

Editorial

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Welcome to the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care!

On behalf of the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) and the Advisory Board, I am delighted to be welcoming you to the first issue of the Scottish journal of Residential Child Care. We very much hope that you enjoy this new contribution to residential child care and find it useful and informative.

The Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care was established on April 1st 2000. The aim of SIRCC is to ensure that residential child care staff throughout Scotland have access to the skills and knowledge they require to meet the needs of the children and young people in their care. The Scottish journal of Residential Child Care is one of the ways that we intend to achieve this aim.

These are challenging times for residential child care services and staff. This year has seen the publication of National Care Standards and the establishment of the Scottish Commission for the Regulation of Care (Care Commission) which will register and inspect care services and enforce the National Standards. It has also seen the establishment of the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) which will set standards and publish codes of practice for social services workers and their employers and register social services workers. Residential child care staff will be one of the first groups to be registered. Over the summer, the consultation was held on the qualifications criteria for registration of the social services workforce. It was with disappointment, frustration and some anger that I read that the required qualifications for residential child care workers were being set at SVQ Level 3 or even SVQ Level 2. At the very moment when field social workers will be required to complete a 4 year BA (Honours) qualification, the proposed requirements for residential child care staff are to be lower than previous targets. What message does this send to residential child care staff, to the children and young people they care for, their colleagues in social services and other professions, and to society at large? There are many other issues regarding the qualifications criteria but these were addressed in detail in The Residential Child Care Qualifications Audit (Frondigoun and Maclean, 2002) and in SIRCC's submission to the consultation. Suffice to say that, whatever the outcome of the consultation, SIRCC is committed to working with employers and staff to achieve a fully and appropriately qualified workforce.

The Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care will provide a forum to debate topics such as these, as well as developments in practice, policy, research and training at every level of residential child care. We hope that the journal will help

in breaking down some of the barriers between practice and research. Research needs to impact on policy and practice in residential child care and residential workers need to be 'research-minded'; looking to change their practice in the light of the messages from research. We also want residential child care workers, managers and young people to write for the journal; contributing full papers or shorter pieces of writing describing your experiences of residential care or developments in practice. Do not think that you need to have a polished article ready for printing. If you have an idea then get in touch and we can discuss how we can help you to develop it. We welcome contributions from practitioners and researchers in other countries so that we can learn from a wide range of residential contexts, traditions and settings. In this way, we hope to promote and enhance the development of positive practice in residential child care, both in Scotland and in the wider world.

References

Frondigoun, E. and Maclean, K. (2002) *The Residential Child Care Qualifications Audit*, Glasgow: SIRCC.