

Editorial

With the publication of this issue, the first of Volume 13, the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care (SJRCC) has grown into a feisty teenager. Our founding Editor, Professor Andy Kendrick, presided over its gestation and birth, and has continued to provide the Journal with close parental guidance. The early years benefited greatly from the gentle nurturing and calm efficiency of Dr Irene Stevens as Editor, and many first-time authors were encouraged into print under her expert tutelage.

The past two years have been marked by transitions - the translation of our sponsor into CELCIS (the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland), the change from hard copy to web-based format, and the increase from two to three issues per volume. There will be more changes to come, as the Journal develops more confidence in its identity as a forum for debate and dissemination about topical issues in residential child care research, policy and practice - in Scotland and internationally.

Expect the Journal to be more conscious of its appearance, with improvements made to the web presence, and perhaps you should also anticipate some adolescent stropiness, as we encourage authors to engage in lively debate about controversial issues.

Regular visitors to the website may have noticed that we have expanded the editorial board to include experts in residential child and youth care from several countries. This deliberate policy means we benefit from our board members' expertise in child care and publishing internationally, and that we can widen our pool of reviewers and also encourage authors from beyond Scotland to consider submitting to the Journal.

As I write, the Board has just held its first international link-up using web conferencing software. One of the outcomes of the meeting was an endorsement of the Journal's publishing policy which aims to give equal prominence to both full-length, research-based or conceptual papers and shorter articles describing or debating matters of practice. The former will have been through standard peer-review procedures, while the latter will be moderated directly by the editors. The Board also plans to encourage practitioners who are not experienced authors to get their ideas into print by being paired with a writing mentor. If you have ideas for a paper or practice article, please get in touch for an informal discussion.

Over the years, the Journal has published contributions from young people and the editors would like to hear from more authors with personal experience of residential care.

This issue contains two full-length papers and three practice-related articles. The first paper, by Chris Holligan and colleagues, based at the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration, argues that while statistical accounts are important for helping to frame policy, they are not sufficient for 'providing a humanistic grasp of the difficult lives of many of society's marginalised children and young people.' Noting that measurement science can skew our knowledge of reality, the authors conclude that: 'We need to draw upon looked after children's unique insights as "users" of the outcomes by, for example, identifying a role for them as co-researchers working with professional researchers, and their ownership of the audits done to allegedly enhance their quality of life, or future opportunities will not arise.'

The second paper, by Dawn Simpson, a children and families social worker in East Ayrshire, is an account of empirical research carried out to examine: '...the therapeutic potential of bedtime reading for young people in residential child care by exploring the related experiences of young

people and children's workers in one large residential child care establishment.' Dawn found that her research: '...brought to life the bedtime reading experiences of children's workers and the children who live in residential child care' and concluded that: '...understanding of child development, the residential milieu and [workers'] approach to using activities to enhance children's emotional wellbeing' were vital components of practice.

The first of three practice-related articles, by Maire McCormack, seconded to CELCIS from the office of Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People, is a reflection on the passage through the Scottish Parliament of the Bill which ultimately became the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014. Maire tells the story of the Act and says why it is important legislation, but also offers a personal account of some 'notable disappointments'.

In the second practice-related article, Gavin Sinclair, arts development officer at Kibble Education and Care Centre, provides a compelling account of the co-production with young people of a 10-minute play, *Please Listen*, about life in care. Gavin learned through his experience: '...that working to people's strengths and empowering them to achieve through something they enjoy can change lives.' He says: 'Recognition for achievements and constant positive feedback goes a long way. I've been fortunate to be part of their project and witness the impact it has had on these kids.' The young people also learned important things from their involvement: to find out what, you will need to read Gavin's article.

The third practice-related article is an account of the redevelopment of a children's home written by Wilma Stickle, a residential unit manager. Wilma takes us through the stages of consultation, scoping and design, and also provides her own reflections on the process. Wilma ends her account with four considerations which will be very useful for practitioners about to embark on commissioning a new children's house. Who could disagree with Wilma's observation that: 'It was also very important to include the young people and staff team in as many decisions about design and internal finishes as possible?'

As usual, the issue ends with a book review. In this issue, Stuart Allardyce contributes a review of *Critical Perspectives on Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking* by Melrose and Pearce, published in 2013.

You can look forward to the feisty teenager's spirited return with Issue 2 of volume 13 at the beginning of September, and Issue 3 will be a special feature celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Kilbrandon Report which led to the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 and the setting up of the children's hearing system. The issue, *Kilbrandon's Vision : Fifty years of aspiring for Care and Justice for Children in Scotland*, guest edited by author and community social work manager, Raymond Taylor, will include a transcript of the 2014 Kilbrandon Lecture by Professor Frank Cottrell-Boyce, contributions by young people, and critical reflections on Kilbrandon's legacy.

We are also issuing a call for papers and practice articles for a special issue in 2015 on leadership and management in residential child and youth care, to be guest-edited by Leslie Hicks.

We hope you enjoy the latest issue of the SJRCC. Please consider contacting the editors at sjrcc@celcis.org with your feedback. Please also consider writing for the Journal and encouraging others to contribute.

Graham Connelly
Joint Editor