

# Editorial

The first issue of the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care (SJRCC) was published, in hard-copy format, and posted out to subscribers, on 18 August 2002. Eleven years later, and after a short sabbatical to take stock, SJRCC is back, refreshed and available as a free-to-download online journal.

In 2002, the Journal's publisher was the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC). Today the publisher is CELCIS, the Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland. Established in 2011, CELCIS has a mission to work with partners to improve the life experiences of all looked after children in Scotland, including those in foster and kinship care placements, and others on home supervision orders. SIRCC gained respect at home and in many countries, and its legacy is maintained by remaining an integral part of CELCIS, particularly demonstrated in the continuation of the annual SIRCC conference with which the Journal's re-launch is timed to coincide.

The aim of the Journal remains as it was in 2002, to provide a forum for debate and dissemination about topical issues in residential child care research, policy and practice. In scope the Journal relates to all aspects of residential child care, and this includes the interface between residential care and other contexts, such as health, education and other care settings. The original impetus for a distinctive *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* reflected the particular character of children's services within Scotland, especially since the devolution of government within the UK and the resumption of the Scottish Parliament in 1999.

But the Journal was never intended to be solely Scottish in identity and its editors have deliberately encouraged contributions about group care from around the world. The current issue illustrates that important international dimension. This issue's authors are from Australia, Belgium, Norway and Scotland. The Journal's editorial board and panel of reviewers include members based in Canada, England, Ireland, New Zealand and USA.

In the first issue, the Editor, Professor Andrew Kendrick, recorded his 'disappointment, frustration and some anger' on learning that the qualification level for residential workers in Scotland was planned to be set at SVQ (Scottish Vocational Qualification) Level 3, or Level 2. He contrasted this with the, then, recent decision to pitch the qualification for social work considerably higher at the level of a four-year honours degree. 'What message', Kendrick wrote, 'does this send to residential childcare staff, to the children and young people they care for, their colleagues in social services and other professions, and to society at large?' In the event, the minimum qualification requirement for residential child care workers for mandatory registration with the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) was settled on the academic qualification of HNC, plus the SVQ3, a level

higher than Kendrick feared<sup>i</sup>. The National Residential Child Care Initiative recommended in its workforce report, published in 2009, an even higher level of qualification, proposing that all newly appointed residential child care workers and managers should have a degree-level qualification by 2014 ([Davidson, Wilkinson, Docherty, & Anderson, 2009](#)). This view was widely accepted but there remain challenges in implementing the ambitions.

During the life of the Journal, there have been many more significant developments impacting on the residential care sector in Scotland. One in particular was the ‘sincere and full apology’ offered in 2004 by the then First Minister of Scotland, Jack McConnell, to all who had suffered abuse and neglect while in institutional care in the past, leading to the provision of services for in-care abuse survivors and the prospect of searchable records similar to Find and Connect in Australia. There has been the development of Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC), a co-ordinated approach to encourage working across professional boundaries to ensure children and families get the support they need without delay. As we publish, the major policy development affecting the sector is the Children and Young People (Scotland) Bill which is making its way through Parliament. Consultation on the Bill found broad consensus for extending the right of care leavers to access support up to age 25, particularly if this were to be a duty on local authorities, rather than a right of care leavers to request support.

During this time, the Journal has published articles dealing with these and many other topics, as diverse as educational attainment, health and wellbeing, attachment and loss, the effects of trauma, improving literacy, safe holding, and leaving care well. Articles have presented practice experience in Scotland and many other countries.

Turning to the current issue, we hope that readers will enjoy the eclectic mix of papers, reviews and tributes presented.

The issue opens with Malcolm Hill’s warm personal tribute to Professor Emeritus John Triseliotis of the University of Edinburgh who died in 2012. Hill outlines Triseliotis’ significant contribution over more than 50 years to understandings of children separated from their parents, particularly his care in writing and speaking to present the application of his research for practitioners and managers.

The main body of the issue contains six substantial papers, representing theoretical and practice contexts, empirical research and conceptual writing.

Two works emanate from Australia. Shelley Wall, Stewart Redshaw and Kym Edwards provide an overview of the therapeutic residential care model of Mercy Family Services in Queensland. The paper shares learning experiences about the implementation of the model and initial outcomes for the young people placed during the first year of operation. Debra Rosser and Shurlee Swain discuss the relationship between historian and those living the out of home care experience by reference to projects arising from government enquiries into indigenous, migrant, Australian-born children in care.

In the first of two Scottish-based papers by practitioner-researchers, Charlotte Wilson explores the implementation of a total communication approach in a residential unit providing short breaks for children and young people with learning difficulties, including communication impairment. In the second paper, Amy McKellar and Andrew Kendrick discuss the findings of a study which aimed to gain an insight into the views of young people in secure accommodation and their residential workers about the quality of relationships and, in particular, to explore the role of the key worker.

Jacob Kornbeck's paper is concerned with the cultural dimension in social pedagogy and discusses whether the fact that social pedagogy originated in Germany can be assumed to constitute a barrier to its successful establishment in the UK. Kornbeck asks whether cultural and other differences suggest that social pedagogy might be 'too German' for a UK context? The article draws on material illustrating how social pedagogy migrated from Germany via Spain to Latin America, and has now arrived in the USA. The paper also serves to signpost a forthcoming special issue of the Journal (due for publication online in September 2013) on social pedagogy, guest-edited by Janine Bolger of Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen.

The final paper in the collection, by Terje Halvorsen, combines a substantial conceptual exploration of the value for young people in having a theoretical knowledge of ethics, with a small-scale pilot study with eight secondary school students who have field-tested an 'adjusted' text introducing ethics. Halvorsen argues that his findings indicate an explicit imparting of ethics may be a viable approach in social education and should supplement the current repertoire of methods applied in residential child care settings.

The review section of the issue opens with a reflection on the German psychologist Fritz Redl, written by Jack Phelan. 'If there was a Hall of Fame for Child and Youth Care practitioners, the first person I would nominate is Fritz Redl.' Phelan notes that Redl coined the terms 'acting out' and 'life-space interview' and 'was opposed to behaviour modification, punishment and psychotropic medications, and suggests practical, CYC based alternatives.'

There are two book reviews. The first, contributed by Neil Gentleman, reviews Graham Connelly & Ian Milligan's (2012) *Residential Child Care: Between Home and Family*, while the second, is a review by Albert Goodluck of Ross Deuchar's (2009) *Gangs, Marginalised Youth and Social Capital*.

The issue ends with some reflections on the EUSARF 2012 Conference, held in Glasgow. These reflections are taken from a conversation posted by New Zealand-based Scot Iain Matheson on the LinkedIn forum Education of Children in Care<sup>ii</sup>. This represents a useful reminder of the utility of social networking, providing the possibility of taking debates far beyond the conference hall. It also sets a challenge to the editors of this Journal to consider ways in which the ideas explored in articles might stimulate discussion in the cybersphere as well as individual consideration.

And finally: for much of the Journal's life to date, each year's volume has comprised two issues. The aim of the editors is to increase this output and in 2013 there will be three issues. As announced, the second issue is a special feature on social pedagogy for which the papers have now been selected. The third issue (due in December) will be an open issue and we welcome contributions. Please refer to the instructions for authors on our website - and get writing!

Graham Connelly  
Joint Editor

Davidson, J., Wilkinson, C., Docherty, B., & Anderson, M. (2009). Higher aspirations, brighter futures: NRCCI workforce report. Glasgow: SIRCC.

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<sup>i</sup> The CELCIS website provides FAQs about qualifications for registration at:  
<http://www.celcis.org/media/resources/publications/Employees-without-qualificationsv1.pdf>  
<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Education-Children-in-Care-Network-4113166>