

# Editorial

## Welcome to the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care

We have been pleased by the positive feedback we have received on the first issue of the Journal and hope that you find this second issue just as useful and informative.

Developments in residential child care continue apace and recent figures from the Scottish Executive remind us of the importance of residential child care in the range of services for children and young people. The number of children and young people in residential accommodation in March 2002 increased slightly from the previous year to 1,962. The number of admissions to residential accommodation, however, increased by 13 per cent in the year 2001 – 2002. There were almost 11,000 admissions to residential accommodation and this is approaching three times the number of admissions to residential care at the start of the 1990s (Scottish Executive, 2003). The vast majority of children and young people only stay in residential accommodation for a relatively short period. Three-quarters (77 per cent) of children and young people who left residential accommodation in 2001 – 2002 had been there for less than one month. A significant number of young people, however, remain in residential care on a long-term basis and it is important that their needs are also met. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons for the increase in admissions to residential accommodation is the development of respite care and shared care arrangements. It may also, however, reflect a more general trend for shorter stays in residential care. These figures also highlight the importance of the links between residential child care and community services for children, young people and their families.

In my editorial in the first issue of the journal, I expressed disappointment at the level of qualifications proposed as the criteria for registration for residential child care staff. SIRCC argued strongly that targets for the qualifications of staff should not be lowered. The Scottish Social Services Council recently published the qualifications criteria for residential child care staff and I was encouraged by the fact that there had been significant movement from the initial proposals. There is now a balance between vocational, academic and

professional qualifications. In addition, the range of professional qualifications recognised (occupational therapy, physiotherapy, speech and language therapy, community education and curative education as well as social work) opens exciting possibilities (Smith, 2003). There are many challenges, for individuals and organisations, that will need to be surmounted over the coming months and years to achieve a fully qualified workforce. SIRCC intends to play its full part in working with employers and staff to reach this goal.

We hope that the *Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care* continues to help in breaking down some of the barriers between practice and research. We are pleased that this issue contains papers from residential child care practitioners as well as academics and researchers. Again we would encourage you to get in touch if you have an idea for an article, either a full paper or a shorter piece of writing describing your experience of residential care or developments in practice. We are also pleased to include a contribution about developments in Ireland and we welcome papers from practitioners and researchers in other countries. We need to grasp opportunities to discuss, debate and evaluate the work we all doing, in Scotland, the UK and in other countries from around the world.

**Andrew Kendrick**  
Editor

## References

Scottish Executive. (2003) *Children in Residential Accommodation 2001 – 2002*, Scottish Executive. Retrieved 15 March 2003, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/stats/bulletins/00216.pdf>

Smith, M. (2003). Qualifying and registering the workforce. *Cyc-online*, 51. Retrieved 10 April 2003, from the World Wide Web: <http://www.cyc-net.org/cyc-online/cycol-0403-smith.html>