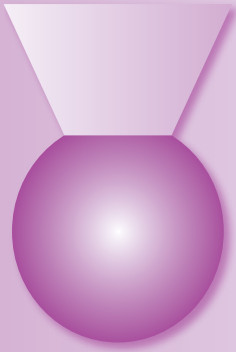


# ANNUAL REPORT 2009



## Scottish Throughcare & Aftercare Forum

### A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHAIR ...

Since the Scottish Government concordat with local authorities devolved decisions about budgets and services to local level, it is vital to have a national network which can help monitor and maintain standards, promote and share good practice and represent the extensive range of agencies involved in supporting young people leaving care. The Forum is uniquely placed to do this.

It is increasingly recognised that care leavers are not just the concern and responsibility of social work throughcare and aftercare teams, but of all corporate parenting agencies: health, housing, leisure, education, training and employment, criminal justice, Children's Hearings, etc.. The Forum is working hard to increase its reach and representation to reflect this.

Increased expectations on local authorities, pressure on budgets and the recession all have the potential to threaten services for care leavers. The Forum is a key advocate at both national and local levels. Our message to all corporate parents is, "When a family has to tighten its belt, the last thing it must cut spending on is its children and young people".

**Helen Heatlie, Chair of the Board of Directors**

**Staffing:** During 2009, the Forum's maintained a staff team of four. We are grateful to our funders the Scottish Government and the Big Lottery Fund for the stability and increased capacity this has given the Forum. The Forum would also like to thank the many volunteers who contributed to our work this year.

**Board of Directors:** The Forum had 10 members on the Board of Directors. They oversaw the Forum's fifth year as a Company Limited by Guarantee.

### Our vision and mission

*Our vision is to achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people leaving care. We strive to be recognised as an influential voice for the opinions, concerns and issues facing young people who experience throughcare & aftercare and those who support them.*

*The Scottish Throughcare and Aftercare Forum is committed to raising awareness of and promoting good throughcare and aftercare practice for young people leaving care. By consulting with and including the views of young people, practitioners and service providers, we will be able to identify and take forward relevant issues and influence positive developments.*



# KEY AREAS OF WORK DURING 2009

## Influencing

### Housing and accommodation

In April this year the Forum jointly hosted a seminar with the Scottish Government for housing and throughcare workers, on accommodation for young people leaving care.

### Enterprise and Employability

In May the Forum contributed to the work of government's More Choices More Chances team on their Young Offender Learning and Skills workstream.

### Secure Care

A transitions report from the Forum's sub group on secure care was sent as background briefing for the government's action research on positive transitions for young people leaving secure care.

### National Residential Child Care Initiative

The Forum contributed to the [National Residential Child Care Initiative](#) (NRCCI), highlighting leaving care issues in terms of resources, skills and commissioning.

### Media work

Young people from the Forum's Debate Project got their views across in national television and newspaper interviews on a range of subjects this year, including education, stigma and social work support.

## Learning

In line with our new research strategy, the Forum has been involved in a range of research work this year:

A Scottish Funding Council evaluation of pilot projects aiming to improve care leavers participation in further education.

An NHS Health Scotland audit of current systems, processes and practice in Scotland which improve health and wellbeing for children looked after at home or in kinship care.

Government research into advocacy services for young people

Our own survey of how Pathways has evolved in different local authorities, and what it is achieving for care leavers.

An Audit Scotland study on the quality and cost of residential provision for looked after children.



## Training

The Forum has updated and enhanced its training to reflect recent developments in policy and practice, and to meet a wider range of needs. We offer training to all agencies in the role of corporate parent to support them in understanding and meeting their responsibilities to young people leaving care, and have developed specific training support on housing and accommodation issues. Multi-agency sessions this year in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen received excellent feedback as did our training for residential schools.

*"A well presented course, lots of valuable group interaction, useful information. As a school we would like to invite the Scottish throughcare and Aftercare Forum back to Balnacraig to present a follow up course"*

*'Our homeless department would welcome any future training opportunities from the Scottish throughcare and Aftercare Forum'*  
Homeless Officer, West Dunbartonshire Council



## Networking

### Practice sharing and updates on developments

The Forum continued to encourage networking and practice sharing through our website, newsletters, the Hub, themed focus groups, local and regional forums, network events and our national conference. We provided updates on national developments in policy, practice and research and gathered and shared feedback on developments at a local level on a huge range of issues reflecting the complexity of corporate parenting for care leavers.

### National Conference

This annual event attracts a potent mix of practitioners, policy makers and young people. In 2009 the conference is in Dundee, and will explore how we can better support young people who are looked after at home. The new Commissioner for Children & Young People, Tam Baillie, will address the conference.

## Building partnerships

### Scottish Commissioner for Children and Young People

The Forum continued to support the implementation of the recommendations from the Sweet 16 report, providing a follow up report. We are now working with the new Commissioner to ensure care leavers needs stay high on the agenda.

### Care Commission

The Care Commission's report in early 2009 on throughcare called for all services to use our guidelines and for more training to be given to staff.

We have asked the Care Commission to make throughcare & aftercare an early subject of joint inspection when the Commission merges with SWIA, and are exploring with them the most useful issues they might address.

### Careers Scotland

The Forum continued to work with Careers Scotland on how they can best support young people leaving care into education and employment. This year we met to discuss the 16+ initiative, and how it might work for young people in residential schools.

### Scottish Healthy Care Network

The Forum continued to support the development of this network, being represented on its management committee, providing administrative assistance and helping to organise a national health conference.

### Child Poverty Action Group

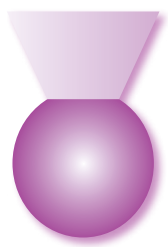
In 2009 the forum worked with the CPAG to build care leavers needs into their poverty briefing, and began work on a joint leaflet on care leavers entitlements.



## Giving Young People A Voice

The Debate Project brings young people leaving care into the heart of the Forum's work, shaping our campaigning, training and events. The Debate Project is growing into a national network that represents the many different experiences of young people leaving care.

In 2009 the Debate Project ran a national conference for care leavers as well as sharing their views and experiences on a wide range of issues including accommodation, employment, leaving care resources, stigma and social work support.



**Scottish  
Throughcare  
& Aftercare  
Forum**



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