

# Children in Scotland

every child - every childhood

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## Media Release

9 September 2011

### Fostering for the future

Getting the best possible support for Scotland's most vulnerable children is the subject of a major conference on Tuesday 13 September in Perth that brings together foster carers, looked after young people and practitioners.

As the Scottish Government announce an inquiry is to consider the educational underachievement of young people growing up in care, *The Future of Foster Care in Scotland: Improving outcomes for looked after children* is run by Children in Scotland with SWISS Foster Care Scotland and Care Visions.

A growing shortage of foster carers and a care system under pressure mean agencies, organisations, care staff and individuals are finding ways to work together better, delegates will hear. Speakers include Jennifer Davidson, director of The New Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children; Graham McCann, of the Looked After Children Education Forum; and Sara Lurie, director of the Fostering Network Scotland; alongside interactive sessions looking at nurturing, dealing with trauma, and improving life chances through learning.

More than 6500 children in Scotland are currently looked after away from home, with many cared for by more than 3000 foster families. Looked after children in general experience poorer health and wellbeing than their peers, and attain lower educational qualifications.

Sara Lurie, director of the Fostering Network in Scotland, said:

"It is essential everyone involved in fostering works together to ensure foster care works for every child and every foster family. Foster carers need to be at the heart of decision making about a child, they need ongoing training opportunities to keep their skills up to date, and they should be paid for the job they do. We know that when foster care works it works very well, and with the right support, foster carers can make an enormous difference to the children they look after."

Suzanne Zeedyk, Honorary Senior Lecturer in Developmental Psychology at the University of Dundee, said:

"What children need most to learn in their childhood years is that love feels safe. For children who have been taken into state care those early lessons have been rough ones. What good fostering has the potential to do is provide moments in which children can begin to experience love that is safe, rather than scary. Good fostering has the potential to turn around not only their childhood, but their adulthood."

### Notes to Editors

1. *The Future of Foster Care in Scotland: Improving outcomes for looked after children* takes place on **Tuesday 13 September** at the Salutation Hotel, Perth.
2. **Children in Scotland** is the longstanding national agency for the whole of the children's sector, reaching over 250,000 individuals through our extensive membership of more than 450 statutory agencies, voluntary sector organisations, professional associations and community groups. For further information visit [www.childreninscotland.org.uk](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk).
3. For more information on **SWIIS Foster Care Scotland** visit [www.fostercarescotland.com](http://www.fostercarescotland.com), and on **Care Visions** visit [www.carevisions.co.uk](http://www.carevisions.co.uk).

**For more details contact Lynn Gilmour on 0131 222 2443 or email [lgilmour@childreninscotland.org.uk](mailto:lgilmour@childreninscotland.org.uk)**