

# Children in Scotland magazine



ALL you

The missing  
link for care  
experienced  
young people

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NEED is

is



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# Welcome...



**Jennifer Drummond**  
@jen\_drum  
#CISMAGAZINE

## ...to the summer edition of *Children in Scotland Magazine*

As the holidays fast approach, many families will be planning their days out, time with friends and family and, if lucky, perhaps time exploring another country abroad.

Above all else, the summer months create opportunities to spend with loved ones without the restrictions and pressures of nursery, school and work.

But what of the children and young people who don't have these opportunities? For many, particularly those without a stable home environment, these invaluable relationships and bonds are often missing. That's why we need to work on bringing love back into the care system, ensuring those children who have often had traumatic experiences feel safe, secure and cared for, as Duncan Dunlop argues in my interview with him (page 8).

We also hear about how, as a country, we are becoming more aware and mindful of adverse

childhood experiences and how those working with children and families can learn to mitigate ACEs with a psychologically informed approach (page 12). Elsewhere, as the mental health of the nation comes under scrutiny again, we discuss why there needs to be increased support for suicidal young people (page 24).

But it's not as bleak an outlook as one might think. Yes, there are many children and young people who sadly face adversity and hardship, through no fault of their own and often purely as a result of the circumstances into which they have been born. But we in Scotland have a reputation for being socially conscious and equipped with a strong sense of social justice. With ongoing activity such as the Care Review, the national ACEs Hub and other vital policy and practice developments we have a chance to test this reputation and put it into action. So what are we waiting for?

Happy holidays, and happy reading,

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# Learning to stack the deck against ACEs

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are relevant to all sectors and involve all of us in society. *Elaine Paterson* gives an overview of the work going on across Scotland to understand, manage and mitigate their impact

The term Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) is used to encompass stressful events occurring in childhood, including abuse (physical, emotional and sexual); neglect (physical and emotional); and household dysfunction (mental illness, incarcerated relative, domestic abuse, substance abuse and divorce).

The seminal *CDC-Kaiser Permanente Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE) Study*, carried out in America in the late 1990s, used these types of adversity for the basis of an investigation into how these childhood experiences could impact in later life. It was one of the largest studies to explore the association between childhood experiences and health throughout life, with more than 17,000 participants from Southern California receiving physical exams and completing surveys regarding their childhood experiences and current health status and behaviours. Published in the *American Journal of Preventive Medicine* in 1998, it concluded that as the number of ACEs increased, so did the risk of experiencing a range of health conditions in adulthood. There was a strong graded relationship between the breadth

of exposure to abuse or household dysfunction during childhood and multiple risk factors for several of the leading causes of death in adults.

Adverse Childhood Experiences can create dangerous levels of stress, physically impact on the body and impair healthy brain development. As humans, if we feel threatened, our body responds by increasing our heart rate, blood pressure and release of stress hormones, such as cortisol. For children, this normal physiological response can be alleviated or calmed in an environment where the child's needs are addressed by supportive relationships with adults. The Harvard University Center on the Developing Child describes how 'toxic stress' can occur when the stress response

**"It is important to recognise poor outcomes are not inevitable and there is much that can be done to respond in a psychologically informed way"**



is extreme and long-lasting and where supportive relationships are unavailable to the child.

It can also have a long-term impact on how the body deals with future life stresses, lead to an increase risk of adopting health harming behaviours, undermine the ability to form relationships and regulate emotions and impair cognitive functions. This potentially has significant implications for a child's ability to engage in school and could result in difficulties with processing information, ability to organise self and work, transitions, and working with others.

It is important to recognise that, whilst acknowledging these potential negative impacts, poor outcomes are not inevitable. There is much that can be done to respond in a psychologically informed way to mitigate these outcomes.

Children who end up doing well despite adversity have usually had at least one stable committed relationship with a supportive parent, caregiver or other adult. This buffers them from development disruption and builds skills such as the ability to plan, monitor and regulate behaviour and adapt to changing circumstances. Significant adults – not necessarily parents or carers – in a child's life can provide important attachments for children. A whole system approach to preventing and responding to childhood adversity requires enabling adults and the communities in which we live to provide a safe, stable environment. It is important that we do not consider children and young people in isolation from their families and the communities in which they are born, grow and develop.

It is also important to understand that while ACEs are found across the population, there is more risk of experiencing ACEs in areas of higher deprivation. Therefore, preventing ACEs should be seen within the wider context of tackling societal inequalities.

## ACEs in the UK

The original American ACE study has since been replicated internationally. In the UK National ACE studies have been carried out in England and Wales. The study with an English population showed that, as the number of ACEs experienced increased, the relation with poorer health outcomes and behaviours increased. Individuals with four or more ACEs were three times more likely to smoke, seven times more likely to have been involved in violence in the past year and 11 times more likely to have ever been in prison. The study in Wales found that individuals with four or more ACEs were four times more likely to be a high-risk drinker, six times more likely to be a smoker, 16 times more likely to be a crack cocaine or heroin user, 15 times more likely to have been involved in violence in the past year and 20 times more likely to be in prison during their lives.

It is likely that data from a Scottish population would show similar trends.

In 2016 the Scottish Public Health Network produced a report *Polishing the Diamonds - Addressing Adverse Experiences* which summarised the research and set out a number of areas for action in Scotland. It recommended a range of approaches:

### • Primary Prevention of ACEs

Continue to advocate for the importance of action and to create policy and strategy on all aspects of household adversity such as domestic violence, substance misuse, mental ill health, teenage pregnancy and poverty. Continue to offer evidence-based targeted parenting programmes to those with greatest need with multiple risk factors and universally, if possible. Examine the equity impacts of policies and strategies, particularly for families with children and those on lower incomes. Continue to work across sectors on increasing community connectedness and improving social capital.

### • Secondary Prevention of ACEs

Explore and build upon existing strategies to increase resilience in all children, particularly children in families where there are risk factors for ACEs.

### • Tertiary Prevention of ACEs

Initiate research to explore how best to ensure that the longer-term consequences of ACEs are effectively managed and the potential for generational transition minimised.

## Scotland's Adverse Childhood Experiences Hub

As an action point from *Polishing the Diamonds*, a Scottish Multi-disciplinary ACE Hub was established. The Hub is co-ordinated by NHS Health Scotland and its membership includes representation across sectors including Health, Police, Social Work, Third Sector, academics and the Scottish Government.

It is involved in action on raising awareness and understanding about ACEs, contributing to developing the evidence base on ACEs and exploring and sharing policy and practice approaches to prevent ACEs and mitigate their negative impacts.

NHS Health Scotland and members of the ACE Hub have links with colleagues in Public Health Wales, England and in Northern Ireland to share approaches including on research and policy and in a variety of settings including primary care, education, police and housing.

## The policy landscape

We are now 20 years on from the original US study on ACEs. There is increasing awareness across sectors, professions, politicians and in communities about how early adversity is related to later life experiences and its relevance across public services and for society. The Scottish

Government has set out its commitment to preventing and mitigating ACEs within the Programme for Government 2017-18, focusing on preventing ACEs and supporting the resilience of children and adults in overcoming early life adversity across all areas of public service, including education, health, justice and social work. It builds on the Getting it Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach. Earlier this year, Deputy First Minister John Swinney hosted an event at Bellahouston Academy attended by cabinet members including Nicola Sturgeon. This demonstrates commitment at the highest level of government and ACEs have been recognised in recent strategies such as the Mental Health Strategy (2017), the Justice Strategy (2017) and the Tackling Child Poverty Delivery Plan (2018).

### Cross-sector interest in ACEs-informed practice

From a public health perspective one of the most exciting aspects of this movement is the interest that is building across lots of different sectors. This is not something that can be tackled by one sector alone. Achieving the goal that Scotland is the best place for all our children to grow up will require a concerted effort across partners and communities. There are currently some wonderful examples of how taking an

ACEs-informed approach to working with children and young people can be beneficial to their outcome.

**“The movement is building across lots of different sectors. This is not something that can be tackled by one sector alone.”**

In May 2017, the Scottish Government and NHS Education Scotland launched Transforming Psychological Trauma: A Skills and Knowledge Framework for The Scottish Workforce. The framework is designed for use across the Scottish workforce and forms part of the National Trauma Training Strategy which has the goal of achieving excellence in outcomes for people affected by trauma and adversity in Scotland.

In March this year, NHS Health Scotland in collaboration with Education Scotland hosted a conference for health and education colleagues to learn and share practice on preventing and responding to adverse childhood experiences, linking this to key approaches in nurture and health and wellbeing within education. This event was attended by strategic leads at local authority and senior managers at school level, as well as public health and health improvement colleagues.

Schools can provide an excellent source of support for children who have, or are currently, experiencing ACEs. There is evidence that the presence of a trusted adult in a child's life helps to build resilience and mitigate the negative impacts of ACEs. Nurturing approaches in schools which focus on building strong relationships with children and families has been found to improve social, emotional and educational attainment. The Pupil Equity Fund, allocated directly to schools and targeted at those children most affected by the poverty-related attainment gap may also help.

Whilst it is recognised that the links between adversity in childhood and poorer outcomes later in life are not new, the use of a common language around ACEs encourages a shared understanding across sectors and between different professional groups. Talking about ACEs provides an opportunity for us to restate and emphasise the importance of providing our children with a supportive and caring early start in life.

### Raising the profile of ACEs

The implications of ACEs cut across many different sectors. NHS Health Scotland has been working with the Deep End GPs, a group of 100 general practices serving the most socio-economically deprived populations in Scotland, to explore a pilot of routinely enquiring about adverse childhood experiences. Routine Enquiry was discussed as one of the potential areas for action on ACEs in the Polishing the Diamonds report. Following on from this, two events were held last year to increase understanding and share learning on Routine Enquiry – a seminar in June, followed by a workshop in November. These events set out to learn and share examples of practice in this area and were run collaboratively by NHS Health Scotland, Scottish Government and NHS Education Scotland.

In September Glasgow will be hosting an ACE-Aware Conference which we hope will attract



upwards of 1,000 people with an interest in understanding, managing and mitigating adverse childhood experiences.

Work is also underway to establish a Scottish Group within the ACEs Connections Site. ACEs Connection is an international social network that aims to accelerate the global movement toward recognising the impact of adverse childhood experiences. This will be an excellent opportunity to showcase some excellent examples of Scottish good practice around ACEs, as well as learn from our colleagues from around the world.

The film *Resilience: The Biology of Stress and the Science of Hope* follows progress in America following the seminal ACEs study. It reveals how toxic stress can have significant impact in brain and body development of children, putting them at a greater risk for mental and physical health problems, homelessness, prison time, and early death. The documentary, directed by James Redford and produced by Redford and Karen Pritzker, shows how trailblazers in paediatrics, education, and other fields in the US are using the ACEs evidence and field-tested therapies to prevent ACEs and protect children from the effects of toxic stress.

A Scottish national tour showed the film to packed out theatres and auditoriums across Scotland. A screening also took place in Children in Scotland's office in April. NHS Health Scotland continues to organise screenings and panel discussions across the country. Between November 2017 and March 2018 the film has been seen by more than 1,300 people, all of whom participated in panel discussions after the screening.

These and other events across Scotland have provided an excellent platform to raise awareness of the ACEs research. Even more importantly, they have prompted discussion with a range of sectors about how their work can contribute to the prevention of childhood adversity and mitigate the effects of toxic stress.

ACEs have been found to have lifelong impacts on health and behaviour. They are relevant to all sectors and involve all of us in society. We all have a part to play in preventing exposure to adversity and upholding the rights of children.

**Elaine Paterson is a Senior Health Improvement Officer with NHS Health Scotland**

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> For more information on adverse childhood experiences, visit [healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/adverse-childhood-experiences](http://healthscotland.scot/population-groups/children/adverse-childhood-experiences)

> Download a copy of *Polishing the Diamonds: Addressing Adverse Childhood Experiences in Scotland* at [scotphn.net/projects/adverse-childhood-experiences/introduction/](http://scotphn.net/projects/adverse-childhood-experiences/introduction/)

> Contact the NHS Health Scotland childhood adversity team via email: [nhs.Healthscotland-ChildhoodAdversity@nhs.net](mailto:nhs.Healthscotland-ChildhoodAdversity@nhs.net)



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# We need to do more to help those who feel alone



@amywoodhouse

**Adequate support for suicidal young people won't be prioritised unless we make the case for it convincingly and in unison, writes Amy Woodhouse**

I took a pause for thought and reflection before beginning to write my column for this issue of the magazine. The topic of suicide and how it affects children and young people is a difficult one, possibly one of the most difficult, and comes with a sense of responsibility – to be respectful of people's experiences, to do them justice, and to not 'make things worse'.

'Not making things worse' is a common concern when talking about anything to do with mental health. It's part of what

stops us asking people if they are ok, because we don't want to upset people further, get it wrong, or not handle the response properly.

And it stops us particularly from asking one of the biggest questions of all: 'are you thinking about suicide?'. Suicide prevention organisations make it clear – asking will not put the idea in someone's head. Instead, it may offer permission for someone to open up about how they are feeling. Then there's an opportunity to find help.

It is a subject which has had a high profile across the media in recent months. The death in May of Frightened Rabbit singer Scott Hutchison led to many newspaper articles, TV and radio interviews, and social media activity. People, including many young people who loved Frightened Rabbit's music, wanted to express their sadness, their support for Scott's family, other members of the band, and each other. They wanted to express their concern and shock that suicide is still an issue to the extent it is in 2018.

And it is deeply shocking. While statistics from the Scottish Public Health Observatory (SPHO) show that suicide rates in Scotland have gone

down over the past 35 years, it is still estimated that one in nine young people aged 18-34 living in Scotland has attempted suicide at some point. It is an unspoken issue within our young male population who are statistically at a higher risk than their female peers.

But statistics can only tell us so much.

For example, annual suicide figures are not currently available for those aged 0-14, for absolutely valid reasons of robustness and comparability. But this does mean we don't really know the extent to which children under 15 are experiencing suicidal behaviour. It tends only to be when a story hits the media about a young person who dies by suicide that the issue is brought into sharp relief.

And then the inevitable question arises about what we need to do to prevent these deaths. As a country. As service providers. As individuals and human beings.

Since 2003, suicide prevention strategy and activity in Scotland has been co-ordinated under the Choose Life banner. Choose Life has done much to raise awareness of suicide, including training frontline staff in how to safely and caringly respond to individuals at risk of suicide. In the early days there was a focus on children and young people as a priority group, which involved joint working nationally with Childline, and many local responses and

**"Suicide prevention organisations make it clear - asking will not put the idea in someone's head"**



Illustration by Marcus Herbert, aged 8

actions developed through local Choose Life Co-ordinators.

It feels like this specific focus has dwindled in recent years, and the Scottish Government's 2013-2016 Suicide Prevention Strategy made no specific reference to children and young people at all.

The Scottish Government recently consulted on plans for a new Suicide Prevention Action Plan for 2018 onwards. Its engagement paper prioritised using evidence, training, impact maximisation and digital resources. In our response we expressed our concern that, again, the specific needs of children and young people were noticeably absent from the engagement paper and we argued that this gap should be addressed across all of the four priority areas.

We also argued that a prevention and early intervention approach should be clearly articulated within this action plan to ensure positive impact across the lifespan.

In essence this means the following:

### Using evidence

We need to know more about the nature and extent of suicidal behaviour for those aged under 25, and particularly how we can address the data gap for those aged 14 and under.

### Training

Suicide prevention training should be targeted at those working with children and young people to understand, recognise and respond to mental health needs and suicidal behaviour in children and young people.

In addition, children and young people need to know more about mental health in general, including suicide awareness, and learn about where to go for help if they are thinking about suicide. We recognise that this training will need to be sensitive to different age ranges, but also know that younger children are often aware of the concept of suicide and need to know how to keep themselves safe.

### Impact maximisation

Children and young people at risk of suicide need access to timely and effective support. Support should also be made available to children and young people who have experienced the death by suicide of a close relative.

Services, including schools, should take a pro-active approach in terms of providing information and support at specific times. For example, there is some research, supported by UK suicide prevention charity Papyrus, that indicates that suicide risk increases for young people during exam times. Having a specific focus on supporting children and young people to manage stress and seek help during this period therefore, would be helpful.

### Digital resources

Adults need to develop their knowledge and understanding of digital media as both a risk and protective factor in children and young people's lives. Social media, for example, can be both a huge source of support for vulnerable young people and also increase risk, when deaths by suicide are irresponsibly reported. The National Union of Journalists Scotland guidance produced in 2014 is very helpful with regards to deaths by suicide of a child or young person. We believe that more could be done to share these guidelines more widely, within the context of more informal social media channels.

One of the messages to come out of Mental Health Awareness week this year was that 'raising awareness' and encouraging people to seek help is not much good if there isn't adequate support there to effectively respond. Adequate support won't be prioritised by decision makers unless the case for it is articulated loudly, repeatedly and convincingly.

Speaking up about suicide isn't easy, particularly where children and young people are concerned, but it is a reality today in Scotland. We all need to know how best to talk about it, support children and young people to keep themselves and each other safe, and most importantly, feel assured that there is support available if it is ever needed.

### Amy Woodhouse is Children in Scotland's Head of Policy, Projects and Participation

> Children in Scotland's response to the draft Suicide Prevention Action Plan can be found in the resources section of our website, available at [childreninscotland.org.uk](http://childreninscotland.org.uk)

## Policy, Projects and Participation round-up

Recent work undertaken by the team has taken us across Europe, promoting inclusivity, participation and children's rights, whilst back home we are enabling children to get to grips with their heritage. *By Elaine Kerridge, Policy Manager (Participation)*

### Inclusive education in Zurich

Our Senior Participation Officer, Emma Rogan, enjoyed attending the European Agency for Special Needs and Inclusive Education (EASNIE) biannual meeting held in Zurich in April. She reported that the Agency has plans to develop how children and young people are involved in their work and we look forward to hearing how things have progressed at the next meeting in October in Vienna.



### Promoting Children's rights in Brussels

Another member of the participation team, Jane Miller (pictured), attended the Eurochild General Assembly in Brussels, also in April, meeting practitioners working in participation across Europe and members of the Eurochild Children's Council (ECC). Key discussions recognised that capacity is starting to build within the children's rights movement. We hope this will support the ongoing process of promoting inclusivity when engaging with children and young people and the rights of children in the digital sphere – something children themselves have highlighted as important. We are looking forward to attending the conference 'Building a better Europe with children: All aboard!' later this year which will be designed by young people.

### Heritage at home

Back in Scotland our Heritage Lottery Fund project is developing well. Our Kirkcaldy 'Heritage Hunters' at Valley Primary School are digging deep into their local history, from prehistoric Fife to the story of local football team Raith Rovers, whilst the Troqueer Boys Brigade are enjoying their time with Dumfries Museum and their Fun And Games exhibition which explores toys from the past.

> For more information on our policy, projects and participation work, visit [childreninscotland.org.uk](http://childreninscotland.org.uk)



# Single parents deserve support, not sanctions



@OPFS

**Upcoming welfare reform, including the introduction of universal credit, is predicted to increase the child poverty rate for children in lone-parent families to 62 per cent. It's time to pause and rethink a policy that could have drastic consequences, writes *Marion Davis***

Single parents and their children have been hardest hit by the Westminster Government's programme of benefit cuts. According to the 2011 Scottish Census there are 170,000 single parents in Scotland with more than 281,000 dependent children. The majority are female. The most recent Department of Work and Pensions statistics show 49% of children in single parent families now live below the poverty line.

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has advised that by 2021 single parents and their children will lose 20% of their current income due to welfare reform, including the introduction of Universal Credit – approximately £5,250 a year. On average, disabled single parents with at least one disabled child fare even worse, losing almost three out of every £10 of their net income.

The consequences are stark, with a predicted increase in the child poverty rate for children in lone-parent families to over 62%. This can only be described as catastrophic.

It is vital therefore that Universal Credit works for single parents.

More than 90% of single parents will be eligible by the time the system is rolled out. There are increased expectations for single parents to move into employment when in receipt of Universal

Credit, but without support, single parents face particularly high barriers to (re-)enter the workforce and progress in work. Many will likely end up in a catch 22 — working but struggling to make ends meet as in mostly low-paid work.

Sadly the experiences of single parents already on Universal Credit highlight significant problems with both its design and delivery.

First, there is a lack of awareness amongst parents as to how the new UC system works.

There are also problems with the practicalities of applying under the new scheme. Many parents may face problems accessing a PC, laptop or tablet to complete the application form, or lack the digital skills to do so. There could be barriers to applying as a result of the lack of the required evidence of identity and access to a current bank account.

Considering the expectation that those applying for UC will move into employment, there has been very little attention given to the job-seeking requirements for parents of three and four-year olds without enough flexible, affordable childcare and flexible work opportunities.

The in-built delays have also been highlighted as a significant problem with a lengthy wait to receive the first proper payment. That's why we think there is a need for increased publicity for Universal Credit Scottish

Choices to give better access to twice-monthly payments and the housing element being paid directly to landlords. We would also request that entitlements are clear and single parents' needs are recognised in UC claimant commitments, and they know their rights.

Moreover, the two-child limit in Universal Credit is a particularly pernicious cut because it suggests some children matter more than others. It's also illogical because no parent has a crystal ball.

Families that can comfortably support a third child today could struggle tomorrow and have to claim Universal Credit because health, jobs and relationships can fail. Surely children should not have their life chances damaged because of the number of siblings they have?

The benefit cap is a limit that has been placed by the UK Government on the amount of benefit that can be paid to people who are receiving housing benefit or universal credit. This breaks the link between need and entitlement which is fundamental to a fair social security system. It should be abolished.

Single parents will, on average, be financially worse off because of Universal Credit, whether working or not. Some single parents already receiving Universal Credit are facing forced evictions and struggling to afford the basics. Feedback from parents, using One Parent Families Scotland services and messages left on

**“The two-child limit is a particularly pernicious cut. Families that can support a third child today could easily struggle tomorrow”**

our website, highlight cases of single parents who are worried and fearful.

Many of the cases are about single parents with young children who say they have been told that they must work full-time, at weekends and evenings or must take a job even if they don't have suitable childcare or face a cut to their benefit.

In the case of single parents with pre-school youngsters there is simply a lack of part-time jobs and suitable childcare. This was a policy meltdown waiting to happen because it is well known that there is a shortage of flexible jobs in the marketplace and that childcare is expensive and in inadequate supply.

To cut the benefits of mothers – and most single parents with care of the children continue to be female – when they are already impoverished and often in debt because of the consequences of separation, shows a disregard for the welfare of children and an ignorance of real life that is reprehensible.

The often first-rate research about single parent families tells us that poverty is the biggest problem affecting single parents. We also know that one in three single parent mothers is depressed compared with one in four mothers with partners – and that single parent families are more likely to face poor health. Most are in their 30s and have come out of a long-term relationship or marriage.

Many have difficulties fitting childcare, concern for their children and paid work together in a pattern that succeeds. Many have few qualifications so the only part-time work available is often so low paid it fails to cover costs. The opportunity to get training to improve skills and qualifications is crucial but often that comes with too little childcare and a lack of financial support to make it possible.

Government welfare reform needs to consider the important caring role that single parents undertake and the added difficulties that they face in the workplace juggling work and home life singlehandedly.

A social security system should prevent and protect people from poverty. The Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform promotes four key principles that a welfare system should

meet. It should be:

- **Dignified.** Delivered with respect and compassion, valuing unpaid work and caring roles, and recognising the responsibilities of employers and government as well as the public benefits of welfare
- **Supportive:** lifting people out of poverty, so that all citizens are financially protected, whatever their circumstances
- **Well resourced:** providing adequate financial and human resources to ensure the smooth introduction of any reforms
- **Suitable:** taking full account of Scotland's differing institutional framework from the outset, so that any proposals enable a joined-up approach to tackling poverty.

Universal Credit, as it stands, fails to move us towards such a system. The only effective response is for the government to pause its roll-out and to rethink its impact.

It must be reformed to ensure financial security for families. Unfair benefit sanctions can result in children going without proper meals and take a

severe financial and emotional toll on single parents and their children, with the situation set to worsen.

Universal Credit is scheduled to be introduced in Aberdeenshire, Perth and Kinross, Moray and Scottish Borders in June. Glasgow will see its introduction starting in September. We are preparing for calls for help and advice from parents who are at a loss with the new system, either through their applications being rejected due to an overly complicated application process, not being able to progress the application in the first place, or being left in a worse situation than we were before the Universal Credit roll-out.

The government needs to recognise that sanctions don't work for single parents, and focus instead on providing support to better enable parents to take up fair work which is family-friendly and sustainable and improve access to further and higher education.

### Marion Davis is One Parent Families Scotland's Head of Policy and Strategy

> [Help and advice on applying for Universal Credit is available from the OPFS Helpline on 0808 801 0323, or on their website \[www.opfs.org.uk\]\(http://www.opfs.org.uk\)](#)

> [Single parents particularly hit by Universal Credit News, Page 7](#)

**“Unfair benefit sanctions can result in children going without proper meals and take a severe financial and emotional toll, with the situation set to worsen”**



# “Scotland is a nation with a strong social conscience”



**As the Anne Frank Trust celebrates 10 years of tackling discrimination in Scotland, *Lucy Glennon* and *Heather Boyce* explain how young people are leading the way in challenging hatred and changing attitudes**

**T**he Anne Frank Trust UK is an education charity, which was established 27 years ago. Our work is designed to empower young people with the knowledge, skills and confidence to challenge all forms of prejudice and discrimination, using Anne Frank's story, life, diary and legacy as the foundation. We are the only organisation in the UK licensed to use Anne Frank's name and writing in this way, and we're the British partner of the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam.

The power of Anne's story is its universal appeal, its adaptability. In our programmes, her story is told accurately, factually and within the context of the Holocaust – but it is told by young people ('peer educators'), who lead their schoolmates through the narrative of this most famous of life stories. From this knowledge base, young people examine contemporary problems and issues in their own lives and communities, looking for parallels, for lessons, taking a look at themselves and others.

In 2007, we knew that this approach worked with the young people we were working with in London, and that many British young people experienced similar concerns and worries. But we were also aware that regional or national differences existed. The programme had potential and, 10 years ago when deciding where to pilot a regional model, Scotland was our first choice.

Our large touring exhibition, *Anne Frank + You*, had already been a great success, visiting Kirkcaldy, Milngavie, Glasgow and Edinburgh.

The people we worked with from schools and local authorities were always so committed and enthusiastic. Normally around 10-15 people train to volunteer with us in any one community, but in Milngavie almost 100 people showed up!

Anne Frank Scotland's first programme was held at Celtic FC in 2008, where schools from across Glasgow came to learn about the story of Anne Frank, and understand how the words and legacy of a young Jewish girl from the 1940s could provide lessons for them in the modern day.

Issues such as sectarianism and anti-refugee sentiment were prevalent for those young people. These days, we also hear a lot from Scottish young people about homophobia, transphobia and (in what seems to be the sad downside of a digitally connected world), online hate speech, cyber-bullying and body image concerns.

Through our ongoing work with young people in Scotland, we can track these trends, and adapt our programmes to fit. Since the story of Anne Frank is a non-threatening access route to these issues, talking about her experiences empathetically can open up all kinds of discussion opportunities.

We understand that standing up for others is sometimes hard when you're young and facing peer pressure, but it's also a lesson for life. We would urge young people to use social media for the good – sharing positive stories and sentiments, following people who inspire social change, signing petitions, backing people up when they're being targeted. Of course, there are other ways to be actively engaged with social change.

The Anne Frank Ambassador network across the UK is growing, and this year we've launched a social networking platform to connect past, present and future Anne Frank Ambassadors, to create a collective social force for good.

Some of our programmes for schools, such as Free to Be and Switch Off Prejudice, allow young participants to create their own campaigns and short videos, where their own authentic opinions can be shared. This means that young people who may have direct experience of discrimination can control their own input to the programme, sharing their story and views in a way that feels meaningful to them. We're excited to be finding innovative ways to explore modern day issues, and we have young people to thank for that.

Right from the start, even though Anne Frank Scotland began as a three-year pilot, we felt it was a permanent move. The appetite for our work in schools, local communities, charities, local authorities, library services and museums, and from Holocaust survivors, politicians across the spectrum, religious communities and young people themselves, has never waned.

Scottish people seemed to immediately take this tragic story of a girl murdered because of prejudice, and her legacy, to their hearts. Scotland is a nation that has a strong social conscience and a history of acceptance and upholding human rights; it plays out through the thousands of dedicated and spirited young people we work with each year.

Dundee and Glasgow are our two main centres of work but we do desperately want to reach all the communities in Scotland where the young people would benefit from the skills and confidence our work imbues. We are proud to say that over the past ten years, we have inspired over 150,000 young people in Scotland with our work. But we can achieve so much more!

Anne Frank said: *"Every person has inside of them a piece of good news. The good news is that you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is!"* We use this sentiment to inspire our work with young people.

Young people in Scotland have huge potential, and opportunities. Our Anne Frank Ambassadors and guides are deeply inspired to go on to do good in their lives, and they feel confident enough to do so. We're proud to be celebrating 10 amazing years of working in Scotland and are excited to see the continued impact that younger generations have on challenging all forms of discrimination in society. Together, we can have a voice loud enough to shout down hate.

**Lucy Glennon is Director of Strategy for the Anne Frank Trust, and Heather Boyce is former Scotland Regional Manager**

> Find out more at [annefrank.org.uk](http://annefrank.org.uk) or contact the Scotland team directly on [scotland@annefrank.org.uk](mailto:scotland@annefrank.org.uk)

> Support the Anne Frank Trust's [#shoutdownhate social media campaign](#), by going to [voicesforchange\\_](#) on Instagram, watching the video and creating your own too.

> Interview by Lisa Clark

## Benefits of Children in Scotland membership



"Being a member of Children in Scotland involves us in a valuable network of third sector organisations and helps keep us abreast of issues and developments affecting children and young people in Scotland, as well as providing access to a broad range of training and learning opportunities."

Lucy Glenon, Anne Frank Trust

> For more details on membership, see page 33