

Browsing history

Celebrating our 200th edition, *Chris Small* charts the successes, surprises and oddities of *Children in Scotland Magazine*. Overleaf are 18 covers capturing the progress of the title, and the children's sector, from 2001 to 2021



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Most magazines crash and burn. They struggle to make it to 20 editions, never mind 200. So we hope you'll forgive some brief introspection as we mark 20 years, 200 issues and 3,788 articles (I've read every one) since *Children in Scotland Magazine* was born.

The magazine's longevity is down to a few essentials. It's been a longstanding part of our membership offer, boosted by the willingness of the children's sector workforce to share their views, expertise and learning. It's been led by talented staff who believe in its qualities of representation, insight and balance. And it's been backed within Children in Scotland and by its audience as a valuable forum, resource and conversation-starter. Over two decades it's charted advances in practice, policy and legislation and, in the process, becoming a biographer of the children's sector.

Early editions demonstrate why the big picture effort of campaigns is so often about playing the long game. Liberal Democrat Jim Wallace's entreaty in the June 2002 edition to remove the legal defence of 'reasonable chastisement' of babies and children would finally bear fruit 18 years later. Freshly-appointed Children's Commissioner Kathleen Marshall talked about establishing "a thinktank of young people" in March 2004, pointing towards the kind of participation work that now feels preconditional.

The first few years of the magazine also track in detail the formulation of highly consequential Additional Support for Learning legislation, and the drive for truly inclusive education.

But, browsing the back issues, it's clear some things don't change. The July 2006 issue responds to one of umpteen Scottish Government early years reviews. It includes a parent describing the frantic timetabling of her life in the face of piecemeal provision: "As a mother of two young children working part-time I find my options getting more limited and more complicated ... maybe I should give up work?"

The magazine has been steered along the way by committed editors and writers,

beginning with launch editor Elizabeth Sykes whose debut included analysis of the challenges facing young refugees dispersed to Scotland. Nicola Pay's policy-crunching and Lynn Gilmour's arts coverage lifted content long-term, while Tracy Francis's stint as editor foregrounded research and practitioner views. Current editor Jen Drummond skillfully blends interviews, comment and analysis with learning from projects, mixing in occasional themed issues for extra depth and topicality.

Evolution in editorial has been matched by progress in presentation. Industrial-strength typography and block-blue layouts gave way in 2006 to a rejuvenated modern design steered by the late Nicola Copeland – a hugely talented colleague, whose unexpected loss affected the whole organisation. In autumn 2017 the magazine morphed again, relaunching as part of our new brand identity. Over the past few years Alan Tait's upbeat covers (see the UNCRC themed edition overleaf) and our own Angus Doyle's playful, infographic-driven creations for the current digital run have lent the title real visual clout.

There may have been the odd mis-step along the way. A December 2003 cover featured a 'Glaswegian' family who, with their polished teeth and Gap clothing (and a turkey), looked suspiciously like some Californians in a stock-photoshoot sitting down to enjoy Thanksgiving. And in 2014, with our current editor absent on maternity leave, the magazine's cover image, for no apparent reason, featured some rusting miniature gnomes on a rainy bridge somewhere in Perthshire.

But in content and ambition over 20 years the magazine has stayed true to the aim expressed in issue #1, 'to bring you in-depth articles on the issues affecting all those who work with or for children, young people and families throughout Scotland' and delivered on that promise with quality and flair. Thank you for sticking with us.

> Visit the Children in Scotland magazine hub at childreninscotland.org.uk/our-work/magazine/

> 'Hot off the Press' Listen to the latest podcast discussing the history and future of our flagship publication. [Listen here](#)

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