

The sky's the limit

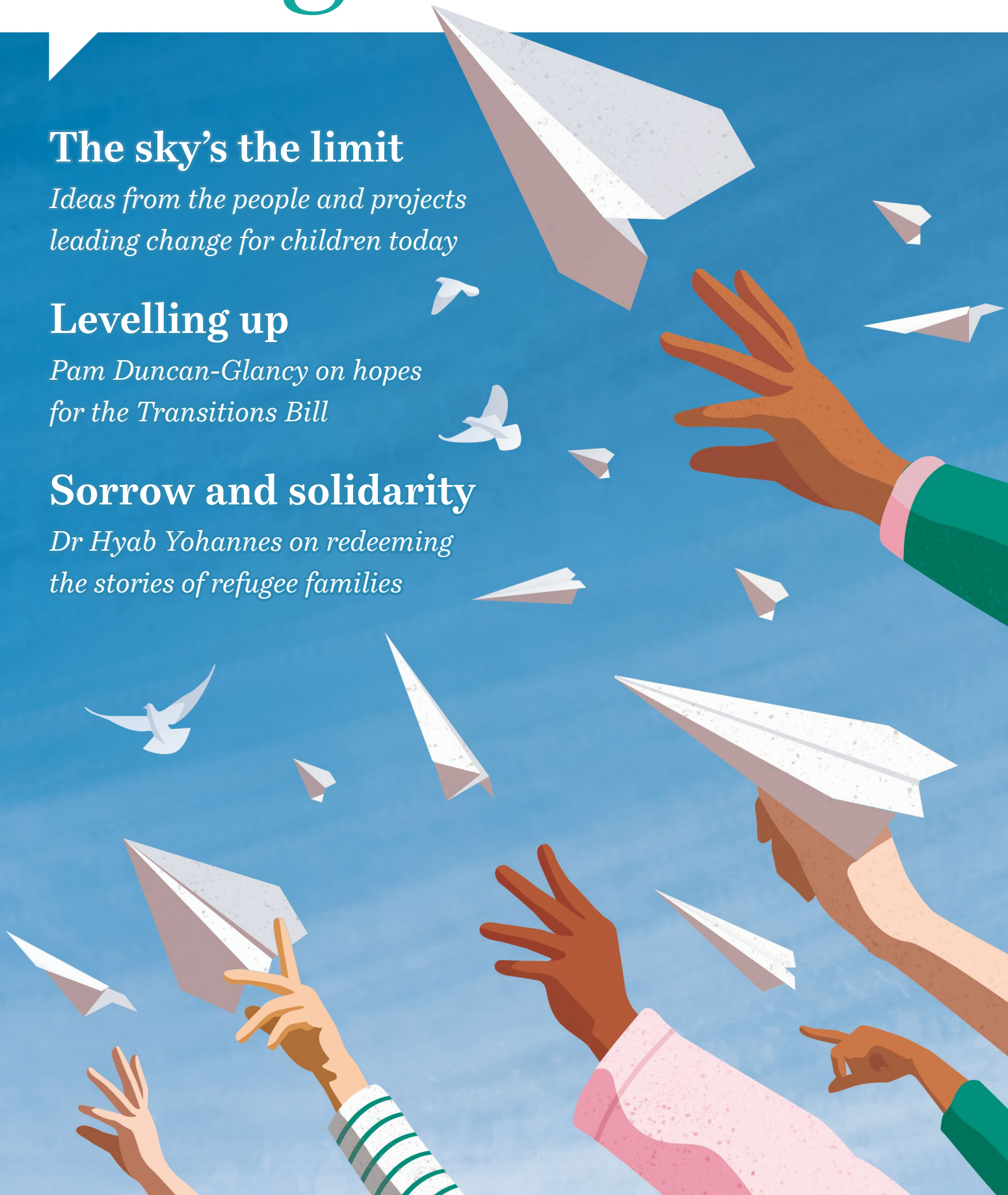
Ideas from the people and projects leading change for children today

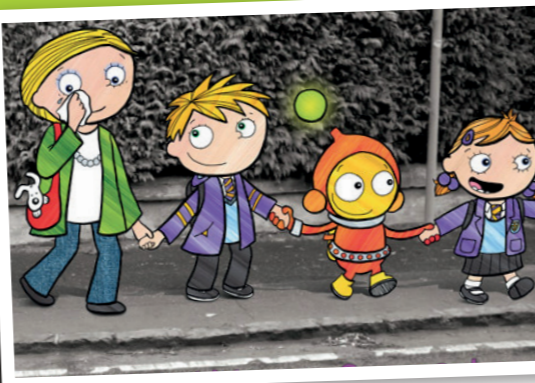
Levelling up

Pam Duncan-Glancy on hopes for the Transitions Bill

Sorrow and solidarity

Dr Hyab Yohannes on redeeming the stories of refugee families





★ ★ ★ Go Safe with Ziggy! ★ ★ ★



Road Safety Scotland's 'Go Safe with Ziggy!' resource helps equip children up to six years old with the skills, knowledge and attitudes that will help keep them stay safe now and in later life.

The free Scotland-wide early level learning resource teaches road safety skills through fun and engaging videos, games and activities, including the much-loved Ziggy books which explore themes such as holding hands, safe places to cross, and safety in the car.

Available to Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) centres and P1 classes, the resources encourage and inspire young children – and the adults around them – to go on their own road safety journey together.

Learning resources

★ Big book sets

Teaching packs containing Ziggy stories in big book format are available for ELC centres and Primary 1 classes or any community setting where parents/carers attend with their young children.

★ Little books

Every ELC and Primary 1 classes are invited to order the little books for children to take home on an annual basis. Paper order forms are posted out to all centres and schools in September. However, the forms are also available online.

To order, visit roadsafety.scot/books

★ 'My Journey with Ziggy' pack

This pack, comprising a cuddly Ziggy and a journey diary, is designed to support the important link between home and school. Every ELC and Primary 1 class teacher can receive a pack by following the online activity.

Find out more on roadsafety.scot/ziggys-big-day-out

★ Online resources

Finally, a diverse range of engaging activities, videos, stories and interactive games can be found on roadsafety.scot/ziggy-online



Welcome

After months in the making, we are delighted to launch *Insight*, a new publication exclusively for members of Children in Scotland. We hope you enjoy what you find in this first issue.

We are passionate about providing space for reflection, instigating conversation and sharing knowledge and good practice. With this in mind, *Insight* brings together voices and ideas from the people and projects driving change across the children's sector. From front to back cover, we want it to encompass and communicate the ambition and enthusiasm for what we can and will do better to give all children in Scotland an equal chance to flourish.

We hope *Insight* proves to be a valuable asset to your work supporting children, young people and families across Scotland and look forward to hearing your feedback.



Jennifer Drummond
Editor

@Jen_drum

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Cover: Ross Richardson

In each edition of *Insight*, we hear from members and organisations in our network about news, moves and innovative projects...

All aboard People Know How's new collaborative venture

Social innovation charity **People Know How** has joined forces with Polwarth Parish Church in Edinburgh to launch the 'All Aboard' canal boat, a new space for wellbeing and community cohesion.

The boat had its maiden voyage at the end of September. The launch celebration welcomed more than 250 guests over three days, starting with thank you events for funders, partners, young people and families and a visit from the Lord Provost. The second day opened the space up to the public, complete with boat tours and bagpipers, and provided information on getting involved with 'All Aboard' through volunteering and collaborating on the boat. The weekend was brought to a close with a dedication mass at the church.

People Know How is inviting collaborations from organisations to make use of the boat to support the community through art, music, culture, heritage and more, as well as recruiting for volunteer crew.

Find out more at: peopleknowhow.org/all-aboard and [@PKHinnovation](https://twitter.com/PKHinnovation) on social

Free iPad workshops from Family Fund

Family Fund, the UK's largest charity which provides grants for families raising disabled or seriously ill children and young people, has some great, free workshops available to learn how to make your tablet or iPad work for your child's support needs. They are also offering fun, creative sessions to learn how to make music and movies on the iPad.

Sign up for a free session to find out more: familyfund.org.uk/getting-creative-with-your-ipad-or-tablet

The charity also offers some **free short courses** and other resources to help families make the most of their money including:

- Get a better energy deal online
- Best start Scotland
- Scottish Child Payments

For details of how to apply for a grant or to access the free resources available, visit: familyfund.org.uk



The new addition to the Union Canal at Edinburgh's Polwarth Parish Church is an important community resource.

Photography by Timothy Aikman: timothyaikman.com

Building a wellbeing hub to support ELC staff

To help nurture the wellbeing of the early years sector, **Early Years Scotland**, with funding from the Scottish Government, has created a website dedicated to supporting those who work with our youngest children and their families.

The Team ELC Wellbeing Hub hosts a wealth of information about wellbeing, mental health, and mental illness. Resources include free online wellbeing events (and recordings of past events), messages from early years staff about why wellbeing matters and a networking service that connects colleagues across the sector.

Access the resource at teamelcwellbeinghub.org

If you have a suggestion for a project, service or resource to feature on the Bulletin pages of *Insight* issue two, please contact Catherine Bromley: cbromley@childreninscotland.org.uk by **11 March 2022**

Award-winning programme to host face-to-face sessions

Children's Health Scotland's award-winning Self-Management Service (SMS) programme is hosting face-to-face sessions in Edinburgh.

SMS supports children and young people living in Scotland with a long-term health condition. The workshops include six weeks of face-to-face sessions, delivered in Edinburgh, and online sessions delivered through SMS: CONNECT.

With the aim of helping young people better manage their physical health and mental wellbeing, the sessions involve a mixture of games, relaxation, practical skills, activities and peer support.

The in-person sessions, involving one group for 10 to 12-year-olds and another for 13 to 17 year-olds, have two coaches working with each group, with the final session always being a fun social activity chosen by participants.

SMS:CONNECT was recently announced as the winner of the Digital Innovator Self-Management Award at the 2021 Alliance Self-Management Awards.

Find out more at: childrenhealthscotland.org/service/lothian-self-management/ and follow [@ChildHealthScot](https://twitter.com/ChildHealthScot) on Social.



New Self-Management Service sessions aim to make young people with long-term health conditions feel empowered.

Image supplied by: Children's Health Scotland



Paint joy during Starcatchers' Expecting Something session at Wester Hailes.

Why it's time to talk about 15 years of Starcatchers

Starcatchers, Scotland's arts and early years organisation, has been celebrating turning 15 in 2021 with a brand new podcast series, *Let's Talk About...*

The charity's CEO, Rhona Matheson, is joined by friends and colleagues from across the arts, education and third sectors in Scotland to discuss baby theatre and children's rights, advocating for ongoing early artistic encounters, and why the arts are so important for young children.

Episode one features early years artists Matt Addicott and Rebecca Fraser who discuss artistic practice and what our youngest children tell us through their play. **Listen to it here.**

The series is part of Starcatchers' **15th Birthday campaign, #15Actions**, which highlights 15 steps the organisation is taking to advocate for children's rights and amplify the voices of pre- and non-verbal children. It's centred on Starcatchers' vision to ensure that all Scotland's youngest children can access artistic and creative experiences.

Visit starcatchers.org.uk to find out more and follow [@starcatchersuk](https://twitter.com/starcatchersuk) on social (#15Actions). New episodes from the *Let's Talk About...* podcast will be published on the Starcatchers website.

The art of the possible

A partnership with Edinburgh College of Art illustration students gives them a platform and boosts *Insight's* creative impact, says **Chris Small**

When developing *Insight* the editorial team were keen that the new publication had an image-led and creative feel, bringing high quality photography and illustration to the fore. Alongside our participation coverage (pages 30-32), we also wanted to find new ways of ensuring young people's contributions had a strong profile within the publication. With this in mind, we contacted Harvey Dingwall, Programme Director – BA (Hons) Illustration at Edinburgh College of Art to ask whether a collaboration with illustration students at the ECA might be possible.

Harvey responded enthusiastically, and we agreed a project whereby current fourth year illustration students would be given a cover concept and series of articles to illustrate for *Insight* as part of their programmed course work. This would be an opportunity for students to gain experience of being commissioned by a publisher, interpret editorial ideas and develop work to deadline.

Over three online and in-person sessions overseen by Harvey at the ECA, our designer Angus Doyle and I met with the students as they presented initial ideas, discussed their individual takes on the work and diplomatically absorbed our feedback. Angus and I, and our colleagues Jen Drummond and Catherine Bromley, were hugely impressed by the work that was produced, and slightly in awe of the range of styles and depth of thinking that went into the interpretation of content. Inevitably it was very difficult to make a selection of the work that we wanted to feature, but we feel the five students we've published (see panel below) did a particularly astute job of understanding what we were aiming for with the new publication. Their vivid individual responses to pieces ranging from Judith Turbyne's personal reflection (opposite page) to the powerful testimony of Dr Hyab Yohannes (page 21) give *Insight* the creative lift we were hoping for.



Commenting on the project, Harvey said:

"The collaboration with Children in Scotland proved a great opportunity for the students to focus on editorial in their final year of undergraduate study. Their work will contribute to their professional practice portfolios as well as giving a rich experience and understanding of the editorial process with critical content that can inspire creative solutions."

"Collaborating with an organisation that is doing such valuable and engaging work is inspiring for the students alongside learning about the reality of the challenges of briefs, deadlines and negotiating contracts."

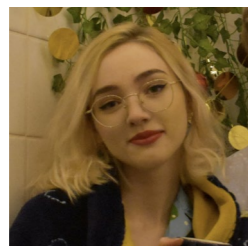
We hope that our partnership with ECA becomes a fixture, and that Children in Scotland members enjoy the skill and quality the students have brought to this launch edition.

Thank you to every student who provided an illustration, and to Harvey Dingwall and the ECA. Look out for a short film, which will be shared on our Twitter and Instagram channels showcasing the work of all the students involved. •

ECA illustration students published in this edition



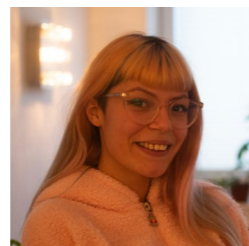
Ross Richardson
Cover



Digby Lambert
Page 7



Marc Gosteli
Page 20



Alice Clark
Page 26



Nazifa Khatun
Page 34

Judith Turbyne Chief Executive, Children in Scotland

Officially taking up post in August, I've had a few months of intense observation and rich learning. Every day I am reminded of the difficult time we are living through and its likely legacy, as well as the many opportunities we have to develop new ways to support Scotland's children.

We are living in a time of legislative ambition. The incorporation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child into Scots law is on the horizon, the Promise is seeking to make radical changes to the way we care for our children and as a nation we have ambitious targets for the reduction of child poverty and the reduction of our CO2 emissions.

The pandemic has illuminated how urgent this work is. As is always the case in a crisis, it is those living in the most vulnerable situations that take the hardest blows. Our current structures and systems, however much we tinker with them, do not have the capacity to make the significant long-term change needed. We need to be ambitious and brave. We need to take bold steps and make strong decisions. We need to stop doing things that are not working.

Being creative and innovative can make people uncomfortable. There is always resistance to change. But we have an opportunity to shift our focus and change direction. We need to make sure that in ten years' time we are not looking back, shaking our heads, and lamenting the fact that we missed our chance.

The range of skill and determination that exists across the children and young people's sector is cause for optimism. I recently chaired a meeting of the Children's Sector Strategic and Policy Forum, managed by Children in

Scotland. The cumulative knowledge across the group was incredible, and the commitment and passion were very clear.

Collaboration must be at our core and the willingness of organisations from across the charity sector, and beyond, to work together is encouraging. Real change will take the effort, energy and ideas of many people across diverse groups. It will require a commitment to work through differences, finding ways to create an environment of constructive challenge and critical support that can facilitate the messy job of building something real and new.

Harnessing the energy and ideas from central and local government, from the charity and wider third sector, from the education sector, from the private sector, from the care sector, from academia, and many more isn't an easy task, especially when things get difficult or strained.

Children in Scotland has a key role here. Through our membership and wider network we can bring together a wide range of people and organisations working with and for children, as well as young people themselves, to create a broad independent voice. We can help build that collaborative space; a space where constructive challenge, critical support and creative thinking is encouraged and facilitated.

When things become difficult, sometimes the first casualty is the ability to listen and really hear. One of the fundamental building blocks of success will be our ability to have difficult conversations, accept and deal with the appropriate constructive challenge and carry on with the essential work of making Scotland a better place for all our children. •



“When things become difficult, sometimes the first casualty is the ability to listen”

Illustration
Digby Lambert

“A young disabled person wants to have the same opportunities as any non-disabled person”



As a new MSP in the 2021-26 session of the Scottish Parliament, **Pam Duncan-Glancy** is making her priorities clear – progressing equality, improving social security and giving a national platform to the challenges facing disabled children and young people

Interview by **Jennifer Drummond**

In May 2021, Pam Duncan-Glancy made history as the first permanent wheelchair user to be sworn in as a Member of the Scottish Parliament. Her presence in the chamber is encouraging reflection across the political sphere and a reality-check on policies, whilst giving a voice to those overlooked and underrepresented at government level.

Since taking office she has worked hard to represent her Glasgow constituents and promote the interests of disabled people. Currently she is campaigning for the introduction of a new Transitions Bill to provide more support for disabled young people after they leave school. The Bill, if passed, will hold local authorities and services to account for their role in ensuring a positive post-school destination for all disabled children and young people in their area.

With shadow responsibility for Social Justice and Social Security, Pam is hoping to progress long-term systemic change. Opposed to the continued cuts to Universal Credit and critical of the lack of progress on child poverty, she is clear there is much to be done to ensure longer term support for those who require state assistance. However, she argues there is more that Holyrood could be doing now, with its existing powers, to improve the lives of families facing difficulties.

Here, she talks to us about the importance of representation and accountability – and how her proposed Transitions Bill will make a difference to generations of young people.

Being visible

Jennifer Drummond: How important do you think your appointment is in terms of inclusion and representation for disabled young people?

Pam Duncan-Glancy: I think it's crucial. We don't see enough disabled people. As young people, you don't see us in school, on the high street, in jobs or in the boardroom, so it's very difficult for a young disabled person to look into any of these environments and believe that they too can be there. Disabled people should be represented everywhere – from the high street, to boardrooms, to parliament, to councils and back again. It's incredibly important for young people to see that they can be there.

It's also been important for other MSPs. Whenever they are talking about anything that affects disabled people, they are now in the chamber talking about one of their own. I like to think what I contribute is more than just being in the room and reminding people you are not talking about folk in the abstract, but I did not expect the impact just being there would have. I can already see other parliamentarians, in my own party and in others, checking themselves. You can see them being uncomfortable. It doesn't surprise me disabled people are as oppressed as they are given that we have never been in those rooms.

Supporting young disabled people to succeed

JD: A recent BBC Scotland documentary, *Disclosure: On a Cliff Edge*, highlighted the experiences and challenges facing young disabled people when they leave high school, including reflections on your own experiences. How can we better support our young people looking to gain independence and continue their journey into a positive post-school destination?

PDG: The fact that young disabled people are twice as likely to end up not in education, employment or training when they leave school shows we are failing them at a very young age and at a crucial point in their life. People go to school to get an education and prepare for the future but the systems and structures that are in place just do not support disabled people to excel.

What I hear from families across Scotland and what I have heard my whole life, is that people don't know

“**The systems and the structures in place do not support disabled people to excel”**”

what to do. Not only do they not know what to do, but the reality is that they only do what they are statutorily required to. Disabled people always fall to the bottom of the list because our rights in statute are so scant. We have very little that forces local or national government, or any organisation, to say 'this bit we can't negotiate'. We are failing generations of young disabled people and we need to fix it.

Unlike other aspects of equality, sometimes supporting disabled people's equality means spending money. Probably the single biggest problem for disabled people leaving school, aside from having no coordinated support, is the lack of funding local authorities have to put in to social care and the lack of accessible housing. Those two things are crucial. We can create job opportunities for disabled people, and there is still a mountain to climb in terms of discrimination in the workplace, but if you can't get out your bed in the morning, or you can't leave your house because it's not accessible, you can't get to those jobs. We have now done a lot virtually and working from home, but it's not the solution. And nor should it be the aspiration.

A young disabled person wants to have the same opportunities available that any non-disabled person has. Fundamentally, we need to look at the budget that social care gets and we need targets for accessible housing. Ten per cent is the bare minimum, but a recent constituency case showed this isn't being met in at least one local authority area. For disabled people to have a fighting chance at anything we need all services, including social care and housing, to do their bit.

JD: Support across all aspects of life, and the need for everyone to play their part, is a key element of your proposed Transitions Bill. Can you tell us more about the Bill and what you hope will happen next?

PDG: I'm really excited about this Bill. One of the things I said when I came into parliament was that I might be the first permanent wheelchair user in the Scottish Parliament but I don't want to be the last and I will do everything I possibly can to put the ladder down, or the ramp down, behind me and bring people up. That starts with making sure people get a fighting chance in their education.



Opening page and above:
Pam Duncan-Glancy photographed at the Scottish Parliament, October 2021, by **Phil Wilkinson** philspix.co.uk

“Unlike other aspects of equality, sometimes supporting disabled people's equality means spending money”

This Bill seeks to give children and young disabled people a right to a transitions plan. The government published a Transition Strategy – but it is not in statute, which essentially makes it discretionary. My Bill places a statutory obligation on the government to publish a strategy and for a Minister to have responsibility and be held accountable. It also places a duty on local authorities to work with all the agencies that are involved in a young person's transition and remove the burden on the young person themselves and their family.

I remember going through my own transition and the only people that knew what all the services were saying were me and my mum. Nobody knew what each other was doing. No-one was talking to each other and nobody felt it was their responsibility. My goal was to go to university and get a degree. None of them understood that they had a duty, in their component part, to help me get there. My Bill will make it very clear to all organisations that they have a duty to engage early with the young person and their family, find out what their aspirations are, identify their role in that – and then do it. Families have been failed far too many times, and are having to chase up far too much which, frankly, authorities should be doing.

Helping and valuing carers

JD: We've seen the rise of the term “sandwiched families”, referencing families who have the responsibilities of caring for an older generation as well as children. Some of this is a result of a crisis in social care and little, or no, support. How can we address this?

PDG: We need to see social care as an investment in society, rather than a draw on spend. We should consider it a job creation opportunity and pay people properly. That's why have a crisis in it, because the pay is terrible and the conditions are awful. If we sort that out, we make it deliver for the people who work in it and the people who need it.

I remember ten years ago using the statement 'the knicker elastic has snapped'. There is no more elastic in this. They cannot spread this thinner. Care workers are knocking their pan in, unpaid carers are broke – physically, emotionally, financially – and disabled people are not getting the care they need. People are caring for older family members, and at the same time parents of young disabled people are never getting a break. If you've got a young disabled person, they don't go to their pal's house to stay over like non-disabled people do. Add to that a whole generation of people, largely women, who want to or need to work but are still expected to pick up the unpaid work, be it childcare, caring for a disabled person or caring for elderly relatives.

Social security needs to seriously pick up. This could start with a commitment to increase the Carers Allowance. In 2019, the Scottish Government topped up Carers Allowance using the top-up powers that the Scottish Parliament has. During the pandemic the Scottish Government doubled the Carers Allowance supplement, in recognition of the significant contribution that unpaid carers had made.

I have argued that the uplift applied to the Carers' Supplement for the pandemic last year shouldn't stop this year. The pandemic is ongoing. The same arguments used for the £20 Universal Credit uplift should apply for the Carer Supplement uplift. I would like to see the supplement doubled until the material review of the Carers' Allowance and Carers' Assistance in Scotland is implemented, which will be 2025. Without a commitment, that is a

“We need to see social care as an investment in society, rather than a draw on spend”

long time for carers to be left wondering how much money they are going to have in their pocket, and wondering at every budget whether or not the Minister is going to use the discretionary regulatory power to double their supplement income.

Tackling child poverty

JD: The UK Government has pressed forward with their £20 per week cut to Universal Credit, estimated to push a further 22,000 children in Scotland into poverty. As the Shadow Spokesperson on Social Justice and Social Security, you have spoken out about your opposition to the cut alongside politicians from some of the other parties. What would you like to see as the next steps to tackle child poverty in Scotland?

PDG: The decision to cut the £20 uplift is catastrophic. It shows a huge misunderstanding of what Universal Credit is and what the uplift has meant to the people who get it. However, the Scottish Government set child poverty targets before the pandemic, and before the £20 uplift. So, ultimately, we have a responsibility to meet those targets without caveat. We set those targets regardless of the economic state of the country.

I believe to meet those child poverty targets we need to double the Scottish Child Payment today, and double it again next year. The longer-term investment in housing, jobs and in ensuring everyone in Scotland is earning a living wage is absolutely essential. So too is bringing down energy costs and housing costs. But the reality is, even if all of those things were brought in overnight, it would take generations to fundamentally change the poverty experienced by families. We don't have the luxury of time.

We need to put the money in people's pockets. Every single organisation, including the End Child Poverty Coalition and the Joseph Rowntree Foundation have all said that social security needs to do the heavy lifting. ●

The draft proposal for the Disabled Children and Young People (Transitions to Adulthood) (Scotland) Bill **can be read here**.

Music to our ears

Fourteen years after the first Big Noise launched, **Nicola Killean** reflects on how the programme is building relationships and helping generations of young people realise their potential

At Sistema Scotland we make a lot of noise. It can be Beethoven, or Lady Gaga, or we just improvise. Sometimes the noise isn't music at all; it's the laughter of babies and carers' sessions, or a group of teenagers joking with their musician. We're committed to making a Big Noise – with music, with our words and with everything we do – to tackle inequality in Scotland.

Established in 2007, Sistema Scotland aims to improve lives and strengthen communities. We know all children and young people have great potential. They have innate skills, creativity and talents to be nurtured. But far too many children face barriers to recognising and developing their potential. Poverty, discrimination, trauma, abuse and other inequalities limit their opportunities to learn, grow and become confident, healthy adults. At Sistema Scotland, we use music and relationships to tackle some of those inequalities through our Big Noise programmes.

Our first Big Noise programme launched in Raploch, Stirling in 2008. We have since established successful Big Noise programmes in Govanhill (Glasgow), Torry (Aberdeen), Douglas (Dundee) and more recently an expansion in Fallin (Stirling). Big Noise Wester Hailes (Edinburgh) will begin in early 2022.

Music is the joyful, creative pulse at the heart of each Big Noise community. It is the means to achieving a range of positive outcomes including increased confidence, discipline, and aspiration as well as improved team-working, communication and leadership skills.



Independent evaluation from the Glasgow Centre for Population Health (GCPH) evidences all of these, as well as improvements in listening, concentration and creativity. They also found that children and young people attending Big Noise programmes have better school attendance, increased resilience, and a heightened sense of belonging and fulfilment.

Through trauma-aware practice and by targeting communities facing multiple and complex challenges, Big Noise also has the potential to reduce health inequalities in later life.

Relationship-based practice underpins the model. By committing long-term to communities and using creativity to connect, we see a new type of professional relationship develop between Big Noise musicians, participants and families. It is based on a foundation of positivity, creating and building

together. It inhabits a space of complete creative trust and openness. It generates a sense of authenticity between the adult and young person that allows for a shift in power, demonstrating true co-creation. This relationship has the flexibility to move beyond music. Our musicians act as mentors and role models, supporting positive behaviours and life choices. GCPH is clear on what Big Noise does; music is the tool, but people change lives.

Big Noise begins by working with children at nursery and in Primary 1 and 2, building core skills such as listening, concentration, rhythm and teamwork whilst learning to play an instrument in a group. The children create their own paper instruments. As children reach Primary 3 and beyond, they swap their paper instruments for real ones and form their first ensemble. Big Noise then evolves into an intensive and immersive programme of

“Big Noise to me means music and life. Some people think Big Noise is just a music group, but it is so much more than that to the people that take part”

Mati, who plays double bass in the Big Noise Raploch Symphony Orchestra

teaching, performance and social interaction. Participants receive up to four after-school sessions of intervention and support a week during term time, and attend up to four days each week during spring, summer and autumn holidays until they leave school. As young people move onto secondary school, the programme grows with them, adding volunteering options, youth leadership and mentoring to the curriculum.

Big Noise programmes also provide weekly sessions for babies, toddlers and their carers. Using music to help infants learn through play helps promote brain development, boosts language acquisition and supports bonding between children and carers. Adult community members can join Community Chorus groups and adult orchestras, with no

prior experience required. There are also a range of meaningful volunteering options for adults which are vital to our successful delivery.

Big Noise programmes are placed centrally in their communities and use regular performance and celebration of the children's achievements to connect families together. These events can take place in schools, community centres, local care homes, and even family homes.

Throughout 2020-21, we delivered Big Noise in whatever ways were possible under contingent Covid-19 restrictions. These ranged from thousands of one-to-one online lessons (supported by pre-recorded teaching videos) to working closely with education and local authority partners to deliver Covid-safe, in-school lessons. Big Noise teams also supported community education and care hubs. We have continued to adapt and evolve our delivery of Big Noise as restrictions ease, providing teaching and fun activities online, outside, in school and at home to support as many children, young people and families as possible.

We are thrilled to be opening our first Big Noise programme in Scotland's capital city next year. Big Noise Wester Hailes

will start teaching in Canal View, Clovenstone and Sighthill primary schools from spring 2022, reaching around 400 participants in its first year. It will eventually work with babies through to school-leavers, as well as offering opportunities to stay involved in the programme as adults. We are delighted to be bringing the benefits of Big Noise to Wester Hailes and to work in partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council, local schools and the wider community.

Over the coming years we will continue supporting the recovery of our existing Big Noise communities in Raploch, Fallin, Govanhill, Torry and Douglas from the impact of Covid-19. We hope to further grow the Big Noise family, continuing to target the programme in communities where it is needed most and broaden impact by sharing our resources and partnering with others.

To tackle inequalities we believe we need to think long-term and across multiple generations. As we begin our fourteenth year of delivery in Raploch in Stirling we are seeing that first generation start to move on; to apprenticeships, to employment, to college, to university. The work is not completed but the foundations are firmly set by a group of children, young people and adults who grasped an opportunity, redefined their world to see the greatness that was always there. That is certainly worth making a Big Noise about! ●

Opposite
Alice and Elizabeth at the official announcement of Big Noise Wester Hailes, June 2021. Jeff Holmes

Left
Big Noise in the Big Top: A Celebratory Concert in Douglas, June 2018. Alan Richardson

Nicola Killean OBE is Chief Executive of Sistema Scotland. Find out more about the work of Sistema Scotland and the Big Noise programme: makeabignoise.org.uk



Views sought on changes to teacher registration rules

The General Teaching Council for Scotland is consulting on proposed changes to its registration rules.

The registration rules set out GTC Scotland's registration criteria, ongoing registration requirements and how the Register of Teachers operates.

The consultation raises important issues about who GTC Scotland registers on its Register of Teachers and what registration with GTC Scotland means.

Teachers, college lecturers, employers of teachers and lecturers, learners and members of the public will all have important contributions to make. You can read the proposed changes and feedback your views at bit.ly/GTCSConsultation.

The consultation closes on 5 January 2022.



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Photostory

Community, place and belonging

The work of *Margaret Mitchell* and her photographs with the G20 Youth Festival



Childhood is an abiding focus for Glasgow-based portrait and documentary photographer Margaret Mitchell. Her recently published book *PASSAGE* spans more than 20 years in the lives of her extended family and their experiences of social inequality. Her current ongoing project, *An Ordinary Eden* looks at notions of home, place and belonging. It includes a number of the images we feature on these pages, taken from the G20 Youth Festival, which is part of the Children's Wood charity working with young people in the G20 area of Glasgow.

Margaret is well known at the Children's Wood where she has built relationships with young people and youth workers over time. At a recent catch-up with families at the centre, she was greeted by one of the young children she'd photographed shouting "You're the photo woman!".

Interview by **Catherine Bromley**

Where does your interest in representing children and young people come from?

I am both intrigued and inspired by children. Lots of learning, growth and

Previous page
Gizmo and Harley at Safe Street Play. From *An Ordinary Eden* (ongoing)

Above
From *The Youth House* (2019)

Below
From *An Ordinary Eden* (ongoing)



transition occurs over a relatively small number of years and I hope the work I do pays tribute to their experiences. Some work is psychological in approach, other projects more social and I try to blend these methods in my photography. I think the best people to educate us about childhood are those who are living it. Children and young people have always featured significantly within my photography, both from within my extended family and community, to children I engage with on shorter projects. I recently had an exhibition of 30 years of my portraits of children and it was interesting to see the parallels between work from the early 90s to some portraits made recently. I like to know what is under the surface, not just what we as adults want to see, but what children and young people can tell us.

How did you begin the process of working with the children and young people you met at the Children's Wood and can you tell us a bit about your work with the G20 Youth Festival?

The Children's Wood is local to me and I followed and supported them over the years as they campaigned to preserve land for community use. They also initiated a youth-led programme called the G20 Youth Festival, referring to their G20 postcode, an area that includes

Right
From *An Ordinary Eden* (ongoing)



“
In a society where it seems that some children have all the opportunities whilst others have none, let these young people grow, let them flourish”

Below
From *The Youth House* (2019)



a significant number of households living in disadvantaged circumstances. Two years ago, as part of their ongoing commitment to young people in the community, they established an indoor base and I asked if I could document this new chapter in their evolving story. Some of my past work concentrated on social inequality and this first photo series with the G20 young people, *The Youth House*, considers how opportunity can be brought to children who don't have equal access, considering whether cycles of disadvantage can be altered within a community.

The portraits in *The Youth House* series carry a deep sense of connection. How do you build relationships and establish trust with the young people you photograph?

This initial series of portraits documented those who came along to the base and its role in their lives. *The Youth House* works on two levels: a representation of being a young person and the wider question of inequality. I subsequently worked with some teens individually and helped them produce their own photographs and handmade books. I felt it important to not only be a photographer but also offer something back. This routine was interrupted due to the pandemic but will hopefully resume. I think that the young people's experiences are not only about *The Youth House* and its fantastic support network, but also about what is in their everyday life. This is what the newer work explores.

I hope my approach builds trust. Some people want lots of interaction and see you a lot whilst others are happy with just having their portrait done. Important in the process is going back with copies of photos and updates as the work progresses. I consider it an incredible privilege to work with young people and believe my role as a photographer is to amplify understanding of their lives and promote visibility of issues they encounter.

The natural and built environment is almost like another character coming through in your work. How does it shape the lives of the young people you depict within it?

Childhood is a complex interaction of domestic, social and environmental factors vastly influenced by whether we are born into privilege or disadvantage. My book *PASSAGE* reflected on

questions of choice, opportunity, and cycles of inequality, considering how adversity often accumulates. In the environmental photographs shown here, I wanted to explore what the children and young people would show me about their lives once we leave the confines of *The Youth House*. What environment surrounds their everyday experiences?

A childhood can shape a life so how might environment and associated opportunities define the futures of these children and others like them? *An Ordinary Eden* will explore these issues, expanding to different settings and looking at more young people's experiences of place, belonging and what it means to be connected – or not – to a community. •

Margaret is keen to hear from individuals or organisations who would like to know more or potentially be involved in her work. See contact details opposite.

“*I believe my role as a photographer is to amplify understanding of their lives*”

Below
From *An Ordinary Eden* (ongoing)



Above
From *An Ordinary Eden* (ongoing)

Right
From *The Youth House* (2019)



Website:
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It's our responsibility to welcome refugees – and redeem their stories

Dr Hyab Yohannes calls on all of us to build a community of people, not categories



Warning: Some readers may find parts of this content distressing

Last month, I had a long conversation with a mum whom I will call 'Azeb'. Azeb had phoned to console me on the eight year anniversary of the death of a friend. Like many Eritreans, I have a visceral memory of October 3, 2013, when over 365 Eritreans vanished off the shores of the Italian island of Lampedusa. Among them was my childhood friend Selam. He was one of over a dozen friends, relatives, colleagues and former classmates who died in the incident. Every time I remember the apocalyptic scenes of that day, I feel shocked and hopeless. The story of Yohanna, a young woman who drowned with her newborn baby, will remain with me forever.

Although my initial chat with Azeb was about the Lampedusa tragedy, our conversation quickly shifted not only to the struggles Eritrean women face as refugees but also as women, especially in the context of the current war in Ethiopia. Together, Azeb and I listed over half a dozen relatives and friends whom we know are missing in the war zone. 'What do you think is happening to the girls, women and mums in Tigray?', Azeb asked. As someone who is relatively familiar with what is going on, the suffering of these women is beyond what my mind can conceive and my knowledge of a foreign language can articulate.

After a moment of contemplative silence, I asked Azeb why she asked that question. She replied: 'Redeem our stories. Redeem us not as sinners but as innocent sisters, mothers, daughters and humans'. I realised then the need to open ourselves up to others. To share our stories.

A phrase in Selam's last message to me was a depressing commentary on the experience of refugees from all over the world – 'Born rightless, die rightless'.

Over the last 10 years, I have survived life-and-death

situations. I have witnessed bodies rotting, and encountered survivors whose bodies were emaciated and burned. I once heard the story of a young girl who was raped and buried alive by traffickers. I have been told numerous stories of young women being exploited for personal sexual gratification. The pain of these women haunts me.

Unfortunately, these stories are not unique. They have long been the conditions for involuntarily displaced women across the world. They are the stories of Eritrean women whose bodies have been hunted down by traffickers for ransom and sexual gratification; whose cries and calls for rescue fall on deaf ears as if their voices are permanently muted; and whose pain is quickly forgotten. It is the story of the Tigray women who are trapped in a war zone where they have been treated as subjects without dignity and rights.

As I write, women in northern Ethiopia are subjected to egregious crimes of sexual violence. With humanitarian access hindered, they are abandoned in an impoverished state, watching malnourished children die in their arms as the little food they do have access to disappears with seasonal changes. Similar stories are told of Afghan and Rohingya women who have been slaughtered for religious beliefs, for wrapping a cloth in a certain way or because of their gender.

Neither the 'hostile environment' nor the so-called 'Nationality and Borders Bill' from the UK Government are the answers to these tragic stories of displaced women. These policies only succeed in creating and perpetuating violent structures designed to render those seeking refuge 'inadmissible' or contain them in a violent equilibrium in impoverished offshore camps.

As Azeb said, these women are not 'sinners', nor are all refugees destined to suffer with impunity. Their stories are a stain on our ideal of morality and collective

“ I witness the solidarity of people coming together to oppose ruthless deportation attempts”

consciousness. Their quest for justice stands the test of our time. Yet, there is light even in the darkest of places and hardest of times.

Having lived in Glasgow as a refugee for almost three years, I see hope amidst multiple axes of indifference. I witness first-hand the solidarity of people coming together to oppose immigration officers who ruthlessly deport people whose claims for asylum are refused. I look at the 'Welcome refugees' messages in the windows in my neighbourhood. I see refugees wearing kilts on the streets of Glasgow. It is why I have chosen this city as my home.

As a society, we cannot force people to stop being who they are in order to be more like us. Nor can we forget or ignore the wretched realities of the displaced. Instead, we can demonstrate humanity, support and understanding. Only then will we build a community, not of categories, but of people.

The stories of the displaced women and the refugees we have welcomed as our neighbours can sow the seeds of a community we aspire to live in. Their presence tells us of a way of life beyond the imaginative finitudes of the ordinary citizen. Their experiences invite us to free ourselves from the fear of 'the other'. Only then can we begin to understand Yohanna, Azeb and Selam. Only then can we redeem their stories. •

Illustration: Marc Gosteli

Dr Hyab Yohannes is a refugee and survivor of human trafficking. He is currently a PhD candidate at the University of Glasgow.

Read more about his experiences at: hyabyohannes.co.uk

When supporting families, we need to be prepared to deliver on our promises



In August, as part of the 2021-22 Programme for Government, the First Minister announced a new Whole Family Wellbeing Fund. The £500m funding is to be used to help families overcome challenges before they reach crisis point and ultimately reduce the number of children and young people in care by 2030.

The Fund goes some way to recognising the scale of the task at hand if we are serious about realising the rights of children and families across Scotland and the importance of getting the right support at the right time. That it is also supported by a commitment to direct at least 5% of all community-based health and social care spend towards preventative measures from 2030, makes it even more powerful.

These commitments have the potential to honour the hopes and dreams of the families who have been brave enough to share their experiences. It can improve support to those whose relationships are fractured by a system that hasn't paid enough attention and facilitate the right of siblings to see each other when the state has intervened to remove them from their parents. It can help women who have experienced violence and trauma but are bounced around systems that cannot see their pain and need for empathy. It will make a difference for families who will finally get the support they need, when they need it, from a system that has compassion and dignity at its core.

The key question though is: how do we make all this a reality?

Having worked in children's services for more than 30 years, both at local authority level and

in the third sector, I have always gone to work with a desire to make a positive impact. But alas I have, at times, been part of the problem. I have contributed to the lack of change and progress by protecting narrow professional or organisational interests. If others took the time to reflect, I think they may reach the same conclusion.

“The Care Review and Promise are a blueprint for people-led change”

Although unpleasant, we mustn't ignore this realisation. Instead we need to embrace our vulnerability and move forward with a changed mindset. One which is unafraid to acknowledge failure, humble enough to be willing to grow, and wise enough to know that the richest learning will be found in listening to the experiences and views of the people trying to navigate the complex systems we have constructed.

By leading with children, young people and families and keeping them front and centre, we can achieve great things. We must guarantee the time, spaces and places that will allow families to lead, to own and to feel like – whatever this looks like for them – it is 'theirs'.

We need to abandon organisational thinking which too often prioritises narrow self-interests and embrace a new approach that ensures children, young people and families are supported in truly collaborative ways. The result will be empowering them to live a life in which they thrive.

It should not be about service models or programmes. People



are the agents of change. Families should feel at all times that any response to what is happening in their lives is on their terms and that they are part of the solution. We can't expect children, young people and families to be part of 'committees' and 'steering groups' which we design and operate on our terms. Instead, we must be open and willing to step outside of our respective comfort zones into a place which supports participation and collaboration equally and authentically on families' terms.

The Care Review and the Promise provide a blueprint for what authentic people-led change looks like. As a sector let's collectively take that to the next level and resist the temptation to form orderly (or more likely disorderly queues) for access to the £500million Family Wellbeing Fund. Let's collaborate and be humble enough to be led by those who know what will work best for them – the children and families we seek to serve. •

SallyAnn Kelly is Chief Executive of Aberlour.

Find out more about their work at: aberlour.org.uk

Act now to invest in our relationships with boys and we can raise a generation of respectful men



Over recent months much attention has (rightly) been given to the violence and aggression against women and girls across the UK. The narrative has ranged from suggesting victims of violence should take more responsibility, to blaming institutions for their lack of focus on the bigger issue.

I was 42 before I understood exactly how my life differed to female friends, colleagues and family. At an event, the brilliant Jason Katz asked women to share how they avoid sexual violence on nights out. I watched the flipchart fill up quickly as women answered – staying with friends, getting a taxi, watching what you drink, holding keys as you walk home, etc. The list was extensive. Male colleagues in the room struggled to answer the same question. It was in that moment the extent of my male privilege quickly became clear.

Women think about their safety in a way that the majority of men don't need to.

We call it violence against women, as though it's something

that just happens to them. Framed like this, we perpetuate victim-shaming and allow the majority of men to tune out. We hear cries of 'not all men'; a poor defence that suggests if it's not you, you don't need to get involved. But this is a whole-gender problem. If we start to call it men's violence against women you bring in the active agent, the perpetrator.

Currently our boys are growing up in a world where the messages of manhood are deeply confusing and where there are still significant influences which promote a toxic version of masculinity and what it means to be a man. In recognising this and accepting where the issues lie, we can play our part in leading societal change.

First, we, as men, need to be open to understanding the issues women face. Agreed, it is not all men. But the threat from our gender is constant, unknown and so ingrained that how to stay safe is passed down from generation to generation.

Next, we need to role model respect. Show and discuss

respect towards girls and women with boys and men in our lives. Boys don't grow up in a vacuum, they do so in a world of sexist and abusive men.

Help develop character. The New Zealand All Blacks rugby team recruit players not just on their ability but on their character, both on and off the field. We need to help boys develop theirs. Speak to them about what they believe and their values as an individual. Challenge them if need be. Help them build their brand and their presence.

Think of the skills boys need to be good men. For me, how we help provide these skills will go a long way to addressing male sexual entitlement as well as addressing many of the other issues that disproportionately impact on men. How we work with young boys will help reduce male suicide, drug, and alcohol addiction. We need to make clear the message that its ok to ask for help, it's strong to walk away from negative peer influence and it's important to take responsibility and challenge bad things.

Ultimately, we need to really invest in the relationships we have with boys in our lives. By challenging toxic images of masculinity and outdated stereotypes and teaching fundamental values of respect, responsibility and strength of character we will improve the lives of boys and create more good men. •

Photograph: Catherine Bromley

Graham Goulden is a former police officer with 30 years' service, including eight years in the renowned Violence Reduction Unit in Glasgow.



Missing the mark

Despite political commitment, progress on reducing child poverty is frustratingly slow. **Chris Birt** weighs up some of the current government policies and their potential to make a difference



our group of people with lived experience who helped us write the report reflected:

'If over 80% of children in poverty are still in one of the priority groups, how much of a priority are we, really?'

(Alex, remote and rural Scotland)

The picture is even worse for the nearly two in five children in poverty who are in more than one priority group, with the poverty rate amongst those children rising to over 35%. Underlining the intersectional nature of poverty, interlinking barriers related to sexism, ableism and racism are locking children and their parents and carers in poverty.

Of course, many of the general proposals from the Scottish Government will have an impact on overall poverty rates and benefit those in priority families. Most importantly, they are committed to doubling the Scottish Child Payment from £10 per week per child to £20 and setting out a timeframe for that in December's budget. It must, however, be done as soon as possible as families face ever-increasing costs of living, not to

“Interlinked barriers relating to sexism, ableism and racism are locking children and their parents in poverty”

Scotland has ambitious child poverty reduction targets, but our *Poverty in Scotland 2021* report warns that we are some ways from meeting them. There is commitment across the political spectrum, so what do we need to do to get there?

First, it is worth reflecting on where we are now. The current relative child poverty rate in Scotland is 24% – roughly 250,000 children. The projections in our report show that on current policy this rate would remain. The proposed doubling of the Scottish Child Payment would reduce it to around 22%, which is still four percentage points short of the interim child poverty target of below 18% by 2023/24 (and well above the ultimate target of below 10% by 2030/31).

The *Poverty in Scotland 2021* report focused in on the six priority groups identified by

the Scottish Government as being most at risk of poverty (current relative poverty rates in brackets):

- Single parent households (38%)
- Households where an adult and/or child is disabled (29%)
- Households with three or more children – large households (32%)
- Minority ethnic households (48%)
- Households with a child under one year old (34%)
- Households where the mother is under 25 years of age (no rate due to lack of data).

More than 80% of all children in poverty are in one of these priority groups, pointing squarely to a need for better support for those families most at risk of experiencing poverty. But poverty rates in these groups are static at best. One member of

mention the political pressure and moral duty to make progress on the agreed targets.

General attacks on the value of social security, such as the UK Government's recent cut to Universal Credit and Working Tax Credits, clearly undermine these efforts. Instead, the focus should be on developing policy aimed at supporting those most at risk of poverty.

It is incumbent, then, on the Scottish Government to sharpen their focus on the priority groups, starting with the two experiencing some of the most significant levels of poverty. For single parents, the poverty trap is multi-faceted. The poverty rates for children in single-parent households are significantly higher than the average. They are built on a triple whammy of having high housing costs, being more likely to rely on the inadequate social security system and being far less likely to be able to secure work. This is reflected in an almost constant rise in poverty among these families in recent years.

For the second of these two groups – families where someone is disabled – although the rate has fallen in recent years, almost half (47%) of children in households where somebody has a disability do not have anyone in work. This is significantly higher than both the average for children in poverty in Scotland (34%) and the rate for the priority group in England (38%). It is likely to be a significant driver of higher rates of poverty for children in these households. Such families are also far more likely to be in receipt of social security support and, hence, suffer from its general inadequacy.

These two examples underline how important it is for solutions to reducing poverty to be designed with and for people in these priority families. We published two recent reports on how single parent families could be supported to access better paid work and on how social security could work better

to support disabled people. Ultimately the key to successful policymaking and service delivery for these families is to listen to them, target the specific barriers that they face and work with them to improve their quality of life.

In that context, the longer-term commitment from the Scottish Government to deliver a Minimum Income Guarantee could be transformational in both reducing child poverty and supporting families of all types. It would set a floor below which no-one's income should fall. It could revolutionise how we value unpaid care in our society, ensuring that anyone who cannot undertake paid work due to care responsibilities, of whatever type, is supported with a decent income. This would greatly improve their lives and the lives of those that they care for, and allow employers to better understand what their staff need to enjoy a good quality of life and help support them to secure it via work that pays fairly.

These steps could help lead to a Scotland where every child had the chance to play, learn and build relationships without the anxiety of poverty hanging over them and their families. It is doable, and it is a goal worth striving for. •

Chris Birt is Associate Director for Scotland with the Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

JRF published *Poverty in Scotland 2021* on Monday 4 October, to coincide with Challenge Poverty Week. Read the full report on their website:

[jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2021](https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/poverty-scotland-2021)

Useful links

[Freeing low income single parents from in-work poverty](#)

[How social security can deliver for disabled people in Scotland](#)

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Hunger for change

Stephanie Mander reflects on the recently announced Good Food Nation Bill and why we cannot undervalue the importance of food policy

The recently announced Good Food Nation Bill proposes new laws on Scotland's food system; legislating for the 'interconnected mechanisms of how food is produced, harvested, processed, distributed, sold, marketed, consumed and wasted'.

The food system directly impacts on children's lives. We know there is a higher prevalence of diet-related illness in households that are food insecure, compounded by irresponsible junk-food marketing undermining healthy choices. Meanwhile, a continually growing body of evidence highlights the links between lower attainment, poorer educational outcomes and food poverty.

A holistic approach recognises these problems as connected and drives better policy across multiple government portfolios. We know the links between poverty and health, nutrition and education, and local authority planning and food access, but current food policy treats these issues in isolation, failing to adequately address any one issue. Systems-wide thinking and joined-up policy is a necessity.

The Good Food Nation Bill obligates Ministers and Public Bodies to publish plans for the food system every five years and report on progress every two years. This is important as it helps focus on proactive planning and encourages coherent policy. However, Nourish Scotland, alongside our colleagues in the [Scottish Food Coalition](#), believes there are areas where the Bill could be further strengthened.

The Bill needs clarity of purpose, otherwise it risks focusing on economic goals such as increasing food and drink exports whilst

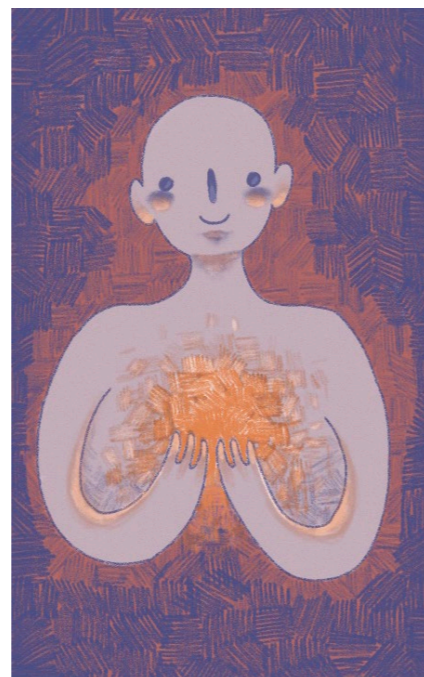
neglecting environmental and social goals such as reducing the number of children experiencing food insecurity.

It must also be underpinned by the right to food, as protected by international instruments such as the UNCRC and the Convention of Economic, Social and Cultural rights. There is precedent for such a move: the principles of the Social Security (Scotland) Act 2018 has the right to social security at its heart and explicitly recognises the delivery of social security as a public service. The Good Food Nation Bill should be imbued with the same promise and clarity of purpose.

The Bill has no policy targets. Specific targets encourage scrutiny and drive action based upon clear goals. We would like to see targets, such as halving of childhood obesity by 2030, appear on the face of the Bill.

The Bill does not enable meaningful participation. Any consultation on the plans would be at the discretion of Ministers and Public Bodies. It must promote participatory governance by providing opportunities for everyone, including young people, to influence the rules that affect them in our shared food system. This could follow the Citizens' Assembly model laid out by the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2019.

The Bill lacks strong tools to review the impact and efficacy of resultant food plans, making it difficult to hold Ministers or public bodies to account. Historically, it is challenging to keep food policy in the minds of Ministers. Without accountability, food issues may once again be overlooked. We would like the



establishment of an independent food commission to review plans and ensure coherence across government and public body decisions. It would confirm work to support a healthier, fairer and more sustainable food system aligning with other policy commitments, such as Universal Free School Meals for all primary-aged children by 2022.

Without a clear purpose, ambitious targets, participation and accountability, there is a danger that the Bill will not be strong enough to push against the rigidity of the status quo. It will be the government's first test of its UNCRC ambitions; a Food Bill with the right to food at its heart in keeping with their commitment to protect, promote and realise the rights of every child in Scotland. •

Stephanie Mander is Senior Projects Officer for Nourish Scotland. Find out more at:

nourishscotland.org

Illustration: Alice Clark

Time to break the rules

Jennifer M Knussen considers *Class Rules* and argues that its astute observations and analysis could present credible ways forward for Scotland's education sector

Before you read *Class Rules*, you should know that James McEnaney does not pull any punches. It is a critical analysis of Scottish Education, in the most literal sense. Although planning to read over a few days, I ended up devouring the whole book in one sitting. However, don't be fooled into thinking this is an easy read.

Class Rules: The truth about Scottish schools does not make for comfortable reading. James provides his analysis of mistakes which have been made in recent years in our education systems. Each claim is backed by strong data and analysis from a wide variety of sources, and his reflections are incisive and insightful. With a strong understanding of Scottish primary and secondary systems, he tackles issues and complexities, particularly the way in which we measure learners' successes, in a fearless and forthright way.

He assesses Curriculum for Excellence as having initially noble and lofty ambitions, impeded by the bureaucracy which followed. I started my teaching career in the 1990s when the first 5-14 draft on Assessment, the precursor to Curriculum for Excellence, was introduced. James' descriptions of the changes from one curricular structure to another made for fascinating reading and brought back memories of many discussions and debates.

In examining the attainment gap, James looks closely behind the 'headline data' and judiciously identifies the varying 'gaps' we deal with as teachers and school leaders – social, economic, gender, geographic and cultural barriers to learning – and considers the learning journey of Care Experienced and Additional Support Needs pupils. He evaluates the failings in our current exam system and how the Scottish Qualifications Authority might seek to improve this, in particular referencing pupils "whose circumstances mean that

their best day might not happen to line up with a national exams schedule."

James also looks closely at how austerity and poverty impact on the attainment gap, stating that to make a real difference we "need to improve pupils' lives rather than simply concentrating on their time in the classroom". Again, his use of data provides clear evidence.

A former teacher himself, James' admiration for education colleagues is strong. I smiled as he recalled a former head of department's advice to, "just teach the weans." I also smiled at this head of department's advice on paperwork, but I won't give away any spoilers.

More than halfway through we start to see some unexpected optimism. From Chapter 7 onwards, James revisits many of the issues he previously highlighted, offering deeper reflections around these complexities, setting out more detailed suggestions and some very credible ideas about how we can move Scottish education forwards in exciting and successful ways. He considers some post-pandemic opportunities for improving learners' experiences and warns of a desire to protect systems, imploring political leaders to demonstrate courage. His proposals on how our education *could* look merit serious consideration by policymakers.

There are many positive narratives around the work which goes on in Scottish schools, and this book should be read alongside those. It draws our potential into sharp focus. As James says, "We must do better and I truly believe that we can, but most of all I believe that our children deserve better than a society that is too afraid to try." •

Jennifer M Knussen is a primary school head teacher, living and working in Fife.

Class Rules: The truth about Scottish schools, by James McEnaney, is published by Luath Press. Out now.

“James tackles issues and complexities within the system in a fearless and forthright way”



The original upstart

Responding to a new book tracing Friedrich Froebel's early years philosophy, **Sue Palmer** assesses his ideas today in the context of the campaign to introduce a play-based kindergarten stage in Scotland

What a delight to be given a book called *Friedrich Froebel: an Introduction to Key Themes and Debates* by Tina Bruce! There is a clear connection between its themes, current early years policy in Scotland and the aims of Upstart Scotland.

Upstart campaigns for a change of educational ethos for three- to seven-year-olds in Scotland and – to make a clear distinction between traditional schooling and the play-based provision we endorse – we call it 'a kindergarten stage'. That word 'kindergarten' (children's garden) was coined in 1837 by Friedrich Froebel to describe the world's first ever educational setting for the under-sevens, in Blankenburg, Germany.

As Tina Bruce describes in her book, the pedagogical approach developed in Froebel's kindergarten respects children's intrinsic drive to learn through play, provides them with 'gifts' to play with (such as three-dimensional shapes of various sizes and wooden building blocks) and encourages 'occupations' (like clay modelling, drawing and painting, weaving, cooking and gardening) as well as songs, rhymes and stories. There is also a strong emphasis on engaging with the natural world. ('Direct experience of nature was essential to Froebel. Children learned in nature rather than just about nature.')

This is very different from traditional schooling, with its emphasis on desk work and the three 'Rs'. The role of Froebelian teachers is different from our traditional teaching model, too. It's to observe the children at play, tune into their understanding and intentions, and enter into a supportive, reciprocal relationship in which children learn through 'freedom with guidance'.

Upstart's debt to this remarkable man is very clear. Our aim is a rights-

focused, relationship-centred, play-based kindergarten stage, as often as possible outdoors, in nature. But our starting point in 2015 was not entirely educational, as Froebel's was. The campaign was sparked by deep concern about the rising tide of mental health problems among Scotland's children and young people.

Increasingly rapid cultural changes over the last half century have resulted in a severe decline in opportunities for the active, social, outdoor play which was previously a central element of early childhood. Also, since the early 21st century, there's been increasing pressure for early 'attainment' in the three 'Rs'.



“*Our aim that early childhood care and education should focus on holistic development was, just like Froebel's, against the cultural status quo*”

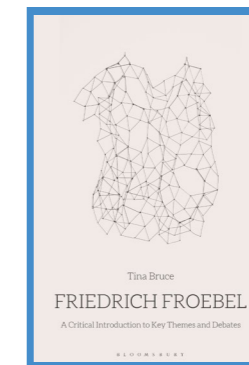
Upstart tries to draw attention to the United Nation's definition of early childhood as birth to eight, and of early childhood care and education (ECE) as 'the holistic development of children's emotional, social, cognitive and physical needs to build a solid and broad foundation for lifelong learning and well-being'.

It was interesting to learn that, back in the mid-17th century, Froebel was himself considered an upstart, since his ideas were seen as threatening the cultural status quo. He was, for instance, very much ahead of his time in training women to be kindergarten teachers (probably the first teacher training courses for women). And there was deep suspicion about his emphasis on helping children develop their whole personalities and the ability to think for themselves, rather than training them to conform to cultural norms. Indeed, his school and kindergarten were at one time closed down by the authorities.

Interestingly, Upstart has encountered similar suspicion among the educational and political establishment. Scotland's exceptionally early school starting age means our children start school the year they turn five (roughly half way through their early childhood) and in 2018, supported by Children in Scotland, we campaigned against the introduction of Scottish National Standardised Assessment of literacy and numeracy in Primary 1. Our insistence that ECCE at this age should focus on holistic development rather than academic attainment was, just like Froebel's, against the cultural status quo.

I'd hoped the 'schoolification' of early childhood – and the vexed issue of the UK's early school starting age – would be included in the 'key debates' promised in the title of Tina Bruce's book but, apart from some critical comments about the Early Years Foundation Stage in England, the debates she describes are mainly about specific aspects of Froebelian theory and practice.

There are, however, frequent references to Scotland. Our country has a long tradition of Froebelian practice, beginning in the early 20th century with free kindergartens for 'the children of the poor' in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and run by female graduates of Froebel's revolutionary training course. Bruce also mentions the Froebelian nursery in the grounds of Moray House College



between 1908 and 1988, which I remember with affection from my own teacher-training days in the 1970s. In those days, graduates with particular talent for early years were invited to 'do the Froebel', which meant an extra year of specialist nursery training.

Bruce gives plenty of attention to the recent revival of high-quality Froebelian practice through networks of Scottish enthusiasts, notably the Edinburgh Froebel Network. They have established several training courses, including a Froebel certificate linked to the BA Early Childhood Studies course, and an MSc in Froebelian principles and pedagogy. Since these developments coincided with the establishment of Upstart Scotland, there are several eminent Froebelians amongst our campaign supporters, not to mention our Froebel-trained Vice Chair, Kate Johnston.

There's also a clear Froebelian influence on the content of Scotland's new early years guidance document, *Realising the Ambition, Being Me* (2020), which covers the whole of Curriculum for Excellence's 'early level' (nursery to P1/P2). It therefore describes the type of pedagogical practice Upstart would love to see for the three to seven age group if we could establish a ring-fenced kindergarten stage.

Springing from this, we produced a book of our own, *Play is the Way* (second edition 2021), explaining how a kindergarten stage would be the ideal way to ensure Scotland realises its ambitions for all our children. And if we ever do a third edition, I'd love to include Tina Bruce's ten Froebelian principles for the contemporary world. They begin:

'Childhood is seen as valid in itself, as part of life and not preparation for adulthood. Thus education is seen similarly as something of the present and not just a preparation or training for something later.'

Perfect! ●

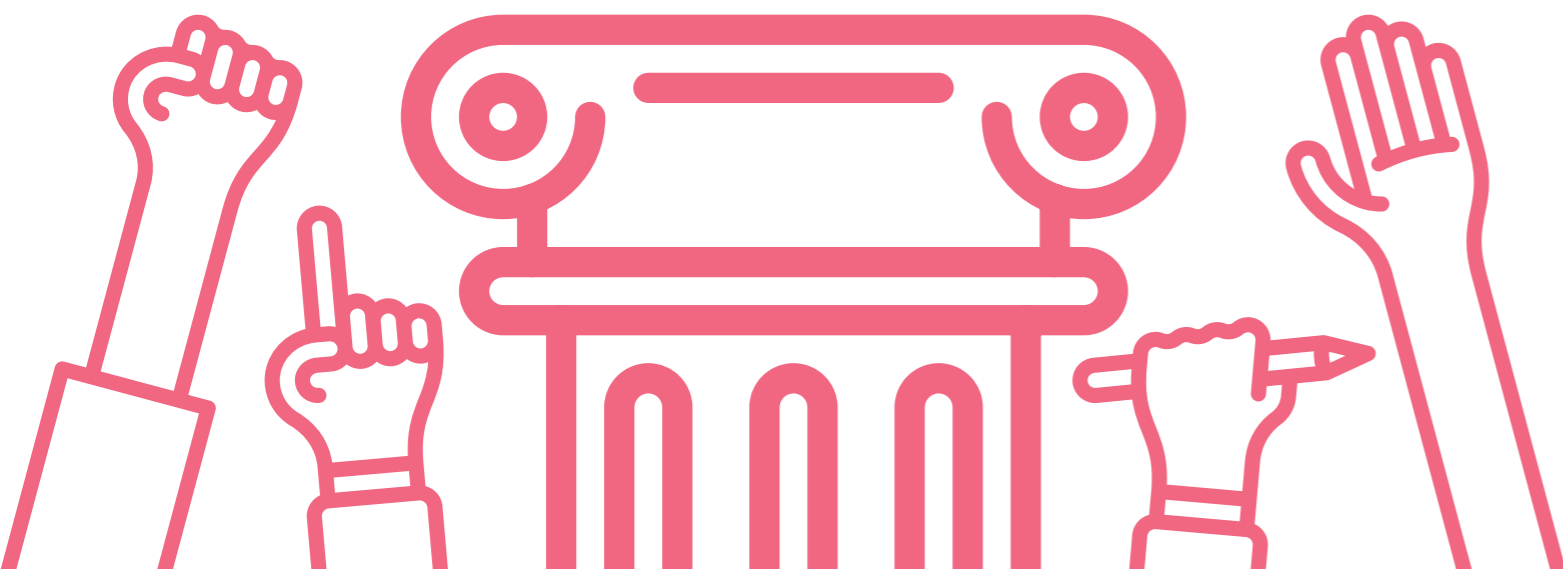
Photograph (opposite): **Polly Harris**
pollyharrisphotography.com

Sue Palmer is Chair of Upstart Scotland and editor of *Play is the Way: early years, child development and the future of Scottish education*, which can be obtained via upstart.scot.

Friedrich Froebel: An Introduction to Key Themes and Debates, by Tina Bruce, is published by Bloomsbury. Out now.

Bringing museums back to life

Over the past year we've been working with young people in three local areas on a special participation project exploring how to make museums more engaging and relevant to them. The **Living Museums** project identifies barriers that young people experience when accessing heritage sites and what could be done to change the status quo. The project culminated in three exhibitions, held from August - October in Stirling, Perth and Dumfries & Galloway, through which young people explored topical themes of importance to them. On these pages, we showcase images from the project and hear from the young people involved



Stirling: Generation Change – Young People's Participation in Protest

In Stirling, young people focused on the theme of protest. They responded to issues including the Black Lives Matters movement, climate change and women's safety, with an exhibition of their creative work running at the Battle of Bannockburn centre in late August. A visitor to the opening night said it presented "themes that were relevant to all of us" in a "fresh" and "modern way", while another praised the young people who produced the work as "trailblazers".

"I really hope that the exhibition shows people within the heritage sector that it is alright to do something outside of your usual box and confront issues head on. I hope that the National Trust for Scotland take what we have done and use it as a first step to making their sites more accessible to, and reflective of, young people"

Member of the Stirling project group



Top: The Black Lives Matters movement informed the Stirling group's choice of theme. Above: Project group members and guests exhibition's opening night exhibition



Above: Members of the Living Museums Perth group

Perth: Our Lockdown Journey – Facing the Unknown through Creativity

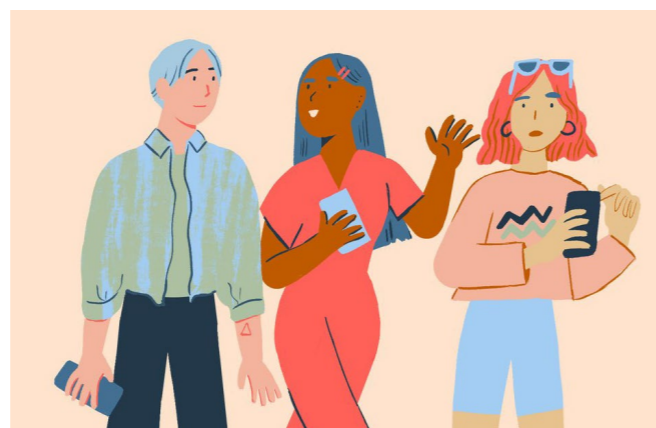
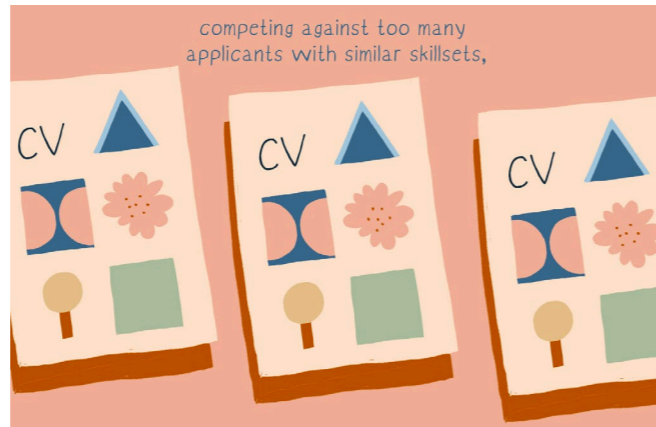
The Perth project group looked at the pandemic's impact on mental health, researching and creating an exhibition in the style of a young person's bedroom. Featuring items that supported the mental health of group members during the pandemic, it reflected the space where they had spent the vast majority of their time over the past 18 months. Their work was on display at Perth Museum from early September until 31 October.

"Museums have a power with engaging people, not only with the past but also with current events"

Member of the Perth project group

Dumfries & Galloway: Times Change – Youth Work Through History

The young people in the Living Museums Dumfries and Galloway project group examined employment and unemployment – both historically and over the course of the pandemic. A survey conducted by the group captured the thoughts of other young people in Dumfries and Galloway on the issue and a new animation was shared as part of the launch to communicate the findings. The group’s exhibition opened at Dumfries Museum at the end of September and ran until 30 October.



Top
The exhibition examined the history of work in the area, including straw plaiting to make hats

Find out more about the project at:
childreninScotland.org.uk/living-museums/



Unlocking the future

How a nursery in Shetland has used the **Access to Childcare Fund** to deliver more flexibility and improve their outdoor space

Case Study:
Hame Fae Hame

Words: Erin Sandison

Tackling child poverty in Scotland has been highlighted as a key priority as the country responds to and rebuilds from the ongoing pandemic. It is encouraging to see recognition of the role high quality, affordable and accessible early learning and childcare can play in the quest to achieve this goal, demonstrated through its inclusion in the Scottish Government’s Child Poverty Delivery Plan, an ambitious expansion plan and renewed commitments to increase support for out-of-school care.

Hame Fae Hame childcare in Shetland has demonstrated a successful and sustainable wraparound childcare model, providing flexible childcare hours paid at an hourly, as opposed to session or day, rate. Assisted by money from the Access to Childcare Fund, we have further developed this model, increasing support for families by offering an affordable, flexible wraparound service.

Flexible childcare provided in this way allows families to pay for only what they need, meaning they can plan and budget much more effectively. The added support from Hame Fae Hame, offering school drop-offs and pick-ups, allows parents and carers even more flexibility and support, particularly if they have several children of different ages, requiring varying hours.

The Access to Childcare Fund has allowed Hame Fae Hame to improve the technology that supports this flexible model. Installing tablets that are used for check-in and check-out



ensures accurate recording of childcare hours which is vital to the flexible model. Parents and carers can also book their own hours via the system, further increasing flexibility. Many parents have reported that they love the accessibility of the booking system and how it helps in balancing sometimes unpredictable or changing work commitments.

Hame Fae Hame also invested the Access to Childcare funding in green space, improving existing outdoor equipment and play areas. We added an ‘Outdoor In’ space, allowing for outdoor play and learning in the ever-changing Shetland weather! The outdoor areas provide opportunities for learning through nature, play, imagination and problem-solving, supporting young people with the

stimulation they need to develop and thrive. Children at Hame Fae Hame can now also engage in the process of growing and harvesting local produce, with the addition of raised beds.

By enhancing the outdoor areas, all children are supported in their development, through physical activity and sensory play. The Fund will allow for continued growth of our outdoor activities and green elements, with ambitious plans for the development of a new outdoor nursery annexe in the future. ●

Find out more about Hame Fae Hame by visiting their website: hamefaehame.co.uk

Above: The enhanced outdoor space at Hame Fae Hame

About the Access to Childcare Fund

The Access to Childcare fund is designed to support solutions that enable more accessible and affordable childcare and help to reduce the barriers parents and carers experience in accessing provision. It is funded by the Scottish Government and managed by Children in Scotland.

Find out more at:
childreninScotland.org.uk/access-to-childcare-fund-summary/



Weathering the storm

Therapeutic Life Story Work (TLSW) enables young people who have experienced trauma, and who are struggling with the pain of their past, to reflect, develop compassion for themselves and move on. As part of our regular **Learning Focus** series, we share one student's experience of the 12-day professional TLSW diploma and the impact it has had on her practice



Words: **Elizabeth Johnston**

I was in the Scotland 2020-21 cohort of students for TLSW. I loved the weekends of input. Richard [Rose, course leader and Director of Therapeutic Life Story Work International] is so engaging in his presentations, as were all of the guest speakers.

The course, although having a basis in theory – which is outlined in an understandable way – is very practical. You are required to work with a young person, or adult if that is your area of focus, using the format outlined in the course, alongside getting the input from Richard.

Although this is time-consuming, it's the best way to learn. I was fortunate to have excellent clinical supervision from a TLSW-accredited supervisor for the duration of the course and this helped to consolidate my learning and gave me the guidance that I needed for the direct work I was doing.

The academic requirements were fully explained during the course and I felt that we were all guided well in this respect. Although hesitant prior to the course starting about this side, the course organisers were very supportive and outlined very clearly what needed to be covered at each assessment stage. I have also found the organisers and Richard very

approachable. Both respond helpfully when I have needed to reach out to them with any questions or concerns.

I would say the only negative experience for me was that our course was fully online due to Covid. This was outwith anyone's control and I am grateful that we were able to proceed, even if it was remotely. This did mean that we, as a cohort, missed out on expected peer support that you would typically get in such situations, and we missed out on the informal conversations that you would have with the presenters. Much was done to mitigate these scenarios, and I point them out just as an observation of my time on the course.

TLSW is clearly a process that works! I have been inspired by what I have heard over the months. I know that I will be using this input regularly as a means of post-adoption support within my work setting.

It's been a privilege to take part in the course and I could not commend it more highly. It was professional in how it was run. It was helpful and practical in terms of developing the tools to use this approach. I am now excited to be starting on a journey of using Therapeutic Life Story Work in my job. •

Illustration
Nazifa Khatun

In partnership with Professor Richard Rose (Therapeutic Life Story Work International), Children in Scotland offers a number of routes into life story work with children and young people.

Students and professionals can choose from the 90-minute webinar, adapted from a one-day introduction workshop; the Advanced Certificate programme, a six-day taught route, which provides a great opportunity to learn the process, the application of it and the assessment of its impact; and the Diploma in TLSW, the 12-day course which incorporates impact and the application of life story work across a variety of processes.

For details of Therapeutic Life Story Work courses running in 2022, contact events@childreninscotland.org.uk or check information in our learning programme online:

childreninscotland.eventbritestudio.com

Insight

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Members' spotlight

Every issue we profile one of our member organisations to highlight their work, recent projects and how they've responded during the pandemic

Organisation:



Improving the lives of families in the Highlands

Profile: A charity providing vital services to families across the Highlands by supporting children and young people with additional support needs. With a focus on listening to users, it works to empower families to know their rights and have their voices heard. The charity has one full-time and six part-time staff, and has been in membership with us since May 2021.

How has the charity adapted during the pandemic?

Karen Macknight, Resource Coordinator (pictured far right): "We moved to working online whereas before we would often meet families face-to-face. We've also all been working from home although there are moves to slowly return to a blended working week. We believe a new hybrid model of working both online and face-to-face will suit the needs of more families and ensure we are reaching the whole of Highland."

What has been the key learning for you of the past 12 months?

"We are now reaching families in Highland wherever they may be. Geography isn't an issue. Even being the largest region in Scotland, our demographic has expanded. Our new Peer Support project employs someone living in a remote, rural area because of the ability to work online. So we've widened the skills base of our staff as we've been able to recruit from further afield. Staff also have much greater access to online courses and learning



opportunities, saving the need to travel and possibly stay overnight in another city."

What have you been hearing from children and families about their experiences over the past 18 months?

"We've heard of the feeling families have had of increased isolation and struggling to get limited access to services. There is also the loneliness and feeling unsupported as well as the lack of money. However, there is a greater sense of community and helping each other out which showed the value of coming together. There is also better information online for families to access."

What does a good day look like for Thriving Families?

"One day is never the same as another. Each call that comes in or email received brings new

challenges but a good day is when families feel listened to and supported."

How can people find out more and get involved?

"People can find us on Facebook, our website, Twitter, Instagram, through our podcasts and coming soon, a YouTube channel!"

Why is membership of Children in Scotland important to you?

"Children and young people are at the heart of everything we do. So it's really important we work with other organisations, helping us to connect to the rest of Scotland, so we're not isolated in Highland. It gives everyone a voice." •

Above: The Thriving Families team at Fort Augustus in 2021 (left to right): Anna McBride, Sarah Fowler (service manager), Karen Kelbie, Catherine Louttit, Karen Macknight

Families can contact the charity via phone, Facebook messenger, through the website "contact us" section or by email. More information available at thrivingfamilies.org.uk

Interview by **Catherine Bromley**

Upcoming webinars



One of our key priorities is to strengthen the children's sector workforce in Scotland. Now more than ever, it's vital that we're able to learn, connect with others and share our own experiences. In spring 2020, as a result of the impact of Covid-19, we moved our programme online. We've been delighted by the response and the increase in delegates able to access our training across Scotland and internationally. Here's a summary of some of the learning opportunities we have coming up in December 2021 and early 2022.

Feedback, questions or suggestions? Email events@childreninscotland.org.uk

Dec 7 Working with children and young people who have experienced traumatic stress
Jan Montgomery | Tuesday, 7 December, 10.30am - 12pm

Dec 13 Child Protection Lead training
NSPCC | Monday, 13 December, 10am and Tuesday, 14 December, 10am
Dec 14 Please note this training is delivered over **two consecutive half days** (13 & 14 December 2021, both 10am - 1.30pm) and participants must be able to **attend both**.

Jan 25 Mindfulness work with children and young people
Jan Montgomery | Tuesday, 25 January, 10.30am - 12pm

Jan 31 Child protection for all: an introduction and refresher
NSPCC | Monday, 31 January, 10am - 1.30pm

Feb 2 Child Protection Lead training
NSPCC | Wednesday, 2 February, 10am and Thursday, 3 February, 10am
Feb 3 Please note this training is delivered over **two consecutive half days** (2 & 3 February 2022, both 10am - 1.30pm) and participants must be able to **attend both**.

Mar 8 Supporting children and young people who internalise their distress
Jan Montgomery | Tuesday, 8 March, 10.30am - 12pm

Mar 16 Leadership & management: attunement in leading, developing and mediating
Sandra Strathie | Wednesday, 16 March, 10.30am - 12pm

To view our full range of upcoming events visit our Eventbrite site: childreninscotland.eventbritestudio.com





Is he lagging behind?

is it Duchenne?



DUCHENNE IS A RARE, GENETIC, PROGRESSIVE, IRREVERSIBLE, FATAL DISEASE¹⁻⁵

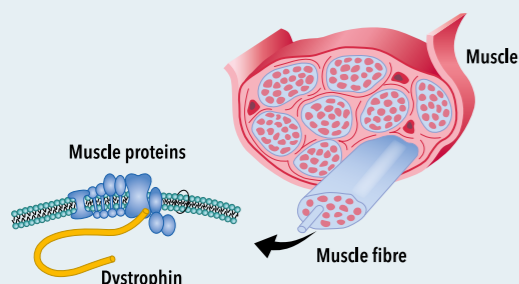
THE DEVASTATING IMPACT OF DUCHENNE

- Duchenne is characterised by progressive muscle degeneration with subsequent respiratory and cardiac failure, leading to early death¹⁻⁴
- Timely and accurate diagnosis can enable the patient and family to receive the care and support they need³⁻⁵

Clinical signs of Duchenne^{2,5}

UP TO 2 YEARS	3-4 YEARS	5-8 YEARS	UP TO 13 YEARS	AFTER LOSS OF AMBULATION
Delayed motor function, speech and cognitive delay	Difficulty jumping and running	Abnormal movements (e.g. waddling gait)	Loss of independent ambulation (increasing use of wheelchair)	Loss of self-feeding and respiratory, orthopaedic and cardiac complications

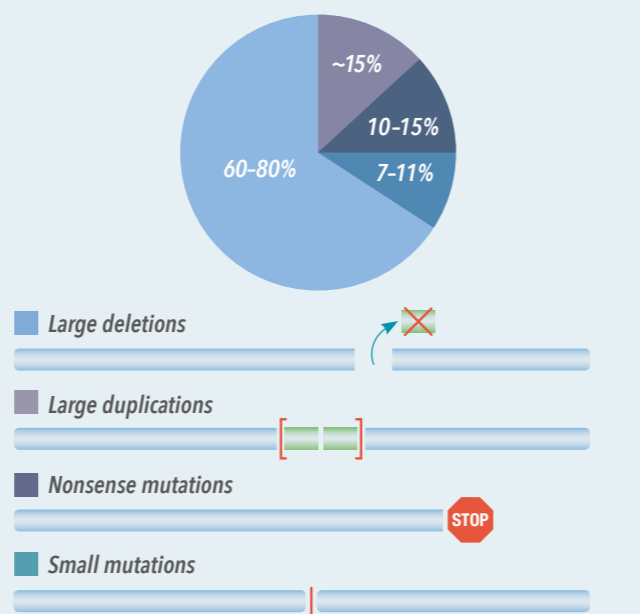
DUCHENNE IS CAUSED BY MUTATIONS IN THE DYSTROPHIN GENE ON THE X CHROMOSOME²



Adapted from Muscular Dystrophy Association.⁶

- Duchenne is caused by mutations in the gene that encodes **dystrophin**, an important component of the muscle cell membrane^{2,7}
- **Mutations** in the dystrophin gene lead to the absence of, or defects in, dystrophin^{2,4}
- This results in ongoing muscle damage and replacement of muscle fibres by scar tissue and fat^{7,8}

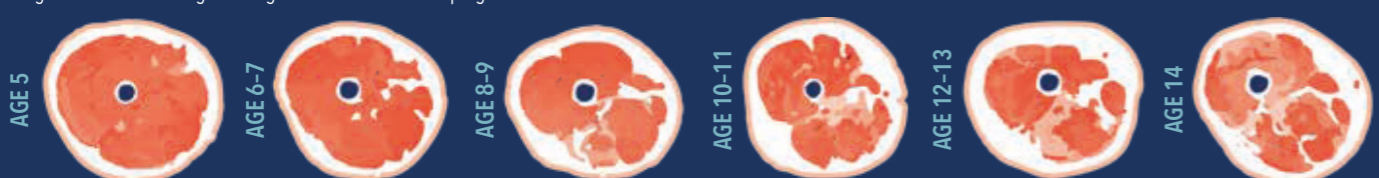
DUCHENNE IS CAUSED BY MUTATIONS IN THE DYSTROPHIN GENE¹



Adapted from Bladen CL, et al. 2015, Pichavant C, et al. 2011 and Kalman L, et al. 2011.⁹⁻¹¹

Once muscle is lost it cannot be restored

Magnetic resonance images of thigh muscle as Duchenne progresses over time¹²



Adapted from Sweeney HL, et al. 2014.¹²

For illustration only

WHAT TO DO IF YOU SUSPECT DUCHENNE MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY (DMD)

OBSERVE

KEY SIGNS OF DMD¹
Early signs may be present before the age of 2 years^{2,3}

- Signs of muscle weakness
- Not walking by 16-18 months
- Cognitive and speech delay
- Unexplained increases in transaminases
- Evidence of Gowers' sign or toe walking (any age, especially <5 years old)

TEST

ORDER CREATINE KINASE (CK) TEST²⁻⁴
Elevated CK levels reflect muscle damage, therefore testing is recommended in primary care²⁻⁴

Elevation in CK warrants prompt referral to a neuromuscular specialist^{1,3}

REFER

REFER TO A NEUROMUSCULAR SPECIALIST¹
Diagnosis is confirmed through:

- 1. CLINICAL ASSESSMENT¹**
Includes neuromuscular and skeletal examinations
- 2. GENETIC ASSESSMENT^{1,5-8}**
MLPA detects large dystrophin gene mutations
Dystrophin gene sequencing detects small/single nucleotide mutations
- 3. MUSCLE BIOPSY¹**
Detects the presence/absence of dystrophin protein*

*If genetic testing does not confirm a clinical diagnosis of Duchenne, then a muscle biopsy sample should be performed¹
MLPA, multiplex ligation-dependent probe amplification

CARE

EARLY DIAGNOSIS MAKES A DIFFERENCE:

- Timely intervention may delay disease progression and complications^{1,2,8}
- Access to emerging therapies and clinical trials²
- Access to genetic counselling and family planning²

For more information about Duchenne visit www.TAKEONDUCHENNE.co.uk^{*}
Make every day count



ONLINE TRAINING COURSES

DECEMBER 2021 – MAR 2022

- Full programme of online training courses designed to help advisers stay informed and up-to-date
- Courses range in topic and training level to suit all learning requirements
- All courses delivered online via Zoom

SCOTLAND WEBINAR:
**IT'S HERE!
 THE NEW CHILD
 DISABILITY
 PAYMENT FROM
 SOCIAL SECURITY
 SCOTLAND**

WED 1 DECEMBER 2021
 1 – 3.30PM

BOOK NOW
cpag.org.uk/scotland/training

LIVE ON ZOOM

SCOTLAND WEBINAR:
**MIX 'N'
 MATCH – UC
 WHEN YOU'RE
 PENSION AGE**

TUES 1 FEB 2022
 1 – 3.30PM

BOOK NOW
cpag.org.uk/scotland/training

LIVE ON ZOOM

DECEMBER

1	SCOTLAND WEBINAR - IT'S HERE! THE NEW CHILD DISABILITY PAYMENT FROM SOCIAL SECURITY SCOTLAND
6 - 7	Benefits for EEA nationals - advanced
7	Universal credit – the online claim
8 - 9	Universal credit update and tactics

JANUARY 2022

13	Payments for children in Scotland
18 - 19	QBC – making the most of your calculator
26 & 27	Introduction to welfare rights (six mornings) + see dates in Feb

FEBRUARY

1	SCOTLAND WEBINAR: MIX 'N' MATCH – UC WHEN YOU'RE PENSION AGE
2, 3, 9 & 10	Introduction to welfare rights (six mornings)
18	Attendance allowance – an introduction
23 - 24	Students and benefits – eligibility

MARCH

1	Scottish social security – an introduction
2 - 3	Benefits for rent
8	Universal credit – transferring from benefits and tax credits
9 - 10	Income maximisation for older people
15 - 16	Universal credit update and tactics
17	Looking up the law online
22	Benefits overview
23	Limited capability for work in universal credit
24 - 25	Social security law update
29	Universal credit – an introduction
30	Personal independence payment – an introduction

Book now at
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