



# Community of Practice for Siblings Newsletter

Keeping the Promise to Brothers and Sisters

## ➔ Pause and Reflect

*Tom Boyd, Member of the Community of Practice Planning Group*

How do we nurture loving sibling and sibling-like relationships to last a lifetime? That's what brings us together as a Community of Practice.

We come from all corners of Scotland, from different professional and personal perspectives, with a shared passion to keep the promise to sisters, brothers and all those with loving friendships in the context of care. Across our Community sessions in 2024, we've explored some of the central aspects to doing just that – kinship care for siblings, housing that meets the needs of siblings, data that begins to tell a richer story (locally and nationally) on how we're doing by our siblings, resources to directly support carers of all sorts as they support their children, approaches to assessment and planning for children and families rooted in connections, loving relationships in residential homes and secure settings.



ENERGY



IMAGINATION



CONNECTION



We've met online and in spaces that matter to young people, at Rossie Young People's Trust and under the big summer sky at STAR, Siblings Reunited. And we've learnt alongside and from each other, bringing a range of expertise and interest together, doing our best to root all that we do in lived experience. As we now look forward to a new year, we're excited by the potential we all bring into our Community space.

The calendar of events for next year is now fully bookable at the links below, and you can access our growing Community resources [here](#). At our first gathering of 2025 we're excited to be focussing on friendship and sibling-like relationships in the experience of care, and exploring how we can work together as a Community to build innovative approaches to keeping the promise to siblings - book [here](#). Your Community Planning Group wishes you a good new year.

## Upcoming Meetings, Book Here

- **23 January 2025** – ONLINE, 10am - 12:30pm
- **10 April 2025** – ONLINE, 10am -12:30pm
- **17 June 2025** – IN-PERSON at Siblings Reunited (STAR), 10.30am – 3.30pm
- **23 September 2025** – IN-PERSON at SCRA, Glasgow, 10.30am – 3.30pm
- **20 November 2025** – ONLINE, 10am – 12.30pm

# New resource launched to support parenting care-experienced siblings

We got a sneak preview of a fabulous new resource at our November Community of Practice for Siblings event.

We were delighted to welcome Dr Chris Jones to our session on Thursday 21 November to talk about a new 'Padlet' resource tool to help understand and support sibling relationships.

The Padlet is in 2 parts and delegates got to hear how the online resource was developed, had a chance to look at the information within it, and then had the opportunity to discuss a series of questions in breakout rooms.

More detail about the resource and the recent event is on the [Stand Up For Siblings website](#).

Thank you to Chris, Adoption UK Scotland and AFKA for coming along to our Community and for creating such a fantastic new resource. Access Part 1 and Part 2 below.

**Part 1**

**Part 2**

## ➔ **Prioritising Loving Relationships and Overcoming Barriers: Rossie Young People's Trust event**

We were delighted to come together in person on 1 October at Rossie Young People's Trust. The focus of the day was on the needs of children and young people in their care who are separated from their siblings.

Michael Scanlin from Rossie gave a presentation on the innovative work they are progressing to have a separate space set within their grounds to facilitate siblings and family members to spend time together.

We also heard from Rachel Farrier and Claire Lightowler from Clan Childlaw on the work they are doing with young people.

You can read a full round up of the day including presentations on the [Stand Up For Siblings website](#). A huge thank you to everyone at Rossie for hosting our event.

## ➔ **Q&A – focus on Family Connections in Glasgow**

Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership have been on a journey with their Family Connections Assessment and Plan. The aim is for all care experienced children who have a brother or sister, to have a family connections assessment and plan as early in their care journey as possible and not just when permanence is being progressed.

Following on from their input at the Community of Practice for Siblings event earlier this year, Elaine Goudie, Assistant Service Manager and Roddy Ringland, Team Leader talk to us about how the Family Connections Assessment and Plan has been developed in Glasgow. Read this [Q&A](#) to find out more about their journey.

## ➔ Scottish Government Update

We would like to thank the Community of Practice for their tireless efforts this year and we have enjoyed the opportunity to work with them this year. A particular highlight of the year was the event hosted by STAR: Siblings Reunited that brought the community together and celebrated all the work done for siblings.

We would like to draw your attention to the [Adoption Vision Statement](#) published in November which sets out the Scottish Government's vision for adoption, the importance of support for our adoption community, and strategic priorities to achieve this. Whilst adoption numbers have decreased in Scotland in recent years, it continues to have a place in our society as the right and best form of permanent care for some of our children. The statement recognises the importance of sibling relationships to children and young people who have been adopted and how they can be promoted and nurtured. We are grateful to the adoption community for engaging with us, and we welcome continued collective engagement on the journey to realise the vision.

We'd like to wish you all a happy and peaceful time over the festive period.

### **Keeping the Promise: Public Consultation on Developing a Universal Definition of 'Care Experience' – Closing Date Extended and Engagement Opportunities**

You may be aware that a public consultation on [Developing a Universal Definition of 'Care Experience'](#) is currently open on Citizen Space. The Minister for Children, Young People and The Promise has decided to extend the closing date of the consultation to 31 January 2025. The extension will allow more time for people to share their views, participate in the consultation, and provide the opportunity for additional engagement throughout January.

The purpose of the consultation is to seek views on the need for a universal definition of 'care experience' and what the potential impacts of this could be.

The consultation also looks to understand views on wider language relating to care and provide an opportunity to consider a national approach, building on existing good practice, and to set the direction for language of care which is nurturing and encouraging to children and young people with care experience.

We are keen to raise awareness of the consultation and provide as much opportunity as possible to hear views from across Scotland. To this end we would appreciate if you could consider any potential engagement opportunities in your area that we could attend and link to, particularly with adults with experience of care. We would be happy to provide more information on why we are consulting, the consultation process, and to gain views on the development of the definition.

Please contact Sean McCartney and Hollie Gibson at [keepingthepromiseconsultations@gov.scot](mailto:keepingthepromiseconsultations@gov.scot) if you have any questions, would like further information, or to set up an initial meeting to discuss. We'd be grateful if you could please share this email with any other people or organisations who would be interested in this offer of further engagement about the consultation.

## ➡ **A Dream Come True: STAR's new barn**

After over a decade, Siblings Reunited (STAR) is overjoyed to share that their long-dreamed-of barn is almost complete!

This magical new space represents so much more than bricks and beams—it's the heart of new opportunities for STAR and the families they support.

Karen Morrison, founder of STAR, said "This barn symbolises the power of dreams, community, and love. We can't wait to see all the wonderful moments it will hold for STAR in the years to come!". [Read more here.](#)



# News Digest



## **New service will ensure siblings in care will be 'staying connected'**

Barnardo's Scotland has partnered with Aberdeenshire Council to unveil a new service that will give siblings – separated by family circumstances and by the care system – the chance to come together regularly to share experiences and have fun.

Called 'Staying Connected', the mobile service will have the ability to transform venues in the heart of local communities into places where young people can meet. Find out more on [Aberdeenshire Council's website](#).



## **Research - Scotland's most vulnerable children taking years to be placed in permanent homes**

Scotland's care system is taking years to find many of the country's most vulnerable children permanent homes – and too many of them have no contact with their siblings, according to new research.

Researchers on the Permanently Progressing longitudinal study have been looking at the lives of 1,836 children who became looked after in Scotland aged five or under in 2012-13, tracking their progress from infant to adult. Read the [full report](#).



## **Revised approach to regulating and inspecting services for children and young people**

In case you missed it, the Scottish Journal of Residential Child Care has given us permission to feature a really informative article by the Care Inspectorate. Mary Morris and Anthony O'Malley from the Care Inspectorate wrote about their approach to Keeping The Promise. You can read the article [here](#).



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