



Health matters for people in Foster and Kinship care

We know that the health and wellbeing of many children and young people in Foster or Kinship care may not be as good as that of their peers. Adverse childhood events experienced in their early lives have left many with emotional health and wellbeing needs which require specific help. For example, we have found that many of these children and young people do not know their healthcare rights, have attachment issues and have experienced trauma and loss. They may also have moved frequently which means their medical history and health background may not be known to their carers. Our health-related workshops and other resources support carers with managing the health issues of the children in their care.

Our Care Experienced Children and Young People Services

offer a range of activities for both Kinship and Foster Carers including workshops, mini/taster sessions and one-to-one support.

Workshops

We offer a range of workshops free of charge based on topics often requested by carers themselves. These workshops are offered through local authority social work departments, third sector organisations (e.g., Kinship Care Advice Service Scotland (KCASS) or the Fostering Network) or can be requested through support groups. The topics covered in our interactive four-hour workshops include:

- **Managing the Healthcare Needs and Rights of Children in Care**

Learn about a child's wellbeing, Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC), and their healthcare rights under UNCRC. This is also an opportunity for carers' needs to be made known.

- **Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing**

A two-part workshop looking at the impact of insecure attachment, trauma and neglect on a child's brain development, and behaviours. Importantly, we discuss how carers can best support their children.

- **Consent and Confidentiality**

A legally challenging area where carers' rights and those of the child are not always fully understood.

- **Play Techniques**

Help children cope with medical, dental, or hospital treatment through imaginary play, DVDs, games, stories, and role play.

- **Getting it Right for Care-experienced Disabled Children**

And those with complex healthcare needs.

- **Loss and Change**

Covers supports to help with grief from bereavement as well as from different types of loss and change. Care experienced children and

young people may have lost their birth families (e.g., contact with siblings) and sense of identity when they come into care.

- **Adolescence Matters**

A time of change often leading to challenging behaviours; this workshop helps carers understand what's going on inside a teen's head and how to support them.

We have delivered our workshops virtually (Zoom or Teams) during the pandemic and just recently starting back face-to-face (where you are).

Benefits of virtual training:

- saves on travel time.
- reaches people all over Scotland (for example a carer who attended from the North of Scotland appreciated not having to stay away overnight).
- virtual workshops include the use of a digital platform which contains all the workshop material (extra resources, discussion board etc) which carers can access at any time.

“When you come to the workshops, you feel you are listened to and believed and it's great to meet other people who are going through similar experiences to you.”

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Benefits of face-to-face workshops:

- More personal as the workshops are in your area and at a time to suit you.
- Provides the opportunity for more in-depth discussions.
- Easier for people who are less confident with IT or who may have felt excluded during the pandemic.
- Immediate access to a range of information booklets at the workshops. We can post them out for virtual ones on health-related matters and requested mental health and wellbeing resources.
- Carers can connect with others in the similar positions as themselves.
- They are experts through experience and often provide peer support and advice to each other in how to deal with particular issues.

Mini/Taster Sessions

Mini Sessions are shorter versions of our training workshops e.g., two-hour taster sessions which fit into a support group meeting time. They can include bespoke topics by request (i.e. taster session on trauma for KCASS).

One-to-one support

We offer a listening ear and support



to carers particularly around health matters and care experience. We will always go the extra mile to find answers as we often know others who can help you as well. This allows us to signpost carers to people or organisations who can help. We have access to advisors and services for specialist advice on health-related topics for children and young people and their families or carers.

Foster and Kinship Care

There are significant differences between Foster and Kinship care groups in terms of their legal status, the legal orders, support (financial) from the local authority and training opportunities. The fundamental difference, of course, is that Kinship Carers look after children from within their own family and there

“The training exceeded my expectations. I had dealt with my own children as teenagers, and also teenagers that I have accommodated but this course highlighted the need to always put yourself in their shoes and see it from their perspective.”

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may be tension or sensitivities in the relationship with the birth family. For these reasons, we always provide separate training or workshops.

If you or your organisation would like to arrange a workshop or talk about how our service can help you, please contact: anne.wilson@childrenshealthscotland.org or sarah.nelson@childrenshealthscotland.org

