

Children in Scotland

every child - every childhood

National Confidential Forum - A consultation on the creation of a Forum for Adult Survivors of Childhood Abuse in Residential Care

In responding to this consultation we would like to restate the points made in our 2009 response to the consultation on an Acknowledgement and Accountability Forum.

Children in Scotland's broad membership from the voluntary and statutory sectors across Scotland includes organisations connected with these issues in various ways over recent decades. Since the core work of the Forum would be with adults, there are aspects of this consultation on which we have no recommendations because we have no evidence/experience base from which to respond.

However, there are two key points we would like to make.

First, our fundamental interest is in the ways in which the proposed Forum can help children today. We hope that the lessons learned through the Forum can and will contribute to ensuring that such child abuse is greatly reduced, if not entirely eliminated, across Scotland now and in the future.

We do not believe that such learning – and implementation of the lessons that should be learned from past behaviour -- will happen automatically or by accident. Thus, Children in Scotland encourages the Scottish Government to plan for and support efforts in communications and professional/workforce development that will bring the insights, experiences and advice generated by the Forum to the attention and benefit of institutions, community groups and corporate parents throughout our nation. Understanding history in a more than superficial way can help prevent it from being repeated.

Second, Children in Scotland encourages the Scottish Government to take another compatible step forward by **increasing the extent and depth at which today's children and young people in institutional or community settings – or otherwise the responsibility of corporate parents – are heard and heeded.**

It is right to seek out the views and experiences of adult survivors of child abuse – and then, to take positive action that will improve their current and future well-being. It also is right not to wait until today's children and young people who are looked after, accommodated or otherwise subject to corporate parenting become adults before they, too, can be properly listened to and assisted. More could and should be done to *meaningfully* engage, consult with and involve children and young people in the here and now.

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Children in Scotland is the national umbrella agency for organisations and professionals working with and for children, young people and their families. It exists to identify and promote the interests of children and their families and to ensure that policies and services and other provisions are of the highest possible quality and are able to meet the needs of a diverse society. Children in Scotland represents more than 400 members, including most of Scottish local authorities, all major voluntary, statutory and private children's agencies, professional organisations, as well as many other smaller community groups and children's services. It is linked with similar agencies in other parts of the UK and Europe.

The work of Children in Scotland encompasses extensive information, policy, research and practice development programmes. The agency works closely with MSPs, the Scottish Government, local authorities and practitioners. It also services groups such as the Cross Party Parliamentary Group on Children and Young People (with YouthLink Scotland). In addition, Children in Scotland hosts Enquire - the national advice service for additional support for learning, and Resolve: ASL, Scotland's largest independent education mediation service.