

# Rostrum

July 2009

Number 97

The voice of social work in Scotland

Guth obair shoisealta ann an Alba



## Hard travellin'

The fight for Scottish  
Gypsy Traveller  
rights

### Children's champion

We speak to new  
Commissioner Tam Baillie

### A voice that needs to be heard

Social work services for deaf people under threat







Ian Williams living with MS

# “Have you still got MS?”

## “Yes, I’ve got it for life. There’s no cure.”



**Multiple Sclerosis Society  
Scotland**

No one knows what causes MS and they’ve yet to find a cure. But with the MS Society’s support, I have a rich and fulfilling life. They’ve got a freephone helpline **0808 800 8000** and you can visit **[www.mssocietyscotland.org.uk](http://www.mssocietyscotland.org.uk)** to find out more or make a donation.

**MS Society Scotland. Putting the pieces together.**

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### Editorial Board members

Would you like to join *Rostrum's* Editorial Board? We are keen to hear from students, front line workers, basic grade and senior workers willing to help shape the voice of social work in Scotland. Contact the Editor at: [rostrum@basw.co.uk](mailto:rostrum@basw.co.uk)

The views expressed in *Rostrum* are not necessarily those of the Editor or of BASW

# Contents

- 4 Dundee child protection comes under fire**  
City pledges action following critical report from HMIE  
*David Mitchell*
- 5 Baillie warns of Baby Peter backlash**  
New Commissioner says more children in care is not the answer  
*David Mitchell*
- 6 None but the brave**  
*Harriet L Dempster*, President, ADSW
- 7 Different Legacies & Common Challenges**  
Report from the ENSACT Joint European Conference in Dubrovnik  
*Ruth Stark*
- 8 Parliamentary business**  
*Ruth Stark*
- 9 Open to question**  
Are we Human... or are we Chancer?  
*Cerberus*
- 10 Talking points**  
"Let's talk about it"  
*Jane Lindsay*, Advice and Representation Officer, BASW
- 11 At risk of harm**  
*Gillian McLean* concludes our series with a psychiatrist's view of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007
- 12- Hard travellin'**
- 13 Colin Turbett** calls for social workers to adopt a human rights approach in combatting discrimination against Scottish Gypsy Travellers
- 14 - A voice that needs to be heard**
- 15 Social Worker of the Year Willie Macfadyen** warns that social work services for deaf people are in danger of extinction
- 16 Letter to the Editor, Publications for review**
- 17 Obituary: Dorothy Sutherland**  
*Kate Pryde*
- 18- MediaWatch**
- 19 Cutting Edge: The Homecoming**  
*Bill Grieve*  
  
Tourettes: I Swear I Can't Help It  
*Janice Mylan*
- 20 - Book reviews**
- 22 Bert Calder, Martin Henry, Ruth Stark, Romy Langeland**
- 23 Diary Dates, BASW Scotland Committees, Branch News**
- 24 BASW Scotland Social Work Awards 2009**

# Dundee child protection comes under fire

David Mitchell

CHILD protection services in Dundee have been criticised in a report from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education.

HMIE's planned inspection of services was ordered to be brought forward by Scottish Ministers following the conviction of drug addict Robert Cunningham for the culpable homicide of city toddler Brandon Muir.



Alan Baird:  
*Getting it right*

The HMIE inspection, carried out in February and March, found that of 18 service quality indicators, eight were "weak" and one - the immediate response to concerns - was "unsatisfactory".

The report says: "Inspectors were not confident that all children who were at risk of harm, abuse or neglect and in need of protection were identified and received the help and support they needed. The immediate response to concerns about children who may be at risk did not always lead to a prompt assessment of risk."

The report found many children did not receive help until they had reached crisis point with delays in

assessing children, particularly those affected by parental substance misuse and neglect.

"Some children were left in situations of risk for too long without adequate protection."

Children and Early Years Minister Adam Ingram said he had sought assurances that concerted action would be taken to address the report's recommendations.

"While this report doesn't look specifically into the death of little Brandon, it plainly shows that child protection services in Dundee are simply not good enough and must be urgently improved," he said.

Alan Baird, Director of Social Work and Health and newly-appointed chairman of the Dundee Children and Young Persons Protection Committee, said an action plan was being drawn up to

address the report's findings.

He said: "We have already made more resources available to strengthen and improve services. This includes an increase in the numbers of front line staff working across child protection."

He also announced that a new Child Protection Unit would be set up at King's Cross Hospital for child protection specialists from all agencies to work together.

"There is little doubt that the proliferation of drugs in our communities has led to major challenges for agencies involved in child welfare and protection. We are prepared to meet these challenges and are determined to get it right," he said.

Meanwhile, the independent review into Brandon Muir's death is expected to report in August.

ABERDEEN'S child protection services have shown encouraging progress following critical reports last year, according to HMIE.

In a follow-up inspection, HMIE said there had been an acceptance of shared responsibility for child protection across services and significant improvements in the leadership and direction of the city council.

"Managers and staff across services have been successful in laying effective foundations for improvement. They all recognised that more had to be done to improve the effectiveness of child protection services and to meet the needs of vulnerable children and families," it says.

Last year the city's social work services were slated by the Social Work Inspection Agency and Accounts Commission for Scotland for long-standing failures caused by poor leadership and low morale.



Alan Wylie

BASW Chief Executive Hilton Dawson, left, joined Professional Officer Ruth Stark and Stephen Smellie, Chair of UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group, to launch the joint manifesto *Helping People Change Their Lives*, a 10-point plan to address the key problems affecting social work in Scotland. A copy of the manifesto is included with this issue of *Rostrum*

## Hilton's Scottish tour

BASW's new Chief Executive Hilton Dawson has now visited Scotland on three occasions.

He came to the ADSW annual conference in May, the SIRCC National Conference in June and in the last week of June attended open meetings with members and non-members in Inverness, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Dumfries & Galloway.

These events are a two-way process to enable Hilton to hear from practitioners about their concerns and what works well and to inform people about the developments in BASW.



# Baillie warns of Baby Peter backlash

David Mitchell

SCOTLAND'S new Commissioner for Children and Young People Tam Baillie has warned that taking more children into care is not the long-term answer to high profile cases such as Baby Peter.

Giving his first interview since taking over from Kathleen Marshall, Baillie said there was an ongoing debate about where the balance should be struck.

"The central tenet that the best place for a child is at home is under severe pressure because of the dangers sometimes posed by parents who have severe problems, particularly in relation to drug and alcohol misuse," he said.

"I think in the short term there will inevitably be more children received into public care but that is not a sustainable way forward in how we pitch our resources for children and young people.

"We are always going to have to support children and young people in families. If we move too far the other way, we will be overwhelmed by the number of children in care. And that's not good for their future because it is important that we value those family relations."

Baillie said intense media coverage of tragedies such as Baby Peter and Brandon Muir tended to mask the very good work done not only by social workers but the whole child protection system.

"These tragedies are exactly that. But day in and day out people are making difficult, risk-laden and sometimes life-saving decisions under difficult circumstances and doing a very good job."

Baillie takes up the post after six years as Director of Policy for Barnardo's Scotland. In a career spanning 30 years, he has worked with young homeless people, young offenders and young people leaving care in statutory and voluntary agencies across the UK.

He believes the key underlying issues are poverty and inequality, and support for children during their early years.



*Tam Baillie: We always need to support children and young people in families*

"Unless we have a more equal society, we will always have some people disproportionately represented in our problem areas such as teenage pregnancy, substance misuse and early mortality," he said.

"We should also be providing much more comprehensive support to children in their early years - including pregnancy - with a significant increase in services and resources for children and their parents at that age.

"The evidence shows that the parenting of children and young people does have an impact on their physical, social and neurological development. If we seek long term improvements for our current generation of children, we have to improve these services as a matter of urgency."

As for the work of the SCCYP office, he intends to focus on three main areas:

- Better awareness and understanding of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child amongst professionals, parents, young people and society in general
- More involvement with children and young people, including plans to use existing technologies in

primary and secondary schools throughout Scotland

- Work on behalf of specific marginalised or discriminated against groups including young people leaving care, youngsters with disabilities, young adolescents, children of asylum seekers and children of prisoners.

"I'd like to have contact with teachers and classes of children in every local authority so that I can speak with authority about engagement with children and young people. I also want to work through children's organisations and the child workforce to get to children and young people. I believe we can do it because the set-up is already there."



**He's coming home, he's done his time**

Join us to welcome Ian Johnston back to Scotland - see Page 23 for details

# None but the brave

Harriet L Dempster, Director of Social Work, Highland Council and President, ADSW

ON 15 MAY I was elected to the position of ADSW President. This is a position I am both excited and honoured to hold. During my presidential address, I set out a number of areas I want the association to progress over the coming year and beyond, and included in that list was an area I am particularly passionate about - research.

*Towards a Research and Development Strategy for Social Services in Scotland* can be found on the IRISS website. It's a product of *Changing Lives* but to date hasn't had the currency and the profile to make an impact.

We need to build research capacity in social work if we are going to take *Changing Lives* to the next stage and deliver sustainable change. There is a strong link between developing research capacity in social work and ensuring a confident competent and valued workforce.

I was pleased to read in the *Changing Lives* newsletter about the government's commitment to the development of a knowledge management strategy and its support of IRISS. Enhancing access to and promoting a better understanding of the implications of research and how it applies to practice is key to the development of what Joan Orme terms "a research literate workforce".

However, knowledge management isn't the whole story. We need knowledge creation. We need social workers who are not just research literate but research competent if we are going to build and sustain capacity.

Few of our number have doctorates or have had the opportunity to work on large scale research. That needs to change. I look forward to the publication of what is described in the *Changing Lives* newsletter as the route map for the research and development strategy. I look forward in anticipation and hope that it will

contain some key milestones towards building the research infrastructure that social work and people who use our services need and deserve.

The new degree should bring with it a growing number in the workforce with an ability to understand and apply research findings and with the potential to undertake research. But this will need to be fostered and nurtured.

There is an urgent need to develop capacity at all levels and create opportunities for and support small scale practitioner research. We should also develop and sustain pathways to enable practitioners to enter into academic teaching and research whilst retaining a foothold in practice.

But we also need to be brave, courageous and committed when



Harriet Dempster: Urgent need to develop capacity at all levels

we put this research into practice. We need not only to try new things, to tackle new and existing issues in social work, but crucially to be prepared to say "This hasn't worked - let's try something else".

And politically, in the current financial climate, this is not an easy thing to say.



University of Glasgow | Dumfries Campus

Crichton Centre for Research in Health and Social Issues

## THE FUTURE IS OLDER International Conference O4O: Older People for Older People 8 – 9 September 2009

**O4O: Older People for Older People** is an initiative within the EU Northern Periphery Programme specifically addressed at meeting the challenges presented by an ageing population in remote and rural areas of Northern Europe, and focused on building social organisations and volunteering to maintain older people living in their communities. The O4O project is lead by the Centre for Rural Health, UHI Millennium Institute.

This conference is for policymakers, health and social care practitioners, community developers, NHS and local authority managers, the voluntary and social enterprise sectors, regional development agencies, academics and communities interested in helping to shape the older future.

**DAY 1: Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September:** Considers the idea of older people working for and supporting each other in remote and rural communities. **Speakers include:** David Manion (CEO Age Concern and Help the Aged in Scotland); Evliina Pöyhönen (National Institute for Health and Welfare, Helsinki); Professor Peter Oberg (University of Gävle, Sweden).

**DAY 2: Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> September:** Looks at how helping each other supports the health and wellbeing of older people and the ways that older people have developed initiatives in their communities. It also looks to the future and Europe-wide change in perceiving the role of older people in communities. **Speakers include:** Dr John Beard (WHO), Dame Joan Harbison (Older People's Advocate, N Ireland), and Jamie Bartlett (DEMOS).

For more information and a conference registration form please visit the O4O website at <http://www.O4Os.eu/> Or contact Philippa McNeill [p.mcneill@crichton.gla.ac.uk](mailto:p.mcneill@crichton.gla.ac.uk) +44 (0) 1387 702131



# Different Legacies & Common Challenges

## ENSACT Joint European Conference

Dubrovnik, 26-29 April

Ruth Stark

BASW is the UK member of the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). Every two years there is a regional conference in each of the five regions of the association and a world conference in the alternate two years.

This year the European conference of IFSW was a joint event with our other European Network for Social Action (ENSACT) partners.



*Sarah Banks: New accountability*

One of the strengths of this type of conference is that it brings together schools of social work and a range of practitioners from the social professions - social workers, social pedagogues, social educators and social animateurs. In this melting pot there are many exchanges of good developments, innovations and reaffirmation of our basic principles and values.

These events become addictive as you realise the strength and diversity of the social services community, both in Europe and globally. It provides a time for reflection and exploration of how we do things in our own back yard.

This year the event was held in

Croatia, a place that just 17 years ago was war-torn and destitute. For the past 50 years they have continued - even during the war - to develop social work in a culture and political setting that has been both challenging and innovative.

In the exchanges from the plenary sessions and workshops, achieving the balance of politically driven resources, professional activity and accountability and the needs and rights of service users is a very complex task in whatever country we live and work.

The outstanding presentation was by Sarah Banks, Professor in the School of Applied Social Sciences at Durham University, on achieving a balance between personal commitment to social work, ethical practice and what she terms the "new accountability".

This conceptual thinking is now being developed by the Practice Governance Group of the *Changing Lives* programme to help people understand the balance of these competing interests. This is a good illustration of research into practice which you should hear more of in the autumn.

Iain Ferguson, Senior Lecturer in Social Work at Stirling University, argued that another social work was possible, one that emphasised the need for collective structural approaches based on notions of social justice.

This social work would value the relationship-based work that had been so marginalised by care management approaches and emerge not out of the heads of a few social work academics but out of the collective gatherings of practitioners, students, service users and social work teachers.

Both presentations are available from the ENSACT website: [www.ensact.eu/conferences](http://www.ensact.eu/conferences)

Other themes that ran through the conference were human rights, conflict resolution, cultural diversity and different methods of social work education.



*Iain Ferguson: Another way*

These international conferences need more presentations from practitioners, for example about complex cases or different methods of

intervention. If you would like to discuss how you can present your work in one of these forums, please contact me. It all adds to your re-registration portfolio and helps revitalise your practice.

The next conference is in Hong Kong in June 2010 - for details see the IFSW website: [www.ifsw.org](http://www.ifsw.org)

## IFSW European Business Meeting

THE EUROPEAN Region of IFSW has a two-day meeting before the conference to discuss the work of the federation in our area. Here we share information from our representatives at the Council of Europe, EU and various UN committees where we are recognised as an NGO (non governmental organisation). We have formed a number of alliances and partnerships over the years promoting social policies and the implementation of the values and principles of our Code of Ethics.

This year we have been undertaking a cross-European study on the regulation and standards of social services across the region and promoting social work as a human rights discipline. A report is being prepared for publication and this will give a snapshot of the state of our services across Europe. This is important information to share as we move across national boundaries both as professional colleagues and service users.

The work of the European Region is guided by a group of members in the executive committee for the region. This year BASW's Ian Johnston was voted onto the committee, which is chaired by Nicolai Paulsen from Denmark.



# Parliamentary business

Ruth Stark, BASW Professional Officer

THIS COLUMN is designed to not only inform you of what has been happening but to seek your help in putting forward the social work perspective in Parliament.

In my last column I highlighted that Graeme Rizza, incoming Chair of Scotland Committee, and myself would be giving evidence to the Health Committee about access to mental health services for children, young people and their families. On 1 April that evidence was used by Labour MSP Duncan McNeil in a debate on drug and alcohol services.

He said: "As the Audit Scotland report confirms, there are limited data on the number of children who are affected by parental substance misuse, and I take it from his statement that the minister recognises the need to do better in that area. When can we expect work to begin on confirming the number of children who live with a parent with an addiction in order to establish a risk?"

"In evidence to the Health and Sport Committee last week, Ruth Stark, a senior social worker, said that there was a real problem in accessing children who live in this situation. Graeme Rizza put things more strongly: 'We need to be more robust about our access to children with non-engaging parents.'"

This is a good example of how we can influence the public policy debate for our service users and the resources to do our work.

The same day saw the launch of the draft Scottish Gypsy Traveller Discrimination Bill by Patrick Harvie from the Greens, UNISON, BASW and Amnesty International. It was encouraging to see cross party support and to meet the people who are currently being discriminated against.

On 22 April the motion was made to formally nominate long time BASW member Tam Baillie as Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People. We anticipate continuing a close working relationship with SCCYP

developed through his predecessor Kathleen Marshall.

Community Courts figured in two debates on 7 and 14 May. The first was initiated by Conservative MSP Bill Aitken while Justice Minister Kenny MacAskill opened the second. Both make interesting reading for their emphasis on reducing the prison population and robust community sentences.

The main target for these proposals is sentences of less than six months, which form the bulk of the prison population. Criminal justice social workers should be contributing to this debate given their knowledge and experience of what works and what does not. Community safety will be an important election issue and if you interested in this area please contact us to help promote what social work can offer.

For anyone supporting children through college or university, the student hardship debated on 21 May is a keen reality. BASW has student members who face special hardships with the various different pressures they experience through practice placements.

Through our A&R service, we support a number of student members and there may be others who might benefit from greater involvement in their professional association. If there is a student in your office, you may wish to introduce them to BASW and help ease some of that hardship.

On 28 May there were two debates of interest. The Missing Children Alert System was introduced by Robert Brown MSP who highlighted children who go missing in the UK, child trafficking and the Amber Alert System in the US used within 48 hours of a child going missing. He highlighted cross-border alerts and the work currently going on in Europe to roll out an alert system.

This is a good illustration of our involvement in Europe, the issues relating to a non-devolved power and BASW linking with IFSW to



provide the best service for children and families caught up in these situations.

The second debate was on Infertility Treatment. There continues to be a diversity of practice and of support for people who access these services. Issues for social workers include what to tell children of their origins if born through IVF or how to work with people who have been unsuccessful when they apply to be adopters or foster parents.

Finally, a motion on Supporting Social Work was introduced by the SNP's Christina McKelvie on 24 June: "That the Parliament supports the awareness raising campaign, Social Work Changes Lives, which was launched by the Association of Directors of Social Work, the Scottish Social Services Council and the Association of Social Care Communicators on 1 April 2009; recognises the burdens that social workers carry; agrees that it is important to promote a positive image of social work acknowledging the huge variety of tasks that social work and social care staff undertake to support vulnerable people in central Scotland region and right across the country; believes that most people will come into contact with social work services at some point in their lives, whether they are receiving a service or are involved in arranging a service for others, and therefore believes that it is vitally important that social work services are well understood and valued by society."

If you would like to contribute to public policy development through BASW, please contact me at: [r.stark@basw.co.uk](mailto:r.stark@basw.co.uk)



# Open to question

## Are we Human... or are we Chancer?

GENERIC free-to-view television has finally dumbled itself down beyond the tolerance level of my significant other, and instead she has been bingeing her way through the entire seven series set of TV drama series *The West Wing*.

I happened to sit down towards the end of one episode, in which the aspiring presidential candidate was making his speech to the Democratic Convention. I was struck by the relevance of its content to our current political and social work condition.

He was addressing the issue of State Governor Eric Baker who, whilst running for re-election, had failed to disclose his wife's medical condition. This, apparently, may have had a potential to impact on his ability to focus on government. The public had a right to know before they voted.

Congressman Santos says: "We are the hypocrites, not Baker. We are all broken, every single one of us. And yet we pretend that we are not. We all live lives of imperfection. And yet we cling to this fantasy that there is a perfect life, and our leaders should embody it."

"But if we expect, insist, that our leaders must live on a higher moral plain than the rest of us... well, we are just asking to be deceived."

Meanwhile, here are we in the UK in 2009, and apparently, inch by inch, a majority of MPs of all parties have made embarrassing expenses claims. In most of the minor cases, these seemed excessive or greedy, and in the worst cases, they may have been illegal.

Hey! I am talking to you! Yes, you with biros and notepads belonging to the council in your child's schoolbag or its paper in your home printer. To you, who organise your car to be serviced from your office 'phone during work hours.

Heavens, we have several insurance policies to renew each year, utility bills to resolve, suppliers to switch, repair men to be home for, parcels to pick up from the post office because *of course* we weren't in, and you have to buy from the internet these days because we both work, and three household appliances break down and need waiting-in-for-repair-men every year, and the dog needs another two weeks of hydrotherapy every afternoon for its cruciate ligament problem and, well... you would have no holidays left at all if you used your annual leave entitlement to do these things would you?

OK, perhaps that is all human nature, and we are all humans, and without external checks it grows and expands.

Still with me? Excellent! Now, apply this whole reference frame to any of the negative social work situations such as Haringey, where enquiries have found departments or individuals wanting. We look for heads to roll and promises that the "bad" people are now gone and we *now* have "decent" or "professional" staff and processes, so it won't happen again.

But this situation is not about acquisitive dishonesty and self deception. This is about dedicated but overstretched people, too long



in a culture where it is not acceptable to say "It is essential that this is done but I can't do it."

The temptation is to review the situation and conveniently find it isn't actually essential that it is done after all. If it is too difficult to do, then don't identify it as needing done! After the first such cycle, the precedent then becomes a benchmark or reference point to indicate where other similar cases may not yet need intervention.

If governments and councils cultivate and perpetuate the fantasy that a bullet-proof social work service is possible. That a manager worthy of the name can achieve and maintain that service, while off-setting inadequate resources through cost-saving efficiencies. And that to be appointed to lead such a service you must be convinced you firmly believe in that fantasy.

Then in the words of Congressman Santos: "Well, we are just asking to be deceived."

*Cerberus*



Scott Leslie and Val Lavery from Angus Council's Brechin Access Office receive a Bronze Healthy Working Lives Award from Sir Andrew Cubie, Chair of the Healthy Working Lives National Advisory and Advocacy Group.

The office has introduced a range of projects to improve the health and wellbeing of its 30 social work and health staff, including weight management, stress management, alcohol awareness and smoking cessation programmes

# Talking points

## “Let’s talk about it”

Jane Lindsay

THE WAY we deal with disputes at work is changing. Following the government’s Dispute Resolution Review, the Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) has revised its code of practice on grievance procedures.

The changes come as tribunal claims are on the rise. The number of discrimination claims rose from 20,641 in 2004-5 to 39,556 in 2006-7. It was clear not enough was being done to promote the early use of mediation. Fixed conciliation periods had failed to encourage early resolution.

The key message from Michael Gibbon, architect of the new code, is that inflexible, prescriptive regulations have been unsuccessful and that future measures should be simpler, more flexible and less predictable in their operation (*Better Dispute Resolution*, DTI, March 2007).

My post requires me to travel to wherever BASW members

have formal representation and my battered old copy of the ACAS code of practice has been one of my most treasured tools. Following this guidance is not a legal requirement but failure to do so is taken into account when a case goes to an employment tribunal.

The code’s simplicity and overriding principle of fairness, consistency and reason have guided me through some very tough meetings. A gentle reminder to the employer of the code has often helped regain focus and perspective, achieving the fairest outcome for the BASW member.

I was keen to compare the new ACAS code with the old one to see how the changes might benefit our members. Surprisingly, it reads rather like a good set of policies and procedures from a large employer with good HR support. It

uses very soft language and the emphasis on “sorting out the problem” is central throughout. This approach not unfamiliar to our A&R service which has always advocated this.

The new rules make it clear that if the employer does not follow statutory dispute resolution procedure there could be a 25 per cent increase in the award. In statutory and larger voluntary organisations, employers are unlikely not to follow the basic procedures as they are advised by able and competent HR advisors.

Arguably, it will be a deterrent for those smaller private organisations driven by profit. Calls to our advice line have alerted us to a growing band of these companies and evidence that their treatment of employees is simply not in keeping with the code of practice.

is accessible and free. It is a creative approach that addresses many of the problems that exist in a social work setting. I was heartened that many of the dysfunctional aspects of working practices are now recognised and services such as stress surveys, diagnostic workplace consultancy and help and support with investigations are being offered.

My own experience has taught me that the calmest and most amiable of people in social work can become irrational and unhelpful when faced with formal disciplinary action. Taking out a grievance can also be acutely stressful, leaving workers feeling desperate, powerless and their self-esteem depleted.

Having supported many people on both sides, I accept that it may be necessary to take disciplinary



action to maintain high standards of practice. But in my experience many disciplinary or grievance procedures could be settled in a more productive way if mediation was used much earlier.

When I have been able to intervene and provide the necessary mediation, the result is often satisfactory and of greater value to everyone involved. The main value is the way it allows each party the time to listen and walk in each other’s shoes. Inaccurate assumptions are laid to rest and the way forward is often much easier than people imagine.

When people are aggrieved they see an employment tribunal as a way of making their employer pay for treating them unfairly. This is often unrealistic and unproductive as winning a tribunal is rare and the sums paid out are not substantial. The new code focuses on more realistic and productive aims and on finding a positive and sensible way forward.

It goes without saying that if any member has a case where the code has been blatantly breached we would have no hesitation in taking it to a tribunal providing they have good evidence to present.

This new code is a valuable and helpful revision. It is an emotionally intelligent document that will guide many an employer or employee through troubled waters and be of great help to human resources advisors. As social workers, we can consider ourselves trailblazers in that the old social work cliché of “How do you feel about that?” has become mainstream practice. We look forward to mediators knocking on our door for tips!

*Jane Lindsay is BASW’s Advice and Representation Officer for Scotland*



# At risk of harm

Gillian McLean concludes our series on the Adult Support and Protection Act with a psychiatrist's view of the new legislation

PREVENTION of abuse is always better than intervention after the abuse has occurred. But whilst abuse is always wrong, the issues around it and the context in which it occurs are often complex.

There already exists a range of civil and criminal legal measures designed to protect adults at risk of harm. Although there have been advances in the protection of adults who lack capacity and those suffering from a mental illness, the position of other vulnerable adults has remained relatively neglected.

The introduction of the Adult Support and Protection (Scotland) Act 2007 addressed some of these deficiencies by widening the care groups who could be subject to assessment and defining powers to intervene in cases where adults were at risk of harm.

A wide-ranging consultation took place prior to the introduction of guidance in May 2008, with implementation planned for October that same year. It was with some concern I noted that only five of the Scottish health boards responded to the consultation and only one of the Royal Colleges - the Royal College of Psychiatry - replied with comments. The Act emphasises the use of a multi-agency approach, yet the consultation process seemed to suggest an indifferent approach from health.

Despite the recommendation that national training and guidelines be developed to take forward the implementation, it was left to local councils and boards to develop their own approach to training. Consequently, there are wide variations in the knowledge and understanding of the Act. Given that local authorities are the lead agency responsible and that they received some £7.8 million to aid its implementation, training here is reasonably well developed and a number of Adult Protection Committees have or are in the process of being established.

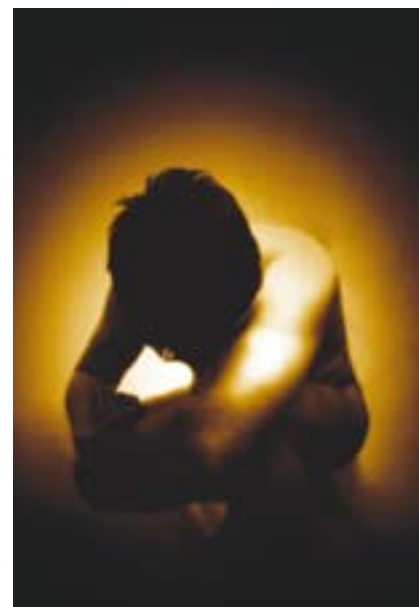
The impact on the NHS was perceived to be low and no additional funding was allocated to the health sector. However, the Act includes the need for medical assessment and examination, access to medical records and the possibility of moving the "at risk" adult to a place of safety, which could be a hospital.

Doctors or other health professionals may require to be part of the Adult Protection Committee or at least attend a hearing so there are time and service commitments which have not been taken into account against all the other duties they are required to undertake.

The Royal College of Psychiatry acknowledged the benefits the Act could bring to a group of vulnerable adults not otherwise covered by the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) (Scotland) Act 2003 or the Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000, although the former does introduce a duty on local authorities to inquire where an adult with mental disorder appears to be at risk due to the circumstances in which they live, where there is neglect or similar.

It also includes the power to seek a warrant for entry and remove someone to a place of safety. The only difference here is that a banning order cannot be made. But how easy will it be to implement these?

The Act has to balance the adult's right to autonomy with the duty of the state to intervene where there are concerns about abuse. It includes powers to intervene even where the individual has capacity, which is somewhat controversial given that many vulnerable groups have fought to have the same rights as other individuals. The Act states that an individual has to consent to being interviewed or examined. How much is to be gained by allowing a forced entry and taking



them from their home to a place of safety only to have them refuse to co-operate with assessment?

Careful consideration will have to be given to whether it is more appropriate to use other legal means of removal so a thorough understanding of not just the Adult Support and Protection Act but also the Adults with Incapacity and the Mental Health (Care and Treatment) Acts will be required. We already encounter problems, particularly in primary care or the acute hospital sectors, where lack of knowledge leads to inappropriate use of these powers.

Individuals all live with a level of risk in their lives and robust training in risk assessment has to be core to the success of this Act. Health, local authorities and police must all agree exactly what constitutes risk and see that in the context of each individual and the circumstances in which they live.

I commend the Act but fear that the knowledge, training and understanding of it has been ad hoc and poorly co-ordinated, and the lack of funding for health will lead to a reluctance to use the Act to its full benefit.

*Gillian McLean is Consultant Psychiatrist for the Elderly, NHS Forth Valley*



# Hard travellin'

Colin Turbett argues that social workers should adopt a human rights approach in combatting discrimination against Scottish Gypsy Travellers

SCOTTISH Gypsy Travellers are so marginalised a community in Scotland that their lack of rights and basic human dignity is almost taken as read amongst the settled population.

That is a bold statement to make at the head of an article for enlightened professionals but unfortunately there is evidence that social workers can find themselves unwitting accomplices to discrimination and persecution of Scotland's oldest extant minority. It is worth reviewing recent developments so that as a group, social workers can take stock and consider their own position.

No one should be in any doubt that Gypsy Travellers who choose to pursue a mobile lifestyle face an uphill struggle. Traditional stopping places have been closed off, caravans are denied entry to most caravan sites (e.g. those used by touring caravans and mobile homes) and if they want to remain living in a caravan Gypsy Travellers are corralled onto official sites which themselves reduce in number all the time.

Such sites are policed by council officials, often overseen by CCTV cameras and regulated strictly. Council policies often ignore Gypsy Traveller culture and family links, and force people to live together on sites regardless. Traditional incomes have been eroded by changes in farming practices and the exploitation of foreign migrant workers.

As always happens with persecuted minorities, the sins of the few (or those of visiting groups) can be magnified out of all proportion and manipulated to justify their persecution and discrimination.

In early 2008, after a series of inflammatory pieces in the local press, Central Ayrshire MP Brian Donohoe raised a debate in Westminster to discuss the "problem" and put pressure on the Minister to give local authorities more powers to move people on who are perceived as a nuisance<sup>1</sup>. This was backed by other Labour MPs and left unchallenged by their colleagues. The language used in Parliament would be familiar to right wing tabloid readers who have launched similar campaigns against Gypsy Travellers south of the border.

Meanwhile in the north east the Gypsy Traveller Education and

Scottish Gypsy Travellers about their roots and cultural heritage. After several months of uncertainty which activists believe was used against Scottish Gypsy Travellers, a clear legal decision had at last been made in their favour.

The impact of the MacLennan judgement was felt immediately in Scottish Government circles. A long awaited statement from Communities Minister Stewart Maxwell on commitment to race equality appeared in December 2008. This included reference to Scottish Gypsy Traveller rights and made reference to the MacLennan judgement.

Not that the Scottish Parliament had been previously inactive on the issue. The Equal Opportunities Committee had taken evidence and issued detailed recommendations concerning Scottish Gypsy Travellers as early as 2001 and this had been revisited in 2005. However, no action has taken place and a recent Equality

and Human Rights Commission review<sup>2</sup> remarked on this lack of progress in establishing fundamental legal rights for Gypsy Travellers in Scotland.

At the same time as these developments the principal self-organised group in Scotland concerned with Gypsy Traveller rights, the Scottish Gypsy Traveller Law Reform Coalition (SGLTRC) recently held an event sponsored by Patrick Harvie MSP in the Scottish Parliament to launch a draft Scottish Gypsy Traveller (Discrimination) Bill specifically for Scottish Gypsy Travellers. This is based on Irish legislation but is now the subject of debate about whether it is a reserved matter for the Westminster Parliament or not.



Shamus McPhee

Information Project (GTEIP), a small voluntary organisation set up to assist Gypsy Travellers, sacked its Strategic Co-ordinator Ken MacLennan on "performance issues" including advocacy activity which had brought them into conflict with local authorities. The GTEIP used an ethnicity argument to try to prevent MacLennan taking the case to an employment tribunal, on the basis that Scottish Gypsy Travellers were not a minority and that he could not therefore have been victimised under race relations legislation.

In a landmark judgement on 20 October 2008, Ken MacLennan successfully challenged an initial ruling in his former employer's favour, using evidence from



To Scottish Gypsy Travellers this looks like just more avoidance and buck-passing whilst the daily problems their community faces continue. SGTLCRC activity though has begun to bring other forces into play. UNISON Scotland, BASW and Amnesty International have all shown interest in the matter and a motion based on one that has become UNISON policy was passed at this year's STUC congress in Perth.

One question that is around in this age of regulation is how Gypsy Travellers can even get into the social care workforce themselves if their lifestyle is mobile. They will not, for instance, be able to provide the normal documentation required for a disclosure check.

So what does this mean for social workers and their practice? Sadly the SGTLCRC has evidence that authorities in Scotland still persecute Gypsy Travellers because of a refusal to accept difference in culture and lifestyle. Children who have required support because of difficulties faced by their parents have found themselves on child protection registers despite an absence of evidence of significant harm. When this has been challenged, removal from the register has followed.

In a recent seminar on domestic violence, a Lothian-based social worker had to challenge an assumption that this was

endemic amongst Gypsy Travellers - a premise that simply would not be accepted in discussion over any other ethnic minority.

Cemlyn has argued that social workers should adopt a human rights perspective on work with Gypsy Travellers<sup>3</sup> and perhaps such an approach might avoid becoming accomplice to the



*Shamus and Roseanna McPhee of SGTLCRC at Pitlochry's Bobbin Mill site*

agenda of other local authority and police agencies.

Brian Donohoe, who raised the debate in Westminster in January 2008, has spelled out where he is coming from in this. He sees two ways of addressing the Gypsy Traveller "problem" - either self regulation by Gypsy Travellers themselves (an impractical suggestion for an ethnic minority rather than an occupational group)

or state harassment by the combined forces of Department of Work and Pensions fraud investigators, consumer protection, planning, police and welfare agencies to break up encampments

and move Travellers on<sup>4</sup>. He clearly sees social work involvement in this process.

Donohoe's perspective is not unique and is likely to be replicated amongst public officialdom until such time as Scottish Gypsy Traveller rights are enshrined properly in law. Social workers have fought involvement

in oppressive practice with asylum seekers and should do so with Scottish Gypsy Travellers.

Our statutory duties are clear and we should work within them and the SSSC Code of Practice which governs our activity. Ken MacLennan's experience of using such frameworks to defend his position has not been a happy one (as will be seen in his forthcoming book) but nonetheless that should be our argument.

- The Scottish Gypsy Traveller Law Reform Coalition offers advice and given the limits of its resources act as an advocate for Scottish Gypsy Travellers and their families. Email: [sgtlrc@btinternet.com](mailto:sgtlrc@btinternet.com)

#### References:

1. Hansard, 30.1.2008
2. EHRC Research Report 12, March 2009
3. Sarah Cemlyn: "Human Rights and Gypsies and Travellers: An Exploration of the Application of a Human Rights Perspective to Social Work with a Minority Community in Britain", *British Journal of Social Work*, 38 (1) January 2008, pp153-173
4. *Irvine Herald*, 27.8.2008

*Colin Turbett is Operational Manager, Social Services, based on the Isle of Arran, North Ayrshire Council and a member of UNISON Scotland's Social Work Issues Group*



*Ken MacLennan, left, with BASW's Ronnie Barnes at the launch of the draft Bill*

Sobhan MacLennan

# A voice that needs to be heard

Social Worker of the Year Willie Macfadyen sounds a warning that social work services for deaf people are in grave danger of extinction

TODAY, social work in Scotland stands on the verge of losing vital services which should be available to a relatively small but increasingly ignored and professionally disadvantaged sector of our community - people who are deaf\*. I would like to take this opportunity to identify some of the causes of this deterioration.

To paraphrase Tony Blair, the priority for social work is and must always be "Communication, communication, communication". Without effective communication between service users and providers, there can be no real professional engagement. If there is a barrier to this communication (such as deafness) then there are serious implications for all concerned and it is the responsibility of the service provider to do all they can to minimise or remove this barrier.

It is essential to bear in mind that deaf people are just as likely to have the same range of social, emotional and practical problems as anyone else in society. Without this acknowledgement, we are faced with the possibility of deaf people of all ages becoming professionally disenfranchised. Apparent commitment to values such as "equality" and "inclusion" have now become nothing more than token phrases when applied to so many deaf people in our country.

When I first started working with deaf people some 30 years ago, after a number of years in generic mainstream services, I discovered that social work services for deaf people in Scotland, while far from perfect, were in fact the envy of many of our UK and European peers. I was fortunate enough to have access to a one-year, full time post-qualifying course at Moray House College which helped to prepare me for working in this specialist area. I recall it being put to us that we were perhaps the last generation of

hearing social workers who would be entering this field and the future expectation was that these services would eventually be the preserve of deaf professionals.

Prior to the setting up of regional councils in 1974, practically all social work and welfare services for deaf people in Scotland were provided by the voluntary sector through agency agreements between local authorities and the network of deaf societies that existed at that time. Social workers with deaf people even had their own professional qualification, the Deaf Welfare Examination Board (DWEB) certificate, which contributed much to the design and development of the subsequent CQSW.

By the mid 1980s, the Scottish Branch of the National Council of Social Workers with Deaf People boasted a membership of over 50 professionals across all branches of social work. Unfortunately there were never any formal national standards for services for deaf people and while every regional council could claim to offer a service (either through continued agency agreements or by direct delivery through their own social work

departments) these often varied considerably in size and quality. But at least they were there and could have provided a foundation for proper professional development.

As far as the needs of deaf people have been concerned, the move to small, unitary local authorities has been fairly disastrous. More than half of the councils in Scotland no longer offer any identifiable or accessible services for deaf people in their area and even where services do still exist, these tend to be under-resourced to the extent that they have become increasingly ineffective.

The implications of this deterioration are that there are large areas of Scotland where deaf people are unable to get an equal and accessible social work service. There are now only a handful of social workers who can use British Sign Language (BSL)

with any fluency and very few mainstream staff with even a





minimum of deaf awareness or communication tactics training. Those staff who are employed in services for deaf people are almost exclusively based in community care or adult services.

I am unaware that there are any workers with any specialist skills or knowledge who are based in children's services (despite the fact that research in England and Wales shows that deaf children are much more likely to suffer abuse than hearing children) or offender services (where there is anecdotal evidence that deaf offenders are more liable to get a custodial sentence, because community-based services are not able to deal with them).

I am also unaware of any practising mental health officers who can work directly with deaf people even though the incidence of mental illness is up to four times higher than the general population. And as for the expectation that deaf professionals would become increasingly involved? If anything, there are now less opportunities for deaf people to train or work than there were 30 years ago. There are a number of reasons why this situation has come about, though lack of resources and managerial understanding have been major factors.

Having come into social work in the heady, optimistic days when the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968 was being introduced, I recall that one of the intentions of the Act was to avoid being too prescriptive in the legislative detail in order to encourage authorities, teams and individual workers to be innovative and imaginative in their approach.

However, in reality it has now become the case that successive generations of politicians and officials (and social work managers) have used this very lack of detail as a way of *avoiding* being innovative or imaginative. They seem to work on the basis of "If it's not in the legislation, then we don't need to do it."

Another key factor has been a lack of any recognised career structure within services for deaf people. Opportunities for professional progress have been almost non-existent and anyone

willing and able to seek further advancement has to leave deaf services and take a new role in one of the more recognised fields such as child care.

Not only does this mean that professionals are being restricted in their career development but, much more importantly, that there is rarely any deaf-friendly representation at levels of national or local authority management where decisions are made about priorities and resources.

Up until the mid 1980s, social work and welfare services with deaf people

consisted of three separate strands - general social work, sign language (BSL) interpreting and provision of environmental aids and equipment. Since that time, BSL interpreting has become a profession in its own right (a move proposed and encouraged by the National Council of Social workers with Deaf People), the provision of aids and equipment (such as flashing doorbells, vibrating alarm clocks, TV amplifiers etc) has become an easy option for some local authorities to claim they are meeting the needs of deaf people and specialist, professional social work services have been in constant decline. In addition, there are no longer any specialist social work training courses.

Some years ago, talking to a senior manager of a large local authority social work department, it was put to me that deaf people never complained about services and so there was no motivation for managers to consider improving things. This highlighted a general lack of recognition of the fact that people who are born deaf or who are deafblind are likely to have difficulties with reading and writing, and so are likely to have problems with forms about complaints procedures or any other

information leaflets. How many Scottish local authorities make their information available in an accessible BSL format? This is a classic case of deaf people literally not having a voice.

I could go on at length about the shortcomings of existing services and about the lack of commitment to address these failings. This situation has been allowed to continue because, so far, there



have been no headline-grabbing cases to draw attention to any failings in the system.

This is in stark contrast to England, where two

significant cases involving failures in services to deaf people resulted in the allocation of millions of pounds of public funds to improve access. Which raises the question - do we have to wait for some disaster in Scotland before we do something to address the problems we face?

Any attempts to suggest ways forward could take up a whole article. In the meantime, I appreciate this opportunity to offer some background on how we have got into this situation and to let you know that BASW Scotland is now working with the Scottish Government and other interested parties in setting up a summit, to be held in October, at which all these issues will be addressed. Please look out for further details.

If anyone wants to comment on this article or would like further information, please contact me at: [willie.macfadyen@hayfield.org.uk](mailto:willie.macfadyen@hayfield.org.uk)

\* Throughout this article, the word "deaf" is used to describe deaf, deafened, hard of hearing and deafblind people

*Willie Macfadyen is a Social Worker with Hayfield Support Services with Deaf People, Glasgow*

# Letter to the Editor

Dear Rostrum,

I am a former social worker with Highland Council and Aberdeen City Council and am currently undertaking research for my PhD. My area of study is emotional support for mothers caring for one or more disabled children on their own. This is an important area as there is a deficit of studies on the emotional support needs of lone mothers.

I am finding it difficult to find sufficient people to participate and wondered if any of your readers could help locate any mothers who fit these criteria and who would be willing to take part in up to four interviews each. I would like to focus on mothers in the Highlands and Islands but this can be broadened to include other parts of Scotland.

I hope to discuss issues such as their child's disability; their feelings about the emotional support they may or may not have received; emotional support they would have liked; and who provides emotional support. I am also interested in their experiences of being a lone mother caring for a child with a disability. The child's age can be from birth to 18 and the additional needs a physical disability, learning disability or both.

It is my wish that this research will highlight the issue of emotional support and in doing so I hope that we can contribute in a positive way to the future development of emotional support services for families caring for disabled children.

Although I don't have a child with a disability, I am disabled and I can empathise with and understand many issues faced by parents caring for a disabled child. I also have an MA with Commendation in Social Work and Welfare: Research and Practice.

The research has ethical approval and complete confidentiality is assured. I would appreciate it if your readers could discuss my research with any interested mothers.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you for your assistance.

**Mandy J. Beattie**  
Email: [m.j.beattie@herts.ac.uk](mailto:m.j.beattie@herts.ac.uk)

## Publications for review

The following have been received by the Editor and are available for review in *Rostrum*.

**From Jessica Kingsley Publishers**



### **Safeguarding Children Living with Trauma and Family Violence**

Arnon Bentovim, Antony Cox, Liza Bingley Miller and Stephen Pizzey, 2009  
ISBN 978-1-84310-938-9, 352 pages, £24.99

### **Working with Ethnicity, Race and Culture in Mental Health: A Handbook for Practitioners**

Hari Sewell, 2008  
ISBN 978-1-84310-621-0, 208 pages, £18.99

### **Recovery from Depression Using the Narrative Approach**

Damien Ridge, 2008  
ISBN 978-1-84310-575-6, 208 pages, £18.99

### **Reflecting on and Developing Your Practice: A Workbook for Social Care Workers**

Suzan Collins, 2009  
ISBN 978-1-84310-930-3, 64 pages, £12.99

**From The Policy Press**



### **Radical social work in practice: Making a difference**

Iain Ferguson and Rona Woodward, 2009  
ISBN 978-1-86134-991-0, 200 pages, £16.99

**From Russell House Publishing**



### **Supporting Positive Parenting**

Wendy Goddard, 2008  
ISBN 978-1-90554-129-4, 160 pages, £44.95

### **Self-esteem: A Family Affair**

Wendy Goddard, 2008  
ISBN 978-1-90554-136-2, 168 pages, £44.95

**From Venture Press**



### **From Fear to Freedom: Masculinity, Control and Change - A Workbook for Men**

Dave Morran, 2009  
ISBN 978-1-86178-082-9, 142 pages, £19.95

**From the British Association for Adoption & Fostering**



### **Access to information for post-care adults: A guide for social workers and Access to Records Officers**

Julia Feast, 2009  
ISBN 978-1-90566-467-2, 67 pages, £9.95

*A review copy will be sent to anyone interested.  
Reviews for the next edition to be received by 1 September 2009*

Contact: BASW Scotland Office,  
Tel: 0131 221 9445  
Email: [j.grant@basw.co.uk](mailto:j.grant@basw.co.uk)



## Obituary

# Dorothy Sutherland 1937-2009

Kate Pryde

DOROTHY SUTHERLAND, a former Convenor of the BASW Scotland Committee and long-standing Secretary of the Forth Valley Branch, died on 22 April after a short illness.

Dorothy was born and bred in Glasgow and always proud of her roots. Academically bright, she gained entrance to the Notre Dame High School for Girls, where she was top of her class for four years. She had hoped to train as a teacher but had to leave school on the death of her father.

She obtained an administrative post in the Planning Department of Glasgow Corporation, the only female staff member amongst 40 men. Here she met Douglas, to whom she was married for just over 50 years, celebrating her Golden Wedding in hospital.

Before marrying, Dorothy took a course in Business Studies and Personnel Management at Skerry's College, which led to a post as a Personnel Officer for an American firm for four years. On marrying, she and Douglas moved to Bonnybridge, where they started a family - Lauren, now an advocate and Calum, a biochemist. As a young mother, she sought information about pre-school playgroups and set one up in the village. Her involvement grew, leading her to become the first Secretary of the Scottish Pre-School Playgroups Association.

After the implementation of the Social Work (Scotland) Act 1968, Dorothy competed successfully for the post of Pre-School Playgroup Organiser in Stirling County Council. This evolved into finding resources for children who needed care and identifying potential foster parents and childminders.

With the advent of Central Region in 1975, Dorothy became the Organiser of Residential Child Care for three years, before working with the Housing Department on services for older

people and people with disabilities. She then decided to apply for a place on a pilot Certificate in Social Service (CSS) course. Later, she completed a Certificate in Community Care and one in Senior Management.

Dorothy became passionate about the rights of older people, particularly the right to good quality residential and nursing home care. She championed this not only as a senior manager - described by one colleague as "doing the deed not talking the talk" - but also on the national scene. She recognised the value of good quality staff and supported them but was quick to deal with those who did not meet her high standards.

She served on the boards of Alzheimer Scotland, Trust Housing Association and Age Concern Scotland. Betty Bridgeford, former Chair of Age Concern Scotland, remembers her contributions as "always valuable".

She took voluntary severance with local government reorganisation in 1996 but was then recruited by Falkirk Council to do specific pieces of work, initially at Falkirk Royal Infirmary and then at the Joint Dementia Initiative project. At the same time, she was a volunteer for other local ventures, helping set up the Braveheart Project and the Central Scotland Appropriate Adult Scheme.

For as long as anyone locally can remember, Dorothy had been secretary of BASW's Forth Valley Branch, the sole surviving branch in Scotland. This was primarily due to Dorothy's dedication to the task, keeping the rest of us right and ensuring the continuation of a programme of topical meetings which allowed members and non-members to come together regularly. Many members sought and received support and advice from her on professional matters over the years. She was also diligent in keeping *Rostrum* aware



of branch activities, serving on its Editorial Group for many years.

Dorothy greatly enjoyed annual conferences, not only for the professional content but also for meeting colleagues from throughout the UK. A memorable conference was held in Southport in 1999. The late Basil Kift was allocated a grand hotel room - not only was it grand, it had a water bed! Basil was "persuaded" to host a party, the theme of which seemed to be "how many social workers can get onto a water bed?" It was great fun and Dorothy, ever caring, helped restore Basil's room and get rid of the empty bottles before she went to bed.

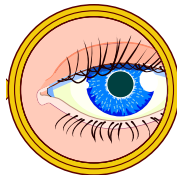
Dorothy had a strong belief in public service and a strong sense of justice, especially for those unable to speak for themselves. She had a way of involving people through quiet determination and a sense of humour, which usually saw her achieving her end.

Dorothy had been making some progress in hospital so it was a considerable shock when she died. The attendance of so many social workers and BASW colleagues at her funeral service demonstrated the regard in which she was held. Apart from being a good social worker, Dorothy was a good and loyal friend.

- Dorothy's daughter Lauren is running two half marathons for Alzheimer Scotland in her mum's memory. She would welcome any support at: [www.justgiving.com/laurensutherland](http://www.justgiving.com/laurensutherland)

*Kate Pryde is Chair of the Forth Valley Branch of BASW*

# MediaWatch



*Cutting Edge: The Homecoming*

Channel 4, 14 May

Reviewed by Bill Grieve

I RECENTLY visited a children's home in Kathmandu which was recommended to me. In the context of the very rickety Nepalese social services, it was impressive primarily for its loving atmosphere.

Older children are encouraged to develop a protective and nurturing relationship with the younger ones and when I arrived a van was being packed with the belongings of two houseparents who had been dismissed for not being sufficiently caring towards the children.

Someone with links to the home told me that during one of her visits she heard the Buddhist founder say to the children: "You are lucky to be here, because here you will be able to learn how to love each other, not because of family ties, but because you are human beings together and that's the most important thing you can ever learn."

In other meetings in Nepal, I noticed the use of language like this - the unabashed insistence that having an open and loving heart is the most important attribute of a human being and the most pressing developmental priority to inculcate.

Would this be true in Scotland or would we regard it as naïve? In this demanding and difficult world

would it be resilience, self-confidence or self-esteem that we would aim to develop in those we are responsible for?

It was a loving heart that lay at the centre of *The Homecoming*, a moving documentary about 38-year-old journalist Rachel Roberts, who had lived in a Doncaster children's home with her sister for 15 months before being fostered. She had very good memories of this period in her life and realised how central the matron Tina had been to her emotional development.

This drove her to seek out not only Tina but the other children she lived with during that time as well as her social service records which held many unwelcome surprises: "Someone, somewhere has knowledge about your childhood that you don't have - I'm totally and utterly broadsided."

Her visit to what used to be the children's home revealed, quite extraordinarily, that the manager of the pub across the road was her half-brother who had also been in the home for a period. Their father had visited Rachel and her sister, but not his son, who for reasons unknown was told not to reveal he was her brother. His bitterness against his father still ran deep.

Rachel had no memory of her mother and Tina was the first maternal figure in her life. "I have beautiful memories of this woman," she said. Other ex-charges had a similar sense. Florence, a black woman with a successful career, kept going back to see Tina after being returned to her birth family. "One little light can inspire you for the rest of your life" and it clearly had for her.



Belonging was another theme and one of the most moving moments was when Rachel tracked down two brothers who had also been in the children's home. Afterwards in tears, trying to express what she felt, she said there had been the beginning of "a kind of belonging" for her, of being with "other people of my kind."

On the whole it seemed the girls had done better than the boys but one of the most intriguing personalities was Brian, who everyone remembered as being the bully in the home. When Rachel managed to find him she learned he had spent all his childhood in children's homes.

He had raised two sons on his own and was astonished when she tentatively raised his bullying reputation. He had no memory of this and seemed genuinely regretful at causing distress to others. In building his adult life, as the programme maker put it, Brian had "chosen not to let his past dominate him" and I sensed that a large component of this involved suppression of memories.

But key for them all was Tina and her kindly husband Dennis. As Tina put it: "All I've ever done since I were little is to look after other people's children - and I loved it." They did too and for many it was the protective factor in damaged and abusive childhoods which made it possible to go on to have a life in the truest sense.

*Bill Grieve is a former Chief Executive of the Aberlour Child Care Trust and currently works as a freelance consultant*



*Rachel, highlighted, with her friends from the home*



*Tourettes: I Swear I Can't Help It*  
BBC One, 26 May  
Reviewed by Janice Mylan

THIS WAS a follow up on the life of John Davidson who suffers the full blown and most severe form of the neurological condition Tourette Syndrome. He was first filmed as a recently diagnosed 16-year-old in *John's Not Mad* (1988) and again in *The Boy Can't Help It* (2002) when he was in his early thirties.

That programme also introduced eight-year-old Greg Storey from Pickering in North Yorkshire, who'd been diagnosed the year before. This latest documentary revisits John, now 37, and Greg who is now 15 - about the same age John was when he was first filmed.

We not only work with John but have also become firm friends with him, his friend Dotty and Greg and his family so we took a special interest. So little is known about Tourette Syndrome and there are so many myths surrounding it. When programmes like this are on national television, the hope is that they will give an accurate and sympathetic account. We were not disappointed.



*If Greg laughs his friends will too*

The programme starts with John asking: "If you ask anybody what's the funniest illness or condition, most people will say Tourettes because it's bizarre, it's like a wild madness." He, along with the rest of the people interviewed, was accepting of the fact that some of the symptoms can be amusing.

For instance, when John's friend Stuart Colquhoun, known as

Chopper, turns up for a Tourette Scotland Adult Group meeting - both are severely affected vocally and are liable to trigger each other off.

As a lovely lady from Citizens Advice Bureau talks through disability benefits, Chopper looks at John's dog and says: "Your dog's got tits!" When she says "At any given moment, you might need a minder" John shouts out: "Arthur Daley". And the mention of speech problems is followed by "blah, blah, blah" and "Pakistanis and Iraqis".

Greg explains that he has a number of random vocal tics but the word "chicken" has stuck with him and he has no idea why. The fact that only one in 10 people have the "swearing" part of the condition was well highlighted.

The point is though that it is OK to laugh *with* people with Tourettes but not *at* them. Greg's friends speak about how if Greg laughs, then they will too. These youngsters have grown up with Greg and are well educated in Tourette Syndrome.

It also shows how Greg and his very supportive family accept him and his condition - in contrast to John's difficult start in life. John blames himself for his mum and dad splitting up. Although he's in touch with his family, his mum moved away to remarry when John was young. Footage from the previous documentaries show the family did not receive the right support and information.

Dotty, Chris and their family took John in despite his difficulties after getting to know him through one of



*John feels at his most relaxed when out in the open*

their own sons. Dotty said: "We have a family joke that John came for the weekend and stayed for 20 odd years!" He still visits most days and it was interesting how they had adapted almost unconsciously to some of John's more socially inappropriate tics (spitting when eating for example).

The comparisons come in again

with Greg's hope and expectation of meeting a special someone and John's heartbreaking and moving description of how he has not.

Despite reassurances from friends that he will find someone who accepts him for who he is, he asks: "But how long do I have to wait?"

Another touching scene is when John

describes how he is at his most relaxed when out in open spaces, fishing or walking his dog - because there are no boundaries and he doesn't have to worry about offending or accidentally hitting someone through involuntary movements.

This documentary was a most balanced and heart warming insight into how it can be for someone living with this sometimes painful, often socially isolating and embarrassing condition.

*Janice Mylan is Acting Manager of Tourette Scotland and the mother of two sons with Tourette Syndrome*



*Chopper: Liable to trigger John off*

# BOOK REVIEWS

## Good Practice in Safeguarding Adults: Working Effectively in Adult Protection

Edited by Jacki Pritchard  
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008  
ISBN 978-1-84310-699-9, £19.99

## Good Practice in the Law and Safeguarding Adults: Criminal Justice and Adult Protection

Edited by Jacki Pritchard  
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2008  
ISBN 978-1-84310-937-2, £19.99  
Reviewed by Bert Calder, Mental Health Officer, Falkirk Council

WHEN reviewing a book, I look at the title and think: "What is the author trying to tell me?" The words that grabbed me in these books were "effective" and "good". I then began to feel like an old car that has seen better days - the clutch sticks, the accelerator doesn't quite react when the pedal hits the floor. The word "effective" suggests exchanging my engine for theirs or better still, a new car. If so, what's this new model all about? Both titles invited me to jump in and find out.

Jacki Pritchard, a stalwart in the adult protection field in England, has edited these books to cover a variety of different aspects of good practice. The fact that she has harnessed such an impressive set of authors (27) from a range of academic backgrounds speaks for itself. This immediately tells me both books will have lots of reference information and are likely to have set presentations which are easier on the brain.

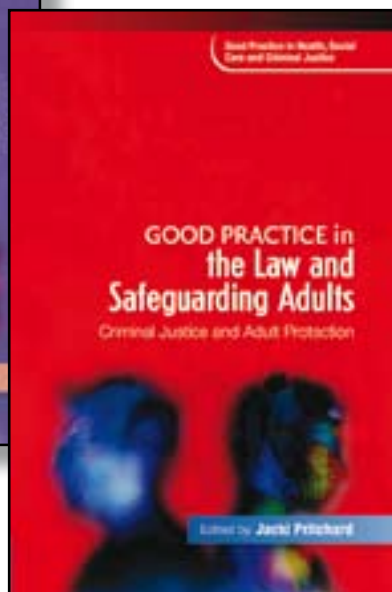
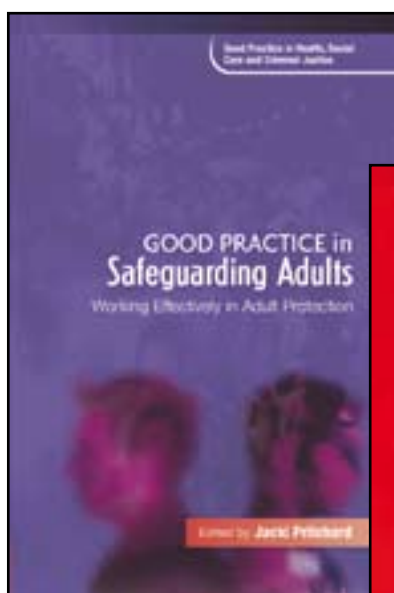
I am not disappointed. The topics covered in the *Working Effectively* book range from elder abuse in black and minority ethnic

communities, brain injury and financial abuse to less familiar issues such as older adults in prison and domestic violence and honour-based crime.

The subjects in her *Criminal Justice* book are equally specialist covering 11 areas such as capacity and financial abuse; confidentiality and information sharing; and Scottish adult protection legislation to name but three. As one would expect, most of the articles overfeed the reader to the extent they need to revisit and digest the contents. Such is the variety of learning on show.

To take an example from each, in *Working Effectively* the chapter

on older adults in prison by Adrian Hayes and



Seena Fazel, academics in Manchester and Oxford respectively, approach this subject using the headings - discussing policy documents; facts and figures; definitions; the social and health needs of older prisoners and how these needs can be met by a proper assessment, management and social care. It is touching to be made aware that prisoners' need for protection measures are just as vital as those who have their freedom.

In the *Criminal Justice* book, Kathryn Mackay's chapter focuses

on what she terms as a "distinctive Scottish approach" in the form of the new adult support and protection statute with its own words such as "harm" and its three protection powers of assessment, removal and banning orders.

Pritchard has a deliberate strand threaded through each book:

- Effective practice must start with removing familiar and unfamiliar labels for groups and applying the same compassionate approach to all due to their shared vulnerability
- Each professional must have at their disposal accurate legal knowledge of all the countries in Britain to implement change.

In other words, the practitioner in adult protection in the present century is almost reinvented as a specialist in generic knowledge. Pritchard's books help encourage the spread of such ideas.

In *Working Effectively*, Pritchard gives print space over to victims of abuse. The contributors are a therapeutic support group she founded called Existing Beyond. Their focus is on the long term healing journey resulting from being abused. There are seven contributors, each with their own moving stories that echo recovery journey experiences in adults with a mental illness.

Finally in *Working Effectively* Peter Sadler, an Adult Protection Coordinator from Lincolnshire, describes his work at times as "a lonely job and not a job that wins you friends and praise."

The warning here is that any practitioner in this field should have their own "effective" self-care and self-knowledge to avoid burnout well before applying the creative ideas and learning available in both books to influence professional practice. If this is ignored, they may run out of more than just petrol.



## Sexual abuse assessments: using and developing frameworks for practice

Edited by Martin C Calder  
Russell House Publishing, 2009  
ISBN 978-1-90554-128-7, £49.95  
Reviewed by Martin Henry,  
National Manager, Stop it Now!  
Scotland

THE PROFESSIONAL evaluation of sexual abuse and its likelihood are for many of us a continuous feature of day to day practice and its demands. This is equally true for children's services social workers as it is for clinicians working on treatment programmes and forensic settings or criminal justice social workers in prisons and in the field.

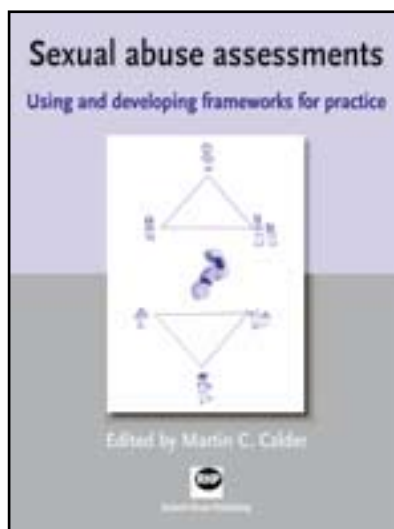
The currency of these issues is increasing and our collective understanding of sexually abusive and harmful behaviour reflects ever-greater complexity. This comes when the number of children on child protection registers in Scotland primarily for sexual abuse has taken a dramatic downturn. In his introduction, Martin Calder comments: "There has been an alarming demise of sexual abuse cases entering the child protection system over recent years... despite an expansion of the areas captured under the definitional umbrella."

Practitioners in various settings and from various disciplines are continually faced with circumstances where it is crucial to arrive at some evidence-based evaluation of the likelihood of sexual abuse, the degree of harm possible, the disposition of offenders to treatment or change and the likely effect on families and communities of individuals who may constitute a risk.

This compendium of articles provides a very useful reference for assessment techniques and models across the spectrum of situations where sexual abuse or harmful behaviour is apparent. These range from those with a victimological focus (Calder's chapter on understanding the impact of sexual abuse on victims) to a more criminological or forensic perspective (David Briggs on core

assessment of adult male sex offenders).

The topics go some way to reflect the "expansion" of areas where professionals are active in undertaking assessments and importantly includes children and young people with "sexually harmful behaviours". Andrew Durham sets the context and this is complemented by an incisive exploration of assessment issues (Miccio-Fonseca and Rasmussen) and Graeme Richardson's detailed account of the Sexually Harmful Adolescent Risk Protocol.



The book further explores the often under-recognised differential approaches in assessment between particular populations. This includes stimulating and challenging work by Susan Robinson, Hilary Eldridge, Ian Elliot and Sherry Ashfield on the assessment of women who sexually abuse and contributions on the evaluation and assessment of young people and adults with learning disabilities.

Child protection practitioners frequently ask about assessing the potential for internet offenders to remain in families. The co-relation between viewing abusive images online and actual contact offences against children poses a real challenge to professionals. As always, Ethel Quayle provides an essential starting point and her chapter on Assessment of Internet Sexual Abuse is no exception.

Further chapters include approaches in relation to mothers of sexually abused children and safe care. Calder and Regan's

contribution on contact considerations where sexual abuse and domestic violence feature is also recommended to those providing information for child protection proceedings.

This updates Calder's previous *The complete guide to sexual abuse assessments*. Its value is in its accessibility to practitioners and comprehensiveness. The practical approach taken by the authors will be of considerable value to all engaged in child protection and provides a solid guide to assessment tools, approaches and issues for consideration in undertaking this work.

I would strongly recommend this as a reference for practitioners and managers. It is mercifully free of academic jargon and imponderables and keeps to a welcome style of accessibility and practical application. The contributors also deserve praise for providing a wealth of useful and engaging material that will undoubtedly assist our work in this challenging and complex field.

## Kitezh: A community approach to raising children in Russia

Dimitry Morozov  
Eland Publishing, 2008  
ISBN 978-1-906011-36-9, £12.99  
Reviewed by Ruth Stark,  
Professional Officer, BASW  
Scotland

KITEZH is named after a mystical city in a Russian legend "which sank beneath the waters of a great lake but was foretold to rise once more in Russia's darkest hour to herald the dawn of a new age." It is a co-operative of foster parents who have created a community 300km from Moscow providing homes and education for children orphaned or not able to live with their parents.

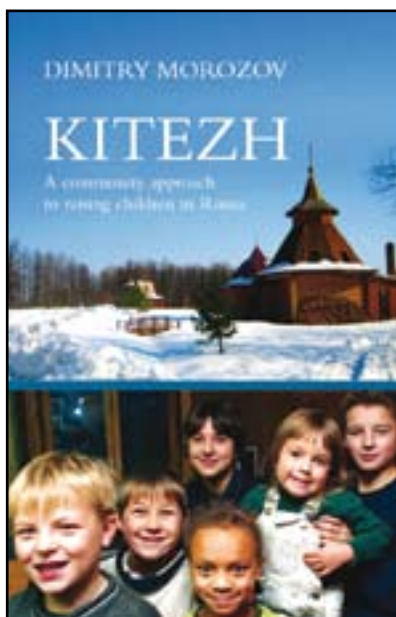
They support their young people beyond school years into settled lives in the community and provide the long term stability that people need. There are aspects of the way they have deinstitutionalised child care from which we could learn and I would commend this

book to those working in child care in the UK and those who become involved in international work through NGOs.

The delight of the book is not only in the descriptions of what they achieve with children and how they have learnt from their mistakes but the journey they have made through their cultural, philosophical and political base to evolve a uniquely Russian home for displaced Russian children. This aspect is very thought-provoking in helping us understand the different cultural and political frameworks in which we work.

The founder of the community and author of the book was brought up as a communist, travelled in India, became a journalist and had his own radio show before deciding in the early 1990s to leave his comfortable lifestyle in Moscow and acquire a field with no plans how to progress.

His personal journey and the description of the evolution of KitezH are fascinating. Each building is built by the community to serve the community. He has taken information from outside Russia to help develop it but only used that which is applicable in the Russian situation. David Dean, founder of Raddery School in Scotland, is a consultant.



I was fortunate to meet the author recently in Edinburgh and talk to some of the people who have been to work in KitezH. This fresh approach that has a proven

track record in a country that has a major problem with the number of displaced children is indeed good news and one that I hope to be able to learn more about. This is a good read with much to reflect upon in how we meet the needs and aspirations of our young people in public care.

### Managing Children's Homes: Developing Effective Leadership in Small Organisations

Leslie Hicks, Ian Gibbs, Helen Weatherly and Sarah Byford  
Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2007  
ISBN 978-1-84310-542-8, £25  
*Reviewed by Romy Langeland, Independent Consultant and Chair, National Residential Child Care Initiative*

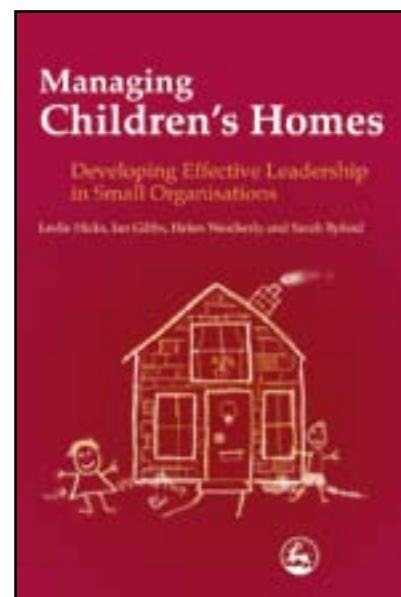
THIS IS a further contribution from the York University team who have added so significantly to our understanding of what matters in residential child care. The book focuses on the leadership role of the manager and ways in which resources are deployed to impact on care and outcomes for children.

Children's homes are placed here within the larger organisational systems in which they work, examining the importance of the level of support from external management and the clarity of role and the status of the manager. Alongside this, there is consideration of internal factors such as the strategies for dealing with behaviour and education which are deployed by the manager and the extent to which the manager works with and influences the team.

What emerges is the importance of the leadership role of the manager in creating a culture in which staff can operate confidently. The manager is at the boundary of the home and its wider organisation, and the authors suggest that the most effective managers are well placed and recognised both inside and outside the home. Good staff development is important but the practice and the processes matter most. Managers who have good

and well worked out strategies, particularly in relation to behaviour and education, lead teams which are in turn more confident in their practice, where morale is high and the young people's well being is greater.

Although the needs of each individual have to be addressed within the context of a group care setting, managers must be confident in working with groups as well as with individuals - conclusions that suggest the need for continued attention to the developmental needs of managers.



The examination of costs is interesting. The total weekly cost per resident is not related to the well-being of the young people. Likewise, higher staff ratios increased costs but did not have a significant impact on outcomes.

This volume recapitulates the message that each children's home is one part of the larger system of children's services and successful outcomes will require all the parts to be working effectively together.

We can work hard to ensure that staff are well qualified and that practice continues to improve but as the authors say "improvements in successful outcomes are often eroded when the young person leaves the children's home" and that remains as great a challenge for us. This book will be a helpful and thought-provoking read for those working both inside and outside children's homes.



## Forth Valley Branch News

OUR LAST meeting on 5 May started by recognising how much we are going to miss Dorothy Sutherland.

The topic for the evening was "Issues around children living with drug addicted parents". There were valuable contributions from Joan Lyle, Service Manager for Clackmannanshire Council; Pauline Proudfoot, Children's Reporter for Stirling and Clackmannanshire; and Rena Phillips, Independent Practitioner.

It was suggested that this area of work is now an intrinsic part of social work. Young parents addicted to drugs are having babies and the impact on grandparents is significant. As ever for social work, there are critical decisions to be made in the interests of the child.

The question was posed as to whether social workers have "taken their eye off the ball" and have been giving more support to parents than to children.

Rena suggested that the damage being done to children was a hidden problem and that for many children, home is a dangerous place. We were left with the enormity of the problem but wanting to seek ways to tackle it. We also recognised that this is now a cradle to grave issue.

Our next meeting will be on 25 August.

Kate Pryde, Branch Chair  
Email: [kate.pryde@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:kate.pryde@tiscali.co.uk)



In the year of Homecoming Scotland 2009, we are planning to welcome home one of Scotland's finest sons - Ian Johnston!

You are invited to join us to welcome Ian back to Scotland on Saturday, 15 August from 2pm to 6pm at an event to be held in Edinburgh.

For more details, please  
RSVP by 7 August to:  
Johan Grant  
BASW Scotland  
Tel: 0131 221 9445  
Email: [j.grant@basw.co.uk](mailto:j.grant@basw.co.uk)



## Diary Dates

### September 8

Young people and mental wellbeing: New directions, better outcomes  
Our Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh  
Holyrood Conferences,  
Tel: 0131 272 2133

### September 8-9

The Future is Older  
Older People for Older People  
International Conference  
Glasgow University Campus,  
Dumfries  
Website: [www.o4os.eu/](http://www.o4os.eu/)

### September 16

Supporting Scotland's Carers:  
From Recognition to Rights  
Sheraton Grand Hotel, Edinburgh  
Holyrood Conferences,  
Tel: 0131 272 2133.

### September 16

Addiction: Understanding & Stopping Addictive Behaviour  
Mindfields College Seminar  
Pollock Halls, Edinburgh  
Website: [www.mindfields.org.uk](http://www.mindfields.org.uk)

## BASW Committees

### August 19

Rostrum Editorial Group

### September 2

BASW Scotland Committee

### September 8

Staff Meeting, Birmingham

### September 9

IRAP

### September 16

BASW Council, Birmingham

## BASW Scotland Office

### Office Closed

**Monday 6 July -  
Trades Holiday**

**Monday 31 August -  
Bank Holiday**

**Monday 21 September -  
Autumn Holiday**

## Next Rostrum

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**BASW**  
**Scotland**

# **Social Work Awards 2009**

**Social Worker of the Year**

**Residential Care Worker  
of the Year**

**Student Social Worker  
of the Year**  
(Practice Award)

The winners will receive -  
**The BASW Scotland  
Social Work Award**

**A European City Break**

**One year's free  
membership of BASW**

to be presented at a celebration  
in December 2009

**Closing Date: 30 November 2009**

Further information and  
nomination forms from:

Mrs Johan Grant, Administrative Officer,  
BASW Scotland, 3rd Floor Princes House,  
5 Shandwick Place, Edinburgh, EH1 3BG

Tel: 0131 221 9445 • Fax: 0131 221 9444  
Email: [j.grant@basw.co.uk](mailto:j.grant@basw.co.uk)

**Make your nomination today!**



Jennifer Lindsay  
Student Social Worker  
of the Year 2007

Willie Macfadyen  
Social Worker of  
the Year 2008

Grace Anne Williamson  
Residential Care Worker  
of the Year 2007

**They have all been winners -  
who'll be next?**



**Do you know someone on the  
front line who deserves an  
Award for their work  
with people?**

John Black  
Social Worker of  
the Year 2007

Stacey Thomson  
Student Social Worker  
of the Year 2008

Scott Hunter  
Residential Care Worker  
of the Year 2008

