**Each and Every Child Initiative**

**Recruitment brief**

**Introduction**

The Each and Every Child initiative is a new programme of work which aims to tell a compelling story about children and young people in the care system, **transforming the current public narrative and mobilising people at all levels in the community to take action to improve their life chances**.

Whilst care experienced children and young people are all individuals with their own unique skills, talents and strengths, as population groups it is well-documented that they face poor outcomes in relation to many areas of life including health and wellbeing, education, employment and housing.

Systemic factors play a significant role in these poor outcomes. Factors such as organisational behaviours, market forces and policy frameworks (and their implementation) all contribute to the challenges facing care experienced children and young people. **Public attitudes are fundamental to influencing this wider system picture.** These attitudes have a profound effect on the daily lives of care experienced children and young people. Critically, these public attitudes are also influential in supporting decision-makers to make policy and financial decisions which directly impact care experienced children and young people and their families.

Following the publication of the findings of the Independent Care Review, and the growth of a movement around care experience, there is a particularly enabling context in which to situate this work. Across the UK and beyond, Scotland is currently being viewed as taking a leading role in ground-breaking work to reimagine care for children and young people and creating a fresh, inspiring narrative around care experience. The Each and Every Child initiative would directly complement and build on this by taking an innovative, but evidenced-based, approach to developing this reimagined narrative.

**Work to date**

In 2017, a group of funders[[1]](#footnote-2) in Scotland collaborated with the [FrameWorks Institute,](https://www.frameworksinstitute.org/) internationally recognised experts in utilising communications to support social change. This collaboration has, to date, encompassed two distinct phases.

**Phase 1** helped to build an understanding of what the ‘experts’ (people with professional experience and lived experience) believe are the important themes around care experience. The results of this research were then compared with findings from research with the general public. This research, [Seeing and Shifting the Roots of Opinion](https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/social-impact/publications/how-do-the-public-and-care-sector-think-about-care-in-scotland), and [Slipping Through the Cracks](https://www.therobertsontrust.org.uk/publications/each-and-every-child-slipping-through-the-cracks/), [update links on TRT website] enabled us to better understand where there are communication challenges for those wishing to campaign and advocate for progressive approaches to supporting care experienced children and young people. **Three key communications challenges** were highlighted:

* Care experienced children and young people are seen as “forever damaged” as a result of factors such as trauma and neglect
* The care system itself is viewed as dysfunctional and unable to provide the loving, nurturing care that children and young people need to thrive
* The public considers that children and young people generally end up in care due to poor parenting and bad choices

**Phase 2** focused on testing reframing strategies to counteract these communication challenges, resulting in **a series of evidence-based recommendations** (not yet publicly available) to support care experienced people and their supporters to tell a different story about the care system and the children and young people in it. From this work an easily accessible Toolkit will be produced to help people put the findings into practice.

The first two phases of the reframing work in Scotland featured engagement with a cross-sector Advisory Group[[2]](#footnote-3) which collectively has extensive experience of working on the agenda around care experience and its members are committed to long-term positive change. Importantly, the Advisory Group also developed strong links with the Independent Care Review (ICR), and this connection will continue and be further developed as the ICR, now known as The Promise, moves into its implementation phase. The Advisory Group will not continue into this new phase of the initiative but will continue to be important stakeholders as the initiative develops. Short-life Expert Groups may be created during the course of the initiative to draw together a range of stakeholders with specific knowledge or additional expertise.

**Looking ahead**

Following these important stages of research, the Each and Every Child initiative is the essential next step to ensuring that **the evidence is put into practice**; it will provide the focal point for engaging a diverse range of organisations and individuals in reframing work to create the scale that is needed to influence public opinion and make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people. A small staff team will be established which will have the focus and expertise to coordinate this work, support networks and lead the strategic development of the initiative, creating a significant profile for reframing in Scotland. FrameWorks Institute will act as consultants in the initiative, training the staff team in workshop delivery and technical support over Years 1 and 2 with the gradual phasing out of FrameWorks as the staff team’s expertise grows.

The initiative will proactively engage with a wide group of stakeholders which will include third sector organisations, care experienced people, Corporate Parents, professional/umbrella bodies, journalists and communications professionals.

Three interlinked priority areas have been established for the Initiative and the focus of the staff team will be to create an integrated programme of work. Crucially, this work will require in-built flexibility to enable delivery to adapt according to what organisations and individuals need, when they need it.

**Priority One: Early Adopters**

We recognise that the most powerful way to communicate the potential of reframing is for people to see it in action. Accordingly, the staff team will recruit early adopter organisations and, with FrameWorks Institute, will work intensively with them to embed the tools within their work. This approach builds on an early adopter trial with Children’s Hearing Scotland (CHS) on their 2019 recruitment campaign. This work, which produced CHS’s most successful recruitment drive to date, is a strong example of how this focused work can support organisations to deliver campaigns which both improve public understanding/attitudes and achieve communications goals.

**Priority 2: Awareness raising, training and building a community**

This priority area will focus on raising awareness of and building support for the reframing techniques, highlighting why they are so important in improving attitudes and understanding amongst the public. It will be led by the staff team and will require a targeted engagement approach, which may include presentations, one-to-one conversations with key organisations and networks, writing articles, blogs and social media posts.

As this activity progresses, the staff team will establish a Peer Network which will bring representatives from these organisations together with others who are interested in the work so they can share experiences and offer one another peer support. Over time, this Peer Network will grow and deepen, but from the beginning a key principle will be inclusion – anyone with an interest in the work can engage.

**Priority 3:** **Campaigners by experience**

It is vital that care experienced people are at the heart of the work to positively change the public narrative around the care system and the children and young people within it. A key priority of the Each and Every Child initiative will be to equip care experienced people to become **campaigners by experience**. This will be a timely opportunity for a movement that is growing in strength but is also still finding its way – care experienced people will have the opportunity to develop skills and expertise which can improve the impact of their campaigning work whilst also offering a buffer against any possible personal exposure. The staff team will have responsibility for connecting with a variety of organisations, initiatives and individuals which can provide a route to recruiting care experienced people to a dedicated programme. This programme will be closely linked to the wider awareness-raising and training programme (priority 2), with a view to care experienced people being core members of the Peer Network.

Clearly in the years ahead the external landscape will be shaped by the impacts of COVID-19. Whilst we cannot be sure at this stage what the implications will be, there are some likely possibilities. We believe that the fact that the pandemic may lead to increased hardship and/or hardened attitudes strengthens the case for this initiative. It may also create a context where we have to reshape ways of working and this could be a useful tool for organisations and individuals in this space.

**Governance**

The initiative is a partnership project between CELCIS, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Life Changes Trust, The Robertson Trust, Scottish Government, and Social Work Scotland. Representatives from this funder group will form a Management Group which will work with the staff team and have strategic oversight of the initiative and its management. Open recruitment is taking place for two care experienced people to join the Management Group. The staff team will be hosted within The Robertson Trust which will provide line management function. The Robertson Trust is the largest independent grant-making trust in Scotland with the vision of a fair and compassionate Scotland where everyone is valued and able to flourish. The Trust has recently launched a new 10-year strategy which will focus on helping improve the lives of people and communities with experience of poverty, trauma or both.

1. The Funders Group has included CELCIS, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Life Changes Trust, The Robertson Trust, Scottish Government, Social Work Scotland and the William Grant Foundation [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Advisory Group membership – Who Cares? Scotland, Action for Children, The Coalition of Care and Support Providers Scotland, Children’s Hearing Scotland, Social Work Scotland, Staf, Crossreach, Independent Care Review (co-chairs of the Stigma group), Glasgow City Council, Scottish Government and Funders Group [↑](#footnote-ref-3)