

GETTING IT RIGHT FOR EVERY CHILD

#ScotROCon19 #BeTheChange

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Chair: National IRO Managers Partnership

www.niromp.org



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“Building on the shoulders of giants”



“We are the majority who have successfully turned the expected statistics on their head, shook them and got on with life, yet rarely get spoken about or heard”

- P Yusuf (McCorack)

**Background &
introductions**

**Negotiating
Identity**



Children's participation

Interview with Chris Brunstrom, Independent Reviewing Officer.

<https://youtu.be/WgZzxYgEq8s>

Discussion and thoughts

- What is care?
- What is love?
- What does it look like?
- What does it feel like?



“Sometimes our care feels more like ‘warehousing’ and we can feel as though we are being ‘passed around’.”

- Care Experienced Conference 2019

A person wearing a red jacket stands in a field, looking towards a sunset over a landscape with hills and a fence. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and yellow. The text is overlaid on the upper part of the image.

**“The care experienced
family have put their
trust in you.”**

- Care Experienced Conference 2019

National IRO Managers Partnership



Strategic Priorities 2019 - 22

- **Voices of children** – loud, proud and entitled
- **Secure love and care** – children feel loved and securely cared for
- **Relationships** – a focus on people, networks, wellbeing and resilience
- **Public Affairs** – clear vision, leadership and direction.

The Independent Reviewing Officer

2002 House of Lords Judgement

Some children without an adult to act on their behalf may not have effective means to initiate a challenge.

Response was to make it a legal requirement for an IRO be appointed to each looked after child.

The Revised Care Planning Regulations and Guidance 2011:

Strengthened the role of the IRO
Chairing of statutory reviews

Also monitoring children's situations on an ongoing basis.

**Statutory guidance:
IRO Handbook 2011.**

Children and Social Work Act 2017

The bill faced a rocky passage through parliament. The government bowed to pressure and scrapped a set of controversial clauses that offered councils the opportunity to seek exemptions from social care law and removal of the Independent Reviewing Officer.

Children's participation

Interview with Chris Brunstrom, Independent Reviewing Officer.

<https://youtu.be/O5-vZXQFE3U>

WHAT'S YOUR
STORY

Voices of children

Strategies & resources

To what extent are children's records part of helping them as children and adults to understand their lived experience?

How do we shape and add to the storytelling about children's life story, care history and identity?

Changing culture

“It shouldn't have taken me more than half my adult life to work out my identity.”

Information is critical.

Secure love and care

- Getting more love into the care system.
- Not defined by job, function or role.
- Nurturing lifelong relationships.
- Challenging risk averse cultures.
- **Love, hugs and warmth.**



Relationships are critical

Seeing the child



Shaping the future

- Recognising achievements, creativity, diversity & strengths.
- Tackling bullying, stigma, prejudice & discrimination.
- Care leavers as “more than just a number.”
- Advocate, push and chase progress.
- Use your position as local system leaders.

Local system leaders

"With a focus on children and young people's rights and being a critical friend, the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer is viewed as integral to their journey of 'Becoming' the very best they can be through, careful planning, agreed goals and aspirations and holding others to account as carers, enablers, encouragers and facilitators."

- Ian Gould, 'A View from Care'. In NIROMP Strategic Priorities 2019 – 22. Ian is care experienced & an Every Child Leaving Care Matters (#ECLCM) Ambassador.



“Lived experience must be at the core of every service that is created”

– Care Experienced Conference, 2019



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Thank you

Any questions?