



Our new website is live!

Our new website was launched at the AGM on 26 January 2021, and we'd love it if you could take a look and let us know what you think.

Our website address is still the same – sacsadopt.scot – but we've made it easier to navigate the website, tried to improve the user experience and added lots of fresh and hopefully interesting and

useful content like a 'Frequently asked questions' page and a PR & Media links page, which lists some of the mentions we've received in the press and media in recent years.

You might notice a few familiar faces in the video on the homepage, which was shot following strict Covid-19 safety guidelines! We'd like to say a big thank you to our parents who very kindly helped us with the video.

There is also now a blog and we look forward to posting regular blog posts which will be informative, educational and entertaining. Is there something you think we should blog about? We'd love to hear your suggestions. Please email them to info@standrews-children.org.uk.

Join our mailing list

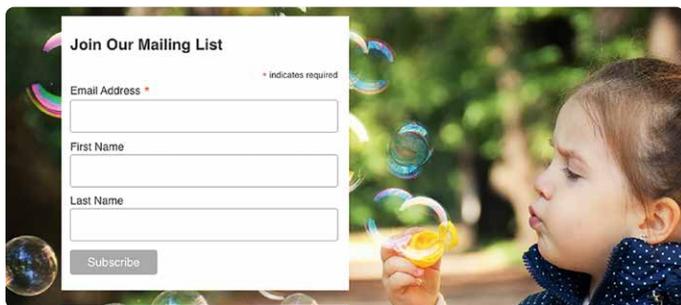
We've added a mailing list too. If you sign up you will receive updates about the work we do, invitations to our events and links to read our latest blog post, newsletter and annual review. Signing up



We have been helping families prepare to adopt since we first opened in Edinburgh in 1922. We now provide adoption and foster care services throughout the central belt and North-East Scotland and welcome adoption and fostering enquiries from all members of the community, including the LGBT+

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'Our new website is live!' continued



is very straightforward. All you need to do is provide us with your name and email address. We won't share your details with anyone and you can unsubscribe at any time.

If you would like to sign up, please click on the blue sign-up button at the foot of the homepage on the website, or type this address into your browser: sacsadopt.scot/#signup



Generous donation from a previous Trustee and long-term Friend of St Andrew's Children's Society: Diana Calder

I met Diana Calder in Edinburgh in the 1990s, while she was working for Sir Robert McAlpine. She ran his company's Edinburgh town house, which was used for meetings and corporate entertaining. She had a real gift for interior design, as well as being an accomplished chef and manager.

Diana was born in Yorkshire, attended Domestic Science College after school, and worked for several years for SAS, Scandinavian Airlines. Among her many duties she was responsible for developing the menus on the aircraft, at a time when airline food was a treat, and one of the highlights of a journey.

Diana had a great gift for friendship and retained friends, from school, college and SAS, many of whom I met at Diana's 60th birthday in Edinburgh. She also retained her gifts for planning and organising events, which meant she was a very valued member of Sir Robert's staff.

When Diana discovered my children were adopted, she asked many questions about the effects of early neglect and trauma on children, as she had a friend who had adopted two children who were causing her some concern. Diana wanted to be better informed about the effects of neglect and abuse on children so she could provide more valuable support to her friend.

Following on this contact, Diana then joined the group who ran the St Andrew's Children's Society Rainbow Ball, which ran annually for 10 years and made a significant contribution to St Andrew's

Children's Society's income over those years. Diana's flower arranging skills, her menu planning ability and her artistic eye added greatly to the success of the Balls.

Diana became a member to the Committee of Management (now the Board of Trustees) between 1998 and 2002 and was generous in giving her time and talents.

Diana retired in her early 60s and returned to her roots in Yorkshire, where several years later she married Peter Padmore, a widower who sang in the local church with Diana. They enjoyed eight very happy years together before Peter's sudden death.

Diana retained her great interest in St Andrew's Children's Society and was delighted to get regular updates on our progress. She left a very generous legacy of £26,777.30 to St Andrew's Children's Society when she died last year.

Diana will be remembered with great love by her many friends, who enjoyed her zest for life and her generous hospitality.

Maureen McEvoy

PANEL MEMBER AND FORMER CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Centenary in 2022!

Did you know that St Andrew's Children's Society celebrates its centenary next year? It was originally called The Archdiocesan Social Services Committee, when it was founded in 1922. There have been many changes since then but the main focus has always remained the same, finding safe and loving homes for vulnerable children. You can read about the charity and how it has transformed since it was founded almost 100 years ago in the History page on our website which was written by Stephen Small, our Director.

History of St Andrew's Children's Soc

Founded in 1922

St Andrew's Children's Society has operated under a few different names, the first being called The Archdiocesan Social Services Committee and was the first of its kind in the Church in the Archdiocese of St Andrews and Edinburgh providing nursery schooling and residential schooling and residential care. It was also involved in services for adults such as providing a welfare service.

The 50s and 60s

...ed its name to The Advisory ... The

Adoption Support

Virtual Friends and Family Workshops

We are continuing to hold our Virtual Friends and Family Workshops, which are proving to be very popular. We have been delighted with the numbers attending, our last three workshops had a total of 84 participants!

Covid-19 has lasted longer than anyone could have predicted, however as a staff group our IT skills have grown and developed more than we would have believed possible at the beginning. We are able to share PowerPoint™ presentations and videos with ease, which allows us to ensure we are still able to impart as much information as possible in different formats, keeping it interesting and varied.

The Virtual Friends and Family Workshop is ideal for friends and family of people who are in homestudy, recently approved or even who have children already placed with them. It is an opportunity to learn more about the children who come forward for adoption and the long lasting impact of trauma. We

ask that people parent adopted children differently to how they would a birth child, so it is an opportunity to understand that and how best to support your family member or friend.

We anticipate continuing to offer these workshops virtually even when the world does return to some kind of normal and we can be in a room together again. We are finding that the virtual workshops are allowing a lot more people to attend as they can do so from the comfort of their own home, in whichever country they happen to live in! We have participants from all over the UK and abroad. Some people find it difficult to speak out in group settings, however Zoom™ allows you to type questions and many people take advantage of that function.

If you are interested in attending the next Virtual Friends and Family Workshop please get in touch.

[Lorna MacFarlane](#) SENIOR PRACTITIONER

Virtual Friends and Family 3 February 2021 feedback:

Very useful and interesting. What a lot some children go through! I thought the video with the children speaking very powerful and sad.

I think having two people presenting the meeting is a good idea as it makes it more like a conversation. You are both very easy to listen to and your expertise and compassion are obvious.

I think the adoption wall was very powerful information, quite upsetting, but important.

I got a lot of useful info from this, thank you!

Thank you! It was very helpful and useful to understand how to support my friends. I found the video with the children talking extremely powerful.

Very helpful and very well presented.

Very interesting and useful. We especially appreciated hearing about funnelling.

Virtual Theraplay?

Here at St Andrew's Children's Society, we've had to adapt our way of working throughout the pandemic in many ways. We've had to rethink how we do preparation groups, how we undertake assessments, how we present prospective adopters to panel and how we provide adoption support to our families when we can't see them in person. No easy task for such a bunch of relational humans who thrive on in-person contact!

One of the most popular support services we offer here at St Andrew's Children's Society is Theraplay™. Theraplay uses attachment-based play activities which model healthy, attuned interactions between parent and child to help build attachment and promote healthy self-esteem and relationships. It's a fun, engaging, physical and relationship-focused interplay. Normally, when we do an Introduction to Theraplay training day, we have our adoptive parents come to the office and they learn all about the theory behind Theraplay, the dimensions of the activities and why we use them and it's a really fun, informative and practical session. Most importantly, we have our parents play some of the games to really get a feel for them and to make them feel more confident in using the activities with their children.

Rita Grant, Adoption Support Manager, and I met at the start of this year to discuss how we could still bring Theraplay to life for a group, when we couldn't meet in person. We decided that the best way to do this in the current virtual climate was to split the training into two parts; we would give a Zoom presentation of the theory behind Theraplay to the parents of an evening when the kiddos were tucked up in bed, and then meet in a second, interactive session, that parents could attend via Zoom with their child or children (given the children were being home-schooled due to the pandemic) where we would play a selection of the games.

We met with a group of adoptive parents from Adoption UK and St Andrew's Children's Society on the 25 January 2021. We took them through an online 'whistle-stop tour' of what Theraplay is, how



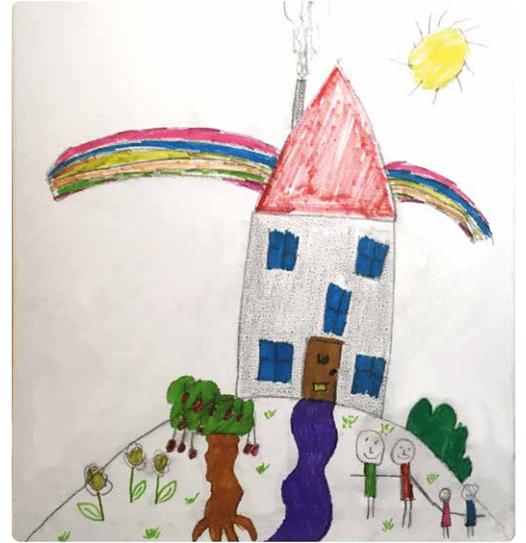
we use it, and how it can help our children regulate and connect with their caregivers. Then a couple of days later, we met again with the parents during the day, and this time they had their children with them too! The children were aged between two and nine years old. We had given our mums and dads a list of things like cotton balls, bubbles, lotion etc., in advance of the session so they were fully prepared for our activities. Rita and I led the games and gave the families instructions on how to play each game, regulated how fast or slowly we played, and sang a few silly songs along the way! All of the children engaged really well in the activities, and they certainly looked like they had a lot of fun.

Before we knew it, we were singing our goodbye song and I don't know about the mums, dads or kids, but Rita and I were sorry for the session to be ending. We had some lovely feedback from our families after the session and we are really happy to have been able to facilitate this training and share some amazing Theraplay activities with the families.

This pandemic will certainly not stop us from finding new ways of supporting our adopters and children!

Tracey Turnbull SENIOR PRACTITIONER

North adopters



Well we have all got through Christmas and survived the crazy endless arctic conditions that the weather gods threw at us at the start of the year. Yet as I type this after the Easter break, I am watching more snow falling!

We can't believe we have been dealing with this pandemic for over a year now. We have so much admiration for our adopters who have all really dug deep and dealt with home schooling children, triggered by the impact of lockdowns. All the while, missing the friends and family that normally keep us sane. We have become home-working experts, masters of Zoom and also conducted

visits in some more unusual places from swing parks to garages.

We have had a couple of Zoom support gatherings, and been able to keep in touch and laugh together about the joys of parenting. We've also heard some great advice and tips from our adopters.

We have really enjoyed learning so much about how to adapt to difficult circumstances. However, we are now looking forward to things returning to a level of normal, that means we can see everyone face-to-face and perhaps, eventually, even as a group.

[The Aberdeen Team](#)

Our Lives with Michelle McManus

Home Episodes Clips Podcast

OUR LIVES
WITH MICHELLE MCMANUS

Three wise men - a beggar, a traveller & a single father

A street beggar who got invited to Sweden for Christmas. An adventurous cyclist who spent Christmas in a remote hospital. A single man who followed his dream of becoming a dad. 28 minutes

Last on
Boxing Day 2020
18:00
BBC RADIO SCOTLAND

More episodes

PREVIOUS
The mounted policeman, the guide dog trainer & the Christmas Eve bell ringers

NEXT
Berlin Wall artist, the life model & the sheep dyke warden

See all episodes from Our Lives with Michelle McManus

Our Lives with Michelle McManus...

We were delighted when Thomas, one of our single adopters, was interviewed by Michelle McManus on the *Our Lives with Michelle McManus* BBC Radio Scotland show on Christmas Day. It was repeated on Boxing Day. He talked very movingly about his adoption journey and the joys of finally becoming a dad. Well done Thomas!

Nurture trumps nature

We were fortunate. When we first met our adopted siblings, Anna and her younger brother Paul, my husband and I were taken aback by how happy they were and prepared for adoption. They were lucky to have had great foster parents where they had found stability after chaotic and traumatic early years, with birth parents and a succession of foster parents.



We soon realised the legacy of those chaotic years though. Nocturnal and occasional diurnal enuresis, 'night terrors', attachment issues and clear (and unsurprising) gaps in their early education. At five and six, neither child could read nor even hold a pencil correctly.

Together with their teachers we quickly decided that they should repeat a year at school – moving them from among the youngest in class to the oldest, which had a positive impact on confidence. The stability school afforded them, particularly friendship groups, was key to their happiness and development throughout their time at school.

Anna struggled with both her academic and vocational subjects, but her practical nature, resilience and capacity for hard work saw her get the first job she applied for in the hospitality industry. She worked overseas where she met her fiancé. They live together, with their dog, waiting for lockdown to reopen hotels and restaurants but happy and settled.

Paul embraced a subject which found his passion and is now in his final year at university. Again, Covid-19 has unsettled his university experience but he has found firm friends and a subject he enjoys and wishes to make his career in.

Our experience has shown us that nurture can trump nature and a difficult start for adopted children need not blight their future prospects. Many people play a part in that nurture in addition to the adoptive parents – foster parents at the start, teachers throughout, friends, neighbours and fellow adopters whom we met at the St Andrew's Children's Society preparation groups. All helped bring out the best in our adopted children and enabled them to embrace their opportunities.

Written by a couple who adopted two children through St Andrew's Children's Society

Healthy-working lockdown

Over the last year, lockdown and working from home has introduced a new set of challenges, one of which has been the change to routine and regular exercise. Walking to work or walking to the shop at lunchtime, even visiting the gym has not been possible, coupled with working closer to the kitchen cabinet, has meant there has been one undesirable effect that we are all keen to shift!

After a number of conversations with our adopters and hearing about how they have managed, staff at St Andrew's Children's Society have been inspired with a challenge to bring about some healthier changes to our working day.

In February of this year we set about to see if the staff could collectively walk and run the distance between our Aberdeen and Edinburgh offices, some 127 miles. What we did not expect was to achieve this five times, with a total of 665 miles.

With enthusiasm for walking challenges met, the plan to implement another challenge was fast needed, this time to see if we could address some of our diet changes over the past year. The biscuit cupboard is so much easier to reach at home than in the office! Although not yet coordinated, the plan is now to walk the distance between all the staff homes, and for every house we reach – a new healthy recipe to be shared. We have the distance from the Lothians to the Highlands to cover, and the possibility of adding 20 healthy recipes to our diets. There was quite a bit of enthusiasm to this suggestion.

The importance of exercise and making wise choices about snacks and meals is important at the best of times. With our lives in the last year changing so considerably it feels all too easy to justify the need for comfort food and skipping the lunchtime walk. However, now more than ever it is important we remind ourselves for the need to find our balance, and this can change daily.

Asking ourselves 'what can I realistically achieve today?' is a good start, and if that means a 'duvet day' and ignoring '5-a-day' then so be it... Just as long as you are able to balance that with a 20-minute walk, and some fruit and veg on another day. Sometimes though, what is needed is a little bit of competition, a little bit of doing something different, and a whole lot of team work to get us motivated and started. Any future suggestions for personal and team challenges will be welcomed!

Iona Hughes SENIOR PRACTITIONER and
Velga McDougall OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR



Fundraising

Like everyone else, we're breathing a sigh of relief as we gradually emerge from lockdown. As well as being able to meet up with our own family and friends again, we're really looking forward to the opportunity of being able to meet some of our donors and supporters face to face.

When we did the Kiltwalk last autumn, one thing we really missed was the sense of camaraderie and collective determination that comes from participating in a mass fundraising event. As we passed other lone Kiltwalkers on our chosen walking route (easy to spot by their accoutrements!), it was uplifting to stop for a socially distanced chat, share stories of emerging blisters and just to be able to give and receive a bit of encouragement!

As is mentioned elsewhere in this newsletter, 2022 is our centenary year. How wonderful would it be if we could aim for a 100 St Andrew's Children's Society supporters participating together in a mass event in 2022! Or maybe we could find a 100 people across the whole year who would be willing to organise mini events, such as a coffee morning or a summer barbecue?

We'll be pulling together plans for our Centenary very soon. If you'd like to contribute ideas or be part of our planning team, we'd love to hear from you at ddocwra@standrews-children.org.uk

But fundraising isn't on hold until 2022 – it can't be! Maybe you have a big birthday or anniversary of your own coming up? Might you consider setting up a Facebook birthday fundraiser or asking for a donation in lieu of a present via our shiny new website? People have simply been so inspired by the likes of Captain Sir Tom Moore and online giving has never been easier. If you think you'd like to help but aren't sure how to go about it, do get in touch.

We continue to be very grateful for the support of the charitable trusts who have chosen to support us in what has been an increasingly competitive funding environment. Since our last newsletter, we have been grateful to receive generous donations from James Wood Bequest Fund, Kuenssberg Charitable



Foundation, D C R Allen Charitable Trust, Murdoch Forrest Charitable Trust, Grand Masonic Lodge of Scotland, John Gordon Charitable Fund, W M Mann Foundation, WCH Trust for Children and Grace Trust. In total, £17,000 has been raised towards our adoption work.

A special shout-out to 'Ps & Gs Church' (St Paul's and St George's Church), in Edinburgh, who are supporting us through their Micah Fund, a charitable fund which is the outcome of an extraordinarily generous congregational gift month. Each year this raises very considerable sums for Micah's chosen charities and we are delighted to be receiving £5,000 specifically towards our Life Story work. Part of the application process was to take part in a Zoom chat about our work and we are grateful to Michael Opitz, Senior Practitioner at St Andrew's Children's Society for joining me (Dan) and for giving a very moving account of the difference that this work is making to the lives of adopted children.

Dan & Karen Docwra FUNDRAISERS