

# Permanently Progressing?

Building Secure Futures for Children in Scotland

## Phase 2

Annual Update Spring 2023

*Permanently Progressing?* is an important longitudinal study seeking to better understand the experiences of care experienced children in Scotland by exploring:

- children's routes to different forms of permanence (with parents, kinship carers, foster carers, or adoptive parents),
- children's experiences, wellbeing, and outcomes, and how they keep in touch with parents, brothers, and sisters who they no longer live with, and other family members and people who are important to them,
- what sources of support are available to children, their caregivers, and families.

We are examining experiences and pathways to permanence for all 1,836 children who became looked after in 2012-13 when they were aged five or under, tracking children's progress at key life stages. Phase 1 focused on early childhood, Phase 2 (the current phase) is focused on middle childhood and Phase 3 will explore adolescence/early adulthood. Reports and summaries for Phase 1 are available at: [Permanently Progressing? reports and summaries](#).

Phase 2 of the study is funded by a donor who wishes to remain anonymous and the Nuffield Foundation. The research team is analysing and linking administrative data, surveys of caregivers and social workers, interviews with caregivers, children, and parents whose child/ren no longer live with them.

This annual summary gives an update on progress since Spring 2022 and is also an opportunity to say thank you.

### Access to administrative data

The data we will be analysing includes pseudonymised administrative data - Children Looked After Statistics (CLAS), Child Protection Statistics, and education data. The process of accessing administrative data has been complex and time consuming, but we are hopeful that we will soon be able to start analysing data which has been linked for us by National Records Scotland with the help of [eDRIS](#).

## **Survey of social workers and children's caregivers**

Each of the 27 participating Local Authorities has a nominated 'link person' to assist with the various elements of the study and we are very grateful to them for all their support with the research.

### **Social worker survey**

In total, 677 questionnaires were sent out to social workers and 480 have now been returned. This is an impressive response rate of 71%. This is similar to the response rate in Phase 1, where social workers (from the original 19 local authorities) returned questionnaires on 433 children. We have now closed the survey, cleaned the data and have begun our initial analysis. This will continue over the next few months.

Thank you so much to the social workers and managers who completed questionnaires. We are very grateful and really appreciate the time and effort you took. The survey provides important data, including why plans changed for some children, children's experiences, and their connections with people who they no longer live with but are important to them.

### **Caregiver survey**

Questionnaires are in the process of being sent out to caregivers. Where we have caregivers' contact details from Phase 1, we are sending these directly, but in other instances we have relied on the help of local authority link people - and again, a big thank you goes to them. The questionnaire includes questions on children's health and wellbeing; education and support needs; behaviour and relationships; and contact, connections, and sources of support.

### **Interviews**

So far, we have interviewed five children and 19 caregivers. We are in the process of starting to make contact with birth parents who live separately from their child. We will be conducting interviews throughout 2023 to enable as many people as possible to take part. Thank you to all the children and adults who have taken part so far and been so generous with their time.

Thank you to all those who have been involved so far from the research team: Alison, Ariane, Helen, Jade, Linda, Maggie, and Paula.

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