



...Growing Up in Orkney... Conference Report

‘... a fantastic event, and we felt very privileged to be part of it...’

(delegate feedback)

On Friday 9th February 2017 around 180 people gathered in Kirkwall Grammar School for the second ‘Growing Up in Orkney’ Conference – **GUio2**.

GUio2 was for everyone in Orkney who works with children, young people and families in Orkney. It set out to provide an opportunity to share, celebrate and promote the work of all the partners. Alongside practitioners from a range of local groups, organisations and services, around 40 young people also attended the conference – as delegates, presenters and facilitators. The conference was organised by the **Child Protection Committee**, along with the **Orkney Children and Young People’s Partnership**, and was hosted by Andrew Lowe. Andrew is the independent Chair of Orkney’s Child Protection Committee.



A number of keynote presentations took place throughout the day and each ‘guest speaker’ had been asked to challenge our thinking and stimulate debate and discussion. The conference got underway with a presentation from representatives of the Orkney Youth Forum.

They provided an insight into some of the work, by young people for young people, that is happening across Orkney. This snapshot included an update on the work of our

Members of the Scottish Youth Parliament (MSYPs), the launch of the Youth Forum itself, a report on the 2017 Chamber Debate, an introduction to the work of the Police Scotland Young Volunteers, a recap on the 2017 annual Youth Awards and an introduction to some of the local plans for the Year of Young People 2018.

Impressive presentations from 
Orkney's Youth Forum at the Growing Up in Orkney Conference
[#growingupinorkney](#)



GUIO2 Keynote 1: Our first speaker was Bruce Adamson. Bruce is the Children and Young People's Commissioner in Scotland, he has over 20 years of experience in children's rights. Originally from New Zealand, he moved to Scotland in 2002.

Bruce Adamson
 @Bruce_Adamson Excited to be on my way to Orkney to hear all about Growing Up in Orkney



Bruce arrived in Orkney on Thursday 8th February and spent time meeting with young people. He was able to take in a range of settings and catch up with children and young people with very different experiences of what it is like 'Growing Up in Orkney'.

Through his work as Commissioner, Bruce is able to hold people in power to account. He told the audience that happiness, love and understanding are enshrined in international law therefore we have a legal commitment as well as a moral obligation to provide these for all our young people.

He went on to say that it is important to talk about the UN convention of Children's Rights, which every country in the world bar the US is signed up to; rights are enforceable and that we all need to be better at linking wellbeing to young people's rights.

Bruce told the conference that he was impressed with all the work happening in Orkney to involve young people in decisions making. This shows that young people are not the future, they are the now!

Really good to hear from @Bruce Adamson about how important it is to link young people's wellbeing into the international legal rights framework & speaking to services and decision makers about their work #growingupinorkney



GUIO2 Workshop Session 1: Children's Rights and Wellbeing



After a short break delegates joined one of eight workshops designed to explore aspects of well-being – safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. GUIO2 created a unique opportunity to celebrate, share in and learn from, the work of our local groups, organisations and services. Workshop leaders included colleagues from health, education and social work as well as Orkney's Third Sector. A number of workshops throughout the day were co-presented by young people.

What is *harmed* through relationships *heals* through relationships

GUIO2 Keynote 2: The second speaker to address the conference was Jennifer Davidson. Jennifer is the Executive Director of The Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures based at Strathclyde University.

Through three very thought provoking stories, Jennifer reminded us that the quality of a placement, and in particular the quality of the child's relationships with carers within that placement, is by far the most important influence on a child's welfare, well-being and happiness. She asked the conference delegates to wrestle with 7 questions organised into three themes:

1. **Young People:** How do we balance the right to participate with the best interests of the child? How do we ensure good relationships to get us there?
2. **Staff:** How do we maintain leadership focus on child-centred decision making? How do we select and support the right people who can build good relationships? How do we ensure a credible range of care options?
3. **Systems:** How do we shift services to deliver the right support, earlier? How do we engage adult services with a view to the child as a beneficiary?



Enjoying the [#growingupinorkney](#) conference [@JenniferIICF](#) talking about care, caring and inspiring relationships



GUIO2 Workshop Session 2: Looking After Orkney's Children & Young People

The second group of workshop sessions explored a range of themes related to how we notice, protect and support the most vulnerable children and young people in our community. Contributors included The Children's Reporter, members of the Children's Panel, representatives from Women's Aid and Advocacy Orkney as well as staff from Orkney's Early Years' Service.

An inspiring day at [#growingupinorkney](#) conference: key messages of relationships, nurture and love!



GUIO2 Keynote 3 & Workshop Session 3: A Poverty Action Plan for Orkney

In the final part of the day, delegates heard from Naomi Bremner (Eyland Skyn). Naomi is currently leading the research, commissioned by the Children and Young People's Partnership, to identify the most prominent 'poverty and disadvantage' factors affecting children and young people in Orkney. The project also hopes to suggest how providers of services to children, young people and families can act to help mitigate the impact of poverty and disadvantage as children and young people are growing up in Orkney.

Naomi gave an overview of what she has done and learned so far, then provided an opportunity for delegates to help shape the recommendations and actions that will be included in the final draft of the report.

What is *harmed* through relationships *heals* through relationships

‘Clear and Connected’ (Orkney’s Children’s Services Strategic Plan 2016-2020) was formally adopted in June 2017. It sets out an ambition to ensure each child and young person, growing up in Orkney, **gets the right help, at the right time, in the right way.** In helping to deliver this ambition, **GUIO2** set out to both create and nurture opportunities for us to work together. At the end of the day we asked delegates to think about their own commitment to working together for a better Orkney. We also asked them to evaluate the conference itself...

Delegates reported that it was good that...

- We came together from all walks of life and agencies to learn, share and network.
- That young people were part of it, actively involved in presentations and listened to.
- All the speakers were excellent and engaged really well with the audience.
- There were so many workshops to attend.

They asked if we could do more...

- Getting together and sharing best practice
- Longer workshops as discussions were cut short
- On the difference that GUIO has made for the young people in Orkney

Delegates also said next time it would be better if...

- We could attend more workshops as it was difficult to choose

Jennifer Davidson



Fantastic conference today
#growingupinorkney Thanks so much for inviting me, so much to think about!

Bruce Adamson



Huge honour to be speaking at
#growingupinorkney conference. I’m hearing about lots of great work going on in Orkney.

...and finally, over the next few months we will...

March: Publish the outcome of the research into Poverty and Disadvantage in Orkney
Create a Poverty Action Plan

April: Publish the annual review of the Children’s Services Plan
Hold a healthy Mind Platter learning event

May: Deliver ‘Getting it Right’ training for the children’s service workforce

June: Begin planning for GUIO3...

Hold the date... Friday February 8th 2019... GUIO3

Conference coverage can be found by following the following links:



Overview with Jack youtu.be/hh8Aby1uLOY

Interviews with Andrew, Bruce, Jennifer and Jack youtu.be/zczswRXaDss

**This conference has been excellent and much improved on last year...
I don’t think anything should change**

(delegate feedback)

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