

## **Changing the way we think about kinship care**

There is growing recognition that children who are looked after away from home should be brought up in their family of origin (Scottish Government 2007, 2009; Algate and McIntosh 2009). When children are at risk of abuse or neglect authorities may intervene to remove the child and place them with other members of their family in 'kinship care'. Children need carers who are able to meet their needs for life, and yet we know that Kinship carers are some of the poorest members of our society. There is concern in Scotland that the option of permanent kinship care is not explored early enough, beginning after a child has been placed in local authority care, and that children are placed with kinship carers on an emergency basis and left too long with carers who are not able to meet their needs.

This paper describes a project to improve systems in decision making and assessment for kinship and seeks to refocus kinship as a proactive child care intervention. Quality Improvement methodology (Langley et al 2009) and Active Implementation theory (Fixen et al 2005) are being used and tackles disruption resulting from spending too much time assessing unsuitable kinship carers.