



15<sup>th</sup> November 2018  
For immediate release

## **FIRST MINISTER TO ATTEND ADOPTION WEEK SCOTLAND CONFERENCE**

First Minister Nicola Sturgeon will attend a conference in Edinburgh on Monday 19<sup>th</sup> November to mark the start of Adoption Week Scotland (19<sup>th</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> November 2018).

The week, which is supported by the Scottish Government, is organised by Adoption UK Scotland and Adoption Fostering Alliance (AFA) Scotland. To mark the Year of Young People 2018, the conference – Adopted Voices – is giving a group of adopted young people the chance to have their views and experiences heard by parents, professionals and policy makers.

The event is particularly special as it has been planned and developed by the young people themselves and will be co-facilitated by them on the day. Staff from Scottish Adoption, St Andrew's Children's Society, AFA Scotland and Adoption UK Scotland will be supporting their efforts but the ideas and inspiration for the day have come directly from adopted young people.

The First Minister is set to take part in a workshop session with adopted young people and will also speak at the conference.

### **First Minister Nicola Sturgeon said:**

"I want Scotland to be the best place for children to grow up and having a loving and secure environment plays a huge part in achieving this. Last year Scotland saw an increase in the number of looked after children who went on to be adopted and I hope by raising awareness of adoption through Adoption Week Scotland events, we will continue to see these numbers rise.

"I'm pleased to be part of the third annual Adoption Week Scotland and it's fantastic young people have played such an important role in organising this year's conference as part of the Year of Young People to ensure their voices are heard in the adoption process."

### **Fiona Aitken, Director of Adoption UK Scotland said:**

"We are delighted that the First Minister has agreed to attend the Conference at the start of Adoption Week Scotland.

"In the Year of Young People, we specifically wanted this conference to be organised by young adopted people. Their involvement has ensured the voice of the most important people at the centre of the adoption process is being heard.



“Adoption plays a crucial role for young people who are in the care and permanence system in Scotland. For children unable to remain with, or return to, their birth family, adoption offers an opportunity for permanent family and all that can offer a child. Adoption is a lifelong process, but for families it begins with children who are at the heart of the process.

“The Year of Young People has given a platform to young people in Scotland to use their voice to influence. Adoption Week Scotland has given a voice to adopted young people and they want to use it to educate and inform their community about their reality of adoption.”

**Director of AFA Scotland, Robin Duncan said:**

“As 2018 is the Year of Young People, we wanted to reflect that in the conference. Their voices need to be heard so that we can better understand what services and support they need not just now but also in the future to secure better outcomes for them and those children who are still waiting to be adopted.

“We are also really pleased that the First Minister will be at the conference. It shows the level of support within the Scottish Government for adoption in Scotland and demonstrates to the young people that their voices are important and being heard.”

The conference will comprise informative workshops, demonstrations of art therapy sessions, an interactive panel of young people and the viewing of a film that was created by a group of adopted young people. The film highlights the issues affecting adoptees at different stages of their lives.

Speaking at the conference as part of an Education Panel will be Nicky Murray, Headteacher of Burnside Primary School in Carnoustie. The school has 500 children and, following its recent HMI inspection, is considered ‘one of the best schools in the country for wellbeing, inclusion and equality’. Mr Murray will share how they have made changes at the school and involved families so that they all work together for the benefit of each child.

In addition to the conference in Edinburgh, there are a number of information events planned throughout Adoption Week Scotland:

DATE	CITY/TOWN	VENUE	TIME
Tuesday 20 <sup>th</sup> November	Inverness	Highland Council City Chambers, Glenurquhart Road, IV3 5NX	3pm to 6pm

# ADOPTION WEEK

#AdoptionweekScotland #ourchildren

## SCOTLAND

Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> November	Stirling	Mayfield Community Centre, Sunnybank Road, FK7 0DB	3pm to 6pm
Thursday 22 <sup>nd</sup> November	Glasgow	Mitchell Library, North Street, G3 7DN	3pm to 6pm
Friday 23 <sup>rd</sup> November	Musselburgh	Brunton Theatre, Ladywell Way, EH21 6AA	10am to 1pm

Ends

### Notes to editors:

Adoption UK is the biggest support charity in the country, providing awareness and understanding for those parenting or supporting children who cannot live with their birth parents. The charity's purpose is to give voice to adoptive families and to ensure the right support is there for them.

Adoption & Fostering Alliance (AFA) Scotland is an independent charity established in September 2015 following the demise of BAAF Scotland, that provides a range of training and consultancy to all professionals connected to adoption and fostering throughout Scotland. Those seeking advice, including advice from AFA's legal consultant, should contact 0131 322 8490.

Anyone experiencing difficulties is urged to become a member of Adoption UK and contact its helpline on 0131 322 8500 or by emailing: [helpdesk@adoptionuk.org.uk](mailto:helpdesk@adoptionuk.org.uk)

For further information, to arrange an interview with Fiona Aitken or Robin Duncan, please contact Ann Bryant at Garland PR on 07801 422159 or at [ann.bryant@garlandpr.co.uk](mailto:ann.bryant@garlandpr.co.uk)