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Please return this form to:
Fostering Compassion,
The Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears,
54 West Windygoul Gardens, Tranent, East Lothian, EH33 2LA

Scottish Registered Charity (SCIO) SC042614

Fostering Compassion is a unique and innovative project run by the **Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears**, that works with 'looked after' children who have been victims of abuse or neglect or raised in a troubled environment.

What is meant by 'looked after' children?

'Looked after' children include children in foster or kinship care or in residential homes or those still living with their parents but subject to a 'Care Order'. Just under two thirds of looked after children come into care following child protection concerns such as neglect or abuse.

In 2012 there were around 83,000 'looked after' children in the UK.

Fostering Compassion was piloted in East Lothian in 2013 and now, thanks to a generous donation from The Sweetpea Charitable Trust, it is being rolled out to other areas of Scotland.



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Fostering Compassion



A project of the Winton Foundation for the Welfare of Bears.

Fostering Compassion

There is enough weight of evidence to show that children who have suffered traumatic starts in life may find it hard to show compassion and empathy to fellow creatures and in general and their futures can often look bleak.

Through Fostering Compassion we hope to play a part in helping to reverse this trend by opening these children up to the world of animals and nature through days out and workshops providing different and varied experiences to help them find new and healthier ways to express their emotions.

We hope that by helping the children see animals as sentient beings that can share similar emotions to them, we will encourage them to be nurturing, caring and compassionate and in turn steer them down a more positive path than the one they may otherwise have taken.



"When the children came to me they showed a mixture of fear and disregard towards animals, yesterday they were snuggling up to the Therapets."
Foster mum

Visits to local vets and animal rehabilitation centres and Animal Therapy

Here the children learn where sick and injured animals are treated. They learn how to be responsible pet owners and how to respect the needs of animals. The children get a chance to cuddle and pat the Therapets provided by Canine Concern Scotland Trust.

"Yesterday was such a perfect day...we call these 'memory days'. The day was so perfect for all of us and the kids are still talking about it. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for this – it couldn't have been more perfect – it was magical."
Foster mum

Our activities

We give the children happy learning experiences that help improve their emotional literacy and resilience and include visiting the bears Carmen, Suzy and Peggy at the Five Sisters Zoo, Bear Sanctuary.

The children learn about the bears' rescue from life in a circus and their transition from their old miserable life to their new much happier life.

Each child receives a goody bag packed full of information on bears and enjoy a day out bonding as a family.

"When it was explained to the children that the bears couldn't sleep when they felt scared and sad but as soon as they felt safe and secure, they were able to sleep. The children and the carers all completely related to this and drew parallels with their own circumstances."
Lesley Winton, Project Manager



Magic of Nature Workshops

Run by Fiona Ogg, Pure Happiness

The workshops are designed to help the children appreciate the amazing world we live in and discover tools and techniques to develop their emotional literacy, resilience and awareness of their relationship with the people, animals and plants we share the planet with.

"I hung my Dreamcatcher up in my bedroom and my nightmares stopped!"
Child in Kinship care

Hollydays

Here the children learn about a special dog called Holly, a victim of neglect who came to a new happy home and thrived. As part of 'Hollydays' the children make up goody boxes of toys and treats to take to dogs in shelters.

The year ends with the children enjoying a Christmas Party with a film showing of Kung Fu Panda or Brother Bear!

"This is the best day ever!"
Child while visiting the bears

When one family was asked "were there any memorable comments/feedback the children made or gave to you after each activity?" they replied "Jack had a hamster which sadly died recently. To my amazement he was very very upset. Before taking part in this project I do not think that there would have been the same response. He is very guarded about his feelings but these activities must have had an impact. He has put his 'Santa stop here' sign beside where we have buried his hamster. So 'Hammy knows Santa is coming.'"



Pictures posed by models

"The Fostering Compassion project helped us so much as a family. The children now both have a better understanding of what a family is all about and they both now understand how much they are loved and that we are never going to leave them or do anything to hurt them."
Kinship care Gran