

Reflections on...

The Workforce & Capacity Issues Division visit to Kirkcaldy LAC Team – 21 February 2008

On Thursday, 21 February, Kirkcaldy LAC (Looked After Child) Team hosted a visit by 6 members of the Workforce & Capacity Issues Division from the Scottish Government.

The purpose of this visit was to give central government officials a greater understanding of the work of front line social work practitioners (in this case in the LAC Team) and offered the opportunity to shadow social workers as they went about their daily business.

The day, arranged by Senior Practitioner Nicola Bruce and hosted by Team Leader Lesley Stevenson, gave the government officials an insight in to the varied work of the LAC Team, where undoubtedly no two days are ever the same.

“For me it brought home the need to give a "reality check" to the work my team does, in terms of being able to articulate how particular policies/ proposals will impact on children, families & staff. I was also struck by the sheer commitment of the staff, the evident flexibility around how they worked and their determination to "make it work" for children and families.”

Gordon Watt, Head of Branch, Children’s Hearings Branch, Scottish Government

The officials were split into pairs and amongst other events (all with the consent of the individuals involved) attended a review child protection case conference, a children’s hearing, risk management meetings, and a period observing the duty system with the Child Assessment Team. There was also plenty of opportunity for the members of the LAC Team and the Workforce & Capacity Issues Division to speak with each other about their respective roles.

"Our team really enjoyed the opportunity to welcome members of the Workforce and Capacity Division to shadow us for the day after spending a very enjoyable and informative day with them in November 2007. The day gave our team a chance to reflect upon the important issues and decisions we are dealing with on a day to day basis. My colleagues described benefitting from this experience and the belief that this may impact upon the development of policies relating to our practice."

Nicola Bruce, Senior Practitioner, Kirkcaldy LAC Team

What stood out for the government officials was the amount of planning and attention to detail needed, and given, by the members of the LAC team, in dealing with the individuals and cases, and the collaborative working, with a wide range of people and services needed to work together on a whole range of issues, from emergency services to psychiatrists to school teachers to voluntary organisations.

On reflection, the 6 officials that visited Kirkcaldy found the day to have been a wholly positive experience, one that has stimulated interest across the Division, and an agreement that a greater understanding of the work of a front line practitioner can only help policy officials within central government.

Our sincere thanks go to the whole LAC Team, but especially Nicola Bruce for organising the visit and to Lesley Stevenson for hosting us.