

Care in Scotland it's life changing work

Caroline McDonald, social work student

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Caroline is in her third year student placement with the Maryhill Children and Families Team, Glasgow City Council. Read more about her role.

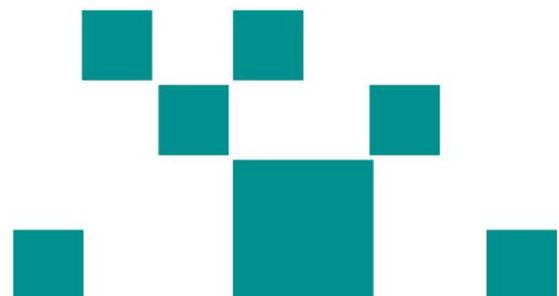
What type of service do you work in?

Maryhill Children and Families Team provides a statutory service to support children and families at risk in the community. The service aims to improve positive outcomes for children. This approach includes the wellbeing and development of children.

In addition, the service manages and reduces possible risks to children by working collaboratively with families, carers and other statutory/voluntary agencies.

Have you always worked in social services?

Yes, I worked within housing and homeless services for 18 years.





Can you tell us more about your job?

My role is to bring my knowledge, theory and ongoing learning into my placement to develop my practice skills further.

On this placement I have been learning about the national practice model of assessment known as Getting it Right for Every Child. I have applied this model of practice in assessing children and young people's needs.

I work with other agencies and service users during the assessment process. I have also submitted reports to the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration on behalf of the young people I have been working with.

I attend weekly supervision sessions with my Practice Educator. This gives me the opportunity to reflect upon my learning and to develop my understanding of social work theory, knowledge and laws applicable to social work.

Who else is in your team?

My team is made up of a team leader, six social workers and a social care officer. My Practice Educator is also part of my team.

What part of your job motivates you and why?

I enjoy working in a challenging, busy environment where there's a variety of learning opportunities available.

I am motivated to work with children/young people and have enjoyed being able to promote their rights and views during assessments. I find this work interesting and insightful.

On placement I have the opportunity to build on my knowledge of the law and social work theories. I can bring my learning into the practice environment and improve my readiness to practice.





I am motivated to develop my learning and take the opportunity to learn new skills that will benefit my overall work.

What are the challenges that you face in your job?

It can be challenging working with families who are reluctant to engage with social work. I have used my communications skills to build relationships with service users and their carers to overcome the barriers.

Often there are deadlines for reports for the Scottish Children's Reporters Administration. This can be challenging at times, collating information and liaising with partner agencies to ensure reports are completed and on time.

In what way is your career in social services rewarding?

I have been working with a child and his mother to help bring about positive changes to their lives. Together we have taken steps to reduce possible harm or risks to the child in the future by agreeing to a person-centred care plan.

I have worked in partnership with the child, his mother and a specialist support provider to meet their needs. It has been rewarding to see positive changes in the child and to see him feeling safe and happy. I find this method of work empowering for the child and seek to promote his rights.

Can you explain the skills and qualities you think are needed to do the role you're doing?

In a social work children and families team good communication skills is key. Being able to speak to children/young people in a way that they understand is important because children are at the heart of the assessment process.

Being able to work in partnership with children, their families and other agencies such as health, education, and the third sector is integral to good practice.





Having an awareness of the law, policies and procedures relevant to the practice setting is crucial. It is essential that I know my role and responsibilities to keep people who use services free from harm and abuse.

Having good personal qualities in social work helps immensely. Such as being approachable, interested in people and having the skills to put a young person at ease during difficult circumstances. Listening to children/young people is also very important because often decisions are made that affect their lives and their views should be respected.

Has your job opened up new learning and development for you?

My employer, Glasgow City Council, is sponsoring me through the BA (Honours) (Scotland) degree programme with The Open University. I am currently in my third year placement learning opportunity.

Since being on placement I have attended child protection awareness training and domestic abuse and gender based violence training.

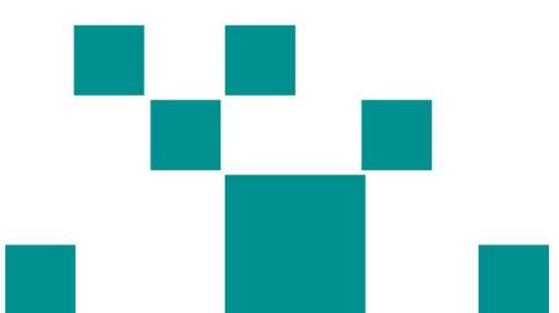
How do you see your carer progressing?

Hopefully I will complete my studies by October 2016 and will be a qualified social worker for Glasgow City Council.

What would you say to someone thinking about a career in social services?

Working in social work children and families is a rewarding job, even although it can be challenging at times.

If you enjoy a variety of work, enjoy working with children/families and have a passion for making positive changes in a child's life then a career in social work may be the right step.





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