

## PRACTICE LEARNING PROJECT

This report is based on evaluations completed by students, service users and university tutors. Evaluations completed by staff at our quarterly staff development days are also referred to.

### AIM OF PROJECT

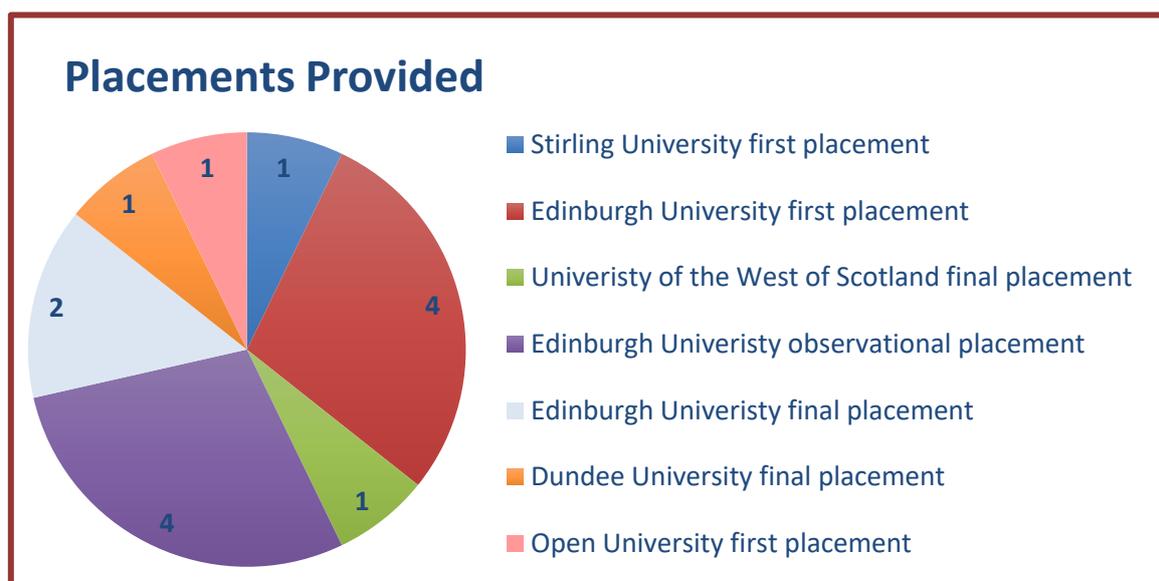
The project's aims are:

- to provide high quality placements to students from a range of academic institutions;
- to develop effective relationships with partner agencies including universities, local authority social work teams, other third sector providers and the wider learning community;
- to contribute towards a culture of learning and continuous development within the organisation through the facilitation of practice teacher forums, solution focussed induction, quarterly staff development days, and the annual lecture; and
- to offer support to candidates undertaking the Link Worker/PDA training.

The project is funded by the revenue raised from invoicing the universities for each of the individual placements.

### BENEFICIARIES

We offered 14 student placements on top of the two placements that were with us at the start of this reporting period. This is less than previous years, however the decision was made to reduce the number of placements towards the end of the year due to the Practice Learning & Development Manager taking on the maternity cover for the Harbour Project Manager post.



## SUMMARY OF YEAR'S ACTIVITIES

- *Positive links with all universities maintained*
- *Continued links with Learning Network West*
- *Continued relationship with Napier University; consulted on new MSc course*
- *New links made with Dundee University and placement secured*
- *Continued partnership with Sunflower Garden offering students direct work with children*
- *Continued development of the two-week 'readiness for practice' experience for Edinburgh University students*
- *Supporting marginal students or those with additional needs*
- *One member of staff achieving PDA with Learning Network West*
- *One member of staff achieving assessor award for PDA*
- *Rolling programme of Solution Focused input for all new staff and students*
- *Two 8-week mindfulness courses run for staff; 16 staff completed*
- *Co-facilitated Link Worker Training in partnership with Edinburgh University*
- *Quarterly Staff Development Days covering a range of themes:*
  - *Substance Use & Mental Health*
  - *Whole Family Approach/Winston Churchill Fellowship*
  - *Parental Substance Use, Children & Complexity*
  - *Implications of ACEs/Beyond the Magic Number 4*

Our event planning and organisation was well supported by Quensley and Liz in our Admin team and we continue to be most grateful for their expertise in this area, ensuring that our events run smoothly.

Some feedback from the Staff Development Days included the following:

*"I felt the whole day was beneficial. More aware of extra things we can do to improve organisation as a whole"*

(Whole Family Approach/Winston Churchill Fellowship)

*"Very relevant for our work; well put across and pitched well"*

(CBT/Substance Use & Mental Health)

*"I really enjoyed the 2 ACEs sessions, I found it very useful and was able to link it with the families I work with"*

(ACEs/Beyond the Magic Number 4)

## OUTCOMES

The primary outcome of the Practice Learning Project is satisfactory completion of placements by students, during which they will have had the opportunity to develop the necessary knowledge, skills and values required to evidence the Standards and Key Capabilities. Where there are issues of difficulty achieving this outcome, Circle seeks to manage these in a supportive and sensitive manner.

There is an evaluation system in place and there has been a good return on student feedback forms. However, feedback from tutors is poor.

### Student feedback

<p><b>Regarding supervision</b></p> <p><i>“I was able to meet all of my learning outcomes and was given great support through regular supervision, I was able to meet on a weekly basis with my practice teacher and seen my link worker on several occasions as well for support and supervision, I could also call at any point if I required support. Through the use of regular supervision I was also able to begin to link the theory to practice through the use of extra exercises. I was also able discuss any difficulties I was facing academically and was given support and suggestions for other ways to address these. I have had a fantastic practice teacher and have been provided so much support.”</i></p> <p>First placement student</p>	<p><b>Regarding the induction period</b></p> <p><i>“This was excellent. I was provided with an induction timetable filled with plenty of opportunities to meet with staff in the organisation and shadow staff to get a feel for the support the organisation provides to service users.”</i></p> <p>Final year student</p> <p><b>Regarding learning experiences that have been offered</b></p> <p><i>“I was supplied with a varied caseload from a mixture of the FABI services. This included group work with the Hub. Through this, I was given more than enough learning opportunities to evidence me meeting the standards. I feel that the range of work I have carried out has been diverse and has really increased my skillset and experience.”</i></p> <p>Final placement student</p>
<p><b>Regarding whole team approach to Practice Learning</b></p> <p><i>“All staff at Circle have the most positive approach to students. My experience on placement felt important and I never felt like I was ‘just a student’. Staff treated me like an experienced individual but were always on hand to answer any questions and support with any worries.”</i></p> <p>First placement student</p>	
<p><b>Regarding support from the Link Worker</b></p> <p><i>“I spoke with my link worker on a regular basis to bounce ideas off when required as well as my practice teacher. I was able to call on her at any time and met regularly to ensure all my needs were being met. She often called me just to check in and see how I was doing to ensure I was ok.”</i></p> <p>First placement student</p>	<p><b>Other comments</b></p> <p><i>“It has been a pleasure completing my placement with Circle, I feel very lucky to have been placed in such a wonderful organisation and to have met amazing people. Thank you for having me!”</i></p> <p>Final placement student</p>

## Tutor feedback

We have received no feedback forms from tutors however feedback from interim and final reports has been positive.

### Regarding range of learning opportunities

*“The tutor feedback identified the need for the student to provide more specific reference to theories informing practice. All of these areas for development are addressed by the PE in the final report, providing clear evidence, from a range of sources, of the development made by the student.”*

First Placement exam board

### Regarding overall quality of placement

*“This has clearly been a very supportive placement and it is good to hear that a student with positive potential has been enabled to complete this placement successfully.”*

First repeat placement tutor

## PROJECT DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR YEAR AHEAD

Due to the Practice Learning & Development Manager covering the Harbour Project Manager post the decision was taken to reduce the focus on practice learning until August. We will have students on placement until June 2019; no further placements will be offered until August 2019 when we will welcome our first student from Napier University. Further placements will be offered to Edinburgh, Stirling and Dundee Universities.

We hope to increase the number of Practice Teachers in the organisation. We currently have one staff member undertaking the PDA; it is hoped he will qualify in the summer. Napier University are hoping to offer a qualification in practice education commencing January 2020; we have one member of staff interested in this course.

The management team have agreed to reduce the number of Staff Development Days to three per year. We will continue to liaise with the wider organisation to ensure that the themes of these days are engaging and beneficial for all involved. We will build on the recent training and skills audit and liaise with Project Managers to ensure we offer the training and development opportunities to the whole staff team.

Although the Practice Learning & Development Manager is currently undertaking a different role, she will maintain links with all universities over the course of the year to ensure students placements from August onwards.

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