

I JOURNEY I

ASSOCIATES CASE HISTORY

SOUTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL / SCOTTISH GOVERNMENT / SAVE THE CHILDREN

THE PROJECT

South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) is one of Scotland's largest unitary authorities providing a range of community and education services. SLC took an innovative approach to the design of residential care homes for children to overcome the common 'institutional' look and feel. This partnership-funded evaluation was commissioned to understand the impact on young people and staff of this change in approach to interior design. The research was in collaboration with the **Scottish Institute of Residential Child Care**.



OUR APPROACH

Following an initial presentation to all staff to inform them of our objectives, methods and outputs, we undertook observational visits to each of the four residential care homes to establish rapport with the young people and staff. We then undertook an extensive literature review and visits to facilities in other authorities, before devising a range of in-depth research activities.

User-focused consultations were undertaken with young people aged 6 to 15 years old, with care staff, social work managers and designers, to explore the pertinent themes. Young people participated through a series of purpose-designed, facilitated workshops that included creative activities and photography. In addition a range of face-to-face interviews were conducted individually and in groups. Staff and other stakeholder participation was achieved through individual and group telephone interviews.

In addition to direct user consultations, a national survey was undertaken of the 32 Scottish Local Authorities to establish best practice and methods used by social work professionals relating to the design of care homes

OUTPUTS AND BENEFITS

The research revealed that young people and staff benefited from this new non-traditional design of residential care homes, endorsing the investment made by SLC. The alternative design allowed young people to feel valued, their aspirations were raised and it supported changes in working practices that can help remove stigma. It also reinforced that it is vital that all user groups contribute to the design process when creating space that has to function for different user groups. The project also highlighted the need for design guidance for social work staff in this area. The outputs of this research have informed the design of subsequent care homes and have supported a more systematic approach to their design.

The project findings have been disseminated at conferences, seminars, in published articles and at CPD events for social care managers, care home staff and government policy makers. The Executive Summary can be downloaded from the **[Scottish Government website](#)** and the full report from the **[SIRCC web site here](#)**.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: JOURNEY ASSOCIATES 83A CANDLERIGGS GLASGOW SCOTLAND G1 1LF

T: +44 (0) 141 553 4705 E: INFO@JOURNEYASSOCIATES.COM