

Report from Day Break

The last year has been an incredibly busy year with demand for our services growing hugely. This has resulted in us taking on 5 new members of staff to meet the demand and alongside this we have invested in new technology to help our central office to run smoothly under our new office manager.

Whilst it is good to grow and take on new programmes we believe that the most pleasing aspect of our growth has been the significant amount of additional investment that many of our current programmes have made in the programmes we are running for them. This has been as a direct result of them seeing the great benefits that FGCs bring to the children and families they refer to us but also our ability to work with our local authority partners to evidence huge savings on court proceedings costs and care costs.

This has come as a result of local authorities complying with the need to explore a child's family thoroughly before they apply for a care order and we are working with two of our partners to put a process in place that ensures that the families of all children on the edge of care are offered the opportunity to have a family group conference. These two local authorities are already offering a FGC to many of these families and they are very pleased with the results and the cost savings this is producing. We have looked back at over 150 children that were on the edge of care when referred. We found that one year after the FGC 81% of these children were not in care and many of the remaining 19% were subject to either residence orders or special guardianships which were in place to secure kinship care placements.

One high spot for us this year was a meeting at the House of Commons in London with the Children and Families Minister. This involved us taking 5 young people who had experienced a FGC to meet him and we are now working on a proposal for the use of FGCs with all children on the edge of care.

We have developed a strong network of volunteer advocates to support children and vulnerable adults in FGC's where professional advocates are not available. This is proving to be very successful.

Adult FGC's continue to bring in a lot of enquiries but although local authorities really like the idea they struggle to find funding within their constantly stretched adult care budgets. We continue to deliver adult FGCs in two areas and we have delivered training in Northern Ireland to their FGC coordinators.

In addition to the ever growing number of programmes we deliver in the UK we have also delivered training in Germany and Scandinavia as well as having visitors on fact finding missions from Italy, Scandinavia and the Netherlands. We are always happy to share our experience whenever possible.

We have now also completed putting together our FGC set up and management package, which will enable us to help others to establish a programme as either a social franchise or with Daybreak acting in a consultation role.

It has been a very exciting and busy year for us and it looks like it will continue.

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