

5 DUNDEE CITY COUNCIL SOCIAL WORK DEPARTMENT - INTEREST FROM JAPAN ON POLICY AND PROCEDURAL MATTERS (AN272-2002)

As a result of his involvement in research into childcare systems and services in Britain, Professor Tetsuo Tsuzaki, of Kyoto University, recently spent a day with staff from Dundee City Council Social Work Department and colleagues from the Scottish Children's Reporters' Administration and the Children's Panel. Professor Tsuzaki had asked to come to Dundee as a result of having had his interest raised by the Council website. As requested, his day focussed on family placement and youth justice services. During the Professor's meeting with the Director of Social Work, the Social Work Convener and staff, he expressed particular interest in the Council's Corporate Parenting Policy, Family Placement Strategy and Children's Services Operating Procedures. This interest is explained by the fact that, in Japan, most children who need alternative care are looked after in large institutions. These can care for as many as 200 children ranging in ages from 1 – 21 years old. The Japanese Government is beginning to recognise that children and young people living in these settings are at serious risk of institutional abuse. It wishes to reduce the size of these homes and to move to have more children cared for in foster care.

Since his return to Japan, Professor Tsuzaki has advised the Director of Social Work of his wish to translate Dundee City Council's Family Placement Strategy into Japanese for use in national childcare developments. He has also requested copies of specific procedures, policies and strategies. The Professor has also indicated his hope that his visit will mark the start of on-going links between Japan and Dundee City Council, as he clearly believes that Japanese policy and practice can be informed by local good practice.

It is recommended that approval be given to the Director of Social Work to supply the necessary assistance and materials and to thereby contribute to international childcare developments and the fostering of positive professional links.