

17 September 2009

This reference confirms that Andrew Waugh worked on secondment to the Scottish Government for 1 year between 14.05.2007 and 09.05.2008 to assist us in implementing a major change to our homelessness statistics system and to develop his model of the capacity of councils to meet the housing needs of homeless households. As the senior statistician in Communities Analytical Services in the Scottish Government I managed both aspects of Andrew's work

During the period Andrew worked a 5 day, 37.5 hours a week.

The work:-

A: The homelessness statistics system

This system involves regular electronic data capture from local authorities of key information on each application for homelessness assistance. There are around 60,000 applications each year and the system has to be efficient in validating the data, loading it and feeding back any invalid or unusual data to local authorities for correction or confirmation.

Andrew managed a complete overhaul of the system. In doing this he quickly developed a good understanding of the SAS software which we use to store and process our data and introduced major innovations linking Excel Macros to control the data capture and outputs from the system. The new system is faster and much easier for non-technical staff to use. Drawing on his previous work with local authorities he also developed an extremely valuable set of standard analyses to allow local authorities a good strategic overview of homelessness trends in their area. This is provided to authorities as a reward for supplying clean data and is much appreciated.

B: The homelessness capacity model.

As part of his secondment the Scottish Government asked Andrew to further develop a model of the relationship between homelessness, housing supply and numbers in temporary accommodation which he had developed as part of his PHD. The key aim was to allow us to assess – on a consistent basis - the implications of key aspects of the implementation of Homelessness policy for each of Scotland's 32 local authorities.

This is a very sophisticated mathematical model and Andrew developed a user friendly front end which allows us to vary key inputs to the model without needing a detailed knowledge of the inner workings of the model.

Andrew's skills:-

Over the period for which he worked for us Andrew was diligent, hard working and enthusiastic. He showed a consistently strong commitment to delivering on both major tasks and did so with positive good humour.

The solutions to both major tasks strong analytical skills and were both innovative and insightful. The outputs were well focused on our needs and have led to significantly more efficient and effective working in my team.

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