



Crook Social Services Department: The Crook Investing in Children Agenda Day



August 2003

We were asked by Crook Social Services to hold an agenda day for young people who have used Crook Social Services. This was to ask them their opinions of the services that Crook Social Services provide for them and to look at the questionnaire that the team has put together to monitor their services.



The Crook Team booked a venue and contacted some young people and invited them to attend. The agenda session took place 11am-2pm Saturday the 22nd of August at The Kensington Hall Hotel in Willington.



22 young people from the Crook and Wear valley district attended the agenda day. We started with an introduction given by Alexis and Tabatha to explain who we were, what work we had been doing and what we wanted from them, which was their views on social services in their area.

Brian, Tabatha, Alexis, Gemma and Claire then worked with the young people in 4 groups of 5. In each group we asked them what they thought of the social services in their area. We have placed the views into 'good' and 'bad' points but these are their opinions in their words:

Good points

- **They had a pool table**
- **They had free food**
- **Some of them listen**

- **They give you sweets when your good**
- **They have funny names**
- **Nice, friendly and funny**
- **They took me on a bus trip**
- **They are good because they help with everyday things**
- **They provide services like connexions**
- **They help with bad days during school-make it easier**
- **Take you on trips to South Shields**
- **They give you play station games/reading books**
- **They help at home and school**
- **They try to help you be good (but only works for a while)**
- **They take me out every 2 weeks**

Bad Points

- They confiscate things
- They never on time
- They leave just as you get to know them
- They talk to young people differently to parents
- They repeat themselves too much
- They're too old-fossilized if they were younger they would understand what its like to be you
- Some are too posh, stuck up and look down on you and are not down to earth
- They make your parents pay for activities and lunch (what if families can't afford it
- They make you play babyish games like 'pick the stone that best describes you
- They talk down to you make you feel little it's patronizing
- They have made something's worse
- They take too long to help in emergencies
- Don't take care of you properly
- They have a BAD ATTITUDE
- They don't take you anywhere
- They talk too much, without getting to the point
- They don't listen very often
- They don't let you go out with your friends
- They have too many rules
- They send you to bed as early as 7pm even on weekends
- They waste time
- They don't let you watch what you want
- They are bossy
- They look at you funny (as if there is something wrong with you)

Bad Points (continued)

- They mostly come to your house and I would prefer to go out somewhere
- You don't get to see your Social worker enough
- You don't get to talk to them by themselves enough
- They change your social worker too often
- They take you on trips but always to the same place (would be nice to have a change of scenery)
- Would like them to talk more to my parents
- They need to give more information about Social work/ers etc.
- They should give you more colouring books

Changes they would make to the service

- They should stop going to your house
- They should change their wages so they are happier
- They should take you on holiday
- They should give you more money
- They should take you swimming, sailing, Blackpool, cinema, McDonalds, bowling, laser quasar, play on the sand at the seaside, go to south shields funfair and give you free food
- They need more youth centres and clubs that you can join
- More parties
- Less patronizing/sick of so many questions

We were also asked to ask them what their opinions on the questionnaire that Crook Social Services Department put together to find out whether it's worthwhile and the responses that we received from that are as follows:

Views on Questionnaire

- Good idea because it means that they understand what we think of them
- Give information on what you've been doing in school
- Like the way they're asking what we think
- Good use of colours
- Gives space so that you can write your own views
- Easy to understand
- Like being able to express views
- Should be more child friendly more pictures and change the style of writing
- Like the front cover because it colourful
- Writing should be explained in pictures
- Writing should be more fun
- Like the background picture in the inside of leaflet
- Numbers on questions are wrong
- Boring
- Should be more understandable
- Needs better graphics

Young people's opinions on group work

The basic view of group work which the young people have been involved in was that they thought it was a good idea as long as they knew other people in the group.

We were asked to help Crook Social Services involve young people in the development of the service. The first part of this was in the form of an agenda day as described above. Crook Social Services have now listened to the young people; the next step for the team is to come up with an action plan based on what the young people have said.

The action plan will then be presented to the same young people to see if they are happy with the suggested changes. In order for the team to gain Investing in Children membership, the team will then have to ensure that these changes are implemented.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

**Yours sincerely,
Alexis Gibson
Brian Davies
Claire Troman
Gemma Greenwell
Tabatha Tilley**