



INVESTING IN CHILDREN

Membership Evaluation

Date August 2006

PROJECT NAME Fairbridge Tyne and Wear

PROJECT LOCATION West 15
Whickham View
Benwell
Newcastle upon Tyne NE15 6UN

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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

Sector Youth Provision
Ages 13-25 years
Area City
Ward Benwell & Scotswood

Number of beneficiaries



investing in children

Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Fairbridge Tyne & Wear

For the purpose of this Evaluation for Investing in Children membership I met with John, Samantha, Mickey, Emma and Kurt.

Fairbridge is a national charity with 15 centres throughout the United Kingdom. The philosophy of the project is to provide a personal development programme for young people who are aged 13 to 25, and are deemed to be at risk. Examples of the indicators of those at risk are anti-social behaviour, criminal activity, substance abuse and homelessness.

The aim of the project is to provide young people with an opportunity to make the step back into mainstream living. This involves helping young people to gain and develop in confidence, motivation and self-esteem.

The young people are referred to the project through different routes and the outreach workers will initially visit the young people to engage with them and explain about the project.

The report will describe the opportunities young people have for dialogue within the project and changes that have occurred because of the dialogue.

Action Planning

This is one to one work where the young person sets goals and objectives with their caseworker, which the young person then looks to incorporate these goals into a selection of activities from the programme Fairbridge offers.

Emma, who had just started to come to Fairbridge, explained about her experience **“I have only been coming here a few days and have set my own goals for the project.”**

Sam told me, **“I wanted to do a high ropes course and hill walking.”**

This has been introduced to the course for Sam and shows how the project works to incorporate the individual views of young people. This allows young people to take the lead in their own programme on the course and changes occur based on an individual's needs or a group's need within the project.

If a young person does not want to select any activities from the programme there is the opportunity to introduce new activities.

Young Person's Forum

The Young Person's Forum is being set up as a means of increasing the opportunities for young people who use the project to talk about issues and ideas to improve the project. The Young Person's Forum will be open to all young people to attend Fairbridge, although this is still in early development and would need to be assessed at a later date. It will be encouraging to discover how the

Young Person's forum has become an essential and valuable mechanism to enhance and further develop the participation of young people who use the project when coming to re-evaluate the project in a year's time.

Session Evaluation

The group I met with spoke positively about the process of evaluation that Fairbridge uses, and how it is structured to allow the young people to give their own important and necessary reflection on the sessions they are involved in.

Michael explained, "**We discuss and evaluate sessions at the end**". He went on to add, "**The canoeing course was about to end but we wanted it to continue**". The course was then extended to meet the needs of some of the young people with the introduction of a new canoeing award to the overall programme. All the young people have the option to do this if they want.

This environment the young people spoke about gives them the opportunity to be open and honest when giving feedback on how good the sessions have been. This also allows the sessions to be open to changes that sometimes occur through the direct input from the young people and the reviewing mechanisms of the sessions can have a positive impact on the development of the project programme.

It would be encouraging to see if further development can be made over the coming year to the increased and positive involvement of young people in the project's aims and objectives, which is already evident in the positive changes to the project, which saw the introduction of a new canoeing award and course.

I.T. Suite Policy

This change occurred because the young people had been asking for use of the I.T. Suite during their time at the project, on occasions other than during project based work. The young people wanted to use the facility to access email accounts and MSM messaging.

Samantha told me, "**The computer room is now open most of the time for the use of MSM messaging**". This is a positive change to the running of the project and seems to be through the positive relationship the young people have with the staff at Fairbridge who encourage change by listening to what the young people have to say.

The project is structured to offer support both on an individual basis and at a group level. There is evidence that the project encourages and develops opportunity for young people both at an individual level and group level to develop and change the way the project is run. The project's ethos is to develop and enhance the skills of young people so that they take charge of their own lives. This was evident when visiting the project and also strengthens what can be achieved through the positive participation Framework at Fairbridge.

For these reasons I would like to recommend that Fairbridge – Newcastle receives its Investing in Children membership and look forward to further developments and change made by young people over the next year.

This report has been endorsed by the following young people who attend Fairbridge; they were Michael, Samantha, John and Ollie.

**Rob Johnson
Project Worker
Investing in Children**

August 2006