

INVESTING IN CHILDREN

Membership Evaluation

Date March 2005

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| PROJECT NAME | Hartburn Walk |
| PROJECT LOCATION | 5 Hartburn Walk Kenton Bar Estate Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 3YU |
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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

Hartburn Walk provides respite care for children with disabilities. Two groups of young people have a break at Hartburn each week (Friday to Sunday and Monday to Friday). There is always a young people's meeting at the start of every break to plan the activities and meals for the days ahead. A young person chairs the meeting supported by staff and everyone is asked for their views – using Makaton and writing with symbols for children who use alternative methods of communication. The young people who met with Investing in Children obviously enjoyed their stay at Hartburn and felt they were included in decisions.

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| Sector | Social Services |
| Ages | 5-19 years |
| Area | North |
| Ward | Kenton |

Number of beneficiaries



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Hartburn Walk

“The ethos of Hartburn Walk Short Break Centre is to promote independence amongst the young people we serve. We want to enable young people to experience, develop and successfully manage interpersonal relationships and promote their social skills. By doing this we are providing them with skills that allow them to live successfully within the community.” *(Taken from a prepared introduction to Hartburn Walk for IIC)*

I visited Hartburn Walk to meet with the young people on Monday evening, Monday being the day a new group of young people come to stay. I met Soofiya, Regan, Lisa, Lindsay, Kirsty as well as Jackie, Gordon and Steve, the staff team for the evening.

Gordon had prepared a ‘banquet,’ a variety of food to meet everyone’s needs, and plenty of it. Lisa arrived late and the food that was left was not what she wanted to eat, but that was no problem, one of the staff team prepared an alternative meal. Everyone enjoyed their tea, but not everyone enjoyed Gordon’s singing!

After tea we had the Young People’s Meeting, please see attached Agenda Form. At the meetings the young people and staff team work through the agenda. On the evening I visited Lisa chaired the meeting, supported by Steve.

Lisa recorded who was present and then asked all the young people what activities they would like to do whilst staying in Hartburn that week. Lots of suggestions were made including:-

- Metroland
- The pictures
- A DVD
- The park

And Lindsay wanted to put her pyjama’s on and stay in.

Next on the agenda ‘food’, the suggestions were endless but included:-

- Chinese
- Dixie Chicken
- Fish Quay for fish and chips
- Digestive biscuits
- McDonalds

Lisa made sure everyone was asked and the staff supported her in making sure that everyone was able to participate. Makaton and writing with symbols is used throughout the home to provide information for some children who have alternative methods of communication.

Lisa then talked everyone through the fire procedures and Regan showed me all of the fire exits in the building, she knew where every exit was, I was very impressed.

'A:O:B' is a reminder to all the young people that bullying and harassment is not allowed and that they all have their own space in 'their' bedroom and are not allowed in other people's rooms. The young people all said this bit together so its obviously well rehearsed and something they all stick to.

After the meeting Lisa gave me a guided tour, showing me around the home:

- The bedrooms, highlighting who was staying where. The room Lisa was staying in is her favourite room.
- The games room – complete with TV, computer, CD Player, payphone and comfy sofa, a chill out space for the young people.
- The large main room has a huge TV with surround sound system, a music centre, lots of DVD's and video's that have been chosen by the young people. Comfy seats, games – big and small, and the dining area and to top it all off a wall that is brightly decorated with an underwater scene.

After all of this I sat down with Lisa and Soofiya to discuss what they think of Hartburn Walk.

Lisa said that it is *'Excellent and I like talking to the staff.'*

Soofiya agreed and said that she *'enjoys coming here, I know that I come here to give my parents a rest but I like coming to see my mates – I haven't seen Lisa for ages. Everyone is good, everyone tries to help you and the staff are really friendly. I don't know what I'm going to do I'm nearly 18 and I can't come here but now I'm a chatterbox,'* Lisa and I are not quite convinced that possible!

We talked about the two girls going to different colleges in Newcastle and Lisa said that *'I like the staff helping me with my course work.'*

All in all, the young people appeared very happy staying at Hartburn Walk and all very familiar and comfortable.

It is very apparent that the young people are involved in dialogue throughout the length of their stay. The Young People's Meeting provides a forum for the young people to have an effect on what happens at Hartburn Walk. In respect of this and on behalf of the young people I would like to recommend that Hartburn Walk receives its Investing in Children membership.

Helen Mulhearn
Project Worker Investing in Children
March 2005

Chill-out time

Hartburn Walk Short Break Centre provides a place for young people with behavioural difficulties to take time out from their everyday lives. It aims to help them develop their independence and social skills.

During their stay, everyone has a say and the opportunity to do the things that suit them – for example, a variety of food is prepared for a welcoming banquet to suit everyone's tastes. The young people hold meetings with the staff to discuss what they would like to do. Staff support them to make sure everyone can participate in the meetings. Makaton and writing with symbols are used to provide information for children with alternative communication methods.

“...I like coming to see my mates...”

The young people say bullying and harassment are not allowed, everyone has their own space in their own room, and people are not allowed in each other's rooms. They also have a chill-out space, games room and TV room with DVDs and videos they have chosen.

Soofiya says, “I enjoy coming here. I know I come here to give my parents a rest but I like coming to see my mates – I haven't seen Lisa for ages. Everyone is good, everyone tries to help you and the staff are really friendly. I don't know what I'm going to do, I'm nearly 18 and I can't come here now, but I'm a chatterbox.”

According to the Investing in Children assessor, “It is very apparent that the young people are involved in dialogue throughout the length of their stay. The young people's meeting provides a forum for them to have an effect on what happens at Hartburn Walk.”

[suggested pics – banquet in progress, people enjoying chill-out space]