

INVESTING IN CHILDREN

Membership Evaluation

Date January 2006
(Member since 2004)

PROJECT NAME Inline Newcastle YHN

PROJECT LOCATION 1st Floor, Council Offices
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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

Inline provides housing assessment and support to about 70 young people. Youth Voice has set up a forum for young tenants of accommodation providers in Newcastle. Young people are clear that the partnership between the two organisations has led to opportunities for dialogue and change, e.g. young people are involved in the recruitment process for all staff at INLINE, and the Open College Network accredited scheme was the result of a working group of young people. The young people also have a powerful voice in development and policy of Your Homes Newcastle and the Homeless Forum. Changes that have resulted from dialogue are too numerous to mention but include new policies about accommodation of young offenders, young people misusing substances and the inclusion of a service user involvement strategy for all organisations which are bidding for funding from Supporting People in Newcastle.

Sector Housing
Ages 16-19 years
Area City
Ward Gosforth

Number of beneficiaries 70



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Inline/Youth Voice

Following on from last year's evaluation the work of Inline, Youth voice and all the young people's work has gone from strength to strength. As an organisation there have been management and staff changes, but the ethos of working with young people in dialogue to affect change within their individual lives, within the service they receive and within the wider debates in Newcastle is still on-going.

Your Homes Newcastle - Inline has successfully moved its management from the The Children's Society to 'Your Homes Newcastle.' *The choice of 'new management' was made in negotiation with the young people who have used and do use the service of Inline.* This has also meant a change of premises.

Continued dialogue and change includes:

Staff Appointments - Young people continue to have an influence over new staff appointments. More recently Jade, a volunteer with Inline was involved in interviews for new 'Area Locality Managers' as part of the new Newcastle Plan with Investing in Children. Jade said '*it was a good experience*'.

Accreditation and Training - Accreditation opportunities for young people has been strengthened and seen an increased demand as the Volunteer Coordinator (Rachel) is responsible for ensuring that young people are able to access a variety of training that they want.

Although staff members talk through what is available Rachel takes responsibility for the volunteers, support and accreditation.

Volunteers - All the volunteers at Inline are young people who have had one to one support from the Inline Team or are friends of volunteers helping in areas they feel are important.

The young people I met with spoke positively about one to one support they received in the beginning. Most of the young people have been involved with Inline for many years and definitely were happy to acknowledge that intensive support they received at a point of crisis in their lives.

'It was good for helping with my routine, especially when I felt depressed or like nothing was worth doing.' (J)

'It helps you build up your confidence' (R)

'Its fab' (S)

The young people can receive floating support from the workers for up to two years, once their housing crisis is resolved. However, in reality through their participation work, young people continue to receive that indirect support by having access to workers.

Jade, Rachel, Shellie and Callie all agreed that the support was ongoing. They could drift in and out depending on what is going on for them. The group were keen to point out that they participate in '***their way***', '***when they want and in what they want.***'

Jade told me '***there is always something to do.***' Rachel said '***you can do everything, you can be here every single day if that's why we have changed the way we get involved. We pick and choose what we are interested in, what we have time to do.***'

The young people told me that '***Karen lets you know what's on offer, by text, by phone and you are under no pressure to do anything, you don't mind saying 'No' its not a problem.***'

Karen Adamson is now the Youth Task Coordinator, responsible for coordinating all the participation projects within Inline.

Training -This group were in the middle of writing a peer education training programme around the issues of 'Teenage Pregnancy.' A 10 week short course to be delivered in Walker Technology College from September.

The young people

- Developed the lesson plan
- Wrote aims and objectives
- Researched the content
- Will be delivering it

The group have also received funding from the 'Princes Trust' for baby dolls. Callie, one of the young people:

- Filled in the forms
- Spoke to the Princes Trust
- Secured the grant

On the visit of the worker from The Princes Trust, Karen and Callie were able to talk to her about college funding for Callie. Callie is now all sorted and is looking forward to starting college in September.

Accreditation - When young people receive tenancy support from Inline they are introduced to the idea of other opportunities, to learn and gain accreditations that can lead to new directions. Many young people who are supported by Inline achieve useful qualifications, and work through them at their own pace.

'From doing work with Youth Voice I also began to get accreditation for my achievements.'

'Being with Inline isn't just about getting you a house and seeing you weekly to help you manage, they run an accreditation programme which I have also been part of and gained certificates for the work that I have done. These certificates are recognised by employers and colleges so they will help me further my education or get a job when my baby is old enough.'

'In January 2006, I no longer needed Inline support and was transferred to a Your Homes Newcastle tenant. While I was working with Joanne she told me about other things I was able to do at the project like the accreditation programme that Rachel ran, this is a way to get qualifications at my own pace.'

One of the training programmes that young people achieve accreditation for is the Child Protection course. This course has run for a few years and is now run by young people for young people.

Karen as the Youth Task Force Coordinator organises and supports **ALL** the young people's work, which is quite extensive.

As highlighted in my report earlier Jade said: ***'there is so much to get involved in.....we pick and choose what we are interested in.'***

Here are more examples of young people led work within Inline:

Youth Voice -Youth Voice continues to promote dialogue between young people and service providers. Youth Voice find themselves invited to support other agencies and services in their work with young people. Youth Voice has been involved in many debates with partner agencies in Newcastle and nationally including:

What Matters to Us - a report which identifies the agenda for change, and lists improvements needed on issues that matter to children and young people in Newcastle' – *taken from Youth Voice slide presentation.*

Every Child Matters – Working in partnership with other services and agencies to look at local outcomes for Newcastle. All of the work at Inline with young people addresses one of the five outcomes.

Youth Matters – Another Government Agenda which young people from Inline were involved in the debate of.

Northumbria Police Youth Consultation

Northumbria University – Youth Voice are Stakeholders in the new social work degree at Northumbria University. They have been involved in 'Interactive sessions with trainers', which involved young people giving their views on the content of the course.

This is partly due to the success of their 'Code of Conduct.' Since the last evaluation for Investing in Children, the Code of Conduct has progressed into a 'Good Practice Tool.' *It is a 'standard' developed and written by young people.* It assesses the service and its workers on their treatment of young people, the information they provide for young people, premises and set up etc. The young people from Youth Voice talk to young people from the service and build up a view of: (a) their assessment of the service and (b) how young service users feel about the service.

From this Youth Voice suggest how the service can improve.

'You don't fail the Code of Conduct' – the service works with the recommendations suggested by Youth Voice.

Youth Homeless Forum - *This was developed by young people for young people.* The forum exists to:

- 'Create opportunities for young people to have a say n what is being done for young homeless people.
- It gives a voice to the young homeless, and those who are in the care system.
- When something happens that affects homelessness, we can tell everyone and ask what they think, then tell the people who make decisions' – *taken from Youth Voice – slide presentation.*

Please see minutes attached as an example of the discussions that take place.

Jade told me she takes responsibility for organising meetings along with Jane, taking minutes and keeping everyone up to date and informed, with help from Karen and Rachel. Jade also said that they continually ask for young people's support from other homeless service providers in Newcastle.

The young people from Inline alongside workers have recently sat down and demystified the new Pathway Plan for homelessness. A great deal of time was spent working through the strategy and putting into plain English. From this the young people decided to produce a DVD. They decided this was much more young person friendly. I joined the group during a planning session for the DVD. Jade and Ed were working with Karen, Rachel and Ben to sort out the content of the video and how they would present it.

Billy, another young person who is mainly involved with Youth Voice couldn't make the session. Billy is very good at animation and filming and he had already drafted his 'vision' for the DVD, which the young people added to and created the main text.

Every time I visited Inline young people were busy, from writing and creating a DVD, coming back from peer education sessions in Schools to preparing new materials for more sessions and everything else.

Apart form working, the young people also have fun. For example, at a recent Sports Day held at Jesmond Dene Park Jade, Rachel



and Shellie told me they had a great day, as did Karen and Rachel, however no-one could move the next day!

Rachael, Jade, Shellie, Callie and Joyce also told me that they have other opportunities such as residentials and visits i.e. to Lightwater Valley. They reckoned **'nothing needs to change at Inline'** said Rachael, **everyone agreed**. However, they did acknowledge that things could improve, all services can get better. Inline gives space to all young people to get involved in that process.

Some of the young parents at the sports day, looking very cool calm and collected!



As you can imagine from all the evidence of dialogue and effective change which shapes the service young people receive, the young people I met with were very definite that Inline deserves its Investing in Children membership and that extra credit should be given for all the ways they allow young people to participate. **'Much more than some services'** said one young person. Therefore, on their behalf I would definitely like to recommend that Inline/Youth Voice remain Investing in Children members.

Helen Mulhearn
Membership Coordinator
Investing in Children

August 2006