

**January 2005**

**South  
Social Care and Health  
Looked After Teams Agenda day  
Report**

The Listening to Children Strategy is about children and young people having a say in how services are provided for them. As part of the listening to children strategy reference group we oversee the Children's rights officer post and work along side her on all areas of the strategy. One part of the listening to children strategy is to assist and facilitate all social care and health teams throughout county Durham to involve the children and young people who use their service in the service provided and if successful, this results in gaining Investing In Children membership. One way of involving young people I through Agenda days.

Agenda days have two parts the first is a blank sheet, the young people say whatever they feel about the service they receive this is usually then written up into good and bad points and changes. The second part is usually specific questions the team would like young peoples views on. Workshop two consisted of four questions, but instead they focused on areas of the service, such as looked after reviews, activities, visits from their social worker and foster carers. We also had a set of 11 extra questions in case we had time left which were more direct but helps to bring about discussion. (see page 3).

The agenda day was organised for the 5<sup>th</sup> January 2005 at the investing in children office, Moor Chambers, Framwellgate Moor from 11am until 1pm. Twelve young people attended the day and there were six facilitators from the Listening to Children Strategy Reference group. The young people were spilt into three groups of four with two facilitators leading each group. Group one was lead by Brian and Kim, group two was lead by Donna and Tabatha and group three was lead by Alexis and Claire.

The young people were also provided with lunch from tasty bites and refreshments. They also received a fee of £10 and any expenses.

## **Agenda** **5<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

**11:00am – Introduction**

**11:15am – Workshop 1**

- Good points and Bad points
- What changes would you make?

**11:45am – Break**

**11:50am – Workshop 2**

- How do you feel about your looked after reviews?
- How do you feel about activities that are provided? Would you change anything?
- What do you think about the visits that you get off your social worker? Would you like them longer, shorter, in the home or out of the home?
- How do you feel about your foster carers? And what do you know about Foster carer reviews?

**12:20pm – Lunch**

**12:50pm – Feedback**

**01:00pm – Payment and End**

Extra Questions

1. Before your review takes place how would you like to be asked about things you want to bring up at your review?
2. Who would you like to talk over the things you want to bring up at your review?
3. Would you like an advocate at your review with you?
4. How and where would you like your review to take place?
5. How would you like your foster carer to treat you?
6. Do you think that they should go to your parent's evenings?
7. Do you think that they should be able to change your fostering officer?
8. Do you think that you have long enough to get to know your social worker properly or are they moved on to quickly?
9. Have you had any problems staying with friends (overnight stays)?
10. Do you get help with your school work....would you like someone to help you at home (Access service)?
11. Healthcare...do you feel this is ok, too little, too much (medical examinations etc)

Involvement in IiC/SC & H groups...do you want to.... How easy is it for you to get here...when is best time....

## **Group 1**

### **Workshop 1**

#### **Good Points**

- Do anything for you.
- Taxis, they provide you with one..
- Attend meetings and stick up for you.
- Try and get the best for you.
- Make sure you are happy where you are staying.
- If there is a problem you can get in touch with them.

#### **Bad Points**

- Do stuff that you don't want to do.
- They get on your nerves.
- Social services (Social Care and Health) offices are dirty.
- Unhygienic.
- Keep one social workers.
- Crap at keeping in contact with your family.
- Don't see you enough.
- Social workers twist words.

#### **Changes**

- Places social services (Social Care and Health) offices are to close to the town centres.
- Come out more often instead of every 6<sup>th</sup> months.
- If you run away they would/will come after you.
- Stop making promises when they cant hold their promises.
- Cleaner offices and bigger (Newton Aycliffe office really dirty on the outside and inside)

### **Workshop 2**

#### **1. How do you feel about your looked after reviews?**

“I felt that they are too long and I cant stay in to long”, “They keep repeating things”, “I am not allowed to swear and I've got to be nice”, “I only go to get out of school”, “shit”, “ parents are allowed to shout at you at the looked after review but you are not allowed to shout back”, “alright”, “sometimes it gets on your nerves, you can't get a word in”

**2. How do you feel about activities that are provided? Would you change anything?**

“Activities for 14+ aren’t there”, “alright- CATS gets boring- don’t go”, “Cant sleep out- police checks”, “go to metroland”

**3. What do you think about the visits that you get of your social worker? Would you like them longer, shorter, in the home or out of the home?**

“They stay for 30 to 60 minutes”, “see me after school”, “go to places”, “longer visits”.

**4. How do you feel about your foster carers? And what do you know about Foster carer reviews?**

“Can’t stand foster carers”, “foster carers are alright”, “don’t know what foster carer reviews”, “you fill in a sheet, they’re not bad and you don’t really think about it.”

**Extra Questions**

**1. Before your review takes place how would you like to be asked about things you want to bring up at your review?**

“It’s sad, ring up and ask over the phone”, don’t like doing the booklet before ‘about a review???’ “It feels like homework”, “it takes hours to do”

**2. Who would you like to help you talk over the things you want to bring up at the review?**

“Foster carers and social workers”

**3. Would you like an advocate at your review with you?**

“No, don’t want an advocate, crap”

**4. How and where would you like your review to take place?**

“Take place in your own home”

**5. How would you like your foster carer to treat you?**

“With respect and the same way you treat them”

**6. Do you think that they should go to your parent’s evening?**

“They should go because they look after you” “don’t like them going”

**7. Do you think that you should be able to change your fostering officer?**

“No, don’t see fostering officer, but if your not happy then you should go”

**8. Do you think that you have long enough to get to know your social worker properly or are they moved on to quickly?**

“Move on too quickly, they don’t introduce you to your social worker”

**9. Have you ever had any problems staying over at your friends (over night stays)?**

“Not allowed to sleep out, too much hassle”

**10. Do you get help with your schoolwork? Would you like someone to help you at home (access service)?**

“Can’t help you with your school work because it’s your work”

**11. Healthcare...do you feel this is ok, too little or too much (medical examinations etc).**

“ It’s a good thing, that if you are ill then you find out soon enough”

**Group 2**

**Workshop 1**

**Bad Points**

- No Facilities
- Boring social workers (Social Care and Health)
- Embarrassing, more help
- Wont let you smoke in car
- Don’t always do what you say
- Don’t come out when they say they will

**Good points**

- They help with problems
- Free clothes
- Money
- Have to tell them where we are going

**Changes**

- Stop social services (social care and health)
- Come out more often

**Workshop 2**

**How do you feel about looked after reviews?**

“Boring, just sit there”, “ Not listened to”, “quite happy with how they are”, “quite good-social worker”, “all right, sit there, say nowt”, “crap, pointless”, people you don’t know”.

**How do you feel about activities that are provided? Would you change anything?**

“Activities are all right- paint balling, light water valley and the pantomime, I don’t like them” “ bring some friends”

**What do you think about the visits you get of your social worker? Would you like them longer, shorter or in the home out of the home?**

“ Spend to long, prefer to go out when social workers visit, e.g. bowling”

**How do you feel about your foster carers? And what do you know about foster carers reviews?**

“ Like foster carers”, “comfortable- if they don’t go into the bedroom- uncomfortable- confiscate stuff”

### **Extra Questions**

**1. Before your review takes place how would you like to be asked about things you want to bring up at your review?**

“ Prefer not to have a review, or not go”, not bothered what is said”

**2. Who would you like to help you talk over the things that you want to bring up at your review?**

“Tell social worker about problems”

**3. Would you like an advocate at your review with you?**

“ I wouldn’t like an advocate”

**4. How and where would you like your review to take place?**

“ Review done at home”

**5. How would you like your foster carer to treat you?**

“ Want to be treated like a human, not like shit”, “don’t like being told what to do”

**6. Do you think that they should go to your parent's evenings?**

"Don't go, not bothered"

**7. Do you think that you should be able to change your fostering officer?**

"Should be able to change fostering officer"

**8. Do you think that you have long enough to know your social worker properly or are they moved on too quickly?**

"Have enough time", "don't care", "too busy to talk to social worker"

**9. Have you had any problems staying at friends? (Over night stays)**

"Get police checks or they say I can't stay out"

**10. Do you get help with your schoolwork? Would you like someone to help you at home (access service)?**

"Get no help with schoolwork, do get offered help"

**11. Healthcare... do you feel this is ok too little too much (medical examinations)**

"go for health checks when want or need to"

**Group 3**

**Workshop 1**

**Good Points**

- They help you with problems.
- They arrange things for you e.g. see family, activities and take you out for a meal at Burger King and Mc Donald's.
- Organise taxis for school.
- Civilised social workers "all right".
- Sort out problems.

**Bad Points**

- "Pile of shit"
- Don't always do what they say.
- Unreliable.
- Old- grannies and granddads.

- Cant always trust them, social workers tell parents stuff.
- Snotty social workers.
- Crap buildings.
- No facilities.
- Should have magazines i.e. football magazines, max power etc.

### Changes

- Pay kids- pocket money.
- Make sure the social worker was there for the young people when they needed them.
- Come out more often.
- Should be able to take friends on trips.
- Activities: Go carting, theme Parks, Paint Balling and laser Quest.
- Social workers who understand you and your problems.
- Young people should interview social workers for the jobs.
- Facilities whilst waiting in social care and health buildings e.g. T.V and sky digital.
- Social workers need a better attitude and need to learn how to drive.
- When they say something they should do it.

#### **1. How do you feel about your Looked after Reviews?**

“Boring”, “Take too long”, “less reviews”, “go on about the same thing”, “always get to be there”, “do your head in”, “sometimes feel stupid”, “social worker you can’t get hold of”.

#### **2. How do you feel about activities that are provided? Would you change anything?**

“You should be able to take friends on visits”, “activities should be going go-carting, theme parks, paint balling, laser quest”.

#### **3. What do you think about the visits of your social worker? Are they too long, too short, in the home or out the home?**

“Social workers visits sometimes comes unexpected”, “Visits are too loo long”, “visits our house”.

#### **4. How do you feel about foster carers? And do you know about foster carer reviews?**

“Bossy”, “ solve your problems”, “shout at you”, “Fair”, “Sometimes feel like an outcast”, “ don’t know about foster carers reviews”, “ some of us get too drunk”

## CONCLUSION

The main Points raised by the young people from the agenda day were that the things they like most about social workers is that they help with problems and arrange things like seeing your family take out to places like mc Donald's and Burger King.

Young people felt that the social care and health buildings should have more facilities for young people such as television etc or just be a little more friendlier looking.

Many young people felt that they couldn't trust social workers as they told their parents things that young people told them. Young people felt that social workers should be more understanding.

Young people wanted more of a say in activities they did, they felt that they should do things like go carting and theme parks.

Young people felt very strongly that their social workers didn't come out to see them often enough. When they did come out to see them it was on the social workers terms and even then they didn't always turn up on time if at all and sometimes they might not even ring to cancel.

Looked after reviews were as young people saw them only a chance to get out of school but other than that young people felt that they were too long and basically just a chance for parents, teachers etc to shout at the young people without them being able to respond. Young people generally wanted reviews at home.

Young people felt that activities after age 14+ are non-existent. They felt that CATS was boring. Young people liked paint balling but didn't like pantomimes on a whole.

Young people felt that foster carers could be bossy and they didn't like it when they confiscate things but in general looked after them well.

Most young people felt that having medicals so often was good as when they were ill it was sorted quickly.

## Recommendations

There are recommendations from this agenda day that you could take forward and you could withdraw more from the report if and when you would like, these recommendations.

1. The social care and health offices that you work in could be more suitable for young people via not looking dull and perhaps cleaner colours.
2. Social workers are often criticised for being unreliable and not being punctual, maybe you could reassure the young people by informing them when you are cancelling an appointment and you should build up a trustful relationship with the young people as well by being assigned to a client for a longer period of time.

3. The activities you do need to be more fun for the young people as we have said in the conclusion that they would prefer to go to a theme park for example Alton towers.
4. Looked after reviews should be held at home if the young person wishes this to happen instead of going to a conference room and it is not a strange environment for the young people and they feel comfortable. The looked after reviews are too long and perhaps you should shorten them for the young people.
5. Foster carers order the young people about and the young people feel uncomfortable with this, there has always been a conflict between foster carers and young people and how they are treated, social workers need to act on this to change the foster carers behaviour.

The main thing is that you continue a Dialogue with young people and allow the young people to participate to bring about change in the service provided for young people.