

North
Social Care and Health
Looked After Teams Agenda Day Report
December 2004

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 alongside 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 is through Agenda Days.

Agenda Days have two parts the first part 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 people's views on. Workshop 2 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 discussions (see page3).

The Agenda day was organised for the 22nd December 2004 at the Investing in children office, Moor Chambers, Framwellgate Moor from 11am until 2pm. Fifteen young people attended the day along with eight facilitators from the Listening to Children Strategy groups. Tabatha, Kim and Claire, leading group one. Brian and Ashleigh leading group two and Francesca, Gemma and Donna leading group three. There was one young girl who felt uncomfortable talking in the group so she worked outside the room with Tabatha, but her views were fed in with the rest of the group's views. This was also the case with a young girl from group two who worked outside with Ashleigh.

We also provided the young people with refreshments and lunch from Tasty Bite's and they were paid a fee of £10 and expenses.

Agenda
22nd December 2004

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....

Workshop 1

The young people were split into three groups for this exercise but we have wrote them up as one as we thought this would be more efficient.

Good Points

- They help you with advice on smoking and drugs – to help stop
- Take you places, have a chance to try new activities
- Sometimes help
- Feel safe
- Deal with problems
- Pay for things
- Accommodation
- Activities
- Get to go on trips with parents sometimes
- Get us to see our parents
- Sister with me
- Like STEPS every week

Bad Points

- Never get in touch
- Never gets sorted out (problems)
- Drivers don't turn up for school
- Arrangements aren't followed through
- Not enough money
- Not enough clothes
- Only listen to what they want to hear
- Hopeless
- Interfering
- Never get to see them
- Go against wishes
- Never on time
- Never listen to problems
- Sometimes call names
- Treated like stupid (young people)
- Sometimes don't get to see my parents as much as they would like, only every 6 weeks
- Don't get to see my brothers that often
- Not enough contact

Changes

- Wants contact every 3 weeks
- Wants to go on holidays

- Would like to choose where to stay/live
- More money provided
- Better families
- Instead of SS more money for families
- Less criticism when working
- Change accommodation and facilities
- Should have children in charge
- Quite happy with the service and there is very little that can be improved or changed
- Forum for young people to have a say
- Have someone to talk to who are in the same position as them
- To listen more
- Take more time talking to them
- For different ages use different approaches
- Make same rules apply both ways
- If they want to make decisions make the right ones

Group One

Workshop 2

1. How do you feel about you looked after reviews?

'I feel comfortable because I get listened to', 'get changes', 'say what you feel', 'they're good because they tell you what's happening about contact with brother, sisters and Mum and Dad', 'I get to choose who goes to my review but have only been to one', 'I have been to lots of reviews but I don't get to choose who goes.'

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

'There is nothing for older people just younger', 'would like to go out and have a break from care', 'they should have separate activities for older and younger age groups', 'they should offer more options', 'should start CID again', 'you should be able to choose your own activities', 'I get to go to the caravan with my carer every Summer', 'I don't like to go on activities because there are too many young people that I don't know', 'I would like to go abroad with my foster carers.'

3. 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?

'I want her to come once a month, she only comes when she has time', 'she comes to my house', 'I like her better because it's better, more private.'

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

'They're lovely and kind', 'whenever I need anything they get it', 'I don't know anything about foster carer reviews', 'a bit more freedom', 'no privacy', 'foster carers should have more responsibility', 'trust them more', 'quite narrow minded', 'they should stop interrupting conversations', 'they should get to know you first', 'they never have enough time to talk.'

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?

'Not sure'

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

'My steps worker'

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

'I think I did one'

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

'I would like it at the social workers office'

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

'How they already treat me but without the shouting'

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

'I would like my parents and foster parents to go'

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

'I have never heard of them'

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

'I get to know them and then they change. I don't like that'

9. Have you had any problems staying with friends (overnight stays)?

'I have never asked'

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

'I get lots of help, especially on maths because it's hard'

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

'I go when I get a letter which I don't mind I only minded once'

Group Two

Workshop 2

1. How do you feel about you looked after reviews?

'Waste of time I don't go to them', 'sometimes they are alright', 'happy with the service I get consulted about issues most of the time', 'sometimes people don't turn up.'

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

'Good but I don't go on them, I used to but I wanted to spend time with my girlfriend', 'sometimes they are rubbish', 'boring, don't get to go on enough of them.'

3. 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?

'I would like shorter visits', 'doesn't bother me where they are', 'good, gives information, but I get sick of the information they give me', 'they come out when something is wrong.'

5. How do you feel about your foster carers? And what do you know about foster carer reviews?

'No, I don't know about them', 'foster carer's alright', 'I'm ok with foster carers reviews', 'the carers at my care home are nice.'

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?

‘I’m happy with the packs given before the looked after review’, ‘I would like a more personal approach not just filling in the form’, ‘I want to talk and discuss.’

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

‘My carer’, ‘I would like my key worker to talk to them more.’

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

‘Yes’, ‘It’s a good idea to have an advocate’

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

‘At home’, ‘a private place’, ‘social places like café’s etc.’

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

‘I think it’s ok how they treat you’

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

NOT ANSWERED

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

‘I have good stability with my social worker.’

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

‘I have good stability with my social worker.’

9. Have you had any problems staying with friends (overnight stays)?

‘It depends, I’m not allowed to stay certain places.’

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

‘My student mentor comes in every week to help mw tih homework, good idea.’

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

“Too little – would like better healthcare and services available”.

Group Three

Workshop 2

1. How do you feel about you looked after reviews?

‘Stop sending the crappie magazines from LAN’, ‘reviews aren’t any good’, stop sending repeats of everything.’

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

‘They don’t provide activities’, ‘I like more of certain activities’, ‘I want to get paid for activities’, ‘more activity money.’

3. 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?

‘Don’t have many visits’, ‘when they do visit we go to play pool.’

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

‘My foster carers are good people’, ‘feel comfortable’, overall I like them’, ‘don’t know much about reviews and I don’t see the point.’

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?

‘Don’t want particular things in reviews.’

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

‘I would like a key worker.’

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

‘No.’

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

‘I would like it to be at my home.’

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

‘My foster carer treats me alright and I am happy with them.’

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

‘I don’t think they should go to parent’s evenings’, ‘they can go if they want to go to my parents evenings.’

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

‘I think that if I wasn’t happy with my foster officer I would change them’

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

‘I don’t think I have enough time to know my social worker.’

9. Have you had any problems staying with friends (overnight stays)?

‘No.’

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

‘I get help at school.’

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

‘I think that they’re alright.’

Conclusion

The main points raised by the young people by the young people from the agenda day were that the thing they like most about social workers is that they 'help them with problems' but they don't always do or come when they say. Social workers do not stay with you long enough to build relationships so they could understand you, social workers attitude towards young people alternate. Social care and health offices are dirty and unhygienic; they should be more young people friendly. The social worker visits are too long.

The young people would prefer your teams to do different activities instead of the ones you are doing now. From the agenda day it was also said that young people want to take friends and activities for 14+ are non-existent.

Looked after reviews, from the information gathered young people felt that they repeat things and the young people feel intimidated and the looked after reviews take too long. They young people felt that they were pointless and boring.

Very few young people on the day knew about foster carer reviews and most of the young people were reasonable happy with foster carers but didn't like them confiscating things.

Most of the young people did not want an advocate and felt that they were crap. The young people also felt that it is important to have medicals when you are in care because it ensures that you are healthy.

Young people wanted their friends to sleep at there home but its too much hassle for the young people because there has to be police checks.

Young people also felt that homework is there work and they do not need help. Foster carers should be able to go to the parents evenings because they are looking after us but young people also did not want there foster carer to go to the parents evenings.

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. That you use some of the passive points that the young people made to develop those areas.

2. Social workers should spend more time with young people to build up a relationship and a good understanding with the young person who you work with.
3. You should involve young people within the decisions of age groups for activities and the places in which they could go on activities and trips young people also expressed the fact that they may be more likely to attend these activities and trips, young people could meet with planners quarterly or even annually so as to plan the years events.
4. Social care and health buildings could be more child and young person friendly as they do have to come in contact with them on occasions at the office. This could be done with a group young service user.
5. Look after reviews, young people had a lot of different issues on these so I would recommend that each young person is treated as an individual and are asked how they would like the process to be carried out.
6. Foster carers reviews and reviewing officers need to be more widely advertised among children and young people with foster carers so they have more accurate information on them as this does affect them and as the agenda day suggests very few young people at least over half of young people have no knowledge of them.
7. Advocates, there could maybe some work done around this, just to clarify if young people have enough information on advocates or if young people find advocates an easy service to use because as this is a service only for young people and targeted mainly on looked after young people they need to feel that they can use this service if any help is needed on this work and would be happy to help you with this.
8. A lot of young people still had to have police checks on people who they were having overnight stays with, which should no longer be happening so this is in need of clarification.

One thing that would be implemental in this would be the ongoing participation of young people as part of a reference group that would be given the power by your team and if need be someone from Investing In Children to bring about changes within your team.

