

MALAP AGENDA DAY

February 2006

On Saturday 11th February 2006, the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership Reference Group Facilitators ran an agenda day at the Investing In Children Office in Framewellgate Moor at 11am till 2pm. It does seem like a lengthy 3 hours, more than our usual but we had a lot to talk about. The agenda day was a success, 22 young people arrived to participate in the agenda day. This was the 3rd agenda day we have had since the formation of the group. The young people who attended were paid a fee of £10 for attendance and any travelling expenses were reimbursed.

We changed the approach to the agenda day again but included a mixture of the previous agenda days we have held. We took a few photographs of the young people during the agenda day to use in a report that will be given to Children's Strategic Management Team (CSMT). I would also like to add we also did it because we thought it would be nice to have photographs of how we work.

We started off the agenda day with introductions of who we are and why we invited the young people. I explained what an agenda day is on a flipchart but with conversation. 'Today is a chance for you to raise issues you may have regarding decision-making and anything that effects your life and how you live your life. We have an open agenda and promise not to talk in jargon. Your views and opinions are important so we want to listen and make changes. From today's workshops your views and opinions are not changed and are put into a report be shown to the right people who make decisions at the strategic level or field level. No names or addresses are mentioned.' I went onto explain what MALAP stands for using the same technique as the flip chart and conversation method. I gave a brief description of Multi Agency Looked After Partnership. What is M.A.L.AP? MALAP stands for Multi-Agency Looked After Partnership. Multi Agency in organisations such as social services, educational, and health services working together such as CAMHS. Looked After- that's you young people having an input in the strategy. Partnership means working together as one.

"It is a group of professionals working on a strategy led by young people to improve services provided."

After explaining what is MALAP I went onto explain what we mean when we say blank sheet agenda. "Blank Sheet Agenda" This workshop is an open talk about anything and everything. It is split into three parts: Good points, Bad points and changes you would like to see...

I also went through the programme of today. I asked the groups of young people to start the first workshop- the blank sheet agenda' an open discussion which included the normalising debate and prepared questions. After this discussion we had a small 10 minute break followed by workshop which was to work on the recommendations from the report 'Go on make a change', the young people commented on the recommendations. The group had lunch followed by the last workshop which was also working on the recommendations. We finished the day with a thank you and payment of fees and transport.

Thank you, for attending the agenda day

Today's Agenda

11am- Welcome and sing in

- Health and Safety
- Explanation of today
- What is an agenda day?
- What does Malap (Multi agency Looked After Partnership) mean?
- Today's agenda

11:15am- 'Blank sheet agenda' and the 'normalising debate'

12noon - Lunch

12:30 pm- Recommendations- 'Go on make A change report'

1:15pm- Break

1:25pm- Recommendation- 'Go on make A change report'

2pm- Finish and payment

Groups 1,2 and 3-Workshop 1- 'Blank Sheet Agenda' and 'Direct Questions'

Good points:

- Some social workers are good and help you with stuff
- Free driving lessons
- Limited financial help when setting up at home
- Pay for education i.e. university

Bad points:

- Everything
- Pocket money not the same for anyone
- Very limited contact with social workers
- Social workers don't show up when supposed to
- Should give money for cigarettes
- They don't follow up recommendations from reviews.
- Police checks for staying at friends
- Everything takes too long
- Receipts for everything
- Not always allowed to see family
- Not allowed friends in home
- Everything you do seems to be wrong
- Always have loads of people come to see you at school
- Why do we have to have medicals when no one else does
- Always changing social workers
- Have to be in early
- Have to go to bed early
- Other people get up early so we have to
- Turn electric off upstairs
- Staff don't treat you as individuals
- Staff don't inform about events such as C.I.D and I.I.C

Changes you would like to see:

- Changing bed times to suit everyone
- Social workers need to spend more time with young people
- Social workers turn up when they are supposed to
- Staff should treat as individuals
- There should be no police checks on our friends, parents don't ask other parents for police checks.
- Pocket money should be the same for everyone
- Friends should be allowed to come and stay
- We shouldn't have medicals
- They shouldn't turn off electricity

Looked After Reviews

1. What do you think of looked after reviews?
 - Waste of time
 - Boring
 - The carers cant make their mind up

- Talk about you as if you are not there
 - Slag you off when you are not there and when you are there
2. What type of information do you get about reviews?
 - What's going to happen to you
 3. What do you feel about reviews?
 - Stupid
 4. What choices do you have in reviews?
 - Nothing
 5. When do your reviews take place?
 - In the home
 6. Who is involved in your reviews?
 - Social workers
 - Idiots
 - Idiots sit there and write things down
 - Don't like it when people write things down because, they don't know me and I don't know them, they could be writing anything

What do you think of the looked after review?

- Not uncomfortable
- Get listened to
- Sometimes don't agree

What type of info do you get about looked after reviews?

- Get everything that has been said in the meeting

How do you feel about the reviews?

- Good they don't treat you differently
- Fine because they tell you everything

What choices do you have in reviews?

- All of the choices
- All the choices (where you get to stay, how long to stay with foster carers)

Where do your reviews take place?

- School
- Home
- Social Services

Who is involved in your review?

- Social workers
- Foster Carers

- No

What have your placements been like?

- Not very good
- Good
- No

How many have you had?

- 14
- 17
- 1

Is there support in education for you how/why?

- Yes
- Treated the same
- Gave a stick to lean on

Do you have contact with family or friends?

- Yes, once every two weeks

1. What has your placement been like??

- Shit (placement)

2. How many placements have you been in?

- 5, 59, 9 placements

3. Is there support in education for you, how or why?

- Yes! Sometimes

4. Do you have contact with family and friends?

- Yes, by everyone

Workshop 2 and 3- 'Go on make a change' Recommendations

1. All positive points you have made should develop social workers jobs.
2. Social workers should make young peoples life as normal as possible.
3. Young people with social workers and managers should work together to make the services better.
4. Have partnerships with other authorities like schools.
5. Social workers need to spend more time with young people.
6. Young people should be involved in deciding where to go on activities.
7. Social services buildings need to look better.
8. Young people need to be treated as individuals.

Social workers should give young people information on advocacy services.

Recommendation 1

- It should develop their jobs, but doesn't

Recommendations 2

- They should make our lives as normal as possible
- We shouldn't be made to feel like being in care is wrong. And we should not be singled out for this

Recommendation 3

- Don't agree with schools getting involved, except for parent's evening

Recommendation 4

- More time should be spent improving the service, rather than the buildings themselves

Recommendation 5

- All young people should be given more info on NYAS
- They all need someone to offer support at least once

Conclusion

The agenda day went quite well, in fact from the young people an additional 12 wanted to do some work with Investing In Children and with the Multi Agency Looked After Partnership Reference Group.

The general comments were in fact similar to previous comments, young people felt that the driving lessons and paying for university was a good idea unfortunately the social workers time management was an issue and not being allowed friends in a residential home or sleeping at others. They felt social workers were not informing them of activities not recreational but events at Care In Durham or Investing in Children Projects. They also felt pocket money was too harsh and asking for receipts still. Would you ask your child for a receipt? More shockingly turning electricity off upstairs at a certain time, it sounds like prison. One young person felt like everything they do they are doing it wrong. Other concerns were young people having to meet professionals at schools. Is it because it fits that professional's diary? If it does then that's not fair after all you're disrupting the young persons education. Another concern was times a young person is due in on a night.

These are just some of the issues mentioned from young people. It appears the same concerns raise time and time again, the question you should ask is why?