



INVESTING IN CHILDREN

Membership Evaluation

Date September 2005

PROJECT NAME NCH Family Mediation Services and Children's Support Services

PROJECT LOCATION MEA House
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SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

Sector Voluntary Agency
Ages up to 18 years
Area City
Ward All areas

Number of beneficiaries



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

NCH Family Mediation Services and Children's Support Services

For the purpose of this evaluation I met with the staff who provide the support services for children in 'Ear 4 U.'

Ear 4 U – 'It is a support for children and young people up to the age of eighteen whose parents may be separated or divorced. The service provides a safe space for young people to talk about their responses to the changes in their lives,' taken from NCH literature.

Ears 4 U aims to help young people to:

- Make sense of their own reaction to change in their lives
- Understand that although it may be very painful, they are going through a normal process that many others may share
- Express their feelings of anger, sadness, confusion and self blame that are common at his time, to gain reassurance

The Children's Workers:

- Work with children and young people on a one to one basis when referred to the project
 - Visit schools within PHSCE to teach children and young people strategies in dealing with divorce and separation.
1. Work with children and young people on a one to one basis when referred to the project
 - 'Anyone can make an enquiry on behalf of a child or young person' – NCH – Information for professionals
 - 'If it is agreed that support would be appropriate, an initial appointment is made for the child or young person to meet with the children's worker who will explain what will happen in the sessions and *to give **them** the opportunity to decide if **they** wish to come to further appointments.*' NCH – Information for professionals.

From the onset the project makes very clear that the children's workers are there to meet the needs of the children and young people not the adults who refer, including parents. The leaflet also goes on to say that:

All meetings are confidential unless the child or young person requests any information to be passed on to a parent'

I believe that the workers enable the children and young people to make decisions to help themselves by ensuring that they **are** listened to.

2. Take their service into schools to meet a wider audience.

- The workers provide an hour session looking at issues related to separation and divorce and talk about strategies in dealing with this.
- By providing this service children and young people can take away information and ask for a referral.
- The Children's workers use a feedback form to evaluate these sessions. The workers then respond to feedback, queries and suggestions.

Evidence of Change

Feedback Forms – one young person asked if the children's workers had a video they could watch.

- The project gained some funding in order to create their own video
- A group of young people with experience of the 'Ear 4 U' service came together to create, think about and write what they would like to see in a video

Result – NCH now have a video for children and young people to watch in the school sessions, created by young people

Interviews – The project needed a new manager

Training sessions were held with interested young people on how to interview within this the young people involved were-

- Introduced to the staff team, workers came into the sessions to explain their role in the organization. This helped the young people understand the new manager would have to manage.
- Discussed what qualities the young people felt the new manager should have.
- Set questions they would like to task the candidates
- Played games and had fun! Also enjoyed some lovely food and drinks
- Had a follow up meeting to talk about how they felt about being involved in this process and to meet the new manager, Margaret Lacy

This also gave the group a chance to hear how Margaret felt about being interviewed. Margaret shared with the group that he two young people in 'meet and greet' duty had helped in keeping her calm before the interview. Margaret really appreciated their presence.

I met with the group during their interview training and after they had appointed Margaret to the post. We talked about how they felt about being involved in this way with NCH – Ear 4 U.

Everyone agreed that they had enjoyed being part of the group.

Emma said 'its interesting, I haven't done anything like this before. At first I didn't want to but now I'm glad I did.' When we interviewed Margaret we gave her five minutes to draw a picture of herself. We gave her answers a score from 1-10.

Annie also said she enjoyed coming and Tam said 'its fun.'

Emma also said ' you know they are listening to you because they ask you about what you've just said.'

During the session with Margaret the young people talked about what they would like to do next and how they can continue to be involved in the project.

This is just an example of what they want to achieve in the future:

Trips – bowling, swimming,, cinema, Theater Royal etc.

Presentation – at the video launch, plan and prepare the presentation and talk about how to use it.

Fundraising –sponsored walks, raffles, bring and buy.

Recruitment continue to be involved in the interview process.

Building – make the rooms more young people friendly, new pictures, move files or hide them.

Advertising – letting other young people know with posters, leaflets etc.

All were full of ideas and enthusiasm. I believe this has been a very positive experience for all involved.

NCH Family Mediation and Children's Support Service – Ear 4 U have truly benefited from involving children and young people in making decisions with and for the positive growth of the project. The service has been enriched by their involvement and looks set to continue in dialogue with children and young people. Good Luck.

In respect of the participation of children and young people in decisions affecting the service delivery I have no hesitation in recommending that NCH Family Mediation and Children's Support Services- Ear 4 U receive their Investing in Children membership.

Helen Mulhearn
Project Worker
Investing in Children

September 2005

Safe space to talk

Ear 4 U supports under 18s whose parents are separated or divorced. It provides a safe space for them to talk about how they deal with the changes in their lives. On a one-to-one basis, workers help them express their feelings, make sense of their reactions and understand that they are not alone.

From the outset, young people's wishes come first, and any who are referred can make their own decision about whether or not they want support from the project. It is there to meet their needs, not those of their parents or other adults, and meetings are confidential.

Ear 4 U also visits schools to talk about strategies young people could use to cope with divorce and separation. Anyone who wants to can then ask for support. A feedback form allows workers to respond to any questions or ideas. For example, after a request was received for a video, the project got some funding and produced one, with input from young people who had benefited from Ear 4 U.

When the project needed a new manager, young people were trained in interviewing techniques and briefed on the demands of the job. They discussed the qualities the new person would need and came up with some questions for candidates. Two of the young people took part in an introductory session with the candidates, and talked afterwards about being involved. "It's interesting, I haven't done anything like this before," says Emma. "At first I didn't want to, but now I'm glad I did. When we interviewed people we gave them five minutes to draw a picture of themselves, and we gave their answers a score from one to ten."

"...you know they listen because they ask you about what you just said..."

Emma adds, "You know they are listening to you [at Ear 4 U] because they ask you about what you've just said."

"All the young people at Ear 4 U are full of ideas and enthusiasm, and this has led to the positive growth of the project," says the Investing in Children assessor. "The service has been enriched by their involvement and looks set to continue in dialogue with children and young people."

[possible pics – interviewees' drawings of themselves, or meet and greet session with candidates]