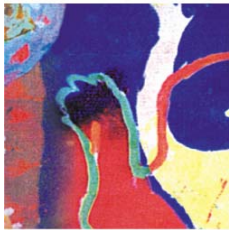


Newton Aycliffe Social Services Department:

The listening to children and young people Agenda Day

February 2002



The background

We met with one of the Social workers from Newton Aycliffe Social Services who explained that their team would like to find out what the children and young people who use their service think about the service they receive and how it could be improved/developed. It was agreed that we would hold an Agenda day where the young people could put forward their views and ideas.



Newton Aycliffe Social Service's team, invited young people, who they worked with, to attend the Agenda day at Sunnydale Leisure Centre in Shildon on the 19th February 11am –1pm, followed by activity sessions until 3pm.



The Agenda session

Twenty young people attended the session.

We started off with an introduction done by Tabatha who explained who we were, what work we had done, what the day was about and what was going to be done with the information that they gave us on the day.

We then split up into three groups with Steven, Alexis and Tabatha working with one group each. We then asked them what they thought of the service provided for them. We did this in the format of Good and Bad points with discussions around the issues raised.

Views and issues raised by young people

The good points

- ❖ Someone to talk to
- ❖ You can tell them things that you can't tell your own family
- ❖ They are always there for you
- ❖ They understand both points of view
- ❖ They give you some helpful advice
- ❖ When they visit, they are always happy to see you
- ❖ They come out and see you, you don't have to go and see them
- ❖ They are nice to you
- ❖ They are kind to you
- ❖ It gets you out of the house
- ❖ They let your parents go on holiday
- ❖ They reassure you
- ❖ They set up good organisations like cats
- ❖ They give you help at home
- ❖ Sometimes you can take friends on some of the activities
- ❖ Like it with social services because you get to talk about why you are with social services

The Bad points

- When some workers don't come
- When the workers are boring
- When workers don't understand
- When workers pretend to listen
- When they twist words
- Workers always know best, but they don't
- Workers split families
- They don't send anyone-else if your social worker is ill
- They don't give you a second chance
- There isn't enough trips for the older people
- She never comes when I ask her to
- Sometimes they say they will do something for you, then they don't
- They promise to see you before they go on holiday, and they don't
- They are sometimes busy or, not in the office when you need them
- They give you lectures, but make you understand
- When they organise trips out they are not for all ages, and they should be as some people feel left out
- The older people should be able to go on trips with the younger ones
- The trips should be a lot more fun like going to the swimming pool or something
- We could go on a trip for the weekend, to a place that we can choose
- We should go on further trips like Alton towers, or something like that
- We should go places that suit us
- The writing is boring, and we sometimes can't understand the writing
- They use words that we can't understand

- Not asked to go on activities
- Lunch is not always provided

- They make it fun by organising trips out including;
 - ✓ Go-carting
 - ✓ Rock climbing
 - ✓ Fishing
 - ✓ Bike riding
 - ✓ Hill walking
 - ✓ Motorbike scrambling
 - ✓ Skiing

- Information available
 - ✓ Letters about the service
 - ✓ Leaflets about football and games
 - ✓ Information about child minding and holidays
 - ✓ Pictures to help explain things
 - ✓ Told what's happening
 - ✓ Should be more colourful and less writing in them
 - ✓ Like it with social services because you get to talk about why you are with social services

The end of the session

After lunch we ended the session by going back over the work. We agreed that once the report of the day is written everyone would get a copy then the Social Service's team would get a copy. When the team have decided how they will use the ideas and views from today to develop their team they will arrange to get everyone back together for an hour to explain how the views and ideas will be used.

Conclusion

In conclusion we found that the young people had different experiences of working with Social Services, which has issues about making sure each person is treated as an individual and for how work is carried out.

There needs to be a way of making the good things happen more often by all staff and stop the bad ways happening at all.

The young people enjoyed the trips that they had been on, but some people thought that maybe there should be certain trips/activities for under 12yrs and different for older. Some young people didn't get to go on some trips as they were either too old or had other appointments. This should be sorted so that everyone has the same opportunities to have a break especially as the older children felt that they were being left out with there being more activities for younger children.

Steven Robinson and Tabatha Tilley