



**INVESTING IN CHILDREN**  
**Membership Evaluation**

**Date** February 2006

**PROJECT NAME** The Viewpoint Team

**PROJECT LOCATION** Children's Standards Unit  
Sheriff Leas  
Springfield Road  
Blakelaw  
Newcastle upon Tyne NE5 3DS

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**ASSESSOR** Helen Mulhearn

**SUMMARY OF EVALUATION**

**Sector** Social Services  
**Ages** 5-19 years  
**Area** City  
**Ward** Blakelaw

**Number of beneficiaries**



investing in children

## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

### The Viewpoint Team - Newcastle

The viewpoint team are Chris Plant and Nicky Campbell. Chris and Nicky are employed by Newcastle City Council, Social Services Directorate. They are based within the Childrens Standards Unit and form part of a wider team of Independent Reviewing Officers, whos primary aim is for children to receive the highest standard of services possible.

A worker conducts the Viewpoint interview with individual children and young people who are part of the Looked After system. Viewpoint is a computer programme, which replaces the consultation book which children and young people filled in prior to a review. *The feedback from the children and young people was that the books were boring, although they were filled in and sent back to the Social Worker and filed, and it was felt with little or no impact.*

- The Viewpoint programme is filled in on the laptop, the programme speaks in various voices, shapes and forms and the child or young person filling in the Viewpoint chooses the way forward.

***R – “It used to be a genie or a parrot”, but “they have made it more older and given it different characters and questions” , added – J.***

- The viewpoint programme asks questions and opinions on how their day to day lives are going.
- ***The Viewpoint programme in Newcastle has been changed as a result of feedback from the children and young people in Newcastle i.e. questions were added to address issues identified by the children and young people i.e. new clothes, bank accounts etc.***
- The Viewpoint team discusses with children, young people and their carers what time is best for the workers to visit to go through the programme.
- On my first meeting with Chris and Nicky they found themselves busy four evenings per week, this has now turned into five.
- The viewpoint team discusses with the children and young people who should receive a copy of their viewpoint reviews and the issues they have raised.

*Both R & J told me they were quite happy with who receives copies of their Viewpoint and they get one for themselves.*

- If the child of young person decides that they do not want to share with anyone, Chris and Nicky identify some areas that they may need to discuss with appropriate people in order to make change. ***This is done with the agreement of the children and young people.***

- ***The Viewpoint team evaluates at the end of each Viewpoint session and asks how the young people feel i.e. have you enjoyed it, would you like to do it again.***

***J – “They say that they will be back out to see you in 6 months, you get one every 6 months. On my last one I asked why both my carers names aren’t on the computer”. As this is just a recent request J is still waiting for feedback.***

The viewpoint programme changes everytime individual children and young people use it. It takes into consideration the answers that are being given. Although the programme has changed here are a few examples of how the Viewpoint has made a difference in the lives of the children and young people who use it:-

- ***R – R has a pocket money rise.***
- ***C – Had his mobile phone returned.***
- ***EI – contact issues resolved***
- ***I – more contact with family (written response attached)***

All of the young people I spoke with confirmed that they did think the Viewpoint Programme is a good system. ***They said that Viewpoint could and does make a difference to their life, not every week but in preparation for their Looked After Reviews.*** The IRO is the responsible person for highlighting these issues in the review.

The outcomes of the discussion from the looked after reviews are then passed back to Chris and Nicky by the IRO’s. ***This confirms that issues raised have been discussed.***

I believe Chris and Nicky strive to make a difference in the lives of children and young people who use the Viewpoint. They discuss on a daily basis with social workers and line managers to highlight issues raised by children and young people in order that a positive change can be brought about as a result of the Viewpoint programme.

*Chris and Nicky ensure appropriate adults listen to the wants and wishes of children and young people and that their views are taken into account and change is achieved where ever possible. The young people I spoke with confirmed that this did happen.*

Chris and Nicky ask for feedback from social workers in order to ensure accountability in responding to issues raised by the children and young people during their viewpoint.

The Viewpoint Programme continues to go from strength to strength and the team are committed to making a difference and making changes for and with children and young people. In light of the commitment from Chris and Nicky in ensuring changes are made I have no hesitation in recommending the Viewpoint Team receive their Investing in Children membership.

**Helen Mulhearn**  
**Membership Co-ordinator, Investing in Children**

**February 2006**