



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

New Beginning

For the purpose of this evaluation I met with Daniel, Jason, Cara, Josh, Geday and Alex

Barnet, Enfield and Haringey NHS Mental Health Trust Tier 4 service offers support to children and young people with serious emotional wellbeing difficulties. The structure of the service is set up to provide two in-patient units and a school, which is attached to both units. The service is located at Edgware Community Hospital in Barnet.

New Beginning offers support to young people from Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Camden and Islington. Young people aged 13-18 are referred by a CAMHS professional from one of these areas and given access to various support.

New Beginning supports young people with emotional wellbeing needs, providing different therapeutic approaches to care, education and recreation activities. Staff positively encourage young people, either through individual meetings or group meetings, to discuss and evaluate their care and recreational time at the centre.

This report will highlight and identify opportunities that exist for young people to engage in dialogue with staff in order to make changes.

Opportunities for Dialogue and Change

Community Meeting.

The community meeting provides young people with the opportunity to share their views about things that have been happening on the unit and how it makes young people feel.

Geday told me, **“I like these meetings because it gives me a chance to have my say about what is happening on the unit”**. I was given the opportunity to attend a community meeting.

A young person was chairing the meeting while other young people were given the opportunity to talk. Issues that were discussed were; - home leave, people's behaviour on the unit, and an incident that had occurred. The staff members then asked the young people how they felt about these issues. It might be a good idea to use the community meeting as a place where young people can chat with staff about their experiences of the service they receive, and work together to make positive changes.

Not all young people saw the benefits of the community meeting and were concerned about participating in it. Daniel told me, **“If you do not say things in the meeting, it's like the staff think you are not getting better”**. Jason added, **“There should be something on the walls explaining about policies which might help people understand them better”**. Cara told me, **“You do not have to go, but the staff recommend that you do”**. It might be interesting to discuss with young people the purpose of the community meetings and work in partnership to develop Daniel's idea.

Unit Procedures.

Some young people on the unit came together to discuss bedtimes. Lucy explained to me what happened, **“We wanted to extend our bedtimes from 10pm. Lucy went on to say, “All the young people came together and discussed this, and then all talked to the staff”.** Young people can now access the relaxation room until 10.45pm through negotiation with staff.

Activities

All young people are encouraged to generate their ideas and plan what they want to do during their time at the centre. Some of the activities young people have asked for were: DVD nights and going shopping. Alex explained, **“Sometimes you get the chance to plan and chat about what you want to do, which is ok”** Young people are given time individually or via group meetings to identify activities with staff, which have included planning a summer activity. Geday added, **“The staff asked me about things I want to do, and try to put them on, like table tennis”**

Admission and Assessment.

Staff and young people spend time together developing relationships during this stage. This gives young people the chance to discuss what their needs are with staff. Support and treatment are then developed together through the admission and assessment process.

Lucy told me about her experience of New Beginnings, **“The staff have been really helpful and have really listened to how I am feeling when I first came here.”**

Investing In Children Agenda Day

To further develop the involvement of young people in decision making at New Beginning, and look at ways to develop the service, New Beginnings supported an Agenda day. This took place on the 25th February and a report has been written. Several issues were identified as important service improvements by young people. Young people and staff are going to work in partnership on these issues. It will be interesting to see what further developments can be made through the positive steps New Beginnings is taking to ensure young people are given the opportunity to participate in decision making.

Conclusion

Young people's rights are respected at New Beginning and they are free to express their opinion during their stay, which sometimes allows changes to take place. A process of dialogue and change does take place at the centre between young people and staff, and this encourages young people to become involved in decision-making. This is highlighted through the community meeting and other individual meetings that take place at the centre. The agenda day also gave everybody the chance to express their opinions and examine the service.

I would, therefore, like to recommend that New Beginning receive Investing in Children Membership and look forward to further developments and changes made over the next year.

The following young people have read and agreed with the report and recommend that New Beginning receive Investing In Children membership. They are: Daniel, Jason and Cara.

I would like to thank the young people and the staff for their time and finish by saying well done.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children
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