



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Hartlepool Learning Disabilities Team

For the purpose of this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting Jade, Amber, and Michael.

Hartlepool's Learning Disabilities Team is based at Hart Lodge. The team consists of a consultant child psychiatrist, a nurse and a support worker offering assessment and treatment for children and young people with learning disabilities. The team also works closely with staff within special schools and liaise with other professionals to provide opportunities for children and young people to get involved in group activities.

Hartlepool's Learning Disabilities Team creates opportunities for young people to enter into dialogue. This report will highlight these opportunities and look at things that have changed within the team.

Investing In Children Group.

Since May 2006 young people have attended various meetings, along with the team, meeting regularly to discuss any issues that are raised by the young people or the team. Jade told me, **"We have a group and talk about what we would like to do"**.

Michael added, **"I like coming to the meeting"**

When staff team meetings take place, there is an item on the agenda to feedback to the team the ideas and issues the Investing in Children group have been discussing. Young people and staff also discussed the idea of a newsletter to be sent out to young people explaining what the Investing In Children group do. As a result of these discussions, a newsletter has been developed by the team using symbols and picture format. The group also met with community nurses, to explain about what they do. All of the young people who attend the service in Hartlepool are encouraged to get involved in the group if they choose to.

Consultation Event

The Investing In Children agenda day was adapted and used as a way for the team to increase and develop participation with young people who access these service's. Stockton, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough and Redcar Learning Disabilities Teams invited young people to participate in this event. It was an opportunity for young people and staff to chat about the service. Young people were also given the opportunity to identify issues that are important to them.

Amber told me, **"They listened to us and asked us what place we would like, to go to"**

Jade added, **"It was good because they listened to what we had to say"**

Young people from Hartlepool are exploring these ideas with the team and are trying to come up with some solutions. Young people explained that staff should wear a uniform when visiting them at school. Jade told me, **“It will be good and will help me at school”**. The team positively responded to this idea and have been meeting with the Investing In Children Group to discuss this idea. The team are looking into the option of introducing a tee-shirt or a polo shirt sometime over the next year.

Staff Photos

This change took place as young people had explained that they would like pictures of the staff team in the main reception at Hart Lodge. Young people explained to the team that they were not sure who all the adults were and sometimes got confused with the amount of adults who worked at Hart Lodge, as several different teams are based there. Jade explained, **“We wanted a board up so people knew who everyone was”**. There is now a notice board in the main reception with pictures of all the team members. Michael proudly told me **“I take the pictures”**.



Children's room

The children's room which is used by the team to offer individual and group support has changed. Members of the Investing In Children group thought this could be brightened up and have made some changes to the room. They decided to paint the room blue and designed some wonderful dolphins for the walls.

Jade explained to me why they made the changes, **“The colours were minging so we asked for dolphins on the wall”**.

Amber added, **“We put paint on the walls with dolphins”**.



Future Developments.

These include developing an information leaflet about the service, which is to be developed by young people and staff. The team are looking at the opportunity for some young people to form part of a Learning Disability sub group. Also the team are looking at involving young people in the design and delivery of group work.

The team has to be applauded for the opportunities young people are given to contribute to decision making processes. All of the young people I met with were able to talk about their involvement and tell me about some of the ways that young people participate. The staff team ensure that a wide variety of opportunities exist for young people to have a say through the development of the Investing In Children Group and the opportunity created for young people to voice their opinions and views through the consultation event.

For these reasons I would like to recommend that the learning Disability (CAMHS) team receives Investing In Children membership and look forward to seeing any further developments made by young people and staff when coming to re-evaluate next year.

The following young people have read and agreed with the report and recommend that the Learning Disabilities team receive Investing In Children membership. They are: - Jade, Amber and Michael.

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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