



## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### Hartlepool Library

This report will highlight and identify opportunities that exist for children and young people to engage in dialogue within Hartlepool City Library in order to make changes to the service. I visited the Library on two occasions and met with Tia, Samantha, Jade, Shannon, Andy, Frankie, Jack and Aaron.

**Evidence of dialogue and change** within Hartlepool Library is provided by the children and young people I met with on different occasions during the homework club and drop in sessions. The workers who operate the 'Homework Club' are Neil and Jess also Bev; a youth worker supplied by Hartlepool Youth Service to support the work of library staff.

The homework club is very popular and runs everyday except for a Friday. The children and young people who access the service have asked for this to change. I spoke about this with Jack and Frankie, they said that they **'do nothing on a Friday night and get bored so we think we should be able to use the computers'**. Neil and Jess have discussed the possibility of young people running a teenager only night on a Friday evening. **'We are going to invite young people through our newsletter, we want music playing games, snacks and somewhere we can have a laugh'**.

The homework club is a support group for young people with their school work. Neil and Jess have agreed with the children and young people that they would play games, have access to computers, organise competitions and activities as well as the educational support. Neil and Jess liaise with the local schools to establish what the children and young people are studying each term so they can have the relevant material on hand to support them with their homework.

Hartlepool Library also works with children and young people who use the library in various ways, including: Arts and Crafts, Football tournaments, and Cookery sessions. Staff have changed and altered programmes to fit in with groups of children and young people who use the different services within the library. An example of this is highlighted by the summer sporting activities planned by the children and young people with support from Bev. The children and young people asked Bev to split the sessions into **'Lads and Lasses'** as they did not want to do sports mixed together. The two groups then worked separately on the planning and budgeting for the weekly sporting activities. This also included a Football Programme; as an added extra the young people also received tickets to see Hartlepool United play Swindon with a guided tour of the ground before the game.

Children and Young people were involved in producing a display for the big wild read event. They informed workers that they wanted it to be **'touchable'** rather than **'boring'**. The children and young people negotiated what display they wanted to do they decided on an Environment display. **'We chose all the colours, drawings and read about the environment on the internet. We made it really colourful for the families.'**

On my first visit to the library I noticed the relaxed atmosphere created by Jess and Neil. The library does not have a formal structure for dialogue to take place amongst children, young people and staff. However, it is evident that this takes place during the various sessions and is effective due to the informal nature of the sessions that take place. Via this approach it is clear that children and young people feel comfortable giving their ideas and feedback to the staff for changes to be made. It is clear that by altering their approach staff are enabling these changes to occur.

Hartlepool Library has created a sense of a community library rather than a busy city centre library. Samantha informed me that she **'really enjoys the library, I like the books and I like that I get to take them home'**.

The children and young people I spoke to agree that library staff include them in dialogue in relation to the service. However they would like to make a number of recommendations for change that they wish to work on with staff over the next year.

**'We should be allowed on MSN, we are not told why, and they should let us on it or give us a reason to why not'**

**'There not enough good kids story books, could do with a better kids section, they could take me to buy the books.'**

**'They should have a box like I do at school, we put our ideas in the box and teachers do something about them. I could put what books I want in the box and the Neil and Jess could do something about it.'**

**'Would like a play - station, we would turn the sound off and sort out the games so only the older ones got to play on the older games and the kids could use the little games.'**

**'Sort out our Friday night'**

Hartlepool library provides a safe environment for children and young people to come together in a friendly relaxed atmosphere.

After a slightly bumpy start the library staff, are developing their relationships with children and young people. With the help, direction and support of Neil, Jess and Bev the library is beginning to settle into a routine of creating an opportunity for dialogue to take place that meets the needs of all involved in the service both users and providers.

Hartlepool Library have made a number of changes to their library, the way it is run and also what is on offer in the library, highlighting that they are listening to children and young people and implementing change as a result. It is important that this dialogue continues between the library and the children and young people to continue and develop what has already been achieved.

The children and young people involved in this report have agreed the content and recommendations. Therefore on behalf of them I would like to recommend Hartlepool Library for Investing in Children Membership.

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