



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

PSS Siblings Project

P.S.S Siblings Project provides support and information to brother and sisters (siblings) of children with complex needs, disabilities or chronic health problems. The project aims to support brothers and sisters by working closely with them and their families. The main focus is to offer support through a child centred approach that recognises the needs, interests and rights of brothers and sisters.

There are a number of ways a young person can become involved with the Siblings Project including; referrals from social workers, teachers, support workers or the children and young people can make a self referral. Once a referral has been made, project staff will contact the young person and their family and arrange a home visit to determine what support can be offered.

The project works with children and young people aged 5 to 16 years. They work with numerous groups of children and young people including:

- 5 – 7 year olds – Little Siblings
- 8 – 12 year olds
- Teenage group which meets once a month

The groups run over an 8 week programme. The children and young people are involved in all aspects of programme planning. The children and young people come together and share similar experiences; the groups provide the opportunity to express their views, attitudes and feelings in relation to disability and their disabled sibling.

This report will highlight and identify opportunities that exist for children and young people to engage in dialogue within the Siblings Project in-order to make changes to the service delivery.

Evidence of dialogue and change is taken from discussions I had with Joe, Carla, Bethany, Lizzie, Sarah (Gilly) and Sarah.

As a direct response to requests from children and young people, a call back group has been set up. **“When we finish our group, we miss coming to siblings. We said to workers that something should be done about it; we now have the call back group. It’s for people who have already been to the project and have not had much support since.”**

When the groups first come together they discuss what they want to get from the group and how they want the sessions to be. The groups also discuss the plans made at the end of each session and discuss any changes that need to be made to the programme. **“We all sit down together in a circle to make suggestions; we asked for more games in the unit, we now have more games to play and computers.”**

Young People who came along to the older groups told workers that they find it boring staying in the unit all the time **“We now go out of the unit on trips. We are going to the pictures next week.”**

Joe informed me that he struggled to get to the Siblings Project as his parents did not drive and needed to look after his “sib”. **“I didn’t want to miss out on coming here. I spoke with the workers and they have changed how they work to come and pick me up after school and they take me home again.”**

The teenage group have produced a leaflet for the workers to give out to children and young people when they do their initial visits to the family home. The leaflet came about from evaluations completed by the children and young people about what they think of the service they received. Children and Young People identified that they would like more information about Siblings that they can understand. **“We have all had a say into the leaflet. We have decided what should go into it. It is really good and easy to understand.”**

The group asked children and young people who use the project how else they would like to receive information. **“We are now working on a website. People have asked us to put telephone numbers on there for when we are no longer at Siblings we can still get help through the web site.”**

Children and young people also discussed with project staff that they felt other people did not understand what it was like to have a brother or sister with a disability. Joe informed me how the group developed this idea. **“We spoke to the workers because it was really important for us to let other people know what it is like to be in our situation. We have made a DVD that we can show to our friends so they understand what it is like to have a brother or sister with a disability. It’s also good when you first come to Siblings to watch how other people have coped.”**

When I asked if they felt that they had a say in the project all of the children agreed that they did. Bethany said **“We get to put our ideas across and get listened to, they are the best and they support us.”**

“We make the decisions; they ask us what ideas we have to make our group better, we talk about our sibs, it helps to make my home live much easier.”

“We basically get listened to about everything.”

P.S.S Siblings Project has excellent dialogue with the children and young people that access the project. The children and young people involved in this report have agreed the content and recommendations. I have no hesitation on behalf of the children and young people in recommending P.S.S Siblings Project for Investing in Children Membership

**Kim Kyle
Investing in Children
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