



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Liverpool ADHD Foundation

The Liverpool ADHD Foundation is a service for children aged 5-18 with a diagnosis of ADHD, living at home with their families. ADHD Foundation is built on the belief that fundamental to building a positive future for children and young people with ADHD is the relationship between parent and child, child and school, parent and school, and the agencies working with the child. Unless children are listened to, it is hard to realise the difficulties they face or the solutions that can be found.

Liverpool ADHD Foundation offers:

- A 6 weeks skill building course
- Children's Group (ages 5 to 11)
- Young Peoples Group (ages 12 to 19)
- Children and young people have the opportunity to contribute in all aspects of the foundation including work experience, voluntary work and film projects.

For the purpose of this evaluation I had the pleasure of meeting with Dan, Frazer, Josh and Anna.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

Dan

Dan informed me about the Foundation. **"It helps people aged 5 to 19. The kids are split from 5 to 11 and 12 to 19. I've been coming here since I was 11. Now I am doing voluntary work here."** Dan explained further his role as a volunteer. **"I try to help other kids understand and manage their ADHD. It's about coping strategies."** Dan went on, **"I have done training as well. I have talked to Connexions, Schools and the MP Frank Field. I did my own presentation. I told them about how people should treat you. It just comes from my head. I did it myself. I asked people to look it over, but nothing was changed, it was what I wanted to say."** (See attached)

I asked Dan to tell me about the how the different groups work. He said, **"The adults listen to the kids and ask them what they want to do. In all the young people's groups everyone has their own input. Sometimes the kids will tell the Coordinators what could make things better or what they want changing, and then they take it back to someone who makes the changes. Like, we use to get funding to go on trips. We would have a big meeting and we would decide where we wanted to go. We went Paint Balling, to Camelot and a Safari Park."**

Dan continued to explain about his role at the Foundation. **"I go to the staff meetings and I am trying to set up a Drop-In for young people. Cos they have one for adults but not for children. I am making up a pack and I will show that at the staff meeting, I am putting that on the agenda. I can put anything on the agenda and that's important to me."** Dan told me he feels listened to at the Foundation and that he feels very comfortable to contribute in meetings where decisions are made. He added, **"Nobody will judge me and everyone can have their say."**

Frazer

Frazer is very involved with the Big Brother project which now forms part of a training package to inform adults. The idea behind this is to enable children and young people to have their say and tell their experiences of their condition. This is done on their own terms without having to attend.

Frazer said, **“At the moment I am working on a Big Brother Diary. You know on Big Brother they ask questions, well we ask questions on ADHD. So I answer questions. It’s so people know about ADHD, to help everyone understand. I think it’s a good idea. If people don’t know what it is, then they won’t understand. It’s much better if people know.”**

Frazer went on to explain further why he continues to be involved with the Foundation. **“I come here when I need help. I get involved in decisions that are being made. I told the ADHD foundation that I wanted to go to Gulliver’s World and they organised a trip there. I went and talked to people here to tell them and they listened. They have been really, really, really , a hundred times, a big help to me. They should definitely get Investing in Children Membership.”**

Josh

I asked Josh about his work with the Foundation and especially the publication of his booklet Do You Know About ADHD SIR? (See attached)

Josh stated, **“I have been coming here since I was about 7. What it was was I was going through a rough time at school, the teachers excluded me. So I thought I need to make the teachers understand me, but not just the teachers but everyone. So I thought I will write a book about it. I thought I would write a few things down and give it to the teachers to make them understand. Once I wrote it, and Rita here printed it off she started to take it into schools for me. They thought it was brilliant, so it helped schools understand it, ADHD. It was a really big confidence boost for me, it was the first time other people really listened to me. Before that, the only person who really understood was my mum. I wanted everyone to understand as much as my mum. I asked Rita to take it to ADDISS for me and they published it cos it’s really helpful. Basically I wanted to raise awareness. When I was in primary school no one really bothered with it.”**

Josh went on to talk about his other involvement with the Foundation. He said, **“When there are meetings I go to them. The staff need to know things about from a kids point of view. Definitely, it’s all about listening and involving young people. If we say something is a good idea then we try it. Basically, it’s not about them making decisions, they have to ask us. Like the Big Brother Diary. I give my ideas and opinions. The whole point is to get everyone’s thoughts on it. It’s about us all making decisions.”**

Anna

On my visit Anna was kind enough to talk with me as well. She said, **“It’s fun here. I come here twice a week. We are currently doing a film project with Soap Box Films. We thought it would be a good idea saying what we want to do when we leave school and then show it to people at Conferences. I go to them sometimes. I went to one at the Liner Hotel in town. They played the Big Brother film and there were loads of people there. They asked if I wanted to speak in front of people, but you have to prepare a speech, and I get really nervous in front of people. So I thought a video would be better. So I got to say what I wanted people to know. Like what it’s like living with ADHD.”**

Anna continued, **“To get ideas for the film we sat round , 5 of us, and came up with ideas of what matters to us. Then all this is going to be used in our film. It’s really easier to talk with people here. Everything is discussed with the kids. Everyone gets along cos it’s something they all want to do. Everyone always listens to us. They**

believe young people should have a say. What's the point of going somewhere if you're not going to enjoy going there? So people have to listen. We really enjoy it here, everyone is so nice."

I would like to thank everyone who helped me to write this evaluation. On my visit it was very evident that Liverpool ADHD Foundation is built on mutual respect. Undoubtedly the Foundation is built on the principle that children and young people have the right to be heard, listened to and believed and that they have a right to information and advice on issues concerning them. All the young people emphasised their belief that it was so important to raise awareness. The Foundation tries to ensure the inclusion of all children in aspects of its life and work. Everyone at the Foundation works hard together to care for and expand the opportunities that they have created and which allows everyone to contribute. The young people I spoke agreed with this report and thought that the Foundation should get membership. I therefore have no hesitation in recommending that Liverpool ADHD Foundation receives Investing in Children membership. Well Done.

**Glenys Newby
Investing in Children
November 2007**