



investing in children

Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Barnardos Action with Young Carers

Barnardos Action with Young Carers Project is a registered charity, which provides a range of support services to children and young people who are Young Carers in Liverpool. The project has been in existence since 1991 and has grown to establish itself as a nationally recognised model of good practice for other young carers projects.

Action with Young Carers is a well established Project that works with young people and children under 18 whose lives are affected by caring responsibilities for a parent or relative who is experiencing physical or mental ill health, disability, and problematic use of alcohol or drugs. The Service offers individual work, group work and family support. It recognises that young carers are children first having a right to be listened to and have their views taken into account in matters that affect them (Article 12 UN Convention on the Rights of a Child).

Children and Young people can join the Young Carers Project by self-referring, referred by parents, or a range of professionals for example teachers, social workers or health visitors. Liverpool Young Carers are an approachable service, where children and young people can meet and socialise on a regular basis. It allows young people with caring responsibilities within the home the opportunity to let off steam. The young people I spoke with value the service.

The Young Carers themselves designed a leaflet to promote the project and in their own words this is what they said when asked:

What can our Young Carers service offer you?

- Someone to talk to who will listen
- Chance to meet other Young Carers at groups and activities
- Give you information about the illness or disability of the person you care for
- Someone to speak up for you when no one wants to listen
- Fun and free activities
- A break from caring
- Getting help, advice and support for the person you care for.

Emma said, “**The best thing about coming here is that you can just meet up with your friends**”. She added, “**Everyone always listens to you and you make new friends**”.

For the purpose of this evaluation I met and talked with Louisa, Thomas, Sue, Marley, Isis, Emma and Candice.

Opportunities for Dialogue and Change.

Young Carer’s DVD.

Young people have been working with staff to develop a DVD film to raise the awareness of being a young carer. They discussed with staff how they could do this. They decided it would be good to raise the profile through the production of a short film. Emma

explained,” **Lots of us have been putting our ideas into the film**”. Louisa told me, “**We hope the film will help more people understand about being a young carer**”.

Providing opportunities for support

Young people spoke very positively about the staff and how they are able to just turn up at the project to get support. Thomas told me all about what happens at the project. “**The thing I like about coming here is that you can just be yourself and talk about things that matter to you**”. Isis told me,

“ **The thing I like about coming here is meeting with your friends and having a laugh with the staff**”. Emma added, “ **The staff are ‘boss’ here and will do anything to help you**”. The project is open five nights a week and can also be opened on a weekend if young people are planning an activity. The group activities give young people the chance to meet with staff and, as the young people explained to me, it provides a cheerful environment where young people can meet with friends.

Recruitment of Staff.

Young people take an active role with regards to the recruitment of staff. Candice explained, “**I met with a woman before her interview and thought she was really nice**”. Candice added, “**The staff listened to what I had to say about her**”. The woman Candice met has now got a job at the project.

Summer Holidays and Activities.

There are lots of different activities that take place, which are chosen by the young people. Sue explained, “**It’s very much based on the individual, there are lots of groups going on, doing things we want to do**”. She went on to say, “**If you do not want to be part of a project or a group activity there is no pressure to join**”. They have been to Camelot and a residential outing to Wales. All young people are given the opportunity to evaluate activities. One way is by talking with the staff.

Key Workers /Individual Support

Young people spoke about how things change based on what they want to do. They direct what type of support they need when meeting with their Key Worker and other staff. Candice told me,” **They helped my sister get some running shoes because they knew this is what she was trying to do**”. Emma told me, “**My phone got robbed and they helped me get a new one**”. Sue enthusiastically told me, “ **The staff are so friendly and approachable and have listened to what is going on in my life and have made things better for me by helping me with my ideas**”.

The service is certainly built on the principle that young carers have the right to be heard and listened to and that they have a right to information and advice on issues concerning them. I look forward to seeing further developments made by the young people working with the project when coming to re-evaluate for membership next year.

I would like to thank everyone who helped me to write this evaluation. When I asked the young people if they agreed that Barnardos Action with Young Carers should get Investing in Children membership they all said yes! Therefore, I have no hesitation in recommending that this project receive Investing in Children membership. Well Done.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children
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