



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

The Mulberry Centre

The Mulberry Centre is part of Darlington Memorial Hospital and is where the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) is based. For this re-evaluation I met with Christine Needham and Richard Parkin, and also three young people who agreed to talk to me after their appointments at the centre.

Evidence of Dialogue & Change

Staff at the Mulberry Centre are very committed to their Investing in Children membership. Whilst their work with young people is structured to gain the best outcomes for children and young people using the CAMHS service, they are very open to finding ways in which children and young people can contribute to their service.

The nature of the service that is provided at the Mulberry Centre means that it is difficult to engage a user group who want to be involved, therefore the staff have had to work very hard at making sure they make the most of the opportunities they do get to ask children and young people about their service.

Waiting Area

Children and young people have a waiting area before appointments; it is comfortable with various magazines and games to keep people occupied. Generally young people do not have to wait for their appointments as this was an issue raised and staff have made great efforts to ensure appointment times are adhered to.

In the waiting room there are signs on the wall asking people for their suggestions as to how to make the experience of visiting the centre better. There are pens and sheets and questionnaires (see attached) left on a table for people to make comments, and a suggestion box is on the wall for the questionnaires to be put in.

Also clearly displayed on the walls are the suggestions that have been made and the Mulberry Centre's response to the suggestions.

The signs read: "We are listening to your waiting room suggestions."

There are signs showing what has been asked for

"You asked for

- *Hang the clock on the wall*
- *To get a biscuit when you get a drink*
- *Improve the toilets*
- *More toys*
- *More board games*
- *Reduce costs for car parking*
- *Lots to keep you busy and entertained*
- *Car and road mat in the waiting room*
- *It gets cold while you are waiting"*

Another sign alongside this shows the response given by the Mulberry Centre.

“Our reply

- *We have now had the clock hung on the wall*
- *You can get a biscuit when you get a drink, just ask if you would like one*
- *We are currently looking at improving the toilets*
- *We are looking at ordering some more toys for the waiting room*
- *We are looking at ordering some more board games*
- *Unfortunately we have no control over the car parking costs*
- *We are also looking at getting some more reading material for adults and children, if you would like to tell us what you would like, there is a poster on the wall*
- *We have ordered cars and a road mat, we are waiting for it to be delivered*
- *The heating is now on.”*

Every issue raised has been addressed and answered and the staff continue to seek comments.

All of the suggestions made for the Mulberry Centre are taken to the team’s business meetings where staff can look at each issue, address it and respond to it.

Teenage Room

A suggestion was made to have a room for teenagers to have their appointments in, or to simply “chill out”. Young people asked for sofas, and a computer in the room. This has all been done and some pictures will be put up, rather than posters with messages, and they are just awaiting a carpet to be fitted to complete the room.

Nathan

I spoke to Nathan following his appointment. He has had a couple of appointments so far and told me about his experience. **“The waiting area is okay, I’ve not made any suggestions but I would make some if I felt like it, I think they’d get listened to because they are good at working with young people. They are open to listening to what I’ve got to say.”**

Steven

Steven is a young person who has been coming to the Mulberry Centre for a few months and is coming to the end of his time there. He told me, **“I’ve just made a suggestion of a pool table in the waiting area, I don’t know yet what’s happened with it. I normally get in quick for my appointment; if I’m waiting I just talk to my mam. The waiting area is okay, plenty to do or read. They would look at my ideas, they deserve a certificate. Richard has helped me a lot, it’s a good place to come.”**

James

James is 8 years old and has been coming to the Mulberry Centre for a little while now. James clearly enjoys coming to the Centre and he told me his thoughts. **“I like making things, I made a space picture, I like doing it. If I had ideas of what to play with I’d write them down, I might put a PS2 as an idea. It wouldn’t be fair if they said no, but it’s a good idea to tell you if it can’t happen, they might not have much money for it.”**

James told me he enjoyed going in the playroom with Christine, **“It’s mint, the best room ever. Christine should definitely get a certificate.”**

The team are considering new ways of talking to the children and young people and finding out their views and opinions and their responses to the suggestions they have made. They may do this with a newsletter, and it will be interesting to see if this idea is successful.

It is clear that the team at the Mulberry Centre are very committed to including children and young people in the development of their service, and to make it a comfortable and rewarding experience for them, and the young people I met with endorsed this. I would like to recommend that the Mulberry Centre receives Investing in Children membership for another year.

Lisa Lines
Investing in Children
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