



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children Membership

Adoption and Permanency Team

I met with Clare Bewley and Joanne Moffat from Durham County Council Adoption and Permanency Team in September, 2007, to discuss what they have been doing during the last year to continue their IiC membership. Clare and Joanne are the two members of staff from the team who have been given the lead **for** involving the children and young people with whom they work in genuine dialogue and change.

I met with a group of 7 young people on the 7th November, 2007 who had been invited by the service to come to a support evening to make smoothies and also to give their views on what support is offered and how it's given by the team. All of the young people who attended had been involved in past meetings to plan work for the service and **discuss** what kind of support they would like from the team

Evidence of Dialogue and Change

All of the children and young people were invited to attend the support evening. During the evening I was given time to sit with the young people by themselves and discuss, what they had been involved in, what had changed as a result of what they had told the staff and whether they were happy with the changes made.

Louise, Dannii, Hope, Jordan, Lauren, Rachel and Sam told me about what the group had done and were planning to do;

- **They had chosen to meet once every 2 months**
- **They had given their views on places they would like to go and how often they would like to go:**
 - **They had chosen to go to **Beamish, Forbidden Corner, Metroland, a Chinese restaurant and bowling. They did say they went to National Railway Museum in York and they said that they didn't like it, "boring", and didn't want to go again.****
 - **They also chose activities to do at the resource centre. They chose to do things like: wet fish game (with a wet cloth), making food, "eating food", "making friends" and "having new experiences".**
 - **They said that "some places we can't go but they tell us why"**
- **They had decided that they would discuss what changes needed to be made to the support that was **on offer and development of** the service.**
 - **The group had contributed messages to be given to the perspective adopters during 'information and counselling groups'.**
 - **The group gave their views to the workers about how they should be helped by the service and what needed to change and their views were added to the Children's Guides on Adoption. This was done for two age groups.**
 - **The young people's views have influenced the training and practice of the staff in their team. The team have been reminded of**

how important it is for the children and young people to have a sense of identity and where they come from, and as a result “life story books” are being used more.

- **The group felt that they had a great support group as they meet with people who may have the same issues and they can talk to them. They felt this was important as others in the group understood what it was like to be them.**

I asked the group if they felt that the team should receive membership for listening to them and helping them get what they wanted, and the groups response was;

- **All agreed they listen to them and things happen that they want to**
- **“some places can’t go but they explain why” Hope**
- **“Very, very good” Jordan**
- **“Fun and friendly” Hope**
- **“bit on the wild side (Irish arts)” Jordan**

I also asked the young people if they were interested in continuing working with the team to make changes. All of the young people were very keen to continue the work and were keen to become more involved in the future.

The young people talked a lot about the old worker who used to support the group. They said “it was better when Chris was here”. Another young person said “he was sound”. When I asked the group why it was better with Chris, they said it was because he was “mad”, and the new workers needed to be a bit more enthusiastic. **However they also** wanted to thank them for all there hard work and still thought they were good.

They also said that they wanted a trampoline.

The group thought that the team definitely did enough to gain membership, and were happy coming to the group.

Two workers have been allocated time to support the group and a budget has been set by management to develop the work and continue to involve the children and young people who use their service within the service’s development. I feel that this shows a great commitment to meaningful dialogue and change involving children and young people, and embedding the practice within the service. So on behalf of the children and young people I met with from the POT group I have no hesitation in recommending that the Adoption and Permanency Team receive Investing in Children membership.

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