



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Clairmont Family Centre

Clairmont Family Centre is a CAMHS centre in Bishop Auckland. It supports children and young people and their families. Their leaflet for children and young people explains, *"We help people in different ways. Some children want to talk to us. Others are helped by playing or painting pictures. We try to make sure you get all the help you need."*

Since the last Investing in Children membership was awarded there has been some staff changes and I met with Peter Edwards and Alison Lamb who are the new contacts for IiC. Peter and Alison are very keen to build upon the good practice that has taken place in the past at Clairmont Family Centre. For this evaluation I also had the pleasure of meeting with Caroline and Chloe.

Evidence of Dialogue & Change

Suggestion Box

A supply of 'Comments & Suggestions' sheets for children and young people has been made available in the waiting area (see attached). The sheet asks for any comments or suggestions regarding the service provided at Clairmont Family Centre, it asks about the waiting area, the rooms that the young people are seen in, the staff, and whether attending the centre has helped. It also asks for any other comments.

The suggestions and comments were summarised by Peter and Alison and young people were invited to attend a user group to look at this.

User Group

Children and young people were invited to attend a user group at the centre to discuss the findings of the questionnaires. In June two young people, Chloe and Caroline came to the user group. The girls looked at the feedback from the questionnaires and found there were a number of areas that young people had commented on.

CD's

Caroline told me, **"We said that the one's that got played weren't modern."** Chloe added, **"There wasn't much choice."** Together the girls suggested that compilation CD's like NOW would be a good way to get a mix of music that was up to date. They also had to think about the music being appropriate for the ages of the children coming to the centre, Caroline said, **"There couldn't be swearing in the songs."** Also some music might be too lively for some children who were easily excited, and this was not good preparation for an appointment.

Once suggestions were agreed for CD's they were purchased using monies from a trust fund at Clairmont Family Centre which has been donated by staff and clients. Caroline told me she had heard the new music in the waiting room that day.

DVD's

Suggestions had been made for a choice of DVD's to be available to watch in the waiting area. Once again this needed very careful consideration because of the ages of the children coming in the centre and the ratings on the films. The discussion led the girls to suggest Disney films as they were appropriate for all ages. When they discussed Harry Potter films it was agreed that they would not be appropriate as it could have parts which were frightening, Chloe told me, **"That can be scary."**

The girls discussed the fact that the films needed to be something you could just pick up watching and then leave behind when your appointment was due. As Caroline said, **"Ones you can enjoy even if you miss the beginning or end."** Another suggestion was Mr Bean as this was funny and you could start watching at any point.

A list of DVD's was drawn up and purchased in the same way as the CD's were. At the moment the centre is awaiting the DVD player to be installed as this has to be done by an appointed person.

It was agreed that there would be a notice in the waiting area explaining to visitors that if they want to play a DVD to just ask a member of staff.

Magazines

The waiting area did have some magazines available, Caroline explained, **"There were some for parents, or they were really out of date."** Chloe added, **"There are kiddy books as well, but nothing in between for teenagers."**

A suggestion made on the questionnaires was for the Simpson's magazine, and this was agreed. Peter explained that once again because of the wide age range of children and young people attending the centre it posed some difficulties as to what was appropriate. The girls were keen to have some current music magazines as they were accessible for everyone, and so it was agreed to buy Top of the Pops and Smash Hits. These are already in the waiting areas and Peter explained that these purchases will be maintained as they have been set into the petty cash budget by the centre manager so that they can be bought on a regular basis.

Posters

A number of young people made suggestions that the walls in the centre were plain and uninspiring and so suggested that posters would be a good way to decorate them. After careful consideration of what was appropriate several posters have been bought and are on display around the centre.

Car Park Signs

A point raised by Chloe and Caroline for improvements to the centre were for directions to, and signs for the car park. Currently in the car park there is one sign which is clear if you are travelling from one direction, however if you are coming from another direction you do not see the sign. Also, the entrance to the car park is actually from another street and is not easy to find. Caroline commented that her parents had found it difficult to find. This issue was taken to the business meeting at the centre and then passed on to the Estates Department who have visited and agreed that new signs were needed and this is now underway.

Toilets

Caroline told me, **“People didn’t know there were toilets here, it can be hard to ask.”** Chloe added, **“When you know where it is you can’t get to it.”** So the girls suggested a sign in the waiting area to tell people there was a toilet, Chloe told me, **“There’s a sign now and you just ask to use it.”**

All of the suggestions made by Chloe and Caroline and the other young people were actioned quickly which demonstrates Clairmont Family Centre’s commitment to entering into dialogue with the children and young people they work with, to result in changes. The staff continue to ask for comments and suggestions from the children and young people and plan to look at these on a three-monthly basis. We discussed how they could inform all of the children and young people of the way in which they have made changes following the suggestions made. The idea of a poster in the waiting area along with an invitation to make further suggestions and an invitation to the user group was suggested by Caroline and Chloe, it will be interesting to see if other young people are encouraged by the changes made and feel they would like to take part along with Caroline and Chloe.

It is clear from meeting with Peter and Alison that they are fully aware of the benefits of working with children and young people in developing their service. They acknowledge that as part of the NHS they are required to consult with service users; however they do not work in this way merely to meet a requirement, but to fully engage with children and young people in a meaningful way. Both Caroline and Chloe were in agreement that they have been listened to and valued and many changes have come about in the short time since they were asked for their views. When I asked if they felt that Clairmont Family Centre should receive Investing in Children membership for another year they were in total agreement that this should happen and I would like to agree with them as I have seen excellent examples of practice at the centre.

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Investing in Children
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