



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Derwentside Detached Youth Project

Derwentside Detached Youth Project, covers very different areas including; Stanley, South Stanley, Catchgate, Anfield Plain and South Moor. The project operates both detached sessions and project work in all areas. The targeted age range is 13 to 19 years.

The main focus of the project is Detached Youth Work. This acts as a mechanism to meet with young people and build relationships, to then develop activities and programmes of personal, social development. These planned programmes are then introduced during sessions specifically designed for project work and are based on the ideas initially developed by the young people.

Evidence of dialogue and change is taken from discussions I had with young people during a drop-in and detached youth work session. For the purpose of this report I had the pleasure of meeting with young people from South Stanley and Craghead.

This report will highlight and identify opportunities that exist for children and young people to be involved in meaningful dialogue within Derwentside Detached. The staff team is supported by Caroline Barnes to actively encourage children and young people to get involved in decision making and bring about change to the service delivery. The young people have full responsibility for their project meetings, they work within a budget which they access via Keyfund and Youth Opportunity bids. The children and young people are obviously keen to support staff to improve the service they provide.

Scott, Cameron and Chris informed me of the dialogue that they have been involved in with workers from the project. Scott informed me **“Some of us wanted the sessions to be inside because when the weather is horrible you don’t really want to meet.”** Chris added **“So the workers asked us where was best, we decided on the haven hut as it’s right in the middle of everything, we now meet here sometimes and do our keyfund application and courses.”**

Two separate groups of young people informed me that they had asked the workers to run an information session on sexual health. **“They took on board what we wanted and changed the plans that they already had.”** Cameron added **“We wanted separate ones, one for the lads and one for the lasses.”** Although the workers were determined to meet the needs of the young people they were also concerned that they did not want to stop the detached sessions and miss contacting those young people who would not be interested in taking part in the planned sexual health work. **“We agreed that those who didn’t want to take part didn’t have to, but the workers would still go out on the streets after, so other young people could still meet with the workers.”**

Cameron informed me that they had been involved in the interview process for the part time and sessional workers. **“We were involved from the very beginning and done the short listing and interviewed people and had a say on who we wanted.”**

Derwentside Detached Project provides an extensive range of activities for the young people. All of the activities are planned via the young people's groups. The activities are planned by the young people with a great deal of thought and consideration. The young women from Craghead informed me **“It's great that we get to plan the activities because it's us that go on them. We've got to do the work; it's not just the activity it's about what we learn by planning it.”**

Derwentside Detached Project is very busy meeting young people in their community and on their terms. The project operates within the core principles of not just detached youth work but also the principles of Investing in Children 'Changing my life where I live'. **“The workers help us; they don't do it for us”.**

It is evident that Derwentside Detached Youth Project is supporting children and young people to become actively involved in real decision making, with a real budget, giving them a true voice in matters that affect their lives.

All the children and young who I spoke to were happy with the service that the project offers, however, they would like to work on a few changes, which they recommend they work on with the staff team over the next year.

- **“Need to have more workers because if one of them is off then sessions get cancelled.”**
- **“Make the start of the session later as young people have to rush to meet, it is a detached session but we still think set times to meet would be good.”**
- **“Think that sessions should still go ahead, even though it is the school holidays. I think that Caroline should be given more money to hire more workers.”**

All the young people that I met with were very positive about Derwentside Detached Project. They feel that they have the opportunity to participate in the direction of not just their individual groups and sessions but the project as a whole.

The young people involved in this report agree with the content and recommendations made. Therefore it is on their behalf that I have no hesitation in recommending that Derwentside Detached Project becomes an Investing in Children member.

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