



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

The Ladder Centre.

The Ladder Centre is a community centre within Ferryhill. Kelly Holmes is a full time Youth Development Worker within the centre. When I visited The Ladder Centre I briefly talked with Kelly who introduced me to some young people who attend the community centre. They told me all about the goings on and decisions they make. **Ruby 11, Megan 11 and Tracey 15.**

Ground Rules:

Ground rules of The Ladder Centre were decided by the youth committee at the beginning of the year. The young people came up with rules for appropriate language, where to smoke etc... These were agreed by all the young people who access The Ladder Centre.

Monday night:

The young people and Kelly told me that they are setting up a session on Monday nights relating to crime and knives. This is due to a recent knife incident. The young people brought it to the attention of the workers.

“ We want to make a DVD about knife crime and other young people’s awareness towards it.”

This is in the process of being set up.

Tuesday night:

Tuesday nights are ‘lad’s’ nights. The young people like to practice their ‘raving skills’ ready for their rave they arrange every term. The raves take place in different community centres on Fridays.

“ We chose to have a rave on Tuesday nights so this is what we do.”

Wednesday night:

Wednesday nights are girl’s nights. The young people get the opportunity to cook, do hair and beauty, candle making - anything that they would like to do is accommodated within reason.

“ We get to choose all of the things we make, we just have to tell Kelly what we would like to do each week.”

Thursday night:

Thursday nights are for all young people. Young people choose what they would like to do. Most of the time they enjoy chatting and playing on the computer.

“ We come here to chill and chat with mates.”

Dialogue and Change:

I asked the young people if they feel they are listened to and have a say in decisions within the Ladder Centre.

“ If we aren’t happy with something then the staff would listen to us.”

“When we went on our residential some of the lads had issues with some of the other lads who came, the lads asked if they could be split up so they weren’t together, this was done so everyone was happy.”

Megan explained...

“ A lot of the activities were just for boys, us girls wanted more girly activities. This was set up, we got hair straightness and had a spa trip.”

“ We got a girl’s night as well. This was because we asked for one.”

Sexual Health Drop In:

Kelly explained that the young people had requested condoms and Chlamydia testing, pregnancy tests and general sexual health advice. Due to this request a drop in centre has been set up for Thursday nights 4-6 p.m. This session is very popular and a great success.

The young people told me that they feel they get listened to and staff respect their wishes:

“ We get listened to and respected.”

“ Feel very safe here.”

Kelly explained the young people wanted a variety of healthy foods to be introduced into their diet. A wide variety of fruit and vegetables are now on offer to children and young people.

“ The staff look after us, we get doner wraps, toast, chicken, fruit and pasta.”

Change of worker:

Megan, Ruby and Tracey told me that they had a problem with one of the workers within the Ladder Centre:

“ We didn’t like one of the workers, she was horrible. We decided to have a meeting between ourselves and the directors; we put our views across about why we didn’t like her. The situation was solved.”

Fund Raising:

The young people decided to do some fund raising for the Ladder Centre. They came up with their own ideas about how to raise the money;

“We went bag packing and had a stall at our local market.”

The Ladder Centre's Youth Committee completes application forms for funding bids. Applying for money to help fund their high demand for resources and activities such as summer trips, outdoor activities etc... This is all at the young people's request.

Recommendations from the young people:

“If we are doing cooking you have to decide what you want to cook quickly. I think we should decide what we want to cook the day before maybe?”

“Nothing could make it better, it's great!”

Staff have a lovely relationship with the young people who attend the Ladder Centre. Children and young people's views and opinions are taken seriously by staff and acted upon. Children and young people influence decisions and are able to come up with their own ideas, and are encouraged to use their own initiative. Therefore with the endorsement of the young people I recommend The Ladder Centre becomes an Investing in Children Member.

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