



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership: The DERIC (Durham's Educational Resources in the Communities) Bus.

For the purpose of this evaluation I attended the DERIC BUS in the community of Quarrington Hill and had the pleasure of meeting Aimee, Becky, Shawn, Emma, Mathew, Jamie, Simone and Kelly who all access the DERIC Bus regularly since it has been situated in the community of Quarrington Hill

The DERIC BUS continues to be supported by Education in the Community and the City of Durham Community Safety Partnerships. It receives most of its funding from the Home Office with an emphasis on drug education, which is incorporated into a 12 week programme. The DERIC Bus engages with young people in different communities across County Durham. This funding will be coming to an end in March of this year.

The previous re-evaluation for membership in May last year was unsuccessful, primarily because some young people felt that their ideas were not fully supported. Since then, the staff of the project have made significant programme developments.

This report will highlight some of the developments the project has made to increase the opportunities of the young people who access this service to discuss service delivery and any changes that have been incorporated into the project.

Opportunities For Dialogue and Change

Session Planning.

The 12 week programme, which is developed prior to engaging with young people, is very flexible and changes to meet the needs of young people who access the service. This was apparent through my discussions with some young people from Quarrington Hill. Through dialogue with staff, young people directed some of the programme and, where possible, changes took place.

Mathew told me, "We talk with the youth workers about what we want to do and they ask us about what we want to know about drugs and that"

Another young person told me about how young people direct changes to the programme.

Kelly explained, "Every week we have the opportunity to put down our ideas on a whiteboard and what we want to do".

In most cases the youth workers will incorporate the ideas of the young people into the project programme.

As the focus of the programme is drug and alcohol education the staff have to place some emphasis on these issues but it was encouraging to discover that some young people have been directing what young people can do on the bus.

Christmas Party

This party was developed in partnership with young people and staff.

Kelly told me, "We organised a party and I went round asking what food young people wanted", She went on to add " Everyone planned the party together".

Trips/Fundraising

Some young people are planning to raise some money with the support of the staff as they want to go on more trips.

Emma told me "We plan to raise some money so we can go paintballing and Quasar Lasering".

Many young people have been asking for more trips so the young people and staff are working together to make this happen.

Exit Strategy

This has been developed so young people are aware that the bus will only be in their community for a certain amount of time, and it is important to find out what the needs and opinions are of the young people who access the service. Where possible, youth workers encourage young people to express their views and opinions about the youth provisions in their community. This includes youth workers talking with young people about developing opportunities to feed their opinions to relevant community groups about their experiences of the bus.

What was encouraging to discover was what young people thought about the bus being in Quarrington Hill

Shawn told me, "It's mint better than nothing". He also had this to say when I asked him about any ideas he had to improve things, "I think it is alright the way it is"

Aimee told me, "We know the bus will have to leave but there is nothing else to do a round here".

Kelly told me "There is nothing to do in Quarrington Hill for us, only the Bus on a Tuesday night "

As the bus is still to leave Quarrington Hill it will be interesting to discover how young people feed their views into the wider community, and whether this will be done directly or indirectly, through the support of the youth worker.

Ready Steady Cook

This change came as a direct result of Jamie a young person, coming up with an idea for his Silver Youth Achievement Award.

James explained, "I came up with an idea to cook a two course meal with a toaster, microwave and kettle".

He went on to add, "This is now a competition and other young people have signed up to Ready Steady Cook"

The idea Jamie had was supported by the staff and has been incorporated into the project programme, with several sessions arranged because other young people want to take part in the Ready Steady Cook sessions

Ready or Not Tots Programme

This change came as a direct result of some young people asking for virtual babies.

Aimee told me, "We asked for virtual babies and to do something like this "

This is another change which was a direct result of young people coming up with ideas about what they wanted to do on the bus, this highlights what can be achieved through this positive approach to participation.

Over the last six months staff have encouraged, through positive and open dialogue, the development of ideas, this has allowed some changes to be made to some of the activities on offer on the Bus.

The project since the last evaluation, responded to what the young people wanted to do, and then they plan a flexible programme of activities. This allows changes based on the positive and necessary involvement of the young people who access the project. However, through my observation and conversations with some of the young people, it is also a place where young people can just come and relax with their friends, if that is what they want to do.

The Deric Bus project has started to develop and increase the opportunities young people have to become active members of their community and participate in different discussions that are important to them, such as looking into having more things to do where they live. Some of the changes that have been made since the last evaluation for membership are a direct result of the positive relationship that some young people have with the staff of the project. The Deric Bus Project allows some young people to shape the development of the project through the independent thoughts.

For these reasons I would recommend that the Deric Bus continues to have Investing In Children membership.

This report has been endorsed by the following young people who are Sophie, Mathew, Anthony, Ashleigh, James and Lucy.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children Project Worker
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