



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Inline / Youth Voice

Following on from last year's evaluation the work of Inline, Youth voice and all the young people's work it has gone from strength to strength. As an organisation there have been management and staff changes, but the ethos of working with young people in dialogue to affect change within their individual lives, within the service they receive and within the wider debates in Newcastle is still on-going.

Continued dialogue and change includes:

Staff Appointments - Young people continue to have an influence over new staff appointments. Young people now sit on various panels including the appointments of 40 social workers, sex and relationships workers and the SCARPA Project.

Accreditation and Training - Accreditation opportunities for young people has been strengthened and seen an increased demand. The accreditation and training opportunities are currently linking in to the citizenship agenda and the project is currently developing the scheme so that young people work towards a youth achievement award for their work.

Millennium Volunteers - The project offers young people recognition for their work. Twenty young people from Youth Voice have already achieved over one hundred hours of volunteering and five of which have received 200 hours in record time. Young people also have the opportunity to access open college network courses which are the equivalent to NVQ's.

Volunteers - All the volunteers at Inline are young people who have had one to one support from the Inline Team or are friends of volunteers helping in areas they feel are important.

Consultants – Young people are currently consultants for the homelessness and housing strategy.

Newcastle Homeless Forum - They are the young reference group for the homeless forum.

Supporting People – They are currently working in partnership with supporting people to review the peer reviews for young people's services. There has been a meeting with inspectors who look at supporting people.

Information Packs – In 2003 an information pack was produced which has recently been updated to help homeless young people access the services they need. The pack is currently used by a range of agencies across the city.

Peer Education Project – Since the last evaluation the peer education programme is currently being delivered in schools across Newcastle. The aim is to inform young people about the help and choices available to them in order to prevent them from becoming homeless.

A homeless prevention programme with a 'Pathways' DVD has also been developed and is being piloted at present.

Here are more examples of young people-led work within Inline:

Code of Conduct – This is a measuring tool based on a set of guidelines devised by young people. It ensures that organisations that provide services for young people do so in a supportive and inclusive way. Young people felt it was especially important that they are treated with respect wherever they go and whatever type of service they require.

All the young people involved in the development have had experiences of being homeless and so have used many of these services at some stage in their lives.

There are 6 guidelines that have been developed that young people feel organisations should meet:

1. Young people should be treated with respect and treated equally
2. All decisions should be explained clearly and correctly and accurate information should be given.

3. Young people should be given support and/or advice and help to support all their needs in order to access the support they require.
4. All staff should have positive attitudes towards the young people they deal with.
5. All organisations should have training to work with young people on a wide range of issues.
6. Services should be adequately advertised so that young people know what is available to them.

Youth Voice members are responsible for assessing whether these guidelines are being followed within organisations that deal with young people. They visit organisations and gather information through interviews with staff and telephone interviews with service users. Once all the information is collated members of Youth Voice will produce a report to show their findings and any necessary recommendations to the organisation will be raised.

Youth Voice - Youth Voice continues to promote dialogue between young people and service providers. Youth Voice find themselves invited to support other agencies and services in their work with young people. Youth voice operates a drop in session on a Monday evening. Youth Voice has been involved in many debates with partner agencies in Newcastle and nationally including:

Youth Homeless Forum - *This was developed by young people for young people.* The forum exists to:

- 'Create opportunities for young people to have a say in what is being done for young homeless people.
- It gives a voice to the young homeless, and those who are in the care system.
- When something happens that affects homelessness, we can tell everyone and ask what they think, then tell the people who make decisions' – *taken from Youth Voice – slide presentation.*
- Remove barriers to young people getting involved and build confidence.
- Provide a place where young people and policy makers can meet up, talk and share new information.
- *Help staff and young people learn form each other.*

Young Parents Day – A fun event was held for young parents to get together and enjoy fun activities such as face painting, Easter bunny competitions etc.. The event gave young parents the opportunity to meet other young parents and following the event there has been a team building event at Whickham Thorns. Following these in September the group are going on a residential.



Northumbria Police Youth Consultation – Youth Voice worked with Northumbria Police on a consultation event held to investigate the proposal of Community Policing teams. It brought police and young people together to identify youth issues or concerns and to work together to try and resolve them.

Role Swap Day – Following the ‘What matters to us?’ Consultation that took place there were several issues raised with regards to the police and young people. Therefore the Youth Homeless Forum worked in partnership with Northumbria Police to respond to the issues that young people did not feel respected by the police. The day took place at Northumbria Fire Authorities Safety works simulation centre. Throughout the day scenario workshops took place around alcohol and anti social behaviour, the theft of a car and a ‘happy slapping’ incident. The event was a huge success.

Young People Views

During my visits I met with three young people.

Firstly I met with **Kaylee who is 20**.

She told me: **“ I heard about the group through the project Stepping Stones who where involved in the ‘Code of Conduct Work’ last year. At first I thought it was a pile of crap but once I started working on it I soon realised that it was really good and brought about change especially with the teenage pregnancy stuff”**.

“ The project is really good they have helped me keep out of trouble, kept me away from drink and drugs. They keep me on the straight and narrow”.

“They have given me self esteem”.

“They really understand and listen to you the projects really young people friendly”.

“ Recently I was featured in a large article in the chronicle newspaper about my life. How it had been turned around from living on the streets to being in jail to how I am now and what I have achieved”,

“ I would recommend the project to other young people and pass the details on to them”.

Next I spoke to **Amy who is 16** and is on a student placement:

“ I heard about the project through the college and I came here on placement because they meet the aims of the course that I am doing and can help me achieve my NVQ Award in Team leadership by the end of it”.

Finally I spoke with Jade who is 23. She told me:

“I was previously a service user and was involved in a mental health project. I went to INLINE to get housed and joined youth voice in 2002 to get more involved and build my confidence etc”.

“They would pick me up so I went to things. I started working as a volunteer quite regularly and got a temporary job training with young people on courses such as Child Protection, Anger management and team building etc..”

“After that I went away and came back homeless and got supported by the service again. I now work as Karen’s Assistant”.

“I support and work with other young people through the Open College network courses. I feel like I have a purpose now, something to live for and next year I am going to University to start my social work degree”.

“I have been involved in several young people led projects since I came to the organisation. These have included: The Peer Education Project – We thought along with many other young people that peer education at schools was crap and gave young people wrong information so we designed a new programme which is now being delivered in local schools”.

“Another piece of work is the teenage pregnancy project. Everything that young people felt they should find out about at school was developed by young people and is now being delivered in local schools”.

“The Pathways Interactive DVD was an idea that young people came up with and developed. We worked on the project for a year”.

My report contains snippets of conversations with the young people I met with but I hope it reflects the dynamics of Inline. The group of young people involved in the project have a major impact on the programmes delivered by Inline and work to improve the service for the benefit of all. Jade and some of the other young people involved with Inline have read and agreed with the contents of my report. With that in mind I would definitely like to recommend that Inline receives its renewal in Investing in Children membership.

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