



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Bowburn Youth Project

Once again, since the last evaluation, Bowburn Youth Project has gone through significant change. Due to health and safety reasons such as the fire door locking people in the building, a lack of heating and no lighting in the boy's toilets, the centre was shut down for 8 weeks.

The young people and the staff wanted to make sure contact between them was still regular so they asked the local community centre for a room. The room however was very small and they only got it for an hour once a week, but they tried to use the time effectively.

The group used that time to raise funds to get their centre up to standard and started deciding what they wanted in the building with the funding they would receive. They had already been planning refurbishments before the project got shut down so this whole incident spurred them on to get it done quickly. It also showed the commitment of the staff and the young people to the project. As you can see from the pictures, the centre is looking great.

I met with the three staff that run the project Gemma, Joanne and Dan who have all been working with the project for around 2 years. They spoke very highly of the young people and talked about all the things the young people have achieved over the last year.

Currently the centre runs three sessions a week:

Tuesday (afternoon) N.E.E.T (Not in Employment, Education or Training)
(evening) there is a boys group

Wednesday (evening) there is a girls group

I met with the girls on two occasions. The first however I stayed for the whole session the young people present were Gemma, Sarah, Kayleigh, Lynsey and Jayne.

Opportunities for Dialogue

There continues to be many opportunities for dialogue between young people and staff.

Suggestion Box

The girls spoke of the suggestion box and said it was nice that it was there but they have never used it. *(When I went back to read the report the young people said that the suggestion box has started being used again)*

Evaluation Forms

Both evaluation forms that were mentioned in the previous membership evaluation are still in use.

Discussions as Sessions

Regular discussions before and after the sessions continues to take place. During these discussions, the young people get the chance to evaluate the previous session and to make decisions for future sessions. It is also an opportunity for the young people to find out what is going on in their area.

Informal dialogue

The girls that I met and Gemma and Joanne all felt that the informal dialogue was the most important.

“I could tell the staff anything even Dan and he’s a man” Lynsey

Changes following Dialogue

Homework group

As a result of recent dialogue, the young people from both the boys and the girls group have requested a homework group set with internet access. The day of my visit the computers had arrived and were in the process of getting set up. This is going to run on a Monday to start with, however the young people have suggested it be ran twice a week, so the staff are seeing what they can sort out.

Joanne explained that although there were computers in the building before, they belonged to Impact, and the other young people were not allowed to use them.



The computer room is still in the process of being set up

Refurbishments

The recent funding that Bowburn Youth Project has received has allowed them to improve health and safety and modernise the contents of the building. Also the young people got the chance to decorate it in the style that they wanted. They also got to choose the new equipment which comprises of a new pool table, ping pong table, table football, tables and chairs.

The money for the refurbishments came from a variety of funds such as the Youth Opportunity Fund, Connexions and the city council. The young people helped apply to all of them.



The new pool table chosen by the young people.



The new table tennis table, and the new 'comfy' chairs for the young people to 'chill' on.

Wierdale House

Due to recent dialogue and continued requests from the young people, this summer they are being taken on a residential. The young people have chosen where they would like to go and are in the process of getting the funding through.

Decoration of toilets

The toilets are bright and full of useful information. I asked about this project and the young people were obviously very proud of what they had done.

"The toilets looked scruffy" Lynsey explained

"So we asked if we could make them better" Gemma (YP) continued

I asked whose idea was it to make them better.

“All of us came up with the idea” Lynsey

“I liked going to IKEA to choose stuff”

“Yeah, we got heap of cool new stuff and paint”

The girls showed me the toilets. They have information on sexual health and drugs and bright walls. The girls seem very proud of them.

Comments from the young people

“I’ve only been a few times but I feel extra welcome” Kayleigh

“Staff try there best” Lynsey

“We have a good tuck shop”

“They respect us and we respect them” Jayne

The conversations I have had with the young people made me feel very confident that there is a lot of dialogue leading to change happening in Bowburn Youth project. The young people agreed with me that the project should receive Investing in Children membership. I would like to thank all the young people and the staff for their time and I hope they continue with the good work and enjoy the equipment.

Congratulations!

**Zoe Sier
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