



Re- Evaluation for Investing in Children membership:

Durham City Centre Youth Project

The Durham City Centre Youth Project (DCCYP) was set up in 1967 to offer information, advice and support to young people and to provide programmes responsive to the needs of young people. They first received Investing in Children membership in 2004.

DCCYP runs many different groups around Durham City. I have met with two, where I received very positive feed. The first, was a girls group that meet at Belmont parish hall and the second was Bearpark girls group.

Tuesday girls group: Belmont Parish Hall

I met with Emma Agar and Emma Lawson who run a girls group at Belmont Parish hall on Tuesday's from 1.30 – 3.30pm. This is just one of the groups that is currently run by Durham City Centre Youth Project. The group is made up of girls from Mrs Waldi's year 9 class from Belmont Community Arts College who struggling to engage in education.

The young people that were present – **Rebecca, Kathryn, Teri, Katie, Jade, Lauren, Rebekah, Amy, Chelsea**

All the girls spoke very highly of the project and the staff that work with them. When asked what kind of activities and session they do, I was bombarded with answers, especially from the more vocal girls in the group.

“We've done lots of things like sexual health were we made posters and visited end house. We did the youth challenge booklet through village project Gilesgate, it was good.”

“We did stuff on like healthy eating and made fruit smoothies, pizza and cakes, but Emma burnt the cakes”

I asked who decided to do 'healthy eating'.

“We decide what we wanna do” Said Jade

“If we can't decide what we want to do they (the staff) will give us a choice then we all vote to decide”, Amy

I then wanted to hear a little about their relationship with staff. Once again the more vocal members of the group replied with many positive comments.

“You can talk to Emma about everything” Rebekah

“She (Emma) is very caring about us” Chelsea

I then asked what the best thing about coming to the group was.

“Its very good coming here” Chelsea

“The best thing is we get out of school” (all of them agreed on this)

“You know the worst thing about here is we only get to come for 1 year” Lauren

“Do you want me to lie or something ok I’ll lie they never listen and we always have to do what they want.” Jade

I asked for some examples of things that may have happened recently where they felt dialogue had led to change. The spoke about how they wanted to go on an outing so the staff helped them to arrange an ice-skating trip. They have now been twice.

“We’ve been ice skating twice” Lauren

Also before the group comes to an end, they want to go to flamingo land. They are currently putting a presentation together for the key fund to raise money for it. The staff have listened to the idea, and are now supporting the group to achieve their goal. They (the young people) all seem excited by the prospect and were colouring in some pictures for the Key Fund presentation while we were talking.

Bearpark girls group

Due to DCCYP running so many different projects, and to get a more balanced view on how they run things, I went to visit another project. Bearpark girls group is on a Thursday evening has been running now for 2 years.

I met with youth workers Adele and Ashleigh and three of the young people Jade (16), Lisa (17) and Amanda (17).

Instantly I could see the strong relationship between the workers and the participants and the ease in which they conversed.

The young people made it clear that they started coming to the project because there was nothing else for them to do in the area but they really enjoy it now. They stated that

“if I have problems I can talk to the staff even if they are personal problems.” Lisa

Opportunities for Dialogue

There is continuous informal dialogue which seems to be the most important for the girls as well as the staff. However at the beginning of each new term the girls are asked what they would like to do. They will choose a theme such as drugs and addictions, issues around sexual health or parenting skills. The staff will then assist them to look at these issues in many different ways such as games, quizzes, poster making and dialogue. The young people at the end of the term then get to evaluate what they have done.

Dialogue that has led to change

The girls spoke about the different issue-based sessions, they have done with Ashleigh and Adele. They spoke about how, once a subject was chosen they were then asked what area of that subject they want to look at. Although some of the ideas were more challenging for the staff, they managed to get hold of things. For example one of the girls had wanted to practise parenting skills with the virtual babies and the staff managed to organise this.

'I wanted virtual babies, and we got them and bathed them and changed them and they were really fun' Jade

Also when the girls suggested just having a fun 'girlie' session, the staff also arranged this.

'We've done things like beauty days we wanted that, we like to pick on Ashleigh on those days' Amanda

Dance Project

The girls had been asked to do something for the DCCPY AGM so they decided to do a dance.

'We wanted to dance' Amanda

The staff supported them to get it ready and it was a huge success.

Following on from this there has been recent dialogue about getting someone in to do drama with them. Last term they had a one evening drama event with someone who is keen to do drama with them. The girls were worried that if the sessions became drama they would not get any time with Ashleigh and Adele. Through dialogue with the young people the staff and participants have decided to have their normal session for the first hour and drama for the second. Everyone seems happy with this idea.

The Staff

'We get on with those two (Ashleigh and Adele) we like them' Jade

When I went back to read the report to the girls from Bearpark the original three plus others were there. Once I finished reading it they wanted me to emphasise how much they liked Adele and Ashleigh. When asked if they thought DCCYP should receive Investing in Children membership they all said in unison 'yes, definitely!'

It is with this endorsement that I recommend Durham City Centre Youth Project receive renewed membership. Well done!

Congratulations!

Zoe Sier
Investing in Children
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