



## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

### S.H.A.I.D (Single Homelessness Initiative in Derwentside)

S.H.A.I.D offer support for young people in Derwentside. The S.H.A.I.D staff team achieves this by offering three strands to their work: -

- Floating support – one to one support
- Life skills
- SHAI DY characters

**Evidence of dialogue and change** for the purpose of my evaluation is provided by the young people who make up Shaidy Characters. After a hectic Friday morning session I met with Sara, Daryl, Kirsti, Tommy, Terry, Wendy, Emma and Sean who told me just some of the things they get up to and some of what they have achieved. In fact after a couple of hours it was more like what have these young people not been up to.

**DIY Project** – Please see attached “Before .....and After.....?” Invite. This explains the DIY project. The young people I met with told me that they -

- **chose colour schemes from charts**
- **went to Ikea and chose furniture**
- **arranged the room etc.**

Shaidy Characters has been on going for many years and some of the girls were keen to tell me about some of the things that have happened over those years.

**HYPE** – Homeless Young Person’s Education (2003)

A video the group created to highlight the issue of youth homelessness. This video is still being used today. Wendy told me that they **“sold loads of copies.”** **Wendy also said that they put the whole training package together to promote the video. It is now used by Shaidy Characters to train housing workers and train the trainers.**

**What if?** – was a credit card sized document produced by Derwentside Young People’s Task Group. **Shaidy Characters created a promotional video to promote the cards.** The video was then shown on the Internet via the SPICE website. Kirsti said, **“We wrote the stuff to go with the What if? Cards.”**

**The Big Bash** – an evening of celebration. S.H.A.I.D celebrated its tenth anniversary in style. This is when the HYPE video was officially launched. **“Shaidy Characters helped out quite a lot with the organizing of the Big Bash”.**

**Fun Activities inc...DJ Workshops** – have been organized over the years. The young people told me how they have done keyfund applications for these to happen.

**Speakout** – An opportunity for young people and professionals to get together and ‘speak out,’ hopefully affecting change in policy development and continued dialogue with young people. These events are organised every year.

One thing the group were keen to point out was that **“All projects are young people led.”** As well as telling me that,

**“We have a core group of dedicated members and some drifters”**

**“We set up mini steering groups”**

**“Jane oversees the budget and finances etc.”**

**Fundamental** – a new initiative of Shaidy Characters. Working with S.H.A.I.D and North Durham Primary Care Trust Shaidy Characters are organising a series of free trial therapies.

**Training** – Shaidy Characters get involved in lots of training for others. I hope in the following list to include everything that the young people shared with me during my visit:-

- ❖ Participation Appraisal Techniques
- ❖ Domestic Violence Training
- ❖ Counselling
- ❖ People and Enterprise Training
- ❖ Learn Direct with National Testing
- ❖ C-Card
- ❖ Bogus Caller
- ❖ Tenancy Participation Advisory Service with the Housing Association (TPAS)  
Presentation in PHSE
- ❖ Seen & Heard - A Smart Justice Project (Campaign work)  
Group 13+ age
- ❖ Sage in Newcastle – showcased the Hype video)
- ❖ Youth Work Experience

**Youth Homelessness Network** – Shaidy Characters work across the region as part of the Youth Homelessness Network.

**Chill Out Day** – *Shaidy Characters are organising a day for themselves. As one of the group said “We reign ourselves in cos it just gets big”*

The group were keen to point out that although they are busy they only do: -

**“Anything that matters to us.”**

**“If we don’t think it’s worth our while then we won’t do it.”**

**“We get asked to do loads of things, we have to be careful because things just get dumped on us.”** I think this highlights how much the young people take a lead role in the work that they do.

The young people I met with all came to S.H.A.I.D through a variety of avenues.

Some joined Shaidy Characters through their referral to Life skills. Others have come along because their friends have.

**Lifeskills** – is a ten-week course, which offers ‘Life skills’ to young people. Practical help for young people to help them as they establish themselves. ‘Life skills’ is run by ‘Auntie Audrey,’ although different young people get the chance to lead the ‘Lifeskills’ sessions at different times. Tommy and Sean led a session on the ‘Life skills’ course earlier in the week. The sessions they were involved in were part of a programme offered as an alternative curriculum for young people in the local school. Tommy and Sean hadn’t particularly enjoyed the session and found it quite frustrating.

The ‘Life skills’ programme is offered at Wear Road, a small building which has been converted by S.H.A.I.D into a useable space complete with fully equipped kitchen, a learning space/meal table and a comfortable area. **Shaidy Characters chose furniture etc and have helped create another nice environment for the young people who access all parts of the service.**

Kirsti volunteers at Wear Road, and all of the young people have the opportunity to volunteer for their Millennium Volunteer Award. Everyone is a volunteer as part of his or her work with Shaidy Characters.

**Newsletter** – *the group produce a newsletter and all of the articles are written by young people. Please see three copies attached.*

**Football** – Emma told me about her taking part in a football tournament. Emma and Kaylee made up a football team with young people from “moving on” and Centrepoint. The girls are on a winning streak and looking forward to meeting nine other teams from nine other counties. They recently won the regional finals and are going to the national finals on 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> July.

**Big Brother Day** – *another event organised by Shaidy Characters for young people.* A lock in from sunset to sundown, 9am-9pm. ***The group organised auditions, set tasks, incorporating some of the ‘Life skills’ training such as budgeting and virtual babies.***

A long report containing a catalogue of events in the lives of the Shaidy Characters. Shaidy Characters are a young people’s reference group for S.H.A.I.D with a life of their own and a unique identity to go with it.

My report contains snippets of conversation with the young people I met with but I hope it reflects the dynamics of Shaidy Characters. A group of young people up for a debate, a group of young people willing to share their experiences for the benefit of others. This group of young people do impact on the programme delivered by S.H.A.I.D and work to improve the service for the benefit of all. It is with the support and endorsement of my report that I would definitely like to recommend that S.H.A.I.D becomes an Investing in Children member.

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