



investing in children

Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Fairbridge Training

For the purpose of this re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership I met with young people from the over 16's group and two young people from the under 16's.

Fairbridge is a national charity with fifteen centres throughout the UK. The project aims to provide a personal development programme for young people aged between 13 to 25 years who often face multiple issues ranging from school exclusion and homelessness to anti social behaviour, crime and substance misuse.

They encourage young people by offering a combination of personal support and opportunities. Opportunities, in the form of a wide range of challenging and structured courses and projects. Support in the form of tailor made action plans for each young person.

The young people are referred to the project through different routes as you will see.

This report will describe opportunities that young people have to be involved, the type of things they do at the club and how they are involved in decision making and change.

Opportunities for Dialogue and Change – Young Peoples Views:

I first met with Laura, Jen, Michael and Stephen from the over 16's group
'The Waxa Group'

They told me how they came to be involved in the project;

'We have been coming for about three months; we came through Connexions' **Laura and Jen**

'I found it myself through the internet and have also been coming for three months'
Michael

*'I've been coming since I was 14. I got kicked out of school and started coming here...
'I've got 757 hours of work here''* **Stephen**

'We are on the Waxa course; you get to do fitness things like going to the gym, watching your weight and what you eat'

'You can stay on it until you're sorted really. They will help you get into jobs and on courses etc..'

'I asked to go on courses, I've been on loads of courses since I started here. I want to be a plumber and I asked for help and they are sorting me out with my plumbing course now'
Michael

'When you're here you never get bored there is always something to do'

'They ask you what you want to do, although sometimes they just plan things but you can always suggest things and they listen to you!!'

'I am going on the sailing boat for a week. You get to take on different duties such as a sailor, cook and look out'

'It's a great experience!'

'It's proper belta!' **Michael**

'They give you more than you will expect and it's something to do. We are going to the lakes on a residential tomorrow, to go swimming, mountain biking and walking etc.'

Michael

'Every week we have one to one work, they see how you are getting on, review things and help you if you want help'

'I asked to go skiing and we have been'

'I leave this time next week to go in the army, it's definitely helped me'

'We all get round a table to discuss things and set goals. Then at the end of each session we look at it and review it to see what can be done better etc..'

'It's a laugh here and gives you something to do and gives you the skills you need to get a job'

'If you can't get here or don't know where it is, you ring them up and they will come and pick you up'

'You are definitely listened to here. If you have any problems they will help you sort them out'

IT suite

'We still have this suite but we get to use the computers in the office all the time anyway'

Building

'Its good, proper cushty'

I then met with two young people from the Under 16's Group.

'We got asked by our teacher if we wanted to be involved. We are all from different schools'

'We come for 10 days on different occasions, this is our 9th time we are going on a residential today and will be staying in a cave overnight'

'We have been canoeing, abseiling and rock climbing! You get to suggest things 'We asked for canoeing!'

'It's really good'

'If you have a problem you could go to a worker and they would help you'

'We would change nothing!! It's mint, totally class and wicked'

Finally I met with two other young people on my second visit to the project. They told me the following:

'Last year I did a construction course and I got an NVQ in Horticulture and got a job from it. I asked to do the course and said I wanted something that could get me a job out of it and they helped me get one. I've done loads of courses like safety training, using power tools and manual handling'

'Now we help the local community'

'It's been a good laugh. I'd recommend it to anyone – TOO RIGHT!!! Craigy' Boy

'We went on a two week course. We got to build things to learn joinery and then we had to plaster what we built and then fit a kitchen. It was really good! Tyrone

Young Persons Forum

In the previous evaluation it was highlighted that a Young Persons Forum was being set up with a means to increasing the opportunities for young people who use the project to talk about issues and ideas to improve the project. Following a discussion with the Operations Manager she explained the difficulty that the project has had in setting up a separate forum, but that there is continuous on-going dialogue with the users of the project anyway. She said it was also hard to have a set formal group because young people are coming and going all the time.

Conclusion

The young people I met with spoke extremely highly about Fairbridge Training and the way in which it has impacted on their lives.

They all agreed that they are listened to, and that their views and opinions influence the ways in which the project is run.

I was very pleased with this and with the evidence the young people presented and have no hesitation but to recommend that Fairbridge Training has its membership for Investing in Children renewed.

This report has been endorsed by the young people at the project.

Eleanor Seed
Investing in Children
April 2008