



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Newcastle Independence Network

Newcastle Independence Network (NIN) provides support to young people aged 15-25 who have complex needs, who are homeless, in secure or transit accommodation, are new tenants or are in unsuitable accommodation.

The project team works within a number of core aims:

- To work with young people who have accepted their first tenancy to ensure they receive appropriate support which helps make a successful transition to independence and sustain their tenancies.
- To support young people who are homeless to secure an appropriate tenancy.

For the purpose of this re-evaluation I met with young people who are supported by the Housing Advice and Tenancy Support / One to One Team. These teams strive to provide a high quality service and support, in order to help young people with the transition into independent living.

Workers support the young people and provide support to allow the young people to resolve their 'homeless' crisis. The workers give guidance to the young people to fight for their rights in relation to seeking suitable housing with either the council or private landlords.

This report will highlight and identify opportunities that exist for young people to engage in dialogue within Newcastle Independence Network, in order to make changes to the service.

The young people who access NIN were very clear about what the service meant to them. Due to the nature of the project I met with the young people individually. It is clear from my visits that the young people play an active role and are encouraged to put forward their views, opinions and concerns to make changes to the service they receive.

Evidence of Dialogue and Change is taken from discussions I had with Jane, David, Anne-Marie and Micquila.

Jane has been involved with NIN for a year; the team began supporting her when she was first looking for a flat and need one to one support.

Jane informed me **“I used to find it hard to talk so I discussed better ways to communicate with my support worker. From this discussion we changed the way we communicated, we started e-mailing. We done this lot at first, I feel more confident now, but I like that I still have the e-mail option.”**

Jane recently went to London to take part in an intense therapy course. She was feeling nervous about being alone in London and not having the support of Lesley her support worker. **“After talking to Lesley she agreed to change the hours she worked so I could contact her, she took the works phone home and contacted me every morning and evening as agreed, to support me whilst I was away.”**

When David needed to find accommodation he was recommended NIN by his sister. During our discussion David was extremely positive about the support he had received from NIN. I asked David to explain to me how NIN and his support worker have changed the way they provide the service to meet his individual needs.

“My support worker helped me to sort out things that I didn’t know that I needed to do. NIN is Liz, when I first got involved, she came out to meet me, it’s all about me. I would not have got my flat if it was not for NIN. It’s hard when you’re a lad, you’re not classed as a housing priority but NIN made sure that I was a priority. They have really helped to change my life for the better.”

NIN provides each young person with a support plan. Anne – Marie informed me that she really values this process as it gives her the opportunity to look back at what she has achieved. Anne – Marie highlighted what was involved in developing the support plans and what benefits they give her. **“From my support plan, my support worker can change the way that she works with me. The plan gives us both an opportunity to look at what I have achieved and what I want to concentrate on next. They are really good with young people; they treat you like you are a human being and give you respect, not like other places.”**

I asked the young people if they felt that NIN provided them with the opportunity to express their views and opinions. David informed me **“NIN allows me to be me; they change all the time as a service to meet my needs, I think that is unique. I have been involved in so many services, but NIN is the only one I know where it is all about the young person.”**

Jane added **“It’s not just about housing, they have continued to support me emotionally. Lesley has changed her role to meet my needs so many times; she has even been added as my key worker within my carer plan at the RVI.”**

Micquila was keen to point out **“NIN has helped me change my life around.”**

All the young people I met with were very positive about Newcastle Independence Network. It was evident during my visits that the young people feel they have the opportunity to participate in the direction of the project.

Newcastle Independence Network has excellent dialogue with the young people that access the project. The young people involved in this report have agreed the content. I have no hesitation on behalf of the young people in recommending Newcastle Independence Network continues to be a member an Investing in Children.

Well done and keep up the hard work!

**Kim Kyle
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