



investing in children

## Evaluation for Investing in Children membership Lightfoot Centre

The Lightfoot Centre has developed itself over recent years as a valuable resource which is based at the heart of the Walker community.

The Lightfoot Centre is a sport and leisure centre that provides the opportunity for children, young people and the wider community to mix together who would otherwise not have the opportunity to do so.

The Lightfoot Centre provides opportunities for children and young people to get involved in decision making with regards to the service they provide, and as a result changes have been made to the sport and leisure activities and provision at the centre.

The leisure centre staff are working with the young people to build on the decision making processes, so that all children and young people can have an impact on activities at the sports centre. This has resulted in some improvements to the sports and leisure provision on offer.

This report will highlight the opportunities that some young people have had to discuss ideas with The Lightfoot Centre through an open dialogue and identify the changes that have come about as a result of this process.

**Evidence of dialogue and change** is provided by the children and young people I met with during a Lightfoot Youth Forum meeting. For the purpose of this report I had the pleasure of meeting with Kayleigh, Natalia, Jade, Matthew and James.

The Lightfoot Youth Forum have been responsible for a number of changes within the leisure centre, including planning and running numerous different fun events, e.g. the longest day event, with trampolines, bouncy castles, tombolas, games etc. At the events they asked children and young people what they would like to improve at the Lightfoot Centre. **“The events helped us to find what young people wanted; we made a questionnaire that we used to get peoples views and opinions. We found out that kids wanted a gym.”**

The youth forum discussed the idea of a Kids Gym with Lightfoot Centre management; they held agenda days to gather the views of children and young people and began to pull together a plan for what they wanted in their gym. As a determined group, the young people held meetings with council members and eventually it was agreed that the Lightfoot could have a Kids gym, the first in Newcastle. **“We have done loads of work, the gym is now being decorated, we got £5000 from U Decide for decoration and the council gave us £60.000 towards the cost of equipment.”** Natalia informed me of the areas they are developing at the moment in preparation for the opening of the gym. **“We are looking at opening times for the sessions, choosing the colours, what equipment we want and where we want it.”**

The young people have not only brought about a major change within the Lightfoot Centre by securing the kids gym, they have also changed policy within Newcastle City Council and have hopefully opened up an area of work that can be implemented throughout the city's leisure facilities.

The children and young people I met with are focused upon what they wish to achieve as a group. I asked the young people if they felt listened to. Matthew responded: **“everyone who works at the Lightfoot are really helpful and committed to helping us and listening to our ideas.”** James added: **“all the staff are dead friendly, all the children and young people get treat with respect, everybody knows everybody.”** Matthew and James; I agree with you, it is evident that the members of the Lightfoot Youth Forum are committed to dialogue and are actively implementing change within the Lightfoot Centre. Kayleigh added **“If we want something to change within the Lightfoot we let the staff know our ideas, they will look at it with us, do some research, and give us answers about what we can and can not do.”**

It is evident that the Lightfoot Centre is supporting children and young people to become actively involved in real decision making, with a real budget, giving them a true voice in matters that affect their lives.

All the children and young who I spoke to were happy with the service that the Lightfoot offers; however they would like to work with the staff team over the next year on a few changes which they recommend:

- **“Promote the work of the youth forum and get more young people involved in the group.”**
- **“Make a Lightfoot Youth Forum form that we could leave in the new gym and children and young people could write down what they would like us to do, if they don't want to come to our meetings then they don't have to.”**

All the young people I met with were very positive about the Lightfoot Centre. They feel that they have the opportunity to participate in the direction of not just the youth forum and gym but the centre as a whole.

The young people involved in this report agree with the content and recommendations made. Therefore it is on their behalf that I have no hesitation in recommending that The Lightfoot Centre becomes an Investing in Children member.

**Kim Kyle**  
**Investing in Children**  
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