



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

The Viewpoint Team – Newcastle

On the 24th October 2007 I attended the 'Honey event' in Newcastle to talk to some of the children and young people who use Viewpoint; I also spoke to one of Viewpoint's workers – Nicky Campbell.

Chris Plant and Nicky Campbell are employed by Newcastle City Council, Social Services Directorate. They are based within the Children's Standard's Unit, and form part of the wider team of IRO's. Their aim is for children and young people to receive the highest possible standard of services.

A worker conducts the Viewpoint interview with the individual young person, who is in the Looked after system.

Viewpoint is carried out on a computer programme. Viewpoint replaces the consultation book. This was due to feedback from children and young people.

Children and young people can choose a variety of voices, shapes and colours within the programme, adapting the programme to suit their own needs and preferences. The programme changes every time individual children and young people use it, taking into consideration the answers that are being given.

N – "It's good because it's on a computer, fun, better than doing the question on paper."

The programme asks the children and young people a variety of questions and opinions on their day-to-day lives.

Nicky told me they ask the children and young people when they should call out and see them, a time and place is agreed with the child or young person.

J – "I get to pick when Nicky comes out to see me, I do get a choice,"

The children and young people I spoke with were very positive about the Viewpoint programme:

J – "Could tell my problem and I know she would do something about it."

N – "I get listened to."

J – "Like to do Viewpoint, I get to discuss things that have been bothering me."

Chris and Nicky are busy with the Viewpoint five nights a week.

At the end of each Viewpoint the team evaluate each session i.e. they ask the young person: How have you found Viewpoint? Would you like to do it again?

S – “ They come out every six months, I think this is fine.”

S – “ We spend the right amount of time on it.”

J – “ After a few questions you get to pick a game to play on if you want.”

Dialogue and Change.

I asked the young people if any change has come about from the Viewpoint programme:

“ I wanted to do the programme on my own in my room, Nicky said it was fine, I do it on my own in my own time with no one looking over me. “

“ My pocket money has gone up, I might be getting a mobile phone soon as well.”

“ I have more independence at home because of Viewpoint.”

All of the children and young people I spoke with said they were happy with who receives copies of their Viewpoint. The young people told me they get to read through them as well.

If the child or young person decides they do not want to share their copy of Viewpoint with anyone Nicky and Chris identify some areas they may need to discuss with appropriate people, in order to ensure change occurs. This is done with the agreement of the child or young person.

I believe Chris and Nicky continue to make a difference to the lives of children and young people who use Viewpoint. They discuss on a daily basis with Social Workers and Line Managers, highlighting issues that children and young people raise. Chris and Nicky promote positive change.

Chris and Nicky ask for feedback from Social Workers in order to ensure accountability in responding to issues raised by children and young people during their Viewpoint.

The Viewpoint Programme continues to go from strength to strength; the team are committed to making a difference and positive changes for and with children and young people.

The children and young people have agreed this report; therefore I recommend the Viewpoint Team receives Investing in Children Membership.

**Michelle Fenwick
Investing in Children
January 2008**