



Evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Stockton Asylum Support Team

For the purpose of this evaluation for Investing in Children membership I met with Jake, Tuba, Dinesh, Maha, Gilberto and Ali.

The Asylum Support Team is based within the Health and Social Care department of Stockton Borough Council. The team consists of 3 support workers who tend to work with families and adults on a one to one basis. There is also a community prescribing nurse, two health visitors, a 'move on' officer (for those who have gained refugee status, providing 6 month's contact/support time) and a children and young people's worker, Michelle Broadbent. Michelle runs out of school activities including a Saturday morning session and evening sessions, for young people and provides individual and group support.

There are 140 children and young people in Stockton that Michelle tries to engage with. Children and young people are given many opportunities to get involved in decision making regarding what they want to do with the team and what changes they would like to make. The team, through Michelle's role, take the approach of being inclusive, responsive and supportive to many ideas children and young people come up with. Michelle then works with those children and young people to try to incorporate these ideas into their environment.

This report will highlight these changes and identify opportunities that exist for young people to engage in dialogue with staff.

Opportunities for Dialogue and Change

Street Sounds

Young people from the team got involved in a project which was lead by the ARC and Stockton Council's Youth Space. They are supported by Youth Music Street Sounds and the Asylum Support team. The young people were given information by Michelle about this project because some of them have expressed an interest in music. Dinesh told me, "**We have been writing our own songs and coming up with lyrics**". Maha explained about her ideas and what she has been doing. She told me, "**I have been using Mozart, putting music over it**". Young people performed music and poetry live at the Arc to a packed audience, which was the pinnacle to the Street sound project. Jake explained, "**We made up the scripts and characters for the show**". The young people who took part in the show produced a finished composition recorded on to a CD.

Youth Bank

Young people from across Stockton are encouraged to come up with ideas for activities and projects and then apply for funding. Young people from the team wanted the Street Sound project to continue. They formed their own group and successfully decided that

they would apply for funding to buy their own equipment and develop their own music project, supported by Michelle. Gilbert explained, **“We like the street sound so much we wanted it to continue, but it couldn’t”**, he added, **“Michelle told us about the funding so we decided to apply for funding and got £4000”**. The young people are also looking at how they might involve other young people from the team in this music project.

Super G’s

During the community Art project some young people felt they were being shown prejudice and felt this was to do with the name they were booked under when accessing the venue for the project. Members of this group identified that the name Asylum Support Team was not the most suitable and discussed this with Michelle and asked about changing the name. Gilbert told me, **“We started working with some other young people on an art project and some negative things were said about Asylum Seekers”**. Young people, are now in discussion with Michelle and have come up with a new name which is Super G. This is to be used instead of the Asylum Support Team when working with children and young people in Stockton.

Activities

All activities are decided on by the young people and then also evaluated by children and young people. Ali explained, **“Michelle always looks at our evaluations and looks to see how many of us like that activity”**. If the evaluations are positive then the activity will be put on. Tuba added, **“I wanted to go Ice Skating and we did”**. Tuba added, **“Loads of us asked for karate”**, which some young people are now doing. Other activities that have taken place, which have been identified by young people, are:- swimming, cooking, Ice skating, horse riding and Air Extreme.

For these reasons I would like to recommend that the Asylum Support Team receives Investing in Children Membership for the positive methods they use to develop the project. They are willing to make the necessary changes and adapt how these projects are run. I look forward to seeing further developments made by the young people working with the Asylum Support Team when coming to re-evaluate the team for membership next year.

The following young people have read and agreed with the report and recommend that the Asylum Support team become an Investing In Children Member. They are: - Maha, Dinesh, Hope, Nicky, Tuba, Alli, Hope, Timothee and Naemie.

I would like to thank the young people and the staff for their time and finish by saying well done.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children
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