



Re-evaluation for Investing in Children membership

Young Carers Eastern Ravens Trust

For the purpose of this re-evaluation I met with Natalie, John, Liam, Amanda, Georgia, Bethany, Ryan, Scott, Sonia, Stephen, Andrew, Chantelle and Georgia.

Young Carers Eastern Ravens Trust continues to provide many opportunities for young people to engage with staff and talk about what they want to do whilst accessing the project. The project continues to offer a drop in session twice a week and has provided additional activities and projects at different times of the year based on the ideas of young people.

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

Opportunities for dialogue and change

Eastern Ravens Website.

The idea for a new website was discussed with young people and staff. Young people also wanted to create a section on the blog for young carers. Young people have been supported by Stockton Borough Council to develop their ideas along with staff from Eastern Ravens.

The original design of the website has been changed based on the feedback from young people when they met with Website designers. Young people are also involved in organising a launch day for the Website.

Andrew told me “ **We organised an event in February which was to get our Investing in Children membership and start talking about the idea to have a website**”.

Chantelle added “**We can access our blog from home and talk to other young about anything we want**”.

Group Planning and Evaluation Session

The group I met with spoke positively about the process of evaluation that Eastern Ravens uses, and how it is structured to allow the young people to give their own important views and plan what they want to do. Staff, positively encourage young people to evaluate activities and projects. The feedback is then used to develop activities and trips that young people want.

Steven explained, “**You just ask Tracey what you want to do and she writes down everything you say**” All the young people have the option to do this if they want.

Sonia added, **“We do this on the first night every three weeks”**. Two sessions are run, one on a Tuesday evening and another session takes place on a Thursday. Ryan added, **“We always get listened to and decide as a group what we want to do”**.

The environment the young people spoke about gives them the opportunity to be open and honest when giving feedback on how good the sessions have been. This also allows the sessions to be open to changes that sometimes occur through the direct input from young people.

Activities

Activities that take place at Eastern Ravens are decided by young people. Activities that have taken place are: cinema, wet and wild, restaurant meals, paint balling, pizza hut, ready steady cook and golf.

Amanda told me about one of the activities, she explained **“All the girls planned a pyjama party which was a really good laugh”**

Andrew told me, **“I asked if we could do golf and Tracey arranged for us to go to the drive in”**

Budgeting

This development in the project has allowed some young people the opportunity to plan and organise activities through the management of finances. The staff discuss with young people about how much money is available when planning an activity.

Liam told me, **“We planned to go ten pin bowling at Teesside Park but I found out it was going to be cheaper to go to Hartlepool”**.

Liam went on to explain, **“You also got a better meal deal at Hartlepool”**

Drop In

This continues to take place twice a week and provides many opportunities for young people who attended these sessions to chat with staff about what they want to do.

John told me about the drop in, **“It helps young carers, and the staff give you support with stuff you talk about”**.

John went on to tell me **“It gives you support and time to chill out”**.

Amanda told me **“If you talk to a member of staff about different situations they listen to you and help you with your ideas”**,

Joe told me, **“If we did not get listened to, we would not come, to be honest”**.

It would be encouraging to see if further developments can be made over the coming year re the increased and positive involvement of young people in the project. This is already evident in the positive changes to the project, which has seen the introduction of a Website and the involvement of young people in budgeting when organising activities.

Young Carers Eastern Ravens is certainly built on the principle that young carers have the right to be heard and listened to, and that they have a right to information and advice on

issues concerning them. I look forward to seeing further developments made by young people and staff next year.

I would like to thank everyone who helped me to write this evaluation. When I asked the young people if they agreed that Eastern Ravens project should get Investing in Children membership they all said yes! Therefore, I have no hesitation in recommending that Young Carers Eastern Ravens Trust project continues to be an Investing in Children member. Well Done.

The following young people have read and agreed this report: Amanda, Sammy, Natalie, Chantelle and Andy.

Rob Johnson
Investing in Children
January 2008