Children Looked After Young Inspectors

August 2014
7 members of LINX attended a residential trip to Borwick Hall in Lancashire with members of Lancashire's Young inspectors and Strategic Lead for Children and Young People's Participation and staff from Barnardo's.

September 2014
A further 4 young people from LINX received training.

The agreed aim of Youth Inspections:

To develop a set
of recommendations about
how a fostering agency can improve.
These recommendations are based on
speaking to staff and young people - to
identify important and easy to achieve
improvements.

The rationale for these recommendations is explained and fostering agencies are revisited by Young Inspectors at a fixed point in the future to see if they have been successful in implementing them.

Young Inspectors will not pass judgement / grade/ merit an agency because all services could be improved. Information is gathered through talking to young people and staff about how the agency could be improved.

The Visits:

All staff are asked 2 -4 open ended very broad questions questions

(eg Where would you like your service to be in six months?)

This is followed by 4-5 specific questions.

(eg Can you tell us how your confidentiality policy works?)

Specific questions are based on the areas highlighted by young people.

(eg if young people were concerned about staff attitude - the specific questions to staff would be based on this).

This means Young Inspectors have to speak to service users before they speak to service staff.

All questions are planned out in advance, although ad hoc follow on / extension questions are also used.

Pre Inspection Question:

'We would like to understand a bit about you before we meet you including your background, your vision for young people and how you improve life for them. We would also like to know how you do the work you do and where. Please tell us this information on one side of A4. How you present the info is up to you but pictures and colour are always nice!'

Questions to Young People:

- Would you recommend this service to other people – why?

- What do you think could make the service better?

- Do you like this service and why ?

- Is this service efficient in making a difference to your life? - how / why?

- How involved are you and other young people in making decisions about the service?

- How do you know you are being listened to?

- Does this service enable you to become more independent?

- How does this service make a difference to you ? What difference does it make?

- Are all young people treated equally?

- Are all staff approachable / how do you know this ?

- Does this service create a comfortable environment for you ? (and how)

Questions to staff:

- How do you prioritise what your service does / what has it prioritised?

- How do you continually improve your service / what do you want to improve?

- How do you listen to children and young people?

- How do you help children and young people?

- What challenges do you face day to day?

- What are the aims of the service?

- Do you feel the service is useful to the community? (how?)

- Do you think having young inspectors coming in is helpful?

- How effective is your service? /What is your service effective at?

Once the questions have been asked to the young people and then the staff (in 2 separate visits) a list of recommendations is written up and sent to the Fostering Agency.

In 6 months the Young inspectors revisit the venue to see if their recommendations have been followed

The Story so far….

In October we visited a Lancashire County Council Residential Unit to run a pilot inspection. We have sent them our recommendations.

In November we inspected a private fostering Agency and have sent them our recommendations.

We will visit both units again in 6 months time to see if our recommendations have been carried out.

We have Inspection visits booked in December and January at two more private fostering agencies

The Good News is….

So far we have experienced

 happy children and

 young people living in

care in Lancashire.