

Throughcare: Giving young people a say in the services they receive whilst in custody.

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| <p>Context: the role of participation in the secure estate.</p> <p>Participation means involving children and young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘where individual decisions are being taken about their own lives</i> • <i>where services for, or used by children and young people are being developed or provided locally</i> • <i>where national policies and services are being developed or evaluated’¹</i> <p>The Government’s Children and Young People’s Unit identified the benefits of participation practice as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>‘Better services</i> • <i>Promoting citizenship and social inclusion</i> • <i>Personal and social education and development’¹</i> <p>The Howard League for Penal Reform has highlighted a lack of participation opportunities for young people in custody²</p> <p>Examples of young people’s participation in the secure estate include consultation in inspections, young people’s involvement on boards such as their YOI’s activities board, internal reviews in the secure estate and young people having a say in their own review.</p> <p>The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2002) has called on the UK to put into place structures that support children in custody to claim their rights :</p> <p><i>‘Ensure that every child deprived of his or her liberty has access to independent advocacy service and to an independent,</i></p> | <p>The rights of young people in custody to have a say in decisions that affect them.</p> <p>United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p><i>‘States Parties shall assure to the child who is capable of forming his or her own views the right to express those views freely in all matters affecting the child, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child’⁴</i></p> <p><i>‘For this purpose the child, shall in particular be provided the opportunity to be heard in any judicial and administrative proceedings affecting the child, either directly, or through a representative or an appropriate body, in a manner consistent with the procedural rules of national law.’⁵</i></p> <p>The Children Act (1989)</p> <p>It is a statutory obligation for bodies with a duty of care to a child or young person to give the child an opportunity to have their say⁶.</p> |
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¹ DFES (2001) *Learning to Listen: core principles for the involvement of children and young people*, Children and Young People’s Unit, Ref no: CYPUCPI.

² Howard League for Penal Reform (1999).

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| <p><i>child-sensitive and accessible complaint procedure;</i>³</p> <p>A wide range of participation tools have been developed to help give young people a say in the services they receive.</p> <p>The Home Office was among a number of government departments required to draw up an action plan for young people's participation.¹</p> | |
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Children and young people's right to be a part of shaping the services they receive is increasingly recognised as central to effective service provision. In the secure estate young peoples participation is very much in its infancy by comparison with other areas of service provision, such as services for looked after young people⁷. Young people in custody have had their rights severely curtailed, so implementing participative practice in this context presents significant challenges both in principle and in practice.

As advocates work directly with young people at Hindley for a significant amount of their week the views of young people expressed during the interview process were invaluable. The young people's views and impressions of the candidates may not have been the same as the interview panel's, they may have noticed different elements of a candidate's presentation, communication and personality. This put into practice the service's standards of being young person led and facilitating their wishes and feelings in being heard.

What does the project do?

Recognising the need to place young people at the centre of advocacy work Barnardo's asked for the views of three young people during the interview process to appoint a full time advocate.

The independent young peoples' rights and participation worker works alongside the young people in a range of ways, including individual work, advocacy, and consultation.

The interview process

The interview process included a young person's panel, a structured formal interview and an IT task. The IT task relating to what information candidates would provide to young people who were new to Hindley regarding the advocacy service prepared candidates for presenting this information to the young person's panel that followed.

³ UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (2002)

⁴ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 12a.

⁵ UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989), Article 12b.

⁶ Children Act (1989), 22.4.

⁷ Thomas & Kane (1999).

Who was involved?

The Barnardo's Panel consisted of two Team Leaders and the Regional Programme Manager. An experienced Advocate supported the young people throughout the preparation and the entire interview day.

When initially approached by Barnardo's, the Head of Young People signposted the service to the Principle Officer (PO) with lead responsibility of communication, consultation & link to Advocacy. The PO concerned identified an officer from the unit where the young people involved were accommodated, to offer additional support on the day. The PO was also responsible for the residential unit from which the young people were selected which helped to make the process run smoothly.

Suggested names for the young person panel were put forward by the establishment. Hindley considered maturity, communication, behaviour and enthusiasm when selecting young people. Barnardo's Advocacy Service approached the young people in turn to explain the role. 1 young person was not interested in taking part; the remaining 3 were very keen. All young people lived on A wing. Barnardo's were keen to involve young people who were potential service users, rather than from a group of other young people, who may have been more accessible, however may not have understood the issues facing young people in custody or the qualities that an advocate may need to work in such a challenging environment.

Holding the interview at Hindley

Barnardo's were keen to hold the interviews in the environment where the successful candidate would be based. This would help the candidates appreciate what could potentially be their daily environment. Alarm bells to emergencies, the rapid response of officers running past candidates and the young people shouting in the corridors added to the atmosphere, showing the reality of Hindley to the candidates.

The young person's panel took place within the youth club. This gave the young people the opportunity to use the facilities as a thank you in between interviews and Barnardo's provided young people's refreshments.

Giving young people support for the interview process

In preparation for the interview, the service's experienced advocate, delivered a session with the young people around the job and person profile that was expected for the successful candidate & the role of an advocate. After this discussion and considering the young people's personal views & experience of advocacy- both within Hindley and their natural advocates- family & friends, the young people agreed on the 6 most important qualities they thought a good advocate should have. The young people then scored each candidate on each of these 6 characteristics using 😊 😐 😞 😡. This meant that each member of the panel could not give an average. The 6 most important characteristics according to young people were **being friendly, using words young people could understand, body language, if they were approachable, were confident in helping and could listen well.**

In addition to scoring the above, young people wanted to ask candidates:

1. If a young person comes into custody for the first time, what do you think their thoughts and feelings are?
2. There are young people in Hindley who have committed serious offences such as sexual offences, rape, murder, violence against another. If you knew about our offences, would you feel differently about working with us and why?
3. Why do you want to be an advocate?

Each young person then used their notes following the candidate's presentation & answers to rank the candidates in their preference. One young person said "I can't believe I'll have a say in who gets the job!"

At the end of all 4 interviews, interview panel members from both Barnardo's & the young people's panel, together with the advocate and supervising officer **listened to the feedback from the young people, who were presented with certificates of participation & £5 telephone credit for their help.** The young people volunteered to take part not expecting any reward. The officer also gave them a green ticket- part of Hindley's rewards & sanctions scheme for their fantastic behaviour and enthusiasm they displayed throughout the day.

Scores were added together from the different elements of the interview process- showing that the service really does put into practice the concept of advocacy!

The young people were informed in person the following day as to who the successful candidate was and were very happy with the decision!

Outcomes

- Young people have access to an independent advocate who acts on their behalf or assists them in having their rights respected;
- Young people are consulted about the elements of a successful candidate;
- Young people have access to the opportunity to develop their skills and awareness of issues surrounding employment.

How is the work an example of a rights based and participative approach?

- Young people have access to an independent advocate;
- Young people have the opportunity to comment on the characteristics they feel are important in an advocate;
- Young people are kept informed throughout the process.

Other Work

- Some YOI's have developed panels where young people contribute to decisions and discussions on prison life e.g. bullying.

Appendix 1
Young Person's Scoring Sheet



YOUNG PERSONS INTERVIEW PANEL

QUESTIONS ONE

If a young person comes into custody for the first time, what do you think their thoughts and feelings are?

QUESTION TWO

There are young people in Hindley who have committed serious offences such as sexual offences, rape, murder, violence against another. If you knew about our offences, would you feel differently about working with us and why?





QUESTION THREE





Why do you want to be an advocate?

SKILLS

| Rank..... | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| Were they friendly | | | | |
| Did they use words you understood | | | | |
| How was their body language | | | | |
| Would you go to them with a problem | | | | |
| Based on your first impression would you feel confident that they would help | | | | |
| Did you feel listened to | | | | |
| Rank..... | | | | |
| Were they friendly | | | | |
| Did they use words you understood | | | | |
| How was their body language | | | | |
| Would you go to them with a problem | | | | |

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|--|--|--|--|--|
| Based on your first impression would you feel confident that they would help | | | | |
| Did you feel listened to | | | | |

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|--|---|---|---|---|
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| How was their body language | | | | |
| Would you go to them with a problem | | | | |
| Based on your first impression would you feel confident that they would help | | | | |
| Did you feel listened to | | | | |

PLEASE NOW RANK THEM IN ORDER, 1 BEING WHO YOU WOULD EMPLOY FIRST

Participation Certificate

This is to certify that

Jo Bloggs

Took part and fully contributed as a young people's panel member during the selection of Barnardo's Advocacy Service staff team in the North West

May 2009

THANK YOU



Barnardo's

BELIEVE IN CHILDREN