

B.O.S.S Project

A Consultation with Young People within Edinburgh Secure Services

At the request of Edinburgh City Council Social Work Department a consultation was undertaken by Who Cares? Scotland's Secure Team. The aim of the Consultation was to gather information of the views and experiences of young people residing in Secure Care within Edinburgh City.

The methodology for consultation process involved young people taking part in a board game. In this game where there were a mixture of fun general knowledge questions and questions relevant to seeking Young People's views and thoughts on the care they receive from the establishment in which they resided.

Three separate consultation groups took place in November 2004. The first with two females, the second group consisted of two males and one female, and the third had one female and one male. The young people were between the ages of 13 to 15.

Young People from Chalmers unit were given the opportunity to participate but declined. We had on one previous occasion tried to involve these young people but due to the unit being unsettled we were asked to rearrange.

Two or three members of the B.O.S.S project facilitated each group. The groups took place with no staff members from the establishment present. This allowed for young people's right to confidentiality.

At the beginning of each group the facilitator explained the aims and objectives of the session. The young people were assured that their contribution to the consultation would remain anonymous unless a child protection issue arose. After gaining the consent of young people all of the focus groups were tape recorded and later transcribed.

The Views of Young People

Young Peoples Quotes

Do you know why you are here?

All the young people had a good understanding in regards to why they were in secure care.

Do you feel safe?

Three of the young people said they did feel safe and one young person said being locked up did not make them feel safe.

Yes no one can get in.

Yes nothing can happen.

If you gave been restrained they take everything from your room including your mattress. You can have no mattress from 7pm to 10.30pm.

I got kept in my room for a week, I had to eat on my own and do schoolwork in my room.

Do the Staff listen to you?

One young person felt that staff did listen to them but the remainder of the young people said only some of the staff did listen to them.

Staff need to get a grip.

I only like Wendy.

Most of them do.

Do you know what the rules are for the young people here?

All the young people said they knew the rules.

Go to bed on time.

Keep your room tidy.

Don't swear.

Don't eat breakfast in the living area.

Not allowed to talk about the outside.

Only allowed to wear long skirts.

No high heels.

No fooling around at Tea Time.

There are too many.

Can't speak about offending.

No relationships.

Can't go in rooms with other Young Person.

Do the Staff have rules too?

All the young people felt the staff did have rules but some Staff changed them to suit themselves.

It's our T.V so we should have what we want on.

They are now allowed to hit us.

Can't give you things your not allowed.

Can't smoke here.

We are allowed one hour of music per shift but if they want football or whatever we don't get it.

Which people who don't live here are particularly important to you?

Six of the young people identified their family as being important people and one person said it was both their family and friends.

Can you contact important people who do not live here when you want to or need to?

This seemed to vary, some young people felt they could and others said they were not able to contact people when they wanted to.

Yes I get phone calls and visits.

Not enough phone calls, only allowed three. Most people have more than three people in there family and maybe mum and dad doesn't live in the same house.

Do staff ask you what you think about what happens?

Staff ask how my leave went.

Yes they ask where you want to go for time out.

In care plan meetings

Ask about food.

Yes we have meetings but they are not as regular as should be.

Is there anything you think the staff should ask young peoples opinions about, which at the moment they do not?

Yes food.

Staff should not force you to talk to them.

More about our offending and drug use.

They should show us videos about how dangerous stuff is when talking about offending.

You end up doing the same stuff when you get out and go back

If a member off Staff or another Young Person hurt you, who would you tell?

Only one young person said they would tell someone within the unit. The majority of young people named their family. One young person said the Children's Rights Officer and another said no one.

If you had a big problem is there anyone here you could talk to about it, if yes who?

I would talk to my Mum.

My brother.

Some of the Staff.

Some of the Staff.

Paul, Lorna and Scott (members of Staff)

No one.

My friends.

What's the best thing about being here?

Nothing.

The beds are comfy.

Don't like it.

I hate it.

Stopping smoking.

Looking forward to getting out.

Paul and Lorna, the best Staff members.

Meeting new people.

Getting money for Birthday and Christmas.

What's the worst thing about being here?

Not getting out.

Not getting steaming.

Not getting home.

No fags.

No drink.

Can't see family.

Miss my friends.

No partying.

Miss my Boyfriend.

Secure is not as bad as I thought; I get home and get time out. I thought I would be in my room all the time.

Being locked up.

Being away from everything.

No fresh air.

When I came here I had no fresh air for two weeks, you can't even open a window.
Miss my family.

Can you think of one thing that would make life better for you here?

If I got to see mum every day.

My friends being here

Do you get individual quality time with an adult to prepare and look towards your future?

No.

Sometimes in the car.

Yes Key time.

Key worker tries but I don't like her.

Yes.

Do you know what the future plan is for you?

The majority of the young people were unsure of their future .One young person said they did know that they were to return home.

If you know what the plan is for your future, do you agree with it?

No, and when I tell them they don't listen.

I guess so.

What things do you feel is important to consider when preparing to move on?

Staying out of trouble.

Getting on with my mum.

My exams.

Work experience.

Not getting into trouble.

Not coming back here.

Stick to care plan.

Behave.

Are you being asked your views on moving on?

Yes

Yes by my Key Worker and Case Manager

Who else do you think needs to be involved in planning your move from here?

Social Worker.

Key worker.

Case Worker.

Family

Panel

Me

What are your hopes and dreams for your future?

Get out of here and get a job.

I want to go to police College.

Have a good life.

Not to do things like before.

Get a nice house.

Kids.

Don't know.

Getting out and getting on.

Getting a car

Whose job is it to make the plan for your future work?

My Key Worker.

Case Manager.

Me.

Managers.

You.

The Sheriff.

Who Cares? Scotland would like to thank the young people for taking part in the consultation and the staff who supported them.

The young people who took part were keen to do so and appreciated the fact that Edinburgh City Council wanted to consult with them.

The purpose of the consultation was to gather information of the views and experiences of young people residing in secure care and to use them to inform practice.

There are and remain opportunities to change and enhance young people's experiences of secure care.

Young people in care have been exposed to insecurity, lack of certainty and are left inevitably feeling troubled and anxious.

Consistency of care is of paramount importance.

Participation by staff and young people is an important factor in the production of good practice and its contribution. A partnership approach should be encouraged at all times. Unit meetings involving young people and staff should be given priority and take place on a regular basis.

It is important for young people to have people they can speak to who they can trust and know will listen. Staff should always make time to listen to young people and should actively promote access to Who Cares? Scotland.

Contact was a key issue for young people; staff should promote and provide opportunities for young peoples contact with family and other important people.

The message that was given to us was that young people did not recognise or chose to ignore that drinking and smoking is risky activities. On more than one occasion young people identified drinking and smoking as something important to them and that they missed.

More information for young people would be useful and workers have a responsibility for promoting positive healthy lifestyles for young people.

It is important to young people to be able to talk through their offending behaviour and to gain help in understanding the dangers and risks associated with it. Without doing this young people feel they are not equipped when leaving secure care and end up in exactly the same place as before.