

Appendix 1

CLA and Care Leaver

Drop in Service

Introduction

This document outlines the “drop in” service delivered by the CLA Adolescent and Aftercare Service in partnership with the Southwark Stakeholders.

The drop in service was introduced in response to a number of identified needs and clear feedback from service users.

The Adolescent and Aftercare Service is part of the Child in Care Service responsible for delivering all care planning and ECM outcome activity for looked after children aged 13-18 and care leavers from 18-21. Located at Bradenham Close SE17, the Adolescent and Aftercare Service has dedicated resources for dedicated work with teenagers which have been utilised to deliver the drop in service.

Background

As well as accessing services, service users have generally made use of reception spaces to network and socialise. This has given rise to incidents of aggressive and violent behaviour, principally because adequate supervision is not available in the reception area. These incidents and their aftermath place additional strain on the duty function and may create a negative environment for direct work or deter some from seeking assistance.

The service asked a care leaver to carry out research into service delivery, principally around how our “walk in” service is perceived amongst service users and staff. He interviewed 50 young people and a range of staff members and found that whilst there was good practice, there were several areas that could be improved.

The introduction of a drop in service is one component of a wider strategy, which is focussed on improving service delivery, assisting those who are NEET and prioritising staff safety.

Regretfully the increase in violent incidents over the last eighteen months has created a degree of tension and unease amongst the staff team, which is evidenced by staff reporting lower morale, demonstrating an over cautious approach to more challenging clients or conversely higher risk taking and “bravado”.

For a few older CLA and care leavers a culture of dependency has developed, who are beginning to react against more consistent messages around service provision, particularly in relation to reducing levels of financial support available.

It is recognised that many of these young people/adults are NEET and are relatively isolated in their living environment, with limited social contact. For some, the Adolescent and Aftercare Service remain the sole agency with whom they have any meaningful contact.

Whilst the service does not seek to promote or encourage dependency, it is recognised that this group have limited external resources and require support and assistance in making links with relevant services in order to develop a degree of resilience and financial responsibility. To facilitate this, we want to encourage participation and positive engagement in an informal setting, whilst promoting and providing information concerning our more formalised programmes and re-introduce service users to external community based resources.

When interviewed 90% of a sample group said that if a more informal drop in service existed, they would make use of it. They were also helpful in making suggestions about what they would like the drop in service to provide

Outline and Aims

The formulation of a structured “drop in” service, seeks to meet young people on their terms. It is recognised that for some disassociation from societal norms has been a factor in their care history and that formalised, structured and enforced activity might lead to further alienation. The introduction of an informal drop in service provides a transitional “taster” of our services whilst maintaining some level of engagement. It will also provide a stepping stone to more formalised and structured work programmes.

The “drop in” service will deliver constructive activities in a welcoming and safe environment. Utilising effective partnerships and role models (esp. male) the service will tackle issues of exclusion, isolation, challenging behaviour and disengagement

The key aims of the drop in service are:-

- minimise disruption in reception,
- serve as a link between reception and our more structured group work sessions,
- offer networking opportunities for young people,
- provide regular access to education and careers advisors for those who are NEET
- maintain constructive contact with those isolated/vulnerable CLA/Care Leavers
- Re-engagement with care services

Service Links and Information

- Community based leisure, health services, faith groups and 3rd sector sources of support and advice
- Formal Group Work programme
- Speaker box
- Southwark's youth service (TYS)
- Targeted Entry Level/Level 1 Literacy/Numeracy courses
- CAB/Welfare Advice
- TP/TDS services
- Banking/Financial Advice Services

NB: These will be provided through partner agencies taking part directly in the drop in programme or through agreed referral pathways where A&AC staff will actively facilitate engagement.

Service Description

The service operates on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday each week. Each day will provide one morning, lunch time and afternoon session (10-12noon) (1-12pm 2-4pm)

The drop in service utilizes space already provided within the Adolescent and Aftercare Services. In general activities will take place in "The Pink room", the IT suite, the kitchen and activity room. Some off site excursions may be planned for one to one work, (subject to risk assessment).

Activities/sessions will broadly adopt a youth work model of working in corporately.

- Breakfast club
- Children's play time
- Homework club
- Quiz hour
- Arts & Crafts – painting drawing, knitting, sewing
- Journalism/graphics session (production of newsletter)
- Afternoon Tea
- Games afternoon
- Education & Careers clinic
- Fluff and fold (do your laundry & ironing)
- DJing/music studio – build your own track
- Forum/Discussion Groups
- CAB/DTA/TP/Dental/Informal Clinics

These will be advertised on message boards, posters, reception tv and mail shots.

Target group

The target group would be NEET and/or those who are socially isolated,(aged 16-21). By offering informal access to leisure, education and meals/refreshments (without the need for appointment), it is hoped this group will begin accessing services and specialist staff.

Identified young people will have the service included in their pathway plan and will be encouraged to attend by their allocated personal advisor, social worker and independent reviewing officer.

Resource Options – staffing & equipment

Service Resources

Personnel

- Group worker – 3 sessions per week
- Apprentice group worker - 4 sessions
- Volunteers (x2) – all sessions
- Social work/health and social care students (x4) – 1 session per student
- Male group worker/youth worker – employed specifically to work on drop in function – all sessions *
- Floating Managers (x1) – as and when required
- 1 member of staff (PA/SW) for each session (note: social workers and personal advisors will be placed on the rota for either group work or drop in)
- Connexions Advisor and NRF worker available one session per week
- Volunteer Care leavers (x2) (who has already exited the service) – 4 sessions

NB: Given current financial constraints all of the above personnel resources are to be funded within current resources (except marked *)

Equipment

- Pool table
- Dart board (Velcro darts)
- Selection of board games, etc. – e.g. Ludo, dominoes, Monopoly, Pictionary, backgammon, Connect 4, Jenga, chess, draughts, cards, etc
- Toys, educational books for small children
- Electronic consoles – Wii/PS3
- Arts and crafts table – selection of Arts and crafts
- Coffee machine and tea urn
- Writing materials
- IT suite
- Tumble Dryer/Washing Machine
- Sewing machine
- Ironing board & Iron
- DVLA theory test – CD Rom
- Kitchen/Cooking Facilities

Security of equipment: - all games will be supervised and moved to locked cupboards in the activity room when the sessions end.

Budget:

a) 2009/10 Start up costs were incurred to purchase core equipment from A & AC direct work budget.

b) 2010/11 Running Costs

- Experienced male youth worker part time delivered in partnership with TYS
- Ex care leavers will be provided with a nominal payment of £20 per session
- Replacement costs – wear and tear/breakages
- food/transport/refreshments

Risk Assessments

Each activity will be subject to a Risk Assessment in keeping with Health & Safety practice.

Evaluation of Drop in Service

Whilst the service will be drawing upon existing resources resources from within CLA services and partnerships with Youth Service, Southwark Works Connexions and Health, it is important that it's impact is evaluated to further shape the service and to confirm its effectiveness.

The CLA service therefore intends to undertake the following evaluation steps:

- Evaluation period January to December 2010
- Statistical analysis against the following measurable outcomes:
 - a) Number of young people attending and engaging with the drop in service (16-18) who are NEET.
 - b) Number of care leavers (18-21) who were isolated in community and NEET attending and engaging with drop in service.

Those

- c) still NEET
- d) now engaged in formal group work programme or other day time project
- e) now engaged in employment, education and or training

18-21 who

- f) remain isolated in the community and NEET

- Qualitative feedback via direct interviews with participants (undertaken by care leaver during university recess over summer period) to assess:
 - a) enjoyment of drop in service
 - b) which parts were most beneficial
 - c) impact upon daily routines and motivation
 - d) Impact upon becoming engaged in employment, education and training
 - e) how could drop in service be improved to achieve a b c and d above
- Impact upon young people accessing formal group work programmes delivered by the Adolescent and Aftercare Service during review period
- Reduction in violent and aggressive incidents in reception recorded area during review period.