

Targeted Youth Support

Integrated support for vulnerable young people – sharing emerging practice



Including disabled young people in local service provision

Area: Hammersmith and Fulham, London Borough, West London, population approximately 165,000

“We’re aiming to help disabled people become fully part of their own communities – and this needs a lot of change to achieve. It’s not a quick fix. It’s about fuelling an ongoing attitude change within the whole population and this is something we all have to keep working at. Essentially, inclusive youth provision is just good youth work.” – Richard Day, Deputy Director of Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability (HAFAD) Dec ‘07

Challenges

- Effecting long-term change in segregated provision culture
- Developing effective partnerships with other services that deal with different service criteria and cultures
- Disabled families concerns about mainstream provision
- Identifying and directing resources to meet needs

Key Actions

- HAFAD brings local disability projects together with the aspiration of becoming a centre for integrated living
- HAFAD becomes the main borough provider for leisure activities for disabled young people (11–25 years) launching its Agenda for Youth (AFY) programme in 2000
- HAFAD pilots a new inclusive youth club in a VCS partnership with Masbro Centre’s mainstream youth group
- Builds on learning from Masbro, developing clubs with youth service at Castle Club and Fulham Cross centre
- Council becomes Children Trust (CT) pathfinder. Richard Day becomes voluntary rep for CT board – enhancing the projects networking potential to influence and join-up services from within the CT
- Children’s Fund establishes a bridge worker in the play service – to work across departments and plan transitions
- HAFAD develops personal profile reports on disabled people to support transitions
- HAFAD works with other agencies to ensure a sustainable inclusion strategy is written into the council’s disability equality plan and the new children’s service framework
- HAFAD develops a training programme for including young disabled people in play and youth services

Key Implementation Tips

- Specialist providers are key to identify resources and foster change across departments in children/adult services
- Establish bridge workers to work across departments + facilitate change
- Where possible exert influence on commissioning committees across the CT; they are powerful levers for change
- Draw up SMART partnership agreements for pilot projects
- Use Disability Equality Duty and Action Plan to ensure strategic progress
- Access to youth clubs needs to be more than just wheelchair access
- Take time to understand the different cultures of different service providers
- Learn from what doesn’t work as well as what works
- Staff attitude is key to club success. Put committed staff in leadership roles + ongoing training and evaluation for all
- Challenge prejudice openly
- Get parental agreement before passing personal information on

Impact

HAFAD has developed its service provider role to incorporate its traditional advocacy and campaigning functions within the new Children’s Service framework. Through its AFY programme it delivers 600 places to disabled young people and refers users onto inclusive groups. The new bridge worker is creating strong links between the play service and social services helping increase mobility; ease transitions and ensure inclusion is high priority. Although the Masbro project funding has ended, disabled users continue to attend clubs at the centre.

Following a planned withdrawal of HAFAD staff at Fulham Cross, the club continues to thrive and disabled young people are also attending other activities at the centre. HAFAD continues to support the development through referrals and bridge working assessments. HAFAD’s involvement in the CT is breaking down barriers and promoting inclusion strategically. It’s also increasing collaboration between services, ensuring disabled young people are always included in plans.

To find out more, contact

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