

REFER 2 US DVD TRANSCRIPT

Matthew: Hello my name is Matthew

Maryanne: and I am Maryanne and we are both part of Barnardo's Refer 2 us group and we are going to take you through the DVD.

Matthew: Firstly we are going to introduce you to the rest of the group who you will see throughout the DVD.

Maryanne: The next chapter is 1 and it's just about the Refer 2 us group and what we do.

Matthew: You will see throughout the DVD that it has all been about us trying to be the voice of children and young people in Barnardo's.

Sabrina: The name of our group is the Refer 2 us group and the purpose of it was to build up a group to be the voice for children and young people in Barnardo's Northern Ireland and to get their views opinions and points across.

Maryanne: The structure of the Refer 2 Us group is there are 5 males and 5 females and it's mixed religion and it's from different services all over Northern Ireland. We meet every Sunday at the end of the month unless we are going on residential [residential weekends away].

Don: We did a calendar to do with the image of young people. One of the things that was in the calendar was Stormont gates – that was to represent that’s as far as we’re going to get is the gates. But hopefully that will change someday. The thing I enjoy about being in the Refer 2 us group is that it gives children and young people a voice instead of kids always being in the background like they usually are.

Ryan: We wanted to be the voice of young people throughout Northern Ireland and we thought the best way to get young people’s opinions was to do the consultation.

Matthew: Chapter 2 is coming up next which is on safe and happy and the consultation which we did with around 150 children aged 3 –25 from different services in Barnardo’s.

Rhoda: Just over a year ago the group decided that for to actually be the voice of children and young people within Barnardo’s they would need to go out and talk to children and young people who use Barnardo’s Services and that’s where the idea for the Safe and Happy consultation came from. The group did a very intense training programme around the skills and the theories needed to carry out the consultation with other children and young people. They did two residentials and several days training and they covered topics such as child protection, how to consult with disabled children and young people, how to consult with pre-school children, and also more technical things like how could they actually plan, deliver and evaluate the focus groups with the different groups of children and young people and try to be as inclusive as possible and think about things that they had actually learned in the training.

Maryanne: We picked Safe and Happy because not everyone knows what makes young people happy and what makes a child

happy and disabled young people. And Safe because we would like to know what makes them feel safe in their area.

Sabrina: We think every child and young person should have that right to be safe and happy and not be afraid of anything and we wanted to find out the sort of thing they were afraid of and how safe and happy they felt in different environments.

Ryan: We picked safe and happy because within Barnardo's that's what they kind of thing they try and promote, being safe and happy and we also believe that every young person should be safe and happy. First of all we actually decided who we wanted to talk to, for example, disabled young people and young people at risk then we actually got in contact with the services. The managers of these services then asked the young people themselves were they interested in doing the consultation and then they got back to us and then from then on I got to travel all over the country. We picked the topics for example school, free time and then just out of that we picked questions to do with each topic.

Simon: We did workshops on bullying, disabled people, discrimination, sexual exploitation and we also done training for the consultation. I actually did a consultation with a young person who had autism and so the workshops kind of helped me do it, but it was still eye opening because you could see he was trying to talk but you were just kind of guiding him, you weren't putting words into his mouth you were just guiding him - take your time.

Lynda: The Safe and Happy consultation has really been the start, I think, of us genuinely bringing children's voices into thinking about what children need. The fact that 9 young people themselves have asked the questions of other young people, that seems to me so important that it hasn't been adults asking those questions, its been 9 young people who have been trained up

through the participation process and they are asking questions in the way only young people can ask other young people so the answers we know have real meaning.

Maryanne: Moving on to chapter 3 this is about the key messages that came out of the consultation and what we are going to do with the information.

Sabrina: Some of the key messages I think, were that people didn't feel safe in their own communities and young mothers felt isolated from their friends once they had their children. Some people were afraid of paramilitaries and others people felt they protected them in their communities but it all depended where you lived and what areas you lived in. Some of the primary school children didn't actually feel safe in school because they thought of bad men coming in and things that had been happening around the areas of the schools. So they didn't feel safe at all.

Matthew: A lot of the children say there was a lot of violence in their areas and they were sort of scared because people were walking about with knives, but that's just not in the city - that's in other areas that there's a lot of violence. The people say that money didn't make them feel any safer apart from a couple of people [who] say money would be good if you needed taxis to get home or credit in your phone in case of emergencies.

Simon: Young people when they go out at night alone feel really vulnerable and unsafe. They are always looking over their shoulder for cars coming behind them. They would be afraid, nervous, shaking, but when they are in a group of their friends they feel safer because they've got friends; they've got the support they need if something was going to happen. Adults have to really listen to what young people are saying about how safe they are

and what they are going through in school or even starting out in work, because most adults don't mean to but they just turn a blind eye. The consultation has really opened things up, so they really have to look at it because this is what they've [the young people] been saying and because there's a lot of people who have said it.

Ryan: Most disabled young people have been bullied or discriminated against within school, work, communities, and that a lot of them are put down by it. Young people actually don't feel safe in their own communities in Northern Ireland whereas the media would perceive that it's young people who are making everyone one else feel unsafe.

Maryanne: The disabled children and young people said that they got bullied when they're on their own, or even when they're in school if they go to a mixed school. The young children were happy because they were with their family and they were with their friends or they were with their playgroups or clubs.

Sarah: Some people were afraid to go out at night because they don't know what's going to happen to them, because they might hear stuff on the news or they might not want to go to school because they are scared of getting bullied something like that.

Lynda: I would have presumed that young people felt very safe in their communities but that isn't necessarily so. So there are big issues there for where we provide services, for example a safe place in the city centre is better than in the community, or maybe we help communities identify and support their young people to be safe. And I think the other messages are around how important family is, and with young people sometimes I don't think families really understand how important their intervention is with their young people, but young people are clearly saying 'I

need the support of my family.' Friendship was a word that came up again, again and again, and if we can create services where young people can support each other through friendship I think that's very important.

Rhoda: There have been three main points for myself that I am going to take away from this consultation. The first one is the fact that the services that Barnardo's have are actually doing extremely good work with children, young people and families in local communities. The second point that I will take away from this consultation is probably the fact that I think the Refer 2 Us group have got much more out of it than I would ever have imagined. I have seen them grow in confidence and I have seen them develop new skills and use these skills and they are also receiving accreditation for doing the consultation through the Youth Achievement Awards. And the third point for me would be that I feel we are much more able to respond to the needs of children and young people because we've actually listened to what it is that they feel they need to be safe and happy in Northern Ireland.

Maryanne: I'd like the information to go everywhere, to let people find out what young people and disabled young people feel. Doing this consultation I thought was brilliant because we got to find out the views of all different people and how they feel. I feel different having done the consultation because I know now more about young people and children, their backgrounds and how they feel about life as well.

Sabrina: I think what surprised me most is the fact that when we went in and asked the children and young people the questions they were excited. They were willing to give you the answers and weren't holding anything back, and I think more adults should give children the opportunities to make decisions and give their

opinion. We are going to give the information to adults and to the children and young people and we are going to have a conference. I'd like to see a good bit of it going into Barnardo's five year plan and it to be used more widely, and used to help the services do better things and get children and young people's opinions across.

Lynda: The information will go into our planning processes so when we are looking to the next five years, where we are going to go, how we are going to spend our money, what we are going to do, we will be bringing young peoples voices into all that adult thinking. Rather than thinking of young people as being in need and dependant and somebody who we look after, we actually deliver services in such a way that we draw on the strength, the power and abilities that young people undoubtedly have, and that they become part of the solution in their own life that makes them resilient not dependant and that's the whole point at the end of the day.

Ryan: Well I hope that it doesn't go to waste and I hope that it is actually used and that maybe if it even helps just one person at least it's done something.

Matthew: We hope that you enjoyed watching the DVD as much as we enjoyed making it, it was excellent and it was well worth while.

Maryanne: We want to thank Barnardo's Northern Ireland for giving us the opportunity not just for making the DVD but being part of the Refer 2 us group.