

Be loud. Be Proud. Get a ...

VOICE

Annual Report

April 2004 - March 2005

Barnardo's Yorkshire



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 About Barnardo's

“Barnardo’s no longer runs orphanages but continues to work with children and young people who live in adoptive, foster and residential homes. It enables children with disabilities to remain in their own homes by providing short term breaks, befriending services and support to their parents. It works with terminally ill children and their families to help them plan for uncertain futures. It works with children and young people who suffer abuse. It supports children who take on the care of ill or disabled relatives. And it works with young people who receive little sympathy: drug users, those from asylum-seeking families, young offenders and those who abuse other children.”

Cherie Booth QC
President

1.2 Barnardo's vision and purpose

Our vision. We believe that the lives of all children and young people should be free from poverty, abuse and discrimination.

Our purpose. To help the most vulnerable children and young people transform their lives and fulfil their potential.

1.3 Barnardo's Basis

Barnardo’s derives its inspiration and values from the Christian Faith. These values enriched and shared by many people of other faiths and beliefs provide the basis of our work with children, young people and their families and communities.

1.4 Barnardo's Values

- **Respecting the unique worth of every individual**
- **Encouraging people to fulfil their potential**
- **Working with hope**
- **Exercising responsible stewardship.**

1.5 “With children, for Children” – our five year plan

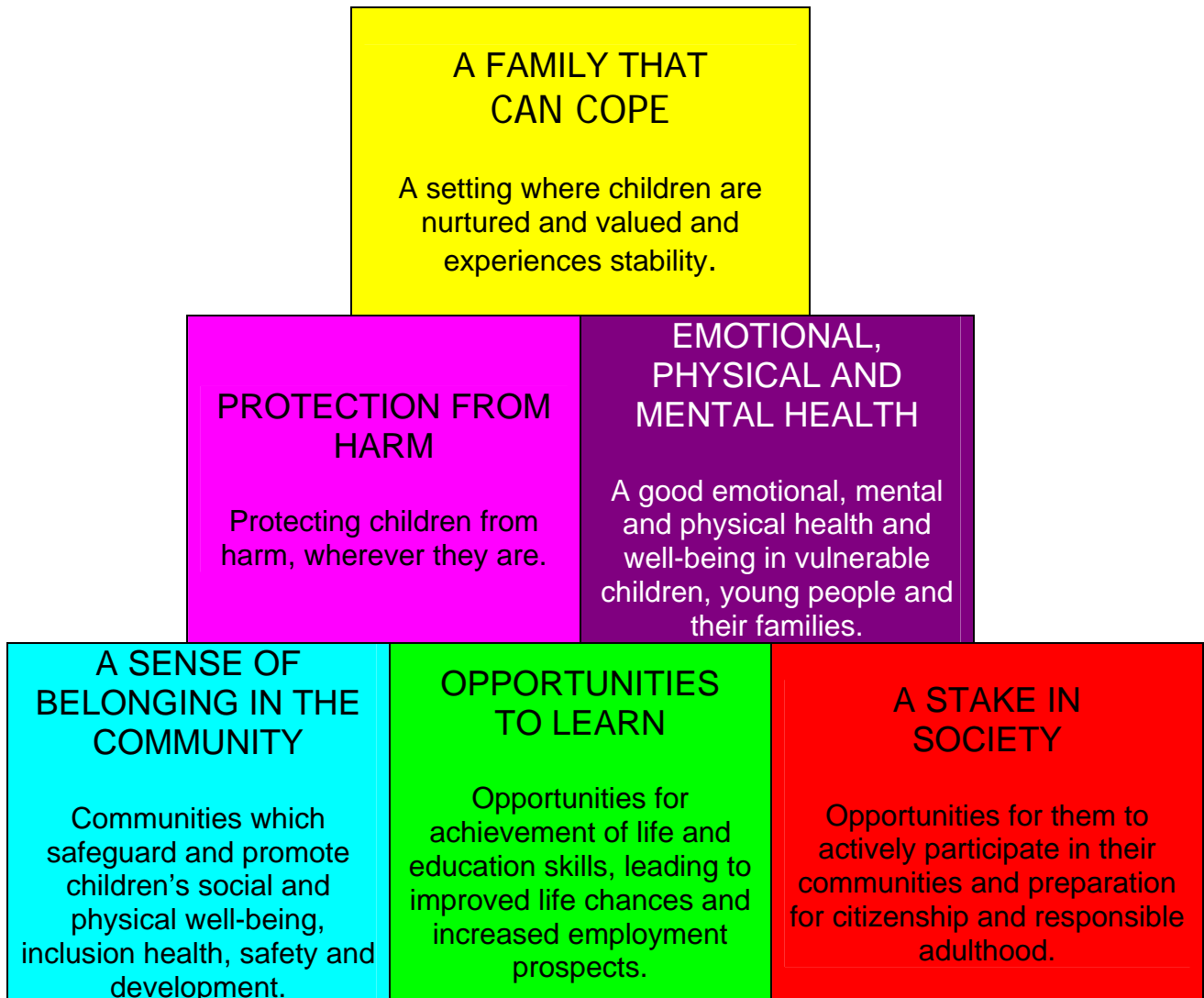
Over the last five years, Barnardo’s has been aiming towards:

- Embedding the views of children and young people at the heart of everything we do
- Meeting the needs of children and young people by offering them excellent, appropriate services
- Improving the circumstances in which children and young people grow up by influencing the government and decision makers

- Enabling staff and volunteers to achieve outstanding performance
- Gain greater support and public awareness of the types of work we do
- Generate the income and support we need to continue our work with children

1.6 The building blocks

Barnardo's work is organised around the six "building blocks" which we believe that every child and young person needs in order to build a positive future



All About VOICE!

2.1 What is VOICE?

VOICE is a Regional participation service which can work with all children and young people who are attached to a Barnardo's Service in Yorkshire.

It's our job at VOICE to ensure that the children and young people who use Barnardo's in Yorkshire have clear, two way and open lines of communication with their Service, as well as in understanding of what's happening at a Regional level and with the UK including direct interaction with Council! The children and young people with whom we work in Yorkshire, also wanted a way of communicating with each other and their newspaper "**Evry1 say ur bit**", (initiated, written by them for them) is just about to launch it's second edition.

VOICE endeavours to be inclusive in the way that we work. We believe that every child or young person has an opinion on something irrespective of age or cognitive ability – it's our responsibility as workers to ensure that we ask the questions in a way that they can understand. VOICE will continue to ensure that we have the tools and skills to work with any child or young person in Yorkshire who wants to.

2.2 Aims of VOICE

The aims of VOICE were born from Barnardo's vision for children and young people "*that the lives of all children and young people should be free from poverty, abuse and discrimination*" and "*to help the most vulnerable children and young people transform their lives and fulfil their potential*". The philosophy that underpins VOICE is also embedded in the six building blocks that is the foundation of our work.

The challenge for Barnardo's is to help ensure that the life experiences of the children and young people that it works with are enriching and involving and that the children and young people who come into contact with Barnardo's feel that they have been treated as valued citizens with a voice.

2.3 The broad aims of VOICE are:

- To create opportunities for the views of children and young people who use Barnardo's services to be heard – so they can influence the service, the region and the organisation nationally, in ways that empower children and young people and help to develop self confidence and self esteem.
- To enable children and young people to influence external policy and legislation and to give the opportunity for young people to be involved in campaigning and lobbying.
- To contribute to Barnardo's policies and ensure that they are influenced by the views and experiences of young people.
- To give children and young people the means to communicate their opinions and views directly (to each other and adults), so that they have control and

direction of what is said and how it is said without being channelled or filtered.

- To raise the overall profile of children and young people throughout Barnardo's either as employees or as members of strategic focus groups.

2.4 Is VOICE unique?

NO! VOICE is happening in various forms throughout the Regions and Nations that make up the UK. Barnardo's believes that the way forward is to work from a young person centred approach – this makes sense – because it's difficult to know what works best for someone unless you actually take time to ask them. In reality this means that we are trying to ensure that children and young people are involved and consulted in all aspects of our work – to make sure we are getting it right! Barnardo's believes that all children and young people have a right to be listened to and should be involved in any decisions that affect their lives.

2.5 Does Barnardo's encourage participation just in Children's Services?

Again – NO! The "Participation Strategy" that we are working within is very corporate and encourages the organisation to involve the children and young people in all aspects of Barnardo's – not just children's services.

As participation workers we cannot dictate how this should look in retail, fundraising, marketing and communications etc – but we can offer advice and support.

Whatever aspect of Barnardo's we work within – I am sure that we are all working towards one common goal – to make sure that the children and young people who use our organisation get as much support and encouragement as they need in order to make them a better future. Working together – will help make this happen.



3. INFLUENCING

The role of VOICE is to ensure that the children and young people that we work with within the Region are encouraged to influence the people and issues that have a direct impact on their lives. Sometimes this means that we may speak on behalf of the young people – after asking their opinions on a subject – or it may mean that we support them in getting their views and opinions across in a way that they have chosen.

3.1 The recording consultation

Between Summer and September last year VOICE carried out “consultations “ with the children and young people who use our Services in Yorkshire regarding the way all Staff make recordings about our meetings or contact with them. The “consultation” meant that we asked if the children and young people knew about the recordings and why we recorded and then asked what information the recording should contain. At first – gathering this information sounded really boring – but because we realised how important it was and how the recordings should reflect the young people’s lives – we set about devising a series of exercises that could be used with children and young people of all abilities and ages. We decided that the exercises should be based around the question – “If you read your file 10 years from today – what would you record from today that would give a clear picture of how you thought and felt?”

The main part of the exercises was around seeing the child or young person’s file as a “memory box” that belonged to them too. For the younger children we decided that the first part of the exercise should be to build a “memory box” – so it could physically represent their computer file. Having learned most of our skills from “Blue Peter” and “Art Attack” – we knew the best way to see if the exercise would work was to “pilot” it with a group of young people. This meant that I got to spend a very messy, but enjoyable day with Sweet and Sour Crazy Chicks at Khandaani Dhek Bhal – turning shoe boxes in to glitzy, glamorous memory boxes – which we then filled with recordings of the day’s group. These comments were then copied on to the days recording for the group. The memory boxes are still being used at the end of each session.

As the consultation was aimed at all children and young people throughout the Region – we devised “cooler” exercises for the older ones – but all based around the same question. This “tool kit” (collection of exercises) was then sent out to all Services throughout Yorkshire and Staff were encouraged to use them and find out what their children and young people wanted.

Not all Services had time to use the exercises with their young people – but the one’s that did promised to change the way they record to ensure that the young people’s thoughts and opinions were in there too. Loads of good ideas came out – young people suggested that pictures they had drawn, photographs, letters etc, could be scanned on to the computer – as well as feedback sheets that they could chose to use at the end of each session or contact.



3.2 "Listen Up!"

The "Listen Up" Conference held at Springhill School in August 2004 was all about influencing.

Initially VOICE was approached by the Yorkshire Influencing Group about ways that the children and young people who use our Services within the Region could add their views to the "influencing policy" that was being written and who they felt it was important for Barnardo's to "influence" on their behalves.

The idea of a "conference" was borne from this and an email was sent around the Region asking for interested young people to facilitate a "conference". Whatever ideas we may have had as VOICE Staff were quickly dismissed at the first meeting of the Conference planning group in February 2004. The group's ideas flowed quickly and were exciting and achievable. The group (2 young women and three young men) came up with idea of a series of workshops around "influencing through your senses" – so using music, art, puppet making, mug and t-shirt painting in order that the young people could express their views and give their messages to the people who could make a difference to their lives, not to mention a room transformed into the "Big Bruvver" diary room – where thoughts, opinions, messages etc were captured on film!

The event, one truly soggy, water logged Friday went without a hitch. It was fantastic and by the end of the day the main hall in Springhill was completely decorated with "Poetry Walls", "Graffiti Walls", fantastic collages of Tony Blair, (which was included in the "Who's Government is it anyway?" report.), giant sized puppets and huge pieces of art work – as well as drying messages on mugs, t-shirts and wooden spoon puppets. Each and every message, whether written on a mug, jigsaw evaluation piece or vocalised in the two "raps" produced in the music workshop were faithfully copied and formed the report that was then distributed to the people who could make a difference. This was accompanied by the "Big Bruvver" DVD. Hopefully people had no choice but to **"Listen up!"**



3.3 Hull Question Time Event

This event, in March 2005, came about after VOICE secured some money from an outside funding stream! Due to the late notification of the cash – the event wasn't as young person lead as we would have liked – but we couldn't pass up on the excellent opportunity of the young people in Hull and East Riding having the opportunity to ask questions of the people who have daily, direct impact on their lives.

The Panel included people from disability services, social services, education and local government. The questions that the young people devised were hard hitting, but the Panel survived – skilfully chaired by Ron Oliver (one of Yorkshires Assistant Directors) – who was great.

Feedback from the day and a video are being produced as we speak.



Quotes from the young people who joined the event:

- “It was brilliant and I thought it was a really good idea”
- “I liked the young people who I went with, I liked meeting the adults I didn't know and talking to them”
- “Thanks for a buzzing day.”
- “To Barnardo's – thanks for inviting me today – it was really fun.”
- “You need to listen up so you know what young people really want.”
- “Your opinion counts – use it wisely.”

3.4 “Evry1 say ur bit”

The idea for a Regional Newspaper – for young people, by young people – came about from a group of young people from some Wakefield Services who Joanne was working with. They were asking questions about other Barnardo’s Services in the Region and decided that this could be an ideal way for them to talk to each other about things that they felt were important.

The first edition came out (finally!) in December 2004, but the second edition is just about to go to print in April 2005.

The newspaper editorial team is made up entirely of young people and they decide who they want to interview or what they want to write about. The first edition wasn’t printed exactly as the group would have liked – so in March this year two young people went to London to talk to Creative Services about exactly what they wanted! They made far more head way in a one hour meeting than we had done in 6 months of hard core negotiating.



Above: Two members of the Editorial Team who visited London to meet with Creative Services

It’s hoped that eventually all children and young people who use our Services will contribute if they want! It’s a fantastic example of young people encouraging other young people to have a voice and a powerful influencing tool!

4. PARTICIPATION



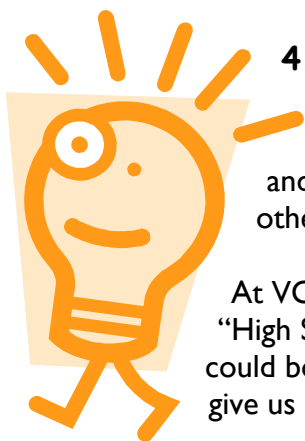
The Staff at VOICE live sleep and eat participative practice! We are passionate at spreading the message that participation is a natural way of working and not a new fangled idea. We believe that it's impossible to know what will work for someone or what's best to meet their needs – unless you ask. VOICE staffs are only happy when they are working with or developing tools to work with children and young people. We are noisy, energetic and enthusiastic, would make excellent door to door sales people and are best avoided if you want a quiet, peaceful time!

On a serious note – we do try and ensure that all practice within Barnardo's is participative, inclusive and is working alongside the children and young people who are involved in the work.



We aren't "experts" in participative practice. We just have the privilege to be in a position that we can spend time looking at what makes good practice and the theories that back good practice up! The best bit about VOICE is that we get to visit and work with other Barnardo's Services, both across the Region and the UK. This means that we get to see excellent practice tools almost every day. We pop them into our virtual tool kit and the next time we have a Service request that is trying to solve a similar issue we can either "signpost" the Service on or give them the tool! We never said that any of our ideas were original!

4.1 The "science bit"!



Voice does work with a number of "theories". This helps us justify and "ground" our work and is also useful when passing on solutions to other Services – "try this because it works and this is why it does..."

At VOICE we use the "Hartes" participation model, we tap in and out of "High Scope" and are beginning to use the solution focused approach. We could bore you for hours about why and how they translate to practice...just give us a call.



4.2 Examples of participation

4.2.1 Investors in Young People Award

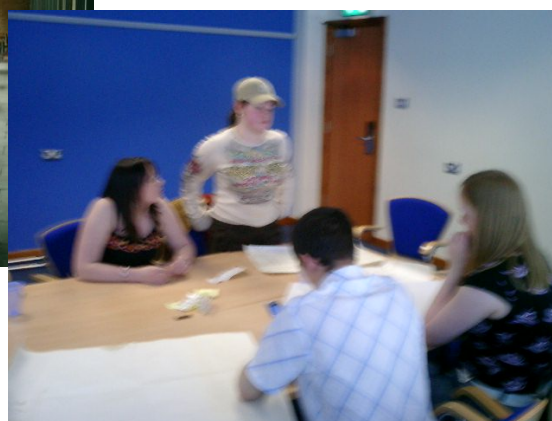
This award was launched for the first time last year. Young people who attended FRAME (the UK Advisory Group) were asked to become inspectors for the award and their job was to look through the applications from one Region – in our case, the North West. The three young people from Yorkshire chose three Services from fifteen applications, who they thought showed best participative practice. The next step was to visit these Services and decide who should go forward to be the Regional winner and be entered into the UK final. This meant initially meeting with the young people from the North West who were to inspect Yorkshire to ensure that they were assessing to the same standards and being consistent. It was hard work and the three young people gave us weekends and evenings to undertake the inspections! They took their job really seriously!

The Regional winner chosen from the North West by Yorkshire went on to be a joint UK winner – which made the young people feel very proud. However, being very professional – they decided that they would like to evaluate the whole process with the other inspectors and further refine practice. This meeting took place in May this year, just before the launch of this year’s award. The young people felt that they would like to repeat this year’s process – in order to see if things had changed as a follow on from their evaluation.



Also as a result of a direct request from the young people involved, an “Inspection Training Pack” has been put together – in order that is used UK wide. It’s hoped that it will be accredited through Open College Network and the equivalent in Scotland.

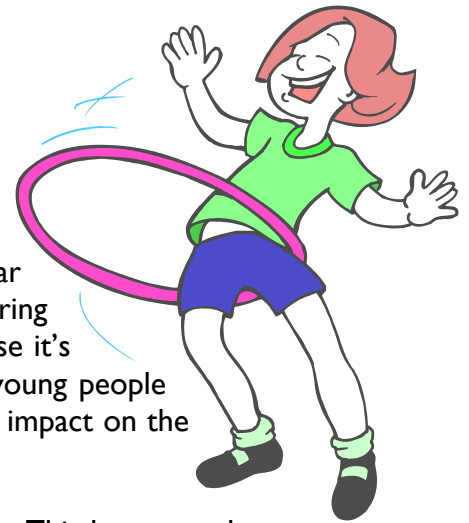
The young people involved said that they felt “respected” throughout their involvement and hopefully will have gained a lot of transferable skills. So if anyone wants trained inspectors – I’m sure they’d be willing to help for a fee!



4.2.2 Balloons as opposed to hula hoops!

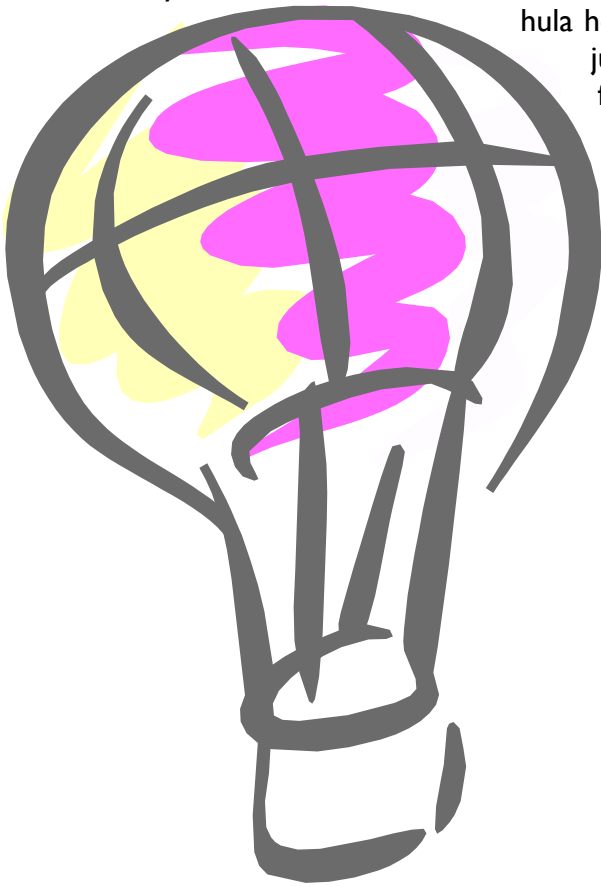
Last year we hula hooped the Region – this year we’ve been playing with hot air balloons!

We have had a number of service requests throughout the year that has requested ways of establishing focus groups or steering groups! This is music to the ears of the VOICE Team – because it’s usually a pretty giant step towards ensuring that children and young people who are linked to the Service are going to have an influence or impact on the way the service is delivered.

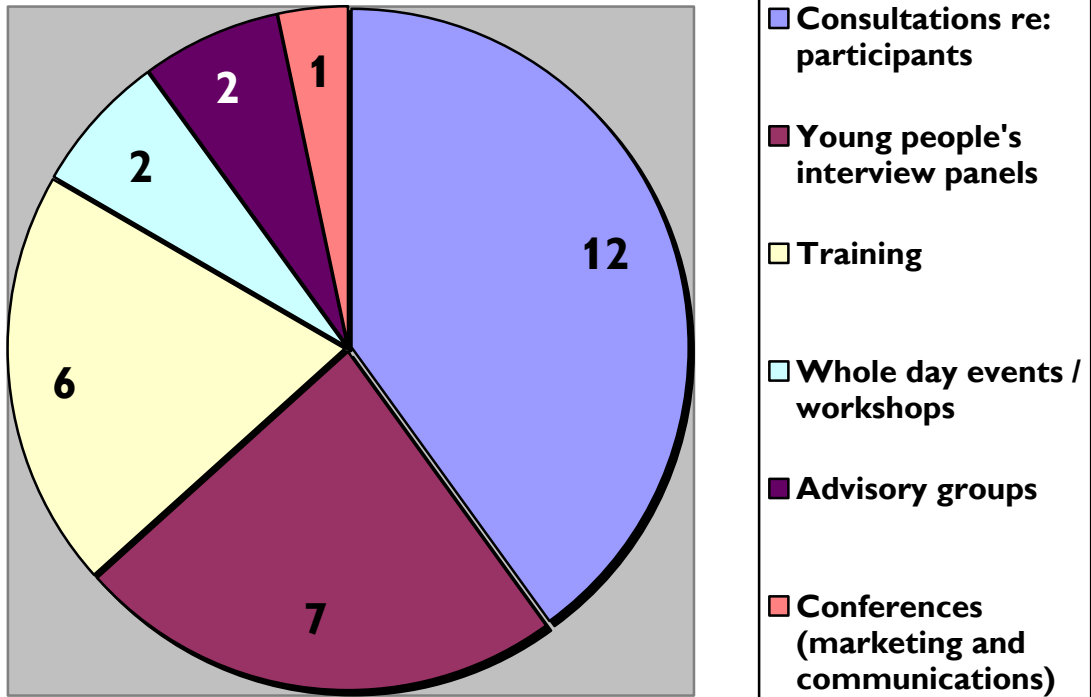


To set up these groups we have used the “hot air” balloon tool. This has proved an amazing resource and is adaptable to working with any child or young person irrespective of age or ability! It’s pretty good at getting Staff teams to focus too – we’ve used it loads. Young people seem to like it because it’s fun and focused – staff like it because you record as you go along and VOICE staff like it because it’s in simple steps and can be passed on with little explanation. One group decided that they wanted to make a 3D balloon in order to deliver their points – this involved

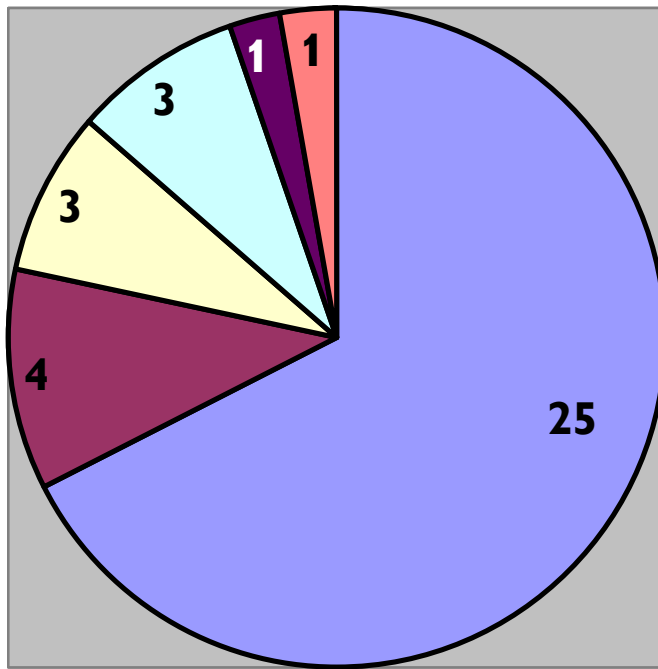
hula hoops, crepe paper and reams of cello tape. I’m just waiting for the next request which will be for the real thing! We’re making links with Mr Branson as we speak.



5. Work Requests 2004 - 2005



5.1 Self-Generated Work 2004 - 2005



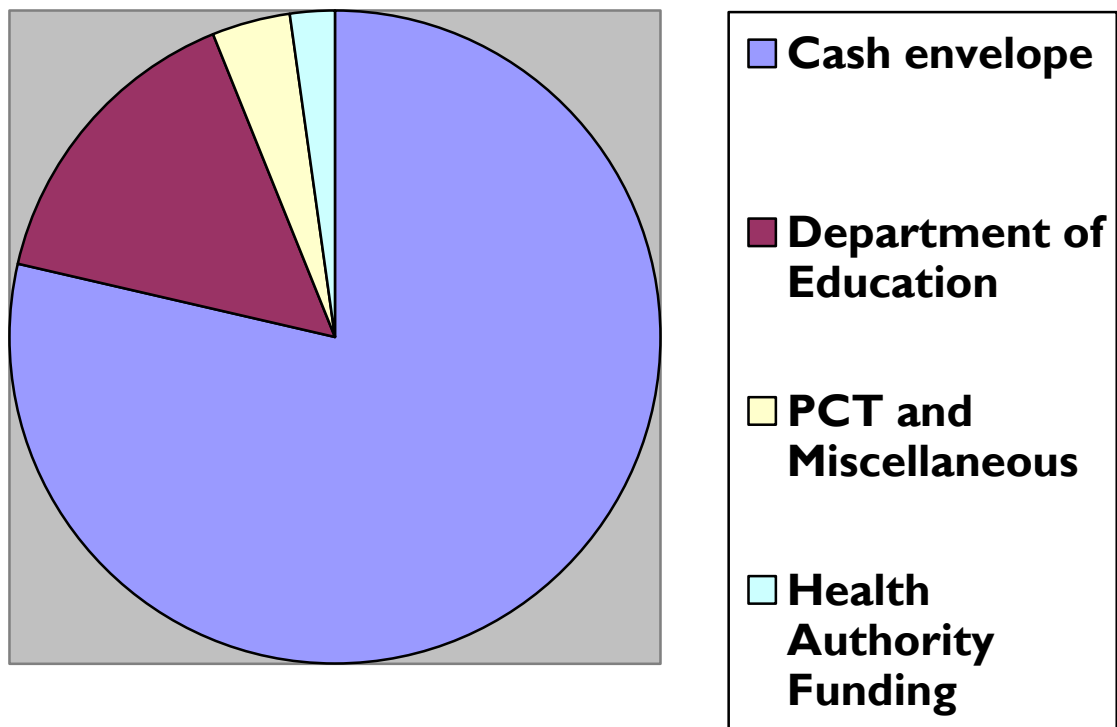
- Newspaper strategy group
- Attendance at FRAME
- Communities of Practice in Yorkshire
- Make it Clear Group
- Listen Up Conference (includes 15 meetings)
- Recording consultations

6. MONEY

VOICE is entirely cash envelope funded. This means that we get all of our money from Barnardo's – which is brilliant on one hand – as it means that we can work fairly autonomously, with no service level agreements to adhere to and no number crunching – but on the other hand – it means that we don't have very much cash.

We were lucky enough last year to pull in £3,000 of external funding for some evaluation work, plus some more money to run specific events – but by enlarge we have to be thrifty and amazingly good at responsible stewardship.

We could always do with more – but it's sometimes fun to see how much you can achieve on so little! AND.....we have now got three Staff on 30 hours and our Admin worker on 10 hours, plus we do have our own building – so I'll stop moaning.



7. PEOPLE

VOICE has experienced huge changes over the last two years both in terms of staffing and location! VOICE now has its very own premises and although quite quirky – it suits the Team!

Here's who we are and what we all do!



Hi my name is Shelly. I have the privilege of managing the VOICE service. I think this is the best job and the best team in the world. I have only been involved with VOICE for the last 2years - but I can definitely see the changes that are happening and the impact that the young people are having on the Organisation! I am proud to work for an Organisation that is not only committed to listening to what the children, young people and their families say, but are also committed to taking action and making changes where they have been suggested.



Hi my name Joanne, I have worked with VOICE for 4years now and have had the best time working together with lots of children and young people throughout Yorkshire, I love being able to support children and young people to influence and shape the way we provide services in Yorkshire and the UK. We have made some great changes this year through the participation but are sure we will make many more over the next coming year. I'm looking forward to continuing this great work in the future. Jo x😊

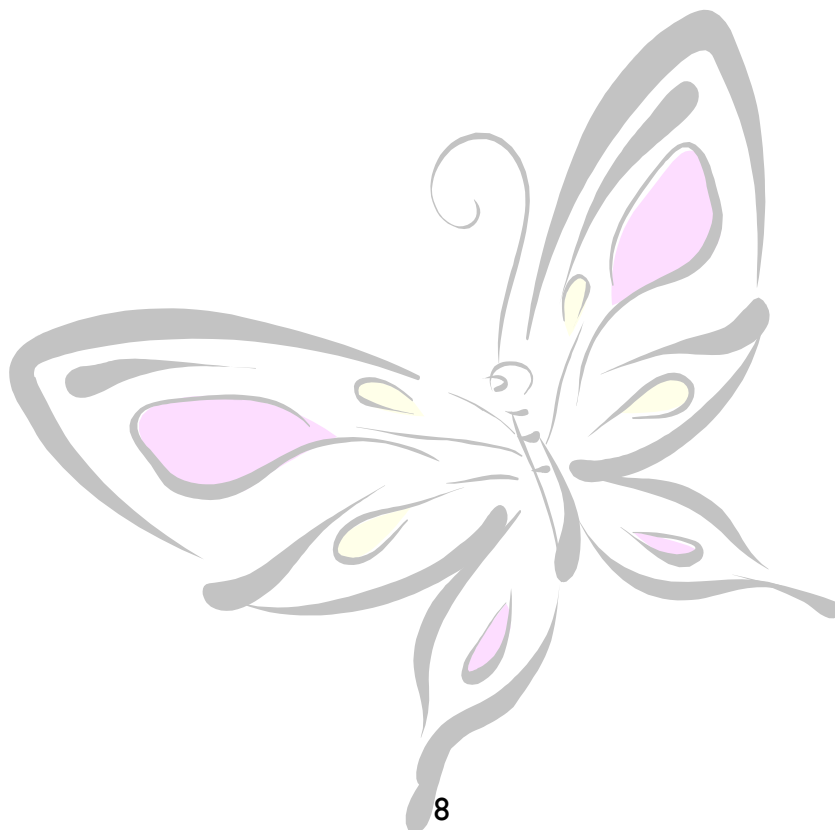




Hi my name is Jackie, I have worked with VOICE for 6 months now, but worked for Barnardo's for 2 years co-ordinating a project with One to One Productions developing a website, it was great fun to have the opportunity to work with so many talented young people. I look forward to having the same experience at VOICE, already I have met so many children and young people that want to change the way we provide services here in Yorkshire. I hope this will continue.



My name is Dick Bonham, and I've been the Service Administrator at VOICE for 6 months. Amongst other things this means looking after all the money and finances. Normally this involves chasing everyone else up to give me receipts! My role involves helping everyone else in the office run things as smoothly as possible, so that they can spend more time working directly with young people. As VOICE has only recently moved into its building, this often involves getting systems up and running. This has sometimes been a challenge, but things finally seem to be getting sorted out!

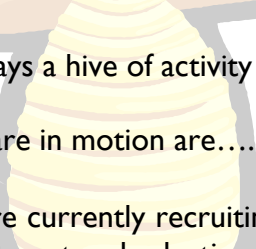
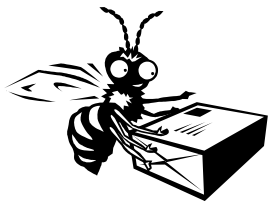




8. HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE COMING YEAR

VOICE is always a hive of activity and the coming months are no exception.

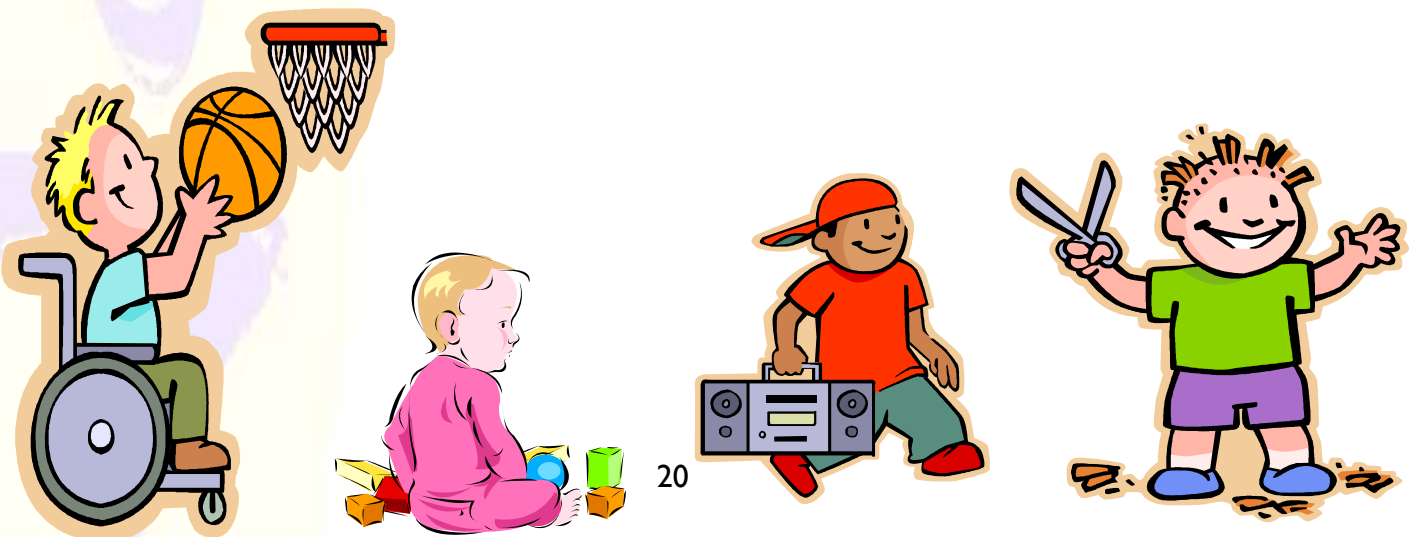
Wheels that are in motion are.....

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- We are currently recruiting eight young people to be trained in all aspects of recruitment and selection by some young people in Wales. It's envisaged that the trained Yorkshire young people will become a regional resource and will facilitate young people's panels for services; train other young people in recruitment and selection and hopefully go on to train regional staff in the benefits of young people's input into the recruitment and selection process. The training is due to take place in July/August and will be done in Wales.
 - Our second regional newspaper for young people and by young people "Evry 1 say ur bit" is currently winging its way from Creative Services as I type. It's hoped that it will be cascaded to children and young people by the Services they are linked to and that the "Editorial Team" will further expand as more young people want to be a part of it! The Editorial Team were unhappy with the last edition as it seemed "too corporate". Joanne had tried to convince "The Studio" that less formal would be better – but to no avail. So two
 - representatives from the Editorial Team requested a meeting with Creative Services. This took place in March and proved very successful – as this edition is exactly how the young people planned it! It's been a fantastic example of the impact young people can have and they are so excited about it and see it as a major achievement!
 - We have just recruited two new members to FRAME (UK Advisory Group). These two young women will replace two of the existing three Yorkshire members who are too busy with other exciting things – one will go to University in October and the other is taking the lead on a lot of VOICE groups and is finding it difficult to fit all of his commitments in! The two new members will be facilitating the FRAME residential that will be held in Yorkshire in August! ("Thrown in at the deep end" comes to mind!)
 - Two members of FRAME (one who's staying and one who's going!) will be visiting Council in July to feed back from the group. The young woman who attended from Yorkshire last year said that it was "a life changing experience – because people actually listened", so hopefully the experience this year will be similar.
 - So far 48 young people want to be part of the planning group for this year's Yorkshire Conference for children and young people! I'm sure we will facilitate it in some way so that everyone feels they have a role! I blame the young people who facilitated "Listen Up"! They were so fantastic – that now other young people want to be like them!
 - The young people who were inspectors in the Investors in Young People Awards have recently evaluated the whole process and have committed themselves to do the inspections this year – in order to see if the changes they have suggested work. This is a huge task and means that the young people have to give loads of the free time as it involves training, initial application sifting, visits to selected Services in other Regions or Nations and lots of report writing!

However the three from Yorkshire who were involved last year are happy to do it again, plus we have “adopted” a young woman who was part of the process in the North east region last year and has recently moved to Yorkshire!

The list is endless.....and this does not take into account work generated by Services and as we are about to embark on a mapping exercise in order to determine how well we are operating in line with the corporate participation strategy – I can only imagine that Service work requests will increase!

BUT.....it’s achievable! The VOICE Team are passionate about and totally believe in participative practice. We see it as a natural way of working and not an “add on” or new fangled concept that will fade away! This year we have seen examples of the real impact that children and young people can have and can only celebrate this move!



9. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

VOICE would just like to say that it's been a privilege to have worked with some amazing children and young people over the past 12 months. You have definitely made our job exciting and have made it clear just how powerful your opinions can be when you have your say. Long may this continue!

Thanks to the Regional Management team for your continued support and faith in the service. Massive thanks to Steve Oversby, who always finds the money when we need it!

Thanks to all the staff in the services for opening up your doors and allowing us to work with the children, young people and families who access your service.

It's been a great 12 months, with loads of changes. VOICE now feels "real" and a "grewed up" service. Let's hope the next year is as exciting!

Shelly, Jo, Jackie and Dick.