

**Evaluation of the
Junior Youth Inclusion Programme**

conducted by

educari

for the

Camden Children's Fund

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Contents

Acknowledgments	2
Summary	3
Introduction	4
Method	7
Summary of results	8
Conclusions and Recommendations.....	9
Detailed Results and Analysis.....	11
Outcomes we were looking for.....	11
Description of project area	11
Description of the project	12
Attendance data for 50 children	16
Register data for 103 children.....	16
Participation of children and young people	18
Work with parents	18
Case studies.....	19
Analysis of case studies.....	24
Outcomes in terms of risk and protective factors	25
Observations	27
Interviews	28
Interviews with children and young people	29
Interviews with parents	30
Interviews with project staff.....	31
Interviews with external professionals	32
Ideas that lie behind the work	37
How the Junior YIP addresses risk and protective factors	40
References	42
Annex 1 Play Service Report on the Summer Playscheme 2005	43
Annex 2 Play Service Report on the half-term Playscheme 2006.....	45

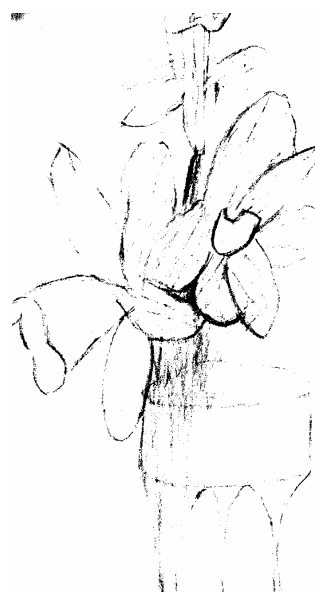
Acknowledgments

Thanks to the staff at the JYIP, especially Gaia and Pete, and to the children and young people and their parents who spoke with me about their experiences of the project.

Richard Ives, July 2007

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(Picture right: child's flower drawing)



Evaluation of the Junior YIP

Summary

This evaluation of the Junior YIP aimed to describe the project, look at its work and assess its outcomes. We used a range of data sources. Quantitative data were available from registration records, but in order to measure outcomes the focus was on qualitative data. Qualitative data included case studies, interviews with key informants, including the Project Manager and project staff, interviews with children and young people who used the service and with their parents, and interviews with professionals external to the project who had contact with young people attending it. We also observed sessions and had access to play service reports on the holiday scheme work.

The evaluation tried to capture some of the complexity and richness of the interventions made by this project in the lives of some very vulnerable young people. It also tackles the questions: 'Does it make a difference?' and 'Does it make a difference that justifies the cost of the programme?'

The answer to both questions was 'yes'. The manager and workers were sure that it did. Our observations convinced us that this was an exceptional project. Located in a deprived area, it was reaching children, some of whom were 'hard-to-reach' and might not otherwise have been in contact with services. The community roots, visibility, and longevity of the project gave local people confidence in accessing it. The staff's commitment to co-operation with other services reassured other professionals who referred children to the service or had contact with it. The children and young people had opportunities to do new things and to have fun and excitement. They were encouraged and enabled to take advantage of other local facilities. They were in contact with positive adult role models, and had chances to participate in planning activities. They also had, if they needed it, a place to do their homework, and – this was very important for some children – a safe haven where they could 'be themselves', and recover some of their childhood. Transitions were sensitively managed, in particular transition from primary to secondary school, and, at age 13, transition from the JYIP, often to the Senior YIP.

The JYIP activities were geared towards outcomes for the children and young people, in particular, the reduction of risk factors and the enhancement of protective factors in their lives; and, if achieved, a reduction in the potential for involvement in crime could be expected. One would also anticipate less involvement in low-level anti-social behaviour. Educational attainment should also improve, both because of direct work on educational aims (such as help with homework) and because other problems were addressed.

We observed some aspects of the service that could be improved and we make some recommendations on these points. We conclude that this project should continue and that alternative sources of funding should be provided to enable it to do so. It is important that there is no funding hiatus at the end of March so that the staff team can be maintained, and community confidence remains, and so that the children who use the service continue to be served.

Introduction

This report describes an evaluation of the Junior YIP (Youth Inclusion Project) in LB Camden. This evaluation was undertaken as an additional evaluation task by the CCF Local Evaluators with support from the JYIP Project Manager.

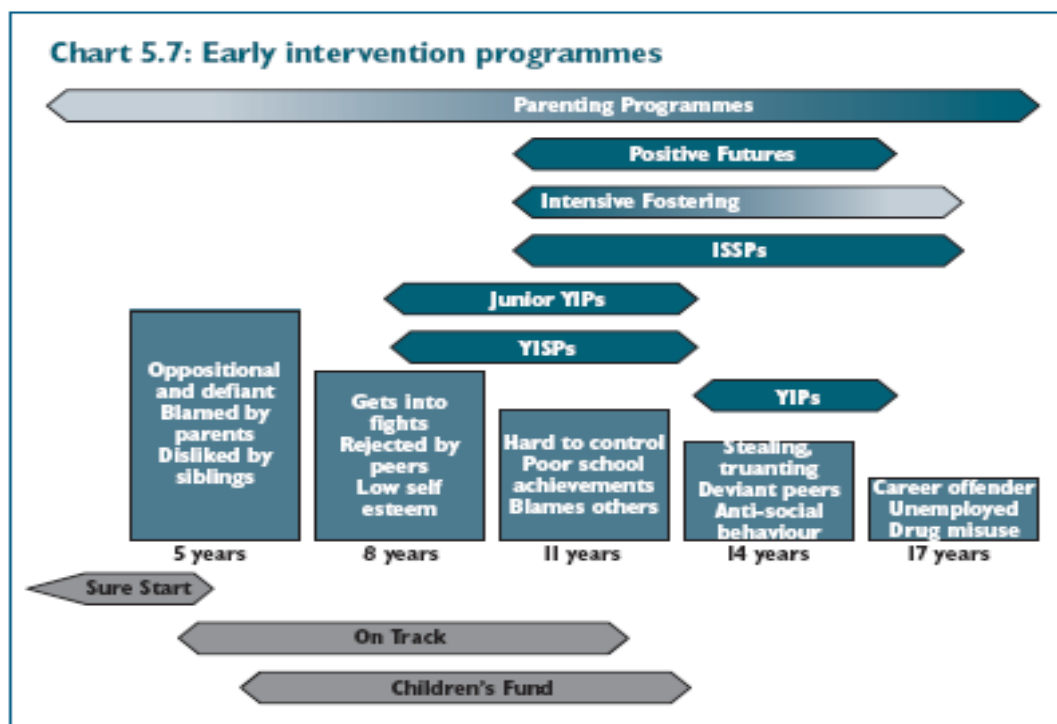
The report is structured so that most of the detail of the evaluation is at the end. This part of the report provides a succinct account of the work; the sections that follow give more detail about each aspect of the evaluation. There is also a section giving some theory about tackling the problems of children and young people at risk.

The UK Government's 2004 Spending Review describes YIPs as follows:

Youth Inclusion Projects (YIPs) cover children aged 13-16 who are either at high risk of offending or have already begun to offend. They provide a tailored intervention package to address each child's key risk factors. Interventions include diversionary activities such as sport and structured advice sessions on drugs, health, education and employment. (HM Treasury 2004, paragraph 5.146)

Junior YIPs operate similarly, covering the younger age-range of eight to 13 years.

The chart below (taken from HM Treasury's Spending Review 2004), shows the range of early intervention programmes that address deprivation, poverty and social problems.



The JYIP in Camden is located in an area of severe social and economic need defined as one of Camden's crime 'hot spots' with very high levels of

deprivation as measured by income and employment health and disability, and proportionally higher numbers of people under 19 than the national and Camden average. An Annual Report of the project describes how it developed:

'The Castlehaven Junior YIP was originally established as part of an overall Youth Inclusion Project for children and young people between the ages of eight and nineteen. Towards the end of the year, events triggered a comprehensive review of the project. In the course of this review, particular difficulties were identified in relation to the management of a Junior YIP, many of whose members were still at primary school, within a project dealing with a number of troubled older young people, some of whom had already left school. A decision was made to separate the management of the Junior and the Senior YIPs, at least for an experimental period. So far, the impact of the separation has been beneficial.' (Castlehaven Junior Youth Inclusion Programme: 2004/5)

The project aims to provide a safe haven away from the pressures placed on the children in their everyday lives; a consistent means of support for the children and their families; and a nurturing environment allowing children to play and develop at their own pace. It offers a planned programme of activities arrived at by consultation with the group. There is also time for one-to-one work adapted to the changing needs of the children.

It is a transition programme, providing a consistent service that spans the whole transition age – this continuity is seen as vital for many of the target group. Without this project, it is claimed that many children would 'slip through the net' and be left to fend for themselves. Many of the young people, when moving on from the project, go to the Senior YIP, located within the same organisation.

The JYIP claims to be unique in that it bridges the gap between exclusion and inclusion and fulfils a need for some of Camden's most vulnerable children and families. An inclusive approach aims to promote further inclusion. For many children with significant needs the JYIP is the only service other than school that the families are engaged with – and through it, families are assisted to access other agencies.

The JYIP offers a free service. And provides access to other services (such as sometimes bringing in the CAB (Citizen's Advice Bureau) Advisor who offered advice to parents / carers); regularly updated information about training and other services is available and the project promotes access to other services and activities in the borough.

A recent Annual Report set out the priorities for the year ahead:

- 'To encourage a sense of 'belonging' to a community by an increase of inter-generational activities and by greater involvement with the local community at all levels.
- To promote healthier lifestyles for these young people who are living in an area that has been statistically identified as having one of the poorest health records in London.

- To ease the difficult period of transition from primary to secondary school. This transition is known to be a trigger for academic decline and for anti-social behaviour. Confidence building activities, educational support and close liaison schools will all be used to help make the move a positive experience'. (Castlehaven Junior Youth Inclusion Programme: 2004/5)

The 'sense of "belonging"' priority has been promoted by intergenerational activities. A report from Camden Council includes a case study, which describes the work of the intergenerational forum:

'In Spring 2006, Castlehaven established the Castlehaven Intergenerational Forum. The Forum, which meets three times a year, is a meeting place and discussion forum for centre users of all ages. The Forum plans and helps to run the Association's programme of intergenerational activities. The Forum is interesting because it is an ongoing (and, as far as we know, unique) intergenerational initiative which aims to embed intergenerational participation and co-operation into the fabric of Castlehaven's ways of working.'
(*Intergenerational Working in the London Borough of Camden: Case Studies* No. 1 March 2007)

The Castlehaven Community Association already had after-school provision; for a while, the Play Service funded a club for transitions for two afternoons a week. Since 2003, Castlehaven After-School Club has had money from CCF to run the JYIP. In the first year, this funding was £120,000, and it dropped by £10,000 each year; in 2006-7 the funding was £90,000. The JYIP also receives £20,000 from the Play Service for transitions work – this pays part of the full-time Transitions Co-ordinator's salary. Funding from the Play Service also supports the school holiday programme. Smaller grants from charitable trusts are an important source of additional funding. For examples, because of a projected shortfall of around £12,000 (mainly due to the Transition Worker's increased hours – since October 2006 the project has had a full-time transitions coordinator) it was decided to raise further funds and £5,000 was received from each of the following three Trusts: The Hilden Charitable Trust; The John Lyons Trust; The Hampstead and Wells Trust.

There are now five members of staff comprising the full-time Transitions Co-ordinator and four part-time staff. These are: a senior play worker working 25 hours a week; two other play workers working 17 hours a week; plus the Project Manager, who is actively involved in direct work with children and young people in the Club, working 17 hours a week on this project. In addition, an Administrator, who works 16 hours a week, also supports the Project Manager in her work on other projects; she has ten hours allocated for JYIP tasks. The project operates two hours each weekday after school and five or six hours a day during school holidays.

Referrals come from schools and from the Play Service Outreach Team as well as via Social Services Department. However, most are self-referred children who, in most cases, are 'at risk'.

Method

The evaluation commenced in February and was completed in July 2007; fieldwork was carried out at the project during April. This section describes the methods used in the evaluation.

We used various data sources, including:

- attendance records of around 100 children for periods that included term-time and holidays
- the attendance start dates and end dates for 50 children
- holiday scheme schedule
- two playscheme reports from Camden Play Service
- ten case studies prepared by the workers
- evaluator observation during sessions
- evaluator observation of an end-of-session staff meeting
- several months of end-of-session record sheets which describe activities undertaken and the workers' comments on the session
- young people's comments from some of the end-of-session sheets
- a walk through the catchment area with a member of staff
- a number of discussions with the Project Manager
- informal interviews with all the staff
- informal interviews with some young people
- informal interviews with some parents of young people attending
- telephone interviews with some professionals who refer young people to the project or work with it
- a worker's diary records for one month.

There were additional data that we would have liked to have been able to use, but were unable to do so. These included school attendance and YOT records.

School attendance records would (possibly) have been available to us. However, they would be hard to interpret: there is little truancy at primary school level (so-called 'authorised absences' are much more common). Another difficulty was that the JYIP works with children attending 19 different primary and secondary schools, plus a special school, and two Behaviour Units. There was insufficient time available to collect and analyse data from so many schools.

We attempted to access YOT records to identify those young people who had attended the JYIP programme who had, subsequently been placed on the YOT programme, but confidentiality issues prevented this. Had these data been available, they might have shown that only a few of JYIP young people were subsequently picked up by the YOT. However, it would have been difficult to interpret this finding, as we do not know, for example, what proportion of the population of vulnerable young people access the JYIP. There were many other imponderables in this comparison.

Summary of results

This section summarises the results; detailed results are in a later section, where the individual aspects of the evaluation are specifically reported on.

Evidence from the interviews with young people and from observations show that young people like the project. The staff treat them with consideration and respect and give them opportunities for consultation about issues that concern them, both informally in the sessions and in more structured ways.

The registration and attendance data show a high level of 'loyalty' to the project. The long attendance periods of some children, and the main reason for leaving being 'too old for it', indicate this. Children who attend the project over a long period have a lot of contact with the staff.

An analysis of the activities offered, observation of sessions, and interviews with children and young people and their parents confirmed that a wide range of appropriate activities are offered, activities that extend children's experiences, which are educational and, often, 'therapeutic'. Activities are both group and individual, and individual activities are carefully tailored to the needs of the child.

Being available five nights each week, and through the school holidays, gives the project continuity, which is especially important for some at-risk children. Longevity is a significant factor in its success. The project is long running and the play work at Castlehaven was already in place before the CCF funding. This gives it an established place in the community, a community where some people are distrustful of 'official' provision.

Parents are treated with respect and consideration. Staff think that contact with them is very important. This means that, for example, even those parents who have an uneasy relationship with other services (such as school and social services) have nothing but praise for the workers and for the project. This was evidence from the parental interviews that we conducted.

Our observations and interviews with staff demonstrated that the staff team is qualified, experienced and cohesive; its members have worked together for some time. They are managed well, with clear objectives and well-thought-out ways of working (but see recommendation below).

A claimed strength of the project is its connections with the (large number of) schools that its clients attend. Considerable effort is put into developing and maintaining these links. Interviews with school-based professionals confirmed this.

The JYIP's role in helping young people to manage transitions is effectively carried out. It has links with both primary and secondary schools and has staff who work both with the JYIP and the Senior YIP in an adjacent building (where some of the facilities are shared); this assists in joint working. Its links with other agencies are excellent, and are maintained by hard work and attention to partnership working in the best interests of the child.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This evaluation reported a very high level of satisfaction from everyone. This is an exceptional project that is almost certainly cost-effective over the long-term, and which adds value to the ongoing work of the Castlehaven Centre.

The project is targeted at young people at risk: it appears to fulfil its brief. The workers are sympathetic and patient with some of the most difficult young people, and employ varied and effective strategies to engage with them.

Children and their parents are more likely to find out about the project through their friends and acquaintances than by being referred. This 'word-of-mouth', community-based knowledge is especially valuable in enabling the project to work with 'hard-to-reach' young people and parents who are disaffected.

A strength of the project is the continuity of contact with the clients. Many projects that work with young people at-risk are not effective because of the limited contact time they have with the target group – this is not the case with this project.

Does the project offer 'value for money'? If prevention works, even a little, it is extremely cost effective. A later section of this report quotes a HM Treasury document suggesting: 'savings of £200,000 per lower-risk, non drug-using offender and much higher cost savings for high-risk offenders'. Thus, if the JYIP has prevented just one young person from entering a life of crime it has more than paid for itself. Since it is likely that it has done at least this, it is clear that it should continue, and if need can be shown, expanded.

The project needs to develop its administrative capacities to ensure that fuller records are maintained in a more orderly fashion. For example, the daily comments sheets that the staff complete are a valuable source of data on progress both of the project and individual children but they were difficult to access and hard to summarise. Were they able to be computerised, it might prove easier to, for example, identify trends, and to provide data from funding applications and for monitoring.

As with many such projects, too little attention is given to administrative matters and they are not prioritised. While, given the more pressing matters for attention, this is understandable, in the case of this project it appears that there *are* sufficient administrative hours available to undertake this basic work. Part of the problem may be management oversight, and part is lack of training in using appropriate software such as *Excel* to maintain attendance records. This matter should be urgently addressed, for the project needs to be able to produce more concrete evidence of its engagement with children and young people; the personal and register data available to us were not adequate for this purpose.

The JYIP works in a flexible and fluid way. Some professionals valued the quick response that could be given in a crisis, and some parents valued the flexibility the project offered. Many young people liked the way that the workers responded to their needs rather than following a pre-determined plan. Such an approach is desirable with this diverse and often difficult client group.

However, it does make a goals-driven approach more complex. While the staff team appears to have a strong set of shared values, there seems to be less clarity on aims.

While there is no question that the work being done is excellent, it is hard to measure and more attention needs to be given to how outcomes can be demonstrated. It is recommended that the project workers think more about what they are trying to achieve with each individual child within the framework of the JYIP outcomes and ECM (and drawing on other frameworks appropriate to their work).

The project is already doing a lot to ensure the participation of children and young people in the work. As has been described, this happens through workers giving children the opportunity to make choices in the activities and outings and through the 'comments and suggestions' box. We also saw examples of young people suggesting activities; ideas which were enthusiastically taken up by the staff. At the time of the evaluation, the project was working with an organisation called ICA to develop further the more formal participation through involvement in the management group. Once this piece of work is complete, we recommend that the project workers consider how they might strengthen the links between the informal, day-to-day participation through the sessions and the more formal forms of participation.

Detailed Results and Analysis

Outcomes we were looking for

The JYIP Management Guide suggests five appropriate outcomes to be looked for:

- Improvement in self-esteem
- Reduction in / ability to resist peer pressure
- Increased levels of parental supervision
- Reduction in truancy
- Improved educational achievement.

We also considered that the ECM five outcomes were important, at least as general guidance on positive looked-for outcomes:

- be healthy
- stay safe
- enjoy & achieve
- make a positive contribution
- achieve economic well-being.

In addition to these, we intended to identify how the project was decreasing risk factors and increasing protective factors – especially in relation to offending.

Description of project area

Walking from Camden Town underground station, north towards Camden Lock, one passes through a lively street market selling exotic items of clothing, tattoos and piercing parlours; the streets crowded with mainly young people. Turning off the main street, one enters a different world: a tiny community park nestles within a 'U' of low-storey flats where you might find a juggler practising his art or a trumpeter gently playing scales. In this area sits a single-storey modern building with a fenced-off children's play area attached. This is the Castlehaven Community Centre where the Junior YIP is located. Walking around the area nearby, one gets the impression of middle-class affluence. But beyond the elevated railway line (some arches leased to business) on the 'other side of the tracks' are large council estates. It is here that most of the project users live.

On the Clarence Way Estate, there is a modern playground area and a hard-surfaced and fenced area for ball sports. Apparently, this area had been used for drug-dealing, but a pilot scheme to install key-hole cameras has successfully reduced this problem, although I was told that there were still crack houses among the flats.

The predominant ethnic groups on the estate are White British, Somali, Bengali, Irish, Congolese and, increasingly, people from Eastern Europe. Racial tensions are generally low, but, for example, the ball sports area was being segmented by different ethnic groups taking turns to use it. (The Castlehaven Centre aimed to do some activities to integrate these different groups.)

The nearby Ferdinand and Denton estates did not appear to be obviously poverty-stricken. But the statistics tell a different story.

The area where the Castlehaven Centre JYIP is located is classified as deprived. The map (left) shows the location of this area (Camden 018B). Government statistics for this 'Super Output Area'¹ show that in 2004, it had an index of deprivation of 62.29. This is one of the highest levels of deprivation in Camden. 2001 Census data report a population of 1,048 people over 16, of whom only 15 per cent were classified as Social Grade AB, compared to 33 per cent in Camden as a whole, while 24 per cent were classified Social Grade E (compared to 16 per cent in Camden as a whole).



Description of the project

Information from the project leaflet

A leaflet (now a little out of date) introduces the project as the 'Junior Youth Inclusion Project at the Haven After School Club'. It describes a junior youth inclusion project as:

- 'a play service designed to help children between the ages of 8 and 12
- (1) to prepare for the transition to secondary school and
- (2) to lessen the sense of exclusion that many children face at this age'.

In answer to the question, 'who can come?' the leaflet states:

'any child between the age of 8 and 12 who live locally. Schools and other agencies sometimes directly refer children to us. ...'At the Haven After School Club we aim to provide positive experiences so as to help prevent the risk of exclusion.

'A child may be at risk of exclusion if he or she:

- is not coping well with school work
- is frequently absent from school
- is being bullied
- shows a tendency [sic] to bullying others
- has problems at home
- is causing a nuisance in their neighbourhood and community.

'Exclusion at this age has a very negative impact. It can affect all aspects of a child's life: home, school, friendships and the wider community.

'At the Haven After School Club we aim to provide positive experiences so as to help to prevent the risk of exclusion.

¹ Super Output Areas (SOAs) are a recently-developed geographic hierarchy designed to improve the reporting of small area statistics in England and Wales. Their first statistical application was for the Indices of Deprivation 2004; it is likely that they will become a standard across the Government's National Statistics.

'We work closely with parents, carers, families in schools to provide the support, which we all know our children need.

'This can sometimes be no more than the opportunity to play and learn with their friends in a safe environment with adult supervision.

'In other cases, where particular concerns are identified, a key worker will be allocated who will work with the child and with the family towards reducing the amount of concern.'

The back of the leaflet lists the facilities as:

- outdoor sports
- educationally support
- arts and crafts
- music
- opportunity to play in safety
- IT sessions
- cooking
- team games
- dance and drama.

It also lists the facilities which include:

- a sports pitch
- club room and garden
- kitchen
- computer suite
- dance studio with sprung floor.

Other local facilities are also mentioned, including libraries and parks and the local sports centre.

The final side of the leaflet has the basic information about the project in three different languages (Kosovan, Bengali and Somali).

Core work of the project

The project operates similarly to an after-school play project, but it is different in that it:

- is community-based
- is not linked only to one school, but has links with many schools
- targets children at risk of exclusion, crime, or anti-social behaviour
- is funded largely from Children's Fund crime prevention money
- has links to the Senior YIP, run by the same parent body
- has a higher staff ratio and the staff are probably better qualified and more experienced
- works more 'therapeutically' than the average play project
- is more concerned with transitions, and has funding for such work
- fosters community cohesion by promoting intergenerational activities and relationships.

Residentials, which are almost free for children's parents, are seen as an important part of the work. These involved visits to centres such as Sayers Croft, last four or five days and involve 10 to 12 young people. They are 'very intensive' but 'really make big changes for the kids'. There have been two in the previous 18 months and one is planned for Summer, 2007.

A relatively small amount of funding comes from the Play Service for school holiday schemes, when the project runs from 13:00 to 17:30, and a wider programme involving trip out is put on. A programme showing term-time and holiday activities is reproduced on the next page.

The workers' time includes considerable contact time and other activities. The one full-time worker at the project kept a diary for us for the period January 5th to 31st 2007 (19 working days). Apart from running the sessions, he was engaged in a variety of other activities. These included: seven meetings, two training events (integrated working, and working with parents), contact with parents and with schools – both face-to-face and on the telephone (for example '...with a head of year about a very serious incident that resulted in a club member's permanent exclusion'), arranging visits (for example, to Greenwich Observatory), various office tasks such as scanning photos, writing letters and emails, and designing a flyer.

Figure 1: JYIP Programme for October, 2006 showing both term-time and half-term activities

Note that the hand-written additions show what activities took place in addition to those planned; this indicates the flexibility and responsiveness of the project.

OCTOBER 06					
HAVEN AFTER SCHOOL CLUB					
Monday 2nd	Board games Snack time. African Pottery Clay modeling. Photo table, Hamza beads Hot Wheels Race track. Homework table.	Tuesday 3rd	Snack time. Arts & crafts. Team games. Football training. Homework table.	Wednesday 4th	Snack time. Football training. Cooking. Pizzas Homework table.
Monday 9th	Snack time. Halloween Art projects Pot planting. Table top games. Painting Football Homework table. Board games	Tuesday 10th	Snack time. Arts & crafts. Team games Football Hamza training. Beads Painting Music Board games Homework table.	Wednesday 11th	Snack time. Football MATCH Haven Heroes Zebra's Vs Parvathy Mornington Crescent. Board games Cooking. Book games Homework table.
Monday 16th	Snack time. Mod rock football Halloween Preparations. Arts & Crafts Board games Homework table.	Tuesday 17th	Snack time. Arts & crafts. Football Bats and spiders, paper mache. Team games. Homework table.	Wednesday 18th	Snack time. Football training Cooking. Camden together consultation with Ocia. Homework table. Painting
Monday 23rd	Designing Children's London Zoo. Scraping Mod rock Lego Football Board games	Tuesday 24th	Swiss Cottage Gallery- Departure Lounge by Lorna Holder. swimming pool.	Wednesday 25th	Camden together Consultation with Ocia. Pedro's workshop. Team games.
Thursday 19th	Snack time. Painting I.T. suite. Board games Arts & crafts. Paper mache Homework table.	Friday 20th	Snack time. Karaoke night!!! Table top games. Homework table.	Friday 27th	Children's Cookery Day. End of holiday meal with slide show.

Attendance data for 50 children

We were provided with attendance data for 50 children, from their commencement at the project up to March 2007 – these were the first 50 children on the database. Thirteen had started attending the project in 2003, six in 2004, 16 in 2005, 14 in 2006 and one in 2007. Twenty-nine of the 50 (58%) were (or had been) regular attendees.

Thirty out of the 50 were still attending the project (at March 2007), with an average attendance length of approximately 17 months. Of the 20 who had already left the project, the average length of attendance was approximately 28 months. The main reason for leaving (applying to 12 children, 60% of the leavers) was that they had reached the age of 13, when they were no longer eligible to attend the project. Three others had moved away, and five had simply stopped attending.

Register data for 103 children

In November 2006, it was reported that 141 members were currently registered with the JYIP, and that the average daily attendance was 15 to 20 young people, of which a high proportion were at risk of social exclusion, and a high proportion were at risk of offending and antisocial behaviour.

We were provided with daily attendance data for sessions over several periods, most completely for a period of three months (January to mid-April 2007). Given the time constraints and the incompleteness of the data, only project attendance data for the first part of 2007 was analysed.

According to the register, 103 different children and young people attended the project during this period. We first analysed attendance records for the 10 term-time weeks of the spring term (the period, Monday, January 8th to Friday 30th March 2007 excluding the half-term week of 12th -16th February), and, next, the half term week together with the two 4-day Easter holiday weeks of April 2nd to 5th and 10th to 13th. These data are indicative only, as there are reasons why some people are not included on the register. There are some missing data: there was no attendance information for seven days during the term-time period and two days during the holiday period.

The tables show the attendance figures over the ten-week term-time period and over three weeks of holiday (taking account of the missing data). The daily attendance figures in both are similar (the weekly attendance figures are not comparable because of two four-day weeks over Easter). The average daily attendance is just over 13 children and young people; it is slightly higher during school holidays.

Table 1: Term-time attendance of 103 CYP, spring 2007

	Jan wk 2	Jan wk 3	Jan wk 4	Feb wk 1	Feb wk 2	Feb wk 4	Mar wk 1	Mar wk 2	Mar wk 3	Mar wk 4	10-wk av.
Average weekly attendance	34	54	76	69	53	56	75	52	52	55	57.6*
Daily average	17	11	15	14	18	14	15	10	13	11	13.4

* Average weekly attendance based on 5-day week, daily average based on number of days for which data are available (i.e. 43 days over 10 weeks).

Table 2: Holiday attendance of 103 CYP, spring half-term and two Easter weeks 2007

	<i>Half-term</i>	<i>Easter 1</i>	<i>Easter 2</i>	<i>holiday average</i>
Average weekly attendance	52	55	45	50.7*
Daily average	13	14	15	14

*includes two 4-day weeks; plus there are two days with missing data.

Attendance rates did not vary much during term-time weekdays; the average numbers attending on Mondays and Tuesdays were 14; and on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays, 13.

The next table shows the average attendance records of the 103 CYP over the ten weeks of the spring term. Half the young people on the register did not attend (the reason for many of these is that they only attended during the holidays). Seven young people only attended once, while 19 attended only a few times (two to five times). Eleven young people were very regular attendees, being registered more than 20 times during the period. Since 51 of the 103 children and young people on the register did not attend during the 10 term-time weeks, the average attendance per child who attended at any time during the 10 weeks is rather high – the highest number of term-time attendances being 36 (that is, 3.6 per week). Data were available on the gender and ethnicity of the young people but were in a format that made it difficult to analyse; time was short, so these data have not been analysed.

Table 3: Average* attendance of CYP over 10 weeks term-time, spring 2007

	<i>none</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2-5</i>	<i>6-10</i>	<i>11-15</i>	<i>16-20</i>	<i>21-25</i>	<i>26-30</i>	<i>31+</i>	<i>total</i>
number of children and young people	51	7	19	4	7	4	5	3	3	103

* mean

The register data show that some children are having a lot of contact time with the project. Many children are long-term users of the facility. So, for example, had the children who attended more than 30 times in the spring term, attended at a similar level over, say, three years for, say, 40 weeks each year they would have attended around 360 sessions of up to two hours – 720 hours of contact time. If holiday schemes, trips out and residentials are added in, this total will be much higher. This is in the context of a term-time session with an average of three workers for an average of 13.4 young people – a higher ratio that is sustained in school classrooms or indeed in other play projects.

The reader is cautioned not to place too much emphasis on these attendance data, as there are some inaccuracies and omissions – the staff indicated that attendance was generally higher than these figures show, and observed deficiencies in recording make this a plausible assertion.

Participation of children and young people

Children and young people are involved in and have a say in what happens on the project in various ways. A regular fixture of the main hall is a post box for comments and suggestions. Members are encouraged to add their comments to each session's 'evaluation sheet', where the staff note down their comments about that evening's session. Young people also participate in running the library.

Staff appear to be open to children's suggestions and ideas. For example, I talked with a boy who had suggested a 'Show & Tell' about pets, and a member of staff had developed this idea with him so that he was able to enumerate a set of rules that he considered necessary (such as not squeezing the animals) to make this event work.

There is an Intergeneration Forum, and intergenerational activities have included a fruit-picking trip with elderly people, JYIP children, and Sure Start children and their families; the children used the fruit to make 'smoothies' for Castlehaven's community festival.

A youth participation strategy is currently being written. This is part of an ICA-UK pilot scheme. It involved two introduction sessions at Castlehaven, one pre-residential overview session, and a two-day residential where, using participatory methods, a plan was drawn up. The aims for the weekend included:

- to develop a 12-month plan for effective youth participation / participation strategy for Castlehaven
- for staff feel more enthused and confident about delivering youth participation
- for young people feel able to get involved
- to agree next steps to put the plan into practice
- lots of fun
- people are enthused about their task and take it seriously
- people feel confident in taking the plan forward.

The group who worked on the project consisted of staff, managers, juniors, seniors and volunteers. The follow-up from the weekend included some one-to-one sessions with each task group and a facilitation skills training with staff and volunteers. This work continues to be taken forward in co-operation with ICA-UK.

Work with parents

One aspect of the work that the project staff consider very important was its level of contact with parents and professionals. This was positively commented on by parents and by external professionals. Children can't attend the project unless their parents have completed a form and when the children return the form completed by their parents the project calls the parents to confirm that that's OK.

The JYIP has a 'Contact with Parents and Carers' policy, which states:

'A real partnership with parents is important to the success of our work and the responsibility for creating and maintaining that partnership lies with the JYIP. Parents want the best for their children. It is our responsibility to make it clear that we respect their views and their intimate knowledge of, and concern for, their own children. A successful partnership is based on respect and on working together for a common aim - in our case, a benefit to the child.'

And clearly sets out why parents are contacted:

'At the Junior Youth Inclusion Project we contact parents not just in an emergency but if we want to discuss a child's behaviour good or bad. We also contact them if a child leaves early: This is not only a safety issue (*we are a local community based centre and children in the area feel free to drop in and out so we need to have ways in which we can keep track of the children*) but also provides a useful opportunity for informal discussion.'

...We contact the parent or carer by telephone if:

- Their child has left club early;
- Their child has been displaying positive behaviour;
- Their child is being picked up but wants to leave early;
- Their child has been involved in an accident or incident;
- They need to be informed of any changes to the routine that day or the next (*for example if we return from an outing later than expected*);
- We wish to arrange a meeting to discuss particular issues;
- They are late picking up their child;
- Their child has been showing inappropriate behaviour;
- Their child has been asked to leave because of inappropriate behaviour.'

We observed this policy in action, when a child went home on his own and a worker called his parents to say he had done so.

Case studies

We were provided with 10 case studies. These were indicative of the range of young people using the service but were rather limited in the detail that they provided. These ten studies are now briefly described; some details have been changed to preserve confidentiality.

Case Study 1

This primary-school-aged boy was 'looked after' within the family, although there were worries about the suitability of this placement and concerns about his safety, as his father was involved in violent crime, and his mother was a drug user who had frequent spells in prison. He had been a victim of abuse and had been forced to assist his father in criminal activities. He had been excluded from school on several occasions and had recently changed schools. He was involved in crime, such as vandalism, and anti-social behaviour: Another member of his family also attended the project.

He found it difficult to connect with his peers and could not maintain friendships – he was continually antagonistic and caused confrontation with anyone he met.

Work of the JYIP

He had been attending the Junior YIP for four months when this study was carried out. He clearly enjoyed one-to-one attention with members of staff and was responsive to an environment with clear boundaries maintained and praise offered.

Outcomes

He was increasing his concentration and ability to participate in group activities such as cooking, football and board games. He was encouraged to take part in physical activities (and he asked to take part in skipping games) and to eat healthy snacks, which, after initial protests about the lack of sweets and fizzy drinks, he did.

Case Study 2

This was an 11-year-old girl who lived with mother (who had her own literacy and learning needs) and adult sibling on an estate with very high crime levels. She had been involved in a special scheme for children from travelling families where she got on very well, but a recent move to secondary school had found her struggling with her new workload and losing confidence.

Work of the JYIP

She had been attending regularly over three years, and the transition programme offered her support with her new routine at secondary school, through daily homework support, discussion and reassurance. For example, she was unaware of the marking system at secondary school and had assumed that a mark of 'A-' was a bad thing because of the 'minus'. Practical support was offered with stationary packs and help with covering her books.

Outcomes

Her confidence has grown and through the JYIP she has been able to take part in many sporting activities (which she clearly loves); she has been a keen participant in JYIP's football training and now plays for an external team.

Case Study 3

This 11-year-old boy was from an African family, where the mother and father were separated three years previously. He was one of a large family his older siblings were involved in crime and on the periphery of gang activity in Camden and he was keen to emulate his older brothers. Other members of the family attended JYIP and had complex needs. The children were on the child protection register.

He had had frequent fixed term exclusions in primary school and was at risk of permanent exclusion for fighting but had recently moved to secondary school. He was violent towards his peers and involved in vandalism, although he had not been involved with the police.

Work of the JYIP

He had been a regular attendee at JYIP over three years, where his confidence had grown. He previously spent time on his own and was very quiet but started to participate in many activities and made many friends, He

had a good relationship with staff but lacked confidence and had difficulty controlling his anger leading to violent outbursts, one of which included biting a member of staff.

Outcomes

Through many discussions and one-to-one support, he was given the tools to cope with many (for him) difficult situations. During these sessions, he began to recognise 'trigger situations' for his anger. He learned to ask people to stop whatever it is that upset him and was encouraged to express, in words, how he felt. This has helped him to control his anger and to walk away from difficult situations. Through the JYIP's policy of sending a child home and informing parents of any violent incidents, he also learned more about the consequences of his actions. He became captain of the five-a-side team and brought some of his new friends to club.

The JYIP has been the only service that the family has voluntarily engaged with until very recently; an 'open door' policy has been operated for all the family. Three members of his family have subsequently attended the JYIP.

Case Study 4

This 10-year-old boy lived with his mother and younger brother. His mother had serious health problems, and as a consequence lacked confidence and was quite stressed caring for her two boys. This affected their behaviour both in school and in the drop-in centre.

In conjunction with a family support worker and the under-fives project (for her three-year-old) the JYIP supported her and her younger child. After she expressed concern about her inability to help with homework, she was encouraged to bring her 10-year-old to the JYIP. She was concerned that her son wasn't doing his homework, and was becoming disaffected from school. She also wanted him to have somewhere safe to play football.

Work of the JYIP

The boy subsequently attended the JYIP daily and settled in well. He did some excellent homework including art pieces.

Outcomes

His mother reported that her son couldn't wait to go to the JYIP each day but, more importantly, he couldn't wait to go to school, especially when he had homework to show. She commented: 'Please don't close, I can't thank you enough, I am so happy that he comes here.'

Case Study 5

This primary-age girl was neglected and had left to her own devices since she'd been very young. There was domestic violence in the family and involvement from social services. She had older brothers and parents involved in criminal activity and the child had been searched for drugs during drugs raids in her home.

Work of the JYIP

She was very hard to engage, and it took more than a year to persuade her to come to the JYIP, but since then she attended almost daily for a year. The YJIP provided here with a safe place to play, and with emotional support from the staff, she started to talk about her home life.

Outcomes

She had the chance to be involved in age-appropriate activities that she would otherwise not do; she was able to 'be herself' and her confidence grew. She attended a residential summer holiday with the JYIP and initially was very reluctant to take part in any of the activities on offer at the camp. With support and encouragement, she eventually took part and was very proud of her achievements.

Case Study 6

This boy's Mother had quite recently died and his Father suffered from depression. The boy spent time with a relative and was always reluctant to go home after the session. When he first arrived, he was isolated, and was possibly being bullied. He was vulnerable, with low self-confidence, emotionally unstable and easily upset. His philosophy of life could be expressed as: 'It always happens to me,' and: 'Why doesn't anyone like me?' He was getting into lots of fights.

Work of the JYIP

He has been attending for 6 months. The JYIP has provided a safe place to play and activities that he would otherwise not be engaged in.

Outcomes

He has made good progress and has formed good relationships with staff. He has made friends, is gaining confidence, and is beginning to talk about his bereavement.

Case Study 7

A primary aged girl with a complex family history lived with older relatives. Her father visited often, but he had a history of alcohol and drug use. She had been on Child Protection Register under the category of 'neglect'. She had mental health issues, and was seeing a counsellor, and a psychiatrist. She had had multiple exclusions within her school (four in one half term) and had a Statement of special needs for behaviour.

She appeared physically neglected, and presented herself as paranoid, isolated and (at school) aggressive. She had little self-esteem and found it hard to engage with her peer group, lacking many social skills; for example, she found it hard to eat with the group or engage in any team activity.

Work of the JYIP

Three years ago, she was referred to the JYIP through the school. She has been a regular attendee, although mainly during the holidays. She has attended two residential holidays. Plans are for her to attend a further residential and she will be supported in her transition to secondary school.

She does not attend any other similar service aimed at children and young people.

The JYIP worked in partnership with social services and school, and has supported the family with school visits and has talked things through with them.

Outcomes

Since attending the JYIP, she has taken part in many activities that have broadened her interests. She has gained in confidence and now talks to adults; her behaviour has improved, as have her social skills.

She is still in school and her Family is off the social services register.

Case Studies 8 & 9

Two siblings, a primary aged boy and girl, had two older siblings who attended the SYIP. Their Father had a history of violence with several spells in prison. The family had been moved several times. Their Mother was physically unwell and suffered from depression. There was domestic violence. Both parents had literacy needs. All the children were on the Child Protection Register for emotional abuse. The School had concerns because both children were below average attainment in literacy and numeracy. Relationship between school and family had broken down.

The 11-year-old has a slight disability and he was bullied. His behaviour was erratic, quickly becoming moody or verbally abusive and aggressive. His younger sister was very emotionally unstable.

Work of the JYIP

Before coming to club, the children were being bullied and getting into lots of fights on the estate. The whole family had been socially excluded. The two children now see the club as their own space, a refuge away from what can sometimes be a difficult and hostile environment in the family and in the community. It is a safe place to play. With the JYIP's encouragement, they often go to the city farm.

At the JYIP, they are encouraged to have ideas and see them through to fulfilment; they participate fully in all the activities, which gives them a sense of achievement. They receive emotional support and guidance.

Outcomes

As well as safe adults to talk to, they also benefit from social interaction with other children.

Case Study 10

This 11-year-old has been attending since he was eight. He has a brother involved with criminal peer group; he himself was involved in vehicle theft and other crime and anti-social behaviour, which has led to confrontation with the police.

Work of the JYIP

He was very influenced by his peers and would do their bidding. There are worries that he was emulating his older brother with whom he was hanging out with and who was regularly in trouble with the police. He would not listen to staff in club when asked to 'stop' or not to do something. He would walk into club, with his friends, pick up a toy and throw it or walk out with it.

Outcomes

A year later, he comes to the JYIP independently without his friends. He can enjoy club activities without interruption and respects club equipment. Has loves to play with Lego. He has brought in homework to complete. He joins in with other children, even those he doesn't know. He listens and talks with staff. Staff report that he is proud of his achievements which has led to improved self-esteem.

He hangs out less with his older brother. He is positively responsive to staff, other young people and activities.

Analysis of case studies

The following two tables map evidence from the case studies against the JYIP and ECM outcomes. Table 4 shows that in many cases the project appears to be helping young people to improve their self-esteem and their educational attainment. There is also a possible reduction in truancy in two cases and increased levels of parental supervision achieved in one of the ten cases. A significant reduction in the ability to resist peer pressure was observed in one case.

Table 5 shows that, for all ten cases, the ECM outcome of 'enjoy and achieve' has been achieved. Most children have also been helped to 'stay safe', and many have been assisted in 'being healthy'. A few have been enabled to 'make a positive contribution', but there was no evidence of any of the 10 being helped to 'achieve economic well-being'.

Of course, this approach has limitations: observation of sessions showed that the staff take the outcome of 'being healthy' as it relates to healthy eating very seriously, and the fact that many children are encouraged and supported in engaging in sport and other physical activities also contributed to 'being healthy'. But this is so much part of their work that they do not necessarily comment on it in the case studies.

Some cells in the tables are empty and some of the entries are rather speculative because the case studies provided were insufficiently detailed and lacked evidence from different 'actors' (parent, child, workers, others). Neither did they address directly either the JYIP outcomes or the ECM outcomes (see our recommendations).

Table 4 Analysis of Case Studies by JYIP desired outcomes

Case Study	Improvement in self-esteem	Reduction in / ability to resist peer pressure	Increased levels of parental supervision	Reduction in truancy	Improved educational achievement.
#1					?
#2				✓ ?	
#3	?				
#4	?		✓		✓
#5	✓				?
#6	✓				
#7	✓			✓?	✓?
#8	?				?
#9	?				?
#10	✓	✓✓			✓?

Table 5 Analysis of Case Studies by ECM five outcomes

Case Study	be healthy	stay safe	enjoy & achieve	make a positive contribution	achieve economic well-being
#1	✓	?	✓		
#2	✓		✓		
#3	✓	✓	✓	✓	
#4			✓		
#5		✓	✓	✓	
#6	✓	✓	✓		
#7		✓	✓		
#8		✓	✓		
#9		✓	✓		
#10		✓	✓		

Outcomes in terms of risk and protective factors

Another way of analysing these case studies is to look at how the work is addressing risk and protective factors. The risk and protective factors that these case studies address include the following:

Case Study #1

This boy had many risk factors, including a problematic family life and the risk of involvement in crime, both with his father and his vandalism. He was at severe risk of school failure. He had difficulties in relating to others. The JYIP helped to reduce these risk factors by offering him the ‘safe haven’ from difficult family life, and the chance to participate in worthwhile activities such as cooking. Protective factors were developed, for example his improved ability to concentrate, his ability to interact with his peers, and his healthier eating.

Case Study #2

This girl had risk factors associated with her life on a high crime estate and her mother’s problems with literacy and learning. She was a child who was

likely to have trouble making the transition to secondary school (the scheme available in her primary school, providing her with additional support, was not available in her secondary school). Support from the JYIP reduced her risk of school failure and developed the protective factors of increased confidence and the chance to participate in sport. It assisted her in making transitions by helping her to participate in a football team away from the JYIP.

Case Study#3

This boy was severely at risk, as indicated by his being on the child protection register. He was clearly at risk of becoming further involved in crime. The JYIP helped to increase protective factors by developing his ability to use practical 'tools' to control his anger; this helped to improve his relationships with others, which enabled him to enjoy and achieve, particularly in football five-a-side.

Case Study #4

The risk for this boy was of not achieving academically and becoming disaffected from school – the JYIP addressed this directly, helping to strengthen the protective factor of 'enjoy and achieve'. The parent was indirectly supported.

This study shows the importance of the JYIP's links with other agencies.

Case Study #5

This girl was considerably at risk, with a range of risk factors that the JYIP addressed through offering her safety and a space where she could 'be herself'. Building her self-esteem through successfully encouraging her to take part in activities helped to develop protective factors.

Case Study #6

His vulnerability was seen in his 'philosophy of life' and his poor self-confidence. His bereavement had probably worsened these aspects. The opportunity to talk with un-depressed adults probably reduced his risk factors for poor mental health. His gain in confidence should be protective.

Case Study #7

This child was at serious risk in many aspects of her life. Just offering her a place to be has probably reduced some risks, and building her confidence and enabling her to talk with adults probably reduces her risk of, for example, school failure. Reducing exclusion should act as a protective factor.

Case Study #8 & #9

These two children were also seriously at risk. Emotional support, and encouragement to interact with others has reduced their risk of exclusion from their peers. The club as a 'refuge' is probably an important protective factor in keeping them safe at least while there are there, and it probably provides a 'psychological haven' at other times.

Case Study #10

This boy was at risk of getting into trouble (and, indeed, had already had been) through criminal activity spurred on by his peers. Helping him to resist

doing what the peer group thought was amusing reduced his risk of criminal and anti-social behaviour. Encouraging him in age-appropriate activities may have helped him to work through some incomplete stages of childhood and helped to build a positive relationship with the workers – a known protective factor.

Observations

Observations from the sessions and from daily end-of-session meetings confirmed what interviewees reported.

Some young people were waiting outside the door before the four o'clock opening time and were allowed into the corridor, but not into the hall, where two workers were setting up the session, including the homework table, the library, some art activities, the snack table, and the 'comments and suggestions' post-box.

There was a printed register for children to sign in (although the staff create an official register based on this – because children can be present at the Centre but not in the area where the register is located).

The sessions started with snacks, eaten sitting at the table, which included brown triangles of sliced bread, sliced up cucumber, sticks of carrots and a few apples as well as hummus and bread sticks, on brightly-coloured plastic plates. The four girls who had arrived first sat at the table and ate a lot of the food and were quite boisterous, perhaps needing to 'let off steam' after a day of formal schooling. The staff asked the children about their day, and some of the children spoke about what they had done at school. I was told that this activity always involves conversation; the staff seeing it as part of their role in providing 'normal family life and interaction'. Sometimes, and especially in winter, they have a 'proper meal' such as jacket potatoes, pizza, at a table with a knife and fork.

I was told that they always staff the snack table and that most children will come and sit at it, but it was sometimes difficult because some children eat at home after school and therefore don't want to have snacks between 4:00 and 4:30.

A boy who arrived at the start of session was asked if he wanted to play with Lego and when he assented he was provided with a large quantity of it. He did not eat, but sat on the floor for a long time playing with the Lego by himself.

On one visit, there were 17 children signed in, with five staff around, one was out on the hard court supervising the football and two were supervising artwork involving drawing around their bodies and then colouring in. A boy and a younger girl were at a separate table colouring in some sheets that promoted health and safety messages.

In the end-of-session meeting, there was a very informal but effective exchange, which took in practical and administrative matters as well as

discussion about individual children. Discussion was open and frank, and problems were addressed directly. For example, a 15-year-old girl had been asked to come in to talk to the evaluator about her experiences of the project, but following her interview she went to play football. Clarification was needed about whether this should be allowed as she was now outside the age-range of the project. The project manager acknowledged the bending of the rule and agreed with the worker who raised it that they needed to be clearer about this.

Evidence of the ‘therapeutic’ approach practiced by the staff in this project was provided by the following observations:

1. A older boy was walking round with a cushion; he wanted to hit it. He was encouraged to go to the soft area and hit it. He did that but then again came around the room with it. A member of staff tried to take the cushion from him but the boy held it and hit it. The staff members encouraged him to go again to the soft play area. There were no raised voices, no recriminations, he was constrained but free and was not negatively treated. Later he covered himself with cushions and lay in the soft play area. The staff’s handling of this rather juvenile behaviour enabled the boy to ‘act out’ safely.
2. A young girl was riding the three-wheeled cycle outside in the play area but she kept riding it into the room through the open door. The staff told her several times to stop it, firmly but without rancour.
3. The four girls at the snack table were boisterous, and the member of staff sitting with them frequently had to remind them of the rules, such as sitting at the table when eating, which she did calmly and without ‘telling off’..

Interviews

Semi-structured Interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders. These are reported on in detail below. During the course of the interview, most interviewees were asked for three words or phrases that best described the project. Table 6 summarises the responses.

Table 6 Responses to the question: ‘Please give me three words or phrases that you’d use to describe the project’

<i>Person</i>	<i>1st word</i>	<i>2nd word</i>	<i>3rd word</i>
Children and young people			
Boy, 10½	‘fun’	‘exciting’	-
Girl	‘proud to be here’	-	-
Girl, 8	‘art’	‘snacks’	‘the <i>Frustration</i> game’
two Boys	‘fun’	‘exciting’	-
Girl, ex-member, 15	‘fun’	‘exciting’	‘dunno’
Parents			
Single Dad	‘this place is a God-send’	-	-
Mum with two children at the project	‘fantastic’	‘excellent’	‘spectacular’
Father with two children at the project	‘neat’	‘tidy’	‘safe’
Mother of eight-year-old	‘perfect place’	‘We couldn’t live without it’	‘I just think: “wonderful staff”’
External professionals			

Play Service Officer	'very effective'	'Team appears to work well'	'Very tolerant and sensitive to children's needs'
Deputy Head of local school	'supportive'	'Experienced'	'Approachable'
Social Worker	'easy-going'	'Good rapport with children'	'Up-to-date feedback to referers'
Learning Mentor	'Provides adventures in a protected environment'	'Offers extra adults that children can refer to and who they can feel safe with'	-
Family Support Worker	'unique'	'inviting'	'approachable'
Project workers			
Worker 1	'safe'	'fun'	'eventful'

Interviews with children and young people

Some informal interviews with children and young people using the project were conducted. Some key points from these interviews follow:

Boy, age 10½ years

What he liked about the Junior YIP was that they had nice trips and that you could: 'Do what you want – but they stop fights and stuff, they don't let you spray paint the wall, but if you have an idea they let you do it'. He quoted the fact that he had an idea for 'show-and-tell' about pets and the staff had accepted this. Later, he and another child were talking about the plans for this event and he was able to enumerate a lengthy list of rules for it, such as not squeezing the animals, they'd obviously talked this through with the staff.

He liked it when the art teacher came in, giving the example of the tiles they had made.

Asked what would happen if the centre closed tomorrow, he said, 'We'd just be sitting around playing with our dogs.'

Boy, aged 11 years

He comes to the centre most days; he's been coming for a year, since he was ten. On Fridays he enjoyed watching a movie and then they got 'Friday challenge'. During the Easter holidays, they had gone to Swiss Cottage Pool.

Two Boys

One of these two said: 'Staff are kind and if you do something wrong, they tell you the right thing to do, like walk away'. Unlike, they said, teachers who don't tell what to do. They also like that the staff asked you what you wanted to do.

Girl, aged 15 years, an ex-member

She said that she started attending at the age of eight and continued until she was 13, virtually every day. She lives a five-minute walk away. What she liked about it was the 'fun and games' the trips, friends and football.

When she was in Year 7, she got help with her homework here. She became interested in other things through, for example, going on a trip to the Science

Museum. When she was about 12, they visited a fire station; this resulted in the JYIP helping her to get on a one-week fire course for which she got a certificate.

She said, 'Most of these kids don't have much money and the cost of these trips are low so they can afford them.'

Regarding participation, she said they wrote down ideas for trips on a sheet of paper and all gave their opinions and then events could be planned.

Interviews with parents

Single Dad with special needs child

'My special needs child is very demanding. She's learning a lot here. In six months here, there's been much improvement. They've taught her and she's very demanding and they are patient and she can play with other kids. She's much more secure back at the flats [where they live], an immense difference in confidence and she can now play with local kids.'

How did he know that it was the JYIP that had made the difference? He said that she had been going to a local school for five years but it was in the last six months since coming to the centre that he'd really noticed the difference. She was less stressed and her grades had improved.

Mum with two children attending the JYIP

The children went to a Catholic school where they had school friends but the school was not so local as this project. There was nowhere local to play; the centre was very good for trips out and for making friends and sometimes the children got help with homework. The staff were nice, they rang up if anything happens and asks permission if need be.

Father of two children attending the project

I was told that this interviewee was chosen for me because the staff thought that he might be more critical than the other parents interviewed might. But he was not. He said that he really liked the project. Its location was good, being near home, whereas their school was some way away. The timing, between four and six o'clock, was good for him, being straight after school, when otherwise the children would be 'in front of the TV'. His children very much enjoy the snacks and they eat vegetables at the Centre, which they won't eat at home. The older child does his homework: he would do it at home, but he does it more effectively at the Centre.

He also liked that during the holidays the centre was open in the afternoon and that there were trips out. He felt that his children were safe and were not allowed to leave. The staff were, 'quite friendly', and, 'they put up with a lot'. He commented:

'It's very one-on-one, ... They always tell you what the kids are doing. they will come to your door and speak to you about it if there is a problem.'

One of his children was statemented for his reading and writing:

'[he]...has done things that he would never have done – he made a spaceship and [a member of staff] got NASA ice-cream off the internet, They have even had Easter eggs off these guys.'

He moved to the area relatively recently:

'I really enjoyed the summer here because there was something for them every day. ... they have done more in the last nine months than in their lifetimes'.... It's absolutely fabulous for the kids to be here. They have never been so happy since we moved here. If they are in here [the Centre] we know they are not in the road wracking and ruining.

Mum of eight-year-old

Her son is nearly nine: 'They get to an awkward age and there is nowhere to play outside. ... 'He'd be bored stiff if I took him home at 4 o'clock.'

'[attending the project is]... the best move he's ever made – he comes five nights, he likes football and loves the staff, he gets help with homework because, 'I'm blind partly'

The staff are: 'patient, helpful, excellent'. One of the staff helped her son to build a Tudor castle: 'I can't believe the staff, the way they are so helpful with homework – it's wonderful'.

She has no negatives about the project:

'There's nothing negative, it's the Gods' truth. ... When my child comes home he's over the moon.'

'It seems very safe here, ...I really hope it stays.'

Interviews with project staff

1. & 2. Project Manager and fulltime worker

What they think is offered by the project is intense adult supervision over quite a long time. The objective is to, 'Create a normal, calm family environment'. So for example if they go on holidays or trips they go by train rather than hiring a minibus and there's a lot of learning about how to behave in normal social situations such as having a meal together, cooking, bread making and so on.

How did it compare with 'normal' play service? A lot of the members have behaviour statements and would not be accepted by standard play service; however, they still manage to maintain high expectations for behaviour and the children come back and back again. They achieve this from having a unified staff with an ethos that is more nurturing than usual.

Some weaknesses in the administration and recording were acknowledged; although recently they had been recording their observations better. They thought that more partnership working was required; an example was of two boys using the project and attending the same school who were not getting on. The school ignored advice from the JYIP

Why were transitions so difficult? Secondary schools were bigger and children need to be more responsible, for example, for doing their homework and

those who don't have home support find it more difficult, particularly those parents who didn't have a very good experience of education themselves. And what naturally happens if a child is struggling at school they will associate with other difficult young people, which compounds the problem.

They talked about the value of the environment that they had created which meant that children could drop their 'street cred' and play age-appropriate games, such as skipping, which they never would have done outside of the project. The staff will offer support for children who are on their own and encourage them to interact with other young people so that they have a chance to try to make friends. The staff also help the children to learn about the area and encourage them to travel by bus so that they can make use of local facilities.

3 Male Worker

He's been a worker since April 2005. He's a local lad and he's currently doing a Level 2 Play-work course with Camden.

He thought that the value of the work they were doing was the structured activities and it provided escape from gangs, parents etc.

4. & 5. Two female workers

One worker has been at the project for almost two years (by July 07) and the other about a year and a half (two years by November 07).

They liked especially the staff team and the facilities. The community-based aspect was important: for example, older sisters pick up their younger siblings and get drawn into the activities. They liked the fact that they were working with children from difficult backgrounds, children who had been branded as being 'trouble', but there was always a reason behind it. One worker had done play-work previously, and when she'd started at this project she found it quite difficult; the children wouldn't talk to her and she found it 'a bit scary'. But now things have been really turned around and: 'They will bring their pet gerbil in to show you'.

What the JYIP offered over the school environment was that: 'In school, there is too little space to voice feelings and desires and to promote their ideas.'

Interviews with external professionals

Five professionals whose work took them into contact with the JYIP were interviewed by telephone. These professionals were the five suggested by the JYIP as useful to talk with. An average 3.4 calls per interviewee were made to successfully complete interviews with all five. Accounts of these interviews are now provided.

1. Play Service Officer

The worker in the Play Service who monitors the school holiday play schemes knew the project well and had written reports on their work (these are annexed to this report). He thinks it is:

‘A very positive project – the activities they carry out, the resources available, and how they engage with young people, for example by making lunchtime a very social occasion and helping young people to make decisions. They work well with a challenging group of young people which other play projects might exclude, but they find ways of working with them.’

For example, two disruptive young people were taken away from the project and worked with elsewhere.

The higher staff ratio allows small group work and they engage with the young people very well, for example with lunch and cooking, and they have learning outcomes and generate good discussion.

The added value of the project is that although they work with all children during the school holidays, they are working with a number of at-risk children who need a greater input. If such kids were dealt with in school-based clubs there might be resource implications – i.e. they’d need more staff there and that would increase the cost. But at Castlehaven: ‘The staff have collective knowledge and experience of working with that group of children and young people.’

Furthermore, its value over and above school-based facilities is that: ‘Young people should be able to make choices themselves about what provision they use.’

Asked what would happen were the project to be discontinued, he responded: ‘There is nothing else in the area to replace it – it is an area of high deprivation with a large number of kids who need that service – they may be at risk of getting involved with anti-social behaviour, truanting, drugs and crime for example. Without this service the young people would get themselves into trouble and that would be far more expensive.’

The only area where he thought that the project could do better was that some administrative areas need to be ‘tighter’.

2. Deputy Head of local school

The school had had a child who was involved in criminal activities and he seemed to be outside parental control. He was out on the streets late at night and – perhaps because he lacked a positive male role model in his single-parent family – he became involved with some unsuitable older males, and this made him vulnerable.

He was referred to Castlehaven, who were excellent in the quickness of taking up the referral and in the immediacy with which the child could start going there. They also attended meetings and kept her informed of progress.

The boy liked going there. It kept him off the streets and his interests were developed. By the time six o’clock came, he was hungry and would go home to eat.

She feels that the project is 'really important'. They have another Year 6 child who would benefit, and he has been offered a place, but his parents haven't yet enabled him to take it up.

Asked what would happen were the project to be discontinued, she responded that it would be 'an absolute tragedy':

'When you think about ECM and looking at children's futures, if we have children as young as 10 out on the streets or becoming involved in criminal activities... they may now be involved in exchanging stolen materials such as mobile phones or bikes, later they'll be in the back of stolen cars. ... Stop it before it gets to this - turning these children around when they are young avoids costs in the future.'

One value of the project was simply to provide a place to go: 'if kids are bored, they muck around'. The child referred didn't want to be at home because he didn't get on with his mother; he had nowhere else to go.

The provision of age-appropriate activities was important. We didn't always appreciate the 'baby-ness' of these kids because of their 'streetwise' façade.

What was the advantage of JYIP over after-schools clubs? They: 'work with troubled kids on specific issues; it's not just "childcare" – they can do a specific piece of work with a child'. Furthermore, they offer a child who is disaffected from school a new and different place to go that is separate from school. It also enables them to make new friends and get to know children from their area, from their estate.

3. Social Worker

This social worker in the W. Hampstead Team held two cases who were already referred to the JYIP when he took them on. He found that the JYIP were good at providing regular follow-ups and if there were any Child Protection concerns they would call him and give him information.

The positive outcomes for the children were that they had previously had no peer programmes and opportunities to mix with children of their own age, and as a result of being at the JYIP, their social skills improved, they managed better in group activities, and the school reported improved behaviour with fewer incidents. He has 'a very positive impression' of the project, and there were no negatives.

If it were to end he said it would be missed because although there were other programmes, there was nothing quite like this – 'it's not high profile or very intensive but it is good for certain kids'. Compared to the normal play project, he felt that it provided more personal attention, and that the staff would pick up even the small issues and let the social worker know – there was: 'constant one-to-one follow-up'.

4. Learning Mentor

This Learning Mentor in a Catholic school had referred several children to the JYIP. She found out about it when looking for somewhere to refer children that

the school felt were involved, or likely to become involved, in criminal or anti-social behaviour: 'A lot of the children that we are involved with are in danger of offending.'

The school would make referrals to the general play service if a child was not doing enough (activities) at home or if there were behaviour issues, but would refer to JYIP if other agencies were involved, if families were struggling or isolated or had problems going beyond the norm, or have had problems lasting for some time.

This is because there are not enough staff in the normal play service really to work with such children. The JYIP staff are: '...good at relating to really difficult children... You can't just throw children like this into a group and they'll "swim" – these kids mostly have poor social skills with conflict in the family.'

One thing she liked about the project was that it provided a 'way back' from exclusion. Although in the case of bad behaviour, the JYIP would sometimes send a child home, they could usually come back the next day. This fits nicely with the ethos of her school – there was always a chance for a fresh start. It was also flexible: 'Kids can stop going for a while and then drop back in again – these children have disrupted lives and need to be able to slot in'

She found communication with the JYIP to be good: 'it is easy to call up and speak to them; [a JYIP worker] came to school to discuss some of the kids. This was important to her because: 'When children know that adults are in cahoots with each other, they feel safer ... These children in isolated families benefit from having adults around.'

She had nothing negative to say about the project and commented that:

'If this project ends, the vast majority of the kids we refer would be very vulnerable between 4 and 6 p.m., ... and they'd be much more likely to get involved in anti-social behaviour earlier. ... [The project offers] 'Adventure, excitement and practical things to do. Without it, there would be a deterioration in school behaviour and therefore more frequent exclusions. The school would therefore be making more referrals and asking more of other services.'

5. Family Support Worker

This family support worker is based at a local secondary school, and covers the feeder primaries, many of which are in the JYIP area. She finds that there are often linked issues around a child's behaviour and concerns about the family. If JYIP contacts the school with worries (for example, if a child is seen unsupervised in a risk area late in the evening), she'll get involved; working with families on supervision issues, while the JYIP works with the children. Sometimes, they jointly make a plan of action for the child. It is helpful to her to get from the JYIP staff: 'clear un-jargonised language about how a child is coping.'

She also advises parents to use the centre because it provides resources for those children who can't always access other Camden resources.

'It's a great resource, it's an all-inclusive centre, and it'd be a shame to see it go... the staff are approachable and on the level with the kids – and they are not “school” ... some children's needs are beyond the school's capacity and it's a place where children can take their worries. ... There are many cutbacks in Camden and [the JYIP] has been built up and money invested in it; it would ludicrous to take it away. ... I feel fortunate as a professional that I can tap into [JYIP] for advice and support about a child and their family.'

Ideas that lie behind the work

Children's Fund Projects can be evaluated in many different ways. Different approaches address different aspects of the work. A simple guide to evaluation has been written as part of the work of the CCF Local Evaluators, and the concepts discussed briefly below are explained in more detail in that document – see Ives and Wyvill, 2007.

Some examples may help. If we wanted to find out if a Project's money had been spent on what it should have been spent on, or if we wanted to explore the working methods of a Project, we might undertake a *process evaluation*, which would look at the way that the Project had tackled its tasks. We might also look at the *outputs* from the Project, such as the number of sessions run, and the number of children attending those sessions. But if we were more concerned with *outcomes*, we would want to look at the effects that the work of a Project had had on the children and young people who participated.

However, measuring outcomes is complex, with many methodological problems. For example, we would need to have baseline data – 'What were the young people like before they attended the Project?' to compare with information on how they were after attending the Project. This might include some pre- and post-intervention measures of behaviour, school attainment, etc. Most of the young people attending the Project do not have a criminal record, and most have referred themselves to the Project; that is, they have not been referred for a crime-related reason. It's therefore difficult to say what the baseline level of crime among this group of young people would be, or what their propensity to commit crime was before attending the Project.

A paper by the National Evaluation of the Children's Fund team also raises some questions about the definitions of crime:

Do we want to measure criminal acts as defined by law, or are we also interested in minor acts of delinquency and anti-social behaviour? The latter are less serious but more common. An example would be teenagers hanging around street corners, which although not a prosecutable offence, may reflect as much of a social problem as a legally defined criminal act. This may be particularly important in relation to youth crime as a number of child-specific activities such as school bullying, for example, are unlikely to appear in strictly defined legal definitions of crime. Moreover, early involvement in delinquency and anti-social behaviour has been shown to be a good predictor of later criminality. (NECF 2004)

The NCEF Paper also points out that young people commit crimes for many different reasons and therefore policies to reduce crime have to take into account the different motivations of youth offending. And while many young people commit delinquent or criminal acts, most commit only one, fairly trivial act, and most young people 'mature out' of crime or delinquency. Those few that do not are the ones that need to be targeted, but they are difficult to identify.

Another difficulty is: how can we be sure that any changes are due to the work of the Project – they might be due to other interventions, or simply be a result

of growth and maturation? This is the question of attribution. And we might observe negative changes – such as a deterioration in behaviour – not uncommon as children grow older, but not attributable to the Project.

Even more difficult is to agree what *counts* as an outcome. This Project is part of efforts to reduce crime. One might say that while the young people are actually attending the Project they are not committing crime, but we don't know how likely they would have been to commit crime if they hadn't attended it. Furthermore, the Project is part of early prevention efforts – it is targeting young people not because of their criminality but because they are considered at risk of getting involved in criminal activities. Such activities are thought to be more likely among the target group when they are older – in other words, the expectation is that their levels of crime and delinquent behaviour will be reduced in the future. This adds greater complexity to measuring outcomes.

One way forward is to say that measuring outcomes is just too difficult, and that we will concentrate on assessing the processes and outputs of the project – if these are appropriate, then the appropriate outcomes can be expected to ensue. But this begs questions about the cost-effectiveness of the work and the impact on individual participants.

A way to address the complexities of outcomes is through looking at *risk and protective factors*. Risk factors are those things that are associated with particular problems such as criminality, drug use, mental health difficulties, etc, and protective factors are those, which are negatively associated with such problems. Risk factors for a particular difficulty – such as involvement in crime – are very likely to be risk factors for other kinds of difficulties – such as low educational attainment. In other words, we can identify a collection of risk factors that, if attenuated, should lead to improvements in a number of problem aspects of a young person's life.

A report by the National Evaluation of the Children's Fund states:

There is a known relationship between the presence of specific risk factors in a child's life and the likelihood of the child offending at some future date. There is substantial and extensive research on this issue, identifying indicators such as truancy; exclusion from school and other educational problems; family poverty; being in care; being a victim of abuse; and many others. (NECF 2004)

An HM Treasury Review (2004) describes the associations between involvement in crime and other difficulties:

Young offenders stand a disproportionate chance of suffering other problems, including:

- educational underachievement – 42 per cent of young offenders sentenced in courts have been excluded from school
- mental health problems – up to one in three young offenders suffer from mental health problems, compared with one in ten of the general child population

- teenage pregnancy – around 39 per cent of young women under the age of 21 in prison are mothers, and 25 per cent of young men are fathers
- poor employment prospects – over two in three prisoners were without jobs before their arrival in prison. (paragraph 5.137)

The Review goes on to explain how early intervention can help:

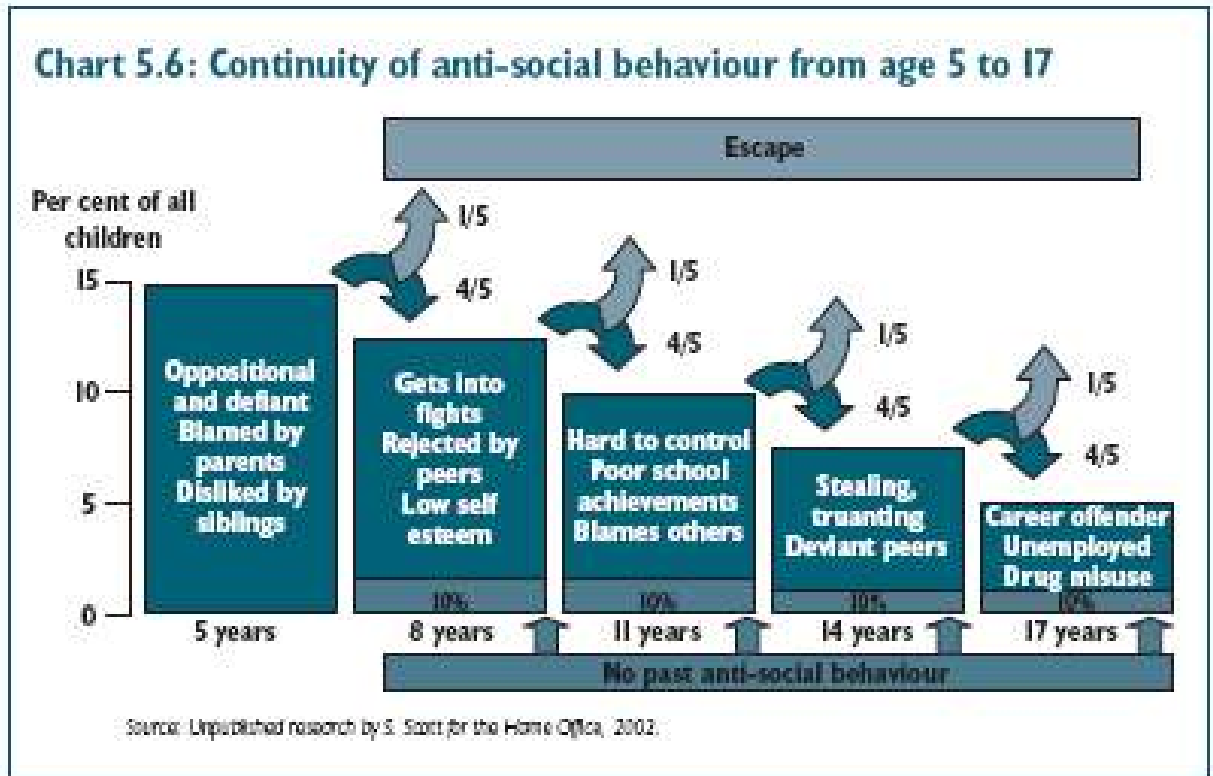
Early preventative intervention to combat anti-social behaviour and youth crime benefits children's long-term life chances, as cognitive criminal responses are reformed and non-criminal behaviour introduced earlier. This reduces the economic and social costs to both the individual and society as a whole (with savings of £200,000 per lower-risk, non drug-using offender and much higher cost savings for high-risk offenders) and prevents the intergenerational transfer of offending behaviour to their offspring.

Existing research from both the UK and the USA indicates that it is possible to identify at an early stage the children and young people at risk of poor outcomes, including those engaging in offending or substance misuse. Furthermore, the existing evidence base suggests that early intervention can prevent the development of patterns of serious or persistent criminal behaviour later on in life, bringing numerous benefits to both the short and long term life-chances and experience of the child, and also to society as a whole. (paragraphs 5.139 - 5.140)

A chart in this report, reproduced below, shows the continuity in anti-social behaviour as a child grows up, and indicates the proportions who somehow manage to 'escape' from this destiny.

What kinds of interventions are effective? HM Treasury's 2004 Child Poverty Review states:

Getting children off to a good start early in life provides a platform for later educational achievement, which in turn affects their adult working lives. Helping parents to provide their children with the best support as they develop is crucial to helping them achieve and enjoy life. Supporting poor children to attain good physical and mental health and adopt healthy lifestyles is important both for their short-term well-being and future life chances. ... ensuring poor children are protected from crime and prevented from perpetrating crime and engaging in anti-social behaviour are crucial to breaking cycles of disadvantage; as is protecting children from the risks they may face in their own homes. (paragraph 5.2)



How the Junior YIP addresses risk and protective factors

The Camden Junior YIP recognises the importance of all these factors, plus many others. Not all these factors can be addressed by a programme such as JYIP. But many can. The JYIP staff support the children and young people with whom they work in many different ways – rather than taking a programmatic one-size-fits-all approach, they stress the need to respond to the individual needs of young people. These needs are expressed in different ways – sometimes directly, sometimes more obliquely. Thus, the staff must often interpret behaviour to identify underlying needs; for example, a child who is failing at school may simply need a quiet place to do their homework, as this is not available in their family home, or a child who is aggressive may need help in dealing with his feelings towards a violent absent father.

The JYIP staff regard improvements over a wide spectrum of behaviour as contributing towards the preventive goals of the programme. For example, give the link between offending and mental health described above, an improvement in a child's mental health would be counted a success in being a potential contribution towards crime reduction.

This approach is supported by research and by politicians of all stripes. There are two problems, however. One is that funding streams are generally available to address particular social problems, and as the JYIP receives funding from a crime prevention funding stream it is reasonable for the funders to expect to be able to identify some achievements in the area of crime prevention. The second, related, problem is that, especially with generic

interventions such as those delivered by JYIP, measuring outcomes is exceedingly difficult.

Why this is a problem for evaluators can be seen by considering what answers might be given to the question: 'Is crime being reduced by programmes such as these?' If evaluators ask project staff if crime is being reduced as a result of their work, they could respond in many different ways:

- Yes, because while they are with us in the Centre, they are off the streets and therefore not committing crime
- Yes, because they are participating in activities such as sport and engagement in activities is associated with reduced crime
- Yes, because we enable them to become re-engaged in the community by, for example, joining local sporting clubs
- Yes, because we provide positive adult role models that are often lacking in their lives and which research shows are preventive
- Yes, because we provide them with a 'safe haven' of 'normal life' away from the chaos of their home lives
- Yes, because our staff are trained to work with children and young people and can respond to their complex psychological needs; meeting these needs makes a happier, more stable individual who is less likely to offend.
- Yes, because our staff work with parents to help to improve family life
- Yes, because through our contact with schools we can help those children with school-related problems – this improves their attainment and increases school engagement which is related to a reduction in criminality
- etc, etc.

The evaluator, while accepting these points as valid, will have methodological difficulty in evaluating these claims. And suppose that the evaluator was able to show that none of the claims were substantiated; the project staff could reasonably respond that what they were doing was a mere 'drop in the ocean' in the lives of these children. They would say that it was unrealistic to expect the multiple deprivations experienced by the children could be overcome by limited intervention of a few hours each week. Therefore, any changes that might have resulted from the intervention would be small relative to the (probably negative) changes brought about by other factors, and it was therefore not surprising that the gains could not be measured.

A way to overcome these evaluation difficulties would be with a prospective, randomised controlled study, but this is far beyond the means and timescale of this small evaluation.

The way that we have chosen to deal with these difficulties, an approach agreed in advance with the project leader, was:

- to describe the work of the project and comment on whether it conforms to current evidence-based thinking on what works in early intervention – that is, identify the processes and outputs which might lead to positive outcomes

- to illustrate the work of the project through some rigorous description of case studies, mapping features of each case to a list of outcomes derived from JYIP and ECM
- to discuss how the project addresses risk and protective factors associated with juvenile crime
- to briefly explore whether the project represents 'value for money'.

References

HM Treasury 2004 *Child Poverty Review (Spending Review 2004)* Chapter 5 Improving Life Chances for Poor Children

Ives R and Wyvill B 2007 *A Guide to Monitoring and Evaluating Services for Children and Young People* educari/CCF Downloadable pdf from www.casweb.org/ccf (when available)

NECF 2004 Assessing the Impact of the Children's Fund: the role of indicators www.necf.org/briefing.asp?section=000100040009&profile=000100080003&id=638 (downloadable *Word* document, accessed 28-02-07)

Annex 1 Play Service Report on the Summer Playscheme 2005

This Annex is extracted from a report by Barry Walden of the Leisure and Community Services Department of Camden Council. Holiday play-schemes are monitored by a 'Grant Monitoring Visit', of which this is the report of a visit in July 2005. It has been lightly edited for ease of reading but nothing important has been omitted.

At this time, the opening hours were 12:30 to 17:00 and there were five staff with 50 children registered for 25 places; there were 19 attending on the day of the visit: 15 in the 8 to 11 age-range and four in the 12 to 14 age-range. Boys outnumbered girls by 60:40. The ethnic profile, as far as could be determined, was: 4 Bangladeshi; 2 White UK; 1 Filipino; 2 Albanian and 1 Ghanaian.

Environment (set up, child friendly, displays, safety, equipment)

The scheme runs from a smallish hall in Castlehaven Community Centre. The hall is used by an under-5's group during term time – the displays reflected this age group.

The project has access to a small outside area with play equipment for younger children, an adjacent sports pitch and occasional use of a dance studio.

A third of the available space was taken up by a table tennis table, a range of art projects were set up on tables in the rest of the space.

There was a small quiet area with soft furniture.

Resources (programming, activities & resources)

On the day of the visit, the young people could choose from table tennis and a range of art projects. A small group was taken off-site for a cooking project while others chose to sit and chat.

Overall, the activity programme includes a range of art, sports, circus skills, cooking and trips out. The programme met the creative and physical development needs of the young people.

Physical activities included dance, swimming, canoeing. The local authority Sports Development Team run sessions on the adjacent pitch and the project is to host part of the Camden Unity Cup Football tournament.

Interactions (adult child interactions, managing behaviour)

The project provides a free cooked lunch at 12:30, this allows the session to get off to a sociable start. The young people sit at a long table with staff members allowing opportunities for informal discussion.

There were examples of staff members giving appropriate advice and support, both individually and in groups. Praise and encouragement was used to recognise good work and reinforce positive behaviour.

Inclusion (disability & special needs, multiculturalism, gender – displays & resources)

This project is an extension of the term-time Junior YIP which works with targeted children who have been identified as being at risk of offending, truanting, etc.

The young people come from a broad range of cultural groups. On the day of the visit, there were slightly more boys than girls. Some children attending had behaviour problems and/or special needs.

One female worker was observed intervening to ensure boys did not dominate the table tennis and that the girls were able to participate.

Consultations (with parents and children)

The lunch provided opportunities for informal discussion. Workers were also observed engaging the children in conversation during the session.

Children who attend the term-time sessions helped to develop the summer programme of activities.

Administration (documentation, procedures, risk assessment, CQ, qualifications)

The young people are asked to sign themselves in. A designated worker ensures this happens.

There were ten children's registration forms in a folder, from which the figures relating to ethnicity were taken. These forms presumably represent those children who had come along for the first time during the summer. While contact numbers were available, the rest of the registration forms were kept in the youth office in another building.

Recommendation: All the children's registration forms should be readily available as they contain information that may be needed in an emergency.

Relevant policies and procedures are in place. These are based on the Camden Play Service Procedure Manual. The Voluntary Sector Child Protection Procedure, agreed by the ACPC was also available.

Information is given to parents, including the programme of activities. There was no indication that the programme related to Castlehaven Junior YIP.

Recommendation: The programme includes the name of the project, contact details, hours of opening and any cost relating to trips.

Annex 2 Play Service Report on the half-term Playscheme 2006

This Annex is extracted from a report by Barry Walden of the Leisure and Community Services Department of Camden Council. Holiday play-schemes are monitored by a 'Grant Monitoring Visit', of which this is the report of a visit in October 2006. It has been lightly edited for ease of reading but nothing important has been omitted.

The opening hours were 13:00 – 17:30. This was a 26-place scheme with 113 currently on the database. There were 13 children attending on the day of the visit, of which 10 were in the 8 to 11 age range and three in the 12 to 14 age range. There were roughly equal proportions of boys and girls but there were usually more boys attending. An ethnic profile was not readily available.

Environment (set up, child friendly, displays, safety, equipment)

The Haven Playscheme runs from the hall at Castlehaven Community Centre. Some activities take place in the adjacent youth building and there is access to a multi sports pitch and small outside area.

The hall is brightly decorated and set up with a mix of table-top activities and resources laid out on mats. The furniture is appropriate for the ages of children and young people attending.

Resources (programming, activities & resources)

During the afternoon of the visit a tutor was running an art workshop printing leaves onto tiles. A play-worker led an activity making bread. In addition, there was a general art table, book area, some construction toys and some home corner equipment. The home corner equipment was not used. Consideration should be given to the age appropriateness of the equipment.

[Evaluator's comment: Barry reported that it was later explained to him that play materials and equipment aimed at a younger age group is seen by the staff as providing important chances for young people to engage in play opportunities that they may have missed when they were younger – he was happy to accept this explanation.]

In addition to the activities taking place in the community centre, the adjacent youth building was used, initially to play pool, and later for a consultation as part of a Camden Children's Fund project, 'Camden Together'.

The week-long programme of activities included a range of art projects, cooking, trips off site and physical activity. There were sufficient activities and resources to meet the needs of children and young people of different ages, abilities and interests and allow them to make choices.

Interactions (adult child interactions, managing behaviour)

The play-scheme is an extension of the term-time Youth Inclusion Project (YIP). Many of the children and young people who attend the Haven have

been identified as being at risk of exclusion from school and/or display challenging behaviour.

Members of the team are sensitive to the needs of the children and young people and there were good examples of positive interactions. Praise was used effectively to encourage participation, with appropriate support and guidance being given.

Two boys who were being disruptive, and under threat of exclusion from the project, were taken by one worker to play pool in the youth building. This diversionary activity prevented the boys being excluded while allowing the main group to continue their activities.

The team put great emphasis on creating a sociable and inclusive environment. A good example of this is the cooking activities, which culminate in the whole, group eating together.

Inclusion (disability & special needs, multiculturalism, gender – displays & resources)

Many of the children and young people who attend the project are at risk of exclusion from school and have been referred to the Youth Inclusion Project.

Two children attend Swiss Cottage School, a school for children with disabilities, and two others were referred by the Play Service Family Outreach Worker. The high ratio of staff to children ensures the needs of children are met.

Consultations (with parents and children)

The young people who attended the scheme took part in two formal consultations during the week. One involved the design of the children's facility at London Zoo, the other a Children's Fund consultation called 'Camden Together'.

The project uses a range of means to consult children and young people. There is a lot of informal consultation and members of staff carry out a review of the session that includes comments and feedback from the children and young people.

Administration (documentation, procedures, risk assessment, CQ, qualifications)

There is a database which includes the details of the children and young people who attend the project. This is updated regularly. Confidential information relating to the children and young people is kept securely.

Comprehensive risk assessments are in place. Procedures, which are based on those from Camden Play Service are currently being updated. This includes a Child Protection procedure.

Children and young people sign themselves in and out.