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The impact of social pedagogy and interviews with children and young people in foster care

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Programme aims

- To demonstrate the impact of introducing a social pedagogic approach to foster carers and the lives of the children they foster
- To develop professional, confident foster carers who can improve the lives of children in their care
- To provide a platform for transforming the role of foster carers
- To implement cultural and systemic change to support this approach
- To develop social pedagogic foster care
Evaluating social pedagogy

- Social pedagogy is an ‘approach’ not a method
  - A way of thinking or a value base
  - Not a manualised programme with key features
- Difficult to define
  - ‘We’re doing it already’
  - Differentiating it from good quality fostering ‘as usual’
- Constructed through the context
  - ‘meaning making’
  - Individual’s relationship with the context is of primary importance
Overview of the evaluation

- Complimentary and overlapping modules
- Baseline and two follow up data collection points

Module 1: Impact on children and young people
- Face to face interviews children and young people
- Analysis of management information systems data and additional case file information
Overview of the evaluation

- **Module 2: Impact on foster carers and on practice**
  - On-line survey and telephone interviews with foster carers
  - Chaired group discussions with practitioners
  - Face-to-face interviews with social pedagogues
Overview of the evaluation

- Module 3: Implementation process, outcomes and changes in the system
  - Interviews with programme managers
  - On-line survey with practitioners
  - Case studies (includes face-to-face and telephone interviews)
Foster carers’ reflections on social pedagogy as an approach

- An approach or a method?
  - Two discourses
  - The learning journey; will these conceptualisations change over time?
- ‘Doing it already’
  - Both positive and negative
- Validating tacit knowledge
  - Confidence
  - Re-affirming of the role of foster carers
  - Does this validation have any impact in the longer term?
Foster carers’ reflections on social pedagogy within a context

- Assimilating social pedagogy into existing practices and language
- Social pedagogy as a way to change the wider system
- How ‘ready’ is the wider system for social pedagogy
  - The importance of the role and support of supervising social workers
  - The importance of a (perceived) commitment from the system
Interviews with children and young people

- Child led informal interviews
- Adaptable
- From support circles to the ‘lifemap’
  - ‘Lifemap’ rich data created and interpreted by the participating young person
Example 1: James, 6yrs, boy
Example 2: Sophie, 9yrs, girl

- Foster carer
- Foster sister
- FC birth child
- FC birth child
- FC birth child

X 4 Pets

- Foster carer
- FC grandchild
- FC grandchild
- FC grandchild
- FC birth child
- FC birth child
- X 3 Pets

Foster carer ‘in heaven’

Birth mum
Mum’s partner
Step brother
Aunties and Cousins

Friend
Friend
Friend
Friend
Example 3: Katie, 16yrs, young lady
Summary findings

- Role of the foster carer
  - Children and young people’s lifemaps
  - Re-affirming the foster carer role

- Complexity
  - Children and young people’s ‘lifeworld’
  - Complexity of social pedagogy assimilation for foster carers

- Professional network
  - Role of professionals for children and young people
  - Relationship between foster carers and the system
Next steps

- Follow up with foster carers and children and young people
  - How the understanding of social pedagogy is developed and its impact on practice
- The cost calculator for children’s services
  - Uses routinely collected data to calculate the costs of different care pathways over time
  - Brings together cost data and outcomes data
  - Six years of child level data will be analysed (2 years prior to programme, 4 years of programme duration)
- Comparative analysis of costs and outcomes
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