

Nottingham University Hospital Youth Service

Brief description

1998 – Nottingham City Hospital Youth Work Project was established as a pilot project, starting out as a two-year funded youth work post based within the Children & Young People's Kidney Unit at Nottingham City Hospital, funded by the British Kidney Patient Association.

2000 – On the back of clear evidence of many positive outcomes for the young people involved, the hospital trust extended the youth work post to cover Children's Services, working closely with other medical teams such as Cystic Fibrosis and Diabetes.

2001 – Hospital youth club was set up due to increased recognition and demand, led by a group of young people and with funding support from Capital One financial group and staffing support from Nottingham City Council. This enabled young people with chronic medical conditions and disabilities across Nottinghamshire (and farther afield), to attend a twice-weekly youth provision with peer support; critically, a decision was made to also allow their siblings to attend.

2004 – The service extended its support to work with young people in adult services up to 25 years of age.

2006 – Following the merging of hospital trusts in Nottingham, the project became Nottingham University Hospitals (NUH) Youth Service, demonstrating its rapid development over less than a decade.

2008 – NUH Youth Service celebrates its ten year anniversary in May, making it the longest running – and possibly the most successful – hospital Youth Service in the country.

Funding and staffing

- Senior Youth Worker post and £500 budget funded by NUH Trust.
- Youth Development Worker post funded by the British Kidney Patient Association.
- Two Part time Youth Work posts (six hours per week) funded by Nottingham City Council.
- 12 Volunteers.
- Approximately £15,000 – £20,000 per year raised from external sources.



Nature of provision

Which groups of young people does the project work with?

The project works with young people aged 10 to 25 who are attending one of the hospitals in Nottingham and parts of the Trent Region, who have a chronic illness or disability. This might include conditions such as kidney disease, cystic fibrosis, diabetes, asthma, autism and cerebral palsy. The service also provides support work for their siblings.

What are the main health approaches used and activities offered?

A twice-weekly hospital youth club providing group work (eg drama, self-esteem workshops) one-to-one support, advocacy work, peer education and peer group activities, health education workshops, accredited programmes (Youth Achievement Awards, OCN, AQA and locally moderated Keystone awards) residential opportunities, transition programmes, youth participation and patient volunteer training programmes.

How are young people involved in shaping the project/programme?

The Youth Service run a hospital Youth Committee, known as 'HYPE' (Hearing Young People Everywhere), where representatives for patient groups voice their ideas and give feedback regarding young people's services in hospital. Young people are involved in programme planning and evaluation every eight weeks by taking part in activity workshops

that enable them to voice their ideas and interests, which then shape the programme of work. There are also peer mentors within the service who attend staff meetings and represent young people's interests and needs.

How does the project respond to the needs of different young people, particularly the most marginalised?

The service seeks to work with all young people with a chronic illness/disability who wish to access it. Essential links are made with the specialist medical teams to ensure that appropriate information and support is provided and that the young people's needs are being met effectively. Staff are encouraged to take part in relevant training to support them within their roles including, for example, Bereavement support and working with young people on the autistic spectrum.

Outcomes

How do young people benefit from their involvement in the project?

Young people benefit through; increased confidence, greater peer support networks ('understanding what I'm going through') new opportunities, personal and social development, independence skills, vocational goals, better relationships with families and medical staff, accreditation and preparation for transition to adult services.

A DVD has been made that highlights what young people have gained from their involvement with the service, and is available from the project.



How do others (benefit from the project?

- Medical staff – have a better understanding of the needs of young people within hospital.
- Families – have benefited through siblings feeling included and involved.
- Parents – have been able to create a support network with other parents and enable more independence for their child.
- Other organisations – have been able to witness good quality youth work with groups of young people who have been socially excluded.
- Other hospitals – have been able to see examples of successful youth work within this setting and apply some of our programmes into their work with patients,

for example the 'Moving On' transition programme.

Does the project contribute to local health priorities? If yes – which ones, and how?

- Tackling health inequalities by ensuring that young people with chronic health conditions and disabilities have access to the opportunities that their peers do.
- Improving mental health and wellbeing by enabling these young people to feel good about themselves and reach their potential.
- Personalised care through providing a service that gives time and priority to a young person's Individual circumstances and needs.

- Providing a voice for young people in the determination of their health needs and wants

How are young people's progress and achievements captured/measured and recorded?

Young people have achieved Bronze & Silver Youth Achievement Awards, AQA awards and Keystone awards (approx 30 to 40 young people per year).

Two young volunteers have come through the service and have gone on to achieve a BA Hons. Degree in Youth & Community Studies.

We also use project reports, annual reports, DVDs, workshops and presentations at conferences and

celebration events to capture voice, progression and development.

Measuring effectiveness

How is the project's work assessed or evaluated?

Young people evaluate specific project work and the generic youth provision giving feedback and recording benefits. Staff debriefs take place and are recorded after every session. Written feedback is provided by young people, staff and parents, which is recorded in reports. Alongside this there are academic and external reports on the work we do, including:

- A paper by Professor A.R. Watson entitled 'Hospital Youth Work and Adolescent Support' (www.archdischild.com)
- A paper by Donna Hilton and colleagues entitled 'Youth Work In Hospital' (*Paediatric Nursing*)
- 'A Diabetes Transition Residential' by K. Cuttell and D. Hilton (*Paediatric Nursing*)

What are the findings of any evaluations to date?

Young people using the NUH service have:

- Built strong relationships with other young people who have a chronic medical condition similar to themselves, sharing experiences and providing peer support for one another.
- Developed confidence and new skills, which has given them a more positive outlook on their lives and realisation that their condition does not have to hold them back.
- Had more confidence when speaking out to medical staff and feel that their voice does matter.
- Felt better prepared for transferring to adult services by participating in the Youth Service's Transition Programme

NUH Youth Service has won several national awards in recognition of best practice including:

Action for Sick Children Best Practice Award – Outstanding Achievement in Adolescent Services (2001).

British Journal of Renal Medicine Award – Innovation in Nephrology (2002).

An Invitation to speak at the first National Youth Conference as an example of Best Practice (2003).

Recognition of good practice by The National Youth Agency (2003).

Recognition of good practice by national organisation Carnegie Young People Initiative (2004).

Finalist in the first Children & Young People's Services Awards, (2006).

What factors help the delivery of healthy youth work?

There are many. But the most important ones for us have been:

- Having a good quality, dedicated team of staff and volunteers.
- Young people's participation.
- Positive partnership working with relevant specialist teams, ensuring that young people's interests and needs are paramount.

What factors hinder this work?

- Lack of funding.
- Lack of youth work opportunities in the NHS.
- Lack of awareness of youth work in hospitals.



Partnership/ multidisciplinary working

What other agencies do you work with on a regular basis?

Medical Specialist Teams
Nottingham City Council Children's Services
Nottinghamshire Clubs for Young People
Other voluntary organisations (dependent upon the work programme at The University of Derby)

When working in partnership, what is the distinctive contribution of your organisation/project?

Sharing good practice and experiences, providing training opportunities (where relevant) and providing quality student placements as part of their professional training.

Has this partnership resulted in greater collaboration or increased understanding between partners?

Locally, there is now a better understanding of hospital youth work and more training opportunities for staff and volunteers. We have also assisted other agencies setting up similar programmes of work and offered our support, experience and know how.

Medical teams have learned to encourage young people to get involved in the youth service and to value youth workers as an essential part of the multi-professional team. They have encouraged young people to become more independent from an earlier age and the importance of patients having a voice. (Some are even starting to use the term 'young people' as opposed to 'adolescents' which young people just do not get!).

Parents have learned to 'let go' a bit more in terms of their child's independence. They have been fully supportive of programmes organised by the Youth Service, in partnership with the medical teams, knowing that their child can participate with others who understand their issues and can become a bit more independent with managing their health care. Above all, parents enjoy seeing

their child smiling and making friends.

Strategic impact

Do you consider this project to be innovative, in terms of healthy youth work?

We believe that the NUH Youth Service is the longest running hospital project in the UK, possibly in the world! Medical teams as far away as Australia have visited to learn more about the service in the hope of developing similar successes with young people.

How do you disseminate the learning from the project?

Through reports, conference workshops and presentations, young people's participation events. A DVD celebrating the ten year anniversary of the project is available from the address below.



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