HAZ CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PROJECTS

EMERGING THEMES/LESSONS

1.   Partnership working

- Project leads have realised that multi-agency partnerships and joint agency protocols are not only important considerations in this process, but furthermore, they are critical to the development of innovative and user oriented services.

- Multi-agency linking and partnership building has enabled leads to realise that they are no longer working in isolation in the large arena of children and family services.

- Another emergent theme has been a need for an agreement regarding the frames of reference for"multi-agency partnership working". Project leads have stated that the HAZ evaluation strategy has facilitated and enabled the translation of the theoretical concept of "multi-agency partnership building" into a practical reality by "proving" with evidence based data that partnership building and community involvement does in fact render a more cost effective and efficient service.

- A constantly articulated learning outcome has been the fact that being part of HAZ has provided a mutual learning curve. Comments like **"Before my project was funded by HAZ I knew very little about other children and young peoples projects. In fact until I attended these proforma meetings (which are facilitated by Allister Butler and Carol Steer) I did not realise just how much expertise, experience and partnership opportunities I could gain from other CYP HAZ projects."**

- After approximately eight months of achieving operational status, it is encouraging to note that ALL CYP projects no longer view partnership building merely as a means to an end, but rather as an integral component of providing an effective and ecclectic range of innovative services to children and young people and their families. There are a multitude of examples to illustrate this emerging theme. They will be elloaboratd upon in the case studies which will be presented to the HAZ Steering Group in subsequent reports.

2. Service delivery

- An encouraging emerging theme is the fact that leads no longer see themselves as insular projects. They have begun to play a siginificant role in informing the Childrens Plan Steering Group re: policy and service provision issues, e.g. this is a good example of field and groundwork (at the project level) informing and contributing towards a countywide (at the strategic and programme level) model of good

practise for service delivery to children with complex needs, as well as the youth population in Cornwall. This is yet another example of how HAZ has served as a catalyst in shifting the paradigms of reference – from the strategic level of childrens services informing and "commisioning" the middle and operational levels to "perform tasks," to an infomed and far more democratic process of enouraging and respecting input from the project level in programme design, planning, and decision making – **the beginnings of an authentic bottom-up approach.**

- A related theme is that leads have not only been able to develop capactiy in planning monitoring and evalaution strategies at the project level, but are also now able to identify methods in which projects make contributions towards achieiving the indicators of success and high level statements of children and young peoples services at the progrmme level. This in turn has also had an impact on writing the countywide Children's Plan for Cornwall.

- Project leads, via the quarterly proforma reporting system (copy availabe upon request from Carol or Allister), have been able to self-report and identify emerging themes re: common barriers to service provision, as well as exploring possible resolution strategies as a team of children and young peoples projects – as opposed to doing to in an historically independant manner. Gaining access to schools (primary and secondary) has been identified as a common barrier/obstacle to service provision. The team of CYP projects have collectively agreed that an appropraite stratgey would for one project (as opposed to five of six) to approach a school with a view of offering a single menu of diverse services for young people in that particular school. For example, a possible scenario may be: Designatd Services for Young People (DSYP) approaching Penrice School and offering them a range of services for their student population – and in turn these services would be collectivley provided by DSYP, ACHE (Advise, Care, Help and Empathy), Young Carers, Youth Participation and Advocacy Project, Voice of Young Cornwall, Newquay one-stop-shop – to name just a few. This process of collectively identifying barriers to service provision as well as developing a strategy for overcoming these barriers, is an apt example of **"partnership working in action**."

- Developing Joint Agency Srategies for children with complex needs and Joint Protocols for Homeless youth is a complicated and intricate process. HAZ funding has enabled numerous projects Joint Agency Strategy, Interagency Support Unit for Young people, Joint Protocols for Homelss Youth, Special equipment for children with complex needs, to name just a few) to serve as catalysts in not only elucidating the difficulties, but also the potential strategies which would ensure successful joint agency collaboration. This comprehensive consultation process with all relevant stakeholders (statutory, voluntary agencies, service users etc) has shifted the reference point from maintaining the status quo and statutory specific obligation statements e.g. "We will do

things the way they have always been done because they are our statutory obligations" to a more inclusive, particpatory and shared ownership of joint agency protocols. **This is a critical and extremely significant change in philosophy and prefered models of effective practise.**

3. Building evaluative capacity

- Building evaluative capacity has encouraged projects to be evaluated within a framework that is simpler and more manageable, without losing its robustness.

- While most project leads had a clear understanding of the aims and activities of each project, subsequent attention has been focussed on implementing an evaluation strategy which is testable, specific, measurable and clearly stated.

- Perhaps one of the most significant "early wins" has been achieved with regards assisting projects in clarifying the different aspects and elements of baseline indicators, and their relationship to the overall evaluation process – and in so doing constantly retesting their assumption base.

- CYP projects have not only developed evaluative strategies at the project level, but also implemented monitoring systems and data recording methods which are able to demonstrate programme evidence of contributing towards the overall HAZ high level statements and indicators of success.

- Projects have been able to integrate both **qualitative** (case studies, focus groups, document analysis, semi-structured interviews) and **quantitative** (surveys, questionaires, collecting data via monitoring assessment tools) methods of data collection and analysis within their evaluation strategies.

- Focussing on developing a sound assumption base has been a critical first step in the learning process of developing an evaluation strategy for all project leads. This statement has been referenced on numerous occasions e.g. "Until I leant to adopt the AAAQI model I was unaware of how much an inaccurate assumption base can influence the outcome of my project." Furthermore, leads have learned to constantly retest and revaluate the accuracy of their assumption base, as the project begins its implememtation stages.

- According to leads, the AAAQI model (assumptions, aims, activities, research questions, and baseline indicators) has not only been a useful capacity building exercise, but more significantly, it has demonstrated how evaluation can be viewed as a continuous learning experience i.e. "Once I estasblished my baselines I was then able to go back and retest my assumption base, aims and related activities– which often changed as a result of doing this."

- Projects, over time, have beome more realistic and scientifically rigorous in the process of designing and implementing their plans. As one lead stated: "The AAAQI model and regular sessions with the evaluator have been extremely helpful in pulling different elements of the project together and focussing on methods of measuring outcomes. I now feel equipped to concentrate on the activities of the project."

4. Community/user involvement

- Community and user involvment is viewed as a critical component to the effectivnesss of all CYP projects e.g. getting young peole (and the families) involved in all phases of the project cycle – from design to planning to implementing and to evaluation. HAZ has served as a catalyst in moving beyond viewing user/youth involvement as mere "tokenism", to viewing young people and their families as active participants and stakeholders.

- This point is borne out by the fact that effective partnership building and community involvement has been built into the AAAQI evaluation and goal statements for all projects.

Report submitted by

Dr Allister Butler
Research Fellow/Programme Evaluator
University of Plymouth

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