

16 Plus Independent Living Services Ltd

External Evaluation



67 Kington St Michael Chippenham SN14 6JE

T 01249 758 350 F 01279 750 027

E enquiries@transparencyresearch.co.uk

W www.transparencyresearch.co.uk

Alex Hall

16 Plus Independent Living Services Ltd

External Evaluation

1.	Introduction.....	2
1.1	Methodology.....	2
2.	Young People	3
2.1	Satisfaction with 16 Plus	3
2.2	Keyworkers	4
2.3	Accommodation	4
2.4	The Future	5
3.	Keyworkers and Key Work.....	6
3.1	Satisfaction with 16 Plus	6
3.2	Background and Motivation	6
3.3	What Keyworkers Liked About 16 Plus	7
3.4	Where Keyworkers Thought Improvements Could be Made	8
3.4.1	Pay Structure	8
3.4.2	Training	9
3.4.3	Supervision	9
3.4.4	Professional Development.....	9
4.	Views of Commissioners	10
4.1	Options in Leaving Care Services	10
4.2	What 16 Plus Does Well	10
4.2.1	Response.....	10
4.2.2	Flexibility	10
4.2.3	Provision of Service	10
4.2.4	How 16 Plus Compares to Other Providers.....	11
4.3	Where 16 Plus Can Improve.....	11
5.	Management Standards.....	13
5.1	Documentation in Place	13
5.2	Additional Suggested Standards.....	13
6.	Equality Impact Assessment.....	15
6.1	Keyworkers	15
6.2	Young People	15
7.	Conclusions and Recommendations	17
7.1	Conclusions.....	17
7.2	Recommendations.....	17
8.	Appendices.....	19
8.1	Interview Schedule for Keyworkers.....	19
8.2	Interview Schedule for Young People.....	19
8.3	Interview Schedule for Commissioning Staff.....	20
8.4	Diversity and Satisfaction Survey for Keyworkers	22
8.5	Diversity and Satisfaction Survey for Young People.....	23

1. Introduction

16 Plus Independent Living Services Ltd (16 Plus) is an independent provider of accommodation and support services for young people in the care of local authorities. The young people concerned are over 16 years of age and are moving towards independent living. The services provided include accommodation in the form of a privately rented flat or house, and outreach support work with a specified number of hours for each young person – which is referred to as Key work. Keyworkers assist the young person to develop and acquire independent living skills. Key work includes activities as diverse as assisting a young person to open a bank account, register with a GP, finding education or work, and sometimes leisure activities.

Transparency Research Partners Ltd (TRPL) were commissioned to undertake an external evaluation of the work of 16 Plus. The purpose of this evaluation was to help the management of 16 Plus understand better what was working well within their organisation and where things could be improved. We also undertook an equality impact assessment given 16 Plus's strong links with local authorities who are duty bound to work within anti-discriminatory practice guidelines.

TRPL has worked in the voluntary and statutory sector since 2001, and has produced high quality research for a number of organisations. As such we have experience in working with diverse groups in society including refugees, asylum seekers, people living with HIV/AIDS, minority groups and young people. Our work is often used to improve management performance or to provide direction in policy.

1.1 Methodology

The methodology was largely qualitative in nature. We devised interview schedules with 16 Plus management, and interviewed Keyworkers, young people receiving services from 16 Plus, and social workers and commissioners within three local authorities who are purchasers of 16 Plus services. We also examined the company's internal documentation and evidence of management procedures, and took a survey of Keyworkers and young people in order to capture information relating to diversity and satisfaction. Interview schedules and sample surveys are reproduced in the appendices (from page 19). Overall we interviewed 12 Keyworkers, nine young people and six local authority staff with responsibility for purchasing 16 Plus services.

Interviews with Keyworkers and young people mostly took place in a café; the remainder were conducted over the telephone. Interviews were conducted confidentially; as such we have referred to all respondents below in the female gender and omitted any identifying information.

2. Young People

The young people we interviewed came from a diverse range of backgrounds, and included those dealing with a number of issues. While some appeared shy, others were more outspoken and confident. They all had experience of dealing with difficult family situations including familial rejection of one form or another and some were originally unaccompanied asylum seekers.

Young people often do not make good research subjects, and that was the case with this research. Sometimes they had little to say about the service they had received from 16 Plus, however generally it did compare very well to previous circumstances they had been in, including foster care. In particular, foster carers had been seen as a mixed bunch, some in it for the money while others were genuinely interested in the young people. Overall however, they appreciated the freedom they had with their current placement.

2.1 Satisfaction with 16 Plus

We asked all young people survey questions relating to their experience within 16 Plus. The results show us that:

- 68% were *very* or *fairly satisfied* with their accommodation.
- 68% were *very* or *fairly satisfied* with the management of 16 Plus
- 89% were *very* or *fairly satisfied* with their personal development; none were dissatisfied
- 100% were *very* or *fairly satisfied* with their Keyworker and of their overall experience of 16 Plus.

	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neutral	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Accommodation	44%	22%	11%	-	22%
Keyworker	78%	22%	-	-	-
Management of 16 Plus	44%	22%	22%	-	11% ¹
Local Authority Staff	11%	22%	33%	11%	22%
Personal Development	67%	22%	11%	-	-
Overall Experience of 16 Plus	67%	33%	-	-	-

Table 1: Satisfaction with elements of 16 Plus placement, Young People.

These results cannot be understated and these high scores are particularly testament to the skills, abilities and aptitudes of 16 Plus's Keyworkers, especially given that young people are often stereotyped as negative and

¹ This dissatisfaction rating was due to a young person who had attempted to install an appliance in her flat, the results of which subsequently cut off the electricity supply for the whole block. 16 Plus had sought to recover some of the cost from the young person; however, the respondent indicated that otherwise she was very satisfied.

unresponsive. As a measure of comparison, their dealings with local authority staff were far more evenly spread across the range of possible opinions.

2.2 Keyworkers

The interviews with young people reinforced the positive results of the survey data. Unanimously the young people got on well with their Keyworkers, and found the support they got valuable, progressive and enjoyable. Most of them had had the same Keyworker throughout the duration of their placement with 16 Plus except when their Keyworker was on annual leave or sick.

We asked how things would have been if they had *not* had a Keyworker. Responses to this question varied – everyone felt having a Keyworker was useful. One or two thought they would have “been fine” anyway, but that certain things would have taken longer to undertake, such as accessing education, training or employment. Most, however, said that a lot of things simply would not have been done. This included getting into college, being able to cook, and a whole range of tangible issues.

Less tangible effects were on confidence and motivation. A Keyworker was often a valuable reference point to help with, and back up decisions. In addition Keyworkers often had a valuable array of local knowledge and knowledge of “the system”. They were able to help young people with issues such as their legal entitlements, form filling, and finding opportunities for work or study.

For some young people recent events had seen them moving from one crisis to the next which had severely affected them. One young person told us “I really want them to help me get back onto my feet” and the Keyworker was seen as instrumental in this. However, opinions of Keyworkers were generally very good. The most serious issue raised was that of one Keyworker being a “bit forgetful”, but generally comments were good, a few quotes included: “diamond geezer” and “kushty”, and others noted that their particular Keyworker provided help which they felt was over and above what they were required to do as a job.

2.3 Accommodation

Overall the most variable opinions within the range of the 16 Plus experience were expressed with regard to their accommodation. It has to be noted however, that the housing market in London is a difficult one and private landlords (from whom 16 Plus generally rents) sometimes have little interest in maintaining their property. However, 16 Plus do have their own retained maintenance staff who deal with problems when landlords are unresponsive (the bill then being passed on), or indeed when damage is caused by the young person.

Nonetheless it remains notable that the people we interviewed mentioned problems with their accommodation over other issues. Although one young person had a range of problems relating to one particular landlord (repairs and bailiffs attending with warrants for the landlord, etc.), we do not wish to

overstate the issue, as dissatisfaction was generally mild – there were no examples of poor living conditions, dissatisfaction was expressed largely to do with decoration, carpets, curtains etc. or intermittent problems with heating or plumbing, which are largely common affairs with any type of rented accommodation in London. Problems with the accommodation were fixed (generally) fairly quickly.

All the respondents reported that they were close to transport and shops and that there were few problems with the local area. Relationships with neighbours were fleeting, but generally good. No disputes between neighbours and young people were recorded.

2.4 The Future

Most of the young people expressed positive hopes about the future. They all expected to be in education or work; one was convinced she would be a millionaire. Hopes for the future included university education, various professions, and ideas about where they would like to live.

Overall views of 16 Plus were positive, in particular of the Keyworkers who were their main contact. They had limited contact with the management except at the beginning of their placement and sporadically thereafter. Although many had clearly had bad experiences with authority and adults in the past, they tended to enjoy the relative freedom they had with their placements and the input from their Keyworker.

Suggested improvements to the service of 16 Plus largely related to the accommodation.

3. Keyworkers and Key Work

3.1 Satisfaction with 16 Plus

We asked Keyworkers a number of survey questions about satisfaction with various elements of work within 16 Plus.

The results show that:

- 84% of Keyworkers were *very* or *fairly satisfied* with the management
- 84% were *very* or *fairly satisfied* with the progress of young people
- 92% were *very* or *fairly satisfied* of their *overall* experience with 16 Plus

This compares well with their dealings with local authority staff (social workers et al), and shows that in the main staff are happy with their work.

	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neutral	Fairly Dis-satisfied	Very Dis-satisfied
Management of 16 Plus	42%	42%	8%	-	8%
Local Authority Staff	-	42%	50%	8%	-
Progress of Young People	17%	67%	17%	-	-
Overall With 16 Plus	25%	67%	8%	-	-

Table 1: Satisfaction with elements of 16 Plus work, Keyworkers.

3.2 Background and Motivation

Keyworkers come from a very diverse range of backgrounds with a range of personal beliefs and a range prior work experience. Many had previously been involved in youth work or social care and all felt they would continue to work in similar caring professions. A number were training to be counsellors. Their motivation for undertaking outreach support were informed by a number of underpinnings but overall they were united by a keen desire to improve the lives of young people.

Key Work itself proved to be a wide range of activities, which included simply talking, playing pool, visits to galleries and theatres, as well as practical skills such as cooking and cleaning, assisting in job seeking and getting into education and developing social skills. Additional support was offered to young people referred to Youth Offending Teams, and many Keyworkers had experience of supporting their clients through courts. Virtually all Keyworkers mentioned that budgeting was a key skill they were working on with the client group.

Keyworkers noted a range of issues which affected their client group. This included familial rejection, drug use, challenging behaviour, crime, lack of motivation, and occasionally trying to deal with historic sexual abuse. Most Keyworkers felt that their clients were making progress although for some it

was particularly difficult. A number highlighted that a young person's life can change in a very short period of time, and there are constant challenges. Views on the prospects of young people varied, and it was felt they were very much related to the amount of motivation that the young person could summon. However, all Keyworkers felt the level of engagement their clients got from Key Work sessions, while varying in outcomes, was a valuable input into the lives of young people.

Arriving at appropriate Key Work activities for a young person was influenced by a number of factors. Initially the referral from social services specified what the young person needed to develop. Over the first six weeks an initial assessment was completed which formed the basis of what went on in outreach support. Each plan was reviewed every three months by 16 Plus and the young person (and when necessary social workers are invited) and a new plan updated. The plan would address health, education and employment, self care and tasks to be completed by 16 Plus, Keyworkers, social workers or the young person themselves. Comprehensive goals and outcomes for young people were documented by 16 Plus and used by Keyworkers to shape key work sessions. However, plans could suddenly change for the young person in situations of sudden change, including referral to youth offending teams.

Keyworkers themselves gave us a more holistic and personal view of key work processes. While this included the planning and execution outlined above, Keyworkers highlighted the interaction between the Keyworker and the young person. The priorities of the young person would generally inform what was appropriate for a Key Work session. If they were looking for work the Keyworker would accompany them to the Connexions service, help with a CV, even go into shops and workplaces looking for employment. If they had an upcoming court case, then that would tend to take priority. Due to the interactive nature of key work, sometimes the interests of the Keyworker would influence the activities undertaken. One young person was interested in youth work himself and had been assisted to find training in this. Another Keyworker was enthusiastic about photography and the young person had taken this on board. Some made visits to galleries with the young person. Keyworkers generally cited active listening to the young person as a good way to take forward their development.

For some Keyworkers there was apprehension when starting work with a new client. The young people often had negative experiences of authority and were often hard to get motivated. However this all improved over time and the young people seemed to be engaged in Key Work sessions. Indeed, one of the local authority informants told us that "there were a couple of cases where the young person did not engage with the social worker but got on very well with the Keyworker. They had made more progress with their Keyworker".

3.3 What Keyworkers Liked About 16 Plus

Many Keyworkers said they liked the relative independence of the job. Keyworkers make arrangements with young people directly and this gives them some flexibility over how to arrange their workload. There is a lot of freedom in the job. One Keyworker told us: "I'm given the freedom and the

trust to do what I am paid to do.” Another said the management had a “lot of faith in their workers. They trust you.” And a third “I’m my own boss.” For many this flexibility meant they could focus on their own ambitions; a number were undertaking training for profession such as counselling.

Some noted that the company did not seem to operate with an overtly hierarchical structure and a number noted that the objectives of 16 Plus were geared towards the needs of young people: “it seems there is a real passion for wanting to do something for young people. ... and making it work between the Keyworkers and the young people”.

The majority of Keyworkers were very motivated about working with young people in a positive way, and overall this was the prime motivational factor amongst staff.

3.4 Where Keyworkers Thought Improvements Could be Made

There were a number of issues that staff felt could be improved.

3.4.1 Pay Structure

First and foremost was the pay structure. The majority of Keyworkers are paid on a sessional basis. At the time of interview with Keyworkers, if the young person did not turn up for a Key Work session, the Keyworker was only paid the first hour. However, this was recently reviewed during the drafting of this report and in the event of a no-show, three hours are now paid.

The current pay structure was felt not to take account of some unpaid work, including travelling between key work sessions, taking phone calls from young people at the weekend and paperwork. All Keyworkers are provided with a mobile phone by 16 Plus, and they are advised to leave it switched off outside of working hours and at the weekend. The hours allocated to reporting on progress of young people was four hours per young person per month, therefore this may suggest greater training for Keyworkers on completing their reports within the timescale is the priority rather than increasing the hours paid.

There were a number of suggestions of how to deal with issues over the sessional pay structure. Overall Keyworkers wanted to be salaried. However, given that any individual young person could end up with a custodial sentence, go missing, unexpectedly move or end up in hospital, and the local authority would not necessarily “replace” the young person, paying salaries means that 16 Plus may find itself in the position of paying people to do Key Work when there is none to do and no income relating to the young person. This does not make financial sense. Keyworkers are advised about the pay structure before taking their post, and given that none of the Keyworkers cited money as a motivation for the sort of work they did, there is, in our opinion, little cause for concern about the pay structure. Indeed, Keyworkers generally seemed to have a high morale regarding their work and only one Keyworker expressed doubts about sustainability or retention.

3.4.2 Training

While all the Keyworkers had some background in working with young people, a number of Keyworkers expressed the need for “shadowing” an experienced Keyworker at the beginning of their employment with 16 Plus. However, introducing a new colleague to young people was not felt to be practical and had the potential to disrupt the key work session or relationship between the experienced Keyworker and her client.

Ongoing regular training for Keyworkers was implemented during the fieldwork for this report, and is scheduled for an entire day every three months. Team meetings are held quarterly. However, during the fieldwork Keyworkers sometimes expressed the need for more frequent and sustained contact between Keyworkers. Some felt that other members of the team had experience to share; equally other Keyworkers felt they *had* knowledge to share, and that some formalisation of the sharing of this knowledge would be advantageous. Certainly we felt further contact between Keyworkers could spread knowledge and ideas further and would help to diversify activities and opportunities seen within key work sessions and spread good practice.

3.4.3 Supervision

Supervision was scheduled monthly for Keyworkers. For some, the level of supervision they received was about right. For others, however, there was not enough, especially when it was needed. Some felt that there was a need for de-stressing occasionally, and while support from management was strong; their supervisor was not always available for this. Supervision sessions for some also focused on the young person without allowing time for their feelings to be expressed. In the light of the draft of this report, management have modified supervision sessions to include the well being of Keyworkers.

While satisfied with management generally, Keyworkers sometimes expressed the perception that the management were very busy and sometimes not available.

3.4.4 Professional Development

Some Keyworkers felt there were limited opportunities for professional development within 16 Plus. There was little scope for Keyworkers to take up management of newer Keyworkers. Indeed, management felt that their best Keyworkers would end up doing less Key Work; however, it is equally arguable that their skills could be usefully transferred to those less experienced. This would require some promotional structure to be in place.

4. Views of Commissioners

By commissioners we mean those people within local authorities who are involved in the process of purchasing 16 Plus services or those who work closely with 16 Plus. Typically this includes social workers or resource allocation teams. We interviewed six informants from Bromley, Greenwich and Southwark local authorities.

4.1 Options in Leaving Care Services

There were a number of options open to managers providing care for 16-18 year olds. These included residential placements, foster care, and the use of independent providers such as 16 Plus. The local authorities we spoke to have their own in-house units, used foster carers and independent providers. The determining factors of which type of care was provided were largely down to the needs of the young person.

When placing with an independent provider, all the respondents said that the needs of the young person were what dictated where that young person was placed. Proximity to their local area was a priority; however, price was cited as a major factor in who was commissioned in leaving care. The key competitive edge for independent providers such as 16 Plus, it appears, is price. Commissioners would get up to three quotes for a placement and choose the best on the basis of proximity, cost, and quality of service, although there was also a need for a spread of placements between companies.

4.2 What 16 Plus Does Well

4.2.1 Response

Overall commissioners were impressed by the efficiency with which 16 Plus responded to their queries. Responses were always fast and they always got their messages returned. Good communication was something all respondents agreed on; although there was one instance where they feel they should have been informed of missing key work sessions earlier.

4.2.2 Flexibility

Commissioners also like the flexibility of working with 16 Plus. Amongst this was the good communication, and the ability to make placements where perhaps other companies had found it too much hassle. In particular a case was mentioned where 16 Plus made a placement for a young person in Wiltshire which appeared to be too far for other companies to deal with. It is evident that one of 16 Plus's strengths as a provider is that they appear to be able to make placements in any area and often at short notice.

4.2.3 Provision of Service

Commissioning staff had limited first hand experience of examining 16 Plus's services, however, they did get feedback from their colleagues. Accommodation was generally felt to be of a reasonable standard ("They always say it's reasonable. It's not a palace, but high quality accommodation isn't realistic"), and where accommodation was poor it was generally due to malicious damage ("Due to the young people").

Key Work was considered largely successful, the feedback was good and in a number of cases a real connection had been made. One respondent felt that the young people often had a better relationship with their Keyworker than with their social workers. Overall there was no negative concern about the quality of Key Work provided. It was: “Generally... excellent” and there was “Really good emotional support” for young people.

Communication with the management of 16 Plus was viewed favourably, and the management were felt able to deal flexibly with problems in most instances and provide productive solutions. Dealings were described as “a good working relationship”.

4.2.4 How 16 Plus Compares to Other Providers

There were mixed views on how 16 Plus compared to other providers. One respondent said simply, “they’re the best”, another respondent that all companies of this nature were “much of a muchness” and what distinguished 16 Plus was their ability to get properties which fulfilled their proximity criteria.

4.3 Where 16 Plus Can Improve

Commissioning staff felt there were a number of areas in which 16 Plus could improve. These were:

- Providing safety certificates for gas and appliances in young people’s accommodation (16 Plus currently hold these certificates and confirm this to the local authority, however staff within Local Authorities felt it would help them if they also had a copy).
- Provide further monitoring and evidence of young people’s progress in terms of independent skills. This would include a 6-18 months action plan and an evidence sheet of what young people are able to do, including tangible skills such as cooking and budgeting and less tangible skills, such as how they deal with loneliness, how they make friends and deal with arguments, and who they contact for difficulties. Commissioners felt that provision of evidence about how a young person progresses would be of great benefit to them.
- It was noted that services like 16 Plus operate within an unregulated environment, and it was felt that if they emulated regulated services such as foster care and other types of placement that this would enhance the level of service that they provide. This would include provision of safety certificates, contact details for the Keyworker, their enhanced disclosure certificate number and records of health and safety checks. Currently commissioners were told that these were in place but this was based on verbal confirmation rather than an evidenced record.
- Further evidence would include confirmation of a young person’s registration with doctors and dentists and helping social workers with their statutory functions.

- The fees structure for placements was a difficulty for one respondent, in that it was not felt to be flexible enough. They noted that generally providers of this nature gave a cost for accommodation and a per-hourly rate for support service, which gave greater transparency, and allowed the commissioner to adjust the support package or negotiate a reduction. However, we have seen detailed quotes from 16 Plus which reflect a highly detailed breakdown of costs associated with a placement.

5. Management Standards

16 Plus provided us with samples of their company documentation which comprised:

- Statement of Main Terms and Conditions of Employment (Keyworkers Employment Contract)
- Placement Agreement (contract between Local Authorities and 16 Plus)
- Health and Safety Checklist (for use by Keyworkers)
- Young Person Referral Form (for use by Local Authority Staff)
- Young Person's Agreement with 16 Plus (rules and regulations of the placement)
- Health and Safety Policy
- Employee Handbook (Rules regarding employment, leave, disciplinary procedures, rights etc.)
- Equal Opportunity Policy

5.1 Documentation in Place

The documentation in place at this stage is sufficient for 16 Plus to operate and complies with crucial elements of good practice. Documentation is specific to 16 Plus and the way in which it operates.

5.2 Additional Suggested Standards

There is some additional documentation that 16 Plus could review and implement to meet further standards.

- Quality Assurance Policy, that deals with how the company delivers its service and the standards that apply. 16 Plus could consider an external system such as ISO 9001, relevant standards from other care providers, or generate one internally. There is no mission statement presented.
- Induction and Training Policies. While we are aware of induction and training procedures, there is no documentation that details these processes. 16 Plus would do well to formalise their training and induction procedures.
- Environmental Policy. No documentation deals with how 16 Plus deals with its environmental responsibilities including recycling.
- Complaints Procedures. While a grievance procedure was noted in the Employee Handbook and Employment contract, there were no details of complaints procedures for use by local authority staff or young people. While there has not yet been any formal complaint pursued against 16 Plus, it would be good practice to prepare for such an event. One issue which complicates the matter is that in the event of a serious complaint there is currently no arbitrator with authority over and above 16 Plus management, other than the Courts. However, this is currently being looked into by management.

Overall 16 Plus meets all its statutory requirements and many good practice requirements regarding policies and procedures and written documentation. Filling existing current gaps would make provision for unusual events and help to manage any future risk, but are not required as a matter of urgency.

However, 16 Plus must recognise that it works within a sensitive environment with risk-averse customers (local authorities), and there would be definite commercial advantages to being able to provide additional documented evidence of management standards.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

We collected diversity data from the young people and Keyworkers we interviewed. This included ethnic origins, gender, religion, sexuality, dependents and marital status.

6.1 Keyworkers

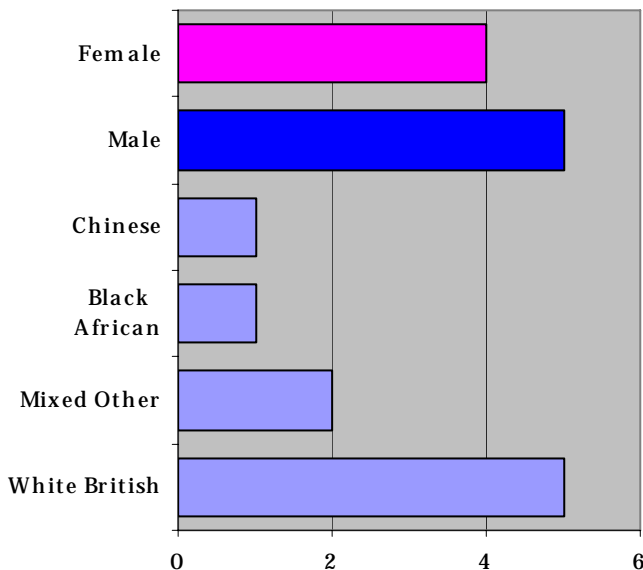
Even with a relatively small workforce, amongst the Keyworkers were people of widely diverse ethnic origins, religions, sexualities and backgrounds. The entire workforce interviewed was under the age of 50, and three quarters were under 40 years of age. Given the relatively small workforce it does not make sense to compare to larger datasets such as the population in South London.² Nonetheless, for reference we include the 2001 Census information below.

No Keyworker felt they had been discriminated against or treated differently by anyone within 16 Plus on the basis of their beliefs, ethnic origin, background, marital status, number of children or their sexuality.

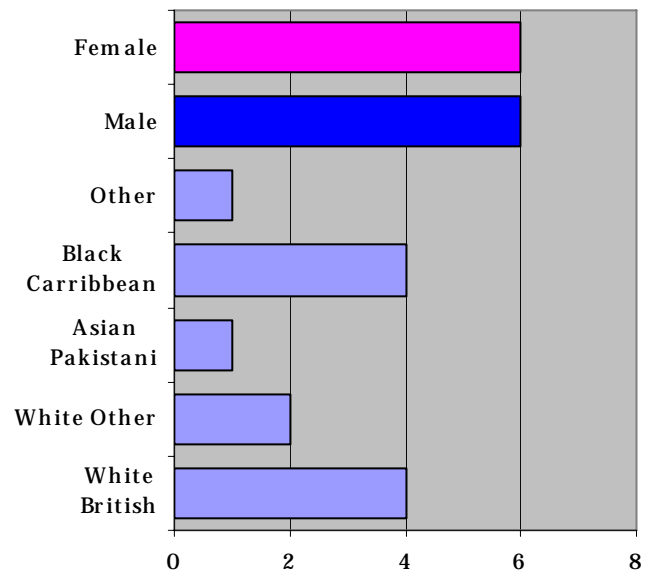
6.2 Young People

Equally, the young people came from a diverse range of backgrounds, and none felt that within 16 Plus they had been treated differently or discriminated against on grounds of their beliefs, ethnic origins, age, or gender.

Gender and Ethnic Origins - Young People Interviewed



Gender and Ethnic Origins - Key Workers Interviewed



² South London was chosen as a reference area in London given that the bulk of 16 Plus young people are from this area.

Gender and Ethnic Origins - South London 2001, Percent

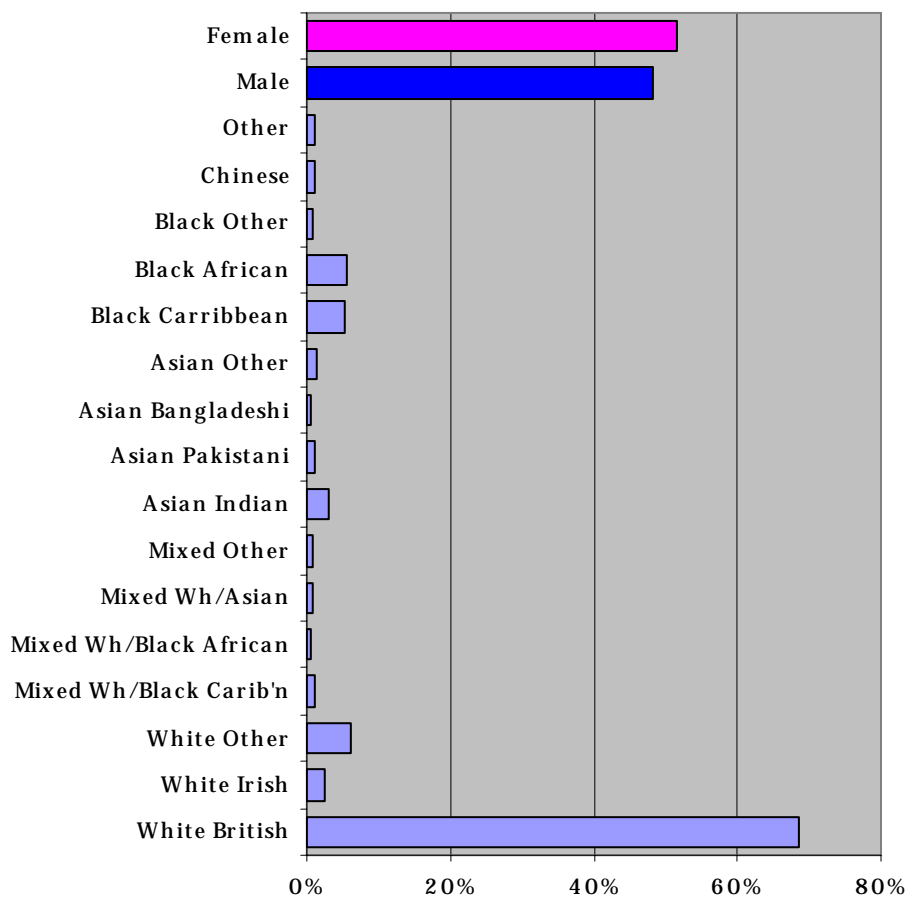


Chart 1, 2, 3: Gender and Ethnic Origins, Keyworkers, Young People, South London 2001.

7. Conclusions and Recommendations

7.1 Conclusions

Overall 16 Plus provides a high quality service to young people and to local authorities. Satisfaction with the work is highly rated amongst Keyworkers, and the young people themselves are overall very happy with their placement with 16 Plus. Keyworkers are crucial to the organisation's achievements in working with young people successfully and our fieldwork found that they were motivated by an overall desire to improve the lives of young people and to make a contribution to their well-being. Young people themselves also highly rated their Keyworkers and despite their difficult circumstances were pleased with their progress.

16 Plus was found to be operating well in its chosen area, and are a highly proactive organisation in dealing with change. Indeed, a number of recommendations from the drafting stage of this report, have already been addressed and implemented. However, there were a number of areas, in our opinion, where improvements could be made in the operations of 16 Plus and will require further implementation over time.

7.2 Recommendations

1. Keyworkers should have more contact with other Keyworkers in the organisation. This would improve transferability of skills and good practice between keyworkers. We believe this recommendation has already been partly implemented by increased formal training provision.
2. The organisational structure needs to take account of the wealth of existing experience within the Key Work team and create a promotional structure. This would better support the motivation and professional development of Keyworkers.
3. Key Work and the practices of Keyworkers should be better defined within the organisation. We found a number of Keyworkers were training to be counsellors and were, in effect, counselling their young people. While there may be a need for counselling, and we found no evidence of adverse effects, it is important that this practise is noted and performed with the knowledge and assent of all concerned. 16 Plus should avoid the possibility of risk in this respect.
4. 16 Plus management should consider further delegation of tasks and possibly promote management from the current pool of Keyworkers.
5. 16 Plus should investigate the possibility of using existing IT skills and knowledge to firm up its operations. Many tasks could be automated, and if the company takes on further roles in monitoring and providing feedback to local authorities, using a bespoke computer system would considerably speed up the process. There are additional possible advantages in using online systems for reporting by Keyworkers and

managing performance. Although we recognise that not everyone will have access to the internet, using this technology could improve circumstances for most.

6. We are aware of several voluntary organisations which also work with the same client group as 16 Plus. Valuable referral contacts could be made with the voluntary and community sector which could provide additional services to young people at no cost to organisations. This can include refugee community organisations for unaccompanied asylum seeker or refugee clients, as well as more mainstream organisations such as The Prince's Trust. Potential opportunities should be investigated further.
7. 16 Plus could implement a great deal of the recommendations above and instead of being considered one of many "in the market" for leaving support services could become the market leader and example of best practice. This would indeed be a unique selling point and where we suggest the organisation should develop strategically. The potential and influence that could come from being seen as "best practice" in leaving support services would be considerable and could even give the company influence over policy and regulation.
8. 16 Plus should continue to review its performance on an annual basis.

8. Appendices

8.1 Interview Schedule for Keyworkers

How long been with 16 Plus

How many hours you do a week last week, on average

How many young people you do Key Work with last week, on average

What sort of Key Work do you do?

What works well about Key Work? Is there a plan, needs assessment?

What you think of working with young people? What are the main problems in doing this line of work? What could be done to solve them?

What works well at the moment in working with the young people? How?

Whether you are optimistic about the prospects for the young people? Where will they be in a few years time? What works.

What you think about the management of 16 Plus? Where they do things well? Where things could be improved?

How would you generally describe staff morale? Only can talk for themselves.

Any problems you've had?

What you think of working with 16 Plus? Enjoy it? Motivated? Best thing? Worst thing?

Where you think the company is going?

Where will you be a few years time from now?

Any key messages you'd like to get to the management?

Anything else?

8.2 Interview Schedule for Young People

A. For Service Users

How you first came into contact with 16 Plus.

How long you have been placed with 16 Plus.

Were you working or in education? What about now?

Any worries or concerns you had before being placed.

How you feel the placement was conducted.

How long it took to put you in a flat/house.

What you think of your current accommodation. Any particular difficulties in relation to the accommodation.

What you think could be done to improve the accommodation?

Who your Keyworker is. How long have you been working with this Keyworker, and how many previous Keyworkers and duration of work with them.

What sort of things do you do in Key Work sessions. Are they useful to you?

Does your Keyworker turn up on time to appointed sessions? Do you?

Do you feel your Keyworker is professional towards you?

What do you think your Keyworker does particularly well?

Do you feel you have been fine without a Keyworker. Do you need a Keyworker.

Where do you think your Keyworker could improve?

Have you met any of the other staff of 16 Plus? Regarding what? What went well, needs improving?

Any other issues about your placement (local area, neighbours, transport, services?)

Overall what do you think about your time with 16 Plus? What key message would you like to get to them?

The future? What will you be doing in a few years time?

8.3 Interview Schedule for Commissioning Staff

What sort of need do you have for support and accommodation services for 16-18 year old care leavers?

How many young people do you think your borough has placed with accommodation and semi independent support service companies?

What percent of your young people are placed in semi-independent placements? (Break down –units like a children’s home. And own rooms, and freedom to come and go as they please so different from their own place.)

How long are placements generally?

What sort of factors influence your choice to use private companies rather than other alternatives? Are there alternatives? Why use a unit than stand-alone accommodation.

Do you need to get a certain number of quotes on services? Do you need a certain amount of “spread” between agencies? What is the rationale behind this?

When you select a company to take on a young person, what factors influence your choice of one company over another? Speed of placement, price, reputation, knowledge of previous work?

Do young people ever move from one placement to another? What factors necessitate this?

Do you have approved suppliers? How difficult is the process for becoming an approved suppliers?

What is the decision process with regards to placing a young person with a private company? I.e. from the point a young person is chosen to be placed with a company to the point he or she actually is?

What factors have influenced your decision to use 16 Plus? What other companies have you used?

How did you first hear about 16 Plus?

Have you seen the advertising literature? What do you think about it? Have you seen the website?

How have referral processes been generally handled? Was there anything that could have been improved?

What do you think about the accommodation provided by 16 Plus? Have you seen many places? Where could improvements be made?

What do you think about the outreach support work, or Key Work that is done with young people? Where do you think this can improve?

Overall, what have you found good about dealing with 16 Plus?

Overall, what areas do you think need improving?

How do you rate the following in relation to your work with 16 Plus? Communication by phone/ communication by email/ communication by letter.

How is your communication after you’ve made a placement with 16 Plus?

How is your liaison with 16 Plus during a placement?

How do you feel the young person relates to his or her placement with 16 Plus?

Are there any good things about a placement with 16 Plus that compares favourably to other suppliers?

Is there anything about placements with 16 Plus that could be improved?

How would you rate 16 Plus compared to other suppliers?

Anything else?

8.4 Diversity and Satisfaction Survey for Keyworkers

Equality Data for 16 Plus Keyworkers - Confidential

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Ethnic Origin:

White		Pakistani	
British		Bangladeshi	
Irish		Other.....	
Other		Black or Black British	
Mixed		Caribbean	
White and Black Caribbean		African	
White and Black African		Other	
White and Asian		
Other.....		Chinese or other ethnic group	
Asian or Asian British		Chinese	
Indian		Other.....	

Sexuality (optional):

Marital Status:

Number Dependents:

Faith/Religion:

In the context of 16+ ever been treated differently or less favourably:

Key Satisfaction Data

	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neutral	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Management:					
Local Authority Staff					
Progress of Young People					
Overall 16 + Experience					

8.5 Diversity and Satisfaction Survey for Young People

Equality Data for 16 Plus Young People - Confidential

Name:

Gender:

Age:

Ethnic Origin:

White		Pakistani	
British		Bangladeshi	
Irish		Other.....	
Other		Black or Black British	
Mixed		Caribbean	
White and Black Caribbean		African	
White and Black African		Other	
White and Asian		
Other.....		Chinese or other ethnic group	
Asian or Asian British		Chinese	
Indian		Other.....	

Sexuality (optional):

Marital Status:

Number Dependents:

Faith/Religion:

In the context of 16+ ever been treated differently or less favourably:

Key Satisfaction Data

	Very Satisfied	Fairly Satisfied	Neutral	Fairly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
Accommodation					
Keyworker					
16+ Management					
Local Authority Staff					
Personal Development so far					
Overall with 16+					