

Quarriers Coaching for Life: An Independent Evaluation

Introduction

In 2018, we asked young people, Lifecoaches and workers from other services to let us know about their experiences with the Coaching for Life service. We collected this information in three different ways.

- 1) We asked young people, Quarriers staff, and workers in other services who knew about Coaching for Life, to complete an online survey telling us about their experiences.
- 2) We asked Lifecoaches to complete a short questionnaire with young people when they first became involved with Coaching for Life, and again when they were ready to end work with the service. This questionnaire asked for information about housing, education and mental wellbeing.
- 3) We also asked young people, Lifecoaches and other Quarriers staff to meet with us in person and talk to us about Coaching for Life.

You may have shared your experience of Coaching for Life by talking to us in person, completing the questionnaire or taking part in the online survey. You may have chosen to take part in more than one of these approaches. The names of people we spoke to are confidential, but we have written this short report to share the main things they told us with you.

Why did we do this work?

The Coaching for Life team asked us to help them. They agreed with their funders (Big Lottery and Quarriers) that they would try to explore and understand how the service works. We thought it was important to find out how the service is experienced by young people and workers involved with Coaching for Life. We also wanted to find out about what difference Coaching for Life has made to young people's lives. For example, we asked: How has Coaching for Life made a difference to young people's mental health, their education or the place where they live? We hoped that this would help us to understand what has worked well and what could be better.

What were the main things that people told us about Coaching for Life?

The workers at Coaching for Life use a flexible but consistent approach.

- The flexible approach means that your Lifecoach will work with you on anything that is important to you and will improve your access to opportunities.
- Consistent means that your Lifecoach will stay involved in your life for as long as you need them.
- When you feel comfortable with some of the goals you have achieved, you might choose to work on something else that is important to you or something that you might be interested in. For example, you may begin by focusing on your health and then move to thinking about your education or training.

The Coaching for Life provides young people with an experience made up of choice, acceptance and partnership.

- Your Lifecoach will encourage you to make choices about what you want to work on, how often you would like to meet, and where you would like to meet, etc.
- You might be asked to decide if you want to meet one-to-one or take part in group activities.
- The Coaching for Life team accept where you are at in life. Lifecoaches will take their time getting to know you and to build up trust. Coaching for Life accept that making changes can be very difficult and will take things slowly.
- Lifecoaches work in partnership with young people to help them understand what is important to them and what opportunities they might be interested in.
- Coaching for Life also helps to build partnerships between young people and other services, e.g. helping to keep health appointments, work with employment agencies, or build relationships with education or social work.
- Young people told us that Coaching for Life provided help with many needs. For example, apprenticeships, education, physical health, mental health and housing.

Coaching for Life improved outcomes for young people that provided them wide and long term benefits.

- Young people and other professionals told us that Coaching for Life improved outcomes for young people leading to wider benefits across many life areas. For instance, relationships, feeling safe, feeling happy,

learning, mental health and understanding how to get support.

- Young people and professionals told us that they had developed long term life skills such as budgeting and finance.
- Young people told us that being able to see the changes that they had made to their lives with the help of Lifecoaches allowed them to look forward into the future.

What else did we find out?

We heard from young people and professionals that Coaching for Life worked so well because it was designed to be flexible.

- The service is successful because it can fit in with what is important to young people.
- It is important that Lifecoaches are people who are professional, and can connect with young people and what is important to them.
- It is also important for young people to be able to keep in contact with their Lifecoach for as long as they need them.

We heard from young people and professionals that in the future there were some things that could be better.

- Coaching for Life did very important work, but sometimes it would be helpful to have more Lifecoaches.
- In large areas, it can be difficult for Lifecoaches to keep in touch with other professionals who work to help young people
- It can be difficult for other professionals to know the ways

that Coaching for Life can help young people.

What happens next?

We have written a longer and more detailed report about this, which is on our website. You can find it by going to the CELCIS website (www.celcis.org) and searching in the "Knowledge Bank". The full title of the report is *Quarriers Coaching for Life: An Independent Evaluation*. The authors are Charlene Plunkett and Nadine Fowler.

The longer report was shared with managerial staff at Quarriers.

Thank you!

We would like to say a big thank you to everyone who shared their views with us as part of this work, and in particular the young people who gave their time to talk with us. Their contributions have been hugely important and valuable to this evaluation.

What if I have questions about this?

This evaluation was conducted by Charlene Plunkett and Nadine Fowler. If you have any questions about it, you can contact Nadine, or ask someone to contact her for you. The details are below.

Nadine can only answer questions about this evaluation work – if you have questions about something different, you should speak to your foster carer, key worker, or someone else you trust.

Contact details:

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