

## Case Study #4

# EVOLVE YP, STAFFORDSHIRE (UK) - SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE

Evolve YP, an employee-owned organisation, was established in 2009 by a group of former Staffordshire County Council employees to deliver services for children and young people who are in care, or are leaving the care system.



## APPROACH

Having worked for many years as part of the local authority, these employees decided to 'spin out' from Staffordshire County Council in search of greater autonomy, renewed professional motivation and real ownership. The social enterprise operates on a not-for-profit basis under contract to Staffordshire County Council, supporting more than 150 children and young people aged between 12 and 25.

15 staff work in the Practice, consisting of 6 social workers, 5 personal advisers, 1 project worker and 3 office staff. The establishment of the mutual has brought about substantial changes in the way the social workers conduct their work. Decisions are made closer to the young people, reducing time spent chasing authorisation from management. This approach encourages creativity and promotes good practice. Its achievements include providing bespoke care packages for young people over the age of 18, the establishment of Solve 24/7, an emergency duty service, and the creation of the Involve youth forum.



## IMPACT

Partners in Staffordshire's new social work practice have cited improving professional autonomy and providing greater continuity of care for young people as key motivations in joining the organisation. Personal adviser Tracy Dean said that "we hope that every member of the practice will have some idea of every young person, of their background and their situation. We want young people to be able to come into the building and have someone who knows their situation."

*"The benefits for practitioners lie within the satisfaction which comes from being able to guide and direct our own services to meet the needs of looked-after children and care leavers. The benefits and rewards do not only lie within statistics but are reflected in the smiles of our young people."*

*Donna Fallows, Practice Manager at Evolve YP*



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