

External Witness Biographies - 30th January 2014

Stepahead Support

Operating since 1995, Stepahead Support has provided services in Kent, Bexley and Medway. Our mission is to 'make a positive difference to the lives of children, young people, their families and communities through tailored, specialist support.' We provide support, advice and guidance to children, young people and families who are experiencing difficulties in their lives and where this adversely impacts upon their ability to thrive and achieve their full potential. Our preventative work avoids the likelihood of young people entering the care system or requiring long term statutory intervention. Our crisis work supports young people and families with the most appropriate intensive support for their individual needs to bring about long-term positive achievements.

Our activities target young people at risk in a variety of settings including those living at home/foster care, leaving care, homeless, in council/private accommodation and supported accommodation. Our specialist support enables them to overcome personal and social problems that can cause or lead to social exclusion. Our person centred approach effectively engages the whole family where possible through placing family members at the centre of support, tailoring support to individual need. Using this holistic, solution focused approach Stepahead Support endeavours to engage the whole community around the young person including their family, peers and neighbourhoods. Stepahead is able to deliver support in a range of settings including the young person's/family home, school, one of our centres and within the community.

Stepahead Support offers a portfolio of services in Kent including:

- **Family Mediation** - The mediation service is commissioned by KCC and is a County wide service. The service is accessed solely through the CAF process with referrals screened by the manager before allocation to a mediator by the coordinator. This is a pure mediation service and not a generic family support service. The interventions that Stepahead deliver with families are grounded in a holistic and family focused approach to assessment, planning, delivery of interventions, case review and case closure. Solution focused models are applied to evidence progress with families and in aggregating progress with all families.
- **Young Healthy Minds** – This service is commissioned by KCC as a County wide service and delivered as part of a consortium approach. Stepahead provides support in Canterbury, Dover and Thanet. Staffing is made up of qualified therapists and counsellors and experience support workers. YHM is accessed

through the CAF process. The YHM service objectives are to support young people with their emotional health and wellbeing, in order to meet their developmental milestones and support them to achieve their potential.

Attending the Select Committee today is: Carolyn Mcvitte, Managing Director.