

# Final report of the social pedagogy pilot programme: development and implementation

Claire Cameron, Pat Petrie, Valerie Wigfall,  
Stefan Kleipoedszus, Alexandra Jasper

Thomas Coram Research Unit,  
Institute of Education, University of London

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Ricarda Borchert	Michael Kirsch	Birte Roedenbeck
Susanne Buchmüller	Stephanie Koch	Oliver Ronning
Charlene Daut	Janine Kriesels	Diana Schmidt
Ulrich Draude	Claudia Krueger	Steffani Schraufnagl
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Frauke Flemmig	Lina Malten	Sinah Spiegel
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# Executive Summary

## Introduction

In 2008, the government commissioned Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education University of London to develop and implement a pilot programme in order to determine the impact of, and best method for, introducing a social pedagogic approach in residential children's homes in line with the Care Matters White Paper's commitment (DCSF 2007). The intentions were modest - to make some 'ripples' in the world of residential childcare. This report is of the development and implementation part of the pilot programme.

There are around 2,000 children's homes in England, run by private for profit, independent and public sector employers and around 6,500 young people are in residence at any one time (SFR 2009). Since 2002, children's homes, as with other services for children, have been regulated by, and inspected against, national minimum standards, which, although not intended to be a benchmark of practice, or representing standardisation of provision (DH 2002), arguably implied just that. Clough, Bullock and Ward (2006) viewed the requirement to meet bureaucratic standards as risking the undervaluing of important and complex issues of quality and process. It was in this context that the pilot programme took place.

As an established tradition in continental Europe, social pedagogy is often understood as 'education in its broadest sense' (Petrie et al. 2009) - an educational approach to social issues. Its breadth can be seen in its concern for the whole person as emotional, thinking and physical beings, promoting their active engagement in decisions about their own lives and as members of society. It is a discipline that takes account of the complexity of different social contexts. In continental European countries social pedagogues typically have a bachelor's degree, combining academic knowledge, with practical, organisational and communication skills and often, the expressive arts and/or outdoor adventure/ environmental activities. Social pedagogues working in residential care in continental European countries expect to exercise a range of responsibilities both inward looking to the home itself and outward looking to the interface between the children's home and the wider society to which the young person belongs.

The pilot programme was designed around three groups of children's homes or 'pilot sites' with differing social pedagogic input, ranging from social pedagogues trained overseas but working to residential care worker job titles, to social pedagogues working to social pedagogue job titles with, in addition, part of their time devoted to training and awareness raising activities. Children's homes were selected for their stated support of the programme objectives and their willingness to learn about social pedagogy from the social pedagogues. Forty eight social pedagogues were recruited through employer's recruitment procedures although some left before the end of the programme period.

## Findings

This was a highly complex project that drew attention to many structural and organisational aspects of residential care as well as making visible the distinctive contribution of social pedagogy.

Introducing a graduate profession with longer and higher level academic knowledge, professional skills and the ability to relate theory to practice represented a significant challenge to residential care in terms of a mismatch with the existing workforce, including their pay and conditions. Often, residential workers valued their own experience over the pedagogues' qualifications and this made it hard for the social pedagogues to be seen as role models.

In sites where there was reorganisation of services, changes of management personnel and financial difficulties or threat of closure, there was uncertainty for the social pedagogues and lack of ownership of the pilot programme. Where management remained stable, pilot sites were more likely to be successful.

Social pedagogues drew attention to the practice consequences of what they saw as the very hierarchical organisation of staff within pilot sites, which devalued practitioners' decision making. This was in contrast to continental European residential care, where the norm is democratic decision making within relatively flat hierarchies, allowing staff to take on a higher level of responsibility, commensurate with their qualifications. They also reported that recording requirements in some cases diverted from work with young people; some introduced methods of recording that supported critical reflection. More time was said to be needed for reflection during handovers in order to help staff relate theory to practice.

One of the distinctive contributions of social pedagogues was their theoretically informed practical and relational work with young people in the pilot sites. While the everyday life of children and staff in children's homes is very different from that of an everyday family, with frequent changes and disruptions, the social pedagogues worked to improve 'everyday activities' and to initiate new ones. Much was achieved but for some this was not an easy task. Constraints encountered included prevailing cultures that were not conducive to change, staff beliefs about priorities, lack of resources, lack of support from social workers, and procedural requirements. In some instances the social pedagogues and the managers had to find creative ways around these barriers.

Although not all the social pedagogues employed were equally capable of working with the English system of residential care, the role of management was crucial in facilitating changes to practice. They occupied a key role at the hub of the network of stakeholders that included young people, staff, managers and external agencies. Any introduction of social pedagogic concepts and methods required a high level of constructive and sustained engagement by the manager. Successful sites were characterised by a 'guiding coalition' of individuals sharing a commitment to engaging with social pedagogic ideas and methods, led by the manager, endorsed by the employer and stimulated by the social pedagogues and, in some cases, practitioners. Managers who were wedded to a narrower interpretation of procedures, minimum standards and associated guidance for practice were less able to support the introduction of social pedagogues, both as practitioners and as the source of new ideas.

While team work is both fundamental to social pedagogic approaches to practice and highly valued in English residential care, the social pedagogues believed that there was a lack of active promotion of team work in some of the pilot sites. They thought team work could be further developed by facilitating more opportunities for team based analysis of practice through critical reflection, by developing a shared value base and coherence for practice, for example through shared involvement preparing a home's statement of purpose. The therapeutic community approach to team work was considered to come closest to that of social pedagogy, with its use of structures and points in the day for sharing understandings, and with all members valued and trusted. Social pedagogues' input produced changes in some teams, improving communication, building trust and confidence and encouraging members to value each other's contributions.

Social pedagogues argued that a strong team, equipped with knowledge and skills, working in a holistic way with children and young people enables staff to adopt a broader range of advisory roles that potentially streamlines the need for multiple numbers of external professionals working with young people in residential care. The expertise of staff teams can contribute to multi-agency work beyond the home, given the unique role of residential workers in knowing the young people, and their everyday lives.

The pilot programme included work with external agencies, through giving some social pedagogues a responsibility to raise awareness of social pedagogy within and beyond the pilot site and through a highly regarded programme of seminars and events for a wide range of children's services staff and artist practitioners. Combining the role of awareness raising and working as a social pedagogue proved to be difficult. In some homes social pedagogues were left largely alone to progress the work, with disappointing results, but in some there were highly impressive developments, particularly where outside agencies were involved with delivering more formal social pedagogy training and there were employer wide initiatives in parallel with the pilot site. Successful work with external agencies generally called for management preparedness to promote exposure, widespread training of staff in social pedagogy, time, resources and professional competence to spread the word, backed up by active support from a guiding coalition to steer the campaign.

Overall, developing and running the pilot programme has helped stimulate interest in social pedagogy, but its introduction into English residential care is not straightforward. No one method of those tried in the pilot programme would appear to be the 'best' for introducing social pedagogy. All three groups included homes which integrated social pedagogy into existing practice, homes where learning was blocked through challenge or confrontation, and homes which embraced change through mutual learning, as revealed in new ways of working. Factors contributing to successful working with social pedagogy appear to be:

- Experience, confidence and skills of social pedagogues
- Knowledge of social pedagogy among management at all levels and willingness to learn and be challenged

- Wider support from employer organisation and willingness to invest own resources into training, networking, thinking and reflection
- Not being wedded to one's own philosophy to the point of exclusion of other ways of thinking
- Stability of managerial and the staff team, with commitment to debate and reflect and to live with uncertainty as a positive context for the work.

In the short term, the pilot programme has shown what can be achieved with overseas trained professionals. The longer term project is to develop the educational, organisational and policy conditions for social pedagogy to flourish in England. This probably means a combination of investment in higher education level training, workplace based training, scrutiny of organisational practices and quality assurance procedures, and, quite critically, stepping into the shoes of young people and taking their perspectives into account.

## Chapter 1: Introduction

The Social Pedagogy Pilot Programme in children's residential care was one of the pilots included within the White Paper Care Matters (DCSF 2007). Research evidence found that young people in residential care in two other European countries had a better quality of life and outcomes, and that in these countries social pedagogy provided the dominant framework for policy, training and practice (Petrie et al. 2006). Given this, and the enduring difficulties of ensuring high quality care and education for young people in residential care in England, the aim of the pilot programme was to examine the impact of, and best method for, implementing a social pedagogic approach in residential children's homes, which ran from 2008 - 2011. In the absence of training and education in social pedagogy in the UK, the pilot programme was designed around the employment of overseas trained social pedagogues working in children's homes in England, supported by a team based at Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU). A more specific training element was introduced into the project in 2010, which involved a series of workshops and seminars termed 'wider reach events'. These were designed to introduce, and debate, social pedagogic ways of thinking about practice, including creative expression in practice, in English children's services and to assist the employed social pedagogues in their task of explaining their approach.

The current report is of the development and implementation phases of this pilot programme. The evaluation phase will be reported by the evaluation team, led by Professors David Berridge and Nina Biehal (Universities of Bristol and York respectively) in 2011. The outcome of the pilot programme will be used to inform Ministers' decisions about whether, and, if so, how, to introduce a pedagogic approach in residential children's homes more widely.

The context in which residential children's operate is worth noting here. There are around 2,000 children's homes, forming one of a range of institutional settings for young people (Clough, Bullock and Ward 2006). Nearly a quarter of those who are looked after and aged 10 – 18 are in residential care (ibid.), representing around 6,500 young people (SFR 2009). Children's homes are regulated by, and inspected against, national minimum standards, introduced in 2002, which were intended as a minimum, rather than 'best possible' practice (DH 2002:3). However, Clough et al. (2006) argue that a minimum standards approach raises the risk of a kind of standardisation, where the task of ensuring that bureaucratic standards are met is valued over the more complex and fine tuned issues of quality and process. This regulatory context was one commented upon by social pedagogues in the pilot programme.

However, this report comes at a time of accelerating interest in developing a social pedagogic approach to care and education practice in a range of services for children, young people and families in the UK. Here we review social pedagogy as a field and the various ways in which social pedagogy is being taken forward in the UK in general before turning to focus in more detail on the pilot programme in residential care in particular.

## What has social pedagogy to offer the development of services for looked after children in the UK?

### A brief definition

Social pedagogy in the UK is becoming an increasingly familiar term in children's services and organisations in the UK. Interest in it began to arise from at least the 1980s, onwards, as a result of professional and research interchange with colleagues in continental Europe. These interchanges often focussed not on social pedagogy directly, but on the services in which social pedagogues work, such as early childhood education and care, youth work and work with various groups of children and adults in challenging life circumstances. Since around the late 1990s, research and development has focused more directly on social pedagogy itself.

Pedagogy is a term that relates to learning. For English speakers, it is typically used to discuss matters that arise in formal education, teaching and learning in the classroom, college or university. Social pedagogy, as used in much of continental Europe, has a different meaning, with three distinct but related areas: policy, practice and theory. A definition at the policy level is policy that addresses social issues by, broadly speaking, educational means – rather than, for example, via benefit, fiscal, housing or justice measures.

In continental Europe social pedagogy is an established tradition across teacher education, youth work, early childhood education, community education and social work, to name but a few. Its linguistic origins are Greek, and refer to a role of accompanying or being alongside boys while they were being educated as a guide to their moral upbringing as well as assisting in the interpretation of formal knowledge. Its 19<sup>th</sup> Century origins were in the social and economic upheaval of Germany, and the search for educational solutions to the question of social integration. For social pedagogic thinkers, education has two aspects. It is both 'person-centred and socio-political: it provides opportunities for personal development towards independence, but also has a socialising function in reinforcing social solidarity and interdependence' (Eichsteller and Holtoff 2011:61). Social pedagogy is fundamentally concerned with four aspects of the human condition through its practice. These are:

- A multi-dimensional and holistic understanding of *well-being*;
- *Learning* from a standpoint of the 'competent' or 'rich' child, where education does not impose but facilitates children's capacity to think for themselves;
- Authentic and trusting *relationships* between professionals and young people that acknowledge and work with both the authoritative and affectionate, as well as retaining a sense of the private; and
- *Empowerment* or promoting active engagement in one's own life and within society, and as such is fundamentally concerned with children's rights and developing the skills for living in a democracy.

Although there is an emphasis on education, for social pedagogy 'education' must be seen in its broadest sense, and it is at this point that the overlap with children's residential care becomes clear:

there is little or no division between 'care' as in looking after young people and furthering their wellbeing, and 'education'. In the continental European social pedagogic tradition, residential provision for children and young people was and is for the most part concerned with integration into society, both through skills and formal knowledge, as well as being a living example of participative democracies.

As a socially situated approach to practice, in which the prime resource is the professionals who practice, for social pedagogy to flourish a great deal of attention has to be paid to values. Practitioners develop their values through training and renew them through dialogue and reflection whilst in practice. An organising concept for social pedagogy is that of *Haltung*, which roughly translates as 'mindset'. This is based on 'our values, our philosophy, our notions about morality and our concept of mankind. All of these affect how we conceptualise the people we interact with, which in turn affects how we behave towards them and colours their behaviour towards us. In social pedagogy, *Haltung* expresses an emotional connectedness to other people and a profound respect for their human dignity' (Eichsteller and Holtoff 2011: 54). One of the roles of social pedagogic practitioners is to engage with developing their mindset and values in conjunction with others.

In sum, social pedagogy is a complex and ambitious field of theory and practice, with implications for wider children's services policy and the organisation of services. There is a deep sense of connection with wider cultural norms and practices around the valuing of childhood and children which can lead to the conclusion that without that cultural foundation, social pedagogy cannot have a claim on professional practice. There are, however, sufficient examples of UK traditions in youth work, social work, school education, early childhood education and community work to suggest that the theory and practice of social pedagogy has had and does have a claim on service provision and professional practice, even if it has rarely been named as such. In pockets of practice such as Camphill-Steiner, therapeutic communities and some mainstream residential care provision, for example, there are professionals familiar with concepts and methods also found in social pedagogy and drawing on a similar knowledge base. This familiarity is not, however, widespread. What social pedagogy as a named discipline offers is a coherent body of theory and values that addresses many of the concerns of UK children's services, particularly as articulated in the five outcomes for the English (but with variants in other parts of the UK) Every Child Matters framework (DfES 2003). For residential care, social pedagogy offers a framework for professional practice that is based on both formal knowledge of sociology, cultural studies, psychology and so on, and communication, organisational and creative skills including the skills required to work between theory and practice and with the personal and professional. Social pedagogy implies a professionalisation of the residential care workforce and a revaluing of the role of residential care in addressing the particular characteristics of young people who live there and the conditions of their lives.

Below we summarise the distinctive features of a social pedagogic approach. It should be noted, however, that social pedagogy is not a tick box, competency drive profession or body of knowledge. It works with complexity and frequently the answer to a question is 'it depends on the context'. This makes it difficult to integrate into instrumental approaches to learning; being a social pedagogue is about 'working on your self' and is not readily reducible to a collection of techniques.

## **Social pedagogy practice**

**The whole child:** Social pedagogues work with the whole child, aware that children think, feel, have a physical, spiritual, social and creative existence, and that all of these characteristics are in interaction in the person. This approach is in contrast to the more procedural methods used in working with children, sometimes found among some English care workers (Petrie, et al 2006). And while pedagogues seek to work with the whole child they also bring themselves as a whole person, to their practice. It is quite common for them to refer to bringing 'head, hands and heart' to the work.

**The heart:** Social pedagogues should bring their hearts to their work as ethical and emotional beings. They are aware of their own emotional reactions to the work and how these can affect their relationships and communications with children and others. They treat others with respect and aim to build security, trust and self esteem through their relationships with other people. They empathise with others and try to see their point of view knowing that this will often be different from their own – they sometimes speak of this as different people having different 'life worlds'.

**The hands:** Pedagogues see their work as practical, relationships are formed in the course of everyday practical, ordinary activities such as preparing food, taking children to school. These are not treated as merely mundane activities, but as the medium for the relationship.

**The head:** Social pedagogy practice develops through reflection. Practitioners assess their work in the light of theory and self-knowledge and on this basis, make decisions about taking the work forward, according to the best interests of children and young people.

**The 3 Ps:** Social pedagogues sometimes speak of the '3 Ps', the Professional, the Personal and the Private. As professionals they are aware of their responsibilities towards others and they bring professional knowledge, skills and attitudes to their work. At the same time, they see themselves as people: fellow human beings with colleagues and children, not afraid to express feelings, or talk about their lives or share humour and fun. But they also judge which matters are private and should remain so, deciding what is for sharing and what would be inappropriate to share.

**Sharing the Living Space:** Social pedagogues see themselves as sharing the same 'living space' as the people they work with. They try to get away from feelings of 'us and them' between different professionals and between adults and children ensuring that, whatever the setting, a group values all its members. In the 'living space' all group members are equally persons, with a right to participate and be heard. Pedagogues work 'in dialogue' with children and colleagues, believing that different perspectives make for richness and creativity.

**The common third:** An important concept of social pedagogy is that of the common third - a mutual focus and the medium in which relationships are formed. Sometimes these are creative activities, sometimes more everyday tasks and sometimes just playing and having fun together.

**Teamwork:** Social pedagogues value teamwork and the contribution of other people in bringing up

children. They try to form good working relationships with other professionals and members of the local community, and especially with parents and carers.

**Role models:** In all aspects of their profession, social pedagogues are aware of being role models for the adults and children they work with, especially in the respect they show to others, their attentive listening and supportive responses to other group members.

### **Young people's views**

Young people's views about the characteristics of those who care for them when they are looked after by foster carers or residential workers are in large agreement with the characteristics of social pedagogy. Cameron, McQuail and Petrie (2007:24) found that the young people consulted for their study, all of whom had been in care as children, wanted carers who were able to make judgements in the context of individual circumstances and not apply automatic rules and procedures, who 'gave priority to 'being there' for them, both in terms of physical presence, providing welcome and warmth, and being available for physical comfort such as a hug, if they felt the young person could accept it'. Careful listening, and getting to know young people as an individual was very important, as was being scrupulously fair and ethical in their use of information about young people, and in their treatment of the young person. The young people said they wanted their carers to have high expectations of them, especially in education, but also as individuals with talents, not just problems. Finally, professional carers should not collude with the societal stigma attached to young people who are looked after away from birth families.

The views of young people who were resident in the pilot programme children's homes were included in the evaluation study, and were not part of the remit of the development and implementation activity reported here. Many social pedagogues told the pilot programme team that they did not introduce themselves to the young people as social pedagogues, and the young people were not necessarily aware of their different approach. But there were instances when they were aware of something different. In one case, the social pedagogues stood out because they were both blond and spoke with accents, but the young people also commented to them that they were 'quite human' or 'normal' simply because they stood closer to them. Another social pedagogue talked of how in the beginning the young people had described her as 'weird' because she was not afraid to give them a hug when they needed warmth or understanding, as well as listening to. Comments from three young people emphasised the learning and the fun to be had when living alongside social pedagogues: 'They are multicultural so we get to learn about other cultures;' 'I like the new experience evenings such as yoga and reflexology;' 'They have different accents'; 'They do things a bit slower, maybe 'cause they talk in another language'; she is 'good at organising things, she took me to London. I really enjoyed the ballet in London;' she 'has been doing yoga with us, that's been fun;' and 'she did more stuff with us ... more activities with us than the normal staff did'.

Some young people did not connect with the social pedagogues, and some social pedagogues found it difficult to form relations with young people across the cultural divide and in the context of very different settings. However, there were some striking examples of enduring trust relations between

social pedagogues and young people. For instance, a social pedagogue formed a relationship with a young woman described as very difficult for any of the staff to connect with, and taught her Swedish. After the young woman left the home, she returned frequently to see the social pedagogue and on one occasion wrote her a postcard in Swedish. The social pedagogues discussed this example in terms of a commitment from the heart, the deployment of professional and personal dimensions of the self, an ability to contextualise and understand the individual and her circumstances, and a methodological persistence to find media through which to connect with the young woman. Thinking more broadly, the social pedagogues discussed their contribution to practice with young people as ‘analysing the thought behind the action’ in terms of what the action would bring for children’s wellbeing.

### **Taking forward social pedagogy in the UK**

When the residential care pilot programme was launched in 2007, relatively little was known about how to introduce social pedagogy into children’s homes or other services for children and young people. Moreover, little was being done. Since 2007, there have been a substantial number of practice related training, modules and programmes in further and higher education developments, and networking opportunities, which are outlined in Appendix 1. Moreover, as a result of the pilot programme, several children’s homes have extended their recruitment of social pedagogues to other homes within their group or used social pedagogy as the foundation approach of new homes being opened. St Christopher’s Fellowship and Heartwood Care Group are, at the time of writing, two examples of this. Perhaps most importantly, the potential for social pedagogy within foster care is now being actively pursued through The Fostering Network. This take up of interest in social pedagogy indicates that the pilot programme has been an important stimulus among employers and other stakeholders about ways to generate coherence of values, principles and methods among those working with looked after children and young people.

### **A note on the project lifecycle**

Before turning to the main report, it is worth outlining features of the lifecycle of the pilot programme. The programme involved recruiting social pedagogues who had been trained in other countries to work in children’s homes in England. There were three broad phases of work which overlapped in time. We can refer to these as: i) *initial preparation* and setting up; ii) an *early days* of employment phase; and iii) *becoming established*. There is also a fourth phase, which applies to some participants, of *leaving the project*. As with all project cycles, each phase has its own momentum, of periods of intense enthusiasm, sustained energy, low ebbs, and, sometimes, disenchantment. An assessment by the pilot programme project team of progress in mid 2010 concluded that in virtually all pilot programme cases, early enthusiasm gave way to disappointment and difficulty, followed by a period of sustained hard work and a more constructive phase towards the end of the project period. As children’s homes joined the programme at different times, and worked to different agendas and dynamics, the precise position on this lifecycle varied at any one moment in time, but all appeared to go through this cycle. Clearly, establishing the merits of a project depends to a certain extent on the point in the project cycle at which it is measured and indeed some of the most positive impacts may be seen after the formal ending of the project period.

## The rest of this report

Overall, the aim in this report is to synthesise findings on the experience of developing and implementing the pilot programme from the point of view of identifying conditions for professional practice that appear likely to have a positive impact on young people's lives in residential care. In keeping with a pilot, the intention was to 'see what would happen' or 'make ripples' in the assumptions underpinning the practice and organisation of residential care. We are interested in the ways in which the social pedagogues employed in practice both constituted a challenge to, and actively challenged, accepted practices in residential care, as a way of contributing to a programme of improvement in English care and education for seriously disadvantaged young people. To this end we have organised this report in the following way: Chapter 2 discusses the way in which the project was carried out. It makes the point that setting up such a project and facilitating an evaluation of it were often conflicting objectives as conditions on the ground demanded compromises on research design. We then turn to a series of thematic chapters that discuss different aspects of life in children's homes and how the social pedagogues, and managers and other staff, contributed to that. Practice in children's homes takes place in a social, economic and cultural context, and in a framework that is determined by local conditions, as well as national policies, and, sometimes, theoretical frameworks with an international knowledge base. Employing social pedagogues frequently shone a light on those frameworks, contexts and conditions, and Chapter 3 examines the structural and organisational issues brought to the project's attention. We then turn, in Chapter 4, to the role of the social pedagogues in one of their distinctive areas of work: valuing everyday life with young people. Chapter 5 looks at the role of management and the varying styles and interpretations of management responsibilities. Staying at the level of the overall system, Chapter 6 reports on the issue of team work, which is central to social pedagogic approaches, and also given much emphasis in English care and education practice. The final thematic chapter reflects on the work that the social pedagogues did to raise awareness of social pedagogy both within staff groups and with external agencies. We conclude, in Chapter 8, with an overall analysis of the potential of children's homes as a site for developing social pedagogy and offer an analysis on the most appropriate methods of doing this.

## Chapter 2: Method

### Introduction

In order to address the question of ‘best method’ of introducing social pedagogy, the project design consisted of three groups with differing characteristics, and a fourth, comparison group, with no social pedagogy input.

- Group 1 comprised four homes in which social pedagogues who had qualified in continental Europe were already working as residential care workers. In these homes, the pedagogues would have access to support from the TCRU team but would have no specific mandate for introducing change.
- Group 2 were eight homes with a higher level of intervention. Each of these homes was to recruit at least two and up to six qualified social pedagogues primarily from Denmark or Germany, as these were the countries for which the programme team had most knowledge of the qualification base for residential care. They were to work for the duration of the project (two years) to a project social pedagogue job description, with the agreement of management and staff to explore and attempt to implement a pedagogic approach.
- Group 3 represented a training model, working between practice and training and the wider context of residential care. In this group, each of six homes were to recruit two qualified social pedagogues, the aim being to work as social pedagogues with the home’s residential care staff for approximately two thirds of their time, like the Group 2 homes. For the other third of their time they were to work with staff in the immediate network of services with whom residential homes operate (for example local authority managers and politicians, social workers, teachers, police, youth workers, health staff) in a training, support and advisory capacity. This one third time was supported by a salary subsidy and was supernumerary.

The rationale behind developing the three models was to provide an opportunity to compare the relative contribution of social pedagogues working alongside residential care staff in different roles (Groups 1 and 2) with those working in a training and staff development capacity and an awareness raising capacity through networking in the local area (Group 3). The comparison homes would ideally employ some qualified social workers as residential care staff (not as managers), given that their qualifications would most closely approximate those of the social pedagogues employed in the Group 1 and 2 homes, allowing a comparison to be made between the impact of a relevant degree level qualification and a qualification in social pedagogy. Furthermore, wherever possible, it was intended that the comparison homes should be identified at the recruitment stage in an endeavour to have homes broadly similar to the other homes in the pilot.

### Recruitment of homes

The overall aim at the outset of the pilot programme was to recruit homes for participation across the three groups, broadly representing the general distribution of children’s homes in terms of sector, size and purpose, and the demographic contexts in which they were located. Thus, homes were to be

selected in rural and urban locations, and in locations with young people from a range of different backgrounds. They were to be clustered in two regions of England with contrasting characteristics, the South and the North West of England. The clustering was intended both for practical reasons, to ease project implementation, but also to allow participants, managers and pedagogues, to network and support each other via regional meetings or mutual visits. A target was set to recruit 18 homes in total, divided equally across the two regions. The detail of the recruitment strategy is set out in Appendix 2.

The final list of selected homes is shown in Table 1.1 below. It includes 12 public sector, 4 voluntary sector, and 2 private sector homes. Considerable effort went into recruiting homes from the private sector, including direct approaches, so the final number was disappointing. More were shortlisted, but were then subsequently rejected. Some failed to qualify because the units were too small and one expert in the field suggested that private sector homes have often developed their own specific approaches and were marketing these; if they were attracting placements, they might see no need to change. Public sector homes, on the other hand, were more likely to see participation in the pilot project as an opportunity to try new ideas, while also benefitting from the support programme offered. One voluntary sector Group 2 home was deselected some months after commencement of the pilot when it became clear that conditions there were not conducive to the introduction of social pedagogy. Because of the short notice, this home was subsequently replaced by a public sector home, working with children with disabilities, but not in the care of the local authority, and thus offered a different setting from other homes in the pilot.

Employer	Grp	Sector	Region	Primary aim/purpose	Size – no of beds	No of staff
Bournemouth	1	Public	South	Mixed gender, long term care, age 13 – 18	6 bed	20
Ingleside	1	Private	South	Long term therapeutic care for girls aged 10 – 16	7 bed	
Break	1	Voluntary -NFP	North	Respite care and short breaks for school age children w learning difficulties or social and communication disabilities including autistic spectrum and challenging behaviour, YP may also have assorted physical disabilities	6 bed	17
Dudley	1	Public	North	YP aged 12 – 18, long term, includes semi-independent	8 bed	14
Ealing	2	Public	South	Mixed gender aged 12 – 17 long term	6 bed	17
Kensington and Chelsea	2	Public	South	Long term older teens 13 – 18 yrs with placement breakdowns	5 + 4 semi-independent	11
Lioncare Therapeutic Community	2	Private	South	YP mixed gender aged 12 – 18, emotional and behavioural difficulties	5 bed	19
St Christopher's Fellowship	2	Voluntary	South	Mixed gender YP 12 – 16, Camden referrals – crisis in foster or own family, mental health, drugs, alcohol	8 bed	15
Surrey	2	Public	South	Mixed gender, short breaks children not in care of LA, aged 5 – 18 years, with complex needs on autistic spectrum, social care referrals for weekends, residential learning programme during week, registered 2008	20 bed (4 x 5) – now 15 bed	73 (!)
Blackburn with Darwen	2	Public	North	Long term boys and girls 10 -17 years	4 bed	9
Cheshire	2	Public	North	YP mixed gender 11 – 17, emotional or behaviour difficulties, long term	4 bed	13

<b>Employer</b>	<b>Grp</b>	<b>Sector</b>	<b>Region</b>	<b>Primary Aim/Purpose</b>	<b>Size-no of beds</b>	<b>No of staff</b>
Staffordshire	2	Public	North	Short term YP aged 12 – 17, in crisis following breakdown, up to 12 weeks stay	5 bed	16.5 + cook, domestic
Hammersmith and Fulham	3	Public	South	Short term emergency YP aged 11 – 17, including UAS's	10 bed	16
Hants	3	Public	South	YP mixed gender up to age of 18, complex needs, long term requiring ongoing assessment, multi-agency services	6 bed	16
Quarriers (1)	3	Voluntary	South	Mixed gender YP aged 12 – 17, emotional and behavioural difficulties and complex needs, including emergency placements, long term	5 bed	19
Quarriers (2)	(2)	Voluntary	South	YP aged 10 – 18, short to long term care for children & YP w complex needs and behaviours, long term.	7 bed	20
Appletree	3	Private	North	Mixed gender, 12 – 16 years, long term, lived previously in other Appletree homes, unable to go to families or fostering by age 13	4 bed	9.5
Lancashire	3	Public	North	Short term care, boys or girls	6 bed	21
Liverpool	3	Public	North	YP aged 10 – 17, boys or girls, but primarily boys, often with sexually inappropriate behaviour, long term	6 bed	17

## **Recruitment of Social Pedagogues**

Work on recruitment of the social pedagogues began concurrently with the recruitment of homes. The main principle of recruitment was that the employers recruited to their existing procedures and conditions, with support and advice from Jacaranda Recruitment and to a lesser extent from the TCRU programme team. The team developed a specific social pedagogy job description, to be used alongside the employer's own residential care worker job descriptions (see Appendix 3). A requirement of the pilot project was that for Group 2 and 3 homes social pedagogues should be employed with a social pedagogy job title, whilst also working within English residential childcare workers' national occupational standards. Applicants were expected to have a BA degree level qualification in pedagogy, social pedagogy or orthopedagogy, and to come with experience of direct work with children and young people in difficult life circumstances and in group settings. During the shortlisting process, project team members checked the content of degree programmes in Germany and elsewhere to check the veracity and relevance of qualification content to the task. Because of the wide range of residential care options in Germany, not all the candidates had experience of employment that directly paralleled children's residential care in England. Full details of the recruitment strategy including the qualifications and experience of those selected can be found in Appendix 4.

## **Support programme following recruitment of homes and social pedagogues**

Newly appointed social pedagogues were invited to attend an induction week consisting of a day's introduction to children's services in the UK from TCRU, followed by four days of language refresher training from a London based English language school.

Ongoing support for managers and for social pedagogues was provided throughout the pilot project by two TCRU project workers who were qualified social pedagogues from Germany with experience of working in England. One of these had an additional training and development role. Members of the pilot project team attended review meetings at participating home at 3 – 6 monthly intervals, working to a standardised topic schedule. This covered team work, relations with colleagues, working with social pedagogy ideas and concepts, paperwork, supervision, support from TCRU, and review of Group 3 work where relevant. At the conclusion of each meeting, key goals were identified to be revisited and their attainment discussed as the starting point for next review (see Appendix 5).

Reviews were supplemented by individual meetings and telephone support provided by the project workers, as and when required. The project workers also set up a Ning web platform for exchange of information and experience, but interest in this proved to be limited. Additional training for staff of children's homes was provided by the pilot project worker in 10 of the children's homes, while one authority commissioned training by ThemPra for staff across all of its children's homes.

The project team organised regional meetings in the North West and in the South at approximately six monthly intervals for key personnel such as the children's home managers, her or his external manager and deputies to share experiences. These days also offered an opportunity for networking and informal exchange and discussion. As part of their introduction to social pedagogy, children's homes staff and managers were also invited to attend a lecture by Friedrich Seibel from Koblenz University on the

foundations of social pedagogy and its relation to social action, followed by discussion, held at the Institute of Education. Other topics for regional meeting were avoiding restraint from a pedagogical perspective, run by Marleen Stefansen, a Danish children's home manager, and Sarah Leitch, a researcher and trainer from Scotland, and social pedagogic leadership, run by Marleen Stefansen.

The project team held regular networking events for the social pedagogues to share experiences. Generally these meetings were well attended and produced lively discussions. The meetings of Group 3 social pedagogues were particularly challenging, reflecting many of the issues confronting them in trying to fulfil what proved to be a very difficult role. We shall return to an assessment of the three groups as a way of assessing the 'best method' of introducing social pedagogy in the final chapter of the report.

Overall, the recruitment and support of children's homes, managers and social pedagogues was a highly complex cultural and practical challenge.

### **Data sources for writing report**

Data sources which have been drawn on for writing this report include the following:

- Documentation of all contact with homes, managers and social pedagogues, including review meetings and informal discussions – face to face meetings, telephone calls and e mails.
- Records of network meetings and any outputs from these.
- Process analysis of each home prepared by the research team in June 2010.
- Contributions from social pedagogues gathered during a writing workshop conducted in January 2011.
- Records of meetings held with the advisory group for the project.

Use of quotation marks in the text indicates an extraction from one of the written documents pertaining to one of these sources.

## Chapter 3: Structural and organisational issues

The ways in which children's homes are structured and organised provides a framework for practice. We know from previous research that external management and support is crucial in leading effective children's homes (Brown et al. 1998; Clough, Bullock and Ward 2006). Hicks (2008: 242) summarised the findings from previous research as: 'Overall, what seemed to matter in children's homes was that the manager was accepted as embodying good practice from within a clear ethos and had positive strategies for working both with the behaviour of young people and in relation to their education, and importantly, was capable of enabling staff to reflect and deploy these strategies'. Hicks went on to argue that clarity of role for managers in children's homes, at the level of the organisation, including being in a permanent position and having access to, and using external supervision and support, were important for achieving the overall goals of children's homes.

This chapter discusses these structural and organisational issues in more detail. Factors such as how the children's home fits into the employer's overall mission, whether and how children's homes managers are supported by service managers from the employing organisation or by external agencies such as CAMHs or other consultants, the use of hierarchical models for organising practice, the use of permanent and agency staff, the requirements for training and qualifications of staff, and the use of official procedures to report complaints and grievances: these all create an impact on the care and education practice that takes place. In particular, for a pilot project, there is the issue of project 'ownership' by managers.

### Stability and consistency

In an ideal world, the external and home managers who responded positively to the idea of taking part in the pilot project would also be the same managers who prepared the staff, recruited the social pedagogues and 'lived' the project through to completion. However, in this project, there was a change of manager either at the level of the home, or at a more senior level, in 10/18 cases. In a northern children's home, a change of manager brought an invigoration of the project and new energy but in most cases there was a stalling of progress when managers changed. In one London home, there were four managers during the course of the project and the two social pedagogues managed to keep change going, at an unspectacular, but steady, level. In one home in the North West, there was a change of manager early on in negotiations, too early for the project to have been embraced by the home's staff, and too late for the new manager to be fully involved in negotiations. The new manager had ambitious expectations, which he termed anticipating 'buckets full of good practice' from the social pedagogues, and when this did not, in his perception, materialise, it led to early disappointment, from which it took some time to recover. In most cases, applying to take part in the project was a personal-professional commitment so the impact of a change of manager was the social pedagogues having to re-introduce the idea and validity of the project which may or may not be then taken up and 'owned' by the new management team.

In two homes, the social pedagogues were recruited at a time of major change in the organisation, such as a re-organisation of services or aims of a particular service, and managers hoped that social pedagogues would be part of the redefinition that would need to go on. In practice, this role was far too ambitious. As one social pedagogue put it, 'there were high expectations of me. I am first learning myself, the country, the team, the philosophy of the house'. In one of these two, for example, the local authority stated that they were interested in taking part in the pilot in order to 'further support the development of a new service, seeing it as an ideal opportunity to have a real impact on the nature, quality and culture of the service being offered ... as an important way of modelling good practice for other members of staff' (process analysis). This was expected of just two social pedagogues.

In this chapter we will give most attention to three issues that are relevant to the further development of residential care in England: i) matching the social pedagogues to the workplace in terms of training, pay and conditions; ii) the uses of hierarchy; and iii) shiftwork and the deployment of staff. Throughout it is worth noting that the presence of social pedagogues constituted a challenge, in that they brought a new cultural-professional lens to what may be accepted and acceptable practice. Our intention in the discussion is to reveal any disjunction between social pedagogical practice and the practice the social pedagogues encountered, and in so doing identify what the conditions might be for developing social pedagogy more widely.

## Training, pay and conditions of work

Social pedagogues trained in continental European countries usually hold a degree level (ISCED level 5) qualification from a college of higher education or university, or they hold a lower level but still three year qualification from a vocational college (ISCED Level 4). This is quite unlike the situation in England. When the project started, the National Minimum Standards (NMS) for children's homes specified that a 'minimum ratio of 80% of all care staff have completed their Level 3<sup>1</sup> in the Caring for Children and Young People NVQ' (Standard 29.5). During the course of the project, the NMS were revised, so that there is now an expectation that *all* care staff will have a relevant Level 3 qualification and from April 2011 there will be an expectation that staff hold a specific Level 3 Children & Young Peoples Workforce Diploma or be working towards the diploma within 3 months of employment. There is still no pre-employment requirement for a specific relevant qualification. Home managers are required to have a professional qualification relevant to working with children, which 'must be either NVQ level 4 or the Diploma in social work (or another qualification that matches the competencies required by that NVQ); and a qualification at level 4 NVQ in management (or another qualification that matches the competencies required by that NVQ)' (Standard 34.3). This standard is barely changed in the revised version, which refers to Level 4 and Level 5 qualifications including relevant and endorsed foundation degrees. In addition to qualifications, the original and the revised standards refer to the importance of a clear plan for induction, Level 3 training, post qualifying training and in- service training.

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<sup>1</sup> Levels refer to the National Qualification Framework qualification levels, where level 2 is equivalent to GCSEs, level 3 is equivalent to A' Levels, level 4 to graduate certificate or the first year of undergraduate programme; level 5 to the second year and level 6 to the full bachelors' degree. The NQF nearly maps onto the internationally recognised ISCED levels, where level 5 is a degree and level 3 is the end of Upper Secondary programmes.

The actual proportions of staff who are qualified to the specified levels falls some way short of the national minimum standards. The CWDC (2008) reported that, in 2007, 58 percent of staff in children's homes held one or more relevant qualifications. One third held a Level 3 qualification, 16 percent held a Level 4 qualification and three percent held a Level 2 qualification. In addition, one third of all staff were working towards a qualification, mostly at Level 3. There is, then, a large gap in terms of formal qualifications between those held by the social pedagogues arriving to work in children's homes in England and the typical staff qualification profile, both in terms of what is expected and in terms of qualifications held in practice. Social pedagogues' level of formal knowledge represented a challenge to existing staff groups.

Social pedagogues presented another challenge on appointment. Reflecting the staffing profiles in place, pay scales enabled appointment on the basis of experience rather than qualifications. The profile of the incoming social pedagogues did not fit. There was a temptation for managers, in looking at the level of qualifications and bearing in mind the sometimes high expectations of the role of the social pedagogue, to appoint them to a senior level on the pay scales.

Social pedagogues came with graduate qualifications but sometimes little experience of residential care. The salary scales were designed for people with few or no qualifications but those with relevant experience could go further up the scale. It was difficult to appoint social pedagogues to a salary commensurate with their qualifications without putting them on a scale designed for those with supervisory responsibilities. This difficulty is a challenge for the upskilling of residential care homes as pay scales will have to be rethought.

The age profile of the social pedagogues constituted a challenge to the established staff profile. In general, the social pedagogues were younger than more established colleagues and being a role model to staff in this context was not easy. At one London home, both social pedagogues were younger, and female, and tried to be a positive role model to staff and young people. However, they found that some staff, in particular those who had a residential working history of ten years or more, considered their experience to be more significant than the formal qualification of social pedagogue. As younger women, it was hard to be taken seriously as a role model. This reflects the established staff profile in residential care, where priority has been given to age and experience in the absence of formal qualifications, although, it should be noted that in this instance the manager protested that age should not be taken as a relevant indicator of competence.

### **The organisation of expertise: hierarchies and the social pedagogue's role**

Earlier research showed that social pedagogues in Germany and Denmark were used to a culture of democratic decision making and relatively flat hierarchies in residential care services. Depending on the size of the institution, the workers held a wide range of roles and responsibilities and the scope for decision making was considerable. For example, pedagogues talked about being involved in recruitment panels, discussing the future policy and practice direction of the children's home and taking an equal part in multi-agency work regarding their residents (Petrie et al. 2006). In contrast, in English homes,

which were often small, with a more limited range of staff roles and responsibilities, there were also much clearer staff hierarchies in place with multiple layers of accountability. So, while it was not appropriate to 'in charge' as supervisors, the social pedagogues found themselves trying to make sense of a number of different positions of responsibility.

In terms of introducing themselves and their practice, this was a considerable challenge. Their presence, and the regularity with which social pedagogues in the 18 homes reported difficulty with the hierarchies, suggests that adopting a more social pedagogic approach would mean challenging the established structure of staffing so that residential workers had a greater degree of decision making latitude in their work. This is also an important ingredient in quality of employment (Cameron and Moss 2007). Below we give four examples from the pilot children's homes.

In the first example, a children's home comprising a manager, a deputy, team leaders and residential workers, the social pedagogues were recruited on the same level as residential workers but with a specific remit to practise as social pedagogues and raise awareness of social pedagogy. Although a decision was taken about mid way through the project that the social pedagogues would attend senior management meetings in order that they could understand the thinking and help shape the team, by the middle of 2010 this was 'not happening as well as' the manager would have liked. The meetings had not been regularly held, and they had 'not yet looked at incorporating a social pedagogical input into the management team' but two meetings had been very productive. In September, the managers agreed to 'make more effort to ensure that the weekly senior management meeting happened on time ... and to make sure that [the social pedagogues] were in attendance'. By December, the manager had left, but was replaced by the deputy who promised to ensure management meetings would be 'held on a monthly basis with the social pedagogues as part of the management but not part of the structure'. By this time the home was earmarked for closure and the agenda was one of helping staff find new employment rather than improve care and education practice. This example shows how crucial the hierarchical structure was to access an understanding of decision making and also how good intentions can drift and not be followed through to real involvement in decision making with the result that there is no change to established practice.

In another children's home, the early phase of the social pedagogues' employment was dominated by organisation and structural changes but far from heralding the promised new focus on 'everyday life' there was only one resident for some months and in the care of many staff, including four levels of hierarchy. Within a few months, two very different perspectives on the possibilities for practice were emerging. At reviews and manager's network meetings, the home managers could not identify any discernible difference between the social pedagogues' practice and that of others employed. The social pedagogues, on the other hand, explained that managers dismissed their ideas as just 'good practice' and not social pedagogy. For example, one of the social pedagogues found that the staff did not use critical reflection and did not have any frameworks to accommodate challenge to their practice. In her view there was a need for deeper cultural change in the organisation but the initial support for social pedagogy from management waned when critical comments were directed at management themselves. The social pedagogues felt undermined and unsupported, a feeling reinforced by the knowledge that in

other local children's homes, jobs were at risk. The management, meanwhile, interpreted the social pedagogues as withdrawing from the team and acknowledged a division between them and the rest of the team, even suggesting that they move to the other local children's home, to make a 'fresh start'.

There were substantial improvements in understanding between social pedagogues and managers toward the end of the pilot programme period, but doubts remained as to whether the learning would be sustained. For example, the social pedagogue said 'I probably don't work differently to my colleagues, but have the theoretical framework behind my actions', while the manager, asked to consider how she would take the learning further, said they would 'try to encourage reflection on discussions including about SP theories' that could be linked to practice. This pinpoints one of the key differences in approach to theory. The social pedagogue drew attention to her theoretical framework, gained through formal education, and her personal qualities, that inform and provide a rationale to her actions, while a much weaker form of this, discussions about theories that could be linked to practice, was thought sufficient basis to continue practice development by management. In this example, the social pedagogues' presence was a clear challenge not just to managers, who were multiple and changing, but also to staff, some of whom felt their job security was under threat, and in a very intense context of not having many young people to work with. The hierarchy consisted of four levels of staff, plus external managers, all of whom perceived the ideas and practices of the social pedagogues to be a threat and forced their withdrawal. At one point one of the social pedagogues said she had 'given up trying' with social pedagogy.

In other pilot homes, relations with management were not so fraught. One local authority was sufficiently interested in social pedagogy that they recruited two social pedagogues (one of whom had training at a lower level, as an *Erzieherin*) to work in one residential care home prior to the project start date. This was a Group 1 home, and the pedagogues worked to a residential care officer job description. The home was a large, new-build assessment centre, with 13 staff and eight residents. It had a 'homely atmosphere', where all areas were accessible, and staff and young people 'being together' and sharing the space was said to be put into practice and valued. The pedagogues' difficulties regarding management were minimal. When one of them failed to log an incident it was regarded as a training issue, not a problem. The management recognised the pedagogues' professionalism, perceiving their different way of working as a source of curiosity and a learning point for the rest of the staff, rather than an occasion for criticism or dismissal of their ideas. The home manager particularly valued the social pedagogues' readiness for reflecting together, and for the way they encouraged the young people to reflect on their actions. It was clear that the managerial approach in this case was to see the social pedagogues as providing an opportunity for their own and the staffs' learning and development, where the pedagogues' suggestions would be treated in an open way, and where basic values such as homeliness and young people's participation were shared. In this instance the negative effect of hierarchy was minimal.

A northern local authority, which employed a social pedagogue in a Group 3 children's home (with a mandate to raise awareness) had taken part in an earlier pilot (Bengtsson et al. 2007) and so had had an introduction to social pedagogy. When the second social pedagogue failed to turn up, a member of staff

was given the explicit role of working together with the first appointee on social pedagogical projects, which, according to the social pedagogue, increased the credibility of the work. In this instance, a change of home manager, shortly after the social pedagogue arrived, led to a significant upward shift of gear in relation to promoting social pedagogy. The new manager considered that there was a great congruence between social pedagogy and the qualities of good management, including being well organised, showing equal respect to all, regardless of hierarchical position, being able to motivate others, and seeing and valuing small improvements. The manager believed that social pedagogy had to be highly visible and tangible, so that everyone visiting the home should be able to experience social pedagogy right from the moment they entered the home. This was a tremendous mandate, and challenge, for the social pedagogue and his colleague. It was demonstrated, in part, through art work displayed that was annotated with understandings of pedagogical concepts and principles. The pair were supported by external managers and all levels of the hierarchy in the local authority including elected members. In this case, hierarchical management and the social pedagogue worked in tandem to promote social pedagogy beyond the single home and into the entire children's services plan (see Chapter 7).

Overall, it would appear that, if working with hierarchical conditions, social pedagogy flourishes where the manager in immediate charge and the external manager(s) are receptive to new ideas in conditions of relative stability and confidence about the current direction of the home. Social pedagogy developed furthest and fastest where social pedagogues were respected by management for themselves, their theoretical frameworks and their practical accomplishments. Existence of hierarchy per se was not the problem, but supportive leadership was essential. Supportive leadership is particularly important where it is not possible to recruit a critical mass of social pedagogues. We return to the role of management in particular in next chapter.

### **The organisation of time: shifts and shift working**

Rotas and the organisation of them are a highly emotive subject in residential care. Staffing a home for 24 hours a day, seven days a week in such a way as to meet official guidance and balance expertise is a complex task. In one case in the pilot programme, disagreements about the rota were such that the social pedagogues, the manager and the deputy were all given a task to construct a workable and fair rota. A frequent comment from the social pedagogues was that in order to offer a normative homely presence, called, in social pedagogic terms, 'being there', they had to work to a schedule that offered the young people predictability and reliability. More specifically, if they were to offer a regular activity to a key child, such as accompanying them to a swimming lesson each week, they had to be rota-ed on duty at those times. Drawing attention to these very practical matters represented a key challenge to residential care structures which have sometimes taken for granted intermittent person-centred presence in young people's lives.

In most homes, social pedagogues were rota-ed on to work with all the staff initially, so that they got to know everyone. However, some found that translating concepts into practice was a challenge. Those working in very small teams sometimes complained that they were either working with only their social

pedagogical colleague, in which case there was no general staff learning about social pedagogy, or they were working on entirely opposite shifts, in which case they were working in isolation. In one case, working on different shifts was insufficient to mask a personal disagreement between the two social pedagogues, which was eventually resolved by redeploying one of them in a different home. A further issue was securing the one third Group 3 time. In one case, the two social pedagogues were rota-ed on at the same time, with one of them being on shift and the other not, but more often than not the additional person got drawn into supporting the shift team. In three cases securing Group 3 time was a constant source of tension as it affected the rotas and/or increased the use of more expensive agency staff, in two cases it was managed within the available staffing and was not a problem and in the last case, the social pedagogue was paid to be supernumerary and did not affect the rota at all.

Other time management issues were related to the boundaries of time and hours of work. Social pedagogues commonly work with uncertainty, situated judgement and personal-professional commitment, all of which might require flexibility with regard to the boundaries of time. In the English homes, some became institutionalised into regulated hours of work, accounting for time through working over hours and reclaiming time off in lieu of extra hours worked, and having difficulty securing Group 3 time for development events related to the project. The organisation of time relates very clearly to the way particular aspects of the residential care role are given priority, such as 'covering the floor' while others are less important, such as analytic and learning time. The use of joint time, when shifts overlap, was a good example here. Social pedagogues complained that it was difficult to introduce critical reflection into daily 'handovers' when they were just long enough to discuss the more mechanical business of the day. More time was needed.

Where time is spent during shifts was also a recurrent issue. Typically, children's homes have offices, which are not spaces for young people, as they contain confidential and procedural records. The proportion of time spent in the office and away from young people was identified as symptomatic of staff who had difficulty balancing the two roles of being with the young people and recording their practice. One of the managers said that one of his social pedagogues spent too much time in the office; others endorsed social pedagogues' practice of taking paperwork, such as logging events, out into the main part of the children's home where they could be completed with the young people around. This was pedagogic in that it allowed young people to participate in formulating evaluations of their own lives.

### **Facilitating practice: Reflective opportunities**

One key activity of social pedagogy (but not only social pedagogy) is learning from and developing through practice, using theory to provide a framework. Generating the conditions for critical reflection on practice is a structural issue that leaders and managers have to address. In part, this is an issue of time for reflection during daily handovers, as noted above. There is also the issue of giving critical reflection validity, by engaging with it themselves, as one manager did when he said he 'values most of all the ability to reflect together with [the pedagogue]'.

Apart from handovers, the main formal opportunity for critical reflection was during staff meetings. The frequency and duration of these varied, as did, in some cases, the reliability of them. In some cases, regular team meetings were delayed or disrupted because staff did not turn up on time or young people were in crisis. In the most extreme case, the young people's behaviour was so disruptive that team meetings could not take place and social pedagogues reported that no reflection or planning happened at all. They were in constant crisis mode. The manager had to arrange for the staff to meet away from the premises and included within this a joint breakfast at which the team could spend time together before discussing formal business. This new discursive space provoked reflection which in turn revealed substantial differences of view, or a 'strong hidden agenda', between team members.

In three cases, managers and/or social pedagogues made suggestions to change the way team meetings were structured to allow for more reflective opportunities, but these were not followed through. In one children's home, the social pedagogues introduced reflection sheets as a way to structure discussion of each young person. When used well, these drew attention to the detail of children's lives, both positive and negative, but they were only used sporadically, and more as a reporting tool, not as a prompt for analytically-focused discussion. Recording sheets could also feed into the overall planning for young people and begin to make links between staff input and analysis and looked after children reviews. In this way the use of staff meetings to reflect on young people's situations could have become a key method to value staff input, so long as it was done in a concise and accurate way. While agreed by management to be a useful tool, the conditions to make such discussions happen did not materialise and the culture of using recording sheets did not become embedded. Similarly in the other examples, suggestions to have more reflective opportunities within team meetings were not followed through. The social pedagogues had wanted a clear indication, early on, as to how much liberty and scope for change there actually was, given the restrictions of the system, the strict regulations and policies. The difficulties of trying to change the culture and practice of team meetings contributed to a sense that in these instances they may have been misled.

However, in at least four pilot children's homes, such changes did happen, facilitated by managers and so validating social pedagogical ideas and methods. In three, recording devices were used to assist reflection. One example was that the social pedagogues asked 'probing questions' of each member of the team individually, enquiring, for example, about the emotional impact of the work. The responses were collated and fed back to the team during a meeting, inviting reflection on the findings with the aim of generating an in-depth team based discussion about practice. In a second example, the social pedagogues kept a reflective diary style log book while they were on shift, noting in particular staff practice that they could praise in pedagogical terms. This positive re-enforcement was fed back at staff meetings, again inviting reflection. A third example was similar, in that a social pedagogue began recording practice and relating it to theory at each stage, which helped the staff understand the ideas and ways of working. After discussion, staff adopted a similar system, recording activities and practice under two headings: 'what have we done?' and 'why have we done it?' In these homes, there were no difficulties in working with the idea of reflection.

Some social pedagogues noted the need to ‘keep pushing’ the staff regarding reflection, to ensure it became a habit and a way of being, rather than a procedural instrument. In one case, even after training from an external organisation where the principles and practice of reflection were taught, the social pedagogues reported that the team still needed a push to make sense of the training, and they had to ask colleagues to reflect on a situation.

Besides introducing reflection into formal structures, management played an important role in facilitating informal reflection, which could happen at any time. It might take place late at night, while having conversations with staff at the end of the shift. Or it could take place during the day, for example encouraging thinking about the impact of behaviour, or distinguishing between the personal and the professional, or emphasising the positive rather than the negative.

Finally, supervision was in theory an opportunity for reflection. The manager played a significant role in the style of supervision available. In some cases the supervision provided was perceived as not about the children ‘but a chance for personal development through reflection and discussion of challenges’ while in others it was about accountability for compliance with procedures. On occasions it happened only intermittently. Overall, strong conviction from the leadership was needed to follow through on changes to structures that would facilitate more in-depth reflection.

## Conclusions

The structural conditions in the 18 children’s homes varied. They were not always under the control of the immediate management and leadership of the home. By the end of the pilot period, for example, one third of the homes were reporting severe financial difficulties and one was closing down entirely, resulting in staff redundancies. Other conditions which affected practice were the responsibility of external agencies, such as Ofsted and the Health and Safety Executive. The manager’s role was to follow and interpret rules and guidelines, some of which did not sit comfortably with a pedagogic approach. Many social pedagogues, and not a few managers, reported that there was an overly risk averse approach in place that hindered spontaneity, placed restrictions on children’s lives and did not facilitate either pedagogical practice or the well-being of young people. The issue of trust was raised repeatedly. How, the social pedagogues asked, can we encourage young people to trust us, when we are not trusted to practice in a responsible and professional manner?

In some children’s homes the structural conditions for pedagogical practice were more prevalent than in others. In order to promote young people’s wellbeing in residential care through a social pedagogic approach it would appear that the following conditions are important:

- Salary scales which recognise graduate level knowledge and skills as well as experience
- Staff hierarchies are not used as an obstacle to new ideas; expertise is valued and respected from all positions on the hierarchy
- Time is organised in a fair, responsive and boundaried way, to facilitate the crucial pedagogical method of critical reflection.

However, it is also worth noting that the challenges posed to the structural and organisational aspects of children's homes are not exclusive to the employment of social pedagogues: any graduate level workforce entering residential care would have implications for the pay scales, for example. These challenges shine a more general light on residential care per se. In the next chapter we examine the issue of social pedagogues' focus on young people's everyday lives in their practice.

## Chapter 4: Social pedagogy practice in everyday life

### Introduction: Theoretical background



**Figure 4.1: Representation of life space produced by one of the social pedagogues**

Before looking at how the social pedagogues made use of, or tried to make use of, 'everyday activities' in the course of their work, it is necessary to touch on the theoretical background which informed their practice. Three concepts which are strongly related to each other in social pedagogy are

- *Lebensweltorientierung*
- *Alltagsorientierung*
- The common third

The first two are German in origin, developed by Hans Thiersch (1986, 1992) while the last is a key concept of social pedagogy in Denmark.

*Lebensweltorientierung*, is literally a 'life world' orientation. The concept of 'life world' derives from sociology and developed over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It has been applied to a particular view of, or orientation towards, social work and social pedagogy. In what follows it is applied to the work of bringing up children – the central task of the social pedagogue. In one sense, for a social pedagogue or a social worker to have a 'life world' orientation conveys that how any child makes sense of the world, constructs their understanding of the world, is to some extent particular to their own life. Each person's 'life world' is distinctive. Their understandings of their world, their own place in it and that of others,

depend in part on their own individual history and experiences, and in part on the social, economic and political contexts which impact them. In this light, it is apparent that the child's responses to their circumstances make sense to them – even those which seem unwise from an outside point of view. Seeking to understand the child's 'life world' and the validity of their decisions from this perspective is seen as an emancipatory process. Social pedagogy based on a *Lebensweltorientierung* does not seek to 'colonise' the children's lives (Hämäläinen, 2003).

For children in residential care, the experience of living in a children's home is itself part of their 'life world' and informs their perspective on life. Used in this way, the term 'life world' can also be understood as 'living space' – the multiple spaces in which they live their lives, and make sense of life - co-construct it - with others. Pertinently, the children's home is the life space for all the children and adults who work there, each with their own individual experiences but also where all are engaged in making meaning of life together – whether they are aware of this or not.

*Alltagsorientierung*. The children's home is a shared space where everyday activities such as eating, sleeping and watching television take place. The term *Alltagsorientierung* means an 'everyday orientation'. When applied to looked after children it conveys a sense of upbringing or education-in-its-widest-sense that takes place via everyday experiences in the shared living space. This is another key social pedagogic concept and is applied to foster and residential child care in Germany and understood as such more widely in other European countries (Petrie et al, 2005; Boddy et al, 2010).

Social pedagogues are seen as practical people, whose hands work alongside their heads and their hearts. Accordingly, their education prepares them to share in many aspects of children's daily lives, undertaking practical activities together as a matter of course. So washing up, making beds, shopping, cooking and eating together are all 'everyday' tasks in which they encourage children to participate, sometimes alone, sometimes with other children and often alongside the pedagogues. For the social pedagogues, these activities are supported by social pedagogic reflection – they are not undertaken mechanically, but are informed by social pedagogic aims and principles.

Social pedagogues sometimes speak of supporting children's competencies, both social and practical, in encouraging them to undertake everyday tasks, including those which can be challenging and take children out of their immediate comfort zone. They appreciate that children's 'life world', their earlier experience and social situation, may mean that some activities are new to the child, or may have unpleasant associations. So the work of the pedagogue is to encourage the child but at the same time not make too great a demand of them: it is a matter of pedagogic judgement as to what may be an intolerable expectation to make of a child, given their particular situation and 'life world'.

It is in the course of everyday activities that pedagogues and children form relationships. The social pedagogue is content for children to make progress slowly. In doing things together social pedagogues come to know the children they are working with, appreciate what can reasonably be expected and recognise when the time comes for the child to take the next small step forward.

At the same time, a focus on every day activities and the life space can also provide a level of structure, and therefore security for children. For example, the home becomes a place where it is expected that everyone has a meal together, every evening. In working through everyday activities the pedagogues aim to make the home a richer, more enjoyable place for adults and children alike, a space where people feel they belong and feel secure.

*The common third.* The concept of the common third is a useful way of thinking about doing things together (Lihme, 1988). Activities undertaken together – such as cooking and enjoying a meal - belong to both the pedagogue **and** to the child or children. The activities are a mutual focus, part of whose interest lies in the fact that no-one knows quite how they will turn out. They are also the medium in which the relationships between children themselves and between children and their pedagogues are formed.

The aim of these activities is to foster children's self-confidence, their sense of being valued, to enhance the children's social and practical skills and to promote group life. Engagement in joint activity is also seen as a means of building trust between pedagogues and children. This arises in part from the children's learning that the social pedagogue encourages them to persevere with a task, but does not reject them if they find it too demanding. Sometimes children are willing to undertake activities – whether challenging (sailing), 'boring' (homework) or mundane (washing up)- with the social pedagogue, because they have already formed a good relationship together. But activities are also ways in which relationships can develop.

As well as more mundane tasks, such as washing up or mending a bicycle tyre together, sometimes social pedagogues employ creative activities as examples of 'the common third'. In many countries creative activities, sport or outdoor activities contribute to the initial education of social pedagogues. In Denmark, for example, 25% of the initial education of social pedagogues consists of themselves participating in creative activities, understanding their challenges and learning what they have to offer children (Petrie and Chambers, 2010). Creative activities can be a means of having an enjoyable time together. For looked after children, they may not be very 'everyday' although for more society's more advantaged child they form a regular part of life. The spirit in which pedagogues approach creative activities with children is that of joint exploration. Neither the pedagogue nor the children know what the outcome will be, but all contribute to it.

The social pedagogues' education often refers to distinguishing between the professional, the personal and the private domains that they should be aware of in the course of their work. In bringing their interests to the work – it could be playing a guitar, cooking or gardening – the social pedagogue is interacting with the children at a personal level, sharing something of themselves, their enthusiasm, knowledge and skills.

Working with children in this way is to work with them as whole people, engaging them physically, emotionally and creatively, impacting on how children experience their world and interact with it, providing opportunities for them to exercise agency in a positive way. Creative group activities also

offer an opportunity to interact and communicate about individual and group needs. Properly supported, they contribute to social skills, provide opportunities for practising mutual respect and for developing the trust and team work which are necessary for working in the adult world.

## **'Everyday activities' in residential child care**

The above are some of the understandings which the social pedagogues brought to their work and which informed their practice. Before looking at how this worked out, it may be useful to say something about the 'everyday' lives of looked after children in residential care.

At a common sense level, the 'everyday' already exists in the children's home with children and staff already sharing a 'life space' together, whether it is so theorised or not. But a residential home would not be seen as 'everyday' by a child living in an 'everyday' family, nor for that matter by a child who has just come into care, no matter how difficult their life had been previously. To take one major difference, the life space of the residential home is one in which many adults come and go over the course of the day and of the week. These could include permanent and agency residential care staff and managers and, in some cases, domestic, maintenance and administrative staff, in addition to different social workers, visiting children and/or home managers. On occasions there are visits from looked after children's nurses, looked after children's educational services and children's relatives. Some of these visitors have an effect on the child's timetable which may need to accommodate meetings with social workers and perhaps contact time with their family. All this is in addition to more obvious 'everyday' activities such as getting up, going to bed, eating, going to school and doing homework.

The looked after child's 'life world', their psychological, physical and social space is complex and to an outsider, very unlike the 'everyday' world of other children. For example, there may well be nine or more residential care (and other) staff coming and going and each with a legitimate interest in the child and their activities, plans and behaviour. What such surveillance means to the child would be interesting to explore. In the course of the year, it is also very likely that a member of staff or another child leaves and an unknown person take their place. The people sharing the life-space do not form a stable population. Also, the child's life is a site for administration: they are subject to and participate in procedures such as the formulation and review of care and education plans. What is more, they live with practice which derives from local interpretations of child protection and safeguarding so that, for example, activities which are seen as 'risky' are either forbidden or hedged round with procedures which themselves may be disincentives for staff.

All this is the 'everyday' world, the living and working space for staff during the hours when they are present. They too bring their own understanding of the world, their own constructions of what it is to bring up children, and to do so as professionals. For residential staff these understandings are based on their professional backgrounds, their level of training, their experience of the work and the procedures, including the clerical and child protection procedures required of them. These are factors which affected the way in which residential staff and managers reacted to the practice of the social pedagogues. For the social pedagogues, their understandings and practice are based on theories such as those described

above and elsewhere in this report, as well as by their professional experience in countries which have their own social, economic and political contexts.

### Introducing everyday and creative activities

Some social pedagogues tried to introduce a greater sense of routine into the life space, to offer a sense of security and predictability for children who had often experienced what were described as chaotic lives: they wanted children to know what to expect at a day-to-day level, with regular mealtimes, bed times, homework, activity times and so on. While some homes already had a strong emphasis on daily routines, in others this was a very challenging objective as some of the examples, below, indicate.

### Mealtimes

Mealtimes were one of the areas that many of the pedagogues thought needed development. Some of the children's homes described at the outset how they encouraged a sense of belonging and homeliness, often using the language of 'family' or 'normal'. For example:

All staff and young people share in the running of [home] in the same way that a "family" home operates. Young people are encouraged to help in the preparation of meals and staff and young people eat together.

But this was far from usual. In nearly all the pilot homes the social pedagogues tried to introduce eating together on a regular basis. The aim was to develop a culture of eating as a social activity which would help to produce a sense of belonging and provide times for talking together. With this in mind, pedagogues would get the children to set the table together and sit at the same table, rather than separately.



Figure 4.2: Social pedagogues' approach to mealtimes as part of team development

Overall, the pedagogues' success in bringing people together for meals was patchy. By the end of the project social pedagogues in four homes reported that the homes had embraced eating together. In

homes where meal times became more sociable, social pedagogues described the effect as positive, creating a more 'homely' atmosphere. Elsewhere there were difficulties. For example, two pedagogues believed that they struggled against a prevailing culture when they tried to introduce healthier eating and mealtimes as a social event - instead of children getting food from the kitchen individually (which happened in other homes, also). They decided, in consultation with other staff - as a first step - to cook dinner for residents and staff, replacing what was usually on offer, such as chicken wings, with more varied food. The pedagogues believed that staff were disapproving of these attempts and sometimes showed this in their reactions.

### **Daily and weekly routines**

In one home a social pedagogue transformed the already existing activity rota into a simpler format. Tasks were picked by the children by lot for an entire week. Tasks included setting/clearing the table, food shopping and gardening, sometimes individually, sometimes working in pairs. The pedagogue explained that for her it was vital for the young people to understand the aims behind the task, which included getting on with other people and taking on responsibilities.

In another home, roles and responsibilities introduced by the pedagogue in consultation with staff, included switching off the lights at night, assisting the cook, locking doors, taking out garbage and planning activities for the group. As a reward the young people received money to top up their mobile phones. This rota was seen as highly successful by the manager because it involved the young people in contributing to the smooth running of the home. The rota gave them ownership of and responsibility for the shared life space. It offered different opportunities for learning and achievement. It also took account of their age, supported their developing independence, included them in decision making and showed that staff took them seriously by treating them as adults.

In a different home, also, tasks and activities were undertaken that centred around the common life space. Examples included planning a holiday together, gardening, waste management, the production of a young people's guide to the home, doing laundry and decorating the house. Interviews with pedagogues and management indicated that this approach was at least partly successful in achieving a greater sense of belonging for the young people. The manager noted that, in his experience, the social pedagogues were more organized, and confident in achieving their goals than the residential care staff.

### **Leisure/Fun/Creative Competencies**

In selecting homes for the pilot we asked the managers if they envisaged any difficulties for the social pedagogues' incorporating arts and creative activities in their work with young people. No manager thought that this would be a problem and a few were already enthusiastic about this approach. For example, for one home our notes stated that:

[the manager identified ] no problem about any of the activities mentioned. Also, when we [TCRU] visited [the home] we found plenty of evidence of this ... they like to go out most

weekends, and they've got a trailer tent that will accommodate 10. There is an arts room, with materials and keyboard .

Social pedagogues in seven of the children's homes were responsible for initiating successful group projects for children and staff. These were most successful where there were reasonably stable staff groups and the ideas introduced were not completely new: the social pedagogues were complementing or building on existing good practice. The following are examples of group -house activities initiated by the social pedagogues:

- Games
- 'Pampering' nights
- Activity afternoons
- Creation of birthday calendars
- Karaoke night
- Movie night
- Board games
- Painting onto canvas
- Computer room activities
- 'Girls night'
- Decorating individual and communal areas
- Gardening

As well as being group activities the aim of the last two examples was for the young people to have a sense of belonging to, and ownership of, their home.

Some specifically creative activities and the evaluation of the pedagogues involved are outlined in the box.

<b>Table 5</b>
<b>Photography projects</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children were given disposable cameras to take pictures of               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o things they found 'unfair'</li> <li>o things that were enjoyable and free (of cost)</li> </ul> </li> <li>- They were asked to explain the reason behind the choice of pictures</li> <li>- A memory book: staff and young people took photographs of outings and activities together over several months</li> </ul>
<p><b>Learning Objectives</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Aesthetic education</li> <li>- Involvement of verbally less able young people who were thought to be able to express themselves more easily through photography</li> <li>- Development of a critical social consciousness and awareness of how young people are discriminated against</li> </ul>

- Focus on the 'common third' for staff

#### **Evaluation**

- Memory book was successful whereas the two other projects were not
- Reasons given for not achieving the desired outcomes were staffs' other work commitments,
- young people moving placement, bad timing and financial cuts – so there was insufficient budget,

In some of the homes the social pedagogues were successful in their aims to improve 'everyday activities' and to initiate new ones. At the end of the project, a manager who was particularly appreciative of the part played by the social pedagogues and wrote:

We have developed and extended our activity work with children, building their confidence, skills and self esteem to better engage in education.

#### **Sports Projects**

Sports and physical activities introduced by the pedagogues included: Yoga, going to the gym, ice-skating, going for walks and dancing. These activities aimed give young people interesting things to do and to promote their mental and physical health.

#### **Holidays and outings**

Social pedagogues in four children's homes introduced projects that took staff and young people away from the home itself for holidays abroad, boat trips and outings to cultural venues, with young people joining in the planning of the trips. For the pedagogues, learning objectives included the promotion of: group life and social skills, environmental awareness, an appreciation of cultural diversity, and promoting independence. The social pedagogues believed that these trips were largely successful because they emphasised 'being together', strengthened relationships and trust and blurred the border between staff and young people.

I have been involved in taking a young person along with another member of staff on a two night camping break. In previous years we would have visited the site prior to the trip and risk assessed the site and local area. On this occasion we googled the site and thought that it looked OK, booked the pitch and went. We had a rough idea as to what we would do during our time away but had not pre planned any specific activities. During the break we discussed together what we all would like to do and went with whichever seemed like a good idea! We all went on a 5 mile bike ride- the young person encouraging me to keep going, had an evening meal in a local pub, playing darts and pool, and went on a night walk armed with a torch each. The learning for the young person included being part of a group of three where decisions for the day were made together, being the expert in some situations rather than the novice, and being taken out of their comfort zone and needing to rely on another person (during the night walk our brave and fearless young person was convinced that there were wolves and bears in the

wooded area next to the site, so ended up awake most of the night talking to us to make sure we were still there. He also needed walking to the toilet block and back at 3 in the morning!) In all it was a great three days and we all felt that we had achieved different things both collectively and individually.

Experiences such as these were opportunities for shared responsibilities and shared memories.

Pedagogues also undertook more explicitly educational trips, sometimes because a young person was not in school full-time and needed alternative provision. Staff in one home, for example, took young people on visits to Glastonbury, the London museum and to see the ballet Swan Lake. These were seen as successful occasions which generated new experiences that expanded young people's horizons.

## Difficulties

Many of the pedagogues, however, found that working to improve the life-space was not easy. Some found that the culture of the home worked so much against this that it was hard to make any substantial change. In part, the residential workers did not understand the importance of staff and children doing things together. They did not share the social pedagogues' theoretical framework for practice and professional reflection was often underdeveloped (see Chapter 5). Many of the social pedagogues reported that their formal qualifications were not really respected or indeed understood by the staff and this was why their suggestions were not supported.

A condition of taking part in the project had been that the home manager would explain the role of the pedagogues and would support them in introducing social pedagogic practice and understandings into the home. Unfortunately this did not always take place – occasionally because of staff changes, but also because the project was supported by senior management but less so by the home manager. As noted in Chapter 3, some staff considered age, life and work experience to be more important than a formal education. Other social pedagogues believed that management and staff did not prioritise joint activities with the children and that these slipped off the agenda, even where they had been agreed. They also reported that the residential staff believed that they were too much taken up with administrative duties to allow sufficient time for more interaction with the children. It was noted by some pedagogues that short-term, one-off activities were easier to complete than ongoing long-term projects that required more sustained commitment from both staff and the young person.

Barriers to establishing group activities were found especially in the more institutional, short stay homes, where there was reportedly a 'non homely' atmosphere, fluctuations in staff, and, most importantly, lack of money. Elsewhere, budgetary constraints played a part. One social pedagogue was shocked when she learned that no activities had been planned for the young people during the school holidays. She would have liked to have offered them a climbing course to strengthen them as a group and to increase their trust in each other but, at £30 per head, funds were not sufficient for this.

Sometimes it was social workers, rather than residential staff, who constrained children's activities. A social pedagogue reported that she had had to 'battle' for approval for a girl to be allowed to go to the theatre. The social worker had resisted this because of the risk that the girl might abscond. In the event, the pedagogue, who believed that she knew the girl well, persuaded the social worker to allow the girl to go. The girl went to see the show, reportedly had a great time and there were no problems.

In other homes, social pedagogues and staff found ways to work within the existing culture and its requirements. One example is the camping trip, quoted above. Elsewhere, in a home where young people were denied access to the kitchen for safety reasons, a social pedagogue took food into a communal area where she was able to encourage young people to prepare their own sandwiches – and management welcomed this.

Also, staff were not all antipathetic to the theories and practice of the social pedagogues. A manager with many years' experience in children's homes supported the social pedagogues' approach enthusiastically and trusted them. He asked two pedagogues to organise a trip to Germany for staff and two young people and was very satisfied with how this was done. With the young people they also planned and organised a canal boat trip lasting several days, with staff and young people sleeping on the boat. For the manager, what characterised the holiday was an atmosphere of 'mutual learning'. These holidays helped to develop trust between children and staff and revealed more personal aspects of each other. The manager said, 'We were no longer only "staff" for them but normal people'.

## Summary

In conclusion, in spite of experiencing difficulties in some homes, many pedagogues were able to work towards improving children's experience of residential care. The rationale for undertaking activities together and for improving the shared living space arose from judgements about the needs of individual young people and of the group. They were also undertaken as a means of:

- Supporting children's learning, achievement and social development
- Providing opportunities for creativity
- Promoting group cohesion
- Broadening children's horizons ...

and much more, depending on individual children and contexts.

The development of the approaches described in this chapter require the following:

- A theoretical framework that gives a rationale for enjoyment and learning through everyday activities, such as that provided by concepts such as *Lebensweltorientierung*, *Alltagsorientierung* and the common third
- Enthusiastic support from managers who can 'own' social pedagogy and staff who are open to learning and change and can trust social pedagogues as younger colleagues

- Giving priority to the 'everyday' above other aspects of practice

## Chapter Five: The role of management

### Introduction

We noted in Chapter 3 the work of Hicks (2008) in drawing attention to the important role of managers in establishing a cohesive culture for practice in children's homes. In this chapter we document how managers in the 18 children's homes worked with the pilot programme aims. We discuss what appear to be the necessary conditions for a management style that is conducive to introducing social pedagogy. We start by outlining a theoretical approach to management and its challenges and then discuss social pedagogues' perceptions of support from the management and the importance of relying on a network of support or a 'guiding coalition' to introduce new ideas.

### The role of the manager as a key stakeholder

The role of a manager in a children's home is very complex; it becomes even more so with the additional task of introducing a fresh perspective on practice. In doing so, the manager has to maintain a balance between fulfilling the basic requirements to run the children's home on the one hand and on the other establishing an atmosphere in which it is possible to adapt to the constant state of flux resulting from the nature of the work in a creative and flexible way. In some cases in the pilot programme, children's home managers were not just internally focused but, in addition, were coping with complex external demands such as service re-organisation or even having to justify its viability. Overall, we can conceptualise the manager as figure which plays a highly important role in the setup of a children's home that goes beyond maintaining the daily routines in it and includes being or becoming familiar with theoretical frames of reference.

Hicks (2008: 241) refers to studies by Berridge & Brodie (1998), Brown *et al.* (1998), Sinclair & Gibbs (1998) and Whitaker *et al.* (1998) that show a strong link between the way the home operates and a "combination of factors" that include 'the leadership of home, the context within which the manager worked, a staff group unified with their manager, the size of the home and a clearly articulated philosophy'.

According to Marleen Stefansen, a Danish children's home manager, a social pedagogic approach to management and practice in an institution can be seen as a building (See figure 4.1) that represents what a children's home stands for. At the base is the **mission**, the vision or the strategy that the home as a unit wants to follow. The walls are the **structure** that is given by the organisational framework

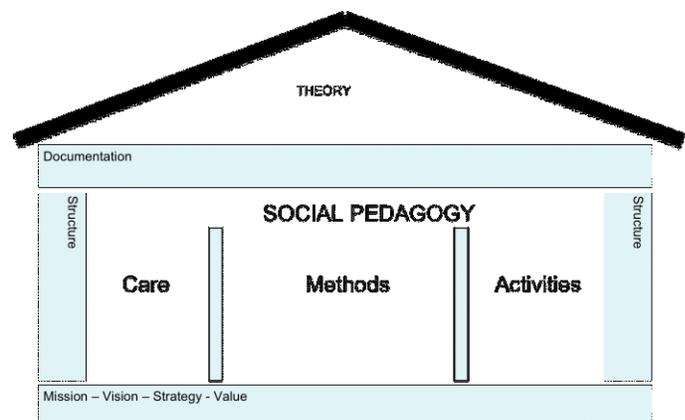


Figure 5.1: The house of social pedagogy

(including rules and regulations). In the home different methods are used to care for the young people and to provide everyday activities. **Documentation** is necessary to keep up with what has already been achieved in order to evaluate practice and identify what still needs to happen. Finally, the theory that informs everything that is happening in this building (or home) provides the overarching knowledge base of how practitioners act within this building. Social pedagogy provides a unifying framework that brings all these components together, possibly in a way that may be different to the organisational culture. Social pedagogic management and leadership implies working with the foundation concepts of the building – or the mission of the children’s home.

According to social pedagogues in the pilot programme, social pedagogue practitioners look to managers (and themselves) to conduct and revisit focused discussions about the underlying concept or mission of the organisation. One example of these focused discussions could be joint formulation of the statement of purpose, including defining the target group, the value base and the theoretical perspective and methods to be employed. Such a concept is worked into a document that is a live topic of discussion as a form of accountability (‘are we doing what we set out to do?’) and to increase the sense of practitioner ownership and belonging (‘what is my contribution to the values and practices here’) to the institution. This is a crucial social pedagogic step in defining the professional identity of the children’s home. In one of the pilot programme homes, similar work, more clearly focused on achieving change rather than defining purpose, took place through groups at two levels; a strategy group and a practitioner forum. The strategy group, composed of managers and heads of service from across the organisation, had a responsibility to take forward the recommendations of the practitioner forum, which was composed of those working directly with children and young people and had a responsibility to identify common issues that were a barrier to social pedagogic practice.

Whether or not it was acknowledged as such, successful participation in the pilot programme meant changing the structure of the metaphorical building. The introduction of social pedagogues meant changes in the relations between staff, between managers and staff and between managers and the external agencies with which they worked. The manager can be seen as part of a **network of stakeholders** that can be used very constructively to implement change, but can also act as a barrier if it is not possible to include all aspects of the network in the process.

There are many different ways to describe such a network. Hicks (2008: 42) identified the following key practice arenas for managers that are relevant to establish ‘clear and successful work’ within a children’s home. The list below gives a basic overview about the different relations that management has to consider to:

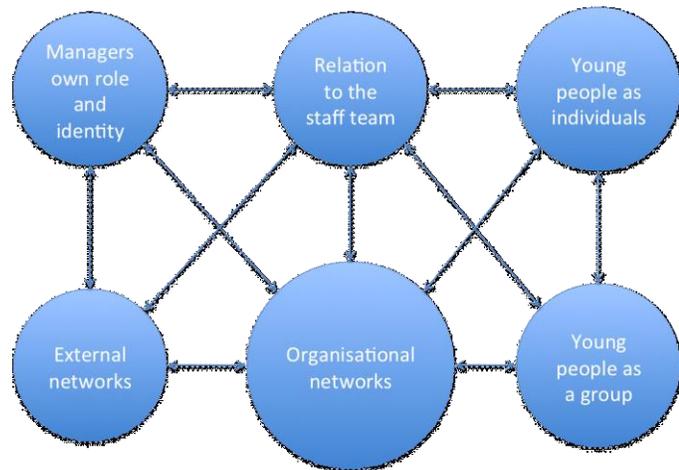
- Their own role and identity
- The staff team,
- The young people as individuals and as a group,
- The networks outside the boundary of the home, and
- Their own organization.

As shown in Figure 4.2, these practice areas are interconnected and the manager is not only a key person in the success of implementing new ways of working but the overall structure of the organisation has to be considered when introducing new ideas. This network also means that the manager can potentially be very limited in what he or she can achieve without risk of bringing the whole system out of balance.

For example, it is important for the manager to achieve a balance between empowering staff whilst retaining a decision-making authority. What seems to be important in this is that the manager works together with the team

‘interdependently to establish a collaborative culture that was led and developed by the manager

from within a hierarchical system of accountability’ (Hicks 2008: 244). This notion is rather similar to the idea of developing a underlying concept as outlined above. In the rest of this chapter we examine ways in which the home managers worked to establish a collaborative culture with the social pedagogues and their staff groups.



**Figure 5.2: Manager's network of stakeholders**

### Success factors

Viewing the manager's role as both responsible for the guiding concept of the children's home and at the hub of a potentially complex network of players underpins the discussion of the role that management played in the pilot programme. It highlights that the manager is embedded in an existing culture represented by the networks of which he or she is a member. Introducing social pedagogy means a cultural change and therefore all elements of this network have to be considered as each 'knot' in this network is closely connected to all other knots. Moving one knot will have an impact on all others.

Reviewing the experience of managers and social pedagogues in the pilot programme, a number of factors support the introduction of social pedagogy, although not exclusively; some of these factors may underpin any substantial change:

- Commitment
- Guiding coalition – or the generation of key players with shared commitment to the goal
- Creating a shared understanding
- Consistency of support or stakeholder

We discussed the advantages of consistency of support in Chapter 3 and noted that in ten of the children's homes there was a change of manager(s), which did not help social pedagogues to become accepted and established.

## Commitment

All the managers in the pilot programme initially expressed a strong commitment to the idea of social pedagogy in their children's home. During the project, however, it became clear that this commitment was not in all cases backed up by necessary action. Pedagogues in four homes reported their experience of an imbalance between the expressed commitment of management and the lack of steps to translate this commitment into practice. This could have happened for various reasons.

First, it was not always the manager of the children's homes themselves who expressed their commitment to the project. In a number of cases it was a senior manager within the organisation who had shown an interest in the idea of social pedagogy and initiated the participation in the pilot programme. This enthusiasm did not always filter through to senior staff or practitioners in the actual children's home. As a consequence, in some homes, the manager of the home and the team was not fully 'on board' with the general idea to introduce social pedagogy. In three homes, that resulted in a lack of preparation of the whole team about the participation in the pilot, with a subsequent impact on the ability of the social pedagogues to introduce new ideas. In one other case the staff were introduced to participation in the pilot programme but took the view that what the social pedagogues had to offer was so similar to their own perspective that little or no difference in practice would be expected. Another possible reason, for homes in the independent sector, for being committed to the pilot programme was market related: being part of a national pilot programme was seen as potentially desirable in promoting the company reputation but in at least one case this commitment did not necessarily translate into sustained commitment to exploring what social pedagogy had to offer.

A lack of sustained action to support commitment stands in contrast to the considered thinking through that took place as preparation in one voluntary sector organisation. Extensive preliminary discussion enabled an open discussion about which home of the organisation would be selected for the pilot, as illustrated below:

\*XX as an organisation has been interested in social pedagogy for some time and invested a lot of energy to consider the impact it may have. One of the homes was selected to participate in the pilot. The manager of this home was informed about this decision very late in the process. At the initial meeting with the organisation the manager of the selected home raised the concern that the current situation in the home would not be stable enough to allow for testing this new approach. As a result of this another home was selected to participate in the pilot programme. In this home the conditions for participation were much better. A stable group of young people, an experienced and well functioning team and an enthusiastic team manager meant that the social pedagogues were able to integrate themselves into the team quickly and introduce new ideas.

Another factor that could explain the imbalance between commitment and action is the context in which the homes functioned. A number of homes experienced financial problems that made it difficult for the management to provide adequate resources for implementing basic ideas like involving young

people as a group in more activities outside the home. Some homes were concerned about a possible closure of their home, causing anxiety about the homes' survival.

A lack of residents also made it very difficult in some cases to turn the commitment into action. In one case no young person was actually living in the home for several months, which made it difficult to implement new ideas. In another home the placement policy of the organisation resulted in a situation in which the group dynamics of the young people spiralled out of control meaning that the team had to work extremely hard to maintain even a basic level of interaction with the residents.

### **Building a guiding coalition**

A 'guiding coalition' is a combination of individuals who share commitment to a goal (Kotter 1996). The social pedagogues had to rely on support given to them from within the organisation in which they worked. Usually it was the manager who was a key person in forming a basic network of support necessary to embed the work of the social pedagogues in the organisation. This 'guiding coalition' sometimes consisted of very few individuals but nonetheless where it was possible for the social pedagogue to work with the support of different levels of management the chances of implementing new ideas were greater.

\*VV is a good example how this guiding coalition has led to a successful participation in the pilot programme. Here the social pedagogue worked closely together with a member of the management team, supported by the home manager and the service manager. This group shared the idea to introduce social pedagogy throughout the whole organisation and managed to get councillors and other key decision makers on board. As a result service decided to roll out training in social pedagogy to all of its residential care workers.

The social pedagogues were not able to form a guiding coalition if they were perceived as outsiders, coming in without much experience, lacking knowledge of the existing culture in English residential child care, and with the aim of criticising existing practice. In these instances, the response to new ideas was either a direct rejection or a resistance, perhaps because existing practice was already regarded as something special or particular organisational dynamics dominated practice.

The guiding coalition was important in establishing the existing staff team's acceptance of new ideas. Where successful, a guiding coalition meant that new ideas were not seen as something externally imposed, but as something that emerged collaboratively from ongoing discussions within the organisation. A guiding coalition meant that it was possible for the social pedagogues to make use of any momentum for change that already existed in the organisation.

## Creating a shared understanding

Organisational theory argues that any attempt to introduce new ideas into a complex organisation such as a children's home has implications for the way the whole system works and the tendency is adaptation rather than revolution. This needs to happen in relation to the question as to how the external rationality (here social pedagogy) fits with the internal rationality (the self-organisation) of the system. If the internal rationality is too disconnected from the external rationality it is likely that the attempts to introduce change will be ignored. If the system feels threatened by the intervention then defence mechanisms will be developed that are in effect barriers for change (Müller-Stewens and Lechner 2005:568)

In a complex organisation, there is a risk that the rationality of an intervention might not correspond with that of the system in which it intervenes. In the pilot study, this links to the question of how far it was possible to create a shared understanding between leadership and operational management. Such shared understanding has to be constantly checked and monitored ensure it keeps pace with changes within the organisation. To this extent, any attempts to introduce social pedagogy into a children's home has to be made within the context of the organisation. A balance has to be maintained between the maximum change that is possible alongside the minimum acceptable level of 'business as usual'.

Where factors such as difficult placements, financial concerns and fragmented teams mitigated against introducing change, and managers failed to acknowledge the situation it was very difficult for the social pedagogues to develop and implement new ideas. In one case, when a social pedagogue failed to log an incident, a manager had to reconcile his concerns for adhering to procedures with the potential risk of allegation against the social pedagogue should he fail to do so. He had to develop a shared understanding based on 'common sense and a professional accountability' taking account of the social pedagogic perspective on concepts that in England are taken for granted, such as risks and reporting them.

Managers generally valued the following factors in professional action:

- Common sense
- Professional accountability
- Able to accept a challenge
- Giving responsibility to children
- Encouraging and empowering young people
- Able to work with young people as a group.

In the example cited, whilst all these characteristics were appreciated, the manager wanted to encourage the social pedagogue to develop these, and act as a role model for the team, but he was also concerned to act within the regulatory framework that outlines potential risks from failure to report incidents. Creating a shared understanding required an authentic commitment to understanding the social pedagogic perspective on often taken-for-granted concepts such as risk and reporting of them.

## Social pedagogues' perception of support from management

Many social pedagogues perceived a conflict of interest between the managers' expressed commitment to social pedagogic ideas and the practical steps required to achieve them, and the need to ensure that the level of practice already achieved was maintained. A number of social pedagogues experienced this almost as a double bind situation in which they were expected to fit into the existing culture of residential child care but at the same time make changes to practice. This was seen as an impossible task. One social pedagogue working in a home with very difficult group dynamics stated that she could not change the system if she was fully part of it.

Similar to this, but from the opposite perspective, some of the managers expressed concerns that the social pedagogues showed no indication of what the managers understood to be social pedagogical practice but instead became 'traditional residential child care workers'. There is a danger of social pedagogues being absorbed into the institutional practices and thereby preventing the distinctiveness of social pedagogy from becoming apparent.

One central theme throughout the project period was the tension between the status quo and change, manifest in the challenge of working with the national minimum standards. While obviously all managers were responsible for adhering to the standards, some pilot programme homes were dominated by a procedural approach while others used the standards and related procedures and regulations as a baseline from which to develop practice creatively. Below is an example of a creative approach to working with the standards:

In an assessment unit young people took on responsibility for tasks such as checking whether the windows and doors were closed in the evening, measuring the fridge temperature and planning the weekly activities as a group. Some of these tasks were outlined in the existing rules and regulations. By involving young people in complying with these requirements it was possible for the young people to earn some extra pocket money but more importantly to experience a sense of belonging and mutual responsibility.

Whether or not a home was characterised by a 'procedural' or a 'creative' approach to standards was not predictable on the basis of the employing organisation alone and in itself was not related to social pedagogic input as there were some homes where creativity and risk taking were evident before the social pedagogues arrived. In the next example, the social pedagogue observed differences between managerial approaches within one employer organisation.

In ZZ the social pedagogue spent time in two different children's homes, one for a few weeks, the other for a year or so. On the basis of her observations she reported that whilst in one home (her original employment base) there was a strong focus on regulations and an emphasis on accountability through daily risk assessments and weekly crisis management plans, in the other home within the same organisation, risk assessments were completed according to need, and individual crisis management plans updated fortnightly. From her point of view the second home had a very good structure to keep up with the regulations and the paperwork while leaving members of staff more time to focus on the interactions with children and young people.

However, support from managers was crucial for enabling social pedagogues to make progress in their role of introducing new ideas, including support for analysis of the use of standards. In the next case example, given in detail, we outline some points that the social pedagogues made about support they received from management and its implications for introducing social pedagogic ideas and methods even when the manager had declared an interest and commitment early on.

## Case Example: AA, a local authority home

In AA the two social pedagogues came into an organisation where the home manager had a long history of being interested in social pedagogy. She had invested significant time and effort in learning more about social pedagogy, together with developing other ideas that, from her point of view, would enhance the ability of staff to support the young people. She started out with a very specific idea of what social pedagogy could do and expressed her hope that it might be possible to introduce this way of working into her home. The organisation was in the process of closing one large unit and opening several smaller homes. The plan was for the social pedagogues to come into the service and use the momentum created by the current changes to introduce and embed a social pedagogical way of working in one of the new homes.

As part of the overall change process, the existing staff had to reapply for new jobs with new job descriptions. Not all of the old team were successful. The intention was to appoint a staff team that was in line with, or able to adapt to, the new intended mindset of the organisation. An unintended outcome of the reorganisation process was that the pilot home had no young residents for several months.

The two social pedagogues who were employed, different in character, professional background and experience, soon found themselves in a situation in which they felt that the proposals that they made were not heard or acted upon. For example, they made several suggestions as to what they could organise with and for the young people but were told that their proposals were going to be taken to management. They considered the result was not constructive: 'we got no reaction and nothing happened'. Other proposals to change elements of existing practice met with a similar outcome. The social pedagogues felt they were being required to fulfil the task of a residential child care worker while denied the ability to add their own ideas. They saw themselves as deprived of their professional role as a social pedagogue.

The perception of the managers of these two social pedagogues was completely different. They reported that their concern that the two social pedagogues had started to adopt the modes of practice of residential child care workers that the organisation had tried to leave behind. The social pedagogues in their view were had difficulty forming relationships with the young people and struggled to introduce new ideas into the service. They considered the staff team showed more evidence of "social pedagogical activities" than the two social pedagogues.

### **A lack of support: some issues**

The above case example was not unique in the pilot programme. Here we document further dimensions of lack of support reported by social pedagogues.

#### *Lack of action*

Sometimes there was a lack of practical action to take a decision or a proposal forward. The barrier was usually securing the go ahead from management despite 'in principle' agreement. Like the example give

above, a verbal commitment was often not translated into practice. In three homes the manager directly responsible failed to follow through earlier verbal undertaking to introduce social pedagogy.

### *Lack of resources*

In some cases, permission for an activity was given by managers, but additional resources, such as finance or help with organisational aspects necessary to carry out the activity were not made available. For example, in AA the two social pedagogues organised an outing to a football match. They stated that they had to organise everything by themselves, from ordering the tickets, talking to the young people about it, sorting out all the paperwork and materials'. There was no involvement of other staff members. However, the outcomes were positive. For one young person who did not have a chance to go on a vacation this was a 'treat' and gave him a chance to get to know the two social pedagogues better and the 'opportunity to start a trustful relationship with a lot of room to talk to and interact with each other'. However, whilst the outcomes were positive, it is very difficult to keep organising such events if the expectations regarding the 'business as usual' requirements are not adapted to new perspectives about what is 'good' action on behalf of young people.

### *Unclear expectations*

Some social pedagogues reported a lack of clarity about the expectations of their role. The management had certain expectations based upon their understanding of participation in a pilot programme. Sometimes these expectations were not made very clear and could be as general as 'introducing a new way of working". In some cases, the social pedagogues made proposals to change the way of working only to be told that these proposals were not social pedagogy as such but just good practice. Ideas were not always taken up, even when acknowledged to be good practice.

Management support was thus a critical factor in validating the ideas and practices introduced by the social pedagogues. Where meaningful and active support of managers was lacking, the social pedagogues were unable to make good progress.

## **Building on a network of support – Guiding coalitions in practice**

In a number of pilot children's homes the social pedagogues felt very well supported from the start. This included support with moving to a different country, receiving an appropriate induction and having enough time to establish expectations on both sides. In an effective guiding coalition, it was important for the social pedagogues to know that support for new ideas was available not only from the direct line manager, but also from the team and from managers at different levels within the organisational structure. Below are four examples of constructive guiding coalitions:

<p>At BB the social pedagogues said they could talk to their line manager about new ideas, as well as the regional manager, on a regular basis. The two managers met frequently with the social pedagogues to discuss proposals and how to implement these within the team. The social pedagogues visited other homes and presented their ideas to the wider management team in the organisation and contributed to the organisations' newsletter.</p>
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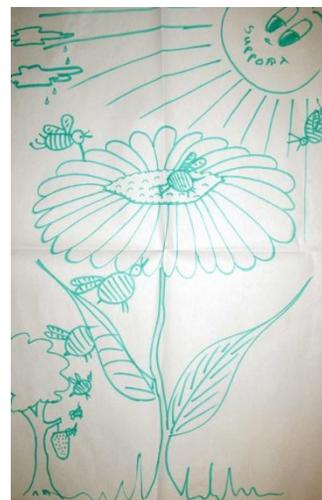
In CC the social pedagogues together with the line manager and the service manager agreed that the social pedagogues would keep a diary documenting observations about good practice and ideas for potential change. At meetings with the management the ideas for new projects and how these could be put into practice were discussed with the focus on integrating the whole team in implementing these ideas. For example, social pedagogues suggested from their observations that the young people should do more leisure and fun activities together with members of staff. Instead of asking the social pedagogues to provide these activities other members of the staff team were encouraged to get more directly involved.

In DD the manager took social pedagogues' ideas for projects like gardening, establishing a plan for a 'greener' children's home or planning holiday trips and allocated these kind of projects to all members of staff.

In EE, the management encouraged the staff to form specialist groups developing aspects of practice, for which the social pedagogues acted as mentors and guides. For example, one member of staff was dedicated to developing creative expression in the children's home and brought ideas to the social pedagogue to explore jointly how to introduce them to the young people.

To form these guiding coalitions support from management was very important. Where it was possible for the manager to include the social pedagogues in different levels of the structure in the organisation and include the team in developing new ideas, the social pedagogues perceived themselves to be in a stronger position to fulfil their own expectations and introduce changes.

Social pedagogues attending project network events often said they wanted to be seen as one resource amongst many that could be used by the organisation to improve the lives of young people. In one of the workshops a group of social pedagogues visualised their idea of how they would like to be seen by their management and their colleagues (Fig 4.3). They wanted to act as a source of new ideas for everyone they worked with. In order to do so, they emphasised that support from the management was necessary to act as a source of energy to renew their ability to act as a resource for ideas. In Figure 5.2, the social pedagogue used the metaphor of a flower to explain that they, social pedagogues, would like to be seen as resource from which other professionals could extract knowledge and new ideas. For this to happen they needed support and stimulation in order to grow themselves so that they were able to provide more food for thought to their colleagues.



**Figure 5.3: Social pedagogy as a resource**

The next example shows that these guiding coalitions do not necessarily have to be large but that they are crucial to move ideas forward. In this case it was noticeable that the fact that there was a link between the social pedagogue and a manager from within the organisation made some developments possible in a brief period of time.

The two social pedagogues at FF struggled over a long period of time to introduce new ideas or even get the time to reflect together on their observations. This was regardless of meetings with the management and the expressed commitment to establish the space in which the two social pedagogues could develop their ideas.

After many months, and after one of the social pedagogues had left, the remaining social pedagogue was able to work together with a manager with decision making capacity to develop a youth club for their young people. Whilst the cooperation between the two social pedagogues was not successful in developing tangible results, the cooperation between the manager, backed up by the organisation, and the social pedagogue quickly resulted in a real change for resident young people who found it difficult to access the mainstream youth provision in the area.

While some of these points sound obvious, it is worthwhile emphasising that at the beginning of the pilot programme many of the social pedagogues worked in homes where they were viewed by the teams with some suspicion and often felt isolated. The suspicion could have been the product of a lack of preparation of the staff team. More knowledge about social pedagogy could have overcome fears about the role of the social pedagogues and whether they were there to observe and/or criticise the existing practice. At network events, social pedagogues frequently referred to the metaphor of the 'magic wand' that they were expected to bring with them in order to change the existing practice. In one children's home the 'magic wand' became a joke, so that when there was a problem, a residential worker would say to the social pedagogue 'get your wand out!' But the idea that a magic wand could be waved caused concerns, especially among well-established staff who had long experience of working with young people in care, and were now faced with professionals who were highly qualified but did not necessarily have similar levels of experience. Where the management took an active role in overcoming initial fears or concerns and allowed the social pedagogues time to become integrated into the team the feedback from the social pedagogues was more positive in terms of successful acceptance of new ideas.

### **Summary: The importance of managers**

It is well known that children's homes managers, together with the wider employer organisation, are engaged in a highly complex task and have a substantial influence on the success of children's homes practice. What this pilot programme showed is that introducing social pedagogues to work alongside staff relies on a high level of constructive and sustained engagement by managers. Managers who were wedded to a narrow interpretation of procedures, minimum standards and associated guidance for practice were less able to support the introduction of social pedagogues, both as practitioners and as a source of new ideas. Promoting social pedagogic approaches within children's homes worked most successfully where managers:

- Followed through verbal commitment with action
- Had a theoretical framework that included building a staff team around a common purpose and value base
- were part of a network of support for themselves and the social pedagogues, including external supervisors for the purposes of reflection and analysis of practice
- Trusted social pedagogues and were able to work with multiple interpretations of issues/events, including the different viewpoints of social pedagogues
- were able to work creatively within the standards and procedures
- Built guiding coalitions, consisting of a mix of team members, managers from different levels of the organisation and external professionals. These enabled new ideas to be developed to be developed collaboratively within the organisation, based on the observations that the social pedagogues made, and with the benefit of all round support.

## Chapter Six: Team Work

### Introduction

Teamwork plays an essential role in social pedagogy for three main reasons. First, the team forms a basis for reflection about practice with other professionals and therefore for professional development. Second, the team in itself becomes a vital resource when working with young people in care. This is because young people in care have a wide range of difficulties as a result of their personal life history and working with them will inevitably have an impact on the practitioners. The young people's behaviour may be perceived as directed at them personally, and not as a way of coping with a difficult life situation. Working in a strong team enables a professional to respond to, and cope with, the presenting behaviour in a constructive way. Interaction of the team may make it possible to deal with behaviour which at an individual level may seem unbearable. The third reason is that team work is fundamental to working with the whole child. The 'team around the child' approach is now commonplace in work with looked after children, but the social pedagogues made the point that a holistic orientation to practice has to include the expertise of residential workers who have a unique knowledge of the young person's everyday life. Residential practitioners therefore need to be seen as, and to see themselves as team members.

In some senses, team work is incontestable. The principle of working as a team, whether constructed in a hierarchical way or not, is almost universally accepted. In fact, there was little discussion of teams as such during the pilot programme. The basis for good teamwork is the interpersonal relationships developed and sustained within it. As Adler et al. (2007: 384) emphasised, 'the qualities that distinguish winning teams is a collaborative climate in which members trust and support each other'. Adler et al. (2007) also highlight some dimensions of communication that they see as important in respect of a given group culture. These are sociability, distribution of power, tolerance for new ideas, ways of managing conflict and emotional support. These dimensions are highly significant for the discussion of the experiences in the pilot programme. The importance of teamwork was discussed on many occasions and no-one disagreed with the need for good teamwork. But there was little evaluation of team work or analysis of what teamwork actually is, how the teams define themselves or how they ensure that Adler's collaborative climate in which members trust and support each other exists. This chapter will review the data on team work raised within the pilot programme.

### The social pedagogues within the teams

All the social pedagogues stated that they felt fully accepted as part of the team when they arrived. In most cases it was noted that colleagues were very supportive in the process of helping them to adapt to a new country, a new job and into a new team. The chance to exchange ideas with professionals from another country was generally seen as a great developmental opportunity for the team. For the most part, managers described having staff with a good mix of skills and experiences that, in combination, created successful teams. It was hoped that the social pedagogues would add to this mix of skills and expertise.

## Preparation of the teams

However, there were some uncertainties in the early stages. Generally, relatively little induction and preparation of staff took place before the pilot social pedagogues started work, despite this being an area of discussion at initial meetings with the TCRU pilot programme team. Most social pedagogues faced teams that knew little, if anything about social pedagogy. The social pedagogues had to explain the principles of social pedagogy, highlight the differences with existing practice and, at the same time, confront the great, but nonetheless unclear, expectations that the teams had about the social pedagogues. This was a very challenging situation for the social pedagogues. In some cases problems arose between the team and the social pedagogues because of the tacit belief that the pedagogues had come to improve existing practice rather than with the aim of developing mutual learning. Potentially such belief could pose a threat to existing staff members, adding an additional hurdle for the social pedagogues to overcome at the beginning.

One of the requirements of the pilot programme was to indicate how social pedagogy might be 'rolled out' after the end of the pilot programme. This meant that the pilot programme team had to be careful not to offer conditions or resources that would not be available after the end of the programme. Being mindful of this, it was not part of the initial design of the pilot to offer whole staff induction in social pedagogy. Some establishments arranged this independently, paying for it through their own resources. In one case, training from an external organisation placed considerable emphasis on team building, and developing mutual confidence as a platform. Other establishments, despite discussions at network meetings about what they could expect and the potential challenges to practice that might emerge, gave little or no induction to their staff team, perhaps due to having limited knowledge about social pedagogy at the outset. A more thorough preparation of the staff teams would, in all likelihood, have increased the speed with which the social pedagogues became integrated. As it was, in most cases, employers allowed a period of at least three months for the initial induction phase, for social pedagogues to gain understanding of the home and the English system, and for staff teams to gain an understanding of the social pedagogues, their education and training.

## Value Base

The first element that establishes a sense of coherence in a team is a shared value base. Some of the social pedagogues noted that there was a need to re-establish or to re-iterate the values that staff members shared on a regular basis. This relates to what knowledge is shared and how more specifically how it is shared. It links to the question of training and qualifications that provides a common set of knowledge, methods and beliefs for all those working with children and young people rather than the specialisation for different roles within the field of children social care. The need for a common core of skills and knowledge among children's practitioners was recognised by government in 2005 (DfES 2005). Effectively introduced, this would enable the establishment of a common set of values that are shared and lived across the whole workforce.

During the pilot programme the reiteration of values at various training and networking events raised questions amongst the social pedagogues about whether or not there really is a shared value base in English children's residential care. The statement of purpose required for each home is one opportunity to express and give meaning to shared values that all staff own and commit to and was common social

pedagogic practice in the countries of origin. But there was little evidence of staff involvement in writing or refining such statements of purpose, when participation in the pilot programme began. This added to doubts about the existence of a shared valued base for team work.



Figure 6.1 Team work as represented in a group exercise for social pedagogues

### Holistic approach and team development

Well functioning teams are a resource in themselves and some of the social pedagogues had previously worked with such a shared team understanding in their countries of origins. Establishing a common set of knowledge and skills, beyond the 'common core', for those working directly with young people in care, would allow the teams to provide a truly holistic approach for their young people. If every residential care practitioner was equipped with knowledge about psychology and group dynamics, for example, or how to resolve conflicts in different groups, the need for the expertise of other professionals would be reduced. Instead, much of what is offered by external agencies could be provided directly by those who work with the young people all the time.

Drawing on the resources of external agencies takes a lot of time and energy and undermines the skills of the team. It also diverts attention away from rethinking the capacity and roles of the staff teams themselves. In one case, a children's home using external agencies was consistently rated as 'outstanding' by OfSTED, which led the team to conclude that the system was responsible for poor outcomes with the young people, rather than analysing how they could use their expertise to improve their way of working. For example, rethinking the team and its knowledge could transform its functioning as a unit beyond the boundaries of the home, using a team approach sharing information,

knowledge and expertise that includes other professionals in schools, CAMHS staff or social workers in order to achieve a holistic way of working with young people.

Constructive criticism is key to moving teams forward. Social pedagogues are trained to challenge and confront, but this approach is less familiar to English workers. Many of the social pedagogues found that any kind of criticism in the team was viewed with unease despite the importance of this for reflective practice. At times, the response on the part of staff teams to perceived criticism was defensiveness rather than openness to reflect and discuss. In one instance, it was the manager herself who was unable to deal with the criticism in a team meeting, or to use it in a constructive way. The social pedagogue in consequence had decided to refrain from expressing her views at future meetings because she considered they would be wrongly interpreted.

### Team coherence

In residential child care it can be very difficult to establish team coherence and exchange thoughts and reflections with team members. This is because of the shift patterns that prevent people from seeing each other either at work or outside work. As a consequence, shift 'hand over' meetings can often be dominated by the 'negative' or 'business' because this is most important information in the limited time available. Teams have to be proactive to establish a feeling of being together despite not seeing the whole team on a regular basis. In one home, after having worked with social pedagogues for some time, a member of staff suggested having a 'feeling round' at the beginning of staff meetings, which was intended to encourage staff to speak about any issues or feelings they may have relating to their work with the young people. A similar example was called a 'feel-good-book' described by the social pedagogue as follows:

#### Example: Feel-Good-Book

We introduced a feel good book. Cos we don't see all the colleagues from all the shifts, there are part-timers and it's really difficult to keep up with everybody, so we have this feel good book, and if you are really happy with something, you put it in the book, or if you want to appreciate the support of a team member, you put it in the book, and I think in the beginning it went well, but it's a bit falling asleep at the moment, no one is using it, but they did at the beginning, and it was like 'oh my god, did you think that', and it cheered them up, and the reason behind was to push them, to lift their motivation sometimes, cos you don't get the motivation sometimes from the kids. When they have a really bad day, you have to have something to, you know, lift your spirits up, just to be positive, which is difficult, but it's good, cos like I said, the kids mirror this, when you are happy you put a smile on their face as well. We can write anything in there, but what we did was like 'thanks so much for your support throughout the whole shift, I really appreciate it', or 'H, thanks so much for taking J and C out to do the shopping, it's much appreciated, it was a big help', and then when you read it, it's like, 'hmm, that's nice', just talking positive.

There was one therapeutic community in the pilot programme, which, in keeping with therapeutic community philosophy, placed a good deal of emphasis on team coherence, similar to the approach of

social pedagogy. One of the social pedagogues employed here reported that daily debrief meetings in which staff expressed their feelings took place so that they could release stress and not take 'issues' home with them. Team coherence was also built through process meetings, in which the expression of feelings was encouraged, and through the fact that everyone, including the cook and housekeeper, did the same therapeutic care training course. The manager considered that having everyone do the same training ensured that all the staff team were working on the same level and in the same way and that they were equally valued and trusted as team members, with no staff member superior to another, just with differing roles and tasks. The social pedagogue said sharing feelings was further encouraged during the daily group meetings with staff and young people, where adults present could share their feelings with the young people about events and incidents. The social pedagogue thought that team work and the way it was used as a resource was one the best 'matches' between social pedagogy and therapeutic community approach.

### **Team meetings**

Team meetings are an important part of working in a children's home. They are the space for exchange of important information about the young people as well as about the day-to-day running of the home. In some cases, team meetings are focussed on the day-to-day business and other meetings focus specifically on the challenges that the young people experience in their daily life. These latter meetings normally involved other professionals who can advise the team on working with young people (e.g. a CAMHS therapist or a psychologist). One children's home employed a life coach who helped the team to develop their skills in working with young people. Another made a clinical psychologist available to the team for team meetings and individual support and supervision. In this sense the team meetings can become a very valuable resource for the staff to cope with the challenging nature of their work.

Most team work goes on in the daily shift work of residential care. Towards the end of the programme, one manager, reflecting on the team's learning and changes to practice, thought that the process of beginning to reflect on practice had changed the way staff communicated with each other during shifts. He said that they had begun to value each others' contributions more highly and that reflection had become an important part of the work. The social pedagogue in this home explained that there had been a shift from 'reflecting whilst judging on the right/wrongs' to a more analytical approach asking 'what went wrong?', 'why did it go wrong?' and 'how can it be improved?' Such reflection depended upon the building of teams that trusted each other and could be open in their expressions about professional practice.

Team work goes beyond the team within the home. However, some social pedagogues drew attention to the need for more and better team work with those working with looked after young people outside the residential home. For example, one suggested that residential care workers in England were not expected to work holistically, because there were different agencies working with different aspects of young people's lives. The scope for residential care worker involvement was often limited. The social pedagogues said that where multiple professionals become involved, this requires precise and comprehensive communication and information sharing. In one case, because there was no record about what the young people did with other professionals who visited the home, the home management introduced a form for them to complete, in order to keep the residential care staff better

informed. Leaving residential workers out of the information loop diminishes their value and excludes valuable information and exchange about young people's everyday lives and contexts of living. According to one social pedagogue on the pilot programme, residential care workers: 'are not working as an equal level professional partner and there is little trust in their knowledge and competence'.

## Conclusion

Team work is crucial for the development of social pedagogy but not uniquely so. Therapeutic communities, for example, focus on working together in teams made up of a group of young people and adults living together. Many teams in the pilot programme appeared to be very close and included the social pedagogues in social events and other activities that helped them to build a strong feeling of participation. Some social pedagogues however reflected that despite being accepted as a member of the team, their views were not heard either as a social pedagogue, or as a residential child care worker

The experience of the social pedagogues working in the pilot programme suggests that there still is a need to discuss what is actually meant by teamwork and to elaborate this with structures, training and theoretical support for the principles and practices of team work. In order to make progress with social pedagogic approaches to residential care the following needs to be in place:

- A sense of working as a team as a professional community in each home which is the baseline for reflection and personal development
- Time, effort and training in the foundations for team work, which include building trust between team members and confidence in them as individuals and competent practitioners. In a social pedagogic sense, this is also a form of professional accountability and quality assurance, given team members should be aware of doubts about colleagues' practice and know in what contexts and to whom such doubts can be raised.
- Organisation of the day and the work to facilitate adequate time for meeting to confront and address feelings This includes dealing with feelings provoked in staff of daily events and incidents and with the feelings and emotions of young people aimed at finding constructive outlets for them.
- Valuing the expertise of residential care workers in documenting and reflecting upon the everyday lives of young people, which is an essential part of the multi-agency team work beyond the boundary of the home.
- Opportunities to have fun together through joint projects involving the team and the young people that create a sense of togetherness.

## Chapter Seven: Work with external agencies

### Introduction

Part of the remit of the pilot programme was to develop awareness of social pedagogy both within and beyond the residential care home. In most European countries, social pedagogy borders other professional fields, including school education, out of school care, early childhood care and education, health services, youth work and work with people with disabilities. There were two main ways in which the pilot programme supported this wider, awareness raising remit. The first was through the work of social pedagogues working in Group 3 homes, for whom one third of their time was supernumerary for the purposes of training and development, raising awareness through networking in the local area. This notion fits with the networking and advocacy role that pedagogues in continental Europe generally fill as a normal and accepted part of their work. The second was through a more specific training programme that the pilot programme team termed 'wider reach' events that ran from June 2010 – January 2011 and aimed to raise awareness and develop strategies for developing social pedagogical approaches within children's services and among artist practitioners working with looked after young people.

One of the striking features of the pilot programme has been the ways in which employers have developed their interest in social pedagogy beyond the original remit, so that in some cases, social pedagogues working within Group 1 and 2 children's homes also undertook awareness raising activities. In this chapter, we document some examples of the both types of awareness raising work, beginning with an account of achievements with external agencies and awareness raising, and then describe the more directly training focused 'wider reach programme'.

### Working as Group 3 social pedagogues

Group 3 social pedagogues were recruited to work for one third of their time on development work and awareness raising beyond the boundary of the home. This work did not begin for the first three months after taking up post, to allow the social pedagogues time to settle in, get to know the system, the organisation and their colleagues. One of the features of social pedagogy is its work within and through the context. It was difficult, therefore, to be prescriptive about what, precisely, would be the Group 3 activities and what the outputs would be. At initial meetings with the pilot programme team, managers and social pedagogues, an outline of the programme intentions was agreed and employers were then expected to work with social pedagogues to identify how the allocation of their time might work in practice, and also to facilitate the implementation of the awareness raising task within the existing local networks.

Approaches to developing the role varied and were not without difficulties. Some managers provided the social pedagogues with suggestions about who to approach in the local network, but left it to them to then make contact and set it up. Others were more pro-active in working with the social pedagogues, liaising on their behalf, arranging introductions and facilitating meetings for them with other organisations. Accommodating the Group 3 time to fit with the rota caused problems for some, as did

resolving where the preparatory work for it should take place, in the home or off site. Evidence of what the social pedagogues were doing with the time was not always apparent to the managers. Furthermore, the ambiguous nature of the work raised questions from other members of staff, who did not always understand what the social pedagogues were doing, or why they were not working a full rota like the rest of the team.

The initial enthusiasm at senior management level for participating in the pilot documented in earlier chapters was clearly evident for the idea of awareness raising work. Translating enthusiasm into supportive management practice was more difficult. In three of the six homes, the social pedagogues were left largely alone, struggling to progress the Group 3 agenda when their pedagogue colleagues left due to sickness, or to go to other jobs. For some pedagogues, perhaps because they lacked confidence, the planning and preparation work took precedence over actual implementation. Others were handicapped by pressures within the home which prevented them from focusing on the awareness raising role. In retrospect, the melding of an externally focused awareness raising role with an internally focused care and educational role was extraordinarily difficult, and illuminated tensions in residential care overall between the institutional focus of work and the more outward facing team around the child multi-disciplinary part of practice.

However, in two pilot programme sites, there was outstanding success in the Group 3 work. Each of these merits more detailed description to illustrate how the role was translated into practice which we set out below. They represent respectively a local authority home and one from the voluntary sector. In both cases, all round support has been strong from staff and management at every level.

### **Local authority**

In the first example, participation in an earlier pilot project (Bengtsson et al. 2008) had triggered enthusiasm for ongoing development of social pedagogy. The authority had actively promoted the concept across all six of its homes. Significant changes were already apparent in the home selected for the pilot as a result of this exposure over the two year period. A new unit manager was appointed shortly after the start of the pilot. Though not trained in social pedagogy, her approach very much embodied social pedagogic values in working with young people. When the second appointee social pedagogue withdrew just before she was due to commence work the authority decided to use the other social pedagogue in a fully supernumerary position, with no commitment to the rota though connected to one children's home in particular. This has allowed him to work exclusively on developing practice and supporting the staff team to carry out their jobs focusing on creativity in particular. The authority also appointed the assistant manager of the children's home, to a role of 'social pedagogy coordinator' so that the pair could work together. Their joint remit was to develop social pedagogy across all the children's homes in the authority, working as consultants and providing training for staff. This became an acknowledged part of the authority's workforce strategy. Links were also made with the local university, with a view to getting training accredited and developing a foundation degree. This partnership of the social pedagogue and the coordinator, supported by the unit manager, has proved to be very effective. The coordinator brought years of experience in English residential childcare, and thus increased the credibility of the project. The social pedagogue brought previous residential experience working in Germany and the UK, which smoothed his integration into the team and the job. Both he

and the social pedagogue have been described as a 'natural social pedagogues' even though the coordinator has never trained as such. Together they have shifted the development of social pedagogy in the authority to a new level.

The office from which they have both worked is located away from the base children's home, but close enough to enable them to maintain strong links and visit regularly to work with the staff team. The Group 3 work has been developed on various levels, both within the home, and beyond. Initiatives which the social pedagogue developed include the production of a residential newsletter with the help of some of the young people, as well as running a number of projects for children and young people, including fun days and creating a 'pedagogical sensory tree' project in partnership with some short breaks homes, which has brought together disabled and non disabled children in joint activities. (Fig 7.1) Together they constructed a garden sculpture, which offers a visible and physical experience, representing participation, creativity and team work. Instead of having fixed days or times for the activity, resources are constantly available, to encourage participation at moments when the young people want to get involved.



**Fig 7.1 Design for a sensory tree, the work of disabled and non-disabled children and young people**

The pedagogue has been attending the 'mainstream redesign group' for the local authority which is looking at restructuring children's services, and together with the coordinator, he has delivered training for students doing 'Foundation to Health Studies' at the university. He has also developed programmes for induction, training and assessment of the residential care staff. More recently, the local authority has committed to providing social pedagogy training as a requirement for all staff working in the residential childcare sector, open also to staff from social services. The training is to be provided by the social pedagogue and the coordinator as a 7 - 9 day course. It aims to offer an insight into social pedagogy, and they are developing this with a view to seeking formal accreditation for successful completion.

However, at the time of writing, the longer term development of social pedagogy in the authority looks less assured due to the acute financial climate. Although the commitment to training has been established, and the social pedagogue's role will continue, that of the coordinator is to be terminated, to save money, and he will resume his original post as deputy manager. He will nonetheless continue to work closely with the social pedagogue. One of their key tasks will be to record all of the activities, and to produce a report which they plan to use to strengthen the case for the ongoing support of social pedagogy.

### **Voluntary sector**

The second example of successful Group 3 activity is a voluntary sector home. This has perhaps come closest to the model envisaged when planning this element of the pilot project. It has been aided by a strongly supportive service manager who acknowledged from the start the importance of the awareness raising role. Together with the home manager, he has built this into the work schedule of the social pedagogues and actively contributed to its realisation. The two social pedagogues appointed to work in this home came respectively from a background in residential care and work with young offenders, and from youth work. As an initial task, the service manager, in collaboration with the pedagogues, devised an ambitious awareness raising programme to complement their work within the home. The programme identified three potential groups to target. The first was located within the employing organisation which had a network of children's homes within one region and was part of the children's services network in the local authority. This work comprised visits and presentations to other homes, to a practice development group in residential child care, a school, and to the cross regional meeting for service managers and service directors at the organisation's Scottish headquarters. It has included contributions from the social pedagogues to the organisation's regional newsletter which is circulated within a national newsletter. A second group targeted was external agencies in the local area such as other providers, local authority fieldwork teams, and senior managers in Children's Services, Education, Health, Police, Leaving Care, Children's Rights and CAMHS. Presentations on social pedagogy have been delivered to their team meetings, and representatives have been introduced to social pedagogy through the organisation's quarterly liaison group meetings. Finally, the third group comprised senior social care managers beyond the local authority area, through input to their quarterly meetings.

Key to the success of this strategy was allowing a period of time at the start for the social pedagogues to develop presentational materials, and also for them to introduce a social pedagogical approach within the home, so that in the presentations they could directly link the concepts to practice examples. The pedagogues organised an away-day for the staff team structured around social pedagogic approaches to young people's self esteem, and followed up in subsequent team meetings. The pedagogues later developed three practical projects in the home, drawing on social pedagogy through experience, and each working in conjunction with a member of staff and a representative from an outside organisation. One involved engaging residents with local youth clubs, linking with youth services and the YOT team. Another aimed to improve relations between young people and their families. A third developed the use of art, music and sport within the children's home. Other projects on improving communication and bullying are also planned as is a conference on developments in practice. By the end of the pilot programme period, the organisation planned to further develop their learning through introducing

social pedagogically inspired ideas to their other children's homes, actively recruiting social pedagogues to vacancies across their service, and developing foster care schemes linked to residential care along social pedagogic lines.

## Group 1 and Group 2 experience

As noted, some of the social pedagogues working in Group 1 and 2 homes carried out some awareness raising activities, either informally, through the contact the home had with outside professionals, or in a more pro-active way, when the employing organisation sought to promote the work of the pilot programme more widely. In relation to the former, it happened through professionals such as social workers, therapists, psychologists or CAMHS workers coming in to work with the young people, and learning about social pedagogy in the course of these visits. When social pedagogues have gone out to external agencies in the course of work related to the young people, for training purposes or when they have been sent on induction, some have used the opportunity to talk about their profession and stimulate the curiosity of colleagues and professionals in other agencies.

The manager of a Group 2 voluntary sector home was keen to encourage the social pedagogues to 'spread the word' about social pedagogy outside his service. He hired a venue and the two social pedagogues were given responsibility to organise a staff conference for the whole organisation. They prepared materials and gave a presentation on social pedagogy, the impact it had in their home as well as how it could be useful for other homes. In this organisation, the interest in social pedagogy was being fuelled by one of the service managers who, in addition to hearing about social pedagogy through conferences and the media in England, had participated in a European gathering held in Prague, with a view to finding out more. As an outcome of this event, he had arranged a visit to the home by Danish social pedagogues scheduled for later in the year.

The experience of one Group 2 home deserves special mention. Here, higher level management support has been key to wider dissemination and awareness raising. This was part of an authority wide commitment to develop a social pedagogic approach across all of its children's homes. Resources were allocated for this purpose independently of the home's selection for the pilot programme. The pilot simply served to trigger the start of the 'movement', as embodied in the home's long term goal 'to fully embrace a pedagogic approach to child care whilst influencing social pedagogy regionally and within the UK'.

The impetus was driven by the head of Looked after children provider services, who had been involved previously in the earlier pilot project while working in another local authority. This pilot had advocated the benefits of a dual approach, having qualified and experienced social pedagogues on the staff team, backed up by training for everyone. At an early stage, the authority commissioned training from ThemPra for its entire residential care staff. A project manager from the Workforce Development Service was formally appointed by the authority to steer the introduction of social pedagogy. He was instrumental in negotiating access to other agencies, making them aware of what was going on at the home, and encouraging colleagues to visit. With his support, the social pedagogues have been actively

raising awareness across the Workforce Development Service, and providing briefings to managers in children's services in the authority. The project manager has also collaborated with the home manager and the two social pedagogues in linking with the local university. They have jointly made presentations to university staff and students on the implementation of the social pedagogy project as part of a Skills for Care Social Work symposium. The staff team at the home produced a DVD illustrating some of the home's achievements since the introduction of social pedagogy. The home manager prepares six monthly reports for the local authority Corporate Parenting panel in which social pedagogy has been referenced. These have been backed up by presentations from the social pedagogues to the panel members, with practical exercises to illustrate the social pedagogic approach. The authority is also actively seeking out opportunities for sharing its knowledge and experiences with other authorities interested in developing social pedagogy.

As an outcome of this wider exposure, a range of professionals in the local area are now aware of social pedagogy, and know what is happening at the home. Social workers in particular are happy about the change. According to the manager they are more prepared to take account of and to respect the opinions of residential staff, acknowledging their ability to offer solutions. This, he considered, is a significant cultural change, given the low esteem in which residential workers have been held in the past. Like the local authority Group 3 home described above, the transformation resulting from the introduction of social pedagogy at this home has been visible and its impact is filtering across professional sectors.

### **Wider Reach activity**

To complement the pilot programme work focused on homes and to assist the awareness raising work of the social pedagogues, including developing confidence in expressive arts practice with looked after children, an additional training programme was developed by the programme team. This was aimed at raising awareness of social pedagogy among children's services workers in the regions where the pilot programme was taking place, beyond the boundaries of residential care. The focus was on those working with looked after children, but the plan was to offer the programme as widely as possible, to include foster carers and foster care support teams, social workers, children's centres, LAC nurses, designated teachers and virtual school heads, CAMHS teams, youth workers, leaving care teams and arts groups with LAC remit.

Three types of events were put on as part of this programme. Half day introductory sessions were aimed at giving an overview of the concepts and principles of social pedagogy, linking these to existing practice in the UK context and providing opportunities for reflection on individual practice in the light of the principles. These were followed by a full day's workshop on experience and theory, to deepen understanding of social pedagogy and extend work with pedagogical concepts previously introduced. These workshops were offered as a social learning exercise in which participants were able to improve their skills in developing new ideas in their own practice. Finally, a full day workshop was dedicated to expressive arts and looked after children, bringing together arts groups and those working with looked after children on a daily basis to reframe practice using the arts and social pedagogy. They examined the

respective contribution of expressive arts and social pedagogic practice, one to the other, and included practical methods as well as theoretical orientation to such work aimed at increasing the access young people have to the arts when they are in public care. The workshops were delivered by Pat Petrie and Stefan Kleipoedszus from the pilot programme team, supported by one of the social pedagogues in the North, and two practicing theatre groups for the expressive arts workshops.

The workshops ran between June 2010 and January 2011 with variable attendance. The scheduling of the workshops, though very competitively priced, coincided with a moratorium on external training imposed on local authority staff around the time the events were advertised and this may have accounted for low attendance. Small groups made it difficult for participants to engage in discussions with professionals from other fields of social care, although for some participants this was a benefit. Invitations were extended to staff of homes in the pilot project, several of whom took part. The final expressive arts workshop in London was attended by 22 people, with representatives from a variety of different sectors, including staff from homes in the pilot.

Feedback from the workshops was generally positive. Some participants suggested that social pedagogy is not in itself new, that it reflects the practice of about 20 years ago, or good practice that is going on now. There is a large measure of agreement in the literature that there is some commonality between social pedagogy and ideas and practices found in social work, youth work and related fields in the UK. Very often, participants in the pilot programme and in the wider reach events said the framework of social pedagogy gave a coherence and depth to their ideas and practices.

In general, workshop participants found them stimulating and thought provoking, with several expressing the wish to learn more, perhaps through taking a recognised course in social pedagogy. A selection of the feedback comments from the workshops is shown in Boxes 7.2 – 7.4 below.

'I came along with no knowledge of social pedagogy. The presentation proved informative, interesting and enlightening. The future looks really promising for LAC if this practice is promoted.'

'I found the seminar very informative and interesting, really great attending training with such a theoretical/academic focus. I feel that what I learnt can and will have an impact on my practice, but it is hard to see the extent to which these practices can become embedded without a real commitment to staff training. Let's hope it does though!'

#### **Box 7.2 Feedback from Introduction workshops**

'I feel that we do work on a level similar to pedagogy but if we could remove the restrictions and constraints of bureaucracy around us we could move forward. I found today interesting and thought provoking.'

'Very enjoyable, fulfilling, informative session. Probably the best 'seminar' I've been to in my arts and youth service career. It had an integrity – the facts, the research, the knowledge were there, combined with the practical demonstrations of creative expressive arts. And the discussion groups at the end were very important – real situations got discussed and potential outcomes were talked about. So often you come away from a day like this feeling like you never really reach any substantial point. But I will definitely spread the word! Thank you.'

'Stimulating, thought provoking and a pure delight to be involved in. The outcomes and enjoyment for young people can only improve if we follow creativity.'

'Great opportunity for creative practitioners to meet and mix with care staff. To build ideas, collect new practices and understand the future possibilities using social pedagogy within work with young people in public care. Would recommend colleagues to attend for greater impact for us as an organisation.'

### **Box 7.3 Feedback from Expressive Arts Workshops**

## **Conclusion**

Social pedagogues in continental European countries have a networking and multi-agency role not unlike that of the awareness raising role in the Group 3. This proved to be difficult to incorporate into the organisational practices of residential care but where it worked well there were significant gains in understanding and in making social pedagogy, and residential care, more visible in the local area. The inclusion of the wider reach programme of events reinforced the process of making social pedagogy more visible and raising awareness.

Where the social pedagogues developed and implemented their own programme of work, it proved much harder to have any impact outside the home. The conditions necessary to support work with external agencies to develop awareness of social pedagogy would appear to be where

- Management at all levels was prepared to support and actively guide a broader exposure across professional agencies.
- Formal training of staff in social pedagogy, its principles and concepts, and methods was available and taken up by large numbers of staff and reinforced by ongoing structures that consider and implement policy and practice change recommendations

- Social pedagogues had the time, resources, professional competence and trust from management to prepare presentations and training materials, were then supported to deliver them
- In line with the findings on the role of management, the impetus for developing social pedagogy from the ground up came from a collaboration or guiding coalition between the employing organisations who were already supporting social pedagogy and the social pedagogues they employed. Together they could steer an awareness raising campaign dedicated to developing social pedagogy. The impact was greater if events were put on to introduce the theory and concepts, using the wider reach model developed by TCRU in the pilot.

## Chapter Eight: Conclusions

Interest in social pedagogy and its applications for work children and young people who are looked after in England has been gathering pace for some years and the pilot programme has played an important part in stimulating that interest. Some social pedagogues who have been recruited for the pilot programme are continuing in employment after the end of the pilot period and some of the employers are actively seeking social pedagogues to work in their existing and planned new homes. In continental European countries, social pedagogy is a field of theory and practice relevant to a wide range of services, from young children's care and education to work with older people in day and residential care settings (Cameron and Moss 2007). In those countries with a long established social pedagogic tradition, national policies and legislation support a social pedagogic framework for practice and there is an established network of further and higher education programmes for qualification in the field. In this context, it is important not to overplay the significance of recent developments of social pedagogy in the UK. Although the main policy framework supports the upskilling of the workforce in recognition of the complexity of work with children and young people, especially those living in residential care, and a holistic orientation to practice including integrated working, there are competing policy priorities around educational performance and criminal justice, for example, that may not coincide with social pedagogic approaches. Moreover, and quite critically, the expected level of education for practice in children's residential care is still pitched at Level 3 (and is not mandatory pre-entry), whereas in comparable European countries the main social pedagogy qualification is at the equivalent of ISCED Level 4 or 5 and is expected as a condition of practice.

This difference in knowledge base is not straightforward. It is not just a question of what the formal knowledge consists of or the level at which it is pitched, but also the type of knowledge that is valued. It is not possible to equate formal academic knowledge with experience, supported by tacit knowledge, or to substitute one for another. Yet experience plays a large part in learning about young people and about residential care. In addition, there is a personal dimension to being a social pedagogue which goes beyond formal training and is to do with personal-professional ethics and the concept of *Haltung*. It is along the lines of practice as a 'vocation' and quite different to implementing procedures or carrying out tasks. Some of the social pedagogues referred to this when they said:

I think to be a social pedagogue is not only to be educated and then are a social pedagogue. It is something you really want to do and so it is always emotional. Yeah, it is part of your identity and who you are. And who you define yourself. It is more than a job.

I think that social pedagogy cannot be taught, but has to be lived.

It is a way of thinking. It is not a method we learn. It is the way you think, the way how you approach people, how you see people. And that is nothing you can develop overnight with a training.

Education and training then gives:

The tool not to get too deep... that you can see a child in front of you who is very vulnerable, but still can do a good job and can be objective maybe. About how to do the right thing with all your heart and always involved...That is part of the education I think that helps to stay a bit out and see, here I have to stop now to get too much emotionally involved because that isn't healthy for your whole relationship and stuff like that. That is part of what you learn with your education.

In thinking about the learning from the pilot programme it is important to bear in mind the three elements of being a social pedagogue practitioner discussed here: formal academic knowledge at an advanced level which enables a discussion, and use, of theory; experience of practice in relation to theory; and the use of self or *haltung*, in relation to theory, practical and organisational skills. These three elements are all important in thinking about workforce development of residential care practitioners.

### **The fruits of social pedagogues' thinking**

Social pedagogues in the pilot programme were in a unique position to examine the differences between residential care in England and that in Germany (and a few other countries, but mostly Germany). During their network meetings the social pedagogues combined their understandings and experience and produced documentation that illustrates some conceptual, structural and organisational differences which we summarise here.

The social pedagogues noted that there is a great diversity of residential provision in Germany, where many are specialist homes for young people with specific needs for example, mental health, eating disorders, asylum seekers, intensive support, 'difficult to handle', mother and baby, crime prevention, residential projects on board ship and so on. This stands in contrast to a 'generalist' trend in the UK (Clough et al. 2006) and makes it possible to narrow admission criteria to those who will most benefit from the provision. Without control over admissions, which was the case in some pilot programme homes, the social pedagogues found that the group dynamics of the young people living in the home could change rapidly, leading to great difficulties managing the group. This can make it very difficult to work in a social pedagogical way. In their experience, the lack of specialist residential provision in England means that young people with very different support needs may be mixed in one setting giving rise to a high level of verbal and physical violence which can leave the professionals in unmanageable situations and lead to staff sickness and burn out.

Despite the diversity of types of provision, the professional role of social pedagogue was broader in scope with more responsibilities in Germany compared to residential workers in England. There was a less rigid staff hierarchy, more decision-making at practitioner level, with less need to seek permission from further up the hierarchy, more trust in professionals, more work with families, more of a sense of being the hub of inter-professional working rather than the social worker being this figure, more

expertise in health and advice work and more control over parts of the budget, such as that for leisure activities. One social pedagogue said about her employment in an English children's home:

'We are not bored, but sometimes we are not challenged enough because we came from uni and all we do is like housework, playing with the kids, and really feeling like a babysitter sometimes, and that's all we do and sometimes it would be nice to have a little more responsibility and actually use what we learned. And in Germany we had so much more responsibility'.

This conceptualisation of the role linked to the social pedagogues' perception that far more professionals were involved in the lives of the young people in residential care in England compared to that in German residential homes. This had implications for young people's sense of privacy when living in residential care and whether it could be maintained when so many people were seeking information from them. They also questioned whether it was appropriate for someone who had rarely met the young person to formulate a decision about their future and to leave out the expertise of the residential workers. They thought there was room for much more teamwork. Two social pedagogues commented that:

It's also multi-professional work. I don't even talk to the social workers, they come in, talk to the kid, and then are leaving. I don't even see when they are leaving.

And they make the biggest decisions in lives of the kids. And sometimes they are not up to date when they talk to the kids. The kids sometimes tell them different stories, and we see what actually happens. For many professionals, there is no information sharing.

As the hub of inter-professional working, the social pedagogue practitioner is in a position to take on the role as a professional carer for the young person over the longer term, drawing on their own qualifications and training, rather than passing on the task to other agencies.

A further implication of having so many professionals involved was that the development of trust between workers and young people was potentially compromised. Social pedagogues questioned whether young people understood how their personal information was being used and distributed (or not) and whether they felt they could trust professionals equally. As trust is at the foundation of social pedagogic relationships, the social pedagogues were doubtful about whether the current structures for expertise and communication were serving the young people's best interests.

Looking at the language and terminology in use in residential care, the social pedagogues detected a more technical interpretation of key terms than in Germany. For example, the aim of independence was common among social pedagogic and English residential care goals for young people. But the meaning of independence appeared to be the acquisition of a number of technical skills in England rather than a concern with more general 'upbringing' in a developmental sense to cope with everyday life in a community, which would be the social pedagogic focus. The concept of 'upbringing' is at the forefront

of the social pedagogic task and is about all round upbringing to become an autonomous adult. Furthermore, the social pedagogues considered the term 'service user' to be problematic. It implied, they said, that the service on offer was predefined and that there was no "miteinander" (co-operation) between the professional and the young person. The young person could accept a service or not.

More broadly, the social pedagogues referred to a lack of clarity about the purpose and role of residential care within society. In Germany, there was what was seen as a "Erziehungsauftrag" (social mandate regarding upbringing) or overall vision of what society hopes to achieve for young people in general which did not appear to them to be articulated for young people in England. Policy guidelines such as the five outcomes in *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2003) provided only a guide to what a young person should be expecting from the service they are receiving, but a social mandate would go beyond this and link to the idea of what it is to be human – Menschenbild - in a society. According to the social pedagogues, the Menschenbild forms the foundation of any social pedagogy and is shared within the professional culture. Ideally, this would mean that professionals with very diverse backgrounds still have a common understanding of what they want to achieve.

The points raised by social pedagogues support much of the discussion in this report and point out some clear differences between German and English organisation of services for young people, conceptualisation of young people and the links between society and professional activity on behalf of young people. The question arises as to how far the critique offered by the social pedagogues maps onto concerns that are relevant to residential care in general, and what social pedagogy has to offer in particular.

English critics of social pedagogy argue that, on the one hand social pedagogy is very similar to practice in the best of the residential care homes and to social work or therapeutic communities in general, and on the other, that it reflects a very different approach to childhood and therefore could never work in England. The learning from the pilot programme has shown, however, that neither is the case. There are very clear challenges if a step change in the quality and outcomes of residential care is to be achieved in England, and some of these are illustrated vividly in this report. But the distinctive contribution of social pedagogy in drawing together and making meaningful the values, methods and concepts which could support successful residential care is also apparent. For example, a recurring theme through the discussions with social pedagogues was the importance of distinguishing social pedagogical practice through:

- Identifying the aim and thought behind action on behalf of young people;
- Generating and constructively using critical reflection to inform and analyse practice and;
- Using and appreciating the value of a professional identity that is supported by academic qualifications, a sense of a distinctive professional role specialising in 'everyday' life, and equal status with other professionals within children's services.

In thinking about how to take social pedagogy forward in the UK, pilot programme social pedagogues frequently drew the team's attention to the fact that social pedagogy is not a collection of techniques

(such as the '3Ps') that can be applied in an instrumental way but that theory and *haltung* must also be involved. This means there is considerable disagreement among social pedagogues about the discipline itself and that it is difficult to define, but also creates the possibility that, as one said 'maybe we can create something together which is then our way of social pedagogy'.

## The question of 'best method' and conditions for social pedagogy

In the final section of this chapter we give an assessment of the 18 children's homes in terms of the ease with which they adopted and worked with the social pedagogues and ideas of social pedagogy. Overall, we will argue that the children's homes fell into one of three categories, distinguishable by whether certain conditions were in place and how the 'key players' worked with those conditions.

In the four children's homes in Group 1, there had been no purposeful recruitment of social pedagogues with a remit to introduce social pedagogy into the home. However, when, in two of the homes, social pedagogues had left their employment, the management remained committed to further recruitment of social pedagogues and to developing training in social pedagogy. One of the managers had undertaken a study trip to Germany and had bought places on a local social pedagogy course for their staff. The other manager was working in the local area to raise awareness of social pedagogy and commission training, particularly in the use of the expressive arts. Some of the social pedagogues in this group said, and managers agreed, that they would have made more progress if they had used a social pedagogue job description from the beginning and that the pedagogue had had a mandate to challenge practice. In a third home in this group, the therapeutic care philosophy was seen as sympathetic to social pedagogy and the social pedagogues integrated very easily. This home was seeking to recruit more social pedagogues with a view to integrating further the two approaches. In the fourth home, there was very 'tokenistic' learning from the social pedagogues in post. From this evidence, it would appear that in two of the four homes there was real change in practice and policy, and evidence of wider and ongoing learning; in one case social pedagogues could be characterised as being integrated into therapeutic practice while in the fourth there was no change.

The largest group of homes were those in Group 2. In this Group, social pedagogues were employed through the project to work alongside residential care practitioners to a social pedagogy job description supplied by the pilot team. Membership of this group fluctuated slightly over the project period as one home left the pilot programme, one joined late and a third was added to the group when a second home from an employer's group joined the programme. Of the nine homes included here, one showed change that was seen as 'spectacular', and three showed some active acceptance of social pedagogic ideas and methods, particularly towards the end of the programme period. Important factors were highly supportive management at all levels who took a lead in encouraging social pedagogic change, investment in support and training, and persistent social pedagogues who 'stuck with' their goals and the aims of the pilot programme. In three of these cases, ongoing development of social pedagogy beyond the pilot programme is taking place.

In four cases, there was no real change by the end of the pilot programme period. In two of these, social pedagogues had left before the end of the pilot programme, and in three there were reportedly entrenched staff groups and minimal management support and leadership and/or changes of managers. Difficult financial climates also played a part in lending an insecure atmosphere where learning and exchange was problematic. In the fourth, the home managers said that they did not find much to learn from the social pedagogues they employed and would not be taking their early interest further.

In the ninth case in Group 2, the social pedagogues fitted in very well with the existing therapeutic community perspective and management supported this integration. There was limited change towards a distinctively social pedagogic approach.

The last group of six homes, Group 3, employed social pedagogues with extra responsibilities to raise awareness and conduct training. Of these homes, as reported in interviews with managers and social pedagogues, two made very good progress, and change here was outstanding (as discussed in Chapter 7), three made limited progress and in one there was no change at all. Again, the important factors were management styles and leadership focused on the social pedagogy pilot agenda, a willingness to be open to new ideas and ways of organising practice, wider training and support initiatives in the local area and social pedagogues who stayed in post and felt accepted by staff teams for their difference and contribution.

In summary, no one of these methods was the 'best' method for introducing social pedagogy; there were examples of great success and also of no change in all three groups – yet all the children's homes were selected for their 'promising' conditions towards learning, development and social pedagogy. Overall, changes towards a social pedagogic approach, and momentum for doing so, could be discerned in 10 of the 18 homes (excluding the second home from one employer to which a social pedagogue had transferred late on in the pilot).

Instead, it is perhaps helpful to look at the conditions for social pedagogy to flourish. Among the pilot programme homes we could distinguish three responses. These were:

- Integration or assimilation into existing theory and practice, such as happened in therapeutic communities
- Challenge or confrontation where management, staff and organisational practices had the effect of blocking the learning
- Embracing change, where mutual and authentic learning was achieved and manifest in new ways of working

When looking at the factors that made working with social pedagogues and social pedagogy more likely to be successful, it would appear that the following is important:

- Experience, confidence and skills of social pedagogues, ideally working with social pedagogic colleagues (i.e. not being the sole social pedagogue in a workplace)

- Knowledge of social pedagogy among management at all levels and willingness to learn and be challenged
- Wider support from employer organisation and willingness to invest own resources into training, networking, thinking and reflection
- Not being wedded to own philosophy to the point of exclusion of other ways of thinking
- Taking a critical view of regulations and procedures, asking how they address the best interests of young people
- Stability of managerial and the staff team, with commitment to debate and reflect and to work with uncertainty as a positive.

For social pedagogy to find a way forward in residential care in England, it seems clear that the stimulus from overseas trained social pedagogues has been as a pilot, in giving depth to a comparison of English and German residential care and practice therein, and offering some reflections on what is possible. The employment of social pedagogues from abroad, however, is probably best seen as a short term measure. The longer term project is to develop the educational, organisational and policy conditions for the introduction of social pedagogy into England. This probably means a combination of investment in higher education level training, workplace based training, scrutiny of organisational practices and quality assurance procedures. Critically, it means stepping into the shoes of young people and taking their perspective into account. It is their well being and well becoming that is at stake.

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## Appendices

### Appendix 1: Developments in the UK

#### Organisations and networks

Centre for the Understanding of Social Pedagogy (CUSP) at the Institute of Education. A programme of research, from 1999 onwards, conducted at Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, has investigated the theory and practice of social pedagogy in continental Europe and its role in services such as children's early education, residential care, foster care and family support services. This programme is the foundation, in 2009, of CUSP led by Pat Petrie, as an international forum to promote research, and teaching in social pedagogy (<http://www.ioe.ac.uk/research/40899.html>).

#### Jacaranda Recruitment

Jacaranda Recruitment is a small (7 full-time staff), provider of recruitment, consultancy and training services in Social Pedagogy and Social Work led by Abby Ladbrooke (further details from [www.jacaranda-recruitment.co.uk](http://www.jacaranda-recruitment.co.uk)). It places social pedagogues and social workers from Europe in permanent jobs in the UK and offers training and consultancy in Social Pedagogy. Jacaranda sponsors and runs the social pedagogy website ([www.SocialPedagogyUK.com](http://www.SocialPedagogyUK.com)) with an editorial team consisting of TCRU, NCERCC, SET, ThemPra and Jacaranda. Jacaranda is the official recruitment partner of the TCRU for the DCSF funded pilot project in Social Pedagogy in England, 2008 – 2011 and also works with local authorities, private companies and charities providing residential child care.

#### ThemPra (Theory meets practice)

ThemPra is a social enterprise, formed in 2008, to provide training courses and promote social pedagogy across the UK, mainly through offering bespoke and in-house training courses. ThemPra was begun by Gabriel Eichsteller and Sylvia Holtoff, two German social pedagogues. Since 2008, ThemPra has been working with Essex County Council, focusing initially on children's residential care but also including some foster carers and professionals. Through a combination of training courses for residential care workers, direct team support and work at a strategic level, social pedagogic practice has developed. Practitioners report significant learning, supported by organisational change ([www.thempra.org.uk](http://www.thempra.org.uk)). ThemPra is also active in Scotland, providing courses for staff at the child care charity Sycamore Service and on behalf of the Scottish Institute of Residential Child Care (SIRCC) and for Orkney Council. Courses have also been run in Northern Ireland, with two teams of the Belfast Health & Social Care Trust.

#### Social Pedagogy Development Network

The Social Pedagogy Development Network is led by Thempra in partnership with CUSP, NCERCC, Jacaranda Recruitment, and the English branch of the international children's professionals' organisation FICE (Fédération Internationale des Communautés Éducatives). This is a grassroots movement for shaping and developing a UK tradition of social pedagogy. Meetings have been held in November 2009, June and November 2010. These were hosted by local authorities and were well attended (around 70 participants at each) from across the children's sector and higher education institutions, in the UK. For 2011 meetings in Belfast, England and Scotland are being planned. Further information on the Network can be found on [www.thempra.org.uk](http://www.thempra.org.uk).

### **Social pedagogy training and consultancy group**

The group – Thempra, CUSP, Jacaranda, NCB - has been meeting at the IOE since early 2008, to exchange information, collaborate and identify ways forward for training and education in social pedagogy, in England. The original group has been joined by representatives of Break, Norfolk County Council and the University of Lincoln.

### **Training and education in social pedagogy**

Some of the developments within this section have arisen outside the residential care pilot programme, and others have been designed in conjunction with the pilot programme or have arisen out of involvement in the pilot programme.

### **Essex County Council**

Around one third (150) of the county's residential child care staff from all 12 children's homes have undertaken initial six day training courses in social pedagogy with trainers from ThemPra. The training was supported by awareness-raising and team-building days for whole teams to contribute to ongoing strategic developments for the residential service. A full-time Development Officer was appointed for children's residential services to help support the development of social pedagogy. The project is being evaluated by a practice based researcher and further training is in development. However, the County Council has now planned to sell its residential homes. The plan for further development of social pedagogy is awaited.

### **Walsall Borough Council**

Walsall is undertaking a Social Pedagogy Pilot supported by a training and development programme (provided by CUSP and ThemPra) for children's residential services to improve outcomes for looked after children. At the same time, social pedagogues are being recruited to work locally.

### **Government Office West Midlands and Strategic Health Authority**

NCB and CUSP, for Government Office West Midlands and the Strategic Health Authority have organised a short series of workshops with Looked after Children's Nurses and other key professionals to identify practical examples of how elements of Social Pedagogic practice and Multi Treatment Foster Care can support attachment building and placement stability and (ii) develop training materials for Looked after Children's Nurses / Foster Carers/ incorporating key learning from the workshops.

### **Norfolk County Council and Break (Residential Care Company)**

A pilot Level 3 diploma has been undertaken with 20 students, 15 from Break and 5 from Norfolk CC, all of whom are residential care workers. This will feed into a planned FdA (Foundation degree) in Social Pedagogy accredited by UEA (Department of Education). The involvement of Break stemmed from their recruitment of social pedagogues and participation in the pilot programme.

### **Staffordshire County Council**

Higher management in Staffordshire has a history of interest in social pedagogy and desire to introduce it and embed it within the authority. They have bought in additional training for staff, are seeking to appoint more social pedagogues and have appointed an officer with special responsibility for introducing social pedagogy in Staffordshire.

Other local authorities with an interest, including some who have commissioned training include Derbyshire (with training by Jacaranda), Shropshire and Dudley (to be checked for details).

### **Social pedagogy and creative activities**

Participation in creative activities is important in the education and practice of social pedagogues in many European countries as part of developing the skills of young people and enjoying begin together. Helen Chambers (NCB) and Pat Petrie (CUSP) have examined the rationale for this in Denmark in a project funded by the Arts Council England (REF). For Culture Creativity and Education, Chambers and Petrie produced a learning framework (REF), informed by the principles of social pedagogy, for artists working with looked after children, but applicable more widely. The framework has been used as the basis for many training events.

Sing Up's programme, promoting and delivering singing opportunities for primary age children, has been extended to looked after children, based on the artist pedagogue framework, and has been evaluated accordingly by CUSP (report forthcoming 2011).

Five workshops have been delivered on the arts and social pedagogy to children's services and other personnel and arts practitioners in different parts of the country, as part of the pilot programme. Others were delivered as part of the West Midlands work (above).

### **The Fostering Network**

In association with various funding bodies, the Fostering Network is, at the time of writing, exploring how it might be possible to introduce social pedagogy into foster care practice. A scoping paper has been written and, subject to further funding, six demonstration sites will be sought for training and development.

### **Further and higher education the modules, accreditation and assessment**

ThemPra's social pedagogy courses can be accredited as a course module through the University of Lincoln. Participants have the option of gaining 30 credits towards a Level 5 qualification in a related subject. This provides participants with a range of academic options. Credits are transferable, and no formal enrolment with the University of Lincoln is required. In order to gain accreditation, participants are required to undertake 2 formal assignments. Jacaranda has had a 40 credit module accredited through the University of the West of England.

### **Degree programmes**

There have been the following developments in University degree programmes:

- The BA in Social Pedagogy (formerly in Curative Education), Aberdeen University and Camphill Schools, follows a social pedagogy curriculum attuned to the practice and philosophy of Camphill Schools
- The BA Youth and Community Work, University of Wales Newport, includes a module on Social Pedagogy
- The BA (Hons) European Social Work, University of Portsmouth, includes a module on social care and social pedagogy in Europe

- The Foundation Degree, Working with Children: education and well-being, Institute of Education, University of London, includes modules informed by social pedagogy
- The MA in Social Pedagogy, Institute of Education, University of London, started in September 2010
- An MA in Social Pedagogy begins at the University of Winchester in September 2011

Less explicit reference to social pedagogy but nevertheless informed by it can be found in other education programmes in the UK including:

- Various BA degrees Early Childhood Studies which developed in the early 1990s were informed by continental traditions of educating pedagogues to work with young children.
- The MSc in Advanced Residential Child Care, Glasgow School of Social Work, as one of the objectives of the Scottish Institute for Residential Child Care (SIRCC) initiative.
- Residential courses for managers, senior workers and care staff run by the Planned Environment Therapy Trust and the Mulberry Bush Training organisation
- Various degrees in Youth Work are in harmony with the principles of social pedagogy

Activity in Scotland:

- Children in Scotland has been helping the Scottish Government to promote discussion and debate around the children's sector workforce. There has been a particular focus on the role, practice and education of pedagogues and the contribution this model might make in workforce development. Scotland's Minister for Children and Early Years asked Children in Scotland to arrange a study visit to Denmark for a small group of those involved in managing children's services and delivering qualifications to them. Their report is available on [www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/workforce).
- Children in Scotland is also leading a cross-European programme, Working for Inclusion, which is examining how improving the qualifications and skills of those working with young children can help reduce poverty and improve social inclusion. A full list of publications is available at [www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi/wfi5.htm](http://www.childreninscotland.org.uk/wfi/wfi5.htm)
- As well as the University courses mentioned above, there have been across- sector learning conversations about developing social pedagogy more widely in Scotland.

## Appendix 2: Recruitment procedure for children's homes

Beginning in October 2008, the project team worked closely with NCERCC, and with Jacaranda Recruitment to recruit children's homes using the following strategy:

- Newsletters, flyers emails sent to email databases – TCRU, NCERCC residential child care network, Jacaranda Recruitment and information published on SocialPedagogyUK.com website
- Press release and articles in professional press
- Publicity/promotion at conferences and events - Community Care Live London, NCERCC Conference Manchester, ADECS Conference Liverpool

Enquiries were acknowledged, and screening questionnaires and responses to frequently asked questions sent out to each enquirer. The screening questionnaire provided information on type and size of homes, staff capacity and vacancies (recent, current and anticipated, including use of agency staff), main aims of establishment, knowledge about social pedagogy, reasons for wanting to participate in the pilot project and whether any social pedagogues were already employed.

By the end of October completed questionnaires had been received from 26 organisations, of which 17 were from the public sector, which represents only one third approximately of all children's homes. Despite targeted efforts to try to redress the imbalance, including direct approaches to organisations showing interest, applications continued to be weighted heavily to the public sector. Initial expressions of interest had reached 71 by the end of November, of which 52 organisations subsequently completed and returned the screening questionnaire, and five declined to participate. Forty five of the original approaches were from the public sector, 19 from the private/non-profit sector, and 7 from the voluntary sector. Of the 52 that then proceeded with an application, 32 were from public sector, 14 were private/non-profit, and 5 were voluntary sector. A provisional long list was drawn up, reduced subsequently to a shortlist of 28 homes, ranked and allocated to one of the three groups.

The criteria used for selection were:

- Representing the three provider sectors – public, private and voluntary
- Clustering in the specified regions – North West and South
- No fewer than three resident places in the unit
- No secure units but otherwise representing different types and purposes of children's home
- Employer statements about knowledge of social pedagogy and interest in the pilot programme, and evidence of thinking about participation
- Employer statements about staffing and whether they already had social pedagogues employed.

Assignment to Group 1 was straightforward, determined by having social pedagogues already on the staff. Because so few homes came into this category, there was virtually no choice to be made. In fact, the fourth home in this group was approached and invited to take part, rather than applying to be

considered. For Groups 2 and 3, the team looked for homes that could most closely meet all of the criteria identified and, using the information provided, might offer the optimum conditions for the introduction of social pedagogy and ranked them accordingly. Assignment to Group 3 was determined by demonstrating knowledge of social pedagogy, where possible linked with previous experience of it – e.g. participation in an earlier pilot project (Bengtsson et al. 2006), or taking student social pedagogues from abroad on placement - underpinned by the need for different sector representation.

Members of the team visited 21 of the short listed homes, and one pair of proprietors visited us. During these visits, the team met with children's services managers, home managers and other staff, and were shown the homes where the social pedagogues might work. The face to face meetings provided an opportunity to talk through the aims and objectives of the project and to resolve any anxieties and concerns, not least the cultural issues around employing staff from other countries. Considerable emphasis was put in these meetings on preparing the staff team for participation in the pilot.

Despite national data on the turnover in children's homes used as an original assessment, it quickly became apparent that in children's homes that met the criteria there were insufficient vacancies to appoint six social pedagogues per Group 2 home. The maximum number any home would consider was four, and this was an isolated case in a home that was starting up and recruiting an entirely new staff team. However, the minimum number of two was a requirement for participation to ensure the pedagogues would have mutual support, and to prevent them from feeling isolated.

Following these visits, five homes were eliminated, four of which were from the private sector. Reasons were inappropriate qualifications, inability to guarantee hours of employment, inability to appoint more than one social pedagogue, and change of management.

The project team compiled a list for the evaluators of 17 possible comparison homes from which to select. Sources were homes linked to the pilot homes already selected, homes rejected in the initial recruitment on grounds of geography or failure to meet the criteria, and volunteer homes from the Charterhouse Group of Therapeutic Communities.

A meeting took place with Ofsted in October to alert them to the pilot project so that inspectors would be informed ahead of visits.

## Appendix 3: Social Pedagogue Job description

### Job Description and person specification, DCSF Social Pedagogy Pilot Programme

Job title: Social Pedagogue (practitioner)

Project: DCSF pilot programme, social pedagogy in children's residential care

Responsible to: (employer to insert)

Salary range: (employer to insert)

Job description: Social pedagogy is a field of practice characterised by a child-centred and holistic orientation, requiring an ability to work with the 'head', academic theories, the 'heart', empathy and relational work, and the 'hands', practical and creative skills. Any applicant should be able to work with these principles of Social Pedagogy:

- 'A focus on the child as a whole person, and support for the child's overall development;
- The practitioner seeing herself/himself as a person, in relationship with the child or young person;
- Children and staff are seen as inhabiting the same life space, not as existing in separate hierarchical domains;
- As professionals, pedagogues are encouraged constantly to reflect on their practice and to apply both theoretical understandings and self-knowledge to the sometimes challenging demands with which they are confronted;
- Pedagogues are also practical, so their training prepares them to share in many aspects of children's daily lives and activities;
- Children's associative life is seen as an important resource: workers should foster and make use of the group;
- Pedagogy builds on an understanding of children's rights that is not limited to procedural matters or legislated requirements;
- There is an emphasis on team work and on valuing the contribution of others in "bringing up" children: other professionals, members of the local community and, especially, parents;
- The centrality of relationship and, allied to this, the importance of listening and communicating.

The role of the social pedagogue on the pilot programme is to work confidently and pedagogically with young people, their families, and staff groups and professionals in other agencies with whom the children's homes comes into contact. It is also expected that the social pedagogue is part of the staff team and works within the relevant English legal and regulatory framework. As a participant in the DCSF pilot programme, with the agreement of the employer, they will also communicate with the TCRU team and participate in events arranged by TCRU,

### *Qualifications*

- A Bachelor's degree in pedagogy, social pedagogy or orthopedagogy

### *Experience*

- Experience of direct work with children and young people in group settings
- Experience of work with children and young people in difficult life circumstances

### *Skills and knowledge*

- Ability to form trusting relationships with children and young people, and their families including being a key worker
- Ability to communicate effectively with staff and young people, using active listening and team work
- Ability to communicate effectively through written reports and records
- Ability to reflect on practice, in small and larger groups
- An awareness of social disadvantage and a commitment to equal rights
- Knowledge of and commitment to, children's rights and participation in daily life and decision making about their lives
- Practical and/or creative skills that can be transferable to residential care
- Ability to set, and assist with achieving, goals with young people in relation to their longer term development, such as in relation to budgetary matters, family and social relations, education and health, access to legal services and so on
- Knowledge of and respect for, principles of confidentiality
- Knowledge of, or commitment to learn about, policy and legislation relevant to children and young people in public care in England

## Appendix 4: Recruitment procedure for social pedagogues

The TCRU team worked in partnership with Jacaranda Recruitment to recruit social pedagogues from Germany and elsewhere in Europe. Jacaranda is a specialist recruitment agency, focusing on social pedagogues and social workers for permanent positions in UK social care employment. With considerable familiarity with continental recruitment and a track record of working with UK employers, Jacaranda was the only agency with sufficient specialist knowledge for the task.

Jacaranda recruitment and TCRU met regularly to review progress with recruitment and drew up a working agreement ascribing roles. Jacaranda was responsible for advertising the programme and finding candidates in Germany, which they did through recruitment fairs and local advertising. The original intention was that the programme would also recruit Danish pedagogues, but this proved to be considerably more challenging, despite support from Inge Danielson from University College Copenhagen, and the social pedagogues' union, SL. Articles and advertisements were placed in the union magazine, key organisations and networks were notified, and a conference was held in Copenhagen for pedagogues interested in participating. However, the number of Danish pedagogues who applied was disappointing. Possible explanations for this were that work was more readily available for social pedagogues in Denmark than was the case in Germany, making the prospect of working in England less attractive, particularly given the requirement for a two year commitment.

Once the employers were selected, they were invited to provide their own job descriptions for prospective applicants and application forms, as well as a statement of purpose and brief description of the home, plus an overview of the area in which it was located with reference to accommodation, attractions and transport links. Where possible, Jacaranda and the pilot programme team met with employers to find out their recruitment procedures, finalise the selection programme and support the needs of the pilot programme.

The central principle of recruitment was that employers were to carry out their usual recruitment procedures. The contract of employment was strictly between the employing organisation and the social pedagogue. Employers were free to set their own salary, in line with existing pay structures, as well as associated terms and conditions. The duration of the contract was likewise left to the discretion of the employing authority, the only requirement being that social pedagogues should be offered posts that would last for the duration of the project. The project undertook to contribute £1,000 to the relocation expenses of the social pedagogues, a half paid at the start, and the balance paid at the end of the project.

Managers planned interview days with advice and support from the pilot programme team and Jacaranda, which supplied a shortlist of suitable candidates. A member of the pilot programme team or Jacaranda staff was available for support during the selection days. Overall feedback about the quality of the candidates put forward and the organisation of the process was generally good, with several employers saying they would have liked to appoint more candidates if they had had the vacancies. Post selection, employment references were checked by Jacaranda. Some employers went through two or

three rounds of recruitment before filling the posts, and the whole process of recruitment of both homes and social pedagogues took considerably longer than was originally envisaged. The first posts were not taken up until June 2009, the last commenced in August 2010. As a result, by the end of March 2011, the formal conclusion of the pilot programme, the longest post was only one year 10 months' duration, and some lasted less than a year.

Continuity of employment during the project was not smooth. Over the duration of the pilot programme, a total of 35 social pedagogues were recruited to work in Group 2 and 3 homes, while an additional 8 were already working in Group 1 homes. All of the Group 2 and 3 social pedagogues were from Germany, with the exception of one from Denmark, one from the Netherlands, and one from Sweden. Eleven of this group left before coming to the end of their contracts, mostly of their own volition because of obtaining other jobs, either in England or in Germany. Two contracts were terminated by the employer. One social pedagogue left to go on maternity leave. Two social pedagogues were replaced. A further 6 have left Group 1 homes. Of the total 18 homes, seven were left with one social pedagogue in post, and in two homes there were no social pedagogues in post by the end of the pilot programme. One social pedagogue in a Group 3 home was moved to work in a Group 2 capacity in another home in the organisation, and a replacement recruited to fill his place. Another Group 3 home appointed only one social pedagogue, to work in a fully supernumerary role, supported by an assistant manager, with a remit of promoting social pedagogy across all of the homes in the authority and working with children's services in the local region.

### **Qualifications of social pedagogues participating in the pilot programme**

Qualifications in the social professions are varied across Europe and within Germany. When recruiting social pedagogues the pilot programme team asked Jacaranda to shortlist and employers to recruit those candidates with Bachelors degree level qualifications in social pedagogy, pedagogy or orthopedagogy as these were the qualifications with which the team was most familiar from previous research. Where candidates had different qualifications the content of these was checked by the pilot programme team at the level of module content.

All of the social pedagogues recruited had a relevant qualification. Twenty nine of those recruited had a Diplom-Paedagogik or equivalent, that is a degree level (ISCED Level 5) qualification with a social pedagogic orientation from a university or college of higher education, and some of these had a joint social pedagogy/social work degree. Ten had a Soziale Arbeit or socialwork qualification, also at degree level, and four were Erzieherin or state recognised educator, which is an ISCED Level 4 state examination. Five of the participants held an MA, one in pedagogy and behavioural sciences and one in philosophy and educational sciences (ISCED Level 6).

### **Work experience social pedagogues participating in the pilot programme**

Given the diversity of residential provision and other settings for children in the public care, the work experience required was of group settings and disadvantaged children. About half the social pedagogues had worked in children's homes prior to the pilot programme, and the work experience of those who had not included social pedagogical settings such as youth work, community work, work with young people with disabilities, with substance misuse issues, and in refugee centres, early childhood care and

education, women's refuge centres, family support and boarding schools. A few had also worked in welfare administration and training.

## Appendix 5: Reviews in Group 1, 2 and 3 homes 2010 - 2011.

Aim of review: to check out perspectives on, and reflect on the experience of, working as a social pedagogue in the children's home. To generate new goals.

Who present: social pedagogues, two representatives of the home management team, and TCRU team

When: six monthly for those in Group 1; three monthly for those in Group2 and 3

Topics to cover:

1. For Group 2 and 3, initial visits were asked to set goals for the social pedagogues. This was not always possible. Were any goals set at the last meeting? If yes, were they reached? If not, what were the reasons?

Group 1: Can you briefly describe your current role? Have any goals been set for or with you? If yes, how easy or difficult has it been to reach them? If not, we are asking all the social pedagogues in the study to work with the idea of goals as a way of framing practice and setting a direction for the work. Would it be OK with you if we set some goals towards the end of the meeting today for the next six months?

2. Team work. How do you feel about team meetings? What contribution have you been able to make? What is the manager's perception of the social pedagogues' contribution? Are there any pedagogical concepts you have been able to talk about in team meetings, arising from the work?

What about relations with colleagues? Have any conflicts or difficulties arisen? What about the question of your qualification level compared to the other staff here, has that caused any problems? Any positive examples?

3. Practice with young people. Are the social pedagogues key workers? What opportunities for spending time with and getting to know young people? Have any difficulties arisen? Have the social pedagogues been able to organise activities, or change thinking about or use made of activities? What about ways of approaching violent or challenging behaviour? Can you give examples of practice you have been particularly pleased about, or disappointed with?

4. Working with social pedagogy ideas and concepts. How has this happened, or not? What gets in the way? Or helps?

5. Paperwork, training, writing reports. How is this going? What is the level of involvement?

6. Supervision. How often is it happening and how is it recorded.

7. Use of the support from TCRU? Is it enough? What else would be useful, or different?

8. Group 3: how has this work progressed? What successes or disappointments can you report?

9. With six months of the project to go, can you outline what the thinking is about taking social pedagogy forward after the end of the pilot programme in March 2011.

We would like to arrange to collect the reflections of managers about the pilot programme at the next meeting – who is best placed to do that and when?

10. What are the arrangements for the end of the social pedagogues' posts – when? References – what will be included? Practice; participation in national pilot programme; outline of responsibilities and projects undertaken. TCRU will provide a letter stating their participation in the pilot programme.

11. Summarise discussion so far. Arising from this discussion it seems there are these issues, to do with your work with staff, with young people and in training and development (itemise them). Would it be OK with you to set these as goals to work on until the next review (3 months or 6 months for Group 1)? What will be needed to help secure these goals? (from managers, from TCRU team, from elsewhere)

12. Support programme for remainder of project

The Thomas Coram Research Unit (TCRU) is a multi-disciplinary research unit within the Institute of Education, University of London. Founded in 1973 by Professor Jack Tizard, its principal function is to carry out research of relevance to the health and wellbeing of children, young people and families.

Thomas Coram Research Unit	Tel: 020 7612 6958
Institute of Education	Fax: 020 7612 6927
27-28 Woburn Square	Email: <a href="mailto:tcru@ioe.ac.uk">tcru@ioe.ac.uk</a>
London WC1H 0AA	Website: <a href="http://www.ioe.ac.uk/tcru">www.ioe.ac.uk/tcru</a>