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## Evaluation report for the Centre for Fun and Families (August 1999-March 2002)

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REPOSITORY RECORD

Chapman, Rosemary, Mark Peel, and Harriet Ward. 2019. "Evaluation Report for the Centre for Fun and Families (august 1999-march 2002)". figshare. <https://hdl.handle.net/2134/2914>.

**Leicester City and County Parenting  
and Cognitive Behaviour Project**

**Evaluation Report for  
The Centre for Fun and Families  
(August 1999 – March 2002)**

First published October 2002 by

CENTRE FOR CHILD AND FAMILY RESEARCH  
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This project was funded by the Centre for Fun and Families  
In conjunction with the Youth Justice Board.

ISBN 0 907274 28 5

Further copies of this publication are available from

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## **Summary of findings**

### **LWT programmes**

#### **Attendance**

Out of 119 referrals, 110 parents commenced the programme and 65 completed (i.e. attended the last session).

41 parents were interviewed. Nine of these were on parenting orders. As far as we are able to establish 5 parents on orders completed the programme, two attended only 4 sessions and the information is not available for the remaining two parents on orders.

#### **Parents on orders**

The majority of parents on orders were generally positive about being on the programme

#### **Frequency of difficult behaviours**

The most noticeable result is in the number of behaviours that were recorded as occurring 'always' at the beginning of the programme (161). By the end of the programme, this frequency was reduced to 68, a reduction of 62%.

There was a 33% (47) increase in the number of behaviours that were recorded as 'never' occurring by the end of the programme. The reduction in the frequency of behaviours occurring 'always' was distributed across the 'seldom' and 'never' frequencies.

#### **Number of difficult behaviours**

There was a substantial change in parental attitudes as to whether challenging behaviours constituted a difficulty by the end of the programme. At the beginning of the programme, 53 parents reported a total number of 518 behaviours that they found difficult to manage (mean 9.7). By the end, this number had been reduced to 296, (mean 5.6) representing a 43% reduction in the number of behaviours they identified as being difficult to manage.

#### **Type of difficult behaviours**

The most reported difficulty was question 8, 'gets angry when doesn't get own way'. 36 parents reported this and it is encouraging to see that this was reduced by 50% by the end of the programme. 23 parents noted that their young people 'will not do what you ask' (question 6) and again, this was significantly reduced by 48% by the end of the programme. The highest reduction was for questions 5 and 9, 'refuses to comply unless threatened with punishment' and 'cheeky to adults'. Both of these difficulties were reduced by 60% by the end of the programme. The overall reduction in the types of difficult behaviour noted was 48%.

### **Additional behaviours: School attendance**

The most commonly reported additional behavioural difficulty was associated with school attendance (22) and 16 parents reported this was a concern.

### **Good behaviours**

Out of the 45 completed questionnaires, 39 parents recorded at least one good behaviour as happening 'often' or 'always' before the programme and 42 recorded at least one good behaviour at the end of the programme.

### **Programme evaluation**

By the end of the programme, it was clear that parents valued and benefited from a number of aspects of the programme most of the time:

- feeling more confident as a parent (Q1)
- less conflict (Q4)
- gaining an increased understanding of their young person's needs (Q5)
- a better understanding of their own behaviour (Q6) and
- feeling less stressed as a parent (Q8)
- being able to share their concerns with other parents, (Q7)

### **Long term effectiveness:**

- **Changes in parent's/young person's behaviour**

Many parents found that their abilities to communicate and understand had greatly improved.

- **Noticeably improved behaviour**

Some parents not only recognised a change in their own behaviour but also reported changes in their young person's behaviour

- **No possibility for change: Mitigating circumstances**

Sometimes it was the *lack* of change in the physical environment or the lack of financial resources that had an impact on the ability for the situation to change.

- **No change**

Only two parents said that things were worse since the course.

## **Perceived benefits of attending an LWT programme**

### **Practical learning outcomes**

Parents learned how to:

- communicate and to listen more carefully
- negotiate situations
- chose the right time and place to deal with a problem
- become more aware of their young person's needs.
- improve their coping skills including:
  - keeping calm and in control by 'taking a step back' or 'taking a deep breath'
  - confidence building
  - assertiveness
  - anger and stress management

### **Social support: Affiliation and respect**

Parents valued the following social supports provided by the programme:

- realising that they are not alone
  - positive support received from other parents and facilitators which increased self-esteem
  - being treated with respect
  - not being considered as failure or a 'bad parent'
  - discovering that it was 'okay' not to be right about things all the time

### **Differences in responses to CFF run programmes versus YOTs**

There was a slight indication that the percentage frequency of difficult behaviours decreased more following the YOTs programmes, however the data are insufficient to be reliable.

There were no noticeable differences in the outcomes for parents attending a CFF run programme or those run independently by other agencies.

### **The ACWA programmes**

8 young people were interviewed. We are unable to provide any quantifiable evidence on the ACWA programmes due to the lack of data. However, from the interviews and facilitators' reports we found that:

The majority of young people attending:

- rated the programme as excellent
- valued the support of their peers
- learned to stop, think and listen
- learned to co-operate
- valued being able to talk about their problems
- found that the facilitators were helpful and kind
- some found their relationships with their parents had improved



## **The Centre for Fun and Families - Leicester Parenting Project**

*“Offending behaviour of young people is closely linked with the family. In a landmark study published in Britain, research was described to show that a range of family factors, including inadequate monitoring and supervision by parents as well as inconsistent and harsh discipline, were strongly correlated with offending behaviour” (Utting and others, 1993).*

### **1. Introduction**

The purpose of this report is two fold, to provide an evaluation of the long-term effectiveness of two complementary training programmes run by the Centre for Fun and Families, *Living with Teenagers* and *Avoiding Conflict with Adults* and to contribute to the research and record of evidence-based practice in support of the Youth Justice Board Parenting Programme (YJBPP).

#### **1.1 Background to preventing young people offending and re-offending**

The election of the Labour government to power in May 1997 heralded a change of focus and emphasis in relation to social policy, including parenting in general and particularly the parenting of teenagers. Consequently a range of government and other bodies have established a number of initiatives to support parents and to develop programmes to prevent young people offending and re-offending, emanating in the Crime and Disorder Act (CDA) 1998. The CDA represents an entirely new approach to the youth justice system. The principal aim of the youth justice system as defined by the CDA is to prevent children and young people offending. Underpinning the new system is an emphasis on early intervention and greater inter-agency working. This has resulted in a series of alterations to both structures and procedures with a particular focus on a number of new legislative options designed to reduce youth offending. These include the setting up of new organisations, such as the Parenting Education and Support Forum and the National Family and Parenting Institute; the Home Office’s funding for a range of innovative parenting teenagers projects; the introduction of Parenting Orders<sup>1</sup> as part of the CDA 1998 (see Henricson and

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<sup>1</sup> Parenting orders were introduced by SS. 8 & 9 CDA 1998. A parenting order can be made if a child under 16 has been convicted of an offence or is subject to a civil order and the court feels it would be desirable in terms of preventing offending. The adult must attend a parenting skills

others, 2000 for further information) and the promotion of ParentLine. These changes provide the policy backdrop to the evaluation discussed in this report.

To support the Government's new approach to the Youth Justice System, multi disciplinary Youth Offending Teams (YOTs)<sup>2</sup> have been established and operate in every local authority area. They include police and probation officers, social workers and education and health staff. YOTs have the responsibility for co-ordinating or delivering the provision of local youth justice services and helping to implement the Youth Justice Plan.

Additionally, The Youth Justice Board (YJB)<sup>3</sup> for England and Wales has developed an assessment profile, ASSET, for use with all youth offenders who enter and leave the youth justice system. When a young offender is referred to the YOT an assessment is carried out to discover the reasons behind their offending behaviour and to design a programme to tackle each aspect of the circumstances causing them to offend. ASSET provides YOTs with a consistent means of assessing the needs of individual young people and the risks of their re-offending, or causing harm to themselves or to others. The profile concentrates in depth on areas of a young person's life most likely to be associated with offending behaviour, including living arrangements, family and personal relationships, education, employment and training, lifestyle, substance abuse, physical health, emotional and mental health, personal identity and cognitive and behavioural development. In addition, there is a detailed risk of harm assessment for use when the profile suggests that the young offender has the potential to commit serious harm to others. The profile will assist practitioners plan a programme of interventions to meet the identified needs of the young person and reduce the factors associated with risks of re-offending, or causing harm to themselves or to others.

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programme and may have to fulfil other requirements such as ensuring the child attends school, stays away from certain places, or is at home at certain times.

<sup>2</sup> YOTs have been operating in every local authority area since 1 April 2000.

<sup>3</sup> The YJB was introduced by s.41 of CDA, 1998. It is a non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Home Office and accountable to the Home Secretary. The Board should enable national co-ordination of youth justice services by: monitoring the work of the YOTs and the operation of the youth justice system; advising the Home Secretary on setting national standards; identifying and promoting and making grants available for the development of good practice; purchasing and commissioning places in secure and custodial institutions and allocating juvenile prisoners within the secure estate.

The YJB has completed an evaluation of ASSET, and in both practical trials and theoretical research studies the Board has established the key reasons for young people's offending and identified how re-offending can be prevented. In addition, experience over the last two years has shown how effective the current programmes are in reducing and preventing youth crime (YJB 2002).

As a tool for predicting future offending behaviour ASSET was independently evaluated and found to have a 67% accuracy rating (Roberts and others 2001). This means that two out of three offenders who are most likely to continue to offend can be identified at the earliest stage and preventative steps can be taken with some degree of confidence.

## **1.2 The role of parents**

Recent surveys and research indicate that the attitude of parents can be critical in preventing offending. The Youth Justice Board's (YJB) MORI survey shows that this is one of the key factors identified by teenagers as most likely to prevent them from offending. The government has recognised that parents have an important role to play; they have a responsibility to the child and to the community to take proper care and control of their children and to do what they can to prevent offending. Research shows that inadequate parental supervision is strongly associated with offending (Felson and Gottfredson, 1984, Junger-Tas and Terlouw, 1991, Junger-Tas, 1994; Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber, 1986; Utting and others, 1993).

Parenting practices have been identified as one of the key variables associated with offending amongst young people (Utting, Bright and Henricson, 1993). Loeber and Stouthamer-Loeber's (1986) widely quoted meta analysis of British, American and Scandinavian studies posits four principal features of parenting which have been found to be associated with criminal development. These include:

- neglect and lack of supervision

- conflict between parent/carer and child involving the child's chronic disobedience and the parent's failure to exert control in a consistent, non aggressive way
- deviant behaviour and attitudes on the part of the parent/carer
- family disruption, in particular intra-parental emotional disturbance and aggression

It has been established that some parents may need help, support and encouragement to manage these behavioural difficulties. The Parenting Order was introduced to help meet these objectives. Magistrates have been given the option of issuing such orders which direct a parent to engage in some form of guidance or counselling. It is argued that such an intervention increases parenting skills so that the parent is more likely to be able to set clear and consistent guidelines for behaviour and to confront and deal with challenging adolescent conduct (Henricson et al 2000: 325).

In Spring 1999, the YJBPP invited applications from the newly created Youth Offending Teams (YOTs), in partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies, to provide services to young offenders and their families. The services were organised around seven programmes aimed at preventing and reducing youth offending by supporting young people and/or their parents in a variety of different ways. There was a particular focus on the impact of the new Parenting Orders, Reparation orders and Reprimands and Final Warnings as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act (1998) and the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, (1999).

As a result, the Parenting and Youth Justice Project (funded by the YJB Development Fund Intervention Programme) has provided support to 42 parenting projects (including the Centre for Fun and Families, (CFF) see below) and to all YOTs in England and Wales. The project supports practitioners who are working with parents of young people who are involved in the youth justice system, considered at risk of becoming so or who are exhibiting "anti social behaviour". Services to parents are provided either on a voluntary basis or as a requirement of a Parenting Order. Since 2001 the Trust for the Study of

Adolescence (TSA) has also been funded by the YJBPP to provide support to all YOTs in relation to their parenting work. The Trust has produced a guide “Working with Parents in the Youth Justice Context” to reflect the process of service delivery (Cuisick and Lindfield, 2000; see also Coleman, Henricson and Roker, 1999).

### **1.3 The YJBPP National Evaluation**

The YJBPP commissioned the Policy Research Bureau (PRB) to conduct a national independent evaluation of the 42 programmes to establish what works in preventing youth offending.

Although it was originally intended that the CFF Leicester City & County project should form a part of this national evaluation, due to a number of difficulties and constraints, the timetables were incompatible and CFF were only able to submit interim findings to the National report.

In July 2002 the YJB published a summary of the main findings of the national evaluation of the Parenting Programme. We will introduce these findings into our evaluation of the CFF programmes wherever appropriate (see section 5 below). A more detailed report of the national evaluation is due to be published by the YJB in Autumn 2002.

## **2. The Centre for Fun and Families**

The Centre for Fun and Families, based in Leicester, is a national voluntary organisation that helps parents who are having behaviour difficulties with their young people. The Centre has a 12-year track record of working with parents and professionals. Previous evaluations have identified the Centre’s work and outcomes to be of a high and successful standard.

Eighty per cent of the Centre’s work is undertaken with disadvantaged families, e.g. low income households, low parenting capacity/ability, ethnic minorities, parents of children with disabilities, disabled parents and many more. Families

can seek help from the Centre directly or can be referred by the YOTs, or professional staff such as health visitors, social workers, or doctors. In addition, the Centre trains over 200 staff per year from statutory and voluntary agencies to run groups on a nation-wide basis.

## **2.1 Project aims and objectives**

In October 1999, as part of the National Parenting Programme, the YJB agreed to fund a 3-year project, the *Leicester City and County Parenting and Cognitive Behaviour Project*. The project is a partnership between the Leicester City and County Social Services Youth Offending Teams (YOTs) and the Centre for Fun and Families (CFF). The aims and objectives of this project were to offer families of young people who are offending, or are at risk of offending, the opportunity to receive assistance to reduce the risk of re-offending. This assistance has been offered through two related group programmes designed and presented by the CFF, namely, *Living with Teenagers* (LWT) and *Avoiding Conflict with Adults* (ACWA).

## **2.2 The Programmes**

### **2.2.1 Living with Teenagers**

The initial aim was to run 20 LWT parenting groups countywide over the duration of the project (2 years and 8 months), targeting those parents on parenting orders or those perceived likely to receive them.

The Living with Teenagers (LWT) programme was designed to provide support for parents of young offenders and young people at risk of offending (aged 11-16). The programme objectives are to reduce family conflict, improve listening, communication, negotiating, and problem solving skills of parents and to assist parents to set realistic and effective boundaries. Both the LWT and ACWA programmes have been designed for people of all race, religion, culture, disability, or sexual orientation. The LWT programme has been designed to be suitable for all parents who are subject to parenting orders.

LWT groups meet for 2 hours every week for 7 weeks. Places (for up to 10 parents) are for families referred by Leicester City and County YOTs (for programme outline see Appendix A).

### **2.2.2 Avoiding Conflict with Adults (or Surviving life as a teenager)**

The ACWA (or Surviving Life as a Teenager) was a newly developed programme, designed, and piloted for inclusion in this project. 6 ACWA groups were planned for those parents known to CFF and the YOTs who had young people presenting challenging behaviours or were perceived to be at the risk of offending. The initial proposal was that these programmes would run in parallel for the young people of parents attending the LWT groups.

The ACWA is a group programme for young people aged between 11-16 years who are experiencing difficulties in the management of conflict situations. Each group (of 8 –10 people) meets for approximately 1½ hours a week for 6 weeks (for programme outline see Appendix B).

The main objectives of ACWA groups are:

- to assist young people who attend the course, to gain an understanding of their behaviour
- to offer young people skills and methods to change behaviours they choose to change
- to offer young people skills in conflict resolution and anger management in order to reduce the number of conflict situations arising
- to encourage young people to interact with one another and share experiences. Also to enjoy the group work sessions and to have fun

The overall objective is to enable young people to learn and practice new skills that will reduce the number of conflict situations they get involved in. In addition, it is hoped that the young person's self confidence and self-esteem will be enhanced.

### **2.2.3 Training of YOTs and other agency personnel**

Part of the YJBPP funding was allocated to the training of additional staff to deliver the LWT programme previously only offered directly by CFF staff. The aim was to train a number of people from YOTs, the Education Welfare Service, (EWO) Intensive Support Teams (IST) and Family Support teams (FST) in the city and the county so that by the second year of the project they would be able to run the programmes independently of the CFF. Training for the ACWA programmes was planned to take place from April 2001 to June 2001.

In addition, Centre staff offer a consultancy to YOTs workers, FST workers and Education workers who have already run a group and may need further ongoing consultancy.

### **2.2.4 Referrals**

Referrals are available on an open referral system to the CFF or YOTs. Social workers, health visitors, doctors, family support workers and any professional who identifies that a family could benefit from attending a group can make a referral to either of the programmes. Parents and young people can also refer themselves. CFF stress that before making any referral the permission of the family has to be obtained.

Parents on Parenting Orders are given priority for attending a programme.<sup>4</sup> However, referrals of parents of young people who are subject to final warnings, action plans and reparation orders are also welcomed, along with parents whose young people are assessed as being at risk of offending. Some parents are likely to be referred to attend the programme under S.17 of the Children's Act 1989, however they do so on a voluntary basis.

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<sup>4</sup> In the CFF initial funding application to the YJBPP, it was estimated that the City of Leicester would issue 20 parenting orders per year and the County of Leicestershire 13 parenting orders per year. The Youth Justice Audit and Projections Group prepared these projected estimates, based on actual experience, in 1997.

### **2.2.5 Home visits**

Once a referral has been made by the CFF or YOTs, a home visit by a member of staff or programme facilitator is offered to families before the group starts so that they can ask for any information before committing themselves to attend.

Home visits were introduced to provide encouragement and support to parents and are recommended for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are thought to be essential to encourage people to turn up for the first session. These visits also aim to deal with any issues or problems, such as transportation, childcare and to meet any cultural, religious or literacy needs of participants as well as needs arising from a disability.

Home visits also provide the opportunity of including both parents in the discussion. This can help raise their enthusiasm to attend and also dispense any anxieties such as confidentiality, the size of the group, and whether any records will be kept. They also provide the focus and the opportunity for discussing the difficulties that parents have with their young person's behaviour and for the 'difficult behaviour' questionnaire to be completed (see 5.5 below and Appendix C).

### **2.3 National Evaluation Programme**

The YJBPP funding criteria specifies that an independent evaluator should evaluate each funded project in order to provide data for the national evaluation programme. The PRB were commissioned to organise and co-ordinate this evaluation and provide the necessary documentation and questionnaires to the agencies involved.

### **2.4 CFF Evaluation Criteria**

Prior to receiving funding from the YJBPP, CFF had carried out informal group evaluations of the programmes they had run. On average, they found that most parents reported a 50% reduction of child behaviour problems after attending a

LWT programme. However these previous evaluations did not address the framework and funding criteria requested by the YJBPP, namely to evaluate a series of LWT and ACWA programmes that were specifically aimed at young offenders and parents on parenting orders.

In accordance with this requirement, we set out below CFF's original evaluation criteria for complying with this request.

The original evaluation aims were to ascertain the long-term effectiveness of the two complementary CFF programmes, LWT and ACWA for:

- improving communication and relationships between young people at risk and their parents
- and reducing challenging behaviours.

Whilst the primary focus of the evaluation was to assess the long-term effectiveness of the two programmes, its aim was to adopt a holistic approach that also considered:

- the impact of the programme across a more comprehensive range of dimensions of young people's developmental progress,
- parenting capacity and
- family environmental factors.

In particular, the evaluation would aim to monitor lasting changes on a number of recognised indicators including:

- school attendance or employment
- substance abuse
- the development of parent/carer support networks
- improvement or deterioration in young people's behaviour patterns and relationships with parents
- Extraneous issues including:
  - changes in parents' circumstances and/or

- the physical environment, which may affect young people's situation and parents capacity to meet their needs regardless of the strengths of the programme

The evaluation approach was informed by and complements issues encompassed by the ASSET programme currently under development (see 1.1 above).

#### **2.4.1 Interview criteria**

It was intended that the external evaluators would provide further evaluation of the two programmes by undertaking in-depth interviews with a representative sample of about one third of the young people and parents who completed the programmes within the first two years of the project (estimated at 50-60 participants). It was proposed that the interviews be conducted approximately six months after completion of the programme to ascertain whether the changes noted during the duration of the programmes have been sustained over time.

The proposed interviews would build upon evidence of change (or its absence) as shown in the content of the monitoring questionnaires completed by parents and young people at the beginning and end of the programme. They would also cover those wider issues indicated above and gather baseline information concerning for instance, reasons for the original referral, behavioural difficulties displayed by the young people concerned before and after completion of the programme, their educational progress and circumstances that may weaken parental capacity to meet teenagers needs. Interviews would focus on changes in young people's progress, parenting abilities and any other circumstances that had occurred since the start of the programme (See Appendix D).

#### **2.4.2 Drop out rates**

If there was a high drop out rate from programmes, further attention would be given to information concerning those young people and parents who do not

complete. It was planned that some interviews would also be sought with this group if sufficiently large.

### **2.4.3 Training of YOTs and other agency personnel**

#### **LWT**

In the first year of the project, LWT programmes would be run by CFF. By the second year, it was anticipated that YOTs and other agency personnel would have been trained and would begin to run some LWT programmes independently of the CFF.

#### **ACWA**

It was anticipated that staff from YOTs and other agencies (e.g. IST, FST, and EWO) would co-run ACWA programmes with the CFF from April 2001. The training would comprise of two one-day courses for staff who had already attended a two-day LWT training course with the CFF.

It was proposed that the independent evaluation sample would be constructed in such a way as to allow the evaluation team to ascertain whether programmes led by staff other than CFF had different outcomes (see section 5.7).

## **2.5 Methodology: Implementation of evaluation criteria by CFF**

### **2.5.1 LWT Programme evaluation data**

#### **Programme facilitators**

The CFF informed all staff and facilitators running the two programmes that the YJBPP had commissioned the PRB to conduct a national evaluation of the programmes and that external evaluators (Harriet Ward and Mark Peel) would be undertaking a local external evaluation. Programme facilitators were asked to produce a brief report at the end of the programme and to provide the CFF with the following additional documentation and information:

- name and postal address of group participants
- attendance record of group participants

- ethnic monitoring data forms
- Completed 'Before' and 'After' young people's behaviour questionnaires (to be completed by parents at the beginning and at the end of the programme) (See Appendix C)
- Programme Evaluation questionnaires (to be completed by parents at the end of the programme) (See Appendix E)
- Completed YJBPP questionnaires<sup>5</sup> (to be completed at the beginning and the end of the programme for mothers, fathers and staff)

### **2.5.2 LWT Interviews and Participant Confidentiality**

All parents participating on programmes in the evaluation period (i.e. October 1999 to March 2002) were sent a letter by CFF advising them of the evaluation by an independent assessor (See Appendix F). The letter assured them that:

- Participants were free to choose whether or not they took part in interviews
- The information obtained would be completely confidential and used solely for the purpose of finding out whether the programmes were effective or not

A similar follow up letter was sent to parents inviting them to participate in an interview with Mark Peel (See Appendix G).

### **2.5.3 ACWA Programme evaluation data**

Facilitators were asked to provide a brief report at the end of the ACWA programme and provide the CFF with the following:

- name and postal address of group participants
- attendance record of group participants

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<sup>5</sup>The YJBPP/PRB questionnaires were not made available until after April 2000 (see Section 3.4 below).

- ethnic monitoring data forms
- Programme Evaluation questionnaires (to be completed by young people at the end of the programme) (See Appendices H,R, S)
- Completed YJBPP questionnaires (to be completed at the beginning and the end of the programme)

A similar procedure was used to obtain the young people sample for independent evaluation. However, in this instance, parents were initially contacted to obtain their permission to conduct the interview.

### **3. Problems and limitations encountered in the implementation of collecting data for evaluation**

Unfortunately, due to a number of constraints, there were several problems in meeting the criteria outlined in 2.6. above. These problems affected the evaluator's ability to supply the appropriate data for inclusion in the National Evaluation (See 3.4 below) and to some extent a comprehensive set of data for the purpose of this local external evaluation.

#### **3.1 LWT:**

##### **3.1.1 Number of programmes**

The first City *Living with Teenagers* (LWT) group was run in October 1999 and the first County Group, although planned to start in late October, was run in February 2000. Out of the 20 programmes originally planned, 17 actually ran to completion. However, because of a lack of documentation from some of the earlier pilot programmes, data is only available for 14 (see section 4).

##### **3.1.2 Participants**

It was originally anticipated that the evaluation would be based on a total population of between 150-180 parents and young people who would be participating in the programmes during the course of the project. The interview sample would consist of a representative sample of one third of the total numbers

of parents participating. However, this approach had to be modified as it became clear that the number of parents participating in the programmes would not generate sufficient numbers to meet the original estimated sample of 50-60 parents and young people.

In the event, 110 parents attended the first session of the LWT programmes and 65 attended the last programme (see section 5.3 on attendance issues). The final interview sample was based on approaching as many parents as possible to participate and although less than originally expected, we were able to interview 41 parents (See 3.2.1 for details of ACWA participants).

### **3.1.3 Parenting Orders**

From the records available, it is estimated that 23 parents were attending the programme because of a parenting order<sup>6</sup>. We have been advised that 36 parenting orders were issued in the period up to March 2002, 25% from the Youth Court, and 75% from Education. Although it was the intention to gain information from ASSET forms to supplement the evaluation this information has not been available.

### **3.1.4 YOTs and other agency lead programmes**

Training of YOTs and other agency staff was successfully achieved and four LWT programmes were run independently of CFF. It is therefore possible to compare the outcomes of the programmes offered by these two groups to ascertain if programme facilitators other than CFF staff can achieve the same levels of effectiveness.

### **3.1.5 Programme evaluation data**

Programme facilitators were asked to adhere to the CFF requirements for data collection (see 2.6 above). However, not all this information was provided for

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<sup>6</sup> Parents may have attended the course on a voluntary basis but at the time of the interview, they may have been placed on a parenting order.

every LWT programme, and in particular, the earlier pilot studies were not fully documented. This has resulted in a lack of consistency and continuity in the data made available to the research team.

### **3.2 ACWA**

The original aim was to run the ACWA programmes in parallel with the LWT programme. However, in the early days of the project, this proved to be problematic. Firstly, it was hard work to run both groups together. Secondly, it was found easier to attract young people to the programme if a relationship had already been established with their parents. It was found that when ACWA was described to parents on the LWT programme they could immediately see the value of the ACWA groups and were prepared to recommend the group to their teenagers and support them in attending. ACWA programmes are now arranged to run after the LWT programme.

#### **3.2.1 Number of programmes**

Six groups were originally planned in the project period. Three ACWA pilot programmes were run in Spring 1999, Jan-Feb 2000 (City) and Feb-March 2000 (County). The average group size at the start of each group was 5/6. Two groups finished the 6-week programme; one was abandoned after three sessions because of the low turnout.

#### **3.2.2 Participants**

Records for the first three pilot programmes are limited. However, as far as we can ascertain, 14 young people attended the three ACWA pilot programmes. Eight interviews were conducted (see section 4.3 below).

#### **3.2.3 Programme evaluation data**

The amount of data available from the three pilot programmes, as noted above, is limited but three ACWA groups were run successfully in 2002. Although

outside the project period, due to the lack of data from the pilot programmes, relevant data from these three programmes will be included in our overall evaluation.

#### **3.2.4 YOTs and other agency lead programmes**

The planned training for independently run ACWA groups was delayed until 2002 and therefore it will not be possible to compare any difference in outcomes.

### **3.3 LWT and ACWA Interviews**

#### **Gaining access**

Gaining access to parents and to young people proved to be problematic and involved numerous attempts at contacting and visiting them. Participants were suspicious of the interview and the interviewer had to constantly emphasise that this one brief interview was all that would be required from them and that no further contact would be made.

Although there is no supporting documentary evidence, anecdotal reports suggest that parents were anxious about confidentiality and the keeping of records. This may have had some bearing on their agreeing to provide information for the purposes of evaluation and in participating in the interviews. The interviews were not as 'in-depth' as had originally been planned and therefore we were unable to acquire as much detailed information as was anticipated. Additionally, parents' anxieties and the six-month time delay since completing the programme may have had some influence on the brevity of the face-to-face interviews with the independent evaluator.

The major reason parents declined or were wary about taking part in the process seemed to be that they found it difficult to appreciate and understand how participation could do anything for them personally other than rake over past difficulties and possibly make things worse for them. The usual research argument that the parents' views and experiences collected throughout the study

might help others in the future did not act as any further encouragement for them to agree to participate in an interview.

Parents were especially nervous about access to young people. This may be a further explanation of why we experienced considerable difficulty in gaining access to young people and interviewing them. A large number declined or had moved away and a number of parents refused permission.

Six months after the completion of the programme, the continuing fragility of the home situation may have contributed to the difficulties in gaining access to young people for follow up interviews. It became evident that whilst parents were happy for their children to participate in follow up interview in principle, they became very wary in practice. One parent commented:

“I am just about on an even keel with G at the moment and whilst I don't have any worries about giving you permission to interview him in principle, I am worried that it will stir up a whole load of trouble and that it will be me, not you, that will have to deal with it.”

Even with such a brief interview, the interviewer found it difficult to carry out the interview in a relaxed and comfortable environment. In some cases interviews had to be conducted at the front door or in whispered voices outside or in a car because participants were unhappy about the idea of being overheard by other members of the household. The difficulty in obtaining participant's agreement to be interviewed will be discussed in our recommendations, section 7.

### **3.4 PRB/YJBPP questionnaires: LWT and ACWA**

As discussed above, one of the requirements of the YJBPP funding was that the project should be included in the national evaluation. The questionnaire materials prepared by the PRB were not made available to CFF until after April 2000.

However, both the local agency (CFF) and the YOTs made a decision not to use the instruments prepared by the PRB/YJBPP to gather data from parents and young people at the beginning and end of the programme. Also, ASSET forms

would not have been completed for the 87 participants attending the CFF programmes voluntarily.

Additionally CFF decided that there was not enough time within the context of an already busy group session for participants to fill in the YJBPP/PRB questionnaires, especially at the outset of group work sessions, where group formation is still fluid. The forms, though described as brief, take around forty-five minutes to complete. Coupled with introductions and necessary explanations it was felt that this would in effect dominate an entire session.

The CFF and YOTs therefore decided that the questionnaires would be distributed to participants at the end of a session for them to take away. A stamped addressed envelope was provided for the completed forms to be sent directly to the external evaluators. However it was understood that the completion of these reports was not received well locally. This possibly explains why only 10 'before' questionnaires and 9 'end' questionnaires were actually returned.

Unfortunately, the PRB questionnaires were intended to provide appropriate demographic information (e.g. gender, ethnicity, age, employment etc). However, due to the complexities associated with the completion of the questionnaire, (for example they were not pre-coded) this information was not obtained. Incorporating any of the data from these questionnaires has therefore proved to be problematic. However, we have looked through these questionnaires and included some of the comments from these in our findings (see section 5).

#### **4. The Data: Collection period October 1999 – March 2002 (2 years 8 months)**

In view of the difficulties outlined above, the data made available to us is not as comprehensive as we would like to form the basis of a comprehensive evaluation. Nevertheless, there is a substantial amount of information that we have been able to include. The evaluation has been conducted on the following programme data.

#### **4.1 LWT Participants**

We had intended to produce a demographic breakdown of all participants attending the LWT programmes (e.g. ethnicity, single parent or couple, employed; unemployed, age and gender of participant, age and gender of young person (s)). However, particularly in relation to the programmes run at the beginning of the project, this information is not available in a sufficiently consistent form to provide a detailed breakdown.

Additionally we would have liked to be able to present a clearer view on why participants were on the course, such as whether they were on parenting orders or attending voluntarily, how many sessions they attended, why they were absent, and details of home visits and follow up/catch up visits or calls. Again, insufficient data are available for us to do this. However, we will endeavour to provide as much detailed information as we can (Please see section 7 for recommendations on future information gathering).

The information in table 1 below has been taken from the records available from the 14 LWT programmes, either from the original documentation, i.e. referral forms, attendance records or the facilitator's report.

As can be seen in table 1 below out of the 119 referrals, 110 parents (92%) attended the first session and 65 parents (59%) attended the last session.

The YJBPP study reported that 1 in 6 parents were referred to the programme by the court as part of a statutory parenting order. Most parents on orders were white 96% and female (81%) and half were lone parents. 23 parents (20%) on parenting orders attended the first session of LWT. Due to the lack of information, it is not possible to state how many attended the last session.

**Table 1: LWT Programmes run during the project period October 1999-March 2002**

Prog No	Dates	Referrals	Attended first session	Attended last session	Orders	Female	Male
1	Oct-Dec 1999	N/a	8	7	N/a	5	3
2	Feb-April 2000	12	6	3	N/a	3	3
3	Mar-April 2000	10	11	10	1	10	1
4	May-June 2000	11	10	6	3	5	5
5	Sept-Oct 2000	21	6	5	3	5	0
6	Nov-Dec 2000	9	6	1	N/a	6	0
7	Nov-Dec 2000	5	9	5	4	7	2
8	Jan-Feb 2001	N/a	9	6	2	N/a	N/a
9	Feb-April 2001	22	7	2	N/a	5	2
10	April-June 2001	10	10	4	2	5	5
<b>Totals</b>		<b>100</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Programmes run independently of the CFF</b>							
11	May-June 2001	N/a	13	6	N/a	10	3
12	May-June 2001	11	6	4	4	4	2
13	July-Aug 2001	8	5	4	4	5	1
14	Sept-Oct 2001	N/a	4	2	N/a	N/a	N/a
<b>Totals</b>		<b>19</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>CFF &amp; YOTs</b>		<b>119</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>27</b>

(See Appendix J for programme number listing)

## 4.2 LWT Programmes

By the end of the project, 17 groups had run to full completion, however supporting documentation for pilot projects run in the early part of the project is not available. This evaluation is based on the documentation available from 14 programmes (See table 1 above).

## 4.3 ACWA programmes

As previously noted, there is very little data available for the first three pilot programmes. The ACWA programme evaluation is based on the CFF's report on the three pilot programmes and the facilitators' reports for the three programmes run in 2002 as shown in table 2 below.

**Table 2: ACWA groups run Spring 1999 to May 2002**

<b>Pilot Programmes</b>						
Programme No	Dates	Referrals	Attended 1st session	Attended last	Female	Male
1	Spring 1999*	No information available				
2	Jan-Feb 2000*	15	6	No information available		
3	Feb-Mar 2000*	No information available				
<b>Pilot totals</b>		15	6	No information available		
<b>Programmes run in 2002</b>						
4	Jan-Feb 2002	15	6	4	3	3
5	April-May 2002	21	8	6	4	4
6	May-July 2002	17	9	6	0	9
<b>Totals</b>		<b>53</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>68</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>16</b>

\*pilot programmes with limited data

Out of the 53 young people referred to an ACWA group, 23 (44%) attended the first session and 16 (69%) attended the last session.

#### **4.4 Interview Sample:**

We have already outlined the difficulties in obtaining interviews (see section 3.3 above). From the above data sample, 41 parents (for a listing see Appendix K) and 8 young people participated in an interview with a member of the evaluation team.

##### **4.4.1 LWT Interviews**

The 41 parents (33 female, 8 male) were representatives from 10 of the 14 programmes run over the period Oct 1999 to Oct 2001. Four of these programmes (P11 – P14) were run by YOTs or other agencies, independently of CFF (15 participants). 9 parents were on parenting orders.

##### **4.4.2 ACWA interviews**

8 young people (1 female; 7 male) were interviewed and had attended one of the three pilot programmes.

## 5. Findings

### 5.1. Basis of LWT evaluation

The following evaluation of the LWT programmes (October 1999 to March 2002) and the ACWA programmes (Jan 2000 to May 2002) incorporates the relevant findings reported in the two earlier reports already submitted:

1. The Interim Report for the Centre for Fun and Families: *Living with Teenagers* programme covering the period October 1999 to April 2000 (Mark Peel and Harriet Ward, November 2000)
2. The report prepared for the National Evaluation of the Youth Justice Board parenting Programme: Interim Evaluation Report for the *Centre for Fun and Families Leicester City & Leicester County Parenting & Cognitive Behaviour Project*, covering the period January 2001 to December 2001. (Mark Peel, December 2001).

As previously explained, due to the lack of available information we are unable to provide as much detailed quantitative evaluation of the impact of the programmes as we would wish. However, we are able to provide some valuable information supported by qualitative comments made at the interviews and provided by the facilitators' reports. Our evaluation is based on the following indicators:

- improving communication and relationships between young people at risk and their parents and reducing challenging behaviours.
- the impact of the programme across a more comprehensive range of dimensions of young people's developmental progress,
- parenting capacity
- school attendance or employment,
- the development of parent/carer support networks,
- changes in parents' circumstances and/or the physical environment, which may affect young peoples situation
- parents capacity to meet their needs regardless of the strengths of the programme

Because very few ASSET interviews were conducted, we are unable to provide any comprehensive evaluation of this process in relation to the programmes.

## **5.2 LWT Programme Data**

One of the main purposes of this evaluation was to ascertain whether attendance on the LWT programme has had any long-term effectiveness in reducing young people's challenging behaviour. Our evaluation is based on the following data:

### **Programme evaluation**

- 'difficult behaviour' questionnaires completed by parents before and after the programme, including additional bad behaviours and good behaviours
- Programme Evaluation questionnaires including what participants found most useful and additional topics they suggest would be helpful for future programmes
- Facilitators' reports. When facilitators have produced reports these have been very helpful in supplementing the data we have and their comments are included in the findings.

### **Long term effectiveness**

- Interviews conducted with parents and young people by the external evaluator (M Peel)

As previously stated, we were not able to carry out the in-depth interviews as planned. Although the interviews turned out to be brief, these nevertheless produced a substantial amount of valuable information on which we can report.

The primary purpose of the interviews was to ascertain whether the changes noted during the course of the programmes (evaluated in section 5.6.1-5.6.3 below) have been sustained over time. Issues relating to any changes in young people's progress, parenting abilities and any other circumstances that have occurred since the start of the programme will be highlighted where possible. The data has also been organised into a number of themes as set out below. Our evaluation will identify how these contribute to our understanding of some of the key criteria under evaluation, namely:

LWT Attendance difficulties and drop out rates  
Parenting orders  
Reducing challenging behaviours: The evidence  
Long-term effectiveness  
Changes in circumstances

Benefits of attending an LWT programme  
Differences in responses to CFF run programmes versus YOTs and other  
agency run programmes.  
Re-offending  
Other outcomes

### **5.3 LWT Attendance difficulties and drop out rates**

Information concerning drop out rates has not been fully documented so therefore any consistent findings are limited. However, we are able to make some comments on possible reasons for non-attendance. This information is drawn from facilitators' reports and comments made during the course of the interviews.

According to the attendance records we have, 110 parents commenced the programme and 65 completed (i.e. attended the last session). It is important to note that the majority of parents were attending voluntarily and therefore were not required to attend. There was therefore a possibility that they would be more likely to drop out. As far as we are able to establish 5 parents on orders completed the programme, two attended only 4 sessions and the information is not available for the remaining two parents on orders.

One of the difficulties expressed by facilitators was the lack of consistent attendance and poor punctuality that affected the effective running of the programme.

There were particularly high drop out rates for two CFF programmes, P9, P10, and two YOTs programmes P11 and P14. The facilitator of the CFF run programme (P10) provided some explanations for the drop out rate (i.e. 10 parents commenced and only 4 completed). One enthusiastic parent with five children was only able to attend the first four sessions due to lack of childcare. Another enthusiastic couple attended for three weeks, but when smacking was mentioned as being inappropriate they were annoyed and did not come to any other sessions (the issue was taken up with the Social Worker). We do not have any information relating to P9 where seven people began the programme but only two completed.

The facilitator of the YOTs (P11) run programme (where 13 people started and only 6 completed) commented that two women had health problems and could not cope with the evening sessions and the husband of one withdrew at the same time. One local woman said that she could not bring herself to discuss her children in a group. Another parent who was not local, gave a similar reason for withdrawing. The remaining two who did not complete the course were a couple and whilst the mother was keen to continue, the father did not agree with the idea of negotiating with his children, believing instead that they should “do as they are told.”

The facilitator of P14 (a YOTs run programme) noted that they only received a few referrals and by the time they were contacted by the facilitator, they were no longer concerned about their young people’s behaviour. They noted that throughout the course only two parents attended most of the sessions. They were unable to explain the low number of referrals and suggested that whilst the professionals recognised or perceived a need this was not necessarily shared by the wider community. Two parents who only attended the first session were telephoned and they said that they had felt the situation at home had improved sufficiently enough after just the one session and they no longer felt the need to attend. However, we have no way of knowing whether this was indeed the case or whether there were other reasons for non-attendance.

A problem identified by both facilitators and parents was that when parents stopped coming it was disruptive for those that remained. There was some evidence that some parents opted out of the course at the point where they felt they had gained all they could from it, or in one case, that it was “a long way for me to go on a working night” (Shirley)<sup>7</sup>

Aileen said that:

“... I didn’t go to the last two meetings as I thought they had covered all I wanted, and that they were just repeating themselves.”

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<sup>7</sup> Shirley was the only parent who mentioned that the location and timing of the sessions were a problem for her.

Some parents, as we have already noted, may have felt uncomfortable about attending the programme for a variety of reasons, or felt that they did not wish to be associated with the moral stigma of being a failure or bad parent. Although there was no specific evidence to support this, it might have had some influence on whether parents continued the course to completion. One aspect to be considered is the element of trust, and that some parents may not feel comfortable about sharing their problems in front of others, particularly in the early stages (see section 7 for recommendations).

As the groups are small to begin with, any drop off in attendance has a number of potential implications for viability. Additionally this causes disruption to other parents and a sense of a lack of continuity. If parents missed too many sessions, i.e. three or more, then it was felt that they had missed the essential aspects of the programme. Although parents were offered 'catch up' visits, facilitators did not consider these helpful as parents may become too dependent on home visits. This which would also defeat the object of running programmes for small groups and parents would not be able to benefit from the highly valued social support of being with other parents in similar situations.

Another problem of reduced numbers suggested by one parent was that those who remained might have felt more vulnerable or uncomfortable in such a small group.

"The social worker organised for me to go to the course as she thought it would help. I felt I had to go as I didn't want to let her down, but I don't think I really put much into it or got much out of it. It was difficult because half the parents stopped coming after the first couple of meetings, which left the rest of us a bit on the spot when they asked us questions. I think it would have been better if there had been more people there" (Geraldine).

Finally, one of the problems for the facilitators and evaluators was that if parents did not attend the last session they were unable to obtain important data in order to ascertain what benefits they may have gained or how the programme could be improved.

Clearly, there are a number of reasons for non-attendance and we have made some suggestions about this in our recommendations.

## 5.4 Parenting orders

It is not clear from the information available how many parents who attended the first session were on a parenting order. However, of the 41 parents interviewed, 9 were on parenting orders at the time of the interview. Only two of these appeared to resent being made to go on the programme; their comments throughout the interview were generally negative (Steve and Finoula). Parents on orders attended P2, P7, P9 (CFF); P10, P11 and P13 (YOTs).

Parents were asked whether they felt that being on the programme with parents who were there because of a parenting order would make any difference.

Table 3 shows the categories of their responses.

**Table 3: Responses to parents on parenting orders**

Response	Voluntary	Parents on orders	Total number
There was no difference	9	4	13
Being forced to go was likely to be non-productive	10	1	11
It depends on attitudes	5	0	5
They should be on separate courses	4	0	4
Generally negative or prejudiced	3	0	3
Associated with shame and stigma	0	2	2
Considered a form of punishment	1	0	1
Making the most of it	0	1	1
No comment available	1	0	1

It was not clear whether or not the parents interviewed were aware of any parents attending on orders. However, no one made any negative comments about the presence of parents on orders on the programme they attended. Their comments were generalised to how parents *might* respond.

#### 5.4.1 They might not take things seriously

Parents suggested a number of reasons as to why being ordered to go might be non-productive, not just for them, but for other parents on the programme because:

“...they might not take things seriously” (Annie).

"I don't think you should be made to do this sort of thing at all. If you aren't there because you want to improve things at home, then you're wasting your time and everyone else's" (Louise).

"I would imagine mums and dads forced into this would make life difficult for all the others" (Aileen).

Some felt that the course might be just what some parents needed, but emphasised that being compelled to attend might also prevent them from benefiting from what the programme had to offer.

*"I think they (parents on orders) need some help, but if you force them, they may automatically put their guard up" (Claire).*

One parent on an order said that she: "hated being ordered to go, and think I would have got a lot more out of it if I had been offered the course as a choice" (Finoula). This was reflected on by another parent who expressed concerns that if parents did not have a choice: "then I wonder what they are going to bring to the group, or get out of it" (Tonya).

There was a concern that parents who were told to do it, "would just 'tune out' and get through, but I don't think it would be of much use to you." (Quinn), and it would make it difficult to join in:

"If they make you go then that's really going to piss you off, and how are you going to join in if you feel like that?" (Nellie).

In fact, Nellie was attending a course with at least one parent on an order but did not appear to be aware of this.

Only 3 parents who showed concern about the contribution that parents on orders might make suggested that they should attend separate courses:

"because those that feel they have to be there are just going to waste everyone else's time" (Shirley). But this was clearly a minority view.

#### **5.4.2 "We're all in the same boat"**

Parents who thought that it would make no difference to them made reference to what they all had in common, that they were all in the same boat. One parent on an order noted that: "...what they said about their kids were up to was just the same as mine" (William).

As far as Karen was concerned, "...we was all in the same boat, and it made no difference to me how people had got there (onto the course)". Leanne commented that:

*"There was someone on the course who I think was on a order, though the staff never said nothing. To be honest I don't think it made a load of difference as she seemed to be in the same old mess as the rest of us."*

#### **5.4.3 Having a good attitude**

Some parents commented that the attitude of the programme facilitator was particularly important and that everyone should be treated the same, regardless of whether they were on an order. It was also important for parents to have a positive attitude:

*"I think it depends on the individual person. It depends on your attitude, and on the attitude of the people running the course and the other parents. If you all have a good attitude, then what does it matter what has brought you to the course?" (Rose) (Emphasis added).*

Elizabeth said that she:

*"...spoke to someone on the course who was on an order, and I think that at first they thought they would just twiddle their thumbs, but they seemed to get into it as much as anyone. I think so long as you (course tutors) don't make a big deal of it and try to make everyone feel comfortable, that people will soon get over any preconceptions they might have."*

She went on to emphasise that it was true for her as well and that she “didn’t say one word the first time, but it got easier as I got to know people, and felt more comfortable.”

Most parents who were on orders also commented on the importance of being treated the same as everyone else. They generally thought that if their attitude was positive and they wanted to get some help in sorting things out, it did not matter whether they were on an order or not. The following comments from three parents on orders speak for themselves.

*"It took about two seconds to find out who was there because of an order and who wasn't. They (course leaders) treated us all the same, and didn't make a big deal of it and all, but people talk, and if they thought we wouldn't find out (who was/was not on order) then they really got it wrong. I don't think it makes one ounce of difference, it didn't to me anyway. I was just keen to try and get some help in sorting things with the kids" (David).*

David also added that he:

*"...had never heard of groups like that prior to the court telling me I had to go, so I wouldn't have even known what to ask for."*

*"I was happy to go on the course, and it didn't make any odds to me that I was there as the result of an order. I didn't make any secret of it with the other parents, and they didn't treat me any differently because of it" (Ian).*

*"I did not like being ordered to go on the course, but I tried not to let this get in the way, and get out of it what I could" (Olive).*

There was always a possibility that a parent on an order might feel stigmatised and clearly Steve did not feel at ease, he:

*"... didn't tell a soul about the order, and to be honest I felt a bit ashamed about it. It really felt to me like we were second class citizens in that group, so I kept stum".*

One course facilitator (P6) reported having 4 parents on orders attending (out of 8) and stated that there was no evidence of any reluctance to attend the course and no evidence that they engaged more or less than other parents. YOTs facilitators noted that they found the programme managed to cater for parents subject to parenting orders *and* those attending voluntarily. However, some facilitators noted that sometimes it was necessary to spend extra time with

parents on orders in order to explain the expectations concerning its requirements.

The majority commented on the importance of a parent's attitude in determining whether they were likely to benefit from attending the programme. Clearly, there was a feeling that if some parents were forced to attend a programme, there might be some repercussions for other participants. However, in our interview sample, only one parent commented on feeling stigmatised because he was on the programme because of a parenting order. Only two parents commented on not liking being ordered to attend, one because she thought she would have been able to get more out of it if she had had a choice and the other tried not to let this get in the way of what she could get out of it.

In summary, it would appear that there is no evidence or strong negative reasons why parents on orders and those who attend voluntarily should not be included in the same groups. There does not seem to be any evidence from either parents or facilitators that separate groups should be made available for parents on orders.

The most important point made by the majority of participants was that everyone was treated the same, regardless of their reasons for being there. Most parents recognised that they were "all in the same boat" and were all there to learn how to manage their young people's challenging behaviours.

## **5.5 LWT Programme Evaluation**

### **Reducing challenging behaviours: The evidence**

In order to ascertain whether there was any reduction in young people's challenging behaviours, questionnaires were completed by the parents firstly to identify difficult behaviours and secondly to indicate their frequency according to five scored categories: never (1), seldom (2), sometimes (3), often (4) and always (5). Parents also noted how many of these behaviours they considered a difficulty. 'Before' questionnaires were completed, either at the home visit or the first session, and 'after' questionnaires at the end of the programme. We will

firstly present the results of the 'before' and 'after' questionnaires and then discuss the long-term effectiveness of these findings with comments from the interviews with parents six months later. This information is presented in 5 parts:

- 5.5.1 Frequency of difficult behaviours: 'Before' and 'after' questionnaires: Improvement or deterioration
- 5.5.2 The number of difficult behaviours identifying how many and which were perceived to be the most problematic
- 5.5.3 The additional behaviours parents included as being problematic. These additional behaviours have been grouped together in terms of perceived difficulty.
- 5.5.4 Good behaviours
- 5.5.5 Long-term effectiveness:  
Changes in parents'/young people's behaviour

**5.5.1 Frequency of difficult behaviours: 'Before' and 'after' questionnaires: Improvement or deterioration**

45 parents from 11 of the 14 programmes completed 'difficult behaviour' questionnaires both at the beginning and at the end of the programme (there were no completed questionnaires available for P8, P11 and P14). Graph 1 shows a summary of the number of times parents reported a particular behaviour's frequency on the 'before' and 'after' difficult behaviours questionnaire and that there have been some significant reductions.

The most noticeable result is in the number of behaviours that were recorded as occurring 'always' at the beginning of the programme (161). By the end of the programme, this frequency was reduced to 68, a reduction of 62%.

There is a 33% (47) increase in the number of behaviours that were recorded as 'never' occurring by the end of the programme. The reduction in the frequency of behaviours occurring 'always' have been distributed across the 'seldom' and 'never' frequencies (See Appendix W for a breakdown of the frequency of behaviours for the individual programmes),

In addition to the reductions recorded on the questionnaires, some facilitators included comments made by parents during the programme supporting this progress. For example, after the second session, one parent reported: "I have seen really good improvement already". Another parent noted that "my behaviour and approach to him has changed and therefore he has changed". Another commented that "attending the group helped me to think about my actions and how to avert instead of fuel a disagreement with my daughter". The 'pay off' exercise was particularly helpful to one mother who said that "My daughter hated me, hit me and I was frightened of her. Now she has changed and the pay off exercises really worked. Now she manages her anger so much better" (P10).

### **5.5.2 Number of difficult behaviours ('before' and 'after')**

Table 4 shows the number of difficult behaviours parents recorded 'before' and 'after' the programme. Although 65 parents were recorded as attending the last session, only 53 parents completed this part of the questionnaire. This information has been taken from the facilitators' reports.

**Table 4: Number of difficult behaviours (produced from facilitators' reports)**

Prog No.	Number of parents attending last programme	Number of completed questionnaires	Number of difficult behaviours recorded as being difficult		
			Before	After	% Reduction
1	7	5	44	28	36
2	3	1	10	5	50
3	10	8	92	43	53
4	6	5	62	33	47
5	5*	6	68	70	3% increase
6	1*	2	23	12	48
7	5	5	58	37	36
8	6	2	21	10	52
9	2	1	11	0	100
10	4	4	32	6	81
Totals	49	39	421	244	42
<b>Programmes run independently of the CFF</b>					
11	6	4	46	33	28
12	4	5	43	17	60.5
13	4	3	8	2	75
14	2	2	N/a	N/a	41.5
Totals	16	14	97	52	47
CFF & YOTs	65	53	518	296	43

\*It is assumed that some parents completed the questionnaire at another session.

As can be seen (Table 4 below), at the beginning of the programme 53 parents reported a total number of 518 behaviours that they found difficult to manage (mean 9.7). By the end, this number had been reduced to 296, (mean 5.6) representing a 43% reduction in the number of behaviours they identified as being difficult to manage.

In terms of reducing challenging behaviours, the questionnaires clearly indicated that parents have found a reduction not only in the frequency but the number and types of difficult behaviours (see table 5 below) reported at the beginning of the programme compared with the end. These findings are further supported by the interview data where parents described better relationships, less conflict and disruption, improved communication, and behavioural improvements (See sections 5.5.5 and 5.7).

#### **5.5.2.1. Types of difficult behaviour**

Some behaviours present particular concerns for parents. Table 5 below shows how many parents noted a particular behaviour as being the most problematic (i.e. often or always).

**Table 5: Types of difficult behaviour presenting the most difficulty: A 'before' and 'after' comparison.**

No	Question	Before	After	Reduction %
Q1	Refuses to do chores when asked	21	14	33
Q2	Refuses to go to bed	10	8	20
Q3	Stays out late	14	11	22
Q4	Ignores 'house rules'	20	14	30
Q5	Refuses to comply unless threatened with punishment	27	11	60
Q6	Will not do what you ask	23	12	48
Q7	Argues with parents	20	17	15
Q8	Gets angry when doesn't get own way	36	18	50
Q9	Cheeky to adults	25	10	60
Q10	Swears	29	15	48
Q11	Hits parents	5	3	40
Q12	Steals	5	3	40
Q13	Tells lies	14	11	22
Q14	Refuses to tidy up	12	4	66
Q15	Is aggressive towards friends or playmates	22	2	91
	Totals	283	153	48%

Table 5 lists the 15 questions and shows the types of behaviour parents reported as presenting the most difficulty 'before' and 'after' the programme. As can be

seen the most reported difficulty was question 8, 'gets angry when doesn't get own way'. 36 parents reported this and it is encouraging to see that this was reduced by 50% by the end of the programme. 23 parents noted that their young people 'will not do what you ask' (question 6) and again, this was significantly reduced by 48%. The highest reduction was for questions 5 and 9, 'refuses to comply unless threatened with punishment' and 'cheeky to adults'. Both of these difficulties were reduced by 60% by the end of the programme.

Although some of the percentages appear high, it should be noted that they are calculated on a very small sample. It is suggested that the reductions highlighted above show a strong indication that parents have learned how to improve their communication and negotiation skills with their young people throughout the programme. The overall reduction in the types of difficult behaviour noted was 48%.

Graph 1 showed that the frequency of difficult behaviours was reduced and table 5 indicated that the types of behaviours that parents found difficult at the beginning of the programme had also reduced. There was a general tendency to record more behavioural difficulties at the beginning of the programme and fewer at the end. A point noted by facilitators reflected to them by comments made by parents throughout the programme was that despite continued difficulties with their young people's behaviour, some parents managed to remain positive and enthusiastic.

Clearly several parents made significant progress and reported improved communication with their young people by the end of the programme. This had helped not only in changing their behaviours but also in a considerable reduction in the number of behaviours they considered difficult (see tables 4 and 5 above).

Many of the comments from parents when interviewed 6 months later reflected that some of these improvements have endured over time (see section 5.5.5). For example, Louise commented that her son was:

"Sometimes good, sometimes bad, but overall better behaved than before."

However, it is worth noting that when parents were interviewed six months later, several also identified the variability of their young people's behaviour. For example, some commented that their young person's behaviour was unpredictable and volatile. This was often reflected by comments about this being a difficult age or changes occurring as young people get older. Six months is a long period of time in a young person's development, and attributing either a reduction or an increase in behavioural problems is therefore difficult to measure, as Petula, (who was on a parenting order) noted:

"As he is getting a bit older things have changed and the rows are not so regular as before. But he's bigger and stronger than I am now, and when we do fall out I sometimes feel a bit intimidated by that."

Jane attributed her daughter's variable, unpredictable and volatile behaviour to it being a difficult time for her but she clearly found it difficult to manage this.

"I think it's very variable like I said. Sometimes she's my lovely little girl, and at other times, it's like she's someone completely different. Unreasonable, angry and a bit scary. I know that this is a difficult time for her, and I certainly wasn't an angel at her age, but it is just so difficult not knowing which way she is going to go next, or how she's going to react to the smallest of things."

Orianna found that she did not know "how things will be from one day or week to the next". Robin, (who was attending with his wife, on a parenting order) commented that: "Sometimes we get on like a house on fire, then I get the silent treatment over the smallest of things" and Shirley found that although things were better now, "I have no clue how it will be tomorrow".

It is therefore not unreasonable to assume that during the course of the programme the young people's behaviour was just as variable. However, by the end of the programme, the overall results indicated an encouraging reduction in how many difficult behaviours parents considered to be a concern.

### **5.5.3 Additional behaviours and difficulties**

Parents were invited to list any additional behaviours that were causing them concern in sections 16 –19 of the 'difficult behaviour' questionnaire and to

indicate their frequency and difficulty. We have grouped the additional behaviours into the following categories.

- School attendance
- Aggressive behaviours
- Anti social behaviour
- Disagreements with siblings and parents
- Breaking of house rules
- Drinking, smoking, and drug related difficulties
- Emotional behaviour
- Other difficulties

Additional behaviours identified by parents before commencing the programme were usually scored as happening 'often' or 'always' and *all* additional behaviours were noted as being difficult. There are some methodological problems in accurately measuring any reduction or increase in additional challenging behaviours. There was a lack of consistency in the additional behaviours parents recorded as issues of concern at the beginning and at the end of the 7-week programme. Parents often recorded different issues of concern at the end of the course than those noted at the beginning or in some cases did not indicate any additional difficult behaviours at the end of the programme. We have included a detailed list of the additional behaviours noted by parents in Appendix L.

As was noted in 5.5.2 above, behaviour is variable especially at this stage of the young person's growth and development. It may be that parents' responses reflect more transitory issues of particular concern around the date of completion of the questionnaire. This could be because the earlier reported behaviours were not presenting themselves as a difficulty any more, or that on the particular day, some other behaviour was more dominating. For instance, one facilitator reported that at the last session, one parent (Tonya) had had a particularly difficult week and a major upset with her young person before the final session and so, understandably, felt very negative on that particular day (P11). This was reflected in an increase in the frequency of difficult behaviours and the number of

difficult behaviours increased from 8 to 9.<sup>8</sup> (Also, see recommendations section 7 for comments on this).

### **School attendance**

The most commonly reported additional behavioural difficulty was associated with school attendance (22) and 16 parents reported this was a concern.

It is not always clear from the 'after' questionnaires whether school problems continued to be a matter for concern, as stated earlier, there was a lack of consistency in the number of reported additional 'before' and 'after' behaviours (see section 7, recommendations for the future). However, 11 parents noted 16 concerns (see Appendix L) related to school before the programme. However, only 5 of these parents indicated that their concerns remained a problem at the end. 5 other parents noted concerns about school at the end of the programme.

Facilitators also reported that the issue of non-attendance at school and truancy were major or sole difficulties for some of the parents attending. They also noted that they found these concerns difficult for them to address within the programme.

It has been noted by one facilitator, (P10) and members of the YOTs team that they were unsure about the appropriateness of parents being referred to attend the programme because their young people were not attending school. In addition, if programmes are run over the summer period, (as in the case of the P10) it makes it difficult for those parents whose children were not in school to put any ideas directly into practice. Some parents said that they had good relationships with their young people, even when they were not attending school, and therefore felt that the issue of non-attendance at school was more relevant to education provision (P6) (See recommendations, section 7).

To establish whether difficulties associated with non-attendance and school have been resolved in any way would require liaison with education welfare officers

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<sup>8</sup> No quantitative data available.

and for school attendance to be clearly monitored and recorded to discover whether this has either improved or deteriorated.

A number of parenting orders issued were education orders.<sup>9</sup> Although it is not possible to determine from the available programme data how many parents were on education orders, as against criminal orders we have been advised that more education orders have been issued. As far as we are aware, little action has been taken by the courts to ascertain the results of education parenting orders until recently and there is insufficient data on this project to comment on this issue.

### **Aggressive behaviours**

Although the core list of behaviours listed included 'aggression towards friends and playmates' (Q15), the second most commonly reported additional difficulty was with aggressive behaviour in the home (10) including temper tantrums and damaging property.

### **Disagreements with siblings and parents**

Problems within the family (7) were also frequently reported as causing difficulties.

### **Drinking, smoking and drug related difficulties**

7 parents reported problems with drinking, smoking, solvents, under age sex, and drugs

### **Breaking of house rules**

Although there is a question about ignoring house rules, some parents identified specific concerns.

Other concerns noted 'before' were 'going to bed late', 'plays loud music', 'sometimes negotiates bedtime', 'lets mates do what they want in the house'.

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<sup>9</sup> 27 criminal and 67 educational parenting orders were issued in Leicester in the period from April 2000 to June 2002.

### **Anti social behaviour**

11 Parents listed behaviours, which we have classified as anti-social.

### **Emotional behaviour**

3 parents noted blackmail as a difficulty.

### **Other difficulties**

Parents also noted a number of other difficulties (See L).

## **5 5.4 Good behaviours**

An integral part of the LWT programme is for programme facilitators to encourage parents to discuss their young people's good behaviours as well as those that they find difficult. Consequently, parents were asked to record and rate any good behaviours. Out of the 45 completed questionnaires, 39 parents recorded at least one good behaviour as happening 'often' or 'always' before the programme and 42 recorded at least one good behaviour at the end of the programme. 3 parents did not list any good behaviours at the end of the programme but did at the beginning and 6 parents did not list any good behaviours at the beginning of the programme, but did at the end.

The good behaviours recorded by parents fell into the following categories:

- Respecting others feelings and co-operative behaviour
- Showing affection
- Helping in the house
- Self respect

We again experienced difficulties in matching good 'before' behaviours with good 'after' behaviours as parents often noted different behaviours. However, it is encouraging to see that parents were able to find positive things to say about their young people, no matter how small or insignificant they may seem (See Appendix M for a listing of good behaviours).

This positive behaviour was sometimes reflected in the interviews. Although a good behaviour pattern may not seem much, to the parent who has to manage a number of difficult behaviours, it is very important to emphasise their young

people's good behaviours as this has a softening and contrasting effect on their bad behaviours.

Elizabeth commented that her son "very occasionally does what I ask of him, like cleaning up his room, or putting his clothes into the washing basket. It might sound like nothing to you, but for me that's just magic." The number of simple behaviours listed as being good clearly reflects the importance of a basic pattern of behaviour that has meaning for parents. The majority of comments were made about co-operative behaviour.

As we have noted above it is not possible to present any useful statistical data on the recording of good behaviours 'before' and 'after'. However, what was particularly noticeable was that parents had a tendency to record more helpful and co-operative behaviours by the end of the programme, including listening, being considerate, less anti-social behaviours and less conflict.

### **5.5.5 Long term effectiveness**

#### **5.5.5.1 Changes in parent's/young person's behaviour**

In addition to the 'difficult behaviour' questionnaire data collected 'before' and 'after' the programme, interviews were conducted 6 months later in order to establish whether attendance on the LWT programme had produced any long-term improvements for parents and their young people.

It was found that when asked to participate in the follow up interview six months later, a number of parents began by expressing their wish to put the programme behind them. One possible explanation for this may be a feeling similar to denial on the part of parents. They may also have felt that talking to an unknown interviewer in their own home, rather than a group member or facilitator, re-introduced issues and feelings about being a 'bad' or 'failing' parent, which they may have preferred not to discuss again. Additionally, it appeared that the time between finishing the programme and the interview may have been too long a period for some parents to retain a distinct as opposed to a general understanding of any benefits they had gained.

However, despite the reluctance of some parents to discuss the programme and their young people's behaviour, we have been able to obtain some valuable responses that support the effectiveness of the programme, and gained some helpful comments about some of the parents' continuing concerns. Parents were firstly asked if what they had learned on the programme had affected their relationship with their son/daughter and secondly, whether there had been any changes in their son's/daughter's behaviour. As might be expected, the responses to both of these questions varied considerably and often merged and were often linked to comments about their own abilities to communicate better.

One parent commented to a facilitator that:

"Our son's behaviour has seemed to have improved by 90 per cent since I've learned to understand how he thinks and how to deal with it".

Nellie implied that her being on the programme might have positively affected her relationship with her daughter. She commented that there had been an improvement in the length of her daughter's moods:

"She is very variable in her behaviour, and when her mood does turn black, it used to take ages for things to get better. I think the bad times are a bit shorter now, and that makes them easier to bear."

Some parents were able to directly attribute positive behavioural changes in their young people because they had benefited from being on the programme. Many of the comments clearly indicated that parents had learned that their abilities to communicate and understand had greatly improved (this will also be discussed in section 5.7. below). They recognised this had contributed to the positive changes not only in their young person's behaviour but had helped to enhance their relationship.

For Rose, the programme improved not only her relationship but also her ability to understand and manage situations:

"Yes our relationship has improved as a result of me going on the course. I think I understand why things blow a bit better now and I am better at managing things so they don't. I don't want you to take this as me having become a bit of a wimp, only I now feel I know better when to push and when to give."

### 5.5.5.2 Attitude change and problem solving

It is clear from the analysis of the completed questionnaires that for a number of parents, the frequency of difficult behaviours had reduced. There was also a substantial change in parental attitudes as to whether such behaviours constituted a difficulty by the end of the programme. However, it was found that parental attitudinal change did not necessarily correlate with changes in young people's behaviour.

For example, one parent recorded ten behaviours as being difficult at the beginning of the programme but only listed five of these as continuing difficulties by the end. However, the recorded frequency of the behaviour (i.e. often or always) had not changed. This suggests that some parents gained valuable skills, which had improved their abilities to manage difficult behaviours more effectively by the end of the programme. Further evidence to support this enhanced ability was reflected in comments made six months later by some of the parents we interviewed.

"I think the behaviour is still just the same, only now I sometimes deal with things a bit more grown up like" (Natalie).

When asked about whether her son's behaviour had improved, Vivian's response was:

"No, I think it's *my* behaviour that's better, though that sounds crazy I know" (emphasis added).

Vivian's comment clearly endorses that she recognised that it was her own behaviour that had changed. The implication made here was that Vivian had acquired some valuable skills, which resulted in her being able to manage her son's challenging behaviours more effectively. At the same time, she observed that her behaviour was significant, thus recognising the importance of parenting being a two-way process. She went on to say that she felt "more confident and

in control, and that seems to be better for us all. It is difficult most days, but the lows are more manageable now."

Hetty claimed that it was her behaviour changing that had an effect, and recognised that her son's behaviour had changed as a result.

"If I had to be honest with you I would say it is my behaviour that has changed, I don't tend to charge in like I used to, and I think his behaviour has improved because of that."

Other evidence supporting a change in parents' behaviour and attitudes was reflected in comments by others who, whilst not attributing these changes to their attending the programme, recognised that they had become more confident, were better at coping with situations and were more able to 'sort things out'. It is suggested that this is a positive reflection of the effectiveness of the cognitive behavioural theory underlying the design of the programme and also demonstrates that the programmes have been successful in meeting some of the key aims and objectives.

Gloria is one of many parents who recognised that talking more is a good thing.

"No I wouldn't say our relationship has improved much as a result of the course, but I do feel more comfortable and confident that I can sort things out, and that has taken a lot of tension out of the air. *We are talking more than we used to, without losing our tempers, and that must be a good thing*" (emphasis added).

Elizabeth also noted a positive change in her relationship with her son, that he was more co-operative now and communication had improved and that "...we can have a conversation with each other without screaming."

As noted above, some parents recognised that if their behaviour changed then this could have a positive outcome on the behaviour of their young person. However, not all parents were able to acknowledge or separate any improvements as a direct result of attending the programme. Barbara raised the issue of whether going on a parenting programme could possibly have had any impact on another person's behaviour whilst at the same time, she reiterated that she was now more able to cope with her daughter's behaviour.

"The behaviour is no worse than it was before I went on the course. I think it's too much to expect that my going on a course will change another person's behaviour. I do think I am better able to cope with the behaviour though as a result of going on the course, so I guess that must have some impact."

Aileen was very reluctant to say that attending the programme had achieved any positive outcomes for her. She also gave the impression that she had a very poor appreciation of social workers, (repeatedly referring to them as 'those nosy tossers') and consequently had difficulty in fully appreciating the benefits of the LWT programme as distinct from something run directly by the Social Services Department (SSD). However, despite her reservations, she was able to acknowledge some improvements which she attributed to a change in her own attitude.

"It's impossible to say if the course has done anything to change our relationship. I seriously don't think so. Perhaps my attitude has changed a bit, and I do try not to fly off the handle as much as I did. But I can't say what has caused that."

She also added that she thought that most aspects of her relationship with her daughter had improved since the programme. So clearly, although Aileen rejected the idea of the programme having had any influence, her situation had improved.

Being able to be more positive about the future was also a perceived benefit. Although both Caroline and Pauline were not clear about the cause of their young people's noticeably improved behaviour, the outcome was reassuring for them:

"I don't think we ever got on so well, and his behaviour is much better than before. Whatever the cause I think we've really turned a corner, and I feel much more positive about the future" (Caroline).

Pauline was clearly relieved that things were much better:

"In comparison to what it was, things are much better on that score (behaviour), and I don't care what has done it, only that it's better."

Parents who noticed changes in behaviour patterns also detected improvements in behaviour. For example, where previously they had experienced specific problems, these had now been superseded by others, as Tonya illustrated:

"Mealtimes used to be the worst, and always ending up with some massive row or other. That seems to have got a lot better, and it is money (lack of) and clothes (requests for) that are now the problem."

The implication here is that arguments over money and clothes were now easier for Tonya to deal with because they tended to be less regular and predictable. They no longer involved all the family as the arguments conducted at meal times had previously tended to do. This also implied that Tonya was now better equipped to deal with confrontation issues and endorses a comment made by Gloria earlier, that she was able to talk more than they used to, without losing their tempers.

### **5.5.5.3 Noticeably improved behaviour**

Some parents were very clear that their attitude towards their young people had changed as a result of attending the programme and this had resulted in positive outcomes. A 37-year-old father of two boys aged 11 and 13 who constantly squabbled said that his outlook had noticeably changed from day one:

"Normally I would have lost my temper and sent them to bed. *Now we try and solve the problem*" (emphasis added).

According to the facilitator's report (P14) one parent reported a slight reduction in the frequency of behavioural incidences by the end of the programme and more significantly, reported a substantial reduction in whether he considered these incidences to be a difficulty.<sup>10</sup> The facilitator commented that this was a particularly pleasing result for this parent because he had been experiencing problems with his son's behaviour for many years, emanating from a diagnosed medical condition that affected his behaviour.

Although not a direct comment on behavioural change, Freya reflected the experiences expressed by other parents, that the programme had helped her to accept an adult role with her children, rather than dealing with them on their level. Freya had been successful in applying what she had learned which resulted in an improvement in her relationship with her 'kids' and she had gained more respect:

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<sup>10</sup> Quantifiable information not available.

"I think all the kids have got a bit more respect for me now, and understand that I am an adult and not just a big kid myself."

Some parents not only recognised a change in their own behaviour but also reported changes in their young person's behaviour:

*"My behaviour and approach to him has changed and therefore he has changed. I now like being with him. I don't dread being alone with him if my husband is working away" (from Iboro2 facilitator's report)*

*Yvonne commented that her daughter's behaviour was "a bit better all round, her behaviour and mine".*

Like Vivian and Hetty earlier, these comments underline the importance for parents to learn and understand that if their behaviour changes, for example that they are more in control and have the skills to manage difficult situations more effectively, then this was likely to have a beneficial impact on their young person's behaviour.

Some parents claimed that the behaviour of their young person had showed definite signs of improvement. For instance, Ian demonstrated that he had learned to understand and prioritise issues:

*"Yes the behaviour is definitely better now than it was. The swearing is still an issue as far as I am concerned, but I am choosing to leave that for the moment and concentrate on the more aggressive things he does. I think the fact that he does not feel I am picking him up for every little thing he does has made it easier for him to take when I do say something."*

He went on to say how he had come to terms with 'going soft' on behaviour (swearing in particular) which previously he had 'jumped on'. He also provided evidence that he had learned to negotiate because he commented that he was able to do this after having seen some improvement with the more damaging and serious behaviours. He was therefore able to reinterpret the swearing as something that, although it still concerned him, no longer provoked such a 'heavy duty' response. It appears that Ian had begun to take a more strategic view on managing his son's behaviour and the outcome was clearly positive. Ian reported that by the end of the programme, the number of behaviours that were difficult had more or less halved and that their frequency was reduced by about one

third.<sup>11</sup> Ian's response and the effectiveness of a reduction in difficult behaviours are particularly encouraging since he was attending because of a parenting order and had experienced some difficulties in coming to terms with this (see 5.5.5.7 below).

How other people responded to a young person or the parent are also indicators of improvement. Aileen reflected that the *lack* of visits from the social worker (who, as noted earlier was not viewed in a positive light) was a clear endorsement that things were better.

"We get on a lot better now (social worker) doesn't call round so much. I think she thinks that all our problems are over now we've been on the course, and she can move on to pestering some other poor sod."

James' son was no longer embarrassing him in front of other people. This not only highlighted an improvement in his son's good behaviour but also acted as a form of confirmation that James was not a bad parent.

"Yes things have got better in that respect. Previously he was embarrassing me in front of others and I was starting to resent him and was beginning to think of him as a bad child and me as a bad parent."

Natalie had learned to create a sense of order, implying that she was able to negotiate with her daughter, which had the effect of improving the situation.

"There are a few more rules now, even if sometimes things slip. That's much better than before."

#### **5.5.5.4 Cause, effect and variability**

Some parents reported beneficial behavioural changes, but also commented on these being variable (see 5.5.2 above). This is understandable, as even parents with young people who do not present problematic and challenging behaviours, experience bad periods when behaviours are difficult.

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<sup>11</sup> Quantitative information is not available

Nellie's daughter's demonstration of affection was clearly a valued improvement and whilst not constant Nellie was now able to deal with her own anxiety and was managing to avoid any confrontation.

"Most of the time we're fine and she even comes in for a cuddle now and again, which she hasn't done for ages. But it can all change in a minute, and the unpredictability is the most difficult thing to bear. But overall, yes I think the course has helped me to make the most of the better times, and not get too anxious about doing something wrong, and there being a row."

Although Hetty was able to see that circumstances had changed, she was not sure whether this was connected to what she had learned on the course. Hetty attended the programme with her husband and what is important in her comment was that she emphasised that "we've changed" and the recognition that *their* changed behaviour was beneficial.

"We had a really bad patch about two months ago (i.e. 4 months after completing the course) and it's difficult to say why things got so bad, and why they are now a bit better. It's a bit like the weather, sometimes rain, sometimes sun. I think the course has helped us to understand that the same is true for lots of people. So I can't say with my hand on my heart that because we do such and such that we learnt on the course that things have changed, but I think we've changed, and that has helped us"

#### **5.5.5.5 No possibility for change: Mitigating circumstances**

Some parents could not envisage that any changes were possible and felt that they had tried everything already, such as grounding the young person and/or withdrawing their pocket money and this had not had any impact. Anecdotal information suggests that these parents were more likely to believe that nothing would work and may have already consulted Health visitors, GPs, or a child psychiatrist before attending a programme.

One of the questions asked in the interview was whether there were any changes in the parent's or young person's circumstances or physical environment (also see Section 5.6). However, sometimes it was the *lack* of change in the physical environment or the lack of financial resources that had an impact on the ability for the situation to change, as Olive commented:

"...we still live in the same shithole, we still have no money, and we spend too much time with nothing to do but get on one another's nerves."

This lack of change in Olive's environment and circumstances highlights a series of potential future problems for Olive, especially as she was on a parenting order, which was issued as a consequence of her son's drinking and offending behaviour. When asked if his behaviour had changed her response was:

"No, he's just the same smartarse as ever. He just won't listen to me most of the time, and if I say anything he does exactly the opposite."

Olive is one of the few parents who made it clear that their young person was experiencing severe and seemingly unmanageable behavioural difficulties at the time of the interview. It is worth noting that the frequency of behaviours questionnaire showed that, by the end of the programme there had been a 32% reduction in her son's difficult behaviours and a reduction of 67% for the number of difficult behaviours. Although we are not able to provide any explanation for these results, it is likely that some behaviours showed a temporary improvement but in the long term, the problems had returned (See recommendations section 7).

The majority of parents on orders were generally positive about being on the programme but Steve's problems seemed insurmountable.

"It's all common-sense anyhow. There ain't no one who can teach you how to be a better parent, and if there were they should come and spend a couple of weeks in this house."

When interviewed, Steve gave the impression that he had not taken much active participation throughout the programme, which may have been a reflection of his being compelled to attend through a parenting order. He also stated that he did not get much out of attending the course and echoed again that "it's all common sense anyway, and when things are really bad there's no magic tricks for getting it right. You just have to get through it like."

When Mark was asked whether the course had any influence on his son's behaviour, he said:

"I don't think the course helped much at all. I enjoyed going, don't get me wrong and that, *but the only thing that can make him change his ways (son's behaviour) is if he wants to himself or if he gets locked up, and at the moment it looks more like he'll get locked up!*" (emphasis added).

However, another comment by Mark showed that he was aware that achieving any effective changes would be as a result of a two-way process and consequently, this would be difficult to achieve without his son's co-operation:

"Things haven't improved because when you try to sort things out, or make a bit of an effort, he (son) just chucks it back in your face. *The only way things are going to improve between us is if we both want them to, and at the moment he doesn't*" (emphasis added).

As we have noted, the ACWA programmes were not available for the young people of parents attending the earlier LWT programmes. Mark's experience provides further evidence that it is important to involve the young people in the process and to encourage them to attend an ACWA programme as early as possible (See section 6 below).

Betty felt she had gained little from the course:

"It turned out to be a big waste of time. I'm really sorry because I've been after the social (services) for help with him (son) forever, and I was really disappointed that this is all they could come up with. Mind you what could they tell you? *When he (son) goes wappy there's nothing you can do.* Soon as he's off and out of this place the better" (emphasis added).

Sometimes it appears that whatever support is offered, for some parents the only solution is for the young person to leave or that the problems are just too complicated and deep-rooted to overcome in a short parenting programme. As Veronica said, solving them was going to take time and was not something that was going to happen in a matter of weeks.

"No things are pretty much the same as they have been over the past couple of years. *I think our problems are too complicated* to be just 'solved' by going on a short course, and it's a shame that once you've finished, all the support stops and you're on your own again" (emphasis added).

Many other parents referred indirectly to what Veronica explicitly states here. Firstly, any improvements in relationships tended to happen slowly, and when changes did occur, it was difficult to define what brought them about. As Annie

states, she "did not expect instant solutions. That just does not happen, things need working at."

Secondly, a 'one off' course does not provide the ongoing support that would really help parents to maintain what they had learnt over a period of time and evaluate any resultant change. Veronica found meeting other parents was helpful and also made an important point about the need for continued support. As outlined later in this section and section 7, one of the most valued parts of being on the programme was the social support and the discovery that there were others who were in similar situations that parents could talk to. Although some parents reported that they were keeping in contact with people they met on the programme, for some, once the programme ended, they were left on their own again and for Veronica, a lone parent, this proved particularly difficult:

"Well it's just me that has to deal with it all, and I feel completely knackered most of the time. If there were another adult around it wouldn't be so bad, and the social worker tries the best she can but she's only round every so often. I think the behaviour is the same as before, perhaps a bit worse."

One parent reported that their attendance on the course had produced even more difficult behaviour. Margaret highlighted a different kind of concern that parents may have if they attend an LWT programme; that some young people may feel uncomfortable or threatened by their parents discussing their problems in public (also see 5.5.5.7 below).

"It's terrible at the moment, and in fact when she found out we were on the course, she gave us a really hard time about it. I think she thought that we would spend the whole time slagging her off and talking behind her back."

Again, this points to the need for both parents and young people to attend the complementary programmes so the young person can be assured of the benefits not only for their parents but also for themselves.

In contrast, one parent on an order commented to the facilitator (P10) that the problems were all outside the home, because that was where her son offended, implying that she had no control over his behaviour in the community. However, six months after the programme she felt that her attendance had worked in a subtle way. Her son's offending had ended because he was aware that she had

been ordered to attend because of him. The effect of this was she was able to say that she not only now enjoyed his company but felt more in control of herself.

Whilst some parents' concerns were related to their young person's behaviour in the community, Finoula's experience was the opposite.

"I'm probably too close to it to say if our relationship has improved or gotten worse. If there have been changes over the past six months, I think they have been small. We did have a great time on holiday in the caravan, which I had been dreading".

She goes on to explain that if she can:

"...get him away from this place (home) and he's like a different lad, happy and much easier to have around. But when we come back things soon fall back into their old pattern".

#### **5.5.5.6 No possibility for change: Extreme circumstances**

Although not completely negative about their attendance on the programme, the following comments from parents are related to their conviction that their problems were too severe to allow for change. Clearly some parents felt that they had no control over their young people. There was a tendency for these same parents to reallocate the responsibility and blame to their young person or to provide evidence of mitigating circumstances in order to justify their negative stance. For instance, as noted in 5.5.5.5 above, the *lack* of change in a family's circumstances can also make it difficult for any change to occur. We earlier reported that Margaret commented on how her daughter appeared to be threatened by her mother attending the programme. Later in the interview, she provided a further explanation of her family situation that affected her abilities to manage difficult situations. However, she did find something positive to say about being on the programme:

"I don't think we learnt much that will be of practical value. But sometimes life in this family feels a bit like living on top of a volcano. What was good was the opportunity to do something together with other adults, as my life is dominated everywhere by kids."

David, who was on a parenting order, was also undergoing major changes in his relationship with his wife and family at the time of the programme, and said:

"When my wife and I were together after the course, I think it was doing a lot of good. But she (wife) was looking for a way out, and things have gone downhill since she went."

David had attended the programme with his wife, and implicit in other things he said during the course of the interview, was that he had hoped the programme would help him and his wife with their relationship. In this sense, it did not appear that his primary motivation in attending related to his son, whom he felt, was largely his wife's responsibility. He added that he did not really benefit from being on the programme and that he felt that things had become much worse at home over the past few months.

"All the kids were always closer to their mam than to me. It's only natural ain't it? Since she's gone, I don't mind saying I've struggled a bit. I've had to stop my job to be at home, and that's been really hard over the summer holidays. There ain't the money coming into the house that there was, so it's all no, no, no to the kids, and their behaviour is much worse than it was. I don't think they understand why their mam has gone, and of course when she visits, there's loads of cash for treats and all that. Things ain't never been this bad."

He went on to explain that because of what had happened the likelihood of him applying anything he may have learned on the programme in any consistent manner had all but evaporated.

Again, as we found with Olive earlier, sometimes it appeared that individual circumstances were so intractable that some parents were unable to gain any noticeable benefits from attending the LWT programme.

#### **5.5.5.7 Failure, stigma and punishment**

Another problem identified by one parent was associated with the young person's perception of his father attending a parenting programme, which was expressed as a form of failure:

"He (son) takes delight in telling you how crap you are. He even says that only bad parents have to go on courses like that and that really hurts. I can't see him changing now, and before too long it will be him not me who will suffer the consequences..."

As Margaret commented earlier, she had experienced additional problems with her daughter because of attending the LWT programme and the outcome was similar to Mark's, in that their young people appeared to be punishing them for being bad parents. When asked about whether her daughter's behaviour had improved her reaction was:

"Don't make me laugh else I'll cry. She knows just how to hurt me with what she says, and she seems to get a big kick out of it."

William, who was attending because of a parenting order, also implied that he was being hurt and punished by his son, and said that:

"His behaviour (ranges) from ignoring us completely to hating the very sight of us, me in particular. I don't know what I'm supposed to have done that was so bad?"

If a parent has been ordered to attend the course, this might create additional problems for them. Ian, also on a parenting order, initially had a difficult time in coming to terms with this because he felt that he was being punished for his son's bad behaviour. He felt this was unfair, and that this resentment had crept into his relationship with both his son and daughter. His daughter in particular had started to 'wind him up' about him being ordered to attend as she knew it was a delicate area. However, he went on to say that his daughter's difficult behaviour became easier to bear once he recognised that he was getting something out of being on the programme and that as a result, his relationship with her had improved.

This suggests that sometimes ordering a parent to attend an LWT programme could have unforeseen, detrimental outcomes, especially if parents feel unjustly and unfairly treated and, implicit in Ian's comments, this can further undermine the quality of relationships with their young people. However, this negative response from young people towards their parents, in certain situations, appears to apply to both parents who were attending voluntarily and to those on an order.

It was originally intended that the young people of the parents attending the LWT programme would attend an ACWA programme. It was hoped that this evaluation would be able to compare the views of young people and look at how

such issues might be dealt with. However, this has not been possible within the project timeframe because the ACWA programmes were not available for the young people whose parents attended the earlier run LWT programmes. This in part demonstrates the necessity to get a better understanding of how young people feel about their parents attending the LWT programme in order to determine whether and how this might impact on their behaviour. However, we were not able to gain much meaningful information about this from the eight young people interviewed.

#### **5.5.5.8 Sometimes it just gets worse**

Harriet and Barbara were the only parents who said that things were worse since the course. But again, it is difficult to attribute this to the failings of the programme.

Harriet claimed:

"No, things are much worse now than they were. He hardly comes home anymore anyway."

and Barbara's response to whether there had been any changes was:

"Not really. It hasn't at all. Things have got worse, but I think they would have anyway."

Only seven parents (17%) reported that there was no change in their young person's behaviour and sometimes implied that there was no possibility of change. One parent commented that although there was no change in behaviour "that things haven't got worse".

Natalie and Quinn felt that 'growing up' and the hope that their young person would grow out of it in time was some form of resolution for them:

"I think the behaviour is still just the same, only now I sometimes deal with things a bit more grown up like." (Natalie)

"There has been no change in how we get on as a result of the course. They did say that kids usually grow out of it (difficult behaviour) so I guess I just got to get me head down and stick it out." (Quinn)

Some parents were extremely negative about the value of the programme and its impact on them and their young person. We have included their comments here in order to provide a balanced view and because it appears that these parents were also trying to offer some justification as to why they did not gain any benefit from the programme.

Steve and Petula (both on parenting orders) thought they had not benefited because the course could offer them little that they did not already know:

"I don't think I got much out of it. It's all common sense any way, and when things are really bad there's no magic tricks for getting it right. You just have to get through it like" (Steve).

"I learnt nothing on the course that I did not already know. Talk about stating the blindingly obvious" (Petula).

However, Petula went on to comment that "on the bad days if the social (services) were to come and ask to take him off my hands, I would just let him go. I feel like I am at the end of my tether, and I never know what will happen next. He's in control, not me". Petula has presented her circumstances as extreme, and as we have already noted, for some parents, it appeared to be impossible for any positive improvement to be made.

Occasionally specific reference was made to parents being 'organised to go' or 'having to be there', and this seemed to have some impact on whether they reported any benefits. However, any negative comments were invariably supported with some form of justification.

Geraldine justified her lack of enthusiasm in attending and also highlighted a major problem associated with poor attendance. As we have already noted, both facilitators and parents have said that this can have a negative impact on continuity, cohesion, and the dynamics of the group (See section 5.3 above).

"The social worker organised for me to go to the course as she thought it would help. I felt I had to go as I didn't want to let her down, but I don't think I really put much into it or got much out of it. It was difficult because half the parents stopped coming after the first couple of meetings, which left the rest of us a bit on the spot when they asked us questions. I think it would have been better if there had been more people there."

There was only one negative comment made about any of the programme facilitators, and this was made by Tom, a parent who was referred by the SSD. He was also generally negative about being on the programme. (See comments on facilitators in section 5.7 below).

"I didn't think the course was all that hot really although one or two bits were quite interesting. I thought the leaders didn't really know what they were on about."

Although some parents were fairly negative about the extent to which the programme could have any impact on their own particular concerns about their young people's behaviour, they generally presented these comments with supporting explanations of mitigating circumstances. It is worth noting that some of the negative comments came from parents who were on an order.

Roker & Coleman's (1998) case study evaluation of parenting teenagers programmes found that during and following the course, levels of conflict and disagreement with their teenagers sometimes increased. They suggested this was because parents felt more confident in tackling issues which they had not done before. They found that the course had enabled parents to re-evaluate their relationships with their young people and address any areas that they came to see as problematic. They also found that some of the most significant changes for parents were not necessarily in terms of knowledge and skills, but in levels of confidence and feelings of support.

Although many of the comments discussed above appear negative they highlight some very important issues for the CFF to consider in the future in relation to providing on-going support, the added difficulties of being a lone parent and the provision of specific programmes for particularly extreme behaviours.

The YJB found that although some parents had mixed expectations at the outset of what the programme would be like (and those parents on Parenting orders were especially likely to feel negative) exit ratings at the end of the programme were very positive. They found that only 6% were negative or indifferent about whether the programme had been helpful and over nine in ten would recommend it to other parents in their situations.

Clearly, parents' responses to attending the programme are variable and very much dependent on their particular circumstances and the specific behavioural difficulties they are facing. However, it is clear that some parents found a number of positive improvements in their own and their young person's behaviour and have reported overall changes and improvements rather than relating these to the specific behaviours that they indicated as matters of concern on the questionnaires. What is clear not only from the questionnaire data, but also from many of the comments included above (5.5.5.1-5.5.5.4) is that the overwhelming majority found the LWT programme supportive. Many parents claimed they had learnt some useful techniques which they found both helpful and valuable in coping more effectively with difficult behaviours. This will be discussed in more detail in section 5.7 below.

## **5.6 Changes in circumstances**

As already discussed, a *lack* of change for parents in particularly difficult circumstances can have a detrimental effect on their situation. During the course of the interviews, we endeavoured to ascertain whether there had been any particular changes to either the parents' or young persons' circumstances, or the physical environment they lived in after finishing the programme. However, we were unable to get any substantial additional information in response to these questions. Out of the 41 responses, only seven parents reported any changes. The most critical of these was a marriage breakdown that left the father, David having to cope with 3 children on his own. Consequently, he reported continual difficulties in being able to manage his children's behaviour (see 5.5.5.6 above). Although Kirsty did not think there had been any significant changes, she did comment that:

"...I think it would take a bomb to change things with my son. When things are good it's fine, but the slightest thing and Boom! But our recent house move helped a bit as we were all keen to get away from the old place."

Harriet reported that she did not see much of her son anymore:

"...and when he does come into the house, he tends to pick his time so as we don't cross over. So the answer to your question is I don't know if the course has affected his behaviour much at all. But I can't hide the fact that not having to put up with the moods and attitude an' all has made things easier for the rest of us."

Others reported a new baby, (Claire) a new man moving into the home, (Louise); moving to a different neighbourhood (Freya); a house extension being completed which meant that the children would no longer have to share a bedroom (Quinn); and the oldest child leaving home (Yvonne). On a positive note, one parent (Elizabeth) reported that her daughter was attending school on a more regular basis.

## **5.7 Perceived benefits of attending an LWT programme**

We will firstly present the results of the programme evaluation questionnaires (see table 6) followed by the comments parents included on their forms. The evaluation and comments confirm that parents gained many positive effects from attending the programme and emphasise the important things that they learned to do. We will then discuss comments parents made about the programme during the interviews undertaken six months later.

When interviewed, some parents found it difficult to attribute any effects or changes to their having participated in the LWT programme and there was a general tendency to focus on their current concerns. However, the majority identified positive and constructive comments for discussion. This was particularly encouraging because many of these points were identical to those made on the evaluation forms at the end of the programme, so it appears that for some parents there were enduring benefits.

### **5.7.1 Evaluation of the impact of the programme on improving communication and relationships**

56 parents completed evaluation questionnaires at the end of the programme. The total number of responses for each question are set out in table 6 below. Parents were also asked to indicate any additional topics they would like to be included in future programmes and we have incorporated these in our recommendations (Section 7).

**Table 6: Evaluation questionnaire results**

No.	Question	No	Some of the time	Most of the Time	All the time
Q1	Did the course help you to feel more confident as a parent?	-	22	30	4
Q2	Did the course help you to improve your relationship with your teenager(s)?	-	27	23	6
Q3	Did the course improve your communication with your teenager(s)?	2	23	24	7
Q4	Has there been less conflict between you and your teenager?	6	19	26	4
Q5	Did the course increase your understanding of your teenager(s) needs?	-	19	23	14
Q6	Did the course give you a better understanding of your own behaviour?	-	14	30	12
Q7	Did you find sharing your concerns with other parents useful?	-	8	20	28
Q8	Do you feel less stressed as a parent since the start of the course?	4	20	24	8

Note: detailed data was not available for P8 and P9.

The evidence from table 6 above demonstrates that, by the end of the programme, parents valued and benefited from a number of changes most of the time:

- feeling more confident as a parent (Q1)
- less conflict (Q4)
- gaining an increased understanding of their young person's needs (Q5)
- a better understanding of their own behaviour (Q6) and
- feeling less stressed as a parent (Q8)

Being able to share their concerns with other parents, (Q7) was noted as a particular benefit.

When asked how they would rate the course on a scale of 1 – 5, from poor to excellent, 78% rated the programme as either very good or excellent (21 v.g. 22 excellent). Twelve (21%) parents rated the programme as good and only one rated it as fair. No one rated it as poor.

It was particularly encouraging that not only did parents highlight these benefits at the end of the programme, but many reiterated similar comments when interviewed six months later (see section 5.7.1-5.7.4 below).

Parents were also invited to indicate the topics which they found the most useful (see detailed list in Appendix N). Their comments fell into the following categories: improved communication skills; social support; discovering that nobody gets it right all the time; practical skills for managing anger and difficult behaviour. These are discussed below, together with some of the most important issues that the programme raises.

### **5.7.1 Improved communication skills**

The main points parents emphasised were that they had learned how to communicate and to listen more carefully, they were better able to negotiate situations and choose the right time and place to deal with a problem and they had become more aware of their young person's needs.

Many valued learning how to manage their young person's behaviour and how to increase wanted behaviour. A number of parents commented on the thought-provoking techniques they had learned such as 'taking a step back', 'taking a deep breath' and 'walking away from flash points'. They also said that they managed to remember them at appropriate times. For example, one parent noted that: "the token system was relevant and helpful" and another wrote that attending the group had made a difference and that she would continue to use the approaches she had learned.

One parent told the facilitator that since she had been using the techniques she had noticed considerable progress with her daughter's behaviour. Another commented after session two, which covered ABC analysis, "what you are saying E is ringing so many bells in my head. If only I had known about these techniques when he was two years of age, I wouldn't have such huge problems now." This is an important observation, because although only made by one parent, it highlights the importance of learning how to manage challenging behaviours even at an early age. This suggests that programmes would also be beneficial for parents with younger children. In fact, one parent commented that the programme only seemed to cater for young people aged twelve to sixteen, and that problems were apparent both before and after this age group.

The programme helped parents with coping skills such as keeping calm and in control, confidence building, assertiveness, and anger and stress management. Freya commented:

"before I thought it was all my fault and I was a bad parent but now I realise it is knowing how to deal with different situations. You think of what the child is going to think rather than how you feel, you are therefore able to avert what is happening".

She also noted that it "helped me to think about my actions and how to avert instead of fuel a disagreement with my daughter".

One parent's written comment encompassed much of what the majority of others highlighted:

"I found it a useful support group where I could speak about difficult issues concerning behaviour. Have learned some useful techniques and have developed some myself, which have been beneficial. It was good not to feel so isolated and meet other parents in similar situations. Group leaders listened and understood and were very approachable".

It was clear from both the results of the evaluation questionnaires, the interviews and the additional written comments that the majority of parents benefited greatly from learning new techniques to improve their communication and listening skills and their abilities to understand their young people's behaviour.

It was encouraging to find that the benefits parents who attended the LWT programmes found most valuable are also in accordance with the National Evaluation summary recently published by the YJB (YJB, 2002). They found that parents reported significant positive changes in parenting skills and competencies and emphasised the following benefits:

- Improved communication with their child
- Reduction in the frequency of conflict with young people and better approaches to handling conflict when it arose
- Feeling better able to cope with parenting in general
- Improved supervision and monitoring of young people's activities
- Better relationships including more praise and approval of their child and less criticism and loss of temper
- Feeling better able to influence young people's behaviour

### **5.7.3 Social support: Affiliation and respect**

One of the most discussed aspects of being on the programme was the social support it provided. Facilitators often reported that some parents arrived feeling unsure and unable to cope alone. But, by the end of the programme, they had seen that they were not alone, they had heard from other parents about their problems and had learned how to talk and to listen to their young people. This was reflected by the majority of parents who emphasised the positive support they had received from other parents in the group. Six months later many were still in regular contact with parents they had met on the programme. In particular, parents often told the interviewer that they now regularly telephoned other group members for support and advice when their own home situation was difficult.

There is a substantial amount of research evidence indicating that social support groups can improve people's ability to cope with stressful and difficult life events, yet for many, supportive relationships are not available at the time they are most needed. People with high levels of social support are likely to benefit from a reduction in psychological distress and are likely to experience less tension when

confronting stressful situations (Lin, Woeful and Light, 1985). For example research has consistently shown that that social support is beneficial to cancer patients in adjusting to the stress of their disease (e.g. Bloom, 1982; Dunkel-Schetter, 1984; Funch and Mettlin, 1982).

The perceived benefits of the practical support between group members was supplemented by the almost universal comment from parents that going to the group had shown them that they were not alone in coping with the sort of difficulties they were experiencing and that other parents had similar problems:

“...to be able to stand back and take a more detached view of *our* behaviour and our son’s was helpful, as was being with others with similar situations”.  
(emphasis added)

Alignment with others and being able to compare situations with other parents was clearly something valued by many of the parents attending the programmes. Out of the 41 parents interviewed, 21 specifically commented on the positive side of being with other parents and sharing their concerns.

A comment by one of the mothers particularly emphasised her situation. She was reassured to find that she was not alone and benefited from the realisation that some parents had even greater problems than she did:

"Before I went on the course I thought I was the only mum in the world coping with this (problems). It was good to see that I'm not on my own and that some have got it far worse than me" (Karen).

However, it is worth noting that being surrounded by people in similar situations was not always seen as positive support and could actually highlight unforeseen problems that parents might have to face in the future, especially if other parents' problems were seen as more intractable than their own.

"Just talking to others (parents) was helpful and some of their problems were enormous, putting your own problems into perspective. However I worried that their problems would be the next stage for me" (Annie).

Social comparisons have been found to be important in adjusting to difficult situations and can enhance self-esteem (Festinger, 1954) and it was found that being able to compare themselves with others on the programme provided parents with additional support.

However, for William, meeting other parents accentuated his own situation, which he saw as particularly extreme:

"I understand that it might be some comfort for other parents to see that there are others in worse positions than them, but that person was always me."

One parent implied that if someone whom they would expect to be able to cope with difficult behaviour was attending the programme because they had similar difficulties, then this worked to help balance any feelings she might have had of being a failure as a parent:

"I thought only we had it so bad. I know it sounds terrible but when I discovered one of the other mums on the course was a teacher, it helped me a lot. I mean if a teacher can have this sort of problem with her kids, then I don't feel alone or such a bloody failure!" (Claire).

Being with other parents in the same situation also appeared to be a positive resource for support and a source of learning. Kirsty said:

"I learnt more from the other parents than I did from other aspects of the course. It made me feel less of a freak that there are other mums in similar trouble to me, and some in much worse situations."

For Hetty, being with other parents also helped to normalise her own situation:

"I was amazed that there were other people in the same situation as me and my husband. We thought we were the only ones. So the best thing about the course I learnt was that what we are going through isn't that unusual, and that there is light at the end of the tunnel."

Her final comment, that "there is light at the end of the tunnel" also reflected that she was maintaining a positive outlook.

It was not only the other parents on the programme who provided social support. Several parents commented on the importance of being able to relate to the facilitators (who could be seen as authority figures, especially if a parent has been ordered to attend). They said that this relationship was helped if facilitators

openly discussed their experiences of trying to manage their young people's difficult behaviours, and that this added to their credibility and influence. This was seen to be reassuring by parents, who again felt that they were not alone in their struggles, because not only teachers but also even programme facilitators could have similar problems. Pauline commented:

"The fact that he (course tutor) told us that he had had problems with his own son helped. You could really see that he knew what he was talking about. The social workers I get are all about twelve years old! How can they help you when they don't know what it's like themselves?"

For Pauline, the credibility, and therefore usefulness, of being on the programme was directly linked to the person facilitating the programme. She attributed this to his personal experience and maturity, that he was able to understand her circumstances through his own experience. She contrasted this with her own experience of social workers, who clearly did not provide her with the confidence she needed. Consequently, she was more inclined to listen to what the facilitator had to say and take the course seriously.

Elizabeth also endorsed the view that being able to relate to others with similar problems had helped her.

"The man (tutor) had had trouble with his son, and knew what he was on about. The course was good and not too long. I can't say there's one specific thing I learnt on the course, but it helped me to see other parents, even professional people like teachers, have got the same problems I have with my son".

Another frequently identified benefit was that the facilitators did not undermine parents in any way, or judge them to be 'bad' parents. Being treated as a responsible adult was also highly valued.

Yvonne had been worried that the people running the programme would start from the premise that they were all 'bad parents' and expressed her surprise that interaction and discussions were encouraged. She had assumed that the programmes would be conducted on a teacher/pupil basis and that it would be more like being at school.

"I just enjoyed going. It's years since I've been to a course and it was good. It was well done that they let us have our say and discuss things between ourselves, rather than just talking from the front and telling what crap parents we were."

Being treated fairly, with respect and not being considered as a failure were also issues raised by other parents. Louise commented on how this had helped her to put any feelings of failure as a parent into perspective:

"Just having an opportunity to speak honestly about how bad things have been is a relief. I can't even talk with my mum about it, because I feel such a failure, and I'm always worried that people will think things are out of control again and go running off to the social (services)."

Leanne also expressed the importance of equality and collaboration:

"I thought the staff would, might come over all 'know it all' and make us (parents) feel like complete failures. But they did a good job of keeping things light and letting us take an active part in discussions and debates. I wish there were other courses like this for me as I would certainly go."

It was clearly important that parents felt able to relate on an equal level with the facilitators. Maturity and personal experience were valued attributes for programme facilitators. Later we will comment on whether those parents attending programmes facilitated independently by YOTs experienced any noticeable differences (See section 5.8).

Even parents who were negative about the course and thought it was "a waste of time," "enjoyed meeting the other parents" and claimed, "it was good to have some time away from this place" (home). So, attendance can provide a number of benefits to parents, although they may be hidden by negative comments.

The majority of parents felt that those running the programmes knew what they were doing and listened to what they had to say. Only two parents thought that the staff did not understand their circumstances and thought they would not be able to do so without personal experience.

#### **5.7.4 Nobody's perfect**

Another problem for parents was that prior to being referred to the course, they had frequently felt under pressure to "get it right" and consequently had found it difficult to ask for help through fear of being seen as a bad parent, a failure, or stupid. CFF's policy is to try to dispel any such feelings or stigma and the success of this policy was reflected in many comments .

Being with other people in similar situations, respecting others and being respected enabled parents to value the importance of being able to talk and to listen. Additionally, they valued being encouraged to talk about their own problems by a facilitator who listened to what they had to say. They also learned that it was 'okay' not to be right about things all the time.

Tonya was clearly reassured by this and realised that:

"For me the idea that you don't always have to instantly jump into situations and know the right answer and sort things out was the best thing. They said it was OK to take a deep breath and walk away from flash points, and that has helped a lot. I think he (son) used to wind me up on purpose. He knew that if he pushed the right buttons I would go up like a firework. It's not so bad now because as I have calmed down, I've noticed that he doesn't play that game so much as he used to."

Dawn also commented that "they told us to take a deep breath, and not feel we had to rush into things all the time, or always get it right."

Parents who have young people with behavioural difficulties often feel that they are judged by others and labelled as 'bad parents'. Consequently, this can generate feelings of isolation. One major benefit from going on the programmes was that they helped alleviate this sense of isolation.

Finoula commented that: "I liked meeting the others (parents) and made some new friends. It's hard to make friends when you're in my position, as they just don't understand and soon fade away."

The opportunities to form friendships and receive peer support were particularly significant for some parents.

*"I made a real friend of one of the other mums, and she used to come and pick me up and take me to the meetings. We've kept in touch since, and often speak on the phone. Actually, I think we have done more for each other than the course did. But we wouldn't have met if it weren't for the course" (Caroline).*

Six months later, the long term benefits expressed by the majority of parents were that they experienced less anxiety, in some cases their confidence was raised, and they felt less stressed. In terms of how they managed difficult situations, they had personally benefited from getting a better understanding of their young person's behaviour, were able to communicate more effectively, they found that levels of conflict were reduced, and they had often learned helpful techniques to resolve specific problems. Some had made new friends who provided them with an additional resource in times of difficulty.

#### **5.7.5 Practical learning outcomes: Managing anger, keeping calm, being in control, and managing difficult behaviour**

As shown in table 6 above, being able to understand their own behaviour and that of their young people was highly valued.

When interviewed six months later, the majority of parents reported that they still employed elements of what they had learned on the programme. This was especially true in relation to dealing with conflict. Although at the end of the programme parents did not score highly on whether there had been less conflict between them and their young person, what was apparent from the interviews, was that conflict resolution was reported as a major long-term benefit.

Many parents reported that they had gained a different perspective on how to manage behavioural problems by learning how to control emotions such as anger and how to deal with confrontation situations without losing their temper.

A particularly significant comment concerned how some parents learned about their own attitude. They realised that they could still love their child, even though they did not approve of their bad behaviour. As Harriet said, she was:

"Learning to isolate the behaviour from the person."

In this statement, Harriet was referring to the idea that no matter how bad her daughter's behaviour, she would try not to let this affect her love for her daughter as a person. She went on to say that she was aware that behaviour can change and that, given time, children and young people usually grew out of bad behaviour. She had picked up both of these concepts from the teaching on the course and found some re-assurance in them. This also had relevance for Nellie:

*"I learnt to say, I will always love you, it's your behaviour I don't like. It don't sound much, I know, but just saying that sometimes takes the heat out of a row."*

Learning how to remain calm by 'taking a step back' or a 'deep breath' when dealing with difficult situations was especially remembered and highly valued. Freya commented that this was particularly helpful in confrontation situations:

*"Although it sounds obvious I especially remember the work we did about taking a step back from confrontation, literally taking a deep breath and saying to myself that I am in control here, and that it will not help things if I lose it."*

Natalie had also retained the idea of not reacting immediately in difficult situations:

*"They (tutors) encouraged us not to feel we had to always jump right in when things were tough. They helped me to see that taking my time, not losing my temper and not picking up on every little thing can be better."*

Clearly learning these techniques to alleviate difficult behaviours also resulted in a better sense of self-confidence about parenting skills. Vivian said that she enjoyed the course and thought she got a lot out of it, "particularly in relation to developing a better sense of self confidence about my own parenting skills, and realising that this is a complex job where we all make mistakes."

Techniques around anger and confrontation management that allowed parents to sometimes prevent difficult situations blowing up into conflict were also learnt on the course and highly valued.

In summary, our overall conclusions are that the LWT programme has proved to have substantial benefits for the majority of parents, whether they were attending

voluntarily or on a parenting order. It provided them with a variety of skills which improved their relationships and opened up lines of communication with their young people. Some parents noticed significant improvements in the challenging behaviours they had previously found difficult to manage. The social support parents received from the group helped improve their self-esteem. The opportunity to compare themselves with others in similar or more difficult situations was a positive source of support.

### **5.8 Differences in responses to CFF run programmes versus YOTs and other agency run programmes**

Table 7 compares the percentage frequency of difficult behaviours identified by parents *before* undertaking courses run by CFF in comparison with those run by the YOTs team and Table 8 compares the percentage frequency of difficult behaviours identified by parents *after* undertaking these courses.

Before both programmes a substantial percentage of difficult behaviours were recorded as occurring 'often' (23% CFF, 25% YOT) or 'always' (26% CFF, 21%, YOT). About half as many were recorded as occurring 'seldom' (12% CFF, 9% YOT) or 'never' (14% CFF, 12% YOT). After the programmes there was a substantial drop in the 'always' category (10% CFF, 7% YOT) and a drop in the 'often' category for the YOT courses. (24% CFF, 14% YOT). This drop was matched by corresponding rises in the 'seldom' category, (17%, CFF; 20% YOT) and in the 'never' category (19% CFF and 26% YOT). For both programmes, almost all the changes were in a positive direction.

Although on the surface these figures might appear to demonstrate that the positive change was more extensive on the YOT than on the CFF programmes, the data are too limited to draw this conclusion. Substantially more data were available from the CFF than the YOT programmes, and until more YOT programmes have been run, this finding can only be regarded as extremely tentative. There were no noticeable differences in the outcomes for parents attending a CFF run programme or those run independently by other agencies. We are not able to make any comparisons with the interview data as all these young people participated in CFF run programmes.

**Table 7 and 8 to be inserted**

## 5.9 Re-Offending

The YJBPP evaluation summary found that participation in the programmes was followed by a 30% cut in offending. In the year prior to the parents being referred to the programme, 89% of their young people had been convicted of an offence, compared to 61.5% in the year after their parents left the programme. There was a reduction of 50 per cent in the number of recorded offences the young people had committed over the same period, from an average of 4.4 recorded offences prior to the programme, this reduced to 2.1 in the following year (YJB, 2002).

Lord (Norman) Warner of Brockley, the Chairman of the YJB said:

*“Parents are crucial if we want to stop youngsters offending. Now there is real evidence that relatively short parenting programmes, often linked to parenting orders, can cut offending by half among youngsters who were already entrenched in their offending” (YJB, 2002).*

From the data available we were not able to identify whether, as a result of parents attending the LWT programme, there have been any substantial reductions in young people’s re-offending behaviour. It was not clear from the referral forms available which parents attending had young people who had already offended. Also, offending was not recorded as a reason for being referred to the programme. This information is not at the moment recorded in the programme evaluation data. In order to measure whether the programmes can have any influence on re-offending it will be necessary to monitor the re-offending rates of the young people who have either attended an ACWA programme or whose parents have attended an LWT programme. We understand this information is now being recorded. (See section 7 Recommendations).

Leicester City YOTs have advised us that according to their records for 2002, no young people whose parents attended the LWT have re-offended.

## **5.10 Additional comments**

### **Difficulties for facilitators**

It was reported that some parents had learning difficulties and/or literacy difficulties. Whilst adjustments to the programme were made to assist them (with their knowledge and consent) they did have some problems in participating fully.

## **6. ACWA Evaluation**

### **6.1 ACWA Pilot programmes**

Because of the lack of documentation for the three earlier piloted ACWA programmes, we begin our evaluation by re-visiting a report issued by CFF. In the early stages of the project, it proved extremely difficult to gain the co-operation of young people to attend the ACWA groups. For example, the January to February 2000, pilot group received 15 referrals but only six young people were persuaded to start the programme. (We do not know how many completed it).

However, the CFF report states that the evaluations of the three pilot groups were generally positive. The first pilot group had a mixed evaluation. There were a number of comments appreciating the refreshments. For instance it was found that if the young people were offered the right flavour of crisps or a particular brand of cake or biscuit this seemed to be a successful way of conveying to them the fact that someone valued them.

The evaluation of the second ACWA group was very positive. The only consistent critical comment was that it was felt there was too much emphasis on games to the detriment of the aims of the group. However, the staff who ran the group had noted that the young people always seemed more relaxed and willing to work after they had taken part in the games. It was also recognised by the staff that many of the games were designed to complement and emphasise the ideas that were discussed in the sessions, but the young people may not have appreciated this aspect.

Another key finding of the CFF evaluation was the value of allowing young people to bring a brother/sister or friend. Whilst it was recognised that this needs to be carefully managed it was found that young people felt more comfortable being accompanied than just coming on their own. There is an argument that allowing friends to come means that those who may need the group are unable to attend. However, in practice it was found that the friends who came were assessed to be in as much or greater need than those referred. For example one young female who attended with a referred friend had been raped and rejected by both parents who had divorced.

It was found that offering transport to young people proved successful especially in the early sessions. Once attendance had been established and the young people had enjoyed it, they were able to make their own way.

## **6.2 ACWA Interviews**

Our eight young interviewees were selected from the first three pilot programmes (7 males and 1 female). Although the interviews were brief, they do highlight some of the positive and negative aspects for the young people attending the ACWA programmes. There were also some similarities in certain aspects of the programme that were valued both by the young people and the parents who attended the LWT programmes, for example respect and support.

### **6.2.1 Respect and support**

When asked what they found most useful about the course, six of the young people were generally positive about attending the group and, like the parents, valued being treated with respect.

Carl commented that:

"When people say that you should give them some respect and treat them right, that just means that they think they are better than you, and that it's OK for them to treat you like shit. They (tutors) didn't do that on the course which was well on (good)."

They also valued being listened to. Barry said that he "felt like they (tutors) really listened to me you know. They gave us a chance to say what we wanted, and didn't just tell us what we should think and how we should act."

Meeting others and having something in common with other young people was also important. Alan said that: "The best stuff was meeting the others, and having a laugh. I thought it would be dead serious and like school. But it was cool." Euan commented that instead of being treated differently, he felt that the group offered him a sense of belonging:

"My mam always treats me like I'm some sort of freak, so I liked it that we were all the same. I think we had a lot in common."

Another similarity with the LWT programme was that, like parents, the young people appreciated the lack of judgmental attitudes from the facilitators.

Darren commented that: "they (tutors) didn't treat us like kids ever. They didn't start off by thinking we were in the wrong or were bad." Florence seemed to have enjoyed the programme saying that: "It weren't boring, and they (tutors) had a bit of a laugh with us and that. It was good because they chilled (were relaxed) and let us get to know each other in our own way."

### **6.2.3 Problems associated with attending**

Garry and Henry were generally negative about the programme, the former claiming: "There was nothing good about it, it was just the same old crap, do this, don't do that. I think they thought we were thick." And Henry was somewhat indifferent: "It were all right I suppose and some of the others were a good laugh, but some of them hadn't got a clue what was going on."

When asked what they did not like, although Barry had earlier said that the tutors listened he did liken the experience to being like school:

"They (tutors) tried but it was a bit like school, and school didn't agree with me."

Carl was unhappy about the timing of the course and the venue: “why couldn’t they make the meetings at a better time and some place else? I think it could have been a lot easier for us to do it if it was held in a better place.”

Sometimes the young people did not get on with each other and Darren said that: “it would have been better if they weren’t there”. He also implied that young people on the programme said one thing and did another: “...some people say one thing in a meeting and you know they don’t really think that and forget it all when they leave”. This highlights the difficulty of being able to measure the effectiveness of the programme as it raises the issue of whether participants will be honest about their views.

Alan felt that he *had* to attend the programme and “...it was ever so like ‘you’re here because you want to be’ an all that, but I don’t think that was really true.” Euan felt picked on and said that there were “lots of kids worse than me who’ve never had to do it (the course) so it felt a bit like, why pick on me?” The implication of Alan and Euan’s comments are that they were on orders but we do not have any evidence of this. This also resonates with those parents on parenting orders who were not happy about being made to go on the programme. Such a view can detract from any benefits that they might gain if they do not value what the programmes can offer.

Garry and Henry could not find anything positive to say about being on the programme. Garry was particularly derogatory and cynical about the tutors: “It was all a load of shit. They (tutors) don’t know what they’re on about, but you can see they think they’re so hard. They treat you all nice and friendly, but if you saw them later outside or in town they don’t even know you.” Henry thought: “there was too much of it y’know, you could have said it all with much less.”

The impact of personality clashes and extreme negative reactions were sometimes noted as being a disruptive factor for others on the programme. This concern was something that has been noted by facilitators on the more recently run programmes. Facilitators need to be prepared to deal with young people being disruptive in the group and it has been suggested that one effective

method of intervention was to take time out with the disruptive member to discuss any issues that were causing them discomfort.

### **6.2.3 Stop, think, and listen**

When asked whether the group had changed the way they thought about things, four felt that there was a difference and particularly emphasised 'stopping to think' and 'listening more carefully'.

Carl revealed that he did think about things more than he used to and that he tried to "think about the people around me and about how what I do and say means to them. Rather than before, when I just sort of charged into things without a thought in my head for where it might lead." Although Euan said it had not changed him he added that he tried "to give other people a bit more room y'know, give them some slack, rather than just go off (lose temper) or leg it". Despite Henry's general negativity towards the programme he was making an effort and said: "Well I try to think about what I do before I do it now, but it don't always work".

Florence commented on her increasing maturity. Again, this resonates with some of the comments parents made about their young people growing up and growing out of some of their difficult behaviours. Florence said:

"I think I'm a bit older and wiser than I used to be and the course has helped me with that, by taking more time to think things through, and trying to listen to what other people say and take their feelings into account as well as saying what I want and how I feel so that they can understand me."

Clearly, Florence has benefited from being on the course, and learned to stop, think, and listen.

Garry and Barry were both rather cynical. Barry said, "yeah, I'd know not to do any more courses!" and Garry "Oh yeah! I'm different, I'm a good lad now I am. All you've got to do is know what to say and you can get away with anything, no one takes any notice anyway." As Darren implied earlier, some young people are likely to say what they think other people want to hear.

When asked whether the group had any impact on how they get on with their family, Garry remained negative and for him “Home is just somewhere to sleep as far as I’m concerned. That’s all. I don’t think any course is ever going to make us get along, we just don’t see things the same.” Barry was vehement about there not being any change saying that “No, they hate me and I hate them right back. As soon as I can get into the army, I’m off.”

However, the remaining six had noticed positive changes, although sometimes these were disguised with negative comments and references to avoidance. Alan said “Not so much, we don’t talk to each other where we can avoid it. I think that’s better cos we don’t row like we used to. I don’t think the course has changed the way we get on, but things are better now than before cos we all keep out of one another’s road (way).”

Carl, Darren, and Henry said they were getting on better. Carl was not sure “whether it’s the course what’s done it I don’t know. But I think it’s a bit easier to talk about stuff now at home and that’s loads better.” Darren was getting on better with his mother and “she was dead pleased with me for sticking with the course.” He also added, “she’s making a real effort to listen to what I want to say and be good to me. I’m trying to clean up and stuff as well.”

Although Henry said things were better at home, he “wouldn’t like to say that’ll be the same next week.” Again, this resonates with what many parents said about the unpredictability and variability of their young people’s behaviour. It appeared that Euan had perhaps been avoiding conflict situations as he said that “Home’s a different place now, much quieter and a bit boring I guess. But I’d sooner have it boring than put up with the yawping (loud disagreements) and all that crap. I think the neighbours think they’ve died and gone to Heaven!” Again, Florence’s response was related to her getting a bit older and consequently her “mam and dad see me more as an adult now and don’t treat me like a kid”.

All the young people claimed that attendance at the group had not resulted in any changes in the way they behaved, although Barry said that he had: “got a few more mates now...but that’s all.” He also thought that it was a permanent change

because he found it easier to make friends now than he did before. Despite saying that her behaviour had not changed much, Florence thought that: “things at home have changed for the better and I hope that’s for keeps. I do think we are talking more and they are listening to me and I am listening to them”.

Although it is difficult to draw any major conclusions from such a small interview sample, the comments reported above do indicate that six months after the programme some of the young people were getting on better at home. This was mostly attributed to them stopping to think and listening, and in some cases, their parents reciprocated this. Unfortunately, it is not known whether the improved relationships on both sides were as a result of parents attending a LWT as this information was not available to us.

### **6.3 An overview of ACWA 2002**

Although the three programmes run in the early part of 2002 are outside of the evaluation project period we thought it would be helpful to include some of the comments from the facilitators’ reports.

The CFF have made a number of changes to the programme, incorporating some of the comments received by young people on the evaluation forms and the facilitator’s reports. These have been applied to the 3 programmes that ran in 2002. The facilitator’s reports for each of these programmes have provided a variety of information.

55 referrals were made to the 3 groups and according to the attendance registers, 23 young people attended the first session (7 females and 16 males) and fourteen attended the last session (See table 2, section 4). As far as we can ascertain only one young person was on a care order and attended 3 out of the 6 sessions.

As part of the ongoing development of finding effective evaluation measures for the ACWA groups a number of different evaluation forms have been used for each of the groups. We understand that evaluation questionnaires for the third

group were not completed. It is therefore not possible to make a comparison of results for all three groups. However, the majority of young people rated the programme as excellent.

The young people also added some written comments to their evaluation forms about what they found most helpful and these are detailed in Appendix U. Some of these are extremely encouraging, for example, 'being able to talk about their problems', 'how to walk out of an argument', 'to live with their parents better', 'learning to be more co-operative', 'learning about alternatives', 'meeting other people' and that 'people were kind'.

When asked to say three things they would like to say about the group, many thought that it was 'cool', 'brill', and 'fun'. It was clear from their comments that the facilitators were very approachable, helpful, and 'nice' and that they understood their problems and feelings. Meeting people was noted as being not only helpful but also a favourite thing about the group.

A "Where are u at?" 'before' and 'after' self-evaluation questionnaire was piloted in the third group (See Appendix P) and this provides a more effective measurement of the benefits and outcomes for young people. A pilot questionnaire to obtain comments from the parents of the young people was also introduced (See 6.3.1. below and Appendix T).

### **6.3.1 Comments from parents**

In addition to the comments from the young people attending the programmes, follow up telephone calls were made to some of the parents, based on the parent/worker questionnaire (See appendix T).

When asked if they had noticed any changes or improvements in their young person's behaviour or attitude, parents made some very positive comments:

"He is more able to negotiate and state facts". He has a "more mature approach to dealing with conflict and mediates well between peers".

"He is beginning to listen first and discuss issues. He is less antagonistic".

“He is more reasonable. He is now able to work out his own emotions and put these into words, rather than just saying ‘it’s not fair”.

“Now he will listen to the other person’s view. Before he was always right! Now he will discuss and accept the other side of the argument”.

*“Understanding that he is not alone in losing control of his emotions and getting angry really helped him”.*

“...attitude generally has improved”

When parents were asked what they felt their young person had gained by attending the group, comments were made about confidence and assertion, ‘being able to negotiate to get what he wants’, that their young person had gained a lot and that “He has achieved a lot by attending the group.”

One parent commented that ““It was very good the way different children were put together with different degrees of difficult behaviour. Peer education went on of its own accord.” However, as we noted earlier, sometimes this caused a problem for some of the young people, especially when there were clashes of personality. One parent noted that the programme was a:

“...brilliant idea and the group should have been longer. It would be excellent to develop this to a youth group in the area which continued these ideas with youth activities too. “

## **Summary**

ACWA was a newly developed programme and a number of changes have been made since the first pilots were run. The programme is still evolving and it is clear from the facilitators’ reports that the design continues to be reviewed and evaluated. The three programmes run this year show some positive outcomes for the young people attending. The recent introduction of follow up phone calls to parents confirms that the ACWA programmes are proving not only beneficial to the young people, but that parents are noticing positive changes in their young peoples’ behaviour.

We understand that a small group of young people who attended the first group run in 2002 were so enthusiastic about the programme that it has led to the CFF developing a ‘peer education programme’. Consequently, five young people who

completed the programme are now meeting fortnightly and receiving further training and support from staff to enable them to accompany staff on home visits to prospective group members. This provides the opportunity for them to encourage their peers to attend the programme by sharing their direct experience of being on the programme.

## **7. Recommendations**

Our evaluation has been substantially hampered by the lack of data and so we want to comment and recommend some changes, which will enhance both internal and external evaluations. Our recommendations are organised into the following three sections:

- The programmes
- Future internal evaluations
- External evaluations

### **7.1 The LWT programmes**

In addition to being asked how they rated the effectiveness of the programme, the programme evaluation form also asked parents whether they thought any additional topics should be included. We have organised these comments into the following categories:

- Additional support and help
- Involvement of young people in the programme
- Additional behavioural concerns
- Ability to attend meetings

#### **7.1.1 Additional support and help**

A number of parents said that they needed additional support and help and suggested they be provided with information on where to seek this, for example a list of help lines. We would also recommend that this be also provided for young people attending the ACWA programme.

It is recommended that parents be provided with a list of additional materials available, (i.e. books, videos etc) to support explanations of how to manage specific behavioural difficulties. Such a list of appropriate supporting information could also be considered for young people.

Some parents suggested the need for stronger collaboration with other agencies i.e. schools, social workers etc to support and help perplexed parents. This is part of an ongoing debate on the need for better inter-agency working practices and the difficulties of achieving this.

It was also suggested that the CFF/YOTs introduce a follow up meeting after about a month of completing the course and also follow up phone calls to see if things have progressed or are progressing in a positive way. It is recommended that wherever possible this be introduced for both parents and young people. It is suggested that this would be helpful to parents who still may feel isolated in coping with their young people. Some of the comments from young people were that they enjoyed being with other young people with whom they felt they had something in common, so it is suggested that they also might benefit from either follow up meetings or an organised event where they could meet up again.

These additional meetings could possibly be co-ordinated with the social worker/YOTs. It is suggested that if these follow up meetings were introduced, an 'exit report' could be produced. This would also provide additional evidence on the long-term effectiveness of the programme on the reduction of challenging behaviours.

We also recommend that the CFF/YOTs could take a more active role in encouraging and helping parents to set up their own on-going support groups.

### **7.1.2 Involvement of young people in the programme**

Several parents thought that their young person(s) should be invited to attend one of the sessions with them in order to gain a better understanding of their concerns and difficulties in dealing with their behaviours. Now that the ACWA programmes are running more effectively and in conjunction with the LWT programme, this problem may be alleviated. Nevertheless, it is worth considering as a future option.

The programmes are aimed at 11-16 year olds, although the young people are from 13 – 19 years of age. One parent commented that it seemed that a young

person was “too late to save after 16”. A number of parents expressed concerns about their young person’s behaviour towards their siblings. Although this project formed part of the YJBPP and the target age group was 11-16, it is suggested that programmes should also be made available for parents who have problems with their younger children. This would provide them with the opportunity of learning how to manage challenging behaviours at an earlier stage of their children’s development.

### **7.1.3 Additional behavioural concerns**

A number of parents said that they would like to know how to manage specific difficulties, for example, how to raise issues such as drugs, smoking, drinking, under age sex, and self-harm.

Parents expressed the need to gain a better understanding of *why* their young person was behaving in such a particular way. Events that have a strong impact on everyone concerned, such as divorce, separation, a family death, a serious illness, puberty, bullying, and moving home are likely to have an impact on young people’s behaviour. It is suggested that the programme include some emphasis on the background/reason for a particular young person’s behaviour problem. Additionally it is suggested the CFF consider specialised groups for specific problems.

### **7.1.4. School attendance**

As we highlighted in section 5, a number of parents had concerns related to school and non-attendance. It has been noted that the programme was not necessarily able to cope with this specific concern. Such concerns are not necessarily improved by behaviour management techniques.

As several of the parenting orders have been issued by Education, this poses future difficulties and it is suggested that the CFF consider how school-related concerns might be managed in the future. Also, if parents are under an education order, if the programme they attend is run in summer period, they are unable to put what they have learned into practice.

Parents ordered to attend because of non-attendance at school may also find it uncomfortable attending with parents whose young people display severe behavioural concerns. For example, one parent stated that:

“I was at this programme because my son would not attend school. After sitting together with parents whose kids used drugs, were violent, sometimes never came home until the next day or had been in trouble with the police, I sat there thinking why am I here when my son was an angel compared to these kids. So I think there could be meetings solely for parents like me which deal with children not attending school.”

Other school issues included requests concerning how parents could improve communication with the school, in particular, if they felt that the school was being unfair to their young person or that they may be having problems in class that are not made known to them until a parents’ evening meeting.

Some parents were concerned about how to encourage their young people to put more effort at school.

It is recommended that CFF consider discussing with other agencies the possibility of offering parents a specialist one day or evening programme to focus on school issues.

It is suggested that a more formal communication be set up with education welfare officers to establish whether school attendance has improved.

#### **7.1.5 Ability to attend meetings**

Inconsistent attendance poses a number of problems for both parents and facilitators. These include lack of continuity and disruption to the group. Non-attendance means that parents are likely to miss key aspects of the programme. Although a limited amount can be ‘caught up by home visits’ these are not encouraged as this defeats the object of running programmes for small groups. Issues concerning attendance are therefore an ongoing concern. The variety of reasons why parents do not attend consistently should be explored and, where possible, addressed.

Although only one parent commented on the time of the meetings (i.e. 7 00 – 9 00 p.m.) and the location being too far away, (meaning that that she had to walk through town on her own in the evening), the time and location of the programme could prove difficult for some. She suggested that this might have explained why only 3-4 parents ever came to the programme.

Other issues concerned the arrangement and costs of childcare. Facilitators' reports noted that as some parents were not able to attend due to lack of childcare, improved co-ordination with other agencies and obtaining the appropriate funding was essential.

If parents or young people miss a session it is suggested that if it is not appropriate to carry out a home visit, (i.e. because of cost, time and resources) that they are invited to come along to the programme a little earlier to enable the facilitator to talk through what they may have missed.

It has also been suggested (by a facilitator) that the CFF should consider providing a service for those who are unable to leave their homes, for whatever reason, and for those who felt unable to discuss issues in a group situation. As noted earlier, some parents did feel uncomfortable about discussing their young people's difficulties in front of others. Not all parents have the mobility to attend a programme, they might be disabled, or are too ill to attend, and currently they would be excluded from being able to participate. Whilst this poses a cost and resources concern, it is suggested that consideration needs to be given to providing equal access to all parents.

Trust is an important factor in sharing problems, particularly in the early stages. It is suggested that the CFF consider running the course over a different time frame, i.e. an initial group meeting, to bond, build up trust, and then run sessions on alternate weeks or every 2 – 3 weeks. Some parents have also said they would like the programme to be longer too, but needless to say, this has a number of cost and resources issues that would have to be considered. For those parents whose young people had particularly difficult behavioural problems, an additional course could be made available.

## **The ACWA Programmes**

We list below some of the comments that facilitators have made in their reports regarding the concerns of the young people attending the ACWA programmes.

Some of the young people commented that the programme was like school despite the efforts of facilitators to make the group as unlike it as possible. It is suggested that the CFF needs to review the amount of writing and 'teaching' aspects of the programme to help resolve this.

Some of the young people expressed the wish for continued support. It is suggested that the CFF research and collate information about other activities available to young people so that those attending groups can be directed into other youth activities if they are interested.

We have already suggested that parents be provided with additional supporting information. It is suggested that the CFF develop similar information for young people. This could include details of local youth agencies that provide support and advice for young people. Many young people have access to a computer and enjoy this facility. It is also suggested that suitable web site information could also be provided.

### **7.2 Recommendations for future internal evaluations: LWT and ACWA programmes**

Since the project began in October 1999 we are aware that there have been a number of changes made to the LWT and ACWA programmes, especially following the early pilot programmes. Different methods have now been applied to collecting feedback and evaluations. Although a wealth of useful data were collected from the start of the project, these were often recorded inconsistently, and the current evaluation had to rely on a very patchy database. We would make the following recommendations for its improvement. It is suggested that the CFF/YOTs consider setting up a computerised database (e.g. Excel) for this purpose.

In order to be consistent with recording data we suggest that the CFF provide style formats for the information required for evaluation as follows:

### **7.2.1 Referrals listing**

A referrals listing which includes: the parent and young person's name, postal address, contact number, the age, gender and ethnicity of the parent and the young person concerned, (See appendix V for suggested codes), whether they are attending voluntarily or because of an order, the nature of any order, including if possible the date of issue and expiry and finally, whether they actually attended a programme, including the date and venue of the programme. A copy of this should be held in a master file at the CFF/YOTs office.

It is suggested that referrals be given a reference code to be included on any future documentation, enabling information to be matched in the future. This should include a code number, whether the referral is to a CFF or YOTs run programme and a programme date, e.g. 1CFF/Oct 2002. This will also protect confidentiality and this number should also be used on any subsequent documentation, i.e. the attendance record, 'before' and 'after' questionnaires and evaluation forms.

### **7.2.2 Attendance record of participants.**

It is important to be able to determine how many people attend each week, and how many drop out, so the numbers of parents attending each session should be recorded. This attendance record should also note the details of any absences and any actions taken so this should include a record of any home visits, with a notation as to the outcome; whether an absence has been agreed, if someone is sick or any other known reason why the parent is not attending a session. It is suggested that the same codes are used throughout, (at present, for instance, some reports used an 'X' for attendance and others and 'X' for absence). Clear guidelines on how to produce the data should be provided to all programme facilitators.

### **7.2.3 'Before' and 'After' questionnaires**

There was some difficulty in being able to identify the questionnaires, as sometimes the parent's name was included, sometimes the young person's, and on occasions, the surname was different. Using the code number would alleviate this problem and it is recommended that this be added to the questionnaires before being handed to the parent/young person. In order to avoid confusion it would be helpful if all facilitators marked whether questionnaires had been completed before or after the programme. It was noted that some facilitators used 'A' for the 'before' questionnaire and 'B' for after which was confusing. All questionnaires should be dated.

#### **7.2.3.1 Additional difficult behaviours and good behaviours**

As we have already noted, there was a lack of consistency in the reporting of additional positive and negative behaviours. It is suggested that at the end of the programme parents/young people are asked to complete the after questionnaire and are then shown a copy of the before questionnaire to compare the behaviours. This suggests that the after questionnaire would need to include an additional section to include behaviours recorded at the beginning of the programme to confirm that they were no longer a concern. It would also be helpful if the after questionnaire included a section on whether there have been any changes in the family environment e.g. moving home, moving schools, separation or divorce, a serious illness, a birth or death in the family.

#### **7.2.3.2 Analysis of questionnaires**

It appears that the analysis of the scores is variable, i.e. sometimes additional behaviours were included in the total scores, and good behaviours were sometimes taken away from scores. It is therefore suggested that all facilitators produce their analysis in the same way.

The in house facilitators' reports provide extremely useful findings concerning the reductions in the number and frequency of difficult behaviours. However, we would question the validity of calculations that aggregate numerical points on a

scale which is based on a quantitative expression of qualitative data. We have therefore re-calculated the frequency behaviour questionnaires by aggregating the number of times a parent records a behaviour as 'never', 'seldom', 'sometimes' often, and 'always'. We have also found it helpful to calculate the percentage of times responses fall into each of these categories (see tables 7 and 8).

#### **7.2.4 Evaluation questionnaires**

It is suggested either that all the evaluation questionnaires are included or that facilitators include a breakdown of the scores for each question, (e.g.. 0 = No, some of the time = 1, most of the time = 2, all the time = 3) and lists the topics covered in questions 9 and 10. Again, scores for the course rating should also be provided in detail.

In addition to the referrals listing, attendance record and questionnaire and evaluation analysis discussed above, the facilitator's report should also include any specific comments relating to:

**Practical issues:** e.g. about the suitability of the venue, access to equipment, disability access, timing, and staffing

**Composition and dynamics of the group** – i.e. whether this provided any benefits or problems

**Any similarities or differences** with parents on parenting orders;

**Learning outcomes**

It is suggested that if facilitators include quotes from parents or young people that these should be given in full or that any omissions are noted e.g. "He is more able to negotiate and state facts...and mediates well with peers."

It is suggested that facilitators be provided with a report pack including the layout of the appropriate documentation. This should also form part of the documentation provided to people being trained to facilitate programmes.

### **7.3 Future evaluations involving external personnel**

#### **Interviews**

Looking at the long-term impact and value of this sort of programme is extremely complex and much more sophisticated research would be required to really understand the outcomes.

Discussing parenting problems and difficulties with the parents of young people with behavioural problems is a sensitive topic and building trust is an important part of protecting the parents self esteem. It is suggested that if any external evaluations are planned in the future, evaluators should be invited to attend one of the sessions. It is also suggested the CFF and YOTs facilitators consider adding an additional session on to the programme package. This could also be attended by one of the evaluators so they can work with the group as a whole and use this opportunity to invite people to participate in an interview. As has already been suggested, a follow up meeting would be beneficial for parents and young people and this would also provide an excellent opportunity for this liaison to take place.

#### **Other recommendations**

##### **Re-offending**

Although we are not able to determine how many orders were related to offending, it is suggested that a more formal monitoring system is needed between CFF/YOTs to provide information on any re-offending that may have occurred. This will make it possible to determine the long-term effectiveness of the programme in reducing the likelihood of re-offending.

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## Appendix A

## Appendix B

## Appendix C

## APPENDIX D

### LWT: Parent's interview schedule

**Q1 Did you learn anything on the course that you still find useful?**

if so,

tell me what that was

Give me any examples of how you use what you learnt.

**Q2 Do you think the experience of being on the course has affected your relationship with your son/daughter?**

either

What has improved and why

Why has there been no change

what has got worse and why.

**Q3 Do you think that the experience of being on the course has affected your son/daughter's behaviour?**

either

What has improved and why

Why has there been no change

what has got worse and why.

**Q4 As you may know the courts now have the power to make orders requiring parents to attend courses like the one you did. Do you think this will make a difference to the experience of being on the course?**

please tell me why you think this will/will not make a difference/

**Q5 Have there been any changes to your circumstances or the physical environment you live in subsequent to finishing the course?**

If yes what has changed

**Q6** Have there been any changes to your child's circumstances or the physical environment he/she lives in subsequent to finishing the course?

If yes what has changed

**ACWA:** Young Persons interview schedule

**Q1** What about the group was most useful to you?

**Q2** What about the group was least useful to you?

**Q3** Has attending the group changed the way in which you think about things, and if so how?

**Q4** Has attending the group changed the way you get on with your family, and if so how?

**Q5** Has attending the group changed the way you behave, and if so how?

**Q6** If you feel going to the group has changed your behaviour do you think this is a temporary or permanent change?

## Appendix E

## Appendix F

## Appendix G

## Appendix H

## APPENDIX J

### Programme listing

Prog No	Dates	Venue	Working code	Run by
1	Oct-Dec 1999	John Ellis, City	JE1	CFF
2	Feb-April 2000	Cedars Barwell, County	CB1	CFF/FST
3	March-April 2000	John Ellis	JE2	CFF/FST
4	May-June 2000	John Ellis	JE4	CFF/YOT
5	Sept-Oct 2000	City	LWT/Leic	CFF/LST
6	Nov-Dec 2000	Cedars Barwell, County	CB2	CFF/YOTs
7	Nov-Dec 2000	City	YOT1	CFF/YOTs
8	Jan-Feb 2001	John Storer House County	Lboro1	N/a
9	Feb-April 2001	John Ellis	JE3	CFF/YOTs/IST
10	April-June 2001	John Storer House County	Lboro2	CFF/YOTs/ FST
11*	May-June 2001	Guthlaxton,	Guth1	YOT/FST
12*	May-June 2001	YMCA	YOT2	EWO
13*	July-Aug 2001	YMCA	YOT3	LST
14*	Sept-Oct 2001	Coalville, County	Col1	YOT/FST

\*YOTs independently run programmes

## APPENDIX K

### Listing of interviewees

No	Name	Prog No	CFF or YOTs	Voluntary Order	Attendance
1	Annie	7	CFF	Vol.cff	7
2	Barbara	7	CFF	Vol.cff	6
3	Claire	6	CFF	Vol.cff	5 out of 6
4	David	7	CFF	Ord.cff	6
5	Freya	6	CFF	Vol.cff	4 out of 6
6	Gloria	6	CFF	Vol.cff	6 out of 6
7	Harriet	6	CFF	Vol.cff	4 out of 6
8	Ian	14	YOTs	Ord.cff	7
9	Jane	9	CFF	Vol.cff	5 out of 6
10	Karen	9	CFF	Vol.cff	4 out of 6
11	Louise	1	CFF	Vol.cff	7
12	Mark	7	CFF	Vol.cff	7
13	Nellie	14	YOTs	Vol.cff	2
14	Olive	7	CFF	Ord.cff	7
15	Pauline	2	CFF	Vol.cff	N/a
16	Quinn (f)	2	CFF	Vol.cff	N/a
17	Rose	10	CFF	Vol.cff	N/a
18	Steve	9	CFF	Ord.cff	5 out of 6
19	Tonya	14	YOTs	Vol.cff	6
20	Veronica	14	YOTs	Vol.cff	N/a
21	William	2	CFF	Ord.cff	N/a
22	Yvonne	1	CFF	Vol.cff	7
23	Aileen	3	CFF	Vol.cff	7
24	Betty	2	CFF	Vol.cff	N/a
25	Caroline	6	CFF	Vol.cff	2 out of 6
26	Dawn	3	CFF	Vol.cff	7
27	Elizabeth	9	CFF	Vol.cff	3 out of 6
28	Finoula	10	CFF	Ord.cff	N/a
29	Geraldine	6	CFF	Vol.cff	4 out of 6
30	Hetty	9	CFF	Vol.cff	1 out of 6
31	James	1	CFF	Vol.cff	7
32	Kirsty	5	CFF	Vol.ssd	5
33	Leanne	5	CFF	Vol.ssd	6
34	Margaret	5	CFF	Vol.ssd	7
35	Natalie	12	YOTs	Ord.ssd	4
36	Orianna	5	CFF	Vol.ssd	6
37	Petula	12	YOTs	Ord.ssd	4
38	Robin	12	YOTs	Ord.ssd	4
39	Shirley	5	CFF	Vol.ssd	6
40	Tom	13	YOTs	Vol.ssd	5
41	Vivian	13	YOTs	Vol.ssd	5

Appendix K Cont.

**Parents on orders**

<b>No</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Prog. No</b>	<b>CFF or YOTs</b>	<b>Voluntary Order</b>	<b>Attendance</b>
4	David	7	CFF	Ord.cff	6
8	Ian	14	YOTs	Ord.cff	7
14	Olive	7	CFF	Ord.cff	7
18	Steve	9	CFF	Ord.cff	5 out of 6
21	William	2	CFF	Ord.cff	N/a
28	Finoula	10	CFF	Ord.cff	N/a
35	Natalie	12	YOTs	Ord.ssd	4
37	Petula	12	YOTs	Ord.ssd	4
38	Robin	12	YOTs	Ord.ssd	4

**APPENDIX L**

**Frequency scores for additional behaviours**

<b>School related difficulties:</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Behaviour listed</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
1.	Refuses to attend school	always	sometimes
2.	Poor behaviour at school	-	often
3.	Not going to school	always	-
4.	Skips school	-	sometimes
5.	Not doing homework	-	often
6.	Off school	always	-
7.	Will not go to school	always	-
8.	Will not get up for school	always	-
	Late for school	always	-
	Playing truancy	always	often
	Cheeky to teachers	-	no score
9.	Causing disturbance in classroom	sometimes	-
	sometimes		
	Putting little effort in homework		
	Missing deadlines, scruffy work	often	-
10.	Does not attend school	always	always
	Does not get up at proper time on		
	School days	often	-
11.	Missing school	sometimes	-
12.	Not attending school	no score	no score given
13.	Education/refuses to go to school	always	always
14.	Doing his homework takes a long time	-	often
15.	Refuses to go to school	sometimes	-
	Bunks off school	-	sometimes
16.	Missing school	-	often

<b>Aggressive behaviours:</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Behaviour listed</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>

1.	Too much anger	always	-
2.	Temper tantrums	often	-
3.	Destroying my property	-	sometimes
4.	Damaging the home	-	sometimes
5.	Breaking things	-	often
6.	Fights with step dad	no score	no score
7.	Offending behaviour	often	never
8.	Defiant	often	never
9.	Causes damage to house	-	often
10.	Aggressive to brother	often	-

**Disagreements with siblings and parents: Frequency**

<b>Parent</b>	<b>Behaviour listed</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
---------------	-------------------------	---------------	--------------

1.	Arguing with brothers/sisters	-	often
2.	Upsets brothers	often	-
3.	Plays myself and his father against each other	sometimes	-
4.	I try to talk to him and he laughs at me	often	-
5.	Refuses to admit he may be wrong	always	-
6.	Spiteful	always	always
7.	Reacts any to discussion with family/ Relatives	-	sometimes

**Drinking, smoking and drug related difficulties: Frequency**

<b>Parent</b>	<b>Behaviour listed</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
---------------	-------------------------	---------------	--------------

1.	Abuses laxatives and vomiting	seldom	-
2.	Smoking	often	-
	Solvents	seldom	-
	Drink	seldom	-
	Underage sex	sometimes	-
3	smokes/drugs	always	-
4	smoking	often	-
5	smokes	sometimes	never
6	smokes	-	always
7	drinking	always	-

<b>Breaking of house rules:</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Behaviour listed</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>

1.	doing bedroom washing	seldom	-
		sometimes	-
2.	Going into rooms on his own	always	-

<b>Anti social behaviour:</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Behaviour listed</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
1.	Always wants his own way	always	-
2.	Refuses to socialise with family remains withdrawn and alone for long periods	always -	- often
3.	never compromises/selfish	often	-
4.	going out of the house going to the children's society?	always always	- -
5.	shows little respect	often	-
6.	Getting up in the morning	often	-
7.	not coming home	often	often
8.	not coming home	always	-
9.	refuses to listen selfish conversation shouting	often often seldom -	seldom - - often
10.	Interrupts phone calls	-	often
11.	Stays away all weekend does not give a contact number	sometimes sometimes	- never

Other 'before' difficulties included: personal hygiene, difficult behaviour outside, always late.

<b>Emotional behaviour:</b>		<b>Frequency</b>	
<b>Parent</b>	<b>Behaviour Listed</b>	<b>Before</b>	<b>After</b>
1.	Emotional blackmail	often	-
2.	blackmail	-	sometimes
3.	blackmail	always	-

Other difficulties		Frequency	
Parent	Behaviour listed	Before	After
1.	Friends having bad influence	often	-
2.	Unable to get to sleep	often	-
3.	Self-centred/inconsiderate	often	-
4.	Exaggerates	always	-
5.	Shouts	-	often
6.	Looking after own things	sometimes	-
7.	Not caring about things	-	often
	Shouting	-	often
8.	Running away from home	sometimes	-
	Elder boys?	-	sometimes
9.	Keeps phoning mobiles	-	often
10.	Telephone usage	always	-
11.	phone usage	often	-
12.	wants more money	-	always
13.	urgency	sometimes	-
	awkward with food	often	sometimes
	no sense of time	always	sometimes
14.	bad peer group	always	-
15.	never eats dinner	-	always

Other additional difficult behaviours included: makes stupid loud noises; peer problems; bad peer group and peer group pressure.

Data based on 56 completed before and after questionnaires

**Good behaviours**

**Showing affection**

Busy and makes me love u cards  
Affectionate  
Occasional sharing of treats with sister  
Loving  
Gives hugs and kisses (A)

**Helping in the house**

Helps paint house  
Does errands  
Digs the garden and makes breakfast  
Looks after younger brother  
Tidies up  
Offers help  
Helps with cooking  
Good with baby sitter  
Often decides to clean around the house (A)  
Often offers to help with my hair if I'm going out (A)  
Helps mum when ill (A)  
Sometimes goes to the shop (A)  
Makes own dinner (A)  
Irons clothes (A)  
Tidy (A)  
Well behaved and helpful (A)

**Respecting others feelings and co-operative behaviour**

Will discuss problems  
He's been very good this week  
Coming in on time  
Will discuss problems  
Willing to negotiate rules, boundaries  
Doesn't shout back  
Trying to be polite to me  
Always ready for school on time  
When on own is okay  
Polite (when not drunk)  
Well behaved when not drunk  
Stopped drinking  
Helpfulness to older people  
Good adult conversation  
Sits and watches TV with me  
Says prayers and checks the house before going to bed  
Tries to please/respect our values

Does want to do well at school  
Doesn't lie  
Says sorry (A)  
Accepts sanctions (A)  
Trustworthy (A)  
Asks parents if they want to eat or drink (A)  
Wants to know the background of her family (A)  
Occasional sharing of 'treats' with sister (A)  
Started to listen (A)  
Very good communication with me (A)  
Listening more to what I say (A)  
Understands what she is doing wrong and wants to do something about it (A)  
Making effort to do homework on time (A)  
Well behaved and helpful (A)  
Communicates with me (A)  
Caring towards family (A)  
Not being cheeky (A)  
Friendly to me (A)  
Obeys what I tell him (A)  
He listens more to what I say (A)  
Seems considerate if I'm ill (A)  
Considerate towards family (A)  
Less arguing (A)  
Not hitting mum (A)  
Co-operative (A)  
Looking after younger brothers (A)  
Looks after pets (A)  
Does his chores (A)  
Talks nicely to us (A)  
Phones home when out (A)  
Fine when staying with friends/relatives (A)  
Does not stay out too late (A)

### **Self respect**

Personal hygiene  
Puts effort into his appearance  
Puts effort into sport, guitar  
Does homework and revision  
Motivated  
Committed to RAF cadets (A)  
Works hard at school (A)  
Takes pride in appearance (A)  
Writes songs, poems, plays music (A)  
He goes looking for a job (A)  
Does his own ironing (A)  
Stopped drinking (A)

Note: A = good behaviour recorded at the end of the programme

**LWT evaluation comments made by parents**

**Communication and understanding:**

Communicate to the teenager  
How to communicate with your child  
Being clear on what you say  
How to praise your children and tokens  
Negotiation  
To listen to your son and daughter before going mad at them  
Being aware of not being 'woolly', i.e. being clearer  
How to be clear about what you want  
How you must sound to your teenager  
Finding right time and place to deal with a problem.  
Likes and dislikes  
Eye contact  
Listening more  
More aware of child's needs  
Talking about your children  
How to listen to them first  
Trying not to argue

**Specific to behaviour**

How to increase wanted behaviour  
Behavioural issues and how to handle it and most of the topics were beneficial

**Coping skills**

Keeping calm and in control  
Was how to handle the children and ourselves  
Confidence building,  
Assertiveness  
Anger and stress management  
How to keep calm  
Expressing thoughts and feelings  
How to be clear about what you say

**Attitude**

Being more positive  
Positive attitude

**Practical learning aids**

Behaviour charts  
Role-play  
To work on stickers  
The booklet that was given out

The awards topic

### **The parent role**

Realising parental influence plays such a small part in a teenager's life  
Discovering that as parents we are only a small influence on our child's  
life  
How to manage the children and ourselves

### **General**

General discussions  
Found all of it useful  
Most are as helpful in their own rights  
Combination of all topics as it would be very difficult to choose one

Appendix P

## Appendix Q

## Appendix R

## Appendix S

## Appendix T

## APPENDIX U

Young peoples written comments on the evaluation form completed at the end of the 2002 ACWA programmes.

Note that these comments have been reproduced as written on the forms.

### **Most helpful/useful**

Meeting people

Name game

The alternatives that we learnt

Getting to know

To charm me down

Graffiti wall

People were kind to me

It learnt us how to co-operate with others

Nowing every ones name because they like the name

The most useful thing about the group was that we was ale to talk about our problems

Walking out of an argument

You can live with your parents more better

### **Least useful**

Playing most of the time

bodyoutline

Teaca

tecca

playing games

In addition to the evaluation forms, they were also asked to say 3 things they would like to say about the group. We list these comments below.

### **3 things I would like to say about the group included the following:**

Cool group talks

Enjoyable

Fun games

It was good

It was laugh  
Cool  
Wicked  
Extremely enjoyable  
The things we did and the people were really helpful  
It is brill  
It is really fun  
M, J and S are grate and you make lods of friends  
It has been a good group and nobody has been nasty  
The 3 people A, S and J have helped us a lot at home with our parents at home  
The group was very helpful  
Good  
People are kind to me  
They were helpful  
I liked the under and over game  
It was very helpful  
The staff were nice  
I learnt something  
Very exciting and fun  
Excellent because you get to meet new people and you can discuss things  
Good because people understood your problems and feelings  
Fun  
Look forward to  
Exalent

### **Favourite things about the group**

Meeting new people  
The group activities  
Playing pool  
Name game  
Playing the name game because I could learn people's names  
When I walked into the room for the first time

Getting to know people and the whole life

Meeting people

All of it

**Worst things about the group was**

Doing teaca

It ending

When we was sitting down to much

when I got upset

F was very very annoying

Nothing

**The things I would like to change are**

lectures

more food

less sitting down and more time to learn

the colour of the room

annoying eleven year old

nothing except feelings bank

**V**  
**Ethnic Origin Code List**

<b>White</b>	White British	A1
	White Irish	A2
	Any other white background	A3
<b>Mixed</b>	White and black Caribbean	B1
	White and black African	B2
	White and Asian	B3
	Any other mixed background	B4
<b>Asian or Asian British</b>	Indian	C1
	Pakistani	C2
	Bangladeshi	C3
	Any other Asian background	C4
<b>Black or Black British</b>	Caribbean	D1
	African	D2
	Any other black background	D3
<b>Other ethnic groups</b>	Chinese	E1
	Any other ethnic group	E2

**APPENDIX W**  
**Programme summary of the frequency of behaviours: A 'before' and 'after' comparison**

Prog. No	No of Parents	Before					After				
		Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Always	Never	Seldom	Some-times	Often	Always
1	5	27	10	18	17	8	33	14	17	9	6
2	1	1	1	8	5	-	1	3	5	6	-
3	8	18	18	44	24	21	26	25	42	21	5
4	4	11	6	19	9	22	6	11	25	11	8
5	6	3	9	18	36	35	4	5	21	44	26
6	3	2	4	6	11	20	6	4	8	24	6
7	5	9	8	19	14	27	14	9	30	17	8
9	1	2	4	7	2	-	5	4	6	-	-
10	4	7	9	11	14	19	14	28	20	6	-
<b>Totals</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>132</b>	<b>152</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>59</b>
<b>Programmes run independently of CFF</b>											
12*	5	11	5	29	18	14	10	17	32	12	6
13*	3	35	5	10	11	11	22	8	9	5	3
<b>Totals</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>9</b>
Totals	45	94	79	189	161	177	141	128	215	155	68

Note: No questionnaire data is available for programmes P8, P11, and P14.

\*YOTs run programmes