

# **CAYA Social Pedagogy Strategy and Implementation Plan**

**2014-2016**

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## 1 Our story: Social Pedagogy in Derbyshire

*'A young person wanted to go to McDonalds to talk with a worker. We discussed as a team what we would do, and how we would use our head, heart and hands to see the child as a whole person. Although our heart wanted us to do what would make the young person happy, our heads told us that fast food was not good for the young person, and nor would they learn anything from the experience. Social pedagogy teaches us to use our hands, be creative and learn together with adults and young people as equals. We thought that by going to the shop to get the makings of a picnic, we could create the meal together and eat it in the park – a great experience for both of us.'*

Example of Social Pedagogy from a Multi-Agency Team

*'I care for a girl, who due to her disability is not able to communicate verbally. I had believed that touching children was a no-no, and only to be used when absolutely necessary. Social pedagogy has taught me that myths like this can lead to me, and others, being risk averse as a practitioner. For the first time I felt that I had permission to do simple things that I would do with my own children, like tickling, or using the child's feet to create motion on a swing – and it has been a great bonding experience for us.'*

Example of social pedagogy from a Foster carer

*'Social pedagogy has fundamentally changed our practice and approaches to parenting the children we care for. We can share our own skills and interests and bring them into work – even bringing our children into the home, or taking young people home for Christmas. We do normal things with the kids, even things like going abroad which we would have thought were too risky before social pedagogy. The homes have changed into spaces that we have created with the young people – we even chickens and rabbits and vegetable plots that we look after together. And we integrate our young people more into society – they have been to art galleries, and even ran a 'house party' event as part of a community festival. We have been given the opportunity to lead social pedagogy in our service, and though approaches such as group reflection, the experiences for us as staff, and for the kids, are improving.'*

A summary of experiences and reflections of social pedagogy by residential care workers

This strategy seeks to explain not only Derbyshire's journey with social pedagogy, but also our ambition for it to grow so that it can touch the lives of even more children, families and staff. Before we do that, here are some voices of those who have been affected by social pedagogy, which continue to be reflected throughout the document. We hope that these give you a flavour of the influence of social pedagogy, and that you will read on, and join the journey....

*'Here it is like having a thousand Mums and Dads!'*

*Young person*

*'Before people were scared to go and do things with the kids – there were lots of protocols, and you constantly hear it now – 'we are going to go and do something with the kids', and they say 'pedagogy says we can do it!'*

*'All of us come into work and share the skills we've got'*

*'Just because they are not our kids, it doesn't mean that we can't care and love them. And we do love them'.*

*'It is about job satisfaction – you come into work and feel you can make a difference and when you go home you are happy'*

*'It has allowed me to just flow into my job'*

## 2 Mission and Purpose

Social pedagogy has been identified as CAYA's underpinning conceptual framework in its role with children, young people and families. We know that its impact in children's residential care has been impressive – with improved educational attainment, fewer children missing from care, better staff morale and fewer physical interventions. This strategy seeks to ensure that the development of social pedagogy practice and knowledge of all staff is supported, that social pedagogy becomes sustainable in CAYA and that it is given the opportunity to grow and flourish in all services.

## 3 Context

### 3.1 What is social pedagogy?

Social Pedagogy is a conceptual framework at the meeting point between care and education. It is concerned with the educational dimension of social issues and the social dimension of educational issues, and aims to create a fertile environment for children which is conducive to their well-being and learning, developing their own resources and connecting them to society. Social pedagogy is both a field of practice, and a field of enquiry that crosses disciplines such as social work, education, community development and psychology.

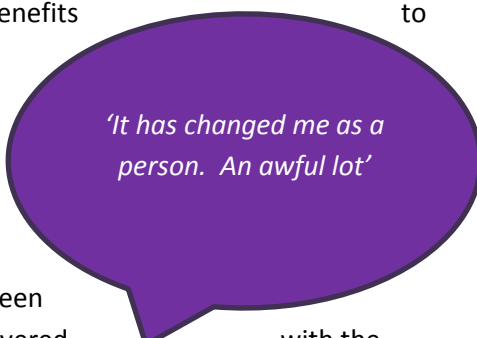
Fig. 1 How CAYA staff described social pedagogy



### 3.2 Social Pedagogy in the UK

Although England, and the wider UK is a country without a social pedagogy tradition as is found in many European countries, interest has been growing over the last decade. An early pilot of social pedagogy in residential care (Bengtsson et al, 2008) produced mixed results, and a substantial research programme in residential children's homes was commissioned by the DfE, the results of which were shared in the 'Raising the bar? Evaluation of the Social Pedagogy Pilot Programme in residential children's homes' report (Berridge et al, 2011). Although the results in terms of impact on children and young people's outcomes were limited, some benefits to practice were identified.

Despite the limited evidence of impact, interest in social pedagogy has continued to grow, and in their 2013 Position Statement 'What is Care For?' the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) provided insights about the experiences of local authorities where social pedagogy had been developed. They concluded that, 'where authorities have persevered with the approach initial resistance has been superseded by a 'light bulb moment' when it became clear that this approach can bring improved outcomes for young people and a better, more satisfying, working experience for staff' (p5). Many local authorities have continued to grow and develop social pedagogy programmes, including notably in Derbyshire where the unique approach to Social Pedagogy has become known as 'The Derbyshire Model'. In 2013, The Fostering Network launched its 'Head, Heart and Hands' social pedagogy demonstration programme, with social pedagogy being applied in foster care across 6 sites in England and Scotland. Interest in social pedagogy is flourishing, academic writing, book publication numbers and course development at universities reflective of this.



*'It has changed me as a person. An awful lot'*

### 3.3 Social Pedagogy in Derbyshire – 'The Derbyshire Model'

Derbyshire County Council's approach to social pedagogy is unique, and is observed and followed by, and is informing, many other local authorities and bodies around the country. The Derbyshire Model has been, and continues to be, led by grassroots workers, it is not solely focused on one professional staff groups (such as residential staff or foster carers), and it is not deploying social pedagogues as part of its strategy – this provides its distinctiveness as an approach.

The journey began in 2010 a group of committed and enthusiastic CAYA staff engaged in a programme of learning about social pedagogy, with support from Jacaranda. Since then, social pedagogy has flourished in children's homes leading to observable changes in practice and the physical environments of the homes. Furthermore, something of a 'movement' has emerged, led by the Social Pedagogy Steering Group who have overseen the continued delivery of a 2-day social pedagogy course which has seen hundreds of CAYA staff participate. Interest in social pedagogy and its wider development has been further stimulated by an exchange programme with a national care organisation in Sweden, with 14 CAYA staff visiting Sweden, and a return party visiting Derbyshire.


Whilst there have been attendees on the 2-day course from a variety of services, and there exist pockets of inspiring practice, the development of a culture that embraces and embeds social pedagogy has been overwhelmingly owned by the residential service. The impact of this movement

has been such that CAYA's Senior Management Team (SMT) endorsed social pedagogy as the underpinning conceptual framework for the department. It also approved the commencement of the design of an 'Introduction to Social Pedagogy' course, co-designed with the University of Derby, and delivered by the University. This course welcomes applications from all front line practitioners, and has so far seen a mixture of staff from children's centres, multi-agency teams, foster carers and others participate. This approach is the subject of doctoral research, which using Derbyshire as a case study will explore the influence of social pedagogy on the workforce, and its potential as a change agent in children's services.

The time has come to explore how the future of social pedagogy should look across CAYA's services, To inform this a workshop was held early in 2014 to explore three particular aspects of the development of social pedagogy in CAYA:

- How social pedagogy practice and knowledge development can be supported;
- Whether those who have been involved with the university course can become activators within their own services, to share their knowledge to positive effect in the services where they work;
- What steer and strategy is needed for social pedagogy to thrive across CAYA services.

This strategy and implementation plan sets the vision and actions required to deliver on what emerged.



*'Since the adoption of a social pedagogy approach, incidence of physical interventions have all but disappeared'*

## 4 Objectives

This strategy seeks to fulfil the following objectives:


- For social pedagogical values to be reflected throughout the department;
- To develop a programme of practice and knowledge development, to include mixed methods, levels and learning styles, and opportunities for staff from different professional group to get together;
- To enable and support a network of social pedagogy ‘activators’ across CAYA and commissioned services, who openly demonstrate their commitment to social pedagogy in their practice, encourage its influence within their service and suggest how it could be incorporated into the operations of the service.
- To enable a clear commitment to social pedagogy from the department’s leaders and managers;
- To develop governance arrangements for social pedagogy, underpinned by the principle of grassroots leadership, which provides both for services specific developments, and an over-arching steer which cuts across the different services;
- To develop a culture of action learning and research across the department, where every person in CAYA is committed to their personal development;
- To ensure the sustainability of social pedagogy over the years to come.

## 5 Strategy

### 5.1 Social pedagogical values

An ambition for this strategy is that social pedagogical values are reflected throughout the department. Those involved with the Social Pedagogy Steering Group report how much they valued its principles of equality of voice and non-hierarchical approach – that very senior managers can attend a meeting with front line practitioners on equal terms and that this is embraced by senior management. This stance is welcomed and viewed as very much in line with the ethical stance of social pedagogy.

It was felt by some, however, that often the values of social pedagogy, in particular those of equality and empowerment, are not evident in meetings and exchanges between those from different professional groups. Carers for example reported that their voice was often not heard or respected by those who appear to perceive themselves as being less worthy, or of lesser professional standing, than others, such as teachers and social workers. There are also inspiring examples of where there has been great engagement with social pedagogy. An example of this is engagement by social workers, such as in Creswell, and the influence of their involvement has been observable by service users in the local area through creative and engaging events and activities.



*‘Why can’t this child come home with me for Christmas? So I did it. We had a risk assessment, and followed everything through then we had a fantastic Christmas!’*



This objective will be achieved by:

- The creation of a set of values that can be written down, and underpin all meetings and communications, could be developed using an action learning approach to generate consideration of values such as equality, empowerment and involvement of all involved in supporting children, young people and families, and between staff and partners.
- The development of a programme of awareness raising about social pedagogy to be developed that will engage those with less understanding, to include education, social worker and managers from across CAYA services to embed an understanding of its values, and to enable the principles of social pedagogy to underpin interactions and communications across the department.
- An exploration of social pedagogy within commissioned services and contracts, including for independent placements.

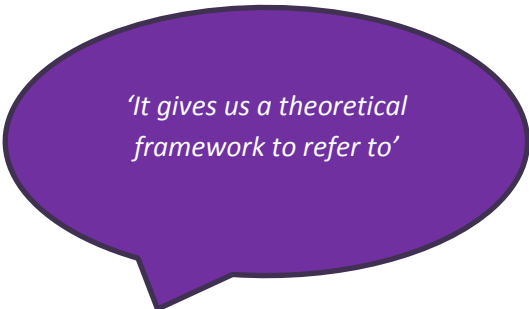
## 5.2 Programme of Practice and Knowledge Development

The in-house 2-day social pedagogy training has had impressive reach, and even more impressive reviews from those who have taken part in it. Currently, the training is oriented towards staff in residential homes, and there is benefit from considering how the training can be developed so as to be more reflective of the practice of staff from other services. Furthermore, knowledge and practice development can be continued after involvement in training, to ensure that the key principles of social pedagogy are not forgotten, and that participants continue to learn.

There is an appreciation of being able to mix with staff from other professional groups in discussing social pedagogy and debating its development, and future practice and knowledge development will include the opportunity for staff from different services to learn together.

This objective will be achieved by:

- The development of a programme of practice and knowledge development, to include mixed methods and learning styles, and opportunities for staff from different professional group to get together – the programme should include refresher training, action learning skills, sessions with invited speakers and further opportunities for facilitated debate;
- The in-house training will be developed to increase its suitability for participants from a range of CAYA services;
- Staff from different professional groups, including those that have been on the university course, will become involved with delivering the in-house training;
- Further support for those involved in delivering in-house training be sourced, to refresh and expand their knowledge, and develop confidence;
- Social pedagogy will be incorporated within the CAYA induction;
- A 'knowledge repository' on DNet will be established to provide access to learning materials, literary papers, key texts, diagrams and information about theory and other resources such as template reflective diaries.



*'It gives us a theoretical framework to refer to'*

### 5.3 A Network of Social Pedagogy Activators

A critical factor in the success of social pedagogy in changing practice and culture in residential services has been the presence of informed and passionate ‘activators’ within the service, who have maintained momentum and commitment. The challenge for CAYA is how to replicate this in other services. Those who have developed their social pedagogy knowledge through the university course or as a result of the training in 2010 will be supported to become champions for social pedagogy in their services – ‘activators’ who openly demonstrate their commitment to social pedagogy in their practice, encourage its influence within their service and suggest how it could be incorporated into the operations of the service.

To achieve this objective, a framework of support will be developed, to include:

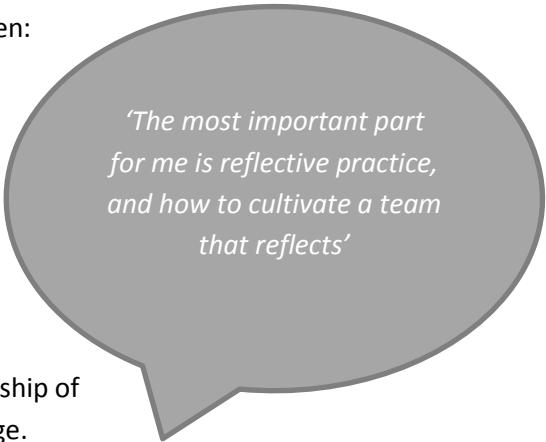
- Development days (to develop knowledge, enable reflection, and consider actions);
- Discussion of social pedagogy within team meetings, and integration of social pedagogical values in meetings;
- Shared sessions across settings;
- Mentoring between staff with different experiences and knowledge of social pedagogy.

### 5.4 Management and Leadership

The role of management in enabling social pedagogy to thrive within residential services has been a critical success factor. Management were engaged in initial training, and have an active role in the steering group and training programme. In order for social pedagogy to thrive across the CAYA departments, management must feel a similar commitment to its development, and be active in its implementation.

In order to achieve this objective, the following will be undertaken:

- Managers, including middle management, will be invited, and encouraged to participate in training and practice development and to incorporate social pedagogy into team and staff development, including Myplan;
- SMT will be engaged as the ‘owners’ of this strategy;
- Appropriate communications with management will be undertaken, whilst securing commitment to the sponsorship of grassroots ideas, developments and challenge and change.



*‘The most important part for me is reflective practice, and how to cultivate a team that reflects’*

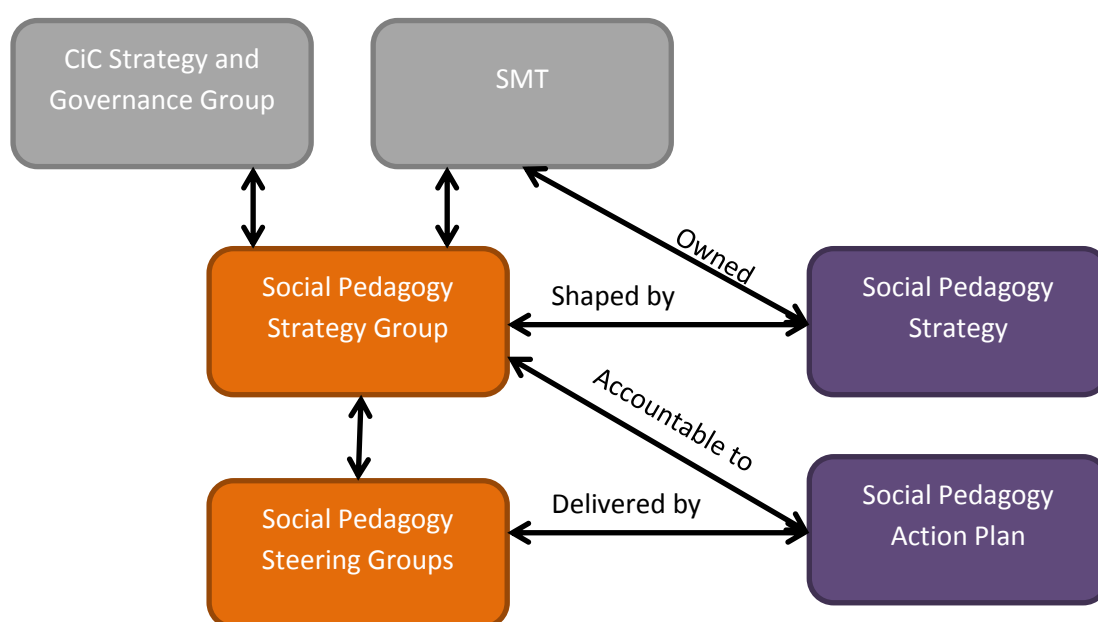
## 5.5 Governance

The steering group, and its underpinning ‘seed groups’, have been fundamental to the success of social pedagogy in children’s homes. This strategy will support different services to have their own for arrangements for sharing practice, developing thinking and co-ordinating activities, in the creation of their own steering groups. These will feed into an over-arching Social Pedagogy Strategy Group (SPSG), with representation from different services. The functions of the SPSG will be:

- To oversee and support the implementation of the social pedagogy strategy;
- To provide influence to both the strategy, practice developments and management as required;
- Planning of social pedagogy activity;
- Sharing ideas;
- Inspiring each other;
- Building on what’s been done;
- Developing and maintaining a newsletter;
- To act as a conduit to decision makers and key groups such as SMT and the corporate parenting committee;
- To update on progress;
- To maintain a passion for social pedagogy;
- To promote a culture and practice of reflection;
- Communication;
- Peer development;
- Oversight of the knowledge repository.

The structure of the new governance arrangements would be as described in figure 1.

Fig. 1 Social Pedagogy Structure

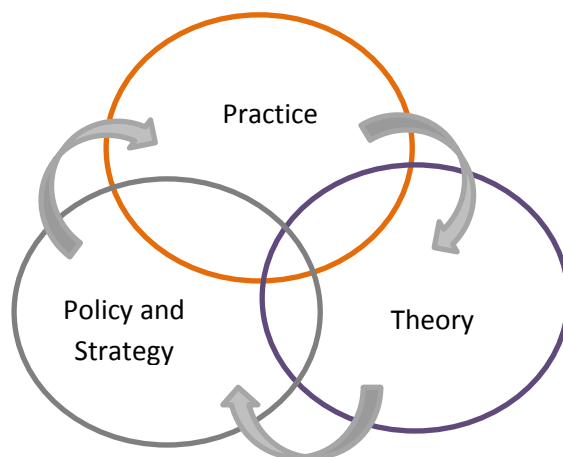


Terms of reference will be developed for each part of the organisational structure.

## 5.6 Action Learning

For social pedagogy to be transformational, learning must be shared and formulated so that it becomes part of business as usual, as part of a continual cycle of theory meeting practice.

Fig. 2 The Social Pedagogy Transformation Cycle



Action learning is an approach to resolving real work issues or problems that involves taking actions toward change and improvement then reflecting with peers upon the results to gain insight. It is based on principals set out by Professor Reginald Revans, who left a successful career in physics at Cambridge to work with industries such as the Coal Board in the 1940s and the NHS in the 1960s (Revans, 2011).

Action learning asserts that individuals' and organisation's learning, of new skills and solutions, is a product of their knowledge or understanding aligned with their questioning of, or reflection on, real practice. It has a strong track record of enabling grassroots practitioners to move from theory and strategy to improved practice and service change (Pedler and Abbott, 2008).

Given the fertile ground described elsewhere in this document, where non-hierarchical values and equality of voice in service improvement already exists, the creation of a new action learning structure is not required. Rather current structures and approaches (such as the social pedagogy seed groups, which have tested out new working practices and the already established professional reflective practice) can begin to use action learning approaches to help embed social pedagogy in real support for children, young adults and families.

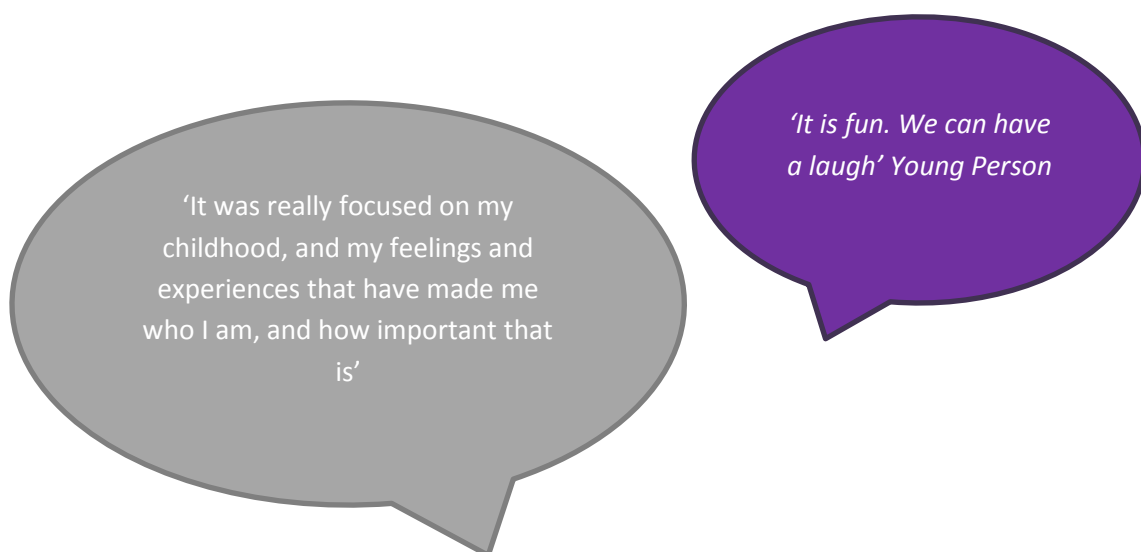
Action learning will strengthen the many existing working practices in key ways:

- The strategy group's sponsorship of seed groups to develop and test new practice that works toward positive change and the dissemination of service improvements
- Ensuring on-going input in the development, promotion and review of the authority's social pedagogy values
- Ensuring on-going input in the review and development of the two day social pedagogy course and Derby University qualification
- Establishing and monitoring practice and knowledge development through representation of practitioners on each social pedagogy steering group
- Strengthening professional teams and their meetings with action learning approaches to assist in embedding social pedagogic practices
- Developing action learning groups to support key professionals to act as the social pedagogy activators
- Guiding other interested peer support groups, such as foster carers, to adapt action learning approaches and bring a robustness to their own social pedagogic practices

The development of action learning approaches will be identified as a key aspect of the Social Pedagogy Action Plan.

## 5.7 Sustainability

CAYA has benefitted from the support of an investment in Uni-fi from the Council's reserves, and from grants provided as part of the Creative Councils programme which have supported the development of social pedagogy across the department. These resources, however, are finite, and the council is facing unprecedented cuts to its budgets. Therefore a sustainable model for developing and implementing social pedagogy is required. As such, a costed, practical and scalable model of social pedagogy development and implementation is a necessity if social pedagogy is to thrive beyond 2015/16.



## 6 Outcomes and Impacts

As a result of the implementation of this strategy we expect there to be visible, visceral and measurable changes in practice, experience and outcomes for the CAYA department, and the children, young people and families in Derbyshire.

We expect to see:

- **A change of system** – a department that is child- and family-oriented, and where risks are managed in the best interests of families and young people;
- **A change of culture** – children's services partnerships that are underpinned by an ethical framework that enables the integration of care, education and community; equality; active learning; children's rights; positive experiences; and a healthy approach to risk;
- **A skilled, insightful and empowered workforce** – all those working in children's services are united by a common conceptual framework, and are empowered to bring themselves and their creativity into their practice.

And as a result of these changes, we will see:

- **Better outcomes for children and young people**– improved educational attainment, attendance, and better mental health, with fewer NEETs and improved placement stability for children in care;
- **Different, better, lower cost services leading to improved performance for Children's Trust Partners** – improved retention of staff and carers, better placement stability, fewer complaints, fewer missing episodes and reduced escalation of need for children within the care system.