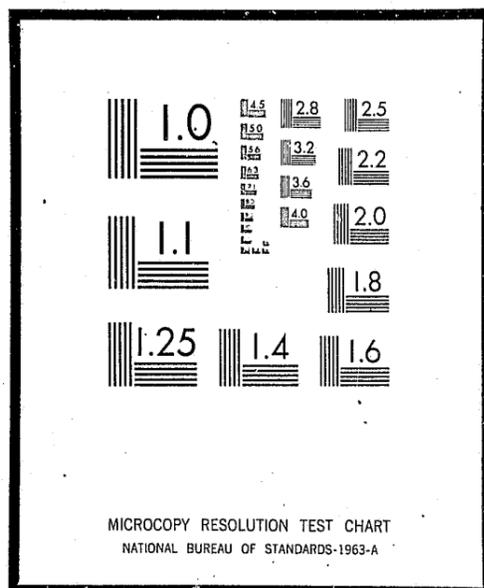


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NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

DALLINGTON LODGE INTERMEDIATE TREATMENT CENTRE
NOVEMBER 1974

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1. INTRODUCTION

Intermediate Treatment is the name given to new provisions that have been made available to the Juvenile Courts in dealing with young offenders and other children at risk, under the Children and Young Persons Act 1969. The Courts on making a Supervision Order, have power to impose an Intermediate Treatment requirement; the form of treatment being decided by the social worker in consultation with the young person concerned, his parents, and other members of the community acquainted with the young person.

The two basic types of requirement are:-

- (a) Residence at a specified place for a fixed period of not more than 3 months, beginning within the first year of supervision.
- (b) Temporary residence, attendance or participation for a period, or periods, totalling not more than 1 month in each year of supervision.

For over three years now Dallington Lodge has been experimenting with various methods of treatment both residential and non-residential. Although these courses are now primarily intended for children and young people with Intermediate Treatment requirements added to their Supervision Orders, they will also be available for young people similarly at risk but who have not been before the Courts. For Intermediate Treatment purposes these courses will fulfill requirement (b) above.

The following report describes these various experiments and the present state of development of the Centre's work. It is known that many of the children and young people for whom Intermediate Treatment is suitable do not make use of existing facilities, for instance those provided by the Youth and Community Service, so specialist provision is considered necessary for many young people at risk. Dallington Lodge seeks to be a positive intervention in this field, fulfilling certain needs which existing services do not normally fulfill: small group experiences, group living experiences, continuing individual contact with supporting adults, and most important of all an integrated treatment plan. It is hoped that the description of the work undertaken so far and the plans for the future will in itself argue the case for special Intermediate Treatment Centres such as Dallington Lodge.

2. METHODS OF TREATMENT AND THEIR DEVELOPMENT

(a) Research Project

(i) The Clients

In the first two years groups of young people were referred to the project, all of whom were known to the helping agencies for a variety of reasons. Some were under voluntary supervision of their social worker or probation officer, some under Care Orders or Supervision Orders, but all were selected because of their difficulty in relating to both their peers and authority; their need for stimulation and achievement; and their lack of opportunity for making decisions and for challenging imposed values in a constructive framework.

(ii) The Methods

In the first year two groups of 9 boys and in the second year two groups of 10 boys (aged 11 - 15 years) have participated in a variety of stimulating activities and group living experiences on a residential basis at Dallington Lodge. Each group has spent up to 30 days in residence spread over 9 months or a year. Apart from activities at the Centre, the groups participated in outdoor pursuits such as canoeing, camping, youth hostelling, aimed at enabling them to cope with a constantly changing and demanding environment. The boys are thus brought under the influence of adults in authority other than the social worker responsible for their supervision.

Simultaneously (groups of boys (two groups in the first year, three in the second year), have been participating in similar activities at other places with, and under the direct supervision of, their responsible officer.

The object of the exercise was to assess the relative value and practicability of boys under supervision being helped in their development by being placed at a Centre specially geared to this type of work, or participating in activities organised by social workers who are already dealing with heavy caseloads.

(iii) The Results

A full evaluation of the project was not made due to Central Office staff changes, but the relative success of the first year suggested a similar approach for a further year. Although the young people involved were placed under pressure during the period of their course, only on few occasions did this result in their absence. Social workers are convinced that in some cases it is possible to identify the project as the probable reason for a break in an individual's delinquency pattern. The boys enjoyed the experience but were aware in general terms of the purpose, and some concern was shown about what happened when the project ended. Most have an increased ability to relate to adults and have learned to function more adequately in a group situation. All have learned that decision making is a demanding occupation.

Social workers too have benefited from the experience, providing them as it has with an opportunity to develop their professional skills and to gain a greater insight concerning their clients and families. They have appreciated the involvement in planning and the opportunity to be directly related to the development of new ways of working with young people, but have found that their involvement is seen as an extra, rather than an intrinsic part of their workload.

(b) Residential Treatment

The particular requirements of the research project have demonstrated the most viable pattern available for making the best use of the facilities available at the Centre. Increasingly the Centre has been used by groups of boys and girls not associated with the research project. Such groups spend periods in residence, some weekends, some full weeks, attending their own school from the Centre.

It will be useful to describe here one of those groups which produced the biggest learning experience for this experimental Centre. In April 1973 we began working on a residential and evening basis with a group of 10 boys from the nearby Spencer Estate, some of whom had referred themselves in the past, and all of whom were under voluntary or statutory supervision, four to the Head of the Centre. All the boys manifested eagerness to belong but their attention seeking actions reached unmanageable proportions, resulting in gang type behaviour, both at the Centre and elsewhere. The problems were aggravated by the total lack of facilities in their area with the closure of their one night a week Youth Club. The group was therefore split: a group of the six more demanding and problematic boys continuing on the planned residential programme, and we formed a new mixed group which included the four remaining boys, their treatment consisting of one evening a week and very occasional residential experiences. This approach proved noticeably more effective but there was a continuous battle to protect these boys from further involvement with the courts because of their deprived environment and their negative self image. Of these six boys two went to Community Schools, three to Detention Centres, and one remained in the community after a short preventative period in care. It was felt that because of the absence of community facilities for their peers in the estate, this small group became a privileged section of this community which had a vested interest in remaining delinquent. It was also felt that we should have done more to tackle the delinquency itself.

We have now made plans for 6 residential courses to start, and some of them conclude, during 1975. All the courses are open to young people on supervision (statutory or voluntary, or subject to Care Orders but living at home). Priority will be given to young people with Intermediate Treatment requirements attached to their Supervision Order. All the groups will consist of 10 young people mostly boys, with fixed age ranges, for instance 14 - 16 years, 11 - 14 years. Two groups will only be open to local young people, and their programme will include two full weeks during which time the children will attend school. One of the groups for 14 - 16 years will include a week's stay at Longtown Adventure Centre, and a group of 11 - 14 years will undertake a fortnight's expedition to the Outer Hebrides as part of their course. All the groups will have a programme of various activities including community work and group discussion.

(c) Activity Groups

Since October 1971 children have been attending the Centre after school for a variety of activities. Initially the Centre was opened 3 evenings a week for an after school club, to which the same children came with their friends. Gradually this group became too large and unproductive, mainly because there were more friends, and friends of friends, than there were original referred children. Smaller closed groups which would meet one evening a week were then set up. The continuation proving more successful and also more rewarding for the children involved. Some specialist groups have met from time to time: for girls, woodwork, mechanics, canoeing and swimming. To date over 150 different children have attended these groups. Activity groups have also been set up in Youth Centres in various parts of the town, with Dallington Lodge support and advice.

Plans are now being made for 6 such groups to meet weekly at Dallington Lodge. These will be mostly led by part time activity group leaders and will generally have a planned programme of activities.

(d) Outdoor Challenge Activities

As part of total plans of treatment, we have attempted to offer opportunities of an outdoor challenge nature. Generally we would see this type of treatment in the context of relationships already built up in other situations, but there are some young people who would benefit from strictly outdoor challenge type opportunities. We have therefore taken several groups to simple self-catering youth hostels in Derbyshire and also camping, where they have learned to cope with a more primitive, but stimulating environment than they are used to. Camping has become easier to organise with the acquisition of our own equipment. In October 1972 and again in February 1974 we took groups of boys to the youth services Outdoor Challenge Centre at Longtown, Herefordshire, which proved a memorable and useful experience for those involved, and in August 1974 9 boys went on a fortnight's expedition to the Outer Hebrides in conjunction with Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs. We have also made use of the Army Youth Team for various activities. From May to October 1974 we worked with a group of seven boys on a strictly outdoor challenge activity programme, with a qualified mountaineer and canoeist who is also a teacher, organising and leading the course. It is felt that these tremendous opportunities for achievement should be made available in all courses run at the Centre where there will also be opportunity to be more direct in attempting to adapt norms and behaviour.

(e) Playgroup and work with mothers and children

From October of the first year of the Centre's operation the twice weekly playgroup provided for children from families with problems, as part of our total treatment plan. A midday meal was provided both for the educational value and also because many of the children are not well fed otherwise. Over 40 children attended regularly, some for 2 years, and have benefited from the experience, which it is felt enables them to start school less disadvantaged than would otherwise be the case. As part of their education girls from a local secondary school assisted the two paid supervisors, and this staffing enabled us to work in family groups with the children. From December 1974 these children will be transferred to the Social Services Day Nursery.

Initially mothers were encouraged to participate in the playgroup and six did so regularly, but it was found that both staff and facilities became too stretched. A mothers and baby group was therefore set up separately to cater for mothers seeking extra support. This successful experiment ran for two terms and is only in temporary abeyance through lack of staff. The first courses at Dallington Lodge were in fact for two groups of unsupported mothers and their children, organised by the social worker involved with these families. It is unfortunate that this type of experiment was never repeated because of the time and effort consumed by the social worker on top of her existing workload. In November 1972 the Centre was used successfully for assessment of two family situations in a residential setting.

(f) Holiday Clubs

Holiday Clubs providing children and young people with opportunities for both free and organised play and social training, were held every school holiday from July 1971 until September 1972. Although as many as 96 children were involved in these ventures, large numbers such as this were found to be unsatisfactory for a number of reasons, and the work was restricted to smaller groups which was found to be more effective. The community, with the support of the local Education Department, and more recently the Leisure and Recreations Department, is now providing holiday play schemes all over the town; a total of 16 different schemes in summer 1973. Therefore to avoid duplication we are no longer running holiday clubs; rather the holidays are seen as an opportunity to work at greater depth with activity groups and residential groups.

(g) Out of School Education

From the beginning of the Centre's operation we were made aware of the constant need for remedial education. Some children and young people were seen as needing opportunities for learning in a non school environment, and Dallington Lodge was seen to have a role here. Since opening the Centre teachers have used it to give individual tuition to three boys and one girl who have been excluded from school. In January 1974 a teacher was appointed to a School Unit at the Centre and has worked with individuals and small groups of truants, suspended pupils and others at risk, enabling them to return gradually to full time attendance at normal day schools. Some of the children have attended the unit full time, others part time, a total of 9 boys and 2 girls to date. A second teacher will complete the school unit team in January 1975.

The teachers in the school unit are employed by the Education Department and are therefore accountable directly to that Department as to the type of education they provide. However, as the school unit is an integral part of the Intermediate Treatment Centre, the educational aims and methods are consistent with the objectives of the centre as a whole. Joint decisions are consequently taken about staff appointments, selection of children and individual treatment programmes.

3. STAFFING

For the first few years the staffing position of the Centre was inadequate, both for the work being carried out and also for the necessary development of this work. It proved impossible to restrict the growth of the work, however, and anyway not desirable. Consequently the workload on both the warden and the domestic bursar, has been great, with too much reliance being put on part time workers, volunteers and students. This was an acceptable demand in the development of something new but could not be carried on indefinitely. The Centre was also somewhat underused because of lack of staff. It was imperative therefore that the staffing establishment was increased at the earliest possible opportunity.

On 1st January 1975 a full time staff team are expected to be in post. The team will consist of a head of centre, a deputy, a residential group worker, a domestic bursar, two teachers, and two community service volunteers. The team is completed by a group of sessional staff (part time activity group leaders, part time residential group workers and specialist instructors) who will work under the supervision of the deputy; and a cook and two cleaners under the supervision of the domestic bursar.

4. PREMISES

We are very fortunate with such large premises in extensive grounds. However, there are some areas of deficiency; improved accommodation for staff; suitable premises for indoor games/sports; workshop facilities (art and craft, mechanics, woodwork); garage space. Also kitchen and dining room facilities must be improved.

5. SELECTION, EVALUATION AND RESEARCH

Increasingly social workers are seeing Intermediate Treatment as a possible way of working with children and young people who come to their attention, and to date 19 intermediate treatment requirements have been made in the Northampton Juvenile Court area. Up to the present, clients have been accepted for treatment at the Centre after referral forms are completed and after discussion, and they are fitted into an available group according to age, sex and where they live in the town. Except in a few cases where it was obvious that intermediate treatment would be inappropriate or undesirable to the group, nobody has been refused. Only in residential courses has there been attempts to select by any more precise methods and even these have fallen down in part. The use of scientific methods would improve this situation.

Attempts have been made to document all work at the Centre, and in some cases extensive reports have been produced about various groups, for example the research project. However, because of lack of staff this documentation has been limited and sometimes non-existent. This situation will be improved with the addition of trained staff. Consultation takes place concerning the family and individual work and also as regards developments, and this has proved helpful in evaluation. Reviews have been held on the young people taking part in the project involving the staff of the centre, the consultant to the project, social workers and schools. The involvement of the schools proved most useful in this process. A system of reviews and evaluation will need to be worked out after new staff commence their duties. An assessment and review system is now being used for young persons made subject of intermediate treatment requirements in the Northampton Juvenile Court area. Before the court appearance the social worker, with the assistance of the Senior Social Worker, assesses the social and emotional needs of the young person and outlines why intermediate treatment is considered appropriate. This is included in the court report. If the court agrees to the recommendation, an assessment conference is arranged to discuss the assessment of a young person's needs and decide on a plan of treatment which includes an outline of the facility to be used, plus counselling and case work aims with the young person and the family. There will be reviews after 2 months and 6 months and a final review after completion of the intermediate treatment programme.

Although only a descriptive study the research project has been useful in that it has allowed the possibility of an in depth assessment and evaluation of an important part of our style of treatment. We would hope, therefore, to co-operate in further projects of this sort, particularly in conjunction with the forward planning and research section of the Department.

6. PARENTAL AND COMMUNITY CONTACT

In most cases parental contact with the Centre has been nominal and consisted of the occasional family visit and once off family parties organised by the young people themselves. For an experimental period from April 1973 to the end of 1974 the Head of the Centre was acting as the statutory supervisor of several of the young people attending the Centre and this included some family casework. The unification in this way of the family casework goals and the group work objectives, has proved very useful in some cases. However, it was beginning to prove impractical for the Centre with limited staff and a full group work programme, to take on the statutory responsibilities in this way. There was beginning to be a back log of young people who remained on supervision to the head of the centre but who had finished their course. It was also felt that with the intensive involvement of the courses it is important for some young people to have someone on the outside with which to relate on a one to one basis. The extent of the Centre's involvement with the family and with the individual counselling of the young person, will be outlined in the treatment plan decided upon prior to the young person beginning the course. We would hope to increase, however, the family involvement with the Centre's work, with families spending whole days at the centre rather than evening party sessions.

The Centre is situated in an exclusive residential area of the town, and apart from some initial complaints there is very little contact either way, except on a personal level. There is, however, excellent contact with the nearby housing estate and the schools which serve it. Many of the activity group children live in this area which has only minimal youth and community provision, and until intervention by the Centre's staff and other interested parties there was none. The Centre's staff have initiated and are still involved in the holiday play scheme for the area, a junior activity group, and a one night a week youth club.

7. SUMMARY

On the basis of this broad panoramic view of the work at Dallington Lodge, we can safely say that the experimental nature of the work so far has proved valuable in finding effective forms of treatment for children and young people in difficulty, and has facilitated the discarding of less useful approaches. We must continue to attempt new ways of working with these young people, in other words we must remain an experimental unit but at the same time we must consolidate our work and use those forms of treatment which Dallington Lodge is most suited for and for which the staff has developed a special skill.

It is seen that we both make the best use of resources and also provide the most effective treatment with the series of short group living experiences and all this entails. It is in the development of this approach that our main work would lie. With the addition of the necessary staff we would hope to work with up to 6 groups a year in this way.

Evening activity groups would seem to be our next most effective method of treatment, in that it provides on a limited scale similar experiences and opportunities. We will continue to invest in this approach developing further groups using existing community facilities.

The school unit is considered to be a useful addition to the type of intervention the Centre can provide, and an example of what can be achieved by co-operation between the educational and social work agencies. School holidays are seen as an opportunity for more residential work and also as an opportunity to work at greater depth with Activity groups.

Outdoor challenge activities have proved of value and should be contained as an integral part of Treatment Courses.

Finally it is felt that to be most effective, treatment should be unified with the family casework and schooling objectives. Therefore involvement of the family in the treatment programme and full liaison between the centre, the school, and the social worker, will be considered an inherent part of our methods.

E. Cassidy
Head of Intermediate Treatment Centre
Dallington Lodge
13 The Avenue
Dallington
Northampton

Tel. 0604 51837

November 1974

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