



Everyday Impact Award

Name of organisation or individual nominated

SAFE@LAST

1. **What were you trying to change?** (maximum 200 words)

Help us understand the vision, aims and objectives

In 1998 Hilary Massarella watched a documentary about a young girl who had run away from home. The story stayed with her and she wanted to know what services were available for young people who run away from home in South Yorkshire. Hilary and some volunteers spent two years researching the issue and realising that there was no service provision for these vulnerable young people established SAFE@LAST in 2000 to change this. It's reported that around 100,000 children and young people run away from home each year with around 4,000 of these in South Yorkshire. A quarter of these children have no option but to sleep rough.

If safe alternatives are not available, young runaways are more likely than their peers to become involved in extremely risky behaviours eg Drug and alcohol misuse, sexual exploitation sometimes leading to prostitution and crime.

SAFE@LAST wanted to provide children and young people with someone independent that they could talk to who could provide practical support to help them address their issues surrounding running away. The charities vision was also to provide safe emergency accommodation for children at risk from where they are running from or where they are running to.

2. **What did you do to make change happen?** (maximum 200 words)

Tell us about what actions you took, who you worked with, what resources you had to use etc.

In its early years SAFE@LAST spent time researching the phenomenon or running away and building links with other organisations. Although the original aim was to provide emergency accommodation for children and young people the trustees recognised that to achieve this other services were needed.

Fundraising was carried out to raise the funds necessary to start providing practical services and in 2004 the SAFE@LAST helpline was launched. With the support of Childline volunteers were trained to answer calls on the helpline. The helpline provides young people with the opportunity to speak confidentially to one of the volunteers that

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operate the helpline to seek advice, support and a listening ear. In the following years SAFE@LAST also established the MISPER (MISsing PERsons) scheme. In partnership with South Yorkshire Police the scheme offers every young person that is reported missing and returned home in South Yorkshire an Independent Return Interview. This allows them to identify and address their issues around running away and access ongoing support. Grant funding was secured to help launch the scheme and continues to fund a proportion of the work.

Support was secured from a grant funder and local businesses to make the refuge a physical reality (buying, refurbishing and stocking the building) and it opened in 2007. SAFE@LAST developed an innovative model of fixed refuge in order to keep costs manageable without compromising on the quality of service – the model is used as an example of good practice and has received GOOD rating in its most recent two OFSTED reports.

3. What were your tangible results? (maximum 200 words)

Outline what happened as a result of the work and the impact it had

As a result of the MISPER scheme every young person that is reported missing from home/care and then returned is contacted by SAFE@LAST and offered the support of a project worker. We support young people with a wide range of issues and it is reported that this work has a significant impact on their lives of the young people with whom we work. The MISPER scheme has worked with around 1800 children and young people since it was launched.

The helpline has received over 1500 calls and texts from young people who often feel that they have no where else to turn. The helpline provides a referral route for young people to access our other services including ongoing support and the refuge. Sometime a young person may call only once to get something off their chest. Other callers phone regularly for support.

The SAFEplace refuge provides safe confidential accommodation to children and young people who are at risk from where they are running from, or where they are running to. The refuge is the only one of its kind in England outside of London. The refuge is accessed via a self referral system when young people contact the organisation through the helpline. Around 75 bed nights for children and young people at risk have been provided since it opened. Providing many children

Recognising the importance of prevention when working with young runaways since September 2008 SAFE@LAST has offered targeted prevention work which aims to educate and inform children and young people about the risks and dangers of running away from home.

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INFORMATION AND TRAINING FOR THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

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