

Children's Services Newsletter

November 2008

Please consider the environment

Working in Partnership

Newcastle
City Council 

A message from the Executive Director

Dear Colleague

It has been a difficult few weeks for safeguarding and I just want everyone in social care to know you have my full support and admiration for everything you do to keep children safer in this city.



Catherine Fitt
Executive Director of Children's
Services

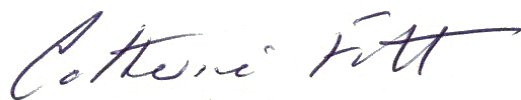
Thank you to everyone who has contributed to our work with KPMG. I am convinced that the corporate transformation programme will help us make accelerated progress in delivering high quality integrated services, which are focused on children and young people and which improve their life chances.

We have had a lot to celebrate with the opening of new buildings and the fabulous Celebration of Achievement of young people which took place at St James' Park this week.

Thank you for making sure we remember what is really important!

Best wishes

Catherine Fitt



everychild
matters

How to submit an article for the next edition.....

The Children's Services newsletter is published monthly. Do you have an article for the next edition that colleagues in Children's Services would like to read? If so, please email it to us at childrens.services@newcastle.gov.uk.

Many thanks to those who submitted articles and other key information in this month's edition.



Be Healthy

New CAMHS Strategy 2008-11

The new CAMHS strategy for 2008-11 highlights our shared commitment to the emotional wellbeing of children and young people in Newcastle. Good emotional wellbeing is important to us all if we are to enjoy a healthy and fulfilling life. It is therefore vital that we ensure children and young people enjoy good emotional and mental health if they are to achieve their full potential.

The strategy can be downloaded from the Children's Services website at: www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk/core.nsf/a/mcs_camhs

Have you heard about NHS LifeChecks in Newcastle? Want to find out more?

Newcastle as a Communities for Health Spearhead has been allocated funding to introduce the LifeCheck scheme to Newcastle. An information event will be held on **Wednesday 26 November (12.30)** at the Old Assembly Rooms where practitioners who are working with parents of babies aged between 5 and 8 months or who work with teenagers can find out more information about the LifeCheck Scheme.

Early Years LifeCheck—This online questionnaire is currently available for parents and carers of babies aged between 5 and 8 months. It focuses on key areas that will support the health of babies including safety, development, teething, play and learning, talking, feeding and becoming a parent. Information is then provided to support parents in ensuring their babies' get the best start in life. www.nhs.uk/lifecheck

Teen LifeCheck—This quick quiz-style online questionnaire has been designed by and for young people aged between 12 and 15. The questionnaire will be going live early 2009. Teenagers are able to "check it before they wreck it" by raising their awareness of risk focussing on their health and behaviours i.e. smoking, exercise sexual health and emotional wellbeing. On completion of both LifeChecks they are signposted to a range of local and national support services available to them such as smoking cessation groups, local sports centres etc.

If you would like to attend this event please contact Ashleigh Des-Forges or Ryan Davison on 0191 2777410 or email childrens.services@newcastle.gov.uk. More general information is available at www.nhs.uk/lifecheck

Nomination for NHS National Centre for Involvement Awards 2008

Through the Children's Trust Arrangements we have been engaging with parents of children with ADHD. Our colleagues in Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Health Trust have submitted the work to the NHS National Centre for Involvement Awards 2008 and the work has been short listed. Congratulations to all those who have been involved in this! Winners will be announced on 25 November 2008.

Did you know... NHS Direct website and NHS Choices Online websites have been combined into one central website? Log onto www.nhs.uk to have a look

Stay Safe

New dates for CAF Locality Support Groups

New dates have been announced for the next Locality Support Groups for practitioners from all agencies.

Date	Time	Venue
24 November 2008	4pm – 5.30pm	Throckley Primary School
26 th November 2008	4pm – 5.30pm	Excelsior Academy
3 December 2008	4pm – 5.30pm	Kenton School
8 December 2008	3.30pm - 5pm	Walkergate Primary School

Please ring the CAF assistant on 0191 2461879 for dates of upcoming locality support groups and to be added to the mailing list.

'Let's talk about Knives' guide for parents

Were you aware that the Home Office has produced a guide for parents who want to speak to their children about knives but are unsure of how to approach the subject? You can find the guide at: www.campaigns.direct.gov.uk/talkaboutknives or call 0845 600 4171 for a hard copy.

Enjoy and Achieve

Tellus 3 results are published

The Tellus Survey is an annual survey of children and young people across England, asking their views, covering the five Every Child Matters outcomes. It asks about their experiences and views of their life, their school and their local area. The survey asks children and young people questions about their satisfaction with local services and questions relating to the five outcomes.

The **Tellus3 Survey** was carried out in Newcastle during Spring/Summer 2008. A sample of Newcastle schools were selected by Ofsted. To read the latest local results log onto the Tellus pages of the Children's Services website at www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk/core.nsf/a/mcs_tellus

Excellent Ofsted report for Beech Hill Primary School

Beech Hill Primary School is celebrating a fantastic Ofsted report. The opening comments of the Ofsted report said, this is an outstanding school. One parent neatly summed it up by writing, "Beech Hill is a fabulous school in which every child, whatever their personal circumstances, is given the chance to fulfil their potential".

Enjoy and Achieve

BSF Schools open their brand new doors

Students and staff from Kenton School have moved into state-of-the-art new buildings as part of Newcastle's £180m Building Schools for the Future project - the biggest ever investment in schools in the history of the city.

The ongoing success of this huge investment programme is largely thanks to the close partnership which has been built up with the council's private sector partner Aura, which is delivering and partly funding the project, as well as designing, building and maintaining the schools. Kenton have also opened their doors to their state of the art sports facilities making them available to the public.

Canning Street Primary School was also officially reopened on the 24 October by former Headteacher Dame Mavis Grant and the Sherriff of Newcastle, Councillor Mike Cookson. Canning Street School became the first school to reopen after being transformed by the £180 million building schools for the Future project.

To keep up to date with the latest news from the Building Schools for the Future Project log onto their webpages at www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/bsf_pfi?opendocument

Newcastle School Achievement Awards

The Newcastle School Achievement Awards ceremony took place on 19 November at St James Park. 18 schools nominated 48 young people aged 5-19 years for the following categories.

- Music and performing arts.
- Service to the community.
- Young Carer.
- Volunteer.
- Personal Achievement.
- Academic achievement.
- Sporting Achievement.



Pupils from Benfield School receive certificates from Fabulous Flournoy

The winners were awarded with certificates by Fabulous Flournoy, coach of the Newcastle Eagles. All the young children were praised for their happy, cheerful and positive outlook on life. All have shown determination, perseverance and commitment and several have overcome major barriers including emotional, social and physical problems.

Make a Positive Contribution

Local Democracy Week

135 young people from 14 schools in Newcastle attended the Local Democracy week event at the Civic Centre on 17 October. The event marked the end of a week long programme of activities in wards across the city. In the wards young people engaged in a number of exciting activities aimed at making politics fun. This included activities such as 'Pizza and politics' and young people taking over ward committee meetings and acting as chairs etc. These activities were a great success and were jointly organised by Play Staff, Youth Staff, Ward Coordination and Community Development.

The event provided an opportunity for young people to mix together and learn more about how local democracy and national politics works. The day was chaired by 3 UK Youth Parliament representatives from Newcastle. The Lord Mayor delivered the opening speech and Deputy Leader, Councillor David Faulkner brought the event to a close. The 135 students present took part in mini debates, which was a highlight of the day for most, played 'Political Blankety Blank' and designed decision making structures and policies in the 'Build your own city' workshop.

A full event evaluation and report will be produced and made available over the next few weeks.

Youth Taskforce Event

On 6 November, the DCSF Youth Taskforce held a regional network event at the Marriott Hotel, Gosforth. Taking advantage of the opportunity, Anne Weinstock, Director of the Youth Taskforce, visited staff and projects in Newcastle involved in the Family Intervention Project and the Intensive Intervention Project, both of which are targeted at children and families at risk and who are involved in anti-social behaviour.

The visit was hosted by Catherine Fitt and members of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership and Safe Newcastle (the city's community safety partnership).

A question and answer session at the end of the visit allowed Anne Weinstock to find out more about the work developing in the city, with several good practice examples being noted down by the Taskforce to take back with them.

11 Million Take Over Day— 7 November 2008

Newcastle's Youth Service Senior Management Team were 'taken over' by young people from All Saints College when 4 year 11 students designed and developed guidelines for youth work staff. These guidelines help staff to manage behaviour and have a joined-up approach to sanctions and rewards for the young people they work with.

The work will be written up and distributed to all young people and staff. For more information please contact Don Irving on 0191 2777426 or 07970846580

Make a Positive Contribution

UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) Elections



25 centres, projects or schools have registered to become voting centres during the UKYP election week 12-16 January. They will enable young people aged between 11 and 18 who access their centre to vote for their favourite candidate in the UKYP elections. Information sessions are being held at the Theatre Royal on both the 29 November and 01 December where young people will learn more about being a UKYP rep and will be given guidance on writing their manifestos. There is still time for young people to register for these sessions at www.newcastle.gov.uk/ukyp

Approx 12,000 young people from across the city are expected to vote in this years UKYP elections. For more information please contact Vicky Hartley on 0191 2606513 or vicky.hartley@newcastle.gov.uk

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

Child Maintenance Changes

Over the next few months you may receive queries about the changes to the new child maintenance system from the families you work with. Here is a brief summary of the changes.

The following changes came into place as of 27 October 2008.

- Parents with care, on income related benefits can keep the first £20 per week of any maintenance received before it impacts upon the amount of benefit paid relating to their household.
- A full disregard of any maintenance received in housing benefit and council tax benefit calculations. The Child Maintenance Options service is available to all parents. www.cmoptions.org
- All parents with care who are on income related benefits will be able to make their own arrangements rather than using the Child Support Agency.

The future of Child Maintenance

In April 2010 the £20 per week disregard for benefit claimants will be increased to a full disregard. In 2011, a new statutory maintenance scheme will be established and by 2013/14, the new system of child maintenance will be fully operational.

For further reading, information is available online at: www.childmaintenance.org



Achieve Economic Wellbeing

Child Poverty—Beacon Status Update

After applying for Beacon status under the theme of Preventing and Tackling Child Poverty, Newcastle City Council were judged to be excellent against all criteria at the end of Stage 1. The Beacon Assessment Team have just visited us for Stage 2 which included:

- a presentation from all our partners;
- the first showing of the film made about some of the excellent work to address child poverty; and
- a visit to Cowgate and Blakelaw Children's Centre to meet parents and staff.



We will receive feedback about the stage 2 next month. The final stage is a presentation to the Beacon Panel in January with the announcement of local authorities achieving Beacon Status in March 2009.

Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the Beacon so far and look out for the viewing of the film!

Strategic Management and Transformation

Head of Children's Social Care

Earlier this month we interviewed for a new Head of Service with responsibility for Children's Social Care. There were no internal candidates and unfortunately we were not able to appoint from the five external candidates who were short listed. The recruitment process was a rigorous one involving a Technical Assessment and meetings with key stakeholders and young people who are Looked After. Feedback from the candidates about the young people's contribution was excellent. They all commented that those who participated were a credit to the City.

We are now looking at next steps with a view to re-advertising in the New Year. In the meantime Karen Simmons has thankfully agreed to continue as Acting Head of Children's Social Care until an appointment is made.

Investors in People Award

On the 23 October 2008, the Childcare Safeguarding and Compliance Service based at the Newcastle Springfield Centre were informed they had met the Investors in People Standard. A number of staff were interviewed during the assessment day on 9 October 2008, where several key areas, including Communication and Good Leadership & Management, came out as very strong characteristics of the service.



Everyone in the service is delighted to have achieved this award, and plan to use it to propel them forward as the service grows.