

As 2010 comes to a close and we look forward to 2011, we'd like to highlight and celebrate some recent successes and achievements in Children's Services

We are delighted about...

- The outcome of OFSTED's annual Children's Services Assessment for Newcastle which says that services aimed at children and young people in Newcastle are performing well and have improved significantly, with a large majority of services, settings and institutions rated as outstanding. They assess that we also have good prospects for future improvement.
- The findings of the recent unannounced inspection of front-line child protection services which found much that was strong and no areas for priority action. This statement was quoted in the annual Ofsted Children's Services Assessment letter – the safeguarding inspection findings are yet to be formally published.
- The success of the Myplace bid with confirmation of the award of £5m of capital funding. Myplace is a national initiative intended to provide a range of high-quality youth facilities in the city, designed by and for young people where they can get help, support and guidance. The funding will be used to create a world-class city centre youth facility, at the site of the former Vine Lane School, beside the City Pool. Myplace will give the 65,000 young people of Newcastle a place to call their own. It will be a distinctive focal point for young people's services in Newcastle, offering the best in terms of services, support, facilities and resources.
- The positive initial reaction to the new marketing campaign using two cartoon super hero characters to communicate the importance of regular school attendance to children and young people and their parents. As part of the campaign, three attendance and aspiration days have been held during the autumn term. These days have included a market place of services with a range of activities for parents and children to do together. An analysis of parents attending the days shows success in reaching the vulnerable and hard to reach families at all three schools.



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Congratulations to...

- The dozens of children and young people aged between five and 19 years old recognised during the fifth Newcastle Schools' Achievement Awards held at St James' Park on 4 November. This year's ceremony was a joint event with the Newcastle Schools Sports Partnership Awards. Categories included music, performing arts and service to the community and many of the nomination forms mentioned the young people's increased self-confidence, selflessness and determination to succeed.
- Jodie Wilkinson, a young person volunteering with Your Homes Newcastle's Youth Voice Project, who won the national "CYP Now: Young Person's Achievement Award" for achieving significant improvement in her own outcomes and making a positive contribution in the community. Jodie was described as "setting a great example for other young people of similar backgrounds" and an "inspirational role model for other young people".
- Felicity Briggs from Sacred Heart who has won the Arts Achievement award in the final of the Chronicle Young Achiever Awards. Shane Surtees, Trinity School also made it to the final in recognition of his outstanding volunteer work at Stepney Bank Stables.
- Lemington Sure Start Children's Centre which was inspected by Ofsted in November and judged to be outstanding. "Lemington centre provides outstanding provision for its users... Managers have a clear vision for high quality provision and outcomes. The centre excels in the care and guidance it offers its users, making this guidance personalised to meet individual needs. Staff know the families with whom they work exceptionally well, which enable them to accurately identify needs. The centre staff have provided excellent support for mothers with post-natal depression and for those who have suffered domestic violence. Its integrated work with other agencies is outstanding, ensuring that the specific needs of the centre users are very well met, as a result of high quality services that produce excellent outcomes. Very close community cohesion is evident, with many examples of users making new friends and relationships being forged. Relationships in the centre are excellent, with a diverse range of groups of different ages and abilities mixing extremely well together and with mutual respect. Safeguarding procedures are extremely robust and effective, and are enhanced by up-to-date training and the very strong links with other services to develop parents' and carers' knowledge."



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Congratulations to...

- Walkergate Early Years Centre for its outstanding Ofsted inspection. Inspectors commented "It offers the highest standard of care alongside excellence in learning. Under the energetic and visionary leadership of the headteacher, excellently supported by highly skilled and committed staff, the Nursery has gone from strength to strength. The school reviews its work rigorously and leaves no stone unturned in its pursuit of excellence".
- Changing Trax, which has been included as a national best practice example by the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes (C4EO) in Children and Young People's Services. Read the service's case study here: <http://bit.ly/f7cApt>
- Ann Bell and Julie Bell from Newcastle Action for Parent and Toddlers Groups Initiative, Lesley Parkin from Sure Start Children's Centre Walkergate and Christine Graham from Newcastle Toy and Leisure Library, who were awarded Quality Play Matters quality assurance awards from the National Association of Toy and Leisure Libraries. Newcastle is leading the way in the development of toy library services with specialist services for parent and toddler groups, childminders and children with disabilities as well as providing opportunities for individual parents to borrow toys via the Book a Toy scheme which is run in partnership with Newcastle Libraries. Newcastle is the first authority to have been presented with three awards at the same time. To find out more about Toy Library services contact Karen Williams, Chair Newcastle Toy Library Forum on 0191 265 6158
- Susan Railton from Shieldfield Nursery who won a Star Award at the annual 'Celebrate our Council' awards. Susan was nominated by a member of the public for providing excellent customer care.
- Carole Barnes who has been elected as Chair of the National Association of Families Information Services (NAFIS).
- Sir Charles Parson school who have been named in Ofsted's Outstanding Providers list 2009/10. The list includes early years registered providers, maintained schools, independent schools, colleges and providers of work-based learning, adult education and children's social care and most were inspected between 1 September 2009 and 31 August 2010.



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Congratulations to...

- Byker Primary School who have been listed in the National Top 100 Value Added Schools for Key Stage 2 SATS. And to St Oswald's RC Primary, in Gosforth and Newburn Manor Primary who were listed in the National Top 200 Value Added Schools for Key Stage Two SATS.
- Atkinson Road Nursery, Youth Voice, Barnardos Teenage Pregnancy Support Team and Linhope Pupil Referral Unit who all recently received Investing in Children (iC) awards. iC membership is free and available to Newcastle organisations that provide services to children and young people. You must demonstrate you have entered into a dialogue with children and young people and out of dialogue has come change and improvement. Critically, it is the children and young people using the service who will decide whether this is the case. If you're interested in applying for iC membership or need more information please contact Peter Ross, phone: 0191 260 6514 or email: peter.ross@newcastle.gov.uk
- Parents and carers involved in the production of a new parent carer participation DVD 'Get Involved'. Five parents and carers are featured telling their stories about the different ways that parents and carers can get involved and influence services and decision making in the city. For more information contact Val Chadwick on phone 0191 260 6512
- Our local NHS hospital and mental trusts which have all been awarded foundation trust status. The latest ratings from the Care Quality Commission also show every single hospital trust in the region, as well as the ambulance service, as either 'excellent' or 'good' for quality of services, giving the highest score in England for the third consecutive year.
- The Great North Hospital on its official opening in November 2010. The new hospital brings together all hospital services for children together in one site.



Looking forward to 2011...

- Thankfully no-one was injured when the roof at Milecastle Primary collapsed a few weeks back due to weight of snow. The school was shut due to severe weather at the time. It will take us between six and nine months to carry out repairs and during this time Milecastle will move its entire operation to the old Throckley First School on Coach Road. The temporary address is Coach Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE15 9JN. The school phone number will remain the same.

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Looking forward to 2011...

- Mouchel Management Consulting Ltd has been commissioned to undertake a review of the 14-19 provision across the city. The review will be led by David Walker and will run from December 2010 to Easter 2011. The review will explore, with stakeholders, the changing economic context of the city and what is required to ensure that 14-19 education and training provision in the future meets the needs of all local learners and drives forward the continued economic growth of Newcastle as a regional centre for scientific, creative and technological excellence. Within this general scope, the consultants have been tasked with reviewing the success of the current provision in meeting the needs of the more vulnerable, disaffected and disengaged young people of Newcastle. The first phase of the review will examine the current situation and evaluate the progress made to date whilst the second phase will explore options for change that reflect a changing local and national context. The review will give all stakeholders the opportunity to take an active role in helping to shape this agenda and will actively canvass the thoughts and opinions of school and college leaders, young people from across the 14-19 system, local business and community leaders and the range of organisations supporting 14 – 19 education and training. The stakeholder launch event is to be held in February 2011. For further information please contact Melanie Bear on 0191 2115391 or email melanie.bear@newcastle.gov.uk or Michael Johnston on 0191 2116906 or email michael.johnston@newcastle.gov.uk
- The city council has been carrying out a review of services since the summer, to identify ways in which they can be improved and made more efficient. This follows on from our corporate transformation programme, which has seen us save £47.7m over the last two years, and helped us to become a more fit for purpose organisation, delivering greater value for money services to local people. It's also part of our planned response to reductions in public spending announced by the government in their Comprehensive Spending Review. In STEP (Service Transformation and Efficiency Programme) phase one, we have identified £20m efficiencies across the organisation with a reduction of up to 275 posts. These STEP proposals are for consultation, and engagement with stakeholders will continue as proposals are refined and developed.

We've done well to identify these efficiency savings through STEP proposals so far - but on their own they will not be enough to achieve a balanced budget which reflects the Government's spending reductions. We are working hard to develop further savings, so that the council's Executive can consider a draft budget for consultation at the end of January. We have brought forward the second phase of STEP to early next year, where we will look at all council services which are not included in phase one. To read more about the STEP phase one proposals click here: <http://bit.ly/gP1EvC>

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Looking forward to 2011...

- In January we will launch our new web portal Youth Linx for young people aged 13-19 in the city. This will be supported by a Facebook page, and will promote things to do, places to go, volunteering opportunities, the different ways that young people can get involved in planning delivery of services and decision making, and signpost young people to both online and local services where they can get support and advice on a wide range of issues. If you are interested in being a content contributor or just want to know more, please contact Roxanne Fulker at: roxanne.fulker@newcastle.gov.uk
- The UK Youth Parliament elections will take place in January with 20 young people standing in this year's elections to represent Newcastle at a national level.
- In February an event will be held to help develop a Movement and Access Plan for Newcastle. As part of this community groups, groups of interest and / or identity are being asked to prepare posters that will be used at the event as part of the material to be discussed by participants. The posters will record information about people's views on what makes a good journey, what makes a bad journey and what could be improved. If there are any groups of children and young people, or parents and carers that you think may be interested in submitting a poster for the event, please could you forward this information to them? Further details about the event and poster templates can be found at: <http://bit.ly/gmLXzd>
- Are you a health service planning to work towards the Department of Health's You're Welcome Quality Standards in 2011? Introductory training for service providers will be held on dates in January and March. For more information and a booking form visit: <http://bit.ly/eThReC>



Festive message from the Executive Director of Children's Services

Can I take this opportunity to wish you all a very merry Christmas and a prosperous new year. If you are taking a break over the next couple of weeks I hope it's not too stressful. And if you are working, for example with some of our more vulnerable and at risk families, can I thank you for your continued dedication and hard work at this time of year.

Yours sincerely

John Collings

