

Children's Services Newsletter

October 2010

Introduction from John Collings, Executive Director of Children's Services

It's an uncertain period for us all awaiting the government's Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) and the detailed local government budget settlement to see what the implications could be for children's services. Over the past few weeks speculation has been escalating in the media about the potential budget cuts, we've heard about the demise of government quangos and measures other local authorities are taking to balance their budgets.



There is no doubt we will face the future with fewer resources than we have had before. And we have to think about how our organisation needs to modernise and adapt to the demands of a rapidly changing world.

We have been planning how we would respond to spending reductions for some time, and we have a managed process in place to review all our services to identify ways to ensure that they remain highly effective with fewer resources. We have an excellent track record in transforming services and identifying efficiencies.

Our Service Transformation and Efficiency Programme (STEP) will take a fundamental look at all services we provide as a council over the next two years and find new and innovative ways to deliver quality services in a more cost effective way. It will explore how we can work more closely with partner organisations across the region to bring our resources together to be more effective at improving outcomes. We will work closely with the voluntary and community sector – exploring how we achieve best value from grants and funding, and considering how to support the sector's important contribution to life in the city.

Members of the Children's Trust Board have indicated, as have wider members of the Children's Trust, that they are keen to continue with a partnership focused around improving outcomes for children and young people. The Children's Trust may no longer be a statutory requirement but there is a belief in the legacy of positive work and strong relationships in the city, which is important to retain and build upon.

We are taking a measured and calm approach to the challenges and issues ahead. And we are clear on our priorities for children and young people in Newcastle.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John Collings". The signature is written in a cursive style.

If you have any comments or contributions, please contact us:
childrens.services@newcastle.gov.uk
Or phone 0191 211 5307

Be Healthy



Health Profile 2010: North East

The NHS Health Profile 2010 gives a picture of health in the North East. Health Profiles are produced every year by the Association of Public Health Observatories. They are designed to help local government and health services improve people's health and reduce health inequalities. North East at a glance:

- The health of people in the North East is generally worse than England as a whole. Levels of deprivation are high and life expectancy for both men and women is lower than the England average.
- North East children are among the most physically active in the country, but the region has the highest level of mothers smoking during pregnancy.
- The North East has one of the lowest levels of violent crime compared to other regions.
- The percentage of mothers initiating breast feeding is the lowest in the country, but it has risen consistently over the last few years, with the gap between the England average narrowing slightly.
- The priorities for the North East are to continue to encourage adult behaviour change around drinking and smoking and to improve the health of children and young people.

View the full profile on the Children's Services website: <http://bit.ly/9IFCSr>

Annual PE and Sport Survey 2009/2010

The latest results for the annual school sport survey from the Department for Education have recently been published. We had a fantastic response in Newcastle with all the schools in the city completing the survey.

For the first time, the 2009 Survey measures the number of young people taking part in three hours of PE and School Sport each week. Previous school sport surveys have only measured the number of young people participating in two hours of PE and school sport with the 2007/08 survey showing that 90% of pupils were reaching that figure.

The latest data shows that 55% of five to 18 year olds in Newcastle Schools are taking part in three hours of PE and Sport a week. This is in line with the national average of 55%. In Newcastle, a high percentage of schools also meet the Government's expectation by providing two hours of core PE in the National Curriculum with an average of 119 minutes of PE being delivered across schools to five to 16 year olds. 53% of Newcastle students also now compete in inter-school events.

These results provide firm evidence of great progress being made by teachers and schools to raise the quality and profile of PE and Sport in the city. They also show a firm foundation on which Newcastle schools can work towards achieving the long-term aim of offering all children opportunities to experience the benefits of being involved in healthy physical activity.

Stay Safe



Ofsted rates Philipson Street children's home as good

Well done to the staff at Philipson Street children's home! Ofsted's unannounced inspection has judged the quality of service as good, identifying the positive relationships between staff and young people as a strength.

Monitoring and evaluation of Family Intervention Projects

National statistics for the Family Intervention Projects (FIPs) to March 2010 are now available. The statistics show that:

- 79% of families left the intervention for a successful reason (e.g. formal sanction had been lifted).
- 47% reduction in the number of families experiencing risks associated with poor family functioning, including poor parenting, marriage, relationship and family breakdown, domestic violence or child protection issues.
- 47% reduction in the number of families involved in anti-social behaviour and crime.
- 34% reduction in the number of families with health issues including mental or physical health and drug or alcohol problems.
- 34% reduction in the number of families with education and employment issues.

4,870 families nationally received an intervention up to 31 March - 113 families in Newcastle. To view the statistics visit the Department for Education website: <http://bit.ly/aAUut2>

Teens feel ill-equipped to handle consequences of underage drinking

The British Red Cross has launched a first aid campaign aimed at 11-16 year olds called "Life. Live it." to help young people learn life-saving skills so that they are better able to cope in an emergency. This includes teaching resources for schools. Their findings into first aid awareness among 11-16 year olds show over the last 12 months:

- 14% have been in an emergency situation as a result of a friend drinking too much alcohol.
- 89% have found themselves having to cope with someone having an asthma attack, head injury, choking or having an epileptic fit.
- When asked what actions they took in response to these situations, 44% said they panicked and 46% said they didn't know what to do.
- Only 5% have been taught first aid. However almost all (97%) would welcome first aid education and believe it would improve their confidence, skills and willingness to act in a crisis.

Visit the British Red Cross website to view the findings: <http://bit.ly/dihdml> as well as more information about the Life. Live it. Campaign: <http://bit.ly/9lahWe>

Enjoy and Achieve



Juice: NewcastleGateshead's festival for children and young people

The annual fun-packed festival programme kicks off on Wednesday 20 October and runs to Sunday 31 October. With over 30 events for 0-18 year olds and families, from Hip-Hop to photography and music to free-running, plus plenty for Halloween, there's a huge range of things to see and do, all on our doorstep. For the full programme visit: www.juicefestival.co.uk

School attendance 'go to school superheroes'

Two new superhero cartoon characters have been designed to teach young people about the benefits of going to school. Smartee and Tick are the city's new 'go to school superheroes' and their faces will be on leaflets and posters across the city reminding children of the benefits of going to school regularly and getting the best possible start in life.

Over the next few weeks, certificates showing the characters will be distributed across the city to children achieving 98%, 99% and 100% attendance in the summer term. The characters will also launch the city's new attendance slogan 'Get up, Get in, Get on' and the campaign will publicise the support available to parents and carers who are having problems getting their child to school.

Newcastle highly commended

Newcastle has been highly commended in the Link2Learn Awards by the British Council, supported by HSBC Global Education Trust, for our excellence and innovation in international school partnerships. Well done to all schools and colleagues supporting this work.

Hawkhirst Scout Activity Centre

Newcastle City Council has now been working in partnership with The Scouts Association for two years to develop the facilities and range of outdoor and adventurous activities offered at the Hawkhirst Centre. Changes in centre provision and resources, as well as service and curriculum offer, have led to many positive developments. View the report: <http://bit.ly/aUMA7n>

'Future School Leaders' of Newcastle

There is an abundance of talented and inspirational teachers working in Newcastle and the Future School Leaders 2 programme has helped many of them to develop their leadership and management skills. Well done to this year's graduates from the course:

Paul Hood and Barbara Andrews (Chillingham Road Primary School), Maxine Pape and Kelly Ealy (St John's Primary School), Karen Leadbeater, Karen Semple and Helen Gorskey (Waverley Primary School), Kirsty Anderson (Westgate Hill Primary School), Rachael Raey (Wyndham Primary School)

For enquiries about the Programme or to sign up to the Future School Leaders 3 Programme, please email Chris Constable, School Improvement Service: chris.constable@newcastle.gov.uk

Make a Positive Contribution



Youth Offending Team is recognised for its achievements

Congratulations to all the staff involved! Newcastle Youth Offending Team has recently been recognised as a national exemplar in reducing the numbers of young people receiving custodial sentences by the Howard League for Penal Reform and the Prison Reform Trust, and also in the Independent Commission's report into the future the Youth Justice system – "Time for a fresh start".

Myplace project update

The Myplace project has been signed off by the BIG Lottery and recommended to the Department of Education for approval, meeting the required deadline for planning and listed building applications in June. However, the final approval of government funding is on hold subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

During this time the project is progressing as normal to the project plan so that all the necessary permissions will be in place when the announcement is made. The young people, who have been involved in the project from the start, have been briefed and remain supportive of the project and are keen to work with the council to consider possible alternatives should the funding not be approved.

National Youth Work week (1-7 November)

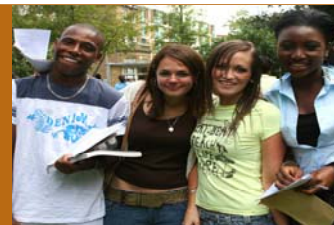
To celebrate National Youth Work week we are hosting a range of seminars for staff and volunteers that support activities for young people. There is also the opportunity to run an activity specifically to promote the Newcastle Youth Offer to young people that you work with. For more information on the seminar topics and for further details see: <http://bit.ly/adfsbX>

UK Youth Parliament

The UK Youth Parliament gives Newcastle teenagers the opportunity to speak up for the city's young citizens on a national platform. Over the last two years the Newcastle Youth Parliament Team has spoken in national debates in Parliament, and become formal members of city council committees where they can speak for young people. Through a number of public events they have given other young people the chance to identify their top issues and the team has taken them forward – including public transport, respect for young people and things to do and places to go. They haven't just made an impact locally - James Bartle, one of the current UKYP members for Newcastle has been selected to lead a debate at the Youth Parliament meeting in the House of Commons at the end of October.

The process is now getting underway to elect our next Youth Parliament Team. Young people aged 11-18 are invited to stand for election. Last time over 6000 young people voted and there is already considerable interest in the 2011 Poll, due to take place at the end of January. Young people wanting to stand should look out for the publicity in their school or youth club, or contact the Participation Team: ukyp@newcastle.gov.uk for more information.

Achieve Economic Wellbeing



Parson's Pizzas receive awards for Business Skills

Congratulations to the students from Sir Charles Parson's School in Walker who recently won the regional award for the Skills Factor business skills competition with their business called Parson's Pizza. They then went on to the national final competing against six other teams. This is a fantastic achievement in a competition which attracted entries from over 300 schools and colleges in the UK.

Organised by Young Chamber and with Lord Sugar as its chief patron, The Skills Factor is a contest for teams of young people who compete to convince the judges that they have the right business skills and character to set up and run a successful company. "Parson's Pizzas" have a thriving in-school café and have secured their longstanding school business link, Siemens Energy Service, as their first delivery customer.

Sir Charles Parson's success continued at the recent Newcastle Enterprise Awards where the school won three of the 11 available awards including the Lord Mayor's Award. These awards recognize the very best in entrepreneurial talent and support in the city. Well done to all the students and staff!

Learning Disabilities work experience pilot

The Learning Disabilities work experience pilot involves officers from departments within the city council and schools developing work experience opportunities for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. This will help prepare them for the next phase of their lives and raise aspirations that paid employment is a realistic goal.

Placements are one half day per week for six weeks. Eight officers received mentor training in July with more being trained in the autumn. Placements will be at Springfield, Civic Centre and Amber Court and will begin in January 2011 once profiles of individual students are matched to the work placements. It is hoped this will be the start of a much wider programme which will be opened up to other schools in the future.

What are the big issues in the benefit world?

Newcastle Welfare Rights has created a whole new area on their website to describe the government's big changes and plans for benefits, for example:

- the Government's plans for welfare
- the benefit cap
- Child Benefit changes
- Incapacity Benefits being abolished and 'transition' to ESA
- pension changes
- big cuts to Housing Benefits and extra benefits for blind people.

Visit the website for more: http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/core.nsf/a/wr_bbi_home?opendocument

Vulnerable Groups



Giving new emerging communities a voice

Lusi Manukyan was Newcastle's first 'young advocate' as part of the Future Leaders programme, commissioned by Changemakers. Lusi worked with the Participation Unit at the council to bring together young people from the asylum seeker and refugee communities in Newcastle and to find out how life in the city, and services they use could be improved for them. The diversity profile of young people in Newcastle is changing rapidly, and we worked with Lusi to help gain a better understanding of the young people who live in the city and their lives.

Many issues raised in her research were common to all young people in the city - the local environment, transport, opportunities. Others were affected by the young people's status as refugees or asylum seekers, and members of minority communities: education, access to services and information, ignorance and racism towards them.

Lusi's report 'Rise' has now been produced and can be read on the Children's Services website at <http://bit.ly/buS1bK>. A number of actions are planned as a result – including work on information for young people arriving in the city about what is offered for them.

Behind the scenes of Tracy Beaker

A group of our looked after children recently got the chance to go 'behind the scenes' of popular CBBC programme Tracy Beaker. While visiting the set in the former Sagesse school in Jesmond, they got to meet the stars of the programme about life in a fictional residential home.

A second visit has been arranged for older children who are thinking about going into drama, film and television with a focus on the various production departments including make-up, costume and set design.

Gandalf to visit Newcastle!

Sir Ian McKellen, co-founder of Stonewall, will be visiting two Newcastle secondary schools on 7 December as part of a national tour on behalf of the charity. The Lord of the Rings star will be giving assemblies, chatting to pupils in classrooms and promoting Stonewall's campaign to tackle homophobic bullying.

Sir Ian said, "Until I visited secondary schools recently, I hadn't realised how much anti-gay bullying goes on, throughout the education system. By talking frankly about my own life as a gay man and listening to the concerns of staff and students, parents and governors, I hope the visits arranged by Stonewall may make a difference in the classroom and the playground and also give confidence to gay students about their lives in the future."

The tour is a benefit to all members of Stonewall's Education Champions Programme, which supports local authorities in helping their local schools to prevent and tackle homophobic bullying.

Strategic Management and Transformation



Children's Trust update

In April this year Children's Trusts were given statutory status, meaning that each Local Authority was obliged to have a formal set of arrangements that promoted cooperation between agencies working with children, young people and their families. We also had to have a single outcomes led vision for children and young people, and had to develop integrated delivery, strategy, planning and commissioning.

With the arrival of the new coalition government this year came the announcement that Local Authorities were no longer obliged to have Children's Trust arrangements, schools were no longer obliged to cooperate with any Children's Trust and the Children and Young People's Plan no longer had to be produced.

The future of Children's Trust in Newcastle?

Members of the Children's Trust Board have indicated, as have wider members of the Children's Trust, that they are keen to continue with a partnership focused around improving outcomes for children and young people, despite the removal of the Children's Trusts' statutory status. There is a belief in the legacy of positive work and strong relationships in the city, which is important to retain and build upon.

The removal of the statutory status and national governance dictating how partnerships should look and work has not deterred us from the review of Children's Trust Governance that has been happening this year.

It has been agreed that there will be a Performance Management and Resources Group and instead of five Every Child Matters outcome groups, there will be three groups reflecting the Children and Young People Plan priorities of Safe, Equal and Achieving.

Visit from Children's Commissioner

Children's Commissioner Maggie Atkinson visited Newcastle on Friday 1 October. During her visit, Ms Atkinson discovered more about Newcastle Children's Services' anti-bullying initiatives in the city by meeting with young people from St Catherine's RC Primary and Walbottle Campus to find out about work young people have done around bullying.

Ms Atkinson also met with representatives from Seven Stories, The Centre for Children's Books, to talk about their partnership with the council and work done in the city's schools.

And finally..

If you have any comments or contributions for the Children's Services Newsletter please contact us by email: childrens.services@newcastle.gov.uk or phone: 0191 211 5307