

Children's Services Newsletter

June 2010

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

It looks like it's going to be a summer of mixed emotions and uncertainties. The forecast is for a heat wave – but isn't it always? With England out of the World Cup, we are left to pin our national hopes for sporting success on the cricket.

But we have many home grown sporting champions with bright futures, for example, squash player Michael Mattimore from Dinnington First School who finished third in the Northern Cup in Manchester in the individual event, and Andrew McDonald, a Year 13 Kenton Sports Leader who has won the Gallacher Award for the volunteer of the year from the Golf Foundation. Keaton Baker and Lewis Phillipson are through to the finals of the National Athletics Disability Sports Event. We look forward to many more celebrations at the UK School Games when they come to our region in September.



We are also facing interesting times with a new government in place introducing new policies in a difficult economic and financial climate. We have already had announcements about in year reductions to some of our grants and the emergency budget on 22 June reinforced that we face a few challenges over the weeks and months ahead. That said we will approach the challenge in a calm and measured way. We will need to be clear and focussed on our priorities and endeavour to protect our frontline services, children and families.

In respect of our longer term priorities, the Children's Trust Board have now agreed for 2011-14. For this current year, we have rolled forward our 2009-10 priorities, therefore we will shortly publish our 2010-11 Children and Young People's Plan.

Thank you for the contributions you are making and I know that you will continue to tackle the challenges we face with optimism and determination.

Best wishes,

John



For up to the minute news and events for children's services practitioners, see: www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk

If you have any comments or contributions, please contact us:

- childrens.services@newcastle.gov.uk

Be Healthy



Newcastle's Big Breastfeed

To mark National Breastfeeding Week, local mums gathered at the Monument on Friday, 25 June to raise awareness of the health benefits of breastfeeding, increase the social acceptance and promote support for breastfeeding. This was followed by the city's first ever breastfeeding exhibition in the City Library. Our Breastfeeding Peer Support Coordinator and a breastfeeding mum appeared on BBC Radio Newcastle to promote support.

Making smoking history for the North East

As responsibility for tackling smoking widens beyond health, the North East is preparing a new Regional Tobacco Strategy to unite key decision makers behind an ambitious vision for a tobacco free future, and to help to achieve the 'Better Health Fairer Health' goals set out by the Regional Director of Public Health. The strategy consultation launched last week and over the next six months there will be a number of thematic events: www.freshne.com/events.php

Chlamydia screening

In a bid to raise awareness of Chlamydia, health care staff from North East Chlamydia Screening, assisted by 50 peer educators, went along to the recent two day Evolution festival on the Quayside. Testing at an event such as Evolution, makes it easier for young people to be tested without them feeling embarrassed or making a trip to a clinic.

This year the team distributed over 2000 free urine tests. Young people could also access information in the form of advice from healthcare officials and leaflets at the event. The NHS has tough targets to screen and treat young people – this year it's 35% (100,000 young people) in the North East.

NHS North East has signed a national charter calling for equal healthcare for all children and adults with learning disabilities

As part of Learning Disability Awareness Week NHS North East has signed Mencap's 'Getting It Right' charter, encouraging all north east healthcare organisations to provide enhanced support for children and adults with learning difficulties, including awareness training for staff, annual health checks, liaison nurses in hospitals, health summary cards, accessible information and practical support for families and carers.

Free swimming to continue

Although the Government has announced that it will no longer provide funding to local councils to provide free swimming for under 16's and the over 60's, the city council has confirmed that it will continue to provide free swimming sessions in all city council managed pools.

Stay Safe



Slatyford Lane is outstanding

Slatyford Lane residential home was awarded a judgement of 'Outstanding' by Ofsted during its inspection on 27 April 2010. The Inspector said it was unusual for a residential facility to move directly from a previous judgement of satisfactory to outstanding in the course of only one inspection, but on the findings of the inspection no other judgement was possible.

Several factors were highlighted as key to the decision: the enthusiasm, commitment and working together of the staff team and the support they gave their manager; the quality of relationships between staff and young people and the way that the views of the young people influenced the day to day running of the home; the ability of the staff to manage challenging behaviour by process of negotiation and compromise with the young people, the partnerships the home had created with many other external professionals and agencies, and the high standard of risk assessments and care plans.

Congratulations to the staff who have worked incredibly hard to achieve this recognition and are determined to maintain the judgement in the future.

Safeguarding and Looked After Children inspections

Preparation is well underway in Newcastle in anticipation of the forthcoming Ofsted inspection which will focus on how partners across each Children's Trust deliver services for LAC and safeguarding. All local authorities will be inspected as part of a 3-year rolling Ofsted programme, described as similar in terms of activity and scrutiny to the Joint Area Review.

Ofsted will test out how well agencies respond to safeguarding issues, which can be as wide ranging as bullying and harassment, or accident prevention, to child protection concerns. They will select up to 90 random cases from Children's Social Care records and cross reference these with information held by partner agencies. Focus group interviews will also be held with staff involved in the cases. Karen Simmons, Head of Assess and Decide at the city council is leading Newcastle's preparation.

Solution Focused and Signs of Safety approach

Signs of Safety (SoS), a solution focused approach to risk assessment, has been rolled out on a pilot basis across Newcastle since spring 2009. A 6-month pilot to implement it within Child Protection Conferences began in September 2009. More recently focused, case consultancy sessions have been offered to practitioners who are 'stuck' with CAF cases, specifically, working with schools - Heads, PSAs and teachers. Practitioner feedback is positive.

A full evaluation of the pilot of SoS used in child protection conferences will be reported to NCSB shortly, together with recommendations for where elements of work will be embedded and monitored. Integrated teams will adopt the SoS model and receive training as part of their induction.

Enjoy and Achieve



Play Day

This year's National Play day is Wednesday 4 August 2010 and yet again Newcastle's Play Service will be marking the day with fun activities on Northumberland Street to celebrate children's right to play.

Summer Reading Challenge 2010

This year's Summer Reading Challenge – Space Hop - launched on 26 June in the City Library. All children aged 5 to 12 are being encouraged to take on the challenge of reading six books over the summer holidays. Libraries across Newcastle will be participating with a range of free events from 26 July to 5 September: <http://community.newcastle.gov.uk/libraries>

Ashfield Nursery outstanding

Ashfield Nursery has been awarded the first outstanding grade under the new Ofsted inspection framework. Ofsted noted: "although children join the Nursery with skills at levels that are well below those expected for their age, outstanding levels of care, skilful teaching and an exciting, vibrant curriculum provide each child with equal opportunity to succeed."

Home Access proves popular

The Home Access programme to tackle the digital-divide is successfully rolling out into Newcastle, equipping some families in high deprivation with online access. The scheme is aimed at families in receipt of certain benefits with children in Years 3 to 9, who haven't already had a computer through another grant programme. 1,112 Newcastle families benefited between January and March 2010. Research has shown that pupils could improve by two grades at GCSE if they have a computer at home, and it is hoped the scheme will narrow the educational divide between children receiving free school meals and their peers.

One to One tuition in Newcastle

This programme has been providing additional support in maths and/or English to children who are not currently reaching their potential. Evaluation shows that pupils show higher levels of engagement in class with increased self esteem and more positive attitudes to learning following tuition. Most pupils make at least one sub level of progress and in some cases as many as four.

Summer rock school gig

The annual gig to showcase our local rock bands will be held on 5 July at O2 Academy, Westgate Road. Six bands from Gosforth Central Middle, Gosforth High, Benfield, Walbottle Campus, Kenton and Heaton Manor will play from 7pm. Tickets are available from Newcastle Music Service on 0191 278 2965.

Make a Positive Contribution



Children and young people's priorities

As part of the development of the Newcastle Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14, we have been consulting children and young people on what is important to them. Detailed feedback from this consultation is currently being collated so that specific suggestions can feed into the planning, but initial feedback is that there is general consensus around their five priorities and a view that they will make a difference to children and young people.

Children and young people in Newcastle want:

- to live in a city where everyone is respected for who they are
- to be recognised as experts in our own lives and issues
- to feel safe and happy in our environment
- to have opportunities and a choice of things to do
- to have someone who is there for us when we need it.

Newcastle Youth Council Elected

The 30 members of the UK's first independent Youth Council have just been voted in. The elections were organised by the West End Youth Enquiry Service, part of Children North East. 52 candidates aged 13-18 stood to represent four areas of the city - East, West, North and Central. In total 8,695 votes were cast (50% online) by young people aged 11-18 who either live, work or study in Newcastle. The new Youth Council will have the freedom to set its own priorities and agenda, as well as control its own budget.

Places to go, things to do

This summer a wide range of events and activities are planned in Sure Start Children's Centres, play schemes and other settings across the city. These include:

- East End Family Fun Run on 3 July
- Newcastle Mela on 31 July and 1 August
- Lemington Summer Festival on 10 July
- Byker Free Family Fun Day on 12 August

Newcastle Families Information Service can help families find things to do, places to go and childcare during the summer. See www.newcastlefis.org.uk or phone 0191 277 4133.

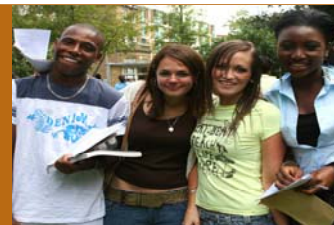
Investing in Children Status for Sure Start North Children's Centre

Congratulations to Sure Start North Children's Centre for achieving 'Investing in Children Status' for their commitment to listening to and promoting change for young children.

Queen's birthday honours

Congratulations to Jacqueline Fisher, Principal, Newcastle College who has been awarded the CBE for services to local and national Further Education. And also to Andrew Gibson who was awarded a MBE for services to young people in Scotswood.

Achieve Economic Wellbeing



New Sure Start Children's Centre website

The five children centre areas; North, East, Central, Outer West and West Riverside have launched the new citywide website which helps parents to identify the Sure Start Children's Centre in their area through a postcode search, which then directs them straight to their centre's individual website.

View the Sure Start Newcastle website at: www.surestartnewcastlecc.org.uk

Teenagers to work

Last year, 9 looked after young people successfully completed a one week work placement in various departments at Newcastle City Council. This programme is a key component of the Corporate Parenting Strategy and contributes to the council's commitment to support access to employment for LAC by offering work experience that may influence their career choices in the future. This year, the council is about to welcome over 20 young people aged 14-16 on placements, as the programme builds on its initial success.

Newcastle College achievements

In 2009, more Newcastle College students gained places in higher education than any other institution in the Tyne and Wear and Northumberland areas. Newcastle College is already confirmed as the best performing general further education college for 16-18 year old attainment in England.

And it's not just the college that's high performing. Their music students have just won Gold and Silver at the WorldSkills UK Popular Music national finals, a horticulture student is celebrating after receiving one of only 14 places on the prestigious three-year Kew Gardens Diploma, and a trainee stylist from the college was recently crowned Britain's top college hairdresser.

Sure Start Children's Centres (SSCC) Ofsted inspection pilot

In November 2009, with four days notice, Sure Start West Riverside Children's Centres were the focus of an Ofsted pilot inspection. As the inspection was a pilot, the final report will not be published on the Ofsted website, but it has been circulated locally including to parents.

All SSCCs will be subject to inspections from 1 April 2010 after 3-years of operation. The Inspectors rated Sure Start West Riverside Children's Centres as 'Good' with many 'Outstanding' features. This independent validation confirms that the contribution of integrated early childhood services through SSCCs is improving outcomes and narrowing the gap for young children and families.

The two significant areas identified for improvement were to build on the self evaluation process (which was a new process for all SSCCs) and to set challenging targets for each centre. These are currently being set as part of the annual conversation, in relation to reach of each centre, reach in the most disadvantaged SOA, and the most vulnerable children.

Vulnerable Groups



Hadrian Schools “Confident Parenting” DVD and training seminars

Hadrian School has been holding “Confident Parenting” sessions for over a decade. The groups are open for all parents across Newcastle to attend and are designed to aid parents and give them confidence to handle challenging behaviour issues with their child.

The Confident Parenting Handbook and DVD are the result of this work. They are designed to help empower new group facilitators to support parents on their difficult road to confident parenting. This resource has been nominated for two local NHS trust awards and has just won the British Institute of Learning Disability (BILD) award for innovation.

The official launch of the Handbook and DVD is on 1 July at Hadrian School. Any profits from the sale of these will go to HEADS, the charity based at Hadrian school for additional resources for the children.

Supporting refugee, asylum seeking and migrant children and families

8 July or 16 September, 9.45am to 2.00pm at Brunswick Methodist Church

The Children’s Society is running free workshops on the above dates, for professionals whose work includes contact with refugee, asylum seeking or migrant families.

To find out more visit: www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk/einformdocs/0624_3.pdf
to register complete the booking form: www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk/einformdocs/0624_4.doc
or phone 0191 256 5037.

Deaf CAMHS training

Northumbria University and the North East Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Commissioning Unit are offering free training and education opportunities in the field of Deaf CAMHS. This pilot project will be the first of its kind and will be ideal for any individual working (or interested in working) with Deaf children and families.

The course includes 10 x 3 hour taught sessions over a period of 10 months (from September 2010 to June 2011) and is suitable for practitioners from healthcare, social care, education and a range of other backgrounds. Places are limited, so for further information or an application contact Philip Hodgson by phone 0191 215 6225 or email: philip2.hodgson@northumbria.ac.uk

Putting words into actions - Annual parent carer conference

This week the third annual parent carer conference took place. The event provided delegates with an update on Aiming High for Disabled Children and the actions agreed against last year’s priorities. Parent carers were also asked to decide on priorities for 2010/2011. A conference report will be made available and highlighted in our July newsletter.

Strategic Management and Transformation



Newcastle City Council and Newcastle Primary Care Trust Joint Board

Newcastle City Council and Newcastle Primary Care Trust have formed a Joint Board to oversee and improve co-ordination in relation to joint posts, joint provision of particular services or the provision by one partner of services on behalf of the other, development of joint arrangements such as strategic planning, service development and commissioning, improving the sharing of intelligence and data, and exploring further opportunities to jointly plan and develop assets. Meetings will be held in public.

Safe; Equal; Achieving

Newcastle Children's Trust Board (NCTB) has considered the responses to the initial consultation on the draft priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2011- 14. 36 formal responses were received in total from individuals, organizations or partnerships. Most responses felt that all of the draft priorities were important. There was a recognition of interdependency between some of the outcomes and that some could not be (or would be more difficult to) achieve if others hadn't been.

NCTB has subsequently agreed a smaller number of strategic priorities with ten 'outcomes' grouped under them that ensure that all our statutory requirements and local needs are covered. For 2011-14 our strategic priorities are:

1. **Keeping children and young people safe and supporting families (SAFE)**
2. **Reducing inequalities (EQUAL)**
3. **Raising aspirations, achievements and opportunities (ACHIEVING)**

Many comments were received about areas that will be included in the underpinning parts of the plan such as workforce development issues, commissioning and performance management arrangements and targeting of services to need and in different parts of the city. There were also comments about particular groups of children and young people which will be addressed through the more detailed planning phase.

The planning phase will kick off on 22 July with a Turn the Curve "Be a part of it" event for key stakeholders and will continue into the autumn with wide engagement of services, parents and carers, and children and young people. NCTB will formally consult on the draft action plans in the autumn before signing off the CYPP in 2011.

Tellus 5 survey of children and young people

The Government has announced an end to the national Tellus Survey as part of its commitment to reduce the burdens which data collection imposes on schools and local authorities. The decision is with immediate effect, which means the Tellus5 survey will not be delivered as planned in the Autumn Term. This suggests some review of the National Indicators set, as Tellus is the current means of assessing children and young people's participation in positive activities (NI110) and experiences of bullying (NI69), amongst others.