

Services Newsletter

March 2009

Issue 15

Introduction from Catherine Fitt, Executive Director of Children's Services

Dear everyone

Hopefully you will have heard by now that Newcastle City Council was awarded Beacon Status for our work in Tackling and Preventing Child Poverty. Our application which was on behalf of all the partners that we work with was outstanding and the assessment that we received indicated that other people thought it was outstanding as well. This is the first time that Newcastle has been awarded Beacon Status and as you can imagine I am absolutely delighted that it is for tackling this really tough issue. This shows the level of aspiration which we have here and our absolute determination to improve things for children and their families.

The members of the city council's Strategic Leadership Team would very much like to say thank you to everybody who has been involved and we will arrange a celebration event at the Mansion House in the very near future. We will then be able to invite all the people who have been involved in any way to come along and just for an hour celebrate the fact that excellence in Newcastle has been recognised.

Best wishes

Catherine Fitt



Be healthy

Vision for a 21st century children's health service

The Government has recently published its long term vision of a 21st century children's health service aimed at improving the health and wellbeing of all children.

The joint Dept of Health and Dept of Children, Schools and Families strategy "Healthy lives, brighter future: the strategy for children and young people's health" sets out the plans for universal, targeted and specialist support across three life stages – early years and pregnancy; school-age children; and young people – as well as the additional support for children and young people in need of acute or ongoing healthcare.

The full strategy and an executive summary can be downloaded from <http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk>

Latest teenage conception rates published

Teenage pregnancy continues to be one of the key challenges for children's services as latest government figures show that teenage pregnancy rates in Newcastle rose from 53.4 to 58.0 per 1000 females aged 15-17 in 2007. This is in line with a similar increase in our statistical neighbourhoods from 51.0 to 58.1 between 2006 and 2007.

As the figures date back to 2007 they predate many of the local initiatives that have been introduced, which should have a positive impact in the future. These include:

- A Teenage Pregnancy Support team working with teenage parents
- Teenage Kicks, an outreach team working particularly in areas where there are greater numbers of teenage conceptions.
- Mint, an award-winning magazine aimed at young women which gives them the information they need to make informed choices about their future in a way which is fun and relevant.

The coming year will also see the opening of a new city centre sexual health centre near the Laing Art Gallery, improving access to local sexual health services for young people.

To read Newcastle's Teenage Pregnancy Strategy 2009-2011 click here: www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk/core.nsf/a/mcs_teenpregstrat

The Health in Pregnancy Grant

If you work with pregnant mothers you may want to let them know that they are entitled to a new one off payment of £190.

From April 2009, pregnant mothers can claim a one-off, tax-free payment from H M Revenue & Customs (HMRC) if they are at least 25 weeks pregnant. The payment is called 'Health in Pregnancy Grant' and is to help prepare for the birth of their baby. Their due date needs to be on or after 6 April 2009 for them to make a claim.

Read more: <http://campaigns.direct.gov.uk/money4mum2be/>



Be healthy

Parent-carer family fun day

108 parent-carers and family members attended a family fun day at the Alan Shearer Centre on 15 February 2009 aimed specifically at families of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Feedback was very positive with requests for more days like this for the whole family. Here are just some of the comments.

About the fun day:

- “It’s been great because its not like just going to soft play where everyone’s like “I’m not playing with (my brother) because he talks funny” - here everyone’s like that, its brilliant”
- “Enjoyed it very much. It was nice to be with other families who have brothers and sisters who are disabled”

About improvements they’d like to see:

- “Better communication between agencies”
- “Have somewhere to go and talk with other brothers and sisters who have a disabled brother or sister.”
- “Appropriate flexible childcare for all ages of disabled children and young people”
- “When a need is identified by professionals e.g. speech therapy, to ensure there is a service to provide for that need”

All comments made by parents and young people will be fed back to the Children with Disabilities and Special Needs Management Partnership. For more information contact Jacqui Adams by phone: 0191 2774605 or e-mail: jacqui.adams@newcastle.gov.uk

Nominations for the 2009 WellChild awards

The WellChild Awards celebrate the bravery of children and young people coping with serious and complex illnesses and conditions – and also honours the dedicated doctors, nurses, teachers, brothers and sisters who go the extra mile to make a difference to the lives of sick children. Nominations for the fifth annual awards are currently being invited to find and reward the most deserving children, young people, health professionals and school professionals. The winners will receive their awards at a star studded event in London in September.

For information on how to make a nomination and for details of the various categories, please visit www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk/core.nsf/a/wellchild_awards. The closing date for nominations is 20 May 2009.

Stay safe

Safe At Home - the National Home Safety Equipment Scheme

DCSF have launched 'Safe At Home' an £18m National Home Safety Equipment Scheme which will be run by the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) until March 2011. With children from disadvantaged families statistically far more likely to have an accident, the main focus of Safe At Home is to provide home safety equipment to the most disadvantaged families in the 141 areas with the highest accident rates.

Stay safe

Safe At Home - the National Home Safety Equipment Scheme

Continued.

The scheme will be delivered locally through schemes run by partners such as Sure Start Children's Centres, local authorities, Primary Care Trusts and charities.

RoSPA is organising information workshops throughout England to inform interested organisations how they can become involved with the scheme. Details about the information workshops, how the national scheme will operate and who is eligible, can be found at www.rospa.com/nhses/



CAF update

A core principle of CAF is the active participation of families throughout the process, from consenting to a CAF through to developing and delivering the action plan.

The Participation Unit has recently carried out an evaluation with parents and carers who have been involved in the CAF process. The feedback about their experience has been extremely positive and encouraging. Some of their comments include:

- On the Lead Professional, "You know which professional to contact about anything instead of contacting lots and getting passed around".
- On the CAF process, "My daughter is a different person, happier at school and at home".
- On the Team around the Child meeting, "It was the first time I felt listened to".
- On Information Sharing, "It can only benefit those involved, saves repeating yourself to lots of professionals".

Respondents were also asked what advice would they give a friend who was about to be involved in the CAF Process. The overwhelming response was to "Go for it", and several parents reported that they had already recommended CAF to friends and family.

For more details about CAF or a copy of the evaluation report visit the Newcastle Children's Services website: www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk/caf

Enjoy and achieve

Building schools for the future

West Jesmond primary has become the final school in the first phase of Newcastle's £180m Building Schools for the Future project to move into its state-of-the-art new home.

The new school features cutting-edge facilities, including a huge music studio, a covered outdoor play area and several "breakout" areas outside of the classroom where pupils can relax with friends and which can also be used as an extra IT resource and for after-school activities. The school also features wireless ICT facilities throughout so that pupils and staff can access computers anywhere in the school.

7500 students from across the city are now benefiting from schools which have been totally rebuilt or refurbished and modernised from top to bottom, with West Jesmond the final school to have transformation work finish. Work has already been completed at Thomas Bewick School, Walbottle Campus, Kenton College and Canning Street, Walkergate, and Stocksfield Avenue primary schools, as well as the first phase of an ongoing refurbishment of Benfield School.

Enjoy and achieve

Building schools for the future

Continued.

Attention will now switch to phase two of the project - currently at the design stage - where a further 6395 students from across the city will see their schools transformed. Phase two schools include St. Cuthbert's RC High, St. Mary's RC School, Gosforth High, Gosforth Junior High, Trinity School, Sir Charles Parsons School and Walker Technology College.

Make a positive contribution

New myplace city centre youth facility

We are delighted to confirm we are one of the 41 local authorities who have been successful with a bid to the national myplace programme. This government programme to develop exemplary youth centres is in response to feedback from young people wanting things to do and places to go.

Our £5M project will transform an unused building on Vine Place, next to City Hall and City Pool, into a world class youth facility making a huge range of activities and support services available under one roof seven days a week.

Young people have actively participated in the development of our bid and also played a central role as part of the national awarding committee in awarding the funding to those projects that they consider world-class and which will meet the needs of all young people, now and in the future.

The Newcastle centre will include facilities such as a youth only café, space for sports such as basketball, netball and football - and even "I-ball" (a range of sports played illuminated by ultraviolet), music decks, a recording studio, a chill out zone, free internet access and a hairdressing salon for training. Support services will be available to young people in the centre and these will include agencies which provide careers advice and guidance, counselling and sex and relationship education amongst other things.

All myplace projects are driven by young people's views and needs and developed through cross-sector partnership between local authorities and organisations from the third and private sectors. Our partners are expected to include Streetwise, Barnardos, Newcastle Primary Care Trust, Fairbridge Newcastle, Newcastle College and Newcastle Connexions Youth Service.



Executive Director of Children's Services Catherine Fitt and Youth Manager Don Irving receiving a cheque for Myplace@vine street

Date for your diary

The Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board and Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership annual conference will be held on **Monday 1 June 2009**. The conference will be held at the Springfield Centre between 8.45am and 1.00pm.

To reserve a place at the conference, contact Tina Lisle by phone 0755449230 or e-mail: tina.lisle@newcastle.gov.uk

Make a positive contribution

Parents and carers as equal partners

If your work involves interaction with parents and carers, you may want to let them know about an exciting opportunity that is being developed. Northumbria University and the West end Health Resource Centre will be developing training courses for parents and carers to help them actively engage with Children's Services. The courses will also help to provide parents and carers with the skills to encourage other services that they are involved with to actively engage parents and carers.

Participation enables parents and carers to get involved in decision-making processes by contributing their valuable local knowledge of local needs. This training also has the potential for peer support between parents.

For further information contact Val Chadwick, Parent and Carer Participation Coordinator on 0191 2606512.

Tellus4 Survey

Tellus is an annual survey of children and young people across England covering the five Every Child Matters outcomes. It asks about their experiences and views of their life, their school and their local area.



How will Tellus4 differ from previous Tellus surveys?

DCSF have taken over responsibility for the survey from Ofsted and have contracted NFER (National Foundation for Educational Research) to manage the survey on their behalf.

There are a number of differences between Tellus4 and previous Tellus surveys. The key differences are:

- Schools will receive their own feedback of the responses from their pupils.
- The survey will be live in the autumn term 2009 (rather than the summer term as in previous Tellus surveys) with national results published in January 2010.
- Local authorities (LAs) and schools will be given the opportunity to select a small number of additional questions from a question bank to support their priorities.
- Schools will have the opportunity to include additional classes, in Years 6, 8 and 10, in order to collect data from a larger number of pupils.
- There will be the facility for schools and LAs to do further analysis of their data in February - March 2010
- Specialists are working on versions that will make it more accessible to children with learning difficulties and disabilities by providing a range of more accessible formats
- Curriculum materials are being developed for schools to use in PSHE and Citizenship around the Tellus survey

For more information and to contribute to the DCSF consultation on Tellus4, log on the Tellus website: www.tellussurvey.org.uk

Have you missed an edition of the Children's Services Newsletter? Don't worry, there are archive copies available on our website www.newcastlechildrenservices.org.uk/news

Make a positive contribution

Newcastle Youth Opportunity Fund (YOF)

Following extensive consultation with organisations working with young people we are pleased to announce the launch of two new initiatives:

Do It Yourself – Small grants direct to young people - £200- £1,000

The Do It Yourself initiative will be distributed through a rolling programme and is aimed at projects where young people are organising and running their own activities and projects. To access the fund practitioners will be required to complete an initial one day training session and become members of the Youth Opportunity Fund practitioner network. Training and membership are **free**.

Greenfield Opportunities – Funds to develop new initiatives—Up to £1,000

This will be accessed through the normal grant round but aimed at practitioners who wanted to develop new pieces of work where young people were not already involved in projects/services. Grants of up to £1,000 will be available without young people's involvement.

The dates for the YOT/YCF rounds are 1 May, 1 July, 1 October, 1 December. Application forms and guidelines are available from yof@thestrategy.org. For further information on either fund or to book a place on the training days please contact either Maureen Wallace or Lynne Percival on 0191 2742429.

Achieve economic wellbeing

Newcastle awarded Beacon Status for Tackling and Preventing Child Poverty

We are pleased to confirm that Newcastle has been awarded Beacon Status for our outstanding work in the area of preventing and tackling child poverty. We were one of only three local authorities to achieve Beacon Status in this category following a vigorous 3 stage application and selection process.



The basis for our application explained how we have achieved a reduction in the level of child poverty through our strong partnerships on the ground and at a strategic level. We have brought together economic partners and Children's Services to support families in a way that builds on their families' own strengths enabling parents to move into employment and training, increasing their aspirations for themselves and their children.

The Beacon awards recognise excellence and innovation in efforts by local authorities to improve the quality of life of residents and communities. Awards are made by government ministers based on recommendations made by an independent advisory panel.

Communities Minister Sadiq Khan MP, who attended the awards, said: "My congratulations go out to Newcastle City Council. Newcastle City Council is among the top performers in their field, setting the standard for innovation, service excellence and improvement."

Achieve economic wellbeing

Newcastle awarded Beacon Status for Tackling and Preventing Child Poverty

Continued.

The final assessment judged us as “outstanding” in:

- Leadership, vision and strategy
- Community and customer engagement and empowerment
- Actions
- Partnerships
- Sharing best practice
- And “excellent plus” in terms of outcomes.

It is an honour for Newcastle to receive this recognition for our expertise and efforts in tackling child poverty, and this award is a testament to the hard work and creativity of our staff, partners and families.

Analysis shows Newcastle is reducing the numbers of children living in poverty at a faster rate than the north east and England as a whole and while we have a lot of hard work still ahead of us, the city can be very proud of the progress being made and we have a lot of ideas and information to share with other local authorities. We also need to continue to learn ourselves from others.

Childcare sufficiency update

The first Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (CSA) was completed at the end of March 2008. A delivery plan was written in response and went to the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership CYPSP Executive in November 2008. A team has now been appointed to lead on the new duty, working in partnership with Private, Voluntary and Independent childcare providers across the City. The first annual refresh of the data will be completed by April 2009.

Newcastle held its first annual childcare providers conference on 3 March at St James Park where over 80 childcare providers helped to shape the work of the team in the coming year. This is being repeated on the evening of the 11 March to ensure all registered childminders are able to contribute.

General News

Newcastle event – for women interested in becoming involved in public life

A national cross party taskforce was established in 2008 with the remit to encourage and empower minority ethnic women to become involved in public service. Minority ethnic women make up less than 1% of councillors in England and there is a long way to go to enlist 1000, which is the number needed to be representative.

The taskforce is holding a free regional event on 20 March 2009 from 10.00am - 2.00pm at Newcastle Civic Centre aimed at encouraging all women who are interested in local issues, particularly those from minority ethnic backgrounds, to consider the positive benefits of public service.

Please pass this information to individuals or organisations who you think might wish to attend. More details including how to book on the event are on the website

www.livegroup.co.uk/BAME/

General News

City Council Transformation Programme

The City Council has now formally agreed its budget for 2009/10. To balance the budget, councillors have approved a programme to protect and enhance front-line services to the public whilst saving £20 million over the next year by changing the way the Council works.

The Corporate Transformation Programme (CTP) will make big changes to our structure, organisation and buying patterns in an effort to refocus all our attentions on front-line services to the public.

Where we've changed the way that we work in the past in different parts of the Council, and achieved savings and service improvements through the efficiencies we've gained, we've not previously looked at the ways we work across the whole of the Council. This is doubly important now we face a budget gap next year of £20 million, due to a low government grant increase, growing demand on services, and increased costs and reduced income due to the economic downturn.

By being more efficient behind the scenes, the public will notice a real difference, for example in having their calls answered more quickly, or through having to fill in fewer forms. **Importantly, no front line services will be cut.**

There are 10 projects in total within the Corporate Transformation Programme:

1. Simplifying management structures
2. Review of administration structures
3. Procurement
4. Review of how we manage our 300+ buildings
5. Review of how we organise and procure transport
6. Review of local ward-based services
7. Review of how we deliver strategic activities such as business planning, policy, performance management, communications and marketing, and project management
8. Improving customer access to services by, for example, reducing the 60+ telephone numbers advertised to the public and improving web content and transactions possible over the internet, at times more convenient to the customer
9. Adult Services transformation to invest more on an early intervention and prevention scheme to provide intensive care at home, for example to older people leaving hospital after a fall, which is proven to enable people to make a fuller recovery and regain their independence so in due course they want and need less long-term ongoing care. This is about reshaping the service, not about cutting or withdrawing existing services
10. Children's Services Assess and Decide.

Children's Services Assess and Decide – overview

This project is carrying out a review of all assessment processes across the directorate to identify areas where we may be able to streamline our approach, rationalise the number of processes or steps within them that we undertake, and help us move more quickly towards the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) being our one assessment tool. In addition this project will be assessing where there are any simple transactions that might be better undertaken through the corporate contact centre.

General News

City Council Transformation Programme

Continued.

Following this initial review, we will be in a better position to reorganise the use and allocation of our resources to be used most effectively, to provide our service users with the services they need, from the right people, at the right time, in the most cost-effective way.

We expect to achieve the following benefits:

- Easier access to services for children, young people and families with additional support needs.
- Effective co-ordination, targeting and allocation of available resources, to support front line delivery.
- An enhanced culture of early intervention and preventative work, with safe referral to Children's Social Care when required.
- Financial efficiencies through the streamlining of processes and the refocus / realignment of existing capacity.

The transformation programme does not apply to schools.

The first tasks planned for the project are currently underway. These are:

1. To work with services to understand current processes and assessments being used, in order to understand the breadth of opportunity for streamlining activities.
2. To identify other review work underway which may need to become part of, or align with approach being developed within this project.
3. Gather intelligence from other authorities who have already made significant headway in streamlining their assessments, from whom we can learn, and also gather good practice from our own services on which we can build.

As the project gathers pace we will be involving groups of staff from across services who can help us understand in more detail the current processes they use, and help to identify ways in which they might become more efficient and provide the best service and value to our customers.

There are critical dependencies between this area of activity and how we engage with and work jointly with our partners. To help manage these links we will be utilising existing communication channels, plus pulling together some specific focus groups with key stakeholders, (including input from our service users), to ensure that the future operating model for Children's Services Directorate continues and increases the effective working relationships with other organisations, whilst at the same time maintaining and continually improving the services and support provided to children, young people and their families.

Details of how you can contribute to these discussions will follow in due course as the communication and engagement for the project are formalised.

ChYPiN bulletin

Latest edition of ChYPiN bulletin produced by the Newcastle Council for Voluntary Service is available to download at: www.cvsnewcastle.org.uk/newsletters/chypin/chypin.htm

General News

Secondment opportunities – NHS LifeChecks Project Manager (1-year) and TAMHS Project Manager (2-year)

A Project Manager is to be recruited for a 1 year secondment to lead on the introduction of the Early Years and Teen Lifechecks in Newcastle. NHS Lifecheck is an online health and wellbeing self assessment tool. Newcastle as a Communities Spearhead has been allocated funding to introduce Lifechecks. So if you are committed in addressing health inequalities and want to empower people to improve their lifestyles this could be the opportunity for you.

Newcastle has also been successful in a bid to become a Targeted Mental Health in Schools (TAMHS) phase 2 project. The aim of the project is to enable the family, school and significant others in the child's life to support and promote their emotional well-being to improve the outcomes for the child. The approach is based on the principle that the family can provide their own solution with the support of the school and professionals involved, and that this solution will be more sustainable than merely providing a service. The project team is in development and will be seeking to appoint a Project Manager who is committed to improving the mental health of children and young people on a 2 year secondment.

We want both secondment opportunities to be available to all the partners of the Children's Trust and will be as flexible as possible in the secondment arrangements to ensure the project is successful. Keep checking the Newcastle City Council jobs website www.newcastle.gov.uk/jobs over the coming weeks for more information.

Tom Adams retirement from Children North East

Best wishes to Tom Adams who will retire at the end of March after 5 years as Chief Executive of Children North East. Tom has been at the helm of the organisation for 5 years and says "I've thoroughly enjoyed my time at Children North East. However I want to have the energy to enjoy my retirement. Now is the right time to pass the mantle to someone new who will be able to take the charity in a new direction."



Tom Adams



Jeremy Cripps

Tom will be succeeded from 23 March by Jeremy Cripps who is joining Children North East from Northumberland County Council.

Jeremy has a long career in support services for children, young people and families and recently helped to establish the Families and Children's Trust in Northumberland which brings together the NHS, Social Services and Education for children and young people.

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

The Children's Services newsletter is published monthly. If you have news or information on successful initiatives to share with staff and partners please email us at childrens.services@newcastle.gov.uk or phone 0191 2777410.

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