

Welcome to the latest Darlington Children's Trust Newsletter. This issue focuses on the review of the Darlington Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2010: Volunteering and Parenting



Murray Rose Director Children's Services and Cllr Cyndi Hughes, Chair Darlington Children's Trust, the Council's Member for Children and Young People.

Darlington wins a clutch of awards for ICT in education

DARLINGTON has scooped a number of awards at the Northern Grid for Learning ICT in Education Awards.

The Council's Learning Technologies Team, community interest company Humantics and a group of young people from the Borough, won an award for an internet safety film they created as a result of the tragic death of Darlington College student Ashleigh Hall, who was murdered by paedophile Peter Chapman. The film they made – 'Choices... a Click too far' was winner of the Digital Media category.

It forms part of a pack of training materials called E-Safety for All, created by the Council's Learning Technologies Team which provides teachers with resources for teaching internet safety to children from nursery age up to further education. There has been interest in the E-Safety packs from local authorities all over the UK.

Cockerton CE Primary received the overall excellence award for ICT at the ceremony at Gosforth Park Hotel in Newcastle, in recognition of their commitment to using ICT across the curriculum, and with parents.

Judges also mentioned the impact of the Council's Learning Technologies Team in embedding ICT in learning in new school buildings.

ICT subject leader at St John's Primary, Mark Darling, won the Teaching Category and Firthmoor Primary was highly commended for the use of ICT in Personal, Health and Social Education after it produced a documentary looking at whether primary school-aged children should use social networking sites. Firthmoor Primary won two other awards for a presentation on promoting the North-East and using computer graphics and art.

Councillor Cyndi Hughes, Darlington Council's Cabinet member for Children and Young People, said: "I am extremely proud of these incredible achievements. These awards are an acknowledgment and celebration of the high quality ICT work being done in our schools and a recognition of the great collaborative work between the Council, schools, young people and private companies. Congratulations to everyone involved.

"As a community we are committed to driving home the internet safety messages that are vital in ensuring children and young people can be safe on-line.

"It is a testament to the strength of the people of Darlington, that having been so shocked and saddened by the death of Ashleigh, so many of them have come together to create something so positive."

Darlington Children and Young People's Plan Review 2009-2010

The second annual review of Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) 2008-2011 has been carried out. The purpose of undertaking the review is to:

- Recognise the progress achieved in 2009/10 in relation to the priority commitments made in the CYPP
- Identify changes in the needs of children's and families'
- Identify the key areas we need to improve.

The key achievements for Darlington Children's Trust in 2009-2010 are:

- The number of young people screened for Chlamydia increased significantly in Darlington in 2009-2010
- Under-18 conceptions have reduced in Darlington. We have achieved a reduction of 20.1% against a national average reduction of 13.3%
- Progress with schools participating and achieving National Healthy School Status has improved in the last 12 months
- Darlington has successfully increased long-term stability of placements for Looked After Children (LAC)
- The number of completed Common Assessment Frameworks (CAF) has continued to increase with 150 completed in 2009-2010
- Darlington has continued to reduce the number of children aged 0 -15 killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents
- Darlington's 5+ A*-C GCSE performance continued to improve with 51.8% of learners achieving 5+ A*-C GCSE's in the summer of 2009
- The number of schools providing access to extended services for children and families in Darlington has also improved

- We have continued to improve the number of young people achieving both level 2 and level 3 qualifications by the age of 19
- We have increased the number of young people in receipt of free school meals at age 15 years who achieve level 2 qualifications by the age of 19
- We have narrowed the gap in level 3 achievement by age 19 between those young people eligible for free school meals and those not eligible.

The main areas for improvement for Darlington that have been identified by the CYPP review are:

- Although under-18 conception rates have reduced work will continue to sustain this downward trend
- Although reported alcohol/drug misuse has reduced, sustained attention is required
- Darlington will mitigate and reduce the proportion of children living in poverty, especially in the current economic climate
- Although obesity rates for reception and year 6 aged children have reduced work will continue to tackle childhood obesity
- Darlington will reduce the number of school exclusions
- Darlington will continue to improve provision for disabled children, their families and carers
- Darlington will reduce the number of youth related anti-social behaviour incidents
- Darlington will tackle under performance in services for children working with vulnerable children and young people.

To view the CYPP review and the planned actions for 2010-2011 please visit Darlington Children's Trust website(www.darlington.gov.uk/children/childrenstrust)

Darlington Children's Trust Parenting Support

Whilst recognising that the majority of parents in Darlington do an excellent job in bringing up their children, and that parenting for the most part is a private and personal thing, from time to time there may be a need to seek advice, guidance or support. Darlington offers a range of support for parents and carers from the early years through the teenage years to the young adult years (for parents with disabled children)

What we offer:-

- One to one support, either at home or in an agreed venue
- Advice, guidance and support at a variety of settings
- A range of Parenting Programmes operating throughout the year which are aimed at building upon existing parenting skills and knowledge, understanding and managing behaviour, improving communication and building positive relationships within the family
- National Parenting Week Events.

Parenting Programmes in Darlington

Evidence Based Parenting Programmes are run across Darlington by trained practitioners. A timetable of these programmes is available on the Service Directory.

Mellow Parenting

The Mellow Parenting Programme is aimed at parents of children between the ages of 0-5 who

have identified relationship problems. It relies on the assumption that parents' own experience of being parented, and their current relationships, help or hinder the development of their relationship with their children.

Webster Stratton: Incredible Years

This programme promotes the protective factors such as positive family and peer support, reduces risk factors such as harsh discipline and neglect, reduces children's aggressive and oppositional behaviour and increases their social, emotional and academic competence.

Strengthening Families 10-14

The Strengthening Families 10-14 Parenting Programme is aimed at parents and carers of children and young people aged between 10-14, although we have extended the age range from 8 - 16 years to provide early support and to encompass older children whose parents may be on a Parenting Order. The aims of the programme are to reduce children's behavioural and conduct problems; prevent substance misuse; prevent later anti-social behaviour by increasing parents and children's self confidence and self esteem.

Parents in Darlington who have received support say:

"Really good experience for us as a family".

For further information contact: Nova Talbot on 01325 388343

Support for parents of disabled children

Aiming High for Disabled Children is a Government initiative to transform services for disabled children and their families.

There is a core offer to parent/carers of access and empowerment where parents must be actively involved in planning and shaping services and receive timely information and support. Through Aiming High, Darlington has a parent led group called CDCD (Carers of Disabled Children in Darlington) which is the focus of parental support.

Through this group parents can access information, training, support and be involved in the commissioning and monitoring of services for disabled children. There are monthly information sessions.

For more information about CDCD and how to get support contact Jacki Hiles DAD (01325) 489999 email jacki@darlingtondisability.org www.communigate.co.uk/ne/cdcd

Parent Partnership Service

The Parent Partnership Service is an information and support service for families which have children with additional needs. The service signposts families to other services and groups, will explain educational procedures in straight forward terms, attend meetings, help fill in forms, provide clear and easy to understand information on a variety of different issues relevant to the child's needs and offer an impartial and confidential service. Parents and carers can refer themselves. There is an independent website as well as information on the DBC web pages. www.darlingtonpps.co.uk

For further information contact Sue Hall on (01325) 254548.

Youth Offending: Parenting Support

The aim of the Parenting Team within the Youth Offending Service is to assist parents and carers of children and young people with offending and/or anti-social behaviour. By providing 1:1 advice and support as well as evidence based parenting programmes to Statutory and Voluntary Families. Our service is offered borough-wide and is available during normal working hours Monday to Friday for 52 weeks in the year. Additional early evening sessions are available to meet client needs.

For further information contact Pauline Jones on (01325) 346861.

Darlington Disabled Parents' Group

This user led group, was set up recently in Darlington with the support of Darlington

Association on Disability and through the Capacity Builders project. It was proposed that the group could work in several ways, including:

- A drop-in group for a chat
- Offering resources, information on legislation etc.
- Raising awareness
- Creating a network
- A peer group - offering support to other parents.

The group is always looking for new members. Meetings are held on the last Friday of every month from 10am to noon at the Direct Payments Support Service, Enterprise House, Valley Street, Darlington.

Telephone Jenny Joyce on (01325) 360524 for more information.

Children's Centres

The Whole Family Care Team includes Health Visitors, School Nurses, Early Years Practitioners, Community Health Nurses and Education Family Support Officers. The team works in and out of Children's Centres and schools to provide parenting support on a one to one or group basis from pre-birth to 18 years. The Health Visiting Team is there to provide support in the early years when attachment and positive parenting can determine future outcomes for children. The School Nurses and Family Support Officers help parents to deal with challenging behaviour and aim to improve the quality of family life.

For more information on Parenting Support please contact Suzanne Lamb, Whole Family Care Co-ordinator, Mount Pleasant Children's Centre on (01325) 488176.

Family Learning

Family Learning in Darlington offers a wide range of activities and courses where parents, carers and children are involved in learning together. The programmes can be adapted to families needs and can be run in schools, nurseries, libraries, community centres, children's centres and the home.

The activities are designed to help families to enjoy learning, have fun and keep up-to-date with children's learning. All programmes are accredited from entry to Level 2, with an opportunity to undertake a national test at the end of the course.

Family Learning is:

• Fun • Free • For All

For more details please contact (01325) 248021 or e-mail alaine.mccartney@darlington.gov.uk



Additional Future Jobs Fund Resources

The Future Jobs Fund has so far created 57 job opportunities in Darlington since 2009, and now the Council has secured a further £299,000 to extend the scheme and create 46 more jobs.

The funding from the Department for Work and Pensions has been provided to help 19 to 24-year-olds who have been out of work for more than ten months and other people who live in unemployment hotspot areas, which include Bank Top, Central, Cockerton West, Eastbourne, Haughton East, Lascelles, North Road, Northgate, Park East and Pierremont wards.

The aim is to help them back into a sustainable job combined with on the job training so they can overcome any barriers which are preventing them from finding work.

The Future Jobs Fund is a national fund of around £1bn to support the creation of jobs for long term unemployed young people and others who face disadvantages in the labour market.

As Darlington does not have access to key regeneration funding like the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, there were limited employment projects and opportunities in the Borough compared to other Tees Valley areas. The Future Jobs Fund was therefore crucial in ensuring unemployed residents could access employment opportunities with training and support.

In early 2010 the Council worked with third sector organisations to pull together a bid for extra funding to extend the successful scheme, which has so far seen 44 people find work.

One of them, Liz Les, took up a post as Future Jobs Fund Assistant at the Council in January having graduated from university in May last year. Liz said: "Employers asked what work experience I had but having been in full-time education for so long I had little to impress the interview panel with. The scheme has given me the chance to get the experience I need."

Those wanting to get work or training through the Future Jobs Fund will need to be referred by Jobcentre Plus, which will carry out an eligibility assessment and analysis of their strengths, weaknesses and identify potential barriers to employment. Once employed through the scheme, the employer and placement officer will dedicate time to help the new employee to address those barriers so they can be overcome. The funding secured from the Future Jobs Fund for Darlington is the last available as the scheme has now been scrapped by the Government.

