

CHILDREN'S TRUST NEWS – CHANGES ON THE WAY!

To celebrate it's first birthday, Children's Trust News will have an exciting new look – watch out for it landing on your desk and don't forget that back issues will be available to download from the Children's Trust website.



If you wish to make any comments about this newsletter, want to write an article for a future issue or have a question about the Children's Trust, please contact Kathryn Rutherford, Communications Officer, Children's Services, 50 Fawcett Street, Sunderland SR1 1RF. Tel: 0191 566 1832 email: communications@ssd.sunderland.gov.uk The deadline for the next edition is Friday 28th April 2006.



Issue 6 - March 2006



Children's Trust News

FOR EVERYONE WORKING WITH CHILDREN IN SUNDERLAND

YOU'VE ALL ACHIEVED SO MUCH!

A RECORD NUMBER OF NOMINATIONS were received for this year's annual Sunderland Young Achievers Awards.

Now adopted by other local authorities across the country and in Essen Germany, the awards are in their thirteenth year recognising the achievements of young people and their contribution to the community in Sunderland. This year's Young Achievers Awards presentation evening was held at the Stadium of Light on Thursday 23rd February.

Organised annually by the Youth Development Group, with the backing of local business, the scheme recognises and rewards young people's personal and social development and the valuable contribution that they make to the city of Sunderland.

The spectacular presentation ceremony was held at Sunderland's Stadium of Light where all winners and runners-up received a special prize and were entertained by some of the winners from the Music and Performing Arts category including Lost Dignity, who won the Group Award, The Band, who were runner up in the Group, Jane Corney and Rachel Ward who were winner and runner up respectively in the individual category and Brentt Barker, who was joined on stage by his rap group The Word.

Metro Radio Presenter, Goffy, conducted the evening with Dr Helen Paterson, Director of Children's Services, giving the welcome address to young people and their families with the Mayor, Councillor Bill Stephenson, joining business and community leaders in presenting the awards. Terry Walsh, Acting Director of Education, gave the closing remarks and Sunderland A.F.C. Footballer Nyron Nosworthy presented the Sports Awards.

Andy Neal, Assistant Manager of the Youth Development Group, said: "From the very beginning of the Young Achievers Award in 1993, the scheme has developed annually with this year being no exception. Now in its 13th year, Young Achievers continue to celebrate the many positive attributes and talents of young people in Sunderland today.



Pictured: Lost Dignity rocking the crowd

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"Young Achievers is not simply about rewarding young people who are 'the best' at something but about those who have shone through and achieved regardless of any barriers or circumstances they may have endured on their journey to success.

"This year we have received a record number of nominations and have again heard hundreds of inspirational and heart rending stories of youngsters showing bouts of courage and determination no matter what! The competition is always tough, but in our eyes all of the youngsters are winners."

Awards are given in six categories;

- Music, Drama and Art
- Sport
- Academic
- Service to the Community
- Personal Achievement
- Young Carers
- Visual Arts

As part of the Visual Arts category five young people took part in a five-day trip to Essen. Flying into Düsseldorf, the group of young people met with other young people from Germany, France and Finland.

The five took part in cultural excursions, visiting a newly acclaimed World Heritage site, an exhibition of the senses and a visit to the Rhurland Museum. The groups of young people were also met by Essen's civic dignitaries, and they were introduced to the Mayor of Essen.

However, the highlight of the trip was seeing their work exhibited at the opening of an art exhibition in Essen. Here, the young people met with a local artist who the next day had the young people at his studio for a workshop. The young people were given the title of 'The Big Five' as a theme relating to the 'big five' animals in Africa. All enjoyed the workshop immensely, finding the artist Ralph Koelman very helpful.

In February five young people from Essen visited Sunderland. They all received recognition for their artistic talents in the form of a trophy, as part of the Young Achievers Awards Ceremony at the Stadium of Light.

The Young Achievers Awards scheme has two age groupings in

each category, 11 – 14 years and 15 – 20 years and the scheme rewards the achievements of groups of young people as well as individuals.

Young people are nominated for an award by adults who have regular contact with them eg parents, teachers, youth workers, coaches etc. with application forms available from the Youth Development Group and across the City from September to November.

Winners include:

'Callum Richardson, winner of the 'Personal Achievement' category 15-20 years, suffers from Sotos Syndrome but this hasn't stopped him reaching for the stars! An ex-pupil at Castle View School, he has amazed many with his determination, perseverance and willingness to succeed - no matter what! Arriving at the school in September 2000, he struggled both academically and socially, often finding many tasks impossible to do. Refusing to give up hope, Callum always had a positive approach to life, always smiling and joking despite all he endured. Through great determination to overcome his difficulties, Callum fought back incredibly gaining 11 GCSE passes and more impressively a black belt in karate. Currently studying Bricklaying at Sunderland College, he has shown to all that he has the inner strength to overcome his learning and medical difficulties.'

'Twelve year old Nicole Richards has won the category of 'Young Carer' 11-14 years, for her devotion to care for her disabled parents. She doesn't have time to play or do the normal things that a 12 year old would do as she is too busy cooking, cleaning and helping to look after her mother who has Huntington's Disease and her father who has brain damage to the left side of his brain. She feeds her mum through a peg to the tummy every morning before school and every evening after school. Described as a 'loving child' by her father, she has had to grow up much quicker than normal, but never complains and copes amazingly well.'

'Another young carer to be proud of is Faye Newton, who has been a

carer since she could toddle about! A runner-up in the 'Young Carer' 15-20 years category, Faye has helped to look after her older sister Laura from the beginning to the end. Laura developed serious problems as a baby which left her brain damaged, blind and epileptic. Faye would be on hand to help her mother as a toddler fetching bottles, clothes and nappies for Laura. As a teenager Laura's health changed and Faye took on more responsibility helping to change and clean Laura's bed sores and attach her oxygen mask. Sadly Laura died recently leaving her family devastated. Faye is currently at college studying child care and also volunteers at the carers centre she has attended since 1997, helping with activities and sharing her experiences to help others now going through similar experiences. She has become a truly remarkable young person who continues to smile and be strong despite her loss.'

'Samuel Broadbent has come out tops in the 'Personal Achievement' 11-14 years category. Having Aspergers Syndrome hasn't stopped Sandhill View student Samuel, if anything it has made him even more eager to succeed! Since initially needing 100% support with his studies, he has gone from strength to strength and has amazingly been selected to do his SATS a year early, becoming an inspiration to all. Not only has he excelled in his learning but also has taken part in an organised sporting activity with Sunderland Football Club. There's no doubt that this boy has achieved more than anyone could have hoped or wished for, he's just fantastic!'

All the young people will be taking part in the evaluation and a consultation day on every aspect of the awards is being held in April at the Stadium of Light.



Pictured: Jane Corney showing the audience exactly why she won the Music & Performing Arts Category!

Bringing success to Sunderland



Civic leaders and senior managers of the City Council were invited to attend an event to celebrate the success of a unique educational programme in Sunderland.

Acting Director for Education in Sunderland, Terry Walsh, was among the guests at the event for Pupils First, which showcased the project's recent annual report presented in a film format.

Pupils First is an innovative project, funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and New Opportunities Fund, which focuses on raising standards within schools. The project also aims to tackle the wider issues of regeneration and unemployment by creating training and education opportunities for young people and members of the local community.

In 2005 as a result of the Pupils First project, 434 pupils improved attainment, 78 jobs were created and 51 people obtained accredited qualifications through training.

Raj Singh, Assistant Head of Service, explained: "The results of the project demonstrate the success of the project not just in schools, but in the community and the business sector."

"Pupils First has been extremely effective and this is evident in the fact that we have an additional 14 schools who joined the project in September, all of which have started to experience the benefits," Raj continued. "The event was a way of acknowledging the achievements of the project so far and through the DVD, which focuses on real people, we hope to raise awareness of the benefits that such programmes can have on youngsters, the local community and the business sector," Raj added.

SYMBOL OF HOPE

DISABLED YOUNG PEOPLE with communication and learning difficulties can now voice their opinions more easily thanks to the efforts of their fundraising friends.

Money raised by seven youngsters from Sunderland Connexions Youth Engagement Group, in partnership with Chain Reaction (a bike project where young people learn how to recycle bicycles) based at Pennywell Youth Project, was presented to the City Equals disability advocacy group. The money raised will enable its members to buy specialist computer software 'Photosymbols' which will help them get their message across through electronic technology.

'Photosymbols' is a way of communicating pictorially using photographs, cartoons, words and symbols to convey emotions, ideas and information on the screen. Meetings, for example, would be signalled by the picture of a clock set to the appropriate time while pictures of tea and coffee cups would signify refreshments were available, while a

simple face with the appropriate expression could be used to convey someone's reaction to something.

Deborah Atkinson, Inclusion Co-ordinator, said: "This new system will mean so much to the group. City Equals are looking forward to having this new technology available, they will be looking to use this resource to encourage a wider participation and a more active involvement of young people.

"The 'Photosymbols' software package will give disabled young people access to new opportunities and give them greater independence to have their views and opinions expressed and heard."

Funds were raised through a sponsored cycle ride across the width of the country from Cumbria to Sunderland, which was organised as part of Local Democracy Week and



Pictured: Jonathan Hall, Trevor Saunders and Cherise Carling, members of City Equals, receiving the cheque from a member of the Youth Engagement Group.

Youth Work Week in partnership with Sunderland Youth Development Group.

The £600 the youngsters raised will be boosted by Sunderland Connexions LMC contribution of £400, Tyne & Wear Connexions of £1,500 and £1,500 from the Sunderland Youth Development Group's Youth Strategy Team.

The £4,000 will not only provide the innovative 'Photo symbols' software programme but also the 'Site Licence' to allow it to be used by 100 users or computers within the project.

BRAND NEW BABY ROOM OPENS ITS DOORS

A brand new baby room is now open at Thorney Close Childcare Centre in Thorndale Road. The nursery can now accommodate up to 12 babies from three months to two years old and has a special sensory area designed to promote a relaxing environment for babies. Day care is also available at the centre for children up to the age of 4 years 11 months with a wide range of equipment and activities provided.

For more information, or to register your child, contact Lynn Biggins, Child Care Centre Manager, on 0191 553 4164.

Bonne shows that Learning Really does Matter



Pictured: Bonne Pennock

Since October 2004, Bonne has been supporting the Reception team at Havelock Community Primary School and has recently started on the Child Play Matters Course, a Level 1 accredited course run by Pennywell Neighbourhood Centre at Quarry View Primary School.

GYO provides learning and employment opportunities for local community members. The scheme endeavours to build self-esteem,

Bonne Pennock (18) from Ford in Sunderland is well on her way to a successful career in childcare thanks to the Pupils First Grow Your Own (GYO) Scheme.

confidence and qualifications in the local community and develop school and family relationships. It aims to encourage local adults to get involved in learning opportunities and help them overcome barriers to learning.

Bonne helps out at Havelock five days a week and attends the Child Play Matters course for two hours every week with seven other adults from the local area. The course runs for 10 weeks and focuses on child development. Commenting on the course, Bonne Pennock, said: "I've always wanted to work with children and I'm really enjoying the course. Eventually I'd either like to work in a nursery or reception class."

Terry Cross, Deputy Head at Havelock Community Primary School commenting on Bonne said:

"When Bonne started with us she lacked confidence, had very low self-esteem and would never have dreamt of enrolling on a course.

"We are absolutely delighted with her progress. Bonne is extremely conscientious and is a valued member of the team. She has a lovely relationship with both the staff and children."

In 2005 175 adults took part in learning activities through GYO ranging from entry level to foundation degree level. Michelle Burlinson, GYO Project Officer at Pupils First, added: "Bonne is an excellent example of how the GYO scheme is helping to create opportunities for individuals and raise aspirations and self-esteem."

SEEN AND HEARD - SHAPING THE FUTURE

YOUTH HAD ITS SAY at Sunderland Civic Centre with Sunderland MPs Chris Mullin, Fraser Kemp and Councillor Pat Smith invited to a presentation from the Youth Parliament.

One of Sunderland's two members of the UK Youth Parliament, Grant Hollis, and his colleagues from Sunderland's Youth Parliament took to the floor to give Sunderland's parliamentary and Cabinet decision-makers the chance to listen to young people's views on life in the City and the issues affecting them.

The presentation was based on the findings of a questionnaire circulated to 25 schools across Sunderland asking young people their views on everything from sports and leisure facilities to how they think their views are represented to those who provide such facilities.

Grant Hollis, a 16-year-old pupil at Houghton Kepier, said: "The questionnaire is a local response to a national Youth Parliament campaign to canvass the views of young people across the country on how they feel their needs are catered for.

"We had a fantastic response, 60% of all of the questionnaires were filled in and returned to us by young people through their school councils. One of the big issues raised was communication, not being given enough information on what was available and where, so in response to this the contents of this presentation will be posted on the council website and included in leaflets for distribution."

Issues raised were the need for cheaper and more frequent public transport to travel around the City to use leisure and sports facilities, more community based youth provision and involving young people in improving the image of the City through highlighting their achievements within the community.

Fraser Kemp MP (Houghton and Washington East) said: "I think today provided us with a great opportunity to listen directly to the views of young people in Sunderland, and how they think their politicians should be responding to the issues affecting them.

"It's events and initiatives like this through the Youth Parliament that helps shape future political policy and public perception of youth issues, and the value of meetings like this cannot be underestimated."

Cllr Pat Smith, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Children's Services, said: "It's great that we have someone like Grant Hollis with the enthusiasm and where-with-all through the Sunderland Youth Parliament to make this kind of this presentation possible.

"The council plan to invest more in our youth services next year and we need to encourage those who they are targetted at in our community to come forward with their views."



Pictured: front row left to right Grant Hollis and Fraser Kemp MP. Back row left to right Cllr Pat Smith and Chris Mullen MP.

REFLECTIVE ARMBANDS HELP SAVE LIVES



Reflective armbands are being issued to nursery children and school children in Sunderland to help keep them safe as they make their way to and from school.

The dark winter mornings and evenings make children more vulnerable to accidents on the roads as they may not be easily spotted by motorists. Figures from the Department of Transport show that in the UK a child is killed or injured whilst walking or cycling every 31 minutes.

A child hit by a vehicle travelling at 30 mph will have a 50% chance of survival, however at 40 mph survival is practically nil. Yet in spite of these shocking statistics, 50% of drivers admit to regularly exceeding the speed limit in a 30 mph zone.

The safety initiative, which is being promoted by Sure Start Ford in partnership with SRB5 funding, is targeting schools in the Ford Estate area of Sunderland. A large proportion of schoolchildren from this

area use public transport or bicycles to journey to and from school, putting them at greater risk of collision with a motor vehicle.

In addition to supplying the reflective armbands, child safety videos are being screened in the foyer of the Ford centre and various activities are being organised to raise awareness of safety issues with local school children and their parents. Karen Buck, the Safety Equipment Co-ordinator at Ford, commented: "For many children in this area it is necessary for them to cross busy roads on their way to and from school. At this time of year dark mornings and evenings, coupled with

icy conditions, put children at a much higher risk of being injured on our roads." Karen continued; "By issuing local children with reflective armbands and organising activities that raise awareness of safety issues, we hope to help reduce the number of accidents and keep kids safer on our streets".

Many local children are due to benefit from the initiative in Sunderland. Sure Start Ford is one of seven Children's Centres in the Sunderland area. Sure Start Children's Centres are places where children under 5 years old and their families can receive seamless holistic integrated services and

information, and where they can access help from multi-disciplinary teams of professionals. The Government is committed to delivering a Sure Start Children's Centre for every community by 2010. Sure Start Children's Centres are a vital part of the Government's 10 year childcare strategy to enable all families with children to have access to an affordable, flexible, high quality childcare place for their child.

Contact details of existing Children's Centres can be obtained from the Children's Information Service on 0191 520 5505.

SERVICE DELIVERY ROOM - Much, much more than A,B,C and 1,2,3...

Gone are the days when schools were simply places set up to teach the three Rs between the hours of 9am and 3:15pm. Today's schools offer much more and you don't have to be under 16 to use them.

Extended Schools is the name of a government programme set up to ensure that by 2010 everyone can benefit from their local school. It's about providing activities and services before and after school for the whole community to use and in Sunderland our schools are well on the way to doing just that. Did you know that already in Sunderland...

All schools have an out of school activities programme which includes everything from homework clubs to music tuition.

Many schools have specialist facilities including sports, ICT and arts which can be used by the local community.

Many schools offer adult and community courses offering everyone the chance to continue learning.

Childcare is available in all Sunderland nursery schools, over 60% of primary schools and some secondary schools.

Many schools provide facilities and activities for parents such as parent and toddler groups and family learning courses.

Northumbria Police run surgeries in 13 schools enabling them to develop strong community links with local residents.

And there's much more to come. The City Council is working to a plan which means that by 2008 all schools in Sunderland will be able to officially open their doors to everyone and offer a core programme of activities and services wrapped around the school day for everyone to use.

A good example is New Silksworth Infant school. The school was recently awarded a £213,000 Big Lottery Grant which has enabled it to be one of the first to extend its services. Local community groups, parents, pupils and residents were all consulted to ensure that the services on offer would meet the needs of the local area.

Now the school provides services and activities including family numeracy and literacy classes, family fun days, breakfast and after-school clubs and a children's centre for babies and toddlers to name just a few. There's also a police team based at the school and plans are afoot to introduce a toy library.

Councillor Pat Smith, said: " Learning shouldn't only be something which stops when the school bell rings and the extended school programme is all about developing life long learning for the whole community.



"The out of school activities are delivered by school workers and parents are encouraged to get involved. The schools also have links with the voluntary sector and youth workers who run activities so it really becomes something which is at the heart of the community.

"Opening schools to everyone provides a real opportunity for the whole community to encounter new experiences. It gives them the opportunity to keep fit and healthy, to acquire new skills or simply to have fun and relax."

To find out what activities are on offer at your local school contact the extended schools team on 0191 553 8800, email: extendedschools@sunderland.gov.uk or visit: www.sunderland.gov.uk/extendedschools



A further £1.5 million is set to be invested in Sunderland over the next two years with the development of an additional six Children's Centres in phase two of this national development.

The proposed locations for the new centres include Hetton Lyons Nursery School, Oxclose Primary and Nursery Schools, Washington, Houghton Community Nursery School, Millfield Community Nursery School, Grangetown Primary School and Dame Dorothy Primary School.

MORE CHILDREN'S CENTRES ON THE WAY FOR SUNDERLAND

Each centre will offer childcare suitable for working parents/carers for a minimum of five days a week, 48 weeks a year and ten hours a day. Support will be offered to childminders and links established with local schools and other childcare providers.

The centres will form a hub around which a range of services will be provided, including support and advice on parenting and child and family health services and information and support for young children and their families. Each centre will link with Jobcentre Plus to encourage and support parents/carers who wish to get back into work or further their education.

Phase one of the Sunderland Children's Centre Programme is now nearing completion with 11 centres on target to open by September 2006.

Norma Hardy, Head of Early Years and Childcare in Sunderland, said: "We have a very exciting two years ahead of us in Sunderland. Building on good practice trailed in Sure Start local programmes, we will see more families being given the opportunity to use a wide range of services through 17 Children's Centres in Sunderland. At the moment children and families in some parts of the City have access to these services now through existing Children's Centres (formerly Sure Start local programmes). If you live in one of those areas, please go along and join in the activities."

Contact details of Children's Centres can be obtained from the Children's Information Service on 0191 520 5505.

A NEW YEAR - A NEW START

On Saturday 14th January Connexions in Sunderland hosted an "Opportunities Event" for young people registered as unemployed. An invitation was sent to all 2005 school leavers who are currently registered as unemployed. Young people were invited to come along and find out about the various opportunities that are still available to them.

A number of Personal Advisers were on hand to offer information and advice about employment, training, college courses and volunteering.

Representatives from a range of organisations also attended the day and were on hand to offer information about courses and training opportunities available to young people who are still unemployed.

46 young people came through the doors on the day. Personal Advisers and providers were kept busy and everyone felt the day had been worthwhile.

Several parents came along with their son/daughter and were very grateful for our support. Those who worked on the day thought they had the time to offer quality support. It was also good to have providers on hand and many young people were referred to them about opportunities. Initial feedback is that several young people who were unemployed will make progressions into a learning opportunity very soon. To encourage attendance we offered a free prize draw. Kelly Scott, who has been unemployed since leaving Monkwearmouth School last year, came along to the event and was the lucky winner of a Ministry of Sound MP3 player. Kelly also took the opportunity of speaking to Lorna and Stacey from Team Wearside about retail training.



Pictured: Kelly Scott



Pictured: young people casting their votes

THE ROAD TO WESTMINSTER has begun for Sunderland's next generation of politicians with this year's elections to the UK Youth Parliament.

Director of Children's Services, Dr Helen Paterson, visited Sandhill View School to see how the vote is progressing amongst the seven candidates up for election to represent Sunderland on the UK Youth Parliament.

This year's elections to the UKYP, which was launched at the House of Commons in July 1999 to represent the political views of young people aged 11 - 18, is the largest ever held in Sunderland with more than 13,000 ballot papers already requested by the 22 schools and 14 youth groups taking part.

At the last elections in 2004, Grant Hollis (Houghton Kepier) and Charlotte Cheal (Thornhill) were elected from the 2,476 votes cast, with Grant standing again this year but Charlotte standing down to concentrate on her GCSE studies. Charlotte said: " My time as an MYP has been some of the best time of my life. As a part of Sunderland Youth Parliament I have met leading local figures and as part of the UKYP I have attended two Annual Sitings at Lancaster University (2004) and

Road to Westminster begins

Leicester University (2005) and travelled down to London to speak to MPs like Alan Milburn.

"My term on the UKYP has left me with higher self-confidence and self-esteem, and I feel that I have grown as a person, and I just hope that whoever takes my place on the United Kingdom Youth Parliament shows the same dedication I have felt, and just as importantly, enjoys their role as much as I have.

"To all of the candidates standing for election - good luck! To all those other young people out there who are not up for election, get out there and vote for your favourite candidate - it's up to you to decide who represents you alongside representatives from the entire UK!"

There are currently over 300 elected MYPs in the UK Youth Parliament representing young people from a variety of ethnic backgrounds, and with physical and learning disabilities across the country. Every local authority is represented by a UKYP constituency, with 87% of the Children's Services areas (formally known as LEAs) in England having elected members in the Youth Parliament with young people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland represented via the Scottish Youth Parliament, Funky Dragon - Wales and the Northern Ireland Youth Forum respectively.

The UKYP is funded by the Department for Education and Skills with private business donations and grant making trusts with local councils providing

MYPs with practical support through youth development groups as they work to establish the burning local, regional and national issues affecting their peers, and then decide how to tackle them through the UKYP with targeted campaigns. Recent national campaigns have led to the establishment of a youth board to monitor the media's portrayal of young people (in partnership with Ofcom and the Press Complaints Commission), and working with the Metropolitan Police Service to alter their Standard Operating Procedure on Stop and Search to ensure young people are treated with respect on the streets.

Michael Elsy, Sunderland City Council's Youth Strategy Officer, said: "The elections provide an early opportunity for young people to get involved in the political process, and it's great to see so many schools and youth groups taking part in the vote.

"The candidates come from schools across Sunderland, and are all determined to use all their political talents to represent our young people in the UKYP.

"A lot of young people are interested in politics and Sunderland's Youth Parliament meets weekly at the Youth Development Group, 270a Hylton Road to allow young people from Sunderland aged from 11-21 the chance to debate the issues affecting their age group. The UKYP is the next step in their political careers and we wish all the candidates the best of luck in the elections."

“Up and Running”

Thirty staff from a wide range of children’s services in Sunderland attended the first two Common Assessment Framework assessor training sessions held at Leechmere training centre on 24th and 27th of January. Feedback from the training was extremely positive and will inform future training materials. Two further assessor-training sessions were held on 28th February and 3rd March and an audit of all children’s services training requirements has been commissioned to help develop a comprehensive training programme to incorporate all training under The Children’s Trust.

The training sessions deliver a nationally designed training package that qualifies and enables attendees to carry out the new CAF assessment procedures using the DfES pilot CAF assessment forms. The majority of the staff who received the training are from organisations involved in the three ISA pilot areas at North Washington Children’s Centre, Farringdon developing Fully Extended School and the developing Children’s Centre in New Silksworth.

Since September 2003 we have provided ISA awareness training to over 500 practitioners in Sunderland. Over 1,700 practitioners have attended 75 ISA presentations and we have reported our progress in ten bi-monthly newsletters.

The pilots will enable staff to become familiar with the new forms and procedures and work with the support of a CAF coordinator using the newly developed CAF database to introduce a procedure similar to the request for services procedure currently in use in some areas of the City. This procedure is designed to help practitioners identify children’s needs at a much earlier stage and support them and their parents or carers through a multi-agency approach that ensures that their needs are better met and achieves better, more positive outcomes.

The new procedures introduce the early appointment of a lead professional who will be a person who is involved in providing the support and who collectively will be best placed to follow up the action plan and support the family.

This appointment will be made in agreement with the group and the child, parent or carer. The lead professional will be supported by the CAF coordinator and eventually by the multi-agency team around the Information Sharing Index.

The three pilot settings have each identified an implementation team who will discuss and agree the above process and legal framework that will form the Information Sharing Protocol.

Solution Finder

The Sunderland Directory of Children’s Services is now available on the web and can be located at www.solutionfinder.org.uk. The directory is available to all services and the public.

Information Sharing Index

As announced by the Children’s Minister, Beverley Hughes, in December last year, the Government now intend to implement an important Lord Laming recommendation for improving information sharing by the introduction of the nationally linked Information Sharing Index.

The Minister quoted, “I am making this announcement after a lengthy process of listening and learning. We have learnt from the Trailblazers not only what works, but what doesn’t, and how we can ensure the appropriate safeguards are in place. We have been convinced by their experience and further detailed work that we can deliver an index in which children, young people and parents can have confidence and which will help local authorities and a wide range of children’s services practitioners to do their jobs more effectively and provide better services.”

She further stated that, “In financial terms the benefits of reducing time currently used unproductively by practitioners trying to contact each other could equate to around £88m per year. This will free up more time for practitioners to concentrate on delivering services.”

The new Information Sharing Index will come on line in all local authorities between now and December 2008. The index will provide further support to families and will ensure that contact information is more readily available and easy to access for all practitioners and across all supporting services.

OPM Consultant

The DfES are providing 12 days consultancy time through the Office of Public Management (OPM) to support the implementation of the CAF and Lead Professional in the three pilot settings in Sunderland. As part of this consultancy, the ISA Steering group held two development days on 7th and 17th March to explore the management implications involved in this process and to develop a greater understanding around its impact upon current services and practices.

In addition the consultant facilitated a range of development work with the Community and Voluntary Sector, School Governors, Head Teachers and Health and will report to the Children’s Trust Steering Group in April 2006.

This work will provide a focus for the ISA Implementation Programme through the project plan and help us to identify and remove barriers to progress and ensure commitment and support at all levels, across all of our partners within children’s services.

ISA Calendar

April	Publication of evaluation report on CAF and Lead Professional role.
April	Expected publication of Working Together guidance on Safeguarding.
April	Expected publication on report on links between the Children’s Information Systems and Service Directories.
April	Expected publication of final version of CAF for national roll out.
April	Expected publication of revised Lead Professional Good Practice Guidance for national roll out.
April	Expected publication of Summary Report on the consultation for “Sharing Information on Children and Young People”.
April	Expected publication of Cross Government Guidance and training materials - Sharing Information on Children and Young People.
June	Index “Data Trials” finish.
Summer	LA ‘Readiness Assessment’ information collection begins.
Summer	Main draft Regulations and Guidance to support Section 12 published for consultation.

If you want to know more about CAF, Lead Professional, The Directory of Children’s Services or the Information Sharing Index please contact Dave Hills on 0191 5661841 or Email:Dave.hills@ssd.sunderland.gov.uk

CHILDREN'S TRUST WEBSITE

A Children's Trust website is under development and is due to go live on 1 April 2006. The site will cater for children and young people, parents, carers and families, and professionals by having content specifically written by and for each of these groups.

The Sunderland Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009 will be hosted on the site as the main way of making this document accessible to the public. This will be supported by an Executive Summary and a Children and Young People's version in hard copy.

Karen Parry (Children's Services Projects Manager) is currently leading on the development of the website. It is important that everyone has ownership of the site and how it develops.

Groups of children and young people across the City are already getting involved in designing the content of the pages dedicated to them. As timescales are tight, we are busy putting some content on each page in order that the site can go live on time. Once this has been achieved a more inclusive process of developing content for the site can be established to involve all Children's Trust partners.

Some people have already been in contact and said they have a number of images from their service which could be used on the website. These are generally photographs taken of specific projects which highlight the good work ongoing with children and young people in the City. We would like to extend the invitation to all services working with children, young people and families in Sunderland to

consider if they have any existing images which might be appropriate to use on the website to show the variety and diversity of work which goes on in Sunderland. Work will also take place over the coming months with children and young people to produce images for the site.

There are a few rules about which images we can use, which you may be aware of. Any images on which service users can be identified must be accompanied with a signed consent form for them to be used on the website.

The relevant form is available from Karen.parry@ssd.sunderland.gov.uk. If there are 10 service users who can be identified on a photo, all 10 must give their consent for the image to be used.

For children and young people, the parent/ carer's consent should be sought. Images must be digital and saved as JPEG or GIF files, and can be sent either by e-mail or on a disc. If you think you may have images we can use, please get in touch with Kathryn Rutherford in Children's Services (contact details are on the back page of this newsletter).



VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR EVENT

There has been a flurry of activity in order to bring agencies and organisations up to speed with the development of the Children's Trust in Sunderland, this includes the voluntary and community sector that do a valuable job in contributing towards improved outcomes for children and young people. What does that mean?

That's exactly what participants in an event held on 23rd February at the Bethany Christian Centre wanted the answer to. The event was well attended by sixty people, who represented a wide range of organisations including youth projects and community projects who work with children and young people. They were able to explore the barriers to engagement and possible bridges that could be put in place to overcome these barriers. The event was seen as the beginning of a process that should see the voluntary and community sector in Sunderland being able to take an active role in influencing decisions involved in the emerging Children's Trust arrangements for Sunderland.

A report of the event will be available from the end of March which will be circulated to all interested voluntary and community sector organisations for comments before the recommendations for actions are submitted to the Children's Trust Steering Group in May 2006.

Any one who wasn't at the event but would like to have a copy of the report please contact Marian at The Hive on 0191 584 5729.

LITHUANIA HERE WE COME!



EXCHANGING POLITICAL IDEAS, EXPERIENCES AND VIEWPOINTS were the aims of an exchange visit to Lithuania that took place recently involving twelve young people from Easington and Sunderland.

The young ambassadors are all involved in the URBACT Young Citizen's Project, a cross European partnership of local authorities from this country and Greece, Spain, Italy, Lithuania and Malta set up to encourage all young people to play a more active role in the local politics and civic life of their respective communities.

The group from Sunderland and Easington made the return visit to Mazeikiai accompanied by workers from Easington Youth Forum and Sunderland Youth Development Group.

Some of the things they did there included:

- Meeting in the City Hall
- Visit to "Venta" Secondary School
- A Concert dedicated to 11 March, the Day of the Restoration of Lithuania's independence in 1990
- A coach trip to the seaside, to the towns of Klaipeda and to Palanga

Alison Clark, Programme Co-ordinator (URBAN II Development Team) said: "All the youngsters on the visit have been involved with the project since it began, not only hosting the exchange party from Mazeikiai last year but also taking part in the local research focus group who came up with the idea of how to build closer links between our two communities."

"Last year our Lithuanian visitors were invited to meetings with a range of youth groups across the City. They also attended a school council meeting at a school based in Easington District, as well as more fun activities such as a trip to the Winter Gardens and Museum in Sunderland and participating in the URBAN II Key Fund Celebration Event organised by Sunderland Youth Development Group.

"Everyone made good friends and established close links, with regular e-mails and letters being exchanged following the visit."

The project is organised in this region through the Hetton and Murton URBAN II Programme, led and co-ordinated by Sunderland City Council on behalf of Durham County Council and District of Easington Council. The Partnership also hosted a two day seminar in the region last year for their European counterparts and a visit from a delegation of Lithuanian youngsters to Sunderland and Easington.

URBAN II is focussed on the former coalfield communities to help with regeneration and participation, and is part-financed by the European Union, European Regional Development Fund. The programme will help young people from across Sunderland and Easington get involved with peer groups such as Easington Youth Forum and Sunderland Young Person's Inspection Team, to look at improving youth provision in their areas.

Councillor Paul Watson, Cabinet Member with Portfolio for Regeneration and Social Inclusion, said: "It's heartening to see our young people getting involved like this, in representing not only the interests of their own communities, but those of the larger European community through this project."

"I'm sure they will learn a lot from their visit, and will be a credit to Sunderland and the region."