

# Working together

**People attending the Children's Trust's annual conference in November played a key role in beginning the planning process for the future of children and young people in Sunderland for the next 15 years.**

The speakers at the 2008 conference outlined the process for the preparation of the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) for 2009/10 and the new CYPP 15 year strategy.

Over 120 people heard Dr Helen Paterson, Director of Children's Services and Cllr Pat Smith, Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, set out the opportunities and ambitions for tomorrow's children. Colin Pettigrew, from Government Office North East, provided the regional perspective and John Kilcoyne and Jeff Teasdale from Sunderland University brought the conference to a close with a lively interactive display, "Science is fun".

The current CYPP comes to an end on 31 March 2009 and delegates at the conference started the debate on the two new plans that will be prepared by Children's Services in partnership with Children's Trust stakeholders. The first is the CYPP for 2009/10 and the second is the CYPP 15 year Commissioning Strategy.

Between April 2009 and March 2010 Children's Services will implement a year long CYPP. This will include:

- Outstanding actions from the 2007/9 plan
- A review of measurable outcomes from 2008/9
- Priorities and recommendations from partnerships aligned to the Children's Trust

The Children's Trust intends to take a long term approach to city wide planning and the CYPP 15 year Commissioning Strategy will have a series of delivery plans for all the partners and will be in place by April 2010. The new plan will have challenging targets that will contribute to achieving the vision set out in the Government's Children's Plan and at the same time support our Sunderland Strategy that runs to 2025.

The Children's Trust will assess the needs of all children and young people in the city and the new CYPP will set out the priority outcomes and identify the partnerships that will be responsible for achieving those outcomes. We will then review the Commissioning Strategy every three years.

The delegates were keen to contribute to the preparation of the plans, with one remarking that it was, "Very clear that all at the conference were there in a partnership capacity and we all want to achieve the best for the city."

The interactive workshops focused on four tasks and the feedback from them will be used in the preparation of the CYPP and the 15 year Commissioning Strategy. Some of the key discussion points are highlighted in the box right.

The participants were enthusiastic about the results: "It was an excellent chance to realise common themes exist no matter which agency you are from and which targets you are attempting to reach."

**Pictured:** An explosive demonstration from 'Science is fun'



## Task one

Identify quick wins to obtaining more effective support from another agency

- An accessible directory of services
- All agencies need more flexible working hours
- Clearer access to funding
- Services based near to children
- Closer working relationships with schools
- Involving children and young people more effectively

## Task two

Identify the big issues to address to improve outcomes for children and young people

- Perceptions of young people
- The role of the media
- Aspirations, expectations and opportunities
- Involving children and young people

## Task three

Identify one thing the Children's Trust could do to help professionals tackle the big issues identified in task two

- Create a media officer to promote children's achievements
- Encourage a flexible approach among the workforce to empower children and young people to achieve
- Tackle youth unemployment
- Greater openness and accountability
- Information sharing meetings

## Task four

Identify the top requirements for an effective Children's Trust

- Vision
- Impact
- Membership
- Measurable
- Accountability