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Connect

THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES PARTNERSHIP NEWSLETTER

Looking after somebody else's child? – We need to know

Children's Services have launched a campaign to increase awareness of private fostering and parents' and carers' legal obligation to notify the Department.

Private fostering is when a parent arranges for someone else, who is not a direct relative, to look after their child (who is under 16 or 18 if disabled) for longer than 28 days.

In 2003, the tragic case of Victoria Climbié highlighted how children who are living away from their parents can be vulnerable. The law states that in any private fostering arrangement the parents and private foster carers must notify the local authority so that they can safeguard the welfare of the children and offer support to the carers, parents and children.

A private fostering arrangement can arise for a number of reasons such as; a teenager staying at a friend's house during a family breakdown, young people studying



at a language school in the UK and staying at a host family's house or a child being cared for while their parents work long or unsociable hours.

Whilst for the majority of the children being privately fostered,

their parents will have made appropriate arrangements and their children will be well looked after, there will be some children who are living in more vulnerable circumstances.

Publicity material is being distributed in January to coincide with the British Adoption and Fostering (BAAF) private fostering awareness week.

If you know of a child who is being privately fostered, please advise the private foster carers or parents of their responsibility to notify the local authority and direct them to more information: www3.hants.gov.uk/private-fostering.

George's Story

George is from Nigeria and was placed by his parents with a private foster carer, Janet, when he was 16 months old. His father stayed in Nigeria and his mother had come to the UK to work and study.

Janet contacted Children's Services about George's planned arrival. A social worker then visited her and got in touch with George's mother to make sure all the information necessary to help Janet care for George had been passed on.

One night, everyone involved in the private fostering arrangement realised how important it was that Janet had all the information about George. He was suddenly rushed to hospital because of a severe allergic reaction. Luckily, the hospital was able to treat him immediately as Janet was aware of his medical history.

George's social worker has put George's carer in touch with toddler groups and other things going on in her area and also with other private foster carers caring for children from Nigeria.

When she finishes studying, George's mother plans for him to join her in London. Janet says she will miss him terribly, but she feels that the best place for him will, of course, be with his mum.



Director's Cut



Welcome to the first Connect of 2009. Thank you to those who were able to provide articles that reflect the great partnership working that continues to exist in Hampshire.

Thanks also to all our partners whose dedication enables children and young people to have the best opportunities made available to them from the beginning.

In this edition you will find news from various areas that represents the commitment to our promises and priorities detailed in Hampshire's Children and Young People's Plan.

With your continued support we look forward to making this coming year a prosperous one for Children's Services and children's organisations in Hampshire.

Connect is now also available online for our partners. You can find this issue and previous issues on the extranet at www3.hants.gov.uk/connect. To access the extranet you will need to login to the site and instructions will be provided for this.

Hampshire Connexions offers a brighter future - Michael's Story

16 year old Michael initially contacted Hampshire Connexions having returned to the UK from Cyprus, where he had been supporting himself since the age of 14. When Michael arrived in the UK he had no financial support, no family or peer support, no legal guardian and no qualifications. Michael worked with a range of staff and at one stage was visiting the office for support on a daily basis.

Over a period of six weeks, many barriers were overcome due to the hard work and dedication of Connexions staff. One of the biggest issues that Michael had was that without a legal guardian he was prevented from doing some of the most basic things like signing up for a doctor and applying for any financial support.

Through the various actions and support offered

by Connexions and the time spent working with Michael, his situation has now improved dramatically and many obstacles have been overcome. A couple of months later Michael no longer requires support from Connexions and is now fully engaged in the Military Preparation College programme.

Chris Smith, Team Leader at Connexions in Gosport, said, "During the course of supporting this young man he received specific support from Personal Advisers, Employment and Training, Personal Development and Careers Guidance. Supporting this young man really was a team effort and supported him to move forward."

Michael is now doing well and looking forward to joining the Forces when he turns 18 early this year.

**Names have been changed to protect identities.*

Connect Newsletter

Connect - The Partnership Newsletter is produced three times a year. Connect is now available online at www3.hants.gov.uk/connect. Hard copies will continue to be delivered, however, if you would like to discuss your delivery options please contact Karen Lewry on 01962 845381 or by email at karen.lewry@hants.gov.uk.

Community makes a difference at Forest First Children's Centre



A SureStart Children's Centre

Volunteers clubbed together to build a landscaped garden for the community to enjoy at Forest First Children's Centre in the New Forest.

Parents, children, Councillor Dunsdon, garden centre staff and even some accountants all pitched in to create a vegetable patch and a sensory garden with bright colourful flowers for children to learn from as they explore.



The Sure Start Children's Centre offers a variety of services under one roof, including a health clinic, midwifery support, support for teenage parents, a dad's club, a day nursery and stay and play sessions. Staff at the centre wanted to offer more for their children and the local community.

Centre Manager Tracie Currie explains, "It had always been our vision that the children of our

nursery and the local community would have a garden that they could use and be proud of. Our nursery children would have somewhere to explore and play, and all users of the centre would have somewhere outside that would be welcoming and a place they wanted to be."

Forest First is managed by Totton College who have a service level agreement with Hampshire County Council to provide quality services for families throughout the community. This partnership means that Totton College is able to increase awareness of its educational development courses throughout the community served by Forest First Children's Centre. To find out exactly what's on offer at Forest First, contact the centre on 023 8089 4425, or email tcurrie@totton.ac.uk.



Wessex YOT performing excellently

The Wessex Youth Offending Team (YOT) have been awarded the highest grade possible in a Capability and Capacity assessment carried out by the Youth Justice Board.

A "Performing excellently" grading was awarded to Wessex YOT in the areas of governance, use of resources and value for money, workforce and

organisational development, performance and quality systems and citizens and service users. The gradings for this assessment will, in due course, become part of the Hampshire County Council's Comprehensive Area Assessment.

Wessex YOT is the largest in the country, covering four local authority areas including one County Council, eleven District

Councils and three unitary authorities. In 2007/8 they worked with approximately 5,000 young people who had committed over 10,000 offences.

For more information about Wessex YOT and the annual Youth Justice Plan please visit: www3.hants.gov.uk/wessex-yot



Hampshire Music Service scores top prize

Hampshire County Council's Music Service has won the Major Trophy 2008 for local authority music services from the National Music Council (NMC) and the Music Education Council (MEC) for "outstanding commitment to music provision".

The award was presented to John Coughlan, Director of Children's Services on Thursday 20 November at County Hall, London.

The evening was a night full of musical entertainment which included pieces by the Winchester Youth Baroque and the Havant Clarinet and Saxophone Choir (HCSC) Saxophone Quintet.

Commenting on the award, John said: "This prestigious award follows a summer of success for Hampshire ensembles after ten

groups performed at the Music for Youth National Festival in Birmingham and two groups performed at the schools' Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. It was an honour to have collected this award on the service's behalf."

Councillor David Kirk, Hampshire County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services (Education) said: "Receiving this award is a remarkable achievement for Hampshire Music Service, as this is the most prestigious award of its kind. It is all the more creditable as this is the second time in five years that Hampshire has achieved this accolade which I believe to be unprecedented."

For more information on the Hampshire Music Service and the opportunities it offers visit: www3.hants.gov.uk/hms

Breaking the violent cycle

A Hampshire charity, the Hampton Trust, has been awarded a million pound lottery grant. The grant will be used to launch a programme to stop young people falling into the 'cycle of violence' and will fund pioneering preventive work with young people.

Kim Brown, Chief Executive of the Hampton Trust, which works to break the cycles of violence, abuse and conflict, said, "Sadly very little is known about how best to work alongside violent young people to affect any change in their behaviour. However, we do know that around 80–90% of young people who are violent have experienced domestic abuse within their own families."

Hampshire is one of four counties set to benefit from this grant. The Hampton Trust is delighted to expand on the good working relationship with other Hampshire services. This project would not succeed without the partnership of organisations including the Wessex Youth Offending Teams, the County Council and Youth Inclusion Projects.

Kim Brown adds, "Violent acts do not generally suddenly come out of the blue. There are warning signs but it is a question of recognising these signs and acting earlier rather than later. Hampshire is at the forefront of recognising that early intervention is a key to success. If we can prevent just one tragic death then the programme will be worth it."

For more information please contact Kim Brown at the Hampton Trust on 07779 999 945.

Children affected for life by abuse

A campaign aimed at highlighting the effect domestic violence can have on children has been launched.

Posters have been produced by Hampshire Constabulary and the Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board to draw parents' attention to the different ways children can be affected by abusive situations in the home.

According to figures from the Safeguarding Children Board, domestic abuse affects around 750,000 children and young people each year.

Karen Evans, chairman of the North-East Hants Domestic Violence Forum, said children can be seriously affected for the rest of

their lives if they witness domestic abuse at home. Even if they do not see an incident taking place, hearing something can be even more frightening.

She said: "Although it can be tempting to try and pretend to a child that nothing is wrong, most children would rather have the opportunity to talk about what is happening and how they are feeling. Where possible, it is best to be honest about the situation without frightening them, reassure them that the violence is not their fault and that they are not responsible for adult behaviour."

Women who have suffered abuse can contact Women's Aid on 0800 200 0247 and men can contact 0808



Barbara Piddington - Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board and Karen Evans - Chairman of the North-East Hants Domestic Violence Forum.

801 0327. People in same-sex or transgender relationships can contact Broken Rainbow on 0845 260 4460. Children and young people can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111. More information is available at www.thehideout.org.uk

Consultation on Hampshire's draft Children and Young People's Plan 2009-2012

Thank you to all partners who submitted their views on Hampshire's draft Children and Young People's Plan, which sets out how the County Council and its partners will improve outcomes for all children and young people within the county. All the feedback received will be considered and used to influence the development

of the final Plan which will be launched in April 2009.

We have received a lot of interest in the consultation, from partners, children, young people, parents and carers. We are confident that the final version of the Plan will reflect the high standards that are expected for the support of children and young people who live in Hampshire.

Hampshire Governor Services awarded fifth Excellence Award

Governor Services has just received its fifth consecutive Customer Service Excellence Award. This represents over 12 years of continued outstanding customer service to the governors of Hampshire. To view the full report please visit: www.hants.gov.uk/education/governors

Supportive Stories

A book featuring North Hampshire parents' own personal stories has been published by the Hampshire based support group, Stepping Stones.

The compilation of experiences called 'Our stories' was produced for parents of Down Syndrome children and has been distributed to hospitals in Hampshire and Surrey, and to healthcare professionals.

The book includes real life

stories written by parents who share their experiences of having children with Down Syndrome - both the highs and the lows, completely written from the heart. It is hoped that the book will be used in hospitals to be given to parents at the time of diagnosis.

For more information about Stepping Stones please visit www.steppingstonesds.co.uk or email enquiries@steppingstonesds.co.uk

Unplgd – Discovering new talent

Young people are being encouraged to boost their musical profiles with the help of the North Hampshire involved team and Anvil Arts.

November saw the first acoustic evening where artists aged 16 and over are encouraged to take advantage of the free promotional tools provided to help kick start their music careers.

For more information about the Unplgd events and involved see www.vinspired.com or email vteam@voluntaryservices.com

Art and Design stars in Hampshire

Five students from the Cove School in Farnborough have been placed among the top ten in the country for their GCSE Art and Design exam results.

Edexcel, the UK's largest awarding body, placed Matthew Bullock, James Cross, Kelly Jackson, Samantha Saunders and Rebecca Wing in the top ten in the country out of 36,294 entries!

Jerry Jarvis, Edexcel's Managing Director said, "This is a tremendous achievement and testament to the hard work students put into preparing for their exams. We send our congratulations to each of these students."

Cove School's Headteacher, Megan Davies Jones, said, "This is an amazing outcome for our students and it must surely be very unusual for one school alone to have five students in the top ten for the same subject. Cove School has always

received high acclaim for its art work and this reflects well on our students and the staff, particularly Paul Thomas, who supported them. It is especially rewarding when each of those students also achieved good results across the full range of GCSEs taken."

This is a particularly memorable achievement for our student Rebecca Wing as she was in Beijing, when the GCSE results came through, competing in the women's gymnastics team. Rebecca passed all her GCSEs, achieving nine grade As of which six were A* grades.



Training at Rose Road

Trainning is now available, from the Rose Road Association, for people working in the social care sector, private companies, individuals, parents and carers.

Courses, including first aid and Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) awareness, are delivered at the state-of-the-art Bradbury Centre in Southampton. Alternatively, bespoke courses at other locations across Hampshire and the surrounding areas can be arranged.

Through participating in these training programmes you will also be making a contribution to the work of The Rose Road Association, helping young people to fulfil their potential in life.

For more information and a full schedule of courses in 2009 visit www.roseroad.org.uk



Currently consulting

Have your say online...

Anti-bullying policy -
Consultation deadline 30 Jan '09
www3.hants.gov.uk/draft-anti-bullying-policy

Draft strategy for young carers –
Consultation deadline 13 Feb '09
www3.hants.gov.uk/youngcarers

Festive winners

The judges had a hard time choosing the winning design for the school Christmas card competition this year. The standard of entries to this year's competition was exceptionally high and each design was carefully considered.

29 primary schools sent their pupils' seasonal creations to the Children's Services Department and the winners were chosen by Councillor Kirk, Lead Member for Children's Services (Education) and John Coughlan, Director of Children's Services.

Congratulations go to the overall winner, Laura Brooks (aged 11) from Oakfield Primary School. Laura and the runners up won book vouchers for themselves and their schools.



School Workforce Census

14 schools in Hampshire will participate in a pilot programme, starting in spring 2009, which aims to rationalise and improve the data collected from schools.

The School Workforce Census (SWC) is a statutory collection required by the Department for

Children Schools and Families (DCSF) and will involve staff from HR, Children's Services, IT Services, EdICT and schools.

For more information about SWC please see www.teachernet.gov.uk/management/ims/datacollections/swfc/pilot/



SWC team members and school admin officers.

Can you help a young person begin a new life?

With the numbers of homeless young people rising, Step By Step is desperately looking for carers who can offer them accommodation in their own home, helping young people to find their feet, develop life skills and eventually move on to independence.

Step by Step, an Aldershot based charity, is working in partnership with several local authorities in Hampshire and Surrey, including Children's and Adult Services and those supporting young people aged 16-25 to find supportive lodgings.

Barbara Wolfe, Step By Step's Supportive Lodgings Project Manager, says more and more vulnerable young people are finding themselves homeless. "When a young person has no family support and has nowhere to go, we help pick up the pieces," she says. "Our scheme aims to bridge the gap between home or being in care, and living independently."

Julie Faiz offers supportive lodgings for young people, "I feel passionately that this age group is too young to give up on," says Julie. "They have such potential and I do my best to encourage the young people who live with me to continue with their education."

Step by Step supports both the householder and young person during their stay.

For more information see www.stepbystep.org.uk or contact Barbara Wolfe on 01252 313158, barbara.wolfe@stepbystep.org.uk

Working with your local children's centre



Sure Start Children's Centres provide families with children under five years a welcoming and approachable gateway to all the support services they need to give their children the best start in life. This could be help getting back to work, health advice, parenting support or simply opportunities to meet other families, play and chat.

So if you work with families, children or mums to be, get in touch with your local children's centre and see how you can support each

other in offering the widest range of accessible services to every community in Hampshire.

There are currently 60 children's centres in Hampshire, with another 25 to be established by 2010.

More information about children's centres and contact details are available online at www3.hants.gov.uk/childrens-centres, or you can phone 01962 847291.

SureStart

Feedback

Please let us know what you think of the Children's Services Partnership newsletter Connect. Suggestions for future articles can be sent to childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk

If you would like a large print version of Connect, please contact childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk

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