

ISSUE 7 OCTOBER 2009

Connect

THE CHILDREN'S TRUST NEWSLETTER

Building Schools for the Future

Over the next decade, education and learning opportunities for young people in Hampshire are to be transformed.

Hampshire County Council has been invited to join the Government's Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme which will see the start of substantial investment in the county's secondary schools. Schools in Havant and Horndean will be the first to benefit from the programme.

BSF is the single largest national investment programme in education for over 50 years. It presents a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform the way schools function, through the development of school buildings and investment in information communication technology.

The programme aims to transform teaching and learning and place schools at the heart of their communities, to increase school diversity, enhance parental choice and offer a broader range of local services.

Transforming Hampshire's secondary schools

The County Council is undertaking extensive consultation

with schools, young people, parents and local communities to formulate the principles and values of BSF in Hampshire.

In the first phase, funding of £80 million will rebuild, refurbish or remodel nine schools and one education centre in Havant and Horndean. It will include the creation of an academy - an all-ability, state-maintained independent school supported by public sector sponsors - set to open in September 2010.

A further nine phases of the BSF programme are proposed, with schools in Gosport and Havant West next in line to receive funding.

Councillor David Kirk, Hampshire County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, said: "This is a unique opportunity to enhance facilities in secondary schools and special schools for secondary aged children. It will ensure that staff and pupils have first class facilities to meet the demands of the 21st century curriculum.

"The programme of works we can now embark upon will enable us to enhance community facilities at schools making them a focal point for residents.

"These enhanced facilities will help raise standards and attainment levels for pupils and will provide



high quality environments for staff to work in, as well as a range of recreational and learning opportunities for the wider community."

Next steps

The County Council is working closely with schools in phase one to develop Strategies for Change which outline proposals for the vision and objectives of future schools. These will be submitted to the Government in early 2010.

Designs for the schools are expected to take shape in 2011 and building is expected to start in 2012.

Progression to further phases of the programme is dependent on approval from the Government.

Have your say

For further information and to give your views on BSF, go to www.hants.gov.uk/education/bsf.



Director's Cut



Welcome to the autumn issue of **Connect**, which marks its transition to the newsletter for Hampshire's Children's Trust. As always, the articles

highlight the successful partnership working already in place across the county.

Over the next couple of months, proposals for Local Children's Partnership arrangements will be consulted on. These proposals aim to build on the positive aspects of existing local arrangements and address inconsistencies and overlaps. Crucially, they will ensure that all schools and colleges are able to meet the new requirement for them to be at the forefront in working with partners to deliver the priorities of the Children's and Young People's Plan at a local level, through the following key functions:

- ensure educational inclusion
- strengthen and develop local networks
- develop a detailed understanding of local needs and outcomes
- direct responsibility for the delivery of locally defined outcomes, e.g. teenage pregnancy
- influence improvement for all outcomes for all children
- co-ordinate early intervention and prevention activities

Proposals for local arrangements will be considered by the Executive Lead Member for Children's Services in December. It is hoped that an agreement will be reached with partners by the end of the year and that the new arrangements will emerge in early 2010, to ensure local action plans are in place by April 2010.

The changes bring both opportunities and challenges for all of us; the new duty upon schools and colleges to 'co-operate' will allow us improved integration of our work, but the challenge is to devise local arrangements which enable all partners to be engaged in an efficient and effective way, to address agreed local priorities.

I am confident that we have the drive and infrastructure to achieve this and look forward to working with you to shape the future of local partnership working.

Departmental exchanges – swapping expertise in sixth form colleges

The Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges' Partnership have swapped skills and expertise in a programme of departmental exchanges.

11 colleges within Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth agreed to formalise the involvement of their peers in college quality and self-assessment procedures. In a Hampshire-wide initiative, staff worked in small clusters to review each other's systems for evaluating performance. As well as making use of home-grown expertise to strengthen self-assessment, staff wanted to find ways of providing support and development where needed. A system of departmental exchanges was established so that colleges needing support in specific subjects could be matched with colleges demonstrating strengths in that area. Cross-college peer groups for all subjects meet regularly and a variety of support groups for staff and managers encourage openness and a drive for improvement.

After its first year of operation, there have been some practical developments to improve performance systems. For example, one college has refined its systems to better assess the large

number of short courses it provides. But what most people are excited about is the potential impact on student achievement. Early indications suggest there have been tangible improvements in results (January 2009 exams) in subjects where development visits/exchanges have taken place. In the coming year, colleges hope that further analysis of results will demonstrate that the practical advice and input from these exchanges will have had a measureable impact on learning outcomes and the achievements of students.

From 2010, local authorities will become responsible for funding the education and training of young people up to the age of 19. In Hampshire, this means that sixth form colleges, previously funded by the Learning and Skills Council, will receive most of their funding from Hampshire County Council, as well as from Southampton and Portsmouth City Councils for colleges within those city boundaries.

For more information about the Hampshire Sixth Form Colleges' Partnership see:

www.hampshiresfc.ac.uk

National Youth Work Week 2009: 1-7 November 2009

Each year, *Youth Work Week* is embraced by a wide variety of organisations to celebrate the work they do with young people. This year's theme is 'Resilient and Resourceful'. Although organisations are encouraged to use the week however they want, the theme gives a focus for the distinctive contribution of youth work.

The National Youth Agency has invited organisations to use the theme to celebrate the work they do to help ways in which they help young people deal with the difficulties life can place in their way, support them to enjoy their lives and meet their potential.

In Hampshire, youth teams across the county will be running events to showcase their services to the

local community. For example, in Eastleigh, the District Youth Team is inviting the community along to their youth centres to find out more about what they do and how they can be involved. For details of events in your area, visit www3.hants.gov.uk/youth or look out for information in your local press.

Looking after the school workforce

The Children's Services Health, Personal Development and Well-being Team have been working with Education Personnel Services to develop approaches to support the well-being of school staff. This has been welcomed by schools developing specific criteria concerning staff within the Emotional Health and Well-Being theme of the Health and Safety audit. The initiative has been led by Fran Stanfield, Healthy Schools Coordinator – West, since May 2008.

In January 2009, a conference for the Well-being of the Workforce (WoW) initiative was held at the Marwell Hotel. It enabled the team to launch the WoW website and introduce schools to the toolkit of support available for managing issues of staff well-being.

There were presentations, sharing of good practice and introductions to audits for discovering the current

state of workforce wellbeing. Tools and approaches for developing and deepening this aspect of school life were introduced by speakers, in an effort to convey what can be done to deliver personal well-being - and ultimately school improvement.

Workshops focused on demonstrating links for staff already involved in other initiatives; providing information that is also available online. For example, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) audits, for primary and secondary staff, can be used to support SEAL work in schools and staff charters are an obvious development for rights respecting schools. A downloadable healthy schools pack and conference activity allowed schools to consider different approaches and possible interventions to support staff wellbeing and thus make progress towards healthy schools status.

A 'whole school approach' to WoW is as crucial as in other areas



of school life. The action planning session of the conference gave delegates a chance to consider how a school would look if it supported WoW initiatives.

The next WoW conference will be held on 12 March 2010 and will focus on supporting WoW leadership. Senior management team representatives and school governors are encouraged to attend. For more information see: www3.hants.gov.uk/wellbeing-workforce.htm.

Bursary offers route to success

A training bursary, set up to enable managers in the voluntary, community and private sectors to access personal development opportunities, is proving a success, with five students recently completing The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) Award in First Line Management.

The bursary scheme is part of a wider programme of free training, targeted at the voluntary, community and private sectors. Hampshire Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Alliance



(The Alliance) has been delivering it since 2007, with funding from the Children's Workforce Development Council.

The ILM Award in First Line Management is a Level 3 Award which provides an excellent foundation for new and aspiring managers. Students studied for

the award at Community Action Hampshire's Centre of Excellence for Learning and Development (CELD) in Winchester, which has been established to address the changing skills needs of the voluntary sector through the provision of accredited training.

Cedric Riley, Chair of The Alliance said: "The Alliance is pleased that its bursary scheme is enabling access to this high quality management training. But all credit to the students, they have worked really hard to achieve this excellent result". The Alliance has offered a further five bursary places for 2009/10.

Aspire to inspire

The University of Winchester was the inspiring venue for the second information and training event organised by the Hampshire Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Alliance (The Alliance), as part of their programme of free training, targeted at the voluntary, community and private sectors.

The Winchester University event, on 16 July 2009, followed the usual Alliance mix of guest speakers and training workshops. Amongst the guest speakers were Kevin Williams, Chief Executive of Kids, the disabled children's charity; Anwen Foy from Hampshire's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service; and Graham Jowett, Director of Education at the Treloar Trust in Alton.

The Alliance was pleased to welcome John Coughlan, Hampshire's Director of Children's Services, who spoke about the important national and local issues affecting Hampshire Children's Trust partners.

Cedric Riley, Chair of The Alliance, informed attendees that since 2007, The Alliance training programme has provided over 600 free training places. This has helped to build the capacity of organisations in the voluntary, community and private sectors and has contributed significantly to the development of the children's workforce in Hampshire. He went on to advise colleagues that although Children's Workforce Development Council funding for the programme is due to end in March next year, The Alliance



is hopeful that replacement funding can be found to enable it to continue this important area of support to the voluntary, community and private sectors.

Hampshire Families are awarded top national award

Hampshire Families (formerly Hampshire Children and Families Forum) is celebrating becoming one of the first charities in Hampshire to earn an internationally prestigious award for quality.

The 'ISO 9001 certification' was awarded following an external assessment and recognises Hampshire Families commitment to an exceptional quality of service. Only three per cent of UK businesses hold this certificate.

Hampshire Families supports children, young people and their families through identifying the needs of the local community and providing

a voice for families through local and county representation.

It also publishes newsletters and directories informing families about quality services and provision, as well as holding an extensive database of these services which parents, carers and professionals can access online.

Delighted Chair of Hampshire Families, Cedric Riley said: "At Hampshire Families we work hard to meet the needs of the local community, in partnership with families, statutory, voluntary and community organisations. We have always been proud of the service we offer our families and this award and recognition has been confirmed



by outside independent experts who are used to judging service and customer care on a daily basis."

Neil Urquhart, who undertook the assessment for Certified Quality Systems paid particular tribute to "the investment in people and training that enables Hampshire Families to provide an efficient service to its customers."

You can access Hampshire Families website on: www.hampshirefamilies.org.uk.



Skills for Work with Disabled Children

A groundbreaking training fayre took place in September 2009, bringing together training providers and all those who now, or will do so in the future, care for or work with disabled children and young people in Hampshire. The Skills for Work with Disabled Children (SWDC) training fayre is part of the SWDC Project currently being undertaken in partnership with the Treloars Trust and The Alliance.

The Fayre included an exhibition of training providers and presentations on the subjects of autism; sibling support; challenging behaviour; and learning difficulties.

For more information on the SWDC Project please contact Kaz Lodge on 01420 547720 or email karen.lodge@treloar.org.uk.

National Parents' Week 2009: The Changing Face of Families

National Parents' Week is happening between 19 and 25 October and this year's theme is 'The Changing Face of Families'.

This is the tenth national Parents' Week and last year over 440 events took place across the country.

Activities planned for this year in Hampshire include family fun days, family curry and quiz evenings, Bollywood dancing, informal tea and coffee sessions.

Parents' Week gives family services the opportunity to showcase their successes, engage with families and inform local decision-makers (MPs, journalists etc.) of the value of their work to families.

For more information about Parents' Week, visit the Parent Support Team web pages at www.hants.gov.uk/parentsupport.

If you are going to be involved in a Parents' Week event in Hampshire, please let the Parent Support Team know by e-mailing parent.support@hants.gov.uk and they will see if they can offer any support.

Test Valley mobile project – rural access

The Test Valley Strategic Partnership are developing a 'mobile' method of delivering services, using a specially purchased van, which has been converted into a mobile unit.

A steering group has been formed by all those who would use the mobile facility as a means of extending the reach for their services – including Sure Start Children's Centres; community education; the local school sports partnership; Testway Housing; Jobcentre Plus; youth teams; extended schools; voluntary sector organisations; Sparsholt and Andover Colleges; and Test Valley Borough Council.

Running costs will be funded by steering group members and Hampshire County Council's Culture, Communities and Rural Affairs Department.

The unit will be used to provide services on alternate weeks in the north and south of the borough (one week in the Andover area and one week in the Romsey area). A programme of 'taster visits' have been organised to research the types of services people want.



This information will be used to establish a full programme of availability and service provision.

This project will bring a range of services to people in more rural areas, including children's centre services; advice and guidance on issues such as jobs and housing; information about volunteering opportunities; and adult learning and skills development.

The project is strongly supported by the Strategic Partnership and new groups continue to express interest in making use of the mobile unit. Discussions are taking place with several local businesses about possible sponsorship of the vehicle, which will help to sustain the project. Initial signs are extremely good and it seems likely that there will be an increasing appetite to make use of the mobile unit and to extend the services provided by it.

Connect update

Connect is being reviewed, to ensure it continues to be a valuable partnership newsletter as Hampshire Children's Trust (formerly the Children and Young People's Partnership) develops. Please let us know what you currently think and any changes you would like to see. Send comments/suggestions and any future articles to childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk.

Sure Start Children's Centres take to the road

Families in rural areas of Hampshire now have information and services delivered to their doorstep thanks to two specially designed mobile children's centres.

The eye-catching mobile children's centres were designed by Hampshire County Council's Property Services team to ensure that services offered by children's centres are fully accessible by residents living in the more rural areas of the county.

The vehicles include a meeting area; crèche area; side pod (which can be used for consultations with midwives and other health professionals); a kitchenette; toilet; and extendable canopy to provide a sheltered buggy park. The mobile units operate from Petersfield in East Hampshire and Brockenhurst in the New Forest.

The East Hampshire vehicle serves Tree Tops, Heath and Hillside Children's Centres who reach families in Headley, Liss, Petersfield and the surrounding villages. Currently, Heath, Hillside and Tree Tops offer stay and play sessions; toothbrush exchange; a home visiting service; access to health professionals; Chatterchums speech and language group; family bounce and rhyme; music makers; and baby massage for families.

The second mobile unit is located at, and supported by, Brockenhurst College. Hampshire County Council has been working in partnership with Brockenhurst College to deliver a range of services to local families through Seedlings Children's



Centre, including a post-natal support group; baby rhyme sessions; Triple P parenting classes; stay and play sessions; a support group for Polish parents; Dad's days; and buggy walks.

Commenting at the launch event for the vehicles, Councillor David Kirk, Hampshire County Council's Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, said: "We are very pleased to launch these magnificent mobile units. They are a very important part of our rural strategy aimed at ensuring our services are accessible to all our residents. I'm sure they will become a vital link for people, ensuring families in rural areas do not feel isolated or unable to access information and support. The

colourful and eye-catching exteriors make them hard to miss and the inviting interior designs and the services offered from them will, I'm sure, make them a popular attraction in all the villages they visit."

Sure Start Children's Centres offer a range of support services to families with children under five and the mobile units will ensure families in some of the more isolated rural areas of the county can access and benefit from them. For more information and to discover your local centre, please visit www.hants.gov.uk/childrens-centres or call 0845 603 5620.

National Childminding Association – SPACE launch

The National Childminding Association (NCMA) is one of the organisations commissioned by the Children's Services Department's Early Education and Childcare Unit (EECU) to deliver support to childminders across Hampshire.

The NCMA is one of many private, voluntary and independent organisations who are part of the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP). The EYDCP acts as an advisory and consultative body to the EECU, bringing together all those involved in the work of early years education and childcare from the voluntary, maintained and private sectors across the county.

In autumn 2008, a task group was set-up by the vulnerable children sub-group of the EYDCP to support the development and re-launch of a community childminding scheme for Hampshire. The membership consisted of a wide range of individuals from children's services, including the EECU; commissioning; social care; portage; post adoption; intensive support scheme; a locality

team manager; Winchester disability scheme; and was later widened to include partners from the Hampshire Autistic Society, Homestart and Hantsdirect.

The new scheme 'SPACE' (supporting children, young people and families every day), was launched at a successful event at Sparsholt College, near Winchester, on the 15 July 2009. The scheme was explained and its values and vision shared. Case studies were presented which detailed the benefits of the scheme, such as positive one-to-one attention, consistent boundaries, stimulation, safe, welcoming environment, good nutrition and 'fun'. The event was well attended with representatives from the Children's Services Department; Sure Start Children's Centres; Connexions; locality teams; and health. Between 1 April 2009 and 31 June 2009, NCMA placed 60 vulnerable children with SPACE carers in Hampshire.

SPACE carers are registered childminders who work in their own homes, offering care and



education to children of all ages. All are very experienced, qualified and committed to continuous professional development.

SPACE carers must be inspected by Ofsted; be insured; have paediatric first aid training; be checked by the Criminal Records Bureau; and have received specialist training. They are flexible, adaptable and part of the community – offering a family friendly approach. This means that children can access care and education specifically designed for them. They always remember that each child has his or her own individual character, strengths and challenges. This unique approach enables them to concentrate on meeting the specific needs of every child.

For more information see: www.ncma.org.uk.

New dedicated phone numbers for professionals to contact Hampshire County Council Adult and Children's Services

Two new Hantsdirect phone numbers for professionals use only were introduced on 23 September 2009. This builds on our collaborative working, supports our partnerships and strengthens the safeguarding referral processes for both adults and children. A letter containing details of the phone numbers and email

addresses to use has been sent to all partners including schools, health and voluntary organisations.

If you are a professional who has contact with Adult or Children's Services, please make sure you use these phone numbers for any new enquiries to both departments to get the most effective response.

You should still contact key workers directly when discussing open cases. If you have not been informed of the new numbers to use, please contact childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk or **01962 845375**.

Aiming High for Disabled Children and Young People



Throughout August 2009, the Children's Services Department's Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) team ran several short break summer activities throughout the county, for children and young people with disabilities.

AHDC is a government-led transformation programme designed to improve the lives of disabled children, young people and their families. It is jointly delivered by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Department of Health and locally by the Children's Services Department and partners.

The summer activities were a great success, with a steady turn out of children and young people participating in a number of activities, including inclusive cycling in Alice Holt Forest and a wildlife activity day at Swanwick Lakes Wildlife Reserve.

Two siblings that attended the Inclusive Cycling event were Daniel, who has Cerebral Palsy, and brother Owen. Their carer told us the following:

"Daniel had so much fun at the event, we hope to go back to Alice Holt Forest in the near future and hire out the bikes again!"

AHDC's stated aim is 'to improve service provision across the board for disabled children and their families, enhancing equality and opportunity for them'. The programme includes measures to transform the system of service provision, as well as investment in specific services, including short break provision and the way disabled children are supported through transition into adulthood.

Underpinning the service is the Core Offer - this sets out five key standards which families have the right to expect from services: transparency; information; assessment; participation; and feedback.

For further information contact the AHDC team on 01962 846399 or email aiminghigh@hants.gov.uk.

Swine flu

Hampshire County Council continues to keep a close watch on the Swine Flu situation, along with the National Health Service, the Health Protection Agency and other agencies. The advice remains business as usual and the Government have moved to a 'treatment phase' in the fight against the virus. Schools and early years settings will no longer close due to individual cases of swine flu.

The type of Swine Flu infection in most cases in this country remains mild, but the rate of infection has increased slightly. Locally, the situation in Hampshire echoes the national picture with a recent slight rise in the number of cases.

As part of the Council's work, it is continuing its planning and is working closely with its partners in the Government, health services and NHS to ensure that any messages are timely, clear and most importantly consistent.

The Children's Services Department have developed Hantsweb pages to pull together guidance for the public and our partners. This includes:

- What to do if you think you have swine flu
- Information pack for schools
- Information pack for children's centres, childcare and early years settings
- Information for the voluntary and community sector
- Information for commissioners and providers of social care
- Advice for parents and carers
- Resources for children and young people

Please visit www3.hants.gov.uk/cs-swineflu to access the guidance. You can link to this information from your organisation's web page.

If you are unable to access the Internet, contact childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk or 01962 845375 and we will provide it in a different format.

New Family Services and Childcare Directory for Hampshire



After months of planning and hard work, the County Council's new family services directory, the 'Hampshire Parent Know How Directory' is due to go live during the autumn. In line with the national Parent Know How Directory (PKHD), it will officially be launched to the public during January 2010.

What is the Hampshire PKHD?

The Hampshire PKHD will provide a comprehensive range of service information for families, young people and practitioners across the county and will be available through Hantsweb or Hantsdirect.

The new directory is a part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) national Parent Know How programme (www.dcsf.gov.uk/parentknowhow) - a suite of free services designed to serve everyone in a parenting role, or those working to support families.

The national PKHD will be available through the Directgov website (www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm). Hampshire's directory will feed into the national PKHD and can also extract data from it (such as national organisations and cross-border services).

What is happening to HantsFish?

Hampshire's PKHD will replace HantsFish (Hampshire's existing family services directory). HantsFish will continue to be available until January 2010, whilst the new

directory is being fine-tuned for the public launch. However, from November, HantsFish will no longer hold childcare data - this will only be available through the Hampshire PKHD. The new web address will be publicised shortly.

HantsFish will continue to hold other family services information until January 2010. If you wish to add any new information, please email parentknowhow@hants.gov.uk.

Data held in HantsFish will be transferred across to the Hampshire PKHD during the autumn. When HantsFish is decommissioned, redirects will be put in place to point users to the new service.

Childcare data

As part of the Hampshire PKHD project, iCHis (the current childcare database) has been replaced by a new database which will hold all childcare information for Hampshire. This information will feed into the local and national PKHDs from September 2009.

Benefits of the new directory

Benefits of the Hampshire PKHD will include:

- a directory for families that has been developed through workshops and consultation with local stakeholders;
- comprehensive local search facilities, developed for specific services e.g. childcare, children and young people with disabilities; Sure Start Children's Centres; and services for young people;
- a user-friendly service with search

terms which have been 'mapped' to increase the chances of the user getting the information they require;

- the capability for users to search for services across county boundaries; and
- more detailed search results, including maps and at-a-glance comparisons.

What does this mean for my organisation?

We need to make sure that the Hampshire PKHD contains the most comprehensive range of information and services for families, young people and practitioners.

Therefore, we are keen to hear from any organisation who hold details about the services they provide to families. This could include programmes/courses, advice lines and details of facilities or services available to families.

We are currently working with 'eVOLve', who provide an online directory of voluntary and community organisations within Hampshire and the Isle of Wight, to ensure that information related to family services held in the eVOLve database will be available in the Hampshire PKHD.

The project team have either met with or contacted many services who hold information that needs to be in the directory. If you have not been contacted and hold information that you think should be part of the directory, please contact parentknowhow@hants.gov.uk.

Caretastic summer school



There was no pomp and ceremony, just sheer exuberance as young people involved in a special summer school at the University of Winchester graduated in August 2009.

The summer school, called Caretastic, was organised by Hampshire County Council in conjunction with Aimhigher Hampshire and Isle of Wight; the University; and Theatre Inc, an inclusive theatre company based at the University.

14 young people from across the county, aged between 14-17, attended the three day event and experienced a taste of university life. During their time at the University they lived in halls of residence and had the opportunity to participate in a wide range of creative activities. These included drama and performing arts workshops, aimed at boosting their self-esteem and aspirations to attend higher education.

There was no shortage of ambition at the end of the course.

Sian, 15, from Andover, is determined to go on to university where she wants to study performing arts. "It has been a great experience," she said. "I've really enjoyed it and the people who have been working with us have been brilliant, tailoring the workshops to what we wanted to do. It's made me want to go to university even more."

Another participant is taking the aiming high theme to its ultimate limits. Byron, 15 from New Milton, wants to be an airline pilot and has ambitions to join the Royal Air Force to gain his licence. "I have been to a summer school before," he said. "It is great. The best thing has been mixing with the others, taking part in the dance workshops and learning new things." Byron was joined this year on the summer school by his brother Kyle, 14, who enjoyed his taste of university life so much he'd like to go on to college to do sports studies. The Manchester United fan is keen to do something with sport such as being an instructor or coach.

The summer school is funded and run by Aimhigher Hampshire and

the Isle of Wight, with the support of students from the University and staff from Hampshire County Council's care team.

The event culminated in a showcase of the young people's talents with a live performance for carers and staff from the County Council, consisting of dance, music, song, acting and poetry readings. A graduation ceremony rounded off the event, with Tony Acland, Director of Aimhigher Hampshire and Isle of Wight, presenting the young people with certificates of achievement.

However, the opportunities do not end there – Theatre Inc and Aimhigher hope to continue working with the young people through an innovative e-mentoring buddy system which will enable young people in care to keep in touch with students at the University. The University also operates a compact agreement with the County Council to enable young people in care to access university places.

Commenting on the course, Councillor David Kirk, Executive Lead Member for Children's Services, said "Hampshire County Council wants all young people in the county to thrive and achieve their potential. These summer schools have been running for three years now and are excellent at showing young people what they can achieve, as individuals and as part of a group working together on creative tasks. I hope these taster sessions will encourage more young people in care to consider further education and other courses like this which will help give them the confidence to do well in anything they want."

Home Access to Targeted Groups (HATG) laptop project

During the autumn, 820 laptops are being distributed to young people in foster care and those who are leaving care but still in education. This includes young people with care orders placed in their own homes and young people from Hampshire placed with Independent Fostering Agencies.

The laptops have been purchased using Home Access to Targeted Groups (HATG) funding. This is an initiative funded by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and BECTA. The programme is providing computers and broadband internet access to eligible young people so they can use IT to enhance their learning and social inclusion. Most children, particularly those of secondary school age, rely on computers for homework research and to access e-learning 'portals' for revision. Then there are the social networking possibilities of sites including MSN, Facebook and Bebo, which may be particularly important to children in care who have had to move away from their family and friends.

It is hoped that providing children in care with access to computers and the internet will help to significantly narrow the gap in educational achievement. Ongoing support, both in relation to the hardware and to safety and security issues, will be provided by a dedicated website for those receiving a laptop and their carers.

For more information contact childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk.

Trafalgar Project



16 year old Ciaron, who is in foster care in Hampshire, is now able to pursue his ambition of becoming a fully qualified sailing instructor thanks to a series of sailing opportunities. He has been involved with the Trafalgar Project since 2007 and has shown a remarkable aptitude and enthusiasm for sailing. When Ciaron participated in a one-week sailing activity last October, aboard Ocean Youth Trust South's John Laing, he said, "The feedback I received from the crew was positively glowing about his attitude and aptitude and they would have him back like a shot".

Geoff Bus from the Children's Services Department said, "I received much the same comment from Releasing Potential, the Project's main provider of sailing opportunities for our looked-

after children. When Ciaron's carer contacted me about further sailing opportunities for Ciaron, I immediately contacted Ocean Youth Trust and they were able to offer Ciaron a place on an eight-day leg of the Tall Ships Race at the end of this month. As the project's coordinator, I contacted the Trafalgar Project's sponsor and secured full funding of the costs for Ciaron. He wanted to pursue his objective of becoming a fully qualified sailing instructor, so it seemed to make perfect sense to go back to the Project's sponsor and ask for the necessary funding. Ciaron is such a worthy example of what the Trafalgar Project is trying to accomplish with looked-after children through their participation in sailing activities". For more information on the Trafalgar Project please contact Geoff Buss, Project Co-ordinator on 01962 845232 or email geoff.buss@hants.gov.uk.

For a copy of this publication in another language or format (e.g. large print or in an audio format) please contact **01962 845375** or childrens.services.enquiries@hants.gov.uk.

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