

# THE ACORN



**Staffordshire Children's Trust**  
Working together to improve the lives of children and young people

**Edition 19**  
**February 2011**

**Welcome to the quarterly newsletter for Staffordshire Children's Trust.  
Read on to find out more.....**

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A small rural school in the Staffordshire Peak District, dubbed the UK's smallest school last year, is pioneering a new flexi-school system which sees some pupils turn up just once every two weeks.

Hollinsclough Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School serves a parish population of just 150; but has seen pupils numbers increase from five to more than 20 in just six months after it began experimenting with flexible school options. The school is working with Staffordshire County Council, the Diocese of Lichfield and the Centre for British Teachers (CfBT) Education Trust and is now attracting pupils from as far away as Stockport, Sheffield and Lichfield.

Like many rural schools, Hollinsclough faced a continual battle to balance the competing demands of serving the needs of local children with providing value for money for the tax payer.

The flexi-school plan offers three options to parents:

- The first option is the traditional model of full time school education within the statutory guidelines; and just over 50 per cent of the pupils currently at the school are in this model.
- The remainder are in the second option: part time schooling with children attending on agreed days; wearing school uniform and joining in with the full timetable on those days; with their formal school education being supplemented by home teaching.
- The third option is for home schooled children attending a learning hub at least once a fortnight with their parents or carers for an education workshop, show and tell opportunities or an activity day.

Headteacher Janette Mountford-Lees said, "Hollinsclough is a very small school offering a caring family atmosphere in which all are respected and valued. Our staff are positive in their approach, encouraging all children to achieve their full potential by using a flexible and child centred approach.

We strongly believe that education provision should move with the times; and understand that parents are often choosing to educate their children at home for a variety of reasons. But many would still like support from the school system. Our more flexible approach to education encourages and supports those parents and children who have made this choice."

Colin Hopkins, Director of Education for the Diocese of Lichfield, added, "This school is developing an innovative approach to education which could well be a model for small schools in rural areas to achieve longer term sustainability. I am delighted that Hollinsclough is achieving pre-eminence in this field."

For further information contact:  
Stephen Malbon, Hollinsclough School  
on 01298 83303.

or Gavin Drake, Diocese of Lichfield  
on 01543 425425.



# Cannock Chase High gets Closer to Nature...

Cannock Chase High School has been awarded a Lottery grant of £9,950 to develop the school woodland area.

The woodland area surrounds the school playing fields and will be developed into a learning nature walk and a haven for local plant and wildlife species. An outdoor classroom will also be constructed to allow the students full access to the outdoor environment. The nature trail will be open for use by the local primary schools and will also be used for Family Learning events such as Family Learning Week which takes place every October.

Cannock Chase High School has teamed up with Staffordshire Wildlife for this project, their expertise will maximise the environmental potential of the area, enhance existing habitats and create new ones.



Students at the school will be heavily involved in the project and local primary schools will also be invited to join in. Staffordshire Wildlife plan to introduce traditional skills to the students and the community such as green wood working and willow weaving.

The school is very excited about the new project and would like to thank the Big Lottery Fund for supporting the work.



## Safeguarding Children Board Training dates for 2011/2012...

Training dates for 2011/2012 are available from the link below:

[www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/Inter-Agencytraining/](http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/Inter-Agencytraining/)

A list of forthcoming events, are available from the link below:

[www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/Inter-Agencytraining/events/](http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/Inter-Agencytraining/events/)

Please note all of our training is indicated on our website as we will not be producing a catalogue this year.

For further information please contact:

Tel: 01785 854579

Fax: 01785 854580

Email: [sscb.training@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sscb.training@staffordshire.gov.uk)



# Lollipop Man Alastair Scoops Top Title...

A village school's popular lollipop man is celebrating after scooping a prestigious title. Alastair Chapman, who is based at Gentleshaw Primary School, has been crowned regional Lollipop Person of the Year.

Pupils at the school nominated Alastair for the award.

They wrote letters and poems, drew pictures and filmed an assembly which was held in honour of Alastair and the vital road safety role that he carries out.

Their appreciation of his work pushed him to the top of the list when it came to picking a winner for the West Midlands awards, sponsored by Kwik-Fit Insurance.

Alastair took on the role of school crossing patrol officer at Gentleshaw Primary in April 2009 but started working at the school in 1994 when he joined as caretaker.

He said, "It is an honour to have been given this award. The children worked really hard to make this happen which was really lovely.

I couldn't believe it when I found out that I had won the West Midlands title - it was great news, particularly for such a small rural school." Another aspect of the nomination process was that the children learnt a lot about road safety which is the biggest achievement of all.

Staffordshire County Councillor Mike Maryon, Cabinet Member for Highways and Road Safety, added, "Alastair is clearly an inspiration to the pupils and has done an excellent job in keeping them safe at the beginning and end of the school day.



School crossing patrol officers do an amazing job and are often unsung heroes. It is nice to see Alastair being acknowledged for the hard work that he does. Lollipop men and ladies are an integral part of the communities they serve, especially in small villages where they become such familiar faces."

Headteacher Sue Winson added, "The Lollipop Person of the Year competition provided a great opportunity to teach the children about road safety and developed communication and creative skills across the school.

The children really enjoyed taking part and we think Alastair thoroughly deserves his title as the best lollipop person in the West Midlands."

If you have a child in year 6 at primary school you will have already applied for their place at secondary school.

You will be notified of the outcome of your application by 2<sup>nd</sup> class post on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011. If you made your application online you will receive an email notification on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2011. If you are happy with the school your child has been allocated you will need to confirm that you accept the offer within 2 weeks.

If however, you are not happy with the school your child has been offered you have the right to appeal against the decision. The letter telling you that your child has been turned down for a school will tell you that you have the right to make an admission appeal. You can appeal even if you have already accepted another school and you can appeal for more than one school. Send your form back as quickly as possible so that your appeal may be heard during the summer term. You do not need to write out your whole case now: just say you want to appeal and give as many reasons as you can.

Send your completed appeal form to:

- Admissions & Transport, for community and controlled schools (postal address below).
- The school itself, for other types of schools.

Appeals are heard by an independent appeal panel of three to five voluntary members of the public. At least one of the panel members will have an educational background. You may be accompanied or represented at the appeal hearing by a friend, an adviser, your local MP or a legal representative, as long as there is no conflict of interest.

The admission authority will notify you in writing of the date of your appeal hearing and they will also send you a copy of the appeal papers. The hearing must be fair. Put your case as you wish. If you forget something, ask if you can add it. If you do not understand anything that is said, ask for it to be explained.

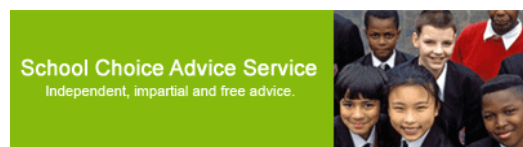
The School Choice Advice Service can provide you with further advice about the appeals process.

Where to find out more about the admissions and appeals process:

### **School Choice Advice Service**

Tel: 01785 278992

[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/schoolchoice](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/schoolchoice)



### **School Admissions and Transport Service**

School Admissions and Transport Service

Tipping Street

Stafford ST16 2DH

Tel: 01785 278593

Email: [admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@staffordshire.gov.uk)

[www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/admissions](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/admissions)



### **The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)**

Tel: 0808 8005793

[www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)



## Full Dyslexia Friendly Status...

On 17th November Sir Graham Balfour School became the first High School in Stafford to achieve the Full Dyslexia Friendly Status.

After a vigorous audit carried out over 2 days by representatives from the local education authority which included scrutiny of files, observations of lessons, meetings with the leadership team, teaching staff, teaching assistants, students, parents and governors the decision was made that the school made excellent provision for its Dyslexic students.

Mrs Cope Head of Learning Support (who is herself dyslexic) said, "We have always tried to teach in this manner and I am thrilled that all the efforts from staff has been recognised. If teachers teach in a dyslexia friendly manner then ALL students benefit."

Dave Wright Headteacher explained, "We are delighted to receive this award which is in recognition of work undertaken over several years. As a school, we recognise fully the problems faced by dyslexics and are determined to help them overcome what for many can be a barrier to progress. Staff training and refinement of classroom practice have been at the heart of our strategy and its success has enabled many dyslexics to achieve their full potential."



## Sports Competition Prize...

Sir Graham Balfour School's P.E. Department was presented with the prize of £1,000 in sports equipment earlier this month.

They had entered a competition which had been organised when one of the senior officers in the County Council won a local government competition with the sports equipment as the prize. County Councillor John Wood then decided to ask the five schools that made the most progress in this summer's exam results to bid for the equipment that he had won.

A group of the Sports Ambassador's at Balfour wrote the schools bid including ideas of what they would use the equipment for such as setting up sports clubs in school and working with our pyramid primary schools.



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A panel of school improvement officers judged the bids and awarded Balfour with the top prize. The cheque was presented to the school earlier this month by John Wood, Head of Financial and Commercial Services who said, "I was really impressed with the way the bid had been put together and the involvement of the sports leaders in each year. I was also impressed by the fact the bid extended to primary schools and the enthusiasm the children showed toward the involvement of other schools. Well done to all."



Mike Osborne-Town, Assistant Director of the Education Transformation Division also attended the presentation and explained, "In every way sport, community work and exam results, Sir Graham Balfour School is one of the top schools in the County. They are a deserving recipient of this award."



## Stafford Railway Building Society...

Stafford Railway Building Society offer awards to schools to acknowledge outstanding pieces of work.

Staff at Sir Graham Balfour School were asked to nominate students who had recently completed outstanding work worthy of the award. Chloe Fordham (Year 8) was nominated by both Mrs. Whincup and Mrs. Hartley for her work in English and Religious Education.

In her English classes Chloe had written diary entries for a soldier fighting in World War One. Chloe used her research to create an authentic and poignant piece of writing that was fluent, accurate and sustained. An extremely mature composition for a student of her age.

She was also nominated by her Religious Education teacher for the design of a Muslim prayer mat that included a host of relevant and appropriate symbolism.

Chloe received a Certificate acknowledging the award and a cheque for £25. Dave Wright, Headteacher explained, "We are grateful to Stafford Railway Building Society for this award which acknowledges and helps promote, educational excellence and of course, we are all very proud of Chloe!"



# A Year in the Life of Clough Hall Technology School 2010...

Staff and students enjoyed a successful year here at Clough Hall School in 2010, with community events, cross curricular projects, Funky Days, educational visits, school productions and more, we really were a busy bunch!

We went crazy with a jam packed Christmas calendar that saw pupils, parents, staff and local residents enjoy The Good Old Days, Christmas Concerts, a DVD Film Show along with a delicious Christmas Lunch.

So as we strive for excellent results and achievements in 2011, let's not forget about the many exciting activities that took place across the school last year. The following stories are just a few highlights:

## Clough Hall Technology School - Ariel Shot!...

On a cold but sunny morning in November, pupils from years 7, 8 and 9 gathered on the astro turf to create the initials CHTS!

With a lot of planning and a dress rehearsal, we just about managed to get the right amount of pupils in each zone of the pitch to create the individual letters!

With everyone in place it wasn't long before we spotted the arrival of pilots Richard Kaprielian and Kurt Luby who had come from Barton Aerodrome to fly over Clough Hall school and take an ariel shot of our creation.

They approached the school from the north, circling the school to take a range of pictures from the air. Several minutes later, we were onto our second pose with all waving frantically at the camera. The pictures have turned out really well and despite the cold, the students enjoyed being part of this creative activity.

A big thank you to the pilots who gave up their time to provide us with the photography and well done to all involved! Oh and thank goodness for dress rehearsals!



# Clough Hall Technology School - New School Canteen!...

As pupils were enjoying their summer break, a dedicated team were busy refurbishing the school canteen.

The new look and feel has definitely had an impact on the break and lunchtime experience for staff and pupils. Now with the photography art work of famous landscapes and food related pictures, we can sit back and enjoy the view.



# Clough Hall Technology School - Kidsgrove Canal Clean-up...

On Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> October year 9 students took part in the Kidsgrove Canal clean-up event.

Clough Hall students and local residents joined forces to take action on our run down canal. British Waterways and Network Rail were asked by Butt Lane Councillor, Kyle Robinson to provide the materials for locals to volunteer with the clean up.

All in all the day was a huge success with British Waterways offering future support and thanking all the residents and school children who got involved. It shows that when the community comes together, we can do amazing things.



## A new Uniform and Prefects System...

You may have seen our pupils out and about with a new look. Last September marked the start of a new term and a new uniform as we changed the uniform back to a classic black blazer and tie.

I think you will agree that our pupils are looking very smart, they even helped to design the new school logo that you will see attached to the blazer.

A number of pupils have been chosen to become Prefects this year – which again marks the start of something new. The selected students will be representing the school for various events such as open evenings and assisting staff on break and lunchtime duties. They may also assist pupils during tutor time or help younger pupils to read.

Our Prefects will be given responsibilities for making sure all pupils are following the behaviour policy while on duty. The Head Boy and Head Girl may issue detentions if Prefects are not respected or obeyed.

To make our Prefects stand out from the crowd, they will wear a new tie and blazer which features a gold trim. We hope that this is the start of something big at Clough Hall and hope that many more pupils will join us in the near future!



## Graffiti Mural!

Inspired by the work on their Urban Street theme and the work of Creative Arts North Staffs artists, a group of Year 9's have been busy taking part in Graffiti art workshops to design a mural for an area of school.

The next stage will be for the professional artists to realise the funky designs and transform one of the bare walls of our school into a creative space. Well done Kerrie Blakeman, Oliver Haycock, James Heath, Scott Jones, Lizzie Moore, Blake Scott, Sasha Jones, Rebecca Littleton, Keiron Owen, Georgia Turnock and Ben Morton.

Other events and activities have included a musical production of *Let's Twist Again* – a brand new 50's musical, international visits, rewards trips, harvest festival, charity support and fundraising, sports days and much more!

We look forward to carrying many projects through into the spring term and hope to see Clough Hall go from strength to strength in 2011.

**CLOUGH HALL TECHNOLOGY SCHOOL PRESENTS...**

# 'Let's Twist Again!'

One Love. One Dream. One Chance. One Mistake.

**A BRAND NEW 50'S MUSICAL**  
**INCLUDES THE 50'S HITS**

TEENAGER IN LOVE • POETRY IN MOTION • LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR • AND THE TITLE SONG 'LET'S TWIST AGAIN'



Show starts 7:30pm  
Art Exhibition/Refreshments from 7pm onwards  
WEDNESDAY 14TH - FRIDAY 16TH JULY 2010  
TICKETS: £5.00 ADULTS £3.50 CONCESSIONS  
AVAILABLE FROM CHS RECEPTION OR CALL 01782 783 281



## Thomas Alleynes High School - Football Scholarships...

Thomas Alleynes High School is fortunate to have many talented sports students. This month though has seen a number of those students fulfil their potential.

Alfie Crooks has signed a scholarship contract at Aston Villa FC, which he will begin on completing his exams. Douglas Price and Ryan Boot have both signed full time scholarship forms with Port Vale and begin training in July.

Commenting on the signing Douglas said "This is what I have been training for, for a number of years since I first went to Port Vale. I am aware that the hard work is only just beginning if I am to realise my dream of playing first team football. I'd like to thank Thomas Alleynes for their support and allowing me time off to train."



Also this term Olivia Walker has represented Staffordshire at the England Schools Athletics, Carly Swift has been selected for Staffordshire's Cross Country Team, and Carly Atkinson has represented England at Tae Kwon Do.

Finally Alex Woods and Ben Smith have made it through to the Staffordshire U15 cricket squad for 2011.



## Thomas Alleynes High School - Ofsted...

Thomas Alleynes High School receives glowing commendations.

Good with significant outstanding features, that's Ofsted's verdict on Thomas Alleynes High School in Uttoxeter following its most recent inspection.

Staff, students and governors of Thomas Alleynes High School were delighted with the glowing commendations received from the Ofsted inspection on 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> January.

This judgment is particularly pleasing under the new more rigorous Ofsted framework and the Ofsted team's very positive report clearly endorses the school's core values of progress, opportunity and individuality.

The inspectors were very impressed with the school's house system, indicating that: Through the house system, students become known as individuals and they have high levels of confidence in the school's ability to advise and support them appropriately. Also commended was the communication and engagement with parents and the students' contribution to the school and wider community, both of which were judged as outstanding.

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The report begins with: Underpinning a strong set of values are outstanding care, guidance and support which is a pleasing achievement for the school of 1,340 students. It also commends the progress students make from Year 9 to the end of Year 11, and good planning by teachers underpins this. There is also good and outstanding practice which involves students in assessing how well they have done and identifying their next steps.

Thomas Alleyne's students are justifiably proud of their school and were complimented by the Ofsted team for being motivated, interested learners who have extremely positive relationships with their teachers and teaching assistants; students with complex special educational needs make consistently good progress and many make outstanding progress.

Headteacher Suzanne O'Farrell said, "I am very pleased with the report and all staff at Thomas Alleyne's and its students and governors should be proud that their hard work has been recognised. All our staff really appreciate the support we receive from parents but what I am most pleased about is the fact that 95% of our parents surveyed said that their child enjoys school. This far exceeds national expectations and we work hard to make sure our students make good progress and enjoy school."



The full report is on the Ofsted and school's website at [www.tahs450.org](http://www.tahs450.org)

## Thomas Alleyne's High School - Lego Competition...

On Saturday 22 January the National Finals of the LEGO competition was held at Loughborough University. 28 teams from all over England and Ireland took part.

Unfortunately Thomas Alleyne's High School did not manage to secure a place in the world final but gave it their best shot. They did however manage to pick up one of the ten trophies for teamwork, which speaks volumes about their pupils and staff.

The pupils taking part were Nadeem Hussain, Kit Naylor, Tom Fitchett, Tom Mottram, Aaron Williamson, John Evans, Callum Lomas, Ben Harrison, Matthew Smith and Charles Douthwaite and the group were accompanied by their teacher Mr Graham Quigley.



# Storytelling Festival (31st January - 4<sup>th</sup> February 2011)...

The seventeen schools that form the Uttoxeter Pyramid Partnership (UPP) – one high school, three middle schools and thirteen first schools, have formed a unique partnership focusing on improving transition and outcome for all pupils in Uttoxeter from nursery through to sixth form.

This year's joint project is aimed at increasing community cohesion and mutual respect and tolerance through the medium of aural storytelling, traditions, music and dance. The Storytelling festival will coincide with National Storytelling week.

On Thursday 3rd February 2011 the Cinebowl hosted performances by renowned storytellers Peter Chand, Shonaleigh and Clive Peters for nurseries, playgroups and all 17 schools across the Uttoxeter Partnership.

A storytelling Café with students performing alongside the professional storytellers took place at Uttoxeter racecourse on Thursday 3rd February.

The winning authors/schools of the Partnership storywriting competition will be announced during the interval.



Storytellers and authors will be working across all 17 schools during the week including:

Stacy Darlington of African Dance and Drums, Surtal-Chinese Storytelling, Bali Rai, award winning author, Clive Hopwood – Writer and storyteller, Peter Chand – renowned storyteller, Scriptwriter Robin Haywood, Shonaleigh - Deputy storytelling laureate, Spicy Fingers – poet and storyteller, Sohan Kailey - Bhangra dancing and Storytelling, Alan Barrett - A Play in a day and choreographer Manuela Brandt.

Uttoxeter Heart of Oak Morris will be dancing in all of the first schools telling the tale of William Kemp, who in 1600 danced a jig from London to Norwich over a period of nine days and hence became a 'Nine day wonder'.

Thomas Alleyne's High School Librarian and organiser of the Storytelling Festival Eleanor Shakespeare said, "This is the third major event the Pyramid Partnership have organised. Following our successful storytelling week last year and the summer Reading Festival that saw over 4,500 students enjoy a 'novel' reading experience, either through meeting authors or performance events such as the Michael Rosen experience in the market square and at Uttoxeter Racecourse. I am sure this, our second storytelling festival will be an enjoyable week for all our students."

# Participation and Engagement Working with Disabled Children...

In the last issue of Acorn I had just come into post here at the Children's Voice Project, since then I have been busy consulting with children and young people who are accessing activities which are funded through Aiming High.

Some activities I have visited so far include Movie mornings, Horse Riding, Basketball and Craft mornings.

Questionnaires are also being given out at these events, which provides an opportunity for the children and young people to tell us what they think and give us their views.

If you have any questions or you would like a copy of the questionnaire please feel free to contact me:

Amy Duddy

Project Co-ordinator

on 01785 253878

or [cvp@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:cvp@staffordshire.gov.uk)



## Introduction to the Children & Young People's Voice Project...

The Children's & Young People's Voice Project aims to help looked after young people have their say about their care, the service they receive and plans that are being made for their future.

The project which has a dedicated team of staff provides young people with the opportunity of attending forums, workshops, focus groups, training professionals and elected members along with being an active part of the recruitment process by interviewing potential new staff.

If you want to know further information about the work of the Children & Young People's Voice Project please contact a member of the team on 01785 253878 or email [cvp@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:cvp@staffordshire.gov.uk).

### **Young People Skill-Up to Interview New Staff!**

Looked after Children from across Staffordshire have recently participated in a newly formed Recruitment & Selection Core Group facilitated by the Children & Young People's Voice Project. Members of the group will be asked to help in the interviewing of staff applying to work in Children's Services of Staffordshire County Council.

To ensure the young people have the confidence, skills and knowledge to be part of an interviewing panel they recently attended a one day training session delivered by the Children & Young People's Voice Project. The training also gave the young people the chance to explore related topics like confidentiality, stereotyping and respect.

If you would like to hear more about the group or are aware of a young person who may want to join, please contact:

Joseph Sullivan, Participation Support Worker

Te: 01785 253878

Email: [joseph.sullivan@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:joseph.sullivan@staffordshire.gov.uk)

**1: The Quality Standards booklets for practitioners and parents** are now available online at <http://www.staffordshirechildrenstrust.org.uk/commissionerparents/linksduments/quality/>

Please note, these booklets are only applicable to Non-Statutory Assessment Services. Any practitioners who work with parents can follow the link to get printable e-copies.

**2: A variety of consultations have taken place with parents over the last few months, these have included:**

- Child Poverty: Parents have been consulted on the new Child Poverty Strategy and were asked for their views on certain topics within the strategy.
- A review of the 2,000 voices (in consultation).
- Teenage Pregnancy: this consultation with Teenage Parents looks at how they access services and their experiences in doing so.
- Safeguarding: The Local Safeguarding Board commissioned us to consult with parents on their behalf regarding current literature.

**3: Results of Parenting Week** – Parent week activities that were delivered in Staffordshire have been picked up nationally and can be found on the Family & Parenting Institute website. <http://www.familyandparenting.org/>

**4: The Housing Family Intervention Project** is a partnership between Staffordshire County Council (SCC) and Stafford and Rural Homes (SaRH). This project has been extremely successful and is being used as a model of good practice. A presentation was given by the team, attended by all SaRH Senior Management and the Department for Education to celebrate and show case its success. The Families Ambassador represented SCC at this event and the presentation was presented by SaRH, Staffordshire Police, the Department for Education, Family Intervention Project Specialist and Staffordshire's Parenting Strategy Co-ordinator.

**5: Staffordshire's Parenting Strategy Co-ordinator, Parent Experts and Family Information Service (FIS)** are working together to design a Single Point of Access for all Evidence Based Parenting Practice. The webpage is in design and training for the contact centre and all FIS staff has been scheduled for February 2011. The launch of this service will be post March 2011.

For further information on any of the 5 updates please contact:

The Children's Trust Team on

Tel: 01785 277116

Email: [staffordshirechildrenstrust@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:staffordshirechildrenstrust@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Families have a chance to get a taste of the 'Good Life' - by winning their own allotment.

They will also be provided with plants, seeds and the necessary equipment as well as getting regular support to make sure their garden grows – in what is believed to be the first scheme of its type in the country.

The borough council is on the look out for five local families who want to run their own allotment. The five plots in the Coton Fields area have been set aside for use by the community for the 'Family Grow' project.

Work is currently going on to bring the plots in to shape for the lucky winners to look after in the growing season - between April and November.

The council has teamed up with the Stafford District Community and Learning Partnership, Environmental and Health Team and Coton Fields Allotment Association to roll out the project which is being seen as a chance for families to cut food bills and improve diets, as well as learning new skills.

Those who provide the best reason for wanting to have an allotment will be selected by a panel of judges. The families will be mentored by Derek Hill from the Coton Fields Allotment Association.

Councillor Stan Highfield, Cabinet Member for Environment and Health said, "This is a hobby that the whole family can enjoy and comes with so many benefits for a healthier lifestyle.

In the current financial climate I am sure people will not want to let the opportunity pass to have free healthy food with the satisfaction that they have grown it themselves, and be supported throughout this unique project."

The 'Good Life' was a popular 1970s television comedy series and featured a couple trying to create a sustainable, self-sufficient life style and turning their garden in to an allotment where they grow their own fruit and vegetables.



Kate Harrold from the Environmental and Health Team, who is leading on the project.



There is also an opportunity to look around the allotment site – between the town's Prospect Road and Corporation Street - with an open day on Saturday 5 March between 11am and 2pm.

For an application form go to [www.staffordhealth.com](http://www.staffordhealth.com), email [ehadmin@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:ehadmin@staffordbc.gov.uk) or telephone 01785 619752.

All applications must be in by 5pm on Friday 11 March 2011.

## New Legislation

The Government has asked Parliament to approve Regulations on Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children. From April 2011, the regulations will place a duty on local authorities to prepare a statement for carers on what services will be available in local areas and what criteria they will be accessed by. Short breaks allow parents of disabled children to carry out day to day tasks that other parents take for granted. Crucially, they also give disabled children and young people opportunities to access positive activities independently of their families. The draft regulations state that local authorities must provide a range of services for disabled children both within and outside the home and in the evenings, at weekends and at school holidays.

## Aiming High Parent Survey

Over the last 18 months Aiming High in Staffordshire has funded a wide range of activities for disabled children and their families, including football, cricket, arts and crafts, trips out, G8way Team, Parent Participation Service, outreach and befriending service etc. Aiming High is currently evaluating and reviewing how successful the development of short break and other services has been in Staffordshire. As part of this process a parent survey has been completed gaining the views of parents and carers. Feedback from the survey is currently being collated. The views of disabled children and young people are also been gathered to inform the review.

The Parent Participation Service (soon to be known as SPAN – Staffordshire Parents Action Network) is a free service for parents and carers of a disabled child, up to age 18, who live in Staffordshire.

The service continues to grow and develop. The Parent and Carer Shadow Board have met each month and attended a range of training sessions. They have been involved in various meetings and consultations and attend the Aiming High Strategy Board meetings.

The e-forum has a widening membership. Parents and professionals can register online to provide help and support in a range of areas. Parents can also use the e-forum to read and comment on documentation affecting services in Staffordshire for disabled children.

Please log in and register on [www.aiminghighforumstaffs.co.uk](http://www.aiminghighforumstaffs.co.uk). Once registered, professionals can post questions and answer any queries posed by parents.



Continued overleaf...

## Shadow Trust Board

Parents on the Shadow Board recently hosted a Parent Participation Network Lunch which was well attended by representatives from a wide range of services across Staffordshire. At the lunch attendees were able to: learn more about the parent forum; how the parent forum could help them; how service providers could help the forum; celebrate the achievements to date; and to set up a working relationship with the parent forum. Feedback received from the event has been very positive, comments included:

- Very well presented and engaging opportunity
- I have been very impressed by the involvement of the Parent Board, attending Aiming High Board
- Very informative and powerful event

The Board are also planning parent information days around the county to share information and collect views and enquiries from parents and carers.

If you would like to find out more about the service please email us at [spps@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:spps@staffordshire.gov.uk), ring 01785 356919 or visit [www.aiminghighforumstaffs.co.uk](http://www.aiminghighforumstaffs.co.uk).

## Opportunity to access Training and Development Fund

In recent months Aiming High has been offering an opportunity for professionals to access some funding for workforce development. The funding is targeted at workers/agencies involved in delivery of short break opportunities for disabled children and young people. This is short breaks in their widest sense and could include overnight stays or community based activities.

There is still a limited amount of funding available which will be allocated on a first come first served basis to applicants where there is a clear link between the training opportunity and improved service delivery. Applications must be received by 7 March 2011 and any training must take place by the 31 March 2011.

For further information, please contact:

Tina Wigfall, Aiming High Strategy Manager on 01785 277856  
or email: [aiminghigh@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:aiminghigh@staffordshire.gov.uk)

## Disabled Children Access to Childcare (DCATCH)

Working with colleagues in Early Years, the Aiming High Team has been developing some work around supporting parents of disabled children to access childcare. This has been funded by a one off DCATCH grant which is aimed at supporting childcare to allow parents to access education, work or training, rather than short breaks. The DCATCH Programme in Staffordshire includes:

- Children Centres – 5 Children Centres have been funded to deliver 6 projects in the County. The projects include extra childcare places for disabled children and workforce development for staff working with disabled children.
- Training and Development Fund – the Training and Development Fund has been targeted at private, independent and voluntary day care providers. Providers can apply to the fund to access training which will enhance their ability to support disabled children. Training funded so far has included Epilepsy and Autism awareness. Providers may also apply in certain circumstances to cover staff costs whilst training takes place. The fund will close 31 March 2011, but there is still currently funding available for training which can be delivered prior to financial year end.

Continued overleaf...

- Research project – Debs Sambor from MRA Research is currently undertaking an in depth piece of research with parents of disabled children regarding their childcare needs and their experiences of formal childcare.
- Grants are being made available to key toy libraries across the County to develop a stock of toys and equipment for disabled children. A pool of toy libraries has been targeted and a bidding round is currently underway. Successful toy libraries will receive up to £5,000 for specialist equipment and toys which be made available to support day care providers.

## **E Learning/Workforce Development**

### **Safeguarding Disabled Children**

An E learning package Safeguarding Disabled Children is available free of charge to Children Trust partner agencies. The course aims to raise awareness of specific needs of disabled children in relation to their vulnerability and communication needs.

The link below should take you to the Safeguarding Board E learning page and then scroll down to '4' for Safeguarding disabled children.

<http://www.staffsscb.org.uk/professionals/Inter-Agencytraining/e-learning/>

### **Autism Awareness**

Staffordshire Aiming High, specialist colleagues and parents are currently involved in working with the Virtual College and Concept Training to develop a bespoke E learning package raising awareness of Autism. The package when developed will be aimed at anyone in the children's workforce in Staffordshire and will provide basic information on the Autism Spectrum, bust some of the myths that surround autism and provide some awareness of communication and other skills required when working with children on the autism spectrum. The package is not meant to be a substitute for more in depth face to face training but will provide an introduction to this disability. It is hoped the packages will be available in April 2011.

### **Short Break Services**

An E Learning Package is also under development covering an introduction to short break provision. This has also been developed in partnership with Staffordshire parents. It is hoped the packages will be available in April 2011.

All packages will be free to the children's workforce.

For more details on any of the above information contact: [aiminghigh@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:aiminghigh@staffordshire.gov.uk)



Social Workers and Family Link Carers from the length and breadth of the Midlands travelled to Walsall College to attend the training event on 4th February organised by the Shared Care Network (Midlands) Region.

The guest speaker, Martin Goodwin gave inspiring and informative presentations and workshops in the event Safeguarding Children with Disability and Safe Care.

Feedback from delegates reported that the day really achieved it's aim which was to focus on the specific characteristics and issues around supporting children who are vulnerable due to disability, and the challenges faced by practitioners, carers, and of course the children themselves.

If anyone would like to find out more about the Shared Care Network, future events, or is interested in becoming a short break carer contact:

Helen Turner (Secretary)  
on 07815 827183.



## Family Link...

### Become a Family Link Carer

Give a little time and make a BIG difference in the life of a child with a disability and their families. Can you provide a regular break for a disabled child? Helping a child with a disability can be both rewarding and fun. By involving the child in your community or at home will give the child the opportunity to gain new experiences and will also give their family a break.

Contact us NOW to find out

Family Link  
Staffordshire County Council  
The Old House  
Eastern Avenue  
Lichfield  
WS13 7SQ

Tel No: 01543 510100  
Fax No: 01543 510141



Ryan Bishop pictured with Kelly Danks.

It was a Christmassy day with snow on the ground, bit this did not hinder the good turn out for the Family Link Christmas trip to Santa on the Farm at the Shugborough Hall Estate.

The children really enjoyed riding on the land train, seeing the animals on the farm and playing on the playground despite the cold weather.

Whilst looking around the farm we came upon a maid in one of the barns who was telling the story of the first Christmas, surrounded by the farmyard animals which the children were able to pet.

Next up was the long queue which faced the children to see Santa, though this caused no problems for the children as they each waited patiently to see the man himself. The children enjoyed receiving their presents from Santa and even got to have a go at stirring the Christmas pudding being made in the kitchen.



Most of the carers and children then retired to the warmth of the café to enjoy homemade mince pies and drinks whilst the children were involved in making music with a variety of musical instruments, led by a music man, who was very understanding to the children's disabilities, and involved them fully.

In whole, a good day enjoyed by all.



## **What's Community Games all about?**

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be the biggest sporting event ever to take place in this country. But it's not just about two weeks of sport in London; it's a four-year cultural celebration right across the UK.

Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent (SASSOT) have been successful in winning the contract to provide support to the West Midlands 2012 legacy trust Community Games programme.

This has placed SASSOT at the forefront of one of the West Midlands' most high profile and potentially community enhancing activities in the run up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and enable us the opportunity to work with our local partners to ensure that Community Games is targeted at our communities of most need.

Community Games are a way for you to bring your community together to take part in sporting and cultural activities inspired by, and in celebration of, London 2012.

By helping people like you to stage their own events and activities we hope to give thousands of people across the West Midlands their own Olympic moment.

## **Are we a 'community'?**

A community is simply a group of people that come together at some point to share and do things. You could, in fact, form your own new community. What's important is that it's your Community Games event, so you can make it exactly the sort of event that you, as a 'community' all want.

## **Why should I get involved?**

Community Games gives you the chance to be part of the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. But it's also about bringing people together to try new sporting and arts activities and having loads of fun at the same time.

## **What do the Games look like?**

A Community Games includes both sporting and cultural activities, and some sort of opening and/or closing ceremony that brings everyone together. The rest is up to you.

Each Community Games will look different – some might happen on only one day at one venue, others over a week at lots of different venues. Some will involve an element of competition; others will focus simply on getting people participating in sports or cultural activities they might never have tried before.

The important thing is that each event will be shaped by those involved and be about what that community wants to do. So it's a pretty blank canvas.

## **We already have an event that sounds similar. Can an existing event be a Community Games?**

Yes if it includes both sporting and cultural events, and some sort of ceremony. If it doesn't then you could perhaps add to it and turn it into a Community Games as you plan for it next time around.



Continued overleaf...

Continued...

## **If I decide to organise a Community Games will I get any help?**

The short answer is 'yes, of course'. Here's a few more details of what we can do to help you:

1. First, we've set up a website [www.communitygames.org.uk](http://www.communitygames.org.uk) which has lots of resources, as well as great ideas based on what other people are doing as part of their Games.
2. The biggest help to you will probably be our Community Games toolkit, which you'll find on the website. It contains loads of useful information and tips for organising an event. The answers to many of the detailed questions that you'll probably have when you start to think about organising an event can all be found in the toolkit. This will continue to be updated as the programme goes on.
3. Then there's the local members of the West Midlands Community Games Team who will be on hand to advise and help you to bring your ideas to life.
4. We've also got free workshops on how to organise and promote your Games, where you'll be able to meet other people planning their Games and share ideas.
5. We'll be keeping you up-to-date with an e-newsletter every so often with information and news on what's happening across the region.
6. We'll help you promote your Games by giving you a page on the web site.

We're also planning to involve local 'stars' that will help to promote some of the Games in their area and perhaps even turn up on the day. These people could be local sporting champions (past, present and future), or perhaps actors or TV personalities.

## **Is there any money for our Games?**

Unfortunately the programme doesn't have any funds available to help stage individual games, but there is lots of free support. Information about where you might apply to for funding will be added to the website.

## **Can we use the Olympic or Paralympic logos?**

Unfortunately, no one apart from the London Organising Committee for the Olympic and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and their official sponsors can use these logos.

However, LOCOG has created the *Inspire Mark* – recognising projects that are inspired directly by the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and can be used on publicity and promotional material. We hope as many Community Games as possible will carry the *Inspire Mark*.

## **I'm interested - what do I do next?**

Go to [www.communitygames.org.uk](http://www.communitygames.org.uk) where you can find out more and register your interest. Then one of the Community Games team will contact you and help you to get started.

I would like you to consider supporting the new Community Games programme in whatever capacity you have available but ideally by;

- Promoting the Community Games through your networks / partners / websites / newsletters / publications etc and signposting interested groups and people to myself or the website [www.communitygames.org.uk](http://www.communitygames.org.uk)
- Becoming or identifying a Community Games advocate(s)
- Identifying existing pre-planned events that could be a Community Games in 2011/12

For further information please contact:

Chris Turner, Club Development Manager, Sport Across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent  
[cturner@staffordbc.gov.uk](mailto:cturner@staffordbc.gov.uk) or call 01785 619681

Hello, the 2011 national year of communication, is a campaign to increase understanding of how important it is for children and young people to develop good communication skills.

In the 21st century, the ability to communicate - to say what you want to say and to understand what other people are saying - is fundamental. Speech, language and communication underpins everything we do in life. Babbling babies do not become talkative toddlers by chance. Communication is a skill that we learn and develop and is something we can all improve.

But did you know that in the UK today over 1 million children and young people have some form of speech, language and communication need? This is at least 2 or 3 children in every classroom – and that's the children we know about.

Difficulties with communicating can affect children and young people severely and for life. In areas of poverty, over 50% of children start school with delayed language skills. This puts them at a huge disadvantage to their peers as they struggle to learn and make friends.

Hello aims to make communication for all children and young people a priority in homes and schools across the UK so that they can live life to the full.

Small Talk Speech and Language Therapy based in Staffordshire are supporting the campaign by a series of free training sessions which follow the monthly themes hi-lighted by the campaign. Director and speech and language therapist Libby Hill feels that this is a fantastic opportunity to hi-light the importance of speech, language and communication. We all know about dyslexia now which is a problem with written language but the incidence of spoken language difficulties is as high or worse. The general public, however are mainly unaware of the importance of spoken language or the crisis we are facing as skills decline.

Small Talk have been extremely concerned about the problems for a while which led Libby to create a series of pre-school groups, Smart Talkers Pre-School Communication Groups which are run in many of the Children's Centres throughout Staffordshire and beyond. These are designed to help address the issues involved such as attention, listening, auditory memory, phonological awareness etc and better prepare children for the demands at school.

For more information about the Hello Campaign log onto;

[www.hello.org.uk](http://www.hello.org.uk)

or to register your interest in a free information session,

contact Small Talk on 0844 704 5888

or [enquiries@smalltalk-ltd.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@smalltalk-ltd.co.uk)



Ignite Your Spark was a Staffordshire Libraries project providing graffiti art activities to the students.

These fantastic free sessions were conducted by a local community arts company based in Staffordshire called Creative Arts North Staffs who work to address Anti-Social behaviour, encourage community cohesion and inspire young people through the arts.

In partnership with Creative Arts North Staffs, Newcastle library offered these events to the students of Newcastle Community High School in October 2010. The aim of the project was to engage with students who do not use their local library and to successfully change their perceptions of the modern library, demonstrating how libraries can be relevant to them, through a range of graffiti art workshops. The students said, "The library seemed to be somewhere that old people would go, but now will definitely use the library." and, "The library is too quiet, but now I think the library is mint!"

For more information on the project please contact Sam Mellenchip or Joanna Henshaw on 01782 297300.



## New Interactive Art Work to Tour the Community...

Staffordshire County Council's Heritage & Arts Service have commissioned artists Mark Beeston and Ian Jones to create an interactive and multisensory art work for young people.

The artists will be delivering a series of creative workshops with Early Years Children at Barnfields Primary School, Stafford, Gateway Special Educational Needs Nursery, Lichfield and Family Groups at Wombourne Community Centre.

Gill Richards, Headteacher at Barnfields Primary said, "This is an amazing opportunity for our children to be involved in. They will be exposed to a wide range of materials many of which would not usually be accessible through school. The children and staff are very excited and can't wait to get started."

Artists, Mark Beeston and Ian Jones will use the workshops to explore how young children think, play learn and learn. The workshops will inform the development of the multisensory art work which will tour to schools and community settings across the county and challenge young audiences in a new and exciting way.

For more information about Explore, visit [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/explore](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/explore)

Contact: Tracie Meredith

Tel 01785 278571

Email: [tracie.meredith@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:tracie.meredith@staffordshire.gov.uk)

explore

## Free Venues to Deliver Support Services...

Did you know that as part of Tamworth Borough Council's Locality Working Initiative, there are four Community Hubs in Tamworth delivering support services to residents in Amington, Belgrave, Glascote Heath and Stonydelph?

What's more, we are currently offering statutory organisations, community groups and residents the opportunity to use these facilities free of charge to deliver services that will benefit local communities and address priority issues.

Locality working provides the key vehicle to close the gap between Tamworth's communities. This project is being led by Community Development Officers, using best practice in Community Development. Their job is to set up, manage and coordinate these Community Hubs, alongside working with partners from across the Local Strategic Partnership to deliver improved services and better use of available resources.

If you are interested in using these facilities or would like to find out more about this project, please contact Peter Smith

Tel: 01827 709380

Mobile: 07891 052142

Email: [peter-smith@tamworth.gov.uk](mailto:peter-smith@tamworth.gov.uk)



Calling all budding artists, sculptors, and sketchers. Stafford and Cannock League of Hospital Friends are proud to announce their art competition in conjunction with Stafford Hospital, entitled 'Reflections'.

The winning paintings will be displayed in prominent areas at Stafford Hospital for visitors and staff to enjoy. The competition is open to anyone in the area in who is between 4 to 18 years of age.

The age groups are as follows:

- 4-7 years
- 8-11 years
- 12-15 years
- 16-18 years

The subject categories to chose from are :

- Listen and improve
- Care for people
- Work together
- Do the right thing

You can use any medium you wish, providing that it can be framed (essential for hygiene at the Hospital) and the entry can be no bigger than A3.

The entries will be judged by a panel from the Stafford and Cannock League of Hospital Friends and representatives from various hospital departments.

There will be a prize for 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> places for each age group, with 1<sup>st</sup> place prize winners also getting a £10 voucher and a certificate. Prize giving will take place at Stafford Hospital, date to be advised. Winners and runners up paintings will all be displayed for future viewing by visitors, patients and staff alike.

**All entries to be sent to the following address:**

Yvette Tompkins  
Stafford and Cannock League of Hospital Friends  
Block 7  
St George's Hospital  
Corporation Street  
Stafford  
ST16 3AG

**All entries must include the following information:**

Name  
Age group  
Subject category  
Entrant's Contact details

**Closing dates for entries is 30<sup>th</sup> April 2011. We will not be able to return any entries.**

# Youngsters put Panel in the Picture...

Four members of Staffordshire Police Young People's Panel have filmed a DVD to publicise their work.

The youngsters, aged between 10 and 16, put together the film as part of the force's contribution to national Takeover Day, an annual event staged to celebrate and highlight the positive contribution young people make to society.

The DVD is being filmed by the Staffordshire Police Audio Visual unit and aims to give an overview of how the Young People's panel works and the contribution it makes to helping inform key decisions in relation to young people.

Citizens' Panel Officer, Natalie Wilford who has been supervising the project is hoping the DVD will encourage more people to join. "The panel gives young people a chance to tell us what they need, what their concerns are and what we could be doing in their communities." she explained, "That's why we're keen to recruit more young people to the panel.

The DVD has an introduction from Mike Cunningham, our Chief Constable, so hopefully, that shows people it's being backed at the highest level. The Panel gives young people the chance to be involved with the force every day of the year and not just on Takeover Day.

"Our Citizens' Panels are about giving people a chance to let us know what's important to them, we want to provide people of all ages with the best possible policing service we can, regardless of their age. That's why I would encourage young people to join our Panel and get involved."

The DVD will be uploaded to YouTube to enable as many young people as possible to watch it. It will also be available through the Staffordshire Police website [www.staffordshire.police.uk](http://www.staffordshire.police.uk).

Anyone aged between ten and 16 wanting to join the Young People's Panel should contact Natalie Wilford on 01785 232284 or email [citizen.panel@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:citizen.panel@staffordshire.pnn.police.uk).



Citizens' Panel Officer, Natalie Wilford directs Aimee Simmill watched by Samantha Shaw and Emma Machin and filmed by Kalwinder Heer.



Kalwinder Heer discusses shots with Samantha Shaw, Aimee Simmill, Emma Machin and Staffordshire Police Consultation Co-ordinator Anthony Small.

## Spotlight Shines on Borough Film Stars!...

Children, young people and pensioners were given the red carpet treatment at the premiere of a short film about where they live, what they think about each other and community cohesion.

People aged between 10 and 80 from Silverdale, Kidsgrove, Chesterton and Audley were filmed and interviewed for the 3 Minute Newcastle film.

3 Minute Newcastle is part of a community cohesion initiative commissioned by Newcastle Partnership.

The communities worked with Newcastle based creative business B Arts to come up with three minute videos about their communities and what is important to them. The purpose of the films was to bring different generations together to learn more about one another.

The film premiered at Vue cinema in Newcastle-under-Lyme on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 2011, and those who took part in the project were given the red carpet treatment to see the finished article.

The film featured images of all four communities which were accompanied by the thoughts of residents young and old, about what it is like to live in their community and how people of different ages get on well together.

The Mayor was also on hand to give out Certificates of Involvement to the stars of 3 Minute Newcastle. The films will also feature in an online campaign called "European Whispers", where local stories will be shared with people in France, Greece, Spain, Germany and Denmark.

This film project illustrates how creativity can bring people of different ages together to understand one another. It demonstrates how individual actions and behaviours can contribute to more cohesive communities which reduces the barriers that exist within communities between different generations.

For further details please contact:

Rebecca Patel – Community Cohesion Officer

01782 742 498

07775 706 337

[Rebecca.wright-patel@newcastle-staffpartnership.org.uk](mailto:Rebecca.wright-patel@newcastle-staffpartnership.org.uk)



Mum of four Claire is now pursuing her dream of working in childcare thanks to help from a number of local organisations.

Claire has worked intermittently while having her four children aged 2 to 11 years but apart from a temporary Christmas job, has not been in employment for about four years.

Helen, Claire's adviser, discussed her current situation and they both realised that to take on employment at this time in her life would be chaotic both for herself and her children. It certainly would not be sustainable employment. Her long-term goal was eventually to find employment in childcare. To enable her to achieve her dream Claire had already completed an NVQ Level 2 in Children's Care, Learning and Development in 2007. Claire had been actively job searching and had attended several job interviews but the lack of recent experience was preventing her getting work.

Helen asked Claire this question ...

"What would you do and how would you cope, if you were offered employment to start next week?" Claire felt panicked, mainly because of childcare issues.

Claire felt that she needed to do something on a part-time basis to keep her motivated and when asked about doing voluntary work within a childcare environment for a short period of time to gain up to date experience she jumped at the chance. Claire agreed that this would be beneficial to her in the long-term. It would give her experience, work references, confidence and would keep her challenged until she is able to commit to paid employment.

Helen approached a local Children's Centre and arranged a part-time volunteer placement which is enabling her to work towards her NVQ Level 3. She is able to leave her youngest son in the centre's crèche while she works.

Claire said, "He loves it and I'm really enjoying volunteering. It's great that it gets me out of the house. When I've got my NVQ Level 3, I want to get a job in a nursery setting."

Helen said, "Claire's confidence is growing and she's always got a smile on her face. We can see a positive future shaping out for her now that Treehouse has given her a break.

Their Volunteer Co-ordinator has been brilliant and the centre has made it all possible."

Families First is a Staffordshire County Council project which aims to deliver the right help at the right time to ensure children, young people and families in Staffordshire achieve positive outcomes.

Over the next few weeks, you'll see the Families First project moving from a series of plans to a reality. The pace of change is quickening and as the period of consultation over the new Families First management structure draws to a close on February 3rd, interviews will be held and the new structure announced by mid-April.

We've reached a further significant milestone in the Families First project this month with the approval of the final boundaries for our Local Support Teams and Specialist Safeguarding Units. Significant changes were made to these areas following your feedback, so thank you for taking the time to send in your comments.

This is an exciting time for the project as we ready ourselves to move to phase two, the appointment of team members and relocation to local premises that will enable us to support Staffordshire's families in a better way.

### **Timescales for confirmation of Families First Management Structure**

Phase one of the Families First project is to put the new management structure in place. Interviews for the management positions will start on March 3rd and we expect to announce the new structure on April 11th.

Once the management structure is in place, we will move to phase two. This will run from April until September and will see the new Local Support Teams and Specialist Safeguarding Units up and running.

### **Local Support Team and Specialist Safeguarding Unit patches**

One of the key features of Families First is local teams of children's service professionals who work together across a small patch to identify and address family needs early.

It's important that on an operational level, we are set up to respond to local need. As such, you'll see that we've given a high priority to school catchment area as the vast majority of cases are referred to us by schools. We have also tried to maintain a good balance between the likely number of clients per team and have tried to ensure manageable drive times for team members.

District managers will be in place to ensure that those of you who work on a district basis will have a key point of contact to assist you with your planning and priorities.

### **What does this mean for me?**

You can now see the areas that our Local Support Teams and Specialist Safeguarding Units will cover and where they are likely to be based.

In each patch we are now looking to secure a main office base. Our teams will also make use of a number of touch down points (small office spaces with internet access) and delivery centres (schools or children's centres for example).

If you have any queries regarding Families First, please get in touch by emailing [families.first@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:families.first@staffordshire.gov.uk)

# Relationships

without

Fear



The Relationships without Fear Project was set up by Arch in 2003. It is a schools prevention and support project that takes a cross curricular approach to Domestic Violence/Abuse.

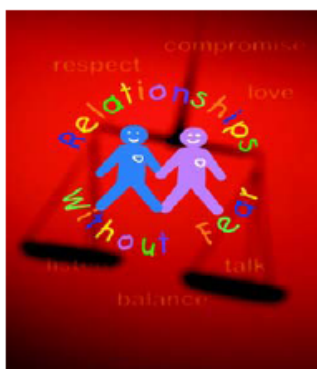
Our aim is to prevent further domestic abuse in the relationships of our children and young people by giving them the knowledge, skills and information to enable them to recognise an abusive relationship and seek the appropriate help; contributing to the long term overall reduction in domestic violence.

The programme starts in year 4 with a gentle 'friendship' programme and runs through to year 11. Each year group has a different programme covering key Domestic Abuse issues including why victims stay in violent relationships, the different forms of abuse experienced and how to leave a relationship safely.

The project aims to safeguard the welfare of children and young people by identifying, supporting and protecting those that are affected by Domestic Violence/Abuse.

**"We learned about situations in relationships & how to act. We know what to do if we get overloaded".**

**"You can use the ideas yourself and use it to give advice to friends."**



## RwF Children & Young People's 1:1 Support

Children and young people witnessing Domestic Violence can have many issues that a 1:1 worker can offer support with including challenging behaviour, truanting, exclusion from school and bereavement.

This service encourages them to understand what makes a healthy relationship, and enables them to discuss what they have witnessed. Our support worker will see your child either at school or at a children's centre local to you, which ever seems best for their situation.

Our support worker is someone that understands Domestic Violence and the complex feelings it can leave children with. They can offer a safe space where the child/young person can talk through their thoughts, feelings and experiences of Domestic Violence and a chance to explore them further.

The programme can be delivered in schools across Stoke-on-Trent & Newcastle-under-Lyme

For more information or to make a referral contact the Relationships without Fear Team

Tel: 01782 219100 or 204479 [info@archnorthstaffs.org.uk](mailto:info@archnorthstaffs.org.uk) [www.archnorthstaffs.org.uk](http://www.archnorthstaffs.org.uk)

Heart disease is the biggest cause of death in England, with someone in the UK having a heart attack every two minutes!

Furthermore, there is growing evidence that adult heart disease can start in childhood. Valentine's Day this month was an important reminder to think about our hearts and how to keep them healthy.

As someone who works with children, there are steps you may be able to take to help children have healthy hearts. See below for tips from us at NHS North Staffordshire:

- 1) Help children understand how amazing their heart is. You can teach them interesting facts such as the heart pumps enough blood to fill a large paddling pool every day, yet it's only the same weight as a mango.
- 2) Explain to children their body is like a car with their heart like an engine and it needs to be looked after so we can function properly. This will help them understand the importance of healthy foods and being active.
- 3) Do your part to get kids moving by incorporating activity into their daily routine. Children should get 60 minutes of activity every day, and you may be able to incorporate some of this into your work with them, such as playing games or dancing.
- 4) By encouraging children to eat healthily, you're helping give them good habits for life. Help children maintain regular mealtimes, and do not rush them or encouraging them to eat while doing other things.
- 5) Don't give children too many sweet treats or sugary drinks.

If you know any children who might need help leading the healthiest lives possible including eating healthily and being active, please signpost them to NHS North Staffordshire.

We offer free programmes for overweight children, including Lifestyle Triple P and MEND programmes.

More information is available on our website at [www.northstaffordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.northstaffordshire.nhs.uk) and select 'Your Health' page then the 'Healthy Weight' page.



Pauline Davies & Sue Bond have trained a number of young people in Recruitment Training to enable them to form Young People's Interview Panels.

Three panels have recently interviewed for County Commissioner for Care & Support, County Commissioner Wellbeing and Families First Targeted Services & Safeguarding. The young people found the process enjoyable and showed confidence in their abilities. The Young People's views are regarded as paramount to the candidates success.

Feedback from Sally Rowe, Head of Families First, Staffordshire County Council.

"Very clear concise feedback. Had clearly tested out the candidates' suitability for the role well. Issues they raised complimented what the stakeholders had found. Certainly helped us to recruit to the posts."

## **E-Safety Project**

Staffordshire Children's E-Safety Group from Christchurch Middle School, Stone, working alongside Pauline Davies, has recently run an E-safety competition for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils in Stafford and Stone. The overall competition winner, Dylan from Walton Priory Middle won £30 and £200 for his school. The E-Safety group members will visit Walton Priory to present the prize to the school.

Dylan, Kate, Anna, Alex and James, the E-Safety Group members will have the opportunity of seeing the printing process to produce the posters. The competition entries will be displayed in Stafford Library over half term.

The Children and Young People's & Families Engagement Team would like to thank all the schools and children who took part and Mrs. Davies and the team from Christchurch for their hard work.

## **Aiming High**

During December, The Children Young People & Families Engagement Team, through funding from Aiming High, have been working with children with disabilities to seek their views on issues that affect them.

The aim of this consultation is to create new opportunities for children with a disability and to give them a voice.

Walton Hall at Eccleshall, Queens Croft at Lichfield, Hednesford Valley and Wightwick Hall in South Staffs all took part in the workshops which were designed to suit the needs of the children and young people.

Over 340 children with a wide range of disabilities including Moderate and Severe Learning Difficulties, children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder and Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties, engaged in activities to find out what they thought about school transport and inclusion.

The workshops have all been filmed and a DVD is currently being produced.

Horton Lodge in the Moorlands are due to take part in February and their views and opinions on transport and residential provision in school, will be included in the final report. Feedback from the staff at the schools and the children and young people involved has been extremely positive.

Continued overleaf...

# Children and Young People's Recruitment Panels...

Continued...

## **Whole School Voice Project**

The team piloted a Whole School Voice Project in St. Wulstan's Catholic Primary School and Chesterton Primary School, which highlighted the main concerns and issues for children age 5-11yrs in Newcastle. A DVD together with reports, has now been circulated to partners. This tool will enable other partners to adopt a method of working with large numbers of children and young people for consultation purposes.

If you would like a copy please contact Carol Goostry on 01785 85 4063 or email:

[carol.goostry@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:carol.goostry@staffordshire.gov.uk)

## **Younger Children in Care Council CHICC**

Consultation information has been collated from children in care and is being used to shape the refresh of The Pledge.

The CHICC (Children in Care Council) younger members have been invited to their next meeting on 24 February 2011 at The Kabin, Stone Road, Stafford. The group meets each school holiday to discuss their views and experiences and have fun.

## The Acorn...

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or call 01785 277116.

Future deadlines for submitting articles are below.

Edition 20	Friday 13th May 2011 at 3pm
Edition 21	Friday 12th August 2011 at 3pm
Edition 22	Friday 11th November 2011 at 3pm