

# THE ACORN

## Edition 20 - May 2011 Parents' & Carers' Version

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

### Contents:

- Page 2: Children's Trust Update
- Page 3: Aiming High - Apply for Shorts Breaks Funding
- Page 4: Changes to Connexions
- Page 4: Cannock Chase Children's Centre - Ofsted Report
- Page 5: Sure Start Children's Centres Volunteering Programme
- Page 5: Do you need support getting back into work?
- Page 6: Your Staffordshire Travel Card
- Page 8: WoW Scheme
- Page 9: Flames Aren't Games
- Page 10: Flames Aren't Games Poster
- Page 11: Family Link Update
- Page 12: Tamworth Young Persons' Wellbeing Service
- Page 13: New online prospectus launched



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

Following the removal of the statutory requirement to have a Children's Trust or a children and young people's plan; and the development of the Health and Wellbeing Boards, the Children's Trust Board made the following recommendations at their meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2011:

- they (the Children's Trust Board) will no longer meet; and
- due to the Health and Wellbeing Board having a 'cradle to the grave' remit, the current Executive Board membership should be reviewed and expanded with direct links into the Health and Wellbeing Board, to ensure the focus and priorities around children and young people remains imperative.

This process of 'updating' the Executive has begun and there will be a period of transition whilst we move towards these new arrangements. It is felt that the current communication channels of the Children's Trust have been running effectively and efficiently over the past several years; so they will be continued during this period of transition, still under the 'banner' of the Children's Trust. These channels include the Children's Trust Monthly Brief, the Acorn newsletter, and Children's Trust website to name a few.

We hope you will continue to contribute towards the various updates, and distribute them amongst your colleagues and networks.

If you do have any questions or suggestions, then please do not hesitate to contact myself or the Children's Trust office.

Kind regards

**Paul Woodcock**

**County Commissioner, Children's Wellbeing**

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

or call 01785 277116



**Staffordshire Children's Trust**

Working together to improve the lives of children and young people

# Aiming High - Apply for Shorts Breaks Funding...

Aiming High for Disabled Children and their Families in Staffordshire - opportunity to apply for short breaks funding 2011.

Aiming High in Staffordshire is now seeking applications to deliver short break services.

Two separate funding streams are available. These are to deliver:

- **Services costing under £10,000 (reference PC352) – closing date 12 noon on 10 June 2011**
- **Services costing over £10,000 (reference PC353) – closing date 12 noon on 6 July 2011**

Funding is available to deliver two types of services:

## 1. Short Break Activities

Staffordshire County Council would like to receive tenders for short break services offering a range of different short break activities and recreational activities, across Staffordshire.

Many activities can be classed as short break activities, this includes:

Youth clubs, sport and leisure activities, outings, holiday playschemes, community activities like scouts and brownies, horse riding, clubs, arts and culture.

This list is not exclusive and we would welcome innovative activities and projects.

Activities should take place in school holidays, weekends, and after school/evenings.

## 2. A Support Service

The Support Service will involve two elements.

Sitting Service – a Sitting Service provided in the disabled child or young person's own home as a base for activities.

Community Support Service – a befriending and mentoring service supporting disabled children and young people to access activities in the community.

### Further Information:

To receive a copy of the applications form, service specification-outlining full details of the service above, contract and guidance notes contact:

Staffordshire Procurement by email at [sp@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sp@staffordshire.gov.uk); telephone to Joanne Whitehouse – 01785 854649 or in writing to the address below, stating:

Aiming High and the reference number

- **For applications Under £10,000 state reference PC352**
- **For applications Over £10,000 state reference PC353**
- 2. Your name/a point of contact
- 3. Name of Organisation/Group
- 4. Postal Address
- 5. Email
- 6. Telephone Number

Aiming High – *state reference number*  
c/o Joanne Whitehouse  
Staffordshire Procurement  
Staffordshire County Council  
Wedgewood Building  
Tipping Street  
Stafford  
ST16 2DH

## Changes to Connexions...

From the beginning of April, career services for young residents of Staffordshire moved from Connexions to Staffordshire Young People's Service (SYPS).

Young people aged between 13-19 and people aged up to 25 with learning difficulties will now receive their career support through Staffordshire Young People's Service. This will form part of a more joined up approach to services for young people, helping them get the best start in life and linking in with many other types of support and opportunities currently offered.

It will be mainly 'business as usual' for young people who use Connexions. Personal Advisers will continue to offer a valuable service to young people, to enable them to make well informed decisions about their future.

Staff will operate from libraries and youth centres rather than from high street Connexions shops. The service provided within schools and colleges will remain exactly the same.

To find out more, please contact:

Staffordshire Young People's Service

Tipping Street

Stafford

ST16 2DH

Telephone: 01785 278785 - Fax: 01785 278764

E-mail: [youth@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:youth@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Website: <http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/youth/home.aspx>

## Cannock Chase Children's Centre - Ofsted Report...

Cannock Chase Children's Centre is Outstanding, its official!

A big thank you to all the staff and Children's Trust partners who work together at Cannock Chase Children's Centre. Ofsted visited just before Christmas and did three separate inspections for childcare, early education and children's centre services. The centre was judged to be outstanding in each inspection report. The children's centre opened in June 2003, much of the catchment lies in areas of significant deprivation where there are problems related to health, lone and teenage parents, education, low incomes and poor housing. The level of unemployment and the proportion of families on benefits are above the national average. Most children's development on entry to early years provision is below expected levels for their age.

The report highlighted the excellent levels of communication between Trust partners including Midwives, Health Visitors and other professionals and commented on how work between the centre and its partners showed commitment to true equality of opportunity, with every family in the area benefiting from the centre's services, while those with particular needs are signposted to other professionals or to further options which are available at the centre. The range of services delivered by or on behalf of the centre was judged as excellent. Ofsted highlighted evidence that showed partnership working resulted in outstanding outcomes for children and their families.

For more information please contact Sarah Rivers

Head of Cannock Chase Children's Centre, Cannock Road, Cannock, Staffordshire, WS11 5BU

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

Mob. 07976191025 Tel. 01543 469894

# Sure Start Children's Centres Volunteering Programme...

Sure Start Children's Centres in Tamworth have re-launched their volunteering programme. It has now been running for nine months and has proved an invaluable experience for both volunteers and services alike.

## A walk in the life of a volunteer

Firstly I contacted Lynsey at the Glascote Sure Start Centre and explained I had an interest in volunteering, she arranged a date that was suitable for me and I went to see her. At this meeting we had a chat and completed an application form and CRB check. After a few weeks I was sent a letter to attend a four week induction programme, which I did. This covered lots of topics including child development, child protection and equal opportunities. It was only an hour and a half a week and it was great to meet other volunteers. At the end of the programme we all were interviewed for what placements we were interested in. I could choose from reception work, parent and toddler sessions to promotional work. Once we were accepted for a placement we are visited and supported by Lynsey. The staff are very supportive and my confidence is growing weekly.

Volunteers are invaluable to our services, they bring with them their own life skills but also an enthusiasm to learn. It has been a privilege to work with the volunteers that have accessed the programme. At present I have 9 in placement and a new programme that started on the 6<sup>th</sup> May. The programme is on a roll on basis so new volunteers can join at any week.

We are always excited to meet new people who are interested in volunteering. If you are interested you can contact Lynsey on 01827 475222 or drop in to the volunteers' bureau in Tamworth.

## Do you need support getting back into work?...

If so, the **Family Employment Initiative** could help. We offer the following:

- Overcoming barriers
- Updating CVs
- Completing application forms
- Interview techniques
- Job search
- Training
- Work experience / volunteering opportunities



We now work in the following areas – all ST5 postcodes, Stoke, Trent Vale, Audley & Bignall End, Halmerend and Biddulph East.

We are based at 23 High Street, Knutton but also work from a number of community venues.

To arrange an appointment or to find out more about the service, please call 01782 618906.



# Your Staffordshire Travel Card...

## How we got the card

For a long time the cost of buses has been a thorn in the side of all young people, with some having to pay over £5 each day just to get to school and back. Within Staffordshire, your United Kingdom Youth Parliament (UKYP) representatives and the Youth Action Council (YAK) have gathered your views from surveys, interviews and the highly successful Speakout Conference in 2009. YAK evaluated the feedback, agreed the best solutions to the problems and presented all this back to County Councillors and key decision makers. YAK would like to thank everyone who supported this campaign, from attending Speakout to filling out surveys. YAK is proud that we now have a scheme that will allow young people to go to the places they want to go for a much fairer price.

County Council Leader Philip Atkins said: "Groups, including Staffordshire's Youth Action Council (YAK), have clearly told us that there is a need for greater mobility for young people. Research conducted by YAK last year showed over 60% of young people said a £1 ticket would get them on the move."

Chair of YAK Jack Bourne, aged 16 from Staffordshire Moorlands, said: "I am really pleased that the County Council is launching this scheme. It will make it much easier for younger people to access employment and education as well as reducing the cost of transport when teenagers want to meet up with their friends socially."

The initiative will also have a positive impact on the environment because people won't be as keen to buy a car if they can catch a bus for a bargain price. This will lead to fewer cars on the road pumping out carbon dioxide.

It is a great scheme and I am sure that it is one that people will be making the most of".

## How it Works

Anyone under twenty who lives within the Staffordshire County Council boundaries can apply for a FREE 'Your Staffordshire Card' which will allow them to travel, from the first of June, for just £1 on any bus journey which starts or ends in the county.

That's a really cheap bus trip to see mates, get to school or college or just to get out and go places.

As the scheme grows there may be other potential benefits too. In the future the card may become a recognised proof of identity and age.



# Your Staffordshire Travel Card...

## How to Apply

There are three easy ways to apply for a FREE 'Your Staffordshire Card':

- Visit [www.yourstaffordshirecard.info](http://www.yourstaffordshirecard.info)
- Pick up an application form from libraries or
- Call 0300 111 8000 to have an application form sent to you



Over the recent school holidays members of YAK and the eight district youth forums have been out and about promoting the Card. In Newcastle & Stafford the Staffordshire Young People's Service (SYPS) mobile units were set up in the town centres and youth workers, Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG) staff and young people handed out promotional materials and sign-posted people to the website – leading to over 30,000 unique hits on the website and over 6,000 young people applying for the card.



Staff & young people promoting the 'Your Staffordshire Card' in Newcastle and in Stafford

Staffordshire County Council's Road Safety and Sustainable Travel Team are launching a new initiative promoting sustainable travel and increasing physical activity on children's journey to school.

The WoW scheme, which stands for Walk Once a Week, further compliments sustainable travel initiatives available to schools in Staffordshire such as Cycle Training and Walking Buses.

Walk Once a Week (WoW) is an all year round walking scheme that encourages parents to leave their car at home wherever possible and walk their children to school. As WoW runs all year round its biggest benefit is making walking the norm for families. Schools that currently take part have a higher average incidence of walking, at 10% above the average.

The WoW scheme rewards children that walk to school at least once a week throughout the school year. Children record how they travel to school on a class wall chart and if they walk at least 4 times a month they receive a themed badge, all highly collectable and designed by children themselves.

Ten schools in Tamworth have been chosen to trial the scheme which started on 16<sup>th</sup> May to coincide with national 'Walk to School Week'. The schools are provided with wall charts and badges and elect children to the role of WoW monitors to co-ordinate the recording of information, issue rewards and promote the scheme to the whole school community. The scheme has many benefits, including reducing congestion outside the school gates, increased physical activity levels and increased independence and road safety awareness amongst children.

Phase 2 of the scheme will be launched in September in approximately 80 schools across the County. The schools selected to take part in the scheme will have to meet specified criteria. This will include, being a nominated school on the school Speed Indicator Device (SID) programme and/or being identified as a school with a high childhood obesity rate. Schools with low walking rates or where it is believed a significant increase in walking is achievable will also be targeted.

Funding has been secured to run the scheme until July 2012. During this period schools will work towards increasing walking levels on the journey to school, through a menu of agreed initiatives and supported by the Road Safety and Sustainable Travel Team.



Welcome to the Walk to School Campaign



Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service has launched a new campaign to highlight the dangers of deliberately starting grass fires.

The Fire and Rescue Service tends to see a dangerous increase in grass fires over the school holidays which is put down to children and teenagers starting fires deliberately.

Last Easter, there were 215 grass fires across Staffordshire during the half term break.

This year, Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service are hoping to educate young people about the dangers of starting fires deliberately and have designed a poster which will be distributed amongst school countywide. The poster (see overleaf) has a firefighter on it and is entitled 'Flames Aren't Games. Grass Fires Kill'. Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service's Head of Risk Reduction, Ian Sloss said: "Young people who start grass fires seem oblivious to the fact that they are endangering their own lives as well as firefighters."

A grass fire can quickly spread and it does not take much for clothing to set on fire and before you know it, you have horrific burns which could claim your life.

For every call we receive about a grass fire there could be a person desperately trying to get out of a burning building or trapped in a car crash in urgent need of our assistance.

We work closely with partners to address the reasons for this type of crime and we hope by using role models, such as the footballers, we can educate young people about the dangers of playing with fire."

To book a free Home Fire Risk Check contact: 0800 0241 999.

You can also book online at

<http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/bookyourhfrc.asp>

For all other non emergency enquiries contact: 08451 22 11 55

or log onto: [www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk) or [www.direct.gov.uk/firekills](http://www.direct.gov.uk/firekills).

In an emergency dial 999.



**Staffordshire**  
**Fire and Rescue Service**  
preventing • protecting • responding

Poster overleaf...



**Staffordshire**  
Fire and Rescue Service  
preventing • protecting • responding

**FLAMES  
AREN'T  
GAMES**   
**GRASS FIRES KILL**



## **Starting grass fires is no game.**

If our Firefighters are putting out a grass fire caused by you or your mates, it means they can't be at the real emergencies – like house fires where people may be at risk of dying or being seriously injured.

**Don't be an arsonist, be a team player.**

[www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk](http://www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk)

**MORE**  
01227 254444

## Link up with Family Link

As Ann and Bill's own children started to become more independent, they started to feel that they had more to give. So, when their son got married and their daughter flew the nest to University, they went to [www.care4child.org](http://www.care4child.org) and then picked up the phone to Staffordshire County Council.

"We joined the Family Link Team in November 2009 after we were told that more carers were desperately needed to give weekend breaks to children with learning or physical disabilities", said Ann. "We're just an ordinary family with a weekend a month spare. We love giving the children, and their parents, a break. It gives them a chance to recharge their batteries, meet new people, try new things and be that little bit more independent.

For us, it's so rewarding to give the children the opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves. We really feel we're making a difference. Each carer is trained and supported by the County Council's 'Outstanding' fostering service. We didn't have any particular experience of looking after children with learning or physical disabilities. The assessment was fine though and we felt fully supported all the way through the training process", said Bill. "Helen, our link worker, is always at the end of the phone to help us whenever we need support or advice. There's also a support group of other carers that we can go to if we want to, if we feel we need some more support."

Ann and Bill had a child placed with them soon after being assessed, and are now looking after \*Steven, who

has learning difficulties. "We don't do anything out of the ordinary", said Bill. "We walk the dog, go bowling, go shopping, go out to eat or just stay at home and play games. We try to fit the weekend around what Steven wants to do, but also around what experiences will help him. Watching his confidence grow and seeing him relax in our company, is just priceless. He especially enjoys playing with our daughter on the games console when she's home from Uni. He has even chosen his own goldfish to go in the garden pond and has a really special love for our dog Arti. It's just like \*Steven is a member of the family and it feels like he has always been with us."

Ann and Bill are calling on anyone with time to care to get in touch with Staffordshire County Council's fostering service to see if it's something they would like to do.

"We'd encourage anyone who has thought of fostering, but is perhaps worried about fitting it in with a full time job, to speak to the Family Link Team. You'll be giving a child and their family such desperately needed support and the opportunity to enjoy a weekend just for them. At the same time you will be fully supported by your very own link worker and given free training if you feel you need or want it. We also get a small allowance to help out."

We are looking for couples, families and single people to 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.

If you think you, or someone you know, would be interested in becoming a Family Link carer please call 0800 169 2061.

\*Name changed for confidentiality purposes.



# Tamworth Young Persons' Wellbeing Service...

Tamworth Young Persons' Wellbeing Service (TYPWS) was launched in October, 2010. The service is a joint initiative funded by Tamworth Borough Council and provided by Barnardo's SMART.

We are a friendly, non-judgemental and confidential service, dedicated to helping young people to overcome emotional hardship such as bereavement, separation, isolation, anxiety, stress, domestic violence. We offer to provide vital support at an early stage to limit the risk of ill mental health in later years and prevent intervention by specialist health teams i.e. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)/Adult Mental Health Services. TYPWS interventions include full assessment, one to one therapeutic sessions, liaison with parents/school and targeted intervention for specific issues as well as Common Assessment Framework (CAF) lead if required.

Outcomes for young people:

- Improved school attendance
- Positive choices/relationships
- Aspirations/looking to the future
- Improved emotional resilience
- Improved confidence/self esteem
- Improved family/school communication

Case Study (names have been changed to ensure the young person remains anonymous):

Billy 9 yrs old referred through school due to displaying emotional distress, crying in school, becoming withdrawn, strained relationships with Mom and bedwetting.

Agencies involved:

- CAFCASS (Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service)
- CAMHS
- Pastoral Care in School
- Pathways (Domestic Violence Agency)
- Universal Services

Intervention:

- One to One therapeutic work
- Multi Agency Meetings
- Access support for mom
- Respite holiday for Billy

Outcome for Billy:

- Bedwetting stopped
- Improved concentration/attendance at school
- Improved confidence/increased self esteem
- Billy said "better relationship with mom" and mom confirms this.
- CAFCASS, CAMHS, Pathways no longer involved
- Making positive choices with friends

For further information please contact:

Lynne Smith

on 01827 286643

or [lynne.smith@barnardo's.org.uk](mailto:lynne.smith@barnardo's.org.uk)



BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

# New online prospectus launched...

Young people will find it easier than ever to get online careers and education advice in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

The 'Way2Go' online prospectus showcases courses, careers advice, events and college open days for young people aged 14-19. Its aim is to help them find the most appropriate course of study from the thousands of opportunities on offer from schools, colleges and other training providers.

Councillor Liz Staples, Cabinet Member for Schools Education and Skills said: “The revamped and upgraded prospectus gives the most up to date information to young people, showing them exactly what is available in terms of courses and places to study. It's essential that young people are given all of the options available so they can take the path that is right for them, whether it is university, college or jobs and training. It is part of our commitment to support young people and to create a highly-skilled workforce of the future.”

Sean Clarke, Local Area Prospectus Manager for Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent, explains: “This improves the services by allowing users to apply directly through the system for courses which they had researched and identified while using it. This website also has a fresh look and feel, and is very user-friendly.”

Schools, colleges and training providers have been offered training and are being assisted in keeping their course listings on the system up-to-date.

The searchable Prospectus is available for all now, whilst the online application process is currently being trialled in preparation for use in September.

For further information log onto: <http://www.way2go.me.uk>

