

## **Max Card Agenda Day Report November 2006**



### **Introduction:**

The Agenda Day took place at the Investing in Children offices in Durham to evaluate the MAX Card scheme and get views and experiences of Max card holders. An Agenda day is a session designed and facilitated by young people where young people can express their wishes and feelings in an adult free environment.

50 children and young people / card holders were randomly selected from over 700 card holders and were invited to attend the agenda day. Six young people and children aged 8 – 15 years attended this agenda day on Saturday the 4<sup>th</sup> November 2006 at 11.00am ending at 1pm. We split into smaller groups to evaluate the card.

The Max Card scheme is developed by MLA North East for the North of England. County Durham is one of many local authorities that buy into the MAX card scheme. In County Durham the Max card scheme is for looked after young people and care leavers. Foster carers and residential workers can also have cards to encourage children and young people to access leisure and cultural activities. The Max card scheme in County Durham is funded from the Listening to children budget via Investing in Children. The CATS team send out the cards.

## **Agenda for the Day:**

### **11.00am – 11.15am START: Introductions**

Safety regulations, Self introductions, purpose of Agenda day

### **11.15am – 11.50am WORKSHOP 1: Blank Sheet Agendas**

Max card scheme, good and bad points, suggested changes to scheme

### **11.50am – 12.00pm BREAK:**

### **12.00pm – 12.35pm WORKSHOP 2: Directed Questions**

- 1 What would you like the MAX card to be used for?
- 2 Do you know how to get a hold of a MAX card?
- 3 How often do you use it?
- 4 Where do you use it?
- 5 Have you had any problems with any staff when using the card?
- 6 How long did it take for you to get a MAX card?
- 7 Did you get any information with the MAX card and what did you think of it?

### **12.35pm – 1.00pm CONCLUSION: Feedback and Payment**



# Feedback from the young people who use the Max Card Scheme

## Group One

### Workshop 1:

Good points about the scheme - go places, saves money, used as a discount card

Bad points about the scheme- can't go to pantomimes, bowling or use the card as a bus pass

Changes we would like to see made- Should be able to do all the 'bad points' and used as access to "metroland"

## Group Two

### Workshop 1:

Good points about the scheme - Foster parents own children are allowed to use them, museums, and swimming baths in Bishop Auckland.

Bad points about the scheme - can not use in the Abbey sports centre or Durham Baths (? Card should be accepted so this may be a staff training issue), Carers are not allowed to use MAX cards on their own.

Changes we would like to see made - Carers should be able to use them by themselves and to change all the bad points stated above.

## Group one and two

### Workshop2:

1 What would you like the MAX card to be used for?

Pictures/cinema, travel (bus/train), bowling, Gala theatre, music i.e. concerts, theme parks

2 Do you know how to get a hold of a MAX card?

No they have one but did not know how to get it. All the cards had been given through foster carers.

3 How often do you use it?

All the time.

Regularly

4 Where do you use it?

Swimming baths, Beamish, Botanical gardens, Stanley leisure centre.

5 Have you had any problems with any staff?

Yes, at the Louisa centre; they were not aware they had any involvement with MAX card but they are now.

6 How long did it take for you to get a MAX card?

6 days to wait.

7 Did you get any information with the MAX card and what did you think of it?

They got a little green book with vouchers but would like to see the presentation become more audience appealing.

## **Conclusion:**

Based on the feedback from the young MAX card users overall the Max card agenda day evaluation was a success and was useful. There was a wide range of ages considering only 6 people attended, however it was felt by all that this made the agenda day a more personal and comfortable occasion. The group were pleased that although only a few people attended the agenda day the max card scheme would be included as an article in the forthcoming “listen to us for a change” newsletter that will go out to all looked after young people and care leavers as well as other children and young people accessing Children’s services.

We gathered the views and opinions of those who attended the agenda day – all of which are included in this report. In the forthcoming article we have asked other young people for written feedback and comments via phone, email, letters or through their workers. We have reassured everyone that all comments would be stated in the report which would be discussed at the Listening to Children steering group who oversee the funding available for the card. Feedback would also be given to MLA who are the team in the North East of England who develop and organise the scheme. It was also noted that Foster carers and residential workers are “gatekeepers” to this scheme and so they need lots of information so they can pass the information onto the children and young people.

## **Recommendations:**

1. The MAX Card scheme in County Durham has been developed by asking children and young people what they want the card to be used for – this should be continued as the scheme will only be good and useful if children and young people feel that it is relevant to them.
2. More information needs to be given directly to children and young people as well as foster carers and residential workers about MAX cards. At present the information is presented in a way where it does not grab the attention of the target audience. It is too complicated, especially in the eyes of under 8 year olds who may rely on adults for the information.

3. Perhaps this information could be distributed in areas where looked after young people and care leavers hang out or congregate.
4. The MAX card scheme could be discussed at Looked after reviews or as part of care planning so that some young people don't miss out.
5. Why can't all children and young people have a MAX card? Is it fair that only looked after young people and care leavers can benefit from this scheme

Max card agenda day facilitated and report written by Kim, David, Matt, Ben and Gemma



## **Action:**

In response to this agenda day Investing In Children have supported young people from the Listening to Children reference group to follow up a number of the recommendations:

- A letter about the max card scheme has gone out to all foster carers, residential workers and young person's advisors to give them up to date information about the Max card scheme.
- A letter has gone out to all county Council and District council leisure centres giving them up to date information about the Max card scheme.

- Where individual venues were mentioned The Children's Rights Officer has spoken directly with the centre managers to resolve any difficulties for children and young people using the scheme.
- An article about the MAX card scheme has been included in the forthcoming "Listen to us for a change" newsletter which will go out to over 4000 children and young people who are in touch with Children's services – this gives up to date information and asks for feedback too.
- The report will be forwarded to MLA (Museums libraries and archives) North East who develop and run the scheme in the North East of England. It will also be discussed by the Listening to Children steering group who oversee the scheme in County Durham.
- The Max Card scheme will be discussed in relation to the Listening to Children steering groups feedback about the "Care matters" green paper which looks at services and support for looked after young people and care leavers.
- This report will also be forwarded to the Youth opportunities Card project worker in County Durham who is developing the pilot of the Youth Opportunities card for 13 – 19 year olds in County Durham.

Written by Shelley Gill

November 2006