

## **ISSUE 69 Oct-Nov 2005**

### **Inside this issue:**

- Page 2      **Editor's Column**  
Jane Morgan
- Page 3      **News Update – Every Child Matters**  
Liam Cairns
- Page 4/5    **Children's Commissioner visits liC**  
Report by Tabatha Tilley
- Page 6      **Membership News**  
Helen Mulhearn
- Page 7      **Middleton Youth Drop in Project**  
Tasha McEwan
- Page 8      **Listening to Children Strategy**  
Update by Brian Davies
- Page 9      **Durham County Council Apprentice  
Scheme**    by Michelle Fenwick
- MALAP** by Brain Davies
- Page 10     **Newcastle Update**
- Page 11     **The Rights of Us**  
Ashleigh Greathead
- Page 12     **Full time**

# Editor's Column by Jane Morgan

Hello and welcome to the latest edition of the Investing in Children Newsletter. You may remember the last edition featured an advert for the position of Deputy Editor, well we haven't had a great response so if you're interested and just didn't manage to contact me, fear not there is still time, just email the address on the back of this issue.

Last month I had the opportunity to visit the World War I battlefields in France and Belgium. The trip had actually been organised for a Year 9 history group, but us sixth formers love any excuse for a holiday so we tagged along. My English class used the study of war poetry as an excuse, archaeology came to see the trenches and I'm still unsure how the geography students justified their four day holiday.

We stayed in a youth hostel in Tournai one of Belgium's oldest cities. The provincial town was extremely picturesque with its spectacular architecture; Year 9 boys had to be dragged from running between the decorative spurting water fountains. The hostel we stayed in was also a local music venue for rock bands; I believe we were lucky enough to witness the talents of Holland's number one act. Though I'm not sure the leather clad over forties will ever quite cut it in the UK.

Of course the real reason we went was to try to gain a better understanding of the loss of World War I, particularly as Remembrance Day was approaching. We visited dozens of graveyards and memorials across Ypres and the Somme such as the Menin Gate, the sheer size of which was overwhelming, endless lists of those declared missing. The overall response from everyone in the group was that it was extremely difficult for us today to comprehend what happened then, and for what?

Our first morning in Belgium was spent at Ypres where we visited 'The Flanders Fields Museum' before spending all of our euros in various chocolate shops, each offering a better deal for your money than the previous one! Apart from learning that it is possible to have far too much chocolate, what stood out most that day was a short film shown in the museum. At the very end of the exhibition there was a screen which listed every conflict in the world since the end of World War I, showing footage from around the globe. I was able to count over thirty different conflicts since I was born in 1987, and it was worrying to read that there has not been a single day since the end of war in 1918, when there has not been fighting going on somewhere in the world. The very obvious question is has nobody learned from past mistakes?

**Jane**

**NEWS UPDATE ...**

# Progress on Every Child Matters

When young people considered what was needed to achieve the Government's target of 'Being Healthy', one of the issues they raised was the fact that it was sometimes difficult to talk to the School Nurse in private. This was seen as a problem that could make vulnerable young people even more vulnerable, because they were unlikely to seek advice and assistance.

This was picked up by Suzanne Lamb from the Health Service. It is now being addressed by Keith Mitchell, Director of Education, who is talking to Head Teachers of the secondary schools in the County. It is also being discussed by the Association of Secondary Head Teachers and Dave Ford, the Head of the Inspection Service.

In Addition, Suzanne has taken steps to ensure that the question is asked within the Primary Care Trusts, on the basis that no other group is expected to seek health advice in circumstances where privacy cannot be guaranteed.

Suzanne is confident that the situation in schools will improve, and where necessary, new arrangements will be put into place to ensure that young people can consult with their School Nurse in private.

This is good news, and it is impressive to see so many young people taking the issue so seriously. I share Suzanne's confidence that things will change.

This also serves as a useful reminder that a commitment to **dialogue** and **change** is at the heart of Investing in Children. We have always taken the view that the participation of children and young people needs to be seen as a **means** to an end, and not an end in itself. The group who

wrote the Investing in Children 'Every Child Matters Report' were rightly praised for doing an excellent job, but the report on its own is not an achievement – it will be so if it leads to significant change.

So, congratulations to Suzanne Lamb for persisting and keeping things moving. We hope that we might see movement on some of the other important issues raised by young people in the Every Child Matters report. Here is a list of their recommendations. We will report on progress as it occurs.

- More places to go – extended and cheaper access to leisure and community centres
- Extended opening of schools, and review of school transport to encourage participation in after school activities
- Cheaper and better public transport. Review rules on subsidised student transport
- 20 mph speed limit around schools, play areas, and residential areas
- Outlaw discrimination against children and young people on the basis of age
- Raise awareness of mental health issues
- Provide drinking water in schools
- Improve school meals
- Open debate about school rules
- Greater choice in curriculum
- Extended study leave from school
- Co-ordinated anti-poverty campaign, including equal benefits and minimum wages for young people
- More ways for children and young people to have their voices heard.

**Liam Cairns**  
**Dec 2005**

Children's Commissioner visits Investing in Children

In June on this year Al Aynsley-Green took up his post as the first Children's Commissioner for England. From the start, Al was interested in the work we have been doing in Durham.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> November, Ashleigh Greathead, Brian Davies, Michelle Fenwick and I invited Al, along with Mark Lloyd (Chief Executive of the County Council), Debbie Jones (Director of Social Care and Health) and Liam Carins to join us for dinner at the Ramside Hotel on behalf of Investing in Children.

The evening discussion was around issues concerning young people and how young people are treated in society. It's fair to say that we didn't agree on all points, but it definitely made for a rich, open and very honest debate.



**Al Ainsley-Green, Nick Brereton, Laim Cairns**

We were impressed by the idea's that Al had and work that he was already doing especially the fieldwork that he has been doing whereby he is stopping off at street corners and talking to the young people and finding out what they

think is important to them. We thought that this was great as he is then not just talking only to the young people who go to school and get involved in after school activities, youth centres and school councils but getting to a broad section of all communities.

At the end of the evening he asked us to give him one thing that we would like to see him do. Our wish list included wanting him to:

- continue with his fieldwork, talking to the young people who are on the streets,



**L-R Thoryn Haylett, Christopher Shepherd, Kevin Hailes, Grey Lyons, Al Ainsley Green, Steve Harness, Alex Newbould, Samantha Roe, Elizabeth Kirton at Woodham Community Technology College**

- wear jeans and t-shirts to make him more approachable,
- Make sure that he works alongside young people when making changes or decisions so they are fully involve and informed of the whole process-young people can speak for themselves.
- open up issues instead of focusing on bullying and only looking at that, to look at other issues that have an impact on bullying,
- work on what is important in local areas and then make them impact on national strategies instead of the national strategies limiting the local areas work,

- Not become trapped within London and the politics.
- and finally, as we are all Apprentices, we asked him to help us get a pay rise for Social Care and Health (we are currently paid below national minimum wage).

The next day, Al met with staff and young people from across Investing in Children. We hope that he got a good idea of the breadth of Investing in Children's work- Newcastle and Tees valley as well as Durham and Darlington. Al spent time talking to young travellers, two young people from the rural youth project, and finally the young people who with the active support of their school, have brought about a massive improvement in their school dinners (eat your heart out, Jamie Oliver).

We enjoyed our evening, and hope that Al enjoyed his visit. We would like to repeat it some time in the future. We are very keen to keep our link with Al strong and are keen to have feedback from him about the issues we raised.

**Tabatha Tilley**



**Al Ainsley Green with from L-R Robbie Lee, Pearl Annie Tyres, Kizzie Tyres, Isabella Atkinson and Ashleigh Greathead from Investing in Children**

# Membership News

\*\*\*\*\*

Well done to our new members this edition, these are:

- in The Mulberry Centre – Darlington Camhs
- Butterwick Children’s Hospice
- Paediatric Clinic for Cystic Fibrosis
- Middleton in Teesdale Youth Drop-in
- Hollyhill Family Centre
- West End Women & Girls Centre – Project in Benwell
- Kids Kabin - An activity project in Walker
- The Newcastle Bridges School – The school attached to the Newcastle Hospitals
- Stepping Stones – A supported accommodation project North Kenton

The good work also continues in the following projects that have been successfully re-evaluated:

- Shotton Library
- Stanley Crook Primary
- Mid Durham Projects Club      Gainford Primary School
- Willington Youth Theatre      Moorside Children’s Home
- Orchard Young Carer’s – Easington & Derwentside
- 1 Orchard lane
- Top Deck / Saturday Club – Darlington
- Atkinson Road Nursery

Once again Well DONE to all involved, we look forward to seeing you next year!!

\*\*\*\*\*

## Quote of the day:

“ West End Women and Girls Centre aims to empower girls and women in the West End of Newcastle, who have been traditionally disenfranchised for access to existing services, to effect positive change in their leisure, work and social environments.’ Taken from WEWGC - Mission Statement.”  
– Evaluation report December 2005

**If you would like to know more about our members and their groups, and work please don’t hesitate to contact us and we will tell you more!**

# Middleton in Teesdale Youth Drop In Project

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of October Helen Mulhearn, Membership Co-ordinator with Investing in Children came to visit our Drop In to see if we would qualify for Investing in Children membership. Helen spoke with everyone attending the drop in that night and asked how we were involved in the management & running of our project, what type of facilities we had etc. She also chatted to Diane, Gordon, Jen & Rachel about how things were going.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> of November Helen came to speak with us again to go through her report. She was delighted with our project and said in her report that it is definitely a service for young people, run by young people and facilitated by the workers & volunteers. Helen fully recommended that Middleton Youth Drop In Project receives Investing in Children membership. She was so impressed with our project that she invited 4 of us along to the Investing in Children offices in Durham on the 15<sup>th</sup> of November to speak with the new Childrens Commissioner for England, Mr Aynsley Green. Laura French - 17, Stuart Robinson - 14, Tracey Priestley - 16 & me, Tasha McEwan - 17 spent some time asking Mr Green questions about services and facilities for young people, what qualifications he had to do the job and what Tony Blair was really like. He asked us to think about one thing that if it was changed would make our lives better. We decided it was best to bring that question back to all our members and we haven't reached agreement yet on what the one thing to change might be, however, when we do decide we'll be letting Mr Green know.

**by Tasha McEwan – now 18 years old**



**Back row: Diane Spark, Project Manager, Al Ainsley-Green, Helen Mulhearn, IiC**

**Front row: Stuart Robinson, Tracey Priestley, Tasha McEwen, Laura French**

# Listening to Children Strategy

Hello! Well, things have been really slow recently with the strategy, but we are getting on top of things. The **Newsletter ‘listen to us for a change’** will be sent out to you all shortly, - sorry for the delay. What’s important is that the newsletter needs to be young person friendly and we would like you to contact us with your comments on the newsletter.

**The Driving lessons scheme** for 17 and over is booming, we have on estimate 30 young people learning how to drive and that is a significant increase in users of the driving lessons for looked after 17 and over. So if you are looked after and you’re old enough, please speak to your key worker to arrange lessons for you! It’s a chance in a lifetime, do not worry if you are revising for your theory test and you don’t have a highway code you can borrow book. Please do contact someone if you are interested and even if you’re not – remember - if you have your driving lessons and past your test then you can drive in the future, and it will give you a sense of freedom. Those who are learning how to drive keep up the good work and I wish you all the best.

For **max card users**, it is now in the hands of CATS- Copelaw Activities at Newton Aycliffe, however, it is still under the listening to children strategy. If you are looked after you are entitled to this card or if you are in foster care, your foster carers and their children are also entitled to have a Max Card. The Max card allows you to access leisure centre facilities at any leisure centre, hopefully you would have been sent a publicity package with the list of activities or sports you can access for free. So please contact CATS on 01325 375600.

Not to go off the main aim of the strategy, we mentioned earlier a universal card for all children and young people, for leisure services. We are getting the balls in motion, since the youth matters paper came out. It spoke of an opportunities card and we are looking for a way to get all services involved who work with children and young people to put in a bid for this card. However, in the report it spoke of young people who misbehave could have the card removed or they might not be allowed a card. We thought this was unfair so, if they accept that we can have this universal card, all children and young people should be able to use it regardless of what they are like? Who will determine how well behaved you have to be to keep the card?

**Children in Need Teams** across the county are applying for Investing In Children membership, unfortunately none of the teams have membership yet, however a project worker and myself went to visit the newly appointed service managers and a strategic service manager to discuss some of the issues that have been brought to our attention. We discussed how we could help the teams to gain membership.

The **reference group** are going to meet with the **Director of Children and Learning from GONE Government Office North East**. However she was appointed without young people on the panel, what’s that all about? The reference group have come up with some questions to ask the director on issues e.g. young peoples involvement, what is her role and what can she do for young people?

Also York Children’s rights want to know how we interact with social care and health, and how our voices are heard within social care and health. We are planning on having some agenda days in the future near Christmas. Christmas ! I cant wait I am off to Bangor to see some friends so I shall have a good time.

**Brian Davies**

# Durham County Council Apprentices Scheme

Hi my name is Michelle, I am one of seven apprentices, we are all employed by Social Care and Health across County Durham. This apprenticeship scheme is a really good opportunity for young people to be involved in Social Care and Health and be included in decision making, earning while we are learning. (although the pay isn't great!) There are three apprentices based here with Investing In Children working alongside young people to support their rights.

The other four apprentices are working across County Durham supporting teams such as, Children In Need, Family Services and Aycliffe Young People's Centre.

We all attend college twice a week working hard towards our NVQ level 3 in Care.

## Michelle Fenwick



## MALAP

The Multi Agency Looked After Partnership Reference group are about half way through the filming of a video. The aim of the video is to get a message to those out there that a young person is not a job and like adults there is only a small minority that misbehave and I emphasise the word small. We have filmed at least half of the video and we are going to find a football pitch to do another scene. I was thinking of Durham, New College Durham or maybe at Maiden Castle, Durham.

We have just had a MALAP agenda day in October. We invited some young people and gathered their views on MALAP. Fifteen young people had turned up to the agenda day to discuss what they felt was related to the five outcomes and what services such as social care and health are like for them? We took a different approach to this agenda day, we started with the blank sheet agenda but the second part of the blank sheet agenda was tied in with the 5 outcomes from 'every child matters'. The third part of the agenda day was direct questions in relation to services provided for looked after young people. The day went well and the report is now finished.

The group are still meeting with the core group to see if any of the issues we or they bring up is what young people want.

**Brian Davies**

# NEWCASTLE UPDATE

Young people have been getting together to look at ways they can improve Newcastle for young people.

They have been working with Investing in Children, an organisation concerned with children's rights and the way they're treated in society.

For several months, groups of young people aged 9-15 have been getting together and working on different projects.

One group has been looking at the environment, leisure and parks. They have met with councillors and the police to talk about problems like broken glass, graffiti and rubbish. They've even become Young Friends of the Gala Field Park so that they can do their bit to improve the park. And they got Leisure Plus passes for the Outer West Pool, this means they get money off their leisure visits.

Another group, called 'Respect', has been looking at how young people can get more respect from teachers. They asked young people to fill in a survey about their experiences at school. They have written a play based on these experiences and are going to invite teachers to come and watch it. They have also been looking at how other organisations, such as the police and the council, can get young people involved in their decisions.

Lastly, one group has been looking at safety. They've been working with Laura Broderick from Northern Architecture to look at ways to make the shopping centre in Newbiggin Hall a more friendly place for children and young people.

The young people agree that it's been a really good experience for them. "We think Investing in Children is good because you can have your say about your area," they said.

If you would like to get involved in Investing in Children, call 0191 2774434 or email [nick.brereton@durham.gov.uk](mailto:nick.brereton@durham.gov.uk)

# The Rights of Us!

The Rights of Us pamphlet which is included with this newsletter has been designed by myself and a group of young people from all over the country including Liverpool and Birmingham.

It focuses on children & young people's rights in society and also tells the story of how our group began. I'm not going to ramble on any more, I'll just let you read it and see for yourselves!

It would be great if you have any comments or stories you'd like publishing!

**Ashleigh**

**(If the pamphlet isn't with your newsletter, please contact me at Investing in Children, and I'll send you a copy).**

# Full time

If you think you've something that you think everyone needs to hear, or have suggestions about what should be in the next month's newsletter, please write to our editor:

Jane Morgan,  
Newsletter Editor

Or e-mail her at [iic@durham.gov.uk](mailto:iic@durham.gov.uk)

Investing in Children  
Moor Chambers  
23-26 Front Street  
Framwellgate Moor  
Durham  
DH1 5EJ



Large print copies of this Newsletter are available  
from the iic office 0191 386 7485

## **Cantonese, Bengali & Punjabi**

The Investing in Children information booklet is now available in Chinese, Bengali & Punjabi. If you require a copy in any of these languages, please contact the above address or telephone the above no.