



investing in children

NEWSLETTER

Sept – Oct 2004

Issue 63

Inside This Issue

| | |
|--|--|
| | Editors Column by Jane Morgan |
| | News Update – Liam Cairns |
| | Working with young people – Sue Younghusband |
| | School Meals Group – visit Harrogate |
| | Membership News – Helen Mulhearn |
| | Spill the beans Roadshow – Iftikhar Hussain |
| | Fairtrade at DCYPC |
| | Membership News Darlington – Andy Whittam |
| | Listening to Children – Carl McGee & Brian Davies |
| | IiC Development Agency – News from Newcastle <i>by Graham Bristow</i> |
| | Full Time |

Editots Column – Jane Morgan

Hello everyone! Well it's definitely time to say goodbye to summer and the little sunshine we've had, now it's back to school and work. But don't be dismayed, I bring you yet another edition of the Investing in Children Newsletter to brighten those dismal days to come.

During the summer I spent a week doing work experience at the primary school where my older sister teaches reception (perhaps the most entertaining week of my summer). While there I noticed the children were given a carton of milk and a piece of fruit every day, which if I recall was never offered to me as a child. I soon discovered it was all part of a scheme to enhance thinking skills through healthy eating, drinking water etc.

I asked my sister, or should I say Mrs Turner, about this and learnt that in schools across the country children are taking part in activities such as brain gyms to improve the quality of learning in classrooms. Like me, you may now be wondering what on earth brain gyms are, so I'll explain. Brain Gym is a chain of quick, fun and effective activities designed to boost performance in all areas by supporting total brain integration, or so I've read. Now this all sounds very impressive but I'm interested in knowing if it really is useful.

I know from my own experiences throughout school life that the vast majority of new ideas to stimulate the

brain and assist learning, most of which were done in PSE/PSHE or whatever it's name is these days, were a total waste of time. It was only last week I spent a whole afternoon learning what type of personality I had, this new knowledge supposedly aids my learning and therefore miraculously increases my employability! Surely this time would have been better spent doing actual work, to gain actual grades, which I'm sure will help me when job hunting far more than knowing I'm an ENTJ preference will.

However, as I have said I would like to know if thinking skills activities are helpful or just another fad, so if anyone has any experience of them please let me know what you think.

While we are on the subject of what you think, you may remember in a previous issue I asked for your contributions to the newsletter. I am still on a quest to find restaurant and music critics, so if you're interested don't forget to email me.

Finally, for everyone who doesn't already know it's Local Democracy Week 18th -24th of October, and to celebrate this we will be printing a special edition of the newsletter. If anyone is involved in, or has ideas about this topic it would be great to feature an article by you in this exclusive edition.

Jane

News Update

As is always the case, there are lots of new developments and ideas buzzing around the liC office. It can be difficult keeping up with everything, so in this column I will try to list some of the most significant or potentially most exciting ideas. If anyone wants more detail, or wants to get involved, please feel free to contact the office.

Integrated Children's Services

Government policy requires that services for children become much more co-ordinated. A group of young people have been working hard to try and ensure that the plans that emerge from the debate about integration reflect not just the official government agenda, but also issues identified as important by young people.

An important part of this is making sense of what services are available now. A 'mapping exercise' is being arranged, but running alongside this, the people have designed an 'audit tool' that attempts to measure what young people make of the available services.

Links with Universities

We are looking at how the work of the 'Investing in Children' research teams might connect with more formal, academic research. A group of young people are meeting with Professor Jonathon Bradshaw from the University of York, to explore this. Young people from Investing in Children will be contributing to the 'Childhood Studies' course at Edinburgh University. We are also collaborating with Newcastle University on a new project entitled 'Presenting Psychology'.

liC Membership for Members.

County Councillor Edna Hunter is leading on a new initiative, making the Investing in Children membership scheme available to elected members. Exactly the same criteria will be applied – Councillors will have to provide evidence of dialogue with young people and change as a result, and the evidence will have to be endorsed by young people themselves. Where necessary, the Investing in Children team will assist in developing opportunities for dialogue. Successful applicants will be certificated as 'Investing in Children Councillors' and be able to use the liC logo.

Leadership Development Seminars with Health Trust Boards

Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority has commissioned Investing in Children to deliver a seminar of children and young people's issues to each of the 15 Trust Boards across the Authority.

Peter Kemp and I, working with young people and colleagues from the Children's Leads Business Group, are working on this. So far, we have delivered two seminars to the Primary Care Trust Boards of Easington and Durham Dales. In both cases there was a lively and very positive debate, and we are optimistic that the seminars will lead to new opportunities for children and young people to influence decisions within the Health Service.

There's more, much more, but this column is already late, and I don't think the editor will thank me if I take up more time, or space.

Liam Cairns

Working with Children and Young People

Hi everyone, my name is Sue Younghusband and I currently work for Durham Dales PCT, as a Public Health Development Specialist for children and young people. In a nutshell my job is to work in the community, developing ways and supporting work to improve people's health and try to prevent poor health experiences but with a remit of the younger age groups as opposed to adults and older people.

I've been working in this job for just over a year now and it's not boring ...honest! In fact one of the best, rewarding and challenging parts of my job is working with young people in the Durham Dales Area... which leads me onto why I'm writing this and hopefully it will get the opportunity to be published.

From a personal view point I passionately believe children and young people receive a raw deal in today's society and often rarely are their comments really listened to. From a professional viewpoint there is currently an ocean of Government initiatives, recommendations and guidance to help us professionals deliver better services for children and young people. I see the key and only way forward to swim through this ocean is to work together and listen (meaningfully) to children and young people to ensure they are central to decisions and working towards all these new recommendations.

So to cut a long story short I just wanted to thank again all those young people within Durham Dales area who have listened, attended, contributed and kept me on the straight and narrow during the quest to work with young people and professionals to set up a **planning group** which will hopefully start addressing all the issues discussed above. The strength of this planning group has to be and will always be that it was

founded on children and young people's views on the issues they experienced whilst living in the community, i.e. unsatisfactory school meals, transport, safety, leisure facilities (or lack of them). There are no surprises in these view points as they seem to have been around for a while but I can say that there is now work / action groups trying to look at all of these to improve or promote changes for children and young people.

Some things take ages to get off the ground, some quick wins can be and are done and some things mean major changes in the way professionals work together which is very frustrating but I passionately believe with young people at the forefront of these changes a difference can be made.

The planning group is starting to become quite established, but there is no time for relaxing, as there is still a gap in how we all listen to each other and encourage more children and young people to want to be involved... So please give me a shout if you want further details.

Finally I just wanted to add something on **school dinners**.....aaaaghhhhh

There has been so much said about this with so much needed to be done. Again in Durham Dales some very enthusiastic young people carried out some action research in local secondary schools to find out exactly what the issues were...open Pandora's box!!

Again this brilliant piece of work, and working alongside young people has helped me understand what is happening and has had a knock on effect causing a flurry of changes, i.e. clearer pricing of foods, clean cutlery, the school meal provider being involved in discussions with individual schools etc...

There is still much much to do, however the effect of young people making their views heard has started to have a very powerful effect.

To date we have increased awareness of the issues within schools and agencies.

We have established a **school meals action group** to look at key things to contribute to changes. This group involves young people, school nurses, teaching staff, the current school meals providers, dieticians, public health reps.

A **school food policy** has been developed to be used by every school in Co. Durham and Darlington as guidance in the delivering of school meals. This is going to be a key document in the healthy school award and has to be signed off by a pupil representative as well as school teaching staff (at last).

There are strong links with the current DHIAR project and both areas of work support each other with a common aim to improve all the issues raised concerning school meals. We cannot promise miraculous differences overnight but we are working towards them!

Anyway I've taken up enough of your time, thanks for reading my worky bits and I do hope we can keep on working towards changing the world to give children and young people an equal voice!

By Sue Younghusband

Ps I can be found at
Durham Dales PCT, 16 Tenters Street
Bishop Auckland, Co. Durham
Email sue.younghusband@durhamdalespct.nhs.uk
Tel 01388 458835

Would you prefer to have **your copy of the Newsletter emailed?**

If so, please contact the liC office (see back of Newsletter for phone number / email address) and let us have your details.

School Meals Group Visit to St Aidan's, Harrogate

Hi. We are a group of young people who are looking at school meals.

In July we went to visit a school called St Aidan's in Harrogate who have their own catering service. They employ two chefs and additional 'catering assistants' to cook meals everyday from fresh ingredients.

There we tried the different varieties of meals that were on offer on the day of our visit (meat pie & veg, pork with noodles, veggie pasta, soup & bun, jacket potato & sandwiches). We each found a huge contrast between their meals and the ones we are currently being provided with in our schools. They were healthier and freshly cooked.

The pupils in the school are only given chips once a week as part of a meal. All their hot meals cost about £1.60 (their free school meal amount). Fizzy drinks are only available twice a week, then for the rest of week pupils can purchase water, juice & milk drinks. However the school provides free drinking water on the dinner tables.

The chef told us that fresh fruit, vegetables, bread and meat is delivered into the school every morning where it is then checked by the chefs and sent back if it's not up to standard. Currently, we only see one delivery made to our school per week.

The dinner hall at St Aidan's is clean, tidy and has a nice atmosphere. The tables for eating at were round-shaped so everyone on the table could see each other and talk. The deputy head mentioned that their school dinner is thought of as a time for students to socialise.

At our dinner hall we have to queue and wait for our Year's turn but at St Aidan's you can go in & get your dinner at anytime in the hour given knowing that there will be enough food left and it will be to the same standard as it was at the beginning of lunchtime.

We all thought that overall St Aidan's meals were of a very high standard. The vegetarian pasta was certainly nicer than anything I've had for lunch at my school before.

At our schools, hot (sorry, I mean lukewarm) meals are a choice of chips, burgers, pizza, fish fingers, sausages, chicken drummers and chicken nuggets (6 very small ones for 95p). You can get a salad but you have to order it the day before but you hardly ever know what you want to have to eat the next day.

Many people believe that young people in modern society only eat fast foods. St Aidan's shows that this view is incorrect, young people will eat healthier foods if it is presentable and (more importantly) if it is offered.

We think that if St Aidan's standard meals were provided in our schools a lot more people would choose to eat them and everyone would be happier because they would have had a good dinner and would not be hungry.

**By IiC School Meal Group - Amy Brown,
Grace Tyldsley, Joshua Railton,
Kirsty Harker, Roxanne Jackman,
Roxanne Wade, Shaun Brand &
Stephanie Rolfe.**

Membership News

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

Darlington Crown Street Library
Skerne Park Youth & Community Centre Management Committee
10 Brough Close (Children's Home)
Branksome Comprehensive School
West Rainton Satellite Home

And a special welcome to our first **Newcastle** partners -

Atkinson Road Nursery School
Sacred Heart Primary School

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

The Community Support Team
Bishop Auckland Diabetes Clinic
Horden Youth Centre
Skerne Park Primary
St Andrews Family Resource Centre
Catchgate Children's Home
Fishburn Youth & Community Centre
Behaviour Support Service

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

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!

Spill the beans Roadshow

Susan Garrett and Katie Davidson first indicated interest for IiC membership for **Pelton and Fellrose Medical Group** during August 2003. When I first met the pair they were very keen on establishing a young people's dialogue group. They both acknowledged the benefits of dialogue with young people and wanted to develop the process of dialogue as soon as possible.

They felt that young people were perhaps, not accessing the surgery, as much as staff had hoped. They realised if they wanted to rectify this, they would have to get into dialogue with the local young people and find out why this was the case.

Armed with their enthusiasm, razor sharp wit and 'behind the scenes' support from IiC, they began to contact local groups/organisations, that had access to young people, in order to create a dialogue group. However, this wasn't as easy as they had anticipated. A number of agencies that had shown initial interest had just dropped out or began to lose interest. This became very frustrating for both Katie and Susan. But it became apparent that they were not just going to give up. They continued to 'hassle' organisations/individuals to consider developing opportunities for dialogue between young people and the PCT across Pelton/Fellrose.

Their persistence eventually paid off. I am very pleased to announce, as a result of all their hard work and commitment, Susan and Katie have managed to organise a huge consultation event.

The 'Spill the Beans' roadshow will be held at Roseberry Sports and Community College on the 27th September (by the time this goes to press, it will have been held and will have been a huge success!)

It will run from 1.30pm to 3.30pm approx. After the initial introduction, 5 workshops will run concurrently, with young people from the college attending each one. The purpose of the workshops will be to explore issues such as:

- What does health mean to you.
- Barriers and pitfalls affecting service use.
- Virtual GP practice.
- What could be done to improve the service.

As Susan has suggested, this information may also be of use to other PCT professionals across Chester-le-Street.

This event would not have been possible had it not been for the considerable commitment and hard work that both Susan and Katie had invested. I feel that Katie and Susan would also like to acknowledge the support and co-operation that they received from other organisations and individuals.

Obviously Health Promotions' Staff, Kim McGarry and Sue Thompson were particularly supportive. Likewise Roseberry Sports and Community college especially Ann Turner and Moira Swan from the School Nurses have been invaluable. Dave Cook from the Eric bus, also deserves recognition. Susan and Katie

have not been the only staff from Pelton Fellrose surgery to get involved in the development of the event. Dr Jose Miralles and Judith Brown have also been key players. All these people (hopefully) will be present at the workshops, so thanks again for their time.

So despite the initial indifference and barriers they faced, the staff at Pelton/Fellrose Surgery have managed to organise what promises to be a useful and enjoyable day. It goes to show 'where there's a will there's a way.'

Well done to everyone involved!

Iftikhar Hussain

SPILL THE BEANS

Your chance to have your say about what happens in the local GP surgery!

Sign up for the event – only 120 places at event (20 representatives from each year group)

The event will be on Monday 27th September 1.30 – 3.15 pm.

What does health mean to you? What do you think goes on in your GP practice? What are the big issues for young people in the area?

What stops you from getting what you want from your GP practice?

Virtual GP practice. What would make your ideal GP surgery?

Come and sign up for the event & get more information. Give us your ideas on the topics above. One sheet will be drawn from a hat to win a Woolworth's Gift Voucher.

Fairtrade at Durham Children & Young People's Council

For this year's theme of work, DCYPC have been working on Fairtrade. This idea came about when the council hosted the National Youth Council Convention last year on the theme of diversity. All of the council felt that fair-trade was a topic that would be useful to know more about, and one which could be publicised to young people across the county.

Earlier this year, the council held a fair-trade information day, where members of the council could learn more about fair-trade, and gain a better insight into the topic. This went down very well amongst all of the council, and increased the interest further into this topic.

Following some research, we realised that the Great North Walk was being sponsored by Traidcraft (a North East company producing and selling goods that are Fairtrade). A large amount of the council then decided to take up the challenge of raising money for this worthy cause and was successful both in completing the walk of 8 miles, and raising some money for the cause.

In more recent times, the council is beginning to get involved in the "One World Carnival" to be held in Durham City on 23rd of October, with some good undoubtedly coming from the day.

With the information that the council now have on Fairtrade, we are now (as much as possible) trying to ensure that we buy Fairtrade where possible, and we hope that this movement continues to grow, and that awareness of the subject can increase.

If you would like more information on the work of DCYPC, or more information about Fairtrade, please feel free to contact the council.

Membership in Darlington

Congratulations

In the last month, three new groups have achieved Investing in Children Membership in Darlington. The three groups have achieved this by being able to show that the people working there are engaged in dialogue with children and young people, and this has resulted in change.

Skerne Park Community Centre Management Committee

Members of the Management Committee worked with Skerne Park IiC group; working together they carried out some research with the Junior & Senior Youth Clubs.

They then used their research, to write a successful bid to County Durham Foundation Children's Fund Network. With the money they purchased items including four computers, a pool table, dance mats and board games.

Crown Street Library

There were six young people in the group, all of whom attend Hurworth Comprehensive School near Darlington. They call themselves the "Selected 6" and designed their own logo. The young people went to Ottakers, and bought books some of which they reviewed. Here are some of the other things that have changed as a result of dialogue: new information boards on Darlington, showing 'what's happening

in Darlington' and 'what we can do in the town.' The group helped to develop 'DBC Website' a virtual tour of the Library and an on-line booklist with Waterstone's. The group chose various magazines that are now ordered on a monthly basis. There is a new computer corner in the library.

Branksome Comprehensive School

There were 23 young people in the Branksome IiC group. The young people developed a questionnaire with an aim of carrying out research, which they hoped would improve life at school for students and teachers. The questionnaire went out to Year 9. Over 100 students completed and returned the questionnaire. Here are some of the changes that have taken place as a result of the work: students can now wear tracksuit bottoms during PE; the school has a new cleaning contract; they have gone back to DBC; an extra caretaker has been employed to undertake painting and refurbishing. Mentoring has been introduced. The dining area has been changed with vending machines and new flooring, a milk bar and is now a more young people friendly setting. ICT facilities have increased; an extra teacher is now employed in this area.

The PE area has a water vending machine and there is a tuck shop in the canteen. The Anti-bullying policy and practice documents were revamped in June 2004 for publishing in September

04. Year 11 students can now use the Library during free periods one month leading up to exams. You can now dye your hair as long as it is a natural colour as long as it is not too much. There is still some disagreement with this but change has taken place.

Three excellent pieces of work that have resulted in dialogue and change and a positive move forward. If services are to start to become more inclusive, it will result in a higher quality provision that will benefit all.

Andy Whittam
Project Worker – Investing in Children

Listening to Children

Hello

Lately we've been working on the Listening to Children Strategy. It's about improving services in County Durham. So far we've worked on the Max Card and the Drive Project.

We have had regular meetings to work on other parts of the Listening to Children Strategy.

We have two new members who are blind. One of the new members commented, "When I'm in County Durham, I don't feel safe because people just push past in the street, however, in Edinburgh where I attend school, people have more of an awareness."

"Also, in public places, such as zoos and shops, they have leaflets but none of them are in Braille. It's difficult for me to get information. Especially if I visit a local zoo and I use touch but can only touch a few animals."

"In Pizza Hut in Edinburgh, they have Braille menus but in County Durham there are none. There are not many pelican crossings to help me cross the road either. It's also difficult for me to meet new people. There are no ways for us to meet people and socialise with others. A lot of people are very disrespectful towards me in public places especially at the youth centre."

Carl and Brian
August 2004

Investing in Children Development Agency

News from Newcastle

Since I last updated you all in issue 60 things have been moving along quite nicely with the Newcastle Participation Strategy.

You will remember that Newcastle City Council had commissioned IiC to work on producing a three year development plan, which, in their own words “has as its aim that Newcastle will develop the capacity within its organisations to engage with young people in a positive dialogue about their life in order to take effective action to change services on the ground.” The strategy has three main strands to developing participation. These are;

Developing the capacity for dialogue. This will be done by running Agenda Days and supporting research groups that come out of these.

Celebrating and rewarding examples of existing effective participation. This will be done by inviting existing organisations to apply for Investing in Children membership by submitting evidence of dialogue with young people that has led to real change.

Staff Training. Through delivering the Staff Development Programme

The capacity building started at the Gala Field Youth Centre with an Agenda Day run by Andrew Young and Steven Robinson. Twenty five young people attended aged between eight and thirteen. The day was a great success and a variety of views and opinions were voiced on a whole range of topics that affected the daily lives of young people living in the area of Newbiggin Hall Estate. Following on from the day, four research teams have been established to look into the areas of **the environment, safety, respect (the way young people aged 8 – 13 are viewed), and parks and leisure.** These teams are having their first meetings this week and I will let you know how they are getting on in the next issue. A further Agenda day is planned for Dinnington First School on October 1st for the under eight age group. This will be run by Sarah Payne and Jayne Cullen.

Other Developments

There have already been two successful membership applications (see membership page 7 for more on this) with more in the pipeline.

The staff development programme gets underway with the first training days on 20th and 21st October and 9th and 10th of November.

Newcastle City Council are in the process of advertising for an Investing in Children/ Participation Officer to co-ordinate the Participation Strategy at the Newcastle end of things.

Graham Bristow

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

Or e-mail her at iic@durham.gov.uk



**Copy date for next Newsletter will be
12 November 2004**

**Large print copies of this Newsletter are available
from the iic office**

Catonese, 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 on 0191 386 7485