

Every Child Matters

Update

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www.childrenleeds.org.uk

The Children's Plan

Last week secretary of state for Children, Schools and Families, Ed Balls launched the national 'Children's Plan'. Building on the 'Time to talk' consultation and the Every Child Matters agenda, the new plan outlines a long-term vision to strengthen support for families during early years, improve schools, increase the participation of parents and make sure that young people have exciting things to do outside school. New national announcements include:

- £225m to build and upgrade more than 3,500 playgrounds and set up 30 new adventure playgrounds in deprived communities for those aged 8-13;
- £160m to improve the quality of places for young people to go and things for them to do, such as youth centres or mobile units running activities such as sport, music, drama, art facilities;
- 20,000 two year-olds from disadvantaged families to get free childcare, building on the current childcare offer to all three and four year-olds; and
- a review of the primary curriculum to ease the transition from early years into schools.

The plan builds on the extended services agenda of transforming schools making them more central to their communities – they will be designed differently, and encouraged to make more effective links with the NHS and other services. Where possible, child health services, social care, advice, welfare services and police will be located on the same sites, making services more integrated and more convenient for children and their families.

Links to more information about the plan and a youtube video can be found at www.childrenleeds.org.uk

Thanks for the toys

Leeds City Council would like to thank everyone who has generously donated toys for looked-after children. Over 1,200 presents have been donated and are currently being wrapped, ready to be delivered in time for Christmas day. Social workers and family support workers nominate children and young people that they work with, who might not otherwise receive many presents. For more information about the scheme contact Vicky Johnson.
vicky.a.johnson@leeds.gov.uk

'Time to talk'

During September, as part of the national consultation for the Children's Plan, the government set out on a roadshow to talk with children and young people. An outline of its findings is now available.

The key themes it identified were: anxieties about family relationships; the importance given to the views of children and young people when compared to the views of adults; good support for families, children and young people; the role of the community; the importance of having something to do; and ideas for improving education.

A link to the full findings can be found at www.childrenleeds.org.uk



Councillor Stewart Golton
Lead executive member for children's services

The best children and young people

It's with great excitement that I take on the role and responsibility of lead executive member for children's services. Every Child Matters is a challenging agenda for everyone involved – but what a brilliant challenge. It will be a great privilege to work with the most creative, talented, open-minded, questioning, thoughtful, wonderful, friendly and fun loving people in Leeds – our children and young people!

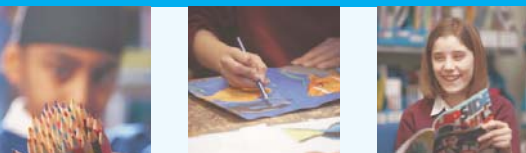
I would also like to recognise and thank Councillor Brett for his time and energy over the last two years, and the role he has played in establishing our new approach to children's services.

I'm looking forward to meeting you all as soon as I can. So can I wish you all the best for Christmas and the New Year. Let's make this a brilliant 2008 so that every child in Leeds is happy, healthy, safe, successful and free from the effects of poverty.

Stewart Golton

Yours, Stewart Golton

20 December 2007 issue 11



Children Leeds



2008 is the national year of reading

To put reading at the top of everyone's agenda the Department for Children, Schools and Families has declared 2008 the national year of reading. Libraries in Leeds are working to raise awareness of the importance of reading, and to inspire more people to take part in reading for enjoyment. Leeds Libraries already run many initiatives to support reading and literacy promotion such as:

Bookstart offering free books to every child and encouraging parents and carers to share books with babies bringing lasting benefits – in Leeds we have distributed over 17,000 free packs since April; readers' groups for children, young people and families meeting regularly in libraries to enjoy books and reading activities together; and Leeds book awards involving young people in schools and libraries across the city who nominate and vote for their favourite books of the year.

The Summer reading challenge encourages children to keep reading throughout the summer break, with 8,000 children in Leeds taking part. Breezereads events give young people opportunities to meet some of the best writers of teen fiction, helping them to become inspired and avid readers. This is a partnership between libraries, schools, Breeze and publishers. More ideas can be found on the national website. www.yearofreading.org.uk

The Libraries team want Leeds to be a reading city. How can you and the children you work with get involved in the national year of reading? We want this year to be a great success for all the children and young people in Leeds.

If you would like to talk to us to discuss any ideas you have for getting involved, or if you want more information, contact Britta Heyworth. britta.heyworth@leeds.gov.uk

Valuing diversity

On Thursday, January 24, Jojo from Galaxy FM will launch a new range of diversity information for Leeds. Two booklets, one for young people and another for children's services staff will outline how to value diversity in children and young people. The event will take place from 5pm-7pm at the Civic Hall Banqueting Suite.

To reserve a place at the event or find out more information, contact Pat Case. pat.case@leeds.gov.uk

This is your publication...

so let us know about the great work you are doing in your organisation. How are you including children and young people in the changes you are making? We all want Leeds to have the very best children's services to make sure that every child matters.

Please send all your comments and suggestions about this update to the children's services unit. Email children.leeds@leeds.gov.uk Phone 0113 395 0247

Improving attendance

To help tackle persistent absences by students from school, Education Leeds is carrying out some research with agencies from across the partnership. It is looking to find new ways to tackle the problem, and the findings will be used to inform the 2008 children's services attendance strategy. Get involved in this research and complete an online questionnaire at www.childrenleeds.org.uk. The questionnaire takes approximately 20 minutes and needs to be completed by Friday 18 January.

For more information, contact Kate James. kate.james@educationleeds.co.uk

Tackling obesity

Free weight management programmes are being offered by Leeds Primary Care Trust for overweight and obese young people aged 11 to 17. 'Carnegie Clubs' delivered by Carnegie Weight Management start on 19 January 2008, and will run every Saturday morning for 12 weeks, followed by an evaluation after 12 weeks. The clubs work with young people and their parents to tackle obesity. If you think that a young person may benefit from this service, or you want more information contact, Georgina Mills: g.mills@leedsmet.ac.uk, 07984 680 620 or visit: www.carnegiweightmanagement.com

Pass it on...

Please pass this publication on to colleagues in Children's Services who do not have access to email or the internet. If you would like this update in another format, please let us know, phone 0113 395 0247.

Read the new Children Leeds commissioning strategy at www.childrenleeds.org.uk also find out about:

- The parenting conference on 18 January.
- A report on the safeguarding of trafficked children.
- A link to the new national 14-19 website.
- A REACH report into raising the aspirations of black boys and young people.

