

# The Bulletin

Issue 23

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Information for everyone working with children and young people in Devon

## Challenging perceptions



Sophy with Anne Whiteley and John Smith at a meal for care leavers going to university

Welcome to the latest edition of **The Bulletin**. I am delighted to report that all the partners involved in the Children's Trust are now fully signed up to the 'Don't Judge Us Before You Know Us' campaign.

The campaign has come about as a result of what young people have told us about the way they feel they are perceived by the media, and the wider public. They feel they are often 'tarded with the same brush', labelled 'hoodies' and 'yobs', and that other people don't see the positive things that so many of them do. We need to challenge these stereotypical views.

The campaign will illustrate some examples of how young people have helped in their local communities, or found ways to improve their own lives or the lives of others. We have talked to groups of young people who

want to help with the campaign, and their ideas and enthusiasm have been inspirational. We will soon be selecting which young people will star in the campaign and working on the design of material, and I'll keep you updated in future editions.

In this edition we look at some of the initiatives from partners in health and Connexions which should make a real impact on the lives of local children and young people and their families.

We've also introduced a new feature – **The View from here** – which each edition will look at the life of a young person living in Devon. The article is written by young person themselves, and will provide an interesting insight into the pleasures and challenges of living in Devon. This edition focuses on young care leaver Sophy Miles, who has now gone on to university to take a degree. It is a particularly

poignant story, and clearly demonstrates what young people can achieve, given appropriate support, even when they haven't had the easiest start in life.

Devon County Council has just produced a DVD on corporate parenting, and this role will soon be a statutory obligation for all Children's Trust partners, under new legislation. It is vital that we support children and young people in our care, and give them the same opportunities as every other young person in Devon.

We are in the process of introducing a new branding for the Children's Trust, which encompasses our new Children and Young People's Plan. Further details of this will follow in the next edition.

Feedback on **this bulletin** is welcome as always, please send your comments to Louise Raymond at [louise.raymond@devon.gov.uk](mailto:louise.raymond@devon.gov.uk)

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**The Devon Children's Trust is a partnership between social care, education, health, community, voluntary, and justice services working together to make a difference for Devon's children and young people.**

# The view from here... Sophy Miles, care leaver



**Where do I begin? I became a care leaver when I was 15 years old, over 7 years ago! So much has happened in that time.**

I have been in foster care since I was 8 years old. I have lived in several homes all over Devon, been to several schools and had several different social workers! Until the age of 16 life was very hectic, confusing and sometimes manic.

**Good, bad, happy, awful, brilliant, new and exciting, very, very trying and sometimes too hard.** That's what it's like being a teenager, and being a young person in care makes it even more magnified. Then you turn 16 and it's even harder because you think you're a 'grown up' now! I was lucky because I worked hard at school and wanted to make a good future for myself.

At 16 I moved in with this fabulous couple who were new to fostering - they were amazing! After commuting from Torquay to Exeter for nearly two years, being physically knackered and failing my GCSEs, they saw hope and supported me 100%. **I gained 11 GCSEs and went onto college to do 3 A levels. I had the ongoing support and guidance of my social worker and Social Services and, with desperately needed financial help, I passed 3 art and design based A levels.**

When I turned 18 I was now an adult and, although I could still be classed as a care leaver as I was in full time education, money for rent and bills had to be sourced from elsewhere. I felt like I was getting chucked into the deep end of the benefits system! It was hard. It was all new, and a big shock. But it got sorted and I was able to move on and finish my studies.

**Do you know the national statistic for young people from care going to university is 1%? Only 1%! I find this amazing. Are care leavers stupid? Incapable of actually bettering their lives? No!**

It's just that it's a really hard road to go down for a person who has the support of their parents and family and money, let alone for us. There just hadn't been that support for care leavers, until recently. I decided to take a Foundation Degree. To get to the best art schools, you need one of those; but this turned out to be a 'black hole'. No one would recognise that this was a valid form of Higher Education, so for a while I was in financial hardship.

It's not all about the money, I wasn't expecting to have it all handed to me on a plate. I've worked since I was 14, but it really is a matter of, if money isn't there then you can't do it. Studying art is expensive! It's now changed and it's been recognised that you can get to uni by many means, and at many ages, I find that really positive.

I went to uni in Nottingham, with the full support, help and guidance of the care leavers' team in Exeter, and then became pregnant at the end of my first year.

**I remember going into the George Street office to tell my social worker and just bursting into tears. I had no idea what I was going to do.** He helped me with housing options, funding, etc. He went beyond his call of duty - if I needed to chat he was there. My daughter is now 20 months old and I've just returned to university, and I popped in down there last week. Everyone knows us there, we have a catch-up and Lily charms the pants off them!

**It's been incredibly hard to get to where I am today. I've had to battle personal problems, health problems, relationships like every other young adult I know, and with so much help from so many different people and organisations,** including my previous foster parents, my family, my friends, Social Services, JACAT, Exeter College, Connexions, the RD&E Hospital, St. Sidwells Health Centre, my university in Nottingham, Mount Pleasant Health Centre, the Maternity Unit at RD&E, Baby Oasis at St. Sidwells and the Head of Art at Exeter College.



**We would like to thank Sophy for her invaluable support and work in helping produce the new Leaving Care Pack for CYPS.**

# New community child health clinics

Parents and families in Barnstaple are set to benefit from new child health clinics based in local children's centres.

From September, the child health clinics will move into Barnstaple children's centres with extended opening hours to help parents who work.

Jan Rolfe, team leader at Barnstaple, said the new setting will improve access for parents and families to the health visitor and school nurse team as well as health trainers.

"We will encourage a range of health professionals to visit the clinics to give one-to-one support on a range of lifestyle topics," she said.

"It is important that the children and families are in a relaxed environment where



Victoria House Children's Centre

they can benefit from the best possible facilities and care.

"We would like to thank the five GP practices in Barnstaple for their support in accommodating the service until now."

The child health clinics have relocated to Victoria House Children's Centre on Thursdays and Sticklepath Children's Centre on Tuesdays open 1.30pm–5.30pm.

# Nurse drop-in sessions

for care leavers and young people in care

Nurses for young people in care, Betsy Allen and Cathy Jerney, are starting weekly drop-in sessions for young people in care and care leavers of any age.

The sessions aim to offer:

- general health advice
- signposting to services
- general emotional support
- sexual health services, including pregnancy testing, chlamydia screening and emergency contraception
- dietary advice and measuring.

The sessions will be held at the YES Centre, George Street, Exeter - every Wednesday at 4.30pm-6.30pm.

# Devon PCT tackles chlamydia

To raise awareness of chlamydia among young people, Devon Primary Care Trust's Chlamydia screening office took its services to the Guildhall Shopping Centre as part of the NHS 60th birthday celebrations.

The National chlamydia Screening Programme is an opportunistic screening programme set up to address the growing numbers of young people diagnosed with chlamydia. The programme is specifically aimed at the under 25s, and encourages young

people to do a self-taken test. The main aim of the Guildhall event was to raise awareness of chlamydia and direct young people to places where they could pick up a screening kit. However, 15 young people decided to undertake a test at the event and many more took away information.

The team was also at Kongomana and the recent YES Forum event in Exeter where they forged links with youth workers to promote the service.

Self-test kits are now available from selected pharmacists free of charge. A full list of participating pharmacists is available at [www.devonpct.nhs.uk](http://www.devonpct.nhs.uk)

For more information contact Beccy Lyons on **01392 284965**.



# CYPS short-listed for the prestigious Beacon Status



**Devon County Council has been nationally recognised for its ground-breaking work in ensuring children and young people get the services they need.**

Devon's Children and Young People's Services have been short-listed for the prestigious Beacon Status awarded jointly by three Government departments.

The accolade recognises the pioneering work the authority is doing in making sure services are tailored to the local needs of communities across Devon.

A decision will be announced in March 2009 following a visit to Devon by national inspectors

and a presentation by the county council in London.

The work Devon is already doing will be used as an example of good practice for other local authorities to follow.

The practice is called strategic commissioning and involves everyone involved in providing services for children in Devon.

It means that services are more closely tailored to what communities and families need.

In the case of individual services, a lead officer is nominated to work with young people and their families to decide exactly what help and support they need and then commission it from whichever organisations are best able to provide it - the council, another public body, a charity or the private sector.

Devon County Council's deputy leader and executive councillor for children's services, John Smith, said:

**"Devon is committed to working with local communities, schools and their learning communities and individuals to ensure we tailor services to individual needs.**

**"As a local authority we don't want to tell people this is the service you are going to get whether you are in Ivybridge or Ilfracombe, Honiton or Holsworthy.**

**"We recognise there are different needs in different market and coastal towns and even in those communities there are individuals with different needs.**

**"This is about Devon County Council responding in the most effective and efficient way possible."**

Devon's notice of short-listing says:

**"All those authorities that applied for Beacon Status highlighted aspects of excellent and innovative practice.**

**"The Advisory Panel has recognised the breadth and impact of your practice."**

## Connexions reach award finals

**Connexions Cornwall and Devon Ltd, has been chosen as one of six finalists for the prestigious UK Excellence Award, awarded by HRH the Princess Royal at the London Hilton Hotel, Park Lane on 14 October 2008.**

One of the highest business accolades to be gained nationally, the UK Excellence Award, launched in 1994 by the British Quality Foundation, recognises organisations that have excelled in management practices. The UK Excellence Award is presented annually to organisations that are deemed, by the British Quality Foundation's trained assessors

and independent jury to be the best in the country.

Connexions Cornwall and Devon Ltd was chosen as a finalist after a rigorous selection process and further scrutiny by a national jury of excellence assessors from top UK companies.

On becoming a finalist, Connexions Chief Executive, Jenny Rudge, said: "I was absolutely thrilled when I heard we'd reached the finals. Not only have we achieved this but we have also been nominated for two other British Quality Foundation awards; for outstanding performance

in the areas of customer, and employee satisfaction. This is all fantastic news for the company and a tremendous achievement, accomplished during a period of significant change to the Connexions service.

"This is the first time we have gone for this award and I've been told applicants rarely even make it to the finals on their first attempt, so to win the UK Excellence Award is a real feat for the company and our employees – endorsing their hard work, professionalism and dedication to families across Cornwall and Devon."

To find your nearest Connexions centre freephone **0800 9755111** or visit **[www.connexions-cd.org.uk](http://www.connexions-cd.org.uk)**



# second guide to...

## the Children's Trust

**Devon Children's Trust is a partnership of public and voluntary sector organisations working together to meet the needs of children, families and young people.**

Children's Trusts exist across the country to improve the lives and futures of children and young people and were set up following the tragic death of Victoria Climbié and the resulting Children Act 2004.

Every Child Matters: Change for Children is the new approach to the well-being of children and young people from birth to 19. The aim is for every child, whatever their background or their circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- **Be healthy**
- **Stay safe**
- **Enjoy and achieve**
- **Make a positive contribution**
- **Achieve economic well-being**

These are known as the **five outcomes**. All Children's Trusts aim to achieve the best for the children and young people by thinking of them in the round, as whole people working in partnership. By working together, the organisations listed below focus on children's services by setting

aspirational goals, pooling budgets and championing children's and young people's interests.

### Who are the partners?

**We are!** Devon's Children's Trust is a strategic partnership. It exists to improve outcomes for children and young people because we believe that this can be done more effectively by us all working together than as single agencies or organisations. Children are whole people, so effective work is based on their needs and aspirations rather than what any one organisation is responsible for delivering. When the term, 'we' is used, it means the Children's Trust partnership.

### We are:

parents, parent governors and parent carers  
the voluntary and independent sector  
schools, colleges and other learning settings  
faith communities  
East Devon District Council  
Exeter City Council  
Mid Devon District Council  
North Devon District Council  
South Hams District Council  
Teignbridge District Council  
Torrige District Council  
West Devon Borough Council  
Devon County Council  
Cornwall and Devon Connexions  
Devon and Cornwall Constabulary  
Devon and Cornwall Learning and Skills Council  
Devon and Cornwall Police Authority  
Devon and Cornwall Probation Area  
Devon Primary Care Trust  
Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service  
Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust  
Royal Devon and Exeter NHS Foundation Trust  
South Devon Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust  
South West Strategic Health Authority

### Decision-making

#### The Board

The Children's Trust Board is led by an independent chair and has representatives from many of the agencies listed above. The Board gives strategic leadership, sets standards and values and makes sure that all our stakeholders are able to learn about, and contribute to, the development of the trust.

#### The Executive

The Executive is made up of various public and voluntary sector organisations and is responsible for implementing Devon's Children and Young People's Plan. Children's Trust Local Planning and Implementation Partnerships (CTLPIPs) are based on district council areas. They reflect the Executive at the local level and implement the CYPP tailored to local circumstances. The chairs sit on the Executive to help join up the local and the county decision making.  
[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/guidance](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/guidance)

**Victoria Climbié**  
[www.victoria-climbie-inquiry.org.uk](http://www.victoria-climbie-inquiry.org.uk)



# ContactPoint update

**ContactPoint will mean greater communication by practitioners across agencies to identify needs earlier and make action to address those needs more effective**

Staff using ContactPoint will be able to:

- check the identity of a child or young person who comes their attention
- assess whether that child is getting universal services, such as education and primary health care
- find out which professionals are involved with the child - this will mean staff can work together to provide the most appropriate services for the child or young person.

### What data will be held on ContactPoint?

- ContactPoint will hold basic information about all children and young people up to 18 years old in England, including:

- name, address, gender and date of birth
- contact details for parents and carers school or college GP and practitioners providing other services
- the lead professional – if there is one.

There will be special arrangements for sensitive services, such as sexual health, mental health and substance misuse. Consent will be needed to show any contact details for these services.

ContactPoint will not hold any assessment or case information, or any subjective observations about a child's family or circumstances. For young people leaving care or with learning difficulties information may be kept up to the age of 25, with their consent.

### Will people be able to see their data?

Under the Data Protection Act children, and parents acting on their behalf, have the right to ask to see data held about them and to ask for any

incorrect data to be corrected or removed.

There are some special cases where a request to see information may be turned down. For example, if the parent or carer making the request has had a court order issued against them which stops them having the information.

### When will ContactPoint be available?

- ContactPoint will be available for use in Devon in 2009. There will then be a phased roll-out to the whole children's workforce.

Devon's ContactPoint Project is being managed by the Children's Trust as part of the AXS (access to services) programme.

Relevant staff will be trained in using ContactPoint and in good practice for sharing information.

### Where can I find out more?

Contact the project team by emailing [contactpoint@devon.gov.uk](mailto:contactpoint@devon.gov.uk)

## Cervical immunisation programme starts in Devon

**Over 4000 girls age 12 and 13 in all state and independent schools in Devon will be immunised with the new HPV (Human Papillomavirus Vaccination).**

A new immunisation team at Devon Primary Care Trust has been appointed to do this, in partnership with school nurses.

Any girl not in school such as home-educated, excluded and travelling families will also be able to receive this immunisation.

HPV is a new vaccine and protects against cervical cancer and pre-cancerous cell changes in the cervix caused by HPV viruses. The vaccine protects against two virus types that cause over 70% of cervical cancer, the second most common cancer in women worldwide. Three injections are needed over six months.

The vaccine will also be offered to 17 and 18 year old girls. Those attending 6<sup>th</sup> forms and further education colleges will be invited to the year 8 sessions.



Girls at work will be able to attend community clinics in community hospitals and walk-in clinics. There will be a catch-up programme from September 2009 to give the vaccine to all girls up to 18 years.

Find more information at [www.immunisation.nhs.uk/hpv](http://www.immunisation.nhs.uk/hpv)



# 5 minute staff interview

**Name:** Tim Tod

**Job title:** Chief Executive of Young Devon

## What is your role in Young Devon?

I have been its Chief Executive since 1997.

## What kind of work do you do with young people?

Young Devon was established in 1949 as a charitable organisation to 'change the odds in favour of young people'. We work with children, young people and young adults to enhance lives and promote opportunities for those who are least likely to have their voices heard, and whose life circumstances affect their ability to achieve their full potential. We also aim to challenge negative stereotypes about young people, campaigning with them and for them.

We have 120 paid staff and 300 volunteers offering young people access to:

- information, support and counselling through Youth Enquiry Service (YES) centres
- housing and support

- positive activities and volunteering
- discrete services targeted at particular individuals or groups struggling to reach their potential.

## How does Young Devon fit into the Children's Trust partnership?

As an independent voluntary organisation we share the aspirations in Every Child Matters. Sometimes the way in which these aspirations are achieved presents considerable challenges - especially to those who have a legal obligation to make them happen.

As a member of the voluntary sector and a representative on the partnership we play a key role as a 'critical friend'. We try to put forward additional ways to achieve an outcome, sometimes one successfully tested by a voluntary sector organisation elsewhere.

## What changes do you think will make a difference to young people?

We believe that every young person needs a significant adult

they can trust and call on when needed. For many it is their parent or carer. The challenge is to make sure that all young people have the opportunity to develop this type of holistic relationship with a paid professional or volunteer, which can also help them pursue safe, healthy and happy lives.

## How are you working to achieve the Every Child Matters five outcomes?

There are young people in need who will not engage with statutory agencies and others who are invisible but may be struggling alone, so much of our work is about making voluntary contact, developing trust and then helping them gain access to a range of options - many of which are provided by other Children's Trust partners. This helps young people move on in their lives. We also act as an advocate for any young person wanting help, or to try something new who is unable to successfully engage with the relevant agency or service.

## Work experience for young people

**Young Devon research volunteering.** Young Devon is researching 'Volunteering as a Route to Employment' across Devon Children's Trust. They have sent out a questionnaire for staff to fill in which will help to develop and improve the skills of everyone supporting children and young people.

Young Devon will produce a report on the findings of the

questionnaire and distribute it across the sector. Anyone who completed the questionnaire will be sent a copy of the report direct.

The questionnaire was to develop understanding of how volunteering is, and can be, a pathway to employment across the Children's Trust. With the information gained from the research we will

be able to gain a better understanding of the current situation and opportunities for future development, including submitting joint bids for appropriate funding to support the training and development of volunteers as a career pathway.

If you have any questions about the research please contact Jo Easton, HR Director Young Devon on **01752 691511** or email [jo.easton@youngdevon.org](mailto:jo.easton@youngdevon.org)

# Parenting Matters in Devon

Parents are the single most important influence on securing positive outcomes for children and young people. Good parenting is an important precursor to achieving fully the ambitions of the CYPP.

A parent is anyone who is responsible for caring for a child.

## What is Parenting Matters?

A three year strategy to:

- **support** parents and practitioners
- **improve** the way parents and practitioners work together
- **improve** the resources available to support parents.

The Devon Children and Young People's Plan says that families bring up children and our job is to support them to do that. This means that supporting and working with parents is a priority for the Children's Trust.

## Why do we need Parenting Matters?

We talked to parents and practitioners and this has helped us to develop some priorities which will improve the way we work together. The parenting

strategy explains what our five key priorities are and says what we will do to make them happen.

### Priority one

Establish a way to:

- discuss parenting issues
- bring practitioners working with parents together to look at how the priorities can be put into action.

### Priority two

Help all parents get the information, guidance and support they want and need, when and where they want or need it.

### Priority three

Help parents get involved in developing services.

### Priority four

Continue to improve and develop the skills and knowledge of practitioners so that parents feel confident that the services they get are effective and good quality.

### Priority five

Look at how the work we are doing is making a difference.

We are currently developing a Parenting Matters leaflet to tell parents:

- what the Parenting Matters priorities are
- what we are doing to make them happen
- what parents can do to get involved
- how getting involved can help parents and their children.



A Parenting Matters bookmark has also been produced with Devon Library Service and the Children's Service Directory, which contains useful and accessible information for parents and practitioners. The bookmark will be sent out to libraries and public

places during National Parents' Week 20-26 October 2008.

For more information about Parenting Matters contact Liz Rafferty on **07974 173 683** or email [liz.rafferty@devon.gov.uk](mailto:liz.rafferty@devon.gov.uk)

## GCSE results

pupils at St James, Exeter

**This year's provisional GCSE results show a big improvement on last year.**

Our initial figures show a 6.2 per cent increase for five or more A\*-C grades - up to 64.1%. That's around three times the national increase and the best ever improvement in Devon.

The figure for five A\*-C grades including English and Mathematics is 50.3%. That's up by 3.1%, which again is greater than the national increase and the best ever improvement in Devon.

31 of our 37 secondary schools improved on their 2007 results for five A\*-C passes with 23 improving on their 2007 results including English and maths.

All three of Devon's National Challenge Schools, St James, Isca and Dartmouth have all exceeded their 2011 threshold of 30 per cent including English and maths within two months of the register being published by the Government.

The five Exeter schools have all made significant improvements resulting in the city's best ever GCSE results. Results have



soared by nearly 30 per cent since education was reorganised in the city in 2005.

The marked improvement has come about following Devon County Council's multi-million pound investment in reorganising the city's education system into primary and secondary schools and the construction of 13 new schools - including all five secondaries.

# Let's Talk!



**We all know and research shows that having conversations with children is the best way to help them develop good language skills. A new campaign has been launched to raise parents' awareness of the importance of talking with their children.**

Princesshay shopping centre in Exeter is supporting the Action for Children Sure Start Children's Centres in Whipton



and Beacon Heath to launch the 'Let's Talk' campaign, designed by Speech and Language Therapists from Devon Primary Care Trust.

Evidence gathered nationally shows that standards for

children's language skills on entry to school are falling significantly and this picture is reflected locally. This is a vital and timely campaign, aiming to reach as many people as possible.

The key message of the campaign is simple - to let people know why having conversations with their children is so important, as well as giving tips for making conversations with babies and children more effective.

Christine Cottle, Action for Children

Sure Start Children's Centres Manager for Beacon Heath, Whipton and Heavitree and Polsloe said: "We're so excited about this new campaign and hope that it will inspire parents and children to get talking everywhere and anywhere!"



I am so delighted that everyone has been so enthusiastic in supporting us and in working together to develop this innovative campaign. It's such a simple idea - that talking and having conversations with children is the best way to help them get a head start in learning and in life!"

The 'Let's Talk' campaign was launched in Exeter on Monday 22 September and information will be distributed to families by a team of parental support professionals including midwives, health visitors, pre-school workers and Action for Children Sure Start Children's Centre staff. People can also access information from the website [www.letstalk.me.co.uk](http://www.letstalk.me.co.uk)

## Devon PCT moves to County Hall

**As part of the continuing integration towards Children's Trust joint working in Devon, Devon Primary Care Trust has moved its headquarters from Southernhay in Exeter, to work alongside Devon County Council at County Hall, Exeter.**

In recent years, the PCT and DCC have been integrating their services in line with the Children and Young People's Plan.



Now, the PCT has moved its commissioning team - which plans and pays for NHS health

services for the people of Devon - to work alongside CYPs colleagues.

For Devon families, integration means a single service able to meet all their care needs regardless of whether services are seen as NHS or County Council ones. For the two agencies, integration allows them to work more efficiently, sharing resources and information and avoiding duplication.

The Bulletin is published by Devon County Council; proud partner of the Devon Children's Trust. To contribute to The Bulletin contact Louise Raymond on: [louise.raymond@devon.gov.uk](mailto:louise.raymond@devon.gov.uk) or telephone **01392 383578**

