

Gateshead Change for Children

Edition 2 Summer 2006

'A change for children newsletter for all practitioners and managers working with children and young people'

'Initiative overload? Can't keep up to speed with change?'

Let us clear the fog - this newsletter is a one stop information resource about the change for children programme for all practitioners and managers working with children and young people.'

Introduction

Welcome to the latest edition of Gateshead Children and Young People's Partnership's news, and updates across many areas of our Change for Children programme.

Our Children's Trust Pathfinder came to an end in March this year. Many readers will have been part of successful work on finding joined up ways to serve children and young people, across partner organisations and agencies, but with a focus on only two of our many client groups: our disabled children and young people, their carers and families and also those with emotional and mental health issues. To make the Children Act 2004 and all the ambitions of Every Child Matters real in the lives of all our 45,600 nought-to-nineteen year olds, we now have to apply our learning from that work to a change for children programme in all children's services. This will help us rise to the next challenge for the second half of this decade: to bring every service to focus around the child or young person's needs, through a Gateshead-specific, whole system children's trust arrangement. This newsletter, published twice a year, is a vital part of sharing the message, views and news, and reminding ourselves that every child and young person – all 45,600 really must matter.

As ever the recent months have been busy, purposeful and productive. We would like to thank everybody working in Children and Young People's services across the whole borough, whichever organisation you work in for the continued drive, energy, determination and creativity shown by so many people.

And we'll leave this introduction with a quick Question and Answer session about our continued, shared purpose.

Q: Why are we all here?

A: To continue to improve the life chances of Gateshead's 45,600 Children and Young People aged 0-19.

Q: What key question needs to drive our work if that's why we're here?

A: How does what I do improve outcomes for those 45,600 people, however many or few of them I may meet in my work?

Q: Can I do that on my own, or even in the confines of my own work, team, setting or institution?

A: No – we can only do it if we work together, when it's easy and when it's hard with the child or young person at the centre of our efforts.

*Councillor Catherine Donovan
Maggie Atkinson*



*Maggie Atkinson,
Group Director
Learning & Children,
and Director of
Children Services*



*Councillor Donovan
Portfolio Holder for
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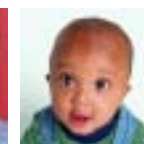
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Gateshead Children and Young People's Trust is a partnership between Gateshead Council, Gateshead PCT, Gateshead Health NHS Trust, South of Tyne and Wearside Mental Health Trust, Connexions Tyne & Wear and Barnardos.

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Inter-agency governance

Creating a robust partnership structure for people to jointly agree vision and priorities, and ensuring there is clear accountability for services.

Children and Young People's Partnership

With broad representation from children's services across all agencies working with children and young people including social care, Education, Health, Learning and Skills Council, Police, Probation, YOT and also Schools, college, voluntary and community sector, parents, carers and young people, the CYP Partnership meets bi-monthly to jointly plan services for children and young people. The Partnership provides the figure-head for the children's trust arrangements in Gateshead and makes us compliant with the Children Act 2004.

The Partnership is responsible for the preparation, monitoring and implementation of Gateshead's Children and Young People's Plan and is chaired by the Lead Member for Children and Young People, advised by the Director of Children's Services and co-vice-chaired by the Chief Executive of the PCT and a young person.

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Local Safeguarding Children Board

The role of the LSCB is to ensure that partner agencies within Gateshead meet their statutory obligations around safeguarding children and young people within the community. To do this the LSCB has agreed a business plan comprising key work priorities that are consistent with the Children and Young People's Plan principally around Staying Safe.

The LSCB reports to Gateshead's Children and Young People's Partnership through the Chair of the LSCB, the Director of Children and Young People. The LSCB comprises statutory member agencies including, Gateshead Council, Northumbria Police, Gateshead PCT, Gateshead NHS Trust, YOT, South of Tyne & Wearside Mental Health Trust, National Probation Service, Co. Durham and Tees Valley Strategic Health Authority, CAFCASS, Connexions and the Voluntary Sector.

Sub-group structure allows wider participation of other agencies, e.g. Tyne & Wear Fire Service, in the development and delivery of policy and practice development.

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And the rest...

The wider partnership structure

As you will probably know there are many more partnerships, subgroups, working groups etc working across agencies to improve services and outcomes for children and young people.

Work is underway to develop a coherent and fully inclusive partnership structure for all working groups to ensure work isn't duplicated and a robust reporting and information sharing structure is implemented.

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Integrated strategy

Agencies jointly analysing needs in the local area, and jointly commissioning services, through pooled resources where appropriate.

Gateshead Children and Young People's Plan

By now, most people should have seen or at least heard of the Children and Young People's Plan and the top ten priorities for the future.

If not, please visit www.gatesheadcyptrust.co.uk to download a copy of the plan or Executive Summary. The plan was put together through a robust analysis of needs involving the hard work and involvement of many.

Our challenge now is to put this nice glossy plan into practice and not allow it to sit on the

shelf until we come to write the next one! All of the top ten priorities require a partnership approach to tackle them. Through the Children and Young People's Partnership a delivery framework is now in place which identifies lead people to co-ordinate each priority and tasks them with making sure the right people are involved in its delivery.

A launch event for the plan is being planned for October at The Sage Gateshead to raise the profile of the plan further. We will begin to review the plan towards the end of 2006 to produce a revised version in April 2007.

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The Special Educational Needs Review

A wide-ranging SEN review is being carried out as a key part of implementing the Council's SEN inclusion strategy. Key outcomes for the review include:

- Increased inclusion
- A reduced need for statements of special educational needs
- Children with SEN having their needs met effectively
- Effective partnership with parents.
- More effective deployment of existing resources.

The SEN Review will involve 3 stages:

- The first stage, which was completed in February 2006 invited submissions from interested parties including parents, schools, and partner

agencies. A report on the consultation is currently being drafted.

- The second stage will involve consultation on an options paper. It is intended that this will include a wide range of options.
- The third stage will involve specific proposals which will again be consulted on before final plans are agreed.

The second stage of the review is being supported by a reference group which includes representatives from schools, health and the voluntary agencies as well as Council officers.

Implementation of the Review will take place over time with some changes beginning in 2007 but with the main changes

expected to take place from April or September 2008.

In the meantime there will be continuing work to reduce reliance on statements and support inclusion based on the effective deployment of resources as they are currently available.



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Young People's Engagement

The Council and partners Connexions and the Children's Fund have been awarded Beacon Status for positive youth engagement. What is it about how children and young people are involved which means we should be awarded Beacon status?

There are currently a number of structures that support young people's engagement in Gateshead.

These include:

- Gateshead Youth Assembly (elected structure)
- The BME Youth Forum
- One Voice Looked After Children Forum
- 5 Neighbourhood Youth Forums
- School Councils in Secondary and Primary Schools



Some young people sit on partnerships, forums and management committees. Examples include:

- Children and Young People's Partnership
- Connexions Local Management Committee
- Diversity Forum
- Community Centre Management Committees, eg Deckham

An engagement workers' forum has been established. Support workers come together to support each other, do joint work, training for co-ordination, responding to strategic requests and supporting those who need advice around engaging children and young people.

The Council uses the "Hear By Right" engagement standards developed by the NYA and LGA

to monitor its engagement process. The Council has achieved the Emerging, Established and three modules of the advanced level of the standards. A cross-council working group monitors progress.

Young people have recently been involved in setting the priorities for the Children and Young People's Plan, developing an engagement plan and an expenses policy for engagement work.

This is just a flavour of the work that goes on and shows that we are really progressing to become a partnership where the involvement of children and young people is not just valued but is essential.

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Children's Workforce Strategy

The Every Child Matters agenda introduces huge culture change and workforce planning challenges for all who work with children and young people.

The national workforce strategy identified 4 key challenges which have to be addressed at the national and local level over the coming months and years:

1. The need to recruit more people into the children's workforce
2. Developing and retaining more people within the children's workforce
3. The requirement to strengthen inter-agency working and the use of common processes
4. In the context of a changing environment, promoting stronger leadership, management and supervision

The Workforce Strategy Group has put together a local strategy to respond to these challenges.

The strategy (and further information) is available at www.gatesheadcytrust.co.uk and comments are more than welcome until the end of the consultation period – 31 July 2006.

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Gateshead Play Strategy

Play is an important part of all children's lives.

As part of 'Change for Children', play opportunities for all children have a central place in the Government's vision for children and young people. All Local Authorities are required to bring together a Partnership of services and organisations from the Private, Voluntary and Statutory Sectors to plan strategically to increase inclusive play opportunities for children.

Big Lottery Funding is available to the tune of £501,307 between statutory and voluntary agencies to kick start the expansion of Play in each Local Authority area.

Gateshead has already written a 'First Steps' Play Strategy with 20 play principles drawn up by an interagency group of staff

working in children's services. A Play Event was organised in March to invite comments on these principles from Children and Young People and their families in 3 venues in the borough. Children were encouraged to express their views on play by taking part in a variety of creative and physical activities.

The inaugural meeting of the Play Partnership took place in May. The Play Service in Gateshead with the Early Years and Childcare Service are supporting the Partnership to write a Strategy that will keep play at the top of the agenda for Service planners and involve children in the design of new play opportunities.

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Local Area Agreement and Joint Commissioning

The **Local Area Agreement** is a tool to help us move towards full joint commissioning.

It provides us with the opportunity to align resources across agencies to achieve common goals. We are looking at how to align grant funding at the moment. The challenge we need to address is how to align mainstream budgets to enable us to jointly commission.

The development of the children and young people plan has meant that there is now a strong needs analysis link between the Plan and the LAA.

Indeed, the four key children and young people LAA reward targets; parenting work, developing activity programmes, reducing the number of young people not in education, training or employment (NEET) and increasing the proportion of 5 A-C GCSE passes which include Maths and English are themes reflected within the CYP Plan.

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Integrated processes

Providing common language and tools for working with children and families.

Common assessment framework: key messages

CAF is a vital part of the change for children programme supporting earlier intervention, reduced duplication of assessment and better information sharing.

What is the common assessment framework?

It is a shared assessment tool to be used across agencies in England for early intervention. It is specifically designed to help practitioners assess needs at an earlier stage and work alongside other practitioners to meet them. It covers all needs, not just the needs that individual services are most interested in.

Do I need to be trained to use the common assessment?

All people working with children and young people will need at least basic awareness training about the common assessment framework. Due to the nature of CAF, those most likely to use it are those working in universal or preventative settings. Practitioners in specialist services are more likely to receive a CAF as part of a referral and use the information to work with the family. In settings such as schools, it is likely that a small number of staff would be trained to use the form and teaching staff would need to have basic awareness of what it is for.

What is the form like?

The form we will be using is a combination of the national CAF which is based on the National Assessment Framework domains and the Signs of Wellbeing form which is based on solution focussed practice.

When would I do a common assessment?

- When you are concerned about how well a child is progressing
- When their needs are unclear or broader than your service can address
- When a common assessment would help identify needs
- When you have agreed with the parents/carers/young person that this would be a helpful exercise. CAF is entirely voluntary and should be used as a tool to support engagement and not done without the involvement with the family.

When wouldn't I do a common assessment?

- There is no need to complete a CAF for every child you work with
- You don't need to complete a CAF where it is obvious what the needs are, or you have already assessed them using your own agency's assessment tool and your service can meet the full range of those needs
- If you are worried that a child has been harmed or is at risk of harm, you should follow LSCB procedures immediately.

What would I do with the form when it has been completed?

There could be a number of different outcomes from completing the CAF.

- You may have agreed with the family that needs are being met and there is no need to do anything further
- You may have developed an action plan for yourself and the parents/young person and agree to review progress.
- You may want to call a multi-agency meeting of all involved to develop a clearer multi-agency plan
- There may be a need for a lead professional to co-ordinate the work who would be nominated from amongst those working with the family
- It might be necessary to make a referral to request involvement from another agency. CAF would be used to provide information as part of the referral.

When will this be rolled out?

We are currently testing the form in children's centres, a school and with health visitors. Full training will begin in late summer initially with all children's centres and also practitioners working in the Birtley area to fit with the Targeted Youth Support Pathfinder (see below). Linda Kelly (newly appointed development officer) will be leading on this with the support of a number of people from across agencies who have been trained as trainers in CAF.

The training and guidance tools are available on www.everychildmatters.gov.uk.

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Local Child Index Update

Our local child index provides basic contact information about the majority of children and young people in Gateshead and Newcastle. Details of agency involvements, GP and school attended are included in records where known. The local index has been operational for over a year and already many users are identifying benefits.

The index will continue to operate until end March 2007 and hopefully it may be possible to keep the index running until the introduction of the national index which will take over all of the functions of the local index and offer access to records nationally.

The training of a wider group of practitioners is now underway. 10 Children's Centres are open in Gateshead and there are now trained index users in each one. The Education Welfare Service is also to get involved. Training for a small number of their staff will give this vital group of practitioners access to the Child Index for the first time.

There has been no shortage of willingness to use the index, however one thorny issue, CRB checks, has been a bit of a stumbling block in

getting users onto the system. While Government has insisted each and every user, regardless of their job, be checked, the Criminal Records Bureau itself has been operating under a very different set of instructions. CRB won't run enhanced checks on administrators or IT staff! Add this to the cost and resources needed to check a workforce of 10,000 practitioners and you can see the scale of the problem.

We now seem to be getting through to those that need to know, so the new Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Bill which is due to be in force in 2007-8 will allow CRB checks for index users of all types. Plus, more and more practitioners are being CRB checked by their employers. Top marks go to Barnardo's and Connexions for ensuring every eligible member of their staff has a CRB check.

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National Index Announcement

In response to the Laming Report recommendations into the death of Victoria Climbié, Beverley Hughes MP announced in December 2005 the Government's intention to develop the National Child Index. This development, across all 150 English Local Authority areas, is due to be operational nationwide by end of 2008.

The National Index will be a central system that is "sliced" up into 150 layers, one for each Local Authority to use. Information going into and coming out of the national system will be connected with information systems already in children's services agencies and organisations across the whole of England.

There will also be regular information updates from Child Benefit systems, National Health Service Systems and very importantly, good ol' Somerset House (now known by the rather mundane title of the Office for National Statistics) will supply births registrations and deaths data.

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Solution finder. What's going on?

www.solutionfinder.org.uk

Solution finder is the Gateshead and Sunderland on-line directory of services for Children, Young people and Families.

New, exciting photography has been used to increase the site's visual appeal and the number of services is increasing all the time. **solution finder** now has over 900 services available to view. Each service description gives a brief summary about what to expect from the service, contact details, costs and eligibility criteria. A new development now means that any email addresses and web site addresses of every service, where they are displayed, have been turned into active hyperlinks, allowing users to jump straight from the directory to any service with one click of their mouse.

A new project in Gateshead for those aged 50 years and over is also linking with **solution finder** to help deliver information about services for this group of borough residents. This makes **solution finder** a genuine one-stop-shop of services for all the family, whatever their age and need.

Not only have these improvements made **solution finder** a superb resource for the public, we continue to work hard to ensure that it is practical, helpful and informative for the army of overworked practitioners supporting the Borough's children, young people and families.



Since 1 June 2006 Gateshead Early Years and Childcare Service have been running solution finder.

It is easier than ever to add your service to the directory and even if you don't have a web site of your own, **solution finder** gives your organisation, service, team or group an advertising space that is accessed by thousands of people. Each week **solution finder** received an average 3,340 visits! If you have a service that you would like to add to **solution finder** and would like to find how go to <http://www.solutionfinder.org.uk/addyourservicev2.html>

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Preventative models of working

In Gateshead we now have a range of preventative/early intervention services which can demonstrate positive outcomes for young people. We believe that over time this will lead to less referrals to higher tier services such as Child Protection and Child and Family unit. The Children and Young People's Trust Senior Officer Group has set up a Multi Agency Preventative Work Group to take forward this work and work out the details. Much of the discussion at the preventative work group has been about trying to work out how to link everything together.

The Preventative work group has submitted a number of proposals that have been agreed as the basis for taking the work forward in Gateshead. These have included:

- A commitment for the preventative elements of the National Service Framework to be taken forward as part of the Preventative Strategy

- Support for the principle of Neighbourhood based planning
- A model for joint planning and commissioning
- Definitions of preventative and early intervention work
- A service user centred route map
- Principles of a preventative/early intervention model
- Agreement for next steps in co ordination of parenting work in Gateshead
- Agreement that the development of preventative work is a key cross cutting issue for the Children and Young Peoples Plan and to begin a process of identifying budgets across a range of partners
- With so many initiatives operating with different terms of reference we will need some kind of structure that will ensure that young people's needs can be met.

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Cross-Government Information-sharing Guidance

Department for Education and Skills have struck gold again. This time they have produced the very long awaited and very welcome guidance on multi-agency information sharing. The Department has secured endorsement for the guidance from a range of other Government Departments.

This Cross-Government guidance, the first of its kind as far as we can tell, has been given the blessing of Department of Health, Home Office, Immigration Service, Department for Work and Pensions, DfES (of course), Office of National Statistics and the Department for Constitutional Affairs (Justice system) who have agreed that this guidance should be **the** guidance for all their practitioners. Excellent progress!

Not only that, in another scoop, more common amongst top journalists, DfES authors have secured the approval of the one and only Mr.

Richard Thomas. Better known as ...John Boy Walton? No really... Mr. Thomas is the Information Commissioner and the regulator of the Data Protection Act and Human Rights Act among others. Not only does he think that the guidance is good, he has written a forward to the documents saying so.

Copies of the guidance are available on the Every Child Matters website at www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/informationsharing

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Integrated Services for Children with Disabilities

The new system for working with children with disabilities, developed as part of the Children's Trust Pathfinder, has been in operation since March 2005.

The system developed involves a single point of access for advice, information and referrals for all services working with disabled children, a multi-agency panel for the allocation of resources and the appointment of a main contact to support the family to co-ordinate their package of care.

One year on, following implementation in March 2005, an evaluation was undertaken of the systems with staff and parents and carers. The evaluation showed that although there are a number of challenges with the system, the most important and helpful element for families was having a main contact to support them.

Around 60 families currently have a main contact. As a result of the evaluation the group which has led on this work since 2004 (the Children with Disabilities Managers Group) has agreed to:

- Adapt the system to ensure all families requiring multi-agency support have a comprehensive family plan, a main contact and know what to expect from services.

- Streamline reviews of provision to ensure families have one holistic review which is person centred and outcome focused.

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Integrated front line delivery

Bringing practitioners from different services and agencies together to deliver services 'at the front line'

Integrating practitioners at the locality level to focus on prevention

Exploring the potential of the Targeted Youth Support Pathfinder and Budget Holding Lead Professional Pilot

The Targeted Youth Support Pathfinder has been working in the Birtley area to understand the barriers to accessing services and analyzing the needs of the local population. In our own CYP plan we set as one of the big picture challenges to "Develop locality based multi-agency teams which will lead to more specialist and targeted services being delivered locally". This is mirrored by the DfES goals in the Youth Matters Green Paper to develop locality teams which are one stop shops providing "wrap around support" via a lead professional for young people with multiple needs. Key elements of this role (as identified by DfES) are:

- Act as single point of contact that children, young people and families can trust and who is able to support them in making choices and in navigating their way through the system.
- Ensure that children and young people get appropriate interventions when needed which are well planned, regularly reviewed and effectively delivered.
- Reduce overlap and inconsistency with other practitioners

DfES are keen to build on the idea of this role to see if budgets can be devolved to this level to enable lead professionals to procure more innovative services, more quickly, to meet needs. We have been successful in receiving £475,000 over 2 years to work on this.

The research phase of the TYS Pathfinder has yielded findings which show that in the Birtley area, there is a mismatch between service provision and the needs of children and young people and services are not well integrated and less able to provide co-ordinated support.

We will be drawing together the two projects into one whole scale change for children programme to develop (initially in Birtley) an integrated, preventative team of practitioners who will co-ordinate support for children and young people with additional needs. The common assessment framework will play a key part in the operation of the team and resources will be identified to support the development of more preventative family support services alongside the procurement budget for individual lead professionals. Once tried and tested, the model will be developed in the rest of the borough.

A key challenge is to re-focus budgets currently used for expensive specialist services towards the delivery of more preventative services.

We are excited about the potential of this project which enables us to work in a planned and proactive way to integrate services at the front line to improve the way our services work with children, young people and families.

Extended Schools

By 2010 all schools are to provide access to a core offer of extended services with half of all primary schools and a third of all secondary schools doing so by 2008.

According to guidance, each school must offer access to high quality childcare provided on the school site or through other providers, a varied menu of activities/study support, parenting support, swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialist support services such as speech therapy, child and adolescent mental health services, and community access to ICT, sports and arts facilities including adult learning.

Gateshead Schools have been clustered around the comprehensive schools and their traditional feeder primaries. As a cluster they are working towards providing access to the core offer of activities, not on each school site.

Each cluster of schools and partners from their communities are being offered a national training programme to support them in the development of extended schools

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Behaviour Improvement Programme

Through the work of the Behaviour Improvement Programme we are seeing improvements in attendance and a reduction in exclusions in BIP cluster schools.

Behaviour and Education Support Teams (BEST) are multi-agency teams working across 4 secondary schools (Hookergate, Kingsmeadow, St Edmund Campion and Thomas Hepburn) and their linked primary schools.

The Behaviour Improvement Programme is also focussing on a number of other pieces of work:

- Restorative justice pilot in partnership with the YOT in Hookergate, Kingsmeadow, Lord Lawson and Joseph Swan schools
- Pilot project of placing student social workers in their final year practice into primary and secondary schools
- Social emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) materials available to all primary schools

to support the development of social skills

- Education is provided for excluded pupils for the first fifteen days of an exclusion (fixed or permanent) within each of the four clusters

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Children's Centres

10 Children's Centres are now open in Gateshead, with a further 6 to follow by 2008.

Centres have opened in Bede, Bensham/St Chads, Blaydon Winlaton, Chopwell, Deckham, Felling, High Fell, Highfield, Leam Lane, Matov (Jewish Children's Centre) building on Sure Start, Early Excellence and Neighbourhood Nursery provision

The new centres will be based in:

- Barley Mow school
- Harlow Green infants
- Wardley School
- Kingsmeadow School Site
- Teams

Children's Centres deliver the core offer of education and childcare, child and family health, family support, parental outreach and adult and community learning and are located within the 20% most disadvantaged areas.

The centres each have a parental outreach worker to ensure they can reach the most vulnerable children and families.

Every centre will have an information hub providing a one stop shop of advice and information

The 10 children's centres must reach a total of 4780 children aged 0 - 4 years and 11 months between them. By 2010 all children 0-5 will receive services in children's centres.

Every centre has a steering and reference group which report to the Gateshead Early Years and Childcare Partnership and from there to the Children and Young People's Partnership.

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In brief...

"Working together to safeguard children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children" has been published and is available at <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00060/>

Gateshead Council and partners, Connexions and the Children's Fund, were chosen as one of eight councils to achieve **Beacon status for Positive Youth Engagement.**

The process involved a group of officers and young people coming together to submit a written bid in September 2005.

The Beacon period runs for 15 months. We are expected to participate in a series of national learning events, we will hold a Gateshead open day in October, and will deliver a range of local learning events, some delivered directly by groups of young people.

Our key driver for applying for Beacon Status was to accelerate our work on engagement in Gateshead so we will be agreeing our priorities with young people soon.

Gateshead Children and Young People's Trust is a partnership between Gateshead Council, Gateshead PCT, Gateshead Health NHS Trust, South of Tyne and Wearside Mental Health Trust, Connexions Tyne & Wear and Barnardos.

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