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Welcome to contact

Welcome to CONTACT – a newsletter published by the Children, Schools and Families service of Hertfordshire County Council for voluntary and community organisations working with children and families.

Children, Schools and Families has now been up and running for 18 months. The service places the needs of Hertfordshire's children at the centre of its work. It brings together professionals from a range of disciplines, working together to provide the support needed to enable

children, schools and families to reach their full potential.

We provide an extensive range of services to support every stage of development – from the birth of a child to lifelong learning for adults. The service aims to help children and their families to attain the best possible levels of education, health and development and to build their achievement, confidence, self-esteem and resilience.

This newsletter will be one of the key ways that we will let you know of

developments and initiatives that we are working on. It will be published twice a year.

As a voluntary organisation working with young people, your views and thoughts are very important to us and we want to make sure that you have your say in how our services are developed. Please complete Part A of the enclosed questionnaire to let us know if you find this newsletter interesting, or have suggestions for future topics.

Preventative Strategy

A key aim of Children, Schools and Families (CSF) is to develop local preventative strategies to stop children failing in school or living in an unsupportive family environment.

The Preventative Strategy has been developed following wide consultation, which included a series of workshops attended by people drawn from CSF, schools, health, police, the voluntary sector and other public agencies. Colleagues and partners have emphasised that, to succeed, the preventative strategy has to be developed and implemented at a local level.

We would like to build on the good work that is already being done by a range of agencies, to develop with local communities realistic action which will counteract/stop, at the earliest stage

in a child's life, those factors which may cause children to:

- live in an unsafe/chaotic environment/family
- suffer poor health
- underachieve at school
- turn to crime or drug/alcohol abuse
- suffer as a result of poverty

This is about changing the way we work together, joining up what we do and being quick to respond to local problems. The strategy is being rolled out across 27 localities to cover the whole county. The localities are based on secondary schools and their feeder primary schools.

The Children, Schools and Families Development Division is assisting with co-ordination of the strategy, mapping information about

needs and services, identifying gaps and sharing good practice.

Preventative strategy groups have been set up in all 27 localities.

These groups will:

- identify the main priorities to be tackled and draft a locality action plan which sets out a range of activities to tackle them – July to September 2002
- consult on the draft locality action plan with children, young people, families and key stakeholders – October 2002
- agree locality action plans – November 2002

If you would like to know more about the Preventative Strategy in your locality, contact: Dorothy Blatcher, Strategic Partnerships Manager, CSF, Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DE
dorothy.blatcher@hertscc.gov.uk

The Children's Fund in Hertfordshire

The Children's Fund was launched in November 2000 and is being rolled out nationally in three waves. Hertfordshire is participating in the third wave of funding, which starts in April 2003.

The overall objective of the Fund is to help children overcome poverty and to ensure that vulnerable children get the best start in life. The aim is to create a web of services and support by providing additional resources over and above those already provided.

Scope and objectives

The Children's Fund is available to develop preventative services for children aged 5-13, although there is some flexibility within this to address key transition points in children's development. This bridges the gap between Sure Start for pre-school children and Connexions for the over 13s.

The key objectives are to ensure:

- that there is an agreed programme of effective interventions that pick up on early signs of difficulty and
- that children and young people who have experienced early difficulties receive appropriate services in order to obtain maximum life chance benefits

The sub objectives are to:

- promote attendance in schools
- improve educational performance
- ensure that fewer young people commit crime or are victims of crime
- reduce child health inequalities
- ensure preventative services are accessible

Effective identification, referral and tracking will be developed.

The aim is to identify the gaps in support, particularly in neighbourhoods where there is a high proportion of children at risk of social exclusion, and where the partnership may want to target Children's Fund activity.

The Hertfordshire Children and Young People's Partnership

The Hertfordshire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (HCYPSP) is a new county wide group involving voluntary organisations, community and faith groups working in partnership with local statutory agencies and with children, young people and their families. Their remit is to bring together strategic planning for children and young people across the county.

HCYPSP is developing and managing the Children's Fund in Hertfordshire. They will consider the priorities for different age ranges. Children and young people will be consulted through Viewpoint (a computer based consultation) and the Children and Young People Reference Group.

The HCYPSP has set up a Children's Fund Sub Group to advise on the detailed work needed to develop the Children's Fund proposals by 31 December 2002. The Sub Group is recruiting a Children's Fund Programme Manager.

Funding

Hertfordshire has been invited to develop proposals to access the grant from April 2003. Up to £2m will be available for Hertfordshire in 2003/4. There will be funding until April 2006 and partnerships are developing proposals for preventative services for a 4 to 5 year period, to allow real progress

to be made. Hertfordshire's Children's Fund Plan will be assessed in January and February 2003 by the Children and Young People's Unit. When the plan has been agreed, the project proposals can be implemented.

Input from you!

The voluntary and community sector and faith organisations provide many preventative services. This is your opportunity to build on or create new services to respond to needs of children and young people. We would like to know what you think should be the priorities in your area. Please complete part B of the attached questionnaire and return it by 15th September. Your proposals will be presented to the Children's Fund Sub Group (and CSF Locality Preventative Strategy Groups) for consideration.

How to get further information

Contact: Dorothy Blatcher, Strategic Partnerships Manager, Children Schools and Families, Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Pegs Lane, Hertford SG13 8DE
dorothy.blatcher@hertscc.gov.uk
or jane.morton@hertscc.gov.uk

Information about the Children's Fund is available on the websites:

www.cypu.gov.uk and
www.go-east.gov.uk and from:
**Children and Young People's Unit, Caxton House,
6 -12 Tothill Street,
London SW1H 9NA**

Diversity Pathfinder

Hertfordshire is one of six local authorities which has been asked by the DfES to develop the Specialist Schools initiative. The Hertfordshire Diversity Pathfinder Strategy, through schools working collaboratively in geographical groups, seeks to develop a wide range of specialisms across the county which will be of benefit to all schools – primary, secondary and special – through sharing good practice, expertise and resources. This will also provide a range of learning opportunities for both adults and children to be involved with the school.

Schools can develop specialisms in the areas of Technology, Languages, Sports, the Arts, Science, Business, Engineering and Maths and Computing. The government is

committed to increasing the present number of specialist schools to at least 1500 by September 2005. In September 2001 there were eleven specialist schools in Hertfordshire – all of them either in Technology or Languages. In September 2002 that number is set to grow by up to a further six, which will include Sports, the Arts, and Business.

In order to gain specialist school status, schools have to draw up plans demonstrating how they will raise standards of achievement and develop their community plans. These could include activities such as promoting e-learning and computer skills, promoting health awareness through drama groups, partnerships with primary schools or community

groups, or schemes to promote the inclusion of traditionally isolated groups in activities e.g. arts or sports.

If you are interested in finding out how your organisation may be able to contribute to or benefit from the community plans for local schools please contact the Community Education Development Officer for your area:

North:

Leroy Williamson .. 01462 7004246
(from 2 September)

South:

Sandra Wood..... 01923 2774169

East:

Eve Galloway 01992 555892

West:

Carole Connelly 01727 8499287

Hertfordshire County Council Funding Applications 2003-04

CSF's short term budget for funding voluntary and community organisations in 2003/04 will be targeted at supporting the preventative strategy as outlined on the front page.

We will be publishing our 2003-04 funding prospectus and application form on the 27 September 2002. This will give eligibility criteria for applications and details of the decision making process. The deadline for returning application forms will be 20 December 2002. We will notify applicants of decisions by the 21 February.

Following the principles agreed in the Hertfordshire Compact we aim to improve the process introduced last year, to be clear about our priorities and to reach new groups who may be able to help us achieve our goals. Keep an eye on the HCC website for information, including details of all the funding awards made this year, at: www.hertsdirect.org/funding

Introducing HERN

The Hertfordshire External Resources Network (HERN) brings together partner organisations across the county with the aim of sharing information, reducing duplication and unnecessary competition and maximising external funding.

We hope that the information they provide will help you to find additional sources of funding and support for your project or organisation.

The next annual funding fair will be held at the Fielder Centre, Hatfield on Wednesday 4 December 2002. This is an all day event giving members of voluntary and community groups the opportunity to meet representatives of various funding agencies.

Information about funding programmes will be on offer from stalls and more detailed information will be given via presentations in workshops.

Details will be posted on the web pages:

www.hertsdirect.org/hern

These HERN web pages are updated regularly and more services are being developed following feedback from users.

If you would like to be put on the HERN e-mailing list for future training, information and news on funding please email Tricia Pope with your name and organisation details and the email address you would like to use:

tricia.pope@hertscc.gov.uk

Date for your diary: 4 December 2002

Children, Schools and Families Plan 2003/04

In April 2002 Children, Schools and Families (CSF) launched a strategic plan, bringing together all of the major service plans for children. This plan covers the period April 2002 to March 2007. The Plan will be updated annually and a new draft has been prepared for 2003/04, the second year of the Plan.

The Plan sets out the priorities for the work of CSF and the actions which need to be taken to deliver on these further. It is vital for the success of our work that this draft document continues to benefit from input from a wide range of stakeholders, including young people, parents/carers and all those

in communities with an interest in the issues affecting children.

Throughout October, there will be a series of stakeholder conferences, plus a number of strategic area based workshops focusing on specific issues within the Plan. The conference for voluntary and community sector groups will take place on Tuesday October 15th from 7pm to 8.30pm at Wheathampstead Development Centre. Further details will be sent out to you nearer the time. We would welcome your views on the proposed plan. All comments will be considered when producing the final Plan.

The final Plan will be improved by

the outcome of the consultation. It will be considered for approval at the meeting of the County Council on February 13th 2003 and will then be published.

Contact: Julian Edwards,
Service Planning Manager,
CSF, County Hall, Pegs Lane,
Hertford SG13 8DF
julian.edwards@hertsc.gov.uk
Telephone 01992 555941

Please let us know your views on having further workshops of this kind, and other ways of developing partnership working by completing Part A of the questionnaire in this newsletter.

LET US HAVE YOUR VIEWS

Children, Schools and Families is looking at ways to improve our communication and joint work with voluntary and community sector groups in Hertfordshire.

We would also like to hear your views about which of the Children's Fund priorities for 5-13 year olds you think we should be spending this new funding on.

Please would you take a few minutes to complete the enclosed questionnaire to give us your views on the proposals we are considering.