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early help

in County Durham

Summer 2023

Welcome

...to our Summer 2023 'Early Help
in County Durham - Newsletter for
Education.'

This newsletter has helpful
information and useful contacts, a
what's going on and know your
teams section, as well as
important dates to remember.

If you would like to contribute or
comment on the content of this
newsletter, please see our 'Have
Your Say' section below.

What is 'Early Help'?

- Early Help is not a service but a way of working.
- Early Help is early in the life of a child or early in the life of an emerging problem.
- Early Help is about getting the right support for a child, young person and their family at the earliest opportunity.



Think Dad! - A father inclusive toolkit for professionals—see page 3 for more details



Do you have any questions or comments about
this newsletter? What can we do better?

What are your suggestions?

Email: StrongerFamilies@durham.gov.uk

One Point and Think Family Termly Newsletter for Education
Services for Children, Young People and Families

Durham
County Council



Family Hubs Launch

Families in County Durham will be able to access additional support services with the launch of new Family Hubs across the county.

Our official launch of our 15 Family Hubs was undertaken on 11th May 2023 by the Government's Early Years Health Adviser, Dame Andrea Leadsom, in Bishop Auckland. Two year old Vinnie, who attends Bishop Auckland's family hub kindly cut our opening ribbon.



The programme will see 75 areas benefiting from the £300 million investment up to 2025, with the new Hubs offering support from conception through to age 19, or up to 25 for children with special educational needs and disabilities.

One Point Family Centres are transforming into Family Hubs, providing additional services to families in one place from pregnancy through a child's early years until they reach adulthood.

This includes seeing midwives and health visitors, help with breastfeeding, support for dads, mental health support, parenting support, and help with budgeting, relationships and children's learning and development.

During the visit, Dame Leadsom met staff who will be working at the Hub as well as families and organisations who will utilise the services provided. Among these were Anne-Marie Marshall and her son Isaac who is eight months old.

Anne-Marie said:

"There is something there for everyone and, as Isaac grows-up, I am confident we will get the support we need through all the different services on offer."

Dame Leadsom said:

"It was a huge honour to be invited to attend the launch of the County Durham Family Hubs programme in Bishop Auckland. Meeting the gorgeous babies and their parents was a highlight of the visit. So too was seeing the excellent work that was already underway at the hub."

Cllr Ted Henderson, our Cabinet member for children and young people's services, said:

"Over coming months, we will be transforming the help we offer through our network of Family Hubs across the county. This is really helping us to transform our former family centres and being selected as a trailblazer authority has allowed us to quickly get more services and support for parents, carers and children across the county."

As part of the Family Hubs development we have established a Parent Carer Panel who are working with us to design services within the Family Hubs. The Parent Carer Panel is a group of parents and carers who want to be involved in designing services. Its a approach called Co-Production which recognises that if organisation want to deliver successful services, they must understand the needs of those using the service and work with them in the design and delivery.

With support from The Charlie Waller Trust, we worked with a group of parents and carer to develop the remit for the group, role descriptors and shared the opportunity to get involved in the work.

Over 60 parents expressed an interest in being part of the Parent Carer Panel and we now have a group of 20 parents and carer from across the County and from a range of backgrounds on our panel.

The Parent Carer Panel have been involved in working with managers from Health on how they design their new health drops ins, they have input into the new Family Hub registration form, and been part of the work around the Early Help Strategy in County Durham.



Dads, Dads, Dads!

As a partnership we are making such exciting progress in relation to better engaging with Dads/Male Carers, so much so, Durham are being asked to speak at regional and national events about our shared journey!



Supported by County Durham's Family Hub and Start for Life programme, we are delighted to roll out the Durham Young Dads Project. This will provide a variety of direct support to young dads and dads-to-be in County Durham. Support is offered by experienced Young Fathers Support Workers and Peer Enablers with lived experience of being a young dad. For more information see attached flier - please promote within your setting.



'We are not the problem. We are 50% of the solution.'

'Being older, you get less judgement. People seem to expect you to know what you are doing. But hopefully, the dad of the future would be seen more as equal a partner as the mums.'

The North East Young Lads and Dads (NEYLD) Annual Report now available, download here.

How Father Friendly Is Your School?

There are some lovely resources available to you currently to wet your appetite which can be found at the [fathers network website](#).

However Durham's very own Nicola James, Headteacher at St. Andrew's Primary School is currently working with fellow education colleagues to develop something for Durham which we will share with you and promote in future newsletters.

If you are keen to find out more now and want to get involved please contact Nicola at n.james201@staprimary.co.uk

For now however here are some **top tips!**

We recognise some of the challenges/pressures professionals face in their day to day lives. This 'Think Dad' toolkit offers some tools for thinking with.

Becoming and being father-inclusive in practice doesn't require a huge amount of time and resource but will make an incredible difference to dads. The toolkit provides some tips and guidance about how you can put father-inclusive thinking and practice into action.





Free Working with Dads and Male Carers Training

A Dad/Male Carers Project Group with trained 'Dads Champions' have been working hard to develop some Dad's Training aimed at all practitioners and managers working with children, young people and families. This is on-line and FREE!

The aim of the course is to provide front line staff and managers with the confidence, knowledge and skills to engage with and work effectively with Dads and male Carers.

By the end of the session attendees will:

- Understand what is meant by 'dads' or 'males carers' and why it is important that we engage with them
- Understand the experience of many dads and male carers in working with services
- Have considered the barriers to working with dads and male carers and the role of culture and attitudes in creating barriers
- Have an awareness of the benefits of engaging dads and male carers on children, dads and male carers and services
- Have knowledge of strategies and techniques which have been shown to be effective in recruitment and sustained engagement of dads and male carers
- Have considered how they can apply their learning.



Working with Dads and Male Carers

20 June 2023
8 Sept 2023
14 Nov 2023
(via Microsoft Teams)

Working with Dads and Male Carers Training (via Microsoft Teams)

Date	Time
Tuesday 20/06/2023	1.30pm - 4.30pm
Friday 08/09/2023	9.30am - 12.30pm
Tuesday 14/11/2023	1.30pm - 4.30pm

Book your place now by emailing strongerfamilies@durham.gov.uk

Open full poster



Help with your money

A dedicated web page [Help with your money](#) has been developed for County Durham residents and contains specific help for families. The page has information on a range of support available including applying for Healthy Start Vouchers, applying for Free School Meals (FSM), debt advice/financial help and help with heating and fuel bills.



The cost of school uniforms can be a struggle for families. Many schools now allow families to buy cheaper, unbranded uniform items, or offer uniform swaps. There is a range of recycled uniform schemes being delivered through schools and voluntary and community sector partners.

A dedicated web page has been developed for families to find out about this support [Help with buying items for school - Durham County Council](#)

Families who are in receipt of child benefit and require help with buying items for school can also apply for a NE First Credit Union Family Loan. This can provide a parent with a loan of up to £500 without having a credit check. A Family Loan allows families to access a cash loan up front to purchase the required items as well as giving the option to save each month for the future.

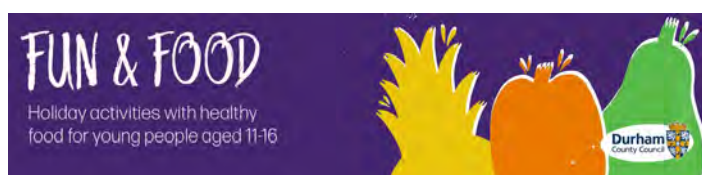
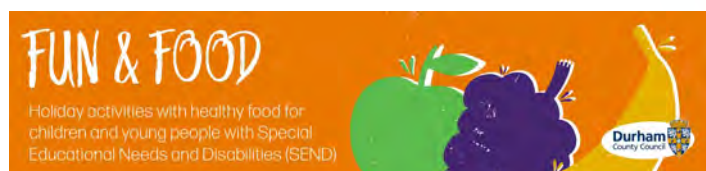
FUN & FOOD

Holiday activities with healthy food

Coming soon

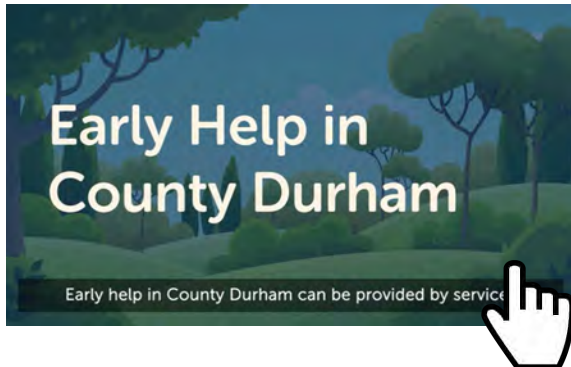
The Fun and Food Programme saw another brilliant May half term school holiday packed with free fun activities for families in County Durham.

Watch out this coming summer on our main [landing/listings page](#) for the logos below. These new categories will list Specialist SEND and 11—16 year old activities only. There will also be the general Fun and Food activities (listed in blue).





Review of County Durham's Partnership Approach to Early Help



County Durham's Partnership Review to Early Help (2019-2022) is currently being reviewed. A number of stakeholders including Durham's children, young people, parents and carers as well as partners from across the early help system are supporting with the co-design of Durham's reviewed 'approach'.

This will bring together our guiding principles of 'how' we can all, consistently deliver support to families regardless of our service or organisation.

There will be one streamlined version, accessible for all, housed digitally on the Durham Safeguarding Partnership Partnership (DSCP) website. If you would like to know more or get involved, please contact fiona.smith@durham.gov.uk

Due to this review, it is quite timely that we remind us all of the [co-produced animation](#) that was produced by Durham's children, young people and parent/carers. This goes some way in trying to explain what we mean by 'early help', what it might look like, what types of support is available to families and how families can get this.

Please share this on your websites, in your newsletters, electronic boards and assemblies where you can.

April 2024: National Supporting Families Programme (Stronger Families) to be governed by DfE

On 24 May 2023, it was announced that the government has agreed to transfer responsibility for the national Supporting Families Programme (known in Durham as Stronger Families) from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) to the Department for Education (DfE) from April 2024. This was confirmed by the Prime Minister in a

Written Ministerial Statement

This move forms part of the government's ambitious set of reforms to drive improvement in the way we support families and protect children, as set out in the Implementation Strategy for children's social care reform, Stable Homes, Built on Love. The transfer of Supporting Families to DfE will enable the Education Secretary to deliver a coordinated, whole system of support for children and families, as well as ensuring services are sustainable for local government. The programme's model of stepping beyond single policy agendas to drive local integration and whole family support will be key for the reforms around Family Help.

Through services joining up and working better together, the programme has directly helped over 650,000 families with complex and multiple needs. Hundreds of thousands more have benefited from improved access to timely, coordinated support for the whole family. Importantly, the programme has shown what is possible when we step in early to help families and prevent problems from escalating.

DfE is committed to the full integration and successful delivery of the programme, one of the strengths of the programme is the relationships that have been established with areas and the joint development of the programme since 2012. Building a future system of effective, sustainable Family Help, with support and protection for children at its heart, will continue to require a committed, strategic and collaborative approach.

Parenting Programme Roadshows

Come and see what we have on offer

Following the success and positive feedback on the Parenting Programme Roadshows last year we are pleased to let you know that the County Durham Parenting Network are hosting not 1 but 2 parenting roadshows in September 2023.

Parenting Programme Roadshow

**Monday 25th September 2023,
1- 4pm**

Spennymoor Education Centre

You will be able to book on later this term - details to follow via the school's Extranet and the Durham Learning Portal).

You can also come along during the afternoon session and speak directly to the programme experts and network amongst colleagues.



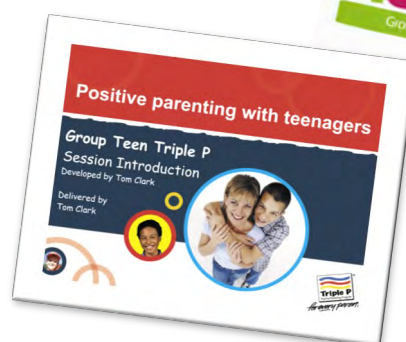
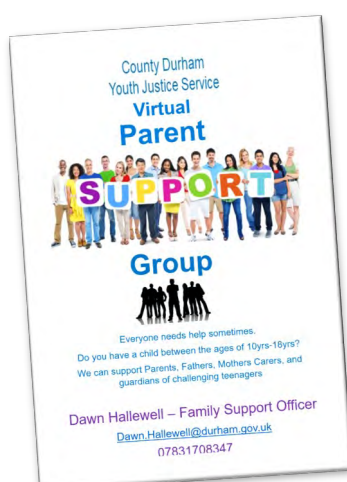
Parenting Programme Virtual Roadshow

**Thursday 29th September
9:30 - 12:30pm**

Staff will talk you through what each programme is, who it is aimed at and how to support families to access the programmes.

Watch out for more information about these events coming up over this term.

Details to follow via the school's Extranet and the Durham Learning Portal.



**EMPOWERING
PARENTS
EMPOWERING
COMMUNITIES**



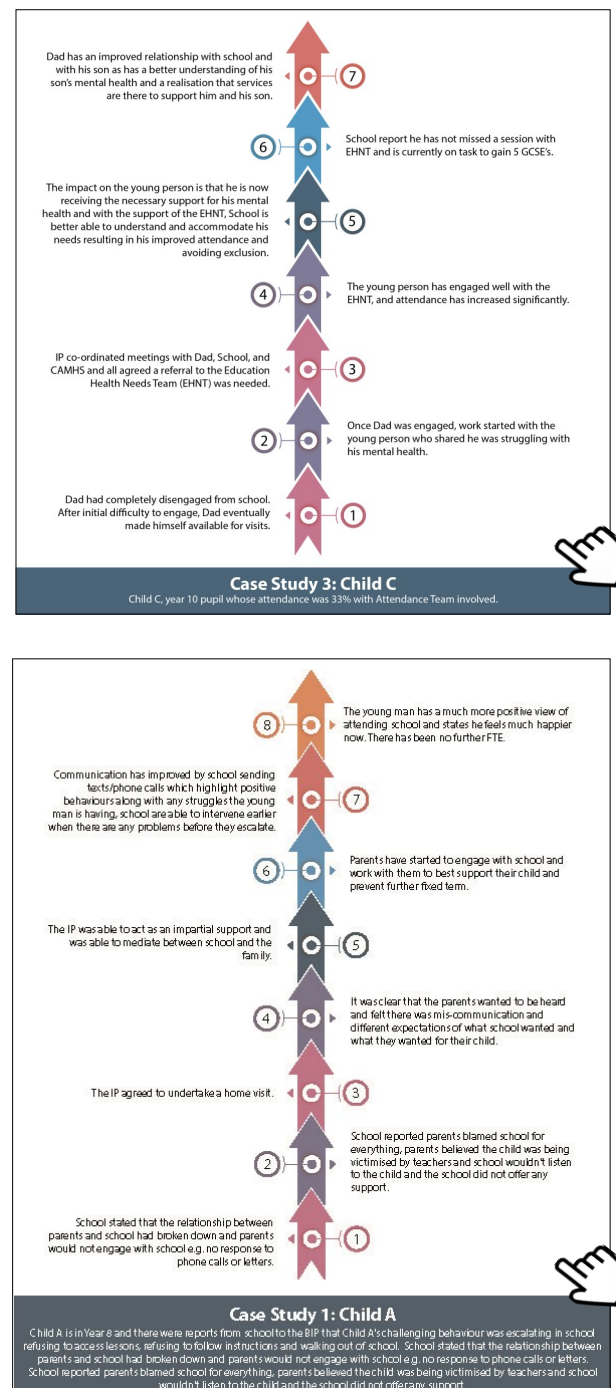
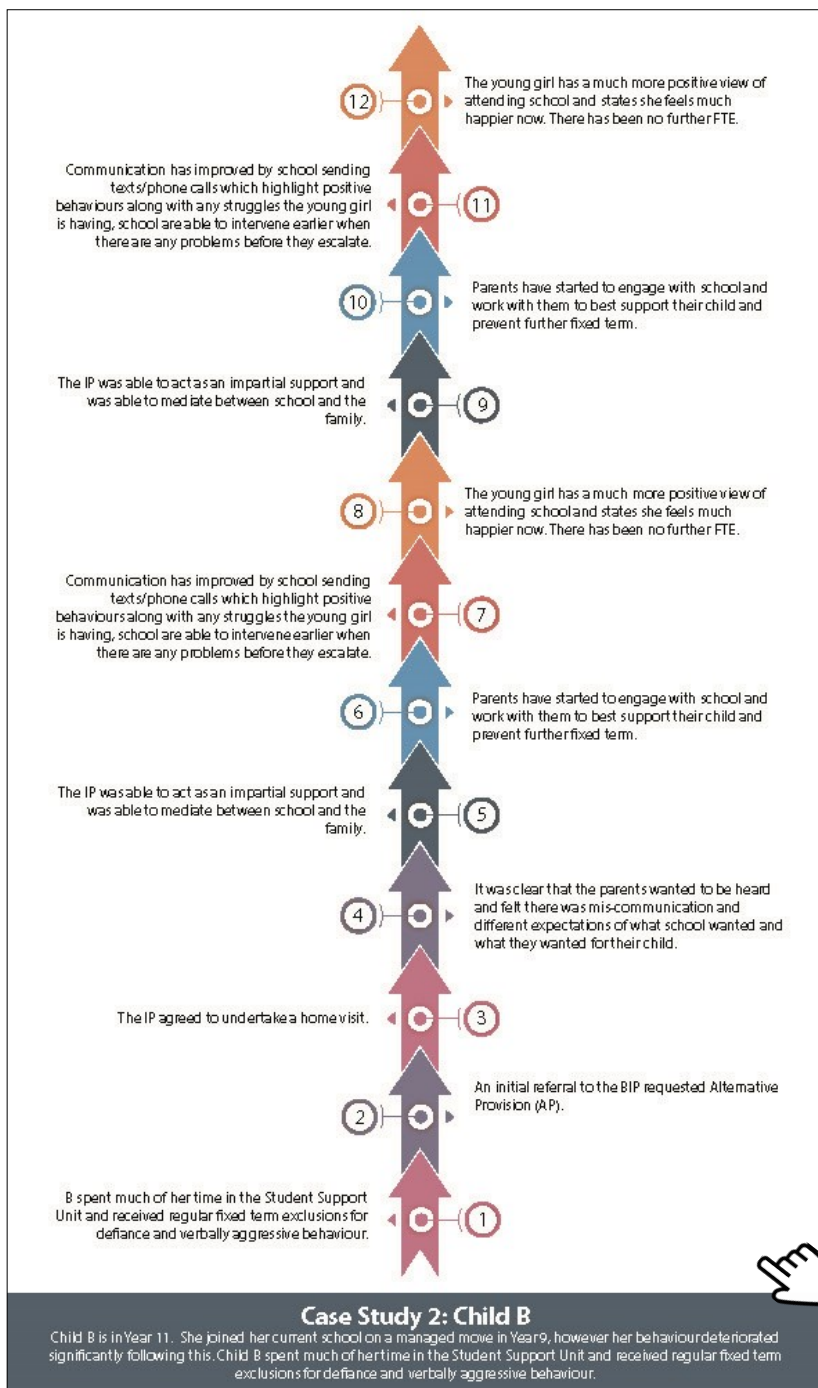


Inclusion Practitioner Case Studies

In Durham, there are 4 Secondary Behaviour Inclusion Panels (BIPs) which have been operating since September 2015. The panels consider referrals from Schools for pupils who are at risk of suspension.

In January 2020, the Special Educational Need and Inclusion Resource Board (SIRB) and Cabinet agreed to a proposal that future funding would focus on supporting Secondary BIPs to help further reduce the number of permanent exclusions and reduce pressures on the Pupil Referral Unit. BIP members in partnership with the LA developed the role of an Inclusion Practitioner whose role is to work with schools and families to explore and remove barriers to pupils accessing education.

Here are some case studies showing the impact this role has had for families and schools (click each image to open a larger version in a new window).





Early Help Assessment

Between October 2022 and May 2023, 1046 Early Help Assessments requesting (additional) early help have been submitted through the new Children's Services Portal, **73% submitted by education partners**. Additionally, 265 Early Help Assessments are from partners telling us they are 'leading on' early help. Out of the 265, **65% are from schools**, 30% are from health and 5% from other partners. This number continues to rise which is really exciting as we are able to capture the fantastic support being provided to families across the system.

There is still opportunity for you to have your say and feed back on your experiences of the new Early Help Assessment process as we look at ways in which to further improve and refine the process. So far we have had 88 responses however we want to extend the closing date for this particular survey to 31 July 2023. It is really important to the Prevention and Early Help Partnership that we hear from you. The survey takes between 2-5 minutes to complete, thank you in advance!

If you do want to speak to someone for help with the new Early Help Assessment then:

- please contact your named Early Help Advisor or
- email the generic Early Help Advisor inbox EarlyHelpAdvisorSupport@durham.gov.uk
- and/or contact the Early Help Triage Team – 03000 267 979, Option 1, then Option 2, then Option 4, (Mon – Thurs 08.30 – 5pm, Fri 08.30 – 4.30).



Drop in or Drop out

School Engagement by Neighbourhood Policing Team

As with any educational facility children from different backgrounds will mix and unfortunately not always harmoniously. Reports of ASB, CRIME AND CONCERNING BEHAVIOUR will be reported to police.

Having developed a strong working relationship with the pastoral team at the school, PC Robert Simpson from the Framwellgate Neighbourhood Policing Team has created a monthly drop in session where PC Robert Simpson and his team can directly engage with students who have either shown concerning behaviours but have not crossed the line into crime or students who wish to engage with an Officer for career advice.

A trial has been ongoing for less than a year with several engagements having been successfully held, students have been open to engagement with no repeat concerns. As this is a comprehensive school, there is a mixture of children from a varied number of social backgrounds. The catchment area is vast, and this brings in children who previously went to separate schools. A meeting has been held with Durham Federation School, Ushaw Moor and drop-in sessions are due to commence.

The scheme has now been pitched to Durham Johnston and St Leonards School with potential start dates coming soon. All secondary schools covered by the Framwellgate Neighbourhood Policing Team are now engaged on this scheme.





EMPOWERING PARENTS EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities (EPEC) is a successful, low-cost evidence-based parenting programme. EPEC groups are led by fully trained local parent group leaders

(PGLs). EPEC aims to improve child development and outcomes, parenting and family resilience.

We have been very lucky here in Durham to be able to offer this peer-led model to our families since September 2022; it has already had a huge impact and is continuously growing.

EPEC parenting programmes are different to our 'typical' parenting programmes, in which they are for Durham parents, delivered by Durham parents, which automatically removes the 'stigma' usually attached to parenting programmes.

We offer parents the chance to train as a PGL. This training is for one day a week (term time only) from 9.30am—2.30pm for 12 weeks. Once completed, PGLs can deliver the Being a Parent Programme (BAP) and will be internally certified by EPEC and externally accredited as a level 3 facilitator.

We cover childcare costs, mileage, refreshments etc. PGLs also have access to our varied career development programme.

We had four fantastic PGLs complete training in December 2022. They delivered three BAP groups. BAP is for parents/carers of children aged 2-11, it is for 9 weeks, 2 hours a week (term time only). We ran three groups across the County. We received some excellent feedback from the 14 parents who completed.

We also had a fantastic Durham Dad complete Train the Trainer training for EPEC and co-facilitated the Stanley BAP group and is currently co-facilitating the second round of PGL training in Stanley.

Our EPEC Co-Ordinator Laura-Jayne is now also trained in BAP Autism and the Baby and Us programme. Once parents have completed PGL training they can then receive top up training in these additional manuals.

Our future plans are to expand in order to keep up with the demands! Firstly, to grow our bank of PGLs, we will be putting on our next round of PGL training in September. We are also hoping to be trained in the Being a Parent-ADHD, which will be another peer led programme to add to our offer.

The PGLs we have currently will be delivering the BAP course termly; and we will hopefully roll out the additional EPEC courses in September across the County, covering East, South and North Durham.

“

'We learnt to empower ourselves, our children, our family, and our community'

PGL who completed training

“

'The PGL training has helped me develop so many skills and I have a new-found confidence in myself.'

PGL who completed training

“

'I was supported all the way through the training and the course was interactive and fun; it was the favourite part of my week!'

PGL who completed training

“

'The PGL training has helped me develop so many skills and I have a new-found confidence in myself.'

PGL who completed training

“

'This parent-led course is ran by real people with real experiences and they don't tell you how to do things, they give advice on what worked and didn't work for them'

Parent attending BAP

[Click here to see further comments from parents, PGLs and Teachers](#)



There here is a wide range of **free training** available to Durham County Council Staff and our Partner Services, topics include;

02 'Thinking Family', building positive relationships between services, promoting integrated working practices

03 Reducing Parental Conflict; understand what is meant by 'parental conflict' and the impact that it has on children and young people.

04 ▶ Understanding Teenagers: the stages of adolescence.

05 Hidden Sentence: awareness course for professionals working with families of prisoners.

For further information including details of how to book see

Stronger Families Training



Stronger Families

A national evidence-based parenting programme

This training will enable practitioners with an increased ability to recognise parental conflict, to understand the causes of conflict and provide practical tools and resources to enable practitioners to support families they are working with. The training includes information and resources for the 'How to agree better' training, which is provided by One Plus One.

This training will enable participants to:

- Gain a greater awareness of what 'Parental Conflict' is and to understand what it is and provide practical tools about the impact it has on children and young people
- Understand the difference between parental conflict and domestic abuse
- Recognise when there is parental conflict within a family and to have the confidence to initiate conversations about the conflict
- Identify and use appropriate tools and resources with parents to enable them to develop positive communication skills and prevent or contain conflict

This course is suitable for professionals who are regularly working with families needing additional support.

The training is delivered virtually via Teams and will be delivered over two half days. You must attend both dates in order to complete the course and receive your certificate. We are unable to mix your date between sessions. You will be sent a Teams invite to confirm your place on the training.

Dates available:

Date	Time
18 Oct 2023 (Thursday)	9.30am – 12.30pm
25 Oct 2023 (Thursday)	9.30am – 12.30pm
8 Nov 2023 (Monday)	9.30am – 12.30pm
8 Dec 2023 (Wednesday)	9.30am – 12.30pm

To request a place please complete the form below and return to:

StrongerFamilies@durham.gov.uk

Reducing Parental Conflict Training

September – December 2023

“Please Note: This programme is designed for parental conflict resolution and does not cover the resolution of domestic abuse or serious mental health issues. All attendees are from the Think Family partner organisations and voluntary organisations. Applicants must have a list manager's approval.

Durham
County Council



nepacs

Supporting a positive future
for prisoners and their families

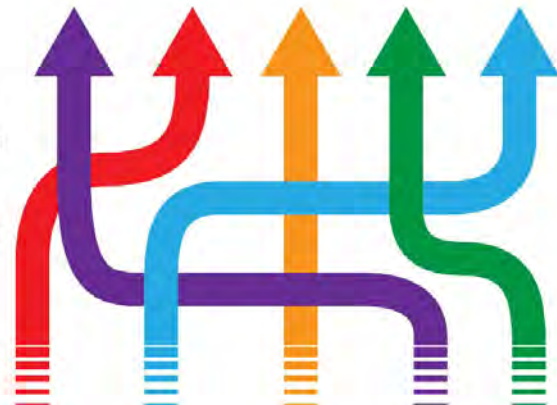
Parental Rights Awareness Training

17 January 2024 20 February 2024

9.30am to 12noon (On Zoom) - registration from 9.25am

What to expect?

This is a 2.5 hour awareness session for all those who may work with a family where a parent is in custody, at risk of going to custody or where parents are estranged. It looks at the legalities of parental rights and the challenges and barriers prisoners or estranged parents face in exercising their parental rights and remaining an active parent.



Topics covered during this training

- Understanding the term parental rights and parental responsibilities
- Legal context of parental rights
- Barriers affecting parental rights, particularly for parents in prison or estranged parents, and the impact this might have on adults and children
- Support needs of people who may be struggling to exercise their parental rights

**To register for this online event (on Zoom) please email
StrongerFamilies@durham.gov.uk**



nepacs

Supporting a positive future
for prisoners and their families

Care Leavers Awareness Training

**3 October 2023
29 November 2023**

9.30am to 12.30pm via Zoom
(Registration online 9.20am)

Who is this for?

This course will be of interest to those working with young people in both a community and custodial setting. The course explores what it means to be a care leaver and the potential issues faced by care experienced people. The course also gives awareness on the rights and entitlements of legal care leavers aged 18 to 25 years.

This is a 3 hour session and will be delivered on Zoom.

It is free for anyone living or working in County Durham.

Learning outcomes:

- Identify care experienced people based on legal definitions.
- Understand the issues faced by care experienced people.
- Describe the basic rights of care experienced people and know where to find local offers.
- Confidently work with care experienced people.

**To register for this online event (on Zoom) please email
StrongerFamilies@durham.gov.uk**



useful contacts

Lindsey Davison Social Inclusion Operations Manager

Lindsey leads on the VCS Alliance programme, Fun and Food programme and a range of projects that strengthens links with Voluntary and Community Sector and frontline practitioners, with a clear focus on tackling child poverty to ensure families receive services and support appropriate to their needs.

Samantha Friend Senior Social Inclusion Worker

Samantha supports the delivery of a range of Social Inclusion programmes including the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Alliance and the Fun and Food programme across County Durham and provides line management support to the Social Inclusion Development Workers. Sam supports effective partnership working, participation and consultation with children, young people, parents/carers across the full range of VCS, Local Authority, service providers and agencies.

Beverley Dodd Social Inclusion Project Support Officer

Beverley provides support to the Social Inclusion team with the development and coordination of the Fun and Food programme, VCS Alliance programme and broader social inclusion projects. Bev also provide support to the National Supporting Families Programme known in Durham as Stronger Families.

Dave Wooley Physical Activities Officer

Dave's role focuses on working with stakeholders and partners across the county to scope and develop an integrated, community based physical activity programme targeting 11 to 16 year old young people linked to the Fun and Food programme.



Susan Hutchinson Lesley Clough Debbie Unsworth Claire Bissett

Social Inclusion Development Workers

The Social Inclusion Development Workers are integral to a range of Social Inclusion projects including Fun and Food and the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) Alliance.

The team provide this support and information in a number of ways:

- Attending Early Help Conversations
- Attending Escalation/De-escalation Meetings
- Attending the Neuro development Pathway Meetings
- Information requests via an online Portal Request Form
- Weekly e-Bulletins

Funandfood@durham.gov.uk
durham.gov.uk/funandfood

VCSAlliance@durham.gov.uk
doitonline.durham.gov.uk/service/VCS_Alliance



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