

REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

LILAC (LEADING IMPROVEMENTS FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN) ASSESSMENT FEEDBACK

During January 2011 four young assessors and a support worker visited Blackburn with Darwen to carry out a LILAC assessment. The purpose of the assessment is to help agencies improve their policy and practice in how they involve and consult with Children in Care and Care Leavers. The four young assessors were all care experienced young people from different local authorities.

The assessors said that they were very impressed with Blackburn with Darwen and that we had achieved 5 out of the 7 quality standards, this being the 2nd highest inspection rating in the country. The 2 quality standards that weren't achieved were:

Standard 4 Staff – Staff are expected to support and contribute to practice and policy on the active involvement of children and young people in services that affect them. Although the assessors identified lots of positives around this standard they recommend that young people are involved in staff / carer inductions and staff appraisals. Also, that all staff and carers receive participation training.

Standard 5 Recruitment & Selection – Children and young people should be involved in the recruitment and selection of all staff and carers who will work with them or be responsible for them. The assessors recommended that a panel of young people be trained in recruitment and selection and that they interview new staff and carers.

EARLY YEARS

- **Shadsworth Children's Centre**

Shadsworth Children's Centre was inspected by Ofsted during March 2011 with a "good" overall outcome achieved and some outstanding features noted. The finalised report is now a public document and can be accessed via the www.ofsted.gov.uk website. This positive experience has been shared across the network of children's centres to inform future performance and planning requirements and support other centres and staff through the inspection process.

- **The Children's Centre Network**

The children's centre network hosted a number of fun day events on Saturday 2nd April 2011. The events held at Livesey, Little Harwood, Shadsworth and Darwen Children's Centres encouraged families and the community to play and learn together and supported community cohesion. The events were very well attended and children, parents and carers have all fed back how much they enjoyed them.

- **Early Years Review**

A variety of information sharing and consultation events with children, parents and carers have recently taken place, to share the outcome of the early years review and consult with families wherever it has been identified that potential change may be needed to the pattern of children's centre delivery. The centres have ensured that support to access services has been offered to families and advice has been made available through consultation, Families Information Service (FIS), centres and outreach work

YOUNG PEOPLES SERVICES TO MARCH 2011

- **Youth Elections**

YPS staff delivered significant programmes around the youth elections in youth clubs, voluntary sector provision and input in school assemblies to support the importance of democracy and the role of the Blackburn with Darwen Youth MP. Turnout in the 2011 youth election was over 50% and following a well attended count in the council chamber Chris Bleasdale was elected as Youth MP, his deputies will be Amy Louise Hyatt and Zainul Chaka.

- **Youth Voice**

Several members of the Youth Forum have been involved in conference facilitating supporting the 50+ Partnership in looking into intergenerational work.

Neighbourhood Youth Forums have also focused on community cohesion staging several workshops and events, also linked to YPS staff facilitating workshops at the recent inter-schools cohesion conferences.

- **February half term activity programme**

Youth clubs and centres across Blackburn with Darwen staged additional provision during February half term. Highlights included football competition at Bangor Street, new openings at Kaleidoscope Youth Centre (marketed to young people in Highercroft area via SMS text message) through Beez card. The children with Disabilities and Looked After Children Projects also delivered comprehensive programmes during the holidays at both Darwen Youth Centre and Ivy Street Community Centre.

- **Community Music Project**

The CMP has delivered work to support the recent Young Minds project, using young people connected with the project to both wrote and perform original music included in the Young Minds DVD. The Project also created the DVD to support the Youth Elections meaning young people's creative skills were showcased in almost every secondary school in the Borough.

- **Duke of Edinburgh Presentation**

Over 200 people attended the D of E award presentation award ceremony held at St Wilfrid's School. The awards, which are delivered both through schools and through YPS Open Award group, were presented to recipients who have completed Bronze, Silver and the prestigious Gold award. The regional representative for the Duke of Edinburgh Award highlighted the fact that Blackburn with Darwen has the largest Open Award group in the North West.

ANNUAL GOVERNORS' CONFERENCE

I attended and addressed the annual Governors' Conference which this year took place at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy on Saturday 26 March 2011. The theme of the Conference was 'Governing Schools in Changing Times' and around 130 governors joined LA officers and guests to discuss issues including the proposed increased accountability and increased autonomy of schools.

The keynote address was made by Emma Knights, Chief Executive of the National Governors Association who reminded governors that the Schools White paper: 'The Importance of Teaching' referred to governors as the 'unsung heroes of our education system'. Evaluations from the Conference were extremely positive.

DARWEN ACADEMY OPENING

Darwen Aldridge Community Academy (DACA) was officially opened on Monday 11th April, in the presence of HRH Prince William and Miss Catherine Middleton. DACA has come a long way since opening on the site of its predecessor school in 2008.

The official opening now recognises the opportunity to reflect and celebrate its successes so far and plans and aims for the future. The day was very much enjoyed by the students, staff and the local community.

PUBLIC MINDS EVENT

On Wednesday 30th March 2011, the 'Public Minds' emotional health and wellbeing/mental health resource for young people was launched at Darwen Aldridge Community Academy. The launch event was a fantastic evening that provided the perfect occasion to celebrate the work that has been performed developing this resource and the opportunity to raise the awareness of the resource and of issues around emotional health and wellbeing/mental health for children and young people.

NHS Blackburn with Darwen secured funding from the Department of Health Teen Life Check campaign to develop a local resource to be utilised by young people aged 12 – 15 years of age that promotes and increases the awareness of emotional health and wellbeing/mental health issues. The aims of the project were to increase the awareness of both the risk factors associated with poor emotional health and wellbeing and the protective factors, increasing awareness of local services and self help information for support, in particular the Teen Life Check website, also addressing wider issues surrounding mental health stigma and discrimination.

Young Minds mental health charity were commissioned to develop this resource, with Rosie Turner the VIK National Project Leader for Training, who works to provide a voice for young people's mental health and wellbeing, the lead for the project. The project began with wide consultation across services for young people in Blackburn with Darwen with surveys and workshops being completed. Young people contributed from services including, Nightsafe, Young Carers, Midnight League, Housing Associations, Lifeline, Brook and

also some colleges and schools including Blakewater, St Wilfred's and Blackburn College.

BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE UPDATE

Sample Schemes

The new Pleckgate High School will open this September and the internal fit out is now being progressed in earnest. Work at Darwen Vale High School, a mixture of major remodel and new build, continues to remain on programme.

Phase 1 Schemes

Construction started as scheduled on both the new Witton Park High School and the New East Blackburn Learning Community in January of this year. All works are progressing as timetabled.

Three events designed to celebrate the construction activities and the continued promotion of the BSF programme have been scheduled. The first of these celebrations was held at Witton Park High School on the 24 March and was attended by Witton Park students and staff, Members, and representatives from the Local Authority, the Local Education Partnership (LEP) and their supply chain. Events for Darwen Vale School and the New East Blackburn Learning Community will be held following the Easter holidays.

Phase 2 Schemes

On the 16 March the Council successfully secured central Government approval for the Stage 0 Business Case for the final four projects within Blackburn with Darwen's BSF programme (St Thomas Pupil Referral Unit, Tauheedul Islam Girls High School and Our Lady's & St John's and St Bede's RC High Schools).

The Local Authority have been working closely with Our Lady's & St John's and the St Thomas Centre to revise and update their individual Strategy for Change documents and their Design Briefs to ensure Local Authority and School priorities are aligned and continue to promote Council and School aspirations during this time of change.

St Bede's and Tauheedul Schools have already progressed to the first stage of the formal design process and this was celebrated at a Mid-Design Review which was held on the 7 April 2011 and provided an opportunity for a range of stakeholders, including Members, to view and comment on the design at this critical stage of development.

Community Use Strategy

The BSF Community Use Strategy was formally approved by the Executive Board in March 2011. A Steering Group has been established and priorities for the Group include undertaking an option appraisal of various operational service models for the provision of Community Use at BSF schools. Options currently under consideration include provision by the Council, social enterprise or third sector.

CHILDREN'S SERVICES VR/ER/COMPULSORY REDUNDANCY DATA

This is an up date of the latest positions regarding VR/ER/Compulsory redundancies within the department.

Voluntary Redundancies	26
Early Retirements	3
Compulsory Redundancies	2
Compulsory Redundancies - notices issued	45