



NCERCC Notes – March 2009

1. New on NCERCC website this month

www.ncb.org.uk/ncercc

- The March Talking point is on Therapeutic Communities & Therapy
- A research report and literature review on Groups and Groupings in Residential Child Care
- Three SACCS articles commissioned by NCERCC on best practice around food and mealtimes; outcomes in the Looked After Children sector; and Therapeutic Parenting.

2. Government & Associated

Updated guidance on Children and young people's plans

<http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/strategy/planningandcommissioning/cypp/>

The DCSF has published updated non-statutory guidance on children and young people's plans.

Evaluation shows boarding option works for some vulnerable children

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2009_0022

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/programmeofresearch/projectinformation.cfm?projectId=14990&type=5&resultspage=1>

<http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/DCSF-RR070.pdf>

Boarding school can be the right place for some vulnerable children to flourish, according to an evaluation of a two year Government 'pathfinder' programme. Local authorities placing young people who are faced with family breakdown or being put into care should consider the option, it said. Welcoming positive stories of young people who have been helped by boarding placements, Schools Minister Sarah McCarthy-Fry announced that Government will fund other local authorities across the country who wish to introduce the option. The DCSF has published the findings of an independent report by Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University of London on the provision of boarding schools for vulnerable children. The evaluation examines implementation of the pathfinder in 10 local authorities and their progress in identifying children and selecting schools. The 2 year pilot resulted in a total of 17 placements, 11 of which were active at the end of the pilot. Examples of good practice and lessons learnt were sought together with the views and experiences of LAs, parents and of the children themselves.

Sixty-five organisations have received a government quality mark for their provision of out-of-school activities.

<http://www.lotcqualitybadge.org.uk/home>

The Quality Badge scheme is part of the government's £4.5m Out and About package, which helps teachers plan out-of-school activities. The scheme aims to cut red tape by assuring teachers that venues have met the required standard, so they will not need to carry out their own risk or quality assessments.

Children's Secretary Ed Balls said: "Quality Badges offer teachers a guarantee that not only is a venue providing the sort of educational value that they can build on in class long after the visit, but they also have the appropriate risk management structures in place."

He added: "It is a significant victory in our battle to move away from the misguided perception that learning outside the classroom is a potential minefield for teachers. I am determined that no child should miss out on these vital experiences because of unnecessary red tape or because of a cotton wool culture that discourages all kinds of risk."

Low risk providers, such as museums, complete an online questionnaire to obtain a badge and are subject to spot checks, while higher risk providers, such as adventurous activity centres, are checked by independent industry assessors before they get a badge.

Ian Pearson, safety manager for educational visits organisation NST, one of the 65 organisations awarded a badge, said: "Understandably, for many parents, safety is a real concern when teachers organise visits using unassessed companies without fully realising the checks they need to put in place. For this reason, we welcome the quality badge as a way for schools, teachers and parents to easily identify safe, quality providers."

The Out and About package was pledged in the government's Learning Outside the Classroom Manifesto, launched in November 2006.

DCSF Guidance on SEN Outreach Support Quality Standards

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/00582-2008DOM-EN.pdf>

Following a consultation on these standards last year, final guidance is now available to be downloaded.

£30 million spells new hope for children with short lives

http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_094400

The government is spending £30 million to improve the care of children with short lives (known as palliative care) in England. The money will pay for children, young people and their families to get the nursing care they need at home and have short breaks in a children's hospice. The £30 million boost is part of an extra £340 million for disabled children's services in the Child Health Strategy published in February. Life-limited children will also benefit from the wider funding for disabled children. The strategy presents the government's vision for children and young people's health and wellbeing. It sets out the plans for universal, targeted and specialist support across three life stages – early years and pregnancy; school-age children; and young people.

Young prisoners face gaps in care

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/ByDiscipline/Youth-Justice/877901/Young-prisoners-face-gaps-care/>

http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx8110fk_75278528742423i25i2722230625

There are still significant gaps in care for young people in the prison system, according to the chief inspector of prisons. When assessing provision for children and young people under 18, Owers identified progress in the quality of education and training where she judged all establishments as satisfactory or better. But recurring problems included placing children a long way from home making visits difficult and criminal record bureau checks are still not mandatory for staff already in place.

Owers also said it was "unacceptable" that three years after social workers were first introduced in the prison system their funding remained short term. She added: "The challenge for the prison service and the youth justice board to provide safe and positive environments for the thousands of young people in prison is considerable."

An NCB guide to good practice with looked after children in custody is available from the NCB website.

Hilton Dawson new BASW Chief Executive

<http://cypnow.co.uk/news/ByDiscipline/Social-Care/883174/New-chief-executive-British-Association-Social-Workers/>

Hilton Dawson has been named as the new chief executive of the British Association of Social Workers. The former Residential Child Care Worker and manager, qualified social worker and MP, will start work at the professional body's headquarters in Birmingham in April.

First meeting of independent reviewing officers body

<http://cypnow.co.uk/news/ByDiscipline/Social-Care/886096/First-meeting-independent-reviewing-officers-body/>

A new national body representing independent reviewing officers (IRO) will have its first meeting this week. The National Association of Independent Reviewing Officers will be open to all officers in England who review the cases of looked-after children. Under section 10 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, the role of the officer was strengthened, giving them responsibility for monitoring the performance of the local authority.

The new regulations also state each child must have a named IRO who will ensure the views of the children and young people are taken into account. The association aims to improve outcomes for looked-after children by strengthening understanding and recognition of the role of the IRO, influencing the legal and policy framework and the reviewing processes at national and local level.

Social care review not ready to report

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/ByDiscipline/Social-Care/881253/Social-care-review-not-ready-report/>

The organisation responsible for registering children's social workers is still waiting for the results of a review into its future role. The Department of Health commissioned the review into the role of the General Social Care Council (GSCC), as well as Skills for Care and the Social Care Institute for Excellence last September. It aims to discover if there is a need for structural changes and to clarify each organisation's remit to avoid any overlap between them.

But the review, which began before Lord Laming's review into safeguarding was undertaken following the death of Baby P, is still under way and there is no date set for the publication of its findings. A GSCC spokeswoman said: "Since the review started, there have been a number of significant events which have impacted on the landscape within which we operate. The GSCC is pleased that the Department of Health is taking the time to examine how the review fits with recent developments."

3. From the Media

Group legal action over alleged child abuse at homes

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2009/02/04/110623/new-group-legal-move-on-past-abuse-in-manchester-childrens-homes.html>

An application to the High Court for a group litigation order against the authority was made on 2 February. The application follows a successful group action undertaken in March 2007 concerning outcomes of the Greater Manchester Police investigation from 1997 to 2002 which covered 66 council-run and independent children's care homes. Six men, including employees and former employees of Manchester Council, were successfully prosecuted for the systematic abuse of children in their care. The authority was ordered to pay more than £2.2m in compensation to 168 former care home residents.

The group has been started following the council has taken the position that people who missed the cut-off point to join the original legal suit will need to bring cases individually in order to sue for compensation. Changes to the law made in January 2008 allow abuse victims to claim extra compensation for "aggravated, exemplary, and/or punitive damages.

ADCS defends record against social work association criticism

<http://www.communitycare.co.uk/Articles/2009/02/17/110745/basw-attack-on-childrens-directors-without-social-work-background.html>

Directors of children's services with education backgrounds should not have responsibility for children's social care services, the British Association of Social Workers has said. BASW's assessment came in its response to the Department of Children, Schools and Families' consultation on the roles and responsibilities of DCSs.

Lessons learned from Scotland's damning care leavers report

<http://www.cypnow.co.uk/news/ByDiscipline/Social-Care/883535/Lessons-learned-Scotlands-damning-care-leavers-report/>

http://www.sccyp.org.uk/webpages/Leaving_Care_Report_for_Web_20080325.pdf

Kathleen Marshall, Scotland's children's commissioner, is collecting information for a follow-up report to the *Sweet 16?* Report to see if the service has improved and whether recommendations have been taken on board. There is the need for more information to know what difference the report is making and what still needs to be done. It is a year on from the publication which highlighted a gap between policy and practice in Scotland, saying many councils and social workers were encouraging children to leave care at 16 despite being entitled to care until 18. The commissioner is calling for local authorities to outline what steps have been taken to ensure young people don't leave care too early. Some people have used the report to advocate for young people, to challenge funding cuts, to change local policies and to train workers.

4. Good Childhood report

http://www.childrensociety.org.uk/all_about_us/how_we_do_it/the_good_childhood_inquiry/buy_the_book/13353.html

The Good Childhood Inquiry was the UK's first independent national inquiry into childhood. Its aims were to renew society's understanding of modern childhood and to inform, improve and inspire all our relationships with children. Evidence was contributed by over 30,000 people – including over 20,000 children - taking part in polls, research and focus groups. The research was far reaching and included children from all walks of life including children in prison, children in pupil referral units, children in early-years settings, refugee children, disabled children and many other marginalised groups. The result of this inquiry is this report. The report includes recommendations from the panel to parents, teachers, the Government, the media and society in general.

Some items and recommendations from the report:

- only a quarter of children who were seriously troubled or disturbed were receiving any specialist help, and one in 10 five- to 16-year-olds had clinically significant mental health problems.
- ensure 1,000 psychological therapists are trained over the next five years to cope with rising numbers of children with mental health problems. The report claimed investment in therapists would "probably pay for itself". It pointed out that a child with a conduct disorder costs the taxpayer £70,000 in crime, social care and remedial costs by the time they turn 28, compared with £7,000 for a child without such problems.
- mental health of children entering care or custody to be assessed as a matter of course.
- an increase in the pay and status of all people working with children

5. Runaway success

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/education/2009/feb/03/children-services>

The Guardian looks at what schools can do to support children who go missing from care.

6. National Association of Fostering Providers

<http://www.nafp.co.uk/>

A trade association representing independent and voluntary fostering providers is due to be launched in March. The Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers (NAFP) aims to enable independent fostering providers to share best practice and keep up to date with policy and legislation that may impact on the sector. Independent and voluntary foster care providers across the UK will be able to join the network. NAFP chair and co-founder Jackie Edwards said: "We aim to give a voice to the independent sector and encourage shared models of good business practice."

A steering group, which includes committee members from Barnardo's, Compass Children's Services, SWISS Foster Care and Foster Care Associates, has already been appointed to drive forward future plans on behalf of the association and its members.

7. Reading Heroes

http://www.readingforlife.org.uk/index.php?id=about_blank

Janice Hutton, who works at the Roycroft clinic in Gosforth, was one of 34 people awarded the status of "reading hero" as part of the National Year of Reading campaign. She worked with the local library service to promote access to reading for young people preparing to leave the unit and hosted reading sessions with well-known authors. The National Year of Reading was a year-long celebration of reading held last year, run by the National Literacy Trust and the Reading Agency, on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

8. Skills for Care: new knowledge sets

Skills for Care are launching a national consultation to create four new knowledge sets to support people who have a learning disability and/or autistic spectrum condition. The four sets are designed to set out the basic knowledge needed to support people who have a learning disability and/or autistic spectrum and Skills for Care will be running two workshops for each set to develop the final documents. Skills for Care want to recruit new volunteers to join fully inclusive workshops of 20 people made up of five people with learning disabilities and/or autistic spectrum disorder, five family carers, five professional experts and five employers. All the workshops to be held in March and April will be co-facilitated by people who have personal experiences of having a learning disability and/or autistic spectrum disorder.

Volunteers will consider new sets to support people positively with their behaviour, working in partnership with family carers, supporting people to be part of society and supporting people who have an autistic spectrum condition.

Potential volunteers should contact knowledgesets@skillsforcare.org.uk.

9. Resources

Promoting Resilience: A resource guide on working with children in the care system

http://www.baaf.org.uk/res/pubs/books/book_promres.shtml

The concepts of resilience and vulnerability have been in the professional domain for some time, but it is the work of Robbie Gilligan that has been instrumental in clarifying these concepts and applying them to practice. This new edition of *Promoting Resilience* contains yet more inspirational ideas and suggestions for promoting resilience in day-to-day work.

Leadership library

<http://www.ncsl.org.uk/NNfeb09/leadershiplibrary-index.htm>

The Leadership library gives access to world-class leadership resources from Harvard and Ashridge Business Schools, 50 Lessons and NCSL. Watch the following videos in which education leaders share their own stories of leadership.

- Praise And Recognition Motivate People - <http://www.ewagroup.com/comq/ccr/D0K0FM9R@YYZYQKWCLV> Professor Geoff Southworth.

- The Four Basic Skills Needed By Leaders -
<http://www.ewagroup.com/comq/ccr/GPSPKTWT@YYZYZQKWCM0> Professor Tim Brighouse, London Schools.
- Remain Emotionally Detached In Difficult Situations -
<http://www.ewagroup.com/comq/ccr/ORM73CVV@YYZYZQKWCLY> Dame Yasmin Bevan, Denbigh High School.

Sexual Exploitation factsheet

http://www.ncb.org.uk/dotpdf/open_access_2/sef_factsheet_37.pdf

The Sex Education Forum published a factsheet relating to sexual exploitation and how it can be addressed in PSHE

Journal of Children's Services

www.pavpub.com/jcsflyer

This peer-reviewed journal encourages the development of research-based, outcome-focused services to better safeguard and promote the well-being of children and their families. It will help you to understand how child development and applied social research can contribute to the evidence base, and increase the integration of children's services.

10. Conferences/Training – in date order

Teaching the unteachable - a certificated 3-day course for classroom teachers

Are there some pupils who just seem unteachable and who take up enormous amounts of your physical and emotional energy? This course will look at what is going on with these pupils in the classroom and will help develop your strategies for reaching and teaching them.

E-mail Michael Reeves: reevesemail@talktalk.net to request a booking form.

10th March, 28th April and 16th June, 2009, London

Network for Research on Children, Young People and Families

NSPCC children and violence: new research on witnessing and experiencing violence

http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/ChildResearchNetwork/childresearchnetwork_wda48289.html

The NSPCC facilitates an informal network for those working in academic and professional research settings and in the statutory and voluntary sector to bring together academic, professional and practitioner researchers involved in research on children, young people and families to promote the sharing of ideas and information and create an environment that will support mutual learning. By joining the Network you will have the opportunity to attend regular seminars with presentations on a range of topics related to research on children, young people and families.

17 March 2009, London

A whole approach to babies and young children who have multiple needs: pre-school and primary school - A national Interconnections Seminar in Birmingham

Team around the Child approach for babies and pre-school children; Why does 'child-centred' go out the window when 'complex' comes in at the door? Conductive Education (CE) in a Birmingham main stream Primary School – using CE with children with physical disabilities and children with autistic spectrum disorder. Each delegate will receive a year's free subscription to IQJ (Interconnections Quarterly Journal) which usually costs £25 + VAT.

For more information, or to book places, please email p.limbrick@virgin.net

19th March, Birmingham

Looked After Children's Practice Exchange Network

http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx_1996sq_98220586996954q67r_20081213743c

http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx_6253it_27298848528953a94x_2008121429q

The LAC Practice Exchange Network events will provide the opportunity for practitioners from across each region to come together to hear about what is happening at a regional level from the Government regional offices and to hear from speakers on topics relevant to direct practice. The events also provide opportunities to network, share best practice, discuss burning issues and find solutions to improve practice with children in care. Participants will be provided with materials from the day to enable feedback to participant's own local authority.

25 March 2009, Cambridge

31 March 2009, Leeds

Children First: Meeting the needs of children & young people living with HIV

http://www.ncb.org.uk/Page.asp?originx_5454yy_71086482438472m92g_200611273213y

This one-day training course have been developed by the HIV Network, part of the National Children's Bureau, to explore the issues that can arise when working with children, young people and families both infected with and affected by HIV in all settings. The course aims to give participants a greater understanding and insight into the issues facing children, young people and their families who are living with HIV, and increase participants' skills and confidence in meeting these needs.

27 April, Liverpool

15 June, London

Healthy Lives, Brighter Futures: A New Strategy for 21st Century Children's Health

<http://www.westminster-briefing.com/?p=1472>

The Government recently published its much anticipated long term vision of a 21st Century children's health service. The joint strategy, Healthy lives, brighter futures: the strategy for children and young people's health, sets out for the first time what children and their families can expect from child health services in their areas from birth through to the age of 19. Delegates at this special Westminster Briefing conference will have the opportunity to examine the content of the strategy and consider the implications for local authorities, health practitioners in primary, acute care and early years settings as well as schools and colleges.

20th May 2009, London

Challenging Behaviour and Autistic Spectrum Disorder: How can we understand and help?

<http://www.treehouse.org.uk/approach-education/treehouses-training-and-consultancy/forthcoming-training>

Children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) can often engage in a number of behaviours that one might define as 'challenging'. This workshop will aim to explore what constitutes challenging behaviour in relation to young people with ASD, how such behaviours can impact upon their lives and the lives of those around them, and what can be done to help make such behaviours less challenging.

11 June 2009, London

A World Class Children's Workforce: Fitting the Jigsaw Together

<http://www.westminster-briefing.com/?p=1084>

One of the principal challenges in delivering the children's agenda is the training and development of a workforce that is equipped with the appropriate qualifications, skills and experience. The publication of the *2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy* and the establishment of the Social Work Taskforce are the important first steps in defining the children's workforce and fleshing out what it should look like. Delegates at this Westminster Briefing will have the opportunity to consider the latest government proposals and the implications for existing and future members of the children's services workforce.

18th June, London

Strategically Measure Impacts And Outcomes

<http://www.haymarketevents.com/conferenceDetail/348/strategically-measure-impacts-outcomes>

Children's services professionals are faced with a raft of indicators that are intended to demonstrate that their work is delivering better outcomes for children and young people. But, if you go beyond ticking the boxes and cut through the red-tape what do you actually need to be doing to measure the impact and outcomes of the services you provide? Advance beyond target chasing & strategically measure impacts & outcomes. Working in partnership to embed measurement into your service and effectively evaluate the impact your work has on children & young people's lives

9 July, Birmingham

'Groups in communities, communities in groups' - 15th European Groupwork Symposium

<http://www.whitingbirch.net/cgi-bin/scribe?showinfo=ip004>

Call for papers - see the website for details of contributions that are invited.

"Join us at this Symposium in exploring the use of groups and groupwork within established communities such as hospitals, day centres, therapeutic communities, prisons, schools, and many others. How do these ideas, that of the 'community' and that of the 'group', complement or conflict with each other? Are they compatible? Can we make them work well together? *Examples of groupwork practice, where these and other relevant issues can be explained will be most welcome.* Additionally, how can we help groups to become 'communities', building a sense of belonging, an identity, and a cause or purpose? How do some groups become communities, able to challenge and campaign for social justice, while providing a 'place' for those with similar needs and interests? *Again, we hope you will share your experiences and your thinking about the group that becomes a community.*"

9th-11th September 2009, York