

3rd October 2014



Dear Children's Links Member

Your news bulletin is produced fortnightly and is designed to keep you up-to-date with the latest developments in children and family policy.

In this edition you will find the following:

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If you have any news or information that you would like to share in the E-Bulletin please email membership@childrenslinks.org.uk

Committed to improving the life experiences of children, young people and their families.



Schools failing to deliver on free childcare places

The government's plan to rely on school-based nurseries to deliver more free childcare places for two-year-olds has been described as "nonsensical", after latest figures reveal less than one in 10 of such settings are providing the free entitlement.

The Department for Education's [Childcare and early years providers survey 2013/14](#), published today, shows that just six per cent of primary schools with nursery and reception classes currently offer funded provision for two year olds.

In comparison, 74 per cent of full daycare providers and 68 per cent of sessional providers are delivering the 15 hours of free childcare to disadvantaged two-year-olds.

The Government and Ofsted have [backed school-based nurseries](#) as being the best settings to improve early education for disadvantaged children, and have sought to boost the number delivering the free childcare entitlement.

But the new data shows just 12 per cent of school-based settings planned to offer funded provision from September this year, with three-quarters saying they definitely will not be. By comparison, more than 40 per cent of childminders, full daycare and sessional daycare providers said they planned to offer more places.

The findings have been seized upon by early years groups as further evidence that the government's faith in school-based providers is misplaced.

Last month, a [CYP Now investigation](#) revealed that more than half of English local authorities expected to have a shortage in the number of free places available to eligible two-year-olds under the free childcare scheme.

Children's centres funding cut by £400m in three years

Spending on children's centres and early years services has been slashed by more than £400m in the space of just three years, government figures show.

Latest [Department for Education \(DfE\) statistics](#) detailing how much local authorities plan to spend in different areas of children's services, reveal that councils have earmarked a total of £985.3m for Sure Start children's centres and early years services in 2014/15.

That compares with £1,093.2m [last year](#), a drop of £107.9m in 12 months, and a drop of £413.2m from the £1,398.5m that was forecast to be spent in 2011/12.

Neil Leitch, chief executive of the [Pre-school Learning Alliance](#), said that given the government has identified improving early outcomes and supporting families, particularly those most in need, as policy priorities, it is "highly concerning" that funding for children's centres is continuing to decline.

"Children's centres remain an important source of early years care, and provide vital information, support and guidance to parents and carers," he said.

"However, sustained funding cuts have meant that the services available in many local communities are extremely limited, and a growing number of centres are struggling to stay afloat.

"It's clear that urgent action must be taken to ensure that vulnerable families are able to access the support they need."

For the full article please click [here](#).

Anti-Bullying Week

Anti-Bullying Week 2014 from 17th - 21st November has the theme **'Let's stop bullying for all'** and focuses on stopping bullying of disabled children and those with special educational needs.

This Anti-Bullying Week the aim is to:

- Stop the bullying of disabled children and those with special educational needs by equipping schools, colleges and youth service leaders with resources to develop youth led anti-bullying initiatives and encourage inclusive attitudes amongst children and young people;
- educate those who support and work with children to recognise children and young people who may be particularly vulnerable to bullying - encouraging an inclusive approach within all anti-bullying education; and
- ensure the school and wider community understand that the use of any discriminatory language is wrong and will not be tolerated and that this includes challenging disablist language

A [free campaign pack](#) is now available to download along with information sheets, resources and free training for professionals working with children and young people.

Young Person's guide to the Children and Families Act 2014

The Department for Education has produced a [summary of the main changes and provisions of the act](#) and how they may affect children and families.

This document is intended to be used by young people so every effort has been made to use clear uncomplicated language.

Conservatives plan to link youth jobseeker payments to 'community work'

Young people aged 18 to 21 and out of work or training for more than six months will need to do community work to continue receiving jobseeker's allowance (JSA), Prime Minister David Cameron has said.

The Conservative leader, speaking during the Conservative conference in Birmingham, said he wants to "abolish" youth unemployment and prevent young people going directly from school to a life on welfare.

Under the plans, young people not in education, employment or training would be able to claim JSA for up to six months while they find work or a training placement but if they are unable to find work in that time, the Conservatives want to stop their JSA payments unless they agreed to volunteer for work in the community.

This would entitle them to a "youth allowance" which would be set at the same level as JSA - currently £57.35 a week for 16- to 24-year-olds. The overall amount that people will be able to claim in benefits in a single year will be reduced by £3,000 from the current level of £26,000.

Savings would be used to fund more apprenticeships.

Cameron said: "Our ambition is to abolish youth unemployment and make it the case that it's simply not possible anymore to finish school, leave home, sign on and get a flat through housing benefit. That should not be possible."

Labour also wants to make changes to benefits for young people. In June, the party's leader [Ed Miliband](#) said he would scrap out-of-work benefits for unemployed 18- to 21-year-olds in favour of a training-based, means-tested system.

Youth Organisations to Pilot Impact Initiative

Three youth organisations have been chosen to champion a new government initiative to improve evidence on the impact of youth work.

[London Youth](#), [Foyer Federation](#) and [Brathay Trust](#) will act as links between existing youth work networks, both regional and national, and the new Centre for Youth Impact (CYI).

The CYI, led by the [National Council for Voluntary Youth Services](#), [Project Oracle](#) and the [Social Research Unit at Dartington](#), is due to launch as a pilot in November and will be funded by the Cabinet Office.

The CYI will provide overarching support for all impact measurement initiatives that are relevant to the youth sector. It will signpost to existing resources, and provide bespoke, practical help.

The centre will offer:

- national leadership, being a central point for information and communications, and a forum for discussing how to measure impact in the youth sector
- an online source of impact measurement resources for youth sector organisations, with guidance on how to use them
- support in managing evidence for 3 'early adopters', to help them improve their own impact measurement work, apply the benefits across the sector and support organisations less familiar with impact measurement train-the-trainer workshops

The CYI is due to be launched at [Creative Collisions](#), the youth sector's annual conference, on 6 November.

Upgrade your Children's Links Membership!

Children's Links' Membership Service is full of relevant children's sector benefits designed specifically to meet your needs. We have recently introduced new membership packages: Enhanced at only £75.00 per year, and Standard which is currently free.

If you would like to become a member please complete the membership application form or contact us by email.

As part of the Enhanced Membership package we can offer bespoke advice and support tailored towards meeting the specific needs of your setting. This will be provided via phone or email, time limited to one hour. The advice will focus on Committees, Recruitment and employment, Ofsted requirements and Finance

You will also have free access to Children's Links resources and guidance documents on key topics and legislation and much more!

To see the full benefits of our Enhanced Membership Package please visit our [new website!](#)

If you would like to upgrade your membership please contact us by calling 0845 3730645 or emailing membership@childrenslinks.org.uk



Looking For A Quality Provider To Take Over The Running Of Your Childcare Setting?

Perhaps you are a committee run provision and feel your setting would benefit from the experience of a larger organisation. Children's Links can help.

We are looking to expand our childcare profile in your area now.

At Children's Links childcare settings we feel privileged to be supporting children and families with a wide range of needs. We value the skills and experiences the children and their families give to the staff team.

As a charity we are committed to providing high quality inclusive childcare led by an experienced workforce.

Children's Links has vast experience of taking over settings so if you would like further information about our briefing events in your area please contact Lisa Wheeler, Business Development Manager by email lisa.wheeler@childrenslinks.org.uk

Children's Links' Vacancies

Children's Links have a variety of vacancies in the children's sector ranging from Childcare Assistants to Visit Centre Workers in prisons.

To view the current vacancies visit the Children's Links [website](#).



FREE Lincolnshire Volunteer Card Training

Helping others can be a hugely rewarding experience, and Lincolnshire Volunteer Card (LVC) training prepares you to dive in!

Supported by Lincolnshire County Council, this is a free service available to **everyone** aged 16 and above – providing a range of skills and knowledge.

Following training you will receive a certificate and your own unique Volunteer Card, which is recognised by organisations countywide. LVC has helped over 1600 volunteers across the county so far, with independent evaluation showing that 75% found it improved their experience of volunteering. Learners also mentioned increased confidence and enhanced job skills.

Places are still available on the following July courses:

Lincoln

Voluntary Centre Services, Tentercroft Street, Lincoln. 2 sessions 6th & 7th November (10.00am – 4.00pm)

Boston

Fenside Community Centre, Boston. 3rd & 4th November (9.30am - 3.30pm each day)

For more information on the Lincolnshire Volunteer Card please contact the Children's Links Sector Support team on 0845 373 0645 or email LVC@childrenslinks.org.uk

For details of other LVC courses available, please click [here](#).



Playing for Life in Lincolnshire

Children's Links have received funding to continue to deliver the highly popular and successful Play4Life courses in various locations (see below) across Lincolnshire.

Play4Life is a fun and interactive and free training course aimed at increasing opportunities of pleasurable physical play for children 0-5 years. This course is aimed at those involved in the lives of young children.

The overarching goal of Play4Life is to reduce childhood obesity by encouraging adults to offer more physically active play to young children. Children's Links will be supporting parents of 0-5 year olds, volunteers and practitioners working with children of this age group to promote healthy lifestyles by increasing participation in active play and to promote the values of physical activity.

Boston - Carlton Road Children's Centre starting 22nd September 2014

Holbeach Children's Centre starting 23rd September 2014

Grantham - Swingbridge Children's Centre starting 23rd September 2014

Lincoln - St Faith & St Martin C of E Junior School starting 1st June 2014

For more information please contact Liz Ash on 07554 450492 or 0845 373 0645 (option 2) or e-mail liz.ash@childrenslinks.org.uk



The logo for Play4Life, featuring the words "play 4 life" in a lowercase, sans-serif font. The text is white and set against a bright yellow rectangular background.