



FREE Conciliation Skills Training



For parents of children with additional needs
and the people who work with them

Green Park Centre, Aston Clinton

Monday 18th January OR

Thursday 28th January

9:15am to 2:45pm

Refreshments and Lunch provided

Childcare and Travel costs paid

Improve your negotiation skills to achieve more positive outcomes for your child with additional needs.

Learn alongside professionals how to work in partnership

Gain a greater understanding of each other's perspective

This training is funded by Parent Participation as part of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme. It is facilitated by trained parent representatives and staff from Parent Partnership and Choice Support

This training is organised by Lucy Falconer and Zana Bayley, Parent Participation workers. Please contact them if you have any queries or would like to book on this training course

Lucy Falconer

Email: lfalconer@buckscc.gov.uk

Direct line: 01296 387322

Zana Bayley

zbayley@buckscc.gov.uk

01296 387321

Networks

"We know that government can't solve all our problems - and we don't want it to. But we also know that there are some things we can't do on our own. We know that there are some things we do better together"

Barack Obama 2006

Youth Focus, Green Park Centre, Aston Clinton, Aylesbury HP22 5NE
T/F: 01296 631911 E: office@youthfocus.org.uk www.youthfocus.org.uk
Registered Charity No. 290094 Funded by Buckinghamshire County Council

Happy Christmas!

Preparing for the New

At this time of year we usually reflect on the achievements of the past year and look forward to new beginnings, but as we move into increasingly uncertain times with the prospect of large cuts in public sector funding and the challenges of accessing funding through commissioning, 2010 will undoubtedly bring enormous changes to what until now has been a comfortable and accepted way of working for voluntary youth organisations in Buckinghamshire. Youth Focus is preparing for these changes in a number of ways.

New Buckinghamshire Children and Young People's Trust

In the past year Carol Mason, Chair of Youth Focus, has been a key member of a group set up to review the Children and Young People's Trust. When the Apprenticeship, Skills Children and Learning Bill receives Royal Assent this month the Trust Board will become a statutory body and legal entity but not body corporate.

The Voluntary Sector in Buckinghamshire will have a place on the new Trust Board, although this is not part of the statutory responsibility. There will also be three different Local Delivery Partnership Boards covering:

- Chiltern & South Bucks
- Aylesbury, Wing, Wendover & Buckingham
- Marlow, High Wycombe & Ridgeway

The voluntary sector has a great opportunity to broaden its representation and voice but in order to make this work effectively there needs to be a co-ordinated approach. Youth Focus therefore proposes to set up the **Third Sector Partnership Group** that will be the 'sounding board' for voluntary organisations that provide services for children and young people. This is in effect an extension of the Youth Focus Council and will build on the already established Working Group.

In order to hear more about these proposals, explore how this model will work, learn what you can contribute and what the changes will mean for you, please come along to the next **Youth Focus Council Meeting on Monday 25th January, 7.00 pm** for a **7.30 pm** start. The meeting will be held in **Seminar Room 1, Green Park Centre, Aston Clinton.**

Change will inevitably affect us all and your views are vital in making sure that the contribution of the voluntary sector continues to be valued.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

What does the convention actually say?

The UN convention has **54 articles**. Articles are different parts of the convention that say what rights children have and how the Government should protect those rights. The UK Government ratified the convention in 1991 and by doing so committed to bringing in legislation, laws, policies and practice in line with its articles. This includes a commitment to make England 'one of the best places in the world for child to grow up'.

How well known are the rights of the convention?

The Children's Rights Alliance for England (CRAE) undertook a study in 2007 to establish a picture of the extent of the implementation of the UNCRC at a local level in England. It found that 55% of local authorities have 'adopted' the UNCRC, while 45% have yet to do so. 77% do not explicitly reference the UNCRC in their Children and Young People's Plan and only one local authority references it in the job description of the Director of Children's Services. 19% do not have a designated person in charge of the convention at a strategic level and inadequate knowledge was identified as a major barrier in the fulfilment of children's rights.

How good is your knowledge of the convention? Here are a few of the 54 articles:

Article 4: Governments must do all they can to protect children's rights.

Article 12: Every child has the right to express him or herself and to receive all kinds of information and ideas (this is called freedom of expression).

Article 18: Governments must support parents. Parents must always try to do what is best for children.

Article 31: Every child has the right to rest, play and to do things they enjoy.

Article 37: Every child has the right to protection from torture and very bad treatment.

To find out more about the convention and how you can inform the children and young people that you work with about their rights, contact the Children's Rights Alliance for England at www.crae.org.uk. A full version of all the Articles of the Convention can be downloaded from www.getreadyforgeneva.org.uk/childrens_rights

frequent and intensive contact provisions. Private arrangements between parents and friends should continue to remain outside the scheme.

- The frequent contact test should be met if the work with children takes place **once a week or more** (at present the test is if activity happens as often as once a month). The intensive contact test should be met if the work takes place on 4 days in one month or more or overnight. (this change is designed to make the scheme easier to understand and put into practice, since at present the test is 3 times in every 30 days or overnight).
- Individuals who **go into different schools** or similar settings who work with different groups of children should **not be required to register** unless their contact with the same children is frequent or intensive.
- The minimum age of registration for young people who engage in regulated activity as part of their continuing education should be reviewed. The Government will make immediate changes to the rules so that **16,17 and 18 year olds in education will not be required to register**.
- Overseas visitors bringing their own groups of children to the UK e.g. international exchanges or the Olympics, should have a three months exemption from the requirements to register for the work they do with children they have brought to the UK.
- Exchange visits lasting less than 28 days, where overseas parents accept the responsibility for the selection of the host family, should be regarded as private arrangements and will not require registration.

This announcement **will not affect the roll out of the scheme**. This will be as follows:

- **July 2010** - new entrants and employees looking to work or volunteer with vulnerable groups can start to apply to become ISA registered.
- **November 2010** - new entrants must become ISA registered before starting work with vulnerable groups.
- **April 2011** - existing workers start to become ISA registered.

Further information can be found at: www.isa-gov.org.uk, including guidance from the ISA for employers on how to fulfil their new duty to refer an employee who causes harm or poses a risk.

The CRB website: www.crb.homeoffice.gov.uk, contains a more detailed account of the new recommendations.

Vetting and Barring Scheme

Vetting and Barring Scheme Workshop

On Monday 2nd November Youth Focus hosted a Workshop on the Vetting and Barring Scheme, at the Green Park Centre. One hundred and thirty delegates from voluntary organisations that work with children, young people or vulnerable adults attended from Milton Keynes, Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. The Event was funded through the Safe Network and Children England enabling us to host a presentation given by Liz Morrison from the Home Office. Following this session, the second part of the morning gave participants the opportunity to ask questions covering a range of different issues. The answers to these questions will be published on the Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board website. In the meantime a Q&A sheet from the Home Office has been posted on the site: www.bucks-lscb.org.uk



Vetting and Barring Scheme - latest update

Government fully accepts the recommendations of Sir Roger Singleton's Report

Sir Roger Singleton, Chair of the Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) was asked by Ed Balls in September to check that the line was drawn in the right place in relation to those who have to register with the scheme because of the frequent or intensive nature of their contact with children.

In his report, published on 14th December 2009, he recommends the following:

- Where organisations such as schools, clubs or groups make the decisions as to which adults should work with their children then the requirement to register with the VBS should apply, subject to the

Important Dates For Your Diary

Council Meetings

Monday 25th January 2010
Wednesday 24th March 2010
Monday 11th October 2010

AGM

Wednesday 29th September 2010

Conference

Tuesday 11th May 2010

Training Days

Saturday 5th June 2010
Saturday 13th November 2010



'START-UP' FUNDING POT FOR SMALL YOUTH GROUPS/UNITS

Grants for 2009 - 2010 now available

The sum of £1,000 has been set aside from the Revenue Grant this financial year to go directly towards helping small groups and units within the Youth Focus membership to start up. Typically funding can go towards insurance costs, equipment or to cover the first few months' rental costs. The maximum grant per group/unit is £200.

Please send your applications in to the Youth Focus office. This fund runs up until the end of March 2010 or until the £1,000 has been allocated.

An application form can be found on the Youth Focus website www.youthfocus.org.uk or can be obtained by phoning the office on 01296 631911 or by emailing office@youthfocus.org.uk



The Percy, Anne and David Wood Charitable Trust Award

We were very pleased to welcome Andrew and Irene Wood to our AGM for the presentation of this Award; the second year in which Youth Focus have supported this Charitable Trust set up to recognise the achievements of a young person with disabilities living in Aylesbury who has made an outstanding achievement in either sport or the arts. This year Lady Sara Aubrey Fletcher, President of Youth Focus, presented the cheque for £500 to Ryan May.

Ryan was nominated by Heather Wyatt, his teacher at Furze Down School. Heather told us that Ryan has had to contend with considerable emotional difficulties in his life, including being born with heart problems. There have also been a series of events that have had profound repercussions on the whole family and both his brothers have suffered severe life threatening conditions. Despite these difficulties, there has been tremendous support for the family from his school and other services.

With support from the Youth Offending Team he has been encouraged to play basketball over the last two years. This has enabled him to gain confidence and has boosted his self esteem and self image. Ryan loves the sport and goes every Sunday to training and is in the DUX junior team. He anticipates joining the seniors when he is 17 years old. He would like to buy new trainers and kit and have a better basketball hoop to practice on at home. Ryan's confidence is increasing with the strong support mechanism that is in place.

Ryan is a very worthy candidate for this award as it will support his needs in overwhelmingly difficult and emotional times as he comes to terms with his past experiences and the current challenges faced by his family. Basketball has become the most positive social activity that he is proud of and excels at and he has now achieved his Sports Leader Award.



YOUTH FOCUS AGM

The Youth Focus AGM was held on Wednesday 30th September. **Carol Mason, Chair of Youth Focus** reported that this has been our busiest year yet, indicating how much is happening in relation to work with children and young people.

The government is recognising the role played by the voluntary sector and with the inevitable announcement of cuts the voluntary sector will play a significant part in front line services. Youth Focus will do its best to ensure that volunteers are able to meet their responsibilities by providing training and support. We will also ensure that our members are kept up to date on possible funding sources.

She also highlighted that a result of the major reforms has been the creation of a local infrastructure of services and committees to try and ensure that the principle of 'joined up working' is developed and maintained. Making sure the voice of the voluntary sector is heard is a considerable task, however there have been many occasions when that voice has resulted in changes in policy.

The next two years will be critical for the future of the voluntary sector. Youth Focus will be talking directly to all our members and other organisations that may benefit from joining us to get an up to date picture of what is happening.

In February 2010 we will present a report to the CYP Trust Board on the work of the voluntary sector as evidence of how much we contribute to work with Children and Young People. Our funding is now secure until 2011 and we will continue to find ways to support our members through our resources and expertise.

Susanne Rauprich, Chief Executive of the National Council for Voluntary Youth Services then gave a presentation on the importance of what she called 'Intelligent Networking'. She drew on comments from the audience to explore how working together can help to develop a stronger voice for voluntary organisations and answered a number of questions. Susanne's talk emphasised the importance of core co-ordination functions that must be in place in order to double the chance of organisations being able to participate in delivery, ensure they are part of local democracy and can work effectively in partnership.