

CHANGES AND CHALLENGES

Hello to Councillors and others reading this, our sixth Children's Trust newsletter.

Since our last newsletter we have successfully recruited a new Chief Executive (**see page 3**), as I will be moving to become the Trust chair in December.

We have also had some recent movement in our Executive team, with David Stringfellow replacing Jenny Turnross on an interim basis as Director of Practice, and Lisa Jamieson stepping up as interim Director of Commissioning and Corporate Parenting.

Following the announcement of the council's Section 114 notice we have communicated the seriousness of this to our staff, and we will do all we can to support this requirement for savings.

We will continue to deliver high quality social work and support to children, young people and families across Birmingham, being mindful of how we do this to ensure we safeguard those that most need our help.

Tough times, and times of change, but challenges we will get through together.

Andy Couldrick
Chief Executive,
Birmingham Children's Trust

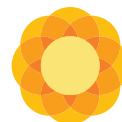


Current campaigns

On pages 8-9 you will find adverts for two current campaigns, both important, and both aimed at safeguard children in the city.

Please familiarise yourself with the campaigns, and where you can, please support.

- Private Fostering - Everyone's Business
- Bring FGM out of the shadows



BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST

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Trust property update September 2023

With the Council's closure of Lancaster Circus Trust colleagues have been incredibly busy preparing for some significant office moves that will be taking place very soon.

As Trust staff leave Lancaster Circus in the city centre in October, a new office, 'One Avenue Road' in Aston Cross, will be ready to be occupied.

Elsewhere, the existing Lifford House offices, situated in the south of the city, are nearing the end of a refurbishment programme.

Staff have been kept up to date through a series of email newsletters and short video clips.



Progress at One Avenue Road

The 'One Avenue Road' offices will be the new home for our Children's Advice and Support Service (CASS), as well as our multi-agency Contextual Safeguarding team, EMPOWERU.

The 'One Avenue Road' offices feature a secure car park and on-site security.

Contact our Executive management team

Andy Couldrick - Chief Executive

andy.couldrick@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

David Stringfellow - Director of Practice (Interim)

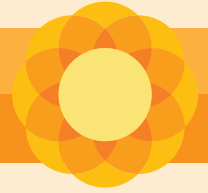
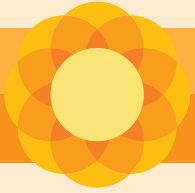
david.stringfellow@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Lee Yale-Helms - Director of Finance and Resources

lee.yale-helms@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Lisa Jamieson - Director of Commissioning and Corporate Parenting (Interim)

lisa.jamieson@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk



Welcoming our new **Chief Executive**

After a national recruitment search, **James Thomas**, currently Director of Children's Services in Tower Hamlets, has been appointed Chief Executive of Birmingham Children's Trust, replacing Andy Couldrick who is retiring as Chief Executive and taking on the role of Chair of Birmingham Children's Trust Board.

James is an experienced Director with a strong track record leading children's services in a number of different local authorities.

Andy Couldrick, current Chief Executive said:

"After a rigorous search, and from a strong field, I am delighted that James was successful.

"He was an outstanding candidate, and he has clear experience of delivering change and improvement in children's services in different and complex environments and I have no doubt he will take Birmingham Children's Trust on to further success.

"I look forward to working with him in my new role as Chair of the Trust Board."

Cllr Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member for Children and Families, Birmingham City Council, said:

"I was pleased to be part of the panel that interviewed James. He was exceptionally strong in the selection process, has great experience as a children's services leader, and I have no doubt he will take up the reins of the Children's Trust and move it forward into its next phase of improvement and development."

James Thomas said:

"I could not be more thrilled to be appointed as the next Chief Executive to deliver for Birmingham's children and families.

"As a proud Social Worker and experienced strategic leader, I will seek to build on the strong foundations that Andy and his team have built, to deliver continual improvement for children's outcomes, and to take the Trust from strength to strength."

James will join Birmingham Children's Trust in **December 2023**.





UPDATE - SEPTEMBER 2023

We are delighted to announce that the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership will be introducing a safeguarding newsletter on a quarterly basis, launching at the end of September. Our newsletter will contain a wealth of information on safeguarding, including updated policies and procedures, available training courses, and other relevant news. Additionally, we will be highlighting the work of Birmingham practitioners in our 'Practitioner Spotlight' feature, where we will be conducting video interviews with a different person in each edition about their experiences and roles in safeguarding children. Our first practitioner will be Dr Yasmin Husain, who is the Named GP for NHS Birmingham and Solihull ICB Safeguarding Team.

Our newsletter launch date is set for September 27, which coincides with our upcoming Practitioners' Forum. During these meetings, we have the chance to connect with front-line practitioners and gain insights into their experiences. We welcome feedback on what is working well, what challenges they face, and what support they need. Additionally, we explore new developments and improvements in children's safeguarding. Our upcoming Practitioners' Forum will focus on important news and updates, including a review of safeguarding arrangements during last year's Commonwealth Games, the appointment of the new Chief Executive at Birmingham Children's Trust, and the significance of ICON Week 2023, including its role in promoting awareness of the consequences of shaking babies and how best to help parents cope with infant crying.

We would love for as many people as possible to sign up for our **newsletter** and Practitioners' Forum.

Sign up online to subscribe to the newsletter:
<https://bit.ly/3rb5KOa>

To join our Practitioners Forum, email:
BSCP.practitionersforum@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

County Lines and Exploitation Awareness Week 2 to 6 October 2023



WEST MIDLANDS
VIOLENCE
REDUCTION
PARTNERSHIP

County Lines and Exploitation Awareness Week will take place between 2 and 6 October 2023.

West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership are providing an extensive awareness training programme for professionals, aiming to develop and improve our understanding of the threat from County Lines and Criminal Exploitation.

NSPCC Online Safety webinars

The NSPCC are delivering free twilight and evening online safety sessions where professionals, parents and carers, and community members can join the same virtual session. 'Keeping children safe online' will teach you how to help kids explore their favourite apps, games and sites safely, and will:

- help you understand how children experience the online world;
- show you resources and tools that could help keep them safe; and
- empower you to guide children.

Please contact Mubashar Khaliq by emailing Mubashar.Khaliq@NSPCC.org.uk if you are interested in attending one of the events below:

- Thursday 28 September 5.00pm - 6.00pm
- Wednesday 4 October 7.00pm - 8.00pm
- Thursday 12 October 6.00pm - 7.00pm
- Tuesday 17 October 5.00pm - 6.00pm
- Monday 23 October 6.00pm - 7.00pm
- Thursday 16 November 7.00pm - 8.00pm
- Tuesday 12 December 6.00pm - 7.00pm

Bfriends Charity in partnership with Birmingham Children's Trust delivered a range of summer events for young people and families known to the Trust, making memories, and creating new opportunities including the largest day trip to date.

Young people enjoyed a football camp designed and delivered by the Trust's apprenticeship team who have worked hard within the last two years to continue this important offer.

Over 150 young people took to the water taking part on canoeing and other water sports whilst others took part in life skills, and cooking sessions were delivered in partnership with Digbeth Dinning Club, 2MuchPassion, and Blesst, where young people got to try different cooking skills and spend time together.



Blesst hosting a cooking skills session

300 young people, siblings, parents, and carers ended the summer programmes with a trip to Blackpool including spending time on the beach, in the pleasure beach and importantly making memories. For many it was the first time they had visited the beach and for some their first trip out of the city. (See pic bottom right.)

Young people and adults from across the Trust's participation groups and forums ended their summer events with a sports and celebration event at The Red Shed community centre. It was a sunny day spent outside together. They were joined by several partners and took part in a range of sporting and team activities.



Andy receives his artwork gift from Denishae

The day was also a surprise celebration created by young people and adults to mark the last summer they would be joined by the Trust's Chief Executive Officer Andy Couldrick before moving to his new role as Trust Chair in December.

Zaynab Sohawon, a care experienced young adult who works very closely with the Trust and Bfriends as a champion for young adults, shared some words she had written especially for the occasion. She also supported young people and adults who created a piece of artwork that they presented to Andy made up of words they felt represented Andy's time at the Trust. The artwork was presented by Trust Apprentice Denishae Francis (see photo above.)

As hundreds of young people and adults enjoyed another summer, Bfriends Charity and the Trust would like to pause and importantly thank all the volunteers and partners that make this possible, the Holiday Food and Activity Fund (HAF) and additional partners that provide match funding and donations in kind.



Young people enjoying a trip to Blackpool



Care experienced young person's conference

The next Trust-led care leavers conference, for care experienced young people will take place on 31 October (yes Halloween!)

Each year the Trust hold three conferences which offer our young people an opportunity to link with organisations who can support them on their journey from care to independence.

The conference will take place on:

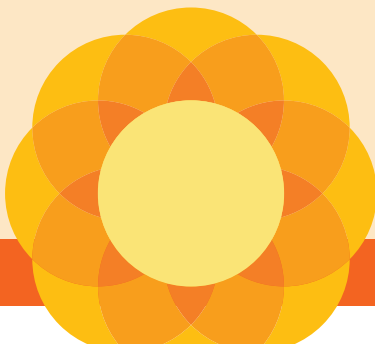
- **Date:** Tuesday 31 October 2023
- **Time:** 11.00am - 3.00pm
- **Venue:** The Lighthouse Young People's Centre, 100 Alma Way, Birmingham, B19 2LN

It is important for us to ensure that the care leavers we work with have access to organisations who can help and support them so that we can ensure that they have the best chances of living a happy life that they love.

Therefore we have carefully selected organisations and groups who we think can offer our care leavers the opportunities and experiences they deserve.

If you are interested in attending the next conference please email Kirstie and Juliette:

kirstie.cotton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk
juliette.walton@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk



Trust activities roundup

Trust staff have been busy supporting children, young people and families across the city this Autumn.

Lots of activities are planned to develop the knowledge base and skills of Trust staff, including:

- **Domestic Abuse training** - Working with Richmond Fellowship a series of online and face-to-face events are taking place right up to April 2023. Topics will include 'gaslighting', 'stalking' and 'holding safe conversations'.
- **Black History Month** - During October the Trust will host online guest speakers and deliver 'lunch and learn' sessions to cover a range of topics.
- **FGM awareness campaign** - Alongside Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership the Trust is raising awareness of FGM by working with a survivor to produce social media videos and online content.
- **Continuing to make 'Connections Count'** - The Trust has it's own way of delivering children's social care practice, called 'Connections Count'. This is the name of our relationship-based practice model. Training on the model continues to be delivered to social work teams to develop knowledge.

As part of the 'Connections Count' awareness a series of characters were developed into animations to better explain the model. You can watch one of the short films by scanning the QR code below:





**Foster
Birmingham**
Birmingham's biggest family

Foster Care recruitment - You can help

As is the national picture, there is currently a shortage of foster families to look after the city's most vulnerable children.

Whilst Foster Birmingham has a comprehensive Recruitment Strategy including bi-monthly information events both face-to-face and online, Foster Carer Recruitment Ambassadors, a 'Recommend a Friend' scheme, and an integrated advertising schedule to name but a few, we need your help!

Every Fostering household recruited makes a real positive difference to the life of a child.

Therefore, we are asking you to please actively promote and support Birmingham Children's Trust's Fostering Agency, Foster Birmingham by:

- Positively promoting fostering in your local area via any communications with your constituents eg. newsletters, social media platforms etc. particularly our bi-monthly information events and any specific recruitment needs at any given time.

- Give out Foster Birmingham literature.
- Liaise with the Fostering Marketing Manager about any opportunities for recruiting more foster carers ie. stalls / events in your local area etc. that the service can tap into.

For more information on how you can help, and to discuss further, please contact:

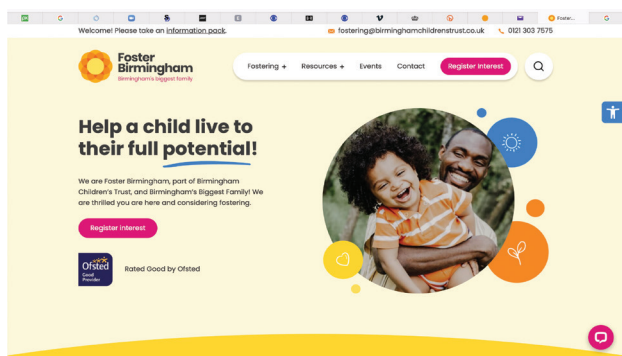
Pip Gagliano

Marketing Manager (Fostering)

07510 369961

Philippa.Gagliano@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

We welcome any ideas you have and look forward to hearing from you!



You can find out about the latest Foster Birmingham information events and drop-in sessions by visiting the **Foster Birmingham website**.

Scan the QR code below on your smartphone to go to the Foster Birmingham website events page.

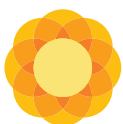




BRING FGM OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is **illegal** and a form of **child abuse**. It has **serious health consequences** and can cause **psychological damage**.

If you, or someone you know is **at risk of FGM**, or **has experienced FGM** and needs support, you can confidentially report it to the **NSPCC: 0800 028 3550**.



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BIRMINGHAM
Safeguarding
Children
PARTNERSHIP



ARE YOU LOOKING AFTER SOMEONE ELSE'S CHILD?



If you have been caring for someone else's child for over 28 days, and you are NOT a close relative (such as a grandparent, uncle or aunt, brother or sister, or step-parent by marriage) this is called '**Private Fostering**'.

Here at **Birmingham Children's Trust** we need to be made aware of these arrangements. We are here to help you, and any children you are caring for.

Please phone: 0121 203 1888 (Mon to Fri office hours)

Please email: CASS@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Website: birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk/privatefostering