

BIRMINGHAM CHILDREN'S TRUST NEWSLETTER



June 2024

Issue #8

TRUST STAFF RECOGNITION

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

It has been a memorable first half of the year for the Trust and our dedicated workforce.

With guidance and support from city council colleagues we are progressing through the Equal Pay Programme, and we are making great headway with our **Trust 2025 Programme**.

2024 has also been a year of recognition and celebration.

Earlier this month we triumphed at the LGC 2024 Awards, winning the prestigious national 'Children's Services' award (**see page 3**). We have also had some fantastic individual staff recognition. **Ivora Ferreira-Bean** was awarded an MBE in May (**see pages 4-5**) and just last week **Janet Parks**, who works in our Lifelong Links service, received a British Empire Medal.

We know our staff are special, so for some to gain national recognition is very satisfying. From everyone at the Trust we wish you all a great summer, along with plenty of sunshine.

James Thomas

Chief Executive,
Birmingham Children's Trust

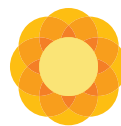


The Trust has been celebrating Eid events in 2024. Here you will find our staff with families and young people celebrating the start of Eid together.

LoB Recruitment event

Birmingham Children's Trust is excited to welcome you all to a **Recruitment Open Day** on **Saturday 3 August** at the **Library of Birmingham**. Come and meet us **11.00am to 4.00pm** to learn about careers at the Trust.

With competitive salaries, flexible working, a great pension scheme, and benefits, Birmingham Children's Trust continue to be an outstanding destination to work. Please spread the word with your constituents.



**BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST**

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Meet Nikki Harding our new Trust Head of HR

Wow! So here I am. My name is Nikki Harding and I'm the new Head of Human Resources at Birmingham Children's Trust.



I'm so excited and feel very privileged to be joining the Trust during this crucial phase. All of the hard work has been evident in our recent 'Good' rating from OFSTED.

I have over 10 years of experience in Human Resources, working for many reputable organisations and charities.

It would be disingenuous of me not to express how much I'm looking forward to working with you all.

It's great to see such diversity in our workforce all under one roof.

So who am I outside of my day job?

I have a huge passion for music whether that be playing, listening, or enjoying live music and musicals.

I have two children, Izzy, who's committed to breaking down barriers in women's football and becoming a professional goalkeeper and James, who loves being a Sea Cadet, which has increased his confidence and supports his neurodiversity.

I'm really looking forward to meeting and working alongside many of you.

Contact our Executive management team

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Trust triumph at 2024 LGC Awards event



Birmingham Children's Trust staff are celebrating, after picking up a win at the **LGC (Local Government Chronicle) 2024 Awards** event.

The Trust won the LGC 'Children's Services' Award 2024, sponsored by Attenti Consulting, beating six other local authorities and a total of eight other finalists.

The Awards ceremony was held in London at the JW Marriott Grosvenor House Hotel, Park Lane on Wednesday 12 June 2024. The guest host was TV star Will Mellor.

Andy Couldrick, Trust Chair, said: "I could not be prouder of the recognition that the great Birmingham Children's Trust team has received with this award.

"We set out in 2018 to harness the skills of our people and build a strong and resilient service for the city's most vulnerable children.

"It's great that our progress, and the efforts of so many practitioners, support staff, leaders, managers and Board members has been recognised in this way."

James Thomas, Trust Chief Executive added: "I am so proud of everyone in the Trust who has worked so hard in recent years to improve the services we provide to the most vulnerable children and families of our great city.

"It is fantastic to have this recognition for our staff who bring their commitment, passion, skills and focus upon children and their needs to work every day."

Invincible Ivora gains MBE

The On Wednesday 22 May 2024, our colleague Ivora Ferreira-Bean was invited to Windsor Castle to receive an MBE from Prince William.

Ivora has worked for Birmingham City Council and Birmingham Children's Trust for 38 years — itself an incredible achievement — and received the honour for her service to children and families.

Now a Trust Team Manager for Ladywood in Early Help and Prevention, Ivora continues her tireless charity work alongside her professional career.

We caught up with Ivora last week to find out what it's like to receive an Order of the British Empire...

When did you first find out about your MBE?

"I found out in November. It was a bit of a mad day. We had driven to see my son at university in Cardiff so I was quite tired when I came home.

And I remember saying to my husband Tony: 'I'm just going to get in, have a bath and chill out'.

"When I was going up the stairs, I noticed there was all this mail and I thought bills, bills, bills. But when I picked one up it said On His Majesty's Service.

"I swear to God, I thought it was for jury service. I said 'Tony, you need to read this letter'.

"He read it and we both just looked at each other and burst out laughing. I went, 'where has this come from!?'.

"But we couldn't tell anybody because the letter is very clear about what you can and cannot say. We had to pretend everything was normal.



"It was actually a really difficult time for me in December because my dad had then become end of life. But I did tell him before he passed away. It was bittersweet — I was focusing on other things."

What was the day at Windsor Castle like?

"We got a letter back in March to say that it would be held at Windsor Castle (rather than Buckingham Palace) and it gave you a list of protocols.

"Things you can and can't wear, what you can and can't do, things you can say and all the rest of it.

"They're very thorough with their checks. You have to tell them what car you are going to drive. Then when we were there they checked the vehicle, went into the engine, took everything out of the boot... it was very meticulous, But it was a really, really nice day and they treated us really, really well.

Invincible Ivora gains MBE

....continued from page 4

"I'll just put it this way: if your necklace wasn't straight or you had a little thread on your dress that was out of place, somebody would notice it and come and give you that attention.

"And I found that quite weird [laughing]. I've never experienced anything like it.

"But Windsor Castle, for those who haven't been, is an awesome experience. I don't know which rooms are open to the public but I would definitely recommend a visit."

What did you speak to Prince William about?

"The award was given to me by Prince William and we talked about four things. The first was Birmingham Children's Trust.

We spoke about the pressures that I feel we are under, the fact that most days we deal with things that are sad, and the lack of resources and funding — how the government doesn't really understand what families are going through.

"We then had a conversation about two of the charities I am a trustee for, Handsworth Association of Schools and Lakis Greek Kitchen, who I do a food programme with.

"Every year we do fundraising. We're doing it at the moment. I told the Prince we're raising money for a little boy who's three years old.

"He has acute sensory needs, autism, a brain tumour and cannot walk unaided. So we're creating a room in his house so that his parents can bring him home from the hospital

"And the last thing I spoke to Prince William about was Aston Villa, because my boys are massive Villa fans. He even broke protocol to give them a thumbs up."



How did your family find it?

"They had a great day. They all came with me, my husband Tony and two sons, Alex and Andre.

"It was very surreal. I used to put on careers fairs at the NEC (National Exhibition Centre), I've done lots of public speaking and I've done training in conferences and stuff like that, but I've never experienced anything like it. I was nervous, I'm not going to lie. I was a little bit nervous."

"My oldest son is an actor, so he's not fazed. He was encouraging me, you know, saying 'Mom, it's going to be alright. Just relax man'. And my sons are of the Instagram generation, so they posted stuff on social media.

"I have had something like 400 comments just on Facebook alone.

"They've come from Nigeria, from Jamaica, from America, from Canada... There have been so many and I'm surprised how far it has gotten.

"I don't think I'll ever experience anything like that again."

Ivora is just one example of the many people working at Birmingham Children's Trust who create lasting, positive change across the city for its children, young people and families.

Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy

The Trust is supporting Birmingham City Council to consult with citizens on the city's draft Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy 2024+.

At the end of 2023, they asked citizens whether the draft strategy set out the right key priorities and actions for how the city council, with agencies across the city, will work together to tackle domestic abuse over the next five years.

Over 90% of the respondents agreed with the priorities, vision and focus, and they received valuable constructive feedback.

Domestic abuse is abuse in a personal relationship, such as from a partner, ex-partner or a family member.

It can include physical abuse, sexual abuse, controlling behaviour (e.g., telling you what to wear, where you can go), financial abuse (e.g., not letting you have money, stopping you from working), and spiritual abuse (e.g., using religious texts to control).

Why your views matter

Having revised the strategy, based on valuable stakeholder and citizen engagement at the end of 2023, as a local authority, the city council is required by law to publish a draft 10 weeks before finalising their Domestic Abuse Prevention Strategy.

Local authorities should ensure they meet existing statutory requirements including (but not limited to) those set out in:

- Equality Act 2010
- Human Rights Act 1998
- Housing Act 1996
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The consultation - How to take part

The city council are consulting with Birmingham citizens to understand your views on their draft strategy.

The online survey should take about 10 minutes to complete and is completely confidential, so your information will not be shared, and you will not be contacted about your answers.

The consultation opened on 8 May 2024, and ends on 16 July 2024.

LINK TO CONSULTATION

<https://www.birminghambeheard.org.uk/bcc/daps/>

If you would like to discuss this consultation, or you would like to submit consultation responses by email, please contact:

DAteam@birmingham.gov.uk

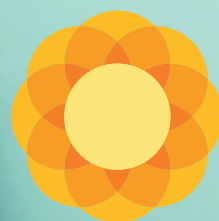
We know that domestic abuse can affect anyone. If you would like to speak to someone, please see support services below.

For women:

Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid Helpline is open every day 9:15 – 5:15 on 0808 800 0028 Webchat is open Monday to Friday 10 – 4, and more information is available at <https://bswaid.org/>

For men:

Cranstoun helpline is open Monday to Friday 9-5 on 0121 633 1750 or go to their website for more information. Trident Reach helpline is open Monday to Friday 9-5 on 0800 111 4223 or go to their website for more information. <https://cranstoun.org/help-and-advice/domestic-abuse/das-birmingham/>



**Foster
Birmingham**
Birmingham's biggest family

Foster Care Fortnight

May saw Foster Care Fortnight 2024, which ran for two weeks. It was the UK's biggest foster care awareness-raising campaign of the year.

Established in 1997 and delivered by leading fostering charity The Fostering Network, the campaign showcased the commitment, passion and dedication of foster carers.

It also supported fostering services to highlight the need for more foster carers.

Thousands of new foster families are needed every year to care for children, with the greatest need being for foster carers for older children, sibling groups, disabled children and unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

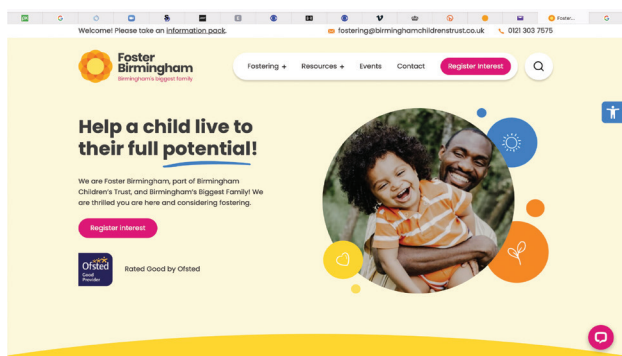
The theme this year was **#FosteringMoments**. Over the two weeks we asked members of our fostering community to share the moments, however big or small, that define people's fostering journeys — with the aim of encouraging anyone thinking about fostering to come forward and find out more at an upcoming information event.



Deane Deakin, a foster carer who looks after children on a short-term basis with Birmingham Children's Trust said her **#FosteringMoment** is:

"Staying in touch and meeting up with children and their forever families after they have moved on."

There are several events running after Foster Care Fortnight which include information about the practical requirements needed to become a foster carer, the support you can expect from Birmingham Children's Trust, and the process to become a foster carer.



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.





BIRMINGHAM AND SOLIHULL

FDAC

The problem-solving court



Helen Davies FDAC Team Manager and Lead FDAC Judge Her Honour Judge Burgher were invited to the **National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) Promising Practice event** at the High Commission for Canada in London, earlier in the year..

The purpose of the event was to share practice and data in line with the drugs strategy aimed at increasing treatment, support and recovery and reducing demand for substances. There were also discussions about the increase of synthetic opiates across the country and the cost that these are having on many lives.

Helen, Judge Burgher and Judge Smith from the women's problem-solving criminal court were asked to present as they are actually running courts with parents and women at risk of substance misuse, losing children and being sentenced to prison in the absence of intervention.

Helen and Judge Burger were able to share the FDAC process, criteria, timeline and data and concluded sharing pictures of successful parents within FDAC who had achieved abstinence and had their children returned, along with a number of quotes from parents who have experienced FDAC.

Said Helen: "We were able to share that after 3 years the data indicates that 69% of children were reunited with one/both parents at the end of proceedings or with family and friends; 63% had not had a lapse or relapse, 52% achieved abstinence at the end of proceedings; 97% had no further arrests or cautions during proceedings or during the post FDAC support period and 26% had returned to employment, education or volunteering by the end of proceedings.

"We had the pleasure of hearing from and meeting Chris Philp Minister of state for Crime, Policing and Fire; Chief Constable Richard Lewis who spoke about the national drug threat and Dr Marta Di Forti, Clinical Reader in Psychosis and presented on the impact of Cannabis and psychosis and treatment options.

"We finally had the pleasure of hearing from Cullan Mias a gentleman with lived experience who openly shared his story in pictures about his addiction, health, impact and recovery. An inspirational story that recovery is possible and he is now giving back to many community services and has his own pod cast.

"It was an honour and a privilege to be asked to present at this conference and share from first-hand experience the important model that is the FDAC and that problem solving and specific interventions for individuals at an intensive level assists and promotes motivation, change and recovery for families."



Latest Child Safeguarding Practice Review shared

The Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership is committed to ensuring that the key learning from serious cases and safeguarding audits are cascaded as widely as possible to frontline professionals across all agencies to share good practice to help improve service delivery.

A Child Safeguarding Practice Review and Learning from Serious Cases Briefing Note entitled '*Serious Youth Violence - Breaking the Cycle*' have been published this month, and are available to download from the BSCP website.

Simply scan the QR code below on your phone, using the camera app.



The Briefing Note provides a short summary of the review, identifies key learning and highlights areas for practice improvement.

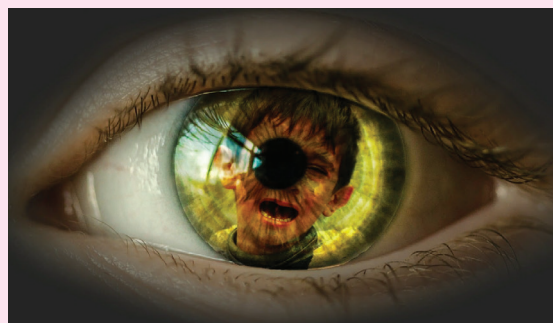
To support meeting discussions a PowerPoint presentation for the case has been developed and is available for download via the above link.



ROUNDUP

Neglect Awareness Practice Week

From 22 - 26 April, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Partnership hosted Neglect Practice Week, a series of free webinars and workshops focused on safeguarding children from neglect.



The week successfully brought together a wide range of agencies, with over 1500 bookings across Birmingham.

The resources from each session have been uploaded to our Neglect Practice Week 2024 webpage. There, you can download the PowerPoint slides for all of the talks, some of which have also been recorded, along with additional useful resources.



**SCAN THIS
QR CODE
TO GO
TO THE
RESOURCE
PAGE**

We would appreciate it if you could share the link to these resources within your organisations, to help ensure as many practitioners as possible across the region have access to them.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to get in touch.

<http://www.lscpbirmingham.org.uk/>



Children in Care Savings Policy launched

Birmingham Children's Trust has launched its new Children in Care (CiC) savings policy, which is a significant step forward in our commitment to the welfare of children under our care.

From April 2024, for all children who have been in care for twelve months or more, the Trust will save £3 a week per child and deposit it into a savings account, managed by The Share Foundation.

This fund is similar to a Junior ISA (JISA) and will be available for the child to access when they are 18 years old. It aims to give children in care the same opportunities as their peers to learn about money, savings, and budgeting as part of everyday life.

The payments will begin automatically once the child has been in care for 12 months or more, carers and social workers will not need to inform anyone.

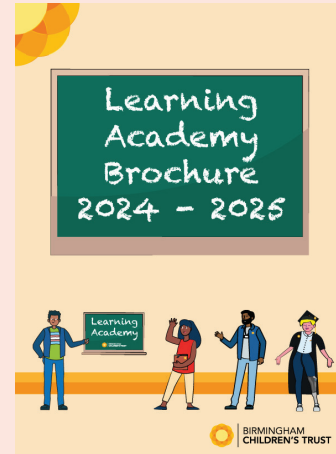
The policy also covers how children and young people should be encouraged, supported and empowered to manage their own finances, and given age-appropriate freedom as much as possible (reflecting their age and understanding) in reaching decisions as to how they wish to spend their own money.



Trust activities roundup

A number of announcements and activities are planned over the next few months.

- The Trust's Learning Academy recently launched a brand new online brochure for staff to access mandatory and optional training and learning courses.

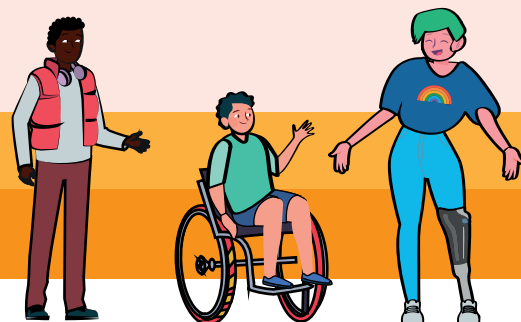


- **Continuing to make 'Connections Count'** - The Trust has its own way of delivering children's social care practice, called 'Connections Count'.

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:

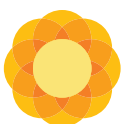




BRING FGM OUT OF THE SHADOWS

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.



BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST



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