



Northern
Health and
Social Services
Board

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LOCAL GROUPS INFORMED OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY FOR 0-4 YEAR OLDS

Children in Carrickfergus could benefit from a proposal being prepared by a partnership of local groups providing services for children.

The Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety has invited proposals under the Children and Young People's Fund to provide Sure Start services in areas of Carrickfergus.

Sure Start projects are designed to enhance opportunities for very young children to enable them to have a good start in life and prepare them for entering the school system. A successful application would provide additional services to promote good quality play, learning and child care experiences. It would include a range of centre based and outreach services to support parents in caring for their children.

John Fenton, Chair of the Northern Childcare Partnership, who made the announcement at a meeting of the Carrickfergus Children and Young People's Planning Group, said:

"This funding would provide an exciting and challenging opportunity for local people to work together to improve the life chances of children in this area. By supporting the development of the pre-school child, they will ultimately raise the level of achievement of the community as a whole".

The Carrickfergus Children and Young People's Planning Group has been working together in the area since 2003 and includes membership from a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community sector organisations who provide services in the area.

Helen Dunn from Barnardo's is the Chairperson of the Group. She welcomed the news saying:

"The Group's recent audit of need identified the lack of family support services in Carrickfergus, particularly in the 0-4 age range. Where services are available they are dependent on short term funding so local children would benefit greatly from Sure Start services. We look forward to working with all the providers of children's services in the area in drawing up what will hopefully be a successful proposal."

The local Group was initiated by the Carrickfergus Local Strategy Partnership and is supported by the Northern Area Children and Young People's Committee.

Mr Roy Beggs Jnr, MLA, founding member of the Children's Services Planning Group, said:

"We have been highlighting the needs of children and their families for some time and were successful in setting up the Children's Services Planning Group. This has resulted in an existing partnership base which will contribute greatly to the success of this Sure Start proposal. This early work with children will provide dividends for our community as a whole."

A range of community consultations will take place in the coming months. Anyone interested in contributing to this work should contact Anne Hardy, Children's Services Planning, NHSSB, County Hall, Ballymena, BT42 1QB or phone 028 2531 1208

Carrickfergus Children and Young People's Planning Group is a locality groups of the Northern Area Children and Young People's Committee led by the NHSSB.

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For further information, please contact Sinead Downey/Elizabeth Owen/Nataleen Surgenor
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