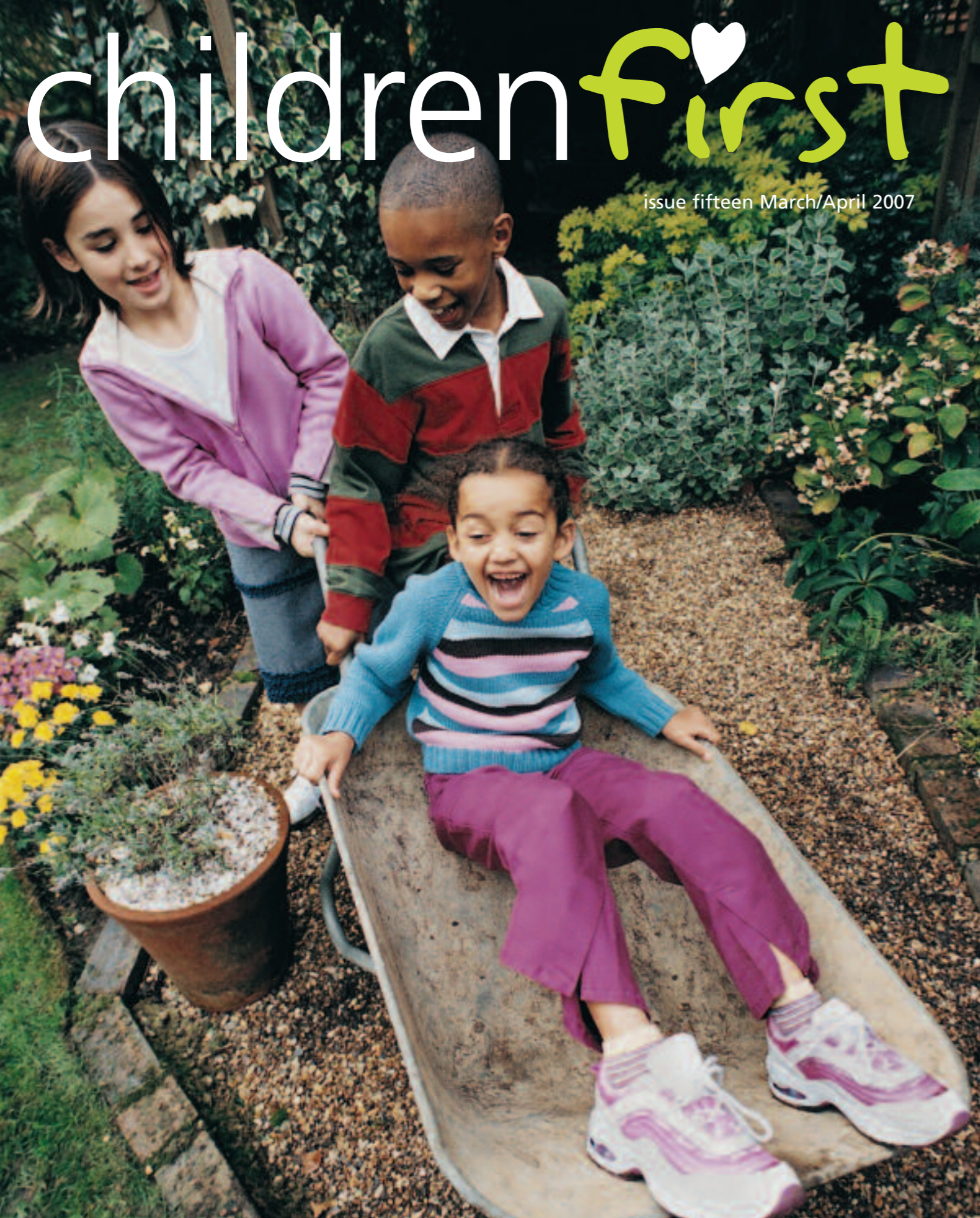


children **first**

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News and views about children
and young people's services



Brighton and Hove
Children and Young People's
TRUST



CYPT News

Respect for Brighton & Hove

Brighton & Hove has welcomed news that it will be leading the way as one of the government's new Respect areas.

Brighton & Hove will be among 40 Respect areas at the forefront of a new campaign tackling anti-social behaviour and ensuring a positive culture of respect in neighbourhoods and communities.

The city's inclusion comes in recognition of trailblazing work already successfully carried out to deal with anti-social behaviour.

And it means the city will receive extra funding to continue and extend this work – with special emphasis on working with families and parents to stop children and young people getting into trouble.



You are welcome to include any of the information in this issue of Children First in your own newsletters. We can provide the copy in Word format – email sue.bowes@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Children and Young People's Trust Director David Hawker said: "Innovative ideas piloted here – for example the Intensive Family Intervention project – have gone on to be followed up elsewhere. Becoming a Respect area will enable us to build on our achievements and extend our work."

The announcement will mean:

- Additional funding for the new **Positive Parenting** project, providing practical support and help for parents of children experiencing difficulties.
- Extra funding for the city's **Intensive Family Intervention Project** which tackles anti-social behaviour by families causing persistent problems in their neighbourhood.
- A new partnership between social housing landlords in the city who are signing up to a **Respect Standard for Housing** to ensure a consistent, responsive service for tenants who are experiencing anti-social behaviour.

Phonebook and team plans for staff

The Children and Young People's Trust team database and phonebook on the staff intranet, the Wave, was updated in December.

No more changes will be made centrally - if there are still errors you or your manager have the power to fix them yourself! Managers can move or rename their team at any time - and they have full rights to update anyone's phonebook entry to bring them into a team. Click on the "team members" link on your team page to check the current make up of your team in the phonebook.

Some teams were deleted and new ones put in their place. If this happened to your team, managers need to check the phonebook entries

for you and your staff to ensure they reflect the new structure. To do this, click on the name you want in the phonebook. To make changes click "Edit". Invalid team names will then be indicated. Select the correct team information by clicking on the drop-down menus.

For technical queries about updating your team page or people's phonebook entries, contact the Service Desk on **(01273) 292001**.

If you have lost the link to your team plan in the restructure and do not want to start over, email Jack.McAngus@brighton-hove.gov.uk with full details of what your team was previously called and he will transfer your previous plan to your new team.



£500,000 for play projects

More than £500,000 has been awarded from the Big Lottery Fund to deliver five new play projects in the city.

The funding, which will be spread over three years, will pay for:

- A new inclusive playground in Ovingdean, where no outdoor play facilities currently exist. It will be designed to enable children with and without disabilities to take part in activities. The money will complement funding raised by local group PARC which works to develop play and leisure opportunities in the Saltdean, Rottingdean and Ovingdean areas. It will also benefit the children attending Ovingdean Hall, a school for the deaf. The project will be built in the school's grounds.
- **Playbus:** A mobile play project that will develop a programme of play activity across the city. The playbus will visit areas identified as being in greatest need of safe, free play opportunities. It will link closely with children's centres and extended schools and also work with special schools to give children with disabilities more play options. It is hoped that more than 1,000 children per year will benefit from the service.
- **Portslade Community College** to extend the range of successful play schemes they already run in the context of extended schools. The funding will enable them to work in a range of parks and open spaces that are currently under-used, and extend their links with their two local special schools. More than 500 children and young people and their families are expected to benefit.
- **Activities run by the Whitehawk After School Project** targeted at children who are currently not able to play in the existing

open spaces, particularly to the north of the estate. This voluntary sector project, run by Impact Initiatives, has a strong track record of working with children with special needs. The new project has the potential to benefit more than 300 children and their families.

- A holiday activities programme for children in the **Turner area of Brighton**, targeted mainly at young people in the 11 to 14 years age range who are socially excluded and at risk of being drawn into crime and anti-social behaviour. This will run five days a week during the Easter and summer holidays, and will be delivered by the Turnerland Children & Young People's Project.

The mobile play project will be delivered by the CYPT's Out of School and Play Service, with the others managed by the organisations concerned. The Strategic Play Forum will oversee the programme of work. It is anticipated that some of the projects will start this summer, with all projects up and running within the year.

Training goes national

A training package for holiday playscheme staff, developed by the city's out of school and play service, is now available nationally.

Time To Play Holiday Training is a 15-hour course which meets the nationally-recognised Playwork Induction Standard.

It is made up of five modules covering supporting children's play; equal opportunities; health and safety; child protection and getting the best from everyone.

Successful participants receive a certificate and can continue on to a full Level 2 award using the knowledge they have gained.

For more information contact Paul Waller on **(01273) 292733** or email paul.waller@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

Gateway programme success

Refugees whose lives had been in danger in Ethiopia are settling in to Brighton & Hove, under a joint United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and UK government programme.

Many of the group of around 80 people, whose ages range from one to 57, had been living in the huge Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya after fleeing political strife in Ethiopia. Most are members of the Oromo ethnic group, which has frequently been in conflict with Ethiopia's central government.

The refugees have arrived under the Gateway Protection Programme, organised by the Home Office. The majority are families with children, a mixture of Muslims and Christians, with many speaking English. They were all granted refugee status before they arrived, allowing them to live and work in the UK indefinitely.

The Children and Young People's Trust provided a short but intensive induction programme for the school-age children, who are now being integrated into mainstream schooling.

Four teachers from the Service for English as an Additional Language (SEAL) were provided, plus an Oromo-speaking community cohesion officer who works in schools with the children and also with families and the wider community.

The SEAL pre-school team has worked closely with the families to get pre-school places for the

children aged up to three.

Carmel O'Malley, a health visitor, is based at Moulsecoomb Children's Centre two days a week with the Gateway project. She visits 12 households with children.

"My job is to focus on the health of the families. Normally a health visitor deals with the health of the pre-school children, but for this programme I am also working with the older children and the parents" she said.

The city's policy and development officer for asylum seekers and refugees, Lucy Bryson, said: "The induction process for the children has been very successful indeed and was visited by people from as far afield as Japan, wanting to find out more about how the UK deals with refugee integration."

Safer journeys

The journey to and from school will be safer for 600 children from St Luke's Infant and Junior Schools in the Queen's Park area of Brighton, after approval for a package of measures to improve travel for pedestrians and cyclists in the area.

The scheme is part of the Safer Routes to School Scheme, an initiative to improve routes to school across the city for children and parents walking, cycling or using public transport.

From rags to rugs

Children from four city primary schools turned rags into rugs at special textile recycling workshops.

Youngsters from Hertford Infants and Nursery, pictured, St Bernadette's Catholic Primary, St Andrew's CofE Primary and Westdene Primary took part in a recycling workshop run by professional textile artist and designer Debbie Siniska.

Debbie showed the children how to turn their old T-shirts and trousers into fantastic new rugs by using the old technique of ragging.

The £4,000 project has been funded jointly by the council's sustainability team and Veolia Environmental Services, which manages the council's waste and recycling contract.

The sustainability team hopes to display some of the children's work at the Jubilee Library later this year.



New-look newsletter

A magazine written and published by a group of looked-after young people has been given a major revamp, thanks to a grant from the Youth Opportunities Fund. Listen Up! newsletter is produced by members of the Young People's Forum (YPF) aged between 11 and 19.

The newsletter goes out to all children and young people over the age of eight who are looked after by the local authority, and is part of the Forum members' way of getting their voices heard.

Members of the group work hard writing articles and interviewing people and they decide on the theme of each issue, as well as helping to design the newsletter. They have lots of fun finding out about new things and go on a trip after the completion of each issue.

Usually the newsletter is photocopied on coloured paper and stapled in the corner. But following a successful application for funding to the Youth Opportunities Fund the latest issue is in full colour and has been designed and printed professionally on glossy paper.

The funding has also meant that the YPF can meet weekly rather than fortnightly, and will pay for computer design training so the group can do more of the design and layout work for the next issue.

The young people who produced the newsletter are Liam Dunne, Jason Tilley, Nicky Collins, Penny Marchant, Jake Fennell, Dan Hylands, and Fiona Robertson

YPF members use other opportunities to get their voices heard by attending consultations, such as those recently held about the Government's green paper *Care Matters*.

The YPF is supported by participation workers from the CYPT's Youth Advice and Participation (YAP) service. To find out more contact Clare McKinley or Tessa Brechin on (01273) 295510, or email ypf@bhyap.org.uk.

An electronic version of the new Listen Up! can be found on the YAP website at www.bhyap.org.uk.



Bud Peel-Doward is only ten, but already his ambition is to be an author. Bud enjoys writing stories at home and at school, and has the plot of a book already worked out. He is also planning to contribute to the next issue of Listen Up!

"One of the most exciting things that happened to me was meeting my favourite author, Paul Stewart, when I was in Borders book shop with Claire from YAP. We went in and he was just in there looking at the books!" said Bud.

Life through the lens

Young people have been exhibiting their photography as part of a project organised by ru-ok?, the Children and Young People's Trust's young persons' substance misuse service.

The exhibition, entitled *My Life*, was presented in February as part of DV8's SUBSTANCE event at Hove Town Hall, which showcased the creative work of young people in the city.

My Life displays the talents of seven young people who use the ru-ok? service.

Provided with disposable cameras, the young people set about trying to capture something that they felt was relevant to them. The project offered the artists the opportunity to share their life experience and express aspects from their day-to-day lives.

After the success of the exhibition ru-ok? is keen to show the work in the community and is now looking for public spaces to exhibit.

If you would like to offer an exhibition space, or want further information on the project or the ru-ok? service contact Frazer Streames on (01273) 293966.

Language skills success

St Mark's Primary School in East Brighton is pioneering a language skills programme developed by its headteacher, Sharie Coombes.

The Talk and Tell© programme is the result of doctoral research carried out by Sharie over six years.

"Many children arrive at school with language skills which are just not up to the job of helping them to learn. Nevertheless, it is not true to say that modern infants have no language - words often heard from heads and teachers" says Sharie.

"The reality is that they don't have the language of learning as part of their repertoire and further, they often don't have the confidence nor the pragmatic and discourse skills they now need, simply because they have never needed them before coming into a learning environment.

"Some professionals believe the solution is to widen children's vocabulary; others believe specific grammar teaching is the best approach. However, without the missing skills being specifically taught, many children will continue to have difficulties accessing language development and, ultimately, the entire school curriculum.

"There is no cost involved in running Talk and Tell © but we have found that its impact has been significant. Some children have improved their speech and language levels by more than 12 months in only ten weeks.

"In 2006, the Year 2 learners who had been on this programme continuously since entering reception class (when more than 60% had language delay) achieved outstanding results which were equal to or above the national average in reading, writing and maths. Very good value for money!"

Foundation unit is a first

Carlton Hill Primary School in Sussex St, Brighton launched the city's first foundation unit for three to five-year-olds with an open afternoon for parents and young children.

Foundation units combine nursery classes for three to four-year-olds with reception classes for five-year-olds. It means staff are able to meet children's needs according to what they need to learn next, not according to how old they are.

Children have open access to an outdoor classroom which supports children's learning across the curriculum. And because all the ages are combined, older children can support younger children.



Around 65 school students took part in the School Council Pupil Day organised by the Healthy Schools Team at the Loxdale Centre in Portslade.

The theme for the day was developing participation. Organiser Ruth Hilton said: "The idea was to get the students to think about going back and encouraging their school council to consult pupils on some of the more challenging aspects of school life which pupils are not always asked about – the curriculum, for example."



Children's author Michael Rosen delighted his audience of teachers and trainee teachers with a presentation of his work at a special session as part of the city's Holocaust Memorial events.

The session at the Jubilee Library dealt with teaching about difficult issues. Michael spoke about writing his *Sad Book* after his teenage son died, but also created a lot of laughter with other stories about his writings.

On your bike

Connexions adviser Amanda Scalway is hoping to raise £1,100 for the Martlets Hospice in Hove by cycling from London to Paris.

Amanda and her friend, Lesley Torn – the inclusion co-ordinator at Cardinal Newman School - are joining over 100 other cyclists on the sponsored ride in June.

If you would like to sponsor Amanda or Lesley go to www.justgiving.com/amandamitchell-scalway www.justgiving.com/lesleytorn



On the road . . .

A new-look youth information bus will be making a splash on the streets of Brighton & Hove.

Young people and a local artist have come up with a colourful graffiti-style design to give the information bus an eye-catching new look.

The vehicle, part of the Children and Young People's Trust Youth and Connexions Service, provides a mobile information, advice and support service.

Staff and young people using the service felt it was time the vehicle – a converted Peugeot van – got a makeover.

Sean Allen, from the Youth and Connexions Service, said: "The bus was plain white before and looked more like a kebab van or a surveillance vehicle. It was definitely time for a makeover!"

"Young people thought of ideas for the new look and came up with a dynamic design, which incorporates local landmarks, like the Pavilion, characters, and hand prints which they felt represented young people's individuality and also their differences."

The information bus, which is run with money from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), has been operating since 2003 and the NRF made the makeover possible.

It goes out and about in the evenings and weekends to different neighbourhoods across the city, stopping at places where youngsters regularly gather to provide an informal advice service. It also regularly visits schools and colleges.

Young people using the service are being encouraged to enter a competition to come up with names for the characters in the design.

Better safe than sorry

More than 4,500 children under the age of five visit the Accident and Emergency Unit in Brighton & Hove every year, with each visit costing on average £1,300.

Unintentional or accidental injury is the leading cause of death and illness among children aged one to 14 across Britain and costs the health service £146 million per year. Half of the injuries to children, which include falls, burns, scalds and poisonings, occur in the home and could be prevented with better support and advice to families, especially those living in poverty.

These figures have been published in the recent Audit Commission and Health Commission report *Better Safe than Sorry* which makes recommendations for a more coherent approach by councils and health trusts to avoid childhood injuries.

Brighton & Hove was praised in the report for being the only authority to undertake a comprehensive audit of safety issues affecting children and young people. The Children and Young People's Trust has developed a three-year children and young people's safety strategy and created an injury prevention co-ordinating group (IPCG) which is looking at ways to reduce childhood accidents.

The group has put in a bid for a home safety equipment scheme to be run across the city, offering assessments, advice and low cost equipment to families of children aged 0-5 years where there is a risk of unintentional injury.

Co-author of the audit and member of the IPCG, Sally Booth, said: "We hope this scheme will offer practical advice to families and save lives as well as money."

For more information contact Sally on (01273) 295055.

Climbing the walls

An indoor climbing wall has provided climbing sessions for 1,700 people – many of them children – in its first year.

The Rock Court indoor climbing wall was built in a converted squash court at Stanley Deason Leisure Centre.

Climbers have included pupils from local schools, youth and community groups and young people and adults with special needs.

Adventure Unlimited, which runs the project, also has a regular club for eight to 18-year-olds (The 818 Club) twice a week, with a chance to take part in climbing awards.

Project manager Christophe Smith says: "We aim to get many more kids and adults involved in our climbing activities this year."

For more information contact Adventure Unlimited on (01273) 681058 or visit www.aultd.org



Training: a new focus in 2007



Training takes centre stage for health workers this year. Last year, South Downs Health NHS Trust was fined £25,000 for failing to train staff adequately in manual handling and other breaches of health and safety.

"South Downs Health has also been unable to comply with Healthcare Commission standards for basic training. This situation is unacceptable and can put staff and patients at risk," said Ceri Davies, SDH Clinical Education Manager.

The new drive to see that every member of staff is trained in the basics begins in April. The aim is to see everyone trained in all key areas over the next three years.

Compulsory training is for all health staff (with a different emphasis in some areas for clinical staff), including SDH staff seconded to the Children and Young People's Trust. There are refresher courses for everyone every year.

Compulsory training covers:

- Fire training
- Incident awareness training - when and how to report out of the ordinary events. (No compulsory annual refresher course for this.)
- Manual handling
- Child protection
- Adult protection
- Equality and diversity
- Hand hygiene

For clinical staff, there is additional compulsory training in resuscitation, hand hygiene and infection control. Clinical staff must also complete mandatory for role training which is specific to the job they are doing and which is agreed with line managers as part of induction and appraisal.

'Although the training list appears to be long, many of the courses like Child and Adult Protection and Equality and Diversity are initial

half day courses with short yearly updates," explains Ceri.

"There will be a training strategy which sets out the Trust's aims with regard to everyone completing their training. Everyone will be expected to be up to date with fire safety, manual handling, infection control and resuscitation (for clinical staff) in the first year.

Obesity study leads the way

School nurses in Brighton & Hove are one step ahead of a national child obesity campaign, following their study which explored best ways to measure 11-year-olds.

This summer, in line with the government's initiative to reduce childhood obesity, NHS Trusts across the UK will become responsible for collecting data on the heights and weights of 11-year old children.

Flis Duncan, practice educator for school nurses, said: "We suspected that some young people would dislike being measured in school, so our main purpose was to explore their feelings. We also wanted to consider the views of teachers and find out how many parents would object.

"We measured 230 children (only two parents refused) and 188 children filled in questionnaires about their feelings. Two-thirds appeared not to mind and many made positive comments about the nurses' sensitive approach." However, a significant third (more girls than boys) minded very much. One child wrote: 'Terrible, horrible, sad, upset, hated it, made me feel fat'" The nurses felt the experience was more positive for children if it was combined with another activity, such as discussions about going to senior school and making healthy life-style choices.

"We would recommend combining measuring with a related activity and sharing the job with school staff to avoid lesson disruption. We would wish to offer support to families and pre-empt bullying by promoting the message 'We are designed to be different!'" said Flis.

For more information contact your own school nurse, or email Flis at felicity.duncan@southdowns.nhs.uk.

Early years conference

City Early Years Childcare and Play hosted a conference for all early years providers at Hove Town Hall in February.

More than 150 people attended, from the private, voluntary and independent sectors in Brighton & Hove. Speakers included Peter Elfer, senior lecturer in Early Childhood Studies at Roehampton University, sharing his knowledge on "Building Relationships for a Quality Provision" in pre-schools and nurseries. Delegates heard from other speakers including one from the Traveller Education Service and one on the new developments on looked-after children aged up to five.

Garden grant

The Boomerang Kids childcare centre in Saltdean has won an Awards for All grant of £10,000 to start a wildlife garden.

They are also fundraising for a large porch area for parents to meet while their children attend the group.

Securing £10,000 for the garden wasn't the centre's only celebration recently - just before



Christmas they had an unannounced OFSTED inspection and received an "outstanding" judgement for the education they provide.

"The barn has been very popular and has a long waiting list" said manager Helen Hicks.

The centre opened 18 months ago in a disused barn with a £300,000 Heritage Lottery grant.

Children's Festival events

As part of Brighton and Hove's Children's Festival, the Early Years Learning Officer at Brighton & Hove Museums is running a series of activities aimed at two to five-year-olds. They include: **Mucking around at Hove Museum**, Tuesday 10 April, 10.30am – 12pm and 1-2.30pm; **Zoolab at the Booth Museum of Natural History**, Wednesday 11 April, 10.30 – 11.15am, 12. – 12.45pm, 1 – 1.45pm and 2.30 – 3.15pm;

Old Pot, New Pot at Preston Manor, Thursday 12 April, 10.30am – 12pm and 1 – 2.30pm; **I Spy with my little Eye at Foredown Tower**, Friday 13 April, 10.30am – 12pm and 1 – 2.30pm.

Places are free, but numbers are limited to 15 children plus accompanying adult at each activity. To book a place call **(01273) 291324**.



Connecting Classrooms makes links with Africa

Cottesmore Catholic Primary School has joined forces with Cardinal Newman Catholic Secondary School, and St Mary Magdalene, St John the Baptist and St Bernadette's Catholic Primaries in a British Council project called Connecting Classrooms.

They have linked up with schools in Dakar, Senegal, and Arusha, Tanzania, with the aim of enabling students and staff to increase their knowledge and understanding of each others' countries and cultures.

Cottesmore's annual One World Week in February focused on these countries. It was overseen by Rachel Holland, and Tim Coxon, from the Connecting Classroom's project, gave the children an introductory assembly introducing them to the schools in Senegal and Tanzania. Another assembly, led by African visitors, taught the whole school some traditional African dances and songs.

Toni Lavelle, the One World Week co-ordinator, and Jackie Stansby, from the Service for English as an Additional Language, helped to organise the week's activities.

Teachers from the schools in Senegal and Tanzania will be visiting all the UK schools involved in the project.

"The creative side of One World Week helps to enrich the curriculum" said Rachel.

Foster carers needed for older children

The Fostering Service is urgently looking for foster carers for older children. It can be difficult to recruit carers for teenagers, but carers who look after older children comment that it is not as difficult as you might think and describe it as hugely rewarding.

Jane, who has been a foster carer for the last eight years, says it was "the best decision I have ever made" and goes on to say: "You can make a real difference with these young people and I know I have played a significant part in helping them make a success of their lives".

There are different types of foster placements needed by older children. Often teenagers come into foster care during a time of crisis in their lives. They need a safe, calm and stable environment in which they can feel supported.

Some teenagers have been in care for a long time and need the on-going support of a family as they move through to independent living. Education is very important and there are key

decisions to be made about future career paths. Foster carers are essential in helping the young person make these important choices.

Caring for teenagers becomes easier with experience. Many people have the skills and knowledge needed gained through bringing up children themselves or having a background of working with young people. It helps to have a genuine interest in young people and the issues they face. Carers also say a sense of humour helps.

Jess, aged 17, who helps with the Fostering Team's recruitment says: "My foster carers are the family I never had".

The Fostering Service provides a comprehensive package of support which includes generous financial allowances, 24-hour support, holiday activities and expert advice and training.

Contact the Fostering Team on **(01273) 295444** or log on to www.fosteringinbrightonandhove.org.uk

Playing for Success

Last term 65 students graduated from the Playing for Success Seagulls Learning Centre and more than 120 parents and students attended a celebration event in Brighton & Hove Albion's hospitality suit.

Students from Moulsecroomb Primary, St. Bartholomew's CE, St. Josephs RC, Longhill and Falmer Schools attended the centre after school once a week for ten weeks, developing their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills.

This term students from Rudyard Kipling, St. John the Baptist RC, Whitehawk Primary, Blatchington Mill, Hove Park and Patcham High are taking part. The scheme complements the Playing for Success Howzat Centre at Sussex County Cricket Club.



Writers in schools

"I feel really excited and confident!"

This comment came from a Brighton student whose school took part in New Writing South's Writers in Residence scheme last year.

New Writing South is a Brighton-based arts charity, whose purpose is to nurture and develop all kinds of new writing. For the last five years they have sent writers into schools to work with a wide range of young people, developing original plays and stories with them, and inspiring them to harness their imaginations.

New Writing South has a team of twelve professional writers.

From a half-day to numerous visits over a term, they can work with students in many different ways: focusing on transferring spoken ideas onto the page, developing ideas for writing careers, or devising an original piece of drama or prose which is performed to an audience.

Schools are charged for the service depending on what programme is agreed.

For more information go to www.newwritingsouth.com, or contact Beth, Education Manager on **(01273) 735353**.

Hidden treasure in school grounds

The city's school grounds cover an area six times the size of Preston Park – and Martin Pett is hoping to help turn them into valuable environmental learning resources.

Martin is the city's school grounds Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) project officer, employed by the Sussex Wildlife Trust (SWT) with financial support from the Countdown 2010 Biodiversity Action Fund. He is based with the council's countryside team at Hove Town Hall.

"BAPs were introduced as a result of the Rio Earth Summit" explains Martin. "In Brighton & Hove an audit of school grounds was carried out, and in an unusual move they were categorised as a habitat in their own right."

A steering group produced the school grounds BAP. It included teachers, countryside rangers, grounds managers, a garden designer and SWT education professionals.

"Our school grounds cover 161 square hectares, which is 15% of all the green space in the city. They are not all grass – some are tarmac" says Martin.

"Children can spend up to 25% of their school lives in the grounds, so there are fantastic opportunities to use them as a learning resource. This also ties in with other government initiatives like extended services in and around schools, healthy schools and eco-schools."

Martin has drawn up a "manifesto" for schools and spends time talking to heads about committing to the actions in it. They include identifying a teacher to take responsibility for taking forward biodiversity conservation, preparing their own BAP, mapping wildlife habitat in the school and using that habitat as a teaching tool.

"So far about 10% of our schools have signed up, and I am working on getting information out to other schools, including a newsletter which will include a poster in the middle for



display" says Martin.

Projects he has already been involved in include building a replica of an iron-age roundhouse at Moulsecomb Primary and creating a wildlife trail at Goldstone Primary. Middle Street Primary is working on greening its tarmac playground, and Patcham House special school has recently been awarded the eco-schools green flag award – the highest level of achievement.

Dorothy Stringer High School already has a dedicated environmental centre and Martin is working with them to take habitat projects to an even higher level.

Martin's background is in horticulture and includes four years as head gardener at London Zoo and working for a grounds maintenance company where he dealt with schools.

"I'm happy to visit any school in the city to encourage and advise on what they could do to make the most of their grounds" he says.

Contact him on (01273) 292370 or email martin.pett@brighton-hove.gov.uk.

SWT teaches over 19,000 children a year at its main centres at Woods Mill, Henfield, and Seven Sisters Country Park, on outreach visits to schools, and through the new Forest Schools programme. It also provides school grounds advice and INSET for teachers. For more information call (01273) 497561.

