

news

summer 2015

positively shaping children's futures



Director's Welcome

In our last Newsletter I highlighted the fact that Delphis Akintunde and her colleagues in the Spiral Bereavement team had led on Family Care's application to be accredited as an "Investor in Volunteering" organisation.

We were delighted to hear recently that our application has been successful and the NCVO has recognised the outstanding contribution which volunteers make to the work of the service and awarded Family Care the status of an "Investor in Volunteering" organisation. Congratulations to all concerned.

Training and professional development is important to our work and so I was pleased that recently our Social Workers and Therapists undertook four days of Theraplay training. Theraplay is a form of focused play therapy designed to enhance attachments between parents and children and as such is particularly relevant to each of the different areas of Family Care's work, whether that be in adoption or bereavement work or work with children affected by domestic abuse.

Family Care's partnership with Home for Good mentioned in the last Newsletter is developing well across the region as we jointly work together to find more families for the thousands of children in the UK who are waiting for adoption. **Our shared vision is a home for every child who needs one.**

As ever, thank you for your continuing interest in and support for our work. I hope you enjoy reading about our work and do pass this Newsletter onto your friends so that even more people can read about us!

Steve Hargrave



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Sphere Domestic Abuse



Sphere continue to support children and young people and their families who have experienced domestic abuse and we have found that we have a steady flow of requests for our service.

The staffing of our team has remained stable - we still have two and a half permanent Children's Practitioners and a part-time Service Manager to run the Service within Family Care. We have been fortunate to have been able to call on three skilled Sessional Workers to help us deliver our important work - one to co-facilitate the therapeutic groups we have been running for CAMHS, and the other two to work on our Tudor Trust boys' project.

Our team is excited about our training plan which enables us to work with

parents and children therapeutically together to help heal the damage caused to relationships within families from the experience of emotional and physical abuse. In our Team Development Day in May we focussed on practicing and embedding what we have been learning and sharing with team members who have not yet received the training.

We also have a busy schedule of activities for the families we work with. In the Easter holidays we were able to offer a climbing group session for seven of our children supported by Sports Aid. In the May half term, the Nottingham Rugby Club and White Ribbon Campaign - who also supported our launch event in February - are hosting an activity afternoon which will cater for up to 40 children aged from 2 to 12 years.

The Rugby Club's Community Coaches will be organising and leading the activities and encouraging parent participation too! Then in the summer holidays we are planning another family event in Sherwood Forest featuring a treasure hunt, nature trail, traditional games and communal picnic.

Our next priority is to ensure the sustainability of the service for the future and attract funding that can give long term stability. We are therefore now looking at some exciting proposals which utilise and develop our experience and learning by collaborating with some key partner agencies in Nottinghamshire.

Adoption

Once again, we start with more announcements about recent changes in adoption.

Adoption pay and leave changed in April to bring it more in line with maternity pay and leave, as well as people being allowed up to five occasions off for appointments when expecting a child to be placed. The Adoption Support Fund was also launched on the 1st of May. This fund has been designed to allow adopters to get access and funding to services, based on their family's needs. Initial feedback from agencies who piloted the fund has been positive and we hope that this allows adoptive families to access the right support in a timely fashion. More information on both the changes to adoption pay and leave and the adoption support fund are available on the government's adoption gateway First4adoption.org.uk.

Although the Adoption Support Fund will hopefully enable us to provide further support for our families, we will still continue offering the high levels of support to all our adoptive families. We now have in place groups for parents with children under six, as well as regular monthly meetings for families accessing therapy. We really value the input of our adopters, and our recent consultation meetings led by Steve, our Director, are really helping us in shaping the future of our service.

We're pleased that so many people have expressed an interest through these in talking at our Information Evenings as well as becoming Trustees and joining our Adoption panel. If you would be interested in finding out more about these please contact Steve (steve.hargrave@familycare-nottingham.org.uk).

Please remember our Facebook pages are also regularly updated with adoption news, details on training, answers to frequently asked questions, and details on our Information Evenings. We've also produced a handy guide to online safety for adults when using Facebook, which can be found on our Facebook page facebook.com/familycareadoption as well as on our adoption page on the Family Care website.

The adoption team have been working extremely hard in their family finding for our approved adopters. Due to the excellent recruitment of adoptive parents nationwide and a recent court case, people have been facing a longer wait for being matched with their 'forever family'. At Family Care we want to make sure any match with a child/children is the right one and lasts. Social Workers have been busy attending adoption activity days and national and local exchange days alongside our adopters to offer their advice and support and we hope that this will result in placements for everyone soon.

Although we are experiencing a delay in the matching process, we are still actively continuing to recruit more adopters. We know that there are still many children coming through the courts where adoption will be deemed as being in their best interests. Our responsibility is to make sure that we have adoptive parents, who have been trained and are supported, and who are available as soon as possible to minimise any delays for children. As mentioned in the Director's Welcome, we now have an active partnership with Home for Good whom we hope are able to help us in this, by working with their network of churches. We know that faith communities can offer excellent support to adoptive families and we're really excited at working together to promote adoption. As part of Home for Good's work, they are looking to find 'Adoption Champions' who are actively involved in their local church and interested in finding out more about how they can help. If you have adopted through Family Care and would like to find out more, you can contact a member of the Adoption Team or Joe, Regional Manager at Home for Good by email: joe@homeforgood.org.uk

Last (...and now 'Lees!'), we'd like to say a big 'Congratulations' to Jane in our Adoption Team, on her marriage to Alex at Easter. We wish them a long and happy life together.

Spiral Bereavement



spiral

supporting children and families

Between January and March 2015 we have run 12 Social Activities with 91 participants in total. We're really pleased to see so many families engage in the range of activities we have been running and are excited about our activities we have coming up. These include a residential trip for a group of children accessing our service and a family activity, which have been funded thanks to the Big Lottery Fund, and Comic Relief.



Our coffee mornings continue to be well attended. Earlier in the year, we celebrated the Chinese New Year, with children enjoying Chinese food and using their creativity to make this marvellous dragon which they paraded around the building much to the delight of staff!



We have seen an increase in the number of grandparents raising their grandchildren accessing Spiral. At the request of one of the grandparents we have started up a grandparents group/coffee morning. Supported by a volunteer and a retired beauty therapist we held a pamper session to offer some much needed nurturing to the group. We had three grandparents attend, but a further four have said

they would like to attend future groups.

The feedback from the grandparents was really lovely with all of them sharing they'd love to have the opportunity to meet up again. There was a real sense of common ground in the group with grandparents agreeing

'It's so different raising your grandchild....you feel so much more responsibility than raising your own children'

'An amazing session, would love to come again, I wasn't sure what to expect but we all need some looking after and everyone was lovely, I felt really relaxed.'

As well as working directly with children and families we also provide training to professionals and we have run four bereavement training events which have supported 34 professionals across the City and County of Nottinghamshire.

Spiral is really excited to share that our monitoring and evaluation project has been named 'Insight'. We began this work in 2014/15 without a name.

Insight is our project that involves face-to-face consultations with children and families who have experienced a range of services Spiral provides. The feedback and responses we gain really inform how the service develops and we hope to continue to develop this to continue to enhance the service we provide.



A recent quote from Insight:

'I met a Spiral worker about a week and a half after the death. Finding them so early meant they could help with all that immediate stuff, which I just wouldn't have known how to cope with otherwise.'

Spiral Volunteering



Spiral's amazing volunteers have provided 341 hours and 8 minutes of their time to support children and families accessing our service in the last three months. 24 Volunteers have supported some of the social events during this time. The support of Volunteers really does enable Spiral to provide a more enhanced service.

We were extremely happy to learn that Family Care has been awarded the 'Investing in Volunteers' Accreditation. Family Care will have the award for three years. A huge congratulations to Delphis, Spiral's Volunteer Co-ordinator for leading on this fantastic achievement for

the agency, and a big thank you to the Big Lottery for enabling us achieve this.



Fundraising



We were pleased to hear that we've been selected as one of the Park Garden Trail's charity this year.

The Trail happened on Sunday 7th June and featured over 20 gardens as well as offering live entertainment, children's activities and food and drink. For more information and photos from the day see their website www.parkgardentrail.org

Sarah Alger in our Spiral team has been busy organising our Family Care one mile Family Fundraising Run which is taking place at 11am on 14th June. We'd love our supporters to come and take part. Whether you'd like to run, walk or even hop we're sure you'll beat Steve

'the Snail' Hargrave who has promised he'll be coming along in his running gear! To find out more, and register your attendance, please get in touch with Sarah on **0115 9603010**, email: sarah.alger@familycare-nottingham.org.uk

If the fun run inspires you to dust off your running shoes the Robin Hood Mini/Half/Marathon will be happening on 27th September 2015 starting on the Embankment as usual. If you'd like to raise money for Family Care please register online sweatshopevents.co.uk/irhm/ and contact Louise Casey on our main number, or email: louise.casey@familycare-nottingham.org.uk as we'd love to hear from you.

Annual Review

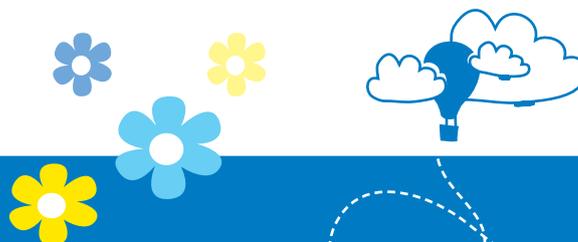
We're currently working on our 2014/2015 Annual Report and it will be available in the summer. If you would like a copy please contact Chris Burton and she will send you a copy either by post or email. Chris' email address is chris.burton@familycare-nottingham.org.uk or phone **0115 9603010**.



Churches

We recently attended Nottingham North's Synod and it was great to meet so many people who were aware of the work that Family Care do and who are already supporting us. We are always happy to go to churches or groups to talk about our work, so if your church is in need of someone to come along and do a talk, please get in contact with Louise Casey who will be more than happy to help.

Louise and Ros (from our bereavement team) recently went along to St Swithun's in Woodborough to do a presentation and would like to thank them for their warm welcome and continued support.



Feedback

The aim of this newsletter is to give supporters of Family Care information about service developments, events and fundraising. We value any feedback you have on the format or content of this newsletter.

If you do not want to receive information on Family Care's work, please email chris.burton@familycare-nottingham.org.uk or write to Chris Burton at our address.



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