

## Say 'Adios' to Passport problems!

In the past, a number of foster carers have come up against problems when trying to go on holidays with the children in their care due to passport issues. Therefore we now have new guidance in place to avoid any unnecessary delays for the children getting a passport.

**It has been agreed that at the second LAC review if the child is not to return home imminently then a passport is to be applied for.**

For children who have been with carers for some time a passport should be applied for as soon as possible and the next LAC review should check on the progress of the application.



***The guidance can be found on the foster carers website under policies, procedures and guidance.***

## Tax Reminder

This is just a little reminder that **all** foster carers are required to register with HMRC. It is very easy, and only takes around half an hour to do on the HMRC website. Visit [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk) and search for 'foster carers'.



## Football Funtime!

One of our foster carers is starting up a new football team in September. It will be an U11's team (year 6) called Trinant Tornados. There will be trials/try outs at Trinant recreational ground on 28th July. Registration is at 10.30am and may go on until 3pm. If you would like any more information, please give Symon a call on 07425 153884.



## A BIG THANK YOU!

Many foster carers are aware that Jane (one of our LAC nurses) was diagnosed with cancer earlier this year. Jane would like to thank all foster carers who sent her cards and well wishes throughout her treatment.

We have recently heard some really good news from Jane, and that is the results of her latest scans were all clear, and therefore she doesn't need to have any more chemotherapy.

We are all really pleased for Jane and hope that she will be back working with us all soon!



## Innovative independence tool launched



Foster carers in Caerphilly are amongst the first in Wales to use a checklist to help the children and young people they care for prepare for independence.

The 'Preparation for Independence Checklist', developed by our Leaving Care and Fostering teams in partnership with foster carers, supported lodgings providers and the young people themselves, is divided into tasks appropriate to different age groups.

The checklist was developed to act as a flexible tool to help children and young people develop their independent living skills prior to eventually setting up their own home. The checklist is divided into tasks appropriate to different age groups and carers can start using it with children as young as 4, and any child placed with you will have their own 'Independent Checklist'.

## Come and help us at the **BIG CHEESE!**

Once again the Fostering Team will be at the Big Cheese this year, raising the awareness of the need for more carers. If you can spare an hour or so on Sat 27<sup>th</sup> or Sun 28<sup>th</sup> July between 11am and 5pm to help give out information please come and find us on the site!!

## Looking for advice to help you care for adolescents?

On 6th June at Llancaiach Fawr the Caerphilly Fostering Team organised an information event for foster carers to raise awareness and provide information on local services available to help to care for older children. We had two brief presentations from the Immediate Response Team and Leaving Care, on their role within Children's Services followed by an open market place of stalls for foster carers to wander around with their cuppa, chatting and gathering information.

There was information provided from:

Family Information Service, Immediate Response Team, Leaving Care, Drug Aid, Sexual Health Prevention Project, Youth Service – Basement project, Fostering Network, NYAS, Youth Offending Team, LAC Safeguarding Team, Missing Children's Project, Llamau.

The foster carers website will soon be updated to feature a section on caring for adolescents, with lots of helpful policies, procedures and tools that any foster carer would find helpful.



### **Dear Caerphilly Foster Carers,**

*By now some of you may have already heard that I have moved on to pastures new. This is my opportunity to tell you what has been happening for me in the past few months, what my future holds and of course to say goodbye!*

*I left my job working with Caerphilly Social Services on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 as a result of an organisational re-structure and began working full time in the Caerphilly Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (Specialist CAMHS). Since this means I am now employed to 'do therapy' with children and young people I am very pleased about the change.*

*However, as with all change there is also a sense of 'loss' and I certainly feel a sense of loss as far as working with all of you is concerned! I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for making my work over the past seven years such an enjoyable experience. I have many happy memories of our training days together, which I tried to make as much fun as possible! I also enjoyed getting to know many of you, and your families, on a more intimate level during our consultation sessions!*

*All that remains is to say "Goodbye!" to each and every one of you and to wish you all the very best for the future!*

**June (Golding)**

### **Invaluable information to support you in your role as a foster carer**

During a recent fostering event Janine, one of our carers, had the opportunity to speak to staff from the Family Information Service (FIS). Janine said;

*"I was looking for information about what activities with appropriately trained staff were organised in my area. The lady from FIS took my details and shortly after I received a pack with details of groups close to me. It would have taken me a lot of time to research this amount of information. I gave the pack to my foster child and let him choose the groups that he wanted to join. He has already joined a canoeing group and will soon be joining St.John's Ambulance. His confidence and self-esteem has improved greatly. If anyone is looking for similar information I would recommend FIS."*

The FIS can provide details of a range of leisure activities and family support services in Caerphilly County Borough. This information is free, and is available for children & young people aged 0-25, their families and carers.

They can also provide information on family support services in the Borough that can help deal with the range of difficulties that families can experience, such as substance & alcohol misuse, domestic abuse, mental health, parenting issues, behaviour support, homelessness and children with special needs. The services are free, confidential and impartial, and are provided by friendly, helpful staff. For more information please visit [www.caerphilly.gov.uk/fis/](http://www.caerphilly.gov.uk/fis/)





## Many changes in the fostering team

**There will be a few changes made to the fostering team over the summer months. Rhiannon Pontin is leaving the review and support team to take up a post in the Bargoed childcare team. Both team managers are also leaving. Cath Hywood (was Williams) and Rhiannon Bates are moving off to pastures new and they both would like to say their goodbyes.....**

"I joined Caerphilly in 2004 and over the past 9 years have enjoyed working with the fostering team and foster carers to provide the best possible service to the children and young people we care for.

Caerphilly fostering service Has lead the way in many service developments, which would not have been possible without the enthusiasm and commitment of the Fostering Team, our partners in Health and Education and of course our Foster Carers.



In September I will be taking up a new post in Newport's Fostering Service, which will focus on developing and managing a new multi-disciplinary team of education workers, psychologists and social workers to directly support foster carers. I am looking forward to the new challenges ahead and continuing to work to develop fostering services to provide children and young people with the best possible outcomes while in care.

I am sure my experiences in Caerphilly will stand me in good stead for my new role and I look forward to any collaborative working with Caerphilly in the future."

**Cath**

*"I joined Caerphilly's Fostering Team in June 2007 as a Social Worker and I was very excited about the challenges of recruiting and assessing potential foster carers for our most vulnerable children.*

*Back in November 2011 I took over as team manager for the recruitment and assessment team, and I can honestly say I have not been disappointed in the standards of applicants coming through the assessment process and subsequently getting approved to care for Caerphilly's Looked After Children.*

*I have thoroughly enjoyed my time working in the Fostering Team, and I will be taking much of what I have learned and my experiences with me as I will be taking up post as an Independent Reviewing Officer. I will no doubt see many of you and the children soon in LAC Reviews."*

**Rhiannon**



## **We would also like to introduce the new Recruitment and Assessment Team Manager to you all.**

It is with great excitement that I join the fostering recruitment and assessment team in the role of Team Manager. I am privileged to be inheriting a team that have great skills and experience and look forward to leading them over coming months.

I have worked within social services for 14 years and have been managing social work teams within Caerphilly and another local authority over the last 5 years. Many of you might remember me from the assessment team East or the Blackwood child care team. Whilst I have worked alongside my colleagues within fostering services this will be my first post within the service and I am looking forward to the challenge of new experiences.

As with all agencies within the public sector there are many challenges being placed upon us due to the current financial environment and heavy budget cuts. It is my commitment to lead the Fostering recruitment and assessment team to overcome these challenges and ensure that we continue to provide a high quality fostering service to our Looked after Children whilst also being mindful of financial constraints being placed upon us.

I look forward to meeting you hearing from carers and young people with feedback and suggestions about where and/or how we can improve the service.

**Sarah Skuse**

