

# Newsletter

Autumn 2010

Family & Parenting  
Institute



## PARENTING FUND ROUND 3



### Welcome to the Autumn 2010 edition of the Parenting Fund newsletter!

Throughout Autumn we have received so many good news stories from the 90 projects that this is a bumper edition so we can fit them all in!

More projects than ever before are being nominated for and winning awards; see page 5 for details. This edition also includes a number of very personal articles. There is a poem written by a service user, as well as stories written from the point of view of both project staff and clients.

“ Thanks to all the projects for completing the recent outcomes survey. We are currently looking through your responses and will pass on the information you provided to the Department for Education. We will be sending out another survey with the next monitoring report looking at what plans projects have beyond April 2011, so we look forward to receiving more information from you then. ”

Mick Morgan, Parenting Fund Senior Manager

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The Parenting Fund

## Spotlight

### Liverpool Personal Service Society

are running a project for mothers and families affected by postnatal depression. They provide enhanced listening, at home play sessions and support to access community services.

They recently organised a daytrip to Formby Beach and Squirrel Park for the families they work with. The trip was an opportunity for the families to meet one another and engage in outdoor activities.

As they walked down to the beach the families realised the sand dunes were steeper than they looked, which was a daunting task as many of them were pushing prams. Luckily this helped to unite the group, who encouraged each other and were able to laugh together about the experience. The team saw that this really improved the parents' confidence and showed them they were able to turn something negative into a positive.

As the day ended many of the parents said they wished it could have gone on for longer. They explained how fantastic and refreshing it was to feel comfortable in a group situation and not feel judged.



“ It was just nice to get out into the fresh air, sunshine and somewhere peaceful. ”

Parent reflecting on the trip

## Case study

### VoiceAbility

VoiceAbility run an advocacy service for parents with learning difficulties and mental health issues in Peterborough.

They recently supported a mother who was concerned that her two year old son might be autistic. Social Services had been involved with the family a few years previously when the mother was using drugs. She was now clean but felt that everyone thought her son's behaviour was due to her parenting. She felt that no-one was listening to her and that she was being judged because of her past. She was becoming increasingly frustrated and her GP increased her dose of anti-depressants.

Social Services asked the mother to attend a Child Protection Conference, which she was very anxious about. VoiceAbility's Advocate worked with her before the conference to help her prepare what she wanted to say. The Advocate also supported her on the day, where she was able to speak with confidence about her concerns.

Following the conference she felt that people started taking her worries about her son's behaviour more seriously. He has been seen by a specialist who confirmed that he is autistic, and the family are now getting support from specialist services to manage and cope with the son's behaviour.

## Parenting Fund in the Media

This quarter two of our Liverpool projects have received well-deserved media attention.

**Families Need Fathers** launched their Liverpool office last year with funding from Round 3 of the Parenting Fund, and since then they have been supporting separated families and helping them achieve child-centred arrangements. Their recent volunteer drive saw them featured in local newspapers and on local radio, and thanks to this publicity they have now recruited and trained a number of new volunteers.

**Liverpool Arabic Centre** held their annual Arts Festival in July and it welcomed a great deal of media interest, receiving coverage from the BBC, Al Jazeera and *The Guardian*. You can listen to an overview of the Festival on Deutsche Welle's international website, [here](#). The picture on the right was taken by photographer Robert Cook.



### Case study

#### Coalition for the Removal of Pimping

CROP are a national charity working to end the sexual exploitation of children and young people by pimps and traffickers. Their Parenting Fund project is in Blackburn with Darwen.

One of their cases involved a family with two 14 year old daughters who were going out for long period of times and being collected in vans by older men from a local travellers' site. Both girls had described sexual activity with a number of the men.

The girls' mother involved CROP and the police, who seized eight mobile phones which were hidden around one of the girl's rooms for investigation. CROP completed a child sexual exploitation assessment for each daughter and met with their parents to explain what grooming is and to help them understand their daughters' behaviours. They referred the family for therapy and provided one-to-one workers for each child. The parents reported that one of the girls was self harming prolifically. CROP's specialist nurse referred her to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and they were offered family counselling.

The girls' parents banned them from leaving the house unaccompanied, which led to them feeling smothered and threatening that they would run away. CROP helped the family draw up a contract that agreed times and safe place for the girls to go out. As the girls kept to it they were gradually allowed more free time, and the family reported that tension reduced.

The girls now take part in positive activities recommended to them by their workers, and the family have been able to enjoy residential respite found for them by CROP. The whole family report that things are much improved; they continue to receive ongoing support from CROP.

## Focus on...

### Berkshire East & South Bucks Women's Aid

Delia Donovan, Head of Children's Services at BESBWA in Slough, tells us how their project has grown since receiving support from Round 3 of the Parenting Fund. Pictured below: family activities during the recent school holiday.

“ *The Children's Services Team has gone from strength to strength in the last year, offering various family support programmes to children and families affected by domestic abuse. We work under the five Every Child Matters outcomes throughout our assessment and intervention, and we implement support plans accordingly to address individual needs.*



*We have a highly imaginative and creative team who are very unique in the services they provide. Our services include family support work sessions, one to one therapeutic direct work for older children, parent and toddler groups, baby clinics, play therapy, a youth support group, healthy living workshops, awareness raising sessions in local schools and weekly fun activities for all the children and young people we support.*

*Our team has also been commended for our outreach work with children and young people, and we're soon to draft a chapter about our work for the national Women's Aid Safe and Sound manual. Our outreach work includes weekly therapeutic intervention around relationships, positive conflict resolution, attachment work, play and creative sessions, working with feelings and self-esteem, and safety planning.* ”

### Monkeying Around

Earlier this year **Action Deafness** launched their brand new children's book at Twycross Zoo in Leicestershire. *Learn to Sign about Nature with Olli* is the third in their series about Olli the Monkey, and includes topics such as the natural world, the weather, seasons and safari safety. The book is aimed at both deaf and hearing children, featuring clearly tabled sign language vocabulary. Pictured right are Olli, creator Garry Slack and the children who joined them at the launch event for monkey madness, song and sign!



“ *Learning sign language is stimulating and fun. Parents and children can have real fun connecting with each other as they practice the signs for bugs, spiders and, of course, monkeys!* ”

Garry Slack, author of *Learn to Sign about Nature with Olli*

Action Deafness publish a number of books on deafness and deaf related issues. To see the full range visit [www.actiondeafnessbooks.org.uk](http://www.actiondeafnessbooks.org.uk).

## Awards and Achievements

**Barnardo's Liverpool** and their partner organisations have been nominated for two Crystal Hearts Awards: Family Ties and Positive Partnership. The Crystal Hearts are awarded by HM Prison Service and the Partners of Prisoners and Families Support Group for multiagency working which improves the lives of children and families.

Two Parenting Fund projects were featured at the recent Children and Young People Now Awards.

**Berkshire East and South Bucks Women's Aid** won Team of the Year, and **Sunderland Association Football Club Foundation** were shortlisted for the Parenting Award.

Birmingham-based **My Time** have received the Outstanding Research Award within Counselling and Psychotherapy from the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy for their study on the emotional needs of carers.

**Gingerbread** in Manchester received a special commendation in the Adult Learners' Week Awards. Their Connecting Communities project works with non-English speaking single parents, and received the certificate in recognition of its commitment to learning.



The **Together Women Project** in Leeds has won the Howard League Community Award for Women (pictured above). The project works in partnership with West Yorkshire Police to deliver intensive interventions to mothers who are offenders, helping to prevent family breakdown and break the cycle of offending. TWP was cited as being an excellent example of delivering innovative, flexible and responsive services.

Bristol-based **One25** have won a 2010 *Guardian* Charity Award. The newspaper awards five small to medium-sized organisations with Charity Awards each year, with the aim of boosting their profile.

## In My Own Words

“ When I first got referred to **Southampton Women's Aid** I was in quite a state, with a lack of confidence and battling against what I felt like was everyone, but they have helped me so much.

*I believed I was a bad parent; after being told by my ex-partner many times I started to believe it, but the project has given me the confidence to look at all the good things I have achieved and the positives in my life. I leave a meeting sometimes feeling quite chuffed with myself after explaining what I have achieved.*

*The main thing the project has helped me with is going to court with my ex-partner to arrange residency and contact for our son. They set up an appointment for me with a solicitor who I really liked and thought could help me. I didn't feel able to attend court on my own and I can't express enough thanks to my Support Worker for being there with me.*

*I don't think I could have got through all the things I have had to deal with if it wasn't for the project. I used to think organisations like this were just for women who had been physically abused but I have been affected by mental and verbal abuse and Southampton Women's Aid have helped me to realise that I deserve help. ”*

## Sound Bites

What service users are saying about the projects:

“ I was very low when I started the counselling, but speaking to someone confidentially really helped. The counsellor was very helpful, attentive and concerned. ”

A mother receiving counselling for postnatal depression from the **Tavistock Centre for Couple Relationships** in Greenwich, London

“ Thank you so very much, I have learnt so much. I am now an empowered parent... kids watch out! ”

A parent who attended a programme run by **Action for Children Cornwall**

“ Wow, I never thought I'd see anything like this, this has never happened before. For men and fathers, this is good. ”

A father attending a parenting programme run by **Barnardo's Southwark** for the African Caribbean community

## Case Study

### National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

The Parenting Fund are supporting the NSPCC Family Team in Grimsby, photographed right by Jon Challicom, image posed by models.

They recently worked with a 14 year-old boy who lives with his mum and step family. He and his mother had suffered years of domestic abuse at the hands of his father, which had deeply fractured their relationship. The mother was unable to feel emotional warmth towards her son, and even found it difficult to be in the same room as him. The son became emotionally isolated: his behaviour became aggressive and his friendships at school suffered. His relationship with his mother came under even greater strain when he was discovered behaving in a sexually inappropriate way towards his younger step brother.

Referred by Social Services, the NSPCC began restoring the son's attachments to his family by using an innovative method called video interactive guidance. This involves taking a ten minute video clip of the family at home interacting normally, which is then used to show them where they are communicating successfully and displaying positive behaviours. As the family recognise what they have done which works, they learn how they can repeat it again.

Over several months the family made real progress, and the son's behaviour changed as his confidence grew. His parents began to welcome his company and he made remarkable progress in his relationships at school. At their final session his mum said "he is a real pleasure to be with" – such a difference from when they began work with the NSPCC.



## Me and My Son

I remember the times when we were together,  
Me and my son at the park.  
Pushing him on the swings  
And hearing him laugh.  
I also remember going for walks  
Long walks, short walks  
And even our talks.

Daddy's little one – you used to hold my finger  
And even my thumb,  
When he kicked the ball  
We both would run.  
We went to Crown Pools,  
Me and my little one,  
Kicking his legs with his armbands on.

And when it was time to go home to his Mum  
I'd have bathed him, changed him and wiped his little bum.  
Now a bedtime story for my little one,  
A kiss on the cheek –  
Goodnight son.

This poem was written by a father on the You and Your Child parenting course run by **Ormiston Children and Families Trust** in Norfolk. This is an OCN-accredited course targeted at prisoners who want to improve their parenting skills in order to develop and maintain their relationship with their children whilst in prison.

## Snippets

A round up of some of the inspiring activities that have taken place recently:

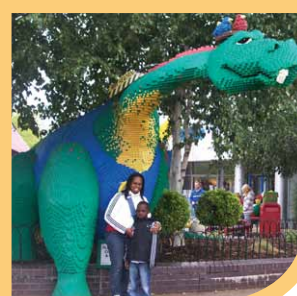
### **Finsbury Park Homeless Families Project**

developed partnerships with Tottenham Hotspur and Arsenal Foundations during the playscheme they ran in the recent school holidays. They feel this partnership will be really beneficial in providing positive male role models for the children they work with.



### The **National Autistic Society Croydon**

arranged a trip to Legoland for fifteen families including mums, dads, children with autism and their siblings. Lots of families commented that they would not have been able to go on a trip like this without the support of the NAS, and that it had given them the confidence to try similar trips in the future.



An 80 year old grandmother recently took part in a sky dive to raise money for **Leeway Women's Aid** in Norfolk. After receiving the go-ahead from her doctor Pauline Webb jumped out of a plane at 13,000 feet, raising £600 for the charity. Her friends at the Women's Institute told her she must be mad!

“ It is something I have always wanted to do and the opportunity may not have arisen again. I thoroughly enjoyed the jump, and it raised money for a great cause.”

Pauline Webb

## Parenting Fund News

Parenting Fund consultants Jill Shaw and Aliona Laker recently held another successful Monitoring and Evaluation workshop in Birmingham, and we would like to thank **COPE: Black Mental Health Foundation** for providing the venue. This event brought the total number of Round 3 workshops up to almost 40. The feedback we have had from these workshops has been great, and we hope they have been an opportunity for project staff to meet each other and share ideas.

Projects are still able to submit examples of local practice to C4EO (the Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in Children and Young People's Services). The Parenting Fund are keen for projects to do this and your consultant will be able to offer support with the application and validation process. For more information visit our website: [www.parentingfund.org](http://www.parentingfund.org).

Dave Ferris recently left his role of Parenting Fund Administrator. We would like to thank Dave for all his hard work on the Fund and wish him all the best for the future.



## Parenting Fund contact details

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## Family and Parenting Institute News

A taster of some of the activities going on at FPI which could benefit Parenting Fund projects.

### **Family Focus – a vital tool for those who work with families**

Do you need to be kept up to speed with the crucial issues affecting UK families, including the most vulnerable? The Family and Parenting Institute offers a free monthly e-newsletter service for people who volunteer or work professionally with families. *Family Focus* contains a monthly digest of family policy issues from Westminster and Whitehall. It also summarises relevant family and parenting news, and provides notices of conferences, seminars and events of interest to those who work in the sector.

To sign up to receive *Family Focus*, [click here](#).

### **Planning a merry (and legal) Christmas**

From what age can children buy pets, babysit or drink alcohol at home? What does the law say about children missing school, parents working flexibly, and child carers? If a child injures someone or damages something, can the parent be held liable?

The law affects families in hundreds of different ways, and the popular booklet *Is it Legal?* answers the most common questions for family workers, parents and carers. For more information and to order a copy, visit the Family and Parenting Institute website.