

The latest news from the Thriving Kirklees partnership

## Included in this newsletter...

- Quality volunteering
- New TK colleague awards
- Workforce wellbeing session
- 'A Day in the Life' of new YCC CEO  
Mark Farmer  
and more...



## Our pandemic response continues

Almost a year into the Covid-19 pandemic our services and colleagues continue to adapt our ways of working to connect with children, young people and families and offer the highest quality support with them.

Teams are continuing to use online methods and phone calls to keep in touch and meet face-to-face where possible and practical, adapting to the latest national and regional lockdown restrictions over recent weeks.

New resources are also being produced, such as Home-Start Kirklees creating bitesize videos to help support families with school readiness. More online resources are being developed and curated and these are being shared with families and added to the TK website as appropriate.

We've also been supporting work in the wider community - see Page 4 for information on the Seed Fund. Another example is that a small surplus from the Health Action Fund was donated to support the Kirklees Looked After Children Annual Christmas Event. In the absence of an actual Christmas gathering, home deliveries of food parcels and presents were made to Looked After Children:

**The co-ordinating team said: "Our young people were absolutely thrilled to receive their deliveries, many of them had not expected to get anything this year due to Covid-19 and were delighted to receive not only a meal but great gifts and a food parcel to tide them over the festive period."**

# Update from Paveen Yaqub – TK Partnership Manager

**Happy belated 2021 to everyone!**

Now we are in the full throes of a new year, it's time to share more on our progress and plans. In January we awarded new grants to a number of social action projects led by young people, all of which are helping to cultivate an ethos of co-production. We are committed to promoting the voices of children and young people and working with them to use what they identify as their needs...to shape our services in their way! To do this, we will be developing a new training and support plan for all our Thriving Kirklees workforce in partnership with stakeholders across Kirklees.

Following a strategic and operational review completed late last year, we have been undergoing a period of reflection to help us take stock of the work already done and prepare for the challenges ahead. There has been much to celebrate in our 4-year journey including valuable relationships built with children, young people, families, and volunteers.

It's also healthy to periodically take stock, re-group and re-focus our energy and resources. We are now in the process of developing the next stage. This involves consideration of review recommendations, agreeing follow-up actions, and creating a plan for the future of the TK Partnership in consultation with commissioners.

Transformation takes many years, and the key challenges as a TK partnership for 2021-2022 are to capture outcomes better; increase the voices of children and young people in shaping and innovating future plans; strengthen integration with stakeholders; and widen our reach. We are also committed to improving accessibility for all communities, especially those most disenfranchised. Tackling inequalities is core to TK vision and aims for a healthier, thriving, local population. To this end **we have some great news, in that our Starting Well VCSE bid has been approved!** We are delighted to announce that a new programme of early health improvement targeting under-represented communities is about to unfold. This is hot off the press so more details to follow in our next newsletter.

Recently, Some of our workforce have put themselves forward as volunteers for the Community Testing and Vaccine Programme and are now being called upon. A huge thank you to everyone willing to give up their time for this vital life-saving work.

Stay well, be safe and hang in there. If you are at all struggling please speak to someone, you are not alone.

**May 2021 yield hope, health and recovery for all of us!**

## TOP Awards

This year we're introducing a new way of recognising the superb work of our colleagues through the TOP Awards (**Thriving Outstanding Performance**).

The TOP Awards are a quarterly award scheme, which will recognise colleagues from across the Thriving Kirklees partnership who go above and beyond in delivering high quality care and support to our community and/or other colleagues.

**The first winners will be announced in March and will feature in our next newsletter.**

## Seed Fund

Here are two more updates on activities that were supported through our Thriving Kirklees Seed Fund

**Time For You** – Children and families enjoyed weekly sessions of creative activities including paper art, needle felting, soap and bath-bomb making. They also took part in discussions on well-being, journaling, self care, diet, sleep, exercise, relationships and much more!

**Be More Outdoors** – Local families were involved with story telling and craft videos which were premiered every Friday morning through Facebook and uploaded to YouTube. 15 weekly sessions were targeted at harder to reach families and included a paper-based story and craft activity to ensure the project was inclusive of those without internet access and IT equipment. The activity allowed families to interact with staff and allow trust and relationships to develop. Participants learnt to film, edit and animate their original stories themed around lockdown with an associated craft activity. Nine local schools were approached and offered analogue story packs containing a printed version of the story and materials to make the craft item.

*“Thank you for keeping us connected to nature, the seasons and the Great Outdoors”*

*“The tales have been exceptionally creative in the way they have related to contemporary lockdown events”*

*“It was good to have some normality and some routine, every Friday morning the story filled our house”*



## Changes at YCC

There've been some recent changes at Yorkshire Children's Centre involving colleagues who have been involved with our TK partnership.

Helen Orlic has stepped down from her role as the YCC Chief Executive. That role has been taken on by Mark Farmer who joins from his previous work with St John's Ambulance.

You can read more about Mark in his "Day in the Life" feature on Page 8.

In addition, longstanding Thriving Kirklees TOG member Jane Sykes has moved on to pastures new. Jane was YCC's Head of Early Intervention & Prevention Services.

Our thanks go to both Helen and Jane for their hard work, dedication and their valuable contributions to the development of the Thriving Kirklees partnership.

We wish them both well in the future.

In addition, YCC are also in the process of recruiting a new Chair and they have a new Head of Finance and Support Services, Rob Edden.

## 50 things to do...

"50 Things To Do Before You're Five" gives parents and carers ideas for 50 activities that you can do with your Under-5s.

They are low-cost or free activities and experiences including indoor, outdoor, seasonal, home-based and out-and-about activities, that are

not only fun but will get your little one off to a flying start with their learning and language development.

Download the app from the Apple App Store or Google Play or visit the website -

<http://www.kirklees.50thingstodo.org/>

# Quality volunteering

Thriving Kirklees provides a high quality experience for volunteers and that's official – as all our partners now hold the Kirklees Volunteering Quality Award.

To gain the award there are eight criteria areas that are inspected. Thriving Kirklees partners demonstrated a high level of knowledge, expertise and professionalism in working with volunteers. We continue to work hard in ensuring they have a positive and rewarding experience.

Volunteers love the experience of supporting families with us and often move on to paid roles of employment or into further education.

Some volunteers often stay with us for a number of years, choosing to support a variety of parents and young children.

You can find out more about our volunteering opportunities and hear from some of our volunteers at:

[www.thrivingkirklees.org.uk/volunteering](http://www.thrivingkirklees.org.uk/volunteering)



# More online resources now available

More online resources for parents and others caring for children and young people are now available on the TK website.

There's five courses from the TK Parents resource:

- Understanding Pregnancy, Labour, Birth and Your Baby
- Understanding Your Baby
- Understanding Your Child
- Understanding Your Teenager's Brain.

In addition, we have also curated a range of resources for parents-to-be and new parents into four categories:

- Building a relationship with your baby
- Feeding your baby
- Keeping your baby safe
- Looking after Yourself

To access the Thriving Kirklees online resources visit:

[www.thrivingkirklees.org.uk/tkparents](http://www.thrivingkirklees.org.uk/tkparents)

# Healthy Start's Gone To Iceland

People who are pregnant or have a child under 4, could get Healthy Start vouchers to help buy basic foods. This important means-tested scheme provides vouchers to spend with local retailers.

As an extra bonus, Iceland is currently offering a free pack of frozen vegetables (worth £1 each) to all families each time they use Healthy Start Vouchers in their stores, boosting the value of the vouchers and providing access to great value, nutritious, family-friendly food. The offer is available until 31st March 2021 in all Iceland and The Food Warehouse stores.

Once enrolled on to the Healthy Start scheme, people will also be entitled to FREE maternal and children's vitamin supplements. They will receive vouchers in the post every six weeks, these can be exchanged at most local Pharmacies & Health centres.

*"Before coronavirus, I rang for help to make my home safer for my children. I got new safety equipment fitted and they did a home fire safety check and gave me some advice. Since lockdown started, people have kept in touch and helped me to get more support and I've signed up to the healthy vitamin scheme too which helps me provide healthier food for my children by exchanging the vouchers at my local supermarket. I just wanted to say to the people who've helped me: you're doing a great job. You care and in these times that means the world."*

For a full list of collection points [please click on this link.](#)

For information on how to apply, please visit

<https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/healthy-start-vouchers/> or contact Yorkshire Children's Centre 0-19 Thriving Kirklees team on 07849 398807.

## Here's some of the feedback we've received about our services as the pandemic continues...

*"Very reassuring and the lady took the time to discuss everything with me, without rushing me off the phone. Appointment now booked for next week at the clinic. Couldn't ask for more. Great service."*

*"It was a brilliant experience to speak with someone who was so helpful and friendly. Janet made me feel at ease and provided me with all the help I needed, she answered my questions and concerns fully. So glad I called and asked for help."*

*"What a difference this has made to our lives and my sanity. From an extra pair of hands, to a non-judgemental listening ear and at times a shoulder to cry on she has made a huge difference to my life and ultimately the life of my family. During Lockdown, my volunteer has kept in touch with weekly phone calls and I know she is there if I need her. I will be forever grateful for the support offered by this wonderful organisation. I'm certain things have been easier thanks to her support and friendship."*

*"It was very informative and very helpful. Answered my questions really well and very attentive. Listened to me in a very professional manner."*

# A happier Christmas

Around Christmas time, Home-Start purchased gifts and goody bags for young parents using funding from Freemasons and a One Community grant. John Lewis Partnership gave Home-Start food hampers for the most vulnerable families plus donations of gifts:

## Quotes from parents...

“Thank you for the food and presents and everything your service has done for me and my family”

“I cannot tell you how happy my husband and the children were when you dropped off our lovely presents, we are having such an awful time with our child at the moment, that was just what we all needed to make us smile. Home-Start really look after us”

“Thank you very much for the lovely hamper and the presents for the children. Really didn't expect these.”

“Just wanted to say a huge thank you for the lovely presents and my very big hamper!”

“Wow- thank you, there's some treats in there for me too, thank you”



# 'A day in the life...' with Mark Farmer

I joined YCC as Chief Executive on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, and two days later England entered lockdown. With a combination of lockdowns and tiers being in place ever since, it has to say the least been an unusual time to join a new organisation, in a new area and a different sector.

I don't really know what a day in the life of YCC's CEO is like yet - hopefully it will not always mainly consist of looking at a screen from home!



YCC has a family of services, including a growing alternative provision College; specialist family and child contact services; telephone and face-to-face befriending; hopeful families, providing an holistic approach helping people into education, employment or training; plus the services we offer in the TK partnership.

My time in post has been a mix of getting to know our people, our services and our partners - all in a virtual world! A priority is investing in our people's wellbeing, support and development, and first steps include establishing an Employee Forum, an Employee Assistance Programme, and kicking off a role and reward project. We're also doing some work on giving more clarity of purpose to YCC - so people understand who we are and what we do.

Getting to know the Kirklees VCS landscape is also a major part of my day - our sector does like meetings, steering groups, partnership boards - and navigating through those and getting to know the individuals and the priorities takes some time.

The TK partnership has been a priority - getting up to speed with both current delivery and the emerging thinking for 'Year 6' and beyond, and how we can all collaborate better to deliver cohesive co-produced services for our community. It is certainly keeping me busy....

# Thriving Kirklees

