



**DURHAM**

[www.mctdurham.co.uk](http://www.mctdurham.co.uk)

c/o Durham SENDIASS

0191 5873541

# **Making Changes Together Conference Report XXIII**

**Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019**

**Ramside Hall Hotel**

# Agenda

1. Registration & information
2. Welcome and introductions
3. SENDIASS update
4. Special Educational Needs Transport
5. Durham's Local Offer  
Coffee Break
6. An Introduction to Kooth: Online Counselling,  
advice and support service
7. Update from Laura Coulthard  
(Designated Clinical Officer)
8. Supported Employment Business Case  
Lunch
9. Raffle
10. Self-care for parents/carers
11. MCT Question and Answer session - deferred. Slot allocated to  
conference delegate, Marie Matthewson to talk about 'Learning  
for Life'
12. Close

## **1. Registration and Information**

Delegates registered into the conference then spent time in the Neville Suite browsing a wide range of stands and receiving information and guidance by personnel from organisations such as:

Sensory Worx  
Cheesy Waffles  
The Sensory Place  
Healthwatch  
Durham County Carers Support  
One Point  
Learning for Life  
Autism Strategy Employment Group

## **2. Welcome and Introduction**

This 23<sup>rd</sup> Making Changes Together parents conference was held in the Bishop's Suite, with lunch served in the conference centre foyer and a separate Marketplace of Organisations Stands in the Neville Suite, adjacent to the conference room and foyer.

Making Changes Together Parents Steering Group member Julie Temple, welcomed delegates to the Conference, introduced the agenda and ensured that all housekeeping arrangements were clarified. Julie asked delegates to complete the various questionnaires in their packs and evaluation sheets at the end.

## **3. SENDIASS Update**

Lisa Stringer, newly appointed manager of the Special Educational Needs Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) introduced Catherine Wynn and Angela McGinley, newly appointed SENDIASS Officers, to the conference. Ann Connor remains Office Manager and the fourth team member. Lisa described the rationale for the provision of a SENDIAS service and showed a five-minute video of the service remit. The video can be viewed via the link below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=54R4cDbX6L8>

Lisa continued her presentation by reminding the conference of the reason for the SENDIAS service being available and at 'arms-length'.

## STATUTORY DUTY ON ALL LOCAL AUTHORITIES

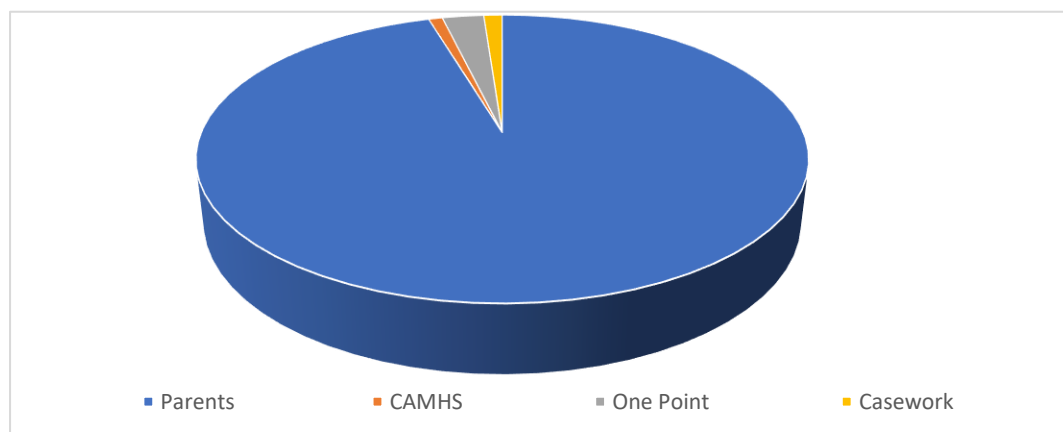
- The Children and Families Act 2014 states that every local authority must provide access to information advice and support about special educational needs (SEN), disability, health and social care for children, young people and parents
- Durham SEND Information Advice and Support Service is the statutory service supporting parents/carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and children and young people with SEND.

Lisa described the work of the service since September 2019, focussing upon the way that information is now gathered from service users at the point of referral, and where referrals were coming from. As well as information on what needs their child had, issues they were concerned about, what service users needed and how the information could be analysed and fed into the Local Authority in a way that it could be used to inform practice and developments.

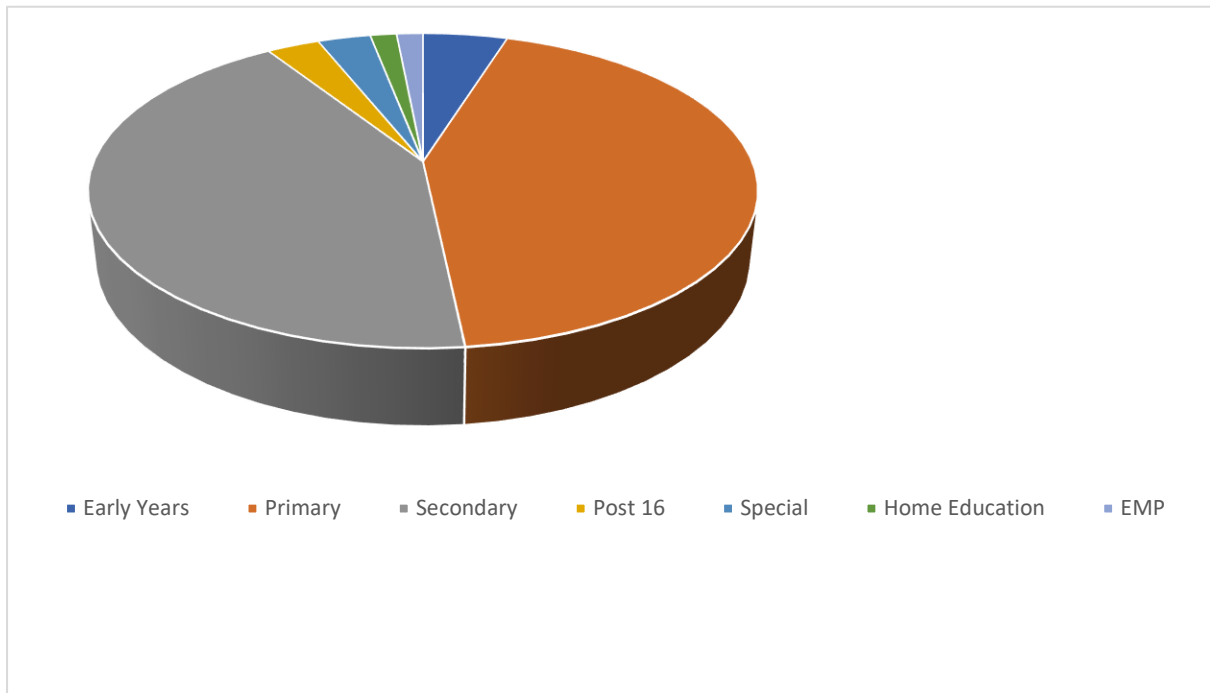
***The range of data taken, and subsequent analysis can be seen below;***

- During the 8-week period (2nd September to 20th October 2019) the service received a total of 709 enquiries via the telephone helpline, a further 20 enquiries via email and 3 enquires via the website link) totalling 732 enquiries to the service.
- From the 732 enquiries SENDIASS identified 330 new referrals. The remaining 402 enquires were identified as repeat calls from parents, carers or professionals.

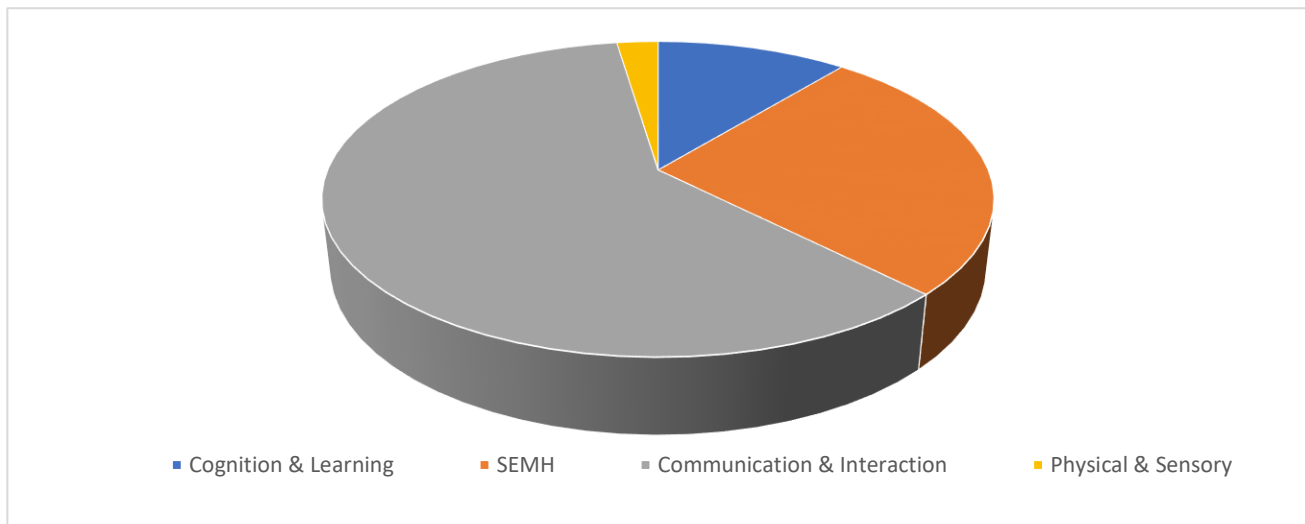
### Source of the Referral



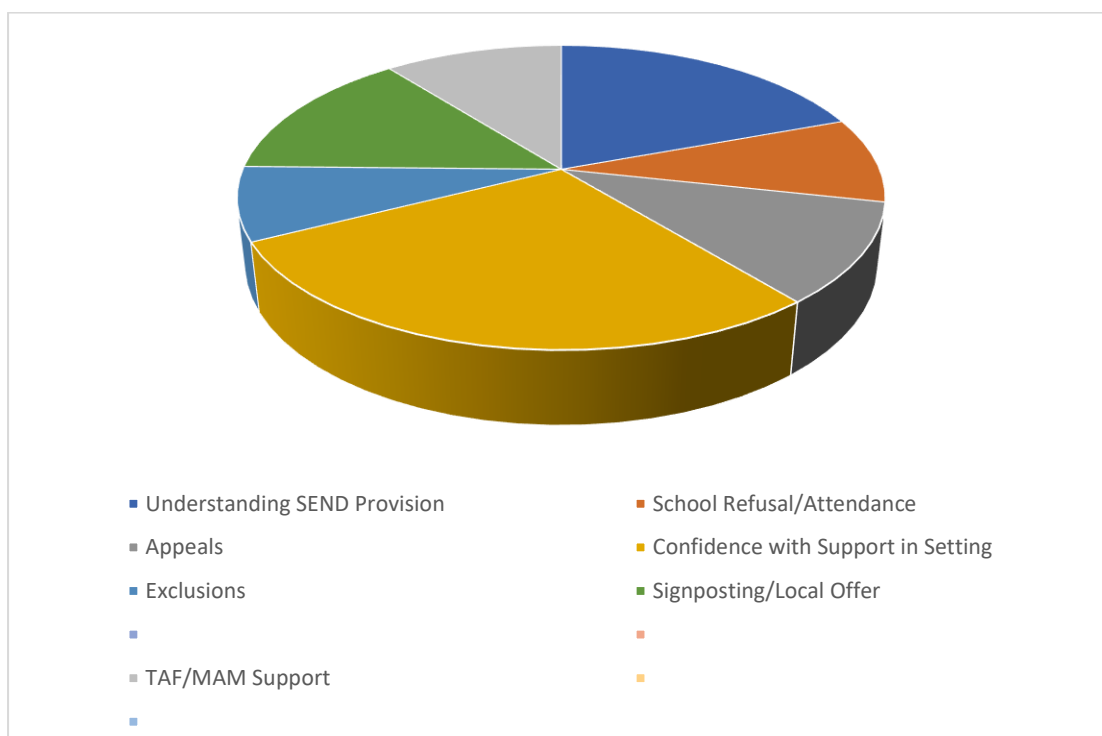
## Settings



## Primary Area of SEND



## Reasons for the Referral



How to get in touch;

### Contact Us

#### **Durham SEND Information Advice and Support Service**

Lee House  
Lee Terrace  
Easington Village  
Peterlee  
Co Durham  
SR8 3AB

Tel: 0191 5873541 or 03000 267007 (Use the answer machine)

Email: You can contact us by completing our [contact form](#).

Website: [www.durhamsendiass.info](http://www.durhamsendiass.info)

**Opening hours** Monday to Friday, 8.30am until 5.00pm.

If parents can't get through immediately, please leave a message. The answerphone is checked twice a day, and someone will get back to you. Lisa asked delegates to complete a short survey about what they feel about the service.

#### **4. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Transport**

School places and admissions manager, Graeme Plews spoke to the conference, describing his role and function. Responsible for school admissions and home school transport, Graeme described how home to school transport works. He explained how the budget operates and the need to stay within a set budget as accurately as possible. He described the admissions policy relating to transport and how the two interlink. Graeme also explained the two and three mile rules on pupil entitlement. Transport is provided to 'nearest suitable school' within a strict policy laid down by the Local Authority. There is a specific range of issues to take into account when a pupil has an Education Health and Care plan. Durham's Transport Policy can be found on the Local Authority website and on the newly improved Local Offer.

Delegates asked a number of questions relating to post 16 transport and age-related entitlement issues.

Karen Staines, from the contract management team talked a little bit about transport contracts. The team check standards and compliance of drivers and all transport. She explained that all drivers undertook safety training, and passenger assistance training when required. The required training was refreshed every three years.

Karen also answered questions from the floor and answered a number of questions around children with anxiety issues and various issues around the tendering process.

#### **5. Durham's Local Offer**

Paul Shadforth, Strategic manager for SEND Strategy Assessment and Provision, started his presentation with some audience participation, by handing out a feedback document to each table and giving out a webpage link to the new prototype Local Offer page [www.durham.gov.uk/article/22105](http://www.durham.gov.uk/article/22105)

Paul updated the conference on the Consultation around the High Needs Analysis and the High Needs Review. Recommendations are being drafted now but cannot be shared until the general election concluded and purdah is completed. Therefore, the report will be shared with the public in January 2020.

Paul moved delegates back to focussing on the Local Offer. Conference delegates were able, through individual technological access (mobile phones and iPads

provided and supported by MCT members in the room on tablets) to have a look and try out the prototype site. The Local Offer platform has been refreshed in Co-production with MCT, the platform is now re-ordered with more practical routing and guidance and imagery to support web page visitors to find support.

Paul gave a clear, visual presentation of the new site and explained that the new site design aims to be more accessible and user friendly. The proposed landing page for the revised site is illustrated below;

## Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and our Local Offer

Welcome to the Local Offer in County Durham. Our Local Offer provides information about services available for children and young people (from birth to 25 years) with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. It is here to help you find information, advice and guidance about the types of services and support available to you.

 <p><b>Local Offer</b> ✓</p> <p>About the Local Offer in County Durham</p>	 <p>What special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) means</p>	 <p>Children and Young People's SEND Promise for County Durham</p>	 <p>Information for professionals and providers</p>	
 <p>Advice and support providers</p>	 <p>Early years and childcare</p>	 <p>Education, training and employment</p>	 <p>Becoming an adult</p>	 <p>Youth Offer - for young people up to the age of 25</p>
 <p>Leisure and activities</p>	 <p>Health, family support and social care</p>	 <p>Money and benefits</p>	 <p>Transport</p>	 <p>Feedback, concerns and complaints</p>

[Share this page on Facebook](#)
[Share this page on Twitter](#)
[Print this page](#)

A to Z

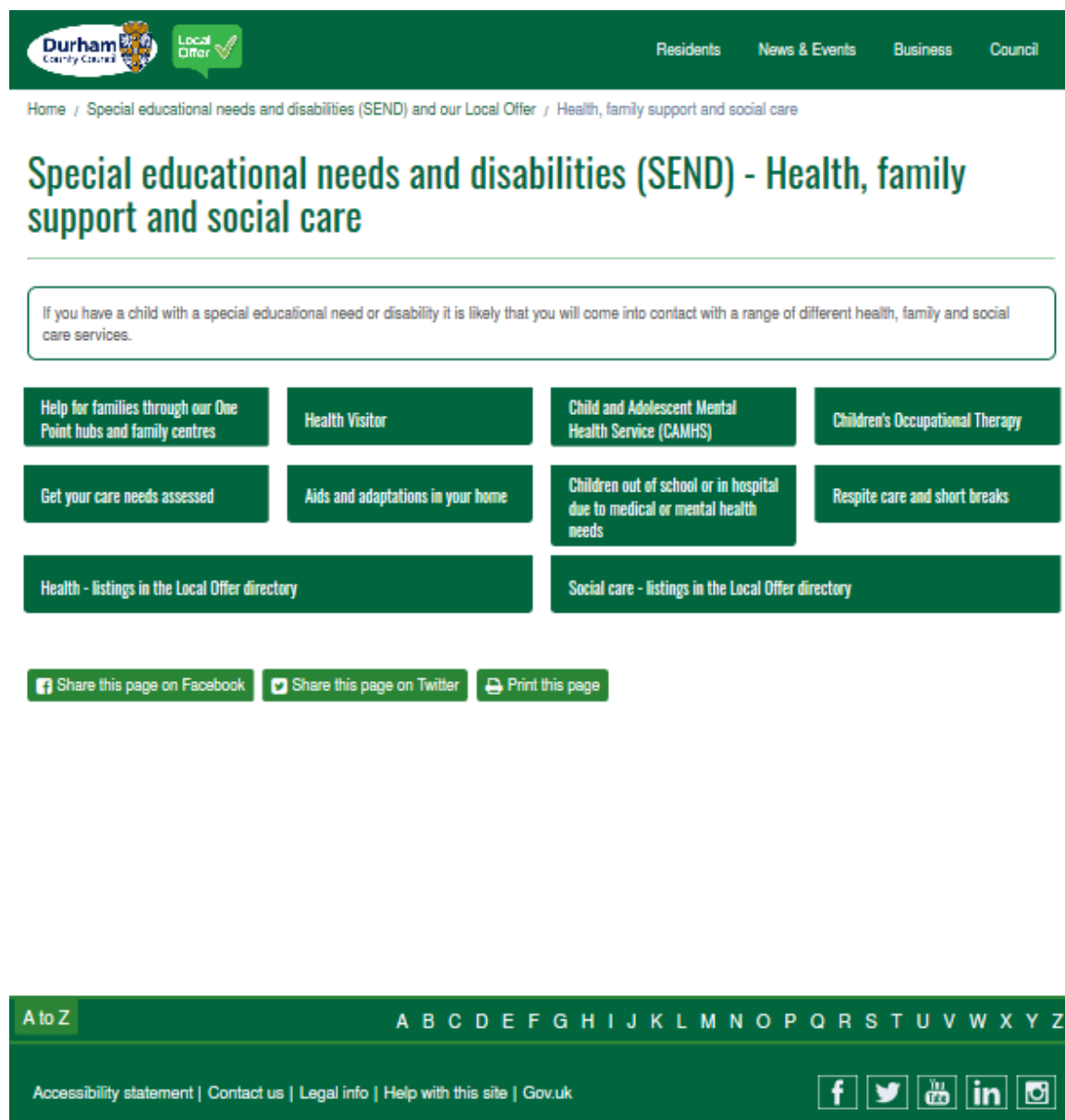
A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

[Accessibility statement](#) | 
 [Contact us](#) | 
 [Legal info](#) | 
 [Help with this site](#) | 
 [Gov.uk](#)





Once users have chosen an area to view, the following page looks like this;



Paul asked delegates to complete the feedback sheets later in the day, after having a chance to look at the new site and try out the tabs and content. Feedback is required on all aspects of development. Once completed, it will be fed out to social media, and the county council website as well as the widest range of advertising to alert all. Expecting to go 'live' by the end of November 2019, following feedback from families.

**Coffee Break – followed by;**

#### **6. An introduction to KOOOTH: Online counselling, advice support service**

This session was delivered by Malcolm Connolly from Kooth. Kooth is a new, NHS Funded counselling, advice and support service which has been commissioned from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019. It is an online support service for young people which includes counselling and direct contact online. There is an enormous amount of information for those ages 11 to 18 online. It's a free, safe, anonymous service funded by the NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Currently Kooth is available in all local authority area's in the North East except Northumberland. Workers employed by Kooth are all experienced in working with young people. The service is totally anonymous, so young people can speak freely about their issues, without fear of exposure. They use a passcode to access the service. And there is a text based service, accessed by any device. <https://vimeo.com/318713056/3b5ea08a52>

Malcolm was previously a pastoral lead in the largest school in the Northeast. He was increasingly worried about the lack of support for young people experiencing difficulties. He brings a lot of experience to his role with Kooth. The Kooth website includes articles and help with;

**Stress, bullying, loneliness, social media, relationships, body-image. In fact, Anything. It is available 365 days of the year. It aims to be an early intervention service for young people, working alongside CAMHS and all other support services.**

Joining is easy. It is an online referral. See presentation below for accessing the service.

The website also has lots of information on gaming, sports etc. through the online magazine on the site.

The Kooth website and joining instructions are at;

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)



Free, safe and anonymous  
online support for young people

● online

LOGIN

IN CRISIS?

# Want someone to understand or advice to help a friend?

## We're here for you.

JOIN KOOTH

▶ WATCH VIDEO



Free, safe and anonymous  
online support for young people

● online

LOGIN

IN CRISIS?

## On Kooth you can



Chat to our friendly counsellors



Read articles written by young people



Get support from the Kooth community



Write in a daily journal

## What's happening on Kooth



Free, safe and anonymous  
online support for young people

online

LOGIN

IN CRISIS?

### Rest and Relaxation Live Forum 68: 7/12/16 - Anger Awareness Week (Anger Managem

Hello and welcome to

[Read more](#)

### Choosing Family

Everyone knows you can't  
choose who you are born to.  
Otherwise we'd all veer  
towards; happy, rich and  
loving right? You can't help

[Read more](#)

### Pushing People Away...

We all have really bad days or  
weeks or months and years  
in some cases. I suffer with  
panic attacks and a few other

[Read more](#)

### Good Distraction Techniques and Coping Methods

So we all get those feelings  
and those thoughts? Well I  
get them regularly. Whilst

[Read more](#)

## What users are saying about Kooth



It means a lot to know Kooth is there  
even if others can't be.

### 7. Update from Laura Coulthard, Designated Clinical Officer (DCO)

Laura introduced herself and described her role, explaining what she has done over the past few months. The need for feedback from parents is enormously important in enabling the CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and SEND services to identify what gaps parents and carers are still finding, in service delivery and in provision. Laura asked for feedback on post-it notes for her to take away and analyse as part of her Health Survey and she promised to return to the next conference and give an update on work done to improve the issues raised by parents today.

Content of Laura's Presentation slides below;

Who am I?

- Designated Medical Officer (DCO) for County Durham
- Named contact for SEND  
within the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)

What have I done?

- Getting to know the SEND community in County Durham.
- Raising the awareness of SEND in all health provider services across County Durham.
- Improve the quality of the health advice in EHCPs



I want to hear about your experiences of health services for children, young people and young adults with SEND in county Durham.

Health Survey



## **8. Supported Employment Business Case**

Stuart Cannon talked to the conference about a new and innovative joint venture, by the Local Authority's Children & Young People's Service working in collaboration with Durham Works. Stuart gave an overview of establishing a Supported Employment Service.

In June a working group was established to look at developing a Supported Employment Service, in a multi-agency approach with Adult Social Care services in County Durham. This is a personalised model of support for people with social care needs/high support needs, by team of individual job coaches.

Stuart asked for feedback from delegates on what their thoughts are in relation to the new project and asked individuals to speak to him during the day, to give their views and ideas for the service, including a name. He explained that they were most keen to secure as much direct feedback and involvement with service users and their parents/carers as possible. The delivery time scale for the new service being up and running is set to be mid-2020.

### **Content of Stuart's presentation slides below;**

#### Quick Overview -

- County Durham has an historically low employment rate for adults with learning disabilities and Autism
- Planning is underway to commission a Supported Employment Service, delivered by the Local Authority.
- It is a multi-agency approach.
- 3-year initial Project with the Long-Term Aim to ensure its sustainability

#### What is Supported Employment? -

- Personalised model for supporting people with significant disabilities to secure and retain paid employment. Ongoing, intensive support is the key difference to this offer.
- We are proposing to create a large county wide team of Job Coaches and employment advisors.
- We want to offer the service to a wide range of clients who may or may not have had Social Care support in the past. We want to support those

who have personal ambitions to move into paid work or want support to develop their interests in employment. It's an all age service.

What Next? We want your feedback! -

  
**Stuart Cannon**  
Supported Internship Co-ordinator

**Mob:** 07795 446 536

**Email:** [stuart.cannon@durham.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.cannon@durham.gov.uk)



**European Union**

European  
Social Fund

'Supported by the Youth Employment Initiative'



## 9. Cheesy Waffles Youth Project

Cheesy Waffles worker Amy supported Cheesy Waffles members Alix, Jenny and Lisa to give a presentation on the work of Cheesy Waffles. They presented a video clip of Erika Denholm introducing other young people talking about some of the excellent work the group undertake. The group now has 100 members and it is important that each of them is heard. They talked about friendships and confidence building and what they get out of being part of the group generally.

A second clip showed some of the group attending the Lumiere - Durham's bi-annual light show. And having a lovely time. The Cheesy Waffles group have presented to the MCT Conferences many times and are always a welcome spot on the day's agenda. Links to both clips are below;

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8\\_L5Jrtg-4&feature=share](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8_L5Jrtg-4&feature=share)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IblyvUzU-Yk&feature=share>

## LUNCH

### 10. Raffle

Organisers changed the format of the raffle and wrapped 12 raffle prizes which were given out randomly to delegates as their number came up. This worked very well and may be adopted at subsequent conferences.

### Self-care for Parents/Carers



### Self-care for Parents/Carers

Gillian Fortune of Feel Good CIC informed the conference of practical ways to 'wake up' the brain, to trick the brain and train the brain to help people to relax easily.

Gillian highlighted the importance of sleep in the self-care for parents of children with additional needs and got the whole conference to practice a 'belly-breathing' technique to use when going to sleep as well as to relax.

The presentation provided the conference with several techniques that were quick to learn and easy to implement with immediate benefits. Each straightforward, practical technique was backed up by research that was presented in an interesting way with full audience participation and the whole presentation was informative, thought-provoking and highly entertaining.

The information below is a handout that Gillian shared with the conference:

### **Making Changes Together Conference 21<sup>st</sup> November 2019**

- The 'Belly Breathing' technique requires a bit of practice but is well worth the effort - even though your brain won't like it at first!
- Use it any time with your eyes open to relax and be in control
- Use it to help you to process information regularly
- Use it to help you to get to sleep or get back to sleep faster



- Even if you are awake a while, belly breathe and focus on it
- Belly breathe whenever you have one minute to close your eyes
- Change your dialogue - tell yourself you can get to sleep as you will do some belly breathing and you know it works
- If you have something on your mind at night, belly breathe & focus
- Instead of clock watching tell yourself it is okay to be awake as you are going to belly breathe & focus which is just as good as sleep
- Belly breathe when driving (eyes open!) or anywhere, any time
- When you need to feel energised or perk up do the hand rub/clap
- Drink water - Your brain can't be effective if you are dehydrated
- **Remember - these techniques work - IF you use them!**
- **Share them with your children, family, friends & colleagues**
- **Please do not promote them in detail on social media or formally teach them**
- **Catch my Facebook videos - Follow Feel Good CIC**
- **Email Gillian Fortune: [gillian@feelgoodcic.com](mailto:gillian@feelgoodcic.com)**

## **COPYRIGHT OF FEEL GOOD CIC**

### **11. Marie Matthewson - Learning for Life**

Marie works at a college for young people with learning disabilities, providing education and social care for young people. Learning for Life was established in November 2004. The college offers the Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) agenda and is based in Consett. It is affiliated with East Durham College.

Maria described the work of the college and the benefits for young people and their families. The presentation below describes what is on offer;



Learning for life  
presentation.pptx

## **Deferred MCT Question and Answer session.**

Some questions were taken by the Making Changes Together Steering Group and answers will be put onto the MCT website.

**Close of Conference** Julie Temple closed the conference and thanked everyone for attending.

## **CONFERENCE EVALUATIONS**

### **Something I've learnt from today;**

- Online Counselling Service Kooth.
- Kooth, fantastic idea.
- What's going on Post 16 in County Durham.
- Kooth.
- About Kooth.
- Kooth Online Counselling.
- How to feel good about yourself.
- How transport works.
- What 'Kooth' does and how young people can access it.
- New staff at SENDIASS.
- Was great to speak to professionals that had to listen to my issues.
- The new Kooth service, online Counselling for children and young people.
- New Durham's Local Offer.
- Kooth.
- A lot of services are online based.
- About Kooth service and more around school transport.
- What Kooth is and how to access it.
- The issues coming into SENDIASS.
- That transport is not one group of people.
- How to belly breathe.
- More about Kooth.
- I've learnt a lot about what information, support and advice is available in relation to SEND individuals and the services that support and promote.
- The range of services available and what they can offer.
- How much support is out there that I didn't know about.

- All new, very good.
- Kooth
- Durham Works.
- Cannot catch up on lost sleep.
- New information - Kooth.
- Positive change, Local Offer changes and new SENDIASS staff
- Kooth sounds like it would be really useful for my daughter.
- SENDIASS data is really interesting.
- As usual somethings never change, transport has been discussed forever.
- Good information.

### **Something I've felt/experienced today;**

- Talking to Laura Coulthard, feeling listened to.
- We've been actively listened to.
- Gillian Fortune is a diamond, what an amazing woman.
- Lovely to catch up with people.
- Laughter - Gillian Fortune.
- Hungry.
- Gillian Fortune.
- Happy and fun, Gillian was a 'breath of fresh air'
- Upset and distraught that there is no appropriate help for my socially anxious isolated teenager.
- Laughter from Gillian Fortune and relaxing techniques, belly breathing.
- Happy SEND is still a priority.
- That a lot of services are for older children/teenagers not so much help for younger children. Maybe in future something could be set up for children from maybe 8 years who are struggling day to day.
- That I'm not alone.
- Laughter
- Pleased the Local Offer is being sorted.
- Cheesy Waffles really positive seeing such a beneficial group.
- The experience has been the privilege of being part of the conference and being able to talk and meet various individuals at the conference and gain such an in-depth and personal experience.

- The enthusiasm of carers/parents and services to help and assist SEND young people.
- Hope.
- Hope that there is support for me, which I had not felt since new SEND diagnosis 2019.
- I'm not alone and need to reach out more.
- Fun.
- Like I belong with other parents of children with similar difficulties. MCT are amazing at these conferences.
- Gillian was so funny.
- Cheesy Waffles, so supportive of each other it warms your heart.
- Friendship - over many years.

### **Something I'll take away from today:**

- Self-care.
- A feeling that there is a pathway that's easier for my son and myself to access.
- How much people still need help and support.
- Meeting Cheesy Waffles for information.
- Discussion with Stuart Cannon
- Gillian Fortune - use of belly breathing
- Hope that there may be better support for us. Spoke to County Hall about problems regarding transport, hope it will be addressed.
- Durham's Local Offer.
- Everything.
- The information stands and share contacts.
- Contacts for school transport.
- Leaflets and Badges.
- Cheesy Waffles Projects.
- Self-care Gillian Fortune.
- Kooth contacts.
- That a lot of parents aren't informed about changes of drivers till last minute and not always by their Local Authority. Usually by drivers themselves. Also, the school route can be changed without warning.
- More knowledge, knowledge is power.

- How to take a moment for myself.
- Feel Good CIC strategies.
- A lot of freebies! I've really taken away valuable experience and all the information about all the incredible groups that are around and knowing that I can share and help to promote and support others.
- Explore transport issues with young people with SEND who attend our eXtreme Group.
- Breathing techniques.
- Information about Learning for Life for friends who couldn't come.
- Breathing techniques.
- My raffle prize.
- Access all websites.
- I have many avenues to contact for more information.
- Info on transport.
- Sadly NHS/CCG Lead must ask questions here so not really joined up yet.
- Fridge magnet and useful bags.
- Clapping! already do belly breathing!
- Breathing, sleeping techniques.
- Lots of information.

### **Something that was not so good about today:**

- Allowing parents to go on and on about their problems!
- Daytime conference difficult to get time off work.
- I had dietary requirements which I informed MCT about and I wasn't catered for, I could only eat the Salad and strawberries, I couldn't eat morning snacks.
- Transport Issues.
- Still no idea what Laura Coulthard does!
- Food was nice but liked lasagne from last time.
- That a lot of services are teenage based not a lot of services are for younger children.
- Technology issues on the morning.
- Can't think of anything.
- Maybe need a Q & A session before speakers for things like transport so parents can ask in advance.

- Great hot food, cold plates. So packed with information that it was difficult to fill in all feedback forms without missing something else.
- Cold plates but that's not important on the scale of things.