

CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group

Downpatrick Back to School Initiative

April - August 2017

Background

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) Down Locality Planning Group recently hosted a Back to School Initiative in the Downpatrick area to support families prepare for the school season.

The group has spent a number of months understanding children, young people and family's needs across the Down area. In undertaking this task, members including colleagues working directly with families have identified through statistical data analysis with local knowledge and experience that over the last five years the percentage of children living in absolute low income poverty after household costs has remained the greatest in the Down area in comparison to other areas of the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust.

The CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group coordinated the Back to School initiative from April to August 2017. The project encouraged families in Downpatrick to donate school uniforms that were still in good condition such as school blazers, shirts, ties, trousers and PE items. Four local primary schools, five post primary schools and two community centres supported this initiative in Downpatrick over recent months. These items were then available for no cost at the two fairs that were hosted locally.

The event was organised with in conjunction with the Lisburn YMCA, Bryson Group, Down Sure Start, County Down Rural Community Network, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and the Health and Social Care Board.

Contributing to the following NI High Level Outcomes for children

- All Children and Young People experience economic and environmental wellbeing

Contributing to the NMDDC Community Plan

- Increase the level of social connectivity
- Increase the quality of school life
- Increase the level of wealth
- Increase the level of civic leadership



CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group members supporting families at the Ballymote Back to School Fair, July 2017

How much did we do?

- A partnership between 7 locality planning group members; Lisburn YMCA, Down Sure Start, Bryson, County Down Rural Community Network, NMDDC, SEHSCT, HSCB
- Engagement: 4 primary schools, 5 post primary schools & 2 community got involved through promotion with families via schoolbag leaflet drops and operating as donation sites
- 743 items of school clothing including blazers, trousers, shirts, skirts, ties etc. were donated
- 2 Back to School Uniform Fairs - 27 July, in Ballymote Centre & 16 August 2017 in Downpatrick Leisure Centre
- 2 press releases, reached 3468 on Twitter and 625 on Facebook



Hundreds of donations were contributed to this project from April to July 2017 from families and schools



Lisburn YMCA and Bryson supported families attending the fairs to prepare to return to school

How well did we do it?

- The total cost of the programme was £180. The room hire for both 'Back to School' events were contributed in kind by NMDDC and Ballymote Community Centre.
- Over 126 families attended the Back to School events in that were held locally in the Ballymote Community Centre on 27 July and Downpatrick Leisure Centre on 16 August 2017.
- Over 455 school items from a total of 743 items were obtained by families who attended the Back to School Fairs
- All items were given out at no cost. To reflect on the average cost of a school uniform to families, the Back to School Initiative supported over 126 families with a cost savings of approximately £2,900 of which estimated at £31 per child.
- A total of 45 attendees completed an evaluation form of which;
 - 98% said the event helped parents with school uniform for their child/children
 - 100% rated the Back to School Fairs as excellent



126 families attended the Back to School fairs.

One parent said 'This is a brilliant idea and has been a fantastic help! I am very happy today!'

Is anyone better off?

FEEDBACK FROM FAMILIES

This has been one of the most helpful events I have ever attended, please run this every year!" - Parent

The staff were so friendly and extremely supportive - Parent

This is a very stressful and expensive time of year but three of my children have got all their school uniforms from attending this event. - Parent

Let schools know before end of term as not everyone is on social media! - Parent

If this could happen in every town across the area it would be fantastic! - Parent

Better Advertised in shops etc. Schools left it too late to give out flyers - Parent

Nursery Uniforms would be helpful too! - Parent

This is such a valuable event. I have taken uniform for 3 children. Please run this every year! - Parent

FEEDBACK FROM STAFF

Amazing to do this project with NO budget! - Staff

The project has provided us better links with schools - Staff

Nice to engage with families and understand their experiences - Staff

Very worthwhile event! - Staff

Really enjoyed this worthwhile event! - Staff

LEARNING & CONSIDERATIONS

Let's improve links with summer schemes & churches! - Staff

Consideration: Charge £2 per family? - Staff

Plan of action in advance to dispose / utilise left over uniforms - Staff

Consider hosting family fun day with uniform event as a part of it. Both events in the same venue over two consecutive days - Staff