

**DOWNPATRICK  
BACK TO SCHOOL  
INITIATIVE  
TOOLKIT**



## **Overview: Back to School Support for Families in Downpatrick**

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership's (CYPSP) Down Locality Planning Group was established in December 2016 and is a multi-agency partnership of community, voluntary and statutory sector members representation the Down area that meet and plan together to address emerging needs of local communities.

The recently established Locality Planning Group has spent the last several 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.

From local experience of working directly with families it has been understood that children receiving free school meals have been facing unmet need during school holiday closures and parents preparing for the back to school period have been evidenced as contributing factors of poverty in the area over recent years.

To support parents, the CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group are took collective action over the summer months of 2017 to coordinate a Downpatrick Back to School Initiative to support families in Downpatrick to get ready for school and make this time of year a little less stressful for families.

The CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group coordinated the initiative over five months by encouraging families in the area 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, two community centres along with locality members Lisburn YMCA, County Down Rural Community Network, YMCA, Bryson Group, Down Sure Start, County Down Rural Community Network, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Bryson Group, Downpatrick Sure Start, South Eastern HSC Trust and the Health and Social Care Board.

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 Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) hosted two Back to School Fairs over July and August to help parents with the costs of uniforms. 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.

One parent at the event said, 'This has been one of the most helpful events I have ever attended, please run this every year!'

Another parent said, "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."

# 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

- All Children and Young People experience economic and environmental wellbeing

### Contributing to the NMDDC Community

- 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?

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

Staff have been so friendly and extremely supportive - Parent

Amazing to do this project with NO budget! - Staff

The project has provided us better links with schools - Staff

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

Nice to engage with families and understand their experiences - Staff

Very worthwhile event and rewarding event - Staff

Really enjoyed this worthwhile event! - Staff

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

Better advertisements in local shops. Schools left it too late to give out flyers - Parent

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

Consideration: Charge £2 per family - Staff

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

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

### LEARNING & CONSIDERATIONS

## **Appendix: Template Documents**

**Appendix 1:** Letter to Schools – Request for engagement

**Appendix 2:** Print Briefing to Local Papers (Pre Back to School Fairs)

**Appendix 3:** Back to School Fairs Promotional Flyers for Families

**Appendix 4:** Parent Satisfaction Questionnaire

**Appendix 5:** Press Release to Local Papers (Post Back to School Fairs)

## APPENDIX 1: LETTER TO SCHOOLS



Tuesday 2 April 2017

### **Request: Downpatrick Back to School - Uniform Project**

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership's (CYPSP) Down Locality Planning Group was established in December 2016 and is a multi-agency partnership of community, voluntary and statutory sector representatives of the Down area that meet and plan together to address emerging needs of their communities.

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 is taking practical steps to support families in Downpatrick to get ready for school and make the back to school of year a little less stressful for families. For further information please see the flyer attached.

We have recently been in contact to explore the potential of using your premises as a drop off site for families who have children attending your school. You may also wish to donate items of lost property that have been outstanding for some time.

We would like to request if your school can be used as a uniform drop off site between May and early July 2017. If you wish to be involved in the project, a collection of the donated items will be arranged with your school reception at a time convenient for you between the end of June and early July 2017.

**Please respond by contacting one of our project coordinators by Friday 12 May:**

**Primary Schools**

Daniella by email at [info@countydownrcn.com](mailto:info@countydownrcn.com) or telephone [028 44 612 311](tel:02844612311)

**Post Primary Schools**

Lisa by email at [lisa@lisburnymca.com](mailto:lisa@lisburnymca.com) or telephone 028 92 670 918

We look forward to hearing from you

Regards,  
Ralston Perera  
SIF Programme Manager, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

## **APPENDIX 2: PRINT BRIEFING TO LOCAL PAPERS (Pre Back to School Fairs)**

### **Supporting families experiencing poverty in Down**

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership's (CYPSP) Down Locality Planning Group was established in December 2016 and is a multi-agency partnership of community, voluntary and statutory sector members representation the Down area that meet and plan together to address emerging needs of local communities.

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From local experience of working directly with families it has been understood that children receiving free school meals have been facing unmet need during school holiday closures and parents preparing for the back to school period have been evidenced as contributing factors of poverty in the area over recent years.

To support parents, the CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group are taking collective action over the summer months to coordinate a Downpatrick Back to School Project to support families in Downpatrick to get ready for school and make this time of year a little less stressful for families.

Four primary schools and five post primary schools have got involved in the initiative alongside a range of locality group members including Lisburn YMCA, County Down Rural Community Network, Bryson Group, Downpatrick Sure Start, South Eastern HSC Trust and the Health and Social Care Board. Further information will follow post August 2017.

**CONTACT US:** For further information contact Ralston Perera, SIF Programme Manager, South Eastern HSC Trust by email at [Ralston.perera@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:Ralston.perera@setrust.hscni.net).  
(Promotional Flyer Attached for inclusion)

## APPENDIX 3: BACK TO SCHOOLS FAIR PROMOTIONAL FLYER FOR FAMILIES



# HAVE YOU GOT SCHOOL UNIFORMS THAT YOU NO LONGER NEED?

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership's Down Locality Planning Group is supporting families in the Downpatrick area to get ready for school and make this time of year a little less stressful for families!

If you have unwanted school uniforms and accessories we are asking you to donate your items to the Downpatrick School Uniform Project in one of our designated drop off sites.

**Let's work together and find these clothes a good home!**

### WE WILL COLLECT

#### Primary and Secondary School Uniforms:



- Jumpers & Sweatshirts
- Shirts
- Trousers
- Skirts & Pinafores
- Coats
- Ties
- Blazers
- PE shorts, skorts, school sports tops, PE bags
- Schoolbags / Book Bags



## DROP OFF SITES

Ballymote Community Centre

St Colmcille's Primary School

Our Lady's and St Patrick's Primary School

St Brigid's Primary School

Downpatrick Primary school

Downpatrick Sure Start

St Mary's High School

Blackwater Integrated College

St. Patricks Grammar School (Red High)

Down High School (Green High)

All donations should be left at one of our designated drop off sites  
no later than 7 July 2017



## DOWNPATRICK BACK TO SCHOOL FAIR

**Join us at one of our two school uniform fairs to get your children ready for school!**

**27 July 2017**

**Ballymote Community Centre**

**10.00am-12.30pm**

**16 August 2017**

**Downpatrick Leisure Centre**

**1.00pm-3.30pm**



**Free**

**APPENDIX 4: PARENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Q1: Did this event help you with school uniform for your child/children?**

		
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**Q2: Overall how do you rate this event?**

		
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**Q3: Is there anything we can improve on for future events, or do you have any other comments?**

## **APPENDIX 5: PRESS RELEASE TO LOCAL PAPERS (Post Back to School Fairs)**

### **Back to School support for families in Downpatrick**

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The CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group coordinated the initiative over five months by encouraging families in the area 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.

Ralston Perera from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust and chair of the Down Locality Planning Group spoke from one of the fairs stating, "We've heard in the news recently about the cost of new school uniforms and we know that this time of the year is very financially stressful for families. This initiative is about helping them get ready for the new school year and improving the economic wellbeing of families locally and it has been very well received."

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.

One parent at the event said, "This has been one of the most helpful events I have ever attended, please run this every year!"

Another parent said, "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."

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.

The Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership (CYPSP), led by the Health and Social Care Board, is a multi-agency partnership that includes the leadership of key statutory agencies and community and voluntary organisations that have a responsibility for improving the lives of children and young people in Northern Ireland.

**Contact Us:**

For further information contact Ralston Perera, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust by email at [Ralston.perera@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:Ralston.perera@setrust.hscni.net).



**Photograph captions:**

**Downpatrick School Uniform Initiative July-August 2017 -**

Ralston Perera, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust, Lisa McCloy, Lisburn YMCA, Helen Brown, Bryson Group, Catriona Hynds, Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Jenny Laverty, County Down Rural Community Network at Downpatrick Back to School Fair in Ballymote Community Centre on 27 July 2017



**Lisburn YMCA and Bryson Group at Downpatrick Back to School Initiative July 2017**

Lisa McCloy, Lisburn YMCA and Helen Brown, Bryson Group at Downpatrick Back to School Fair in Ballymote Community Centre on 27 July 2017

## CONTACT US

For further information please contact:

Ralston Perera, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

**Email:** [Ralston.perera@setrust.hscni.net](mailto:Ralston.perera@setrust.hscni.net)

**Telephone:** 07525 898221

Find out more about the CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group at <http://www.cypsp.org/locality-planning-groups/down-locality-planning-group/>