

STOCKTON-ON-TEES BOROUGH COUNCIL

CHILDREN, EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE

TEES ACTIVE SCHEME

LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Stockton Borough Council has around 230 looked after children. The majority are placed in Stockton with Local Authority foster carers, however because of the steady increase in the number of children looked after over the last year approximately 49 children are living outside the Borough. There are 86 foster carers providing around 112 placements for children in Stockton.

Stockton has three Children's Homes in the Borough which provide 12 placements. There is a further respite home for children with complex needs, which offers overnight and weekend breaks to support families.

There has been an increase in the number of looked after children over the last eighteen months from around 200 to 230. In light of this, resources have been stretched and we have purchased placements from independent fostering agencies and private residential homes. These placements are usually outside the Borough.

In addition to our responsibility towards looked after children, the Local Authority has a corporate duty under the Care Leavers Act to continue to support young people once they leave care up to the age of 21 and beyond if accessing higher education.

Tees Active, as part of the every child matters agenda, have been offering free use of leisure facilities for looked after children and care leavers for a number of years now. Reduced rates are also offered to Local Authority foster carers and their families. The scheme has been an integral part of the Council's corporate parenting agenda. The leisure saver card allows young people free access to:

- SPLASH
- Billingham Forum
- Thornaby Pavilion
- Thornaby Pool
- Stockton Sports Centre

It covers individual activities including swimming, ice skating, fitness classes, Active8 health and fitness suites and fitpro activities.

Applications for the scheme are approved/endorsed by the Service Manager for looked after children by Stockton at any one time.

Areas for development:

- When a child or young person becomes looked after, they or their carers automatically receive an application form for membership. Take up has been slow, particularly the renewal of cards after a year.
- Stockton has three Children's Homes and all twelve young people who live there have access to the scheme. Take up generally, however has been relatively low (see attached Appendix 1). A small number of foster carers have memberships and it may be timely to re-launch the scheme to ensure maximum use.
- There are a number of Local Authorities across the region who run similar schemes and have rolled this out further to include free access to other facilities such as Beamish and discounted or free admission at theatres or local events.
- Group activities are not covered at present although it has been possible to negotiate on an individual basis a reduction for 5 a side and individual activities such as squash or badminton are not currently included.

Jayne Palmer
Service Manager
(Looked After Children)

Appendix 1

Memberships taken out since scheme started:

Billingham Forum	58
Splash	86
Stockton Sports Centre	6
Thornaby Pavilion	10
Thornaby Pool	5
<u>Total</u>	165

Live Memberships at 7-11-08:

Billingham Forum	43
Splash	25
Stockton Sports Centre	6
Thornaby Pavilion	6
Thornaby Pool	2
<u>Total</u>	82

Usage:

2006-7	485 visits	(source: TAL Business Plan 08-11)
2007-8	943 visits	(source: Steve Chaytor, committee 19 th November)