

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

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.

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.



**Photograph Caption: Families prepare for the Back to School season in Downpatrick with the CYPSP Down Locality Planning Group**

From left to right: 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 Lavery, County Down Rural Community Network at Downpatrick Back to School Fair in Ballymote Community Centre on 27 July 2017

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.



**Photograph Caption: Lisburn YMCA and Bryson Group at the Ballymote Back to School Fair, 27 July 2017**

From left to right: Lisa McCloy, Lisburn YMCA and Helen Brown, Bryson Group

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:**

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