



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release:

Monday 21 January 2008

LOOKING AFTER CHILDMINDERS IS VITAL TO BARKING & DAGENHAM

Child-minders in Barking & Dagenham are to be thrown a lifeline – the Lifeline Childcare Agency – which will help them to train or to find and stay in work through self-employment.

There is a shortage of flexible and affordable childcare in the borough, which is a real barrier to lone parents, especially women, in returning to work or in beginning to start their own business. On the other hand, there are many people who would like to be childminders, but need training and other help to meet nationally-required standards before they can be registered.

There are other people who become qualified childminders but have yet to master the business skills necessary to market themselves successfully or to become fully self-employed. Some even risk losing their registered status, and so will be unable to take a job in or continue in self-employment as a childminder.

From end of January, LifeLine Childcare Agency will help by:

1. Establishing new and sustainable businesses in childminding to the benefit of the community by linking services and connecting employers with potential childminders
2. Enabling childminders to start their own businesses
3. Making it easier for childminders to earn steady money as they move from unemployment to training and self-employment
4. Work to deliver accessible and safe childminding services that keep the needs of the child as paramount and free parents to go back to work with peace of mind

The LifeLine Childcare Agency project is a co-operative venture between Barking & Dagenham Enterprise (BDE) and Lifeline Projects. It complements existing activities of London Borough of Barking & Dagenham Shared Services and Engagement.

BDE spearheads the enterprise drive in the borough through its management of more than 30 enterprise - related projects.

Chris Oliver, chairman of BDE, says:

“There is a huge risk that many new childminders will not be able to become registered and that that existing childminders will lose registration without additional support. That can’t be good for the community as a whole or for enterprise in general, and that’s why BDE is backing this project.”

Creating an enterprise culture



Kay Treacy, LifeLine Childcare Agency Project Manager, says:

“LifeLine Childcare Agency will bring together English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and basic skills training, credible self-employment opportunities for women and lone parents, as well as enterprise development in Barking & Dagenham.”

Kay adds: “We offer free community-based training, linked to children’s centres, bringing real training opportunities right into the heart of our community.”

– ENDS –

Notes to Editors:

The LifeLine Childcare Agency project will be based at the LifeLine JobShop in Dagenham, and is aimed at women and lone parents who have completed, are receiving or about to receive childcare training.

Lifeline Childcare Agency (Tel: 020 8597 2900) would be happy to provide someone for an interview to publicise their innovative project to the wider domain.

Barking & Dagenham Enterprise will fund the LifeLine Childcare Agency project through the Government’s Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI). Barking & Dagenham was among the first ten local authorities nationally to be awarded funds from this programme and the only Thames Gateway borough to be successful. Barking & Dagenham was awarded £15.5m over three years under the LEGI programme.

For more information:

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