Northumbria University NEWCASTLE

Kay Heslop, second left, with other members of the Northumberland Early Years Professional Network

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National win for Early Years Professionals Network

A network of early years professionals in Northumberland has won a national award for excellent practice in team development.

The Northumberland Early Years Professionals Network promotes best practice in early years across Northumberland, with all activities aimed at promoting the best outcomes for children. It is run by Northumberland County Council's Early Year's Team, in partnership with Northumbria University.

The network was successful in the annual Nursery World awards, winning the team development title, which recognises those who have built a high-quality staff team through good recruitment, retention, training and career development.

The Nursery World awards shine a light on best practice in early years education and childcare from across the UK. The winners were announced at an awards ceremony at The Brewery in London last week.

The Northumberland network has grown since its inception two years ago, supporting strong partnership working and staff recruitment, especially promoting men in early years and childcare. It has included a variety of training and professional development opportunities including beach school, inclusive practice, the learning environment and health and wellbeing for practitioners and children.

Kay Heslop, a senior lecturer in Northumbria University's Department of Social Work, Education and Community Wellbeing, said: “It was an honour to win such a prestigious early years award, and fabulous that our partnership working has been recognised.

“The Early Years Professional Network in Northumberland, in partnership with Northumbria University, is an example of good practice in the sector and it is hoped that we can continue to grow, learn, engage in research and write about our experiences in order to support children, families and practitioners.”

Theresa Iley from the Northumberland Early Years Team said that the annual Nursery World Awards is one of the most prestigious events in the early years sector. “To be rewarded and recognised nationally for the dedication and commitment to improve quality and best outcomes for young children in Northumberland is such an immense honour and privilege,” she said.

Councillor Wayne Daley, cabinet member for children’s services at Northumberland County Council added: “This is an absolutely fantastic result for a brilliant team – and a fitting endorsement of the excellent work that they are doing to improve early years provision here in Northumberland.

“The team provides excellent support to early years practitioners through training and development of best practice - which all contributes to the high quality of services across our county.”

Northumbria University offers a range of courses for people interested in working in childhood and early years settings, and for those already working in early years who are keen to further develop their skills. Visit www.northumbria.ac.uk/earlyyears for more information.

Northumbria is a research-rich, business-focused, professional university with a global reputation for academic excellence. To find out more about our courses go to www.northumbria.ac.uk

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Contacts

Rik Kendall
Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences
rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk
07923 382339

Andrea Slowey
Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences
andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk
07708 509436

James Fox
Press Contact
Student Communications Manager
james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk

Kelly Elliott
Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk

Rachael Barwick
Press Contact
PR and Media Manager
rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk
07377422415

Ruth Lognonne
Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
ruth.lognonne@northumbria.ac.uk
07971274253

Gemma Brown
Press Contact
PR and Media Officer
gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk