



PACC Newsletter

January 2023

Welcome to the January issue of PACC's monthly newsletter

Shropshire Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Coproduction Workshop

Coproduction is about listening to people who use services about their experience of support and using that experience and knowledge to make things better.

This month PACC reps joined staff from Shropshire Council and Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care System to discuss how Coproduction could happen in the Shropshire SEND System. The day was led by the National Development Team for Inclusion (NTDi) and the aims of the day were to ensure that those who attended;

- increased their understanding of co-production
- understood the Shropshire Coproduction Bench model developed by PACC
- recognise and understand examples of good coproduction
- explored and agreed what's needs to be done differently to enable and support co-production to happen in Shropshire.

PACC presented our model of co-production and shared what Shropshire parent carers had told us about what co-production looked like to them. You can view the PACC presentation [here](#)

This work will continue with the aim to create a Co-production Framework, so that co-production can be evidenced and measured in Shropshire.



Developing A SEND Early Help Offer in Shropshire

PACC has been highlighting the need for a specific SEND Early Help offer in Shropshire for some time. Early Help is about providing early support, rather than waiting until a child or family's situation hits crisis point. Early Help can be appropriate at any stage of a child's or young person's life.

Feedback received by PACC over the last couple of years has suggested that the current Early Help offer in Shropshire is not effectively responding to the needs of SEND families, therefore we welcomed the Early Help Review announced before Christmas. PACC has provided input to the Review in two ways: before Christmas, Sarah and Zara met with the independent Review lead to share key relevant points shared with PACC in our recent 'State of SEND – Shropshire Update 2022' report linked to the delivery of Early Help. We have also carried out a more targeted survey during December and January asking parent carers to specifically tell us about their experience of Early Help in Shropshire. The resulting report on 'Shropshire Early Help and SEND' has been shared with the Review lead and Tanya Miles, the Director responsible for Adult and Children's Services in Shropshire. Tanya has Provided the following response to the PACC report:

'Firstly I would like to thank all those members of PACC, parents and carers who have children with special needs and/or disabilities who completed the survey. Your feedback, suggestions and views are valued and come at a time when Shropshire Council's People Directorate is reviewing its Early Help system. Your feedback is so important and I am committed to do everything I can across the Early Help System to ensure children with SEND and their families get the support they need, when they need it.'

Early Help is not a single service and is made is up network of services, processes and interactions that aim to help children, young people and their families at the earliest opportunity. Part of the survey also helpfully incorporates some ideas and suggestions that will feed into the Early Help System review but will also be shared with the SEND Partnership Board and Integrated Care System as a call to action. The survey response is thorough with plenty of detail and yet there is one thing that touched me in a simple, single sentence. This was that Early Help should be someone to turn to, with understanding and who will help. The need for 'empathy and understanding' is repeatedly highlighted by parent carers, indicating that Early Help must show improved recognition of the challenges that supporting a young person with SEND can bring for parent carers.'

Thank you again for your contribution. Recommendations from the Early Help Review will be shared with PACC to circulate to the SEND community in due course and I look forward to further developing the Early Help system with you.

Kind regards,

Tanya Miles

Executive Director of People'

PACC will continue to work with services across Education, Health and Social Care to promote the development of an effective Early Help offer for Shropshire SEND Families and look forward to supporting the next steps of the Review.

'Shropshire Early Help and SEND' Report can be accessed here:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Preparation for Adulthood



What is Preparation for Adulthood (PFA)?

Our early life experiences help us to prepare for life as an adult and this should be recognised as early as possible, although there is an expectation that Young People with SEND focus on PFA from Year 9.

Conversations about a young person's future should involve themselves, their parent carers, their teachers and anyone else who works with them.

What areas does PFA cover?

PFA covers all areas of your Young Person's life that will enable them to have the best outcomes as they enter adulthood, including:

- Further education
- Activity Plans
- Finances and Benefits
- Employment and Volunteering
- Annual Health Checks
- Staying Healthy
- Being Part of the local community



How does our PFA journey start?

Planning for transition into adulthood should start from the Year 9 annual review of the EHC plan. Each review thereafter must focus on preparing for adulthood- including the move between children's and adults services outside of education.

The transition towards adulthood review from Year 9 will start to gather information regarding the young persons and their families' aspirations for their future, including who needs to be involved, target planning and the support needed. The review will explore provision accessible to students in order for them to be healthy, participating in society, living independently, and accessing further education and/or employment where appropriate.



For more information, please contact our PFA Navigators



Abi@paccshropshire.org.uk
Denise@paccshropshire.org.uk

Teacher Strike Action

Parent Carers will rightly be concerned about the impact of the Teacher Strike Action that is scheduled to take place on Wednesday 1st February. Please note that only one union has voted to participate in strike action, so this may mean limited impact to your child's school.

We understand how the risk of uncertainty and the possible disruption strike action may cause could create anxiety for both you and your child. Schools have been advised to instruct parents of their planned measures to combat any impact on their teaching capacity on strike days. This means all schools should be making you aware of what they are doing in the event of a reduced number of teachers in their setting. Parent Carers may want to approach schools and ask what they are doing to ensure your child's education and routine will be impacted as little as possible and what you may be able to share with them to prepare them for any disruption in advance. Schools may find they have to prioritise vulnerable students and ask some other students to remain at home. This should be decided by considering the educational vulnerability as well as the safeguarding vulnerability of all children in their care. Priority should be given to pupils with the greatest need to remain in the school setting, however they may still experience a disrupted schedule. Parent Carers will need to consider the benefits and the challenges this may present. Parent Carers may wish to negotiate a possible reasonable adjustment which could include asking their child remain at home to access virtual learning; asking for their child to remain out of lessons if disruption is likely and instead attend an alternative offer within school such as a SEN Hub / Learning Lounge, homework club, or receive enhanced support instead.

For pupils accessing Free School Meals, schools must make arrangements for these to be available to pupils whether they remain in the setting or stay at home. This could be through a lunch box being provided or a voucher to use locally, or an alternative that meets the guidance they have been provided.

The advice provided to schools can be found here:

[CLICK HERE](#)

Specialist Shortbreaks Consultation Opened

As previously shared Shropshire Council is currently recommissioning its specialist Shortbreaks offer for disabled children and young people. This includes overnight support and specialist activity sessions, both of which are accessed via a social care assessment. PACC representatives have been part of this process to date and hosted a discussion workshop at the end of 2022, to inform this recommissioning. Following this workshop Shropshire Council and PACC have coproduced a survey to gather further feedback on what is important to families when developing specialist Shortbreak services. The new service will start in 2024.

If your family uses services such as Bradbury House for overnight breaks or other sessions currently offered by Action For Children or you think you might access these services in the future please share your feedback by completing the survey.

**Please note that this recommissioning process does not relate to the All In programme managed and promoted by Actio

[CLICK HERE](#)

Meet the Team

Each month we will be introducing you to a member of the PACC Team, so you get chance to know a bit more about us as Parent Carers.

This month, meet Zara - PACC's Chair and Comms & Engagement Lead



Parent Carer of 2 daughters alongside my Fiancé

- 13 yrs. old with complex combination of Hemiplegic Cerebral Palsy and Hydrocephalus, both diagnosed from birth. She has an EHCP and is in mainstream secondary education, accesses targeted Short Breaks, has a huge personality, and wants to start her own youth participation forum.
- 11 yrs. old with sibling carer responsibilities and associated mental health needs. Loves fiercely and is protective of her sister and 2 cousins who are also disabled.

- **Part of the Ockenden Review having experienced challenging maternity and neonatal support.**
- **Experienced the CDC assessment pathway, under acute surgical and neurosurgical care, access community services for ongoing interventions.**
- **Varied working history across the SEND and Mental Health Sector**
 - Previously worked in mental health services as a rehabilitation to employment coordinator.
 - Worked as the SEND Local Offer Coordinator in Shropshire for 3.5 years.
 - Have worked at national level championing the voice of local parent carer communities.
 - Currently a Director of the West Midlands Region Parent Carer Forum Network.
 - Trained fitness and dance professional, working at a performing arts academy in Shrewsbury delivering SEND support and wellbeing activities.



Zara also runs our Facebook Live "Check in & Chat" session's on Monday evenings at 7:30pm (Term-Time)

Ask Abi

Do you have a SEND related question? Each month, we will be answering questions that we are frequently asked. Please email your question to abi@paccshropshire.org.uk (all questions will be posted anonymously)

Online Safety

The NSPCC have partnered with Ambitious about Autism to bring online safety tips, advice and activities specifically for parents and carers of children with SEND.

Letting your child go online can be intimidating; you might worry about the different spaces they explore, the people they meet digitally and the potential for things going wrong.

Being online can be positive for children and young people, including those with additional needs. So much of our communication now happens online, either by messages, in a game or through a video call. Sometimes online platforms like the apps, social media sites and games your child accesses can help them connect and make friends with new people that they might not know offline.

As a Parent Carer, you play an important role in helping your child to have positive experiences online. If your child has additional needs, then this role can be even more important, and it can feel like a lot of responsibility when you hear about some of the risks young people face online.

How to support
children with
SEND with talking
to people online

(click to learn more)

Supporting online
wellbeing for
children with
SEND

(Click to learn more)

Useful Contact Information (Click to access further Information)

- [Beam](#)
- [Kooth](#)
- [Autism West Midlands](#)
- [IASS](#)
- [Healios](#)
- [IPSEA](#)
- [BeeU Urgent Helpline](#)
- [Actio](#)
- [Local Offer](#)