



Shropshire Parent and Carer Council Monthly Newsletter February 2023

Welcome to the February edition of PACC's monthly newsletter. If you have any questions or require any further information, please email info@paccshropshire.org.uk



Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Local Area Inspection Revisit

The SEND Inspection Revisit Outcome was very well informed by Shropshire Parent Carers and their families' experiences. The outcome reflects what both PACC, as a representative parent carer forum, and individual Parent Carers have shared with inspectors. This demonstrates that our links between the SEND community and the system we are trying to influence have improved over the last two years. PACC has been clear that while the SEND system may be listening to families more, there is still a disconnect between that information being fed through to influence service delivery to improve families experience of the care and support they receive. We are pleased to see the Inspectors recognise the challenges, and express concern that a refreshed focus should be applied to the quality of Education Health Care Plans, the Neurodevelopmental Assessment Services, and the Speech and Language Therapy Services. This reflects what families within the SEND community share with us regularly, and while there has been some progress made in relation to waiting times and legally required timescales being met across these three areas, the quality of the experience for many families remains far too varied and inconsistent for these not to remain key priorities.

[Read More](#)



PCAS Shropshire

A free to use, 100% independent and confidential advocacy service. PCAS provides independent advocacy for adults with any disability, physical, sensory, learning or mental health. Aiming to be the Service of Choice, to secure clients' rights, services, and to ensure they are listened to, empowered and treated with respect. We further aim to promote social inclusion, equality and social justice for all, irrespective of sexual orientation or ethnicity.

[Read More](#)



Shropshire's SEND & Inclusion conference for educational providers



PACC joined the Shropshire Education Conference on Friday 10th February exploring 'developing inclusive practice' across all education stages. Ensuring that children and young people with SEND have a positive experience wherever they are educated is essential, and we know that many families feel their young people's needs are not being fully met at the moment. PACC was pleased to be invited to speak at the conference about developing improved relationships between SEND families and school leaders.

[Read More](#)



The Only Way is UPP- Understand, Prepare, Prevent



PACC recently presented to the Shropshire Integrated Place Partnership (SHIPP) Board about the how young people with learning disabilities and / or autism can be best supported to lead healthy lives. The PACC Preparation For Adulthood Healthy Lives Project started in 2022 and supported the development of an approach PACC calls 'UPP - Understand, Prepare, Prevent.

[Read More](#)



Help RJAH improve health equalities by joining focus groups



The Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital is working with Healthwatch Shropshire to improve health equality, and is seeking the help of the local community. The Oswestry-based hospital is inviting patients, service users and members of the public to join one of two focus groups, taking place on Tuesday 7 March from 2pm to 4pm and Saturday 11 March from 10am to 12 noon.

[Read More](#)



Shropshire All Age Carer Strategy Consultation

Who are Parent Carers

- A parent carer is defined in the Children and Families Act 2014 as 'a person aged 16 or over who provides care for a disabled child for whom the person has parental responsibility' this includes foster carers and kinship carers. In Contact's 2017 report 'Caring More than Most' it was reported that there were 820,000 adults caring for a disabled child or young person in the UK.

PACC has been working with the Shropshire Carers Partnership to inform a draft All Age Carers Strategy and to improve support for parent carers. We have produced some information explaining the role of parent carer, the impact of the role and recommendations for improving support.

[Read More](#)

Impact of Being a Parent Carer – Mental Health

- It is only recently that the true impact on parent carers of supporting a young person with additional needs has been fully understood. The National Network of Parent Carer Forums [www.pccf.org.uk](#) championed the use of the term 'parent carer' in recognition of the additional responsibilities and roles parent carers take on over and above the role of being a parent. When supporting a child with additional needs, the additional responsibility, combined with the sense of loss and concern about the vulnerability of their children, can have a significant impact on parent carers physical and mental health.
- The British Psychological Society comments that 'Parent carers' emotional responses are complex, varied, and – like their child – unique. Yet there are common experiences. Many identify a negative impact on their wellbeing (Trotter et al., 2011) including psychological distress (Newson et al., 2016), stress, depression and chronic sorrow (Bass, 2007)

The Shropshire Council consultation closes on the 6th March and you can share your thoughts about what good support for parent carers should look like here:

[Read More](#)



ShrewsAbility Fun Run



Shrewsbury Town FC Foundation are excited to invite you to take part in their ShrewsAbility 600m Fun Run as part of Shrewsbury Town FC's Foundation Day on 15th April 2023.

The 600m ShrewsAbility Fun Run will be held on Saturday 15th April 2023 at Montgomery Waters Meadow Shrewsbury and will start at 10.30am (arrivals at 10am). This year's route will take place around the perimeter of the pitch and a video will be shared with participants once sign up is complete, so they can know what to expect.

[Read More](#)

Foundation Day

Foundation Day 2023 will take place on Saturday, April 15 when Shrewsbury Town host Portsmouth! This year, they are hosting a kids takeover day!

“Do you know someone who you think could step into the shoes of one of our matchday workers? Nominate a young person and the role you think they'd be best suited to, to be in with a chance of winning a behind the scenes experience! All applicants must be aged 8 - 13 to apply!”

[Read More](#)

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





Meet the Team

This month meet Sarah Thomas- PACC's Participation Lead



Sarah is a Parent Carer to 5 young men; 3 birth children and 2 adopted - aged 11 to 24 years old. With lived experience of supporting neurodiverse young people (Autism, ADHD, Dyspraxia, Epilepsy, Dyscalculia, sensory issues and trauma).

- 22-year-old son with learning disability and autism recently transitioned to Supported Living
- Experienced foster carer - family based shared care and Looked After Children



- Part of the group that established Shropshire PACC in 2008
- Co-Chaired the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (2012 – 2015) and supported the delivery of the 2014 SEND reforms
- Part of the team that developed the Autism in Schools project supporting the delivery of the Transforming Care Programme



We have received a number of enquiries around transition and how to support young people with change. Transition points in life can be difficult, whether this is the transition from home to school, nursery to primary school, primary school to secondary school, secondary school to further education, moving into independent or supported living. This month we will be focusing on school transition.

A transition from one educational setting to another can be exciting, but it can also be a cause of anxiety for you and your child/ young person.

If your child/ young person has an EHCP:

- You need to start thinking about the transition at least 18 months before it will happen
- You will discuss the next school at the Change of Phase EHCP review.
- Your child's plan will be reviewed and a school placement will be named on an updated EHCP, issued in February of the year they are due to transfer
- If you don't get the school of your choice, you have the right to appeal

What to discuss on a school visit

- Communicate any worries that you have and consider how they can be addressed
- Give a true reflection of your child's needs, remembering to be sensitive to when and where to discuss these
- There are some things that may not be appropriate to discuss in front of your child
- Consider how your child can be involved in the process
- Be prepared to consider other ideas that the new setting may have

Things you may want to talk about

- The structure of the school day
 - What will my child's day look like?
 - How are children supported at break or lunch times?
 - How do toilet breaks for children work?
 - Are there quiet areas?
- How does your school support children with SEND?
 - How is the curriculum adapted for children with SEND?
 - How are teaching assistants used?
 - How do you make adaptations for children with SEND?
 - Are all the buildings accessible to children with disabilities?

How you can communicate

- Who would be my main contact in school if I have any concerns or want to check something?
- How do we communicate and when?
- Is there a home/school diary or an app to support communication?
- How will you support me to support my child?
- English is not my first language. What support is available to help me access information?

What extra support may be available?

- Extra visits (before the main transition days for all children) to familiarise themselves with the new environment and new people
- Taking photos of the new setting
- Creating prompt cards or checklists as reminders of new people or new routines
- Using 'social stories' to help prepare your child for change
- Providing a 'My new school' booklet or induction/transition pack with information about the new setting, including new routines
- Providing clear maps of the site and/or timetables
- Identifying a 'go to' person for children and families to contact
- Providing specialist equipment or resources to facilitate access to learning
- Creating individual support plans for your child
- Extra support from the pastoral team
- Creating a 'one-page profile' so that the new school knows all the important information about your child- More info can be found [here](#)

What can I do to help prepare my child/ young person?

- Encourage a positive mindset when talking to your child about the changes ahead
- Talk to your child about what is going to happen
- Look at any information provided and explore the website of the new setting together
- Find out which of their friends will move to the new setting with them
- Arrange for them to have a visit or visits before they start
- Do you already know any other parents with children at the setting? Ask them to talk to your child about it
- Think about how best to explain things to your child and how they can communicate their worries to you
- If school transport is not provided, start planning and practising the journey to school during the holidays. Make contingency plans to pre-empt any possible difficulties
- Practise trying on the new uniform and packing their own school bag
- Use countdowns or calendars so that they know when the change is coming
- Consider the need for a mobile phone and discuss when it will be used and for what purpose
- Keep talking to the new setting. The more they know you, the better you will work together to support your child

Useful Resources

YOUNGMINDS



Information & Support | Influence & Change



Tuesday 7th March

12:00-2:00pm

Palmers Café, Shrewsbury



Monthly Coffee & Chat with PACC Reps

Join the PACC Rep Team for a monthly Coffee & Chat. We welcome Parent Carers to pop in and catch up with our team, to share your experiences, or simply to say hello.

These will be held monthly at various locations across Shropshire.

No need to book, just pop along if you have chance.