

For families who have a child with a disability or additional need
aged 0-25 years

Spring 2020

Participate

Find out what's going on, Have a say, Make a difference



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SHROPSHIRE Parent
And
Carer
Council

Welcome from PACC



During these unprecedented times, both Sarah and I felt it was the right opportunity to bring back the PACC Newsletter—albeit a rather condensed version for the moment.

So, firstly lets say hello, and welcome back to the PACC newsletter. We hope that you are all safe, well, and managing in these rather unusual circumstances we find ourselves in. We felt now would be a great chance to let you all know that PACC is still fully operational (we are not new to this working from home malarkey, although the added bonus of having our children and young people under our feet is certainly a novelty that is fast wearing off), so we are still doing the majority of the functions the forum performs usually. However, we are working with reduced capacity for many of our colleagues and, as you would expect, the tone of many of our discussions has shifted slightly to accommodate the new challenges posed by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

We are having regular conversations with the Adult Social Care Team, SEN Team, Children's Social Care Teams, Transition Team, and Council Leaders. These currently have a focus on ensuring the local Covid-19 Response is adequately meeting the needs of our SEND community as well as keeping all parties up to date with the ever changing landscape. Our primary concern has been ensuring that our families who will find isolation and limited access to support extremely challenging are able to seek out the support they need, when they need it; and that they do not become more vulnerable in their circumstances where this is avoidable. We have, as you will see on our social media, secured updates and clarity on specific information that is vital to our community from the Adults and Children's Social Care Teams, and SEN Team, which we will continue to do.

Due to the lockdown procedures, many of our normal meetings have now either stopped temporarily or moved on to a virtual platform. Presently the focus for all LAs and CCGs has to be protecting their communities as best they can, this does mean that some areas of work will be likely to slow down or pause for the time being. We will be keeping an eye on these areas to ensure that when appropriate we continue to champion the parent carer voice and share your experiences to ensure that any progress or resumption of work continues in full coproduction. This does mean that our priorities will also temporarily change as we face an uncertain few months ahead with the

changing nature of this health pandemic. So what are PACC doing at the moment? Well, we continue to engage with our partners as we have said locally, but also continue to work closely with the National Network of Parent Carer Forums to inform and influence national guidance. We are continuing to share information via our social media platforms, and are planning a series of Facebook live opportunities for families to keep in touch with us. But our main priority at the moment is the wellbeing of our own families too.

We are both working hard at home to keep PACC operating as 'normally' as possible, but we are each facing our own challenges of having become teachers, chefs, therapists, personal assistants etc. The really interesting thing about this 'new' situation for all parents is that this isn't really 'new' to us SEND parents at all! This is often the daily reality for many of us, and what has struck me particularly in the current climate is how many people are suddenly aware of how challenging our reality can be, especially when coupled with the very specific and complex nature of our children's needs. The worrying element here though is that many people really do not understand the complexity of our daily lives and it has come as a surprise to them.

Anyway, the 'most important thing to remember is that we are here, we are still operating as normally as we can, and we are still ensuring families have access to the right help and support throughout this difficult time.

Please keep safe, stay well, and keep in touch with us!

Zara Bowden, Chair of PACC
Sarah Thomas, Participation Coordinator
(Voluntary)



Coronavirus: Key Information

Guidance on Hospital Admission and Care for those who are Disabled and are diagnosed with Covid-19 has been re-issued and clarified this week. We have produced a full article in response to this on our website - <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/guidance-on-hospital-admission-and-care-for-those-who-are-disabled-and-are-diagnosed-with-co-vid-19>

NICE and NHS England have made it clear the application of the Clinical Frailty Scale (the method used to assess access to specific medical care and admission to critical units) should not be applied to younger people where there is a stable long-term disability, learning disability, or autism. This is extremely welcomed as the lack of clarity was rather distressing and cause for concern for many families.



Further to this, NHS England and NHS Improvement issued a letter to all acute, community, and primary care providers making it clear that DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) letters must not be issued to patients unless a full assessment has taken place in consultation with family, carers, and taking their personal circumstances into account appropriately. Again this is a very clear message to medical practitioners about the importance of working with families to understand the needs of those with additional needs and disabilities effectively to support their care as best they can.



For more information about the signs and symptoms of Covid-19, please see the NHS guidance: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

This includes guidance for those identified as extremely vulnerable. Remember, if you or someone in your home has been identified as extremely vulnerable, please follow the advice you have been given.

Stay safe, keep well, protect your family.

NHS England have asked patients to share their Coronavirus symptoms to help others identify and understand the risk of any developing symptoms they may be displaying. This is being done via the NHS Coronavirus Status Checker (<https://www.nhs.uk/coronavirus-status-checker>) which asks a set number of questions of patients or carers who think they may have Coronavirus symptoms. This information is being used to inform the ongoing response in the health service and is providing vital information to local health services about the real impact of Coronavirus in their areas.

If you or a family member believe you have, or have had, symptoms, please complete the survey to inform NHS England's ongoing learning.



Personal Assistants and PPE

Shropshire Council Advice on Personal Protective Equipment for Personal Assistants

Shropshire Council are trying to access Personal Protective Equipment for PA's and they hope that these will arrive soon, but this is being impacted by a huge demand across the system in general for PPE. Advice on the use of PPE is available from Public Health England.

The most appropriate guidance is those for providing care in an individual's home – not a residential setting – you will see the recommendation is that when providing care in somebody's own home PPE only needs to be used if someone in the household is symptomatic of Co-vid 19.

As expected, the prioritisation for PPE is hospital staff and those in the community who are symptomatic.

Shropshire Council are working to have some sets available for PA's if a child / family member becomes symptomatic, but they won't be in a position to provide it for every child / PA automatically. Shropshire Children's Social Care have a worker doing additional hours to deliver necessities to families, so if families need the PPE they will get it out to them, there is no expectation that you will collect it.

If you are struggling with worries or concerns during this extremely challenging time, please contact Shropshire Council's First Point of Contact Team on 0345 678 9044. They can signpost you to the relevant team to best help you.

If your enquiry is Coronavirus specific, please contact their dedicated enquiries team on 0345 678 9028.

Do not struggle, please seek help if you need it. These are really unusual circumstances and it is ok to ask for help if you are finding things really tricky.



Paying Personal Assistants


Advice on payments for Personal Assistants

PACC has spoken to both Adults and Children's Social Care about concerns raised by parent carers who employ PA's through direct payments and are concerned about the impact of self-isolation on retention of PA's. We have asked if PA's employed by parent carers are eligible for the Government's Co-vid 19 Job Retention Scheme and what advice is available from Shropshire Council for family's who employ PA's through direct payments, on how the challenge of the current situation can be managed?


So far, we have the following information from Adult Social Care. In relation to the question asked around retaining PA's, the adult social care team have informed us that they are committed to ensuring that that if an individual who is receiving support is self-isolating, their PA's will not be disadvantaged and will continue to receive full pay. This step has been taken to protect the PA market locally, which it is recognised as not well developed in Shropshire. The team will review individual situations on a 4- weekly basis, but the full pay may continue for up to 12 weeks. This reflects PA's status as being paid through Public Funds and the expectation that such payment will continue to be available for them, and the fact that they are not eligible for the Job Retention Scheme.

If anybody employ's a PA through direct payments from Adult Social Care and wants further advice they can contact Chris Roberts on 01743 25 4843.

As we receive further information from Children's Social Care we will share it with you.




HM Government




Coronavirus

Wash your hands with soap and water more often for 20 seconds


Use a tissue to turn off the tap.
Dry hands thoroughly.




1
Palm to palm




2
The backs of hands




3
In between the fingers




4
The back of the fingers



5
The thumbs



6
The tips of the fingers



CORONAVIRUS
PROTECT YOURSELF & OTHERS

Update from the SEN Team

Thank you to all of our schools, colleges and early years settings for their continued support to meet the needs of all of our vulnerable children. I am aware that this support has taken many forms including on-line learning; distance learning; regular phone contact; visits to the family home as well as continued access to school for those children who are vulnerable, including those with an EHCP and those whose parents are key workers. I understand that virtual classrooms are working well and providing an opportunity for class teachers to interact with their children and for peer to peer interaction to take place as well. The Sensory Inclusion Service are continuing to support families and are planning to set up virtual meetings using Skype. Likewise, those children who have an intervention from the Severe Speech and Language Impaired Children's Team are continuing to receive support and we are hoping to establish regular virtual sessions for them with their SSLIC teacher. Information that SIS would like shared with families has been added to the Local Offer.

You may be aware that a bill was introduced to parliament to clarify the statutory responsibilities of LAs during the current crisis. The 'Covid Act' is now passed, which means that the government has new powers, however these have yet to be 'turned on'. Until this happens the statutory requirements remain the same. This means that the LA will continue to request that schools undertake annual reviews and the LA will continue to undertake statutory assessment. Please be mindful that any statutory assessment started now is unlikely to be completed within the 20-week timescale, as exceptions are likely to be applied due to school closure. I will let you know as soon as further information is available.

Funding will continue to be available as agreed and therefore schools are expected to maintain staffing levels, so that when schools return to 'normal' SEN provision will be in place as previous to school closure.

Thank you for your continued understanding and support.

Julia Dean
Shropshire SEN Service Team Manager



autism
west midlands

Autism West Midlands are continuing to offer a virtual support offer. Advice sessions have been replaced with telephone consultations and a virtual support group is being held for Shropshire Parent Carers.

Please take a look at their website for dates of activities and access information.

<https://www.autismwestmidlands.org.uk/>

[16th April: Virtual Support Group](#)
[20th April: Telephone Advice Sessions](#)



NEW Local Offer for young people - how should this look?

We are in the exciting process of creating a Local Offer just for young people and want to know what you think should be included.

- Are you a young person with SEND? What content do you want/need to see on your Local Offer?

- Are you a parent/carer of a young person with SEND? What do you think your child needs to know about?

Please leave comments here or, if you would prefer, send an email to:

Local.Offer@shropshire.gov.uk.

Any comments are really useful - big or small.

Singing Hands

Come and join Singing Hands for half an hour of fun Makaton signed nursery rhymes and action songs. Grab some props such as toy animals, colourful scarves or ribbons, a shaker and a drum (or a saucepan and wooden spoon) to replicate the sensory elements that we can't provide through a screen. Each week will follow the same structure but feature a different combination of songs. Happy signing!

Tuesdays 10.30am for Preschool age children.

Thursdays 10.30am for Early Years and Primary aged children.



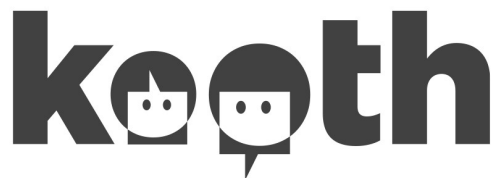
Ongoing Support in Shropshire

The Parenting Team will continue to offer telephone consultations to support parents and carers with:

- managing difficult questions and worries from children due to the current situation
- managing challenging behaviour which might be a result of the changes to their everyday lives
- suggestions on activities with children

In the current situation and with schools closed this might become a lifeline for parents and carers. Please share.

Call 01743 250950 or email parenting.team@shropshire.gov.uk to arrange a consultation at a time convenient to them.



We would like to remind you of the availability of the Kooth online service to support the wellbeing and resilience of young people.

Kooth is a web based confidential support service available to young people. Kooth provides a safe and secure means of accessing mental health and wellbeing support designed specifically for young people.

Kooth offers young people the opportunity to have a text-based conversation with a qualified counsellor. Counsellors are available from 12noon to 10pm on weekdays and 6pm to 10 pm at weekends, every day of the year on a drop-in basis. Young people can access regular booked online counselling sessions as needed. Outside counselling hours' young people can message our team and get support by the next day.

Please visit the Kooth website for more information <https://www.kooth.com/?fbclid=IwAR0HFVjJYLzZM7-AUpAXmw6VBSCrFniuoYJMPmUrPjVxpWUjCTJNni36Z2Q>



**Need to talk to someone who understands the challenges our community face?
Want to know what PACC are up to at the moment?
Have a question?**

Join us every Friday 10-11am for a Facebook Live catch-up.

Follow and like our Facebook page to join in.

Education Select Committee

The implications of the coronavirus pandemic for the education sector and the impact on children and young people will be examined in a [wide-ranging inquiry](#) by the Education Select Committee.

The inquiry will look at how the outbreak of Covid-19 is affecting all aspects of the education sector and how children's social care system and will scrutinise how the Department for Education is dealing with the situation.

It will examine both the short term impacts, such as the effects of school closures and exam cancellations, as well as longer-term implications particularly for the most vulnerable children.

Rt Hon Robert Halfon MP, Chair of the Education Committee, said

The Education Committee recognises that the closure of schools has been a massive decision with huge implications and would like to put on record its thanks to the Education Secretary and Ministers who are having to make tough decisions in very difficult circumstances. We appreciate the briefings that the Committee have so far received from Ministers and officials at the DfE.

"We would particularly also like to thank all the education professionals - the staff, the teachers, the ancillary staff - who are doing everything possible to continue to educate our children. We recognise that this is an incredibly worrying time for all.

"The coronavirus outbreak is going to have a deep and long-lasting impact right across the education sector. While it is so important that all the right steps are taken to keep people safe, actions such as school closures and delays to exams add up to an unsettling time for everyone. We must make sure everything is in place to support our dedicated teachers and school staff who are looking after the children of key workers and also the hardworking pupils and students who are now facing such an uncertain future.

"We also must not forget the disproportionate and potentially devastating impact that the steps put in place to fight this virus will have on our most vulnerable children and young people. If we are to ensure we continue to fight social injustice, we must work to support the disadvantaged, including those with special educational needs and disabilities and those who rely on children's social care services. Everything possible must be done to ensure that those children who are already left behind are not left behind further because of the coronavirus outbreak.

"This is a fast-moving and unprecedented situation and we hope the Committee can play its part in ensuring the right steps are being taken to ensure a prosperous future for all our young people while ensuring everyone in society is kept safe.

The Committee is looking to hear from everyone involved in education, including students and families, staff from across the sector and childcare providers and youth services and local authorities. There is likely to be a series of one-off evidence sessions and other forms of engagement.

PACC will be feeding into this and would appreciate your feedback about your experiences of the Covid-19 response to help us write an accurate account of our local perspective.

Please email enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk

Summary

During this period of unrest, many of us will be trying to manage a household that is struggling to adjust to strange and unfamiliar routines, or the pressure of balancing home schooling with home working.

Remember this is not a normal set of circumstances we are facing. The most important thing during these times of uncertainty are to stay safe and well. If this means your focus needs to be spending some time together watching a movie, or baking cookies, or singing along to the radio, then do exactly that. If it means allowing your young person to spend some time doing what keeps them calm and happy, let them enjoy that a little more.

Not one solution will be right for us all, and not one set of advice will resolve everyone's worries. But, it is really important that you as a family are okay.

If things get tough, reach out. Our Facebook Live Chats will be there to help do this. If you need professional advice or guidance, contact Shropshire Councils FPOC team, your Social Worker, Family Information Service, your SENCo, or other key professional you have access to for that advice. Do not be afraid to seek help.

We are here, we are all finding this difficult, but we will all listen and support each other to get through these tough times.

From PACC, we wish you all to stay safe, keep well, and connect with us when you need to.

Best Wishes

Zara & Sarah

Chatter Pack - <https://chatterpack.net/>
Online resources specifically designed for families with children and young people with SEND

DfE Covid-19 education resources -<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>

The Sensory Projects -<http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/covid19-resources>
Educational resources for children with SEND

Covid-19 Social Story from TES -<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/covid-19-sen-social-story-12276179>

Baby Shark Handwashing Song -<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L89nN03pBzI>

Playmobil explains the Coronavirus -<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DIOGkPMNs4>

Widget Visual Timetable/Planner — <https://themighty.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Our-day-at-home-3.pdf>

You can use this to plan and explain each day of the week for your child.

DfE Covid-19 guidance -<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-guidance>

NHS England Covis-19 guidance -<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

www.paccshropshire.org.uk

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