



PACC Newsletter

November 2022

Welcome to the November issue of PACC's monthly newsletter.

Website: [Parent and Carer Council Shropshire \(PACC\) \(paccshropshire.org.uk\)](http://Parent and Carer Council Shropshire (PACC) (paccshropshire.org.uk))

Facebook: [Shropshire Parent and Carer Council | Facebook](#)

Email: Info@paccshropshire.org.uk

Thank you!

PACC would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to Shropshire parent carers for your response to the SEND Inspection re-visit request for feedback. There was an amazing response to the online survey, with over 700 families sharing their experience of the Shropshire SEND System. We know that the Inspectors really valued this input to the re-visit process and have commented that they found Shropshire's parent carer's feedback to be "balanced and considered".

Once the re-visit has been completed a final report and decision will be issued by the Inspection Team, but this is likely not to be available until after the Christmas and New Year period. PACC will ensure that the report is shared through our website, social media and direct mails as soon as it is published.

Thank you again for your support in helping PACC to improve the local SEND System and ensuring that the voice of Shropshire parent carers is heard.

New PACC Health Chat Group launched

Following feedback gathered during the Shropshire SEND Inspection re-visit PACC has launched the PACC Health Chat group on Facebook. This is a closed group, hosted by PACC, Shropshire Parent Carers to discuss and share information about local Health services. PACC is interested in hearing about your experience of visiting hospital, receiving therapy services in the community and accessing your GP and your ideas about how this experience can be improved. This will inform PACC's conversations with health decision makers and contribute to improving services and outcomes. We will also share helpful resources and information about supporting the health and wellbeing of children and young people with SEND, through this group.

PACC's usual social media rules apply, please be kind and respectful of each other's views and keep feedback courteous and not personal. If you have genuine concerns about a practitioner, please use the individual service complaints process, not this group to address these.

You can request to join the group on the following link
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/2767659166839982>

Making it Real Shropshire Mailing list

Are you a Shropshire resident with an interest in Adult Social Care or work within Adult Social Care in Shropshire?

Would you like to be kept up to date with the work Making it Real Shropshire are doing and opportunities to contribute?

Sign up for the Making it Real Shropshire mailing list by following the link below.

[Click here for more information and to register](#)

You will be kept up to date with what Making it Real Shropshire are doing with a regular newsletter and any useful information received by Making it Real and from other organisations about adult social care.

Making it Real is a national framework and a set of clear and simple statements that set out what good care and support looks like when it's moulded around each person's strengths and needs. Please follow this link to the Making it Real national website for full details;

<https://www.thinklocalactpersonal.org.uk/makingitreal/>

If you would like the registration form either emailed or posted to you, please email makingitreal@shropshire.gov.uk

Autism, Girls and keeping it all inside



The topic of autism and girls has been much discussed in recent years, but while many are aware that girls may present differently, there is widespread misunderstanding about exactly how. This is a huge issue because autistic girls (and those who present in the same way) are being missed and outcomes for autistic females are particularly poor.

A must-read for both parents and education, health and social care professionals, Autistic Girls Network white paper looks at the internal presentation of autism and why it's so often missed.

Click the image to learn more.

Parent Carer Wellbeing Survey

Shropshire parent carers have told us that there are a number of areas that issues that impact on their wellbeing, these are;

- Loneliness
- A lack of understanding by services of their lives
- A lack of a break from caring responsibilities
- A lack of mental health support for parent carers
- The difficulty in accessing services
- The difficulty in understanding and navigating the system

PACC are currently collecting information on what support you would find helpful, and feedback on your wellbeing. We have put together a survey and would appreciate your feedback



Healthy Parent Carer Programme

Abi and Denise will be delivering The Healthy Parent Carer programme starting in January. The first programme will be for Parent Carers of 14–25-Year-olds. The programme is 12 sessions which are delivered online.

Parent carers face increased risks of mental and physical health problems. They often prioritise the health and wellbeing of their children and their caregiving responsibilities, sometimes to the neglect of their own needs. Many parent carers don't feel empowered to look after their own health. They may feel too tired or stressed to engage in healthy behaviours or feel guilty about taking time for themselves. However, poor health of parent carers can have negative consequences on their wellbeing and on their children and families.

The Healthy Parent Carers programme aims to improve health and wellbeing among parents of children with additional needs and disabilities through Promoting greater empowerment, resilience, and confidence of parent carers; Taking small steps that are associated with better health and wellbeing; Encouraging setting achievable goals and taking a problem-solving approach.

More information about the programme can be found [here](#).

If you would like more information or would like to sign up, please contact Denise@paccshropshire.org.uk





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)

A number of Parent Carers have asked where they can find PACC groups on social media. We have our main PACC Facebook page, as well as numerous topic specific pages, we also have School specific pages.

The PACC open page can be found on <https://www.facebook.com/ShropsPACC>

In addition to this main page we also facilitate a number of topic specific closed group as listed below;

PACC Forum Chat <https://www.facebook.com/groups/198288090337379>

PACC Post 16 Chat <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1703290999908562>

PACC Early Years Chat <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1763186617247365>

PACC Autism Chat <https://www.facebook.com/groups/400261288252971>

PACC Health Chat <https://www.facebook.com/groups/2767659166839982>

Along with a number of closed groups for SEND parent carers who attend specific schools. There are currently SEND Engagement Groups hosted by PACC for the following schools;

Bettws Lifehouse School <https://www.facebook.com/groups/799857974393820>

The Marches School <https://www.facebook.com/groups/343841494293213>

The Grange Primary School <https://www.facebook.com/groups/153029779994488>

Shrewsbury Academy <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1099032000596952>

Oakmeadow Primary School <https://www.facebook.com/groups/349608476698727>

Tillstock and Lower Health Primary Schools <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1091634974844449>

All of the groups hosted by PACC are for parent carers only and you will need to request to join these groups. If you are at a school not listed above and you feel there would be interest in PACC hosting a group for your school, please get in touch to discuss this with us.

As well as creating opportunities for participation to influence local and national decision making and providing information to the Shropshire SEND Community, PACC also has a 'Community Support' offer. The current offer is outlined below but this is a growing area of work, which we expect to expand going forward.

Actio – PACC is a founding member of Actio, working with Energize and Ignition to improve the availability of inclusive community-based activities for SEND children and their families.

<http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/about-us/actio-consortium>

Buddies Social Network – Buddies is a group for young people aged 12 and above and their families. Its aim is to bring young people and parent carers together, to enjoy social activities and to provide peer support to each other. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/about-us/buddies-social-group-for-send-teenagers-and-young-adults>

Preparation For Adulthood Navigators – This project started in Sept 2022 and offers guidance and support to plan for the future for parent carers of young people aged 14plus.

<http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/cd-content/uploads/files/PFA%20Navigator%20Intro.pdf>

Healthy Lives Programme – This project also targets the 14 plus age group and explores how young people with Learning Disabilities and / or Autism can be supported to be healthy and well, supporting both physical and mental health outcomes. <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/pacc-pfa-healthy-lives-report-published>



Christmas tips

Putting up decorations can involve a lot of change inside and outside the places we are decorating. There will be lots of new additions or we may have moved furniture around to accommodate our decorations. Whilst lots of autistic people like decorations, returning home or walking into school to find these spaces fully decorated could be a bit of a shock, especially if the changes were unexpected. It's often important to prepare the person for any changes to how the usual space will look before you decorate. Here are some general ideas that may help. Everyone is different so it's important to find out what individual triggers and preferences are...

Consider decorating gradually, e.g. you could put the Christmas tree in position one day, decorate it the next day, then put up other decorations even later.

Involve the young person in charges to the space, e.g. take them shopping for decorations, let them see decorations being hung up, or let them help putting them up.

Understand and make accommodations for things that may trigger sensory overwhelm. Christmas scents and candles can often be overwhelming as can fast-flashing fairy lights and ornaments that play sounds and tunes.

Try and make sure the young person knows how long the decorations will be up. Some autistic people can struggle with the concept of time and may not automatically know that you will be taking the decorations down at some point. Even not knowing when they will be taken down can cause distress. It would help to mark the day on a calendar or schedule or for older children, set a diary reminder on their phone.

Keep things that might overload the person away from communal areas, e.g. flashing Christmas lights or noisy ornaments could go in other rooms rather than the living room or their bedroom. You could put a tree at the back of a classroom out of plain view. Have a 'Christmas-tree' zone in your home or school.

Free chocolates – some young people experience anxiety and become pre-occupied with how many chocolates are on the tree or when they can have them. They may want to eat them all at once. Try making it a game by adding one chocolate per day to the tree for the young person to find. If they don't like this, you could put the chocolates away and hand them one each day to eat.

If furniture needs to be moved around for the tree going up, try not to move everything at once and explain where things will move to. It may help to draw a plan of the room. Once the room is set for Christmas, take a photograph – this could then be used next year to prepare the young person for what the room will look like again in the lead up to decorations going up.

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Tips for a more successful sensory Christmas

- Keep a routine as much as possible. Using visual schedules can be helpful so they know what is next.
- Enjoy short and simple activities.
- Have a quiet room or space for your child to be alone when they get overwhelmed.
- While you are out remember that it's ok to leave early; watch your child's signs.
- Read social stories to prepare your child for Christmas events.
- If your child has several gifts, open them gradually so they don't get overwhelmed.
- Remember to regulate – use sensory strategies to help. As there are so many new experiences.
- Take care of yourself- adjust priorities and expectations and be creative with self-care.

Winter Holiday Fun and Food in Shropshire

Book Now!

Spaces are available on the Winter/Christmas HAF programme.

During 19 to 23 December 2022, eligible children and young people aged 4 (reception class age) to 16, are invited to take part in a range of fun activities, happening at over 43 venues across the county.

To find out more please go to:
www.shropshire.gov.uk/haf

