

Family Voice

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

Participate

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

January 2016

Our vision for children with SEN and disabilities is the same as that for all children and young people - that they achieve well in their early years, at school and in college; that they find employment; lead happy and fulfilled lives; and experience choice and control.



Edward Timpson
Minister of state for Children and Families
Department of Education

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Face 2 Face
Parents supporting parents
of disabled children

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LOTTERY FUNDED



**Parent
And
Carer
Council**

Welcome from PACC



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SHROPSHIRE
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Welcome to the first PACC newsletter of 2016. We hope that you and your family had a good Christmas and New Year break and that the returns to school, college and work have gone reasonably smoothly! Starting a new year can often bring mixed feelings, either being seen as a new start, with new opportunities, or as another round of challenges to face. In reality a new year is likely to bring both for our families. At PACC we have decided to start the New Year by reminding ourselves about why we do the work we do, and we felt that the vision statement on the front of this newsletter really summed it all up. This was shared with us by Patrick Agius, from the Department of Education, at our AGM and Open Meeting in December. It was a statement made by Edward Timpson, the Minister for Children and Families and is the basis for the changes that have been made to the Special Educational Needs and Disability system, as part of the Children and Families Act 2014. Whatever we may all think about the success or not of those changes, we are sure that no one can disagree with

this aim. It is a useful measure when we are thinking about the effectiveness of the support that is provided to our children; does that support enable our children to achieve and to have the same opportunity to lead happy and productive lives as all other children? If it doesn't then perhaps something needs to change?

A change for PACC that you may have noticed is in the format of this newsletter. Over the past couple of years we have worked more closely with our neighbouring parent carer forum in Telford (Parents Opening Doors), as part of our joint lottery funded, Family Voice Project. This has given us an opportunity to explore when working together could be more effective and to extensively develop our work. This project is now in its final year. It has become clear as we have progressed, that while working in partnership brings some benefits, in many cases a more individual approach is needed, that reflects the very different needs of the two areas that we cover. Due to this we have decided that from the end of the Family Voice

project in September 2016, PACC will seek its own sustainable funding. It is part of the strength of local parent carers Forums that we continually share information and experiences and we will continue to work closely with PODs on specific pieces of work and via the West Midlands Regional Forum Network. Moving to a Shropshire specific newsletter is the first step in developing this new approach. If you feel that there are any disadvantages to this we would be very interested to hear from you.

Finally we would like to draw your attention to the PACC annual report 2014/15. This was shared at our AGM and provides a comprehensive summary of PACC's activity and outcomes during this period. It is available on our website under the newsletter and reports section.

Alternatively if you do not have internet access you can request a paper copy by contacting us on 0845 601 2205.



Your Local Offer needs you...

Do you have access to the internet?

Can you spare a few minutes occasionally to shape your Local Offer?

Would you like to be a part of a team reviewing and researching the Local Offer content?

Are you willing to share your knowledge of the Local Offer with others?

If you answered yes to any of the above then you could be a Local Offer Champion.

We are looking for parent carers, professionals, or service providers with a keen eye to help us make our Local Offer the best it can be.

Please contact your Local Offer Coordinator, Zara Bowden,
onlocal.offer@shropshire.gov.uk for more information.

Surviving Brain Injury Conference 2016

Thursday 17th March

**Surviving Brain Injury
The Journey**

**Theatre Severn,
Frankwell, Shrewsbury.**

9.00am - 4.30pm

Speakers include:

Dr Nick Crombie
Midlands Air Ambulance

Neil Davies
Lanyon Bowdler Solicitors

Dr Andrew Worthington
Headwise

Jayne Brake
Headwise

Alison McNamara
AJ Case Management

Dr Penny Butler
The Movement Centre

Jean Robinson
Headway Shropshire

Zara Bowden
Shropshire Council

This year Lanyon Bowdler solicitors are hosting a conference on acquired brain injury.

PACC participation forum chair Zara Bowden is one of many guest speakers on the day, she will be talking about the journey a parent carer goes through from concern/injury to diagnosis and many of the other phases we traverse during our lives as a parent of a child with additional needs. Within her capacity as Local Offer Coordinator she will also be discussing the challenges parent carers face in accessing services, in navigating health and social care pathways, and in having our voice heard and valued.

Other speakers attending will be talking through the process of assessment to diagnosis, the role of case managers and care coordinators, the importance of community services such as OT and Physiotherapy, and

how independent services compliment their statutory counterparts.

The phrase acquired brain injury conjures up images of a stroke victim, of a person significantly brain damaged from a head injury. We forget that in fact damage to the brain in any format can lead to an acquired brain injury, such as epilepsy, memory loss, motor neurone difficulties and much more. The speakers are specialists in their fields with a wealth of knowledge and experience to share. To attend this conference does not mean that you have to have a child with a significant disability, just an interest to learn more or ask questions to those in attendance.

Each speaker will also have stalls with information available on the day to share with you.

For more information email local.offer@shropshire.gov.uk

PACC Job Vacancy

PACC promotes parent carer participation in planning and delivery of services for children and young people (0-25 years) with disabilities or additional needs. We are looking for one person (or two people as a job share) to join our Big Lottery Family Voice project on fixed term contracts until 30th September 2016. DBS Enhanced Disclosure will be undertaken for successful applicants.

Participation Co-ordinator

30 hours per week – may be offered as a job share.
£25,724 p.a.
We are looking for a parent carer to be the lead contact for

the development of local participation across Health, Social Care and Education. The role involves representing PACC at strategic meetings and forums, and working closely with parent carer representatives and the PACC Committee. The successful candidate will also provide organisational and administrative support to develop the infrastructure of parent carer participation, working with PACC trustees and forum on tasks including grant applications, monitoring, report writing, minute taking and planning events. It is highly likely that the successful candidate will have personal



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experience of being a parent/carer of a child with disabilities or additional needs. The role is home based but as travel within and occasionally outside Shropshire will be required, the use of your own car is essential.

To discuss the post or to request an application pack contact PACC on:

Email: enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk

Tel: 0845 601 2205

Closing Date - Friday 12th February 2016

www.paccshropshire.org.uk

Accessing Social Care support for Disabled Children in Shropshire



Over the past 12 months PACC has been working with Shropshire Council to improve the transparency and experience of accessing social care support for disabled children in Shropshire. This work began following parent carers raising concerns with PACC about a lack of transparency in the Shropshire social care system that provides support to disabled children and their families, up to the age of 18.

Social care offers a range of support services for individuals and their families who need additional help to maintain their independence, improve their quality of life and in some cases to protect them from harm. Social Care support service for disabled children and their families can either be a lower level of support, known as targeted support, and in Shropshire this includes Early Help service or the All In Short break programme. More specialist services are available for those with a high level or complex needs and include overnight Short Breaks and 1:1 support from a personal assistant.

These services can only be provided after an assessment of need has been carried out and the threshold criteria met. It was the lack of transparency in the process to access specialist services, which was raising concerns

amongst families.

Shropshire Council agreed to review the threshold document for specialist service as part of the development of the Shropshire Local Offer. The Local Offer requires information about all services available for local children and young people with SEND, including the way to access them, to be published in an accessible and transparent way. PACC has been progressing this work with Shropshire Council for the last few months. Recently however another Social Care concern has been raised due to Shropshire Council's proposals to reduce the availability of overnight Short Breaks via the Willows unit in Shrewsbury. Shropshire Council has made this proposal because of what they describe as a 'lack of demand



for this type of service'. PACC's work over the last 12 months looking at parent carers knowledge of and experience of accessing social care support in Shropshire lead us however to question this statement about demand reducing.

To explore further and gather feedback from a wider range of families PACC issued a survey in November 2015 asking parent carers to tell us

about their knowledge and experience of accessing social care support for their disabled children in Shropshire. The key messages from the survey responses are;

- Well over half of the parent carers who completed the survey were not aware of the fact that a disabled child is eligible for a Child in Need Assessment
- Two thirds of the parent carers who completed the survey were not aware of how to request a Child in Need Assessment
- Approx. half of respondents had not heard of any of the overnight short breaks services available in Shropshire
- Only half of the respondents had heard of either Early Help, Compass or First Point of Contact and significantly less understood the role of these teams
- The most common reasons for needing support was the impact of challenging behaviour on a family and wanting to support a child's development and independence away from home. Lack of sleep and wanting to spend more time with other children were additional significant reasons for needing support
- Over half of those parent carers who hadn't requested support said it was because they didn't know support was available and they didn't know how to request support.

Accessing Social Care support for Disabled Children in Shropshire continued

- One third of the parent carers who said they hadn't requested support said it was because they were 'worried about being judged'

These conclusions clearly do not suggest that there is a lack of demand for the type of service offered by The Willows, rather a lack of knowledge about the availability of such services or of how to access them. This combined with our earlier work, which had identified numerous examples of families wrongly being told that they were not eligible for assessment, paints a worrying picture about the Social Care support system for disabled children and their families in Shropshire. Full

details of survey responses and PACC's conclusions and recommendations have been published in our 'Accessing Social Care Support for Disabled Children in Shropshire' report, which is available on our website.

The report has been shared with Shropshire Council's Director of Children's Services and all Shropshire Councillors. As well as raising concerns about local processes it also highlights the value of social care support and calls for Shropshire Councillors to protect these services as they set future budgets. PACC is due to meet with senior managers from Shropshire Council at the end of January, to discuss the findings in the report and what action might be taken to improve the

knowledge and experiences of local parent carers when requesting social care support for their families.

If you have any questions about how to access social care support for your family you can contact the Shropshire Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) for help - 01743 280019

<http://www.cabshropshire.org.uk/shropshire-iass/>

If you have a particular experience of requesting social care support that you would be willing to share with PACC, to inform this ongoing piece of work, please contact us using the contact details on the front page.

How Fish Climb Trees by Kate McDonald

'How Fish Climb Trees' is an exciting and innovative project which has been developed in partnership by A4U and Ignition Arts. The project will establish a high quality Theatre Company for members of Shropshire Autism Hub.

Funded by Arts Council England, this project is led by Ignition's professional artists who are working with members of the Hub to create a new piece of theatre. Through the theatre making process the participant's will explore their experience of living with autism and will be given opportunities to develop theatre skills in acting, directing, scenography and stage management. These rehearsals will culminate in

final performance of the piece 'How Fish Climb Trees' in March 2016.

In addition to the live theatre performances, an exhibition of rehearsal photographs and a short film sharing the rehearsal process and the final performance will be displayed at Louise House in Shrewsbury.

Marion Youens, CEO of A4U is delighted by this new venture and is looking forward to watching the development of the Theatre Company and growing confidence of Hub Members as they try out new activities in areas where they would not normally feel comfortable. Marion said: 'We are looking forward to

Hub members developing theatre skills as well as being able to enhance their everyday life and communication skills."

Hannah Prior, Creative Director of Ignition is excited to be directing this new and innovative piece of theatre. Having already begun working with the members of the Hub she is excited to be developing and nurturing the creative talent within it.

Hannah commented: "It is great to be collaborating with our local artists and the members of the Hub to create this exciting new piece of theatre."



Supported using public funding by

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ENGLAND**

CAMHS Transformation Plans and 'Future in Mind'

PACC is aware that many parent carers in Shropshire have considerable concerns about the lack of local mental health support for children and young people and in particular have concerns about the effectiveness of the service offered by the Shropshire Children's and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

PACC has raised these concerns on numerous occasions, with both Shropshire Council and the Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group, both of whom are responsible for funding local mental health service for children and young people, including CAMHS.

Over the past 18 months this has resulted in a number of opportunities for Shropshire parent carers to share their concerns directly with the organisations that both fund and deliver CAMHS. As a result of a parent carer workshop hosted by the Shropshire Community Health Trust and a report was produced that identified key issues in relation to CAMHS, outlining what parent carers would define as a good service and making some proposals about how the service could be changed to improve outcomes and satisfaction levels.

In these discussions there was a particular focus on the significant issues around the diagnosis of Autism and associated conditions, including excessively long waiting times, and the lack of post diagnostic support. This report was shared with both Shropshire Clinical

Commissioning Group and Shropshire Council and resulted in a commitment to the completion of a Shropshire Autism Needs Analysis.

The Shropshire Autism Needs Analysis was completed in July 2015 and included information gathered from schools, service providers, children and young people and parent carers.

Over 300 parent carers contributed to the Autism Needs Analysis by either completing a survey or by taking part in a workshop, exploring how young people with Autism and associated conditions are diagnosed and supported in Shropshire.

Several recommendations were made as a result of the Autism Needs Analysis including;

- A focus on the availability of information and communication with families
- Better communication between services
- A programme to support how schools engage with families regarding issues relating to autism and the support provided
- Increased Educational Psychology support
- Improved transition planning

This work in Shropshire was happening at the same time as a national campaign to improve the availability of mental health services for children and young people throughout England. The campaign was led by Young Minds and resulted in the Government response document 'Future in Mind' being published. Part of the

Government's response was that all Clinical Commissioning Groups are now required to produce a CAMHS Transformation plan for their local area. The CAMHS Transformation Plan must be designed to deliver system wide improvements, as well as additional funding being made available for some specific areas as outlined below;

- Building capacity and capability across the mental health system for children and young people, so children and young people who need mental health support have the opportunity to achieve good health and wellbeing outcomes.
- Rolling out the Children and Young People's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies programmes (CYPIAPT) so that by 2018, CAMHS across the country are delivering a choice of evidence based interventions
- Developing evidence based community Eating Disorder services for children and young people with capacity in general teams released to improve self-harm and crisis services;
- Improve perinatal care. There is a strong link between parental (particularly maternal) mental health and children's mental health.
- Bring education and local children and young people's mental health services together around the needs of the individual child through a joint mental health training programme testing it over 15 CCGs.

CAMHS Transformation Plans continued

Prime Minister, David Cameron, has promised £1bn to improve mental health services across England - 11th January 2016

"I want us to be able to say to anyone who is struggling, talk to someone, ask your doctor for help and we will always be there to support you"

Transformation plans are expected to be completed within the year 2015/16, with implementation starting in 2016/17. Guidance for CCG's on producing the transformation plan, written by NHS England states that; "We understand that every local area is different. What is included in the Local Transformation Plan should be decided at local level in collaboration with children, young people and those who care for them as well as providers, commissioners and

other key partners including local Healthwatch."

And amongst other things that transformation plans should;
"Cover the whole spectrum of services for children and young people's mental health and wellbeing from prevention to interventions, for existing or emerging mental health problems, including in patient care and transitions between services;

- address the full spectrum of need including children and young people who have particular vulnerability to mental health problems
- set out the steps towards agreeing a clear role for schools and colleges locally including providing locations for delivering accessible services."

Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group has a draft transformation plan in place which PACC are pleased recognises much of the feedback that parent carers have provided over the last 18 months about mental health services for children and young people in Shropshire. We are disappointed to say however that to date it is not clear how Shropshire parent carers will be involved in finalising the plan or the work around implementation. PACC has contacted Shropshire CCG's commissioning team and requested a meeting to discuss the participation of families in this work and we will keep you updated on any progress made.

You can find out further information about mental health support for young people at www.youngminds.org.uk

Inclusively Fit Project

The Inclusively Fit Project is a Reaching Communities, Big Lottery funded project covering Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. It aims to encourage more disabled people to access local sport and physical activity opportunities to benefit their health and wellbeing, self-confidence and reduce social isolation.

The project was funded back in late 2014, undertaking a planning year under the direction of a project steering group incorporating eight national and local organisations including: Shropshire Providers Consortium, English Federation of Disability Sport, Public Health Shropshire, Energize County Sport Partnership, Shropshire

Disability Network, Headway Shropshire, Shropshire Football Association and South Shropshire Furniture Scheme. A web based directory has been created to search for local opportunities, increasing the awareness and accessibility for disabled people to be active. In addition, we have recently launched transport, equipment and coaching bursaries to support individuals, clubs and groups to become more active and inclusive. Also to support the highlighted barrier of self-confidence and lack of motivation proven to affect people with disabilities, we have a volunteer buddy programme, giving new disabled participants the opportunity to try a new activity for the first time.



If you would like to get involved in the Buddy Programme as a participant or volunteer, or if you would like to know more about the bursaries, find out more information below:

Directory – www.shropshire-disability.net/beactive

Bursary / Buddy programme - <http://energizestw.org.uk/inclusivelyfit>

Email: inclusive-lyfit@energizestw.org.uk Call – 01743 297191

Shropshire Activity Support

Shropshire Activity Support run by Action for Children has been providing community support services, play activities and social opportunities, as well as offering support, information and advice to families and professionals for children and young people with disabilities since April 2007. Currently we support over 200 families throughout Shropshire and provide a service with professional, caring staff. These children have, or would experience difficulty attending groups, clubs or facilities without support. The service provides community-based short breaks where children enjoy a range of activities, trips and visits during a morning/afternoon or evening session.

Shropshire Activity Support is commissioned by Shropshire Council. This means that the council covers the costs of the service, which amounts to £349,940 per annum.

We are currently having to review some of our services and the costs involved and therefore would appreciate parents/carers feedback, ideas and preferences to enable us to make an informed decision on how to plan and provide the support which we provide.

Holiday Playschemes

We provide holiday play schemes which are accessible for all children and young people who are aged 4-18yrs of age who are registered with "All in" via Shropshire Council.

Normally each play scheme runs during the school holidays as follows:

February – one week – 4 days – 2 venue days and 2 trips days

Easter – two weeks - 4 days – 2 venue days and 2 trip days

Whitsun – one week – 4 days – 2 venue days and 2 trip days

Summer – 5 weeks - 4 days – 2 venue days and 2 trip days

October – one week – 4 days – 2 venue days and 2 trip days

Christmas – one day

Each day the hours are 9.30am – 3.30pm

During these days we provide skilled experienced staff who support young people with a range of needs some of whom receive 1:1 or 2:1 support

During a venue day we currently provide a variety of activities which include: arts and crafts, computers, dvd's, toys, games, books, puzzles, sports equipment and we will book inflatables, organised dance and sports sessions, and children's entertainers i.e magician, Animal Man. Hydrotherapy and sensory sessions are also booked.

During a trip day we book a variety of events i.e. Enginuity, Blists Hill, Cosford Air Museum, Jungleland, AMF bowling, cinema, candle factory, Dudley/Chester Zoo, Monkey Forest, Cadbury World, pantomime, Park Hall Farm to name but a few.

Our priority has always been to endeavour to provide the most enjoyable and positive experience possible for our children and young people.

Obviously the costs involved are substantial not only for the hire of coaches which also requires wheelchair access more often than not but also for the entrance fees to these locations on trip days and for the cost of hiring activities

and entertainers for venue days. We also have to pay the hire of Priory School as well as replacing toys and resources which is costly. We can assure you that we always endeavour to negotiate concessions/discounts where possible. Currently the full costs of the activities and trips alone is £16 per child per day excluding support costs and the total cost of a day around £120

There is currently a standard £15 parental contribution per place with a non-refundable £5 deposit per session required to book a place to help manage attendance and make a small contribution to overheads. Bookings are made direct with Shropshire Activity Support.

The service has not reviewed their parental contribution for a number of years. Prices for activities and for transport have increased during this time. This means that we need to review our fees before Easter 2016. We want to gain the views of parents and carers to help us understand what the impact would be on families and to reach a decision that reflects your feedback and preferences.

The benefits of a fee increase would mean that we can continue to offer the level of activities. We would like your views on the following options:

Option 1

Increase of fee from £15 to £20 per day (applies to all days)

Option 2

A charge of £20 for trip days and charge of £17 for venue days

Shropshire Activity Support continued

Option 3

Keep fees as they are but reduce the level of trips and activities

Do you have any views or alternatives to enable us to generate more income for play scheme i.e. fundraising activities to avoid raising charges?

Saturday Youth Club

Shropshire Activity Support currently run a Saturday morning youth club session (term time only) from 9.15am until 1.00pm at Belle Vue Youth Club, Rocke Street, Shrewsbury. Parents/carers can book a specified time or the whole session.

This session is designed to be a youth club scenario where a variety of activities take place i.e. arts and crafts, sports games, DVDs, toys, games, puzzles etc. There is no charge for accessing this session.

This is accessible for all

children and young people aged 4-18yrs who are registered with Shropshire Council "All in" and is bookable direct with Shropshire Activity Support for two sessions at a time with two weeks' notice (if a previous session has been booked another one can be booked once the last session has taken place). This is to ensure that all families have fair access.

We are currently looking at the possibility of providing another Saturday youth club in the afternoon and would like to consult with parents/carers about their preferences in how this would be organised. In order to be able to staff this effectively and give staff proper breaks and time to clear up and set up groups, we would like to run the sessions as follows:

Am session 9.30-12.30
currently 9.15-1.00

Pm session 1.30-4.30

We are looking at a morning session for young children i.e. 3-11yrs and afternoon session for 12-18 yrs. This would enable us to provide activities which are appropriate to ages of children and young people and look at activities to enhance independence for older young people.

Please could you give us your views on this as well as any other options you would like to see.

Please email your responses to: deborah.king@actionforchildren.org.uk stating your preferred option for playscheme and views on the youth club.

Alternatively please phone 01743 285765 to give us your views. We will also be sending out an online survey and attending parent meetings so you may wish to give us your views in this way.

The experiences of parent carers of children with disabilities as multi-service users: a Questionnaire

healthwatch
Shropshire

Please can you tell us what it is like to be a parent carer? We are asking PACC members to fill in the questionnaire, which is enclosed with this newsletter, as part of PACC's current project (funded by Healthwatch Shropshire). We aim to explore the reality of being a parent carer of a child with a disability or additional need who is using a range of different services.

From PACC's experience of talking to parent carers, it is clear that many families of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs are often in contact with numerous services related to their child's disability or additional need, at any one

time. Parent carers often talk about the impact of maintaining a relationship with several services and professionals, and this project is exploring that further.

We have now completed the first stage of the project and found three themes:

- the *child in context*, looking at exclusion and inclusion;
- *managing outcomes*, exploring communication, and conflict and co-operation between parents and service providers;
- the *impact on the parent carer*, which explores parental identity and emotional impact.

The next stage of the project will take themes two and three and explore them further, to tell us what it is like to be a parent carer. We are therefore hoping you can spare a bit of time to fill in this questionnaire, and return it to us in the pre-paid envelope. Alternatively, if you would rather complete electronically please request a copy to be emailed to you by contacting PACC at enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk. For any queries relating to this project please contact Kat Slade on katslade27@btinternet.com. This research project has been supported by Healthwatch Shropshire grant funding

Non Emergency Patient Transport

Do you currently have a medical condition that means you are unable to travel by public, private or community transport to attend a healthcare appointment?

Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are advising people that they could be entitled to use the Non-Emergency Patient Transport (NEPT) Service.

This service, which is totally separate to emergency ambulance services, is not provided to people who want transport for social or financial reasons, or for those who are able to travel on public transport or by other means to get to their healthcare provider.

You could be entitled to use the NEPT service if you are registered with a GP in Shropshire or Telford and

Wrekin and have been referred for a hospital or another medical appointment. Patients will be assessed on their suitability using a short and simple series of questions to ensure fair and consistent use to the service.

If following an assessment you are eligible for the NEPT service, transport will be arranged for you.

The NEPT service in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin is provided by Medical Services. To find out if you are eligible, please call: 01743 762650.

If you are not eligible for the NEPT service, there are a number of other travel options for patients. These could include friends and family, public transport and community transport, if you need more information about NEPT services across the

county for alternative transport options, please visit either website:

For Telford and Wrekin please visit www.telfordccg.nhs.uk or telephone 01952 580407

For Shropshire please visit www.shropshireccg.nhs.uk or telephone 0800 032 0897

If you live in Shropshire, and require more information and help about local transport options, please visit the Shropshire Council website: www.shropshire.gov.uk/public-and-passenger-transport or telephone 0345 678 9000.

If you live in Telford and Wrekin and require more information about travel and transport please visit your local council's website at: www.telford.gov.uk/info/1019/transport-and-travel or telephone: 01952 380000.

Listening Books Membership



Listening Books – FREE memberships for audio-book library service

The national charity Listening Books runs an audiobook library service for people who find it difficult to read or hold a book due to an illness, disability, mental health issue

or learning difficulty such as

dyslexia, giving members access to thousands of audiobooks on MP3 CD, as downloads from the website and through internet streaming. The library boasts fiction, non-fiction and educational titles (from Key Stage 2 to A Level) in many popular genres for both

children and adults.

Listening Books is currently able to offer a number of FREE memberships to children and adults living in

Shropshire who would find the usual membership fees a barrier to joining.

Membership fees range from £20 to £45 per year but the charity also regularly applies for funding to provide FREE membership places for those who would find it difficult to pay this fee.

To take advantage of this opportunity, please contact Jo Cord on 020 7407 9417 or jcord@listening-books.org.uk You can also apply for a membership online by visiting <https://www.listening-books.org.uk/join-us.aspx>

Face 2 Face Update

How Full is Your Cup?



It is natural for us as parents to put ourselves last and tend to the needs of our children. However, we need to try to remind ourselves

"You can't pour from an empty cup - we need to take care of ourselves"

We run a number of support groups for Parents and Carers of children and young people with any special need or disability across Shropshire. Emotional support is so important to our wellbeing as parents. We tend to be great at making sure our children have access to all of the emotional and practical support they need, but may not think much about our own need for support.

Sometimes even the most well-meaning parents of typically developing children may not be able to provide the kind of support we need. They might not fully understand the

challenges you or your child faces, or they might find it too awkward to talk with you about your child's needs without being able to offer some practical help.

This is why having a dedicated time and space to be with other parents who walk in your shoes can be invaluable. As well as the emotional support that a support group can provide, you can also get some practical ideas and suggestions from other parents and even help you develop coping strategies.

It is great when you meet individuals who face similar challenges to you. You feel a sense of kindred spirits, you don't need to feel you are walking the path of being a special needs parent alone.

General update -

The latest Face 2 Face Befriender training course has started, which means at

the end of the 10 weeks training we will be welcoming new Befrienders to our current team to extend the 1-2-1 emotional support we are able to offer to parents in their own homes and also to support our groups.

We are also working along side Autism West Midlands whom we co-host a number of support groups with, looking at areas that we can expand groups in to widen coverage across the county. All of the groups that we support welcome parents who have children with all disabilities or additional needs, who are in mainstream or specialist educational settings or are home educated.

Dates of Support Groups

Spectrum
St Nicholas Hall, Shrewsbury
1st Thursday of each month
(8-10pm)

Shrewsbury
Baptist Church
Tuesday (10-11.30)
23rd Feb, 15th March

Bridgnorth
Friday (10.30-12.30)
29th Jan, 26th Feb,

Oswestry
Thursday (10.00-12.00)
11th Feb, 10th March,
14th April

Contact

Shana Weare
Face 2 Face
Co-ordinator

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Dates For Your Diary



Bridgnorth PACC/AWM coffee morning

Friday 29th January - 10.30am-12.30pm
Cartway URC/Methodist Church

Spectrum Meeting

Thursday 4th February - 8pm-10pm
Lecture Room, St Nicholas Hall, Shrewsbury United Reformed Church.
The speaker will be Jane Bannington and Jane will be discussing Autism Diagnosis and the ADOS Criteria.

Oswestry PACC/AWM coffee morning

Thursday 11th February - 10am-12 Noon
Whole Life Centre, Cabin Lane

Shrewsbury PACC/AWM joint coffee morning

Tuesday 23rd February - 10am—11.30am
Central Baptist Church, Claremont Street, Shrewsbury

Bridgnorth PACC/AWM coffee morning

Friday 26th February - 10.30am-12.30pm
Cartway URC/Methodist Church

Spectrum Meeting

Thursday 3rd March - 8pm-10pm
Lecture Room, St Nicholas Hall, Shrewsbury United Reformed Church

Oswestry PACC/AWM coffee morning

Thursday 10th March - 10am-12 Noon
Whole Life Centre, Cabin Lane

Shrewsbury PACC/AWM joint coffee morning

Tuesday 15th March - 10am—11.30am
Central Baptist Church, Claremont Street, Shrewsbury

Shropshire Independent Advice and Support Service (IASS)

Phone: 01743 280019

Referral line is open
Monday to Friday

10am till 4pm

www.cabshropshire.org.uk

[www.facebook.com/
cabshropshire](https://www.facebook.com/cabshropshire)

www.twitter.com/CABShropshire

Free, confidential and impartial information, advice and support for children and young people (aged 0 to 25) and their parents and carers about special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), health, and social care.

Including:

Support on the take up and management of Personal Budgets and how to navigate the Local Offer.

Information and support around welfare benefits, finance, independent living, employment, debt, and money management.
advice also available.