

Wolverhampton

Parent Partnership Service



Supporting parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs

Issue 31

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Please save paper and costs

Let us know if you would like to receive the newsletter electronically. Just send us your e-mail address to ppservice@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Autumn Term 2009

Welcome to the autumn issue of our newsletter...

I hope you had a safe and restful summer and are geared up for the year ahead. As we enter this new school year, it seemed a good opportunity for me to update you on a few matters.

Readers may recall from our summer newsletter that I'm here managing the Parent Partnership Service on a part time basis covering Lucy's maternity leave. I've been made to feel welcome by all I've come into contact with; I'm really enjoying my time here and am pleased to be helping out where I can.

I'm delighted to inform you that Lucy gave birth to a boy in May; she and Charlie are doing well, as are her 3yr old son Joe and husband Richard. I'm sure you'll join me in wishing them all the very best.

It seems appropriate to remind you who we are as we always get new parents/carers registering with us. Wolverhampton Parent Partnership Service is a statutory service for parents and carers of children with additional needs (special educational needs and disabilities). We are a confidential service providing impartial advice, guidance and support. If you think we can help you, do get in touch.

Back in December 2008, Brian Lamb wrote to Children's Secretary Ed Balls raising concerns that parents feel they have to 'fight' or 'battle' the system to secure high quality provision for their children. The

government then launched the Lamb Inquiry which is investigating parents' experiences of special educational needs processes and systems and how parents' confidence in these areas can be improved. We're eagerly awaiting the outcome of this enquiry which we understand will be published soon.

There's lots more news inside so please take a look. Don't forget, if you think we can help you, do get in touch.

With best wishes

Ken Upton

Interim Service Coordinator



To receive a copy of our newsletter, contact us by phone or email.



ppservice@wolverhampton.gov.uk



www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/parentpartnership



Helpline (01902) 556945



Exclusion Line (01902) 555860



School Choice Advice (01902) 550941

Fax (01902) 446272



Wolverhampton Parent Partnership Service, The Gem Centre, Neachells Lane, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton WV11 3PG

Advice Spot

Transferring from one school to another can be very stressful for parents and children, and probably more so if your child has additional needs.

Your child has probably started their new school by now, but there are still a few things you can do to ensure your child settles quickly and ensure their new school is aware of your child's needs. No one knows your child better than you do so we suggest you contact the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to:

- ask if they've received all the information about your child from their last school
- discuss your child's additional needs and share any concerns you may have about school
- discuss your child's statement and Individual Education Plan (IEP) if they have one
- ask how the school will help your child to settle in
- ask what provision or help is in place for him/her and how this will be used and when
- ask who will provide the extra help your child needs and whether he/she needs any specific training
- ask when and how your child's IEP will be reviewed
- find out what you should do and who you should contact if you have any further concerns
- ask what you can do to help the school to help your child learn.

Schools are very busy places; however, if you prefer to meet the SENCO face-to-face rather than discuss all of the above over the telephone then ask for a meeting with him/her.

Remember we are here to help and support you so please do contact us.



Free School Lunches 2009

Children whose parents become unemployed, or reduce their hours to less than 16 hours a week, but still receive working tax credit for a run-on period are entitled to free school meals. For the full eligibility criteria visit: <http://tinyurl.com/pvbla6>

The City Show 2009



On Saturday 11th and Sunday 12th July, the Parent Partnership Service joined thousands of people at the annual Wolverhampton City Show. Following the success of last year, we were again kindly invited to join the Family Information Service in the Families First Marquee at the show. We gave out lots of information and spoke to numerous families whilst their children were entertained by the staff of the Family Information Service, Local Children's Centres and Early Years.

Our thanks go to Jenny Leech and her team for allowing us to use their facilities and for such great support. In addition to this we would like to thank all of you who came to see us and helped make the weekend a success.



School Choice Advice

Supporting Parents and Carers of Children who are moving from Primary to Secondary School

Do you have a child who was born between 1st September 1998 and 31st August 1999?

Are you considering secondary schools for your child?

Did you know that your child will not automatically be given a place at your preferred secondary school and that **you have to apply?**

You should now have received your secondary school application pack. **The deadline for secondary school applications, for children transferring in September 2010, is 31st October 2009.**

If you will be applying for a secondary school place for your child for September 2010, then don't panic as help is available. The School Choice Advice Service is available to any parent or carer whose child is moving from primary to secondary school. Through the School Choice Adviser you can receive individual support, information and guidance to express a preference for the best and most realistic secondary school for your child.

The School Choice Advice Service can help you; it offers:

- Impartial and confidential advice, information and support on all aspects of secondary school transfer
- Individual support and guidance
- Help to complete the preference forms
- A wide range of information on local secondary schools
- Support to parents/carers in making informed decisions when expressing their preference
- A friendly and flexible service

For more information about the Choice Advice Service, secondary school admissions or local schools please contact me on **01902 550941** or email emma.pearson@wolverhampton.gov.uk. You can now also text your enquiries by texting **CYP SCA** followed by your question to 60006. Or visit my webpages for more information at www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/schoolchoiceadvice

Schools: you can book me to give a talk at your school transfer events for parents/carers and to host drop in sessions.

If your child has a statement of special educational needs, his/her transfer to secondary school should be discussed at their annual review in Year 5.

For impartial guidance and support, please contact my colleagues in Wolverhampton Parent Partnership Service on **01902 556945**

Thursday 1st October 2009

(10.30am - 12.30pm & 2.00pm - 4.00pm)

Come to one of my information sessions at the Gem Centre when I will be offering information to parents/carers on all aspects of the secondary admissions process.

Please call **01902 550941** to book a place as spaces are limited!

IMPORTANT - A new Admissions Code was published in February 2009. This is a legal document which sets out guidance to schools and local authorities when setting their admissions criteria. Copies are available from www.dcsf.gov.uk/sacode



14-19 Reform

You may be aware that from 2013, all young people in England will be required to continue their education or training to the age of 17, and from 2015 this will be 18yrs. This means that, 11 year olds who have now gone into Year 8 at secondary school will stay in education or training until they are 17yrs old and the current Yr 6 children will stay on until they are 18.

During the summer holidays, I spent some of my time working with the council's 14-19 Reform Team to ensure information is available to parents/carers about the options and qualifications available to young people. More information about these important changes can be found at www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19 or www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/education_learning/youth_support/14_19devteam

WOLVERHAMPTON ADHD FAMILY SUPPORT GROUP



Are you the parent or carer of a child diagnosed with ADHD? Would you like to meet other parents and carers who have similar concerns and worries?

Would you like the opportunity to share your experiences with other parents and carers, and learn more about ADHD?

Do you wish you could access more information relating to issues concerning your child's diagnosis of ADHD?

Then, please come along to one of our support group meetings - we may be able to help you.

Wolverhampton ADHD Family Support Group dates:

Wednesday 16th September 2009

Wednesday 21st October 2009

Held at the Gem Centre, Wednesfield

10.30am until 12.30pm

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL

Wednesday 9th December 2009

(venue to be confirmed)

If you know anyone who would benefit from our support group, please pass our details on to them!



We are affiliated to ADDISS:
The National Attention
Deficit Disorder Information
and Support Service

Telephone: 07932 424 362
07949 809 458

Email: adhdsupportgroup@blueyonder.co.uk

Website: www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/community_living/interest/charities/wton_adhd.htm

Also find us on www.adders.org

Children and Families Questionnaire

The Wolverhampton Workforce Development Team would like to invite you to participate in a survey (the One Children's Workforce Tool) to help them assess how the Children's Workforce is performing across a number of key areas, such as integrated working practices, the capacity to deliver high quality services and the use of common values and plain language.

So far, they have been gauging the opinions of staff from across Wolverhampton, as well as from Children and Young People themselves.

The thoughts and opinions of children and their families are extremely valuable in helping to build an accurate picture of how the Children's Workforce is performing, so they would be very grateful for your input.

For more information or to register to be a part of this, please e-mail CYPWorkforcedev@wolverhampton.gov.uk or contact Steve Cartwright on 01902 550948.

Have Your Say!

Does your child enjoy the cinema?

Would you like a free ticket for whoever accompanies your child on each visit?



The Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card is a national card that can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. There is a £5.50 processing fee and the card is valid for one year.

To apply for the card, you will need to meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be in receipt of disability living allowance or attendance allowance

- Be a registered blind person
- Be a holder of a disabled person's rail card

Application forms are available from cinemas across the UK supporting this card (including Cineworld Bentley Bridge) and from the website www.ceacard.co.uk.

For further information contact 0845 1231292, or email info@ceacard.co.uk

SENCOs!



Many parents like to receive information about the PPS through their child's school so here is a quick checklist for you. Please help us by:

- Mentioning our service to parents when discussing their child's SEN
- Keep a stock of our leaflets and hand them to parents
- Photocopy our newsletter and give it to parents who might be interested
- Post our newsletter on your school's website
- Pass on information about events and courses

Thank you!

Revised booklet 'Special Educational Needs (SEN) - a guide for parents and carers'

The reference number is DCSF-00639-2008BKT-EN and copies are available from the DCSF publications centre on 0845 602 2260 or email dcsf@prolog.uk.com



If you have some news you would like us to share with parents/carers of children with additional needs please contact us on 01902 556945 or email ppservice@wolverhampton.gov.uk

Special Days Update



For children with additional needs, the activities run by Special Days for Special People are for those aged from 3-19 years of age. For more information contact Early years on 01902 551019 or 01902 555293



Parentline Plus is a national charity designed to work with parents to offer practical solutions to difficulties.

website for parents concerned about bullying. They also provide extended telephone support to parents via individual sessions.



They offer a free, confidential 24 hour phone line for parents, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Leaflets can be downloaded and support obtained from other parents online through message boards. Parents can exchange ideas, ask others how they have dealt with similar situations or simply make new friends. They have a website for parents of teenagers and a

The Parentline is answered by trained staff and volunteers, all of who have parenting experience.

For more information about Parentline Plus contact: parentsupport@parentlineplus.org.uk or call 0808 800 2222



Providing sport's art's and play activities for children and young people with special needs and disabilities in Wolverhampton



Let Us Play (Wolverhampton) is an independent registered charity who provide sports, arts, and play activities for children with special needs and disabilities in the Wolverhampton area. They have just launched a new web site www.letusplay.org.uk which includes details of all the activities available through them.

Some of the activities planned for October half term are jewellery making, bowling and possibly a trip to Legoland, Windsor. Due to funding most activities are free of charge.

In September Let Us Play have a new group, especially for 10 - 13 year olds, meeting once a week and offering lots of different activities.

On Tuesday 15th September a drama club is starting for those aged 8 years and over. It will take place at The Dance Studio, Colton Hills School 6:30 - 8:30pm. Booking is essential.

For more information or to book a place call Kim Hatton on 01902 403357 or email letusplay.kim@btinternet.com

Staffing Update



Baby News



We are delighted to inform you that Lucy gave birth to a little boy on the 31st May. Charlie and Lucy are both well. Lucy will be returning to the Parent Partnership Service next year. Parents and carers who usually speak to Lucy can contact the service on **01902 556945** in her absence.



Return to work

By the time you read this Sarah will be back at work. She returns to work on a part time basis and will be in the office on a Monday, Tuesday and a Wednesday morning. Parents can contact Sarah on our helpline number **01902 556945**



ContactPoint: The quick way for professionals to find out who else is working with the same child or young person.

ContactPoint is a contacts list for people working with children and young people. It aims to improve services for children and young people as it will be quicker and easier for professionals to contact each other if they need to and help them work as a team

What's coming up

The ContactPoint Team are now working closely with local organisations across the council, health, youth justice, schools, police and community services and the voluntary sector in order to embed the use of ContactPoint, raise awareness and ensure the relevant security procedures are in place to access the system.

An integral part of local communications is to ensure that there is a link with children, young people, parents and carers. The ContactPoint Team will shortly be sending out targeted information to over 200 settings that children and young people use regularly and we will also be attending events they visit.

Michalia Tope, Director of Residential Services, The Haven Wolverhampton said:

"The Haven Wolverhampton has been working with ContactPoint Wolverhampton to become an accredited organisation. Due to the nature of our service and the vulnerability of the families we believe it is vital to the safety of children escaping domestic violence that their records do not enable them to be located inappropriately. We have worked with the ContactPoint team to get these children's records shielded meaning that the safety of the families in our care is not compromised. Our staff will be able to use ContactPoint to get a full picture of a child's involvements with services. This will enable us to more easily work with other professionals to ensure the best service is given to children and families requiring our services."

More information

For more information please visit www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/contactpoint
e-mail contactpoint@wolverhampton.gov.uk or call **01902 5540238**.

Join In Our Christmas Card Competition

Once again we are looking for budding artists to design the Parent Partnership Service Christmas Card for 2009.

There are two age categories:

10 and under

11 and over

If your child would like the opportunity to win a prize and see his/her design on this year's card

please send their design to:

The Parent Partnership Service at the Gem Centre (full address on front) or drop it in to the Gem Centre Reception. You could even e-mail it to us at:

ppservice@wolverhampton.gov.uk.

Don't forget to include your child's name and age, your contact number and address. We look forward to seeing the entries!



Carers Support Group

This is a small group of carers who have an opportunity to meet, discuss and learn from others who share similar situations. The group provides carers with an opportunity to support one another, and they can share advice and information and offer social and emotional support.

If you are a carer why not go along and join one of their groups.

For further details please contact The Carer Support Team by calling us on **01902 553409**



The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) is a national charity that provides advice and information to parents and carers on a wide range of school based issues including exclusion, admissions, special education needs, bullying and attendance.

They have advice booklets for parents on many education issues. Booklets can be downloaded free of charge from <http://tinyurl.com/q78nd3> or by telephoning **0808 800 5793** (Mon/Tues 9am-5pm and Wed-Fri 10am-5pm)

Coffee Morning for Parents and Carers



Does your child have any additional needs? Would you like to meet other parents? Then come along to one of our friendly coffee mornings. These sessions provide an opportunity for parents and carers to meet members of the Parent Partnership Service and other parents/carers to share experiences and advice in a relaxed and informal environment.

Please come along, you will be made very welcome.

Dates are as follows:

6th October 2009
2nd November 2009
15th December 2009
12th January 2010

10am—11.30am
Held at the Gem Centre

We apologise but we cannot cater for children. For further information contact **01902 556945**

Rising to the Challenge

Last term, autism.west midlands held a free course for parents and carers of children with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Seventeen parents attended the free course which included advice and information about various aspects of autism including understanding autism, communication, social skills, behaviour, growing up and managing stress.

The course was delivered by Elizabeth Attfield, Training and Information Officer for autism.west midlands, who has an extensive knowledge and a personal understanding of issues pertinent to living with a child on the autistic spectrum disorder. We would like to thank Elizabeth and the parents who attended for making this course a great success. Feedback has been highly positive once again. A few comments are...

"Very insightful. Made me think and reflect, challenge my own thoughts. Great session for thinking of new ideas"

"Ideas were explored, and participants shared their own experiences. I went away with the intention of applying some new techniques".

"As I have little knowledge about autism, I am really learning first hand with course tutor and parents. I found the visual aids advantageous."

"Elizabeth is an excellent tutor. She has first hand experience of what she is talking about. She has amazing experiences and can understand what individuals are talking about. She is the perfect person to run this course. Excellent ideas to put into practice. Positive ideas and skills. Lots of areas covered for all people across the autistic spectrum."

NEXT COURSE

Rising to the Challenge will be run again in the new year, if you would like to attend please call us to book your place. Places are limited and booking is essential

11th January, 18th January, 25th January
1st February, 8th February, 23rd February

To be held at the Gem Centre, Wednesfield, at 10am - 2pm, sandwiches will be provided.

For your place, you can contact us on **01902 556945**

Contact Details

For more information about the Wolverhampton Parent Partnership contact:



Ken Upton
Interim Parent
Partnership Coordinator



Sarah Letford
Parent Partnership
Officer



Michelle Reid
Parent Partnership
Case Worker
(Exclusions/BESD)



Emma Pearson
School Choice Adviser



Pauline Williams
Admin Assistant



The Gem Centre
Bentley Bridge Business Park
Neachells Lane
Wednesfield
Wolverhampton
WV11 3PG
01902 556 945
ppservice@wolverhampton.gov.uk

The next issue of the Parent Partnership Newsletter is due out in January 2010.

All articles to be submitted by mid November by email or by mail.