



WPPS Newsletter



Summer Term 2008

IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT

You may already be aware that Wolverhampton Local Authority (LA) is planning a revamp of the way in which children and young people with a statement of special educational needs (SEN) for moderate learning difficulties (MLD) are supported in schools. Traditionally, many children with a SEN for MLD have attended a Resource Base (RB) that caters for children with MLD because their local mainstream school has been unable to meet their needs.

Government expectations towards inclusion and a demand from parents to change what is provided have contributed to the need to revamp the current provision for pupils with MLD. The number of empty MLD RB places continues to rise. Some of the MLD RBs in Wolverhampton have less than half of their places full. LA figures show that parental preference is moving away from Resource Base provision towards mainstream schools. A growing number of parents and carers are telling the LA that they want their child to be educated at their local mainstream school, with their peers in an inclusive classroom with teachers and support staff who are confident and skilled in meeting their child's individual needs.

The Parent Partnership Service recently supported the Local Authority in its consultation with parents and carers on the future of MLD RBs and we promised to provide an update on what is happening.

The changes mean that more children will be able to have their needs met in their local mainstream school and primary MLD RBs will eventually phase out. During consultation, parents told us that this is what they would like to see but they felt apprehensive about the ability of mainstream schools to meet the needs of these youngsters. The LA will implement the following to support mainstream schools:

- 1 Enhanced outreach services to enable mainstream schools to draw on the knowledge, advice and expertise of special schools to teach children with MLD.
- 2 Additional funding to be distributed on area based need.
- 3 Area SENCOs to offer advice, guidance and support to schools.

IMPORTANT FACTS

- ◆ If your child currently attends a MLD RB, don't panic, they will not have to move!
- ◆ From September 2008, MLD RBs will be funded for the number of children they have rather than the number of places available which is what happened traditionally.
 - ◆ Now, funding will follow children rather than children following funding!
- ◆ The changes will affect primary RBs initially and there will be a review of secondary RBs.
 - ◆ This will only affect MLD RBs not specialist RBs

The Parent Partnership Service will be writing a FREE leaflet for parents to explain in detail how the proposals will be implemented. If you would like to place an advance order or if you have any questions, please contact us on 01902 556945 or e-mail ppservice@wolverhampton.gov.uk



Lucy Harris

Parent Partnership Co-ordinator



Sarah Letford

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School Choice Adviser



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ppservice@wolverhampton.gov.uk

www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/parentpartnership

Helpline 01902 556945

School Choice Advice 01902 550941

Fax 01902 446272

Wolverhampton
City Council



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PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE FEEDBACK

Parent Partnership Services Increasing Parental Confidence

This new document produced by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) relates to the Parent Partnership Service minimum standards in the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice 2001.



It sets out the Government's expectations of good practice in the provision of impartial Parent Partnership Services. The aim is to further develop parental confidence in the advice and information they receive.

The standards apply to all PPSs and to Local Authorities who are responsible for overseeing, monitoring and reviewing them and to ensure that adequate resources and staffing can meet the needs of parents in the area.

The exemplars in the document illustrate a range of practice from minimum to best practice. This document will be used to inform the future development of the Wolverhampton Parent Partnership Service.

STAFFING UPDATE



We are delighted to inform you that Sarah is expecting her second child in September! Sarah will start her maternity leave during the summer holidays. All those parents who usually work with Sarah can contact Lucy.

As you may already be aware, the Service is experiencing a period of short staffing. Our exclusions caseworker post is vacant but we hope to fill that post as soon as possible.

We will be without a Parent Partnership Officer whilst Sarah is on maternity leave but we aim to offer the same high standard of support to all of our service users. Do bear with us and thank you for your patience!

GOOD NEWS!



Emma Pearson (School Choice Adviser) will be with us for a further three years after the Local Authority agreed to extend her contract.

Read more about Emma's role on page 3.

UPDATE

The Short Breaks Strategy

The Parent Partnership Service would like to thank all of those parents who took the time to complete and return the questionnaire on short breaks in Wolverhampton. We know that short breaks is a topic that many of our parents and carers feel passionate about. The high return rate and detailed comments prove that this is still the case.

The returns were collated and returned to Viv East (Head of SEN and Disabilities) who provided an overview of the feedback at our Parent Information Event last term. The feedback was detailed and, whilst there were many similarities, there were some real differences in opinion particularly around Direct Payments and the future use of Wolverhampton's short break facilities.

There were areas of concern that were highlighted by a number of parents. These include: the needs of lone parents, weekend activities, siblings, transition to adulthood, advice about benefits and lack of information. Parents told us once again, that a 'One Stop Shop' is needed to ease the difficulties around accessing information.

The Short Breaks Task and Finish Group will ensure that the views of parents and carers are included in Wolverhampton's Short Breaks Strategy. Consultation with children and young people is currently taking place. We will keep you updated on any developments!

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The WPPS advice spot covers a different issue in each edition

This term we take a closer look at **THE SCHOOL CHOICE ADVICE SERVICE**



Emma Pearson
School Choice
Adviser

Following a successful first year of the School Choice Advice Service I am pleased to announce that funding has now been secured for the service to continue for the next 3 years. During the first year I dealt with over 600 parental enquiries regarding school choice and liaised closely with schools across the City and beyond.

Last year, the number of outstanding preference forms was only 40 out of a transfer group of over 3000 compared to just under 300 the previous year! This significant reduction demonstrates the importance of having a service to support parents through the secondary admissions process.

My role is to provide **IMPARTIAL** information, advice and support to **ANY** parent or carer whose child will be moving into year 6 this September. If your child has a statement of special educational needs, his/her transfer will have been discussed at their year 5 Annual Review. If you have a child with a statement and would like advice then you can speak to my colleagues at the Parent Partnership Service on **01902 556945**.

Comments received from parents who have used the service include:

"I didn't know where to start. You helped me to make an informed decision".

"It's nice to know there's someone to talk to".

"I was confused by the application pack but you put my mind at ease".

"It was nice to discuss my choices with someone who could offer relevant information".

The process of applying for a secondary school can be stressful and confusing, if you will be applying for a secondary school place for your child for September 2009, then don't panic as help is available.

I can:

- ☺ Provide detailed information about schools and their admissions criteria.
- ☺ Provide information about performance of individual schools.
- ☺ Offer assistance when completing your application.
- ☺ Offer individual support and guidance.
- ☺ Offer independent, impartial information and a confidential service.

**SCHOOLS,
YOU CAN BOOK
ME FOR YOUR
TRANSFER
EVENINGS!**

Remember **YOU MUST** apply for a secondary school place as you will not automatically receive a place at a secondary school, if you do not apply then you risk not getting a place at a school of your preference.

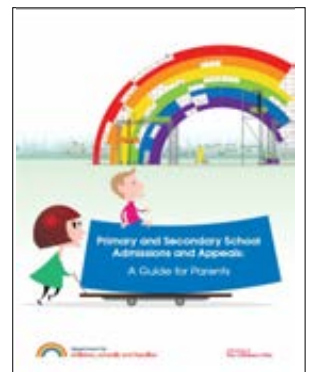
See me at the
Wolverhampton
City Show!
12th & 13th July

SCHOOL CHOICE ADVISER
01902 550941

In April 2008 the DCSF published a new 'Step- by-Step' guide for parents on the School Admissions and Appeals system.

The aim of the guide is to give straight forward advice on all aspects of choosing a school for your child and appealing against a school place decision, for any applications which are made for a school place for entry into the school from Sept 2009 onwards.

To receive a copy call the DCSF 0845 6022260 or call me on 01902 550941 and I'll send you a copy.



INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & CARERS

WOLVERHAMPTON'S FAMILY INFORMATION SERVICE



Wolverhampton Family Information Service

Wolverhampton Family Information Service and the Local Authority are delighted to announce the arrival of the new "Children and Young People's Directory of Services".

The Children's Act 2006 places a duty on all Local Authorities to provide information to all parents and carers about **services that are available locally as well as nationally** so that they can identify sources of support for their children up until they are 20 years old. 'Every Child Matters - Change for Children' emphasises the importance of providing an online service directory with up to date information and details of the services that are available to meet the needs of **children, young people and their families**.

Wolverhampton City Council has commissioned the Wolverhampton Family Information Service to manage the Directory. This builds on their history and good practice of providing information to families within the city. The directory is web based and holds details of statutory, voluntary, independent and private sector services in Wolverhampton that deliver services to Children, Young People and their families. **Also included** are links to national organisations. The site is a valuable resource for practitioners, professionals and Families throughout the city.



- ✦ You can visit the directory online at www.wolverhamptoncsd.org.uk
- ✦ If there is a service you feel should be included in the directory, you can contact the Family Information Service on **0800 294 9939**

Wolverhampton Record of Children with Disabilities and/or Special Needs.



We have recently provided a new, up to date print of the information packs which give details of the benefits of the Wolverhampton Record of Children with Disabilities and/or Special Needs Record.

These packs can be obtained at The Gem Centre, all GP Surgeries, Health Clinics and Local Authority premises including Social Care offices, Libraries and Wolverhampton's Special Schools, or alternatively by ringing the Child Health Records Department in The Gem Centre.

Anyone wishing their child to be considered for registration as disabled with the City Council and to receive support from the Council will need to obtain one of these packs and return the application form to the Child Health Records Department in The Gem Centre, or in the pre paid envelope in the information packs.

ARE YOU A CARER?

**Do You Need A Helping Hand?
Are You Caring For A Child
with Special Needs?**



Wolverhampton Multi-Care offers care to children with special needs. Our service users have severe learning disabilities and some have multiple disabilities. The focus of our work is to give a short break to carers enabling you to have time for yourself and other family members by offering:

- ☞ Care in the family home on a sessional basis.
- ☞ One to one care at our premises for children aged from 8 years.
- ☞ Support for you and the service user during hospital visits.
- ☞ A holiday club for children up to 18 years of age during school holidays.

For further information please contact our Care Service Manager/Care Service Officer on **01902 453700**

EAT SMART, EAT FREE

Free school meals are available if...

- ★ You get Income Support/Income Based Job Seekers Allowance/support from NASS (National Asylum Support service) or Child Tax Credit with an income of less than £14,495.
- ★ You do not receive Working Tax Credit.
- ★ Your child is in full time education, and
- ★ Your child goes to school in Wolverhampton.

See if you are eligible, call student services 01902 551462

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS & CARERS

TETTENHALL WOOD SCHOOL OUTREACH SERVICE FOR AUTISTIC SPECTRUM DISORDERS

Tettenhall Wood Outreach Service offers support to staff in mainstream schools who are working with pupils with a diagnosis of ASD. As the school's population of pupils with ASD has increased, staff have developed specialist knowledge and skills in order to meet the specific needs of these pupils. The school has a range of experienced professional staff, with many different areas of expertise, which can help to support the educational and social experiences of pupils with ASDs in mainstream schools. The Outreach Service can provide practical advice to try and overcome some of the difficulties that staff may be experiencing. This is based on methods used with pupils with an ASD in the classroom.



The Outreach Service can provide support for staff in mainstream schools in a number of ways including:

- ★ Whole school in service training sessions.
- ★ Visits to the school to observe good practice.
- ★ Workshops and informal discussion groups for parents and staff supporting individuals with ASD.
- ★ Advice and practical solutions for working with specific individuals who have an ASD.
- ★ Attendance at Annual Reviews.
- ★ Information on school structure and learning environments.
- ★ Information about specific teaching techniques.
- ★ Pupil observation with structured feedback meetings.
- ★ Information leaflets on various aspects of ASD.
- ★ Regular informal meetings between staff.

Referrals must be made via the pupil's school.
For further information please contact:
Louise Steel Outreach Manager
Tel: 01902 556519 Fax: 01902 556520
Email: louise.steel@wolverhamptoncyp.org.uk

Young Minds

This national charity is committed to improving the mental health of all children and young people.

The charity has recently been working with a group of young people so that they could redesign their website to become more child friendly.

This useful website has information on a range of different topics including abuse, depression, learning difficulties and self harm.

They also have a section for new siblings

www.youngminds.org.uk

The Wolverhampton Quality Standard for Inclusion

Ask your child's school if they are working towards the Quality Standard for Inclusion.

The Quality Standard for Inclusion has been developed in collaboration with Wolverhampton Headteachers and other professionals in order to reflect the context of schools in the City.

The aim of this tool is to support schools in gaining a clear understanding of the extent to which inclusive practices are embedded in school life.

Schools that achieve the Quality Standard will be able to demonstrate how inclusion exists in all policies in order to increase learning and participation for every pupil.



UNPAID TIME OFF

Working Families is campaigning for PAID time off when parents need to deal with their children's medical emergencies and other issues that come with having a disabled child. Many parents cannot afford to take the Parental or Emergency Leave that they are entitled to because it is unpaid. Research by Working Families has shown that many parents are unaware of how much money they will lose if they take time off.

Current rules and regulations are not working! Check out your rights at work by downloading Working Families factsheets from the website www.workingfamilies.org.uk or ring the helpline on **0800 013 0313**.

For local advice you can contact the Wolverhampton Family Information Service on **0800 294 9939**

Working Families would also like to hear from people who cannot afford to take the Parental or Emergency Leave that they are entitled to as it will help with their campaign.

Please call 020 7017 0072 or email, janet.mearns@workingfamilies.org.uk.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS



FREE TRAVEL SERVICE TO THE GEM CENTRE

- ✦ Do you attend the Gem Centre?
- ✦ Do you have difficulty getting there?
- ✦ Do you struggle to attend your appointments?

Wolverhampton PCT together with Wolverhampton Transport, supported by Centro have combined to

provide specialist transport support to families in accessing services provided by the Gem Centre.

There is a new service available to families who have no car and are not on an easy bus route; have special transport needs; or may have to bring more than one child. Transport will be provided by a 15 seater Community Transport mini-bus, every weekday during opening hours to enable families who may have difficulties getting to the centre to attend their appointments. All requests will be given due consideration.

If you think this service could be of use to you or you require further information please contact Sue Wheatcroft on **07810 836234** or email sue.wheatcroft@wolvespct.nhs.co.uk



MEDICAL DEVELOPMENT Wolverhampton PCT is gearing itself up for September!

It is widely known that almost all cases of cervical cancer are caused by Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection. **There is now a vaccine to prevent most cases of cervical cancer.**

In most cases the HPV infection clears up spontaneously but the infection persists in some. **The persistent infection then causes cell damage resulting in early (pre-cancerous) changes that eventually lead to full blown cancer if not detected early, for example by the cervical smear test, and removed by surgery.** Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in women on a world scale. There were 2250 new cases in England in 2005.

The cancer commonly occurs in young women in their 30s and in women in their 70s-80s. Ninety-nine per cent of cases of cervical cancer are caused by HPV infection. **Two high-risk types, HPV 16 and 18, cause over 70% of cervical cancers.**

The vaccine targets the two high risk viruses (HPV 16 and 18) that cause cervical cancer. However **to gain protection against these viruses the vaccines need to be given before the risk of infection starts.**

There is no clear evidence that the current vaccines are effective at clearing up infection once it has set in. The infection is passed on by physical contact. The incidence of infection rises from age 14 onwards. Specialists have therefore advised that the vaccine should be offered to girls age 12-13 starting in September 2008 (year 8 at school).



There will also be a catch up programme for girls age 16-18 in the school year 2009/2010 and for girls age 15-17 in the school year 2011/2012.

There are two licensed HPV vaccines. One is **Gardasil** which protects against HPV types 16/18 and 6/11 and the second is **Cervarix** which protects against types 16/18 only. The vaccine is administered in the arm or the side of the thigh. The government will decide soon which of these two vaccines is to be used for the immunisation programme. Both vaccines are in use in some countries including the USA and Australia, and they have been shown to be safe and effective.

The Department of Health will be producing information leaflets and publicity material on the HPV vaccination programme, which will also be available on the website

www.immunisation.nhs.uk/vaccines/HPV.

The aim of the HPV vaccination programme is to prevent cervical cancer in the future by having the vaccine before the risk of infection arises. The current cervical cancer screening programme will continue even after vaccination has been introduced. This is to protect women who have not had the vaccine and also because the vaccine does not protect against all viruses that cause cervical cancer.

Dr Abraha Derso, Consultant Paediatrician & Lead Clinician for Immunisation, Wolverhampton City PCT (on behalf of the District Immunisation Committee)

NOTICEBOARD!

Better support for emotional well being in schools

Minister for Young People, Kevin Brennan has announced the 25 Local Authorities that will begin the 'Targeted Mental Health in Schools' project. The good news is that Wolverhampton is one of the successful areas. The Local Authority and the Primary Care Trust will work with a selection of primary and secondary schools to deliver better support for those children who are at risk or are already experiencing mental health problems. Kevin Brennan said "Good mental health and well being are crucial to ensuring that all our children and young people can learn, achieve and fulfill their potential..."



Tell us About bullying



Contact a Family is joining forces with Parentline Plus to produce a guide for parents of disabled children to help them if their child is being bullied and we are looking for your help. Research suggests that more than 1 in 3 disabled children have been bullied at school and many parents feel they have no where to turn. Bullying can take place anywhere. The guide will be a tool for parents to help them cope if their child is being bullied. As well as containing information about the law relating to bullying and the action schools should be taking, it will include parent experiences.

If your child has been bullied or is being bullied because of their disability and you'd like to share your experiences to help other parents, please get in touch. We would also like to hear from you if your child has been bullied because they have a disabled sibling. We want to know how you spotted signs of bullying, the strategies you used, how you coped with the situation and any advice you would like to give to other parents in similar situations. Your experiences will be used anonymously in the guide. The guide is due to be published in November in time for Anti-Bullying Week 2008. So watch this space!

If you would like to share your experiences or have any questions about the project, please contact Penny Roper on the Contact a Family freephone helpline 0808 808 3555 or email penny.roper@cafamily.org.uk

Wolverhampton has 2 anti-bullying co-ordinators. If you would like to know more about what's being done to tackle bullying in Wolverhampton call Stephen Dodd 572016 or Janet Kerr 555290

Watch this space for details of how the project will be implemented in Wolverhampton.



Fuel poverty hits families with disabled children hardest.

The 'Every Disabled Child Matters Campaign' is supporting 'Contact a Family's' call to give families with disabled children a winter fuel allowance to match that currently paid to pensioners.

Research shows that it costs three times as much to bring up a disabled child compared with other children and childcare costs are up to five times as much. Two thirds of families with disabled children struggle to pay their fuel bills in winter and 10% have had their gas or electricity supply cut off.

Steve Broach, campaign manager for EDCM, comments: "We are proposing that, to begin with, the allowance is paid to families with the most vulnerable disabled children - those aged 5 years and under who are most likely to be at home and have difficulty moving about to keep warm".

EDCM update - New Law on Short Breaks

The government has responded to EDCM's call for a "right to short breaks" and has created a "new legal duty" on Local Authorities to provide short breaks and support to families with disabled children.

More details can be found at www.edcm.org.uk/shortbreaksduty

The progress on short breaks shows that public involvement in EDCM campaign actions has a "crucial impact on government policy".

Visit www.edcm.org.uk/getinvolved to see how you can help to make change happen for disabled children and their families.

READ ABOUT WOLVERHAMPTON'S SHORT BREAKS STRATEGY ON PAGE 2

The National Autistic Society has opened a new regional office in the West Midlands. Based in Central Solihull, it will cater for the Greater Birmingham area and the West Midlands. The NAS is the national autism-specific charity but now with a local presence and identity.



EVENTS FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

FREE COURSE FOR PARENTS



Following the success of the previous Help! & Help!2 courses held in Wolverhampton, we are delighted to announce that there will be another three-day Help! Course during the Autumn term.

23rd September 9.45 - 2.45pm

24th September 9.45 - 2.45pm

1st October 9.45 - 2.45pm

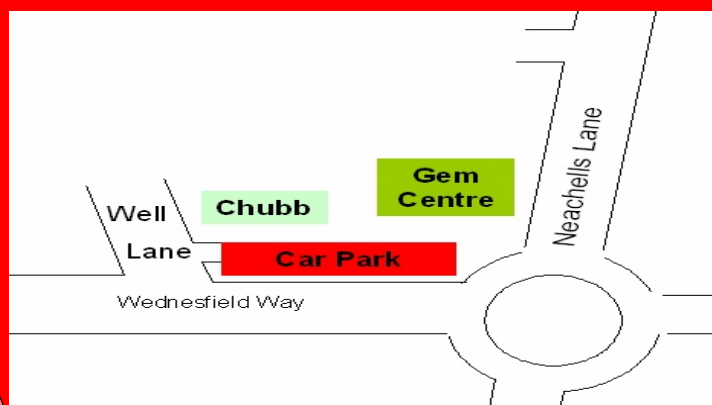
Venue: Gem Centre Lunch will be provided

The National Autistic Society (NAS) will be providing this **free** course for parents and carers of children who have had a recent diagnosis of Autism or those who would like further information about their child's ASD. The course will be delivered by Lorraine MacAlister from the NAS who has extensive knowledge and personal understanding of the issues to be able to provide insight for parents.

For more information or to book a place on this course please contact Michaela or Lorraine on 0115 847 3530

ALTERNATIVE CAR PARKING FACILITIES

As you may be aware it can sometimes be difficult to find a parking space on the main Gem Centre car park. Below are directions to the alternative car parking facilities should you need to use them.



If you require further information about any item in this Newsletter or if you would like to contribute please contact us on 01902 556945 or email ppservice@wolverhampton.gov.uk
To access previous issues of our newsletter, visit www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/parentpartnership



SUNFIELD TRAINING

Family training opportunities for families of children and adults with special needs. Each course costs £10 per person.

19th July

Mum's day, supporting parents and carers with issues of Adolescence, Sexuality & Learning Difficulties

6th September

Understanding & Managing Sensory Behaviour

For further information or to book a place, Please contact: 01562 883183, email: pdc@sunfield.org.uk

Wolverhampton City Show 12th & 13th July 2008

The Parent Partnership Service will be at the City Show again this year. If you wish to speak to us or the School Choice Adviser, please come and see us this year at West Park



CALLING ALL SCHOOLS!

A workshop run by the Children's Occupational Therapy Department to support your implementation of the Cool Kids programme.

Held every term at the Gem Centre.
Tel: 01902 444272 for details