

WIRRAL SEND PARTNERSHIP

Information, Advice and Support Service



Welcome

to our 2015 New Year Newsletter. We hope you enjoyed a pleasant Christmas break and are looking ahead to a happy and healthy New Year.

There have been so many changes to the SEN system over the past few months that we thought it might be helpful to recap on some of the main changes. We have also had some changes within our service. You may have noticed that our name has changed as we are now known as **Wirral SEND Partnership Information, Advice and Support Service**. The new name was chosen by parents and young people and reflects the fact that, in response to the requirements of the Children and Families Act, we now offer Information, Advice and Support to children and young people up to the age of 25, as well as their parents and carers. We were very happy to retain the *Partnership* element, as this is central to the work we do.

Although our name has changed, we are still the same statutory service which has been providing impartial support to parents of children with additional needs in Wirral for many years, but with some additions to our service.



We are delighted to introduce Becky Wilson as an additional member of our team. Becky has many years experience in providing advice and guidance to young people, having previously worked for Connexions, Job-Centre Plus and in a number of school and college settings. She will be developing our service for children and young people, as they have been granted much more choice and control under the new reforms. Read Becky's

column for more information about vocational options for young people.

Another development of our service is that we are now providing an independent disagreement resolution and mediation service in Wirral. This service aims to resolve disagreements about assessments and provision for children and young people with additional needs or disabilities, quickly and amicably and if possible avoid the need for appeals and complaints.

We hope you will find this newsletter informative. More information about the SEN reforms and other topics can be found on our website www.wired.me.uk or get in touch if there is anything you would like to ask or for us to include in a future newsletter.

*Wirral SEND
Partnership Team*

Some of the topics covered inside this issue:

New Member of Staff	2
Volunteering for Wirral SEND Partnership	2
The role of the PSS Independent Supporter	3
Local Developments in implementing the SEND Reforms	3
Wirral Disagreement Resolution and Mediation Service	4
Preparing for Adulthood	6

Meet our new Staff Member Becky



I would like to introduce myself, as the newest member of the Wirral SEND Partnership Information, Advice and Support Service. It is a very exciting time for me, joining the team at such a change to the SEN system. Having many years experience of working with young people, in an advisory role, I will be developing part of our service with young people in mind.

The Children and Families Act from 1st September 2014 has changed the way that children and young people with SEN and/or Disabilities, get the support they need.

Children and young people will now have more say over what support is offered to them. Young people over the age of 16 who have left compulsory education (Year 11) should be encouraged and supported to make their own decisions if they are able to. Our website now has a dedicated page for children and young people and contains many helpful links and information.

There are Vocational Choices within local colleges, free schools and training providers in Wirral. These work

in partnership with many of the local Wirral Borough schools and offer a wide range of vocational courses for 14-16 and 16-19 (25 for SEN). All providers offer a quality service and key priorities for these services are to work towards progression with routes to Further Educational Training, Apprenticeships or Employment (see websites www.teenwirral.com www.apprenticeships.org.uk)

Please call me if you would like more information about options for young people.

Becky Wilson

**Further
Educational
Training,
Apprentice-
ships and
Employment**

Volunteering for Wirral SEND Partnership

We are very fortunate to have a small team of skilled and dedicated volunteers. They enable us to support more young people and parents to participate fully in decisions by helping to explain the SEND system and supporting them at meetings. All volunteers receive full train-

ing and supervision and travel expenses are remunerated.

If you have some time on your hands and would like to learn new skills and train to empower parents and young people with special educational needs this interesting and rewarding volun-

teer role might be for you. If you'd like to find out more ask Kerstin to send you an information pack. All volunteers are subject to a DBS check and would need to have their own transport. We reserve the right to decline a volunteer application.



The role of the PSS Independent Supporter

PSS Independent Supporters support families who are transferring from a statement to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) or who are requesting one.

By 2018 there will no longer be any children who have educational statements as the government are phasing them out. EHCPs are a more holistic approach than the Educational Statements and incorporate both the child and young person's social and health care needs. This new system also means that they will now have provision in place until they are 25 if they are staying in education or training and still need support. At the age of 16 where the young

person has capacity they become responsible for making decisions about their EHCP rather than their parents.

PSS Independent Supporters will arrange an initial visit to determine where the family is up to with the application process. We are able to support the families to request an EHC Plan (they can do it themselves to the Local Authority however it is usual that parents can request the school to apply). PSS Independent Supporters will explain the timelines and then are able to support the families to complete Section A which should help with the outcomes for the professionals (usually by speaking with the

children or young people and filling out a person centred one page profile).

PSS Independent Supporters are able to attend any meetings about the EHC assessment if families want us to and make sure they understand everything. Once the draft plan is completed by the Local Authority PSS Independent Supporters can support families to check it over and make sure the families are happy.

We work alongside the IAS (Information Advice and Support Service - formally Parent Partnerships) and if the parent/carers or young people are not satisfied with the EHCP draft plan we would explain the



appeals and mediation process and then refer them to the IAS who will guide them through the appeals.

Referrals can be made by professionals, schools, parents and young people over the age of 16.

Referrals can be made via phone on 0151 702 5552 or via email: ISS@pss.org.uk

Local developments in implementing the SEND Reforms

Most of you will by now be aware of the changes to the Special Educational Needs system as part of the Children & Family Act 2014 which we have explained in previous editions of our newsletters. Since the changes came into

place in September the Local Authority and schools have been busy putting the changes into practice. There are a number of working parties which have been tasked with developing the local response to the new legislation and ensur-

ing that they comply with the statutory guidance and legislation.

In addition to ourselves, Wirral Family Forum parent/carer representatives have been involved in all wor-

king groups to ensure that all policies have been co-produced and they are also developing an emblem that services listed on the Local Offer website can use to show that this has happened.

Article continued on page 4

Local Developments in implementing the SEND Reforms continued

An advisor from the Department for Education (DfE) has also visited Wirral to check on progress and give advice. One area which the DfE is focusing on is Wirral's Transitional Arrangement Plan which sets out how they will transfer Statements of Special Educational Needs to Education Health & Care Plans over the next few years.

Each child or young person who is currently in receipt of a Statement of SEN will have a transfer review meeting, which will usually

replace the child's annual review at key transitional points (i.e. Year 6 and Year 11). If it is felt that the child or young person still requires a high level of SEN support or specialist provision it will be followed by an education health and care needs assessment. Wirral's transitional arrangements can be found on the Local Offer website.

Schools now have a duty to set out how they support pupils with SEN, and what SEN resources they have, in their SEN Information Report which can be

found on their website or the local offer. Schools are always open to feedback about the information contained in their report as this should reflect from their own pupils and parents. Speak to your school if you need any information which isn't contained in the report.

Another key area of change related to EHC plans is Personal Budgets. Parents or young people in receipt of an EHCP can ask for a personal budget which sets out how the identified provision is

costed. In some cases it may be possible to ask for some elements of the personal budget to be made available as a direct payment.

Not every element of a personal budget will be able to be taken as direct payments and certain restrictions will apply. The local authority is currently working on Wirral's personal budget policy and this will be published early in the new year.

Wirral Disagreement Resolution and Mediation Service

When disagreements arise between young people or parents and the local authority or education, health or social care providers about an aspect of a child or young person's special educational needs or provision they can be difficult to resolve.

Wirral SEND Partnership, which is independent of the Local Authority, provide a disagreement resolu-

tion and mediation service to help young people and parents to discuss areas of disagreement with the aim of seeking resolution, hopefully avoiding the need to appeal or

complain. Although the words "disagreement resolution" and "mediation" are often used interchangeably, under the Children and Families Act 2014 they have

different meanings.

Disagreement Resolution is for young people with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) and parents of children with SEND, whether or not they have an Education Health or Care Plan (EHCP).

Article continued on page 5.



Wirral Disagreement Resolution and Mediation Service

Continued from page 4

It allows the parties to come together to discuss issues and explore possible solutions in a respectful, constructive way.

Mediation is a confidential process (except in cases where there are safeguarding issues) and is facilitated by a trained mediator in a neutral environment allowing all parties to discuss the issues.

Young people or their families who have, or who have requested an assessment for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) have the right to ask for mediation if they are unhappy about any of the following issues concerning the assessment or plan.

- The Local Authority's refusal to carry out a needs assessment
- The Local Authority's decision not to issue an EHCP following assessment
- The description of the young person or child's special educational needs
- The extra help that is required to meet those needs
- The local authority's decision to cease or maintain a statement or EHCP

People will be expected to consider mediation before registering an appeal, but having done so, they also have the right to decline it if they so wish. This decision will not affect the outcome of the appeal. If the disagreement only concerns the name of the educational establishment then the case can proceed straight to appeal without the need for mediation.

Disagreement resolution and mediation meetings are often successful in finding a solution which is agreeable to both parties and they can prevent the disagreement from escalating. All parties come to the meeting with a view to resolving the disagreement ami-

cably. During the meeting the mediator ensures that all parties have the opportunity to explore the issues and explain their point of view. You can also ask for the health and social care aspects of the EHCP to be discussed at mediation, but if you are not able to agree, you would not be able to appeal these at tribunal. Instead you would have to follow their independent appeal or complaints procedures. Participating in a disagreement resolution or mediation meeting does not affect your right to pursue further routes of appeal or complaint. Contact us if you would like further information about mediation or registering an appeal.

Wirral Autistic Society Survey

Wirral Autistic Society is conducting a survey about the impact of Autistic people of so called "mate crime". They feel that this form of "hate" crime must be stamped out. They say "We need your help to end mate crime" in Merseyside.

"Anyone who cares for a person with autism will understand how vulnerable their loved one is to a false friend - someone who, under the guise of friendship, manipulates and bullies. Mate crime can happen to anyone, young or old. Please help us understand the extent of this problem across our region by answering our questionnaire. The more we know, the more we can help."

If you would like to find out more about "Mate crime" or take part in the survey contact Wirral Autistic Society on 0151 666 9960 or email Rick Myers at Wirral Autistic Society at rick.myers@wirral.autistic.org

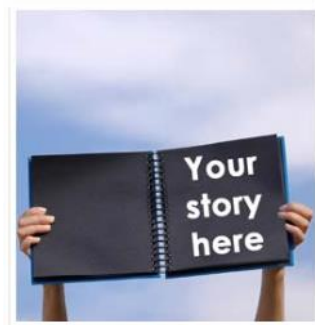
How to be creative with words - Young DaDa



Creative writing doesn't always mean putting pen to paper. Local writer Roger Cliffe-Thompson will be joined by other professional writers to guide budding wordsmiths in this project, using words to create poems, songs and stories. Young DaDa are looking for young people aged 11-25 who are disabled, deaf or living with a long term illness or condition with an enthusiasm and keen interest in creative writing.

Workshops will be held on Tuesday, 3rd February, Tuesday, 3rd March, Tuesday, 5th May, Tuesday, 2nd June and Tuesday, 7th July from 4pm to 6pm, at the Bluecoat, School Lane, Liverpool, L1 3BX. We would want participants to attend all five workshops, we have 15 places available on the project. Project participants will work towards producing work to be used at Young DaDa Fest in July 2015.

All workshops are free and access support and transport will be provided if required. Please note before the young person is able to take part their parents/guardians will need to complete a registration and consent form. To take part in the project please contact Sam Wade by Monday, 19th January on samw@dadafest.co.uk or call on 0151 703 2258.



TOP TIPS when looking for childcare

Family and Childcare Trust have been funded by the Department for Education to make a series of short films and have written "Top Tips" with parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities for parents. The Family and Childcare Trust want to hear from parents and talk about the advice they would pass on to other parents who are looking for childcare. For more information email Pip Dorkings at pip@familyandchildcaretrust.org

Preparing for adulthood: Information for young people

From September 2014, under Part 3 of the Children and Families Act 2014, the right to make requests and decisions applies directly to disabled young people and those with SEN over compulsory school age (the end of the academic year in which they turn 16) rather than to their parents.

This has raised a lot of questions from young

people, their families, and professionals working with them, about how young people can be prepared and supported to make important decisions about their future.

Preparing for Adulthood (PfA) have worked in partnership with the Transition Information Network (TIN), the Information Advice and Support Services Network

(IASSN) and Making Ourselves Heard (MOH) to develop this factsheet.

Find this and other information about choice and control in preparing for adulthood for and young people on our dedicated page on our website



Mental Health in Children and Adolescents

Anxiety, depression and self-harm: three of the most common mental health issues in children and adolescents. They're issues which, if ignored, are highly likely to continue into adulthood. One in 10 children, aged five to 16, suffers from mental health condition, says the last UK National Prevalence Survey - that's three in every classroom.

Mental health problems are increasing. ChildLine recently reported a rise in the number of calls from people self-harming, and A&E admissions figures reflect this: an increase of 68 per cent in the last year.

England's chief medical officer, Dame Sally Davies, has stressed the need for more focus on children's mental health services. Her annual report on mental health highlights that half of

adults with problems develop them by age 15; three quarters by 18. Davies showed particular concern about the high rate of bullying, calling it the "foundation of poor mental health later on" with girls' cyberbullying a critical issue. In fact, cyberbullying is now the most common form of bullying. Up to 34 per cent of young people in the UK have been affected, and girls are twice as likely to be victims of persistent bullying. The pressures young people face through the internet is a growing problem. These also include the effects of pornography, body image issues and pressure to succeed at exams. The nature of the internet and social media means children now live in a 24/7 online world. Other pressures come from websites that normalise unhealthy behaviours, such as self-

harm and anorexia. However, the internet can also be an enormous force for good and a platform for mental health support. Currently, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) teams work under a four-tiered approach - Tier 4 is for the most severe issues and involves inpatient and day unit care.

Nearly two-thirds of young people polled by YouGov believe learning about mental health as part of the curriculum would help tackle the problem. MindFull, a support service for 11-17 year olds (www.mindfull.org), is campaigning to make this compulsory. More prevention, early intervention and treatment are required.

For further advice, visit www.youngminds.org.uk, or call the YoungMinds Parents helpline on 0808 802 5544.

Makaton training - Wirral Children's Centres

Wirral's Children's Centres are delivering a nationally acclaimed training programme designed to support young children who struggle to communicate.

Children, parents and carers have been helped to learn Makaton, a language programme which includes speech, manual signs and graphic symbols, during a series of training sessions. Makaton is designed to support those for whom communication is difficult, including people with learning disabilities. The method is used in the popular TV series "Something Special" with Mr. Tumble, and has been proven to be very effective in enabling young children to use basic signs to communicate. The training takes place in schools, nursery settings and children's centres, and children are encouraged to reinforce their skills by practicing with their peers in school.

Stephanie McGreal, who leads the training sessions, is currently the only accredited, licensed Makaton Regional Tutor for Wirral. The training was funded and supported by Wirral Council. For more information about Makaton sessions and courses, email stephaniemcgreal@wirral.gov.uk or call 0151 625 3892.

Wirral SEND Partnership - Information, Advice and Support

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Website: www.wired.me.uk

Wirral SEND Partnership provide an impartial, independent and confidential service which gives free information, advice and support about matters relating to Special Educational Needs or Disabilities for children and young people aged 0-25 and their parents or carers.

You can self-refer or ask someone else to refer on your behalf.



WIRED SERVICES WIRRAL

Wirral SEND Partnership

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Wirral Disagreement Resolution & Mediation Service

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Email: contact@wired.me.uk
Website: www.wired.me.uk

Payroll Service

Tel: 0151 522 7990
Fax: 0151 670 1600
Email: wirralpayroll@wired.me.uk
Website: www.wired.me.uk

Wirral Carers Service

Tel: 0151 670 0777
Email:
carers.support@wired.me.uk
Websites: www.wired.me.uk
www.wirralcarers.co.uk

PALS Service (Patient Ad- vice and Liaison Service)

Tel: 0151 647 4251
Email: WirralPals@wired.me.uk
Website: www.wired.me.uk

Shopmobility

Tel. Birkenhead: 0151 647 6162
Tel. Liscard: 0151 606 4665