

Dudley Parent Carer Newsletter

Edition 3 - September 2015

Welcome to the third edition of Dudley Parent Carer Newsletter

As a forum we aim to:

- Offer support and provide friendship.
- Listen with empathy
- Provide signposting and share information in ways that are easily understandable and accessible
- Be democratic, transparent and represent the collective views of parent/carers
- Influence policy development
- Be realistic in what we and partners together can achieve in the current climate of continued spending cuts



The forum
presents its
First
Annual Report

The Future of
the Transition
Task and Finish
Group

HealthWatch
Dudley

Steering Group
updates and
dates for your
diary

Working Together For Change Presents its First Annual Report!

WTFC was set up in the spring of 2014 and has a steering group of 24 members, *made up from 6 local organisations and independent parent carers.*



WTFC isn't just a talking shop; it is a real powerhouse for change. In less than a year, its members have worked with Dudley MBC, Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group, colleges, schools and local parent support groups to co-design services and policies. The Steering Group meets regularly and seeks to make the best use of people's strengths, skills, experience and interests, but without over-burdening them.

Task and finish groups have been set up for transition, personal budgets, integrated care and transport.

Transition from school to college is an area that concerns parent carers immensely. The task and finish group work with Youth Services, Connexions and colleges to explore solutions to issues and to influence and inform policies that make the transition process as smooth as possible.

The forum has also been involved in compiling the Local Offer and has worked closely with Dudley MBC and Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure parent carers were able to influence the list of services that need to be included. They are also looking at co-producing a framework for the personal budgets process.

The transport task and finish group lobbied strongly against proposed

budget cuts to transport services for children under five with special educational needs. The 'We Love Carers' campaign led to a more holistic appraisal around transport resources to encompass cover all stages of life and not segregate children's and adults transport.

In just one year...

- Parent carers have met at 13 different venues at locations all across the borough
- Our members have come together 31 times in the last year
- The forum has 92 followers on Twitter & has had 66 likes on the Facebook page with some of the posts reaching over 300 people!
- Members have come together over 650 hours to make sure their voices are heard and that they are influencing services

For a copy of the Annual Report visit <http://dudleyparentcarerforum.com/newsletters-and-reports/>

The Future of the Transition Task and Finish Group



Over the last six months Working Together for Change members have been working closely with officers from Dudley Council and local colleges to have informal conversations, exchange views, offer ideas and ask questions about the transition process.

Over the past six months parent carers have met regularly with Dudley MBC officers Helen Ellis, Divisional Lead for Integrated Youth Support, Sue Powell from Connexions and John Cunningham the 16-19 Funding and Commissioning Manager to discuss issues regarding the transition process. It is an opportunity to have open and honest discussions and for the forum to act as a critical friend, be solution focused and influence services to get things right.

Transition from school to college is an area that parents get concerned over. Representatives from Dudley, Halesowen and Stourbridge colleges regularly attend and join in the discussions. It gives the colleges an opportunity to explain their transition process and parents an opportunity to share their perspectives and experiences.

The group has recently evaluated the success of collaborating in this way and have been pleased with the impact they have made and the strength of the professional / parent carer relationship. Working in this way has been meaningful for everyone and all involved want to continue to work together to improve the transition process.

The group are planning to produce a guide to transition which will share their experiences, offer advice, signpost and share case studies to help anyone with a child with a special educational need or disability going through transition. WTFC are also planning to develop the transition pages on the website and add more resources to help parent carers.

You can find notes from all transition meetings at <http://dudleyparentcarerforum.com/transition-16-25-years/>



Dudley SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs & Disability Information, Advice and Support Service) are offering free workshops for parent carers and young people up to 25 with SEND

If you're a parent or carer of a child or young person with special educational needs (SEN) or a disability, or a child or young person up to the age of 25 with special educational needs or a disability, we can help you. We provide legally based advice, information and support on all matters relating to SEN and disabilities including health and social care issues.

Young Persons Workshop - Wednesday 7th October 2015

A workshop for young people aged 16-25 with special educational needs and disabilities attending colleges or other post 16 settings, understanding how your special needs can be supported in your setting

Transferring from Statement to EHCP - Wednesday 14th October 2015

If you are a parent of a child with SEND and your child is in one of the following year groups: Yr5, Yr9, Yr11, Yr14 come along and find out about the transfer process and how you can be supported

Attachment Awareness Project Information Session - Wednesday 18th November 2015

A workshop for parents with adopted children and foster carers to introduce a new project within Dudley schools focusing on understanding attachment

These workshops will be held between 10.00 am and 12 noon at:

Dudley SENDIASS, Saltwells Education Centre, Bowling Green Road, Netherton

Please telephone 01384 817373 to reserve your place.

More information is available at www.dudley.gov.uk/dudleysendiass



Independent Support Service

EHC assessments and plans help you secure the best possible SEN provision across education, health and social care. Whether you or your child has an existing statement of SEN, a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA) or are new to the process you can use an Independent Supporter to help you through this journey.

What can an Independent Supporter do to help you?

- Explain the EHC assessment and how an EHC plan is developed
- Explain who does what and when
- Help you recognise the difference between goals, aspirations and outcomes
- Help you navigate the Local Offer and how it can help you
- Ensure you have all the information you need to make a decision (e.g. how to request a personal budget, how to choose a school or setting)
- Provide impartial information and support for you to be confident to express your views
- Be a point of contact throughout the EHC assessment, with your Key Worker if you wish



You may want help with all of this process or just part of it. An Independent Supporter works flexibly with you and can be accessed at any stage of the EHC assessment and planning process. Independent Support is an additional service offering support for parents, carers and young people. For more information or to make a referral contact Mencap Direct on 0808 808 1111 or email us on independent.support@mencap.org.uk

What's happening nationally?

Implementation of the SEND system

Recent figures published from the annual return by local authorities showed that:

- 240,000 have EHC plans or statements;
- Over 4,000 children and young people had an EHC plan. Of these a third were new assessments; the remainder transfers, mainly from statements;
- the number of children and young people with a statement or EHC plan increased by around 3,000, although the number of new assessments in the year dropped by about 2,000;
- there was a significant increase in assessments for under 5s;
- 9 out of 10 statements were completed in time; and around 65% of new EHC plans were completed in 20 weeks;
- 165 of EHC plans included a personal budget.

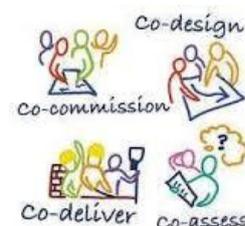


Co-production

Local Authorities need to work closely with children, young people and parents to co-produce their Local Offer to ensure that it is effective and relevant. But it's also important to engage children, young people and parents fully in other aspects of local SEND activity – such as commissioning, service planning, delivery and evaluation.

The principles of co-production, which underpin the new SEND system, are being applied in many areas to great effect, leading to sound decisions that are widely supported. It's important that these principles are adopted everywhere so that they become a fundamental part of delivering support for children and young people with SEND across the whole country.

If you want to know more about co-production, there's an excellent video available produced by Contact a Family which you can access here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SPa3qrDZWp8>



Spotlight on HealthWatch Dudley

Your **voice**
can improve NHS
& care
services

healthwatch
Dudley

Got something to say...

...about your GP, hospital, mental health service, optician or pharmacy?

Healthwatch Dudley listens and shares your experiences with people who make important decisions about local health and care services.

We can also point you in the right direction if you are looking for information about local services, or want to know what to do if something has gone wrong.

Patients and carers sit at the heart of everything we do and by working together we really can make a difference!

03000 111 001 (Calls charged at local rate)

www.healthwatchdudley.co.uk
email hello@healthwatchdudley.co.uk or
tweet us @HWDudley

Good or bad
we want to
listen



Dates for the Diary

Transition Task and Finish second meeting – Tuesday 20 October 12pm - 2:00pm
Venue: Brinton's Field, The Old Chainwire Club, Zortech Avenue, Kidderminster DY11 7DY

WTFC Steering Group – Friday 2 October 9:30am – 11:30am (Steering Group members only)
– Friday 4 December 12:30pm
DY1 Stafford Street, Dudley, DY1 1RT (next to Steppingstones Medical Practice)

WTFC Meet & Greet – Wednesday 16 September 9:30-11:30 (all welcome)
DY1 Stafford Street, Dudley, DY1 1RT (next to Steppingstones Medical Practice)

Carers amble through Saltwells Nature Reserve - Thursday 8 October (then 2nd Thursday each month)
12.30pm (Saltwells Lane carpark DY5 1AX)

Join us for a gentle amble through accessible woodland trails, take some time out for yourself or bring along the person who you care for to enjoy the beautiful surroundings and sculpture trail. The route is not demanding, is generally flat and everyone is welcome. You will get the chance to meet and chat with other carers and people will be on hand from local services to discuss help available in Dudley borough.

For more information contact Alan Preece, Senior Warden on 01384 812795 or email alan.preece@dudley.gov.uk

Don't forget you can keep in touch or check out what we are up to in a number of ways



Email: info@dudleyparentcarerforum.com



Website: www.dudleyparentcarerforum.com



Twitter: @DWTFC



Face book: <https://www.facebook.com/dudleyparentcarerforum>