

# Dudley Parent Carer Newsletter

Edition 6 - September 2016

## Welcome to the Sixth edition of Dudley Parent Carer Newsletter

Hello there! We hope you have all had a wonderful summer filled with lots of sunshine and fun times!

It has been a busy few months for the forum and we have lots to update you on. Parent Carers have met with the Clinical Commissioning Groups Designated Medical Officer to find out more about his role. The forum has been involved with influencing the Education Health and Care Plan process and is meeting regularly with professionals from a range of organisations in a variety of roles to continue this work through a task and finish group.

Parent Carers have also been giving their time to act as a critical friend and review Dudley schools websites SEND content in a bid to improve and standardise SEND information and easy navigation.

There have also been a few changes within the Local Authority and we are sad to say goodbye to Merlin Joseph Chief Officer of Children's Services and Deanne Fishbourne Head of Educational Outcomes, who has been a great advocate of the forum. Sue Butcher will be taking up her post as Merlin's replacement in October 2016 and we are pleased to welcome Suzanne Edwards as the new Head of Educational Outcomes. There have been further changes Matt Bowsher who is Chief Officer of Adult Social Care will hold the accountability for the new Whole Life Disability Service supported by Donna Patel as the Head of Service. We wish them all well and look forward to working alongside them all.

Consultation on  
Travel Support

Designated  
Medical Officer –  
Tim Horsburgh

Education,  
Health and Care  
Plan – Task and  
Finish Group

Carers Amble  
and dates for  
your diary

## Consultation on Travel Support Policy & Procedures for Learners Aged 0 to 25

Dudley MBC's People Services Directorate would like to hear your views and experiences around the travel support they offer to eligible learners that attend School or College aged 0 to 25 that live in Dudley. The consultation document and online questionnaire can be found using the following website link:  
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/about/directorates/children-services/consultation-documents/>

The closing date for comments and responses is **Tuesday 11 October 2016** which can be either submitted online or emailed to the address below or posted to People Services Directorate, Westox House, 1 Trinity Road, Dudley, West Midlands DY1 1JQ

Alternative versions of the consultation document are available by contact the Executive Support Team by telephone on 01384 814225 or email [children.services@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:children.services@dudley.gov.uk)

Engaging with communities and residents is vital to the Council in planning and structuring services to meet needs. Your involvement is important to the Council as they want to hear your views and opinions so that they can best respond to them in the services that they provide.



## Introducing the CCG's Designated Medical/Clinical Officer

Tim Horsburgh is the Designated Medical/Clinical Officer for Dudley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This is a role that is particularly challenging as there is limited time dedicated, lack of resources, and decision making structure in place which makes this role hard to achieve its maximum potential.

Tim believes that meaningful engagement and feedback from Groups such as the forum are essential to further develop this work and to identifying gaps.



### The role of the Designated Medical/Clinical Officer (DM/CO):

- The Children and Families Act builds on the role of the Designated Doctor role and recommends appointment of a DM/CO
- Joint Commissioning partners should ensure there is a DM/CO to support the CCG in meeting its statutory responsibilities for children and young people with SEND.
- The DM/CO is the key point of contact between the local NHS and the Local Authority and Families
- Supports the delivery of Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions at Schools
- CCG Board Level role
- Educational role – Engagement
- Establish Strategic Outcomes
- Co-ordinate EHCP process
- Participation / Engagement Strategy for CYP
- Local Offer Oversight
- Specialised Services Commissioning
- Extending reforms to 18 – 25yr olds
- EHC assessments in Youth Justice

### Some Key areas of responsibility for the DM/CO:

- Takes part in strategic decision making in Joint Commissioning Arrangements
- Role in coordinating notifications of SEND from clinicians to Local Authority
- Coordinating medical information input into EHC Needs Assessments within statutory timeframe
- Carrying out assessments for EHC Plans (where part of their clinical role) and ensuring that assessments and planning is carried out
- Coordinating delivery of health provision specified in EHC Plans

Parent carers that met with Tim felt that this was a tremendous amount of work and responsibility to meet given the fact that the time dedicated to achieve this in is around 1 session equating to half a day per week in Dudley, however the National Guidance is 2-4 sessions per week.

Tim is continuing to meet and work with parent carers from the forum through the Education, Health and Care Plan task and finish group.

## The Local Offer

**The Local Offer provides information on services available in Dudley for children and young people from birth to 25 who have Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND).**

Dudley's Local Offer has been developed with parents / carers to help you find the right services and support for you and your family. It is a one-stop-shop for young people, parents, carers, family members and practitioners working with families. It will help you find the information you want about support and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities.

Dudley's Local Offer includes information on short breaks, health services, leisure activities, travelling to school or college, and training for work and help for young people to move towards independence in adulthood

To find out more visit <http://www.dudley.gov.uk/resident/localoffer/>

## Education, Health and Care Plan – Task and Finish Group

A range of professionals from various departments and organisations came together with parent carers from Working Together for Change to discuss the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process. The aim was to develop a better understanding of the process, share a variety of views and perspectives and with the long term view of improving the experience for people within Dudley borough.

Sharon Hearne, Dudley MBC's SEN Team Manager, very helpfully took parents carers through each stage of the EHCP process, explaining the 20 weeks timescale and describing all the activities which need to be managed in order to complete the assessment.



An EHCP is a legal document describing a child or young person's special educational needs and the provision they will require to meet those needs. An EHC Plan also includes any health and social care provision needed to secure the best possible outcomes across education, health and social care in preparation for adulthood.

### The Statutory Assessment Process

**Week 1** – A referral is received and the SEN Team send a letter to parents explaining that they are **considering** the request. The referral process is **'front loaded'** so that all the information available including Educational Psychology reports and other specialist reports are included right from the start in the initial referral. Parents carers should always be involved and fully informed of any referral made by the school or setting. The request goes to a Local Authority Panel for discussion. A decision will be taken within 6 weeks as to whether an assessment will be undertaken or not.

**Week 3/4** - A decision is usually made around this time so it can be communicated to parents within the 6 weeks timescale.

**Week 6 onwards – Assessment is agreed:** If the decision is to agree to conduct an assessment parents will be informed by letter. All those involved with the pupil will be invited to update their information via a proforma. This will update the information provided at the referral stage so should not take too long and therefore minimises time delays.

All the information made available through discussions with parents, young person and professionals is carefully considered for inclusion into the EHCP: the EHCP provides a summary document which includes the pupil's aspirations, needs and outcomes and provision. The plan shouldn't be separated from the advices received and the final document is only as good as the information received!

**Week 6 onwards – Assessment is not agreed:** the parent carer will be informed by letter. This will include the reasons why the assessment has been declined. The letter may appear complex because it contains all the routes for further discussion and appeal if the parents are unhappy with the decision. This is a legal requirement – the team are working on trying to simplify it! A meeting will be offered with the school and the parent carer to discuss the next steps in the school setting.

**Week 12** – The assessment process is completed when all the information sought and provided is returned to the Panel by the SEN Case Officers. At this point a decision is made about whether a plan is needed or not. Parent will be informed of the decision and again the rights of appeal are clearly described in the letter if the LA decides a plan is not necessary. Health Watch can help if you are struggling with health and social care elements.

**Week 14 - 16** – Usually around weeks 14 -16, if the plan is agreed to be needed, a **draft** plan is produced and shared with parent carer and colleagues who contributed. There is a 15 days period for parents and others to talk to the LA to make sure that the plan is right. Schools and settings will then be consulted about placement.

**Week 20** – By week 20 a **final EHCP** should available. The Department for Education monitors all Local Authorities on their compliance to the timescales so LAs are keen to complete within the timescales set. Sometimes though the timescales are unhelpful and where this is the case, the Local Authority tries to be flexible.

It was felt that it had been a very positive meeting that had helped parents to understand a complex process.

It was felt, however that colleagues from social care should also be around the table and it may be beneficial to ask Adult Commissioners to attend to cover up to 25 years.



# What's happening?

## Moving on from School to Post 16 Education

On Friday 21 October Dudley SENDIASS are hosting a conference to look at moving on from school to post 16 education for young people with special educational needs.

The conference will be led by Christopher Robertson who is an independent academic and author, policy analyst and adviser to educational organisations. He is also an honorary lecturer at the University of Birmingham. His key interests are in the areas of education policy, developing high quality special and inclusive education, staff development, and enhancing the role of children and young people with SEND and parents/carers, in decision making about all aspects of their education.

### Focus of the conference

- The Children & Families Act 2014 key statutory duties relating to SEND
- Overview of SEND Reform
- Understanding the statutory duties of SENDIASS and the rights of children & young people
- Engagement between school & post 16 settings
- Duties on post 16 settings to deliver SEND & challenges of the FE sector
- Post 16 commissioning arrangements to meet needs of young people
- A good transition, young people at the centre
- Examples of practice

Places are limited. To book a place please contact Dudley SENDIASS 01384 817373

## Chaos! Toy Library

A specialist Toy Library for children with disabilities or special needs and their siblings. You don't need a diagnosis just come and join in. A variety of toys are available including specialist sensory that help with OT, SALT and sensory issues, musical, traditional wooden and educational toys. Come play and find out what's going on around the borough and borrow some toys!

### Future dates

Friday 7 October 2016

Friday 4 November 2016

Friday 2 December 2016

### Saturday Chaos!

For children with disabilities and their siblings – every Saturday from 10am-12pm £5 per session.

All sessions take place between 10am and 12pm at Queens Cross Network, Wellington Rd, Dudley DY1 1RB

### Sunday Chaos!

Takes place on the first Sunday of the month, Chaos take over the wonderful Scallywags Indoor Play Centre in Brierley hill from 9 – 10:45am Sessions are free of charge but parents do need to stay on site. Siblings are welcome and the equipment is suitable for children of toddler age through to 12.

For more information contact Rachael Gardner at [rachael@welovecarers.org](mailto:rachael@welovecarers.org) or phone 07817 321072.



## Tumble Down's SEN Kids Club

Tumble Down's Sen kids club is a new kids club for children with special needs. The club will run every Thursday 6:00-7:30pm term time only at Hob Green Primary School, Hob Green Road, Stourbridge, DY9 9EX. It's a chance to meet other parents and children, parents are welcome to stay or leave

For more information contact Wendy 07807030583 or email [wendyhacket45@gmail.com](mailto:wendyhacket45@gmail.com)

# What's happening?

## Autism friendly cinema screenings

Showcase are proud to present the launch of our Autism Friendly screenings in partnership with not-for-profit support provider, Dimensions. Our innovative autism friendly screenings provide opportunities for people with autism or sensory sensitivity to enjoy a trip to the cinema.

Visit for more information: <http://www.showcasecinemas.co.uk/events/autism-friendly-screenings>

On Sunday mornings throughout the month, films suitable for all audiences are screened in a sensory friendly and inclusive environment. Adjustments at the cinema reduce over-stimulation and create a welcoming place for people with autism to enjoy films with their families, friends or carers.

Visit for more information: <https://www.dimensions-uk.org/families/autism-friendly-screenings/>

## ODEON autism friendly cinema screenings

ODEON hosts autism friendly cinema screenings every month. Listed below are the participating sites for our autism friendly cinema screenings with ODEON. Tickets for the latest releases may come with a small Blockbuster charge of £1.

Visit for more information: <http://www.odeon.co.uk/accessibility/autism-friendly-cinema-screenings/>

## ADHD, ADD & ASD Parent Support Group

For all parent/carers of children with ADHD, ASD and related diagnosis's (Asperger, ADD etc). A chance for a coffee and chat with friendly like minded parents and an opportunity for passing on any relevant information or get help with any issues that you may have. A Great support network and a place to make new friends. The group meets every month from 10am till 12pm.



### Future dates

Thursday 13 October 2016 – DY1 Stafford Street, Dudley

Tuesday 15 November 2016 – contact Anne for venue details

For more information contact Anne Davis at [anne@welovecarers.org](mailto:anne@welovecarers.org) or call 07763 875654

## Carers amble through Saltwells Nature Reserve

The second Thursday of each month - 13 October, 10 November 12.30pm Saltwells Lane car park DY5 1AX  
- No booking necessary

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](mailto:alan.preece@dudley.gov.uk)

## Scope Face2Face Coffee Morning

Stourbridge Children's Centre, Forge Road, Stourbridge DY8 1XF.

Are you the parents/carer of a child that has an additional need or disability? Come along and join us

Tuesday 11 October 2016 10:00am – 12 midday

Tuesday 22 November 2016 10:00am – 12 midday

Tuesday 15 December 2016 10:00am – 12 midday

For further information please call or email: [sarah.thompson@scope.org.uk](mailto:sarah.thompson@scope.org.uk) 07436 805 494

Face 2 Face  
Parents supporting parents  
of disabled children

Scope  
About disability

# What's happening?

## Future Stars!

Future stars are a drama group for children and young people who have a disability or additional need. The group is for children and young people aged 10 - 25 years. The group runs term time on Saturdays at Quarry Bank Community Centre from 2pm - 5pm.

Children and young people can come along to develop performance skills to include expression, improvisation, body language etc. that will help with confidence and all aspects of performing they will also meet new friends and build on their social skills. We do 2 performances at Quarry Bank which is to showcase what the children and young people have learnt in lessons where parents/carers and other family members come along to watch.

For more information our email is [letsdancefuturestars@gmail.com](mailto:letsdancefuturestars@gmail.com)

## Carers Tea and Chat!

Do you support a relative, friend or a loved one with everyday tasks?

You might be cooking, shopping or helping with taking medication, washing and dressing ...people who give this kind of support often need more information or help.



Carers Tea & Chat is an informal drop in for carers to meet each other and find support from local organisations.

Refreshments start from just £1 – all welcome!

First and third Friday every month 9:30am-12 noon

Lunch on the Run Cafe @DY1, Stafford Street, Dudley, DY1 1RT

## Let's Dance

Let's Dance is a dance group for children and young people who have a disability or additional need. The group is for children and young people aged 5-25 years, under 8's have to be accompanied by a parent/carer.

The group runs term time on Saturdays at Quarry Bank Community Centre. Sheffield St, Quarry Bank, Brierley Hill, West Midlands DY5 1EA.

### Current lessons are:-

Ballet - 3:30pm to 4pm

Musical theatre – 4pm-5pm

Street/freestyle/rock and roll/slow dance (the style changes each term) – 5pm-6pm

Tap - 6pm-6:30pm

Children and young people can come along to learn new styles of dance that will help with balance, tone, coordination etc. They will also meet new friends, grow in confidence and build on their social skills. We do two performances which showcase what the children and young people have learnt in lessons where parents/carers and other family members can come along to watch. We also do performances for the local community events such as the Dudley Performing Arts Dance Festival, school fetes, fundraising events etc. These are optional, some children and young people love to perform, but you don't have to do the performances if it's not for you!

For more information email [letsdancefuturestars@gmail.com](mailto:letsdancefuturestars@gmail.com) or visit the Facebook page 'let's dance'.

dancing with the feet  
is one thing  
dancing with the heart  
is another



# Dudley Educational Psychology Service

Working Together for Change is delighted to have the opportunity to work with Dudley Educational Psychology Service. Dawn Goodall and the team are friendly, understanding, knowledgeable and really open to views and feedback from parent carers.

Dudley Educational Psychology Service is commissioned by Dudley Council to optimise the learning, development and emotional well-being of and young people in the borough.



They are a large, experienced and highly qualified team, with a proven track record of achieving positive outcomes for children and young people up to the age of 25.

## What is an educational psychologist?

### Educational psychologists:

- Are trained to understand how children and young people learn and develop
- Have knowledge and experience of a wide range of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- *Have as a minimum:*
  - a degree in Psychology
  - at least two years experience working with children (e.g. as a teacher)
  - a post graduate qualification in Educational Psychology (masters and or doctorate level)
  - HCPC (Health & Care Professionals Council) registration

### In our work as applied psychologists we:

- Must have your informed consent as parents or carers before discussion about or involvement with your child / young person
- Work with children and young people (aged 0 to 25) to prevent or overcome barriers to learning and to promote healthy social and emotional development
- Observe children and young people at home, in early years settings, schools or colleges
- Consult with parents/carers, setting staff and other professionals to develop an understanding of needs and suggest specific strategies that are likely to help
- Provide detailed psychological advice when an assessment of special educational needs is being considered by Dudley Council
- May discuss our work with other services who work with your child
- Will provide feedback (this may be via setting staff)
- May be involved for a short time, or carry out work over time
- Draw on our research background to plan and carry out research activities
- Deliver training and provide other professional support for those involved in educating and caring for children and young people

### Individual work

*"Thank you for coming with me on my home visit I have found your support really valuable"*

Individual work is a key part of the service. Building trust and confidence through regular meetings enables greater understanding of a child's needs and ensures that the thinking develops in line with their requirements.

Dudley Educational Psychology Service is based at the

Mere Education Centre, Lawnswood Road, Stourbridge DY8 5PQ

For more information and advice Telephone: **01384 813847** | email: [eps@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:eps@dudley.gov.uk)

## Share your Views & Have your say!

Dudley Carers Alliance is currently reviewing support for Carers living within the Dudley Borough and would like your views and opinions to help us improve the future development of services

Please take the time to complete a short survey by 31 October 2016 <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/ZZM2KQ7>

Information gathered will be collated into a report which will be made available on the Dudley Carers Alliance Website; feedback will also be given to the Dudley Carers Alliance meeting in November.

If you would like a paper copy of this survey or have any queries regarding this form please contact Dudley Carers Network on 01384 818723 or email [carers.network@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:carers.network@dudley.gov.uk)



# Spotlight on Carers Amble

## Saltwells Nature Reserve, Healthwatch Dudley and Dudley Carers Co-ordinators host an event for local carers.

The first Saltwells Carers Amble took place in August 2015 which had a great turnout from local carers and the people who they support. This was such a success that people asked if it could become a regular event.



Dudley borough carers were invited to join Alan Preece, Dudley MBC's Nature Conservation Officer for a gentle amble through accessible woodland trails, take some time out for themselves or bring along the person who they care for, to enjoy the beautiful surroundings and sculpture trail.

During these walks staff from local organisations are on hand to give information about local services that carers can tap into. It's a real chance to meet and chat with other carers, enjoy a gentle stroll and even enjoy a pub lunch when the walk finishes!

Carers Amble takes place on the second Thursday of each month. Meet up is at 12.30pm on the nature reserve car park on Saltwells Lane, DY5 1AX.

You are guaranteed a warm welcome and 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. The route is not demanding, it is generally flat and everyone is welcome.



The stroll will end with a pub lunch at 1.30pm at the Saltwells Inn where there is a full menu or carvery starting from £4.50.

Thursday 13 October 12:30pm - No need to book, just turn up!

## Forum Dates for the Diary

### October

Carers amble through Saltwells Nature Reserve - Thursday 13 October 12.30pm Saltwells Lane carpark DY5 1AX  
No booking is necessary, you can just turn up and join in. After the walk carers and health staff go for a buy your own meal to chat at the Saltwells Inn. This is a monthly walk which takes place on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Thurs of each month.

Transition Task and Finish Thursday 6 October 12:30pm-2:30pm Dudley College

### November

Steering Group - Monday 7 November 10:30am-12:30pm

### December

Past, Present, Future Event – Monday 5 December 10:00am-12:00pm at DY1 Venue, Stafford Street, Dudley  
Find out about how the forum started, what it has achieved and the vision for the future.

**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](mailto:info@dudleyparentcarerforum.com)

Website: [www.dudleyparentcarerforum.com](http://www.dudleyparentcarerforum.com)

Twitter: @DWTFC

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