



# Newsletter

For parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs in Sheffield

Published by the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum

Written by parents, for parents!

Spring 2019 - Issue 19 - FREE!

## Parents' survey

The verdict: what parents really think about local services

Pages 4 - 5

## Alternative provision

How music and drama helped our daughter through tough times

Pages 12 - 14

## Free legal advice

Get help with education, health, social care, transport and more

Pages 16 - 17

## PIP assessments

What parents of young people need to know

Pages 20 - 21



# About us

We are an independent group of almost 1,800 parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities and/or special educational needs in Sheffield.

Our aim is to make sure the needs of our children are met. We understand the challenges you face on a day-to-day basis, because we are parents and carers too. We organise regular events where parents can meet each other. We can tell you about the most up-to-date sources of information for your children.

We are here to give parent carers a voice. By joining the Parent Carer Forum, we can work together to improve services for our children.

## Membership is free, join us today!

Fill in the membership form at the back of this newsletter to join.

## Get in touch

### By Post:

St Mary's Community Centre  
Bramall Lane  
Sheffield  
S2 4QZ

**By phone:** 0300 321 4721

### By email:

[enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)

### Website:

[www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)

### Drop-in:

Currently by appointment only; please contact us to arrange a time.



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St Mary's Community Centre



National Network of Parent Carer Forums  
'Our Strength is our Shared Experience'  
[www.nnpkf.org.uk](http://www.nnpkf.org.uk)

## Your advert here?

Would you like to advertise your products or services in our next newsletter? For a small fee, you could reach up to 6,000 families in Sheffield.

Our rates are:

- Full page £150
- 1/2 page £75
- 1/4 page £37.50

Charity discounts available. Please call us on **0300 321 4721** to discuss your requirements.

If you wish to unsubscribe from this newsletter, please contact us on **0300 3214721** or email [enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)

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Letter from the Chair

# A very warm welcome to our Spring newsletter!

**The nights are getting lighter and the sun is shining for longer. Let's hope we're in for a good summer!**

As most of you are aware, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission visited Sheffield in November 2018 to carry out an inspection of provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Our Forum was heavily involved in the inspection by sending parent representatives to various focus groups to represent parents' views and experiences. The open meeting with parents was really well attended and I do believe we managed to get our views heard – it was great to see so many parents there! (See page 11 for more information)

Sheffield are now in the process of producing a "Written Statement of Action" around seven areas of weakness that were identified by the inspectors. We are working hard to ensure that evidence from our State of Sheffield survey (see page 4) is incorporated into this.

I think it is fair to say that there were no surprises with the outcome of the inspection. It is what parents have been saying for years! We can only hope that, with a re-visit due to take place within the next 18 months, we will now see real improvements to the way that children and young people with SEND access support and services to enable them to reach their full potential.

Funding cuts have affected all services and schools in Sheffield, and many people are lobbying the government for more funding



– for example, through the petition about "Fair Funding for Sheffield Schools" ([www.change.org/p/fair-fund-for-sheffield-schools](http://www.change.org/p/fair-fund-for-sheffield-schools)). Recently, several headteachers from Sheffield travelled to London to put forward the case for more school funding. We hope that the government will listen – but in the meantime, Sheffield City Council and Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group must work together in a different and more joined-up way to make sure that every penny counts. Our children and young people need to see change now – better communication, quicker access to services, clearer referral routes and pathways to services, earlier identification of need, more support in mainstream schools and information that is easy to find and understand on the Local Offer website.

If just some of this was improved, our children's journeys would be much smoother. Let's hope we see the changes that are so desperately needed.

Enjoy this latest edition and have a lovely summer!

Best wishes,

*Katie Monette*  
Chair

## Parents' survey reveals bleak picture

A huge thank you to everyone who took part in our State of Sheffield survey! We had a fantastic response, with 706 parents completing our rather lengthy questionnaire.

This survey repeated many of the questions we had posed in a previous questionnaire, back in 2014. We found that on most fronts, things have become worse:

- **More families report that they feel isolated and are struggling to cope.** More parents say that they are not getting enough support from social care services.
- **Key services for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are stretched ever more thinly.** For some services, as many as 90% of parents are now saying that their child is getting “too little” input. It is likely that capacity issues in NHS services are impacting on the time it takes to get an assessment – many families had to wait for over a year, and some for two or three years.
- **Three quarters of the children in our sample were affected by anxiety and/or depression,** yet parents report great difficulties in accessing mental health services.
- **Education Health and Care (EHC) plans are not working as intended.** These plans were meant to create a more holistic and person-centred approach to meeting the needs of the most complex children – yet most parents described the process of applying for an EHC plan as difficult. Parents also expressed concerns about the quality of plans, particularly for statement-to-EHCP conversions. Quality issues could

be addressed through the annual review process; however, our survey found that this process is often non-compliant with statutory requirements. And even the best-written plans are of limited use if they are not being properly implemented – which our survey found to be a widespread problem.

- **Children with SEND in mainstream settings are bearing the brunt of many years of real-terms funding cuts.** In 2014, almost half of all parents of mainstream pupils thought that their child's needs were being met by their child's school; in 2019, this had fallen to just a quarter.

To introduce large-scale system change at a time of austerity was always going to be problematic, and our survey bears this out. The 2014 SEND reforms have raised families' aspirations, but successive cuts to local authority and school budgets alongside increasing demand have made these very hard to achieve. Mainstream schools and colleges have been further disincentivised from promoting inclusion by an education policy that prioritises academic attainment above all else.

We recognise that where the system still works well for families, this is often due to the committed professionals and practitioners who go the extra mile. Their good will is not an unlimited resource.

Government funding cuts have caused many of the harmful trends we are now seeing, and long-term funding increases are needed to reverse them. However, there is much that Sheffield City Council, NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group and providers of education, health and social care services can do to alleviate the issues highlighted in our report- for example, through improved

information and communication, more training for staff and parents, and more effective pathways and processes. Such changes will only be effective if they are coproduced with children, young people and parents.

We will continue to provide constructive challenge, and push for these local improvements to be made. We will also push

for more government funding and changes to national policy through our MPs and through our umbrella organisation, the National Network of Parent Carer Forums.

Download the report from:   
[www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/about/publications](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/about/publications)

## Forum welcomes **2,000th** member!

We have reached an important milestone by signing up our 2,000th member. This makes us one of the largest parent carer forums in the country.

The 2,000th member is Carmel, who lives in Waterthorpe with her partner Nick and their three children.

Carmel said: "I am very touched to be the 2,000th member. We discovered the Forum via social media and a pop-up stall at the Ryegate Children's Centre whilst attending a review appointment there."

All of Carmel's children have additional needs, and all go to different schools. James (9) has epilepsy, autism and severe learning difficulties and attends an integrated resource unit. Chloe (7) has learning difficulties and attends a mainstream school. Rosie (5) has autism, severe learning difficulties and sensory processing needs and attends a special school.

Clearly, Carmel has a lot on her plate, and we are pleased to be able to help her through signposting and peer support.

Carmel said: "I find Sheffield Parent Carer Forum a great place for an informed chat about support we may need and to meet

other parents with children with similar needs. They also advertise specialised activities and events that have been differentiated appropriately so our children can access them."

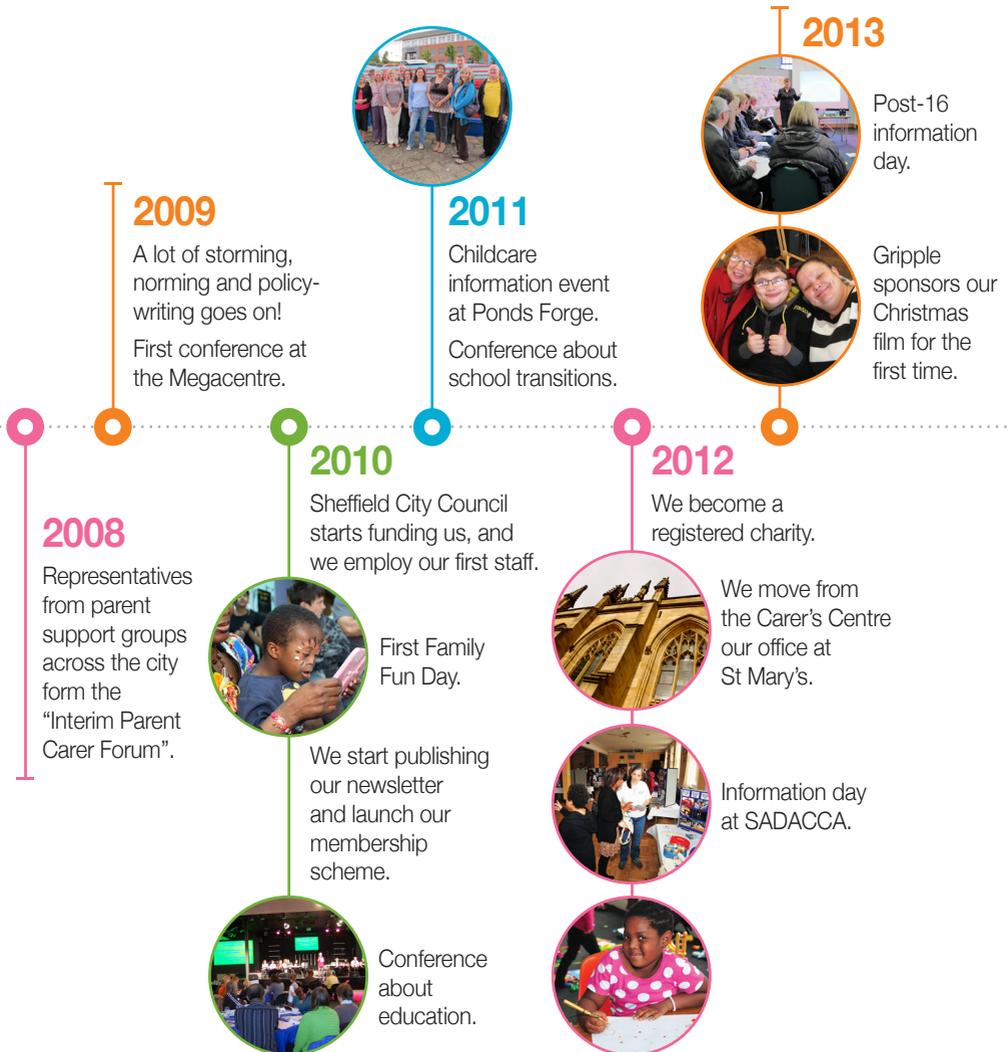


Membership is free for parent carers and professionals; to join, please fill in the membership form at the back of this newsletter, or visit **[www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member)**.

## Celebrating our 10th anniversary

Has it really been that long?! For those of us who were involved from the beginning, it doesn't feel like a decade has passed... until we look at our hulking teenagers and remember how tiny they were when we started!

**Here's a look back at some highlights from the past 10 years...**



2015



We run another conference and a series of briefing sessions about the SEND reforms.

We publish a report about parental confidence in mainstream schools.

2017



Conference about family wellbeing.

SEN Support booklet and Transitions Guide published.

2019



Second 'State of Sheffield' survey published.



2,000th member joins.



Launch of monthly trampolining sessions.

2014

First State of Sheffield survey report published.

Conference about the SEND reforms.

Launch of our disability awareness training package.

2016

Information day about activities for children with additional needs.

Conference about health and therapy services.



2018



We are commissioned to update, develop and improve the Local Offer website.

We contribute to the local area SEND inspection.

## Celebrate with us!

Join us for a birthday picnic at Norfolk Heritage Park on **Saturday 8 June**, between 11.30am and 4pm. For more information and to book your place, go to: [sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/events/](http://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/events/)

## New information on the local offer website



We are currently working on a commission from Sheffield City Council to develop, update and improve the local offer website ([www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer](http://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer)). The local offer is intended to be the central “go-to” website for information about support and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Here is some of the information we have added in recent months:

- What to do if you think your child may have special educational needs
- How to access health services
- What to expect on SEN Support, including templates used by schools
- EHC plans: the assessment process, annual reviews, mediation and tribunal appeals
- School admissions for learners with SEND
- Short breaks services
- Direct payments
- Childcare funding for children with SEND
- Support at university
- Help with finding and keeping a job

### Integrated Resource provision to be expanded

Sheffield City Council is proposing to improve and expand Integrated Resource (IR) provision. IRs are specialist units for children and young people with special educational needs that are located within mainstream schools.

The Council has put forward a model for discussion that could lead to around 80 additional IR places being created across the city. The model would also provide better pathways covering the entire age range, from primary into secondary school. Funding for this expansion would come from an increase in the “high needs” element of

the school funding allocation that Sheffield receives from the government, as well as a one-off grant for capital projects.

Parents are invited to give their views through a **consultation** which is running from 18 February to 14 April 2019. Feedback from parents, young people and staff will be used to further develop the proposals, and these will then be presented to Sheffield City Council’s cabinet in mid May. If all goes according to plan, the proposals would be implemented from September 2020.

## Sensory-friendly days at the National Emergency Services Museum



If your child loves fire engines and police cars, then the National Emergency Services Museum on West Bar is well worth a visit. Working with the Autism Centre for Supported Employment, the museum is now offering monthly “sensory-friendly” days. Visitors will be able to borrow their new sensory backpacks, and there will

be additional support staff and comfy chill-out zones on each floor. The sessions take place between 10am and 4pm on the first Tuesday of every month, with the 10am-12.30pm slot reserved as a “lights-only” quiet session. For more information, please visit **www.emergencymuseum.org.uk**.

### Information event about support for disabled students

The University of Sheffield is holding an information event about support for disabled students on 24 April, 6-7.45pm. The session is aimed at disabled young people thinking of applying to university and their parents or carers. It will be led by disability advisers and disabled students currently studying at the University of Sheffield and

will provide information about what support is available and how to go about setting this up. This event is relevant for applicants to any university, not just those thinking of attending the University of Sheffield. To register for this event, please email **disability.transitions@sheffield.ac.uk**.

## Fundraising efforts pay off

We are delighted that we have received almost £10,000 from the National Lottery Community Fund. This money will be used to hold a series of events for parent carers, which will include information workshops, taster sessions for stress-busting activities, and an additional Christmas film screening in December. It will also pay for the next two issues of this newsletter.

In addition, we have been chosen by Virgin Money Sheffield as one of their charities to

donate £250, £500 or £1000 to. Until the end of April, Virgin Money customers can vote for us at the Virgin Money Lounge on Fargate by placing a love heart token into our box. The money raised will be put towards our “Picnic in the Park” to celebrate our 10th anniversary (see page 22).



## New special school announced

Sheffield has received government approval to create a new special free school.

This is in addition to another new special school, sponsored by Nexus Multi Academy Trust, which is already in development and due to open in 2020 on the site of the former Norfolk Park special school.

Each new school will have 80 places and add much-needed capacity to the Sheffield special school system. Both will cater for children who have complex communication and interaction needs (e.g. autism) as well as social, emotional and mental health needs. One will focus on children whose needs lead to outward, behavioural issues and the other will support those whose needs are more inward-facing, around anxiety.

Free schools are state-funded schools that are independent of local authority control. It is envisaged that neighbouring local authorities as well as Sheffield would commission places at the new schools.

## New parent mentoring service

Disability equality charity Scope recently launched “Navigate” – a free mentoring programme for parents of disabled children around the point of diagnosis.

**Who is it for?** Parents of children who are either going through diagnosis or who have received a diagnosis of a disability in the last year.

**What happens?** Over a period of six weeks, parents are supported by a personal advisor, either online or by phone. The advisor works with them to explore their needs and personal goals, helps them to agree a six-week action plan, and provides support if needed. (Please note: The advisor cannot help parents with claiming benefits, challenging discrimination or managing their child’s condition.)

**How can you access the service?**

Call the Scope helpline on **0808 800 3333**

or complete an online application form:

**[www.scope.org.uk/family-services/navigate/navigate-form](http://www.scope.org.uk/family-services/navigate/navigate-form)**

## Sheffield Carers Centre launches Carer Card

In November 2018, the Sheffield Carers Centre launched the Carer Card. This card offers discounts on a range of activities, products and services – such as cafes and restaurants, entertainment venues, hair and beauty salons, professional services, and more.

The reverse of the card is designed to be used in case of an emergency. It provides space for you to fill in details of two emergency contacts who can support the person you care for - for example, if you are involved in an accident or become ill.

The card is available to carers of children and adults who are already registered with the

Sheffield Carers Centre, and as an incentive for people to register for the first time.

Please complete the online form at **[www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk/carers-card](http://www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk/carers-card)** or phone **0114 272 8362** and your Carer Card will be posted to you. If you are registering for the first time, you will receive a welcome pack which will also include the Carers Centre’s regular newsletter and information about the support services they provide.



# SEND inspection report published

On 25 January 2019, inspectors from Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission published their findings from a week-long visit to Sheffield in November 2018. The purpose of the inspection was to assess

how well the local area identifies and meets the needs of children and young people aged 0-25 years who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).

**Download the inspection report from:**  
<https://files.api.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/50051879>



In their report, the inspectors identify seven areas of significant weakness:

- No co-produced SEND strategy for the city
- Issues with communication between local authority leaders, parents and children
- Poor strategic oversight of SEND arrangements by the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- Weaknesses in commissioning arrangements
- Issues with the quality and timeliness of EHC plans
- Inconsistencies in identifying, assessing and meeting the needs of learners with SEND in mainstream schools
- Issues with transition arrangements

To address these concerns, Sheffield has been told to produce a “Written Statement of Action”. This means that Sheffield City Council and the CCG must write an action plan that sets out how they will address the issues identified.

The written statement of action must be submitted no later than 30 April 2019 and must be agreed by the inspectors. Once approved, advisors from the Department for Education and NHS England will carry out regular monitoring visits to check on progress. In addition, Sheffield will receive another visit from the inspectors after 18 months.

Our Forum played an important role in the inspection, representing parents’ views and experiences. We attended many of the inspection meetings and submitted a summary of the feedback we had collected from parents, including preliminary findings from our State of Sheffield survey (see page 4-5). The inspectors really appreciated this, and we felt that they listened well to parents.

We are now working with the local authority and the CCG to ensure that parents’ views are also reflected in the action plan, and that this leads to real, tangible improvements for children with SEND across the city.

# Alternative provision

## How music and drama helped our daughter through tough times *By Tracey Wild*

My daughter Grace spent most of her primary school years in distress. The cause of this was an unsuitable school environment, staff who did not have the right training or skills, and a lack of funding.

By the end of Year 4, Grace could no longer manage in a small mainstream school. I secured her an Education Health and Care plan (a battle in itself) and was able to move her to a school with an Integrated Resource. However, over the next two years things became progressively worse, and Grace was diagnosed as having clinical depression due to the school environment.

Grace was prescribed anti-anxiety medication but was unable to attend school for more than a couple of hours a day. When she did attend, she spent all her time with a teaching assistant in a tiny room with the blinds closed. She was unable to communicate directly with others or tolerate noise due to massive sensory overload and anxiety. This was despite the head of the IR being incredible and the school trying everything to support her. The environment was simply not suitable for a child with such complex needs. Grace not only has autism with a PDA (Pathological Demand Avoidance) profile, but also ADHD, sensory processing disorder and depression caused by educational trauma.

I was dismissed from my job as a teacher because Grace was out of school so much. By the end of Year 6, despite my best efforts

and visiting countless schools, we discovered that there was no secondary school in Sheffield that could meet Grace's needs. We cast the net wider and wider, searching for suitable provision looking out of city and out of county.

It felt like our family was isolated and falling apart. Grace's massive meltdowns and other fight-or-flight behaviours caused high levels of stress and disruption for all members of our family. The loss of my income created additional pressures we did not need.

I did not know anything about alternative provision and had to dig deep to find out what was available. A small chink of light appeared at the end of the tunnel when we found out about A Mind Apart - a small performing arts company based at Burton Street ([www.amindapart.org.uk](http://www.amindapart.org.uk)). A Mind Apart is part of the alternative provider network (see page 14).



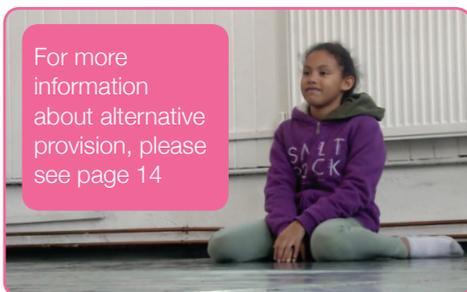


Grace is a master masker, she just wants to fit in and belong. Her favourite way of coping with her anxiety is to put on personas, so music and drama are a brilliant way of coping for her. Through their specialist support, A Mind Apart managed to engage Grace with learning and got her working towards a qualification in Art. Grace sang at their annual general meeting, proving that appropriate support in the right environment will allow her to progress and learn. We were able to use this to evidence the type of provision that does suit Grace's needs.

Initially, the provision was funded by her school and she attended for an hour a week, for four weeks. Once she was out of school completely, the local authority reluctantly agreed to fund the provision for six hours per week.

Grace is now in a full-time specialist provision and enjoys going to school. The transition was fully supported by the A Mind Apart team, helping Grace to cope. We never thought that this day would come and are very grateful to the team at A Mind Apart for their caring approach, skilled staff and amazing support.

For more information about alternative provision, please see page 14



## Alternative Provision

**Alternative provision (AP) is education for pupils who would not receive a suitable education because of exclusion, illness, behaviour or other reasons, such as accessing specific vocational qualifications.**

Sheffield has an “Alternative Provision Network”. This is a network of local providers like city farms, vocational training providers and sports organisations, which is managed by the Progressions Team in the council. They offer the following programmes:

- Alternative Provision: placements of up to a term for primary pupils at risk of exclusion
- Intensive Re-engagement: placements of up to a term for students in Y7, Y8 and Y9
- Progressions: placements with one or more providers for a year or more for students in Y10 and Y11

The Progressions Team matches learners to AP providers and helps with any problems that may arise. They only accept referrals from schools, not from families. For primary school pupils, referrals need to be made via the Primary Inclusion Panel.

The cost of AP provision is met by the school where the pupil is on roll.

The school retains overall responsibility for pupils on AP placements; that means they must monitor attendance, visit learners on provision, set targets, monitor progress and attend review meetings.

Young people must travel independently to their AP placement or be supported by the school to get to the provider.

### More information

The Progressions Team can be contacted on [ect@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:ect@sheffield.gov.uk).

A directory of AP providers in Sheffield is available at:

[www.lifelonglearningandskills.org/component/attachments/download/37](http://www.lifelonglearningandskills.org/component/attachments/download/37)



Would you prefer to receive this newsletter by email only? Please let us know by sending an email to [enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)



# SUPPORT GROUP FOCUS



## Ray of Hope

Ray of Hope is a parent-led support group and a registered charity. We are based in the North of Sheffield, but support families from all over the city.

We are a friendly group who are passionate about supporting families through our regular meetings, informal coffee mornings, twice-monthly soft play sessions and day trips out.

Our children have a variety of additional needs and disabilities, including ASD, PDA, epilepsy, genetic disorders, sensory processing difficulties, ADHD, Tourette Syndrome, OCD, ODD, learning disabilities and life-limiting illnesses.

Many of our children don't yet have a medical diagnosis. We recognise that families who are on diagnostic pathways often need our support the most.

Our twice-monthly parents' meetings are held on the 2nd and 4th Tuesday of each month at 9.30-11.30am (term-time only) at **Eskdale Community Centre, Eskdale Drive, Sheffield S6 1SL**. They provide parents and carers with an opportunity to socialise and share experiences, in a welcoming and understanding environment.

Occasionally we have guest speakers that are experts in a wide variety of issues that affect

our families. They often help by providing an insight into how the children perceive their environment; this can help parents to devise strategies that support and encourage their child's development.

Our twice-monthly soft play sessions take place at **Medieval Mayhem, Neepsend Lane, Sheffield S3 8AW** on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of each month at 6-8pm (including school holidays). We have exclusive use of the venue and there is no upper age limit; siblings are also very welcome. If you feel your child or young person would have fun, then come along and join us. The cost is just £2 per child.

The mezzanine area at Medieval Mayhem is for young people of secondary school age and above.

There is WIFI! If you feel your young person doesn't do enough socially, but has outgrown soft play centres (or so they say - you're never too old, right?), then this is something to consider! We have a fabulous group of teens, who we know would love to make more friends.

Ray of Hope is a place where strong friendships are forged, by the children and their families.

For more information, visit Ray of Hope's Facebook page (**@RayOfHopeCharity**) or contact Jayne Raynor on **0114 249 0797** or **07961 776794**.

# Free legal advice

Parents often ask us where they can get free legal advice – so we've compiled a list of providers that we are aware of. If you come across any other organisations that are not listed here, please let us know!

*Please note: The information in this article is provided for reference purposes only. It is not intended as a tool for verifying the credentials, qualifications or abilities of any individual or organisation listed. Inclusion in this article does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by SPCF; nor does omission imply disapproval.*

**Cerebra** runs a project that helps families of children aged 16 or under who have a brain condition (including, autism, ADHD, epilepsy, learning difficulties etc.) who need help with health or social care issues – such as assessments, home adaptations, school transport, CAMHS, carers' rights, short breaks or direct payments. They don't deal with special educational needs provision.

-  [probono@cerebra.org.uk](mailto:probono@cerebra.org.uk)
-  [www.tinyurl.com/y698wmbp](http://www.tinyurl.com/y698wmbp)
-  01267 242 582

**Child Law Advice** provides free email and telephone advice on child, family and education law. They also offer a bookable call-back service, which costs £25 for the first 30 minutes, and £10 for each additional 15 minutes.

### Family or child law:

-  [www.childlawadvice.org.uk/email-advice-family](http://www.childlawadvice.org.uk/email-advice-family)
-  0300 330 5480

### Education law:

-  [www.childlawadvice.org.uk/email-advice-education](http://www.childlawadvice.org.uk/email-advice-education)
-  0300 330 5485

**Citizens Advice Sheffield** provides a free, independent, impartial and confidential service to people who need advice and advocacy to solve the problems they face.

-  [www.citizensadvice/sheffield.org.uk/contact-us](http://www.citizensadvice/sheffield.org.uk/contact-us)
-  03444 113 111

### The Equality Advisory and Support

**Service** advises and assists individuals on issues relating to equality and human rights.

-  [www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/ask](http://www.equalityadvisoryservice.com/app/ask)
-  0808 800 0082

**The Family Rights Group** works with parents whose children are in need, in the care system or at risk of being taken into care, and with members of the wider family who are raising children unable to remain at home.

-  0808 801 0366

**IPSEA** (Independent Parental Special Education Advice) provides free legally-based advice on educational issues for parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities. This includes advice and support in relation to appeals to the SEND Tribunal.

### Book a telephone appointment via:

-  [www.ipsea.org.uk/Pages/Category/service-overview](http://www.ipsea.org.uk/Pages/Category/service-overview)



**The National Autistic Society** runs several helplines, including an Education Rights Service, a School Exclusions Service and a Transition Support Service.

For contact numbers and enquiry forms, go to [www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines.aspx)

**SENTAS** provides parents and young adults with information, advice and advocacy around issues with SEN transport.

 [info@sentas.co.uk](mailto:info@sentas.co.uk)

 **07986768085**

**Sheffield Carers Centre** offers free half-hour advice sessions in partnership with Lupton Fawcett Solicitors. They can give advice on issues like Wills and Trusts, Power of Attorney, and Community Care.

 [www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk/contact-us/register-with-us](http://www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk/contact-us/register-with-us)

 **0114 272 8362**

**Sheffield SENDIAS** (SEN and Disability Information Advice and Support) is a statutory service run by Sheffield City Council. It provides impartial and confidential information, advice and support to parents/carers of children and young people (0-25 years) with disabilities and special educational needs in relation to education, health and social care services, disability benefits, support groups and leisure opportunities. The service can support families with appeals to the SEND tribunal.

 [ssendias@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:ssendias@sheffield.gov.uk)

 **0114 273 6009**

**SOSISEN** offer a free, friendly, independent and confidential telephone helpline for parents and others looking for information and advice on special educational needs and disability.

 **0300 302 3731 or 0208 538 3731**

**The University of Sheffield** runs a free legal advice clinic. This is led by current Law students, and a supervising solicitor checks over all advice before it is issued.

 [freelaw@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:freelaw@sheffield.ac.uk)

 **0114 222 6774**

## Specialist lawyers

Parents sometimes ask us if we can recommend a specialist lawyer – we can't. However, a good starting point is this list of legal aid solicitors with expertise in special educational needs and disability cases, compiled by barrister Steve Broach:

[www.tinyurl.com/yv9s9t6](http://www.tinyurl.com/yv9s9t6)

Legal aid can help pay for legal advice. To check if you can get legal aid, go to [www.gov.uk/check-legal-aid](http://www.gov.uk/check-legal-aid)

# FORUM STARS

In this section, we celebrate your children's successes – from the small steps that perhaps only you noticed, to the big milestones everyone can see. So, get snapping, get writing, and tell us what your wonderful children have been up to...

## For this issue we have TWO stars!



Sophia started ice-skating at the age of four. She first joined the Penguin Club for pre-schoolers at Ice Sheffield, but quickly moved onto Skate UK lessons. This is an eight-level programme designed to teach basic skating skills. Sophia is currently skating at level seven – at only six years old!

Her mum Sarah says: “Skating is her life, she loves it so much and is happiest when she’s on the ice.”

The social benefits of participating in the sport are immense. “Sophia gets fantastic support from Ice Sheffield in her lessons and has made a friend who loves her to bits and will look out for her”, reports her mum. “She’s overcome anxiety and bullying to get this far. She now says that she wants to teach children to ice skate like her when she’s older. I couldn’t be more proud of this girl!”



Star of this issue:

**Riley  
Cutts**

Riley had a rocky start in life when his mum Hayley went into premature labour with him at 25 weeks. "He was so tiny", recalls Hayley. "He weighed just 2lb 2oz when he was born!"



Like many premature babies, Riley had serious health problems and needed surgery soon

after birth. He suffered a collapsed lung, bleeding on his brain, inflammation of the bowel, damage to the retina, and many other problems.

"The doctors said he might not make it home", says Hayley. "And when he did, they said he would possibly never walk or talk."

But Riley proved them all wrong.

"Riley is 11 now, and he is amazing", reports his mum. "He is on the autistic spectrum and also has ADHD and chronic lung disease, but that doesn't stop him enjoying life."

Riley moved up to secondary school last September. He attends the Westfield Hub run by Bents Green Special School. "I can't praise the school highly enough", says Hayley. "Riley is so positive and even made the mainstream football team as goal keeper. We are so proud of him every day, and always knew our tiny baby would do big things."



## PIP Assessments

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is a benefit that replaces Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people between 16 years and state pension age.

Children turning 16 who receive DLA will be reassessed under PIP – even if their DLA award is not due to run out at 16. This also includes young people with an indefinite award of DLA.

Before your child turns 16, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will write to you to find out if your child needs an appointee (a person responsible for making claims on their behalf). If you want to become an appointee, the DWP will arrange a home visit to talk to you and your child.

**You can't become an appointee simply because it is more convenient for you or your child. The DWP can only agree to you becoming their appointee if they believe that your child lacks the capacity to manage their affairs.**

After your child turns 16, the DWP will send a letter to your child (or to you if you have been made their appointee) inviting them to make a claim for PIP.

**Just because your child gets DLA, it doesn't mean that they will automatically qualify for PIP.**

They/you must make a claim for PIP within 28 days of being invited to do so by the DWP or their DLA payments will stop.

To make a claim for PIP, your child or their appointee needs to call the DWP (**0800 971 2222**) and complete a claim form (PIP1 form). This should take no more than 20 minutes. If they/you have difficulties using the phone, a paper form can be requested, or you can ask someone from the DWP to make a home visit to help fill in the form.

Once the PIP1 form has been completed, and the DWP have established that your child meets the basic qualifying conditions, you will then be sent a questionnaire called How Your Disability Affects You (PIP2).

This questionnaire gathers information about your child's ability to get around (mobility) and carry out a range of daily living activities. Use the "extra information" boxes to give as much detail and examples as possible. You can also send additional evidence (e.g. health or therapy reports, EHCP or MyPlan, diary to show how their day-to-day life is affected, prescriptions) as long it supports what you have written on the form. The more supporting evidence you provide, the better the chance that a decision can be made without the need for a face-to-face assessment.

**You must complete and return the questionnaire within a month or the claim for PIP may be turned down and any existing DLA payments will stop.**

As well as having to complete the claim forms, most people will be asked to attend a face-to-face assessment. In Sheffield, a health professional working for Independent Assessment Services (formerly known as Atos) will carry out this consultation.



Most consultations take place in an assessment centre, but they can be carried out at home if your child's condition makes it difficult for them to travel or attend.

At the consultation, the healthcare professional will ask your child about their condition, their day-to-day life and how they manage at home and out of doors. The assessor's questions will be based on the information provided on the PIP claim form, but they will also draw opinions from what

you say and do on the day. They may also carry out a brief physical examination. You or someone else can attend the consultation to support your child.

The DWP will send a letter with their decision. If your child's claim is turned down or you are unhappy with the level of benefit awarded, you have one month to ask the DWP to reconsider their decision. This is called a mandatory reconsideration.



### Tips for forms

- Always make a photocopy of the completed form and any additional evidence
- Label additional sheets with the child's name, date of birth and National Insurance number
- Ask for help (see links below) and take your time completing the form - writing on separate sheets of paper first can help.



### Tips for the face-to-face assessment

- Assessments can be cancelled and rearranged once only! If you miss your appointment without good reason, the DWP may end the PIP claim.
- Know what was written on the claim form by reading through it together before the assessment.
- Let your child answer the questions first but prompt them when it is clear that they haven't understood what is being asked or to provide more information and examples.

**For more information please see the contact details on page 26...**

# Dates for your diary

## All meetings will be held at:

St Mary's Community Centre,  
Bramall Lane,  
Sheffield S2 4QZ  
unless otherwise indicated.

## May

Friday 10 May, 12-2pm

### Transition subgroup meeting

This group is for parents of young people aged 14-25 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Managers from Adult Social Care will join the meeting at 1pm to answer your questions and hear your views. We are a friendly group and there will be time to swap experiences and information with other parents over tea, coffee and cake!

**Please book your place.**

Tuesday 14 May, 10.30am-12pm

### Coffee morning

Wednesday 15 May, 11am-1pm

### SEND Advice Clinic

Book a 30-minute individual appointment with a worker from SENDIAS, to talk about anything related to your child's special educational need or disability. For example, you may want to ask about your child's support in school or college, EHC plans, SEN transport, health and social care services, disability benefits, and much more.

**Booking essential.**

Tuesday 21 May, 6-7pm

Jump Inc. Meadowhall, Vulcan Road

### JumpStars inclusive trampolining session

## Book your place

To book your place on any of the events listed here, please visit our website [www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/events](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/events) or call our office on **0300 321 4721**.

## June

Saturday 8 June, 11.30am-4pm

Norfolk Heritage Park

### Picnic in the Park

Come and help us celebrate our 10th anniversary! Bring a picnic or buy food from a street food van and watch performances from local community groups.

**Please book your place.**

Wednesday 12 June, 10am-12pm

### Workshop: Supporting children who stammer

Led by a speech and language therapist, this workshop will explain how speech, language and fluency are related, how to recognise typical stammering versus normal non-fluency, how to decide whether a stammer is causing any problems or not, and general ways to help other people talk as easily as possible.

**Booking essential.**

Thursday 13 June, 10.30am-12pm

### Coffee morning

Friday 14 June, 10am-12pm

### Education subgroup

Please come along to our Education subgroup to talk to other parents about special educational needs, swap useful information, and help us influence education policy in Sheffield. This is a friendly and informal group, and new members are always welcome. No specialist knowledge required – being a parent is enough! No need to book, just turn up.

## June continued

Tuesday 18 June, 6-7pm  
Jump Inc. Meadowhall, Vulcan Road

### JumpStars inclusive trampolining session

## July

Tuesday 9 July, 10.30am-12pm

### Coffee morning and essential oils workshop

Come for a cuppa and a chat, and enjoy some lovely essential oils at the same time! Anita, one of our parent volunteers, will tell you how essential oils can support you and your family with things like basic first aid, insomnia, stomach issues and feelings of overwhelm.

Tuesday 16 July, 6-7pm  
Jump Inc. Meadowhall, Vulcan Road

### JumpStars inclusive trampolining session

Wednesday 17 July, 11am-1pm

### SEND advice drop-in

This is a drop-in session for parents and carers of children and young people (0-25 years) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). You'll be able to talk to a worker from SENDIAS about anything SEND-related.

For example, you may want to ask about your child's support in school or college, EHC plans, SEN transport, health and social care services, disability benefits, and much more. Please note: This is an open group session with other parents. Not suitable for children. No need to book, just turn up.

## Coffee mornings

Our coffee mornings are run by our friendly volunteers Thaeeba and Pat. They are open to all parent carers, whatever their children's needs, whether diagnosed or undiagnosed, mild or severe. Pre-schoolers and home-educated children are welcome too. Pop in for a few minutes or stay for the whole session – no need to book. You can be sure of a warm welcome and plenty of tea, coffee and cake! The venue address is **St Mary's Community Centre, Bramall Lane, Sheffield S2 4QZ.**

## JumpStars inclusive trampolining sessions

These are discounted, disability-friendly trampolining sessions for children with additional needs and their siblings, held at the **Jump Inc.** centre on Vulcan Road near Meadowhall. Only Sheffield Parent Carer Forum members are eligible to attend. Sessions **MUST** be pre-booked and pre-paid via our website: [www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)

## Don't miss out!

Sign up today by completing the membership form on our website ([sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member](http://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member)) or at the back of this newsletter!

# Useful Contacts

<p><b>0-5 SEND Service</b> (formerly Early Years Inclusion Service)* Works with young children (0-5+) with additional needs both in their homes and in settings</p>	<p>0114 273 6411 elizabeth.hodkin@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>ADHD Support Service</b> Run by Family Action, this service provides information, support and training for families with a child with ADHD</p>	<p>07587 633179 adhd.sheffield@family-action.org.uk</p>
<p><b>Autism Education Service*</b> Supports mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with autism and related conditions</p>	<p>0114 273 6567 (helpline, 1-4pm) 0114 250 6800 (office) moira.bolan@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Becton Hospital and Outreach Team*</b> (formerly Home and Hospital Education Service). Provides education for children who are unable to attend school for medical or related reasons</p>	<p>0114 255 7679 headteacher@becton.sheffield.sch.uk</p>
<p><b>Child Disability Register</b> A local register of disabled children aged 0-19. Join up to receive the termly newsletter "What's Going On"</p>	<p>0114 271 7626 martina.capaldi@sch.nhs.uk</p>
<p><b>Children with Disabilities Team*</b> Social work team for children and young people with disabilities</p>	<p>0114 273 5368</p>
<p><b>Contact</b> National charity which provides information and advice on any aspect of caring for a disabled child, including education and benefits</p>	<p>0808 808 3555 info@contact.org.uk</p>
<p><b>Direct Payments Team*</b> Provides support, advice and guidance relating to direct payments</p>	<p>0114 273 5985</p>
<p><b>Educational Psychology Service*</b> Works with families and staff in educational settings to support the education and development of children and young people</p>	<p>0114 250 6800 stuart.williams1@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Hearing Impaired Service*</b> Works with deaf and hearing-impaired children and their families</p>	<p>0114 273 6410 caroline.chettleburgh@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Independent Travel Training*</b> Trains young people with disabilities/learning difficulties to use public transport to get to school, college and other education providers</p>	<p>0114 205 3542 jill.siddall@sheffield.gov.uk Indetravel@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>IPSEA</b> National charity providing free legally-based advice on educational issues for parents of children with SEN</p>	<p>Book a call-back via <a href="http://www.ipsea.org.uk">www.ipsea.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Local offer</b> A website with information about support and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Sheffield</p>	<p><a href="http://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer">www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer</a></p>

<p><b>Paces Sheffield</b> A leading specialist centre for children with cerebral palsy and other motor disorders</p>	<p>0114 284 4488 info@pacesheffield.org.uk</p>
<p><b>Portage Home Visiting Service*</b> Home-visiting educational service for children under three with additional support needs and their families</p>	<p>0114 273 6411 debbie.marshall@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Ryegate Children's Centre</b> Assessment, diagnosis and therapy for children and young people with developmental and neurological problems</p>	<p>0114 271 7000</p>
<p><b>SENDIAS (formerly Parent Partnership Service)*</b> Provides information, advice and support to parents of children with SEN/disabilities in relation to education, health, social care, leisure, disability benefits and support groups</p>	<p>0114 273 6009 disabilityinformationservices@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>SEN Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SENDSARS)*</b> Deals with statutory assessments, EHC plans, annual reviews and specialist placements</p>	<p>0114 273 6394 sendassess&amp;review@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Sheffield Carers Centre</b> Offers information, advice and a range of services for carers, including parents of disabled children</p>	<p>0114 272 8362 support@sheffieldcarers.org.uk</p>
<p><b>Sheffield Children's Hospital</b></p>	<p>0114 271 7000 sheffield.childrenshospital@sch.nhs.uk</p>
<p><b>Sheffield Futures Learning Difficulties and Disabilities (LDD) Team</b> Supports young people with learning difficulties &amp; disabilities to make the transition into further education and employment</p>	<p>0114 201 2800 enquiries@sheffieldfutures.org.uk</p>
<p><b>Sheffield Young Carers</b> Offers support to children and young people (8-25 years) who provide care for a family member, e.g. a disabled sibling</p>	<p>0114 258 4595 information@sheffeldyoungcarers.org.uk</p>
<p><b>Sibling Support Group</b> Support group for children who have a sibling with a disability</p>	<p>0114 233 2908 laura.westmorland@burtonstreet.org.uk</p>
<p><b>Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS)*</b> Helps disabled children aged 5-18 years access out of school activities / clubs to give their parents a break from caring</p>	<p>0114 273 4017 SnipsBusinessSupport@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Transport Services*</b> Provides transport services including home-to-school transport for pupils with SEN</p>	<p>0114 203 7570 transportservices@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Vision Support Service*</b> Supports children with a visual impairment and their families</p>	<p>0114 294 1201 joanne.hogg@sheffield.gov.uk</p>

\* Part of Sheffield City Council

## PIP Assessments *cont.*



### Where to find more information about PIP Assessments

For official information about PIP visit:  
[www.gov.uk/PIP](http://www.gov.uk/PIP)

For help with filling in the PIP claim form, contact Citizens Advice on **03444 113111** or visit [www.citizensadvice.org.uk](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk)

Citizens Advice have published guides to filling in the PIP claim form (<https://tinyurl.com/y8erjx29>) and to preparing for a PIP assessment (<https://tinyurl.com/y7xh6adq>).

Contact have published a detailed guide to PIP for families of children with disabilities: [www.contact.org.uk/media/1391178/pip\\_guide.pdf](http://www.contact.org.uk/media/1391178/pip_guide.pdf)



Benefits and Work offer detailed guides to claiming a range of benefits at a cost of £19.95 for a year's subscription:  
[www.benefitsandwork.co.uk](http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk)

Many national disability charities (e.g. National Autistic Society, Epilepsy Action, Down's Syndrome Association) also offer information and support.

For information and photographs of the PIP assessment centres in Sheffield visit: [www.mypipassessment.co.uk/consultation-centres](http://www.mypipassessment.co.uk/consultation-centres)

## Advert

# Hugi Hub

## Play & Explore

Family Hub & Early Years  
Training & Education Centre

07714 253061

[www.tinyhandsbigfutures.co.uk](http://www.tinyhandsbigfutures.co.uk)

Tiny Hands Big Futures

# Sheffield Parent Carer Forum

## Application for Full Membership

Full membership is free and open to all parents and carers of children and young people (aged 0-25 years) with special educational needs and/or disabilities who live in Sheffield or access services in Sheffield.

### About you

First name  Surname

Street and house number

Town/city  Postcode

Email address (please print)

Home phone  Mobile

Your ethnic group (optional)

### About your disabled child/children

#### Child 1

Date of birth

Main disability

Other disabilities

School (name)

#### Child 2

Date of birth

Main disability

Other disabilities

School (name)

#### Child 3

Date of birth

Main disability

Other disabilities

School (name)

### Please tick as appropriate :

- Please add me to your email list.
- Please add me to your text messaging list.
- Please add me to your postal mailing list.

I am happy to take part in consultations:

by phone  by email

by post  by SMS

I am interested in volunteering with the Parent Carer Forum.

Signature

Date

Please note: By signing this form you consent to the Sheffield Parent Carer Forum storing your information. We will not pass any of your details on to any third parties. Members of our postal mailing list will receive a regular newsletter. Members of our email list and text messaging list will receive news updates and events information. You are free to opt out of this service at any time.

Tear along here

2



Freepost RTBJ-SHTR-RRGJ  
Sheffield Parent Carer Forum  
St. Mary's Church Community Centre  
Bramall Lane  
SHEFFIELD  
S2 4QZ

Fold along here



Positive Change for our Children and Young People  
with Disabilities and Special Educational Needs