

About us

We are an independent group of over 2000 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-today 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, or go to

www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org. uk/become-a-member

Get in touch **Bv Post:**

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

By phone: 0300 321 4721

By email:

enquiries@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Website:

www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Drop-in:

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



Find us on Facebook!



Follow us on Twitter! @ShefParentForum











National Network of Parent Carer Forums 'Our Strength is our Shared Experience' www.nnpcf.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

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NEWS

Staff changes at the forum

We have recently restructured our staff team to cope with a rise in demand for our services.



Laura Gillespie has taken over as Chair from Katie Monette. She heads up our board of seven trustees, who are in charge of the governance of our charity. laura.gillespie@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Katie Monette is our Director of Strategy. She attends many strategic meetings and works to build relationships with key people and organisations.

Katie.monette@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk



Eva Juusola is our Director of Operations. She oversees the running of our organisation, including events and communications. Eva.juusola@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Cathy Wilson is our Website Content Manager and works on a commission to update, improve and develop Sheffield's Local Offer website. local.offer@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk





Anna Marie Emmett and Tracey Wild are our project workers for the Autism in Schools project (see page 10). annamarie.emmett@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk / tracey.wild@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk



Sadly, our long-serving Development Support Worker Anne Snowdon recently had to resign from her role in order to focus on her son's transition to adult services. We are hugely grateful for all the knowledge and energy that Anne has contributed to our organisation over the years, and delighted that she will stay on as a volunteer.

NEWS NEWS

Information day draws a crowd

Our information day on 4 March brought over 120 parent carers to St Mary's. There was a real buzz in the air – people clearly felt excited about finally being able to meet again in person.

Parents were able to browse information stalls run by 28 organisations, pick up leaflets and chat to staff. Services represented included Council services like the Autism Education Team and SNIPS, NHS services like Speech and Language Therapy and Health Visiting, local organisations like the Carer's Centre and Disability Sheffield, and national charities like the Family Fund.

It was great to see parents leave the event with armfuls of information. We asked them on the evaluation form if they had any unanswered questions, but most said that they had found everything they needed.



"I have learnt information that I can use directly in my son's SEN review next week. It is invaluable to be able to speak to key people. I can't recommend enough!"

"This has been a fantastic and worthwhile visit and I have learnt so much!"

Stress-busting activities for parent carers

Parenting a child with additional needs can be very stressful. It is important (but far from easy) to take time out to look after yourself and recharge your batteries. A great way to do this is to engage in something creative.

We currently have a grant from the People's Health Trust, using money raised by Health Lottery Yorkshire and Humber, to offer taster sessions for a range of stress-busting activities. So far, we have run sessions on mindfulness, yoga, fused glass art, needle felting and printmaking. The idea is that parents get to try out different activities and hopefully find something that they would like to do long term, maybe even together with other parents they've met at our sessions.

The next sessions will be about Japanese Hand Stitching (29 April, 10am-12.30pm) and Collage (25 May, 12-2.30pm).

For more information about all our events and workshops and to book your place, please visit www. sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/events

"Very supportive meeting others with similar parental difficulties and challenges"

"I really feel the benefit of the wellbeing sessions. They allow me to take some time for myself."

"I have loved all the sessions I have attended, I'm also very proud of all my creations. SPCF have given me an opportunity to try things I would never have been able to do. It has also been a 'safe' space to chat/listen."

Virtual befriending service

SENSE offer a free virtual befriending service that matches people with disabilities of any age with a volunteer. Your child or young person will meet online once a week with someone who has shared interests, sense of humour and personality. They could catch



up about their week, watch a film, do an online class, craft, game or bake together. Find out more here: www.sense.org.uk/get-support/virtual-buddying



Looking for **leisure activities** for your child?

We have an overview of specialist and inclusive sports and leisure providers on our website:

https://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/information/leisure/





Many providers also have listings on Sheffield's Local Offer website. You can filter these listings by age group, type of activity, location and more.

Take a look at https://tinyurl.

com/5n7xjvmk





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NEWS NEWS

Feedback from **members' survey**

Every two years, we ask our members what they think about our organisation. This year, 150 people filled in our questionnaire - thank you to everyone who took part! The lucky winner of our prize draw for a £50 shopping voucher was Sabina France.

Below are some of the key messages from the survey. To read the full report, please visit our website: https://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/about/our-members



were confident or very confident that we can accurately represent parents' views.



said they read our newsletters.



said that being a member of our forum had made them feel better informed about services.



said that they were better able to support their child with additional needs.



felt less isolated as a result of being a member.

42% had engaged with us through our events, meetings and through social media. This rate is lower than in previous years and may reflect the impact of the pandemic. For parents who had not got more involved, the main barriers were a lack of time generally, and events/meetings being held at times that were not suitable for them.

The survey confirmed that our activities are well aligned with parents' priorities information, signposting, and family events. Parents also indicated a demand for services we are currently unable to provide, such as children's activities, advocacy and peer support/befriending. However, we have just received some funding for a peer support project, so watch this space!

When asked what burning issues they wanted us to focus on over the next year, the transition to post-16 and adult services, support in education and better mental health support for children and parents topped the list.

"SPCF have been a valuable guide along this pathway! A helping hand and really good advice on lots of matters. Even learning really useful advice from reading stories from other parents. It was learning about the 'short breaks grant' through SPCF that we were able to take our Son with ASD on a holiday where he felt at ease and was able to enjoy. The Council are not so good at communicating support available."

"I have been able to access activity groups that I was previously unaware of - this has provided more opportunities for my child to do interesting things that they enjoy."

"The staff and volunteers are always special and go out of their way to make each person special."

Honouring an unsung community hero

Nina Rose is the third recipient of our annual David Woodhouse Community Award, which is funded from donations made in memory of David Woodhouse. David was the husband of Deborah Woodhouse, a former trustee and one of our founding members.

Nina has been involved with the Sheffield Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (SHASBAH) for over 15 years. She received a trophy, a cheque for £250 and vouchers for a spa experience and a meal.

Presenting the award, Forum trustee Jayne Woodward said: "Nina is another worthy winner of our award. She works tirelessly and selflessly to provide emotional and practical support as well as a range of activities to the community. This was especially the case during lockdown and incredibly important when so many people were isolated. The breadth of her work and determination to get things done is impressive and reflects the qualities that we wish the award to recognise."

Deborah Woodhouse added: "When I was looking at the applications for my husband's award. Nina's stood out. I could see Nina was someone who saw a problem and came up with a solution, and this reminded me of David. He was a doer and wanted to help without making a fuss. I can see Nina is someone who cares about her community and takes actions to support people. She is a worthy winner of the award and thank you to my friends at the Sheffield Parent Forum for this, the third year of this initiative, on behalf of myself and our children Olivia and George. It means a lot to us."

The award is presented annually, and the next round of nominations will open in October 2022.



Weekly information sessions with **SSENDIAS**

Sheffield SEND Information, Advice, and Support (SSENDIAS) are now running FREE weekly information sessions via Zoom. The sessions cover:

- SEN Support
- How to apply for an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan
- Checking a draft EHC plan

Sessions take place at 10am-12pm on different days of the week

Call **0114 2736009** or visit www.sheffieldsendias.org.uk to book your place.

Ofsted finds "sufficient progress" made in improving SEND services

Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission have published their findings from a revisit to Sheffield they carried out in February.

The revisit was a follow-up to the 2018 inspection, which found significant weaknesses in the support provided for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

In their report, the inspectors conclude that Sheffield has made sufficient progress in six out of the seven areas of weakness identified at the last inspection. The area where progress has been insufficient is the transition to post-16 and post-18 services.

You can read the inspectors' report here: https://tinyurl.com/4kw6nuaa

OUR VIEW

We don't think that "sufficient progress" is good enough for our children. Whilst we agree that some progress has been made, what we hear from families in Sheffield is that they are not feeling the impact of this yet.

The Ofsted inspection was over three years ago, and we would have expected to see real improvements by now. It may take another year or two before the changes start to have an impact. For many of our children, this will be too late.

We know that almost 300 parents filled in the inspectors' questionnaire, which was only open during February half term. We have not



seen a report about this survey, and have asked the inspectors to share a summary with us.

As part of our involvement in the revisit, we had submitted feedback to the inspectors. This included a summary of the feedback parents had given us over the past three years in relation to the seven areas of weakness.

You can read it here: https://tinyurl.com/mwv9npn6

Some of the information in the inspectors' report differs from what we have been told, for example in relation to the availability of speech and language therapy for young people aged 16+ in special schools, or the age group that the new social care transitions team will work with. We have asked for clarification on these issues.

The job of improving SEND services in Sheffield is not complete – in many areas, it has barely even started to have an impact. We will continue to monitor progress, hold services to account and influence decision making.

Changes to mainstream school **SEND funding**

Sheffield City Council is looking at changing the way provision for learners with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is funded in Sheffield's mainstream schools.

NEWS

Schools say that they don't always get enough funding for the support described in a pupils' Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan, or that they don't receive it quickly enough.

Officers are looking to make changes to ensure that the right support is in place for children with SEND.

At present, top-up funding is allocated to

schools through localities.

The new proposals, due to be put out for consultation in the summer term, are likely to include a method for working out how much extra money a school needs to put support in place and how the money is allocated to schools.

The proposals will also include how extra provision is funded for pupils on SEN Support, who do not have an EHC plan.

It is likely that these proposals will require an increase in SEND funding for mainstream schools.

Activities and support for siblings

Sheffield Young Carers offers support to children and young people (8-25 years) who provide care for a family member, e.g. a disabled sibling.

www.sheffieldyoungcarers.org. uk / 0114 258 4595 / information@ sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk

SIBS is a project at the University of Sheffield that offers siblings of children with a disability aged 8-12 years the opportunity to take part in free activity days (once a month, on Saturdays).

sibs@sheffield.ac.uk / 0114 222 8533

SENSE run a virtual service for children and teenagers aged 5 to 18 years with caring responsibilities for a brother, sister

or parent with any kind of disability. They provide weekly activities such as film nights, book clubs, cooking, games nights, crafts etc., as well as one-to-one support.

www.sense.org.uk/get-support/ support-for-children/activities-forsiblings-and-young-carers

Sheffield Adult Sibling Support Group

is a local peer support group run by the national charity SIBS. It is for adult siblings (aged 18 and over) of people with lifelong disabilities. Although based in Sheffield, siblings from across South Yorkshire (and beyond) are very welcome to join.

www.sibs.org.uk/support-for-adult-siblings/adult-sibling-support-groups

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Improving autism support in mainstream secondary schools



A project called "Autism in Schools" is now running at ten mainstream secondary schools in Sheffield (see box below).

The project is funded by the government and aims to improve support for autistic learners. This will be done by making changes to the school environment, fostering good relationships between staff, parents and students, signposting families to sources of support, and providing better access to early intervention.

Our forum is involved in the project, and we have recruited two project workers (Anna Marie Emmett and Tracey Wild) to set up parent groups in the participating schools and seek parents' views on how to improve support for their children. These groups are open to parents of children with any type of special educational need or disability – not iust autism!

Another organisation, KIDS, has set up children's and young people's forums in the schools.

Using learning from the project, training for school staff will be produced by health professionals. This will ensure that good practice developed at the pilot schools can be rolled out across the city.

If you have a child with additional needs at one of the schools listed here and you haven't yet

received information about the parent groups, please contact our project workers directly.

For Notre Dame, Sheffield Park, Sheffield Springs and Westfield, please contact Anna Marie Emmett, annamarie.emmett@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

For Birley Academy, Chaucer, Firth Park, Parkwood Academy, UTC Sheffield and Yewlands, please contact Tracey Wild, **tracey.** wild@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Participating schools

- Birley Academy
- Chaucer
- Firth Park
- Notre Dame
- Parkwood Academy
- Sheffield Park
- Sheffield Springs
- UTC Sheffield
- Westfield
- Yewlands

Improving the transition to adult social care

Sheffield City Council's Preparation for Adulthood Team supports young people with disabilities and their families to prepare for adulthood and move from children's to adult social care services. Recently, the team has needed to make some improvements and the Council has taken steps to offer a better service.

Seven new members of social care staff are being recruited to significantly increase the

capacity of work the team can complete. These new workers aren't yet in post, but will be over the next few months.

CONTACT

You can contact the Preparation for Adulthood Team via the Children with Disabilities Service (call: 0114 273 5368 / email: 0-25duty@ sheffield.gov.uk).

COMING SOON:

Peer support service for parent carers

We are delighted that our forum has received funding to develop a brand-new peer support service. Feedback from parents in Sheffield clearly shows that there is a lack of support both before and after a child receives a diagnosis. Although the

funding has a focus on autism and other neurodevelopmental needs, our service will be available for ALL families.

We will work closely with families in Sheffield to decide what the new service should look like. We will also be recruiting a project worker and peer support workers soon. If you are interested in being part of the project, please email katie.monette@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Council to employ dedicated Local Offer worker

We are delighted that the Council has decided to create a dedicated Local Offer post.

The Local Offer is a website with information about the support and services available in our local area for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25 years. You can find it here:

www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer

For several years, our forum has had a contract with the Council to update and improve the information on the Local Offer

website. Whilst the content is now much better, we've not been able to improve the searchability and look and feel of the site as much as we would have liked, due to the limitations of the IT platform.

The new Local Offer worker will have a key role to play in the future development of the website. They will engage with children and young people with SEND and their parents to ensure the website meets their needs, lead on the promotion and marketing of the site, and act as the first port of call for enquiries.

BOOK REVIEW

Get information in other languages

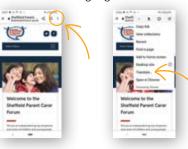
Do you know someone who would benefit from the information on our website. but would struggle to access it due to a language barrier? We have a translation feature on our website that could help. (www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)

HERE'S HOW TO ACCESS IT:

 If you're viewing our website on a desktop or laptop, simply click on "Select Language" at the top of the screen and choose the language you want.



• If you're using a mobile phone or tablet, click on the three dots in the top right corner of the screen, select "Translate" and choose a language.



Ryegate autism workshops now online

The two-day autism workshops for parents that used to be run by the Ryegate Centre are now available as a series of short videos.

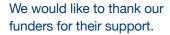
The videos explain what autism is and how to support your autistic child in specific areas including communication, toileting, eating, sleep and behaviour. They are aimed at parents of children and young people who either have a diagnosis of autism or who are on the waiting list for an assessment.

You can watch the videos here: https://tinyurl.com/4pf27ujp

This page also has links to lots of other useful information about autism.



Thank you to our funders





Department









Wiggles, Stomps and Squeezes Calm my Jitters Down

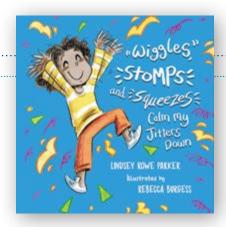
By Lindsey Rowe Parker Illustrated by Rebecca Burgess **BQB Publishing 2021** Reviewed by Eleanor Cantor

There are books that bring tears to your eyes - not because they are tear-jerkers but by making you feel instantly seen and understood. Wiggles, Stomps and Squeezes is exactly such a book. I'd been impatiently waiting for it to reach UK stores ever since I came across a video of its author - Lindsey Rowe Parker - reading it on YouTube.

Built around the unique experience of children with heightened sensory perception, the story follows a simple day of routine activities - eating, dressing, going to the playground and depicts in sound, image and emotion the events and impressions that can make or break the child's day: the food squishes, the label itches, the sand crunches ... the need to wiggle, zoom, run, "touching every wall."

Sentences like "everything is loud, my tears are loud too" capture an emotional-sensory meltdown with rare and moving accuracy. However, the book is not a lament but a celebration of sensory sensation: "I need to swing - I need to fly," "my shoes sparkle as they speed towards the sky", "I smile and stomp stomp". The pages are bursting with the joy of searching and finding sensory stimulation - that right feeling.

It is a far cry from other children's books that try to offer a glimpse into the so-called "autistic world". Rowe Parker, a mother



of an autistic child and herself diagnosed with ADHD, has created a story that makes us empathise without pity, and promotes understanding without being condescending. It's hard to believe that this is her debut book. and hopefully more will follow.

Autistic illustrator Rebecca Burgess's pictures complement the text with depth, freedom and originality words fail to describe, but I'll try: the size of various objects is determined by their momentary presence and weight in the child's subjective experience, thus the sand pebbles in the sandpit are wonderfully gigantic, while at dinnertime, the oppressive smell of the mush gathers into a green jagged frame enclosing the child's head. Moving objects and characters are drawn several times on the page to convey their quick motion, so we literally see the whooshing, tapping and hopping in every detail.

Another major plus point: the protagonist Burgess has drawn is delightfully and effortlessly gender-neutral. Although the blurb on the back refers to "a young girl," nothing in the illustrations prevented my two sons from assuming it was a boy and referring to "him". This, along with the relatable experiences in the story, helped to naturally facilitate a conversation between me and them about why one of them needs more wiggles, stomps and squeezes than the other, and that calmed everybody's jitters down.

SENSORY ROOMS

A sensory room is a therapeutic space that is designed to stimulate the senses through a variety of sensory equipment.

This can include coloured lights, lava lamps, sounds, or equipment like swings, squeeze toys or exercise balls. Sensory rooms can have a calming effect on children with additional needs. They can provide a sanctuary for escaping sensory overload and can also be used as a therapeutic space for building skills like colour recognition or motor skills.

All of the venues listed here have parking, and all are wheelchair accessible.

Concord Sports Centre

- Shiregreen Lane, Sheffield S5 6AE
- Weekdays: 7.30am-9pm Weekends: 8am-4pm
- £9.90 per hour for lifeCARD holders Induction required (£12)
- Call to book: **0330 333 0555**

Includes: Changing places toilet

Early Days Family Centre

- 71 Palgrave Rd, Sheffield S5 8GS
- Weekdays 8.30am-4.30pm
- Free
- Call to book: 0114 2734926

Accessible to families from all areas of the city. No age restrictions.

Alive

- Paces Campus, Sheffield S35 3HY
- Mon-Fri, 9am-3pm
- £ Room hire: £17 per hour
- Book Online: www.alivesheffield. com/product/multi-sensory-rooms Email: info@alivesheffield.com Call: 0114 284 8401

Meadowhall Sensory Zone

- Management Suite, Oasis Dining Quarter, Meadowhall, Sheffield S9 1EP
- Closes 30 mins before centre closes
- Free
- No booking system.
 Call 0333 313 2000 for info

Includes: Changing places toilet

Norfolk Park TARA

- 89 Guildford Rise, Sheffield S2 2PP
- Weekdays (except Wed 2-5pm)
- **£** Donation if possible
- Call: 0114 270 1191 or 07946 045089

Open to anyone, not just Norfolk Park residents.

More Rehab

- 40 Little London Road, Sheffield S8 0UH
- Mon/Wed/Fri: 8.30am-5pm Tue/Thu: 8.30am-7pm Sat mornings
- 2 Room hire: £15 per hour Induction required (£25)
- Email: info@morerehab.com
 Call: 0114 2353150
 Online: https://tinyurl.com/bdh8546p

Hoist available (must be pre-booked)

Sam's Space

- Firth Park Methodist Church, 8 Stubbin Lane, Sheffield S5 6QL
- Under Tue-Fri: 10am-2pm

 Private hire on Sat: 10am-6pm
- Private hire £10 per hour, or use alongside soft play sessions with prices starting at £3.75 per child
- Email: sams.space.info@gmail.com

For children up to the age of 11

Sheffield United FC

- SUFC, Bramall Lane, Sheffield S2 4SU
- Matchdays: 1 hour before kick-off until 30 minutes after full time
- Same as matchday ticket pricing in the John Street Family Stand. A complimentary ticket for a PA may be provided based on eligibility criteria.
- Email: Jon Helliwell, Disability Liaison Officer, at jon.helliwell@sufc.co.uk

Supporters can watch the match from the sensory room with seats also available just outside in the stands themselves. Spaces allocated on a first come, first served basis. Max. five supporters and their PAs.

Sheffield Mencap & Gateway

- Norfolk Lodge, Park Grange Road, Sheffield S2 3QF
- Weekdays: 9am-4pm
- £5 per hour for one service user and one supporter (max two people in the room at any time).
- Email: mencapoffice@ sheffieldmencap.org.uk Call: 0114 2767757

Includes: Changing places toilet.
Open to anyone, not just Mencap users.







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.

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According to national statistics, 10% of the UK population is dyslexic. However, the condition can often be misdiagnosed or overlooked, especially where children with other special needs are concerned. Here is an overview on how to spot the signs, work in partnership with professionals and get support for a child or young person with dyslexia.

Who notices dyslexia first teachers or parents?

Often it is the staff in school who raise concerns. Teachers pick on little clues during phonics screening, spelling tests, or through other observations and regular conversations with the child. Some parents notice that their child is having difficulty with reading and ask the school to consider dyslexia. Parents who have dyslexia themselves are more likely to pick up on early signs due to their own experience.

Can signs be misconstrued?

Yes, without a good understanding of the traits of dyslexia, signs can often be misread. Dyslexia may be attributed to children whose difficulty stems from other sources. This has been especially true during the pandemic. Parents or teachers who notice a child falling behind may worry that the child is dyslexic. In fact, these children may just need stronger support in specific areas after being away

from school for so long. It is important to be aware that not every problem in reading and writing points to dyslexia. There could be other underlying conditions at play, such as developmental language disorder or a general learning disability.

On the other hand, dyslexia can be overlooked, especially when a child has already been diagnosed with another condition. If, for example, a child is autistic, we should not attribute all their difficulties to autism - they may be dyslexic as well, and it might be their dyslexia rather than their autism which poses barriers to learning.

What if my child's first language is not English?

Learning in a new language can be hard, but schools need to be very vigilant regarding children with English as an additional language and not automatically assume that language is the only barrier to learning. In any case, support must be put in place.

What specific characteristics should we pay attention to?

While dyslexia has overlapping traits with other conditions, there are some specific tell-tale signs staff and parents can look out for. For instance, many young children mix up their b and d when they learn to read

and write, but children with dyslexia may continue to do so in later school years. Other signs include speaking or writing slowly, poor standard of written work compared with oral ability, creating anagrams of words (e.g. tired for tried), making slow reading progress, finding it difficult to blend letters together, confusing place value in numbers (e.g. writing 15 instead of 51), and struggling with reading from a white background, compared to a coloured background.

Dyslexic children may also try to avoid certain activities like spelling tests and written work, or tire easily due to the extreme effort they put in to decode and recognise words when they read.

You can find some useful dyslexia checklists at www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/dyslexia/howis-dyslexia-diagnosed/dyslexia-checklists

Once a parent or a teacher notices a difficulty, what are the next steps?

Teachers will consult the Sheffield Support Grid (see box on next page) and together with the SENCO start a review process and begin putting support in place. This is called SEN Support. They will try different interventions to see which have the most impact. The review process may be lengthy, but it is important to stress that support is needs-based and not diagnosis-dependent. Measures should be implemented as soon as difficulties occur.

Meanwhile, staff and parents should be sensitive to the child's feelings. Schools may make reasonable adjustments, such as changing how spellings are marked or not asking a child to read in front of the class. Many dyslexic people report feeling anxious or self-conscious about their disability, which is important for adults to be aware of from the start.

Who will assess my child?

An initial assessment is usually carried out by the SENCO, after asking the parents

for permission. They would use various assessment tools to check for traits associated with dyslexia. The SENCO will also ask the class teacher how the child is doing in class.

What are the assessments checking for?

Dyslexia has more to it than difficulties in reading and writing. The person doing the assessment will look at the child's thought processes – how they work out a solution to a problem, their working memory and their ability to organise ideas both verbally and in writing. The results will inform the choice of methods for helping the child. For some children, pre-learning is the way forward: sitting with a teaching assistant a few minutes before the lesson to prepare for what will be done in class.

The effectiveness of the strategies depends on each student's individual strengths and difficulties. For example, some dyslexic people struggle with putting their thoughts in writing, but using a recording device as a middle step - that is, dictating their answers and then transferring them onto paper - helps them organise their ideas. Recognising dyslexia and using the right strategies can turn a child's learning experience around.

What should I do if I feel that my child's needs are not being recognised or met?

The first step is to speak to the school's SENCO about your concerns. The school can then work with you and look at what support can be put in place. If the school needs external support, they can contact their locality SENCO to ask for advice. SENCOs can also contact Fusion SEND Hub and get a consultant teacher in SEND to work with the child and carry out specific assessments. From these assessments the consultant teacher will be able to offer strategies for the school and the family.

FEATURE

Parents seeking external advice may want to contact a private provider for an assessment. They can then present the report to the school and discuss further measures.

If issues with school persist, SSENDIAS can help mediate and resolve problems. Their service is free of charge. See www. sheffieldsendias.org.uk for more information.

Does my child need an official diagnosis to get help in school exams?

No. An official diagnosis is not needed to get help in exams like SATS, GCSEs and A-levels, and a diagnosis of dyslexia does not mean that a student automatically qualifies for help.

Extra help in exams is known as "access arrangements" and can include things like extra time, a reader, a scribe or a laptop. Any kind of access arrangement must reflect the student's normal way of working. For example, a student would only be allowed to use a laptop in exams if they normally use one in class.

For some types of access arrangements, a student must undergo a formal assessment before the school can apply for them. These assessments might measure things like reading speed, writing speed, spelling accuracy, or cognitive processing speed. They must be carried out by a specialist assessor and should be arranged by the school.

For more information about access arrangements, please see:

https://tinyurl.com/2xyf9mye

What about help at university?

If your child is considering university, they will be expected to provide documentary evidence of their dyslexia to access support. You should contact the disability service at the universities your child is considering well

in advance of the start of the academic year to check what evidence they require. The university may also provide funding in full or part for a full diagnostic assessment report which can then also be used to apply for Disabled Students' Allowance.

How can parents support dyslexic children at home?

Continuity is key. Parents should work in partnership with the school and use the strategies at home that work well in the classroom – for example visual timetables, lists, pre-learning etc. – and vice versa: teachers can learn from parents about what helps the child at home and incorporate these techniques in class.

Remember that dyslexic children often need more time to process the information on the page or what is being asked of them. Try to allocate more time for schoolwork. For instance, if your child has been given a book for half-term reading, you can help by reading it together and explaining it to them in preparation for the next half-term. However, beware not to overload your child and always be conscious of their mental health.

Should I support my child by engaging a private tutor?

Tutors, if they do not overstretch the family budget, can be a good option, as long as they follow the methods used in school. The last thing you want is to create confusion and send the child mixed messages. Collaboration between professionals and a holistic approach to the child's progress and wellbeing are essential.

We would like to thank Cheryl Gaughan, Assistant Head at Talbot Specialist School and Director of Fusion SEND Hub, for invaluable information.

THE SHEFFIELD SUPPORT GRID

The Sheffield Support Grid is a local guidance document for school staff that aims to ensure that children with similar needs get a similar level of provision. It has a list of dyslexia interventions and support strategies schools can use. The school should tell you where they have scored your child on the grid. For more information, see https://tinyurl.com/4wrpxm6j

SEN SUPPORT

SEN Support is the first level of extra support provided by mainstream schools and other education settings. Most dyslexic learners will require SEN Support. For more information on what to expect, see https://tinyurl.com/2p8v6n22

INFORMATION ABOUT DYSLEXIA

British Dyslexia Organisation:
www.bdadyslexia.org.uk

NHS: www.nhs.uk/conditions/dyslexia
Parent Champions guide for families:
www.parentchampions.org.uk/
resources/understanding-dyslexiabooklet

PRIVATE SCREENING AND ASSESSMENTS

There are several providers in Sheffield who offer private dyslexia screening and assessments. You can find them on the Local Offer website. Go to www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer and type "dyslexia" into the search box. Basic screening starts at £80, while an official diagnosis done by a specialist can cost up to £585.



PRIVATE TUTORS

Rates for private tuition are around £30-40 per hour. Families are not expected to engage private tutors to complement school lessons.

- If you are considering private tutoring, look for experienced teachers with a Diploma in SpLD (Specific Learning Difficulty).
- Look for PATOSS-approved teachers on www.patoss-dyslexia.org
- The British Dyslexia Association has a list of accredited tutors; email tutorlist@bdadyslexia.org.uk with your county and postcode to request it.

SUPPORT FOR PARENTS

Sheffield SENDIAS provide free and impartial information, advice and support to parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities. www.sheffieldsendias.org.uk 0114 273 6009

Yorkshire Rose Dyslexia are a volunteerled organisation that offers a free parent support helpline and Whatsapp group as well as a tutor/assessor directory. www.yorkshirerosedyslexia.org.uk 0113 8562240

SUPPORT GROUP FOCUS

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...

18 months ago, disability football club Hillsborough Hornets started with just five players, not sure if the team would take off or where it would go.

Some of the children had never played football before. Many had struggled to fit in with mainstream football, and some simply had not enjoyed other teams.

Over 50 voungsters now attend the weekly training sessions in Hillsborough Park – ranging from the age of three all the way to 16.

Head Coach Alex Whitehead said: "All have different disabilities, but once they cross the line onto the pitch, they all do it for the love of the game and their team. Every single one of them has a smile on their face - well most times, depending on the referee's decisions, but that's football for you!"

He is full of praise for the young players: "Attitude and behaviour are just fantastic. We couldn't be prouder of every single one of them. They have given up every Saturday morning and one Sunday a month to take part in our training sessions and league fixtures."

"These kids have all overcome so much and really built a family. They deserve to have their achievements and courage recognised. We can't wait to see what happens next!"





For more information about Hillsborough Hornets, see www.hillsboroughhornets.co.uk

AUTISM HOPE

We are a parent-led support group that is for all parents, carers and family members of children of all ages with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

This year, we are celebrating that it is five years since we first launched!

Children do not need to have a received an official diagnosis for parents to join, and supporting parents through the diagnostic process is something we care deeply about.

Our Parson Cross group has grown thanks to support and funding from the Parson Cross Initiative. We now meet weekly on Fridays during term time for a lively coffee morning with regular quest speakers and plenty of tea, coffee and cake!

We have also been meeting weekly on Zoom since lockdown and continue to do so every Tuesday morning. This enables members who cannot make our in-person coffee mornings to still feel supported and connected to our other members.

In November 2020 we were able to launch a second group at High Green. We have since received funding to meet fortnightly, and this group is also growing.

We believe what makes our group so special is not only the way our members connect over having a child with autism and all that it entails, but also how they grow friendships that support one another through all of life's challenges. At our groups there are often tears but just as much laughter!! We aim to share as much information



as possible to help our members navigate the education and social care system. We have a busy and vibrant Facebook page that is very supportive and the members have a wealth of knowledge!

If anyone feels like they would like to meet other parents in a similar situation, please come along to one of our groups. We have regular guest speakers from organisations such as SNIPS, SSENDIAS and Sheffield Parent Carer Forum, and we also run our own workshops. We don't want anyone to feel isolated or alone, and a warm welcome will always be found at our groups. For more information please visit our website www.autismhopesheffield.co.uk, email autismhopesheffield@gmail.com or call Carlie on 07968 984179.

Meeting details:

HIGH GREEN GROUP

Fortnightly on Mondays, 1pm-3pm High Green Campus, Pack Horse Lane, Sheffield S35 3HY

PARSON CROSS GROUP

Weekly on Fridays, 10am-12pm Creswick Greave Methodist Church, Yew Lane, Sheffield S5 9AS

ZOOM MEETINGS

Weekly on Tuesdays, 9.30am-11.30am

Find out more about other local support groups:

You can find information about other local support groups on our website: www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/information/support-organisations

Dates for your diary

Venue addresses

More Rehab: 40 Little London Road, Sheffield S8 0UH

Old Sharrow Junior School, South View Road, Sheffield S7 1DB

Book your place

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

*If you can't attend in person and would like to join online, please let us know and we'll send you a meeting link.

April

Thursday 21 April, 10.30am-12pm at More Rehab

Coffee morning

Fridays 29 April, 6 & 13 May 9.30am-2.30pm at More Rehab

Makaton training course Level 1&2

Run by the Speech and Language Therapy service, this course will teach you the Makaton signs from Stages 1 and 2 (and some of the additional stage) of the Core Vocabulary. We will practice together in a relaxed way and discuss hints and tips for Makaton signing. The cost is £36 per person, which covers all three sessions, two manuals and a certificate. Fees can be waived for parents on means-tested benefits - please contact us to discuss.

Booking essential.

April continued

Friday 29 April, 10am-12.30pm

Old Sharrow Junior School

Parent wellbeing session: Japanese hand stitching

Learn how to do Sashiko hand stitching
– a simple but beautiful form of Japanese
embroidery. We will be using upcycled indigo
denim to create the Japanese Asanohah
pattern, which symbolizes growth. You
will be shown how to mount your stitched
piece to put up at home or give as a gift. No
needlework skills required! **Booking essential.**

May

Tuesday 3 May 10-12pm at More Rehab

Transition subgroup meeting*

This group is for parents of young people aged 14-25 years with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The meeting will be attended by officers from the transition teams in children's and adult social care. We are a friendly group and there will be time to chat and swap information with other parents. No need to book, just turn up.

Tuesday 10 May, 10.30am-12pm at More Rehab

Coffee morning

Wednesday 25 May, 12-2.30pm

Old Sharrow Junior School

Parent wellbeing session: Collage

Learn how to make joyful and colourful collages using hand-painted papers you have prepared yourself. No artistic talent required – just come along and give it a go! **Booking essential.**

May continued

Wednesday 25 May, 7-9pm on Zoom

Safe Space meeting for Black and Brown parent carers

June

Thursday 19 June, 10.30am-12pm at More Rehab

Coffee morning

Tuesday 21 June, 10am-12pm

at More Rehab

Education subgroup meeting*

Please join 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! We'll be joined by Laura Chambers, the new leader of the Autism Team, for the first hour of the meeting. No need to book, just turn up.

Wednesday 29 June, 7-9pm on Zoom

Safe Space meeting for Black and Brown parent carers

July

Tuesday 12 July, 10.30am-12pm at More Rehab

Coffee morning

Don't miss out!

Sign up today by completing the membership form on our website (sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/becomea-member) or at the back of this newsletter!

August

Friday 26 August

Hillsborough Sports Arena

Family Fun Day

Our highlight of the summer! We're still confirming arrangements, but will hopefully be able to offer all the old favourites – from bungee trampolines and adapted bikes to exotic animals. **Booking essential.** Booking instructions will be sent to **our members only** by email and SMS a few weeks before the event.

Safe Space meetings for Black and Brown parent carers

We acknowledge that some parents from Black and Asian Minority Ethnic communities may not feel confident about attending our typical meetings. Therefore, we are running a monthly Zoom session for Black and Brown parent carers, chaired by our volunteers Melissa and Thaeeba. Sessions take place on the last Wednesday of each month at 7-9pm.

Zoom details: Meeting ID 882 7654 8347, Passcode 027695

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!

Useful Contacts

0-5 SEND Service (formerly Early Years Inclusion Service).*Works with young children (0-5+) with additional needs both in their homes and in settings	0114 273 6411 0-5SEND.SupportService@sheffield.gov.uk
ADHD Support Service Run by Family Action, this service provides information, support and training for families with a child with ADHD	07587 633179 adhd.sheffield@family-action.org.uk
Autism Education Service* Supports mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with autism and related conditions	0114 2506800 (helpline 1-4pm) autism.educationteam@sheffield.gov.uk
Becton Hospital and Outreach Team* (formerly Home and Hospital Education Service). Provides education for children who are unable to attend school for medical or related reasons	0114 305 3121 jgibson@nexusmat.org
Child Disability Register A local register of disabled children aged 0-25	www.sheffield.gov.uk/childdisabilityregister
Children with Disabilities Team* Social work team for children and young people with disabilities	0114 273 5368 fieldwork-cdtbs@sheffield.gov.uk
Contact National charity which provides information and advice on any aspect of caring for a disabled child, including education and benefits	0808 808 3555 info@contact.org.uk
Deaf/Hearing Impaired and Vision Support Services Supports deaf / hearing impaired and visually impaired children aged 0-25 years and their families	Head of Service: bernadette.roe-dean@sheffield.gov.uk Deaf/Hearing Impaired: 0114 273 6410 rachel.dickens@sheffield.gov.uk Vision Support: 0114 2941201 sarah.blake@sheffield.gov.uk
Direct Payments Team* Provides support, advice and guidance relating to direct payments for children	0114 273 5985 childrensdpenquiries@sheffield.gov.uk
Educational Psychology Service* Works with families and staff in educational settings to support the education and development of children and young people	0114 250 6800 deborah.page@sheffield.gov.uk
Independent Travel Training* Trains young people with disabilities/learning difficulties to use public transport to get to school, college and other education providers	0114 205 3542 jill.siddall@sheffield.gov.uk Indetravel@sheffield.gov.uk

IPSEA National charity providing free legally-based advice on educational issues for parents of children with SEN	Book a call-back via www.ipsea.org.uk
Local offer* A website with information about support and services for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Sheffield	www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer
Paces Sheffield Runs a specialist school for children with cerebral palsy and other motor disorders, and a day service for adults.	School: 0114 2845298 office@paces-school.org.uk Day service: 0114 5510419 darren.walker@pacessheffield.org.uk
Portage Home Visiting Service* Home-visiting educational service for children under three with additional support needs and their families	0114 273 6411
Ryegate Children's Centre Assessment, diagnosis and therapy for children and young people with developmental and neurological problems	0114 271 7000
SSENDIAS* 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	0114 273 6009 ssendias@sheffield.gov.uk www.sheffieldsendias.org.uk
SEN Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SENDSARS)* Deals with statutory assessments, EHC plans, annual reviews and specialist placements	0114 273 6394 sendassess&review@sheffield.gov.uk
Sheffield Carers Centre Offers information, advice and a range of services for carers, including parents of disabled children	0114 272 8362 support@sheffieldcarers.org.uk www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk
Sheffield Children's Hospital	0114 271 7000 sheffield.childrenshospital@sch.nhs.uk
Sheffield Young Carers Offers support to children and young people (8-25 years) who provide care for a family member, e.g. a disabled sibling	0114 258 4595 information@sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk
Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS)* Supports children aged 5-18 years to access short break activities to give their parents a break from caring	0114 273 5368 SnipsBusinessSupport@sheffield.gov.uk
Transport Services* Provides transport services including home-to-school transport for pupils with SEN	0114 203 7570 transportservices@sheffield.gov.uk

^{*} Part of Sheffield City Council



Free training session for every child who wants to play inclusive football regardless of ability or disability.

We are part of the world's first football club but we're far from traditional. We are a team of individuals and we celebrate the right to be different. Every player is guaranteed game time, regardless of ability or disability participation, inclusion and fun is our drive, not results.

Follow us on:

www.sheffieldfcdisability.com

✓ @sheffieldFCDT☑ @sheffieldfc_disability

Your child will benefit from:

- · Improving health and mental well being
- · Playing as part of a team and having fun
- Coaches who are fully trained, with extensive experience in managing teams of individuals with a broad and diverse range of disabilities and ability levels.

Monday night training:

Juniors U12's & U16's - 6pm - 7pm Adults 16+ - 6.30pm - 8pm Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park Attercliffe Common, S9 3TL

For more info contact:

Ruth Wittenberg - Members Secretary Phone, 07962 471556 Email. ruth.wittenberg@sheffieldfc.com

Sheffield Parent Carer Forum Application for Full Membership

along here

Tear

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	Please tick as appropriate :	
Child 1	Please add me to your email list.	
Date of birth	Please add me to your text messaging list.	
Main disability	Please add me to your postal mailing list.	
Other disabilities	I am happy to take part in consultations:	
	by phone by email	
School (name)	by post by SMS	
Child 2	I am interested in volunteering with the Parent Carer Forum.	
Date of birth		
Main disability		
Other disabilities		
	Signature	
School (name)	Date	
Child 3 Date of birth Main disability	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	
Other disabilities School (name)	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.	



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

Fold along here

