



# 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 2024 Issue 30- FREE!

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# About us

We are an independent group of over 2,700 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, or go to

[www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member)

## 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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Follow us on Twitter!  
@ShefParentForum

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)

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## 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.

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## “You are not alone”

### Parents find support at information day

Almost 100 parents attended our annual information day at Niagara Conference and Leisure Centre on 8 March.

The event centred around support for children and young people with anxiety, sensory challenges and behavioural issues.

Attendees were able to browse information stalls and talk to representatives from over 30 local services. A range of partner organisations – as well as our own Peer Support Workers – led workshops focused on equipping parents with practical strategies for supporting their children at home.

Feedback from attendees was overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of parents rating the event as either “good” or “very good”.

*“You have to look hard for information, so regular events like this are really helpful as they are all in one place.”*  
- Parent



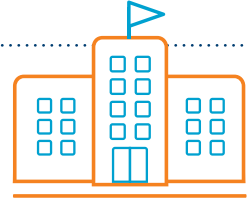
*“So good that there were stalls for older children and young adults. Lots of Ryegate stuff is aimed at younger children.”* - Parent



*“It was lovely to see how many services are available for our children.”* - Parent



*“The biggest and best networking event I have been to for SEND.”*  
- Stallholder



## Autism in Schools project expands into primary schools

Autism in Schools is a national scheme which aims to improve support for autistic children and young people in mainstream schools. After running successfully at 15 secondary schools in Sheffield, the project is now expanding into the primary sector.

A key part of the project are in-school groups for autistic students, facilitated by national charity KIDS. These meetings provide a safe space where students can learn more about their autism, boost their self-esteem, provide mutual support, and educate school staff about how best to meet their needs.

This is mirrored by monthly parent meetings, facilitated by our SPCF project workers at the participating schools. Not only have these groups helped parents to feel less isolated,

they have also served as a platform for discussing concerns and coming up with solutions. Where schools have taken this feedback on board, the effect has been transformative.

Over the next few months, our project workers will phase out their involvement in those secondary schools where the work has become embedded, and the schools will continue with the project themselves.

The focus will then shift to the primary schools that are coming on board. These schools are currently being identified, and we will shortly publish a list on our website; please see [www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/about/autism-in-schools](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/about/autism-in-schools) for more information.

## Celebrating a local treasure

Zoe Burgar is the fifth 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 SPCF trustee and one of our founding members.

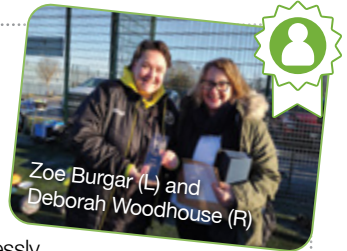
Zoe volunteers with Hillsborough Hornets, a disability football club for young people aged 12 to 16 years. Her official role is Treasurer – but from what we've heard, she spends at least as much time welcoming and supporting the young players and their parents as she does poring over financial data!

Zoe received a trophy, a cheque for £250 and vouchers for a spa experience and a meal.

Presenting the award, SPCF trustee Jayne Woodward said:

"Zoe works tirelessly to create a welcoming and supportive environment for the children, young adults and families that are part the Hornets community. It is so important for our families to be able to access clubs like the Hornets, and Zoe's enthusiasm and passion for the club is very evident. Zoe is a worthy winner of this award."

The award is presented annually, and the next round of nominations will open in October 2024.



Zoe Burgar (L) and Deborah Woodhouse (R)



## New Adult Autism Support Hub

Sheffield has a new Adult Autism Support Hub offering free support to autistic people, aged 16 and above, and their (informal) carers and families. It is based in the Mental Health Matters Building at 44 Bank Street, Sheffield S1 2DS.

The service offers one-to-one and group support via phone calls, face-to-face appointments, online video consultation and email. Their staff can help with benefits, employment issues, confidence building, social opportunities, mental health advice, peer support and more.

You can contact the Hub on **07811 589 909** or email [adultautismsupporthub.mhm@nhs.net](mailto:adultautismsupporthub.mhm@nhs.net)

For more information, please go to [www.mhm.org.uk/adult-autism-support-hub](http://www.mhm.org.uk/adult-autism-support-hub)



## Weston Park Museum gets Changing Places toilet

One of Sheffield's most popular museums has now become more accessible thanks to the installation of a Changing Places toilet. It features a height-adjustable changing bench and wash basin, ceiling track hoist, toilet with alarm pull cord and privacy screen. Access is via a Radar key; use your own, or request one from the museum foyer. For more information, please go to [www.sheffieldmuseums.org.uk](http://www.sheffieldmuseums.org.uk)



## New toolkit for parents of autistic children

Ambitious about Autism have created a series of five animated films to help parents of autistic children whose behaviour challenges. These short clips explain the "iceberg model" and give advice on supporting your child's autonomy, relatedness and competence and managing family conflict. You can watch them here: <https://tinyurl.com/5n7n7mdb>



## Are you a kinship carer?

**Kinship** is a national charity that works with all kinship carers – grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles, family friends – who are caring for children when their parents can't. They have created an online information, advice and support hub called Kinship Compass. Kinship run free online workshops for kinship carers, including a workshop specifically about Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans and the processes for accessing SEN Support in school. For more information, please visit [compass.kinship.org.uk/training-and-events](https://compass.kinship.org.uk/training-and-events)

### Fancy meeting up in person?

- Kinship run a support group for kinship carers in Sheffield. It meets every three weeks on a Tuesday morning (10.30am-12.30pm) at Meersbrook Park United Reformed Church on Chesterfield Road. Some sessions feature speakers on topics like SEN Support, legal issues and local support, others are for sharing concerns and supporting each other. See [compass.kinship.org.uk/groups/south-sheffield-kinship-group](https://compass.kinship.org.uk/groups/south-sheffield-kinship-group) for more information, or contact group leader Janet on **07969297870 / janlizkay@hotmail.co.uk**
- Our SPCF subgroup for adoptive, kinship and foster carers meets at least once a term. The aim of the group is to share information and give feedback on services. See page 18 for meeting dates.

## Help with benefit forms

### Support Buddies

This service is based at St Mary's Church on Bramall Lane. Every Tuesday between 10.30am and 1pm, supporters are available to help with things like Universal Credit claims, DLA and PIP forms, making phone calls, booking appointments and more.

Staff from Citizens Advice will be available via video call to give advice on housing, money, pensions, energy bills, legal questions, wills, immigration issues and more.

To make an appointment, contact St Mary's on **0114 223 0223**. Please note, slots may be booked up for several weeks in advance, and you may have to wait up to 20 minutes on the day.

### Community Access Points

There is a new way to get help from Citizen's Advice. Community Access Points (CAPs) enable people to speak to an adviser through a screen via video call, using a simple one-click device.

The CAPs can be found in confidential spaces at the following venues:

**Howden House, Manor Park Centre, Jordanthorpe Library, Pakistan Muslim Centre, Burngreave Library, Zest Centre, Lowedges Community Centre, Tinsley Forum, and Firth Park Library.**

For opening times, see [www.citizensadvice.org.uk/get-help](http://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/get-help)

## Short Break Grant applications now open year round



**Parents can now apply for the Short Break Grant at any point during the year and no longer have to spend the money by 31 March.**

This change was made after we advised the Council that many families struggled with the tight deadlines. You can apply for one short break grant in each financial year (1 April to 31 March).

The purpose of the grant is to give parent carers a break from their additional caring responsibilities. You can apply for up to £400 per family.

### Who can apply?

**You can apply if you meet all of the following criteria:**

- Your child has a disability and receives a high rate component of DLA or an enhanced rate component of PIP\*;
- Your child is under 18 years of age;
- You are in receipt of means-tested benefits OR your family household income\*\* is less than £21,000 a year;
- You do NOT already receive a short break service (e.g. SNIPS club or befriending, overnight respite) or a direct payment for this child;
- You have NOT received a Short Break Grant in the past 12 months.

\*If your child does not receive high rate DLA or enhanced rate PIP you can still apply, but you will need a relevant professional who knows your child and your family to complete an additional form.

\*\*Your household income consists of the income from everyone, aged 18 and over, who lives in the household, and includes Child Tax Credits. DLA and PIP do NOT count as part of your household income.

### How to apply

If you believe you are eligible, then your first step is to complete a Household Income Assessment by calling **0114 273 4567** (choose option 4, then option 6). Once your eligibility has been confirmed, download the application form and guidance notes from the council website: [www.sheffield.gov.uk/social-care/short-breaks](http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/social-care/short-breaks)

Do not send in an application until you have completed the Household Income Assessment. It will take around six weeks to process your application.

### More information

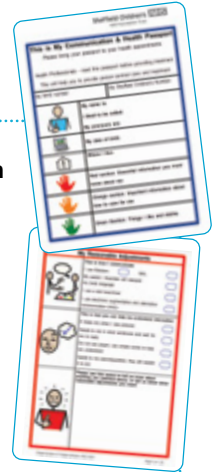
For top tips on completing the application form, please see [sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/information/short-breaks/top-tips-for-completing-short-break-grant-applications](http://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/information/short-breaks/top-tips-for-completing-short-break-grant-applications)

If you have any queries or need help to apply, please contact SNIPS / Short Breaks Grant on **0114 236032** or email [CYPF\\_ShortBreakGrants@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:CYPF_ShortBreakGrants@sheffield.gov.uk)

## Does your child struggle with hospital appointments?

Sheffield Children's Hospital have introduced a patient-held **communication and health passport** that may help. The passport enables staff to better understand your child's support and communication needs. It covers things like reasonable adjustments, communication preferences, medication, help with eating or drinking, sensory needs, likes and dislikes, and much more.

You can download the passport as a PDF file from [www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/assistance-with-learning-disabilities/#Hospital\\_Passport](http://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/assistance-with-learning-disabilities/#Hospital_Passport). Once you have completed the document on your computer, you can print it off and take it along to appointments. You can also get it added to your child's hospital record by emailing the PDF file to [scn-tr.autism-ld@nhs.net](mailto:scn-tr.autism-ld@nhs.net)



If your child has a diagnosis of **autism** or a **learning disability**, you can ask the hospital to add an **alert** to your child's hospital record, so that staff can see straight away that your child may need extra support. To request this, please email [scn-tr.autism-ld@nhs.net](mailto:scn-tr.autism-ld@nhs.net) or call **0114 2717594**. (The hospital is currently looking into an alert for other disabilities, but this is not yet set up).

If you are already at the hospital and your child is struggling, ask the reception or nursing staff for help. They may be able to find you a quiet place to wait in or issue you with a bleep so that you can leave the waiting area and come back for your child's appointment. Some departments also have play specialists who can support and distract your child.

If you have concerns about how your child will cope with a **planned hospital visit or medical procedure**, you should contact the hospital well before the appointment so that reasonable adjustments can be put in place. This could include measures such as desensitisation programmes, familiarisation visits, access to quiet rooms, fidget and sensory toys, easy read versions of documents, or changes to appointment times.

- If your child has a diagnosis of autism or a learning disability, contact the Learning Disability and Autism Lead Nurse, Joanne Bowers, on **07584 345848** or email [scn-tr.autism-ld@nhs.net](mailto:scn-tr.autism-ld@nhs.net)
- If your child has other needs, contact PALS on **0114 2717594** or email [scn-tr.pals@nhs.net](mailto:scn-tr.pals@nhs.net)

For more information about reasonable adjustments at the Sheffield Children's Hospital, please see [www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/assistance-with-learning-disabilities](http://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/patients-and-parents/assistance-with-learning-disabilities)



## Planning for **medical emergencies**

Healthcare providers in Sheffield have adopted a new emergency protocol called ReSPECT (Recommended Summary Plan for Emergency Care and Treatment).

A ReSPECT plan sets out recommendations for a person's medical care and treatment in emergency situations when they may not be able to make decisions or express their wishes. This includes a recommendation for or against CPR. ReSPECT Plans are for any patient, of any age, but are more relevant for people who are at risk of a sudden

health crisis and those who are nearing the end of their lives.

The plans have been adopted by all healthcare providers in Sheffield, including GPs and Sheffield Children's Hospital. To get a ReSPECT plan for yourself or for your child, talk to your GP or another healthcare professional, such as a hospital consultant or nurse.

For more information, visit [www.sheffieldhcp.org.uk/what-we-do/integrating-care/delivery-groups/ageing-well/anticipatory-care/sheffield-respect-project](http://www.sheffieldhcp.org.uk/what-we-do/integrating-care/delivery-groups/ageing-well/anticipatory-care/sheffield-respect-project)

## **New participation group for young people**

SENDing Voices is a group for young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) aged 13 to 24 years in Sheffield.

They meet fortnightly on Wednesdays at 4.30-6.30pm, at Electric Works opposite Sheffield Railway Station. Young people can also join in online.

The purpose of the group is for members to talk about their experiences and share their ideas with decision-makers to help make SEND services better for everyone. It is a great opportunity to make new friends, learn new skills, boost your CV and join in with fun activities.

The group is facilitated by youth workers who have had training in supporting young people with SEND, mental health issues and neurodiversity. They don't have Makaton or BSL training. One-to-one support can be provided for short periods of time, but not on an ongoing basis.



**For more information** or to discuss your young person's needs, please contact Kerry by emailing [youth.voice@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:youth.voice@sheffield.gov.uk) or call **07391 739118**.



## Get discounts with **the Carer Card**

The Sheffield Carers Centre operates a Carer Card. It gives carers access to offers and discounts on a range of activities, products and services.

The reverse side of the card can be used to add details of two people who can support the cared-for person if the card holder is suddenly taken ill or involved in an emergency.

To get your Carer Card, you need to register with the Sheffield Carers Centre by completing this form: [www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk/forms/join-our-community-of-carers](http://www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk/forms/join-our-community-of-carers)

If you are already registered, call **0114 278 8942** or email [support@sheffieldcarers.org.uk](mailto:support@sheffieldcarers.org.uk)

## SEND provision to open at **Peaks Campus**

The Sheffield College is launching a new post-16 provision for young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) at its Peaks Campus, which is currently being refurbished.

The new provision, which is due to open in September 2024, will be aimed at students with SEND whose support needs cost at least £6,000 per year. These students will usually have an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan. However, those without an EHC plan can still apply and will be assessed by one of the college's EHCP Coordinators.

Students will be able to choose from a range of courses, which will be aimed at different abilities. All will focus on preparing young people for adulthood by helping them develop their life skills and employability skills. Most students will be working on pre-entry or level one programmes, with some working towards a Functional Skill or GCSE qualification where appropriate.

It is envisaged that students will progress onto a range of opportunities, such as provision at the Hillsborough Campus, mainstream study programmes, or supported work.

We have been working closely with the college to ensure that the new provision meets the needs of local families. This has included feedback from parents that the traditional college offer of three days per week is insufficient for many young people with SEND. We are pleased that from September 2024 onwards, all students on SEND-specific programmes at Peaks and at Hillsborough will receive four days of provision per week. There will be an optional fifth day of activities focussed on the further development of employability skills required for supported work.

### For more information please see:

[www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/news/peaks-campus-qa](http://www.sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/news/peaks-campus-qa)

or email:

[Rachael.dickens@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:Rachael.dickens@sheffcol.ac.uk)  
(Academy Director)

[Sean.farrell@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:Sean.farrell@sheffcol.ac.uk)  
(Head of SEND)

[Helen.price@sheffcol.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.price@sheffcol.ac.uk)  
(Head of Student Experience)

# Peer Support Service Update

## Our Peer Support Service continues to go from strength to strength.

The number of parents accessing the service is growing and we are currently expanding our team for the coming year with three new staff joining us after the Easter holidays. Our mission is to offer information, support, advice and guidance on all issues relating to special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

We continue to work closely with other services and to signpost to organisations who have expertise in particular areas.



All our current and new Peer Support Workers have lived experience of caring for a child with additional needs and a good knowledge

of both local and national services. They truly understand the challenges of raising a child with additional needs.

## Our Services



**One-to-one support** is available if you would like to have a more in-depth conversation about your situation and feel a longer session or series of sessions would be helpful. Call or email us to access support.



**Information sessions** are running in community venues across the city. We deliver sessions on a range of topics, including introduction to autism, demand-avoidant behaviour, autism and anxiety, exploring sensory needs, and many more. See pages 18-19 for dates of upcoming sessions. Additional dates will be added soon, so make sure you are subscribed to our email bulletins or follow our Facebook page! If there are any other topics you would like us to offer sessions on, please let us know.



**Opportunities for peer support** give parents and carers a chance to come together to talk and share their experiences. This includes time to talk in our information sessions, attendance at school coffee mornings, our Men's Wednesday Snooker group, parent support alongside children's group sessions, SEND groups for under-5's, peer support with a SEND focus in community groups, and more.

## Coming soon **Coffee & Chat**

Our coffee mornings are being relaunched in a new format called Coffee & Chat. These sessions will run six times a year in a community venue. They will provide an opportunity to get together over coffee and cake and to chat with our fantastic, very experienced volunteers. Parents will also be able to book a 20-minute appointment to discuss an identified issue with an expert

attending that session, e.g. a Speech and Language Therapist, Educational Psychologist, or Occupational Therapist. Sessions will be advertised in our email bulletins and on our Facebook page, and you will be able to book via our website.



## Support for dads and male carers

We are continuing to run our Men's Wednesday Group once a month on a Wednesday evening at the Stephen Harrison Snooker Academy. We would love more men to come along and benefit from such a friendly and welcoming group. Although meetings take place in a Snooker Academy, there is no pressure to play - you can simply sit and chat and enjoy a coffee. It can be daunting attending something new, but we've had really positive feedback from all who attend. If you are a male carer or know someone who could benefit from such a group, please encourage them to come along. The next sessions are on 15 May, 12 June and 17 July, all at 7-9pm.

*"I find the group a great place to chat with people who I feel are in the same boat as me (men carers). To speak in regard to any issues I have, knowing the group members may already have gone through and can advise. Can also find out about any resources available to help, and the venue is great. Ideal in regard to being relaxing, comfortable and a resource and information pool."*

**Get in touch** If you would like to know more about the service or wish to access support, you can do so in the following ways:

- **Call and chat to someone on our phone line.** You can ask a quick question or seek advice, guidance and signposting around a particular issue. Call us on **0300 321 4721** and select option 1 for our Peer Support Service. If we are not able to take your call, please leave a message and we will get back to you within a couple of days.
- **Email [peersupport@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:peersupport@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)** with a question or ask someone to call you.
- **Talk to a Peer Support Worker** if you attend a session or see them out and about.

### Small grants programme

We are teaming up with other community and voluntary organisations to expand the number of events available for families in the school holidays. Through our small

grants scheme, organisations can bid for between £500 and £1000 to run a parent or family event with the support of our Peer Support Team.

### Events so far this year

#### Air Haus

We were delighted to team up with ACCT to offer some super bouncy sessions for over 80 families at Air Haus. Sessions were held on 4th January and 15th February and were open to all ACCT families. Parents who attended also had time to chat with Peer Support staff, getting information and access to one-to-one support where requested. If you are a member of ACCT and would like to access a future event, please look out for the next date on the ACCT Facebook page and details of how you might apply.



#### Greentop Circus

In January we worked with Green Top Circus to offer an autism-friendly family circus and music event. At the session, twelve children and seven parent carers explored a range of circus and music activities. Peer Support staff were available to talk to parents and to offer information, advice and support where needed.



**If you belong to a voluntary or community organisation and would like to know more about our small grants programme, please get in touch by emailing [peersupport@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk](mailto:peersupport@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk)**



# SUPPORT GROUPS



## Support groups for parent carers in Sheffield

Thinking of joining a parent support group, but unsure which one is right for you? We've compiled an overview to help you decide.

**ACCT** are a local charity led by parents of autistic children and young people. They run several fun, accessible activities for children and young people each week. They also have a social group for young autistic adults, offer support for parents, and provide regular inclusive activities for the whole family.

**0114 223 0242 / 07527 824034**  
**enquiries@acctsheffield.org.uk**

**Autism Hope** are a support group for parents and family members of autistic children and young people of all ages. They are based in the North of Sheffield and meet weekly.

**07968 984179**  
**autismhopesheffield@gmail.com**

**Epilepsy Action** is the UK's largest epilepsy membership organisation. The Sheffield Talk & Support group acts as a support group to people with epilepsy, their families and friends; they also provide information and educate the public about the condition. The group meets on the second Thursday of every month at 7.15-8.45pm at United Reform Church on Norfolk Street.

**0113 210 8899 | iso@epilepsy.org.uk**

**Family Support Group** run free activities for children and young people (0-25 years) with a

learning disability and their families. Sessions take place on Saturday afternoons and currently include leisure swims and trampoline/rebound sessions at Hillsborough Leisure Centre, and Taekwondo at the English Institute of Sport.

**fsgswimming@outlook.com**

**Kids Together Club** are a parent-led support group for families of children with disabilities, their siblings and friends. They run two monthly groups at indoor playcentres (Buccaneer's Bay and Medieval Mayhem). There is no upper age limit.

**07884438008**  
**admin@kidstogetherclub.co.uk**

**SHASBAH** provides befriending and welfare support to everyone in Sheffield affected by spina bifida and hydrocephalus. They run a wide range of group activities and events for all age groups and provide specialist advice and guidance on benefits, education and health needs on a 1:1 basis.

**07752 665411 | info@shasbah.co.uk**

**Sheffield Autistic Society** is a local charity for people with autism and their families. They provide support and information and campaign for a better world for autistic people in Sheffield.

**philcooney99@yahoo.co.uk**

**Parents often feel a sense of relief when they talk to others who are facing similar situations; people who immediately “get it” in a way that friends and family members sometimes can’t. But support groups don’t just provide a sense of community; they are also a brilliant source of information. Often, a five-minute chat with other parents yields more useful information than hours spent trawling through websites or ringing up services.**

**Sheffield Carers Centre** provides information, advice, advocacy and support to unpaid carers in Sheffield. They run a range of support groups at various locations across the city on a regular basis. The groups are open to adults who care for a family member or friend of any age.

**0114 2728362 | [office@sheffieldcarers.org.uk](mailto:office@sheffieldcarers.org.uk)**

**Sheffield Deaf Children’s Society** provides support and impartial advice to families with deaf and hearing-impaired children in Sheffield, Rotherham, Barnsley, Doncaster, Chesterfield and the surrounding areas. They host a range of events and activities throughout the year, including a regular youth club and a baby and toddler group.

**[sheffielddeafchildrenssociety@gmail.com](mailto:sheffielddeafchildrenssociety@gmail.com)**

### **Sheffield Down Syndrome Support Group**

(SHEDS) is a support group for families who have a child with Down Syndrome and live in and around Sheffield. Their aim is for families to provide advice, support and friendship to each other and to exchange information on how to best support their children. They run monthly coffee mornings at The Burton Street Foundation and a weekly baby and toddler group in Greenhill.

**[downsyndromesheffield@gmail.com](mailto:downsyndromesheffield@gmail.com)**

**Sheffield Parent Carer Forum** (that’s us!) provides peer support and information sessions

for parent carers, as well as social events that the whole family can enjoy. We also gather parents’ views and represent them at meetings with the council, education settings and healthcare providers. For dates of upcoming meetings, please see pages 18-19.

**03003214721**

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

## **Online groups**

### **Sheffield and Surrounding Areas SEN**

**Support Group** is a closed Facebook group for parent carers - a safe place to have a moan, groan, celebrate triumphs and successes and ask for and offer advice. They have over 1,000 members. Join them at **[www.facebook.com/groups/1434263226822582](https://www.facebook.com/groups/1434263226822582)**

**STARS** is an informal, closed, caring WhatsApp peer community run by adoptive parents for adopters in Sheffield. They have over 200 members. To join, just email **[sheffield\\_stars@fastmail.com](mailto:sheffield_stars@fastmail.com)**

Please note: The information in this article is provided for reference purposes only. Inclusion in this article does not constitute an endorsement or recommendation by SPCF; nor does omission imply disapproval.



## Childcare funding for pre-schoolers with SEND

### Free Early Learning

Free Early Learning (FEL) is a government-funded programme that provides free childcare for pre-school children. It has been around for many years, and is currently being expanded to include more families. Whether your child is eligible for FEL depends on many factors, including their age and your income; please see our overview below. Free childcare places are available at approved nurseries, pre-schools, schools and childminders.

### Three- and four-year-olds

ALL three- and four-year-olds are entitled to 570 hours of free childcare per year. This is usually taken as 15 hours per week, for 38 weeks of the year. The entitlement increases to 30 hours per week, for 38 weeks of the year, for eligible working parents\*.

### Two-year-olds

Parents of two-year-olds can get 15 hours of free childcare per week (for 38 weeks of the year), if they receive certain state benefits – such as Income Support, Tax Credits or Universal Credit. Parents also qualify if

they are not eligible for benefits due to their immigration status but have limited income and savings.

From 1 April 2024, eligible working parents\* of two-year-olds also qualify for 15 hours of free childcare.

In addition, two-year olds are eligible for 15 hours of free childcare if they have an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan or get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) – this is regardless of their parents' income or benefit entitlements.

### Under-twos

From September 2024, all eligible working parents\* of children aged nine months to three years will be able to access 15 hours of free childcare per week, for 38 weeks of the year. This will increase to 30 hours per week from September 2025.

### More information

For more information about Free Early Learning and how to apply, please see [www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/fundedearylearning](http://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/fundedearylearning)

\*Eligible working parents are those who earn at least £2,167 every 3 months on average, if they are 23 or older (amounts are lower for younger parents). In two-parent households, BOTH parents must be earning above this threshold. This does not apply if one of the partners is disabled or has substantial caring responsibilities (e.g. receives Carer's Allowance).

### SEND funding for childcare providers

Childcare providers can access additional funding to support pre-schoolers with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This money is paid to the provider, not the parents. There are two sources of funding:

#### Disability Access Fund

This is money given to Early Years providers to help support children with SEND in their setting. Providers can claim an annual payment of £910 per child, for all children in receipt of DLA who are accessing any of the free early learning entitlements listed on the previous page. It's the provider who is responsible for identifying eligible children – so please make sure they know if your child gets DLA!

#### Early Years Inclusion Fund

Every local authority must have an Early Years Inclusion Fund to support Early Years providers in meeting the needs of individual children with SEND. In Sheffield, this funding is allocated using the Sheffield Support Grid - a local guidance document used by staff in settings and other professionals to ensure that children with similar needs get a similar level of provision.

### Looking for a toddler group for your child with additional needs?

We have an overview on our website: [sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/information/childcare/groups-for-young-children-with-additional-needs/](http://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/information/childcare/groups-for-young-children-with-additional-needs/)

### Direct payments for childcare

If you cannot find suitable childcare for your child, then you may be able to get a direct payment for childcare. This money can be used to employ a Personal Assistant (PA) to look after your child while both parents (if it's a two-parent household) are at work. It's based on the assumption that the PA will be paid the national minimum wage of £11.44 per hour; Sheffield City Council will pay £6.41 towards this as a direct payment, and the family has to fund the rest.

For more information, please see [www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer/help-with-caring/short-break-services-for-children-and-young-people-with-disabilities/direct-payments/](http://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer/help-with-caring/short-break-services-for-children-and-young-people-with-disabilities/direct-payments/)

### Get help

If you are struggling to find a suitable childcare provider for your pre-schooler with SEND, the 0-5 SEND Service may be able to help. If your child has a diagnosis of vision impairment, hearing impairment or autism, then you should contact the relevant support service instead. Please see pages 18-19 for contact details.

# Dates for your diary

## Information & booking

For more information and 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**

## May

Friday 3 May, 11am-1pm  
at Darnall Family Centre

### Information session: SEND and sleep

Learn about strategies to support children and young people with SEND who struggle with their sleep. **Booking Essential.**

Monday 13 May 10am-1pm  
at High Green Development Trust

### Information session: Neurodiversity and anxiety

This session will feature a presentation about anxiety in children with autism, ADHD and learning disabilities, followed by plenty of time for discussion. **Booking Essential.**

Wednesday 15 May 10am-12pm  
at Sheffield Mencap and Gateway

### Information session: Introduction to autism

For parents of children with suspected or recently diagnosed autism. Learn about the main traits, challenges and strengths associated with the condition. **Booking Essential.**

## May continued

Thursday 16 May 10am-1pm  
at Nexus, 300 Meadowall Way

### Information session: Introduction to demand-avoidant behaviour

Find out what demand-avoidant behaviour is, how it differs from PDA, and what it feels like for a young person to experience it. Learn what parents can do to reduce demands and reduce stress.

#### **Booking Essential.**

Thursday 23 May 10am-12pm  
at St Mary's Church

### Focus group on school transitions

Is your child moving from primary to secondary school in September? This meeting is a chance to talk through your hopes and fears and get ideas, strategies and resources to support your child's transition. **Please book your place.**

## June

Friday 7 June, 10am-12pm  
at Sharrow Community Forum

### Subgroup for adoptive parents and foster carers

For adoptive parents and foster, SGO and kinship carers of children and young people aged 0-25 years with SEND in Sheffield. Please join our group to give feedback on services and processes for identifying and supporting SEND in looked-after and previously looked-after children. No diagnosis required! **Please book your place.**



## June continued

Monday 10 June, 9.45-11.45am  
at Primrose Family Hub

### Information session: Sensory needs & behaviours that challenge

Learn about strategies and tools that can help children who struggle with sensory processing. **Booking essential.**

Monday 10 June, 7-9pm  
on Microsoft Teams

### Information session: Neurodiversity and anxiety

As above.

Thursday 13 June, 10am-1pm  
at High Green Development Trust

### Information session: Introduction to demand-avoidant behaviour

As above.

## July

Wednesday 10 July, 10am-1pm  
at Newfield Green clinic

### Information session: Introduction to demand-avoidant behaviour

As above.

Wednesday 24 July, 10am-1pm  
at Newfield Green clinic

### Information session: Neurodiversity and anxiety

As above.

## Events already booked up?

Don't miss out – join our email list! Sign up today by completing the membership form on our website [sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member](https://sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk/become-a-member) or at the back of this newsletter!

## August

Friday 30 August, 10am-3pm  
at Niagara Conference & Leisure Centre

### 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.

## Venue addresses

### St Mary's Church & Conference Centre:

Bramall Lane, Sheffield S2 4QZ

### Sharrow Community Forum:

Vincent Road, Sheffield S7 1DB

### Darnall Family Centre

563 Staniforth Road, Sheffield S9 4RA

### High Green Development Trust

The Campus, Pack Horse Lane, Sheffield S35 3HY

### Sheffield Mencap and Gateway

Norfolk Lodge, Park Grange Road, Sheffield S2 3QF

### Primrose Family Hub

45 Creswick Street, Sheffield S6 2TN

### Nexus

300 Meadowhall Way, Sheffield S9 1EA

### Newfield Green clinic

501 Gleadless Road, Sheffield S2 2BS

### Niagara Conference & Leisure Centre

Niagara Road, Sheffield S6 1LU

# Useful Contacts

<p><b>0-5 SEND Service*</b> Works with young children (0-5+) with additional needs both in their homes and in settings</p>	<p>0114 273 6411 0-5SEND.SupportService@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>0114 2412733 adhd.sheffield@family-action.org.uk</p>
<p><b>Autism and Social Communication Team*</b> Supports mainstream schools to meet the needs of pupils with autism and related conditions</p>	<p>0114 2506800 (helpline 1-4pm) autism.educationteam@sheffield.gov.uk</p>
<p><b>Becton Hospital and Outreach Team*</b> Provides education for children who are unable to attend school for medical or related reasons</p>	<p>0114 305 3121 jgibson@nexusmat.org</p>
<p><b>Child Disability Register</b> A local register of disabled children aged 0-25</p>	<p><a href="http://www.sheffield.gov.uk/childdisabilityregister">www.sheffield.gov.uk/childdisabilityregister</a></p>
<p><b>Children with Disabilities Team*</b> Social work team for children and young people with disabilities</p>	<p>0114 273 5368 fieldwork-cdtbs@sheffield.gov.uk</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>Deaf/Hearing Impaired and Vision Support Services*</b> Supports deaf / hearing impaired and visually impaired children aged 0-25 years and their families</p>	<p>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</p>
<p><b>Direct Payments Team*</b> Provides support, advice and guidance relating to direct payments for children</p>	<p>0114 273 5985 Existing Direct Payments: DirectPayments.ILFTeam@sheffield.gov.uk General enquiries: childrensdpenquiries@sheffield.gov.uk</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 General enquiries: educational.psychology@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>

<b>IPSEA</b> National charity providing free legally-based advice on educational issues for parents of children with SEN	<a href="http://www.ipsea.org.uk">www.ipsea.org.uk</a>
<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	<a href="http://www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer">www.sheffielddirectory.org.uk/localoffer</a>
<b>Opportunity Sheffield*</b> Employment and skills service helping to break down barriers to employment	0114 229 6168 <a href="mailto:opportunity@sheffield.gov.uk">opportunity@sheffield.gov.uk</a>
<b>Paces Sheffield</b> Runs a specialist school for children with cerebral palsy and other motor disorders, and a day service for adults.	School: 0114 2845298 <a href="mailto:office@paces-school.org.uk">office@paces-school.org.uk</a> Day service: 0114 5510419 <a href="mailto:darren.walker@pacsessheffield.org.uk">darren.walker@pacsessheffield.org.uk</a>
<b>Portage Home Visiting Service*</b> Home-visiting educational service for children under three with additional support needs and their families	0114 273 6411
<b>Ryegate Children's Centre</b> Assessment, diagnosis and therapy for children and young people with developmental and neurological problems	0114 271 7000
<b>SSENDIAS*</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	0114 273 6009 <a href="mailto:ssendias@sheffield.gov.uk">ssendias@sheffield.gov.uk</a> <a href="http://www.sheffieldsendias.org.uk">www.sheffieldsendias.org.uk</a>
<b>SEN Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SENDSARS)*</b> Deals with statutory assessments, EHC plans, annual reviews and specialist placements	0114 273 6394 <a href="mailto:sendassess&amp;review@sheffield.gov.uk">sendassess&amp;review@sheffield.gov.uk</a>
<b>Sheffield Carers Centre</b> Offers information, advice and a range of services for carers, including parents of disabled children	0114 272 8362 <a href="mailto:support@sheffieldcarers.org.uk">support@sheffieldcarers.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk">www.sheffieldcarers.org.uk</a>
<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, and those who are affected by familial substance misuse.	0114 258 4595 <a href="mailto:information@sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk">information@sheffieldyoungcarers.org.uk</a>
<b>Special Needs Inclusion Playcare Service (SNIPS)*</b> Supports children aged 5-18 years to access short break activities to give their parents a break from caring	0114 273 5368 <a href="mailto:SnipsBusinessSupport@sheffield.gov.uk">SnipsBusinessSupport@sheffield.gov.uk</a>
<b>Transport Services*</b> Provides transport services including home-to-school transport for pupils with SEN	0114 203 7570 <a href="mailto:transportservices@sheffield.gov.uk">transportservices@sheffield.gov.uk</a>

\* Part of Sheffield City Council

# 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...



Meet nine-year-old Hamlet, a baking aficionado whose culinary journey began just over a year ago. What started off as a joint undertaking with Daddy soon blossomed into a solo adventure.

In Hamlet's kitchen, there's just one rule: no grown-ups allowed! Except, of course, for cleaning up once the master chef has put the finishing touches to his creations.

Recently, Hamlet showcased his skills in his school's bake-off and was crowned master baker of his class. His entry, the spectacular "Duck Cake", wowed judges and classmates alike.

For Hamlet, baking is about more than just eating the end product. "What I like most is whisking, and licking cake mix off the beater," he admits.

So, does he have any tips for budding bakers? According to Hamlet, it's all about following the recipe and mastering the art of oven temperature. "Get the heat on the oven right," he advises, before adding, rather sensibly: "Bake with an adult until you can do it on your own."

Star of this issue:  
**Hamlet  
Higgins**



# 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



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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