

Bringing the local offer in Leicestershire to life

SEND NEWS

FREE

The SEN
Support
Handbook
is now live

see page 2



Produced by

A warm welcome to the fifth edition of SEND News

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▶ As we come to the end of 2020, it has been a year like no other and I would like to acknowledge that for parents/carers and children with SEND things have been particularly challenging. There has been a great deal of creative working to support children learning from home and to continue to support activity such as short breaks. As we move into 2021, I hope that much of what we have learned will continue to be useful in the future. Many of our services have continued throughout this pandemic, all have had to adapt and take different shape, but our officers have worked extremely hard to make sure we are providing a good service. Despite the pandemic a lot has happened in the last couple of months and I just wanted to reflect on some of that work.

In October, we submitted our written statement of action in response to Ofsted's report. We have since found out that this proposal has been accepted by Ofsted and can continue the good

practices, we are putting in place to improve quality of our service.

Our SEN Support handbook also launched in November, during which time it had been downloaded over 200 times. The handbook provides details of the support available for both parents and schools to assist children and young people and can be found on the **Local Offer website**.

We have been working closely with the Parent Carer Forum on processes such as the redesign of our new Education, Health and Care Plan and EHC Needs Assessment Request Form. The new documentation will be rolled out as new EHC Plans are issued and is clearer to understand and more directly reflect the child's or young person's voice and their aspirations of what they would like to achieve.

I would like to wish our children, young people and their families a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! ■

We want to hear your views

▶ Throughout December you can offer feedback on a variety of matters. These include, wrap around childcare, the Carers Passport, our Autism web page and the effects Coronavirus has had on education.

Please check the **Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum Facebook page** or alternately email

karen.hall@leics.gov.uk for more information ■

Parent Carer Forum

▶ Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum (LPCF) Steering Group is delighted to announce the recruitment of two professional Contact Associates to work alongside us to improve our governance and engagement processes prior to our Annual General Meeting, which is rescheduled to 27 January 2021.

This is an exciting time of change for our Forum. Our membership is growing. We know that many of you have important skills and lived experience which you want to give. We want to involve you every step of the way. Here are three things you can do right now:

- Encourage other parent carers to join LPCF and stay informed about our work. It's free.

- Become a parent carer representative and attend meetings alongside local authority and health professionals. Get in touch and we will reply with more information about the role, training, and remuneration.
- Register your interest to take part in a working group to review our constitution and election processes and to ensure that they are clear and meet the requirements of an expanding parent carer forum. The first step will be a Zoom focus group. Register your interest and we will put you on the attendance list (date tbc).

Leicestershire Parent Carer Forum is a group of parent carers of children

and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25 years and living in Leicestershire. We work alongside the professionals to improve the services our families need.

If you to help us gain a wider voice from parents/carers please contact us via email on info@leicestershirepcf.org.uk

Website leicestershirepcf.org.uk

Facebook page

www.facebook.com/leicspcf/ ■



LEICESTERSHIRE PARENT CARER FORUM
INFORMING INVOLVING IMPROVING

The SEN Support Handbook is now live

The SEN Support Handbook contains local information and guidance for schools/education providers, parents/carers and other interested parties about the support that is available to Leicestershire children and young people who have SEN or a disability.

▶ The Handbook includes important guidance for education providers on expectations about the use of Best Endeavours and Reasonable Adjustments to meet children's special needs and to support any disabilities. There are also links to useful information, legislation and an overview of school SEND funding. Sections include:

- The Local Offer
- The SEND Code of Practice
- Legislation
- Starting School and Transitions
- Best Endeavours and Reasonable Adjustments (BE/RA)
- Inclusion Services
- Support in the Early Years
- Identifying Health Needs
- Support in Schools
- Targeted and Specialist Support
- Whole School SEND Reviews
- Funding

- Transport Policy
- Other Support Agencies
- Best Practice

The handbook can be found on the **Local Offer website.** ■



Supporting children through performing arts

I am the parent of a high functioning autistic, ADHD complex 15 year old daughter.

▶ Feeling unsupported and isolated, all the school issues, discriminated & unfounded exclusions, the unfairness, hurt and loss of self worth, confidence, I was passionate about wanting to help other children & families.

Research & experience, I realised children with needs were drawn to creative & performing arts. I wanted to provide a genuinely positive, safe, inclusive & experienced environment for all children to enjoy being creative, whilst through this I could help with their personal development, social/emotional, coaching, mentoring & CBT and through role play to further embed into their subconscious mind.

Positive outcomes by each child who attended our holiday programme has been amazing! Book your FREE session / consultation now. ■



Parent volunteers as Cadet Leader in spare time

We'd like to say a big thank you to PC Matt Burton, his wife Sarah and their daughter Grace for their incredible volunteering efforts.

▶ On top of working full-time and caring for their autistic son, the family all still find time to support the Police Cadets.

Matt says:

 "I get a real buzz out of teaching the cadets about policing and helping them work towards a career in the police. Being a cadet offers young adults the chance to see that with the right attitude and direction, they can better themselves and have a good life and career."

 "As a father of a disabled child, I'm a big believer that every child, regardless of the barriers they may face, should be offered the same opportunities and I truly believe we offer that."

When Matt started volunteering four years ago, he enjoyed it so much that he persuaded his wife, Sarah, to sign up as a Cadet Leader too.

He said

 "We love it so much that we even use our respite care time for our son to attend Cadets with our daughter, it has become a family event for us."

Grace plans to join her parents as a Cadet Leader when she turns 18 and is hoping for a career with the force too. ■



What is the library like now?

Council-run libraries across the county reopened their doors for browsing again on 2 December, but what is it like visiting the library now?

▶ Booking an appointment is no longer required at most libraries, so visitors are able to pop in as normal during opening hours. There may be a short queue outside as we're still limiting numbers to maintain social distancing but staff will be on hand to welcome you to the library and let you in.

You'll be asked to sanitise your hands before entering and wear a mask inside the library, unless you are exempt. We're asking everyone to borrow books using the self-serve kiosks, to limit face-to-face contact and protective screens are in place. Find out more about what to expect when you visit the library.

Use a computer at the library
PC usage has also returned and you may book a one-hour slot at www.leicestershire.gov.uk/book-a-computer up to two weeks in advance. Computers and workspaces are cleaned in between sessions and only one person may use the computer during each session. If you're unable to book online, please ask a member of staff when you visit about booking a PC.

Click and collect

We know that some residents may still feel hesitant about visiting the library, in case of crowds. Our Click and Collect service enables those library customers to tell us their local library and favourite authors or genres. Librarians will then hand-pick a selection of books or audiobooks they think customers will enjoy and give them a call to advise a quiet time for collection.

For more information about Click and Collect, visit www.leicestershire.gov.uk/click-and-collect or call **0116 305 2695**.

Everyone is a Hero!

Children can now join The Reading Agency's Winter Mini Challenge (1 Dec - 15 Jan) to work towards a reading goal, find a whole host of fun activities, and unlock a virtual badge and certificate once they've completed the challenge.

To take part, children of any age just need to read or share three or more books of their choice. These can be books from home, eBooks or eAudiobooks, or books they've borrowed from the library. We've even got Winter Grab Bags available to help them meet their goal!

Sign up at: www.wintermini.org.uk

Winter Grab Bags

Our librarians have grouped books together by genre to help young readers choose a selection of surprise books to take home with them!

This proved really popular during half terms, so we are now providing Winter Grab Bags in our sixteen council-run libraries, request yours using the Click and Collect service or visit the library during opening hours.

The Winter Grab Bags can be used to help children complete the Winter Mini Challenge. Take a chance with our children's mystery book bags and discover some new authors.

- 6 mystery books in every bag
- Suitable for all ages from babies to primary school
- Free activity sheet in each bag
- Click and Collect or visit the library to choose a Grab Bag
- Please remember to bring your child's library card with you. ■

Sam Bailey lends her voice to adults with learning disabilities

▶ X Factor Winner Sam Bailey has given her support to adults with learning disabilities to record Do They Know Its Christmas. The song introduced by Sam, has been produced in conjunction with Meadow Barn View, a skills centre for adults with learning disabilities based in Whitwick, Wigston Amateur Operatic Society and disabled adults throughout the County who have used sign language to interpret the song.

The song and accompanying video can be viewed on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zORqyRSVfI4&feature=youtu.be>.

Funded by the National Lottery and supported by Leicestershire County Council, the song is part of a bigger project called MY MIND. This is a support package of online activities, loaned out ipads and a new App designed to help adults with learning disabilities who have become isolated as a result of Covid 19.

Recent figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) have revealed that disabled people, while only making up 16% of the population accounted for 6 out of every 10 deaths between March and July. These figures signal that disabled people have been disproportionately affected by the experience of lockdown and the pandemic.

Speaking about her involvement Sam Bailey said, 'I am very very excited to be involved in this, we just wanted to make people happy and put a smile on people's faces.'

Owner of Meadow Barn, Lynda Toon MBE, said

 'Its been a difficult year for all of us, but especially so for adults with learning disabilities. They need routine and structure to their lives and struggle to thrive when that is removed. When we told people that Sam Bailey was supporting this song, we were overwhelmed by the positive

response from people across the County wanting to be involved. It has been wonderful to work in partnership with Leicestershire City and County Council colleagues in Health, Social Care the Voluntary, Private Sector, carers, local communities and people who use services in creating this song. It is just one piece of the jigsaw in our collaborative approach to breaking down barriers and developing creative ways in which people with learning disabilities and/or autism and their carers can come together to be heard...Every Voice Counts! A very big thank you to everyone.' ■



SEND Joint Commissioning Strategy Consultation

▶ Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Councils and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCG's) for the area are engaging on a new, draft Joint Commissioning Strategy for SEND.

The strategy contains a high-level vision for joint commissioning 'we will work together across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland to improve the outcomes for children and young people with SEND' and a set of priorities

for the focus of joint work in the coming 3 years.

Views are being sought from anyone interested in the strategy and joint working around SEND, including children and young people, parents and carers, schools and colleges, early years settings and employers.

We expect to have more conversations once this strategy is in place, asking people to help us shape and co-produce services as

we work through our action plan.

You can look at the draft strategy and share your views on the vision, the priorities and the actions necessary to take these forwards by going to the consultation website at www.leicestershire.gov.uk/have-your-say/current-consultations/send-joint-commissioning-strategy-consultation. The survey will be live from Monday 7 December 2020 until Friday 29 January 2021. ■

Health for under 5s

▶ Health for Under 5s has been developed further recently to include a local area, offering localised information and advice to support families in LLR. We now have a service finder map that can be searched by location and filtered by stage, for example, pregnancy, baby, toddler etc. Users can then filter by service type, such as Breastfeeding Peer Support, Family Support Services (children's centres), Health Visiting support, Foodbanks and out of hours healthcare. This section also offers information about what Healthy Together offers families universally across Leicester Leicestershire and Rutland, and gives information about local specialist services.

<https://healthforunder5s.co.uk/leicestershire/services/>

The new area also provides local advice from professionals, such as local safeguarding processes, the Lets Get Talking Programme and video antenatal sessions called 'Bumps to Babies' developed by Healthy Together Practitioners. This area will also house local events, <https://healthforunder5s.co.uk/leicestershire/local-advice-and-events/> ■

Health for
Under 5s

