



NEWCASTLE PARENT, CARER FORUM NEWSLETTER



Winter 2023

Welcome to our Winter Newcastle Parent, Carer Forum Newsletter. We will be sharing Summer, Autumn, Winter and Spring editions to show what support is available in Newcastle and bust some myths.

Thank you for your feedback on the autumn edition, we've been asked to cover a few topics in this newsletter:

- Newcastle Autism Hubs offer - Pre and Post Diagnostic support for autistic children and young people.
- What is the RISE Team and how can it help?
- What does a good Education, Health and Care Plan include?
- Understanding funding for education to meet the needs of children with special educational needs.
- Hiring a Personal Assistant Toolkit.
- Navigating the Local Offer.
- Accessing Covid and Flu vaccines for children and young people.

There are also a few things we'd like to share with you:

- Quality of Life at Home Toolkit from Ambitious about Autism.
- Sensational Parenting - Support into your local children and families hub.
- Evenbreak - Job opportunities for people with disabilities.
- Support for Kinship Carers.
- The Sunshine Fund.
- Understanding respite needs for parents/carers of children with challenging behaviours - Survey Link.
- Makaton for beginners course.
- Invite for feedback on Newcastle's SEND Services.

E-Mail us at contact@newcastlepcf.co.uk

You can find copies of our previous newsletter on our page on the Local Offer [here](#)



Newcastle Autism Hubs - North East Autism Society

What if I can't get to the hub in my area?

Families are able to access any of the autism hubs across the city, regardless of where they live in Newcastle.

What if I can't travel to the hub?

The hub can carry out home visits in the following situations:

- When travelling to a hub is a barrier.
- When attending a hub would cause stress and anxiety.
- When it is useful to meet the child and observe in the family environment.
- When completing a joint visit with another professional.

Working Together.

NEAS works closely with the local authority, NHS and the voluntary sector to influence and advocate on behalf of families.

How can the hubs help me?

Each hub offers parents/carers;

- Workshops on communication, toileting, sleep, sensory needs and emotional wellbeing.
- Peer support from families with lived experience.
- One-to-one sessions if needed.
- Support in meetings such as EHCP and Team Around the Family.

What is an autism hub?

It's a safe, supportive space where families can get information support and guidance to help them with some of the challenges they might be facing.

Who can go to the hubs?

Any parents or carers in Newcastle who would like advice, information and support. Your child does not need a diagnosis for you to be able to attend the hub.

Reaching out

Fortnightly hubs are being run in local mosques, interpreters are available if needed. Spaces must be pre booked via Kerrie Highcock (details below).



Feedback from parents about the hubs



Nunsmoor Centre

NE4 5AH

1st Wednesday of the month

Galafield Centre

NE5 1LZ

2nd Wednesday of the month

Byker Sands

NE6 2FF

3rd Wednesday of the month

Fawdon Community Building

NE3 2SN

4th Wednesday of the month

Workshops: 10am -12 noon 1:1
Appointments: 9am - 4pm

Spaces must be pre booked via Kerrie Highcock.



0191 410 9974



kerrie.highcock@ne-as.org.uk

Sensory Issues - Do you wonder why your child does...this?



My child can't sit still, they're always jumping and spinning themselves.



My child doesn't like being in busy places.

My child won't let me brush or cut their hair.

My child becomes upset around some noises, like hand dryers.

My child doesn't like the feeling of tags in their clothes.



Nunsmoor Centre

NE4 5AH

7th February 2024

10am - 12 noon

Galafield Centre

NE5 1LZ

14th February 2024

10am - 12 noon

Byker Sands

NE6 2FF

21st February 2024

10am - 12 noon

Fawdon Community

Building

NE3 2SN

28th February 2024

10am - 12 noon

Newcastle Occupational Therapy Team are running introductory sessions for parents/carers exploring all things sensory.

The sessions will be running out of the Children and Families hubs in Newcastle and are available to any parents or carers who might want to find out more about why their child might struggle in some situations.



For further information or to book onto the sessions please contact:
nuth.thesensationalthinkingproject@nhs.net
or call
0191 282 1281



Navigating the Newcastle Local Offer

What is it all about?

Newcastle's [SEND Local Offer](#) website is the “go to” place where information and advice about local services for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their families can be found.



Can it be translated?

As part of the website's accessibility features, it uses a software called ReciteMe. If you click the listen and translate button at the top of every page, you will have the option to hear the page read aloud. It can also be translated into a wide range of languages and the background colour and font can be changed, details on how to do this are included in the presentation we have on our page linked below.

What kind of information does the Local Offer have?

The Local Offer has all the information, advice and support you might need, together in one place. It has sections on things like:

Activities and Short Breaks



Autism and ADHD



Education and Employment



Planning for Adulthood (Next Steps)



Childcare for children with SEND



Social Care



Money



Transport



Health



Mental Health



A guide for how to use the Local Offer.

We have put together a Powerpoint slideshow which gives people an overview about using Newcastle's Local Offer website. It is available [here](#) and can be found under the **Documents** tab on the right hand side of the page.

Key pages and quick links.

Here are some of the most frequently looked at pages on the Local Offer. They can be saved onto your favourites on your phone or device so you can find the information you need easily.

- [SEND Local Offer | Newcastle Support Directory](#)
- [Getting Started with the Newcastle Local Offer | Newcastle Support Directory](#)
- [SEND Services contact details | Newcastle Support Directory](#)
- [Newcastle City Council SEND Services | Newcastle Support Directory](#)
- [SEND Portal | Newcastle Support Directory](#)

Local Offer development work - Working on improving our Local Offer.

Work is currently happening to improve the information on the Local Offer as well as moving our current website to a newer, easier to navigate platform. We are keen for parents and carers to be involved in this work, to get it right.

We would like parents and carers to get involved by helping us evaluate our existing website in preparation for moving to a new platform so the information we have moving forward is the best it possibly can be.

Please complete this [short survey](#) to help the project team collect as much feedback as possible to inform the website development.

If you would like to get involved, please get in touch by contacting us at: localoffer@newcastle.gov.uk



Hiring a Personal Assistant

A personal assistant is a paid care worker who is employed directly by somebody requiring care, who will support them to live more independently. Many people prefer to organise this support directly to have the consistency of one-to-one support from somebody they can get to know.

A personal assistant can help with things like:

- Personal care e.g. getting dressed
- Making meals
- Taking medication
- Tidying up
- Using transport to get out and about
- Going out and socialising



Skills for Care has a **Employing a PAs Toolkit** which takes you through step by step how to recruit and manage a PA and the responsibilities as an employer.

The guide will take you right the way through the process from writing a job description, legal responsibilities as an employer to managing and developing a PA. Each section of the toolkit is also available as an easy read booklet.

The RISE Team - Mental Health Support in Schools

RISE Newcastle Mental Health Support Team works with children and young people aged between 5-18 to support them with their mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Their team works into schools/colleges and are qualified to deliver interventions for low mood and anxiety.

RISE lead on a whole school approach delivering a 12-week programme within schools and colleges across Newcastle and support the Senior Mental Health Lead on a whole school approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Please note they only accept referrals for support from the schools they are delivering in. You can watch their promotional video [here](#) which explains in more detail how they work.



There is information, advice and guidance available on their [website](#), [YouTube channel](#), [Instagram](#) and [X](#).

Support for Kinship Carers

Kinship offer support to grandparents, siblings, aunts, uncles and family friends who step up to raise children when their parents can't. They aim to help all kinship carers to get advice and information as well as emotional support through peer support groups. You can access their website [here](#).



Quality of Life at Home Toolkit

Ambitious about Autism have created the Quality of Life at home toolkit. They have worked with parents of autistic children to identify the everyday challenges families are struggling with.

They then created a series of 5 short videos looking at:

- Understanding behaviour
- Emotional needs: autonomy
- Emotional needs: relatedness
- Emotional needs: competence
- Family conflict



It's recommended you view the videos in sequence, 1-5 and you can find them [here](#).

Who pays for it?

- Self funded
- Through a personal budget (direct payment) from the Local Authority.
- Through a personal health budget (if health funded through children's continuing care or s.117 mental health act)

You can read more about Personal Budgets [here](#) on the Local Offer.

Evenbreak - Job opportunities for people with disabilities

Evenbreak is a website where disability confident employers advertise jobs.

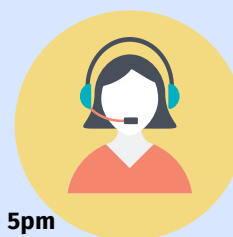
The Job Board can be found [here](#). and there are already 158 recruiters registered, with 17,000 jobs being advertised.



Winding down of the Rescare befriending service

In our Autumn edition we wrote about the Rescare helpline and befriending service. Unfortunately this service will be winding down, however the helpline will remain open until at least March 2024.

The Rescare helpline offers advice on things like Residential Care, education disputes, funding, care packages and more.



Available Monday - Friday, 9am - 5pm
Contact on: 0161 474 7323

Accessing Covid and Flu vaccines for children and young people

We have received information from Cockerton Pharmacy regarding the vaccine clinics they are running in Newcastle.

Cockerton Pharmacy
141 Beaconsfield Street
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE4 5JP
Telephone: 0191 273 3030



The pharmacy is running bespoke clinics for covid/flu vaccines for children and young people. They are aware that some children may struggle with busy environments and are able to accommodate appointments at quieter times, it just needs to be flagged by parents.

Prior to the appointment if you are worried at all, the pharmacy welcomes any phone calls to discuss your concerns.

The National Booking System closes on the 15th December and the 119 line closes on 22nd December, from that point appointments will be available via walk-ins.

Understanding respite needs for parents/carers of children with challenging behaviours

The Newcastle Parent Carer Forum is working with Newcastle health commissioners (part of the North East and North Cumbria NHS Integrated Care Board) on a project to make improvements in the way families of children with complex and challenging behaviours are supported.

We are keen to understand the specific needs of parents/carers of young children who regularly display these challenging behaviours, and what they would need to enable them to take a break from caring, to get some respite, space to relax, or just to get some time to do something else that is important to them. This will enable the project team to build respite support into the developing offer for supporting distressed children and their families.

Please complete the survey [here](#) if you meet the following criteria:

- **You are a parent/carer of a child/children under the age of 8**
- **Your child/children regularly displays violent/aggressive behaviours towards you/others**
- **You live or your child attends a childcare/education setting in the Newcastle local authority area**

Thank you for your support with this important piece of work. We appreciate these are really difficult issues to talk about and we are grateful for your involvement to try and make improvements in services for children and families. Please contact Jenny Hicken (PCF steering group member) via jennifer.hicken@nhs.net if you have any queries about the survey or the wider project.

Makaton for Beginners

Gain confidence and skills needed to sign key sentences using Makaton sign and symbols.

Monday 15th January
12:30pm - 2:30pm
8 week course

For more information or to book a place contact Emma on 0191 226 0754 or emma@riversidechp.org.uk

Riverside Community Health Project, Carnegie Building, Atkinson Road, BENwell, NEwcastle Upon Tyne, NE4 8XS



The Sensational Thinking Project

The Sensational Thinking Project has developed and delivered comprehensive training packages available to parents, schools and practitioners on sensory processing.

They have created the Sensory Differences Explained video which you can view [here](#).

Understanding funding for education to meet the needs of children with special educational needs

Top Up Funding for schools is agreed locally and is given to schools under 3 main headings.

Element 1: An amount of money for each pupil in the school.

Schools get most of their funding based on the total number of pupils in the school, the amount varying from one authority to the other. This makes up the core budget for each school and is used to make general provision/support for all pupils in the school, including those with special educational needs.

Element 2: The School's Notional Special Educational Needs budget.

Every school receives an additional amount of money to put in additional support to meet children's special educational needs.

This money is called the Notional SEN Budget because no-one tells the school exactly how they should spend the money.

The schools can spend it in the way they think is best, however, they have a duty to **identify, assess and make special educational provision for all children with special educational needs.**

The government has recommended that schools should use this budget to pay for up to £6,000 worth of special educational provision to meet a child's needs.

Element 3 - Top Up Funding

If a school can show that a pupil with special educational needs requires more than £6,000 worth of support, they can ask the local authority for top-up funding to meet that cost.

Requests for this funding are taken to the **Educational Health and Care Plan Outcome Review Panel.** This panel meets every Wednesday and will decide when this funding is appropriate.

Improving SEND Services

In our autumn newsletter we shared the **Newcastle SEND Strategy** and as part of this strategy the Local Authority are committed to improving how they communicate with all children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and their parents and carers.

They are asking for feedback on their services. If you have any comments about SEND Services in Newcastle please send your feedback to localoffer@newcastle.gov.uk

Please note, if your query relates to:

An EHC Plan, please e-mail: SENCASEWORKERS@newcastle.gov.uk

SEND Transport Service, please e-mails: SENDtransportservice@newcastle.gov.uk

WE WANT YOUR
FEEDBACK!

The Sunshine Fund

The Sunshine Fund is a local North East charity that provides specialist and adapted equipment to children aged 0-19 living with disabilities, additional needs, chronic or terminal illness.



The kind of equipment they can fund are not available through the Local Authority, schools or the NHS, but are specific pieces of equipment that enrich quality of life for families.

Families can apply to the fund by filing in the application form on the website [here](#).





Navigating your child's Education Health and Care Plan - What to look for in a good plan

An Education Health and Care Plan should lay out your child's needs and what support (commonly referred to as provision) will be put in place to help them achieve their goals. Invision360 have made some examples of what to look for in each section.

Section A

A good section A summarises the views and aspirations of a child. Wherever possible it should include information gathered directly from the child or young person.

Destiny (14 years old) would like people to know that she loves listening to and making music and that she is a member of her school's "rock band". She would like to learn to play the keyboard and to write her own songs.

Section B

A good section B summarises a child or young person's special educational needs. Their current level of development should be clear as well as the difficulties that they experience and the impact that their needs have on their day to day life.

Oliver (7 years old) can focus and maintain attention. However, he struggles to maintain this on his own and he is liable to make noises and move around a lot in class without supervision. This can be disruptive to his own learning and that of others.

Section C

A good section C should set out any health needs a child has and the practical implications / impact on their day to day life, not just the diagnostic label.

Mary (4 years old) has a hearing loss that is moderate in both ears at mid to low frequencies and profound in both ears at high frequencies. She wears post aural (behind the ears) hearing aids but her hearing levels are unstable. This means she can often miss important information and affects her interactions with her peers and family at home and in nursery.

Section D

A good Section D provides information about a young person's social care needs, and the impact these needs have on their day to day life.

Blade (10 years old) is subject to a Child in Need Plan due to concerns that his development will be impaired without support from Local Authority Services. Blade is currently in receipt of support from the Youth Offending Service to help tackle the reasons he's been involved in criminal activity.

Section E

A good section E should have outcomes listed which are **Specific Measurable Achievable Relevant Time-bound** and there should be one relating to every area of identified need covering education, health and care. It should clearly show how people will know the outcome has been achieved.

By the end of KS1, Shelia (6 years old) will be able to express her preference when offered a choice between two activities.

Section F

In a good section F it should be clear how each type of support being put in place helps the specific outcomes in the plan or helps the achievement of the child's aspirations.

It should say clearly what needs to be provided, how often it will be provided, and who will deliver it.

Joe (8 years old) will receive a 30 minute session twice a week focussing on developing his social use of language. The sessions will be delivered by a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT). The session programme will be developed under the direction of a Speech and Language Therapist (SLT) who will train the Teaching Assistant (TA) in delivering the sessions. An SLT and Joe's teacher will review his progress on a termly basis and adapt the programme accordingly.

Section G

In a good section G it should be clear how each type of provision contributes to specific outcomes.

Ethan (9 years old) will have a physiotherapy programme developed by his therapist for use in school in advance of the start of Year 5. Within the first week of Ethan starting Year 5, school staff will be trained in the programme by the therapist to help Ethan improve his co-ordination at school. The programme will subsequently be reviewed at the beginning of every half term by the therapist.

Education Health and Care Plans - More info

The Newcastle Local Offer has a dedicated page to information on the Education, Health and Care Plans and requesting an Education, Health and Care needs assessment which you can see [here](#).