

PODS Summer NEWSLETTER

JULY 2019

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A Message from the Team



A massive sunny welcome to all our families old and new.

We are fast approaching the School Summer Holidays which can be a time of mixed emotions for many of us, however we are all hoping for some lovely weather, maybe not as hot as last year and some quality family time.

We have got the year off to a flying start with 3 large workshop events covering children's emotional resilience, SEND update and Transition to Employment. We have also trained new Sleep Practitioners, held a Lego therapy pilot scheme plus lots of small activities and sessions, we even squeezed in a visit to meet the Queen.

Last year was our 10th Anniversary and we were delighted that many of you joined us to celebrate and mark this huge milestone. We are now well underway planning for the future to ensure that there are many more years to come, with some exciting developments on the horizon.

Our workshops and events this year have been more popular than ever to the point we have had to increase capacity at each one. Everyone seems to have adapted very well to the new booking systems and this is allowing us as an organisation to plan more effectively for the events, so thank you for your support.

Family groups are continually being accessed by more and more families and we are delighted to be seeing many new faces coming along. The Wacky Warehouse session is particular popular and early booking is strongly advised. Thursday evening group has taken on a new twist with different activities being tried monthly, these have received fantastic feedback. So far, we have had Tai Chi, Dog Racing, Cake Decorating and Fish & Chip Bingo, if you have any ideas of different activities we could try we would love to hear them.

Jayne and her Parent Reps continue to ensure all our parent/carers voices, opinions and thoughts are heard at the highest possible level, which ultimately pave the way for better services and opportunities for our children and young adults. A massive thank you to them for their continuing dedication and time, you really are making a difference.

Shana and her team of befrienders continue to bring that vital 1-1 to support to families whom are going through a challenging point in their journey. They are also running many mini workshops on hot topics to try and reach and support as many families as possible. Well done to all the Befrienders it's a emotionally difficult role to fulfil and you all do it amazingly.

Kerrie continues to work extremely hard and is the lady behind all of your ebulletins, updates and this amazing Newsletter amongst other things. Thanks Kerrie, for doing such a fabulous job.

Elaine is busy planning all the upcoming events and day trips alongside her Fundraising team. She would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of the volunteers as without you we would not be able to bring so many activities to you all. A special thank you also needs to go to Val and Alice who always go the extra mile and attend many Funday events across Telford and give up many of their weekends. We are always looking to develop and grow the existing team of volunteers to help out at events and fundraising activities, please contact Elaine if you're interested in helping elaine@podstelford.

Finally, we hope you all have a lovely Summer Holiday and look forward to seeing you throughout the year at our many family groups, daytrips and of course our biggest ever Picnic in the Park.

The PODS Team

Participation Report from Jayne Stevens

Hope everyone is well. I'm writing this update in the first week of June – it's 'Volunteer's Week' so I'm delighted to say a big thank you to all the volunteers I have had the pleasure to work with over the past 12 months.

Some of the meetings my volunteers are involved with include Autism Working Group, Child and Family Board, Aiming High Board, Child Development Centre, Early Years work, Transition, Preparing for Adulthood, Ican2 and short breaks, Local Offer and Communications groups, Carers Partnership Board and Aiming High for SEND Board, the Joint Commissioning workstreams and of course our links with the National Network of Parent Carer Forums through attendance at regional meetings.

Wider work and involvement is with the Stepping Stones group, the Shining Stars group (check out page 19), or helping us to work on our events or part of our fundraising team.

I would like to personally thank and acknowledge the following team members who have been a massive support: Tina, Simon, Kerrie, Elaine, Shana, Uma, Sara, Sarah R, Karen, Sarah, Liz, Keiron, Val, Alice, Julia, Annette, Charity, Zoe, Sarah Y, Deb, Sarah P, Moira, Tracey; and of course to all of you – our wider parent carers who have all provided us with feedback and information and shared experiences that we use to make Telford & Wrekin a better place for our children and young people.





Our work, alongside many other voluntary organisation was further recognised on the 2nd April with an invite from Her Majesty The Queen to a reception to mark the Centenary of the NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations). It was an honour to be greeted by HM The Queen and to talk to her about the importance of local communities supporting each other, and also talk to other voluntary groups from around the country.



Our Family Groups & Events

Our family groups are as popular as ever, and we've heard from some great guest speakers over the past few months - including a presentation for Speech and Language therapy, Exploitation Awareness and Library Services. In between the more serious subjects we've had plenty of time for fun and giggles - Easter bonnets and crafty activities along the way:

We've been raising awareness at the Balloon Festival more recently and it was lovely to meet up with some of our families and introduce PODS to new families too.



Early Help Teams (Strengthening Families)

We've continued our work with the 'Early Help' team which has recently changed its name to the Strengthening Families team. A new tool has been developed to support the wider "family conversation" and covers a wider range of areas including siblings, mental health (for parent and for child), financial support and key areas relating to wider family.

Having been to a recent Early Help Network meeting they are looking to develop more training to support families and whilst this is not directly for families with disabled children, some

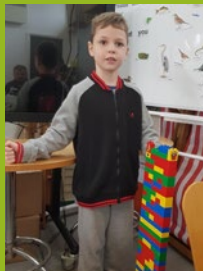
of the information may still be relevant. This is in early stages of development and we are working with teams around how this may be rolled out.

At time of writing we are due to attend awareness training of the new assessment tool, so we can report back on this at our Family Groups.

You can make contact with the team by getting in touch with Family Connect in first instance via

01952 385385

Family Group & Events Gallery



Aiming High for SEND (0-25years)

The aim of the Aiming High Board is to collate information and reports from all teams involved with SEND. We have two seats on this board which I have attended with a Parent Rep (rotated based on availability).

SEND Workforce Development – covers SEN Support, Transition between key points (throughout school and out of school into further education), School Autism Strategy. A Provision matrix for SENCO's has recently been shared which covers areas that schools are expected to provide. This went out for consultation earlier in the year and was shared at the SEND Event in February.

EHCP Pathway – Annual reviews are currently a key area for focus. Some families have reported delays, but at the time of writing (June) we hope that this matter has been resolved. We understand trials have taken place with new 'live amendments' and that the new system regarding strikeouts/italics has been a pilot change. We are interested in hearing your views about this please as it's important that families understand the process.

High Needs Funding Block – this focusses on the resource bases and a new leaflet has been designed and co-produced which provides more information. The link is available on the Local Offer website and here is a snapshot of the Frequently Asked Questions: http://www.telfordsend.org.uk/localofferservices/info/1/home/86/specialist_provision_hubs?fbclid=IwAR3aTg7D8YUOynLQ8n6PPE9wxNkoQ-br7ZqSMSXnv-7AkIWq6d-wzKdEfKY



FAQs

- Where will the specialist provision hubs be located?
- Where will the hubs be located in the schools?
- Where will children be on roll and what uniform will they wear?
- What is the age range of the hubs?
- What is the entry/exit criteria into the hubs?
- What is the pathway into a specialist resource hub?
- When will the hubs open?
- How many children will attend the hubs?
- Is there an opportunity for children who currently attend a special school to move into a hub provision?
- Some mainstream schools have already developed 'hub' provision. Does this new provision replace what those schools are doing?

Information for parents

Parent Leaflet

Communication and Local Offer

– this group focusses on anything to do with communication, newsletters, bulletins and also the SEND newsletter – there's one for professionals and one for parent carers – both can be found on the Local Offer website. We also discuss the young person's forum – Shout Out for SEND. These meetings incorporate all key areas – social care, education, health and IASS also join us.

Preparing for Adulthood

– our ongoing work in this area focusses at the moment on agencies involved in a

young person's transition to adulthood and accompanying services. Continued scoping is currently taking place, as are discussions relating to the Care Act responsibilities.

Joint Commissioning - We have worked with commissioners on identifying where information is collected from for making decisions and identifying needs of local families. This has led to discussions about what is needed by families and highlighted gaps where services may need to be commissioned differently in future.

There are four key areas that come under the remit of the Joint Commissioning work:

Community Wellbeing with more of a focus on providers working to make their services more inclusive of a wide range of needs. We are working with local providers to understand the needs of our families – asking questions around their understanding and encouraging them to be more accepting;

Community based care and support that offers more support closer to home, working with community providers, social enterprises and individuals to actively involve our families, their children and young people.

Independent Living Skills with consideration around what support looks like and how effective this is in developing housing schemes, but also wider skills such as travel training, living and life skills.

Provision of services to help people with high and complex care needs thrive in their community, working closely with education and health teams. Where residential care is needed more work is being done with local providers so that families can live closer together.



We have recently been involved in a series of workshops that included senior leaders and Directors of the council, Parent Carer representatives from our steering group and teams from Council for Disabled Children. Summary of the work that has been undertaken is below. This workstream to develop this has recently begun and will see our involvement as a Parent Carer Forum gathering momentum as we move towards a truer and strong co-production model of working:

“Since the inspection Telford and Wrekin Council have been working with its strategic partners to address the identified areas for development, including exploring new opportunities to jointly commission services for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities aged 0-25 and their families. The Council for Disabled Children has been commissioned by the Department for Education to provide information, advice and support to local areas involved in projects to enhance integrated working and joint commissioning, as part of delivering the Government’s reforms for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25 and their families. This can also include offering local areas bespoke consultancy support. Telford and Wrekin Council approached the Council for Disabled Children to provide some independent, external advice and support on reviewing the current position in relation to joint commissioning and to facilitate a multi-agency discussion on how this could be progressed over the coming months”.





PODS and Face 2 Face Family Groups

From: 21/11/2018–03/06/2019

Family Groups Held: 32

Attendees: 529

PODS FORUM TRANSITION TO EMPLOYMENT

"TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"



ATTENDEES: 64



HELD ON: 02/04/2019

VENUE: Ramada Hotel Telford



COST

Cost of holding the Transition to Employment Conference per head: £26.95



DONATIONS

Total raised at the Transition to Employment Conference: £11.78 on the day/£81.00 on Eventbrite
Thank you!



KEY STATISTICS

- 82% Felt more supported
- 79% Felt less isolated
- 82% Thought it was inclusive enough
- 100% Enjoyed the event

for more info www.podstelford.org

PODS FORUM BLINKS WORKSHOP

"TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"



ATTENDEES: 40



HELD ON: 30/01/2019

VENUE: Ramada Hotel Telford



COST

Cost of holding the Blinks Workshop per head: £40.54



DONATIONS

Total raised at the Blinks Workshop: £71.00
Thank you!



KEY STATISTICS

- 100% Enjoyed the workshop
- 100% Felt better informed
- 100% Felt more supported
- 100% Would be happy to pay a small fee for similar workshops

for more info www.podstelford.org

PODS FORUM SEND WORKSHOP

"TOGETHER WE CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE"



ATTENDEES: 37



HELD ON: 27/02/2019

VENUE: Ramada Hotel Telford



COST

Cost of holding the SEND Workshop per head: £28.78



DONATIONS

Total raised at the SEND Workshop: £119.22
Thank you!



KEY STATISTICS

- 92% Felt better informed
- 88% Felt more supported
- 96% Felt they had been given an opportunity to 'Participate'
- 100% were happy with the venue

for more info www.podstelford.org

Transition to Employment

We were delighted to welcome our key note speaker Barry Jones who spoke with enthusiasm and a can-do approach for young people moving into work. What was particularly inspiring on this day was they video messages from young people who had found success in employment (or training towards it). We also heard from good practice that we are exploring further, from local people involved in the process and from a lovely young lady with her assistance dog and the importance of this in support to live as normal life as possible.

Blinks Books

Emotional Support Workshop

We were delighted to welcome Andrea Chatten to our first workshop of the year, where we were able to demonstrate the work of the Blinks Books and the importance of supporting our children with their emotions:

Even more amazing is that these books have now been purchased by the Local Authority for loan from ALL libraries, with main libraries also having a reference copies that will be available. We also have a copy in the Hub at Stepping Stones for you to have a look at.



SEND Workshop

Our SEND Workshop heard an opening address from Heather Loveridge (Assistant Director for Education and Corporate Parenting) on the importance of an education for all and listening to parent carers and also the young person's voice; we had a local update regarding SEND including the provision matrix and SEND Hubs from Simon Wellman – Service Delivery Manager for SEND, We gave an update on our local parent carer forum work and heard from IASS Team regarding their work in supporting families through the Education process. We had an update from Autism Education Trust news and also news regarding NASEN Whole School SEND work that is being led locally

NB: These are snapshots as we are limited on space, but further information, photographs and video of these workshops is currently under development and will be available on our website.

The Local Offer and SEND Newsletters

I wanted to bring your attention to the SEND newsletters that provide key information direct from the Local Authority (and we discuss as part of the Comms meetings) - we would recommend that you check out the Local Offer website at www.telfordsend.org.uk

It's really important to us that we continue to provide feedback on the Local Offer as this is a key area of information for our families and we are keen to get it working the best it can be.

A recent snapshot survey demonstrated to us that more work needs to be done to raise awareness of this website to families, but also with professionals and teams who support our families. Out of the responses we received half of families had heard of it and used it, with some finding what they needed, approximately a quarter of families had never heard of it, and another quarter had tried to use it but couldn't find what they needed. We are collating the feedback and further conversations about this with through the relevant meetings and continue to develop the offer.

SEND
Telford & Wrekin Local Offer

Links Newsletters FAQs Contact

News feed Events feed

Homepage
SEN Support
Inclusive School Forum
SEND Strategy
What is an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan?
EHC Needs Assessment Request Form and Guidance for Educational Settings
EHC Plan Banding Levels
Single Route of Redress
Special Provision Plan
Specialist Provision Hubs
Accessibility Strategy
School Admissions
Ofsted CQC Local Area Inspection
Personal SEN Budgets
Preparing for Adulthood
SEND Reforms and the Youth Justice System
SEND Newsletters
Local Offer Annual Report
Early Years SEND Support
Early Years Inclusion Panel

Welcome to Telford & Wrekin's Local Offer which aims to provide information on what services you can expect from local agencies including education, health and social care. Simply click on the age range that applies to you, or your child if you are a parent or carer.

SEND Local Offer for 0-5 years old
SEND Local Offer for 6-10 years old
SEND Local Offer for 11-15 years old
SEND Local Offer for 16-25 years old
SEND Local Offer for All ages
Find a school
Choose an option
GO
Add your service to the Local Offer
Have your say - Feedback Form

ican2 Short Breaks provide support for disabled children.

Improving How We Support Children on the Autism Spectrum

Telford and Wrekin has become an Autism Education Trust Hub, this means we have a licence to deliver the AET Schools and Early Years Programmes in our schools and settings. The AET is a national research based programme which was developed in partnership between universities, the voluntary sector (including National Autistic Society), local authorities, schools and people with autism; it is supported by the Department for Education. The AET offers face to face training and practical resources for teachers and other practitioners working in schools and early years settings with the aim of helping



'Children and young people with autism to receive an education, enabling them to reach their potential'

AET comprises 6 training modules and tools (some of which are free of charge) to support whole school development and personal professional development. In Telford we began rolling out the programme in November 2018 and so far about half of all schools in Telford have received whole school Tier 1 training 'Making Sense of Autism' and the first Tier 2 training course is taking place this month (June). Our aim is that as a minimum all Telford schools receive Tier 1 training. The feedback from schools on the quality of training has been positive.

Has your child's school received AET Tier 1 training yet and do they have staff booked on to attend a tier 2 course?

For more information visit  www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk

Have you heard of the EarlyBird Programme?

The EarlyBird programme is for children under five years is a support programme for parents and carers, offering advice and guidance on strategies and approaches for living with young autistic children. The programme aims to support parents in the period between diagnosis and school placement, empowering and helping them facilitate their child's social communication and appropriate behaviour in their natural environment. EarlyBird Plus is for parents whose child has received a later diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder and is aged over four and under ten. The programme addresses the needs of both home and school settings by ideally training parents/carers together with a professional who is working regularly with their child, the aim being that a child will be given consistent support. We work to build both parents' and professionals' confidence and encourage them to problem solve together. Parents are, of course, able to attend the programme without a supporting professional if their school are unable to release a staff member. EarlyBird Plus uses the established EarlyBird framework of teaching about autism before considering how to develop communication or manage behaviour. The programme consists of eight group sessions, and two home visit weeks. A follow-up session is held three months after the programme. We work with between three and six teams (parents and a local professional) at a time. Two places are allocated to each family with a third available for their local professional or another supporting adult.

The EarlyBird programme is delivered by two NAS licensed trainers who are speech & language and education advisory specialists.

For more information visit  www.autism.org.uk/earlybird

If you have a child 0-10years you may be able to enrol on the EarlyBird or EarlyBird Plus programme?

The EarlyBird programme is usually recommended to parents by health professionals such as paediatricians, health visitors or speech and language therapists and educational practitioners such as educational psychologists, advisory teachers and early years setting staff. Alternatively, if you feel you would benefit from the support the programme provides, you can also choose to refer in person. To register your interest, please download and complete the quick application form from



www.telfordsend.org.uk/localofferservices/info/2/0-5_years.

Hello, It's always great to share an update with you regarding the things that the Face 2 Face scheme have been involved with and up to.

Face 2 Face

Parents supporting Parents
of disabled children

Parent Carer Workshops

We have run several Parent Carer Workshops recently 2 Sleep workshops where we looked at a range of areas across Sleep, Common sleep issues, Bedtime routines, Bedroom environment, Sleep strategies, Sleep cycles, Sleepy foods, The bedtime box and much more.

A session on Picture Exchange Communication System where we went through phases 1-6 how to set up to start implementing PECS at home and also looked at visual scheduling.

We have also held two Makaton Lets Learn and Share together Sessions – where we have covered the alphabet, greetings, learning signs for rooms and objects at home, signs for what you take on a day out, transport we use and signs for what we can see, also back to school signs.

We are planning a Story Massage workshop that we shall be arranging shortly to share the methods and way you can promote positive touch and relaxation by incorporating a story alongside massage.

Feedback from workshops we have delivered:

“Well laid out workshop and important information shared esp bedtime box and sleep foods”

“Welcoming, friendly, supportive. Lots of information, helpful and useful tools to try. Brill Thank You!”

“Learning new skills to help with our child, well done great workshop”

“Was a great workshop, some new tips for me to try and booked onto the next one”



Befriender Support

Our 1-2-1 Befriender support continues offering emotional and practical support out in the community. With Befrienders supporting families to make and how to use visual aids such as, Now and Then boards, morning routines and scheduling, also sharing sensory calming activity ideas, supporting parents to make Alert Cards, Story massage and PECS support directly in families homes. We also facilitate our Face 2 Face Family Groups each month that run bi-monthly across each of the 5 different locations in Telford, Admaston House, Hollinswood Community Centre, Dawley Town Hall, our evening Activity based session and also the Wacky Warehouse exclusive session. We have held busy half term and holiday sessions, where we had lots of family fun sowing sunflower seeds, decorating cakes, making pipe cleaner monsters, Easter crafts, flossing! (the dance craze – yes the kids had us up having a go) Bubbles and lots more.



Information Hub Drop In

Don't forget about our weekly drop in sessions at the Information Hub in Stepping Stones (room just off of the main waiting room) where we have a parent carer resource library, visual resources to look at and software to support you designing and personalising your own. I am there between 12noon - 2.30pm

Visits

We have recently been invited to visit a support group that the fostering team have formed to talk about the support we are able to offer foster carers and the Hearing Aid clinic where we spoke to parent carers the communication practical support we are able to give around visuals, PECS and Makaton.

Then there was the Balloon Festival at Telford Town Park, even though it was windy and we had to spend much of the time holding down the leaflets we still managed to reach out to new (to us) parents and carers and let them know that they aren't alone and we have a whole community here waiting to welcome them. Even got a couple of tight hugs when we mentioned how we offer sleep support, unfortunately sleep for some parents feels like a bit of a myth. Don't you worry we can help with that!



National Volunteers Week

June 1st – 7th saw National Volunteers Week, where it's always a pleasure to be able to hang out the flags and show gratitude to the wonderful team at Face 2 Face that offer support out to our community.



Sleep Show

Sarah, Amy and myself went down to London to attend the Sleep Show which was very informative and gave us lots more of the science technical stuff behind sleep and the impact of sleep deprivation. Enabling us to strengthen the support and knowledge we can share locally.



Team Building Day

The Face 2 Face Team had our team building day that they had decided they wanted to focus around self-care, well 'team care' actually and we visited a spa for the day in Nottingham. Day in day out the team advocate that parents look after themselves, so it was lovely to be able to make this a time they took their own advice.

 **Face2Face Telford and Wrekin**  **face2facetelfordwrekin**

Make sure you follow us on Facebook where over the summer holidays we will be posting simple craft activities or easy bake idea each day that hopefully will give us all a little inspiration to stop anyone getting bored. Also pop over and follow us on instagram.

Sleep Practitioners working with you and your family

I'm very pleased to be able to share that we have 2 of our Befriending team as well as myself accredited sleep practitioners trained by the children's sleep charity.

We have been now offering 1-2-1 sleep support which involves collecting sleep history from parents, reviewing sleep diaries and then writing personalized sleep programmes to fit the individual family dynamics.

The sleep practitioner then keeps in touch with family offering ongoing support and encouragement, as well as adjusting and making any tweaks to the sleep plan needed to set the family up to succeed.



What our Practitioners say

"Supporting families in Telford to get a good night's sleep. This means so much because what comes after a good routine is a good night's sleep to for everyone. It brings balance in other areas that families may be struggling with. Hearing feedback on this is great but to see a particular family blossom is such an achievement for me"

"It's very rewarding to help a family who has a child with sleep problems. The positive impact it has on the whole family when a child sleeps well is amazing to see. From improvements in behavior and the families, wellbeing to parents who are better able to deal with the challenges of raising a child with additional needs. The feedback from families I have worked with has been great and I am proud to have helped them achieve success"

Feedback from a Family

"We found it helpful as Z's bedtime was getting later and later and with his behaviour becoming more and more challenging, we needed to focus on getting bedtime re-established. Sarah our sleep practitioner worked with us and did a sleep programme that included an hour 'bedtime time'- including a snack and we started a bedtime box - this particularly works for us Zach thrives on the focused time and activities and games that we put in it for him to choose.

We found that Z was going to bed and asleep before 8pm instead of 10-11pm, and he was less challenging in the day. Unfortunately, we are struggling with the lighter nights but hopefully working with Sarah we can find ways to combat this, the difference before the clocks changed is even more noticeable now that he's getting less sleep again!"

Lego Therapy Construction Club Pilot

With 2 of our team trained in Lego Based Therapy a club was set up by Uma and myself as a pilot to work directly with children after giving parents and carers an overview into the theory of and outcomes we work towards with Lego Based Therapy.

We ran the pilot for 11 weeks, starting each session with sharing emotions and how we are feeling and thinking about why we might be feeling that way, recapping on group rules that we all formed together during session 1 and then moving onto the main body of the session working in teams of 3 with each child taking on one of 3 roles The Engineer, The Supplier and The Builder we looked at the responsibilities of each role and what we

needed to communicate, listen and practice to get stronger at.

At the end of the 11 weeks we wrote an overview assessment to share with each parent that covered the outcomes we were working on and how much they had achieved against those.

It was lovely to be able to share the successes they had made and an absolute pleasure to see the children grow, from walking in the door on the first session looking nervous and anxious to blossoming into very confident communicators and Lego creators. Building on their skills and forging friendships over the course of the programme.

The children told us ...

"I want this to carry on for a million years

"Can we come back when you start lego

"I don't want it to stop, I'll be sad next Tuesday"

Parents feedback...

"My son learnt how to work in a team, wait patiently for his turn and also how to acknowledge each others achievements"

"Thank you ladies, he is loving this group and it's so lovely to see his confidence grow. He thoroughly enjoys this little group, he comes away so proud of himself"

"Thanks to you both, she had a great time and is looking forward to returning next week, she said Uma is so lovely"

"He had a lovely time, thank you he didn't stop talking all evening



Parent Carer Wellbeing and 'Self Care'

Let us help you look after YOU!

So what is 'self care'?

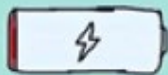
"Self-care is any activity that we do deliberately in order to take care of our mental, emotional, and physical health. Although it's a simple concept in theory, it's something we very often overlook. Good self-care is key to improved mood and reduced anxiety. It's also key to a good relationship with oneself and others"

Taking care of all the aspects of a parent carers daily life – medical appointments, school meetings, the battles for services and appropriate support as well as the guilt we put on ourselves of not ever doing 'enough' whilst trying to manage work and other family responsibilities is not for the faint hearted.

It can be so easy to put ourselves and our wellbeing on the back burner. But we need to rethink and ensure we put our needs as a priority as well, I know this is difficult and just doesn't sit right initially (I'm still trying to get this right myself, our son is 21 and I recognise I'm still a way off yet) because we put our children and young people's needs above our own. However, we have to keep plugging away at this, it's important - not just for us but for our children too.

Ensuring we spend time on our own wellbeing has a direct impact on how well we cope and respond to the challenges daily life throws our way. If we want to do our best for our families, we need to look after ourselves, so they get the best version of us. "Parent carers who take care of themselves and give themselves an occasional break are better able to take care of their children"

So, with that in mind I've compiled a mini guide to hopefully help a little.



**YOU WOULDN'T LET THIS
HAPPEN TO YOUR PHONE.
DON'T LET IT HAPPEN TO
YOU EITHER.
SELF CARE IS A PRIORITY.
NOT A LUXURY.**



Top 6 Self Care Ideas

1.

Choose something that you're going to savor today - taking a shower, walking, reading a celebrity magazine, etc. "Savor" it instead of just "doing" it.



2.

Follow the "rule of three": always be consciously aware of 3 things that you're looking forward to.



3.

That old cliché about laughter being the best medicine rings true; it really does have a striking impact on your mood, laughing away your stress and seeing the funny side of life will help you keep parenting in proportion.



4.

Indulge in a little Micro pampering, doesn't have to be a mani-pedi or massage (although don't say no if offered!) could be as simple as a extra nice shower gel, bathbomb or even taking a moment to lovingly apply some hand cream is enough to give us a boost.



5.

Many of us have a shot at surviving on coffee, biscuits or indeed marmite crisps! But we really need to think about how to nourish our bodies if we're to have a healthy mind. It can be easy to forget to eat properly as we are dashing from one thing to another and working down our 'to do list' but try to give yourself a target of how many glasses of water to drink during the day, making sure we start the day on a healthy breakfast is another biggie.



6.

Getting involved in a crafting project is a excellent self care activity. It's well researched about the effects that art and crafts can have on stress levels. So whether it's a little mandala colouring, needle felting or even a DIY project sometimes it does us good to get lost in creativity.





Mind Full, or Mindful?

Mindfulness

What can it give to me?

With regular practice of mindfulness exercises, rather than being led on auto-pilot by emotions influenced by negative past experiences and fears of future occurrences, we harness the ability to root the mind in the present moment and deal with life's challenges in a clear-minded, calm, assertive way.

Where and how to find Mindfulness during the day?

Why not try these

Mindfulness, the art of grounding yourself in the here and now – can be difficult to make time for when your mind is always on your child's needs.

Shared from Mind.org

Here are a few exercises you could try. You don't need any special equipment:

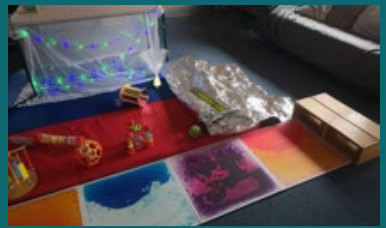
- Mindful eating. This involves paying attention to the taste, sight and textures of what you eat. For example, when drinking a cup of tea or coffee you could focus on how hot and liquid it feels on your tongue, how sweet it tastes or watch the steam that it gives off.
- Mindful moving, walking or running. Notice the feeling of your body moving. You might notice the breeze against your skin, the feeling of your feet or hands against different textures on the ground or nearby surfaces, and the different smells that are around you.
- Body scan. This is where you move your attention slowly through different parts of the body, starting from the top of your head moving all the way down to the end of your toes. You could focus on feelings of warmth, tension, tingling or relaxation of different parts of your body.

Gratitude

How taking a moment to find snippets can be the perfect end or start to the day. Studies show people who keep gratitude journals sleep longer and experience higher quality sleep (something no one's ever going to say no to!) and writing in a gratitude journal only takes a few minutes. Before you go to sleep, have a go at jotting down three things you're thankful for. Might be simple things, like how the sun was shining through the bathroom window this morning, or the daisies that you noticed whilst waiting at the traffic lights, or some milestone or something else you want to celebrate. It doesn't matter, simply reminding yourself of the things you have to be grateful for can help you feel good about life.

Shining Stars

Shining Stars is a voluntary parent led play group, in Telford, for children under 5 years old with additional needs. It's a place for parents to get support, advice, make friends and to meet others in similar situations. It is run by four volunteer parents that have children with additional needs so have lots of experience and knowledge and an understanding of the isolation and the issues and concerns that parents may feel.



We are Tina, who has a 7 year old son with complex medical needs, autism, global developmental delay, peg fed and other issues. Karen has a 6 year old daughter with Down's syndrome, Uma has a 7 year old son with autism and Emma has a 5 year old son with autism and global developmental delay.

Max Card

The Max Card is designed to make days out more financially accessible for foster families and families of children with additional needs. Families simply show their Max Card upon entry to a venue in order to obtain free or discounted admission.

The scheme is designed to help these families save money on great days out - locally and throughout the UK - at castles, zoos, bowling alleys and more.

www.mymaxcard.co.uk/ for more details.



The Max Card is available from PODS family groups and events at a cost of £3.00 each. A new batch of Max Cards have just been received - please join us at a family group if you wish to buy one.

When you have a Max Card, you can also get a Dine Card which offers great discounts at thousands of restaurants across the UK. To get your Dine Card, all you need to do is:

- Go onto the Max Card website: <https://mymaxcard.co.uk/dine-club/>
- Fill in the Online Form, you will need your Max Card number.
- Download the app to your phone and log in.

Funky Friday Disco

We're hearing great things about the Funky Friday Disco over in Newport - it's on third Friday of EVERY month for anyone aged 16+ and their parent and/or carer:

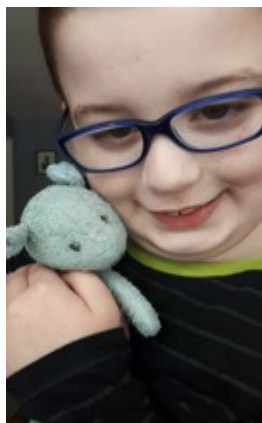


A Mum's Story... Teddy and his Best Friend Toby

My name is Lucy Trower and I am a Mum of two children, Toby, 7 years old with autistic spectrum disorder, moderate learning disability and attention deficit disorder and Isabelle, 6 years old with autistic spectrum disorder.

Toby was diagnosed at the age of 2 years old and it was difficult to explain to our younger family members that Toby was a little different but also special. I searched for a book I could use to help explain how Toby felt about particular things but couldn't really find anything.

So I decided to have a go at writing my own book. I wanted the illustrations to speak for themselves and didn't want it to overload in information for little minds.



When Toby was born we bought him a little blue teddy. We didn't realise that teddy would become Toby's most treasured possession (yes even more important than his ipad!), so I used the idea of Teddy and Toby to make it personal to us and sent my short story off to the publishers (Austin Macauley Publishers). I couldn't believe it when I received a letter saying they wanted to publish the book. I was so proud of myself and of course of Toby & Isabelle.

I want to try and help others explain some of the traits of autism but also to spread some awareness if I can, into schools, clubs, groups... anywhere really, where others can learn more about autism, accept autism and recognise that although different, children with autism are not less! The book can be ordered from Austin Macauley Publishers, Amazon, Waterstones and other online Bookstores.



www.austinmacauley.com/book/teddy-and-his-best-friend-toby



Short Breaks @Derwen



"Right from the beginning, staff were lovely and friendly, ensuring they had plenty of information regarding Amy's needs. I would certainly recommend Short Breaks @Derwen to other families. These are the words of a parent whose daughter has now accessed Short Breaks at Derwen College, near Oswestry, on three separate occasions; enjoying the over-night experience of being away from home and spending time with peers of her own age in a fun environment with plenty of activities organised on and off site.

Short Breaks @Derwen offers young adults with special educational needs and disabilities a holiday experience away from home, where they can enjoy activities with other like-minded young people. Guests have the opportunity to take part in activities, sports, trips and develop independence skills, all with the specialist support of trained care staff. Short breaks offer guests a change from their daily routine and give parents and carers a break from the demands of their role; caring - even for someone you love - can be an exhausting experience, which can leave you little time for yourself or other members of your family.

Short Breaks respite are suitable for young adults aged 18 and over who have a range of learning difficulties and disabilities. Guests will be supported by specialist care staff, and will be assessed to ensure the correct level of support is given. Derwen is aware that it can be hard to entrust the care of a loved one to others, and every effort is made to make the process as simple as possible. Derwen College has a 'Good' CQC rating which reflects the high standards of care and good practice offered. Families are invited to view the house and to meet with staff. Specially trained care and independence support workers, take time to find out about each guest, their interests and needs; each stay can then be tailored to include

the best plan of activities for individual guests. Short Breaks is open for 50 weeks of the year, closing for only two weeks each Christmas. There is no limit to how often, or for how long you may wish to stay with short breaks.

The Short Breaks House is modern and spacious, with six individual, en-suite bedrooms. Hoists are available for those who require them. There is a fully equipped kitchen and dining area, and meals are bespoke to guests' preferences and needs. Laundry facilities are available for those who wish to use them. There is also full use of a communal lounge area with TV and WiFi, and a garden for guests to enjoy. Guests can take part in a range of activities and trips to local attractions. Daily activities may include; swimming, basketball, use of the gym and football. Day trips are organised to the beach, theme parks, shopping, bowling and cinema. Parent and guest feedback for the short breaks facility has been overwhelmingly positive indicating a clear need for quality respite for young adults in the Midlands.

Parent of Guest A said "A Short Break @Derwen gives A the opportunity to have some time away from us with people of her own age in a structured and supportive environment. It also gives us as a family some time when we can have a break from the caring responsibilities and some down time. "For us, the primary reason for accessing short breaks is for A as she has very limited time away from us. We want her to develop more independence with the aim of eventually moving into supported living. She has a lot of fun with people of her age and is kept busy. She seemed to develop confidence and was a lot more willing to do things herself on returning."

01691 661234
shortbreaks@derwen.ac.uk

Mark Taylor Support Ltd

Mark Taylor Support Ltd is a provider of specialist support for children, young people and adults with a disability in Telford and the surrounding areas. We are dedicated to working closely with service users and their families to provide highly personalised, flexible, safe, outcome based support. We will support service users to access new experiences, learn new skills, access social interaction opportunities and increase confidence all while promoting free choice and independence.

We aim to provide services such as but not restricted to;

- 1:1 Support & 2:1 Support – support to access social activities, education and training settings and more
- Flexible service user led Small Group Support i.e. 4 service users : 2 support workers – promoting social interactions while exploring new experiences in the community
- SOCIAL16+ Project – providing a platform via small group support for service users 16 years and over to form and maintain positive peer relationships and friendships while promoting independence and self-confidence within the local community.
- Jumpin' Wednesdays @ Airea 51 – Group sessions to a maximum of 8 service users with supervision, 1:1 and 2:1 support options.
- Local Activity Based Overnight Residential Opportunities – minimum 16hrs personalised, activity based support programmes including an overnight stay within the Telford Area.
- Weekend Residential Opportunities – 48hrs weekend residential trips with venues to include Pioneer Centre @ Cleobury Mortimer, Alton Towers Resort and Chester City Break (including Chester Zoo visit and more).
- Life Skills Project – Small group Life Skills Project to focus on individual needs whilst developing independence through life-long learning and community integration.
- Alternative Education based support programmes

We are also keen to work with services users and families to offer new, bespoke support packages, individually designed using a person centred approach. These packages will aim to challenge the status quo, and offer new exciting options to meet service user needs and respond to identified gaps in service.

We would welcome any questions and enquiries from service users, families and professionals.



**'Recognise Disability
Emphasise Possibility'**

✉ enquiries@marktaylorsupportltd.co.uk

🖱 www.marktaylorsupportltd.co.uk

📱 **MarkTaylorSupportLtd**

Face 2 Face
Parents supporting Parents
of disabled children

PARENTS
OPENING
DOORS
PARENT CARER FORUM



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL



PODS
BIGGEST
EVER

Mobiloo
available
throughout
the day

**OPEN TO
EVERYONE**

Picnic IN THE Park



MONDAY 5TH AUGUST 2019

10AM-4PM AT ADMASTON HOUSE, ADMASTON, TF5 0BN

part of a celebration of Telford's Community

Lots of **FUN** activities, workshops & attractions
including a Gaming Van | Quad Bikes | Bouncy Castle | Go Karts | Science
Workshops | Bubble Football | Glitter Tattoos | The Owl Man

PICNIC LUNCHES, ICE LOLLIES & CAKES FOR SALE

**Come along and join in the fun, which is made possible thanks to
Telford & Wrekin Council's Community Events Grant.**

*This is going to be our **Biggest Picnic in the Park** to date, we have a wide variety of activities and events planned, with something for everyone. We are looking forward to bringing our community together for a truly inclusive fun day. A huge thanks to all our volunteers who have helped make the day possible and to the Council for the funding.*

Elaine Pearce
Event organiser

Please park in the car park opposite Admaston House
Company/Charity number: 1150871



DATES for your DIARY

**COME AND JOIN US AT ONE OF OUR FAMILY
GROUPS THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER**

FACE 2 FACE FAMILY GROUP

Friday 26th July from 9.30am-11.30am
Dawley Town Hall (opposite Langley School/
CAMHS) New Street, Dawley, Telford, TF4 3JR

FACE 2 FACE FAMILY GROUP

Wednesday 21st August from 9.30am-11.30am
Hollinswood Community Centre, 7
Downmead, Telford, TF3 2EW

WACKY WAREHOUSE GROUP

Sunday 28th July from 9.30am-11.00am
Wacky Warehouse, Bridge Builder Pub, Wrekin
Retail Park, Arleston, Telford, TF1 2DE

WACKY WAREHOUSE GROUP

Sunday 25th August from 9.30am-11.00am
Wacky Warehouse, Bridge Builder Pub, Wrekin
Retail Park, Arleston, Telford, TF1 2DE

PODS FAMILY GROUP WITH BEAM

Wednesday 17th July from 9.30am-11.30am
Hollinswood Community Centre, 7
Downmead, Telford, TF3 2EW

PODS FAMILY GROUP

Friday 30th August from 9.30am-11.30am
Dawley Town Hall (opposite Langley School/
CAMHS) New Street, Dawley, Telford, TF4 3JR

**PLEASE LOOK OUT FOR MORE FAMILY GROUP DATES ON OUR
WEBSITE EVENTS PAGE AND OUR FACEBOOK PAGE.**



**PARENTS
OPENING
DOORS**
PARENT CARER FORUM

Jayne Stevens

☎ **01952 271532**

☎ **07775 342092**

✉ **info@podstelford.org**

🖱 **www.podstelford.org**

📘 PODSForumTelford
🐦 PODSTelford

🏠 **PODS (Parents Opening Doors)**
P O Box 772, Telford,
Shropshire TF7 9FD



Face 2 Face
Parents supporting Parents
of disabled children

Shashama Weare

☎ **07557 130 091**

✉ **Face2Facepods@hotmail.com**

📘 Face2FaceTelfordandWrekin
🐦 Face2Face T&W
📷 face2facetelfordwrekin

🏠 **C/O Parents Opening Doors,**
P O Box 772, Telford, Shropshire
Tf7 9FD