



*All children and young people will be happy, healthy, safe and reach their full potential, supported by their families, friends and the wider community*

## Welcome to Shropshire SEN News April 2017

### Updates

In the previous newsletter we reported on a number of projects that we are supporting to provide additional specialist provision for children and young people across Shropshire.

Following the success of Acorns Centre in Oswestry, Woodlands School are looking to develop a similar provision in the south of the county. A number of potential sites have

been identified and are currently being investigated with a final decision expected shortly.

You can find out more about this provision at [www.woodlandscentre.org](http://www.woodlandscentre.org)

It was also reported that Shropshire Council were supportive of a Free School bid being submitted by Shrewsbury Academy Trust to create a school for children with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) who are

unable to access their education within a mainstream environment. The provision is intended for children from key-stages 2 to 4. Unfortunately the initial bid was unsuccessful with the Department for Education requesting additional clarification around a number of points. A core group of representatives have met to discuss the options and will be resubmitting the bid shortly.

### Person Centred Approaches in Shropshire

Following the introduction of the Children and Families Act 2014 Shropshire schools were introduced to the concepts of person centred approaches and how these can be implemented in schools. Shropshire SEN team have encouraged and reinforced the implementation of person centred reviews across all settings within Shropshire through SENCo network meetings and other correspondence.

Whilst there is evidence of much good practice across Shropshire, we believe that there is a need to develop greater consistency in the approach and encourage schools to embed person centred approaches into their practice.

Schools and colleges have been offered free one day training with 80 settings attending so far. Feedback states that 50% of delegates rated the training 'Very Good', 47% 'Good' and 3% 'Satisfactory.' In summary the elements of the training that were most valued were the:

Resources and tools  
Networking opportunities  
Re-affirming of best practice

Knowing what to expect from schools as practitioners/parents  
An overview of person centred approaches

Evaluation comments made about the training were that it offered:

**"An excellent overview of person centred approaches."**

**"Improved my knowledge – first time I'd heard of it."**

**"Feeling more confident about what we are doing."**

**"I like the person centred review idea and will be trying this in the next review meeting."**

**"Just knowing support is available by email."**

**"The importance of One Page Profiles and the impact that person centred approaches can have for all children."**

To help us monitor the impact that the training has had, parents and carers have been requested to complete a short questionnaire following the annual review of their child, which is to be returned to the SEN Team in the pre-paid envelope provided.

# News From the Shropshire SEN Team

## How well are we doing?

In order to inform our processes and enable us to further improve the service that we offer, we are requesting that parent/carers complete a simple questionnaire at the end of the education, health and care needs assessment process. The questionnaire is distributed along with the draft EHC plan and will provide valuable feedback to enable us to develop our practice to best

support the needs of children and young people with SEN and their families.

In the short period of time that we have been circulating these questionnaires we have received 14 returns.

The questions are scored on the following scale;

Strongly agree = 5  
 Agree = 4  
 Neither agree or disagree = 3  
 Disagree = 2  
 Strongly disagree = 1



Our findings, so far, are presented in the table below;

Questions	Average Score
Staff from the SEN Team kept you sufficiently informed during the assessment process.	4.4
Is the paperwork clear and easy to complete?	4.5
The local authority strives to be person-centred. How well do you feel we achieved this?	4.6
If you used the Local Offer, did you find the information regarding the EHCP assessment process useful?	4.6 (5 returns)
Overall, were you pleased with the service and support you received?	4.5
Do you think that your views and aspirations are appropriately reflected in the proposed plan?	4.6

There is also a chance to add additional comments.....

"We are really grateful for the opportunity to have our voices heard in the new EHCP, however we found quite a crossover in some of the questions and not much space to write (about a very complex character!)... We do find all the jargon baffling ...! We have very little personal contact with the SEN team, although on the occasions when we do make contact folk are lovely :)..."

## The number of new EHCPs issued within a 20 week timescale – latest figures

The SEN Team work hard to achieve the 20 week timescale for issuing an EHC plan from the point at which the request to assess is received by the Local Authority. During 2016 82.6% of all EHC plans were issued within 20 weeks and this increases to 96.6% with exceptions (exceptions apply when the local authority are waiting for information from another agency such as health or where schools are closed during the summer holidays which means that the LA are unable to gather further information from the school in order to inform the plan).

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# News From the Shropshire SEN Team

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## Developing Specialist Provision in Shropshire

**Every child deserves the best possible start in life and the support that enables them to fulfil their potential'** (Statutory Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage, para 1)

In Shropshire we recognise that 'Person Centred High quality teaching' is key to children's learning and development and forms the basis for any additional or different provision for children with Special Educational Needs and / or a Disability (SEND). High quality teaching is based on the highest expectations for individual children, draws on what parents, carers and staff know about children's learning and development, is differentiated for individual children and uses a range of teaching approaches.

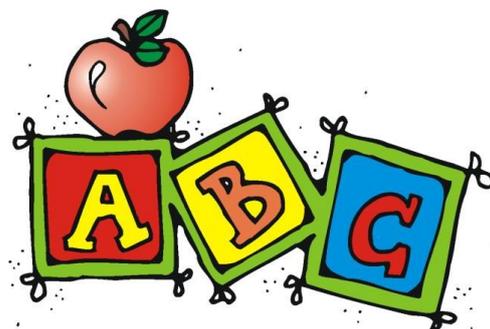
In Shropshire we have a number of children aged 0-5 who are accessing their Early Years (EY) education at

specialist provision in Shrewsbury. We would like to be able to offer children the opportunity to access their EY education within their local community (or somewhere fairly close). This will reduce the necessity for lengthy journeys for very young children and will allow parents direct contact at each session the child attends so ensuring opportunity to share and plan regularly. In addition children with complex SEND will be able to mix with their peers locally and families will be able to experience the relationships that others cultivate through meeting at local nurseries/childminders/playgroups. This will strengthen communities and remove barriers by enabling communities to work together to support children.

With this in mind we have developed a '**preferred provider**' list, this is a group of educational setting – schools, nurseries, preschools and childminders etc. who have committed to attending, further training, accept help, advice and support to enable

them to improve outcomes for the children they work with. The provider list is not a quality assurance group but is a group of settings wanting to improve services for early years children in their own community. We have 28 providers across Shropshire who have requested to be part of this group which is absolutely fantastic.

For further information a list of these providers will go onto the local offer or contact [sue.carroll@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:sue.carroll@shropshire.gov.uk)



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## SEND Peer Review

Ofsted and CQC jointly, have commenced inspections of local areas to see how well they fulfil their responsibilities for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The inspectors are looking at 3 main areas:

- How children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) are identified
- How their needs are assessed and met

- How they are supported to move onto their next stage of education, world of work and wider preparation for adulthood

We commissioned the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) to facilitate a peer review workshop for Shropshire parents and practitioners to look together at what areas of strength we have and what areas need further development. The information obtained will contribute towards developing an action plan to address

identified gaps in our processes as well as other areas requiring development.

We will share further details in future newsletters.



Parent carer representatives attending the Peer Review Workshop

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# News From the Shropshire SEN Team

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## Independent Travel Training

As part of a wider Specialist Transport redesign which has been created to give more options and flexibility to parents and students with specialist educational needs (SEN), Shropshire Council has been working closely with Enable to design, organise, maintain and produce travel training for eligible students with a statement of SEN or an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).

Since the launch of the project on a trial basis, back in September 2015, the scheme has proven popular and has been very successful, reaching a number of students in urban and rural areas across the county to nurture and develop their independence and confidence in using the public transport network.

Training is delivered through Enable's dedicated team and aimed at students aged 11 and older. They must be attending an eligible secondary school or college and are in need of support with using public transport. The objective is to help build up confidence and knowledge and develop familiarity with the route to school or college. The training delivers a positive approach to independent living and is tailored to each individual's needs.

The benefits of the scheme are widespread and promote increased independence and self-confidence, increased access to education opportunities at colleges and universities, greater access to local services and leisure

activities, improved opportunities to gain employment and participate in activities, pursuing hobbies as well as receiving ongoing support from Enable for as long as needed.

Independent Travel Training has proven to take as little as one month for some students to be fully confident to travel alone. This course can help individuals learn their route to school or college, giving them the independence to communicate with the public, deal with the exchange of money as well as providing them with the freedom to travel without relying on anyone else.

**Reuben is one such success story**, he was keen to start training in order to use the bus to get to college instead of using a taxi. Reuben was supported by trainers in every aspect of his journey, including; the walk to the bus stop, identifying the correct bus, getting off at the right stop and safely crossing the roads to get to college.

The travel trainers helped Reuben gain road safety awareness and taught him tell the correct time to leave college to catch his bus. Gradually support was reduced at a pace that suited Reuben, whilst ensuring he was implementing everything he has learned. Reuben is now travelling independently and his confidence has grown so much so that he is now learning his route by train. Through this, Reuben's chances of employment are increased for the future.

Another student who has completed the training successfully had been asked

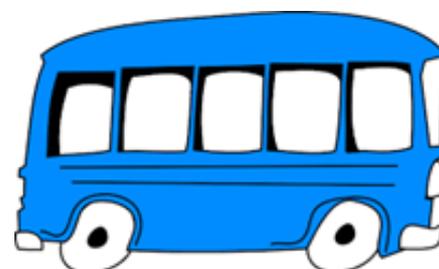
to provide feedback, here is what he had to say;

*"Made me feel independent/grown up. Should have been doing this when I was 12. Now I can catch a bus to town and to my mates house" - Aaron, Shrewsbury (17).*

A parent has shared with us how they felt about their son starting travel training:

*"I was nervous about my son starting this but it has been so good for his confidence, he goes to college by himself and even goes to the cinema to meet friends at the weekend, his behaviour at home as also improved as he feels good about himself"*

If you would like more information on the scheme or you know someone who may benefit from it please call Chris Royle on 01743 258975 or email [chris.royle@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:chris.royle@shropshire.gov.uk).



# News From the Shropshire SEN Team

## SEND Grant Allocations

Edward Timpson, Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families, has recently announced two grant allocations to support local authorities to develop provision for children and young people with SEND.

This includes an allocation to develop a strategic plan, as well as capital funding to create new school places, and improve existing facilities for children and young people with SEND. Shropshire Council

will work with providers, young people and parent/carers to develop an appropriate plan. Further information can be found on the [Department for Education website](#).

Shropshire Council believe that all children should be educated in their local mainstream school where possible and work closely with parents and settings to ensure that appropriate provision can be put in place to meet the special educational needs of Shropshire children. All

children identified as SEN support and the majority of children with an EHC plan will have their needs met within their local mainstream provision. However, there will be a small minority of children/young people, with an EHC plan, for whom a specialist setting will be more appropriate.

Where this is the case Shropshire SEN Team will work with parents/carers, young people and practitioners to identify an appropriate setting.

# Working in Partnership with Families

## Parent Carer Participation

One of the core principles of the new SEND system is that families are placed at the heart of decision making, both in terms of decisions about planning individual support and strategic decisions about service provision.

The Shropshire Parent Carer Council (PACC) provides parent carer representation at discussions about service development, to ensure that the experiences and knowledge of parent carers informs local decision making. Membership of PACC is open to any parent carer of a child or young person (0-25 years), who has a special educational need or disability (SEND). PACC publishes a termly newsletter sharing information about service development in Shropshire, activities and opportunities for SEND families and other SEND news. PACC also hosts two conferences each year, as well as

consultation workshops, training sessions and family activities. If you would like to join PACC email [enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk)

On the **10<sup>th</sup> May** PACC is hosting its Spring Conference 2017. The focus of the event will be on exploring;

- How parent carers and schools can work in partnership
- How Special Educational Needs are identified
- What support is available including 'Early Help'
- When and how further help should be requested

If you would like to attend this free conference book your ticket at <http://Bit.ly/PACCSpringConf> or email PACC at [enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk)



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And  
Carer  
Council

