

# Local Area - SEND newsletter for parents & carers



Dear Parent or Carer

Welcome to our partnership newsletter from the teams working together to deliver SEND services in Birmingham City Council, the NHS and Birmingham Children's Trust. I hope that you will find it useful and informative.

I am aware that the cost of living crisis is affecting families across the city and times are tough. If you are in need of help or support, please contact the [Early Help team](#) in your area to see how they might be able to help.

Work continues at pace to improve SEND services and support in Birmingham as you will see from this newsletter. However we do appreciate that it might be taking longer than you might have hoped for to feel these changes. There are some things that we can change quickly and hopefully you will be seeing results, like the Healios system (supporting additional capacity to reduce waiting times for autism assessments) and the improved EHCP review and assessment timeframe. We want to improve the system effectively and permanently and in some cases this is taking a little longer. We do appreciate your patience as we make these improvements.

We are currently conducting a survey, with the Parent Carer Forum, to gather your views on SEND services and support in Birmingham. Your feedback is used in our SEND working groups, which will inform the SEND strategy to ensure that parents and carers are at the centre of everything we are doing. We would really like to hear your thoughts so that we can continue to make the right changes for families in the city. The link is [here](#) and the survey closes on Friday 27th May and there is a chance of winning £100 shopping vouchers.

The Government has also now published a more accessible [Green Paper on the SEND](#) which is currently out for [consultation](#), which you can be part of. Please do express your views on the proposals; the deadline is 22nd July.

**Sue Harrison**

Director for Children's Services/Executive Director of Education and Skills  
Birmingham City Council

## Newsletter Highlights

[Have your say in our SEND survey.](#)



[SENAR update](#)



[Special School Nursing Review](#)



[#You've Been Missed](#)



[Birmingham PCF update](#)



[News and information from the Specialist SEND support services](#)

MAY 2022

Tell us what you think about SEND services in Birmingham to be in with a chance of winning £100 shopping vouchers

To help with our work on SEND Improvement, we are asking parents and carers to fill in a short, anonymous survey (about 5 minutes long) about their experiences with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services for their child or children in 2022. We hope that as many people as possible will take part so that we can get a clear picture of what is going well, and what not so well in the service and use that information to bring about change. Your feedback is used in our SEND working groups and upcoming workshops, which will inform the SEND strategy to ensure that parents and carers are at the centre of everything we are doing.

Those people who wish to submit contact details will be in with a chance of winning £100 worth of shopping vouchers.

Here is the link to the [SEND Survey](#), - which will be open until 5pm on Friday 27th May 2022.

Please feel free to circulate this widely so that we can hear from as many people as possible. If you have any questions about the survey or need support completing it, please email - [SENDImpComm@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:SENDImpComm@birmingham.gov.uk)



## SENAR Update & Progress

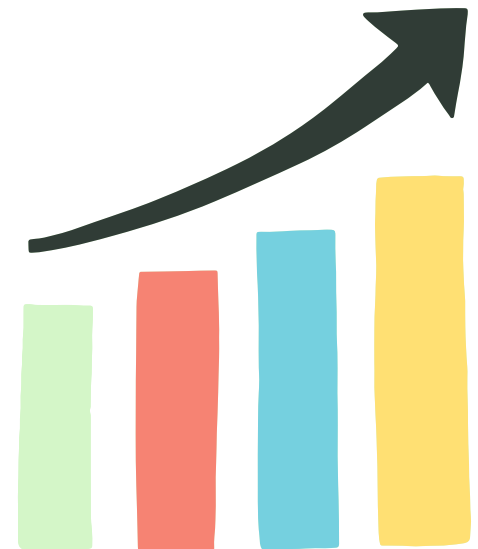
### Statutory compliance on Assessments & Reviews

**Reviews** - Although we are currently still dealing with a backlog of Annual Reviews which is impacting on timescales, we expect to be back within statutory timescales as set out in the 2015 Send Code of Practice by end of September 2022.

•We've been making progress on addressing the Annual Review backlog. The % Annual Reviews actioned within 4 weeks of the meeting was at 0.4% in September 2021; our latest performance for March 2022 was 25%.

**Assessments** - We are working to bring the Assessment statutory timeframes back in line with the 20 weeks' timescale set within the 2015 SEND Code of Practice

•We have improved on the 20 week statutory compliance with Education, Health and Care Needs Assessments - 64% of assessments were completed within 20 weeks in March 2022 compared to 58% national average.



### Education Health Care Needs Assessment

We are still progressing with the Education Health Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) process and the review of all of the associated documentation. We recognise that the Government has released its [Green Paper](#) on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provision (AP) SEND review, but will continue with our plan as any changes made by the Government are likely to be at least 18 months away. We will be undertaking this work in consultation with the Department for Education.

MAY 2022

### Nexus – SEND case management system

We are at the closing stages of the introduction of CACI (system owners) into the service to support the development of the SEN module within NEXUS, our SEND case management system.

We will be working on the development of the co-produced EHCP and the associated template documents for the system and developing the parent portal. We will be contacting parents and schools to support with development of the parent portal and schools' portal and we will have further information in the next update.

### New School Placement Team

We have decided to create a new team which will solely focus on children and young people in need of a special school place. We have set up robust internal processes to ensure efficient handover, and the team will work closely with those involved in monitoring and commissioning of special school places. Having the cohort in a single team will also help us gain further understanding of need in order to inform strategic planning.

In the coming weeks the Placement team will be in touch with families to highlight to them who their allocated Case Worker is and ways to contact them



### **A new website for Forward Thinking Birmingham (FTB)**

Forward Thinking Birmingham (FTB) have launched their new website for our mental health services. The new website has an overview of their services, the conditions they treat and help and advice for those looking for support and can be found at <https://forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk/>.

If you would like to provide feedback on the website or make any suggestions of content that would be helpful for parent/carers you can do so via the feedback links on the website or by emailing Digital Communications Specialist - [charlotte.burton7@nhs.net](mailto:charlotte.burton7@nhs.net)

MAY 2022

## Special School Nursing Service Review - give your view

The continuing expansion of special schools and school places across Birmingham and Solihull is increasing the demand on Special School Nursing (SSN) teams (and other associated services) at a time of significant NHS pressures. Birmingham and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group (BSol CCG) is undertaking a review of the Birmingham and Solihull SSN services, in partnership with Birmingham Community Healthcare Trust (BCHC) and University Hospitals Birmingham Foundation Trust (UHB).



The aim of the review is to ensure that the SSN services commissioned across BSol provide an effective and efficient service that achieves the best possible outcomes for children and young people (CYP) with SEND.

We are aiming to complete the service review and any required service modifications for the autumn term of 2022. As part of the review process we would like to gain the views and insights of both young people and their parents and carers, and those professionals that interact with these services. Therefore, if you use or work with this service, we would like to ask if you would kindly take 10 minutes of your time to follow the appropriate link below to complete an online Survey Monkey. All responses will be considered as part of the review.

### Links to reviews:

oSurvey for professionals working with Special School Nursing Services:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YS87DC9>

oSurvey for young people and family/carers on the Special School Nursing Services:  
<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/YSR3J3M>

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## #YouveBeenMissed campaign - helping children return to school

The #YouveBeenMissed campaign is led by a partnership within Birmingham supporting pupils, parents, carers and education professionals, helping our children and young people to return to school. The dedicated website section has been visited more than 18,000 times since it began. This collaborative service has supported pupils, parents, carers and education professionals to help children and young people when they've returned to school.



Clear guidance has been created for our colleagues in Early Help and education, along with young people and their families and carers, to ensure appropriate resources, videos and webinars are available; these resources and videos cover topics such as anxiety and worry, challenging thoughts, emotions and self-care.

Visit Birmingham and Women's Hospital Trust website for a host of useful resources, including videos. The dedicated online section is split and contains tailored advice and support for parents, carers, children, young people, young adults and education professionals <https://bwc.nhs.uk/youve-been-missed/>

MAY 2022

## Birmingham Parent Carer Forum Update

Firstly, we hope that you all had a lovely Easter Break, we certainly enjoyed being able to spend time with our loved ones.

Since our last update we had the second of our Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA) Society online training course, the two sessions covered developing our understanding of the PDA profile of autism and considering what demands are and their effects. We wanted to thank everyone for attending and our colleges at the PDA Society for hosting such a fantastic course.

The Birmingham Parent Carer Forum has been working hard to ensure the parent voice is being heard. We have continued to support and influence the creation of a Co-Production Framework and Definition for Birmingham. The Framework will shape how Co-Production works within Birmingham, and we are looking forward to sharing these details with you. We were also involved in the creation of the latest Parent Carer SEND Survey through attending consultations with other stakeholders to address the content and structure before it was finalised and the decision to offer £100 in vouchers was made by senior leaders at Birmingham City Council.

We have also planned an engagement event with the Director of Children's Services Sue Harrison on 1st July, where parents will have an opportunity to speak with Sue about various issues and concerns.

After a successful Q&A event with Department for Education appointed Commissioner John Coughlan in February John has asked that we host another session after the release of his report.

Please keep an eye on our social media pages for updates regarding these events, you can find us on Facebook [www.facebook.com/BirminghamPCF](http://www.facebook.com/BirminghamPCF) and Twitter [twitter.com/BirminghamPCF](http://twitter.com/BirminghamPCF).

We also continue to make sure we flag concerns raised to us to the relevant parties in Health, Education and Social Carer.

As always, we thank you for your continued support.



# BUILDING A BRIDGE

## BETWEEN PARENT CARERS & THEIR SERVICE PROVIDERS

We are a voluntary group of Birmingham Parent Carers whose purpose is to be the bridge between services and families and a collective voice representing all members and all disabilities.

We aim to build strong and sustainable links between our Local authority, Joint Clinical Commissioning Group and The Children's Trust.

MAY 2022

## Communication and Autism Team

### Transition Training for Parents

The CAT team offer transition sessions for parent and school settings throughout the academic year. We have delivered two transition sessions for Year 5 parents / carers. These took place virtually on the 8th and 9th February. In addition, Top Tips for Transition was delivered via Webinar on the 29th & 30th March and is also available for viewing on the **Local Offer Website** [www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/parents-carers-and-young-people](http://www.localofferbirmingham.co.uk/parents-carers-and-young-people)

This month we will be hosting a transition event for practitioners supporting young people moving from year 6 to year 7. This provides a platform for practitioners from primary and secondary to come together with a focus on understanding the depth of this journey for our autistic young people.

Two further parent sessions are planned for the 7th and 9th June for Year 6 parents / carers. These courses are extremely popular and further information can be found Access to Education - Courses and Events ([birmingham.gov.uk](http://birmingham.gov.uk))

### Autism in Schools: Autism Empowered Schools and Developing Identity Project

The Communication and Autism Team are working with the Parent Carer Forum, SEND NHS Occupational Therapy and schools to deliver this project which aims to empower autistic young people and help them to celebrate their amazing individual identities. In Birmingham, we are excited to have two schools join the project; Cockshut Hill School and Broadway Academy.

This project which support pupils to develop a positive autistic identity has been co-produced. Parent Engagement Forums have been set up with schools and are led by the Jo Green from the Birmingham Parent Carer Forum. There will be a full environment audit lead by the SEND Occupational Health Team with recommendations for schools to make adaptations to ensure autistic pupils are fully included and have every opportunity to meet their potential.

The project will conclude in July 2022 with a full evaluation and plans to introduce this wider to secondary schools in Birmingham from September 2022.

### Communication and Autism Team Training Update

The Communication and Autism Team (CAT) trained 1440 education staff last term, offering training packages that are designed to enable school staff to improve their understanding of how to support autistic pupils within their settings. All materials are co-produced and based on current research into Autism and Education conducted by the Autism Centre for Education Research at the University of Birmingham.

Training modules during the Spring term included, Good Autism Practice course and Leadership, Inclusion and Structural Reasonable Adjustments, plus new modules on Autism and Anxiety and Autism and Exclusion.

97% of education staff who attended the full day Good Autism Practice training stating that they have an improved understanding of autism and improved confidence in supporting autistic children and young people.

In the Summer term, CAT will be delivering additional modules for Early Years and Post 16 settings.



## Vision Support Team destigmatising disability

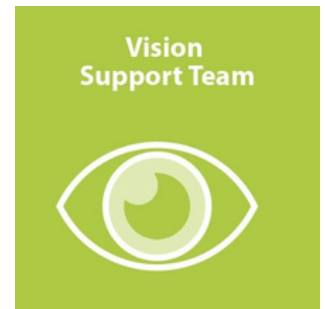
The Visions Support team recently met Azeem Azir a blind international footballer who is championing sport as a way of destigmatising disability

Azeem Amir is 23 and has been vision impaired since birth. However, he has never let it be a barrier to success. Azeem plays blind football professionally for the England and Great Britain blind football team and is working towards achieving international success. Playing across the globe he and the team are aiming to qualify for the next Paralympics.

He is also a brand ambassador and part of several national and international media campaigns, working with brands from an array of industries across the globe. Alongside his football, Azeem has recently completed a master's degree and has risen to fame as a highly respected advocate for disability rights.

One initiative that Azeem has started is 'Learn with ESS' which uses Education, Sport, Speaking based activities to provide a unique and interactive team experiences. The workshops that are offered aim to change individual perceptions within society to work towards a more unified future for all.

Watch Azeem in action at:  
Never underestimate a blind footballer | Azeem Amir | TEDxBrighton  
Find out more at: [www.learnwithess.com](http://www.learnwithess.com)



**Learn** :: :: :: ::  
**With** :: :: :: ::  
**ESS** :: :: :: ::

## Hearing Support Team - Communicate and Play!

**Free playgroup sessions for children with a hearing loss aged 0-4**  
Are you a parent or carer of a child with a hearing loss aged between 0 to 4?  
Are you aware of our Communicate and Play sessions?

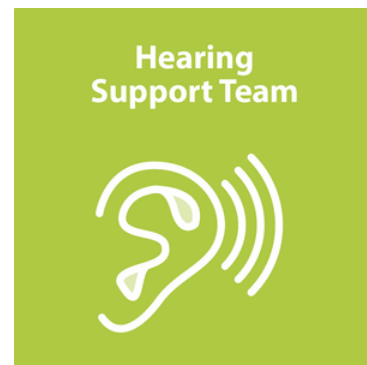
Children can enjoy playing alongside their peers who, just like them, wear a hearing aid or a cochlear implant. This helps develop a positive self-esteem and encourages children to wear their hearing technology. The fun begins with a "Hello Song" and continues with a range of activities, including a snack time and outdoor play (if weather permits).

Communicate and Play sessions are currently delivered at two Children's Centres:

- Castle Vale Children's Centre (every-other Wednesday morning)
- Bacchus Road Children's Centre (every Thursday afternoon)

For more details including exact dates and times, please contact us on: [ssparentenquiry@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:ssparentenquiry@birmingham.gov.uk)

We are looking forward to welcoming you and your child!



## Physical Difficulties Support Service (PDSS)

In the Spring term the PDSS team held a workshop in collaboration with the charity Shine, for parents and carers of early years pupils with a diagnosis of Spina Bifida.

PDSS worked collaboratively with the charity 'Shine' (an organisation providing specialist advice and support for spina bifida and hydrocephalus across England, Wales and Northern Ireland) to deliver a supportive and informative session. Parents/carers were introduced to the PDSS service and how they support children and young people in schools.

The staff from Shine talked to parents and carers about their website, events and how to become a member of Shine. There was an opportunity for parents and carers to ask questions of the PDSS teachers and the Shine staff as well as share their experience with each other.

[www.shinecharity.org.uk/little-stars/shines-little-stars](http://www.shinecharity.org.uk/little-stars/shines-little-stars)

The second session will take place in the Summer term.



## Getting Ready for School

The PDSS team is delivering a workshop called 'Getting ready for school' in the summer term for parents/carers who have children that are transitioning from home/nursery to school in September 2022.

The workshop will be presented by PDSS teachers via Microsoft Teams and will include -

- An explanation of the role of PDSS for their child as they transition into school and throughout their education.
- Advice regarding how to prepare their child at home for school. Opportunities for parents to share their experience and concerns.

For more details contact [PDSSParentEnquiry@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:PDSSParentEnquiry@birmingham.gov.uk)





## The Educational Psychology Service Update on Video Interaction Guidance

The Educational Psychology Service has a thriving team of seven VIG (Video Interaction Guidance) practitioners. The VIG team have been busy visiting family homes and schools with their video cameras, supporting adults to enhance their relationships with children.

### What is video interaction guidance (VIG)?

VIG is an evidence-based intervention that uses video clips to enhance communication within relationships. VIG has been used successfully in a wide range of settings (including early years settings, schools and families) around the world. VIG highlights the strengths in relationships that already exist, and then support those involved to build upon these strengths.

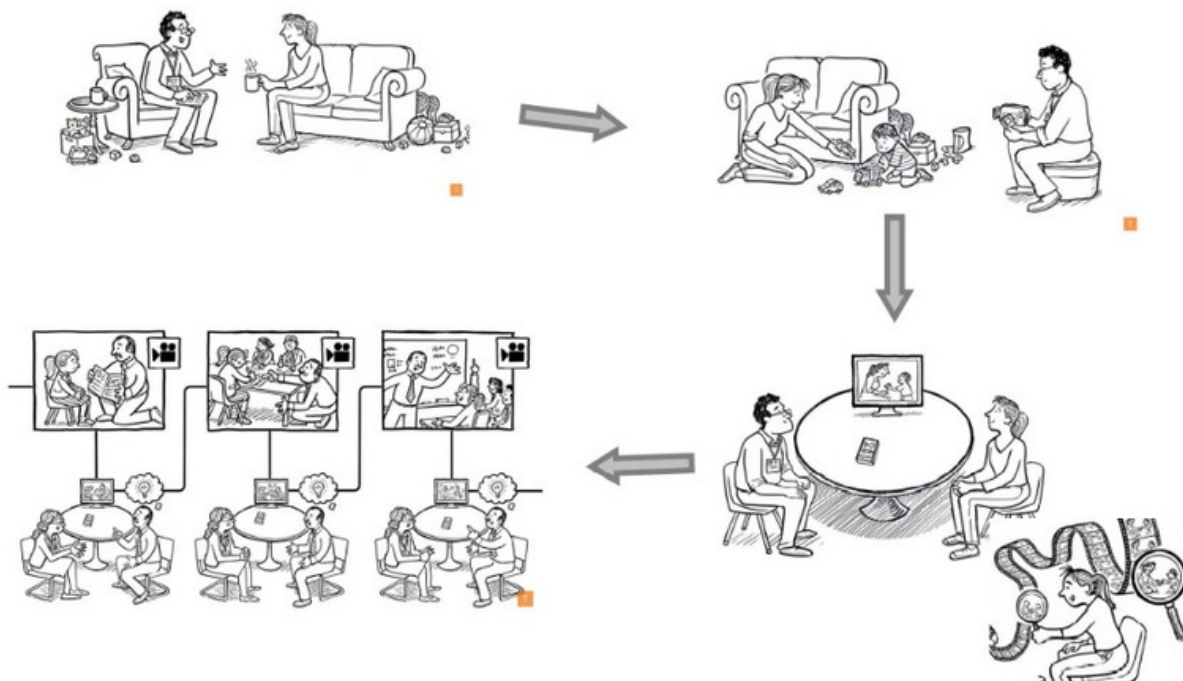
### What have parents said about VIG?

“I’ve gained confidence in my intuition for how best to help my child. I’ve become more observant – picking up on little expressions and listening to him. I was always doing it but I’m more aware now. I trust him and follow his lead.”

The VIG team have asked parents and teaching staff about **the changes that they have noticed at the end of the VIG intervention:**

- Parents and teaching staff have noticed that the children have been more engaged with their learning and younger children have communicated more often.
- Parents have noticed that they have started to listen to their children more and their children have listened more to them.
- The confidence of parents has increased, and parents have said that they enjoy time spending together with their children.

I am interested ... where can I find out more? For more information about VIG, click on this link to view a three minute video VIG animation 3 minutes. Speak to the SENCO at your school to find out how to gain support from the VIG team.



## A Poem on Autism from a Young Person in Birmingham

I'm glad I'm Autistic  
I want you to know that autism isn't all that bad,  
It's actually a superpower that I was born to have.  
Although the sensory issues are a pain,  
Each day there are super-powers that I gain.

Did you know so many artists, scientists and writers are autistic too?  
Have you ever thought about your friends or you?

I was diagnosed Autistic when I was eight years old,  
I was confused and scared wondering what was wrong,  
What were all these weird feelings I'd been having for so long?

But then I was told;  
It means you're  
Amazing  
Unique  
Tremendous  
Inspiring  
Super  
Magnificent

I felt a sense of relief,  
Finally, I felt complete.  
Everything was starting to make sense,  
All my little things that I thought weren't normal had a reason.

I'm glad I'm autistic, I wouldn't change it for the world!

Emily, aged 12