

## Latest News

### Welcome to our 'NEW LOOK' Newsletter!

To ensure our newsletter is as useful to parents as possible we will now be including the following features:

#### Job Focus

A question and answer interview with different professionals that you may encounter. We hope that this will give you a clearer picture of the role that the people working with you and your child do.

#### Check it out!

A page packed with useful websites and resources for children with special educational needs.

#### Signposts

A page dedicated to different local services that provide support to parents of children with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

#### Spotlight on SEN

A page dedicated to a different SEN education issue in each newsletter. Please contact the Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service if you have any suggestions for topics!



The Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service aims to ensure parents/ carers of children with SEN, including the very young, have access to accurate information, advice and guidance in relation to the additional educational needs of their children so that they can make informed decisions.

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# Job Focus...



This edition of the Parent Partnership Service's newsletter focuses on the role of the Choice Adviser, Heather Weston.

## **What is the role of the Choice Adviser?**

The Choice Adviser is here to help parents to select the right school for the needs of their child. This ensures that the child attends a school that suits their interests so that they can reach their full potential.

The main role is to support parents whose children are transferring from primary to secondary school, although support can also be given to those who choose to change schools mid-year.

The role of the Choice Adviser is impartial and at 'arms length' from the Local Authority. This means that no service or organisation has any influence on the information given to parents.

## **Do you support all parents or just parents of children with special educational needs?**

I support all parents from all backgrounds within Stoke-on-Trent, regardless of whether their child has special educational needs or not.

## **What support can you give to parents?**

Parents can receive help and advice via telephone or email, one-to-one meetings and support when viewing schools. This is flexible to the needs of each individual parent.

Parents can also download useful information leaflets and checklists to use when visiting schools from the website.

## **How can I access the Choice Advisory Service?**

Parents can contact the service via email, telephone or the Choice Advisory website.

Parents can refer themselves for support or they can be referred by other professionals such as teachers. Professionals must always ask the parents permission before making a referral to the service.

**For more information contact Heather:**

**Telephone: 01782 234867**

**Email: [choice.adviser@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:choice.adviser@stoke.gov.uk)**

**[www.choice-adviser-stoke.co.uk](http://www.choice-adviser-stoke.co.uk)**





The **North Staffs Special Adventure Playground** is located in Newcastle-under-Lyme.

The purpose built playground offers a variety of adventurous and imaginative indoor and outdoor facilities designed to provide play and recreational activities for children with special needs

The playground offer weekly respite clubs, meaning that parents of children and young people with special needs can have a much needed break whilst their children have fun and socialise.

For more information contact:

**Telephone:** 01782 717612

**Email:** nsadventure@lineone.net

[www.specialadventureplayground.co.uk](http://www.specialadventureplayground.co.uk)

# Check it out!

## Aukids

Aukids is a quarterly positive parenting magazine aimed at families with young children on the autistic spectrum.



It provides instant advice, great ideas and practical solutions for anyone who cares for a child with an autism spectrum condition.

An online subscription costs just £8 per year, whilst having copies of the magazine delivered to your home costs £10 per year.

For more information visit

[www.aukids.co.uk/index.html](http://www.aukids.co.uk/index.html)



## Free Epilepsy resources!

The National Centre for Young People with Epilepsy have produced two fantastic free seizure diaries - one for teens and one for younger children. Visit the following website for more information

<http://www.ncype.org.uk/epilepsy/freesezurediary>

or call 01342 832243 ext 508  
to request yours now!



# Dates for the diary

## Parents workshops

Would you like to learn more about special educational needs and the education system?

The Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service is holding 3 FREE workshops for parents at **Abbey Hulton Primary School**.

**Understanding School Action and School Action Plus**

**8th June 1:15pm - 2:45pm**

**Understanding Statutory Assessment**

**15th June 1:15pm - 2:45pm**

**Understanding Fixed Term and Permanent Exclusions**

**22nd June 1:15pm - 2:45pm**

For more information visit our website:  
<http://www.parent-partnership-stoke.co.uk/training>

or call Emma on  
**01782 234701**

## Would you like to help parents of children with SEN?

The Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service is looking for new volunteers to support parents of children with SEN.

Our volunteers may help parents with:

- Viewing schools
- Completing forms
- Preparing for school meetings
- Supporting parents at school meetings
- Explaining the education system

Our volunteers may also:

- Help at parent information days
- Help with administration work in the office

All volunteers are provided with a **FREE** training course so no experience is necessary.

The next training course begins on  
**Wednesday 11th May 2011**

For more information visit our website:  
<http://www.parent-partnership-stoke.co.uk/volunteering>

or call Emma on  
**01782 234701**



## Parent Partnership Service Steering Group

Would you like to help to drive the Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service forwards?

We are looking for parents of children with special educational needs to help us to improve the service that we offer to parents.

Our next Steering Group meeting is taking place at Queensberry on  
**4th May 2011.**

If you are a parent/carer or professional and would like to join the group please  
phone:01782 234701

email: [parent.partnership@stoke.gov.uk](mailto:parent.partnership@stoke.gov.uk)



# Signpost

Services that you may find useful...



Disability solutions is a voluntary organisation, controlled and run by local disabled people.

They offer services such as:

- The Disability Information & Advice Service.
- Direct Payments Service.
- Equipment Information & demonstration Centre.
- Disability Awareness & Equality Training.
- Access Audits.
- LGBT-Disability Link Project

**Advice line:** 01782 683800

**Direct Payments:** 01782 683801

**Training & Access:** 01782 683805

**Txt (SMS):** 07797801397

[www.disability-solutions.net/](http://www.disability-solutions.net/)



Younger Mind offers emotional support to young people aged from 7 to 18 years who live in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.

Anyone can refer a young person to Younger Mind, providing the young person has consented for the referral to be made.

**Telephone:** 01782 262100

**Email:** [youngermind@nsmind.org.uk](mailto:youngermind@nsmind.org.uk)

<http://www.nsmind.org.uk/youngermind/index.htm>

**face2face**

Parents supporting Parents of Disabled Children

Face 2 Face is a network of trained volunteer befrienders who can help parents make positive adjustments to the news that their child has a disability.

Every Face 2 Face befriender is a parent too – someone whose own child has a disability. They know what it's like to cope with a new diagnosis and can offer support parent-to-parent.

Face 2 Face is free and confidential. A befriender can either visit you at home or you can agree another convenient location. It is an informal and flexible arrangement designed to suit you. We support parents of children with any type of disability or additional need.

**Contact Denise Deakin for more information**  
01782 874974 or 07921 046511

<http://www.face2facenetwork.org.uk/find/StokeOnTrent.htm>

## Family Support Service



Caudwell Children's Family Support Service offers parents of disabled or seriously ill children in Stoke-on-Trent practical and emotional support in their own home.

You could receive help with shopping, cleaning, ironing, finding local support groups or accessible activities, information about specialist local services, signposting to support groups, someone to listen or to talk to.

**Contact the Family Support Team**  
01782 600263

**E-mail:** [support@caudwellchildren.com](mailto:support@caudwellchildren.com)

<http://www.caudwellchildren.com/families>

# Spotlight on SEN

## I.E.P.s

### **What is an IEP?**

IEP stands for Individual Education Plan. An IEP is a document that schools use to show the help that pupils with special educational needs are receiving.

### **Who needs an IEP?**

All pupils with special educational needs should have an IEP. This includes pupils receiving help through School Action, School Action Plus and those who have a statement.

### **What should an IEP contain?**

An IEP should record the teaching strategies that the school will put in place to help the pupil to progress.

It should include targets that are SMART - **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**elevant, **T**ime bound. The IEP should also contain success criteria and the date that the targets and progress will be reviewed.

### **Who will be involved in writing an IEP?**

The IEP will usually be written by the SENCO and the class teacher (primary schools only).

### **How often should an IEP be reviewed?**

Government guidance says that IEPs should be reviewed at least twice a year. Some schools review IEPs more frequently than this.

Parents should be consulted on their views when the school are reviewing an IEP.

The pupil's views should also be sought when reviewing an IEP. They could be involved in the review meeting. Alternatively they could share their thoughts on their progress and targets before the actual meeting.

For pupils receiving help through School Action Plus, external support services such as the Inclusion Service or Access to Learning should provide the school with advice on suitable IEP targets.

At secondary school, at least one IEP review should coincide with Parents' Evening.

If your child has already achieved the targets listed on his/her IEP you should ask the SENCO to review it so that new targets can be set.

# Congratulations!



On Wednesday 26th January 2011 our newest volunteer celebrated completing their training to become Independent Parental Supporters.

The volunteers were presented with their certificates by Mr John Bostock, Chair of the Parent Partnership Service Steering Group.

The four ladies from across the city attended a twelve week training course from September to December 2011. Both the training course and celebration were held at St Maria Goretti Catholic Primary School, Bentilee.

The volunteers are now able to begin to support parents of children with special educational needs. They will join our current Independent Supporter, who has supported several families since completing her training in 2009.

We'd like to say a huge

## THANK YOU!

to all of our volunteers for giving up their time to support the Parent Partnership Service!

### What is an Independent Parental Supporter?

An Independent Supporter is a trained volunteer who gives advice, information and support to parents of children with special educational needs.

They may help parents with:

- Viewing schools
- Completing forms
- Preparing for school meetings
- Supporting parents at school meetings
- Explaining the education system

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer please contact Emma on

**01782 234701**

## "The best thing about Parent Partnership is..."

Extremely helpful and supportive throughout the meeting.

They gave me complete reassurance and support during a difficult time.

Often it is difficult to take in information when anxious and upset about your child and their problems. Use of professional terms can be confusing. You just need a little help.

School are normally very helpful but sometimes things get forgotten with everyone being so busy they are there to help you.

They are knowledgeable and supportive.

## Contact us!

**Stoke on Trent Parent  
Partnership Service  
Queensberry Education Centre  
Queensberry Rd  
Normacot  
Stoke on Trent  
ST3 1QZ**

**01782 234701  
Fax: 01782 236858**

**parent.partnership@stoke.gov.uk**

[www.parent-partnership-stoke.co.uk](http://www.parent-partnership-stoke.co.uk)

**Our newsletter is circulated to parents/ carers, professionals and educational settings. If you would like to be included on the mailing list please let us know. Alternatively, if you move to a new address or change your email, please keep us updated.**

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**If you are a professional and would like to know more about Parent Partnership and the support we offer, please contact us on**

**01782 234701**

**Alternatively we would be happy to come along and chat to your team about the Service and our role supporting parents/carers. Please feel free to pass on our details to parents who may need support for their child / young person.**

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**Want to advertise your service in our Summer newsletter? We would love to hear from you but please do send the article over no later than 30th May 2011.**

### How to find us

From Stoke: Follow the A50 until the Normacot turning. Take the third exit off the mini roundabout. Go across the bridge and then straight across the next mini roundabout. Take the first turning on the right into Normacot Road. Turn left into Furnace Road and you will see Queensberry City Wide Training Centre directly facing you. The Parent Partnership Office is in the building on the left.

