

Latest News

PPS Steering Group

The Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service Steering Group met on Wednesday 4th May. Members of the Steering Group thanked the current Vice Chair for her support and dedication. Julie Massey was welcomed as the new Vice Chair.

The Steering Group looked at ways in which the Parent Partnership service can develop in the coming year. They discussed ways in which the service can work with school staff and governors to develop parent friendly policies and share good practice. It was also discussed how the PPS can help to feed back the views of parents to the Local Authority, promote mutual support groups for parents and raise the profile of the service with carers of looked after children. The ideas taken from the steering group will be discussed at Parent Partnership team meetings and may be used to inform future service action plans.

Independent Parental Supporters

Narina Stead, our IPS who was recently featured in the 'Our City' magazine, will be leaving the service at the end of the summer. We would like to thank Narina for all her hard work and wish her the very best for the future!



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 head of the SEN Monitoring and Assessment Service, Brian Hepburn.

How many people work in the SEN Monitoring and Assessment Service?

The Service structure means that there are three people who administer the statutory assessment process, three who carry out the monitoring and reviewing of statements and one who leads on Post 16 provision.

What is a 'Named Officer'?

I feel it is helpful for parents to have the contact details of one person within the Service. Parents can speak to that person, the Named Officer, when they have a question, and be confident that the person will know their case.

Parents will have a Named Officer during their child's statutory assessment. They will have a different Named Officer once the statement has been finalised. They will be informed of this change in the letter that accompanies the final statement.

Who decides if a statutory assessment will go ahead?

The decision is made by the Local Authority. The LA receives advice from the Statutory Assessment and Moderation (SAM) Panel who recommend whether an assessment should be carried out. The Panel consists of two officers from Monitoring and Assessment, and representatives from the Educational Psychology Service, SEND Service, Early Years Services and schools.

The Panel considers submissions from schools and settings or requests from parents.

The Panel relies entirely on written evidence from school, parents, the young person and any other professionals involved in the case. It is important, therefore, that the information submitted to the LA is as detailed as possible as the Panel will not know the young person personally.

How will you keep me informed/up to date?

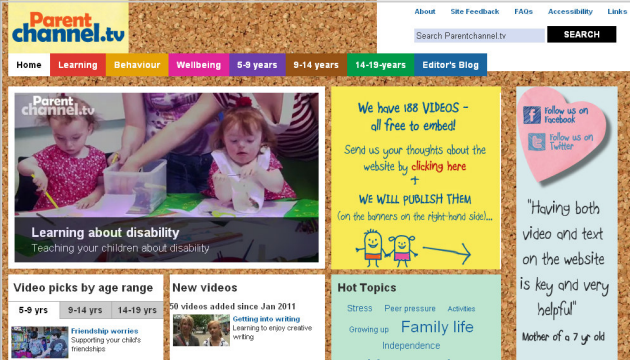
The LA will write to convey any formal decisions and will telephone to discuss developments as they occur.

For more information contact:

Email: senmonitoringandassessment@stoke.gov.uk

www.sgfl.org.uk/subsites/view/default.asp?doc=1522

Check it out!



ParentChannel.tv is an online service designed to support and encourage parents and carers of children aged 5-19, with a collection of videos addressing day-to-day questions and concerns around behaviour, learning and wellbeing.

There are videos on topics such as healthy eating, starting school, peer pressure, bullying, learning differences, positive discipline and lots more!

For more information visit:
www.parentchannel.tv

Do you have a favourite website, magazine, book or place to visit for children with additional or special educational needs?

If so we'd love to hear about it!

Email us at:
parent.partnership@stoke.gov.uk



Free online games!

Help Kidz Learn is a collection of free software for young children and those with learning difficulties to play online.

The software is split into five sections:

- Early Years
- Games and Quizzes
- Stories and Songs
- Creative Play
- Find Out About

For more information visit:
www.helpkidzlearn.com



Dates for the diary

July

13th July

ASD Help! Understanding Behaviour Parent Seminar, Chester Contact 07425 624592 for more information

August

23rd August

ASD Help! Teen Life Parent Seminar, Preston. Contact 07425 624592 for more information

September

20th September

ASD Help! Managing Anger Parent Seminar, Wilmslow. Contact 07425 624592 for more information

21st September

ASD Help! Sensory Needs Parent Seminar, Chester. Contact 07425 624592 for more information

Early Bird Course for parents of children under 5, with a diagnosis of ASD. Contact Vikki Law on 01782 552692 or Barbara Petrie on 01782 234700 for more information.

On-going

Rudyard Sailability. - Phone Dennis Priebe on 01782 853721 to book a taster session.

Youth clubs for children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

- Tuesdays, 7-9pm, Packmoor Uth Centre
- Wednesdays, 7-9pm, Pump Street Uth Centre
- Thursdays, 7-9pm, Bentilee Uth Centre

Contact Steph Fletcher on 01782 237920 or 07901102919

Butterfly Youth Club is run by the charity Caudwell Children. Sessions are monthly and are based at Whitfield Valley Community Centre, Fegg Hayes. A minimum donation of £2.50 is required. Contact Susan on 01782 600263 for more information or to book a place.



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
12th October 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



Signpost

Services that you may find useful...



NORTH STAFFORDSHIRE
ASPERGER / AUTISM ASSOCIATION

The North Staffordshire Asperger/Autism Association provides support and information to parents and people of all ages who have Aspergers and Autism.

The NSAAA is open as follows:

Mon, Wed, Thurs - 10:30am - 2:30pm
Parents can drop into the office for information and advice. Members can borrow resources from the information library.

Tuesday - 10:30am - 2:30pm
Telephone helpline only.

NSAAA also runs parent support groups and groups for children and young people with Aspergers or Autism.

For more information contact:

Telephone: 01782 627002
Email: info@nsaaa.co.uk



The North Staffs Carers Association offers information, training and support to carers of all ages.

There are a range of services including:

- Befriending
- Support for young carers
- Chat line
- Carers Link project

For more information contact:

Telephone: 01782 834836

Fax: 01782 831 610

www.carersfirst.com

family Information Service

The Stoke-on-Trent Family Information Service can provide information on the following issues:

- Childcare in the area
- Family benefits
- Work life balance - maternity and paternity leave, time off for dependents etc
- Sign posting to parenting advice, behavioural issues, activities for children etc.

For more information contact:

Telephone: 0800 015 1120

Telephone: 01782 232200

Email: fis@stoke.gov.uk

www.stokefis.co.uk



Support and friendship
for families

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent is a voluntary organisation providing practical help and support to families with at least one child under the age of five years, who are experiencing difficulties and stress.

Home-Start can provide:

- Volunteers to support families in their own homes
- Family Groups
- Family Support Workers

For more information contact:

Telephone: 01782 280850

Email: admin@homestartstoke.org.uk

www.homestartstoke.org.uk

Spotlight on SEN

Transition

Is the process for choosing secondary schools different for children with a statement?

Children with a statement of SEN will go through a slightly different process of transition than children without a statement. The Local Authority will contact you in the Autumn Term ask you to choose a preferred school. It is advisable to go and visit any school that you are considering. It may be helpful to take a copy of your child's statement with you so that you can discuss your child's needs with the SENCO.

If the Local Authority agrees, they will then contact your preferred school to see if they can meet your child's needs. The statement must be finalised by 15th February. For more information download the 'transition to secondary school for children with a statement' leaflet from our website - www.parent-partnership-stoke.co.uk/publications.

What happens if my child is on School Action or School Action Plus?

Your child's school will send home a booklet at the beginning of the Autumn term. This will have information on all the secondary schools in Stoke-on-Trent and the admission criteria for each school. It will also contain an admissions application form, although you can complete this online.

Admission forms must usually be submitted by the beginning of November that the child is in Year 6 but the booklet will tell you the exact date.

You should start to think which schools may be suitable for your child now and try to find out when these schools will be holding their open evenings. These will usually be quite early in the Autumn term.

After attending the open evenings you may feel that you have more questions, especially around your child's special educational needs. You could contact the school and arrange a meeting with the school's Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). This would give you the opportunity to discuss how the school could support your child. It also gives you the chance to explain all your child's needs and difficulties to the school.

Where can I get information and advice from regarding transition?

The Stoke-on-Trent Choice Advisory Service offers impartial information to parents whose child is moving schools. The service website contains information on all of the schools within Stoke-on-Trent as well as the admissions criteria.

For more information contact 01782 234867 or visit www.choice-adviser-stoke.co.uk

SEN GREEN PAPER

Department for
Education

On 8th June 2011 the Stoke-on-Trent Parent Partnership Service held a parents' consultation session on the Government's SEN Green Paper 'Support and aspiration: A new approach to special educational needs and disability'.

The session was well attended by a mix of parents, professionals and members of the community. The group looked at questions around the Government's plans to change the process of statutory assessment and statements to instead give an 'Education, Health and Care Plan'. The group felt that, in theory, this was a good idea but that parents would need fully trained key workers to co-ordinate the assessment and guide them through each stage. They were concerned whether adequate funding would be available for such training and also to deliver the needs identified in the plan.

The group also highlighted the fact that the process needs to be easy for parents, transparent and give opportunities for outcomes to be explained to parents face-to-face.

The group also looked at the plans to give parents control of a budget to provide support for their child. The group felt that this would give parents more choice over what services were prioritised for their child but were concerned that some parents may need support to use the budget effectively. One idea they gave was to use a credits system for the child's support budget rather than actual money.

All of the groups' views will be combined with others from Parent Partnership Services throughout the West Midlands and then sent to the Department for Education by the end of June. Thanks to all who took part and shared their views!

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

They were very helpful and understanding.

That they are available when you need help.

Somebody being there to speak "for" you and believing in you. Very understanding and helped me by leading in the school setting.

The support you receive and how you explain things to people as it is a very confusing process when you haven't a clue.

They are easily accessible.

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

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.

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.

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

