

Essex Parent Partnership Service

Newsletter

Winter 2009

Inside this issue

Chidcare Consultation p3

Booklets for pupils
projects p4

InterAct p4

Children's views
for the Special
Educational Needs and
Disability Tribunal (SEND) p5

Working Together
Through Transition p6

Quest Seekers p7

Also including the new Aiming
High Supplement
8 page centre pull out section



CyberMentors

full story on page 2



What is CyberMentors?

'CyberMentors is all about young people helping and supporting each other online'.

If you're being bullied, or are feeling a bit low, or are maybe troubled by something and you're not sure what to do or who to talk to, then **CyberMentors** is where you can go for help. It doesn't matter how big or small you think the problem is, or whether you're being targeted online or offline, **CyberMentors are here to listen and support you.**

The best thing about it is that **CyberMentors** are young people too. It's never easy talking about bullying and many young people have told us that they would prefer to speak to another young person if they could. That's why **CyberMentors** are young people like you, who have been trained and are volunteering their time online to help you. It's still important however, that you talk to your parents or teachers if you can.

If you want to talk about a problem you've got with bullying, just drop a **CyberMentor** a message or ask to chat to them online. The site is secure and you can keep all your chats private but there are also counsellors available for anything really serious.' If your school has been involved in the **CyberMentors** training, then there will also be **CyberMentors available to talk to you face-to-face if you'd prefer.**

At the moment you can only become a CyberMentor if you live in the UK and if you are aged 11-25.

If you're still not sure or want to find out more about **CyberMentors**, including how to get involved, simply send a message to **Patrick@Beatbullying.org.uk**

At the moment, Beatbullying has funding to keep our BACP-accredited counsellors online from 8am-10pm. However, you will mostly find CyberMentors and Senior CyberMentors online until much later, often until midnight. If you need help outside of these hours, please refer to the list of other organisations that may be able to help you. Beatbullying is working hard to secure funding to allow CyberMentors to operate 24/7.



www cybermentors.org.uk

Childcare Consultation

Essex County Council has a duty to ensure that sufficient childcare or, for older children, a 'safe place to be', is available to all families who require this. Childcare can be breakfast and after-school clubs, holiday clubs, specialist schemes, childminders, nurseries or pre-schools.

As part of Essex's ongoing commitment to provide quality childcare provision to all parents that need it, we are carrying out a consultation with families who have a child or children with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or a disability. This consultation will take the form of a questionnaire, which will be distributed via as many sources as possible during November 2009.

The results of this consultation will identify what types of childcare families with children with SEN or a disability use, or would like to use; where they

would like childcare to be available and whether the childcare that is currently available meets their needs. This information will inform future childcare developments across the county, so is a really good opportunity to **have your say**.

Please look out for the questionnaire via your child's school, early years setting or support groups you may attend. Alternatively, if you would like to request a copy directly, please email **Emily.french@essex.gov.uk** tel: **01245 438501**



Booklets for Pupils Project

This term sees the exciting culmination of a project that has been working on producing two booklets for pupils – one titled '**My Statement**' and the second '**My Annual Review**'.

These booklets are the result of feedback and input from pupils within primary and secondary schools in Essex on their understanding of and involvement in the Statutory Assessment process, having a Statement of SEN and Annual Reviews. Pupils' own views, thoughts and ideas have been integral to putting together the wording, format and graphics of these booklets.

Colleagues from within Special Educational Needs & Children with Additional Needs (SENCAN) have worked closely together on this project. The aim of producing these booklets is to enable pupils to have a more meaningful involvement in and understanding of their Statement and Annual review; for example - what it is, who writes it; how they can have their say and what it will mean to them.

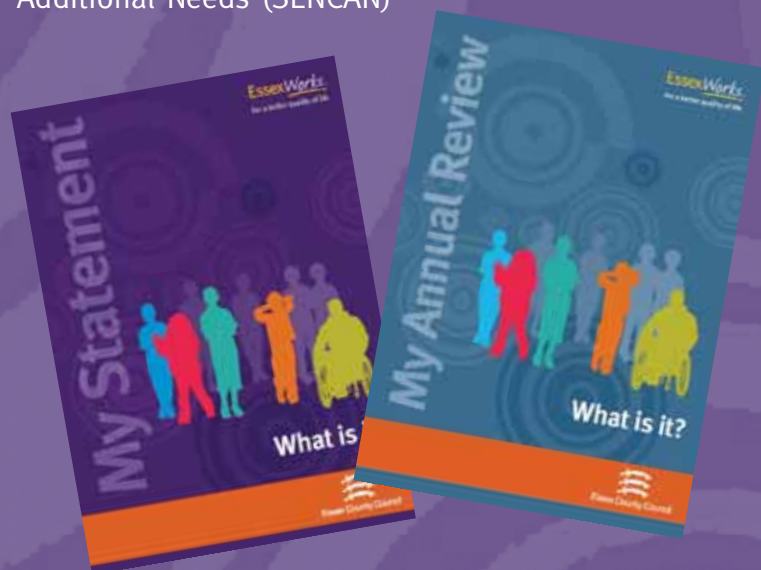
The booklets are going to be coming out to schools this term with an accompanying letter and we look forward to hearing how you find using them with the pupils.

We will be looking to evaluate the impact of the booklets on pupils' understanding and involvement in a year's time.

In the meantime I would like to say a big thank you to all the pupils and SENCOs who spent the time contributing their ideas and thoughts to the project and I really hope that you like the results.

Clare Woodcock

Manager Essex Parent Partnership Service
Special Educational Needs & Children with
Additional Needs (SENCAN)



InterAct

A programme supported by Stagecoach Theatre Arts and Stagecoach Charitable Trust (Reg Charity No 1081561), provides inclusive performance workshops that include disadvantaged children and young people from both mainstream and special school backgrounds.

In July 2009 they ran two Holiday Workshops at the Sixth Form College in Colchester, which were greatly enjoyed by a total of 54 youngsters, aged between 9 and 19, from local

schools and organisations. Rebecca, aged 10 said *“Would love to come again and again and again!!”*

A parent said *“Max really enjoyed this fantastic week - the mix of singing, acting and dance was brilliant and Max, who is severely autistic, was able to participate in all the sessions and gained confidence throughout the week”*

InterAct aims to establish a permanent after school format in Colchester, among other regions and they are looking to partner up with schools and

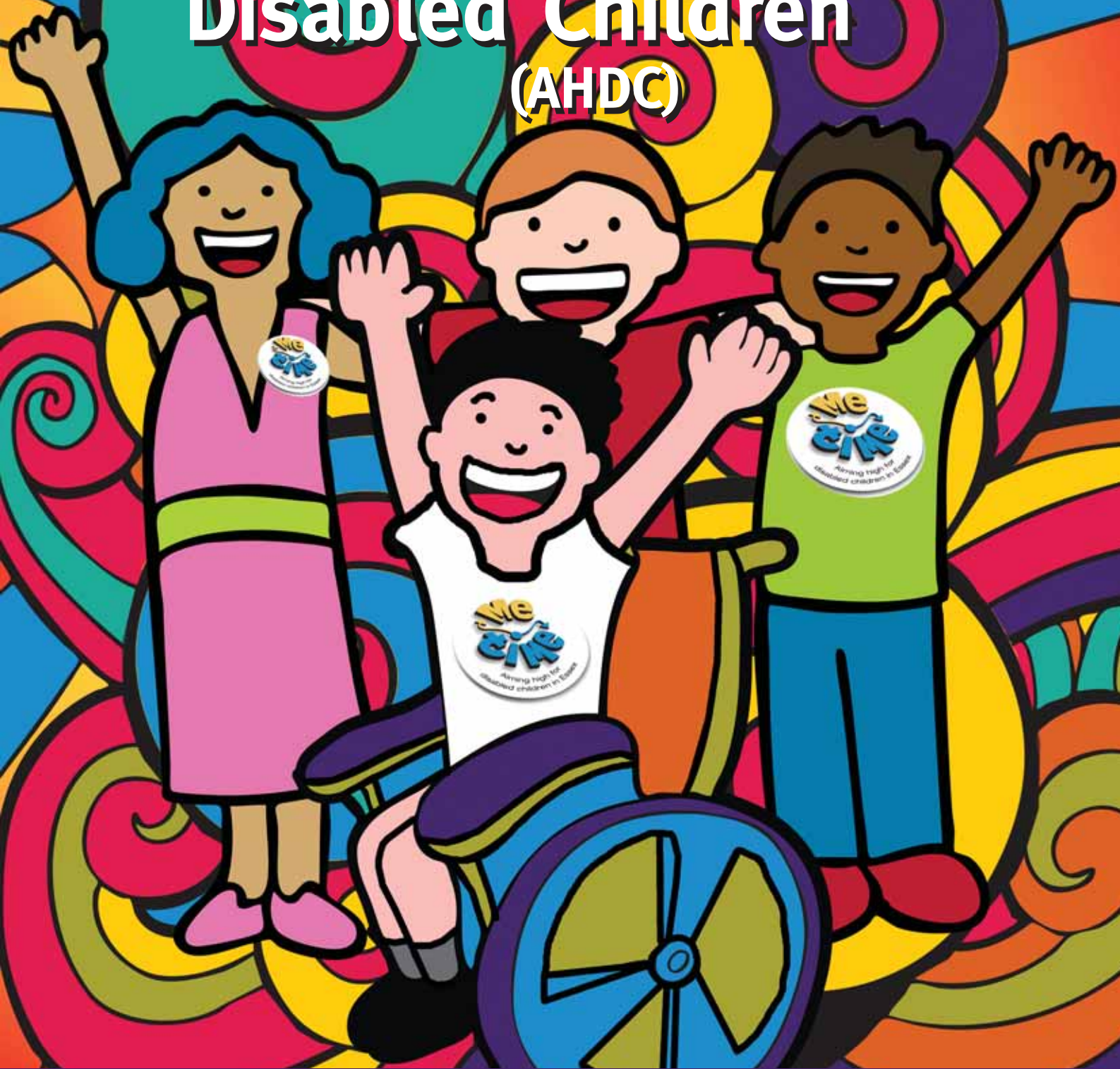
organisations who may be able to help them fund this valuable project.

If you are interested and would like more information, please contact **Mike McNulty or Tina Taylor on 01932 254 333**

You can donate at:
www.justgiving.com/interact



Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC)



Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC)

Better support for families

Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) is a central government programme to help disabled children, young people and their families get the support and chances they need to live ordinary lives. The government wants to ensure that the significant new funding for AHDC is allocated to families' specific wants and needs; families have described short break opportunities as their key priority.

Essex County Council, Primary Care Trusts, parents and the voluntary sector are working in partnership to develop short break opportunities.

Our vision for children and young people with disabilities in Essex is that they will enjoy, achieve and participate in a wide range of short break activities. These opportunities support 'Me Time'. This is what Essex is calling its short breaks. 'Me Time' is for both children and young people with disabilities and their families.

An update on Aiming High for Disabled Children in Essex

The design of the Short Break's programme is based on information gathered through formal consultation with children and young people and their families, identifying what could make the difference to them. Together with parents and partners we have agreed a vision of flexible and personalised support. To this end, Essex is developing already existing Short Break opportunities, creating new provision, increasing the availability of personal assistants and supporting children and young people to participate in their chosen universal leisure and community activity. We want families to have access to a wide and varied range of support that meets their individual needs.

'Me Time' short breaks can be anything from a couple of hours to overnight stays. They are designed to give children and young people with disabilities enjoyable experiences that contribute to their personal and social development, as well as enabling parents and families to have a break from their caring responsibilities.

If you think 'Me Time' may support you and your child, this is what you may do:

- Consider what your child will enjoy doing and what sort of short break would make a difference to you and your family.
- Discuss these ideas with people such as your lead professional or key worker, therapist, school, community nursing team, support group, social worker, health visitor or doctor. If you have a team around your child, someone in your team should be able to help you or contact the AHDC project team directly, details on page 8.



Some of the possibilities

There are after school clubs, community activities and hobby based opportunities for all children and young people. In addition there are some evening, Saturday and holiday clubs especially for children and young people with disabilities.

These can all be contacted directly by you. If you feel that your child could participate in these kind of activities if there was some additional support, AHDC is keen to develop this as an option. To discuss this, please contact those working with you and your family or the AHDC project team.

Some opportunities may require a more formal assessment. These include: Family Based Support, Family Support Services or Direct Payments, residential overnight stays, residential holidays with additional carer support.

You can find out more about these opportunities by contacting Social Care via Contact Essex on **0845 603 7627** or your social worker. If your child has healthcare needs, your community nursing team can advise as well.

Developments so far have resulted in children and young people:

- having more opportunities to participate in specialist holiday clubs and their activities across the county during the summer holidays
- having more opportunities to participate in specialist Saturday clubs and their activities across the county during the year
- having greater access to personal assistants who have been trained, recruited, vetted and placed with the family
- having more opportunities to participate in their chosen universal, leisure and community activity
- having greater opportunity to have more home care support because we have increased funding to service providers.
- families having more opportunities to have self directed support through Direct Payments

Encouraging children and young people with disabilities to participate in universal, leisure and community activities...

Very exciting news! Essex has commissioned **Out & About**. Out & About is a charity in the East of England which is focused on enabling children and young people to overcome the barriers they face when trying to access local leisure activities in their community. Out & About supports leisure providers to meet their needs and become more inclusive. There are a number of ways in which they help, from providing training and advice to providing a supporter who helps the child or young person until they are included in their chosen leisure activity.

Out & About wants to hear from:

- children and young people who want to access a local activity and need some support
- local leisure and community activity providers who want to include children and young people
- volunteers who want to make a difference.

To find out more about **Out & About Trust**, please contact them on **0845 241 2577** or visit their website **www.oaa.co.uk**

We are promoting Out & About to all our services and parent groups so that we all support children and young people being able to participate in their chosen leisure activity.



Children, young people and their families having greater access to personal assistants...

As part of our programme to increase the range and choice of short breaks, AHDC in Essex commissioned Cool2Care to provide vetted, trained, personal assistants who are matched directly with children, young people and their families.

This service is now up and running – families and young people have been matched with personal assistants and the young people are experiencing new short breaks.

Training programmes are continuing to increase the number of personal assistant available. There are now over 50 personal assistants across the county who have been trained and recruited by **Cool2Care** and are ready and keen to be placed with families.

You can pay for your Cool2Care personal assistant from Direct Payments, allowances or private means. By finding the best possible match, Cool2Care aim to meet the requirements of both the young person with disabilities and their family. They will suggest a suitable personal assistant for you to interview, however if the match is unsuccessful, they aim to find you another candidate. To find out more about this innovative service contact

Cool2Care on **0845 123 5484**
or visit **www.cool2care.co.uk**



Individualised Budget Pathfinder Pilot in Essex

Aiming High for Disabled Children as the major government programme to transform services for disabled children has 4 strands. These include transforming short breaks, improving parent and young people's participation, transitions support and most recently, piloting individual budgets for disabled children.

Essex was invited by the Department of Schools, Children and Families (DCSF) to be a pathfinder site for Individual Budgets for Children.

We are one of 6 pathfinder sites across the country. The pathfinder pilot projects run for 2 years until March 2011.

Individual budgets are used in Adult Services and the government wants to know how they could work for children's services. During the pilot, Essex will offer individual budgets and support planning to 30 children/young people to meet their assessed needs. The pilot project will be working with a small number of young people and their families but we expect that many more families will be interested in how the pilot is going. There will be an area on the Essex Aiming High website giving updates.

The first children's individual budgets in Essex are expected to be 'live' in February next year.

A multi-agency project board has been established which reports to the CWD Strategy Group and to the Be Healthy Children Trust Board and other forums.

Support planning and budget allocations based upon a Resource Allocation System (RAS) are key to individual budgets. We have started work on training staff in support planning and identifying other organisations who may wish to help families with support planning.

A support plan is a plan that recognises that people are active citizens who sometimes need extra back-up. It assumes that people know what they want from life. If they seem not to

know what they want, then they can be helped to discover this using a set of simple techniques. A support plan, therefore, says things about the person, who they are and what they want from life. It goes on to say how they might practically go about making their plan real over a period of time.

We have also started work on agreeing our RAS which should lead to a more equitable allocation of resources across CWD services.

For more information on the Essex pilot project contact Georgina Parkin

01799 514563

email: georgina.parkin@essex.gov.uk

For more information about individual and personal budgets, the following website from the voluntary organisation In Control is a useful source: <http://www.in-control.org.uk>



Aiming High for Disabled Children - Frequently Asked Questions

Here are some frequently asked questions that you may find helpful in understanding the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme.

FAQ: *What is a short break?*

A: A short break is the opportunity to have some 'Me Time'. 'Me Time' for the child or young person and 'Me Time' for the family. 'Me Time' can be anything from a couple of hours to overnight stays. They are designed to give children and young people with disabilities the opportunity to participate and enjoy experiences as well as enabling their family to have a break from their routine caring responsibilities.

FAQ: *Is Aiming High about more than Short Breaks?*

A: Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) is the major central government programme to help disabled children, young people and their families get the support and opportunities they need to live ordinary lives.

Aiming High for Disabled Children is intended to transform services for disabled children. AHDC has 4 strands – transforming short breaks, improving parent and young people's participation, transitions support and most recently trying out individual budgets for disabled children.

FAQ: *At what age can children be part of Aiming High for Disabled Children?*

A: Aiming High for Disabled Children will transform and improves services for all children with disabilities, from 0-18.

FAQ: *What holiday activities are there for children and young people with disabilities?*

A: There are many holiday activities for children with disabilities. Some of these are only for children with disabilities; others are available for all children.

Aiming High for Disabled Children in Essex will continue to increase the choice and amount of holiday activities for children with disabilities and we shall update information on the AHDC website.

FAQ: *What are Direct Payments and Individual Payments?*

A: Individual Budgets and Direct Payments are not the same thing, nor are they competing ideas. In a system of Self-Directed Support everybody is given an Individual Budget and some people decide to manage their Budget as a Direct Payment. Someone has a Direct Payment when their local authority provides them with cash instead of a service; the person then purchases their own support directly. A Direct Payment, in other words is a way of managing your social care money.

An Individual Budget is more than this. You have an Individual Budget when you know how much money you can spend. You know what outcomes you are aiming to achieve, and can decide exactly how and when that money is spent.

Early work with children, young people and their families suggests that high numbers of people do choose to manage their budget as either a Direct Payment or Indirect Payment. Some people choose to mix and match – part Direct Payment, part direct service. This is fine, if it is what the person chooses.

FAQ: *Will this scheme be embedded in Essex County Council's way of supporting children and young people with disabilities and their families in the future?*

A: Under Aiming High for Disabled Children, all those working with children with disabilities have to change and improve the way they work. We have to work together and make the children and family the centre of what we do. Services available to support children and families also have to change to make sure that they meet your needs. These changes and improvements will continue after the Aiming High for Disabled Children programme finishes in March 2011.

FAQ: *How can I find out about the different activities in my area?*

A: There are a variety of ways to find out about different activities in your area.

These include:

- Contacting the Family Information Service: Tel: **0800 556874**
email: **fis@essex.gov.uk**
- Contacting your local Children with Disabilities Social Care Teams through Contact Essex **0845 603 7627**
- Asking someone who is supporting you and your family such as your lead professional or key worker, therapist, school, social worker, health visitor or Doctor. If you have a team around your child, someone in your team should be able to help you.
- Using the SNAP Directory
- Contacting the Aiming High for Disabled Children project team
- Using the Aiming High for Disabled Children link in the Essex County Council's website. Don't forget this is still in development.



Aiming High for Disabled Children in Essex has a link in ECC website:

www.essex.gov.uk/ahdc is the new Essex County Council's website link for Aiming High for Disabled Children in Essex. The link is still in development. So far it contains information about Aiming High for Disabled Children and also what is happening within Essex.

As it develops the website will let you know these exciting opportunities happening or planning to happen in your area.

There is some information about the Essex Forum and its agenda, how to obtain support and advice, details of local and national events. Useful links if you are looking for specific information.

Hopefully we are making it more useful and more attractive to use. In the future we hope to make the web site a more active source and tool for communication.



Where else to find information

We recognise that information about services and support is very important and here are a few contact details that may be helpful to you

Family Information Services

Email: fis@essex.gov.uk

Tel: 0800 556874

Parent Partnership Service

Email: parentpartnership@essex.gov.uk

Helpline tel: 01245 436036

Choice Advice Service

email: choice.advice@essex.gov.uk

Tel: 0845 6032000

The **SNAP** *special needs and parents support group* for parents of children and young people with any special needs or disabilities.

www.snapcharity.org

Email: info@snapcharity.org

Tel: 01277 211300

Families InFocus (Essex) provides holistic, independent support to any Essex family who has a child with any disability/special need, requiring advice, information and support.

www.familiesinfocusessex.org.uk

Email: familiesinfocus@btconnect.com

Tel: 01245 353575 Fax: 01245 351625

Contact Essex for information and advice.

Tel: 0845 603 7627 or 0845 743 0430

4Children

Email: jayne.bentley@4children-essex.org.uk

Tel: 01245 438572



Essex Forum

As part of Essex County Council and its partners' commitment to Parent Participation, the Essex Forum of Support Groups are working closely with the Aiming High for Disabled Children project team to ensure that parents and young people's views are included in its planning and development. Parents' Forums will provide more opportunities for parents to shape the services their families receive in every area.



Essex Forum aim is to be the voice of parent/carers across Essex, working in partnership with the statutory authorities and voluntary sector to help inform everyone about what is happening both locally and across the county. This will be achieved by parent/carers working together and engaging with the Council and its partners at all levels, helping the shaping of services.

If you would like to know more and how to become involved, please contact Kevin Smith-Galer by Email: smith.galer@btinternet.com or telephone **07951 443225**.

The Children with Disability Strategy Group through the Aiming High for Disabled Children project team are very keen to hear what type of short breaks would be helpful for your child and your family.

You can do this by:

- Completing the questionnaire about childcare and short breaks that will be distributed before the end of November 2009 through a range of ways including through your child's school, early years settings, support groups, Child Development Centres. If you would like to request a copy directly, please email Emily.french@essex.gov.uk

You may receive this questionnaire through a number of sources; you only need to complete one!

- Contacting the Aiming High for Disabled Children project team
- Discussing your ideas with any of the support groups you may attend.



Contacting the Aiming High for Disabled Children project team

The Aiming High for Disabled Children's team in Essex is

Tony Crouch,
Linda Fisher,
Georgina Parkin,
Maria Alvarez and
Kevin Smith-Galer

They would like to hear from you – because your questions and feedback are very important.

To discuss anything related to Aiming High for Disabled Children, please do not hesitate to contact:

Tony Crouch
By email:
tony.crouch@essex.gov.uk
By tel: **01245 436 777**

Georgina Parkin
By email:
georgina.parkin@essex.gov.uk
By tel: **01799 514 563**

Linda Fisher
By email:
Linda.fisher@essex.gov.uk
By tel: **01245 436128**
Mobile: **07920 286 416**

Maria Alvarez
By email:
maria.alvarez@essex.gov.uk
By tel: **01245 436 128**

Kevin Smith-Galer
By email:
smith.galer@btinternet.com
By tel: **07951 443225**

The information contained in this document can be translated, and/or made available in alternative formats, on request.

Published November 2009

Children's views for the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal (SEND)

New regulations from the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal have given more strength to the requirement that Local Authorities must find out what the child thinks about the issues raised by the Tribunal proceedings. If the authority does not submit any views from the child to the Tribunal, they must explain why they have not been able to find out what the child thinks.

In Essex, children with special educational needs are already being asked for their views, for example, through reviews of their individual plans during statutory assessment and for Annual and Transition Reviews. We believe it is essential that children with special educational needs are involved in discussions such as these, where decisions are made affecting their future.

However, the materials and methods that we currently use to support these discussions are not always enough for SEND, as they do not specifically address the issues raised by the Tribunal proceedings. So a group from the Special Educational Needs and Children with Additional Needs Service (SENCAN) has

been exploring other ways of finding out and recording the child's views.

We have consulted parents and carers, school Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators, specialist teachers, educational psychologists and representatives of voluntary agencies and have developed materials, which have been piloted with some Tribunal cases during the Summer term 2009.

You may be familiar with the 'My Views' sheets, which are filled in by the child (with parents'/carers' and school support where needed), when a statement is requested. These sheets have now been changed to include more details of the child's thoughts about how they are getting on, about the help they are getting and about their needs. These views will be helpful to a Tribunal in many situations; for example, if an appeal is about a Local Authority decision that the child's needs can be met without a statutory assessment being undertaken.

Materials have also been developed to cover situations where 'My Views' are not available or do not address all the decisions the Tribunal will need to make.

With parents'/ carers' permission, these forms will usually be completed by someone in the school who knows the child well and who the child would be happy to talk to. Parents will be given the option of being present when this discussion takes place.

In some circumstances it might be a professional from SENCAN known to the child (such as a specialist teacher or educational psychologist) or, where the issues are particularly complex or exceptional, an advocate from an outside agency, who seeks the child's views.

Further details of these changes can be obtained from Parent Partnership Officers. Their contact details are on the last page of the Newsletter.

The new materials and arrangements will come into use in the Autumn Term 2009.



Working Together Through Transition – Essex Parent Partnership Conferences

The Essex Parent Partnership held 4 conferences around the county throughout June 2009. Chelmsford, Colchester, Basildon & Harlow were the chosen venues. The theme of the conference was 'Working Together Through Transition'.

On the day representatives of many of the services available to Young People and their Parents displayed their information and supplied advisers specifically to answer any queries that Young People or Parents had regarding Transition. Information from the

services available on the day included Children with Disabilities, Adults, Health & Community Wellbeing, Connexions, Essex Carers Network, Essex Coalition of Disabled People & Essex Parent Partnership.

Nick Presmeg – Senior Operational Manager, Adults, Health & Community Wellbeing & Gary Pocock – Head of SEN and Children with Additional Needs opened the conference together with an informal talk around the current work being done around transition for young people in Essex and how Essex are working together in partnership to create a streamlined service for those in transition.

Wendy Burt gave the audience her views from a parent's perspective, as a mother of children with learning difficulties. Her talk was very informative and gave lots of interesting tips on completing 'Dream Sheets' for annual reviews and some real practical advice on dealing with the various services involved in transition.

With her other 'hat' on Wendy also provided information at her stall on the Essex Carers Network, displaying examples of her son George's completed 'Dream Sheets' and the 'All about Me' forms as examples.

David Parker from MENCAP gave a first class talk on his experience of transition. David, who has a learning disability, spoke about his trials and tribulations of achieving exams, getting a job and having his own flat. David also gave the audience an insight into his personal life and how a young person with a learning disability exceeded professional expectations by getting married, having children and enjoying a family life of his own.

InterAct represented by Peter Dilley – Transition Broker and Connor Hickey – a young person going through transition, talked about Person Centred Planning and how it helped Connor to ensure his views, dreams and aspirations were met.

Parent/Carers Across Essex – Your County Needs You!



As part of Essex County Council commitment to Parent Participation, I would like to invite all parent/carers to become

involved by joining the newly developing Essex Parent Council.

Our aim is to be the voice of parent/carers across Essex, working in partnership with the statutory authorities and voluntary sector to help inform everyone about events happening both locally and at County level. This will be achieved by parent/carers working together to engage with

the Council at all levels and telling them what is working and what is not.

If you would like to know more and how to become involved please contact me,

Kevin Smith-Galer by
Email: smith.galer@btinternet.com
or telephone **07951 443225**



ConSENsus moved office on 1 September 2009

The new address is ConSENsus, 8a Looms Lane, Bury St Edmunds IP33 1HE

Telephone 01284 731580

(for 3 months our old telephone will have an answerphone giving the new number)



Supporting Inclusion during the summer reading challenge

The **Summer Reading Challenge** is a national activity and a well established tradition within Essex Libraries. It runs throughout the six weeks of the school Summer holidays and involves children in reading activities, setting them the challenge of reading six books. The activity is supported by exciting stationery including rewards and a medal. The aims of the challenge are to support children to read for pleasure during the school holidays and to encourage their families and carers to share books with children. The emphasis is on fun, informality and allowing children to read whatever they prefer.

This year's event, "**Quest Seekers**" saw a total of 46,160 children of all ages taking part. During the challenge they had to complete three quests involving firebirds, mountains and dragons. For each successful quest the children received stickers (some scratch and sniff) to complete their Quest Seekers poster and earn their golden book.

This year Essex Libraries went even further to include children with disabilities in this fun event. Library staff were specially trained to use bag books, which are tactile, multi-sensory stories especially for people with disabilities. Supported by Inclusive Communication Essex (ICE), a number of libraries worked closely with their local short stay units to provide tactile, interactive story sessions, which proved a great success with all involved"

During the Summer Reading Challenge, children with profound and multiple disabilities from Lavender House visited Stanway library and joined in the sessions. Both library staff and their support staff were delighted with the responsiveness of the children.

The relationship between the library and Lavender House has continued after the event with one young man joining and using the library independently and children being regularly supported to visit and use the library.

Sarah Mears, Children's Services Development Manager in Libraries said "We were really pleased to see more children with disabilities included in this years Summer Reading Challenge and we hope next years' event will see many more children come into their library and become involved"

If you would like to know more about Inclusive Communication Essex (ICE) then please contact Jason Boyce, ICE Resources Manager
Jason.boyce@essex.gov.uk
Tel: **01376 519625** Ext: **25**
Mob: **07825 115579**

or simply visit your local library to see how your child can become involved in the range of activities on offer throughout the year.



Appointment of the New Choice Adviser

Hello, my name is Hayley Jordan and I have been appointed as the Essex Choice Adviser. Previously, I was temping at SENCAN in Colchester as a Team Support Assistant, providing admin support to the Locality Casework Managers, Caseworkers and Educational Psychologists. This post gave me a good grounding for my new post, as I gained valuable experience of the education system from a local authority perspective. From a parent's perspective, I have three sons, one at university, one at secondary school and one at primary school.

Choice Advice is a statutory service that offers information and support to all parents and carers about the admissions process for the transition from Primary to Secondary school. In addition to casework with individual families and

providing information sessions to schools, I will also be involved in outreach work and aim to create links with the many community groups and organisations across Essex. Although there are clear boundaries around both my role and that of the Parent Partnership Officers, I look forward to working alongside my colleagues in the Parent Partnership Team. If you would like to speak to me about the Choice Advice Service, I can be contacted currently on the Parent Partnership line: 01245 436236. I look forward to hearing from you!



New Parent Partnership Officer: Mid Area Office

Personal Profile

My name is Ann Gregson and I have held the post as the Parent Partnership Officer for Mid Essex since beginning of May 2009, based at Crossman House, Braintree. The role of Parent Partnership Officer is a busy and varied one and as a people person I find meeting and supporting parents, visiting schools and working with other agencies interesting and enjoyable.

I previously managed projects for young disabled people and was instrumental in setting up

a Young Disabled Peoples Forum. I'm passionate about disabled children and young people having the same rights and opportunities as non disabled people. I feel that by working with and supporting the parents of children with Special Education Needs I'm indirectly helping the young people to obtain the appropriate support they need to reach their individual potential.

Ann Gregson
Parent Partnership Officer –
Mid Essex 01376 555615

EssexWorks.

For a better quality of life

Essex Parent Partnership contact details:

Parent Partnership Managers
Janet Hill and Clare Woodcock
(County Hall):
Telephone: 01245 436236

Parent Partnership Helpline:
Telephone: 01245 436036

Write to:
Essex Parent Partnership Service
SENCAN, Essex County Council,
E2 County Hall, Chelmsford,
Essex CM1 1LD

Parent Partnership Officers:
Mid SENCAN
Ann Gregson,
Crossman House, Station Approach,
Braintree, Essex, CM7 3QA
Telephone: 01376 555615

North East SENCAN,
Samantha Morgan,
Park Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3UP
Telephone: 01206 711134

South SENCAN,
Maggie Caley,
The Knares, Basildon, Essex, SS16 5RX
Telephone: 01268 632321

West SENCAN,
Vicky Spry,
Brays House, Tracys Road, Harlow, Essex,
CM18 6EH
Telephone: 01279 772817

Advanced notice
Change of Address for Harlow Area Office
As of 30th November 2009 our address will be: SENCAN, Goodman House, Station Approach, Harlow. CM20 2ET
Telephone: 01279 439266

Parent Partnership
Business Support Assistant
Elaine Brace (County Hall)
Telephone: 01245 436320

email: parentpartnership@essex.gov.uk
web: www.essex.gov.uk/parentpartnership

How are we doing?

We would welcome your feedback if you have any comments or ideas for future articles, please let us know. You can call Parent Partnership on the helpline: 01245 436036 or email us at parentpartnership@essex.gov.uk

Or write to us at:
Parent Partnership, SENCAN, E2 County Hall,
Chelmsford. CM1 1LD

The information contained in this newsletter can be made available in alternative formats: large print, braille, audio tape or disk. We can also translate this information into other languages.