

Blackpool Parent Forum

TO ADULTHOOD

BLACKPOOL
Parent
Forum

5 TO 12
YEARS

EARLY
YEARS

13 TO 16
YEARS



Newsletter *December 2021*

BLACKPOOL



Parent
Forum

Funded by



Department
for Education

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**We are parents
too!
Stay in touch.
Your voice will
be heard!**



Seasons Greetings

Welcome to the first issue of our quarterly newsletter about The Blackpool Parent Forum and SEND in Blackpool. We've co-produced this newsletter with Blackpool Council, the NHS and the local SEND Partnership Board. We wish you all a very happy Christmas and New Year. As we go to print life is again a little uncertain about larger events. We hope to be able to provide you more news about our plans in our next edition in the New Year.

We aim to...

- * bring you the latest news on work happening across Blackpool to support families who have children and young people with SEND.
- * a summary of activity in the North West and nationally.
- * an in-depth look at one or two key areas of change.
- * links to useful websites and relevant articles.

How the Parent Forum can help...

- * The Blackpool Parent Forum consists of a group of parents and carers of disabled children and young people, age 0-25, the aim being to ensure that local services in the area meet the needs of disabled children/ young people and their families.
- * We do this by gathering the views of local families and working in coproduction with the local authority, education, health and other providers to highlight where things are working well, or challenge when changes and improvements need to be made.

Join us...

- Have your say, know what is going on, improve services, share your skills
- Send your email address to blackpoolparentforum@outlook.com

Blackpool Parent Forum

find us on Facebook or email: blackpoolparentforum@outlook.com

Please allow fifteen minutes to complete Blackpool Council's survey

Please complete our survey at:

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/blackpoolsend2021>

The needs and aspirations of disabled children, disabled young people, those with special educational needs, and their families are central to the work we do. We want to deliver the right support at the right time to you and your family.

Across Blackpool services are working together to improve the way we work with children, young people, parents and young adults.

- We want to know what you think about the way we provide information and advice, support inclusion and independence and assess, plan and make agreements together about services.
- We want to share information and deliver services in a joined up way.

It is important for us to understand how we are doing now.

What works well and what could be different.

We will use the results of this survey to scope our future planning and priorities.

We will not collect any personal information to identify you.

Please complete this survey if you are a parent of a child or young person with SEND or if you are a young person with SEND.

This survey closes on 22nd December 2021.



Blackpool Local Offer

- * **Go www.blackpoollocaloffer.co.uk**
- * You can easily search for information about what services and support are available locally for children and young people with SEND, and their families
- * Save your searches for future use using the shortlist function
- * An extensive events section with lots of information about activities to do with your family



Some useful pages on the Local Offer:

For information about childcare go to:

<https://www.fyidirectory.co.uk/children-and-families/childcare/help-finding-childcare>

For information about short breaks go to:

<https://www.fyidirectory.co.uk/blackpool-local-offer/news/updated-short-break-statement-october-2021>

For information about EHC plans go to:

<https://www.fyidirectory.co.uk/blackpool-local-offer/ehc-plans/about-education-health-care-plans>

To view all services in the local offer go to:

<https://www.fyidirectory.co.uk/directory/categories/blackpool-local-offer>

For information about Max cards go to:

<https://www.fyidirectory.co.uk/blackpool-local-offer/news/updated-short-break-statement-october-2021>

For information about school transport and travel for children with SEND:

<https://www.fyidirectory.co.uk/blackpool-local-offer/travel/home-to-school-transport-and-travel-for-children-with-send>

Some useful contacts



Blackpool SEND Advice and Information Service

The Service also offers information and advice to parents, children and young people. The service is free, confidential, impartial and independent from Blackpool Council. They can also help if you have difficulties using the EHC hub.

They can also advise about the EHC plan process and what to do if you disagree with a decision.

Contact

W: www.blackpool.gov.uk/sendiass

E: sendiass@blackpool.gov.uk

T: [01253 477083](tel:01253477083)

Blackpool Council SEND team

The team manage the Education, Health and Care plan process including annual reviews. They can also help with matters relating to general support including school placements.

They can signpost you to other services if you are not sure who you need to ask. Available weekdays between 9am and 5pm (4.30pm on Friday)

Contact

E: send@blackpool.gov.uk

T: [01253 477602](tel:01253477602) or [01253 476553](tel:01253476553)

Blackpool Council Disability register and Max card scheme

Registration is voluntary. We encourage registration because this helps give a true picture of children and young people with special needs across Blackpool, helps us plan services and develop new ones. Children and young people eligible for inclusion on the disability register are also eligible for a MaxCard. This is a discount card that families of children with additional needs can use at venues across the UK to get free or discounted admission.

You can register at

W: www.fyidirectory.co.uk and search for Max Card

NHS Designated Clinical Officer

This is a single point of contact for families seeking health information. They listen to children and young people, families and professionals so that health services offer the right provision to ensure children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) are able to reach their goals and achieve their outcomes.

Contact

E: bfwh.lcn-tr.dconorth@nhs.net

T: [01253 956168](tel:01253956168)

EHC Hub

Parents and young people can view EHC plans, reports, give views and contribute to the annual review process online through a secure account.

Contact

W: <https://www.ehblackpool.org>

E: ehchub@blackpool.gov.uk



Young Empowerment Forum

We are a youth forum open to young people with SEND aged 13-25 and meets at one of the local special schools. The Junior young empowerment forum is open to primary school aged children and meets at one of the local primary schools.

The forums are an opportunity for young people to make positive changes to services for other people with SEND.

Recently the young empowerment forum has worked with professionals consulting on the local offer and having their say on what they want from services. This vital feedback helped to shape the focuses of the SEND strategy and the most recent short breaks offer.

Before COVID hit, the young empowerment forum began a project working with Blackpool Transport to create instructional videos on how to catch the bus and how to stay safe while travelling. These had to be put on hold due to the ever-changing restrictions, but we are delighted to now have a filming date for the videos which will hopefully go live later this month.

The young people have worked very hard to plan what should be included and have really used their experiences -both positive and negative- to hopefully help other people. The group are really excited to get the videos done and plan to carry out some further work with Blackpool Transport in the form of training for staff around hidden disabilities.

The group has also completed disability awareness training sessions, worked with the Performance Improvement and Project Delivery Lead at the council to make improvements to services and plan to undertake some work on preparing for adulthood.

The junior young empowerment forum is still starting out; it was created after a gap was highlighted in the age of our members. We felt it was important to include the voices of children and young people of all ages and having one older youth forum did not reflect this.

We currently have three schools involved in the project but are always keen to expand as the more schools we have on board the more young people are heard. The group has only had one meeting so far but hopes to work with the council to improve our parks and outdoor spaces.

If you would like to join one of our groups or are a professional keen to get some of your SEND children and young people involved, please contact the Children's Engagement Lead on the details below.

Name: Sophie England

Telephone: [01253 956652](tel:01253956652)

Email: sophie.england1@nhs.net



Do you have news or information to share that would be of interest to parents?

Please also tell us what you think of the newsletter, and if there is anything else you would like included

Please email us
blackpoolparentforum@outlook.com

Blackpool will probably have a local area SEND OFSTED inspection during 2022

What will happen...

- The inspection lasts five days, with five days' notice given . There are usually three inspectors: HMI from Ofsted, CQC Inspector, SEND specialist
- The inspection aims to establish how effectively the local area is working together to meet its responsibilities and improve the well-being of children and young people who have SEND.



It will look at how effective the local area is in 3 main areas:

- The inspection lasts 5 days, with 5 days' notice given . There are usually 3 inspectors: HMI from Ofsted, CQC Inspector, SEND specialist
- The inspection aims to establish how effectively the local area is working together to meet its responsibilities and improve the well-being of children and young people who have SEND.
- Improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND

Inspectors review a range of information in preparation, such as national data and inspection outcomes.

During the on-site fieldwork week they will:

- Visit providers across health, education and care to gather evidence
- Meet with elected members, local area officers from health, education and social care, leaders of early years settings, schools and colleges, parents forum and specialist services
- Visit settings and services to focus on their understanding of and participation in meeting the areas' responsibilities, and impact on improving outcomes

- Review a sample of children and young people's files
- Gather the views of young people and parents and carers
- Take account of any safeguarding concerns that arise and take appropriate action

After the inspection:

- A report will be published highlighting strengths and areas requiring further development. Local areas can also be given priority areas for action and/or if the inspection team judge that there are significant concerns, may be required to produce and publish a written statement of action (WSOA). This must be sent to Ofsted, Department for Education, Department of Health, and Care Quality Commission and must be published on both the Local Authority and CCG websites.

A supported internship towards employment

FOR YOUNG ADULTS 16 – 24 with learning difficulties



- Do you have a learning disability?
- Do you have a passion for work?
- Do you want to gain real work experience?

The goal for Project SEARCH is to provide real work experience where you can acquire the skills for a competitive market.

You will be immersed into real working environments, three in total, throughout an academic year (September to June).

A job coach and tutor will support you through your journey.

Run by Blackpool Council we work alongside many council departments and its companies, Blackpool Teaching Hospital and the private sector.



Contact us for more information:

- Email: project.search@blackpool.gov.uk
- telephone: 01253 477878

“Project Search is a fantastic opportunity and supported me into a job. I would recommend the one year’s internship to anyone.”

Will Quince gives keynote address to parents and carers of children with special educational needs and disabilities

Good morning and thank you for inviting me here to mark the inspirational work you do. I'm very glad to be speaking to you today as the new Minister for Children and Families. Throughout the pandemic, parent carer forums went above and beyond. You did everything possible to keep in touch with parent carers, working with local authorities and services to help meet families' needs. You have persevered day in, day out, to support families and improve services so that people can thrive.

I have been impressed by the way many of you have gone above and beyond every day to support children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). Your work exemplifies the impact and importance of the forums, to families across the country and to us in government. In my first 3 months, I have been listening hard to as many varied voices as I can. I have visited mainstream and special schools and providers, met with sector organisations and hosted roundtables. I have also spoken to children and young people, their parents and families – listening, and learning as much as I can. It'll be no surprise to you that Mrunal [Sisodia, Co-chair] and Tina [Emery, Co-chair] were high up on my list of people to speak to. I know I can trust them to relay the realities of your experiences and to give support and vigorous challenge to me and the department.

Going forward, I pledge to listen carefully to the lived experience of parents, that I will always speak to you straight, and that I will put you and your children first as we forge a new path forward. Because I have heard how you have suffered disproportionately during this pandemic. How it has intensified existing issues. I have heard, loud and clear, that too few children and young people with SEND maintained access to all their usual support, and particularly therapies, and too many are still waiting to have their full menu of support put back in place. And while, as a father, I know how important it was to get children back to school, for some it has understandably been really, really difficult. So why am I talking about forging a new path forward? I am here because I recognise improvements to the SEND system are urgently needed. I am here because we know what will happen if we fail to act. We need to take action now and in the future.

As just one example of the steps we can take to support children and young people now, earlier this year we offered training to teachers in using assistive technology which can reduce or remove barriers to learning for children with SEND. Today I'd like to take this opportunity to announce that from January, we will be working with Nasen and MicroLink to launch a pilot which will test how training can increase school staff confidence and capability in using assistive technology. But of course, we need to do more. And we will.

I am fully alive to the frustration many feel with delays to the SEND review and have committed to seeing it published for public consultation in the first 3 months of 2022. What I say to you today, and to all parents and families of those with SEND who are not getting the help they need, is that this review is a priority for me. It is a priority for the Education Secretary and Health Secretary. It is a priority for this Government. Work is moving at pace to finalise proposals. But we would not have got this far without you, the forums. As forums, you've contributed a lot to our understanding and really helped to shape the work of the SEND Review. You – and others – you have told us what we should focus on. You've offered constructive engagement and helpful solutions.

It is clear we need to get mainstream provision right so that needs are identified and met early and effectively across mainstream settings – whether in early years, schools or further education. We must reduce inconsistency of practice and end the postcode lottery. Alongside this, you can expect the review to have a strong focus on clarifying accountabilities at every level of the system. There will also always be a place for a strong specialist sector for those whose needs cannot be met by high quality mainstream provision. That is why I was so delighted to see the October spending review provided new investment of £2.6 billion between 2022 and 2025 to deliver new places and improve existing provision for pupils with SEND or who require alternative provision. This funding represents a transformational investment to improve the lives of so many of the nation's most vulnerable children.

Fundamentally, our proposals must lead to improved outcomes for children and young people with SEND and improved confidence in a financially sustainable system. They must realise the benefits of aligned education, health and care provision and prepare children and young people for a happy and rewarding adult life. That means improved outcomes in attainment, health and wellbeing, employment and independence – every facet of life. I want to see high aspirations across education, health and care at every level. I want to ensure we have the right resource, in the right place, at the right time, always.

And through all of this, the voice of children, young people and their families must remain central. I know I will need to take some difficult decisions. It is clear that the issues the SEND system faces are extraordinarily difficult. I do not and will not shy away from that fact. I know we have a duty to get this right, which is why public consultation on our proposals will be critical to shape our future reforms. We will make the consultation as accessible as possible so that we capture the widest range of views – and I hope you will encourage as many parents as possible to take part. And finally, I want to say thank you. For the work you have done to be a candid friend of local and national government. For the leadership and courage you demonstrated throughout the pandemic and the work you are doing to help us improve the SEND system. For the real difference, over many years, you have made to families.

Blackpool Council is helping children, young people and families improve their outcomes through its new Early Help Strategy.



The new plan, puts a fresh emphasis on empowering the council's partners and agencies to take the lead role in working directly with families - carrying out early help assessments and developing plans alongside the council's own early help teams.

This means that those in need of support will be able to access the right help early, as a need or problem arises, preventing the need for statutory services and support.

Over the past decade, pressure on children's services across the country has grown alongside child poverty; austerity; unemployment, welfare reform; and reductions to public service funding. Blackpool suffers similarly.

Since April 2019, Blackpool Council has received 11,800 requests for support for individual children, resulting in 5,300 social care assessments. There are nearly 600 children in Blackpool in care.

The council's Early Help Strategy aims to prevent families needing higher levels of support, by working with agencies and partners (including police, health, schools, nursery providers and colleges) to become more confident to deliver that support. This means social workers will have more time to focus on those families that do meet the statutory intervention level.

To ensure that children and their families can access support as soon as an issue arises, the council will:

- Work in neighbourhood areas with all providers delivering services to children and their families
- Use an early help process of 'assess, plan, do, review' to understand and respond to needs early
- Undertake early help assessments that consider whole family's needs but remain child and young person focused
- Support lead professionals from all agencies to undertake early help work
- Improve the quality and impact of its work to support sustainable changes with families
- Work within the Blackpool Families Rock model of practice

Families will need to 'consent' to work with services using the early help approach. Children and parents will be central to each stage of the process and will be supported to drive their own plans and make their own decisions.





EXCITING NEW PROJECT FOR BLACKPOOL CHARITY

Aiming Higher for Disabled Children & their Families is the Blackpool based charity that supports hundreds of local children and their families. The charity has been bringing the families of children with disabilities together for 10 years. For the last three years, the charity's Transformation Project has been funded by The National Lottery Communities Fund, providing families with disabled children with support from a team of Family Support Workers and a Development Worker.

Amongst other things, these workers have helped families with diagnoses, provided emotional support, navigated benefit forms and grant applications, find suitable housing and apply for Education & Health Care Plans. They also supported families at meetings with other professionals and suggested strategies to help with the challenges that life throws at them.

The biggest of these challenges, and one which no one could have planned for was obviously Covid-19. The team adapted their way of working completely to continue service delivery throughout lockdown providing support in lots of different ways.

The Transformation Project came to an end at the end of November 2021 but Aiming Higher are delighted to announce that they will be working with the National Lottery again with the creation of "*The Reaching Resilience Project*" which will run for 3 years from January 2022. The project aims to develop on the existing work, providing a real focus on the therapeutic interventions and building families' resilience; enabling them to manage challenges better. They will continue to work with families addressing diagnosis, health and social care, finances, education, mental health and housing.

As well as a Family Support Worker, the team will include a Short-term Intervention Worker and a Resilience Worker. The Short-term Intervention Worker will focus solely on families who only need

short-term help such as help completing a form or general advice. The Family Support Worker will then be able to continue to provide robust, early help for families who may otherwise reach crisis point

The Resilience Worker will work with parents, carers, siblings and young people with additional needs to highlight and build on their existing strengths and promote feelings of positive self-worth and capability to manage challenges.

This will include direct therapeutic work with children and young people with disabled. They will also consult with families and then deliver workshops for parents and carers, or children and young people on topics they feel are currently important.

Through this work, the charity aims to:

- Improve families wellbeing
- Reduce isolation
- Create healthier communities for children and parents/carers
- Build resilient parents/carers and young people
- Improve the communities understanding of disability so they can be part of a wider network of support

Latoya Sykes, Direct Services Manager at Aiming Higher explains

that the charity are incredibly grateful to the National Lottery for funding the new project. "The last 2 years have been filled with challenges and uncertainty in regards to funding and service delivery. We are grateful as an organisation to be able to continue supporting the disabled community as we are very aware that sadly other charities across the UK have not been so fortunate to survive the pandemic."



<https://www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/what-we-do/employment/toolkits>

Ambitious About Autism have created a **toolkit for young people and employers** to make it easier to find employment.

The resources will help employers to develop their awareness and understanding of autism. They will support the hiring and retaining of talented autistic young people.

These resources are also relevant for autistic young people, their parents/carers, teachers, and other relevant professionals to support a young person to make informed choices about their future employment opportunities.

October half term saw the return of Active Blackpool's Sport and Physical Activity camp

The camps are for 5–18 year olds who have mild to moderate additional needs. Sessions provided an opportunity for children and young people to experience activities they may already be familiar with but also encouraged them to try some new and exciting activities along the way. Record attendances throughout the week saw many new faces and some returning faces from the summer camp.

Participants took part in Football, Boccia, Table Tennis and many more activities.

The children enjoyed the last day the most as participants came dressed as witches, zombies, and many more spooky characters, for our halloween party, where they learnt how to move like Frankenstein, walk like a zombie, and even turned the Active Lives coaches into mummies! The camp was a huge success.

Bookings now being taken for our Christmas camp

Please email leah.wilkinson@blackpool.gov.uk if you would like to know more or book a place



ACTIVE BLACKPOOL DECEMBER SPORTS CAMPS

20th December 2021 – 23rd December 2021 8.30 – 17.30

24th December 8.30 – 16.00

Blackpool Sports Centre

Primary Aged 5 – 11 year olds

Secondary Aged 11 – 18 year olds

MONDAY **Invasion Games**
(Football, Rugby, Hockey, Basketball)

TUESDAY **Net and Wall Skills**
(Tennis, Table Tennis, Badminton)

WEDNESDAY **Striking and Fielding Skills**
(Cricket, Golf, Baseball, Tee – Ball)

THURSDAY **Athletics**
(Running, Jumping, Throwing)

FRIDAY **Friday – Personal Challenge Day and
Christmas themed Sporting Events.**

Sessions will provide an opportunity for children and young people with mild to moderate additional needs to experience sporting and physical activities they may be already familiar with but also some new and exciting activities along the way.

Please contact active.blackpool@blackpool.gov.uk
for booking and further information.

Bookings must be made prior to attending the session.

Full day and half day option for
children and young people.

Blackpool Council

ACTIVE BLACKPOOL

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T: 01253 478474

activeblackpool.co.uk

Blackpool Parent Forum

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