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If there are issues you'd like to see in future newsletters, contact admin@familyvoice.org.uk or 07535 895748.




family voice
norfolk
together improving services

FREE conference for all parents and carers of children (0–25 years) with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Hear about
the latest developments in EHCPs, Transition, Health and SEN support

Saturday 18th March 2017
10.00–15.30
John Innes Conference Centre, Norwich NR4 7UH

Come and participate
in informative workshops and individual sessions with service providers, charities and others
More than 30 information stands

For more information and to book a place
Please email admin@familyvoice.org.uk or ring/text 07535 895748 and leave a message with your contact details by 15 March 2017. Waiting lists may apply.
www.familyvoice.org.uk for more details

Open to members and non-members
Free to attend
Free buffet lunch
Children's (5–18) activities – limited places
BOOKING ESSENTIAL

 @familyVoiceNfk  FamilyVoiceNorfolk 

Family Voice Norfolk's Annual Conference 2017

This year's Conference is only a few weeks away. Each year is more popular than the last, and we do our best to fit in more stands, more workshops and more useful information for parent carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

Booking is essential and the easiest way to register this year is online. Click on <https://goo.gl/forms/gMpmFHUicZWMGFTo1> or copy the address into your browser. Registration is very straightforward.

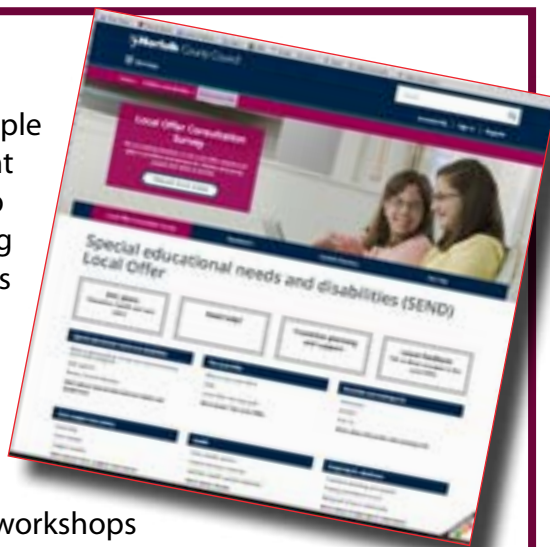
The link also enables you to book places for children's activities, but these are very limited, so allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

If you don't have internet access, ring 07535 895748.



Local Offer consultation 2017

The local council is very interested in knowing how people currently use the Local Offer website and how they want to use it in the future. The Local Offer is a one-stop shop online where you can find out about provision, planning and services for children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities in Norfolk. You can find it at www.norfolk.gov.uk/send



You can take part in the consultation by clicking on the online survey button on the home page of the Local Offer above, or you can attend one of the consultation workshops being held around the county. These will offer a walkthrough of the Local Offer website and the Norfolk Directory, prior to discussion about how they can be improved.

Three sessions will be run each day at each venue:

10am – 12pm 1pm – 3pm 4pm – 6pm

- Friday 24 February 2017: Kings Centre, Great Yarmouth NR31 0LE
- Tuesday 28 February 2017: West Norfolk Professional Development Centre, King's Lynn PE30 2HU
- Friday 03 February 2017: Fakenham College, Fakenham NR21 9HP
- Tuesday 07 March 2017: Ayton House, Wymondham NR18 0QQ
- Wednesday 15 March 2017: Green Britain Centre, Swaffham PE37 7HT
- Tuesday 21 March 2017: Norwich Professional Development Centre, Norwich NR7 9QL
- Tuesday 28 March 2017: The Bell Hotel, Thetford IP24 2AZ
- Thursday 30 March 2017: The Atrium, North Walsham High School NR28 9HZ

Open to all families and professionals with an interest in the Local Offer.

SEND e-Newsletter

If you do not already subscribe to Norfolk's SEND e-Newsletter, you can do so on the Local Offer website (see above) as well as finding past issues of the newsletter. The newsletter is full of information about events and services in Norfolk that may be of interest to you.

Family Voice Parent Participation Events

Thank you to everyone who came to the events we held around the county to find out what you feel about services for your families and what improvements need to be made. A full report on what you told us will appear in the February newsletter.



Travel assistance for those with hidden disabilities

Christmas is behind us, so everywhere we turn there are holiday advertisements.

You may be interested to learn that Norwich Airport has been working closely with numerous local charities to help make air travel accessible to all and improve the Special Assistance Service offered at the airport. As part of this commitment the airport has introduced a new scheme to assist passengers with hidden disabilities.

From December, coloured wristbands have been available free of charge for passengers and any friends/family/colleagues travelling with them to wear as a discreet sign to staff that additional support may be required while travelling through the airport.

Jamie Price, Norwich Airport's Security Manager commented, "Working with passengers who have or are affected by hidden disabilities such as autism, hearing impairment or sight loss can really help ease the fear of air travel. As a result we have made many changes to our Special



Assistance Service including providing the opportunity to talk with us, on a one to one basis ahead of travel to try and alleviate any anxieties or fears they may have about using the airport. We are also able to facilitate a 'trial run' at the airport before their chosen flight, which has already proven to be successful. We are keen to improve the airport experience for anyone travelling with a hidden disability and the new wristbands available for passengers who wish to wear them, is just another step towards improving the overall passenger journey through Norwich Airport."

The pale blue wristbands are available from the Special Assistance desk located just inside the terminal building.

New interim DCS



In the last newsletter, we reported on the appointment of Andrew Bunyan as interim Director of Children's Services in Norfolk. This month has come news of the appointment of Matt

Dunkley to take over from Andrew Bunyan as interim Executive Director of Children's Services in February.

As well as serving as DCS in East Sussex for eight years – for which work he was awarded his CBE – Matt Dunkley is also a past President of the Association of Directors of Children's Services.

"In Norfolk, I am keen to build on the 'green shoots' of recovery highlighted by both Ofsted and the DfE commissioner in their recent reports, as well as responding to the issues of pace of improvement in leadership they identified," said Mr Dunkley.

"There is clearly much improved practice in many parts of Norfolk children's services and staff in the service have been working hard on improvement and deserve recognition for what they have already achieved. My job will be to consolidate that progress while addressing the remaining areas where we need to improve faster to reach the required standard."

He will also help to recruit a permanent director.



News from the National Network of Parent Carer Forums

Family Voice Norfolk is a member of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF) and sends representatives to the Eastern Region Parent Carer Forum meetings that take place three times a year in Cambridge. A representative of the ERPCF sits on the steering group of the national body. Until autumn 2016, the Eastern region member of the national steering group was Norfolk Family Voice's steering group member Karen Wooddissee. Karen stepped down from both roles in September.

The Eastern region representative is now Mrunal Sisodia, who has a strong background in parent participation having helped set up the Bedford Borough Parent Carer Forum. He was also co-chair of the Eastern region from May 2014 to December 2015. As well as his experience with co-production, Mrunal brings a lot of management and leadership experience having held director-level positions in the financial services and charity sectors.

A voice to Government

Information and support flows in both directions within the network. Local Parent Carer Forums feed the views of local families to regional and national groups, while the NNPCF informs and supports individual forums about key issues, as well as working to speak directly to national decision-makers.

At the January meeting of the NNPCF steering group, Edward Timpson, Minister of State for Vulnerable Children and Families, attended and shared further funding commitments towards Parent Carer Participation and other services that support the implementation of SEND Reforms over the next financial year. He responded positively to a suggestion of further meetings, to include also his colleague Nicola Blackwood, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health and Innovation in the Department of Health and the NNPCF steering group.

The steering group also met with the Department for Education official who is leading on the Local Area Inspections, to share comments and observations from Parent Carer Forums around the SEND Local Area Inspections. These suggestions were welcomed and work will continue between the Department and the NNPCF to support the process.



Consultation

The Government is seeking to consult on the subject of work, health and disability. The consultation is open until 17th February and can be found at <https://consultations.dh.gov.uk/workandhealth/consult/>. The Government particularly wishes to hear from:

- people with health conditions and disabled people
- both large and small employers
- employability professionals
- health and care professionals
- families, friends, teachers and carers
- local leaders and commissioners in health, social care and local authorities
- voluntary and community organisations

