



# Parent Carer Forum newsletter Autumn 2025



## Welcome to the Autumn edition of the Parent Carer Forum Newsletter

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# Reviewing and designing the SEND Local Offer

**Laura Lewis:** for those who don't already know me, I'm part of the SEND Systems and High Needs Review Team. One of my key areas of work is the review and redesign of our SEND Local Offer.

Our aim is to make sure the Local Offer provides easy-to-find, high-quality, and up-to-date information for young people aged 0–25 with additional needs. It should be a resource that young people, parents and carers, and professionals can all rely on to find what they need.

Over the coming months, we'll be moving all relevant information from the our **current SEND Local Offer** into our **new site**—and we really need your help to get it right.

To give you an idea of what the new site could look like, please take a look at our **SEND Activities Page**

## How You Can Get Involved

Please register your email address so we can share updates with you: **Join the Consultation Group**

We'll create a mailing list of everyone interested in giving feedback—young people, parents, and professionals. When we have something new to share, we'll send you:

- A link to the draft page
- A short survey for your feedback

For example:

We've created a new **calendar of events**—please let us know what you think by completing this short survey: **Give Feedback**



If you register, you will receive this information and could complete the survey, or if you had more detailed feedback you could email me or book a meeting with me. If you didn't want to respond, that would be fine too!

Please share this invitation with anyone who might be interested in helping us shape the new Local Offer.

Thank you so much for your support!



# By Your Side project volunteer with Contact

## About Contact

Contact is a UK-wide registered charity, established in 1979 to support families whose children have a disability. Contact improves the lives of all families with disabled children. With them, we transform their lives, break down barriers and tackle disadvantage through ambitious, collaborative and innovative work. We make a real and lasting impact and are a force for positive change.

## Volunteer Role - About the Role

As a By Your Side project volunteer, you will be meeting families at our information stand in the Main Outpatients Department at the Great North Children's Hospital (RVI) Newcastle. The information stand is held every Wednesday between 9.30am and 2pm during term-time and we provide support and information to families visiting the hospital with their child(ren). Your role will be to greet and chat with families, offering support and signposting them to further support.

**Volunteer Job Title:**  
By Your Side Project  
Volunteer

**Responsible To:**  
Naomi Jacobs –  
BYS Parent Adviser

**Department and  
Location:**  
Family Support  
Great North Children's  
Hospital (RVI, Newcastle)

**Hours of Volunteering:**  
Term time only  
3-4 hours per week -  
Flexible

## Main Duties

- To work with Parent Advisers supporting families with disabled children using the Great North Children's Hospital and providing in-person signposting around issues faced by families with children with disabilities.
- To support parents to develop the skills, knowledge, and confidence to make decisions which are right for their families.
- Enhancing Contact's work with hospitals, aiming to reach more families early in their journey with their child's disability.

**To apply for this role and for further information please contact:  
[naomi.jacobs@contact.org.uk](mailto:naomi.jacobs@contact.org.uk)**

## Hadrian Education and Development Services (HEADS)

Hadrian School run a range of training courses for Parents, Carers throughout the school year 2025/6.

All courses start at 9.30am until 12.30pm.

Free training for Parents/Carers - open to all parent/carers not just those with children attending Hadrian school.

### 24th October 2025 – Behaviour as a form of Communication

For all professionals and family members who support a person with a learning disability, autism, or mental health problem, including those working in with people who have complex needs.



### 6th November 2025 – An Introduction to First Aid.

This 3-hour workshop is designed for school staff, parents, and other community members to provide essential first aid knowledge until a qualified first aider arrives on the scene. A certificate of attendance will be provided upon completion



### 21st November 2025 – Sleep Training.

Causes of sleep disturbance in children and how to address this.

Parents will be able to discuss issues together in a supportive environment, and learn from each other too. There is no single 'cure' or approach that will guarantee their children will sleep through, however the approaches discussed can be applied in a person centred way to hopefully bring some help to every family.



### **5th December 2025 – Introduction to Autism**

We will consider autism as a condition and how it impacts on the lives of individuals and how, in turn this can reflect on their learning. We will develop an understanding of how individuals with autism may need to be supported in a school environment and the adaptations that can be made. Special reference will be made to sensory issues and the importance of working in a person centered way.

### **23rd January 2026 and Introduction to Sensory Loss**

This course will help to learn how our senses affect us on a daily basis. What is sensory loss and how to support people who have a sensory loss, alongside disabling conditions such as learning difficulties/physical disabilities.

### **27th February 2026 – Complementary Therapies**

How complementary therapies can be used in person centred and holistic ways to help manage stress, pain and sleep problems. Introducing a number of therapies which can be used by everyone. Discuss how to give a hand and foot massage and learn relaxation techniques.

### **29th April 2026 – Mental Health Awareness Training – content to be confirmed**

### **24th June 2026 - Introduction to Epilepsy**

Understand more about causes, effects and supporting people living with Epilepsy. Learn how to deal with seizures and understand common treatments for Epilepsy.

**If you would like to book a place on any of the training, could you please email: [david.palmer@hadrian.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:david.palmer@hadrian.newcastle.sch.uk) or [daniel.coffey@hadrian.newcastle.sch.uk](mailto:daniel.coffey@hadrian.newcastle.sch.uk), or call school on 0191 273 44**



## Ways to Wellness football sessions for young people with health needs

Northumberland FA is proud to partner with Ways to Wellness, an organisation pioneering the transformative use of non-medical interventions across the North East and beyond, to launch 'Your Move' - a programme of inclusive training sessions for teenagers with acute or long-term health conditions that make it difficult to take part in traditional footballing environments.

Starting on 18<sup>th</sup> September, the outdoor sessions are open to those aged 13 to 17 and have been made possible by the FA's Journey to Inclusion Fund. Sessions will take place from 5pm each Thursday on the 3G pitch at St Peter's Sports Hub in Wallsend, North Tyneside.



The idea came about after Fliss Hunter-Nott, a specialist social prescribing link worker on our SPACE Pilot (Social Prescribing And Community rEsources) programme at the Great North Children's Hospital, which supports children and young people with chronic, complex conditions, noticed there was no existing football training provider that could meet the needs of one of the patients she works with.



Young people can register to take part in 'Your Move' on a form on the Northumberland FA website at [northumberlandfa.com](http://northumberlandfa.com), and to find out more about SPACE Pilot, and how it supports the young people in its care, and their families, visit [waystowellness.org.uk/space-pilot](http://waystowellness.org.uk/space-pilot).

# Starting2Move... On the Move!

A new physiotherapy-led project focused on promoting physical activity and movement in early childhood at a community and population level.

The project will run a series of movement-focused events across the North East and North Cumbria, in partnership with the NHS MELISSA Bus. The aim is to provide families with practical information and advice about childhood movement, free toys and resources, and offer space for questions and support.

The collective goal is simple: to make it easier for every family to access credible, practical and inclusive information to support movement.



The Starting2Move project is in collaboration with The Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Newcastle Hospitals Charity, The Newcastle Upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, Northumbria University and the Association of Paediatric Chartered Physiotherapists.

**Email: [melissabus@outlook.com](mailto:melissabus@outlook.com)**

**Website: [www.melissabus.co.uk](http://www.melissabus.co.uk)**

**[More information and practical resources about Starting2Move](#)**

# Caseworker contact and escalation process

## Making Sure Your Child's EHCP Is Being Followed in School

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), the school has a legal duty to make sure the support written in the plan is actually happening.

- This includes things like:
- Specialist teaching
- Therapies
- Equipment
- Extra help in class



## You Don't Have to Wait for the Annual Review

**If you're worried that your child's needs aren't being met, you can:**

- Ask your school/ setting to arrange an interim review – this is a meeting to look at the EHCP and check if anything needs to change.
- Contact the SEND Caseworker Team at [SEND@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:SEND@newcastle.gov.uk) – they work for the local authority and can help look into your concerns.



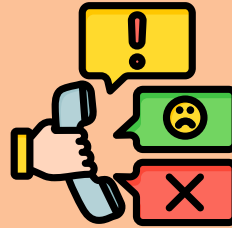
### What You Can Do:

- Speak to the school's SENDCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator)
- Keep notes of what's happening and what's not
- Ask for updates on how your child is doing
- Reach out for support if you feel things aren't improving
- You know your child best – and you have the right to speak up if something doesn't feel right.

## Step-by-Step Complaints Process:



- Speak to the School First
- Talk to the SENDCo or Headteacher.
- Share your concerns clearly – you can do this in person, by phone, or in writing.
- Ask for a meeting if needed.
- Contact the Local Authority
- If the issue is about the EHCP itself or the support in the plan not being provided, contact your SEND Caseworker Team on [SEND@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:SEND@newcastle.gov.uk).
- You can also ask for help from SENDIASS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information, Advice and Support Service) on
- Put Your Complaint in Writing
- If things don't improve, write a formal complaint to the school.
- Ask for a copy of the school's Complaints Policy – this will explain what happens next and how long it will take or if it is a complaint about the local authority send your complaint to [complaintschildrens@newcastle.gov.uk](mailto:complaintschildrens@newcastle.gov.uk)
- Ask for Mediation
- If you still feel things aren't being resolved, you can ask for mediation – this is a free service to help you, and the local authority find a solution.
- Appeal to the SEND Tribunal
- In serious cases, you can appeal to the SEND Tribunal. This is a legal process where an independent panel looks at your case.



## SEND Event Feedback

The SEND event taking place on Friday the 8th of August at the Civic Centre Newcastle. The feedback from the families that attended was great and the buzz in the room was lovely.

One parent said: “really useful info that we wouldn’t usually know how to access.” Another said: “lots of activities, you will never be bored”. Everyone who completed the feedback form said they were glad they came and that their children enjoyed it. 92% scored us five out five when asked if they had found useful information.

Visit this link to hear from one of our providers who attended the event: [Accessibility at the Life Science Centre - David Jones](#). Please look out for details of our next event in November 2025, where we will be focussing on SEN Education, Social Care and Health services.



### Saving money tips from Mobilise



Mobilise is the UK’s digital platform for unpaid carers, trusted by local authorities and carer organisations [Online support for unpaid carers | Mobilise](#)

We all know looking after someone can be costly, but there are discounts and offers available that are exclusively for carers. From saving us money on groceries, pharmacy essentials, and utility bills - to cheaper travel, classes for us, and days out - these little wins can make a real difference to our finances. [Click to see the updated carer discounts guide](#), packed with the latest savings. Don't miss out! that prevents them from doing so.

# Reasonable Adjustments Campaign

Set out in the Equality Act 2010 all health and care services have a legal duty to ensure that they adapt and support people with disabilities to be able to access services in a way that they are accessible for everyone else. This includes people with a physical disability, sensory disability, learning disability or a long-term condition such as dementia.

The changes they make are called reasonable adjustments. Reasonable adjustments can sometimes be very small changes such as a longer appointment time or providing information in an accessible format such as easy read. They may mean adaptations to their building such as fitting a ramp, lift or tactile signage. But they could also be quite complex and require significant planning across health and care teams.

By identifying the need and providing reasonable adjustments in a timely and effective manner it can lead to improved outcomes and experiences for patients and health and care staff.

The Reasonable Adjustment Campaign has been developed by the North East & Cumbria Learning Disability Network. Its aims are to:

- Raise awareness of people's rights to reasonable adjustments
- Raise awareness of the legal obligation of health & care services to provide reasonable adjustments
- Support health & care services to provide reasonable adjustments
- Support health & care services to document and share reasonable adjustments



**Find more information and resources to support you on the Learning Disability Network website**

## What is Children and Families Newcastle?

Children and Families Newcastle brings services together so they can support children and families to get the help that they want and need, accessing different services and activities in buildings they know in their local area. We want to make sure children, young people and families only have to tell their story once, and get the support they need, when they need it.

## SEND support within the Community Family Offer:

The Community Family Offer (CFO) provides support to families with children who have SEND.

Whether you're looking to tackle an ongoing problem or prevent one from happening, Early Help can support your family to stay on track. You don't need to face challenges on your own.

Often an informal chat with a teacher, health professional or support worker can be a useful way to explore what support is available. However, if that's not right for you, then the Early Help team can help. You can talk through your issue with us to find solutions. We have a range of resources, contacts, and support plans for your family to use.

As part of the Early Help offer, Family Partners and Intensive Family Support teams work with families to identify and support needs through Early Intervention Conversations, and Early Help Assessments and Plans.

They act in a bridging role between home and school, sharing information on appropriate supportive services available within the community, or offering support to implement strategies at home, enabling families to manage challenges more confidently.

Family Partners and Intensive Family Support workers can chair (or support in) Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings, where the aim is to streamline support – for example, a TAF meeting will include colleagues from various services who work together and with the family to consider the best way to offer support.

Each school within Newcastle Local Authority has an allocated Family Partner, whose role includes supporting young people and families to navigate and connect with services available to them.

## Groups and Activities



The Children and Families Newcastle website provides information on all aspects of the Community Family Offer (CFO). Schools, childcare providers and wider agencies have QR codes which provide instant access to information on the range of services available across the city.

Please visit: [childrenandfamiliesnewcastle](https://www.childrenandfamiliesnewcastle.org.uk)

The **North East Autism Society** runs weekly sessions/workshops in the community family hubs, hosted by the CFO. Families can discuss concerns, share challenges, and explore common misconceptions and differences in autistic children. There are group sessions and also individual appointments. For more information please visit [ne-as.org.uk](https://www.ne-as.org.uk)

### **Other parts of the CFO specific to SEND include:**

- Rainbow Borrowers (a Toy Library for children with additional needs which runs in East locality)
- Masquer-Aid and Fab Group (peer support groups for neurodivergent young people which run in Inner West and East localities)
- SEND support groups for parents and carers (Outer West and North localities)

Family Hub buildings aim to be fully inclusive spaces through making simple adaptations. Providers who use spaces within our buildings complete an inclusivity questionnaire which allows us to benchmark how accessible each session is, and to identify and overcome potential barriers to accessibility.

For more information about Children & Families Newcastle, please visit: [Children and Families Newcastle](https://www.childrenandfamiliesnewcastle.org.uk)

# Preparing for Adulthood - “Getting ready for next steps”

Does your child have an Education, Health and Care Plan?  
Would you like to know what services are available to support them as they get ready for their next steps?

There will be informal drop in sessions across the city for parents to ask questions and get information about opportunities and support for young people following their Year 9 Review and beyond.

There will be representatives from a variety of services for you to talk about social care, health and education. Please use the QR Code below to view the transitions guide for further information.

## Date and Venue:

Tuesday 21st October	13:00 – 15:00	Thomas Bewick	Linhope Road, West Denton, Newcastle Upon Tyne, NE5 2LW
Tuesday 4th November	10:00 – 12:00	Trinity Academy	Uppersite, Condercum Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 8XJ
Friday 28th November	10:00 – 12:00	Sir Charles Parsons	Westbourne Ave, Walker, NE6 4ED
Tuesday 27th January	13:00 – 15:00	Newcastle City Learning	West Rd, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 9LU
Friday 27th March	10:00 – 12:00	Newcastle College, Rye Hill Campus	Scotswood Road, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE4 7SA



# Preparing for Adulthood Event

We are pleased to invite you to a special event focused on Getting Ready for Next Steps and improving outcomes for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) at the Civic Centre, Newcastle, on Friday 7th November 2025.

This event will bring together services, schools and settings, families, and young people to explore key themes around the transition to adulthood, including education, employment, independent living, adult social care, and health.

We're delighted to welcome Marian Cullen from the Department for Education (DfE) as our keynote speaker, alongside presentations from local services and young people sharing their experiences.

Lunch will be provided and there will be opportunities for networking and visiting a marketplace of services and resources. Please share this invitation widely and post on social media so others can join us.

👉 **Please click the link or scan the QR code below to register:**

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/supporting-better-outcomes-for-young-people-with-send-tickets-1759813753309?aff=oddtcreator>

**We hope you can join us to help shape better futures for young people with SEND.**



# Preparing for Adulthood Workshops

Newcastle Local Authority have listened to parents concerns about not having enough information to support their young person to move forward into adulthood.

So, alongside the coffee morning drop ins at venues across the city, and the event at the Civic Centre on November 7th, **Skills for People** have been commissioned to produce workshops for parent carers to guide them through the process in Newcastle and to become knowledgeable about what support is available and how to access this.

Watch this space for information about the upcoming workshops which are scheduled to start January/February 2026 and to register your interest, please contact Skills for People on 0191 2818737.

