

[View this email in your browser](#)



## Parent Carer Forum newsletter Winter 2025



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

#### In this issue:

- Newcastle Parent Carer Forum Volunteer opportunity
- Neurodevelopmental Welcome Event
- Preparing for adulthood workshops
- Feedback on EHCPs
- SEND reform update
- Family Lives
- Citizens Advice Gateshead Great North Children's Hospital Project
- Supported internship recruitment fair
- SEND transport update
- SEND support hub Autumn event
- Useful Vision events brochure
- Community short breaks: Art programme

We always welcome feedback on our newsletters, and try to include issues that families have asked us about. Please let us know if there are any services you would like to know more about and what you would like us to include in our newsletters

E-Mail us at: [contact@newcastlepcf.co.uk](mailto:contact@newcastlepcf.co.uk)





## Volunteer opportunity



★ Join Newcastle Parent Carer Forum – Make a Big Difference with a Little Time! ★

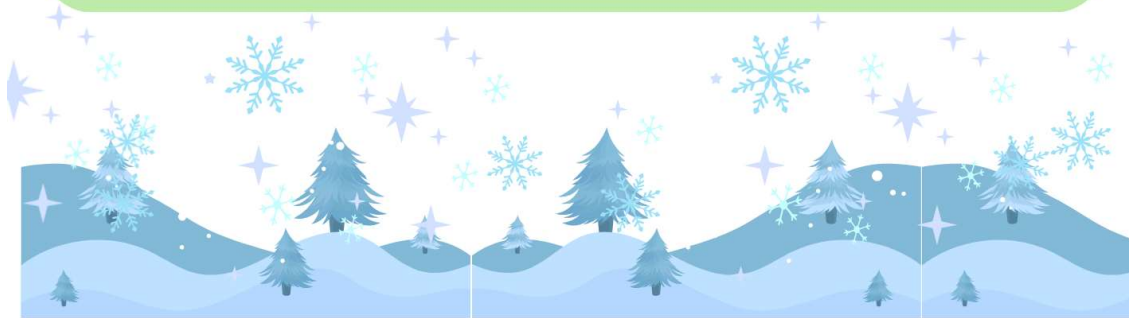
Are you a parent carer in Newcastle? Your experience is powerful! By volunteering with us, you'll help shape services and support for families like yours – and it doesn't have to be a big commitment.

### Why get involved?

- ★ Learn new skills – advocacy, communication, and leadership.
- ★ Meet amazing people – connect with other parent carers and professionals.
- ★ Make your voice heard – influence positive change for our community.

Even a small amount of time can make a huge impact. Together, we can create better opportunities for families with children who have additional needs.

Interested? Email us at: [contact@newcastlepcf.co.uk](mailto:contact@newcastlepcf.co.uk)  
Your voice matters – let's make it count!



## Neurodevelopmental welcome event



## Is your child neurodiverse?

Drop in to find out about;

- autism & ADHD diagnosis,
- support for parents and carers,
- mental health support,
- activities and groups,
- and more

19<sup>th</sup> January, 12.30pm - 3.30pm,  
St Martins, Byker, NE6 2RJ

24<sup>th</sup> February, 1.30pm - 4.30pm,  
Carnegie Hub, Benwell, NE4 8XS

20<sup>th</sup> March, 9.30am - 12.30pm,  
The Haven, Kenton, NE3 3RX



These events are for families with a child over 5 on the neurodevelopmental pathway, or families considering joining the CYPS waiting list.

For further information about the event please visit  
ChildrenandFamiliesNewcastle.org.uk website:  
<https://childrenandfamiliesnewcastle.org.uk/neurodevelopmental-welcome-event>



## Preparing for Adulthood

**Do you and your young person have a plan for the future after leaving school or college?**

These workshops are for parent/carers who have a young person in Year 9 and above who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

We will explore how to get the right support in place for the best life possible and how you can prepare for them moving into adulthood.

There will be speakers from education, health, social care and voluntary services.

### Workshops run over 2 days



**Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2026 and Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2026**



**From 9.45 – 2.15pm (lunch provided)**



**Location: Skills for People, 4 Glendale Terrace,  
Byker, NE6 1PB**

To book a space, please contact Skills for People on 0191 2818737 or email [info@skillsforpeople.org.uk](mailto:info@skillsforpeople.org.uk)



## Feedback on Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP)



Newcastle City Council has received feedback from the SEND Tribunal that Section B of their EHC plans is not sufficiently focused on needs and contains too much information.

The SEND Code of Practice says that Section B of the EHC plan must specify all of the child or young person's identified special educational needs. Section B may also include needs for health and social care provision that are treated as SEN provision because they educate or train the child or young person. Each primary need should be listed separately so it's easy to check that there is support in place for every one of them.

In response, Newcastle City Council have been trialing a new approach to writing Section B, focusing on needs. This means some of the narrative previously suggested by advice writers has been reduced. Other Local Authorities are also changing how Section B is written.

Parents/carers will continue to have the opportunity to comment on any changes made to their child's EHC plan following the annual review process.

The deadlines for a phased annual review of an EHCP are February 15th for transfers to any other phase of education (e.g., primary to secondary) and March 31st for transfers from secondary school to a post-16 institution. A further review is required at least five months before a move from one post-16 institution to another.

For more information on Phase transfer reviews please visit IPSEA :



[www.ipsea.org.uk/phase-transfer-reviews](http://www.ipsea.org.uk/phase-transfer-reviews)



Annual Review Timetable - SEN help <https://www.sen-help.org.uk/other/annual-review-timetable/>



Reminder that the closing date for reception applications is 15th January 2026

Apply for a school place | Newcastle City Council

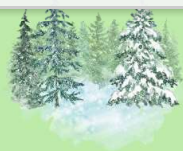
[www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/apply-school-place](http://www.newcastle.gov.uk/services/schools-learning-and-childcare/apply-school-place)

[Phase transfer reviews](#)

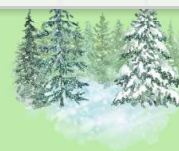
[Annual Review Timetable - SEN help](#)

[Apply for a school place | Newcastle City Council](#)

---



Summary of an update from:  
Georgia Gould OBE MP  
Minister for School Standards



There is a [national conversation](#) on the future of SEND. This builds on a year of engagement and expert leadership and will help us make sure our proposals for reform are rooted in the experience of children and young people, parents and all the teachers, support staff and professionals who are supporting them.

For too long, we have seen a system where too many children are not accessing the support they need to thrive, despite many teachers, SENCOs, and support staff going above and beyond for children and young people with SEND, often in very challenging circumstances.

When we talk about a system that isn't working, we talk about the structures and processes around you, not the dedication of professionals in our settings.

Our plans will be built from the pioneering work happening in mainstream and special schools to support children with SEND, and we want to hear your ideas.

### **What we're doing**

We're committed to delivering a SEND system that stands the test of time and delivers positive outcomes for all children and young people.

Early next year, we will publish the Schools White Paper and our plans for improving SEND support, making sure every child and young person can thrive. This will be followed by a period of formal public consultation and engagement.

We want to hear from families and carers, teachers and staff, health and care practitioners, and local authority workers – to ensure reforms reflect lived experience and practical insights. This is a direct line to the people who know the system best and want it to work better.

---

have done over the last year, five key principles are guiding our approach to reform.

These are:

- **Early:** Children and young people should receive the support they need as soon as possible.
- **Local:** Children and young people with SEND should be able to learn at a setting close to their home.
- **Fair:** Every setting should be resourced and able to meet common and predictable needs, including when they change over time.
- **Effective:** Reforms should be grounded in evidence.
- **Shared:** Education, health and care services should work in partnership with local government, families, teachers, experts, and representative bodies.



### Get involved

Starting in Bristol, my ministerial colleagues and I will travel to every region of England, holding events across the country.

I'll also be hosting five online events with SEND experts, each focusing on one of our guiding principles of reform. There will be an opportunity to share views and ask questions. You can book onto as many of these as you like.

We have developed a toolkit for those who want to organise their own events to speak to young people, families, or education staff – you can find that under 'related' on our website.

I hope you will join us in this vital conversation and encourage your colleagues and the parents and families of children and young people with SEND in your setting to take part in whatever way suits them best. Above all, we are keen to hear the voices of children and young people themselves and how they want to be supported by our education system.

Every child deserves the opportunity to achieve and thrive in their setting. That's exactly why we are opening the doors to every parent, carer, teacher, and practitioner who wants to drive change. Every voice will help shape the system our children and young people deserve.

[SEND Regional Engagement Events with the Department for Education](#)  
[SEND Reform National Conversation - Online Series | Eventbrite](#)  
[SEND reform national conversation - Department for Education - Citizen Space](#)

---

Family Lives services are free to access and here to support you with parenting and family challenges. Get one-to-one support through their free helpline on **0808 800 2222**, live chat or message them via WhatsApp on **07441 444125** to connect with experienced professional family support workers and highly-trained volunteers.

You can also visit our [online forum community](#) to share dilemmas, experiences and issues with others who understand the ups and downs of family life.



They also offer [free online parenting courses](#) offer a supportive way to navigate parenting and family life from the comfort of your own home. Whether you're raising a baby, navigating the teen years, or co-parenting, we have a wide range of free courses tailored to all ages and stages. Our new baby course is in also Arabic and Pashtu.

Sign up to their [newsletter here](#) to keep up to date with monthly emails including tips, information and guidance.

### **Citizens Advice Gateshead Great North Children's Hospital Project**

Free advice and assistance for anyone who is receiving treatment under the Great North Children's Hospital at the RVI, including patients, carers and family members. Help includes benefits advice, help with money worries, grant applications, housing, and employment issues.

Also available to Newcastle residents Citizens Advice Gateshead Davidson Building Swan Street Gateshead NE8 1BG Phone: 0191 490 4199 Phone advice: Monday - Friday: 9.00am - 5.00pm

Drop-in-service: Tuesday and Thursday 10am - 1pm Medi cinema in RVI New Victoria Wing Email:

[GNCHfoundation@citizensadvicegateshead.org.uk](mailto:GNCHfoundation@citizensadvicegateshead.org.uk)

Website <https://citizensadvicegateshead.org.uk/>



citizens  
advice

[Family Lives forum](#)

[Free online parenting classes | Family Lives](#)

[Family Lives newsletter sign up](#)

[Home - Citizens Advice Gateshead](#)

---


# SUPPORTED INTERNSHIP RECRUITMENT FAIR



Young people aged 16–24 with an EHCP. Come along and choose the right supported internship for you!

**Join us at Home Group, Strawberry Fields (5th Floor) at One Strawberry Lane, NE1 4BX**

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2026  
10am–12:00pm**

 On attendance can you collect a visitor badge from the host team at Reception.

**Parents/carers can come along and see what is available.**

Please scan the QR code to register a place





## SEND transport update



The proposal to amend the offer for home to school transport for children and young people with SEND, Post 16 was withdrawn from Cabinet following feedback received. There are no changes at present, although obviously we do need to identify how we will address the financial pressures. Our Assistant Director, Paul Shadforth is looking to establish a working group to look at options which will include potential growth in our Independent Travel Training offer.

Our personal travel budget (PTB) offer has proved much more popular with parents, and we now have the highest ever number of families accessing a PTB as the transport solution. It is completely flexible, families can use the funds however they choose, such as joining up with other families to share resources and responsibility, using the money for siblings to free up their own time to help with taking the eligible child to school and may more. We are hoping to showcase some examples of this when our capacity allows.

Just to make you aware, we will be undertaking a whole new procurement exercise over the next few months, to deliver new contracts to begin Academic year 20206/27. We always try to minimise disruption to children's arrangements, but it is likely that a number of families will be faced with different arrangements from September 2026. This is something we must do to comply with procurement legislation.

Linda Steel  
SEND Place Planning & Transport Service Manager  
Newcastle City Council  
Education & Skills  
Civic Centre



## SEND Support Hub 2025 Autumn Event

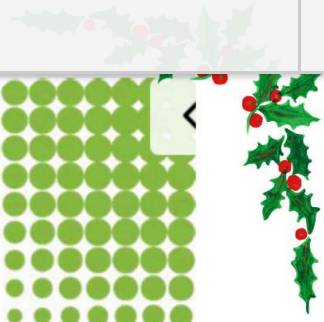
After a successful SEND Support Hub event at the Civic Centre in the summer, this time we were at the wonderful Galafield Family Hub. Over 30 parents, carers and young people came to find out about local education, health, and social care services that support children and young people with SEND. The room was filled with chatter throughout the morning as friendly service providers shared information.

There was also a free voucher for a hot drink from the café for those who came along. A quiet room with sensory toys and a free soft play session for little ones were also available. Claire from Footsteps said ‘...it was great to meet with families that had not heard of the Access Fund and to be able to introduce them to the offer. Some of these families haven't yet been receiving support with being new to the area and were really happy to connect with different services.’



A big thank you to everyone who came and helped make this event another success. We will be holding more of these SEND Support Hub events in the new year.





usefulvision

January - February - March 2026

Activities for visually impaired children  
across the North East



[www.usefulvision.org.uk](http://www.usefulvision.org.uk)



Part of **Healthworks**  
the community health charity

Useful Vision is a service providing positive opportunities and jam-packed events for visually impaired children around the North East. They work with children and their families to give them the support they need to flourish.

**Click the link to explore their events brochure:  
[Final Useful Vision Brochure Jan-March 2025 \(2\).pdf](#)**



Community Short Breaks:  
**Arts Programme Spring 2026**

## Hang Out and Dance

Join us for an inclusive dance, movement and aerial programme, at Dance City.

Time: 1pm - 2pm: Under 12 years. 2:15pm - 3:15pm: 12-18 years

Dates: Sundays 18th January, 1st February, 15 February, 1st

March,  
8th march

Cost: £8 per child

Book online at [www.dancecity.com](http://www.dancecity.com)  
or call Lynn on 07906854092 for more  
information.



## Saturday Art Classes

Join our monthly inclusive art class ,for 10-15 year olds, at  
The Laing Art Gallery.

Time: Session 1: 10:15 - 11:45am. Session 2: 1:30pm - 3pm

Dates: 3rd January, 7th February, 7th March

Cost: £5.39 per child. Buy tickets at  
[www.northeastmuseums.org.uk](http://www.northeastmuseums.org.uk) - What's On

For dates, more information and to  
book, or if you'd like to have an informal  
chat with the tutor before booking,  
email [learning@laingartgallery.org.uk](mailto:learning@laingartgallery.org.uk)



Community Short Breaks:  
**Arts Programme Spring 2026**

## Konnect Lab

Join our inclusive music-making programme, for 12-17 year olds, at Cluny 2. Try music technology, looping, recording and percussion to create music. No experience needed!

Time: Thursdays at 4:15pm - 5:45pm

Dates: 15th, 22nd, 29th January and 5th, 12th, 19th February

Cost: Free

To book, or for more information, call Jim on 07941049722 or email [info@konnectaudio.com](mailto:info@konnectaudio.com)



## Art Garden and Music & Movement

Join our family-friendly inclusive outdoor sessions filled with art, music, movement and exploration, at Scotswood Gardens. Please dress appropriately for outdoors.

Time: 1:30pm - 3pm

Dates: Saturdays, beginning 10th January. However, other events may affect this.

Please contact Sally for dates.

Cost: Free.

Booking is essential. Please Contact Sally on 07808473300 for dates, to book or to find out more.



Our website is:

**[Newcastle Parent Carer Forum](#)**

Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#)