

Thursday February 29th 2024

# VOICE 4 PARENTS

NEWSLETTER



'giving a voice to parents & carers of children with additional needs'



Time to Connect

Our next Autism Café will run on

March 23rd 2024—4-6PM @ Vanilla Coffee shop, 6a School Road, Tettenhall WV68EJ as always,

There are games and complimentary crisps and squash for the children as well as the chance for refreshments and cake treats at subsidised prices for our families. Everyone Welcome

Check out our facebook page:

[Time to Connect - Autism Cafe | Wolverhampton | Facebook](#)

or visit our V4P website to learn more:

[Time to Connect - Autism Cafe | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](#)

Please e-mail [Emma@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:Emma@voice4parents.co.uk)

if you have any questions, concerns or queries.

## Coffee Morning

Our Coffee Mornings are back!

We have been delighted to welcome our existing and new members back to our coffee mornings this month. The turnout has been brilliant and it was great to see so many of you. Thank You!



Everyone is welcome—so please come along, have a cuppa and meet people that just get it!

Dates for your diary: 5th march, 16th April, 7th may, 4th June, 9th July, 10th September, 8th October, 5th November and 3rd December 2024.

Look out for more dates to be added soon!

Our Coffee Mornings will run @ Low Hill Strengthening Families Hub, Fourth Ave, WV10 9LZ

10—12PM.

## Transport Questionnaire

CASBA are doing some research around public transport and have designed a questionnaire. We know transport in general is a problem for a lot of us given the challenges associated with our disabilities, but we know public transport in particular presents a whole realm of challenges.

CASBA have designed a short questionnaire, for anyone wanting to share their valuable feedback to go towards their research.

<https://forms.gle/kl3zfKZS1SaHt2nc9>

## How to become a member?

In order to go straight to our membership form, please use this QR code.

Please be ready to show proof of address and SEND need if asked. Also note memberships and membership number queries are processed every Monday evenings only. Outside of these hours, we cannot guarantee a swift response.



## Local Support Grant / Autism Survey

As many of you will be aware we have recently launched our Local Support Grant Application and our Autism Survey. Thank you for those who completed the local support grant application, however we still have a large number who have indicated that their child/young person is either diagnosed/on the pathway/suspected autistic and have not completed the Autism survey.

Please note that it was criteria of the grant that the survey be completed if applicable to your Childs/Young Person needs.

We hope to start looking at Local Support Grant applications in the next couple of weeks and will be crossing referencing applications with the survey, can we please ask that you complete this survey if appropriate. Please see link below <https://forms.office.com/r/Kg9vp7GWPK>

For any queries about local support grant, please email [events@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:events@voice4parents.co.uk).

## Our NEW Website

Come and check out our new website, give feedback and find out more about us, the work we do and sign up to become a member @ [www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk](http://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk) or scan the QR code opposite.

We hope you enjoy it as we are updating it all the time with new information. If you have any queries, comments, suggestions or feedback on the website or if you would like to see something important added, please feel welcome to email: [emma@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:emma@voice4parents.co.uk)



## Power Of Words (POW) Project

This is a V4P led project based on families telling us how Words and Language used by Professionals have the power to impact families, Children and Young People. Work is now complete on the Power of Words project that was Co Produced with Outreach. ;

As we can now share with you all, we would like to again say thank you to all of you who took part, helping to make this possible.

Please take a look at our video and let us have any feedback. Thank You

The video and further information can be found at

[The Power of Words | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](#)

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### Help and Support in our City

- ◆ Food Banks—<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/benefits/social-security-benefits/food-banks-and-soup-kitchens>
- ◆ Community Shops—<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/community-shops>
- ◆ The Good Shepherd—<https://www.gsmwolverhampton.org.uk/>
- ◆ The Well—<https://www.thewellwolverhampton.co.uk/>
- ◆ The Good Night Project— <https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/cost-of-living-support/the-good-night-project>
- ◆ IASS - <https://wolvesiass.org/>
- ◆ Include Me Too—<https://includemetoo.org.uk/contact-us/>
- ◆ Sunshine Support—[Resources - Sunshine Support \(sunshine-support.org\)](https://resources-sunshine-support.org)
- ◆ Please also remember to check out our V4P Website — [WWW.VOICE4PARENTS-WOLVES.CO.UK](http://WWW.VOICE4PARENTS-WOLVES.CO.UK) and look under our 'support in the city tab' for further details.

### Mental health for Early Years Children

Help for Early Years Providers has added [new information and guidance on supporting babies and young children with their mental health.](#)

The guidance:

- explains how practitioners can support positive mental health in early years children
- includes emotional and behavioural support strategies to use in early years settings
  - links to further reading and resources

For more guidance on supporting children in the early years, visit the [Help for Early Years Providers website.](#)

**Lead person to contact in LA:**  
Stacey Henderson  
Early Years Senior Advisor

Email: [Stacey.Henderson@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:Stacey.Henderson@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

### The Way to provide free entry and hot meals this winter

The Way Youth Zone will be providing free entry and free hot meals for young people throughout the winter, thanks to funding from the Community Organisations Cost of Living Fund, delivered by The National Lottery Community Fund.

It will be able to give free entry to all young people aged 8-18 until the end of March 2024, and they will be able to enjoy a free, nutritious hot meal in the café during their visit.

**Lead person to contact in LA:**

Clare Knowles  
Communications and Marketing Manager

Email: [Clare.knowles@thewayyouthzone.org](mailto:Clare.knowles@thewayyouthzone.org)



**Sensory Saturdays**  
SEND Families  
10am - 12:30pm

Weekly themed activities in a calm, relaxed setting

- Sensory room
- Climbing wall
- Parachute games
- Music
- Arts and crafts
- Board games & lego
- Soft play
- Cafe

50p per person  
All ages welcome, accompanied by an adult.

The Way Youth Zone  
School Street, Wolverhampton WV9 0NR  
[www.thewayyouthzone.org](http://www.thewayyouthzone.org)  
Registered Charity Number 1101247

### The Way Youth Zone

### Saturday Sessions

### 'Back to School' Communication Toolkit

Following the increase of measles cases in the West Midlands a 'Back to School' communications toolkit has been produced. This includes helpful advice from the NHS and the UK Health Security Agency on how to keep children healthy during the school term, and most importantly information on measles and the MMR vaccine.

[NHS Back to School Communications Toolkit for Schools & Nurseries \(mailchi.mp\)](#)

There is also a poster on flu that can be used in your schools and settings.

[Schools Flu Catch Up West Mids v2.jpg](#)

Email: [healthprotection@wolverhampton.gov.uk](mailto:healthprotection@wolverhampton.gov.uk)

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**What do we do?**

**Working with children and young people:** First you will have an information gathering appointment or initial assessment where we will identify your needs.

**Working with schools:** We work alongside the school's Mental Health Lead (MHL) and school staff to identify, discuss and plan for your mental health and emotional wellbeing needs.

We work with children and young people who may need support with:

- Low mood
- Exam stress
- Problems with sleep
- Low self esteem
- Anxiety

**Contact us**

If you or someone you know would like to be referred to our service please speak to the Mental Health Lead at your school.

If you would like more information about the Reflexions service please email [bcfht.reflexions@nhs.net](mailto:bcfht.reflexions@nhs.net) or contact your area's Reflexions team via telephone:

**Sandwell**  
0121 672 6620

**Wolverhampton**  
01902 444 021

**Walsall**  
01922 607400

**Dudley**  
01384 324 689

**Reflexions is a Mental Health Support Team (MHST), we are a service that helps increase access to mental health support for children and young people in schools.**

Information for children, young people, parents and carers

Partner with us to make healthier, happier lives

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**What do we offer?**

**1:1 Low/High Intensity CBT**

Mental Health assessments

Weekly interventions with young people and their families

**Whole School Approach (WSA) including:**

- School Assemblies
- Staff Training
- Psychoeducational groups/workshops

**In our team we have...**

**Leadership Team** which includes Service Manager, Service Clinical Lead, Clinical Lead and Team Leads. The Leadership team support the whole of the Reflexions team.

**Educational Mental Health Practitioners (EMHPs)** who will be based in schools as a first point of contact working closely with the school's Mental Health Lead. EMHPs usually carry out your first appointment.

**Specialist EMHPs** who are trained to see children and young people for more complex and high intensity treatment.

**Children's Wellbeing Practitioners (CWP)** who will focus on 1:1 sessions with children and young people.

**Educational Psychologists** who will support your school with mental health whole school approaches, referrals and queries.

**Administrators** who will be your first point of contact when contacting your Reflexions Team.

**Be kind to your mind**

Your mental health is just as important as your physical health.

Thoughts, feelings and behaviours (what we do) are all linked together and can impact each other. Sometimes, you can get stuck in a cycle of unhelpful thoughts, feelings and behaviours and this can affect your mental health.

We cannot see our feelings and thoughts, but we know they are there, because we feel them.

Our mental health can change how we feel about ourselves, our bodies, our family or our friends.

Sometimes our feelings can be too big for us to manage on our own - and that's okay!

This might be where Reflexions can help.

### Reflexions

Voice 4 Parents Met with Reflexions to discuss support for Children and Young People outside of Specialist CAMHS.

Reflexions is a Mental Health Support Team (MHST) they are a service that helps increase access to mental health support for children and young people in schools. They offer an early intervention service prior to any specialist/CAMHS interventions. They do this by working within schools for an 8 week period either on a 1-1 basis or group therapy basis. This is a free service, funded by NHEENGLAND.

They work with Parent Carers to help support families with their Child/Young Persons Mental health and also offer Craft and Chat sessions at the Art Gallery, Staff Training for schools, run coffee mornings within schools, assemblies and workshops as well as their Mental Health offer for therapy.

V4P are looking forward to working closely with this service in the future.

The poster can also be seen on our website [Miscellaneous | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-](#)

### Fundraising—Can you help us raise some Funds? Do you shop online a lot?

Just letting you know that voice4Parents - wolverhampton pcf are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them - at no extra cost to yourself!

These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment.

You can find our easyfundraising page at [https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/voice4parents-wolverhampton-pcf/?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=pmc&utm\\_content=gs-email1](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/voice4parents-wolverhampton-pcf/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=pmc&utm_content=gs-email1)

### New School Nurse Bulletins

The 0-19 School Nursing Service has launched a new digital bulletin called 'Building a healthy future', sharing latest news from their service, alongside important healthcare messages. Check them out below:

For Secondary Students: [click here](#)

For Primary Parents: [click here](#)

For SEND Parents: [click here](#)

Whether you are a young person, or the parent/guardian/carer of a young person, the Wolverhampton 0-19 Service are here to offer you advice, support and information to help you and your family be as healthy as possible.

We provide services including Health Visiting, School Nursing, and the Partnering Families Team (PFT).

### Building a healthy future this spring



To download the latest 'Building a healthy future' School Nurse e-Bulletin



For SEND parents



For Primary parents



For Secondary students

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**Habinteg** Accessible homes  
Independent lives

0300 365 3100 | [Habinteg.org.uk](http://Habinteg.org.uk)

Habinteg is currently working on a project with The West Midlands Combined Authority to identify the need for accessible housing in the WMCA area, in order to inform local plans.

It is believed, this project will offer a great opportunity to shape housing provision for disabled people, and they are keen to ensure local disabled people and organisations working with them have a voice in this review, to share their experiences and highlight where improvements could be made.

They have put together a survey to capture disabled people's experiences (and parents/carers)

### Wolverhampton Thematic Ofsted Visit / Review

Wolverhampton local area was notified that they will be having a Thematic Ofsted visit /review over the next 3 weeks with the focus on Preparation For Adulthood.

Thematic reviews are part of the new area SEND inspection arrangements, Ofsted and CQC will carry out a series of thematic visits each academic year and the theme they will investigate in 2024 is preparation for adulthood (PfA).

The purposes of the 2024 thematic visits are to:

- find out how education, health and social care are working together to prepare children and young people with SEND for adulthood. This will include children and young people who are receiving SEND support or have an education, health and care (EHC) plan
- better understand what support is provided to children and young people with SEND and their families. Inspectors will also look at how children and young people with SEND develop independence, are made to feel visible and valued in their community, and are supported to be as healthy as possible in adulthood
- find how services work together to support children and young people with SEND to transition successfully into adulthood. This could include transferring from children's to adult services

The inspection does not make judgements about individual areas during these visits and will share findings in a national report to be published in autumn 2024. The national report will list the local areas visited but will not attribute findings to individual areas.

It's so important that families voices are heard to help shape this work going forward. We have been asked by the inspectors to share the following survey

This is the survey for Parents Carers and Professionals

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/wolves-parents-carers-and-professionals>

This is the survey for Children /Young people over the age of 11

<https://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/wolves-cyp>

Voice 4 Parents Steering group will also be meeting with Inspectors on Monday to share collective feedback from families, if you would like to share any feedback with us or would like to share your journey so we can use this as a case study, please email [admin@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:admin@voice4parents.co.uk)

We will also be sharing a further survey and polls on Facebook that families can complete.





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### Child/ Young Person Autism Diagnostic Pathway

Following focus groups arranged between the Integrated Care Board (ICB), Health Services and Parent Carers in September, V4P Attended the Black Country Stakeholder workshop for Autism Spectrum Condition (ASC).

A presentation was given to everyone that attended on what Parent Carers, Children and Young People had feedback were their experiences of the current service/ diagnosis pathway which included (but not limited to) :

A struggle to get diagnosis

A struggle for individuals and families to get support, before, during and after diagnosis

Lack of support if no diagnosis received

Diagnosis process is long and impacts a Child Young Persons Education/ Mental Health and further implications on anxiety and depression and understanding of oneself.

With this in mind, 4 areas will be targeted across the Black Country to develop one pathway IN Wolverhampton, Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley. The focus will be on:

Waiting Times Intelligence - This will be a statistic based focus group to look at the number of people waiting for diagnosis, how long they have been waiting, why the wait takes as long as it does -what does the data show?

More Than Diagnosis - This will be a support based focus group to look at the support given and needed before diagnosis, during diagnosis and after diagnosis - what support is needed?

Modelling the Pathways - This will be a technical focus group to look at the actual pathway model taken from all 4 local areas to become 1 Black Country Autism Spectrum Condition Diagnostic Pathway

Evidence-based review - This will be a review focus group of the Autism Diagnostic process to identify what is missing, what are the gaps and to make recommendations whilst finalising the whole report/process.

#### Autism Survey

AUTISM SPECTRUM CONDITION(ASC) FORMALLY AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDER (ASD/Asperger's)

Many members have advised us that their Child/Young person (CYP) is either diagnosed with ASC, has suspected ASC and is on a pathway for diagnosis or trying to access the pathway for a diagnosis of ASC.

Work is starting throughout the Black Country to try and improve the Pathway and Process for diagnosis as well as support offered to families.

We need to feed your families experiences from Wolverhampton into this process to ensure your voices are heard and that changes made are what is needed.

You can complete the survey per child/young person, rather than 1 per family.

Voice4Parents will keep updating on this work but would also encourage families to please complete the questionnaire based on Autism diagnosis below so that we can make sure that the experiences of families are taken into account. <https://forms.office.com/r/Kg9vp7GWPK>

As a thank you for completing the survey, all responses will be entered into a prize draw.

- 1st Prize - Amazon Fire Tablet
- 2nd Prize - Amazon Echo
- 3rd Prize - £10 Shopping Voucher
- 4th & 5th Prize - Sensory Bag

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### Let's Meet!

Please join us at our next *Coffee Morning* on **March 5th**. We will be joined by **Mags Courts—Head of CAMHS commissioning** and **ASC Lead** joining us to discuss the **Autism Pathway** !


You are all welcome.



**For this Coffee morning we will have Mags Courts, Head of CAMHS commissioning and ASC Lead joining us to discuss Autism Pathway - Experience of getting a diagnosis. This is following on from the document we have shared with you via email.**




**You can find us on facebook or visit our website at the below address or follow our QR code**


Like Us On Facebook

<http://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk/>

Join Voice4parents For our Coffee Morning on March 5th From 10am - 12 noon. Low Hill Family Hub Fourth Avenue W10 9LZ



We feel this is an important opportunity for families to discuss their experiences on the Autism Pathway, both the good and not so good points. Please take a look at the document emailed in advance, or look on our website below, to help you focus on what parts of the experience matters most to your family.



### Swim Fun!

Did you know that children and young people in Wolverhampton aged eight to 15 can swim for free at WV Active Central and WV Active Bilston-Bert Williams leisure centres, and at Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre?

First introduced 15 years ago, thousands of children and young people aged between eight and 15 have taken advantage of the free swimming offer funded by the council. And, as there is no charge for under 8s, it means all children and young people aged 15 and under who live in Wolverhampton can swim for free in the city's pools! For more information, please visit

<https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/freeswim>

Councillor Jasbir Jaspal, Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing, said: "Taking part in regular activities is essential for improving people's health and well-being,



# Thank You All!

**A huge thank you to everyone that attended our Information / Fun day at St Martin's Church, Bradley. To everyone that held stalls there, Sassy Sensory, Anthony Arnold, the amazing face painter and balloon modeller, Ian Brennan and every single person that attended. The day was an amazing success and the feedback we have received about it has been amazing. It was a real team effort and we are thrilled with how well it went. Thank You to you all for making it a great day!**

**To view more pictures from our brilliant day, please check out this link:**


[Information Fun Day Feb 2024 | Voice4Parents Wolves](https://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk)  
[voice4parents-wolves.co.uk](https://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk)




**Carer's Assessment**

Voice 4 Parents have extensive feedback from Parent Carers around how they feel isolated, struggle to find support and how challenging life can be at times. We have been working with Carers Support Team to raise awareness of Parent Carer Assessments (now know as Carers Conversations) and for families to understand how they can get support. Please complete the following survey which will help feed into this work.

Please use this link to complete:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/wLAT2TZzxf>  
or use the QR Code.






**Website**

[WWW.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk](http://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk)

There are a number of ways to feed back to us; using the link <https://forms.office.com/r/bq86NFx8wg>, on our website under the feedback tab or on our facebook pages.

**Follow us on Facebook:**

[Voice4Parents-Wolverhampton | Facebook](#)



**Contact us at:**

[Admin@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:Admin@voice4parents.co.uk)