

Wednesday January 31st 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

February 24TH 2024—4-6PM @ Vanilla Coffee shop, 6a School Road, Tettenhall WV68EJ as always,

everyone is welcome to attend. 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.

Further dates for 2024 are as follows: 23.03.24, same venue and times,

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

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: 6th Feb, 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

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 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



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

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>

The Way Youth Zone



See FREE helpful resources at:

[Sunshine Support](#)

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 WV3 0NR
www.thewayyouthzone.org
Registered Charity Number 1151247



KEEP IN TOUCH

Website

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](#)

YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS!

Contact us at:

Admin@voice4parents.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 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

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

'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

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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:

https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/repo/our-services/0-19-service/documents/Building_a_healthy_future_this_spring_2024_for_Secondary_students.pdf

https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/repo/our-services/0-19-service/documents/Building_a_healthy_future_this_spring_2024_for_SEND_parents.pdf

https://www.royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/repo/our-services/0-19-service/documents/Building_a_healthy_future_this_spring_2024_for_Primary_parents.pdf



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

SCAN ME!

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

For SEND parents

For Primary parents

For Secondary students

EDUCATION HEALTH AND CARE PLANS (EHCPs) -Pilot Template

The Local Authority as part of their review of the processes around EHCP's have adopted a new template for the layout of EHCP's.

The changes to the current template were primarily being to remove all short-term steps/short-term outcomes. V4P were consulted on the new template and it was felt that this would be detrimental to families and young people.

This was because firstly most families report that they do not have termly Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings in school to review the short-term targets as envisaged by the local authority and secondly it was felt that schools were not entirely qualified to make short-term targets for those individuals where specialists were involved such as in Communication and language and Physical and Sensory specialists.

It was decided through a workshop to carry out a pilot of the new template from September 2023 on all new EHCP's and all Phased transfers.

The Local authority reported from feedback from schools that generally the new template was working and termly TAC meetings were taking place to track outcomes.

It was agreed 1 term is not sufficient to comment on the new template and the pilot should extend to at least 12 months - end of July 2024

Also the Local authority needs to find a method of making sure TAC meetings are taking place and their effectiveness.

Voice4Parents would be interested in your experiences of EHCPs and Annual Reviews and whether the new template is working? Does your family have TAC meetings termly? If so are short term targets set? Please let us know by completing feedback at [Feedback | Voice4Parents Wolves \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](https://www.voice4parents-wolves.co.uk/feedback)



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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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Health Inequalities

This month - meetings have resumed around Health inequalities experienced by children and young people with SEND. A focus was made specifically on Autism. Voice4Parents are aware that many of our families have Children/Young People and Adults that are diagnosed as Autistic or in the process of being diagnosed as Autistic. To inform this work, please complete the questionnaire based around Autism, diagnosis, Pathways/ Process and Support that we will be asking all families with autistic members to complete. You can find it on page 4 of this newsletter. Please complete this questionnaire and help us make sure that services for Autism in Wolverhampton meets the needs of families.

We are also reviewing the Oliver McGowan training, how many staff have received this in Wolverhampton, what else could be done to bridge any gaps in training and if there are other professionals who would benefit from the same or similar training. Findings and any progress in these areas will be reported to the Autism Board, where Voice4Parents are also present to ensure families voices are represented. Further information on this mandatory training can be found at:

[The Oliver McGowan Mandatory Training on Learning Disability and Autism - e-learning for healthcare \(e-lfh.org.uk\)](https://www.e-lfh.org.uk/)



Health Passports were also discussed and information from the Voice4Parents Annual Survey was given. Many Families are not aware that Health Passports are being offered and used in Wolverhampton to help make medical appointments easier for Children and Young People. Information on Health Passports:

[All About Me \(royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk\)](https://royalwolverhampton.nhs.uk/)

Voice4Parents also discussed waiting times for Health Services and Diagnosis Pathways for both Health and Mental Health, we advised that families need appropriate support whilst on waiting lists that meets the families needs and helps with ongoing issues.

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 \(voice4parents-wolves.co.uk\)](https://voice4parents-wolves.co.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 schools' 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 bchfl.reflexions@nhs.net or contact your area's Reflexions team via telephone:

Sandwell
0121 612 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

Healthier, happier lives

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 leads 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 treatments.

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-](#)

Health Steering Group

Since V4P presented our Annual Report to the Group in late 2023 - Health services have looked at the feedback and created actions to address the feedback parents gave. This meeting discussed the actions made to improve services including Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, Paediatricians/Dieticians amongst others. These were agreed with V4P and other partners and will now form part of the overall Health action plan to be monitored for progress at subsequent Health Steering Group meetings. We are hoping to get a formal response to families in next month that shows what Health are doing to meet concerns raised.

PINS Project (Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity In Schools)

PINS is a national project that has been rolled out to local ICBs (Integrated Care Boards). Our ICB is Black Country, which includes Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton. The programme is about offering a package of support to 40 primary schools over the ICB. Wolverhampton Local Authority and V4P have expressed an interest in assisting with this work, and helping to develop and deliver the project. The hope is to work with schools to better understand Neurodiversity and the needs of Children and Young People - this is not a training package but rather support on how to practically help Children and Young People, whether they are diagnosed as Autistic or not - a whole school approach that should also help Parent Carers and Professionals to better understand difficulties and work together to strengthen their relationship whilst helping children and Young people.

This project is still in very early infancy but as we continue with this work we will update families,



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SEND & Inclusion Partnership Board

Public Health Professional presented a report from the City of Wolverhampton Children and Young people's Emotional and Mental Health Needs Assessment.

The needs assessment highlighted a number of groups where emotional and mental health needs are higher, children and young people with SEND was one of these groups.

The needs assessment picked up on a number of areas of strengths in Wolverhampton's support for emotional and mental health needs. These included positive experiences of some services, good practice happening in schools, the contribution made by community groups, and examples of effective multi-agency working and collaborative commissioning.

It also raised some of the following areas where improvements could be made Addressing demand for core CAMHS (The Child and Family Service) and reducing waiting times

- Improving clarity and communication across the system about the support available to help children and young people with their emotional and mental health
- Increasing opportunities for earlier intervention
- Developing the support offer in schools and colleges
- Increasing support available for parents, carers and families
- Improving emotional and mental health support for children and young people who are neurodivergent and/ or have special education needs and disabilities (SEND)
- Addressing information gaps

Voice 4 Parents would like to thank all families who have sent us feedback around Mental Health and we ensured that all this was fed back to help inform this needs assessment. We will keep you updated of progress made and we also expressed at Board the importance of Voice 4 Parents being involved in this work going forward.

SEND board meet approximately 6 weekly to make strategic decisions involving Special educational Needs within Wolverhampton City Council. This board should have complete oversight of all things SEND within Wolverhampton Local Authority and NHS Services.

V4P Attended Send Board in January and discussed;

1. Self evaluation and SEND and Inclusion strategy and Written statement of action feedback - this forms the plan of action for the council to address all the important work that needs to be carried out. A easy read version is being produced for families/parents/carers and young people that we will share as soon as we can.
2. Preparation for adulthood -it was agreed this work will continue to identify gaps and opportunities in Post 16/18 services and to look at hopefully commissioning services to meet these gaps and offer greater opportunity.
3. EHCP audit reports - reported that EHCPs are now being audited for quality and things are slowly Improving, however much work is still to be done.

Send Dashboard - tells the council in real time the data around special educational needs, such as the number of EHCP's/SEN support plans in Wolverhampton, attendance and exclusions. This should give all services a greater understanding of what SEND in Wolverhampton looks like and what is needed for families.



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ADHD Partnership Group

Voice4parents are really happy with the progress being made on the ADHD workstream, stakeholders are working hard to create a pre and post support system for Children, young people and parent carers who are on the ADHD pathway. Medication clinical reviews are now in place and all who receive a diagnosis should receive a support pack in the post. Outreach are working hard to create a training program on supporting children and young people with ADHD. Wolverhampton are now regularly using QB testing alongside traditional Vanderbilt questionnaires and observations. QB is a diagnostic screening tool to help diagnose symptoms of ADHD.

QB tests now take place Twice a week and are approx. 30 mins each. This will raise to 3 - 4 days a week from April when new ADHD/ASC nurse comes into position.

Currently have 147 16 to 18 year olds on the pathway, 39 are 18 years old and will be prioritised for clinic so they can be seen and discharged to adult services to continue support rather than falling between the lines of support as was occurring before. 108 are aged 16 and 17 and will be seen in clinics once those who are 18 have been seen. This new clinic is proposed for April.

SENDCo development meeting

Following feedback from SENDCos and the Voice4parents annual survey, Voice4parents are working with Wolverhampton's School Improvement SEND advisor and other partners, to shape a cohesive training package for all schools to be able to access, based on the priorities identified by families and professionals:

1. School SENDCo's understanding of SEND and its varying presentations
2. Ensuring that Schools access the training available to them

Gaining further parent and child feedback, not just professional, to identify schools that are particularly poor at identifying and supporting SEND.

Childrens Village Partnership Board

Voice4parents now sit with the Family hubs partnership board ensuring that Parent carers, children and young people's voices will be heard and will be part of discussions on where funding money as part of this project is spent supporting SEND in Wolverhampton.

We were shown slides with data for each areas surrounding the Family hubs. Current focus is on Low Hill and Childrens Village as these 2 are further along and have some of the highest poverty levels within the city. Data included FSM in each ward, exclusions, EHCP and known SEND, Crime, households claiming benefits, single parents, low income households

Come and join us



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

Join Voice4parents
SEND Information Fun Day!

Drop in anytime.
No booking required

From 11 am -2pm

On

February 12th at
St Martins Church

Slater Street

Bilston

WV14 8PF



Parent carers of children and young people with SEND, will be able to meet providers and learn about the services and support available to them in Wolverhampton



We will have fun activities throughout the day including Sassy Sensory, a magician, circus skills, face painting and balloon modelling.

Slushes , popcorn and Candyfloss will be available



Don't miss our Tombolla and Raffle



Refreshments will be available free of charge kindly funded by City of Wolverhampton Council.

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



NO NEED TO BOOK!!