



Wednesday November 30th 2022

# VOICE 4 PARENTS

NEWSLETTER



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

## Welcome to your Novem-

### The Way

As we mentioned in last months Newsletter, The Way has opened it's doors for SEND sessions. We hope that some of our families have had the opportunity to access these sessions. Please do share your feedback and photo's with us and we can pass it on to The Way. Thank You.

### Change of Times for Saturday Sessions

The Saturday SEND sessions times have changed! These weekly SEND family activity sessions are currently FREE. Families are welcome to stay past 12:30 but The Way will be open to the public from 1PM.



The Way—School Street, Wolverhampton, WV3 ONR.

01902 328290

### Cost of Living Crisis

The Cost-of-Living crisis is affecting us all, if you're finding it more difficult to afford food, there are community shops that can help. The City of Wolverhampton Council have helped fund six shops so far in communities across the city, where you can get good, nutritious food at lower prices. Other help is also available, there's a list of food banks and advice on applying for free school meals amongst other things - check out all the details here:

<https://orlo.uk/5rkAf>

### Coffee Mornings

We were thrilled to be back at our coffee mornings in Low Hill. Was great to see so many families join us. We do not have any coffee mornings planned for December but keep an eye out for January dates in next months Newsletter.

### The Written Statement of Action / Annual Survey 2022

Over the last couple of Newsletters we have mentioned the WSOA and invited you to meet with the Local Authority to discuss and feedback your views. Early in November we met with the Local Authority, Health Partners and Department for Education staff to discuss Wolverhampton' progress on the WSOA. The next steps are to start looking at what impact the changes implemented have had for Children, Young People and Parent Carers. With this in mind, Voice4Parents will be launching our Annual Survey to capture your views on many aspects of SEND services. It is so important for families to complete the survey as we can compare all responses to responses received in 2021 to identify any progress and to also inform what you feel we need to prioritise in 2023. To complete the survey, please allow around 30 minutes (estimated time) and follow the link: <https://forms.office.com/r/uXU9gdTAxN> or use the QR code below.

All completed entries will have the chance at winning a prize wither a £100, £50 or £25 voucher for a supermarket of your choice.

It is vital we all have our voices heard.

Thank you.



### Communication Board Training

Our Communication board training has been a massive success. Thank you to everyone that attended. Please let us know how you get on with your boards and how your children find using them. "The boards have been a game changer in our house, reduced frustrations and has helped massively, Thank you!" commented one of our members.



### Merry Christmas Everyone

Christmas can be overwhelming for SEND families. If you need any advice on how best to cope, please visit:

[How can I help my child with special educational needs cope over Christmas? - Support for Parents from Action For Children](#)

May we take this opportunity to wish you all a very

**Merry Christmas.**

Follow us on Facebook:

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Contact us at:

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



## V4P updates from Strategic meetings attended in November



### Financial Wellbeing Partnership Board

V4P attended this newly formed Partnership Board. The aim of the board is to ensure delivery of the recently launched Wolverhampton Local Authority Financial Wellbeing Strategy. The main issue is to help tackle the Cost Of Living Crisis in Wolverhampton. V4P have reported in all your feedback from applications made via the Household Support Fund regarding the impact on SEND families, the additional costs faced by families and also where extra help is needed. The board will meet 4 weekly and we will update families after each board meeting, it is agreed by all partners that it is extremely important that the board need to understand the local context of the Cost Of Living Crisis and what this means to our families so please keep feeding back to us.

### All Age Carer's Strategy

Wolverhampton Council, following consultation events has produced A Commitment to All Age Carers plan. The plan has identified five priorities. Voice4Parents have attended the first Carers Strategy meeting to ensure that Parent Carer feedback is heard and that together with service partners, delivery is made against the five priorities. In summary, the plans are around ensuring all Parent Carers understand their right to have a Carers Assessment both digitally and in person, enabling access to clear and concise information, work with Parent Carers to review carers needs and services available including an emergency plan of support where possible and also to review the current short breaks and respite (planned and crisis) offer for carers, with a focus on the range of individual needs, a whole family approach and quality. Voice4Parents are incredibly excited to be part of this work as these changes are what families have reported is desperately needed.

### Alternative Provision

The Department for Education defines alternative provision as 'education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.' Children and Young People that have difficulties in mainstream settings may be educated in Alternative Provision - the most common of which are Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) and they tend to have smaller class sizes and pastoral support.. Other types of Alternative provision can include (but not only) forest schools, Therapeutic farms, Animal Centres and outdoor learning centres. There are many reasons why a child might attend alternative provision, including Mental health Needs, School refusal, Bullying, Medical Needs and being at risk of Exclusion.

V4P have met with professionals currently reviewing Alternative Provision in Wolverhampton and what is available for Children and Young People (C / YP) that need to access this provision. We have raised Parent Carer concerns regarding School Refusal and adjustments required to help with attendance; concerns raised around identifying SEND, supporting needs and helping CYP in mainstream settings and ensuring that CYP in PRUs still achieve an education that gives them every opportunity in future life as they move into adulthood. It is recognised that a lot of work is needed around this and also needs to ensure that CYP and Parent Carers are well informed on what provision is available.



### Little Red Riding Hood—SENCO Panto

V4P is very pleased to be able to offer this out to our families. Places will be limited but it is a SEND friendly and fully accessible showing with a Santa visit and present. Totally FREE.

Booking details will be out soon. We have 2 sessions, 1 at 10am and one a 1pm.

Please keep an eye on your e-mails.

### Follow up...

Following on from feedback at our coffee morning where some parents asked about more inclusive books in libraries, the local authority/councillors have made a commitment to get more books into libraries that have disabilities in etc. Please e-mail us any suggestions for book titles at [admin@voice4parents.co.uk](mailto:admin@voice4parents.co.uk).

Thank you.

### Keep In Touch Meetings

We meet regularly with Senior Staff within the Local Authority and NHS/ Clinical Commissioning Group to ensure all feedback is captured and presented to the correct people to inform on what is working well and not so well. We meet weekly with the Deputy Director of Education and Inclusion Manager, we meet monthly with the Deputy Director for Children's Social Care, Alison Hinds and monthly with the Head of Joint Commissioning, we also meet monthly with Health officials and the Designated Medical Officer for Wolverhampton. We can only report back on what you tell us - please keep contacting us and letting us know what your experiences are with services both good and bad - we can only influence change with your help.

**FEEDBACK TO US:** families can feedback to us on any of the areas mentioned in this Newsletter by using the following link:

Please include any continence feedback here as per our meeting discussion. <https://forms.office.com/r/bq86NFX&wg>