

Fifteen years old

Stockport Parent Partnership achieved its fifteenth birthday in June. We were so busy at the time, we forgot to mark the occasion. However, the fact that parents have a service which is much appreciated, the local authority know that we will do all we can to encourage them and parents to work in partnership and Together Trust can rely on us to promote their values is reason to celebrate.

Since the last edition of 'Partners' in June, we have been very busy, working with 200 families. Of these, 103 were either new to the service or had not been in touch for over six months.

Each term seems to bring certain issues to the fore and the start of the year has brought to our attention many concerns of parents of children on the autistic spectrum, particularly at the start of their time in primary school. This is also the time of the year for parents who have children in Year 5 with Statements and Year 6 parents with children on School Action and School Action Plus to think about transfer to secondary school.

Our School Transfer Advisers, **Sarah Bramwell** and **Mel Hubbard** are here to help.

Please contact on 431 3024 if you would like a meeting to discuss your child's secondary school transfer needs.

Staying in touch

Some families stay in touch and others will get in touch with us when the need arises. If you would like to stay in touch and receive regular bulletins as well as have the chance to contact other parents of children with special educational needs, how about joining the **'For all parents of disabled children in Stockport'**, Facebook site? If you are interested please send an email to **parentpartnership@togethertrust.org** and I will send you joining details.

We would also like to welcome **Alex Buckley** to the Parent Partnership team. Many of you will remember Alex from her years of working with Care Coordination and Sharecare. She has now joined Parent Partnership on a consultancy basis to work with the Parent Participation Focus Group. She will ensure that those parents who give up their time to support other parents and take their views to CYPDisP sub-committees have the back up that they need to do this effectively.

If you are interested in taking part in the **Parent Partnership Focus Group** please join us at **7.00 p.m. Beckwith House on the first Monday of each month** or at **1.00 p.m. at INCA library on the first Wednesday of each month.**

Please phone 431 3024 for further details.

Parent Evaluation

Thank you to all parents who took place in our Autumn Evaluation. We carry out surveys twice a year to find out what you think of our service and very much appreciate the positive comments that are made by the majority of the users of our service. We are also ready to accept constructive criticism and whilst it was good to hear that one parent said:

"The support was fantastic. Both over the phone and in person. I felt completely confident that what I was saying was right and I had someone there to back me up. The school know now how strongly I feel about my son's education and I was helped to voice my concerns"

and

"Very helpful in the way that you explained things. We now understand the education system and our rights"

We will also take on board comments asking us to be *"more available, less vague and more proactive"*. We want to avoid at all costs, parents and carers feeling that they are on their own in trying to get the right help for their children with additional needs; I hope that you all feel that you could get on the phone or email us if you are not receiving the service that you need to support your child.

Sonia Florent

Parent Partnership Manager, October 2009

Anti-Bullying Week 2009

16th to 20th November

It's the sixth Anti-Bullying Week the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA), based at NCB, has run, and the theme is cyberbullying, with the slogan 'Stay safe in cyberspace'.

The campaign aims to help children and young people stay safe from cyberbullying, and to encourage parents, teachers and the wider community to learn the tools they need to help the children and young people around them stay safe and happy.



Focus:

Cyber Bullying (where children and young people are threatened, left out, embarrassed, receive abusive language through emails, mobile phones, Facebook, MSN etc.)

All schools will be holding special assemblies, organising drama productions, showing DVDs to raise awareness with their pupils.

Parents:

Please ask at your child's school. Every school has information for parents on this important issue.

Judy Davies – Head of Service, Schools Leadership and Pupils

Parents' Forum

All Parents are welcome to come along and learn more about

The Lamb Inquiry

The Lamb Inquiry was set up as part of the Government's response to the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee Report Special Educational Needs: Assessment and Funding. The Inquiry is being led by Brian Lamb, the Chair of the Special Educational Consortium, and will advise on the most effective ways of increasing parental confidence in the SEN assessment process.

How can you feel confident that your child's special educational needs have been assessed and supported fairly?

How will Stockport LA respond to the findings of the Lamb Inquiry?

Come and discuss with **Andy Simpkins**

Senior Education Officer, SEN/Inclusion-Strategy and Development

1pm to 3pm, Wednesday 2nd December 2009 at Inca Library, Together Trust, Schools Hill, Cheadle, SK8 1JE
OR

7pm to 9pm on Thursday 3rd December at Beckwith House, Heaton Lane, Stockport, SK4 1HN

Please phone Liz or Leoni at Parent Partnership on 0161 431 3024 to book your place

Every Disabled Child Matters

The Manifesto for Change has been produced by campaign group Every Disabled Child Matters in partnership with disabled children and young people themselves, who identified their priorities for the document. Through the Manifesto for Change, they are calling on all political parties to set out their policies on increasing respect, inclusion and participation for disabled children and young people.

Between now and the next election, they want every party and individual candidate to make public commitments to:

- Making people understand and respect disabled young people and children.

- Supporting disabled children and young people to take part in their communities, doing the things that all other children and young people do.
- Making sure the services disabled children use support them to live ordinary lives.
- Helping disabled children to get the education, jobs and training they want.

In response, the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign is calling on all parties to include specific commitments for disabled children in their party manifestos.

Stockport Aiming High For Disabled Children (AHDC)

Summer Programme of Activities

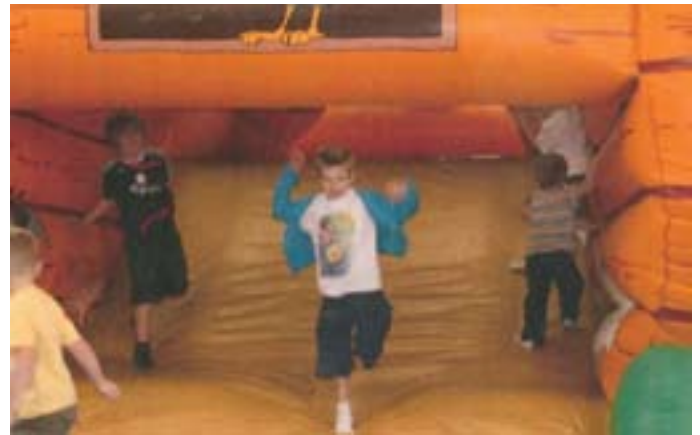
AHDC Summer activities provided additional much needed short breaks for families. Consultation with families highlighted the need for more short breaks for children with disabilities over the summer holiday period. The government have provided additional funding to help local areas increase the number and range of short breaks available for children with disabilities who often struggle to find activities that cater for their needs.

Although timescales were tight a pilot summer programme was organised by CYPDisP offering a range of activities for all ages throughout Stockport. 396 places were provided during the summer break for 166 children.



Some comments from parents;

"I contacted the AHDC short breaks programme to see what activities they could offer my son who has a disability. He was offered a place at an inclusive holiday/after school club and absolutely loved it. He has since gone back there and thoroughly enjoys himself. It also opened his eyes to the fact that there are other children who have worse conditions than he has. If he wasn't given the opportunity to access this provision he wouldn't have had the confidence to engage in the activities he did. It also gave me a short break every day for a week which is just what I needed".



"My son James, who is classically autistic, enjoyed a trip to Stockley Farm as part of the AHDC short breaks programme. The experienced team of support workers enabled him to access all the fun stuff, he loved the tractor ride, looking at and feeding the animals and of course the ice creams! It is very difficult to take James on these sorts of outings unless he has one to one support and as I have two other children one who is only 3 this presents a real problem. This sort of outing enabled James to do what he loves doing and have independence and enabled me and the other children to have some time out doing what they wanted. I can't stress how important this sort of resource is during the very long school holidays It's great - please keep it up "

"I found the day out really beneficial as it enabled me to spend time with my younger daughter and give her the full attention and time that she so often misses out on. Joshua really enjoyed the trip and being on his own. The amount of carer support was ideal and I felt confident leaving him in their care. Roll on the next one"

"Both my sons have a disability and they have never been able to access activities together due to their age gap. Through the AHDC short breaks programme they were able to do just that. As well as the trampoline there were lots of other activities and they absolutely loved it. This gave me a chance to have a much needed break and a chance for a rest "

*Julie Kilroy
AHDC Project Manager*

'Confidence Building for Participation'

Aiming High For Disabled Children

This was training with a difference. After a brief introduction we were left in the capable hands of Penny Noel who drew us in with the consummate ease of a seasoned magician. Penny had the ultimate ice breaker exercise served to bond the different group members to their respective groups whilst acknowledging the differences that make us who we are. This exercise not only made it possible to know each other beyond name and the disabilities affecting different families, but also made us feel that we had known each other a long time.



more vocal participants in a meeting felt that the listeners were not contributing whilst the listeners felt invisible and that other were not interested in their views. The onus is on us, that is all the participants, to ensure that our views are heard. Additionally, getting involved in discussions early alleviates stress levels even if it is to ask the speaker to clarify the jargon used.

At the end of the day, there was a general consensus that we had all really benefited from the training and could have continued for a good many hours

more had they let us! We definitely felt equipped to stand our ground at local level at strategic decision-making about the provision of services for our disabled children. We appreciate such opportunities and look forward to future training programmes. I am confident that more and more parents will join the subgroups and

that soon parents will hold key positions higher up the echelons of the disability forum.

Muthoni Nuttall, Parent



Penny started by outlining four communication styles. Such was the interest on communication that coffee was an extension of rather than a break of deliberations. As we exchanged experiences and strategies we had adopted to cope with these experiences, it became increasingly clear that we had a lot in common and a lot to offer each other in terms of tangible advice such as which officials to approach, measures to apply when our concerns were side-tracked or trivialised or we were simply patronised. I think I speak for all when I say that we felt empowered that not only were our fears real and not isolated incidents, but, nor were we paranoid when we felt patronised or ridiculed or raised concerns about our children.

It also became clear that we needed to be more proactive in discussions. None of us wanted a repeat of the all too common scenario whereby the

The SEN Team

Many parents will have been in touch with the SEN Section whilst waiting for the outcome of a statutory assessment, checking on the process or to send views of a proposed statement. What you might not know is that members of this team are not always in the office but also attend annual reviews, meetings in schools and the Parents' Forum.

This summer under the Council's Volunteering Policy scheme, the whole team also gave up some of their free time to decorate the hallway at Lisburne School. They also helped with the Heaton and Lisburne summer holiday clubs and all worked together to make a sensory garden for a little Valley School girl who is sensory impaired and has complex needs. Assessment and Review Officer, Angela said:

"It was a whole team effort and it was lovely to feel that we could make a positive contribution".



Stockport Disability Database

426 5514

elaine.mounter@NHSStockport.nhs.uk

www.stockport.gov.uk/disabilitydatabase

The database is only going to produce 2 newsletters each year from 2010. The usual 1st November issue will now be delivered to you on 1st December and then from 2010 there will be issues available 1st July and 1st December. This is due to the expense of producing them and at this difficult time we are all having to stick strictly within budgets.

To save money even further, if you are able to download a copy of the newsletter instead of it costing postage, let me know, this will really help us out.

Regards Elaine and Jane

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S DISABILITY PARTNERSHIP		0161 426 5216
Cath Millington	Head of Service	0161 249 4471
SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) TEAM		
Ian Donegani	Education Officer – SEN Access and Performance	0161 249 4469
Sara Carratt	Personal Assistant to Ian Donegani	0161 249 4459
Moira Atkinson	Education Officer for all EBD Provision	0161 249 4453
ASSESSMENT AND REVIEW OFFICERS (AROs)		
Sharon Meikle	Senior ARO for all Early Years/Nursery Children	0161 249 4453
Sarah Jewitt	ARO for Brinnington, Reddish and Part Cheadle	0161 249 4453
Jane Oakley	ARO for Hazel Grove, Bramhall and Part Cheadle	0161 249 4453
Angela Critchley	ARO for Heaton's and Part Stockport	0161 249 4453
Emma Lawson	ARO for Marple, Romiley and Part Stockport	0161 249 4453
SEN SUPPORT OFFICERS (SENSOs)		
Paul Dempsey	Senior SENSO & Transport Commissioning Officer	0161 249 4451
Liz Starkey	Acting PA to the Head of Service / SEN Panel Clerk	0161 249 4450
Ashleigh Sutcliffe	SENSO for Brinnington, Reddish, Marple, Bredbury and Romiley	0161 249 4453
Caroline Jordan	SENSO for Cheadle, Hazel Grove, Bramhall and High Lane	0161 249 4452
Marilyn Miller/Joanne Parkinson	SENSO for the Heaton's and Stockport	0161 249 4454
Email Address:	specialeducation@stockport.gov.uk	

Welfare Rights Service

Benefits for children and young people

Many children who have a statement of educational needs or are being assessed for one qualify for disability living allowance (DLA). This is a social security benefit paid to people who, due to their illness or disability, need help getting around or more care than other people. It is not affected by any income or savings the child or the child's family may have. An award of DLA may allow the parent to claim carer's allowance and extra tax credits.

At 16, as well as DLA, a young person may also qualify for income support or employment and support allowance even though they are still at school. Advice should always be sought before applying for these benefits as when awarded a parent can no longer claim child benefit for the child nor have them included in their child tax credits.

For help completing benefit claims and advice contact Elaine Foster on 0161 218 1300 or 0161 474 3093. Email: elaine.foster@stockport.gov.uk

Notice Board

contact: Liz Dabrowski 0161 431 3024 parentpartnership@togethertrust.org

ABC Support Group

For parents/carers of children with disabilities
We run two groups, one for 0 – 10, and another for 11-16.

The ABC Group

The aim of the ABC Family Group is to provide a setting for all the family within a play environment. All children/teenagers and parents/carers should feel relaxed with plenty of toys, games and activities to keep everyone busy. It is an opportunity for families to make friends with families in a similar position and share experiences.

The ABC+ Group

ABC+ is a YOUTH GROUP specifically for special needs teenagers aged 11 to 16. A fun teenage atmosphere is created by providing games consoles (Wii, Sony Playstation 2), football table, snooker tables, group activities run by experienced volunteers.

Contact: Dawne/Paul 0161 428 2429 or Tracey/Dave 0161 431 9867 www.abcfamilygroup.com

AFASIC

Support for parents/carers of children with communication impairments.

Contact: Ed Baines 0161 431 0326



Dyspraxia Foundation

Contact: Moira Haworth, 0161 483 0335
Sat 7pm—9pm, www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk



FADS Friends and Disability Support

Meet twice a month. Also support Heald Green carers jointly with Signpost.

Contact: Jenny Davies 0161 485 4427

Hazel Grove Support Group/Contact a Family

For Parents of Special Needs Children.

Contact: Moira 0161 483 0335 after 6.00 pm

The Inscape Centre

Courses, library and 'Living with Autism' support group.

Contact: Liz 0161 283 4761

Independent Options Children and Family Centre

We now run two Opportunity groups – on Tuesday afternoon 1.00 – 2.30 and Wednesday morning 10.00 – 11.30. The focus is on free play, activities for children and support for families.

We offer refreshments and most days end the session with 'singing and signing'. Come along, we have places available.

For children who have additional needs and their siblings, we run an 'After school club' every Tuesday 4.00-5.30, and a 'School holiday' club during each school holiday during the afternoon 1.00 – 3.00. We have a variety of activities including computers, toys, craft activities, outdoor play, stories and more. Please telephone for more details.

We hold a Parent Support Group on the last Wednesday evening of each month 7.30 – 8.30pm. It is very informal so please come and join us for a friendly chat and a coffee.

Places need to be booked for all of our groups so please telephone Nicky Jones on 0161 482 2536 to book a place and for more information.

Parent Support Group

For parents who have a child with Autism.

Contact: Cheryl Salt

ASD Partnership Project 0161 249 4474

SPACE – Support Group

Monthly meetings for parents of children with ADHD.

Contact: Fraser 07846441182

Stockport Cerebral Palsy Society

Contact: 0161 494 5771

South Manchester Down's Syndrome Support Group

07593 542107 www.dsmanchester.org.uk

Stockport Dyslexia Association

Contact: Judith Jones 0161 440 0818