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SEND Newsletter

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SEND Newsletter Summer 2023

Welcome to our summer SEND newsletter, we want to tell you about some of the fantastic work that has been going on across the SEND partnership over the last few months as part of our commitment to improve services and support for children, young people and families as described in our written statement of action.

Meet the SEND Team online events

On 7 June 2023 we held our first online meeting which gave parents the opportunity to meet Charlotte Baron, Head of SEND and hear about the new look local Oofer. Over 40 parents joined and had the chance to raise any questions about the service with Charlotte and the rest of the team. Further sessions have been arranged and the details can be found on the local offer in the calendar of events. A summary of questions and answers will be produced and added to the local offer.

SEND Advisory Groups

The SEND partnership is committed to working together through a model of co-production. This means parents and carers, children and young people are involved as equal partners in the design and shaping of services/support alongside those responsible for funding and delivery. To strengthen our communication with families, we have established two SEND advisory groups, a parents' SEND advisory group and a young people's SEND advisory group to facilitate co-production with families across Blackpool. Working closely with the Parent Carer Forum and Youth Empowerment Forum, these groups enable parents and carers, children and young people to confidently express their views, wishes and feelings. If you are interested and would like more information please contact Sarah Wells Sarah.wells@blackpool.gov.uk.

Preparation for Adulthood Strategy

The advisory groups alongside the Parent Carer Forum and professionals are currently working on developing a preparation for adulthood strategy. This strategy will set out the SEND partnership's commitment to supporting young people with SEND to get ready for adulthood. The advisory groups meet every Monday with partners to develop the five areas of the strategy which are:

- Living an independent life
- Education and employment
- Living healthy lives
- Transitioning to adult services
- Being included in social and community activities

Once the strategy has been written a full consultation will be undertaken that gives everybody the opportunity to have their say. The consultation will be published on the local offer in July.

Parent Carer Forum

Every parent carer of a child or young person with SEND in Blackpool age 0 to 25 years can be a member of Blackpool Parent Carer Forum.

We hold many different events throughout the year to create engagement opportunities between parent carers and service providers. For example meets & treats events take place on the last Wednesday of every month at the Salvation Army in Blackpool from 10:30am until 1:30pm. A buffet lunch and drinks are provided and everyone is welcome!

We also hold an annual information day, where you can meet with different services across Blackpool from all sectors to get helpful information, and an annual day out for families which includes the children and young people, this year's day out will be at Blackpool Zoo in August. Please look at our website or join our facebook page to see updates and booking links for this event.

As a forum, we have five steering group members with lived experience and/or children of their own with SEND and we are available to contact for help and support. For further information please see our website [Blackpool Parent Forum](#) or join our Facebook page Blackpool parent carer forum, this is a closed site, so it is safe to share and ask for advice and support.

Neuro-developmental Pathway (ND Pathway)

Following feedback received from parents and carers, members of the Parent Carer Forum and senior leaders from Blackpool Victoria Hospital are working together to improve family experiences.

Highfurlong School expansion

One of the Blackpool SEND Partnership's strategic priorities is to 'expand our range of education provision to enable children and young people's needs to be met in local settings that provide an inclusive education and support them to achieve their very best.' To deliver this priority the local authority has been successful in bidding to the Department for Education for funding to develop The Meadow site at Highfurlong School. This will enable the school to expand and create extra space and improved facilities for students.

Phase one will see a two-storey extension built that will comprise facilities for post-16 students and a community café designed for post 19 students to gain valuable work experience. Phase two will see the creation of a new fit-for-purpose hydrotherapy suite, with a music room, sensory unit and breakout rooms above. The work is due to start over the summer, subject to planning permission, and is anticipated for completion in June 2024; it will bring fantastic new facilities and opportunities for Blackpool's young people.

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