

WSPF NEWS LETTER...



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ISSUE 4
July/August 2010

Who we are...

West Sussex Parents Forum exists to improve the quality of and access to information and services by giving a voice to, and representing, parents of children and young people in West Sussex who have learning difficulties and disabilities.

We currently have over 450 members and it is our aim to ensure that parents and carers are empowered and involved in making decisions about services that affect children and young people aged 0-25 in West Sussex.

This newsletter is our way of communicating to our members of the latest update of the Parents Forum, as well as keeping you up to date with what is happening in West Sussex.

Meet the Team...

The Parents Forum is run by parents for parents. We are all volunteers and below is a list of who we are and what we currently do for the forum.

Kelly Willard
Chair



Kim Paul
Finance Administrator



Lindsey Butterfield
Secretary



Lyn Aaron-Ferrigno
Website



Ranti Fallowfield
Publicity



Rod Brown
Committee Member



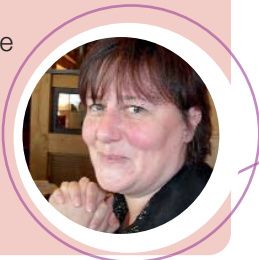
Message from Kelly...

I can't believe that we are half way through the year already. So far 2010 has been an amazing year for the West Sussex Parents Forum. We have been the busiest that we have ever been and it has been a huge challenge to stay on top of the workload, but so far we have managed it and that is with thanks to all of you. Over the last few months we have had a lot of feedback from parents about a whole host of issues as well as suggestions about what we can do differently. I would like to thank you for your continued contributions.

Please could I encourage you all to 'save the date' of our Annual General Meeting, that will be taking place on Tuesday 14th September 2010. This will be an opportunity to come along and find out about all that has been achieved over the last year, as well as looking ahead to the future. Also we are very excited to showcase the refreshed logo and strap-line that was voted for by you – 'Making Our Voice Heard'. We think that it says it all about who we are, the challenge now is to ensure that we are not only heard, but really listened too!

I hope that you all have an enjoyable summer and I look forward to seeing you at one of our events soon.

Love Kelly



Updates



Information Evening

Back in May we took over Palatine School in Worthing to offer parents and carers the opportunity to meet and gain information from over 25 providers, charities and local organisations that support families with disabled children.

The evening went extremely well with over 70 members attending who came away from the evening with additional knowledge of what is out there and what is on offer. For providers too it gave them the opportunity to talk to parents and promote their organisations and services.

This evening was a pilot for us, but now, due to its success we are

considering running similar events throughout the year in different areas of the county. Such events give us the opportunity to talk to one another and swap information and ideas, as well as getting support from those in similar situations.

Please ensure that you look out for details of future Information Events!

Question and Answer Session

In June we held our first, what we hope to be yearly, Question and Answer sessions at Billingshurst Village Hall. The event was well attended by parents from around the county and thank you for those who gave up their evening, or sent their questions in to be asked. The question panel had a good representation from health, education and social care as well as local councillors who have an interest in children's services.

We propose on having other Q&A sessions through-out the year at varied locations across West Sussex, to ensure that all parents have every opportunity to ask the questions that they want to regarding services and plans. This is particularly vital in such uncertain times as these, where the government is looking to make several cutbacks. A full report of the Q & A session will be found in the September newsletter, as at the time of going to print, the transcript of the event was not available.

Review of Services

for Children & Young People with Complex Needs in West Sussex

Many of you will be aware that at the moment NHS West Sussex is reviewing the Services for Children and Young People with Complex Needs in West Sussex. This review is being lead independently by Dame Philippa Russell for the National Children's Bureau. Several of you may also have been part of one of the various workshops that have been held for parents and carers around the county. As a Forum, we have had good representation throughout the review and we are very interested to see what the final report shows. From the meetings that we have attended it seems that many parents

are anxious about the transition from children to adult services and there seems to be a real frustration that ideas that have been suggested in the past few years are taking there time in being implemented.

This report should help in prioritising the work that still needs to be done in West Sussex and we will continue to ensure that the views of parents and carers are clearly heard. If you still have any comments that you would like to make with regards to this review, then please contact us as soon as possible and we will ensure that these are forwarded to Dame Philippa Russell.

Situations Vacant – I.T. Support

At the moment we are looking for someone who can support us with I.T. and would love to hear from you who could help us in this area. Whether you have time every month to support us with setting up I.T. systems or whether you could do a training session for those of us who currently use the I.T. at the moment.

If I.T. is not your thing, but you still have few hours a month that you would like to volunteer for the West Sussex Parents Forum, then please get in touch to.

**If you think that you can help us
in this way then we would
love to have from you,
please contact us
on 07528 418149**



Your Opinion...

West Sussex Parents Forum is at the point where we are considering becoming a registered charity with the Charity Commission. The reason for this is that we are now becoming quite large and we want to ensure that the Parents Forum is sustainable beyond the current support that we have had from Aiming High, which is due to come to an end in March 2011.

This is a big step for us and we can not do this with out your help. In order for us to move forward in this way, we are looking for parents/carers or other interested persons, who would be willing to become a **Trustees**.

We are particularly looking for individuals who have experience in the following areas:

- Human Resources
- Finance
- Fundraising
- Governance
- Previous experience as a Trustee
- As well as the officer roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer

If you are interested in finding out more about becoming a **Trustee** for the West Sussex Parents Forum, then please contact **Daniel Cheesman** via the forum on 07528418149 or alternatively email him on parents@westsussexparentsforum.co.uk. You only need to be interested at this stage and we will explain the commitment, roles and responsibilities and criteria that is needed in order to become a **Trustee**.

All interest in becoming a potential Trustee of the West Sussex Parents Forum, should be made before Wed 1st September 2010.

West Sussex Parents Forum

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Tel: 07528 418149 • Email: parents@westsussexparentsforum.co.uk
www.westsussexparentsforum.co.uk

West Sussex Parents Forum Membership Form

Your Name and Details: _____

Address: _____

Tel No: _____

Email: _____

Details of your Child or Young Person

Name of your child/young person: _____ Their Age: _____

Your child/young person Disability Diagnosed/Non Diagnosed: _____

Name of your child/young person: _____ Their Age: _____

Your child/young person Disability Diagnosed/Non Diagnosed: _____

Name of your child/young person: _____ Their Age: _____

Your child/young person Disability Diagnosed/Non Diagnosed: _____

Name of your child/young person: _____ Their Age: _____

Your child/young person Disability Diagnosed/Non Diagnosed: _____

Questions about you

The running of West Sussex Parents Forum is under taken by a very few passionate parents who think that if you all have the same VOICE we can make a difference to Change things for our children and young people for the FUTURE. I know there are many of you who can help us by bringing your skills and expertise to the Forum to make it the type of organisation other organisations will seek and value as a VOICE of parents in West Sussex.

Expertise/Skill you can bring to the Forum: _____

Would you be willing to attend meetings as a representative of West Sussex Parents Forum?

Yes No

Would you be willing for West Sussex Parents Forum to pass your details on to other organisations?

Yes No

If you do not wish to be contacted to attend meetings, would you be willing to help West Sussex Parents Forum in other ways.

Yes No

If yes how much time (this can be as little as an hour per Month): _____

Summer – Things To Do

Monday 16th August 2010, 11-3pm

Picnic at Brooklands Park, Western Road, Lancing, West Sussex

This is a chance for families and children to come and play together. Bring a picnic or relax in a café nearby. The playground here is fully inclusive and the site has a state of the art changing/toilet facilities.

The event is organised by Portage Support Group.

Wednesday 25th August 2010, 10.30-4.30

Day out at Tilgate Park, Crawley, West Sussex

A fantastic day out with for all children as there is so much to do: lakes, woodlands, gardens, a nature centre and farm, children's play areas, craft units, and plenty of places for picnics. There is also a cafe, it is just a fun place so come along and join us, you can come and go as you please but would be good to meet all together for picnic lunch at 12-30ish. All parents/carers are responsible for their own children and you have to pay to park. The event is organised by Portage Support Group.

Friday 27th August 2010, 11:00-4:00pm

Washbrooks Farm, Brighton Road, Hurstpierpoint

A lovely family farm, with lots of things to see and do, a day to come and join with other parents and children for some fun and laughter. You can come and go as you please throughout the day. Prices - Children under 3 go free, Adults- £5:00 and Children -£4:50



Free Benefits Advice

Aiming High and West Sussex County Council have taken on a Benefits Advisor to offer help to parents and carers who have a child with a disability or additional needs for help with Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Employment Support Allowance, Tax Credit etc. If you would like some support in this area, then please contact David Harper at david.harper@westsussex.gov.uk Please give the name and age of your child together with your contact details.

Free Counselling

Free counselling is available for parents in West Sussex who have children with special needs. Six free sessions with a professional counsellor are available through the Parent & Family Care Trust for more information please contact Brian O'Hagan on 07939 192388 or email info@brianohagan.co.uk



Future Dates for the Diary...

Parent Training Day – Saturday 17th July 2010 – Angmering Community Centre

Various workshops on this day include; introductions to signalong/makaton, play and learning and disability awareness. Contact Sophie Spearman on 07879660410 or email her on sophie240@btinternet.com for more information.

Aiming High for Disabled Children – Family Fun-days

Sunday 4th July 2010 Lancing Manor Leisure Centre, 10-4pm

Sunday 25th July 2010 Southwick Leisure Centre, 10-4pm

Sunday 17th October 2010 Westgate Leisure Centre, 10-4pm

Places are limited at these events, so please contact Michelle at michelle.vanrooyen@westsussex.gov.uk or call her on 01243 642284

Parent/Carers Planning Group – Tuesday 14th July 2010 – Brinsbury College

This meeting gives parents and carers the opportunity to meet with officers from health, education and social care. It is held between

10:30am and 12:30pm in the Conservatory at Brinsbury College, a lunch is provided.

National Play Day Event – Wednesday 4th August 2010 – Broadwater Green, Worthing

This FREE event welcomes all children, running from 10m-3pm, there is something for everyone, the event will be opened by TV's Dave Benson Phillips.



West Sussex Parents Forum – Annual General Meeting – Tuesday 14th Sept 2010

Please 'Save the Date' in your diary as this is our AGM and we would like to see as many people there as possible. To make the event slightly more interesting we are planning to make this an evening for you, where you can come along and be pampered too. Invitations with full information will be sent out over the coming months.

Parents for Autism – Monday 20th September 2010 – Maybridge Children & Family Centre

For more information please contact Lindsey Butterfield on 01903 538303 or email her on lindseybutter@ntlworld.com

STOP PRESS – Amendments to past newsletters

- Issue One of our 'new look' newsletter, we stated that the Forum we meet all parent expenses for all Forum events. At present we are only in the financial position to reimburse parents when this is clearly stated and unfortunately we are rarely able to reimburse child care. For parents attending various meetings, we will be happy to advise you, who to claim expenses from – for further clarification, then please do not hesitate to contact us.
- In previous newsletters we have mentioned our Aiming High for Disabled Children Special Newsletter. This edition is taking us longer than expected to produce due to the continuing updates with the programme. Our aim is to have this ready complete with all the information about Aiming High by the Autumn.

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