



Spring 2025 PCF newsletter



Welcome to the Spring edition of the Parent Carer Forum Newsletter

In this issue:

- Meet new staff
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities support within the Community Family Offer
- Groups and Activities
- Health and Care Passports guidance and templates
- Jargon Busting
- Newcastle SEND portal
- Graduated response for SEN support
- What support is available in Newcastle for children, young people and their families?
- Personal travel budgets update
- EHCP phase transfer process
- Local Offer name and winner





My name is **Vicki Whincup** and I'm the SEND Voice Lead for within the Children & Families Directorate at Newcastle LA, working alongside education, health and social care.



I'm looking forward to continuing working to ensure Newcastle is an inclusive, accessible and safe city for our children and young people with SEND.

What do I do as SEND Voice Lead?

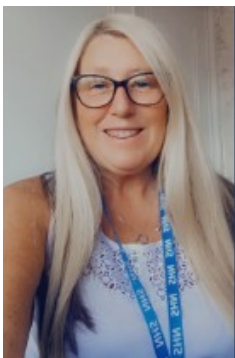
I recruit and manage SEND Youth Voice Trainees. Together we make sure our children and young people with SEND, and their families, have their voices heard. We do this by working directly with children and young people and staff in education, health and social care.

We are involved in developing SEND Services and the Local Offer in Newcastle to ensure an inclusive approach to supporting our young people with SEND.

Working together with other services, I try to ensure parents and carers have access to the right information at the right time.

Dawn Robson

Designated Clinical Officer SEND Gateshead and Newcastle.



I am the Designated Clinical Officer for SEND for Newcastle and Gateshead, employed by North East North Cumbria Integrated Care Board (NENC ICB) and enjoy working with my partners from Education, Health and Social Care to support our Children and Young People from 0-25 years receive the right support at the right time.

My role involves:

- Supporting health professionals to contribute to the Education, Health and Care Plan process
- Working with others in the local area to improve the quality of Education, Health and Care Plans.
 - Supporting the SEND team at the local authority with questions and queries
 - Promoting links between the SEND team, education professionals, social care and health services
- Supporting the commissioners and senior leadership team with regards to meeting and assuring the SEND health requirements
 - Working alongside commissioners and stakeholders including children and young people, parents and carers to identify and raise any commissioning gaps some of which may require joint commissioning to resolve
 - Ensuring we can evidence a good local offer of health services and clear health journeys for those age 0-25 with SEND





SEND support within the Community Family Offer

Graduated Response/Team Around the Family (TAF)

The Community Family Offer (CFO) provides support to families with children who have special educational needs (SEND) and settings, as part of Newcastle's Graduated Response.

As part of the Early Help offer, Family Partners and Intensive Family Support teams work with families to identify and support needs through Early Intervention Conversations, and Early Help Assessments and Plans.

They act in a bridging role between home and school, sharing information on appropriate supportive services available within the community or offering support to implement strategies at home, enabling families to manage challenges more confidently.

Family Partners and Intensive Family Support workers can chair (or support in) Team around the Family (TAF) meetings, where the aim is to streamline support – for example, a TAF meeting will include colleagues from various services who work together and with the family to consider the best way to offer support.

CFO colleagues can support in reviewing the effectiveness of SEN support plans, where young people have one in place. A smaller group of children will require Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) – CFO colleagues can contribute to the assessment process for EHCP requests.



Each school within Newcastle Local Authority has an allocated Family Partner, whose role includes supporting young people and families to navigate and connect with services available to them.

[Find your school's Family Partner | Services to Schools](#)



Groups and Activities through the CFO

Welcome to your family hub | Children and Families Newcastle – our website provides information on all aspects of the Community Family Offer (CFO). Schools, childcare providers and wider agencies have QR codes which provide instant access to information on the diverse range of services available across the city.

north east autism society

The **North East Autism Society** runs weekly sessions/workshops in the community family hubs, hosted by the CFO.

These are delivered in rotation across family hub sites in our four localities (Nunsmoor, Galafield, Byker Sands and Fawdon). In the sessions families can discuss concerns, share challenges and explore common misconceptions and differences in autistic children.

<https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/node/4548>

There are opportunities to explore practical strategies to use in everyday life and to develop action plans. In addition to the group sessions, individual appointments can be made between 9am and 4pm.

Other elements of the CFO specific to SEND include:

- Rainbow Borrowers** (a Toy Library for children with additional needs which runs in East locality) <https://www.napi.org.uk/toy-library#AdditionalNeedsToyLibrary>
- Masquer-Aid and Fab Group** (peer support groups for neurodivergent young people which run in Inner West and East localities) <https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/masquer-aid-programme> <https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/fab-group>
- SEND support groups** for parents and carers (Outer West and North localities) <https://childrenandfamiliesnewcastle.org.uk/parenting-support>



What is a health and care passport?



The health and care passport is designed to be a quick and easy way to give health and social care professionals more information about you to help them provide the right care and treatment. It should help them understand what reasonable adjustments they should make for you and how to communicate effectively so your voice is always heard.

To find out more about the health and care passport please see the latest guidance which will explain how to complete a passport, how to keep it up to date and how to use your passport.

The latest guidance and templates can be found here:

<https://www.england.nhs.uk/long-read/health-and-care-passport-plain-english/>

The website will give you information on the following:

What is a health and care passport
Completing your health and care passport
Keeping your health and care passport up to date
Using your health and care passport



Find an example of a health and care passport here:

<https://neclnetwork.co.uk/work-programmes/secondary-care/hospital-passports/>



The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust

Learning disability support

Our learning disability support services helps people with a learning disability and their carers when visiting our our hospital.

We work with adults and children who have a learning disability who need additional support to access our services.

What can we help with?

We want to improve the care you receive when you visit our services.

Reasonable adjustments can be made to our services so they meet your individual needs.

We can also co-ordinate care for when you attend hospital. In addition to this, we make sure that all those involved in your care are aware of your additional needs.

We support and advise our staff on personalised care and delivery of services and act as facilitator between agencies.

Using the learning disability liaison service

The service is available Monday to Friday (excluding bank holidays) 8:00am – 4.30pm

If you have a learning disability or are supporting someone with a learning disability, please contact the service on:

Telephone: 0191 282 0347 or email: nuth.LearningDisability.LiaisonService@nhs.net

Jargon Busting

To help you navigate the maze of SEND language, jargon and acronyms we have put together a short list of the most commonly used terms which is by no means exhaustive! We will add the jargon busting list to the Local Offer so if you know of any others, please let us know so we can keep updated. Also remember that if you attend any meetings where jargon is used please ask the person to explain what it means.

ADHD / ADD – Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder / Attention Deficit Disorder

ADOS – Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule

AP – Alternative Provision

ASD/ASC – Autistic Spectrum Disorder/Autistic Spectrum Condition

CAMHS – Child and Adolescent Mental Health services, provided by the NHS

CWDT – Children with Disabilities Team - Social Care team

CYP – children and young people

CYPS – Children and young peoples services

DfE – Department for Education

DLA – Disability Living Allowance. Non means-tested benefit for under 16's

Early Help Assessment – An early assessment and planning tool to facilitate multi agency support

EHC Plan/EHCP – Education, Health and Care Plan

EHCNA – Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment

EHE – Elective Home Education

EOTAS – Education Otherwise Than at School

EP – Educational Psychologist.

EWO – Education Welfare Officer

GDD – Global Developmental Delay

HI – Hearing impairment

IEP – Individual Education Plan.

LA – Local Authority. The local council responsible for managing services in your area

LO - Local Offer – Online information outlining the provision available in the Local Area for SEND relating to health, education, social care and voluntary services

LSA – Learning Support Assistant, also sometimes called Teaching Assistant.

LST – Learning Support Teacher

MLD – Moderate Learning Difficulties

NAS – National Autistic Society

NEET – Not in Education, Employment or Training

OCD – Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

ODD – Oppositional Defiance Disorder

OT – Occupational Therapist.

PB – Personal Budget. Money that is allocated to individuals to meet assessed needs

PCF – Parent Carer Forum

PDA – Pathological Demand Avoidance. A profile of ASC

PDD – Pervasive Developmental Disorder.

PECS – Picture Exchange Communication System

PIP – Personal Independence Payment

PMLD – Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities

PfA -Preparing for Adulthood.

SCD – Social Communication Disorder

SEMH – Social Emotional and Mental Health

SEN – Special Educational Needs

SENCO – Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.

SEND – Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities

SENDIASS – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service. Provides information and support particularly around education issues

SLD – Severe learning difficulties

SLT or SALT – Speech and Language Therapy.

'SMART' targets – Targets which are Specific, Measurable, Agreed, Realistic and Timed.

SPD – Sensory Processing Disorder

SpLD – Specific Learning Difficulties.

TAF – Team around the family

Universal Services – Services provided to all Children and Young people in the area.

VI – Visual Impairment



Newcastle's SEND Portal



If you have ever applied for a school placement, free school meals or SEND transport in Newcastle you will probably have used the Citizen's Portal. The Local Authority have been using the Citizen's Portal to process Education, Health and Carer (EHC) assessment requests and plans for two years. Most parental requests for an EHC assessment are now made on the SEND Citizen's portal.

Don't have an account? Please [register an account](#)

Required fields are marked with a red asterisk *

Email address *

Password *

[Forgot your password?](#)

[Show](#) [Sign in](#)

Welcome to the Citizen Portal

School Admissions - before you start:

- Make sure you have read the admissions policy of the schools you are applying for. The admissions policy can be found on the individual schools websites.
- Make sure you have read how we process your application form. This information can be found on the [Newcastle City Council website here](#)

Free School Meals - before you start:

- Make sure you have read how we process your application form. This information can be found on the [Newcastle City Council website here](#)

Special Educational Needs Disability (SEND) Travel Support - before you start:

- Make sure you have read how we process your application form. This information can be found on the [Newcastle City Council website here](#)

SEND - Education Health Care Plan Assessment and Review - before you start:

- Make sure you have read our helpful information on our [Newcastle Local Offer website here](#)

Forgotten your Password?

If you are already a registered user then login and apply using your previous login details. If you cannot remember your password please use the "Forgotten your Password" option under the Login button.

Having technical problems?

If you experience any technical issues with School Admissions and Free School Meals, please email us with full details to admissions.information@newcastle.gov.uk.

If you experience any technical issues with SEND Transport or SEND EHCP Assessment and reviews, please email us with full details to CapitaOneDataQual@newcastle.gov.uk. We cannot personally resolve technical issues within the Teams and emails will be escalated to our technical IT team. Please note that our office hours are Monday to Friday 9.00am to 2.30pm. Emails and calls will not be responded to at weekends.

The SEND portal is a secure website used by Newcastle Council's SEND Support Assessment and Review Team to gather information for the Education Health and Care (EHC) assessment and planning process.

Why should I register on the Citizen's Portal?

Once registered on the portal you will be able to:

- Check the current status and track progress of an EHC assessment
- Complete Section A of the EHC plan
- View the draft and final EHC plans

Soon annual reviews will be processed on the portal, and you will be able to view all of the annual review documents.

If you are using the portal the Local Authority are keen to get your feedback and would be grateful if you could complete this short survey: <https://forms.office.com/e/3D0eykZWV6>. If you have any questions about the portal, please email: localoffer@newcastle.gov.uk.

or go to this link:

<https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/send-portal>





Fact check



False: My child needs an EHCP to receive SEN support in school.

True: Schools use a graduated response when a pupil is identified as having SEN

Graduated Response – When a pupil is identified as having SEN, schools should take action to remove barriers to learning and put effective provision in place. This SEN support should take the form of a four-part cycle (assess, plan, do, review) to help gain a better understanding of the pupil's needs and tailor support accordingly.

Schools must show evidence of a graduated response whereby they have sought advice, put appropriate interventions in place and evaluated progress before requesting additional or alternative provision through an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment.

The graduated response includes the SEND Advice and Support Allocation Panel (ASAP).

The intention of services available through SEN ASAP is to provide free specialist advice and guidance to support mainstream inclusion.

The Local Offer has lots of information about what support can be offered before needing an Education, Health and Care Plan. There are documents and resources to explain the SEND Advice and Support Allocation Panel and how this can help your child.

<https://www.newcastlesupportdirectory.org.uk/newcastle-send-advice-and-support-allocation-panel-send-asap>





Newcastle – What support is available to children, young people and their families?

Support offer from CNTW

CNTW Service	Description
Children and Young People's Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for young people (0 -18) presenting with some degree of psychological distress of mental health difficulty. Mental Health Assessment, and up to 12 sessions of psychological therapy carried out.
Crisis Resolution and Home Treatment Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intensive home -based support for children and young people who's mental health is causing significant concern. Operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (not an "emergency" service like 999)
Newcastle Treatment and Recovery	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for young people experiencing substance misuse. Harm reduction, medical support and ongoing recovery support. Dedicated recovery coordinator
Early Intervention in Psychosis Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for young people 14+ experiencing first symptoms of psychosis. Build understanding of symptoms and develop ways to cope with them. Offering psychological therapy and develop daily living skills.

Single Point of Access – Lead Provider Support

From the Single Point of Access	
Kalmer Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:1 counselling (private or within school). Group Work and Drop In sessions (school only). Offer Bespoke school counselling.
North East Counselling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselling is available face to face, zoom or over the phone.
Children North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1:1 counselling for 9-25 year olds. Can be accessed in the Children North East building or a location the young person feels safe. Available on evenings and Saturday mornings.
Streetwise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 counselling sessions, once per week for 50 minutes. Available over Skype or instant messaging if that's the preferred method. Drop in sessions, details on their website.
Kooth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Live counselling functionality. Access to magazines, forums, activity centres and messaging.
Barnardo's- Independence Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Step down for 13-18 year olds from therapeutic services. Supports young people for a period of up to 6 months, with a focus on emotional wellbeing, to ensure young people don't require further counselling.
Barnardo's- Orchard Mosaic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional and wellbeing support including; assessment for children who are demonstrating harmful sexual behaviour, Capacity to Protect assessments for women, workshops for children, parents and professionals on awareness and prevention of child sexual exploitation, parenting workshops for parents of children with ADHD.

Support available for Newcastle's schools

Organisation	Support
Support and training available to schools – to provide better support for children and young people	
Team around the School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support for all secondary schools, will be rolled out to primary schools in the future. Aim is to create better communication between schools and other professionals by linking people together. 1 multiagency meeting per half term; early help, police, youth justice, family partners, 0 -19 services and voluntary sector colleagues etc. Early triaging, having a joined -up approach when a child may show early signs of needing support.
Newcastle Educational Psychology Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Putting together the Education Health Care Needs Assessment. Supporting young people with Special Education Needs and children from refugee or asylum -seeking families as well as children living in foster or residential care. Schools can buy in additional support from the service (£240 per half day). The SENDCO organises how this time is used. Referrals come directly from the school; parents cannot directly refer in.
Zippy's Friends – Children North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme for years one and two to develop coping and social skills. Whole year group sessions. Teaches young people how to cope with everyday difficulties, to identify and talk about their feelings and to explore ways of dealing with them including topics such as communication, friendship, solving problems and moving forward.
Apple's Friends – Children North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme for years three and four. Builds on the Zippy's Friend programme.
BU Programme – Children North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group programme which aims to build young people's (8 -25) resilience to cope with emotional challenges in everyday life. 2 hour sessions across a 6 weeks covering; communication, friendships, self -help, coping with feelings and mental health.
Today's Teens and Tomorrow's Teens – Children North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Programme of 6 weekly sessions or 5 intensive consecutive days. Group work and separate sessions for students and parents/carers. Sessions cover; teenage brain development, exploring parenting styles, violence and how to actively take responsibility for behaviour.
Family Partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All schools in the city have a named family partner. Level of communication with the school vary depending on need, monthly meetings with SENDO/Pastoral Care Staff. Link in with parents/carers of children/young people who are not currently accessing school, have been excluded or have been involved with the youth justice system using a restorative practice approach. Carry out Early Intervention Conversations with families, taking into consideration both what the school and family are saying the issues are. Aim of the role if to connect the family quickly with the appropriate services and to speed up the liaison needed to activate support.



Additional support for young people in Newcastle

Organisation	Support
Mental Health Support for children and young people in Newcastle	
Eating Distress North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Weekly 50 minute counselling sessions for 6 -8 weeks. Counselling is available online or face to face. Free counselling only available 9am – 5pm on weekdays.
Relate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Counselling for any young person struggling with their mental health.
Chit Chat – YMCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Details of YMCA's youth workers are on their website, with a direct link to chat to them via Facebook messenger
Space 2 Connect – YMCA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Online digital youth centre. Safe space for young people to access YMCA services and engage with youth workers and other young people. Online mental health resources and self help guides. Youth Work Team based at YMCA Walker Park Centre – appointments required to attend
Humankind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1-2-1 sessions for 11-25 year olds needing support around sexual orientation and / or gender identity.
Young victims of crime counselling – Children North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Special counselling service for 11 -25 year olds if they have been a victim of a crime e.g. domestic abuse, sexual violence or hate crime. Can attend the service via drop in. Offer the opportunity to meet other young people who have been through similar experiences.
Support for children and young people in Newcastle with a learning disability	
Masquer-Aid (Children North East)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Peer support group for 11 -25 year olds awaiting their diagnosis or have recently found out they're neurodiverse. 1-2-1 support available to build initial confidence prior to attending groups; 2 groups available in Newcastle.
PathWEYES (Children North East)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Open to anyone who identifies as living with a disability, no diagnosis required. 1-2-1 sessions to signpost young people with SEND to activities / services they might enjoy. Peer mentors to support young people going through the diagnosis process.
Youth Link Newcastle – Children North East	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people with a learning disability (including SEND) set their own life goal and are matched with a peer mentor to achieve their goal. Young people can have between 6 -12 sessions with their peer mentor. For 11-18 year olds living in a Newcastle postcode. Open to any young person who identifies as living with a disability, regardless of their stage of diagnosis. Peer mentors are a good support for young people going through the diagnosis process.



Personal Travel Budgets Update:

Following the consultation on Personal Travel Budgets as a means of travel support for eligible children and young people with SEND, we are pleased to announce that the new offer will be introduced in September 2025. Further information will follow shortly.

We understand that some schools sometimes alter their teaching times, particularly on the last day of term. If advised of any changes as soon as possible, we will do our utmost to accommodate these changes. However, despite our best endeavours, we are often unable to provide transport at a different time to that which is contracted. This is largely outside of our control and due to several factors such as the commissioning framework which we are obliged to adhere to, availability of staff (drivers, escorts etc), as well as priorities within our own transport team's workload.

Post 16 travel budgets:

For the post-16 still no updates beyond it going back to councillors sometime in Spring and we will keep you posted if there is any news.

EHCP Phase Transfer Process

Lots of parents have asked about how this works and what the stages are during the transition year.

Transition years are the years in which a child moves to a new phase of education.
A transition year (often called a phase transfer) is:

- **Early years education to school.**
- **Infant school to junior school.**
- **Primary school to middle school.**
- **Primary school to secondary school.**
- **Middle school to secondary school, or**
- **Secondary school to a post-16 institution.**



What happens to an EHC plan during a transition year?

Statutory deadlines state the EHC plan must be reviewed and amended before:

- **31st March if the transfer is from secondary school to a post-16 institution.**
- **15th February in any other case, or**
- **If a young person is moving from one post-16 institution to another post-16 institution at any other time, at least 5 months before that transfer takes place.**

Transition Review Meeting

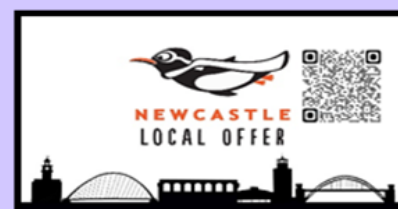
An annual review meeting must be held in the autumn term of the year before the child or young person moves to a new school. These meetings are called Transition Review Meetings.

Following the Transition Review Meeting:

1. The LA reviews the plan.
2. The LA sends proposed amendments and a copy of the plan with section I indicated with a strikethrough to the parent or YP within 4 weeks of the transition review meeting.
3. The parent or YP has at least 15 days to respond to the proposed amendments/content of the plan and to request that a particular school be named.
4. The LA issues a final amended plan naming both the YP's current school and the name of the school they will be transferring to, along with notice of appeal rights, by the statutory deadlines listed above.

This year (the academic year 2024/25,) the LA has issued 94% of phase transfer EHCPs within statutory deadlines. This is an increase of 13% on the previous year (2023/24). Although this isn't the 100% that the LA aim for, please be assured that the LA is working closely with those families who have not received their finalised plan yet.

Please scan below to visit the Local Offer for more information:





Well done Aaliya!!



A huge congratulations to Aaliya, who has won our competition to name the penguin in our Local Offer logo.

Our logo was originally designed by young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND), who chose a flying penguin to symbolise the incredible potential of children and young people when given the right support.

As part of last year's SEND Celebration Event, we launched a name-the-penguin competition.

Aaliya's choice was GIRTrood, a combination of her favourite dolly, Gertrude, and the message of Getting It Right Together. Aaliya has received a £100 voucher for Eldon Square and a penguin teddy as her prize.

A big thank you to the Youth Voice and Influence team for selecting the winning name.

