



Newsletter of the Dorset Parent-Carer Council working for the parents and carers of children and young people in Dorset with additional needs or disability

**NEW YEAR 2018**

Dorset Parent-Carer Council



Making Positive Change for Children and Young People with Disabilities

# Dorset Parent-Carer Council Voice



**Lesley Mellor**  
Chair of DPCC

## Happy New Year and welcome to our 2018 New Year newsletter.

If you haven't received one of our newsletters before, I hope you will find this edition informative and useful. For our regular readers, here is an update on some of the work we are currently involved in.

DPCC are, as a group, working hard towards becoming a Charity. This will let us tender for work and funding and at last, after 8 years, be able to pay some of our volunteers. Our main funding comes through the Department of Education. It has just been confirmed that this will still be available for the next two years—subject to a time consuming yearly application. Becoming a charity means changes for us on the management of the forum, but exciting times ahead too.

We use some of our funding to pay for our 2 annual big events for families. The next one due is our Information Event taking place on Monday March 19<sup>th</sup> 2018 at Kingston Maurward. Please put the date in your diary.

In October last year, we held our regular Teenager2Adult event. We had over 180 adults plus 71 young people visiting. It was a fabulous day and we gathered lots of information as did our visitors and stallholders.

Over the last few months, we have been busy developing a new survey. It is our most comprehensive survey to date and will really help to build up our core of data around concerns or issues that you, as carers, may be experiencing. In particular, it follows on from the smaller survey we did to feed into the local area inspection by Ofsted in 2017.

Please take the time to complete the new survey. The results will be so powerful for us to have, providing vital evidence of families' needs and concerns when we are at SEND ( Special Education Needs or Disability) meetings whether health services or the local authority.

This is the strength of being a forum. It means that we can have a store of parent carers' views, thoughts and opinions. We can then share this at meetings where we are part of the Board or Group involved. This is particularly important where the local authority is obliged to consult with us e.g. in accordance with the SEND reforms.

So our surveys, the Contact Us tab on our website and our parent coffee mornings are really important for you to let us know what you think, to have your say and to participate in what happens in the future.

Of course, I know this all takes valuable time. So just to tempt you to complete our new survey, there is a gift voucher for those who complete it :-)

Becoming a member of DPCC and getting information sent directly to you, is also important. It means you know what's happening and where your voice could make a difference. If you haven't joined us already, just go to our website and sign up. It's free, of course.

For our members who like looking ahead, remember that our Beach Huts will be available again this year. So whilst we sit here shivering and thinking of those sunny days ahead, it may be a good time to book early!  
[www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk/our-beach-huts/](http://www.dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk/our-beach-huts/)

Meantime, happy reading!

**Best wishes**

**Lesley**



### Date for your diary

**DPCC Information Event**  
**March 19th 2018 at Kingston Maurward DT2 8PX**

## Our biggest ever survey!

We need to collect the views of parents and carers about a wide range of services, so that we can let Dorset County Council and the Dorset Clinical Commissioning Group know what is working and what isn't.

**Please do take part.** More details about the survey and how you can receive a free £5 voucher are set out on the card included inside.

**FREE £5 VOUCHER**

**P2**

- Advocacy and independent visitors
- We need your help

**P3**

- Dorset Enhanced Transition Working Group
- EHCP Banding system

**P4**

- SENDIASS—the Dorset service explained
- Local Offer—new look

### New Advocacy and Independent Visitor Service

It is important that the views and wishes of children and young people are taken into account when key decisions about their lives are being made.

**ADVOCACY** provides independent one to one support for Children and Young People to make sure that their voices are heard when decisions are being made about them, or if they want to make a complaint.

If they are Looked After/Leaving Care, Children in Need, or involved in SEND transition assessments, mental capacity assessments or Child Protection processes – they may be entitled to the support of an Independent Advocate.

*"My advocate helped me say the things I wanted to say but was too scared to...."*

**INDEPENDENT VISITORS** are trained volunteers who befriend and mentor a Child or Young person in Care who



<https://services.actionforchildren.org.uk/dorset-services/>

has little or no contact with their birth parents and would benefit from having an independent adult in their life.

Whether it's trying a new activity, going out and about, or just being a listening ear, the Independent Visitor will be there for the long haul.

Independent Visitors are highly valued by the young people as they are often the only person involved in their lives who is not paid to be there.

*"She's like the Aunty I never had"*

Dorset County Council have a new contract with **Action for Children** to provide these independent services. Both services are free for children and young people who meet the criteria.

You can find out more and how referrals are made from their website link below.

### "How can you find out what YOUR child's school has in place to support pupils with Special Educational Needs or Disability?"

Did you know that all schools must have an SEN Policy and SEN Information Report\* by law? They are key sources of information for parents/carers. They explain how schools identify and support children with SEN and disabilities. This includes children with and without an EHC Plan.

**The SEN Policy** sets out the school's vision for SEN and disability over a 3 year period. **The SEN Information Report** sets out what the school has actually done over the past year.

Because they are for parents/carers, schools are encouraged to consult and involve you when writing them. You can also use them to challenge a school if you feel they are not doing what they say they will.

Dorset County Council has recently issued guidance to all schools about these documents. They have asked schools to make sure they are friendly, useful and easy to read.

Why not check if your child's school has these documents on their website? If your child is due to start or transfer schools next year, you may find it helpful to choose a school based on these.

\*The SEN Information report MUST be published on your school's website. (Thanks to K. Lambert at Dorset County Council for this article.)



### We need your help

Volunteers are very important to us and the work we do. If you join us as a DPCC volunteer, you will help to make a real difference to the lives of parents/carers of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs and their families.

There are several opportunities to get involved with DPCC, whatever skills and time you have to offer. We can offer you support and training if needed to work with us and to represent the collective voice of parents/carers.

We pay our volunteers out of pocket expenses.

Most of all it gets you out of the house and meeting other Parent Carers!

We have a wide range of Volunteering opportunities that might interest you:

- Being part of our DPCC steering group
- Parent Reps who attend strategic meetings, working groups and other boards
- Volunteers for parent groups & coffee mornings
- Helping out at events, stalls, leaflet drops, admin etc
- Sitting on Interview panels
- Speaking at events or training sessions from a parent's perspective

Please contact us for more information— we'd love to catch up with you.

Email: [dppcc@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk](mailto:dppcc@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk)

Visit our website for more details.

## Update on the new banding system for Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

In October 2017 Dorset County Council introduced a new banding system for funding the costs of pupils with complex Special Educational Needs (SEN).

Before this change, schools were funded based on the number of teaching assistant hours that were written into a statement or EHCP where central 'high needs' funding is provided, in addition to what the school provides from its own funding.

The way the new banding system works gives schools greater flexibility in how they support children and young people with complex SEN, as it provides details of specific

interventions that are broader than just providing a teaching assistant at school.

As a result of the changes to date, the Council have had feedback from schools, parents and carers that has been very helpful.

Dorset County Council would like to share this feedback and provide some comments and answers to some of the questions that have been raised.

They will be publishing further information about the new banding system on the Dorset Parent-Carer Council website and on the Dorset Local Offer pages in early February.

Please do look out for these additional updates.

## Dorset Enhanced Transition Working Group Weymouth College & Kingston Maurward working together to prepare our students for adulthood

When young people reach the age of 16 a range of options become available. Remaining in learning until they are 18 doesn't mean they need to stay in school. Alternative options include:

- Attend college
- participate in an internship
- start a course of work-based learning – such as a supported internship or apprenticeship
- get a job
- do voluntary work
- be supported by Social Services/Social Care and Health/Children's Service

Choosing the right post-16 provision and the right provider can seem quite daunting. For this reason Weymouth College and Kingston Maurward College – working together to ensure that Dorset-based students – together with their parents and carers – can make sensible and informed choices about which path to take.

In May 2017 the Dorset Enhanced Transition Working Group was created. The Group allows specialists and representatives from both Colleges to meet on a regular basis to share experience and best practice and to move towards a seamless level of service ensuring that Dorset's students, parents and carers receive excellent guidance and support in making the right choice for the future. Dorset Parent-Carer Council are also part of the group -

providing an invaluable view of experiences and feedback from students, parents and carers.

Advice and guidance on education should always be impartial and that is exactly what this joint project will bring. Kingston Maurward College, Weymouth College and the Dorset Parent-Carer Council are looking forward to working closely together.

**Luke Rake – Principal at Kingston Maurward College** said:

*"As providers we are different and offer different options. However, students in this county are very fortunate; there is excellence in both our organisations and wherever students study, they are sure to have an outstanding experience."*

**Nigel Evans – Principal at Weymouth College** added:

*"The provision of foundation learning is a core element of the course offerings at both Kingston Maurward and Weymouth College. We completely agree that it is right that we work collaboratively to ensure that the students of Dorset and their supporters can easily access all the information they need about our courses and pathways – talking fully and openly about those options with the staff who will be working with them every day."*

*We will be working closely with Kingston Maurward in 2018 and beyond to offer the right course, the right access, the right level of support and the right advice for every student in Dorset to ensure that – as they prepare for adulthood - their time at college is the most enjoyable, supported and productive it can be."*

JOIN US  
CONTACT US



**Membership Secretary:**  
G. Baker, 20 Warmwell Close, Canford Heath, Poole BH17 8AW  
[membership@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk](mailto:membership@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk)

**Email us**  
[dpcc@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk](mailto:dpcc@dorsetparentcarercouncil.co.uk)

**Call us**  
**07827 793 244**



## Dorset Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

If you have a child with Special Educational Needs, SENDIASS is there to help YOU and your CHILD.

It's IMPARTIAL, CONFIDENTIAL & FREE. Could SENDIASS help you?

### What is SENDIASS?

*'Local authorities must arrange for children with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, and their parents/ carers, and young people with SEN or disabilities for whom they are responsible, to be provided with information and advice about matters relating to their SEN or disabilities, including matters relating to health and social care.'*

SEND Code of Practice 2014, DfE

The Dorset local service is called SENDIASS—Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service.

One of the crucial things about Dorset SENDIASS is that their officers are not office based – they work from home and are impartial. If you are struggling with any part of the education system, you can be confident that SENDIASS is 'on your side'. They will do their very best to support you and your child or young person with information, advice and support.

### The legal bit! What information, advice and support do they provide for Dorset families ?

Every SENDIASS Officer has legal training relating to education for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability, including:

- > Duties of the local authority and schools in line with the Children and Families Act 2014, the SEND regulations 2014, the Education Act 1996 and the SEND Code of Practice
- > The Equality Act 2010 and Disability Discrimination
- > Department for Education Guidance documents on issues such as bullying, exclusions, supporting young people with mental health or medical needs in school and more

### How can they help? In lots of different ways, for example;

- If you're not sure what to expect from the local authority or education provider in terms of support and education
- If you're not sure how to check that the education provider is doing all they should be doing
- To help you explore possible courses of action that could be followed to enable you to make an informed decision
- If you're having difficulty agreeing education plans with the local authority or education provider and need support to put your points across

- If you need help to rebuild the relationship with professionals so knowledge and concerns can be shared to find the best solution
- To signpost you to local or national sources of information, advice and support
- To give you support through the process of applying for an Education, Health and Care Plan
- To support you through the transfer review process from a Statement of Special Educational needs to an Education, Health and Care Plan
- To help you appeal decisions and advise about your rights of appeal.

### How to contact them:

There are 3 SENDIASS Officers for the Dorset local area:

> **Jane Schmidt**, SENDIASS Co-ordinator and Officer for the North, West Dorset and East Family Partnership Zones.

Email: [j.e.schmidt@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:j.e.schmidt@dorsetcc.gov.uk) Mobile: 07748 624609

> **Catherine Breakwell** – SENDIASS Officer for the Chesil, and Dorchester Family Partnership Zones.

Email: [c.breakwell@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:c.breakwell@dorsetcc.gov.uk) Mobile: 07771 978404

> **Rebecca Maslen** – SENDIASS Officer for the Christchurch and Purbeck/Corfe/Lytchett Family Partnership Zones.

Email: [Rebecca.Maslen@dorsetcc.gov.uk](mailto:Rebecca.Maslen@dorsetcc.gov.uk) Mobile: 07464 675467

### THEY ALSO PROVIDE DROP-IN SESSIONS – NO BOOKING REQUIRED—you can just turn up and have a chat with them.

#### Verwood: Verwood Youth Club

Howe Lane, Verwood. BH31 6JF

Every Friday (term time) 10.00 to NOON

#### Portland: Outlooks Children's Centre

Castle Road, Portland. DT5 1AU

Mondays once a fortnight (starting Mon. 8<sup>th</sup> January – term time) 9.30am to 11.00am

#### Weymouth: Mulberry Children's Centre

Newstead Road, Weymouth. DT4 8JE

Every second and last Thursday in the month (term time) 1.00pm to 3.00pm

#### Dorchester: Dorchester Youth & Community Centre

King's Road, Dorchester. DT1 1NJ

Wednesdays once a fortnight (starting 10<sup>th</sup> January – term time) 10.00am to 12.00pm

### IMPORTANT!!

All remaining Statements of Educational Needs must be converted to EHC plans by March 2018!

Following a 'transfer review' meeting, you will have received or be due to receive a DRAFT Education Health & Care plan. You then have **15 days** to request any changes/amendments. We strongly recommend that you seek independent advice from either SENDIASS or Independent Support (Rose Road Association) to check the quality and content of your child's/ young person's draft plan during those 15 days!

**(If you want to know more about why please do get in touch with us here at DPCC)**

### A new look for your Dorset Local Offer

Dorset's Local Offer provides information and advice for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their parents or carers in a single place.

Following feedback and to help raise awareness of the Local Offer, DCC are working to create a new look and identity for it. The first step has been to design a new logo. Following input from parents, professionals and young people DCC created 3 logo options and put them to a vote. There was a clear winner which is now getting its final tweaks. The logo will feature on the Local Offer section of the **Dorsetforyou** website when it's upgraded this summer, as well as on Local Offer promotional leaflets.

If you want to be involved in shaping the Local Offer's brand new look, DCC will be asking for more votes and feedback very soon. Follow Dorset's Family Information service on Facebook ([facebook.com/dorsetfis](https://www.facebook.com/dorsetfis)) for updates. You can visit the current Local Offer: [www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/local-offer](http://www.dorsetforyou.gov.uk/local-offer)