

Somerset Parent Carer Forum CIC



Welcome to the June edition of our newsletter.

Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter. We have included information on upcoming events and provide updates on some of the work we have been doing.

SEND Family Fun Day

Less than 1 week to Go!



We're counting down to the Annual SEND Family Fun Day and we're so excited to be teaming up again with the Community Inclusion Activity Team to bring you a day of fun, connection, and inclusive activities for all!

SAVE THE DATE: Saturday, 5th July
 Time: 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM
 Location: The Mendip School, Shepton Mallet

From archery and LEGO building to inflatables and board games there's something for everyone of all ages and abilities!

- Food & refreshments available
- Fun for the whole family
- Meet local activity providers

We can't wait to see you there

In this newsletter you can expect:

SEND Family Fun Day

Ways to have your voice heard

Empowering Neurodiversity in Somerset

Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)

Changes made following your feedback

Events

Ofsted and CQC Visit to Somerset – Focus on Children with SEND Not in School

Somerset Council and NHS Somerset Integrated Care Board have been informed that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) will be visiting Somerset from [30 June to 17 July 2025](#). The visit is part of a national review looking at support for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) who are not in school.



The aim is to understand how well education, health, and social care services are working together to support these children. Inspectors will look at the quality of services and the help available to children who are not in full-time school, including those:

- Not on the roll of any registered school
- Who are flexi-schooled or on part-time timetables
- Receiving education in other ways (EOTAS)
- Or those who are severely absent from school

The review will also explore how well services help children return to school, the access they have to health services and how information is shared between professionals.

The visit will take place over three weeks:

- The first two weeks will involve preparation and information gathering
- Inspectors will visit Somerset during the third week

Share Your Views – Ofsted and CQC Survey

As part of the upcoming visit, Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) want to hear from children and young people with SEND, their parents and carers, and the professionals who support them.

There are two short surveys to gather your views. These will be open until 5pm on 17 July 2025

For children and young people with SEND (ages 11–25):

Complete the survey [here](#)

For parents, carers, and professionals:

Complete the survey [here](#)

If you need help to fill in the survey, please call us on 01458 259384 – we're happy to support you.

Details of how the review is conducted can be found at: [Thematic reviews of children not in school in local areas - GOV.UK](#)

WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!



www.surveymonkey.com/r/pcsurvey2025

Have Your Say – Take the Somerset SEND Survey

The SEND survey is a chance for you to share your thoughts and experiences as a parent carer of a child or young person with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in Somerset.

Your feedback really matters – the results will be shared with the SEND Partnership Board to help shape and improve services across the county.

At Somerset Parent Carer Forum, we'll also use what you tell us to guide our work from September, making sure we focus on the things that matter most to our SEND community.

 How long will it take?
Around 15–20 minutes.

Who is the survey for?

All parent carers of children and young people aged 0–25 with SEND are invited to take part. If you have more than one child with additional needs, you're welcome to complete the survey more than once, one for each child.

Need help or prefer a paper copy?

No problem – just call us on 01458 259384 or email getinvolved@somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk and we'll be happy to support you.

Thank you for helping to make a difference for families across Somerset, your voice counts!

Survey closes midnight 25th July





Department for Education Survey - Parent carer views of SEND bases within mainstream schools

The Department for Education are inviting you to take part in a survey intended to gather views from parents and carers who have a child who currently, or has previously, attended a SEN unit or resourced provision, or a school's own unit for SEND provision.

They intend to publish the response to this survey and the information they collect will help the DfE make decisions about SEND provision in mainstream schools. People will not be able to tell who has responded in the published report. You can find out more information about why they are running this survey and who to contact if you have any questions in the attached parent carer information sheet.

If your child has attended more than one type of base, you can submit a separate response for each one. If you are uncertain about which type of provision applies to your child, further detail will be provided in the survey.

We know you are busy and this survey should only take approximately 20 minutes to complete.



Supported Employment Discussion Event

 **Date: Thursday 10th July**

 **Online**

 **Time: 10:00 to 11:00 & 17:00 to 18:00**

Are you wondering when your young person might be ready for supported employment. Do you have questions or concerns about what comes next after age 16?

Join us for a supportive session where we'll explore the options available.

Guest Speaker: Siobhan – Head of Service at Young Somerset
She'll be sharing insights and answering your questions about:

- ✓ Supported Employment pathways
- ✓ What Bold and Brave offer
- ✓ How to support your young person's next steps



Visit our website or call us on 01458 259384
to book a space.

Supporting Your Neurodivergent Child

Written by parents,
for parents

Empowering Neurodiversity in Somerset

Thank You for Joining Us!

Last week, we were absolutely delighted to welcome over 250 people to our Empowering Neurodiversity in Somerset conference!

It was a fantastic day full of learning, inspiring talks, and hands-on experiences that helped shine a light on the power of understanding and embracing neurodiversity.

A huge thank you to everyone who spoke, supported behind the scenes, and of course, to everyone who came along – your energy, openness, and enthusiasm made the day truly special.

We're so proud to be part of such a passionate and supportive community!

When you first realise your child sees the world a bit differently, it can feel overwhelming. But as you begin to understand their unique perspective, it can also become a rewarding journey.

We were delighted to launch our new guide which brings together practical tips, real stories, and trusted information from families like yours. Inside, you'll find links, books, videos, and blogs we've personally found useful. It's not meant to be read all at once, just dip in when something feels relevant.

Every child is different, and so is every family's path. We hope this guide offers you support, reassurance, and a sense of community. Most of all, we encourage you to find your tribe, other SEND parents who truly get it.



Download

Visit the resources section of our website
to download or complete the form to
order a hard copy



Hard copy

Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS)



Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools – Year 2 Update

We're excited to announce that Partnerships for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools is now entering its second year – and we're absolutely delighted to be welcoming 30 new schools on board!

Each of these schools will benefit from 37.5 hours of dedicated support, take part in three parent carer sessions, and host at least two 'Young Unstoppables' sessions. These sessions will give young people the chance to share their own experiences of school life – helping us all to better understand what inclusion truly means for neurodivergent students.

Every school has already completed a self-evaluation, which has helped us tailor the support they'll receive. This year's offer includes a wide range of training topics such as:

- Practical classroom strategies
- Understanding the impact of anxiety on neurodivergent children
- Supporting behaviour that challenges
- Dyslexia awareness and support

We're also offering joint sessions for schools and parents on topics that affect many families, including sleep difficulties and eating challenges.

For our Year 1 schools, this is a valuable moment to reflect on what's been learned so far and start planning how to embed inclusive practice more deeply across their settings. They'll also have three opportunities to come together, share what's worked well, and spark new ideas for positive change. We're proud to continue this important journey with all of our partner schools – and we can't wait to see the progress that unfolds in the year ahead!

☀️ This year's participating schools are:

- Ashlands C of E Primary School
- Bishop Henderson C of E Primary School (+ Puffins Nursery)
- Bishops Lydeard Church School
- Bruton Primary School
- Chilthorne Domer Church School
- Churchfield Church School
- Curry Rivel C of E VC Primary School
- Danesfield Middle School
- East Coker Community Primary School
- Fairlands Middle School
- High Ham C of E Primary School
- Kingston St Mary C of E Primary
- Long Sutton Primary School
- Lyngford Park Primary School
- Meare Village Primary School
- Minehead First School
- Milford Infants' School
- Milverton Community Primary School
- North Newton Community Primary School
- Reckleford Infant School and Nursery
- Ruishton C of E Primary School
- South Petherton C of E Infant School
- St John & St Francis Church School
- St Mary and St Peter's Church of England Primary School
- St Paul's C of E VC Junior School
- The Redstart Primary School
- Thurlbear C of E Primary School
- Wembdon St George's Church School
- Westover Green Community School & Autism Centre
- Wincanton Primary School

🗨️ If your child attends one of these schools, we'd love to hear from you!

There's still time to take part in the parent survey, which helps shape the support we offer:

👉 [Take the survey here](#)

You can find out more on our website:

www.somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk

Information by age group



Early years

Support for children aged 0 to 5, including staying healthy, information for parents and getting ready for school



Primary years

Help and advice for children aged 5 to 11, including support with school, family information and useful services



Secondary years

Advice for young people aged 11 to 16, including leaving school, planning for the future and support in your community



16 years and over

Information and advice for getting ready for adult life, including learning, training and finding a job

Somerset SEND Local Offer Updated

In response to feedback from parent carers, Somerset's SEND Local Offer website has launched a new feature: "Information by age group."

This aims to make finding relevant services and information for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) much easier.

Parent carers often struggled to quickly see what information or services applied to their child's age. Jenny from the Digital Transformation Team explained, "We consistently heard from parent carers that they found it hard to spot at a glance what was relevant to them and what wasn't, especially when trying to determine the age ranges covered."

To solve this, Somerset collaborated with Somerset Parent Carer Forum, SEND Navigators (part of SPCF) and parent carers to group key information families seek at each age stage, from early years to adulthood.

This new section, found by scrolling down the Local Offer homepage, also highlights important but often missed information.

Gemma, Local Offer Co-ordinator, emphasised the value of this collaboration: "Their lived experience and expertise have allowed us to structure the Local Offer in a way that truly reflects the needs of families."



Improving Communication Around the SEND Register

We've heard from parent carers that it's not always clear when a child has been added to the SEND register at school.

We know how important it is for families to feel informed and involved, so we've been working with a group of practitioners to improve this.

Together, we've created a new letter that schools can send to parents when their child is added to the SEND register. This aims to make things clearer and help you feel more supported at this stage in your child's journey.

Through your feedback in Chill and Chat groups, the PINS programme, phone calls, emails, and conversations with our SEND Navigators, we've gathered the questions that come up most often.

We've used these to create a helpful information leaflet that will be sent with the letter. It's full of useful links and signposts to support, so you know where to turn for advice or next steps.

Thank you to everyone who shared their thoughts – your voices are helping us make real, positive changes for families.



Your Voice Matters

Your feedback and experiences are incredibly important to us, as they help ensure that your voices are truly heard.

By sharing your thoughts, you help us advocate for meaningful change and improvements. We always appreciate hearing from you, so please do keep reaching out.

Thank you for your continued support and engagement.



Never Miss an Event – Sign Up for Our Free Text Reminders!

Did you know we offer a free text message service to help you keep track of upcoming events?

We understand how busy life can be as a parent carer, so let us take one thing off your plate with a quick reminder straight to your phone.

It's easy to set up – just give us a call on 01458 259384 or email admin@somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk and we'll get you signed up in no time.

Because a little reminder can go a long way! 😊

Chill & Chat – A Supportive Space for Parents

Each month we run a range of groups where parent carers in Somerset can meet up for a coffee and a chat with like minded people.

We also have an online group provides a friendly, informal, and safe space where parents can connect. We often have guests so check our website to find out more information.

This months groups

- Wells 3 July 7-9pm
- Bridgwater 9 July 10-12am
- Taunton 10 July 10-12am
- Yeovil 15 July 10-12am
- Stay and play Ilminster 17 July 4-5:30pm
- Street 18 July 10-12am
- Langport 23 July 10-12am
- Shepton Mallet 23 July 10-12am



Chill & Chat Dads Group

Dad's Group

Group Details:

- 📅 **Date:** Thursday, 27th March
Thursday, 24th April
Thursday, 22nd May
Thursday, 26th June
Thursday, 24th July
- 🕒 **Time:** 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM
- 📍 **Location:** Royal Marine Inn, Yeovil, BA215AA

Are you a dad of a child with additional needs or disabilities? We'd love to invite you to join our new dads' group, where you can connect with other fathers who understand the joys and challenges you face.

This is a safe, welcoming space for sharing experiences, gaining support, and building friendships. We look forward to meeting you!



Calling all dads! Our Chill & Chat Dads Group is up and running in Yeovil – and you're invited.

Led by our brilliant reps, Richard and Chris, this group offers a relaxed, down-to-earth space where you can grab a cuppa, chat, and connect with other dads who get what it's like to raise a child with additional needs.

No pressure. No judgement. Just a chance to take a breather, share experiences (if you want to), and know you're not alone.

- 📍 Where? Yeovil
- 🕒 When? Once a month
- 📝 Need to book? Nope – just turn up!

Whether it's your first time or you've been before, we'd love to see you there.



Workshops for Information, Support, and Education (WISE)



WISE UP WORKSHOPS
Empowering Parent Carers to succeed

We know that being a parent carer of a child or young person with additional needs can come with its own set of challenges – and sometimes, it's hard to know where to turn. That's why we've created WISE (Workshops for Information, Support & Education) – a friendly, welcoming space where you can learn, connect with others, and pick up practical advice to help you on your journey. Our workshops are shaped by what you have told us matters most. Topics cover a wide range of areas and are designed to be useful, relatable, and supportive.



All workshops are completely free, and we've made it easier than ever to join in:

- Many now include an online option, so you can join from wherever you are.
- We also continue to run around six face-to-face sessions each month across Somerset.
- Workshops are held on different days and at various times to fit around busy family life.

Each month brings a new selection of themes, so it's always worth checking our website to see what's coming up near you. We'd love for you to join us, because sometimes a little guidance, a listening ear, and a friendly space can make all the difference.

How to Book a Workshop

All our workshops are free, but you will need to be registered on the Somerset Parent Carer Forum database to book a place. This helps us keep in touch with you and send you any important workshop details.

Once registered, you'll be able to sign up for any workshop using your registered email. Our database also ensures that your information is stored securely. Links or online sessions are sent 24 hours before so they don't get lost in your inbox.

If you have any questions or need support with booking, please don't hesitate to call us, we're happy to help

Upcoming workshops

- Understanding movement difficulties including dyspraxia - 8 July @Yeovil/Online
- Helping your child manage anxiety - 10 July @Frome
- Emotional based school avoidance (EBSA) - 11 July @Chard/Online
- Parenting a child with extreme demand avoidance - 16 July @Taunton/Online



Just Act Natural
be in nature, be yourself

For families who are members of Somerset Parent Carer Forum.

For families with children and young people who have additional needs and or disabilities.
Come along for a fantastic camping weekend, packed with activities and exciting opportunities to explore the great outdoors. A welcoming and supported space for families to come together and make friends



Inclusive Camping Weekend Fun for the Whole Family

FRIDAY 1ST - SUNDAY 3RD AUGUST

You will need a code from Somerset Parent Carer Forum to book this event

MEALS WILL BE PROVIDED
£53 per person

For more information visit:
<https://somersteparentcarerforum.org.uk/home/events/family-events/>

TAKE PART IN ALL INCLUSIVE, FUN ACTIVITIES:
Some of the activities you may get the opportunity to take part in:

- animal care
- gardening
- cookery
- being creative and exploring nature
- Treasure hunt
- den building
- fun games
- sensory calm down area

This unique weekend offers a welcoming and supportive environment where families can connect, relax, and enjoy exciting outdoor activities together.

What to Expect:

- 👉 A safe and inclusive space to meet new friends 🍌
- 👉 A sensory calm-down area for relaxation 🌿
- 👉 Fun activities like animal care, gardening, cookery, and creative nature exploration! 🦋🔍
- 👉 A chance to learn about the environment and make amazing memories.

What's Included:

- 🍽️ All meals provided throughout the weekend
- 🚿 Camping pitch with access to showers
- 🦋 All activities – no extra costs.