

Somerset Parent Carer Forum CIC



Welcome

Welcome to this edition of our newsletter. There is a lot going on in the SEND world currently and we want to provide you with some useful updates.

You will also find details of upcoming events which may be of interest. Please do share this others who you think may be interested. They can also sign up [here](#).

Looking After Yourself During the SEND Changes

We know that the proposed changes to SEND provision and all the different documents being published, combined with all the media coverage, may be making you feel overwhelmed.

It's important to remember that there is a 12-week consultation period, giving you time to read the information, ask questions, and share your views.

The law around SEND has not changed, so your rights and your child's rights remain the same.

During this time, looking after yourself is important.

Talking with other parent carers, attending local support groups, or connecting with the school can help you feel informed and supported.

In this newsletter, we will include information about groups and sessions you can attend to get advice, share experiences, and find practical support throughout the consultation.

In this newsletter you can expect:

Welcome

Ways to have your voice heard

Release of the white paper and the SEND consultation

Discussion Event

Let's Talk SEND and Inclusion

Preparing for OFSTED and CQC Inspection

Workshops/Chill & Chat Groups



Have your voice heard - Locally

We want to keep you informed about opportunities to have a say in decisions that may affect families.

In this section, you will find information about upcoming local and national consultations, including how you can share your views.

Taking part in consultations helps ensure that your voices are heard.



2 April 2026

Bishop Henderson Church of England Primary School, Coleford.

Somerset Council, working with the school's governors, is proposing to create a Special Educational Needs (SEN) unit at the school for 16–18 local children who have an Education, Health and Care Plan and whose needs cannot be met in a regular classroom.

You can find out more and respond to the consultation [here](#).

The closing date is Thursday 02 April 2026.



27 March 2026

Somerset Adult Social Care Strategy (2026-2029)

Somerset Council is updating the Somerset Adult Social Care Strategy, which will set out the key priorities for the next three years (2026–2029).

To make sure the Strategy reflects what really matters, they want to hear from people who draw on care and support, unpaid carers, and the organisations and professionals who provide services across Somerset.

You can find out more and respond to the consultation [here](#).



20 May 2026

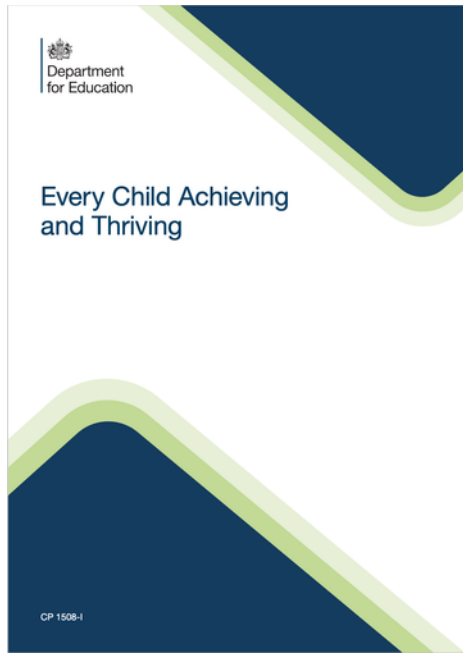
Frome Education Restructure from 3 to 2 tiers.

There is an informal (pre-publication) consultation asking the Frome community whether there is support for a significant change to local education structures, specifically a move from the current three-tier system to a two-tier education system.

At this stage, no final decisions have been made. The consultation is intended to test community appetite before any detailed proposals are developed.

You can find out more and respond to the consultation [here](#).

The closing date is Friday 20 March 2026.



Release of the white paper and the SEND consultation

The SEND White Paper has been published this week by the UK Government.

This is an important moment. The proposals in the White Paper could shape how support is delivered in the future, so it's vital that families, professionals, and young people themselves have the opportunity to look at the details and share their views.

We're now taking the time to carefully read through what's been proposed and to understand what the changes could mean for children and young people with SEND, as well as for families, schools, and support services. We will share our response once we've had time to fully absorb and discuss the detail.

This week we have attended a session run by Simpson Millar Solicitors to help us start to understand the legal implications. We also have 6 sessions with the NNPCF to help shape their consultation response.

We will be planning a range of ways for you to feed your views into our response and more details will follow over the next few weeks.

We are also looking to organise a session delivered by a solicitor to ensure local families can understand the implications.

Contact are also running a series of focus groups to find out what you think about the schools white paper. Your views will inform their response to the white paper consultation. You find out more [here](#).

We strongly encourage you to read the White Paper and take part in the consultation. Your voice, experiences, and perspectives really matter and can help influence what happens next.

Below you will find a range of documents which you may want to review. Each link will take you to the relevant page.

Video format with BSL	SEND reform: putting children and young people first consultation
Every Child Achieving and Thriving	Every Child achieving and Thriving easy read
6,500 additional teachers delivery plan	Supporting Documents

Other opportunities



Fostering for the future: improving the foster care system

This call for evidence asks about what might need to change in fostering, and how they can spread the best evidence on what works.

This aims to gather views and strengthen the evidence base on a number of key issues.

Find out more [here](#).

Closes 17 March 2026



Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

The Department for Education is seeking your views on proposed changes to the statutory guidance Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE).

Find out more [here](#).

Closes 22 April 2026



Tips for Completing Consultations

- **Read the information carefully** – Take time to understand what is being proposed and why.
- **Note your questions** – Write down anything you're unsure about so you can get clarification.
- **Focus on your child's needs** – Share your experiences and how the changes might affect your child's learning and wellbeing.
- **Be clear and specific** – Use examples where possible to explain your views.
- **Meet deadlines** – Make sure your responses are submitted before the consultation closes.
- **Use support networks** – Talk with other parent carers, school staff, or local support groups for advice or to discuss your views.



Down Syndrome Act 2022 draft statutory guidance

This consultation sets out what the Department of Health and Social Care is proposing for the statutory guidance issued under the [Down Syndrome Act 2022](#).

People are invited to take part in the full consultation to widely test the draft statutory guidance ahead of final publication.

Find out more [here](#).

Closes at 11:59pm on 30 March 2026



Adoption support that works for all

The consultation sets out proposals to maintain and improve the mental health and wellbeing of children who are adopted or in kinship care, with a focus on strengthening the support available and building their resilience.

Find out more [here](#).

Closes 5 May 2026

Discussion Event: Somerset's Best Start in Life Draft Strategy

Book here
or call
01458
259384

 Date: Friday 27th February

 Online (via Microsoft Teams)

 Time: 13:00 to 14:00 & 18:00 to 19:00

Helping every child get the best start, Somerset are developing a new Best Start in Life Strategy to make sure every child has the strongest, healthiest start possible.

The strategy focuses on three key areas:

- Better support for families
- More accessible early education
- Improving quality in early years provision

Before the strategy is finalised, we want to hear from the families and parent carers who use early years services every day. Come along to learn about the draft strategy, ask questions, share your thoughts, and tell us what would make the biggest difference for your family.



SEND Somerset's
Local Offer



Lets Talk SEND and Inclusion Tuesday 4th March 10:00-14:00

A reminder that our Let's Talk SEND event is on Tuesday. The event is open to all parent carers and practitioners. Your child or young person doesn't need a diagnosis to attend and the event is free.

You will be able to visit a range of information stalls and talk to people providing services locally.

- Navigating Health Services Let's talk about the Local Offer: what's helpful, what's missing, and how we can make health information clearer and more useful for families.
- Somerset SEND Action Plan Your voice matters. Join this discussion to share: What's working well right now? • What could be easier or better? • What are your top priorities for improving SEND services in Somerset?
- Community Inclusion & Activities Team We'll be gathering parent feedback on their holiday calendar and what you want, what's accessible, and what would make a real difference.

We can't wait to see you there!

Free event - no booking required	Tuesday 4th March 2026
10:00-14:00	The Assembly Rooms, Christchurch Street West, Frome, BA11 1EB

Preparing for the OFSTED and CQC SEND area Inspection



Somerset is expecting an Ofsted and CQC SEND Area Inspection later this year. As a forum, we will be asked to share feedback about local SEND services.

It is essential that we reflect your real views and experiences. We are currently reviewing the information we have already gathered and would really value your help to build a fuller picture.

You can share your experiences of local services in a number of ways:

- ✉ Email us at getinvolved@somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk
- ☎ Call us on 01458 259384
- ☕ Attend one of our listening events or coffee mornings

We are also developing a feedback wall where you will be able to post feedback about services, more details will follow.

Your voice matters, and your feedback will help ensure that inspectors hear directly from families about what is working well and what needs to improve.

Thank you for your continued support.



We are delighted to have been joined by several new parent carer volunteers.

If you are interested in volunteering with us then please do get in touch. We have a range of different areas you can get involved in but are always open to discussing any ideas you may have.

Please contact us at getinvolved@somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk or call 01458 259384.

Workshops for Information, Support, and Education (WISE)



We know that being a parent carer of a child or young person with additional needs can bring unique challenges, and sometimes it's hard to know where to turn for guidance and support.

That's why we've created Workshops for Information, Support, and Education (WISE)—a friendly, welcoming space where you can learn, connect with others, and gain practical advice to help navigate these challenges.

Our workshops cover a wide range of topics based on what parent carers have told us would be most helpful. Best of all, all of our workshops are completely free to attend.

To make it as easy as possible for you to take part, we have updated many of our workshops to include an online option. We also continue to run around six face-to-face sessions each month across Somerset in locations including Taunton, Bridgwater, Chard, Minehead, Yeovil, Cheddar, and Wincanton. Workshops take place on different days and at various times to fit around busy schedules.

Each month, we offer different workshop themes, so it's always worth checking our website to see what's available near you.



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

We look forward to welcoming you to one of our workshops soon.



Upcoming workshops

- Communication through play
- Help your Neurodivergent child manage their anxiety
- When siblings needs clash
- How visuals can help support your SEND child
- Emotional based school avoidance EBSA
- Low demand parenting
- AuDHD: Understanding those with co-occurring ADHD & Autism
- Introduction into SEND
- Sleep differences in Neurodivergent young people

Chill & Chat – A Supportive Space for Parents

Parents carers of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities are warmly invited to come together for a coffee at our peer support groups across Somerset.

These relaxed and welcoming sessions are a chance to:

- Meet like-minded parents who understand your journey
- Share experiences and feel less alone
- Get helpful signposting to local services, organisations and groups
- Help shape and improve local services by sharing your voice
- Hear from guest speakers on topics that matter to families

There's no pressure — just friendly faces, shared understanding and support when you need it. We'd love to see you there.

Visit our website to find out more.
www.somersetparentcarerforum.org.uk



Dad's Group

Group Details:

- Time: 7:00 PM - 9:00 PM**
- Date: Thursday, 26th Febuary**
Thursday, 26th March
Thursday, 23rd April
Thursday, 21st May
Thursday, 25th June

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!

Location: The Activity Warehouse, Bridgwater.



Chill & Chat Dads Group

We're excited to invite dads to join our Dads Group, a relaxed and welcoming space created especially for fathers of children with additional needs and disabilities.

Being a dad comes with incredible rewards, but it can also bring unique challenges. This group is a chance to:

- Connect with other dads who understand your journey
- Share experiences in a supportive, judgment-free space
- Learn helpful tips and resources
- Take some time for yourself

There's no pressure just real conversations, shared understanding, and support.

This group is open to all dads who have a child with additional needs. There's no need to book just come along, relax, and connect with other dads who understand the journey.