

Leicestershire SEND Hub Newsletter



March 2024

Issue 005

Two chairs at the table:

This month, we have been reflecting on our system's challenges and how crucial your role as parents and carers is in navigating it. We are here to support you in this increasingly difficult journey.

We acknowledge the huge challenges within the current system, from school inclusion to EHCPs, special school places and diagnostic services, and access to health professionals, including the current wait for medication and mental health support. We are committed to addressing these issues and supporting you in every possible way. The LA's coproduction and partnership efforts are a testament to their commitment to this, but we are a long way off any real improvement for children.

As more children are being placed in mainstream with the lack of specialist places, we have developed a model of inclusion in this issue that can be helpful in these challenging times. We hope you will find it helpful when talking to professionals about improving things for your child.

For those celebrating Ramadan and looking forward to Eid, and those celebrating Easter, please don't put too much pressure on yourself. These times can be challenging.

In Solidarity,
Robert and Hayley



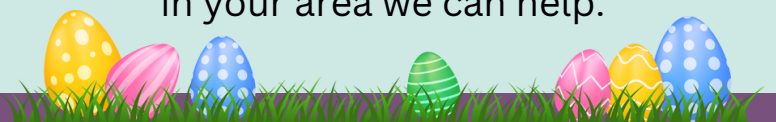
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Summer Fete



We are hosting Leicestershire's first **inclusive summer fete on Sunday 23rd June** and need a group of volunteers to help with set up/take down and running stalls on the day. If you are available to help [CLICK HERE](#) to join the volunteers group. We are also expanding our parent coffee group offer, if you want to get involved in this or set one up in your area we can help.





The SEND Hub Model of Inclusion

Families regularly face the challenge of being asked, 'What do you want for your child?' by professionals. We go to them with our questions and sometimes ask ourselves how we would like things to change. When faced with this situation, parents usually want the provider, whether it's a school, a club, family, or the home, to be more 'inclusive'.

But what does that mean? We have created a handy model to ensure that we can ask the right questions and get the right change.



Environment

Research suggests that enhancing the environment of children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can boost their learning and happiness. The Tizzard Institute in Kent developed the “capable environments” tool to identify areas for improvement for children and young people. This tool examines various aspects related to your child, such as:

- Providing a conducive physical environment
- Having mindful and skilled caregivers
- Implementing effective management and support
- Establishing a positive organisational context
- Fostering positive social interactions
- Facilitating communication support
- Encouraging participation in meaningful activities
- Establishing consistent and personalised routines
- Supporting the formation and maintenance of relationships and friendships
- Offering choices and opportunities for independence
- Promoting personal care and health support

By ensuring that your child's environment encompasses these elements, you can enhance their well-being and learning. Feel free to inquire about implementing these strategies at the annual review or in provider meetings.



Training

It's important to dispel the assumption that a mainstream classroom cannot improve their knowledge to the level of a specialist setting. In fact, they can. By recognizing the needs and identifying knowledge gaps, advocating for your child's teachers and carers to enhance their skills can pave the way for your child's needs to be effectively addressed.

Across the 4 key areas of SEND need: communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and mental health and sensory and physical, there are simple solutions of support models, training and changes that can be made to ensure that our children are supported. There is knowledge about caring for our children, from PECS and objects of reference to hoists and desensitisation strategies, from strategies for deaf children to trauma-informed care.

As parents, it's crucial not to hesitate in expressing your concerns and needs regarding your child's education. Remember, most professionals welcome the opportunity to learn something new, which can significantly enhance their job satisfaction. Just as social care often encourages parents to attend parenting courses, it is reasonable for us to expect the same level of commitment from professionals.

Culture

Breaking down cultural barriers can often be the most difficult challenge for parents. It may seem like an impossible task, which can lead to conflict between the parent, the local authority and the school. However, this doesn't mean that it's not worth trying. The SEND hub advocates for a closer relationship between these three parties to work together for the benefit of the child. By forming a team around the child and working towards shared goals, we can promote inclusion and improve outcomes. While diversity in our schools is a fact, it's up to all of us to choose inclusion and fight for it. As Martin Luther King once said, "Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly."

Conclusion

We hope that you can use our model for inclusion to improve the care of your children or the children in your care. Each aspect of inclusion makes the others stronger and can build to a point whereby children's needs can be met and a SEND child's wellbeing is not behind that of their peers.



RAMADAN MUBARAK

“O you who believe, fasting has been prescribed for you as it has been prescribed for those before you, so that you may attain Taqwa (God-conscious)” [Quran 2:183]

During this holy period for Muslims, the Leicestershire SEND Hub recognises the impact observing Ramadan has on parents and carers.

Here is a list of advice on adapting for Ramadan:

- Within the Equality Act 2010, flexible working and reasonable adjustments for workers wishing to observe Ramadan is included. Speak to your employer if you require any adjustments
- If you have to stay at home, you can stream Islamic lectures or Taraweeh prayers
 - Hydrate well for the long fasting days
 - Eat high-energy, slow-burn foods for Suhoor
 - Take regular breaks to rest and reflect
- If you need to adjust the time of any upcoming medical appointments, please contact the relevant healthcare organisation
- Speak to your Imam, GP or other professionals if you have any questions or concerns about managing your caring role during Ramadan
- Celebrate! Celebrate your children’s little achievements whatever their special needs and disabilities.

As families and communities come together to celebrate Ramadan, the Leicestershire SEND Hub is here to support all parents and carers. May your Ramadan be successful, may your fasting be accepted, and your duas (wishes) be granted.



NHS Updates

Leicestershire Partnership
NHS Trust

Occupational Therapy

Introduction

The Children's Occupational Therapy Service recognises that participation in everyday childhood occupation is fundamental to the healthy development of children regardless of ability or disability. The service provides assessment and intervention for children and young people who are having difficulty participating in functional daily living skills, due to specific long term health conditions. Intervention aims to build on a child's existing assets and strengths with a focus on improving functional abilities and outcomes and the promotion of self-management.

Children and young people will receive evidence-based therapy interventions aimed at achieving optimal functional impact with the ultimate aim of empowering them and their families to self-manage their conditions proactively in the long term.

Referral

Acceptance into the service is on a referral screening process which identifies the most clinically appropriate pathway and a medical diagnosis which identifies the input required. Referrals can be made by other health services known to your child or education services.

Service Delivery

The service is delivered by Occupational Therapists and Therapy Support Workers based in clinics across the region. If a referral is accepted Children and young people will be assigned to one of three, evidence-based clinical pathway umbrellas.

1. Early Years:

Children who require intervention around the early development of motor, sensory and functional skills will be seen under this pathway. If children have long term needs, they will move onto either the physical disabilities pathway or onto the complex physical needs' pathway as their clinical needs change.

2. Physical Disabilities:

Children who have the potential to achieve independence with functional Activities of Daily Living with or without use of equipment or adaptation to the activity or environment will be seen under this pathway.

3. Complex Physical Needs:

Children who's purposeful and active movement skills are significantly restricted and who rely significantly on carer support and adaptations in order to meet their personal care needs and participate in activities of daily living, education and leisure will be seen under this pathway.

Digital offer

Some intervention may be delivered via a digital package which currently includes:

- Parental Education workshops
- Co-ordination workshops
- Sensory workshops

Website

Leicestershire Partnership Trust's website has Children's OT Service pages which contain a wide range of guides available including:

- School and Early Years sensory packs – an information guide for schools and setting with ideas for activities and environmental changes for children with sensory needs



Leicestershire SEND and Youth Justice service



Special Educational Needs

38% of young people had a Special Educational Need identified (prevalence likely underestimated)

Behaviour, Emotional and Social Difficulty (BESD)	18%	
Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) (including Asperger's)	16%	[? 31%]
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)	8%	[? 60%]
Reading and/or writing difficulties (including Dyslexia)	6%	[? 10%]
Moderate, Severe or Specific Learning Difficulty (MLD/SLD/SpLD)	5%	
Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)	4%	

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80% of those with SEN had an EHCP, Statement of SEN, or LDA:

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	67%
Statement of SEN	11%
Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA)	7%

Public Health in Leicestershire

The Leicestershire Youth Justice Service has shared data concerning special needs children and their involvement in the youth criminal justice system. The absence of adequate support and social care has resulted in heightened vulnerability and exploitation of SEN children in Leicestershire. This aspect of SEND is rarely highlighted, emphasising the necessity of taking clear steps to safeguard our young people.

In response, the SEND Hub plans to contact the department to investigate these statistics further and explore ways to provide education and social care support to our most vulnerable children. We aim to ensure the system does not fail these vulnerable SEND children in our county.



Speech, Language, Communication and Neuro-disability

84% of young people had at least one concern identified through screening

Social skills difficulties (inc. Autistic Spectrum Disorders)	71%
Understanding spoken language	56%
Speaking	50%
Non-verbal	51%
Education Needs & Learning Disability	48%

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Health and consent: The Gillick Guidelines

Age of Consent

In law, a person's 18th birthday draws the line between childhood and adulthood (Children Act 1989) - so in healthcare matters, an 18-year-old enjoys as much autonomy as any other adult. To a more limited extent, 16- and 17-year-olds can also make medical decisions independently of their parent/carer(s). The right of younger children to provide independent consent is proportionate to their competence - a child's age alone is clearly an unreliable predictor of their competence to make decisions.

Gillick Competence

Victoria Gillick challenged Department of Health guidance which enabled doctors to provide contraceptive advice and treatment to girls under 16 without their parent/carer(s) knowing. In 1983 the judgement from this case laid out criteria for establishing whether a child under 16 has the capacity to provide consent to treatment; the so-called 'Gillick test'. It was determined that children under 16 can consent if they have sufficient understanding and intelligence to fully understand what is involved in a proposed treatment, including its purpose, nature, likely effects and risks, chances of success and the availability of other options.

If a child passes the Gillick test, they are considered 'Gillick competent' to consent to that medical treatment or intervention. However, as with adults, this consent is only valid if given voluntarily and not under undue influence or pressure by anyone else. Additionally, a child may have the capacity to consent to some treatments but not others. The understanding required for different interventions will vary, and capacity can also fluctuate such as in certain mental health conditions. Therefore, each individual decision requires assessment of Gillick competence.

If a child does not pass the Gillick test, then the consent of a person with parental responsibility (or sometimes the courts) is needed in order to proceed with treatment. The 'Fraser guidelines' specifically relate only to contraception and sexual health. They are named after one of the Lords responsible for the Gillick judgement, but who went on to address the specific issue of giving contraceptive advice and treatment to those under 16 without parental consent. The House of Lords concluded that advice can be given in this situation as long as:

1. They have sufficient maturity and intelligence to understand the nature and implications of the proposed treatment
2. They cannot be persuaded to tell their parent/carer(s) or to allow the doctor to tell them
3. They are very likely to begin or continue having sexual intercourse with or without contraceptive treatment
4. Their physical or mental health is likely to suffer unless they received the advice or treatment
5. The advice or treatment is in the young person's best interests.



Gillick Competency Age guidance

Under 13

There is no lower age limit for Gillick competence or Fraser guidelines to be applied. That said, it would rarely be appropriate or safe for a child less than 13 years of age to consent to treatment without a parent/carer(s) involvement. When it comes to sexual health, those under 13 are not legally able to consent to any sexual activity, and therefore any information that such a person was sexually active would need to be acted on, regardless of the results of the Gillick test.

16-17-Year-Olds

Young people aged 16 or 17 are presumed in law, like adults, to have the capacity to consent to medical treatment. However, unlike adults, their refusal of treatment can in some circumstances be overridden by a parent, someone with parental responsibility or a court. This is because these individuals have an overriding duty to act in the best interests of the young person. This would include circumstances where refusal would likely lead to death, severe permanent injury or irreversible mental or physical harm.

Under 16: Safeguarding Considerations

If a young person under the age of 16 presents to a health and social care professional, then discloses a history raising safeguarding concerns:

- if they are not deemed to be Gillick competent, the health and social care professional is obliged to raise the issue as a safeguarding concern and escalate their concerns through the safeguarding process
- if they are deemed to be Gillick competent and disclosure is considered essential to protect them from harm or to be in the public interest, the health and social care professional should escalate concerns through the safeguarding processes
- in both cases, the health and social care professional should inform the young person of this action, unless doing so could pose significant additional risk for their safe care.

It is reasonable for the local authority or police to decide whether it is appropriate to inform the parent/carer(s) of the concerns raised. In some circumstances this may not be in the best interest of the young person.

Summary

Gillick competence is the principle we use to judge capacity in children to consent to medical treatment. Fraser guidelines are used specifically for children requesting contraceptive or sexual health advice and treatment. Where a person under the age of 16 is not Gillick competent and therefore is deemed to lack the capacity to consent, it can be given on their behalf by someone with parental responsibility or by the court. However, there is still a duty to keep the child's best interests at the heart of any decision, and the child or young person should be involved in the decision-making process as far as possible.



Coffee & Connections

Our next session is on Friday 12th April 10:30am - 12:00pm

Coffee and connections is held at:
The Hub, Tay Road, New Lubbethorpe
10:30am - 12pm on the below dates:

Friday 10th May Friday 14th June
Friday 26th April Friday 24th May Friday 28th June

Transport

Last week we met with Chris Pettifer, head of assisted transport for Leicestershire County council and Rachel Draper Team Manager Passenger Transport Services. This will now be a regular meeting occurring on a 3 weekly basis. These regular meetings will be fantastic opportunity to report parent carer voice and keep the communication channels flowing, especially in this busy time of the year and running up to the next academic year.

Last week we discussed where they were in regards to planning for the next academic year and as reported on our Facebook SEND hub group, we have been advised that letters have been sent out regarding applying for PTB and council organised transport (COT). These have also been sent to schools in the area to distribute.

A reminder that the deadline for PTB and council organised transport for ages up to 16 is 31st May.

If you already have a child with a PTB in place who is statutory school age, you do not have to re apply every year, this will roll on, unless there is a change in circumstances. COT also does not need to be applied for every year.

The application process for post 16 transport has been extended this year until 14th April it was previously the 31st March. This is because the system will be unavailable between Noon Tuesday 26th March 2024 and 9am Friday 5th April 2024.

Should you try to apply during this shutdown period there should be a message pop up asking you to come back after 9am 5th April 2024.

You are required to apply every year for SEN transport assistance once your child reaches post 16 age ie school year 12 and school year 13 and if your child is of pre school age.

We look forward to updating you all of further developments in the next newsletter.





EASTER ACTIVITIES

Easter Egg
Sensory Bag

Egg
Decorating
Resources

Easter Egg
Sensory Bin

Odd & Even
Number
Easter Egg
Activity

Easter Egg
Matching
Activity

Egg Box
Bunny
Craft

Bunny Hop
Pencil
Control

Chocolate
Edible
Sensory
Recipe

Cutting Skills
Easter
Bunny

Eggs In
Nest
Counting

Easter Egg
Colour By
Number

Spring Hunt
Checklist



Easter Resources



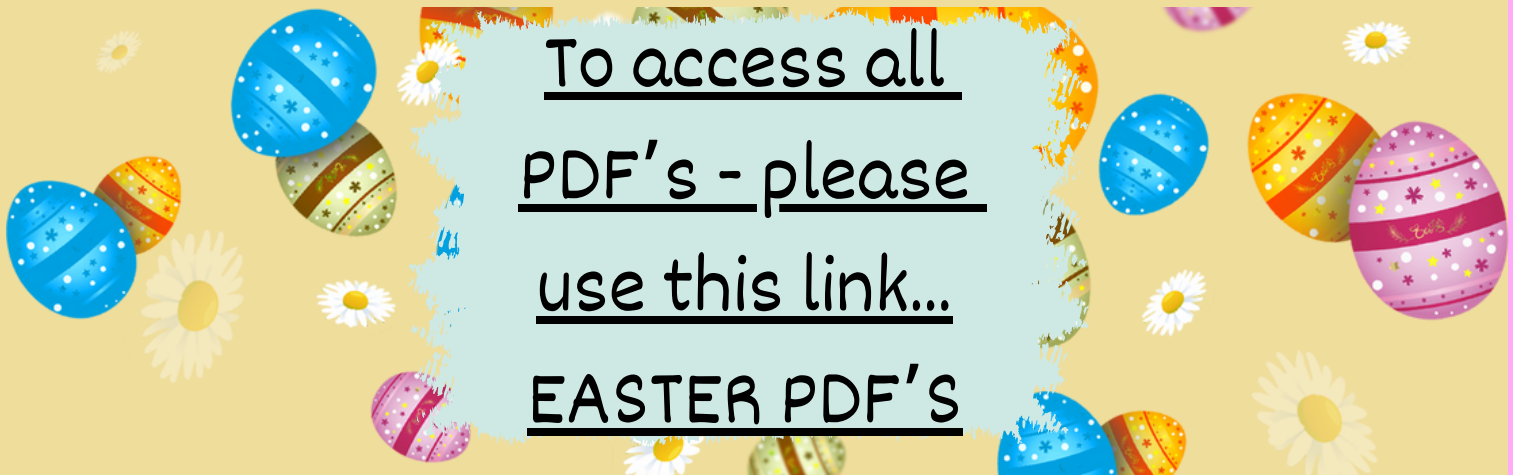
AAC Mat &
Colourful Semantics
Description Cards

BSL Word Mat
BSL Flash Cards

Easter Word Cards
Easter Word Cards -
Dyslexic

Easter Sensory Bottle
Textured Sensory Eggs

To access all
PDF's - please
use this link...
EASTER PDF'S





Local Offer

3 recent opportunities have presented themselves recently for the send hub to gather parental voice, hand out stress balls and spread the word of our existence.

On Friday 8th March we were invited to have a stand at the Big brave Inclusion conference organised by Birchwood special school and partners. This was a bit different in that it was talking to professionals. Lots of discussion with SENCO's across the county about our work and plenty of piles of postcards taken with a promise to hand out to parents in their schools.

On Wednesday 13th March we were able to attend the Sense college Transition Event. This was again a bit different and provided an opportunity to listen to students, support staff and parents. The focus here was definitely access to post 16 and post 19 assisted transport.

On Wednesday 20th March we had a stand at the latest very busy 'Local Offer Live' at Gorse Covert, Loughborough. Lots of issues raised including this time a report of a doctor telling a parent their child wouldn't get an EHC plan. The law is very clear on this process. If your child fulfills the criteria of the 2 part test for assessment, then it is the assessment of needs that will lead to whether a child requires an EHC Plan to be issued.

Thank-you to every parent who attended these events and shared their experiences with us.





Carers allowance

1. You will be eligible for Carer's Allowance if you:

 - spend at least 35 hours a week caring for a child who is receiving a qualifying disability benefit
 - are 16 years old or over
 - are not be in full-time education
 - earn £139 or less per week after tax (2023-24). The £139 is 'earned' income only, so doesn't take into account other state benefits you receive.
2. In addition, the Child you care for must receive one of the following benefits:

 - Disability Living Allowance (DLA) - the higher or middle rate care component
 - Child Disability Payment - the middle or highest care rate

The current rate of the Carer's Allowance for 2023-24 is £76.75 per week.
3. Ensure you have your National Insurance number, bank details, latest payslip or P45 (if you recently stopped working)
Details of any expenses you pay. This could include: Pension contributions.
The costs of caring for your children, or the person you usually care for, whilst you are at work.
4. You can apply for Carer's Allowance online on the [Gov.uk website](https://www.gov.uk) or by filling in and posting a DS700 form (or DS700/SP if you receive state pension). If you would prefer to apply by post, download the [DS700 form](#) and print a copy to send by post.



For any other queries, contact the Carer's Allowance Unit (Tel: 0800 731 0297).

You can [report a change to your circumstances here](#).

Leicestershire [Carers Info & Assessment](#)





SEND HUB COMMUNITY BOARD

Click around board to visit sites



ADHD ADULT SUPPORT GROUP
(10AM - 12PM)
EVERY THIRD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH
STARTING ON 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

LOUGHBOROUGH WELLBEING CENTRE
ASHA HOUSE
63 WOODGATE
LOUGHBOROUGH
LE11 2TZ

WWW.THEWELLBEINGCAFE.ORG
01509606370
WWW.ADHDSOLUTIONS.ORG

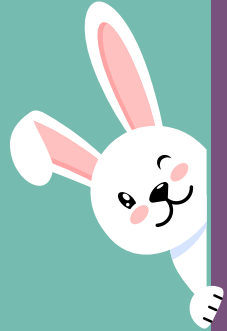


Tiger Feet SEND Dance Classes
Inclusive Dance Classes for Pre-Schoolers, Children and Teens with additional needs.
Safe, Supportive & Structured Classes
Professional Friendly Teachers
Ages 2-18
All Ages and Abilities Welcome
VISIT OUR WEBSITE TODAY!

EMBODYDANCE.CO.UK



Accessible Friendly Cinema Viewings



If you would like to share any local activities/events

Please contact the hub @

admin@leicestershiresendhub.org.uk

SHARE YOUR COMMUNITY EVENTS WITH US

COMING SOON



Youth Forum



Coffee & Connections Evenings

More info coming soon...