



# Newsletter

Issue 2

Hello and welcome to another packed edition of the Our Voice Counts newsletter. We are the parent carer forum for North Somerset. We've been very busy since our last edition. Following a successful re-launch event, we now have places for our parent representatives at the local authority meetings for Education Health and Care Plans, The Local Offer, Personalisation and Short Breaks and the SEND Programme Board. We have also met with CAMHS and the Clinical Commissioning Group.

We regularly attend these meetings, and several others, to represent the views of parents and help create services that really meet the needs of those who use them. It's really important that you tell us your experiences of services, good or bad, we want to know. We can only represent you effectively with your input, get involved to have your voice heard.

To give us your comments email [admin@ourvoicecounts.org.uk](mailto:admin@ourvoicecounts.org.uk) or telephone 07852 660670.

## Find Us on Facebook and Twitter:-

Our Voice Counts now has a social media presence. Find us to receive regular topical updates, news and information about our work.



@OVC\_Forum



Our Voice Counts

(North Somerset Parent Carer Forum)

**Are you a parent of a child with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities? Would you like to see change in North Somerset?**

**Then we need you and your voice!**

**Become a member of Our Voice Counts – North Somerset's Parent Carer Forum.**

We are a friendly, parent-led group which enables parents to get involved in service planning and take an active role in influencing what services do and how they operate.

Join us to be kept up to date with useful information, connect with other parents and to make your views count when decisions on services and provisions are made. Help us to create services in North Somerset that really meet the needs of our children.

Email: [admin@ourvoicecounts.org.uk](mailto:admin@ourvoicecounts.org.uk) or call 07852 660670



## The BBC & National Star Need Your Help

### How are the new EHC plans working?



New department for Education statistics show that the majority of young people with LDAs (Learning Difficulties Assessments) are being assessed for but refused a new EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan).

The [statistics](#) show 440 young people with LDAs were assessed but not given new EHCPs. Only 30 young people with LDAs, since September 2015, have been given new EHCPs.

So why is this happening? Is there confusion about how to assess young people? Are there issues with the quality of assessment? Or is the process simply not working?

Have you, or a member of your family been assessed to transfer from an LDA to an Education Health and care plan? If so National Star would like to hear from you. Was the transfer assessment requested by you? Was the transfer approved? Were you rejected and on what basis? Are you planning to appeal?

[National Star](#) College is helping the BBC research how the new EHC plans are working across England - so please email Marianne Sweet on [msweet@nationalstar.ac.uk](mailto:msweet@nationalstar.ac.uk) to tell them about your experiences.

If you would like more information you may be interested in IPSEAs outline of transition arrangements, click [here](#) for details.

A release from [Natspec](#) (The Association of Specialist Colleges) outlines concerns regarding both the process and the content of plans. Click [here](#) to read.

## Save the Date!

We will be holding public meetings on the following dates:

Thursday 24th September 2015 –  
SEND Reforms 1 Year On, 7 - 9pm at  
Castlewood, Tickenham Road,  
Clevedon, BS21 6FW.

Tuesday 17th November 2015  
(daytime event) - more details to come  
later...

## Listening Books

### FREE memberships to people living in the South West who would struggle to pay the membership fee

The national charity Listening Books runs an audiobook library service for people who find it difficult to read or hold a book due to illness, disability or learning difficulties such as dyslexia, giving members access to thousands of audiobooks on MP3 CD, as downloads from the website and through internet streaming. The library boasts fiction, non-fiction and educational titles (from Key Stage 2 to A Level) in many popular genres for both children and adults.

Membership fees range from £20 to £45 per year and the charity also regularly applies for funding to provide free membership places for those who would find it difficult to pay this fee. Listening Books is currently able to offer a number of free memberships to children and adults who would find the usual membership fees a barrier to joining.

To take advantage of this opportunity, please contact Jo Cord on 020 7407 9417 or [jcord@listening-books.org.uk](mailto:jcord@listening-books.org.uk)

You can also apply for a membership online by visiting <https://www.listening-books.org.uk/join-us.aspx>



Listeningbooks



## SEND Information, Advice & Support Service



Supportive Parents welcome the recent developments to progress

OVC, we wish Jessica well in her role as Chair and look forward to continue to work closely with OVC to ensure that the voice of parents, carers, children and young people influences planning and development of services.

Following additional funding from the Department for Education I now have Sarah Trevitt and Helen Matthews working with me in North Somerset providing Independent support to parents throughout the SEN process, including the EHCP process.

The new SEND system has been testing for us all, parents and professionals alike, the new SEND Code of Practice was finalised last July to be implemented from September, schools and services have had to train and put the new process into practice at the same time, understandably this has been a challenge and it will take time to embed, it's important that parents continue to work with local authority services to improve processes and practice.

We continue to hear concerns about problems experienced by parents in accessing Community Paediatric services for their children and young people, in particular support for anxiety and mental health issues. We hope that the CCG and related services will continue to work with parents to improve waiting lists and service access.

Jackie Oxley - Coordinator  
Supportive Parents - 0117 9897725  
[www.supportiveparents.org.uk](http://www.supportiveparents.org.uk)

## Adventure Sports Club

**iDID Bristol** is an adventure club for people with a wide range of disabilities.



They encourage disabled individuals to get involved in new and exciting sports and believe that anybody can take part in adventure sports, regardless of disability. They do their best to adapt the sport to meet the needs of the participants. Their team of volunteers work closely with the participants, supporting them to take on new challenges and encourage them to reach their full potential.

They provide a range of adventure sports, starting with rock climbing, which has a number of benefits and significant improvements in physical and emotional well-being, regardless of the disability.

Held at Redpoint Bristol, 40 Winterstoke Road, Bristol, BS3 2NW on Wednesday evenings, 6:30-8:00pm. Price - £ 9.00/ session or £ 40.00 for 6 sessions (All equipment included)

You can go to the first session without being a member, but you need to take a registration form with you which you can request from them by e-mail. To attend subsequent sessions you will need to become a member.

For more information, to request a registration form or book your place e-mail the secretary at [bristol@idadventure.co.uk](mailto:bristol@idadventure.co.uk). They also have a national number telephone - 01536 799553.

## Check Out Sky Badger

Sky Badger is an award winning web based charity that finds help and adventure for disabled children and their families in the UK. Their website is packed with useful information and how to guides, and covers areas like benefits, holidays, medical, school and much more.

Sky Badger builds bridges between disabled children and the charities and services available to help. They find everything from disabled sports clubs to sibling groups to 'make a wish' charities and tell families about them through their website, social media platforms, videos, information packs and e-helpdesk.

To go to their website click [here](#)



## Days Out – disabled friendly venues or discounted rates for those all-important days out:-

Disabled swimming sessions that are free for both child and carer are available at Hutton Moor Leisure Centre (Weston-super-Mare) and Backwell Leisure Centre.

Session times are Wednesdays 3pm – 4pm & Saturdays 12pm – 2pm at Hutton Moor and Mondays 7pm – 8pm at Backwell

Concessions of carer goes free also available at all other times and is also available at Strode Leisure Centre (Clevedon) and Parish Wharf Leisure Centre (Portishead).

Bristol Hippodrome offer wheelchair accessible, audio description, captioned and sign language interpreted performances at discounted rates for both child and carer.

Rates vary depending on the performance.

For more information contact the Access Booking Line – 0117 3023222

## Useful Links



Our Voice Counts! 07852 660670  
[www.ourvoicecounts.org.uk](http://www.ourvoicecounts.org.uk)

Supportive Parents 0117 9897725  
[www.supportiveparents.org.uk](http://www.supportiveparents.org.uk)

Springboard Opportunity Group  
Clevedon Centre 01275 341113  
Weston Centres 01934 426165  
[www.springboardweb.org.uk](http://www.springboardweb.org.uk)

Mencap North Somerset 01275 876587  
[northsomersetmencap.co.uk](http://northsomersetmencap.co.uk)

Council for Disabled Children 0207 8431900  
[www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

North Somerset Disabled Children's Team - 01934 427669  
Click [here](#)

Contact a Family 0808 808 3555  
Click [here](#)

### Contact us:-

### Our Voice Counts! - North Somerset Parent Carer Forum

[www.ourvoicecounts.org.uk](http://www.ourvoicecounts.org.uk)  
[admin@ourvoicecounts.org.uk](mailto:admin@ourvoicecounts.org.uk)  
07852 660670

## What's On ...

**Mondays - 9.15 – 11.15am Stay and Play Springboard**, for children aged 0-5 with additional needs and their parents/carers at Ashcombe Children's Centre, Stepping Stone Walk, Weston-super-Mare BS23 3NA, £1.00 per child (term time only).

**Thursdays - 1.30 - 3.30 Stay and Play Springboard**, for children aged 0-5 with additional needs and their parents/carers at Springboard, 2a Princes Road, Clevedon BS21 7SZ, £1.00 per child (term time only).

**Thursday 9th July, 7 – 9pm Supportive Parents, North Somerset SEND Information, Advice and Support Service - drop in support group meeting** at St Barnabas Children's Centre, West Hill, Portishead, BS20 6LN.

**Saturday 18th July, 7.30-9.30pm North Somerset Mencap Discos** at the Mycon Centre, Nailsea Methodist Church, Silver Street, Nailsea, BS48 2DS. £4.00 entrance fee including refreshments. Contact Anita Brown for more info on 01275 546404 or 07766 767222.

**Tuesday 8th September, 7 – 9pm Supportive Parents, North Somerset SEND Information, Advice and Support Service - drop in support group meeting** at The Firs, Drove Road, Weston-super-Mare, BS23 3NX.

**Thursday 24th September Our Voice Counts Meeting - SEND Reforms 1 Year On, 7 - 9pm** at Castlewood, Tickenham Road, Clevedon, BS21 6FW.

