

# SEND *An update*

Your views, our news; working together to strengthen SEND services

Issue 6 • Summer 2023



South Tyneside SEND It in the Council Chambers

## hello FROM SEND It

We are South Tyneside SEND It, a young people's forum made up of students from the specialist schools and additional resource bases across South Tyneside with a wide range of additional needs.

We meet at South Shields Town Hall every half term and talk about the things we feel we need to improve and what we can do to help people. We have been thinking about making improvements to places to make it easier for young people like us to access them and have fun.

To do this we want families to know about all the groups out there that include people with additional needs. Because after our survey of young people we found not enough people know all the groups available. So, we have decided to create a guide of leisure services, sport and youth groups for young people with SEND.

Our hope for this guide is for children and young people to find places they can have fun and befriend others who understand them. We have a booklet that has more information about groups in and around South Tyneside which will launch in the summer. We can't wait for you to see it!

What topics would you like to see SEND It explore in the future? Please send your thoughts to [participation@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:participation@southtyneside.gov.uk) Every idea matters to us.



### WELLBEING TIPS

We think mental health is really important, especially for those with additional needs. They often need more help and support to have good mental health and wellbeing.

#### Our top tips for good mental health and wellbeing are;

- There are lots of places and groups you can go to for support and we think it's really important to spend time with others.
- Finding someone you trust to talk to can help you feel better on a bad day.
- Use quiet spaces to feel calmer.
- Try new hobbies.
- Play games or do activities that you enjoy.
- We love spending time with our animals to help us feel happier. If you have a pet, giving them cuddles can make you feel better.
- Getting outside and enjoying a nature walk is always good! We love walking along rivers and ponds.

Written by Harry, Ellie & Lucy from Bamburgh School on behalf of SEND It

### INSIDE

2

**New Specialist Free School**  
Update on progress for new free school

5

**Parks & Play Areas**  
Children and young peoples sign competition

6

**Participation & Engagment**  
Children and young peoples voice influencing services

8

**STPCF Needs You**  
Get involved in South Tyneside Parent Carer



South Tyneside Council



Spread the word!

**THIS IS SOUTH TYNESIDE**

# New Specialist Free School

A new Specialist Social Emotional Mental Health Primary School is to be established in South Tyneside following the Council's successful application.

The school will be for pupils with significant Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs and often with additional needs such as autism and ADHD. Currently many of these pupils have to go outside of the Borough for schooling but a new primary school will mean more children will be able to receive their education in the Borough.

The Council's ambition is to help residents stay healthy and well throughout their lives, and the new 56 place SEMH primary school is part of that promise. The Council has also invested in Epinay School which has opened on a new base in Jarrow, and this means more children with additional needs can go to school locally.

**"We want all our children to have the best start in life and for most of our young people that means going to school in the Borough. This school will result in fewer children and young people having to travel to school in neighbouring areas which as to be a good thing.**

**By reducing the number of lengthy homes to school journeys we can also lower the amount of carbon emissions produced which will support the Council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030"**

Councillor Jane Carter, Lead Member for Education & Skills

The SEMH school will be a "Free School" which means it will be run by an Academy Trust, not the Local Authority. The Council is planning steps to find an academy trust to manage the school. By reducing the number of lengthy homes to school journeys we can also lower the amount of carbon emissions produced which will support our carbon, Borough.

It is anticipated that the free school will also provide outreach opportunities for staff from mainstream schools to observe lessons in order to share good practice and increase inclusive practice in South Tyneside.

**"There is significant demand for primary special school provision in South Tyneside, with higher than national levels of children needing support. Providing specialist education tailored to student's unique needs is vital in ensuring that all of our children can learn, grow and achieve."**

Councillor Adam Ellison, Lead Member for Children, Young People and Families,



## Inclusion Service

We are excited to announce our Inclusion Service, a new approach to help mainstream schools and nurseries (settings) make sure every child is included.

Feedback from our settings and our parents/carers told us that mainstream setting need more advice and training on inclusive practice, also specialist support and training in Social Emotional & Mental Health Needs, Communication & Interaction: Autism.

The Inclusion service will help mainstream settings to improve and develop their SEN offer, making sure that children and young people are able to reach their full potential.

The service aims to ensure all settings have the skills, training and knowledge they need to meet the needs of our children through a robust system of observation, recommendations, implementation and review

The Inclusion Service will be launched in September 2023



Opening of the Family Hubs

# FOR every FAMILY

## SOUTH TYNESIDE FAMILY HUBS

We are pleased to launch our new FAMILY HUBS which offer access to a broader range of support services for children, young people and families from conception up to the age of 19 (or 25 when the young person has additional support needs).

The Hubs offer high quality information, advice and support with teams located at venues across the Borough, enabling families to enjoy their local Hub and find any support they need at the right time

The support on offer will expand over the coming months to include parenting support, early language and home learning, parent-child relationships and infant feeding support.

A range of professionals and service providers, including midwives, health visitors, early help workers and adolescent workers will be located at the Hubs to provide a 'one-stop-shop' so that families need only tell their story once and help can be provided at the earliest opportunity.

The Hubs consider the sensory needs of children and adults who may have sensory processing difficulties – they are calm, neutral and follow child-friendly communication principles of not over-stimulating people with bright colours and lots of competing visuals and sounds.



**"**Families who have already used the Hubs are telling us that: **"I think of lot of families can feel isolated when their children become teenagers so having the hubs there to offer support and advice will be fantastic."**

**"It will be easier for people to access the hubs rather than having to go to hospital and I think people will feel more comfortable in familiar surroundings as some people might feel intimidated in a medical environment."**

Contact us on [Familyhubs@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:Familyhubs@southtyneside.gov.uk) for further information about new programmes and services, and to enquire about booking room spaces (including accessing the sensory rooms and resources).





# HMT

## HEALTHY MINDS TEAM



# PARKS & PLAY AREAS

We consulted with children and young people with SEND, disability and community groups work has started on the installation of accessible play equipment in parks across South Tyneside to support children with disabilities and sensory impairments.

The first piece of fully inclusive play equipment - a level roundabout - has been fitted in the children's play area at Cleadon Recreation Ground.

This kick-starts a programme to provide accessible play pieces in 11 parks and playgrounds across the Borough to help accommodate wheelchair users and other children who have difficulties using the existing play facilities. Other new pieces include swing sways and rock and rumbles. The Council is also planning to adapt existing pieces of play equipment to make play spaces as inclusive as possible.

Councillor Joan Atkinson, Deputy Leader of South Tyneside Council with responsibility for Culture, Leisure and the Visitor Economy, said: "We know how important play is to the health and wellbeing of our children. We want to encourage children of all abilities to be able to have fun and play together."

"Introducing inclusive play equipment and making our play spaces accessible to all is a key priority for us. I'm delighted to see the start of the programme with the first new piece of inclusive play equipment being installed, with more to follow over the coming months."



**"We look forward to seeing our families enjoying these new additions to our play spaces throughout the spring and summer months, and for many years to come."**

The Council worked with disability and community groups through a series of consultation sessions to understand their experiences and to ensure the new equipment meets the needs and wishes of those users.

The Healthy Minds Team is a school based mental health service for children and young people across South Tyneside. The team help children with positive self-esteem, personal growth and ways to be more resilient.

The team is made up of Education Mental Health Practitioners who are all trained to support children and young people with mild-moderate emotional health needs within the school environment.

The team can work directly with children and young people to support their individual needs thorough 1:1 sessions or through group work. We also offer therapeutic group work programmes for parents to help them know how best to support with mental health difficulties.

We also work with schools to create a positive and inclusive environment to normalise mental health through our whole school approach work. We deliver numerous workshops, assemblies and whole class exercises to build awareness of mental health and to develop resilience and coping strategies.

Our goal is to support schools and pupils to grow into adults who are able to meet their potential and reach their goals whilst being able to cope with the stresses that life can bring.

This year we have really focused on our preventative approaches and ensuring these are embedded within the school environment. Our aim going forward is to have a rolling programme within our schools so that all pupils will have access to our preventative workshops and activities throughout the duration of their academic journey.

The 'We Eat Elephants' programme within our primary schools and 'Living Life to the Full' in our Comprehensive schools are designed to help children and young people understand feelings and emotions, and deal with the effects that emotions can have. The programme teaches children how to problem solve and develop life skills. It is a great programme to help children to develop emotional literacy and learn helpful ways to communicate and express their feelings.

Our 'Everyone Worries' workshop to help normalise worries and learn useful ways to manage any of these feelings you may have.

Our '5 Ways to Wellbeing' workshops - a very practical based session to look at the things that can be done to keep yourself mentally and emotionally healthy on a daily basis.

All of our programmes are very positive, upbeat, creative and interactive to ensure all children can get the most from the sessions we deliver.

Here is an example of some of the feedback we have received.



**"We have seen a big impact within the school, with the service being well utilised."**  
Feedback from School about HMT

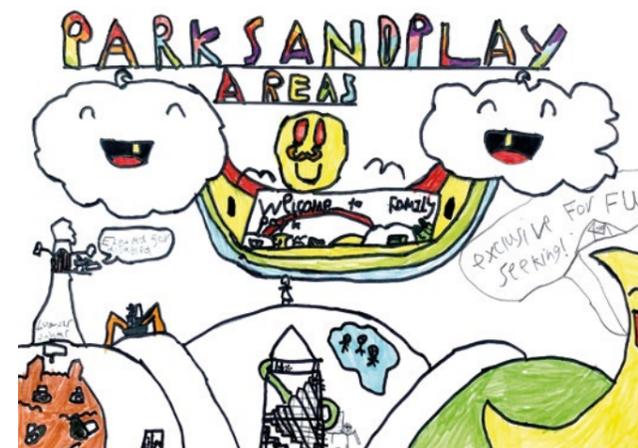
**"I love doing sessions on We Eat Elephants. now I know what to do when I feel stressed or uncomfortable."**



**"I have learned to understand my feelings and thoughts."**

Childrens feedback from We Eat Elephants Sessions (Year 3)

Children from local special schools have also been taking part in a competition to design the new signage to go alongside the new equipment, encouraging users to respect the equipment and value the investment made. Winning entries will have their signs on display at each of the locations.



## SEND Exclusive Family Swimming

Jarrow Community Pool, Saturdays 1.30pm - 2.30pm

Sessions are free for the whole family, to find out more and how to book

<https://sendlocaloffer.southtyneside.gov.uk/article/9426/>



## Children and young people with SEND

# Participation & Engagement in South Tyneside

We have established some new groups for children and young people with SEND to make sure their voices are heard.



The South Tyneside SEND It members have already told you a little about their work this year on the front cover, but they have also;

- Renamed their group from Borough Wide SEND School Council to South Tyneside SEND It!
- Promoted a competition across all 7 SEND secondary schools to design the SEND It logo.
- Voted for the winning signs to accompany the borough's new accessible park equipment.
- Met Senior leaders, Fi Cisneros, Rob Angus and Paul Topkinson, to share their views on additional groups that they think would be beneficial for young people with SEND.

The next strand of developing the young people engagement strategy has been a group of young people who utilise the Foxden short breaks service.



This group have now met on 3 occasions at The Market Place. They meet monthly and the aim for this group is to reflect on any SEND provision the young people receive, to explore their thoughts on how SEND provision across South Tyneside can be improved, and to have fun!

In order to engage with those with SEND over the age of 16, drop-in sessions have been created at South Tyneside College and Epinay 6th form. We plan to offer drop-in sessions with Keelmans way post 16 provision and Route to Work to broaden the range of young people we are working directly with.

Work has also begun on engaging with young people with additional needs who attend mainstream secondary schools. We are working with the DfE funded program 'Making Participation Work' to deliver an event for schools in September. This will aim to explore what forms of engagement this group of young people would prefer to participate in. Therefore, their views will directly shape the way in which we work with them moving forward.

## The Max Card

The Max Card is the UK's leading discount card for children with SEND and children cared for. Families can use their Max Card at venues across the UK to get free or discounted admission.

You can use your Max Card to gain access to free family swimming across all of the leisure centres in South Tyneside and discounted entry to attractions including Jarrow Hall and Customs House.

To apply for a Max Card children must be registered on the Children with Disabilities Network.

The Children with Disabilities Network is for those who live in South Tyneside and have a child with a permanent disability or life-long additional needs, aged between 0-18 years.

# SUMMER 2023 ACROSS SOUTH TYNESIDE

# HOLIDAY, ACTIVITIES + FOOD

22 JULY  
UNTIL 3 SEP

## SEND LOCAL OFFER

FREE\*

\*For young people with SEND in receipt of benefit related free school meals

For more information and eligibility please call  
**0191 424 0118** or email [haf@southtyneside.gov.uk](mailto:haf@southtyneside.gov.uk)

Bookings Open 4pm Monday 10th July

[www.southtyneside.gov.uk/holidayclub](http://www.southtyneside.gov.uk/holidayclub)



Spread the word!



# SEND Sport & Leisure Festival

MONDAY 7TH AUGUST 10AM - 3PM

Perth Green, Community Centre, Inverness Rd, Jarrow NE32 4AQ

FREE  
GOODIE  
BAGS!

Come and try lots of different accessible sports and activities for **FREE!** You may find your new favourite hobby!.

Suitable for children and young people of all ages.  
Café and library available on site. Staff will be available on the day to answer any questions you may have.



South Tyneside  
**Parent Carer Forum**  
Uniting voices in the SEND Community

# VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

Join us this September  
to find out more about  
what we do

South Tyneside Parent Carer Forum are a group of volunteer parent carers. We all live in South Tyneside and care for children who have Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND). We volunteer our time to try and make positive changes for families of South Tyneside.

We've got upcoming projects, working alongside South Tyneside Council and we are looking for parent carers who have a passion for improving the lives of children with SEND.

**Do you have experience in:**

- Championing parent/carer voice
- Events co-ordinating
- Administration
- Accountancy

If you do, we would love to hear from you.



*Follow us on social media and sign up through our website to be updated about the work we do and how you can get involved.*

🔍 [www.stpcf.org/](http://www.stpcf.org/)

📘 @stparentcarerforum

📷 st\_parent\_carer\_forum