



Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome to your Bristol bulletin for July 2020. We hope you are all well.

## Supportive Parents News

Firstly, a reminder that our service is operating throughout the school holidays. Details below:

- **Telephone support: 0117 9897725.** Our Information, Advice and Support line service is operating as normal but calls are being diverted to an answer machine to enable remote working. We still aim to return all calls within 24 hours, Monday-Friday, between 9.30 and 4.30pm.
- **Paperwork:** we offer one to one support via telephone and email, with any aspect of SEND including preparing for annual reviews or tribunals, statutory assessments etc. A telephone or online translation service can be provided where needed.
- **Meetings and Face to Face Support:** we are working with varied media options to communicate with service users such as face-to-face online meetings and you may soon be able to dial into meetings where capacity and technology allow.
- **Information & Signposting:** we will provide an Information and signposting service through our social media, e-bulletin and website, including relevant updates about the COVID -19 virus and information from local authorities and health. Browse Aloud is available on our website.
- **Contact Us** by phone: **0117 9897725** or email: [support@supportiveparents.org.uk](mailto:support@supportiveparents.org.uk)
- For more information see our [News](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

## Staffing Changes

We are delighted to introduce Victoria Allan, our new Head of Service. Vic joined Supportive Parents on 1st June and comes to us with a vast experience of supporting children with SEND and their parents/carers, having been SENDCo at Bristol's Orchard School for five years.

Vic has recently completed a Masters Degree in Inclusive Education. She said: *"I am really pleased and excited to be taking on the role of Head of Service at Supportive Parents. I am looking forward to being able to continue working in the world of SEND and to being able to contribute to the brilliant work that Supportive Parents is known for."*

At the same time everyone at Supportive Parents says a big thank you to Kathryn Mason, our Deputy Head of Service, for the hard work she has put in over recent months. Kathryn is resuming her deputy role and is our new Local Authority Lead in Bristol.

## **We're Recruiting!**

We currently have two vacancies on our staff team:

- A Local Authority Information, Advice & Support (IAS) Worker
- A Local Area Practitioner with a Children & Young People focus

For details about both these positions and how to apply, please click [HERE](#).

The deadline for applications is **Friday 7th August**.

## **Young People's 'Hub'**

Have you visited our Bristol 'Hub' for young people yet? This virtual information hub is open to all but aimed at children and young people and their families. It brings together information from local partner organisations about services, activities and opportunities available to children and young people while COVID-19 restrictions are in place. Information is available in video format for each organisation together with a link to their website. Come on in and browse [HERE](#).

## **AGM**

A date for your diaries - our Annual General Meeting takes place on Monday 19th October at 7pm. This will be a virtual meeting and all are welcome. Further details about this will follow in due course.

## **Volunteering**

If you have some time on your hands or useful skills and experience to contribute, do get in touch with our Volunteer Lead, Jane Franklin, to find out about any current or forthcoming volunteer opportunities with Supportive Parents. Contact Jane by emailing: [jane.franklin@supportiveparents.org.uk](mailto:jane.franklin@supportiveparents.org.uk).

## **Education**

**Department for Education Advice** - on Thursday 2nd July, the Department for Education published detailed guidance to support schools and colleges to fully reopen in September 2020 and early years and childcare providers from 20th July. The Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson announced:

- Limits on attendance to be lifted to allow schools to open at full capacity
- Schools and colleges to deliver their full curriculum, ahead of exams next summer
- Limits on nursery group sizes to be lifted from 20th July
- "Covid-19 secure" measures to remain in place, with children self-isolating at home where needed

This means all children are expected back in school, full time from September and **all provision for SEND should be in place**.

See also the ministerial letter to parents, carers and young people, about the full return to school in September, issued 21st July [HERE](#).

If you have any concerns about the return to school which you wish to discuss, please do get in touch through our helpline or why not come along to our coffee morning on **26th August** (see 'training, events and support groups' below).

The Department for Education has provided a leaflet and some short videos for parents regarding children returning to school after Coronavirus and what you can expect.

- The leaflet can be found [HERE](#)
- The film for primary school pupils can be found [HERE](#)
- The film for secondary school pupils can be found [HERE](#).

### **COVID update - changes in the law**

See our video [HERE](#) in which the changes to SEND law, made as a result of COVID -19, are explained by our North Somerset colleague, Sarah Bishop

## **Training, Events & Support Groups**

### **Return to school & Transition 26th August 2020**

Last minute worries about returning to school? This is an opportunity to pick up some practical tips and ideas about how to support a child or young person with transition from nursery to school, between year groups or from primary to secondary school and to understand what steps schools can take to ensure a smooth transition. We are inviting parents and carers to grab a cuppa, listen to a short presentation, receive a handout, ask questions and chat with other parents and carers. This event is free. It will be hosted on Zoom and you'll be able to book on Eventbrite shortly, so keep an eye on our [News](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

### **Support Groups**

A member of our team will be available to discuss any SEND issues which you may have and to provide information advice and support at support groups run by Bristol Parent Carers. We attend alternate support groups run by BPC in North, South, East & Central Bristol. These support groups have been suspended during Coronavirus. We hope that they will resume in September and will keep you posted about this as soon as we know what BPC's plans are.

### **Coffee Mornings**

We have run a couple of virtual coffee mornings over recent weeks. We are going to trial running some further virtual coffee mornings during the year. We hope to cover a particular topic at each coffee morning and to invite guest speakers along to join us. During the year, we will keep our virtual offer under review and decide whether physical alternatives should be offered. We will ask for your views about this.

### **Evening Surgery 8th September 2020 – save the date!**

We're holding a FREE 'SEND surgery' for parents and carers living in Bristol who have children with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). A 30-minute telephone appointment OR a scheduled 'virtual' online zoom appointment can be booked with one of our trained SENDIAS practitioners. This is an opportunity to speak to one of our trained Bristol SENDIAS practitioners on a confidential, one-to-one basis and receive help and

support with any query about special educational needs or a disability. We're happy to discuss paperwork, processes, give guidance about filling in forms and talk through next steps. This event will be available to book through Eventbrite, so keep an eye on our our [News](#) and [Facebook](#) pages.

## Consultation & Feedback

**You Said, We Did** - we asked what you wanted from your SENDIAS service during the Coronavirus pandemic. Thank you to all of you who responded. This helped us to plan our service delivery. You told us that you wanted to access information about the law, local events and services and to be able to contact us through the helpline. Please see [HERE](#) for how we have responded.

**SEND Surveys** - we have had some really positive feedback from both the local authority's send survey [HERE](#) and a survey carried out by Bristol Parent Carers (BPC). Thank you so much to all of you who gave this feedback. One issue which came out of the BPC survey was that not many people had heard about our service from schools. We are looking at ways in which we can raise our profile with schools in future.

## Resources:

We have two new resources:

- a new leaflet on transitions [HERE](#)
- a leaflet on attending virtual meetings with professionals [HERE](#)

## Summer Activities

- The latest 'Families in Focus' bulletin is now available. This is a city-wide Bulletin containing a huge amount of information about activities, resources and support for families, parent/carers and young people available during the Summer. Click [HERE](#) to read it.
- Off The Record have a range of summer activities for the 11-25 age range. You'll need to check each activity for specific age groups. Click [HERE](#).
- We Are Bristol Kids - fun stuff to help children learn about Bristol, as well as stories, art tips, P.E, competitions and more. Click [HERE](#).
- Wecil – 'Out & About' have two activity packs to support parents and carers of disabled children and young people. If you need them printed and sent to you please contact [outandabout@wecil.co.uk](mailto:outandabout@wecil.co.uk). To Download the activity packs, click [HERE](#).
- Bristol Libraries Summer Reading Challenge will take place online this Summer. The challenge is free to join, and encourages children to read books and take part in games, quizzes and downloadable activities. Click [HERE](#) for details. The Library service has further online services for families, children and young people, including, storytime and live baby bounce and rhyme sessions, a weekly children's book quiz, a weekly Lego Club challenge to build at home, [eComics](#) for all ages and learning resources. Click [HERE](#) for information about library services in Bristol during coronavirus.

## Other

[DigiLocal](#) (Reg Charity: 1185746) are working with partners locally and nationally to try and address the digital divide highlighted by COVID-19. The charity is trying to get an idea of the number of local families without access to a laptop/internet so they can try to start addressing this issue. If this is relevant to you, please contact John Bradford on: [john.bradford@digilocal.org.uk](mailto:john.bradford@digilocal.org.uk) or 0773 9705578

We hope you have a good Summer.

Best Wishes  
Supportive Parents