



# FORUM FOCUS

News & Updates from Solihull Parent Carer Forum

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ISSUE NO. 4 – JUNE 2019

## CHAIR'S WELCOME – SUE HAWTHORNE-SLATER

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Well here we are in the last half term of school. What a busy year it has been for the PCF and for ourselves personally!

We have just held the most amazing fun day, for all Solihull SEND children and their families, and what a highlight it was for the PCF. There were so many happy faces and it was great to see some professionals from the LA with whom we have made useful links, while working together to benefit ALL of our children. More about the day later.

We have pencilled in the date for our next summer event, so watch this space! Hopefully we can order better weather for next year, although of course the rain didn't dampen the spirits of our stalwart visitors this year as we were all inside.

As ever, if anyone feels that they have the time and commitment to represent Solihull SEND children and would like to find out more about possibly joining the Management Committee then please do email me on [chair.solihullpcf@gmail.com](mailto:chair.solihullpcf@gmail.com). You need to be committed to helping all children, (it's not for people who just want to get things sorted for their own children), you need to be able to commit time and energy, and a sense of humour is essential! The rewards include; seeing children happily spending time at our summer event, knowing that you are making a difference in policy, and we do have team building days, which really help gel the committee members.

I hope you enjoy our newsletter and please sign up to our mailing list by going to <http://bit.ly/Join-SolihullPCF> so you can be the first to hear any relevant news!

## INCLUSION MEETINGS – ROSE SALLUFI

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The Forum has been involved in the development of a new inclusion strategy, since The LA Inclusion Conference in October 2018. We are working with the Local Authority and other partners to get parent and carers' voices heard. We attended a working group with heads recently and discussed that inclusion needs to be embedded across the LA and signed off from senior leadership to enable it to be taken forward.



## PCF PRIORITIES 2019/20 – EMMA MCGUIRE

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Building on knowledge and experience gained in the previous year as a Parent Carer Forum and responding to what parents are telling us, we have chosen the following 3 priorities for this year:

### 1. CO-PRODUCTION

This includes EHCPs, pathways, policy, health and the law.

Co-production is a way of working whereby the public and decision makers, or people who use services, family carers and service providers work together to create a decision or service which works for them all.

### 2. INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS

Including Centre of Excellence, Reasonable Adjustments, Alternative Provision, SENDCos and EHCPs.

### 3. OFFICIAL SERVICES PATHWAYS

Encompasses Education, Health and SOLAR.

All the events/groups/conferences we attend reflect these priorities. When we receive a request for PCF time, we check that the request is in keeping with the priorities to ensure we remain focused.

## OUR SECOND SUMMER FAMILY FUN DAY – SUSIE DZIAMA

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Now in its second year, our FREE summer event for all SEND children of Solihull and their families attracted around 150 people! The weather was against us, but we didn't let it beat us. For all the families that came along to join in the fun, Solihull Parent Carer Forum Committee members would like to say a big thank you.

Some of the event remained the same as last year and we were joined by some members of the Local Authority and ladies from SENDIAS who ran some of the stalls. They enjoyed meeting everyone.

In addition there was wheelchair basketball which many had a go at and found lots of fun, archery which brought with it competitiveness and perseverance, Alpacas and a gaming bus which children repeatedly used and loved.

These were the comments left by Darren and his gaming bus family, "It was an absolute honour for us to attend the family fun day. Everyone we met was extremely friendly and the kids were impeccably behaved. We had such a great time."



Whenever we put on an event we always appreciate feedback. One family left a message which sums up many of the comments we received both during and post event.

“Thank you for a great day; the weather can’t beat us, we all had lots of fun.”

It is wonderful for all of us to see everyone else relaxed in a safe environment and enjoying themselves. Remember, this event is for you!

## **PDA AWARENESS CONFERENCE – SARAH CAMPBELL**

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On Saturday 18th May, Solihull PCF representatives went on a road trip to Wolverhampton, to attend the PDA Action Awareness Conference.

It promised to be an informative afternoon full of speakers including Harry Thompson (PDA Paradox), Jane Sherwin (My Daughter Isn’t Naughty), Phil Christie (too many books to name), several other professionals and parents/vloggers.

This made for a jam packed, non stop agenda...

I was in awe, as I am passionate about Pathological Demand Avoidance, and felt inspired to be in a roomful of like-minded people, especially hearing the talks by the young adult PDA’ers, Harry Thomson, Mollie Sherwin and Isaac Russell. Resoundingly they all agreed school had been a generally awful experience which was very sad and rang true with our experiences. It is always fascinating to hear the views of anyone with actual lived experience.

Interestingly Phil Christie pointed out that without a diagnosis of PDA it is hard to plan the best approach in terms of support! Support is very specific for PDA.

I laughed, I cried, but mostly I felt empowered. Thank you to Alison Fisher and co from PDA Action and the PDA Society who just get it, and want to ensure everyone else does too :)

Do you want to learn more about Pathological Demand Avoidance?



PDA Action presents  
**PDA Awareness  
Conference**  
Saturday 18th May 2019  
11am - 5.30pm

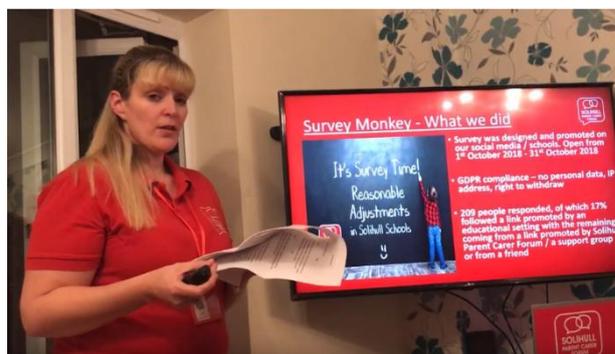
## **REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS UPDATE – NATASHA COMPTON**

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Our March edition of Forum Focus included a piece about our parental survey on reasonable adjustments. A report on the results can be found on our web site in the [‘News’](#) section which also includes a link to a video presentation on our [You Tube Channel](#).

We are presenting the results to both primary and secondary school SENDCo’s in June and also the Local Authority’s Ed SEND Group meeting.

Off the back of the results the Local Authority are designing a parental request form for formally requesting and recording the use of reasonable adjustments within education settings and are considering further changes to policies and practice. There has been considerable interest in the results from the Local Authority, Educational Psychologists, SISS, Schools and other professionals. Look out for possible follow up research in the future.



## **DYSPRAXIA FOUNDATION WEST MIDLANDS LAUNCH EVENT – SARAH CAMPBELL**

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On Tuesday 14th May, several members of the SPCF attended this launch event at the Renewal Family Centre.

It was very interesting to hear more about Dyspraxia and to hear that it's not just about being clumsy!

A mixture of talks from professionals and young adults who live with dyspraxia provided an inspiring evening. Importantly the three dyspraxics were keen to showcase that 'anything is possible' such as public speaking, riding bikes, driving cars, running marathons, casually going from being diagnosed with minimal brain dysfunction to a being very well respected paediatrician... yes there really are no barriers these guys won't push.



It's amazing that Solihull now have specific support in the shape of Helen and Imogen Rowe. Find them on Facebook at [@wmdyspraxia](#) and the Dyspraxia Foundation. Check out the Facebook page to keep up with the latest news. Parent and child support group coming soon...

## **FREE SCHOOL UPDATE – SUE HAWTHORNE SLATER / ROSE SALLUFI**

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Exciting news! On 21st May two members of the forum met with the potential bidders for the new Autistic Free School. New information and a presentation from the event are available for all our parents to view here: <https://www.solgrid.org.uk/education/specialfreeschool/>

In addition you can sign up to the Council's e-bulletin to keep up with the developments practically AS THEY HAPPEN: <https://public.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKSOLIHULL/subscriber/new> It's great that we are being given the opportunity to be informed throughout the whole process.

## **ED SEND SUB GROUP UPDATE – LOUISE LUCKETT**

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PCF representatives attend Education SEND Sub Group meetings every half term where a range of professionals including head teachers, staff from the local council, educational psychologists and SISS are in attendance. We have presented our Reasonable Adjustments Survey and are working on a process to help parents and schools to identify and implement reasonable adjustments.

## **SEND CONFERENCE – JANE CREESE**

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We were invited to attend the recent SEND Conference at Edgbaston Cricket Ground. It was interesting to hear some of the new ideas around SEND provision in schools, some of which we agreed with, and the tools schools can use to keep track of children's needs, provision plans and progress.

During the breaks we talked with several representatives of neighbouring councils, discussing common issues that parents experienced when supporting their children through the education system. This included concerns around possible unlawful refusal to assess for EHCPs, annual reviews not taking place annually, lack of provision and difficulty in communicating with council employees. This list is not exhaustive.

Overall it was a good day and we felt we had been able to represent parents' and carers' views to a wider audience.

## LADIES IN RED COFFEE MORNINGS – SUE HAWTHORNE-SLATER

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We have been hosting bi-weekly 'Ladies in Red' coffee mornings for 12 months now, and it's fantastic to get to meet parents and hear all your views and what you feel needs to be brought to the attention of the Heads of Service at Solihull LA.

Although we at the PCF are not a support group, we can listen to your queries and signpost you to the places that can help you the most.

We have had SENDIAS regularly attending, so that parents can engage directly with them and get the "from the horse's mouth" legal information and support with children's EHCPs etc. We have also had Educational Psychologists and Heads of Service from the Local Authority, so that you can access them directly to get information, our most recent visitor being Ann Lowe (Head of SEND).

We hold our coffee mornings on the first and third Fridays of the month in term time, at the coffee shop at the Renewal Family Centre, Vulcan road, off Lode Lane in Solihull. The dates for the meet ups are as follows, and you can keep up to date on our Facebook page at [@solihullpcf](https://www.facebook.com/solihullpcf)

- 5 July SENDIAS
- 19 July LA representative
- 6 Sep SENDIAS and Ann Lowe
- 20 Sep TBC – please check events on our Facebook Page
- 4 Oct SENDIAS
- 18 Oct Ann Lowe
- 15 Nov Ann Lowe
- 6 Dec SENDIAS
- 20 Dec Ann Lowe

## UPCOMING PLANS: SHORT BREAKS – SU RAYTON

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We are just starting the process to look into the short breaks policy on the local offer. In September the Local Authority are looking to gather parent views and more information will follow in the autumn term.

## INTERESTED IN FINDING OUT MORE?

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If you are a parent or carer of a child or young person (aged 0-25) with additional needs who lives in Solihull and/or whose child uses Solihull Education, Health or Social Care Services you can become a member of the forum!

Once you join you'll receive updates about our activities as well as opportunities to participate, such as being involved in consultations and research projects!

However much or little you choose to get involved you will be helping to make a difference to the services that matter so much to our children. So please add your voice to that of others'. The more people we represent, the more our joint voice will be heard by decision makers in our area.

You can find us on Facebook, Twitter and on the web at [solihullpcf.org](http://solihullpcf.org). Please check out our pages to find out more about what we do and why we do it. Click below to join today and spread the word to others!



Thank-you for reading! And don't forget, you can sign up to receive updates at [www.solihullpcf.org/join-us](http://www.solihullpcf.org/join-us)