

SEND *An update*

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

Issue 1 • Winter 2021

Commitment to working together

The past 18 months has meant that we have all had to adapt very quickly, plans were altered, and priorities shifted as a result of the global pandemic. We know that this has been particularly difficult for our children and young people with SEND and their families.

We have been listening and responding to your experiences. In the past year we have

- Held six online events at different times
- Carried out three surveys with 563 responses from parents/carers
- Developed the SEND Improvement Forum
- All About Me consultation with children and young people
- Brand new training offer for parents/carers

Our commitment to working together with families has remained and will continue to be steadfast.



Shona Gallagher, Director of Children's Services
South Tyneside Council



Matt Brown, Executive Director of Operations
South Tyneside CCG

Welcome to SEND An Update

We are Shona Gallagher and Matt Brown, together, we chair the SEND Leadership Board, which is responsible for making sure we have the right services and support available for children and families across the Borough.

It is our pleasure and privilege to introduce SEND An Update which is part of our approach to keep you up to date with all things SEND.

Our children are our most precious gift and being a parent can be our most rewarding and at times challenging experience. Every child's journey is unique, and when our children have additional needs this journey can be complex. Our schools, health and care services are working together to improve how we work with you and your children, and to improve the advice and information available to help you make

the best choices. We know we have more to do but we hope that the content of the newsletter is useful and informative.

We want to hear from children, young people and parents, and there are lots of ways you can get involved, you can find out more inside.

Together we can make this Borough an outstanding place to live and thrive for all our children and young people!

Shona & Matt

INSIDE

2

Mental Health Support for you and your family.

4

Preparing For Adulthood and your next steps in employment and training.

6

Your Voice Matters: An update on what you've been telling us and what we are doing in response.

8

Get involved: Find out how your voice can make a difference to SEND services.



South Tyneside Council



Spread the word!

THIS IS SOUTH TYNESIDE

Mental Health

Our approach to mental health services for children and young people emphasises prevention and early intervention.

We have a range of universal services that offer flexible support available for all children, young people and those that support them. These are all free to access and can help support children, young people and their families.

Our services are organised using the iThrive approach



We want everyone to be well informed about the support available, the choices that they have and understand how they can help themselves and others. We have increased capacity across the system to support children, young people, their families, and professionals to make sure that everyone can get the right support at the right time.

Putting you and your family first

Demand for mental health services has fluctuated in line with the rapid changes of restrictions as a result of the pandemic.

This has impacted everyone's health and wellbeing and particularly difficult for some children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. As a Local Area, we are continuously striving to develop and improve our mental health offer. Ensuring that our children and young people are continuously learning, growing, and working towards their best self.

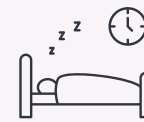
We want parents and carers to be equipped with the skills and confidence to support their children in managing their Mental Health. Teaching children how to recognise their emotions and develop the tools and healthy habits that they need to remain resilient.

There are a broad range of universal services that are available for children, young people and those that support them throughout the newsletter.

Top tips for looking after yourself



EATING WELL



GET ENOUGH SLEEP



ASK FOR HELP



ACTIVITY AND EXERCISE



TAKING CARE OF YOUR BODY



GET PLENTY OF SUNLIGHT



DIGITAL DETOX



HELPING OTHERS



SLOWING DOWN



BE SOCIABLE



HAVING FUN



SOLVING PROBLEMS

Useful Links

- Q www.youngminds.org.uk
- Q www.minded.org.uk
- Q www.annafreud.org

Support

humankind®
LGBT+

The South Tyneside LGBT+ service is for young people aged between 11 and 25.

It seeks to improve mental and emotional wellbeing, promote healthy lifestyles, reduce the social isolation often felt by lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender people and those with other related identity issues and tackle the discrimination they experience.

"The service has been a massive help to me, helping me understand myself and working through any issues or uncertainties I have."

We offer:

- 1:1 Support
- Family Support
- LGBT+ Peer Support Groups
- Activities

contact

📞 0191 466 1389

✉️ lgbt@humankindcharity.org.uk



Healthy Minds

The Healthy Minds Team provide a free and confidential service for all our children and young people who are in full time education (including college).



We offer evidence-based treatments, including individual, group, and family work, for a variety of common mental health issues, these may include:

- Low Mood and Depression
- Worry & Anxiety
- Building Self Esteem
- Controlling Anger & Emotions
- Bereavement/Loss
- Developing Resilience
- Self-Harming Behaviours
- Bullying
- Relationship & Family Difficulties

We aim to help children and young people at the earliest possible stage, in order to support children, young people and families to develop skills and promote positive wellbeing and reduce the risk of further distress.

For more information visit the website <https://www.southtynesidelifecyclementalhealth.nhs.uk/our-healthy-minds-team/> or ask the Senior Mental Health Lead in school.



Kooth is an anonymous online counselling service for young people in South Tyneside age between 11-25.

The service is available 365 days a year between the hours of midday to 10pm Monday to Friday and 6-10pm Saturday and Sunday.

The support available includes:

- Peer to peer support via articles that have been written by young people, for young people with the opportunity to submit your own content
- Instant text based chat to counsellors

Kooth is free to join Sign up at www.Kooth.com



We are proud to introduce a new resource for staff in schools, social services, social care, and other agencies.

Stronger Schools is an online resource, focused on recognising and responding to health and wellbeing concerns such as behaviour, development, learning and much more.

contact

✉️ necsu.strongerschools@nhs.net

🔍 <https://www.strongerschools.org/>

Stronger Schools provides professionals such as staff within schools and social care, health and wellbeing practitioners access to clear and concise guidance on supporting the health and wellbeing of children school years 1-6.

The Stronger Schools website provides information and a pathway of care on each health and wellbeing concern as well as access to resources and creative wellbeing ideas.

Mental Health Parent and Carer Peer Support Group

Our peer support group is safe space for those parents and carers who are supporting a child or young person struggling with emotional or mental health to be heard, supported and to share stories with others.

Next session:

16.12.2021 – Develop an insight into the LGBT+ service and find out how they support families in the local area.

Book a space

✉️ michelle.olsen@southtyneside.gov.uk



Your Next Steps

We understand that many young people may feel nervous about what their future may look like and what options are available to them in relation to options after Year 11.

In addition, we recognise that young people have faced many challenges over the past 18 months with the COVID pandemic affecting their education in an unprecedented fashion. South Tyneside's Connexions Team have worked in partnership with the Skills Service to develop a 'Your Next Steps' prospectus for young people planning their transition into post 16 education, employment or training.

In the Your Next Steps prospectus you will be able to find out about what local training providers are offering, as well as find out where to look for information about local College and Sixth Form provision as well as specialised SEND provision.

To access a copy of the prospectus alongside information regarding support for SEND please go to: www.southtyneside.gov.uk/sendlocaloffer

Connexions are also available to support you with making informed choices about your future or next steps. Connexions Advisers are on hand to offer impartial information, advice and guidance regarding college courses, apprenticeships, 6th form, employment, and training as well as a range of other options depending on needs and interests.

"I contacted Connexions through Facebook and they got in touch very quickly. They spoke to me on the phone and sent me lots of information to help me make a decision on the right course for me."

"What an amazing service, they came to my school a couple of years back, so glad I remembered the team as I would definitely not be where I wanted to be right now"

contact

📞 0191 424 6690 or 0191 424 6657
📱 @cnxSouthTyneside

connexions
SOUTH TYNESIDE

SEN Open Events 21/22

If you have an Education Health & Care Plan there are open events available for you to attend to find out what you can do to further your education and training.

8TH DECEMBER - Groundworks, Jarrow Hall, Jarrow NE32 3DY 4.30pm-6.30pm

9TH DECEMBER - Epinay 6th Form, Eco Centre, NE31 1SR 3-5pm

4TH JANUARY - Project Choice, Ocean Road Community Centre NE33 2DW 4-6pm

18TH JANUARY - South Tyneside College, NE34 6ET 5-6.30pm

Speak to your Connexions Advisor to find out more



14+ Annual Health Checks

Young people with a learning disability often find it difficult to access health services, at the right time.

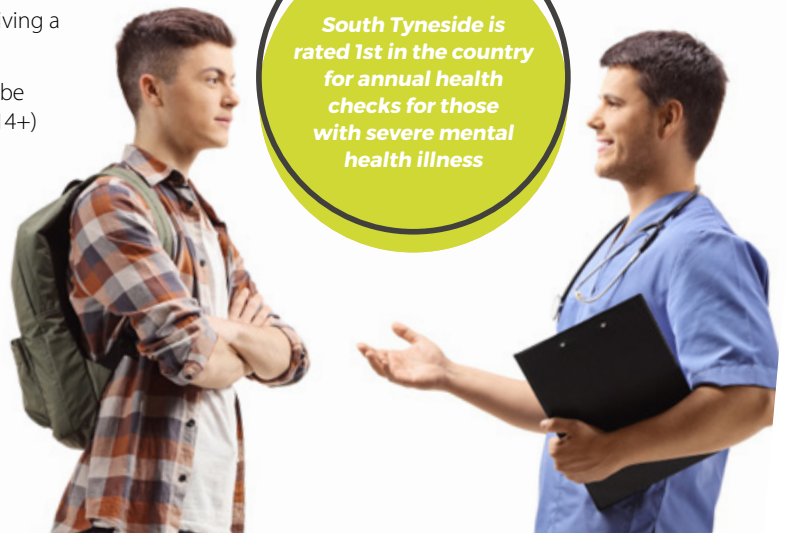
If you have a learning disability, a severe mental illness, ADHD or you are autistic you can get support from the Primary Health Care Hub on living a healthy life.

Over the up and coming months, the Primary Health Care Hub will be piloting health clinics in schools to further support young people (14+) with their health needs. Further information about the pilot will be communicated out via the schools.

Support regarding Annual Health checks can be made by contacting the Primary Health Care Hub on 0191 451 6649 Monday to Friday between 9am and 5pm or emailing SouthTynesidePCPHS@cntw.nhs.uk

"Last year, South Tyneside was rated 3rd best in the country for the number of people with a learning disability who received an annual health check."

"South Tyneside is rated 1st in the country for annual health checks for those with severe mental health illness"



Stomp-Stamp

The STOMP-STAMP programme promotes the importance of prescribing the right Psychotropic medication, at the right time, for the right reasons, for those with a learning disability and/or Autism.

Psychotropic medications are used to treat conditions such as Anxiety, Epilepsy, Psychosis, and sleep problems. These medications are right for some people because they help them to stay safe and well. However, they can cause problems if taken for the wrong reason, in high doses or over long periods of time.



It is important to speak to your health care professional about the medication you or your child are taking, as well as ensuring the medication is reviewed during the yearly health check. Remember, medication should not be stopped without consulting a doctor first.

The STOMP-STAMP programme doesn't aim to stop people taking medication altogether but promotes the empowerment of the person and their family to ask questions about this medication.

South Tyneside are doing some exciting work with children, young people, families and professionals to understand how the current available STOMP-STAMP information and resources can be used to support them and we would welcome your feedback:

www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/R7YN7BY

Alternatively, if you would like to discuss STOMP/STAMP further, you are welcome to contact:

- Steve Storey
Steve.Storey2@cntw.nhs.uk
- Laura Singleton
laura.singleton@southtyneside.gov.uk



Qwell.io is an online service which offers peer to peer support via moderated discussion forums and self-help through reading or submitting content



Qwell also gives people the opportunity to access online counselling from qualified counsellors who are available from midday to 10pm every weekend day and from 6pm to 10pm at weekends. People can drop in for one-to-one instant text-based chats or book a session in advance.

The service is available to adults age 24+ and who live in South Tyneside.

Looking for support?
Find one to one professional support from a mental health practitioner today.
It's free, safe and anonymous.
Visit Qwell.io to find out more.



The Autism hub is for all who would like pre and post diagnostic support and their families.

The Autism Hub offers a mix of face to face and digital support through two providers. Toby Henderson Trust and Autism in Mind.

The Toby Henderson Trust provide support to families at the hub Monday through to Wednesday. They deliver one to one, family or group sessions as well as offering topical workshops. These sessions are advertised through their social media page on Facebook.

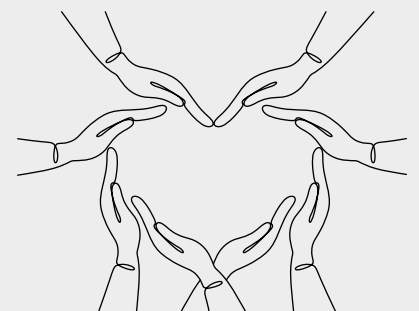


AIM provide support to adults (16+) with autism on Thursday and Friday out of the Autism Hub.

AIM offer one to one as well as peer support in groups on social media. They provide access to their Me, Myself and Autism course to help people to develop an understanding of their own autism and how to express their needs.

contact

- 📞 0191 816 0550
- 🔍 www.autisminmind.com
- 🔍 www.ttht.co.uk/
- 📌 [theautismhubsouthtyneside](https://www.facebook.com/theautismhubsouthtyneside)



YOUR VOICE MATTERS



Your comments, shared experiences, feedback and what we do in response to them, demonstrates the impact that you have on the development of the SEND Local Offer.



Information & Advice

A central information point of accurate and up to date information that is used by all so that everyone is looking at the same information

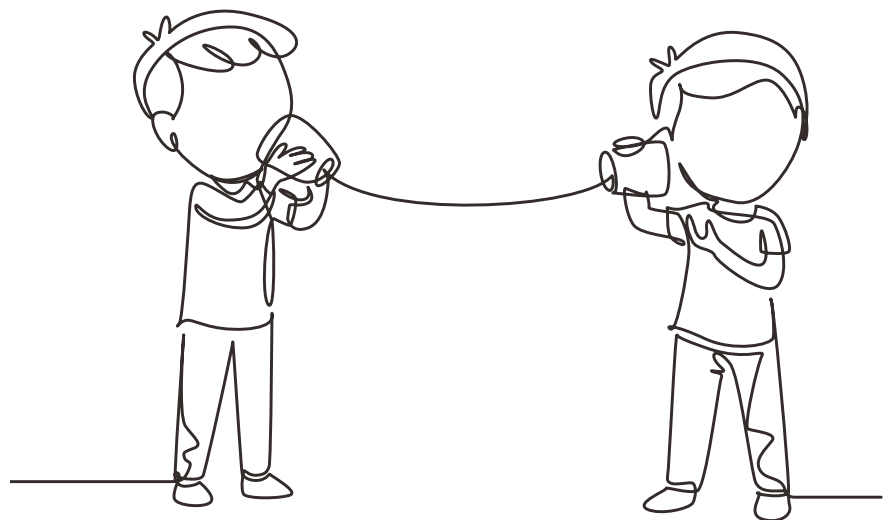
ACTION PLAN > We will be relaunching the SEND Local Offer early 2022 with updated content. We are working with professionals across Education, Health & Care to promote using this as their primary source of information in SEND to ensure that there is consistency of knowledge for all.

Information should be available in a variety of formats and use visual media.

IN PROGRESS > We have started to develop guidance documents for parents and carers to be available in print and have launched the SEND Local Offer on social media. New forms and Parent carer guides for Education Health & Care Needs Assessments and Annual Reviews are now live and your child's setting will be able to provide you with a copy when needed.

You don't know what you don't know, so more signposting is necessary.

IN PROGRESS > We have increased our communication with parents and carers through mail outs, social media, advertising and working with education settings and community organisations to promote information sharing, including the introduction of SEND An Update.



Education

Communication between professionals and parents/carers impacts children's progress.

IN PROGRESS > 'SEND a message' has been created with parents and carers in the SEND Improvement Forum. It outlines the promises we make about how we will communicate with families. This will be implemented in education settings initially and expand to other services over the coming year.

There is not enough time to prepare for the transition from primary to secondary school.

Transitions has been a common theme through all engagement. Consultations with children/young people, education settings and parents/carers are taking place in Autumn 2021 to understand current experiences, best practice and how transitions could be improved at all stages. In the first sessions parents/carers told us that planning from the earliest point is vital to a good transition at any stage.

It's difficult to navigate the system and know what support my child is or should be getting.

Engagement events have been offered covering a variety of topics including 'New to SEND', 'What to Expect From Schools', 'SEND Q&A', with more planned over the next year. These are opportunities to meet with professionals and ask questions. You can find out what events are taking place in the coming months on page 8.



Support & Care

Training opportunities for parents/carers to increase skills, knowledge and confidence in SEND.

We have held 42 training sessions for parents and carers that have covered topics that they suggested would help them support and meet the needs of the children at home. These have been accessed by more than 240 parents/carers.

In the Parent Carer Training Survey, you told us that:

98% would recommend the training to other parents and carers of children with SEND

"Anyone looking for help and support would benefit from this course"

"It was really easy to attend with the sessions being online. Eventbrite was good, it was easy to get booked on"

'Look Out For'

Training in 2022; follow the SEND Local Offer on Eventbrite to stay up to date on training and events.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/o/send-local-offer-south-tyneside-32567325573>

Parent Carer Experience reported from training session:

"Thank you so much, for the past 3 weeks. These have been the best talks I've listened too"

Can I say a big thank you! After your presentation last week about cutting out the unnecessary in the morning routine, my son's school has now agreed for him to wear an alternative jumper. I can't believe the difference it has made to our lives! Thank you, really helpful session. Hope it will make me be a better parent to my little boy.

We need more supported leisure activities for children and young people with SEND.

IN PROGRESS > You've told us that there are lots of children and young people that struggle to access universal leisure activities, but they don't meet the threshold for assessed short breaks. We are looking at how we can provide a non-assessed short break offer, we are working with South Tyneside Parent Carer Forum to develop the offer and we hope to have a pilot launched in the new year.

Health & Wellbeing

It would be helpful to know about local resources and how parents can access them and recommended online resources for professionals while children wait on lists

We are improving the information about services available in the Local Area. All services listed on the SEND Local Offer will be categorised into Universal, Targeted and Specialist with detailed information about how they can be accessed and what support they offer for children and young people with SEND.

In March 2021 Stronger Schools was launched, this is an online resource for education settings that provides guidance to help them respond to health and wellbeing concerns about their students.



What is the response to waiting times since the pandemic?

Recovery planning and the introduction of new services has had a positive impact on waiting times for Lifecycle. Since the start of national lockdown in March 2020 there has been an overall increase in the number of people being assessed within 0-4 weeks and nearly all have been assessed within 18 weeks since October 2020.

Preparing for Adulthood

There is no clear guidance on post 16 pathways

We have developed our Post 16 Pathways document that outlines information about the different types of education settings/training providers and the types courses that are available at different levels, this has been shared with education settings and connexions

Leisure services in the local area need to be more inclusive and accessible young people with SEND.

ACTION PLAN > The pandemic has meant that a lot of services were closed, and it was difficult to get a full understanding of what was/is available in the changing landscape. We will be improving the information about leisure services on the SEND Local Offer website and a consultation with young people will be held to understand how we can make leisure services more inclusive and identify any gaps.

Young people's voice in their EHCP is not strong enough.

We have worked with children and young people at Epinau School to produce new 'All About Me' forms and these are available now.

Comments from those that participated showed that having conversations about what they want for the future was really important to them. There are lots of tools in our new Annual Review guidance that can help you to have positive conversations about your child's future.



Get involved

For the SEND Local Offer to develop and grow, we need you to be involved. There are lots of ways that you can provide your views, share your experiences and get involved in the development of SEND services

SEND Improvement Forum

You can share your experiences and work alongside practitioners to find solutions for improving SEND services and the experience of children/young people and their parents/carers.

We meet every half term via ZOOM, upcoming dates

Thursday 20/01/2022 and Thursday 03/03/2022

You can book your space: <https://stlocaloffersendimforum.eventbrite.co.uk>

'Look Out For'

Preparing For Adulthood Engagement Group:

If you have a child aged 14-25yrs, there will be an exciting opportunity to get involved in developing our Preparing for Adulthood offer.

The SEND Local Offer Relaunch

Coming in February 2022



Parent Carers READ

(Read, Edit, Approve, Distribute)

We want all our communication to be effective. This means removing the jargon and making sure that it is easy to understand.

The best way to do this is by having you read, edit, and approve our policies guides and more. Look for the Parent/Carer stamp of approval.

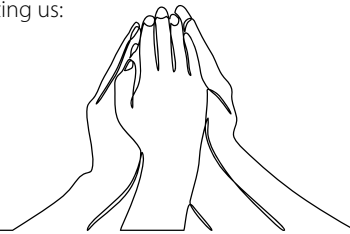
Find out more about how you can get involved by contacting us:

📞 0191 424 7778

✉️ SENDlocaloffer@southtyneside.gov.uk

🔍 www.southtyneside.gov.uk/SENDLocalOffer

📱 @localoffersouthtyneside



South Tyneside Parent Carer Forum

Uniting voices in the SEND Community

Who are we?

We are an independent group of parents and carers of children and young people with additional needs and disabilities in South Tyneside. We work in partnership with key organisations to ensure the needs of the child are at the heart of all services. We offer the benefit of lived experience and understand the challenges parents and carers often face.

What do we do?

We work collaboratively to give parents and carers of young people (aged 0-25) a unified voice, to guide service providers and commissioners in the conception, design and implementation of services across health, education and social care, ultimately improving the lives of young people and their families in our area.

We aim to enable parents/carers to share their knowledge of what works and what doesn't work so well; and to help service providers and commissioners focus their efforts on effective, high quality support. The Forum also signposts parents to advice and information, to help them through their journey as carers of a disabled child or young person.

What have we been doing this year?

We have been involved with a number of consultations around service provisions throughout this year. Some of these consultations have become ongoing projects, such as navigating the EHCP process. We look forward to continuing this work, bringing the parent carer voice, and ensuring they are consulted and represented.



Becoming a member of our forum increases our collective voice and strength.

Come and join us, and sign up to be a member on our website

contact

🔍 www.stpcf.org/

📱 @stparentcarerforum

📷 st_parent_carer_forum