

Tips from local parents

Swimming

The London Borough of Wandsworth Amateur Swimming Association (LBWASA) Disability squad won the Mayor's Award at the Wandsworth Active event in March. Congratulations go to the organisers for continuing to provide excellent swimming opportunities for disabled children.

For details on swimming lessons for disabled children aged between 5 and 12 please contact: William Collins, email: wblc11@hotmail.com or disability@lbwasa.org

Tennis

For those with Down's Syndrome, there is a partnership between the Down's Syndrome Association, Lawn Tennis Association and Fulham Football Club.

Every Tuesday there is tennis coaching for children and young people between the ages of 7 and 25. In the winter coaching is held at Raynes Park High School (6-7pm) and in summer at Priory Lane.

For details please contact: Matthew Maguire, email: mmaguire@fulhamfc.com

Cycling

There is a one hour free hire of specialist bikes and trikes for a disabled child and a carer or sibling in Battersea Park at the weekends and in school holidays.

You will need to register and take proof of identity and eligibility, so contact them first on telephone: 020 8299 6636 or www.wandsworth.gov.uk/disabilitybikehire.



Who we are

We currently have 13 parents on the forum, who meet every month, and also over 100 parents on our general contact list.

We are all parents or carers of children and young adults, with additional needs. We have children of different ages and differing abilities and come from all parts of the Borough.

What our Members Say!

- Being part of PPA makes me feel part of a community who are trying to help each other by improving services for our children
- I think it's fantastic meeting like-minded parents who want to fight for their children's best interests. It is particularly useful learning from those parents with older children who have often learnt things the hard way and may help us make a big difference in the future for our own kids
- It is empowering to think we can make a difference and make big changes by going through the right channels
- I like getting together with other parents each month

The Calvert Trust

The Calvert Trust offer adventure holidays to disabled people, their families and carers. At the beginning of March, ten families from Wandsworth schools spent a long weekend at the Calvert Trust Exmoor.

- We all participated in a variety of activities that wouldn't ordinarily be easily available to our disabled children. The activities included abseiling, climbing and canoeing and it was good to be able to participate fully in everything as a family because we normally end up splitting up to support our disabled or non disabled child in different activities. The staff are fully experienced working with people with all types of disabilities and made sure everyone was included. In addition to the activities being fun and challenging, the location is stunning and the accommodation and food are also excellent. I wouldn't hesitate in recommending it to anyone of any age or disability



Visit www.calvert-trust.org.uk/exmoor for more details.

Families living in SW19 might also be eligible for a grant from the Generations Charitable Trust

telephone: 01598 763 221
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Some of our children attend special Schools, others are in mainstream and some are reaching adulthood. What we have in common, though, is that we need to get the most out of local services for our children and for other families like ours.

The following comments are some of the things parents have said about being part of our PPA forum:

- One of the things I most value about PPA is being part of a team that develops positive opportunities for disabled people
- Decisions made by the council have a huge impact on my son's life. Being part of PPA has helped me understand how those decisions are made and how the system works, which has been invaluable
- It is my pleasure to be one of the founders of PPA, which gave voice to parents of children with special needs in improving the services for disabled children and young people in our Borough
- Recognising that we can make a difference, being informed, meeting other parents facing similar difficulties/challenges
- It's been great being able to be part of PPA as you feel you are making a difference for other parents

Finally

To be as representative as possible, it is important that we get as much feedback from families as we can.

We would love to hear your views from time to time. So if you would like to be part of the collective voice, please do let us know your contact details. Emails work best for us, but if you would prefer to be contacted by phone or post, that's fine too.

As an incentive, we are offering a prize of a £50.00 shopping voucher for the first new name or contact details out of the hat. **Entries in by May 31st 2012.**

Contact details

Elizabeth Nassé
Term time:
Monday, Tuesday and Thursday
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c/o Contact A Family
1 Siward Road
London SW17 0LA
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020 8947 5260
Email:
elizabeth.nasse@cafamily.org.uk
Website:
www.positiveparentaction.org.uk



Positive Parent Action (PPA) is Wandsworth's parent forum. We are a group of parents and carers of children (aged 0 to 25 years) aiming to improve provision for all local families, whose children have additional needs. We are supported by Contact a Family (www.cafamily.org.uk) and are part of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums (www.nnpcf.org.uk).

We hope you all had a good spring break

PPA update Good News!

The Department for Education (DfE) has committed more funding for forums like ours across the UK, so we have applied for **£10k** for 2012/2013.

Our application was supported by:
Carol Payne Head of Special Needs and Children with Disabilities Service
Helen Duffy Head of Nursing Children with Disabilities and SEN
Susan Reid Deputy Head of Early Years
Roger Legate Headteacher of Linden Lodge School and
Rina Patel Manager of Parent Partnership.

We are very grateful for their ongoing support.

We are hopeful that we will receive funding in the next few weeks, so will be able to start organising activities for this year.

We have had positive feedback about our newsletter and consultation events, so we plan to do more of these. This is in addition to representing families at council steering groups, training forum

Free SEN workshop

We are planning a free Special Educational Needs legal workshop with specialist lawyers, Irwin Mitchell on Thursday 10th May, 10.00-12.00pm, followed by lunch.

Places will be limited, so if you are interested, make sure we have your contact details and we will get in touch with you nearer the time. **irwinmitchell**^(IM)
solicitors

members and administration of the group. The issues we hear most about are around Short Breaks, transition to adult services, schools and blue badges, so we will make sure we keep addressing these through our meetings with the council. Please check out our revamped website for up to date news and more information.

We hope you find PPA of interest and really value your feedback and suggestions.

PPA website relaunch

We have relaunched our PPA website:
www.positiveparentaction.org.uk

It is now easier to find, so should be accessed by more local parents and carers.

It has up-to-date information on local meetings and events plus links to local organisations.

It is also linked to Facebook and we have recently completed some social networking training, so hopefully we will be able to use it more effectively!

We hope you like it and find it easy to use.



Please get in touch – our contact details are shown below and also on the back page.

WE WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!!! Please get in touch if you would like to come to the next meeting

Positive Parent Action c/o Contact A Family, 1 Siward Road, London SW17 0LA
www.positiveparentaction.org.uk and **info@positiveparentaction.org.uk**

WE ARE MAKING A DIFFERENCE and WE DO NEED YOUR INPUT TOO!



One of our core functions is to speak on behalf of parents and carers at Council Steering Groups

Remember to plan well ahead for the summer holidays. The Council will be able to let you know more about what is going on.

Please contact the Family Information Service, email: fis@wandsworth.gov.uk or telephone: 020 8871 7899.



Short Breaks

We have been reassured that the level of Short Breaks available will remain largely the same this year, which is good news.

Services that will be prioritised are

- ❁ Special school's summer schemes,
- ❁ Specialist play provision,
- ❁ Lady Allen, ❁ Share a Family,
- ❁ George Shearing and its buddy scheme.

This is in addition to small grants for organisations wishing to promote inclusion and sports and leisure activities. If you have any other ideas about what you would like to be made available, please let us know and we can suggest them at the next Short Breaks meeting.



Multi-Agency Sub Group for Safeguarding Children and Young People

The group discussed the need for training, specifically around health needs, safeguarding awareness and anti-bullying. The group is also looking at development of a 'passport' type document for health professionals and schools, so that parents do not have to repeatedly explain what their child's needs are. The document will summarise key points and what needs to be in place to support a child in a setting.

Children with Special Needs and Disabilities strategy group

At the last meeting, topics included ideas for development of services between the Local Authority and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services Learning Disabilities team.

Some initial research looked into residential care and Special Educational Needs Pathfinders for the SEN Green paper.



Transition

In addition to taking part in the Council's regular Transition meetings, we recently hosted a parent/carer lunch, which focussed on transition to adult services and to schools.

You can read more about this in our featured section below.

Lunch Event THE KAIROS CENTRE

PPA hosted a meeting at the Kairos Centre in Roehampton on the 27th March.

Entitled **Transition**, the session was aimed at helping parents and carers understand transitions in their child's education, whether from nursery to school, primary to secondary or secondary and beyond.

The talk was introduced by PPA's chair, **Naomi Collett** who spoke of the need for parents and carers, in a time of central and local budget cuts, to make use of all available resources.

Carol Payne, gave a summary of what transition in schools should look like, including a transition social worker at all annual reviews from age 16 in the case of complex needs/residential provision and age 17 otherwise.

Celia Sands, from *Parent Partnership*, was on hand to answer questions about schools and

Mike Abel, *Adult Services commissioning manager* spoke of what direction care for adult services was taking.

Last up was **Terry Miles**, *Team Manager for Special Needs Connexions Personal Advisers*. He or his staff will try to attend all transition reviews from age 16 but this may not always be possible. Nonetheless, he has a wealth of knowledge about what is on offer post school and we urge all parents to contact him when their child reaches the relevant age.

Talks were followed by a delicious lunch in the centre's relaxing and opulent dining room. The session was very well attended and many parents said they came away feeling more reassured about their child's future.