



ESPCF May Newsletter

Hello! Welcome to our May 2020 e-newsletter. We've got lots to share with you since our April update, including examples of positive coproduction work, updates on the progress of key projects such as the Ofsted review, and how you can become more involved to help strengthen our collective voice.



Weekly meetings with East Sussex County Council

We've been continuing to hold virtual weekly meetings with senior managers at ESCC during lockdown. Our priority has been asking what measures have been put in place, how effective these have been, and what more can be done in helping families cope during the pandemic.

Feedback from ESPCF members showed that many parent carers are only just coping, need more support with home learning, and are unsure who to contact in crisis. We were encouraged that ESCC listened and responded positively in a couple of areas:

- Key contacts flyer: ESCC and ESPCF jointly produced an infographic (see image below) for parent carers listing key contact information, including who to call in a crisis. Did you find it useful? Please let us know.

Coronavirus Support

Services and support are still available for your child with SEND.



SENDIASS Advice Line

☎ 01273 772289
sendiass@amazesussex.org.uk

AMAZE FAQs

Please visit their website:
<https://amazesussex.org.uk/coronavirus-faqs-for-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-in-east-sussex/>

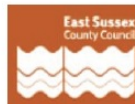


CITES

Children's Integrated Therapy and Equipment Service
☎ Therapy One Point: 0300 123 2650
Monday to Friday, 8.30am to 4.30pm

CAMHS

Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services
☎ 0300 304 0100
<https://sussexcamhs.nhs.uk/>



Education

Your child's school is your first point of contact.
If this doesn't resolve the issue, or you have query about an ISEND service your child is open to, contact the coordinated Covid-19 helpline.

☎ 0345 60 80 192
cs.customerrelations@eastsussex.gov.uk

- New telephone helpline: As a result of your feedback, the Educational Psychology Service has launched a brand new telephone helpline for SEND families in East Sussex who need support with, for example, helping children to learn at home, family wellbeing and anxiety, and managing behaviour positively. We coproduced the info flyer (see image below) for the service and, again, we would be interested to hear any feedback you have about the helpline.



NEW Parents and Carers Helpline

Launching on Monday, May 18th, 2020 at 9 a.m.



What and who is the helpline for?

The new helpline is for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND in East Sussex. If you are concerned about any of the following areas, you can talk with an Educational Psychologist (EP) for support:

Learning
at home

Setting
routines

Positive
behaviour

Preparing
for school

Wellbeing

Anxiety

The helpline will be available until schools, nurseries, colleges and alternative provision are fully open to all pupils again after the Covid-19 pandemic.

How to contact the helpline:

You can call the ISEND Telephone Number at any time and leave a message saying that you would like to talk to an EP.

You will need to leave your name and telephone number. It would help us if you could also leave a very brief description of the kind of support you are looking for and need.

01273481967

What happens next?

Your contact details will be entered onto a booking form and you will be contacted by an EP. Your contact details will then be deleted unless there is an immediate cause for concern or risk of harm, in which case the EP would explain what they would need to do to try and help.

An EP will call you back between 2pm and 4pm on the next Monday, Wednesday or Friday that is available.

Please do not call this number to make a complaint or to ask about the EHCP processes.

Key message for ongoing challenges

With Amaze we have set out some of the ongoing challenges we know families are facing in the summary key message attached and we continue to work with ESCC to raise concerns and try to seek action.

Cavendish School

We were very concerned to hear the news about Cavendish School in Eastbourne and the delay in informing parents that a staff member had tested positive for Covid-19 (thankfully we understand that the person concerned has not been seriously ill). We asked ESCC to brief us on what had happened, and were informed that the local authority was only notified about the incident on 15 May, the same day as parents, and had not been contacted by the school prior to this. An updated risk assessment and recovery plan have now been put in place as a result of this incident.

Workstreams: latest updates

Home to school transport

We have attended meetings and liaised with ESCC to get clarity around the planned changes with home-to-school transport contracts affecting families attending some schools in East Sussex. A helpful and informative communications

piece setting out clearly what is being planned, when, and who will be affected is imminent from ESCC. Our excellent ESPCF rep will continue to liaise with ESCC as families receive this update to ensure any concerns or queries are flagged and addressed swiftly, so please do feedback to the forum if your child or young person is affected by these planned changes.

Ofsted progress review

ESCC are reviewing what progress has been made in addressing Ofsted's recommendations from the local area SEND inspection which took place last in 2016. We are actively looking at how the forum can consult on this review remotely, after a planned workshop involving parent carers, iSEND staff, and CITES practitioners had to be postponed due to lockdown. Some of our committee members will be reaching out to the wider forum membership to hear about what is happening on the ground to feed in ESPCF's perspective on the review; our engagement coordinator Denise will be identifying key questions and areas which still need addressing; and we also hope to conduct a series of five daily polls on Facebook to gather wider feedback from you - so please do keep an eye on our page.

Local Offer

Two parent carer workshops were held in March to look at ways to improve the Local Offer pages, and we have recently received the report which summarises the discussions and recommendations - one of our committee members is reviewing it at the moment. Our next step is to make sure further consultation with parent carers takes place and we will be asking ESCC this week about its timetable for implementation, to ensure the forum plays a key role in shaping the new-look Local Offer pages.

i-go

We have been invited to contribute to some development work with i-go and would be keen to hear from anyone who would like to be a representative for ESPCF with this project. We are also about to become a 'provider' on the i-go website and will be promoting our events - virtual for the moment of course! The membership of i-go is quite extensive so this is an excellent platform for us to promote the forum and to encourage membership.

Get in touch and get involved

Social media

We have recently set up a 'closed' [Facebook group](#) for SEND parent carers in East Sussex which we hope will be a safe, welcoming, and supportive place for members to exchange views, experiences, ideas, and offer support to each other. We would love for you to join and help us to become one voice which is representative of all parent carers across East Sussex.

We do ask that you complete an ESPCF membership form first (a link is included in the join-up questions) and once your membership is confirmed we will be delighted to add you to the group.

Become a parent carer representative

Are you interested in helping to represent the views of all parent carers in East Sussex? Reps are a crucial part of what we do, helping to shape outcomes and deliver improved services.

You will be fully supported with a comprehensive induction and any necessary training. Reps are paid for their time, and childcare and travel costs are reimbursed. We'll have more information soon, but if this sounds up your street, or you'd just like to find out more, please contact our engagement coordinator [Denise](#) or call 0300 770 1367.

Virtual get-togethers

Finding new ways to connect with parent carers has been one of the many lockdown challenges. What is a good substitute for coffee mornings and drop-in sessions? One idea has been virtual get-togethers, using a platform such as Zoom or Skype, as a way for parent carers to connect (albeit online) and offer support or share concerns and experiences with each other. If this is something you might be interested in attending, please let us know.

Contact us

Please keep telling us how you are getting on. We know that finding the time to call or email is hard, if not impossible some days, but ESPCF is here to represent you. It makes all the difference if you tell us directly about your experiences, as well as your ideas to help us achieve the best outcomes for all SEND children and young people. There is a [form on our website](#), which you can complete anonymously if you prefer, [email us](#) directly, or telephone 0300 770 1367.

Other news

Parent carer experiences of Covid-19

A big thank-you if you completed Amaze's recent survey which asked parent carers about the challenges they face during lockdown, and what support they need right now. The findings showed high levels of stress and anxiety among both children and young people with SEND and their parent carers, and that parents need more help to support home learning. The [full report](#), along with Amaze's recommendations, are on the Amaze website.

That's all for now – please keep safe and keep in touch.
ESPCF
May 2020

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