

Peer Support Network round-up

6th May 2020

This week our Peer Support virtual meet-up brought together families caring for children and young adults at home. Whilst each family shared how they are coping, airing growing concern as lockdown continues, we also paid attention to some positives. A new appreciation of nature, spotting worker bees, discovering wild garlic for the first time (it's a good year for this) and making drawing tools from foraged sticks in the garden. We discussed the challenges of attempting home-schooling, shared resources and walked through new government guidance around Education Health and Care Plans which are summarised below.

Families with older children in the Peer Network shared their experience in putting together EHCPs and suggested a proactive approach to researching accessible alternative provision during this period. It was acknowledged the Local Authorities are under immense pressure and Covid-19 is pulling away capacity which would ordinarily focus on EHCP assessments and reviews. The first port of call should be a conversation with schools as to what support can be brought into the home environment. Please use the following guidance to present your case to your school.

Our next **Peer Support Network online meet-up** is on **Wednesday 20th May, 2 – 3pm**. This is open to parents, siblings, carers and support workers supporting adults with complex support needs. Further details will be announced nearer the time.

In the meantime, if you'd like to speak to a member of the team, please contact Esther – esther@projectartworks.org

Children and Families Act 2014: EHC plans modification notice

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/882290/CV19_Act_modification_notice_SEND.pdf

The modified s42 duty relates to the provision for each individual child and young person. Local authorities and health commissioning bodies must not apply blanket policies about the provision to be secured or arranged. A 'one size fits all approach' is not appropriate and "as children grow their needs change" as highlighted by a member of the Peer Support Network this week.

Education, health and care needs assessments and plans: guidance on temporary legislative changes relating to coronavirus (COVID-19)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus/education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-guidance-on-temporary-legislative-changes-relating-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

There is a framework to guide decision making when addressing what can be carried out as part of 'reasonable endeavours'. Accompanying this is a list of examples of alternative arrangements which is given as a guide but not an exhaustive list. This should help you start a conversation with your child's school around what provisions could be accessible from home for example:

“a school or college delivering direct education or support in the home where a young person is not able to attend school or college (subject to risk assessment and appropriate health protection measures)”

“a home learning reading programme, provided by a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) and reviewed weekly”

Amaze support

Amaze SENDIASS is the Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service for East Sussex and Brighton and Hove. If you are a child or young person with a special educational need or a disability (SEND), or the parent of a child or young person with SEND, you can call the Amaze SENDIASS helpline for information and advice.

Amaze's SENDIASS helpline is open Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 2.30pm.
Call 01273 772289

For further information on how Amaze can support you during Covid-19, including planning for the future education, employment and training, visit:

https://amazesussex.org.uk/amaze_news/amaze-statement-on-coronavirus-covid-19/

New Package of Support for online learning

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-major-package-to-support-online-learning>

To make remote education accessible for all pupils staying at home during the outbreak, the government has announced a major new package of support for online learning that it is to provide free laptops for vulnerable and disadvantaged children who do not have access to a laptop or tablet and are preparing for exams (in year 10); receive support from a social worker; or are a care leaver. For those in 16 to 19 education, providers including schools can already use their 16 to 19 Bursary Fund allocation to provide devices and connectivity for disadvantaged and vulnerable young people, where this is identified as a barrier to a student participating in education.

Other useful resources:

Hidden Disabilities Sunflower Lanyard

Not all disabilities are visible. The Peer Network discussed that some people may need help in understanding that we are all individual and have different needs. To maintain a personalised-approach and not make assumptions, sometimes tools like this are useful.

A parent within the network uses this lanyard with her son and finds it useful when leaving the house during lockdown. Others may find this useful in helping others identify when someone has a hidden disability. The lanyards can be collected from most major supermarkets. <https://hiddendisabilitiesstore.com>

Twinkl SEND online resources

Create a free account to access resources to support home learning.
<https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/specialeducationalneeds-sen>