

LINCOLNSHIRE PARENT CARER FORUM

December 2014

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Welcome to our December newsletter and season's greetings to all.



As always, we have been busy attending an enormous amount of meetings to represent the views of parents. We participate at high level strategic meetings that impact on how services are delivered in the county, host our own coffee mornings, attend external events with our information and organise and host our own events such as the recent Carers' Rights day. These are only a few things our willing volunteers have been involved with.

Feedback from these meetings, coffee mornings and events, is collated confidentially and fed back to commissioners so they can improve service provision where required. We have more about our role as a parent carer forum later in this newsletter.

We would love to meet you at our coffee mornings. They are informal, relaxed meetings where you can find out lots of information or just chill with a free cuppa!

Later on in this newsletter, you will read why our volunteers commit so much of their time to our Charity. Hope Santa brings them something special for Christmas!

The LPCF team would like to say a **big thank you** to the wonderful parents and carers on our network who keep in touch with us, who attend our events and coffee mornings, who support us through our lottery club or just tell us what they think. We really appreciate your support.

We hope you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year. With very best wishes,

The LPCF Team

Uniting, empowering and supporting families



Website Update - 'Your Say' page

We have now developed a page where you can help us make a difference by sharing your experiences of being a parent carer. Let us know about the good and bad times you have had relating to raising your child with SEN and/or disability.

Parents and carers contributing their feedback on this page can feel valued in helping the forum to influence policies and decision making on services provided for families. In return all parent carers in our county should be able to benefit from better targeted services that families feel happy to use.

Although you are asked for some personal information when providing feedback we always anonymise it to protect your identity and adhere strictly to our confidentiality procedures (unless you request otherwise). As we cannot involve ourselves in individual cases, we may be able to give factual information and guide you to the sources of information and support you may require.

If you are unable to access our website, you can give feedback by post or by telephone.

New Document in our web library

We now have our SEN Workshop Report available in the Library and on our SEN page. If you would like a paper copy of our report please do not hesitate to contact us. A donation to cover postage would be greatly appreciated.



Updating your details

We are currently in the process of asking anyone who has changed their contact details within the last 3 years to complete the subscription form online. This confirms we have your correct details and gives you the chance to tell us where you heard about us.

Who cares for your child...or grown up child?

We are also interested in supporting, hearing from and networking with anyone else who cares for your child. This could be a sibling, extended family member or a friend. Anyone that plays a caring role with your child, can join our network. If they wish to join, but do not require any information from us, they just have to tick the website box. If support is required, we will be more than happy to signpost and give carers information as needed. This is what we are all here to do...to help each other.

A New Beginning for SEND (Special Educational Needs & Disability)

Our volunteers have been gathering feedback from parents on how they have been affected by the new SEND laws that came into force on 1st September. Some parents are still unsure what this all means to them. Here's a quick rundown of some of the changes:

Local Offer - this is a source of information of what is 'on offer' or available for families who are affected by disabilities and SEN. It is the duty of the Local Authority to maintain it and keep it up to date. Lincolnshire County Council are constantly updating the Local Offer which can be found on www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/SENDLocalOffer. If you know of a group or service that has not yet put up their details on this, please alert them to it. The more information that goes on there, the easier it is for families to find out how to obtain the support they require.

EHC Plan - There are a number of new EHC plan requests that have been made to Lincolnshire County Council and in addition to this, the authority is also working on converting existing statements of educational needs to the new EHC plans. Some parents have told us that they are worried about losing their statement when it is time for conversion. Please be aware that the SEND code of practice states the following:

The legal test of when a child or young person requires an EHC plan remains the same as that for a statement under the Education Act 1996. Therefore, it is expected that all those who have a statement and who would have continued to have one under the current system, will be transferred to an EHC plan – no-one should lose their statement and not have it replaced with an EHC plan simply because the system is changing. (pg 15)

For young people with existing LDAs (Learning Disability Assessments), the code states this:

[...] the expectation is that young people who are currently receiving support as a result of a LDA and remain in further education or training during the transition period, who request and need an EHC plan, will be issued with one. (Pg 15)

The Code of Practice is statutory guidance regarding the Children and Families Act 2014 and it can be downloaded from www.gov.uk (insert SEND code of practice 2014 in the search bar and the July 2014 version is the right document.)

Information Advice and Support Service (IASS) and & Core assets - IASS (used to be known as the Parent Partnership Service) and Core Assets have Independent Supporters who will work with parents to assist them with the processes involved with EHC plans. As the name suggests, IASS can also give information, advice and support regarding SEND.



LPCF Coffee mornings—Where and When?



BOSTON 10.00-11.30am	New England Hotel, Wide Bargate, Boston, PE21 6SH	Monday 19th January 2nd March
LINCOLN 12.30-2pm	The Homestead St Johns Park, Canwick Road Bracebridge Heath, Lincoln	Wednesday 7th January 4th March
SKEGNESS 11.00-12.30pm	The Vine Hotel (Best Western) Vine Road, Seacroft, Skegness PE25 3DB	Friday 9th January 27th February
SPALDING 10.00-11.30am	The Castle Sports Complex Albion Street, Spalding	Tuesday 20th January 10th March
LOUTH 11 -12.30am	Best Western, Kenwick Park Hotel, Kenwick Park Estate, Louth, LN11 8NR	Tuesday 27th January 24th March
GRANTHAM 10.30-12.00 noon	The Ramada Hotel, Swingbridge Road, Grantham, NG31 7XT	Wednesday 21st January 11th March
SLEAFORD 11.00—12.30pm	Jolly Scotchman, 18 Lincoln Road, Holdingham Sleaford, NG34 8NP	Monday 26th January 9th March
BOURNE 10.30-12.00 noon	The Nags Head, 2 Abbey Road, Bourne PE10 9EF	Thursday 15th January 26th February

Our First Coffee morning in Bourne was held on 23rd October. It was well attended by the parents of Bourne and surrounding villages. Michelle, our host introduced herself to the parents before they all sat down for coffee and scones. The thirteen parents that attended were able to relax in the comfort of the pub and chat away. A lady from a local organisation attended and brought information about what services they had to offer. Michelle passed on information to the parent carers about support in Lincolnshire. Some parents commented on the fact that Bourne needs this 'get together' (support) as there is a gap in the Bourne area.

Dates for Bourne's coffee mornings into next year can be found on the LPCF website. Michelle asks that you please check your diaries and add the dates and she will be there to welcome you to her next events. Thank you for your continued support.

Guests that are invited to our coffee mornings are by invitation only. As we listen and respond to parents' needs, we will shortly be circulating a very quick survey to ask you who you would like to attend. They will be invited to speak to parents about their services. The most popular service or organisation will be invited. Please watch out for this.



Weather Warning– Please check our facebook and website page before you set off to our coffee mornings as they will be cancelled if the weather is bad. We will always try and notify you beforehand hand if we have to cancel.

Michelle's Mindful Moments

One of our kind parent volunteers has written this interesting article for you about Art Therapy.



How do we relax?

In front of the TV, playing computer games or by keeping fit and active! In this modern world our minds are still active even when we are at rest. Here's some alternatives that will not require medication or alcohol to make us feel calmer. Art therapy is one of these alternatives that we can do, to boost our energy levels and reduce our stresses and strains.

Art therapy

What is it? It is an expressive therapy, which uses our own creativity as a medium to help improve physical, mental and emotional wellbeing.

How?

Through art, music, drama and even photography and dance....

Who can it help?

It can help anyone! The young, sick, adults, elderly, those with learning or behavioural problems. It is used in a number of settings, hospitals, day centres, counselling, healing, rehabilitation and psychotherapy....one to one or group work.

How does it work?

Well it doesn't matter if you can't draw or act etc. It is the process of doing the therapy that allows you to express yourself and understand yourself better. You will learn to relate to your feelings and emotions in fun and imaginative ways.

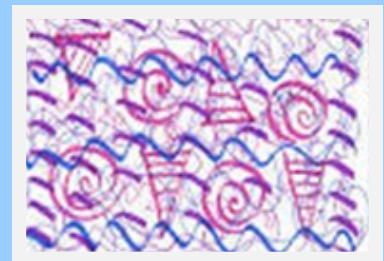
Benefits

Helps us cope- if we are depressed, anxious or grieving.

Express ourselves- our emotions are not always recognised

Achieve- confidence and freedom of expression

Art Therapy to have a go at – **Scribbling**. We all scribbled as a child. This technique is just that:-



1. Close your eyes
2. Relax for a few minutes by listening to some soothing music
3. Get a large piece of paper and some chalk paste
4. Tape your sheet to the table
5. Pick up the chalk and place it into the middle of the page
6. Close your eyes and begin to scribble
7. After 30 seconds approx, open your eyes
8. Look at your picture and find an image within it- shape or figure etc.
9. Step back and look from a distance

10. Colour in your image and add detail to make it clearer

11. Hang it up and think of a title

12. Write a few sentences about it (can be done later)

This technique can be repeated daily. As you build up a journal of spontaneous images, similarities will start to appear.

Additions to the above:

As you scribble think about positive images, sounds, textures- anything that makes you feel happy and good.

Enjoy!

What is a parent Carer Forum?

A parent Carer Forum is a group of parents and carers of children with disabilities/Special Educational Needs who work with the Local Authority, including Education, Health and other services to make sure the services that they plan and deliver meets the needs of the children with disabilities/SEN and their families.

Forums usually have a committee who listen to parents and enable them to participate with service providers.

Frequently asked Questions about Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum

Who Are LPCF?

We are made up of five trustees and parent committee members who make up the steering group. We are a Registered Charity and our committee is made up of parents of a diverse range of disabilities and Special Educational Needs. This reflects the parents of children on our network who also have a diverse range of needs (over 2000).

Are you part of Lincolnshire County Council?

No: We are a totally independent Registered Charity run by volunteers.

Are you linked to IASS (formerly Parent Partnership?)

No. We are a completely separate group although we signpost people to obtain advice to IASS as well as other organisations.

Why should I join your network?

We have a network made up of parent carers and one for professionals.

We are the communication conduit between parent carers and service providers and information sharing is vital for all parties to enable the best possible outcomes for children with special education needs and disabilities.

It is true that there is strength in numbers. Our group takes in everyone's views and represents them to service providers like Lincolnshire County Council and NHS Lincs. Collated views from parents on our network make a very compelling voice and as we have an extensive number of families on our network, it is easy for us to find out what the general experience is for certain services and to influence commissioners accordingly. In turn, commissioners can save valuable funds in targeting services appropriately reflecting the actual need rather than what they think families need, which can be two very different things. This makes better use of taxpayers' funds and provision is made to specifically help families.

How do you help parents?

We provide lots of opportunities to find out information through various ways. Here are some examples:

- ⇒ Our Coffee mornings throughout Lincolnshire –see page 3
- ⇒ We organise events and conferences, where parents are given the opportunity to speak to professionals about the issues that affect them e.g our very successful Carers' Rights Day event.
- ⇒ We organise events on subjects specifically requested by parents wherever and whenever possible.
- ⇒ Our website is regularly updated with useful information.
- ⇒ We provide regular email bulletins providing parents, carers and professionals with current information relevant to their needs e.g events, consultations, changes in legislations and so on.
- ⇒ Being well networked and informed, we signpost parents to where they can obtain the support and information they require.

We also continue to obtain your experiences through many avenues whether it is through email,



Consultation, coffee mornings, event feedback or otherwise. Our volunteer representatives have been able to collate your experiences and represent parents and their families at policy making meetings.

With parents' opinions being voiced through our representatives at local, regional and national levels, services have continued to be shaped in the way that would be most beneficial to families and in particular, the children. This saves money and is a more efficient way for service providers to operate, whatever the financial climate may be like.

We asked one of our parent volunteers why she joined LPCF

I joined when my youngest child started primary school after saying I could do a bit of volunteering. 6 years on, LPCF has made me more empowered to fight my corner and to get the help my child needs. I also like to help other parents and support them in their caring role making sure that they do not feel isolated. Several parents have asked "Is a group out there for us parents?"

At the coffee mornings I host, parents chat to each other and bounce ideas around in a very positive way, often parents come stressed out but go away with information and a smile on their face.

I get lots of satisfaction out of hosting the coffee mornings, even if its just helping one parent. I also like working with like minded people on the team!

When I joined it was a bit daunting going to the meetings, especially with all the jargon, but I now feel confident and feel I have achieved a lot over the last few years.

I have learnt along the way that you have to be yourself and not who other people want you to be, that your views count and that you are not on your own. Do your best and do whatever you can however large or small.

In England, there is a Parent Carer Forum in virtually all the Local Authority Areas which are recognised by the Department for Education.



National Network of Parent Carer Forums (NNPCF)

The LPCF is part of the NNPCF which is made up of all of the parent carer forums from across England. The NNPCF ensures that local parent carer forums are aware of national developments and promotes opportunities for the voice of parent carers to influence at a regional and national level. The NNPCF works closely with the Department for Education, the Department of Health, and other partner organisations to improve outcomes for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs and their families.

Members of



National Network of Parent Carer Forums
'Our Strength is our Shared Experience'
www.nnpf.org.uk

INVITATION FROM THE CHAIRPERSON OF LPCF

I'm raising **free** donations for LPCF and I wondered if you would like to join me and our other donators? We also raise an extra £1 for inviting you. Here's a message from the Easyfundraising team (see right)...

Thank you in anticipation that you will hopefully be taking us up on this invitation. Remember it costs you nothing!

With best wishes,
Thérèse

Here's your invitation link:

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/invite/15XTZI/>

How it works is really simple. With easyfundraising you'll be able to raise free donations when you shop online, without it costing a single penny extra.

If you're buying something, just remember to visit the retailer (such as Amazon, John Lewis, M&S) via [easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk). Once you've ordered, the retailer makes a donation to your chosen good cause. It's a lovely way to give something back for free!

Easyfundraising have already raised over £7million for good causes and Lincolnshire Parent Carer Forum have really benefited from these free donations.

Please join us in raising **free** donations with easyfundraising.

Here's your invitation link:

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/invite/15XTZI/>

Kindest regards,
The easyfundraising team

Carers' Rights' Day



On 28th November we held a free information event for parents and carers to celebrate Carers' Rights Day. The event was held in Coningsby Community Hall and was well attended by over 100 parents and professionals. 30 organisations attended providing information about their services and support. Attendees included:-

Action for children, Buckles solicitors, Core Assets, Healthwatch, IASS, Linkage Community Trust, The Carers Team, The Thomas Centre, Transitions Quality Development Officer, Independent Travel Trainers,



Circles of support, Senad Group, Family Fund, Esco Team, Carers Connect, Lincoln Deaf Children's Society, Lincolnshire County Council Send stand, Citizens Advice Bureau, Penderels Trust, LCYCP, Sense Louth, Promoting Employment Team, Glass house Farm



Care Centre, Dedicated Transitions Worker, Team around the Child, Sensory Education and Support Service, Tourette's Support Group. **Many thanks to you all for your support.**

We will be providing a separate report with feedback from the day but a few highlights are as follows: We asked, **What did you find the most valuable out of this event?**

One parent told us: **All good. Many thanks to all who came and all the help/advice and support which is there.** Another parent told us: The wealth of specific knowledge is

wonderful. All of the agencies I have spo-

ken to today have been uplifting & helpful; two very important qualities. Thank you.



Carol with her wonderful cakes



The aftermath!

October's Lucky

Winners...

£50 - M Agger

£10 - M Davies

£5 - E Cross

November's Lucky

Winners...

£50 - R Rollinson

£10 - H Pym

£5 - J Sclanders

LOTTERY CLUB NEWS

The odds are in your favour...this is a small lottery club and you have a high chance of winning. You don't have to be a forum member to join the lottery either. This is open to everyone that wants to help raise funds for our charity supporting families with children with SEN and disabilities.

The best news is, once we have more members, the prize money will go up!!! We would love your help to spread the news and attract more lottery club members.

If you'd like to join or buy an extra number, call 07593 553 609 or e-mail carol.lotteryclub@gosberton.plus.com

You can join via our website too!

50:50 Club

We now have £150 in our pot. We will be drawing the winning envelope on Thursday 11th December at our Bourne coffee morning. If you would like to be in with a chance of winning half of the pot please see our coffee morning hosts SOON!



As it's Christmas soon, we are giving you the chance to purchase three months' lottery subscription for £13. If you would like to do this for a Christmas present please contact us as soon as possible and we will organise it for you.



Publicity Campaign - We need your help!

If you know of any schools who are not aware of our forum, could you please contact us and we will send them our information. We are in the process of circulating our information to all schools in the hope that they will link parents into our coffee mornings and events. With all the changes surrounding SEN legislation we are trying to keep everyone informed to enable them to participate in improving services for everyone. Thanking you in advance.

Carol's Cookery Corner

This is an easy pudding to make instead of the usual trifle on Christmas Day. It takes just a few minutes to make and the children can help too (as well as licking the bowl out afterwards).

Banoffee Pie.

- 1 shop bought pastry case,
- 1 tin caramel condensed milk,
- 3 Bananas,
- 1/2 pint double cream. Whipped.
- Chocolate flake (or grated chocolate) for decoration.

Method:

Put sliced bananas into pastry case, cover with condensed milk, then spread on the whipped double cream, sprinkle chocolate on top.

I often make it, and believe me, it doesn't last very long!

Thank you Carol for all your lovely recipes over the last year and your sumptuous homemade baking enjoyed by everyone at our events. YUM!!



Our Contact Details:

To find out more about our coffee mornings or other events and activities, please use the email address or phone number below. If you phone please leave a message and we will return your call.

Website: www.lincspcf.org.uk

Tel: 0845 33 11 310

Email: admin@lincspcf.org.uk

Address: LPCF, PO Box 1183, Spalding, PE11 9EE

To subscribe to the Lottery Club, Tel : 07593 553 609 or E-mail: carol.lotteryclub@gosberton.plus.com