

**Staffordshire Parent Partnership Service**

# **Early Years Forum Information for parents**



**☎ Parent Partnership Helpline 01785 356921**

The Early Years Forum exists to try to make sure that children's educational needs are identified as soon as possible and to ensure the best possible outcome for each child.

Some children need extra support before they start school. Parents and health professionals such as health visitors and doctors are often the first to notice if a child may need extra support.

The Early Years Forum has been set up to help identify these children, recommend appropriate support for them and monitor their progress, in partnership with parents and other agencies.



## What is the Early Years Forum?

The Early Years Forum is made up of a group of people who represent services that may help your child. The Early Years Forum holds regular monthly meetings.

The people at the forum may not personally know your child, but will have reports and information from their colleagues who do and from you as parents. The forum will make suggestions to ensure that each child has the best possible start to education.



## Why are children referred to the Forum?

Children will be referred to the forum if:

- their progress is causing concern in one or more areas of development
- they may need extra support or assessment before starting school

## How is your child referred?

Children may be referred by any of the professionals who may be working with them. They will talk to you about the referral answering any questions you have. They will ask your permission for the referral to be made and for information about your child to be shared by all the people at the meeting.

You may also refer your child if you are worried about their progress. Contact details will be found at the end of this leaflet.

## What happens next?

As much information as possible will be gathered on your child. Parents and all the professionals working with them will be asked for a report.

It is very important that you express your views and share any information you have about your child.

If you would like help with expressing your views you can contact the Parent Partnership Service on 01785 356921 who will help you do this, or you can talk to any of the people who work with your child.

All the information on your child will then be discussed at the next Early Years Forum meeting (usually within one month). They will consider your child's needs and the help currently provided, based on all the information they have.

One of the members of the forum will be appointed as a Keyworker for each child and will be responsible for liaising with you to let you know the forum's recommendations. This person will usually be someone already known to you who will contact you as soon as possible (usually within a week of the meeting) to discuss the suggestions made. They will explain what is being suggested, talk to you about the recommendations and take your comments back to the forum.

## Outcomes

The forum will make one of several possible decisions/recommendations.

- Not enough information available. The assessment officer will be asked to request more information and your child will be discussed again at a future meeting.
- Current provision is appropriate, in which case a keyworker will be allocated and a date set for review.
- Current provision is not meeting your child's needs. If it is felt that a child needs more help, then additional support or further assessment will be suggested. Again a keyworker will be allocated who will contact you to discuss this. A date for review will also be set.
- Your child meets the criteria for statutory assessment. Your keyworker will talk to you about this and help you to decide if you want to agree to statutory assessment, and help you to express your views. You may also wish to contact the Parent Partnership Service on 01785 356921 for help.
- Your child is due to start school. Arrangements for transition into school will be set up.

## Reviews

Once your child has been discussed at the forum meeting, their progress will be reviewed regularly, usually within 6 months. You will be told the proposed date of the next review.

You will be contacted by your keyworker who will ask you for information on your child's progress and report this to the forum at the review. They will also advise you about the outcome of each discussion at the Early Years Forum that concerns your child.

If progress is not adequate, parents state that they are not happy with the current arrangements or when your child is within six months of school entry, their name will be placed on the agenda for discussion at the next Early Years Forum meeting.



## Membership of the forum may include:

Speech and Language Therapists

Educational Psychologists

Early Years Specialists

Assessment Team

Occupational Therapists

Physiotherapists

Paediatrician

Special Needs Health Visitors

Early Years District SENCOs

Portage workers

If you have concerns about the Early Years Forum, Julia Anderson, Specialist Senior Educational Psychologist, would be happy to discuss them with you. You can contact her on 01543 512088 or via email to: [julia.anderson@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:julia.anderson@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Contact the Early Years Forum for your district through the District Inclusion Support Teams.

Their addresses are:

Lichfield & Cannock District	The Old Library Bird Street Lichfield WS13 6PN Tel: 01543 512050
Burton & Tamworth District	Resource and Development Centre Grange Street Burton-on-Trent DE14 2ER Tel: 01283 239755
Newcastle & Moorlands District	Seabridge Centre Ash Way Seabridge Lane Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 3UB Tel: 01782 297524
Stafford & South Staffs	Flash Ley Centre Stafford ST17 9DR Tel: 01785 356949

## Leaflets produced by Staffordshire Parent Partnership Service include:

- Information for parents/carers who have children with special educational needs - General
- Information for parents/carers who have children with special educational needs - Early Years
- Information for parents/carers who have children with special educational needs - School Exclusion

### Information Packs:

- Supporting your child's educational needs - General
- Supporting your child's educational needs - Statutory Assessment
- Supporting your child's educational needs - Early Years

### General Leaflets:

- Dyslexia - A guide for parents
- Developmental Coordination Disorder or Dyspraxia - A guide for parents
- Transition Review- Year 9 onwards

Copies of these can be obtained from:

Staffordshire Parent Partnership Service  
13 Lichfield Road  
Stafford  
ST17 4JX

Telephone: 01785 356921 (Minicom service available)

**Fax:** 01785 356921

**E-mail:** [spps@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:spps@staffordshire.gov.uk)

**Website:** [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/spps](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/spps)





working together for your child

Staffordshire Parent Partnership is funded by Staffordshire County Council. It operates independently as a confidential service for parents and carers of children with special educational needs.

It you, or someone you know, would like a copy of this booklet in large print, Braille, on audio-tape or in languages other than English, please contact the Parent Partnership Service on 01785 356921.

Email: [spps@staffordshire.gov.uk](mailto:spps@staffordshire.gov.uk)

Website: [www.staffordshire.gov.uk/spps](http://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/spps)

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