



# NEWSLETTER

Issue 005

‘Empowering Parents and Influencing Services’

May 2016

## 2016 PARENT CARER CONFERENCE



This year we held our annual conference at Ripple Centre, Barking. We also helped to launch the borough’s SEND Strategy, which parents can find under the Local Offer on the council’s website. Two young men, Luke Brook and Wesley Scott spoke about their experiences in education and/or employment which parents found useful to know. Debbie Robinson spoke about a model of supported internship called ‘Project Search’ which is a programme of study. It’s an opportunity for young people with a learning disability and/or autism to develop existing skills and learn new skills in a work setting.

It’s an opportunity to try different jobs and have varied work experiences. The aim is to get a paid job at the end of the programme. If you would like to know more about Project Search: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0HU3jM0ppJE>

## EHC Workshops at Schools in B&D



The Local Authority has funded Marcella Cooper, an experienced parent carer, to do workshops to support parents/carers with Section A and Section E (Outcomes) of the new Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan. So far Marcella has attended: Robert Clack, Dagenham Park, Jo Richardson, Trinity, The Acorns/Ripple Primary, and Riverside. She has also delivered to parents/carers a Saturday workshop at the Heathway Centre. She will soon be at: Dorothy Barley, Southwood, St. Peters and Valance. Over 250+ parents/carers have been notified of these workshops in schools.

# FORUM NEWS

**GOOD NEWS:** Provided the forum continues to meet the criteria, we will be funded again by the Department for Education for 2016/17-2017/2018 to participate and engage with public bodies, such as schools, the local authority and health. There are 152 local parent/carer forums in England and Wales and they are regarded 'nationally' as the voice of parent/carers of children/young people with additional needs 0-25. We welcome all parents, and if you would like to become a member and you wish to influence services text us on **07936851199** or email: [justsaybdforum@gmail.com](mailto:justsaybdforum@gmail.com)

## Parent/Carer Surveys

In 2015/16 we surveyed parents/carers on 'Additional Needs' services. On **Short Breaks/Direct Payments**, some parents were confused about short breaks and direct payments, many not realising direct payments were for 'respite' to have a 'break' from caring. As a result the forum delivered workshops and parents/carers who attended said they now had a better understanding of the law and guidance around short breaks and direct payments. We will notify the local authority to ensure that clearer information is given to parents/carers on how to use their 'direct payments'. On **health services**, parents said they had experienced long waiting times for referrals for dentists, GPs or therapies. Given the problems in accessing health services, parents have expressed the need for more Speech & Language Therapists, Occupational Therapists, and Educational Psychologists. We will be informing the CCG of parents' concerns.

We also evaluated our **2016 Conference**. All parents were happy they had attended. Some said it was the best conference ever as it left them feeling empowered.

### Dates for your *diary*:

- ❖ Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> May 2016 – Forum Meeting at the Vibe Youth Centre, Becontree Avenue (off School Way) Dagenham, RM8 2UT
- ❖ Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> July 2016 – Forum Meeting at the Vibe
- ❖ **ANNUAL CONFERENCE on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017** for parents of child/young person 0-25 with additional needs at Ripple Centre, Ripple Road, in Barking. **Viv Cooper** from the Challenging Behaviour Foundation will be sharing her experiences, and how she came to set up the Foundation. We will also have an update on SEND from local authority officers and from the CCG on therapies.