And that means that the Easter holidays are on the way, along with the latest edition of the DISCplus newsletter.

In this issue you can read about a day in the life of a Children’s Occupational Therapist, find out about the Child Brain Injury Trust’s new Family Support Service and we have a special feature on the North Devon Sibling Club. This is in addition to the usual round-up of useful information and details of groups and events in our three localities: Eastern, Southern and Northern.

You are also given the chance to give your thoughts on the DISCplus newsletter, the Single Point of Access (SPA) and the Integrated Children’s Services website. A short survey is enclosed and can be returned by freepost. Or if you’d prefer to complete it online you can go to http://surveys.virgin care.co.uk/s/TZL54 It only takes a couple of minutes to complete and your feedback will help shape the way these services are developed.

We hope you enjoy this edition and have a wonderful Spring.

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Providing Feedback

Here at Virgin Care we are passionate about our customers feeling the difference and believe in continued improvement and development. We therefore like to hear about the experiences of our customers whilst they use our services. We use the NHS England Family and Friends Test which are a simple few questions either in paper format, web based via computer or ipad kiosks in hub buildings or text message. The questions ask whether you would recommend our services to family and friends should they need a similar service and why, that’s it, and your answers are completely confidential, you will not be asked for your name.

What happens with the feedback?

Teams use this information to improve and shape our services to better fit the needs of the customers and support them in feeling the difference in the care they receive.

If you would like to provide feedback for any of the services you have received through Virgin Care, please contact jodie.down@virgincare.co.uk

Get in touch with your local DISCplus information co-ordinator if you:

- need general information on services for children with special needs
- need support to access services
- need us to print out web information for you

If you live in Exeter, Mid or East Devon contact

**t:** 0345 1551 013
**e:** discplus@virgincare.co.uk

If you live in Teignbridge, South Hams or West Devon contact Kristine Taylor

**t:** 01803 763505
**e:** kristine.taylor@virgincare.co.uk

If you live in Torridge or North Devon contact Amanda Smithson

**t:** 01271 384074
**e:** amanda.smithson@virgincare.co.uk

If you’re not sure which co-ordinator you should speak to call MyDevon on 0345 1551 013

The information in this newsletter is for general information purposes only and is provided by various organisations. Whilst we endeavour to keep the information up to date and correct, we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability or availability with respect to the information, products, services or otherwise included in this publication for any purpose. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.
Tactile Tales

Putting together a story you can touch and explore
By Sarah Miller and Carol Brookes, ROVIC Assistants

Any story can be transformed into a sensory learning journey for your child. We have chosen ‘The Rainbow Fish’ (a great story about sharing). Carol had the book and as you can see below, made the large and small fish, purchasing the octopus and starfish. A tactile story can help children with visual impairment, make meaningful links between words and objects.

With hearing impairment. If you have not received a pack and would like one, they are available by emailing kate.mackenzie@librariessunlimited.org.uk

All new born babies are given ‘Bookstart packs’ to help parents share stories, rhymes and songs. They also produce ‘Booktouch’ for babies and toddlers with visual impairment. ‘Bookshine’ is available for babies and toddlers with hearing impairment.

Devon Libraries www.devon.gov.uk/libraries offer a number of resources. Fact sheet 24 has a list of resources for children with little or no sight. Fact sheet 26 lists resources for children who are deaf or have a hearing impairment.

If you have not received a pack and would like to access our service, please get in touch at the Single Point of Access (SPA) Integrated Children’s Services Devon on 0330 024 5321, email VCL.DeonSpa@nhs.net or visit devon.integratedchildrensservices.co.uk

The Local Offer Reference Group

Devon is committed to making sure that children, young people and families get a say in their Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) provision. The Local Offer Reference Group, or LORG, is a new group that had its first meeting back in November 2016. We plan to meet every half term. We meet so we can contribute to the review and development of the local offer for SEND.

We are working hard to represent the perspectives of as many parent carers, children and young people as we can. We work closely with Devon Parent Carers’ Voice (DPCV) and local support groups to try to achieve this. The LORG was created by and for parent-carers. Reps attend meetings, alongside DPCV, to make sure we can be involved in shaping local SEND provision. We are also helping children and young people with SEND to have more of a voice at a strategic level.

If you want to find out more about the Local Offer Reference Group, contact 01392 383080, email sendlocaloffer@devon.gov.uk or visit the Local Offer website: new.devon.gov.uk/send
DIAS Springs into Action!

What does good information about special educational needs and disability look like?

It’s a big question, but it turns out that you had many of the answers! In February, we held our first Open Space event to talk about the information that parents/carers need to support their child or young person to achieve their full potential. Everyone voted to set the priorities for what happens next and a small working party attended our follow-up event to help us to move towards creating more relevant, useful information resources for you.

Capturing a young person’s view... This is Me

At DIAS, we are currently developing a series of resources, tailored to a range of needs and situations, which will help young people to record their views when decisions are being made about them. Our first ‘This is Me’ resource is for young people who are undergoing statutory EHC assessment and who may need some support to convey their thoughts and feelings. It has been developed in consultation with young people themselves and will also be sent out by the SEN 0-25 Team as part of the statutory process.

Does your child have medical needs?

Some children have medical needs that affect their ability to manage during the school day and this can sometimes have an impact on their opportunities to learn and reach their full potential. There can also be social and emotional difficulties if a child feels self-conscious about his/her condition, if they are bullied because of it or if they have to miss a lot of school to attend appointments.

In some cases, a school nurse or community nurse might write an Individual Healthcare Plan (IHP) for a child. This sets out their medical needs and how they should be managed, plus gives details about the emergency protocol for the school to follow if required. IHPs can help to ensure that schools effectively support pupils with medical conditions and they provide clarity about what needs to be done, when and by whom. Call us for more information.

Look on our web site for our recently revised leaflets:

- A guide to Devon Information, Advice & Support Service
- Excluded or at Risk of Exclusion from School?
- Education Support, Resources & Funding for Children with Additional Needs
Did you join us at Buckfast or Barnstaple last November?

At each event we wanted parents to get involved, to get talking, to discuss and share experiences and perspectives. We had senior professionals attending, letting us know what had happened to the ‘burning issues’ we’d raised back in June. Sitting around the tables, parents and professionals, had face to face honest and frank discussions to help shape provision for our children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

There was a lot of positive feedback, parents are feeling their voices are being heard. The other important part of each event was about parents having the right information at hand, when you need it, in the format you need it. It is vital to have accessible, clear, honest information available.

And our morning session, led by Sarah Smith from DIAS, encouraged parents to share their experiences and expertise, to begin building that vital, fit for purpose resource. Do you think these are important to you too?

The year ahead

We are planning to run a number of small events over the next year. These will hopefully take place around the county so that more parents feel they are close enough to attend.

We want parents to feel empowered and we are planning, with DIAS, to take the morning session working on how we can make the best of meetings we have with professionals.

The day will also include further opportunity to share your hopes and expectations and ‘burning issues’.

In July we will have our combined Conversation Event and Annual General Meeting. This will take place at Buckfast Abbey and we will let you know what we have planned later.

Don’t miss out!!!

It is so important that as many parents as possible join us to have their voice heard and we would so appreciate knowing from you how we can encourage more to come along. The events are free; travel expenses are reimbursed; reasonable child care costs will also be reimbursed. We will try our best to make the day useful and valuable for you and make you feel comfortable and welcomed!

Don’t miss out! shortly we will be setting dates for these events. Sign up for email bulletins and text alerts via our website [www.devonparentcarersvoice.org/join/235-sign-up-now](http://www.devonparentcarersvoice.org/join/235-sign-up-now)

If you would like to respond to anything in this article there are several ways you can do this.

Contact us on 07794 233249 Monday-Wednesday between 10am and 12pm or email: office@dpcv.org.uk

You can also message us directly via our social media pages:


[@DPCVoice](http://www.facebook.com/DevonParentCarersVoice)

and like/follow our pages for up to date news, information and events in your area.
A day in the life of a children’s OT

There is no such thing as a typical day for a children’s occupational therapist, it is a wide and varied role with lots of layers. We use the term ‘Occupation’ to refer the activities meaningful to children, it probably won’t surprise you to know that the main occupation of children is play, but other occupations include going to school, family time, clubs and hobbies.

The OT’s main aim is to support children to be as independent as possible and maximise their potential in meaningful occupations. Their work spans from minor to major adaptations, self-care/dressing, to fine/gross motor and sensory assessments. They use a holistic approach, often seeing children in the various environments they access – including schools, clubs and respite services. They also run clinics, such as Kids Skills and Sensory clinics. Skill improvement groups like handwriting groups and workshops such as sensory processing workshop for parents.

The occupational therapy team are an innovative service which is constantly developing – watch this space for future developments...

An example day in the life of an OT working with integrated children’s services.

The day starts with a joint visit to a child’s home with the grants officer from the local authority, and an architect, to make plans to adapt the property to enable a child with physical disabilities to be able to get in and out of the house, to be able to get to their bedroom, bathroom, living space and garden. Whilst there the OT also reviews the equipment used to help move the child, ensuring the slings still fit. The OT may well also check the bathing equipment to ensure it offers the right amount of support to the child, whilst allowing them to play and enjoy bath time.

Then it’s onto school to observe a child that has previously been seen in clinic. Spending time with his teacher and LSA to identify ways of supporting him to engage in learning and develop his handwriting skills.

It’s then back to the office to complete notes and reports (paperwork is sadly a very large part of the job!).

After lunch it’s a sensory clinic. The child we see is struggling to dress themselves and manage everyday tasks due to an aversion to handling certain textures or tolerating certain situations. The parents and school will have already attended a workshop to support them to understand sensory processing difficulties and how we can help their child. The clinic then lets us work on specific practical skills the child is struggling with.

Completed report/notes before heading home.
USEFUL INFORMATION ROUND-UP

Cerebra

Cerebra’s Problem-Solving Toolkit aims to support disabled people and carers, as well as their families and advisers, who are encountering difficulties with the statutory agencies in relation to the provision of health, social care and education support services. This toolkit aims to unpick these problems and to develop effective strategies for resolving them.

To help parents and carers, as well as professionals, get the most out of the toolkit Cerebra have introduced workshops to assist in using the information and resources in the toolkit and to assist in trying to access the services that their children need.

If you are interested in having a free workshop for your forum, syndrome support group, charity or advice service, then please contact Beverley Hitchcock on beverleyh@cerebra.org.uk

You can download the Problem-Solving Toolkit here http://w3.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-informationguides-for-parents/problem-solving-toolkit/

The Joshua Wilson Brain Tumour Charity

The Joshua Wilson Brain Tumour Charity was founded to help families living with childhood brain tumours and post-operative complications. It is able to provide grants to families living in England and Wales for:

- Hospital expenses and travel
- Specialist equipment and house adaptations
- Special treats such as holidays and respite
- Financial hardship

The charity also supports hospitals by funding Entertainment packs and the Changing Places Campaign. Go to: www.joshwilson.org.uk for more details.

Positive Behaviour Support – Challenging Behaviour Foundation

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation have launched 5 Positive Behaviour Resources for family carers which have been created in collaboration with the PBS Academy. PBS is an effective and ethical way of supporting people with learning disabilities who are at risk of developing challenging behaviours. An essential part of PBS is understanding the causes of a person’s behaviour. PBS also involves families, professionals, schools and services working together in order to create a consistent approach across every setting.

The new PBS Family Carer resources pack is available to download, free, from the Paving the Way website: www.pavingtheway.works

B-eat – Beating eating disorders

Information on anorexia, bulimia, binge-eating disorders, EDNOS and other kinds of eating disorders.

To find out more go to: www.b-eat.co.uk/about-eating-disorders

Helpline 0345 634 1414
Youthline 0345 634 7650
Sepsis

Many of us aren’t aware of what sepsis is, or what we should be looking out for. Catching sepsis early could be life-saving, so it’s important to know the symptoms, and when to seek urgent medical help. These are the facts you need to know.

What’s sepsis?
Sepsis is a rare, but serious, complication of an infection or injury. It can be fatal. If your child’s unwell with a bug or infection, is rapidly getting worse and you’re worried that the illness seems different from anything they’ve had before, it could be sepsis. 

Spotting the signs of sepsis
If you notice any of the following symptoms of sepsis, it’s essential to get medical help immediately.

- Looks mottled, bluish or pale
- Is very lethargic or difficult to wake
- Feels abnormally cold to touch
- Is breathing very fast
- Has a fit or convulsion

Acting quickly could save their life, so take them to A&E or call 999. For more information go to: www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Blood-poisoning/Pages/Introduction.aspx

AuKids magazine
This is a practical, friendly magazine for parents of children with autism. An annual subscription costs £16 and they are happy to announce that AuKids is offering DISCplus newsletter readers a 10% discount. To take advantage of the discount, available until the end of April, autism awareness month, simply go to www.aukids.co.uk and type in DISC17 as the promotional discount code. Happy reading!

Equal opportunities for people who use British Sign Language

The government is breaking down barriers to ensure that people who use British Sign Language gain the skills they need. For the first time, British Sign Language (BSL) will be accepted as an alternative qualification to functional skills in English for apprentices where BSL is their first language.

Functional skills are qualifications that help people gain the essential, practical skills in Maths and English they need and enable them to be confident in life and work. This change will mean that apprentices will be able to take BSL as an alternative to functional skills in English – removing the unnecessary barrier that has been preventing them from getting on. BSL isn’t simply English with hand signs, it is a different language with its own grammar and sentence construction. It is also totally different to other sign languages such as American Sign Language or Japanese Sign Language. To find out more go to: http://ow.ly/LHrt30873b3

Learn My Way

Learn how to use the internet, free courses on using a computer, browsing the web, sending an email and finding work online. Learn My Way have added new courses, they are pleased to announce that they have joined forces with TalkTalk to launch a new Internet Safety course – ‘Staying Safe in Your Digital World’ for more details about Learn My Way and the courses they offer go to: www.learnmyway.com/subjects/online-safety
Newlife Nurses are the gateway to information, grants and care. They man a national Helpline which supports and informs families, whether they have just been told of their child’s disability or need help accessing local services.

The Newlife Nurse Helpline is free and confidential and can be reached in the following ways:

- Calling the free Nurse Helpline phone number 0800 902 0095 (free from UK landlines) Monday to Friday 9.30am-5.00pm (Wed 9.30am to 7pm) – answer phone facility outside normal hours
- Using the Live Nurse Chat Service – click on the icon top right. If icon is grey, the service is offline, but you can leave a message.
- Sending an email directly from their website or via nurses@newlifecharity.co.uk

Mencap’s New FamilyHub

Judy Fryd founded Mencap 70 years ago. Judy reached out to other parents back in 1946 and in honour of her Mencap have launched FamilyHub, a new online community for parents and family carers of people with a learning disability. It’s a place for people to reach out for help, and offer advice in return.

If you are a parent or family carer of someone with a learning disability, why not join? Share your story, start a discussion, help someone out. You’ll find a host of people facing the same triumphs and challenges as you.

To find out more go to: www.mencap.org.uk/familyhub

Tourettes Action launches new Helpdesk service

Tourettes Action are very excited to offer this brand new service which allows one of their trained Helpdesk volunteers to use live messaging to answer your queries and to send information instantly.

To access this service click the orange ‘Chat with us’ box in the bottom right hand corner of the Tourettes Action homepage screen www.tourettes-action.org.uk

If you prefer, you can still call the Helpdesk on 0300 777 8427 or send an email.

Breaking the Barrier 2017

Events for Summer 2017 book early to avoid disappointment.

- Surfing at Polzeath: Saturday 3rd June
- Surfing at Saunton: Saturday 1st July
- Cycling at Torbay Velodrome: Saturday 29 July
- Trampolining at Bodmin Ibounce: Saturday 5th August
- Surfing at Bigbury: Sunday 3rd September.

Please note the event on Bigbury Beach 3rd of September will celebrate 10 years of Breaking the Barrier; triathlon certificates will be presented to young people participating in all three sports activities (cycling – trampolining – surfing) at this event. Breaking the Barrier would like to have participative music and fun for all the family on the beach. To find out more contact: Sarah-Jane Lowson Tel: 01803 861 060

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Cerebra – Teenage sleep

A local family who were having sleep issues with their son who has ADHD. The fifteen year old wasn’t falling asleep until 5am most days and was missing a lot of school.

The therapist recommended a technique called Chronotherapy which involves altering bedtimes each night. Instead of moving the bedtime backwards gradually as you would with young children, which takes a long time to do and isn’t as successful in older children, you move it forwards by a few hours each day.

Here is an example of how the times can be moved:

- **1st night**: sleep at 4am, wake at 12 midday
- **2nd night**: sleep at 7am, wake at 3pm
- **3rd night**: sleep at 10am, wake at 6pm
- **4th night**: sleep at 1pm, wake at 9pm
- **5th night**: sleep at 4pm, wake at 12pm
- **6th night**: sleep at 7pm, wake at 3am
- **7th night**: sleep at 10pm, wake at 6am

The therapist was reluctant to suggest this technique initially because of the need to monitor the times closely and consistently. However, the family were willing to try anything that could have a positive effect on their son, who had exams coming up.

She followed up with the family a couple of weeks later and was delighted to hear that the technique had been successful and the teenager had been sleeping from 10pm-6am everyday for a week and had not missed school for a whole week, which was the first time in a long time.

The sleep service can offer information/advice regarding settling issues, night waking, difficulties sleeping alone and early rising. Cerebra’s services are free to parents.

For more information email: sleep@cerebra.org.uk or complete our online enquiry form at www.cerebra.org.uk/help-and-information/sleep-advice

NHS Help with costs

Check with the NHS Trust whether they have any parking concession schemes and if so, how you apply for them. Some people on a low income or receipt of certain benefits may be able to claim hospital travel costs under the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme.

Some hospitals also have schemes for carers. Your local Patient Liaison Service (PALS) should be able to advise you further. You can use the http://ow.ly/8ffU309ffPk NHS Choices PALS Search to find your local office or the hospital website should list the number. See http://ow.ly/krOw309fhal Help with the cost of travel to Hospital information and http://ow.ly/WAhA309fh6 Help with Health Costs information. Click on the purple links for more details.
Spring Daffodil Bunting

Draw out some daffodil ‘star’ shapes onto some yellow card, either freehand or by using a template.

Ask an adult to help you cut out the centre part of some egg boxes to make the trumpets for the daffodils and paint them orange inside and out. Once the trumpets are dry, glue one into the centre of each daffodil star using craft glue and leave the daffodils flat until the glue dries.

Attach some wool, string or ribbon on to the back of each daffodil using sticky tape and then you can hang up your daffodil bunting to decorate your home.

See if you can unscramble the Springtime words

TEEARS _______________________ PRSNDOWO _______________________
GEG __________________________ SRPMIOER _______________________
BLMA _________________________ NYNUB _________________________
FFDDIAOL ____________________ KIHCC _________________________

We’d love to hear from you…If you have a story, picture or anything you’d like to share with other readers get in touch and there could be a reward for you! Drop us an email at: discplus@virgincare.co.uk

Unscramble the Springtime words – Easter, Snowdrop, Egg, Primrose, Lamb, Bunny, Daffodil, Chick
North Devon Siblings Club

Siblings Club is a group for young people growing up with a sibling(s) with additional needs, who attend Pathfield School or a school in North Devon. The group is open for children aged between 5 and 16.

North Devon Siblings Club has been running since September 2011. It gives members the opportunity to meet and make friends with others in similar situations. The group meets once a month (normally the second Saturday), 10am-2pm at Pathfield School, Barnstaple.

The club is specifically designed for young people who have a sibling with additional needs. They understand that sometimes home life can be difficult. The staff work alongside the members to offer help, whether it is just ‘an ear’ to talk to or ways to cope with different emotions.

Staff find that members will talk to each other and find out that they have, in the past, all been through the same problems and give ideas on what to do.

Apart from trying to have as much fun as possible, whether it is a trip to the cinema or a day spent at Watermouth Castle or Woodlands, the club is based on the framework from 'Sibs', the only UK charity representing the needs of siblings of disabled people.

FRAME describes the aims and outcomes for the Siblings Club:

F – Fun; siblings make friends and enjoy themselves.
R – Relieve Isolation; siblings meet other siblings facing similar situations.
A – Acknowledge Feelings; siblings discuss and value the unique feelings and experiences of being a sibling.
M – Model Coping Strategies; siblings learn how to manage difficult situations and identify support networks.
E – Enhance Knowledge; siblings learn more about their brothers or sisters disability.

One of the residential to Calvert Trust, Exmoor

The members take part in various activities from abseiling, kayaking to zip wire! Alongside the instructors members have to help each other.

Calvert Trust was amazing! Lots of different activities and I had loads of fun.

A weekend away without my sister. I made new friends.
Calvert Trust run weekends designed specifically for young people with siblings with additional needs.

If you would like further information or may know someone who would like to attend North Devon Siblings Club, please call Charlotte at Pathfield School on 01271 342423 or email at cthomas@pathfield.devon.sch.uk

For additional information about the UK charity Sibs visit www.sibs.org.uk
For more information on Relax Kids go to www.relaxkids.com
Independent Travel Training

This is a free scheme for students who are eligible for support from Devon County Council for their transport to school or college.

The purpose of the scheme is to help young people throughout Devon learn how to develop the skills required for safe, independent travel. The five accredited Travel Trainers work with students from mainstream and special schools, pupil referral units and colleges of further education.

The Travel Training team now offer a ‘Guide to Travel Training’. This is actually a structured workbook for parents/carers to use in a number of ways. It facilitates useful additional support from home when the team are training a student (e.g. to explain what they are doing, to provide scenarios for parents/carers to talk through or role play about things like ‘staying safe’).

If you would like to make a referral to engage in this scheme contact:
Team Co-ordinator, Spencer Nasey, Barnstaple Civic Centre, Barnstaple, Devon EX31 1ED. Email: spencer.nasey@devon.gov.uk or Tel: 01271 388 492 (office) Tel: 07816 856 314 (mobile)

Pinpoint is a searchable database of services across Devon. This replaces the Devon Community Directory. Pinpoint currently contains 7000 checked records on regulated (CQC registered) and non-regulated providers, plus a wide range of other organisations and providers throughout Devon. There is a blue ‘Feedback’ tab on the right hand side of the new website and a ‘Can’t find it?’ button at the bottom.

Service categories include: Older Adults, Working Age Adults, Young People, Parents and Families and Education, Work and Leisure.

Under the banner of Parents and Families you can find a range of service categories such as: Child Health and Children’s Centres, Family Support Groups, Additional Needs Childcare and Families with Long Term Illnesses or in Grief.

You can search Pinpoint via keyword, a drop down service category list or by entering a town or postcode. There is a ‘How to Guide’ for guidance on searching or how to use specific features.

A considerable amount of work has been undertaken to get to this point, and there is more work to do, so please send your feedback via the blue ‘Feedback’ tab at www.pinpointdevon.co.uk

Without your views and suggestions, good or bad, Devon County Council cannot improve the service.
Every 30 minutes, a child or young person in the UK will acquire a brain injury. Bones can mend and scars can heal but a brain injury stays with you for life and impacts on everything you think, feel and do. The Child Brain Injury Trust provides support for families following childhood acquired brain injury.

The Child Brain Injury Trust have recently expanded their service throughout the South West and now have a Child and Family Support Coordinator covering Devon and Cornwall. The Child and Family Support Coordinators work in hospitals, home, school and the community to provide children, young people, their families and the professionals working with them with the support that they need in order to live their lives to the full potential.

Referrals can be made via the dedicated Helpline: 0303 303 2248 or email helpline@cbituk.org

For more information please visit www.childbraininjurytrust.org.uk

**New Free ‘Carer Support’ Training Course**

Devon Carers is now able to offer a new course to support carers, which focuses on ‘self-management’. This course is to help carers to take control of their own caring situation and lead a fuller life. Carers are encouraged to attend all three sessions but do not have to. Each session lasts for three hours and covers these subjects:

1. Introduction to self-care in a caring role
2. What we say and what we mean
3. Thoughts, feelings and behaviours

**Up coming courses:**

- Dewdney Unit, Exmouth Hospital, Thursdays 6, 13 and 20 April
- Durrant House Hotel, Bideford, Tuesdays 2, 9 and 16 May
- Ockment Centre, Okehampton, Fridays 5, 12 and 19 May
- Tavyside Health Centre, Tavistock, Tuesdays 6, 13 and 20 June
- Exeter Community Centre, Mondays 3, 10 and 17 July

All sessions run 2:00pm-5:00pm.

The first step to accessing a training course is to have a Carers Assessment. Please ring and ask to speak to the training team if you would like to find out more and they will be able to talk you through the details. Tel 03456 434 435.
Exeter, Mid & East Devon Children’s Hearing Services Working Group (CHSWG)

Who are they?
A group made up of health, education and social care professionals, volunteers and parents of deaf children who care about supporting deaf children and young people.

What do they do?
Work together to agreed ‘terms of reference’ to improve services for deaf and hearing impaired children and their families in this area.

When and where do they meet?
They meet in the Exeter area, the venue may vary. They meet four times a year for 3 hours, on a Thursday morning.

How can I be involved?
Your views and experiences as Parents and Young People are important to help improve services – you can:
- Talk to any professional working with your child to share your views.
- Join the South West Every Deaf Child Matters Facebook Group swedcm.weebly.com/facebook-group.html
- Join the CHSWG group as either a regular member or request to attend a meeting.
- View group meeting minutes on the CHIME website or ask to join the circulation list.

Contact either: Caroline Payne, Tel 01392 402223, e-mail: cpayne2@nhs.net or Sarah Collinson Text: 07715 205125.

Exeter iBounce!

Opening at Easter 2017, this attraction offers some exciting facilities including interlinked trampolines, dodgeball and a giant airbag. There will be regular parent and toddler sessions, fitness classes and specific times for those with additional needs.

There are plenty of discounted sessions throughout the week, why not go along for a bounce! For more details contact: www.i-bounce.co.uk/exeter.php

Autism Friendly Glamping in Devon

The owners of the Glamping site explain what they have to offer:

“Hi, we are Andrew and Dannie, together with our young family, we are setting up a new luxury glamping site, next to a working dairy farm, near the Blackdown Hills in Devon, which we’d love to share with you this summer. We hope to create a wonderful holiday environment for families with young children and those with autism like ours. We will have six cream bell tents and two large safari tents. Glamping is camping with glamour. It is a lot closer to self-catering under canvas than camping. With a sprinkle of luxury, real beds and cosy duvets, fire pits and bunting. We appreciate that autism is different for each individual and are happy to adapt and help where we can to enable your whole family to have a truly relaxing time.”

For more information or to make a booking please visit our website www.leafyfieldsglamping.com or email: leafyfieldsglamping@yahoo.com
The Hollow Lane Club supports children and young people with complex disabilities through a year round programme of clubs and activities that provide them with opportunities to socialise and engage in fun and recreational activities. Club sessions run at both Ellen Tinkham School in Exeter and at Bidwell Brook School in Dartington for children aged 4-19. As an Ofsted recognised ‘Outstanding’ provider they have been running specialised clubs for children with disabilities since 2001.

The annual 12-day summer club returns for 2017 for 3 days per week throughout August. The club is being run at both Ellen Tinkham and Bidwell Brook schools, with each site offering a programme of activities, trips and lots of fun throughout the summer holidays.

After summer club last year one family said: “The Hollow Lane Club provides our son with structure and activity over the holidays and he can try things with the club that he’s never done before in a safe environment. He really enjoys going”

Booking forms are available – see the summer club sections on the website www.hollowlane.org.uk or call Deb Ward on 01392 463823. Sessions cost £38 per day. The Hollow Lane Club has a flat rate charging system; all families pay the same.

Sessions can fill up quickly so get booking forms back as soon as possible.

“This club is making such a positive difference to family life. The activities that are provided for young people are quality activities with clear objectives. Each club day adds great quality of life experiences to the young people that attend.”

Parent of Hollow Lane Club member, 2016

SW Autism have moved from their Exwick venue to the old Steiner school in St Thomas. (This is a temporary base until the new build near the quay is completed later in the year.)

Whilst in the temporary venue they are able to offer a gated base with enclosed play park, art room, games room, activity room, meeting room and parents room.

At present they have 3 places available for children under 11 and their parent/carer on Tuesdays from 5-6.30pm. South West Autism provides services for families with children with an autistic spectrum disorder (firm diagnosis not needed). SW Autism offer established enabling, training and family support services which continue to be popular.

They are able to provide the following services:
• Training for professionals and parent/carers,
• Life and independence skills for young people
• Tutoring from a fully qualified teacher
• Enabling in the community
• Parent support
• Sibling support
• Support for children on a part time timetable
• Support for children who are excluded from school or at risk of exclusion

For more information contact Penny Dye southwestautism@gmail.com 07397959320
www.southwestautismsupport.com
Twitter @SWAutism
Hannah’s at Ivybridge launched its 3-5 years special needs nursery class in December 2016.

The Starfish class is based in the main school and offers early years learning opportunities as well as speech and language therapy for each child. The focus is on working with families so that each child is learning through play, sensory learning and having fun! Expressive and sensory arts and design, sensory play, soft play and outdoor play are used to help children understand the world, develop and communicate.

The nursery class can offer full or half day sessions. For further information please contact Hannah’s School on 01752 892461 Head Teacher Chris Freestone on chris.freestone@discoverhannahs.org or administrator, Audrey Peace on audrey.peace@discoverhannahs.org

Living Coasts is an aquarium and coastal zoo located on Torquay seafront. This Torbay attraction offers the following concessions and facilities when visiting the venue.
- Carers go free, disabled child/adult at reduced prices
- Disabled toilets
- Disabled parking
- Assistance dogs permitted
- A3 photocopied guide available on request
- Manual wheelchairs free to borrow
- The site is reasonably wheelchair/pushchair friendly

For more details go to: www.livingcoasts.org.uk

Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship Open Day and 5th Birthday!

Saturday 10th June 11am-3pm, Hannah’s at Seale Hayne, Newton Abbot, Devon, TQ12 6NQ.

Go along and meet the team and horses at Sirona and find out more about what they do. Sirona Therapeutic Horsemanship provides equine-assisted therapeutic and educational activities to disadvantaged young people and adults, such as Autistic Spectrum, mental health issues, ADHD, educational challenges and other support needs. They also offer Level 1 and 2 in Horse Care courses in partnership with Duchy College for students who require a small, tailored environment and have a 100% pass rate.

Refreshments available on the day, raffle, and activities such as horse shoe painting and a horse agility demonstration by some of our young people.

Entry by donation, for more information contact: info@sironacic.com tel: 07958 356114 www.sironacic.com
Tavistock Youth Café (TYCP)

This Tavistock based group is aimed at young people with additional needs aged 0-25. Slightly older age groups also attend and are welcome.

The café is open on Monday nights from 5:30pm-7:30pm. This relaxed group offers a social setting, trips out and plans are in place to start a swimming group.

If this is something you think you would enjoy, contact: 01822 841682 for more information.

Brighter Futures – Citizens Advice launches new initiative to combat fuel poverty in South Hams

Citizens Advice South Hams is launching a new project to alleviate the pressure of low income and high costs of living in the South Hams. Citizens Advice South Hams will be working in partnership with the Children’s Centres in Totnes, Dartmouth, Ivybridge and Kingsbridge.

The Children’s Centres will assist with running events and finding people who are eligible for assistance through the scheme.

Dates for these events are to be released in due course so keep an eye out on the South Hams website http://southhamscab.org.uk or Facebook www.facebook.com/southhamscab and Twitter @southhamscab Do you want to know more?

To apply call 03444 111 444 or visit one of our drop-in’s at Follaton Totnes, Ivybridge, Kingsbridge or Dartmouth.

Young Film Makers from Devon and Torbay seek film commission from the Arts Council

A group of young film makers age 16-20 from Torbay and South Devon, facilitated by Lifeworks Community Projects, have been working with Artist Ed Jobling since October 2016. The young people are diverse both as people and artists but as they worked together a strong theme emerged. All of the young film makers have a non-visible learning disability and are trying to work out what that means for them as they transition to adulthood.

In January 2017 the young team submitted a short film and story board in way of proposal to Calling the Shots to be commissioned to make a 3-minute art film for the Arts Council in partnership with Channel 4’s Random Acts series. The film they submitted is called Uncomfortable.

It was for some difficult to make, demonstrated a huge commitment to process and the bravery and vision of the young film makers involved: “If I want to have my feelings heard, this is my chance.”

View the film: www.lifeworks-uk.org/2017/01/callingtheshots

The young film makers have been successful in sparking the interest of Calling the Shots who have just confirmed they wish to work with them to develop this theme into a short art film to be shot locally during the summer half term holiday (May/June 2017) – the young film makers are now seeking the involvement of other learning disabled young people somewhere on the preparing for adulthood pathway to participate as performers and members of the production team.

To find out more contact sarah-janelowson@lifeworks-uk.org
By tackling the common concerns that have a tendency to be triggered during childhood – fussy food eating, inactivity and a taste for fast food and sugary snacks – Nippers Nutrition not only aims to teach parents how to satisfy stubborn stomachs sensibly (and tame the tantrums that stem from tempting tots to try new tastes and textures!), but how to ensure that exercise is an enjoyable experience for children of all shapes and sizes.

To find out more about the Bideford based non-profit organisation, get in contact via NippersNutrition@outlook.com or www.facebook.com/NippersNutritionUK

Community Arts Network, Inclusion – Good for Everyone

Inclusive Play schemes are where children and young people with and without disabilities and additional needs are positively welcome and where everyone can play together according to their individual wishes. Sometimes a child may need extra support from a Playworker due to mobility, medical or behavioural support needs, depending on the individual needs of each child, but not always.

Play workers believe that every child has a drive to play and that all children should be respected and valued, play workers support this by offering resources and space to play in. Inclusive play workers look for the child not the disability.

As an inclusive playworker for the past 23 years, Mary knows that inclusive play helps all children understand each other as individuals and breaks down any fears or misconceptions children might have. Disabled children who may have to travel to attend a specialist school can get to know children from their local neighbourhood. Disabled children who attend local schools meet other disabled children and find out they are not the only ones. It is a non pressurised environment where children can play following their own interests, making new friends and having fun together.

Community Arts Network run the following groups:

- Arts Play inclusive holiday scheme, open every school holiday from 8.30am-6.00pm based in Bideford and Barnstaple.
- CAN Play After school clubs at Orchard Vale and Bluecoats schools in Barnstaple and Pynes School in Bideford, provides a collection service from St Mary’s, East the Water and Westcroft schools.
- CAN SAY youth group for young people with disabilities and additional needs. The club meets fortnightly on a Saturday between the hours of 2.00pm-5.00pm at Pynes School.
- ICAN Short break scheme, providing one to one support workers to allow children and young people the opportunity to access the leisure activities of their choice or to offer a short break for families.

For more information contact Community Arts Network on: 01237 471972 or email: mary@canplay.co.uk
New Weekly Inclusive Football Session

A new weekly inclusive football session has started on Monday evenings (5pm-6pm) at Bideford College Sports Hall. The club is open to boys and girls aged 8-16 years old. Children with autism, aspergers, learning disabilities, physical and sensory impairments, deaf or hearing impaired are all welcome.

To register a place contact Ashley Harris on: 07912089838 or email: ashley.harris@devonfa.com

For further information about disability football in Devon go to: www.devonfa.com/disabilityfootball

Honey’s Bravery Bags – local organisation based in Barnstaple

Formed by a North Devon mother after her daughter Honey was diagnosed with congenital heart defects and went through subsequent open heart surgeries in Bristol Childrens Hospital. During these experiences Honey’s mother felt one of the biggest challenges in having a seriously ill child was both the financial and emotional impact on the whole family unit. After fundraising for other charities during their own difficult times, she decided with the support of a small committee of friends and professional trustees to form a new charity and Honey’s Bravery Bags was born. The mission is to provide children aged 0-18 in North Devon suffering with serious or life threatening illness AND any siblings with a bag of goodies and free family day out passes as a mark of all their bravery.

Aside from this they can also provide a £20 voucher to parents for petrol or food for families accessing treatment for their child in a hospital out of area.

To refer a child, a parent or healthcare professional can email grace.honeysbraverybags@gmail.com and access a referral form.

Unity is a weekly session run by the Wings Youthwork organisation in Bideford for young people aged 16+ with a learning or physical disability. They have now expanded Unity to two sessions a week, and started an after school Youth Club for students aged 11-18 with additional needs! Unity costs £15 per session and runs on Mondays and Wednesdays from 10.30am-2.30pm for young people aged 16+ to have fun, socialise and try lots of new challenges. Activities you can choose include drawing, photography, woodwork, motor mechanics, cooking, drama, trips out and sport. They have recently started a music project with their Monday group with the help of Jane from Turning Tides and Daisi. This has proven to be a great success with the group and the results are fantastic.

Easter at Unity – there will be sessions on motor mechanics, sport and craft over the Easter Holidays.

The Unity Youth Club for students at the Wings Hall from 3.15-5.30pm on Thursdays is well established now. There are lots of activities to enjoy, to help develop skills and independence and just to have fun! Cooking is currently proving popular.

For more information please contact Mark Slade mark@wingscharity.com or 01237 472000

Scott Cinemas Barnstaple have ‘Autism Friendly Screenings’ on the second Sunday of each month. The lights are kept on at a low level, the sound is turned down and you are free to move around the auditorium as you like. Coming soon:

- 9 April – Beauty and the Beast
- 14 May – Boss Baby

Cinema doors open at 10 am. To find out more go to: www.scottcinemas.co.uk
If you have any book recommendations, hints and tips or anything really that you’d like to share with other readers we would love to hear from you, email: discplus@virgincare.co.uk

**BOOKS**

*‘The Girl with the Curly Hair Asperger’s and Me’*  
By Alis Rowe  
This book is a real insight into what life is like with Asperger’s. Particularly for a girl with Asperger’s, as many of the typical Aspie traits seen in boys aren’t necessarily there in girls. Alis, the author finally got a diagnosis when she was in her twenties. She writes very candidly about school life, home life and social life and gives tips for friends and family to help them see things how an Aspie sees them.  
ISBN 978-0-95626-932-4

*The Five of Us*  
Written and illustrated by Quentin Blake  
A children’s book for 5-7 year olds, about five friends, each with an unusual ability. Disaster strikes on a day out in the countryside but the friends – Angie, Ollie, Simona, Mario and Eric – work together to save the day. One character uses a wheelchair, one has a stutter and another’s eyesight is impaired but Blake said he never mentions disabilities because “it’s all about abilities. My friends are just five ordinary children who happen to be amazing.”  
ISBN-10: 1849763046

*Special Brothers and Sisters*  
Stories and Tips for Siblings of Children with Special Needs, Disability or Serious Illness  
This is a collection of real-life accounts from the siblings of children with special needs, disability or serious illness, ranging from 3-18 years old. They explain, in their own words, what it’s like to live with their siblings. These stories come with related tips to help siblings deal with some of the things that happen in their family lives.  

*The Obsessive Joy of Autism*  
Julia Bascom, illustrated by Elou Carroll  
Julia Bascom offers a rare and powerful insight into the joys of autistic obsessions. Her writing will resonate powerfully with other autistic people, and encourage those who have a person with autism in their lives to look out for and nurture that joy.  
ISBN: 978-1-84905-726-4

*The Label – a Story for Families*  
Becoming a new parent is nerve-jangling enough as it is, but what happens if your baby is not what you were expecting? How do you deal with the conflicting feelings? Excitement and fear, giddy happiness and overwhelming anxiety... This happened to Caroline White when her newborn son, Seb, was diagnosed with Down’s syndrome. So she pulled together her emotions and spun them into an uplifting story. The book explores what happens when you let the label go and watch as your child blossoms into their best life untroubled by negative expectations. Caroline regularly blogs for Mencap and is donating 10% of proceeds from the sale of her book to them.  
ISBN: 1782404600
HINTS & TIPS

Toe Tagz
Although intended for runners in case of an emergency while out running, this great idea can be used by anyone. A small plastic clip attaches to the shoe lace and has no impact on the wearer. ToeTagz is a form of ID which will stay with you at all times unless you lose your shoe! The blank space on the tag is for information to be added, this way it only shares the details you want to. Prices start at £2.99.

For more details go to: www.toetagz.co.uk

Rory’s Story Cubes
Pocket sized creative story generator which encourages imagination and language development. Roll the nine dice to make one of over a million combinations for limitless storytelling fun. Magnetic snap lock case, robust and ideal for carrying on the go. You can also buy a huge variety of themed packs www.storycubes.com

Discounts and Concessions
Always remember to ask about concessions for disabled people and their carers when out and about at attractions etc. Some venues have generous discounts.

Dycem
Dycem (or similar rubber non slip material that can be bought at hardware stores) can be used to anchor items like toys and books to tables and can stop plates and cups from sliding on the table surface.

Washing clothing and bedding soiled with urine
Logic tells us to use the hottest wash, but the washing can still come out with an undesirable smell. Using biological washing liquid on a cold wash eliminates this problem.

Drinking through a straw
This can be helpful to calm a child as the sucking motion provides sensory input to the mouth.

Create a Retreat
A small tent or book area in the house can be a good calming environment for a child to use when they are feeling overwhelmed.

Don’t forget to ‘like’ our DISCplus Facebook page for regular updates on all things related to children with additional needs
**SPORTS ROUND-UP**

Paralympics Shortlist

15 year old Cameron Harris from Totnes is celebrating after achieving a place on the shortlist for the Paralympics. Cameron has also managed to win a collection of rosettes and cups for his achievements in a season of riding competitions with the Torbay and District Riding Club. To top that off he was presented with club’s Reserve Champion shield after he was picked out as the second most successful rider in the club during the past season. Mum, Heather, explains that last autumn Cameron travelled to Manchester where he was assessed for a place in the Paralympics athletics section and shortlisted for future assessments. When he is not riding, Cameron swims with the Totnes Swimming Club and goes kayaking with the Totnes Canoe Club.

Ocean City Powerchair Football club

This sport is played in specialised sports chairs with striker bumpers. Any age can take part, male or female and the club invites anyone with a physical disability as long as they can control a powerchair safely. It promotes independence, fun and positivity and playing the game helps with social skills. Ocean City is Plymouth’s Powerchair football club and was formed in 2014 thanks to a lot of hard work and determination especially by Helen Phelps-Starbuck.

The club currently have 14 players signed to compete in the regional league but also have many others who go along to training at the Plympton Community Sports Centre. The club are beginning to get the nucleus of team three, so please feel free to go along and give it a go or to have a watch. You won’t regret it! If you are interested you can contact them at: secretaryocpfc@outlook.com or 07864 642767.

Pinhoe Spartans Inclusive Football Team

The club started in January 2013, primarily due to Andy Barefoot’s son, Niall. In March 2006 Niall fell ill with meningitis, like so many other parents they didn’t recognise the symptom’s and thought he had a severe flu bug. He didn’t seem to improve and his temperature soared, they took him to A&E in Exeter, he was unconscious and in hospital for what seemed weeks. Before the illness he was a healthy, normal boy who was mad on football. The after effects of his illness were to leave him totally deaf in his left ear and partially deaf in his right.

He continued playing football and was fortunate enough to attend the Devon FA Disability Player Development Centre, which brought the family into contact with Dai Carpenter, who was the Disability Football Development Officer. When the Player Development Centre ceased, Dai assisted them in starting the Pinhoe Spartans Inclusive Football Team.

The club now train 6.30pm-7.30pm every Friday at St Luke’s School, Exeter on their Astro pitch and regularly have 18/20 players participating in coaching sessions and matches. The participants have a range of impairments from hearing, autism, cerebral palsy, Asperger’s and dyspraxia. They cater for all levels of football ability and ensure every child is included in a safe, fun environment. Niall is now one of the qualified coaches taking the sessions and can demonstrate to everyone that it doesn’t matter what impairment you have, as long as you’re determined and have enjoyment for a sport, there are no limits. If you’re interested in attending the sessions, please email andy.barefoot@virgin.net