

- **Changes to the Blue Badge scheme.** People with hidden disabilities, including autism and mental health conditions will soon have access to Blue Badges, removing the barriers many face to travel. The Blue Badge scheme already means those with physical disabilities can park closer to their destination than other drivers, as they are less able to take public transport or walk longer distances. In the biggest overhaul to the scheme since the 1970s, this will now be extended to those with less visible conditions early next year. To find out more about this and the Inclusive Transport Strategy which launched on 25 July 2018 go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/people-with-hidden-disabilities-to-benefit-from-blue-badges>
- **Help during the school holidays** - Summer holidays should be a time for children to have fun, relax and recharge for the next school year. However, the cost of extra childcare, food and activities during the break can put added financial pressure on families. Turn2us have compiled a list of some of the major charities and organisations that can help you with these added costs. <http://ow.ly/NigQ30l8jPB>
- **Free e-learning Autism Awareness and Positive Behaviour Support courses.** The following courses have been created by Health Education England and the Department of Health and are aimed at professionals, carers and volunteers.
Free Autism Awareness Training available from MindEd at: www.minded.org.uk, enter 'Autism' in search bar. There are many other e-learning topics also available on the MindEd website.
Free Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) Awareness Training available from Bild at: www.bild.org.uk/capbs/pbs-awareness-course/
- **Bow Congregational Church are running Free drop-in sessions** with making, baking and play activities. Open to all including children with additional needs. Monday 6th August and Tuesday 14th August, 3pm – 5pm with afternoon tea at 4.30pm.
- **The Playpark in Exeter** is the 6th most accessible and inclusive play park in the world! The equipment is designed to encourage co-operative play and is large enough to be used by older disabled children who may need more space for wheelchairs and helpers. It contains sensory equipment such as sand, textured surfacing and sensory planting, along with tactile signs for less well sighted visitors and pictorial signs for people with learning disabilities. To find out more go to: <http://ow.ly/ju8L30l5RV0>
- **Phoenix Theatre Exeter Drama Workshop**, FREE taster session Saturday September 8th 1pm-2.30pm Phoenix Theatre Exeter Gandy Street EX 4 3LS. Drama Express is a West Country charity providing opportunities for young people with additional needs to aspire to their dreams of appearing on stage. Booking: dramaexpress11@yahoo.com or call 07724 930 744.
- **The Sandcastle Trust** supports families where a parent or child has a rare genetic condition. They can help with short breaks, special day trips or an annual attraction pass. For more information contact: info@sandcastletrust.org or go to: www.sandcastletrust.org
- **Made-well Open Day.** Free Family Fun Day Tuesday 14th August 10.30 am – 3 pm. West Fishleigh Farm, Hatherleigh. Live music, activities, arts & crafts, bake-off, nature trail, workshops and much more. Café open selling refreshments. To find out more go to: http://www.made-well.co.uk/made-well-events-sessions-calendar/cat_ids~40/
- **Summer childcare costs**, working parents are being reminded they can use Tax-Free Childcare, which is worth up to £2,000 per child per year, to pay for regulated holiday clubs during the school holidays. With Tax-Free Childcare, for every £8 a parent pays into their childcare account the government pays in £2. The offer is available throughout the UK, to working parents including the self-employed with children aged under 12 (or under 17 for disabled children). To find out more go to: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/reduce-school-holidays-stress-with-help-for-childcare-costs>

- **Merlin Entertainment** Families of children with disabilities can now get free tickets to Alton Towers, Legoland and the London Eye from Merlin Entertainment. Due to the high level of demand they are only accepting applications from families who have not applied for this offer in the past, for more details go to: <https://www.merlinsmagicwand.org/apply-for-a-day-out/making-an-application.aspx>



Find us on Facebook.....like the SIGNPOSTplus page for regular updates on all things related to children with additional needs.

An archive of the previous four weeks of snippets can be found at the SIGNPOSTplus page on the Devon Integrated Children's Services website: <http://devon.integratedchildrenservices.co.uk/signpostplus/>

If you no longer wish to receive these bulletins please let me know and I will remove your details from the mailing list.

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