



# Parents' Forum for Bradford and Airedale

## Bulletin February 2020

Welcome to the latest update from the Parents' Forum. You will find:

- A blog by our new member of staff, Adele.
- How you can have a say in how services are run in the Bradford area.
- Local events for parent carers.



### **Engagement Manager at Parents' Forum Welcomes You!**

I write this blog after being in post here at the Parents Forum for Bradford and Airedale for a whole week! Rather than have people welcome me as the newbie, I wanted to welcome you all..... To ME!

My name is Adele Jones and my official title is Engagement Manager here at the Parents Forum. I have two amazing children, an 18 year old daughter and a 13 year old son, both having a diagnosis of higher functioning autism. Life hasn't been easy and we've struggled, a lot. I am sure many of you have felt like this at one time or another along this journey. But, one thing that does amaze me about my children, is their ability to think different and be different to other people. Not to think or be wrong, just different and to me, that is amazing. On a Sunday night, I know it isn't going to be easy as school is an environment they struggle in, so we sit down and think about what we have achieved that week. It doesn't matter how small it is, but it's a positive thought. It could be as big as managing to go to lessons all week or as small as having a bite of a new food (it was rice this week and he didn't like it!!!) I have learned things like this from other parents along the way and I am hoping to be able to work with you to support you, help you and share any learning or information I have.

One of the things that drew me towards applying for a job at the Parents Forum was that everyone who works here is a parent carer of a child with special educational needs and/or disabilities. So, although we don't claim to know everything, we do 'get it' and understand what families go through and how difficult life can be. Just having a safe space to get whatever you're

having issues with off your chest can be enough as it's difficult for others to understand your child's behaviours (and this includes family) when a lot of the time, we don't understand it ourselves! So, there is a drop in here at the office at Unit 73, Carlisle Business Centre on a Wednesday morning between 10 and 12 for anyone to come and have a cuppa and a chat. My colleagues, Julie, Louise and I would love to meet you!

Part of my role is to talk to parents and find out what it is they are really struggling with or would need more support with and to feed this back to the decision makers at the Council. I've often felt that I've not been listened to so for me, it's really important to hear from you about what really matters and what would really help you or make things easier for you and your children.

In my first week, I've had the opportunity to go to two of the workshops that we run. An EHCP workshop which was really informative and made the parents that attended really think about what should be in the EHC plan. The other was a Positive Behaviour Workshop. This one really made me think about why my children may behave a certain way. The main thing I learned was about triggers. I have often talked to parents who have said my child is like a light switch. They can just change like flipping a switch. I can even remember saying this to our CAMHS keyworker myself. And when you think about it, if there is something bubbling away under the surface that they may be worried about or needing (this would be the hard trigger and things like being hungry, lack of sleep, worrying about school), then the slightest thing can trigger a behaviour or response we don't want (such as saying no to a request or asking them to do something). And really, if I think about it, I can apply this to myself too. If I've had a bad night's sleep or a hard day at work, I'm generally more snappy or less likely to want to do something. It's just the reaction isn't anywhere near as extreme and I have a better understanding of why I'm feeling like I do. If you think either of these workshops may be useful to you, please do book on via our website.

Please get in touch, I'd love to hear from you and find out what your experiences are good and bad! There are loads of ways to contact us. You can email me on [adele@pfba.org.uk](mailto:adele@pfba.org.uk) or the main office is [supportnews@pfba.org.uk](mailto:supportnews@pfba.org.uk)

We have a Facebook page that you can join. You should find it if you search for Parents' Forum for Bradford & Airedale

Our Twitter handle is @infoPfba

Oh and before I forget, if you would like to join our mailing list, we send out information about workshops we will be running, relevant information regarding SEND and disability, future blogs and newsletters, visit our website [www.pfba.org.uk](http://www.pfba.org.uk) where you can sign up.

So, welcome to you and welcome to me! I can't wait to talk to you and maybe meet some of you!

## Have your say!

The SEND Team at Bradford Council has organised some Listening Events when you can go along and speak directly to members of the team as well as meet support services. They are aiming to find common themes for development and look at how SEND services can be improved.

The dates for these sessions are:

- Wednesday 26 February 2020, 12pm-2pm, Margaret McMillan Tower
- Wednesday 18<sup>th</sup> March, 10:00am – 12:00pm, Winter Gardens Ilkley
- Thursday 26 March, 10am-12pm, Shipley Library
- Wednesday 29 April, 12pm-2pm, Keighley Civic Centre
- Thursday 21 May, 10am-12pm, Shipley Library
- Monday 22 June, 10am-12pm, Margaret McMillan Tower

To book a place email [SENDT&C@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:SENDT&C@bradford.gov.uk) or call 01274 435300

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We have set up three surveys so we can find out what the main issues are for parent carers (and also what works well) in connection with SEND in the Bradford district, and CAMHS. You may have given your views in the survey on SEND we did last year – your responses were passed on to the relevant people at Bradford Council, and helped to bring about some changes in the SEND Department, including the organisation of the Listening Events, as above.

You can access the SEND survey here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9BNJGCT>

Here is the Camhs survey: <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9BCVJLG>

The third survey is about the subject of Carers' and Wellbeing Assessments. We would love to hear from you even if you have not heard of these. As a parent carer, you may be able to access one of these assessments – they are designed to look at the carer's life and areas in which they may need support.

The survey can be accessed here:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/9BHSPNV>

A member of the PFBA attends the regular meetings of the Carers' Partnership which looks at issues for all carers in the Bradford area. The purpose of the Partnership is to make the Bradford area a place where carers are recognised, supported and valued, both in their caring role and as individuals.

We will use the data obtained to inform the Partnership how assessments are working or not working for our parent carer members.

All information given in these surveys will be totally anonymous.

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We will be producing a newsletter during the next half term. Do you have anything you would like to share in it, or any information you would particularly like to see? We would love to include a personal story – this could be something that you as a parent carer like to do (eg a hobby) to “escape” from your caring duties, or perhaps you have changed career to fit around your child. Or is there a particular group that helps you or your child? If you would like to suggest something, or to get in touch for any other reason please email [supportnews@pfba.org.uk](mailto:supportnews@pfba.org.uk).

## Events

As usual, we have Education, Health and Care Plan workshops running during term time. The remaining dates to the end of March which are not yet fully booked are:

Friday 28th February, 10.30am-1.30pm  
Carlisle Business Centre, Carlisle Road, Bradford, BD8 8BD

Wednesday 4th March (evening), 5.30pm-8.00pm  
Carlisle Business Centre, Carlisle Road, Bradford, BD8 8BD

Monday 30th March, 10.30am-1.30pm  
Carlisle Business Centre, Carlisle Road, Bradford, BD8 8BD

Please visit <https://pfba.org.uk/ehcp-workshops-for-2020/> for more information and to book.

You may also be interested in:



Sleep Workshops organised by the Specialist Behavioural Services at Bradford Council - these are for parents in the Bradford district whose child is experiencing sleep issues. It is not essential to have a diagnosis for your child to attend these.

The workshop will run between 9:00am – 12:30pm for half day on the following dates:

Fagley Primary School Falsgrave Avenue, BD2 3PU - 14th February 2020

Merlin Top Primary, Braithwaite Avenue, Keighley, BD22 6HZ – 28th February 2020

High Crag Primary, Crag Rd, Shipley, BD18 2ES - 13th March 2020

Atlas Community Primary, Lincoln Close, BD8 8DL - 27th March 2020

For more information and the booking form, please go to <https://pfba.org.uk/sleep-workshops/> The contact name on the form is Elaine Woodley, [elaine.woodley@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:elaine.woodley@bradford.gov.uk)

**Are you a parent or carer, supporting a child or young person who is struggling with emotional or mental health issues?**

We know how difficult it can be and want to develop more support to help you. We can't do this without listening to what families want and need.

We are inviting parents and carers to come along to a workshop to share experiences, ideas and tell us what you would like. We will be sharing information on other parent support groups and ideas from around the Country. All of the information from the day will help us develop more parent support.



**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February 2020**  
**Bradford City Football Ground, Valley parade, Bradford, BD8 7DY**  
**10am-2pm**  
**Lunch provided**

***Look forward to seeing you there***

To book your place or for more information please contact:  
Lisa Stead Tel: 07713711521 or Email: [lisa.stead@bdct.nhs.uk](mailto:lisa.stead@bdct.nhs.uk)

