



Newsletter

We are your voice

Autumn | Winter 2018

School Transport Confusion

MPCF received a higher number of comments than usual from parents and carers, regarding school transport across the Summer due to changes made by Medway Council.

MPCF sent an e-mail to every councillor across Medway voicing those concerns and anxieties. Subsequently, the issue was raised at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting in July and two articles appeared in the Medway Messenger in August.

Whilst most people were enjoying their Summer break, Michelle and Angela from the MPCF committee, worked very hard with Medway Council to resolve those issues. A weekly update session was put in place and, as we go to print, the news is that the majority of the many appeals received have been resolved. Most parents should hopefully now know their school transport options in time for the start of the new school year.

EHCP Training From IPSEA

On September 20th 2018, MPCF and Independent Parental Special Education Advice organisation (IPSEA) will be running a one day Education, Health and Care Plan workshop at The King Charles Hotel, Gillingham.

The training, aimed at parents & carers, was developed to guide them through the EHC plan process from beginning to end. Topics covered include the structure and legal status of an EHC plan and making informed and positive decisions to get the right plan in place, with a question and answer session at the end.

This heavily subsidised workshop will cost members just £10 with lunch, normally £65 for the course alone, although we will not exclude anyone for financial reasons. Places are strictly limited, so to book a seat, please e-mail medwaypcf@googlemail.com with EHC Master Class as the subject heading and check our Facebook page for updates. Requests via Facebook will not be accepted.



Medway Council & MPCF Co-Production Workshop

On 14th May, MPCF organised a co-production workshop for all partners who signed up to our partnership agreement. Co-production is when professionals and parents all work together on key policies and all have an equal input into the projects. Several key personnel from Medway Council attended along with MPCF committee members. The workshop was presented by Lara Roberts (on the left) from the National Network of Parent Carer Forums and Susie Campbell (on the right) from Surrey County Council and was well received by all those who attended.

Your Forum Needs You



Medway Parents and Carers Forum want you.

We need parents who can commit some time and have passion to make a difference and improve outcomes for their own and other families with all types of disabilities and additional support needs across all communities and areas of Medway. Our committee and volunteers are a committed and friendly team.

For an informal chat to find out more please ring MPCF on 07813 123984

misplaced cases, but NELFT informed members that they were already working through outstanding caseloads, although it would not be a quick fix. They have already set up an eating disorders service, 365 days a year online young people's service and self-referrals. The general feeling of members was positive for the future and they appreciated the honesty of the team, who have promised to return next year to give a further update. We will also be asking for some representatives from Medway Council and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group to take part in a Question and Answer Panel.

SEND Operational Group and SEND Improvement Board Leading to Improvements

Michelle and Jayne from the committee, have been attending these groups, following the Written Statement of Action (WSOA) issued by Medway Council after their OFSTED inspection last December.

They have used their own experience and feedback from our parents and carers, to help shape changes, thus improving outcomes for our young people.

OFSTED will be returning to Medway later in the Autumn to ensure that the Written Statement of Action is being followed and they will also be speaking to parents, carers and professionals on their visits.

Children and Young Peoples Mental Health Services Raises Hope

In June, members attended a coffee morning where guest speakers from North East London Foundation Trust (NELFT), who've taken over the running of mental health services in Medway for children and young people, presented a session on their changes and improvements. Although they took over in September 2017, there were statutory duties they had to fulfil and training on new practices before they officially took over the service in April this year.

Members heard about issues that the previous CAMHS providers hadn't resolved, including

Contact Us

MPCF can be contacted on 01634 333315 (mornings only during term time) or our mobile number 07813 123984. You can e-mail medwaypcf@googlemail.com or we're on Twitter @MedwayPCF and Facebook Medway Parents and Carers Forum. We also have a website www.medwaypcf.org.uk where new members can apply online.

More MPCF Coffee Mornings Across Medway Following Feedback

Following feedback from members, the forum is extending the range of venues and days of the week we run our coffee mornings. From September, apart from our regular coffee mornings in Strood & Gillingham on Tuesdays, we will be running some joint coffee mornings with the Peninsula Special Needs Group in Stoke near Allhallows on Mondays and independent ones at Cuxton and Lordswood on Fridays. Our Gillingham coffee mornings, on Tuesdays, will be moving from Gillingham Golf Club to Star Meadow Sports Club, where there is much more onsite parking.

Topics and speakers will be announced as they become available via our Facebook page and Twitter.

Here are the full list of dates and venues throughout the year until Summer Holidays 2019. All coffee mornings run between 10am and 12 noon

Coffee Morning Dates and Venues 2018/2019

Sept 2018

Monday 10th September: Lower Stoke Chapel, Allhallows Road, Stoke, Rochester

Tuesday 25th September: St Nicholas Church, High Street, Strood ME2 4TR

Oct 2018

Friday 5th October: Cuxton Scout Hall, Bush Road, Cuxton

Tuesday 30th October: Star Meadow Sports Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham ME7 3AN

Nov 2018

Fri 30th November: St.David's Church Hall, Newton Close, Lordswood, ME5 8TR

Dec 2018

Monday 3rd December: Lower Stoke Chapel, Allhallows Road, Stoke, Rochester

Friday 7th December: Cuxton Scout Hall, Bush Road, Cuxton

Jan 2019

Tuesday 29th January: St Nicholas Church, High Street, Strood ME2 4TR

Feb 2019

Friday 1st February: Cuxton Scout Hall, Bush Road, Cuxton

Tuesday 26th February: Star Meadow Sports Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham ME7 3AN

March 2019

Monday 11th March: Lower Stoke Chapel, Allhallows Road, Stoke, Rochester

Fri 29th March: St.David's Church Hall, Newton Close, Lordswood, ME5 8TR

April 2019

Tuesday 30th April: St Nicholas Church, High Street, Strood ME2 4TR

May 2019

Friday 3rd May: Cuxton Scout Hall, Bush Road, Cuxton

Tuesday 21st May: Star Meadow Sports Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham ME7 3AN

June 2019

Monday 3rd June: Lower Stoke Chapel, Allhallows Road, Stoke, Rochester

Tuesday 25th June: Star Meadow Sports Club, Darland Avenue, Gillingham ME7 3AN

MPCF Raises Profile at Summer Events

Across the Summer, your forum was invited to attend several community events around Medway which raised the profile and interest in our group and the work we do.

We also gained some new members. Please contact us if you would like us to attend an event at your school or in your local community.

SENCO Conference

Once again, a group of parents were invited to the Annual Medway SENCO Conference, which was held at St Georges Centre in Chatham Maritime on 5th June. Parents and carers shared tables with SENCO'S and other teaching professionals. A number of guest speakers, including the forum Co-Chair Keith, gave presentations, MPCF were also able to increase the number of schools engaged with through the event.

Those parents who attended enjoyed participating in the event and we look forward to inviting a different group of parents next year.



Successful First Opportunities Fair



On Friday 11th May, Medway Parents and Carers Forum held their first Opportunities Fair at Rochester Corn Exchange. With over 30 information stands, young people aged from 14 years and upwards from across Medway attended the event, many with their schools, which kept the committee on their toes. Information included after school activities, sexual health, further education, personal budgets and supported internships.

The forum had very positive feedback from students and stallholders alike. The many comments received included “well run and attended” and “very informative”. Plans are already under way for a bigger event next year with an even wider range of information including benefits, jobs and supported and independent living.

Rivermead Graduation

Michelle and June from the committee were honoured to accept an invitation to join the students of the Rivermead Partnership for their graduation event in June. The brilliant event was organised by the students themselves who raised money for their favourite charity.

Newsletter and Flyer Distribution

The forum sends copies of the newsletter to all schools in Medway as well as reception at Snapdragons. We also circulate flyers for events and coffee mornings to additional groups so that we can ensure the widest coverage. Please let us know where you picked up your copy so that we can ensure we are distributing through the most efficient method.

And Finally

The forum has had a very busy year so far, as you can see, and that is set to continue over the next few months. We can always use a helping hand, so if you could assist in running a coffee morning or insert newsletters into envelopes, please contact us to let us know how you can help.





