

SWINDON SEND FAMILIES VOICE NEWSLETTERS

What are we making better?

Your newsletter shows all the good work that you're doing in partnership with the LA – David Haley, DCS



In the 2018 Local Area Ofsted and CQC SEND Inspection it was reported that Co-production was weak and was not shared and owned by children, young people, their families and professionals, waiting times were too long and parents reported having difficulties accessing mental health support, and were sometimes frustrated with the quality of support they received. Parents and carers who contributed to the inspection were overwhelmingly negative about their dealings with the local area. They told inspectors that they considered the future for their children as 'bleak'. Consequently, many of these parents and carers were upset, angry and concerned about the services and provision that their children receive.

What are we doing?

We wanted to create a way of communicating with parents and carers that utilised the feedback provided by them to provide an interesting and useful to read document that shared how their feedback has influenced positive change and to also involve local area officers from across the LA/CCG and other agencies to help break down barriers between parents and professionals.

We now produce the quarterly newsletters partly in co-production with professionals. For example, in our Covid-19 Impact Survey (June 2020) parents reported anxiety about returning to school after lockdown as a main concern. We approached both the Mental Health Trailblazer team and Educational Psychologists who wrote articles for us to include in both the Summer and Autumn newsletters. The articles provided useful tips and resources to help parents support their children and young people.

The newsletters are warmly received, and are shared widely through our social media platforms, mailing list, Local Authority (internally and to education provisions) and the CCG. Parents have reported that the articles and information within the newsletter are very helpful to those that are on a waiting list. For example one parent made the following comment, "The newsletter is always interesting and helpful with clear support paths and contact details. I find it interesting to read about the results of recent surveys and what the team are busy working on for us and our children." We recently dedicated a page on useful websites to use when your child or young person is self harming and the anxiety article provided lots of high quality information and resources that parents can access for free.

What difference is this making?

What will we do next?

We will continue to use the feedback we receive from parents and carers to influence our future editions of the newsletters. We will continue to reach out to professionals for

their contribution to help ensure articles are informative and useful.

We would also like to print hard copies of the newsletter in the future so those without internet access can receive copies. We also want to continue to utilise as many outlets as possible to share the newsletter to grow the audience and reach a higher number of people as possible, which in turn increases awareness and encourages more parent participation.

Introducing... Sarah Tkaczyk Quality Assurance Manager

Annual SEND Survey results from Swindon Borough Council

50.5% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with SEND services in Swindon 41.9% were Dissatisfied or Very Dissatisfied

Swindon Trailblazer (Project Me!) Returning to school and 'normality'

Helping you to help your child to manage anxiety/worries

Believe in children's Burrows

Dear David, I am an Education Mental Health Practitioner, and work within one of the Mental Health Support Teams at Swindon (Education Trailblazer, Project Me, Burrows).

Anxiety is normal and it's a healthy response to threat or danger. It is the following strategies that we use as a mental health and wellbeing of staff and organisations help to calm down: <https://www.burrows.org.uk/> You can also use apps such as <https://www.burrows.org.uk/> for help and support.

Best threat to our body changes (heart rate increases, breathing speeds up, muscles get tense) and this is helpful to us as we can run away or fight the danger. However, it can be quite uncomfortable if there is no real danger. Some people can get anxious about being anxious but anxiety is not harmful.

We all feel anxious from time to time. Considering that we are in a time of uncertainty (until anything of us we have experienced before, many people are feeling anxious and worried. This is a normal response to an abnormal situation.

Adapting to a new normality can be particularly challenging for some children and young people. Parents are understandably worried about possible scenarios. You can use this [guide](#) to manage your own worries.

Believe in some top tips on how to best help your child manage anxiety and worries.

Help your child understand what they are feeling when anxious.

Experiencing unpleasant bodily reactions can be quite scary and lead to more anxiety. Talk about anxiety and help understand what happens to their body when anxious and why, so that they can make sense of it. You can use these [body maps](#) and videos ([anxiety](#), [anxiety](#)).

Explain that anxiety will pass. To make this idea more concrete, you can compare it to a hot gas through a tunnel. Feeling overwhelmed can reduce their ability to think. It's like a computer when processing a lot of