

Dear Parents' Voice Supporter

Here's a fairly lengthy update for March with lots of news, we hope you'll find something of interest in it. Please note that all links to information are provided in good faith but we are not responsible for the content found on the sites.

You are welcome to share this email (or parts of it) with your friends or groups, but please mention that it came from [Parents' Voice](#) if you do, thanks.

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1) Parents' Voice news

i) We seem to have been very busy, which is great news (if a little tiring for our small committee). Some highlights from the last few weeks are that we

- attended the Worcester Skills Show
- sent a representative to Healthwatch Worcestershire's public board meeting
- hosted a talk about anxiety and the Kooth service (thank you to everyone who braved the awful weather to come to this)
- compiled and sent in a response to the Government's consultation about proposed changes around Children/Young People's Mental Health services.

As usual we've also been pretty busy on social media (March has lots of awareness days/weeks and celebrations!).

There are no events planned for the rest of March, but in the next few months we will be holding our Annual Report meeting and another information session before the summer holidays. Now we are getting ready for May 25th when the General Data Protection Regulation comes into effect (we will be contacting you about this so please look out for our emails!) and working on the website. We have posted occasionally on [the site](#) about what we're doing, so do [take a look](#): ow.ly/813A30iVHce.

2) Consultations, surveys and your right to vote

i) Local council elections take place on May 3rd this year. You only need to [register to vote](#) once, but if you've moved house or changed your name or nationality you must register with your new details. It should take about 5 minutes and the deadline for [registering to vote in May's elections](#) is April 17th. Find out more and register here: <http://bit.ly/gov1regr>.

ii) On March 16th the Department for Education (DfE) announced a national review into school exclusions (to better understand inequalities in the system). As part of this they launched a [call for evidence](#) - the views of parents, carers, children and young people are wanted! You can find out more here (scroll down for the link to the online consultation): <http://bit.ly/DfEcons181>. **The consultation closes on May 6th.**

iii) The DfE also launched a [call for evidence about the educational outcomes of children in need](#) (a legally defined group of children, assessed as needing help and protection; the group includes children subject to Child in Need Plans, Child Protection plans, Looked After Children, young carers; and disabled children.) The aim is to better understand what works in enabling Children in Need to achieve their potential and the consultation closes on June 1st. We are making parents and family carers aware of this consultation, even though it seems to be aimed at professionals (we have emailed the DfE to ask if they also want parents' comments).

Both the above consultations are part of "a programme of work to better understand how to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of all children with additional needs and challenges, so they are able to overcome barriers and realise their potential."

We have already told you about these consultations, surveys and local panels:

iv) Bromsgrove District Council would like local residents to join the [Community Panel](#). You can find out more here: <http://bit.ly/2pvbdccp1>.

v) Worcester City Council have a [survey for residents](#) about their neighbourhood and how they get on with others who live there: bit.ly/pvwc1ty1.

vi) Bullying UK have a short, anonymous [survey](#) about where children and young people (up to the age of 25) go to for support when they experience bullying. It should take about 5 minutes to complete and will be used to improve support: <http://bit.ly/u25bullysrvy>.

3) Safer Sleep for babies

This year Safer Sleep week focussed on what parents might buy to reduce the risk of [Sudden Infant Death Syndrome \(cot death\)](#). Some useful links are:

[Lullaby Trust Product Guide](#) - <http://bit.ly/ltsafepr0d>

[Four simple tips for safer sleep](#) (video) - <http://bit.ly/ltsafet1ps1>

[All your baby needs for a safer night's sleep](#) (video) - <http://bit.ly/ltsfepr0d2>

[Safer sleep factsheets](#) - <http://bit.ly/1Rm4R5X>

[Safer sleep animation](#) - <http://bit.ly/1SSez5n>

4) Mental Health

March is the month for Eating Disorders Awareness Week, Self Harm/Injury Awareness Day, University Mental Health Day and National Conversation Week. Here's a quick roundup of a few useful links (NB: some links at the end of this section deal with conversations about suicidal thoughts):

[Youth Mental Health information hub](#) (NHS) - <http://bit.ly/nhsytmh1>

[Children and young people with anxiety. guide for parents](#) - <http://bit.ly/pvaukgu1d>

[Anxiety](http://bit.ly/pvymanx2) (Young Minds) - <http://bit.ly/pvymanx2>

[Parent's Guide to Depression](http://bit.ly/cwmtdep) (Charlie Waller Memorial Trust) - <http://bit.ly/cwmtdep>

[Understanding Eating Disorders](http://bit.ly/beatued2) (Beat) - <http://bit.ly/beatued2>

[Worried about a friend or family member](http://bit.ly/beat1w0rr) (Beat) - <http://bit.ly/beat1w0rr>

[Eating Disorders](http://bit.ly/1n18UMS) (Mental Health Foundation) - <http://bit.ly/1n18UMS>

[Eating problems](http://bit.ly/1no0EXF) (MIND) - <http://bit.ly/1no0EXF>

[Supporting somebody with an eating disorder](http://bit.ly/beat3supp) (Beat) - <http://bit.ly/beat3supp>

[Parent's Guide to Eating Disorders](http://bit.ly/1O8qfjI) (Priory Group) - <http://bit.ly/1O8qfjI>

[Your attitude towards eating disorders could make a big difference](http://bit.ly/2lv3bzn) (Time to Change) - <http://bit.ly/2lv3bzn>

[Academic pressure, the strive for perfection and eating disorders](http://bit.ly/mhfed1per) - <http://bit.ly/mhfed1per>

[In recovery I sometimes miss the 'comfort' of my eating disorder](http://bit.ly/2msB9rT) (The Mighty) - <http://bit.ly/2msB9rT>

[But what do I say though?](http://bit.ly/2mjIQS6) - <http://bit.ly/2mjIQS6>

[What is self-harm?](http://bit.ly/1M1selfharm) (Internet Matters) - <http://bit.ly/1M1selfharm>

[Understanding self-harm](http://bit.ly/1TVtCMm) (Young Minds) - <http://bit.ly/1TVtCMm>

[Self-harm - there is hope](http://bit.ly/1RMNOgc) (Bipolar Foundation) - <http://bit.ly/1RMNOgc>

[The truth about self-harm](http://bit.ly/1R7mzA9) (Mental Health Foundation) - <http://bit.ly/1R7mzA9>

[Understanding Young Minds, free online course](http://bit.ly/2IT9aix) (Virtual College/Selfharm UK) - <http://bit.ly/2IT9aix>

[Selfharm UK](http://bit.ly/SHarmUK1) recovery, insight, support (includes parents' section) - <http://bit.ly/SHarmUK1>

[Calm Harm](http://bit.ly/st4clmhm1) (free app, helps to manage urge to self-harm) - <http://bit.ly/st4clmhm1>

[Looking after your mental wellbeing](http://bit.ly/2pfnMO2) (Student Minds) - <http://bit.ly/2pfnMO2>

[Coping on Campus](http://bit.ly/1QZwNTb) (Young Minds) - <http://bit.ly/1QZwNTb>

[Advice for students](http://bit.ly/1VYmRr1) (Depression Alliance) - <http://bit.ly/1VYmRr1>

[Student mental health](http://bit.ly/1p5LWpK) (NHS) - <http://bit.ly/1p5LWpK>

[Six things students can do to boost their mental health](http://bit.ly/1pqRf3a) (Guardian) - <http://bit.ly/1pqRf3a>

[10 tips for talking about worries](http://bit.ly/2cPVwvG) (Heads Together) - <http://bit.ly/2cPVwvG>

[Tips for starting a conversation about mental health](http://bit.ly/t2talkt1p) (Time to Change) - <http://bit.ly/t2talkt1p>

[Papyrus' Conversation Starters](http://bit.ly/pap1conv) (with someone who may be thinking of suicide) - <http://bit.ly/pap1conv>

[Suicidal thoughts, how you can help people talk](http://bit.ly/RMI sui1) (Rethink Mental Illness) - <http://bit.ly/RMI sui1>

[Mental health and suicidal thoughts](http://bit.ly/2cJ197) (NSPCC) - <http://bit.ly/2cJ197>

[Supporting someone who feels suicidal](http://bit.ly/MINDscd1) (MIND) - <http://bit.ly/MINDscd1>

5) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

i) March 21st is World Down's Syndrome Day - to celebrate everyone's uniqueness and to raise awareness, people are wearing odd (and often colourful) socks.

50 mums and their young children have made a carpool karaoke style [youtube video](#) for World Down's Syndrome Day and it's gone viral - take a look: <http://bit.ly/yfb50mum1>. You'll also find a TV interview with the mums on Youtube after the song.

ii) 12th - 18th March was (British) Sign Language Week. If you follow us on Twitter you may have seen some of our tweets and retweets about this. You can [find out more about BSL](#) (and learn it) here: <http://bit.ly/pvbslan1>

iii) The [Generation Can awards](#) are local awards to celebrate the remarkable achievements of children with special educational needs and disabilities and the adults who support them. Find out more here: <http://bit.ly/pvgencan1>.

iv) NHS England have a [survey for people with a learning disability and their carers](#). This is to get views about including a note (flag) on health records to indicate someone needs extra help or support (this has not been done yet, it is a proposal). You can find full details, an easy read version and the survey here <http://bit.ly/nhsesrv1>; **it closes on March 30th**.

v) Please see section 2 for Department for Education consultations which may be relevant to any children with a SEN or Disability and section 7 for details of the [Bercow: Ten Years On](#) report.

6) Older Children/Young People

i) Exam season will soon be here. Family Lives' information about [supporting teenagers through exam stress](#) may be useful: <http://bit.ly/examstrsfl>.

ii) A new careers website called [Skills4Worcestershire](#) was launched at the Worcestershire Skills Show (we provided some feedback when it was being set up). There's a huge amount of information on the site, so do take a look at it if your youngster is thinking about what to do in the future (there's a section about support for parents in Worcestershire and we're in there!). You can find it here: <http://bit.ly/skil4worcs1>.

iii) If someone in your family is thinking of an apprenticeship, the [Worcestershire Apprenticeships](#) site has live vacancies as well as information: <http://bit.ly/worcapps1>.

7) Reports

i) The Women and Equalities Committee (a UK Parliament select committee) has published a [report](#) that fathers are not being supported in the workplace and this contributes to the pay gap between men and women. There are [7 policy recommendations](#). The report has been given to the Government and they should respond within two months. Read the recommendations and download the full report here: <http://bit.ly/WECrept1>.

ii) In July 2008 a report was published about a national review of speech, language and communication services for children and young people aged 0-19. The review was chaired by John Bercow MP and the report made 40 recommendations. The charity ICAN and the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists have now published a report on current provision for speech, language and communication needs (SLCN), called "[Bercow: Ten Years On](#)". You can read the new [recommendations and download this new report](#) here: <http://bit.ly/icanSLT1>.

8) Sleep and World Happiness Day

March 15th was World Sleep Day (and parents sometimes struggle to get enough sleep!). A good night's sleep aids good mental health so the Mental Health Foundation shared [10 top tips for good sleep](#): <http://bit.ly/mhslp2>.

March 20th is International/World Happiness Day (also good for mental health). Action for Happiness have some [free downloadable action cards](#) to help children feel happier and build resilience: <http://bit.ly/A4Hchild1>.

9) Child Sexual Exploitation

Any child, any age, anywhere can be a victim of child sexual exploitation (CSE); CSE Awareness Day was March 18th so we're sharing some links.

West Mercia Police have been raising awareness of CSE with their [#TellSomeone campaign](#) over the last year - <http://bit.ly/2mHxmGm> (there is a section for parents and a printable Online:Onguard leaflet).

Many parents are not confident they would recognise signs of CSE (78% couldn't in 2013 according to YouGov). Parents Against Child sexual Exploitation (PACE) and the Safeguarding Children e-Academy have a short (20 - 30 mins), free [online course](#) to help parents: <http://bit.ly/1pcsTmC>.

The NSPCC's "[Jay](#)" [animation](#) shows how relationships are sometimes not what they seem: <http://bit.ly/nspcse1>. The NSPCC also have [resources for parents to "talk pants"](#) with young children - <http://bit.ly/nsppant1> (there is also a [Pantosaurus animation and song](#) - <http://bit.ly/nsppant2>).

The NWG charity has several [downloadable resources](#) (including the Online: Onguard leaflet) - <http://bit.ly/nwgres1>.

Congratulations, you've reached the end of this update (apologies for the length but there was a lot to pack in)!

You are welcome to share this email (or parts of it) with your friends or groups, but please mention that it came from [Parents' Voice](#) if you do, thanks.

Thank you for your continued support in 2018, we really do appreciate it :)

Sue and the Parents' Voice Committee

Parents' Voice - Worcestershire

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