

HSPCF WEEKLY NEWSLETTER

15th October 2026



Welcome back! Here are this week's updates from Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum.

1 PARENT CARER FORUM UPDATES



We have lots coming up for parent carers throughout October, so we wanted to bring everything together in one place. Our **October What's On poster** includes the latest coffee mornings, and opportunities for families to get involved, ask questions and connect with other parent carers.

Coffee Morning – 22nd October, 9.30–11.30am

DCBL Stadium, Widnes

We'd love you to join us for a cuppa and a catch-up at our last coffee morning before half term. We'll be welcoming Ben Holmes, Halton's Director of Education, Inclusion and Provision, and members of the SEND team, who will share the latest local SEND updates.

There'll be time to ask questions, talk about your experiences and share what matters to your family. You're equally welcome to come along, listen and enjoy some company—there's no pressure to speak.

Whether you're a familiar face or joining us for the first time, we'd love to see you.

A Little Half-Term Break

We'll be taking a break the following week for the October half term - so the forum will be closed with no coffee morning on Thursday 29th October. We hope you find a little time to recharge over half term, and we look forward to catching up with you afterwards. The forum will reopen on the 2nd November with the next coffee morning taking place on the 5th of November. Where we will be joined by Sheryl from Positive futures.

You are not alone – we're here for you 



info@haltonsendpcf.org.uk



www.haltonsendcarersforum.org.uk



[HaltonSENDCarersforum](https://www.facebook.com/HaltonSENDCarersforum)



Cheshire and Merseyside
Integrated Care Board

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL UPDATES



2 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL UPDATES

Local Offer Live – Thank You and a Final Feedback Reminder

A big thank you to all the families who joined us at Local Offer Live last week. It was lovely to meet you, hear about your experiences and see so many parent carers asking questions, making connections and finding out more about local support.

We'd like to give a warm welcome to the families who signed up as forum members, and to those who came along to our coffee morning this week. It's been lovely getting to know you all

If you attended Local Offer Live and haven't yet shared your feedback, please take a few minutes to complete the short survey. Whether something worked particularly well or you have ideas for making future events more useful, your experiences can help the council understand what matters to families.

Scan the QR code on the poster or [open the link here](#), then scroll down to the pink banner to find the survey.

Fit 4 Life – Teen Edition: Free Leisure Access

Halton Borough Council's **Fit 4 Life – Teen Edition** offers young people a chance to get active, build confidence and support their wellbeing.

The programme is open to young people aged 13–19, and up to 25 for those with SEND, and includes:

- Up to six months of free leisure access, including gym, swimming and fitness classes at local leisure centres.
- Three months of free Health Coach support, with regular check-ins, encouragement and healthy lifestyle advice.
- Weekly wellbeing tips, challenges and motivation through the Healthy Halton WhatsApp Channel.

If your young person would benefit, [find out more here](#) or for further information, contact Isabelle Murphy, Children and Young People's Health Trainer, on 0151 511 6641.

You are not alone – we're here for you 



NHS / ICB UPDATES



Welcome back! Here are this week's key updates from NHS and ICB partners.

3 NHS / ICB UPDATES

Soluna by Kooth – parent and carer demo

Soluna by Kooth is a free, safe and anonymous mental health platform for children and young people. It launched September 26 as an upgraded version of the original Kooth service.

A temporary demo area is available for parents and carers, giving you the opportunity to explore the platform and see what your child or young person will experience when using the service. To try the demo:

- Visit the Soluna Demo Site, Enter a dummy date of birth between 10 and 25 years old, You can also link an email address if you would like to see how a full user account works.

Young people can access Soluna through the website, while the downloadable mobile app is available for those aged 13 and over. Parent/carers demo:

<https://demo-web.solunaapp.com/>

Soluna website: solunaapp.com

Flu Vaccinations for Carers and Health Checks for Young People

Free flu vaccinations: If you are the main carer for an older or disabled person, or receive Carer's Allowance, you qualify for a free NHS flu vaccination. You do not need to receive Carer's Allowance if you are the main carer. Contact your GP surgery or a participating pharmacy to book.

[Flu vaccination - NHS Cheshire and Merseyside](#)

Learning disability health checks: Young people aged 14 and over with a learning disability who are on their GP's learning disability register should be offered a free annual health check - It's a chance to discuss health, wellbeing and support needs. Ask your GP surgery whether your young person is on the register and how to arrange their check.

[Learning disabilities - Annual health checks - NHS](#)



Stay connected

Look out for our weekly newsletters, coffee mornings, Zooms and events for more information, support and opportunities for parent carers across Halton.



You are not alone – we're here for you 



info@haltonsendpcf.org.uk



www.haltonsendcarersforum.org.uk



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Cheshire and Merseyside
Integrated Care Board



OTHER UPDATES

Any events/ service suggestions please share with us
info@haltonsendpcf.org.uk

Tax-Free Childcare – Could Your Family Get Help?

Halton Families Information Service have shared this information with us to help families of SEND children to find out about support with childcare costs.

Tax-Free Childcare can help eligible families pay for childminders, nurseries, breakfast clubs, after-school clubs and holiday clubs.

For every £8 you pay into an online childcare account, the government adds £2. You then use the money to pay a childcare provider who accepts the scheme.

For children who meet the disability rules, families can receive up to £4,000 a year in government top-ups, with support continuing until the September after their 16th birthday. This includes children receiving DLA or PIP, or who are certified blind or severely sight-impaired.

Having SEN alone does not automatically qualify a child for this extra support with Parents usually needing to be working and meet the income rules. However, you may still qualify if your partner works and you receive Carer's Allowance.

[Find out more and check whether your family could qualify using this link](#) or check out the poster at the bottom of the newsletter.

The Autism Wellbeing Podcast -

Looking for conversations about autism and everyday life? The Autism Wellbeing Podcast, from Autism Wellbeing Project CIC, brings together experts by experience to talk about the things that matter to them. Including having one of our very own members involved. Topics include friendships, relationships, making sense of the past and growing up. It could be of interest to parent carers and anyone wanting to hear different experiences and perspectives on autism. Listen on Spotify, Apple Podcasts or Buzzsprout. See the poster for more details.

Starting to Think About Christmas?

If you're starting to think about Christmas gifts, Preston Brook Christmas Market is a chance to browse handmade gifts, cakes, sweets and more while supporting local businesses and a community venue.

Saturday 14th November, 10am–3pm
Preston Brook Village Hall, Runcorn – free entry

Know of any other local events that parent carers and families might enjoy? Please send the details to the forum so we can help spread the word and support our local businesses and community spaces.

 *You are not alone – we're here for you*  





HALTON SEND

Important Information



PARENT CARER ADVICE / SUPPORT

1 Halton Send Parent Carer's Forum



A voice to inform families with children with additional needs of the services in our local area which may be beneficial to your child.

www.haltonsendcarersforum.org.uk

2 ADDvanced Solutions



An open access offer that supports the emotional health and wellbeing of neurodivergent children and young people, their families and the professionals that work with them.

www.addvancedsolutions.co.uk

3 Halton Carer's Centre



Halton Carers' Centre is a network partner of the Carers Trust. We work to reach unpaid young & adult carers and develop services for them across the borough.

www.haltoncarers.co.uk

SIGNPOST FOR HALTON



1 Bridgewater



Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Here you will find information about all of Halton's Health services

www.bridgewater.nhs.uk/halton/

2 Sendiass



If you need some advice, guidance or support on any issues that are affecting you or your child then we're here to help. We provide impartial and confidential information and support.

www.sendiasshalton.co.uk/

3 Family Hubs



A one stop digital platform for Halton residents to use to find services, events, support groups and advice

www.haltonfamilyhubs.co.uk/



SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH



1 MHST

www.merseycare.nhs.uk

Our Mental Health Support Team provides direct mental health support to 45 schools in Halton. We promote the early detection and prevention of mental health problems, strengthen links with mental health services, providing direct, ongoing support around mental health and wellbeing across the whole school.



2 KOOTH

www.kooth.com

Kooth is a free digital safe and anonymous platform for support for young people. They have wellbeing activities, journals, discussion boards, tips and a free Chat and messenger option for young people to talk to someone.



3 CAMHS

www.merseycare.nhs.uk

Headz Up Halton drop-in hub
An informal drop-in café where young people up to 18 years, parents and carers can drop by to speak with a mental health professional for assessment, advice and signposting to local services.
Tues- Brookvale / Thursday Warrington Rd



Halton **SEND PARENT**
Carer's Forum
Your voice counts

WORKING TOGETHER FOR **SEND** FAMILIES

A SIMPLE GUIDE TO OUR FORUM

We want to explain what the Parent Carer Forum is and what we do.

We listen to parent carers and share your experiences to help improve services.

This is called co-production.

Your voice matters.



1 WHAT IS CO-PRODUCTION?

Co-production means working together.

Parent carers share their experiences.

Services listen.

We talk about what is working well and what is not working well.

We use this to help improve support.

It does not mean staying quiet.

- ✓ Families share
- ✓ Services listen
- ✓ We work together
- ✓ Support improves



2 WORKING WITH HBC AND THE ICB

We meet with Halton Borough Council (HBC), the NHS ICB and other local services.

We feed back what parent carers tell us.

We raise themes, ask questions and follow up.

We help services improve and help hold organisations to account.

We may not fix individual cases, but we can raise common issues.



3 HOW CAN PARENTS GET INVOLVED?

There are lots of ways to engage with us:

- Coffee mornings
- Evening Zooms
- Our closed Facebook group
- Reading our weekly newsletter
- Taking part in surveys about local services
- Sending us an email



4 SUPPORT FOR PARENT CARERS

Our coffee mornings are a friendly, supportive space.

Parent carers can meet others in similar situations.

We often invite guests from different services.

They may share information or ask parent carers for their views about what is working well and what is not working well.

- 👥 Connect with others
- 🗣️ Share experiences
- ❓ Ask questions
- 🏠 Hear from services

5 CAN FAMILIES STILL SPEAK UP?

Yes.

Parents and carers can still speak up, make complaints and campaign as individuals.

As a funded Parent Carer Forum, we have rules to follow.

These rules affect how the forum works, but they do not take away parents' rights.

Your voice still matters.



Thank you for sharing your views and experiences.
Your voice makes a difference.



Better
support



Families
heard



Services
improve



Inclusive
future



Questions or concerns?

Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum

✉ info@haltonsendpcf.org.uk

WHAT'S ON OCTOBER 2026

Events, support and opportunities
for SEND families in Halton

**1
OCT**
9.30–11.30AM

PARENTS AND CARERS SUPPORT - COFFEE MORNING

Bridgewater Park, WA7 2LW

With Gill Tyler, Designated Clinical Officer (DCO)

Come along for a brew, a chat and support from
Gill. Ask questions and meet other parent carers.



**8
OCT**
9.30–11.30AM

PARENTS AND CARERS SUPPORT - COFFEE MORNING

Bridgewater Park, WA7 2LW

With Cheryl from Gateway Community
Alternative Provision

Come along to hear from Cheryl, ask questions
and chat with other parent carers.



**15
OCT**
9.30–11.30AM

PARENTS AND CARERS SUPPORT - COFFEE MORNING

Bridgewater Park, WA7 2LW

No guest

Come along for a brew, a chat and support from
other parent carers.



**22
OCT**
9.30–11.30AM

PARENTS AND CARERS SUPPORT - COFFEE MORNING

Halton DCBL Stadium

With Ben Holmes

Director of Education, Inclusion and Provision

Come along to hear from Ben, ask questions,
share your views and chat with other parent carers.



**24
OCT**

SYNC CLUB

Monthly SEND Youth Needs Club

A safe and friendly space for young people
with SEND to socialise, take part in activities
and be themselves.



*We are here to
support you*



Peer to peer
support and advice



Share experiences
and information



Have your say and
help shape services



Friendly, welcoming
and judgement free



Everyone
welcome!

*Get
Involved!*



Everyone welcome! 

FOR MORE INFORMATION



haltonsendcarersforum.org.uk



info@haltonsendpcf.org.uk



Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum

contact

For families
with disabled children


HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Informing  *Empowering*  *Engaging* 



Halton SEND
Parent Carer's Forum

Your voice counts



COFFEE MORNING

PARENT ADVICE, SUPPORT & CHECK-IN

*Everyone
welcome!*



Join us for a coffee morning with Ben Holmes, Director of Education, Inclusion and Provision.

Ben will provide a Halton Borough Council (HBC) update. Come along to hear from Ben, ask questions, share your views and chat with other parent carers.



MEET
other parent
carers



SHARE
experiences
and information



GET
support and
advice



DATE
Thursday
22nd October



TIME
9.30 – 11.30am



VENUE
Halton DCBL Stadium
Widnes



GUESTS / SPEAKER
Ben Holmes
Director of Education,
Inclusion and Provision

We look forward to seeing you!

GET IN TOUCH



haltonsendcarersforum.org.uk



info@haltonsendpct.org.uk



Halton SEND Parent Carers Forum



Informing *Empowering* *Engaging*



IT'S A GREAT DAY
TO BECOME
THE PERSON YOU
WANT TO BE

Soluna is a space to be you. Get **free mental wellbeing support** when you need it – live **one-on-one text chats** with real professionals, **journalling**, and loads more.



Soluna is the free, safe, mental health app and website – made for you.

Scan the QR code to download or visit **SolunaByKooth.com**



A man with a beard and a bandage on his arm. The man is smiling and looking down at his arm, which has a small white bandage on the shoulder. He is wearing a red t-shirt. The background is a solid light blue color.

Do you look
after someone?

**Ask about your
free flu jab**

 **carersUK**



Led by
Rachael Russell



Certificate of attendance
sent after the event

Vesta

Educational Services CIC

**FREE
EVENT**

EBSA CPD

Understanding EBSA



Wednesday 21st | 4:00–5:30pm



Light refreshments on arrival

For teachers and staff in primary schools, secondary schools, specialist settings, alternative provision, and EOTAS tutors / caseworkers.



What the session will cover



Understanding
EBSA



Impact on
schools



Practical
strategies



Next steps

Scan to register



Limited capacity—
booking essential

Full event details shared
on registration

Funded by Vesta Educational Services CIC as part of
The National Lottery Community Fund project.



**COMMUNITY
FUND**



Gateway Community

NEW 16+ SATURDAY PROVISION

Launching 6th June • Every Saturday • 10:30am - 1:30pm

A Fun, Safe & Welcoming Space for young people and adults (16+)
with **SEN** needs to socialise, relax,
and enjoy time with friends.



Films



Disco



Bingo



Gaming



Gaming



Lunch



Tuckshop

Occasional small trips out to broaden experiences and build confidence.

• Accessible for All • Activities can be accessed privately or through Direct Payments.

Want to Know More? Contact Us!



0151 422 0111



gatewayc2017@outlook.com



Hallmark House, Waterloo Rd, Widnes WA8 0QR

Tax-Free Childcare

Halton families
Information Service

for parents, for carers, for children, for young people

**BEST
START
IN LIFE**

**Tax-Free Childcare can
help with the cost of
paying for childcare**

For every **£8** you
pay into the
account, the
government will top
it up by **£2**



You can use Tax-free childcare for:



Childminders, Nurseries



Afterschool clubs & Holidays clubs



Other registered providers



You'll usually need to be
working (or returning to
work) and your child
must be **11 or younger**
(16 or younger if
they're disabled).



ONLINE

Register to set up an account
and start saving money

SCAN ME!





NOW LIVE!

The Autism Wellbeing Podcast



**WITH EXPERTS BY
EXPERIENCE FROM THE
AUTISM WELLBEING
PROJECT CIC**

The Autism Wellbeing Podcast is now LIVE!

Tired of podcasts that don't sound like real life?
Welcome to The Autism Wellbeing Podcast – where real people sit on the sofa and talk honestly about life, autism, relationships, work, mess-ups, wins, and everything in between.



Reiki /
Massage
treatments
available

FREE
ENTRY

WELCOME TO OUR
**Christmas
Market**

Enjoy different kinds of handmade gifts,
cakes, sweets and so much more!



10am-3pm



Saturday
14th November 2026



**Preston Brook
Village Hall, Runcorn**



SEE YOU THERE!

