

# FamilyMatters

The newsletter for parents, families and practitioners



## Welcome to Family Matters

**Family Matters is the newsletter for Warwickshire families with children and young people aged 0-20. The Family Information Service created the publication to help you find out more about local services and support available to you.**

The Government's Every Child Matters: Change for Children agenda has influenced the content of the magazine and each issue focuses on one of the five outcomes identified by children as being important to them.

This particular issue focuses on the outcome 'Making a Positive Contribution' and highlights how some of the services available in Warwickshire can make a positive contribution to the lives of children, young people and families within the county.

We have only included a selection of the services currently working towards this aim. To find out more about Warwickshire County Council services that are available to residents, visit [www.warwickshire.gov.uk](http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk)

We hope that you enjoy reading Family Matters. If you would like to comment on anything that you have read or make suggestions for future articles then please get in touch.

## Reducing child obesity in Warwickshire

**Children in the UK are currently rated third in the world's obesity league with 10% of six year olds classed as obese. Current data for the West Midlands suggests that the number of children being classed as overweight increases from 22% at reception (aged five) to almost 36% at year 6 (aged 11).**



To help tackle this problem and the onset of weight-related health problems in later life, seven Family Change4Life Advisers have joined the School Nursing teams across Warwickshire. The advisers will support the School Nursing teams in the delivery of the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP) which weighs and measures Reception and Year 6 children.

The posts have been commissioned and funded by the Public Health Department and are currently funded for a fixed term pilot period of 2 years and will be evaluated by Coventry University. The aim of this scheme is to reduce obesity in children before they reach Year 6 in Primary School.

Obesity related health issues costs the NHS an estimated £500 million a year and this figure continues to grow.

The Family Change4Life Advisers will help support families with children identified as having an unhealthy weight to access structured weight management programmes. They will provide information on healthy eating and physical activities so that parents can help themselves and their children in achieving and maintaining a healthy weight and sustain a healthy lifestyle both now and in the future.

For more information, contact Lynn Hitch on **01926 317732**, email [Lynn.Hitch@swft.nhs.uk](mailto:Lynn.Hitch@swft.nhs.uk) or visit: [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life)



# Time 4 Every Family

**Time 4 Every Family is a group of seven busy Family Support Workers (FSWs), one of whom has recently gained national recognition for her work.**

In the last year alone, the team has helped over 200 families and over 350 children throughout the county, building on their strengths and offering support to successfully cope with any challenging issues that these families may face.

The team works alongside families with children aged 5 and over. They work with all members of the family to build positive relationships within the home and the local community.

Services offered by the FSW team include: one to one support with families in their home, advice about positive parenting strategies including behaviour management and supporting families to establish routines. They also act as go-betweens for parents in meetings and point them in the direction of other services that may be able to offer further help.

One of the their team members, Hannah Frost, recently gained national recognition for her work with a local family when she received a National Autistic Society (NAS) Happiness Hero Award in London.

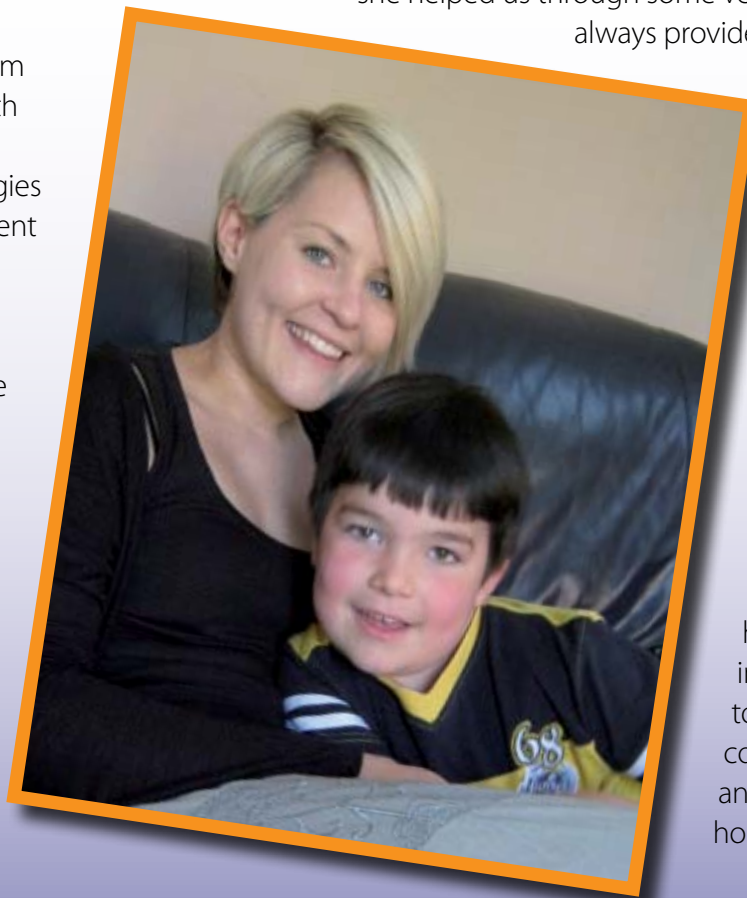
She had been nominated by Julie Thomas for the support she had offered to Julie's five year old son Jack, who is on the autistic spectrum. Hannah had started working with Jack around two years ago after Julie had a new baby. Julie was unable to take both children out due to Jack's unpredictable behaviour, where he would run off without warning.

Hannah visited the family on a weekly basis and accompanied them on trips to the park and the library in an effort to build Jack's social skills and his road safety awareness.

Julie said, "Hannah was a godsend for Jack and for myself. Nothing was ever too much trouble for her and she helped us through some very difficult times. She

always provided a listening ear and useful advice at times when we felt most isolated."

Hannah said she was pleased to have been involved in Jack's life and to have helped both him and Julie. While working with Jack, she would meet regularly with the school and all of the health professionals involved with Jack to ensure that he continued to develop and make the best of his home and school life.



For further information about the work of the Family Support Workers, please contact Gill Bishop, the Family Support Worker Project Manager on **01926 742192** or email **[gillbishop@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:gillbishop@warwickshire.gov.uk)**

# Childcare Brokerage Service – Helping those who need it most

## Warwickshire’s Childcare Brokerage Service has been making a real difference to the lives of local parents.

Disability, serious illness, language difficulties, living in a rural location, being on a low income or being a lone parent can all act as a barrier to finding childcare or accessing support services, but the Brokerage Service can help.

The service is led by Anna Standing and works on a referral-only basis. The level of support offered by Anna depends upon each family’s circumstances, but can include:

- Help in finding emergency childcare or childcare at short notice
- Speaking to childcare providers and support services
- Ensuring that any financial help they may be entitled to has been investigated
- Helping parents to understand the information available to them
- Helping with applications for any support they may be entitled to, for example, financial help

Here is how the service helped one family:

A health visitor called the service to see if support could be given to

a mum who needed emergency childcare. The mum had previously fled a domestically violent situation. She needed childcare so that she could attend a court hearing regarding the custody of her two small children.

She was a lone parent, on a low income with no family or community support to help her. The health visitor stated that her English was limited and that she therefore lacked the confidence to contact childminders herself.

First of all, Anna contacted the health visitor to get more information about the mother’s situation. She then contacted the mum using an interpreter (another staff member) to explain how the service could help her.

A search was done for childminders in the local area and they were contacted by Anna to see if any could meet the mother’s needs. The interpreter then told the

mother that a childminder had been found and about how much this would cost. He was also able to give her information about other support services that could help her deal with other family-related issues that were affecting her life.

This meant that the mother could go to the court hearing, happy in the knowledge that her children were being cared for by a qualified childminder. This also helped to greatly reduce her levels of anxiety during this stressful time. Using language skills within the team, she had also been able to express her needs and requirements in her own language and these were then effectively dealt with.



For more information on this invaluable service, call the **Family Information Service** on **0845 090 8044**, email: **fis@warwickshire.gov.uk** or visit **www.warwickshire.gov.uk/childcarebrokerageservice**

# Helping parents to help themselves

**Being a parent can be one of the most demanding jobs that we ever have to face. Even the most confident of parents need a little bit of help from time to time.**

The Positive Parenting Programme (Triple P) is the world wide phenomenon that has been successfully helping parents throughout the world with their parenting skills, including those in Warwickshire.

Since January 2009, nearly 1200 parents throughout the county have received support through Triple P groups, seminars or one to one programmes. Research undertaken by Warwick University Centre for Education, Development and Research (CEDAR) has shown that Triple P has helped to increase the confidence, skills and knowledge of local parents in the task of raising their children.

## What is Triple P?

Triple P is a flexible system of parenting and support. It is evidenced based which means that it has been proven to work. Triple P focuses very much on a prevention / early intervention approach – helping parents to find solutions to their parenting problems before those problems are allowed to become a more serious disruption to family life. However, it has also been proven to improve outcomes for children, young people, and parents/ carers in families where there have been more significant conduct issues, parental discord and lifestyle issues causing parental struggles.

There are five different levels of intervention to the Triple P approach, depending on how much

help individual parents need. Some will only require information or minimum help and support, while other parents may need more intensive intervention.

Strategies employed in Triple P can include encouraging parents to model positive behaviour so that their children can learn from this and using descriptive praise - asking parents to be specific on positive things so that the child knows what they are being praised for. This helps to raise the children's consciousness of what good behaviour is and encourages them to repeat this behaviour.

## The impact of 'Triple P' on parents:

- Parents function better themselves
- Better communication over parenting
- Less conflict with partners
- Less stressed, depressed and angry
- More resilient in coping with adversity
- Function better at work
- Better quality of life
- Helps parents to build on their own strengths and focuses on the positive aspects of their parenting

## The impact of 'Triple P' on children:

- They benefit from growing up in a more positive harmonious family
- They are more cooperative
- Fewer behaviour problems
- More sociable with peers and siblings
- Fewer problems with worry and anxiety
- Fewer ADHD symptoms
- Improved self-esteem
- Higher quality of family life



### Here is an example of how Triple P has helped one Warwickshire parent:

A single mother was struggling to cope with her three children and in particular the behaviour of her six year old son.

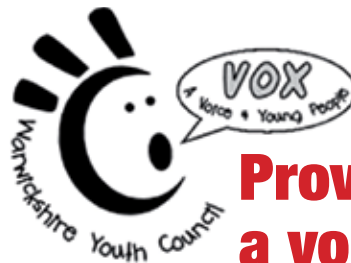
There were concerns about his behaviour at school; the mother was worried about her mental health and her parenting skills.

The mother started on a Triple P Primary Care plan. This involved eight weekly home visits and concentrated on the principles of positive parenting. Through the support of a Triple P practitioner and by using some of the Triple P parenting tip sheets, the mother was able to work out a parenting plan and to put what she had learnt into action.

This resulted in the mother being much more confident in her parenting and she enjoys spending time with her son. She is confident in using the simple but highly effective Triple P strategies and her son's behaviour has improved considerably at home, as well as at school where he is now achieving more and doing much better in terms of his educational progress.

#### Further information:

For more information about Triple P courses in Warwickshire, contact the **Parenting Development team** on **01926 742219** or email: **familyandparenting@warwickshire.gov.uk**



## Providing a voice for Warwickshire's youth

**The Warwickshire Youth Council, known as the VOX, was set up to act as a voice for young people from all over Warwickshire. It aims to promote different ways of influencing decisions in community planning as well as creating opportunities to develop new skills, to meet new people and have some fun!**

The Youth Council makes it clear why young people should be involved in decisions that affect them and the positive outcomes that can be achieved from this. This can happen at every level – local, national, even European!

#### The benefits of being involved in the forum include:

- Being part of positive change
- Help change negative images and stereotypes of young people
- Increased confidence
- Helping the community
- Being recognised for doing something positive
- Creating goals and achieving them

#### Here is why one member joined the Youth Council:

I got involved in VOX because I wanted to make a difference to the young people around me, change the things they think are wrong with our society and to make others hear young peoples voice. I want to make people my age more aware of the things that influence them and others like them, give them the things they lack, such as decent places to go. Being in VOX allows me to do all this and more.

For more information on VOX, contact **Shinderpaul Bhangal** on **01926 742 498** or email **shinderpaulbhangal@warwickshire.gov.uk**

# Improving Relationship and Sex Education



Warwickshire's  
Respect Yourself Campaign  
Working in partnership for young people  
[www.respectyourself.info](http://www.respectyourself.info)

**Many young people gain knowledge and skills to manage their relationships in positive ways from their parents. However, many others rely on Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) lessons in school to give them important sexual health information.**

Good quality RSE helps young people build healthy and respectful relationships, delay their first sexual experiences, and be responsible about the use of contraception.

Sadly, reports show that many young people are not getting the RSE that they want or need. In 2007 over 21,600 young people aged 11 to 18 years, took part in a national survey and 40 per cent stated that RSE in schools was either poor, or very poor.

In Warwickshire, young people have taken a great interest in the RSE they get in school and members of VOX (the county's youth council) and the Warwickshire Youth Parliament, have made RSE a priority. Supported by the Youth and Community Service, the Respect Yourself Campaign (RYC) and Loudmouth Education and Training, VOX consulted young people in four secondary schools and one FE College earlier this year about the RSE they receive. At another four secondary schools, young people took part in a consultation commissioned by RYC.



Several pupils commented that the content and the methods used in RSE did not sufficiently reflect their world and some students felt that some topics were covered too late in their education due to the fact that young people mature at different rates.

Such feedback is unsurprising given the wide variety of messages young people receive from a range of interactive and engaging sources such as the internet, popular music, computer games and TV. This has challenged professionals to develop more engaging methods of exploring RSE with young people.

Although the majority of young people will not be engaging in sexual activity at a young age, early sexual development and experiences are a reality for some pupils. Without appropriate education this can put them at risk of unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs) which may affect their educational achievement and future life chances.

Such feedback has prompted RYC to commission research into raising the quality of RSE in our secondary schools. RYC has also been supporting secondary schools who wish to develop health drop-ins on school sites, which will cover topics including sexual health.

For more information on the Respect Yourself Campaign, contact Jenny Whateley - [jennywhately@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:jennywhately@warwickshire.gov.uk) or visit [www.respectyourself.info](http://www.respectyourself.info)  
If you would like a copy of 'Talking to Your Children about Relationships and Sex' contact the Family Information Service on **0845 090 8044** or email [fis@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:fis@warwickshire.gov.uk)

# Caring for the Carers

Warwickshire

**Young Carers' Project**



**Across Warwickshire, there are hundreds of young people facing the daily pressures of caring for other family members who may be disabled or suffering from long term illness. The care they provide is unpaid, challenging and is often hidden from public view. But, through the help of a Warwickshire charity, there is an invaluable support network available to help these young carers.**

## **So what exactly is a young carer?**

Put simply, young carers are children and young people under 18 years of age who look after someone in their family who have an illness, disability, mental health issue or a substance misuse problem. They take on practical and emotional caring responsibilities that would normally be expected of an adult. In addition, they may also look after younger brothers and sisters and do all or most of the household chores.

Although helping to care for someone can be very rewarding, it can also be time consuming and very demanding. As a result of those demands, young carers are often at risk of social isolation, bullying, under-achievement, absenteeism from school and physical and mental ill health.

The Warwickshire Young Carers Project (WYCP) is a charity that was commissioned by Warwickshire County Council's Children, Young People and Families Directorate to help ensure that a support network is in place to help these young people.

WYCP currently works with 650 young carers aged 8 to 18. It provides a range of support including someone

to listen to their needs and feelings, help to get in touch with other services that can offer help, one to one support, group sessions and activities for carers around the county. It also offers support at school to help young people achieve their goals and succeed in the things they may be struggling with.

WYCP can also provide them with the opportunity to 'take time off' from their daily routine with fun days out and holiday breaks like the activity weekend run in Staffordshire last summer (pictured below).



There is no doubt that these young people provide a great deal of support to their loved ones, but they are often in need of support themselves. WYCP strives to provide these young carers with a service that is not only extremely helpful, but one that is also enjoyable through its range of activities and breaks. In doing so, they provide these young people with a welcome release from the day to day demands and pressures of their carer's role.

For more information on the **Warwickshire Young Carers Project** call **01926 485 486**, email **info@warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk** or visit **www.warwickshireyoungcarers.org.uk**

# Warwickshire Award for Involvement



**The Warwickshire Award for Involvement (WAI) helps local projects measure their work around the involvement of children, young people and parents/ carers in the design, development and evaluation of services within the county.**



The Warwickshire Young Carer's Project (WYCP) is the most recent recipient of the Award at the silver level. Manager Anthony Bishop, pictured with Gemma Gough receiving the award from WCVYS President Bridget Winstanley MBE DL stated, "WYCP are proud to receive the silver level WAI. Completing the award has helped us to recognise the work already done to support the needs and aspirations of our young people, as well as helping shape the direction for young people's involvement in decisions regarding the delivery of services."

To achieve the award, organisations are supported by Warwickshire Children and Voluntary Youth Services (WCVYS) in putting together a folder of evidence to demonstrate how they meet standards at the bronze, silver and gold level for involvement.

Folders are assessed by members of a young people's assessment panel, who then visit the organisation and ask questions of the staff and those using the project before making a final decision about giving the award.

## **Becoming a young person assessor**

The assessment panel are a group of young people who have been trained by WCVYS and who are mainly recruited through the organisation's annual

Young Leaders residential - though any interested child or young person can become an assessor. WCVYS trains young people from across the county so that they can assess projects within their own area.

Those involved have found that they have grown in confidence and have gained communication skills and knowledge in how organisations can involve children young people and families in service delivery.

In December last year, the WAI group were short-listed for the National 'Young Partners Award' which recognises 'outstanding commitment to youth participation' and 'involving young people in all aspects of decision making'.

## **How to get started on the award**

Any voluntary and community sector organisation working with children young people or families in Warwickshire can be supported in achieving this award at no extra cost. For more information contact **Helen Smith** at **WCVYS** on **01926 413611** or email: **helensmith@warwickshire.gov.uk**

# FamilyMatters

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue. The next issue of Family Matters is due out in August 2011.

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