



Welcome to the December 2025 Newsletter

We know how busy you all are, especially in the run up to Christmas but wanted to let you know of some of the services and support available in your area.

First and foremost don't forget the Special Guardian's December Quiz!

Date - Tuesday 16th December at 5pm. Teams invites will be sent out nearer the time.

What our Special Guardians and their families said about the Autumn Quiz!

'The SGO "Quiz was shamazing'

'A' is asking can we have another??

'We all really enjoyed it!'

'It was fun'!

'More questions next time please'

Amy, Jane and Louise would all like to take this opportunity to wish you and your families a joyful Christmas and we hope that 2026 proves to be a wonderful year for you all.

Our offices will be closed on Christmas Day, Boxing Day and New Years Day. If you have concerns for the safety of a child during this period, please contact First Point of Contact on 03456789021.

Some events local to you in the run up to Christmas (further details online):

Saturday 29th November to Christmas Eve (selected dates) – Severn Valley Railway – Elf express.

Alderford Lake – Santa experience

Christmas at Park Hall farm – Oswestry

Follies Safari – Hawkstone Park Follies

Chester Zoo Lanterns and Light

Oswestry and surrounding area illuminated Tractor Run – 13th December 2025.

SEND Meet and Chat

The Autumn Meet and Chat SEND sessions start this month for parent carers of a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)?

Parent and kinship carers can join us for an informal drop-in session where they can ask questions, get advice, and explore the support available to them within Shropshire. Speak to a range of professionals who can help with:

- Education, health, and Care Plans (EHCPs)
- School support and advocacy
- Health and Wellbeing for children with SEND
- Social care and family support
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Advice for navigating SEND challenges

Each session will have different professionals available, but parent carers are encouraged to come along, have a chat, and find the help they need!

Visit the [Family Information Service \(FIS\) directory](#) for information on dates and venues.

The SEND Local Offer for parent carers of children and young people with SEND

You may have heard of [the SEND Local Offer](#), which is a single place for information, services, and resources for parent carers of children and young people with SEND.

The SEND Local Offer has two sections, one is an information section talking about process and support across, health, education and social care. It also looks at early years, preparing for adulthood, travel and transport, emotional health and wellbeing, finance, things to do and support for parent carers,

The other section is a directory element listing services and organisations of support, locally, regionally and nationally. The [directory element](#) was recently redesigned, but the SEND Local Offer remained as a key top level category, which you can access [here](#). You can then filter by sub category, or location to find the information you need.

In the free text search box you can also try typing some of these keywords.

#ChildrensMentalHealth

#UnderstandingYourChild

#SENDChat

#SENDThingsToDo

#SENDParentCarerSupport

If you have any feedback about the Local Offer please email us at local.offer@shropshire.gov.uk or complete our online survey - [Shropshire SEND Local Offer Feedback Survey](#)

Parenting Help and Support Line

The Parenting Help and Support Line are here for all parents with a friendly listening ear and practical advice on everything from behaviours that challenge to sleep issues. No judgment, just support.

Call 01743 250950 Monday - Thursday, 9.30am - 4.30pm or Friday, 9.30am - 3.30pm or email: parenting.team@shropshire.gov.uk

Early Help Coffee and Chat Drop Ins

It's fair to say that all parents and special guardians from time to time need some help and support with issues that impact on family life. There is help and support available in Shropshire through our Early Help coffee and chat drop ins – some of which are also stay and play sessions.

You can get free Information, advice and support on all aspects of family life, at our Family Drop-Ins. You can chat, have a cuppa and see how we can help you with:

- Family life
- Parenting support

- Domestic abuse support
- Money worries
- Housing support
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- and much more

To find your local drop in please visit the [Shropshire Family Information Service Directory](#)



Don't forget someone from the Special Guardianship Support Team will be joining the Early Help coffee mornings as often as possible and will send out dates and further details throughout the coming year!

Health Visitor Open access clinics

Information on the open access clinics run throughout Shropshire by Health Visitors has been updated. You can find out where they are and when they run by clicking on the [Shropshire Family Information Service Directory](#)

They offer kinship carers and parents the chance to get the baby in their care weighed but also to access information, advice and support on a range of topics, including:

- Infant feeding advice
- Child development
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Parenting and local support groups
- Behaviour
- Sleep

Special guardians who would like support but are unable to get to a session, can also get help by calling 0333 358 3654 or texting the team on 07520 635212.

Getting on better – relationship support

Worried about your relationship or feel you're arguing too much? Not all arguing between adults is harmful but when it's intense or happens a lot of the time, there can be a negative impact on the children.

If your relationship is going through a difficult phase, you can find ways to argue 'better', resolve disputes and reduce conflict at home with our range of free courses, resources and apps. Have a look at the [Getting on better](#) pages of the Early Help website.

Our latest newsletters for families

We've issued a couple of our newsletters recently, including

Our SEND newsletter is aimed at parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities but is also useful for those who work with the SEND families. These newsletters can be found on the [SEND Local Offer](#).

Our Family Information Service newsletter is aimed at all parents and contains lots of useful information – this edition had lots of events and activities for the school holidays. These newsletters can be found on the [Early Help website](#).

New groups from Shropshire Youth Association

SYA have launched two new groups – one for home educated young people called [Youth Connect](#) and one for parent and kinship carers of children and young people with SEND called [Tea and Time](#).

A reminder that they also have a group for young parents called [Tuesday Time Out](#).

Best Start in Life campaign

We are delighted to share with you the launch of the new Best Start in Life campaign. It is part of the government's Plan for Change promise to break the link between a child's background and their future success, with the aim to ensure 75% of children are ready to learn when they start school by 2028.

From pregnancy to childcare and beyond, every milestone in the early years of a child's life helps shape their development. The Best Start in Life campaign aims to increase awareness of

the role of the early years in a child's development, increase parental understanding of things they can do in their child's early years and how early education supports child development.

Raising children is full of joyful firsts but can also feel daunting, with questions both big and small, which is why our [Best Start in Life website](#) brings together trusted advice, support and guidance for parents and kinship carers to turn to. Whether they are wondering when the right time is to wean their baby, looking into childcare support options, or thinking about activities to get their child ready for school, the Best Start in Life website offers a broad range of information for families, including eligibility for childcare offers, help to find free breakfast clubs and Best Start Family Hubs in their area, and support on pregnancy through to starting school and beyond.

To mark the campaign launch, a powerful new film titled '[The Story of You](#)' celebrating the journey of early childhood, highlighting to parents the vital role they play in their child's lives and the support available. The film is scripted by children's author Camilla Reid (author of the Pip and Posy books), illustrated by Rob Biddulph (illustrator of Blown Away and Odd Dog Out) and narrated by famous parents; dancer and author Oti Mabuse, TV personality Billie Shepherd, online creators Ms Apple and Tay Kabs, as well as much-loved character, Mummy Pig from the Peppa Pig series alongside 'Secret Life of 4 Year Olds' childhood expert Professor Sam Wass.

More information:

Best Start in Life website: [Best Start in Life](#) to find trusted resources and information as well as local support.

Newsletter sign-up: subscribe to the [newsletter](#) or [personalised weekly emails](#) for tailored updates, tips, and guidance.

The impact of online news on children and young people's wellbeing

Internet Matters has published a new report examining the impact of online news on children and young people's wellbeing. The research included a survey of 1,000 children across the UK aged 11-17 and focus groups with children aged 13-17.

Key findings show: children and young people regularly consume news on social media from a range of sources; distressing news stories, mis- and disinformation and AI-generated content impact young people's wellbeing; and young people have developed their own support strategies when navigating this news environment.

The report provides recommendations for social media companies, news outlets and the government, including the need for robust age assurance on all online platforms to ensure children are receiving an age-appropriate experience and support for schools to deliver media literacy education to every child at all key stages.

Read the report: [Understanding the impact of news on children's wellbeing](#)

See also on NSPCC Learning > [Preventing online harm and abuse](#)

Alleviating pressure on Midlands primary care through early mental health support

Across the NHS, the picture is clear: demand for mental health services continues to outstrip capacity. In primary care, this means:

- **Rising numbers of young patients presenting** with stress, anxiety, and low mood
- **Increased repeat appointments** for issues that could be better managed with timely psychological support
- **Families frustrated** by long CAMHS waiting lists, often turning to their GP as the first point of call
- **Growing pressure** on practice teams to provide safeguarding and signposting support

Health systems today are forced to prioritise those with the highest level of need, leaving many young people waiting for specialist care. But this isn't inevitable. **Prevention is the best route forward.** Early, accessible support helps young people before difficulties escalate, reducing demand for GP appointments and avoiding A&E visits from those with nowhere else to turn. That's where [Kooth](#) makes a difference.

- **Free, safe, anonymous mental health support** available to ages 10+ in the UK
- **No referral or waiting list** -young people can access support immediately
- **24/7** therapeutic content, self-help tools, and moderated peer support
- **Professional counselling sessions** available, helping young people manage their wellbeing before reaching crisis point
- **Population-wide, preventative model** proven to ease pressure on primary and acute care services

[Kooth](#) is at the forefront of shifting health systems towards prevention. By ensuring every patient has access to early support, we can reduce the strain on GPs and practice teams, while improving health outcomes for young people and their families. Encourage young people and families in your community to use Kooth – and help protect capacity in primary care.

[Supporting mental health amid growing pressures — your October KoothBytes](#)

Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium +

Children who have been previously Looked After may be entitled to Early Years Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium Plus between reception to Year 11 of mainstream school. If there is already support funded by Pupil Premium within Nursery or Education, the Child's Social Worker must

liaise with Virtual School for discussions (before the SGO is granted) to secure any 'bridge' funding that may be required until 'Previously Looked After' Pupil Premium Plus can be claimed.

Free information events for kinship carers

We're pleased to update you on this month's upcoming **free online and in-person workshops and events** available for kinship carers to book onto. They cover a range of topics including 'Supporting your kinship child at school', 'Life story work with children in kinship care', and 'Understanding how to keep children in kinship care safe online'. Funded by the Department for Education, these workshops and events are a dedicated space for kinship carers only. All events are listed on our [website](#).

[share this flyer](#)

At Kinship we offer a range of free support to help your kinship child in school.

This email brings together all our **free advice and online workshops in one place**, making it easier for kinship carers to find practical guidance to help your children succeed at school, and to understand what support should be available to you.

We know that many kinship carers may be feeling overwhelmed during the last school term before festivities begin and we want to make sure you have access to the information you need to support your child's learning.

Almost half of kinship carers have said that their kinship children aren't getting the support they need in education. We hear every single day from kinship carers that navigating the school system to understand what support is available to kinship children can be very complex and disheartening.

"It's a constant fight to get the right support in a school setting. I feel as if I am not listened to as a kinship carer. I also believe there is stigma attached to the children, or teachers do not have the relevant training in supporting children like ours." (Aunt and special guardian)

This is why we have launched **brand new and updated education advice guides on our website** to help your kinship child thrive in the classroom.

[Get support for your child's education](#)

Have you been to our free online education workshops?

As well as accessing our online information, we know that many kinship carers really value our **free, online workshops tailored to the topics that matter to them**.

You will come away from these workshops feeling confident about how to communicate with your child's school and advocate for your child.

If you have a specific question for our expert trainer, then our workshops are for you.

Time at the end of the workshop is reserved to answer your questions and to give you a chance to speak with our expert facilitators.

[Sign up for our 'EHCP and SEND process' workshop](#)

[Sign up for our 'Supporting your kinship child at school' workshop](#)

What do the education advice guides cover?

Find out what support your kinship family should expect to receive from school, including any additional support schools might offer. Our dedicated advice guides break down the education topics that matter most to you. **They are clear, reliable and will help you get the best education for your child.**

You can find new advice guides on how virtual schools can and should be supporting your child, how to get an EHCP plan in place for your child and how to move and transition to another school.

You can also find revamped advice guides on what additional support should be available at your school, how to find the right school, help with school costs and how to access Pupil Premium Plus.

NEW: [Moving schools](#)

NEW: [How virtual schools support kinship children and carers](#)

NEW: [Getting an EHCP plan for your kinship child](#)

UPDATED: [Finding a school for your kinship child](#)

UPDATED: [Help with school costs for kinship families](#)

UPDATED: [Pupil premium plus](#)

UPDATED: [School support for kinship children](#)

COMING SOON: Post-18 support

Our aim is to make sure you know what educational support your child is entitled to.

We hope our advice guides and workshops support you and your kinship family to navigate the rest of the school year and any challenges that lie ahead.

Best wishes,

Carine and the Kinship Team

Once again may we wish those of you that celebrate Christmas a very merry one and for those who don't, may this holiday period be a chance to rest and catch up with friends and family.