

Dear Special Guardians,

***Welcome to the July 2026 Special Guardianship Order Support
Team Newsletter.***

Free Summer Holiday Activities and Food Clubs Across Shropshire

The summer holidays are fast approaching, and Shropshire Council's Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme is offering to make the holidays unforgettable for eligible children and young people. Fully funded by the Department for Education, the HAF Programme provides free holiday clubs and healthy meals to eligible families across the county from 20 July to 20 August and booking is open today, Monday 29 June.



Summer Holiday Fun and Food in Shropshire
Book Now!

Spaces are available on the summerr HAF (Holiday Activities and Food) programme.

Over the summer holidays, eligible children and young people aged 4 (reception class age) to 16, are invited to attend free holiday clubs across the county.

To find out more please go to:
www.shropshire.gov.uk/haf

Shropshire Council

The Summer HAF Programme runs from 20 July to 20 August and booking is open today, Monday 29 June.

Children aged 4 to 16 who receive benefits-related free school meals, or are referred by professionals due to them experiencing financial hardship, can join exciting activities like sports, crafts, cooking, and outdoor games in community venues across the county.

Taking part in the activities is free for eligible children and young people and each session includes a nutritious meal, with plenty of opportunities to learn about healthy eating.

To check eligibility and to book, visit [HAF holiday clubs | Shropshire Council](#) . Eligible families will need a unique HAF code from their school or referral professional. All places must be booked in advance.

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Other places to visit and things to do during the Summer.

Top Summer Activities in Shropshire

- **Water & Adventure Fun:** Cool off at the [Alderford Lake](#) in Whitchurch, featuring a massive floating obstacle course, paddleboard and kayak rentals, and outdoor "Escape Islands."
 - **Historic Trails:** Head to [Attingham Park](#) in Shrewsbury to enjoy the Pokémon TCG Mega Evolution Trail, running from late June through early September.
 - **Treetop Thrills:** Let the kids explore the magical woods, giant treehouses, and wooden play structures at [BeWILDerwood Cheshire](#), just a short drive from Whitchurch.
 - **Exhibitions & Culture:** Visit [Shrewsbury Museum & Art Gallery](#) for free gallery entry and affordable, family-friendly workshops.
 - **Countryside & Discovery:** Discover the fascinating caves and trails at [Hawkstone Park Follies](#), or engage in the ecology events at the [Shropshire Hills Discovery Centre](#).
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Family Information Service Updates



Our job is to give you the info and resources you need to help your family life run a little smoother. We can help with:

- Childcare - finding it and advice on paying for it
- Local baby and toddler groups
- Events, clubs, activities, and fun things to do in the school holidays, for all ages
- Getting parenting and family support
- Finding health and wellbeing support

We cover everything and anything to do with family life, so if you have a question, chances are we'll be able to help, or if we can't, we'll point you in the direction of someone who can. Find us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) or [X](#). Call 01743 254400 or email ShropshireFIS@shropshire.gov.uk



He's coming home – domestic abuse support

He's coming home – domestic abuse support

Match days can bring a mix of emotions — from excitement and celebration to frustration and disappointment. For some people, this can increase tension at home. While most people enjoy the game safely, factors such as alcohol use, gambling outcomes and heightened emotions can increase risk in some households. Abuse is never acceptable, and responsibility always lies with the person choosing to use abusive behaviour.

So while most of us are hoping football is coming home, there are many women fearing that their partners will do the same. Abuse doesn't start with the football world cup, but it can get worse during this time.

If you are worried about your safety, or about someone else, support is available.

- You are not alone
- You deserve to feel safe
- You can speak to someone in confidence at any time

To find support in Shropshire visit: <https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/domestic-abuse/>. Remember in an emergency, call 999, if you can't speak press 55 for the [silent solution](#).

If you're concerned about someone: Check in when it is safe to do so, listen without judgement, encourage them to seek support. Small actions can make a big difference. Enjoy the match, look out for one another, and help keep our communities safe.



Summer Fun Holiday Clubs

Summer fun at holiday clubs

There's another school holiday just round the corner and you may be looking for engaging activities for your kids during the long summer break.

Holiday clubs are the perfect solution! Packed with fun, adventure, and learning, they offer a safe and dynamic environment for your children to thrive. From sports and arts to science experiments and interactive workshops, there's something for every interest.

Check out local providers in our Family Information Directory and secure your child's place today and let them enjoy a holiday full of discovery and excitement. [Information to help families in Shropshire - Shropshire Together Community Directory](#)



Pick your own at a local fruit farm

Visiting a pick your own fruit farm is a great summer activity for all the family. Check out our list of places in and around Shropshire.

[Bellis Brothers - Wrexham](#)

[Woore Fruit Farm – North Shropshire](#)

[Hungersheath Farm Shop - Market Drayton](#)

[Bearstone Fruit Farm - Market Drayton](#)

[Holly Farm Garden Centre - Prees, Whitchurch](#)

[Arscott Farm - Shrewsbury](#)

[Grange Farm - Bridgnorth](#)

[Essington Farm - Essington, Wolverhampton](#)



Keeping safe around water

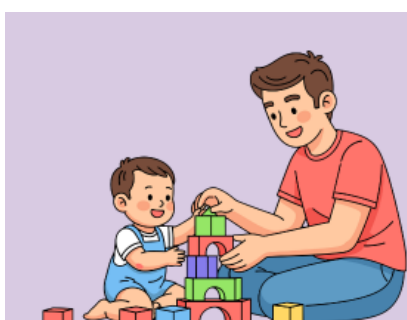
Keeping safe around water

Warmer weather and the summer months can mean many people take to the water to cool down. Teenagers and young adults often take risks around rivers, lakes, canals, reservoirs, quarries and other inland and coastal waters, especially in groups. Most teenagers - especially males - don't fully recognise the risks they're taking.

The Royal Lifesaving Society has produced a toolkit called 'Have the conversation' which includes simple conversation prompts that help teenagers understand the real risks of open water and make safer choices when hanging out with friends near rivers, lakes, beaches, and other bodies of open water. You can download it here - [Water Safety for Teenagers](#)

Here's some key advice for staying safe around water

- Educate young people around the risks of open water.
- Be aware of cold water shock, walking into the water rather than jumping in can help reduce the risk.
- Always supervise children closely around water.
- Never swim alone, especially in open water.
- Even shallow water can be dangerous and people can get into difficulty.
- Only swim in designated areas.
- If you see someone in trouble, don't enter the water yourself and follow
 - **Phone** - call 999.
 - **Throw** – throw them something that floats to support them.
 - **Float** – tell them to lie on their back and gently move their hands to help them float.
- What3Words can help to provide the exact location when reporting an incident.



Calling all dads, granddads & male carers

Calling all dads, granddads and male carers

Understanding Your Child - a group for dads, granddads and any male carer

Parenting can be challenging, whatever age your child is. This group offers practical ideas, straight talking support, and a chance to hear what has helped other parents in real life.

Join Peter and Tracy from the Parenting Team and other parents and carers, to explore what's happening for your child, understand tricky behaviour, and pick up simple strategies to make family life feel calmer and more manageable.

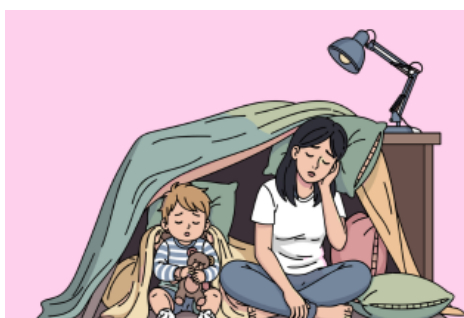
What we'll talk about:-

- Communicating and building connection with your child
- Routines like sleep and bedtime and any other routines you have as a family
- Understanding behaviour and big emotions
- Child development and how you can support it

Starts Tuesday 22nd September 2026, 5.00pm to 7.00pm in Shrewsbury – venue to be confirmed

The group meets once a week over 10 weeks, excl. half term with the last session being on Tuesday 1st December 2026.

To sign up email: parenting.team@shropshire.gov.uk or call: 01743 250950



End Bedtime Battles

End bedtime battles

Is your child struggling to go to sleep and stay asleep?

Our Sleep Tight workshop may be for you. This free, five week group run by our Parenting Team covers sleep issues in children of all ages and will give you the support you need to get bedtime back on track.

Here's what other parents say: "Absolutely fabulous workshop. Should be offered to first time parents when their babies are old enough for the skills learned to be applied. I have a disabled daughter and naively thought that the workshop wouldn't apply to her needs, well I was wrong, I believe it applies to most children, and every parent can take massive positives away from this workshop! Awesome!"

There is a virtual group for all parents, and you can find out more [here](#).

And there's a face to face group for parent carers of children and young people with SEND and you can find out more about that [here](#).

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Changes to free school meals

From September 2026 the Department for Education is [introducing new benefit criteria](#) which will mean that all children from households in receipt of universal credit will be entitled to receive a free school meal.

At the same time, the transitional protections that have been in place since 1 April 2018 are ending. If your child currently receives a free school meal because they've been protected under the transitional protection rules, but you no longer receive universal credit, their entitlement will end in August 2026.

From the start of the 2026/27 academic year, there will be two categories of benefits-based free school meals, known as 'targeted FSM' or 'expanded FSM':

For more information about the two categories and eligibility see

[Changes to free school meals | Shropshire Council](#) or speak to your child's school.

Do summer safely

News from our partners

Looking forward to attending an event this summer?

Shropshire Council is working with Counter Terrorism Policing to help keep everyone safe this summer by supporting their latest campaign encouraging the public to stay alert and report anything that doesn't feel right to security.

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING THAT DOESN'T FEEL RIGHT

Tell security or report
at gov.uk/ACT

We'll handle the rest

In an emergency, call 999

ACT

ACTION
COUNTERS
TERRORISM



Do Summer Safely campaign poster

We all have a role to play in keeping each other safe. Your safety is our priority and that's why you can play your part by trusting your instincts, and if you see something that doesn't feel right, tell security. Our teams will take every report seriously. You won't be wasting their time.

Here are some quick tips to help you have a safe and enjoyable time:

- Arrive early, allowing more time for security checks and measures
- Be patient with security checks. It might seem inconvenient, but they are in place to help you.
- Keep it simple and minimise what you carry. Fewer bags to search will speed up entry.
- Stay alert and look out for each other. If you see something that doesn't feel right, tell security. Don't leave it to someone else.
- Don't leave bags unattended. Never agree to look after a stranger's bag, no matter how genuine they seem.
- If there is an incident, listen to staff and any announcements.

In an emergency, always call 999.

Have an amazing time, and if you see something that doesn't feel right, report it to security straight away. Thank you for playing your part.

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The Kinship Care Charity - Free information events for kinship carers

kinship peer support groups – our [Kinship Compass](#) tool lists groups local to kinship carers.

Check out the workshops and courses coming soon:

[Free training and events for kinship carers | Kinship](#)

The Kinship Care Charity - Annual Survey **Please see below from Kinship**

It's that time again when we invite kinship carers to tell us about the reality of stepping up to care for the child you love.

Kinship's annual survey for 2026 is now open, and we need your voice.

Your voice leads to real change. The survey isn't just a form, it's how Kinship understands what kinship families really need.

Our **annual survey** will include questions on you and your kinship household, the start of your kinship journey, financial support and local authority support, amongst other things.

By sharing your experiences, you give us the facts about **what is happening to kinship families** and a deeper understanding of why.

Will you be an important part of our survey this year, and tell us what matters to you and your kinship family?

The survey takes around 20 minutes to complete, is **completely confidential**, and will remain open for responses until **23:59 on Thursday 23 July 2026**.

Who can take part in our survey?

Our annual survey is open to **all kinship carers** whether you have a legal order like a special guardianship order or child arrangements order, whether you're a kinship foster carer, or if you're an informal kinship carer with no legal order. If you are raising a child of family or a friend because their parents are unable to, **we want to hear from you**. Every response helps build the case for **better support, funding, and recognition**.

We want to hear from all kinship carers, but we are especially keen to hear from informal kinship carers, kinship carers from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, kinship carers aged under 45, sibling or family friend kinship carers,

and male kinship carers. We want to better understand the **experiences and challenges** in these groups.

By completing **our survey**, your experience, whatever it looks like, will help shape:

- what we campaign for next
- what support we provide
- what decision-makers are told about kinship care

P.S. Your responses are completely confidential – no identifiable information about you or your family will be included in any reports based on the survey findings. Thank you.

Shropshire Kinship Peer Support Group

In Shropshire, there are around 700 Kinship Carers, and there is a friendly and supportive Shropshire Kinship Care support group that meets regularly – face-to-face and on-line. The group is a place where Kinship Carers can meet, share, support each other and get practical advice on all aspects of being a Kinship Carer and also access to information and support through the Kinship national charity.

Being a Kinship Carer is a wonderful “gift” and hugely positive “lifeline” to a child. But it is challenging and demanding. But with Shropshire Kinship Care group, you aren’t alone. Why not get in touch for an initial chat? No commitment required. Email Peter Thompson, Shropshire’s group leader (and a Kinship Carer): shropshirekinship@gmx.com or call on 07541 485 475, any time. We’d love to hear from you

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Shropshire parenting team - Understanding Your Child

0 – 5 years

“I met others going through the same things. It really helped me feel less alone.”

“The group boosted my confidence as a parent.”

Join our friendly, relaxed group!

Parenting can be full of ups, downs, big feelings and lots of learning — for both you and your child! Come and join us as we chat about what’s going on for you and your family. Together we’ll make sense of tricky moments and share simple ideas that can make life calmer and more positive.

Want to Join Us?

Email: parenting.team@shropshire.gov.uk

Call: 01743 250950

Visit: [The Parenting Team | Shropshire Council](#)

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Kids Shropshire Autism Support Service



Kids services provide early support that are not diagnosis led. The Kids Shropshire Autism Support Service is available to parent carers and families of children and young people under 19 who are at any stage of the diagnostic journey or have received a diagnosis of autism and ADHD.

Parent/carers can complete the online referral form, via the link below:

[Shropshire Universal Autism Support Service - Kids](#)

How to Contact Kids:

Phone: (01743) 644506

Facebook www.facebook.com/kidsshropshire

Email: kids.shropshire@kids.org.uk

Web: [Kids Charity | Supporting Disabled Children and Young People](#)

Early Help community hubs

Where is my local hub?

Shrewsbury - As of this Thursday 9th July the Family Drop In will be at The Lantern from 9:30 to 12:00 every week.

From Monday 13th July Meole Family Drop In will be at Louise House 9:30 to 12:00 and then fortnightly for the rest of July.

In August it will be weekly.

Please see link for the other family Drop-In opening times and locations.

<https://next.shropshire.gov.uk/customer-services/community-hubs/>

The Special Guardianship Support team are trying to attend hubs regularly and we will send out the details of where we are planning to attend the next one in due course – *Watch this space!!*

Child Exploitation

CHILD EXPLOITATION AWARENESS DAY

WEM YOUTH CLUB, 16 LEEK STREET, SY4 5EP

Representatives from Shropshire Council's TREES (Together Reducing & Ending Exploitation in Shropshire) Team along with West Mercia Police officers, Catch 22, With You and staff from Wem Town Council will be on hand to talk to local residents about Child Exploitation and what it means for the local community. **All are welcome to join us**, whether it be young people, parents, professionals, or anyone within the local community who would like to learn more about this important matter.



THURSDAY 23 JULY 2026

1:00PM - 5:00PM



Shropshire Local Libraries

Shropshire Local Libraries are offering lots of events across the county for you to drop into, including:

- Healthy Lives – Stop Smoking service.
- Rhyme Time.
- Shropshire Local drop in – Help with accessing Shropshire Council Services.
- Family Local History.
- Happy Mondays – coffee and a chat.
- Drop-in tech support.
- Grief Café.
- Crafternoons.

Take a look at what is on offer near you!
[Library events | Shropshire Council](#)

Wishing you a lovely summer full of hydration, suncream and fun!

Kind Regards,

Louise, Hannah and Amy 😊