



Welcome to the June 2025 SGO Newsletter. This addition has information about activities, parenting support, Virtual School support, Child Trust Funds and Junior ISAs, and much more.

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### Activities and Child Care

Shropshire Council's Family Information Service (FIS) is where you can find information about [things to do](#) or details of [registered childcare](#). Some examples are included below:



## **Childcare and holiday clubs**

**If you are looking for childcare or holiday clubs to keep your kids busy, why not take a look at our Family Information Directory.**

**Whether they enjoy animal care, arts and crafts or sport, there is something for everyone!**

[Find out more](#)

## **Summer fun at the splash park**

Make the most of this fantastic sunny weather and visit a splash park. Pack a picnic and some sunscreen and have a great low-cost day out with the kids.

[Find out more](#)

## **Blaze Trails**

Blaze Trails is the UK's parent and baby walking community. They support parents and kinship carers to feel confident outdoors with over 80 parent and baby walking groups around the country.

Walking is brilliant for mental and physical health, but getting outdoors with a baby can feel daunting. Blaze will provide you with the walking buddies, support and inspiration you need to make that step out into nature achievable.

All the walks are free and organised by parents for parents.

[Find out more](#)

## **Shropshire Great Outdoors website**

The Shropshire Great Outdoors website has loads of great ideas for family friendly walks and bike rides, including 12 family friendly walks that have been specifically developed with children in mind. Most of the routes are circular and vary in distance from 1 to 3 miles. They start from countryside sites that have parking and many of the routes are pushchair friendly.

[Find out more](#)

## **Open Farm Sunday – FREE Fam visits**

Shropshire has a proud history of farming, have you ever wondered how food gets from the field to your plate?

Sunday 8 June 2025 is Open Farm Sunday. Farms across the county will be opening their doors so you can find out about the story behind our food and how farming affects our everyday lives.

Each event and farm is unique. Activities range from machinery displays, tractor and trailer rides, through to demonstrations, nature walks and much more! Visit the LEAF website to see which farms are open by you, or have a virtual farm visit instead:

[Find out more](#)

## **Calling all budding filmmakers**

Do you know any young filmmakers aged 13-19 with a powerful story idea just waiting to be shared? Could their vision inspire others? If so, encourage them to enter Time to Inspire.

This exciting and educational competition aims to engage students and help them develop their creative skills and imaginations with the aim of designing a hand-drawn storyboard based on what inspires them - something unique to each young person.

The aim is simple: submit a storyboard for a short film (live action - no animations please - and with a max length of 2 minutes 30 seconds) and Into Film will support one winning entry to bring their inspirational storyboard to life as a completed film.

Entries can be created by groups of up to 6 people, or by individuals. (**Note:** individuals will need to recruit friends to assist with the filmmaking process should their entry be chosen as the winner).

Entrants have until Monday 28 July 2025 (for postal entries) or midday on Wednesday 30 July (for email entries) to submit their storyboards.

[Find out more](#)

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## **PACC's Healthy Lives Programme. Registration is now open for Summer activities.**

The Healthy Lives Programme is about supporting the physical and mental wellbeing of children and young people from the Shropshire SEND community, especially those from the Learning Disability and /or Autism communities.

It is about making community-based activities accessible to this group, bringing together activity providers into one co-ordinated programme that offers meaningful opportunities to learn new skills, build confidence, make friends and get active.



Importantly it provides these opportunities during the school and college holidays, a time families tell us can be difficult, when young people miss their friends and routines, and kinship carers sometimes struggle to balance the demands placed on them.

The programme is not childcare, does not provide 1:1 support and a PA or special guardian will need to support children/ young people at activities. The Healthy Lives team ask for a contribution of £5 per child/ young person per activity attended.

To register your interest please complete this form [PACC Healthy Lives Programme 2025- Registration form](#)

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## Meet and Chat SEND

Are you supporting a parent carer of a child with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)?

Then encourage them to join us on Thursday 19 June 2025, between 2 and 4pm at Raven House, Market Drayton, 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, so come along, have a chat, and find the help you need! Visit our Family Information Directory to find [a full list of SEND Meet and Chat sessions](#).

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## Early Help Coffee and Chat Drop Ins

It's fair to say that all kinship carers 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](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-help-directory)

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## Getting on better – relationship support

Worried about your relationship or feel you're arguing too much? Not all arguing within a relationship 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.



## 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](https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/early-help-directory)



They offers parents and kinship carers 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 and breastfeeding advice
- Child development
- Emotional health and wellbeing
- Parenting and local support groups
- Behaviour
- Sleep

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

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### Parenting Help and Support Line

The Parenting Help and Support Line are here for parents and kinship carers 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](mailto:parenting.team@shropshire.gov.uk)



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### Shropshire Virtual School Support for kinship carers



From September 2024 Virtual Schools have new non-statutory extended duties to develop their strategic leadership role in promoting the educational outcomes for children in Kinship Care arrangements.

Virtual Schools have responsibilities to:



- Raise awareness of and promote the educational achievement, progress and attendance for this group of children, including advising schools on how to avoid exclusion for example
- Provide advice and information to Kinship Carers who support their children under a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order, regardless of whether the child was Looked-After by the Local Authority.
- Answer queries from schools/settings where permission has been given. Shropshire Virtual School has a dedicated Education Advice and Support Officer to support queries, if you would like advice please contact [virtualschool@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@shropshire.gov.uk)
- To provide advice and support regarding Pupil Premium Plus, for children looked after before the SGO was granted.

The reason for Virtual Schools having this extended duty is because research indicates that the outcomes for children who grow up in kinship care have overall better outcomes than those that grow up in 'non-parental care', but that their outcomes can fall below those children who have a social worker. This information is taken from [the GOV.UK website](#).

Here is a link to the new guidance - [Kinship care: statutory guidance for local authorities](#).



Here is a link for information on Kinship training and events - [Kinship training and events](#).

For further information about support and advice available from the Kinship Care charity please see [Kinship - The kinship care charity](#) and [Kinship Compass | Independent information hub for kinship carers](#).

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## Supporting Families Employment Advisors

We have two Family Community Work Coaches, Ben Marr and Jenny Johnson, who are employed by the Department of Work and Pensions and support families in Shropshire.

Family Community Work Coaches can help families in the following ways:



- Offer support for family members who may be eligible for disability benefits
- Refer family members to Improving access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT), Enable Supported Employment Services and Shropshire Recovery Partnership
- Visit families in their own homes, where they're unable to attend office bases
- Internet job searches
- Help with CVs
- Help with job applications
- Interview skills and preparation
- General benefit queries
- Work experience opportunities
- Travel plans
- Training information
- Other information such as transport schemes

To be eligible for the support:

- There must be a named Lead Practitioner
- Families are eligible for a DWP benefit/support
- Families are looking for support towards/into employment

Please contact the Special Guardianship Support Team if you wish to be referred.

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### **Kids – Universal Autism Support in Shropshire**

As you may be aware, the Shropshire Universal Autism Support contract has been transferred from Autism West Midlands to Kids. Here is a link to the Kids website where further information and a referral form can be accessed. [Shropshire Universal Autism Support Service - Kids](#)



The support offer can be found in this link [Kids - Universal Autism Support Service in Shropshire | Shropshire Council](#)

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## Shropshire SENDIASS

Shropshire SEND Information, Advice and Support Services (SENDIASS) are here to empower parents and kinship carers with the information, advice, and support they need.



Shropshire SENDIASS provides free, impartial, and confidential support to parents and kinship carers of children aged 0 to 25, as well as young people aged 16 to 25, who have or may have special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).

When you contact them, they'll discuss the best way to support them. You don't need a formal diagnosis to access their services—if they live in Shropshire, they're here to help.

They will

- Listen to their concerns, provide relevant information, and help them explore their options.
- Support parent carers to prepare for upcoming meetings, including annual reviews.
- Explain reports written by professionals.
- Provide information about SEND law to help parent carers make informed decisions about their child's education.
- Support parent carers in building positive relationships and improving communication with schools and the local authority.
- Signpost parent carers to other relevant organisations or sources of information.
- Help parent carers prepare for tribunals and mediation processes, ensuring they feel confident and informed.

Find out more by visiting their [website](#), they have also produced a new [flyer](#) for you to share with parent carers.

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## New Service: Support Through Exploitation and Prevention Service (STEPS)

A new service offering support to children and young people who are experiencing or at risk of child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE), across the West Mercia area is now live.



The service offers a range of support, including

- 1:1 early intervention support for CYP at risk of CCE
- 1:1 support for CYP at risk of, currently experiencing, or have experienced CSE

- Awareness and prevention for CCE and CSE in the form of group training and workshops

Please contact the Special Guardianship Support Team for further information and to discuss a referral.

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### **Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF)**

Local authorities and regional adoption agencies can apply for therapeutic funding for eligible adoptive, special guardianship order and child arrangement order families who were looked after prior to the order being granted.

The ASGSF has been renewed for 2025-26 but with significant changes to how it operates. The "Fair Access Limit" for therapy funding has been reduced from £5,000 to £3,000 per child per year, and there is no longer a separate allowance for specialist assessments.

For more information, please contact the Special Guardianship Support Team.

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### **Child Trust Funds and Junior ISAs**

#### **Find a Lost Child Trust Fund account**

A Child Trust Fund is a long-term tax-free savings account for children born between 1 September 2002 and 2 January 2011.

If a child in your care is aged 16 or over and their birthday is not before 1st September 2002, this form could be of real value.

If they were born in the United Kingdom, they are almost certain to have a Child Trust Fund - money put into a personal account for them by the Government, which could now be worth £1,000 or more. They can take control of this from their 16th birthday, before getting access to the money at 18.

If their parent or special guardian knows which account provider it's with, that's fine - no action is needed. But if they don't know where the account is, please use the link to access the form <https://findctf.sharefound.org/>

Complete and submit the form, then print it, sign it, and send it to ShareFound at the freepost address shown on the printed form, so that they can find it.

Note: if ShareFound need to check with HMRC, this search can only be made on receipt of the signed paper form. Please note that this form must be completed by the young person to whom the account belongs. Please only complete the form once to avoid duplications – if you have any amendments or have not heard from The Share Foundation, simply contact them and they can help!

#### **Junior Individual Savings Accounts for Previously Looked After Children**

Children who have been in local authority care for 12 months or more and who are not eligible for a [Child Trust Fund](#) are entitled to a £200 payment from the

government into a [Junior ISA](#). Following the granting of a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) you should be contacted with details of how to assume responsibility for this account on behalf of the child in your care. You can support the child to make contributions, but only they can draw out the money themselves once they are 18 years of age.

If you think a child in your care under an SGO is eligible for this JISA but you have not received the form, please contact the Special Guardianship Support Team. If you have had this form but not acted to assume responsibility for the account please act without delay!

Please contact the Special Guardianship Support Team if you have any queries or if there is anything you would like to see in the next newsletter. In addition, if you have anything you would like to add to the next newsletter let us know 😊

If you wish to be removed from the mailing list please contact [SGODuty@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:SGODuty@shropshire.gov.uk)