

Southampton Parent Carer Forum

Review and Updates

Summer Holiday 2026



The summer holidays are almost here, and we know this can be a wonderful but also challenging time for many SEND families. Changes to routine, finding suitable activities, and balancing everyone's needs can sometimes feel overwhelming.

We hope this month's newsletter helps you make the most of the summer by sharing activities, updates and useful information. If you're finding things difficult, please remember you're not alone – reach out to us if you need support, information, or simply someone to listen.

Thank you, as always, for sharing your experiences and helping us ensure the voices of Southampton's SEND families continue to shape local services.

Key Updates

- You can now text or Whats App the forum on 07354 940 838
- Mileage rate is now 55p and should be backdated to April. This is especially important for those who cover mileage for PAs who support their young people. School travel service already pay this.
- An update to families about direct payments will be going out in the next 5 days or so about more flexibility in how it's used.

Meeting in the Spotlight - Courageous Conversations Shaping Southampton 360°

Last month, we took part in the Courageous Conversation event, which focused on the proposed Southampton 360° model (known as Experts at Hand). Representatives from mainstream and special schools, health services, the voluntary sector, Southampton Parent Carer Forum, as well as colleagues from other local authorities and Parent Carer Forums, came together to review the proposed model. The day provided a valuable opportunity for professional challenge, open and honest conversations, and the sharing of learning from different areas. Together, we explored the strengths of the model and identified improvements to help ensure Southampton 360° meets the needs of children, young people, families, and professionals.

Key Dates - More info on the following page

Friday 10th July - Bookings for summer activities go live in the afternoon or evening via the website

Scan the QR code for the link to our facebook page for the most up to date info.



Continued ...

Local Offer Development Officer

Hello, I'm Collette and I joined Southampton City Council in June as the new Local Offer Development Officer.

My role is to work with parent carers, children and young people, and professionals to continue developing and improving Southampton's Local Offer. There's already lots of great work happening, and I'm really excited to build on this so families can easily find and access the support available to them.

I'll be focusing on making the Local Offer even more user-friendly, accessible and helpful, particularly the website, while making sure it reflects what families really need in day-to-day life. I'm really passionate about inclusion and making sure everyone can access the right support at the right time. I know the best way to do that is by listening, so I'd really love to hear your experiences, ideas and suggestions.

Over the coming months, I'm keen to get out and about, meet people and listen. If you see me at an event or SEND get-together, please do come and say hello.

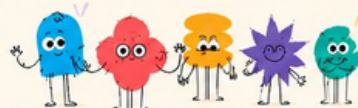
You can also share your thoughts anytime at localoffer@southampton.gov.uk.

I'm really looking forward to working together to keep making the Local Offer the best it can be for families in Southampton.

Southampton Neurodiversity Multidisciplinary Team

SUMMER SURVIVAL TOP TIPS

Supporting neurodivergent children and young people during the summer holidays



Every child is different.
Small changes can
make a big difference!

1 KEEP SOME ROUTINE



Try to keep bedtimes, getting up and meal times fairly consistent.



Use a calendar or visuals to count down to events and see what's planned.



Include a 'Whoops' card for unexpected changes.

2 PLAN AROUND INTERESTS



Choose activities based on your child's interests – they are more likely to cope with new places.



Familiar interests can help new experiences feel safer and more enjoyable.

3 THINK ABOUT SENSORY NEEDS



Sensory needs may increase during the holidays.



Consider heat, clothing, noise, crowds, smells and changes in routine.



Pack sensory supports and comfort items if helpful.



4 PREPARE FOR TRIPS



Look at photos or websites and talk about what to expect.



Have an exit plan – agree how your child can let you know they're becoming overwhelmed. Identify a safe or quiet space and agree how long you'll stay.



Take snacks and drinks your child enjoys.



Plan for 'time outs' so your child can rest and decompress.



5 BE KIND TO YOURSELF



Build in breaks and downtime. Don't try to do too much.



Ignore other people's Instagram summers!



You do not need a perfect summer. You're doing your best!



BACK TO SCHOOL

PREPARING FOR SEPTEMBER



Look at photos of new schools, classrooms and teachers.



Talk about any changes to routines. Start trying on new school uniform – don't wait until the night before!



Practice the journey to school.



REMEMBER

Every child is unique. What helps one child may not help another.



Use what works, let go of what doesn't, and celebrate the small wins!



SEND Services
Making a difference

Education
Services
Southampton



Whats On ...

FREE ENTRY



Date	Event Info	Time	Location
Thursday 9 th July	WORKSHOP - to gather family feedback on ND profile tool	10-12	Harbour Lights, Southampton SO14 3TL
Monday 13 th July	HEARING YOUR VOICE - Preparing for Adulthood	10-12	Harbour Lights, Southampton SO14 3TL

Our summer holiday activities are now available to book through our website from Friday (afternoon or evening TBC). In line with our booking policy, each family can book up to three activities over the summer holidays to help ensure as many families as possible have the opportunity to attend. Our full booking policy is available on our website.

A huge thank you to Jigsaw for providing the funding that has made these activities possible. Their support enables us to offer a range of free events for families of children and young people with additional needs across Southampton.

SPCF - Summer Events 2026



Week beginning	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
20 th July			Last day of term for most schools			Jungle Jeans 5.30 till 7.15pm 6439 West Quay Road SO15 1GZ (under 12 year olds)	
27 th July		Wet n Whacky 2 to 3pm Bitterne Leisure SO18 6AQ	Ninja Warrior 10 to 11am Antelope Park Bursledon Road SO19 8NE				
3 rd August			Oaklands Pool 2 to 3pm Cromarty Road Lordshill SO16 8LX		Toy story 5 at 11am Showcase cinema West Quay SO15 1DE		Monkey Bizz 6.15 to 8pm 234 Empress Road SO14 0JW
10 th August		Wet n Whacky 2 to 3pm Bitterne Leisure Dean Road SO18 6AQ	Ninja Warrior 10 to 11am Antelope Park Bursledon Road SO19 8NE		Highscore arcade 7pm to 8pm OR 8pm to 9pm East Street SO14 3HH		
17 th August	Pitch and Putt, Weston Shore, SO19 9SH - Morning. Times TBC		Minions & Monsters 11am Showcase cinema West Quay SO15 1DE		Oaklands Pool 2 to 3pm Cromarty Road Lordshill SO16 8LX	Jumping Jaxs 5.45 to 7.30pm Ashley Cresent SO19 9NA	
24 th August			Oaklands pool 2 to 3pm Cromarty Road Lordshill SO16 8LX				

Whats On Locally ...



The homepage features a green header with the forum's name. Below is a navigation bar with links: Home, About, Need Help, Upcoming Events, News and Updates, and Getting Involved. The 'Upcoming Events' link is highlighted. The main content area includes a section titled 'Support, information and a strong network for parent carers in Southampton' with a sub-header 'We are the recognised Parent Carer Forum for Southampton.' and a paragraph about supporting families with SEND. Below this are six yellow boxes with icons and text: 'I need support - Talk to us for 1:1 signposting, advice and help finding the right services.', 'Events & Workshops - Information sessions, practical workshops and family activities.', 'I'm a professional - Sign up for more information', 'Money & Practical - Help Support with food bank referrals, energy grants and signposting to financial advice.', 'Have Your Say - Share your experiences and help shape local education, health and social care services.', and 'Stay Connected - Sign up to our newsletter for updates, events and local SEND news.' A 'What we do?' section follows, stating the forum is parent-led and driven by lived experience, with a list of activities: 'Provide 1:1 support and signposting' and 'Run SEND get-togethers and workshops'. At the bottom, there are icons for 'Education' and 'Health'.

New Activities Map
Our new interactive Activities Map is now live on our website! It's designed to help families find activities, events, support and services taking place throughout the year, with plenty of summer holiday events already added. Visit the Upcoming Events page to explore what's available or submit an event for us to include.

Our easy-to-use filters help you find the activities that are right for your family. Search by age, SEND need, activity type, location, date and accessibility to quickly narrow down the options.

The filter sidebar is located on the left side of the page. It has a header with navigation arrows and a date selector set to 'Today' and 'Now - July 9'. Below this is a 'Filters' section with a 'Your selections' area showing 'Things to do: Family events' with a clear button. The main filter list includes: 'Things to do (1)' with a plus icon, 'Support' with a plus icon, 'Who for' with a plus icon, 'Age' with a plus icon, 'Accessibility' with a plus icon, 'Venues' with a plus icon, and 'Organisers' with a plus icon.

The 'Upcoming Events' page features a search bar at the top with a 'Find Events' button and a 'Map' dropdown. Below the search bar is a date selector set to 'Today' and 'Now - July 9'. The main content area is divided into two columns. The left column contains a 'Filters' section with expandable categories: 'Things to do', 'Support', 'Who for', 'Age', and 'Accessibility'. The right column contains a map of Southampton with several blue location pins. To the right of the map is a list of events, each with a date, time, and title: 'JUL 8 June 24 @ 10:00 - November 2 @ 17:00 Longdown Dairy Farm Longdown Dairy Farm Deerleap lane, Southampton', 'JUL 8 All Day Sensory Room Hire Freemantle Community Centre Randolph St', 'JUL 8 09:30 - 11:30 Chatter Matters Best Start Family Hub Honeysuckle Honeysuckle Road', and 'JUL 8 10:00 - 11:30 Bumps and Babies'.

This map is just the beginning. Over the coming months, we hope to continue growing it by adding even more activities, support groups, services and information for children, young people, parent carers and families across Southampton. To make it as useful as possible, we need your help. If you know about a local activity, event or support service that would benefit other families, please submit it using the form on our website or email the details to us. Together, we can build a comprehensive resource that helps families discover the fantastic opportunities and support available throughout the year.