

Visual Inclusion Newsletter

Issue

37

Summer 26

Sensory Inclusion Service, Floor 6, Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford, TF3 4JA

Holiday Cover



There is a QTVI on duty every week of the summer holidays.

For urgent support, Call **01952 385269**
or email **sendandinclusion@telford.gov.uk**



Hospital to community Opticians

by Charlotte Deakin, BSc (Hons) MMedSci, Head Orthoptist

If your child has been under the Hospital Eye Service since they were little, it can be daunting when the time comes to transfer their glasses tests to community services. The hospital team will suggest the right time for this, when they feel your child will be able to manage with testing in community.

You may still be able to see the hospital Orthoptic team after you have seen the community Optometrist. This hospital team will advise you if this is appropriate. It is important to note that the hospital cannot do glasses tests for people over 16 years of age, as the service is not commissioned.

Top tips for helping the transition:

Explain your needs to the practice - don't just book the appointment. They can support you and your child better if they are prepared

Visit the practice with your child prior to the appointment to help familiarise them

Ask for an appointment at a quieter time of day when the practice is less busy

If one practice can't help, try another one. Not all Optometrists have the same experience

Take any clinical letters from the hospital with you to the Optometrist - notes are not routinely shared between the hospital and community Optometrists

Talk to others and ask for their experiences of different practices

SeeAbility website has more information and support, they have a document called "Making eye tests easy" which has lots of tips (there are currently not many local practices registered on SeeAbility, but we are hoping to increase awareness).



Shropshire
Council

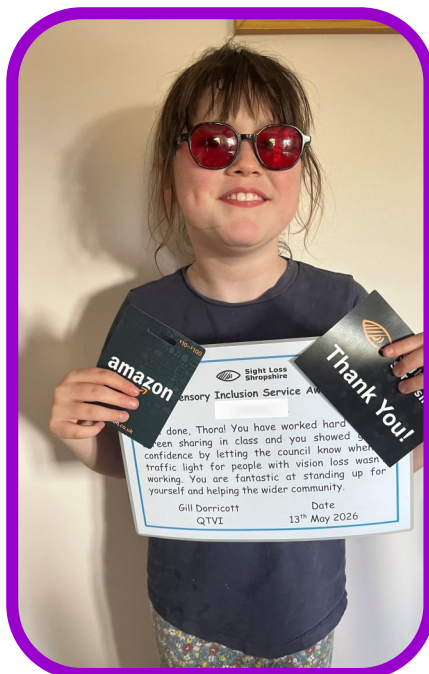
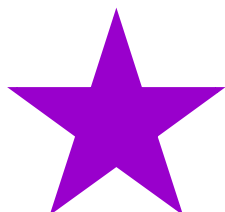


Telford & Wrekin
Co-operative Council

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Sight Loss Shropshire Awards 2026

A huge thank you to Sight Loss Shropshire for funding vouchers for 10 students nominated by Sensory Inclusion Staff at the end of each academic year. Your generosity helps us recognise and celebrate the achievements of the young people that we support.



A picture of Thora with her certificate

Celebrating Thora's Inspiring Achievements

We are delighted to celebrate Thora's recent success in being awarded a certificate and Amazon voucher from Sight Loss Shropshire. This recognition highlights her determination and resilience in adapting to assistive technology in the classroom, enabling her to access the interactive whiteboard more independently.

Thora's achievements extend beyond her own learning. With support from her teaching assistant, she wrote to Shropshire Council to report a faulty tactile marker at a pedestrian crossing—an important feature for people with visual impairments. She composed her letter on a computer using her preferred print size, and the council responded thoughtfully in large print to ensure accessibility.

In addition, Thora worked collaboratively with her teaching assistant to create a PowerPoint presentation and confidently led a peer awareness session for her classmates. During this session, she explained her condition, achromatopsia, which affects her ability to see colour and makes her vision blurry. Her presentation helped others better understand her experiences and how they can support inclusive learning.

Thora's proactive attitude, advocacy, and willingness to educate others make her a fantastic role model. We are incredibly proud of her achievements and the positive impact she continues to make within the school community.

Thora's letter to Shropshire council

Wednesday, 01 July 2026

Dear Shropshire Council,

My name is Thora and I am 8. I have a visual impairment called achromatopsia. This means that I cannot see colours.

We recently went to Tesco to look at the crossings. We noticed that some of the buttons did not light up when I pressed them. This means that I would not be able to see it.

Some of the cones didn't spin so I didn't know when to cross.

One of the middle islands did not have a green man lighting up. It was stuck on the red man so I couldn't cross the road and we had to go back the way we came.

Can you please fix these problems so I can go back there and cross over without me worrying about the traffic lights.

It is important that other people like me can cross over safely.

Thank you,

Thora

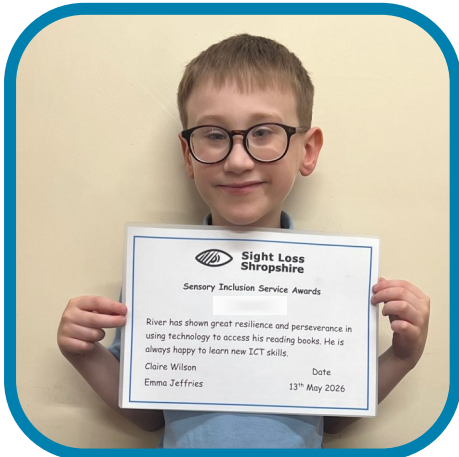
Shropshire Council's reply

Hi Thora, my name is Jeff and I am a Traffic Signals Engineer. I wanted to thank you for bringing to my attention the faults at the Tesco junction in Shrewsbury.

I have instructed our traffic signals contractor to attend the site and to fix the faulty equipment as soon as possible. If you notice any more please let me know so I can fix them.

Thanks, Jeff

Shropshire Council Traffic Signals Team



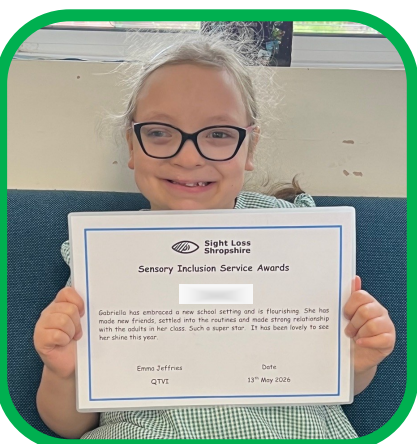
A picture of River with his certificate

River was chosen by QTVI, Emma for showing great resilience and perseverance in using technology to access his reading books. He is always happy to learn new ICT skills.

Ben was chosen by QTVI Sarah and Social Inclusion Facilitator, Nicky for his excellent attendance and positive attitude, particularly for his enthusiasm for trying new activities during each session.



A picture of Ben holding his certificate with QTVI Sarah and Miss Greenaway



A picture of Gabriella with her certificate.

Emma also nominated Gabriella who has embraced a new school setting and is flourishing. She has made new friends, settled into the routines and made strong relationships with the adults in her class. Such a super star. It has been lovely to see her shine this year.



A picture of Willow and Amy



Willow was nominated for an award by Access Support Assistant, Carla for her dedication, positive attitude and impressive progress in touch typing.



Freddie was nominated by QTVI, Sarah as she has been impressed by how he consistently uses his touch-typing skills as well as his 'wonderful can do' attitude.

Claire and Helen have also been impressed with how he has built on his ICT skills and persevered with using shortcuts. He has now completed his eDigital Competency Certificate.

Well done Freddie, enjoy using your touch typing!



A picture of Freddie in his green jumper With QTVI Sarah and staff member Avril



A picture of David holding his certificate with QTVI Louise

David was nominated by QTVI, Louise for his dedication to learning Braille. His positive attitude, determination, and consistent effort shine through in every session. The progress he has made is truly inspirational, and he approaches every challenge with resilience and enthusiasm. David demonstrates not only a strong commitment to his own learning but a genuine love for developing new skills.

He is a true star!



The Young Persons Activity Group

The Young Persons Activity Group, for people aged 14-25, has been taking part in a wide range of exciting and creative activities recently. The group has enjoyed hands-on sessions such as lino cutting, where participants designed and produced their own unique cards, as well as an archery experience in Telford that allowed everyone to try something new and build confidence in a supportive environment.

During half term, the group also took part in a hugely successful silver smithing workshop. With the help of skilled and patient tutors, the young people were guided through the process of designing and creating their own silver rings. The tutors provided excellent one-to-one support, ensuring that all participants, including those who are visually impaired, were fully included and able to engage with the activity. Their understanding, adaptability, and encouragement made a real difference, helping each young person feel confident, capable, and proud of what they achieved.

A key strength of the group is its inclusive approach, ensuring that activities are accessible, enjoyable, and meaningful for everyone. The dedication of experienced tutors and facilitators allows the young people to take part safely while developing new skills, independence, and friendships.

Looking ahead, there is an exciting programme of activities planned. These include adventurous opportunities such as abseiling, kayaking, and even indoor skydiving, alongside creative workshops like enamelling. With such a wide variety of experiences on offer, there is something to suit every interest, helping young people to challenge themselves, discover new talents, and continue building confidence in a fun and supportive setting.



The Young Persons Activity Group - upcoming events

July 11 th	Kayaking, Arthog outreach, Telford	14:00—17:00
July 30 th	Outdoor fun, Wrekin Forest School	10:00 - 15:00
August 8 th	Outdoor climbing, Arthog outreach, Telford	13:00—16:00
August 25 th	Cake review get together, Shrewsbury	10.30-12:00
August 26 th	Cake review get together, Telford	10.30-12:00
August 29 th	Trip to Cadbury world	10:00 - 18:00
September 19 th	PSAR sim racing, Market Drayton	14:00 - 15:00
October 10 th	Enamelling with Gifted Crafts, Hadnall	14:00 - 16:00
October 27 th	Blackpool Illuminations, coach pick up Telford & Shrewsbury	09:00 - 22:00
October 29 th	Crate Stacking, Arthog Outreach, Wellington	13:00 - 15:30
November 14 th	Indoor Skydiving, coach from Shrewsbury	10:30 - 18:00
November 28 th	Eco Resin Casting, Hadnall	14:00 - 16:00
December 12 th	Shrewsbury Prison tour & escape room	1pm lunch 2pm escape room

If you would like to know more or are interested in attending an event, contact
penny.norris@telford.gov.uk

Your voice matters!

We want to organise events and activities that reflect the interests of our families. Whether you'd enjoy social gatherings, workshops, trips, creative activities, or something completely different, we'd love to hear your ideas.

Your suggestions help shape our future events and ensure we're offering opportunities that people genuinely want to attend. No idea is too big or too small, so please share your thoughts with us. While we may not be able to organise every suggestion, we'll carefully consider all feedback and do our best to bring popular ideas to life.

Please send any suggestions to **nichola.clark@telford.gov.uk**

Sensory Inclusion Service, Floor 6, Darby House, Lawn Central, Telford. TF3 4JA

A Star in the Making: Celebrating Kyle's Success



A picture of Kyle dressed for the performance

We are incredibly proud to celebrate the achievements of Kyle, who is currently in his final year of the performing arts course and continues to shine both on and off the stage.

Kyle recently took part in the much-loved production of Footloose, where he played the role of Uncle Wes. True to the spirit of the show - where "you've got to cut loose" and embrace every opportunity - Kyle delivered a confident and memorable performance that truly captured the audience.

As a budding actor and talented singer, Kyle has shown real dedication to honing his craft. His performance included a particularly dramatic moment where he 'slapped' Ren on stage - so convincing that it caused the audience to physically startle and gasp. It was a fantastic example of his growing stage presence and ability to fully engage those watching.

Kyle achieves all of this while navigating sight loss and cerebral palsy, demonstrating remarkable resilience, determination, and passion. His commitment to the performing arts is inspiring, and it is a privilege to see him develop his talent and confidence.

Gill Dorricott, Kyle's Qualified Teacher of Vision Impairment (QTVI), was in the audience for the performance and was thoroughly impressed. She shares how proud she is of everything Kyle has accomplished - not just in this production, but throughout his journey. Watching him perform was a powerful reminder that, just like the message in Footloose, barriers can be overcome when you have belief, support, and a love for what you do.

Kyle's journey is far from over, and we are excited to see where his talents take him next. There is no doubt that with his passion and determination, he will continue to take centre stage in whatever path he chooses.

Well done Kyle - we are all cheering you on!

Transition Day Celebration



The Sensory Inclusion Service recently hosted a successful Transition Day for Year 6 pupils, providing children with hearing and vision loss the opportunity to meet, connect, and build confidence as they prepare for the move to secondary school.

One of the highlights of the day was the positive interaction between the pupils. Children quickly formed friendships, shared experiences, and supported one another in a welcoming and inclusive environment. It was particularly encouraging to see Year 6 pupils engaging with students in Years 7 and 8, asking questions about secondary school life and receiving honest, reassuring advice from those who had recently made the transition themselves.

Throughout the day, pupils took part in a range of enjoyable and purposeful activities, including decorating name badges, playing board and card games, preparing fruit kebabs and rocky road, boccia, and macramé keyring making. Alongside the social and creative opportunities, pupils also developed important skills to support their transition. Activities focused on organisation, independence, understanding timetables, packing school bags, creating pupil passports, and learning about hearing aids and radio aids. Role-play sessions encouraged pupils to develop confidence in advocating for their own needs as they move into a more independent school setting.

We would like to extend our sincere thanks to the Social Inclusion Facilitator for her outstanding organisation and planning, which made the event possible. Thanks also go to the Teachers of the Deaf, Qualified Teachers of Vision Impairment (QTVIs), the Access Support Assistant, and the IT Officer for their invaluable support throughout the day. We are also grateful to Shropshire Deaf Children's Society and Sight Loss Shropshire for your support and also Vernon Webb for generously donating specialist equipment, including tactile rulers and protractors, which pupils were able to take away with them.

Most importantly, we celebrate the young people who attended. For many pupils, being the only child with a sensory loss in their school can sometimes feel isolating. The event provided a valuable opportunity to meet others with shared experiences, helping them feel less alone and more supported. Despite any initial nerves, pupils embraced the day, stepped outside their comfort zones, and engaged enthusiastically with both the activities and one another. By the end of the event, confidence had noticeably grown, new friendships had been formed, and pupils felt better prepared for the next stage of their education.

Following the success of this year's event - the first to involve both the Hearing Inclusion and Vision Inclusion Teams - we are delighted to confirm that the Transition Day will return next summer.

Sensory Inclusion Service Family Group



SIS (VI) Family Group takes place every **Tuesday** during term time for
Visually impaired children and their families.

Families can arrive anytime between **9.30 am – 11.30 am.**

Autumn 2026

September

1st - No Group
8th - Teddy bear
15th - Spot
22nd - Farmyard
29th - Harvest

October

6th - No group
13th - Porridge
20th - Room on a broom
27th - **Half Term**

November

3rd - Bonfire
10th - Odd socks
17th - Pudsey
24th - Tree

December

1st - Christingle
8th - Christmas
15th - Party

The Stepping Stones Centre, Brunel Road, Malinslee, TF3 2BF (Sat Nav TF3 2HZ)

If you would like to attend Family Group, contact Nicky
nichola.clark@telford.gov.uk or 07581 035047

Farewell and Thank You

This year, we say a heartfelt goodbye to two much-valued members of staff who are retiring.

Helen, our Access Support Assistant, will be greatly missed. Her work supporting children with vision loss—particularly through touch-typing lessons, resource modification, and staff training—has had a lasting impact on both pupils and schools.

Linda is also leaving us this term. Joining the team in 2018 as a QTVI and later becoming Lead Teacher alongside Gill for the last two years, Linda has been an inspirational colleague. She brought particular expertise in supporting younger children and those with complex needs, and her dedication—even learning braille in just six weeks early in her career—is truly remarkable. Linda has played a vital role in strengthening the team, leaving us in a very positive position moving forward.

We thank both Helen and Linda sincerely for their dedication, professionalism, and lasting contributions.

We are pleased to share that two new team members will be joining us in September, and we look forward to introducing them in our next newsletter.



Although I have been working at the Sensory Inclusion Service for the past 6 years. I also worked for the service from 2002-2012. During my time working at the Sensory Inclusion Service with the VI team I have seen lots of changes especially with technology but what always stands out is that the team always want to have the best outcomes for the young people.

My role has been to support the young people by providing Large Print and Braille so that they can access their classwork and work alongside their sighted peers. I have also supported young people to learn to Touch type and for the braille users I have been there to support their learning.

I shall miss working with such positive young people, who get on with things alongside everyone else. Watching PE lessons can really be a heart in the mouth experience - I don't envy parents letting them explore and trusting that they will know their limitations.

I am now looking forward to my retirement and all the adventures I shall have with more time to explore new hobbies! **Helen**



I first started working with visually impaired children in 1986 in a beautiful residential school in Kent. Prior to that I had been an Early Years Teacher, and as I was due to have a class of 8 and 9 year olds I was worried that the children would be better at braille than me, so I worked really hard over the summer holidays and had more or less cracked it by the beginning of term. Staff at the school were rather astonished!

While I was at the school I had concerns that some of the children were unrealistic about their expectations in life, as everything was made as easy as possible, and I was convinced that inclusion in mainstream schools would provide a better grounding for many of them.

In 2002 I married my husband Vernon who happened to be a QTVI in Herefordshire, and after a career break, his line manager asked if I would like to work as part of the Physical and Sensory Support Service, and enrol for the Mandatory Training at the University of Birmingham. Two years later I passed the qualification with Distinction and moved on to a full time job as QTVI in Worcestershire, where I worked full time. The most difficult thing I have ever had to do is to teach braille to teenagers losing their sight, as understandably they experience a whole range of emotions, and learning a new abstract skill is the last thing on their mind. We are often asked if braille is still relevant in the world of technology, but our argument is that it is much more difficult to pick it up as an adult, so we give students the opportunity and they can choose whether or not to use it in due course.

The best thing about this job is that unlike class teaching we can follow children through education: sometimes they are referred as babies, and we help parents to come to terms with the diagnosis and signpost them to other services. We follow them through nursery and primary schools, offering training and providing support as needed. We help with transition and continue onto further education. I have shared the joy and pride in seeing a child thrive in their educational settings and seeing how inclusion brings a sense of empathy and understanding to staff and pupils.

I will continue to have a busy life in retirement, with lots of hobbies and a rapidly growing family of grandchildren, but I will continue to support children with a visual impairment on a voluntary basis, including fundraising for CEVIC school for the blind in Uganda. **Linda**

You've got to be in it, to win it!

Sarah Hovington - QTVI



from left to right Linda Webb and Gill Dorricott - Joint Lead Teachers, Sarah Hovington - QTVI and Mark Rice - Sales Executive and Charities UK, Dolphin Computer Access

VIEW Conference

Sarah Hovington was recently a lucky winner entering a competition at the VIEW Conference. VIEW is the professional association and registered charity for the vision impairment (VI) education workforce - Qualified Teachers of Children and Young People with a Vision Impairment (QTVIs), support staff, and habilitation specialists. It champions best practices and supports these professionals who work with the children and young people with a 'VI'. She entered a prize draw and won a free SuperNova licence and a high-quality document camera from Dolphin Computer Access for the children and young people in Telford and Wrekin. The prize is worth £1725.

SuperNova Education Kit

The SuperNova Education Kit enables pupils with a 'VI' to read, study and learn independently. This kit empowers schools to provide an accessible learning environment so pupils can fully participate in their learning throughout the school day. The pupils can view the interactive whiteboard, read lesson material, complete learning tasks and study for exams and assessments in the way they find accessible with customisable magnification and speech.

View interactive whiteboard

The pupil can sit anywhere in the classroom and view the interactive whiteboard on their laptop in a way they find accessible. The teacher shares the PowerPoint / presentation using the Dolphin Whiteboard Assistant.

Complete learning tasks

There is no more last-minute photocopying! With the SuperNova Education Kit, pupils can independently access printed worksheets. The pupil uses the camera to view the documents on screen, zoom in, change colours, listen to text and annotate schoolwork. The pupil can then save and print their work or email the work to the teacher.

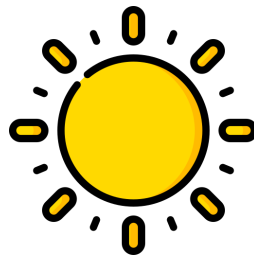
Curriculum materials made accessible

Pupils can access books - textbooks, novels, revision guides, and more. Supernova includes an EasyReader Personal Plan, providing over a million education titles from the RNIB Bookshare and classroom material shared by the teacher. The pupil can continue reading at home on their iPad or Android tablet.

Complete work independently

Pupils can complete work independently. The SuperNova Education Kit builds skills for life by providing access to the same Windows applications used in higher education and the workplace - including Microsoft 365, Google Docs, web browsers and more.

SuperNova is a powerful tool. It ensures these children and young people are equipped with the tools and the skills they need to use throughout school, and take these with them, into higher education and the workplace. Sarah is looking forward to learning more about the SuperNova Education Kit alongside a young person on her case list. Exciting times ahead!



As we come to the end of another busy and rewarding academic year, we are delighted to reflect on what has been a highly successful 2025-2026 for the Sensory Inclusion Service. We would like to thank all our families, schools, and partners for your continued support, collaboration, and commitment to ensuring that our children and young people achieve their full potential.

Celebrating a Year of Opportunities

This year has been full of enriching experiences. Nicky has worked incredibly hard to organise a wide range of activities for our young people and families. Highlights have included visits to Attingham Park, where we have also been proud to support the development of a sensory garden area, shaped by valuable feedback from our families. It has been wonderful to see our community contributing to a lasting, accessible space for everyone to enjoy, we look forward to that being completed and will share the outcome in a future newsletter.

This term, plans are underway to organise a sensory experience for our young people with complex needs, including those who cannot attend mainstream school settings. We hope this will provide a valuable opportunity for families to connect with one another, while children enjoy engaging sensory musical and tactile activities. Our aim is to develop these sessions into a regular offering in the future.

Training and Professional Partnerships

Each year, we host a training day for teachers and school staff. We were very pleased to receive positive feedback from our Autumn term course, and plans are already underway for the next training day on 6th October.

We also continue our annual joint training with NHS colleagues, ensuring we remain up to date with developments in clinical practice and strengthening our collaborative approach. We are proud of our strong relationship with the Ophthalmology team, which enables us to attend clinics alongside families and maintain regular communication to share appropriate updates. This close partnership helps us provide the best possible support for children and young people with vision impairment. We are also grateful for the continued contributions to this newsletter from senior optometrists.

Celebrating Achievements and New Beginnings

We would like to congratulate all our school and college leavers as they move on to the next exciting steps in their education and careers. We wish them every success in their exams and hope they achieve the results they deserve. Most importantly, we hope they feel confident as they move into adulthood, equipped with the skills they need for independent and fulfilling lives.

We warmly invite all leavers to keep in touch—we would love to hear how you are getting on and hope to share your stories in future newsletters.

We also celebrate our pre-school children, who are moving on from nurseries and our Little Stars and MY Time to Play groups to begin their school journeys. It has been a joy to see their development, and we wish them every happiness in this next stage.

Activities and Enrichment

This year, we have been fortunate to continue our partnership with Penny from Sight Loss Shropshire, who has organised a fantastic range of activities for young people aged 14–25. From horse riding and rock climbing to craft and jewellery making, these opportunities have allowed participants to build confidence, develop new skills, and form friendships. This successful collaboration will continue into next year.

We also remain proud to work alongside Guide Dogs, supporting children and young people with mobility, orientation, and daily living skills. Our sincere thanks go to Jodie and Nancy, who are valued members of the team and make a real difference every day.

Looking Ahead

We want to thank all the families and young people, whose experiences provide valuable insight and inspiration to others through the articles in our newsletters.

As we close this academic year, we would like to wish all our families a wonderful and restful summer break. We hope the weather is kind, and that all our children and young people have a fun, safe, and relaxing time.

We look forward to seeing most of you again next academic year. Thank you for the ongoing support you give to us in enabling the children and young people to be fully included in their educational settings, enabling them to achieve their potential and lead full and productive lives.

With warmest wishes,

Gill and Linda and all of The Sensory Inclusion Service Team

Discover all you need to know about education, health and care services in Telford and Wrekin.

On the [local offer](#) website, you can find information and advice about services, support and activities for children and young people aged 0-25 with special educational needs and disabilities all in one place.



Telford & Wrekin
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NHS
Shropshire, Telford
and Wrekin

**Local offer for special
educational needs
and disability**

www.telfordsend.org.uk

SCAN WITH YOUR
SMART PHONE...



[Shropshire's SEND Local Offer](#) is a single place for information and services for children and young people with special education needs and/or disabilities, their families and the practitioners who support them.

Take a look at the [SEND Family directory](#) for local events, groups and things to do. For news and updates please like and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Local.Offer@shropshire.gov.uk
0345 678 9063



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