

A newsletter for families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in Reading



The Spring Issue

Inside

- Latest news
- Early years activities
- What's on in Reading
- Counselling for young people
- Support for families and more...

Hello to all families!

Welcome to the 31st issue of the SEND Local Offer newsletter. We have packed this edition with lots of information based on direct feedback from parent carers and young people.

You have requested more blogs from key professionals, giving you an insight into local services, so families are aware of who is leading on local provision, decision making and services. We will continue to gather feedback and develop the newsletter to meet the needs of Reading families.

There are some amazing short breaks, activities and support services included in this issue, and we are very proud to include blogs from Lara Patel, Reading's new Director of Children's Services and Jane Stanford-Beale, CEO of Autism Berkshire.

We worked with Reading Families Forum to create the SEND Local Offer annual survey and we had an amazing response this year, with 637 people taking part. You can read more about the outcome in this issue. Thank you to everyone who took part. Your support is helping us further improve information, advice and guidance for local families.

Community engagement and collaboration is an important part of delivering the SEND Local Offer. The team continues to develop this by working with parent carers, young people and partners. During this quarter the team attended Special United, Addington School Transition event and the RAFT Club to hear from young people and their parent carers, first hand on what's important to them, the services, support etc. Helping them access information on local provision, taking the service to the heart of the community where it's most needed.

The team is planning more outreach work during 2023, so look out for us at community events.



Maryam

Family Information
Service Manager

Contact



0118 937 3777 (option 2)



localoffer@reading.gov.uk



@ReadingLocalOffer

Contents

- 3** SEND Local Offer
- 5** Latest news
- 11** Early Years - info and activities
- 15** What's On? - Short breaks, holiday clubs and childcare
- 18** What's On? - Sporty Activities
- 21** What's On? - General
- 25** What's On? - Easter
- 27** What's On? - Events and workshops
- 30** Support for you and your family
- 34** Support for those aged 16+
- 39** Counselling services for children and young people
- 42** Nationwide support

Much of the information in the SEND Local Offer newsletter is provided by third party organisations. Brighter Futures for Children (BFfC) and Reading Borough Council (RBC) cannot guarantee the accuracy of this external information or endorse it. Where appropriate, you should ask to see DBS checks are up-to-date.

SEND Local Offer

Reading's Local Offer provides children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and their families, information about what support is available in the local area. It helps parents, carers and young people clearly see and access the range of services that they may need.

Visit www.readingsendlocaloffer.org

Email localoffer@reading.gov.uk

Call on [0118 9373777](tel:0118 9373777) (option 2), Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm



Smiles all round for the SEND Local Offer



In the last edition we informed you that the new SEND Local Offer refreshed website directory was live!

We have had an amazing response from parent carers and professionals using the platform, commenting on the new look of the site, the navigation, usability, accessibility and the robust information available to Reading families.

We ran the SEND Local Offer annual survey once the site went live in November and had a fantastic response, with 637 people taking part.

Of those who had used the service, 97% said they found the information they were looking for and 93% said they found it helpful or very helpful.



This year Brighter Futures for Children kindly offered a £50 voucher, for a winner picked at random from those who completed the survey. The lucky winner was Carla, and little Noah. Full information can be found [here](#) along with the SEND Local Offer 2022-2023 annual report. You can read the press release about Carla and Noah's win [here](#).

Once again we would like to thank everyone who took the time to take part in the survey, your input really does help us shape information we provide on the Local Offer – read more about the development on our [Reading Directory | Local Offer Feedback & Consultations](#)

Please have a look at the new site and let us know what you think! www.readingsendlocaloffer.org Comments can be sent to: localoffer@reading.gov.uk

SEND Local Offer



Help us help you Disabled Children and Young People's Register

To help us understand your family's needs and plan for future services that may be required, we'd really appreciate it if you could fill in your details on the Disabled Children and Young People's Register.

This is a secure database, managed by Reading Family Information Service, to capture information about all children and young people, aged 0-25 years old, with special educational needs and/or disabilities. All details provided are used anonymously to show the use of, and demand for services in Reading.

By registering, you will have the opportunity to sign up for the free MAX card, which gives discounts on major attractions across the country, as well as locally. You will also have

the option to create a care passport. This can be completed by the parent/carer, to provide information about the young person, which can then be used when attending short breaks, activities etc. Plus, by having your up-to-date details, we will be able to keep you informed of all the relevant information for your child and developments to our service.

To find out more, contact the Family Information Service on 0118 937 3777 (opt 2) or email: localoffer@reading.gov.uk

[To register, complete an online form here](#)



SEND Local Offer – Peer Review

Reading SEND Local Offer team took part in a 'SEND Local Offer Peer Review' with Hackney SEND Local Offer team in December.

This was a great way to revisit and evaluate the information we provide and how we can continue to improve navigation around a vast SEND information system. We were very pleased with the outcomes of the review.

Summary from Hackney SEND Local Offer team on Reading's SEND Local Offer.

Overall comments:

- It was easy to find all the information included in the review.

- The website is very well populated with information and options for a wide range of queries.
- The attention to detail in many of the individual entries is impressive.
- As a source of SEND information the information listed is confidently relevant and comprehensive.
- The processes used to keep information updated are robust.

The full report can be found [here](#).





Updates from...

Brian Grady, Director of Education

Welcome to Issue 31 of the SEND Local Offer newsletter



Hello! We were delighted to welcome our new Director of Children's Services (DCS), Lara Patel, in February. Lara has more than 25 years' experience working across local authority and voluntary sector

children's services. You will find a personal introductory message from Lara in this section

Outstanding result for Cressingham

Our Cressingham children's home achieved an 'Outstanding' rating from Ofsted following a full inspection in October last year.

Staff and management were praised for providing highly effective services that contribute to significantly improved outcomes for children and young people who need help, protection and care.

You can read the [full report](#) and our [press release](#) about this excellent news.

Mental Health Support Team expansion official launch

The official launch of the recently expanded Reading Mental Health Support Team (MHST) took place in January. The Reading MHST was initially created in January 2020 to serve 16 schools in west Reading. The service has been very popular and has now been extended to a further 20 schools in south and central Reading, so that's 36 in total.

You can read our [press release](#) about the expansion on our website. The launch attracted a lot of media coverage, including a piece on the ITV Meridian news.

Oak Tree School

150 spaces will be created for children with complex needs in Reading and Wokingham with the opening of Oak Tree School in Winnersh.

The school is due to open this September and will cater for pupils with social, emotional and mental health and/or autism spectrum condition, from Year 1 to Year 13.

The project is a collaboration between BFFC, Reading and Wokingham borough councils, the Department for Education and Maiden Erlegh Trust. Please visit the [Oak Tree School website](#) for the latest updates on this exciting project.



Latest news



Lara Patel, Director of Children's Services



Hello, I am Lara.

I started as the newly appointed permanent Executive Director for Children and Families on 1 February, working for Brighter Futures for Children and Reading Borough Council.

I am a mum to three secondary school children and a school governor at our local primary school. I qualified as a social worker more than 25 years ago and have worked in local authority and voluntary sector children's services across London and the South East.

Most recently I was the Deputy Director for Children's Services at Oxfordshire

County Council, with responsibility for safeguarding, corporate parenting, children with disabilities and youth justice and exploitation.

I have received a very warm welcome since joining Reading and have been struck by the strong sense of community and pride of living and working in Reading.

I am looking forward to getting to know the area and to meeting with many of you to better understand, from your perspective, what is important to you, what works well and what needs to improve.

It is a privilege to be in this role and I am truly committed to working together to improve outcomes for children with special educational needs and disabilities across Reading.

Jane Stanford-Beale, CEO of Autism Berkshire

I have led Autism Berkshire since 2015, working to develop advice and support services for autistic people of all ages, and their families, throughout the county.

I first came into contact with the charity as a parent of an autistic child, later joining the board of trustees, before taking on my current role. I also have lived experience and parent training in dyspraxia, dyslexia, hearing impairment and severe asthma.

I have a professional background in business



administration and extensive experience of other voluntary sector roles, including as chairman of governors at New Bridge Nursery School in Caversham.

I served from 2012-2022 as a Reading borough councillor, becoming deputy leader of the opposition and a member of Royal Berkshire Fire & Rescue Authority, as well as a non-executive director of Reading Buses, a role I retain.

I am proud that the help Autism Berkshire provides has been transformed in the past few years, with the NHS supporting work that led to the establishment of the Berkshire West Autism & ADHD Support Service, which we deliver in partnership with Parenting Special Children, to help

Latest news



families of neurodivergent children and young people.

We are now aiming to build on this success, with the launch of the Berkshire Adult Autism Support Service to help older autistic people and their families.

You can find out more about all Autism Berkshire's services at autismberkshire.org.uk and get in touch by emailing contact@autismberkshire.org.uk or calling 0118 959 4594.

Update on the Mental Health Support Team

By Claire Thomas (Senior Educational Psychologist for MHST)



I co-manage one of the Mental Health Support Teams (MHST) in Reading with my colleague Kayleigh Henry. We have recently launched a second team which is run by Alec De Sausmarez, which you may have seen in the local media. I've been an Educational Psychologist in Reading for more than 20 years and have been working in MHST since 2019.

I'm passionate about supporting children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health. I've previously worked with Behaviour Support (now Cranbury College) and really enjoyed training many Emotional Literacy Support Assistants for schools in Reading over the years.

MHST supports children and young people at project schools in South/Central/West Reading with their worries, anxiety or if they are feeling low. This might mean that your child/young person is finding it hard to attend school, go to

lessons, spend time with friends and family, do activities they previously enjoyed or to get a good night's sleep. We can also support with worries about schoolwork or exams.

We work either directly with children or young people or with parents and families and there tends to be 10 weekly sessions. We teach skills to help children and young people feel better, make changes to their lives and meet their goals. It can be difficult to talk about mental health or to ask for help, but we're a really friendly and approachable team.

We have an online referral form, which can be found on our website. The form can be found under the 'how can you access the service' section. There is also lots of information about MHST and a list of the schools we support. Visit: www.brighterfuturesforchildren.org/MHST

Latest news



Join Reading Families Forum

Are you passionate about working with service providers to improve local services for children with additional needs? Do you want to be part of a friendly, like-minded team? Do you have an hour or two a month to volunteer? Then join us!

Reading Families' Forum is the local parent carer forum for Reading. We work with local managers, help them understand how parent carers feel about services for children with additional needs and what might improve services. We are a friendly, supportive group of trustees and are looking for more parent carers to become trustees and be part of planning our work.

No special knowledge is needed. You will receive support and training is available.

If you would like to find out more, email fran.morgan.rff@gmail.com or phone/text **07516 185380**.



Special United – youth forum

**Next Event: TBC
6.30 - 8.30pm
@ The Avenue School**

Special United is a youth forum for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their siblings, age 8-25 years, living within Reading borough, run by Reading Families' Forum.

Special United gives young people with SEND a platform to have their say on local services. We meet regularly and have guest speakers who listen to young people's feedback, thoughts, ideas and opinions to help shape existing and future services. All young people taking part receive a £10 Amazon voucher as a thank you.

The Family Information Service/SEND Local Offer attend and support all the sessions.

To see our journey and read our blogs from the Special United events, visit the Local Offer:

[the Local Offer: Special United - Youth Area \(Young People's Forum\) | Reading Services Guide](#)

If you would like to attend future events please contact:

Lisa Harry:
lisaharry14@aol.com

or Ramona Bridgman
rgebridgman@aol.com



Latest news



*Carers Partnership – Reading and West Berkshire

New service for carers



*(This service replaces TuVida Carers Hub)

- Get support to help you in your caring role
- Find local services and sources of help
- Look after your health and wellbeing
- Connect with other carers
- Understand your rights
- Carers Assessments for Reading-based carers

Information, advice and support services for family carers in Reading and West Berkshire is now being provided by the Reading & West Berkshire Carers Partnership. The partnership took over the service on 1 November 2022.

The partnership members - **Age UK Berkshire, Age UK Reading, CommuniCare and Reading Mencap** - all have a successful track record of working with carers.

CommuniCare provides information, advice and support to carers in need in Reading and West Berkshire.

Address: CommuniCare, 233 Kings Road, Reading, RG1 4LS

Tel: 0118 926 3941

Email: office@communicare.org.uk

Website: communicare.org.uk

Reading Mencap offers support for carers of children and adults with a learning disability and/or autism.

Address: Reading Mencap, 21 Alexandra Road, Reading, RG1 5PE

Tel: 0118 966 2518

Email: carers@readingmencap.org.uk

Website: readingmencap.org.uk

Age UK supports those caring for people aged 50+ .

Tel: 0118 950 2480

Keyworking Programme – newsletters for parent carers and professionals

Please see the link on the right to NHS Key Working Programmes and newsletters

- New Keyworking Programme – Berkshire West
- Children and Young People Easy Read Version
- Keyworking Programme Newsletter for Parents & Carers
- Keyworking Programme Newsletter for Professionals

[Reading Directory | Berkshire West Keyworking programme: for children and young people with a learning disability and/or autism](#)



Latest news



Children & Young People's Wellbeing Project

With funding from Artsworld and Reading Borough Council, we have commissioned three projects to improve wellbeing for children and young people up to the age of 25 across all of Reading. The project is being delivered in schools and communities with a focus on youngsters already facing disadvantage.

We will be collecting evidence from all parts of the project in partnership with the University of Sussex to form a theory of how involvement in arts and culture can improve wellbeing through development of inter-personal and intra-personal skills.



To see the list of projects please click on the link below:

[Reading Directory | Children & Young People's Wellbeing Project](#)

Care, Education and Treatment Reviews (CETR)

Information and guidance on Care, Education and Treatment Reviews (CETR):

[Reading Directory | Care, Education and Treatment Reviews \(CETR\)](#)

Reading All Age Autism Strategy 2022-2026

The Reading All Age Autism Strategy 2022-2026 is now published on the SEND Local Offer. The Autism Strategy will be delivered by the Autism Partnership Board and we will be setting up a Reference Group to inform service improvements.

The full strategy: [Reading All Age Autism Strategy 2022 - 2026 - February 2023](#)

Easy read guide: [All Age Autism Strategy Our plan 2022 to 2026 - Easy Read - February 2023](#)

Try-a-train

At GWR, we want our railway to be accessible for everyone, but we appreciate some people feel it is not for them or are anxious about station environments and rail travel.

Our aim is to show that rail travel is open to all members of the community.

We have a dedicated accessibility team whose primary focus is to work with groups or individuals who need a little extra guidance and reassurance before travelling independently.

We offer tours of a station near you, followed by a short train trip and we can provide a bespoke approach according to your individual needs.

This service is completely free. Interested? Find out what we can do for you by contacting accessibilitymentors@gwr.com We look forward to welcoming you aboard.



Early Years

info and activities



Early Years Advisory Service for SEND

- Supporting Early Years Settings in supporting children with SEND
- Meetings with settings and parents about their child's SEND
- Training Courses for professionals
- Network Meetings for Early Years SENCOs
- Advice to families & professionals
- Observations of children in the setting and advice.
- Advice on applying for additional funding and EHCP

Email: aimee.trimmer@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

[Early Years Advisory Service for SEND | Reading Services Guide](#)

Baby Boost

Helping babies born in lockdown get ready for nursery, Brighter Futures for Children (BFFC) offers the Baby Boost programme to all children born in Reading during the pandemic. They can access a range of additional activities and support to get them ready for nursery and school.

Baby Boost – [Baby Boost for lockdown babies](#) - Brighter Futures for Children



Our children's centres are bustling with lots of face-to-face activities. Is your child two or three-years-old? Why not join our six-week Ready, Steady, Nursery course to get them prepared for nursery life?

To see all the fantastic, free activities on offer, see the Reading Children's Centre Timetables [Children's centres - Brighter Futures for Children](#)

Email reading.childrenscentres@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Or like the [Reading Children's Centres Facebook page](#).



Early Years

info and activities



SEND Family Beats live music class for 1-Syrs



Starting in September

Fun music session aimed at families with young children who have additional needs.

Play-based atmosphere so children can relax and enjoy following their interests.

Small classes so noise levels are comfortable. Live music including piano and flute.

Thursdays 10.15-10.50am. Reading Music Centre, 100 Cockney Hill, Reading, RG30 4EZ

For further details and registration please visit: berkshiremaestros.org.uk

or email admissions@berkshiremaestros.org.uk to book your free taster session.

Home-Start Reading

Home-Start wants to see a society in which every parent has the support they need to give their children the best possible start in life.



Support and friendship for families

Home-Start helps young families going through difficult times, whether because of bereavement, illness or disability of the child or the parent, post-natal depression, family breakdown, loneliness and isolation, or stress in coping with a number of children.

Tel: 0118 956 0050, email: office@home-start-reading.org.uk, web: www.home-start-reading.org.uk

Childcare support for parents of a two, three or four-year-old?



Parents of two-year-olds may be eligible to apply for 15 hours per week – that's 570 hours per year - free early education and childcare, if they are on a low income, other types of benefit or meet certain other criteria.

All three and four-year-old children are eligible for at least 15 hours funded childcare, or up to 30 hours a week for working parents.

For further information, please contact the Family Information Service on **0118 937 3777** (option 2) or email fis@reading.gov.uk

To access information on which providers offer places for two-year-olds, search through the childcare options here: [Childcare Search](#).

Or see here to find out more about the 30 hours: [Tax Free Childcare](#).





New eligibility for no recourse to public funding for two-year-old funding

If your immigration status says you have 'no recourse to public funds', you may still get free childcare for your two-year-old. You must live in England and your household income must be no more than:

- £26,500 for families outside of London with one child
- £30,600 for families outside of London with two or more children

You cannot have more than £16,000 in savings or investments.

Visit our website for full details of eligibility to two year funding: [2 Year Old Education & Childcare Funding | Reading Services Guide](#) or view [2 Year Funding Leaflet - October 2022](#)

Tax-free childcare: Helping working parents pay for childcare

The government introduced Tax-Free Childcare (TFC) in 2017, a UK-wide scheme to help working parents pay for childcare for children 0 - 11 years, or if your child is disabled and under 16-years-old.

Find out more here:

[Tax-Free Childcare: Helping Working Parents Pay for Childcare | Reading Services Guide](#)

Reading Toy Library

The Toy Library is open again.

Currently, the toy library is open for two hours on a Thursday morning, 10am to 12noon.

Our toy library offers a fantastic selection of toys and games, catering for all ages, from babies to teens. Choose from a wide selection of small, medium or large toys at a minimal cost. Toys on offer range from Duplo sets and push & ride walkers, musical instruments and story sacks, to popular indoor games like marble runs, puzzles and Lego.

You can also hire larger indoor and outdoor games for children's parties. Staff will be available to help you when the Toy Library is open.

Tel: 0118 901 5950, email info@readinglibraries.org.uk, visit www.reading.gov.uk/libraries Reading Central Library, Abbey Square, Reading, RG1 3BQ.

Parent & Toddler Groups

To find out more information on where they are and when they meet, please click on this link: [Reading Directory | Listings in Parent & Toddler groups](#)

Healthy start

In Reading, many families with a child under four years are missing out on help to buy fresh fruit, vegetables and milk. Parents can find out more and check their eligibility to apply here: healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/



Early Years

info and activities



**FREE
TASTER
SESSION**

**50% OFF
FIRST TERM**

SEND Family Beats live music class for ages 1-5yrs

A fun music session aimed at families with young children who have additional needs

Play based atmosphere so children can relax and enjoy following their interests!

Small classes so noise levels are comfortable

Live music including
piano and flute!



**Thursdays 10.15am-10.50am
Reading Music Centre,
100 Cockney Hill, Reading RG30 4EZ**



For further details and registration please
visit www.berkshiremaestros.org.uk

or email admissions@berkshiremaestros.org.uk to
book your free taster session

What's On



Short breaks, holiday clubs and childcare

What's on this Easter? Short Breaks

Full information on Easter short breaks can be found [here](#) on the SEND Local Offer

Easter 2023 holiday SEND Short Breaks

Holiday SEND Short Breaks with funding from Brighter Futures for Children

Reading FC Community Trust

SEND Short Breaks Easter Play Camp 5 -7 years

3, 4, 11 & 12 April, 10am-1pm

The Avenue School, Reading

[Full information here](#)

SEND Short Breaks Multi Sport Camp 8-18 years

3, 4, 5, 11, 12, 13 April 2023

The Avenue School, Reading

[Full information here](#)

Reading Play

Reading Play welcomes you to The Ranger Station as your SEND Easter holiday provider. We will be holding two sessions on 4 & 6 April 2023. [Full details here.](#)

Make/Sense Theatre

Make/Sense Theatre's holiday club returns for Easter 2023. We will be running different sessions for young people with MLD, sensory

needs, complex needs, PMLD, from ages 5-25.

**Tuesday 4, Wednesday 5, Thursday 6 and
Tuesday 11 April 2023**

**The Avenue School, Conwy Close,
Tilehurst, RG30 4BZ.**

Our pricing structure is as follows: £10.50 for part-funded BFfC places, £20 for out of borough/Over 18 places.

We are running different sessions throughout the Easter break for young people. [Full information here.](#)

Cressingham Lego Club

Sunday 11am-2pm

The LEGO club meets one Sunday a month at Cressingham Short Breaks Centre.

Spaces are limited to eight young people per session, aged between 8 to 18.

Places are allocated on a first come first served basis. Each session will have some free play and structured activities to encourage the children/young people to use their imagination and learn to work as a team on some of the projects.

Eligibility: Have a current Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), which includes information to evidence the child/young person cannot access mainstream activities through universal services published on the Local Offer.

Tel: 0118 937 4201, email: Cressingham@brighterfuturesforchildren.org.

Further information, including how to book, can be found [here](#).

What's On



Short breaks, holiday clubs and childcare

Chance to Dance Stars CIC

Dates: 19, 26 March 2023

Chance to Dance Stars CIC will provide group activities for children and young people with disabilities to have new experiences with sport and dance, to have fun and to build upon social and physical needs.

Note Cost - £20 per day for anyone outside of Reading.

Reading residents - sessions are partial funded by Brighter Futures for Children. If your child requires 1:1, you must contact Vicky before booking.

Call Vicky on 07736 343570, email: sendanceclub@hotmail.com, website: [Chance to Dance information](#)

HAF Programme

Easter Holiday Activities & Food scheme (HAF)

Registration is now open for the Easter Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) scheme.

The programme provides a wide range of fun holiday camps, with lunches, for children who are normally entitled to pupil premium free school meals. Eligible children are invited to attend four-hour sessions, four times a week for two weeks.

[Holiday Activities and Food scheme \(HAF\) - Brighter Futures for Children](#)

Short Breaks – Feedback from parent carers

Since 2021, we have been asking parent carers and providers commissioned to deliver short breaks to provide us with feedback on the sessions. This information is then used to help shape and improve future short break offers.

We have had some amazing feedback from parent carers on how their young person has enjoyed attending the short breaks on offer. Below are some of the comments received in 2022. You can view the full feedback information [here](#).

April 2022 – Make Sense Theatre

"The whole experience is amazing. The staff are amazing and I never worry about my son being with them as they are all very professional" (parent carer)

August 2022 – Multi-sport Camp Feedback

"Our 14-year-old son, with Down's syndrome, has been attending Reading football holiday clubs for a few years now and absolutely loves them. It's a fantastic opportunity for him to socialise, be active and make new friends in a safe and friendly environment. He absolutely loves going every day to play with his friends from football and that includes staff members as he sees them as his friends too. This programme has also supported us, as parents working from home, because it allows us to have a close to normal working day knowing that our son is enjoying himself and having fun with his friends" (parent carer)

What's On



Short breaks, holiday clubs and childcare

Feedback continued...

December 2022 Short Breaks – Christmas – Chance to Dance

"I'm not sure I can find enough words to sufficiently describe what attending these sessions mean to my daughter. She is almost a teenager and for the first time ever she has something for herself that is age appropriate to look forward to the weekends. Having always had a passion for music, dance and socialising she has had to watch her cousins and family friends go off to their various clubs whilst there has been nothing suitable for her. Vicky, I hope you and your team realise how incredible you all are and the difference you are making for our children." (parent carer)

Apollo Holiday Club

**Children must bring packed lunch.
Advance booking recommended. Age
range 4 to 12 years and is inclusive.**

**Open all half term and school holidays
except Christmas. However, we will
reconsider for December 2023 and the
decision will be based on demand.**

If you are interested in space at the

**Christmas club 2023 please email us asap
to register your interest.**

**This setting has signed up to offer Tax Free
Childcare.**

Email apolloyouthclub@gmail.com

**Further information can be found here
[Reading Directory | Apollo Holiday Club](#)**



Natural Steps Holiday Scheme

Natural Steps Holiday Club opening hours are from 8am - 6pm

Full day for the first child is £28 and £27 per day for a second child, £1 discount for third child onwards. Parent drop off and collect.

Ofsted registered. Age 4 to 11 years. This club is inclusive.

This setting has signed up to offer Tax Free Childcare.

Tel: 0118 951 4444, email: nsasc@hotmail.com

Further information can be found here [Reading Directory | Natural Steps Holiday Scheme](#)



COMMUNITY
MISSION
PROJECT

What's On



Sporty Activities

Level Water – Swimming for children with disabilities

Level Water is offering free swimming lessons for disabled children. We fund lessons for children aged 4-11 years, with a mobility, hearing or visual impairment, who cannot swim 10 metres.

Level Water provides small group and one-to-one lessons until children are ready to join a mainstream class or competitive club.

Email contact@levelwater.org with your child's home postcode, age and disability.

Better Leisure Reading (Swim School) SEND Session

SEN and disability swimming lessons for kids

Our instructors will aim to integrate children with disabilities into our existing group lessons. Whether through special exercises or some extra attention during class, our qualified teachers will assess the needs of your child and adapt their classes accordingly.

We do offer specific SEN group children's swimming lessons for a range of ages and abilities. These include:

- **Foundation – SEND - age over 4 years with adult**
- **Foundation – SEND - age over 4 years**
- **Development - SEND (15 metres plus, under 16)**

If this is not suitable, we can offer 1-2-1 lessons to support children with disabilities and help them improve their skills. We also work with our partner charity [Level Water](#) to provide lessons for primary school-aged children with a physical or sensory disability. Subject to availability.

Visit our website for further details.

Rivermead has a lesson on Mondays at 6-6.30pm and Wednesdays 5.45-6.15pm

Rivermead Leisure Centre, Richfield Avenue, Reading, RG1 8EQ

Meadway has a session on Thursdays at 4-4.30pm, which has a few spaces.

Meadway Leisure Centre, Conwy Close, Tilehurst, RG30 4BZ

The website to book is: betterflow.courseprogress.co.uk/onlinejoining/home

What's On



Sporty Activities

Reading Rockets SEN Basketball Sessions

For children with additional needs aged 8-18yrs



Book your place at readingrockets.co.uk

Please see flyer for further details.

For further information, please contact steph.johnson@readingrockets.co.uk

South Reading Leisure Centre, Thursdays 4-5pm.

Red Kangaroo Trampolining - Special Needs Sessions

Kanga Calm Sundays 5- 6pm, £7.95

Our Kanga Calm sessions are specifically for those aged 2+ who are diagnosed with SEN, ASD, disabled and additional needs. Carers who are not bouncing go free but would pay for socks which can be reused. You may be asked for proof of disability.

Tel: 0118 324 8884

Email: jumpreading@redkangaroo.co.uk

Web: redkangaroo.co.uk/parks/reading/



What's On



Sporty Activities

Reading

FREE!



Sport In Mind


Registered Charity 1161323

Youth Activities **for** **Mental Wellbeing**


Sport in Mind provides **free sport** and **physical activity** opportunities for children and young people to help build confidence and self esteem, meet new people and support low mood and other mental health challenges.


Reading Sessions (term-time)

Day	Time	Activity	Age	Venue
Mon	5-6pm	Football	9-12 years	Palmer Park 3G pitch
Thu	4:15-5:15pm	Tennis	10-15 years	South Reading Leisure Centre *starting soon*
Fri	4-5pm	Sport & Games	9-12 years	Morgan Centre, Queen Anne's School
Fri	5-6pm	Sport & Games	13-16 years	Morgan Centre, Queen Anne's School

   @sportinmind

 info@sportinmind.org

 www.sportinmind.org

 01189479762



Berkshire Healthcare
Children, Young People and
Families services

Working in partnership with

What's On



General Activities

Smelly Wellies Care Farm



We are an animal care farm in Woodcote. We offer animal assisted therapy sessions and are keen to focus on children with [SEND](#) and those who are struggling with emotional and mental health issues. We offer animal assisted care sessions. We offer children a very hands-on, therapeutic and positive experience which has proven to be very successful.

Mob: Vikki Edwards on **07377 582103** or **07917 852027**

Email: smellywellieswoodcote@gmail.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/smellywellies1

The Engine Shed

**New Venue for next 6 months -
ST BARNABAS CHURCH HALL,
20 St. Barnabas Rd, Emmer
Green RG4 8RA**

The clubs enable those with an interest in trains to come together with their peers to observe, play, talk and enjoy their hobby in a welcoming, safe and relaxing environment – and where parents and carers can have a chance to relax and talk in a supportive atmosphere. You do not need to have a diagnosis of autism to attend. The last Saturday of each month (always check website to check we are running)

Children/young people's group: 11am-2pm

Over 18s: 2-4.15pm Free entry. Free teas/biscuits. No need to book.

Tel: Sarah Snow on **0118 3751432**

Email: mail@theenginshed.org.uk

Web: theenginshed.org.uk



Grassrootz

Grassrootz has three drop-in youth clubs in the Reading area, one in **Caversham** and two in **Coley**.

Caversham, ages 11-16: Every Tuesday 7- 8.30pm at The Milestone Centre, Northbrook Road, Caversham Park Village, RG4 6PF - £3 entry.

Coley, ages 8-11: Every Friday 6-7.30pm The Coley Park Community Centre, 140 Wensley Road, Coley RG1 6DW – £2 entry.

Coley, ages 11-16: 8-9:30pm at The Coley Park Community Centre, 140 Wensley Road, Coley RG1 6DW – £2 entry.



What's On



General Activities

**READING
REP
THEATRE**

Reading Rep Youth Theatre and partnership with Make/Sense Theatre

Creative Youth Assembly

The Avenue School, Conwy Close, Tilehurst,
Reading, RG30 4BZ

**£8.50 (Half Assembly) and £16 (Full
Assembly) per week paid half-termly in
advance**

This unique and carefully crafted youth theatre
with a youth club feel is the perfect opportunity
for SEN young people aged 11+ to be
supported in developing their social skills and
making friends while building their confidence
and self-expression through drama and dance/
movement.

**Half Assembly (11 – 25 years)
Thursdays 6.15 – 7.15pm**

This is for young people who are keen to make

friends, develop their social skills while
taking part in fun drama and movement
workshops, but would prefer not to perform.

**Full Assembly (11 – 25 years)
Thursdays 6.15 – 8.15pm**

This is for young people who may have some
experience of drama and/or dance and want
to develop these skills and work towards
productions. They may also be looking for
more opportunities to socialise and make
friends in a supportive and fun environment.

Please contact us at [team@
makesensetheatre.com](mailto:team@makesensetheatre.com) to book a free trial
session.

Young Carers Youth Clubs – Brighter Futures for Children

Clubs are available for the following age
groups.

Young Carers Groups

- Junior sessions for 5 to 9-year-olds at
Katesgrove Children's Centre, Reading,
RG2 0BX
- Inters sessions for 9 to 13-year-olds at
Katesgrove Children's Centre, Reading,
RG2 0BX
- Seniors group for 13 to 18-year-olds

at Tilehurst Community Centre, 23 The
Triangle, Reading, RG30 4RN

This is a targeted referral service. For further
information about these clubs, please contact
the Children's Single Point of Access.

Email: cspoa@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Tel: 0118 937 3641

Website: [Young Carers Youth Clubs - Brighter
Futures for Children | Reading Services Guide](#)

What's On



General Activities

Guide Dogs for the Blind

Guide Dogs believe all children deserve the opportunity to develop a love of books

CustomEyes Books is a tailor-made service producing large print books, so that children with a vision impairment can read just like their friends and classmates do.

From Dr Seuss to Shakespeare, from inspirational fiction to educational textbooks, we have over 4,200 large print books available (and counting).

What's more, if the book you want isn't already in our catalogue, we'll do our best to add it. Every book is custom made, with colour, spacing, font size and more, all tailored to your child's needs.

Thanks to a Guide Dogs subsidy, all books are available at the recommended retail price, regardless of format.

Mob: 0800 781444

Email: children@guidedogs.org.uk or servicesmarketing@guidedogs.org.uk

Address: Hillfields, Burghfield Common, Reading, Berkshire, RG7 3&G



ReachOut

ReachOUT is the youth club in Reading for young people, aged 13-18, who are LGBTQ (Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual or Transgender, or Questioning).

The club is held every Wednesday, in a town-centre location, 6.45-8.45pm, and provides a safe space for young people to come along, participate in fun activities and events, and meet other young people in a similar situation to themselves.

They can also receive support from the volunteers and staff at the club on a range of issues they would like help with.

ReachOUT is really keen to hear from any LGBTQ young people living in the Reading area, so please get in touch!

Contact Chris Page - Senior Youth Worker

Mob: 07568 130439

Tel: 0118 937 6130

Email: reachout@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Website:

Brighter Futures for Children ~ Young Peoples Zone - ReachOUT

What's On



General Activities

London Zoo's Community Access Scheme

London Zoo is providing discounted tickets for families on low incomes, with tickets from as little as £3 per person, as part of their Community Access Scheme.

To qualify, families must be in receipt of either: Universal Credit, Working Tax Credit, Child Tax Credit, Employment and Support Allowance, Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance.

The £3 tickets are available for the whole family (under 3s go free), only at the zoo entrance (not online) from 11am every day of the week, and the current offer runs until the end of March 2023.

For further information, please visit London Zoo's Community Access Scheme page [Community Access Scheme | London Zoo](#)

Me2 Club

Me2 Club is launching a new club for teenagers with additional needs in Reading and Wokingham.

The club is for teenagers aged 13 – 19 with any additional need. A diagnosis is not required.

The teenagers will meet monthly and be able to help choose activities and assist in planning and fundraising. The teenagers will be supported to do this and those who can't help plan or fund raise are nonetheless very welcome to come and just enjoy the activities. We have 15 spaces and priority will be given to teenagers who don't have another activity to go to.

Ramona Bridgman, Children and Young People's Participation Coordinator,

Me2 Club email: ramona@me2club.org.uk

Reading Children's Festival – Don't miss it!

Saturday May 6 - Sunday June 4



Don't miss your opportunity to take part in this year's Reading Children's Festival! Kick-off event Forbury Fiesta on 6 May. Follow [this link](#) for all details on how to get involved.



What's On

Easter



Quest Family Fest this Easter! Norden Farm

The animals are gathering. But one species hasn't turned up, and it's the species which has been causing all the trouble. Something's got to be done, and whatever it is, it's going to be wild!

Animals! is an empowering and uplifting performance about animals, humans and nature. It is fun, interactive and features original songs. It celebrates the amazing wildlife around us and makes big things feel possible.

This event is part of [Quest Family Fest 2023](#).

Arts & Crafts this Easter at Norden

Join us this Easter for fun and easy crafts! They vary so you can create something new at each session.

The below sessions are part of [Quest Family Fest 2023](#). Suitable for ages 5 - 11 years

Join us to navigate your way through two weeks of creative adventures.

Tues 4 Apr, 1.15pm - Make and decorate fish mobiles.

Wed 5 Apr, 1.15pm - Under the sea themed print making.

Thur 6 Apr, 1.15pm - Decorate an under the

sea scene using tissue paper and glue.

Tues 11 Apr, 1.15pm - Make a fish sun catcher with willow.

Wed 12 Apr, 1.15pm - Create dangling jellyfish friends.

Thur 13 Apr, 1.15pm - Air dry clay octopus.

Fri 14 Apr, 1.15pm - Shaving foam marbling sea creatures.

All materials provided. Children must be accompanied by a paying adult.

Box Office 01628 788997. Web: [Norden Farm Events](#).

Fairytale Farm

A sensory and learning wonderland for all the family

Mixing classic fairy tales, animals and adventure play, children will love Fairytale Farm.

Fairytale Farm is the UK's first visitor attraction that is open to all, but where disabled children come first in our design and layout. A truly inclusive experience, where everything is accessible and everybody is welcome.

The farm is divided into six main zones: Huff and Puff for adventure play; Enchanted Walk for our fairytale sensory experience; Alfie and Friends, where you can meet our amazing animals; Jack's Yard, for a fairytale experience;



and our brand new Wilderness Walk and Fairy Dell areas, with features being added all the time.

Look out for Easter Fun with the Easter Bunny – keep your eye on our [events page](#)

What's On



Easter



Camp Mohawk

The Woodland Centre Trust

For children and young people with special needs

Camp Mohawk is a day centre for children with special needs and their families, set in 5 acres of beautiful countryside, just outside Wargrave, Berkshire. Throughout the year the centre provides a range of activities, facilities and natural space to encourage children with a variety of special needs to play, socialise and learn in a secure and caring environment. Our facilities include adventure playgrounds, swings, sensory garden, play village, soft play and sensory rooms, art / craft room, music room, play lounge and, in the summer months, an outdoor, heated play pool. All this is set in approximately 5 acres of natural woodland.



Fireworks night



Toddler play area



Soft play

What we offer:

- Family Days in school holidays and on Saturdays in term time – children / young people need to be accompanied by a parent / carer but we have a team of staff and volunteers on hand to provide support and assistance
- Short Breaks activities for children / young people aged 8 to 25 who have High Functioning Autism / Asperger's Syndrome
- Special events including sensory sensitive fireworks displays and Christmas parties
- Group sessions / days for SEND support groups, schools and groups of families

Registration is mandatory for all services and advance booking is necessary for all sessions. Fees / charges for families are all voluntary but contributions from our service users are an important source of income so we do have suggested contribution levels.

Please visit our website or get in touch for more information:

Web: www.campmohawk.org.uk

Email: info@campmohawk.org.uk

Family support: mark.carr@campmohawk.org.uk

Tel: 0118 940 4045

What's On



Events and Workshops

Brighter Futures for Children – Direct Payments – Drop-in Sessions at the Civic Centre

Do you care for someone with SEND aged 0-25? Would you like to learn more about Direct Payments and if they could benefit you? Then pop into one of our drop-in sessions for all enquiries relating to Direct Payments.

They will be held on the following **Tuesdays between 1-4pm:**

28 March; 11 April; 25 April.

A member of staff from Brighter Futures for Children will be there to answer your questions.

Address: Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU

Please note - Parking is not available at the Civic Offices.



Swings & Smiles – proudly supporting disabled children and their families



Swings & Smiles offers support for disabled children and their families in a unique and accessible environment. Our services include respite, family play sessions, youth clubs, sibling support and outreach.

Swings & Smiles provides activities for children and young people aged 0-18 years old with a wide range of disabilities and special needs. We provide opportunities to enjoy playing together without the pressures often experienced in wider community settings.

We support the whole family, including parents, carers, the disabled child, brothers, sisters and grandparents. Our support is hugely varied and depends on the needs of the family. We will tailor support to individual needs. Swings & Smiles also welcomes visits to the centre from other schools, groups and individuals who may benefit from our facilities.

Tel: **01635 285170**, email: office@swingsandsmiles.co.uk. Web: swingsandsmiles.co.uk

A Place To Play, Lower Way, Thatcham RG19 3RR.

What's On



Events and Workshops

Early Years workshops

Additional funding from the Department for Education, via the Early Years SEND Partnership, has enabled extra dates on our popular parent early years workshops. Details and booking links are on our [workshops webpage](#).

These workshops are aimed at the parents of 0 to 5-year-olds, covering topics such as sleep, speech and language and early years entitlements.

A poster for the Festival of Inclusivity at Palmer Park. It features a red background with a black diagonal stripe. On the left, a young man in a blue and green sports jersey is clapping. On the right, a person in a blue and yellow sports jersey is sitting in a wheelchair, also clapping. The text 'FESTIVAL OF INCLUSIVITY' is in large white letters, with 'PALMER PARK' in large green letters below it. Below the title, it says 'Save the date Friday 14th April, 2023'. At the bottom, it says 'Palmer Park Leisure Centre and Stadium 9am to 4pm' and 'FREE ENTRY - limited spaces so booking required (details to be circulated ASAP)'.

FESTIVAL OF INCLUSIVITY PALMER PARK

Save the date
Friday 14th April, 2023

Palmer Park Leisure Centre and Stadium
9am to 4pm
FREE ENTRY - limited spaces so booking required (details to be circulated ASAP)

OPEN TO ADULTS AND CHILDREN (8+) WITH A PHYSICAL, LEARNING OR NEUROLOGICAL CONDITION.

Activities include Athletics, Football, Rugby, Cricket, Wheelchair Rugby.

Bring a Picnic and stay for the day!



BETTER

CH SPORTS
CHRUGBY.COM



BCF
BERKSHIRE CRICKET FOUNDATION



Proudly supported by: GLL, CH Sports, Reading Rockets, Reading Athletics, Berkshire Cricket, Reading FC

What's On



Events and Workshops

Creative Youth Assembly

SEN Youth Theatre Made Differently

make/sense
THEATRE

Rehearsals starting for our productions of

YANKEE DOODLE DOO

The American Story of Doctor Dolittle

From
after February Half Term

Being performed in July, at South Hill Park (Reading Saturday and Bracknell groups) and South Street Arts Centre (Reading Thursday group)

Tuesdays

Half Assembly – 6.00pm – 7.00pm

Full Assembly – 6.00pm – 8.00pm

Located at

Garden Room, South Hill Park Arts Centre
Ringmead, Bracknell, RG12 7PA

Paid half-termly in advance – bursaries available.

Thursdays

Half Assembly – 6.15pm – 7.15pm

Full Assembly – 6.15pm – 8.15pm

Located at

The Avenue School, Conwy Close, Tilehurst,
Reading, RG30 4BZ

Paid half-termly in advance – bursaries available.

Saturdays

Half Assembly – 10am – 12pm

Full Assembly – 10am – 1pm

Located at

Reading Rep Theatre, Kings Road, Reading, RG1 4LY

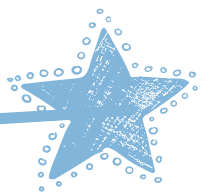
Paid half-termly in advance – bursaries available.

Free trial sessions offered every Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday.

To book on, please contact rosie@makesensetheatre.com

Support

for you and your family



Parenting Special Children Conference – 16 May

Treasure Box of Ideas: from a Trauma Informed Lens. Tuesday 16 May, 9.30am-4.30pm. Via Zoom

Supporting children's strengths, resilience and protective factors, our 2023 conference is aimed at providing parents/carers and practitioners with a greater understanding of developmental trauma.

Who's it for? Parents and carers of children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma

- Professionals working with or supporting children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma
- Those training to work with or support children and young people who have experienced developmental trauma

Further information and booking details [PSC Conference 2023 - PSC](#)

Tel: 0118 9863532

Email: admin@parentingspecialchildren.co.uk

Parenting Special Children Workshops (via Zoom)

16 March - [Sleep](#)

27 March - [Sensory Processing Workshop](#)

22 & 29 March - [ADHD & Medication](#)

23 & 30 March - Professionals Only - [Supporting children with trauma/insecure attachments at school](#)

16 May - Conference - [Treasure Box of Ideas from a Trauma Informed Lens](#)

Parenting Special Children, The Arcade, 11 Glebe Road, Reading RG2 7AG

Tel: 0118 986 3532

Berkshire Vision – Children and family support

We support children and young people from birth to 19 years. We also support their families, including parents, siblings and anyone affected by sight loss.

Our children, young people and families programme supports blind and visually impaired children across Berkshire, as well as their parents/carers and siblings. We aim to provide a range of new experiences, challenging perceptions of what they can and cannot achieve. Activities have included cooking, balloon modelling, accessible tech sessions with Apple, trips to the pantomime with touch tours and opportunities to meet the cast, craft sessions, accessible outdoor tennis and footgolf.

Many of our sessions are delivered in partnership with key partners in the county, including Berkshire Sensory Consortium and Guide Dogs, providing parents with information, advice and guidance while their children are taking part in activities.

Tel: 0118 987 2803, email: info@berkshirevision.org.uk

Autism Advisor to Families in Reading

Supporting all families in Reading that receive a diagnosis of autism for their child.

- Home Visits
- Living with Autism course
- Family Seminars
- Coffee Mornings
- Advice to families & professionals

If you would like to speak to the Autism Advisor, please contact Jenna Redmond on

07912 362341 or email jenna.redmond@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Web: [Reading Directory](#) | [Autism Advisor to Families in Reading](#)



Stepping Forward

Stepping Forward supports families affected by disability who are struggling to access services and support. It also offers help with filling in DLA and PIP applications with experienced advice staff.

For further information and help, call (0118) 375 4729 or email info@stepping-forward.org.uk. Visit the [Stepping Forward website](#).

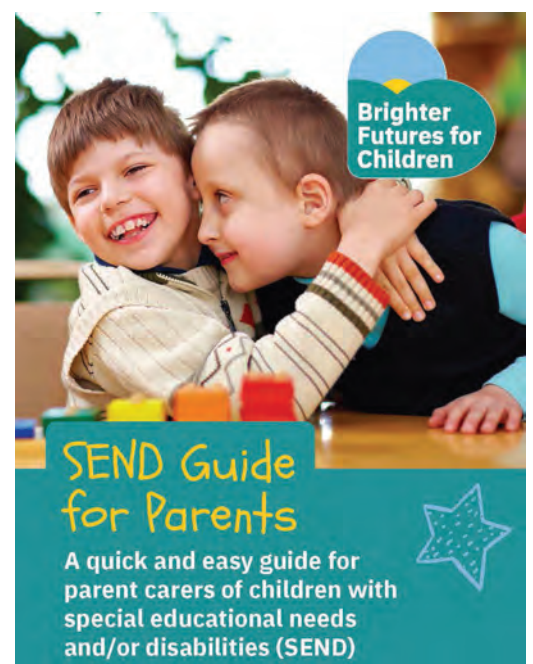


SEND Guide for Parent Carers

Our quick and easy guide for parent carers of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) has recently been updated.

This guide has been put together with parent carers, in partnership with other services, to help families access information on local SEND services for children, young people with additional needs

Further information can be found here [SEND Guide for Parent Carers](#) | [Reading Services Guide](#)



Support

for you and your family



ACRE Family Support Team (Alafia)

Supporting black and minority ethnic families with a child (0-25) with additional needs or disabilities. Alafia works in partnership with local statutory, voluntary and community organisations to facilitate access to services by BME families in Reading. We offer advice and advocacy support to our members, empower members to participate in relevant health and social care forums and provide a relaxed environment aimed at reducing isolation, enhancing life skills and improving well-being of our members.

They offer:

- Home visiting and a short breaks service.
- A monthly support group
- A Tuesday tea & coffee club drop in 11.30am-1pm. We will have a cognitive behavioural therapist available every



Tuesday for support and more.

If you would like to find out more please contact us. Tel: 0118 951 0279, email: info@acre-reading.org, web: acrereading.org

Berkshire Deaf Children's Society

We are a registered charity run by parents of deaf children and our main aim is to give help and support to deaf and hearing impaired infants, children and their families.

Membership is free and anyone can be part of the group, regardless of the level or type of their child's hearing loss and methods of communication.

We have a full diary of [great outings and events](#) and meet throughout the year. The aim of the events is to help families meet up in an informal setting and to provide support and advice. It is also an opportunity for hearing impaired children to meet others and for them to meet deaf role models.

Email: berksdcs@gmail.com, web: berkshiredcs.org

SEND Needs Support

Support available to parents, families and carers and young people with SEND.

In this section on the Reading SEND Local Offer website, you will find a range of information including:

- Local services and charities
- National services and charities
- Support groups
- Where to get help and advice.

Please see link to our special needs support area:

[Special Needs Support | Reading Services Guide](#)

Chat Health

Berkshire Healthcare Health Visiting and School Nursing service has launched a ChatHealth texting service.

ChatHealth is a confidential texting service aimed at parents/carers and young people.

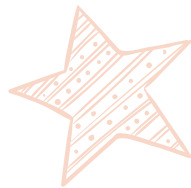
It is an easy way to support more parents/young people with conversations about health and wellbeing. It will enable support to be started earlier, prevent problems from escalating and make connections with people who might otherwise be challenging to engage.

We have designated staff members who are running our service on a Monday-Friday (9am-4.30pm) basis and aim to answer all text messages within a 24-hour period.

Website: chathealth.nhs.uk/

You can find further details including contact numbers here:

[ChatHealth | Reading Services Guide](#)



Remap Berkshire



Remap makes bespoke aids (or adaptations of commercial equipment) for the disabled, at no cost to the client, for who commercial aids are not available. These are tailor-made for the individual's needs to help with personal care, mobility, daily tasks, sport or hobbies.

Our volunteers are experienced engineers or craftsmen with access to a wide variety of skills and expertise. Remap Berkshire is one of over 70 local groups spread across

England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We are pleased to give people our equipment free of charge. This is because we are a charity and are not trying to make money. All our running costs are covered by donations and support from Reading Borough Council, and our volunteers give their time for free.

Call Robert Monk 07790 127123, email: berks.caseofficer@remapgroups.org.uk, web: [Remap Berkshire](https://www.remapberkshire.org.uk)

HIDDEN disabilities



Sunflower Lanyard

Not all disabilities are visible – some are not immediately obvious, such as learning difficulties, mental health as well as mobility, speech, visual or hearing impairments.

Living with a hidden disability can make daily life more demanding for many people, but it can be difficult for others to recognise, acknowledge or understand the challenges you face.

Be visible when you want to be. Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around you, including staff, colleagues and health professionals, that you may need additional support, help or a little more time.

Web: hiddendisabilitiesstore.com

Support

for you and your family



Reading Families Forum

Reading Families' Forum is the local parent carer forum. Our board of trustees and steering group are all volunteers and have children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities ourselves.

Reading
Families'
Forum

We understand what it is like to care for a child with additional needs and to fight for the services our children and their siblings need.

We are independent of Brighter Futures for Children and Reading Borough Council. As a parent carer forum, we work with parents, young people, education, health and social care to improve services for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families.

Tel: 07516 185380, email: fran@readingfamiliesforum.co.uk

Further information can be found here: [Reading Directory | Reading Families' Forum](#)



Support

for those aged 16+



Greenshoots (part of The Ways & Means Trust)

We provide a safe environment where adults who have learning or physical disabilities, or poor mental health, may learn social and practical skills for independent living and take part in training in the form of horticultural therapy.

Email: mail@waysandmeans.org.uk

Parent Organisation: waysandmeans.org.uk

Further information can be found here [Reading Directory | Greenshoots](#) (part of The Ways & Means Trust).



Support

for those aged 16+

16 – 25 Preparation for Adulthood

This section is designed to provide information for young people with Special Educational Needs and/or Disability (SEND) on support and services available to help them make informed choices about their futures.

16+ Guide: This guide contains information on support services and leisure for young people aged 16+ through to adulthood.

[SEND Local Offer 16+ Guide | Reading Services Guide](#)

Transition Guide: [Transition 16-25 | Reading Services Guide](#)

Preparing for Adulthood Guide: [Preparing for Adulthood - An information guide for parents and carers | Reading Services Guide](#)



And here is useful slideshow on preparing for adulthood, with audio:

[Preparation for Adulthood with audio - YouTube](#)

SEND Local Offer 16+ Guide

Contains news and information on:

- Training, employment & further education
- Clubs, groups & community activities
- What's on / events

[SEND Local Offer 16+ Guide | Reading Services Guide](#)

To be added to the mailing list to receive the newsletter and other information, email: localoffer@reading.gov.uk

or phone: 0118 9373777 (opt 2)

Support

for those aged 16+



Autism Berkshire

Autism Berkshire is now providing the new Berkshire Adult Autism Support Service, to help adults aged 18+ in the county who have an autism diagnosis, or who are waiting for assessment.

The aim of the service, which is funded by the NHS, is to provide advice and support to autistic adults who do not meet the criteria for help from specialist NHS-funded services, such as mental health and learning disability teams.

Help available from the Berkshire Adult Autism Support Service includes:

- Adult Support Helpline
- One-to-one Support
- Autism advice workshops
- Problem-solving and advice sessions for autistic adults and their parents and carers at the Atrium coffee shop at Greyfriars Church in Reading town centre
- Activity groups – details to follow soon

Starting Point

Starting Point provides mentoring and creates opportunities for young people aged 11-25. There are four main programmes available: Aware, Advance, Aspire & Action Media.

Tel: 0118 995 2160 or 07825331262, email Startingpoint@themustardtree.org
[Reading Directory | Starting Point](#)



More information about the service – and other support for adults provided by Autism Berkshire, including benefits advice – is available in the Adult Support section at autismberkshire.org.uk

To contact the Berkshire Adult Autism Support Service, email adult.support@autismberkshire.org.uk or call 01189 594 594 and leave a voicemail message including your contact details, so our team can get in touch.

Prince's Trust

The Prince's Trust in the Thames Valley has lots of exciting programmes coming up for young people aged 16 to 30 .



If you would like to refer a young person for a programme, you can either call our customer services team on 0800 842 842 or complete the form through the following link: [Refer a Young Person.](#)

To see a full list of courses available please click on the link: [Reading Directory | Prince's Trust ~ Courses available in Thames Valley](#)

Support

for those aged 16+



The Mustard Tree



The Mustard Tree is a family of projects seeking to be a voice for the unheard. We strive to identify, support and empower the misunderstood and overlooked in our community. Based in Reading, we are committed to enabling social action in our area. Our projects are varied, but we all desire to empower and envision communities and individuals to bring positive change.

Tel: 0118 956 7000, email: info@themustardtree.org,
web: themustardtree.org

Graft Thames Valley

Graft Thames Valley is a small but dynamic charity that aims to eradicate barriers to employment for disabled or disadvantaged people struggling to find a job.

Our services are entirely **FREE OF CHARGE**. We can help with CV writing, job searching, work experience placements, one to one support and work-related training courses.

Free Job Club - 4 Queens Road, Reading, RG1 4BW (next to Wesley Methodist Church) Tuesdays 10.30am-12.30 pm & Thursdays 1.30-3.30pm (term-time only)

Practical help for job searching, applications and interviews

Call 01183 805 950, email: sophie@graft.org.uk, web: ReadingDirectory.com | Graft (Thames Valley) Limited

Fab4All – Day Service for people with SEND

Fab4All provides day centre facilities in our fully accessible purpose-built building, for individuals with a range of abilities, including learning difficulties, physical disabilities and mental health problems.

Our purpose is to provide a safe and secure environment for our members and promote their social, cognitive, physical, and emotional wellbeing. We aim to build a community to help prevent social isolation and loneliness and promote wellbeing.

We take pride in providing a range of activities, including arts and crafts, computer skills, games and a selection of indoor sports adapted to our members' needs.

We have a relaxing Sensory Room which is a wonderful space full of lights, sound, and touch.

Tel: 07961240518, email: info@fab4all.org.uk

For further information and opening times, please follow the link ReadingDirectory.com | Fab4All.com - [Day Service for people with SEND](http://DayService.com).



Support

for those aged 16+



Make/Sense MONDAYS!

A new adult theatre company for people with autism and/or learning disabilities

Make/Sense Theatre is forming a company of adults interested in acting, movement and/or theatre making for 40 weeks from September 2022 to July 2023 at South St Arts Centre, Reading.

At the end of the 40 weeks, we will perform a devised piece in the main theatre. No experience is necessary, just a willingness to give things a go!

Every Monday from 10am - 3pm we will come together to be creative and have fun!

Email: team@makesensetheatre.com

Website: [Make/Sense MONDAYS! - A new adult theatre company for people with autism and/or learning disabilities | Reading Services Guide](#)

Reading Mencap – service helps young people prepare for adulthood

Reading Mencap offers a service to support young people with learning disabilities and autism prepare for adulthood.

Sally Utting, Preparing for Adulthood Advisor, provides an information, advice and advocacy service for young people aged 16 – 25 and their families.

She guides young people and their families through the complexities of becoming an adult, helping them manage the changes this

New Meaning – A New Social Enterprise in Reading

Our Achieve Programme teaches life skills to support young people to be able to live independently



There is a focus on practical life experiences such as cooking, planning and booking trips, social skills, public transport, embedding Maths and English and British Values.

Teaching and activities take place in a small group environment of approximately eight students.

This programme is specifically for young people who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) in place.

The course runs over 2.5 days, 2 days of life skills, 1/2 day of English and Maths.

Further information can be found here: [New Meaning - A New Social Enterprise in Reading | Reading Services Guide](#)



brings to social care, benefits, housing, health, education, employment and finances.

Sally explained: “I am also a supportive, listening ear to parents coping with these changes.

“I try to help them navigate the changes in a step-by-step approach while keeping the young person and their wishes for the life they would like to lead at the core of the support.”

Call **0118 966 2518** or make an [online referral](#).

Counselling

for children and young people



Anxiety UK

The charity offers support, advice and information on a range of anxiety, stress and anxiety-based depression conditions. Helpline/text service/web-chat offers information on anxiety and self-help resources.

03444 775774 – Helpline

07537 416905 - Text service

Email: support@anxietyuk.org.uk, web: anxietyuk.org.uk



MindJam

Mentoring

MindJam offers emotional support and guidance for children and adolescents through gaming and game design.

At MindJam, our aim is to support children who suffer anxiety, stress, social issues and other emotional needs. All our mentors are very experienced and trained in working with neurodivergent individuals, including autistic young people and other conditions such as PDA, ADHD, anxiety, trauma and PTSD.

Counselling (for parents)

Being a parent to a neurodivergent child or a child suffering anxiety can often be challenging, stressful and isolating. We believe it is vitally important to look after your own mental health to be the best support for your child. We are now proud to offer counselling for parents with one of our excellent counsellors. If you would like to enquire about sessions, please get in touch for more information.

Email: mindjamdan@gmail.com, web: mindjam.org.uk



Counselling

for children and young people



No5 Young People

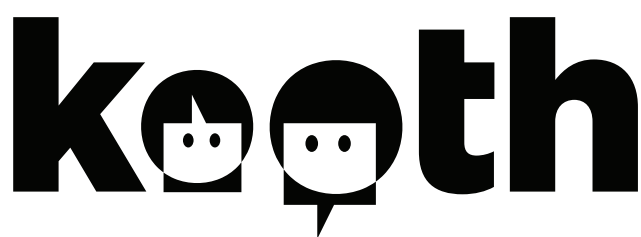
Young People's Mental Health Helpline

Young people from 11-25 years of age can access this free helpline and receive a call from a trained counsellor. Talking to someone who won't judge you about how you're feeling is, in itself, helpful. No5's trained counsellors can also offer practical advice over the phone.

Simply text **TALK** followed by your first name and postcode to **07786 202430** to request a phone call from a trained counsellor. The support line is open Monday to Friday.

No5 Helpline is not a crisis line. If you are in crisis, please contact the Samaritans 24/7 phone line on **116 123**.

For more info on No5 Young People, call **(0118) 901 5668**, email info@no5.org.uk or visit the [No5 Young People website](https://www.no5.org.uk).



Kooth - Online Counselling Service

Kooth supports young people, aged 11-18 years old, with their mental health and wellbeing, providing online counselling, emotional wellbeing services and many useful resources.

Berkshire West CCG commissioned Kooth to support young people in the area and it is an integral component of local mental health provision.

No referral is required – it's really safe, secure and easy to access help. Young people can register with Kooth independently [here](#).

Young Minds

YOUNG MINDS

Young Minds is the UK's leading charity committed to improving the emotional wellbeing and mental health of children and young people. Driven by their experiences, we campaign, research and influence policy and practice. We also provide expert knowledge to professionals, parents and young people through our Parents' Helpline, online resources, training and development, outreach work and publications.

Support for Young Minds

YOUNG Minds Crisis Messenger Service is free 24/7 crisis support service across the UK. If you're a young person and need urgent support with your #MentalHealth, text YM to 85258.

0808 802 5544 (parent helpline)

www.youngminds.org.uk



Counselling

for children and young people

Mental Health Support Team (MHST)



The MHST will support children and young people with emerging, mild or moderate mental health difficulties which may be affecting day to

day life. The project is for those pupils on roll at 36 schools in Reading.

Depending on the age of the child or young person, we may work either directly with them or with their parents. We also work with school staff and offer support on different levels; with the aim of developing and supporting a whole school approach to mental health.

Tel: 0118 937 6548

Email: MHST@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Use the following link to find out more:

[Mental Health Support Team](#)

National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi)

The National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTi) is a not for profit organisation working to enable people at risk of exclusion, due to age or disability, to live the life they choose. We inspire and support policymakers, services and communities to make change happen - change that leads to better lives.

Tel: 01225 789135

Email: office@ndti.org.uk

Web: www.ndti.org.uk/about-us/about-ndti

SHaRON

The Support Hope and Recovery Online Network (SHaRON) is a secure and confidential online platform, moderated by clinical staff, to enable parents, carers and young people to support each other and get expert advice.

SHaRON provides support and advice for families of young people with eating disorders; families of young people with autism or awaiting an assessment for autism; pregnant women and new mums with mental health difficulties.

[Online peer support in mental health | SHaRON](#)

Place2Be

Improving children's mental health

Place2Be is a children's mental health charity with over 25 years' experience working with pupils, families and staff in UK schools.

We provide mental health support in schools through one-to-one and group counselling using tried and tested methods backed by research. We also offer expert training and professional qualifications.

Tel: 020 7923 5500

Email: enquiries@place2be.org.uk

[Improving children's mental health in schools – Place2Be](#)



Nationwide



National organisations offering support to families who have children and young people with SEND

Cerebra

Set up to help improve the lives of children with brain related conditions through research, education and directly supporting the children and their carers, Cerebra helps children up to 16 years with neurodevelopment disorders and conditions, their parents, carers and professional practitioners. [Web: Cerebra | Reading Services Guide](#)

The Communication Trust

The Communication Trust is a coalition of more than 50 not-for-profit organisations working together to support everyone who works with children and young people in England to support their speech, language and communication. [Web: The Communication Trust | Reading Services Guide](#)

Contact – For Families with Disabled Children

FREE workshops and 1:1 support for families with disabled children from Contact. [Web: Contact - For Families with Disabled Children | Reading Services Guide](#)

Family Fund

We support families living across the UK who are raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young person up to the age of 17. Our support is focused on those on low incomes. We believe that all families should have the same choices, quality of life, opportunities and aspirations.

We provide grants for a range of essential items such as fridges, freezers and cookers, clothing, bedding, games, books and music, laptops and tablets, family breaks, sensory toys and more.

[Web: Family Fund | Reading Services Guide](#)

Scope – Navigate (Emotional Support for Parents/Carers)

We're Scope, the disability equality charity in England and Wales. We provide practical information and emotional support when it's most needed, and campaign to create a fairer society.

[Web: Home | Disability charity Scope UK](#)

Purple Ella – Autism & Disability

Hi, I'm Purple Ella. I'm disabled and I make content about my life with autism, ADHD and chronic illness (hEDS) [Web: Purple Ella - Autism & Disability | Reading Services Guide](#)

Sense Active – for Children & Young People

Activity videos to enjoy in the house or garden, new live yoga session specifically for children and young people, more quick challenges for pairs or groups. If you need any support accessing any of the activities please contact us on Sense.Active@sense.org.uk.

[Web: Sense Active - for Children & Young People | Reading Services Guide](#)



National organisations offering support to families who have children and young people with SEND

KIDS

KIDS is a national charity, founded in 1970, that provides a wide range of services to disabled children, young people and their families in England. [Web: kids.org.uk](http://kids.org.uk)

IPSEA

The Independent Provider of Special Education Advice (IPSEA) offers free and independent legally based education advice to parents of children with SEND. They also provide training on the SEND legal framework to parents and carers. [Web: ipsea.org.uk](http://ipsea.org.uk)

Council for Disabled Children

The umbrella body for the disabled children's sector bringing together professionals, practitioners and policy-makers. [Web: councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk](http://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk)

AccessAble

AccessAble is here to take the chance out of going out. To give you the detailed information you need to work out if a place is going to be accessible to you. Their Detailed Access Guides tell you all about a venue's access. They are 100% facts, figures and photographs. [Web: accessible.co.uk](http://accessible.co.uk)

National Autistic Society

The UK's leading autism charity. Their goal is to help transform lives, change attitudes and create a society that works for autistic people. [Web: autism.org.uk](http://autism.org.uk)

Down's Syndrome Association

The Down's Syndrome Association has specialist advisers who can provide you with information and support on issues such as health, social care, benefits and education for people with Down's syndrome. Web: downs-syndrome.org.uk

National Deaf Children's Society

The National Deaf Children's Society is the leading charity for deaf children and their families. [Web: ndcs.org.uk](http://ndcs.org.uk)

Sense

Sense gives legal advice and assistance to deafblind individuals or their family members and supporters. [Web: sense.org.uk](http://sense.org.uk)



Information, support and services for Reading's children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.



Contact



0118 937 3777 (option 2)



localoffer@reading.gov.uk



@ReadingLocalOffer

Visit **www.readingsendlocaloffer.org**