

Welcome to our

Newsletter

🌞 Introducing "Beyond Barriers" 🌟



We are thrilled to introduce to you our latest endeavour: "Beyond Barriers," a newsletter dedicated to championing inclusivity, celebrating diversity, and supporting students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) within our school community.

In a world where differences should be celebrated and barriers broken down, our newsletter aims to be a beacon of positivity, understanding, and empowerment. Whether it's showcasing the talents and achievements of our diverse student body, highlighting initiatives that promote inclusivity, or providing resources and support for students with SEND, "Beyond Barriers" is committed to fostering an environment where every individual feels valued, respected, and included.

We believe that by embracing our differences, we enrich our collective experience and create a school community that thrives on acceptance and empathy.

Join us on this journey as we go beyond barriers, together.

Emma Gother
Assistant Headteacher for SEND and Inclusion send@nsg.northants.sch.uk

In this newsletter you will find:

information on School Life, and features on Community Matters, keep reading!

Table Cricket

We had Patrick from Northants Cricket Club come into school to deliver a 4 week course on table cricket which was well received in preparation for the Schools Competition at the County Cricket Ground in January. We had 10 students who attended the course.

These 10 students went to the County Cricket Ground to take part in a 'come and try' session for Table cricket.
These students worked with young leaders and developed their skills and tactics in preparation for the County Competition.







Sports Leadership

On Thursday 19th October we had 4 Primary Schools visit us to take part in a Year 5 Multisports Festival. We had 15 leaders from Y8-Y10 and 10 students from the Y12 Sports Leaders Qualification. It was a very busy morning with 120 visiting pupils but the leaders were amazing. They adapted their activities to be run inside, due to the poor weather conditions. The primary schools all had a wonderful time and are looking forward to being the younger pupils from their school in the spring and summer term.

Wendy Tarlton, Head of Sport & Performing Arts Faculty

Rock Climbing @ Benham

Some of our students have been fortunate enough to participate in rock climbing over at Benham sports arena. They have all made excellent progress on a variety of different walls, utilizing different techniques, learning how to safely abseil, use the harnesses and how to tackle tougher courses. They all communicate with one another and support each other on the walls. In recent sessions the girls have been challenging themselves by trying to beat their times and race one another. The girls have been brilliant so far and we hope they continue to thoroughly enjoy the sessions.





Boccia & New Age Curling Festival @ NSG

NSG hosted the Boccia and New Age Kurling festival, where 3 schools including NSG took part in a come and try session based around the skills of boccia and new age kurling. The sessions were run by young leaders from NSG. The students thoroughly enjoyed the different skills and training, as well as playing friendly matches against the other schools.

Donations

We are asking for donations to add to our nearly new uniform stock for NSG's blazers, jumpers and branded school PE Kit. All items need to be clean and in good condition. Any donations can be dropped off at school reception. Further information about future events will be provided in later editions. Thank you in advance for all donations.

Friends of NSG

Want to help donate to a really worthy cause?

We are a small group of parents and other interested parties whose aim is to raise small amounts of money that can be used for the benefits of as wide a range of pupils as possible. The items that we purchase are extras that otherwise the school would find it difficult to provide and are in addition to what is provided through curriculum areas. New members are always welcome and in the first instance, please contact

admin@nsg.northants.sch.uk who can put you in touch with members of Friends of NSG.



A Spectacular Success:

The Wizard of Oz Musical at Northampton School for Girls by arrangement with Concord Theatricals

In a whirlwind of color, music, and talent, we recently staged a mesmerizing rendition of "The Wizard of Oz," leaving audiences spellbound and enchanted. Under the arrangement with Concord Theatricals, the school brought the beloved classic to life with four brilliant performances that drew a total audience of over 1000 people.

The stage was transformed into the magical land of Oz, thanks to professionally hired sets and costumes that added an extra layer of authenticity and charm to the production. However, it was the students who truly shined as the stars of the show.

With nearly 100 students from year 8 to 13 involved in various roles including the cast, crew, and band, this production showcased the incredible talent and dedication present within the NSG community. What made this rendition stand out even more was the diversity among the student cast, making it a truly inclusive and unforgettable experience for everyone involved.



"It truly was a fabulous show, and each and every one of the girls involved should be immensely proud of themselves."

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The success of the production wouldn't have been possible without the hard work and dedication of the Performing Arts team, along with the support of staff across the school. They ensured that every student involved had an experience they would cherish for a lifetime.

The impact of the musical extended beyond the stage, touching the hearts of both audience members and parents alike. One parent shared their thoughts, saying, "Huge congratulations to you and your team; it was absolutely fabulous, and [their child] had the best time being part of it all."

The Wizard of Oz musical at NSG was not just a theatrical performance; it was a testament to the power of collaboration, creativity, and community spirit. It provided an opportunity for students to showcase their talents, build lasting memories, and inspire those around them. As the curtains closed on this unforgettable production, it left behind a legacy of magic and joy that will be remembered for years to come: "It truly was a fabulous show, and each and every one of the girls involved should be immensely proud of themselves."

Claire Odell, Head of Drama





#inspireinclusion



The campaign theme of International Women's Day is an ambitious call to action. This year's goal- to 'Inspire Inclusion'- encourages us to consider the ways in which girls and women in our community experience barriers to full participation and equal opportunities in education, employment, politics and beyond. When considering inclusion, we must also consider the ways in which some women and girls experience additional inequalities and marginalisation; layers of disadvantage which impede their life chances.

Women with impairments arguably experience more significant barriers than any other group. In the UK, the Census highlights that 18.7% of women and girls experience impairments and would be defined as disabled by the Equality Act, 2010. This includes women with sensory, learning and physical impairments as well as those with long term health conditions which affect their daily lives. The social model of disability argues that society and its institutions are not designed for these women, and therefore they are disabled by barriers and discrimination.

When we look at national figures for women and girls with impairments, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (2022) highlights that they are more likely to experience violence, abuse and harrassment-both in public and their private lives. Our collective responsibility to safeguard and empower SEND students therefore becomes more acute. Additionally, disabled people are three times as likely to leave education with no formal qualifications (ONS, 2021), and are more likely to live in poverty while experiencing higher living costs.

This year, striving to consistently provide appropriate and sensitive support for the individual needs of our students is one action I will try to take to forge a gender equal world- and to inspire inclusion. International Women's Day advocates for solidarity between all women and girls, and by supporting the needs of students with impairments I hope to achieve this goal.

Siobhan Cox, Head of Health and Social Care



B.WELL Celebrates International Women's Day

The B.Well Café, International Women's Day celebration was a joyful and busy event, providing our school community with a range of activities to explore this year's theme "inspire inclusion'.

We celebrated by creating sparkling IWD wristbands, looked at positive affirmations and used discussion cards to reflect on a range of topics such as: 'describe five issues you would like to fix for girls and women' and 'identify a woman or a girl who inspires you and list her qualities'.



You can find out more about our B.Well Café and events via the schools PSHE & Wellbeing Hub: https://sites.google.com/nsg.northants.sch.uk/nsgpshehub/wellbeing-nsg/b-well-cafe

The Lowdown also joined us, providing students and staff with the opportunity to find out more about their work and variety of services. There were high levels of engagement from our students and their stall was constantly busy throughout the lunchtime session. As a result, several students have already applied join their Youth Advisory Board and are keen to attend their youth and wellbeing groups. The Lowdown commented on the politeness of our students and were impressed with their enthusiasm and questions.

If you want to find out more about The Lowdown and the wonderful work they do, take a look on the PSHE & Wellbeing Hub: https://sites.google.com/nsg.northants.sch.uk/nsgpshehub/information-advice/the-lowdown

Our B.Well Café continues to be very popular with our students with lunchtime numbers reaching 90+ even with a rota system. If you would like to support some of our sessions, our Year 7 & 8 weeks are particularly busy, please contact Cara Nicholson to find out more.

Cara Nicholson, Head of Psychology and Student Well-Being Lead

Assisted Technology - AV1 Robot



As you will be aware from previous communications, we are strengthening our inclusive practice by embracing and welcoming AV1 Robots into our school. This assisted technology allows our most vulnerable students who are unable to attend lessons for an extended period to access their learning. This provision is supported by research and made available through our partnership with Hospital Outreach. Whilst the provision is in high demand, it is important to recognise that it is not widely available. There is a specific criteria and process to be able to access such provision as it is designed for the students with a high level of need. Each situation is different, we have some students accessing their AV1 Robot at home, in school and even a hybrid model of the two. We have had much success this term introducing and embedding the AV1 Robots and have received positive feedback from all partners involved including:

"It is fantastic that NGS is using the AV1's to ensure all students can access high quality learning regardless of need" (Hospital and Outreach Practitioner).

"We've missed having the student with us, and having her join us again was, quite frankly, awesome!" (NSG, Teacher).

"I think it is a good thing, it means that the student is able to learn and now it is weird if the AV1 Robot is not in lessons" (NGS, peer).

"It's amazing. I can join lessons, learn and see my friends. It has helped improve but also make me feel less isolated. I am enjoying using my AV1 Robot" (NSG, AV1 User).

I want to thank everyone involved in implementing this provision and helping to remove any barriers. I have provided two QR Codes if you would like to learn more about this fantastic technology.

Emma Gother, Assistant Headteacher SEND and Inclusion







Year 7 Modern Language Art Exhibit: Celebrating Creativity in French and Spanish



Northampton School for Girls recently transformed the foyer into a vibrant showcase of creative expression, hosting a spectacular art exhibition featuring the art works of its Year 7 students. Spearheaded by Mrs Wilson, the Head of Modern Languages, with invaluable support from the Art department, the event provided a platform for budding artists to display their talent and showcase the amazing work that these students are completing in their Modern Language lessons. The exhibition boasted an array of artwork, each piece accompanied by a description in either French or Spanish.

Parents and guests were treated to a unique experience as they wandered through the makeshift gallery, marvelling at the ingenuity and creativity displayed by the young artists. Mrs Wilson's vision of promoting cross-cultural understanding through art came to life as parents and carers explored the work on display, fostering appreciation for both artistic and linguistic expression.

One of the highlights of the event was the premiere screening of the Year 7 Eurovision videos, marking the first time that parents have had the opportunity to witness their students' performances. The videos, a long-standing rite of passage into language learning at NSG, showcased not only linguistic proficiency but also the students' enthusiasm for music, dance and Disney songs.

The event was a smashing success and Mrs Wilson would like to express her gratitude to the students for their dedication and creativity, as well as to the Art & Modern Language departments for their support and willingness to collaborate on this project. This event was not just about showcasing artwork; it's about celebrating the beauty of language and culture. Through art, we bridge barriers and forge connections that transcend borders.

Amanda Wilson, Head of Modern Foreign Languages

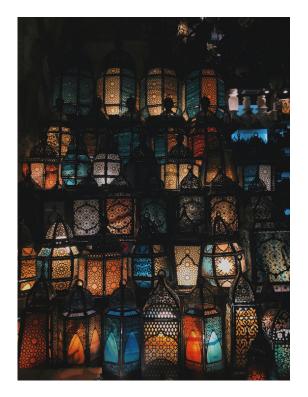
Ramadan Rules, An Illuminating Insight.

With such a rich and diverse school community at NSG, most of you will know a Muslim who fasts during Ramadan. Ramadan is a month of spirituality and renewal, a month when mature and able Muslims are obligated to go without food and drink between dawn and dusk.

(Yes, not even water).

Do all Muslims need to fast the whole month, every single year of their life? And what does it mean to be 'mature and able'?

Below, we have some experiences of students at NSG, beginning with a mature and able Muslim girl who is responsible for fulfilling religious duties:



"The year I got my period I became obligated to fast. Before that, I would only voluntarily fast some days. Now, I have to fast all month except from the days I'm on my period, travelling far away, or if I'm too ill (like, last year I caught a horrid virus). As I'm generally well and able, I have to make these fasts up after Ramadan." - A.A Year 7

What about disabilities?

M.M, below would be exempt from fasting due to medical needs. As her medical condition is continuous and she is therefore unable to make up missed fasts in the future, she would give 'fidya' which is a meal for those living in poverty.

"I take liquid meals through a feeding tube and need medication throughout the day. This means I can't fast. I love gathering with my family for the break-fast and performing the extra prayers. I wish I could fast... Instead, my parents feed the poor, and when I grow up and have money of my own, I will do the same." - M.M Year 8.

A visible disability, however, doesn't necessarily mean an inability to fast. If there are no dietary or medication needs during the day, Muslims with disabilities can observe fasting with some support:



Ramadan Rules continued...

I'm a wheelchair user. I understand religious obligations and have the same diet as my family, so I should fast and pray with some adjustments. For example, I don't need to do the ritual washing with water before I pray, and I can stay in my chair and pray by sight." - W.A Year 8.

"Whoever guides someone to goodness will have a reward like one who performed it." Source: Hadith Sahīh Muslim 1893

Some disabilities and genetic conditions do affect brain development, meaning some individuals will never reach the mature understanding required to fulfil religious obligations. Below, we have a student who would be exempt from fasting and other duties including hijab and daily prayers, but tries her best anyway:

"Everyone tells me I don't need to fast, but I want to join in! Mum wakes me up and tells me when to eat because I forget. When the fasts are too hard, sometimes I eat - I hope I'm not doing a bad thing!" - A.K Year 11.

Much More than Fasting

Fasting is a time to disconnect from the world and focus on our relationship with the Creator, be it through increased worship, charity, mindfulness or community spirit. Muslims of all walks of life, old and young, well and able and otherwise can participate in the blessings of Ramadan in many ways other than fasting. Let us all remember, that every person is unique with individual needs and it is within the teachings of Islam and all faiths to support one another towards good.

Ramadan Kareem!

Further reading about Ramadan: https://mcb.org.uk/resources/ramadan/ or scanning the QR Code.







Syeda Begum, Learning Support Assistant

Smashing Stereotypes in SCIENCE WEEK at NSG

Celebrating the diverse people in science and engineering!





What do you imagine when you're asked what a scientist looks like? Are you picturing lab coats, goggles, and conical flasks? How about the person? Are they a White man with grey hair, who resembles Albert Einstein?

If that's who you pictured – you aren't alone. Buts it's something that we at NSG want to change.

Students from Y7-11 celebrated British Science week by watching an explosive assembly showing the significant contribution women have made and continue to make to developments in Science.



Science week activities about the topic of TIME were completed in our labs. Some classes considered how time could be measured, some considered how time is important in rollercoaster design and some classes reflected on their own personal timeline.

Science is for everyone! NSG Science Faculty is here to support you every step of the way. If you would like to find out more about British Science week please visit www.britishscienceweek.org or scan the QR Code.

Sarah Golley-Spokes, Head of Science



Say "Yes" to Free School Meals

Have you ever wondered if your child is eligible for Free School Meals (FSM). Maybe you know you are eligible but worry there will be a negative impact on your child if they receive them. You may be concerned about the quality of school food and think providing a packed lunch is a healthier option. At Northampton School for Girls, we operate a cashless restaurant serving a range of nutritious meals, so every child's experience is the same, whether they receive a free or paid for meal.

By signing up for FSM, your child can receive a nutritious hot meal, desert and drink every day. View the varied range of food available by clicking <u>here</u> to access the menu on the school website.

In these times where the cost of living is impacting lots of families, it is important to look at every opportunity to save money, but this is just one benefit of accessing FSM.

- · You will save time, as well as money, by not preparing a packed lunch
- · Your child will receive a nutritious meal every lunchtime
- NSG will be able to access additional funding

Apply online through the Gov.uk website <u>here</u> or by scanning the QR Code which will redirect you to the appropriate local council website when you enter your postcode.

"Healthy school lunches mean students are getting the nourishment they need to power their minds and bodies to learn."





Strategies for Anxiety and Stress

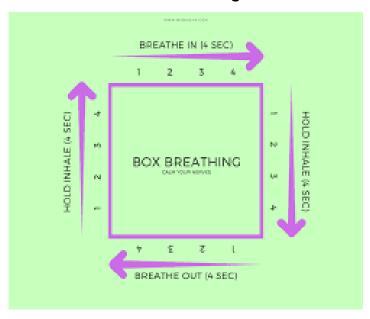
Tammy Enright, our School Counsellor, shares some helpful tips and ideas to support anxiety and stress.

There are numerous tips and strategies currently available to help manage the exam pressures of today. Each of these strategies is highly valuable in its own right or when used in combination with others. However, it's important to recognise that there's no one-size-fits-all solution; finding the right strategy involves some trial and error.

Finding a strategy that fits you is crucial, and this requires practice. It can be quite challenging to employ a strategy or technique during moments of high anxiety or stress, particularly if it involves cognitive tasks such as counting. This challenge arises from the disconnect between different parts of the brain—the emotional brain and the logical brain—due to heightened emotions (fight or flight response). For instance, consider the box breathing; exercise outlined below.

Anxiety often takes control at unexpected moments, steering your emotions. Attempting to implement a strategy while feeling anxious can be overwhelming and may lead to giving up altogether. However, with a well-practised strategy or coping mechanism, it becomes easier to employ, as the skill becomes ingrained in the neural pathways of your brain. As Donald Hebb famously said, "Neurons that fire together, wire together"; It's akin to learning to ride a bike; initially, you must concentrate on various components—feet, hands, brakes, balance—but with practice (and a few falls), you eventually ride automatically without conscious thought.

Box Breathing







Beyond Barriers Logo Competition

As Beyond Barriers is a community publication, the school staff have decided the name, and we are launching a competition as we would like students to design a suitable logo that reflects the theme (Beyond Barriers) and will be used in future editions.

Students will have until **4pm on Friday 10th May** to produce their entries. Entries will then be shortlisted and then each form group will judge the finalists. Prizes will be awarded to all finalists with the winner have their design used on all Beyond Barriers as well as a pamper box.

Terms and Conditions:

- Students to design a logo to reflect Beyond Barriers.
- · Students can only submit one entry.
- Entries can be in any form of media.
- All entries to be submitted to reception or if digital emailed to the central SEND email below by 4pm on Friday 10th May.
- All entries will be review and finalist shortlisted.
- Finalist will be contacted.
- Students will vote for their favourite in registration. All votes will be collected and counted.
- The winning entry will be contacted and announced to the school community.
- 1st Prize will include a pamper box and there will be chocolate items for 2nd and 3rd place.

Please email send@nsg.northants.sch.uk if you have any questions.

Want to contribute? Here's your chance!

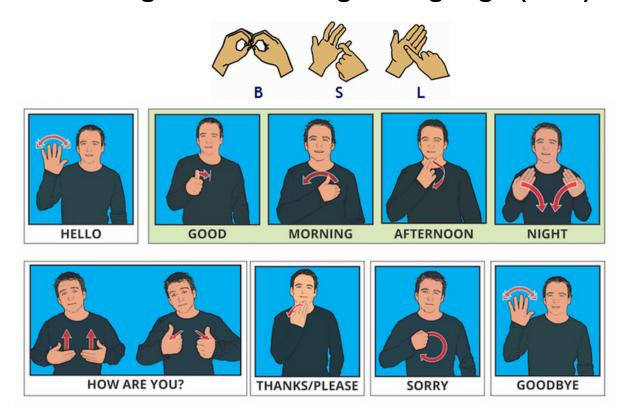
Dear Students! We invite you to contribute to our termly newsletter! Your input is valuable in creating a vibrant and engaging publication that reflects the diverse experiences and achievements of our student body. Use the link before or scan the QR Code to submit your contributions.

https://forms.gle/U5arx5xCWaZBGgSUA





Greetings in British Sign Language (BSL)



Four Interesting Facts Most People Don't Know About Sign Language

It's The Fourth Most Used Language In The UK

Over 125,000 adults in the UK use British Sign Language, and many more people know how to communicate using it. In fact, 15,000 people living in England and Wales use British Sign Language as their main language.

Different Countries Have Their Own Versions Of Sign Language

Just like spoken languages, sign language changes depending on the country you're in. Even though Britain and the USA both speak in English, their sign languages are very different! Differences can also be found in regional sign language – similar to how accents and dialects are reflected in speech.

Sign Language Uses More Than Just Hand Gestures

As well as 'signs', British Sign Language includes facial expressions, gestures and body language to communicate. Sign language uses its own system of grammar, which involves different sentence structures to spoken English.

Many Deaf People Have 'Name Signs'

Instead of signing out the individual letters of their name, many people who communicate through sign language use a single sign to represent it. This 'name sign' is unique to the individual and can be compared to a nickname.

Hannah Bradshaw, Library Assistant

Meet the SEND IASS Team

We support children and young with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the parents and carers in West Northants.

We provide free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support for SEND children and young people aged 0 -25 years. Our aim is to empower children and young people with SEND and their families to play an active and informed role in the decision- making process around education, health & social care.



What can the service offer you?

- ·A free confidential, impartial service with independently trained staff.
- ·Someone impartial to talk to in confidence
- ·Information and support on a one-to-one basis
- Information about SEND Services in your local area
- ·The Local Offer
- ·Personal Budgets
- ·A straightforward explanation of SEND services and processes and procedures
- Information on special educational needs and disability, health and social care
- ·Facilitate form filling
- Someone to assist you put forward your views
- ·Someone to attend meetings with you, when required
- ·Someone to listen

We also offer advice to professionals working with SEND children and young people and their families. The service runs a free adviceline providing advice around SEND related matters. **Please call 0300 126 1039 or email SENDIASS@westnorthants.gov.uk**

News: Students for NSG had the opportunity to attend the SEND IASS 'Moving on Up' Conference on Thursday 21st March. Students involved will share their experience about this event in our next edition of Beyond Barriers.



En-Fold

En-Fold is the brainchild of an Autistic adult wanting to make a difference with a vision to be an effective all-age Autism service removing the 'Abyss' and system navigating for those who need it-both through the diagnostic journey itself and following. Having a founder who has experienced first-hand life on the spectrum, and the role of parenting two girls with diagnosis, the passion and drive to meet needs and make a difference is huge.

En-Fold was born as a result of this passion and drive for change, ensuring that autistic individuals and families get the support and information that they need to empower them to make decisions. All too often, once a diagnosis is given a very limited explanation or information is offered on what support is available. This system navigating and setting people up equipped for their life journey is En-Fold's mission, and something En-Fold is proud to be taking forward. As an organisation, En-Fold is based on the moto 'About us, By us, For everyone'-with personal lived experience at the very heart of all we do.

"Autism is not a puzzle piece to be solved, but a mosaic to be celebrated. Each piece is unique and adds beauty to the whole."





Northamptonshire Autism Support **Our Services**



Autism Support Service

Support for autistic adults or parent/carers of autistic children at any stage of the diagnostic process

- · Virtually or in the home
- Practical support or service signposting from staff with lived experience

What is Autism?

Understanding behaviour, meltdowns and sensory issues

Education and understanding the system

Form Filling Support



Adult Social Groups

- Friendly welcoming groups
 For Autistic adults (Formal diagnosis not required)
 Ages 16+ (no upper age limit)
 Daytime and evening sessions
 Various Locations Northampton, Kettering, Wellingborough and Rushden
 A safe space to meet new people and have fun

- al group activities such as: Bowling, laser tag, bike rides etc (small charges apply subsidised prices)





Young Person's Autism Advisory Project (YAAP)

An opportunity to meet like-minded people, whilst having a say on the development of services for Autistic young people

Ages 11-25 Groups in Kettering and Northan

A new Northampton YAAP group for ages 8-11 launching early 2024 Safe environment to express needs and aspirations Activities from creating resources through to interviewing for staff

Refreshments provided Free to attend





High Five Parent Support Group

- Evening group
- Free to attend
- Family days out and activities throughout the year (small charges apply, subsidised prices)
- Closed Facebook group





Autism Training

- · Highly-rated training, aimed at organisations and businesses:
- 6 hrs of quality training in understanding Autism and its impact on those working with Autistic individuals
- · Delivered by experts through experience
- Can be delivered in the workplace for up to 30 people and also virtually
- · Handouts and a certificate for each participant





Peer Support Project

- Part of Northamptonshire Keyworking Service, working with Barnardo's. Commissioned by the NHS
 as part of 'Transforming Care', this service is open to:

- Ages 0-25 years
 Autism and/or Learning Disability diagnosis

- 1:1 individual/Family support in the community, focused on avoiding hospital admission and improving well-being





SEND Local Offer website

The Local Offer provides information about services and provision available in our local area

- · It is a series of webpages and a searchable directory
- Information about support services, education, health, care, activities, parent groups, funding, transport, charities...

www.westnorthants.gov.uk/local-offer

· Save it as an internet favourite and share



The Local Offer service and website is for parents, carers, young people and professionals in the community of SEND in West Northamptonshire. The website has comprehensive information about the services and provision available for children and young people with a special educational need or disability.

The web pages are informative on a range of subjects such as Preparing for Adulthood, Transport, Early Help and Social Care as well as Education and Leisure activities. Information ranges from commissioned short break youth clubs and respite care to services for children with sensory impairments and the support that schools can access for them. The Information for Parents section was compiled by local parents as part of our commitment to the local co-production charter and includes links to useful support groups and forums for parents.

The search directory can be used to find services and support services in the county and wider, with useful links to national charities. Feedback from users is used to make changes to the software as needed and is always welcome.

The Local Offer produces a termly newsletter, printed versions available for parents by signing up on the Disabled Children's Register webpage or by signing up for the electronic version.

Families can contact the Local Offer team by using our online form (link on webpages) or emailing <u>localoffer@westnorthants.gov.uk</u> or by telephone: 0300 126 7000 and ask to speak to the Local Offer team, or text or WhatsApp us directly on 07391 381240 or 07780 473982.





What's Happening?







