

Dear parents and carers,

Do you have a child with a special need or a disability?

Would you like to be involved in council decisions and sharing your thoughts on processes that involve your children? (If so, read on...)

Staffordshire Local area (this includes the council and the clinical commissioning groups) are committed to supporting our parents and carers. But we understand that we need to do more. Which is why we're setting up a brand-new parent / carer forum and we want **you** to be involved.

A forum, put simply, is a meeting or group. In this case, one that will meet regularly to discuss the views of parents / carers and will be heard in a more formal way. This forum will then **work together** with council staff to make positive changes involving your children who have a special need or disability. Staffordshire is made up of eight different districts / areas and we want a parent / carer forum in each.

Helping us to do this, is an organisation called 'CONTACT' (you might know them as 'Contact a Family'). They have worked with other councils do something similar and its worked really well. We feel that by setting up these meetings (forums), it will help us to build even stronger structures and practices for our young people and will make sure parents have a voice. Parents and carers **should** be involved in shaping the processes that involve their children – so let's make it happen!

If you would like to find out more ... please come along to one of our information events to be held on the following dates (we appreciate that parents/carers have school runs and work commitments too! – So, we've tried to cater for everyone with the times suggested). If you can't attend the meeting that's linked to your local area, just attend any that suits you. The information will be the same at each event.

- **Cannock and Lichfield: Thursday 21st January 2021, 10:00am – 12:00pm**
- **Stafford and South Staffs: Thursday 21st January 2021, 18:00pm – 20:00pm**
- **Newcastle and Moorlands: Wednesday 27th January 2021, 12:30pm – 14:30pm**
- **East Staffs and Tamworth: Friday 29th January 2021, 10:00am – 12:00pm**

For more information and to find out how you can be involved, please contact Catherine Ratcliffe on Catherine.ratcliffe@cafamily.org.uk who will send you the link to the [Zoom meeting](#)* (you don't even have to move from your front room!). There is no pressure to speak if you don't want to (but please feel free to do so if you feel comfortable enough). And whilst we know that it can be scary going along to any sort of meeting, all you have to do for now is turn up... and we will do the rest. So, have yourself a cuppa ready and tune in! This is an exciting opportunity for you to work with us at the Staffordshire local area. (We really hope you can make it).

(*zoom is an app that is a free way of meeting up with people from your own home! It's really easy to download and works on most laptops, tablets and phones. To find out more and how to download the app – click [here](#)). Once downloaded, you click on the link emailed to you and voila! – you're in the meeting!)