

Aiming High – Short Breaks Newsletter

October 2022

Edition 7



Welcome to the seventh edition of the Aiming High – Short Breaks newsletter.

To find a list of activities in your area, please go to the Aiming High page:

[Aiming High - Activities and short breaks | Staffordshire Connects](#)

Click on the calendar for a specific area or the grey area to see a whole week or month's activities. If your child/young person would like to take part in an activity or have any questions, **please call 0300 111 8007 (option 2, option 5)**

We want to make sure that bookings for our activities are accessible to everyone and so if you are unable to contact our booking team via the telephone, please email

sendreferrals@staffordshire.gov.uk

Please include information on your child's name, date of birth and the activity provider and date you are interested in.

Don't forget it is **one free** session in November but **two free ones** in December!

Contact us at the inbox ...

Please remember, if you have any questions, queries, feedback or just general comments, please send us an email to the Aiming High inbox and also if you want to be added to our mailing list: aiminghigh@staffordshire.gov.uk



News and updates ...

When you call to book onto activities, we need to ensure that the **right people** are detailed on our registers – so that if we need to contact you about a booking or confirm times/cancel activities, **we are calling the right people. We need to check who has parental responsibility** – please do not take offence at this, it is to ensure safety and that we adhere to data protection laws.

November Activities



Stoke City are running their Ability Counts sessions in **Rugeley** on Wednesday's and **Gnosall** on Thursday's.



Sherratts Wood are running their Family Fun Days on a Saturday at their site in **Burton** and the Farm in **Leigh**.

Caudwell Children are running their **Purple Explorers** **At:** Burton-on-Trent, Lichfield, Newcastle, Brocton and Leek.



Staffordshire Wildlife are running **Nature Tots** in Burton-on-Trent.



Action for Children are running a **Bowling and Burgers night** in Stafford.

Gartmore are running 1:1 sessions and themed sessions at the Riding School.





Doves Care have a good number of events on in November: Crazy golf and miniature railway in **Eccleshall**, Bowling in **Stafford**, soft play in **Stafford** and fun at the farm in **Tamworth**.



Chuckie have their Chuckle Chillout session which is always very popular.



Sherratts Wood Christmas Festivals

Take place on Saturday 26th November and 10th December!

Sherratts Wood Farm, Leigh, Stoke-on-Trent, ST10 4PQ – following on from their successful October Halloween Festival.



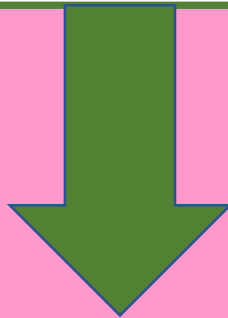
Santa and Mrs Claus will be making the long trip to meet you at the farm on Saturday 26th November and Saturday 10th December between 3-7!

Aiming High

For children and young people with
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staffordshire.gov.uk/aiminghigh

December and Christmas Activities Will be ready to book from November 1st!



We have pantomimes (oh yes we do!) Christmas Meals, Chillout sessions, Christmas Riding sessions, Christmas crafting sessions, Ability Counts sessions and Christmas parties and don't forget our Christmas Festivals!

Don't forget you get two free sessions in December!

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What difference does Aiming High activities make to our children?



TRANSFORMING
COMMUNITIES
Community Trust

Harry is absolutely loving the Wednesday night sessions. I'm not sure if I've told you already but this is the first club he has managed to maintain since his brain surgery and subsequent brain injuries and ongoing issues. I know it's because he feels safe in the environment you provide to forget, get it wrong, need a break, be slow, or any other multitude of issues he deals with. The other boys and parents are lovely all looking out for each other and the way you and your team deal with the boys is just brilliant. It sounds like a cliché, but it feels like Harry has found a little "tribe" where he can just kick a football about and forget his worries and just be himself. It's the first time he's ever had a place to go with other children socially where his disabilities are not a problem, and he can just be himself. He has never been so excited about a club that he asks to go each week and is gutted to miss, and it is down to the environment you have created, and we are so grateful.



I really hope the sessions can continue beyond October as Noah really enjoys coming, it can take him a while to feel comfortable enough to fully engage and having a break would set him back. This is a really lovely group, and all the lads are great, and they all get on well. It's also really good for me as well as it enables me to get out and speak to other parents/careers and they are all really friendly and supportive, being a single parent this type of group is invaluable and a real lifeline.



What should the County Council offer you ...

Your local Council can provide help if you have a disabled child, including:

- Short break services such as the Aiming High activities
- Holiday play schemes
- Care at home
- Some aids and adaptations

The Council has a duty to provide these services under [the Children Act 1989](#).

Some are free of charge – the Council might ask you to contribute towards others. If you think your child may qualify, contact <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/>

If your child qualifies for services from the Council, you will also have the option of getting [direct payments](#). These are paid directly to you so you can arrange services you need. They are an alternative to social care services provided by the Council. You may also be eligible for extra [Child Tax Credit](#) for each disabled child you're responsible for or [Disability Living Allowance for children](#)



Check out Staffordshire Special Educational Needs & Disability (SEND) Local Offer. It is the place to go for information, support and services for children and young people aged 0-25 years. It includes all Aiming High activities and much more. The information is held all in one place and can be searched by subject, age and district.

Watch our video below to find out more about Staffordshire's local offer.

Video: <https://bit.ly/3z2rLQa>

Website: www.staffordshireconnects.info/localoffer

Facebook: Staffordshire SEND Local Offer

Download flyers and promotional materials: <https://bit.ly/3O0wxCd>

Money information ...



Full list of DWP Christmas benefit and cost of living payment dates

This year, there will be a four-day Christmas weekend starting Saturday, December 24 (Christmas Eve) and finishing on Tuesday, December 27th (a bank holiday in place of Christmas Day which falls on a Sunday). In the case of weekends and bank holidays, benefits are usually paid on the nearest working day beforehand.

For each Universal Credit claimant, payments are fixed to the same date each month, but any Universal Credit amounts normally due on the 24th, 25th, 26th or 27th of the month should instead go in on Friday, December 23rd. So you will have the money in time for Christmas but will have to make it last right through until your usual payment date in January.

Other benefits are tied to a specific weekday, not a date, because of the festive bank holidays, any that you would normally expect to get on the Monday or Tuesday after Christmas will instead arrive on Friday, December 23. That includes Child Benefit, which is normally paid by HMRC every four weeks on a Monday or Tuesday, and any State Pension payments usually deposited on those days of the week - that applies to pensioners whose National Insurance number has 00 to 19 (Monday) or 20 to 39 (Tuesday) as the last two digits.



Next instalment of £400 energy rebate

The £400 energy rebate is being given out over six months to those with a domestic electricity account. After two instalments of £66 each in October and November, there will be five sums of £67 from December to March. So you should get a £67 payment from your energy supplier sometime during December.

How you get the money depends on how you pay for your energy. People with direct debits will get a reduction on the amount taken out or a refund paid back in afterwards, while those with prepay meters will get a credit or a voucher. The money is being given out via your electricity billing account, but you may be able to get some of it moved across to your gas account.

Cold Weather Payment

This is a payment of £25 for periods of cold weather between November 1st and March 31st, 2023. The money goes directly into bank accounts within 14 days. In past winters, some people in parts of Britain that had regularly experienced a cold snap have received three payments, meaning an extra £75.

The cash goes to those on the following benefits:

- Pension Credit
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Universal Credit
- Support for Mortgage Interest



It's paid out if the average temperature in your area is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days. To find out if your area is due a Cold Weather Payment, enter the first two letters and numbers of your postcode on the [UK Government website here](#).

Who can attend Aiming High sessions?

We often have questions from parents/carers asking us if their child can attend Aiming High activities – the answer is: any child with a diagnosed Special Educational Need, any child with a life limiting condition, any child who has an Education and Health Care Plan and any child who receives additional support in their school/education setting as a result of their additional or Special Educational Need. What we cannot do unfortunately, is fund places for children with very mild needs, we have to focus on those more in need of a short break and stimulating learning/social development opportunity.

If you ever have a question about whether or not your child can attend, please email us at the Aiming High inbox: aiminghigh@staffordshire.gov.uk

Explaining your child's needs ...

When you ring up to book onto an activity, the SEND contact team will ask you a number of questions relating to the needs your child/children has and also the support they will need. It is important that you explain everything, even if you think we won't allow your child/children to attend, we will only ever stop a child attending an activity if it was dangerous to the child and or if the provider did not have the essential training or staff in place to support them, we will then look to see what other provider could offer activities.

If there is ever a time when you feel you need to share anything further, please do not hesitate to speak to the contact team or contact us at the Aiming High inbox aiminghigh@staffordshire.gov.uk – we really want to be able to offer the best time for your children.

Carers and Young Carers Service ...

Carers Rights Day

Understanding stress and anxiety Staffordshire Together for Carers Service is looking forward to raising awareness of carers and their rights on Carers Rights Day. We will be basing ourselves across the county with information stands and resources to ensure that you:

- Are aware of your rights
- Know how to access support
- Continue to receive support wherever you are in your caring journey

Pop along and have a chat with one of the team who will be happy to help. We will be at the following venues:

Burntwood Library, Sankeys Corner, Bridge Cross Road, Burntwood, Staffordshire, WS7 2BX

Thursday 24th November 2022 10.00am to 2.00pm

Codsall Library, South Staffordshire District Council Offices, Wolverhampton Road, Codsall, Staffordshire, WV8 1PX

Thursday 24th November 2022-10.00am to 2.00pm

Stafford Library, Staffordshire Place, Tipping Street, Stafford, ST16 2DH.

Thursday 24th November 2022-10.00am to 2.00pm

Newcastle Library, Castle House, Barracks Road, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Staffordshire, ST5 1BL

Thursday 24th November 2022 -10.00am to 2.00pm

NO NEED TO BOOK JUST TURN UP!

**More information attached to the email about Christmas Activities with
Staffordshire Together for Carers Service**



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