

Find your way with the new Starting Point

Fantastic news for families of disabled children/ children with additional needs, living in the Wakefield District. A new edition of Starting Point has been produced.

Starting Point is a comprehensive directory of services for disabled children/ children with additional needs in the Wakefield District. This new edition has been produced thanks to generous sponsorship from Irwin Mitchell Solicitors.

The directory, produced by KIDS WeSail, lists services by type. These range from Information, Support and Short Break Services, Health, Education and Early Years, to Leisure, Equipment and Housing. There is even a 'Moving on' section, which details services that may be useful during the transition to adult services. All of the sections are individually colour coded, making Starting Point quick and easy to use.



Your map to find your way around the maze of services available



Starting Point, the beginning of your information journey!

Also featured within the directory is a detailed section on Entitlements and Concessions. It outlines a whole range of benefits that may be available to your family, depending upon individual circumstances, how to go about claiming them and where to turn for advice.

Starting Point will also be available as an electronic copy, which can be downloaded from **www.wakefieldfis.org.uk/Disabled/Default.htm**. It will be found in the related downloads section and is perfect to use on your lpad or other tablet device.

If you are a member of Wakefield's Information Network you will automatically receive a shiny new copy of Starting Point. We would welcome your feedback and comments regarding this new directory, both positive and negative.

To request additional copies of Starting Point or for more information please contact KIDS WeSail

Call: 01924 379015

E-mail: wesail@kids.org.uk







Eureka Helping Hands



Eureka! is launching a fantastic new project for families with disabled children, called Helping Hands. Thanks to funding from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Helping hands will be able to offer a range of services that will enable the whole family to enjoy a day out at Eureka! Helping Hands can help to reduce the stresses and strains that a family day out can entail and can provide:

- An Extra Pair of Hands a bookable service providing families with a specially trained enabler who will support them throughout their visit.
- Saturday and holiday clubs a chance for families to play and learn together at sessions run by trained enablers.
- Ambassadors Eureka! wants families to help by telling them what they think of the galleries and activities, giving them your ideas and suggestions and telling other families about the Helping Hands project.

For more information on the scheme contact **Trizia Wells**, Helping Hands Project Lead on **01422 330069** or E-mail **trizia.wells@eureka.org.uk**

There's also a survery to help them decide what are the most important issues facing parents and carers of children with disabilities when visiting Eureka! and how they can improve. This can be found at www.eureka.org.uk/visit_us/helpinghands

Doing Transport Differently

This new guide from Radar, the latest in their 'Doing Life Differently' series of guides, is written by and for disabled people. The writers document their real experiences of using public transport. Doing Transport Differently – How to access public transport – a guide for everyone with lived experience of disability or health conditions features information and travellers' tales to inspire people with experience of disability or health conditions to use all types of public transport.

In this modern era people with a disability can travel more independently than they were able to do so before. However around a fifth of disabled people report having difficulties related to their impairment or disability in accessing transport. There have however been significant improvements, ranging from low-floor wheelchair access in buses, (which increased from 53% of buses in 2004/5 to 89% in 2009/10), to training of underground staff, bus drivers and railway staff.

Radar has published this guide to inform people with any kind of disability, be it; learning difficulties, mental health conditions, visual impairments,

Doing Transport Differently

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hearing impairments, wheelchair users, mobility impairments or something else, know what kind of access is available, how to plan your journeys and what to do if things go wrong. The guide features real experiences of using trains, buses, coaches, undergrounds, light railways, ferries and more.

To download your **free** copy visit: **www.radar.org.uk/people-living-with-health-conditions-disability/doing-life-differently/doing-transport-differently/**

Children Today Charitable Trust

Children Today was founded in 1994 to help disabled children and young people, up to the age of 25, enjoy a better quality of life by providing them with the specialised equipment that they need.

Often children and young people with disabilities remain excluded from a lifestyle which other people may take for granted. They want to join in and take part in the same sorts of activities, within their capabilities, as other children. They want to gain more independence from their parents as they get older, but are often prevented from doing so.

Children Today believe that the provision of specialised equipment has a direct and immediate impact on a child's quality of life and independence and is vital in helping them to overcome obstacles and achieve their potential. Equipment can include wheelchairs, walking frames, tricycles and other mobility aids, as well as communication aids, multi-sensory equipment and other information technology.

Each piece of equipment is gifted to the child concerned. It is not a loan and it is owned by the child, not their parents or guardians. The recipients particularly appreciate this fact and are very proud of their new independence and abilities. The trust provide ongoing support and children can come back for further funding as their needs develop or they outgrow their equipment.

For more information or to make an application visit: www.childrentoday.org.uk/

Disability Rocks

Disability Rocks is a new, not for profit community interest company set up by Richard Sutton, father of a young boy with a disability, with the aim of presenting music and arts events for disabled people, their families, friends, carers and anyone else affected in any way by any form of disability.

The fruits of the company's labours will be seen in their forthcoming 'Disability Rocks @ Nell Bank' event, which is being held on Saturday the 26th May in Ilkley West Yorkshire and runs from 12pm-8pm. Surplus monies raised from the festival will be reinvested into future Disability Rocks events and other local disability support initiatives.

> The event itself will be an eclectic mix of music, arts and interactive areas, featuring over 10 live acts. There will be 2 stages, the main stage and an acoustic stage, as well as a dance area, a cinema tent and workshops in music and art. Food and drinks will, of course, be available and people will be encouraged to bring a picnic.

dise bility rocks In addition a sensory yurt, (a type of tent), will also be coming to Disability Rocks. Access Events have been busy working on the design and creation of beautiful sensory equipment to go inside the yurt. At previous events the sensory yurt has proved to be one of the most popular spaces, appealing to visitors with learning disabilities who'd never been inside such an unusual and non-plastic sensory space, as well as to non-disabled visitors who'd never even heard of a sensory space before.

Nell Bank Outdoor Education Centre, (www.nellbank.com), provides day and residential breaks for school children of all abilities from throughout the Bradford area. Its ethos is that of absolute inclusivity. It is a truly beautiful place in beautiful surroundings and the site is surrounded by the stunning Middleton Woods.

Tickets for the event are priced at £11.25 for disabled guests, the first carer and children under 14 and £16.75 for all other quests.

For more information or to book visit www.disabilityrocks.org, or call 07540 233412

Jargon Buster

Are you troubled by strange terminology in the night? Do you experience feelings of dread when encountering abbreviations? Have you or your family actually come across a phrase you didn't fully understand? If the answer is yes, then don't wait another minute. Just continue reading and if there's a term we've missed then pick up the phone and call the professionals -- Ghostbus... sorry I mean WeSail.

CAF-Common Assessment Framework: The CAF is a shared assessment and planning framework for use across all children's services and all local areas in England. It aims to help the early identification of children's additional needs and promote co-ordinated service provision to meet them.

DFE-Department For Education: A Government Department responsible for education and children's services.

DCDT-District Child Development Team: A multi-disciplinary team that deals with the diagnosis and ongoing management of any child who may have a disability or additional needs.



Busting makes me feel good!

LA-Local Authority: The nearest Council, in this case Wakefield.

MDT-Multi Disciplinary Team: A team of professionals and specialists from a range of different agencies, who come together to offer co-ordinated support and guidance.

OT-Occupational Therapist: A health professional who is concerned with difficulties that people have in carrying out the activities of everyday life. This could include sitting in a chair or drinking from a cup.

PCT-Primary Care Trust: A body that manages the provision of primary care services in a specific area. This includes services provided by doctors surgeries, dental practices, opticians, pharmacies, walk-in centres and the NHS Direct phone service.

Personalisation: A Government initiative to ensure that care for adults and children is individually tailored and flexible to the service user's needs. Achieved through the use of direct payments and personal budgets.

PIP-Parents in Partnership: A forum managed by Wakefield Parent Partnership Service. Its aim is to make sure that parents and carers who have a child with SEN or a disability can feed their views about local SEN services back to the local authority.

PRG- Parents Reference Group: A leading consultative group for parents of disabled children and young people living in the Wakefield District.

SALT-Speech And Language Therapist: A professional whose role it is to assess and treat speech, language and communication problems and enable people to communicate to the best of their ability. They may also work with people who have eating and swallowing problems.

SEN-Special Educational Needs: A term referring to children who have learning difficulties or disabilities that make it harder for them to learn or access education than most children of the same age.

WESAIL-Wakefield Early Support Advice Information Liaison: A service provided by KIDS which is the first stop for families caring for a disabled child or child with additional needs and living in the Wakefield District. The service offers information, signposting and support.

WMDC-Wakefield Metropolitan District Council: More commonly known as Wakefield Council. This is the Local Authority in this area and covers everywhere that has a Postcode beginning with WF.

If there is an abbreviation or term you're not sure of call **WeSail** on **01924 379015**, who will be happy to explain it to you.

Special iApps

Special iApps is a non-profit social enterprise, dedicated to helping children learn. They develop apps for the Apple iPad, iPhone and iPod touch. All of their apps are developed in co-operation with education professionals, parents and children. The apps are designed to be suitable for typically developing children and those with learning difficulties or poor fine motor control and are also available in a range of languages.

Modern smartphones and touchpads have the potential to transform children's education, because almost all children are attracted to them and their interface is more user friendly than a traditional desktop PC. However apps to teach children only succeed if they are designed with an understanding of how children learn.

Special iApps recognise that many children are easily distracted and don't have the mental agility or manual dexterity of a typical adult. Therefore they carefully trial their apps with children of varying abilities. The feedback gained is then incorporated into design and testing processes. They also work closely with other organisations that support children with disabilities, including down syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism, and



This tech is App-tastic!

hearing impairment.

For more information visit www.specialiapps.co.uk or search for Special iApps in the App Store.

Ask & Thou Shalt Receive!



This Will won't be n the next issue!

Following a number of requests from parents about information regarding Wills and Trusts, opening a Bank Account for a person who cannot sign or communicate and also Home To School Transport and changes at post 16, our reporters are busy gathering information on these issues.

We will have articles on all of these topics in the next edition. In the meantime if there's something else you'd like to see an article on drop us a line on 01924 379015.

KIDS Caravan Update

Following our article in the last edition of News and Views, there appears to have been some confusion regarding the availability of the Caravan. Several families from within the district phoned to make a booking, only to be told that the Caravan was only available to families living in the Birmingham area.

We've taken it upon ourselves to investigate the situation and can now offer some clarification. The Caravan can be booked by families from any region, there was an oversight on the part of the booking team. However the Caravan park has been closed from January up until the beginning of March and currently bookings are only available for weekdays in March.



Our expert investigator presents his findings!

Beyond March there is currently uncertainty as to whether there will be funding available to continue to offer the facility, but rest assured that News and Views will be on hand to keep you posted.

Happy Days

Happy Days are a national children's charity dedicated to providing holidays, residential trips, days out and theatre trips for young people with additional needs.

They support young people aged between 3 and 17 years old who may have learning difficulties, physical or mental disabilities and/or acute, chronic or life limiting illnesses. They also offer help to young people who have been abused or neglected, witnessed domestic violence, been bereaved or act as carers for a parent or a sibling.

Things they are willing to fund include;

- * Holidays for young people and their families.
- * Residential trips for groups of children and young people.
- * Days out for groups to hundreds of venues throughout the UK, including the seaside, zoos, theme parks, safari parks and fun fairs.
- * Trips to the theatre or shows and theatre workshops.

You can apply for a family holiday if you have a child or children with additional needs. These are one week holidays by the seaside or in the countryside, usually in the UK. The only eligibility criteria is that your child is between the ages of 3 and 17 years old and has additional needs. All they ask is that you complete a monitoring form after the holiday has taken place.

also accept applications from GPs, consultants, nurses or social workers.

To request an application form call 01582 755999 or E-mail Mandy Bilbrough at enquiries@happydayscharity.org

Applications for a family holiday will be accepted from parents, guardians, grandparents, or siblings. They will

SEN National Advice Service

Contact a Family has been awarded the Department for Education contract to establish a new country-wide service for families of children with special educational needs.

The Special Education Needs National Advice Service offers comprehensive advice and information to parents in England who have a child with SEN, additional needs or disabilities, on any aspect of their child's education, including:

- Early years
- Individual Education Plans (IEP's)
 - Statutory Assessment/ Statements
- Transition planning and education after 16
- Appeals
- Disability discrimination



Will you spend a

'Happy Day' at the seaside?

The service also provides advice on general education issues affecting children with SEN, such as transport to school, bullying, exclusions and school attendance.

Boredom Busters

Are you dreading the Easter Holidays and having to find things to do to keep the kids entertained? Fear not, for help is at hand. Continuing our theme of "Busting" News and Views present our Boredom Busters. Some fun receipes to help the hours pass.

Playdough:

Soft, squidgy, safe fun. Our receipe is quick and easy and you can even choose what colour you want to make.

You will need:

- * 2 cups of flour
- * 1 cup of salt
- * 1 teaspoon of cream of tartar
- * 2 cups of water
- * 1 tablespoon of oil (any cooking oil will do)
- * Food colouring



As Homer Simpson would say "Play D'oh!"

Microwave method:

Place all of the ingredients in a mixing bowl and stir. Microwave for 5 minutes, checking and stirring every minute. Allow to cool for a few minutes, then knead until smooth.

Pan method:

Place all of the ingredients in a pan and heat gently, stirring all the time. When the mixture comes away from the side of the pan it is ready. Allow to cool for a few minutes, then knead until smooth.

Paint:

A perfect play-tool to develop budding artistic talents, which can be made with items from your Kitchen.

You will need:

- * 2 teaspoons of corn starch
- * 2 teaspoons of white vinegar
- * 20 drops of food colouring

Gather all the ingredients and mix them all together, to make an individual portion of paint.

Finger Paint:

The textured kind, perfect for active hands.

You will need:

- * 1 cup of flour
- * 1 cup of water
- * 1 & a half teaspoons of salt
- * Drops of food colouring



What amazing designs will you create?

Mix all the ingredients up together and then put on plates or plastic trays, ready for use.

PIP Forum Update

Details of the last meeting, which was held on the 25th of January at Wakefield Town Hall.

Andy Simpson introduced the Council's new Short Break Statement. This is a new starting point for the development of short break services. It is an on-going piece of work for the Council and they hope to have it completed for April and intend to bring the completed document back to the Forum.

There was a detailed discussion about the Speech and Language Therapy provision currently being provided. The service has been re-structured and at the moment vacant posts for the education part of the service are not being filled. A report has gone to the service directors management team, with recommendations for a number of possible options for providing the service. It is hoped that the new service will be in place for April. There were some concerns raised by the Forum about problems parents were experiencing with regard to the lack of therapists working in schools.

Andy Simpson talked about the proposed re-structure of Special Needs and Disability Governance. This group is in charge of developing the overall strategic policy for the Council. The proposed structure gives a greater, more important role for consultation and scrutiny for both the Parents Reference Group and Parents in Partnership Forum.

The next meeting is on Wednesday the 18th of April at 6PM at Wakefield Town Hall.

Mencap Guide To Wills And Trusts

mencap

learning disability

If you can't wait until our next exciting issue and need to know about Wills and Trusts now, then Mencap have some handy information available on their website.

There is a wealth of information on the site, including an online guide to Wills and Trusts. You can also order free booklets about writing wills and setting up trusts for the benefit of someone with a learning disability. In addition there is also a directory of specialist wills and trusts solicitors across England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Also listed on the site are details of the free 'Planning for the future' seminars, which are held all across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Their specialist solicitors are able to offer advice over the phone and you can also arrange a home visit. There is also information about the Mencap Trust Company Limited, which is a company that sets up and manages discretionary trusts for people with a learning disability.

To find out more visit www.mencap.org.uk/what-we-do/our-services/wills-and-trusts

Parents Reference Group Moving On

Do you want to find out what is happening to the Parents Reference Group and how it is changing? We are hosting an event for you to tell us what parents' priorities are in the district and what you would like from the Parents Reference Group.

Come as a family and join us for this free event on **Friday 30th March**, from **6pm-8pm**, at **The Play Station Unit 7b**, **Ahed House**, **Sandbeds Trading Estate**, **Ossett**, **WF5 9ND**. There will be a free children's play session and food will be available. Places are limited so please book early.

For more information and to book your place please contact **KIDS** on **01924 379015**. If transport is a problem please let us know and we can help with travel costs.

Who is the Teacher?

"When we rid ourselves of an imposed view of the world and connect to a deeper sense of what makes us truly happy, then there is no disability"

I have loved the experience of having a child with Down's syndrome. I haven't always felt as happy and balanced as I do now though.



Joe, teacher of enjoying life!

My Joe is eight and is our fourth child. As I struggled to carry on doing what I had done, before he was born, I became emotionally ill. I eventually swallowed my pride and asked for help from the children with disabilities team, who were wonderful, (of course I have to say that). I have been truly fortunate to have had wonderful support from professionals, friends and family and to have been part of support groups such as Wakefield Down's syndrome group. However, my biggest discovery may come as a surprise to some. My greatest teacher has been Joe.

I have participated in lots of training and educated myself as much as possible. This education has been wonderful, to understand how a child develops, so I can teach Joe the things he struggles with. What a wonderful time we live in, with so much available knowledge. I have no doubt about Joe's potential if, with lots of help, I can teach him at his level. However in the process of teaching him, he has shown me my "special needs".

Joe lives through his senses. As a child we may get a sudden urge to jump in a puddle, as an adult we think about the washing and the mess. We live through our minds and forget the joy of feeling through our senses. He lives in the moment, less attracted to the weight of past struggles or future expectations.

A sheepskin rug presents an opportunity to roll around – how wonderful it feels – what fun we adults miss! Whoever decided that being cool or whatever the latest word, is fun? Being cool is all about appearances.

Being different can be liberating – living outside a well defined box. We have so much fun in our house because of Joe, he loves music. His dancing and singing are certainly not cool and neither is ours when we join him!



Strictly may beckon in the near future!

Thank you Joe and to all the children who teach us so much.

This article was submitted by a parent member of the Information Network. We are always delighted to receive articles or feedback from IN members. If you would like to submit something or even discuss an idea for a future article please E-mail omar.shefta@kids.org.uk or call 01924 379015.

Transition: Preparing For Adulthood Website

A new Government funded initiative is underway around transition to adulthood 'Preparing for Adulthood'. This is a newly commissioned 2 year programme that can be seen as the successor to the 'Transition Support Programme', 'Getting a Life', and 'Valuing People Now' initiatives.

The initiative provides knowledge and support to local authorities and their partners, including families and young people, so they can ensure disabled young people achieve paid work, independent living, good health and community inclusion as they move into adulthood. The website will be regularly updated with news, resources and events.

Visit: www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk/

Benefit Changes

Confused about benefits and tax credits changes? Help is at hand

April this year will see another round of changes to the benefits and tax credits system, which may leave some families with disabled children worse off.



The changes include scrapping Employment and Support Allowance in Youth for new claimants and time limiting contributory Employment and Support Allowance to 12 months for less severely disabled claimants. They also include a change to the Working Tax Credit rules, so that a couple with children need to be working 24 hours a week between them, with one partner working at least 16 hours, to qualify.

Contact a Family provides advice, information and support to families with disabled children and has produced a Guide to Future Benefit Changes, which can be ordered free of charge from their helpline. If you would like advice about any of the forthcoming benefit changes please call Contact a Family freephone on **0808 8083555**.

Emergency Essentials Programme





BBC Children in Need have announced the creation of their Emergency Essentials Programme, to deliver the charity's welfare grants for individual families.

The scheme is administered by Buttle UK and works seamlessly in conjunction with their own Small Grants Programme. The needs of the individual child are paramount to both programmes and reflected in their united mission to make a positive change to the lives of children and young people in need throughout the UK.

The programme will give emergency grants for essential items for struggling families living in extreme deprivation throughout the UK. Applications **MUST**

be made through a statutory agency or voluntary organisation that is capable of assessing the needs of the child/young person and that can also administer the grant behalf of Buttle.

For more information visit: www.buttleuk.org/pages/-children-in-need-48.html

Council For Disabled Children

The Council for Disabled Children, the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector, has launched a new website. Its full of useful information and fantastic resources and also has details of forthcoming events and seminars.



Visit www.councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk

Supporting Parents Programme

The Supporting Parents Programme, (SPP), is a free self management course for parents, guardians and carers of children with disabilities, long term health conditions or special needs. It recognises that parent carers have their own needs, which if left unaddressed, leaves them open to high levels of stress and ill health. This course offers tried and tested skills which have helped parents and carers to cope better and improve family health and quality of life.

We are currently looking for parents who would like to take part in these courses. The courses will be held at times which are suitable for parents to attend, this can be mornings or afternoons. Courses are held in venues throughout the Wakefield area and may be schools or community venues, dependant upon the parents' wishes.

Refreshments will also be available, (free of charge) during every session. There is a maximum of 12 places available on each course. Feedback from people who have attended in the past has been really good and they have learned alot from the course.

To take part you will need to attend six, weekly sessions, each lasting two and a half hours. You will learn new skills to better manage your own and your child's health, including:

- Better breathing
- Relaxation
- Improving communication
- Parenting approaches
- Dealing with tiredness
- Coping with distressing thoughts and feelings
- Making action plans which work for you
- Using problem solving skills in your daily life



You will learn much young Jedi

and much, much more.

We also recruit our volunteer tutors from participants on these courses, simply because we feel they understand what life is like, living with children who have a long term health condition.

To find out more information please contact the co-ordinator, **David Payne**, on **07920 548199** or **01977 665732**. Please leave a message if you are unable to make contact and we will return your call as soon as possible.

Gym (& Zumba) For You

Want to go to the Gym or take part in Zumba, but got no-one to help look after your child? Fear not, for help may be at hand. Thornes Park Stadium runs an on-site Creche which takes children aged from 6 months to 5 years old. Subject to individual assessment, they are willing to support children with additional needs.

The Creche operates from **10am** to **11am** on a **Monday, Tuesday & Thursday**. There is also a ladies only gym or Zumba session running on a Tuesday & Thursday, (10am–11am), and also a mixed gym. The fantastic facilities are wheelchair friendly and accessible to all.

Please be aware that staff are not trained to support children with additional needs, which is why an individual assessment will be done, to ensure staff can offer support appropriate to your child's needs.

For more information contact Thornes Park Stadium on 01924 302385.

Focus on Contact A Family



Contact a Family is the only UK-wide charity that provides advice, information and support to families with disabled children, whatever their child's condition or disability. We have over 30 years experience of working with families of disabled children. Visit our website at www.cafamily.org.uk

Our freephone helpline is a one-stop-shop for families, giving confidential advice on any aspect of caring
 for a disabled child. This ranges from benefits advice and social care issues to providing a listening ear,
 which includes a dedicated SEN national advice line. Families can call 0808 8083555, (Mon-Fri, 9.30am-5pm).

We also link parents of children with the same disability or condition, on a local and national basis through our family linking service. This is also done by putting families in touch with parent support groups or support groups for the specific condition of their child. Parents can call our helpline to link to families or local or national support groups, or register on our linking website, Making contact, at www.makingcontact.org

Our Family Life project has teamed up with Relate to offer families free online access to a trained counsellor, to talk over any issues that may be affecting them. We also provide workshops and training to families and professionals around relationships issues. For more information on these visit www.cafamily.org.uk/families/familyissues/index.html

Our SEND project is working with special educational needs coordinators, (SENCOs), in schools and parent support groups, to make sure families who have a child with SEN get the information and support they need on non-education issues. This includes things such as getting back into employment, benefit entitlement and short breaks. For more information on this visit

www.cafamily.org.uk/professionals/SEND.html

The Owl And The Pussycat Relaxed Performance

West Yorkshire Playhouse's award-winning relaxed performances offer young people with learning disabilities and their families the chance to experience the magic of theatre.

Each relaxed performance has detailed pre-show information, extra staff to assist with access, extra wheelchair spaces, a section of seating reserved for those who want to move around, extra lighting during the performance, free carer tickets if required, access to a 'Changing Places' facility and perhaps most importantly, a relaxed attitude from all audience members and staff. Voluntary and involuntary noises are fine with us!

Puppetry, live music and beautiful storytelling combine in this enchanting retelling of Edward Lear's classic poem. Suitable for children with learning disabilities, approximate age range 3-10, but can be enjoyed by older children and adults too!

This special performance will be held on **Friday 13 April** at **1:30pm**. Running time is approximately **1 hour** with no interval, followed by a chance to meet the actors. Tickets cost **£8.50** each, with a free carer ticket available if required.

For general enquiries, to check availability and book tickets please contact **West Yorkshire Playhouse Box Office** on **0113 2137700**.

For further information please contact Nicky Taylor on 0113 2137296 or E-mail: nicky.taylor@wyp.org.uk