

The Connected Persons Team

**The Connected Persons Support Team
Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service**

Civic Centre 1

High Street

Huddersfield

HD1 2NF

Tel:01484 221000

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Find us on Facebook:

Kirklees Connected Persons Support Group



**How we have supported
our families**

Connected Persons Support Team

Kirklees Social Care set up the Connected Persons Team in February 2013. This was in response to the increase in the number of Special Guardianship Orders being granted by the court. This led to an emerging picture of support needs of the children and their carers.

As the team continued to develop it took on responsibility for the assessments in February 2014. This enabled specialist social workers to undertake the assessments of prospective carers and ensured support plans were written with a full understanding of support needs to ensure placements were robust. In February 2015 as the team continued to grow and to ensure a quality service continued the decision was made to split the team into two sections. The Connected Persons Assessment Team would undertake all Connected Persons Assessments (SGO and F&F fostering) and the other Connected Persons Support Team would provide ongoing support to families post order.

The two team now sit in separate services within social care: The Assessment team sits in the Fostering Service, the Support team sits in Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service. However this does not hinder joint up working and staff from the support team will often undertake a joint visit with the assessment team to enable carers to access support at the earliest opportunity.

Currently the Support team has 1 manager, 2 full time and 2 part time social workers, 1 Senior Community Care Officer and 2 Contact Officers. We are currently advertising for 2 Family Support Workers to enable the support offer to reach more families.

We have commissioned a Project Worker from Grandparents Plus who is working alongside us to develop peer support within the carers network.

Constituted Group

We have worked with carers in supporting them to set up their own group to enable them to have their own united voice and to raise their own funds for activities. "The aim of the Kirklees Connected Carers Group Together shall be to provide a support network for all kinship carers who live in Kirklees or have a child placed by Kirklees. The group shall provide activities and events, provide opportunity for children and parents to improve their health and well-being, and increasing opportunities for children and carers to take part in educational and recreational activities."

Additional Feedback from carers

"I would just like to take this opportunity to thank Debs and Ruth and the rest of the team for all the support you have given me and my family it's been a roller coaster ride but we have had a good team of supporters behind us thank you for the good advice when we struggled to do what was right for the child in our care and thank you for always listening to us when we have needed that listening ear. I would like to also thank you for changing the way I think as a parent I find myself been more positive now instead of looking at the negative side of parenting thank you and it's much appreciated."

"Hi Ruth, as you know before Debs Goddard came along I didn't really trust local authorities and the system I found myself in. I have to say that since you n your team started I've felt supported n understood I've been given the confidence to strive forward with H for the better knowing I've had support. I've made lifelong friends at the support group n H is loving the children's group plz keep up the fabulous work, your helping so many that feel trapped by authorities to be confident to make the right choices for the children."

Lifestory Books

Lifestory books are completed with children and their carers on request to enable children to understand the situation that has led to them coming into the care of their aunt/uncle/grandparent/family friend. This piece of work is not time limited, it is taken at the child's pace and offers time and space to explore a variety of emotions that may surface.

Feedback

"Debs put together an amazing life story book to help us and R move forward with this knowledge in a positive way .We are still working on her life story work but already R seems accepting of this information."

"The life story work was very thorough but at the same time was done very sensitively. Although some of the information did upset my child Debs was able to help him work through his anger in one session by way of putting it all down in a picture. He talked it all through as he did it and today he started a conversation with me about it which shows he is processing it appropriately."

Young Person

We have a young person who has spoken at various events sharing her experience of living with her birth parents and the journey with her carers. She has shared her experience of Lifestory work and ongoing journey. She is an aspirational speaker who often moves professionals to tears when she speaks. She is happy to come and talk with Ofsted and share her book during the inspection.

Kirklees Connected Persons Support Group on Facebook

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/372839483074924/?ref=bookmarks>



Kirklees Connected Persons Support Group has a closed Facebook page used to promote the support groups dates, training and other information which is relevant to the carers.

New members are encouraged to post an introduction to enable other carers to welcome them to a new network of people living similar experiences to their own. It has proven invaluable to carers as it offers a platform for peer support, carers can share experiences, ask questions or use the page to organise play dates and coffee mornings.

Communication with carers

Carers are written to several times each year and receive regular emails to keep them informed of upcoming support groups, events, training and points of interest, ie MAX cards, pupil premium plus, adoption support fund and updates of the team.

Carers are provided with a timetable of support groups dates and invites to children's parties and trips run by the Support Team.

Carers are also encouraged to offer feedback and suggestions to enable the support offered to meet their needs.

The Connected Persons Support Group

The Connected Persons Team support group runs 10:30am – 12:30pm, on the last Wednesday of each calendar month (unless it coincides with a school holiday)

- ◆ **24th April 2019 - Easter Party 11am– 1pm**
All children and carers are invited to attend our annual Easter Party. There will be a disco, games, arts and crafts, Easter Egg Hunt, Easter Bonnet competition and a buffet lunch.
- ◆ **22nd May 2019 - Child Abuse and Child Sexual Exploitation**
An awareness session of how to talk to your child about the risks, signs of abuse and exploitation and how to get help and support.
- ◆ **26th June 2019 - Behaviour Strategies**
Today's session will look at therapeutic strategies and how to use them to manage challenging behaviours.
- ◆ **17th July 2019 - Keep your children safe online**
Is your child using social media? Do you know how to keep them safe on their devices? Today's session will look at how you can support your children to be safety aware when online.

We aim to have regular guest speakers

Please come along to meet the team and other people in similar situations to you. There will be time to chat over a cup of tea.



Venue:
Mirfield Community Centre,
Wateroyd Lane,
Mirfield,
WF14 9SG

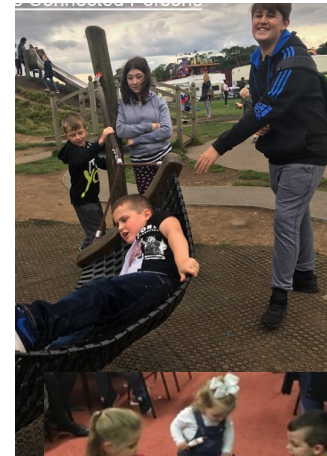
The Connected Persons Support Team
Looked After Children and Care Leavers Service,
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Feedback received about Children's Support Activities

- ◇ I'd like to say a massive thank you to all the team for an amazing at the Halloween party and everyone who comes along and makes it special for all the children. Its times like today you know you're surrounded by a fabulous team and fantastic people.
- ◇ Thank you J for a brilliant disco, well done.
- ◇ OMG L was hyper tonight. He just didn't stop chattering right up to going to bed. He's sad he enjoyed reading out the cards in the game. Think he's settling into the group now.
- ◇ The party was amazing. Massive thanks to everyone who organised it.



Feedback received about Children's Support Activities

Carers are asked to give feedback following an activity. Here are just a few:

- ◇ What a fabulous party for the kids.
- ◇ The boys had a brilliant time. I'm sure the highlight of the night was the snowball fight at the end when the adults go to play. A big thank you to you for all your hard work and making it possible for all our children to be included and have some amazing times.
- ◇ Brilliant time had by all.
- ◇ Huge thanks to Debs and the team for a great party, thoroughly enjoyed it. Looking forward to the next one.
- ◇ Massive thank you to Debs and team you all did a fantastic job. J had a great time and has been chattering non stop about it since he got home.
- ◇ A big well done to all involved today. It was a good turn out and all of the children and carers enjoyed themselves.
- ◇ Thank you everybody. You made A welcome looking forward to the next one.
- ◇ I'm glad I came to the children support group today the kids loved it, can't wait for the next one.
- ◇ Fab party H loved it. Was great to see everyone. Its so good to see them go from strength to strength and helping so many children. I feel truly blessed to know we have support. It makes such a difference.

Carers Support Group

The carers support group was set up in June 2014. These run on a monthly basis and offer advice and support to all carers with monthly themes, and guest speakers. Topics are chosen by carers to meet needs of carers and their children. These sessions are relaxed with tea and biscuits and offer carers time to talk with each other as well as with members of the team.

Carer feedback received:

- ◇ Thank you for the warm welcome into group today
- ◇ This group is a godsend for so many of us. It's so good to see there are others who just 'get' us. I have always found it very welcoming.
- ◇ The topics are always relevant and its good to have specialist speakers come and talk to us.
- ◇ I really enjoy the coffee, biscuits and being able to have a chat with other carers.
- ◇ More of the same!
- ◇ I love the relaxed, friendly environment.

Some carers have stated that the date/time and venue causes them some difficulty in attending. To reduce this timetables are sent out with several months notice to enable carers to plan in advance. Peer support enables carers to share lifts to and from the venue and on occasion taxis have been booked for carers. Children are welcome to the group if carers have no child care.

The venue was selected as it is central within Kirklees.

The Connected Persons Support Team Children's Groups

The children's groups have been set up to enable children who live with connected persons carers to come together in their very own space. This group promotes peer support and encourages friendships in a safe environment.

As part of the session the children will be offered a light tea and will be invited to join in various team building activities and games.

Carers are invited to have a cuppa and a chat with other carers, there will also be members of the team available if you would like to talk about any issues relating to your child/ren.

Huddersfield Timetable 2019

Each session will run on a Monday 4.30pm– 6pm
24th June, 10th July, 23rd September, 21st Oct, 25th Nov
16th Dec will be our Christmas party



Venue:
No 11 High Street, Huddersfield, HD1 2NF

Batley Timetable 2018

Each session will run on a Wednesday 4.30pm– 6pm
12th June, 22nd July, 11th Sept, 9th Oct, 13th Nov
18th Dec will be our Christmas party



Venue: Jo Cox House,
Market Square, Batley, WF17 5DR

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Debs Goddard: 07870 590283

Children's Groups

The children's support groups were launched in April 2017 with an Easter Disco. We had over 50 children attend with their carers. Since then the groups have been running on a monthly basis in Huddersfield and in Batley. We have run a summer trips to The Butterfly World in Leeds, Scarborough seaside resort and to Yorkshire Wildlife Park. We have held Easter, Halloween and Christmas parties and organised play in the park events over the spring and summer.

