



Tactile Resources Day

VSSS are holding a training day on producing learning resources that are accessible for students with a visual impairment.

The day will provide an opportunity for teachers, teaching assistants and SENDCos to get together, share ideas and learn something new.

(Lunch and refreshments will be provided)

When? Monday 12 June 2017 09:30am - 2:45pm

Where? The Professional Development Centre, Woodside Road, Norwich, NR7 9QL

Cost: £20

To join us please contact Virtual School Sensory Support on 01603 704040 or go to www.s4s.norfolk.gov.uk for details of the course.

Reference - VSSS-0617-T001

Closing date: 2nd June 2017

What a difference a goal makes

The evening of Wednesday 8th February saw some extra visitors to the Norfolk and Norwich Goalball Team's usual fortnightly training session. An Open event brought Kathryn Fielding, Development Officer from GoalballUK as well as members of the Paralympics GB Women and Mens teams, Laura Perry and Daniel Roper. They also brought with them two new aluminium Goalball goals which will now be used in all future NNGT practices.

After a period of time where the coaching staff learned how to piece together the new goals under the expert guidance of Kathryn (something which with more experience will no doubt take much less time), the new players were introduced to each other, the regular players and the visitors from Paralympics GB.

The Open evening also allowed the team to welcome a number of new players from the local community all of whom were invited to join in with the training session. Kathryn led the warm up and soon everyone was practicing passing and playing agility games. Kathryn provided advice for all ability levels with the evening culminating in a variety of matches which gave some of the younger players the opportunity to gain valuable experience playing with and against more seasoned players.

A dramatic change was seen in some players who were much more confident with the addition of the new goals as they were seen launching themselves forward from the goals. This allowed them to put much more power behind the ball and provided the opposing teams with a greater challenge than was possible with the previous tactile markings which have now been repurposed as court markings.

The session ended with a group photo of everyone in attendance many of whom discussed their plans to come to further sessions. Norfolk and Norwich Goalball Team practice sessions take place in the Sports Hall at City College Norwich on alternative Thursday evening between 7pm and 9pm during term times.

The idea of a junior team for players of Primary School age has been suggested. If anyone is interested in exploring this further, please contact John at VSSS.

For more information about Goalball sessions please phone John Rous Milligan at Virtual School Sensory Support on 01603 704040 or send an e-mail to john.milligan@norfolk.gov.uk

Short breaks funding

The following article was written by Amanda Peart who is the Commissioning Officer from the Access & Services Team and Clinical Commissioning Team at Norfolk County Council Children's Services.

Big changes on the way for short breaks!

We have to radically change the way we deliver short breaks for disabled children to ensure that we meet the expectations set by the government in the Children and Families Act 2014. The two most important parts of the Act are:

- the introduction of personal budgets and
- the need for a more robust approach to support parents and young people caring for disabled children.

We have undertaken two consultations, one in October 2013 and one in January 2016, where parents and disabled children told us very clearly that we needed to improve the current situation.

The good things you told us about:

- Current short breaks providers are good and your children and young people enjoy attending.
- The fantastic inclusive offer from mainstream primary schools running after school clubs and summer schemes. Also the opportunities given to disabled children through Brownies, Guides and Scouts.
- The improved self-esteem and confidence children and young people gain through short breaks.
- Children developing a peer group and friends.
- Parents benefitting from having time to sleep or time to spend with a disabled child's siblings without having to be a carer.

The things we need to improve:

- Provision is good, but there is just not enough. It's hard to get into due to high demand.
- Sometimes people have an allocation but just cannot access any of the provision.
- Families in rural areas and in the west of the county are frustrated that nearly everything seems to happen in and around Norwich.
- The eligibility criteria is too high so families with disabled children cannot access support.
- Parents explaining they do not want specialist services but want their child to have the same opportunities as their peers - such as sleepovers with mates.
- Families want more choice and flexibility.

What we will do:

- Our ambition is to increase the range of short breaks opportunities and make them available to a wider range of disabled young people.
- We will offer all assessed families the chance to purchase services through Direct Payments (a cash sum) giving more choice and control.

- We will try and increase the scope of opportunities in rural areas and the west of the county (including Thetford and Attleborough).
- The way in which resources are allocated will be clear and transparent and information will be available to families, children and professionals.
- We are changing the eligibility, opening up short breaks to all disabled children who cannot participate in social activities without some level of support.

Timeline for change:

January 2017

We will know which short break providers we have, we will also know the cost of all services available for people to purchase through an individual budget so families can make informed choices.

January 2017 - March 2017

The Access and Services Team and relevant social work teams will be in contact with families to explain if their current short breaks package can continue until the child's next review. The only time this will not happen is if providers are no longer offering short breaks on behalf of Norfolk County Council.

The Individual Budget will be considered at a child's next review where families can, within the limits of the Indicative Individual Budget, choose which services will meet their needs and their child's needs over the next year.

From April 2017 - September 2018

We will work with families who receive an individual budget to ensure they feel able and confident to get the services they want within their child's individual allocation. In some cases this may take some time. However, we are trying to make the system as flexible as possible to prevent people feeling stressed or anxious about any changes.

Changes to Direct Payments for Disabled Children

There have been several recent changes to Direct Payments as agreed by our Legal Department. These are now in place for all new Direct Payments and will be implemented over the next 12 months for current Direct Payments.

- ☐ All Direct Payment Personal Assistants (PA) must have a DBS check in place prior to commencing employment.
- ☐ Direct Payments cannot be used to employ any relatives, including step relatives and in-laws or anyone living in the household.

(In exceptional circumstances, relatives may be employed short term, but only by prior agreement with Children's Services).

What you can do now:

If you want to know more have a look at the details on the Local Offer.

Norfolk's interim short breaks statement is on the Local Offer with further details about eligibility, what is available etc.

If you want to see where the current individual budget thresholds are and where we think Norfolk

children score on the system, please have a look on the Local Offer.

If you want to know which current providers will be affected by the change, please look at the Local Offer and the interim short breaks statement.

If you have any questions or concerns, please send a question into the Local Offer who will pass it to the Access and Services Team. We will use these queries to create a set of frequently asked questions to help families.

If you cannot access the internet you can call our Short Breaks Hotline on 01603 692482. This is an answerphone message service so please leave a message and someone will call you back.

Music with Lab Media Education

During February half term, ten young people with a visual impairment joined with Paul and Will from Laboratory Media Education to explore, create and compose music using apps, iPads and electronic equipment. This was the second time such an event had taken place in partnership with NNAB YoungEyes.

The young people had a great time using the equipment, learning about communication, composition and playing music together with Will and Paul.

Plans for the future include further sessions to develop a piece of music which can then receive a world premiere for families and others.

One of the young people present said it was a, "thoroughly enjoyable time in the Lab Media event and it's nice to have the opportunity to meet other VI children. We will definitely be back next time the event is run."



The pictures show one of the young musicians using a free app called Launchpad to play a melody and another using a synthesised drum to play a rhythm as part of their composition.

Contact John at VSSS or follow Virtual School Sensory Support - visual impairment on Facebook.

