



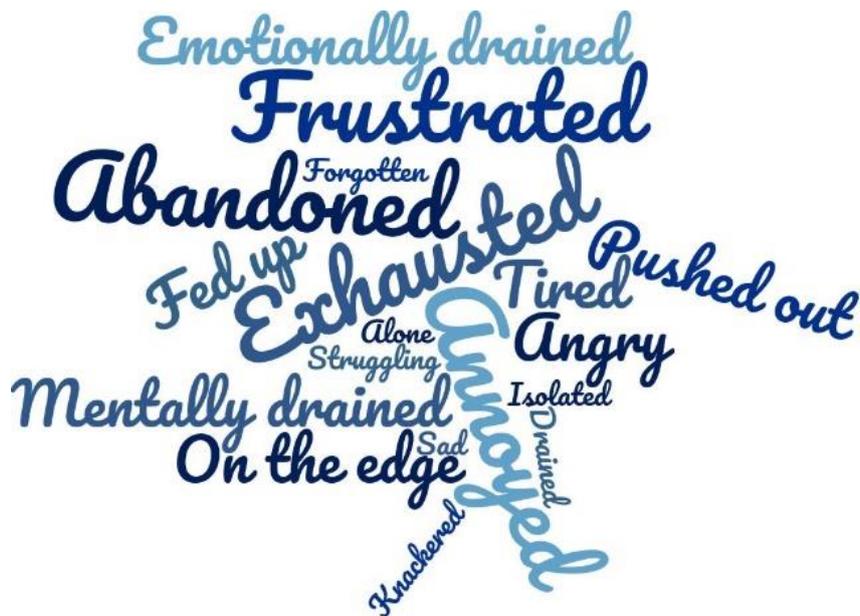
Summer 2020 Newsletter

As lockdown begins to ease I thought I would take the opportunity to update you on what Voice4Parents has been doing during lockdown, apart from learning how to make ice cream from bananas (I'll put the recipe at the end of this for those of you who might be interested) and being parent, teacher, therapist, cook etc that is.

THANK YOU

First of all, we would very much like to say a massive thank you to everyone who has liked and is following our Facebook page, since lockdown it has reached over 400 followers and likes which is just amazing.

Thank you too goes out to everyone who has found the time to comment and feedback on their experiences during lockdown. We really do appreciate you all taking the time to comment, we know how hectic life has become since March, like many of you, Voice4Parents steering group members lives have all been turned upside down since lockdown, not only have we all had to adapt to running the forum virtually, whilst home schooling and being home therapists, some of our steering group members have had to face even more challenges including ill health, hospitalisation and their homes flooding during the thunderstorms we had. So, you see, we really do understand what you are telling us when you share your experiences and views with us.



The feedback on how you are all feeling during lockdown, summarised in the word cloud above, the support you have received or lack of during this time has all been anonymised and collated and reported back to the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group and gives Voice4Parents a stronger collective voice when we sit in strategic meetings such as the SEND Health Board.

Over the last few months, based on your feedback, Voice4parents has asked Wolverhampton's Local Authority to help families with support with food parcels and to specifically support our local ASD support group with providing vulnerable families with a much-needed food supply.

We have attended meetings regarding a new SEND strategy being implemented in Wolverhampton, to ensure the strategy is based around your needs and provides the services and support you have told us you need and want. The consultation on the draft strategy began on the 14th July 2020, further details and the link can be found further on under the heading SEND Strategy Consultation.

Our work continues around Autism, both in the Diagnosis Pathway and the support offered and received around this. After the feedback you gave on Facebook around this our parent rep has met with the Clinical Commissioner to discuss your experiences and will be having

further opportunities to feed into both the diagnosis pathway, support and educational support being offered for those with ASD both during the period of waiting for a diagnosis and also after diagnosis.

Parent reps from Voice4Parents will also be attending the Mental Health Board where they will focus on supporting your children back to school. You will have seen that our recent questions and polls on Facebook have been around your child or young person returning to school and we want your feedback to be the foundation of what is needed so please, keep telling us what is needed to support you, your family and your child or young person in returning to education. We are also interested to hear from you if your child or young person has already returned to their educational setting, can more be done to support you?

Voice4Parents welcome feedback to do with your experience of lockdown or just in general, we need to know what is working well for you, your family and your child or young person; what isn't work so well? What needs improving? It is our role to gather information from you which our forum can use as a collective voice in the work we do strategically. All feedback is anonymised, you can feedback in several ways:

via our website: www.voice4parents.co.uk/have-your-say

our Facebook page [Voice4Parents-Wolverhampton](https://www.facebook.com/Voice4Parents-Wolverhampton)

Or email admin@voice4parents.co.uk

And hopefully someday soon in person at one of our coffee mornings or events!



SEND Strategy Consultation

Since the Spotlight on SEND event back in October 2019, Voice4Parents has been working in partnership with Wolverhampton's Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group and Changing Our Lives to write the SEND Strategy for the next 3 years for children and young people (0-25 years) with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) living in Wolverhampton.

The strategy sets out the vision and key priorities that the council and partners in the city want to focus on to improve the lives of children and young people with SEND over the next 3 years. This strategy signifies a commitment by all SEND Partnership Board partners to work together to achieve their vision and ensure that:

- children, young people and their families feel empowered and well supported
- Wolverhampton is an inclusive city
- young people feel well prepared for adulthood

The strategy also supports the city's 10-year Children, Young People and Families Plan which aims to improve the resilience, health and emotional wellbeing of children, young people and families in Wolverhampton.

Voice4Parents urges you to read the draft strategy and have your say on this consultation by completing the online survey.

The consultation began on Tuesday 14 July and will run until Monday 21 September, 2020. To see the draft strategy and have your say online, please visit: <http://orlo.uk/XxMBT>

Parent Survey - School Travel

Sustrans, the walking and cycling charity, have developed a survey looking at how children and their parents/guardians travel to and from school. The survey is only 10 questions long and should take less than 4 minutes to fill out. This survey is really important for determining how they can make school runs safer, easier and more sustainable.

The closing date is midnight on Sunday 26 July. A link for this survey can be found here:

<https://sustrans.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/wolverhampton-schools-parent-survey>

Everyone that completes the survey will be entered into a prize draw to win a bike worth up to £400 including accessories (helmet and lock)!

WV Holiday Squad

WV Holiday Squad is back so if you are stuck for ideas to entertain your kids over the summer holidays, join WV Holiday Squad and explore the activities available, **many of them free**, across our city.

Visit <http://www.wvvirtualsquad.co.uk/>

Department for Education coronavirus helpline

The Department for Education coronavirus helpline is available to answer questions about COVID-19 relating to education and children's social care. Staff, parents and young people can contact this helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Opening hours: 8am to 6pm - Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm - Saturday and Sunday

[What parents and carers need to know about early years providers, schools and colleges in the autumn term](#)

Useful contacts:

Contact has a freephone helpline 0808 808 3555 (Monday-Friday 9:30am to 5pm) their helpline advisers are ready to help you with any concerns or worries you might have about your family during the current pandemic and beyond. For further information on Contact and the work they do for families with children or young people with additional needs and or disabilities head to www.contact.org.uk where you will find online resources, advice and information.

Wolverhampton Information Advice and Support Services offer impartial information, advice and support on matters relating to a child or young person's special educational needs or disability from birth to 25 years. Head over to their website <https://wolvesias.org/> for further information or you can get in touch with the team via email ias.service@wolverhampton.gov.uk or via their social media channels on Facebook and Twitter @wolvesIASS.

Wolverhampton's Local Offer is an essential guide for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families providing necessary information all in a single place. <http://win.wolverhampton.gov.uk/kb5/wolverhampton/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>

Finally, as promised...

Banana Ice-cream recipe

You will need **4 very ripe bananas** (you know the kind the ones the kids avoid because they are turning brown!)

1. Peel and chop up the bananas
2. Freeze for a couple of hours or better still overnight
3. Pop into a food processor and blend until smooth and creamy (this is very noisy)
4. Scoop it into a bowl and enjoy!!

You could add other ingredients to the bananas such as chocolate spread (which went down very well in our house!), peanut butter (as long as you are not allergic to nuts!!), other fruits - raspberries, strawberries etc or even a sprinkle of cinnamon. ENJOY!

