

Birthday Celebrations for Sheffield ADHD Drop-in Café

Family Action's Sheffield ADHD Drop-in Café marked its first birthday with a special event this week, to celebrate its work supporting hundreds of families looking for advice and guidance around their child's behaviour.

The Family Action Sheffield ADHD Project is commissioned by Sheffield City Council, and has been operating for over 14 years. With £30K funding from financial organisation NewDay, the service was able to launch the region's first free Sheffield ADHD Drop-in Café in 2022.

The birthday event, at Lowedges Community Centre in Sheffield, was attended by families whose lives have been changed for the better by the work of the Family Action team and their partners, and they all came together to share their experiences and favourite memories.

Mum, Grace Smith*, said: "I attended my first coffee morning at the beginning of the year. I was overwhelmed and exhausted from trying to support my 10-year-old and cope with the pressure on my relationship. I was greeted by friendly, understanding professionals and parents who really got it. A group of strangers shared and supported each other, shed tears, and laughed at the situations we often found ourselves in. My friends and family just don't get it but others living it do.

"There's no judgement, just ideas, support and a safe space to be honest. Every time I go to a café, I feel my needs are met and I can gain a little bit more. This is a fabulous service that I think has changed so many lives and I feel stronger in my mental health and able to embrace my situation."

The celebration culminated in the unveiling of special birthday bunting, created by the parents and children who attend the Sheffield ADHD Drop-in Café. The bunting contained illustrations and reflections on what the service has meant to the families, over the last year.

Family Action Strategic Operational Manager for The Sheffield ADHD Project, Sue Guest, said: "We have been supporting parents and carers of children and young people diagnosed with ADHD in Sheffield for over 14 years. Our aim is to improve the knowledge and awareness of ADHD and to provide strategies for families managing the symptoms associated with it.

"We launched the ADHD Drop-in Café, as we recognised that there was an increasing need for families to seek support and guidance when they first have worries and concerns about their child's neurodiverse behaviours, pre-diagnosis.

"We are delighted to be celebrating our first birthday and to be able to share the success and positive impact that the new ADHD Drop-in Café has had on hundreds of families. I also want to thank the team at New Day who provided essential funding to make this new service possible."

At the Sheffield ADHD Drop-in Café parents have the opportunity to come together to share their experiences with other families in a warm and welcoming environment. Part of the essential peer support the café provides is access to an ADHD WhatsApp group, which the families set up, that now has over one hundred members who regularly access this essential lifeline to other families experiencing similar struggles.

Grandparents, Rick and Violet Maltby, said: "The 'ADHD Drop-In Café' has been extremely useful to us as a family and an incredible source of encouragement as we navigate our teenage grandson's ADHD journey. Meeting other parents in similar situations and having access to relevant professionals, in person, has been invaluable. We have gained greater understanding and we feel it has equipped us to cope with a very challenging situation."

Family Action Project Coordinator at the Sheffield ADHD Project, Georgie Boot, said: "We recognise that raising any child can be difficult and at times stressful, but raising a child with ADHD can sometimes feel impossible. There is no magic wand or any easy solution, but it is possible to reduce the difficulties of managing ADHD and to find positives and strengths in the young people diagnosed. That is where our team comes in."

In Spring 2022 The Team Manager for Partnerships from Sheffield City Council undertook through The Supporting Families Programme to have conversations with parents and carers, from communities across the city, around the neurodiversity needs of their children and young people. These conversations were face to face and enabled open and honest discussion around the needs of families and what would really help them. Following on from this the Partnership Manager had the vision to ensure that the voices of the families had been heard, and she set about the implementation of citywide ADHD Information Cafes for all families to access. Connectivity was developed with both Family Action and Ryegate- Sheffield Children's Hospital NHS Foundation Trust to start the offer from October 2022.

Through the continued development from Sheffield City Council- The Partnership Manager was able to collaborate with many of our council teams and wider partners, to develop an offer that would enable families to be able to access support from many different services within the Information Café, and one that would complement the peer support model.

Partners providing guidance and advice with Family Action, at the Sheffield ADHD Drop-in Café, include Sheffield City Council Parenting Team, SENDIAS (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Information Advice and Support Service), the Department of Work and Pensions, ADHD Nurses and the Adult Mental Health Team from the NHS.

Sheffield City Council said: Councillor Richard Williams, Chair of Communities, Parks and Leisure Committee at Sheffield City Council, said: "It's wonderful to see how this vitally important café has thrived and developed over the last year. To hear about the difference it is making to the children, parents and carers of children with ADHD is so reassuring. We're very appreciative of the effective partnership working that has taken place to get to this important one-year milestone. The inspiring stories from those attending the event say it all, and I wish the project and the café continued success."

To find out more about Sheffield ADHD Drop-in Cafés visit: adhd.sheffield@family-action.org.uk

Family Action Sheffield ADHD Project welcomes referrals from parents of children and young people diagnosed with ADHD. For further information or to make a referral please contact: adhd.sheffield@family-action.org.uk or visit [Family Action Sheffield ADHD Project](#)

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Notes To Editors

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About Family Action

Family Action is a national charity committed to building stronger families and brighter lives. Since the charity was founded in 1869, we have continued to help children and families overcome the challenges they face through a wide range of practical, emotional and financial support. Today we work with more than 60,000 families in some 200 community-based services, as well as supporting thousands more through our national helpline, FamilyLine, which offers free and immediate support to adult family members and national schemes like the National School Breakfast Programme.

We help families and individuals to manage their mental health and wellbeing, working with families to reduce the impact of social isolation, poverty, addiction and other significant sources of stress and pressure. We also support families affected by adoption, special guardianship, separation, special educational needs, disability, domestic violence and sexual abuse. In addition, we provide thousands of welfare and educational grants every year to people in financial crisis. For further information, please visit our website at www.family-action.org.uk

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