

Hello!

Welcome to Gateshead's SEND Network Newsletter.

In Gateshead we believe that the voice, opinions and experiences of children and young people with SEND should be at the heart of everything we do. For more information go to www.gateshead-localoffer.org, follow the Gateshead SEND Local Offer [Facebook](#) page or visit the [Gateshead Local Offer YouTube channel](#).

A simplified version of this newsletter can be found at

<https://gateshead-localoffer.org/gateshead-send-network-newsletter/>

Demi's Story

My name is Demi and I'm 22 years old. I'm originally from Fife, Scotland, but I grew up in the North East of England. I have so many exciting hobbies. They keep me busy and play a vital role in my creativity. I love reading fictional books. I hope, at some point in my future, to become an author.



I was diagnosed with Riboflavin Transporter Deficiency (RTD) when I was 10 years old. Truthfully, life with a disability like mine, is depressing. You have an unfair amount of limited activities and then there's you comparing yourself to able-bodied people. You have to take risks and find other ways to deal with it. There are many other things that I wish I can do and have, things that able-bodied people can have, but they just seem impossible.

I am currently a student at Newcastle College, doing an Art & Design Level 3 course in illustration and animation. I have always loved art. As I grew older I found a new way to draw as my arms and hands became weaker. I had two options available - I used my mouth and feet! I've been at college for two years now - I got a distinction in Level 1 and a double distinction in Level 2. I'm determined to get more distinctions as I work my way up the ladder of education. My favourite part about being creative is living in my imagination. It amazes me to see what I can do in my mind, so I try my best to show everyone what I see, through my writing and my visual art. It also gives me unlimited

freedom; to do the things that I can't do in reality, to have the things that I can't have in reality and to see the things that I can't see in reality.

Your body may be disabled, but your mind isn't - no one is allowed to tell you what you can and can't do. I highly recommend reading lots of books - non-fiction and self-help - because knowledge is power and it definitely helps you reach whatever goals and desires you have. It may be difficult and challenging to overcome these issues, but isn't it time to make everywhere wheelchair accessible in today's world of technology and intellect? We just want the same life experiences as everyone else. There's only one life to live, let us have a chance to access anything we wish. Don't overlook our abilities.



To read more about Demi's Story visit [Demi's Story - Gateshead Local Offer SEND 0 to 25 years \(gateshead-localoffer.org\)](#) and visit <https://gateshead-localoffer.org/demi-anderson/> to see examples of her amazing artwork. For more information about RTD visit [About RTD - Cure RTD](#)

New provider for Gateshead Autism Hubs

North East based charity Daisy Chain has been commissioned to improve and extend the offer of support for autistic people, their families and practitioners across Gateshead.

Gateshead Autism Hubs will offer parents and carers of autistic children and young people information, advice and support on a range of issues. The Hubs provide drop-in sessions, peer support groups, and training for parents, carers, and professionals. Daisy Chain has been commissioned to provide its offer through Gateshead Family Hubs which are located across the borough.

Lynn Wilson, Director of Place Gateshead, North East and North Cumbria ICB and Gateshead Council, said: "It can be difficult to find suitable support when you're the parent or carer of an autistic person, or an autistic person yourself. Autism Hubs bring together helpful, local information and a range of support for autistic people and associated neurodiversities.



**DAISY
CHAIN**
Autism & Neurodiversity

"We are delighted that NENC ICB has been able to fund Gateshead Council, who have successfully commissioned Daisy Chain, to provide these much-needed hubs - they will make a huge difference to the quality of lives of the neurodivergent people in Gateshead."

For more information visit [Gateshead Autism Hubs - Daisy Chain](#) .

For information about Gateshead Family Hubs visit [Gateshead Family Hubs - Gateshead Council](#)

Learning Disability Annual Health Checks

NHS

North East and
North Cumbria

Annual health checks are for adults and young people aged 14 or over with a learning disability.

Anyone aged 14 or over who's on their GP's learning disability register can have a free annual health check once a year.

Adults and young people aged 14 or over with a learning disability who are on the GP practice learning disability register should be invited by their GP practice to come for an annual health check.

Most GP surgeries offer annual health checks to people with a learning disability, but if your GP surgery hasn't offered you a check you can contact them to ask them if they could provide one.

Find out more by watching [Introduction to Annual Health Checks for people with a Learning Disability](#) or going to the NHS website [Learning disabilities - Annual health checks](#)

Gateshead SEND Thresholds

Gateshead's Local Authority is leading a system-wide initiative to develop and implement a new SEND Thresholds model.

The SEND Thresholds - sometimes called 'Ranges' - will provide a framework for all professionals working with children and young people with SEND, as well as giving greater clarity for parents, families and carers in terms of what their child's needs are and the support they should receive. They will provide a helpful reference point in identifying the level of need and will support children and young people with additional needs with consistency across schools, colleges and other settings.

"We have undertaken an extensive series of training opportunities across education, health, social care, and families to help make the SEND Thresholds 'Gateshead specific'", says SEND educational specialist Anne Hayward. "The Thresholds are based on the four areas of the SEND Code of Practice - cognition and learning, communication and interaction, social emotional



and mental health, and sensory/physical. They will give practical guidance and ideas from Early Years to Post 19. It also includes the Preparation for Adulthood (PfA) outcomes from Early Years through to the age of 25."

The SEND Thresholds will be launched in January 2024 and an in-depth moderation event is planned for Summer 2024. This event aims to give families and professionals a chance to discuss their experiences and opinions of the document in more detail.

Gateshead Parent Carer Forum

Are you a parent/carer of a child or young person under 25 with SEND?

The Gateshead Parent Carer Forum are looking for new members to join their group. The Gateshead PCF are a volunteer group of parents and carers of children and young people with a range of SEND living across the Gateshead borough. Their aim is to make sure that services within Gateshead meet the needs of our children, young people, and families. They want to hear your thoughts, your views and experiences and help them to share information to influence and shape the delivery of services for families. They have drop-in coffee mornings to come together in a relaxed atmosphere, facilitate information



sessions with invited speakers, and offer training events.

Membership of the forum will ensure you are aware of consultations and events in our area and that your voice is heard in reviewing and developing services to meet the needs of our children, young people, and families.

For more information and to join up, visit <https://www.gatesheadparentcarerforum.co.uk/join-us> or email info@gatesheadparentcarerforum.com or phone 07865 354162.

Activities, Information and Resources

The **'Supporting Parents New to Hearing Loss' online events** are an ideal opportunity for families to get the information they need after diagnosis. The full range of events for families and deaf children/young people can be found here [Online events and courses for parents and families of deaf children | National Deaf Children's Society \(ndcs.org.uk\)](#)

The **Charlie Waller organisation** is a mental health charity which aims to help young people understand their own mental health, to equip them to support themselves and those around them, and to empower them to talk more openly about the subject. Visit www.charliewaller.org for more details.

Gateshead Council have appointed a new Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) - Tara O'Donnell - to support with their strategic priorities in relation to children and young people with SEND. This post is positioned in Children's Social Care and is jointly managed across Children's Social Care and Education. For more information, visit <https://gateshead-localoffer.org/designated-social-care-officer-dsco/>

Gateshead Council's SEND Service has recently updated its Privacy Policy. Click here for details: <https://www.gateshead.gov.uk/article/8501/Special-Educational-Needs-and-Disabilities>

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We value your feedback and to help us improve our newsletter we have created a short survey which you can access by clicking <https://forms.office.com/r/HFRHE6EHmd>