

# Monmouthshire EarlyBird Plus Programme

## EarlyBird Plus Programme

A three-month programme for parents/carers of children (4 – 9 years of age) with a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder or who are going through the diagnosis process with a likely autism diagnosis pending. Also for a school staff member or other key professional that is supporting their child



## What is the EarlyBird Plus Programme?

Our EarlyBird Plus programme is a three-month training programme involving eight group sessions and two home contacts/visits. It provides support for those parents/carers whose child may have been given a later diagnosis.

## Who is it for?

Two key adults from the families of a child aged between four and nine years of age with a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder can attend the programme. Three places are allocated to each family, two for parents/carers and one for a school staff member or other key professional who is working with or supporting their child.

## Where does it take place?

The eight group sessions are held weekly in a venue in Monmouthshire on the same day each week. Each session lasts around 2½ hours. Home contacts/visits take place either online, by telephone or at the home of the parent/carer or another convenient venue.

## What are the aims of the programme?

- To empower parents/carers and school staff
- To encourage a consistent approach between home and school by training parents/carers and professionals together

## What will we learn about?

Improving your understanding of your child's autism.

- Improving communication with your child.
- Developing strategies to pre-empt problem behaviours and/or manage those which do occur.

## The Monmouthshire EarlyBird Plus Team

The programme is run by Educational Psychologists from Monmouthshire (Stephen Trow and Tanya Walters) and the Early Years Additional Learning Needs Advisory Teacher (Ruth Davies). We all have experience and understanding of autism and youngsters with autism in schools and the community. We have all been trained by the National Autistic Society EarlyBird Centre in South Yorkshire to be able to deliver the programme.



### **Stephen Trow – Educational Psychologist**

I have been working as an Educational Psychologist in Monmouthshire since 2007 and worked in Caerphilly and Lincolnshire before this. I have worked with a variety of children with autism/social communication difficulties, their families and settings. I have been part of a team delivering the EarlyBird Plus programme in Monmouthshire since 2014. I really enjoy the interactions and confidence building that comes about from the programme for parents/carers and staff.



### **Ruth Davies - Early Years Additional Learning Needs Advisory Teacher**

I joined Monmouthshire Local Authority working within, and then managing, the Specific Learning Difficulties Team. I also became the Early Years Special Educational Needs Liaison Officer, working with Monmouthshire non-maintained settings. From September 2021, I became one of the Early Years Additional Learning Needs Advisory Teachers, working exclusively within this area. I have a wide range of teaching experience and have worked with young people with a range of differences, including those with Autism. I trained to deliver EarlyBird Plus in 2014 and have been helping deliver the programme since then each year. It is great working with parents and other professionals to help them through EarlyBird Plus.



### **Tanya Walters – Educational Psychologist**

I have worked with children and young people with autism and communication needs for over 25 years, both as a teacher and as an EP. I have been working with Monmouthshire EPS since January 2020 and have run several in-person and online EB+ courses. Autism is an area of particular interest for me and I thoroughly enjoy supporting families/settings with their very special and unique autistic children.



Contact [stephentrow@monmouthshire.gov.uk](mailto:stephentrow@monmouthshire.gov.uk) 01633 644524 for more information.

