



WEST MIDLANDS COMMUNICATION
June 2026

INTRODUCTION	2
MEETING DATES	2
10 Years of CANN: Reflecting on the National Knowledge Exchange	2
CHAIR COMMENTS	4
Jennifer Giles	4
Hoodo Abdulrahman	4
NEW MEMBERS	5
Almond Tree Foundation	5
Action for Children	5
Parent Carer Voice Herefordshire	5
Forward Carers CIC	6
NICE, Centre for Movement Disorders	6
Harry's Pals	7
National Deaf Children's Society	7
The Movement Centre	8
RESEARCH	8
Young Voices Questionnaire	8
INFORMATION & DATES FOR YOUR DIARY	9
Come to Sight Village!	9
SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS:	9

INTRODUCTION

Hello and welcome to the latest West Midlands CANN Update.

West Midlands Children's Additional Needs Network shares information and helps to increase the reach of your services for children and young people in the region.

Regarding updates and information, if you have material or information that you would like forwarded to the members of the Network, or any updates, please ensure that you email it to Miriam on westmidlands@cann-network.org, before the end of the month.

Thanks to everyone who shared the information below for our latest update, which contains information and sessions for children and young people with additional needs and their parent carers.

You can find these Communications on the CANN Website at:
<https://www.cann-network.org/blog/>

MEETING DATES

WMCANN Meeting
15th September 2026
10:00am - 12:00pm

Venue Details
Sense Touchbase Pears
Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6NA

Please complete our form - 'West Midlands CANN: Shaping Our Meetings'
https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSftuZuOs9jx5duvhMukIRSab6Gn-TXusN6nmhteObw-_hcFPg/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=118290473335415316891

10 Years of CANN: Reflecting on the National Knowledge Exchange

Recently, we marked a decade of the Children with Additional Needs Network (CANN) with our National Knowledge Exchange. It was a privilege to see so many professionals from the third sector and charity world come together to celebrate how far this voluntary network has come.

A huge thank you to Irwin Mitchell for hosting us and for their continued support of the network. It was fantastic to gather in a space that fosters such important conversations.

West Midlands CANN
www.cann-network.org
westmidlands@cann-network.org

Our chair for the morning, Lucy Owen (Chief Executive, SNAPS Yorkshire CIO), set the tone perfectly by reflecting on the far-reaching impact of CANN over the last ten years. As Lucy highlighted, even when time is short, the importance of carving out space for peer support and shared information is vital for our sector's wellbeing.

We were also honoured to welcome back Karen Hoe OBE, one of the original founders of the network in Leeds, who shared her expert perspective on the changing landscape of charity leadership and innovation.

The morning provided real, "Monday-ready" insights from our brilliant speakers:

Michael Guy on honest prioritisation: "When everything is important, nothing is important."

Sophie Lowe on resilience and why we should "be more zebra."

Mark Armstrong on using AI for "more mission, less admin."

Vic Hancock Fell on the essential power of networking and community.

This event feels like a new step for the CANN network—a commitment to even better communication and support across the third sector.

We need your feedback!

To help us decide if this should become an annual event, please take a moment to fill out our short feedback form:



https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeKBH038mbGIGSuto5zpm2q_wxm2zoVbVPbkyP89iaqJ9Uh7w/viewform

Missed the live session?

You can read the full summary and watch the webinar recording on our website:

<https://www.cann-network.org/news/cann-national-knowledge-exchange-reflecting-on-10-years-and-looking-ahead/>

CHAIR COMMENTS

We thought for this one that it would be nice for you to meet your new Chair's:



Jennifer Giles

As the National Lead for Early Intervention with Sense I support disabled children with complex needs access support in the early years, with specific work in Birmingham at our Selly Oak hub. I've been in this role for 4 years and prior to this worked in Special Education as a teacher in schools across the city. I enjoy supporting children and their families, and am always keen to learn more about what is out there in our community. I'm really excited to Co-Chair with WMCANN, to connect and network with incredible practitioners and partners

doing wonderful things! If you have any questions about our work please do contact me at jennifer.giles@sense.org.uk



Hoodo Abdulrahman

I've worked in Social Care for 10 years, and throughout that time, I've always been drawn to supporting people through difficult periods and helping them regain independence in a way that feels right for them. In my current role as a Support and Rehabilitation Coordinator at Irwin Mitchell, I take a practical, person-centred approach, working closely with individuals to make sure their needs are understood and their voices are heard. I enjoy bringing together different types of support to help people move forward in a way that's meaningful to them.

At the heart of my work is a genuine commitment to helping people feel supported, valued, and more in control of their lives. I am excited to co-chair the WMCANN alongside Jennifer Giles. If you have any questions or queries drop me an email: Hoodo.Abdulrahman@irwinmitchell.com

Please complete our form - 'West Midlands CANN: Shaping Our Meetings'

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSftuZuOs9jx5duvhMuklRSab6Gn-TXusN6nmhteObw-_hcFPg/viewform?usp=sharing&oid=118290473335415316891

NEW MEMBERS

Almond Tree
Foundation



Almond Tree Foundation

The Almond Tree Foundation offers wellbeing support for parents of children with disability or long term illness.

We've grown a warm, global community of people with shared experiences and run free online events, including webinars and drop-in sessions, that offer a safe space for reflection, discussion, and support.

<https://www.thealmondtree.org/>



Action for Children

A National children and family charity.

Their four core service areas are family support, children in care, disabled children and mental health and wellbeing.

Driven by love, they take action so children don't miss out on a safe and happy childhood. They have thousands of people on the ground, giving children and young people the protection and practical help they urgently need. And they campaign for lasting change.

<https://www.actionforchildren.org.uk/>



Parent Carer
Voice
HEREFORDSHIRE

Parent Carer Voice Herefordshire

A Parent Carer Forum (PCF) is a group of parents and carers of children with additional needs and disabilities. Everyone who works or volunteers with a parent carer forum is also a parent or carer of a child or young person

with SEND. Parent Carer Forums aim to ensure the services in their area meet the needs and improve outcomes of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families. Herefordshire's Forum is the Parent Carer Voice Herefordshire.

At PCVH, they believe that every community member has a role to play in shaping our future. Join them in our mission to foster connections and drive positive change in our neighborhoods. Your voice matters!

West Midlands CANN
www.cann-network.org
westmidlands@cann-network.org

<https://pcvh.co.uk/>



Forward Carers CIC

We're an award-winning, not-for-profit, Community Interest Company and have been empowering unpaid Carers to live fulfilling lives since 2014. We're on a mission to create Carer Friendly Communities nationally, places that understand, value and support unpaid Carers, so Carers can thrive in all areas of life and work. We deliver innovative, solutions-focussed, place-based supported digitally and in person, to create Carer Friendly

Communities across the country. We are also commissioned to deliver the following services:

[Birmingham Carers Hub and Young Carers](#)

[Walsall Carers HUB](#)

[Sandwell Carers Service](#)

[Dudley Adult Wellbeing and Young Carers](#)

[Carer Friendly Wiltshire](#)

[Carer Friendly Dorset](#)

<https://forwardcarers.org.uk/>



NICE, Centre for Movement Disorders

NICE is a small charity based in Birmingham with the biggest of hearts, working miracles for local families affected by physical disability. We specialise in helping individuals with incurable movement disorders such as children born with cerebral palsy and adults recovering from a stroke, to push the boundaries of their own potential.

Movement is an integral part of who we are. A lack, loss or difficulty with movement has a major impact and affects every aspect of daily life especially for the children we support who have been born with a lifelong condition. Basic skills such as sitting up, crawling, and talking become unimaginable milestones for families at the worst time in their lives.

This is where NICE becomes a family's salvation, with power in the knowledge that every child can be better, and improvement now is a gain forever.

NICE's centre of excellence has been delivering its pioneering services for over 40 years and has transformed the lives of over 10,000 families affected by movement disabilities, throughout this time. With no statutory support available for these long-term and complex conditions, NICE fills a crucial gap in community services for children from birth, young and older children, to adults of all ages.

West Midlands CANN
www.cann-network.org
westmidlands@cann-network.org

<https://nicecharity.org.uk/>



Harry's Pals

Harry's Pals is a charity supporting parents in England whose child has a life-limiting or life-threatening condition. Our work is centred on reducing isolation, improving wellbeing, and creating meaningful support networks for families navigating complex and often overwhelming circumstances.

Created by Harry's mum and founder, Hayley Charlesworth, Harry's Pals was built through lived experience and a deep understanding of the challenges families can face when caring for a seriously ill child. Harry, the charity's namesake, remains at the heart of the organisation and its commitment to ensuring families feel seen, supported, and connected.

<https://harrispals.co.uk/>



National Deaf Children's Society

The National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) is the leading UK charity dedicated to supporting deaf children, young people, and their families, regardless of hearing loss level. They provide free, expert information, local support groups, advocacy, and online resources covering education, health, and technology to empower families and remove barriers to childhood

We're here for deaf children and everyone who cares about them. Whatever the question or challenge, we help find a way through.

We empower families to connect and drive change in their communities, and we campaign to make sure deaf children get the support they need.

We lead the way, sharing insight and knowledge in the UK and internationally.

<http://www.ndcs.org.uk>



The Movement Centre

At The Movement Centre, they provide specialist paediatric physiotherapy for children with movement difficulties. They are proud to specialise in Targeted Training, an evidence-based and life-changing therapy designed to help children and young people with movement disorders including Cerebral

Palsy, Down Syndrome, acquired brain injuries and genetic disorders.

Through a structured course of therapy, children can develop new physical skills, develop strength, and improve postural control, leading to improved independence and confidence; changes that can have a profound and lasting impact on daily life.

They offer a fully-funded 12 month course of physiotherapy, with check-ins in person with our expert team and ongoing support and guidance so that therapy can be carried out safely and effectively at home.

<https://the-movement-centre.co.uk/>

If you know of any groups that may be interested, please get them in touch!

If you are not yet on the WYCANN website, you can be added by completing this form:

<https://www.cann-network.org/member-registration-form/>

Please only use contact details that are for public use

RESEARCH

Young Voices Questionnaire

Are you an education professional working with blind and partially sighted students? Our Young Voices are working on a project around improving education for blind and partially sighted young people. They are conducting this questionnaire as part of their efforts to explore the introduction of Visual Impairment (VI) training for teachers and those who work within education settings.

They hope the feedback shared can help improve the experiences of blind and partially sighted students in education. To learn more and share your feedback, follow the link below.

[Questionnaire for Teachers – Fill in form](#)

INFORMATION & DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Come to Sight Village!

Step into the UK's premier exhibition for blind and low-vision communities, bigger, bolder, and more inspiring than ever! Discover the latest technology, products, and services that make everyday life easier and more enjoyable. Get hands-on with brand-new innovations, explore emerging trends, and speak directly with leading experts from across the sector.

Our Technology Coordinator Sydney May will be attending Birmingham Sight Village 7th to 8th July. She will be running seminars at both events, or come along to get all your technology questions answered! To find out more and sign up, follow the link below.

["Sight Village: Where Inclusion Meets Innovation." - QAC Queen Alexandra College Birmingham - National college for people with disabilities.](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA LINKS AND CONTACT DETAILS:

GENERAL

Website:	www.cann-network.org
Admin:	westmidlands@cann-network.org
Chairs:	chair.westmidlands@cann-network.org
Bluesky:	https://bsky.app/profile/wmcann.bsky.social
LinkedIn:	https://www.linkedin.com/company/west-midlands-cann
Facebook:	https://www.facebook.com/westmidlandscann