

# Passport for special children

## Parking in the Community

The WAND Card, Wandsworth Council



Adam Westwood, Tiffany Jonas and Nick O'Donnell from Wandsworth

The Wandsworth Council WAND Parking Scheme was introduced by the children's services special needs planning team in partnership with the council's parking team. The initiative sees parents and carers of disabled children benefit from special parking concessions.

Special needs planning runs a Disabled Children's Register (DCR) which all families are encouraged to join if they have a child with special needs or a disability (SEND).

The Special Needs Planning team's Lucia Daniels explains: "The WAND (Wandsworth Additional Needs Database) is an ID card that helps children and young people access discounts and concessions in and around the borough, including free or reduced rates at all leisure centres, free entry to Battersea Park Zoo, discounts at other attractions and help with fast-tracking in participating local shops. Approximately 1,200 young people now hold a WAND card.

"Parents are very positive about the benefits it offers their families," says Daniels. "Some 70% of special needs and disabilities are not visible, so the ID card helps parents and carers flag up to shops and services when help might be required without the need for awkward explanations."

In 2014, in response to parents' requests, the special needs planning team negotiated free parking in council car parks and at St George's Hospital and Queen Mary's Hospital for anyone visiting for an appointment with a WAND cardholder. Daniels says: "These were important

parking concessions for children who do not currently qualify for a Blue Badge because their disability is not physical, although they need to be safely transported by car because of complex social/communication issues, like autism."

In 2015 the special needs planning and parking team conducted a survey to find out what services WAND card users wanted in more detail. Top of the list came parking to make school pick-ups and drop-offs easier, especially when there is an emergency and it is necessary to go by car to collect a child who falls ill. The parking team proposed trialling free parking for up to 15 minutes outside schools, using existing parking bays. Parking contracts manager Tiffany Jonas spoke to the council's on-street parking enforcement contractor NSL on the background, purpose and initiative of the WAND card. This information was then passed on to the civil enforcement officers.

Usage of the parking offer was monitored and has justified the extension and expansion of the parking scheme. And, to date, there have been no reports of misuse of the WAND card.



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### Jury comment

Wandsworth's WAND card parking scheme is helping to make life just a bit easier in cases where a child or young person has a special need that is not yet recognised via the Blue Badge scheme. This is a great project and really plugs a gap for that vulnerable sector. It is also a great example of partnership working across different parts of the public sector. Indeed, it was good to see a parking team nominated by colleagues in children's services.