

“Vicki and Spurgeons changed my life and my family’s life and I want to pass on what I’ve learned on to other parents.”

Spurgeons Children's Centres

We offer information, advice and practical support to families with children aged 0-5 so they can get the best start in life. In Birmingham we operate as part of the Birmingham Forward Steps Partnership, under the NHS, within which Perry Barr is one of our Children's Centre venues. In Wiltshire we work for Wiltshire Council via Children's Centres in East, West and South Wiltshire.

We helped Amy – now she helps other parents!



Vicki Naish
Spurgeons Family Support Worker



Spurgeons West Wiltshire Children's Services helped Amy* successfully conquer a complex range of family and parenting issues. It inspired Amy to become a Spurgeons volunteer, and she has plans to take things further...

“I’ve always loved working,” Amy says, “but in 2020 I had to give up my job to care for my disabled partner Dave, our two primary-age children Ben and Mollie and twin toddlers. I really didn’t want to be a stay-at-home mum and I struggled. Mollie and Ben developed behavioural problems, so I asked the Family Support Worker at their school for advice and she referred me to Spurgeons.”

Vicki Naish was the Spurgeons Family Support Worker assigned to help Amy. Vicki says, “The family had a number of challenges which needed to be sorted out so they could move forward.

“They were in social housing that was too cramped. Dave’s disability meant he needed the main bedroom to himself, so Amy often had to sleep on the sofa. The twins, who shared a bed, didn’t sleep well and so neither did Mollie who slept in the same room.

She was frustrated, angry and tired. We involved Wiltshire Family Counselling Trusts to help Mollie and Ben manage their emotions and develop more confidence.

“Amy also needed support with parenting, particularly with the twins, so we invited her to join our *Five to Thrive sessions*.”

Amy says, “Vicki taught me how to interact with the twins better, like getting down on the floor and making more eye contact with them. Then I did the *Being a Parent* course which Vicki led. I met other parents with similar problems and situations. It was so good to know I wasn’t alone!”

Several other agencies were involved with the family. “We opened an *Early Support Assessment* to co-ordinate them all,” says Vicki. “We’d all meet with the family every six weeks to review progress. In between, I’d do a home visit and a video call with the family, so they were having contact once a fortnight.”

Meanwhile, Vicki helped Amy and her family in other ways too. She reduced their financial pressures by ensuring they were getting all the benefits they were due.

She also suggested Amy try for a house-swap, and the school Family Support Worker wrote a supporting letter. Now the family has moved to a more spacious home and are near to Dave’s parents who help out with childcare. Amy says, “The twins have their own beds, they’re sleeping well and have started nursery. Mollie and Ben now get on really well. Dave is having another operation which will mean he can be more independent. Things are going in the right direction and all of us are much, much happier!”

With more time freed up, Amy did some training and started volunteering with Spurgeons on our *Being a Parent Course*. She says, “Vicki and Spurgeons changed my life and my family’s life and I want to pass on what I’ve learned on to other parents. After facilitating my first course one of the mums said, ‘I’m really going to miss you and all the support you’ve given me.’ It felt so good to have helped her. I feel so much more positive. I’m planning to get my NVQ qualifications so that I can become a Family Support Worker myself.”

*Name changed to protect identity