

14 Prisoner who had phone in jail again

A prisoner who was caught with a mobile phone and two SIM cards at a Midlands jail has been locked up for a further four months.

Prison officers at Stoke Heath saw Thomas Sidwell, from Solihull, and another inmate involved in an "exchange", Telford Magistrates Court heard.

Mr Adam Warner said 31-year-old Sidwell put a small package in his mouth and when he spat it out, prison officers saw it contained two SIM cards.

He said Sidwell was asked if he had anything else and was searched. He admitted having a mobile phone, which was recovered from him wrapped in cling film.

Sidwell, of Redfern Close, admitted possessing the prohibited items at the prison, near Market Drayton.

Mr Israr Habib, for Sidwell, said while he was in jail his father committed suicide and he had made an application for leave but the request was denied. Mr Habib added: "His mother became suicidal. Sidwell wanted to make contact. This is why he got a mobile phone."

History talk to be staged at library

A local history talk will take place in Tipton.

Glebefields Library, in St Mark's Road, will hold the event this Saturday from 10.30am to 1.30pm.

There'll be photographs, stalls and a talk on Princes End by Keith Hodgkins.

Legal ruling paves way for better access to educational help

Our autism fight will help other families

Report by Heather Large
heather.large@expressandstar.co.uk

AN autistic schoolboy from Wolverhampton could help other children access a recognised therapy programme following a 'ground-breaking' legal case.

A judicial review was launched in the name of seven-year-old Tyger Quintyne, supported by his mother Pandora, against Wolverhampton council for not offering Applied Behaviour Analysis, ABA, as one of the options for children with autism.

ABA is regarded as an effective form of therapy for some children with Autism Spectrum Disorder.

While it is standard in the US and Canada, it's not as widely available in the UK and in most cases parents have to pay for it privately.

Tribunal

Tyger had been given access to ABA in February last year after his mother appealed through a Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal.

But campaign group ABA Access4All decided to launch legal proceedings in a bid to increase access to the therapy programme.

Now Wolverhampton council has agreed 'out of court' to offer ABA as one of the options in its provision for young people with special educational needs.

This means it is available when it is assessed as being suitable for a child on an individual basis.

It is now hoped that more councils across the UK will follow Wolverhampton's lead to provide access to the therapy programme, which is centred on a child's particular needs and motivations.



Seven-year-old Tyger Quintyne of Wolverhampton with his mother Pandora, 30

Tyger's mother Pandora, aged 30, who lives in Lanesfield, said: "ABA removed the stress and worry about him not progressing."

"Now he goes to mainstream school and gets all the support he needs."

"I think the council's decision is fantastic because it means other parents will not have to go through the tribunal process and

the financial costs like I did, which was a really long-winded route, they can just approach the council."

"I'm really pleased they have made this decision as it could help many other children if ABA is suitable for them."

Jane McCready, from the ABA Access4All campaign, said: "With this legal case settled, Wolverhampton is now leading the

way in making things fairer for autistic children.

"It effectively means ABA can now be made available, rather than only those whose parents have the money to pay privately as before the case. Although there are terms and conditions for getting it."

"It really could be a ground-breaking moment in autism education. It sets an important precedent and my campaign plans now to use it to persuade other local authorities across the UK to follow suit and offer ABA."

"ABA helps autistic children learn to talk, read, write, stop behaviours such as self-injury - you name it. Tyger himself is now out of special school and in mainstream, catching up. There are 5,000 parents who have joined my campaign."

A council spokesman said: "The council and its partners provide a wide range of support for children and young people with autism through Wolverhampton's SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Local Offer."

"Applied Behavioural Analysis is an approach which may be suitable for some children and young people, and it will be offered as part of the child's wider educational programme where there is an assessed need."

"For other children and young people, alternative approaches offered by the council will continue to be more suitable to meeting their particular needs."

Mrs McCready, who is a mother and step-mother to four, including a son called Johnny with autism and severe learning difficulties, and a step-daughter with very high-functioning autism.

She started the ABA Access4All campaign in early 2014 to lobby for a change of thinking in relation to the therapy programme.

ABA is a teaching technique that uses positive reinforcement to enable successful learning and shaping of behaviour.

It is tailored to a child's specific needs and is said to help children develop communication skills and progress academically.

BRIEFING

Boxing night at town hall

Darlaston Town Hall will come to life on Saturday with a spectacular night of amateur boxing presented by Darlaston Boxing Club.

Memberstrain at the gym in Darlaston Town Hall and young people from across the town have flocked to learn new skills and improve their fitness levels.

Councillor Doug James said: "Everyone is looking forward to an exciting night's sport and entertainment." It starts at 6.30pm. Tickets are available on 0794 4009328.

Superbowl for Steelers

Sandwell Steelers are hosting a Superbowl 51 party in Wolverhampton on Sunday.

The event takes place from 9pm at Rileys Sports Bar, which is on Broad Street in the city centre, with live big screen coverage of the clash between New England Patriots and Atlanta Falcons.

For ticket information, visit the Sandwell Steelers page on Facebook.

Stately home is seeking helpers

A stately home is seeking volunteers. Weston Park, on the Shropshire border, is holding a volunteer open day on February 14, between 10am and 11am. E-mail julianne@weston-park.com or visit weston-park.com

FREE Valentine's message

in the Express & Star and online

Place a message for your loved one to appear in the Express & Star and online on Tuesday, February 14.

Simply place your message at bookanad.expressandstar.co.uk using discount code V100 or fill in the coupon below and send it to: Valentine's Day Messages, Classified Advertising Department, Express & Star, Queen Street, Wolverhampton WV1 1ES. Or you can call into any of our branch offices or e-mail: marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk

Write your Valentine's message here, starting with first name or nickname.

(One word per box in block capitals)

SENDER'S DETAILS

Name: _____

Contact No: _____