



Network Newsletter

Issue No. 12 August/Sept 2008

Northumberland Parent, Carer and Professional Forum

Do you want to have a say in the planning and delivery of services for your child? Then come and join us!

After months of careful planning and preparation, the inaugural meeting of the **Northumberland Parent, Carer and Professional Forum** will take place on **Thursday 23rd October** in County Hall, Morpeth.

Both parent/carers and professional representatives will come together to discuss identified issues and mutual areas of concern. The Forum will provide an opportunity for parents' and carers' views to be heard, and to influence the planning and delivery of services that impact on children with special needs and their families.

There will be **three** Forum meetings each year; one meeting in each school term. They will be preceded by **locality meetings** which will be held in north, west and central Northumberland approximately one month in advance of the Forum. The issues raised by parents and carers at the locality meetings will be prioritised to form the agenda for the Forum. Representatives from each locality will attend the Forum meetings and provide feedback to the other parents and carers in their area.

All parents and carers attending the meetings will be reimbursed for any travel or childcare expenses incurred. Lunch will also be provided.

Please come along to your locality meeting and be part of this exciting new development. Meetings will be as informal and parent-friendly as possible, and you will be made very welcome.

See details over the page

Northumberland Parent, Carer and Professional Forum cont.....

Date and times of locality meetings:

West Northumberland - Thursday 18 September, 11.30am - 2.00pm,
Hexham Community Centre

Central Northumberland - Monday 22 September, 11.30am - 2.00pm,
Hirst Welfare, Ashington

North Northumberland - Wednesday 24 September, 11.30 - 2.00pm,
Bell View Resource Centre, Belford

For further information about the Forum,
please contact **Susan Cullingworth** at NCH IN-PACT on **01670 857816**.

Additional Needs



The Families and Children's Trust (FACT) Leadership Team is reviewing the way that services are delivered to children and young people with additional needs and their families.

The current system tends to respond to a child's needs only when they have reached a significant level of concern. However, all evidence shows that prevention and early intervention leads to better outcomes for children and young people.

The Leadership Team plans to change the way that services and support are delivered so that a child's needs can be recognised and addressed well before they become critical. It is envisaged that this will be achieved through close partnership working by schools and the range of services providing support to children with additional needs and their families.

The review will involve consultation with children and young people, parents and carers and other stakeholders. One of the ways that parents and carers can be involved is through the Parent, Carer and Professional Forum locality meetings in their area.

For further details, please refer to front page of this newsletter
or contact **Susan Cullingworth** on **01670 857816**.

Aiming High for Disabled Children



As we reported in the last Network Newsletter, Aiming High for Disabled Children is a major government investment in services for families of children with learning difficulties or disabilities. Northumberland will have an extra £360,000 next year and £1.1 million the following year for more short break services.

A big thank you to all the parents who contacted Jeremy Cripps with their thoughts about short breaks for parents who have responsibilities of caring for a disabled child. Thank you too to the parents who came to focus group meetings to discuss short breaks.

In September Jeremy will publish a report about this consultation with parents, children, young people and professionals with recommendations about what the Aiming High money should be spent on in Northumberland.

**A date for your diary -
Monday 13th October at Choppington Social Welfare Centre**

an opportunity for parents and professionals to discuss the report and validate the recommendations. More details to follow in September.

**For further details, contact Jeremy Cripps on 01670 533878
or email: jcripps@northumberland.gov.uk**

Dyslexia North East

Dyslexia North East welcomes anyone who has an interest in helping children or adults with dyslexia and related difficulties, such as dyspraxia.

Their next meeting will be on Thursday, October 2nd, at the RGS Junior School, Jesmond, Newcastle, from 6.30 - 8.30pm.

Stuart Henderson, is an experienced Optometrist who offers assessment for children (or adults) with Visual Dyslexia problems. He will be explaining about the tests and conditions that he can help with.

**Do go along and bring a friend or relative!
If you need more information, please
contact Liz Ferguson on 0780 300 3475.**

Carers Emergency Card Scheme

The Carers Emergency Card Scheme is funded by Northumberland Care Trust and FACT and provided in partnership by Carers Northumberland and the British Red Cross.

What is a 'carer's emergency'?

This is any unplanned event involving the carer and resulting in a situation where it would be unsafe to leave the person needing care without help. Planning for the kinds of emergencies that can happen to anyone can reduce anxiety and stress.



Peace of mind

Though unlikely, many people worry most about having an accident while away from the person they care for. By registering for a carers' card, and carrying it, a carer will know that help is only a phone call away in a crisis. In the unlikely event of an accident, it will alert people to the fact that a person is a carer, so that the person cared for will be looked after.

How does the scheme work?

The card contains the emergency 24/7 number for the British Red Cross and the carer's unique reference number. It is this phone number that is called in an emergency and the reference number that, when quoted will automatically display the carer's plan and help the British Red Cross duty officer decide what action to take. They will call the contact numbers (of friends, relatives or care staff to be contacted in an emergency). If none of them answer, or if they are unable to respond immediately, local Red Cross volunteers will be sent to stay with the person cared for until alternative care arrangements are in place.

To find out more about how the scheme works contact Carers Northumberland on 0844 800 7354.

Fledglings

Fledglings is a registered charity that helps parents/carers of a child with special needs of any kind to find simple, affordable solutions to practical problems. They offer a free product search service to locate toys, clothing, developmental aids and other items which may stimulate the child's development or give relief to the carer. Fledglings can help anyone who cares for children with special needs. The website is www.fledglings.org.uk or contact them by telephone on 0845 458 1124.



In-PACT Family Fun Day

Here is a shot of some of the young athletes, taking part in the egg and spoon race (or should we say egg and cup race). Emilia Marchetti (front) looks well on her way to the championship at the joint Downs Syndrome and Wansbeck Support Group Family Fun Day at Ingram Valley.



Nearly sixty mums, dads and siblings turned out to enjoy a barbecue by the river at the yearly event on Friday 8th August.

Congratulations to the winners of the older and younger kids egg and spoon race, hula hoop competitors (you were amazing!!) and apologies to the young fishermen and women. We could not coax any fish out of the river on the day.

For more information about IN-PACT
contact Sue Cullingworth or Anne-Marie Donnelly on 01670 857816.

IN-PACT Sibling Group, Hexham

The IN-PACT Sibling Group from Hexham had their summer outing to The Lake District. They visited Rheged Visitor Centre and watched a giant movie called Dinosaurs. Then they did a pottery painting workshop with staff from the centre, you can see the concentration on their faces; We are sure mums and dads were thrilled with the ornaments they painted.



After a packed lunch they headed off to Keswick and 'The Puzzling Place'. This was great fun, especially the 'Anti - Gravity Room'. Well worth the £2-50 entry fee although access is a problem for those with mobility problems as there are stairs to climb!

After tea there was a scenic drive home around Lake Ullswater, it was a lovely day out and the English sun shone for them.

Anyone wanting more information about the Sibling Group in Hexham can
contact Sue Cullingworth or Anne-Marie Donnelly on 01670 857816.

NORTHERN COUNTIES SCHOOL

Northern Counties School for Families offers a free half day provision on Monday mornings from 9.30 am - 12.00 pm. The sessions are for pre-school children who have a visual and/or hearing impairment and/or communication difficulties (e.g. autism). The sessions provide an opportunity for family members to work alongside their child with the support of school staff.

The aims of the session are to:

- ◆ Develop each child's early social and communication skills using a total communication environment which includes the use of gestures, signing, lip reading, objects of reference, visual supports, PECS, pre-Braille skills, speech and written word.
- ◆ Share with parents, ways to maximise their child's sensory abilities.
- ◆ Offer the opportunity to meet with other families.
- ◆ Facilitate liaison with other agencies involved with the family.
- ◆ Offer access to the school's family support service.

Children will be able to access the specialist on site resources which include Rebound; Hydrotherapy; Sensory Room; Light Room; Sensory Garden; Adventure Playground and Soft Play.

For further details, please telephone 0191 281 5821.

The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

The Advisory Centre for Education (ACE) is an independent national education advice centre for parents. It offers information and advice to parents on a wide range of education topics, including exclusion, bullying, disability discrimination, special educational needs and school admissions appeals.

Advice booklets are available on the ACE website and can be downloaded for free.

ACE is often contacted about school trips by parents of children with special educational needs and disabilities. They can provide advice on the steps that should be taken by schools to ensure that all children are included in school trips.

Contact details are:

Unit 1C, Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2DQ

Tel: 0808 8005793 for general advice and

0808 8000327 regarding exclusions

Website: www.ace-ed.org.uk

Copy of a letter from a proud parent.....

I hope that this letter will give encouragement to all parents of Visually Impaired Children that they are able to achieve as well as their sighted peers.

Two of my four children went down with a Visual Impairment at the ages of seven and six respectively.

They were supported in their local mainstream schools by Dave Robson and several very committed class room assistants in Amble.

Suffice it to say they went on to get extremely good grades in their exams and they both went onto to University.

They have recently both graduated, one with a 2 1 in Neuroscience and

Politics and is going on to study for a Masters in European Politics, and the other with a first in Disability Studies with Advice, Guidance and Counselling.

They both looked very smart in their regalia at the Graduation Ceremonies.



From a very proud Father.

Dance for Pleasure

Kathleen Holdroyd teaches ballet, tap and modern dance together with performing arts at her dance studio in Lynemouth Welfare Institute. As well as performing in their own dance shows, the pupils have recently sat their exams and achieved excellent results. Some pupils also perform on stage with Beaconsfield operatic Society.

Kathleen would like to extend an invitation to children who are partially sighted. She would like to start a new class on a Saturday morning. She proposes to hold a free hour long session where interested children can come along, dress up in costumes which will be provided and have a dance session to see if they would like to come along to classes in future.

For further information please contact
Kathleen Holdroyd on 01670 356102.



Useful Local Telephone Numbers:

Bliss ADHD Support Group	Lorraine Walker	01670 540979
Contact a Family	Kathy Rist/Sarah Lewis	0191 2136300
Downs Syndrome & Friends Support Group	Anne-Marie Donnelly	01670 857816
Dyslexia North East	Liz Ferguson	0780 3003475
Haltwhistle Parent/Carer Support Group	Janet Nicholson	01434 684422
Hidden Dys-Ability (Berwick upon Tweed)	Kim Redpath	01289 331450
Hyperkidz	Tracey English	01670 516537
In-Pact	Anne-Marie Donnelly	01670 857816
Nurture Group, Hexham	Lesley Grieve	01434 601698
Parent Partnership	Alison Bravey	01670 533694
Ponteland Parents' Special Needs Group	Kate Whitehead	01661 822103
Portage Service	c/o Anne-Marie Donnelly	01670 857816
Support Group for Parents of Self-Harming Children	Susan Cullingworth	01670 857816
Toby Henderson Trust	Lesley Henderson	01670 789753
Tynedale Support	Ali Shotton	01434 601594
Wansbeck Parent Carer Support Group	Anne-Marie Donnelly	01670 857816

Some of the articles in this newsletter are those of individual contributors and are not necessarily supported by Northumberland County Council.

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Contact Jackie Stanton Tel: (01670) 533883

If you require this newsletter in an alternative format, please contact 01670 857816.



Supporting families who have children with special needs



If you would like your child to be registered on the Network Database for Children with Disabilities, you will receive your own copy of our Network Newsletter. Please complete below to receive an application form and send to **Jackie Stanton, Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth NE61 2EF**

Name of child:

Name of parent:

Address of child:

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