



# Network Newsletter

Issue No. 13 Oct/Nov 2008

## Northumberland Parent, Carer and Professional Forum Latest News

The first locality meetings for the Parent, Carer and Professional Forum have been held around the county. Many thanks to all the parents and carers who were able to attend.

The meetings covered three main areas regarding provision from the different services working with children with special needs and disabilities:

- ♦ What is good about the provision you and your child have received?
- ♦ How could this provision be improved?
- ♦ In an ideal world what would you like this provision to look like?

The feedback from the meetings will be used to prioritise the agenda items for the main Forum meetings. These meetings will be attended by parent representatives from each locality along with senior professional representatives from a range of services.

The information gathered through the various Forum meetings will be fed into the review of services for children and young people with additional needs and their families. This review is currently being undertaken by the Families and Children's Trust (FACT) Leadership Team.

We will keep you updated on the progress of the Forum through the Network Newsletter.

If you were unable to attend your locality meeting,  
but would still like to contribute your views,  
please contact Susan Cullingworth  
at Action for Children (previously NCH) IN-PACT  
on 01670 857816.



## Bus passes for people with learning disabilities

Anyone who is registered as having a learning disability is entitled to a free bus pass to travel anywhere in England on local bus services without charge. For a child under 18, to apply for a bus pass, ask a social worker from the children's disability team to send you a letter to confirm that the child is registered as having a learning disability. (Family And Children's Trust, 01670 516131, ask for the duty worker if the child does not have a social worker).



If the child is unable to travel without a carer but could use a bus if a carer was present, the child is also entitled for the bus pass to be a "Companion pass". This means that the bus pass has a "C" in one corner and the carer travels free when supporting the child. To arrange this, ask the social worker to add a paragraph to the entitlement letter to state that the child needs a carer to travel on a bus and is therefore entitled to a Companion travelling free. Take the letter with two photos to your local council office and they will arrange for the bus pass to be sent out. Even if you do not use buses with the child yourself, your child's school, respite carer or youth club may appreciate being able to use the pass with your child.



For more information telephone the Disabled Children Team on 01670 516131.

## Brave Hearts of the North East

Brave Hearts awards are made to children who have shown incredible courage battling to overcome illness, disability or other adversities. Awards have included a holiday of a lifetime or the toy or computer of their dreams. They also receive the Brave Hearts Crystal, recognising they are indeed special children, which many value the most.

Every year numerous awards are made. One of the striking features of all the children Brave Hearts has helped, is the fact that each of them sees nothing remarkable about their struggle to overcome adversity.

The next awards presentation will be made at St James Park, Newcastle on 4th December 2008.

If you would like to nominate a young person to receive an award, please see the website at [www.brave-hearts.com](http://www.brave-hearts.com) where you can download a nomination form.



## Parents' views about Short Breaks

AIMING HIGH IN



NORTHUMBERLAND

Earlier this year an article about Aiming High for Disabled Children appeared in this newsletter inviting parents to tell us what they thought about short breaks. A cross section of parents were also invited to meetings during June and July to discuss short breaks. The meetings took place in Blyth, Ashington, Morpeth, Hexham, Wooler and Berwick.

In all, 30 parents contributed in meetings, interviews, phone calls, emails or letters. The FACT has now published a short (5 page) report about what they thought which can be found on the Northumberland Families and Children's Trust website: [www.northumberland.gov.uk/fact](http://www.northumberland.gov.uk/fact)

FACT wanted to know what sorts of short breaks parents wanted:

- ◆ Playschemes during the long summer holiday.
- ◆ Daytime activities at weekends - which are not available everywhere in the county.
- ◆ Things for over 14s to do - most 'childcare' stops at age 14.
- ◆ 'Family helpers' - someone who knows you and your child well and is prepared to baby-sit or take your child out or accompany your child to activities.
- ◆ Overnight breaks for children who are dependent upon technology or require night-time supervision, especially in urgent situations such as parent going into hospital.
- ◆ Monksfield Oak Unit should have the same number of beds as Acorn Unit.
- ◆ Transport to and from Barndale overnight care as part of the package.

The report also includes 30 issues about short breaks that were raised by parents during the consultation.

On 13<sup>th</sup> October there will be a meeting of about 100 parents and professionals at Choppington Social Welfare Centre to discuss the report. At the meeting FACT want to know if these are the right priorities for short breaks in Northumberland; what other types of short break should be priorities; and anything else that is not included in the report.

FACT also spoke to about 50 children and young people with disabilities about short breaks during the summer; that report is on the same website and will also be talked about at the meeting on 13<sup>th</sup> October.

For more information please contact Jeremy Cripps on 01670 533878  
or email [jcripps@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:jcripps@northumberland.gov.uk)

## Improving the transition in health services for young people

Last year, some work was carried out by Northumberland Care Trust to look at the experiences of young people with learning difficulties and complex health needs during the transition between children's and adult health services. As a result, a number of important actions to improve this transition are now being taken. The review explored the experiences for both the young people and their families of health services in general; the services provided for children; the services provided for adults; and the transition process that they had gone through, or were still going through.

Several suggestions for improvement were made and, as a result, a four step transition plan is being introduced this year:

- ◆ While a child, the young person and their family get to know their local Doctor and Nurses
- ◆ When they get to age 14, everyone meets to plan changing from children's to adult health services
- ◆ One person is asked to co-ordinate the health services the young person needs
- ◆ Afterwards, they get a regular check up of their health.

For more information please contact Dr Turner or Dr Cardwell who are working on the implementation of this plan.

Telephone Dr Turner on 01661 867749 or telephone Dr Cardwell on 01670 564030



## NCH is now Action for Children

NCH, the children's charity became [Action for Children](#) on the 18th September 2008, in the largest rebrand of its kind within the voluntary sector. The brand development is part of the charity's Change for Children programme which aims to effectively reflect and deliver its work supporting vulnerable children, young people and their families.

Established in 1869 and supporting over 170,000 people every year, [Action for Children](#) is a major children's charity, one of the UK's largest. In order to stay true to its founding principles and heritage, while delivering innovative services and campaigns and attracting new audiences, the strategy and new brand will engage with key stakeholders through phased activities over the next five years.



For further information log onto : [www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)



# **BritishBlindSport**

Registered Charity Number 271500

**‘Seeing a Healthier Future’**

**Are you aged 14-18 and  
have a visual impairment?**

**Do you enjoy taking part in  
sport and leisure activities? – Then Sign up for British  
Blind Sports ...**

## **JUNIOR FOOTBALL ORGANISERS (JFO) CERTIFICATE**

**TUESDAY 28<sup>TH</sup> & WEDNESDAY 29<sup>TH</sup> OCTOBER 2008  
10:00am - 3:00pm**

**WHICKHAM SCHOOL SPORTS CENTRE,  
BURNTHOUSE LANE, WHICKHAM,  
NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE, NE16 5AR  
TOTAL COURSE COST ONLY £10.50**

### **How can I get involved?**

[For more information - Get in contact as SOON AS POSSIBLE to book  
your place](#)

To find out more, please contact Tom Soulsby on 0191 433 6963 or  
07825 506 353 or email [tom@britishblindsport.org.uk](mailto:tom@britishblindsport.org.uk)

 **Gateshead**  
Council  
[www.gateshead.gov.uk](http://www.gateshead.gov.uk)



## Tell your story and win a laptop

Contact a Family is calling on parents to tell their story of raising a disabled child in a national competition which aims to highlight the many issues they face. On the theme of "Me and my disabled child" Contact a Family is looking for families to share their experience in a written story, in a short video, with an audio recording or by taking a photograph. The competition has been launched in the run up to Contact a Family's 30th anniversary and entries are invited from any family member or friends involved in caring for a disabled child.

Entries can be a diary account, show a day in the life or focus on a particular time raising a child, such as around diagnosis. Entries can highlight a particular challenge—coping with behavioural problems, peoples' attitudes, attending endless assessments and meetings or using public transport. Entries must be submitted by 30th November 2008.

**contact a family**  
for families with disabled children

For more information log on to:  
[http://www.cafamily.org.uk/news/  
contactafamilynews.html](http://www.cafamily.org.uk/news/contactafamilynews.html)

## Every Disabled Child Matters

Over the summer EDCM asked disabled children and young people what better 'places to go and things to do' should look like for them. Recently they launched the 'Going Places!' booklet, which includes children and young people's views and suggestions about what needs to change so that they can have better places to go. They need you to act to get government to listen to disabled children and young people.

Please email your local councillor now to ask how they will make sure disabled children and young people have good things to do and places to go in your area! They have also published a campaign tool to help young people campaign for better places to go where they live. You can find out more, watch their DVD and download the booklet and the campaign tool at <http://www.edcm.org.uk/goingplaces>.

Children and young people said one of the things that stops them going places is bullying. Help fight bullying in schools by inviting your local MP to attend the All Party Group on Learning Disability.

*disabled*  
**Every Child Matters**

Please visit <http://www.mencap.org.uk/takeaction> and take 30 seconds to contact your MP.

## HemiHelp Website

HemiHelp is a registered charity for children and young people with hemiplegia.

Hemiplegia is a neurological condition that weakens one side of the body and affects up to one child in a thousand. It is sometimes described as a form of cerebral palsy and the effects are similar to those of a stroke.

HemiHelp offer support and information to children and their families who are affected by hemiplegia as well as the professionals that work with them. They run fun days, workshops and conferences across the country.

To find out more log on to [www.hemihelp.org.uk](http://www.hemihelp.org.uk)



## Cash help for child care costs

Many parents of disabled children would like to do some work to earn extra money and have a break from their caring responsibilities but are often put off by the cost of child care. Did you know you may be able to get up to 80% of the cost paid through Tax Credits? To be eligible you (and your partner if you have one) must work at least 16 hours per week unless one of you is incapable of working.

Other things taken into account are whether you or your partner work over 30 hours, whether you or your partner are disabled, family taxable income, the DLA rate you get, the number and ages of your children and the child care costs that you pay. The maximum eligible child care cost is £175 per week for one child and £300 per week for two or more.

The child care you use has to be formal such as a registered child minder, nursery, after-school club or a Local Authority day care service; you cannot use a relative in your own home, even if they are a registered child minder. Parents are encouraged to investigate help with child care costs through Tax Credits before approaching Children's Services for help.

If you want to discuss your individual circumstances, you can contact your local Citizens' Advice Bureau or make an appointment at a Jobcentre. Alternatively you can contact the Welfare Rights Unit on 01670 536486.

## 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 824711
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.

Produced by Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth, Northumberland NE61 2EF  
Contact Jackie Stanton Tel: (01670) 533883

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



**action for children** | N-PACT

Supporting families who have children with special needs

**NORTHUMBERLAND**  
COUNTY COUNCIL

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: .....