



Network Newsletter

Issue No. 14 Dec/Jan 2009

Down's Syndrome and Friends Group

During the half term break in October, families from the Down's Syndrome and Friends group had a spooky encounter at White House Farm Centre.

Many of them dared to enter the haunted house, watch the 'scary' puppet show, have fun and games with the resident wizard and join in the fancy dress parade. There were many staff witches and gremlins about to ensure they also fed the animals.



Here are some pictures of little vampires and others who dared to join in the fun!

The Down's Syndrome and Friends Group is a pre - school group for parents, carers and siblings. The group meets monthly at Wansbeck Young Peoples Centre in Ashington.

For more information about the group contact:
Susan Cullingworth or Anne-Marie Donnelly
at Action for Children IN-PACT on 01670 857816.

Update - Children's Services Strategy Development (Additional Needs)

In the August/September Newsletter, Children's Services announced a radical review of services to children and young people with additional needs. The goal is to transform services so that they can deliver high quality preventative services that can also intervene early and effectively to the needs of children and families in the communities where they live. This project is co-ordinated by John Kirton and has the full backing of the FACT Leadership Team.

Parents and Carers Views

Recently parents, carers and children have been asked what they think services should be like in the future. Their thoughts were discussed at the Parent, Carer and Professional Forum on Thursday 23rd October 2008.

Parents and Carers said services should be:

Holistic - Children's and Young People's needs should be defined and met in context of their family, extended family, school and community

Coordinated - Services and Teams and the workers within them should share information about what works and what doesn't work, and undertake (when appropriate) joint and coordinated actions. Many parents and carers said they would like Key Workers to be available

Local - Services and Teams should have the necessary capacity and capability to deliver a multi professional service without the need for families to travel a long distance to them

Consistent - Local Services and Teams should be consistently welcoming (friendly), organised and delivered so that even when key staff are absent the service is still accessible and friendly

Client and Community Focussed - Services delivery should be shaped to the specific needs of children, young people, parents and carers and the communities in which they live

Vision

Parents, Carers and Professionals all agreed they all want every child to:

- ♦ Be a Confident Individual, a Successful Learner and a Responsible Citizen

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- ◆ Have success within the five Every Child Matters outcome areas
- ◆ Be and feel secure and valued
- ◆ Feel that they belong within their community in Northumberland

And for all parents and carers to be able to support their children to achieve these outcomes.

Next Steps

Berwick Community has been invited to take the lead towards this transformation. In the coming months other communities will be approached to build on this work.

Keeping You Informed

There will be regular updates in this newsletter. If you would like further information on progress to date or would like to contribute to this exciting development,

contact John Kirton (Strategy Development Coordinator)
by email at jkirton@nothumberland.gov.uk
or telephone: 01670 533803



Parent Seminars

At Swalwell Community Fire Station, Market Lane, Swalwell NE16 3DZ

Tuesday 20th Jan 2009—Anger Management (10am—2.15pm)

Tuesday 27th Jan 2009—Meeting your Child's Sensory Needs (10am—2.15pm)

The *help!* 2 seminars aim to provide parents and full-time carers with information and advice, to support them in the care of their child with an autism spectrum disorder (ASD).

3 day *help!* Programme in Sunderland

This programme runs for three sessions and is for parents/carers of children aged between 5—11 who have received a diagnosis of an autism spectrum disorder within the last 18 months. The sessions cover :

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| - An overview of ASDs | - Tips for communication |
| - Education and your rights | - Services and your rights |
| - Approaching behaviour difficulties | - Benefits and your rights |

The sessions will take place on 13th, 16th and 20th January 2009 from 9.30am—3pm.

For more information on any of the above, please phone
Jan Fuller on 0191 5680732



New guide to dealing with bullying: for parents of disabled children

Contact a Family has joined forces with Parentline Plus to produce a new guide about dealing with bullying, for parents of disabled children. The guide is available now to download from <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/bullying.pdf> or order from our freephone helpline (0808 808 3555).

The guide is packed full of information and tips around spotting the signs of bullying, action and strategies you can take as a parent, and your child's rights. The guide was developed from a range of stories and experiences told to us by parents of disabled children affected by bullying. Their tips and stories are included throughout the guide.

Parents can feel a range of emotions when they discover their child is being bullied. While initial feelings may include isolation, anger, sadness and guilt, it is important to remember there is a way forward. We hope the guide will provide ideas of things you could try if your child is being bullied and help you feel that you are not alone.

contact a family
for families with disabled children

If you would like a copy of the guide or to speak to someone about bullying, please call Contact a Family's freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555.



New resource on bullying children with SEN and disabilities

Children's Secretary, Ed Balls, has recently announced a clampdown on the bullying of children who have special educational needs and disabilities, with the launch of a film for school pupils. Schools have been provided with the film to show to pupils in assemblies and classes. Its aim is to bring home the message to young people that it is unacceptable to bully their peers with SEN and disabilities.

Ed Balls, Secretary of State for Children Schools and Families said "Beating bullying is a priority for Government and we have produced a number of resources for schools, teachers and staff to help prevent and wipe out this damaging form of discrimination".



For more information log onto :

http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0255

DCATCH (Disabled Children's Access to Childcare)

Northumberland is one of a small number of local authorities which has been chosen to pilot ways to improve Disabled Children's Access to Childcare as part of the government's 'Aiming Higher for Disabled Children' commitment.



Research shows that parents can face significant barriers when trying to find appropriate childcare for their disabled child and over the next three years this pilot will explore ways in which those barriers can be removed.

In Northumberland the DCATCH project will be piloted in 3 areas initially (Alnwick, Hexham and Morpeth) with a fourth area possibly to be identified in the South East of the County. All pilot areas will be linked to Children's Centres and will look to establish ways in which the extra resources can be used to improve access to childcare for disabled children in a way which can be rolled out across the whole of the County.

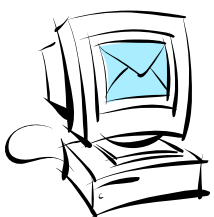


The pilot is looking to appoint a number of posts to take the work forward and in the interim, Barnardos is undertaking a short term piece of work between now and Christmas to begin to find out where the gaps are in childcare, what the issues are, from both parents, childcare providers and specialist workers' perspective, and where there can be some solutions put in place quickly.

For further information about this project email Jean Hedley: jean.hedley@barnardos.org.uk Mary Connor: mary.connor@barnardos.org.uk

Dyslexia North East

Dyslexia North East is a group of dedicated volunteers who care passionately about improving the educational opportunities and support for those affected by DYSLEXIA and related conditions such as ADHD and DYSPRAXIA and AUTISM.



They offer information, advice and guidance to parents and carers of children with dyslexia, or related conditions

The website for Dyslexia North East is now up and running. You can view this at www.dyslexianortheast.org. Alternatively you can contact them by email at: info@dyslexianortheast.org

New Rules for lone parents

From 24th November 2008, if a lone parent's youngest child is aged 12 or over, their Income Support may stop.



Lone parents will be contacted 8 weeks before Income Support stops and invited to attend an interview at the Jobcentre. Jobseekers Allowance can be claimed at the same rate as income support but lone parents will be expected to be looking for work. Some lone parents who can claim Income Support for another reason, such as being a carer, will not be required to claim Job Seekers Allowance.

For more information contact your local Job Centre.

Local School and Local Charity work in Partnership with Adoptive Families

The North East Post Adoption Service (NEPAS) is a small registered Charity who has been providing post adoption support in North Tyneside for over ten years. They have recently expanded its services into Northumberland and are facilitating a small number of support groups locally. NEPAS works in partnership with Northumberland Adoption Support Services in the development and promotion of the groups. Northumberland also offers support through a 24hr telephone helpline for adoptive parents— 01670 534450.

The Cramlington group is hosted and supported by East Hartford Special School. The Head Teacher, Mr Hugh Steele, welcomed the plans to set up the group for established and new adoptive parents. This includes adoptive parents who have children with special needs and is one of the many aspects of family support provision the school extends to parents and the local community.



The Cramlington group meets on a four weekly basis on Wednesday mornings between 10am and 12 noon. If you are interested in joining, please don't hesitate to contact Tracy Abraham at NEPAS on 0191 2966064.

Alternatively you can contact Glynis Burn, Family Support Worker at East Hartford School for information on this and other support services provided by the School. Telephone Glynis on 01670 713881.

Trefoil House Grants

The Trefoil House Holiday and Personal Grant Fund provides enabling grants up to £500, for people with special needs or disability where a need exists that cannot be provided for by the local authority or health service.



Information on eligibility and criteria can be found on their website—www.trefoil.org.uk

Enable Holidays

Enable Holidays believe travel for disabled people should involve less work and more play. As the specialist tour operator for wheelchair-users, people with limited mobility, their families and friends, they can help you find, plan and arrange an overseas holiday to suit your individual needs. Telephone 0871 222 4939 or log onto www.enableholidays.com



Correction from last edition of Network Newsletter

In the last newsletter, we gave you information about free bus passes for some children and young people with special needs. It was unknown at the time that each local council seems to have slightly different criteria for this. If you would like a copy of the conditions that need to be satisfied in your local area, please contact your local council office in Wansbeck, Blyth Valley, Morpeth, Alnwick, Berwick or Tynedale. Please do not contact the Disabled Children's Team as the scheme is operated by each individual local council. We apologise for any confusion caused over this.

We have had a request to put a "happy poem" in the Newsletter.
Hope this fits the bill:-

If I could catch a rainbow I would do it just for you
and share with you its beauty on the days you're feeling blue

If I could build a mountain you could call your very own
A place to find serenity, a place to be alone

If I could take your troubles I would toss them in the sea
But all these things I'm finding are impossible for me

I cannot build a mountain or catch a rainbow fair,
But let me be what I know best, a parent who's always there



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
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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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: