



# Network Newsletter

Issue No. 15 Feb/March 2009

## FACT Card Discount Scheme Have You Got Your Card yet ???

Every family who receives this Network Newsletter on a regular basis has a child on the Northumberland Network database for children with disabilities.

When a child is on the Network Database, it also entitles them to join the FACT Card Discount Scheme. This is a discount scheme which enables families with disabled children to access places of interest and leisure services at discounted rates.



Inside this newsletter you should have been sent a leaflet detailing the places where the FACT Card is recognised and where discounts are available for families.

If you have not yet applied for your FACT Card, **DO IT NOW !!!** All you have to do is send a passport size photo of the child with the disability in to Jackie Stanton and she will be able to issue the family with a FACT Card. Please note, the photo must have the child's name and date of birth on the back so it can be matched up with the entry on the database.

To send in a photo for a FACT Card, please address it to Jackie Stanton, Children's Services, County Hall, Morpeth NE61 2EF.



Don't delay,  
do it today!

For further details about the FACT Card Discount Scheme, please contact Jackie Stanton on 01670 533883 or email [jstanton@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:jstanton@northumberland.gov.uk).

## TV Licence discount for blind or severely sight impaired

If you or someone you live with is blind or severely sight impaired, you may qualify to receive a 50% concession on the cost of your TV Licence.

For more information telephone 0844 8006790 or log onto: [www.tvlicensing.co.uk/information/blind.jsp](http://www.tvlicensing.co.uk/information/blind.jsp)



## Useful Vision Event

Useful Vision (UV) is a registered charity established in the North East to help blind and visually impaired children get the most out of life. They offer a number of services including family days out and activities. A forthcoming event is a cookery course (4 x 2 hour sessions) in March 2009. Families need to register with UV to take part. Registration is free and will enable families to be contacted with details of other events and trips that are organised.



Contact them on 01434 682160 or email them at [info@usefulvision.org.uk](mailto:info@usefulvision.org.uk)

## Newcastle Actionnaires

The Launch of Newcastle Actionnaires will take place on Saturday 28th March 2009 at 10.30am at the Lakeside Centre, Killingworth.

Actionnaires Clubs provide opportunities for blind and partially sighted children of school age to participate in sports in a safe, structured and fun environment. If you have a favourite sport you want to improve, or a new one you want to learn, your local club will have something for you. Under 8s are welcome as long as they come along with an adult who stays with them during the session.



Telephone 0800 915 4666 or log onto [www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk](http://www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk).

Action for Blind People is an expert national organisation, ensuring blind and partially sighted people get practical support in all aspects of their lives.

## "eye4news"

A new online magazine written by and for young people with sight loss has now launched. Eye4news is produced by blind and partially sighted children from across Scotland and the North East of England. It will feature news and views on sport, music, travel and fashion, as well as articles on personal life and school experiences. Log onto [www.eye4news.org](http://www.eye4news.org).



## Autism Bill

Cheryl Gillan MP, who was drawn first in the Private Members' Bill ballot, has agreed to take forward the Autism Bill. The National Autistic Society would like to thank all those who campaigned to get them this far. This is a once in a lifetime chance to introduce a law specifically to support people with autism.

To make the most of this opportunity, they now need to ensure that at least 100 MPs attend Parliament on Friday 27th February to vote in favour of the Autism Bill. Parliament doesn't usually meet on a Friday, so they want to persuade each MP to make an advance commitment to attend and vote: please [email your MP](#) and ask them to make this commitment now! Please ask your friends and family to do the same.

think  
differently  
about  
autism

Further information on the Bill itself can be found at [www.autism.org.uk/autismbill](http://www.autism.org.uk/autismbill) or you can email [thinkdifferently@nas.org.uk](mailto:thinkdifferently@nas.org.uk) if you have any questions.



## New autism website

Treehouse have launched a new website to support parents of children with autism. The website provides expert information and advice from education professionals, plus a forum for parents of children with autism to share experiences online. This will provide a lifeline to parents looking for support from others in the same position. Log onto: [www.talkaboutautism.org.uk](http://www.talkaboutautism.org.uk)

## 3 day help! Programme in Hexham

This free 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
- Education and your rights
- Approaching behaviour difficulties
- Tips for communication
- Services and your rights
- Benefits and your rights

The sessions will take place at Best Western Beaumont Hotel, Beaumont Street, Hexham on 3rd, 6th and 10th March 2009 from 9.30am–3pm.



For more information, please phone  
Jan Fuller on 0191 5680732

## Northumberland Parent reps attend Capita's 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual Conference



On Wednesday the 28<sup>th</sup> of January, three parents from Northumberland, attended the "Transforming Services for Disabled Children and their Families" Conference at the Hilton Hotel in London. This is a short account by Wendy, of her first experience at a national event.

We left Newcastle Central Station on Tuesday ahead of the conference with Sheila Dillon and Donna Ridley from the Local Authority. For two of us it was a first visit to the smoke and I for one was terrified!!

After a stroll down Oxford Street on Tuesday evening we saw a throng of people around H & M, who were NOT waiting for us, (but some other celebrities I suppose!). After wandering for some time trying to find Gordon Ramsey's place, we gave up and made do with fish and chips at Garfunkel's.

On a wet Wednesday morning we headed for the venue, where we had a wander round to see how the other half live. The conference on the whole was a little daunting for us but we saw a familiar face in Christine Lenehan, Director of Council for Disabled Children who spoke at the first parent's conference in Northumberland three years ago.

There were presentations by Contact a Family and The Children's Society. They were interesting but the highlight for me was 'A Young Disabled Persons Perspective' by Zara Todd who gave a powerful account of what it was like to be disabled in today's society. A brief outline of the messages she wanted to get across included:

- Services are out there but you don't know how to access them
- When drawing up policy you need to involve and build young people into it
- Recognise what the person is capable of rather than not!
- There should be a key individual with a positive attitude to support young people through transition

It is often forgotten that disabled people are people

All in all an enjoyable if not scary experience, I would definitely do it again with a little help from my friends.

Wendy Marchetti

## Northumberland Parent, Carer and Professional Forum Locality Meetings—March 2009

For parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities or special needs who live in Northumberland.

Monday 2 March	11.30am - 2.00pm	Hirst Welfare, Ashington
Wednesday 4 March	11.30am - 2.00pm	Hexham Children's Centre, Hexham
Thursday 5 March	11.30am - 2.00pm	Bell View Centre, Belford
Monday 9 March	11.30am - 2.00pm	Community Enterprise Centre, Blyth

Here is your opportunity to:

- ♦ give your views about Northumberland services for your child
- ♦ find out what is happening locally and nationally for children with disabilities and special needs
- ♦ meet other parents and local professionals in a friendly and informal situation

Please come along and join us. Lunch will be provided and child care and travel costs reimbursed (receipts required).

For further information contact **Susan Cullingworth**  
at Action for Children,  
IN-PACT on **01670 857816**.



## Whizz Kids Events

On **Saturday 14th March**, there will be a **Bike and Trike Exhibition Day** held at Percy Hedley Academy for Disability Sports. It will offer families and professionals the chance to view and try a wide range of equipment from different dealers, with impartial advice and guidance of Whizz Kidz Mobility Therapists.

On **Wednesday 27th May**, there will be a **Buggy Product Day**, venue to be confirmed. This is a chance for families and professionals to view different types of buggies and to discuss their mobility needs with dealers and Whizz Kidz Mobility Therapists.

Places are limited for both events so if you want to book a place

or want more information,  
please contact Jenny or Philippa  
on 0191 2136770 or  
email: [Newcastle@whizz-kidz.org.uk](mailto:Newcastle@whizz-kidz.org.uk).

**Whizz-kidz**  
move a life forward

## Northumberland Sport Events

Northumberland Sport supports and develops sport in all parts of the county for 4 to 19 year olds. They co-ordinate work by schools, sports clubs and sports centres to encourage children and young people to get involved in sports and are particularly interested in sports for disabled athletes.

There are two events running shortly:

- ♦ Athletics Talent ID Day at Wentworth, Hexham on 29<sup>th</sup> April for age 12+. Young people will get the opportunity to try out the range of disability events and talent ID will then enable them to enter young people for the Regional and National competitions in June and July.
- ♦ Disability Sports Hall Athletics—a county wide event for "primary aged children" on May 8<sup>th</sup> at Willowburn Leisure Centre, Alnwick

For more information, contact Rod Rogers on 07515284279  
or email: [rrogers01@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:rrogers01@northumberland.gov.uk)



## Internet Access

The internet has become an important part of our every day lives. It is regularly used to access information and for e-mail communications. Many people are still missing out on the benefits of the internet because they don't have access to a computer. If there is something in the newsletter that you are interested in and would like to find out more from a website, some local libraries have computers with internet access. County Hall in Morpeth also has free internet access for use by the general public. Contact your local council for more information about this service.



## Dyslexia North East

Below is a list of events to be held by Dyslexia North East at the Royal Grammar Junior School, Lambton Road, Jesmond, Newcastle upon Tyne.

**5th March**, 6.30—8.30pm. **Dyspraxia**

Some tips to help children at school and at home

**4th April**, 10am—12 noon. **Barebones Story Walk™**

For children aged 7-12 years old, with parents/Carers

**7th May**, 6.30-8.30pm. **Applying for Disability Students Allowance** at University and College

**4th June**, 6.30-8.30pm. **Understanding Autism**

For further information, contact Liz Ferguson at 6 Green Close, Stannington, Morpeth NE61 6PE or telephone 07868 263696.

## Does your child have special educational needs? Do you need any help?

Just contact the **NORTHUMBERLAND PARENT PARTNERSHIP SERVICE** on **01670 533694**. We are a **free** and **confidential** service which provides **impartial** information, advice and support to parents and carers of children with special educational needs.

The service helps parents and carers to work in partnership with others involved in their child's education by:

- ♦ listening to them and helping them to express their views;
- ♦ offering them practical advice and support in understanding the procedures;
- ♦ helping them with the paperwork;
- ♦ helping them to explore the options open to them for their child's education;
- ♦ putting them in touch with other organisations and groups that can support them.

### Quotes from parents:

"I liked the fact that the person I dealt with came to my house and helped me understand what happens and gave me support."

"Excellent advice and support".

"Friendly, non-judgemental attitude. Very informative and helpful. An excellent service all round."

## Advisory Centre for Education (ACE)

ACE is an independent national education advice centre for parents. It offers information and free legal advice to parents on a wide range of educational issues, including choosing a school, school admissions, exclusion, bullying, disability discrimination and special educational needs.

Contact the ACE free advice line on **0808 800 5793** or their free exclusion advice line on **0808 800 0327**. Advice booklets are available to download from the ACE website at [www.ace-ed.org.uk](http://www.ace-ed.org.uk)

ACE now also provides free, independent advice by text message through their new service - AskACE. This service enables parents to contact ACE simply and quickly. All you have to do is text the phrase **AskACE to 68808** and follow the instructions. You will be asked what subject your enquiry is about and will be able to choose from a series of options. You can also ask your own specific questions and request lists of tips and ACE information booklets. All texts are **free** to send and receive.

## 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	Susan Cullingworth	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	Susan Cullingworth	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	Wendy Goodbarn	01670 534309
Toby Henderson Trust	Lesley Henderson	01670 789753
Tynedale Support	Ali Shotton	01434 601594
Wansbeck Parent Carer Support Group	Susan Cullingworth	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: .....