



Network Newsletter

Issue No. 17 June/July 2009

Don't forget your FACT Discount Card this Summer !!

The School Summer Holidays will soon be with us. Remember you can use your FACT Discount Card at a number of places.



Alnwick Garden - 50% discount on the normal admission price on production of a FACT Discount Card.

Whitehouse Farm Centre, Morpeth - Adults and children both charged 10% off the child admission price on production of a FACT Discount Card.

Wildlife Sanctuary, Ulgham - The disabled child and one carer will be charged the child admission price on production of a FACT Discount Card.

Blue Reef Aquarium, Whitley Bay - Admission £3.50 per person for adults and children with a FACT Discount Card. (Normal admission is £7.50 for adults and £5.50 for children.)

Northumberland Leisure Centres - All Leisure Centres in Northumberland (with the exception of Haltwhistle Swimming & Leisure Centre which is a charity) offer the same discounts to FACT Card holders as are available to local Leisure Card holders.

Castlemania Softplay, Amble - Admission will be reduced for any disabled child who holds a FACT Discount Card.

Lion's Den Softplay, Alnwick - Admission will be reduced by £1.00 for any disabled child aged 1–12 who holds a FACT Discount Card.

Bounce Softplay, Blyth - Admission will be reduced to £2 for any disabled child who holds a FACT Discount Card.

The National Trust - Admits the necessary companion of a disabled visitor free of charge. The normal charge applies to the disabled person.

English Heritage - Admits the necessary companion of a disabled visitor free of charge. The normal charge applies to the disabled person.

For more information about the Fact Card please contact Jackie Stanton by email - Jacqueline.stanton@northumberland.gov.uk or telephone 01670 533883





VICTORY

Visually impaired people will be eligible to claim a higher rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) the Government has announced.

It means that as of 2011, severely visually impaired people claiming the lower rate of the mobility component of DLA will be able to claim the higher rate which is currently worth an additional £29.

The campaign to extend the higher rate of DLA to visually impaired people was spear-headed by the RNIB who argued that people with severe sight loss often have mobility problems on a par with people unable to walk but who are granted the higher rate.

For more detail, contact your local Job Centre or Social Security office or telephone the Benefit Enquiry Line on 0800 882200.

Carers Direct Service

The Carers Direct Service has recently been launched as part of the Government's New Deal for carers. This is a programme to improve support for the region's growing number of carers. It provides carers with a single and comprehensive online resource for carer specific information, including guidance on the different stages of caring, information for claiming benefits, advice for young carers and contact details for local authorities.

For more information about the Carers Direct Service please visit:
www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirectHome.aspx

Hexham Branch of the National Autistic Society

Following meetings of Officers with parents and professionals, it was decided that there is a need for a local branch of the National Autistic Society. The launch took place on Saturday 25th April at the library in Hexham and was well attended. There will be monthly branch meetings with a 2:1 day/evening ratio and a monthly coffee morning for parents and carers. The initial plan is to fund raise to provide a free lending library of books and sensory equipment to try. Hexham Branch officers are volunteer parents who will refer enquiries to the appropriate department of the NAS, provide information on local services and a venue to meet others in the same position.

Contact details: Mobile: 07931681553
or email: hexham@nas.org.uk



Parent Carer and Professional Forum Locality Meetings

These meetings provide a great opportunity for you to find out what is happening locally and nationally for children with disabilities and special needs, and their families; give your views about services for your child; and meet other parents and local professionals in a friendly and informal setting.

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

Please come and join us. We would be very happy to arrange for someone to meet you at the venue if you feel unsure about attending by yourself. Just give us a ring on 01670 857816.

The date and times for the locality meetings this term are:

- ♦ **West Northumberland** - Monday 22nd June 12.30am - 2.30pm
Hexham Children's Centre, Hexham East First School, Beaufront Ave, Hexham
- ♦ **Central Northumberland** - Tuesday 23rd June , 12.00 - 2.00pm
Hirst Welfare, Alexander Road, Ashington
- ♦ **South East Northumberland** - Wednesday 24th June, 12.00 - 2.00pm
Briardale Centre, Briardale Road, Cowpen, Blyth
- ♦ **North Northumberland** - Monday 29th June, 12.00 - 2.00pm
The Barn at Beal, Beal Farm, Beal, Berwick upon Tweed

Complex and Challenging Behaviours Research and Development

Sherry Pinner (School Advisor) and John Kirton (Strategy Development Coordinator) have been asked to undertake a research and development project focussed on complex and challenging behaviour. The outcome of the work will inform future strategy and operational developments.

The research will focus on the following areas:

- ♦ Causes
- ♦ Access to services
- ♦ Feedback from service users
- ♦ Prevention/early intervention
- ♦ Service effectiveness

If you would like to contribute to this work, please contact John Kirton, Strategy Development Coordinator on 01670 533803 or email John.Kirton@northumberland.gov.uk.

Ability to Play

Ability to Play is a project that supports children with disabilities to reach their potential through sport.



The service helps disabled children and young people with any level of sporting ability to access sporting opportunities organised across South East Northumberland.

The Ability to Play project has been set up in order to get more children to enjoy sports and physical activities, open doors for young people to join mainstream clubs, introduce new and exciting activities for children and provide support and information for participants, coaches and clubs.



If you would like more detail, contact Adam Dixon at Blyth Sports Centre, Bolam Park, Blyth NE24 5BT or telephone 01670 367286.

Toy Library Service

With the holiday season coming soon, parents need as much help as they can get. Northumberland Toy Library has a huge selection of popular toys, games and play equipment including large outdoor toys and sports equipment to keep the children amused. Musical instruments are also available to hire. They have a selection of sensory toys and equipment suitable for children and young people with diverse needs. Membership costs only £1.00 per family to join the toy library for a full year.



The toy library is at Station Villa, Kenilworth Road, Ashington. Check out their website www.ntrlrc.co.uk or phone 01670 523539



Wheelchair accessible static caravan

We have been told about a 5 berth caravan situated at Church Point, Newbiggin by the Sea which is available for wheelchair users. The caravan has specialist features such as wide access sliding doors, fold down seat in shower, hand rails to shower sink and WC area.



If you would like further information about this caravan, please email Gilliangibson3@aol.com or telephone 01670 850165.

Holiday in the Carer-Van

AT the start of last year, the Borders Aspergers and Autism Group Support (BAAGS) charity took on the massive challenge of raising £30,000.

The money was to be used to buy a luxury static caravan, which would be based at one of the most desirable holiday parks in Berwick.

The three-bedroom, eight-berth caravan, known as the Carer-Van, has now been purchased and is being used to offer respite, short breaks or a holiday.

It is available to people who have a condition on the Autistic Spectrum who would like to have a holiday with their family or carer or friends; for the carers or family members who would like to have a break or holiday along with their ASD person; and for carers who need a break/respite from their everyday stress of coping with the pressures of life.

For more details check out the website
www.baags.co.uk or telephone 01896 668961.



Holiday in France

happykidsholidays is a non profit making association aimed at supporting families with children and teenagers with Autistic Spectrum Disorders who want to go on holiday in France.

The owners of all the properties or gites have at least a basic understanding of ASD, Autism and Asperger Syndrome and are committed to trying to ensure your family has the best, most relaxing holiday possible, in surroundings that are suitable to your needs, and in a non-judgemental and supportive atmosphere.

They can help you prepare for your holiday in a way that is appropriate for you. For holidays in certain locations, they can provide support while you are there.

[happykidsholidays](http://www.happykidsholidays.com)



For more information on **happykidsholidays**, spend some time browsing their website at www.happykidsholidays.com

Down's Syndrome North East

This a charity run almost entirely by parent volunteers for all people with Down's Syndrome in the North East of England. They currently have a membership of over 400 families. Since their beginnings in 1977 they have constantly promoted awareness of Down's Syndrome and encouraged positive approaches to health care, education and social inclusion. They continue to provide opportunities for all people with Down's Syndrome, whatever their ability, and to provide advice and support for their families.

Their Aims are:

- ♦ To advise, support and provide information for families who have a member with Down's Syndrome.
- ♦ To create and develop the conditions that will enable people with Down's Syndrome attain their full potential.
- ♦ To raise the profile of the needs of children and adults with Down's Syndrome.
- ♦ To liaise and work with professionals involved in the education and care of all people with Down's Syndrome.
- ♦ To be self financing in order to provide on-going advice, help and opportunities for those with Down's Syndrome and their families.

They provide:-

- ♦ Membership for parents, carers, other interested persons, and those with Down's Syndrome aged 18 or over.
- ♦ Advice and support, and opportunities to meet other parents who have a child with Down's Syndrome.
- ♦ Meetings for parents and carers, including regular 'drop-ins' for groups.
- ♦ Regular newsletters which update members on news, issues and events.
- ♦ Christmas parties for different age groups at various venues.
- ♦ Social inclusion through visits to theatres, shows and activity centres.
- ♦ Music days for youngsters to try instruments, perform, dance and sing.
- ♦ Family breaks at activity and leisure centres which specifically cater for those with special needs.
- ♦ Swimming, athletics and activity events for all ages and abilities.
- ♦ Dance and art workshops for young adults with displays and public performances.
- ♦ Events for adults with Down's Syndrome to enable them to gain independence and meet socially.
- ♦ Conferences for parents, carers and professionals on a wide range of subjects relevant to Down's Syndrome with presentations by professionals using up-to-date research.



Their website is www.dsne.org.uk. For more information write to
DSNE, PO Box No.185, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE12 7WP
Tel - 0870 765 2121 or email contact@DSNE.org.uk

The Flexible Families Programme

Have you ever considered owning and running your own business but thought it's just too big a step? Have you a business idea you would like to explore?

Do you feel you could benefit from building confidence in order to explore career opportunities? Would you like to meet other like minded parents who often face barriers to training and employment due to caring responsibilities?

If you have answered yes to any of the questions above or would like to find out more information then read on . . .

The Flexible Families Programme

If you are interested in furthering your career opportunities and developing your confidence then this exciting new course may be for you . . .

You will be given the opportunity to meet other like minded parents who find themselves in similar situations with similar barriers to accessing opportunities.

The course is informal and fun and will enable you to explore your potential and challenge you to consider different options and to embrace opportunities with a positive attitude. You will be required to attend just two workshops that will be delivered at a centre near you. One to one mentoring is also available as part of the programme free of charge.

Funded by One North East and in partnership with NBSL and Core Training they would like to offer you a place on this course for free. Places are limited so register your interest early. Go on take the plunge.

For further information please contact Sue Cullingworth on 01670 857816.

Useful and Helpful Reading !!

There is a book that has been recommended called "Talking together about growing up".

It is aimed at children with learning disabilities around the age of puberty and is for use by parents, carers and families of children with learning disabilities. The Authors—Lorna Scott and Lesley Kerr-Edwards.

Contact your local bookshop or go on website www.amazon.co.uk



The Disabled Children's Services Indicator -NI 54

In April 2008 a new system was introduced to measure and compare the performance of each local authority in England.

Every local authority will now be measured against 198 national indicators, to see how well they are serving the local community. This means that all local authorities will be measured to see how good their local services for disabled children (0 - 19) are and how they compare with other areas.

Information will be collected through confidential surveys of 200 parents in each local area.

Anyone wanting more information about how parents will be selected can contact the IN-PACT office on 01670 857816.

Alternatively email susan.cullingworth@actionforchildren.org.uk or visit the DCFS website at www.dcsf.gov.uk



department for
children, schools and families



IN-PACT action for
children

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.



action for
children IN-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: