



# Network Newsletter

Issue No. 20 Dec/Jan 2010

## New for 2010 - Parent 2 Parent Mentor Service

### What is Parent 2 Parent?

Parent 2 Parent is a network of trained parent mentors who can offer help to parents to enable them to make positive adjustments to the news that their child has a disability.

Every Parent 2 Parent mentor is a parent whose own child has a disability. They know and understand what it is like to cope with a new diagnosis and can offer support and understanding.

They will be able to signpost to other useful organisations and benefits. Support to complete DLA forms will also be available. All of the mentors are police checked by Action for Children.

### What can they do and how are they managed?

Parent 2 Parent will link parents with a mentor who lives locally. The parent mentor will be happy to meet parents at home or somewhere for a coffee at a convenient time.

Parent 2 Parent support is free and confidential; they support parents who have children with any disability or special need. The Parent 2 Parent service is managed by a Co-ordinator employed by Action for Children. The Co-ordinator provides ongoing support and training to the team of parent mentors.

Wherever parents live in Northumberland, they will try to offer the support that is needed.

For more information, contact Angela Tait,  
Volunteer Co-ordinator on 01670 857816.



## Aiming High for Disabled Children: Update



A provider event was held on 1<sup>st</sup> December inviting service providers to come together to discuss improving services offered to families in relation to Short Breaks.

The event also discussed issues around accessing training for providers and parent/carers. A range of training providers were identified who offer free training to parents.

A new provider's application form has been developed to be sent out to providers who wish to apply for funding to provide additional services to children young people and families.

Parent/ Carers will be updated when new services have been approved.

For further information about Aiming High,  
please contact Lorraine Pattison on 01670 516131  
or email [Lorraine.Pattison@northumberland.gov.uk](mailto:Lorraine.Pattison@northumberland.gov.uk).

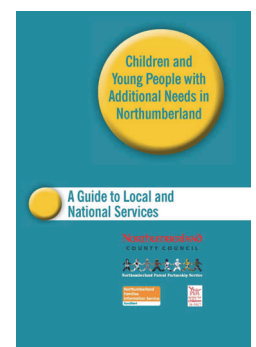
### PLEASE GUIDE US!

A recent independent national survey commissioned by the government to get feedback from parents of children with disabilities revealed that:

- ◆ Families struggle to find the information they need, often approaching GPs and teachers
- ◆ Families often don't know about the full range of services available to them, including disability services

We want to make sure that families in Northumberland get the full range of information that they need. The *Guide to Local and National Services for Children with Additional Needs in Northumberland* is currently being updated. Please let us know if there are any services missing from the guide or if there is any other information that should be included.

Contact Anne-Marie Donnelly at Action for Children IN-PACT on 01670 857816 or by e-mail at [Anne-Marie.Donnelly@actionforchildren.org.uk](mailto:Anne-Marie.Donnelly@actionforchildren.org.uk).



## 3 day help! Programme in Blyth

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
- Strategies for education
- Approaching behaviour difficulties
- Tips for communication
- Accessing Support Services

The sessions will take place from 9.30am—2.30pm on Tuesday 26th January, Friday 29th January and Tuesday 2nd February 2010.

The venue is Blyth Community Enterprise Centre, Ridley Street, Blyth. A light lunch and refreshments will be provided.

For more information or to book a place  
please phone Jan Fuller on 0191 5680732



## Autism Education Trust Free Training Event

This event takes place at the Jury's Inn Hotel in Newcastle, from 9am - 3.15pm on Thursday 11th February 2010 and includes lunch and refreshments.

The theme is 'Transition: practical steps for moving forward' and will consist of a range of speakers and practical seminars.

The roadshow event is FREE to attend but must be booked in advance. It is aimed at teachers, professionals and parents/carers involved in the education of children and young people on the autism spectrum.

It will cross education, social and health services and shows there is often a need for a more integrated approach between these services. It is one in a series of events the AET is holding across the country.

For further information  
please see: [www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk](http://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk)  
or telephone 0115 9113367 to book a place.

## What is the Portage Service?

Northumberland Portage Service provides a home teaching service to any pre-school child under five years whose development is delayed or who has learning difficulties which make it difficult for parents to help them.

The aims of the service are to help parents to understand their children's needs and to provide them with teaching skills which will support learning during the early years.

Each family is assigned a Portage Home Visitor who can visit either weekly or fortnightly to work in partnership with parents. They can help parents to assess their children's needs, set sensible targets and agree play activities which will help the children learn and achieve success quickly.

Activities are designed to be pleasurable and are usually taught through play and games. All sorts of skills can be encouraged from feeding, playing, walking and communicating, right through to early reading and number work in preparation for nursery and school.

Portage can be involved until the children are settled into nursery or school, which could be anything between six months and three years depending on when they are referred to the service.

In annual questionnaires parents frequently report how much they value the support provided for themselves, their children and their extended families.

The following parents also added:

"The Portage Service has been vitally important to the gradual development and stimulation of our child" - Mrs Turley

"It worked for us, we finally had success" - Mrs Williams

"It showed us what to do, how to do it and where to go next" - Mrs Lowes

"A lifesaver, it gave Issac a chance and me hope for the future" - Mrs Whitfield

If you would like more information about the Portage Service please contact Wendy Goodbarn on 01670 534318.

## Parents attend Teaching Strategies for ASDs Event

The Royal Station Hotel was the venue for a most informative day led by Sue Larkey who had travelled from New Zealand to do this lecture tour. Her work is endorsed by well known authority on ASDs, Tony Attwood.

Sue's programme lived up to all and more of our expectations. It included a presentation from Dr Wendy Lawson and tackled issues for teachers in the class room as well as strategies that could be transferred to use at home with your child.

For most parents, an event like this should be a standard training session that helps us to cope with our child's problems. Not a luxury we can not afford. At £140 per head, we were happy to be guinea pigs and sent on this mission to find out how useful the teachings of someone like Sue Larkey would be for other parents.

What can we say? It was, BRILLIANT!! But—how can we ensure that other parents have the same opportunities to learn about ways of coping and helping our children to meet the outcomes they deserve?

Two parents

Karen Middleton and Dawn Parry  
Wansbeck Parents Support Group

## "Supporting families in our community"



**SPLASH!** is a new support group in Amble for parents and family members of children with disabilities and additional needs. The group offers friendship, information and a listening ear in a relaxed environment. It is run by parents, carers and family members for parents, carers and family members.

Would you benefit from time with parents and carers sharing similar experiences to you? Could you share information and offer support to others at the same time as receiving it?

The group is held at Brambles, Coquet Enterprise Park, Amble on the last Thursday of every month from 6.30pm—8pm.

For further information contact Brambles on 01665 710453

## Boccia Day

Recently around 20 pupils from Priory School in Hexham went to Alnwick Willowburn Leisure Centre as part of a the North East Regional Junior Boccia Event Talent Identification and Taster Day run.

Staff and Pupils enjoyed the day and several pupils were identified as having a talent for Boccia and took part in further sessions.



## Need a short break?

Swiftsdale Childcare is a purpose built childcare facility that is located in Bedlington, Northumberland. We have a friendly, fully qualified and very experienced staff team. Swiftsdale offers a range of services for families of children and young people, including children with additional needs.

As part of Aiming High for Disabled Children, Swiftsdale has identified a need to provide short breaks services for families of children with disabilities and learning difficulties, we can offer a one off or regular short breaks both in our setting and in the family home. Initial meetings ensure the views of parents of children with disabilities and the children and young people themselves are listened and responded to; especially when selecting key workers for the family and in tailoring care package to their individual needs. We operate a flexible booking in system where parents/carers can inform us of sessions that will suit their needs as late as one week prior to sessions required.

Currently we are providing our service between 7.30am and 11.30pm 7 days a week. We are able to cater for children with complex needs, and have specialist equipment such as a hoist to assist us, in addition we actively seek training specific to the individual child/young person to ensure we met all their medical and emotional needs. In some cases we are able to collect child/young person from their school to enable them attend our out schools sessions.

### Different Types of Short Breaks available

We offer a wide range of short breaks and hours to suit families needs which includes:-

- ◆ Day or evening care in the home which is available from 7.30am till 11.30pm
- ◆ Holiday sessions available day or evening.
- ◆ Saturday club held at Swiftsdale 10am-4pm hourly rates apply
- ◆ Friday night club held at Swiftsdale available till 9pm
- ◆ After school care, collection may be possible.

We are able to accommodate families who wish to use direct payments scheme.



**Swiftsdale Childcare**

For more information please contact  
Jacqui Robertson on 01670 530477

# PARENT CARER PROFESSIONAL FORUM UPDATE

## Locality meetings

The latest round of locality meetings for the Parent Carer Professional Forum focused on the work of the Children's Early Intervention Teams (CEIT) linked to each school partnership. Each team is made up of a range of professionals including an educational psychologist and behavioural specialists. They work with children, their families and schools in a range of different ways to help ensure that all children are happy and successful in school.

## County-wide Forum meeting

The meeting included updates on Aiming High For Disabled Children and the Berwick Pilot, as well as feedback on the IN-PACT parents' conference and a Together for Disabled Children Parent Participation event hosted by Contact a Family.

Aileen Fitzgerald, Head of Commissioning for Children and Families, NHS North of Tyne, was invited to the meeting to explain why Northumberland had missed out on Department of Health funding for Aiming High for Disabled Children (ADHC). This money had been allocated to the North of Tyne NHS by central government to provide for short break care for children with technology dependence, complex health needs and life limiting illnesses. It was supposed to match the funding received by each Local Authority for short break care through ADHC. However, the Northumberland Care Trust was unsuccessful in their bid for this money, which would have been used to expand the range of services offered by the Children's Community Nursing Team.

The reasons given for Northumberland missing out on this funding included:

- the money was not ring fenced so did not have to be used for that purpose
- provision of services had to be prioritised through planning processes and other areas of work had taken priority.

the money was received as part of a lump sum and it was difficult to establish the amounts designated for specific purposes

The parent representatives at the meeting expressed their serious concerns about the situation and asked how they could feed back these concerns to the North of Tyne NHS, the Department of Health and other relevant parties in a way that would have the biggest impact. They were told that this may best be achieved through parent groups working via the Link, which is a group that looks at health priorities. INPACT agreed to get a group parent representatives from the Forum to take this forward.

Please contact Susan Cullingworth on 01670 857816  
if you would like more information about the Forum  
and how you can be involved in its activities.

## Do you miss the camaraderie of the school gate?

Come and chat to other parents.

When did you last swop ideas, information and tips with other parents?

We usually meet on the first Tuesday of each month.

The next few dates are 12 Jan, 2 Feb, 2 March 2010.

Come for a coffee and a chat with other parents to Collingwood School & Media Arts College, Stobhillgate, Morpeth.

For more detail contact Jackie Tweedy on 01670 504706



A parent led initiative in partnership with Collingwood School & Media Arts College and Morpeth Extended Services

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 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: .....