



Network Newsletter

Issue No. 8 December/January 2008

Latest news on the Max Card Scheme

You will have received a letter recently explaining that the Max Card Scheme that is run by MLA-NE has run into financial difficulties. This means that some places of interest will no longer accept Max Cards or will only accept them under different terms. For example, the Blue Reef Aquarium are now charging Max Card Holders £2.50 per person and the Centre for Life is to offer a discount of £1.50 per person on admission prices.

Children's Services have advised all Max Card holders to telephone the place of interest that they want to visit beforehand and check that the Max Card will be accepted. Leisure Centres in Northumberland are not affected by this problem and they should continue to accept the Max Cards.

The Max Card Scheme will run until 19th March 2008 and then they will not be accepted. Northumberland Children's Services are working to set up a Northumberland version of the Max Card Scheme and hopefully this will commence at the beginning of April 2008.



If you have any queries regarding the scheme, you can contact Jackie Stanton on 01670 533883 or email jstanton@northumberland.gov.uk

Network Newsletter Evaluation

Thank you to all the parents who took the time to complete the evaluation form and let us know what you think of the newsletter. We are collating all the information and will let you know the outcome in the February/March edition. As this newsletter is for families of children with disabilities, we welcome your comments and will ensure that we listen and act on your suggestions.

If you would like to discuss any aspect of the newsletter or would like to contribute to the content, please contact Jackie Stanton on 01670 533883.

Transition Information Network

The Transition Information Network (TIN) is an alliance of organisations and individuals who come together with a common aim: to improve the experience of disabled young people's transition to adulthood. TIN is a source of information and good practice for disabled young people, families and professionals. **What is Transition?** Between the ages of 14 to 25 young people usually have to make important decisions about their education; leave home; get a job and start having relationships. For disabled young people it can be a confusing and complicated time. Planning should start well in advance of leaving school, so that a person's needs and choices are fully explored.

To find out more, telephone 020 7843 6006 or log onto www.myfuturechoices.org.uk

Carerlink Project

Carerlink offers emotional and social support for carers. They do 1:1 home support and can also offer a counselling service. Just having a chance to talk to somebody provides quite a lot of relief. Talking to other carers can also help—it makes people feel they are not alone.

Is there something special that you'd like to do but think you can't afford the cost? Would it give you a break from your caring responsibilities if only for a short time each week? Would you get the chance to meet other people as well as do something different in your life? Then the new fund available to carers could be what you need. The Carers Opportunity Fund is open to individual carers wishing to apply for up to £100 towards the costs incurred by taking a break.

You do not need to be known to Social Services to apply to the Carers Opportunity Fund. You can apply for yourself as long as you meet the criteria and are registered with CarerLink or Carers Together (or will register to apply). What might you want to do? How about using the fund to pay towards the cost of an adult education course or hobby? Pay for transport costs so you can attend a local leisure centre or meeting regularly? Use the fund towards the cost of a complete weekend away somewhere out of the area? Anyone in Northumberland can access support either through Carerlink or Carers Together.

Telephone CarerLink on 01668 219951,
email: co-ords@carerlink.org.uk
or telephone Carers Together on 01670 784166



Provision for Children with Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties



A major national review into the provision of services for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs is underway led by John Bercow, MP. John was appointed by the Prime Minister to lead the review which aims to 'advise the Government on how the very best provision can be mirrored in all areas, so every young person up to 19 years old with speech and language difficulties gets support as early as possible.'

There are over 89,000 school-aged children nationally with speech and language difficulties as their primary educational need ranging from mild stammers to serious communication disability.

In Northumberland the biggest proportion of primary aged children, either with statements or at school action plus, are those with communication problems.

The review will report in summer 2008 and advise on:

- ♦ the range and composition of services to meet the diversity of children's needs;
- ♦ how effective co-operation between local agencies can promote early intervention and improve services;
- ♦ good practice in commissioning and service delivery.

Members of the Northumberland Speech and Language Therapy Service have met Mr Bercow and are involved in the review. The review team will carry out two focus groups in the county early next year specifically seeking the views of parents and young people. If you would like to participate please contact sue.welsh@nhs.net

There is also a national on-line consultation exercise and call for evidence running until 18 January 2008.

If you would like to have your voice heard you can participate in the on-line survey at www.dfes.gov.uk/bercowreview



Blyth Valley Nurture Group

A new group has been formed this summer in Blyth Valley. A partnership between Blyth Valley Children's Centre and Northumberland Early Years Inclusion Co-ordinator has started a group for parents and families of young children with additional needs. The intention is to hold activity sessions during the school holidays for all of the family.



The group have enjoyed two visits so far. A trip to the Alan Shearer Centre with 43 parents/carers and children was a resounding success. The families enjoyed the sole use of the Centre for the afternoon and staff from the centre laid on lots of activities for all ages including a team game of rounders and craft activities which were thoroughly enjoyed by all who took part. It was a beautiful sunny day allowing all to enjoy the lovely gardens surrounding the building. The families who took advantage of the hydro therapy pool voted it a favourite activity.



The second trip was to Ulgham Wildlife Sanctuary and was enjoyed by over 50 families. The children enjoyed free pony rides and face painting and there were craft activities laid on for all to enjoy. A treasure hunt and animal bingo games were set up for the whole family to enjoy. The day was a success though a bit cold!

Any family with a young child with additional needs living in Blyth Valley can join the group. Their next event will be on 20th February and will be at Blyth Valley Children Centre.

For further information or suggestions for future events please contact:

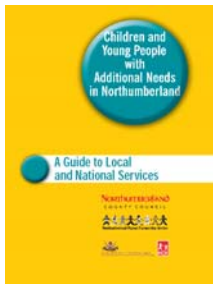
Sheila Dillon on 07747188611 or email sdillon@northumberland.gov.uk

Karen Kirkbride on 01670735546 or email Karen.kirkbride@barnardos.org.uk

Karon Biancardi 01670798800 or email KBiancardi@northumberland.gov.uk



Children with Additional Needs in Northumberland: A Guide to Local and National Services



This brand new guide for parents and professionals has been produced by NCH IN-PACT and the Northumberland Parent Partnership Service. It lists some of the many local services available in Northumberland that can provide you with information, advice or support in looking after your child. The services are listed in colour coded sections, which include Health, Social Care, Breaks from Caring, Education, Transition, Leisure, Money Matters, Local Support and Voluntary Organisations.

To order your free copy of the guide, contact Karen Davison or Carole Deeming on 01670 533689 or Anne-Marie Donnelly on 01670 857816.

"If I could change one thing"

Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) is the UK campaign to get rights and justice for every disabled child. We all want disabled children and their families to have the right to the services and support they need to live ordinary lives.

During this Summer EDCM asked disabled children, young people, their parents and carers: "If you could change one thing for disabled children, young people and their families, what would it be?"

There were hundreds of responses from all over the country and they have been published in two booklets, one contains children and young people's views and one parents' views. These booklets are to be sent to Ministers, MPs and other key decision makers so they hear about what needs to change directly from families.

This is a summary of the main points from both booklets. The top three things disabled children and young people wanted to change were:

1. to have more fun things to do
2. to change negative attitudes to disability
3. to make it everyone's right to get a good education

The top three things that parents wanted to change were:

1. not to have to fight for support
2. to be included in their communities
3. to be able to find educational provision that meets their child's needs



Copies of the booklets can be downloaded from: www.edcm.org.uk/one thing or telephone 020 7843 6318.

Another Successful DNEX



Alan Shearer opened the Disability North exhibition, DNEX, at the Metro Radio Arena in November and staff from the charity were delighted with the success of the event.

DNEX is the north's biggest independent living exhibition and in two days attracted around 5,000 visitors. Alan Shearer spent time walking around the exhibition before presenting the winners of the Disability North and Contact a Family Children's Drawing competition. The winning children had drawn stick pictures of themselves, which appear on a t-towel sold in aid of Disability North. Staff from Disability North are already planning next year's event, which will take place on 22nd & 23rd October at the Metro Radio Arena.

For more information on DNEX contact Disability North on 0191 2840480 or events@disabilitynorth.org.uk.

Lets Create' and Celebrate

Parents in Northumberland were in the public eye a few weeks ago, when an exhibition of their photography was shown in the main pavilion at Alnwick Gardens. The works were the result of a course of photography led by Helix Arts and funded by Northumberland Children's Fund.



The parents who all have children with disabilities and are all NCH IN-PACT service users came from across Northumberland for weekly sessions at Wansbeck Young Peoples Centre and venues across the county.



Some pictures reflect their feelings about involvement with NCH IN-PACT and the 'Power of Prevention', the theme running through all Children's Fund Services. Parents were on hand at

the Let's Celebrate event, to take delegates around the exhibition and explain the words behind the pictures.



For more information, contact NCH IN-PACT on 01670 857816.

Need help planning a trip ?

"Going on trips with an Asperger child" is a new addition to the range of books from the National Autistic Society. This advises how to plan a trip, useful for anyone with a child with asperger syndrome.

Log onto their website : www.autism.org.uk

RNIB European Exchange 2008



supporting blind and partially sighted people

RNIB are pleased to be able to offer twelve students the chance to participate in the third Spanish exchange programme. The purpose of the week is to allow students from across the UK with a visual impairment who are aged 14-17 years and attend mainstream schools, to come together with 12 students from South East Spain, to develop their language skills in a fun environment, participate in a leisure programme and enjoy the cultural experiences each country has to offer. The group will travel to Alicante in March 2008.

If you are interested in a place, please contact Gillian McGregor, Vacation Scheme Administrator on 0113 274 8855 for an application form.

Closing date for applications is 31 January 2008.

In need of a holiday?

Either as a family with a special needs child or for a child to go on a supported holiday. There are many organisations that offer this kind of supported break. OASIS has a list of organisations around the country.

Please call or email for a copy of the list.

Tel: 01590 622880 email: oasis@cambiagroup.com

Respite holiday in Crete ??

Therapeutic Holiday Centre is a charity offering holidays in Crete, Greece for people with learning disabilities. It is a facility where hospitality and support are just two characteristics of the quality vacation services they provide to people learning disabilities, autism, physical disabilities, sensory impairments etc. Animal care, therapeutic riding, bread baking and swimming are just a few of the programs and activities visitors can get involved in.



Visit their website www.therapeutic-holidays.org.gr.

Useful Local Telephone Numbers

Berwick Autism Support	Michelle Mitchell	01289 304309
Bliss ADHD Support Group	Lorraine Walker	01670 540979
Contact a Family	Kathy Rist/Sarah Lewis	0191 2136300
Downs Syndrome Support Group	Anne-Marie	01670 857816
Hidden Dys-Ability (Berwick upon Tweed)	Kim Redpath	01289 331450
In-Pact	Anne-Marie	01670 857816
Parent Partnership	Alison Bravey	01670 533694
Portage Service	c/o Anne-Marie	01670 857816
Support Group for Parents of Self-Harming Children	Susan Cullingworth	01670 857816
Support Group for Parents of Visually Impaired Children	Anne-Marie	01670 857816
Toby Henderson Trust	Lesley Henderson	01670 789753
Tynedale Support	Ali Shotton	01434 601594
Wansbeck Parent Carer Support Group	Anne-Marie	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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Contact Jackie Stanton Tel: (01670) 533883

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

Supporting families who have children with special needs



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:

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