



Network Newsletter

Issue No. 9 Feb/March 2008

Latest news on the Max Card Scheme

Please note that the current Max Card scheme will end on Wednesday 19 March 2008. Max Cards cannot be used after that date.

Museums, Libraries and Archives North East (MLA-NE) who run the Max Card scheme have recently decided that in the future they will only run the scheme for looked after children so Northumberland County Council intend to set up its own scheme for families of disabled children.

We hope to negotiate discounts for families of disabled children to use facilities in the county, including some activities that families requested in the survey we conducted last year.



In order to help us set up this new scheme, we would be grateful if you would complete the form included in this newsletter to update your details on the database. We will also need a passport size photo of the child with the disability with the child's name and date of birth written on the back.

Please return the form and photo to us in the enclosed envelope. The photo will be used on your discount card so we can only send you a discount card if we receive the completed form and photo.

We apologise for the inconvenience that this has caused. We will try to set up the new scheme as soon as we can.

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

Making Every Disabled Child Matter & Aiming High

Event for parents—26th March 2008—9.30am—2.30pm (or 4pm)

Civic Centre, Burdon Road, Sunderland SR2 7DN

A joint event for parents looking at the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign and the progress of the implementation of the Government's Aiming High for Disabled Children programme.

The morning will focus on next steps in the EDCM campaign. Come and find out

- ♦ What's happening in the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign
- ♦ Why local targets for disabled children services are so important
- ♦ Ask your local authority to set targets for services for disabled children in your area

In the afternoon we will be joined by professionals working to implement improvements to services for disabled children in the north east. We will focus on the Core aims of Aiming High. How money will be spent to improve short break care—we will tackle the question "Will this work in practice?"

For more information and to book a place,
contact Kathy Rist or Sarah Lewis

at Contact a Family on 0191 213 6300.

disabled
Every Child Matters

contact a family
for families with disabled children

Ponteland Parents' Special Needs Group

We are parents/carers of children with special needs living in the Ponteland area. We meet half-termly to share similar experiences, ideas and information. It is a chance to meet other parents, over a cup of coffee in an informal atmosphere. We meet in the Community Room in Ponteland First School, Thornhill Road, Ponteland. Our next meeting is on Thursday 13th March at 9.15am, also attending, will be a guest speaker from Communication Support.

For more information, contact Kate Whitehead on 0782540787 or email whiteheadka@pchs.northumberland.sch.uk



Walk for Autism Research at The Alnwick Garden

Autism Speaks is returning to The Alnwick Garden for a second Walk for Autism Research on Sunday, 4th May 2008. Registration is from 10:00am to 12 noon and the Garden closes at 6:00pm. The first walk was such a success - 700 supporters, families and friends turned up in the rain, raised just under £26,000 and enjoyed a really happy day.



The Alnwick Garden is a magical venue providing a walk that is suitable for everyone, of all ages and abilities along routes which are suitable for both pushchairs and wheelchairs. Do bring your family and friends along to make up a team! Children and adults with autism are especially welcome to come along to have fun and enjoy the games or entertainment along the way. Explore the magical landscape - dip in and out of the jets of water in the Serpent Garden and help us raise money for autism research.

Taking part is easy. You can register online at www.autismspeaks.org.uk and set up your online fundraising page at www.justgiving.com/autismspeaks/raisemoney/. Alternatively, please ring Lynn Hart on tel: 01491 411 569.

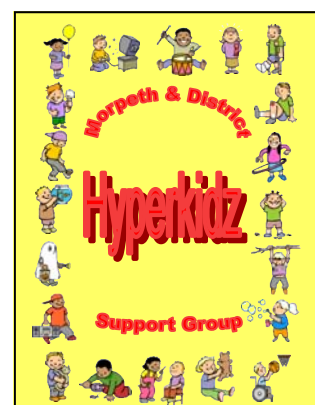


Support Group in Morpeth for ADHD and Autistic Spectrum Disorders

Hyperkidz is a support group for parents and carers of children and young people with ADHD, ASD or both. It is a parent led support group.

It is not easy coping when you have a child with problems. If you would like to meet parents and carers in an informal setting, Hyperkidz meets once a month at Contact, 36 Bridge Street, Morpeth.

For meeting dates or further information, contact Tracey English on 01670 516537 or email: english833@hotmail.com.



Northumberland Parent/Carer Forum

In March last year a questionnaire was sent out with the Network Newsletter by NCH IN-PACT (Information Northumberland - Parents and Carers Together), an NCH service which offers support and information to parents and carers of disabled children and young people who live in Northumberland. The questionnaire asked parents their views about the Services they and their children use and what they thought about establishing a Forum for parents and carers. Over 150 parents responded, with a large number indicating that they would like to play an active part in a Forum.

Since then IN-PACT has been consulting with parents and representatives from the County Council and other organisations, to discuss what a Northumberland Parent/ Carer Forum might look like. They have received funding from the County Council to run a pilot for the Forum.

What will the Parent/Carer Forum do?

The Forum will provide an opportunity for parents/carers, statutory and voluntary organisations to work together as equal partners to bring about positive changes for families who have children with special needs. The Forum will provide a non-confrontational setting for these partners to discuss and explore special needs issues and mutual areas of concern. Issues raised at the Forum will be directly related to general issues, policies and practice rather than individual cases.

The Forum will provide an opportunity for parents' views to be heard and understood and to inform and influence the development of special needs policies and practice in Northumberland.

The Proposed Parent/Carer Forum for Northumberland

There will be 3 Forum meetings each year - one meeting in each school term. Each Forum meeting will have three district pre-meetings for parents/carers, to allow for countywide representation. These will be held in north, west and central Northumberland approximately three weeks in advance of the Forum. The Forum will aim for a minimum of 50% parent membership. Grandparents will also be encouraged to participate. All Forum meetings will be organised, facilitated and minuted by representatives from IN-PACT. Parents who attend the Forum pre-meetings/meetings will be reimbursed for any travel and childcare expenses incurred.

For further information about the Parent/Carer Forum and how you can be involved, please contact Anne-Marie Donnelly on 01670 857816

MOVING ON - IN-PACT Transition Conference

IN-PACT hosted it's 2008 conference on Tuesday the 5th February at the Holiday Inn Seaton Burn. The day was attended by over 75 delegates. Sixty parents were entertained by Headway Theatre's special needs group, Seven Stars.

The Stars performed their specially devised piece 'On the Bridge' a short light hearted sketch which explored the possibilities and support available to a young man on the verge of his next adventure...followed by a chance to ask the group about their work.

This was followed by a presentation by Dr Jonny Caldwell on Chris Milner's survey of the views of families and young people with complex health needs during the transition from children's health to adult services. This survey was commissioned by Dr. Gill Turner. A pilot is due to begin March 2008 to implement some of the recommendations.

Morning workshops looked at Welfare Benefits, Direct Payments, Carers, Education and Education choices.



After a well earned lunch, the afternoon session looked at three questions which focussed on the Every Child Matters outcomes for children:

- ♦ Economic wellbeing
(Employment, mobility and Housing)
- ♦ Being Healthy
(Emotionally and physically well/autonomy)
- ♦ Making a Positive Contribution
(friendships/quality of life/employment/helping others)

A report will be available in April, parents and carers who attended the conference will automatically receive a copy.

Anyone else who would like to request a copy
of the report should contact
IN-PACT on 01670 857816.

Rise in Earnings Limit on Carers Allowance

On 1st October 2007 the Government raised the earnings limit on Carer's Allowance to £95, increasing the amount carers can earn before losing their Carer's Allowance. Crucially this breaks the cycle whereby carers were losing income due to increases in the National Minimum Wage taking them over the threshold.

For further information go to www.carers.org/news



NORTHUMBERLAND
COUNTY COUNCIL

Children's Services Directorate



Communication Support Service

~ **Comprehension and Active Listening**

~ **Making the World a Less Confusing Place**

Tuesday 1 April 2008

Choppington Social Welfare Centre, Choppington

9.00 am – 3.30 pm

Cost: £45.00 plus VAT (£52.88) for Professionals
£20.00 plus VAT (£23.50) for Parents and Carers

This one-day conference has been organised by the Northumberland County Council, Communication Support Service and is open to anyone living and working in the North East region.

Keynote Speaker - Maggie Johnson

Maggie is a speech and language therapist specialising in childhood communication disorders. Her experience in education and community settings spans over twenty years in special schools, language units, mainstream schools, clinics and multi-agency centres. An extremely engaging, sought after speaker, Maggie spends time travelling across the country providing training and workshops for schools, parents, health and social care professionals.

The conference will include opportunities for discussion and teaching, as well as time to look at books and resources.

For further information, please contact Sharon Griffin, Administration, Communication Support Service, Till House, Hepscoth Park, Stannington, Morpeth, Northumberland. NE61 6NF Tel: 01670 534808 e-mail:- SGriffin@northumberland.gov.uk

Parent Seminars—help! 2

Taking place at the Family Centre, South View, Ashington NE63 0SF
Tuesday 1st April 2008—Anger Management (10am—2.15pm)
Tuesday 22nd April 2008—Anti Bullying (10am—12.15pm)

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). The seminars will include presentations, group discussions, video material and practical activities. A *help! 2* Parent Manual, including handouts, information booklets and leaflets is included in each seminar. Please note that the seminars DO NOT include an introduction to autism spectrum disorders within their content and, therefore, it is recommended that parents/carers attending seminars already have some prior knowledge of ASD.

For more information telephone
Jan on 0191 5680732 or Wendy 0191 5680731



3 day help! Programme in Jesmond

help! provides support for parents and carers of school aged children, young people and adults who have a recent diagnosis of an ASD. This programme is free and provides basic information on :

- An overview of ASDs
- Education and your rights
- Approaching behaviour difficulties
- Tips for communication
- Accessing support services

The sessions will take place on 4th, 6th and 13th March from 9.30am—3pm.



For more information, please phone
Jan on 0191 5680732 or Wendy 0191 5680731

Seminar on Visual Dyslexia and Reading Difficulties

On Saturday 12th July 2008 at the Performing Arts Centre, Royal Grammar School, Newcastle upon Tyne from 9 - 4pm Prof John Stein and Sue Fowler (Orthoptist) are coming to take part in lectures and discussions. Open to parents and professionals. There will be workshops and information and bookshop, with buffet lunch and time to meet people who share a common interest in helping those affected by dyslexia.

For more info contact Liz Ferguson - Dyslexia North East - 0780 300 3475.

Useful Local Telephone Numbers:

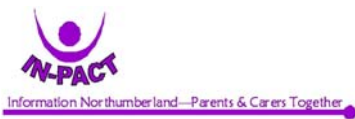
Berwick Autism Support	Michelle Mitchell	01289 304309
Bliss ADHD Support Group	Lorraine Walker	01670 540979
Contact a Family	Kathy Rist/Sarah Lewis	0191 2136300
Downs Syndrome & Friends Support Group	Anne-Marie Donnelly	01670 857816
Hidden Dys-Ability (Berwick upon Tweed)	Kim Redpath	01289 331450
Hyperkidz	Tracey English	01670 516537
In-Pact	Anne-Marie Donnelly	01670 857816
Parent Partnership	Alison Bravey	01670 533694
Ponteland Parents' Special Needs Group	Kate Whitehead	01661 822103
Portage Service	c/o Anne-Marie Donnelly	01670 857816
Support Group for Parents of Self-Harming Children	Susan Cullingworth	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.

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.

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: