

contact a family

for families with disabled children

In Touch August 2010

Contact a Family - Northern Ireland Bi Monthly newsletter

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Counting the Costs 2010

Families with disabled children struggle to afford food and heating

Families with disabled children are going without essentials such as food and heating. This is the norm, not a temporary crisis brought on by the economic slump.

These are the findings of Counting the Costs 2010, a survey and report from Contact a Family. The survey, a repeat of one carried out in 2008, asked over 1,100 UK parents caring for a disabled child about their current financial situation.

Key findings include:

- Almost a quarter are going without heating (23%). Up from 16% in 2008.
- One in seven (14%) are going without food. Down from 16% in 2008.

- More than half have borrowed money from family or friends (51%) to keep financially afloat or pay for essentials, such as food and heating. Up from 42% in 2008.
- More than 40% have applied for a charity grant. Up from 25% in 2008.
- Almost three quarters (73%) are going without days out and leisure time with the family. Up from 55% in 2008.

Srabani Sen, Chief Executive of Contact a Family, said: “Many families with disabled children are in financial dire straits. Everyone has been hit hard by the recession but families with disabled children were already having to cope with a harsh combination of extra living costs and the difficulty of holding down a job and caring. These financial pressures have been worsened by the economic slump and have left many at breaking point.

“In the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review we call on the Government to pay particular attention to ensuring that families with disabled children are genuinely protected.”

Many of the parents who responded to Counting the Costs 2010 don't work (60%) due to the difficulties of juggling employment and caring. Many parents wish to return to work, but find the lack of flexible working and the cost of childcare prohibitive, with 45% reporting they pay more for childcare for their disabled child.

Counting the Costs 2010 shows that financial difficulties have a negative impact on many aspects of life and increases families' social isolation. Almost three quarters are going without leisure and days out and 68% are going without holidays. Even basic activities, such as swimming or going to the local park that other families take for granted, are difficult and this is worsened by a lack of money.

Srabani Sen added: “Time and time again research shows that families with disabled children have an above-average risk of living in poverty. Steps must be taken to address this imbalance from the Government, from businesses and employers, from local authorities and the voluntary sector.”

To download a copy of the report go to <http://www.cafamily.org.uk> and follow the links

Can you help us to improve how we provide information to parents?

Contact a Family is evaluating a recent project to increase and improve ways of providing information to parents.

We hope that you can spare five minutes to complete our online survey about the effectiveness and accessibility of Contact a Family information. There are a few questions about your personal situation too, but it shouldn't take more than five minutes.

We will use your input to:

- Evaluate ways of increasing and improving ways of providing information to parents.
- Help secure future funding for our services.
- Better understand the people we support.

Your answers will help us to develop our work in the future, so please pass the link on to others too!

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/index.php?module=newsmodule&action=view&id=513&src=@random4864ff40710ee>

NEW! Podcasts from Contact a Family

Benefits: Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

ESA came into effect in October 2008 and replaced Incapacity Benefit and Income Support. This podcast is an interview with a Contact a Family adviser and provides more details about this benefit.

Benefits: Social Fund

It costs more to raise a disabled child and some families need additional financial help. This podcast provides an overview of what the social fund is and the sort of things it can help fund

To listen to the podcasts go to <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/news/podcasts.html>

Helpline hours extended

Contact a Family's freephone helpline's has new and extended opening hours. It is now open Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm. So, if you need advice on any issue about raising a disabled child, please give the Helpline Team a call on 0808 808 3555.

DHSSPS: £3.95million centre will help children with learning disabilities

Health Minister Michael McGimpsey said a £3.95million facility will help children with learning disabilities have a better quality of life within their own communities.

The Minister was speaking as he officially opened the new eight-bedded children's treatment and assessment unit at Iveagh. The unit, which has been operational since April 2010, provides specialist health and social care for children and young people with learning disabilities.

Speaking at the site at Broadway, close to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast, Michael McGimpsey said: "This new facility will provide acute specialist treatment and assessment for children and young people with learning disabilities and prevent them having to be admitted to hospital."

A full range of nursing, social work, speech & language therapy, occupational therapy and physiotherapy, as well as medical & dental staff, is available on a full time or outreach basis. In addition, staff provides an outreach service for schools to ensure children can be maintained at their own school.

Michael McGimpsey said: "This unique facility was planned in consultation with young people in care. It provides the latest in treatment and care in a safe, homely environment. It ensures that children with learning disabilities are assessed and treated in the community.

"This is a key step towards our ultimate goal of ensuring that anyone with a learning disability is promptly and suitably treated in the community and no one remains unnecessarily in hospital."

Belfast Trust Chairman, Pat McCartan said: "We are very proud of the new facilities in the Iveagh Centre. They provide an ideal environment for children and young people with a learning disability. We wish the centre every success for the future."

As part of his visit, the Minister was given a tour of the facility. He said: "I have been impressed by the beautifully landscaped garden areas which no doubt provide quiet, therapeutic outdoor spaces

for the children to enjoy. The calm, child-friendly living areas within the centre offer a welcoming atmosphere for both children and their families.”

The Minister continued: “This facility is another part of investment plans in primary and community care. This is a key element of the health component of the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland which will bring over £3billion of investment to modernise the infrastructure of our health and social care services.

“At the heart of our modernisation programme is the recognition that we will deliver high quality, safe services which continue to put patients first.”

Welfare reforms need to meet the needs of Northern Ireland

Social Development Minister Alex Attwood today met with Lord Freud who is responsible for Welfare Forum.

Following the meeting Alex Attwood said: “I made it clear to Lord Freud that the welfare reforms being discussed by the coalition government won’t work in Northern Ireland.

“The fact is that Northern Ireland is very different and needs to be treated differently.

“My sense is that Lord Freud heard and understood my arguments. I will now work hard to drive my arguments home.

“There are three big differences between Belfast and London. Firstly, it is certain that Northern Ireland will emerge from recession far later than Britain. Welfare reforms that purport to get people back to work require by their nature work opportunities. This may not happen for many years in Northern Ireland. This makes the North different and welfare proposals won't work here.

“Secondly, there are deeper levels of deprivation in NI which results in bigger reasons for people being on benefits. Welfare policy must reflect this. London proposals do not.

“Thirdly, devolution is still young. Our institutions are still growing. Stability of the community, particular in areas of need must be protected. Welfare proposals and any other government proposals must be assessed by these particular needs. Stability must not be jeopardised.

“Lord Freud worked in Belfast before. I believe he understands our past experiences and different needs. I shall be working to ensure that this is reflected in the welfare regime that will prevail in the future.”

Minister questioned about service provision

Ms S Ramsey asked the Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety to detail the (i) specific services; (ii) after-school services; and (iii) respite services available for children with a disability, in each Health and Social Care Trust area.

Minister of Health, Social Services and Public Safety provided the following details of the services requested, for each Health and Social Care Trust area.

Health and Social Care Trust	Specific Services	After School Services	Respite Services
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South Eastern Trust	Direct Payments, Domiciliary Service, Social Work Service, Psychology, Psychiatry, learning disability nursing, community children's nursing, cedar foundation support service	Sponsored childminding, Positive Futures, Footprints, PHAB, Direct Payments, Angel Eyes (visual impairment) NI Deaf Youth Organisation (hearing impairment)	Lindsay House, Forest Lodge, Beechfield, Hospice, Barnardos, Fostering
Northern Trust	Child Development Clinic, Multi Disciplinary Assessment, Paediatrics, Speech and Language therapy, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy, Community Nursing, Social Work, Community Based Services and Hospital Based Services	No specific Afterschool services but possible to participate in general afterschool activity alone or with support	Family based respite, Direct Payments, Residential Respite, social and leisure opportunities by means of Service Level Agreements,
Belfast Trust	Residential care, community nursing service, Group/recreational activities, Domiciliary care, Overnight at home(All of these services also provide respite for parents)	Trust funds after school places with some voluntary/community organisations ie Artability, Ardmonagh and SENSE. The Trust has Day Care Schemes within Children's Services but this is not a dedicated disability service.	Residential Care in Forest Lodge and Lindsay House, Short Breaks, both day time and overnight provided by the Trust and Barnardo's, Community respite e.g. Cedar Foundation, Crossroads and Autism Initiatives, Direct Payments.
Southern Trust	Community children's nursing service, Specialist Nurses for Children, Children's Epilepsy Nurse, Children's Learning Disability Nurses, ADHD Specialist nurse, Child Development Nurse Liaison Nurse, Child Development Centre, Community Child Health Clinics, Special Schools and Support Centres, Learning Support Centres, Language Units, Education Centres for Physically disabled children, Community	Summer Schemes (including SHINE, Chips and Creative 1), Funzone, Respite to Children within their own home	ACE Team, Residential Respite, Orana Respite Centre, Oaklands Respite Centre, Family Based Care, Foster Placements, Saturday Link Scheme, Overnight respite in the Child's own home, Sponsored Child Minding, Day Care Placements, Playgroup placements,

	(Domiciliary) AHP Services, Autism Specialist Services, ACE Team, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Surestart Programmes, Social Work, Community Access, Transition Service and Family Support Services.		community respite, Enable NI, Cedar Outlook Flexible Respite Scheme, Direct Payments, Summer Schemes, Horizon House, Community Care Teams, Hospice at Home, Support Services such as Autism NI, Homestart etc, Sixth Sense, The Parent's Council and Wraparound
Western Trust	Host care and family aide, summer schemes, direct payments, cash grants, social outreach programmes, hospice at home service, family support through the Family Support Panel	The Trust is not commissioned to provide after-school services to children with a disability.	Shepherd's Way Respite, Beltany House, Summer Schemes, Hospice at Home, Direct Payments, Social Outreach Programmes, Family Aide Services, Family Support Workers

Employers For Childcare Questionnaire

This is a local charity whose ethos is to make it easier for parents with dependent children to get into work and to stay in work. They recognise the challenges that families may face in accessing quality, affordable childcare, and that these challenges are even more apparent and significant for families who have children with disabilities/special needs.

The survey will ascertain the challenges families face and the gaps in provision that currently exist for families in Northern Ireland. A survey of this nature has never been carried out in Northern Ireland before and the results obtained from it will serve as a powerful lobbying tool to Government. They are asking all parents of children with disabilities to complete a questionnaire. Parent's personal details will remain completely confidential.

Your help as a parent of a child with a disability would be gratefully received. You can complete the survey online at www.employersforchildcare.org, by contacting Nora Smith at Employers For Childcare on their FREEPHONE number 0800 028 6538 or email nora.smith@employersforchildcare.org who can either post or email you a copy of the questionnaire. If you are returning via post a SAE will be included.

The name of every returned questionnaire will be entered into a draw for a £50 shopping voucher for Tesco, unless you specify that you do not wish to be entered.

'Living made easy' relaunched with new design

DLF has relaunched its impartial advice site 'Living made easy'. To see the new version visit www.livingmadeeasy.org.uk.

Products Working Group - Needs your help!

Disability Action is currently looking for disabled people and carers to take part in a pilot Products Working Group. Can you help them spread the word?

The Products Working Group will be made up of a range of people including: people with disabilities, manufacturers, representatives from the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, and other professionals.

This group may look at a range of products including:

1. Shower/s- Shower seat or aid
2. Baths - Bath aid or seat
3. Lifts
4. Ramps

If you would like to share your experiences on these products or perhaps suggest a new product /adaptation then the Products Working Group could be the place for you. The pilot will take place between September and December 2010.

How to take part in the Products Working Group Pilot

For further information on how to take part please contact our administrator Laura Cleland.

Laura Cleland
Housing Project
Disability Action
Portside Business Park
189 Airport Road West
Belfast, BT3 9ED

Ph 028 90 297880
Fax 028 90 297881
Text 028 90 297882

Email lauracleland@disabilityaction.org
Web www.disabilityaction.org

Family Fund eligibility criteria change

The Family Fund has revised its income criteria for grant applications. From 16th August 2010 families with a severely disabled child and a household income of below £28,000 will be eligible to apply for a grant.

Upcoming training events

Autism NI - upcoming training events

Please phone Donna or Christine for further information on times, venue, any costs and booking details at 028 9040 1729 or email Donna at donna@autismni.org or Christine christine@autismni.org.uk

Sexual Health Awareness, NEW!! for parents

Dates and time: 14th and 15th September, 9.30am-4pm Location: Ballymena North Business & Recreation Centre

Behavioural/Emotional issues with John Clements

This session aims to help parents and professional better understand the links of Autism with well being and behaviour and interventions to improve and manage behavioural patterns.

Cost: £25.00 parents,£15.00 Parent member, Professional £45.

Date: 24th November 2010

Time: 10am - 3 pm

Venue: Autism NI, Knockbracken Healthcare Park, Saintfield Road, Belfast.

Peat Autism September 2010 training workshops on Autism and Effective Intervention

These workshops are targeted towards parents, tutors and professional working with children with autism. All PEAT training uses the principles of applied Behaviour Analysis (ABA). Costs are PEAT Parent £15, Parent £25, Student £20, Professional £60.

For more information and to register your interest for any of the training courses and/or secure a place please contact the PEAT Office directly on 02890324882 or email: info@peatni.org

Date and time: Monday 20th September 2010, 10am to 3pm

Location: Venue Ramada Davincis Hotel, L/derry

Date and time: Tuesday, 21st September 2010, 10am to 3pm

Location: Venue The Lodge Hotel, Coleraine

Date and time: Thursday 23rd September 2010, Date 10am to 3pm

Location: Venue Leighinmohr House Hotel, Ballymena

Date and time: Friday 24th September 2010, 10am to 3pm

Location: Venue Lagan Valley island Centre, Lisburn

Date and Time: Monday 27th September, 2010, 10am to 3pm

Venue: Silverbirch Hotel, Omagh

Date and time: Tuesday 28th September 2010, 10am to 3pm
Location: Venue Killyhevlin Hotel, Enniskillen

Date and time: Thursday 30th September 2010, 10am to 3pm
Location: Armagh City Hotel, Armagh

NAS- Help! 2 parent programme

The following parent seminars are provided free of charge to parents and to make a booking phone 028 9068 7066.

Title: Meeting you child's sensory needs
Date & Time: Tuesday 5th October 10am - 2.30pm
Venue : Glen Community Centre, 33 Glenard Road, Newtownards, BT23 4HS

Title: Common toileting difficulties in children with autism
Date & Time: Wednesday 6th October 10am - 2.30pm
Venue : Glen Community Centre, 33 Glenard Road, Newtownards, BT23 4HS

Title: Adult Life 'Managing Money'(for parents of young people 14+)
Date & Time: Thursday 18th November 10am-2.30pm
Venue: Wellington Park Hotel, 21 Malone Road, Belfast, BT9 6RU

Title: Autism an introduction(2 day course for parents of recently diagnosed children aged 5-11yrs)
Date and Time: 16th & 17th November, 9.45am- 2.45pm
Venue: Carrickfergus Marina, Marina Building, 3 Quayside, Carrickfergus, BT38 8BJ

Consultations

Contact a Family Northern Ireland are well placed to respond to consultation papers to ensure the views of parents, carers and young people are made known to decision makers at all levels in NI society.

If you would like to discuss any issues arising from the consultation responses contact us. We would like to hear from parents, carers and young people on these and any other issues of concern. We also encourage you as parents, carers and professionals and children and young people, to make your opinions known as individuals in response to changes that will affect you, your child or the group of children you may care for.

Department for Work and Pensions: 21st century welfare

The DWP is seeking views to inform its thinking on reforms to the benefits and Tax Credits system, including the idea of a single integrated Universal Credit.

Consultation from 30.07.10 to 01.10.10 You can comment online at <http://interactive.dwp.gov.uk/21st-century-welfare> or view the full documents at <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2010/21st-century-welfare/>

DHSSPS: Consultation on A 10 Year Strategy for Social Work In Northern Ireland: 2010 - 2020

This is the first ever strategy for social work in Northern Ireland. It is intended to provide professional leadership and direction for social work in the post RPA context and ensure a focus on supporting frontline staff and their managers to deliver a safe, effective, high quality social work service through challenging times.

Consultation from 23.07.10 to 15.10.10 To access the documents and make your response go to <http://www.dhsspsni.gov.uk/showconsultations?txtid=43394>

DSD: Warmer Healthier Homes- A Consultation Paper on a new Fuel Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland

This consultation aims to review the Fuel Poverty Strategy and develop proposals for a new strategy to address future challenges.

Consultation from 28.06.10 to 24.09.10 Go to

<http://www.dsdni.gov.uk/index/consultations/consultation-warmer-healthier-homes.htm> for the full documents.

DE: Consultation on the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy

On 25 June 2010 the Minister for Education, Caitríona Ruane, launched the consultation process of the draft Early Years (0-6) Strategy. The purpose of the new Strategy is to set out a vision and plan for ensuring better outcomes for children by improving the provision and quality of services to the youngest children, their parents and families for the next 5 years.

Consultation from 25.06.10 to 30.11.10 For all the information on this consultation go to

http://www.deni.gov.uk/index/85-about-the-dept/85-about_dept-consultations.htm

'In Touch' is issued every two months (end of August, October, December, February, April & June) and aims to bring you up to date news, details of training courses, group information and new resources available from within Contact a Family and from other organisations. We hope the information is useful and helps you and your family.

We value your feedback on this and all our services and publications. Please forward you comments to the e mail address below.

For up to date information on events, consultations, local groups our most recent Newsletter and more see our webpage at www.cafamily.org.uk/inyourarea/nireland.html bookmark this page and then you can access it quickly!

We are available to help with any issues that affect the disabled child or young person, parents, families and professionals.

Contact us at 028 92627552 or e mail nireland.office@cafamily.org.uk