

Autumn/Winter 2011

## The Newsletter of Contact a Family Lewisham

 **Lewisham**



**HELP A  
CAPITAL  
CHILD**

### Contact a Family Lewisham Celebrates 30 Years of Supporting Local Families

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Over the last 30 years, Contact a Family in Lewisham has helped literally thousands of families in the area by providing vital advice, information and support to parents and carers.

*Christine, Nancy and Jacky. See page 2 for more pictures of the day.*

On 24th August, over 150 Lewisham parents and children helped celebrate 30 years in style with a bouncy castle, clowns, circus workshops and celebration cupcakes.

It was fantastic to see so many children and parents helping us to celebrate. Over the last 30 years we've helped many families with disabled children have a say in how local services for their children are developed and delivered as well as offering practical help and support helping people deal with the benefits system, social services, education and organising much needed fun events and activities during the school holidays. This is an incredible milestone for us and we are delighted to hear that we have been awarded further funding from Lewisham Council for the next two and half years which will help us support even more parents in Lewisham who care for disabled children.

## Family Events

### Past and upcoming events

As always, we want to say a big thank you to all of you who have helped to make this such a special summer. Especially we want to thank for their support and understanding those families who attended Chessington World of Adventures. The trip to Chessington was planned for the 9<sup>th</sup> of August which turned out to be, as you probably know, the aftermath of the riots that affected Lewisham. After carefully considering the cancellation of the trip, we decided to go ahead, but with some important changes on the schedule. As a result, our day was shorter, but we thought this to be the best option in order to guarantee the safety of all the families attending the event. We want to thank you all for your cooperation and understanding.



We hope you enjoyed our 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary party. We want to thank all the families and colleagues that attended the party. We have come a long way and we hope to be able to be here for many more years.

Other events over the summer have included days out to Willows Farm, Kew Gardens, The Emirates Stadium, The Natural History Museum, Southend-on-Sea and Tea Dance for Little people. A fun packed summer!



Enclosed with this newsletter you will find our events programme for half term and Christmas, please take time to read it carefully and look out for the deadlines to apply for the trips. We also include our terms and conditions so please take the time to read these.

# Workshops and Socials

## Pamper day:

We saw a record number of parents attending our pamper day which was held during carers week in June. The feedback was amazing and we really hope to be able to pamper more of you in future days like this.



## Workshops:

Our Adolescence and puberty workshop was very well attended in May, we will be repeating this workshop due to high demand. Look out for more information coming your way,

## September and October Workshops:

Social Services, Disabled Children and their Families, "In Control" Personal Budgets for Children and Families in a Climate of Cuts: **27<sup>th</sup> September 10-1pm.**

Parent Partnership workshop, **11<sup>th</sup> October 10-12pm**, How can Parent Partnership support you and your child with a statement?

## New Family Socials:

An opportunity to meet other families and hear more about the services we offer over a tea and cake! Please see enclosed flyers for more details, to book your place complete the tear off slips and return it to the Contact a Family office

## New texting service

By now, most of you will have received at least one of the Contact a Family texts. As you may know, this new way of communicating with you is allowing us to organise a bigger and wider range of events. You can expect to hear about arrangements for last minute activities and updates on outings that are weather dependent. Also you will be receiving reminders about the workshops, new members socials, coffee mornings and Parent & Carer's Forum meetings. We will send you information and reminders, so you won't miss any of the events and activities you have applied for.



**If you do NOT wish to receive texts from Contact a Family, please tick the box below and send it back to us so we can update your information on our database.**

.....  
Name of parent/carer \_\_\_\_\_



I do NOT want to receive text updates from Contact a Family

## Lewisham Parent & Carer's Forum



The Lewisham Parent & Carer's Forum has had a busy few months with our Forum Meetings and Workshops. Our series of *Speak Up* workshops were a big success.

They started with a one-off *Not A Care In The World* followed by four more sessions leading up to our Forum Theatre experience. This is where parents and carers give examples of a real-life scenario and everyone acts out different roles. We were delighted (and a bit nervous) to perform a couple of examples during our recent Forum Meeting in July and this was attended by Cllr

Helen Klier from Lewisham who enjoyed it very much. The examples parents gave of meetings with professionals in various agencies really struck a chord with our audience and constructive feedback followed.

A hard-working group joined two training workshops on *Understanding Consultation and Tender Submissions* and one on *Policy and Decision-Making In Communities* (the latter being an accredited course with National Open College Network). These subjects gave parents and carers a really good insight into the world of the local authority and enabled them to have a clearer understanding of the importance of policies and how services are organised and chosen in the first place. The aim is for some of these parents to become more involved in working with the Local Authority in Lewisham and to inform them of the reality of being a carer of a disabled young person. During these economic hard times it is more important than ever to let our Council know how families are affected. Equally it is important for our parents and carers to understand the challenges Lewisham Council has in providing services.

Our Steering Group meets every 6-8 weeks and since January we have elected officers to ensure the smooth running of the Lewisham Parent & Carer's Forum. Please see opposite for their names and positions. The Forum itself meets 2 weeks afterwards and these were held in January, March, May and July. All Forums were well attended and as lively and informative as we are coming to expect of our Lewisham Parent & Carer's Forum! A new thing for us was the Short Breaks Consultation run by Rachael Wallach, Aiming High Programme Manager, Lewisham. This took place during our Forum meeting in May and 25 parents and carers attended. This new experience allowed parents to really have a say in what Short Breaks mean to them and answers to the two questions "**What are the most important elements of short breaks**" and "**What information parents and carers need to be given about short breaks**" resulted in plenty of valid points by the participants. By October 1<sup>st</sup> 2011 Lewisham Council will come out with their Short Breaks Services Statement and currently a few parents are part of a working group to consult with the Local Authority about what they feel should be included in this statement. This is really good news. A group of 11 parents also got together to provide written consultation from our Forum to the Department of Education regarding their SEN and Disability Green Paper.

A huge thank you to everyone involved with the Forum for all your hard work and Commitment.

## Lewisham Parent & Carer's Forum

There are now 152 Parent Forums nationwide and the latest Department of Education Green Paper emphasises the importance of parent participation. We are currently awaiting news on our bid for a grant from them to continue the good work and should have news very soon. Keep those fingers crossed!

### Steering Group Officers:

**Chair and Co-Chair:** Jacqueline Paschoud / Nalan Salih  
**Secretary:** Sue Stocks  
**Treasurer:** Joyce Brako-Amofo

**Website:** [www.lewishamparentcarer.org.uk](http://www.lewishamparentcarer.org.uk)

We are still waiting for those stories from you in the 'Day in the life of a carer' section You can write anything you like. Why not ask one of your children to come up with something?

Just email Jacky at: [jaqueline.spigel@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:jaqueline.spigel@cafamily.org.uk)  
or [info@lewishamparentcarer.org.uk](mailto:info@lewishamparentcarer.org.uk)



### Dates for your diary:

**Steering Group Meeting:** September 16<sup>th</sup> 10.00 – 12.00  
**Parent & Carer's Forum:** September 30<sup>th</sup> 10.00 – 12.30

If you would like to find out more about the Forum, please contact our Parent Participation Officer: **Jacky Spigel**

### The Lewisham Team

Just a reminder of who we all are and what we do.

**Nancy, Manager**



**Christine,  
Events Coordinator**



**Jacky,  
Parent Participation Officer**



**Dawn,  
Family Worker**



And welcome to our new Family Worker, Jennifer. Featured on page 6.

## Financial Support Service for Parents and Carers of Disabled Children



My name is Jennifer Cole and I am the new Family Worker based at the Lewisham Office. I am looking forward to supporting parents and carers with a disabled child or children.

I have spent many years working in Social Services departments and recently within health, so I am knowledgeable about services provided by the statutory and independent sectors. I am also a carer of a disabled child, and can identify with many of the issues (additional costs, isolation, stress, and other challenges) associated with caring for a disabled child.

### Confidential face to face support

I am here to support you in any way that will improve your household income, finances, and the wellbeing of your family.

### Support can include:

- Checking that you are receiving all the benefits and support services available, including assistance with form filling and letter writing
- Applying for financial assistance
- Help with managing your household income
- Debt management
- Accompanying you to meetings with statutory services

**Email:** [jennifer.cole@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:jennifer.cole@cafamily.org.uk) **Tel:** 0208 297 8056 or mobile: 07903 044 447

For an appointment or telephone discussion. Home visits are also available for parents who are unable to get out of their home.



### Other Services

Jennifer will be organising events that will provide a wider range of activities that will support you to further improve the wellbeing of your family. These events will include a regular advice surgery, drop-in sessions, and topic based workshops. Watch this space for further details.

### Benefits, tax credit and other financial assistance

This new updated version of the popular Contact a Family guide gives an overview of all the main benefits and tax credits. The focus is on those aspects which affect families with disabled children, with details of how to claim your entitlements.

Parent/carers can have a free copy of this and any other Contact a Family guide, download them from our website or call our **FREEPHONE helpline on 0808 808 3555** and we'll post you a copy.

### Is your child eligible for a new government bursary payment?

Contact a Family is urging parents with a disabled child planning to stay on in further education, to call the Helpline to get advice about whether they qualify for the government's new bursary for 16–19 year olds.

Parents might be unaware that the new bursary is available from September 2011 for 16 to 19 year olds in further education. This is being introduced as a replacement for the Educational Maintenance Allowance. The most vulnerable students will be guaranteed a payment of £1,200 per year - and this includes some young disabled students.

For further details about if your son or daughter could be eligible for a payment of £1,200 call Contact a Family's Helpline on **0808 808 3555**.

# News & Updates

## New Contact a Family survey – Isolation 2011

Families sometimes report that they feel isolated and alone. There may be other reasons or situations when families with disabled children are affected by isolation. Isolation can impact on all areas of life.

Contact a Family wants to find out what the situation is for you and your family in 2011 and if isolation impacts on your family life.

The survey will take just five minutes to complete and the findings will help us highlight this issue through a media story. We are inviting responses until 23rd September.

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/ContactaFamilyIsolation2011>

To accompany our report, we are also looking for families who will be happy to talk to the media about their experiences of this issue and how getting support from Contact a Family has reduced their feelings of isolation.

If this is something that you are interested in please do call Elaine Bennett on 0207 608 8741, or Michele Cefai on 0207 608 8776, and we will give you further information and talk everything through with you.



### Donate By Text To Contact a Family

If you would like to donate to Contact a Family we have set up a new text service.

It's quick and convenient

– simply text 'FAMILY' to 70007 and donate £3 to Contact a Family

You will be charged £3 plus one message at your standard network rate  
Contact a Family will receive a minimum of £2.40 from each message sent

### Swimming sessions at Wavelengths Giffin Street, Deptford, SE8 4RJ

Don't forget that we continue holding our monthly free swimming sessions at Wavelengths Leisure Centre. These sessions take place the first Saturday of the Month (except January and December) and Contact a Family has exclusive use of the pool during these sessions.

You will always find a Contact a Family staff member there to help you.

The dates for the sessions for the rest of the year are:

**1st October**

**5th November**

**No session in December**



Cut this out and keep somewhere useful to remind you of the dates!

## News & updates



A huge thank you to Tesco for donating £500 to Contact a Family this summer in exchange for Nancy, our Project Manager, cutting the ribbon at the new store in Lewisham.

The cheque was gratefully received by a group of parents, children and staff. The money went towards our 30th anniversary celebrations.



We are encouraging families to apply for days out with Merlin's Magic Wand.

Merlin's Magic Wand charity has been established to provide experiences for disadvantaged children. These would primarily be at attractions within the Merlin Group, although other experiences relevant to the child's circumstances may also be considered.

### Who can apply?

Merlin's Magic Wand welcomes applications on behalf of seriously ill, disabled or disadvantaged children (aged 18 or under) who may benefit from an award. These applications can be made by EITHER parents/guardians of these children OR organisations which work with these children (where the prime purpose of the organisation is not already aimed at providing days out or experiences.)

If you are eligible then see the Merlin's Magic Wand website and complete one of the official application forms. Find out more about Merlin at:

[www.merlinentertainments.biz](http://www.merlinentertainments.biz)



Children are eligible for one trip per calendar year. If your child has received a trip through Merlin's Magic Wand via an organisation/group or charity then unfortunately they would not be eligible for free tickets in the same year.

## News & Updates

### FREE Cycling for Disabled Young People



Are you disabled?  
Are you under 24?  
Do you want to cycle?

Are you free on Saturday afternoons over the summer?  
Then you could come cycling with Wheels for Wellbeing.

**Where?** All Weather Pitch, near the Lido, Brockwell Park, SE24 0PA

**When?** Saturdays from 30th July to 29th October, from 2.30—4.30 for 5—19 year olds

Cyclists need to be accompanied. Non-disabled siblings welcome. To find out more,  
call: **020 7346 8482** or go to **www.wheelsforwellbeing.org.uk**

No need to book but you do need to register. You can do this on the day or download a registration form from our website and bring it with you.

### Get Walking Keep Walking

The Ramblers Association are running 'Get Walking Keep Walking' to help residents of Lewisham, Southwark and Lambeth enjoy the benefits of regular, everyday walking. Their programmes offer easy interesting walks, information and individual advice. No need to travel! All programmes start from local venues.

You can also set your own 12 week walking challenge programme and log your progress online, check their website for more information:

<http://www.getwalking.org/get-walking-pack>

### Resources for Parents of Disabled Children

The Centre for Excellence and Outcomes in the Children and Young People's Services (C4EO) has developed a new area on their website to help parents of disabled children.

The web address is: <http://www.c4eo.org.uk/themes/disabledchildren/parentsresource>

The site can be used to find out more about services for disabled children and understand how children's service providers make decisions about the type of services they offer.

## News & updates



### Autism Friendly Screenings



If you would like to attend autism-friendly screenings of the latest children's pictures at a great price, keep an eye on the Picture House website for the upcoming news and events: [www.picturehouses.co.uk](http://www.picturehouses.co.uk)

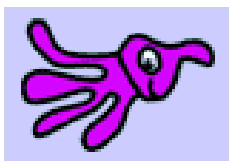
Autism-Friendly Screenings are film screenings especially for people on the autism spectrum and their families, friends and carers. Some people with autism are sensitive to sound and light and they can find going to the cinema difficult. Picturehouse cinemas are working in partnership with The National Autistic Society to hold special film screenings for people on the autism spectrum and their families, friends and carers. During the film low lights are left on inside the auditorium and the volume of the soundtrack is reduced. It is fine for customers to move around, make a noise or take a break during the film if they need to.

Tickets cost £3 for everyone (there are no concessions or free tickets for support workers). Wheelchair users **MUST** book in advance.

Autism-Friendly Screenings are managed in partnership with The National Autistic Society.

The National Autistic Society is the UK's leading charity for people affected by autism.

If you need information, advice and support, call The National Autistic Society's Autism Helpline on 0845 070 4004 (Monday - Friday, 10.00am – 4.00).



The Squidz Club is for young people with learning disabilities, aged 10-25 years, their families and friends.

It features young DJs, VJs and artists in a fun and friendly atmosphere.

**Squidz Club** is a family friendly event for young people aged between 10 and 25. Younger and older family members and friends are welcome when accompanying a young person. Children under 16 must be accompanied to the event by an adult. Children under 11 must be supervised at all times during the event. Adults can take part or relax in the parents' and carers' room

[www.heartnsoul.co.uk/squidznext.html](http://www.heartnsoul.co.uk/squidznext.html)

# Useful information

## SIGNAL

Support, Information, Guidance and News for Autism in Lewisham hold monthly meetings to which all members are welcome.

The group hold monthly meetings which include talks from experts on a variety of topics related to autism. Coffee mornings are held in different members houses, are open to all members to exchange ideas, experiences and information or just have a chat. The group produces a quarterly newsletter and runs a borrowing library with many specialist books, journals and articles, videos, and specially selected children's books. For more detailed information about SIGNAL access their website: [www.signalonline.org.uk](http://www.signalonline.org.uk)

Sally Fricker  
c/o Amersham Road Children's Centre Annexe  
75 Amersham Road  
London  
SE14 6QQ

### Carers Lewisham:

Lewisham Carers Centre,  
Waldram Place, Forest Hill,  
SE23 2LB.

Tel: 020 8699 8686

### Kaleidoscope User Group

Do you use Kaleidoscope,  
Children and Young Peoples  
Centre in Lewisham?

If you would like to have more  
of a say about services, the  
way Kaleidoscope runs and  
the services provided then  
please contact Fiona for more  
information about the quarterly  
meetings

[Fiona.hurst@nhs.net](mailto:Fiona.hurst@nhs.net)

### Lewisham Autism Support:

Email: [lewishamproject@nas.org.uk](mailto:lewishamproject@nas.org.uk)

Tel: 020 8699 3066

### Hyperactive Children's Support Group

Hyperactive Children's Support Group  
(HACSG) – information for parents  
who suspect their child is hyperac-  
tive/allergic and/or

ADHD: [www.hacsg.org.uk](http://www.hacsg.org.uk)  
Tel: 01243 539 966

### Parent Partnership Service:

Parent Partnership Services (PPS) are statutory  
services offering information advice and support to  
parents and carers of children and young people  
aged 0-19 with special educational needs (SEN).

Lewisham PPS  
The Kabin  
Forster Park School  
Boundfield Road  
SE6 1PQ  
Tel: 020 8695 5955

email: [lewishampps@pre-school.org.uk](mailto:lewishampps@pre-school.org.uk)

# Get Involved



## Your local office needs YOU!

At Contact a Family, we listen to parents and families and encourage others to have their say.

We have a Steering Committee made up of parents and professionals which guides our work and keeps us focused on the real issues for families. We are always looking for new parent carers to get involved. If you are interested, please call the office and ask to speak to Nancy. Meetings take place approximately every 6 weeks.

## Become a Volunteer

We are currently recruiting volunteers to help us out in the office or on events and family days out.

If you think you can find some time to help us, and therefore, help other families, do not hesitate to get in touch with us on:

**020 8297 8056.**

### Subscribe to our newsletter:

Our newsletter is available free of charge to families, parent groups, support organisations and professionals who work with families of children with disabilities.

If you would like to be on our mailing list please call the office or email:  
**lewisham.office@cafamily.org.uk**

### Contact a Family Lewisham Office

Leemore Central Community Hub

Bonfield Road

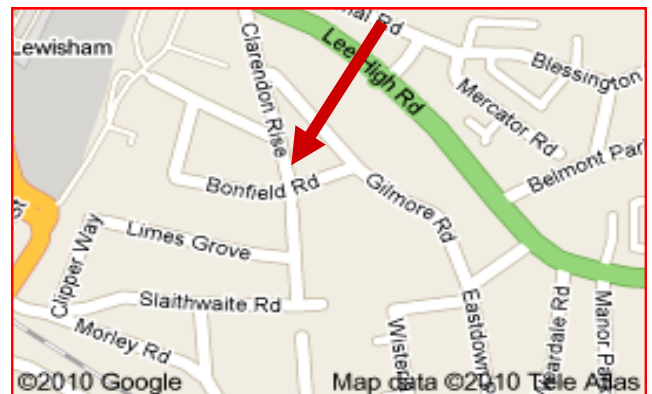
SE13 5EU

Tel: 020 8297 8056

Fax: 020 8297 6961

Email: [Lewisham.office@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:Lewisham.office@cafamily.org.uk)

**We are here !**



Lewisham Contact a Family autumn/winter 2011.

The views expressed are not necessarily those of Contact a Family.

Data protection: Contact a Family is committed to the confidentiality of your personal information. Personal data will be held and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will not be shared with any third parties for commercial use.