

contact a family
for families with disabled children

incorporating
The Lady Hoare Trust

in **contact**



The newsletter of Contact a Family North East

www.cafamily.org.uk/northeast

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Parent Participation News

Pictured are parents and professionals working hard at the recent Regional Summit organised by Contact a Family. See page 3 for more information.

Contents	Page
Contact a Family News	2
Local Participation	3
Sibling Support	4
Local Cerebra News	5
Local News	6 & 7
Child Trust Fund News	8

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Contact a Family would like to thank Northern Rock Foundation for their continued support of the North East Office



Contact a Family News

Welcome Debbie!

Hi, I'm Debbie Armstrong and Contact a Family has recently recruited me as a Family Worker for Cumbria. The Family Support Service is free to families caring for children between 0-19 years. The service is entirely confidential and can visit the family at home or meet at a local venue at a time to suit the family.

Help offered includes:

- Information on local services and support groups
- Negotiating with services such as education, health and social services
- Helping a family to access benefits and other sources of financial help
- Information on direct payments
- Support with the transition to adult services
- Emotional support in times of crisis or stress
- Linking with other families
- Training to increase skills and confidence
- Parent friendly information on a wide range of issues
- Encouraging mutual support in the form of local support groups
- Working along side parents to raise awareness of parents' and childrens' needs

My role will include providing one to one support to families in need and facilitating workshops. To do this I will be supported by a Volunteer Parent Representative and work closely with colleagues in the Contact a Family North East and North West offices to ensure Cumbrians across the county have a relevant point of contact.

Why did I come to work for Contact a Family? For me that's an easy answer; I liked the support they can offer families. Coming from a long social care background and having personal experience of caring for a child with a disability, I'm aware that there can be times when having that little bit of extra support can be invaluable. Parents and carers do an incredible job, in often very difficult circumstances, however, if you live in Cumbria and ever feel you need that extra bit of support, please feel free to get in touch with me.

I can be contacted by phone on **01228 550 069** or **075007 28062** or by email at **debbie.armstrong@cafamily.org.uk**

Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300

Local Participation News

Parent Participation and Involvement - the Latest!

On the 11th September, Contact a Family held a successful Regional Summit to look at parental engagement and involvement across North East and Cumbria. It was successful mainly because there was no snow (the first Summit was held in February when there was loads) and because feedback tells us that both parents and professionals who came, thought it was very worthwhile.

The aim of the day was to let parents, carers and professionals from Health, Education, Social Care and the Voluntary Sector share their successes and get some ideas to help everyone develop and embed parent participation in their area. Everyone worked really hard and we would like to say a big thank you to all of you who gave up your time and energy.

Next Steps

As featured in previous editions of "In Contact", National Indicator 54 (NI 54), the Disabled Children's National Service Indicator, is a form that is being sent out to families to ask them about their experiences of service change resulting from the Aiming High Core Offer. These results will tell us that we need to give families better, clearer information so that services can deliver better, clearer provision. If it comes your way, please please fill it in and return it, it is in your best interests.

Parents and Carers will need to be aware of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Core Offer which sets out in one place, a national statement of expectations for how disabled children and their families will be informed and involved as their needs are assessed and the necessary services are delivered. The Core Offer covers:

Information	Participation
Transparency	Feedback
Assessment	

Most importantly if you don't know how to contribute to this important agenda yet, now is the time to find out ,so do get in touch with us at Contact a Family if you would like information about what is happening in your area.

Full information about NI 54 and the Core Offer can also be found on the Department for Children, Families and Schools website at

<http://tinyurl.com/n6dvv2>

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Sibling Support

Seaham Sure Start Children's Centre - Siblings' Group

This new group is meeting every Tuesday evening from 3.30-5.30pm and is for siblings who are aged 0 to 5 who have a brother or sister with disabilities or special needs and their families



There will be lots of art activities, free time to chill out, games, song time and puppets and a snack will be provided too.

For more information, please contact the Children's Centre on **0191 581 4500**

Sibs

Siblings' Workshops for Professionals organised by Sibs

Two workshops have been arranged in the region taking place in Darlington on 3rd November 2009 and in Newcastle on 12th November 2009.

These workshops are aimed at professionals who have an interest in learning more about the needs of siblings of children with disabilities or life limiting conditions and who are interested in developing support services for siblings.

For booking forms and more information, see their website at **www.sibs.org.uk/events** or call Nicola on **01430 810094** or email **bookings@sibs.org.uk**

Siblings' Factsheet

Remember, Contact a Family produces a factsheet on Siblings' Issues which you can download from our website at

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/siblings.pdf>

If you would like a paper copy, just get in touch with us at the North East office and we can send you one in the post.

We also have factsheets on Fathers and Grandparents too, so let us know if you would like copies.



Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300

Local Cerebra Information

Cerebra in the North East

Cerebra supports families of children who have brain injuries, neurological conditions, learning disability or developmental delay, including Autistic Spectrum Disorders and ADHD.



A new Parent Support office is now open in Newcastle, where parents and carers from across the North East region are welcome to come in and discuss any of Cerebra's services. These include:

- Grants for adapted toys, trikes, computers, special car seats, some therapies or other activities to enhance a child's quality of life
- Sleep Counselling with individualised plans made through a telephone consultation or face to face
- Library of books about parenting and disabilities, as well as sensory toys for loan
- Personal Portfolios are colourful booklets to introduce your child to new people and communicate any special needs, preferences or requests
- Stress counselling help line 0800 0439385

All services at Cerebra are free of charge to families. For full information, or to arrange a visit to the Newcastle office or a home visit, please contact Sally McLean, Cerebra's Regional Officer on **0191 230 8036**

You can also read more about Cerebra on their website at www.cerebra.org.uk

During half term, why not go along to Cerebra's Family Fun Day which is being held on Tuesday 27th October 2009 at the Alan Shearer Centre, Newcastle upon Tyne.

Bring a picnic and enjoy loads of activities as well as free access to all the sensory rooms and play areas. Places are limited so phone early to book! **0191 230 8036**



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Local News

Ashington Children's Centre New Nurture Group

Ashington
Children's Centre

Plans are in place for a nurture group for children aged 0 – 9 years who have disabilities and/or additional needs and for their parents and carers who live in Ashington, Bedlington, Newbiggin and Lynemouth in Northumberland.

The plan is from mid November to hold a weekly Drop In at the Centre. The sessions will allow families to relax and socialise with other parents/carers and their children. There will also be the opportunity to meet up with some of the Centre's multi-agency staff including Health Visitors, Dietician, Speech and Language Worker as well as the Family Support Team.

On Saturday 7th November between 10.00am and 12.00pm, they are planning to hold an Open Morning at the Centre for families who wish to come along to find out more about the Drop In sessions. There will also be the opportunity to view the facilities on offer in Ashington as well as a chance to meet all the staff who are going to be around during the morning. The new sensory room will also be on show for you to view. A children's entertainer has promised to be there and freebies will be on offer as well as a buffet lunch.

All members of staff are really looking forward to meeting as many families as possible.



In the meantime, if you would like to make contact with Ashington Children's Centre, please ring **01670 819988** or email David Forster at **David.Forster@actionforchildren.org.uk**

Parent/Carers - sorry, we have been unable to include a Leisure Insert in this edition of "in Contact" We hope to have one in the next edition which will be circulated Winter 2009

Contact a Family North East 0191 213 6300

Local News

CP Talk - A New Cerebral Palsy Website Forum

Local parent Anna Wilson has recently set up this new website based forum for the parents and carers of children with Cerebral Palsy. It can be found at **www.cptalk.org.uk**

The aim of the site is to be a place to share thoughts, feelings and information. It is very new, but hopefully will grow in the coming months and years so why not take a look.

Barnardo's Bereavement Group

A small new, confidential group offering parent/carers a space to explore their feelings in a safe, supportive environment facilitated by two experienced counsellors has started recently .

The group will meet every fortnight until December 2009 from 6.00-8.00pm at Barnardo's Orchard/Mosaic Project in Jesmond, Newcastle. Please pass on details to anyone you think would benefit from attending. For more information and to book a place please call **0191 212 0237**

S.I.G.N (Social Inclusion Gardening Network)

Community Integrated Care (CIC) is a registered not for profit charity. Their property, The Whinnies, in Sunnyside, Newcastle includes 3 large allotments/community gardens for people with disabilities to use. An amount of £26,000 has been raised to make these gardens suitable for groups and families of all ages to use.

This means that anyone with a disability can come along and take part in activities including planting, cultivating, growing or nurturing their own part of the allotment. It might also help people to extend their social networks and make new friends. The allotments can be used as leisure gardens and can be reached by a locked gate and accessed at anytime they wish. There is no cost involved and the gardens are open to any families, regardless of where you live

If any families or support groups are interested or would like to arrange a visit to look round, please contact Brenda Cawton from CIC for further information on **0191 496 0418**

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Child Trust Fund News

Child Trust Fund Payments

Contact a Family is calling for families with disabled children to seek urgent advice about their benefits entitlements. From 2010, the Government will contribute £100 every year to the Child Trust Fund accounts of disabled children, with severely disabled children receiving £200 per year. To benefit from these payments, a child must receive Disability Living Allowance (DLA) and have been born on or after 1st September 2002. The first payments are due in April 2010 for those in receipt of DLA at any point in 2009-10.

Contact a Family is urging families to telephone our National Freephone Helpline for advice about claiming DLA and other benefits and maximising your income. We would also urge families already in receipt of DLA to have a full benefits check to ensure you are getting every penny you are entitled to. The helpline details are below so please give them a call and don't miss out!

Contact a Family North East Volunteer Parent Representative

Bob Mitchell is in Northumberland and is happy to help local parents and professionals who would like more information about Contact a Family.

You can contact him on **07532450218** or by email at **bob.mitchell@cafamily.org.uk**

National Freephone Number - 0808 808 3555

Contact a Family's **National Freephone Helpline** for parents of disabled children is open from Monday to Friday 10.00 a.m. to 4.00 p.m. (& 5.30 - 7.30 p.m. Monday)

The textphone number is **0808 808 3556** and Language Line is available for parents whose first language is not English

If you did not receive this newsletter at your own address and would like to be added to our mailing list please give us a call or write to us at Contact a Family, The Dene Centre, Castle Farm Road, Gosforth, Newcastle upon Tyne NE3 1PH.

Tel/Fax - 0191 213 6300

E-mail - northeast.office@cafamily.org.uk Website - www.cafamily.org.uk/northeast

The next edition of **In Contact** will be circulated **Winter 2009**

The views and suggestions in **In Contact** are those of individual contributors and are not necessarily supported by Contact a Family.

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