contact a family
for families with disabled children

incorporating
The Lady Hoare Trust

in contact

The newsletter of Contact a Family North West
www.cafamily.org.uk/northwest

Issue 27 Winter 2008/9

Contact a Family would like to thank the following for their generous support of our work in the North West Region: **Kathleen and Ivy Barnett, Children in Need, Parenting Fund**

Don't forget Dads!

Research has shown that generally fathers feel that support systems are aimed at Mothers. There is evidence that services could benefit from involving fathers of children with special needs more.

Contact a Family ran a successful event in October when we took a group including dads, grandads and uncles on a tour of Manchester United. We would like to follow up some of the issues raised at this event. This year Contact a Family will be running a series of workshops and events aimed at Dads and male carers in Manchester together with a programme of family events that enable families to participate in activities together.

Events help families to meet other families, raise their awareness of sources of help and obtain opportunities for getting involved so Dads can be better informed and be more actively involved in their child's care.

If you are a father of a child with special needs who is living in Manchester and would like to be involved in a series of events and workshops please contact Claire Kerfoot on 0161 743 0700 or email claire.kerfoot@cafamily.org.uk

The views and suggestions in this newsletter are those of individual contributors and not necessarily supported by Contact a Family. Contact a Family cannot accept responsibility for goods and services mentioned in this newsletter

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Monday – Friday 10am – 4pm Monday 5.30pm – 7.30pm
The Language Line interpretation service is available for those whose first language is not English.

North West Team at Contact a Family

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Here at Contact a Family we would like to make improvements to our Newsletters. We feel very strongly that parents/carers of disabled children have vast knowledge and expertise when carrying out their caring roll. We would therefore like to hear from parents who are willing to share their story, their experiences, hints, tips or any websites that you may have found useful. If you feel you have anything to contribute then please contact Karen Brumell on 0161 743 0700 or karen.brumell@cafamily.org.uk. The deadline for our next newsletter is **30th April 2009**.

Lastly don't forget our local web page which can be found at www.cafamily.org.uk/northwest. We will be advertising services and events on our page so please keep checking for updates.

You can also find us on Youtube by visiting us at www.uk.youtube.com/cafamily. On here are videos of parents who share their experiences. We will soon be launching a brand new look for our Youtube channel.

Contact a Family News

Contact a Family join Facebook

Several months ago Contact a Family launched a group on Facebook. You can gain access to videos, podcasts, parent blogs, pictures, discussion boards, event listings and share views and tips with other parents. At present we have around 900 members.

If you wish to join and register you can find us at
http://www.facebook.com/pages/Contact-a-Family/25040545213

New Podcasts

Contact a Family have been busy doing various podcasts which have been added to our web site. We have produced a new one on Autism which features an interview with a mother. The mother gives an honest account of what life is like having a son with autism. We have also produced the following podcasts

- Special Educational Needs
- Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance
- Benefits
- Money when your child reaches 16

To listen to the podcasts and other one's which are not listed above please visit http://www.cafamily.org.uk/news/podcasts.html
Remember to keep visiting this section for new and updated podcasts.

New booklet for Fathers

Contact a Family has produced a new information booklet entitled Fathers. A number of fathers from various workshops have helped to produce this guide. It has helpful hints and tips and also stories from fathers.

If you would like a copy of this guide, you can either download it from our website at http://www.cafamily.org.uk/fathers.pdf or contact the North West Office on 0161 743 0700

A guide to dealing with Bullying

Contact a Family has joined forces with Parentline Plus to produce a new guide about dealing with bullying for parents of disabled children.

The guide offers hints and tips on how to spot signs of bullying. It also offers actions and strategies you can take as a parent. The guide was developed with the help of parents who shared their experiences, tips and stories on bullying issues their own disabled children have experienced.

If you would like a copy of this guide you can either download if from our website at http://www.cafamily.org.uk/bullying.pdf or contact the North West Office on 0161 743 0700

Parentline Plus has also launched a new website surrounding the issues of bullying. The site is aimed at parents of children who have been or are being bullied. It includes personal accounts from parents and hints and tips on how to spot the signs of bullying. You can access the site by visiting http://www.besomeonetotell.org.uk

National Indicator for Disabled Children

Your experience matters – survey on the Disabled Children's Services National Indicator

In spring the government will be sending a survey to a sample of parents of disabled children to ask for their views on the services they receive. Parents' answers will be used to develop a National Indicator for disabled children. But what is a National Indicator, why is it important and why should parents complete the survey?

What is a National Indicator?

In April 2008, a new system was introduced to measure and compare the performance of each local authority in England. Every local authority will now be measured against 198 National Indicators, to see how well they are serving their local community. One of these National Indicators will specifically measure services for disabled children.

Why is the Disabled Children's Services National Indicator important?

This is the first time there has been a specific indicator for disabled children's services and crucially, the indicator will be measured by parents' experiences. Local areas will be able to see how they are performing and compare with others. The government will also be able to compare services for disabled children across different local areas. Local areas that perform badly will be expected to improve their services. Local services are likely to channel money and resources into meeting National Indicators where they are underperforming.

What difference have other National Indicators made?

One National Indicator says that patients should be referred to a health specialist within 18 weeks of being referred by a GP – the introduction of this National Indicator has significantly reduced patient waiting times.

Tell me more about the Disabled Children's Services National Indicator survey

The survey will be sent out to a sample of parents of disabled children in **spring** 2009. It will ask parents about their experiences of the services they receive from education, health and social care.

Part of the sample will be made up of families of disabled children who are receiving services. The other part wil be made up of families who indicate their child has a difficulty in a 'Health and well being questionnaire.' This questionnaire will be sent out to thousands of families by the **British Market Research Bureau (BMRB)** in January on behalf of the **Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF)**. This is to make sure families who are currently not receiving any services are included in the survey. The final sample will include families whose children have a range of disabilities spread across each local area.

If I receive a survey why should I complete it?

The Disabled Children's Services National Indicator is a key tool to ensure services improve in your local area. It will focus education, health and social care's attention on services for disabled children in a way that hasn't been seen before. Your experiences are crucial in measuring local services for families of disabled children. The survey is a unique chance to have your say – if you get the opportunity to take part, please do and encourage other parents to do the same.

Only a sample of parents with disabled children will be involved in the survey. It will be initially sent to some parents in the spring and then to a larger sample in the summer. After that it will be sent out on a regular basis once a year.

If you or anyone else you know about has any problems filling in this survey, there will be a telephone number clearly marked on the questionnaire that you can call to get assistance. This information will also be provided in several community languages.

Information, groups and resources

On the 9th December the **Home Heat Helpline** winter campaign was launched with new branding, a new website and with the support of actor Richard Wilson and paralympain Tanni Grey-Thompson. The helpline is the only national service set up to enable people to access the free grants and services they need to manage their fuel bills and reduce their energy.

The freephone helpline (0800 33 66 99) is aimed at older people, families with young children and people with disabilities or long term health conditions. It provides vulnerable customers with a direct link to specialist team within their energy supplier and access to a range of services including:

- The Priority Service Register which provides extra services including bills in large text or Braille, security passwords and free gas safety checks
- Grants for free home insulation
- Flexible payment options for customers in fuel debt
- Benefits entitlement checks
- A disconnection safety net which ensures that no vulnerable customer is ever knowlingly disconnected

As well as providing direct help through access to grants and support for those most in need, the helpline also acts as a one-stop shop for access to the full range of support services from a wide range of organisations. This year, for the first time, the Home Heat Helpline will be able to direct calls – at no cost to the caller – to a number of specialised services including Warm Front, Consumer Focus, Energy Efficiency Advice Centres, benefits teams at DWP and other agencies.

Since it was set up by the Energy Retail Association in 2005, the Helpline has received over 80,000 calls from across the UK with a quarter of customers reporting reduced energy bills and many more accessing benefits that they were previously unaware of. As part of the re-launch of the service, for the first time, customers or their relatives and friends will be able to make enquiries and access support online at www.homeheathelpline.org.uk

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Turn2us is a new charity offering an online service to help people in need in the UK. They have information on all benefits and grants which are available. If you wish to apply for any grants it also tells you how to apply. The website is www.turn2us.org.uk

Challenging Behaviour Foundation provides information and support to parents and professionals caring for individuals with severe learning disabilities and challenging behaviour. Please visit www.thecbf.org.uk or telephone 0845 602 7885 for further information.

Children Today is a charity that gives grants for a wide range of equipment for children and young people with sickness or disability across the UK. These include adapted tricycles, powered, manual and sports wheelchairs, sensory equipment, adapted car seats – anything that is not covered by the NHS. They help young people up to the age of 25 years and deal directly with the young person or their parent/carer. For further information please visit www.children-today.org.uk or telephone 01244 335622

Information, groups and resources

Dyspraxia Foundation Helpline

If you are the parent /carer of a child with Dyspraxia, the local volunteer parent representative for the Dyspraxia Foundation can be contacted on Saturday evenings between 7pm and 9pm. The telephone number is 0161 483 0335.

Netmums now has a new message board section in their Coffeehouse chat called Special Needs and Disabilities. Contact a Family has been providing support to mums and dads with a disabled child through their Netmums website. Sarah Lewis from our Northeast office is on hand to answer any questions that may arise when caring for your disabled child. Please visit www.netmums.com where you can register for free.

S.N.A.P
Special needs and profound

S.N.A.P. aims to provide advice, information and support for parents. This Warrington based support group has an emphasis on targeting dads and male carers – (Partners are also very welcome to attend).

The group holds meetings at The Saracens Head Pub, Wilderspool Causeway in the private lounge. The next three meetings will be held on **29th April, 8th July** and **7th October**. They all start at approximately 8pm. For further information you can contact parent reps Andrew and Joanne Freeman, telephone 01925 456 227 or you can visit their website at www.snap-support.co.uk

Good news from the Family Fund

The Family Fund has recently increased the age limit of children they can help. You can now apply for 16 and 17 year olds in England and Wales. For further information please visit www.familyfund.org.uk or telephone 0845 130 4542 or 01904 621115.

The family fund understand how expensive caring for a disabled child can be. They can only afford to give grants to around 48,000 families a year and then only to families on low incomes who meet specific criteria. Family Fund Extra is their way of finding new ways to support and make a difference to all families that care for a disabled child or young person.

Family Fund Extra is separate from their grant making and will help families make their money go further. It will offer a variety of discounted goods and services such as electrical products and holidays. It will also allow supporters of the Family Fund to make a difference to disabled children through donations and donate as you shop opportunities.

If you would like to be part of this exciting new venture, benefiting from discounts and services that Family Fund Extra will offer then please visit www.familyfundextra.org.uk

If you would like a list of charities which give grants to families with disabled children, ring the Contact a Family freephone helpline on 0808 808 3555 to receive your copy.

CARERS EMERGENCY CARD SCHEME

Have you registered on the Carers Emergency Card Scheme run by Manchester Carers Centre. It provides peace of mind and is **FREE** of charge. Please contact the centre on 0161 835 2995

Events

Phab is a leading national charity committed to promoting and encouraging disabled and non-disabled people to take part in a wide range of social and sports activities. For many years Phab has provided and ran a range of projects enabling children and young people with and without disabilities to spend a week together at accessible venues and to be involved in a wide range of activities.

Each project provides a safe, supportive environment which builds self-confidence, encourages people to explore their horizons, learn new skills and make new friends.

The aims of the project are:

- To nuture self-confidence so that everyone can take their first steps towards self-fulfilment at a pace they are comfortable with.
- To encourage people to explore their horizons and to enable them to challenge limitations placed on them by their own attitudes, their environment and the misconceptions of others.
- To provide an environment where everyone can live, work and play together, in order to create an atmosphere where they can realise that we each have values, strengths and talents.

In 2009 Phab is organising a summer programme of amazing residential projects at specialist centres around the country offering tuition in a wide range of outdoor activities. Each project usually runs for 7 days.

Anyone aged 9 – 16 years old can apply (this age range is a guideline only) with our without a disability – individuals, brothers and sisters, friends, small groups, and carers are welcome to attend. You do not need to be a Phab Club Member and Phab welcomes referrals and applications from all sources around Great Britain.

Everyone who attends is able to take part in a huge range of activities such as canoeing, climbing, abseiling, caving, horse riding, sailing, archers, zip wire, swimming, discos, trips out to theme parks and other attractions.

To request an application form for any of Phabs projects or if you would like further information please contact **Rebecca Hargreaves National Development Manager** 01254 824 784 rebecca.hargreaves@phab.org.uk or visit www.phab.org.uk

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Big Screen Entertainment – Race to Witch Mountain

Odeon at The Printworks in Manchester. Wednesday 15th April 2009

Arrive from 10.15am for film starting at approximately 11.00am

A Las Vegas cab driver comes across two teens with supernatural powers and then finds himself in an adventure that he can't explain. They soon discover that their only chance to save the world lies in the secrets of Witch Mountain. The race begins as they are being tracked down by the government, mobsters and extra terrestrials as they try to stop them.

If you would like to book your FREE places please contact Karen Brumell on 0161 743 0700 or karen.brumell@cafamily.org.uk

Contact Us

Freephone Helpline 0808 808 3555

Freephone Textphone 0808 808 3556

Helpline open Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm and Mondays 5.30pm to 7.30pm

If you would like information in another language or another format, please ask us.

0808 808 3555

যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

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Si vous souhaitez des informations dans une autre langue ou sous un autre format, veuillez nous le demander.

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यदि आपको सूचना किसी अन्य भाषा या अन्य रूप में चाहिये तो कृपया हमसे कहें

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If you would like to be on our mailing list and receive this newsletter as well as details of our family events and workshops, free of charge, please complete the form below and send to:

Contact a Family North West, 6th Floor, St James House,
Pendleton Way, Salford, M6 5FW. Fax: 0161 743 0711

I am a ☐ parent ☐ support group

☐ voluntary organisation ☐ statutory sector

Name:

Organisation:

Your post/title if you are a paid worker:

Address:

Post Code:

Telephone no:

Email: Fax: