contact a family
for families with disabled children
dèan ceanglaichean le teaghlaichean

incorporating
The Lady Hoare Trust

in contact

The newsletter of Contact a Family Scotland

www.cafamily.org.uk/scotland

The Fisher family, Fife

The Lally family, West Dunbartonshire

The Meek family, South Lanarkshire

The Reid family, Inverclyde

The four Scottish families who took part in Contact a Family's 'Our family, our future' report which was launched in November - see inside for further details. Also inside this issue: direct payments, the latest on fSDC, keeping warm, the Haggeye youth forum and much more.

Spring 2010

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Volunteer Parent Representatives

Our Volunteer Parent Representatives are all parents of disabled children who offer information and support to other parents in their area.

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Contact a Family News

Welcome to the first issue of **In Contact** for 2010!

It's been a very cold winter so far for many of us, with heavy snow and sub-zero temperatures bringing a mixture of fun and misery. We know that some families with disabled children can struggle to keep warm in winter and page 4 highlights some of the help available.

Getting help to adapt your home and direct payments are two topics parents often ask us about. Contact a Family's Welfare Rights Specialist, Derek Sinclair, explains how direct payments work on page 6, and outlines the new system of financial assistance for home adaptations on page 7.

for Scotland's Disabled Children continues to grow apace. The website is now live and the 'missing millions' campaign has recently been launched. If you are a parent, and you get In Contact by post, you'll find a postcard you can use to send to your local councillor or MSP. See page 9 for full details.

Helping make your Cash Count

Contact a Family has launched Cash Counts, a new online service dedicated to ensuring families with disabled children are getting every penny they are entitled to.

Cash Counts includes:

- An online benefits calculator, allowing families to work out how much they are entitled to
- A top tips guide on the benefits available to families with disabled children written by the Contact a Family helpline
- A frequently asked questions page to help families navigate the complex benefits system.

Visit Cash Counts at http://www.cafamily.org.uk/cashcounts

Alternatively telephone Contact a Family's free helpline to make sure you're getting every penny you are entitled to 0808 808 3555.

Mixed Sources
Product group from well-managed forests and other controlled sources
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The views and suggestions in this newsletter are those of individual contributers and are not necessarily supported by Contact a Family. Contact a Family cannot accept responsibility for any goods or services mentioned in or enclosed with this newsletter.

Launch of 'Our family, our future' report

Contact a Family's report 'Our family, our future', highlighting the stories of 30 families with disabled children, was published in November. To launch the report we held a reception and exhibition of the 30 family photographs at the Scottish Parliament on 9th November 2009.

The event brought together three of the four participating families living in Scotland, MSPs, professionals, Contact a Family volunteers and staff including Chief Executive, Srabani Sen and many others.

The published report - a collection of photos and stories of 30 families - is insightful and inspiring. The families tell their stories including their hopes and aspirations for their disabled children with great courage and honesty. Fiona Fisher – our Volunteer Parent Representative from Fife who had contributed to the report - gave a presentation on her personal experience.

Michael McMahon MSP hosted the event and congratulated Contact a Family on its work to support families - empowering them to live the lives they wish to lead. He welcomed the report highlighting that it illustrated the diversity of families affected by disability and the challenges they faced as well as the rewards gained. Lady Susanna Crawford, as Chair of the Contact a Family's National Council for Scotland, thanked Michael for his continued support on behalf of Contact a Family Scotland.

The event was attended by around 70 people and we were delighted that Adam Ingram (Minister for Children and Early Years) was able to come along with other Scottish MSPs including Des McNulty and Elaine Murray. It was a great occasion and a lovely and warm way to celebrate our 30th Anniversary.

The 'Our family, our future report' is available to download from the Contact a Family webiste http://www.cafamily.org.uk or call us for a copy on Tel: 0131 659 2930.

Fiona Fisher spoke about her family's hopes for the future

MSPs Michael McMahon, left, and Elaine Murray, below, enjoying the exhibtion

Keeping children and families warm this winter

For many families, winter marks the beginning of their struggle to afford to heat their homes. However, this year could be different. Mike Thornton, Director, Scotland for the Energy Saving Trust, says a new initiative from the Scottish Government can help.

"We are all looking for ways to make our fuel costs lower and our homes warmer this winter and the Energy Assistance Package has been designed to do just that. It's open to everyone in Scotland and can provide real help to those on low incomes, including families with disabled children under 16, young families with children under five and pregnant mums-to-be.

"The package is a new approach to helping people save money and save energy and provides real benefits – from cost savings on gas and electricity, to home insulation or even a whole new heating system."

By calling the Energy Assistance Package hotline (free from landlines) on 0800 512012 or visiting www.energyassistancepackage.com you can find out about the offers that may be available, including:

- Energy advice – to find out how to make your home as energy efficient as possible.
- Help to find out if you are entitled to more money through benefits or tax credits.
- Help to switch to the lowest-cost gas or electricity rates for those who qualify.
- Loft or cavity wall insulation.
- Other measures such as additional insulation, central heating and renewable heating systems.

Brrrrr.....it's freezing – you may be eligible for Cold Weather Payments

Families with disabled children may be eligible for a Cold Weather Payment after the continued freezing conditions. The UK government pays £25 for each week of cold weather to those with a disabled child and in receipt of:

- Income support
- Income based Job Seeker's Allowance
- Income related Employment Support Allowance

Those eligible must live in an area where the average temperature is recorded as zero degrees celsius or below for seven consecutive days.

The payments are made during the period Novemer 1st to 31st March 2010 and will be paid automatically to those in receipt of the above benefits.

For more information telephone the Contact a Family helpline 0808 808 3555.

The winter guide - help with fuel bills and keeping warm

Contact a Family's winder guide gives information about keeping fuel bills low, sources of financial help to pay bills and some practical suggestions around keeping warm in winter.

Download a copy from the Contact a Family website http://www.cafamily.org.uk/pdfs/winter.pdf or call the helpline for a free copy Tel: 0808 808 3555.

News

Contact a Family supports adapted trolley campaign – join our drive!

A mum from Devon has successfully persuaded her local Sainsbury's to purchase a specially adapted trolley seat for disabled toddlers. She is now calling for every supermarket to stock the adapted trolley and Contact a Family is supporting the campaign.

Julie Evett said: "The experience of going shopping for my daughter Rose is really stimulating. She loves the sounds and smells and the experience helps her development. I think disabled children should be out and about with their parents enjoying life to the maximum, not hidden away and isolated. This trolley has given us a new lease of life and I'd like to see all the major supermarket chains stock at least one."

Julie approached Sainsbury's in Barnstaple North Devon about the difficulties she was experiencing and Customer Services Manager, Katie Southworth, agreed to order a specially adapted trolley.

Julie has set up a Facebook petition group ***Every Supermarket needs this new disabled trolley*** to support her campaign. Contact a Family is urging families to sign up to the group to help families get out and about doing everyday activities that other families enjoy.

Link to Facebook petition http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=180123000906&ref=mf

Link to news item on BBC website: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8328654.stm

We Exist: A Bill for Autism, A Bill for Scotland

The National Autistic Society Scotland has launched this campaign to ask the Scottish Government to implement a national strategy, backed with legislative power through a Scottish Autism Bill, to meet the needs of people living with autism in Scotland.

Hugh O'Donnell MSP has also published his proposal for a draft Scottish Autism Strategy Bill in the Scottish Parliament.

The proposal is based on implementing in Scotland the measures contained in the Westminster Autism Act 2009 which only apply to England. It would require the Scottish Government to put in place a national ASD strategy and to place appropriate duties on councils and health boards that will support its implementation.

The public consultation opened on the 6th January 2010 and all responses must be submitted by Tuesday 30th March. The consultation itself and details on how to respond can be found on the Scottish Parliament website at www.scottish.parliament.uk in the sections Parliamentary Business - Bills - Proposals for Members' Bills.

To find out more about ***We Exist: A Bill for Autism, A Bill for Scotland*** visit www.autism.org.uk/scottishautismbill

Social Work Changes Lives

Social work has had a difficult time in the media over the last twelve months. And the coverage often only tells one side of the story. What's more the media often focuses on a very limited range of social work services. For example, work with disabled people is often ignored. Now a campaign has been set up by the Association of Directors of Social Work and the Scottish Social Services Council to improve understanding of social work services in Scotland.

The ***Social Work Changes Lives*** campaign aims to highlight examples in the media of where social work services have improved people's lives. It is also trying to ensure that the media have a wider and more accurate picture of the value of social work.

If you have experiences of social work services you would like to share, or views you would like to express you can visit the campaign's facebook page. If you are a member of facebook you can clink on the link on the Contact a Family Page or search for ***Social Work Changes Lives***. Alternatively you can contact Lynne Veitch by e-mail: lynne.veitch@adsw.org.uk

Direct Payments

If your social work department agrees that your child needs care services, you can choose to get money to buy these services yourself rather than have the care organised for you. This is called a direct payment.

How do I go about getting direct payments
You have the legal right to choose direct payments rather than getting a service provided by social work. If you are already getting services from social work you can ask for direct payments instead. However if you don't currently get services, your first step should be to ask social work to assess your child's care needs. It is a good idea to also ask for a carer's assessment of your own needs at the same time.

After an assessment
Once social work has carried out an assessment they must decide whether there is a need for services. If they agree services are needed they should then set out a 'care plan' outlining the support required. This care plan will set out the types of care required and the amount and frequency of that care.

At this point you should have the option of:

- asking social work to provide services to meet all of the identified needs; or
- asking for direct payments so that you can buy services to meet all the assessed needs; or
- opting for a 'mixed package', for example social work provides some of the required services and you use direct payments to buy the rest.

You can use a direct payments to buy care from a **service provider** such as a care agency or a voluntary organisation**.** Alternatively you can use a direct payment to employ someone as a **personal assistant** for your child. This latter option gives you the most control over how your child's care needs are met but it also involves more responsibility for you, as you will become the employer of the person providing care.

No assessed needs?
Direct payments are offered as an alternative to services that social work would otherwise organise. If social work don't accept that your child needs support, direct payments will not be an option. If you disagree with a social work assessment you should consider challenging it via their complaint procedure. Contact our free helpline for more details.

What can I use direct payments for?
There is no exhaustive list of the things that you can use a direct payment for. You should be allowed flexibility in how you spend your direct payments as long as you can show that the support will meet your child's assessed needs and promote their welfare. However there are restrictions on using direct payments to buy residential accommodation or to pay for permanent adaptations to your home. There are also certain limitations placed on the amount of short breaks that can be paid for via direct payments.

You will need to discuss your plans with your social worker and they will want to draw up an agreement spelling out what care needs will be met via direct payments and how these services will be provided.

Are there any other restrictions on how I use my direct payments?
Direct payments can only be used to buy services that would otherwise be provided by social work. However, where social work and your local Health Board are jointly funding a care package it is possible for direct payments to cover the healthcare elements too.

There are restrictions on using a direct payment to buy care from close relatives. However social work can agree to make an exception to this rule, and allow you to employ a close relative if they believe that this is necessary to 'safeguard or promote the welfare' of your child.

How much money should I get in direct payments?
The amount of your direct payments should be enough to buy a service of the same sort of quality and quantity as social work would have otherwise provided.

There is no national set rate of hourly pay used in calculating direct payments. However it is not unusual for individual social work departments to have a 'standard' pay rate which it uses in calculating your direct payment amount. However, if your child has complex needs, your direct payment should cover the cost of purchasing appropriate care for him or her, even if this is above the rate being paid to meet the needs of other disabled children.

If you want to employ a personal assistant, your direct payments must also include enough to cover any other costs without which the service could not be legally provided e.g. insurance premiums, training costs, emergency cover for staff absence, pay roll or book-keeping fees.

Will I be asked to make a financial contribution to my direct payments?
If your social work department charges for children's services, they may ask you to pay towards the package of care that your direct payments fund. You should not be charged more than it is reasonable for you to pay and no deduction should be made at all if you or your partner gets Income Support, income-based Jobseekers Allowance, income related Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit at a rate higher than the basic family element or Working Tax Credit.

Contact a Family produce a free guide to direct payments for parents in Scotland, to get a copy or for further advice about direct payments telephone our free helpline on **0808 808 3555**.

Adapting your home

If you are an owner-occupier or a private tenant, you may be able to get help from your local council with the cost of adaptations.
A new system of financial assistance has been introduced in Scotland – this includes, for the first time, mandatory grants to cover the costs of adapting a property to meet the needs of a disabled person.

What is different about the new scheme?
Under the previous home improvement scheme, the only grants that were mandatory were those given to provide standard amenities such as baths, showers and toilets. Grants for all other types of work were always at the discretion of local authorities. Under new rules, councils now have to offer grants for any structural adaptations (other than certain extensions) that are assessed as 'essential' in order to meet the needs of a disabled occupant including a disabled child.

If a mandatory grant is awarded on the basis of disability, it must cover at least 80 per cent of costs. However, where the applicant, or anyone living with them, is getting Income Support, income-related Employment and Support Allowance or Pension Credit (guarantee credit) it must meet 100 per cent of costs. Where someone does not receive one of these benefits, a council may still decide to give a grant for more than 80 per cent of costs.

What is the maximum amount of grant I can get?
Under the new rules, there is no longer any fixed upper limit on the amount of a mandatory grant. Instead the grant must cover the costs of the necessary work as identified in the assessment of need.

How will local councils decide if an adaptation is essential or not?
Councils are only under a duty to offer grants where an adaptation has been assessed as 'essential' to the needs of a disabled person.

Are there any types of work that a grant will not meet?
The new rules state that councils cannot give a mandatory grant to extend a property in order to provide additional living accommodation. If an extension provides a standard amenity (such as a bathroom) alongside additional living accommodation, then a grant can only be awarded for that portion of the costs linked to the standard amenity. If an extension solely creates space for a standard amenity and no additional living space is created, then full costs can be met.

When did the rules come into effect?
Local authorities have until April 2010 before they have to fully implement some discretionary aspects of the new scheme. However, guidance from the Scottish government emphasises that those parts of the new legislation that place legal duties upon local authorities, including the provision of mandatory grants as outlined above, came into force in April 2009.

The Scottish government's booklet, *Help with adaptations to your home – a guide for disabled people in private housing* is free to download at www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/266465/0079748.pdf

fSDC update

for Scotland's Disabled Children (fSDC) has just launched the national campaign to turn some of the missing £34million into services and support for disabled children and young people. And now they are looking for supporters' help to take the campaign local.

"We want our Missing Millions" aims to persuade local authorities to spend their share of the money to make a real difference to disabled children and young people's lives. How much money is available? This is where it gets complicated.

In 2008, the Scottish Government received £34million over 3 years as a result of the UK government making new money available for the Aiming High for Disabled Children strategy in England. This was in response to the Every Disabled Child Matters campaign which was hard fought by 33,000 parents and supporters, including many from Scotland. So each year, councils in Scotland have received £11.3million. The fSDC liaison project has worked out (using the same formula the Scottish Government uses) how much of this £11.3million each local authority will have received. There is a table showing this breakdown available on the website **www.fsdc.org.uk**. Local authorities have now received the last of the money in the 2010-11 finance settlement and in the next few weeks will be meeting to decide their budget priorities, as a council overall and then within services. So we don't have much time which is why we need to act now!

for Scotland's disabled Children (fSDC) wants every local authority, through the relevant service committees, to commit to spend its share of this year's Missing Millions on transforming services and support for disabled children and young people. This could mean providing more of an existing service to more children and their families or piloting a new way of supporting families or improving existing provision.

And because "We want our Missing Millions" is targeted at local authorities, we need your help to succeed. Local councillors are more likely to listen to local people whose votes they will be asking for in 2012. Here are 5 quick and easy steps to get a campaign going in your area:

1. Become an fSDC supporter – sign up at www.fsdc.org.uk/join or e-mail: info@fsdc.org.uk or call 0131 659 2939
2. Find out who your local councillors and MSPs are – we have a handy tool on the website to do this; just enter your postcode and you will be taken to a website listing all their names and contact details
3. Check how much of the Missing Millions your local authority has received
4. Download the template letter – add in your local details, feel free to add your own message and send off
5. Order "We want our missing millions" postcards – a quick and easy way to reach local councillors; order enough to share with family, friends and other local supporters – they are free! Tel: 0131 659 2939 or e-mail: info@fsdc.org.uk

And here are 3 activities that will take a bit more time to do:

1. set up a campaign group through an existing local support group, carers centre or branch or service of a national organisation, or feel free to set up your own; the website has a basic guide to campaigning that will keep you right
2. make appointments to attend local councillors' surgeries – these are usually publicised in local press or available from council offices
3. send a news release to local media – there is a template release for you to "localise" on our website

You can do as much or as little as you have time for but please do something. And do it now! It's time to tell Scotland's local authorities "We want our Missing Millions!"

P.S. Please remember to tell us what you are doing and how your campaign is going. Contact info@fsdc.org.uk or call 0131 659 2939.

What's on?

What Do Human Rights Mean for Disabled Children in the UK?

Friday 30th April 2010
Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh

The UK's 700,000 disabled children are widely recognised as facing disproportionate discrimination in realising their basic human rights such as the right to life; the right to a family life; the right to play; the right to an effective education and the right to health care. This conference will look at the human rights of children living with disability in the UK, in the context of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the UK's reports to the United Nations.

The aim of the conference is to bring together academics, lawyers, medics, parents, children, voluntary organisations, NGOs, service providers and policy makers to examine: Where are we now? How can we ensure children with disability are fully included in all future reports to the United Nations? How can we make the Convention and the fulfillment of human rights generally a reality for the UK's disabled children?

Places cost £150, with some subsidised places at £100. For further information contact the Centre for Research on Families and Relationships
Tel: 0131 651 1832 e-mail: l.marshall@ed.ac.uk
Web: www.crfr.ac.uk/events/disabledchild.html

Special Scotland Parent Support Meeting

11.30am-1pm, 27th March 2010
Regal Community Theatre, Bathgate

Special Scotland is a Scottish charity aimed at helping parents with autistic children and young people. It offers a free online library and e-newsletter and provides grants to families. This meeting is designed for parents and carers to engage with each other and offer and receive advice based on their own and other people's experiences. Staff are on hand to offer information about the charity and the grants that are available. Tea and coffee, and biscuits, are available to make the day as informal as possible. Places are limited so booking is essential. Some help with transport costs may be available.

For further information Tel: 07843559572
e-mail: info@specialscotland.org
Web: http://www.specialscotland.org

Enteral feeding in children with complex and exceptional healthcare needs

Wednesday 24th February 2010
e-Science institute, Edinburgh

The Managed Clinical Network for Children with Exceptional Health Care Needs is holding this day on the practical and emotional issues related to enteral feeding. The day will include sessions on the practical and emotional issues; decision making and risk assessment; issues related to the implementation of decisions in school and local authority setting; and the launch of the CEN Education module on the emotional issues related to tube feeding. This event is for parents and carers of children with complex and exceptional healthcare needs, plus voluntary sector, healthcare, education and social work professionals. Early registration before 14th February is recommended, however, late spaces will be available for parents and carers.
For further information Tel: 0131 537 9218
Web: http://www.nesc.ac.uk/action/registration/index.cfm?id=1027

Families as Learning Partners

Tuesday 9th March 2010, Hamilton

It can be hard for parents of children with additional support needs to get involved with their child's school. This year's Enquire conference aims to look at the successes and challenges for parental involvement. It will cover parental rights; how parental involvement links with additional support for learning; the opportunities, through parental involvement legislation and parent councils, for parents of children with additional support needs to get involved in school; the importance of partnerships between the child, the school and the family; making the most of parent/carer's expert knowledge of a child; and how school staff can help parents get involved. The conference is for parents and practitioners.

Subsidised rate of £10 for parents of children with additional support needs.

For further details Tel: 0131 222 2425 or
e-mail: info@enquire.org.uk
Web: http://www.enquire.org.uk/conference

Fledglings is a national charity which aims to assist parents and carers of disabled children, or those with additional needs of any kind, by identifying, sourcing and supplying practical, affordable products to address every day issues. They specialise in finding those unusual items which may not be easily available elsewhere or those designed specially for children with additional needs.

Some examples of the Fledglings product range are:

- Age-appropriate waterproof backed/ lined bibs, aprons and scarves for feeding/drooling.
- All-in-one vests and sleepsuits.
- Waterproof bedding including wipe clean duvets and pillows.
- Cups, plates, cutlery and other products to assist eating and drinking.
- ID wristbands.
- Trikes, including some with parent controls, for children with a wide range of disabilities.
- A range of beds to suit different needs.
- All-terrain buggies for children and adults.

These are just a few examples out of many hundreds of products that Fledglings know about and have supplied before. Whether you have a particular product in mind that you wish to find, or have a problem you don't know how to solve, get in touch and Fledglings will help you to find the most suitable product to meet your requirements.

For further information contact Fledglings on Tel: 0845 458 1124 or e-mail: enquiries@fledglings.org.uk
Web: www.fledglings.org.uk

Access Scottish Theatre

The Access Scottish Theatre guide contains useful information about accessible performances and venues across Scotland. Forthcoming performances include the Sound of Music at His Majesty's Theatre, Aberdeen on Saturday 3rd April 2010 (with Captioning); Peppa Pig at the King's Theatre, Glasgow on Thursday 8th April 2010 (BSL Interpreted); and Treasure Island: Wee Stories at the Eden Court Theatre, Inverness on Friday 30th April 2010 (Audio Described).

You can download plain text and PDF versions of the guide at www.accessscottishtheatre.com or Tel: 0131 220 6393 to request an audio CD or print copy. You can also visit www.youtube.com/user/BSLscottishtheatre to find information about the guide and theatres in BSL.

React Holidays in Wemyss Bay

React provides practical help to families who have children with potentially life-limiting or life-threatening condition. One of the ways it does this is by enabling families to have a week's break free of charge at one of their mobile homes throughout the UK. The charity operates two mobile homes in Wemyss Bay, Renfrewshire, and currently there is good availability, including during the main summer months of June, July and August. The season runs from late March to the end of October. The homes are fitted with three bedrooms, sleep six and are fully furnished to a high standard making them home from home. Unfortunately they are not wheelchair accessible.

Applications must be supported by a doctor, social worker or other health care professional but families can contact React in the first place to make a provisional booking. For further information contact React on Tel: 020 8940 2575
Web: www.reactcharity.org

Congratulations to Drake Music Scotland

who recently secured a grant from the People's Millions to **create a recording studio at their premises in Edinburgh for use by people with disabilities.** There are many talented songwriters and performers with disabilities in Edinburgh and a fully accessible and equipped recording studio will give them the chance to let everyone hear what they can do!

For more information about Drake Music Scotland contact them on Tel: 0131 659 4766 or visit their website: **www.drakemusicscotland.org**

Haggeye - the forum for blind and partially sighted young people in Scotland

RNIB Scotland's Youth Forum, Haggeye, was launched in June 2007 with 3 years funding from the Lottery. The Forum works with young people with sight loss in Scotland aged 12-25 years, and in partnership with various organisations and service providers. In developing this project, the young people themselves identified the project aim through stating issues that affect them in their everyday lives. The ultimate aim of the project is to encourage more local and national facilities, services and areas to be made more accessible to people with sight loss.

This forum was created in direct response to concerns that had been raised from young people with sight loss. The young people felt they were not always, if ever, consulted on issues or events that impact upon them. They wanted to share their concerns with a peer group who also have sight loss and felt that organising into a collective voice would ultimately lead to a more inclusive society. Haggeye, as the Forum is now called, was chosen as a name by the young people themselves.

Haggeye offers opportunities to enable young people's voices to be heard. It provides opportunities for young people with sight loss to meet new people and make new friends, take part in social activities, discuss issues, influence the provision of services and importantly, to campaign for change. Whilst the current funding ends in May 2010, RNIB have a made a commitment to continue the good work of youth engagement and involvement!

Haggeye have had great success during the life of the project and aim to keep up the good work. One of our most recent activities has been our involvement with the Scottish Parliament as a partner in their Community Partnerships Project; a groundbreaking project to give a voice to blind and partially sighted young people that are typically under-represented in political life. As part of this initiative, we have produced an audio CD about the positives of engaging with the Parliament. If you'd like a free copy, please contact the Haggeye office on 0131 652 3147 or email youthforumscotland@rnib.org.uk

If you'd like to know more about Haggeye or RNIB, please contact Mo Colvin, Project Development Officer on 0131 652 3136 or email mo.colvin@rnib.org.uk

Groups and Resources

The Family Fund gives grants to families who have one or more disabled child for things that make life easier and more enjoyable. Here are some examples of what grants can be used for: holidays, a computer, play equipment, a trip to the zoo, removal costs, a washing machine, swimming lessons, internet support package, a karaoke machine and driving lessons.

The Family Fund can consider your application if you live in the UK, are the parent of a disabled child or young person aged 17 or under and have a household income of less than £25,000 per year or your income is entirely from benefits.

Telephone 0845 130 45 42 for an application pack or download one from the Family Fund website **www.familyfund.org.uk**

Support for Groups

Contact a Family first began as a local support group for parents living in the London Borough of Wandsworth. Today, we are in touch with hundreds of parent support groups and understand the value of giving families the opportunity to come together and share their experiences.

If you are thinking of setting up a group, or you'd like help to develop the group you are in, we can help.

Our **group action pack** guides offer information for both new and established groups, on a wide variety of topics. The guides are based on groups' experiences and cover issues ranging from how to start a group, local campaigning, creating a website and fundraising. Find a full list of the guides on the Contact a Family Scotland website www.cafamily.org.uk or call 0131 659 2930 for details.

Our **local parent support group network scheme** is open to any local group supporting parents of disabled children and is completely free of charge. Some of the benefits in joining include: entry of your group's details on the Contact a Family database which enables our helpline to refer parents to your group; the option of having your group's details and activities publicised on the Contact a Family Scotland office webpage; and a free copy of Connected, Contact a Family's quarterly magazine.

Whether your group is large or small, brand new or well-established, we can offer information, advice and guidance. Tel: 0131 659 2930 or e-mail: lesley.gray@cafamily.org.uk

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a parent / carer

a parents' group contact

a professional

Contact a Family Scotland, Craigmillar Social Enterprise & Arts Centre, 11 Harewood Road, Edinburgh EH16 4NT