

In Contact - Issue 22, Spring 2007

Corrections - Front Page

Stoke on Trent

Children's Services (Parents Direct)

0800 015 212

Please note that the contact information for Staffordshire has been amended as follows:

Staffordshire County Council

0800 093 0417

Contact: Anne George (Special Needs Co-ordinator)

Staffordshire Parent Direct

0845 650 9876

Tamworth Borough Council

01827 709709

Lichfield District Council

01543 308 765

Contact: Mary Cook

Cannock Chase District Council

01543 425 996

Newcastle Borough Council

01782 717717

(30 April 2007)

contact a family
for families with disabled children

incorporating
The Lady Hoare Trust

in **contact**



The newsletter of Contact a Family West Midlands
www.cafamily.org.uk/wmids



Be an Early Bird!



Looking for advice and information about play and leisure activities for your children with Special Needs during the school holidays? Find out what is available in advance and apply ahead of time!

West Midlands

Kids (West Midlands)
0121 355 2707

Birmingham

Childcare Information Bureau
0121 303 3521
Dens of Equality
0121 443 1159
Play Care Network Birmingham
0121 464 8740

Coventry

Coventry City Council: Special
Needs Playschemes
024 7640 5700

Dudley

Children's Information Service
01384 814 398

Hertfordshire

Children's Information Service
01438 737 502
Marches Family Network
01568 614908

Solihull

Children's Information Service
0800 389 8667

Staffordshire

Staffordshire County Council
01785 223 121
Stafford Borough Council
01785 619 000
Tamworth Borough Council
01827 709 709
Tamworth Parent Forum
01827 261 756

Shropshire

Children & Young Peoples
Services (Inclusion Service)
01743 254 307

Telford & Wrekin

Children's Play Services
01952 202 100

Walsall

Children's Information Service
01922 653 383

Warwickshire

SEN Children's Information
Service **0845 090 8044**

Wolverhampton

Wolverhampton Early Years
Partnership **01902 551 487**

Worcester

Children's Information Service
01905 790 560

Sarah Lee (Development Officer)
Jean Mitchell (Development Assistant)
Shazia Malik (Asian Development Worker)

Contact a Family West Midlands,
Prospect Hall, 12 College Walk,
Selly Oak, Birmingham, B29 6LE
Tel: 0121 415 4624 Fax: 0121 415 4922
Email: westmids@cafamily.org.uk

Gaye Cowley (Family Worker)
Tel: 01527 833293

National Freephone Helpline 0808 808 3555

Contact a Family and Citizens Advice Bureau

New help from Contact a Family and Citizens Advice if you are in financial difficulties

In 2005 Contact a Family and the Family Fund carried out some research which found that many families with disabled children were in financial difficulties and struggling with increasing debts. They were juggling loan repayments, credit cards and were getting behind with rent or mortgage and other essential expenses. Many families told us that they weren't able to access help from traditional advice centres because of the long queues.



Contact a Family has joined up with Citizens Advice to secure funding for a specialist money advice project especially for families with disabled children. The new service offers face to face debt advice and help by home visit in various pilot areas in England. Two of the pilot areas are **Wolverhampton** and **Stoke on Trent**.

The Stoke on Trent project offers home visits for families anywhere in Stoke on Trent City Council, Staffordshire Moorlands Council and Newcastle under Lyme Council areas. The Wolverhampton project offers home visits anywhere in the



Wolverhampton area. The projects are able to help families sort out their finances.

The advantage of the new projects is that they are all able to offer home visits or appointments without any queuing at a time to suit you. The workers will be able to sit down with you and work out what, if anything, you can afford to pay towards your debts. They will then be able to negotiate with the people you owe money to – usually they will try to ensure that no more interest is added to your debt and that no further action is taken against you as long as you are making whatever repayments you can.

All CAB services are free and confidential and most will also represent you if you are taken to court. It's never too early or too late to seek help – and now it's just a phone call away.

A new debt advice service in Walsall will also be starting later in spring and we will keep you informed about this through our newsletter.



If you would like to make an appointment for a visit to help get your finances back on track call the Contact a Family West Midland office on **0121 415 4624** or the national Freephone helpline on **0808 808 3555**



Pounds for Parents Campaign

The West Midlands Pounds for Parents campaign

The West Midlands Pounds for Parents campaign has been running successfully for a year now and during this time Shazia Malik, our Asian Development Worker, has managed to support a number of families with enquires on Disability Living Allowance forms, charitable funding and general benefit advice. In an attempt to reach even more families, Shazia is in the process of setting up a weekly, Pounds for Parents drop-in session at the Birmingham Children's Hospital, June 2007.



The drop-in sessions will allow families visiting the hospital to pop in and speak to Shazia about any financial enquiries they may have. Each session

will last for four hours. The first two hours will offer an open drop in for general information and advice. Appointments will then be allocated for the remaining time for DLA or funding applications.

Special information packs will also be available from the hospital's Information Centre and the Contact a Family office to assist families with their claims. These packs will explain the background to Disability Living Allowance and Charitable Funding. Families will be provided with the necessary tools to keep their claims in order and through the pack be encouraged to think about their child's condition and abilities.

We hope these sessions will offer families the opportunity to learn more about their rights and the process their applications will take.

New Factsheet

Education Maintenance Allowance

Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) is a weekly payment for your son or daughter if they stay on at school, college or training after compulsory schooling. They may also get bonuses depending on the progress they make with their learning programme. EMA is dependent on household income and is intended to help with the day-to-day costs of staying on at school, college or in training, such as travel, books and equipment. It is paid directly into the young person's bank account during term-time.



You can download this from <http://www.cafamily.org.uk/ema.html>. Alternatively, you can call us on **0121 415 4624** and we will post you a copy.

Website factsheet

Help with Council tax bill

This website factsheet is currently being updated and will be available soon as a hard copy. Until then, you can download it from our Website:

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/FactsheetHelpWithCouncilTaxBills.pdf>

Contact a Family News

A training arm for Contact a Family?

A Contact a Family survey of parents' views

A big thank you to all the local groups and individual members of groups who returned my survey

To remind you what it's all about - I am investigating whether Contact a Family should set up a training arm and we need to have parents' views of the idea as well as establishing how much they would wish to be part of any unit.

We sent out survey forms to 500 local groups and a further 40 to individual parents who requested copies. By end of February, 165 parents had returned surveys including members of 113 local groups.

From this I have learnt that more than one third of you already give talks to professionals on an amazing array of topics. Almost two thirds of you said you would like to join a training unit if Contact a Family set one up.

This is a fantastic response. We have recorded all your helpful comments and views and these will be vital in any plans we make in the future.

There is a long way to go and more exploration to do over the next few months. Then if Contact a Family does decide to set up a unit, it will need to raise funds and do a lot of work and all that takes time. However, we will keep a note of everyone who provided contact details and will let you know the outcome.

Thank you again!

Pauline Shelley
Contact a Family

Contact a Family Magazine Connected



After 25 years of faithful service, our *Share an Idea* magazine has been re-launched as **Connected**. The spring 2007 edition focuses on financial help and can be downloaded in Adobe Acrobat PDF format from Web

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/sai.html>. You can also subscribe to receive a hard copy of the magazine which is published four times a year. The cost is £10.00 per year. For details call **020 7608 8700**.

Parents and Paediatricians Together project Leaflets

Contact a Family's Parents and Paediatricians Together project have published a number of leaflets for families which have been approved by the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health. They can be ordered for free from Web:

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/paptupdates.html>

How Contact a Family Might Help

This is particularly suitable for families where English is the second language and will shortly be translated into other languages. Web:

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/paptHowCaFMightHelp.pdf> (0.1Mb).

Feeding and Eating

This lists problems that can cause difficulties with feeding and provides tips and ideas around managing meal times. Web:

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/paptFeeding.pdf> (0.1Mb).

Potty/toilet training,

Information is provided about toilet training for parents of disabled children web:

<http://www.cafamily.org.uk/paptToilet.pdf> (0.1Mb).

General Information

Finding information about your child's medicine

Has your child been prescribed drugs which you would have liked to have been given more information about? Have you received information leaflets about your child's medicines which have been particularly useful to you and helped you care for your child better?

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) and the Neonatal and Paediatric Pharmacists Group (NPPG) have started a project called the Parents Medicines Information Project. They will be developing information about specific drugs, or groups of drugs and the conditions/illnesses for which they are prescribed. This new information will be freely available in a variety of formats.

To start the project they would like to hear from parents about the drugs for which information is most needed. They would also like suggestions for sources of information which have been particularly useful to them as a parent.

If you have any suggestions please contact Caroline Higgins, Project Manager, email: <mailto:caroline.higgins@rcpch.ac.uk> or write to Caroline at: RCPCH Research Dept, RCPCH, 50 Hallam Street, London W1W 6DE.

Funding: Useful Websites



<http://www.open4funding.info>

This site is of interest to groups looking for funding.

<http://www.funderfinder.org.uk/applyyou.php>

This site is for help with grant applications.



Different Dads: Fathers' Stories of Parenting Disabled Children

Fathers of disabled children can feel overlooked when the focus of much parenting support is aimed at mothers. Different Dads is a collection of inspiring personal testimonies written by 21 fathers of disabled children who reflect on their own experiences and offer advice to other fathers and families on the challenges of raising a child with a disability.

Issues explored include the reactions of family, friends and colleagues, how to deal with the organisations and professionals that support families with a disabled child and the difficulty of being open about feelings in a culture that doesn't always expect men to have a sensitive or nurturing role.

In his Foreword, Rt. Hon. David Cameron MP says, "It is a great idea to draw together stories of fathers' experiences in bringing up disabled children. One of the ways parents manage to cope is to know that others have been through the same experiences. Then you learn that it isn't just about coping - there are positive stories to tell."

The book is £12.99, 176pp, ISBN-10: 1-84310-454-7, ISBN-13: 9781843104544.

All royalties from sales of this book are donated to Contact a Family.

Severn Trent Water The Vulnerable Household Scheme

The Vulnerable Household Charge is intended to help customers who pay for their water charges via a water meter and are experiencing difficulties, as a result of high water usage for essential purposes. To find what criteria's you need to meet to qualify for this scheme and request an application form call **0845 7500 500**.

Organisations



West Midlands Region

Brainwave is a Children's Charity which provides therapy for children with developmental delay due to brain injury, genetic conditions, chromosome abnormality, birth trauma and accident. The aim of the Charity is to help children from all over the country to become as independent as possible whilst improving their lives on a daily basis.

Joanna Sladden is West Midlands Regional Family Co-ordinator for the Brainwave Charity.



"Since being with Brainwave I've met so many lovely families and shared in the excitement of seeing their child's progress. Nothing can possibly be better than seeing a child learn to crawl, walk, or

talk, when you know their parents have been previously told that nothing could be done for them. Brainwave's aim is to help every child we

see become much more functional in their everyday life as they possibly can. Families visit our centre in Somerset where the therapy team spends two days with the family, talking with the parents, assessing their child's potential and then designing a set of physical and cognitive exercises specifically for their child. Therapists then teach the parents how to carry out the exercises in their own home so they can take an active role in their child's progress, which gives parents a much greater sense of control over their situation.

My role is to support families locally so I visit them before they visit Somerset to explain what is involved, afterwards I check to see they're happy with how it's all going and also keep them in close touch with the therapy team. I also research lots of varied information which might be helpful to them and organise get-togethers and social events that the families can really enjoy."

If you would like to know more about Brainwave you can contact Joanna on **0121 308 1943** or **07725 956012**
Email: joannasladden@brainwave.org.uk
Website: www.brainwave.org.uk



United Health is a Lincoln based company and has been providing health and social care since 1984. They design, construct & operate care home schemes for people with learning disabilities.

Recent schemes have focused on supporting young adults with profound and multiple learning disabilities. The schemes are registered care homes in the community and accommodate 5 - 8 people. The buildings are spacious, single storey, well equipped with ceiling hoists, en-suite bathrooms and sensory facilities. Woodview in Sheffield is our most recent scheme and has a hydrotherapy pool. United Health has submitted planning permission for a scheme at Sleaford in Lincolnshire and if granted, will be for young adults who have profound and multiple learning disabilities and could be completed for 2008/09. They also operate two schemes closer to the West Midlands in Swadlincote, South Derbyshire. These schemes are home to people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Longer term plans include developing schemes in the West Midlands, but this depends on purchasing suitable development land. For more information contact Bryan Birket, United House, Carlton Boulevard, Lincoln, LN2 4WJ. Tel: **01522 560951** or **07855 112389**. Website: www.unitedhealth.co.uk

Courses, Events and Services

Speakeasy: Helping you talk to your children about sex, relationships and growing up

Speakeasy is a fun and relaxed course for mums, dads and carers of children of all ages. Courses are delivered by skilled fpa (Family Planning Association) trainers in small groups. For more information contact Karmah Boothe on **0121 236 6796**, or to find out about Speakeasy courses in your area call **020 7608 5243**

The National Autistic Society: Missing out? A one-day conference and national launch of NAS research findings, about the experiences of children with autism from BME communities in England and Wales. Date: Monday 16th April Venue: central London. Cost: Professional £50.00 (inc. VAT); Parents/carers- £20.00 (inc. VAT). To book a place, contact: BME Conference, Campaigns Department, The National Autistic Society, 393 City Road, London EC1V 1NG. Email: <mailto:campaign@nas.org.uk> Tel: **020 7923 5799**.

Dad's Day - Challenging behaviour. In this Workshop Dave Hewett (Freelance trainer & consultant) will explore different approaches to managing difficult and complex behaviour. Dave has a wealth of experience in this area and has published a well-respected book on this subject. The day will be co-ordinated by Barry Carpenter, himself the father of a young woman with learning disabilities. Date: Saturday, 28th April. Venue: Sunfield Professional Development Centre, Worcestershire. Cost: £10.00 per delegate. For further details contact Rose Welling, Tel: **01562 883183**. Email: <mailto:rosew@sunfield.org.uk>

Mencap 'Get Together' is a project to help children and young people with a learning disability take part in out of school activities Mencap are looking for volunteers and clubs who would like to take part and will provide training. Date: Monday, 14th and 21st May 2007. Venue: Calthorpe Park Play Centre, 257 Edward Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, B12 9LF. Time: 7pm-9.45pm. For details call **0121 708 3039** or email: get-together@mencap.org.uk

Headway West Midlands course for carers: 'Looking After Me'. Based on the Patient Self Management Programme, this course is about making time to look after your own health needs and runs for 6 weeks, one session per week for two and a half hours including lunch. Date: Wednesday's, 10am-12.30pm from April 18th until May 23rd. Venue: Hub Hazelwell, Vicarage Rd, Kings Heath. To book a place contact Alice Bassett on **0121 442 4671**.

The Pear Tree: Multi-sensory Centre (Dudley). Open: Monday-Saturday 9am-9pm and Sunday 10am-4pm. Cost: £8.50 per hour. For details call Sue on **0121 525 4529**.

Massage Therapy Course (Warwickshire). The Training & Support Programme (TSP) is designed to equip parents of children with disabilities with simple massage skills that they can use at home with their children. The TSP has been running for six years and is linked to a research programme based at Coventry University. If you are a parent whose child has cerebral palsy (and conditions with similar symptoms), from birth to 18 years, contact Laura Swaby on **024 7688 7454**, email: l.swaby@coventry.ac.uk, or Lesley on **024 7688 7498**, email: l.powell@coventry.ac.uk. If you take part in the research, the cost of attending the TSP is FREE. However, you will be asked to complete a short questionnaire about the TSP.

Mencap: Wills & Trusts Service Concerned about providing financially for the future of a family member with a learning disability? For advice and information, booklets, seminars and directory of specialist solicitors, contact Gina Collins, Will and Trust assistant, on **0207 696 6925**

Local Support Groups



Asian Women's Group – A group for carers of people with brain injury. Meetings: Monthly on a Thursday during the daytime. Contact: Rekha on **0121 442 4671** or **0121 702 2121**

Dudley Autistic Support Group (DASG) – Helpline: 01384 823 487 Mon-Fri, 7pm-9pm. Email: nealepilkington@blueyonder.co.uk Help and support for 16's and over. Contact: Chris Morgan **01384 813 373**

Lighthouse Group-South Staffordshire ADHD Support Group – Meetings: Every 6 weeks at Stafford Rangers Social room. Contact: Lindsey Burton on **01785 222708**

NSAAA-North Staffs Asperger and Autism Association – Meetings: 1st Wednesday in the month, 10am-12pm and 7-9pm at Newcastle office. Wednesday, alternate months, 10am-12pm at Moorlands Home start, 43 Bath Street, Leek. Contact: **01782 627002**

Downs Syndrome Support Group-The Shires. Meetings: every 3 months in North Staffs. Contact: theshires-dssg@yahoo.co.uk

Downs Syndrome Support Group Staffordshire – Meetings: 1st Tuesday of the month in Lichfield. Contact: Debbie on **01827 707765**

AWARE-Autism Walsall for Action, Resources & Education – New support group for families affected by ASD. For further details about meetings and events telephone/text: **07927 861845** or email: aware-walsall@fsmail.net

Sutton Coldfield Parent Support Group – Meetings: Wednesday's, 10am-13pm at 1 Beaconsfield Road. Contact: Bez Brittain on **0121 373 5784** or Ishbel Speight on **0121 308 3699**

Transition Group for Parents and Carers – New support group for parents/carers of young people with a learning disability who are going through the transition from children's to adult services. Meetings: Every month. Contact: Pat Bailey on **01902 553412**



Contact a Family West Midlands Volunteer Parent Representatives

All our local parent reps are parents of disabled children. For local information in their designated areas or a listening ear, please give them a call – they will be only too happy to help.

Rizwana Pathan
Sonia Tooray

North Warwickshire
Asian Communities Birmingham

024 7634 9612
0121 331 1248

The Contact a Family National Freephone Helpline **0808 808 3555** is open Monday - Friday, 10am-4pm and 5.30pm-7.30pm Monday evenings. The Textphone number is **0808 808 3556** and Language Line is available for parents whose first language is not English.