



the newsletter for families who have children with additional needs and the professionals who work with them

CHIP+ AGM

will be held at 1.30 pm
on Thursday 25 September 2008
in Culduthel Christian Centre, Inverness

*Guest Speaker: Dave Rex
(Child Health Lead Dietitian)*

Sandwiches & tea/coffee
available from 12.30 pm

If you wish lunch
Tel: 01463 711189
Email: info@chipplus.org.uk

ALL WELCOME

We know that people caring for a child with any kind of additional needs (eg disability, chronic illness, mental health, behavioural difficulties etc) often have a desperate need for information. Whether living in a remote, rural area or large town, parents/carers can feel very isolated.

CHIP+ is here to provide reliable information which is available for parents, carers and professionals working with children who have all kinds of additional needs.

We also know that at certain times families need some support (for example - at school meetings). Again you are only a phone call or email away from such support and advice.

Get in touch with us or check out our website for more information on what we provide/can do for you.

www.childreninthehighlands.com

FORTHCOMING CHIP+ OUTREACH EVENTS

We are currently arranging an outreach event at **Ross County Football Club, Dingwall** on **6th and 7th November 2008**.

As part of the event, representatives from the Office of the Public Guardian will provide a 2-hour programme on the **Adults with Incapacity (Scotland) Act 2000**.

The CHIP+ programme will include:

- a brief reminder about CHIP+ and the different ways we can help you
- a talk about the Additional Support for Learning (Scotland) Act 2004 and how it works
- workshops on issues such as **Transitions** and **Solution Focused school meetings**

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***We are currently planning other events at the following venues:-***

**Aros Centre, Portree on 18<sup>th</sup> November**

**Macphail Centre, Ullapool on 26<sup>th</sup> November**

There will be a guest speaker at both events but arrangements have not yet been finalised.

Details will be put in the local press. You can also contact us on **01463 711189** or email [info@chipplus.org.uk](mailto:info@chipplus.org.uk) to register an interest in attending or to book your place.

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In March 2009 we hope to run an event in Golspie (further details available later).

If there is anything particular you would like us to talk about please let us know and we will try to include it.

BENEFITS AND ENTITLEMENTS

Changes in benefit rules meaning some young disabled people are financially worse off.

From 27th October 2008 Incapacity Benefit and Income Support for people with health problems or disabilities will be replaced by Employment Support Allowance (ESA). Until then, families with a disabled teenager born before 27th October 1992 may have a choice.

They can either claim the existing benefits now or wait and claim the new ESA at a later date. As the rates and rules are different, depending on individual circumstances, some young people could be worse off on the new ESA.

For advice about DLA, tax credits and other benefits telephone the Contact a Family helpline - **0808 808 3555** or The Benefits Helpline on **0800 88 22 00**.

Replacement of Child Support Agency

From July 2008 the Child Support Agency (CSA) was replaced by a new body called the Child Maintenance and Enforcement Commission (C-MEC). There will be a gradual series of changes over the next five years.

This includes a change in rules that will mean lone parents who are currently receiving a reduced amount of Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance because they were refused permission to opt out of using the CSA will have their benefit increased to the full amount.

The Child Maintenance Options Helpline provides information to parents about the options available in making a child support arrangement.

Tel: **0808 988 0988**

(Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 9am-4pm); or visit

Web: www.cmoptions.org/index.htm

Direct Payments: Employing Close Relatives

Employing close relatives who live with you is generally disallowed, but the Community Care (Direct Payments) (Scotland) Amendment Regulations 2007 means that there can now be exceptions.

The new rules give Social Work departments the power to make exceptions even if the close relative lives with you.

The guidance does not provide examples of situations where you might be allowed to use a Direct Payment to employ a close relative. It will be left to the discretion of your Social Work Department, who must consider each case individually.

The new rules also widen the definition of who is to be treated as a close relative.

The Highland Council has produced a Guide to Direct Payments in Scotland which explains in detail how parents can get direct payments.

Effect on other benefits and entitlements

If you start to get Disability Living Allowance (DLA) it might increase the amount of other benefits or credits you are entitled to, such as **Income Support, Pension Credit, Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit, Working Tax Credit** and **Child Tax Credit**.

Disability Living Allowance is normally ignored as income for working out these income-related benefits and credits.

Note: Now all new successful Disability Living Allowance claims for children will trigger an orange card sent off to HM Revenue and Customs. This will act as an alert for HMRC to adjust any tax credits claim in respect of that child.

Carers Can – Carer Training Pilot

Highland Carers Project will be running free training sessions for unpaid carers across Highland during autumn and winter as part of its Carer training pilot programme 'Carers Can'.

The first of these sessions is called 'Caring with Confidence' and will look at some of the issues that carers, including parent carers, have identified as being important to them. Caring with Confidence considers the causes of stress and ways to manage that stress, how to communicate confidently and why it is important to look after ourselves. There will also be an opportunity for participants to relax, meet other carers and enjoy themselves.

The first courses will be taking place in **Poolewe on 16th Sept, Dingwall on 23rd Sept and Fort William on 29th Sept**. There will be many more across the region between now and March 2009.

Transport costs and alternative care costs are available if you need someone to look after the person that you care for while you participate in a 'Caring with Confidence' session.

Other events will also be running during the next six months and information about these will be available shortly.

If you are interested in attending a session or would like to know more please contact Tina Morrow on **01463 723573** or email tmorrow@hccf.org.uk

Hello from CHILDREN 1ST

Family Solutions, the Family Group Conferencing Service currently operating in Ross and Cromarty, will shortly be recruiting for a new part-time FGC Co-ordinator post to develop the Service into Sutherland, serving the Dornoch and Golspie Associated School Group areas.

This person will be based in Sutherland, as an outreach post with the Family Solutions team, Chris Cochrane and Nicki Kennell.

Highland Carers Project Contact Number

Analysis of previous calls to the Carers Information Line has shown that most carers seem to prefer to use the office number rather than the helpline number. Therefore Highland Carers Project will no longer be providing an 0845 helpline number at set times.

However, the same information will still be available to you by phone on **01463 723561** as well as by post, email and via the website. If no one is available to take your call, you may leave a message and someone will call you back. During the transition from the existing set-up, calls to the helpline number will be diverted to the new number.

The Disabled Persons Railcard

If you have a disability that makes travelling by train difficult you may qualify for the Disabled Persons Railcard. This Railcard allows you, **plus an adult companion**, to get a 1/3 off most [Standard and First Class fares](#) throughout Great Britain.

For instance, buy a one year card for £18, take a journey that usually costs £54 and the card has paid for itself.

You must provide proof that you qualify for a Railcard. You might qualify if you: have a visual impairment, a hearing impairment, have epilepsy or are in receipt of a disability related benefit.

To get a Disabled Persons Railcard, complete the application form downloadable from the website and send it, together with payment and the required proof of disability to:
*Disabled Persons Railcard Office,
PO Box 163, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, NE12 8WX*

Helpline on: **0845 605 0525** (telephone) or **0845 601 0132** (textphone)

Email: disability@atoc.org

Website: www.disabledpersons-railcard.co.uk

Inclusion Scotland Roadshow

Inclusion Scotland are looking to hold a roadshow in the Highlands & Islands to consider the main issues for disabled people in the area. The aim of the roadshow will be to bring together disabled people and the local authorities, MSPs, Councillors, Health Boards and other professionals to discuss how everyone can work together on these issues.

As Inclusion Scotland are not familiar with the Highlands & Islands they are looking for some assistance with setting up the roadshow:

- What are the main issues for disabled people in the Highlands & Islands?
- Best accessible venues?
- Accessible transport to and from the roadshow?
- Speakers and workshop facilitators for the roadshow?

If you would be interested in helping out please contact Donna McSwiggan on

0141 887 7090 or e-mail information@inclusionScotland.org

Register for new service from Family Fund

The Family Fund will be launching 'Family Fund Extra' during November. This is a separate scheme from their grant making programme and aims to help families make their money go further.

Membership of Family Fund Extra will offer families access to retail discount from a wide range of nationally known retailers to a variety of discounted goods and services (e.g. electrical products and holidays).

Families who are not currently eligible for the direct grants will also be eligible to become involved in Family Fund Extra.

If you care for a child or young person up to the age of 25 years old and would like to benefit from the discounts and services Family Fund Extra will offer, register now at Website: www.familyfundextra.co.uk

Parent Support Group

NAS (Inverness) Branch is a parent support group for families who have children with autistic spectrum disorder. It has evolved from a group of parents who have all attended the Earlybird course and/or the Help course. They have continued to meet on a quarterly basis at Inshes Church for social gatherings and informative talks from various speakers. The next planned meetings will take place on:

Thursday 27th November 2008

Thursday 26th February 2009

Thursday 28th May 2009

Any new members would be warmly welcomed. For further information please email David McDiarmid on lornadavid@aol.com

DID YOU KNOW.....

You can telephone The Highland Council's **Income Maximisation Service** for advice and assistance with the completion of claims forms for all Welfare Benefits and other entitlements on **01463 702391**. You can also email them at: income.maximisation@highland.gov.uk

National AD/HD Awareness week from 22-29 September. Highland ADHD Support Group are organising meetings/activities during this week. For information contact Susie Iredale on **01463 226273**/email seiredale@btinternet.com or Elaine de Ste Croix via **01667 461318** or email e.destecroix@yahoo.co.uk

Published by CHIP+

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If you would like to be placed on our mailing list or contribute to the newsletter please contact us

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