



Summer 2009

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

DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

The CHIP+ Annual General Meeting will take place on **24th September 2009**. Venue and further details to follow.

If you are interested in becoming a Director of CHIP+ please get in touch for the appropriate forms.

NEW MEMBER OF STAFF



Meet our newest Information & Support Officer Karen Kelbie.

Karen is married with two young children and comes from Inverness.

UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS IN THE INTEGRATION OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN WITH AUTISM SPECTRUM DISORDERS

After several years in the planning, the inter agency centre for autism services, known as The Pines is about to become available. This exciting building, in Inverness, will house the hub of staff who make up Highland's Children's Services Autism Team. It will bring together staff with a specialist remit in autism who were previously located in separate health, education, social work and voluntary sector agencies.

It is intended that working together in this new way will improve diagnostic, assessment and support services throughout Highland for children with an ASD and their families. The low stimulus environment is ideal for working with children with complex needs as a result of their autism.

Staff begin moving in from late May. Parent training is already planned from June onwards. A full statement of the services available will be developed as soon as possible after the staff begin working together.

An open day is being planned for later in the summer and invitations will go to all those who participated in the consultation on autism services and have stuck with it along the way in helping to shape ideas about an ideal service. It is hoped that partnership with parents and carers throughout Highland will be a continuing feature as the service develops.

CHIP+ are delighted to say we have been given the opportunity to work in The Pines and are currently in the process of moving a member of staff into our new 1-person office.

This means CHIP+ staff will be even busier than usual as we will also be changing offices within the Birnie Centre. We are shortly moving out from behind the reception desk to a room down the corridor close to the playgroup, which will allow easier access to us.

UPDATING OF AUTISM PACK

Our Autism/Asperger Information Pack is going to be updated. We would appreciate feedback on possible changes or additions users would find helpful.

The pack is routinely given out to families going through the diagnostic process and is intended to provide basic information and advice, plus signposting to other specific help (e.g. local support groups, benefits, useful reading material etc).

It is hoped to set up a meeting involving professionals, voluntary organisations and parents/carers to discuss this. If you or your organisation would like to be involved or give comments on appropriate changes please let us know.

FAMILY FUND ELIGIBILITY

Another change to the Family Fund age eligibility means they are now accepting grant applications from families with disabled young people up to their **18th** birthday. This is an exciting increase in age eligibility and they hope to try and help young people themselves at this important transition in their lives with things that will help in the move to college, training or employment.

Additionally, they have also confirmed that the family earned income upper limit for eligibility will be £25,000 per annum. For more information please visit their website www.familyfund.org.uk

DISC ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING



The Annual General Meeting of DISC (the Disability Inverness Sports Club) will be held

on **Monday 29th June 2009 at 7pm in Drummond School, Inverness**. They are looking for Committee members to help with the administration of the Club. All Welcome.

FOR SCOTLAND'S DISABLED CHILDREN

For Scotland's Disabled Children (FSDC) is the campaign to secure rights and justice for disabled children, young people and their families in Scotland. FSDC's Liaison Project is funded for 3 years, which means a busy time for the new Policy Manager Kate Higgins.

The Project is focused on 4 objectives that were identified by the members of FSDC:

- Improve the provision of, and access to, quality short breaks
- Increase and improve provision for periods of transition, when young people move through different phases in their lives
- Improve access to better quality, affordable and appropriate childcare provision
- Review the Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 to ensure that it meets the particular needs of disabled children and young people.

Because the way the Scottish Government has changed how it funds and supports local authorities, FSDC will also be involved in working out what money is being spent locally and whether it is being spent as initially intended.

Ultimately the campaign is about the estimated 70,000 families with a disabled child/young person in Scotland and your help and support is important.

To sign up or get further information contact Kate Higgins on **0131 659 2938** or email to kate.higgins@cafamily.org.uk

CHANGE OF TELEPHONE NUMBER

Our Spring newsletter included an article provided by the Children's Disability Service, Additional Support Needs Team. The telephone number given for Jonathan Turner, Team Manager, (covering Inverness, Nairn, Badenoch and Strathspey) was incorrect. His correct number is **01463 709521**.

CONSULTATION WITH CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR PARENTS/CARERS

An opportunity for children, young people and their families who receive services to have their say on whether they were actually listened to by services! Highland Children's Forum is seeking families for an important consultation on their experiences. The consultation is an independent piece of work but has the support of key policy makers within Integrated Children's Services in Highland.

The Highland Children's Forum is an independent charity that exists to ensure that children's voices are listened to by service providers and policy makers when planning or evaluating children's services. Information on the work of the Forum can be found on www.highlandchildrensforum.org

Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) is a Scottish Government programme that aims to improve outcomes for all children and young people ensuring that children get the help they need when they need it. This programme involves a different way of working for children's services. Services should work together involving the child and family as partners in planning to meet a child's needs. Listening to and involving children and families are key to this process. Highland is the pathfinder area for this project; Inverness is already working within the new processes and the rest of Highland should be operating under the new processes from March 2009.

The Highland Children's Forum is carrying out a consultation project to listen to children and families who have experienced the new planning processes in the Inverness area and also children and families who have experienced the older processes across Highland to find out about how involved they felt in the process of assessment, planning and reviewing outcomes around the child.

Children and parents can take part through an interview in their own home, or other setting if chosen. Everyone will be asked the same basic questions, but the words used will reflect the age and understanding of the person being interviewed. Where it is appropriate and of interest to the child, drawing or stickers might be used. The information will be anonymised, analysed and classified as positive or negative experiences or suggestions for improvements. It would be hoped that this analysed data would demonstrate good practice, identify frustrations and suggest ways forward for the improved involvement of children and families in the new GIRFEC procedures.

The Forum is looking for families who live anywhere in the Highland area and who have a child who has had an assessment or review and some sort of support planned in the last six months. Any family members, the child, parents or brothers or sisters who took part in the review or assessment are welcome to contribute.

The Forum would be delighted to visit them and take their testimony. People wishing to take part in the consultation are invited to contact Gillian Newman on **0778 986 0811** or via e mail to gillian@highlandchildrensforum.org

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS FIRE & RESCUE SERVICE - FREE HOME FIRE SAFETY CHECKS

Community fire-fighters from your own area provide this free service. Guidance is given on the installation and maintenance of smoke alarms as well as advice and information on how to stay safe from fire (including kitchen hazards, safe disposal of smoking materials, candles, heaters, electric blankets and dangers from harmful substances). In addition, they can help you to make an escape plan to help prepare you should a fire occur in your home. To request your Home Fire Safety Check please contact them on **08000 12 13 12** or online at www.hifrs.org

HIGHLAND AUTISTIC PLAYScheme INITIATIVE

The Highland Autistic Playscheme Initiative, otherwise known as H.A.P.I., is now in its 11th year. The aim of the organisation is to provide fun and educational activities during the summer holidays for children (aged 4-11 years inclusive) who are on the Autistic Spectrum.

The activities enable the children to experience a lot of fun and pleasure which benefits their social awareness and confidence. These activities are supervised by trained staff (one to one for each child) so there is no requirement for parents/carers to attend.

Sessions are divided into two groups - younger and older. Each group attends two days per week from 10.00 am - 2.00 pm. The children are picked up from home and taken to their day of activities. At the end of the sessions they are dropped back at home.

Some of the activities included are swimming, horse riding and visiting outdoor centres e.g. Landmark and wildlife parks. There are also base days (held at Raigmore Primary) where the children can do arts and crafts/soft play and for the older group there is a visit from musicians and the opportunity to try out various instruments including the guitar and drums.

H.A.P.I is a registered charity and relies on funding to exist. A small fee is charged for each child attending, which this year amounts to £65 for the whole summer.

While the summer 2009 sessions are fully subscribed names for the 2010 waiting list can be forwarded to Lana Warrender via E.Mail: lane30@hotmail.co.uk or Tel: **01463 241558**.

H.A.P.I. look forward to hearing from you, whether it's to put your child's name on the waiting list or just to ask some questions.

USEFUL WEBSITES AND HELPLINES

www.scottishdisabilitysport.com is the co-ordinating body for sport for disabled people in Scotland.

www.nsfscot.org.uk for information on mental health issues and where to get help and advice locally. Did you know that "one in four people will experience some form of mental ill health in their lifetime"?

www.direct.gov.uk/disability provides a range of up-to-date information and services from government on subjects such as home & housing; financial support; disability rights; employment and health & support.

CHANGE OF NAME

Sight Action is the new name for the organisation formerly known as Visual Impairment Services Highland.

Their resource centre at 38 Ardconnell Street, Inverness is open Monday - Friday between 9 - 5 (except public holidays).

The new Sight Action website has been built with accessibility in mind and they hope you find it informative and useful. If you think anything is missing please get in touch with them as they would be happy to receive feedback.

Tel: **01463 233663**

Website: www.sightaction.org.uk

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