

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

**IT'S MY CHOICE!** is an information guide for young people and their supporters which provides information on opportunities and services within Highland for young people with additional support needs, in transition from secondary education to adulthood.



This newly updated version is in two parts - an Easy Read section and a Main Directory. The Easy Read section uses pictures and text and is designed to be used in conjunction with the sections in the main Directory.

Copies of the directory can be obtained from CHIP+ (by post, email or telephone).

It will also be available for printing or downloading from the websites of CHIP+, Highland Council and NHS Highland soon.

The update was funded by Determined to Succeed, The Highland Council Education Department, The Change Fund Learning Disability, Equal in Scotland, Europe and Scotland Working Together, Integrated Children's Services and Hi Hopes Equal Monies.

CHIP+ also has other resources, including library books on a range of topics that you may find helpful.

### **RECOGNISING FATHERS: A CHANCE FOR FATHERS TO BE HEARD!**

The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities is running a national survey aimed at building up a picture of the experiences of fathers of children with learning disabilities. They are asking fathers to complete a questionnaire that covers issues such as:

- dads' involvement in childcare
- whether it has led to changes in their paid work
- the impact on relationships with family and friends

It also asks fathers if/how they would like to see changes in the way support is provided to their families, and how employers could better support fathers involved in their children's care.

The FPLD will use this information to think about how fathers and families could receive better support through changes in policy and practice.

If you are a dad who has a child with learning disabilities and would be interested in taking part in the *Recognising Fathers* survey, visit [www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk) and click on "Recognising Fathers Questionnaire"; call **0207 803 1144** to have a questionnaire posted to you or contact CHIP+ who also have copies available. The deadline for completed surveys is end of **December 2007**.

## THE HIGHLAND COUNCIL Support for Learners Website Accessibility Update

Many readers of the CHIP+ newsletter will have used information from the Highland Council's Support for Learners website.

The site went live in September 2005 and since that time it has received about 7000 hits.

The site includes a lot of information for parents and carers and for those who work in the field of additional support needs, including information about local services, links to local and national organisations (including CHIP+ !), and copies of local and national policies and guidance.

The site as originally established, however, does not meet current national standards for accessibility, and some users have reported difficulty in finding and using the site.

In order to address these things the information on the site is now being moved on to the main Highland Council website, and this process is expected to be completed by late November. Once the new site is running it will be possible to use the accessibility tools which are available on the Council's website, for example the text reader.

The Support for Learners website will continue to be accessed as follows:

Go to the Highland Council website:  
[www.highland.gov.uk](http://www.highland.gov.uk)

In the A-Z of Services click on Support for Learners.

The site is managed by Stephen Iliffe, Senior Manager (Additional Support Needs), and suggestions to improve or further develop the website are welcome.

There is an email link for feedback on the website.

## INTEGRATED CHILDREN'S SERVICE Improving services for children, young people and families affected by disability

Marlyn Campbell, Co-ordinator, Disability Services has compiled the following article which highlights the key issues for discussion and puts forward options for consideration. A consultation questionnaire is available for feed back by **10<sup>th</sup> December 07**. Marlyn can be contacted at **01463 701345** or [marlyn.campbell@highland.gov.uk](mailto:marlyn.campbell@highland.gov.uk)

This is what she has to say:

*"A consultation is underway seeking the views of the children, families and professionals most likely to be affected by changes proposed to improve services for children with disabilities and their families, in particular about how the social work service is organised and managed.*

*The consultation is specifically considering whether the specialisation of children's services for children with disabilities and their families in the Central Highland Team area of Inverness, Nairn and East Ross has been successful and should be extended across all of Highland, whilst accepting there will be greater management costs.*

*Part of this is to consider how best to provide advice, information and intervention services to children with ASD and their families. There is strong commitment to continuing to build specialist knowledge and skills within children's service in supporting children and young people with ASD and their families. The previous Scottish Society for Autism specialist service proved difficult to sustain and resulted in a reduced service in some Areas.*

*The preference is to make the most of the resources available by creating additional specialist posts within children's services, which will both support existing staff and take on key tasks in supporting children with ASD and their families.*

*The aim of the changes is to ensure that children with disabilities and their families experience a social work service which is integrated or joined up with the other services which are of most relevance to them."*

## HIGHLAND BIKES n TRIKES DAY!

Organised by Highland Disability Sports and  
NHS Highland Children's Services Therapists

1st April 2008 at

Inverness Leisure, Bught Park, Inverness

10.00 - 12.00 "Come and Try" Session

13.00 - 15.00 "Fun event on your own bike"

Come along and try out bikes and trikes (which will cater for most abilities) - ranging from children through to young adults. In the morning there will be opportunities to try out the different bikes and trikes available. The afternoon session will be aimed at those who already have bikes so bring them along.

For further information contact your physio or phone Laura Cheadle at the Birnie Child Development Centre on 01463 704419.

## LEAVING SCHOOL? THE BRIDG'IT VENTURE MIGHT BE JUST WHAT YOU'RE LOOKING FOR!

The Bridg'it Venture in Drumnadrochit provides training and further education in a residential setting for young adults of 16+. The weekly timetabled programme includes a range of activities, many of them linked to horse care and riding which are proven methods of building self-confidence, communication, co-ordination and a host of skills transferable to life or working situations.

Away from the horses there are ample opportunities to develop life and social skills in 'The Lodge', living amongst a small group of students with full-time houseparents to offer guidance and advice.

They are currently processing applications and assessing candidates for the 3 to 4 year course, commencing August 2008. Contact: Janie Thorburn or Kate Ellistone: Bridg'it Venture, Borlum Farm, Drumnadrochit, Inverness-shire, IV63 6XN  
Tel: [01456 450588](tel:01456450588)  
Email: [Bventure@tinyworld.co.uk](mailto:Bventure@tinyworld.co.uk)

## WORD TALK

WordTalk is a free plug-in developed for use with all versions of Microsoft Word (from Word 97 upwards), which can help people with reading difficulties (such as Dyslexia) use Microsoft Word more effectively.

It will speak the text of the document and will highlight it as it goes. It contains a talking dictionary to help decide which word spelling is most appropriate. It sits neatly in your toolbar and is highly configurable, allowing you to adjust the highlight colours, the voice and the speed of the speech.

For more information go to the CALL Centre on [www.callcentre.education.ed.ac.uk](http://www.callcentre.education.ed.ac.uk). You can download a copy of the plug-in by clicking on the "WordTalk" logo. Please note that it is a large file (50.6Mb) and may take 2 hours to download if you don't have broadband, so take advice from the website.

This website also contain lots of other useful information so take time to browse.

## NEW EARNINGS LIMIT ON CARER'S ALLOWANCE

From 1 October 2007 the earnings limit on Carer's Allowance rises to £95, increasing the amount carers can earn before losing their Carer's Allowance of £48.65 a week.

The government announced this change in policy as an interim measure, to prevent carers losing their Carer's Allowance (due to rises in the National Minimum wage taking them above the threshold).

Without the change, carers who were working more than 16 hours per week would have automatically lost their Carer's Allowance on 1 October when their wages rose above £87 a week. All carers in this position would then have had to re-apply for the allowance once the earnings limit was increased in April.

## **FACES (Family Association for Children with Extra Special Needs - under 21 years)**

Faces is a charity for families in the Badenoch & Strathspey area. If you are interested in joining or wish more information please contact:

Deirdre MacKintosh, Faces Co-ordinator,  
Arenthrou, West Terrace, Kingussie,  
Inverness-shire, H21 1HAP.

Tel: 01540 662299; or email

[faces@dmackintosh.orangehome.co.uk](mailto:faces@dmackintosh.orangehome.co.uk)



## **PARENT TRAINING PROGRAMME**

For parents of children with a diagnosis of ASD. All Training Programmes must be booked in advance. To book a place please contact Dawn on 01463 258802 or email [dawn.edwards@nas.org.uk](mailto:dawn.edwards@nas.org.uk)

21<sup>st</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2008 : 2-day programme : to be held in Inverness (venue tbc)

5<sup>th</sup> February 2008 : Sensory Needs : to be held in Fairways House, Inverness

18<sup>th</sup> February 2008 : Sensory Needs : to be held in St Clements Church, Dingwall

4<sup>th</sup> March 2008 : 1-day programme : to be held in An Drochaid, Fort William

18<sup>th</sup> March 2008 : 1-day programme : to be held in the MacKinnon Hotel, Kyleakin

## **CAN ANYONE HELP WITH THIS?**

I am a BA Child and Youth Studies (Hons) student. A major part of my Honours year is to undertake a research project. I am looking for brothers and sisters of someone with a disability, who are aged between 18 and 25 and would be willing to take part in the research. It will involve filling in three questionnaires and should take no longer than 20 minutes.

If anyone is interested, please can they email me at [Kathleen.murray@inverness.uhi.ac.uk](mailto:Kathleen.murray@inverness.uhi.ac.uk)

## **USEFUL WEBSITES & HELPLINES**

For information about free prescriptions and other NHS charges please phone the customer enquiry line on 0845 850 1166.

ENABLE Trustee Service can help parents to set up trusts and also to manage them. If you are interested in finding out more contact Sophie on 0141 226 4541 or email [sophie.dobson@enable.org.uk](mailto:sophie.dobson@enable.org.uk)

Go to [www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk](http://www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk) to find out more about Shared Care Scotland's Online Short Break Information Service (OSBIS Stage 1) launched in November.

**The new Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR)** will take on the role and functions of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Commission for Racial Equality, as well as having responsibilities for issues around religion and belief, sexual orientation, transgender status, age and human rights.

### **Contact details for Scotland are:-**

Equality and Human Rights Commission  
Helpline Scotland,  
Freepost RRLG-GYLB-UJTA,  
The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street  
Glasgow, G2 8DU.

Tel: 0845 604 5510 - (Main)

0845 604 5520 - (Textphone)

0845 604 5530 - (Fax)

9:00 am-5:00 pm, Monday to Friday (an out-of-hours service will start running soon).

## **THE HIGHLAND AD/HD SUPPORT GROUP**

holds regular meetings in Inverness and Invergordon and are interested in setting up Satellite Groups elsewhere in the Highlands. For more information contact Susie Iredale.

Tel: 01463 226273 or

email: [seiredale@btinternet.com](mailto:seiredale@btinternet.com)