



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

OUTREACH EVENTS

The event in Dingwall, which was organised in tandem with the Office of the Public Guardian, was cancelled due to a shortage of numbers expressing an interest in attending.

Information on Guardianship is frequently requested so it was really disappointing that we did not reach the minimum numbers which would have guaranteed the Office of the Public Guardian representative being able to attend.

However, they have sent us all the latest information and hope to arrange another visit to the Highlands in the Spring. If you would like information on this please let us know.

The events in Portree and Ullapool took place in a slightly different format than had originally been planned. Feedback was very positive and it was great to have the opportunity to offer one-to-one sessions.

We would like to thank everyone who supported us in arranging these events.

WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL SESSIONS

Wheelchair basketball sessions will be starting some time in January 2009 at Drummond School, Inverness. For further information contact:

Charlie Forbes
Highland Council Disability Sport
Development Officer, Ruthven House
Drummond Road, Inverness, IV2 4NZ
Tel: **01463 232262 / 729662**

RACHEL HOUSE AT HOME/CHAS - UPDATE

"**CHAS at Home**" is the new name for "Rachel House at Home" and from 1st August 2008 Babs Henderson became the new Director of Home Care for CHAS.

Currently they are still based in the Highland Hospice but are looking for larger premises to accommodate the expanding role of the service. However, they will continue to keep their contact/support with the Hospice.

As always, the North Team, namely Alison and Yvonne (plus bank nurse and of course, the merry band of volunteers) have had a busy year. It started with a video shoot for new DVD which is being distributed, followed by trips to Clachbeg Education Centre, Eden Court Theatre, activities at the Leisure Centre, a weekend at Badaguish for some teenagers and a Halloween Party which was a great success. The "Pampering Nights" for Mums continue to be popular and the final event of 2008 will be the Christmas Ceilidh on 13th December.

Throughout the year CHAS at Home continues to support families as and when required, whether on a regular basis or in crisis. For further information please contact Alison/ Team Co-ordinator on **01463 248479**.



EARLY BIRD PROGRAMME IN INVERNESS

"Early Bird" is a programme for parents of young children (aged 3 and no older than 5½ at the start of the programme) who have had a recent diagnosis of Autism.

The programme begins with a pre-programme home visit (including video sample) and is followed by a series of weekly sessions. The next Early Bird programme will begin at the Centre for Health Sciences, Raigmore Hospital on Wednesday 14th January 2009 from 10.00am - 12.30pm, with the last session taking place on Wednesday 25th March.

There are places for six sets of parents/carers and a commitment to attend is needed by 15th December. For further information please contact Evelyn Gault or Val Mackenzie, S< on **01463 253623**.

NATIONAL AUTISTIC SOCIETY EVENTS

SOCIAL PROGRAMMES:

The National Autistic Society are running Social Programmes in Inverness. These groups are aimed at people with Asperger Syndrome and High Functioning Autism over the age of 16 who want to socialise and meet other people with AS.

The group meet monthly and activities are decided by the group members. If you are interested in joining a group or becoming a volunteer please call Dawn Edwards, Social Programmes Co-ordinator on 01463 258802 or email to dawn.edwards@nas.org.uk

TRAIN WALK:

Would you like to be involved in a sponsored walk with a difference? Everyone loves Thomas & Friends and Train Walks are a way for children to play at being Thomas for a day and a brilliant and easy way for money to be raised for local NAS branches.

Contact trainwalk@nas.org.uk or telephone **020 7903 3589** for more information and a starter pack.

CHANGES TO GRANT MAKING PROCESS

BBC Children in Need have made changes to their grant-making process.

The fund now has four closing dates for applications. **These are on the 15th of January, March, July and October each year.**

Other changes include better help for applicants, such as help with forms, quicker awards and online applications.

For more information go to their website:

www.bbc.co.uk/pudsey/grants

BLUE BADGE SCHEME OVERHAUL

The Blue Badge scheme provides a range of parking concessions for people with severe mobility problems who have difficulty using public transport and operates throughout the UK.

New proposals announced include extending the Blue Badge entitlement to:

- children under the age of three with specific medical conditions
- people with the most severe mental impairments/extremely disruptive behavioural problems
- specific individuals with temporary mobility problems lasting a minimum of one year

A new system of assessing eligibility for the Blue Badge is also being developed with the aim of standardising assessments throughout the country.

There are also new proposals concerning extending the scheme to injured active and ex-service personnel, and additional efforts to fight fraud and abuse of the Blue Badge scheme.

For guidelines and an application form go to the Highland Council website

www.highland.gov.uk/livinghere/benefitsgrantsandallowances/disabledparkingbluebadge/

CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

The Challenging Behaviour Foundation now has a new 0845 number. Families caring for sons/daughters with severe learning disabilities can now receive individual telephone support around understanding and managing challenging behaviour for the cost of a local call.

Some children (and adults) with severe learning disabilities typically display behaviour which may put themselves or others at risk, or which may prevent the use of community facilities or an ordinary home life. This behaviour may be in the form of aggression, self injury, stereotyped behaviour or disruptive and destructive behaviours. Whilst anyone may at times display challenging behaviour, the work of the Challenging Behaviour Foundation is aimed at helping those with severe learning disabilities. Severe learning disability (sometimes referred to as severe intellectual disability or severe mental handicap) is a developmental disability and refers to individuals who have either no speech or limited communication and require support with daily living skills such as dressing and eating.

Family carers experiencing these issues can now access individual information and support from the Challenging Behaviour Foundation Family Support Worker on **0845 602 7885**.

SUPPORT GROUP

The Inverness ME, Fibromyalgia, Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, Post Viral Fatigue Support Group is a small group who meet monthly for mutual support, a chat and sharing of information.

The group is open to anyone suffering from, or caring for someone with the above illnesses.

They meet on the 1st Wednesday of each month (except January when it will be on the 2nd Wednesday) at the Craigmonie Hotel, Annfield Road, Inverness from 1.00-2.30pm.

NATIONAL DEAF CHILDREN'S SOCIETY

A new online service has been launched to help parents/carers of deaf children make contact with other families across the UK. Around 90% of deaf children are born to hearing families with no experience of deafness. Parents are challenged when they find out that their child is deaf and can feel isolated when they don't know anyone else who is going through the same experiences.

Parent2Parent Network, launched by the National Deaf Children's Society (NDCS) and the NHS Newborn Hearing Screening Programme (NHSP) can be accessed at www.parentsnetwork.org.uk

This facility enables you to search and contact other families based on specific criteria such as geography, age of child, level of hearing loss and preferred language of parents.

HIGHLANDS & ISLANDS AUTISM SOCIETY



HIAS is a support group for parents, relatives, carers, professionals, those who express an interest in ASD, as well as those on the ASD spectrum.

The Society meets at 7.30pm on the last Wednesday of each month (except July and December) in **The Mackenzie Centre, Culduthel Road, Inverness**.

Most monthly meetings provide informative talks / discussions on a range of issues (see newsletters), along with tea / coffee. Not all meetings are formal. Some evenings are informal, allowing those who attend to share their experiences. Over the period of one year there are also two Social evenings (June and November). **Meetings are open to non members.**

HIAS also has a well stocked library, from which members can borrow. Further details are given in the newsletters which are produced quarterly. Contact HIAS on: **01463 241469** or **07773 596005**.

DID YOU KNOW.....

The Family Fund is a national charity which gives grants to families with disabled children. **They have recently increased the age limit of children they can help in Scotland to include 16 year olds**, providing the application is received before the young person's 17th birthday. This brings it in line with the eligibility criteria for England and Northern Ireland.

For more information about The Family Fund visit www.familyfund.org.uk

CARERS' DROP-IN SESSIONS

This is a new way of connecting carers with each other and follows on from the success of the telephone conference support groups.

Kathleen Murray, Carers Connect Coordinator has begun holding drop-in sessions for carers for a trial period. The weekly sessions take place in the new meeting room at **Highland House on Tuesday mornings between 10am and 1pm**. Although the venue is in Inverness, all carers are welcome whenever they can make it. A warm welcome will be given as well as the opportunity to enjoy a chat over a cup of tea or coffee!

LONDON CONGESTION CHARGES

A family has asked that we highlight their experience when they drove their child to an appointment at a hospital in the centre of London and unknowingly fell foul of local congestion charges. The first they knew of this was when they received a £60 fine!!

When you drive in the centre of London it is important you pay the daily charge (£8). If your visit is for a hospital appointment you can take the receipt to the hospital reception desk where they have a list of medical criteria which may allow them to refund the cost.

For more information on how to pay: Telephone **0845 900 1234** or visit Website www.tfl.gov.uk/roadusers/congestioncharging

USEFUL WEBSITES AND HELPLINES

www.mencap.org.uk/youngmencap is a new website offering a safe environment for young people with a learning disability. It is somewhere they can go for advice, share experiences, learn new life skills, see what's new, and be inspired to move on.

eric Education and Resources for improving childhood continence: Helpline: **0845 370 8008**
Website: www.eric@org.uk

Parentline Plus has launched a social networking site for parents concerned their child is being bullied. The site aims to allow parents to share experiences of their child being bullied and to support each other. This site is also for parents who believe their child may be bullying other children and looks at the different roles involved in bullying.
Website: www.besomeonetotell.org.uk

"Lagh-Sgoile" means *school law* and is a Gaelic language site specifically designed for children and young people who speak Gaelic by the Govan Law Centre Education Law Unit.
Website: www.lagh-sgoile.org.uk

Fledglings helps parents/carers of children with special needs find affordable solutions and has recently launched their new look website www.fledglings.org.uk



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