

Baby love...

How the 'Open Door' project made a difference to Beverley and baby Liora - page 6



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From the Editor

The recent Panorama care home investigation revealed shocking images of systematic abuse in a Bristol Care Home. An undercover reporter revealed horrific cases of prolonged abuse. The inspection unit, the Care Quality Commission (CQC), failed to respond to three whistleblower reports or identify the problems during pre-arranged inspections.

There has been a public outcry and David Cameron has announced immediate spot checks on 150 homes. The CQC has launched an internal review and the Social Care Minister, Paul Burstow has said that he is “determined to strengthen the system of safeguarding to protect vulnerable adults from abuse”.

The workers responsible were on the whole untrained and low paid. However, in these austere times local authorities are making cuts to budgets and cost, not quality, seems to be the deciding factor when providing some services. Surely this programme has shown the importance of getting the right staff, paying them a decent wage and giving them training, regular supervision and support? All that costs money! If the government really means what it says they need to invest in services for vulnerable people...not expect local authorities to go for the cheapest option. *Shelley Gibbons*

Autism Strategy

The Autism Strategy ‘**Towards Fulfilling and Rewarding Lives**’ was published in March 2010 and is concerned with improving existing services and making existing policies work better for people with autism. Key aims of the strategy are:

- Increasing awareness and understanding of autism
- Developing a clear consistent pathway for diagnosis of autism
- Improving access for adults with autism to the services and support they need to live independently within the community including helping people into work
- Enabling local partners to develop relevant services for adults with autism to meet identified needs and priorities

Work has now started on the development of a local Action Plan for Barnet for the Autism Strategy. The working group, made up of representatives from all sectors including health, Social Services and the voluntary sector, plus family carer representation, has met on a regular basis over the past few months to develop the Action Plan in collaboration with a number of partners. The plan and final draft has been approved by the Learning Disability Partnership Board and received comments from stakeholders but final approval is still required. There will be a new Autism Sub-group to oversee the implementation of the plan. The sub-group is likely to be up and running later this year. The delivery of the action plan will be achieved through collaboration with a number of other statutory authorities and third sector organisations and will not be the sole responsibility of the Local Authority to take forward. There are a number of National and Regional initiatives that Barnet will be responding to within the context of a local Barnet Action Plan and the Plan will take account of existing projects and developments in Barnet.

If you require any further information please contact John Mason, Commissioning Manager, on 0208 359 4945.

**THE BIG
PICTURE**



(Left to Right) Princess, Makalay, Valerie and Kian, on the day Mike Freer MP visited the Open Door project.

Focus on... Mencap Consortium

There has been a lot of talk in recent years about the need to work in partnership. Barnet Mencap has shown a strong commitment to this idea and is proud of its strong links with voluntary and statutory organisations. We have developed good relationships with groups across Barnet, always keeping in mind what is best for people with learning disabilities and their families and that they get a better deal when organisations work together.

In the same spirit, we will now be working more closely with Mencap groups in five other London boroughs - Kensington & Chelsea, Ealing, Hammersmith & Fulham, Brent and Harrow. The groups have formed a consortium to see where there are gaps in services and it makes sense to develop projects across a number of boroughs. One area we are looking at is how to work with parents with learning disabilities so that they have the support they need to raise their children.

There may be opportunities to pool some of our 'back-office' services, such as Finance and HR, so that as much of our funding as possible can be spent on front-line services. The consortium has taken on someone to help us do this and to generate new ideas, and he will be working with the Mencap groups over the coming year.

National Mencap has shown a lot of interest in the Consortium and is an active member. We have joined the 20:20 pilot scheme, to explore how Mencap and local groups can work more effectively in partnership to benefit people with learning disabilities and their families. We will look at fundraising and campaigning, for example, where we will get better results from working jointly rather than going it alone. We will be able to keep you updated as the work gets underway and we start to get some results from this ground-breaking initiative.

ray.booth@barnetmencap.org.uk

News & Events

SAFEGUARDING

Protecting Adults at Risk

One of the most important tasks that all of us face is keeping people with learning disabilities safe from abuse. There are now new guidelines, covering the whole of London, called 'Protecting Adults at Risk'.

Terminology changes, and the new guidelines refer to 'adults at risk' rather than vulnerable adults. But they have the same purpose, which is to make sure that everything possible is done to prevent the abuse of adults with learning disabilities and where there are concerns, ensure that these are properly investigated.

Everyone has a responsibility to be aware of abuse, such as neglect, physical, sexual, or financial abuse, and to tell someone if they are worried about it. This includes paid staff, family carers, volunteers and the general public. People with learning disabilities can speak up for themselves too. We know that abuse can take place in services, at home or in the community.

Where we suspect there is abuse it is vital that this is reported. It will then be investigated by staff working together. The social work team will take the lead but also involve others who can help with the investigation, such as staff from the health team or voluntary sector. It is important too that social workers listen to family carers and others who know the person well.

Everybody has the right to make choices in their life and to take risks in what they do. But part of the investigation will look at whether the person with a learning disability really understands the risks and possible consequences of their actions. In other words do they have the capacity to make these choices?

It is better, of course, to prevent abuse in the first place. We know that abuse is less likely to happen in high quality services, where staff are well trained and genuinely listen to what family carers and people with learning disabilities tell them.

There is an important section in the guidelines that makes the link between hate crime and

abuse and the need to make our communities safer.

The Safeguarding Adults Partnership Board in Barnet has the role of ensuring agencies are working together and that training and support is available to everyone who needs it. The Safeguarding Board will help to implement the new guidelines and see that they are working. Barnet Mencap intends to do its part. It will continue to train all staff, volunteers and trustees and will be making sure it works effectively with the social work team to prevent and deal with abuse. You can see or download a copy of the guidelines at www.scie.org.uk

EMPLOYMENT

Juice Bar



Michael Capocci and Rebecca Shepherd serving juice at the bar.

This new project is a partnership between Barnet Mencap, Finchley Youth Theatre, IPOP, Self Unlimited, and Community Space. The idea came as a result of last year's Happy Healthy Fun Day. The evaluation revealed that the Juice Bar was one of the most popular opportunities on the day.

A steering group got together and in May 2011 the group, led by Barnet Mencap was awarded a grant BY Barnet Council to start a bar up at Finchley Youth Theatre.

The Juice Bar will be open to the public. It will be facilitated by a project coordinator and staffed by people with learning disabilities. The bar will

News & Events

open on a Saturday from 10.30am-1.30pm and will be run by 3 staff per shift, supported by the project coordinator. Staff working on the juice bar will work for 6 weeks and be rotated. It is intended that the project will offer paid work taster opportunities for up to 16 people over a 6 month period.

Training will be offered so that people will be able to learn and develop relevant skills. It is intended that the bar would develop into a mobile project and be taken to local festivals in the borough and be used at borough conferences. The trainee staff will receive a wage.

With the exception of the Coordinator, the staff will be people with learning disabilities aged 18 plus. If you would like more information contact Shelley Gibbons or Laura Davitt on 020 8349 3842 or email laura.davitt@barnetmencap.org.uk

TRAVEL TRAINING

Going Places

It should go without saying that people with learning disabilities have many skills and talents. However, there often seems to be a focus on their difficulties and what people can't do rather than what they can do. Therefore there are limited appropriate work and volunteering opportunities. Also there is a lack of training and support. Going Places looks at the positives, using and developing the skills people have to aid and assist their peers.

Going Places is a new project, funded by the Safer Transport arm of the Metropolitan Police, designed to focus on the 'travel' skills of people with learning disabilities and how these skills can be used to benefit other people with learning disabilities. The project uses the travel training skills of people to support their peers to get to activities by foot or by using public transport. This exciting new project trains people to become Volunteer Travel Assistants. They are all people with learning disabilities and will work alongside other people with learning disabilities, who cannot or do not like to travel alone (fear of getting lost and of crime) by foot or on public

transport. The project will enable them to get to activities they wish to attend with the aid of the Volunteer Travel Assistants. As well as looking at procedures the training includes Communication Skills (provided by Speech and Language Therapists), Community Safety (provided by the Safer Transport Police), Makaton, First Aid, Epilepsy Awareness and Safeguarding training. The Coordinator will then support the travel assistants until we are sure that they are able to work independently. A thorough risk assessment will inform this.

Volunteers may undertake one or several trips a month, depending on how much time they wish to give to the project. All the volunteers will receive a mobile phone to use on the project which they will be able to keep. Whilst working they will have access to an on-call person, in case of difficulties, including evenings and weekends. For more details about Going Places contact Judith Green at Barnet Mencap on 020 8349 3842 or Judith.green@barnetmencap.org.uk

A great day out for people with learning disabilities
Come and join us at the 2011 . . .

Happy Healthy Fun Day

Try out

- ▶ Dance sessions
- ▶ Massage
- ▶ Fitness sessions
- ▶ Manicures
- ▶ Hairdressing
- ▶ Beauty therapy
- ▶ Juice bar
- ▶ Healthy eating

Information on

- ▶ Health action plans
- ▶ Sports
- ▶ Health advice/
Support
- ▶ Fitness

Tuesday 21 June 2011
At Trinity Centre, 15 Nether Street,
North Finchley, N12 7NN
Drop in between 10am and 3.30pm
Light lunch and refreshments
will be available

For more information contact:
Shelley Gibbons on 020 8349 3842
Claire Dawson on 020 8492 5422

Funded by Woffling Estate
and Donations

News & Events

OPEN DOOR

Beverley & Liora

Barnet Mencap's Open Door Drop-in centres offer support to parents and children under 5 with additional needs. Here one of those parents, Beverley Cohen, talks about how Open Door has supported her.

"She's HOW old?"

The woman from the National Childbirth Trust (NCT) group in East Finchley stared at my toddler, Liora, with amazement. I could see why, but it still hurt.

Liora wasn't toddling or anything close, she didn't make eye contact and constantly wiggled a rattle with absorbed repetitive hand movements. She was in her own little world, trying to survive two horrific stints in intensive care and regular epileptic seizures. I lived in constant terror of the seizures, and nobody had a clue how I felt except my husband who worked full-time. I was lonely.

Liora is now four and a half, with severe learning difficulties. I have local friends with non disabled children, but I don't think I could have achieved this without the help of Barnet Mencap's Open Door group, which I am unashamedly giving a great big puff.

Barnet MP Mike Freer recently visited. Like all politicians he is schooled in diplomacy, but I think he was sincerely impressed with Open Door's professionalism and enormous popularity.

For me, Open Door was where my nightmare was normalised, with all its blue-light ambulance trips to the horrific 'crash' room at the Royal Free, gruesome blood tests at Great Ormond Street and naso-gastric tubes. The relief was indescribable.

At Open Door I met another parent, whose son is autistic. She told me: "When I went to ordinary children's groups, his behaviour would make him seem naughty. I felt people were thinking I was a rubbish mum but nobody is judging us here."

I quote this mum to underline my experience and to plead with anybody influential who may be reading this piece. Open Door has funding for the

next six months but after that - who knows? The group, and the people who run it, were the crucial elements to save me from depression, enabling me to pick up and go on with my life. It still hurts every time I go past the gates of the local primary school and see all the mums and kids milling around. Liora goes to a special school a long way from East Finchley, too far for me to mix with the parents. But thanks to Open Door, I have a little sniff as I walk past, then let go. For information about Open Door contact Lorraine Jarman on 020 8349 3842 or email

lorraine.jarman@barnetmencap.org.uk

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding Week

Barnet's annual safeguarding week will take place from 13 - 17 June 2011, to coincide with World Elder Abuse Awareness Day on 15 June.

This year, activities will be highlighting financial abuse. Financial abuse is when money or belongings are taken from someone under pressure or stolen without their consent. This could be a friend, family member, care worker or even a stranger. It can often go unnoticed, especially as it is likely to go on behind closed doors. As usual, local groups from across the borough will be doing their bit to raise awareness. They will be talking to their members about how to keep their finances safe and avoid scams and rogue traders. Key tips include:

Don't give out bank cards or pin numbers; Plan your finances well and if you have difficulty in paying bills, you could consider setting up a Direct Debit; Don't send money or give out any personal details to anyone until you have checked that they are genuine and Say "no thank you" and close the door on doorstep traders.

If you are worried that someone you know might be the victim of financial abuse, you can report your concerns to the Social Care Direct Team at Barnet Council: Tel: 020 8359 5000, Email: socialcaredirect@barnet.gov.uk Or visit www.barnet.gov.uk/safeguarding-adults for more information about all types of abuse.

Being...

Ade Adedoyin



Ade Adedoyin has been working at Sherrick House since April 2000.

I was born in London, grew up in Nigeria and was sent to boarding school there, at the age of 6 (not my choice!) as were my 6 brothers and sisters. I enjoyed most of my time at school once I got used to it. I left at the age of seventeen. Sometimes I wonder why my parents educated me in Nigeria after their own UK education only for me to return back to the UK after twenty years and spend many more years finding my feet.

I went on to study textile design at Yaba College of Technology in Lagos and was a bit of tearaway in those days, racing around in my white V.W. Beetle 'with the boys'.

I came to the UK on holiday all through my childhood. I had open top bus rides around London and lots of shopping trips, but spent most of my time in and around Watford where my Dad had a house. Little did I know in a few years I would be living about 10 miles from that old house.

I eventually came back to the UK about 17 years ago to care for an uncle who was paralysed after a motor cycle accident but unfortunately he died six months later. This is how my interest in caring for people developed. I worked all around the London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham doing home care for elderly people and those with disabilities and I really enjoyed this, but there was never enough time to talk to people and get to know them and there was far too much pressure to get on to the next client.

I asked my agency for residential care work and was sent to Barnet (working for the same client groups) all around the Barnet area, so yes, I've managed to work my way round most of the Barnet day centres and homes! Many of them are no longer there.

I've seen so many changes in the care profession over the last 15 years, some of them good, some, in my personal opinion, not so good.

I saw a vacancy for a support worker post at Sherrick House and knew that it had a good reputation as I knew a couple of clients that visited for short stays, so I applied for the post. I was invited for an interview and came to have a look around Sherrick just before. I loved it from the word go! A very friendly, happy, 'home from home' atmosphere. From that day I have never looked back. In those days any idea of becoming a Manager was only a dream, one that I'm pleased to say came true in 2009.

I now live in Hatfield, Hertfordshire with my wife and children. Being the Manager of Sherrick House is hard work but so rewarding. However, finding the balance between paperwork and people work is difficult. I know the office work is all too important but anyone who enjoys working in the care profession knows that without knowing and understanding the needs of our clients, this last part of my story would be quite different. I still enjoy working with Barnet Mencap as we don't only work with the people who use the service but care for the families as well.

So here's to the next few challenging years.

Photo Finish



The 'Living in London' group in Regent Street, lined with Union Jacks in the run-up to the royal wedding.



General Information

You can also view this newsletter on your computer! It's on our website in the 'Newsletters' section, or please email andy.dawkins@barnetmencap.org.uk to be put onto the emailing list, so you'll save paper and never miss an issue!



How to find us

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Email: projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Website: www.barnetmencap.org.uk

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in September 2011.

Diary Dates

Happy Healthy Fun Day - a day for people with learning disabilities promoting healthy living, on **Tuesday 21st June 2011, 10:00am - 3:30pm** at the Trinity Centre, Nether Street, North Finchley N12.



East Finchley Festival - in Cherry Tree Wood, East Finchley on **Sunday 19th June, between 12 noon – 6pm**. Barnet Mencap will have a stall, and there are lots of activities for both children and adults, including a bouncy castle, face painting, food stalls and raffle.

Workshops for Parents

'Understanding Sleep Problems in Autistic Children', **Monday 13th June 2011, 10:00am - 12:00pm**.

'Positive Parenting Practices' - for parents of children with ADHD, **Tuesday 21st June 2011, 10:00am - 12:00pm**

All workshops take place at Avenue House, 17 East End Road, Finchley N3 3QE

