

FEBRUARY 2015

This way to the Oscars!

Acting Bugs is a great hit page 4



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Cover picture:
Nick Cox and
Mr Plinky Plonk
put a smile on
Dexter's face

From the Editor

Another year and a new set of challenges. Despite the success of our Family Support Project (advice and information around housing, education, health and benefits for 5 – 18-year-olds and their families/carers) the borough has decided to end the contract 12 months early.

This service, which exceeds all targets, operates with two part time workers, covers the whole borough, and in one year has offered support to 200 families. We have asked the borough to suggest where we re-direct parents to, but at the time of writing have had no response.

On a more upbeat note we are actively developing our play sessions for children with additional needs. Acting Bugs (front cover and page 4) was a great success and we are seeking more funding for this work. In addition we are working with the Library service and Royal Mencap to develop sensory storytelling sessions.

We were invited to send some children to the Lord Mayor's Party. We had very little notice but managed to support several children to attend. Although it was a little hectic they had a great time (see back page).

So mixed fortunes at the moment, but the general message is a positive one . . . let's hope it continues that way.

Shelley Gibbons

The Care Act: safeguarding adults at risk and their carers

The Care Act 2014 is the most significant change to adult social care since 1948. It will supersede most of the care legislation we have been used to. A lot will be familiar – eligibility, assessments, support planning and Personal Budgets. But there will be some new features and all of it will be underpinned by new legal powers and duties.

Everybody with a learning disability or autism will have a right to advice and information. Barnet Mencap is already providing this through its Bright Futures service (see article page 3), with its focus on prevention, so that people can avoid or delay, where they can, the need to go to Adult Social Care.

Where they do approach Adult Social Care, people will have an assessment and there are national eligibility criteria, rather than local ones, to determine whose support is funded by the council. People with learning disabilities or autism who are eligible will be offered help with support planning and have a right to a Personal Budget.

The aim of any support will be to enhance people's independence and well-being, and to make sure the outcomes of support are the ones that really matter to people, and make a difference in their lives.

A significant new point in the Care Act is that family carers will be for the first time on the same legal footing as the person they care for. This means that they too have rights to assessment and support to meet their needs.

There will be a clear legal framework for safeguarding adults at risk. Safeguarding Adults Boards will be statutory in the same way as they are for Child Protection.

Most of the changes will be introduced in March 2015. There are other important changes about the funding of people's care, including a cap on costs, that will be implemented a year later.

There is a lot of work underway so that everybody is ready for the changes. It is complicated and people can find out more if they want on the following websites, including some helpful worksheets.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/care-act-2014-part-1-factsheets

Barnet Council:

www.barnet.gov.uk/info/941039/the_care_act/1248/the_care_act



Hamid, Giulia, Chris and Nicola attend the All-Party Parliamentary Group on learning disability at the House of Commons to look at how voting can be made more accessible for people with learning disabilities

Focus on... Bright Futures

Having friends and activities, working in a job, and getting good advice and information when we need it are important things for most of us. People with learning disabilities and people with autism can now get all of these things through Bright Futures.

Bright Futures is a new service provided by Barnet Mencap and Royal Mencap Society. Staff from Working for You will help anybody with a learning disability or with autism who needs advice to sort out problems like housing or to develop the skills they need to live more independently.

The COPs team will support people with leisure and learning activities to develop skills and to keep safe in their local communities.

Royal Mencap will support people to get paid jobs or to find training or work experience which will improve their employment prospects.

Bright Futures will also work with local

organisations. We want to make sure that their staff understand the needs of people with learning disabilities and people with autism and can adjust the way they work so that they provide a better service.

Barnet Council has awarded Barnet Mencap with a three-year contract to provide the Bright Futures service. We know that good support at an early stage prevents people's needs from increasing. Giving them the advice they need means they can make decisions about their lives and what works best for them.

You can find out more or make a referral to Bright Futures by ringing Barnet Mencap on 020 8349 3842 or emailing us at:

projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk,

or contact Royal Mencap about the Employment Service at 020 8346 1237 or email them at

brightfutures.employment@mencap.org.uk.



World of wonderment: discovering the magic of blowing bubbles at an Acting Bugs session

ACTING BUGS

Little stars in the making

The Barnet Mencap Open Door Project recently held three fantastic drama sessions with the professional company Acting Bugs at Finchley Youth Theatre.

Acting Bugs was created by Samantha Seager (amongst other roles, she played Bobby, the bus cleaner in the *CBeebies* show *Me Too!*). This was the first time that Open Door and Acting Bugs had worked together, but judging by the positive comments from parents and staff, hopefully it won't be the last.

The sessions were open to under-fives with additional needs and their siblings. Each session, which took place on a Sunday afternoon, had around 10 children and they were led through a magical world, as the children used their imaginations to ride on the magic train: where would it take them this week?

A different theme was used each week and it was explored through songs, puppets, bubbles, games and stories. It finished with the 'Star Stage' which proved what a talented bunch the

Open Door children are with renditions of songs such as 'Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star' and jokes galore.

The sessions were structured in such a way that even those children who started the session quietly watching were soon engaged and mesmerised by the Acting Bugs magic.

It wasn't just the children who enjoyed themselves, the parents and play workers all had just as much fun getting involved with the singing and games.

The feedback below was very positive:

"It was pitched perfectly. Thank you."

"On our first visit both children were quite hesitant to start but were quickly put at ease by the welcoming team of Acting Bugs. They loved all three sessions and I am still asked by them now if we can go to Acting Bugs."

"My son has told me Acting Bugs is 'super fun' and his favourite part was the magic train ride."

We are currently in the process of trying to secure funding to allow us to run more Acting Bugs sessions in the future.

For more information contact:

valerie.lam@barnetmencap.org.uk

TAKE A BREAK

Respite for respite service!

Barnet Mencap has been successful in being appointed onto Barnet's Framework for Provision of Short-break and Respite Services for children and young people with learning disabilities. This means that the Take a Break service (for 0–19- year-olds) will continue to offer families respite, as well as practical help and emotional support provided by trained staff on a one-to-one basis.

Bringing up a child with additional needs can be very challenging, often putting significant strain on family life. Barnet Mencap short breaks can help reduce the pressures that can cause significant stress within the family and help eliminate the isolation their parents/carers often experience on a daily basis.

Breaks can include day, evening and weekend activities, and emergency support may be available at short notice.

Breaks are arranged at a time to suit the parent/carers and can take place in the child's own home or in a community setting.

With additional support from a trained worker, these breaks benefit the child by allowing them to participate fully in their community and to have the same choices, opportunities and experiences as other children. This will enable them to make

local friends, and to access play, leisure and recreational facilities with others beyond their own home environment.

Families can use their support worker as an additional pair of hands on a family day out, to support them with an appointment or even just to take the opportunity of a break from their caring responsibilities and go out themselves knowing that their child is in safe hands.

For more information on what is available for children of all ages contact Billie Jean Lockhart on 0208 203 4860 or email at billie-jean.lockhart@barnetmencap.org.uk

Alternatively please look at the short breaks/ local offer information available on the Barnet.gov.uk website.

COOK AND EAT

Food for thought

The Cook and Eat sessions took place for the first time at the end of last year. They are being run by Barnet Mencap as part of the Bright Futures project in partnership with the Mini Cooking Club led by Cecilia Belier and her team of volunteers.

The Cooking Club is a registered charity based in London. The mission is to spread a love of cooking and encourage understanding of nutrition and healthy food choices, in order to create a more informed, happier, healthier and more sustainable society.

The Mini Cooking Club was created by Cecilia in order to reconnect people with great, affordable food. The sessions in Barnet run on a Saturday morning. People with learning disabilities, working around a large communal table, are taught how to prepare and cook healthy and nutritious meals .

Each session is completely interactive and the participants are involved in every stage. At the end they share a very well-cooked two-course meal that they have been involved in producing. As well as learning new skills, the group have a great deal of fun as Cecilia ensures that the sessions are lively and interesting.

Different kinds of food, which can be



Remember, we celebrate our 50th anniversary this year. Look out for news of events commemorating this important milestone in our history



Debbie Singh receiving her certificate at the end of the Cook and Eat course

► replicated easily at home, are prepared. In one session the group made hummus, mixed salad and pitta bread followed by a fresh fruit salad. One woman who normally lives on a diet of burgers and chips, and was initially very suspicious of the hummus, asked if she could take the leftovers home!

The sessions will be repeated in April/May 2015 and cost £100 for the course (five sessions).

For more information contact Corinne Roberts at corinne.roberts@barnetmencap.org.uk

BARNET PARENT CARER FORUM

Now carers have a voice

With so many changes affecting disabled children it is more important than ever for parent carers to have their say about the future.

Barnet Parent Carer Forum has just been launched by local families. They are keen to see that the right services and support are in place for disabled children aged 0 – 25. The Forum will give a voice for parent carers of children with

disabilities or additional needs about strategic developments in the borough. In this way, parent carers will be working with council officers to influence the long term and big decisions that affect their children.

The Children and Families Act is bringing in some major changes across health, education and social care. It is vital that every disabled child achieves its potential and gets the right support as they go through transition and into young adulthood.

Parent carers, through the Forum, will be able to say how well they think these changes are being implemented.

Barnet Parent Carer Forum will build on the work of pp4dan. It wants to involve as many parent carers as possible and allow people to be involved in any way they want – attending meetings, via emails or surveys or helping to organise the work of the Forum, so that it is a strong and effective presence in the Borough.

To find out more, people can contact Barnet Parent Carer Forum on info@barnetpcf.org.uk or 020 8349 3842.

Being... Molly Rayment



Molly Rayment: making a difference

I started my nursing career in 1977. I had wanted to be a nurse ever since two district nurses came to my house to give my mother a series of injections. I wanted to be like them but work in a hospital. I wanted to be a ward sister and wear a frilly cap and a white starched apron, and give lots of injections to make people better.

When I lost my job as a dental nurse I applied to Cell Barnes Hospital, home to over 1,000 people with learning disabilities (PWLD).

I had met some of the people who lived there as my father, a Chaplain there, used to invite them to Christmas parties at his church. I will never forget being shown round the ward I was to work in. Elderly ladies wearing white socks were waving at me or holding out their hands shouting 'hello nurse'. I found it very overwhelming.

I was offered the job of nursing assistant until my training started. I saw things that most people don't get to see and made a list of things I wanted to change. I said to myself that I must give it a chance and stay at least one month. Thirty eight years later I am still a learning disabilities nurse!

As a student nurse I worked hard and played hard. I left home and moved into the male nurses' home. As the only female living there for

six months I used to get lots of female visitors!

I qualified in 1980. My registration certificate states that I am a registered nurse for the "mentally subnormal"! I then became a ward sister. I was free to make real changes, ensure people had real choices and were treated with dignity and respect.

I joined the Barnet Community Learning Disabilities team in 1998 as a resettlement nurse. I had to travel all over the country to monitor and review quality of care. I like to think that I identified bad practice and made a difference by helping to improve things.

I was acting team manager for two years before becoming a Senior Specialist Community Nurse Practitioner after completing a two-year part time BSc. I held a caseload of very complex cases, represented LD on several committees and developed and delivered a series of training sessions. I also chair the health subgroup of the LD partnership board which sets and reviews the health agenda for PWLD in Barnet.

I started a secondment in 2013 to the Barnet Clinical Commissioning Group. My job involved helping to improve health access and health outcomes for PWLD. I am now Nurse Lead and Health Team Leader.

I think I can safely say that after 38 years as an LD nurse I have never stopped championing the cause; I have also seen it all, done it all and enjoyed most of it!

I am planning to retire soon. It will be hard to let go but I have a lot of work to do on my house and I have four cats that I can spend more time with. I plan to travel and find new adventures.

I have flown in a hot-air balloon across the Masai Mara at sunrise, driven a quad bike across the Egyptian desert and been paragliding in Turkey where I jumped off a 6,500 foot mountain (strapped to a very handsome pilot). I walked the plank in Barbados, entered a salsa dance competition in Cuba and swam with two dolphins that took me across a very large pool while I was balanced on their noses.

It's time for a rest. I quite fancy a cruise round the Maldives . . . bliss.

Photo Finish



Game of Thrones: Kian Lam at the Lord Mayor's party



General Information

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



How to find us

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Tel: 020 8349 3842 Fax: 020 8349 2192

Email:

projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Website: www.barnetmencap.org.uk



www.facebook.com/barnetmencap



@barnetmencap

Diary Dates



Thursday 26th February

'Looking Forward' – Advisory Council meeting

St Paul's Centre, 50 Long Lane, Finchley N3 2PU

10:00am – 12:30pm. Contact Project Support on 020 8349 3842

or projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Monday 30th March, Tuesday 31st March, Wednesday 1st April

Create Your Own Music Video – Create Your Own Dance Video

Finchley Youth Theatre. 5:30pm – 8:00pm. £45 per person.

Contact Corinne on 020 8349 3842

or corinne.roberts@barnetmencap.org.uk

Saturdays 2nd, 9th, 16th, 23rd and 30th May

Cook And Eat. Learn how to cook healthy meals then enjoy a tasty lunch.

St Paul's Centre, 50 Long Lane, Finchley N3 2PU. 11:00am – 2:00pm.

£100 for the five week course. *Booking essential.* Contact Corinne on

020 8349 3842 or corinne.roberts@barnetmencap.org.uk

Wednesday 17th June

Happy Healthy Fun Day. Trinity Centre, 15 Nether St, N12 7NN.

For more information contact Shelley Gibbons on 020 8349 3842

or shelley.gibbons@barnetmencap.org.uk

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in June

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