

June 2020

## Life in Lockdown



Tom, Evelyn and Simon, three of our Equality Housing Supported Accommodation tenants, living in lockdown. Read how they have been getting on on page 7.

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

2 From the Editor

2 Covid Update

3 Focus on ...  
Fundraising

4-6 News & Events  
Looking Forward

New Royal  
Mencap CEO  
Barnet Parent  
Carer Forum  
Activities

7 Being . . . In  
Lockdown

8 Photo Finish

8 Diary Dates

8 How to find us





## *From the Editor*

Lockdown, social distancing...It hasn't taken long for us all to learn a new language since the start of the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this newsletter, which, due to Covid-19, we can only send out digitally, some of the Equality Housing tenants describe how they have coped with the enormous changes that have taken place since March. COPS has been busy adapting what it offers.

Royal Mencap has produced a lot of information to help people with learning disabilities understand Covid 19 and we have been distributing it locally. We have shared information with other Mencap groups, which has helped us get to grips with the changes. We are looking at how we can share good practice in supporting young children and their families, in providing advice and information, and resources for people to use while their usual support is unavailable. Inside, you can find out more about Royal Mencap's new Chief Executive.

Many of the pre-Covid challenges we face will remain as the lockdown eases. The need for parent carers of disabled children to have a strong voice is set out clearly in our article about the Barnet Parent Carer Forum (BPCF). I echo the invitation for new members to join BPCF. Everybody at Barnet Mencap and our supporters want to see a world where children and adults with learning disabilities and autism are valued and truly equal and this will be guiding us as we re-establish all of our services and support in the coming months.

*Ray Booth*

## **Covid update**

At the end of February everyone at Barnet Mencap was busy finalising their plans and budgets for 2020-21. At the bottom there was a note about Covid-19, but we weren't aware then of the huge changes that would sweep over us and everyone across the world.

Barnet Mencap has worked very hard to respond to the pandemic, adapting its services, starting new ones, and focusing on getting support in place for children and adults with learning disabilities and autism, as well as their family carers.

The Equality Housing team has continued to provide face to face support for the tenants. They have given them practical and emotional support and help to combat anxiety and boredom that has affected so many people in the past 3 months.

COPS has maintained support by phone or 1:1 for some people. While the Autism Service and Working for You has taken call after call from people worried about health, money, and other matters. The Children's Service has had referrals for parenting support and kept up the advice and information, or short breaks, that families need so badly at the moment. Fewer people have come to Sherrick House but for some families it has been a lifeline.

Other staff have worked behind the scenes to keep the organisation functioning and put out messages to let people know what we are doing at the moment.

Some people with learning disabilities and family carers have sadly died and are in our thoughts in these difficult days.

New services have been a great success. Project 300 has enabled us to reach more people, get them urgent help, such as medicine and groceries and involve the Barnet Learning Disability Service or other voluntary organisations as they are needed.

At Barnet Mencap we are carefully planning how we can safely see people at the office again. Many staff will still work from home for much of their time. But COPS activities and parenting programmes will resume although they will look a bit different and the office will have new safety measures in place.

Covid 19 has affected everybody in some way. We are trying hard to communicate the support available. We ask people to be patient if things don't always run smoothly. And finally, do contact us if there is anything we can do to help. The staff, trustees and volunteers send their best wishes and hope to see people as soon as they can.

THE BIG  
PICTURE



2.6 Challenge. Left: Nadia with a little supporter, completing an exercise challenge in her back garden. Right: James and Emma, before and after their movie challenge.

## Focus on... Fundraising

My name is Nadia and I am the Fundraising Coordinator for Barnet Mencap. I have been here since November, and it has been a great pleasure getting to know some of our clients - I look forward to meeting many others in the future!

This year so far, we held a very successful fundraising event at Barclays in Ballards Lane. We raised awareness of Barnet Mencap and our service users helped to fundraise. The bank match-funded the amount of money we raised. We continue to work in partnership with Barclays and will be delivering a free training session to their staff. We are very thankful to have received an enormously generous donation from the New North London Synagogue and we have also received donations from St Mary's Church, just across the road from us.

The Coronavirus situation has had a huge impact on everybody, and our fundraising is no different. With lockdown measures in place, we haven't been able to do our usual range of fundraising events. Despite this, we

got involved with the 2.6 Challenge - a fundraising event for people to go some way towards replacing the money the London Marathon would have raised. Through my own sit ups challenge and James and Emma's movie marathon, we raised around £2000! It shows that, even in times of great uncertainty, people are still very generous. We really appreciate every donation.

An 'easy' way to help raise money today is to sign up to EasyFundraising and AmazonSmile. Once signed up at [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk) you can raise money for Barnet Mencap when you shop online at no extra cost to you!

Check out the back page for details of our fundraising Art Competition and keep your eyes peeled for future events. If you have ideas, or if you know someone who would like to take part in a challenge event, please get in touch with me at [nadia.topper@barnetmencap.org.uk](mailto:nadia.topper@barnetmencap.org.uk).



## LOOKING FORWARD

### 2020 Vision

Each year, we review what has been achieved and what we hope to accomplish in the year ahead. Following the AGM and an Away Day this is a good opportunity to reflect on the progress Barnet Mencap has made on its Business Plan, 2018-21.

One of the priorities was to maintain the core services of providing advice and information to adults with learning disabilities and autism, as well as to parent carers, short breaks, leisure and learning, supported living and parenting programmes. These are all performing well, while also looking at how the teams reach more people.

The Autism Service and Hate Crime Reporting project have given us extra capacity to meet long-standing needs and both projects have made their mark in Barnet. Sadly, Expect the Best, the peer quality checking service, has come to an end.

Barnet Mencap is committed to increasing public awareness of what is

important to people with learning disabilities. When mainstream organisations in the borough want to engage with people, or carers, they often attend the Have Your Say group and Parents' Action Group, where they hear strong opinions and well-informed views that help them in their work. The Awareness-raising training continues to be well-received.

We want to continue this and must ensure there is the funding to pay for it. We need the contracts, grants and community fundraising that give us the necessary income, which may include fair charges for some.

Barnet Mencap has further ambitions, set out in the Business Plan, that it has not yet achieved and where funding is still required. It is disappointing that nothing has come from the Day Opportunities framework contract. We are keen to repeat E-PaTS, the early support work for parents of young children, and to offer activities to children who do not meet the criteria for short breaks.

In January 2021, the Business Plan will end and we will work hard, involving as

many people as possible, in setting Barnet Mencap's direction for the 2020s.

The Barnet Mencap staff team, in a photo taken in early February at our away day.



## ROYAL MENCAP SOCIETY

### Welcoming Edel Harris

Edel Harris is the new Chief Executive Officer of Royal Mencap Society. She is formerly the CEO of Cornerstone, one of Scotland's leading charities, which provides a range of services to people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, autism and dementia.

In this role, Edel pioneered new ways of providing care particularly through Local Cornerstone, tackling the challenges faced by the social care system, whilst ensuring that people with a learning disability are empowered to live the life they choose. Edel has a wide range of experience and notable achievements

Commenting on her appointment, Edel said:

"I am delighted to have been appointed as the new CEO at Mencap. As someone who is passionate about ensuring that people with a learning disability are included, listened to and valued, this role provides me with an opportunity to continue all the good work I've done at Cornerstone but on a bigger stage.

Mencap is a very well-known and respected charity and I am excited about the opportunities that lie ahead."

Derek Lewis, Chair of Royal Mencap Society, said:

"The trustees are delighted that Edel has accepted the role of chief executive of Royal Mencap Society. The challenges facing people with learning disabilities, as well as their families, carers and the organisations that provide support, remain severe. Working with all of these groups, Mencap is committed to enabling people with learning disabilities to lead good lives, able to make their own choices and free from discrimination. As we embark on the next phase of our ambitious development strategy, we look forward to Edel's leadership and commitment to people with learning disabilities. Her experience and insights will be invaluable, especially those from her eleven years as CEO of Cornerstone where she has pioneered transformational changes in the way people with learning disabilities are supported.

We look forward to welcoming her and working with her."



New Royal Mencap CEO Edel Harris

## BARNET PARENT CARER FORUM

### Helping shape services for children and families



**Barnet Parent  
Carer Forum**

Barnet Parent Carer Forum (BPCF) is a voluntary organisation whose members are all parent/carers of Children and Young People aged 0-25 with Special Education Needs or Disability (SEND). Our role is to liaise with the Local Authority to help shape the services



our children and families receive. The Forum has a steering group comprised of a small group of committed parent/carers drawn from our membership who work with Barnet to feedback the views of our membership in order to help improve these services. Information about conferences, workshops and training opportunities and other items of interest are circulated to our members by email.

2019 was a busy year for BPCF. We continued to build on our engagement with the Local Authority and have increased our membership to over 200 members. We have grown our steering group too and now have 15 members. We have been active in a range of ways – attending meetings to help develop the Local Authority SEND strategy, coproducing the annual SEND conference and the Health, Education and Social Care mini conferences, as well as delivering training and workshops to our members. There are an increasing number of opportunities for parent carers to be involved, with many requests from the Local Authority for representation. Parent carers from the Forum have been involved in the CAMHS transformation plan, the Autism Strategy, the Integrated Therapies Offer, the development of the Local Offer and many other initiatives. Throughout 2020, BPCF are focusing on increasing engagement with our membership, with an increased social media presence.

The effectiveness of the Forum depends on having a wide and diverse membership, with representation across all services in the Local Authority. To accomplish this, we need to continue welcoming new members and strengthening our steering group. Please join us and add your voice!

To find out more please visit [www.barnetpcf.org.uk](http://www.barnetpcf.org.uk) or email us at [info@barnetpcf.org.uk](mailto:info@barnetpcf.org.uk).

## LOCKDOWN ACTIVITIES

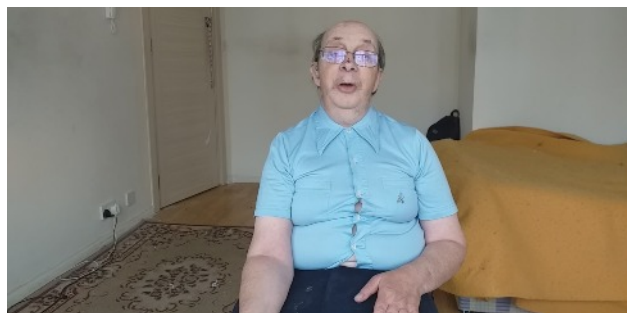
### The show must go on...line

We haven't been able to offer our usual extensive range of activities as we stick to lockdown guidance and social distancing regulations. We have still been offering one-to-one support to clients, and regular phone calls to check in with them, but we know this can't replace the range of group activities our members love so much.

With this in mind, we are trying to provide some online activities, so people can access these from home. These are all free, and you don't need to be a member of our projects to view them.

We will send out lists of activities with a mixture of videos we have recorded with our staff, instructors and clients, as well as links to things we have found online which we think our members will enjoy. We will have sports and fitness sessions, arts and crafts, dance, jokes and more.

Head to our Facebook page (search for Barnet Mencap) or our website at <https://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/home-activities/> to see what we have coming up, and to watch some sessions.



Phil teaching an exercise session, and David talking about life in lockdown

# Being... in lockdown



Evelyn relaxing at home

**T**he Coronavirus situation and lockdown has been really difficult for people all around the world, and it's no different for the tenants in our supported accommodation. Here's how it's affected them, **first up, it's Simon:**

At the beginning, I found the lockdown boring. I had some symptoms of the virus and had to self-isolate for 14 days with my housemates. Support staff had to do my shopping and cooking and would leave it outside my room.

Since then, I've been doing a walk at 7.30am nearly every day with my friend Leasa (on the phone) and feel fitter. I've been playing I Spy and do a spelling competition with her son on my phone.

I haven't been able to go to the barbers so I bought some clippers and tried to cut my own hair, I did the front and sides and Debbie helped me tidy it up.

I've got used to wearing gloves and a mask when I go



Simon mowing the lawn

out, I feel safer. I enjoy walking to Swan Lane park nearly every day with staff and sometimes we play football.

I've missed seeing my family, and am glad the lockdown has eased. I saw my mum at the park this morning, we social distanced and I'm looking forward to seeing my brother and nephews soon.

## **Here's how Evelyn has found it:**

I've been finding it very difficult and I didn't understand what was going on and all that. I was off work for 3 weeks because I got a letter from the government but work rang me wanting to know where I was, so after 3 weeks I had to go back to work otherwise I wouldn't get paid. To start, I was upset not going to work then it was hard going back to work as I had to wear a mask and gloves and I have to wear a visor. I have to wash my hands when I get to work, wash my hands when I leave, then wash my hands when I'm back in my flat. Then I put my clothes in the wash, have a shower and put clean clothes on.

I was scared going on buses. We have to get on the second door, not by the driver. Lots of people stand by the doorway and don't have gloves or masks and I say excuse me. I was worried I would catch it.

My Barnet Mencap support worker and my work colleagues explained all about the virus to me and what I had to do to keep safe. I still get seen by the staff and they come to my flat wearing gloves and masks. The staff call me a lot to see how I am.

I've been missing all my friends because I can't see them but I have to keep calm about it as we don't know how long it's going to go on for. I miss doing the activities at the office and meeting people.

I hope things get back to normal. I have booked a holiday in Scotland in July and really hope I can get to go.



# Photo Finish

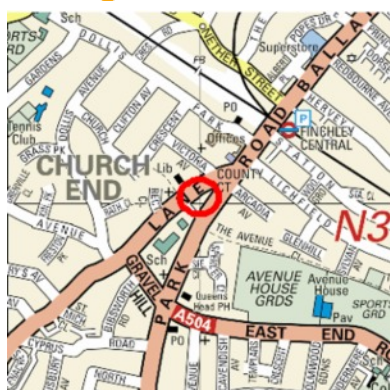


Sam filling up her car with food and essentials to deliver to families in need, thanks to a grant from the Barnet Community Response Fund



## 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](mailto: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

35 Hendon Lane, Finchley, London N3 1RT

Tel: 020 8349 3842 Fax: 020 8349 2192

Email:

[projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk](mailto:projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk)

Website: [www.barnetmencap.org.uk](http://www.barnetmencap.org.uk)



Like Barnet Mencap on Facebook



Follow @barnetmencap on Twitter

## Diary Dates

### Fundraising Art Competition

**Closing Date: Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

Get creative! Paint, draw or craft your favourite landscape and send us a photo for the chance to win a prize! All ages and abilities welcome, with prizes for our favourite adult and child entry. £5 per entry. Send your entry to [projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk](mailto:projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk). For more details, head to [www.barnetmencap.org.uk/artcompetition](http://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/artcompetition)



The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in September 2020

Barnet Mencap Registered Charity No. 1089388 Company Registration No. 04274621

