

May 2021

Waiting for the sunshine!



Two of the tenants from our Supported Accommodation spending some time in their garden. As restrictions lift, we're spending more time outdoors. We do have vacancies in some of our supported accommodation - if you or someone you know might be interested, please get in touch!

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From the Editor

Vaccinations and recent lockdowns have had a huge impact on bringing down the Covid rates. Many of Barnet Mencap's staff have been vaccinated and regularly take Covid tests. High numbers of people with learning disabilities in Barnet have also had their jabs. The vaccination programme is a key part of the government's Road Map and is helping us to feel more confident about resuming activities we enjoy.

We were very sad to get the news that Mary Zelinger had died recently. Mary first got involved with Barnet Mencap in the mid-1960s. She was a Trustee for many years and was twice the Chair of Barnet Mencap. She was a huge influence on the way the organisation developed over the years, working with families, involving people with learning disabilities to be active in the community and live a life that is full and equal. These are values that guide us to this day. She would have been proud to see the resilience and creativity shown by staff and Trustees during the Covid pandemic.

Mary gave a lot of help to me when I first joined Barnet Mencap in 2002. I also have fond memories from that time of Derrick Verity, who has also died. Derrick was a volunteer at Open Door, working alongside his wife Pat, who ran the project. He was an active fundraiser, helping with Christmas Fairs and with street collections.

I'm sure he would have been pleased to learn we have just received a grant from John Lyons, which will enable us to re-establish Open Door, with a range of new activities for young children and their carers.

Ray Booth

Start your journey to becoming a Shared Lives carer today!

What is Shared Lives?

Shared Lives is a community-based approach to care and support. It offers an alternative (and highly flexible) form of accommodation and support by using the Shared Lives carer's home as a base. Support can be delivered for a few hours, an overnight stay, months, or even years – this all depends on the carer's lifestyle and availability as all support is based within the carer's home.

What is the role of a Shared Lives Carer?

A Shared Lives carer shares their home and family life with an adult who needs support to live everyday life. They give a helping hand to someone getting dressed, getting to doctors' appointments, making friends, cooking together or even voting for their favourite singers on tv!

What kinds of people are being cared for?

People visiting or moving in with Shared Lives carers are 18 and over with an identified care and support need. They may have been in foster care, have learning or physical disabilities, may be an older person with a frailty or dementia, or have mental ill health.

What do I need in order to become an SL Carer?

To qualify to become a Shared Lives carer you must be over the age of 18, rent or own your home and have a spare room available. There are no qualifications required although it is helpful if you have had previous care experience. It is important that you have a caring nature, and respect and value people as individuals.

What are the benefits to becoming an SL Carer?

This is a flexible caring role giving one the opportunity to work from home while still being able to earn a competitive allowance. All earnings will receive a tax-free benefit as per her majesty's qualifying care relief. Not only will you be improving the quality of someone's life but you'll also have access to ongoing support and training opportunities and will be making a positive impact in your community.

How can I find out more?

Get in touch today by calling 020 8359 3576 or emailing shared.lives@barnet.gov.uk. We would be happy to answer any questions you have!

THE BIG
PICTURE



One of our workers and one of our clients on a regular catch up phone call in Project 300.

Focus on... Project 300

Project 300 is a new project for Barnet Mencap that started in April 2020, near the start of the Covid -19 pandemic.

The aim of the project is to provide support throughout the pandemic to clients and their families at risk of isolation, who were nominated by the London Borough of Barnet. Some of these were clients we knew well from our other projects, and some of them were new to Barnet Mencap.

We couldn't just pop around to see these clients, but through regular telephone calls we have become a vital link for the clients and their families to our community. Not only are our calls an avenue for support, but also a chance for clients to have a chat with somebody, which has been just as important across a year where people can't just leave the house to see friends or pop to a cafe.

As well as covering important health topics like hospital passports, carers' assessments, annual health checks and Covid-19 vaccines, we've chatted about the news, television and of course the weather!

We have helped clients to source respite, medical and mental health support as well as emergency food supplies when needed. We are still providing that support today.

Our clients have greatly benefited from this service and we've received really great feedback over the past year, with one client saying, **"I was very pleased to be able to speak to someone and to laugh about things."** Another said, **"I was really happy after our chat."** The family member of one client told us, **"Dad is very appreciative of the calls from Barnet Mencap."**

We're looking forward to restrictions easing and life returning to normal so we can offer lots more face-to-face activities and appointments, but this telephone service has been vital for some of the most isolated people with learning disabilities in the borough of Barnet.

Project 300 is run by Sam Bishop, and assisted by a number of our staff.

DAY BREAKS

Sherrick House, day breaks and a new venue!

During the last year, things have been very difficult for everybody including YOU, our clients. With the uncertainty of what has been happening, we have a date set by the government (June 21st) when we will be fully open again. This means a return to 'some kind of normality' with activities, get-togethers, trips and holidays. We will be organizing holidays, weekend breaks and also daytrips and we look forward to enjoying each others' company.

During the last year, Barnet Mencap has been going through a few changes for our services and premises. As most of you are aware, we are no longer able to offer overnight short breaks at Sherrick House. We are very proud of the work done at Sherrick, and thank all of the staff who worked extremely hard to give our clients bespoke holidays and overnight stays over the years. Some of that team remain, and are working alongside our Community Services team to give you a great experience with Barnet Mencap and build on the relationships we already value.

We have still been able to offer lots of small face-to-face activities at Sherrick House now that restrictions have allowed us to do so, but Sherrick House will soon be closing its doors completely.

We will be moving into a new building for activities in the coming months, but our office is staying in Finchley. Even though it's disappointing to lose Sherrick House, we are



Phil with a small group of COPs members at an Afternoon Tea session at Sherrick House

optimistic about our new premises, which is not too far from Sherrick. This space will enable us to organize and facilitate more day activities than ever before in our own premises - so keep a look out for some new events and activities over the coming months! It is not a like-for-like replacement as we won't be able to offer overnight stays, but we will be offering daytime activities, short breaks for children and young people, and we will be offering holidays again, in the UK and abroad, once it is safe to do so.

The date for moving into our new building has not yet been confirmed but the council is working hard in the background to get us moved in as soon as necessary work is complete. This will hopefully be before the end of the summer - members of our social and leisure projects should keep an eye on their monthly mailouts for photos and details of where our new venue is very soon.

We look forward to seeing you and enjoying each others' company and making some new experiences and memories soon!



Not everyone can wear a face covering - There are a number of reasons people can be exempt from wearing a face covering, including having a learning disability or autism. Please be mindful of those who are exempt and look out for the sunflower lanyard.

For more information or to get a free sunflower lanyard or exemption card, contact us now!

PARENTING COURSES

Parenting Courses in Lockdown

The Family Support team have been delivering group parenting courses for a number of years. However, the current pandemic and lockdowns brought some new challenges to the delivery of our courses.

Initially, the delivery of group courses was put on hold and as an alternative, we offered one to one telephone parenting support.

As the lockdown eased in September 2020 we were able to offer three face to face Triple P courses. Although it was great to be able to physically see parents again, due to social distancing restrictions, it was only possible to have a small number of parents on each course and attendance was obviously affected by parents or children having to self isolate.

As another lockdown started in October our planned face to face Triple P courses had to move online. This was a huge learning curve for the facilitators. We really appreciated parents learning with us about how to use the Zoom features of sharing screens, using break out rooms and the now familiar phrase "You're on mute!"

In January we were able to use our new found skills to deliver the Family Links course via Zoom and whilst the current situation is uncertain we have started a second Family Links Course in April, also via Zoom.

Although there is no substitute for meeting in person, we have found that there are a number of positives to delivering online.

- we were less affected by parents/children having to isolate.
- Both parents could attend and could join no matter where they were with one parent regularly joining from work!

- No one needed to travel which meant parents could easily attend from all parts of the borough

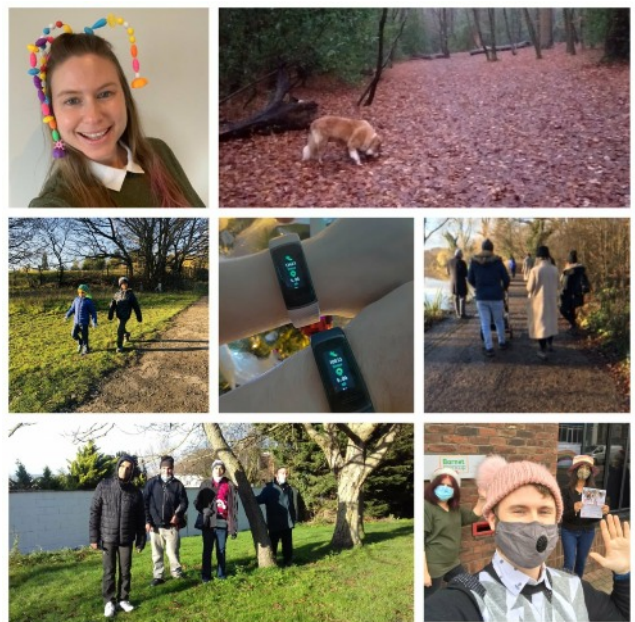
We would like to thank all the parents that attended the courses over these unpredictable times. Whether in person or online we really appreciated you taking the time to attend and adding something else to your already busy "to do" list.

Look out in our next newsletter for future plans for the Parenting Support Service.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising Update

It's been a busy time in the world of fundraising. Thank you so much to all of our amazing pledgers, donors and our champion funder - The Reed Foundation - who helped make the Big Give Christmas Challenge a huge success. We raised a whopping total of £4,100!



Some of our Big Give fundraisers!

Our pledgers were Kinloss Synagogue; Helping Hands UK; Barnet Mencap Trustees and individual supporters.

Our donors were The Rocking Horse Nursery; Northway School; Mill Hill County

News&Events

High School; individual supporters and Barnet Mencap staff, friends and family.

Would you like to help raise money for Barnet Mencap whilst you shop online without it costing you a further penny? Look no further as EasyFundraising and AmazonSmile allow you to do just that!

Signing up to EasyFundraising and Amazon Smile and selecting Barnet Mencap as your cause is free and it just means that whilst you are shopping, retailers donate some of the money you spend to us at Barnet Mencap! It doesn't cost you any more, and we don't see what you're buying!

To sign up to EasyFundraising, which will donate a percentage to us when you shop at hundreds of online retailers, head to www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/barnetmencap.

If you shop on Amazon, sign up through www.smile.amazon.co.uk today!

If you're interested in doing a socially distanced challenge on behalf of Barnet Mencap, including exercise or an activity at home with your household, please get in touch with us at projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk.



CANCER SCREENING PROJECT

Cancer Screenings for people with Learning Disabilities

Barnet Mencap has produced a package of support to help increase the take up of cancer screening by people with learning disabilities. The package consists of a 20-minute film, Easyread materials and a questionnaire which was launched in January 2021. The project was funded by NCL Cancer Alliance and commissioned by Barnet's Public Health Team.

Data showed that even with the generally low take up of cancer screening by people with learning disabilities, the figures were even lower in Barnet. Barnet Mencap and Healthwatch Barnet researched the barriers people faced to accessing cancer screening.

This package focuses on screening for breast, bowel, and cervical cancers. It is aimed at family carers and services which support people with learning disabilities. The film shows people what cancer is, how screening helps people to get an earlier diagnosis, and how treatment and can save lives.

The film features a cast of people with learning disabilities and autism and health professionals and illustrates why people don't take up the chance of screening and how they can confidently use the screening services. It shows too what families and paid staff can do to support people with learning disabilities, providing them with information, reassurance, and encouragement.

To access the package now, including the video, questionnaire and further resources, head to <https://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/cancer-screeningpack/>

Being... Esther Shortt

Fitness
Instructor



I was born in 1965. I am of mixed English, Nigerian heritage and I was brought up by my mum, who divorced my dad when I was 2 years old. I always, knew about my dad, my mum mentioned he had gone back to Nigeria and opened a Medical Centre as he was a doctor.

I tried to find him over the years, with no success. To cut a long story short, I finally discovered my dad's location by accident through someone who happened to live in the same town in Nigeria as my dad's medical centre! I contacted the medical centre only to find my dad had sadly passed away 6 years ago. I was informed that he had other children from his new marriage - I had an extended side to the family, 4 half brothers, and a sister! I was an only child, and dreamt about having siblings, and wished I had 4 little brothers, when I was a child. So here I was with a new extended family! My sister has glaucoma and is visually impaired, and my youngest brother has Down's Syndrome.

I met my family in 2005. The initial meeting was an experience as I felt like I was being interrogated. This was obviously so that they can check I'm not a fraudster! They hid the little brother with Down's

Syndrome from me until the last day. I loved him and spent my last day in Nigeria with him.

When I left school, I worked in a travel agents and trained as a fitness instructor. I needed a job that fitted around my young family of 4 children. My family has grown and I now have 9 grandchildren!

I initially taught aerobics and extended that with a variety of exercise classes, boxercise, yoga, pilates, aqua, Zumba, dance fit, body conditioning, legs bums and tums and many more over the 30 years. I am fully qualified and hold several certifications.

I am very passionate about my job. My work has taken me into teaching classes, either 1:1 or in large groups, from able bodied to the not so abled bodied. I also had a visually impaired group and a deaf member, which helped build my verbal skills and the additional teaching considerations that I trained in to teach them effectively.

One day in class a young lady with Down's Syndrome attended. The following week, a group of people attended the class from a day care centre along with my usual members. After the class I found that some of the original class members were uncomfortable with the mixed class, so I had to simply tell them to find another class as everyone should have the opportunity to exercise!

My exercise classes branched out into working with additional needs groups, such as Barnet Mencap, which has been extensive during Covid with the online classes. Over this year, I have been running a full timetable of classes online. It took a little getting used to for my members, but over the time they have adapted really well to the 'new normal'.

You can find Esther's website at www.myfitune.io/shorttfitness and she can be found on Instagram and Twitter at Shorttety

Photo Finish



A Day Breaks client enjoying the flowers at Kenwood House



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

35 Hendon Lane, Finchley, London N3 1RT

Tel: 020 8349 3842 Fax: 020 8349 2192

Email:

projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Website: www.barnetmencap.org.uk



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Diary Dates

Learning Disability Week

14th - 20th June 2021

This year, the theme for Learning Disability Week is art and creativity. Keep an eye out for activities or events across the week!

New Building for Activities and Day Breaks

July 2021

We hope to move into our new new Hendon premises for day breaks and activities for adults and children in July! Keep an eye on our social media for more details

Annual General Meeting (AGM)

November 2021

Look out for news of our AGM later this year. We're not sure if it will be face-to-face or virtual yet, but we will be holding an event in some form in November

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in autumn 2021

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

