

September 2022

Doing a good seed for the day!



Some of our clients planting seeds at our new Station Road premises in a Gardening Session.

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From the Editor

Apologies that there has been a long gap since the last newsletter. The last few months have been very busy. Barnet Mencap has produced its new Business Plan for 2022-25 and a Funding Strategy to support it.

These documents set out what we want to achieve over the next three years; and the resources we need to run the services, and develop new ways of supporting children and adults with learning disabilities and autism, and their families. Copies of the Business Plan are now available, and members and supporters will get a copy at the AGM.

After a couple of years disrupted by Covid-19, the AGM will hopefully return to its usual format. It will be a chance to hear about our work and future plans. Our teams have worked very hard this year – with a record number of referrals to some services, and a lot of interest in activities now that people feel more confident to go out.

The rise in inflation, reflected in prices in the shops and energy bills, is causing a lot of concern. We have looked at what Barnet Mencap can do to recruit and retain the staff it needs, and to support the current workforce - especially as we expect to see more demand for services this autumn and winter, as both families and those living independently struggle to manage their bills.

The council has a new Engagement Strategy and wants to get the views of residents. We will be encouraging and assisting adults with learning disabilities and autism to have their say about things that are important to them. We want this to be the start of a new phase where co-production (the idea that people and their carers are fully involved in developing services) becomes a reality.

Ray Booth

Autism Acceptance Week

You might be wondering, “why is it **acceptance** and not **awareness**?”

Awareness raising campaigns aim to increase visibility about specific issues, like autism. The United Nations General Assembly set World Autism **Awareness** Day to be held annually on the 2nd April. This was done to encourage member states to take action in raising awareness about people with autism spectrum disorder (ASD), support research, and find new ways to improve wellness and inclusion.

However, many people (especially those with autism and other neurodiverse conditions) felt that the image given by these actions could be quite negative. So the first Autism **Acceptance** Day celebration took place on 1st April 2011. In an interview with AssistiveWare, activist and founder of the initiative, Paula C. Durbin-Westby, said that: *‘acceptance is: pro-neurodiversity, a focus on supports and services tailored to the needs of the autistic individual, rejection of cure-oriented projects’*. It is also not about fundraising or other agendas.

This celebration quickly spread on social media; and for the last couple of years the movement has been gaining strength within the autistic and neurodiverse community.

Last year the Government published a National strategy for autistic children, young people, and adults (2021 to 2026) and set among its goals the desire to *‘... demonstrate that we have significantly improved public understanding and acceptance of autism, and that autistic people feel more included in their communities and less lonely and/or isolated. We want the public to have a better understanding of autism and to have changed their behavior towards autistic people and their families.’*

The National Autistic Society (NAS) has estimated that 99.5% of the population are aware of autism; but that there is still a significant lack of understanding about autism amongst the public - including what it means to be autistic, and the diversity of the autistic community. NAS has therefore re-branded Autism **Awareness** Week as Autism **Acceptance** Week, with a packed schedule of activities and events.

At Barnet Mencap, we too want to reflect and be in-line with these changes, and will be celebrating Autism **Acceptance** Week.

THE BIG
PICTURE



The London to Brighton bike ride is coming up on **Sunday 11th September!** Check out our social media for the build up and afterwards to see how our riders got on!

Focus on... London to Brighton

We are very excited that five people have signed up for the London to Brighton bike ride on **Sunday 11th September 2022** to help raise money for Barnet Mencap!

One of the riders is the former Chair of our Board of Trustees, Andrew Waite, from Impactful Governance! If you would like to donate and support him, head to his JustGiving page at www.bit.ly/L2BBMencap.

In the build up to the day, we will be posting updates and hosting fundraising sessions for our services users. Then on the day we will be represented too; so stay tuned for updates!

If you or someone you know are interested in taking part in a challenge event like the London to Brighton challenge, email us at projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or give us a call on 020 8349 3842.

Plus there are plenty of other ways to get involved in fundraising - from bake sales, to running, to swimming, and much more. So do get in touch with us for further ways to get involved.

Last year we took part in the The Big Give challenge for a second time. This was a huge success as we raised a total of £3,438.25!

Both staff and service users enjoyed our coffee morning; and our yoga event and swimming gala were great fun.

We'd like to say a special **THANK YOU** to each and every one of our pledgers and donors!

Pledgers: **Mr Plant Hire UK; St. Mary-at-Finchley Church;** Barnet Mencap's trustees, and individual supporters. Our Champion Funder, **The Hospital Saturday Fund.**

Donors: **Christchurch Primary School; Northway School; Rocking Horse Nursery; Mindful Meanders Yoga; Finchley Lido Leisure Centre; Monica's Cafe,** our service users, and individual supporters.

We are also very grateful to have received funding from the **Clifford Chance Foundation.** The money is being spent on the Safe Places project.

LOOKING BACK

What Barnet Mencap Means To Me

After two years of significant restrictions, different challenges, and altered lifestyles caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, we spoke to some of our service users during that time to see how they found it, and where we have been able to help them.



First is Evelyn (left), who is supported by our Equality Housing project:

"I found it very hard during lock-down but I did stick to my support and found it very helpful. I think we all coped very well. Apart from being boring, it was OK. If I

wasn't getting support from Equality Housing in lock-down it would have been more stressful."

Our Support Workers continued to see their service users throughout the pandemic, and another client supported through Equality Housing is Dionne:

"I would not have done my shopping without my support worker going for me during the virus."

Michael and Christina (below) felt:

"They were helping us a lot in the lock-down.

Lucy, Caroline, and Sharon went shopping for



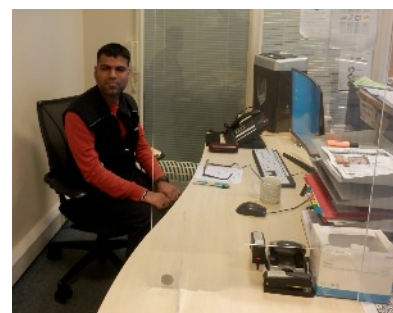
us; and I think it was very nice of them to do that. They were very helpful. They understand your problems."

During the pandemic our office was closed to everyone except essential staff - so our volunteers were not able to come in.

Shyam (below), who has volunteered on our front desk for a few years now, found that difficult:

"I missed coming in to volunteer at the office. I would wake up thinking 'I wish I could go in', but I did get used to it. I joined a lot of online activities Barnet Mencap put on through COPs. This was my first time doing that. This was quite good, but face-to-face is better. When the office opened, it was quite nice as I was talking to the staff often."

When a full lock-down was in force, we were not able to offer any of our leisure and learning activities face-to-face. But we adapted and offered as many activities as we could online.



The carers that use our adult and child services also found it tough. We were not able to offer face-to-face appointments. So again we had to adapt, offering appointments over the telephone and online through Zoom - even using it to run a weekly parenting programme.

Other projects, such as Working for You and the Autism Service, also switched to online appointments when they couldn't take place in person.

We know the pandemic isn't over yet, but we are so proud of our staff - some who were still in the community and in clients' homes every day providing support and keeping them safe, while others adapted and learned new ways of working.

News&Events

BARNET FRIENDS

Barnet's Telephone Befriending Service

We would like to introduce you to **Barnet Friends**. A telephone **Befriending Service**, delivered by Community Barnet, for anyone aged **18 to 55** that might be experiencing isolation, loneliness, and/or require support with emotional wellbeing.

Vetted volunteer befrienders are matched with an individual to provide companionship and emotional support. They can also give information on a range of activities and services that can help with increasing confidence and sociability; reducing isolation; accessing the local community; using public transport; furthering hobbies and interests; and obtaining other means of support.

The service is available to adults living, working, or studying in Barnet. They are also looking for volunteers to help deliver this service and everyone is welcome to apply.

BARNET FRIENDS

Volunteers needed!

We provide support to residents suffering from loneliness and isolation. Having someone to talk to could really make a difference to someone right now. **YOU** can make this difference.

You will need good communication and listening skills, patience, empathy and understanding of the needs of vulnerable people. We ask for a commitment of 3-4 hours a week.

You will be provided with safeguarding training and ongoing support and supervision.

Can you spare a few hours a week to have a friendly chat with residents who are feeling lonely and isolated?



For a rewarding volunteering experience please get in touch!

✉ adam.wilson@communitybarnet.org.uk

☎ 020 8016 0016



It would be a minimum of one hour a week telephoning any service users that are referred to the service.

For more information, visit www.communitybarnet.org.uk/portfolio/barnet-friends. There you can also make referrals by downloading and completing a referral form.

If you have any questions do not hesitate to get in touch. Contact 020 8016 0016 befriending@communitybarnet.org.uk www.communitybarnet.org.uk.

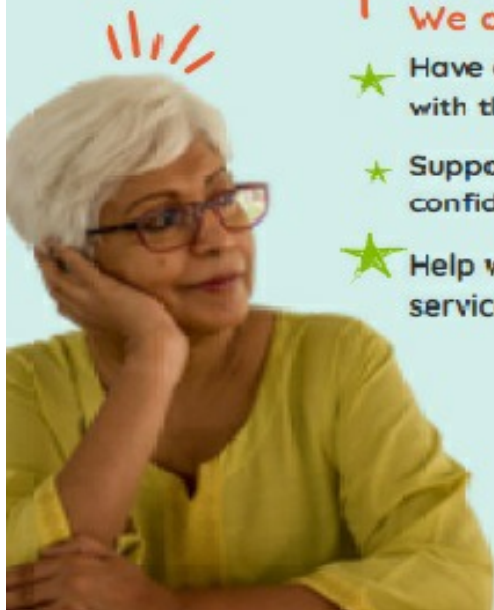
BARNET FRIENDS.

The CommUNITy Barnet Telephone Befriending Service provides Barnet residents aged 16-55 with support, comfort and connection to the community. If you or anyone you know is feeling isolated or lonely, talk to us.



We are here to..

- ★ Have a friendly chat to help you deal with the feeling of loneliness
- ★ Support you to increase your confidence and sociability
- ★ Help with signposting to other useful services in the borough



☎ **020 8016 0016**

✉ befriending@communitybarnet.org.uk

News&Events

SUICIDE PREVENTION

Suicide prevention is everyone's business

In the UK, suicide is the leading cause of death in people aged 15-24, the biggest killer of men under 49 years-old, and significantly high among those with autism.

National suicide rates are increasing. Every year many more contemplate or attempt suicide, harm themselves, or suffer alone - being afraid to speak openly about how they are feeling. The latest data for Barnet shows that between 2016 and 2019, 89 people lost their lives to suicide. On average that is one person every 16 days.

Every life lost to suicide is a tragedy that has a devastating effect on families, friends, schools, workplaces, and communities. So all of us have a role to play in reducing suicide.

Barnet Mencap, in partnership with the London Borough of Barnet, is working with a wide range of organisations and people that are experts by experience, to both reduce the number of suicides and/or better support those bereaved or affected by suicide.

The Borough's Public Health Department has recently launched the first phase of a campaign focused on preventing ill mental health and suicidality amongst men. They have gone out to male dominated industries, such as construction companies, and talked to men about their mental health problems - encouraging them to talk if they notice anything different about their friends and co-workers.

Together we are calling all Barnet residents to join us in playing their part. Download the '**Stay Alive**' app and share this resource with your friends, family, and network.

The app has many life-saving features, including: strategies for staying safe; how to help a person thinking about suicide; and access to local and national support.

The time to act is now. Let's make suicide prevention everyone's business!

PARENTING

Workshops

There are still some slots available on our programme of workshops for parents of children with additional needs!

The workshops range from information sessions on applying for **Blue Badges** and **PIP**, to more relaxed sessions in which you can talk to other parents and share experiences on **ADHD** and **Managing Celebrations**.

They all take place **online** at **10:00 am** and **7:15 pm** on the dates shown below, and are led by **Jenny Melling** and **Valerie Lam**.

For more information or to book a session, email projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or call 020 8349 3842.



Upcoming Workshops for Parents of Children with Additional Needs

Check out our programme of upcoming workshops. There's a mix of information sessions and time to talk sessions where we can share our experiences and learn from each other



- Wednesday 20th April
Time to Talk: ADHD
- Wednesday 18th May
Applying for Short Breaks
- Wednesday 22nd June
Time to Talk: ADHD
- Wednesday 21st September
Applying for PIP
- Wednesday 19th October
Time to Talk: ADHD
- Wednesday 23rd November
Time to Talk: Managing celebrations
- Wednesday 18th January 2023
Time to Talk: ADHD
- Wednesday 22nd February 2023
Blue Badge Information Session
- Wednesday 15th March 2023
Time to Talk: ADHD

All sessions will take place at both 10-11am and 7:15-8:15pm on Zoom, so you can choose the slot that suits you

Sessions will be led by Jenny Melling and Valerie Lam, Barnet Mencap

To book your place today, contact **Project Support** on projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or telephone 020 8349 3842

Don't forget to let us know which sessions and times you'd like to book!

Being... Corey Goodison



Hello everyone! I'm excited to tell you all about my life! My father is Jewish and a film director, which gave me the exciting opportunity to be in one of his films ('Solomon & Gaenor') as an extra! I met some stars, and I had a crush on Ioan Gruffudd who starred in it. I had the most exciting time taking part! One of my brothers is also in the film industry, so I still get to hear lots of exciting stories! Every other Sunday I have lunch with my dad and we go walking in Hadley Woods. I look forward to this. We have very interesting walks and it's lovely to catch up with him.

My mum is my best friend and we are very close. We have a family dog called Daisy, who I absolutely adore. She is a rescue dog from Portugal. I look forward to seeing her when I visit my mum and my step-dad in Dorset. I have 3 younger brothers, who I am also very close with. I love my family and I have recently become an aunty. My niece is adorable - I think she has my eyes!

I had a very good upbringing and it shows in my character. I am a very sociable, outgoing, happy, and caring person, who likes to keep busy.

I have been working for Marks & Spencer in Brent Cross for approximately 13 years. I have a great relationship with my work colleagues. I get to meet lots of new people every day. Some customers are very friendly towards me and some can be very rude. But I am used to dealing with this, and every day is different.

I've always been a very creative person and I am currently doing an art course with Community Focus, which I enjoy very much! They have helped me to develop my skills. I especially enjoy colouring and writing short stories.

Barnet Mencap plays a big part in my life. I am a member of COPs (Communities Opportunities Project) and I like to attend their activities. It is nice to meet with other members who live in the area.

I moved into one of Barnet Mencap's shared houses around 20 years ago and I appreciate the staff, who have supported me over the years. I get support twice a week to learn everyday skills, including: cooking; shopping; and banking.

I was a bit scared and anxious when I first moved in, but I can honestly say I am very happy. I've built my confidence around other tenants in the house and in the community. There have been times when I had disagreements with my fellow housemates but we always manage to sort things out, which is good.

I can talk to my key workers about anything. When I was feeling ill last year, they supported me to book and attend appointments and helped me with my medication. Covid has been very worrying for me. But, with the help and support of family, friends, and Barnet Mencap staff, I am managing to learn to live with it.

I am enjoying my life and especially look forward to spending lots of quality time with family this year. Family time is very important to me!

Photo Finish



Some of our staff team at a recent Away Day



General Information

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



How to find us

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Email:

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Website: www.barnetmencap.org.uk



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Follow @barnetmencap on Twitter

Diary Dates

London to Brighton Bike Ride

Sunday 11th September 2022

Five people, including our former chair Andrew Waite, are taking part in the London to Brighton Bike Ride to raise money for Barnet Mencap. You can support Andrew here: www.bit.ly/L2BBMencap

Barnet Mencap's Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Wednesday 23rd November 2022

Wesley Hall, 9 Stapylton Road, Barnet EN5 4JJ

10:30 am - 12:00 noon

Everyone is welcome to come along to our AGM and hear what we have been getting up to over the past year, and how the services we offer have developed.

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in Winter 2022

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

