



Newsletter

September 2023

Somewhere under the rainbow!



Some of our clients, volunteers and staff enjoying an LGBTQ+ Cabaret Night at Siorai Bar as part of Pride Month

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From the Editor

As we hit August and it already feels like Summer is behind us, we're looking back to a couple of fun Summer events we've held recently. The cover photo is from the LGBTQ+ Cabaret Night we held as part of Pride Month, which all who attended really enjoyed. Across the page is a photo from our fundraising Summer Fun event which was also a massive success - we're already being asked when the next one will be!

On page 4 we've got an article on what it's really like working in social care, featuring quotes from a number of the Community Support Workers from our Equality Housing team. We have a couple of vacancies in our supported living houses at the moment, so please do get in touch if you or somebody you know might be interested. The Being... article this time is Evelyn, one of our Equality Housing clients!

We've also got articles on Project 300, a project that began during the pandemic but has gone from strength to strength, and a piece on leaving legacy donations in Wills which sounds a bit morbid, but is still very important!

Please do note the date of our upcoming Annual General Meeting in the Dates for your diary section - Wednesday 22nd November. We'd love to see as many people as possible there this year, after a few smaller ones in recent years.

I'd also like to just express our - and my personal - sadness to hear that one of our clients of many years, Christopher Clements, passed away recently. Chris will be very sorely missed by all of us who knew him, and we're thinking of the family at this tough time.

James Wheatley

Early-Positive Approaches to Support (E-Pats)

We have been very fortunate, at Barnet Mencap, to have worked with the Tizard Centre at The University of Kent over the last seven years to deliver their E-PATs Parenting course.

E-PATs (Early Positive Approaches to Support) is unique, as most parenting programmes offered to parents of children under 5 with developmentally delays are usually an adaptation of an existing course either for older children or typically for developing children, whereas E-PATs has been specifically devised from the very beginning for parents of children 5 and under with learning disability/developmental delay.

Another unique element of E-PATs is that parent carers have been involved throughout its development and when delivering the programme, it is essential that one of the facilitators is always a parent carer of person with a learning disability or developmental delay.

The E-PATs programme is an 8-week in-person course which provides parents with space to share the joys and challenges they may face and provides a practical toolkit to support them with new strategies that can reduce challenging behaviour, improve communication with their child and improve the family's wellbeing and resilience.

Barnet Mencap was initially involved in 2017, as part of a Pilot Study of the programme, then in 2018 and 2019 we were once again involved in delivering programmes as part of a feasibility study. This was to see if it was possible to carry out a larger Randomised Control Study. Funding has now been secured by The Tizard Centre for this larger study and we are delighted at Barnet Mencap to be one of the centres that is taking part in delivering E-PATs courses!

We are now looking for parents of children aged between 18 months to 5 years with a learning disability/developmental delay to take part in E-PATs. The child does not need to have a diagnosis. Parents that take part would either be offered the programme now or in a year's time. As part of their involvement, parents would also be asked to complete questionnaires for which they would be rewarded with vouchers.

If you are a parent or a referrer interested in E-PATs, then please contact Valerie Lam at the Barnet Mencap Office on 020 8349 3842 or email valerie.lam@barnetmencap.org.uk.



Focus on... Summer Fun-draiser!

On Saturday 17th June, the sun was shining and Barnet Mencap celebrated its 58th birthday! Children and adults came together and enjoyed activities including a treasure hunt, skipping challenge, tombola, glitter tattoos, creative art, bouncy castle and much more! Our Summer Fun Celebration was a huge success and we raised a total of £5,848.61, and our service users, staff, trustees, volunteers and supporters had an amazing time. We were lucky enough to witness the King's birthday flypast.

We'd like to say a massive thank you to local councillors Cllr Humayune Khalick, Cllr Gill Sargeant and Cllr Matthew Perlberg for attending. We'd also like to thank Herts Parties for the Bouncy Castle, Soft Play equipment and Connect 4; Waitrose & Partners, Ballards Lane for the generous food and gift donations; Sandie Levell for the

beautiful, branded Barnet Mencap cake; HOB Salons for the hairdressing gift voucher and BKL Chartered Accountant and Tax Advisers for their very generous money donation. Thank you also to everyone who baked, donated gifts, attended and helped on the day! We are always grateful to receive money/gift donations whether we are organising events or not – thank you to all our individual supporters.

With June being Pride month, we were chosen as the charity partner for the launch of an event that brings accessible nights to mainstream venues in order to bridge the gap between learning disability/autism and the LGBTQ+ community (see cover photo!). Our staff, service users and supporters enjoyed some entertaining performances, including one of our own service users, Sacha D as the headline act!

We are looking for links with schools/local business who might want to

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organise a fundraiser! This can be anything from a funky hair day to a bake sale. Please get in touch if you have any useful connections.

We have also been busy with several grant applications. We are currently looking for funding to cover our office telephone upgrade and sensory equipment for Take a Break children's activities.

We're excited that two people are currently signed up to do challenge events to raise money for Barnet Mencap! Our worker Kate will be doing the Swim Serpentine later this month, and Lorraine will be running the Royal Parks Half in October. You can donate to their pages to show your support here:



Kate:

<https://swimserpentine.enthuse.com/pf/katrina-gordon>

Lorraine:

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/lorraine-bell-1692184199940>

SOCIAL CARE

What's it like working in Social Care?

At Barnet Mencap we work with both adults and children with learning disabilities and autistic adults and children. Working in social care can be an extremely rewarding career with many benefits for both the worker and the individuals they support.

You can get a huge amount of job satisfaction knowing that you are able to make a real difference to people's lives on a

daily basis, helping those who need support and having a positive impact on their well-being. No day is the same and the satisfaction of leaving someone in a better situation than when you found them gives a real sense of accomplishment and pride in a job well done, however big or small it may be.

We work with the most amazing individuals every day and we are very privileged to see them grow and develop, achieve their goals, widen their expectations and enjoy life. Working in social care involves learning and growth for the worker. You will learn so many new skills through both formal training as well as on-the-job learning from your colleagues and those that you support - skills such as communication and interpersonal skills, learning about disabilities, safeguarding, the benefits system, learning to bond and help you clients live a safe and productive life. The training opportunities that you will be afforded can be invaluable for your personal development and acquiring new skills that are transferable to many other roles.

Each day will bring a new challenge, we have to wear so many different hats through the course of an average day from counsellor to advocate, teacher to finance and benefit advisor. Helping with day to day tasks, health appointments, being a shoulder to cry on and someone to share a joke and a laugh with!

Working at Barnet Mencap allows our workers to feel valued in their role by the individuals they support, their colleagues as well as the wider community that appreciate the value of work carried out in the sector. This can contribute to a sense of job satisfaction, importance and pride. If you are thinking about a career in social care Barnet Mencap is a great place to start!

Here's what some of our staff had to say!

Continued ->

"Barnet Mencap Equality Housing is a great team to be part of, they have staff who go over and above when working with the people we support. No two days are ever the same and you never know what challenges your going to be faced with when you turn up for work"

"I enjoy working with Barnet Mencap as they have been very supportive and flexible during difficult periods in my life, this has made me feel valued. My colleagues are wonderful, always happy to help."

"I have recently joined Equality Housing at Barnet Mencap after 30 years in a totally different profession. My admiration for the staff and work involved is huge, but there is more to this job than I ever imagined. Every day is a new learning curve, and presents new challenges for me, but I feel very supported by all and trust the guidance and knowledge passed on to me- really proud to be a part of this inclusive community of clients and staff."

"I have been working for Equality Housing since September 2021. I have to say working as a Community Link Worker has been both exciting and rewarding. I have found both management and my colleagues a pleasure to work with.

I particularly appreciate the opportunity to further my continuous and professional development and feel supported in every area of my work."

"In Equality Housing you are part of a team the staff really care about and support each other."

"Working for Barnet Mencap, you meet extraordinary people whose personal qualities are inspiring. Working with clients who, despite extreme challenges, show courage, compassion, humour, humility, kindness and resilience. This is inspiring and gratifying. My colleagues are people who put others first, which helps me to think that the world can be a better place."

Project 300 and Working for You Teaming Up

Barnet Mencap's Working For You (WFY) service provides information, advice and guidance for autistic adults and adults with Learning disabilities living in Barnet.

We provide a free service which helps people to navigate and resolve any issues that they may be struggling with.

We can offer general advice or support you with a wide range of issues such as applying for a freedom pass or blue badge to obtaining the correct benefits or appealing benefits decisions. We also provide help to access care and support or advocate on your behalf.



One of our Working for You advisors with a client

Working for You have teamed up with Project 300 to provide surgeries at their P300 Coffee and Information Mornings.

These surgeries will give people the opportunity to meet with the Working For You team and get advice about issues they or their loved ones are experiencing.

For those of you who don't know, Project 300 was developed during the pandemic to provide much needed support for families who are caring for loved ones with a learning disability. Support has been via

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regular phone calls, home visits, coffee mornings and just lately, help with the cost of the living through providing warm spaces and food/essentials banks.

The project has been very successful and due to the invaluable support the service provided throughout the pandemic, the London Borough of Barnet have continued to commission the service.

At Barnet Mencap appreciate that time can be very limited for carers and hope that bringing the advisors to the coffee mornings will be of benefit for those who are in need of support and advice.

LEGACIES

Where there's a Will, there's a... gift?

With a gift in your Will to Barnet Mencap, you could have a powerful impact on children and adults with learning disabilities and autistic people. Your money will help us to secure high quality services and support in the borough of Barnet.

By remembering Barnet Mencap in your Will, you'll ensure that we can continue to be here for children and adults with learning disabilities and autistic people.

Earlier this year we were surprised and incredibly thankful for a legacy we received from the estate of Peggy Jones, who left one third of their estate to us in the 1980s!

If you would like to leave a gift in your Will, we strongly recommend you that you speak to a solicitor to ensure that your wishes will be carried out as you intend.

For further information on ways to help individuals with Learning Disabilities, autistic people and their families, please get in touch with us at projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk.

MEMBERSHIP

Do you support Barnet Mencap?

Barnet Mencap is a membership organisation, informed by the opinions of those we support. We have a more powerful voice the more members we have. For £15 per year, or £5 if you are unwaged, you can become a member of Barnet Mencap.

@What's in it for me?' you might be asking. The main benefit or 'perk' of becoming a member is that you are showing your support to us and our work, and you are helping strengthen our voice. One of the ways you can do this, is by attending our AGM (details on the back page) and voting on important decisions.

See the panel below for joining details and join today!

We Want You!



If you support Barnet Mencap, why not become a member? Join us for £15 per year (or £5 if you are unwaged)! As well as supporting our work, members get a small welcome gift, a membership card, the chance to vote at our AGM and much more!

Contact 020 8349 3842 or projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk if you're interested

Being... Evelyn Donaghue



My name is Evelyn, and I am an Equality Housing tenant. I live in my own home in North Finchley with my canary Charlie!

I have worked in Waitrose for 33 years, and I am retiring in July when I turn 65. I have been supported by Barnet Mencap since the 12th of February 1987. I have seen lots of change over the years and have interviewed lots of staff including Sam (Bishop) the COPs Manager and Community Link Workers Laura and Tracey. I think I am really good at picking new staff and enjoy being a part of interviews.

Barnet Mencap has been very good to me. Barnet Mencap supports me by looking after my money and my home. The staff help me to make the right decisions and manage my letters. I am very happy at Barnet Mencap and don't want my support to change.

When I retire, I would like to see more staff. I am also a member of COPs (Community Opportunities Project). My favorite activities are pub nights, Sunday lunch and Nosh Night.

I work at a charity shop as a volunteer. I enjoy tidying up the clothes and other donations and steaming the clothes ready to sell. I am working on the tills as I get to talk to lots of people that live near me in my community.

I also attend St Joseph's on Mondays and Tuesdays, where I do cooking and dancing. I enjoy going and getting on with everyone.



I enjoy going out to the theatre and I have 1:1 support to do this. My favorite show is Mamma Mia. I also enjoyed the Mamma Mia House Party at the O2. I have a few more exciting trips coming up including Grease and Pretty Woman.

I also love going on holiday. Last year, me and my friend Janette went on holiday to Disneyworld in Florida and swam with the dolphins! This year, me and Chris are going on holiday to Malta, I am very excited about this and have already started my shopping!



Evelyn celebrating her birthday recently, as well as at the ballet.

Photo Finish



Clients posing amongst the ruins on a Barnet Mencap supported holiday to Hastings - Get in touch if you'd like a trip away!

**Barnet
mencap**

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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Diary Dates

Barnet Mencap's Annual General Meeting (AGM)

10:30am- 12 noon on **Wednesday 22nd November 2023**

Wesley Hall, 9 Stapylton Road, Barnet, EN5 4JJ

Everybody is welcome to come to our AGM to hear what we've been getting up to over the past year, as well as a chance to speak to our staff and trustees.

Everybody is welcome to attend, but it would help us to plan if you can let us know you are coming by contacting projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk or 020 8349 3842.

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in November 2023

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