



Newsletter

December 2024

Celebrating a Year of Success



Days out with friends: COPs take a trip to Alexandra Palace

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From the Editor

As we near the end of 2024 it feels like a good time to look back over what incredible achievements we have accomplished. It is thanks to the dedicated, committed and caring staff that know our clients so well that we can achieve great results.

The year's highlights have been the opening of the Autism Hub, offering Holidays, fundraising at the London Big Half Marathon and the fun Summer Ball, and successfully advocating to increase care hours for clients in need of more support. We also secured funding to continue our Open Door and parenting projects, as well as the new tender for Bright Futures which we have run for the past 10 years. You can read more about this in the next article.

I'd like to do a 'shout out' to the staff at The Old Finchleians Club, a Sports Club in Woodside Park, where we held our Summer ball and Staff Christmas Party. Thank you so much for donating your premises and time.

We had another successful Hate Crime Awareness Week standing with our community to prevent hate crimes, support victims and encourage witnesses to stand up. On the 20th November we held our AGM, we premiered two new films from the Employment Project and Bright Futures, showing the excellent work that enhances the lives of clients.

Whether you celebrate or not, we're wishing you and your families all the best over the festive season and into

2025!
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Bright Futures on the horizon

Barnet Mencap is delighted to have won the contract to continue its Bright Futures services. The council published a tender in the spring and our bid was successful.

The Council asked for a service that can prevent, reduce, or delay the need for adult social care. It is available for any adult with a learning disability or who is autistic in Barnet, and is intended to improve their resilience, aspirations, health, and wellbeing.

Providing the service means that COPS can maintain its monthly programme of community participation and learning, fit and healthy activities, and peer support. Working For You provides advice and information, support with benefits, health, and housing. People will be helped to access paid employment and training.

We will run workshops to raise awareness of what is needed by autistic people, and people with learning disabilities. Through the Project 300 team, staff will help people with learning disabilities prepare for their reviews and check on their wellbeing.

Staff will continue to work in collaboration with others, such as the Barnet Learning Disability Service, the Carers' Centre, and Age UK Barnet.

One change to the Bright Futures Service is that Barnet Mencap is now providing the Employment Service itself. We were very pleased that Zeeshan Sharif transferred over from Royal Mencap so that he can still coordinate the service. Money is tight and we will have to make savings on the budget.

But Barnet Mencap is proud of what has been achieved over the past ten years and is excited that it can now develop the Bright Futures Service.

THE BIG
PICTURE



Our lovely COPs members enjoying one of our regular games of crazy golf

Focus on...

Barnet Mencap's current plan will end next March, and we have begun to develop a new one. The Business Plan sets out what we want to achieve, the resources required, and the governance arrangements. It outlines the risks that might blow us off course, and what the staff and Trustees are doing to mitigate the risks.

Since 2022, Barnet Mencap has maintained its services. Working For You continues to see a lot of people. COPS has increased its membership, introduced holidays, and established Station Road as a great community base. The Children's team has won a new Advice Information and Advice contract.

We have increased care packages for the tenants, increased the number of people in jobs, and launched the Autism Hub. There have been new opportunities, to support

family carers, and to promote cancer screening, and the Dementia pathways for people with learning disabilities. Fundraising has been successful. We have done more work on equality, diversity, and inclusion and been involved in strategic forums across Barnet.

Over the Autumn we want to engage with Stakeholders and ask them what they think Barnet Mencap should be doing in the next three years. Social care for children and adults faces huge pressures and money is extremely tight.

In 2025 Barnet Mencap Celebrates its 60th Anniversary. Staff and Trustees are still dedicated to the Chairty's values and using them to guide the work we do. Please tell us what you think we should do and where there are gaps in support, as we plan for the future.

Winter Safety is Easy (Read)

Last year we worked with partners in _____ to produce easy read guides for extreme weather and emergency preparedness.

We're please to have published these publicly on our website and our new easy read resources page, which can be found at: www.barnetmncap.org.uk/easyread

Ones to look out for this winter are our cold weather guide and advice on preparing for power cuts.



The guides offer general advice for staying safe and preparing for winter and any minor emergencies that might come up in day to day life. They cover how to dress for the weather, letting your electricity and gas companies know that you might need extra help in an outage, and what you should keep around the house to make sure that unexpected problems like power cuts don't ruin your day

Hate Crime Awareness Week

In October, Barnet Mencap contributed to National Hate Crime Awareness Week. Each year, our hate crime coordinators play an important role in organising events together with partners, including Barnet Council and the Metropolitan Police. Hate crime is a rising issue across the UK, with more than 145,000



Harking back to warmer weather, our Just Holidays project supported people on holiday this September



The Arts and Crafts group tried out incorporating nature's beauty by using natural resources in art

hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales in 2022-2023.

To prevent hate crimes, support victims, and encourage witnesses to stand up, Barnet Mencap is raising awareness about this type of crime. Only by standing together with the community can we protect and support our vulnerable members from perpetrators.

This year, Barnet adopted the slogan "Hate Has No Place in Barnet." The new campaign included flyers and banners with a clear message and brief information about hate crime. We focused on easily readable information, understanding the diversity of Barnet's community. Together with local police support officers and people from Barnet Council, Barnet Mencap set up stands and stalls around Barnet. One of the busiest stations was Edgware Bus Station, where the hate crimes team delivered leaflets and

talked with passers-by about the importance of standing against hate crime. Another successful day was at Edgware Community Muslim Centre, where, side by side with the police and Tell MAMA, we spoke with Muslim community members and received an amazing supportive response. In Golders Green, we were joined by local councillors Anne Clarke and Sara Conway, and surprisingly attended by Member of Parliament Sarah Sackman.

Hate Crime Awareness Week is also a great opportunity for Barnet Mencap's hate crime team to share their experiences and challenges with colleagues and professionals from law enforcement, local authorities, and various charities. Together, during professional meetings and seminars, we discussed future partnerships and how we can stand together against hate crimes in Barnet.

To receive our newsletter about hate crime prevention, please sign up here and become a Hate Crime Champion!

<https://www.barnetmencap.org.uk/what-we-offer/hate-crime/hate-crime-reporting/>



We held a number of really successful hate crime awareness stall across Barnet for Hate Crime Week.

Fundraising

Fundraising Update

It's been a busy time in the world of fundraising! We are always really grateful for support from local businesses. Huge thank you to Vallectric who very kindly supported us with a donation of £1000 which will enable our users to go on a fantastic trip to Edinburgh castle where they'll enjoy the sites and indulge in some afternoon tea! We received £1000 from Barnet Council where our clients will enjoy music sessions. We have also received funding from St Marys Church and Brookside Methodist Church!

Massive thank you to our 3 runners who took part in the Big Half Marathon in September and between them, raised over £1800! Our service users had a wonderful time making good luck banners and cheering on the runners in Greenwich! Keeping up with the healthy lifestyle theme, our service users had a spring in their steps and completed several laps around Victoria Park, raising money for Barnet Mencap. Many of the participants are also part of our Weigh Less club. Do get in touch with us if you would like to take part in a challenge event – including swimming, running or sponsored silences.

Looking ahead, we are excited to be taking part in bag packing at Tesco in Ballards Lane where we will dress up in our most festive attire, help customers pack their shopping and collect donations! We will also be organising a fun arts and crafts session, making Christmas cards and we'll get to enjoy some mulled wine, hot chocolate and some festive bites thanks to a very generous donation from our local Waitrose.



We received a generous donation from Vallectric Ltd which will help us support vulnerable people and their families.



We received a donation of non-perishable food from Waitrose which will help service users that are struggling in low income households.



Our regular weekly job club has been continuing to provide first class support to people seeking employment

Warm Spaces And P300

2024 has been a busy year for Project 300 and Warm Spaces. We have maintained a stable number of clients and carers who want and are keen to receive regular contact with us, via phonecalls and through coffee and information mornings.

We received grants which enabled us to offer shopping vouchers to families to help with the increased cost of living. Feedback has been very positive and families have said that they have 'come at the right time' especially since the change in weather.

We have held coffee and information mornings so far this attracting well over 20 families and carers at each. We have another coffee and information morning planned in December with guest speakers attending.

Our referral rate has been good. There have been positive outcomes for clients, especially those who have requested additional support and we work well with Barnet Learning Disability Team. We have also made referrals to Bright Futures, which is a massive step up for clients who were either not interested or confident in trying new things.

Working with Barnet Mencap's Carer's Caseworker has enabled us to refer carers who have been reluctant to receive support in the past. Feedback from P300 carers has been very positive.

We have been able to deliver a service that is welcomed by carers, who now feel that they have someone to go to for support, or just someone to talk to. Many positive relationships have been developed where there was none before and we are pleased to say that this continues.

Being... Caludia



My name is Claudia.

I live in Barnet but I was born in Kent.

I have 3 brothers and no sisters.

I work at Barnet Mencap 2 days a week.

I help in the office and do shredding. I like doing the shredding and chatting to the other staff. I get on with everyone at the office. It's hard work but I love it.

Sometimes I clean up in the kitchen and do the washing up. The staff tell me well done when they see what I have cleaned.

I used to work at St Joseph's centre in the cafe. After I left there I started volunteering at FIN with my partner David

I feel sad when I talk about David as he passed away last December. I still miss him.

When David was ill, I met staff from Barnet Mencap when they came to the house to visit David.

They helped me get support. They also helped me get my new shower and benefits.

I now have support from Equality Housing. It's very helpful and I like my staff and spending time with them. If I need anything I come to them and they sort it out for me.

I decided to join COPs but i tried them out first to see if I liked it. I did and now I go every week.

I joined the weigh less club at Station road and I have lost weight. I lost the most one week and won a prize of fruit.

Since being involved with Mencap. Everything has changed. I'm out more and I know more people , it's nice and makes me feel less lonely.

I even made a video with Barnet Mencap. Now I'm famous!!!!



Claudia and Lucy talking about how things have improved since Claudia began support.

Photo Finish



Getting into the groove at a celebration event for the Making Plans Together research project



General Information

You can also view this newsletter on your computer! It's on our website in the 'Newsletters' section, or please email ProjectSupport@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

Email:

projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk

Website: www.barnetmencap.org.uk



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Diary Dates

Christmas Holiday Period Closure

24th December 2024 - 2nd January 2025

The Barnet Mencap Office will be closed for the holiday period.

Changes to local Parking

December 2024

Barnet will be removing all Parking Pay and Display machines by 31st December. You will only be able to pay for parking using the PaybyPhone App, online, phone or cash at Pay Point locations.

The next newsletter, with all the latest news and features, will appear in March 2025

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

