

Barnet mencap



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From the Editor

As spring blossoms around us, it brings with it the perfect reminder that change is not only inevitable but often the start of something brighter. It's a time for fresh energy, new beginnings, and moving forward – all of which are very much alive within our organisation right now.

We're proud of the strong, inclusive culture we continue to build. Recently, we've welcomed several new staff members, and it's been wonderful to see them embraced as part of the team so quickly. Our commitment to creating a supportive and collaborative environment is as strong as ever.

A big highlight this season was the Minds and Muffins event. Thanks to the slick and efficient organisation behind the scenes, it was a fantastic success – an event with great purpose, enjoyed by all who attended.

Our community spirit continues to shine through in the incredible opportunities we've created for people with learning disabilities and autism. Trips to Emmerdale and Butlins were enjoyed by many, offering meaningful experiences, independence, and joy.

We're also delighted to welcome our new trustees, who bring a wealth of experience and insight. Their guidance will no doubt strengthen our mission and help steer us towards even greater impact.

Looking ahead, we're focusing on growing our membership ensuring more people can benefit from and contribute to the work we do. And of course, we can't wait to celebrate with everyone at our 60th Anniversary Party, a night of fun, music, and connection. Don't miss it! Here's to a season of progress, positivity, and purpose.

Warm Wishes

Annette Zippis (COO)

MEET THE MANAGERS

BETH SALMON

I began with Barnet Mencap on the 8th of August, 2022, not long after completing my degree in Education with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities in 2020. Following my graduation, I worked as a cover teacher at a special school in Watford, where I gained valuable experience supporting young people with learning disabilities. My career at Barnet Mencap started as a Community Support Worker. In October of that same year, I became the deputy manager for Equality Housing under Lucy Clifford. In this role, I developed my skills, leading to my becoming the manager of Equality Housing in April 2024.

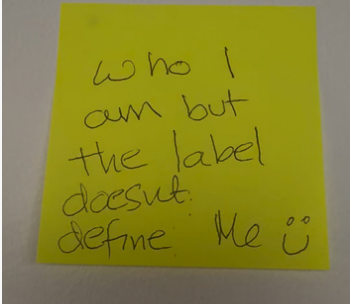
In my personal life, I have a strong passion for travelling and I have just completed travelling to 30 countries before turning 30, thanks to Wizz Air and my love for finding bargain flights. I have travelled to 25 European countries, experiencing a range of cultures and cities.

When I was 18, I backpacked Southeast Asia, visiting Thailand, Vietnam and Laos. This sparked my love for travel and has led to many road in America where I visited Seattle, San Francisco, Los Angeles and Las Vegas. Last year, I travelled back to Asia and explored Japan and South Korea.

If you're interested in becoming a Support Worker with Barnet Mencap, head [here](#).



AUTISM ACCEPTANCE MONTH



April was a vibrant and inspiring month at Barnet Mencap as we celebrated Autism Acceptance Month, which brought our community together.

We kicked things off with a warm and welcoming afternoon at The Autism Hub during Autism Acceptance Week. This event created a safe and inclusive space for autistic people to explore mindfulness, connect with others, and celebrate neurodiversity.



Later in the month, we hosted a cake bake sale called 'Minds & Muffins: At the Autism Hub in North Finchley. Taking place on Thursday, 24th April, the event was not only a sweet success but also a brilliant opportunity to raise awareness and funds. It gave people a chance to network, chat over cake, and support our ongoing work in the community.



FUNDRAISING UPDATE



*Thank you
for your support*

It's been a very busy and exciting time in the world of fundraising!

Our Minds and Muffins was a super sweet event. Huge thank you to Waitrose and Wenzels for the amazingly delicious and generous donations. We raised £225.55 and highlights included:

- Talks from an Autism Hub client and staff member
- Networking with several key stakeholders including BLK, Vallectric, St Marys Church, Rocking Horse Nursery, M For Menopause, Only a Pavement Away, NHS Social Prescribing, Community Barnet Plus and more!
- Bear Auctions
- Cake, cake and more cake



**WE ARE NOW EAGERLY
LOOKING FOR FUNDING
FOR OUR AUTISM HUB.**



Looking ahead, we are very excited for Barnet Mencap's 60th birthday which is fast approaching in June. To celebrate, we will be organising a park celebration and fundraiser on Wednesday 16th July. This event is for our service users, their families and Barnet Mencap staff. We will be taking part in a range of sporty activities in order to raise money – a minimum of £60 for our 60th is our aim! Please book your place if you would like to come – places are limited!

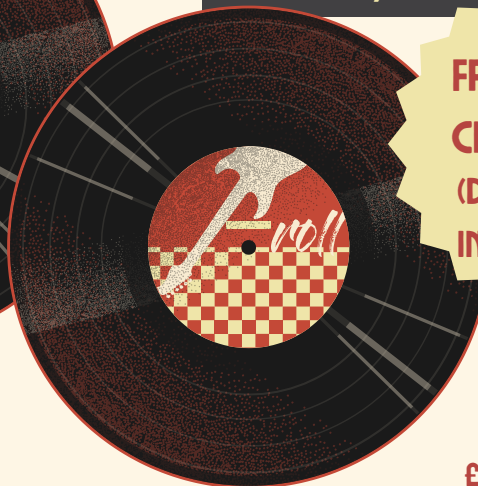


Do get in touch if you would like to take part in the celebrations and fun.

COME CELEBRATE BARNET MENCAP'S ROCKING 60S



6 JUNE, 2025



FREE CAKES &
CRISPS
(DRINKS NOT
INCLUDED)

7:00 PM – 9:30 PM

Featuring:

THE SWINGING RETROS

Email projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk
to book.



OLD FINCHLEANS CLUB
POSTCODE: N12 7JE

Ticket Price
£15.00

£10.00 (IF NOT WORKING)

ULTRA CHALLENGES



We are very excited to have formed a partnership with Ultra Challenges! Whether you are interested in doing a bridges walk or a spooky trail, there are many activities to choose from so do check out what's on offer! You might fancy heading over to the Cotswold or Wales for a beautiful change of scenery. Otherwise sticking with London based events is always fun!

[Events Overview - Ultra Challenge](#)

[Gower Peninsula Challenge - Ultra Challenge](#)

[Thames Bridges Trek - Ultra Challenge](#)

We thank Sports England for awarding us with an incredible £16000 to fund COPs sessions and activities so do check out our calendar for information on how to get involved!

BEING.... KEMI & SHARANYA

Hello, my name is **Kemi Akinsanya** and I am a qualified solicitor.

Over the years, I have become increasingly involved in community engagement through volunteering with several charities—as a volunteer befriender and mentor. Each opportunity to serve and give back has been incredibly rewarding and has deepened my commitment to becoming more involved in the community I live in.

I decided to become a trustee for Barnet Mencap because I am deeply committed to advocacy, inclusion, and equality, particularly in supporting individuals with learning disabilities and autism.

I strongly believe in the importance of empowering people to live as independently and confidently as possible, and Barnet Mencap's work in advocacy, practical support, and community involvement resonates strongly with me. I was especially drawn to the organisation's long-standing presence in the local community and the meaningful, lasting difference it continues to make in people's lives. Becoming a trustee offers a valuable opportunity to contribute to a cause I am interested in, while learning from others and working collaboratively to promote positive change. I look forward to supporting and working alongside the team at Barnet Mencap to help achieve its goals and continue its vital work.



Hello! I'm **Sharanya Nagendran (née Kumar)**, and I'm thrilled to be joining Barnet Mencap as a new Trustee.

My journey with Mencap began back in sixth form, when the local charity Merton Mencap were advertising for volunteer support workers. Soon I was spending my Saturdays afternoons at the "Transition Club," a vibrant youth group for 15–25-year-olds held at the local YMCA. Both the staff and members were such an incredible bunch, that I ended up continuing to help the charity with their holiday activities and a fantastic Wednesday club called "Give Arts a Go", whilst undertaking my undergraduate medical training nearby at St. George's Hospital.

I'm now a Paediatric Registrar, completing sub-speciality training in Allergy, but have also completed rotations with the Community Child Health teams in Wandsworth and Harrow, supporting children and adolescents with ADHD, autism, and complex neuro-disability.

I have recently returned to clinical practice, after completing a research fellowship at St Mary's Hospital, Imperial College NHS Trust, where I helped lead a large randomised controlled trial (BOPI-2, NCT03937726) exploring new treatments for peanut allergy and am currently writing up my thesis. I was extremely lucky to have won a prestigious award of £222,319 from the charity Action for Medical Research & the Rosetrees Trust to fund the role and am very excited to use all my knowledge and training to date in this new role as a trustee for Barnet Mencap.



REDUCED FUNDING, REDUCED SUPPORT

-WRITTEN BY RAY BOOTH (CEO)

Barnet Mencap is increasingly worried about funding cuts and their impact on people with learning disabilities, or who are autistic.

Much of Barnet Mencap's funding comes from Barnet council. We have worked hard in the past few years to secure contracts and then to meet the targets set for the services. We mostly perform very well, and this is recognized by the council's commissioners, other officers and councillors.

There are lots of news stories about the social care crisis and the significant under-funding that makes it hard to provide the support we would like to see for children and adults with learning disabilities,

autistic people and their families.

Council's do not have the money they need to provide all of the services they want for local residents. There are pressures on all of their budgets, including Adult social Care.

In the past nine months, our funding for the Bright Futures services has been reduced by £50,000. This means that we will be able to see fewer adults with learning disabilities, or who are autistic, and they will have to wait longer to get support. We are now getting £10,000 less for supporting parents of disabled children and will be able to do fewer parenting courses as a result. Barnet Mencap provides vital preventative services and staff are

proud of the fact that we have been able to see people quickly in the past and put support in place. This is now much harder. The cuts to our funding also mean that we lose good, experienced staff.

The council make these cuts reluctantly. The challenges in the economy means that central government is not giving social care the funding that it needs. We are disappointed that it will be three years before Baroness Casey's final report on the future of social care when the funding is needed now.

We are working hard to make sure that we use our fund the best way, but we have reached a point where there will be longer delays and a bit less service provision in the months ahead.

NOW PLAYING: SOUND HUB

Barnet Mencap's initiative, in partnership with Barnet Council and Boost Barnet, called Sound Hub, is officially live, and it's already making waves!

This exciting initiative offers neurodivergent individuals the chance to explore music production, jam on instruments, and dive into creative workshops—all in a supportive, inspiring space.

Sound Hub isn't just about music—it's about expression, confidence, and community.

Want to know more? Catch all the Sound Hub updates on Instagram handles [@barnetmencap](#) and [@soundhub_unlocking_](#).

To help us continue doing our meaningful work for the community, support us by becoming a member at just £15 a year, (and £5 if you are not in work).





CONCERN GROWS OVER PROPOSED CUTS TO PIP BENEFITS

At Barnet Mencap, we're alarmed by the government's recent proposals to cut or change Personal Independence Payment (PIP) – a benefit that many people with disabilities, including neurodiverse individuals, depend on to live with dignity and independence.

PIP helps cover the extra costs of living with a disability – from transport and daily living support, to specialist therapies or equipment. For autistic people and those with ADHD, learning disabilities, or other neurodiverse conditions, PIP can be a lifeline. It enables access to structure, stability, and support – all of which are essential for well-being.

The proposed changes could include making it harder to qualify for PIP or shifting support away from financial payments. This would disproportionately harm neurodiverse people, whose needs are often less visible but just as real. These cuts risk increasing isolation, mental health struggles, and poverty for some of the most marginalised in our community.

We urge the government to reconsider. Disabled and neurodiverse voices must be heard in these discussions – not ignored.

Take action: Write to your MP today and tell them how important PIP is. Together, we can stand up for the rights and dignity of every person.

ACCESSIBLE BREAST CANCER SCREENING – A SUCCESSFUL PARTNERSHIP

Royal Free London
NHS Foundation Trust



North London Breast Screening Service

**What to expect at the
assessment clinic.**



An **easy guide** about what to expect at your visit.



Barnet Mencap was commissioned by the NHS to develop an Easy Read guide for people being recalled for further breast screening. This project has been a real success, helping to make the North London breast cancer assessment clinic more accessible and less intimidating for people with learning disabilities and neurodiverse conditions.

The guide clearly explains what to expect at the clinic, who you might see, and what tests could be done – all in simple language with clear visuals.

This is a brilliant example of how co-production between health services and the learning disability community can break down barriers and improve health outcomes.

We're proud of the impact this work is having, and hope to see more inclusive resources like this across other areas of healthcare.



Emmerdale & York Trip



ICB Talk



PHOTO RECAP

Barnet Mencap

Mar 2025 - May 2025



Children Open Door Workshop

Diary Dates



How to find us



**35 HENDON LANE,
FINCHLEY, LONDON
N3 1RT**

CONTACT US



projectsupport@barnetmencap.org.uk



020 8349 3842

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Next edition will be in Autumn 2025