

Welcome to our latest Newsletter.

We trust that you are all aware of the drop in Event organised by the local authorities along with ourselves? If not the details are:

Information Event for families caring for children with a disability or additional needs

**9.30am – 3pm on Weds 9th June
Legends Suite Barnsley FC**

There will be service providers present and we have also arranged for Charities such as the National Autistic Society, Contact a Family and Family Fund to attend. We also have arranged for Students from the Health & Beauty Dept at the College to come down and they are offering treatments such as Manicures and Indian Head Massage!

There is a free crèche for your little ones with face painting, and don't forget the free lunch!

We really hope it will be well supported by you all and please tell or bring along with you any of your friends who are also caring for their children's additional needs.

UPDATES

Our new telephone number is **(01226) 292222** for any enquiries now. You may have noticed in the header that we are currently working out of facilities offered at Voluntary Action Barnsley (VAB) offices.

When we had our initial meeting in July of last year it was clear from collecting your comments that you wanted a voice in the decision making process on the provision of Services in Barnsley to our children and young people. The Steering Group made up of the Management Committee and other active parent members have been driving things forward behind the scenes on your behalf to accomplish this. We would always welcome hearing from any member who wished to be involved in the activities of this group

As a result we have achieved representation at a strategic level. Three parents are now sitting on the Disabled Children's Program Board who have overall responsibilities for all Services for children with a disability or additional need and how they can be better met.

We have two parents sitting on the Short Break Planning Board who are responsible for rolling out the Aiming High plans for improving this type of provision for our children and young people. This group is working hard currently to improve Out of School provision among many other work streams such as improving playground equipment and better access to clubs or activities.

Very soon we will have three sitting for the first time on the Transitions Board Panel. Again, this is another key area that needs working on and improving especially to parents facing this major change to their child's Educational life this year. Educational issues in general represent the biggest area of concern and we have many challenges to work on.

As you can see the Steering Group has been very busy. It has secured your voice in the system. Now the time has come to continue to inform us as to what situations are affecting you all out there? Then we can collectively present our case to the people that matter and we can work together to begin to affect the outcomes to our children and young people.

Events

We are planning to in the coming months to organise various events for the benefit of our members. The first Event coming up is the previously mentioned Local Authorities first ever drop in **Information Event** to be held at **BarnsleyFC Function Rooms** between **9.30am - 3pm Weds June 9th**

We have arranged to have some parents and sibling speakers talking about their experiences and circumstances as we need to continue to give professionals insight into what we are facing and trying our best to cope with on a daily basis.

We are launching a Film Club at this Event to provide special screenings of films. Please come onto our Stall and we will take your details.

The next Event is a meeting specifically about **Speech and Language Therapy** provision for children and young people to be held on **Friday June 18th 10am – 1pm** again at Barnsley FC Legends Suite. This has been organised by Barnsley LINK and ourselves. Please email us on info@barnsleypcf.org if you want further information or to let us know you will be attending.

We feel there are a lot of you parents who are unhappy about the level of provision your individual child receives in the Authority from this Service and this is an opportunity for you to attend and hear a presentation on their work but more importantly a chance to ask questions to the Managers of the Service.

The Disability Program Board are looking at this subject of SLT in its Agenda due to concerns and the Commissioner responsible is also attending and speaking to observe and get a flavour of public opinion. Again we really need your support to help us get as many as possible to this meeting.

We have been informed of a piece of work being undertaken by the **National Autistic Society** about provision in Barnsley. A specific meeting to bring together Parents caring for children on the spectrum is planned for July where your views will be gathered. They will be fed back to the Commissioners of this work in the report

Future Developments

Barnsley Parents and Carers Forum have achieved a lot in the last 12 months. There is a good strong core of Parents forming the Steering Group. We have established ourselves in the Local Authority. We have an Action Plan that has been presented as a report to Key personnel and this will provide an agreed way forward. We aim to achieve the signing of the Professional & Parent pledge it contains in the very near future. We will continue to work on the issues that concern us all.

This year the continued success of the Forum will be linked to how many new members we can attract, inform and involve. We really appreciate the support of the 140 members that have signed up to our newsletter. We aim to be making our Forum self sustaining as we are unsure of the plans the new coalition Government have with the Aiming High Program. That way we can continue to be an integral part of the decision making process to improve disability provision in Barnsley

Thank you for taking the time to read this. We look forward to seeing you at the Information Event on June 9th along with as many new faces that you can bring along with you.

The Editor