

Learning Disability News

SOUTHAMPTON MENCAP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We are combining our Annual General Meeting with the grand re-opening of the Mencap Centre on **Monday 30th June—12 pm—2.30 pm**

Please keep this date free in your diary

Further details to follow

PLUS SIZE CLOTHES



We have received a donation of some beautiful Plus Size Clothes, new and nearly new, dresses, trousers and coats. Sizes 26, 28, 30.

Looking for a good home for small donation.

If interested contact Jane at Southampton Mencap. Tel: 02380 294606 or email: familycarers@southamptonmencap

Southampton Learning Disability Partnership

Board has been looking at a variety of issues. The Police, money and health being recent examples. Information from our meetings is on the website, and the dates of future meetings and outline agendas. Please let Hilary know if there are things you think have been forgotten. Perhaps you are a family carer or have a learning disability and want to be more involved? Please let Hilary know as we are always open to encouraging more people to join us. <http://www.friendlypeople.co.uk/>

Blog post: How Asperger's re-ignited a passion for art

The Ouch blog from BBC news has recently featured an interview with artist Raj Singh Tattal whose life and art changed once he was diagnosed with Asperger's. You can read the interview on the Ouch blog [here](#)

EUAN'S GUIDE BETA New Website – Tripadvisor for disabled people

Euans Guide—this website lists disabled access anywhere and in any country. A sort of Tripadvisor for disabled people and their friends and families. Endorsed by Stephen Hawking. www.euansguide.com



Shared Lives Care—A paid occupation that transforms lives

Vulnerable or elderly adults who cannot live independently are proving that they still have a lot to offer in their local communities and other people's lives – as demonstrated through Southampton City Council's Shared Lives scheme.

Shared Lives is a scheme linking people who need help to live in the community with people who can offer this support in their home. People who benefit from Shared Lives may have a learning disability, a mental health problem or be unable to live independently due to their age.

Shared Lives has a thorough screening process to match clients' needs with carers' skills and lifestyle. The scheme also provides an excellent level of training, courses and support for carers.

Due to the scheme's growing success and popularity, the council urgently needs to recruit an additional 35 Shared Lives carers. For more information about becoming a Shared Lives carer or to find out how the scheme could provide respite care for somebody you are caring for please contact the council on 023 8091 7617, shared.lives@southampton.gov.uk or go to www.southampton.gov.uk/sharedlives.



Give as you Live - Give as you Live works with over 2,400 leading stores. They've all signed up to donate a

percentage of every online purchase to the charity of your choice. Online sales this Christmas will top £17bn. Give as you Live turns shopping into money for your charity.

Some of the most popular stores are Amazon, Debenhams, John Lewis, ASOS, Argos, Mothercare, Currys, Rakuten play.com. If you are an online shopper, you can continue to support Southampton Mencap to raise money for our much needed redevelopment of the Mencap Centre and improve equipment and facilities. For more information and to sign up, please visit: www.giveasyoulive.com

Easter 2014—Holiday Scheme Dates

Junior Scheme 2014			
7 th April	8 th April	14 th April	15 th April
Teen Scheme 2014			
9 th April	10 th April	16 th April	17 th April

It's not too late to book your child onto our **Junior or Teen Holiday Schemes** this Easter! Please contact the office with the dates that you require as soon as possible.

The **yPod Service** will be running throughout the Easter Holidays, supporting children with additional needs in a variety of registered childcare settings across Southampton. Spaces are now limited but you can contact Elly Iles on: openingdoors@southamptonmencap.co.uk to see what is be available.

iPad Training Day Over recent years a number of specialist communication and therapy apps, have been developed to support the needs for people with a range of impairments. You are invited to come along to the next training session where these apps will be demonstrated. The training will enable you to create scenes to support communication for people with Learning Disabilities and/or Autism in a variety of ways:

- Improve quality of life and Life Skills and support Service Users effectively
- Reduce Challenging Behaviours by increasing independence
- Support smoother transition processes
- Support task prompting and demonstration
- Equip Service Users to take more ownership of how they would want their support to be delivered
- Improve family involvement
- Support inclusion – use of technology that general public use
- Improve adaptive behaviour skills

We will be demonstrating as an example, a scene based around a visit to the dentist to help de-sensitise people to dental visits. Details of the training are:-

When: Wednesday 7 May 2014 from 10am to 3pm

Where: The Warren Centre, Chestnut Road, Shirley Warren, Southampton SO16 6BR

Please confirm interest with Jane Gleeson, Family Link Worker at Southampton Mencap on 02380 294606 or email at familycarers@southamptonmencap.co.uk

Mencap Chief Officer's Update



Main item on our agenda recently has been our building works. Buchanan Building Services are doing a grand job to improve our Mencap Centre facilities and we would like to thank everyone for their patience. We look forward to the middle of June when we anticipate the works will be finished.

Moving up: My transition from school to university

The Talk about Autism blog has recently featured an article from an 18year old student moving onto university. It is a first-hand account of the different challenges and worries he faced making the transition from school and the support he has received along the way. Read the blog article and many others relating to issues around Autism: <http://blog.talkaboutautism.org.uk/2013/12/moving-up-my-transition-from-school-to.html>

'A Real Home a Real Life': short film

Inclusive Films have produced a short film 'A Real Home a Real Life' featuring eight people with learning disabilities. It shows the kinds of support they receive and the varied ways they have gained a real home of their own and are living their own lives. You can watch the film here:- <http://inclusivefilms.org/our-films/a-real-home-a-real-life/>



New Benefit Helpline Numbers from 29th January 2014

- Disability Living Allowance (DLA) 0845 7123456
- New Attendance Allowance helpline:- 0345605 6055 or 0845 6056055
- Personal Independence Payments (PIP) helpline 0845 850 3322.
- Carers Allowance Online Service <https://www.gov.uk/apply-carers-allowance>

Volunteers needed for the Independent Home Visitor Scheme



Many carers of relatives with learning disabilities worry about who will visit their loved ones when they are no longer around. The aim of this scheme is to build up a relationship which supports the best interests of a person with a learning disability who has little or no contact with friends or relatives.

Regular visits to them in their own home provides social contact and forms an on-going and long-term relationship. Home Visitors encourage clients to address any concerns and will support them by seeking help from other professionals.

If you have experience of working with people who have a learning disability or have been a carer, why not become a volunteer for the Independent Home Visitor Scheme?

Volunteers will need to be reliable, sensitive, understanding and have good communication skills. The role involves working unsupervised and so a good level of initiative and professional conduct is required. If you have as little as two hours a week to spare and would like to find out more information please contact Southampton Mencap on: 02380 294606 or

familycarers@southamptonmencap.co.uk



Mencap Centre Redevelopment

Despite our initial disappointing setback when work to redevelop our Centre was postponed last year, it has now started earlier than envisaged due to the builders finding they had some spare capacity. We were pleased to accommodate them especially as they generously donated toward our lovely new summer house which has now been installed in the garden. Already this outside area is looking much better, especially with the new astro turf laid which will greatly improve the facilities for our members. To enable the work to progress there will be some inevitable disruptions which we will try to keep to the minimum. After the Easter holiday schemes have finished the Centre will be closed from Tuesday 22nd April until mid June. We're confident that the finished result will be well worth any temporary curtailment of our usual activities and look forward to welcoming everyone to the new Centre and the much improved facilities.

Can you help? Volunteers have always been a wonderful asset for Southampton Mencap. In addition to all they have contributed, they've importantly helped ensure that we have kept our charges for our clubs and activities to the minimum, something which we know is appreciated by our members, their families and carers. We're now developing even more services for which volunteers are needed. If you have even a few hours to donate on a regular basis why not get in touch and we shall be pleased to tell you more. Please contact Southampton Mencap on: 02380 584088 or email: admin@southamptonmencap.co.uk for further information.



Carers Lunch Dates for 2014

- **April— Thursday 24th—Victory Centre Update from Dawn Buck**
Dawn is the Head of Stakeholder Relations and Engagement Southampton City Clinical Commissioning Group
- **May—Thursday 22nd— Victory Centre Housing Session from Doug Munro**
A presentation of housing options for people with Learning Disabilities.
- **June—Monday 30th—Mencap Centre AGM & Update on new Contracts and Building Refurbishment.**
- **July & August—Summer break No Carer's Lunch**
- **September—Monday 15th—Mencap Centre**
- **October—Monday 13th—Mencap Centre**
- **November—Monday 17th—Mencap Centre**
- **December—Monday 15th—Mencap Centre Seasonal celebration**

Please contact Jane Gleeson on: 02380 584088 or email: admin@southamptonmencap.co.uk for further information.

Own2Feet are having an event on the 1st April 2014 at the Mencap Centre called 'The Casino Royale' event. They are inviting Family & Friends who have supported them throughout their time together as a group. They are hoping to have a disco, buffet and some stalls to raise money for them to go for a really nice day out either to Paultons Park or Butlins.

If you have anything suitable for raffle prizes or can help them in any other way, please contact Southampton Mencap or drop it in at the main office in Portswood. Thank you. Jade Graham (Own2Feet Student on behalf of the group)

Please contact Southampton Mencap on 02380 584088 for further information.

Caring & Family Finances Inquiry - Carers struggling with alarming levels of hardship

[Carers UK](http://www.carersuk.org) have recently undertaken a 12-month investigation to expose the stark reality faced by those looking after loved ones who are older, disabled or seriously ill; loss of savings, debt and struggling to afford food and heating. The Inquiry also reveals that, despite rapid rises in the number of families providing care to loved ones, Government cuts to support leave carers facing a shocking £1 billion cut. Carers UK says "carers not only feel they are not recognised or valued but also feel victim of increasing public criticism for claiming their social security entitlements". You can find out more about the investigation on their website: <http://www.carersuk.org/get-involved/caring-family-finances-inquiry>



1 in 7 homes inspected by Gas Safe Register in London had unsafe gas appliances!

Help keep you and your family safe from gas leaks, fires, explosions and carbon monoxide poisoning. Staying safe—the basics:-

- Get your gas appliances checked every year either through a service or gas safety check.
- Always use a **Gas Safe Registered Engineer**.
- If you are a tenant, insist on seeing your copy of the **Landlord's Gas Safety Check Record**.

Gas Safety Register replaced CORGI in 2009 to run the official list of gas engineers who are qualified to work safely & legally on gas appliances. They don't sell anything—they just promote gas safety in the home. There is a new gas map tool and a free gas safety check reminder service. You can find out more about this at:- www.staygassafe.co.uk.



Journey and Better Journey Cards

First buses have produced cards for people who have a disability to use on their buses. They are called **Safe Journey and Better Journey** cards. First buses are promoting them on their website. The cards have space to add personal help info as well as a range of options like "I need help to count my change", "Please be patient, I have a hidden disability" and "Please wait for me to sit down"; they are credit card size and come in a plastic wallet.

You can see more about them at www.firstgroup.com/ukbus/bristol_bath/bus_access/safe_journey_card and the contact to get copies for distribution is mark.williams@firstgroup.com If First buses does not operate your area, does your local bus company offer a similar scheme? If they do, we would like to hear from you with their details so we can share it with family carers in your area. Contact: 0117 906 1751 info@hft.org.uk

How to achieve a successful transition to adulthood

Parent/Carer Seminar Thursday 27th March 9.30am to 2.00pm Resource for London, 356 Holloway Road, London, N7 6PA

www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/index.cfm are running a parent and carer seminar to look at the support available to help with the transition to adulthood. As well as talking about options such as further education, supported employment opportunities, independent living, supported housing and respite care, it will also cover: Assessments you can request for transition:-

- The assessment process
- The type of support you and your family may be entitled to
- What to do if you are not given adequate support
- Advice on personal budgets and direct payments
- The Mental Capacity Act

National Autistic Society Policy & Campaigns Priorities Survey 2014

The National Autistic Society (NAS) campaigns and lobbies at a national level (as well as supporting local campaigns) to improve services and support for children and adults with autism and their families. They are currently planning their work for April 2014-March 2015 and want to hear from you to make sure they get their priorities right for people with autism and their families. In this survey, they explain more about the areas they plan to work on and ask for your feedback. There is also an opportunity at the end of the survey to tell NAS about other issues that you think they should work on. To access the survey, please click [here](#). If you have any questions, please email policy@nas.org.uk or call 020 7923 5799.



If you missed the recent workshop about Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

(the new benefit replacing Disability Living Allowance) Hft's Family Carer Support Service has made a series of short videos about PIP. The videos give information about:-

- How people are assessed
- Completing the forms
- Going to a face to face assessment
- Decisions and appeals

Links to the PIP videos:

PIP 1: [Rules and how people are assessed](#)

PIP 2: [How to fill out the form](#)

PIP 3: [Going to a face to face assessment](#)

PIP 4: [Your award and appeals](#)

Hft also have our 'Guide to benefit changes' which is regularly updated. Find out how to get a copy, or download it from: www.hft.org.uk/benefitsguide There are more events about PIP planned for 2014. Please see www.hft.org.uk/pip for dates and locations.