

LEARNING DISABILITY NEWS Spring 2024 Edition

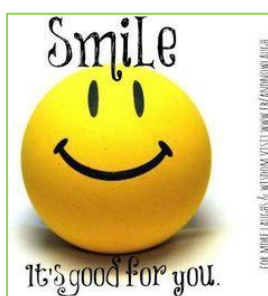


Happy 75th Birthday Susan

It really must be that time of year again with longer days, warmer air and everything feeling a little fresher. Here at Southampton Mencap we've been shedding the winter layers and preparing for a season of growth and productivity. In this spring edition you will find updates from our team as well as other learning disability related news to keep you in the loop with what's going on.

We hope you enjoy this edition which is dedicated to the power of the smile!

Date for the diary
AGM/Summer
Open Day Event
Tuesday 11th June
12pm-2pm – AGM
2pm-3.30pm Open Day



"You'll find that life is still worthwhile if you just smile!"

We always aspire to turn our AGM into an occasion to celebrate our successes and acknowledge the contributions of those using our services and the teams who work so hard to support them. Building on the success of last year we're planning another '**AGM/Summer Open Day**' event. Proceedings will start at **12pm** with reports on the organisation's activities and financial status. This will be followed by short presentations from participants, staff and volunteers on their achievements over the past year. Aiming to finish this part of the meeting by **2pm**, there will then be an opportunity to enjoy the various activities until **3.30pm**. We hope you will join us.

Another date for the diary
Carers Network Meeting
Wednesday 26th June
10am -12.30pm
Mencap Centre

Amidst growing concerns over the surge in dementia cases across the population, our next Carers Network meeting is set to tackle this pressing issue head-on. With a focus on understanding dementia in individuals with learning disabilities, the event aims to equip the people providing their care with vital insights into managing the condition effectively. Dedicated professionals in the field will be on hand to shed light on early warning signs and the crucial pathways to support, from initial diagnosis to ongoing care. You may have had experience of this with a loved one already, but the meeting will offer invaluable information and resources to navigate the complexities of dementia care. We are joining forces with the Unpaid Carers Service in Southampton to deliver this session. To secure your place, call or email our office.

Trustees

Jennifer Stevens **[Chair]**
Di Bernstein
Daniel Mar-Molinero
Heidi Oldrey
Hilary Linssen
Brian Stevens
Lisa Stead

Chief Executive Officer
Alexandra Iles

Senior Administrator
Sue Roberts

Activities Manager
Elly Iles

Finance Officer
Lorna Simpson

Day Service & Club Leaders
Marc Kibler
Cath Wigham
Liz Curtis
Pula Popat
Kelly Brackstone

Website:
www.southamptonmencap.org

Tel: 023 8058 4088

E mail
admin@southamptonmencap.co.uk

Why do we hold an Annual General Meeting?

Because it's where shareholders meet, decisions are made and the future is shaped.



187a Portswood Road, SO17 2NF
Email: admin@southamptonmencap.co.uk Tel: 023 8058 4088

A local charity affiliated with Royal Mencap but operating independently.

Easter fun and games



Wei has a smile on his face as he is having as much fun as Eric!

Fairplay Easter playschemes ran for 8 days over the two week school Easter break, providing valuable services for 22 children and short breaks for their families. Supported by a mixture of experienced staff members and some recently recruited fresh faces to our Activities Team, children and young people were able to get involved with Easter baking, arts and crafts and fun group games. Although the weather wasn't on our side at times, we nonetheless made full use of our lovely garden area when the sun did shine!



Eloise and Caleb being productive together

Bookings are now being taken for the May Half Term and the Summer Holidays. They'll be here before you know it so call 023 8058 4088 today to book your child's place.

A few places are available to join our Saturday Fairplay Schemes which run alternate Saturdays during school term time so do get in touch for more information if this is of interest to you.



Jamie has a smile on his face as he's happy doing something he loves while helping to raise our profile

Volunteers are our unsung heroes!

We are fortunate in having many wonderful volunteers who support our work. We see them as unsung heroes whose dedication and contributions to our services make a world of difference to the people we support. If you have some time to spare and would like to find out more about volunteering please let us know. We can guarantee it really will put a smile on your face!



Jess is smiling as she's putting the skills she has gained with us to good use to further her career

We are also very grateful to our other volunteers, our Trustees for their ongoing commitment and our donors and individual fundraisers. Between you all you have given us so much support.



A smile spreads joy and positivity and can brighten yours and someone's day!
Like us you'll find that even the small things in life are always worthwhile if done with a smile!



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Our services to the community



The **Makers & Bakers** group is able to provide delicious home made products made to order. **Bakery down the Lane** is open to the public each Thursday, and **The Maintenance & Gardening Group** can help local garden owners who need a hand with the upkeep of their gardens. These services offer people with learning disabilities the chance to develop work-like skills and increase their sense of self-worth. Operating under strict professional supervision we can guarantee to provide high quality goods and services. **Please do get in touch if you would like to find out how we can help you**

Bakery Down the Lane



"Empowering Abilities"

Bakery Down the Lane is run by Southampton Mencap. It is made up of people with learning disabilities who enjoy learning new skills around customer service and working in a bakery and all it entails open to the public.

Come along and enjoy a drink with a slice of sweet or savoury temptation all offering great value for money.

So please spread the word amongst your family and friends, come with them or chat to our friendly crew or just enjoy some time to yourself! We can guarantee that all products are top notch, made by our Wednesday Bakers Group under strict supervision by experienced staff.



Open each Thursday between 10am and 3pm.



Freshly baked products to purchase/order

Bread

Samosas
Sausage Rolls
Scones



Lemon/Orange Drizzle/Carrot loaf cakes
Decorated cakes for that special occasion



Southampton Mencap is a local charity in the heart of Portswood which exists to empower individuals with learning disabilities. For more details contact 023 8058 4088



We definitely think that this is service with a smile!

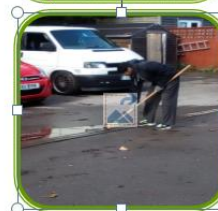
MG&M Services



"Empowering Abilities"

MG&M Services is run by Southampton Mencap. It is made up of people with learning disabilities who enjoy garden and maintenance work. They are supported to develop their skills and talents in all aspects of gardening and basic repairs. They have honed their skills by initially working on the Mencap premises in Portswood. Jobs undertaken have included developing a garden area for planting crops, creating a seated patio area for bakery customers and taking on a number of recycling projects.

So please do spread the word amongst your family and friends—their work is top notch and is all under strict supervision by our experienced staff team.



MG&M Services



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Mencap Garden & Maintenance Services (MG & M Services)



Garden Maintenance

Lawn mowing



Tidying, weeding and planting



Patio pressure washing



No job too small!

Priority given to local older/ vulnerable people in need of a little extra help to manage their gardens or small maintenance jobs.

A big thank you to our supporters who recognise ability rather than disability



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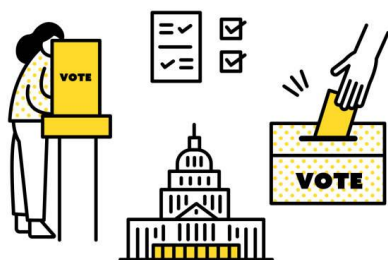
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Did you know that local Elections are being held on Thursday 2nd May?

It's important that people with learning disabilities are encouraged to vote. To help them there is some good information on these websites;

[Voting Resources Hub – 2024 – Learning Disability England](#)

[Quick guide to voting – My Vote My Voice](#)



To vote you need to:

- Register to vote
- Have photo ID
- [Apply for photo ID to vote \(called a 'Voter Authority Certificate'\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The type of ID you will need can be

- UK passport
- Disabled Person's bus pass
- Blue Badge

You can still use expired photo ID if it still looks like you.

Have you been affected by the Carers Allowance overpayment?

There has been significant media attention recently regarding overpayments affecting thousands of unpaid carers, with many cases being for over £5,000. A harsh earnings limit for the benefit, as well as poor systems by DWP in managing potential cases of overpayments, have resulted in the large number of cases as well as significant numbers of very large overpayment debts for carers.

Carer's Allowance is worth only **£81.90 per week** and has an earnings threshold of £151 per week after certain allowable deductions. If the carer earns even £1 over this limit, they lose 100% of their benefit which they can ill-afford.

We have no doubt that Britain would grind to a halt without unpaid carers and are pleased to see that Carers UK has launched a survey on this matter asking carers to share their experiences of dealing with overpayments. Findings will be used anonymously and in the strictest confidence enabling Carers UK to collate a dossier of carers' experiences about overpayments and to campaign for a better model to be developed and to prevent overpayments from building up to such high levels in the future. **To complete the survey:** <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CAoverpayment>

Do you support someone with a learning disability?

Webinar for professionals supporting people with a learning disability in Hampshire & Southampton.



Southern Health
NHS Foundation Trust

WHEN?

17th May 2024
10:00-11:30

TOPIC:

Dementia awareness

Bring questions @

This session is facilitated by the Learning Disability Strategic Health Facilitation team from Southern Health.

Let's talk about dementia

Session will be delivered by Louise Webb, Community Learning Disability Nurse.



This FREE session will be delivered virtually via Microsoft Teams.

To book your place (to get MS Teams link) email:

shffhealthfacilitators@southernhealth.nhs.uk

We look forward to seeing you.

The Community Learning Health Disability Service for Hampshire and Southampton

specialise in helping adults with a Learning Disability who are registered with a GP in Hampshire or Southampton that require specialist support. You can find lots of useful information on the [Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust](#) website.

Amy George is the East Hampshire and Southampton Learning Disability Health Facilitator
Amy.George@southernhealth.nhs.uk
Phone: 02382 316350 Mobile: 07786 173423

Let us know if you have any useful or helpful tips to share with our readers

News from the office



Lorna joined the team! We welcomed Lorna in January as our new Finance Officer. You will generally find her around on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, often with her head in figures and spreadsheets. But don't let that put you off as she is very friendly and rapidly adapting to the working life of a charity!



Elly our Activities Manager is the go to person for anything related to our children or adult programme of activities. She is the first port of call for all new referrals to services, people looking to volunteer or inducting new staff. You will also find her managing our short break services and keeping her feet on the ground she directly supervises the Saturday Fairplay Junior Scheme. From time to time you will see her at various events across the City from representing the organisation.



Emma is our flexible friend and will be sharing her hours between her current direct support work and admin. She tells us she loves working with everyone and is willing to help where needed. Having joined as a trainee activities worker six months ago she is keen to develop more skills and gain a greater insight into the background operations of the organisation. You will soon find her in the office on Mondays and Thursdays (and some Wednesdays) when she covers the days when Sue isn't in. You may also know her as the escort in the Mencap car!



Sue changed her hours! Having just celebrated the end of her first year with us Sue decided to reduce her hours. Some of you may know her in her previous role as a Carers Assessor. Sue takes care of our day to day administrative business and is also the friendly voice over the phone or the face that greets you when you come through the doors! You will now find her in the office every Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday.



Alex, our CEO, is giving us plenty of notice of her plans for the future. Approaching her third decade with us the time has come for her to consider semi-retirement. No firm decisions yet but she will be reducing her working hours significantly by this time next year. Meanwhile you won't see her out and about as much as she'll be busy planning for the future so we can continue to develop and deliver services which are accessible to those who need them. Meanwhile she is encouraging feedback from you all which will be used to improve and shape services.

A team that smiles together can achieve great things!



Help us shape our future!



Our AGM fast approaching, an opportunity for us to share news and reflections from the past year and our past work and share some of our thoughts for the future. With this in mind we are inviting you to contribute your own ideas and suggestions for future initiatives for Southampton Mencap to consider. Below are some development ideas we've been thinking about and we would like to hear from you about these. Let us know which would be your top 3 priorities. You can add something else or comment against any section on the list. If you've had a hard copy of this newsletter just cut this section out and return to the office, or you may want to email us. We really want to hear about your experiences, what helped or could have helped, etc. as this will help us to focus on what's most important to our client group. E mail: alex@southamptonmencap.co.uk or phone **02380 584088**.

Please indicate your top 3 priorities. You can also add any comments against anything else on the list.

Expand our leisure/day service programme: or enhance current provision so it is tailored to a wider age range and needs, e.g. older adults or those with complex needs.	
Day Enterprise Opportunities: Expand our work-like experiences for meaningful engagement of individuals with learning disabilities.	
Education and Training: Increase access to quality ongoing education and training opportunities for people with learning disabilities.	
Health and Wellbeing: Implement health and wellbeing programmes focusing on promoting physical health, mental wellbeing, and social inclusion for people with learning disabilities and family carers.	
Community Engagement: Create stronger connections within local communities which bring people together and promote a sense of belonging.	
Advocacy and Awareness Campaigns: Offer more advocacy support for the rights and inclusion of people with learning disabilities through awareness campaigns and policy changes.	
Collaboration and Partnerships: Strengthen partnerships with local organisations, government agencies, the council, healthcare providers, and other stakeholders to maximize impact and ensure comprehensive support for individuals with learning disabilities.	
Research and Development: Invest in research and development initiatives aimed at better understanding the needs and experiences of people with learning disabilities, as well as developing innovative solutions to address those needs.	
Other? Anything important to you?	

