

ABC NEWSLETTER

Leeds & District Autism, Behaviour, Communication Support Group - Registered Charity No. 1023066
www.abcleeds.org.uk

September - October 2012
 "Supporting each other, learning together"

Contact us at Leeds ABC, 25 Somerdale Walk, Bramley, LS13 4SF Tel: (0113 2579269 – a message can be left on this number) or email info@abcleeds.org.uk. Views expressed by correspondents are their own and not necessarily those of the committee members or the editor. Leeds ABC does not recommend any one approach to autism, just as no two people are the same, so their individual responses will differ.

CONTACT NUMBERS

Susan – 2579269, Mandy – 2795142, Susan C. – 2770779 or Vic – 2822797

| GROUP MEETINGS | SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER | NOVEMBER |
|--|---|--|--|
| LEEDS ABC - EVENING MEETINGS St PETER'S CHURCH (COMMUNITY ROOM, lower floor) Hough Lane, Bramley, LS13 3JF | Tuesday 11 th – AGM from 7pm – 7.45pm, followed by support group meeting up until 9pm. | Tuesday 9 th – Fundraising Body Shop Party at 7pm. We'll be around until 9pm so there will still be time to chat. | Tuesday 13 th – support group meeting from 7pm – 9pm. |
| LEEDS ABC - DAYTIME SESSIONS | | Wednesday 31 st October from 11am to 2pm in the upper hall at St Peter's Church – front entrance. | |
| NEXT GENERATION YOUTH GROUP High functioning autism or Asperger's age 11-18 yrs Burley Lodge Centre 42-46 Burley Lodge Road LS6 1QF | Every Wednesday (term time only) 6pm to 8pm | Every Wednesday (term time only) 6pm to 8pm | Every Wednesday (term time only) 6pm to 8pm |
| PRIMARY YOUTH GROUP High functioning autism or Asperger's age 7-11 yrs. Burley Lodge Centre 42-46 Burley Lodge Road LS6 1QF | Every Monday (term time only) 6pm to 8pm | Every Monday (term time only) 6pm to 8pm | Every Monday (term time only) 6pm to 8pm |
| KIRKSTALL LEISURE CENTRE Kirkstall Lane, LS5 3BE Family swim in large pool | Saturday 22 nd from *3.30pm to 4.30pm. | Saturday 20 th from *3.30pm to 4.30pm. | Saturday 17 th from *3.30pm to 4.30pm. |
| YOUTH CLUB for SIBS and their FRIENDS Swallow Hill Community College, Whingate Road, LS12 3DS | Every Thursday from 6.30pm to 8.30pm | Every Thursday from 6.30pm to 8.30pm | Every Thursday from 6.30pm to 8.30pm |
| AUTISM/ASPERGER ADVICE SESSIONS 3 rd floor meeting room Central Library, Leeds | Friday 7 th from 10.00am to midday | Friday 5 th from 10.00am to midday. | Friday 9 th from 10.00am to midday. |

***Please note that the family swimming times have changed. This is now the last session at Kirkstall Leisure Centre.**
LEEDS ABC YOUTH GROUP

The Next Generation runs every Wednesday (term time only) at THE BURLEY LODGE CENTRE, 42-46 BURLEY LODGE ROAD, BURLEY, LS6 1QF

It is for young people with high functioning autism or Asperger's syndrome aged 11-18 years at a cost of £3 per week. We have a team of young, enthusiastic volunteers who are all CRB checked. Activities include arts and crafts, games, social skills sessions, specialist workshops and occasional trips out. For further information contact Leeds ABC Vice Chairperson, Mandy Craven on 0113 2795142/07769317744 or Email: mandycraven.leedsabcgroupp@googlemail.com



PRIMARY YOUTH GROUP

This group is on Mondays (term time only) at THE BURLEY LODGE CENTRE, 42-46 BURLEY LODGE ROAD, BURLEY, LS6 1QF. It is for children aged 7-11 years with high functioning autism or Asperger's Syndrome at a cost of £3 per week. All the volunteers are CRB checked and activities include arts and crafts, games, social skills sessions and specialist workshops. The children attending will work together to choose a name for the group and design a logo. For further information contact Leeds ABC Vice Chairperson, Mandy Craven on 0113 2795142/07769317744 or Email: mandycraven.leedsabcgroupp@googlemail.com

LEEDS ABC GROUP and LEEDS YOUTH SERVICE SIBLING GROUP

This is a group for young people attending high schools. It is running at the Swallow Hill Community College from 6.30pm – 8.30pm every Thursday, at a cost of £1 per week. Many different types of activities will be available such as pool, Wii, cookery, quizzes, urban arts and crafts, in fact activities will be chosen by the young people that attend. If you are interested or need to know more, please contact Mandy (Leeds ABC Group) mandycraven.leedsabcgroupp@gmail.com or 0776 931 7744 or Lauren Whyte (Senior Youth Worker) 0789 127 7365

AUTISM/ASPERGER ADVICE SESSIONS

Leeds Library and Information Service in partnership with STARS (Education Leeds Autism Response Service) and Leeds ABC will help you with advice on issues relating to individual children and young people with autism or Asperger syndrome and their specific needs as well as information and support for parents. Library staff will help you use Boardmaker to design and print visual resources. All sessions run from 10.00am to midday on the 3rd floor meeting room of the Central Library.

BOARDMAKER (PECS SYMBOLS)

The software programme, Boardmaker, has thousands of symbols and images that can be printed and used to support visual communication e.g. communication boards, visual timetables and social stories and is available in 25 libraries across Leeds. Parents and Professionals can book sessions with a librarian to learn how to use the software or use the software independently to print boards and symbols. Each library has a laminator so that you can laminate your boards and symbols after printing. There is no charge for using Boardmaker in libraries or for laminating your boards and symbols, but there is a charge of 20p per page for printing. The libraries are:

| | | | | |
|------------|--------------|------------|---------------|-----------------|
| ARMLEY | BEESTON | BRAMLEY | CENTRAL | CHAPEL ALLERTON |
| CHAPELTOWN | COMPTON ROAD | CROSSGATES | DEWSBURY ROAD | GARFORTH |
| GUISELEY | HALTON MOOR | HEADINGLEY | HOLT PARK | HORSFORTH |
| MIDDLETON | ALLERTON | MORLEY | OAKWOOD | OTLEY |
| PUDSEY | ROTHWELL | SEACROFT | WETHERBY | YEADON |

For further information visit, www.leeds.gov.uk/boardmaker or telephone Enquiry Express for more details: (0113) 2476016. Alternatively you can also contact the Learning Co-ordinator, Jason Tutin on: (0113) 3952357 or email: jason.tutin@leeds.gov.uk.

There are going to be significant changes in education and disability living allowance over the next couple of years. Please read the next couple of pages and endeavour to make sure that you are aware of what is going to happen and make sure that you aren't **caught out!** Editor.

DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE (DLA) and PERSONAL INDEPENDENCE PAYMENT (PIP)

For the time being, there will be no change to DLA for those children up to the age of 16. If you are aged 65 or over on the day that PIP is introduced, you can stay with DLA, so long as you continue to be entitled to DLA.

PIP is for those with a disability between the ages of 16 to 64 and this age range is referred to as “the working age”. As with DLA, PIP isn’t means tested so income and savings won’t affect your entitlement to PIP and again, as with DLA, PIP can be claimed whether you are in or out of work.

Initially, PIP will be introduced only into certain areas of the country. New claims will be accepted from North West England, North East England, Cumbria, Merseyside and Cheshire. Everyone else, for the time being, will continue to receive DLA up until June 2013 when new claims from all claimants in all parts of the country will begin.

“The benefit (*as in PIP*) will go to those individuals whose impairments impact most on their ability to participate in society” (www.dwp.gov.uk/pip- April 2012)

Each claimant will be assessed individually looking at personal circumstances and the barriers created by health conditions or disabilities. The PIP will make greater use of evidence.

There is no automatic transfer from DLA to PIP. Everyone of “working age” on DLA will be contacted and invited to apply for PIP. This will begin in October 2013 and be finished by March 2016. You will be asked if you want to claim PIP and then be informed as to when you can claim it, what will happen through the assessment process, how and where it will take place, what you need to do and what help is available.

PIP will have different entitlement criteria to DLA “...to better reflect today’s understanding of disability”. Entitlement will depend on an individual’s ability to carry out daily living and/or mobility activities and how these are affected by your condition or disability and not depend on what health condition or disability you actually have.

From October 2013, if you report a change of circumstances or it’s time for you to reapply, then you will be reassessed for PIP. A national re-assessment will begin in January 2014.

If you have been awarded DLA for life or indefinitely and your condition doesn’t change or is never going to change and you are of “working age” on the day that PIP is introduced, you will be asked if you want to claim PIP because of the new “entitlement criteria” and you may or may not have to have a face to face consultation with a health professional. Those with the most severe health conditions or disabilities – or those who are terminally ill – are unlikely to need to attend a face to face consultation, but this will be decided on a case by case basis.

ASSESSMENT

- It will involve looking at the impact of your disability or health condition and the extent to which you are able to live independently.
- The length of the award you get will depend on your individual circumstances and the likelihood of them changing.
- This will be determined by the benefit decision maker, following advice from a healthcare professional.

- Some people will get short awards (up to 2 years) and others will get longer ones (such as 5 or 10 years). Others will get indefinite awards which will be subject to review.
- If you are awarded PIP you will get a letter telling you how long your award is for and when and how you need to contact them if there are changes in circumstances.
- If you get a longer award, you will be contacted occasionally to see if your needs have changed over time, to ensure that the correct level of benefit has been awarded.
- When the term of your award ends, if you still have needs arising from your health condition or disability you can decide to make a further claim for PIP.

At the moment there are no plans to introduce PIP to those under the age of 16 as the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) want to see how PIP works for those of “working age”. All children entitled to DLA and approaching 16 will be asked if they want to claim PIP. Specific plans are being developed to make the transition to PIP as “smooth and straightforward as possible” for those coming up to 16.

If you get DLA and are aged 65 or over on the day PIP is introduced, you won’t need to claim PIP and will be able to keep your benefit beyond the age of 65 so long as you continue to satisfy the qualifying conditions. The DWP want to see how the assessment for the new benefit works for those of “working age” before deciding if PIP should be extended to people over 65.

PIP has different entitlement rules to DLA but the DWP will endeavour to make sure that there are no gaps when moving over from one benefit to the other, “...so long as you send us the information we need when we ask for it”.

BLUE BADGE/CARER’S ALLOWANCE/MOTABILITY

It has been recognised that certain DLA rates are a “gateway” or “passport” to obtaining the Blue Badge, Carer’s Allowance and the Motability scheme. Wherever possible these arrangements will stay in place. The DWP is working with other government departments and bodies that currently use DLA as a passport to schemes they provide to ensure that any future passporting arrangements remain appropriate for their own schemes. Further information will be published once “they” have decided how this will work.

REASONS GIVEN FOR THE CHANGE

- DLA has been around, mostly unchanged, for almost 20 years, with few of the checks that other benefits have.
- DLA no longer properly takes into account the needs of all disabled people.
- The cost of DLA has risen by a third over the last 9 years.
- The changes that are being made will ensure that this new benefit will remain affordable in the future.
- The amount expected to be spent in real terms in 2015/2016 on “working age” individuals will be around the same level as that spent in 2011/2012.
- Through greater use of evidence and reassessment the intention is that the new benefit will enable a more accurate assessment of an individual’s entitlement to make sure support is reaching those who need it most.

PROPOSED CHANGES IN EDUCATION FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (Source: Mencap)

The Government hope to bring changes into place by 2014 for all children and young people in England, between the ages of 0-25, recognised as requiring extra help because of special educational needs (SEN).

Levels of SEN now:

School Action – this is where children need some extra help in class to keep up and this help can be offered by planning things differently or doing small things that don't cost much money.

School Action Plus – this is where children might need some specialist help to keep up, like speech and language therapy or to work in smaller groups. These children's progress is monitored through an individual education plan.

Statement of SEN – this is where children who need lots of help, have a specialist assessment of their needs and then are given a legal document telling them what they need to succeed and guaranteeing they will get it.

What happens now:

Families often have a multitude of assessments and meetings happening at the same time, such as:

Assessment of SEN (for provision in school)

Common Assessment Framework (assessment to access together.

short breaks and community support)

Medical Assessments (ongoing progress reviews to ensure medical and development needs are met).

This process can be seen to be confusing and time consuming.

Proposed new levels of SEN:

Single SEN category – this will cover children who used to be defined as being on school action, school action plus and it will also cover children who have barriers to learning such as English as a second language.

Education, Health and Care Plans – replacing statements of needs, these plans will use a single assessment to identify all the needs of a child and secure their delivery in one document.

Proposed new assessment:

Families will have one assessment where professionals consider their Education, Health and Care needs together in a co-ordinated way so families get a support package that works.

This process is intended to be easier to understand and should mean that families spend less time telling different professionals their story.

Other Proposals

Local offer – all local authorities will have to publish a statement detailing what services they can provide to families with children and young people who have a disability.

Direct Payments – will be offered to all parents of children with Education, Health and Care Plans so they can choose to arrange their child's support and manage the budget themselves.

Health Checks – will explore the possibility of annual health checks from GPs for all disabled young people from the age of 16.

Parental Choice – with the rise in school provision, including Academies and Free Schools, the government wants to increase the options available to parents with disabled children.

The proposed new assessment sounds a good idea **but**, it would mean that professionals in all three areas would have to meet the families, children and young people as well as amongst themselves on a regular basis and they would **need** to be the same professionals. The Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) have already experienced cuts to their personnel and I'm pretty sure that the other services have had the same happen to them so, **will it work?** It might if extra money is attached to the whole project but that is probably not going to happen. Also, does anyone else think it's strange that English as a second language is treated as a "special educational need"? As a child of parents from abroad and whose first language wasn't English, I find it odd that I would have been considered as a child with "special needs"? It would be good to start a debate on this to hopefully move things on in the right way. Editor.

GUIDE TO MANAGING CHALLENGING BEHAVIOUR

SHEFFIELD – 3rd October 2012 – Jury's Inn

This workshop outlines an effective model for dealing with difficult behaviours, including self injury and aggression.

The Guide to Managing Challenging Behaviours training involves an introduction to broad-spectrum behaviour analysis in the form of the Pyramid Approach to Education. The workshop teaches participants to determine and define unwanted behaviour. Participants are taught how to assess why the behaviour is happening and are given a

range of strategies to decrease the likelihood of the behaviour happening again. Finally issues related to the evaluation and monitoring of behaviour plans are discussed.

Course Fee: £159 for a professional or £85 for a parent. Price includes VAT, course materials, refreshments and a light lunch.

For more dates, information or to register online, visit www.pecs.com

Android

I am but machine
I have emotions, but they can't be seen
Only live in my artificial dreams
The computer's disc gives everything I need
But I am lonely and that doesn't compute
For I have no need or use
For people are alien to me
And so I short-circuit whenever you pass
I start to falter and am dying to ask
Why do I feel this way?
I try to be all machine like
I straighten myself so that I'll stand tall
But you only have to say or call
And I am almost alive
Almost but not quite
I can still turn myself off
It's just a switch
Or a lever to end all this
But to never feel this way would be a loss
Even though there can be no us
And that is when I start to break up
They take off my head
They take off my arms, legs and feet
And I am replaced like I'm a new machine
Now I have a heart and a mind of my own
And I want you more than you know
But now I can let it show
I rush toward you, towards your angel like face
But alas I see you have been replaced
You look similar, but with wires and cogs
Distinctly machine like and my love is lost
Our places swopped
You are but machine, have no need for love

Daniel White
13th July 2012



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