

contact

For families
with disabled children

In Contact

NORTH WEST

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2019



Welcome to the North West Newsletter, we wish you all a Happy New Year!

We are Contact, the charity for families with disabled children. We understand that life with a disabled child brings unique challenges, and we exist to help families feel valued, supported, confident and informed.

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Contact would like to thank the Big Lottery Fund for their support of the North West Office regional newsletter
Charity registered in England and Wales (284912) and Scotland (SC039169)



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We hope you find the information in the newsletter useful but if for any reason, you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please email northwest@contact.org.uk and let us know and we will remove you from our mailing list. Thank you to everyone for your continued support.

Contact North West Team

You can e-mail general enquiries to the team at northwest@contact.org.uk or get in touch with individual team members below.

To join our mailing list, please email the northwest email address above. For information and support please contact:

North West Parent Advisers - Local support and information in relation to bringing up a disabled child and local group information.

- Diane Bridge: diane.bridge@contact.org.uk - 01704 532256
- Lyndsay Regan-Hicks: Lyndsay.regan-hicks@contact.org.uk - 07920 655128
- Noreen Arif: noreen.arif@contact.org.uk - 07458 045709

Regional North West Manager - manages the work of the parent advisors in the North West region, contact if you have an enquiry regarding parent or professional workshops, information days and events.

- Karen Robinson: karen.robinson@contact.org.uk - 01772 424758

North West Sessional Administrative Support Worker – supports the North West team with admin and produces the NW newsletter. Have you got any articles that you want featured in the newsletters? If so, please email:

- Rebecca Robinson: Rebecca.robinson@contact.org.uk

Parent Carer Participation Adviser (North West) - for parent carer participation and help and advice around parent Carer forums in the North West

- Kate Hurn: Kate.hurn@contact.org.uk - 07458 045 694

Volunteer Parent Representative - Ruth is a parent of a disabled child and offers peer support and local signposting for parents in the St. Helen's area

- Ruth Card: ruth.card@contact.org.uk - 01942 721 323

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LOTTERY FUNDED



North West Contact Support Information Sessions & Stands

Free information sessions for parents/carers – a range of welcoming and informative themed sessions aiming to increase knowledge, confidence and wellbeing

Manchester Parent Carer Forum

Monday 28th January 2019, 10am–12:30pm – **Difficult Behaviours that challenge us.** To increase knowledge, explore strategies and top tips and sources of advice and support.

Monday 25th February 2019, 10am-12:30pm – **Building Confidence.** This session will help you to develop better communication skills, feel more confident when working with professionals and prepare to get the best out of meetings.

Monday 4th March 2019, 10am-12:30pm – **Growing up: Puberty, sex and relationships.** To explore puberty, changes to expect in your child and relationships, keeping safe and sources of support.

Manchester Parent Carer Forum information sessions event location have not yet been confirmed. To find out more information, the location of the information sessions and to book on please email; info@manchesterparentcarerforum.org.uk or Facebook; www.facebook.com/mpcfinfo

Cheshire & Warrington Carers Trust

Monday 11th March 2019, 9:30am-12:30pm – **Difficult Behaviours that Challenge Us – Developing understanding and getting support.** To increase knowledge, explore strategies and top tips and sources of advice and support.

Monday 25th March 2019, 9:30am-12:30pm – **Helping your Child to Sleep.** To help increase knowledge and understanding of sleep issues and to explore and share strategies, top tips and sources of advice and support.

Wednesday 15th May 2019, 9:30am- 12:30pm – **Supporting Brothers and Sisters.** To explore a range of methods to support siblings and to identify and share resources and support available.

Cheshire and Warrington Carers Trust information sessions will be held at **Unit 1, Brierley Business Centre, Mirion St, Crewe, CW1 2AZ.** To find out more information or to book on please email Lisa Warburton; lisa@cheshireandwarringtoncarers.org or telephone 01270 257331





LivPaC – Liverpool Parent Carer Forum

Tuesday 26th February 2019, 6pm-9pm – Supporting Brothers and Sisters. To explore a range of methods to support siblings and to identify and share resources and support available.

LivPaC information sessions will be held at **5 Shelmore Drive, Dingle, Liverpool, L8 4YL**. To find out more information or to book on please email; info@livpac.co.uk or telephone **0151 727 5271**.

St Helen's Parent Carer Forum

Monday 11th February 2019, 10am-12:30pm – Growing Up: Puberty, Sex and Relationships. To explore puberty, changes to expect in your child and relationships, keeping safe and sources of support.

Monday 29th April 2019, 10am-12:30pm – Supporting Brothers and Sisters. To explore a range of methods to support siblings and to identify and share resources and support available.

St. Helen's PCF information sessions will be held at **Fishwick House, 18 Cotham Street, St Helen's, WA10 1SJ**. To find out more information or to book on please email; SaraDolan@sthelenscarers.org.uk or, telephone **01744 675 615**.

For early years' information sessions please see page 9 & 10

Contact's Hospitals Project in the North West

Contact's parent advisors provide practical and emotional support within hospitals at our information stands. In the North West, we hold information stands at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and Royal Manchester Children's Hospital. We can help with any questions parents may be struggling to get answers for, including help in the early years, medical and health information, diagnosis, benefits, education and local support.

Come and meet Contact staff at our information stand which will be held at **Alder Hey Children's Hospital**, in the Atrium from 10am-2:30pm on the following dates:

- Thursday 7th February 2019
- Tuesday 26th February 2019
- Monday 11th March 2019
- Thursday 28th March 2019





Contact's Hospitals Project in the North West Continued...

And at **The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital**, in the Atrium from 11am-3pm on the following dates:

- Tuesday 5th February 2019
- Tuesday 26th February 2019

Please do check our North-West Contact webpage for updates and information for our hospital stands and information sessions.

Contact's Resources

Advice, consultancy service, training and workshops for practitioners

As well as supporting families, we help other practitioners working with disabled children. We have now launched a menu of products and services for you. As practitioners, you can also commission any of our parent workshops to meet the needs of parents in your area.

To find out how our advice, consultancy service, training and workshops can support your work please visit: <https://contact.org.uk/professionals>

NEW Parent guides

We produce a series of guides and factsheets on all aspects of raising a disabled child that covers:

- ✓ Money and money saving tips
- ✓ Transport
- ✓ Disability and sickness benefits
- ✓ Benefits for working
- ✓ Help with rent, mortgage and council tax
- ✓ Grants and loans

You can find our most recent and up to date [guides and factsheets](#) in our library at www.contact.org.uk, or email helpline@contact.org.uk/call our helpline on 0808 808 3555 and ask for a free copy of the latest edition sent to you in the post.



Early Years SEND Partnership

We are delighted to announce that one of our flagship programmes will play a crucial role in a new Department for Education-funded partnership that aims to improve access and inclusion in the early years. The Early Years SEND Partnership aims to support families improve their children's early communication skills. It is led by the Council for Disabled Children who will work with Contact alongside NASEN, ICAN and the Communication Trust, who each bring specific expertise to the project.

As part of the new government contract, we will be developing and delivering our Brighter Beginnings workshops for parents with a focus on early years education for children with special educational needs and additional support for families to help them feel empowered and able to make informed decisions that are right for their family.

Find out more about the project here <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/early-years-send-partnership/about-programme> and contact us for further details regarding workshop dates and locations. See page 9 & 10.



Communication is Vital

Children with Speech, Language and Communication Needs form one of the largest groups of those with special educational needs.

If you are worried about your child's speech, language and communication skills and you think they may need to be assessed by a Speech Therapist, you can ask to be referred by your health visitor or GP. However, you can often make a referral yourself as most speech and language therapy services will take a direct referral. Ask your health visitor or GP for the contact details of your local Speech and Language Therapy service. There are also a number of organisations that can offer support, resources and an opportunity to speak directly to specialists in this area.



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I CAN

I CAN, is the children's communication charity. Children and young people can sometimes fail to reach their potential because communication difficulties are not visible and can be mistaken for something else or not noticed at all. I CAN's mission is that no child should be left out or left behind because of a difficulty speaking or understanding.



The **I CAN Help Enquiry Service** gives parents/carers and practitioners a chance to discuss questions or concerns about a child's speech, language and communication development with one of I CAN's speech and language therapists. The therapists can give helpful information about children's talking and communication development as well as tips on improving these skills. They can also offer advice on ages and stages and what can be done to help a child and get the right support.

If you would like to speak to a therapist about your child's speech, language and communication development call **0207 843 2544**. For more information about I CAN, please visit www.ican.org.uk

Talking Point

The Talking Point website has lots of great free resources to help parents and carers of children with speech, language and communication needs, including a Progress Checker which will help you to review progress in talking, listening and understanding.



Visit their website: www.talkingpoint.org.uk

Afasic

If you are worried that your son or daughter is not talking, saying very little or has difficulties understanding what you say, Afasic offers support to parents and carers of children and young people who find these important skills difficult.



The **Afasic Parents' Helpline** is there to listen to your concerns and answer your questions about your child's talking and understanding. Call the Helpline on **0300 666 9410** during opening hours – Monday & Wednesday: 10.30am to 4.00pm. They have a wealth of information and resources available from their website: www.afasic.org.uk





The Communication Trust provide a list of **10 Top Tips for developing talk** which is useful for many children and young people of all ages:



The Communication Trust
Every child understood

1. Get their attention

When children are absorbed in another activity, it can be hard to listen. Say their name first to get their attention and make sure they are listening.

2. Vocabulary is key

Learning and remembering words is incredibly important. Help children of all ages by using all their senses to teach new words. Then build in lots of repetition and practice.

3. Build on what they say

Build on what children know and say already, to support them develop language to go to the next level; e.g. taking turns with babies, adding words for toddlers, adding phrases for older children and showing teens how to debate.

4. Talk about what children are interested in

Children and young people are much more motivated to talk when it is about something they are interested in. Ask an open question where the answer is not only yes or no about a favourite hobby, for example.

5. Be careful with questions

When adults use comments, and prompts rather than questions, children join in and talk a lot more.

6. Show them the right way

If children make mistakes, it's best to repeat back what they say rather than tell them it's wrong. Say it clearly with the right words, so they can hear how things should sound. Children learn from what they see and hear.

7. Make learning language fun

Play around with words, make up silly rhymes - children of all ages can enjoy the fun of language. Understanding how words are made up and rhyme helps with learning to read.





8. Give children time

Children need time to process what others have said, work out what they are going to say and how they are going to say it. Use facial expression to show you are listening and happy to wait.

9. Check out understanding

Encourage children to ask when they are unsure; check out understanding by asking children if they have understood – can they tell you what they need to do?

10. Have conversations

Communication is a skill like any other – the more it is practiced, the better it gets! Children and young people benefit from practicing having conversations with adults as well as people their own age. http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk/media/617945/tct_toptips_pdf.pdf

For further information, advice and resources on how to develop children's communication skills please go to www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk

Early Years Programme age 0 to 8: Free Parent Carer Information Sessions - Rainbow House



Session 1: Tuesday 29th January 2019 – Information and Support

This session will look at the range of support services available for you and your family both locally and nationally.

Session 2: Tuesday 5th February 2019 – Working with Professionals

This session will help you to develop skills to feel more confident in making decisions about your child when meeting and communicating with professionals.

Session 3: Tuesday 12th February 2019 – Building Parental Resilience

This session will explore ways to help you look after yourself and your family.

Session 4: Tuesday 5th March 2019 – Planning Outcomes

This session will focus on the educational support that children and young people are entitled to with regards to their special educational needs.

Session 5: Tuesday 12th March 2019 – Encouraging Positive Behaviour

This session will look at why our children behave the way they do, how to encourage positive behaviour and top tips to help.



Early Years Programme Information Sessions – Rainbow House Continued...

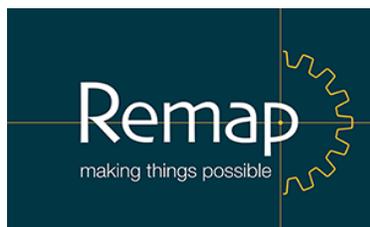
Session 6: Tuesday 19th March 2019 - Money Matters

This session will address the additional costs of bringing up a child with a disability and help you understand the range of grants, benefits and entitlements available and know how to get support.

All sessions run from 10am-12pm (*registration and coffee from 9:30am*). Rainbow House information sessions will be held at **The Legacy Rainbow House, Salt Pit Ln, Mawdesley, Ormskirk, L40 2QX.**

To find out more information or to book on please email Sonia Harris, s.harris@thelegacy-rainbowhouse.com or telephone **01704 823 276.**

Resources featured in this article



Remap: [Remap](http://www.remap.org.uk) is a national charity that works through local groups of skilled volunteers. They help disabled people achieve independence and a better quality of life by designing and making **free** equipment for their individual needs.

The tailor-made equipment helps people to carry out essential daily tasks without having to ask for help, or helps them take part in leisure occupations or sports that would otherwise be impossible.

To Find out more information about Remap please visit their website: www.remap.org.uk or get in contact; email: data@remap.org.uk telephone: 01732 760209.

Cerebra: [Cerebra](http://www.cerebra.org.uk) is a charity dedicated to helping families who have a child born with a brain condition discover a better life together.

They offer a range of helpful parent guides and have also created a new downloadable sleep booklet – ‘sleep – tips and techniques’, it explains techniques to help with the ten most common sleep problems, download it for free [here](http://www.cerebra.org.uk) now: www.cerebra.org.uk





Resources featured in this article Continued...

Tree of Hope: [Tree of Hope](#) is a crowdfunding charity that helps children and young people with a disability or illness by supporting their families to raise the money they need to pay for specialist care that is not freely available through the UK healthcare system.



tree of
HOPE

The fundraising charity supporting
children's healthcare needs

Tree of Hope: Children with healthcare needs can often benefit from a range of therapies and treatments, not necessarily available via state provision. Tree of Hope supports families to fundraise towards these costs whilst working with a registered charity to maximise their fundraising opportunities and get support and help from them every step of the way.

To find out more information please visit www.treeofhope.org.uk or get in contact; email: info@treeofhope.org.uk telephone: 01892 535525



Phab: [Phab](#) inspires and supports children, young people and adults with and without disabilities by breaking down community barriers, reducing social isolation, and creating opportunities for disabled people to enjoy the same activities and challenges as, and alongside, those without a disability. There are over 150 Phab clubs across England and Wales!

To find out more information about Phab and how to get involved visit their website; www.phab.org.uk

YHA: [YHA](#) are offering a free family breaks programme. They recognise the benefits of time away from the normal home environment in strengthening relationships and believe that family time is the cornerstone of children's happiness and wellbeing.

Up to two adults and your children can apply for the free family breaks programme. They also offer guidance notes to support you to complete your application.



For more information please visit: www.yha.org.uk/support-programmes/family-support or get in contact; email: breaks@yha.org.uk Tel: **01629592723**



Resources featured in this article Continued.

PicturePath: PicturePath is a free digital visual timeline for use by visual learners at home and school. It's a portable, easy to use visual timeline that's been developed by a team based out of Alder Hey Children's Hospital with support from the National Autistic Society and several practitioners.



They understand that people with special educational needs can often feel overwhelmed by sudden changes to their daily routine. This clear and simple app allows you to create a visual structure to help prepare for these changes and reduce anxiety levels. The app can also be shared between devices as well as between home and at school so your child knows what to expect throughout their day.

The app is available on Google Play and iTunes, simply type in 'picturepath' in the search tab on your app store.

Looking Back on 2018

Campaigning through the seasons

Here's a traditional round up of campaigning in 2018 from Una Summerson, our head of public affairs

Snow turns to spring...

We started the year with a High Court win for parent carers campaigning to stop the closure of Nascot Lawn respite centre in Hertfordshire. Meanwhile in Hampshire and elsewhere we expressed concern about decisions to close respite centres. In response, we hosted a successful webinar about using the law to challenge cuts to services with Alex Rook and Steve Broach, two specialist public lawyers. The webinar is still available on our [Youtube](#) channel. Our School Run Crisis campaign was highlighted on [BBC Breakfast](#) and the campaign was also shortlisted for the SMK Amplifying Voices Award.

Other highlights included supporting parent carer, Nikki from Lancashire to give evidence in parliament. You can read Nikki's blog [here](#). Meanwhile in Wales the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act was passed. The introduction of the new system will not happen until September 2020. Until the law changes, the [current system of support for children with SEN](#) will remain in force.



Campaigning through the seasons continued...

Into Summer...

Whilst the sun shone outside yet more families are forced to take legal steps against cuts, this time families in Surrey lodged a legal challenge against the decision to cut more than £20 million from services for disabled children. And we supported parents in Coventry to change post 16 school transport cuts.

We also worked with Channel 4 News on a feature about Ludlow Road respite centre in Worcestershire, shortly after the council announced plans to keep the centre open!

Families helped us deliver two petitions to the Prime Minister at Number 10 Downing Street. More than 10,000 people signed our petition on the [school transport legal loophole](#) and 5000 more on our petition to stop the £175 million cut to child disability payments under Universal Credit.

As temperatures soared further, BBC Panorama aired 'Fighting for my Child'. Three extraordinary families let cameras into their homes to see what it takes to give their children the care they need on a daily basis. We worked with the producers, putting them in touch with the families and the programme also highlighted our new research on the £1.5 billion funding gap for disabled children's services through our joint campaign, the Secret Life of Us. You can still watch the programme here <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0bc2ch6>

As the leaves fall...

Our campaign to stop the £175million cut to child disability payments under Universal Credit hits the headlines. Thanks to more than 1000 of you writing to your local MPs, almost 100 MPs [signed an Early Day Motion](#) in Parliament showing their support too. In November, our Chief Executive, Amanda Batten gave evidence in Parliament on the need to strengthen support for families in education, health and social care. Read more [here](#).

As the bells jingle...

We publish our hard hitting Counting the Costs research into family finances. The research found a sharp rise in families going without the essentials including NHS therapies and specialist equipment. The findings show why our Family Finances Helpline is so important. But funding for the Family Finances Helpline will run out in just six months' time. We face the very real possibility of closing this lifeline. Unless we can raise the money to keep it open.



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Campaigning through the seasons continued...

[Please donate to our Lifeline Appeal today](#) and help save our Family Finances Helpline. In the last year alone, we've helped families secure an extra £2 million in financial support. That's £5,200 per year per family. That's money they didn't know they were entitled to until they called us. For every £10 you give to our Lifeline Appeal, Contact can secure £130 into the pockets of families with disabled children.

2018's Contact North West Team Achievements

Throughout 2018 we have supported more than **2,789 parents and practitioners** through **2 family events** at Chester Zoo and Greenland's Village Farm, **32 information stands** at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital, **42 information sessions** around the region and **9 drop-ins**.

Additionally, we have supported over 1000 parents and practitioners by providing them with advice and information on a range of topics such as benefits, housing, behaviour, education and sleep. We would like to thank everyone who has supported us along the way.

Looking forward - 2019

During the first half of 2019 we will be running 4 family events. We will continue to deliver to parents and professionals our themed information sessions across the north west. Our information stands at Alder Hey Children's Hospital and The Royal Manchester Children's Hospital will continue to be held throughout the first half of the year (please see page 5 for dates). We look forward to continuing supporting parent/carers and practitioners throughout 2019 but we also face the very real threat of reducing our services when regional funding ends in June. If you know of any regional funding or are a service who wants to commission any of our work please contact Karen Robinson email karen.robinson@contact.org.uk

Have you got your copy of the *free Helpful Guide for families with disabled children* yet?

How can I order a copy?

If you'd like a copy, simply [complete our online application form](https://contact.org.uk/order-your-copy-of-the-helpful-guide-for-families-with-disabled-children/) at <https://contact.org.uk/order-your-copy-of-the-helpful-guide-for-families-with-disabled-children/>. We'll send you a copy within a couple of weeks.



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Who to ask?

Finding information about services and support in your local area – THE LOCAL OFFER

Every Local Authority should have information on services for children with SEN or disabilities set out in an area of their website named the 'local offer' and should be easily accessible on council websites. It should list information about how and where you can get support from for your child to enable them to have the same opportunities as any other child, prevent isolation and promote good mental health and wellbeing and community involvement. You can find the link for each NW local authority on our Contact North West webpage.

Parent Carer Forum

To find the parent carer forum information and contact detail in your area please visit:

https://contact.org.uk/media/1209981/contact_lists_for_website_sep_18.pdf or alternatively

contact our north west Parent Carer Participation Advisor, Kate Hurn via email:

Kate.hurn@contact.org.uk

Useful contacts and numbers

Contact's free phone helpline advisers can help you with any question you have about life with a disabled child – from getting a diagnosis for your child, the services and benefits you might be entitled to, to childcare options in the early years and support when your child is at school or college. We can also put you in touch with support groups in your area.

Call our free helpline on **0808 808 3555** or email your query helpline@contact.org.uk. We're open 9.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday and have access to interpreters. Visit www.contact.org.uk for more information.

Interested in Volunteering?

Would you be interested in volunteering with Contact North West? We are looking for volunteers to either offer support at the office with developing newsletters and parent packs or supporting Parent Advisors at our information stands or workshops.

If you're interested please email northwest@contact.org.uk or telephone 01772 424578 (answer phone available please leave contact details).





Registration

Not your own copy? Need to update your details?

Fill out our registration form...

You can find our Contact NW registration form for professionals and our Parent Carer registration form on the links or visit <https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/local-support/contact-in-your-area/offices/north-west>. Please fill out your form and email it to us at northwest@contact.org.uk. If you would like us to send you a registration form or you would like to write to us about something, you can send a letter to us at **North West Registration, Contact, Office 2 Centurion House, Leyland Business Park, Centurion Way, Leyland, PR25 3GR.**

If we have your details we can send you our free newsletters, information about family events and news about all kinds of issues that may affect your family or the families you work with. Contact is committed to the confidentiality of your personal information. Personal data will be held and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will not be shared with any third parties for commercial use.

Contact would like to thank the following for their generous support of our work in the North West Region: The Big Lottery Fund, Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, Department for Education, Maria Marina Foundation, Sir Francis Scott Trust and The Pilkington Trust.

Don't forget to look at our...

Website, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter discussions by clicking on the links on the website at www.contact.org.uk you will find lots of information and advice there including:

- Publications and leaflets
- News Stories
- A to Z of medical conditions
- Fundraising activities and campaigns
- Online community (To get in touch with other parents)
- Support for professionals

Disclaimer...

Every effort is made to ensure the information in this newsletter is correct. Contact can accept no liability for errors and omissions and cannot recommend products or services. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Contact.

