Workshop on the EHC Plan

More than 30 parents attended the workshop on the Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan on Thursday 13th February 2014. The event was facilitated by colleagues from the local authority as they continue to consult with parents on the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) reforms.

The EHC Plan will replace the statement of educational needs of children with disabilities starting September 2014. The change will be gradual but it is hoped that all eligible children will have the EHC plan in three years.

There was also a brief discussion on the Local Offer - a comprehensive source of information about services for children with disabilities.
It's been quite a pleasant winter - with much rain, some sunshine, and no snow! The ever changing weather mirrors the vibrant changes in disability and special needs programmes.

The Children and Families Bill which will soon be an Act is the government’s vision to transform the way services are delivered to children including better access to services and an increased choice and control for parents. We anticipate a much more rigour in policies and services for children and families in Southwark.

Southwark Council will reform the current support for children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) to improve their life chances. In view of this, there are ongoing discussions on the changes in the statementing process, development of the local offer, integrated pathways for children with disabilities (including transition), and personalisation.

There will hopefully be a better engagement with families to make sure the right services are provided and accessed. As parents, you can have a say in what is going to happen through your respective family workers. Please feel free to tell them the issues you face in using the services in the borough so that we can feed this back to the relevant people. If you want to know more about the SEND redesign in Southwark, please get in touch with Contact a Family.

Thank you very much.

Natalia Sali, Manager

Victory for parents in the Children and Families Bill

A last minute amendment to the Children and Families Bill was made which means that parents caring for a disabled child will be given the same right to support as those looking after a disabled adult.

The change to the bill is welcomed by Contact a Family who have campaigned to ensure that parent carers have the right to be assessed and supported when the bill takes effect in England later this year.

Una Summerson, Head of Policy at Contact a Family welcomed the amendment saying: "We are delighted that the Children and Families Bill has been changed to include parent carers. Parity of rights for all carers - whether looking after a disabled child or adult - is essential. By mirroring the new rights for carers of disabled adults in the care bill, the change to the Children and Families Bill shows that the government recognises the vital role of parent carers. Importantly parent carers played a pivotal role in this campaign including meeting with Ministers, government officials and their local MPs".

Families wanting to know how the Children and Families Bill or care bill may affect their family should telephone the Contact a Family helpline for advice on 0808 808 3555. You can also visit Contact a Family website for more information.

Alternatively, you can call the Southwark office on 020 7358 7799.
As we say goodbye to Winter and begin to look forward to the warmer months of Spring and Summer, it’s time to look back once again at the last couple of months at Contact a Family’s events.

At the beginning of January, we headed down to the Greenwich theatre for our yearly panto ‘Puss in Boots’. All of our families seemed to have a great time with the visuals, story and comedy appealing to both kids and adults. One of our families sitting at the front also got slightly more than they bargained for from Dame Fruity Fifi during one particularly amusing moment!

During the February half term holiday, we hired out one of the auditoriums at the Peckham Plex for a private screening of The Lego Movie. Another big hit with our families, it was a pleasure to see the kids really getting into the storyline, jumping up and down with excitement during several scenes whilst the parents took the opportunity to sit back and relax or have a catch up with some other Contact a Family members.

**An appeal to parents**

Some parents book and don’t turn up in events and workshops. Please know that we have a very limited funding, and with the ever-increasing demand from families, we try our best to offer more activities and workshops. **When you book, please turn up**, or call us one day prior to the event should you need to cancel so that other parents will get the chance to take your place.

One of my other big tasks over the last couple of months has been to look at other ways to bring extra money in to help pay for the events throughout the next year. Being able to bid for external sources of income is becoming an extremely important part of any event co-ordinator’s role, particularly in the charity sector. Without it, some of the events that Contact a Family offer would not be able to happen. Fingers crossed that we are successful with at least one or two!

At the time of writing, I still have the Zumba class and behaviour workshop to take place so I will report on these events in the next addition of Grapevine but in the meantime, I am going to be very busy with the planning of Spring and Summer events.

There are a couple of upcoming events that I think you will all be very excited about, but whilst I can’t reveal any more information about this yet, I can tell you that one of the events is likely to be very fast and very furious! Until next time.

**Ed Bywater**

Inclusion /Admin coordinator

020 7358 7799 (extension 2118)
I’ve had another hectic, but fun quarter so far. I supported parents through regular advisory drop-ins at Crawford Children’s Centre and Sunshine House. I’d like to meet more parents/carers over the coming weeks. If you require support, have any queries, issues or just a need a friendly and understanding ear please attend my monthly drop-ins.

Phone: 020 7358 7799 ext. 2115
Email: Elaine.mulligan@cafamily.org.uk

**Local drop-in session**

Where: Crawford Children's Centre, Crawford Road, London SE5 9NF
When: Every last Wednesday of the month, 1.30 to 3pm (term time only).
No appointment necessary.
Coincides with the Centre’s Messy Play session

**Messy Play**

Stay and play for both babies and toddlers with lots of paint, gloop, sand and water.

Where: Bessemer Grange Children’s Centre
Dylways, Camberwell, SE5 8HP
When: Wednesdays 1:30pm-3:30pm.
Tel: 020 7274 2520/2618 (option 3)

**Disability Community Club**

For just £2.00 per session, disabled young people aged between 16 and 25 will enjoy paralympic and multi sports activities.

Where: Camberwell Leisure Centre,
Artichoke Plance, London SE5 8TS
When: 3pm-5pm, every Saturday
(term time only)

Please contact: Alan Whetherly on 020 7021 0973

**FREE Zumba Class**

Why not join us for some Zumba fun!

Where: Kingswood House,
37-38 Seeley Drive, SE21 8QR
When: Wednesday from 11:00am -11:35am
Tel: 020 8670 1578

**Benefit Advice**

Free confidential advice for people who need help with applying for or coping with changes in the benefit system. You can get support for appeal/tribunal.
Provided by the Southwark Law Centre.

Where: Dulwich Wood Children’s Centre,
Lyall Avenue, SE21 8QS
When: 1st Thursday of the month 10am-12pm
Tel: 0207 525 1192 Booking essential

**Citizens Advice Bureau**

Help people resolve their legal, money & other problems by providing FREE, independent and confidential advice

Where: Kingswood Community Shop
37-38 Seeley Drive, SE21 8QR
When: Every Tuesday from 10am-12pm
Tel: 020 8670 1578

**Benefit Advice**

FREE

Why not join us for some Zumba fun!

Where: Kingswood House,
37-38 Seeley Drive, SE21 8QR
When: Wednesday from 11:00am -11:35am
Tel: 020 8670 1578
Peckham, Peckham Rye and Nunhead

The last quarter has been exciting and busy. I have met and supported new parents. I also attended a locality meeting which helped reinforce and increased my knowledge about service in Southwark. If you have an enquiry, need support or advice you are welcome to pop in to Rye Oak on Friday or Sunshine House on Wednesday.
If you are a professional and want to know more about our service or how to refer then contact me on the details before.

Phone: 020 7358 7799, ext. 2119
Email: yvonne.lubwama@cafamily.org.uk

Local drop-in sessions
Why not join us for a Breakfast Morning on the 1st Friday of every month at Rye Oak Children’s Centre?
Where: Whorlton Road, Peckham, SE15 3PD
Every Friday morning, 9.30am-12pm (term-time only). No appointment necessary.

Sensory time
Sensory play, arts and crafts for children under five and siblings, and Makaton workshop for parents.

Where: Ann Bernadt Children’s Centre
Chandler Way SE15 6DT
When: Wednesday, 1.30 to 3.30pm
Tel: 020 7525 0252

One-to-one yoga sessions
Where: Ann Bernadt Children’s Centre
Chandler Way SE15 6DT
When: 26th March and 23rd April 2014
Please book by calling 020 7525 0252

Health and well-being day
Join their cooking competition
Where: Rye Oak Children Centre
Whorlton Road, Peckham, SE15 3PD
When: Thursday 29th May 2014, 11am - 2pm

Father’s Day event
Sports, arts and crafts, music for dads
Where: Rye Oak Children Centre
Whorlton Road, Peckham, SE15 3PD
When: Saturday, 14th June 2014 at 11am-2pm

Super Saturdays
Come and join us for a morning of fantastic fun and great learning opportunities for the whole family (big kids up to 8 years too!)

Where: The Nell Gywnn & East Peckham Children’s Centre
Leyton Square, Maismore Street
Peckham SE15 6TP
When: Saturdays, 10am to 12pm
Tel: 020 7639 1812
Elaine, Yvonne and Ann are the family workers assigned in this locality.
We jointly support families in this locality so if you need any support, come to Sunshine House or contact us on the details below.

Please call 020 7358 7799
Elaine - extension 2115
Yvonne - extension 2119
Ann - extension 2116

Social skills workshop

For children 0 - 5 years old.
A workshop to encourage and build children's confidence, language development and promote social skills. Children will dress up in costumes and use props for fun and exciting sessions.

Where: Victory Primary School and Children’s Centre
Elba Place, Rodney Road,
SE17 1PT

When: Mondays, at 1.30pm to 2.30pm
Term time only

Please call on every Friday to book your place for the following week.

Tel: 020 7703 5722 option 4

Employment Training

One-to-one training and advice for parents of under fives who want to go back to work.

Where: 1st Place Children and Parents’ Centre
Chumleigh Street,
Burgess Park, SE5 0RN

When: Thursday at 2pm to 4pm

Please call every Friday to book your place for the following week.

Tel: 020 7740 8070

Parenting programme

The programme is designed for parents and carers who want to learn and develop some new parenting approach. Creche is available but advanced booking is required.

Where: Coin Street Family and Children’s Centre
108 Stamford Street, London SE1 9NH

When: Mondays, 10am to 2.30pm (term time only), up to 12th May 2014

Please call and book your place first.
Tel: 020 7021 1600
I am now coming up to my fourth month with Contact a Family and have met and built up relationships with many of our new families.

I have also met with professionals and visited services in the local schools and children’s centres to support ways in which we can work together. I also attend our drop-in service at Sunshine House to support my colleagues.

I hope to start a regular coffee morning in the Bermondsey area in Spring. I also plan to offer a drop-in service at one of the children’s centres to make our service more accessible to parents living in my locality area. I will be able to advertise a more local service in our next edition of Grapevine.

You can reach me on 020 7358 7799 - extension 2116.

Email: ann.laffey@cafamily.org.uk

Speech & language sessions for parents

Parents can receive advice from a speech & language therapist about any aspect of their child’s speech or language development.

Where: Blue Arrow Library
South Bermondsey Children’s Centre

When: from 3rd March 2014, 10.15 to 11.15 am

Tel: 020 7525 3013

Stay and Play

Please come and have fun with your little ones, weekly all year round.

Where: Blue Arrow Library
South Bermondsey children’s Centre

When: Wednesdays, 9am - 12pm

Drop in session no need to book!
Tel: 020 7525 3013

Speech & Language therapy drop in session

Come along to meet Charlotte, the speech and language therapist

Where: Pilgrims’ Way children’s Centre
Tustin Estate,
Manor Grove SE15 1EF.

When: Wednesday, 19th March at 1.30 - 3pm

Tel: 020 7639 1995

Whippersnappers session

Using drums, puppets, dressing up, props and bubble sessions for all families of children aged 0 to 16 years old.

Where: Pilgrims’ Way children’s Centre
Tustin Estate,
Manor Grove SE15 1EF.

When: Saturdays, 11am-12pm:
No need to book, just turn up!
Focus on transition

Thirty-four (34) parents attended our successful Transition event on 27th February. We had a speaker from Cambian, an autistic specific organisation that provides residential and other bespoke services for young people on the spectrum. Gillian, their Director of Education gave a detailed presentation on Transition. Iris from Resources for Autism gave a brief introduction on their service which includes playgroups and mentoring groups for young people on the spectrum.

Alison Miles, mum of a girl with complex needs represented the Southwark Parent Carer Council. She was joined by Cara Jones of the Southwark Parent Partnership. They both spoke about the local offer and in particular the importance of parent participation.

Rosemary Merricks – a parent from Lambeth talked about her and other parents’ success in influencing the Lambeth Council to establish a sixth form for young people aged 16 plus.

David and Ellie gave a brief presentation of Orchard Hill – a college for young people with additional needs. Janet Mearns from Working Families gave a brief overview of parents’ rights in particular how to request flexible working hours from an employer.

Here are some sites you can visit:

- Contact a Family also produces relevant guides and booklets which can be downloaded from the website:
  www.cafamily.org.uk
  1) Preparing for Adult Life and Transition-England and Wales.
  2) Personal Independence Payments and other benefits at 16.
- Preparing for Adulthood
  www.preparingforadulthood.org.uk. They have a forum and the focus in March is personalisation and person-centred practice.
- Transition Information Network
  www.transitioninfonetwork.org.uk
  Resources and publications on transition and includes a section for young people.
- Cerebra : www.cerebra.org.uk
  An informative website for parents/carers for children with a neurological disorder. Cerebra have a guide titled ‘Transition to Adulthood a guide for professionals’ is relevant for parents/carers the guide can be downloaded. They also provide a toy library which has lots of multi-sensory toys, and a library. This is a FREE service.

Nadia Crichlow  
Transition Worker  
0207 358 7799 (Monday and Thursday)  
nadia.crichlow@cafamily.org.uk
Meet our local steering group

The local steering group of Contact a Family Southwark is composed of eight members - Carole Haynes, Elsa Joseph, Ged Sydow, Lizzie Hunter, Nik Hood, Ged Sydow, Rebecca Emmanuel, Soulaf Rizki, and Xandra Watts. All of them apart from Lizzie are parents of children with disabilities and special needs.

“I recently retired but felt that I still wanted to be involved in some way with SEN. Contact A Family was an organisation that I knew worked tirelessly to offer excellent support to families with children with disabilities and so was absolutely delighted to be asked to join the Steering Committee in 2012.

I hope to be able to work to ensure that all SENCOs in mainstream schools are aware of the wonderful support that Contact A Family offers to families. I feel that there is a great opportunity for more families, who for example, are perhaps facing a new diagnosis of their school age child, to be directed by the school towards the support of such agencies as Contact A Family”.

~ Lizzie Hunter, steering group member

They advise us on the issues faced by parents and how these can be addressed through the services we provide. They also talk about Contact a Family when they meet other parents. They contribute their time and skills and are truly an asset to the organisation.

The group is chaired by Carole Haynes who herself is a mum of a teenage boy with autism. Carole has participated in many consultation events and contributed to Autism Spectrum Strategy, redesigning of the SEND Programme, and other events in Southwark. Carole, Soulaf and Lizzie also took part in a podcasts and video to promote Contact a Family’s work.

In September 2013, Elsa, Carole and Nadia (who is now our transition worker) met with our big funders to talk about the impact of the organisation on their family.

We continue to encourage parents to become members of the steering group. Their expertise and dedication to Contact a Family is invaluable and one that helps us to provide more responsive services to families.

If interested, do give Natalia a ring!
Contact a Family Events

Annual General Meeting and Conference 2014

Find out more about the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Redesign in Southwark! Come and join us on Thursday 15th May at 10am to 2pm at Cambridge House.

We have invited different speakers to share updates as well as talk to you about the changes that are going to happen in September 2014. These changes will have implications on the services that you and your child are receiving, and so it is important that you attend.

Contact a Family is also going to celebrate its 20th year in Southwark - an important milestone of our service to families. The annual general meeting will be an opportunity to meet other parents, our current local steering group, and nominate new members of the group.

Please book your place now!

Events and drop-ins

Drop-ins

Come and speak to a family worker at one of our weekly drop-in sessions around the borough.

Wednesdays
9.30am - 12pm, Sunshine House (term time only)
1.30 - 3.00pm, Crawford children Centre (monthly, term time only)

Thursdays
9.30am–12pm: Sunshine House (term time only)

Fridays
9.30am - 12pm: Rye Oak Children’s Centre (term time only)
1.00pm - 3.00pm: Kintore Way (last Friday of the month, term time only)

DLA renewal workshops

To book onto a DLA workshop, please call 020 7358 7799.

Tuesday 22nd April 2014
Tuesday 13th May 2014
Tuesday 10th June 2014

9.45am - 1pm, Sunshine House

Coffee mornings

Come and join us for a delicious coffee and a chat with some of our family workers and parents.

Tuesdays 1st, 8th and 15th April 2014 at 2pm to 4pm
Tuesdays 6th (10am-12pm) and 27th May 2014 (2pm-4pm)
Tuesday 3rd June 2014, 10am-12pm

Survey 2014 Raffle Winner!

Congratulations to Hassatu Kamara, our lucky winner of £50 Argos voucher. We also take this opportunity to thank the parents who sent us their survey forms back. The findings will be published in the annual review in May 2014.
Southwark Libraries’ Creative Writing Challenge

From 1 March to 15 June 2014 Southwark Libraries will run the ‘Young Peacemakers Book Challenge’. This First World War commemorative activity will challenge children and young people age 7 to 17 years to write a short story, poem or letter around themes of peace related to the First World War.

The best 40 stories, poems and letters will appear in a book published by Scholastic Press called the ‘Southwark Young Peacemakers Book.’

To engage and inspire children they will hold creative writing workshops in libraries, including intergenerational sessions with local school children and elderly citizens. A multisensory storytelling session with stories about friendship will be held for children with special needs.

Multi-sensory story telling sessions

Multi-sensory storytelling session using Bag Books will be held in Peckham Library. Bag Books are story sacks with manufactured tactile story props. Library staff are specially trained to use bag books with special needs children. The stories will be on the theme of friendship.

Venue: Peckham Library
Date: Saturday 12 April 2014
Time: 2pm to 3pm

For more information on both the activities above, please call Elaine Walters on 020 7525 3889.

Jumble Sale

Come and join them on Saturday 22nd March at 3.30 to 5.30 pm.

Half Moon Lane Church
155 Half Moon Lane
Herne Hill SE24 9HU

Proceeds will go towards funding the events they do for families such as the annual Christmas party, adventure playground fun day and speaker events.

Autism Support Group

A daytime and an evening support group for parents and carers of ALL children with an ASC (Autistic Spectrum Condition).

Evening Support Groups

Where: Crooked Well Pub
16 Grove Lane, Camberwell SE5 8SY
7.30 - 9.30pm.

When: Mondays at 7.30 to 9.30
14th April, 12th May, 9th June, and 14th July.

Daytime Support Groups

Where: Alfred Salter Primary School,
Quebec Way, Rotherhithe, SE16 7LP

When: Fridays, 10.00 to 12.00 pm
28th March, 25th April, 16th May, 28th June, and 18th July.

To book, please call:
Tel: 07747 768 536
Email: southwark@nas.org.uk
About Contact a Family

Across the UK, a child is diagnosed with a severe disability every 25 minutes. While some children need hospital care, 98% of disabled children live at home with a parent or other family member who may not have expected to be in this position, but who quickly has to become an expert.

When parents find out their child is disabled, they feel isolated and alone, usually because they don’t know anyone else facing the same problems. They want contact with another family that has been through a similar experience and they want information about their child’s disability.

Contact a Family is the only UK-wide charity providing advice, information and support to the parents of all disabled children, no matter what their disability or health condition. We also enable parents to get in contact with other families, both on a local and national basis. Each year we reach at least 340,000 families.

the helpline
freephone: 0808 808 3555
9:30am–5:00pm, Monday to Friday

for information: on disabilities and medical conditions
for advice: on assessments, breaks, benefits and finances
for signposting: to support groups, organisations and services
for linking: to other families
for listening

Contact a Family
Southwark
Cambridge House
1 Addington Square
London SE5 0HF
tel: 020 7358 7799
southwark.office@cafamily.org.uk

registered office:
209–211 City Road
London EC1V 1JN
helpline: 0808 808 3555
www.cafamily.org.uk
reg. charity number: 284912
charity registered in Scotland, no: SC039169
company no: 1633333

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Awards for All
BLF Family Learning
Help a London Child
Happy Days
Park Life Café in Burgess Park
Peter Minet Trust
Southwark Council
Sunshine House
Wakefield and Tetley Trust

our fantastic volunteers and session worker for helping to make our events programme such a success

Data protection: Contact a Family 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.