

# newsandviews

Wakefield Information Network

Issue 5 Christmas 2010



## Disabled Childrens Access To Childcare

Wakefield Council have commissioned KIDS to deliver the Disabled Childrens Access To Childcare, (DCATCH), project. The main aim of this project is to increase the confidence parents of disabled children have in the mainstream childcare locally available to them.

DCATCH is available to disabled children aged 3 to 14, whose parents are; in work or education, looking for work or training courses, or thinking about entering into either work or education.

Through the DCATCH project, KIDS will support childcare settings and childminders to include disabled children and young people within their provision. This will be done by offering training on inclusion, providing access and support to KIDS E-learning package and by visiting settings to help them overcome any additional barriers specific to each provider.

KIDS E-learning package has been mapped to meet the National Minimum Standards for Domiciliary Care, Play and Youth Work. The training is available, **free of charge**, to any setting, parent or professional in the Wakefield District. You only need a valid E-mail address to be able to access it.



Who wants a free childcare place?

To support families to try childcare, Wakefield Council will be providing **free childcare** taster sessions. The vouchers for these sessions will be administered by KIDS. This will provide the families and young people with a taster of the childcare available to them.

The DCATCH project will enable families and disabled children to access local mainstream childcare. This will be done by providing the setting with short term sessional staff, who will support the existing work force to include disabled children.

KIDS are working in partnership with providers and other professionals to set up an Inclusion KITE mark. The KITE mark will indicate those settings that are participating in the DCATCH project and are working towards inclusive practices within their provision.



No its not the Fantastic Four or Charlie's Angels, its the dynamic DCATCH Team

Kids would like to thank all parents who completed the Childcare sufficiency questionnaire for Wakefield's childcare marketing development team.

For further information on the Dcatch project, how to get free taster sessions, or KIDS E-learning please contact **Siobhan O'Connor**.

Call: 01924 379015

E-mail: [siobhan.o'connor@kids.org.uk](mailto:siobhan.o'connor@kids.org.uk)



# Wakefield CAPS

Wakefield Children's Advocacy and Participation Service (CAPS), is provided by Barnardo's with additional funding from Wakefield Council.



BELIEVE IN CHILDREN

What the service does.

- \* Advocacy is open to any young person who is in foster care or in receipt of short breaks or overnight respite care and aged 0–19 years old.
- \* Support and advice through the complaints procedure, to include care leavers up to the age of 21.
- \* Provide information on children's rights.
- \* Exit interviews, (gathers views from young people about their placements after they leave).
- \* Independent visitors service, (befrienders to children and young people who don't have regular contact with adults, apart from professionals).
- \* Peer mentoring and befriending, (young people who have been in care and are trained to support those currently in care).
- \* Young people's involvement in training and recruitment.



Have your child's voice and opinions been heard in meetings and decisions? Are there times when different people think different things would be best for your son or daughter? Would you like someone independent to support your child to have a voice in decision making, however big or small? If so Wakefield CAPS might be able to help.

Ring the team on **01977 722020** to make a referral.

## 2010 Junior Deaf Athletics Championships

On the 24th June, the Wakefield Service for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Children again took a group of 26 children to the 2010 Junior Deaf Athletics Championships. The event, involving both track and field sports, is staged every year and this year was held at the Costello Stadium in Hull.

The group was made up of deaf children from the Service for Deaf and Hearing Impaired Resource bases at the Rookeries J&I School and Castleford High School, as well as others from mainstream primary and secondary schools, who the service support. As well as being a sports event, the day is intended to provide opportunities for deaf students to meet and socialise with their peers, both from across our region and also from other neighbouring local authorities and deaf schools.



Everyone had a very enjoyable, relaxed day and the children made the most of their opportunities to socialise and make new friends, as well as meeting up with those made in previous years. All the children tried their best in the sports events and performed very well, bringing back a total of 17 medals (7 gold, 8 silver and 2 bronze). Well done!

We would like to thank the Federation of Disability Sports Organisations for organising the event and Wakefield Deaf Club and Wakefield Council, who were able to fund the transport through Aiming High.

# Social Finance

Caring for a disabled child is expensive and can make it hard to manage your finances. Would you like a helping hand?

Social Finance, (a non-profit organisation), is working with the Family Fund to help families with disabled children to access:

- \* Benefits checking
- \* Debt counselling
- \* Fixed fee bank accounts
- \* Unsecured loans



For more information visit: <http://www.familyfinance.org.uk/web/kids.htm>

## National Autistic Society 1 Day Help! Programme

The help! programme provides support for parents and carers of school aged children, aged between 3 and 12 years who have a diagnosis of an Autistic Spectrum Disorder. The programme provides basic information on the following:-An overview of Autistic Spectrum Disorders, tips for communication, education and your rights, services and your rights, benefits and your rights.

The event is being held on **Thursday 13th January 2011** at **Concord Sports Centre, Shiregreen Lane, Shiregreen, Sheffield, S5 6AE**, from **9:30 am** until **3:00 pm**.

Places for parents are **free**.



For further information contact **Jan Fuller** on **0191 5680732** or **Wendy l'Anson** on **0191 5680731**

## New football team for children with learning disabilities

Pontefract Pirates, a well established team for older people with disabilities, have set up a football team for children aged 8 to 16.

The team is being run by Trevor Waddington, a Special Olympics coach who has links to the FA. He hopes to arrange some matches once the team is established. The team is open to boys and girls with learning disabilities, but not their siblings.

Sessions run on Sunday mornings from 11am until 12pm at **Pontefract Collieries Football Club, Beechnut Lane, Pontefract, WF8 4QE**.



For more information visit: [www.pontecolls.co.uk](http://www.pontecolls.co.uk) or contact Trevor Waddington on **07825 418999**

# KIDS Halloween Party

On the misty evening of Wednesday the 27th of October, numerous brave families ventured to a creepy castle in Hemsworth, (The Platform 1 Youth Hub). Once inside and away from the storm, the families encountered the creepy KIDS team and were subjected to a truly memorable Halloween Party.

There were plenty of scary decorations and play-things, including a giant Pumpkin and spooky Sensory Den. A horrific Halloween buffet was on offer, including treats such as Orc toes and Bat Wings. In addition the devilish DJ played a selection of tunes to get everyone in the mood for a fright, before the evening's big finale....



Welcome to our den



A hauntingly good time was had by one & all

Two horrifying Pinata's were presented to all the boils and ghouls in attendance and under the watchful gaze of the skeleton pirate they were all invited to pull a magic string and try to open the treasure chest. When the Pinata's did open they released a whole host of scary goodies, including rubber skeletons, Bat Whistles and Spider Rings.

When the night was over all of the mummies, (daddies and other family members as well), returned to their tombs, (homes), and the clean-up crew moved in to sweep up all evidence of the ghostly goings on. As the gates were locked, eerie laughter could still be heard coming from the building.....

This event was open to members of Wakefield's Information Network and families supported by KIDS. The event was funded by Wakefield Council through an Aiming High Grant.



The KIDS team decided not to go in costume.

We look forward to welcoming you to future events.

## Ridings Shopping Centre Disabled Changing Facility

The disabled changing facilities have been refurbished and improved at the Ridings Shopping Centre.

Working in partnership with the centre, Wakefield Council, through the Aiming High for Disabled Children Grant, has funded the refurbishment to the facilities, which are located in the blue car park. New features have been introduced to help parents and carers, including an overhead tracking hoist and height adjustable changing bench.

All of the improvements meet Changing Places standards, a national campaign to improve toilet facilities for disabled people.



The new changing facilities at the Ridings.

For more information on the Changing Places campaign visit: [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

# Star House

## A brand new short break centre for disabled children

In January 2011 the short break services provided by Wakefield District Health Care Service, at both Rainbow House and Rose Garth, are moving to a brand new purpose-built centre at Purston Jaglin next to Purston Park.

Work on the centre is nearing completion, (see picture on the right), and after consultation with children and families, 'Star House' was chosen as the name of the new unit. Star House is being built to meet the needs of all the children who currently use either of the existing services. There will be seven bedrooms in all, four with ceiling tracking for children who need to use hoists for transfers.

There will be two lounges, one with tracking hoist facilities. There is also a communal dining/activity area, although space within the lounges is available for children who would prefer to dine or do activities there.



A masterpiece in progress  
Star House, coming soon

Star House also has a sensory room, soft play room, computer room, sensory garden and a huge garden with paths around woodland, outdoor play equipment, an all-weather play surface and a vegetable garden. Star House will be staffed by the teams who currently work at Rosegarth and Rainbow House.

An open day for parents and carers and also tea visits for all the children will be arranged at Star House prior to opening for overnight stays. There are also plans to invite the local community and professionals who work with the children in to have a look around.

## Full Body & The Voice Youth Theatre



The Full Body & The Voice youth theatre welcomes people with learning disabilities who enjoy performing and making new friends!

FB&TV is a registered charity and an organisation regularly funded by the Arts council. Our resident company of actors with learning disabilities work in FB&TV's own high profile touring productions, in co-productions with other leading theatre companies and in film and TV.



Could you be the  
next Brad Pitt  
or Angelina Jolie?

FB&TV also delivers youth theatre sessions to young people on a weekly basis. This community aspect of the company's work enables people from the ages of 11+ to benefit from FB&TV's experience and ethos as a producing theatre company.

Youth theatre meets every **Monday night** at the **Lawrence Batley Theatre, Huddersfield** from **6:30pm to 8:30pm**, and at **Dewsbury Minster** every **Wednesday** from **6:30pm to 8:30pm**. Places are available for anyone with a learning disability aged between 11-18 years old, who has a desire to learn new skills and perform.

If you are interested in joining please contact Sally on **01484 484441** or E-mail [sally.marshall@fullbody.org.uk](mailto:sally.marshall@fullbody.org.uk) to discuss a trial session

# Aiming High Update

Aiming High for Disabled Children, (2008-2011), was the last government's transformation programme for disabled children. It came with extra funding, particularly for short breaks. Using this funding, Wakefield has been able to offer a wider range of short breaks to more children. For instance from 2009-2010, 112 more children got a break/activity compared to the previous year (323 to 435). Including children who took part in play schemes, holiday activities and the family breaks funded by the 'Grants and Family activities' scheme, this number has already increased to 661.

## Listening To Parents:

Wakefield's Aiming High Short Breaks' Delivery Plan was developed in 2008. It was developed by listening to parents and young people. For instance, the 'Where this Weekend?' project was the result of young people telling us they wanted breaks "at the seaside" or "activity centres" rather than in overnight residential units. Equally, Family Link was set up because parents told us they sometimes needed support to go out 'as a family' and extra funding was directed at holiday activities because parents told us that this was really important. An extra week's holiday scheme was also put on for young people over the age of 14 years, because feedback from parents was that pressures increase as young people get older.

(For more information about how Wakefield listens to parents see the '**You Said, We did**' document available at [www.wakefieldfis.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldfis.org.uk))

## A Legacy For The Future:

Although it is acknowledged that some young people will always need more specialist support, an important strand of the Aiming High programme in Wakefield has been the number of initiatives aimed at increasing the skills of the whole of the children's workforce. In this way, staff in universal settings will be more able and more confident to support disabled children and young people in mainstream settings. For instance:

- 31 children enjoyed summer activities at playschemes organised for under 5s at one of three Children's centres (Pinmoor, Little Owls in South Kirkby and Airedale). As well as providing the children with a fun week, the schemes have also left staff at Children's Centres feeling more skilled and confident enough to include disabled children in all of their activities and future play schemes.
- Inclusion Champions have been funded in the Youth Development Support Service. Their remit has been to encourage disabled young people to attend mainstream youth clubs and to support staff so they are confident enough to include them.
- The 'Get Started' project run by Barnardo's, works to support leisure providers/ clubs so they include disabled children in activities in their local communities.

The funding allocated to this strand of the Aiming High Programme, just in the three initiatives described above, has led to 83 children and young people being included in mainstream settings since April 2010. Perhaps even more important is the legacy this will leave in the future; disabled children and young people being included in universal settings as 'everyday business'.

More Aiming High news in the next issue!



# The Bradbury Centre & iMuse

The Bradbury Centre houses a purpose-built hydrotherapy pool with sensory lighting and sound, where children and young people enjoy convenient access to hydrotherapy as well as rebound therapy



Swims = smiles



The Bradbury Centre,  
home of the  
hydrotherapy pool



I've heard of Rainbow  
Carp but Rainbow  
Dolphins?

Opened in 2006, the centre offers a large pool (10m x 5m), spa pool and dry activity hall set up with a trampoline for rebound therapy. This facility is open daily including weekends, and is used by all the young people who are cared for by Hollybank Trust. We also hire the facility to some external groups.

## iMUSE

News and Views is always happy to hear about new ideas and innovations for disabled children and was interested to hear about the iMUSE project at Hollybank Trust. Hollybank Trust provides education and care for children, young people and adults with complex disabilities and medical needs. Hollybank is a Specialist SEN provision for physical and sensory needs and this drives a vision to empower their students to become active communicators and creative learners, despite their profound needs.

In the past Hollybank have used 'Soundbeam' to enable students to create and manipulate sounds and to compose individual and group pieces, with adult support. They have also used 'G-force', with the aid of a microphone, to enable students, who cannot hold a paintbrush or take part in traditional art activities, to paint with sound.

More recently Hollybank have innovatively taken the use of Soundbeam and G-force from the classroom setting and have created a specialist iMUSE environment in which a combination of both musical and visual effects are created by the movements and sounds of the students. This has been further personalised using low frequency sound to reduce pain, stress and anxiety, thereby freeing learners to think, communicate and learn independently.



Service users show off their  
creative talents using iMUSE



iMUSE sessions are an interactive music, sound, visual and vibration stimulation experience, tailored to the individual needs of the person. Vibroacoustic therapy is a technique in which a combination of two different sounds are played to the person through a Sound box, whilst sitting in their wheelchair or out on a positioning bag. This will include low frequency sine tones that stimulate and relax the body.

Individual 20-40 minute person centred sessions are used to enable students to progress from being passive to active and ultimately creative learners. iMUSE celebrates the participants' movements and sounds and gives them ownership of their work. This is a great achievement for learners at Hollybank, as their experiences are often very limited due to the complexity of their disabilities and medical needs.

For more information contact the **Bradbury Centre** direct on **01924 483916**.

For further information about iMuse contact **Stewart Geddes** on **01924 490833**.

To tell us about other innovations for future editions of News and Views please contact **Omar Shefta** on **01924 379015** or E-mail **omar.shefta@kids.org.uk**

# The Inclusion Champions

We are the Inclusion Champions and are based in the various Youth Hubs across the Wakefield District. Our principal aim is to increase the number of disabled young people accessing mainstream youth development and support services. We have made good progress so far, with young people accessing a range of our youth centres and projects. Examples of our work include:

Young people enjoyed a five day Art project. A partnership between the YDSS and the National Coal Mining Museum, where they worked alongside a professional artist creating work for an art exhibition which is currently on display at the NCM museum.



I've been informed that these champions are not the Inclusion Champions

One young person is now attending Chesneys Youth Centre and also taking part in the Five Towns' "Involving Young People" Project Youth Parliament. This initiative is benefitting staff and young people by developing their political awareness.

In July we had three young people involved in the Master Chef project, which culminated in two female service users competing in the final for the Young Master Chef of Wakefield title. Held at Wakefield indoor market on the 17th of September, it was a close, hard fought contest with the girls narrowly beaten into second place. Despite this they had a great day full of mixed emotions including nervousness and excitement.

Through the Aiming High programme, our Inclusion Champions were able to work in partnership with the Deaf and Hearing Impaired Team. The aim was to promote mainstream Youth Clubs and the Wakefield Deaf Club and give the young people an opportunity to see for themselves what is available to them.

During the day the young people enjoyed various activities including access to computers, playing on the Wii, Table Tennis, Pool and Arts and crafts. Sports Development workers were on hand to provide demonstrations of Boxing, exercise and anger management. The Five Towns' Master Chef project provided a Healthy Lunch of Chilli Con Carne and Fresh Fruit.

In addition to learning about mainstream clubs there were also displays giving examples of other projects young people could get involved in, which included amongst others the Vole Project. This project provides an opportunity to introduce Water Voles back into the local environment and their habitat.

We have received a lot of positive feedback about the day and the following week City Limits welcomed some new members, (although they were disappointed not to find Chilli Con Carne on the menu).



Never mind if it wasn't on the menu, here's a tasty reminder on me

If you are interested in finding out more information about any of the above or want to know where your nearest youth centre or project is please contact us directly. We can arrange to meet you at home to discuss things or can support you in a visit to a club or project you are interested in.

Contact **Mary Harper** at the Five Towns Hub on **01977 723185**, or at the South East Hub on **01977 723165** or E-mail **maryharper@wakefield.gov.uk**. Alternatively you can contact **Tahera Khanum-Johnson** at the City Limits Hub on **01924 303600**.

## Family Activities Grant

There is still a little bit of money available from this grant, but you'll have to act fast as the funding must be used by March. Families can claim up to £200 depending on the child's age and groups can claim up to £5000

For more information contact Alison Clark on **01924 379015** or E-mail **Aiminghg@kids.org.uk**

# Donna's Dream House

The Donna's Dream House Charity in Blackpool is a locally based trust providing free holiday experiences for children and teenagers with life-threatening illnesses and their families, and for recently bereaved siblings and their families.

Donna Curtis had just turned 20 when she passed away. She had spent her last four years fighting cancer. In that time Donna saw the suffering of many terminally ill children and vowed her legacy would help them live a little more happily in the time they had left. Her parents, Len and Barbara Curtis, have made it their labour of love to fulfil their only daughter's fairytale dream.

The house consists of four family apartments, all with themed rooms for absolute escapism. Themes include Winnie the Pooh's Den, Cartoon World, Teddy Bear World and a Tangerine Room decked out with Blackpool Football Club merchandise. All the guests are invited to enjoy the decor of the communal rooms. These include a circus room complete with a steam train encircling the ceiling and a wonderful Disney room full of fantastic teddies, soft toys and murals. Families visiting the house also receive a pack of tickets for the Tower, the Sealife Centre, Tussards, Blackpool Zoo, the Model Village, Mermaid Cafe and more, all kindly donated by the town's businesses.

As well as each family having their own 'apartment', there is a fabulous garden area to the rear of the house. The Dream House encourages and sparks the imagination. It's how any child would imagine the perfect holiday to be. It's full of light, laughter, fun and most importantly life. This magical environment allows families to share precious moments and enjoy each day together as a gift.

Thanks to the generosity of many people and organisations, guests at Donna's Dream House will be having even more fun. Earlier this year a new 12-seater cinema was opened, adding to the existing hot tub and sauna. A real-live fairy horse and carriage calls in from time to time, taking the younger visitors on a short tour of Blackpool.



You can see from the outside that this is a very special house



The Carousel is just one of the many special features in the house

Families from the Wakefield District have already enjoyed a magical stay at Donna's Dream House. To find out more visit [www.donnasdreamhouse.co.uk](http://www.donnasdreamhouse.co.uk) or call 01253 752222.

## Netbuddy

Netbuddy is a new web site offering hundreds of simple, yet ingenious solutions to everyday issues encountered by parents, carers, teachers and therapists working with people with a learning disability. The website contains over 700 great tips from other parents, teachers and therapists, all of whom have experience of looking after people with learning disabilities.



For more information visit [www.netbuddy.org.uk](http://www.netbuddy.org.uk)

# Stay And Play Plus

This is a new support group for children under five who have additional needs or disabilities and their parents/carers. You will be given a warm welcome and the opportunity to have a chat to other parents while the children play in a stimulating environment.

The sessions run on **Monday** afternoons between **1pm and 2:30 pm**, at **Apple Tree Children's Centre, Shepsty Road, Horbury, WF4 5BE**.



For more information contact **Karen Black** on **07525 731689** or **Maureen Bradley** on **07525 731910**

## New Training Opportunity For Parents

### Developing Parental Confidence at Special Educational Needs Statement Annual Review Meetings

Through recent feedback at The Parents in Partnership Forum and in one-to-one meetings with parents we have been reminded that some parents are not very confident about attending Annual Review meetings.

To help parents through this we have put together a short training session about:

- developing parental confidence at Annual Reviews
- considering how parents can contribute to them more effectively

The sessions will also briefly look at person centred reviews and transition reviews. There will be lots of opportunities for parents to talk to other parents and share their experiences.

We hope to hold the first sessions some time in January 2011. If you are interested in taking part please call The **Parent Partnership Service** on **0800 5878042** or E-mail **parentpartnership@wakefield.gov.uk**

## Families Information Service

Don't forget that there is lots of useful information available from Wakefield's Families Information Service. The "Disabled Children, Young People and their Families" pages are constantly being updated and feature many useful links and pieces of information.

**Wakefield District  
Families Information  
Service**

Details of services in the District, previous issues of News & Views, service access guidance and an extra detailed version of Starting Point are all available on the website. In addition details of forthcoming events by The Parents Reference Group and WeSail are also listed.

Be sure to keep visiting [www.wakefieldfis.org.uk/Disabled/Default.htm](http://www.wakefieldfis.org.uk/Disabled/Default.htm)



# Wakefield Parents' Reference Group



Wakefield Parents' Reference group is looking for parents and carers to join the group. Our aims are to explore special educational needs, disability issues and mutual areas of concern. We aim to be a leading consultative group for all parents of disabled children living in the Wakefield and District. The group provides an opportunity for direct discussion that improves the knowledge and understanding of all partners to inform future policy and practice.

We hope to establish and develop good partnership relationships between parents, the local authority and related services. In the last 3 years we have held many events, the Eid Masti event at the end of last month and also the Parents' conference in March in 2010. These events were funded by the Parent Participation Grant, as part of Aiming High. We aim to be holding another conference in the beginning of 2011 and would like parents to get involved in the steering group for this event, so that we can make it as successful as possible by having speakers that parents would like. If you would like to attend these steering group meetings please get in touch by using the contact details below.

The next regular Parent's Reference group meeting is being held at Castleford and Normanton District Hospital on the 20th January 2011, from 11am until 1pm.

If you wish to attend any of these meetings or would like any further information, please contact **Emma Jukes** on **01924 305544/ 07818 514550** or E-mail **emmaj@carerswakefield.org.uk**

## Eid Masti

On Monday 29th of November Wakefield's Parents' Reference Group hosted their first Eid Masti event. The event was open to families of disabled children throughout the district and proved to be extremely popular, with an excellent turnout despite the freezing weather.

Parents from the Parents Reference Group and staff from Wakefield Council, Pinmoor Children's Centre, Carers Wakefield, WeSail and Wakefield PCT were all on hand to ensure the event ran smoothly and a good time was had by one and all. There were a range of activities on offer, including games, Henna Painting and a fantastic Bollywood Dance workshop. In addition food was on offer, including Curry, Rice and Samosas and also Sandwiches for those less inclined towards spices.



Bust a move Bollywood style

The event also provided an excellent opportunity for families to find out about the range of services available in the district, with information stalls from Carers, The Health Trainers and the Parents Partnership.

Stay tuned to News and Views for details of further events.

## Wakefield & District Down's Syndrome Support Group

2010 saw the 10th anniversary of the formation of Wakefield and District Down's Syndrome Support Group. Formed in 2000 by a small group of new mums, it has grown into an established local community group that regularly provides events and activities for people with Down's Syndrome and their families.

The core of the group's activities is the monthly Saturday Club, held between 10am and 12pm on the first Saturday of each month, at Sunbeam Childrens Centre in Lupset. The group is currently looking at expanding the activities provided, in order to include older children and teenagers.

To coincide with the 10th anniversary the group launched a new website, which provides up to date information on the group and their activities, (including details of the groups Facebook site), as well as general information and links to other relevant websites.

Visit the website at [www.downsyndrome-wakefield.co.uk](http://www.downsyndrome-wakefield.co.uk) or contact **Amanda Courtman** on **07956 869952** for more information.

# Focus on... Martin Mullen Autism Navigator

I am a qualified social worker who has been seconded for a year to specifically work with people who have a diagnosis of autism/ aspergers, who neither have a learning disability or mental health problem. I take referrals from social care direct which may have been received from GP's or other professionals.

I carry out assessments to determine need and may signpost people on to other services, depending upon the issue/ problem. Even though I may signpost the person on to another service, I will continue to work with the individual and their family as a source of support and information.

Another very important part of my role is to assist in the development of the local autism strategy. This is in direct response to the Autism Act 2009 and the Autism Strategy: 'fulfilling and rewarding lives', which is the guidance that came from the Department of Health. This document is still in draft and is expected go live later this month.

Presently I am working on looking at the pathway to diagnosis and the care pathway from diagnosis. This is a very important and large piece of work. We are aiming locally to produce a protocol as to what the pathway to diagnosis of autistic spectrum conditions should look like and the care pathway from diagnosis. I am working closely with professionals from the PCT and public health.

For more information contact **Martin Mullen**, Autism Navigator on **01924 303570**.

The work of the Autism Navigator is part of the Autism Delivery Group, who report back to Wakefield Learning Disability Partnership Board. For more information visit [www.wakefieldldpb.org.uk](http://www.wakefieldldpb.org.uk)

## The Right To A Short Break

### Legal right to short breaks for disabled children to be approved by Parliament

On the 19th of November 2010 the Government asked Parliament to approve Regulations on Breaks for Carers of Disabled Children. From April 2011, the regulations will place a duty on local authorities to prepare a statement for carers on what services will be available in local areas and what criteria they will be accessed by.

Short breaks allow parents of disabled children to carry out day to day tasks that other parents take for granted. Crucially, they also give disabled children and young people opportunities to access positive activities, independently of their families. The draft regulations state that local authorities must provide a range of services for disabled children, both within and outside the home and in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays.

The new regulations state that by 1st October 2011 local authorities must publish a statement for carers in their area setting out:

- \* Details of the range of short breaks services provided.
- \* Any criteria against which eligibility for services will be assessed.
- \* How the range of services is designed to meet the needs of carers in their area.

When preparing or revising this short breaks statement, the local authority must have regard to the views of carers in their area.

Wakefield Council has already published an "**Access Guidance**" document, this is available on the website [www.wakefieldfis.org.uk/Disabled/Default.htm](http://www.wakefieldfis.org.uk/Disabled/Default.htm) in the **related downloads** section.