

newsandviews

Wakefield Information Network

Issue 8 Autumn 2011

Childcare Information Pack available now

A new publication from KIDS, produced in conjunction with Wakefield Council is now available to families. This pack was developed by KIDS as part of the Disabled Childrens Access to Childcare, (DCATCH), project. Further support and input came from Wakefield Council Educational Psychology Service, Wakefield Family Information Service and Wakefield Council Childcare and Marketing Development Team.



Say Childcare Information Pack!

The pack is the final offering from the DCATCH project, which came about through the Childcare Act of 2006 and highlighted the need for childcare which met the requirements of parents, as well as those of the child. The DCATCH project also established a Kite Mark, which has been awarded to Childcare providers who demonstrate good 'inclusive' practice. Further Kite Mark training will be offered in the near future.

Each Childcare Information pack contains two booklets, "Simply Childcare Whats Out There?" and "Childcare: Your Rights And Entitlements". The Simply Childcare booklet details the different types of childcare that are available, including Childminders, Nurseries and Wraparound Care. It also contains useful information like "Things to consider when accessing childcare", questions to ask providers and a useful contacts section.



The Kite Mark
Your assurance
of quality

Given the current economic climate, the "Childcare: Your Rights And Entitlements" booklet proves to be a very useful tool. The document lists a variety of entitlements that families may be able to receive and how to go about claiming them. There's also information about ways in which employers may be able to assist with childcare.

Childcare has proven a very valuable service to a number of families in the District. Here is what one family had to say. "Tom loves going to holiday club, he always seems very happy going there. The setting are very good in giving him lots of sensory activities which he really needs and lots of very active experiences which help with his ADHD. We don't know what we would do without the service, it is vital to our health and well being."

A Simply Childcare event is being held on **Monday 3rd October at Chesneys Resource Centre, Regent Street, Featherstone, WF7 5EW**, from **10am-12pm**. Here you will be able to get a copy of the Childcare Information Pack and find useful & relevant information.

To request a copy of the Childcare Information pack, please contact KIDS Inclusion Service.

Call: 01924 299488

E-mail: wakefield@kids.org.uk



Barnardo's Get Started Inclusion Team

At Barnardo's Get Started Inclusion Team we aim to increase the skills of leisure providers to enable them to include 5-19 year olds with a disability or additional need in a weekly activity of their choice. The service is funded by and works in partnership with Wakefield Council.

How can I access the service?

- You must be between the ages of 5 and your 19th birthday
- You must live in the Wakefield and five towns area
- The group must be a regular weekly service activity with group leaders who we can train so that they can continue to support you without additional help
- Parents/carers can refer to the service, as can children and young people
- If other agencies or professionals are involved with families then they can also refer on the parent/carers behalf by completing a common assessment framework or other relevant assessment

Some groups that children have been supported in previously include; uniformed groups such as Brownies, Boys Brigade, Cubs etc, out of school clubs, dancing, St Johns Ambulance first aid cadets, sporting clubs and music groups. Unfortunately the Get Started team cannot offer transport. If however transport is a problem, please talk to the project worker who may be able to give you information or direct you to other services that may be able to help.

We want the child to become as independent as possible, so the role of the project worker is to encourage the group leaders to help the child so they become used to their needs. After 8 sessions at the group the project worker will meet with the family and group leaders to review how the sessions have gone. By this time we would expect the child to be settled into the group and look at withdrawing support if the child has settled really well. If it looks like the child will need some further help at the group then we would look at matching a Get Started Volunteer who will do up to a further 8 sessions.

There is no cost to families for the service, although they will have to pay for any activity costs or snacks. For more information contact us at **The Constance Green Centre, 24 Cheapside, Wakefield, WF1 2TF**, or telephone: **01924 239250**.



Havercroft Children's Centre Parent Support Group



This group supports parents of children with additional needs. The aims of the group are to provide an opportunity to talk to other parents and carers, offer access to information about services and provision within Wakefield Council.

Each meeting focuses on a particular topic of interest. These can range from education issues, to understanding behaviour and daily living. These topics reflect the needs identified by parents and carers. Attendees are encouraged to suggest topics relevant to them for future meetings.

There is also access to a "Parent Library", which offers wide range of books available for parents and carers. Guest speakers can also be invited to talk about their service and answer questions.

Meetings are held on the **first Tuesday of each month**, from **1pm to 2:30pm**.

For more information contact **Havercroft Children's Centre, Cow Lane, Havercroft, Wakefield, WF4 2BE**, Telephone: **01226 726478** or E-mail: **cc@havercroft.wakefield.sch.uk**

Face 2 Face Befriending Service

Face 2 Face is a free and confidential online and telephone befriending service. We link parents of disabled children with parent befrienders. It can be challenging to learn your child has additional support needs, but remember that other parents have been there too. Talking to someone who understands can help you to move forward, be reassured and enable you to make positive adjustments.

This is where Face 2 Face can help. We have a network of trained, volunteer parent befrienders who support you to successfully navigate through the worrying and confusing experience of having a child newly diagnosed with additional needs. Every Face 2 Face befriender is a parent of a disabled child too. They understand and know how to offer friendly and practical support.

“It was the first time I had really opened up. I’d been putting on a brave face.” Said one user who has benefitted from the service. Online befriending enables you to talk about your experiences on the phone or E-mail. We also have over 60 schemes nationally where befrienders can meet up in person. For more information contact Scope on **0844 8009189** or visit www.scope.org.uk/face2face.



The Internet, useful for more than just Facebook!

Logically Illogical

INFORMATION AND INSIGHT INTO AUTISM

Ros Blackburn is an adult with autism. At three months old she appeared withdrawn, isolated and very much in a world of her own. At eighteen months she was diagnosed very severely autistic but with average intellectual ability. Now at 42 Ros lectures nationally and internationally giving insight into her own experiences and the care and education practices she has observed. Ros displays great courage, (and a strong sense of humour), in facing her fears and tackling life’s challenges.



Ros Blackburn in action

In this talk Ros will draw on her experience of living with severe Autism and her considerable understanding as a recipient of services and increasingly as an observer of education and care approaches. Ros brings a perspective that is unique and yet speaks to all her audience; people with an autistic spectrum disorder, carers, families, educators and the planners/ providers of these services. Ros tells it ‘as it is’. She describes the approach taken by her parents to give her what she now describes as the ‘vener of social competence’ that

enables her to engage in a still largely autism-unfriendly world. She explores with humour and passion the ‘mistakes’ from which she has had to learn and some of her coping strategies.

From these she is able to offer helpful advice on practical strategies, (and even more helpful advice on what not to do). She does not advocate any one approach except that we should remember that people with ASD are people too and that ‘common sense’ should apply. In a quote from her mother, Ros pleads that one should ‘never make autism the excuse, but help the person overcome the problems caused by it’. Finally, it is Ros’ wish that all those who attend her talks find them helpful and informative but above all that the experience is entertaining and full of fun.

The talks are being held on **Thursday 6th October 2011** at **Sandal Endowed School, Barnsley Road, Wakefield, WF2 6AS**, from **1:15pm-3pm** and then repeated from **4pm -6pm**.

Both sessions are open to all but Ros hopes to tailor the first session to parents, carers and support staff. The cost is **£5** for parents and carers and **£10** for professionals.

To book a place contact the school on **01924 303525** or E-mail lcarter@sandal.wakefield.sch.uk

Konfidence In The Water

Any parent or carer will know how important it is that their child feels confident when they are taken to the swimming pool, or taken into the sea on a family holiday. There are a number of aids that can be used when in the local swimming pool. Alternatively families might opt to buy a swimming jacket for their child, however these can vary in price from the inexpensive through to very expensive. Any swimming teacher will tell you that the cheaper jackets, whilst appearing to offer support in the water, are often not adjustable and can hinder the child's movements in the water.



Confidence in the water at the CP Sport/Able2 Swimming Gala at Normanton in June 2011

A swimming jacket that is generally regarded as being one of the best designs and is recommended by specialist disability swimming teachers is the jacket manufactured by Konfidence. The Konfidence swim jacket comes in a number of sizes and can be adjusted according to the child's natural buoyancy. These jackets are understandably quite expensive but the Able2

Swim Club now have a selection of these jackets that can be loaned by parents and/or carers to use with their children in the swimming pool of their choice.

In addition the jackets can be loaned when a child starts swimming lessons with school. (Although this would have to be negotiated through the appointed swim teacher and the school.) They can also be borrowed when a family is going on holiday and would like to loan a jacket just for the period of their stay, regardless of whether the break is in this country or abroad. The stock of jackets is not restricted to children's sizes and there are a couple of larger jackets that will fit older teenagers or an adult. The smallest jackets are suitable for children aged 4 or 5, (17 – 21kg), whilst the largest will fit a medium adult, (38 – 42 inch).



The range of Konfidence Swim Jackets that are now available to loan

The jackets can be loaned by contacting **Steve Greatorex** at The Able2 Club on **01977 709576** or E-mailing: **greatorex_s@sky.com**. Parents and/or carers are also invited to make use of the Able 2 Swim session at **Featherstone Swimming Pool** in order to try out the jackets. This is held on **Thursday evenings** from **6:15pm-7:15pm**.

Mulberry Club



Is a specially created club for young people with physical and learning difficulties. Our experienced and well-qualified coaches deliver lots of multi-skills activities that are focused on; playing games and having fun, improving mobility skills, co-ordination and confidence, improving social skills and making new friends. We are based in a spacious and well-equipped Sports Hall. The Sports Centre also offers good accessible changing areas and a lounge area with refreshments, where parents and carers can relax during sessions.

The dates for this term are **3rd, 10th, 17th, 31st October, 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th November, 5th, 12th December**. Times are **6pm-7pm** for **7-11** year olds and **7pm-8pm** for **12-20** year olds. All sessions are held at **Havercroft and Ryhill Sports and Youth Centre, Off Mulberry Avenue, Havercroft, Wakefield, WF4 2BD** and cost just **£2.50** each time.

To register your child and for more information contact **Gail Tombs**, (club co-ordinator), on **07762 018136**, E-mail: **gailtombs@btinternet.com**, or visit **www.themulberryclub.org**

Information Network Update

Do we have your details up-to-date? Please call us on **01924 379015** if anything has changed, to enable us to keep everything current. Remember you can also call us on the above number for advice and information between the hours of **8:30AM** and **5PM**, **Monday** to **Friday**.

Children's Centres

Wakefield Children's Centres provide access to advice and support for parents/ carers and their families, from pregnancy right through to when your child becomes 5 years old.

Children's Centres bring all the different support agencies together to offer a range of services to meet you and your child's needs, all in one place. They're somewhere your child can make friends and learn as they play. Parents can access professional advice on health and family matters, learn about training and job opportunities or just socialise with other parents and carers.



The facilities at Acorn Children's Centre

Wakefield has 23 Children's Centres, one in each community, developed in line with the needs of the local area, so no one children's centre is the same. However all have a clear purpose, focused on offering young children the best start in life and helping them reach their potential.

Services include:

- Advice on your child's development to support them to be ready for school.
- Support for parents and carers, including parenting support and access to specialist services for the family.
- Child and family health services, including Midwifery and Health Visiting services.

For details of Children's Centres in your area contact WeSail on **01924 379015**.

Key Working Research Project



What have your Key Worker experiences been like?

KIDS is currently undertaking a national research project on behalf of the Department for Education, to look at developing a key working approach for children over 6. Information is being gathered from services in Wakefield who provide key working and KIDS would like to hear from parents about their views on key working. What is a Key Worker? A Key Worker acts as a co-ordination point for getting the right support in place, giving advice, information and emotional support to the parents to ensure that the help and support parents/ carers receive is well planned, coordinated and targeted to their child's specific needs.

KIDS would like to speak to families to get their views on key working for older children, up to and including those of transition age. They will be attending the **'Moving On Event'** in Wakefield on **14th October** at the new **Wakefield South East Training and Enterprise Centre**, in **South Kirkby** to speak to parents and young people to gain their views about how key working services for older children can be developed.

If you can't make the 'Moving on Event' or have a younger child but would still like to be involved then please contact **Katy Boyd-Wallis** at KIDS Hull office on **01482 467540** or E-mail: katy.boydwallis@kids.org.uk

Families Activities Grant

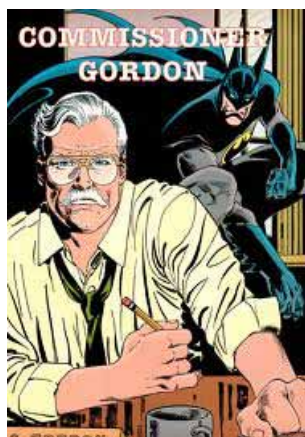
If you haven't applied for a Family Activity Grant this year you'd better get your skates on. A limited amount of funding was allocated to this project and is nearing exhaustion

Up to £150 or £200 can be claimed, depending upon the age of the child and the main qualifying criteria is that you are in receipt of DLA at either the middle or high rate care component.

So don't delay and risk missing out, apply today. Contact **WeSail** on **01924 379015** for an application form or more information.

Meet Andy Simpson

As promised last issue, we're pleased to introduce Andy Simpson who is the new Team Manager for Targeted and Specialist Children's Commissioning within Family Services at Wakefield Council.



Here's another famous commissioner. As if you needed reminding

I have been working in Children's Services in both the public and voluntary sectors for over ten years now. I am hugely passionate about this area of work and enjoy the concept of providing services that improve the lives of children, young people and families. I started my career in Hull, working on projects that supported vulnerable groups of young people to engage in positive activities like sport, leisure and cultural opportunities. I went on to manage a wide range of these types of projects, including projects that work with young people who have special educational needs and disabilities. I then went on to work in two other local authorities, focusing on different areas of children's services including childcare, extended schools and youth services

I joined Wakefield Council in April 2008 and have been predominantly working within the remit of Children's Commissioning and in particular within the remit of Youth Services. Since then I have been responsible for designing services that are commissioned with a combined value of over £20m. My current job role means that I am responsible for designing, commissioning, managing and evaluating a wide range of different services. This includes services for children within the looked after system, young people involved in alcohol and substance misuse and services for young people with SEN and disabilities.

With regard to SEN and disabled children, it is clear that we are working in times of significant change. There are huge changes proposed in emerging Government policies that will impact the way in which families with SEN and disabled children receive services from the public sector. There are also huge challenges to meet in terms of the current and future economic climate. I think that the key challenge for Wakefield Council as commissioners is to ensure that the services we respond to these policies with are not just services that align with the Government change in policy direction, but more importantly meet the needs of children and families locally. As such, I am committed to including children and young people, families and professionals in the commissioning of services that provide the right support to families at the times when they need them most.

I am looking forward to meeting more families for whom the services we commission are there to serve.

Merlin's Magic Wand

Merlin's Magic Wand has been set up by the Merlin Entertainments Group, ("Merlin"), to provide magical experiences at its attractions. We aim to give children who are seriously ill, disabled or disadvantaged the opportunity to enjoy attractions that they may otherwise not have been able to. These would primarily be at attractions within the Merlin Group, although other experiences relevant to the child's circumstances may also be considered.



We welcome applications on behalf of seriously ill, disabled or disadvantaged children, (aged 18 or under), who may benefit from an award. These applications can be made by EITHER parents/guardians of these children OR organisations which work with these children, (where the prime purpose of the organisation is not already aimed at providing days out or experiences). Children are eligible for one trip per calendar year. If your child has received a trip through Merlin's Magic Wand via an organisation/group or charity then unfortunately they would not be eligible for free tickets in the same year.

To check if you're eligible and to apply for an experience visit www.merlinsmagicwand.org

Unpaid Carers In A Material World

Following some fantastic feedback we got after her article in the last Newsletter, we're delighted to welcome Sharon King back for another guest article.

An Existential Crisis In A Material World

In today's ever more materialistic society, it seems that we are defined by our profession, by our possessions, by the way that we earn money and by how much money we earn. "Where do your children go to school?" "Whereabouts do you live?" "What do you do?" These questions all seem innocuous enough, but the deeper, (and yet more shallow), question that lies behind them is always the same, "What are you worth?"



In my early forties I now find myself an unpaid carer for my two youngest, severely disabled children. The "wage" for an unpaid carer is in the proximity of £50 per week, although if you ever find yourself in my position, caring for more than one disabled person, please do not expect this amount to double, or even to increase. Despite this poor reflection of my value in the world, I actually feel that my self-worth has increased. I am in no doubt that the quality of my children's lives would decrease sharply if I were to follow any financial ambition and not devote all of my daylight, (and twilight, and midnight, and small-hours-of-the-morning), hours to their care.

Unpaid Carers, the superheroes of the real world

"So...what do you do?" I may be asked at a social gathering. "Oh, you know," I will answer, none-committedly, "a bit of washing up, nappy changing, scrubbing wee-wee out of carpets, that kind of thing." I watch on as the previously interested person, eyes glazed with boredom, tries to quickly extract themselves from the uncomfortable chasm that the conversation has fallen into. Maybe I should have tried a more positive response...something like

"Actually, I'm a Super-Hero. I make the world go around. Even though I am invisible, I am absolutely vital to three very special people. I have permanently put to bed my hopes and dreams in order that I can make my children's lives comfortable, and in order that I can change the world in small ways to make future generations of people with disabilities more respected and more fairly treated in society".

Something tells me that I may be faced with a similar "someone save me from this mad woman," response. So am I worth £54.40 per week, or am I a superhero beyond material definition? The answer to the question, I think, can only be realistically answered by another Carer.

For more information about Sharon and her books visit www.sharonkingbooks.co.uk

ME2 Inclusive Youth Dance Company

Me2 is an inclusive youth dance company for young people aged 11-24, with and without disabilities, run by Leeds Mencap and MeshDance. We are currently looking for members to join this fantastic group. Whether you've danced before or not, we'd love to meet you!

You'll get to learn a fun new skill, meet some new people and take part in some very exciting performances at various events throughout the year. Numbers are limited so get in touch today!

Come and join us every **Friday** evening during **term time**, from the **16th of September**, at **Northern School of Contemporary Dance, Chapeltown Road, Leeds, LS7 4BH**, from **6:30pm-8pm**. The cost of each session is **£3**. For more information or to book a place please contact **Karen** on **07779 152574** or E-mail: meshdance@gmail.com



Will the new Ricky Martin please stand up

Able2 Update

The Wakefield Able2 club made maximum use of the 6 weeks of the school holidays with a total of 44 separate activity sessions to choose from. This averages out at an activity every day and there were several families who were present at just about every session. School holidays boring? We certainly don't think so at the Able2.

Thanks to funding from the Aiming High Grants, (administered by WeSail), the Able2 could continue the weekly clubs of Wheelchair Rugby, (Mondays 7pm-8pm), Boccia (Wednesdays 6pm-7pm), Swimming, (Thursdays 6:15pm-7:15pm), Whirlwinds Wheelchair Basketball, (Fridays 6:30pm-8pm,) and the Saturday Club, (surprisingly on a Saturday, 11am-1pm). There were however a host of additional 'extra' events, including the extremely popular Summer Ball, which was held in the marquee at the Holmfield Arms. Ballgowns and tiaras were displayed in abundance – and that was just the boys!

Featherstone Sports Centre was the venue for weekly Trampolining and Wheelchair games, as well as one of the Able2's more recent additions – Wheelchair Football. This has proved so popular that the sessions are now every three weeks. The team has become the Yorkshire Wheelchair Football Club and it is hoped that they will soon be playing in one of the regional UK leagues.

The Wheelchair Rugby team has also undergone a name change. The team has become part of the Featherstone Rovers 'family' and were introduced on the pitch at half-time at the match against Dewsbury Rams. The Featherstone Rovers Wheelchair Rugby League Club play in the Championship League and completed their season with impressive performances against Mersey Vikings, (St. Helens), and Medway Dragons, (Gillingham).



A very wet bunch at Pugneys

After a successful Able2 Sail project in 2010, the club again invaded Pugneys Water Park for sessions of sailing and canoeing. As well as improving sailing and paddling skills, the members learnt how important it was to take spare clothing. Splash you? Me? Never! It was difficult to judge who had most fun on the water – the children or the parents, (even if some took a bit of persuading to get into a boat).

A massive effort was made by some of the members as they took part in a sponsored Wheelchair Push organised by Natalie and Ryan's Mum. The 2½ miles around Anglers Country Park were completed in record time and the money raised meant that the club was able to go for a day at Flamingoland. The sun shone all day and the members squeezed as much into the visit as possible.

The end of August marked one year to go to the London Paralympics 2012 and the Able2 were proud to be chosen to launch Wakefield Gold – 'an inspirational programme to ensure that a legacy continues beyond the Olympic and Paralympic Games.' We dedicated a week of events to the Paralympic sports, starting at the launch with Wakefield Council at Thornes Park that included Wheelchair Racing, 'Petra' Racing Bikes and Access Cycles. Over 50 participants pedalled and pushed around the Thornes Park track in and on a variety of incredible pieces of equipment.

A second day, this time at Featherstone, saw new Wheelchair Basketballers in the Sports Hall and lots of first-timers trying their hand, (and arms), at archery. This session was delivered by a group from Doncaster who need to be praised for their patience and in the skill they showed in making the session so inclusive. The Basketballers and Archers then spent the afternoon in an exhilarating Dance session – 'Strictly' celebrities watch out!



The 'Wheels4All' event at Thornes Park. (One of the Paralympic sports 'taster' sessions.)

Also at Featherstone we were able to welcome Kevin Plowman, a Paralympic Wheelchair Tennis player, who put everyone through their paces in the Sports Hall and used the session to demonstrate the inclusiveness of disability sport. Several young people had turned up at the Sports Centre expecting to do



Joseph - heading for Paralympic Gold in 2028 - just keep pedalling!

Tennis. They saw what fun the Able2'ers were having playing Wheelchair Tennis with Kevin and decided that they wanted to do Wheelchair Tennis as well!

Other Paralympic sports that were on offer during the week included Athletics, (with several Able2'ers taking part in the 'Tartan Games' at the Gateshead Stadium), Sailing and Canoeing, Boccia, Table Tennis and Swimming. If anyone would like to know more about the Paralympic sports or, indeed, any of the activities of the Able2 group of Clubs, please contact **Steve Greatorex** on **01977 709576**, E-mail: **greatorex_s@sky.com**. Alternatively you can contact **Featherstone Sports Centre** on **01977 722700**.

BME Ladies Carers Group

Are you a carer from the BME, (Black & Minority Ethnic), community who looks after a relative or friend who is ill or disabled? Our group supports carers from the BME community. We meet on a monthly basis to share experiences, offer support and highlight issues that carers from this community face.



Our next meetings will be on **Thursday the 20th of October** and **Thursday the 24th of November**. For the times and locations of these meetings please contact **Lucy Horobin** on **01924 305544**. Come and join fellow carers for a Coffee and a chat.

Help! Teen Life Seminar

Help! Teen Life is a one day Family Support seminar and provides information and advice to parents and carers of young people with Autism. The seminar is aimed at parents of young people aged between **11 to 16** years old.

The seminar will cover;

- Autism in the teenage years
- Education and transition
- Accessing local authority support
- Benefits now and in the future
- Things to think about in the teenage years



Families can book two places on a one day Help! Teen Life seminar for **£30**, which includes a full resource pack of useful information, advice and support guidelines. Help! Teen Life is delivered by experienced and trained professionals from The National Autistic Society (NAS).

For further details of forthcoming seminars and to book a place contact **The Family Support Programme** on **07425 624592**, E-mail: **help@nas.org.uk**, or visit **www.autism.org.uk/help!**

Protac Ball Blanket

A pioneering ball blanket available from Sheffield is helping children with ADHD to fall to sleep faster and sleep better; according to a recent international study. Many children with ADHD are particularly restless in the evening and bedtime can often develop into a prolonged and frustrating process for all parties involved.

To combat this growing issue, Kingkraft, specialists in solutions for disabled adults and children, is offering the Protac Ball Blanket to children with ADHD to help them fall to sleep quicker and more peacefully at night. The Protac Ball Blanket contains silent plastic balls and it is the pressure of these balls on a child's skin that stimulates a sense of calm and feeling of safety.



There were four in the bed and the Protac Ball Blanket said...

The research into the blanket was carried out by the University of Southern Denmark and was recently published in the international 'Nordic Journal of Psychiatry'. The study found that when children slept with the Protac Ball Blanket, the time taken to fall asleep was reduced by almost 40%, with the children only taking 15 minutes on average to drop off. It also showed that a child's tendency to wake up during the night was reduced to match the level of children who did not have ADHD.

The behaviour of children at school was also studied revealing those who had slept with the blanket were able to concentrate better and were able to cope more with school activities; with a 10% improvement in both hyperactivity and concentration levels. 11-year-old Harrison Stanley, who has both ADHD and Tourette syndrome is just one of the children whose life has been transformed by the Protac Ball Blanket.

His mum Lorraine explains that before being introduced to the blanket, Harrison was unable to sleep or even stay in his own bed at night; a problem which caused stress and prolonged tiredness for the whole family. Lorraine added: "Despite going to bed at 7pm every night, Harrison would still be up at midnight hanging from the banisters and running into his brothers bedroom. This disturbed the whole family and had a knock on effect at school the next day.

"Bedtime with the blanket however is a completely different experience and the results were amazing, almost instantly. Harrison is so much more settled and calmer and now he asks to go to bed at night rather than it being a battle. The blanket has totally transformed his life and we even take it with us when we go on holiday."

Lisa McSprit, a Sensory Integration Occupational Therapist who introduced Harrison and his family to the blanket said she has seen real benefits from the technology. Lisa added: "I have taken the blankets into special schools and witnessed first hand improvements in calming with children of various ages who have sensory difficulties." "It really enhances the work I do and in a short time has a dramatic effect on children's lives, as well as the lives of their whole family. The blanket offers extra input to a child's sensory system and helps them to feel calmer and happier, as well as having a knock on effect on their sleep patterns, emotions, behaviour and concentration levels."

As well as ADHD, the blanket is a suitable aid for a whole range of conditions including; Autism, Cerebral Palsy and Epilepsy. The Protac Ball Blanket is available to buy or loan from Kingkraft. To find out more call **0114 2690697** or visit **www.kingkraft.co.uk**

Please note the Protac Ball Blanket is not endorsed by KIDS WeSail or Wakefield Council. The purpose of this article is to make people aware of its availability.

Ackworth Riding For The Disabled Group

If you are interested in joining our group for riding or volunteering then come and see what we are all about on one of our taster sessions. These will be held on **Thursday 6th October** and **Thursday 3rd November** from **6pm-7pm**.

For more information or to book a place please contact **Karen Bullock** on **07852 141629**.

Moving On Event

The annual post 16-19 progression day, 'Moving On', is this year being held on **Friday 14th October** at **Wakefield South East Training & Enterprise Centre, Brigantian Way, South Kirby Business Park, South Kirby, Pontefract, WF9 3TH**. It will run from **10AM to 1:30PM**.

This event is a 'drop in' session for parents, carers, young people and professionals to call in and find out about post 16 transition opportunities and support available for those with additional learning needs. The information available is for students from mainstream schools and special schools who may need help in the future with choices regarding appropriate college courses, work opportunities, home care support, accessing leisure opportunities, benefits, health issues & more.

The focus this year is around individualised budgets for young people and adults with a learning disability and how you can use them. Attendees will have the opportunity to visit information stands from a variety of services, residential colleges and further educational establishments.



Movin on up to the Moving on event!

For more information contact either **Tracy Bunko** or **Wendy Fereday** on **01977 723145** or E-mail: **bunkot@oakfieldpark.wakefield.yhgfl.net**

Young Carers



Did you know that Barnardo's has a service in the Wakefield District aimed specifically at supporting young carers? They support young people and children aged 5-18 who care for a family member at home and that includes those who care for a sibling. They may care for a person with a physical illness or disability, a mental health problem or for somebody who misuses drugs or alcohol.

To qualify for the service young carers must have significant caring tasks beyond those usual at their age and this responsibility will be having an impact on them. During their time with the service, young people are helped to develop the practical & emotional skills they need to help cope with their situation.

If you would like to know more about the service please call us on 01977 722860.

KIDS Halloween Party



Its that time of the year again, when there is a chill in the air, things go bump in the night and creepy boils and ghouls come out to party. KIDS Wakefield will be hosting their annual Halloween Party on the **27th of October** at **Wakefield Wildcats Rapid Solicitors Stadium, Belle Vue, Doncaster Road, Wakefield WF1 5EY**, from **4PM to 6PM**.



The Joker will have you grinning from ear to ear at this year's party

A fiendishly good time is guaranteed and there will be a devilish disco, freaky food, creepy crafts and spooky sensory den for all to enjoy. Come in fancy dress if you dare and bring your mummies... (Dads are welcome too!)

Places are limited so please call KIDS on **01924 379015** to book your spot.

Focus on Portage Service

The Portage Service is a provision within the Wakefield Local Authority for pre-school children with additional needs or disabilities. Portage Home Visitors undertake weekly home visits to families, to support parents to teach their children new skills. To do this, parents and the Portage Home Visitor together agree goals and plan how to teach the child the new skills that they want them to learn.

Some examples of skills that might be taught include the child learning to find pictures in a book, to drink from a cup or to transfer objects from one hand to another. The emphasis is on activities being enjoyable for the child and parents and they can often be included in the child's daily routine or play.

Parents are encouraged to practise activities daily with their child and an Activity Chart is usually left for parents to record what the child has done. This can be discussed at the next home visit and used to plan next steps. Each teaching plan is based on the individual child's needs and is reviewed regularly to make sure that it is right for the child.

Portage staff work closely with other services that are involved with the child and their family and sometimes undertake joint home visits. This provides the opportunity for parents and staff to discuss the activities that they are working on and to plan next steps. The Portage Service is based with the Educational Psychology service and there are 4 full-time equivalent Portage Home Visitors, managed by a Senior Educational Psychologist. Since Portage began in Wakefield, in 1988, (when there were just 2 Home Visitors), the service has worked in partnership with well over 700 children and their families.

There is an open referral system, which means that anyone can refer children to the service, providing they have parental permission. Many referrals come from medical staff, such as Paediatricians, Speech and Language Therapists, Physiotherapists and Health Visitors, but referrals are also often made directly by parents, Children's Centre staff and other Early Years practitioners. The service works closely with colleagues from WeSail to ensure that families have access to support and information.

The Wakefield Portage Service is a registered service with the National Portage Association, (NPA).

The NPA website address can be found at www.portage.org.uk. For any enquiries about the service, please contact **Carmel Boorman**, Senior Educational Psychologist on **01924 307403**.

Faceless Free Creative Play & Music Sessions

For parents or carers and children aged 2–5 years with additional needs. This is a fun session all about growing up and sharing ideas for developmental play. Crawling, walking, climbing, playing & learning together.



Thanks to funding from the Aiming High Grant, which is administered by KIDS WeSail, these sessions are free. However places are limited and must be booked in advance. There are two sessions, the first is at **Ashtree Children's Centre, Ashton Road, Castleford WF10 5AX** on **Tuesday 11th October** from **1PM-2PM**. To book your place call **01977 723012**.



The second session is being held at **Cedars Children's Centre, Barnsley Rd, Hemsworth, WF9 5PU**, on **Thursday 13th October** from **1:30PM-2:30PM**. To book your place call **01977 722215**.

So that's where my Parachute ended up