



Charity No: 1066691

# AIMING for Disabled Children



**NHS**  
Brent

July 2010

## Brent Carers Centre

Wembley Centre For Health & Care  
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Welcome to the Summer 2010 edition of Brent's 'Aiming High for Disabled Children' Newsletter. This edition focuses on what we believe has been the most exciting development since 'Aiming High' started in April 2008. This is the development of the parents' group '1Voice'.

The group aims to bring together parents of disabled children to ensure they have a say in shaping the services

that local agencies in Brent provide for your child. If you have not joined 1Voice yet or been along to any of the meetings they have arranged, please do try and set aside some time to find out how they may be able to help you - and how you may be able to help them. The more parents - the bigger the Voice!

### Marion Rodin

Head of Integrated SEN & Disability Services

## AIMING HIGH – updates

### Aiming High – the final year

Aiming High funding ends in March 2011. We are waiting to hear from the new government what plans it has to take forward the achievements of Aiming High. However, given the current situation of public finances, we do not anticipate having the same level of funding made available after March 2011. In the meantime, we continue to work with our partner agencies, parents and young people to allocate this years Aiming High funding.

### Aiming High - small grants

We received a lot of applications from agencies interested in making a bid for a small one off Aiming High grant of up to £5,000. This grant can be used to make existing services more accessible to disabled children, or to fund a special activity or event that the agency would not be able to afford from its own budget. For example, a grant has been given to Hay Lane school to arrange for 14 young people to go on a 3 day activity break in Norfolk. Another grant was provided to fund a Youth Participation forum at the Wembley Plaza hotel last month which was attended by over 50 young disabled people. This event was led by Emma Harker from Brent Youth Service who is also being funded by Aiming High to further develop and extend youth participation in Brent.

### Aiming High on transition

In addition to Aiming High, funds have been made available under the Transition Support Programme to develop transition planning for disabled young people. Brent Mencap has just been funded to recruit a Person Centred Planning Transition Coordinator. This worker will be responsible for supporting up to 30 person centred reviews which we hope to arrange with the help of the secondary special schools next academic year.

In addition, Prospects have been commissioned to produce a DVD on transition which I hope will give parents and young people a better idea of what transition is and what support is available to help young disabled people plan for adulthood. The DVD will be supported by an Information Pack. There will be a launch of the DVD at the College of North West London in Willesden on Saturday July 10th between 1.30 pm and 5 pm and I do encourage parents and their young people to drop in on the Launch, even if you only have an hour to spare!

### Aiming High on summer play provision

Our Short Breaks Coordinator continues to work with Brent Play Association, Brent Mencap, Resources for Autism and Brent Youth Service to plan what summer play activities can be provided for disabled children and young people this summer. Over the year, over 80 children who did not receive a service last year have been added to the 'Play Scheme List'. This list identifies children and young people who need additional support to be able to access play provision or youth activities. As a result around 250 children and young people will be offered one weeks activity from one of the play providers this summer. The providers will be contacting parents this month to confirm which play scheme or activity their child or young person will be offered. Brent Youth Service will need you to complete an application form.

### Aiming High on child care

Brent has been offered a grant, along with other local authorities, to support improvements in the availability of adequate child care services, particularly for working parents of disabled children. This initiative, called DCATCH (Disabled Children's Access to Childcare) supports the aims of Aiming High. Brent has been allocated £89k for next year to implement DCATCH. The first thing we have done is appoint an officer to contact all the main child care providers in Brent to find out what support they would need to improve and expand the services they offer to disabled children. Once this survey is completed, we will have a better understanding of how we can allocate these funds to improve access to child care. Work is underway through DCATCH to develop a Handbook for parents of disabled children which will also provide a directory of services that can be used safely by disabled children.

### Aiming High Steering Group

A meeting of key agencies involved in Aiming High takes place regularly. The next meeting is on Thursday 1st July. Parent representatives from 1Voice attend this meeting - so if you have any comments, views or opinions on how we can make Aiming High work better for you and your child, please contact 1Voice and let them know!

# 1 Voice a parent forum for Brent - Launch day workable

The Government's Aiming High for disabled Children programme's objective was to improve service's across the board for disabled children and their families. Part of this programme was to help fund parent forums in all local authorities across the UK, In response to this directive, Brent Carers Centre held 3 parent participation conferences at Brent Town Hall in March 2009. From these conferences, it was evident that parent/carers were very enthusiastic about setting up their own a parent forum. Following on from the conferences and subsequent meetings we were pleased to see the emergence of 1 Voice a forum for parents/carers in Brent.

1 Voice officially launched with a Family Fun Day in March 2010 at Hay Lane School, which we were kindly given use of at no cost by Jenny Drake, Headteacher. Flyers for the event were designed by 1 Voice members and distributed around the borough. T-shirts, baseball caps, pens and key rings were especially commissioned by Aiming High for the event. All that was needed was a nice day to ensure a good turnout.

The big day arrived with 1 Voice members turning out early in numbers to help transform the school into a fitting event arena. Unfortunately the heavens opened and the rains came, fingers crossed we opened the doors, there was no need to worry, all the hard work seemed to work with a steady stream of people turning up. Notable attendees included Marion Rodin, Head of Integrated Services for SEN & Disability Children and Families, Councillor Bob Wharton, Lead Member for Children and Families, and MP's Sarah Teather and Barry Gardener.

Activities during the day included a bouncy castle, outside games and activities, organised by Brent play's mobile team, an indoor market with a bric and brac stall, tombola, and other miscellaneous stalls. A roaming magician and children's entertainer with special shows on the hour. One of the highlights of the day was a demonstration by Dance group, I can dance, ballet for the dancer with special needs which was awe inspiring for anyone with or without connection with a child with additional needs.

Food was provided by members of 1 Voice included: Curry, Rice, Spicy Chick Peas, Mediterranean Cous Cous and a Greek salad. There was also a designated section for voluntary groups which included Resources for Autism, Mencap and The National Autistic society and Brent professionals.

The day ended with a raffle drawn by Sarah Teather with prizes including a digital camera, ice cream maker up for grabs. All in all it was a great day, which I was very proud

to be a small part of and that will hold fond memories for me for a very long time to come and I would personally like to thank everyone who made this day possible.

**Kieran O'Donnell**  
*Chair, 1 Voice*

## How 1 Voice changed my life

In April 2009, my life changed. Dramatic as it sounds this was true. I had joined a group (1 Voice) of other parents and carers of children and young adults with additional needs like mine that live in Brent. This dedicated group's purpose is to provide an authoritative voice to all those that make decisions about our children and family. My voice was now not small and isolated but part of a loud and influential group.

They have sent me on training courses so that I am much better equipped to talk/discuss and challenge other who affect my daughter and our family. I have gleaned much information from other parents and carers and feel very fulfilled passing on what knowledge and experience I have since embarking on this journey of having a child with severe additional needs.

Change will only happen if you make it happen and by joining 1 Voice together we can make it happen.

**Rita Mills** – *mother of Ruby with a life limiting and threatening condition.*



## Parents contributions regarding their involvement with 1 Voice:

*"I became part of 1 Voice nearly a year ago and it has changed my family's life by giving me training and support to achieve skills needed for me to approach professionals and head of Departments who are responsible for providing services for my family.*

*1 Voice is a group of friendly, highly motivated and enthusiastic parents and carers with one goal to empower parents of children with additional needs and advise one another.*

*Thanks to 1 Voice, I have been able to take part in various work shops where I was able to add my opinion to the future planning of children's services."*

*"Since becoming a member of 1 Voice I have enjoyed great day trips with lovely like minded parents of special needs children and have made some good friends and found myself not so willing to take a back seat in issues concerning my son who is autistic. I have become empowered to jump in the driving seat and take off with the help and support of this wonderful parent/carers group."*

## When Sema asked me

When Sema asked!!! told me that I should write an article for this newsletter my first reaction was "Oh no" but on reflection it is apt. When I first joined Brent Carers Centre the staff and board identified that there was no real dialogue between parents of children with special needs and statutory services and it became one of BCC key aims.

Over the years I have been at BCC there has been many steps forward and on occasions steps back I believe that most parents understand budgets and deciding what needs to be brought and what would be nice to have but maybe next time. So I am so please to see that Brent has recognised that involving parents in early consultation is good value for all parties. Now I won't say everything now is perfect but over the last few weeks I can hear that parents feel they have a voice.

So as I leave BCC I wish all parents especially those involved in 1 Voice well and hope that they GO ONWARDS AND UPWARDS.

**Shirley Bickers**  
Chief Officer

## Aiming High Conference for young people with disabilities

On Tuesday 1st June 2010, we had our first aiming high conference for young people with a disability at Wembley Plaza. Over fifty five young people with various needs attended the conference and had a massive input in how the conference was shaped and its overall outcome. The young people were consulted on many issues that are relevant to them as young people living in the borough with additional needs. They had the opportunity to get involved in setting up a youth forum and a youth magazine as well as deciding on a name for the forum and designing the forum logo. They also discussed what they would like to have in the youth magazine and many of the young people who attended signed up for either the forum or the newsletter or both. The young people decided that youth forum will be meeting once a month at Brent Town Hall on Monday from 4pm – 6.30pm. Invites will be sent out to all young people who signed up to attend the forum. The conference was a great success and the young people have asked if it can be repeated in the future.

### Emma Harker

Disability Youth Worker

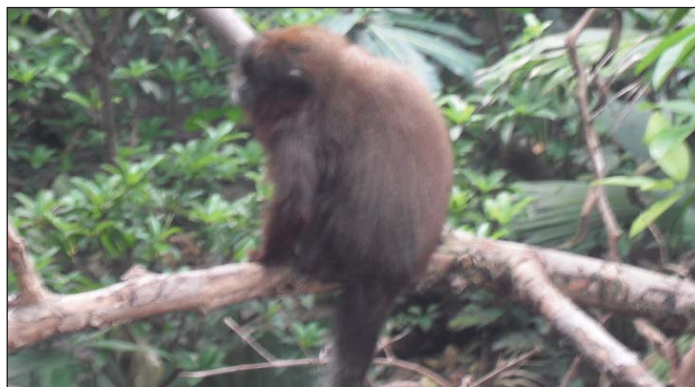
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## Day trip to London Zoo

We were very fortunate to receive an invitation from Daytrippers to attend London Zoo on 12 June. Once again, the sun was shining on us as we ventured into the lions den – not literally!! As this was a day for children with additional needs, it was so lovely to see lots of families attending, many of whom were Brent residents. We set off in 2 coaches and enjoyed a great fun filled day. We were fortunate enough to see sleeping tigers, lions, monkeys and talkative parrots. The gorillas enjoyed the attention of an audience and put on a show especially for us much to the joy of the little ones watching in awe. There was so much to see at the Zoo and it was impossible to cover it all in one day so it's going to have to be re-visited.

Once again, the transport cost was met by Aiming High funds for which we are very grateful for as the children and adults had such a fun filled day with their siblings.



## Family Day trip to Brighton

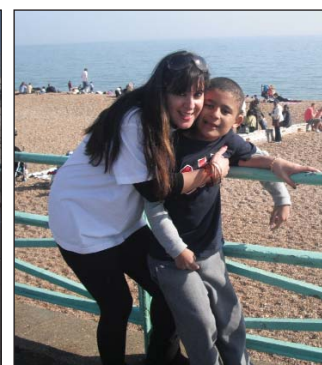
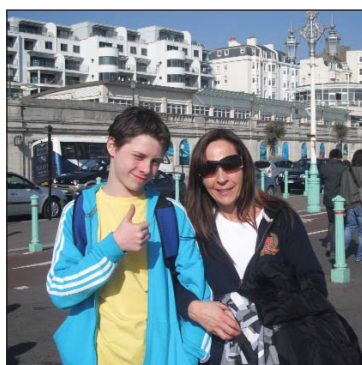
When asking parents where would you like to go on a day trip, the seaside always tops the list so with that in mind we boarded our coach to Brighton. Another sunny day was in store for us and the British seaside weather was very kind to us. With the thought of an authentic fish and chip lunch and a walk along Brighton's famous pier proved very popular. Many families enjoyed walking through Brighton's shopping area, known as The Lanes, whilst some decided to make the most of the sun and enjoy the rays. Many children had fun running around and breathing in the fresh sea air with their siblings. Needless to say, the coach journey home was very peaceful with many sleepy children, carers and parents!

Below are a few comments written by parents who came to Brighton:

*"We had such a good day, everything was perfect. A big thanks to Sema who organised it – we can't wait for the next trip".*

*"These trips are the only ones I can come on with my 3 children as travelling with them is such hard work. Its nice to see all my children together having fun".*

*"If only we could do this more often – my children always look forward to the trips organised by Sema".*

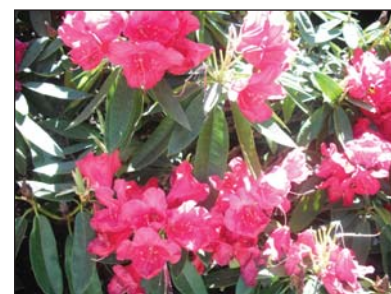


## Family day trip to Kew Gardens

On the hottest day of the year so far, on 22nd May 3 coaches from Brent Carers Centre descended onto Kew Gardens. The weather was tropical and in favour with all the tropical plants we were able to see and smell. The colourful rhododendrons and azaleas proved to be such a vivid and pretty sight enjoyed by all. The hot houses and greenhouses were very interesting as we saw how household herbs and fruits are able to flourish in their natural setting. We saw how cocoa grows which was a revelation to some children as their imaginations

went into overdrive trying to see how the plant is transported into a Mars bar!

Needless to say, the sun made our day very successful and all were very grateful to the funding provided by Aiming High for making this day possible. We hope to have more day trips throughout the summer.



# Brent Aiming High 'In transition to adulthood' DVD Launch Event 2010

For the first time in Brent a unique and exciting event for young people with special needs between the age of 13 and 25, and their families.

**Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> July 2010**

at:

**The College of North West London (Willesden Campus)**

**1pm - 5pm**

**(refreshments provided)**

Free  
transition  
DVD and  
information  
pack

Take part  
in fun  
taster  
sessions in  
Media, Art  
and  
Catering

Meet  
people  
from  
different  
schools

Speak to  
professionals  
from Adult  
Social Care,  
Mencap and  
local colleges

Leavers  
presentation

For more information contact Sara Levick @ Brent Connexions: 0208 438 1650 / [sara.levick@prospects.co.uk](mailto:sara.levick@prospects.co.uk)

# Supporting Parents, Supporting Their Children

Brent Council recognises that parents who have children with disabilities may be families who do need special help and advice due to the additional pressures that they face.

There are many different ways in which the Council and other agencies provide services for parents of children with disabilities. But what we need to improve and think about:

- how we communicate where parents can find this information
- how to access a service and
- whether you would qualify for help.

We would welcome and value your help with this and would welcome your involvement and feedback. Brent Council are in the early stages of developing a handbook for parents who have children with disabilities and a website to improve the way that we let you know what help is available. The handbook could possibly detail the different types of support and help that is available. The parenting support website would also consider some of the issues that you may face as parents in bringing up your children such as being healthy, feeling safe and growing up.

A copy of the types of topics that could be covered in the handbook are available for you to look at and I would welcome your thoughts on whether these are the topics that you would like to see. Also, what other topics would you like to see on our new parenting support website. Both of this information can be accessed on [www.brent.gov.uk/parenting](http://www.brent.gov.uk/parenting).

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter, please complete the slip below and return it to Brent Carers Centre or email to [disabledteam@brent.gov.uk](mailto:disabledteam@brent.gov.uk)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Telephone details: \_\_\_\_\_

**Disclaimer:** Every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct. Brent Carers Centre and partners can accept no liability for errors and cannot recommend products or services. Views and opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Brent Carers Centre and partners.

Please do let me know either through the survey on the website or by contacting me directly on [Susannah.jordan@brent.gov.uk](mailto:Susannah.jordan@brent.gov.uk), Brent's Parenting Commissioner.

## Useful contacts:

Many of the listed contacts can put you in touch with other organisations that also may be able to offer information and support to you.

Children with Disabilities Team .....	020 8937 4483
Children and Families Information Service.....	020 8937 3001
Special Educational Needs Assessment Service .....	020 8937 3229
Brent Parent Partnership Service .....	020 8937 3434
Brent Connexions Service .....	020 8438 1650
Brent Youth Service (Ability Youth Club)....	0208 965 3475/07958 700446
Brent Youth Service – Learning for Life 16+ .....	020 8937 3676
Brent Play Service.....	020 8810 9126
BOAT – Brent Outreach Autism Team .....	020 8838 0513
Brent Mencap .....	020 8451 5278
Brent Carers Centre.....	020 8795 6240
Contact a Family .....	020 7608 8700
Brent Young Carers Project .....	020 8795 6249
Parentline Plus .....	020 7284 5536
Brent One Stop Shop (for all council enquiries) .....	020 8937 1200
1 Voice.....	07765 362 877

## How can you help?

- Join the editorial board
- Be involved in helping to plan future events
- Write articles for the newsletter
- Volunteer to distribute the newsletter
- Look at joining steering groups, especially joining sub-groups, for example, Early Years.