

Campaign for Carers

Contact a Family is urging the Government to raise the threshold for carers allowance following the rise in the minimum wage.

We have gathered signatures and sent an open letter to Justin Tomlinson, Minister for Disabled People, asking him to ensure carers are not unintentionally disadvantaged. Currently a carer working for 16 hours on the minimum wage is at risk of losing their allowance because they will earn just above the threshold, but if they cut their hours below 16, they risk losing Working Tax Credit.

Read our [letter](#) by clicking on the link

For information about [carers' allowance](#)



Contact a Family cam-

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Helpline Success



The Contact a Family advice helpline has been awarded the Helplines Standard, a nationally recognised quality accreditation.

Helpline manager Angie Fenn says: "Achieving this standard shows parents that they can have complete confidence that the service Contact a Family provides through the helpline is professional and of the highest possible standard."

The helpline operates between 9.30am and 5pm Monday to Friday, and it can also be contacted via facebook, twitter and email. It offers advice on any issue around caring for a disabled child, including education, benefit issues, entitlement to equipment or aids, and finding local support.

Access the [Helpline](#)

To remove your name from our mailing list, email wendy.flynn@cafamily.org.uk or call 0121 415



LOTTERY FUNDED

Confused at school?

SEND reforms

Understanding the changes ushered in with SEND (Special Education Needs and Disability) reforms and ensuring a child's needs are met can be challenging for parents. So Contact a Family now has a designated Parent Adviser specialising in education issues who can help.



Since taking on his role with Contact a Family in the Midlands in April Matt Bennett has been busy organising workshops for parents and attending drop in sessions in Dudley, Nottingham, Coventry and Staffordshire as well as offering one-to-one advice by phone or email to parents who are encountering problems with the system.

Matt's role has been funded by the Big Lottery Fund and over the 2.5 year lifetime of the project he expects to reach almost 2,000 parents across the Midlands. He is putting in place a programme of workshop events and information stands for the year and will deal with individual queries from parents.

"I think it is fair to say that the system can be confusing for a lay person," says Matt. "There is also a wide variation in the way local authorities are sticking to statutory timescales and in the extent to which they are truly involving children and families in the decision making.

"I can advise parents and give them the information they need to help them negotiate their way through the system and give them the confidence to be able to point out that things should be done in a certain way."

Matt Bennett developed a keen interest in special needs education as a member of Birmingham City Council, and in his previous job he was an Independent Supporter for parents of children with special educational needs.

If you would like Matt to organise a workshop or information stand, or if you would like advice on education-related issues, call him on 0121 415 4624 or mobile: 0779 353 0790



LOTTERY FUNDED

Report disability hate incidents



If you or a disabled person you know has been the victim of a hate incident or crime, you can get help.

Verbal or physical abuse, teasing, bullying, online abuse, abusive texts, or damage to property are regarded as a 'hate incident' or crime if it is motivated by hostility or prejudice based on a person's disability.

The Disability Resource Centre, funded by West Midlands police and crime commissioner, offers a free and confidential service. They can support you in reporting the incident, making a statement, and liaising with the police on your behalf.

If you would like to talk about something that has happened to you, call Janette Fletcher at the

[Disability Resource Centre](#) on 0121 248 4527.



Clued in to benefit changes?

Are you up to date with the recent changes in benefits?

In the last few months:

- the **family premium in new housing benefit** claims has been scrapped;
- the rules have changed in **the backdating of housing benefit**;
- new claimants have to wait longer for help with **mortgage interest**;
- there has been a cut in the 'income rise disregard' element of **tax credits** there has been a change in the recovery of tax credits over payments.



Check out our **[Ongoing Benefits](#)** webpage

We need you!

Are you a parent of a disabled child? Would you like to use your experience to help us reach more families with disabled children?



We're looking for your advice on the best way to ask parents and supporters to donate to Contact a Family or to fundraise for us.

You'll be joining our staff on a small parent-led team to create powerful fundraising messages and decide how we should share them.

As a charity we rely on donations and fundraising proceeds, and we think the parents who've used our services are best placed to help us reach other families. By taking part in our fundraising programme, you can help ensure we get it right to support more families.

You don't need any experience to take part, and it could be an exciting opportunity to learn more about fundraising and make a big difference!

[Read more](#)

Autism strategy - have your say

The City of Wolverhampton Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group want to have conversations with children, young people and adults with autism and their parents and carers so that their views and experiences help to shape their five year strategy from 2016 - 2021.

They want to hear your views on the [draft strategy](#) for future provision, any suggestions that you may have about how they work towards the objectives contained in the strategy or any alternative suggestions.

You can take part by dropping in to the pop-up shop on **Thursday 4th August 2016**, at Unit 29, The Wulfrun Centre, until 4pm.

Children and young people aged 10 – 15 years old can attend a consultation workshop **Thursday 28th July 2016, 1 pm - 3 pm** at The Newhampton Arts Centre, Dunkley Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 4AN. This session is only for children and young people aged 10 - 15 years old. You can book a place by calling 01902 551040.

Money Matters



Raising any child is expensive but raising a child with disabilities is even more so as there are always additional costs.

Contact a Family is running a [‘Financial Support’](#) workshop in Birmingham on Wednesday, July 13 for parents of disabled children. The workshop runs from 10.30am-12.30pm at the Norman Power Centre on Skipton Road, Ladywood, and it is free to attend.

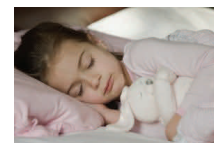
We will look at the range of benefits available to parents of disabled children, and we will tell you about grants and other financial support which might be available to you.

We are also running a free course looking at the [Disability Living Allowance for Children](#). This course will take place on Friday, July 8, at 10.15am-12.15pm at the Birmingham Settlement Training Office, 359 Witton Road, Aston, Birmingham B6 6NS. This course will raise awareness of the rules for claiming disability allowance for a child under 16. It will help you navigate your way through changes to the benefits system; show you how to deal with common issues such as filling in the claim form effectively; explain what to expect at medical assessment; and go through the appeal process if you need to challenge a benefit decision.

You can also find information and download a guide to [money matters](#)

For [details](#) of all our workshops click the link and scroll down to local events.

Autumn Workshops – Behaviour, Sleep and Siblings



Our autumn events in Birmingham include workshops for parents to help deal with challenging behavior (Friday, September 23); a workshop to help parents support siblings of a disabled child (Wednesday, October 19) and a workshop on sleep issues. You can find full [details](#) here by scrolling down and clicking local events. To book a place call 0121 415 4624.

Coventry

The A Word Live

Tuesday, July 12, 9.45am-2.45pm
The Welcome Centre, 47 Parkside, Coventry

The Special Education Needs & Disability Information, Advice and Support Service is holding an event specifically around autism. Sessions include Aspergers and Education; Anxiety, Stress and ASD; How Your Child with ASD thinks; ASD and Sensory Issues. There will also be information stands from organisations supporting people with autism.

To book, call 024 7669 4307. Places must be booked.

Dudley

Face to Face coffee mornings

Thursday, July 14; Tuesday, September 20, 10am-12.30pm

Stourbridge Children's Centre, Forge Road, Stourbridge

Scope would like to invite parents or carers of children with additional needs or disability to join them for coffee mornings in Stourbridge.

Contact: Sarah.thompson@scope.org.uk

Wolverhampton

Makaton at Home

Wednesday, July 6, 9.30am-11am

Tettenhall Wood School, Regis Road, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, WV6 8XF

A free workshop for parents or carers using Makaton to communicate with a child at home.

To book, call 01902 556519



Activities for disabled children and families

Birmingham

Birmingham Siblings Group

Friday, 12, 19 and 26 August, 10am – 1pm
Autism West Midlands, Regent Court, George Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham,
B15 1NU

The group aims to allow children to meet other children who understand what it is like to have a brother or sister with autism; to allow them to get a better understanding of autism; to understand and feel positive about their role within the family and to increase their confidence.

To book a place, call Amanda on 07881 109496, or email
amandap@autismwestmidlands.org.uk

PHAB Birmingham North and East —holiday camps

The volunteer-led PHAB Birmingham Club organise holiday camps and day trips (as part of the camp) for disabled children during the school summer holidays.

To find out their plans for summer 2016, Wendy Walsh on 07496 536 972

Sandwell

Holiday planner

To find out about fun activities and events for disabled children and their families in Sandwell during the summer holidays, log on to the [school holiday planner](#)

For more information, call 0121 569 4914.

Multisport

Saturday during term time, 11.30am-1pm

Portway Lifestyle Centre, Oldbury

A multi sports club open to young people aged 11 plus, their family and friends which costs £2 per person. Indoor sports hall, sensory room and 3G-pitch. Sports include football, basketball, badminton, dodgeball, skittles and table tennis. For more information, call Mandy Williams, Sports Development Officer on 0121 506 4980 or email mandy.williams@slt-leisure.co.uk



Funarama - Out to play

Futurama is a specialist service for children and young people with disabilities. Activities are free and include singing, dancing, cookery, sensory drama and trips, and are adapted to ensure the each child's individual needs are met. A waiting list operates for the service.

To apply for a place call 0845 352 7855 or email Samantha.harman@sandwell.gov.uk.

Shropshire

Picnic in the park

August 3, Telford Town Centre, 11am-.3.30pm

A free event organised by PODS Parent Carer Forum and Face 2 Face scheme. Fun activities including face painters, stilt walkers, bubbles, a whole range of craft activities and a "Disco Dome" bouncy castle. The family picnic will be held at the sensory garden, adjacent to the visitors centre.

Staffordshire

Golf Coaching

Every Monday 5-7pm; every Saturday 3-5pm

Range, Wood Farm, Broad Lane, Essington, Staffordshire

Golf coaching available for disabled children aged 6 and over. Parents and siblings welcome too.

To book, call Craig Thomas on 07973 798483 or email info@thegolfacademy.co.uk

Inspire clubs Family Fun days

Clubs in East Staffordshire, Lichfield, Newcastle-under-Lyme, Stafford, Staffordshire Moorlands, & Tamworth

The Inspire Disability Multi Sport Club will give you and your family the opportunity to try a range of different sports and activities in a relaxed and informal environment with qualified coaches. The free club is open to disabled children (5 to 18 years old), siblings, friends and parents. There will be a range of activities on offer such as multi skills, badminton, zumba, football, trampolining and many more.

For more information, call 01785 619398; email disabilitysport@staffordbc.gov.uk or log on to www.sportacrossstaffordshire.co.uk/abilitysport.

Summer holiday Football and cricket

School holidays, 10.30 am-2.30pm

Camps at Newcastle, East Staffordshire, Burntwood, Stafford and Tamworth

Four-hour football and cricket camps for disabled children aged 5-18.

For more information or to book, call 01785 619398

Wolverhampton

Me and You' Project—Summer Holiday sessions

Thursday, July 28, August 4, 11, 18 and 25. Daily sessions run over 6 weeks.

Albrighton Trust Moat and Gardens, Blue House Lane, Albrighton, Nr Wolverhampton WV7 3FL

This is a summer project for young disabled people aged 15-25 which offers the opportunity to take part in outdoor practical activities based around horticulture, conservation, wildlife and angling.

The programme is designed to build the confidence of young people as they approach transition years. It is hoped that the initial six weeks of activities will introduce young people to new interests which they can choose to develop further with the 'Me and You' team.



To book, call Ruth Broome on 01902 372441 or email ruth@albrightontrust.org.uk

Keep in touch

If you would like us to publicise your events or activities in our e-news, please send details to us by the 20th of each month. We will do our best to include all relevant activities when space is available.

Please get in touch too if you would like to make suggestions about information to include which would be useful to parents.

E-mail wendyflynn@cafamily.org.uk or call us on 0121 415 4624

**The Editor retains the right to omit, or edit any contributions.*

**The views and suggestions in this E-bulletin are those of the individual contributions and are not necessarily supported by Contact a Family. Contact a Family can not accept responsibility for any goods or services mentioned in or enclosed in this E-bulletin.*

Contact a family

Contact a Family is the leading UK-wide charity providing advice, information and support to all families with disabled children, regardless of disability.

Our freephone helpline: 0808 808 3555.

Open Monday-Friday, 9.30am-5pm

The Contact a Family freephone helpline is an advice service for parents and family members caring for a disabled child. We also have a dedicated SEN (Special Educational Needs) service to advise families, on any aspect of their child's education.

Email: helpline@cafamily.org.uk

Website: www.cafamily.org.uk

**To add or remove your name from our mailing list, or to give us updated contact details:
email wendy.flynn@cafamily.org.uk
or call 0121 415 4624**