

In The Loop



January 2021 Issue

I would like to wish you all a VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Phew what a year 2020 was! I did say in my New Year message last year that we would have challenges, but little did I know the true extent of these.



2021 will be very different with its own set of challenges to be faced. The Covid-19 situation will certainly keep us guessing until the Government gets this vaccination programme up and running. As I write this, we all have high hopes of its success, but do not know for sure how this will pan out.

Then of course, there is life to be lived outside of the pandemic with all of its ups and downs. I hope as you read this you are all ready to face head on whatever your own situation throws at you, but I know you will all do your best. I hope that we will all be able to meet up again some time during the year.

I must thank all the staff for their continued dedication to Mid Norfolk Mencap and for steering us through the many Government restrictions. The four managers have had a difficult time working through the copious Government guidance which is not always as easy to work out as one would expect. Thank you also to the volunteers, most of whom were unable to meet last year, see you sometime this year. Special thanks to the Family Carers SMILES emails that are keeping us going when the going gets tough.

Thanks also to my fellow Trustees, we have all met by Zoom to keep an overview of Mid Norfolk Mencap.

Lastly but by no means least, I must thank Lorna who retired in December for all the hard work and dedication, not only at work but in her spare time as well. Thank you so much Lorna, we will miss you. We have, however, gained Sarah whom I welcome and wish her well as we go forward into 2021.

I would like to echo Jon Rose from his Christmas message to say that we do not know what 2021 will bring but we do know that Mid Norfolk Mencap will endeavour to meet any challenge head on and we will continue to be here to support and champion those with learning disabilities, their families, carers and friends.

Keep safe.

Pat Grout, Chairperson



Firstly, I would like to wish everyone a very Happy New Year!

You are all probably aware that in December we said goodbye to Lorna Studd, Mid Norfolk Mencap's Administrative Assistant. Lorna will be sorely missed in the organisation; however, we all hope she enjoys her well-earned retirement.



Moving forward, I would like to warmly welcome Sarah Freeman to the office team, as our new Administrative Assistant. I am sure many of you will get acquainted with her over the coming months.

We have also said goodbye to Steven Mills, the Registered Manager at Merle Boddy House. Steven left the organisation in December and we all wish him well for the future and thank him for all his hard work. We are currently recruiting for a new Registered Manager and will update you all on this in the very near future.

Let us hope for a kinder and prosperous 2021.

My very best wishes to you all, Anya.



OFFICE CHRISTMAS CLOSURE

The office in Tavern Lane will be closed from 5pm on Wednesday 23rd December and re-open on Monday 4th January 2021.

CHRISTMAS SPIRIT

One of our fantastic Community Outreach staff members spread some Christmas cheer in December by launching an appeal to get gifts to residents in care homes.

The impact of Covid-19 has been monumental to residents, with families and loved ones unable to visit for months at a time.

Melanie collected many donations of toiletries, socks, gloves, and manicure sets to name a few, and delivered them to residents, so they received a special gift for Christmas. Melanie quickly enlisted the help of Mid Norfolk Mencap's Community Outreach service users to help her wrap and deliver the generous amount of gifts donated to her.

We could not be prouder of the service users who helped Melanie achieve this, and of course of Melanie herself.



What a wonderful, kind and community spirited thing to do.

We applaud you all!



Winter Flu Jab



Due to the global Covid 19 pandemic, it is more important than ever that you get your flu vaccination this winter.

As those who have had the flu will tell you, it is very different to a common cold, at the very least, it can confine even the fittest person to bed and for people with long term health conditions, it can be very serious indeed.

As health care workers, we play an important role in protecting the vulnerable people we support, both in the Community and at Merle Boddy House and the health of the public in general.

With the seasonal influenza and in particular the increased pressure on the health service, due to the Coronavirus pandemic, being vaccinated yourself is one of the simplest way of protecting and endorsing who we care for, our colleagues, as well as our family members.



The NHS are strongly recommending vaccination for frontline health and social care workers. The flu vaccine is usually free for people aged 65 and over, and to other persons with long standing eligible health conditions and persons in long-stay residential care homes. Most surgeries and pharmacies offer the vaccination, which is usually available from September to December.

Seasonal influenza immunisations can be provided free of charge at present to nursing and care home workers during the 2020/2021 flu season. Guidance is published about who will be eligible this winter for a free influenza vaccine. It is targeted at staff employed by a registered residential care/nursing home or a registered domiciliary care provider.

The sooner you have your vaccination, the more effective it will be. You can ask your local pharmacist or GP for the information in obtaining a free flu vaccination. Even if you need to pay for the vaccination, it is certainly worth taking care of yourself and others and keeping Britain Safe.

You can also find information online at both

www.tinyurl.com/NHSfluinfo

www.england.nhs.uk



*A BIG THANK YOU
TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS
WHO WE HAVE MISSED SEEING
IN 2020.
WE WILL SEE YOU SOON.*





COMMUNICATION TIPS

Remember, everybody is unique, so take the time to ask the person you're communicating with what works best for them.

In person:

Many people with a learning disability prefer face to face and one to one communication.

In writing:

Use bigger text and bullet points, and keep writing at a minimum.
Too much colour can make reading harder for someone as well.

On the phone:

Speak slowly and clearly, using easy to understand words.

- Find a good place to communicate in - somewhere without distraction. If you are talking to a large group be aware that some people may find this difficult.
- Ask open questions; questions that don't have a simple yes or no answer.
- Check with the person that you understand what they are saying e.g. "the TV isn't working? Is that right?"
- If the person wants to take you to show you something, go with them.
- Watch the person; they may tell you things by their body language and facial expressions.
- Learn from experience - you will need to be more observant and don't feel awkward about asking parents or carers for their help.
- Try drawing - even if your drawing isn't great, it might still be helpful.
- Take your time, don't rush communication.
- Use gestures and facial expressions. If you're asking if someone is happy or unhappy, make your facial expression unhappy to reinforce what you're saying. Be aware that some people find it easier to use real objects to communicate, but photos and pictures can really help too.

Remember, all communication is meaningful, but you may need to work harder to understand.

Further help:

Many people with a learning disability can use or recognise some signs. Signalong and Makaton are both Sign Supported English systems. They are based on British Sign Language (BSL), but are used to support the spoken word.

Visit the Signalong website or the Makaton website to find out more.



SIGNALONG

A central principle of Signalong is “one concept, one sign” which is different to other British Sign Language based systems, which require an understanding of the context in order to distinguish meaning. People who have learning difficulties, especially those with Autism, may find it difficult to differentiate the context.

Through the use of Signalong, children, young people and adults with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties can give their views, can be taught about healthy living, can be made aware of dangers (for example from exploitation) and can “talk” about things that have upset them or made them uncomfortable. Signalong can be used to prepare people for complex (frightening) procedures. Signalong is an invaluable tool which can support professionals in their work with vulnerable adults and to enable them to understand and make choices about treatment in line with the Mental Capacity Act.

WHAT IS MAKATON?

Makaton is the UK's leading programme for adults and children with learning or communication difficulties. It is a language programme that combine signs, symbols and speech to give different options for people to communicate.



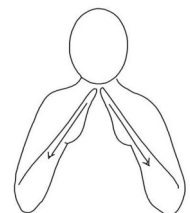
Using signs can help people who do not use speech. Symbols can help people who have limited speech, or who cannot or prefer not to sign. Makaton transforms the lives of people with communication difficulties, by giving them a way to express themselves independently. Being able to communicate eases frustration and gives people confidence and independence while they develop communication and language skills.

There are currently over 1 million Makaton users. Makaton can help anyone who has difficulty with:

- communicating what they want, think or how they feel
- making themselves understood
- paying attention
- listening to and understanding speech
- remembering and sequencing

It is also used by supporters of people with a learning disability, such as family, friends, carers, education staff and health professionals. Makaton is regularly used in mainstream schools, to support all children to develop communication, language and literacy skills. It supports integration as children with and without language difficulties can communicate, learn and play together more easily.

- Use the signs whenever you talk about the action e.g. eating and drinking happens many times a day and by using the sign and saying the word each time it will help to reinforce it.
- Always say the word while making the sign.
- Try to make eye contact and use facial expression.
- Use clear, short sentences.
- You can guide an individual's hand to help them sign.
- Encourage attempts at signing; use the sign for 'good' and say 'well done'.
- Encourage friends and relatives to use the signs too.
- Have fun!



House / Home



Each year, Family Voice Norfolk holds a Conference where families can find out about all things to do with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). It's also an opportunity for them to hear from families and for families to talk face-to-face with key managers from the local authority, health services and providers.

With the hope that conventions and gatherings will take place in 2021, the Family Voice Norfolk Conference is planned to take place on **Saturday 13th March**.

Please make a note of this in your diary.

CHANGES TO THE CARE ACT

The government has passed a new law called the Coronavirus Act. This gives emergency powers to help the NHS and other public services cope with the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

One area the new law covers is the Care Act and people's right to be assessed for social care and to get the support they need.

Local authorities should do everything they can to continue to meet their duties under the Care Act, but the new law gives local authorities emergency powers that they can use if they need them, for example, if large numbers of care staff are ill with the virus and the council is struggling to support everyone. If used, the powers mean councils can prioritise who gets support, they will not have to do detailed assessments of people's care and support needs as they do under the Care Act and they may not have to deliver all the support a person needs.

Mencap is concerned about these powers, but they may not be used. The government is asking a huge amount of people with a learning disability and their families, having to stay at home, which can be very difficult. Any cuts to support could be very damaging and Mencap believe the government should be giving people more support at this difficult time, not less.

Mencap will be watching carefully to see what happens, and are available to give advice and support to anyone who is worried by or impacted by these changes, if they are brought in.

To help, Mencap have created an information and advice resource on this which includes background information as well as answers to questions that people may have around these changes.



SOUTHERN Locality Group Meeting

Norfolk Learning Disability Services

Cancelled until further notice

The Annexe, Watton Sports Centre
118 Dereham Road
Watton, IP25 6HA

NORTHERN Locality Group Meeting

Norfolk Learning Disability Services

Cancelled until further notice

Change of meeting venue, now at:
The Bayfield Centre, Kelling Hospital,
Old Cromer Road, High Kelling,
NR25 6QA



SATURDAY CLUBS — JANUARY 2021

Due to Covid 19, all meetings of the Saturday Club are still cancelled until further notice.

They would normally run from 10am to 4pm at £8 per session, held at Sacred Heart School in Swaffham and at the Mid Norfolk Mencap Office at Tavern Lane, Dereham.

FAMILY CARERS MEETING DATES

For the foreseeable future, all meetings are cancelled until further notice. We will keep you updated on any changes.

Normal meetings take place between 10.30am—12.30pm at Dereham Memorial Hall. We always welcome new faces and ask for a £2 donation to cover the cost of refreshments and room hire.



INTRODUCING..... ELECTRIC UMBRELLA TV



Check out this registered charity that challenges the perception about people with learning disabilities and enriching and empowering lives through music. They provide daily online interactive sessions for the learning disabled community with music always at the heart of it. They include singalongs, songwriting sessions, experimental music sessions, their Big Yellow Choirs and open mic nights.

Being online-only since Covid hit, they have continued to use music to combat social isolation for adults with learning disabilities and ensure the improvement of the health and wellbeing of the community.

You can log in to 4 hours of free fully interactive entertainment each week. Guests, music, chat, fun and laughter presented by pro musicians - enjoyed by EVERYONE.

SPECIAL CELEBRATION DATES IN JANUARY 2021



Veganuary
Walk your Dog Month
Dry January

Festival of Sleep Day, 3rd January
World Braille Day, 4th January

Big Schools Birdwatch starts 6th January

Winnie the Pooh Day, 18th January
Cervical Cancer Prevention Week starts 18th January

Sugar Awareness Week starts 18th January

Burns Night, 25th January

Australia Day, 26th January

Holocaust Memorial Day, 27th January

National Storytelling Week starts 30th January

HAVE FUN!



DROP INS

Unfortunately, due to the Coronavirus, we have cancelled both the Cromer and Dereham Drop In sessions until further notice. We will constantly be reviewing the situation and will keep you posted as to when the sessions will re-commence hopefully in the upcoming weeks.

Cromer

Thursdays

1.00pm — 4.00pm

Merchants Place,
16 Church Street,
Cromer, NR27 9ES
£5.00 entry fee



Dereham

Tuesdays and Fridays

10.00am — 2.00pm

1a Tavern Lane,
Dereham
NR19 1PX
£4.00 entry fee

Stepping Out Club

All meetings of the Stepping Out Club are cancelled due to Covid 19.

We will keep you updated and informed of the situation in the coming weeks.

Meetings held at:

Church House
Church Street
Dereham
7.30—9.00pm

£1.50 Entry Fee



Gateway Club

All meetings of the Gateway Club are cancelled due to Covid 19.

We will keep you updated and informed of the situation in the coming weeks.

Meetings held at:

Dereham Community Hub
Independence Matters
Rash's Green, Dereham
7.00—9.00pm

£1 Entry Fee

If you would like details on anything seen in this leaflet, please contact Mid Norfolk Mencap, 1a Tavern Lane, Dereham, Norfolk NR19 1PX. Telephone: 01362 693013 Email: info@midnorfolkmenca.org

Website: www.midnorfolkmenca.org