

Fostering Newsletter

Autumn 2015



Featured in this issue

- Referral Reward scheme
- Foster Carers Ball

Fostering Fortnight Extravaganza

Willesden Sports Centre was a hub of activity on Saturday, June 13, as local residents came together to take part in Brent Council's Fostering Fun day. The event was held as part of the Fostering Fortnight which ran from June 1 - 14 and aimed to highlight the nationwide shortage of foster care placements. Activities in the sports centre included a bouncy castle, face painting, snack station and kids' activity zone. There was entertainment from St Michaels Steel Pan Orchestra and energetic dancing from local dance group, Revolution, who are based at Poplar Grove Youth Centre.

Staff from Brent's Fostering and Adoption team answered questions from residents interested in fostering and current foster carers were also out doing their bit letting residents know about the benefits and rewards of being a foster carer. Refreshments were provided courtesy of Tesco, Asda, Sainsbury, McVities and Manos Grill 2.

A huge thank you to everyone who supported us to deliver this great event!



Message from Head of Service

Dear Foster Carer,

I write this note with the sun blazing outside my window and the noise and activity of building work in progress on the new houses and flats being built next to the Civic Centre in Wembley Park. It has been very educational watching how these buildings are created; extremely quickly and with a huge number of different people involved with all of the different tasks. Not wanting to stretch things too far but I see a lot of parallels in how we all work together to support the children in our care. Foster carers need to create firm foundations for children and young people after they arrive to live with them. They need to build relationships, often brick by brick, with children and young people as well as other professionals. And we all need to maintain the building work – ensuring that where repairs are needed in relationships these are done in a timely way. Your training and learning opportunities, detailed later in this newsletter, are an example of how we support you to maintain these positive relationships. I see so many good examples of this ‘construction’ work happening on a daily basis with you, your supervising social workers and other professionals and would like to take the opportunity to thank you for this.

As I write we are also in the middle of our Ofsted inspection of children’s services. This is a 4-week inspection covering all aspects of work with children within Brent – from safeguarding through to adoption. We will learn the outcome of the inspection in a month or so and we will let you know once the details are published. We are confident of much of the good fostering work that goes on in Brent and are busy demonstrating this to the inspectors. I would like to say thank you to those foster carers that have been involved in conversations and meetings with inspectors.

We continue to experience ongoing problems in relation to payments within the Council and you will have received a recent letter from the Head of Finance and myself providing more details about this. I am very sorry that this has caused you all a great degree of inconvenience and I thank you for your patience whilst this is being resolved. Please be assured that I am working very closely with my colleagues in other parts of the authority to prevent these issues from happening again. If any of you wish to discuss your own situation please do not hesitate to contact me at nigel.chapman@brent.gov.uk

Finally I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at our annual foster carers’ awards and celebration evening. This year it will be held on Saturday 5th December at the Clayton Crown Hotel, 142-152 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 3ED. This is our opportunity to thank you for all of your efforts over the course of the year and I hope you are all able to come.

With best wishes, **Nigel**

Dates for your diary

Please note down the dates of these forth coming events and RSVP as soon as you can

Foster Carers Ball

Get your glad rags out! We will be hosting our annual end of year ball on Saturday 5th December at the Clayton Crown Hotel, 142-152 Cricklewood Broadway, London NW2 3ED.

This year promises to be an enjoyable night of fun and celebration for all with a three-course dinner and dance! Invitations will be sent shortly so please respond as soon as you can to confirm your attendance.

*Max 2 person per household



Foster Carers Children’s Party

It’s that time again....Christmas is soon upon us and this year the foster carers association will be hosting the annual children’s party. Further details regarding venue, time and date will be sent out shortly.

*Please note priority will be given to Looked After Children regarding gifts from Santa Claus.

Brent Community Champions

The Brent Community Champions Awards is back again this year with another round of nominations to honour and recognise individuals who have given outstanding community and voluntary service in Brent. The awards, presented by Mayor of Brent, Cllr Lesley Jones MBE, will be held in a prestigious ceremony on the 4 November 2015.

Winners in previous years have included carers, conservationists, youth workers, a classical Indian musician, and a retired postmaster. This year the Placements Service will nominate a carer who has made an outstanding contribution to the lives of children and young people in care. Look out for more details in the next edition of the Fostering Newsletter.

Staff Updates

We welcome to the Placements Service colleague, **Iran McGinn**, social worker, who has returned from a secondment, and new colleagues **Rachael Hinds** (social worker), **Rhiannon Spencer** (social worker), **Tamiko Victor** (social worker) and **Anjumara Hussain** (Marketing and Recruitment).

Placements Service has also recently said goodbye to a few colleagues including **Tsungai Tawanda**, **Julia Walters** and **Thomas Kpaamah**.

Training and Support Update August 2015

As we head into the autumn months, it's that time of the year when we re-look at our priorities for learning and development. Throughout the last year we have been steadily increasing the number of learning opportunities available to carers, however, the attendance at training courses has not increased.

A number of carers have not attended any training in the last 12 months and in the next 4 to 6 weeks these carers will be invited to attend sessions on Safeguarding and First Aid. Continuing professional development by attending training is a key part of the fostering role and ensures that carers are continuing to meet the national minimum standards for fostering.

Unfortunately the low numbers of carers signing up to training courses is resulting in courses being postponed, sometimes with only a days notice which is unhelpful for carers and the Placements Service. To ensure that courses are run, and you are all getting the opportunities to attend the training you want, please take an opportunity to relook at the training brochures and sign up to some courses.

If you don't see any courses that interest you, and you've completed the mandatory courses please contact me as we are always looking to hear about what courses you would like to see running.

Coming up in October we have;

6th October	10 -2:30pm	Life Story Work - Adoption
8th October	1 - 4pm	Allergies and Seizures
10th October	10 - 4pm	Working with Sexually Active Young People
20th October	10 - 1pm	Promoting Healthy Eating
21st October	10 - 12:30pm	Finance Information Workshop (Not at Brent Civic Centre)
21st October	6 - 8pm	Comments and Complaints
22nd October	10 - 1pm	Administration of Medication
22nd October	1 - 4pm	Introduction to Supporting Young People who have experienced Sexual Abuse
23rd October	10 - 1pm	WRAP: Working to Raise Awareness of Prevent Training
27th October	10 - 4pm	Supporting Young People with Disabilities

**Further information on each of the courses can be found in the Course Overviews Brochure.*

Please also look out for invites to other events, support sessions and consultations, if you are not receiving emails or feel that your missing details please either speak to your supervising social worker or contact me directly.

Lastly, I am happy to inform you that we are beginning the distribution of the carer email addresses. In the coming weeks you will receive your email account and temporary password, alongside instructions on using the system. IT Drop in surgeries will take place throughout October for any carers who need some support in using the new system, in addition to the IT Training already booked as part of the training offer.

As always, please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, suggestions or comments regarding any of the courses on offer, support sessions or for any other reason.

Zak Darwood - Fostering Development Coordinator
0208 937 4458 or **07788 335717** (also on whatsapp)
zak.darwood@brent.gov.uk

Fostering and adoption information evenings

The fostering and adoption team hosts information evenings each month for those who are thinking about fostering or possibly adoption. Sessions provide an insight into the assessment processes and are held on the first Thursday of the month Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, London HA9 0FJ at 5.45pm. Tea/Coffee and refreshments are available.

- **22 October 2015 (special information event to mark National Adoption Week)**
- **5 November 2015**
- **3 December 2015**

If you would like more information; email or call the team on **020 8937 4538**, fostering@brent.gov.uk / adoption@brent.gov.uk

Foster Carers support group dates

Held at Brent Civic Centre in first floor training suite area on the following dates. Time/theme to be confirmed nearer the time.

- **13/10/2015 (morning)**
- **10/11/2015 (evening)**
- **08/12/2015 (morning)**

We need long term foster parents... Can you help?

In Brent we have several children in need of long term placements. We need families who can provide long term stability and commitment. I'm Tanika Buchanan and as the family finder for Brent's looked after children. I'm currently family finding a sibling group who are urgently in need of long term foster family. If you would like to discuss their profile or have any questions please contact me on **07788389531** or email - Tanika.buchanan@brent.gov.uk.

Mustifa and Mohammed

Mustafa and Mohammed are Somali siblings aged 12 and 9 who share a close, loving and caring relationship. Mustafa and Mohammed have unfortunately experienced neglect and as a result have emotional

difficulties and mild behavioural concerns; however Mohammed is currently being supported with therapy at school which is going well. During the boys' time in care they have made positive progress. Both children wish to be placed with a family that can support them to develop their emotional maturity and provide them with the essential life skills they need for later on in life. Mustafa and Mohammed are sociable, joyful children with cheeky smiles who enjoy visiting their local park and being creative. We are looking for carer(s) who can provide the boys with a routine, can implement boundaries, are patient, and able to provide a safe, nurturing and stable home to allow them to develop emotionally. The carer must be willing to care for the children long term until they mature providing them with a sense of family membership.

Zane

Zane is aged 10 and is of a British Black African heritage. He has been in care of Brent since 2011 due to his mother not being able to look after for him. Zane is an outgoing young boy with a good sense of humour. He is a very bright and likes to keep himself active. Zane has a Statement of Special Educational Needs (SEN) and is diagnosed with ADHD. His school provides him with lessons in small class sizes, school transport and one-to-one support where necessary. Zane wishes to be placed in a long term foster placement where he can be considered part of a family and experience a home life that offers stability, love and commitment.

Do you know
someone that
is looking after
someone else's
child?

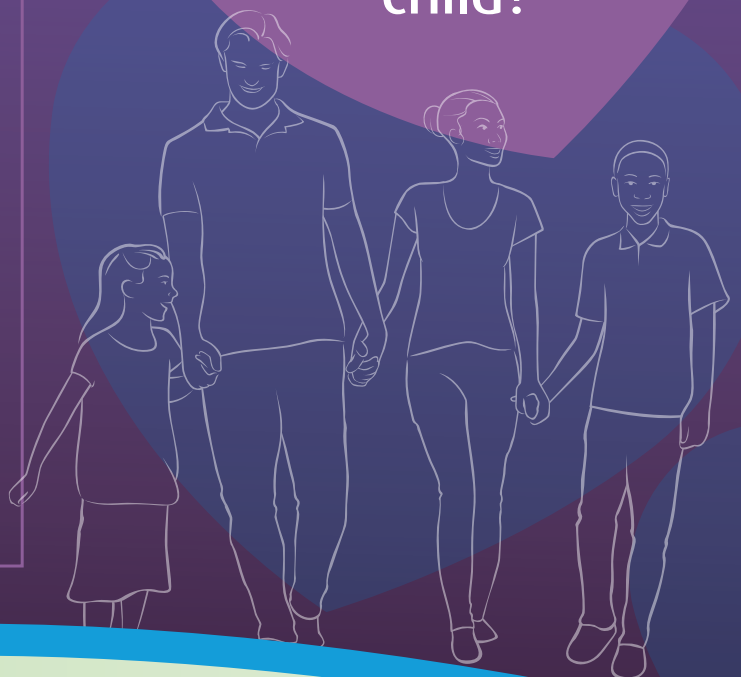
Did you know that looking after a child that is not a close relative for over 28 consecutive days is called private fostering?

Private fostering is when a child under 16 (18 if they have additional, complex or severe needs) is cared for and provided with accommodation for more than 28 days by an adult who is not an immediate relative. This is a private arrangement made between the parent and carer.

Brent Council have a responsibility to ensure that all children in Brent are being cared for properly and carers are supported. If you know of a child who is being privately fostered please let us know.

www.brent.gov.uk/privatefostering

020 8937 2749



Fostering Recruitment News

The Fostering and Adoption team will be out and about this autumn promoting our need for more foster carers in the community. There are over 300 children in care and we still need more people to come forward and help look after some of our most vulnerable young people. Please encourage your friends and family who may be interested in fostering to attend one of our outreach sessions. We will be there to answer any questions you have at the following locations:

- ASDA, Park Royal
Monday 19 October,
10am – 4pm
- Kingsbury Library
Wednesday 21 October,
10am – 4pm
- Brent Civic Centre Foyer
Thursday 22 October,
11am – 2pm
- Harlesden Library
Wednesday 4 November,
10am – 4pm
- Ealing Road Library
Wednesday 18 November,
10am – 4pm
- Brent Civic Centre Foyer
Thursday 19 November,
11am – 2pm
- ASDA, Park Royal
Monday 23 November,
10am-4pm
- Brent Civic Centre Foyer
Wednesday 16 December,
11am – 2pm

Points of contact

Fostering, Duty Support –
new duty number
Tel: **020 8937 3881**

Fostering Development Co-ordinator
Zak Darwood
Tel: **020 8937 4458**

LAC Nurses
Tel: **020 8795 6342**

LAC Participation Officer
Tel: **020 8937 4173**

LAC Education Team
Tel: **020 8937 4907**

Youth Offending Team
Tel: **020 8937 3832**

Brent Sexual Health Advisor
Tel: **020 8937 3083**

Brent Youth and Connexions Service
Tel: **020 8937 3680**

Wembley Centre for Health and Care
Tel: **020 8795 6000**



**EARN
£500
IN CASH**

Referral Reward Scheme

As a Brent foster carer you are eligible to take part in our Referral Reward Scheme.

The Brent Placement Service will pay a "Referral Reward" to any Brent approved foster carer who successfully recommends a friend or family member to the Service. An initial £250 is paid when the referred person is approved at panel and a further £250 following their first placement.

Referrals can be made to our recruitment number 020 8937 4538 or email fostering@brent.gov.uk – quoting 'Referral Reward'.

Terms and Conditions

1: To qualify for the scheme; the prospective applicant must quote the Foster Carers name during the initial enquiry stage on the telephone or first home visit with assessing social worker.

This will be cross referenced to confirm connection.

2: Each 'Referral Reward' is based on one household.

Household

= A single applicant

= Joint applicants living in the same household making one application.

3: Payment will be authorised after the referred person has been approved at panel and could take up to 14 days to reach you.

4: Payments will be made by payment card.

5: Foster carers can make as many introductions as they wish. However there is no reward payable for general enquiries. Payments will **ONLY** be made at the following times; **after successful approval** of a referred applicant and **after placement of first child**.

6: The foster carer can receive up to £500 upon the referred person being approved and subsequently taking a placement.

Half Term Activities

October Half Term Play Scheme at Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre

School is off, play time is on! From Monday 26th to Friday 31st, October's half term brings back the Play Scheme at Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre.

From 9am to 5.30pm, children aged between 8 and 13 years old can spend the day engaging in a wide range of activities: multi-sports sessions, arts & crafts, inflatables, racket sports, dancing and much more. Book a Full Day for £10.80, or Half Day (9am to 12pm or 13pm to 5.30pm) at £6.10.

The Play Scheme also offers Drop-In Sessions for children aged 5 to 7, and Parents & Toddlers Sessions for children under 5 years old - with games and Bouncy Castle - for £3.70.

Only for October Half-Term, you can bring a new friend to the Play Scheme for free. Conditions apply, only one booking per child.

Get in touch for booking and more information.

Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre,
Harrow road,
London,
NW10 0RG
Tel: 020 8937 3730

Black Cat Halloween Workshops... Miaow!

Learn fascinating facts about cats, their care and behaviour and then enjoy a fun creative activity making all things Halloween. Workshops are delivered by Petra Coughlin, Education Officer, Cat Protection London and South East.

- Kilburn Library – Wednesday 28 October, 11am-12.30pm
- Harlesden Library Plus – Wednesday 28 October, 2.30- 4pm
- Kingsbury Library – Thursday 29 October, 11am -12.30pm
- The Library at Willesden Green – Thursday 29 October, 2.30-4pm
- Ealing Road Library – Friday 30 October, 11am-12.30pm
- Wembley Library – Friday 30 October, 2.30-4pm

Monsters and Super Heroes

On Wednesday 28 October, discover monsters and super heroes, write their stories and then illustrate them in full colour!

Ealing Road Library, 11am – 12.30pm
Wembley Library, 2.30 – 4pm

Brent Fireworks Night

Join us at Brent's free fireworks show on Thursday 5 November at Roundwood Park, Harlesden Road, NW10, gates open at 6pm.

The funfair will also run at the park on Fireworks Night and will be on during half term from 24 October to 1 November in Roundwood Park. There will be a few hot food stalls inside the park and plenty of hot drinks & snacks to buy on the night.

The nearest tube stations Neasden, Willesden Green & Willesden Junction. Buses 52, 98, 206, 226 & 297.

We would like to thank Irvin Leisure & 1st Galaxy for their support at this event.



FIREWORKS
5 November NIGHT
FREE FIREWORKS SHOW

8pm Main display, 7pm Children's display
Roundwood Park, Harlesden Road NW10

Sponsored by
GEORGE IRVIN'S
IRVIN
LEISURE
info@irvinleisure.com
020 8795 4282

Funfair on 5 November and Half Term 24 October to 1 November
Please use public transport
No pets, no personal fireworks, no alcohol.

 **Brent**
www.brent.gov.uk/fireworks

Make 'n' bake corner

Scary Halloween Cookies!



Ingredients:

250g/9oz unsalted butter, softened
250g/9oz golden caster sugar
2 free-range eggs, lightly beaten
½ tsp vanilla extract
500g/1lb 2oz plain flour
Red and black food colouring (optional)
1 tsp baking powder
Halloween-themed cookie cutters
Red, white and black writing icing
200g/7oz ready-to-roll fondant icing
1 tbsp apricot jam, warmed with 1tsp water

Preparation method:

1. Beat together the butter and sugar in a large bowl, preferably using an electric mixer, until the mixture is light and fluffy. Beat in the eggs and vanilla extract. (If the mixture looks a little curdled, add a spoonful of the flour.) If you're using food colouring, add a few drops to the mixture.
2. Sift together the flour and baking powder in a separate bowl. Stir the flour into the butter mixture and work into a dough using floured hands. Turn onto a floured work surface and knead into a ball (the dough will be quite wet). Divide the dough into two portions, wrap in cling film and leave to chill in the fridge for at least one hour.

3. Preheat the oven to 170C/325F/ Gas 3. Line two baking trays with greaseproof paper.
4. Roll the dough out to a 0.5cm/¼in thickness on lightly floured work surface. (It's best to roll out one portion of the dough at a time, leaving the remainder in the fridge.) Cut shapes out with the Halloween cutters. Take a few limbs and heads off the gingerbread man for added gore.
5. Place the cookies onto the baking tray, leaving a gap between them in case they spread a little.
6. Bake for 12-15 minutes, leave on the tray for 10 minutes and then move to a wire rack to finish cooling.
7. Once cool, let your imagination run wild. Use the red writing icing along the edges of the missing limbs and heads as blood. For the skeletons and mummies, roll the fondant icing out to a 0.5cm/¼in thickness on a work surface dusted with icing sugar and cut out shapes using the same cutters as the cookies. Brush the cookies with the warmed apricot jam and stick the icing onto the cookies. Decorate with the white and black writing icing.

Courtesy of www.bbc.co.uk/food/recipes/scary_halloween_cookies_86970

Useful contacts

NHS Brent Sexual Health and Substance Misuse Service



At NHS Brent improving sexual health and providing effective substance misuse services are a huge priority.

We want to help you with any questions, worries or problems you may have by offering a range of services that provide personal advice and helpful pointers.

There are many highly trained professionals who are a visit or phone call away. Use our website to find out more about national and regional organisations that offer counselling whenever you need it.

<http://www.sexualhealthbrent.org.uk/>

Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board – launch online training



Brent LSCB is very pleased to announce the launch of their new E Learning zone. Here you will find a range of online courses and learning materials designed to meet your individual needs and priorities.

To get started visit:
<http://brentlscb.learningpool.com/>

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Placements, 3rd Floor, Brent Civic Centre, Engineers Way, Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 0FJ

020 8937 4538 / fostering@brent.gov.uk