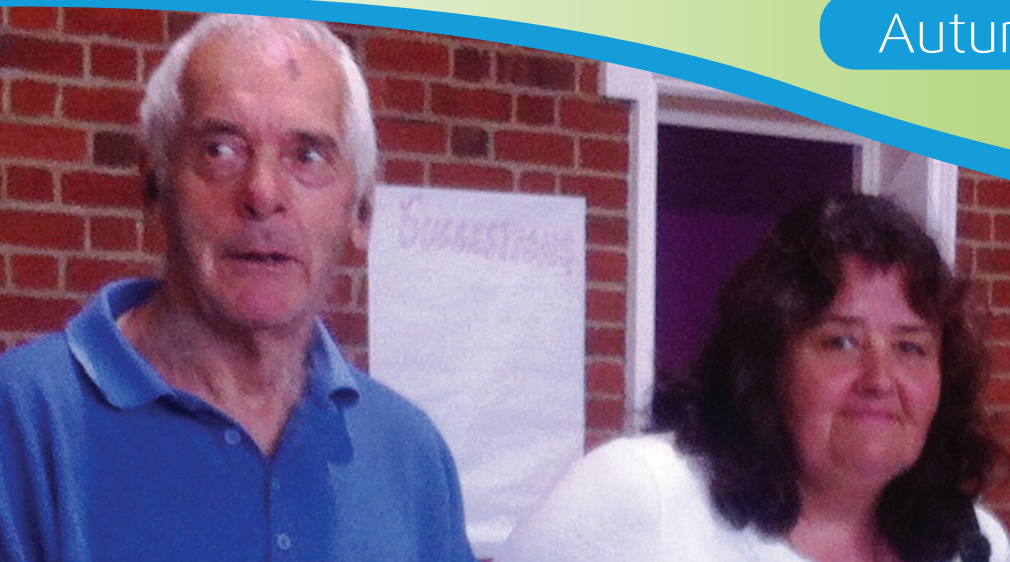


Fostering Newsletter

Autumn 2014



Thank you and all the best!! Pete and Pat Cassidy

Mr and Mrs Cassidy were approved as Brent foster carers on the 9 April 1999 and as Enhanced carers on the 31 December 2007. Since this time they have fostered 23 children, many of whom have had a high level of emotional and behavioural needs.

Mr and Mrs Cassidy are experienced and impressive as foster carers and show great devotion to children. They are both committed to improving outcomes for looked-after children and are flexible in their approach to this. The carers have worked well as part of a professional network and have provided invaluable information on children which has enabled children's plans to be progressed more efficiently.

Mr and Mrs Cassidy have ensured the smooth transition of children from short-term care to permanency and in several cases have maintained contact with both the children and their current carers.

Over the years they have completed their CWDC training and have actively engaged on other additional training, support and focus groups and have supported less experienced carers.

Sadly, after 15 years of service Mr and Mrs Cassidy have decided to retire from fostering and instead will be migrating abroad at the end of the year. I have had the pleasure of supervising Mr and Mrs Cassidy since April 2014 and they have proven to be committed, flexible and proactive carers, whom more importantly enjoy fostering and making a difference in children's lives. I would like to thank them for the positive and lasting impression they have left upon looked-after children and their families and for their tireless efforts in helping them become stronger, healthier and more successful each day.

Thank you and good luck

Jenine Jackson
- Supervising Social Worker

Featured in this issue

- Foster carers conference feedback
- Brent council news
- Dates for your diary

Half term activities

What's on?

Scooby Doo 25 Oct - 26 Oct 2014 at Brent Cross

Scooby-Doo, the Great Dane, is coming to Brent Cross this Halloween. He's loyal, lovable and cowardly but can't wait to see his fans young and old!

Appearances will take place in Centre Court, on the Lower Mall at 11am, 12pm, 1.30pm, 2.30pm and 3.30pm on 25 October.

FREE online tickets will be available to book from 10 October. Limited additional **FREE** tickets will be available in Centre Court on the Lower Mall on the appearance days.

Remember! If you pre-book, your ticket is the confirmation email that you will receive, so please either bring a printed or digital copy with you.



Character Visits: we'll be visited by a much-loved character from a popular children's book or TV show on the last weekend of every month. Plus, there'll be fun, educational activities to entertain young minds and exercise energetic youngsters. To find out more sign up to receive all the latest news by email, or follow Brent Cross on **Twitter** or **Facebook**.

www.twitter.com/brentcross

www.facebook.com/mybrentcross

Disclaimer: Places for meet & greet sessions are by FREE ticket only. For online bookings the FREE ticket must be presented on arrival. A limited number of FREE tickets will also be available in Centre Court, Lower Mall on Saturday 25 October, on a first come first served basis, by joining the queue from 15 minutes prior to appearance start time. One FREE ticket admits one child. Adults do not require a ticket. FREE tickets have no monetary value and should not be sold on. Brent Cross is not responsible if you are unable to attend at your chosen time or for lost/damaged FREE tickets and no compensation is due, however we will do our best to accommodate you. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times. Tickets are not available to commercial organisations.

Black History Month Celebration Workshops

Tuesday 28 October, All Brent libraries, 2.30 – 3.30pm

Design a musical instrument in honour of Black British composer Samuel Coleridge Taylor 1875 – 1912.

Black History Month at Poplar Grove

Wembley, Middlesex, HA9 9DB

Poplar Grove Youth Centre Presents a fun filled evening to end Black History Month. Come and see art work, live performers and socialise.

Friday 31 October 2014

Doors Open 5:30pm - 11pm

Adults £1, Children free

For more information contact Jennifer on **0208 937 2896** or email Jennifer.Parris-buckley@brent.gov.uk

Roller Disco Halloween Special

When: Friday 31 October
7pm – 10pm

Bridge Park Community Leisure Centre
Brentfield, Harrow Road, NW10 0RG

£2.00

For more information please call **07956 343 942**

Bring your own music! Refreshments available



Support group dates

Held at Brent Civic Centre

Tuesday 14 October 2014 – (pm)

Tuesday 11 November 2014 – (am)

Tuesday 9 December 2014 – (pm)

Hip Hop down to Harlesden #2

**Saturday 1 November,
Harlesden Library Plus**

**12noon – 1pm: Mouth Open,
Story Drop Out! Stories from
Africa**

See how Anansi became King of all the stories and how the zebra got his stripes. All brought vividly to life as children revel in creating vibrant African scenes.



**1 – 2pm: Black History Month
Celebration Workshop:** Design
a musical instrument in honour
of Black British composer Samuel
Coleridge Taylor 1875 – 1912.

2 – 4pm: Pottery Workshop Fun:
Make a tile and add African and
Caribbean symbols, animals or
flags or what ever you fancy!

Fostering and adoption information evenings

**Do you know somebody who
would like to foster or adopt?**

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.

6 Nov

5 Dec

If you would like more information;
email or call the team on
020 8937 4538
[fostering@brent.gov.uk/](mailto:fostering@brent.gov.uk)
adoption@brent.gov.uk.

Staff Updates

On Wednesday 17 September we
said goodbye to **Marie Fletcher** –
SSW in fostering support team. We
wish her all the best in her future
endeavours.

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 3810**

Brent Youth Support Services
bmyvoice@brent.gov.uk

Wembley Centre for Health
and Care
Tel: **020 8795 6001**

Foster Carers Association
'unofficial' representative:
Patrice Thomas
Tel: **07985 512 847**



Care in Action (Brent Children in Care Council) Update

Corporate Parenting Group

The Chair and Vice-Chair of Care in Action (CIA) attended the Corporate Parenting Board in July where they met with the Strategic Director and Lead Member for Children and Young People, senior managers and newly elected members. The young people gave a presentation on their work and some of their achievements as part of the induction for new members of the Board.

Meeting with Strategic Director and Lead Member for Children and Young People

On 29 July, the new Strategic Director and Lead Member for Children and Young People attended a Care in Action meeting to introduce themselves to the members. Young people were given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss issues or concerns they had about the following areas:

- Is there an advocacy service for children and young people in care?
- The development of a 'Coming in to Care' pack and how children and young people already in care will receive the pack
- An update on the leisure scheme for young people in semi-independent accommodation
- The development of a website for Looked After Children
- How things raised by young people will be followed up with feedback provided
- Who will be the champion for children and young people in care
- How to monitor money foster carers receive

Well-Being Fun Day

We hosted a 'Well-Being Fun Day' on Saturday 2 August at Poplar Grove Youth Centre, Chalkhill for children and young people in care. This was our second annual event promoting the health and well-being of children and young people in care. The event was full of fun and interactive workshops and activities such as football, Zumba, drama and face painting and there was an opportunity for foster carers to ask questions and gather information at health seminars hosted by the Looked After Children Health Team. Although the attendance was low, the event was greatly enjoyed by all who attended!

LAC Expressive Art Group work

In August, members of Care in Action took part in a drama therapy session with the theme of 'Working with Personal Transitions' using drama based exercises. Young people who participated were able to consider and be more aware of how they deal with trauma and suppress difficult feelings. The workshop gave young people skills to help them identify this and how they could start to change their behaviour.

Millet Farm Centre Trip (19 Aug)

During the summer holidays, as a reward for their hard work so far this year, both Care in Action and Junior Care in Action members attended a trip to Millets Farm Centre in Oxfordshire. Children and young people had the chance to see birds



of prey at the Falconry Centre, pick their own fruit and enjoy a fish and chips lunch!

Coming into Care Pack

To help support children and young people who come into care, we are working on putting together a 'Coming into Care' pack. The pack will be available in a choice of colours and will provide information about what being in care means, how children and young people will be looked after and the different services and support they will receive. The pack will also contain information about Care in Action and how children and young people can raise any issues or concerns they may have.

Join us!

Care in Action (13+) and Junior Care in Action (7-12) are constantly looking to recruitment new members. If your foster child would be interested in becoming a change maker or you would like to have more information about what we do, please contact:

Shirley Ricketts on **07867 184047**
shirley.ricketts@brent.gov.uk

Natasha Thomson on **07951 483406**
natasha.thomson@brent.gov.uk

**Dates for
your diary**

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

End of year - foster carers ball

Get your glad rags out! We will be hosting our annual end of year ball on Saturday 13 December at the Sattivas Pattidar Centre, Forty Lane, Wembley Park, Middlesex HA9 9PE.

This year promises to be an enjoyable night of fun and celebration for all.

Please confirm your attendance by emailing

Zak.darwood@brent.gov.uk

by Friday 31 October with your names and dietary requirements.

*Max 2 person per household

Brent council news

The Brent Borough Plan 2015/19 Consultation

Brent residents are being asked for their views on how local public services should evolve and what they can do to improve the borough given the continuing squeeze on budgets.

The borough plan consultation opened on 16 September 2014 and invites residents to help shape the future of the borough in the context of significantly reduced budgets for local public services.

Over the next four years services in Brent face the most challenging financial cuts ever. The council's budget alone is expected to be halved by 2018.

Brent has increasing demands on public services with a growing population, more babies being born, more people moving into the borough and more people living longer. To meet these challenges some services will need to be delivered in different ways and some stopped altogether. Residents are being asked what their priorities are through a series of surveys and public meetings throughout September and October.

Residents are being asked how they could play a vital role in their local community as well as how services should be designed in the future. In some cases, prioritising one area will mean that something else has to be cut back, or stopped altogether.

Leader of the Council, Councillor Muhammed Butt, says: "Brent has been through tough financial times – which are sadly not yet over.

Local public services face the same challenges, those of reducing income and increasing costs, which many of our residents are facing.

For example, by 2018 Brent Council's funding from central government will have been cut in half. To put this in context, we would need to more than double council tax next year to start plugging the gap in the council's budget and this would still not address the shortfalls in other local service budgets such as the Police and Fire Brigade.

This harsh reality means we will inevitably face tough choices in the coming months and years and this is why the borough plan consultation is so important in informing the future of Brent.

All of the organisations involved in the consultation want to work with local people to make sure that our plans are the right way forward given the limits we are all working with.

This is your Brent, your community and your services so please get involved as we are listening."

You can get involved by responding to the call for evidence before October 29.

Visit <http://www.brent.gov.uk/your-council/the-borough-plan-consultation/> to have your say.

Outreach Borough Tour

Can you help us with recruitment?

We are looking for volunteers to help us with our forthcoming recruitment events. Do you attend a place of worship? We would like your support to help us spread the news about fostering and adoption. In September we are planning to start an outreach tour of the borough visiting churches, temples and mosques to highlight the need for more foster carers and adopters and need your help to connect with imams, reverends, priests and heads of congregation etc. We are hoping for opportunities to speak for 5-10mins or have a stall in the entrance.

Please get in touch if you think you can help.

Email: tanya.williams@brent.gov.uk or call 0208 937 4538

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.

*Please note priority will be given to looked after children regarding gifts from Santa Claus.

Further details regarding venue, time and date will be sent out shortly.

If you have any ideas or suggestions you would like to put forward please contact Patrice Thomas.



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 for two sibling groups who are urgently in need of long term foster families. If you would like to discuss the profiles 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 11 and 8 who share a close, loving and caring relationship. Mustafa and Mohammed have unfortunately experienced significant neglect and as a result have emotional difficulties and behavioural concerns at school which is currently being supported with therapy. Both children receive extra educational support and Mohammed is due to have a educational psychologist assessment carried out. While being 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 essential life skills which will prepare them to develop and flourish as they mature. Mustifa and Mohammed are sociable, joyful children with such cheeky smiles who enjoy attending the local park and being creative.

We are looking for carer (s) who can provide the boys with 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

Steph and Ty

This is me Steph, I'm a 11 year old girl that started secondary school this September which is abit scary but as my new school have implemented a support plan so hopefully I will manage the change. My carers have said that I act a lot younger than I should for my age and that I find it tough to manage my emotions but I think this is because me and my younger brother have had to move to 10 different foster homes since 2008. I attend Kids company which I really enjoy. My brother Ty goes to Barham school and as I started

secondary school in September our new long term carer will have to be able to do the school run to two different schools. Ty is mature and a bit more emotionally stable than me but sometimes he seeks attention and as I'm getting older we both need our own bedrooms. This will also help to reduce the quarrels that we have with each other. Ty and I would like a family that can care for us long term so that we can settle into a family that we see as our own. We would also like them to be kind, robust and patient so that we can develop holistically and learn things that will help us to lead a positive adult life. If you can provide any of these siblings with the above requirements please contact Tanika.



Tanika Buchanan

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



What's the role of a family finding Social Worker?

The role of a Family Finder is to work closely with the child's Social Worker to assist in identifying suitable long term foster carers for Brent's looked after children. In addition to this, to explore long-term approved carers to care for children on a permanent basis, thus providing children with a secure and long-term feel to their placement.

The Family Finder provides advice and support to Social Workers whilst recommending and participating in permanency planning processes via permanency planning meetings held on a 6 weekly basis. This enables the permanency assessments to be completed and presented to panel for approval of long-term plans for children.

Long term fostering has vital benefits for children, ranging from:

- Offers an opportunity to develop secure attachments which formulates the foundation for children to develop holistically.
- Have a stable, safe and secure environment.
- The child can form a sense of family membership.

- Develop the confidence in knowing they have a permanent home that they can call home.

It also has benefits for carers:

- Carers can develop a sense of personal achievement as the child matures and progress's into adulthood.
- Allowing children to receive continuous care
- Receive the same allowance and fees as short term carers.
- Ability to develop an understanding of the child's needs over a period of time which assists carers in providing an enhanced level of care.
- Develop the skills required to meet the long term needs of a child.

Mental Health Service for Children and Young People with Disabilities (CAMHS LD)

Information for families

Our CAMHS-LD team is made up of clinical psychology, play therapy and nursing. We offer assessment and intervention for young people with learning disabilities plus mental health difficulties and/or challenging behaviour. We also offer advice and support to other professionals within the network surrounding a young person, e.g. schools, short break services and voluntary services.

How to be referred to us

If you are a parent or carer and live in Brent, you can access our service by asking your paediatrician or Social Worker to refer the young person to us.

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

Foster carers conference



Overview

The Foster Carers conference took place on Thursday 11 September with over 60 carers in attendance. The aim of the conference this year was 'Keeping children at the heart of what we do through developing solutions to common problems'. Co-facilitated by Cecilia Gabriel and Zak Darwood, the conference had a number of workshops to reinforce the reasons why people chose to become carers with Brent and also some of issues that carers face and possible realistic solutions.

Overall the feedback from the conference was positive with 93% of attendees rating the conference as 'excellent' or 'good'.

The Fostering Support Team, Marketing and Recruitment and Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team are working towards a development plan to tackle some of the issues raised by you with practical and realistic solutions. Working groups are being set up by Cecilia and Zak to address issues in their respective areas.

The first we have managed to address is the introduction of a duty phone number for the Fostering Support Team. If you are unable to contact your own SSW please use the duty number to access advice and information from the duty social worker. After 5pm on weekdays and at weekends this number will divert to the out of hours EDT team.

020 8937 3881

Other issues may take longer to develop however in each Foster Carers newsletters please expect an update on the developments. Also remember you can make any comments or suggestions to the service at any time by speaking to your SSW, the team manager or any other member of staff within the Placements Service.

We received a variety of comments around Learning and Development; the following table contains a list of the most frequently raised comments with responses from the Fostering Development Coordinator.

Issue/ Training Request	Answer from Fostering Development Coordinator
Incentives for attendance of training/conferences/meetings	It is the expectation that carers attend meetings, training courses and conferences as part of the Foster Carers agreement they signed with Brent Council. Additionally the fostering fee contains an element for the successful completion of the agreed training per year.
Substance Misuse	Brent LSCB run courses on this topic. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.
Managing Challenging behaviour	The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team provide this training on a quarterly basis. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.
QCF Training (QCF courses where previously known as NVQs)	Accredited training is something that Brent would like all carers to undertake, The Fostering Development Coordinator is currently reviewing options for these programmes and notification will be sent out in due course.
Mother and Baby Placements	The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team provide this training on a yearly basis. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.
Carers to lead the sessions	Any carers interested in training to become facilitators should contact the fostering development coordinator to register their interest.
Specific support groups: Unaccompanied Minors / Babies / BME / Disabled	The Fostering Duty Support Team Manager and the Fostering Development Coordinator are currently looking at options for additional support groups. Notification will be provided in due course.
Cross-Borough training	Cross-borough training is being looked at by the Fostering Development Coordinator. Notification of the outcome will be made in due course.
IT Training	The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team provide this training on a regular basis to small groups of learners. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.
More evening and weekend sessions	Learning and Development sessions are delivered at a range of times throughout the day. It is the expectation that carers utilise their nominated carers if they feel that child care is a problem and we ask that carers utilise some of their annual leave entitlement from their work. We understand that this may not be a popular request however some courses are unable to be condensed into an evening session or have suitable trainers available at the weekend.



Issue/ Training Request	Answer from Fostering Development Coordinator
Online Training	Online training is currently being looked at by the Fostering Development Coordinator. We are hoping to launch some specific online courses for carers in the 2015-2016 financial year. Please refer to the LSCB website to access some of their online training, http://brentlscb.learningpool.com/
Finance Training	Finance surgeries will be delivered by Foster Talk over the coming months. Please look out for information either in the newsletter, the fostering handbook website or from your supervising social worker.
Tax issues	
Housing and Income Support	
Pamper Day / Bar / Massage	
Fun activities for foster carers	The Fostering Duty Support Team Manager and the Fostering Development Coordinator are looking at the functions of the Foster Carers Association and how we can support this group to fundraise and develop its own strategy to run additional events that would not fall under the remit of the department. Notification will be provided in due course.
Laughing therapy	
Services to provide training to teenage children	Brent Council run a range of services for young people, please follow this link to look at the youth and connexions pages: www.bmyvoice.org.uk .
Sexual health awareness	The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team provide this training on a regular basis. Please refer to the foster carers training calendar for further details.
Missing young people and dealing with the police	The Brent Panel Advice and Quality Assurance Team are always on the look out for new course ideas; this will be looked at for the next training programme.
Regular meetings with Senior Management ¾ times a year	An opportunity to meet with senior management in the Children's Social Care department will be offered on an on-going basis starting in the near future. Please look out for an invite within upcoming newsletters, on the Fostering Handbook website or via your supervising social worker.



Gentle reminder

Please note from now on we will be using email to correspond with you more often so please remember to add our email address to your contacts list (fostering@brent.gov.uk) and check your email account on a regular basis. For those with smart/android mobile phones – emails can be viewed on your phone after quick set-up.

If you would like some help to set up an email account or learn the basics of using the internet; we will be holding an IT surgery on Saturday 15 November 10am – 2.30pm. Having a basic understanding of the internet is very useful as this can aid you with children's homework etc. IT is being used more and more in schools even as early as nursery and primary

school. If you would like to attend the IT surgery in November please contact Zak Darwood on 020 8937 4458 or text 07788 335 171 to book your place. Alternatively another session will be held in February 2015 – check your training calendar for further details.

Make 'n' bake corner

Sensory Slime



Sensory play is an important part of early learning and is a key factor in healthy development. It can also improve fine motor skills and be soothing for many children! Most importantly- it's fun for those of any age! Some children (depending on their particular attachment issues and experiences) can find sensory play overwhelming, so do bear this in mind and find another activity to enjoy if your child seems unsettled or overstimulated. Below is a recipe on making 'homemade slime', which should provide hours of entertainment!

What You Need

Materials:

1 1/2 cup Cornstarch

1/2 cup Tap Water

Food Coloring (optional)

Liquid Extracts (optional)

Empty Container

Instructions

1. Mix: Add cornstarch and water to container of choice. Empty food containers work great. Stir super-gently with a fork, the mixture will come together, but if you stir too quickly, the cornstarch will make things difficult (think quick-sand) and the water won't fully absorb. Mixture should be firm when mixed quickly with a fork and will crumble, while liquid appears when a finger is pushed slowly to the surface.
2. Stir in Additives: If you'd like, you may add in a few drops of food coloring or baking extracts to make things a little more colorful and smelly.
3. Play! "Clean Slime" is a great outdoor or bathtub activity. If less is made (or smaller portions are used... think Dixie cup size), it's easily played with on any sealed piece of furniture. The mixture simply wipes up when finished. Our favorite place to turn kids loose with it, however, is the bathroom. Plunk a kid down in an empty bathtub and let them go to town hitting, slapping and picking up the slime to watch it melt between their fingers and return to liquid. When finished, simply rinse off!
4. Store: This mixture keeps in an airtight container forever. If it dries out, simply add a little extra water and stir to combine.

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/>

Produced October 2014

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

020 8937 4538 / fostering@brent.gov.uk