



Autumn Newsletter 2018 – Welcome to the North West Newsletter!

We are Contact, the charity for families with disabled children. We understand that life with a disabled child brings unique challenges, and we exist to help families feel valued, supported, confident and informed.

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with disabled children*

In Contact
NORTH WEST



We hope you find the information in the newsletter useful but if for any reason, you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please email northwest@contact.org.uk and let us know and we will remove you from our mailing list. Thank you to everyone for your continued support.

Contact North West Team

You can e-mail general enquiries to the team at northwest@contact.org.uk or get in touch with individual team members below. **To join our mailing list, please email the northwest email address above.** For information and support please contact:

North West Parent Advisers - Local support and information in relation to bringing up a disabled child and local group information.

- Diane Bridge: diane.bridge@contact.org.uk - 01704 532256
- Lyndsay Regan-Hicks: Lyndsay.regan-hicks@contact.org.uk - 07920 655128

North West Parent Advisor SEND (Special educational needs & disability) - for information about any special educational needs issues or about the SEND workshops

- Noreen Arif: noreen.arif@contact.org.uk - 07458 045709

Regional North West Manager & interim Yorkshire & Humber manager - manages the work of the parent advisors in the North West & Yorkshire & Humber regions, contact if you have an enquiry regarding workshops, information days and events.

- Karen Robinson: karen.robinson@contact.org.uk - 01772 424758

North West Sessional Administrative Support Worker – supports the North West team with admin and produces the NW newsletter. Any articles you want featured in the newsletters please email:

- Rebecca Robinson: Rebecca.robinson@contact.org.uk

Parent Carer Participation Advisor (North West) - for parent carer participation and help and advice around parent Carer forums in the North West

- Kate Hurn: Kate.hurn@contact.org.uk - 07458 045 694

Volunteer Parent Representatives- Ruth is a parent of a disabled child and offers peer support and local signposting for parents in the St. Helen's area

- Ruth Card: ruth.card@contact.org.uk - 01942 721 323

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FREE Workshops and Information sessions NW regional offer...

By working together and developing partnerships with other organisations across the North West we can offer a number of *free* workshops and information sessions to parents.

We offer a range of welcoming and informative sessions for parent carers of children with any additional need or disability (with or without a formal diagnosis). We attend support groups, link with Children's centres, parent carer forums, schools and other organisations to offer the following free sessions:

- * Introduction to Contact, about us
- * Difficult behaviours that challenge us
- * General benefits & grants
- * Disability Living Allowance
- * Confidence – coping at meetings, assertiveness and communication skills
- * Special Educational needs & Disability - SEND reforms, EHC plans and legislation
- * Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- * Helping your child to sleep
- * Building resilience, coping & support
- * Supporting brothers & sisters
- * Bullying- awareness and support
- * Growing Up, moving on – supporting the transition from child to adult
- * Growing up, sexuality, relationships and understanding puberty

For further information or to book for your group, please contact by email: northwest@contact.org.uk or telephone Karen Robinson 01772 424758

*Please note that all sessions are subject to availability and local needs. There is a requirement that a minimum of 8 people attend. *Please note sessions for parents are free where funding permits*

North West Contact Sessions, Events & Workshops

Free information session for parents/carers – Bury Parent Carer Forum

31st October, 10am – 1pm - **Difficult behaviours that challenge us – developing understanding and getting support.** An introductory session to increase knowledge, explore strategies and top tips and sources of advice and support.

14th November, 10am – 1pm – **Building Confidence.** This session will help you develop better communication skills, feel more confident when working with professionals and prepare and get the best out of meetings.

For further information please contact Northwest@contact.org.uk or telephone: 01772 424 758



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Workshop in Liverpool in partnership with LivPaC

20th November 2018, 6pm-9pm – ‘**Supporting Brothers and Sisters**’, to identify the emotional and practical issues affecting siblings, explore a range of methods to support siblings and identify resources and support for siblings.

This session will be held at: **LivPaC – Liverpool Parent and Carers Forum, c/o DCLP, 5 Shelmore Drive, Dingle, Liverpool, L8 4YL**. To book on, visit <http://www.livpac.co.uk/index.php/courses>

Contact’s Hospitals Project in the North West

Contact’s parent advisors provide practical and emotional support within hospitals at our information stands.

In the North West, we hold information stands at Alder Hey Children’s Hospital and Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital. We can help with any questions parents may be struggling to get answers for including help in the early years, medical and health information, diagnosis, benefits, education and local support.

Come and meet Contact staff at our information stand which will be at **The Royal Manchester Children’s Hospital**, in the Atrium from 11am-3pm on the following dates:

- Tuesday 9th October
- Tuesday 30th October
- Tuesday 13th November
- Tuesday 27th November

Sparkling Stars – FREE ASD Parent/Carer Support Group

Morning meetings at **Simply Wicked, 43 Albert Road, Barnoldswick**



- Wednesday 17th October
- Wednesday 28th November
- Wednesday 19th December

Time: 9:15am – 11:15am. Contact: sparklingstars2017@outlook.com



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Contact's Resources

Kidz to Adults – Up North



One of the largest, free UK exhibitions dedicated to children and young adults up to the age of 25 years with disabilities and additional needs, their families, carers and professionals who support them. Contact will be there with an information stand (stand number: V9), offering advice and information. Please come and say hello!

This event is taking place on Thursday 8th November, 9:30am-4:30pm,
at EventCity, Barton Dock Road, Manchester, M17 8AS.

To find out more information and to download your free tickets, please visit

<https://www.kidzexhibitions.co.uk/kidz-north/visit-kidz-to-adultz-north/download-tickets/>

Shop 'til you drop with Amazon Smile – and make £ for Contact!

We're pleased to announce that Contact has joined Amazon Smile – a brilliant initiative from Amazon that lets customers enjoy the same wide selection of products and donates 0.5% to the charitable organisations selected by customers.



If you would like to support Contact, simply shop through

<https://smile.amazon.co.uk/ch/284912-0> and double check the correct charity is selected at the top, under the search bar. It should read: *Supporting: Contact.*

Browse as usual, purchase what you need and Amazon will donate 0.5% to Contact at no extra cost to you or to us!

Advice, consultancy service, training and workshops for professionals

As well as supporting families, we help other professionals working with disabled children. We have now launched a menu of products and services for professionals.

To find out how our advice, consultancy service, training and workshops can support your work please visit: <https://contact.org.uk/professionals>

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Contact's Resources Continued...

NEW Parent guides

We produce a series of guides and factsheets on all aspects of raising a disabled child that covers:

- ✓ Money and money saving tips
- ✓ Transport
- ✓ Disability and sickness benefits
- ✓ Benefits for working
- ✓ Help with rent, mortgage and council tax
- ✓ Grants and loans

You can find our most recent and up to date [guides and factsheets](#) in our library at www.contact.org.uk, or email helpline@contact.org.uk/call our helpline on 0808 808 3555 and ask for a free copy of the latest edition sent to you in the post.

We'd also like to apologise for an error in our summer 2018 newsletter. The new factsheet - [Extra help in education for 19-25 year olds in England](#) was unavailable. However, it is now available [HERE](#). It was written by experts on our education helpline. It explains education options post 19, what happens to Education, Health Care (EHC) plans, what if your child doesn't have an EHC plan, funding for education and much more.

Have you got your copy of the free *Helpful Guide for families with disabled children* yet?

This is our all-in-one book; with all the information and help you need to enjoy family life. With our guide, we'll talk you through what can be a confusing system of support.

We'll support you to find the best way to help your child. We can help you make sense of any jargon and job titles you'll come across.

How can I order a copy?

If you'd like a copy, simply [complete our online application form](https://contact.org.uk/order-your-copy-of-the-helpful-guide-for-families-with-disabled-children/) at <https://contact.org.uk/order-your-copy-of-the-helpful-guide-for-families-with-disabled-children/>. We'll send you a copy within a couple of weeks.





Contact's Advice and Support – Benefits & Financial Help

Check out our [energy saving tips](#) on our website now! We cover:

KEEPING AN EYE ON YOUR BILLS

- Your bill might be based on estimate readings!
- Consider switching suppliers. The Freephone energy helpline: 0800 074 0745 – this compares all major suppliers in the UK to help find you the best deal.



TIPS TO SAVE ON HEATING AND FUEL COSTS

- Turning down your thermostat by just 1°C can cut your fuel bills by up to 10%, saving you about £70 a year!
- Use draft excluders and draft proofing tape, you could save up to £50 a year!

TIPS TO SAVE ON WATER COSTS

- Encourage your family to shower rather than have a bath; a five-minute shower uses about 30% less water. Check if you are eligible for Water Sure scheme (see link below)



TIPS ON ELECTRICITY

- By switching off lights in empty rooms and corridors, you can save up to 15% on your bill
- An average household can save £30-£40 a year just by turning appliances off at the wall.

WARM HOME DISCOUNT

- This scheme may lead to a rebate worth up to £140! Visit to check whether you are eligible: <https://www.contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/benefits-financial-help/help-with-fuel-and-water-bills/>

We also cover help with [fuel and water bills](#) on our website at www.contact.org.uk

Blue Badge Scheme Extended to Include Hidden Disabilities



This month, the government announced that the [Blue Badge scheme](#) in England will be expanded to include people with hidden disabilities, such as autism or mental illnesses.

To find out more information and whether you are entitled to a Blue Badge, visit our website at: <https://contact.org.uk/news-and-blogs/blue-badge-scheme-extended-to-include-hidden-disabilities/>

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Resources featured in this article



Super shoes: Empowering children fighting cancer in the UK. Each pair of shoes are designed specifically for a particular child or young person and hand painted by a Super Artist to express the child and all of the things they like. This could be a favourite game, sports team, music, animals or all the above! In fact, anything that the child holds dear.

Supershoes are as unique as the child or young person that wears them and act as a reminder to that child of who they are, despite their illness, challenges and treatment.

To find out more information about Supershoes visit <https://www.supershoes.org.uk/about/> or Tel 01908 274 944 or email: admin@supershoes.org.uk

Pyjama fairies: Pyjama Fairies is the only UK charity to make pyjamas and surgical gowns specially designed for babies and children up to age 16 having surgery or any other associated medical test.



Each garment is made in colourful, age-appropriate fabric and is designed to minimise discomfort when medical intervention is necessary. Your child can remain fully dressed, safe and warm whilst being examined and throughout their stay in hospital.

To find out more information or order a personalised gown visit <https://pyjamafairies.org/our-garments/order-garments/>



Family Fund: Family fund are the largest provider of grants to families living on low income who are raising disabled or seriously ill children or young people aged 17 and under. Their grants bring practical and essential help to families such as; washing machines, fridges, freezers, specialist toys, computers and much needed family breaks.

To find out more information visit their webpage: <https://www.familyfund.org.uk> or contact them on 01904 550055.



Resources featured in this article continued...

‘Quieter Hour’ at Morrisons Stores in the UK: Morrison’s have introduced ‘quieter hour’ in all their stores every Saturday during the hours of 9:00am-10:00am.

During Quieter Hour, Morrison’s will

- ✓ Dim the lights
- ✓ Turn the music and radio off
- ✓ Avoid making any announcements
- ✓ Reduce movements of baskets and trolleys
- ✓ Turn down checkout beeps and other electrical noises
- ✓ Place a poster outside to tell customers it’s Quieter Hour.

To find out more information visit <https://my.morrisons.com/blog/community/quieter-hour/>



SPACE4AUTISM: Space4autism was set up by parents in 2005. They are a voluntary run charity in Cheshire who supports the whole family by holding monthly parent support meetings/workshops and events for all ages.

To find out more information Tel: 01625 617884 or email: info.space@hotmail.com

Booth Charity Family Scheme at The Lowry – Salford. For families with a Salford postcode.

Did you know The Lowry in Salford have an exclusive scheme that support families of children with additional needs to visit and enjoy the theatre together?

The booth charities would like to offer families in Salford the opportunity to see three live theatre performances at The Lowry for free, and to take part in activities together. They would like to hear from families of children with disabilities who may have found it difficult to visit and experience live theatre together.

To find out further information and to complete their online [application form](#) to get your free tickets, visit www.thelowry.com.



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Contact and HemiHelp new Partnerships

Contact North West would like to welcome HemiHelp to Contact and say hello to the families in this region. Contact officially took over running HemiHelp services on the 1st April 2018 and a great deal has happened in the last five months to ensure families using HemiHelp services continue to receive the best service we can deliver as HemiHelp and Contact have formed this new partnership.

The main areas that have so far focused on in the first quarter and going into the second are:
Promoting the Helpline number to families – and ensuring the helpline staff had all the information they needed to support families living with hemiplegia

Website development - merging HemiHelp information onto Contact website- the merging of all the information is due to be finished this Autumn.

Transitioning all our fundraisers – HemiHelp secured funding from Community Fundraisers, regular givers and Trusts, working with the fundraising team we have been ensuring that the financial support will continue.

Looking at our information leaflets and publications - HemiHelp produced 28 information leaflets - 8 of them were very similar to ones that Contact produces so we are merging that information together. From this Autumn we are looking at the more specific medical information and how we can ensure the most relevant information is updated.

We have also continued to run our specific hemiplegia online support group via Facebook – We have nearly 5,000 members on our closed group - we have volunteers and staff who monitor the group and accept new members on a daily basis - it's a very positive group and our first port of call if any families are looking for peer to peer support - you can signpost them here, if you get an enquiries. **Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/5512952137/>

Health Information

Contact's Strategic Health Lead, Lynn Hoppenbrouwers, is collecting and sharing any health related information, consultations and publications that may be relevant to parent carers on a new '[news & updates](#)' page. Although aimed primarily at parent carers who are involved in their [local parent carer forum](#), the information is likely to be of interest to individual parent carers as well. It will be updated regularly so keep checking back.

If there is any information you think might be useful to other parent carer, please send onto lynn.hoppenbrouwers@contact.org.uk .

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Who to ask?

Finding information about services and support in your local area – THE LOCAL OFFER

Every Local Authority should have information on services for children with SEN or disabilities set out in an area of their website named the ‘local offer’ and should be easily accessible on council websites. It should list information about how and where you can get support from for your child to enable them to have the same opportunities as any other child, prevent isolation and promote good mental health and wellbeing and community involvement.

It should have information on a wide range of things such as local parent support groups, carer’s assessments and short breaks; Special educational needs and health; leisure activities and play schemes. Information should be clear and provide an overview of the pathways to accessing additional support. Some of these may involve an assessment of your child’s needs and this should take into account the needs of you as a parent and the whole family as well as your child. It should tell you about short breaks available in your area both specialist and mainstream activities and how to access these.

If you can’t find a service or have any difficulties with the information on the local offer site then there is an opportunity to send feedback about this, in fact it is the duty of the local authority to promote feedback, to examine gaps in services that parents may raise and to respond to any parent enquiries and review service provision in response to parental feedback. Many of the local offer pages are ‘works in progress’ as they grow and respond to parental feedback to make improvements. Here are the links to local offer pages across the North West.

Cheshire

- Cheshire East – local offer can be found at:
http://www.cheshireeast.gov.uk/livewell/local-offer-for-children-with-sen-and-disabilities/what-is-the-local-offer/local_offer.aspx
- Cheshire West and Chester – local offer can be found at:
<http://www.westcheshirelocaloffer.co.uk/kb5/cheshirewestandchester/directory/localoffer.page>
- Halton – local offer can be found at:
<http://localoffer.haltonchildrenstrust.co.uk/>
- Warrington – local offer can be found at:
<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/localoffer/>





Finding information about services and support in your local area continued...

Cumbria

- Local offers for South Lakeland, Copeland, Allerdale, Eden, Carlisle, can be found at:
<http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/cumbria/fsd/home.page>



Greater Manchester

- Bolton – local offer can be found at:
<http://www.localdirectory.bolton.gov.uk/send.aspx>
- Bury – local offer can be found at:
<https://www.theburydirectory.co.uk/kb5/bury/directory/localoffer.page>
- Manchester local offer can be found at:
<https://hsm.manchester.gov.uk/kb5/manchester/directory/directory.page?directorychannel=1-7>
- Oldham – local offer can be found at:
http://www.oldham.gov.uk/info/200368/children_with_disabilities
- Rochdale – local offer can be found at:
<https://rochdale.fsd.org.uk/kb5/rochdale/fsd/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>
- Salford – local offer can be found at:
<https://www.salford.gov.uk/localoffer>
- Stockport – local offer can be found at:
<https://stockport.fsd.org.uk/kb5/stockport/fsd/localoffer.page>
- Tameside – local offer can be found at:
<http://www.tameside.gov.uk/localoffer>
- Trafford – local offer can be found at:
<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/localoffer.page>
- Wigan – local offer can be found at:
<https://www.wigan.gov.uk/Resident/Education/Special-Educational-Needs-and-Disability/Special-Educational-Needs-and-Disabilities.aspx>



Merseyside

- Knowsley – local offer can be found at:
<https://www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/categories/knowsley-local-offer-send>
- Liverpool – local offer can be found at:
<http://fsd.liverpool.gov.uk/kb5/liverpool/fsd/localoffer.page>





Finding information about services and support in your local area continued...

- St. Helens – local offer can be found at:
<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/schools-education/sen-the-local-offer/>
- Sefton – local offer can be found at:
<https://www.seftondirectory.com/kb5/sefton/directory/localoffer.page?localofferchannel=0>
- Wirral – local offer can be found at:
<http://localofferwirral.org/>

Lancashire

- Lancashire – local offer can be found at:
<http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities.aspx>
Blackburn with Darwen – local offer can be found at:
<http://search3.openobjects.com/kb5/blackburn/directory/localoffer.page>
- Blackpool – local offer can be found at:
<https://blackpool.fsd.org.uk/kb5/blackpool/fsd/localoffer.page>



Other useful sources to find out what's on...

Your local **Family Information Service (FIS)** should know what is going on for families with disabled children in your area. There is no longer a national number and each local area has its own contact number but you can search for your local FIS at www.daycaretrust.org.uk/nafis

Support groups can be a great source of information. If you know of a local support group in your area, either for children with disabilities generally, or a group set up for the same condition as your child, ask them if they have details of suitable events.

Carers centres are there for anyone who is an unpaid carer for another person. They often have strong links with parent carer forums. Lots of services advertise their events with carers centres and they frequently hold their own events.

Parent advisors, family support workers and **SENCOs** in schools, often keep abreast of local events, meetings, groups and play schemes, so ask if they know of anything suitable.



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Other useful sources to find out what's on continued...

Your **local parent carer forum** will provide local information and **may** offer events, workshops, training and consultations for parent carers in their area to enable them to get involved in influencing local services.

For more information about forums please contact: **Kate Hurn** – Parent Carer Participation Advisor, kate.hurn@contact.org.uk or phone 07458 045 694. Or see contact details below for your area forum

Blackburn with Darwen – Tel: 07923 252483, website: www.bwdpip.org.uk

Blackpool Parent Forum – Tel: 07889 156310 or Blackpool Parent Forum – Facebook page

Bolton Parent Carer Consortium – Tel: 07715 201798, website: www.bpcc.org.uk

Bury Parents Forum: BURY2GETHER@gmail.com or www.facebook.com/BURY2GETHER

Cheshire East Parent Carer Forum – Tel: 07794 431768 or visit www.cepcf.co.uk

Cheshire West and Chester Parent Part. Parent Carer Forum – Tel: 07522 249938

Email: chair.pcfwcac@gmail.com

Cumbria Parent Carer Forum – www.cumbriaparentcarerforum.org.uk Tel: 07702580347

Halton – help@haltoncarers.co.uk Tel: 01928 580182

Knowsley Parent Carers Voice – www.knowsleyinfo.co.uk/content/knowsley-parent-carers-voice Tel: 0151 549 1412

Liverpool, LivPaC – livpac@hotmail.co.uk Tel: 0151 727 5271

Manchester – www.manchesterparentcarerforum.org.uk Email:

info@manchesterparentcarerforum.org.uk

Parents of Oldham in Touch (POINT) – <https://www.point-send.co.uk> Tel: 0161 503 1547

Rochdale Parent Carers Voice – contactus@rochdaleparentcarersvoice.co.uk Facebook:

<https://www.facebook.com/theparentforum/>

Salford Parent Voice – info@salfordparentvoice.co.uk Tel: 0161 603 6833

Sefton Parent Carer Forum – Email: seftonparentcarerforum@gmail.com Tel: 07934 274449

St Helens – Listen 4 Change – www.sthelenscarers.org.uk Tel: 01744 675615

PIPS (Parents in Partnership Stockport) – www.pipstockport.org Tel: 07786 101 072

Tameside – Our Kids Eyes – www.ourkidseyes.org Tel: 0161 371 2084

Trafford Parent Forum – Email: hello@traffordparentsforum.org

Warrington parents and carers – www.warringtonparentsandcarers.org Tel: 07581 302 172

Wigan Parent Carers Forum – <http://www.embracewiganandleigh.org.uk/index.php> email:

info@embracewiganandleigh.org.uk Tel: 01942 233 323

Wirral Parent Carer Participation – Email: contact@wired.me.uk Tel: 0151 522 7990

Lancashire Parent Carer – cathrat130@gmail.com



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Campaigning News

Universal Credit

Under [Universal Credit](#), payments for a disabled child are to be cut by more than 50 per cent for most disabled children. Consequently, many families with a disabled child will be worse off. Contact is therefore calling on the Prime Minister to reverse cuts to child disability payments under Universal Credit.

More than 5,000 people have signed our petition to the Prime Minister so a big thank you! We handed this into Downing Street in June. We will let you know her response.

If you would like to find out more information about our [latest campaigns](#) and what you can do to get involved, please visit <https://www.contact.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns-research/>

Useful contacts and numbers

Contact's free phone helpline advisers can help you with any question you have about life with a disabled child – from getting a diagnosis for your child, the services and benefits you might be entitled to, to childcare options in the early years and support when your child is at school or college. We can also put you in touch with support groups in your area.

Call our free helpline on **0808 808 3555** or email your query helpline@contact.org.uk. We're open 9.30am to 5pm Monday to Friday and have access to interpreters. Visit www.contact.org.uk for more information.

Interested in Volunteering?

Would you be interested in volunteering with contact North West office? We are looking for volunteers to either offer support at the office with developing newsletters and parent packs or supporting Parent Advisors at our information stands or workshops.

If you're interested please email northwest@contact.org.uk or telephone 01772 424578 (answer phone available please leave contact details).

North West Annual Survey

Thank you to everyone who gave their time and completed the North West annual survey! It really does help us. The winner of the £40 Argos gift voucher was Iseabail Malpus from St Helen's. Congratulations!

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Registration

Not your own copy? Need to update your details?

Fill out our registration form...

You can find our Contact NW registration form for professionals and our Parent Carer registration form on the links or visit <https://contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/local-support/contact-in-your-area/offices/north-west>. Please fill out your form and email it to us at northwest@contact.org.uk. If you would like us to send you a registration form or you would like to write to us about something, you can send a letter to us at **North West Registration, Contact, Office 2 Centurion House, Leyland Business Park, Centurion Way, Leyland, PR25 3GR.**

If we have your details we can send you our free newsletters, information about family events and news about all kinds of issues that may affect your family or the families you work with. Contact is committed to the confidentiality of your personal information. Personal data will be held and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998 and will not be shared with any third parties for commercial use.

Contact would like to thank the following for their generous support of our work in the North West Region: The Big Lottery Fund, Irwin Mitchell Solicitors, Maria Marina Foundation, Sir Francis Scott Trust and The Pilkington Trust.

Don't forget to look at our...

Website, YouTube, Facebook and Twitter discussions by clicking on the links on the website at www.contact.org.uk you will find lots of information and advice there including:

- Publications and leaflets
- News Stories
- A to Z of medical conditions
- Fundraising activities and campaigns
- Online community (To get in touch with other parents)
- Support for professionals

Disclaimer...

Every effort is made to ensure the information in this newsletter is correct. Contact can accept no liability for errors and omissions and cannot recommend products or services. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of Contact.

