



# Carers And Parents of adults with learning disabilities in Enfield

## **CAPE NEWS – March 2021**

Spring is now officially here. Hopefully we shall have a healthy and happy Easter, and lockdown will soon start to ease. The excellent news is that Enfield's Covid-19 infection rates are steadily falling, and currently stand at 28 cases per 100,000, compared to a national average of 45. The vaccination rollout is advancing at speed, and this must make us all feel a lot safer. The schools have now re-opened, and hopefully this will not adversely affect Covid-19 infection rates.

We are delighted that Wally Walawalker (CAPE Chair) is now recovering well, after his very serious Covid-19 infection. He and his wife, Ann, attended the March meeting of the Focus Group.

CAPE members have continued to meet with Enfield officers and still attend various 'remote' meetings, such as the L.D. Focus Group, the Health Sub Group, the Transition Implementation Group, and the L.D. Partnership Board, making every effort to raise concerns and issues on behalf of carers of adults with L.D. We have now taken a leading role in a new group which is being lead by Enfield Disability Action, to monitor social care charging and other financial issues (see below).

### **Local Covid-19 PCR Testing.**

The Covid-19 PCR testing is still available, even for those who do not have symptoms, and we are grateful to Enfield for providing this. Tests are available on Mondays at Park Avenue Disability Resource Centre. If you, your Direct Payment staff, or the person you care for would like a test, please ring Rosemary Mann, on 020 8360 1195 or email her at [Rosemary.Mann@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Rosemary.Mann@enfield.gov.uk). Enfield has also now set up several centres where the high speed Lateral Flow Display (LFD) tests are freely available to anyone who would like one. Please check [Enfield.gov](http://Enfield.gov) for a centre in your area.

### **Re-Start of Day Services.**

Day services are scheduled to re-open, and all users should have received a letter (dated 08/03/21) from their day service provider, informing them of the new arrangements. If you have not received this, please contact your day service provider. The re-opening process will commence on 12/04/21, although I understand that day services may be available before that date to those who are considered to be 'in crisis'. Again, I urge you to contact the Duty Social Worker (020 8379 5075), if you, or your family member, are struggling to cope with the closure of day services. The re-opening process will be 'phased', with 'priority' service users returning first, and numbers being increased over the following weeks. As previously, there will be testing requirements for all service users attending day services, as well as day service staff. We also understand that the Formont pool will be open for private hires from 12/04/21, but please check with Shard Madhewoo at the Formont (020 8363 6388), for more information.

### **Visits to Family Members in Care Homes or Group Supported Living Environments.**

Now that the lockdown has eased a little, we understand that a nominated visitor should be allowed to visit a disabled resident. This will be reliant on a negative LFD test, taken at the time of the visit, and PPE being worn. Please check arrangements with your service provider, and if you have problems, contact the Duty Social worker (020 8379 5075).

### **Covid-19 Vaccine.**

supported by Enfield Disability Action



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Hopefully, most carers and adults with L.D. will have received their COVID-19 vaccinations. The G.P. hubs are excellent, and have made extensive adjustments to accommodate people with L.D. who might be fearful of having the jab. In addition, Enfield L.A. has set up a special hub at Chase Farm Hospital, for carers and people with L.D. This was featured in a BBC TV news bulletin last week. This has been very successful, and people have even been given the jab in their own homes, where this has proved to be the most appropriate method. To obtain more information about the vaccine and to access this hub, use the following link:

<https://mylife.enfield.gov.uk/enfield-home-page/content/learning-disabilities/coronavirus-vaccine-hub/>

## **Council Tax.**

Now that the Council Tax bills for 2021-22 have been sent out, I should like to remind carers that they may be entitled to a 25% or 50% discount on their Council Tax bills. Please check this link for information about this:

<https://new.enfield.gov.uk/services/council-tax/council-tax-discounts/>

It is quite complicated, and depends on the number of people who live in a property, and whether or not they are 'disregarded' for Council Tax purposes – e.g. children, students, people with severe L.D., carers of disabled adults, etc. If you are unsure about this, and require advice, please contact Enfield Carers Centre (020 8366 3677). If you are found to be eligible for a discount, it will be backdated to the date when your entitlement began – so it could be a lot of money!

## **Charging Policies for 2021-22**

The Policies for 2021-22 are now being finalised, and we have produced quite a lot of feedback on these. The new 'sub-group' to consider Social Care Charging and Finance issues has had an initial meeting, chaired by Karen Grimes of EDA, and we shall hope that this works as effectively as the discontinued Charging Reference Group. We shall wait to see how this progresses. We do have concerns that neither Finance nor Social Care officers are part of this new group, so we shall have to rely on the group reporting issues to officers and, hopefully, receiving timely feedback. This has proved problematic in the past. The new group will report regularly to The Learning Disabilities Partnership, and any issues will also be taken forward to the L.D. Focus Group, for more detailed discussion.

## **Charging Assessments for 2021-22 and Claims for Disability Related Expenditure (DRE).**

We expect that letters will soon be sent out informing people of their revised social care charges for 2021-22. Again, we have been informed that a breakdown, explaining how the charge has been arrived at, will not be sent out to every affected service user. I do urge you to request that your charging breakdown be sent to you by calling the Financial Assessment Team (020 8379 8177) and requesting this. Enfield is acting unlawfully by not sending this information out as a matter of course, with the annual charging review letter, but apparently their I.T. system is STILL incapable of doing this. You will need your breakdown so that you can check the levels of Disability Related Expenditure (DRE) you are claiming. You must ensure that you update your DRE regularly, otherwise almost all of your benefits increases will be taken as additional charges. The more DRE you claim, the lower your charge will be! Please request a printed copy of the latest DRE Factsheet and DRE Claim Form, to remind yourself of the DRE which you can claim, alternatively, you can access this on line at:

<https://mylife.enfield.gov.uk/media/24433/dre-factsheet.pdf>

The 'reasonable' levels, described in this factsheet, which you can claim for certain DRE categories, have been increased in line with inflation (.9%). You can claim DRE amounts which are less than, or equal to, a 'reasonable' level, applicable to that category, by simply explaining how they relate to your disability. You will not be required to provide 'evidence', either by receipts or by it needing to be specified on the Care & Support Plan, for these 'reasonable' DRE claims. Any DRE claims above the 'reasonable' levels, will require 'evidence' to be provided. If you feel that you are being treated unfairly by Finance, then please contact the Duty Social



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Worker (020 8379 5075), as sometimes Finance officers appear to be applying the DRE policy incorrectly. If you require any further assistance or advice, you can contact the Enfield Carers Centre (0208 366 3677) or Enfield Connections (0203 960 0129).

Finally, please remember that you can add or change items of DRE, whilst retaining previously evidenced DRE from the previous year, if they still apply. You should not be required to undergo a full DRE assessment. If a Finance Officer attempts to make you do this, please contact the Duty Social Worker, or take advice. Obviously, if you wish for a full DRE assessment, you may request this.

Please be absolutely clear that if you are not receiving any services at all from Enfield L.A., then you should not be paying any charges. You must call the Duty Social Worker (020 8379 5075) and ask for a refund of any charges which you have paid during periods when your family member was not receiving services. Duty should organise for a refund of incorrect charges, on your behalf. Remember that you will still have to pay charges for any week when you do receive a service from the L.A.

### **High Court Ruling against Norfolk County Council.**

We are still awaiting Enfield's response to this ruling. A group has been set up by the L.A. to consider this, made up of various senior officers and legal experts. They will provide their decision soon, and we have been assured that there will be an appropriate consultation on any proposals and/or policy changes, before these would be implemented. This link provides the information about the case:

<https://www.inclusionlondon.org.uk/campaigns-and-policy/facts-and-information/equality-and-human-rights/important-legal-victory-for-disabled-people/>

### **Enfield Advocacy Service (EAS).**

You may be aware that Enfield Disability Action (EDA) leads an advocacy service (EAS). CAPE is a delivery partner for this service, providing Group Peer Advocacy for carers of people with L.D. This link provides information about their advocacy service, and how it is currently operating:

<https://mylife.enfield.gov.uk/directory/providerdetails/211454>

It is headed up by Karen Grimes, whom many of you know through her excellent work leading DIAS. Karen works closely with us, at CAPE, currently leading the new charging group, and she also provides information for young people with L.D. who are moving into adulthood. If you, or your family member, require personal advocacy support, then please contact this service via the details given above, and request a referral.

### **Finally!**

We are still really hoping that we can re-start our CAPE meetings in the not too distant future. I cannot believe that a whole year has passed since we all met, and we had been so excited about meeting in our new venue at Park Avenue. So many terrible things have happened since then, and many friends and family members are sadly no longer with us. Let us all hope that the future will now be a lot brighter and that we can start to enjoy more normal lives.

Luan continues to support us from EDA, and we are always pleased to hear from members who wish to contact CAPE, or who have issues of concern. Please keep in touch with each other, and let's hope we can all meet up again before too long.



# **C**arers **A**nd **P**arents of adults with learning disabilities in **E**nfield

Wendy Berry (Vice-Chair).

Contacts - Tel: Luan, 0208 373 6249 (or 07745 795347) email: [CAPE@e-d-a.org.uk](mailto:CAPE@e-d-a.org.uk) website: [www.CAPE-LD.org](http://www.CAPE-LD.org)