

Bradford Portage Service

Issue 8
October 2020

Welcome to our Portage Newsletter in Lockdown!

It seems crazy to think that last time we were writing the newsletter, we were going into our 7th week of no home visiting. As we write this, we are now going into our 7th MONTH.

Due to the recent government guidance, all face to face contact and home visiting remains on hold and we continue to deliver a virtual service as effectively as we can. We are still accepting referrals.

The team continues to keep busy, offering as much support as we can to the wonderful families we are all so desperate to be back out visiting.

And on this note, it seems appropriate to mention some very exciting news. Our Portage Team has expanded as Lucy Rowley has welcomed a beautiful little girl into the world—Lily Ava Rowley on 02.10.2020.

We wish the family lots of happiness as they get to share some precious time together whilst on her maternity leave.

Which then leads us onto welcoming our newest member of the team Karen Russell.



Hello,

My name is Karen Russell, and I have just joined the wonderful Bradford Portage Team full time, covering a maternity leave for one year.

I have worked with Portage for many years - my first introduction to Portage was in the 1980's, and since then, I have had the privilege to continue Portage over the years, both working as a Specialist Nursery Nurse at Barkerend Resourced Nursery for 15 years, and then for 16 years as a Specialist Practitioner within the Specialist Teaching and Support Service, working with children with additional needs and their families, in the Early Years Team.

Portage has always been the 'backbone' of my early years work with young children with additional needs and their families in the Bradford district.

When this opportunity to do Portage on a full time basis came up, I just knew it was for me, to work with children with additional needs and their families, in a 'can do' approach and partnership way of working.

I am really looking forward to meeting you all.

We are aware that families may now be starting to consider nursery placements for the new year which is something we are continuing to support the application and transitions of.

We hope that all those children that have started their new nursery provisions at the start of term are settling in well and enjoying lots of new fun learning experiences.

Please remember these continue to be exceptionally tough times, give yourselves the credit you deserve and be kind to yourselves.

We hope to see you all very soon.

Keep positive, keep in touch and stay safe.

The Portage Team x

Useful Websites & Information

Family Fund - A charity that provides grants to support families providing things such as sensory toys or family breaks.

Bradford Inclusive Disability Service—Based at CDC St Luke's, this is a place for children with additional needs to loan a range of sensory toys and join the community on days out, activities and groups.

Cerebra—A charity to support families that include children with brain conditions and other useful information and grants.

Newlife - Another fantastic charity that loans sensory play packs and grants for children with additional needs.

Shabang—Based in Huddersfield Shabang provide shows for children with additional needs using sensory and makaton to bring them to life. They have lots of support groups for families to attend.

The Down syndrome support and training group Bradford—A charity run by parents and carers of children who have Down syndrome. They offer support and training for parents and professionals.

AWARE - A parent run group supporting families with children and young adults on the autism spectrum.



National Portage Association
Partners with Parents and Children



We are very proud and pleased to share with you all that we have received our 5 star registration with the National Portage Service for another year.



National Portage Association
Partners with Parents and Children

Certificate of Registration
Bradford Portage Service

fulfills all the criteria set by the National Portage Association and is hereby certified to provide a Registered Portage Service
★★★★★ Service
for the period of 1st June 2020 to 31st May 2021

Jane Rickman
Chairperson
National Portage Association
Service Registration No. 107

The National Portage Association is a company limited by guarantee No. 4633172, registered in England & Wales. Registered Office: 1077001, Regional Office: Keighley, 11 School Road, Keighley, West Yorkshire, WF11 1JG.

Learn. Connect. Be stronger.

Friends & Family Hub

For families of children with disabilities and learning difficulties

Notice for PARENTS AND CARERS of children and young people with disabilities and learning difficulties:

We are here to support you through the challenges of COVID-19

How can we help?

- ✓ Opportunities to connect with other parents and carers in friendly groups (remotely for now)
- ✓ Up-to-date information from vital SEND sources
- ✓ Regular Zoom events with guest speakers and trainers to develop knowledge and skills
- ✓ Online resources and chat groups
- ✓ Access to 1:1 support for a listening ear (by telephone / email / Zoom / in person)
- ✓ Wellbeing Exchange
- ✓ No commitment required – just here if you need us

GET IN TOUCH

We have Hubs based in

Bradford / Menston / Keighley

If you would like to find out more about the groups and how you can get involved, email

claire@thinkingbiguk.org

City of BRADFORD
BRADFORD METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Working in Partnership with

Thinking
BIG

Thinking Big is a non-profit, independent, social enterprise. Our aim is to promote social inclusion, opportunity and wellbeing. You can find out more about us by visiting www.thinkingbiguk.org

If you want to ask anything about the Friends & Family Hubs, you can email claire@thinkingbiguk.org

If you want to get in touch about any of our other projects or training, you can email adam@thinkingbiguk.org

This project is proud to be supported by

COMMUNITY FUND

Makaton News

We have some exciting news about one of our Portage Home Visitors, Kerry Cawley.

Kerry qualified as a Makaton Regional Tutor a few years ago and has been delivering Makaton courses within her role at work.

Earlier this year she was chosen by Senior Makaton Tutors to be one of only 11 Makaton Ambassador Tutors out of 1,300 other Tutors throughout the UK.

Her roles will be to support the Senior Tutors with Tutor training and the support of other Tutors, to represent The Makaton Charity, be involved with different projects and produce resources to use with Makaton signs and symbols.

We have known of this for some time as a Team, and are now happy that all the Ambassadors have been announced and we can share this news with you all - we are very proud of you Kerry!

We are not delivering any Makaton courses just now due to Covid-19, but we will be again once it is safe to do so.

In November, Kerry is due to attend a Makaton Tutor training course to learn a new course to deliver - Using Singing with Makaton! This great course will be delivered along with other Makaton courses and workshops when we are able to do so again.



Bradford Portage Service

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A Portage Service registered with
the National Portage Association.

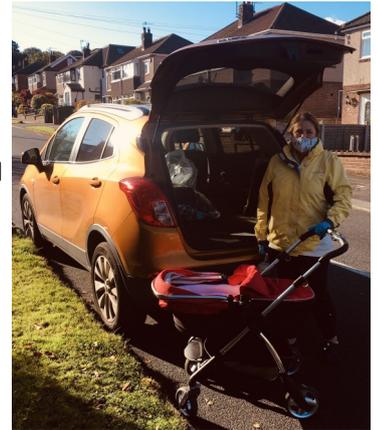


Bradford Baby Bank helps families experiencing financial difficulties and/or are vulnerable and who need support to buy essential baby and toddler items.

We work with local support services on a referral led basis. Social workers, Youth workers, Domestic Violence workers and Midwives are just some of the services to request items.

We can provide toys, baby and toddler clothes, prams and pushchairs, high chairs, baby baths, stair gates, breast pumps, cots and mattresses as well as basics such as nappies, toiletries and baby milk.

If you feel we could support a family you are working with please do get in touch via email bradfordbabybank@gmail.com or on our Facebook page.



Chellow Heights are now showing a virtual tour of their settings on their website for anyone that is considering a nursery place with them.

www.chellowheightsschool.co.uk



Please like and find us on Facebook—Bradford Portage Service - or click on the icon. Keep checking in where we are sharing lots of things.



We would still love parents/carers, siblings and professionals to contribute to the newsletter too. If you have any celebrations, exciting news or stories, activities or handy hints you would like to share with us please email

Portage.Team@bradford.gov.uk or let your Portage Home Visitor know.

Autumn Sensory Fun!

Oh how we miss being creative and having lots of sensory fun with you all! Here are some of our favourite sensory and craft play ideas we like to use at this time of year. We would love to see and hear about you enjoying some of these activities and exploring the outdoors for your own natural resources to use.



Use sealable freezer bags to create your own messy free pumpkin sensory play fun that can be used over and over again

Create your own Autumn sensory trays using leaves, conkers, acorns, mud, creepy-crawlies



Spider Handprints



Use a potato or apple to create your own stamps—great for those that might not like paint on their hands





Parents Reflection

Sarah's Portage Journey

Sarah was born in April 2017; Sarah was born prematurely and was diagnosed with Down syndrome at birth. Sarah had numerous health complications and this was a challenging and emotional time for Sarah and her family. This was the families first experience of the condition and they had many concerns and worries at the time and thinking ahead to Sarah's future.



Sarah's parents share how they initially heard about the Bradford Portage Service when attending a Health Visitors appointment at Canterbury Nursery and were handed a leaflet about the Service. Their initial thoughts were that it sounded like something they were very interested in and they were keen to find out more.

A referral was made to the Bradford Portage Service by Sarah's Consultant Paediatrician following a review appointment when she was around 6 months old.

When Sarah was aged 11 months her mum was contacted by one of the Portage home visitors who arranged a time and date to visit at home and share more information about the service. The family remember feeling a mixture of excitement, curiosity and apprehension as they waited for the initial visit.



An initial home visit took place on the planned date and time, by the Portage Coordinator and Portage home visitor who shared details of the service and the support on offer. They remember feeling worries of 'where to start' 'feeling lost' and worrying about the 'new experiences' they were going to have. However, after the initial visit this feeling was already lifted and they were ready to look forward to the future with Sarah.

Sarah started to receive fortnightly Portage home visits, initial visits covered lots of sign posting and gathering information. Following information from the Portage home visitor, the family soon became in touch with the Down syndrome support group in Bingley and have found this a valuable service and support since. Sarah continues to attend a fortnightly group with the Down syndrome support group. The Portage home visitor attended appointments with Sarah and her family and linked advice from other

professionals into Sarah's play plans, including her individual Physiotherapist programme. This really helped them to gain confidence to ask questions at appointments and to practice new skills with Sarah at home.

One of the most important things for the family was that Sarah thoroughly enjoyed Portage home visits and say how eager she was to play and see what toys were on offer each session. Sarah soon remembered her favourite toys and this was wonderful for her parents to see. They always felt fully involved in Sarah's Portage journey, from completing an initial baseline and having time to become familiar with the development journal, to agreeing Portage targets that were realistic and personal for Sarah.



They enjoyed looking at the steps Sarah had achieved and had a clear goal when looking at next steps for her. It allowed them to celebrate all that Sarah was achieving and highlighted the progress she was making.

They commented on how the Portage service follows an approach that is for the 'whole family' and it was as beneficial for them as it was Sarah. When Sarah's home visitor changed they felt valued and reassured during this period and it was most importantly it remained consistent for Sarah. The Portage home visitor always arrived with a smile, happy and ready to welcome, support and extend ideas.

Sarah had many changing interests during her time with Portage and parents reflected on the activities planned for her, for example magic bag/ colours and matching and how they followed these changing interests. This gave them ideas and the confidence to try their own activities with Sarah at home and they reflected on the many skills she has developed during her time with Portage, in particular her fantastic use and understanding of Makaton signing. Sarah



continues to develop her use of signs and this has become a whole family skill. Her parents have completed Makaton training and are keen to support Sarah to extend her use further to help her express how she is feeling and what she would like. They were initially worried that signing would prevent Sarah from developing language, but soon saw first hand how it helped Sarah to express herself and how much she enjoyed it.

The Portage home visitor helped them to complete paperwork including DLA and Specialist nursery application; things they weren't aware they could apply for, or had not heard of. They remember a key moment in Sarah's Portage journey when they started to look around nursery provisions for her and the feeling of recognition that she was ready for this next step and the sense of pride mixed with apprehension this gave them. The transition into nursery was done and achieved through small steps, for the family and Sarah, and they felt fully involved and prepared by their Portage home visitor.

In between the fortnightly visits, parents would keep in contact with their Portage home visitor and always felt valued with a response or some form of reassurance. Portage helped them to have realistic, high aspirations for Sarah. They feel they embraced all that Portage had to offer, attending many of the Portage parties and celebrations. They felt included as a whole family and it was lovely for Sarah's sister to join in these events too. It gave them opportunities to meet other parents, some of whom they are still in touch with now and the sense of a shared understanding and a feeling of security.

As the end of Sarah's Portage journey neared, they never felt rushed. In Portage style, it was planned and taken in a small step approach, as knowing Sarah was happy and settled at nursery was key. They remember the feeling of realisation that Sarah was ready for this next step in her life. They could see Sarah was keen to learn more, was excited to be around other children and knew Sarah was ready to have the opportunity to do this independently. They recall how they too had been on their own journey to come to terms with this.

Sarah's parents are keen to share their families experience of the Portage Bradford Service and the Portage journey they have been on with other parents. They hope to encourage families to fully embrace all that Bradford Portage Service has to offer, mostly the fun, enjoyment and memories that are made along the way.

