

# Disabled Children's Information Service

Spring 2016  
Issue 33



## The importance of communication



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A free termly newsletter for families of children and  
young people with additional needs

# Specialist Inclusion Project

Short Breaks for children and young people with additional needs or disabilities

## August 2016 summer camp



This year the Specialist Inclusion team are running a summer camp at the William Henry Smith School in Brighouse. There is access to fantastic facilities including individual bedrooms, lounge areas with TVs

and pool tables, a huge sports hall, cinema room as well as outdoor facilities which include an adventure playground, go-karting track and a mini farm.

The cost per week for each young person is £300 which includes all accommodation, food and activities. This works out at around 98 hours of care at around £3 per hour. There is a new online system where you can also split the costs into affordable payments and keep track of your total balance.

The camp will allow young people to gain new skills and meet new people. Staff will be on site 24 hours a day, and can support young people with personal care and/or administering medication.

There is the choice of weeks for young people to sign up for (4 nights/5 days) below.

**8 August to 12 August**  
**15 August to 19 August**  
**22 August to 26 August**

## Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award

The SIP team are now offering young people with disabilities the opportunity to do the Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award while being supported by members of the team. This will include developing new skills within a group and enjoying the outdoors visiting places such as Harewood and Nidderdale.



## Workshops

The team are running new exciting workshops on topics like dance, Minecraft, drama, film making and sports. The topics will change each month, as the SIP team are listening to what young people want to have workshops on...watch this space to see what's next!



The Specialist Inclusion Project is for children and young people with a diagnosed disability aged eight to 18. To find out if a child or young person is eligible contact the Specialist Inclusion Project on **01274 438744**, mobile **07582 101393** or email **S.I.P@bradford.gov.uk**

# Welcome to the DCIS Spring 2016 issue

Every time there is a new edition, a group of parents, carers and representatives from local support groups sit down and chat about what's happening in the District which we think you'd find interesting to read about.

Your suggestions and ideas are really important to us, as at every editorial meeting we discuss the topics and suggestions you send in or raise at local events or meetings. The edition always starts with a blank piece of paper, which means we are always featuring the most relevant and up-to-date topics. By the end of the two hour meeting we hold for every edition that goes out, the blank piece of paper usually ends up full of writing, drawings, scribbles and ideas of what will appear in the next edition.

Your involvement, ideas and articles, as parents and carers living in the Bradford district is fundamental to this newsletter. We urge you to continue sending us your ideas and articles, and welcome feedback. You can contact us through many channels including phone, email and social media.

The topic we discussed at the latest editorial meeting is communication, and how it is so important to the lives of all children and young people, especially for those children and young people who have a disability and who find it difficult to communicate. We decided it is important that we cover this as a topic, as after all it affects everything from making friends, to school to understanding information and everything in day to day life.

We hope that you enjoy reading this edition and find the content included useful. We welcome your feedback.

The wording in this publication can be made available in other formats such as large print and Braille. Please call 01274 433861.

**Note:** Events and activity details are correct at the time of going to print. If in doubt please check with the venue or organisers of an activity before setting off.

Every effort is made to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct. City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council can accept no liability for errors or omissions. Views and opinions expressed are not necessarily those of City of Bradford Metropolitan District Council.

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★ The DCIS would like to thank all the people who have contributed to this edition.

## Contact us...

Write to: **Disabled Children's Information Service, Room 420, City Hall, Bradford BD1 1HY**

Telephone: **01274 433861**

Email: **DCIS@bradford.gov.uk**

Website: **www.bradford.gov.uk/dcis**



Facebook:  
**www.facebook.com/dcisbradford**



Twitter:  
**www.twitter.com/dcisbradford**



## Max Cards

Max Cards are now available to buy from the Parents' Forum for Bradford and Airedale. The card costs £2.50 and lasts for two years.

The Max Card is a discount card for families of children with additional needs. To qualify you must receive Disability Living Allowance for your child, and live in the Bradford district.

The cards can help families to save money on great days out at castles, zoos, bowling alleys and more both in the local area and throughout the UK.

Once you have your Max Card all you need to do is simply show it upon entry to a venue in order to get free or discounted admission.

To apply for your Max Card visit [www.pfba2.org.uk](http://www.pfba2.org.uk) (and click on the 'news' heading) or drop by the new Parents' Forum office where they are now holding drop-ins every Wednesday between 10am and 2pm.

The Parents' Forum is located at: Unit 73, Carlisle Business Centre, Carlisle Road, Manningham, Bradford BD8 8BD

If ordering a Max Card please do not send cash through the post. There is the option to pay by bank transfer, cheque or in person at one of the forum events or at the Wednesday drop-ins.

To find out more about **Max Cards** visit [www.mymaxcard.co.uk](http://www.mymaxcard.co.uk)



## The Parents' Forum for Bradford and Airedale (PFBA)

By Louise Connors (parents' forum member)

The year began with the launch of the new Transition Forum. A group of parents and professionals met to discuss transition for disabled young people, and looked at how the process might be improved. The group will be meeting again, and if your child is 14 or older you're invited to be involved. Please email/phone to find out more.

Our latest news is that we have now moved into our new office, Unit 73 at Carlisle Business Centre. This is a space we will now use for our meetings, events and drop-ins. We are now holding drop-ins every Wednesday 10am until 2pm where you can come along, have a tea or coffee and browse leaflets, magazines or use the computer we have.

The other exciting news is we are now running the Max Card scheme, which gives discounts at certain attractions nationwide. The cards are £2.50 and last two years. You can read more about this (left), and order a card though the website or at one of our events.

The forum have been holding workshops about Personal Budgets, Gill Bauld from In Control came to do a presentation about how personal budgets, which will be launched on 1 July, will work. More information about Personal Budgets will be included in the summer newsletter so watch out for an update in the next edition.

Our most recent Parents' Forum event was held in Eccleshill and the MP for Bradford East, Imran Hussain, came along to talk to his constituents. On 15 July the MP for Shipley, Philip Davies will attend our forum event.

Whether you are already a member of the forum or if you are new, please do drop-in on a Wednesday 10am until 2pm to say hello. You can contact us below.

Parents' Forum for Bradford and Airedale  
[www.pfba2.org.uk](http://www.pfba2.org.uk)  
 Tel: 01274 397396 or 07506 789051

# Shine TOGETHER



## The Landmark Centre

A youth club for young people with a disability aged 13 to 18. The group runs on Saturdays 1pm until 3pm.

Activities vary depending on what young people want to do, but can include:

- playing board games and jigsaws
- using Lego and duplo
- doing crafts like collages / making pictures / taking photos
- cooking things like cakes / pizzas
- playing ball games / skittles
- making music
- making dens / outdoor games / walks

The Landmark Centre is based at All Saints Church, Little Horton BD5 0NG

For more information email: [shine@allsaints-landmark.co.uk](mailto:shine@allsaints-landmark.co.uk)

## Stay & Play for under 5's

New

SNOOP are a local charity that run activities and give support to children and young people.

They run a number of groups and activities, including a new Stay and Play session every Monday during term time, 10am until 12 noon.

There is use of the indoor play room and outdoor play area as well as the sensory room. There is no charge but a donation is appreciated.

Contact Matt Pedley on 01274 292127 or Carol on 01274 292126, email [2carols@snoopcharity.org](mailto:2carols@snoopcharity.org) or visit Facebook, search: SNOOP special needs objective outreach project



## Coffee mornings with Bradford Autism Support

The coffee mornings are for parents/carers of children with or without a diagnosis of Autism or any related conditions. Drop-in for a chat with other families and get support from Michelle Kelly, a family support worker from Bradford Autism Support. If you have any younger children please feel free to bring them along.

Upcoming sessions are all held from 9.30am until 11.30am at:

**Cavendish Primary School**  
Hall Rd, Bradford, Eccleshill BD2 2DU  
**Tuesday 7 June and Tuesday 5 July**  
(then the 1st Tuesday of the month)

**Gateway Children's Centre**  
43 Thackeray Rd, Bradford BD10 0JR  
**Monday 23 May and Monday 20 June**  
(then the last Monday of the month)

**Parkland Children's Centre**  
Old Park Rd, Bradford BD10 9BG  
**Friday 27 May and Friday 17 June**  
(then the last Friday of the month)

### Bradford Autism Support offer:

- support groups for parent/carers
- Asian mothers group
- various workshops
- Training in Autism (professionals)
- one to one appointments
- school support
- benefit support



For more information contact Michelle from Bradford Autism Support on 01274 721932



The team at Nell Bank, far left (Dan Goodey) the new centre manager for Nell Bank

Nell Bank Outdoor Education Centre in Ilkley is starting a new chapter. Bruce Fowler, the centre manager at Nell Bank for over 20 years, retired from his post in November 2015. Dan Goodey, the new centre manager, will now manage the centre going forward.

Nell Bank has a fully accessible adapted lodge, a treehouse adventure playground and the latest addition, an early people's settlement which includes an 'ancient' Roundhouse. New developments currently under construction include a new sensory garden and a brand new specialist dormitory. The new building, once complete, will sleep 70 people in a range of dormitory and single occupancy en-suite rooms.

Also under construction is a new sensory garden for the adapted lodge.

**The DCIS spoke to Nell Bank to find out more.**

**Where will the garden be created?**

It will be around the edges of the garden which surrounds the adapted lodge. We wanted to keep the central part clear so people can still play ball games or camp in the space while allowing the sensory garden to be accessed easily from the lodge. This means young people who need access to facilities in the lodge such as the hygiene suite can access them easily.

**What will be in the sensory garden?**

We have talked to families to find out what they would like to see and also looked at ways to use the natural resources already within Nell Bank. These are the ways we are planning to appeal to the different senses:

**Sight:**

There will be lighting created around the fence to make sure the sensory play area can be used in the evening. The pergola and also areas of the fencing will include different coloured perspex or acrylic sections and mirrors to create visual stimulation and reflections.

**Touch:**

We plan to build tactile panels on the fence surrounding the lodge using things such as scrubbing brush bristles, artificial grass, rubber mats, metal pipes and plastic tubing. There will also be a removable messy play area with soil and kitchen utensils to play with.

**Sound:**

There will be wind chimes hanging from the pergola made from natural materials.

**Smell / taste:**

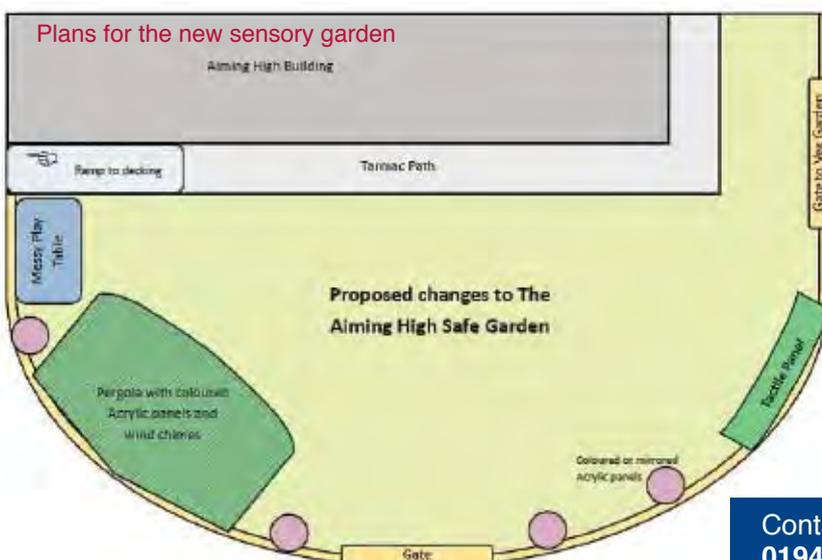
Making sure the already existing vegetable patch is easily accessed from the garden will be important, as the vegetable patch has lots of smells and tastes to appeal to the senses.

**When will the sensory garden be ready?**

Work has already begun, and plans are in place to have the sensory garden ready to use by young people this summer.

**New sensory garden**

The team at Nell Bank, along with the Specialist Inclusion Project are in the process of developing a safe and sensory garden which will surround the adapted lodge.



Contact Nell Bank Outdoor Education Centre on 01943 602032 or visit [www.nellbank.com](http://www.nellbank.com)

# The importance of communication

Being able to communicate is the most important skill we need in life. Almost everything we do involves communication. Everyday tasks such as learning at school, ordering food and drink, sorting out problems, making friends and having fun all rely on our ability to communicate with each other.

## Early identification

For people who have difficulties with speech, have limited speech, or physically can't speak, communication can be a challenge. It is important that the needs of children and young people who have difficulties speaking are identified as soon as possible to ensure they receive the best support as they learn to communicate.

## Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC)

A common term that's used to explain the additional help some children and young people need to communicate is Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC). This is used to describe a wide range of techniques children and young people can use to support spoken communication. This includes gesture, signing, symbols, Boardmaker, communication boards and books, as well as Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCAs).

## The use of symbols

Symbols are one type of communications tool. They can be used on a communication board, in communication books or on a computer screen so the person using them can choose the symbol they need to indicate what they want to say. Sometimes a symbol has the word written underneath or above it which helps if a young person is not familiar with all the symbols.



## Eye-pointing to communicate

Eye-pointing can be very useful for young people who find it difficult to use their hands and arms to sign or point. Eye-pointing means letting someone know what you want by looking hard at the object you want or by looking at pictures, letters or words placed in front of you, so that a person knows what you want or are trying to communicate.

## Use of Voice Output Communication Aids (VOCAs)

These are devices that have been created to help people unable to speak. A VOCA produces spoken words to help a person get their message across. They all work in different ways, for example, some store words or phrases and allow the user to put together messages which are then spoken out by the device.

## Communication passports

This is a really useful tool for children and young people who are non-verbal. A communication passport is a way to show important things about a young person quickly, for example, likes, dislikes or medication needs. It could be created by a school, a professional or a family alongside a young person. The passport should go with a young person for example, if they go to a new school, college or to a new group.

You can read more about different forms of communication tools and information through the few next pages. The DCIS would like to thank The Communication Trust for kindly sharing information with us for this introduction.

For further information about The Communication Trust, visit [www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk](http://www.thecommunicationtrust.org.uk)

## Communicating through . . .

## music



The Bingley Inclusion project is run by Bradford Council's youth service. The DCIS wanted to find out more about the workshops and spoke to Gemma Booth (youth worker) who is one of the staff who works at the music workshops.

## Interactive music workshops

Workshops especially for young people with additional needs with physical and learning disabilities including, autism, dyslexia, Down syndrome and Asperger's syndrome.

The latest technology being used at the workshop means young people with any ability or needs are able to take part and perform, produce and create music.

Facial expressions can be used as movement to control and manipulate musical frequencies and sounds including pitch, harmony and melody.

Hand movement can control intricate music production software using virtual drums, pianos or triggers to manipulate audio loops and samples.

Body movement can be used with virtual reality technology, such as LEAP Motion and XBOX Kinect where learners can easily mix and interact with any form of music.

For more information contact Alex on 07725 780382 or email [alex@allstarents.co.uk](mailto:alex@allstarents.co.uk)

**Who can go to the music workshops?**

Any young person aged from 11 to 18 (or 25 with a disability). The workshops are for young people both with and without additional needs. The aim of the group is to bring young people together to enjoy music, communicate and express themselves.

**What can young people do at the workshop?**

Use the instruments we have including the drum kit, keyboard, guitars and tambourines to play along to music of their choice. Or they can just listen, watch others, and get involved in singing or dancing. The group is about sharing a love of music in whichever way young people want to.

**How do the staff support young people?**

Staff encourage young people to try out new musical instruments, dance or sing lyrics by using the laptop so young people can read the words into the microphone. Young people are also encouraged to dance and move to songs to express themselves.

**What improvements have you seen?**

We have seen massive improvements in the vocabulary and pronunciation from young people going to the group. Staff help, for example if a young person is struggling with certain words, a member of staff will mirror back the correct pronunciation so they can learn the correct way to say a word. We have seen confidence levels increased, for example young people now request songs and encourage their friends at the group to dance with each other and the staff.

**What other opportunities are there?**

Every nine weeks we book a music artist who comes

to the group to give young people extra support to develop their musical skills. Some of the young people have made consistent improvements on the drum kit or can now pick out chords on the guitar. There is also the opportunity, if a young person wants to, to perform on stage at celebration events.

**What would you say to someone thinking of coming along to the group?**

Come along and give it a try, you will get support and a chance to develop your musical skills and have a laugh with friends. Everyone is friendly and all the staff will encourage you to join in.

To find out more contact Gemma Booth, youth worker on 01274 437146 or 07582 103570

# Speech and language therapy

The DCIS spoke to Bradford District Care NHS Foundation Trust's speech and language therapy service. This service supports children and young people in Bradford district with communication difficulties.

## Who does the service support?

As a paediatric team we support children who have communication difficulties ranging from birth to the age of 25 (if still in education).

## What speech and language difficulties do you support?

We have teams that specialise in certain areas of speech and language care including children and young adults who have:

- swallowing difficulties
- delayed attention and listening skills
- delayed speech development
- social communication difficulties
- hearing impairments
- cleft lip and palate
- learning disability/difficulties
- dysfluent speech
- social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.

## What is the role of the service?

As specialist teams we assess, diagnose and give help to children and young people with communication difficulties. The teams work across Bradford district in community clinics, children's centres, at workshops and therapy groups, in schools, both primary, secondary, mainstream, special schools and designated specialist provisions.

## What communications tools would you use with a young person?

As a team we would vary the communication tools depending on a child's needs. These can include:

- augmentative and alternative communication
- picture exchange communication system
- makaton signing
- visual aids e.g. visual timelines and timetables.

## What improvements have you seen with young people the team have worked with?

We have seen improvements in children's ability to:

- develop and improve their language skills.

- be understood by others by working on a speech sound programme.
- understand instructions of increasing length and complexity.
- understand social language such as answering 'who, what, where' questions.
- express themselves, both verbally and non-verbally, so that they can express their wants and needs.
- interact with people around them and increase their emotional wellbeing.

## How can families get in touch with the speech and language service?

You can get advice or refer your son or daughter by calling **01274 770397**. The team also welcome referrals from professionals such as GPs, health visitors, social services or education services.



# Boardmaker drop-ins

**Free service**

The DCIS spoke to two parents who were at the Boardmaker drop-in at City Library

**Parent of an eight year old who has Autism and is non verbal**

## How do you and your son communicate?

As a family we tend to use objects of reference which means for example, our son will hold up something like a glass, which means 'drink'. This has been a convenient way of communicating, but doesn't show the sequences in an activity.

## What have you come to create today?

A routine timetable to show my son how to get ready for school. I am planning to use real photographs, as my son has related better to these than using symbols. I will be able to use the photos within the boardmaker programme and write words above the photos, for example 'get dressed' 'eat toast' 'pick up school bag.'

## How do you think the timetable will help?

As my son responds well to having a plan in place I think the timetable will be really helpful.

I'm hoping I can help him learn the morning routine so it becomes easier.

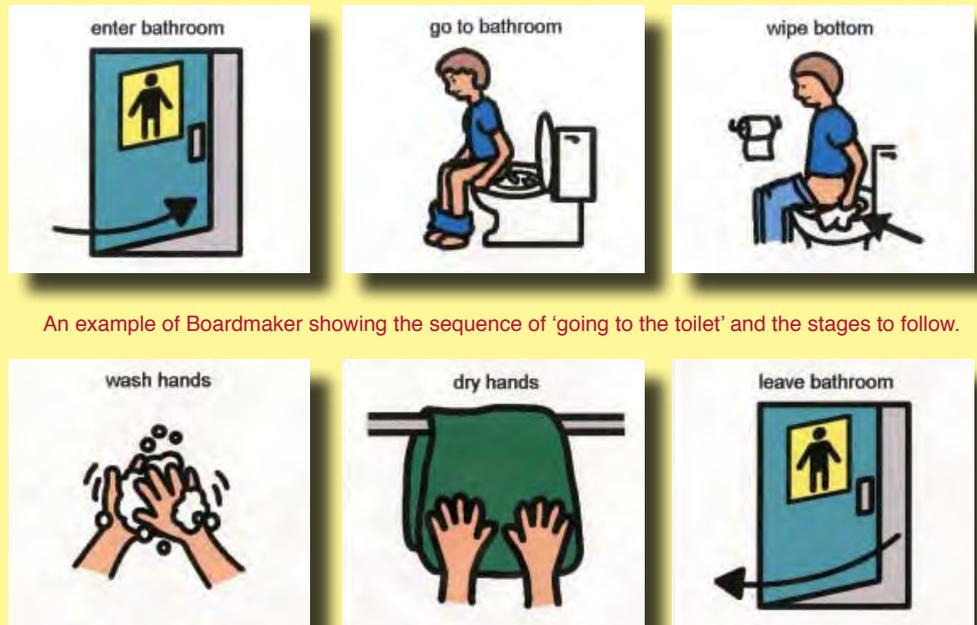
## What do you think about the drop-in session?

Coming along today has made me feel more confident in using Boardmaker. I'd say if you also have a child with Autism it's fantastic as you can make your own picture boards and timetables. Everyone is friendly and there is a great tutor.

**Parent of a seven years old who has learning difficulties**

## Have you used Boardmaker before?

I've printed out pictures from the internet to create a sequence myself, but haven't used Boardmaker before.



An example of Boardmaker showing the sequence of 'going to the toilet' and the stages to follow.

## What topic are you looking at today?

I'm trying to teach my son the stages in going to the toilet. He is toilet trained, but struggles with understanding the routine and stages to go through on his own.

## What are the benefits of using the Boardmaker programme?

There's lots of symbols to choose from so it's easy to find one that suits the topic you want to create the routine for. With Boardmaker you can add in simple words or a particular symbol to represent a stage he is struggling with. It means the routine can be personalised to his needs.

## How have you found today?

I think it's held in a great location as City Library is easy to get to. Everyone at the drop-in helps each other and is really supportive.

Future monthly drop-in sessions at City Library will be held on the following dates. No need to book just turn up on the day. All sessions run from 10am until 1pm.

**8 June**

**6 July**

More dates to follow

## Finding out about Lego therapy



The DCIS went to Green Lane Primary School in Bradford to talk to teaching assistants Billy Riches and Ashley Wallace about Lego therapy.

### Lego therapy can be a very effective form of therapy

It can be used to develop children and young people's social, interaction and communication skills. It has a whole range of benefits including developing language skills, social skills, confidence building, patience, fine motor skills, eye contact, turn taking, listening, problem solving, group work and much more.

Lego therapy is a very flexible therapy tool. We have worked with children who have additional needs, and seen first hand the benefits for children with Autism, hearing impairments and behavioural problems. They have shown increased confidence, better behaviour, and improved language skills, especially for children where English is a second language.

### When we do the Lego therapy the end goal is to create a full Lego model

There are usually three or four children involved in the model making process. This is because one or two children are chosen who we think would benefit from the therapy session, and then one or two children who are involved e.g. a volunteer or a friend. This helps to give encouragement and support if any of the young people need it in order to reach their goal of the final model.

### Each of the three children have a rotating job role

This means in each sessions there are three chairs around the table, each chair representing a different job role which each child swaps roles every 4 minutes. Changing the role helps to develop different skills as each role requires thinking differently and in a team to create the finished Lego model.

### Swapping job roles continues until the Lego model is finished

If an error occurs the team have to go back and amend any of the pieces which have been built incorrectly. This again develops communication and problem solving skills. As staff we observe the session and only intervene if and when necessary to allow the young people to work through a problem themselves as a team if possible.

### The rotating job roles we use include:

**The Boss** – This is the person with the instruction manual. The boss can't touch the Lego, but has to use the instructions to describe what to do to the selector and builder.

**Selector** – This person has all the pieces of Lego in front of them. The Boss has to describe to them which piece is needed for the different steps to build the model. They then pass the piece of Lego they have chosen to the builder.

**Builder** – The builder is the only one who can make the model. The selector passes them the right piece of Lego and the Boss describes to the Builder where to put the pieces of Lego to build the model.

### We asked the young people "what have you learnt at Lego group?"

“ I've learnt not to get angry and stressed. building with Lego is cool!

you have to work together, we even help each other if we make a mistake.

if you use positive language towards each other you finish the job faster.

you get to use Maths!

you have to work together and listen to each other which helps to get your model finished.

you get to work together as a team.

you learn how to build quickly. ”



**If your child doesn't pay attention when you are talking to them**

Always use your child's name at the beginning of a sentence so that they know you are talking to them. Make sure your child is paying attention before you ask a question or give an instruction, even if it means waiting for them to look at you or in your direction. Use your child's special interest, or the activity they are currently doing, to get them interested in the conversation and motivated to listen.

**Ideas to develop a child's communication skills**

Reward and praise any spontaneous communication or appropriate behaviours that your child shows you e.g. 'good sharing'. By rewarding them, you are increasing the likelihood of it happening again.

Expand on what they say, for example, add one more piece of information, if they say 'car', you can reply 'yes, blue car'. That way you are only giving them one more piece of information to process.

Make opportunities for your child to communicate, for example, if they want a biscuit, give them a jar or tin that is difficult to open so that they have to ask for help.

Try not to always solve their issues for them. If you are singing songs with your child, pause to see if your child can sing the next part. You may need to prompt them with a sound cue.

**If your child has difficulty processing the information that is said to them**

Reduce the amount of communication you use (including non-verbal communication including eye contact, facial expressions, gestures, body language) when your child is showing signs of anxiety. It can be difficult for them to process information if they have high levels of anxiety.

Use visual supports (e.g. symbols or timetables)

to help them to process information more easily. Speak clearly and precisely using short sentences as a child with autism can find it difficult to filter out the less important information. If there is too much information, it can lead to an 'overload', where no further information can be processed.

**If your child has difficulty answering open ended questions**

Don't use too many questions as children may find 'where', 'when', and 'who' questions difficult. Structure your questions in a way that you offer options or choices so that your child doesn't have to think of the options themselves. Keep your questions short and specific. You could ask 'How was lunchtime?' and 'How was maths?' rather than 'How was your day?' which may be too broad. This minimises the decision-making your child has to do on a daily basis.

**If your child takes language literally**

Avoid using irony, sarcasm, figurative language, rhetorical questions and idioms as a child with Autism will find it difficult to understand. If you do use them, explain what you have said and be clear about what you really mean to say.

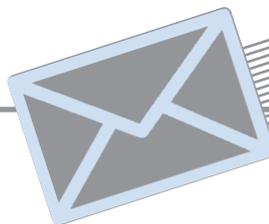


**Your home environment can help communication**

If your child is over-sensitive to noise, light, heat and/or smells providing a low stimulating environment can help, for example, limiting disruption or background noise can help a child to focus.

These tips have been reproduced by kind permission of the National Autistic Society

For more information visit [www.autism.org.uk](http://www.autism.org.uk)

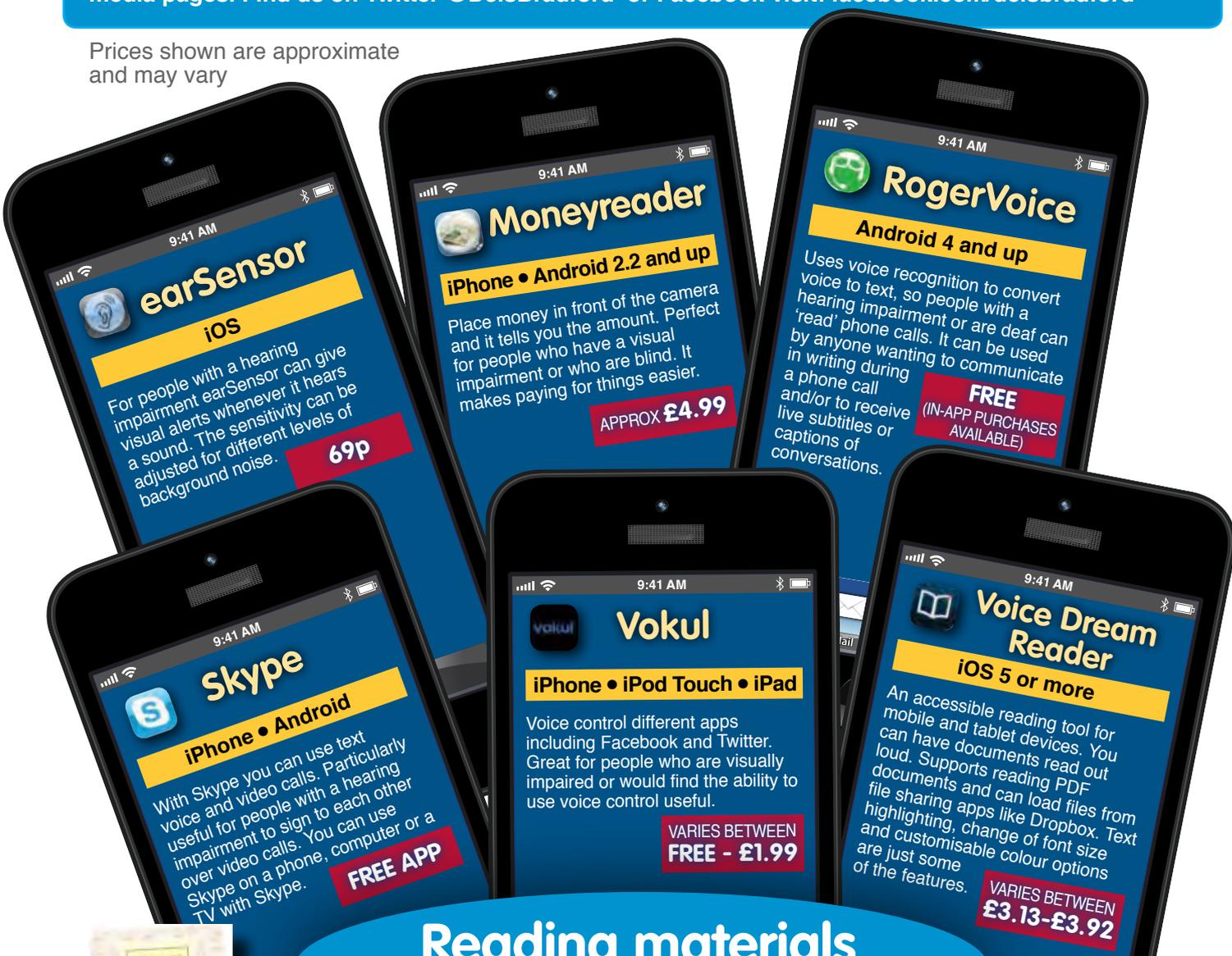


## Reader request

# Useful phone apps

Here's a few ideas, if you use any please let us know what you think of them and share on our social media pages. Find us on Twitter @DcisBradford or Facebook visit: facebook.com/dcisbradford

Prices shown are approximate and may vary



## Reading materials



Let's Sign & Down Syndrome has been written by Cath Smith and Dr Wendy Uttley. Wendy runs the Bradford charity The Down Syndrome Training and Support Service.

The book, available to buy for £6.99 from Amazon or directly from the charity itself, includes clear introduction, guidelines, practice sentences and early language development activities.

Topics including family, feelings, food, health, actions, instructions, home school, manners and time.

The charity also run training courses on useful topics including courses to help children's development and communication skills.

To find out more call **01274 561308** or visit [www.downsupportbradford.btck.co.uk](http://www.downsupportbradford.btck.co.uk)

**RNIB** Supporting people with sight loss

Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) newsagent produce over 200 popular and best-selling publications in audio. These range from daily and weekly newspapers to magazines including BBC Good Food and children's magazines such as BBC Horrible Histories. A free trial is available.

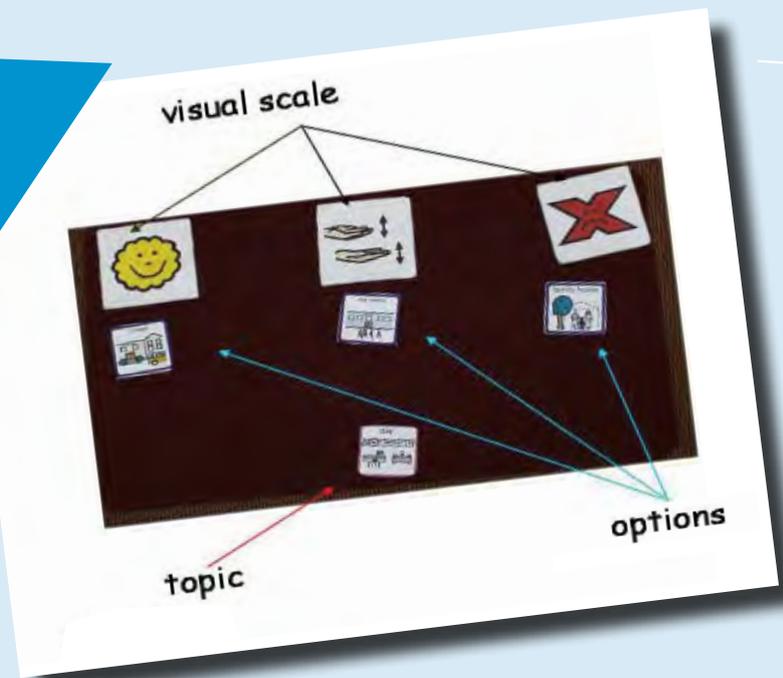
Full text is also available electronically so you can read with a screen reader of your choice, or you can receive selected audio highlights on CD, USB stick or digital download.

Telephone: **0303 123 9999**, email: [helpline@rnib.org.uk](mailto:helpline@rnib.org.uk) or visit [www.rnib.org.uk/newsagent](http://www.rnib.org.uk/newsagent)

# Finding out about Talking Mats

FREE WORKSHOP

People First Keighley and Craven are a charity who provide self advocacy support, training and information for people aged 18+ with a disability. They consult, communicate and give advocacy support by working with partnership organisations, offering training and promoting equality and diversity in all of their work.



## Finding out about the 'Talking Mats' workshop

The DCIS wanted to find out about the training course run by People First on 'Talking Mats', a communications tool which can be useful for people with learning disabilities.

### What is a Talking Mat?

A Talking Mat is a simple system using a mat, such as a nylon doormat or carpet tile which symbols and pictures can be attached to by Velcro.

### Who is the workshop aimed at?

It is for anyone wanting to learn a new communication method for example, it can be useful for people with learning disabilities and/or their parents and carers or professionals. The course delivered by People First is led by people who have learning disabilities themselves.

### How can a Talking Mat help?

It can be really useful for a person who has difficulty communicating choices and decisions in their life. It can help with, for example, big decisions people might need to make about housing options, support needs or can help with everyday decisions such as food and clothing.

### How is it used?

Talking Mats are usually used by clinical practitioners, carers or support workers. This is how they work:

1. A relevant **topic** is chosen for the young person and placed on the lower part of the mat.
2. The practitioner will place **options** for the young person to choose from.
3. Across the **visual scale** is the emotion symbols to show how a young person feels about their decision (positive, negative, unsure)

4. The practitioner will then generate discussions with the young person.

5. At the end of the session the practitioner will check that each item is in the intended category and may take a photograph of the mat as a record of the person's choices.

### What discussions take place with a young person during discussions?

It is really important that the practitioner, carer or support worker is in charge of the conversation to the young person, using open questions and working at their pace. The questions are matched to the chosen topic, and asked in a way to meet the ability of the young person they are working with. The language needs to be consistent using neutral facial expressions and body language.

### How much is the workshop?

The Talking Mats workshops for families and professionals is fully funded by NHS Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven CCG. People First Keighley and Craven would like to hear from you if you would be interested in the course.

For further information about Talking Mats visit: [www.talkingmats.com](http://www.talkingmats.com)

### How can people get in touch?

Call 01535 607222 or 07435 960794, email [peoplefirst@live.co.uk](mailto:peoplefirst@live.co.uk) or visit [www.peoplefirst@live.co.uk](http://www.peoplefirst@live.co.uk)

People First Keighley and Craven are located at: Unit 10 Springfield Mills, Oakworth Road, Keighley BD21 1SL

# Spotlight on

## Steven Livingstone, family support behavioural nurse

**My job role involves** giving support to families who are having difficulties with their son or daughter's behaviour. I assess a child's behaviour and then put in place strategies to help.

**I work for** the specialist behavioural services who work with children and young people from starting school age to 18 (17 at the time of referral).

**A typical day involves** going into a family's home to assess the behaviour of their child. Often a child will show a negative behaviour because they can't communicate or express what their needs are. I will trial different strategies aimed at improving their behaviour.

**I will select different communication tools** depending on the needs of the child or young person I'm working with. I might use a tally chart initially for measuring the frequency of behaviours, and then use tools such as a visual reward systems, visual routines, choice boards or symbols. I work closely with the whole family to make sure everyone is involved and using the strategies.

**I have seen children's behaviour improve** through the use of communications tools. For one particular young person this was seen through the use of a choice board. A choice board is when there is a number of different symbols, which a child can pick to explain what they are trying to say. This particular young person was pulling at clothing and grabbing things. After using the choice board their behaviour improved and they stopped doing this, once they had the chance to communicate and express themselves.



### Tips for families

- Develop a good relationship with your child's school, members of staff and / or a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo). If you are able to, go into their school and speak to staff about your child's behaviour and find out what they are doing in school to help.
- Speak to any groups your child goes to about what their behaviour is like when at the group and what they are doing to support them.
- Get in touch with local support groups specific to your child's disability. They often have a wide range of information and resources to help.
- Make your own communications tools at home, you can use your own photos or old catalogues for example to cut out images and make visual routines to use with your child.
- Try to go to the Boardmaker sessions in Bradford 's City Library. You can get support from staff there to make your own visual timetables and storyboards (see page 10)
- It's important to speak to your child, even if they can't respond verbally. There are lots of communications tools that can be used for a variety of different needs.
- Every child and young person has a right to be communicated to and to have the opportunity to communicate back.
- Make sure your child has a 'communication passport'. It should be owned by the child and go with them when they more schools. Speak to your child's school to check if they have one.

**If you're worried about your child's behaviour or communication ability speak to a member of the specialist behavioural services. Call Children's Initial Contact Point on 01274 437500**



# Information for **YOUNG** people 18+

The DCIS spoke to Kate Hammond project development worker for Luv2meetU, a friendship and dating agency for people with a learning disability based in Bradford.



Kate Hammond

## Friendship and relationships

### What is Luv2meetU?

A friendship and dating agency for people with a learning disability aged over 18. Luv2meetU is a Community Interest Company which means we use any profits we make to put back into the group, activities or events we hold. All the staff are employed by the charity Home Farm Trust (Hft) who are a national charity providing services for people with learning disabilities throughout England.

### What can people get involved in?

The team work to support people to make new friends, share interests and if they want to, develop relationships. We are mainly a friendship agency and many members join for the social opportunities the group offers. Staff members arrange social activities like going to the theatre/cinema, bowling, meals out, coffee mornings, picnics, concerts, shopping trips, day trips and much more. As well as this if a person is interested we also run a 'Single Mingle' event every couple of months and organise one to one dates.

### What support do the staff give at activities?

The team encourage people to develop their independence and learn new skills. Staff offer support at social events including helping people with travel to events, reading, using money and to develop and widen their social networks. In regards to dating, the team will support a member's first date and make sure that support is in place if members enter into a relationship. This may include referral to other agencies. Luv2meetU can also organise training for people around relationships, confidence/self-esteem, health, keeping safe in the community and using Facebook.

### How does the dating aspect of the group work?

For members who are also looking to date there are opportunities to be matched with other members based upon on similar interests, personality and age. If members want to meet up, we would then set up a date based on what they would like to do. A trained member of staff or volunteer will always go along on a first dates to give support. After every first date we will ring up each member to see how things have gone to support any budding relationships.

### How can someone become a member of Luv2meetU?

Becoming a member is easy, you just need to be over the age of 18 and have a learning disability. New members just need to fill out a form so we can find out a bit more information, and post it back to us. After the form is returned, we will get references and then will arrange a meeting with you to chat about what we offer and find out more about you.

### How much does it cost to join?

There is an annual membership fee of £40 which includes the opportunity to go to social events each month, as well as the opportunity to have support to go on dates. Some activities are free (included with the annual membership) and some will have an additional fee.

To find out more about Luv2meetU visit [www.luv2meetu.com](http://www.luv2meetu.com), call 01274 655956 or email [luv2meetu@hft.org.uk](mailto:luv2meetu@hft.org.uk)

## Hum Tum



Hum Tum (Hindi for 'you and me') is a friendship agency especially for people with learning disabilities from Asian communities. The group meets in Bradford at selected venues.

Hum Tum was set up by Luv2meetU and Asian community organisation Hamara in 2011, to take into account the cultural and religious needs of people from Asian communities. Hum Tum is based on developing friendships, allowing people to enjoy a healthy social life and make friends in environments that are familiar and comfortable to them.

Activities run by Hum Tum include Bollywood evenings, Henna painting evenings and ladies or gentleman only evenings. Members also join together to celebrate religious festivals such as Diwali.

To find out more contact Farzana at Luv2meetU on **01274 655956**



## Beautiful Octopus Club

Beautiful Octopus Club is an over 18s club night especially for people with learning disabilities based at Leeds University Union held twice a year, (usually in March and September). The night is supported by staff from West Yorkshire Playhouse and Leeds University Union, regularly attracting over 400 people at each event.

Each club night has a new theme that everyone can get involved in dressing up for. The entrance fee is £7 per person in advance or £8 on the night.

On the night there is:

- party atmosphere
- licensed bar with picture menu for easy ordering
- free face painting
- hot food to buy e.g. hot dogs, burgers and chips, (vegetarian option also available)
- cloakroom facility
- two bars
- pop up shop selling party items

**For more information contact Maria Thelwell, Creative Engagement Officer (Access) call 0113 245 5252 or email [maria.thelwell@wyp.org.uk](mailto:maria.thelwell@wyp.org.uk)**

The autumn date hasn't been set yet, but keep a look out on **[www.wyp.org.uk](http://www.wyp.org.uk)** for updates.

## Beat It Nights

Inclusive night club events held once a month at Glyde House in Bradford for people over 18 with a disability. The night club is held on the 4th Wednesday of every month from 7pm until 11pm.

**Upcoming Wednesday club nights:**

- |                |                     |
|----------------|---------------------|
| <b>25 May</b>  | <b>24 August</b>    |
| <b>22 June</b> | <b>28 September</b> |
| <b>27 July</b> |                     |

The Beat It Nights are for anyone to come along to who has a disability. Each month has a different theme with live music to dance and sing along to as well as a club DJ taking requests. The nights are a chance to get together, have fun and meet old friends, and make new friends.

The night club is informal so you can come and simply sit and chat or get up and dance to live music. The entry price includes pie & peas and a soft drink, tea or coffee.

The cost for entry is £5 per person for pre-booked tickets or £6 on the door. The charge for anyone supporting a person to come along is £2.50 per person.

For more information visit

**[www.beat-it-nightclub.co.uk](http://www.beat-it-nightclub.co.uk)**, tel **01422 363817** or email **[info@beatitnight.co.uk](mailto:info@beatitnight.co.uk)**

Beat It Nights are held at Glyde House, Glydegate, Bradford, West Yorkshire BD5 0BQ. There are a limited number of free car parking places for essential wheelchair users. Please contact to book in advance.



## Junior swimming lessons

for children aged five to 16 with a disability

**Bowling Pool**  
Mondays at 6pm

**The Leisure Centre Keighley**  
Mondays at 7pm

Both of these facilities have accessible entry to the pool by either ramp or hoist.

With every set of lessons you buy you get 10 free swims.

## General swimming lessons for anyone with a disability

**Bowling Pool**  
Wednesday at 6pm – 7pm  
Fridays 6pm – 7pm

Carers go FREE

**The Leisure Centre Keighley**  
Thursdays 11.15am – 12.15pm

**Richard Dunn Sports Centre**  
Tuesdays 2pm – 4pm

For information about any of the disability swimming sessions call Megan Ayres (swim activator) on **01274 438791**

## Star youth project

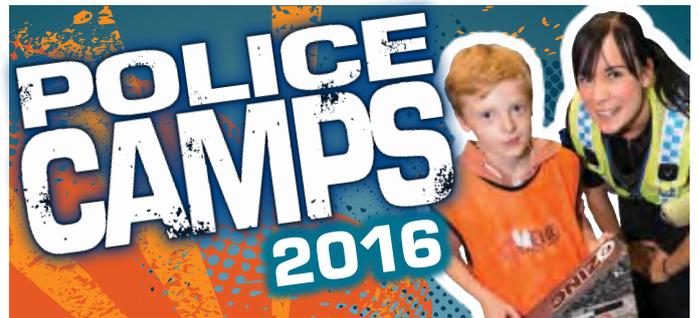


Star is an inclusive project for young people aged 11 to 25 with and without additional needs to meet up and take part in fun activities together.

This includes activities like playing pool, table tennis, gaming, arts and crafts, bike rides, quiz nights, bowling, cooking and more.

The group runs every Thursday from 6.30 to 8.30pm at Culture Fusion, 125 Thornton Rd, Bradford BD1 2EP

New members welcome, for further information contact Shaun Wilkinson (Bradford Council youth worker) on **07582 101962**



Open to young people aged between nine and 15 who live in the Bradford district. Places are £15 for young person a week.

The camp offers the opportunity to spend a week with frontline emergency services staff from the Police, Fire and Ambulance service. Learn new things such as first aid, cyber safety, judo skills, touch rugby, archery, boxing, street dance and much more!

Staff at the camp welcome young people with additional needs, but are unfortunately unable to provide one-to-one support, personal care or administer medication.

The camp will take place from 9am until 4pm on the following weeks:

31 May to 3 June                      22 to 26 August  
15 to 19 August                      25 to 28 Oct

For further information or to book visit <https://policecamps.bradfordcollege.ac.uk> or email [policesummecamp@bradfordcollege.ac.uk](mailto:policesummecamp@bradfordcollege.ac.uk)



# Free termly newsletter sent to your door in three easy steps . . .

- 1** fill it out
- 2** seal it up
- 3** send it off

Alternatively you can sign up online, visit [www.bradford.gov.uk/DCIS](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/DCIS)  
 If you'd like to find out more about the subjects covered in this newsletter or to speak to a member of staff for advice contact Bradford Families Information Service on 01274 437503

All councils are required under the Children Act of 1989 to hold a voluntary register of families with a child or children who have additional needs. In Bradford, when you sign up to the Disabled Children's Information Service newsletter your details will be placed on the secure disability register.

## Membership Form

**Parent / Carer**

Title:

First Name:

Family Name:

Address:

Relationship:

Signed:

**Child / Young Person**

First Name:

Family Name:

Address: (If different)

Date of Birth:  /  /

Male:  Female:

**General description of disability**

Physical impairment <input type="checkbox"/>	Communication disability (incl Autism) <input type="checkbox"/>	Chronic illness <input type="checkbox"/>
Visual impairment <input type="checkbox"/>	Development/learning disabilities <input type="checkbox"/>	Life limiting illness <input type="checkbox"/>
Hearing impairment <input type="checkbox"/>	Emotional/behavioural disabilities <input type="checkbox"/>	Mental health <input type="checkbox"/>

**Your Information Needs:**

I would like the DCIS newsletter to cover:

An article on  A guide to  An interview with

I have a story or some information to share with other parents in this newsletter.

Continue on an additional sheet if necessary

Do you have a question that you would like us to try to answer in this newsletter?

How would you like it delivered? Post  Email

Normal or large print? Normal print  Large print

Moisten and seal

Moisten and seal



Fold



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