



# CAUGHT OUT!

This did not set out to be a 'cuts issue' of *YourVoice*, but the amount of material that has flooded in leaves little room for much else. It's all too important to leave out. Please do something with what you read - write letters, send emails, whatever else you can think of - don't just sit there and let evil prevail.



Members of Telford Centre Rotary presented two cheques for £750 at their Burns Night celebration, held at Madeley Court Hotel. SDN is one of the two charities that benefitted from Rotary's great generosity. Fund-raiser Ruby Hartshorn and committee chair Sonia Roberts are seen with the cheque. Ruby also won a bottle of Scotch in the raffle, so one way and another she had a good evening out! The other charity was 'LifeStraw', a system that makes contaminated water safe to drink economically and quickly. It is saving thousands of lives in the Third World.

On pages 17-18 is a great guide to useful services for people with disabilities.

The Government's lies and half-truths about disability benefit changes have been laid bare in a report called *Responsible Reform*, which was researched and written by disabled people. Also known as the *Spartacus Report*, this is no partisan document. It has won wide respect and support across the disability community and beyond.

- ⊙ Boris Johnson, the Tory Mayor of London, has slammed his own party's Government over the Disability Living Allowance.
- ⊙ Stephen Fry, on Twitter, published a link to the report with the comment 'Looks as if the Government's been found out lying and misleading the people on the subject of disability allowances.' We couldn't have said it better! This is the link: [www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/16008](http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/16008).
- ⊙ Such has been the impact of the report that the lead author, Sue Marsh, was invited to go head-to-head on *Newsnight* with employment minister Chris Grayling on January 12.

See the full story on pages 6 and 7

## Also on the cuts:

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'We now have concrete figures on how much worse off the households in our study are in the six months since benefit reforms started to be implemented. These losses range from £74.70 to a staggering £781.55 between April and October 2011. Some of the people we spoke to are now reporting they have to choose between fuel and food...with each passing month the financial resilience of the households in our study decreases – savings are wiped out, debts accumulate, and one-off emergency grants are used up'

# Destination Unknown...

Just over a year ago, Destination Unknown explored how cuts to welfare and public spending would affect disabled people. It looked at how the cuts would affect five typical disabled families. Research showed that, far from being protected from the worst of the cuts, disabled families faced dramatic reductions in their household incomes, totalling £9 billion.

However, this initial research only told half the story – it did not include the implications of cuts to public services and local authority budgets.

A sequel provides detail on the real consequences the cuts have for the everyday lives of disabled people, revealing the first-hand experiences of disabled families living on the edge of uncertainty, financial stress and disability poverty.

Demos says: 'We were able to paint a far richer picture of the circumstances in which these disabled households found themselves, and were struck by their financial vulnerability in their daily lives, and the oppressive sense of uncertainty that they had to live with, which clearly jeopardised their emotional wellbeing.'

'Although nearly everyone faces tough times in this current economic climate, disabled people are hit particularly hard

## 'Tracking the lives of disabled families through the cuts'

as a result of lower income, higher costs, fewer support services and unpredictable health conditions.'

The case studies were:

- ☐ A young disabled child (Aisha) cared for by her mother and father
- ☐ A disabled man (Albert) and his wife, who cares for him and has moderate disabilities herself
- ☐ A single disabled man (Philip)
- ☐ A single disabled woman (Carla)
- ☐ A middle-aged, disabled man (Steve) who is a social care service user
- ☐ A disabled mother (Helen) caring for her disabled child

Demos calculated how much income the six households have lost over six months:

- ☐ Aisha and her parents lost £199.52
- ☐ Albert and his wife lost £781.55
- ☐ Steve lost £618.77
- ☐ Philip lost £74.70
- ☐ Carla lost £140.10
- ☐ Helen and her son lost £238.82

These losses arose from a combination of lower than expected benefit increases and other more significant reforms. To take two examples: Albert and his wife have lost benefits as a result of their new pension income, which means overall they are worse off by around £33 per week - over 7% of their total income in six months. Steve's large loss arose because he now has to contribute nearly £25 per week towards his care, and he has

continued next page



# Destination unknown, continued from page 2

lost the equivalent of almost 10% of his total income over six months.

Demos says: 'Perhaps the most significant development in this update report is the fact that Albert and his wife are soon to be evicted from their home, having fallen £13,000 into arrears since the Government decreased the Support for Mortgage Interest (SMI) payments by linking them to the average mortgage rate (3.63%), significantly lower than the previous SMI rate, which was based on the Bank of England base rate plus 1% (6.08%), which left the couple with a £200 shortfall each month.'

Their situation demonstrates 'how disabled people are extremely vulnerable to the wider economic climate ... Disabled people are more likely to be in such financially vulnerable situations because they have lower than average levels of savings, and less access to affordable credit, as a direct result of being less likely to be in work or to have a sustained work history...

'Six months on, the households in the study are still in a financially precarious situation, and we have seen Steve's modest level of savings wiped out, other households accumulating more debt, and one-off charitable grants being exhausted as there are now few avenues for emergency support available.

'This financial insecurity is compounded by fluctuations and deteriorations in the health of Albert and his wife, Aisha's mother, Helen's son and, Philip, who all report worsening health since we spoke to them in April, demon-

**Demos is a think-tank focused on power and politics. Its approach challenges the traditional, 'ivory tower' model of policymaking by giving a voice to people and communities, and involving them closely in research. This article, by Claudia Wood, summarises the second stage of the ground-breaking work Destination Unknown. Find out more about Demos at their website - [www.demos.co.uk/to](http://www.demos.co.uk/to).**

**These are just highlights from the article. Please read the whole thing, it is a really important piece of work.**

strating how vulnerable disabled people can be to changes in their circumstances and ability to work.

But alongside this, the effects of budget cuts in the wider environment are also making themselves felt:

□ Carla may lose her freedom pass as the local authority scraps concessions for those with mental health needs, and says her benefits agency is closing because of 'lack of funding'. Her local law office looks set to close.

□ The charitable trust Albert relied on to pay his water bill last year says it cannot help with his water bill two years in a row, as it is inundated with new claims for financial assistance. His local NHS trust has refused to provide him with a community psychiatric nurse through lack of funds, and has told him to go to a charity instead.

□ Aisha's family is experiencing increased delays and difficulty in securing physiotherapy services and equipment; Aisha has been waiting for nearly six months for a standing frame and was refused a motorised wheelchair by her local authority.'

Demos says that perhaps the most striking development in its update report is how several of the households have sought different sources of financial assistance when faced with a reduction of state support. Aisha's family has turned to a support scheme run by her father's employer, and held a fundraising event in the community for Aisha's new wheelchair. Philip has borrowed from his brother, and is being 'exceptionally frugal' in order to pay off his debts. Steve, who has now used up his savings, says he will simply not buy things until he had more money, or get a loan. Helen has resorted to using her son's trust fund to rent a suitable home.

## Review support saves mobility section of DLA from the axe

The Government will now not cut the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance for those in residential care. Instead, it says, it will gather more evidence before deciding whether the same will apply under the planned Personal Independence Payment which is due to begin in April 2013.

The recent Low Review, an independent review into how the mobility needs of people living in state

funded residential care are met, came out strongly in favour of keeping the mobility component. "Its removal would lead to disabled people becoming increasingly isolated from their communities and family and being denied basic human rights," the review found.

The weekly payments of either £19.55 or £51.40 continue to be paid whilst a claimant lives in residential care. [Social Welfare Training]

## AllCare seasonal success

Thanks to a Christmas party, SDN is some £200 better off. The All-Care company rounded off a fantastic year of support for SDN by making us the beneficiary of the 'office' Christmas party, which was also open to others who wanted to buy a table. In addition to a profit of £80, guests left £115 in envelopes on the tables. Maybe they were so generous because of a rousing talk given by Trevor Dickinson about the work of SDN! Our grateful thanks to all concerned. - Ruby



In the ordinary way of things we wouldn't run used car ads, so please don't send in details of your 1960 Mini, even if it has only had one careful owner who just drove to church on Sundays.

This Kia was the car of SDN founder Geoff Forgie and had been adapted to meet his needs.

Geoff's family have asked SDN if we could help them sell the wheelchair accessible Kia, which many readers will have come to know well.

Jess, Geoff's daughter, has put together some photos and information about the Kia and if you are interested, or know of anyone who may be interested, please contact her via the contacts in this poster

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## Nerve fibres discovery may bring MS hope

A discovery that ageing nerve fibres can be rejuvenated by young cells may have important implications for treating multiple sclerosis, scientists say.

MS occurs when the immune system destroys myelin, the fatty insulating layer that protects nerve fibres in the brain and spinal cord. Early in the disease, the myelin can repair itself to some extent but as the patient

ages, this ability declines and nerve fibres are permanently destroyed. A new study on mice shows that the age-associated decline can be reversed. When old mice were exposed to immune cells taken from the blood of young mice, the myelin covering their spinal cord nerve fibres began to regenerate.

The discovery could pave the way to new therapies for MS, according to

the British and US scientists whose work is reported online in the journal Cell Stem Cell. Professor Robin Franklin, director of the MS Society's Cambridge Centre for Myelin Repair, said: "What we have shown in our study... is that the age-associated decline in re-myelination is reversible...For individuals with MS, this means that in theory regenerative therapies will work." [from Yahoo News]



# 500,000 to lose out as DLA is 'reformed'

**Half a million disabled people of working age will lose out on benefits through the Government's reform to Disability Living Allowance.**

That figure is included in a consultation document on assessment criteria and eligibility thresholds for Personal Independence Payments (PIP), which is proposed as a replacement for DLA.

By the year 2015-16 half a million fewer people will be receiving the benefit, even though the Government has made some concessions on its original proposals in the face of a huge outcry against its plans. These concessions include:

- Dropping plans to double the qualifying period for the benefit after the onset of disability from three to six months.
- Dropping plans to remove mobility payments from 80,000 state-funded care home residents.
- Revising the original assessment criteria following criticisms that the threshold for the benefit was too low.

The Government's plans threaten the ability of many disabled people to live independently, according to Mencap.

"Disabled people, many of whom already live on the brink of poverty, should not be forced to cover the significant additional costs of their disability on their own," said David Congdon, head of campaigns and policy at the mental health charity

"It seems that those disabled people with lower level needs, but who nevertheless face extra costs associated with their disability, will lose out.

## NO LONGER ELIGIBLE

"For example, a person with a learning disability who lives independently but who needs some level of help each week with things like cooking, shopping and sorting their household bills, may no longer be eligible for the benefit."

Like DLA, PIP is designed to be split into two components: a daily

living part, equivalent to the care component of DLA, and reflecting people's needs for assistance in supporting themselves; and a mobility component to support people to get around.

There would be two rates for each component- a standard and enhanced rate - in contrast to DLA, which has three care rates (lower, middle and higher).

Under the proposed assessment, people with disabilities would be assessed on their ability to carry out nine daily living activities, including preparing food and drink, bathing and grooming, communicating and engaging socially, and two mobility activities: moving around and planning and following a journey.

Points would be awarded according to people's abilities to carry out tasks, with account taken of how far they need prompting, support or aids to do so.

[From <http://www.communitycare.co.uk>]

## DLA video diaries

The Guardian asked for short video submissions from people who receive Disability Living Allowance to explain why it is important to them. Now a short film has been produced bringing together their voices, and giving an insight into how DLA is a lifeline for people from a range of backgrounds and conditions. Use this address to find it: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/video/2012/jan/17/disability-living-allowance-video-diaries>

## Macmillan directory

Macmillan Cancer Support's "Directory of Information Materials for People Affected by Cancer" is a single source of reference covering cancer in general, specific cancers, treatments, and living with cancer. It is

arranged by cancer type and detailed indices allow users to identify resources by title, subject, language and format. It has details of 1165 booklets and leaflets published in the UK in the last five years by a wide range of organisations, such as national cancer charities and support groups and government departments. Go to <http://be.macmillan.org.uk/be/s-205-information-resources.aspx> [From Health Information News]

## Screening cuts bowel cancer deaths

A bowel cancer screening programme in England is on course to cut deaths by a sixth, say researchers studying results from the first million people tested. The study has been published online in the journal 'Gut'. Some 16,000 people a year die from bowel cancer, making it second only to lung cancer as a killer. [From Health Information News]



# Cameron and Co hid extent of opposition to cuts from MPs

**A REPORT** entitled *Responsible Reform*, published this month by disabled people, finds that the Government misled MPs and peers over the hostility to disability benefit reform.

It finds that Parliament has been given only a partial view of the overwhelming opposition to the Coalition's planned reforms of a key disability benefit, Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

It also finds that this opposition was previously not released to public scrutiny by the Government.

The report is based on the responses to the Government's own consultation on its planned DLA reforms, which were only made public once disabled people requested them under the Freedom of Information Act.

Findings include:

- \* 98% of respondents objected to the qualifying period for benefits being raised from three months to six months
- \* 99% objected to Disability Living Allowance no longer being used as a qualification for other benefits
- \* 92% opposed removing the lowest rate of support for disabled people

In all three cases, as well as many others, London's Conservative Mayor Boris Johnson also objected to the proposed changes. He said in his response to the official consultation, "people with fluctuating conditions have increased difficulty meeting the qualifying period. People with fluctuating conditions face the same barriers that all disabled face in relation to higher costs of living and DLA is essential to maintain a decent quality of life."

"We would recommend that the passporting system remains the same as under DLA, as it has worked well when signposting people to additional benefits to which they may be entitled."

The Mayor also objected to the Government's strategy for clamping down on disability benefit fraud, pointing out that the Department of Work and Pensions statistics give

Report that shames Government is based on its own official consultation

the overall fraud rate for Disability Living Allowance as being less than 0.5%. The Mayor's views were representative of the overwhelming majority of responses to the Government's consultation.

*Responsible Reform* suggests that the Government's DLA consultation breached its own code of practice and was "highly misleading".

Researchers used the Freedom of Information Act to obtain more than 500 responses to the consultation that were submitted by disability organisations, disability charities and other groups and have carried out the first detailed, independent analysis of those responses. The analysis showed overwhelming opposition to replacing DLA with a new Personal Independence Payment (PIP). The Government also plans to cut spending on DLA/PIP by 20%

The new report has been researched, written and funded by sick and disabled people, thousands of whom contributed to the research through their use of social media.

The report has already been backed by non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and disability experts including Disability Alliance, Mind, Papworth Trust, Scope, and the thinktank Ekklesia, along with Sir Bert Massie CBE.

A Disability Alliance spokesperson said: "The Government's mis-portrayal of the DLA consultation response is truly shocking and could represent a

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betrayal of the process of consultation and engagement with disabled people.

"The Government has refused to provide a justification for a 20%t cut in DLA expenditure and we fear that the same faulty rationale, misunderstanding of disability and higher costs of living and poor judgement exposed in this report sadly underpin the basis of the entire reform plans."

Paul Farmer, Chief Executive of mental health charity Mind, said the report "is essential reading for everyone ... a vital contribution to the debate on reform and a huge achievement for the volunteers who have produced it... Rather than getting out of control as the Government claims, DLA has been increasingly going to people who really need it."

The Papworth Trust says its own recent survey found that almost nine out of 10 people would have to cut back on essentials, including food, if their DLA payments were reduced or stopped under PIP. "We believe that the proposed 20%t cut will push more disabled people into poverty."

Richard Hawkes, Chief Executive of Scope, said: "This report once again reveals the very real concerns disabled people have about the Government's reform of Disability Living Allowance... this benefit is a lifeline for millions of people and families... We urge the government to listen

Sue Marsh, the disabled blogger and activist who led the research, alongside Dr Sarah J Campbell, said: "For some years now, poorly designed Social Security reforms have created a 'trust deficit' among disabled people towards government.

"We believe that reform must be measured, responsible and transparent, based on available evidence and designed with disabled people at the very heart of decision-making. Currently, we do not believe this to be the case.

**continued from  
previous page**

## **Authors had to invoke Freedom of Info Act to get details**

"While disabled people welcome reform of DLA where it will simplify the system and better support their needs, they do not want a new benefit. They believe it is a costly irrelevance during a time of austerity.

Another contributor to the report, Kaliya Franklin, said: "Cutting spending on DLA will increase the burden on local authorities, the NHS and community services at the very time they are seeking to find savings by reducing eligibility, particularly for social care support.

"Sick and disabled people have voluntarily combined our skills, experience and talent to produce this report, demonstrating that if we are able to work in the way our conditions demand, we can participate in the world of employment, but only if it is willing to receive us on our terms, with more flexible ways of working and participating."

Among the report's conclusions are that:

- \* Only 7% of organisations that took part in the consultation were fully in support of plans to replace DLA with PIP
- \* There was overwhelming opposition to nearly all of the Government's proposals for DLA reform
- \* The Government has consistently used inaccurate figures to exaggerate the rise in DLA claimants
- \* 98% of respondents opposed plans to change the qualifying period for PIP from three months (as it is with DLA) to six months
- \* 90% opposed plans for a new assessment, which disabled people fear will be far too similar to the much-criticised work capability assessment used to test eligibility for employment and support allowance (ESA)
- \* Respondents repeatedly warned that the Government's plans could breach the Equality Act, the Human Rights Act and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

**The full report, 'Responsible Reform' is available online at Ekklesia and elsewhere. See: <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/responsiblereformDLA>**

### **£11 billion given to charities**

A report by the Charities Aid Foundation and NCVO, shows that in 2010-11 the UK public gave £11 billion to charity. An additional 1.1 million people donated money to charity, although the median average amount given per month fell from £12 in 2009/10 to £11. To read the report visit the NCVO website [from VCS Newsletter]

### **Student funding 'faces £5m cut'**

The Department for Education says it is 'unable to deny' that the Social Work Education Support Grant will be slashed by almost 20%, to £23m, this year.

[communitycare.co.uk]

### **'Patchy progress' on joint working**

The NHS and local council have made only patchy progress in improving 'joined up' working between health and social care, according to a new report, which says that integrated working across health and social care offers opportunities for efficiencies and improvements to services.

It offers guidance to local partnerships, setting out a list of questions to consider, and suggestions for interventions that might help. Case studies show how some areas have embraced partnership working and used local data and benchmarking to establish how and where to make improvements. [From Health Information News]



# Disability Football in Shropshire

Shropshire FA is striving to ensure that every disabled person who wants to be involved in football has the opportunity to reach their potential as a player, coach, referee or administrator. Through its disability programme, the FA aims to establish opportunities for participation and offer quality provision for people with disabilities.

Regular club football is provided via the 3 Counties League (3CL) and support is provided to schools across the county that accommodate pupils with a disability. Shropshire FA is also working closely with partners to raise awareness of the 3CL, including targeted work with adult disability groups.

Teams, groups and individual players are more than

welcome to take part in 3CL festivals.

The Football Development Team is keen to support any club wishing to become more accessible to people with disabilities or wishing to establish a disability football team within the club.

A course is being held at TCAT in Haybridge Road, Telford (TF12NP) on Sunday 4 March from 9.30am-4.30pm – the FA Learning Coaching Disabled Footballers Course.

It is open to men and women aged over 16; managers and coaches of teams of players with disabilities; youth leaders of clubs with special needs; and teachers in special needs schools. For further details contact Eve Bailey on 01743 362769 or email [eve.bailey@shropsfa.com](mailto:eve.bailey@shropsfa.com)

## Disabled children lose out as Lords press ahead with cuts

**Three amendments to the Welfare Reform Bill were defeated in the House of Lords as the Government pushed ahead with its plan to make the poor and vulnerable pay for what critics say is the excess and failure of their allies in the City.**

Among them was an amendment - lost by just two votes - to protect the benefits of disabled children once Universal Credit is introduced.

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, a Crossbencher and the most successful paralympian of all time, put forward changes that would have safeguarded support for disabled children.

Although the closeness of the vote - 187 to 189 - gave some encouragement to disabled rights campaigners there was disgust and outrage both at the callousness of the measures being put forward by the ruling coalition, and also at the lack of general media interest on the harm being inflicted on disabled people.

Under Universal Credit, all but the most profoundly disabled children will only get half as much support. Child Tax Credit additions for disabled children will fall from £52.21 per week to £25.95 per week – a loss of £1366 per year, or £20,000 over the course of a childhood.

"These votes will almost certainly decide what becomes law and what doesn't. For disabled children, now it's too late. Shame on us," said campaigner Sue Marsh. "In a week where the Government suggested all cancer

patients undergoing chemotherapy ought to be assessed to see if they can work or not, I can only wonder where this will all lead."

The Welfare Reform Bill, in addition to replacing Disability Living Allowance, will restrict Housing Benefit entitlement for social housing tenants; reduce Local Housing Allowance rates by linking them to the Consumer Price Index; amend the statutory child maintenance scheme; limit the payment of contributory Employment and Support Allowance to a 12-month period; and cap the total amount of benefit that can be claimed. [Ekklesia staff writers]

*See also 'Betraying disabled people and welfare', by Karen McAndrew, Ekklesia, May 2011 - <http://www.ekklesia.co.uk/node/14675>*

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## SDN meeting dates

Diaries at the ready ...the next two SDN General Meetings will be held on 8 March and 14 June.

The March meeting, starting at 10.30am, will be held at Meeting Point House in Telford Centre. There will be two guest speakers - Tina Jones will talk about Listen Not Label, and Liz Holdsworth will explain how Enduring Power of Attorney affects health and social care choices.

The June meeting will be held at the Trinity Centre in Meole Brace, Shrewsbury, beginning at 1.30pm. Dave Hewetson will speak on "Rett Syndrome: An Amazing Story."



## Pat's online petition draws some major supporters

When Pat Onions submitted her e-petition to the government website a few weeks ago she could not have imagined how it would be taken up and supported by disability organisations of all kinds.

Already on board and helping raise awareness are: RADAR, Disability Alliance, CarerWatch, Broken of Britain, CarersUK, DPAC, and Benefits and Work. But there's always room for more - and the most important thing is individuals who sign to show their feelings.

Pat is blind and Pat is also a carer. When asked why she submitted the petition she said that she had made it to the Hardest Hit rally in Edinburgh. "We were determined to show we were united against the vicious cuts we are all enduring. We knew there were many thousands who couldn't make it. To those who came in spirit...this petition is for us all."

Pat's petition reads – "Stop and review the cuts to benefits and services which are falling disproportionately on disabled people, their carers and families."

If Pat gets 100,000 signatures it could generate a debate in Parliament.

The first step to signing is to go to <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/>



## iPad appeal hits the ground running in 2012

End-of-Life Charity Omega, which is based in Shrewsbury, raised more than £500 for Motor Neurone Disease sufferers thanks to the Devil's Chair 'Dawdle or Dash' on Boxing Day. Proceeds from the Stiperstones event were shared between Omega and Severn Hospice. Omega will use the money to buy iPad computers loaded with speech synthesis software, enabling MND patients to communicate more effectively.

Last year, Omega supporter Alison Shaw lost her husband James to MND and she describes the benefits of assistive devices: "His final year of living with MND was transformed through technology. In

spite of his paralysis, it allowed him to speak and use the internet and email, and - most importantly - to go on feeling useful."

MND is a progressive neurological disorder without cure and losing the ability to speak is common in advanced cases. Phil and Lara at the Stiperstones Inn ([www.stiperstonesinn.co.uk](http://www.stiperstonesinn.co.uk)) organised the event and an Omega spokesman said the charity was very grateful for all they had done. Omega would like to hear from anyone interested in organising an event or making a donation to the fund - just visit their website, [www.omega.uk.net](http://www.omega.uk.net).

## Winter surge for online health information

The Department of Health says there has been a record surge in people going online for trusted health information and advice over the winter.

Daily visits to NHS Choices from October to the end of December were up 56% over last year. This equates to 133,000 more visits a day.

Over the Christmas period, concerns about Norovirus drove up visits to pages on the winter vomiting bug by 162%. [From Health Information News]

## Red Cross help on call

A team of Red Cross volunteers are available to provide short-term care and support to any adult in Shropshire, both after a stay in hospital and to avoid hospital admission. Services range from lending medical equipment and pendant alarms, to assisting in pain and stress relief by providing gentle massage. Volunteers help with shopping, light housework and transport. The team also works to signpost clients to local support groups and organisations. This service is completely free. To contact the team just call 01743 280073.



# 'Spartacus' inspires a sermon

These are extracts from a sermon preached at the West London Synagogue by Rabbi Debbie Young-Somers, about Responsible Reform (see page 6)

Our limitations are often placed on us by the world we live in, but it is not uncommon for us to place limitations on ourselves, through our own fear and doubt. Moses demonstrates this perfectly ... trying to convince God that he really can't do the task he has been called to. He has a speech impediment...If we are all given the right encouragement and guidelines, and perhaps more importantly resources, just as Moses is by God, we can overcome much that life has thrown at us.

... there's the obvious quote from Leviticus: "You shall not insult the deaf or place a stumbling block before the blind" (19:14). But there are other imperatives too; one of my favourites comes from Isaiah (56:5) talking about the Temple: "For my house shall be a house of prayer for all people". We need to not just enable, but ensure our houses of worship, and the world around us, is open to all, not just those we see.

In starting to think about these issues I sent a twitter message to a tweeter known as @BendyGirl who I follow and have learnt a huge amount from. She suffers from a condition called Ehlers Danlos Syndrome and blogs, in her words "about the highs & lows of life lived with joints that dislocate as frequently as the British weather changes". To leave the house she needs an electric wheelchair. However to qualify for one on the NHS you have to be wheelchair bound in your own home for six months.

At home it is good for her health to move as much as possible, so in walking at home, she is precluding her opportunity to leave the house. She was incredibly helpful and suggested in response to my unsolicited online message that I just give her a call. Which I did.

It is clear that our responsibility, Jewish or otherwise, to support the vulnerable in our society is not going well... Proving you need the benefits is becoming harder and harder, with those who are wheelchair bound, likely in the new benefits which will replace the DLA to be qualified as able to work as well as you or me, as long as they can propel the chair themselves.

...I was struck by something BendyGirl (whose real name

is Kaliya) said. In Nazi Germany, well before there were Jewish pogroms and camps, disabled and mentally ill German citizens were rounded up, and it was for them that camps were initially developed.

And how were the rest of the population convinced this was ok? They were told that these people were an economic drain on the nation. Increasingly, as Kaliya sees it, our media has been spearheading a campaign to convince us that the disabled are work shy benefit cheats...

"In fact, only half a percent of all disability claimants have been found to be fraudulent, and yet to combat these false claims, benefits are being cut by, at the most optimistic estimate, 20%. Deuteronomy (15:7) says "If there be

among you a needy person, you shall not harden your heart, but you shall surely open your hand".

Disability campaigners are, on the whole, themselves physically struggling, sick, and isolated.

*Moses had a speech impediment  
... I want us all to lift up our  
voices in remembrance of  
Moses, who couldn't*

Moses' inability to express himself clearly is a useful metaphor for this. He had his brother, Aaron, to help him along the way, and he became the greatest leader of the Israelites. With this kind of support, three defeats against the welfare reform bill were achieved in the House of Lords. Yet these cuts have been happening for a while, and will continue if more isn't said and done....

"What I hear, particularly on the web, where the housebound often have their only outlet, is that people aren't making enough noise about this... We need to support those that we can, and be the voice for those who can't raise theirs up loud enough. Even if this doesn't affect you directly, it is still our responsibility to speak up for others...

"We all have unique skills and abilities, as well as challenges and disabilities...I must confess, as a sister of someone with special needs, I'm angry at what is potentially being lost both in care and in human dignity, but as a Jew, and as a British citizen, who knows we can do better, I am angrier, and I want us all to lift up our voices, in remembrance of Moses who couldn't.

May this be God's will. Amen."

[thanks to The Broken of Britain for forwarding the sermon]



Thousands of ill and disabled people have become trapped in a revolving door of medical assessments and appeals at a cost of £80 million, with many claimants on their second and third attempts to overturn rulings that remove their benefits.

The Government's drive to cut Britain's multi-billion pound welfare bill by moving long-term unemployed people off sickness benefit and into work is at risk of descending into chaos, according to a Channel 4 news investigation.

The work capability assessment programme, which assesses benefit claimants to see whether they are fit for work is 'teetering on the brink of collapse' as the system becomes clogged up with appeals.

Ministers introduced more stringent medical tests as part of welfare reforms designed to cut the number of people claiming incapacity benefits, currently at 2.4 million. They say sickness benefits are too often abused as an excuse for being out of work and have pledged to end what they call the 'something for nothing' culture.

But the number of appeals by claimants who believe they have been incorrectly assessed as medically able to work has quadrupled in two years, and is expected to reach 240,000 this year.

In one case uncovered by Channel 4, a woman placed on benefits after being diagnosed with musculo-skeletal problems was declared as capable for work, having being given zero points at her work capability assessment medical test. Her appeal found she was incapable of work-

# Benefits appeal system 'is near collapse'

ing for health reasons and as a result her benefit was reinstated but the process took so long that she faced another assessment, which found her fit for work. She is now appealing against that decision.

The logjam in the appeals system has meant that even claimants who lose their appeal against being declared fit for work are not being directed to the jobs market. Because the appeals process can take more than six months, many claimants deemed medically able to work are entitled to make a new claim for sickness benefit.

Channel 4 News spoke to 30 Citizen's Advice and legal advice centres. All reported that they

had clients on their second or third appeal. Many described the system as 'close to meltdown' and one said it was 'teetering on the brink of collapse'.

The tribunals service that hears incapacity benefit appeals is overstretched, with some sitting on Saturdays to try to keep on top of demand – and the cost of running the tribunals over the last two years has been £80m, according to official estimates, with that figure expected to rise.

A Department of Work and Pensions spokesperson said: "Welfare reform will ensure people no longer get written off to a life on benefits. Appeals increase whenever a benefit like ESA is introduced, that is why we are working to ensure that problems can be dealt with so they do not unnecessarily proceed to a tribunal. We are also continuously improving the work capability assessment to ensure that it is as fair and effective as possible, bringing in changes recommended by Professor Harrington.

[From Shropshire ME Group newsletter/Guardian]

## Social media guide updated

American nonprofit software information provider Idealware has updated its 'Nonprofit Social Media Decision Guide' which looks at the various tools available, examines what you might want to achieve with social media, integration, and a workbook.

The new edition has additional sections on goals and strategies, and information about using social media for advocacy and fundraising. For more information on Social media within the VCS and how it can help your organisation please visit: <http://www.idealware.org/reports/nonprofitsocial-media-decision-guide?key=49266978> and do a quick registration to receive the report. It is well worth doing!

[VCS Assembly newsletter 021211]

## Sensory Impairment Shropshire

[www.sensoryimpairment.org.uk](http://www.sensoryimpairment.org.uk)

The website for the Sensory Impaired  
Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Low Vision  
Lots of interesting and informative pages

**We need your Help**

Loop Systems in Shropshire

Please go to the website and tell us how you find the loop systems

Let us know about the loop systems in the county.  
We will form a catalogue of loop systems and their working state.  
You can contact us at [don@condover.net](mailto:don@condover.net)



# Shropshire mum hits back at the Prime Minister's Tourettes sneer

**David Cameron's joke comparing Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls to someone who suffers from Tourette's, has been widely criticised.**

The gaff was made during an interview with the Sunday Telegraph in which Mr Cameron said of Mr Balls:

"He just annoys me. But I'm very bad, in the House of Commons, at not getting distracted, and the endless, ceaseless banter, it's like having someone with Tourette's permanently sitting opposite you."

The Prime Minister was quick to distance himself from the

remark, stating that he was speaking "off the cuff". But Nicky Clark from the Shropshire Cares campaign and mother of two disabled daughters was unhappy with the comments.

"Comments like this compound the myths and the stereotypes surrounding people with Tourette's," she said.

Mrs Clark was equally dismayed by the PM's "non-apology".

"I don't believe he was speaking 'off the cuff'. It was a recorded interview and the Prime Minister doesn't make comments off the cuff".

## Children's Hospital website success

NHS Local and Birmingham Children's Hospital have created a website for children and their parents that moves beyond just providing information. It includes a section in which children can upload their stories and share experiences. In the longer term, the hospital aims to create a genuine interaction between patients and staff through its new site. [From Health Information News]

## Deaf Club members praise Shrewsbury theatre

Members of Shrewsbury Deaf Club are full of praise for Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn. At the December open meeting of Shropshire Disability Network, they said what a pleasure it had been to attend signed performances.

One of the members said: "Going to Shrewsbury's Theatre Severn is brilliant, we are always treated as equals by them and we love that."

All members of the Deaf Club were full of praise for the riverside theatre and recommended that hearing impaired people check out the programme for BSL interpreted performances. Theatre Severn is committed to increasing the number of Sign Language Interpreted

performances by working with companies which include SLI as an integral part of their productions. The theatre said: "We always promote an SLI performance within our pantomime season. See our brochure for further details or enquire at the box office when booking your tickets"

The theatre is now offering some captioned performances for deaf, deafened and hard of hearing patrons, delivered by Stagertext. Captions are similar to TV subtitles; the actors' words appear on an LED display unit, placed near the stage or in the set. Character names, sound effects and offstage noises are also given. To contact the box office call 01743 281281, or email [mail@theatresevern.co.uk](mailto:mail@theatresevern.co.uk)

### COMMENT

## Does cruel remark show Cameron's real attitude to disability?

David Cameron's casually cruel remark about Tourettes in an interview with The Sunday Telegraph speaks volumes about his attitude to disability as a whole, and it makes you wonder if some deep psychological issue is driving his remorseless campaign to make people with disabilities suffer.

The amount of money to be saved for the national purse through benefit 'reforms' such as seeking to destroy Disability Living Allowance is derisory as a percentage of what we are told is needed. But the suffering and heartache being caused is enormous. Cameron knows this, he has to. It is blindingly obvious. Even the Daily Mail's website thinks he is going too far.

So what did he say? Referring to Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls, the Prime Minister said: "He just annoys me. But I'm very bad, in the House of Commons, at not getting distracted, and the endless, ceaseless banter, it's like having someone with Tourettes permanently sitting opposite you."

That was not just cruel, it trivialised a condition that afflicts many and can cause great family distress. The 'apology' that followed was nothing of the sort. It was at first a grudging 'sorry I got found out' statement issued by his office. But later, on the Andrew Marr Show on BBC 1, Cameron actually had to say out loud that he was 'sorry'.

What does it say about our politics when the Prime Minister thinks it is all right to use language you would expect from school bullies? He knows from first-hand experience about the distress that disability can bring to a family, so why, why, why be so callous? Is this comment a glimpse into the mind-set of a man who blames people with disabilities just for existing? - PS



## Legal Aid cuts loom for the disabled

Concerns over Government plans to cut legal aid for disabled people have been expressed by 23 organisations, including MENCAP, RNIB, Leonard Cheshire, Scope and Mind.

These organisations want to see an amendment put forward by Lib Dem Tom Brake included in the Legal Aid and Sentencing Bill.

Charities argue that if Ministers restrict legal aid for disabled people wanting to challenge benefit decisions, they will be limiting access to help in England and Wales, which could harm vulnerable people.

Campaigners also say that those affected would not be able to receive legal help elsewhere, causing a serious impact on their finances and peace of mind – which in turn, could make it harder to return to work in the future. - Sarah Starkey

## Telford parents group discusses additional needs services

'Parents Opening Doors' (aka PODS) is an independent parents' forum for improving the lives of families who have a child with an additional need or disability. Based in Telford, PODS recently held a discussion on the Telford and Wrekin Service Review and Children's Specialist Services (such as Stepping Stones, Disabled Children's Team, Children's Centres, Family Connect, Education, Social care, and Health) PODS' address is: PO Box 772, Telford, Shropshire, TF7 9FD, [www.podstelford.org](http://www.podstelford.org)

## Grant-giving trusts website

If you need to identify potential funders there are a number of free resources available to help you in your search. For instance Grantmakers, an interactive database of worldwide grantmakers. The database currently includes over 6000 entries of grant-makers, either nationally or internationally. To make use of this tool please see [www.grantmakersonline.com](http://www.grantmakersonline.com) [VCS Assembly newsletter 021211]

## Health boards disappear in merger

The regional health boards of Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, Worcestershire and Herefordshire are being merged into an NHS West Mercia 'cluster' board. The new set-up is a temporary measure until power is devolved to 'clinical commissioning groups' of GPs who will take over NHS budgets on 31 March, 2013. Dismay has been expressed at the expected loss of local focus and jobs. [Shropshire ME Group Dec 2011]

# Audit Office slams long term policy failures

**Outcomes for people with long-term neurological conditions have stalled or deteriorated, six years on from a key policy to improve support and despite significantly increased funding for care.**

That is the message from the National Audit Office in a report which says the 2005 National Service Framework for Long-term Conditions had been poorly implemented and "lacked clear leadership, co-ordination, appropriate accountability structures and monitoring information".

The NAO concludes that many of the problems identified by the framework still remain - including poor information and advice for patients and carers, poor co-ordination between health and social care and a postcode lottery in care. This is despite a 38% real terms increase in NHS spending on neurological conditions from 2006-7 to 2009-10.

While there had been some improvements, for instance reduced waiting times for inpatient and outpatient neurology services, other

indicators had deteriorated. For example, emergency neurological admissions to hospital rose by 31% from 2004-5 to 2009-10, compared with a 20% rise in emergency admissions overall.

"Services for people with long-term neurological conditions are not as good as they ought to be, despite a large increase in spending," said Amyas Morse, head of the National Audit Office. "Progress in implementing the department's strategy has been poor and local organisations lack incentives to improve the quality of services."

The NAO says the Department of Health did not put in place arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the framework and was thus unable to hold primary care trusts and councils accountable for delivering on it.

The Government had cancelled a review of the framework agreed by its Labour predecessor, so it was not clear how lessons would be learned to inform future work on long-term conditions.

[from [communitycare.co.uk](http://communitycare.co.uk)]



# Dementia care slammed

A "significant improvement" is needed in the way hospitals care for patients with dementia, according to a new report. The National Audit of Dementia looked at 210 hospitals in England and Wales and surveyed 2,211 staff.

Just 32% of staff said they had sufficient training in dementia care.

According to the Alzheimer's Society, the number of patients with dementia in the UK is expected to increase from 750,000 to a million by 2021. Currently a quarter of all hospital beds are occupied by dementia sufferers. The report makes several rec-

ommendations for improvements in treatment.

One of the authors, Dr Mike Crawford, said: "The first thing we need is for all staff working on general medical wards to get basic training in dementia and each ward should have at least one member who's had a high level of training. The people who run the hospitals also need to make sure that staff have the re-



sources to manage and help people with dementia and need to make changes to the environment in which people are cared for so that they have things like familiar objects so they feel less scared."

Dr Peter Carter, from the Royal College of Nursing, said: "It's about time the Government took this report, along with many others before, and insisted that there is action taken to address the issue."

The Department of Health said: "We will be financially rewarding hospitals that identify patients at risk and refer them for specialist care." [from Sky News]

## Financial abuse of sufferers 'is rife'

Social care professionals have been urged to watch for indicators of financial abuse among dementia sufferers after the Alzheimer's Society warned that the problem was rife. Some 15% of carers polled by the charity said the person they cared for had been financially abused, while 62% said their loved-one had been targeted by unsolicited or unscrupulous cold callers or sales people.

In a report called Short Changed, the Alzheimer's Society says people with dementia are at increased risk because of isolation, reduced capacity to assess financial risk and reliance on others to manage their money.

This was exacerbated by problems in the financial system, including lack of awareness among banking staff of the signs of dementia and of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, which enables people to manage money on behalf of loved-ones under lasting power of attorney.

It also said that the rise of chip and PIN, online banking and other personal banking systems that required customers to remember passwords and codes risked in-

creasing financial exclusion for people with dementia.

The report said social workers and other professionals needed to be aware of the increased risks of financial abuse facing people with dementia and the warnings signs. Alzheimer's Society staff and social care co-ordinators interviewed for the report identified the following risk factors:

- Significant or sudden changes in a person's behaviour or living circumstances
- Unpaid bills
- New interest or involvement from a third party in a person with dementia
- The person with dementia showing confusion about the value of money or the bill paying process
- Family members moving into the person's home and taking control of financial issues

It also said that financial abuse needed to have a much higher profile in local authority safeguarding procedures, citing research that it was often seen by councils as secondary to other forms of abuse. [from CommunityCare.co.uk]

### Disability charities unite

Disability Alliance, the National Centre for Independent Living and Radar joined forces to form Disability Rights UK on 1 January. The new charity, Disability Rights UK, will be led, run and controlled by disabled people, with disabled people making up at least three-quarters of its board members. Disability Rights UK, promoting disabled people's leadership and control, breaking the link between disability and poverty, and campaigning for disability equality and human rights. [Shropshire ME Group Newsletter]

### Antibiotic attitudes

The Health Protection Agency has published the results of research into people's attitudes towards antibiotics. Over half of the 1,700 people interviewed who had contacted a doctor or nurse (53%) went expecting antibiotic treatment and 25% of those who responded said they believed that antibiotics work on most coughs and colds. However 70% recognised that antibiotic resistance is a problem in hospitals and a similar number acknowledged that resistance to antibiotics could affect them and their family. [from Health Information News Dec 2011]



## GPs comment on 'Fit for Work' notes

Recent research published by the Government gathers the views of GPs about the introduction of Fit for Work notes, which replaced sick notes almost two years ago.

GPs say they use the fit note as a consultation tool to initiate and guide patients through the options for returning to work. They report the fit note to be most useful in facilitating a return to work for those patients with mild-to-moderate mental health conditions and musculoskeletal conditions. But they are less likely to use the fit note to help patients return to work if the patient's job contributed to their condition. They are also unwilling to damage their relationship with their patients.

Many GPs say they did not at first recognise the potential of the fit note to help patients remain in work or return sooner and so did not put thought into how it might be used in practice. Not all GPs are confident in the level of detail required on the fit note.

Motivating people back to work is an integral part of their role, many GPs believe, and say the fit note helps them do this. [from Social Welfare Training Dec 2012]

### Lifestyle and links with cancer

Cancer Research UK has published an extensive article in the British Journal of Cancer which shows that lifestyle factors - cigarettes, diet, alcohol and obesity - are behind more than 100,000 cancers. This figure increases to around 134,000 when taking into account all 14 lifestyle and environmental risk factors analysed in this study. Smoking is the most important lifestyle factor causing 23% of cancers in men and 15.6% in women. The review shows that 45% of all cancers in men could be prevented and 40% in women.

[From Health Information News]

## Grayling pledge on changes in work assessment

Employment Minister Chris Grayling says people with disabilities are to benefit from further changes to the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) following an independent review.

The changes, which he says will improve the system's fairness and effectiveness, are outlined in the second independent review by Professor Malcolm Harrington. Chris Grayling pledged to accept Professor Harrington's recommendations and to further consult on how best to support people with cancer.

The second Harrington Review has made substantial recommendations, which have been reached after extensive consultation with health and disability groups, including:

- Introducing checks on benefit decisions to ensure fairness and consistency
- Working with disability groups to help develop guidance for Atos healthcare professionals and Decision Makers
- Improved support and communications for people who move onto Jobseeker's Allowance to make sure they get the help they need
- Regularly publishing data on performance and quality to improve the transparency of face-to-face assessment

Professor Harrington said: "My first review found that the WCA is the right concept, but that each part of the process was not working as well as it could. I am confident that the changes being implemented are already making a real difference."

[From Shropshire ME Group newsletter Dec 2011]

## Library closures: have your say

In response to widespread concern about the cuts to public library services, the House of Commons' Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee has launched a new inquiry into public library closures in England.

Many people with disabilities make good use of their local libraries and might want to speak their mind about the value of

libraries. Chaired by John Whittingdale MP, the committee is inviting written submissions and views on:

- What constitutes a comprehensive and efficient library service for the 21st century
- The extent to which planned library closures are compatible with the requirements of the Public Libraries & Museums Act (1964) and the Charteris Report
- The impact of library closures

have on local communities

- The effectiveness of the Secretary of State's powers of intervention under the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964.

There are guidelines on how contributions should be formatted on the CILIP website and also some suggestions as to the issues to be covered on The Public Library News Blog.



# Cuts and delays: predictions for 2012

**Community Care magazine has made some predictions about the social care sector for the year ahead. Will we look back and say 'How did they know?'**

**1. The Dilnot Report:** Andrew Dilnot's proposed £1.7bn reform to care funding put forward in the economist's report to ministers last year is looking more unlikely to go ahead. Soon after this proposal, the Treasury made clear its opposition to a plan of such expense. The public spending situation has since deteriorated, meaning cuts to local authorities are likely to be greater than initially predicted.

**2. Case completion:** The target to have all care cases completed within six months will be watered down. In November, the Family Justice Review recommended that social workers and courts should be ex-

pected to complete care cases in just six months. Review chair David Norgrove said the new limit would reduce "shocking delays" in the system. However, many social workers have deemed the target unrealistic.

**3. Personal budgets:** The target to have Personal Budgets for all by 2013 will be revised. The Government's target of having all ongoing users of publicly-funded care in England on Personal Budgets by April 2012 is increasingly being questioned. Sector leaders describe the target as "challenging" and have warned that many service users will not be receiving the choice and control over their support that Personal Budgets are supposed to provide.

**4. Care Quality Commission:** The CQC will survive but with a change of leadership. It was slated for failing

to intervene to stop abuse at Winterbourne View hospital for people with learning disabilities and additional scandals.

The Government shows no plan to abolish - or reform - the CQC on the grounds that it will cause unnecessary disruption, but it will be a surprise if both Cynthia Bower and CQC chair Jo Williams are in post at the end of 2012.

**5. Care applications:** These will continue to rise but resources will be slashed. Care application figures have jumped more than 40% since the middle of 2008 and predictions are that this situation will increase in 2012.

**6. Industrial action:** More industrial action over pay cuts and pension reforms seems likely with unions threatening ministers with further strike action in 2012.

## Health records will be 'online by 2015'

NHS patients will be able to access their own health records by 2015. This development was first announced as part of the Chancellor's autumn review, which also included plans to link GP and hospital data on patient outcomes.

The Department of Health says that linking GP and hospital data could help to stimulate medical research and enable patients to take informed decisions about their care.

## NHS has 'lost plot'

At the NHS Alliance conference, Future Forum Chair, Professor Steve Field, attacked the quality of general practice, saying the NHS had 'lost the plot' on primary care. Field said his vision for innovation in primary care would involve more practices working in federations.

## New look Blue Badge, and a new look fee!

The new Blue Badge was introduced on 1 January in an effort to improve the service for disabled drivers and to prevent fraud. But it comes at a price – the cost for a successful application has gone up from £2 to £10.

Under the new system, councils will have instant access to key Blue Badge details anywhere in Britain, not just in their local authority area. Applicants will be able to check their eligibility online before applying, which can also be done online at Directgov. They will also be able to track their application's progress and to receive reminders at renewal time (by letter, email or text)

The badge was redesigned because the old design was easily forged. Many local authorities and disabled people had reported incidences of copies being used. Production of the old badge was slow and fiddly for local authorities, which had to personalise each badge themselves by handwriting the details, and cutting and gluing the holder's signature and photograph. This led to inconsistencies and details were easily changed.

Standardisation of information on the badge should help enforcement and the credibility of the scheme. Local authorities could only charge up to £2 under the original legislation, but the Act has been amended so that they can charge up to £10. This fee is payable on issue of a badge, not on application, and has not changed since 1983. Councils don't have to charge the full £10.



# Services directory

YourVoice is very grateful to a reader who has put this directory together for other purposes and been kind enough to share it with us - and you - as well, complete with useful comments. If you know of any other services not listed please get in touch and we will include them in a future issue.

## GENERAL RESOURCES

SERVICE	PROVIDED BY	COMMENTS
<b>Driving and Vehicles</b>	Motability	Will send full info pack
	Queen Elizabeth's Foundation for Disabled People Leatherhead Court, Woodlands Rd Leatherhead, Surrey, KT22 0BN. 01372 841100	
	QEF Mobility Services	Assessment, advice, information and tuition; all ages; drivers, passengers, scooter and wheelchair users
<b>Legal Assistance &amp; Referral</b>	Disability Law Service	<a href="http://www.dls.org.uk">http://www.dls.org.uk</a> , 020 7791 9800 Superb information sheets and legal advice in specific disability-related areas – including benefits. Can also signpost to local legal support and advice.
<b>Benefits</b>	Benefits and Work	Detailed info for people doing their own DLA / ESA applications + prep info for medical visits and tribunal appearances + offers training to organisations – costs £20 a year for individuals, £97 for organisations – with open access to share documentation with clients.
	Age UK's online personal benefits calculator <a href="http://www.ageuk.entitledto.co.uk/Default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1">http://www.ageuk.entitledto.co.uk/Default.aspx?AspxAutoDetectCookieSupport=1</a>	For people to discover what they are entitled to
<b>Access – stairs</b>	AAT – the Stairclimber People AAT GB Ltd, Community Enterprise Centre, Office 3, Well St, Cefn Mawr, Wrexham, LL14 3AL Tel: 01978 821875 Fax: 01978 821913, <a href="http://www.aatgb.com">www.aatgb.com</a> Email: <a href="mailto:sales@aatgb.com">sales@aatgb.com</a>	For people without step-free access
<b>Clothing for disabled</b>	Discretely Different <a href="http://www.underwearfordisabled.co.uk">http://www.underwearfordisabled.co.uk</a>	Good quality – plus they do bespoke work
<b>Guidance, advice</b>	CAB, <a href="http://www.adviceguide.org.uk">http://www.adviceguide.org.uk</a>	Practical, reliable, up-to-date information in English, Welsh, Bengali, Chinese, Gujarati, Punjabi and Urdu on a wide range of topics.
	Court of Protection	When someone has lost mental capacity  <a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Mentalcapacityandthelaw/UsingtheCourtofProtection/index.htm">http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Governmentcitizensandrights/Mentalcapacityandthelaw/UsingtheCourtofProtection/index.htm</a>
<b>Car Tax</b>	<a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/Yourvehicleandlicence/DG_10028003">http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/MotoringAndTransport/Yourvehicleandlicence/DG_10028003</a>	Information on free car tax for disabled people
<b>Travel/Transport</b>	Each local authority area will have at least some of the following services available: Dial-A-Ride Disabled Person's Freedom Pass (Higher rate mobility component of DLA is a qualifying benefit)	



SERVICE	PROVIDED BY	COMMENTS
<b>Travel/Transport</b> (continued)	Shopmobility national number 0845 644 2446 <a href="http://www.shopmobilityuk.org">http://www.shopmobilityuk.org</a>	They can tell you where your nearest Shopmobility scheme is. Often free, sometimes a nominal fee.
	Community (or Country) cars/transport <a href="http://www.ctauk.org">http://www.ctauk.org</a>	National association website, gives information on local services
And there is also:	Disabled Person's Railcard	Check local authority website or phone them to see what is available. The local authority ought to know, but for community transport it is always worth checking with any local voluntary sector disability groups, or Age UK. They should know what is available.
<b>Funding and discounts</b>	<a href="http://www.disability-grants.org">http://www.disability-grants.org</a>	This is a site put together by the mother of a disabled child (but is NOT just about children's needs). It looks very comprehensive, has lots of people sharing info – and is worth having a good look through.

## LEISURE ACTIVITIES

<b>Movies:</b>	<a href="http://www.ceacard.co.uk">http://www.ceacard.co.uk</a>	This is a national card that can be used to verify that the holder is entitled to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema. Costs £5.50 and is valid for 1 year, so have to renew each year. You must be getting DLA. Info and downloadable application form on website.
<b>Theatres:</b>	<a href="http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/servlet/file/store8/item118620/version1/Venue%20Access%20Guide.pdf">http://www.officiallondontheatre.co.uk/servlet/file/store8/item118620/version1/Venue%20Access%20Guide.pdf</a>	This is a superb downloadable document with access information on a wide range of London theatres – also includes contact information so you can ask about discounts for you - and free tickets for carers!
<b>Various:</b>	<a href="http://www.enabledpeople.co.uk/goingout.shtml">http://www.enabledpeople.co.uk/goingout.shtml</a> <a href="http://www.dialuk.info/info_service/Information/holidays_for_disabled_people_user_guide.asp">http://www.dialuk.info/info_service/Information/holidays_for_disabled_people_user_guide.asp</a> <a href="http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/TravelHolidaysAndBreaks/TravelAndHolidaysInTheUk/DG_4015876">http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/TravelHolidaysAndBreaks/TravelAndHolidaysInTheUk/DG_4015876</a> <a href="http://www.disabledholidaydirectory.co.uk">http://www.disabledholidaydirectory.co.uk</a> 0800 993 0796 <a href="http://www.disabledaccessholidays.com">http://www.disabledaccessholidays.com</a> <a href="http://www.disability-grants.org">http://www.disability-grants.org</a> <a href="http://www.3hfund.org.uk">http://www.3hfund.org.uk</a> <a href="http://www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk/documents/PossibleFundingsourcesforforAdults.pdf">http://www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk/documents/PossibleFundingsourcesforforAdults.pdf</a> <a href="http://www.myhandicap.com/barrier-free-holidays-disability.html">http://www.myhandicap.com/barrier-free-holidays-disability.html</a> <a href="http://disabledgo.com">http://disabledgo.com</a>	website with access information to shops and venues in towns and cities across the UK. published in 2003, Access in London is a comprehensive guide which includes useful information about accommodation, travel and access to major sites and places across the capital. Information service for arts, leisure and entertainment focussing on physical disability website providing information for disabled people, including leisure and entertainment comprehensive parking and interactive bus information for Blue Badge disabled drivers travelling around London disability-led arts organisation which runs Shape Tickets, an accessible booking service Information on accessible accommodation, tourism advice and special offers on hotels
	<a href="http://www.accessinlondon.org">www.accessinlondon.org</a>	
	<a href="http://www.artsline.org.uk">www.artsline.org.uk</a>	
	<a href="http://www.mouseability.co.uk">www.mouseability.co.uk</a>	
	<a href="http://www.parkingforbluebadges.com">www.parkingforbluebadges.com</a>	
	<a href="http://www.shapearts.org.uk">www.shapearts.org.uk</a>	
	<a href="http://www.tourismforall.org.uk">www.tourismforall.org.uk</a>	

If you can add to this list please let us know by emailing [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)



## Letters to YourVoice

To contact us with your opinions or to promote events, just email [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)

### Thanks to STFC

Just before Christmas, a group of deaf people went to Shrewsbury Town Football Club for Christmas dinner. We had brilliant food and were met with a really good attitude from the staff. It was a lovely room and very comfortable. We all enjoyed ourselves very much. Thanks to everyone who made it possible.  
Yours, Kathy Jones

### Cinema campaign

*I wonder if you have heard about the Trailblazers campaign to make cinemas more accessible. The young campaigners have made a short film and written a report on the issues that affect young disabled people who go to their local cinemas. Please see our findings and sign our petition to get a better service for disabled movie fans.*

[http://www.mdctrailblazers.org/campaigns/682\\_access-to-cinemas-lights-ca...](http://www.mdctrailblazers.org/campaigns/682_access-to-cinemas-lights-ca...)

[http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/cinema\\_access](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/cinema_access)

# Blue Eyed Soul's sad farewell

**It's a New Year and a new chapter for Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company. The next three months will see us working very practically on winding down the company that has been pioneering inclusive dance for almost 18 years.**

From its Shropshire base and with the support of Arts Council England, Blue Eyed Soul explored, developed and delivered a highly successful and extensive programme of inclusive dance, locally, nationally and internationally.

The Company's aim has been to create a level playing field where people can step over their threshold of perceived possibility.

And so we look to the future. Coming up we have Like Youth Dance group Envision performing at Telford Dance Festival Performance at The Place on Friday 10 February. This will be the last public event from us as Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company.

The CONTACT group are meeting with Blue Eyed Soul one last time to dance a

lot but also to consider their future which looks very bright thanks to the Gateway Arts and Education Centre. It has agreed to support the group in 2012, so keep a lookout for future CONTACT dance workshops and projects.

The remaining Dance Transformations artists continue on their individual career development pathways supported by the programme.

We are currently creating a digital archive of the company and our legacy, further details available soon.

Rachel Freeman will work from her base in Herefordshire as an Independent Dance Artist in association with everyBODY dance. Drawing upon the rich legacy of Blue Eyed Soul the work will continue to be inclusive and collaborative. Rachel Liggitt will also work as an Independent Dance Artist, particularly in education.

Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company  
Tel: 01743 210830  
Email: [admin@blueeyedsouldance.com](mailto:admin@blueeyedsouldance.com)

## Diabetes symbols bring new clarity

People living with diabetes need to learn how to manage their illness and much of the available education involves the use of materials requiring literacy.

The use of symbols has been found to be effective, particularly for those with learning,

literacy or language difficulties. Diabetes UK has developed symbols for concepts and words related to diabetes, in order that diabetes materials might be presented more clearly for the benefit of people who have difficulties reading. [From Health Information News]

## Practical guide on how to support your local community

Coutts & Co have just published a report, *Inspiring Local Philanthropy*, in collaboration with New Philanthropy Capital and the Community Foundation Network.

It's a practical guide for individuals who want to support their local communities and highlights various ways

that donors can get involved, from volunteering to funding local charities to collaborating with other funders.

It also shows how donors can deepen their understanding of needs within their local area, giving snapshots of five UK regions, including

key statistics and an assessment of funding gaps. See [http://www.philanthropycapital.org/publications/improving\\_the\\_sector/improving\\_philanthropy/local\\_giving.aspx?dm\\_i=59B,MDD2,3PCRS2,1T8IH,1](http://www.philanthropycapital.org/publications/improving_the_sector/improving_philanthropy/local_giving.aspx?dm_i=59B,MDD2,3PCRS2,1T8IH,1) (Apologies for the ridiculously long link) [From Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Nov 2011]

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Names and numbers that might help

This new feature will build up into a directory of all sorts of organisations to do with disability. Help us to make it better month-by-month by letting us know what's missing. Email the editor at [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net) or write to him: Peter Staples, 8 Gorse Lane, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, SY3 0JJ

Shropshire Council Disability Services  
[www.shropshire.gov.uk/disability.nsf](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/disability.nsf)

Telford & Wrekin Council Disability Forum  
[www.telford.gov.uk/info/200041/equality\\_and\\_diversity/925/disability\\_forum](http://www.telford.gov.uk/info/200041/equality_and_diversity/925/disability_forum)  
A4U Disability Advice Centre 0845 602 5561; email [advice@a4u.org.uk](mailto:advice@a4u.org.uk)

Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company  
01743 210830; email: [admin@blueeyedsouldance.com](mailto:admin@blueeyedsouldance.com)  
[www.blueeyedsouldance.com/](http://www.blueeyedsouldance.com/)

Carers Direct 0808 802 0202  
[www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirectHome.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirectHome.aspx)

Community Council of Shropshire  
[www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk/](http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk/)  
4 The Creative Quarter, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, SY2 6LG  
01743 360641 fax: 01743 342179

Disability Arts in Shropshire: 01743 272939/271676; [www.dasharts.org/](http://www.dasharts.org/)

Disability Directory – Information, aids and mobility services  
[www.ableize.com/Disabled-Groups-and-Clubs-by-County/Shropshire/](http://www.ableize.com/Disabled-Groups-and-Clubs-by-County/Shropshire/)

Disability Football Directory 01952 407198  
<http://www.disabilityfootball.co.uk/Madeleysports.html>

Disability-friendly holiday accommodation  
[www.friendly-places.com/categories/disability-friendly/disability-friendly.asp?Location=Shropshire](http://www.friendly-places.com/categories/disability-friendly/disability-friendly.asp?Location=Shropshire)

Disability Resource Centre, Lancaster Road, Shrewsbury, SY1 3NJ  
01743 450 912; email: [robin.durham@shropshire-cc.gov.uk](mailto:robin.durham@shropshire-cc.gov.uk)  
[www.the-svab.org.uk](http://www.the-svab.org.uk). RNIB: [www.info.rnib.org.uk/exe/Agencies/Details.pl?480](http://www.info.rnib.org.uk/exe/Agencies/Details.pl?480)

Disabled and Wheelchair Athletics Directory  
[www.apparelyzed.com/disability-directory/adaptive-sports/disabled-athletics/](http://www.apparelyzed.com/disability-directory/adaptive-sports/disabled-athletics/)

Headway Shropshire (brain injured and families)  
Holsworth Park, Oxon Business Park, Shrewsbury, SY3 5HJ  
01743 365271; [www.headwayshropshire.org.uk/](http://www.headwayshropshire.org.uk/)

Landau Limited - Supported employment services for people with disabilities,  
5 Landau Court, Tan Bank, Wellington. TF1 1HE 01952 245 015, [admin@landau.co.uk](mailto:admin@landau.co.uk)

Listen Not Label - User Led Organisation for disabled people and carers in Telford and Wrekin (Tina Jones, Manager)  
Liz Yates Centre, The Poplars, Lightmoor, Telford, TF4 3QN  
01952 458021

Marches Community Enterprise 01584 878402 or 07891094901

ME Connect  
Helpline - 0844 576 5326 - between 10.00-noon, 2.00-4.00 and 7.00-9.00;  
email [meconnect@meassociation.org.uk](mailto:meconnect@meassociation.org.uk)

Motor Neurone Disease Association - MND Connect 08457 62 62 62  
[mndconnect@mndassociation.org](mailto:mndconnect@mndassociation.org)

Multiple Sclerosis Society - 7 Britten Court, Telford, TF1 1YU; 01952 250038

NHS Choices - [www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx](http://www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx)

## Parent & Carer Council Shropshire

[www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups)  
PACC provides an index of support groups for children with disabilities in Shropshire. The following groups are listed on the PACC site. Where possible we list direct contacts, but refer to the PACC site for full details)

Allsorts (South Shropshire, for behavioural conditions) 07813043841  
[www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/71-allsorts](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/71-allsorts)  
Bridgnorth Buddies (Parent-led, Special Needs) 07968 544182 or 07790 780631; email [Buddies20@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Buddies20@yahoo.co.uk)  
[www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/72-bridgnorth-buddies](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/72-bridgnorth-buddies)  
Haughton School, Telford, drop-in for parents of pupils with more complex special needs) 01952 387551 or 01952 387552; [www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/83-haughton-school-drop-in](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/83-haughton-school-drop-in)  
Onevision (visual impairment) 01952 385269  
[/www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/77-onevision](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/77-onevision)  
STACS (Aspergers, 16+) 01952 254594 or 01939 260273; email [louise.griffiths@carerscontact.org.uk](mailto:louise.griffiths@carerscontact.org.uk)  
[www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/76-stacs](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/76-stacs)  
Autistic Supporters (if you suspect your child is autistic, or has recently been diagnosed) 01743 356298  
[www.shropshireautisticsupporters.co.uk/?q=node/2](http://www.shropshireautisticsupporters.co.uk/?q=node/2)  
Deaf Children's Society 01952 770019; email: [nat4sdcs@aol.com](mailto:nat4sdcs@aol.com)  
[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)  
Down's Syndrome 01743 233802, 01948 880110 or 01588 640319  
[www.dsa-shropshire.org.uk](http://www.dsa-shropshire.org.uk)  
Dyslexia Association 01743 231205; [www.thesda.org.uk](http://www.thesda.org.uk)  
Wheelchair Users 01743 350460 or 01952 252243  
SKiD (Shropshire Kids Insulin Dependent, associated with Diabetes UK) 01743 873724 or 01743 364366; email: [home@morkot.go-plus.net](mailto:home@morkot.go-plus.net)  
SPECTRUM (Autistic Support group) email: [netgriffiths@fsmail.net](mailto:netgriffiths@fsmail.net)  
[www.spectrum.t83.net/](http://www.spectrum.t83.net/)  
Telford STAA (supports parents/carers of children with ASD, ADHD, and challenging behaviour) 01952 457439 or 01952 617758; email: [julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk](mailto:julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk) or [lesley@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk](mailto:lesley@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk)  
Steps (help for parents/carers, lower limb abnormalities) 01743 355363  
PODS (Parents Opening Doors - Telford, forum for views on services) 01952457439; email: [julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk](mailto:julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk)

Omega (National Association for End of Life Care) - [www.omega.uk.net/](http://www.omega.uk.net/)

Parent Partnership Service - [www.parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk/#/useful-links/4551168089](http://www.parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk/#/useful-links/4551168089)

PODS (independent forum in Telford for families of children with a disability or additional need). Jayne Stevens 0777 534 2092 or 07824 631 297; [info@podstelford.org](mailto:info@podstelford.org); [www.podstelford.org](http://www.podstelford.org)

Primary Care Trust [www.shropshire.nhs.uk/Get-Involved/](http://www.shropshire.nhs.uk/Get-Involved/)

Scope (Cerebral Palsy) - [www.scope.org.uk/services/shropshire](http://www.scope.org.uk/services/shropshire)

Shrewsbury Dial-a-Ride - Sundorne Trade Park, Featherbed Lane, SY1 4NS. Enquiries 01743 440350; Direct Line 01743 440744; Mobile 07891094901, [linda@shrewsburydialaride.org.uk](mailto:linda@shrewsburydialaride.org.uk)

Shropshire MIND - [www.shropshiremind.org/](http://www.shropshiremind.org/)  
Observer House, Holywell St, Shrewsbury, SY2 6BL 01743 368647

Shropshire Peer Counselling and Advocacy Service  
[www.shropshirepcas.co.uk/default.htm](http://www.shropshirepcas.co.uk/default.htm)

Shropshire Volunteering Team -Promote your volunteering opportunities.  
<http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/volunteering/>

Shropshire and Staffordshire Heart and Stroke Network  
Lambda House, Hadley Park East, Telford, TF1 6QJ  
Email: [yuen-ting.cheung@shropshirepct.nhs.uk](mailto:yuen-ting.cheung@shropshirepct.nhs.uk) 01952 228490

Telford & Wrekin LINK - Suite 1, Conwy House, St Georges Court, St Georges Road, Donnington, Telford, TF2 7BF 01952 614180

Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly [www.shrop.net/shropvcsassembly](http://www.shrop.net/shropvcsassembly)

Voluntary Association for the Blind (linked to RNIB)

**Send your details and somehow we'll find space on Page X!**