

# yourvoice

ISSUE NO. 8 January 2011



## In This Issue

<b>Out &amp; About</b>		<b>General</b>	
• Top Quality Sport in Wrexham!	7	• Child charity benefits error appeal won	8
• Seeing The World My Way	17	• Personalisation, ULOs and the VCS	34
<b>Care Matters</b>		• Myalgic Encephalomyelitis	38
• Disability cuts will hurt deeply	28	• Big society – is it democratic?	23
<b>The Cuts</b>		• Volunteer Management Toolkit	34
• 15 Rural Bus Services Withdrawn	4	• The real cost of £98 PCs	5
• Chancellor says government should not ring-fence voluntary funding	8	• RNID Lip Reading Petition	42
• DLA consultation	19	• CONNECT one click at a time	18
• Call for 50% tax on banker bonuses	29	• Disabled people are disadvantaged!	43
• Disability living allowance cuts could Confine disabled to homes	44	• Funding Update	33
• Protect social care for deafblind	30	• SOLNET	20
• VAT increase could deprive poorest of emergency aid	31	• SDN General Meeting 9/12/2010	2
• Consultants speak out on Shropshire Hospital services	27	• Study of deaf young people	21
• Patient's anger at pool closure	34	• Shropshire Disability Network	35
• Changes to Dial-a-Ride, Shrewsbury	5	• New Oswestry Counselling Service	4
• Primary Care Trust to cut vital funding	26	• Shock Shropshire bowel cancer figures	16
• Legal Aid cut	33	• The Gateway Work Club	37
• Seriously ill patients 'told to work'	31	• Through the Doorway	44
<b>The Grange Centre closure:</b>		• Useful Information	16
• SDN gets involved	10	• Scope launches online forum for Young disabled people	43
• Alternative to the Grange Centre?	12	• PACC concern about changes	24
• Services available at Qube, Oswestry	14	<b>Personal Experience</b>	
<b>Medical Developments</b>		• Some Amazing Things About MS	15
• Huge variation in stroke care	21	<b>What's On</b>	
• Safer down's syndrome test offered to pregnant women	9	• General Events	50
		• Events: Conferences etc.	72
		<b>The Crippen Cartoon</b>	83
		<b>Late News</b>	85

# SDN General Meeting, 9<sup>th</sup> December 2010 – Network meeting hits the spot on all fronts

By Val Lewis, SDN Steering Group member

What a great meeting of Shropshire Disability Network. Despite the awful weather we had a good turnout of people at Mereside Centre and there was a lot to hear about too!

## SDN Business

Chair Geoff Forgie told everyone about:

- the change in date for the **Disability Awareness Day** – Please put **16th October 2010** in your diaries and remove the June date.
- the **'Walk and Roll' Day – 10th April 2011**, a chance to take some exercise and raise some funds for SDN in the Quarry, Shrewsbury
- Collection days – volunteers gladly welcomed in the Darwin Centre on March 19th and September 18<sup>th</sup> and Telford Town Centre April 30th
- Employment Group – Ann Johnson told us about the work that this group is going to do around supporting people with disability in the workplace with better information and supporting employers to help people with disabilities in the workplace. The working group meet again on Tuesday 5th January, 10.00 am at Mereside – they have already put together lots of ideas, and welcome more people with more ideas if you can attend. See the website for details.



## My Life My Choice

Ruby Hartshorn and Ann Johnson did a brilliant and informative double act on the progress of the Pioneers who have been testing out the processes for Personalised Budgets in Shropshire.

Messages included:

- It doesn't have to change the way you receive your care if you are happy with what you have, but it does give you the chance to make changes if you feel you would benefit from a different way of spending your budget.
- The process makes your social worker more aware of what matters and is important to you and changes your relationship for the better
- There is a clearly laid out pathway for you called "The 7 steps to being in control of my support" and this helps you to understand what is involved
- Everyone who has a care package will move over to new system gradually, but there are a variety of ways of doing this and you can pick and mix the best options for you
- Ann has been recruited as a Champion of My Life My Choice and can be contacted to help people understand what is involved. To contact her, email [mylifemychoice@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:mylifemychoice@shropshire.gov.uk) and add 'for attention of Ann Johnson' and it will

get to her.

## General Comments

There was quite a chat around this in the audience and Sue commented on her concerns about the consultation on the future of the Disability Living Allowance and how important it was for everyone to respond to this to say what they want. Go to

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2010/dla-reform.shtml> to share your views **BY 14<sup>TH</sup> FEBRUARY**, but it would be great if people started posting comments on our website too - we could do with a good old debate about this one.

## Disability Hate Crime

I told the meeting about the Disability Hate Crime Event I chaired on 8<sup>th</sup> December in Walsall, and we talked a bit about finding out the stats for hate crime in Shropshire.

The message was Disability Hate Crime is not acceptable in any form, from persistent teasing, bullying, abusive language or behaviour towards anyone with a disability or their family or friends. The Crown Prosecution Service and the Police want to work together on this to punish offenders, but also to put in place education programmes to prevent it happening in the first place.

## Enabled by Design

Dominic Campbell from Enabled by Design was the guest speaker and he had travelled up from London to talk to us in what turned out to be a brilliant 40 minutes of information which stimulated loads of questions, a lot of laughter and a wealth of ideas for Dom to take back and share with others.

Dom and his very good friend Denise Stephens set up Enabled by Design when Denise was diagnosed with MS at 25 years of age and was frustrated by the expectation of health professionals and the world at large, that she should be happy to have assistive aids that were designed in the dark ages, and in any other setting would probably be valuable antiques, but because they support people with disability, it seems that they are fine to be noisy, grey, clunky, plastic and about as unattractive as they could be!



Denise and Dom, through the website, and with the help of 100s of other people with disabilities, are sourcing funkier looking but functional products that help all sort of people to live their lives without feeling that they have to look different or have homes which look like hospital wards!

It was a great presentation and clearly struck a chord with most people in the room. People talked about their frustration with badly designed equipment, gave ideas to Dom to take back to Denise to explore further, and some will almost certainly go to the Enabled web site to participate in discussions, ask others for sources of useful items and generally join in the debate.

Why should people with a disability have to have stuff that is designed to look different when half the stuff they need is also used every day by many people without a disability, but if designed better could be used by everyone without discriminating? Go and have a look at

<http://enabledbydesign.org/reviews/#comments-open> and SDN will explore whether we could have a Shropshire ideas page on SDN and link with Dom and Denise's site to give a local view.

**PS:** Dave Hall, from Independent Living Partnership Ltd, has asked us to remind readers that the ILP provides independent advice, information and support for self-purchased disability items.

Further information is available from Dave at **Independent Living Partnership Ltd, Tel: 01743 210820, Mobile: 07957 131677, Website: [www.ilp-ltd.co.uk](http://www.ilp-ltd.co.uk)**



# 15 rural bus services withdrawn

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/shropshire/3759956.stm>, 20-10-2010

## Fifteen rural bus services are being axed by Shropshire County Council.

The authority said while it was "keen" to improve rural services, it had no choice but to make the change where buses were "poorly-used". Eleven services will continue to operate "largely unchanged", and the future of four other routes is still under investigation.

The changes have been made after a three-month review of rural bus services in the county.

### 'Detailed investigation'

The council said it was working with Dial-a-ride and community bus operators to try to provide alternatives to some services.

Philip Engleheart from Shropshire County Council said: "We have received a great many letters, e-mails and telephone calls as part of our consultation about the future of high-cost bus services, and all of these have been taken into account when making our decision. Since our detailed investigation revealed significant numbers of passengers on certain services, we are happy to retain those. But we do not have the funds to support poorly-used services and some of these are having to be withdrawn in January." The 15 discontinued services are:

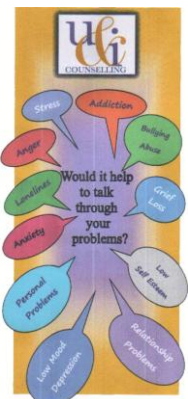
- Service 429 Weston Common - Westbury - Shrewsbury (Saturdays)
- Service 576 Oswestry - Baschurch - Shrewsbury (evenings)
- Service 575 Whitchurch - Weston Lullingfields - Shrewsbury (Mondays)
- Service 254 Little Green - Myddle - Wem (Thursdays)
- Service 218 Market Drayton - Ightfield - Whitchurch (Saturdays)
- Service 579 Wilcott - Forton - Shrewsbury
- Service 441 Shrawardine - Maesbrook - Oswestry (Wednesdays)
- Service 772 - Shrewsbury - Rushbury - Church Stretton (Thursdays)
- Service 575 Weston Common - Forton - Shrewsbury (Fridays)
- Service 539 Hughley - Kenley - Shrewsbury (Saturdays)
- Service 752 Burford - Knowlegate - Cleobury Mortimer
- Service 735 Ludlow - Downton - Elton (Mondays)
- Service 731 Ludlow - Brimfield - Tenbury Wells (Tuesdays)
- Service 131 Cleobury Mortimer - Stottesdon - Bridgnorth (Wednesdays)
- Service 718 Ludlow - Clee Hill - Stoke St Milborough (Fridays)



The changes will take effect in January

## New Oswestry Counselling Service

Wendy Hickson, MBACP, Diploma in counselling, Schools and Young Peoples Counselling Training, Certificate in Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, B. Ed., will be offering counselling session at Room 5, 12 English Walls, Oswestry, for a minimum donation of £3 per 50 minute session. Phone or email for an appointment 07530448000 [uandi.counselling@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:uandi.counselling@hotmail.co.uk). People with a disability can be seen at Qube, Oswestry, which is accessible, if requested.



## Changes to Dial-a-Ride, Shrewsbury

Linda Cox, Dial-a-Ride, Shrewsbury tells me that Dial-a-Ride has changed the availability of its service, in an effort to spread the service more fairly. Instead of it being available to its customers for general trips 5 days a week, the area has now been split into two, and trips 3 days a week are now available in each area. However, for medical appointments, trips are still available 5 days a week (with the exception of dental check-ups, where appointments can be made in advance as one of the 3 trips a week). So, in theory, you could have 5 trips in one week, 2 medical and 3 general, or even 5 medical if that was necessary.



Another change is that instead of only being able to book a trip 48 hours in advance, customers can now book 3 weeks in advance and can also make regular bookings, e.g. to go to the supermarket every week.

Phone numbers for booking are Medical 01743 450350 and General 01743 450270.

### However ...

One of SDN's Steering Group, who is a regular user of Dial-a-Ride, and has considerable mobility problems, was told by a couple of the drivers that the new system has been brought in because in April 2011 Dial-a-Ride anticipates having its funding being greatly reduced or taken away altogether. They are actually moving 1500 people a month now (December 2010) compared with 900 in November.

This user has a number of medical appointments and has since had difficulty in being able to use Dial-a-Ride for even one appointment a week, which has necessitated her missing appointments, since she is on benefits and cannot possibly afford a taxi from Shrewsbury to the Orthopaedic in Gobowen and back.

Sally Barrett, Your Voice Editor

## The real cost of Martha Lane Fox's £98 PCs

Article in PC Pro, By Steve Cassidy, 18-01-2011, <http://www.pcpro.co.uk/blogs/2011/01/18/the-real-cost-of-martha-lane-foxs-98-pcs/#ixzz1BsEypRWo>

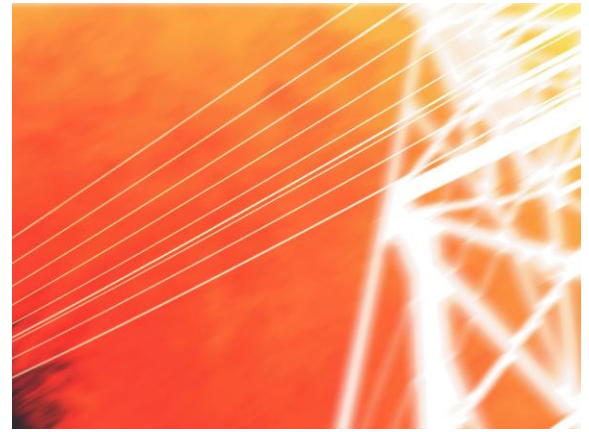
It seems that the current strategy for getting the country 100% online includes disabled employment charity Remploy, digital guru Martha Lane Fox, and nine million old computers, which can be pumped out at 98 quid a box to those unable to buy a machine for themselves.

I'm almost totally conflicted by this news. On the one hand, I'm a huge fan of the idea that work for those with disabilities should never look or feel like make-work, and I'm an even bigger fan of the concept of recycling PCs, the closer to home the better.

You can see the "but" staggering into view, even though I'm striving for a tone of polite respect, can't you?

The "but" is this: older PCs suck power like crazy. Two hundred watts is a reasonable estimate for an old PC, and as our more recent reviews of a wide variety of devices show, a low-powered

machine of 2011 vintage will consume little more than 20 watts. **If Ms Fox gets her way then her nine million old PCs will cost something like £800 million a year in electricity alone.** According to my sketchy calculations, nine million Intel Atom PCs will cost £47 million per annum on the same usage estimate – a reduction in ongoing consumption of 94.2%.



But that's not the end of the road when it comes to power saving and the idea of serving the Digitally Deprived. An even lower-power platform has been around for a while, and is even now in a £100 package aimed squarely at the home user. I'm talking about the Apple TV, with its A4 ARM-derived processor. This little black box arrives with a six-watt power supply.

Now, those carrying a pitchfork for use on the Apple Fanboys will be delighted to hear that this is the first time I have had cause to agree with the criticism of Apple's closed-world approach, which it is well known for guarding very jealously with teams of lawyers.

This isn't the first time I have heard of ideas featuring ARM CPUs and "computing for the masses" – a year ago I was talking to Jack Lang, who is described as "entrepreneur-in-residence at the University of Cambridge's business school".

Jack's track record and history in mass market technical development is audacious, and goes back to initiatives such as the BBC Micro. In the beginning of 2010 he was telling me about Project Raspberry ("well, everyone else is using fruit names and I want people to think about this like a Blackberry, so...").

Jack's idea wasn't about the nine million disconnected and disadvantaged in the UK. It was instead, about the whole planet. He thought that what they needed was a very small device, about the size of a mobile phone, with solid-state storage, some kind of programming language, the ability to control mains-switched power, and an HDMI video out. He thought this could be made with ARM technology (remember, ARM doesn't make much itself, it sells licences to chip makers for their designs. Texas Instruments is just about the biggest actual ARM manufacturer); he also thought it would start from the skill base accumulated in mobile phones – but not be a phone in itself.

Today, I can't find any useful links to a live running Raspberry project. There's a loose reference to Jack and David Braben and some proposed coursework at Cambridge, but I have to say that I fear a massive opportunity – a global one, not only a UK one – is being lost here because Apple already sits jealously and commercially – bang in the middle of the territory that Jack's Raspberry is intended to target.

I suspect the reason no work has been done on this idea is because there were conversations with a certain media company, which brought up concerns about overlapping with commercial enterprises, conflicts of interest, and all that. In the meantime, Ms Fox has had to come up with the Remploy scheme, and Apple has taken a commercial position with something less general purpose, less UK-specific, less re-usable and more monopolistic.

Ms Lane Fox's budget is going to a good cause at Remploy: but the cost of giving Jack Lang the means to change the world – and fix Ms Lane Fox's problem – is a tiny fraction of what she proposes to spend, or even what she proposes forcing her beneficiaries to spend on electricity. And that really is a waste.



# Top Quality Spectator Sport in Wrexham!

I have lived in Shropshire for 14 years now and at last we have easy access to watch top quality sport on our doorstep. Wrexham Racecourse, in addition to Wrexham Football club, is now home to Rugby Superleague team "The Crusaders", who moved up from South Wales at the beginning of last season.



I have followed Rugby League (off and on, sometimes watching live and also on TV) since the late 1970s and have supported Wigan as I lived quite close then and have been privileged to have seen greats like Ellery Handley, Martin Offiah, Sean Edwards and a teenage Jason Robinson, although it pains me to say the best player I have ever seen was Jonathan Edwards when he was playing for Warrington.

So I was delighted to hear in late 2009 that Crusaders would be playing the 2010 season based at the Racecourse. Rugby League is now a "summer" sport; the season starts in

February and finishes with the Grand Final in October, which means it can dovetail quite well with football grounds for ground sharing. I was still in hospital in 2009 and my return home co-incided with the start of the 2010 season. As part of my re-hab I was encouraged to get out and not allow my condition to limit what I could do and the Rugby League at Wrexham fitted the bill perfectly. Although the Crusaders had struggled in South Wales we are talking premier league here and the chance to see some of the best players in the world. There is a family friendly atmosphere and I have taken my wife and kids along on occasion since who have all enjoyed it.

So with my carer, we obtained tickets to see Huddersfield and checked out the disabled facilities, which I have to say are excellent. The disabled parking was free and the typical cost for myself AND a carer was only £10! The car parking is right next to the stand and it is an easy transfer to the disabled section at the front of the stand. There are disabled toilets on the way but it is only about 50 metres from the car park and no steps. There is a very helpful steward in the car park and if you can transfer in and out of a car OK then you are sorted. The only downside is if the rain blows the wrong way you do get caught but it was never a major problem as long as I wrapped up well.

Unfortunately, we lost against Huddersfield and then also against the Catalan Dragons in the cup with the last kick of the game. All matches are covered on Sky but the Challenge Cup was on BBC2 and much to the embarrassment of my kids, as Wrexham took a conversion we were on the Telly! Before the game Claire Balding conducted the pre-match interviews in front of us and the Challenge Cup itself was right in front of us, a mighty impressive piece of silverware! After that we predictably lost to Wigan and due to difficult kick off times I then missed a few games.

At the end of each season the top eight teams play in the play offs and it is a massive achievement just to make it. Despite a wobbly start the Crusaders got some real momentum going and needed to beat Hull Kingston Rovers and for St Helens to also win their last game to make eighth. The atmosphere at the racecourse was electric. In typical Crusaders style the game was end to end, the lead changed hands a couple of times then Jarrod Sammut intercepted the ball and ran the entire length of the ground to score. I thought the roof of the main stand was going to

come off!

We were in the play-offs and my carer and I decided to follow them as far as they went. We were due to play Huddersfield and had a fantastic day out at the Galfarm Stadium. Crusaders took about 1000 fans and made a mighty impressive noise. I recorded the game and when I watched it later you couldn't hear the Huddersfield fans at all – all the noise from was the Crusaders fans from start to finish. Despite playing very well, and leading for a good part of the game we narrowly lost in the dying minutes, but from being thumped at home by the same team to narrowly losing away in the biggest game of our season showed just how far the team had come in a relatively short space of time. Equally importantly, it was great to see such enthusiastic support and I have great hopes for the 2011 season which starts mid February. The first home game is against Hull KR on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> February 8pm kick off. If you are interested you can find more info at <http://www.crusadersrfl.com/> or pop into the club shop next to the Wrexham Racecourse Ground.

PS . Despite Crusaders going out we went along to Old Trafford to watch Wigan beat St Helens in the Grand Final. 77,000 people there, what a venue and event, maybe the Crusaders might make it there in 2011.....

Hope to see you there this season!

By Jon Shelton

## Child charity wins appeal on benefits error

By Paul Cheston, London Evening Standard Courts Correspondent, 8 Dec 2010, <http://www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23905100-child-charity-wins-appeal-on-benefits-error.do>



Judges unanimously dismissed a Government challenge today to a legal victory by the Child Poverty Action Group on overpaid benefits.

The charity originally went to court after the Department for Work and Pensions sent out 65,000 letters to benefit claimants, telling them they could face legal action if their overpayments were not returned.

In October last year, judges at the Court of Appeal ruled that the Government had no power to recover overpaid social security benefits from claimants who had done nothing wrong.

The Secretary of State took the case to Supreme Court. But judges agreed there was no power of recovery where the overpayments were a mistake and not misrepresentation or fraud.

## Chancellor says government should not ring-fence funding for voluntary sector

<http://www.thirdsector.co.uk/Thisweek/Article/1046189/Chancellor-says-government-not-ring-fence-funding-voluntary-sector/>

George Osborne tells a Norwood charity event that protecting cash for the sector would mean the budget deficit would never be “eliminated”.



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)



The government should not ring-fence funding for the voluntary sector because doing so would hinder its ability to pay off the budget deficit, according to the Chancellor George Osborne.

During a question-and-answer session at an event hosted by the learning disability charity Norwood last night, Osborne was asked whether he thought there was a case for the government to ring-fence its funding for charities.

"We've tried to protect the voluntary sector, but I don't think you can ring-fence it," he said. "You can't ring-fence everything because you'll never eliminate the deficit if you do."

Osborne said he hoped charities would be able to increase their non-statutory income. "A lot of charities have already been successful in upping their fundraising efforts," he told attendees.

At the event, a Norwood spokeswoman said that the charity now faced a 20 per cent cut in its local authority funding for next year. She said Norwood had an annual shortfall of £4m and was planning to reduce its spending by £3m per year, and raise an extra £1m per year from donations.

The charity has been considering a proposal to cut the salaries of some of its staff in order to deal with the situation.



Chancellor George Osborne with Times columnist Daniel Finkelstein

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-scotland-edinburgh-east-fife-12225702>

19/01/2011 the BBC reported:

## Safer Down's Syndrome test offered to pregnant women

A safer, more accurate test for Down's Syndrome is being offered on the NHS to expectant mothers in the Lothians.

Until now, the scan has only been available privately in Edinburgh and the Lothians, at a cost of about £250.

The test is being offered to all pregnant women in the area to reduce the number who have to undergo the more risky amniocentesis procedure.

Women will be offered the Nuchal Translucency test when they are between 11 and 14 weeks pregnant.

The scan measures the fluid lying under the skin at the back of the baby's neck, which, coupled with blood tests, increases detection rates from 60% to 80%.



Women will be offered the Nuchal Translucency test when they are between 11 and 14 weeks pregnant

Health officials said it would half the number of referrals for the amniocentesis test, which carries a

risk of miscarriage and involves a needle being inserted into the pregnant woman's stomach.

Until now only pregnant women in part of Glasgow and in the Ayrshire and Arran health board area have been offered the Nuchal Translucency test for free.

### Miscarriage risk

Over the next two months the Nuchal screen will be phased into every area in Scotland.

Dr Graham Mackenzie, NHS Lothian's consultant in public health, said: "Screening can involve difficult choices and we want to make sure that we offer women the best services possible.

"This combined screening is more accurate than the previous test and will reduce the need to offer women further diagnostic tests which increase the risk of miscarriage."

Pamela Hamilton, 31 from Edinburgh, is 14 weeks pregnant with her second child and has recently had the combined test.

Mrs Hamilton said: "Being pregnant is very exciting but there are worries.

"My husband and I chose to have this test so we could find out about the wellbeing of our baby and to prepare ourselves for all eventualities."

## SDN gets involved in the closure of the Grange Day Centre

**An SDN Special Meeting about the closure of the Grange Centre was held on 6<sup>th</sup> December.**

**The Grange Day Centre in Shrewsbury provides support and services to disabled people and is seen as a home from home by many users and their carers, who are offered some relief from their 24 hour care responsibilities when their wards are at the Grange.**



Sadly it has been in the news in recent weeks because of the very real threat of closure of the Centre as part of Shropshire Council's budget cuts. Members of Shropshire Disability Network had very real concerns about the haste and apparent lack of transparency in arriving at the decision to inform Grange users and staff about the decision to close the centre.

It was therefore decided that the SDN Steering Group would invite users, family carers and others from various professional

bodies associated with the Grange, to get a better understanding of the needs of people who would shortly lose day centre facilities at the Grange, and to listen to the concerns of family carers.

One of the members of the SDN Steering Group, Ruby Hartshorn, who is also involved as a pioneer for Personal Budgets, attended the meeting and shares her perception of what was discussed:

*It was a very positive meeting, as Geoff – our Chairperson – stated "if we have greater understanding of the needs of people, then we hope to be in a better position to be able to help/support them".*

SDN's understanding until the meeting on 6th January was that the Grange Centre would close by April 2011. We were informed that Shropshire Council have now received two reports – one from family carers and another from those using the Grange Day Centre facilities, and there may be a reprieve until December 2011 - but nothing is definite yet, as further meeting is being held shortly.

Everyone at the meeting had the opportunity to speak and despite the worries of people directly affected by the pending closure there were a lot of constructive comments. We heard that:

- there is a great fear that friendships made over many years may be lost as people might be split up
- some days centre users go to the gym at Stoke Heath Young Offenders Institute. Some Young Offenders come to the Grange to help with gardening. Relationships and understanding of the needs of the more vulnerable is enabled. This is another area which could be lost, which affects those in the wider community.
- several activities take place at the centre including games, computing, going out shopping etc., with carers. Meeting others is so important to these people and for family carers it can be their lifeline - knowing the cared for are being looked after, fed, kept safe, while they have a much-needed break. Some people need their own carer at the Grange when they attend, others don't – it is all individually assessed.
- there were real concerns from carers regarding “long term advocacy” for the cared for, when the family carers are no longer around. You could sense people who have anything to do with the Grange see it as “home” and, like a larger family getting together to do things, enjoy the companionship of others and a place they want to be, but also a place where the individual needs are understood and advocated for.
- there is a “big fear” factor that always comes into play when major decisions are being made in people's lives and they feel they have no control over the outcome
- not every user/carer has their Personal Budget sorted, so can't make plans for the future. However, we heard this has taken longer than anticipated but we are assured that by 31st January 2011 everyone will know how much money they will get; this enables the next stages of support planning etc to take place.

My own view is that I feel as a pioneer for Personal Budgets, despite what has been aired in the local press, the pending closure of the Grange Centre has nothing to do with Personal Budgets. It is cuts that are causing this closure, not the move to Personal Budgets. Personal budgets were introduced in some counties 2 years ago and it is just unfortunate Government/Council Cuts have happened just after the introduction of Personal Budgets in Shropshire and led to this muddying of messages.

Users come from Shrewsbury, Market Drayton, Oswestry and the wider surrounding areas. We heard from a family that have already been looking for alternatives to the Grange for their son. They had visited various places but had been referred elsewhere. When going to the 'referred' place, they discovered that it was not appropriate or did not provide the service and they ended up going around in circles. Geoff, as Chairperson, pointed out “if this is happening Shropshire Disability Network needs to know”. Vulnerable people and those who care for them have enough to do just getting through each day without this added burden.

It was a good meeting with comments being passed by those attending: “We have found out answers to things today we have not had before” “I think this has been good that we have come together like this, I have learnt a lot”

Prior to closing the meeting, Geoff asked each individual person if they had anything else to say that had not been said. Much information was exchanged at this meeting and all were invited to become members of SDN and join us at our quarterly general meetings.



You can see this report and comments about it on SDN's website at <http://shropshire-disability.net/6085/shropshire-disability-network-involved-closure-grange-day-centre/>

## Help needed to get an alternative day centre facility in Oswestry running for 2 days a week, following the closure of the Grange Day Care Centre in Shrewsbury

By Helen and Sid Grimes

In 1980, when our 18 year-old son, Tony, was on a 48-hour pass from the RAF, he was involved in a serious road traffic accident in Brandon, Suffolk, in which our 22 year-old son was killed. Tony was very badly injured, including serious head injuries – in fact they did not expect him to survive - and since then has been restricted to a wheelchair and needed 24-hour care. He has also suffered from epilepsy since the accident.

After caring for Tony for 18 years, our then GP suggested we should put Tony in a home for respite, and Social Services put him into a home in Colchester where he eventually stayed for a year, and then for another year in a home in Liverpool – Tony was not at all happy in either home, and we had serious reservations about the treatment he was receiving. After Tony spent 3 months in hospital after breaking his hip, we had Tony home. Altogether, we cared for our son for 27 years.

In 2000 we moved from East Anglia to Shropshire, first to Treflach and then to Oswestry itself, partly to be nearer our daughter, who lives near Wrexham. The difference in help we received from social workers in Shropshire could not have been better – we cannot speak too highly of our social workers here. Nearly 4 years ago Social Services found Tony a bungalow being built by Sanctuary Housing in Oswestry, and Tony is really happy there. We had to pay nearly £6000 to furnish and carpet the bungalow before he moved in and we are now trying to raise funds to have a doorway moved to make it more wheelchair friendly (architects ought to have to spend a week in wheelchairs etc. themselves before they are allowed to design property for the disabled!)

Tony is on the Direct Payment scheme, which we administer on his behalf. We employ the carers directly, to cover Tony's care for the whole week, with the help of Sally's Payroll (Sally's Payroll Service Limited, 11 Meole Walk, Meole Village, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY3 9EU) for which Social Services pay £47 a month to sort out our employer's responsibilities like National Insurance and Income Tax, and we find that the system works really well. The Penderels Trust (Shropshire Office: Penderels Trust, Unit 1 Pimley Barns, Pimley Manor, Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury, SY4 4SD, Tel: 01743 350174, Email: [shropshire@penderelstrust.org.uk](mailto:shropshire@penderelstrust.org.uk)) help us interview new carers, and Social Services pay Employers' Liability Insurance for us (although we pay an extra £60 a year to cover us for legal assistance if needed). Every three months our accounts are checked by Social Services – they have always been in excellent order – and the Independent



Living Fund also check the accounts every 2 years. Helen pays the cheques needed, and keeps meticulous records of everything. A bonus for council tax payers is that the Direct Payment scheme costs Social Services less than using an agency for carers.

We have been really lucky with the carers, and they could not be better; they keep the bungalow spotless, Tony is always clean and smart, they cook his meals and they take him out, generally every day, for which we pay the expenses. We also pay for a private physio once a week to help him. Tony only really has the use of his right arm, but before the accident was a very active person, interested in all sorts of things, including motor bikes and mechanics. Now he loves the company of other people and talking, and needs the stimulation of interacting with other people, but his condition means that he has no inhibitions and poor concentration, which can make social activities difficult!

Several years ago, our social worker found Tony a place at the Grange Day Care Centre for two days a week. Tony's carer goes with him, and, using his bus pass to pay half the cost of the wheel-chair suitable taxi, we pay £65 a week in transport. Tony has tried other day care centres, but not got on well, mostly because his lack of inhibition means that he does not always behave appropriately and, for instance, will call out the answers straight away in a quiz regardless of whether it's his turn or not. They are not always wheel-chair friendly either. However, The Grange seems to cope well with Tony and he loves going there, so we were distraught when it was announced that it was going to close.

Being fighters, we looked everywhere to find an alternative, preferably in Oswestry, which seems to have very few day care centres (they all seem to be based in Shrewsbury). Our daughter even spent some time looking on the internet, but without success and we have contacted David Cameron and Shire Hall, also without success. Someone suggested that we visit the new church in Cabin Lane, Oswestry, which also has a community centre, and the staff there were very helpful. They have a lovely room upstairs, with wheel-chair accessible lift, disabled WCs on both floors, a café and they are making a garden suitable for wheelchairs. They also have a large wall TV suitable for showing films, and their hire charges are very reasonable. We estimate that, with two paid carers, volunteers and users bringing their own carers where they need to, we could run a day centre there for two days a week – possibly Mondays & Fridays - for less than half the cost that other day centres charge. We would need to have 6 – 10 users for each session, and sessions would run from 9.30 am to 3 pm, with a sandwich lunch. We would have to approach funding charities for help with the equipment needed. Qube in Oswestry have also been encouraging, and we will go back to their Volunteer Centre for volunteers when we can get the project under way.

So what now?

- We want to hear from other disabled people, or their carers, who would enjoy this sort of day centre facility.
- We want to produce a flyer for distribution to GPs surgeries etc. in the Oswestry area to get more people involved, both potential users and helpers, and need help with both the design and printing of this.
- We are both quite elderly and need the help of more active volunteers in getting this project off the ground.

So if you can help with any of the above, please get in touch with the SDN Newsletter editor, Sally Barrett, email [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net), or phone Geoff Forgie, the SDN Chairman, on 01691 830662, and they will pass on your details to us.

**We look forward to hearing from you.**

# Services available at Qube, Oswestry:

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## Transport

Dial-a-Ride transport to medical appointments, shopping etc  
Fairholme and Meres day care  
Shopping trips to local supermarkets  
Bus hire with a driver for care homes, sheltered housing schemes  
and voluntary groups for social trips  
Wheelchair and scooter hire  
3 commercial bus routes in rural areas

## Arts

Arts classes and workshops for anyone  
Weekly art classes for people with disabilities called PaintAble. Currently just one session a week  
but will be increasing this to 2 sessions to meet demand. This is facilitated by a professional artist  
and the work is displayed in the gallery once a year.  
Art exhibitions

## Care

Emergency shopping for people coming out of hospital etc  
Weekly shopping service for people who cannot access the shops themselves. We take orders  
over the phone and deliver the shopping to their door  
Shropshire Care Information Project

## Volunteering

We run an accredited volunteer providing volunteer placements and helping other volunteer  
groups with their volunteer management

## Other services

There is a Learndirect Centre in the building run by WNSC  
We provide beginner IT courses and will soon be starting a work club  
Creative computer courses and other media courses  
Public use of computers  
Room hire facilities for meetings/workshops etc which are fully equipped.  
Information point for what else is happening in the area

For further information, contact:

Laurel Roberts  
Chief Officer  
Oswestry Community Action  
tel: 01691 656882  
email: [l.roberts@qube-oca.org.uk](mailto:l.roberts@qube-oca.org.uk)

<http://www.qube-oca.org.uk/>



# Some Amazing Things About MS

## By Geoff Forgie, Chairman of SDN

I was diagnosed with MS in June 1988 after some eight months of intermittent attempts to establish why I was having unusual discomfort in my upper right leg. We had just recently received the good news that my wife was expecting.

Whilst the MS diagnosis was quite disconcerting, my wife and friends were extremely supportive, and in many ways I considered myself lucky to have got to the age of 48 before being faced with anything approaching a serious illness. I was also advised that there was only a one in five chance I would end up in a wheelchair in ten years. As it happened it took me 18 years, and life certainly hasn't stopped yet.

From a personal point of view having my daughter born in the same year as I was diagnosed, sent out a strong message that while there was some bad happening in my life there were also some powerful forces for the good. I had been a father before in my first marriage, I knew just how special having children could be.

To add to the poignancy, my daughter Jessica was brought into the world after an/ emergency Caesarean section and had to have a blood transfusion, due to the umbilical cord blocking her normal passage from the womb. It was touch and go as to whether she would make it, and she spent her first week in an incubator. She would also need to be monitored quite carefully for the next three years to ensure there was no brain damage resulting from oxygen starvation.

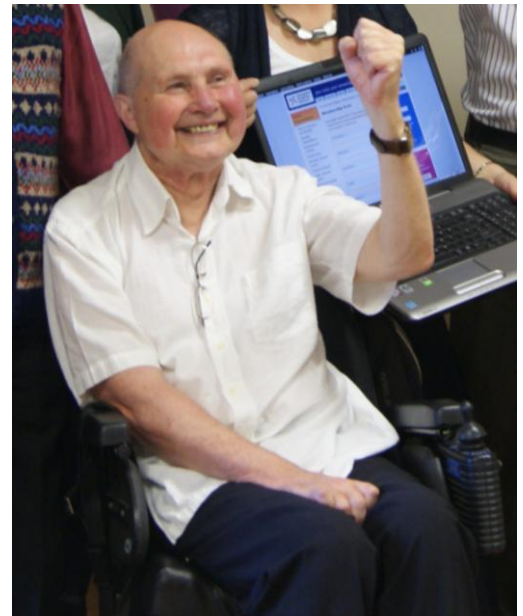
Our friends and family were extremely supportive as were the hospital staff and Jessica made excellent progress **passing** all her checkups. Jessica was already precious to us, but knowing it was touch and go in the beginning as to whether she would make it at all, and touch and go later as to whether she would suffer ill effects, she became even more special.

So it will be seen that right from the start there was something much more important to worry about than the inconvenience of my MS.

I am now 70, in a powered wheelchair and have been for over three years. I have some great carers with extra special mention to Dylan and Julie. Life has continued to treat me well and brought me much happiness. Jessica is 21, my son Dean is 47 and my grandson is 15. My wife Sue and I just had our 35<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. I was fortunate in working for a computer company, and able to continue making a difference at work until I was sixty three.

I have been involved in charity work since shortly before my MS diagnosis, and it has been an enormous source of satisfaction to me.

In summary there is life after MS and in my experience, many other life changing conditions. Go for it step by step and live every second. You will be amazed!!!!!!!



# Shock Shropshire bowel cancer figures released

Monday 24th January 2011, article in the Shropshire Star,  
<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/01/24/shock-shropshire-bowel-cancer-figures-released/#ixzz1C3fBkYmG>

**More than 200 people in Shropshire are diagnosed with bowel cancer every year with almost half of those dying from the disease, it was revealed today.**



The figures were released as part of a campaign to encourage more men to get screened for the disease.

Data shows 243 people in Shropshire are diagnosed with bowel cancer every year, resulting in 110 deaths.

The figures show that in Telford alone more than 80 people are diagnosed with bowel cancer every year with almost half of those dying from the disease.

Among those backing the Beating Bowel Cancer 1,2,3 Campaign is Telford MP David Wright. He said today: "If we improve participation in the screening programme we can diagnose these cases earlier and save lives."

Doctors say if the disease is diagnosed early, more than 90 per cent of patients could be treated.

Beating Bowel Cancer says more lives could be saved if participation in bowel cancer screening matched other national cancer screening programmes in England.

## Useful Information

If you ever need to call the **POLICE** dial, **0300 333 3000**. This goes through to a call centre either in Shrewsbury or Worcester, depending on the volume of calls being dealt with at either centre at the time.

The call taker will ask "*How may I direct your call?*" which can be confusing, especially to the elderly.

Give your **name, address, telephone number and postcode** followed by what has happened, in as clear and precise a manner as you can. It should always be borne in mind that the call taker may not have a clue about the area that you are calling about.

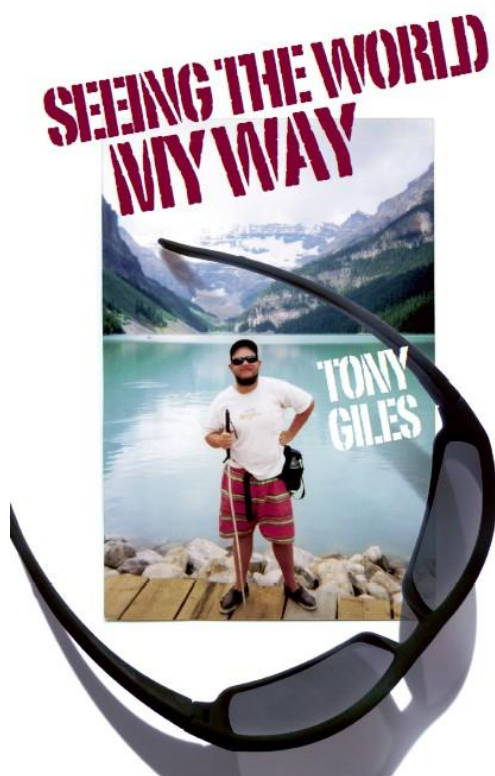
Try to remain calm, as this makes it easier and quicker for the call taker to get the information required. *This number is for West Mercia Police in **Shropshire, Herefordshire or Worcestershire**.*

Reprinted from Shrewsbury & District MS Society News, Issue 48,  
[http://www.mssociety.org.uk/branches/west\\_midlands/shrewsbury/newsletters.html](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/branches/west_midlands/shrewsbury/newsletters.html)

# Seeing The World My Way

## A totally blind and partially deaf guy's global adventures

**Tony Giles** lost all sight except for his ability to recognise bright sunlight at the age of eighteen. At an early age Tony developed nerve sensory hearing loss and is now severely deaf, yet he travels the world solo, staying in backpacker hotels. His most recent journeys include trips to the USA, Sri Lanka and Iceland. 'Seeing The World My Way' is Tony's first book.



'Seeing the World My Way' follows Tony Giles' journey of hedonism and thrill-seeking adventure as he travels across North America, Asia and Australasia. Full of drama, danger and discovery, this fascinating travel biography is a young blind man's view of the world as he sets out to achieve his dream, dealing with disability whilst living life to the limit.

From bungee jumping in New Zealand to booze filled nights out in New Orleans, 'Seeing the World My Way' is a no-holds-barred account that is certainly not for the faint hearted. Travel the world in a whole new way with Tony

Giles' frank, honest and exhilarating romp through one adrenaline-fuelled experience after another.

Paperback published by SilverWood Originals ([silverwoodbooks.com/originals](http://silverwoodbooks.com/originals)). Price £8.99. ISBN 978-1-906236-38-0. 224 pages.

'Seeing The World My Way' is now available to order from most bookshops, on Amazon, and directly from the publisher at [silverwoodbooks.com/my-way](http://silverwoodbooks.com/my-way).

Tony was born in 1978 in Weston-Super-Mare and at 9 months was diagnosed with Cone Dystrophy and Photo Phobia. He spent the first few years of life living in darkness whenever possible. From the age of five Tony attended a day school for the disabled in Bristol – a round trip of 40 miles. He learnt to read and write using his light sensitivity, but by the age of 9 or 10 this light vision began to lessen. In addition, at age 6 it was discovered that he was partially deaf in both ears, and he is now about 80% deaf although his digital hearing aids enable him to hear.

In 1989 Tony went to a boarding school for the blind and visually impaired in Coventry, where he stayed for 6 years and took his GCSEs in 1995. Tony then went to the Royal National College for the Blind, but the change, the death of his father and also of his best friend from Coventry (of Muscular Dystrophy) caused him to turn towards alcohol. However Tony passed A Level history,



Tony in Ohrid town, Republic of Macedonia, May 2010



maths and biology and decided to take a degree in American Studies at Northampton University.

Tony had visited Boston, Massachusetts as a 16 year old on a school trip, and visited New York and Washington DC with a disabled friend before beginning his degree course. During the course he spent 4 months at Coastal Carolina University and then travelled around California, New Orleans and Hawaii, finally gaining a 2.1 honours degree in 2001. During the course his local authority funded equipment with speech in order for him to write his essays and read, and he employed fellow students to help with researching books and correct his spelling and grammar. Tony also uses a text scanner.



Tony Bungee Jumping in Kawaru Bridge, Queenstown, New Zealand, 2002

A backpacking trip around Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam and Thailand followed, during which Tony was diagnosed with high blood pressure and kidney disease, and in 2008 Tony had a kidney transplant (his Step Dad was the donor). Seven Months later Tony was back travelling abroad. Tony stopped drinking in 2002.

In October 2002 Tony began a master's degree in Transatlantic Studies (History of US Foreign Policy) at Birmingham University, graduating in December 2003.

In Jan 2004 Tony started a yearlong epic backpacking solo world journey, visiting South and North America, Mexico, Cuba and southern Africa, during which he undertook his first solo hike in the Rocky Mountains, Canada. In February 2005 Tony rented his first flat, in Birmingham, and began writing his first travel book. To date he has visited over 50 countries, totally blind and partially deaf, has bungee jumped 12 times and sky dived 3 times. At present he lives in Teignmouth, Devon.

Tony is the youngest of 3 children and the only one who has a disability. His aims are to continuing travelling, particularly to Antarctica, across Russia, to India and the Himalayas, Japan and Indonesia, and to write travel books and fiction. He has now found a 'beautiful, wonderful Greek lady to share this with'.

Tony was interviewed on Excess Baggage on Radio 4 on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> December.

## CONNECT one click at a time

The BBC First Click website says:

Using computers and the internet is easier than you think.

You can find lots of activities, video guides and printable pages on this website to help you get started and feel more confident.

For help in understanding the basics, go to

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/connect/campaigns/first\\_click.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/connect/campaigns/first_click.shtml)



# Disability Living Allowance Reform Consultation – Deadline 14<sup>th</sup> February

Article reprinted from Regional disability Network West Midlands e-bulletin, <http://www.rdn-wm.org.uk/Consultations/Disability-Living-Allowance-Reform-consultation.aspx>

The Department for Work and Pensions has launched a consultation on Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for working age Disabled people. The Government will rename the benefit ('Personal Independence Payment') and introduce a new assessment from 2013 for all recipients – but also aims to deliver the Government proposal of cutting the amount of DLA available by 20%.

DLA was introduced in 1990 and implemented in 1992 to help Disabled people meet higher costs of living. The Treasury announced in the June 2010 Emergency Budget that 20% of DLA 'caseload and expenditure' would be cut. Today's consultation is set to finalise who will lose support by introducing a new 'assessment' process for all people 16-64 years of age receiving DLA.



## Disability Alliance Response to the consultation

This new assessment will be costly to introduce and administer and has the primary objective of restricting access to this essential benefit for Disabled people.

Neil Coyle, Disability Alliance Director of Policy, says:

"Margaret Thatcher paved the way for DLA in 1990. She recognised that DLA could help disabled people pay for everyday things like heating or specialist equipment. But the coalition Government wants to cut 20% of this essential support and risk leaving our most disadvantaged citizens facing deeper poverty and exclusion."

Using the most recent DWP figures (up to May 2010) over 1.8 million working age people receive DLA. The Government cuts are likely to mean over 360,000 disabled people losing DLA across the UK. But a third of disabled people live in poverty in the UK already and disabled people are twice as likely to live in poverty as other citizens.

The consultation is focused on DLA for working age disabled people but may be extended to disabled children and older people over time, affecting far more families. And, alongside this consultation, the Government has also proposed axing payments of DLA to disabled people living in care homes – cutting the support to get out and about to shop and see friends for example. But cutting DLA support for disabled people in care homes not only undermines autonomy and independence, it may also result in higher charges to councils to provide the lost support or to the NHS for health emergencies or crises if disabled people cannot visit a GP or collect a prescription. Neil Coyle says:

"The combined effects of the Government agenda for DLA risks meaning disabled people are unable to participate, less likely to work and more likely to live in poverty. Disability Alliance also today began consulting on DLA to ensure a thorough investigation of the issues involved. Our research will be an in-depth analysis of DLA use, disabled people's needs and potential risks in the Government plans."

## What the RDN is doing

The Disability Alliance consultation – which includes the Government's questions – will be available at: [www.disabilityalliance.org](http://www.disabilityalliance.org) and we hope to receive 1,000 responses by the closing date of the Government consultation (14th February 2011).

Despite the significant changes announced today and the massive impact on disabled people, DWP is running a very short (9 week) consultation over the Christmas period despite Government guidance suggesting 12 weeks is appropriate and the communication needs of many of the disabled people needing DLA.

The consultation is now open and closes on 14 February 2011.

The DWP invites you to respond to the main questions at the end of the introduction of the consultation document. You can however, also respond to any part of the consultation document that you would like to.

Please get involved and give your views to help ensure that the government provides for the needs of all Disabled people in the UK.

To access the consultation in full on the DWP website, cut and paste the following address:  
**<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2010/dla-reform.shtml>**

We have written a summary of the 22 questions the consultation asks about. If you do not want to read the whole consultation document go to to **<http://www.rdn-wm.org.uk/Consultations/Disability-Living-Allowance-Reform-consultation.aspx>**

To see a BSL, subtitled and spoken word summary of the consultation, visit You Tube  
**<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A2CfSbglUvI>**

If you have any queries about this consultation, or would like to receive the consultation document in a particular format, for example, large print, Braille, audio, or Easy Read, please contact:

DLA Reform Team, 1st Floor, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA

Tel: 020 7449 7688 – answering machine only

Textphone: 18001 020 7449 7688 – answering machine only

Fax: 020 7449 5467

Email: **[consultation.dlareform@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.dlareform@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)**

Please bear in mind that you will need to order these alternative formats to be sent to you which will take some time. Please allow enough time to respond.

**How to respond:** Visit **<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/consultations/2010/dla-reform.shtml>** and respond by post to: DLA Reform Team, 1st Floor, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London, SW1H 9NA or email **[consultation.dlareform@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:consultation.dlareform@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)**

**Deadline for responses:** 14/02/2011

## Shaping Our Lives networking website

**<http://www.solnetwork.org.uk/>**

This site has lots of news of things that are happening, new publications, events, jobs etc.  
– worth keeping an eye on!

**Shaping Our Lives  
Networking website**



THE place for information on  
disability throughout Shropshire.  
**[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)**



## Manchester University 1988 Study of deaf young people revisited – can you help?



In 1988 Peter Hindley and other researchers carried out a study of deaf young people aged between 11 and 16. Some of them were from Deaf schools and some from Hearing Impaired Units in mainstream schools. In 1988, the researchers collected data, including completed questionnaires from deaf young people's parents, as well as interviewing some of the deaf young people themselves. The original study showed that many more young deaf people were experiencing mental health difficulties in comparison with hearing young people.

**The original data that was collected by Hindley and his team was stored away but not with the names or contact details of those who took part.** Those deaf young people who did take part will now be between 32 and 39 years old. The team now want to carry out a new study of the original deaf young people and will try to trace them and find out what their wellbeing is like now and what has happened to them over the past 22 years since they were first involved in the research in 1988.

### Am I eligible to take part in this study?

You may or may not be aware that you were involved in Hindley's study in 1988. If you were born between 1971 and 1977 and attended one of these schools in London - Haverstock School, Sedgehill School, St. Paul's School or Oak Lodge School, it is likely that you were involved in Hindley's study.

Your parents might remember that you took part in this study. Those who were in the study in 1988 can take part in this new study.

You will be paid to take part. However, taking part will not cost you anything, as all materials will be provided for you.

More information is available on <http://www.nursing.manchester.ac.uk/deafwellbeing/>

BBC Today programme, 12<sup>th</sup> January 2011,  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid\\_9358000/9358778.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/today/hi/today/newsid_9358000/9358778.stm)

## 'Huge variation' in stroke care



A new report for the Care Quality Commission has criticised after-stroke care across many hospitals in England. The Care Quality Commission reviewed the performance of all 151 primary care trusts, finding gaps in rehabilitation services such as physiotherapy. Patients often faced delays in being seen, while some areas were failing to provide services altogether, the official



THE place for information on  
disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

health regulator said.

Its chief executive Cynthia Bower explains where improvements can be made.

'Your chances of being successfully rehabilitated after a stroke depend hugely on things like early discharge from hospital, the availability of a range of specialist services to get you back into work, to get you moving again, to get you communicating again, and what we've found is that there is huge variation across the country in the availability of those services.

For example, what we already know from the research is that something called 'early supportive discharge', where you are sent home early from hospital and then you have available to you at home a big range of things like speech therapy services, physio therapy services, are only fully available in 18% of the country. So there is every chance that you could go home and those services wouldn't be available to you. One in four people who have a stroke are of working age and we found that only just over a third of areas in the country that we looked at had proper rehabilitation services to help you back into work. So this is about your life chances following a stroke. There are very few places in the country where no-one helps them at all - there are indeed such places - but what we are saying is, for example, that waiting times vary hugely. So that even to wait two weeks, for example, for access to specialist physiotherapist services starts to impact on your ability to walk again.

We found that only about a third of all places that we looked at had specialist stroke physio therapists available to people at all; physios would be there but they wouldn't be stroke specialists. You need those specialist services in order to successfully go back to your previous life. There are many cases where people are very successfully rehabilitated after a stroke, but it's the biggest cause of disability in adults in this country and your chances of successfully returning to your previous life following a stroke are hugely dependent on access to this range of services.

One of the things that we found and is self-evident is that if you discharge people from hospital, it's cheaper than leaving them in hospital; if you start to rehabilitate people at home, rather than at hospital, again it's self-evident that people get better quickly, but research does demonstrate that if people get back to work it's less cost to society as a whole. So we're certainly not saying that it's more expensive to provide these services; what we're saying is that the sort of attention that's paid to acute stroke services is very good, so within an hour you get to a specialist stroke unit, you get all the right diagnostic treatment services at that point. What we're saying is that that same attention and focus has got to be given now to rehabilitation services.

There is no evidence at all that those [specialist skilled] people aren't there, it's about applying that attention and listening to what people who have had strokes and their carers are saying about the help they need.'

The Health Secretary, Andrew Lansley, later said that the rehabilitation care of stroke patients in England will receive additional resources in the next 4 years, although he did not explain how this would be financed.

# Big society plans raise concerns for parliamentary democracy

## Civil service boss orders inquiry into impact of bill as critics warn providers may be less accountable

Polly Curtis, Whitehall correspondent, [guardian.co.uk](http://www.guardian.co.uk), Friday 21 January 2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/jan/21/big-society-parliamentary-democracy?INTCMP=SRCH>

The head of the civil service has ordered an inquiry into the government's localism reforms amid growing concerns that its "big society" plans risk eroding the basic democratic principles of transparency and ministerial accountability, the Guardian has learned.

There are fears by those at the top of Whitehall that parliament's fundamental right to hold the government to account for its actions is being tested by the scale of the coalition's ambitions to devolve power from the centre to local communities and outsource services to charities and the private sector.

Gus O'Donnell, the head of the civil service, has asked a senior colleague to investigate the democratic impact of the government's localism bill, which is intended to end Whitehall's domination of the political system and devolve power to local people.

Sir Bob Kerslake, the permanent secretary at the Department for Communities and Local Government, will investigate the "accountabilities issues" being thrown up by the plans. O'Donnell told MPs this week that the issue was "absolutely crucial" to the project's success.

The case of Riven Vincent – the mother who this week wrote on a website that she was putting her severely disabled daughter, Celyn, into care after cuts to their support package – highlights the tension in the government's plans to devolve powers. David Cameron was forced to step in and offer reassurances in an attempt to avoid a full-scale political row, prompting accusations that he was undermining the localism agenda.

The information commissioner, Christopher Graham, has warned separately that the government is risking eroding the accountability of the state as services are outsourced under the big society reforms, because everything from children's services to doctors' practices could end up outside the scope of the Freedom of Information Act.

"We've got to think through the implications, we can't be so starry-eyed that we can't see the downside. There is a potential for services to become less transparent and less accountable," he said in an interview.



David Cameron was accused of undermining localism by stepping into the row over Celyn Vincent's care. Photograph: SWNS-Masons



The government's localism plans are its second biggest priority after cutting the deficit. It has promised to devolve power locally, establish new rights for communities, change the planning system and give local people more control over housing decisions. It is closely tied up with the big society reforms, under which the government wants to open up state services to new providers from voluntary groups, charities and the private sector. At the same time ministers are reforming Whitehall with the introduction of new governance systems, including non-executive board members from the private sector.

Concerns are growing about the impact of these changes. The National Audit Office this week warned that the NHS reforms could reduce accountability because there will be "no single headquarters for the NHS" that the spending watchdog can investigate on and report to parliament.

The Labour chair of the Commons public accounts committee, Margaret Hodge, has raised concerns about democratic checks and balances in Whitehall departments after the appointment of new boards, including the private sector non-executives. The MP for Barking said in a lecture on Thursday: "I think the dynamics change and there is a real issue about who we, parliament, hold to account. It looks muddled to me ... I think it blurs, in a worrying way, accountability."

Graham is calling for an expansion of the freedom of information rules – which he is calling FOI 2.0 – alongside privatisation and outsourcing of government functions. He did not oppose opening up the state to new providers but said ministers needed to ensure that the charities and businesses that took over services were not less accountable to the public. If action was not taken, the big society initiative could potentially undermine the government's transparency agenda, he said.

"It would be perverse if by going for alternative provision of services – privatisation, contracting out, looking at new and imaginative alternative ways of delivering public services – we suddenly found that we are giving important public functions to authorities that are not within the FOI Act and they became less accountable."

Nick Clegg has announced plans to reform the FOI laws, including expanding it to about 20 more bodies. But Graham warned that the proposals should go further. "The government is aware of the issue and they are acting, the question is whether they are moving far enough and fast enough to keep up with their own reforms," he said.

A spokesman for the communities secretary, Eric Pickles, pointed out that his department was introducing a range of measures to improve accountability, forcing councils to publish all spending over £500 and the salaries of senior employees, while the public will be given a right to veto excessive increases in council tax.

## The future of services for children with disabilities or additional needs in Shropshire

Shropshire Parent and Carer Council (PACC) have written to the CEO of Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust outlining their concerns for the future of services for children with disabilities or additional needs in Shropshire. In the letter they say:

The Shropshire Parent and Carer Council (PACC) has been working with families and service providers in Shropshire since 2007 to ensure that Shropshire services for children with



**Face 2 Face**  
Parents supporting parents  
of disabled children



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[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

disabilities or additional needs are fit for purpose. This work has been carried out in the light of an increasing understanding by the senior management of service providers, of the importance of working with service users to create high quality services that meet the needs of the communities they are intended to support. More recently this work has been placed in the context of ensuring value for money in times when the financial constraints on service providers are ever increasing.

The value of involving parents and carers of children with disabilities or additional needs in the development and design of the services they use has been fully recognised by the coalition government. The value of this participation to both service users and service providers has been evidenced nationally over the past two years in the development of short breaks opportunities for this group of children and their families. It has been shown that collaborative working between parents and services providers results in benefits for all; better services, increased uptake, better value for money and reduced need for high cost crisis intervention. The groundwork has been done with regard to the value of parent participation; PACC now wants to ensure that these opportunities to improve the lives of some of the most vulnerable members of society are not lost.

...

There are presently major challenges across all service areas in Shropshire and PACC are requesting your support in ensuring that the benefits that parent participation can bring to service delivery are embedded in the local response to these challenges. PACC in particular request that you support us in our involvement in the following areas;

### **Short Breaks:**

...

The Short break programme in Shropshire has brought huge benefits to local families of children with disabilities or additional needs and PACC are looking for reassurances that this work will continue to be a priority for Shropshire Council. PACC will be working to ensure that disabled children and their families are locally the high priority that national government say they should be and that the additional funding brings the enhancement of services that it was intended for, and is not diverted to mitigate spending cuts in other areas.

### **Education:**

- **A planned complete overhaul of the special educational needs (SEN) system will take place over the next few years. The Government has received nearly 2000 responses to the SEN Green Paper call for views – nearly half of the responses (40 per cent) coming from parents of children with SEN and disabilities.**

**The key areas of concern from parents, teachers, local authorities, SEN coordinators and others are published today and show that**

*The SEN system is overly complex, bureaucratic and adversarial*

*Parents want to get better information on the services available and the choice of schools*

*Better training is needed for school staff to recognise SEN and work better with children and their parents*

*Education, health and social care services need to work better together to identify and deliver on children's needs.*

PACC responded to the SEN and Disability Green Paper Call for Views and the key themes



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identified above reflect local concerns. PACC hopes that local services will work together to address the genuine concerns raised by parents about the education for children with disabilities or additional needs in Shropshire. PACC would like to discuss the concerns raised locally about the education provision for children with disabilities or additional needs with the providers of this service.

**NHS:**

...

PACC supported the response of the National Network of Parent Carer Forums to this consultation and its concerns that 'Achieving Equity and Excellence for Children' provides a weak response to some of the issues raised by the Kennedy Review, because it assumes solutions measured to fit services for adults will also suit Children's Services. In addition to this the relationship between the child and the family needs to be recognised and fully valued by the NHS, with the needs of the whole family being taken into account. Locally PACC is looking to ensure that the needs of children and young people with disabilities or additional needs and their families are a central consideration when planning the delivery of health services in Shropshire. PACC aims to ensure that this vulnerable community has a voice and as such are particularly looking for the new local bodies 'Health Watch' and the 'Health and Well Being Boards' to make a clear commitment to understanding and meeting the needs of this group.

...

PACC would be keen to meet with you to discuss the above areas further and would be happy to provide you with further information about the work that we do. We hope to hear from you in the near future and look forward to a productive partnership that secures real improvements across all services, from all service areas, for the families of children with disabilities or additional needs in Shropshire.

Yours Sincerely

Julie Davenport, Chairperson, On Behalf of the Shropshire Parent and Carer Council Committee

**You can read the whole letter and accompanying documents at**  
<http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/home/pacc-news/223-pacc-highlights-the-importance-of-parent-participation-with-senior-decision-makers-in-shropshire>

## Primary Care Trust to cut vital funding

Article in the Advertizer, 25<sup>th</sup> January, 2011, by David Lawson,  
<http://www.bordercountiesadvertizer.co.uk/news/98120/primary-care-trust-to-cut-vital-funding.aspx>

**VITAL help for families and carers of people affected by alcohol and drug dependency is under threat as an Oswestry centre's support work is facing a 30 per cent cut in its funding.**

The Kingswell Centre is facing a 30 per cent cut in income as Shropshire Primary Care Trust is withdrawing vital funding for the centre's support work with families and carers of people affected



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by alcohol and drug dependency.

A statement from the centre trustees said: "After some 15 years working with the PCT through its Adult Pooled Treatment and Community Substance Misuse Budget, the cuts will mean highly skilled frontline staff jobs at the centre are at risk of redundancy.

"This work, which goes on discreetly and without fanfare, supports some of the most vulnerable people in the town. We have never needed to advertise the service widely, because workers in other agencies and those who have been helped in the past send their contacts to Kingswell where they know they will get help. Kingswell is a quick response service for Oswestry people and many other services are appointment-based, or located in Shrewsbury."

Tudor Humphreys, a Kingswell volunteer and chairman of the centre trustees, said: "Since the late 1990s Kingswell has specialised in supporting local people who are either recovering from alcohol and drug misuse or are isolated with complex needs, and few close family ties locally.

"The team works alongside a paid senior family support worker to create an atmosphere of hope for those who come for support, what new government strategies call a 'recovery community'. Kingswell has been specialising in providing such a community for 27 years.

"People who have sometimes been written off by other services have been supported by Kingswell over the years. Some who use the centre sleep rough and initially come in for a hot drink and to dry their sleeping bags. Over time staff and volunteers have built up a good working relationship and help them with various problems, often a range of issues from substance misuse to homeless/worklessness, and into permanent accommodation alongside other services."

"Every year when reports have been presented, PCT Commissioners have praised the centre, seeing it as providing a unique community-based service, a street level, easy-to-access, service in line with current thinking. The PCT is apparently developing a new delivery model," he added.

One young woman who uses the centre said: "It fills the gaps when nobody else wants to help."

**More information on the Kingswell Centre can be found on their website**

<http://www.kingswellcentre.org.uk/>

## Consultants speak out on Shropshire hospital services

Monday 24th January 2011, Report in the Shropshire Star,

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/01/24/consultants-speak-out-on-shropshire-hospital-services/#ixzz1C3ckPEXC>

**Shropshire hospital consultants today spoke of the threats to clinical services at the county's two main treatment centres.**

They fear specialist services could be relocated outside Shropshire due to national directives or as a result of a failure in the county to take "difficult decisions" to protect them.

A major public consultation exercise is underway to explain planned changes to services at Royal Shrewsbury Hospital and Telford's Princess



Royal.

Health chiefs and leading clinicians claim changes are necessary to keep services in Shropshire and ensure they are safe and sustainable.

But a proposal to concentrate women and children's services at Telford has already come under fire from the west of the county.

Dr Sharon Oates, obstetrician and gynaecologist, said Shropshire had lost the "more complex" gynaecological cancer surgery. "Saying no was not enough to keep it in the county," she said.

"We lost the service primarily because we did not serve a large enough population across our hospitals. We do still continue to perform the less complex operations for gynaecological cancers, to a high standard of care."

Dr Oates added: "We have a major strength in that we offer both chemotherapy and radiotherapy services locally. Many hospitals of a similar size do not do this. This puts us in a good position to keep services locally, and also to attract new services as treatments and technology do change. But we have to make this happen.

"Where we have opportunities to keep services in our hospitals, even if this means some difficult decisions about how and where they are provided, then we do need to do this rather than see more patient care disappear from the county."

Bob Diggory, consultant Upper GI (gastrointestinal) surgeon, said that five years ago Upper GI cancer surgery was removed from Shropshire "in favour" of Stoke.

"The primary reason for this relocation was a national directive to centralise cancer services, and not in any way a criticism of the Shropshire Upper GI team who quality of care, survival rates and patient satisfaction levels were praised at each external peer review," he said.

Mr Diggory warned: "It is therefore entirely possible that other local, high quality clinical services in our county are at risk of a similar fate."

**By Health Correspondent Dave Morris**

## Disability cuts will hurt deeply

Stacie Lewis, [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), Friday 21 January 2011,  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/jan/21/disability-cuts-funding?INTCMP=SRCH>

A year and a half ago, my daughter, May, was born severely brain damaged. After a healthy pregnancy, her injuries sent me into a paralysis of fear.

Staff at the hospital reassured us. When we left the special care ward, there would be a team of professionals, equipment, funding and respite care. We would not be alone.

A few months later, our local council, Lambeth, quietly prepared for the announcement that its budgets were about to be slashed. They began by cutting a programme that had paid for my daughter to receive one-on-one care 15 hours a week. It also paid for a special chair for her so that she can



eat and play safely.

When I learned that Riven Vincent had lost her fight for additional support from social services, I felt sick with the familiarity of it. I want to say I can't imagine the horror she has been through, but I can. Even more nightmarishly, I'm ashamed to admit that her decision – to give up a beloved child to care – is one that has crossed my mind.

Despite his own intimate knowledge of the tragedy of disability, David Cameron has pushed through budget cuts that will devastate families across the country. The Conservative-led coalition government vowed not to cut funding to the NHS, but it did not ring-fence money to the disabled. My daughter's care relies heavily on services outside the NHS; without them, we will be destitute.

The new political climate is going to hurt families like mine deeply. The recession is an easy excuse for the government to cut funding for the most vulnerable children in the country while pretending, as Nick Clegg did when he announced the budget, that the government would seek to "protect children and everything that benefits children".

When a spokeswoman for Cameron called Vincent's story a "local issue" I found it deeply offensive. Such a statement is deceptive in the extreme. The government's budget cuts will mean the end of services for vulnerable families across the country, in every council.

But the government has no fears that we will mobilise like students did recently. We could bang on 10 Downing Street's door, but our children cannot eat or sit without support, and I'm afraid my immediate duty is with my daughter. If only we were a mobilised force of young people with the time and means to march on parliament, perhaps we would receive the same attention.

The more the government brushes this aside as a "local" issue, the less the media and the country will consider it "their" issue as well.

One day, my husband and I will no longer be alive. With our teacher's pensions, we will not leave May independently wealthy. The so-called "local" services we use may seem insignificant now but, in the long-term, they may provide our daughter with the skills to live independently. If she is able to live independently, those insignificant services may save her from becoming a financial burden to the country for the rest of her life.

Do not be fooled. Not all cuts will benefit society. Cut funding today and it will cost tomorrow.

Today, in hospitals across the country, children will be born with the same devastating injuries as my daughter. What kind of reassurances will the hospital staff be able to offer their grieving parents?

See also Stacie Lewis's Blog on <http://mamalewis.wordpress.com/>

## Acevo chief calls for 50 per cent tax on banker bonuses

The Civil Society, Finance, Gareth Jones, 4 Jan 2011

[http://www.civilsociety.co.uk/finance/news/content/7998/acevo\\_chief\\_calls\\_for\\_50\\_per\\_cent\\_tax\\_on\\_banker\\_bonuses](http://www.civilsociety.co.uk/finance/news/content/7998/acevo_chief_calls_for_50_per_cent_tax_on_banker_bonuses),

Sir Stephen Bubb has called for banker's bonuses to be taxed in order to fund the Big Society Bank.

Speaking to *The Times*, the newly-knighted Acevo chief





executive argued that with bonuses estimated at a total of £7bn this year, a 50 per cent tax would “start the new Bank off with a sensible amount to re-capitalise the sector”.

**He said: “The £500m in cash reductions we’ve seen so far in the voluntary sector are merely the first signs of a gathering tsunami of ill-considered cuts which threatens to decimate the third sector, wreaking havoc on our communities.**

**If some local councils continue with this Neanderthal approach to cuts, we will be setting a timebomb of social need, which first the most vulnerable in society and then ultimately taxpayers will pay for.”**

Acevo is now seeking a meeting with the chancellor George Osborne and chief secretary to the treasury Danny Alexander to discuss the proposal, as well as Nick Clegg, who has previously called for a cap on bonuses.

Writing in his blog, Sir Stephen added that he would be asking for the support of the CEOs of the major banking firms, and said: “I’m sure we can persuade the British Bankers Association to support us on this. I shall be contacting [the association’s chief executive] Angela Knight to discuss this.”

Ed. Note: ACEVO, Association of chief Executives of Voluntary Organisations.

## Protect social care for deafblind people

**Sense, for deafblind people, say ([http://www.sense.org.uk/campaigns/protect\\_social\\_care](http://www.sense.org.uk/campaigns/protect_social_care))**

**Take action by writing to your local council**

**Over the next couple of months we have an opportunity to ensure that extra funds are spent on vital social care provision.**

In October, the Government announced that by 2014, local authorities in England will have an extra £1 billion a year as part of their grant funding. The Government has been clear that local authorities should use this money to make sure people still have access to social care support.

However, this money is not ring-fenced. This means that the money is not reserved exclusively for social care. Therefore, we must make sure that councils do spend this on social care provision and do not reduce social care services.

Please take a few minutes to [email a letter to your local council](#), asking them to ensure that your council prioritises the budget for these much needed services.

Why do we need to act now?

Councils will be deciding their budgets over the next couple of months. Negotiations will be taking place right now. So it is the right time to influence decisions before it is too late. When you go to <http://e-activist.com/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=150&ea.campaign.id=8688> you will be able to email a personalised letter to your local council. It only takes a few minutes. Please do add in your own views and experiences as this will have the most impact.



## Seriously ill patients 'told to work'

A BBC investigation has heard claims of seriously ill patients being told they are fit enough to work and denied benefit payments.

Two former doctors for the private healthcare company Atos, which carries out the medical assessments have expressed concerns that the checks are being done too quickly and that the system is biased towards declaring people fit for work.

BBC Scotland's Social Affairs Reporter, Fiona Walker, has been investigating why some of those who had high hopes for ESA say it has been a failure

Read the whole article at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/scotland/8465122.stm>



There are 44,000 people waiting for their appeals to be heard.

## VAT increase could deprive poorest of emergency aid as charity funds dwindle

'Perfect storm' of 2.5% rise and low return on investments threatens to cut number of grants at same time as demand soars

Rachel Williams, [guardian.co.uk](http://guardian.co.uk), Sunday 2 January 2011

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/jan/02/vat-rise-charities-aid-poverty>

Hundreds of poor families and young people may miss out on emergency welfare assistance for essential items such as beds for children, cookers and fridges because of this week's VAT increase, charities warn.

People in urgent need of specific household items – for instance those who have had to move swiftly to escape domestic violence, or who have lost their belongings in a house fire – can apply to charitable organisations for small, quickly delivered sums to meet their most pressing needs when they have exhausted state help.



Family Action said at least 70 families would probably lose out on grants this year. Photograph: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images

But charities warned of a "perfect storm" as the rise in the VAT rate from 17.5% to 20% on Tuesday increases prices and cuts the number of grants awarding bodies can make – at a time

when applications are rising and funds dwindling because the interest earned on charities' investments has plummeted.

Family Action, which gives out between £100 and £300 per family, said at least 70 families would probably lose out on grants in this year. In the last financial year it handed out £540,000 to 3,000 families. It calculated that it would need an extra £12,000 to help as many under the increased VAT rate.

The charity, which has made such awards since its foundation in 1869, has had to close its grants service for eight months because of the impact of the financial crisis on its investments.

"The number of families making requests is spiralling as the numbers on the unemployment register rise," its chief executive, Helen Dent, said. "The VAT increase is a double-whammy because interest is so low at the moment that our grant interest is down.

"These grants are an absolute lifeline for a lot of families, and that's what's so awful. We really only fund essential items – every week it's beds, bedding, washing machines, fridges, cookers – and we only help people who have run out of opportunities for statutory funding.

She added: "We really are a last-ditch attempt for help. It's wrong that in a country like ours people have to turn to charity to get essential items."

Applications could "go through the roof" if the economic situation did not improve, Dent warned.

The government provides cash for people in desperate circumstances, through the social fund. But much of that assistance comes in the form of loans, which, although interest-free, must be repaid from recipients' benefits.

The amount in the fund is capped and can run out, and while someone is paying back one grant, they cannot apply for another.

"They won't give out two grants however great the need is," Dent said. "And they will turn you down for a loan if you can't afford to repay it. In our experience many of the families can't.

"We've seen families turned down [for cookers] by the social fund and told to feed their children sandwiches or microwave meals."

The Frank Buttle Trust, which provides grants for white goods, beds, bedding and essential items of furniture for children facing "exceptional difficulties" that are affecting their health or development, said it would need another £27,000 to help as many people as it did last year, and was therefore likely to be able to help 130 fewer applicants.

The Vicar's Relief Fund, part of the St Martins-in-the-Fields charity, which runs from donations given each Christmas in response to a Radio 4 appeal, also awards emergency welfare grants. St Martins' charities manager, Craig Norman, said he, too, was concerned about the effect of the VAT rise.

"We already receive many more applications than we have funds for and have to turn down perfectly valid ones," he said. "We will have to try to raise more money to overcome that extra cost of the higher VAT.

But we're already thinking that next Christmas – after nearly a whole year of increased prices, budget cuts and benefits cuts – people are going to be feeling the squeeze. It's going to be really hard for charities like us to raise that extra money."



## No More Legal Aid for Benefits Advice



From Social Welfare Training, Free Benefits Newsletter, January 2011, <http://www.socialwelfaretraining.co.uk/>

The Government is proposing to cut all Legal Aid in welfare benefit cases, as well as most housing, employment and debt cases.

The proposals are likely to hit the independent advice sector particularly hard, with a reduction in advice provision to many vulnerable clients.

Ian Mearns, MP for Gateshead, tabled an early day motion about the effect it may have, as an example, on Gateshead Advice Centre. '...to cut legal aid represents a sharp break from the long-standing bipartisan consensus that effective access to justice is essential to underpin the rule of law.'

The changes are likely to come into effect some time in 2012.

A white paper was released in November 2010, with consultation running until 14/2/2011

For more information and to email your views, go to:

<http://www.justice.gov.uk/consultations/legal-aid-reform-151110.htm>

## Funding Update

- 1) **Shropshire Partnership's Funding Update 68** gives details of grants – large and small – that are available. **Go to** <http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/our-services/funding-advice/shropshire-partnership-funding-updates/>



See also the **Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership's Newsletter**, available at <http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/blog/spotlight/shropshire-infrastructure-partnership-newsletter/>

- 2) **European Year of Volunteering**  
**Deadline 7<sup>th</sup> February**



**CabinetOffice**

The Office for Civil Society has opened a programme of grants and contracts to fund activity under the European Year of Volunteering.

Organisations can apply for grants to deliver activities under five themes:

- Young people and children - March and April
- Environment - May and June
- Sport - July and August
- Culture and the arts - September and October



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- Health and social care - November and December

There are also contracts available for leadership programmes. For more info see

<http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/content/european-year-volunteering-2011-funding-opportunities-develop-and-implement-activities>

Note deadline for applications for grants - **Monday 7th February 2011**

Deadline for applications for leadership contracts - **Monday 7th March 2011**

## Personalisation, User Led Organisations and the VCS



A paper written by Stephen Hodgkins of Disability LIB looks at plans to transform public services from 'one size fits all' to a 'personalised' consumer driven approach. Stephen argues that this poses both opportunities and challenges for Disabled People and User Led Organisations (ULOs). The paper outlines implications of the proposals and the next steps DPO's can take.

Read the article at <http://www.rdn-wm.org.uk/News/Personalisation,-User-Led-Organisations-and-the-VC.aspx>

## Volunteer Management Toolkit



**shropshire  
infrastructure  
partnership**

strengthening the voluntary sector together

**So – you are managing volunteers?**

We have put our latest toolkit on line. Find the answers to queries you may have in relation to managing volunteers. There are many sources of information, advice and guidance out there we have collated and can signpost you around the plethora of useful information that is available.

<http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/volunteering/volunteer-management-toolkit/>

## Patient's anger at pool closure

**Article by Russell Roberts in the Shropshire Star, 24<sup>th</sup> January 2011.**

A chronic arthritis sufferer today demanded answers over the future of a hydrotherapy pool at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital which has been closed for nearly two years.

Carole Lawrence, of Longden Common, near Shrewsbury, said that her pain had increased and her health had deteriorated rapidly as she could no longer go to sessions at the pool



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Carole Lawrence, of Longden Common, near Shrewsbury, who says her health has declined since the closure of the hydrotherapy pool

She claimed that many other patients had also suffered as a result and that their mobility was worse than ever.

Mrs. Lawrence said: "the pool has been closed for 21 months now with still no decision on its future. How long does it take to make a decision?"

"I suffer from arthritis and fibromyalgia and weekly sessions at the pool increased my mobility, helped keep me mobile and also helped in the management of my pain.

"Since the close of the pool my mobility has decreased again and my pain worsened. I feel that the NHS HAS ABANDONED ME AND MY NEEDS.

"We have been constantly told that as chronic patients we are not the responsibility of the hospital as we are not NHS patients."

### Limit

"I beg to differ. It is only NHS criteria that limit the number of free sessions you can have via the NHS at the pool".

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust said that it is not "contractually obliged" to provide a pool in Shrewsbury.

It closed the hydropool at the RSH in March 2009 because it did not meet the trust's "high health and safety standards".

Those who meet the criteria currently receive free treatment at the hydropool at Telford's Princess Royal Hospital.

But Shropshire Council has now asked Shropshire County PCT to look at the provision of community hydrotherapy services since these are no longer provided by the hospital trust.

Dr. Julie Davies, head of contracting and performance at the PCT, said: "We will need to look at all the options available to support this service in the community and will need, as with all service developments in the county, to do this in line with the PCT's prioritisation and funding process.

"We will be reporting back to the health overview and scrutiny committee once these options have been explored."

**Editor's note: The Shropshire Star has printed several such accounts since the RSH hydrotherapy pool was closed, and SDN has also received similar accounts from our own members.**

## How important is "Your Voice" to You?



Do you enjoy communicating with others by passing on useful up to date information? Do you have computer skills and some free spare time?

We have been very fortunate and grateful to Sally Barrett our Newsletter Editor

who has tirelessly produced a fantastic, informative Newsletter each month for SDN since our launch in June 2010.



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)



Unfortunately for us Sally is stepping down from this post at the end of March 2011 to enjoy a much earned rest and retirement. This leaves a massive hole in the work we do, which needs to be filled urgently.

Would YOU be interested in taking this on? Maybe there are 2 or 3 people out there who could form a team to continue producing "Your Voice" for us!

Talk to Sally and she will tell you how rewarding her work can be, by communicating with so many other people and at the same time providing others with a wealth of valuable information.

If you are interested please contact Sally on [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net).

Ruby Hartshorn

## Shropshire Disability Network



### How We Can Help Your Organisation

**Supporting Individuals with Disability and/or Long term illness, their families and carers**

- 1) Linking to your organisation on our website [www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)
- 2) Facilitating the promotion of your organisation at our General Meetings held 4 times a year in Shrewsbury - **contact Dave Hewetson on 01743 247019**
- 3) Meeting with you to discuss how we can work to our mutual benefit - **contact Geoff on 01691 830662**
- 4) Presenting SDN to your members - **contact Val on 01948 840726**
- 5) Facilitating the inclusion of your organisation at Shropshire Disability Awareness Day - **contact Geoff on 01691 830662**
- 6) Including articles about your organisation in our monthly newsletter – **email Sally [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)**
- 7) Publishing your events in our Events calendar - **email Gavin c/o [Gavin@omega.uk.net](mailto:Gavin@omega.uk.net) and Sally [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)**

### How you can help Shropshire Disability Network

- 1) By encouraging your members to register with us - they can register via our website [www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net) or by **ringing Val on 01948 840726**  
(the greater the number of individuals with disability and/or long term illness, their families and carers registered with the Network, the more powerful our voice.)
- 2) By informing us of the issues you are facing – **email [info@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:info@shropshire-disability.net) and [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)**
- 3) By submitting articles about your organisation in our monthly newsletter – **email Sally [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)**
- 4) By submitting events for our Newsletter and Events calendar - **email Gavin c/o [Gavin@omega.uk.net](mailto:Gavin@omega.uk.net) and Sally [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)**

# The Gateway Work Club



## Want some help finding a job?

Work Club will provide you with:  
a place to meet, exchange skills, share experiences, find opportunities, make contacts and get support to help you in your return to work.

Every Thursday for 6 weeks from 13 Jan 2011; 10 am - 12 pm  
at The Gateway Education & Arts Centre in Shrewsbury.

- 13 Jan - Exploring career options
- 20 Jan - Developing a personal jobsearch plan
- 27 Jan - Creating an effective CV
- 3 Feb - Application forms and business letters
- 10 Feb - Interview Preparation
- 17 Feb - Interview Preparation

If you are interested in joining one of these sessions please contact: The Gateway, Chester Street, Shrewsbury, SY1 1NB



01743 355159



countytraining@  
shropshire.gov.uk

**county** | training

In conjunction with The Gateway  
Education & Arts Centre, Shrewsbury

# Myalgic Encephalomyelitis ~ A very controversial illness

## A Personal view by Peter Ruberry (Secretary Shropshire ME Group) December 2010

In 1987 I was forced to retire early from my job as agricultural lecturer, which I loved, due to contracting ME.

This name literally means Muscle pain with inflammation of brain and spinal cord.

ME has been classified as a Neurological Disease by The World Health Organisation (in G93.3) since 1969

It has been known by the medical profession as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome (CFS) since 1988.

**This trivializes the illness and puts emphasis on one of its least important symptoms.**

This is a tale of suffering and years of ignorance and abuse by some sections of the medical profession.

People with ME (PwME) would like to know - What is so secret about ME/CFS that both the MRC and the DWP feel the need to lock away documents relating to this illness until 2072?

### It is not a trivial illness

Nancy Klimas, one of the world's top AIDS and ME/CFS physicians; Professor of Medicine and Immunology, University of Miami, said:

"I hope you are not saying that ME/ CFS patients are not as ill as HIV patients.

I split my clinical time between the two illnesses, and I can tell you that if I had to choose between the two illnesses I would rather have HIV"

Hillary Johnson, USA advocate for ME sufferers for many years, says "It's hard to imagine a general patient population that has suffered more horribly than the English, given the remarkable sway of a handful of British psychiatrists, such as Simon Wessely, who dominate and even define the field there."

### Who are affected?

250,000 sufferers in UK - 4 per 1000 of population (About 1500 in Shropshire)

25,000 children. (About 150 in Shropshire)

25% are severely affected – Housebound or bed bound, needing 24-hour care, tube feeding, in darkened, soundproofed rooms in worst cases.

It affects all economic and ethnic groups and at any age, from 2 years upwards. Most commonly, it starts in 30s and 40s, and in children, around puberty. Female: Male ratio is 3:1 (1:1 pre puberty).

### What's it like to live with?

It's like severe flu, combined with a severe hangover, which persists for months/years but fluctuates in intensity hour to hour, day to day. It is worse after physical or mental activity. RELAPSES or setbacks are often DELAYED up to 72 hours after the activity.

Aching all over, no energy, poor concentration, difficult to hold a conversation, find the right words or even finish a sentence. Heavy limbs - feels like lead running through your veins. Circulatory impairment with facial pallor (the 'most striking finding'), cold extremities and hypersensitivity to climatic changes in temperature. Sore throats and extreme THIRST but Intolerance to ALCOHOL.



Most are affected by light and noise – so hospitals are the worst environment.

### Experts have found

- Reduced blood flow to the brain
- Reduced circulating blood volume
- In ME the DNA includes an 'infection gene' which triggers an immune response to a virus, causing us to feel muscle pain, fatigue etc., but then fails to switch itself off,
- Greater energy expenditure for any particular task
- Lower pain threshold.
- Abnormal cellular activity and signals from brain
- Oxidative stress and cytokine response.
- the mean QOL (quality of life) scores as regards limitations on physical functioning were very, very low, similar to those found in people with AIDS and multiple sclerosis"

Prof Komaroff says

"...there are now over 4,000 published studies that show underlying biomedical abnormalities in patients with this illness. It's not an illness that people can simply imagine that they have and it's not a psychological illness. In my view, that debate, which has waged for 20 years, should now be over"

### Abuse of the Patient

M.E. patients are one of the most abused patient groups in the world and have been for years, because large sections of the medical profession have long been under the misapprehension that it's a mostly psychological illness, or rather, an "illness belief". There are numerous *true* stories of children with M.E. being seized from their families and abused in hospital, of parents being accused of causing or perpetuating their illness, of sexual abuse, of people being sectioned when they refused particular types of treatment

In the UK, the establishment psychiatric Lobby has become known as "The Wessely School", after leading proponent Professor Simon Wessely of the Institute of Psychiatry in London. (He is now Government advisor on Gulf War Syndrome and has declared GWS to be MASS HYSTERIA)

In spite of thousands of biomedical studies to the contrary Wessely famously asserted that

"ME is simply a belief, the belief that one has an illness called ME"

Peter Denton White, Head of Barts Hospital CFS/ME clinic, says

'Remove the barriers to recovery:

- Tell Family and friends and work colleagues not to help.
- Do not give them any aids like wheelchairs etc so they can get out of the house occasionally.
- Get rid of all the Drs from the CFS clinics who believe in a physical cause.
- Ban doctors who practice medicine where they believe there is a physical cause
- Finally as they are doing now stop their sick benefit after one year

This school of thought also advocates that PwME should avoid joining ME Support Groups as this will only perpetuate misguided illness beliefs and prolong the illness.

## Why are we treated so badly?

Due to lack of research on the physical aspects of ME (although £millions of government/MRC money has been spent on psychiatric aspects) there are no definitive tests or effective treatments.

Poor GP training – Many believe it's psychological, rare and only lasts up to 2 years.

The wide range of symptoms – causes misdiagnosis – Depression, Fibromyalgia, MS. Polio, Post polio syndrome, Lyme disease, Thyroid and adrenal problems, etc.

Most often patients are referred to a psychiatrist/treated with antidepressants which most of us cannot tolerate.

## History of the Illness

Disease of 1000 names – (David Bell book)

Sporadic outbreaks worldwide from 1930s – often in small, closed communities- schools, hospitals, convents, military bases, etc.

Known as Summer Grippe, summer flu, Lake Tahoe Disease, Tapanui Flu, Iceland Disease 1948, Royal Free Disease. In USA it became known as CHRONIC FATIGUE and IMMUNE DYSFUNCTION DISEASE (CFIDS) but they have recently voted to adopt the name ME!

Numbers affected increased exponentially after polio vaccination in 50s (Salk) and 60s (Sabine). Was originally called a-typical or abortive Polio.

Iceland disease indicated a polio link. In 1948 an outbreak occurred in Akureyri. The following year Paralytic Poliomyelitis occurred throughout Iceland but did not affect those who got ME the previous year.

Dr Melvin Ramsay 1955 “ME/PVFS The Saga of the Royal Free Hospital”

1 Effort induced muscle fatigability with a prolonged recovery period - the 'sheet anchor' of the ME diagnosis. NB: muscle pain is not required by Ramsay.

2 Circulatory impairment with facial pallor (the 'most striking finding'), cold extremities and hypersensitivity to climatic change.

3 Cerebral dysfunction affecting concentration and memory, word-finding abilities, sleep rhythm, thermoregulation (sweating episodes in particular) and autonomic function (e.g. orthostatic tachycardia).

4 Variability and fluctuation of symptoms throughout the day.

Early British research, linked the illness to enteroviruses. There are 70+ viruses including Echo and Cocksacki viruses (rampant in 1980s) and 3 polio viruses, which enter the gut, then invade muscle and nervous tissue.

In USA ME was wrongly assumed to be Glandular fever (EBV)

1970 In the *British Medical Journal*, psychiatrists Colin McEvedy and A.W. Beard categorize ME/CFS outbreaks as mass hysteria, effectively destroying Ramsay's work. They didn't examine any patients involved, many of who were still unable to work!

There were major ME outbreaks in 1980s and 1990s. USA health insurance companies, already hit by HIV/AIDS epidemic threatened that US health care would collapse if they had to pay benefits to ME patients (known as CFIDS in USA).

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome was invented by psychiatrists (including Wessely and Co.) in 1988. Since then the definition has been widened so that virtually anyone with any form of fatigue/tiredness can be included.

This invalidates much of the research, which is done on ill-defined cohorts, and most government

funding has been to study psychiatric/ psychosocial aspects.

1996 Royal Colleges Report into ME/CFS, (written by psychiatrists) resulted in a determined effort by some doctors to completely remove the term Myalgic Encephalomyelitis from UK medical language.

Most medical journals refuse to publish any research involving ME in the title.

In 1991 Elaine DeFreitas, a researcher at the University of Pennsylvania discovered a brand new retrovirus in the blood of M.E patients. This information was deliberately buried for 18 YEARS until in 2009 the retrovirus XMRV was uncovered by the Whittemore Peterson Institute in 67% of M.E/CFS patients and 4% of “healthy” blood donors. This work has been replicated elsewhere, but British labs, using different techniques have failed to find this retrovirus, and have claimed that positive results (replicated in 3 other studies) stem from laboratory equipment contamination. However as from 1st November 2010 anyone who has ever had a diagnosis of ME/CFS is banned from donating blood “to protect the ME sufferer” – not in case XMRV is present and might contaminate the national blood supply. N.B. As yet XMRV is not proven to cause any disease. It is related to HIV but has a different mode of action and not so easily transmissible.

### NICE Guidelines 2007

Based on very few, suspect Randomised Controlled Trials, with high dropout rates -

Ignored patient protestations and some 4,000 published papers showing ME/CFS to be a PHYSICAL illness. (Not considered by NICE as they were not randomised controlled trials, due to lack of research funding, which mostly has to come from patients.)

NICE proscribes many treatments which have been shown to be helpful – e.g. injections of vitamin B<sub>12</sub>, Mg, Gamma globulin, thyroid hormones etc.

Proscribes tests and investigations that might indicate a viral cause.

Their only recommended treatments are Graded Exercise Therapy and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. The former has been shown in patient surveys to be harmful in most cases and the latter to be at best ineffective and occasionally harmful.

Government has spent millions on research into psychological causes.

FINE Trial £1.4M – proved current treatments has no lasting effects.

PACE Trial £5M+ (PACING, ACTIVITY AND COGNITIVE BEHAVIOUR THERAPY: A RANDOMISED EVALUATION)

should have reported by September but still no results

In 2003 £8.5M earmarked (ring-fenced for two years) to set up CFS/ME diagnostic /treatment centres in England. Mostly established in psychiatric hospitals or headed by psychiatrists.

In the last 3 years a group of doctors of the Wessely school have set themselves up as THE training group for GPs in UK – their conferences involve mainly psychiatrists.

Dr Abhijit Chaudhuri, “There is abundant evidence of physical abnormalities in CFS patients after exercise, giving rise to symptom exacerbation beyond normal aches and pains. Health care providers must understand the unique effects of exercise on people with CFS. Just as CFS patients may be overly sensitive to medications, even in reduced doses, they are sensitive to exercise, which causes a delayed relapse even if the exercise seems well tolerated at the time. Therefore, “Like pharmaceutical therapies, prescribing exercise as therapy . . . must be predicated on understanding the risks and benefits of exercise as thoroughly as possible. Only in this manner can the ‘right’ dose be achieved.”

In the absence of any effective curative treatment (apart from medication to control specific symptoms), the only solution for the ME sufferer is to learn to PACE one’s activity and



CONSERVE ENERGY to enable the body to heal itself. By this means most sufferers are able over time to improve to 60 or 70% of former activity levels. Unfortunately some sufferers never improve, or deteriorate.

**I am one of the lucky ones who have improved from under 10% to 60-70%, largely thanks to getting involved with Shropshire ME Group for 23 years and learning about the disease while seeking to help group members who are fellow-suffers.**

In the end you begin to realise that what Dr Dowsett (SMEG Patron and medical advisor) said all those years ago was absolutely right - that the body is trying to heal itself, and a lot of the time you're better off avoiding people doing things to you, and let it get on with it.

There is so much misinformation out there. In a recent news article Yvette Cooper MP who has apparently recovered from ME pronounced that her consultant told her that 90% of PwME recover within a year!

Prof William Weir, her consultant (one of the good guys), had to refute that with the statement,

"I enjoyed reading the recent Yvette Cooper interview. Nonetheless as her consultant when she suffered from ME/CFS (which she put into the public domain in an article in the Independent and also the Daily Mail) I have to put right the assertion that "90% of people recover from ME" The correct statistic is that 90% of recoveries occur in the first year, not 90% of people recover. I would be very grateful if you could arrange to publish this correction as the misconception that "90% of people recover" distorts the true picture of a disease in our community which wrecks the lives of in excess of two hundred thousand people, both sufferers and their carers." William RC Weir.

## RNID Lip Reading Petition



**SDN has received this request from the RNID**

Dear Supporter,

### **RE: CLASSIFICATION OF LIP-READING CLASSES PETITION**

I am writing to inform you that there is a petition for lipreading classes to be classified as an "essential" skill, which we will be submitting to the Minister for Business, Innovation and Skills.

Lipreading is a vital skill for many people who are deaf or hard of hearing. It helps with communication and allows many people with hearing loss to remain in work and stay in touch with friends and family. It builds confidence and independence and helps to avoid social isolation. The best way to learn to lipread is through regular classes by a qualified tutor. However, with provision of lipreading classes being patchy in some regions and fees that can be as high as £100 per term, some people are simply unable to attend a class. Many classes have closed and many more are threatened with closure. This is because the vital skill of lipreading is classified so that little central funding is allocated to local authorities and learning providers to run the classes. People with a hearing loss are unable to attend as there are no classes for them.

**We are campaigning to improve this situation by:**

1. Campaigning nationally for a change in the way that lipreading is classified for funding so fees can be reduced.
2. Working locally with students and teachers in areas where there are not enough classes or they



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

are under threat of closure.

3. Making sure that everyone who could benefit from going to a lipreading class knows about them.

### What can you do?

Please sign our petition to show your support for people with a hearing loss to have access to learn this vital skill or their communication.

Encourage friends, family and colleagues to sign the petition by forwarding this link to them.  
<http://bit.ly/lipread>

Read our "Paying Lip Service" report (<http://www.rnid.org.uk/howyoucanhelp/campaignwithus/ourcampaigns/lipreading/introduction.htm>) to find out more about the situation in your own area.

Please let us know if you have a particular problem accessing lipreading classes in your own area.

Many thanks for all your support,

Kind regards,

Cara Fullelove

Campaigner, RNID, 19-23 Featherstone Street, London EC1Y 8SL, telephone: 020 7296 8171  
textphone: 020 7296 8001 ext 8171

The Petition is available at <http://www.gopetition.com/petition/41521.html>

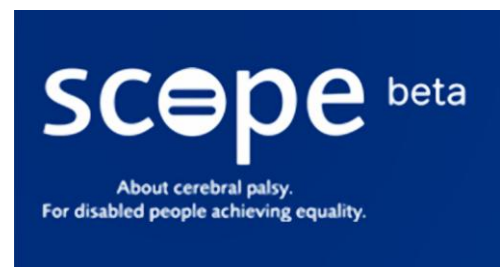
## Disabled people are disadvantaged!



The first Life Opportunities Survey (LOS) has published its interim results. This is quantitative research which can be quoted when making a case to funders and when negotiating contracts for funding. Disabled people and DPO's will not be surprised that the survey found many Disabled people in Britain are living socially isolated, cash-strapped lives and struggling to participate in normal activities.

From: Regional Disability Network, West Midlands E-bulletin. Read the full article at <http://www.rdn-wm.org.uk/News/Life-Opportunities-Survey---interim-results-releas.aspx>

## Scope launches online forum for young disabled people



The young people's forum is a closed room, meaning that the only people who can view it, post messages and interact with users are the young people registered by us.

You can use the forum to talk to other young disabled people about the things that are important to you, to find out information, to ask questions of the Scope team or just to chat.



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

The registration process requires an adult to give their consent, so please don't ask to be registered unless your parent or guardian knows about it, and are happy to give their permission for you to register and use the forum (we have to do this to make sure it is a safe place for you to use). At present we can only accept registration requests from young people living in England and Wales.

The forum is post-moderated, which means that you once you are registered you can post messages and they go straight onto the forum for the other users to see. However, the moderating team (us!) can edit, remove or delete messages if they don't fit the forum rules. So please read the rules before posting. Any user who continually breaks the forum rules will be removed without discussion.

Go to: <http://www.scope.org.uk/help-and-information/young-people/meeting-point>

## Through the Doorway to Healthy Living

Through the Doorway to Healthy Living is a 'virtual' healthy living centre working primarily in Shrewsbury, but also with a Shropshire-wide remit.

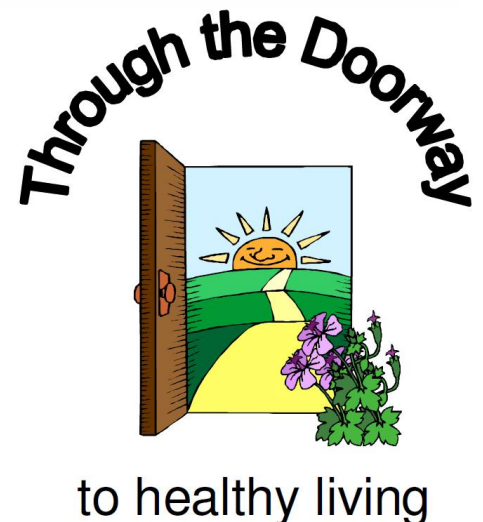
We use the term 'virtual' because we do not have premises of our own, preferring to use a variety of community venues across the area to provide activities within communities – in other words we want to spend as much of our funding as possible on people rather than places.

Our aim is to reduce health inequalities (by which we mean reducing the gap between the health of different groups of people such as the well-off compared to poorer communities or people with different ethnic backgrounds), by giving people the skills, opportunities and confidence to adopt healthier lifestyles.

We do this by providing free or low cost practical activities that can help people to live healthier and more fulfilled lives. The programme includes Cooking for Health, Craft Modelling & Jewellery Making, Belly Dancing, Combifit, Dance Fit, Extend, Gentle Exercise, Pamper Sessions, Pilates, Tai Chi, Walking for Health, Yoga with crèche, Mini-music, Top Tots & Bouncing Babies and Tots Dance.

Find out more on their website

<http://www.throughthedorway.btck.co.uk/Home>



## Disability living allowance cuts could confine disabled to homes, say charities

The cutting of the Mobility Component of the DLA was highlighted on 12<sup>th</sup> January when the Guardian reported the plight of Louisa Spivack and her two autistic sons.

'Her two sons, Daniel, 34, and Joel, 25, are both severely autistic, and live in a care home in Sussex catering specifically for people on the autistic spectrum. They are living far from their parents' home in north London (where they were cared for until they left school) because there were no good specialist homes with places for them any closer.



Neither of them speak, but Danny is more severely disabled than his younger brother, diagnosed with epilepsy, curvature of the spine, and a prolapsed disc that leads to periods when he cannot move. Both sons receive the higher rate of the mobility allowance, £49.85 a week, a reflection of the seriousness of their disabilities.

Danny's behaviour disturbs other residents at the home, so he is unable to travel with them. The DLA mobility component has helped fund a car exclusively for his use, which his carers use to take him for daily walks in the nearby forests, regular swimming sessions and all his doctors' appointments.

Without his own car it would simply be impractical for him to leave the home, his mother says. If his routine is disrupted Danny can get anxious and a bit aggressive, she explains. He is unable to use public transport, and even if he could, the care home in Sussex is in a rural area, not close to a bus stop. When he has travelled by bus in the past, Spivack says, other passengers have been upset by him, and he is equally distressed by the noise of other people.'

You can read this article at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/jan/12/disability-living-allowance-cuts-charities?INTCMP=SRCH>



Louisa Spivack and her autistic sons Joel, left, and Danny. They have been threatened with having their mobility allowance cut. Photograph: Martin Argles for the Guardian

## Parents and Disability Organisations give a red light to the Government's DLA Reforms

**Sarah Thomas, Secretary of The Parent & Carer Council Shropshire, attended a meeting organised by the Disability Benefits Consortium (<http://www.disabilityalliance.org/dbc.htm>) about the impact of the proposed reforms to the DLA and this is her report:**

On Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> January I attended a meeting organised by the Disability Benefits Consortium with Labour MP's. The meeting was hosted by Kate Green MP with a view to gathering information about the real potential impact of the proposed DLA reforms on disabled individuals and their families.

The key aspects of the proposed reforms are listed below;

### Mobility Component

From 2012/2013, payment of the mobility component of DLA will stop where a claimant is in residential care. Currently the care component of DLA stops after 84 days (for children) but payment for the mobility component is unaffected.

The justification given by Government for the removal of the mobility component of DLA from children and young people in residential special schools / colleges is that of double funding – i.e.

transport is provided by the facility (school or college) themselves. However, the evidence suggests that this is not the case. Even where transport is provided by the education provider, it is often restricted to provision at the start and end of term. No extra provision is factored in for visits at weekends or for the child when they are at home during the holidays. We are concerned that if DLA is withdrawn because a child is in residential care or school for more than 84 days in a year, it will not be possible for them to leave their residential setting when their families visit, to spend time with their friends or to take part in community activities. This means they will essentially be trapped in their residential setting, and as a result, they will become more isolated from their families and from the local communities.

## PIP

The Government has proposed to replace DLA with a new benefit called the Personal independence Payment (PIP).

## Rates

The Care component will now be known as the 'daily living' component. There will now only be two rates instead of the current three. We are very concerned about the impact that this will have on people currently on low rate DLA.

There will still be two rates for the mobility component.

## Aids and adaptations

The Government is looking at the way aids and adaptations help disabled people to live an independent life when assessing them for DLA. This may mean looking at things like how a disabled person can get around using a wheelchair. At the moment they do not look at this for Disability Living Allowance.

We are concerned that this proposal will mean reduced benefit for wheelchair users. To financially penalise families for having suitable equipment would be extremely damaging. It would reduce families' ability to contribute towards aids and adaptations that meet their child's wider wellbeing needs and that help that child live a more independent and ordinary life. It would also not take into account that having an aid or adaptation does not create a completely accessible society and that to allow disabled children to live ordinary lives many families will still incur additional costs regardless.

## Automatic entitlement

At the moment people with specific health conditions or impairments get automatic entitlement to DLA. The Government wants to stop this and assess everyone. They also want to introduce more regular reassessments to ensure that people are still getting the correct rate of financial assistance.

## Who will these rules apply to?

The Government have not decided yet whether claims from children and people over 65 should follow the new rules.

## Children

The Government is consulting on whether they should take account of assistance that children receive from 'public bodies such as school' when assessing the rate of DLA they should be entitled to.

EDCM thinks disabled children have a right to access the same services that all other children access, such as education, health and social care. These services should be tailored to meet each child's individual needs. However, services such as schools have a limited remit as appropriate to their purpose – i.e. education – and should not replace financial support that is provided to

promote independence and reflect the additional costs incurred by families who are attempting to lead ordinary lives as active citizens.

### **Introduction by Kate Green MP and Neil Coyle of the Disability Alliance:**

Fundamentally DLA will still be based on the extra cost of living associated with having a disability but the consultation document does not give any details about how these will be measured. It is not expected that there will be any change in how Disabled individuals are able to use their DLA money. A recent survey carried out by the Disability alliance showed that the main areas of use for DLA by those in receipt of it are;

- Transport
- Aids and Equipment
- Heating / utility bills

It should also be noted that in the Conservative Parties Manifesto it stated that they would protect Disability Living Allowance should they get into government.

This is an issue that is causing great concern amongst Labour MPs at the moment because the most vulnerable within our society are being most greatly impacted by the cuts implemented as part of the Governments deficit reduction programme. There seems to be a real lack of understanding about the needs of the disabled and role of residential care, with the Prime Minister recently likening living in a care home to a stay in hospital. This makes no allowance of the need and rights of disabled individuals to have access to an independent life. The reforms have been justified in part by a reference to double funding, with the suggestion that mobility in particular is already funded by Local Authorities, which is a total fallacy, particularly in this time of reducing local budgets.

The Personal Independence Payment has nothing to do with improving an individual's independence and everything to do with reducing budgets. The target is to save 20% of the DLA current expenditure, a benefit that has one of the lowest fraud rates recorded. The reforms are aimed at restricting access to the benefit.

A 20% saving would total £1.6 billion; however it is unclear how the reforms currently proposed would reach that target, which raises fears that these are just the first steps in the process. The Disability Alliance believes that if the 20% savings were to be reached over 700,00 individuals between the age of 16 and 65 would have to lose their benefit entirely (mainly through the removal of the lower rate option), then the benefit of children and those over 65 would need to be reviewed and rates of payment changed.

In addition to the direct impact of the loss of DLA due to the reforms, many individuals and families will suffer other financial losses such as parents eligibility for carers allowance.

In summary the proposed reforms of DLA will result in

- A loss of independence
- A reduction in the ability to work (for both disabled individuals and carers)
- A reduction in the quality of life
- An increase in family breakdown
- An increase in mental health issues for disabled individuals and carers
- An increased need for high cost crisis intervention both from the social care and health sectors

### **Comments from the floor were then taken;**

- DLA is not an easy benefit to claim and the need for reform is recognised. This benefit



currently involves a time-consuming and expensive process and savings could be made if this was changed. Life long, diagnosed conditions that are well understood by the medical community should be fast tracked. A realistic approach to reviews should be taken using societies understanding of individual conditions and whether they are progressive or needs are not likely to change.

- Parents are currently feeling constantly under threat from new initiatives that reduce the support they receive in caring for their disabled children. One of the biggest challenges facing parents is to trust society to care appropriately for their disabled children when they are no longer able to do so. The proposals for DLA reform make this impossible creating only fear and concern for the future of children with special needs and will inevitably result in further tragic situations where parents feel that life is not worth living for themselves and their children.
- The reforms are short sighted and do not reflect an understand of the benefits to society that DLA brings;

Improving family resilience and allowing parents to continue in the caring role by funding additional help in the home or access to social activities for young people

Protecting the health and wellbeing of disabled individuals and carers through the purchase of aids, adaptation, suitable transport etc. because the aids / adaptations provided by Social care or health services frequently do not meet the needs of the disabled individual or family. E.G. a young person was offered a heavy manual wheelchair by wheelchair Services to meet his mobility needs but DLA was used to top up funding so that a manoeuvrable, light weight three wheel buggy could be purchased, providing better access to social outings for the disabled young person and protecting the parent's back that had already been weakened due to moving and handling needs.

Enhanced early intervention where parents use the DLA to support the cost of therapies, differentiated curriculum etc. More and more frequently LA and Health bodies cannot provide sufficient levels of funding to allow young people to fully reach their potential.

- NAS raised particular concerns about those people diagnosed with Aspergers where relatively small, low cost changes can make a huge difference to individual quality of life. E.G using a taxi to access social activities because public transport is too overwhelming.
- With regard to including how individuals have adapted to their disability in the assessment the following comments were made;

“Work is very satisfying but it does not abolish disability”

“I might become a paralympic athlete but I still won't be able to get on the London underground” (wheelchair user)

- Concerns were raised about the proposed increase in waiting time before individuals are eligible for financial support, particularly with regard to situations where individuals become disabled due to a sudden catastrophic event or when a child is born with a life long disability. Evidence shows that during these intense crisis periods people are often being thrown into debt from which many never fully recover.

### **Introduction on the proposed removal of the DLA component from people in state-funded residential care and schools - Rebecca Rennison, Leonard Cheshire Disability:**

The proposed removal of the mobility payment for those in residential care will make a minimal saving of £80,000 but have a huge negative impact on the quality of life of those it affects. Examples have been collected from individuals where the removal of this component of DLA will prevent people from continuing to access training, maintaining contact with their family and friends, and will make them a prisoner in their own home.

The governments justification is that LA are already funding transport in care packages but this is just not true. The Government have stated that Social Care law states that the LA are responsible for meeting this need but the specific wording relating to this has not been identified. These are treasury led cuts that are not well thought through and with a lack of supporting detail. It is simply a case of the government trying to pass the cost on to the Health services and LA, but these organisations do not have the money to cover these costs.

### Discussion from the floor:

- In the current climate of cuts it is irresponsible of the government to put more pressure on LAs. Many LA are already asking services providers to reduce the amount they pay their employees to the minimum wage. This has potential impacts on quality of care received by individuals and a knock on wider effect on society in terms of recovery from the recession.
- Research by Mencap has shown that residential schools do not as a matter of course provide transport to leisure activities outside of school hours. Transport provided by school is usually restricted to journeys to and from home at the beginning and end of term. The proposals also make no allowance for mobility needs when the child is at home during weekend or holiday periods
- (Laura Stanley - EDCM) Great concerns that the proposal includes reference to the possibility of extending this principle to the support that children and young people receive in non-residential schools. That is, support received in school time will be used as a basis to reduce the funding received by the family to cover additional daily living costs associated with caring for a disabled child. This blurs the boundaries between what all children should be able to expect as a right, i.e. an education suitable for their needs and additional support to improve the quality of their life.
- The proposal shows a lack of understanding of the needs of many individuals who are in residential care. Many individuals will not be able to access communal transport for safety reasons and will need access to transport on an individual basis to ensure their and others safety. The loss of the mobility allowance will mean for many disabled people that they will lose their independent mobility since very few LA / care homes/ carers will be able to fund the cost of this provision from their budgets. There is a real potential that if some individuals lose opportunities for social interaction and the chance to experience a variety of environments their behaviour could deteriorate to the point that the placement breaks down and high cost crisis intervention is needed.

**The floor asked for clarification on Labour's position in opposition to the proposals. Rachel Reeves, Shadow Pension Minister gave the following explanation;**

Any proposal for the reform of DLA must include

- A universal benefit that recognises the additional cost of disability
- Disabled people and carers in its design process
- A pilot period must take place before implementation in 2013 /14
- A regular review process as part of any new system

**The audience was then encouraged to;**

- Get members of their organisations to participate in the consultation on an individual basis
- Get members to speak / write to their local MPs
- Give local examples of how individuals will be disadvantaged if these reforms go ahead.

Further events of this kind are presently being arranged with the Conservative party and the Liberal Democrats. Kate Green MP has requested a full debate in parliament on wider disability issues, to be arranged in the next few weeks.

**Sarah Thomas, 20<sup>th</sup> Jan 2011**

## Travel payments for people with a disability:

- The Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee website says on: <http://dptac.independent.gov.uk/door-to-door/03/08.htm>

### The Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is the main allowance for help with travel and transport. DLA is a tax-free benefit for people who have a care or mobility need that arises from disability or illness before the age of 65. Once approved, the benefit continues to be payable beyond 65 if the other conditions continue to be met. It is not income related, nor are there any conditions on how the benefit is spent.

The amount of money that you receive will depend on how much help you need.

The Mobility Component has two different rates, a Higher Rate and a Lower Rate, which one you receive will depend on how much help you need to get around.

The Mobility component higher rate is £49.85 a week, and the lower rate £18.95 a week (Directgov,

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DisabilityLivingAllowance/DG\\_10011925](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/DisabledPeople/FinancialSupport/DisabilityLivingAllowance/DG_10011925))

- Student Finance Ni says on [http://www.studentfinancenl.co.uk/portal/page?\\_pageid=54,1268397&\\_dad=portal&\\_schema=PORTAL](http://www.studentfinancenl.co.uk/portal/page?_pageid=54,1268397&_dad=portal&_schema=PORTAL)

Travel allowance: extra travel costs you have to pay as a result of disability and not normally for everyday travel costs. You will have to pay the equivalent to the public transport rate towards your travel.

There is no upper limit to this allowance.

- Scope suggest that you Tell Maria Miller (Minister for Disabled People) why she's got this decision wrong – go to <http://act.scope.org.uk/ea-campaign/clientcampaign.do?ea.client.id=1677&ea.campaign.id=8744&ea.tracking.id=1520f709>

## Events

### Cerebra's new E-Learning Courses

The new E-learning courses are open and enrolling students.

Cerebra's collection of E-Learning Courses have been designed for parents and carers of children and young people with brain-related, neurological conditions. The collection of five different courses have been developed by a collaboration of experts in the field of clinical research, social work and legislation and is divided into five main areas of interest:

- Anatomy & physiology
- Causes and diagnoses of and approaches to brain injury in children
- Legal rights & benefits
- Parental needs & concerns



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)



- Sleep problems and management

Each of the different courses provide the students an excellent opportunity to expand their knowledge and to develop the skills necessary to assess information and services available to them, for their own particular circumstances. The courses will provide them with confidence in communicating with professionals. Some of our previous students who studied on the old programme accredited by Agored Cymru found the programme an excellent stepping-stone for progression to either further education or employment.

It is hoped that the new collection of five separate courses on offer accredited by NCFE will provide the same progression and support for our students.

These courses may also be of interest to anyone seeking continual professional development (CPD) training. A fee is payable for CPD students - please click on the link below, for more details.

The student is supported every step of the way by our dedicated E-Learning Team, who are dedicated to providing feedback and help at all stages of the study process. Students will be allocated a personal tutor who will be available for one-to-one support for the student and answer questions about assessments and the course material. Our expert IT department will help the student with any platform or technical difficulties and the E-learning Co-ordinator is on hand for technical support and advice. This all round support ensures the learner an enriching and trouble free learning experience.

More information at <http://www.cerebra.org.uk/Research/education/E-learning+enrolment+and+Information/E-Learning>

## City & Guilds – Learning for Living

Welcome to **Learning for Living**, an online learning programme designed specifically for unpaid carers.

Over one and a half million people in the UK have given up their jobs to look after sick, disabled or frail relatives. These people often do not think of themselves as carers, but view caring responsibilities as part of their daily lives. In this website carers refers to unpaid individuals who care for someone close to them.

Often carers don't have the time to think about using their existing skills or getting new ones. A carer's confidence can be affected by time away from a paid job, and by the isolation of their caring role. When a caring role finishes, the carer may feel lost and unsure what to do next.

Does this sound like you? If you would like to find out how **Learning for Living** could help you, read on by going to <http://www.learning-for-living.co.uk/>



## Shropshire Disability Network Events

**General Meeting, 10<sup>th</sup> March 2011, 10.30 am – 1 pm, at Mereside Community Centre, Shrewsbury**



**Shropshire  
Disability  
Network**

We are excited to welcome Keith Barrow, Leader of Shropshire Council to talk with us and hear our voices; and Ann Johnson, who will explain how The Equalities Act 2010 affects people with disability.

All welcome – please let Dave Hewetson know if you are able to attend 01743 247019



THE place for information on  
disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

davidhewetson@talktalk.net

## Darwin Centre Collection, 19<sup>th</sup> March

Please help us to finance our valuable work. Contact Dave Hewetson, 01743 247019  
davidhewetson@talktalk.net

## Walk & Roll Event, April 10<sup>th</sup>, 9.30 am – 3 pm in the Quarry, Shrewsbury

Three sponsored 'walks':

- Round the Quarry, suitable for wheelchairs, families, etc.
- A gentle 3 km stroll along the riverbank
- A 6 km walk along the riverbank

More details from Geoff Forgie, 01691 830662, [geoffforgie@talktalk.net](mailto:geoffforgie@talktalk.net)

## Shropshire Disability Awareness Day 2011, 16<sup>th</sup> October

At Shrewsbury Sports Village, Sun

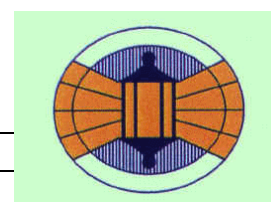
dorne Road, Shrewsbury, SY1 4RQ. A fun day out for all the family!

More details from Geoff Forgie, 01691 830662, [geoffforgie@talktalk.net](mailto:geoffforgie@talktalk.net)

## Shropshire Association of Senior Citizens' Forums

### Programme of Meetings:

<b>Market Drayton</b>		
February 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 pm, speaker Delia MacIntyre, CCS	Contact Eric Davis, 01630 655778 <a href="mailto:ericatriverside@btinternet.com">ericatriverside@btinternet.com</a>	Beacon Community Centre, Market Drayton
March 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 pm, speaker Jennie Cook, Central TV Switchover Help Scheme		
<b>Shrewsbury</b>		
February 17 <sup>th</sup> , 10 am, Discussing Issues that Concern You	Further information or help with transport, phone 01743 244640	The Barnabas Centre, Longden Coleham
April 21 <sup>st</sup> , 10 am, Your Gardening Questions Answered, by Rhona Owen		
<b>Oswestry</b>		
24 <sup>th</sup> February, Roadshow 1.30 – 4.30 pm	01743 244640	Wynnstay Hotel, Oswestry



## Shropshire ME Group – Informal Meetings

### INFORMAL MEETINGS

All are welcome to drop in for a chat.

#### Bridgnorth

Meetings are held on the first Wednesday of each month from around 12–2 p.m. Please ring the area contact Liz Gilson for venue details.

#### Oswestry Area



THE place for information on  
disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

At The Wynnstay Hotel, Church Street, Oswestry 11.00-1.00, on the third Thursday each month. Please phone Meg Campbell to confirm venue before the meeting.

### **Shrewsbury Area**

Held in the front foyer lounge of The Lord Hill Hotel, Abbey Foregate on the first Thursday each month between 11am – 1.00.

### **Telford**

Suspended through lack of support. Please contact Daphne Caton if you wish meetings to restart at the Community Centre in Ketley.

### **North Shropshire**

Meetings are no longer viable because of low numbers. If you are interested in reviving them, please contact Amelia at 01948 770471

### **NEW GROUP in Montgomery!**

Karen and Mike are starting a new group for all pwme and Fibromyalgia sufferers in or near Montgomery. The first meeting will be held in the Institute from 1.30 to 3.00 pm on 15th December. If you want any further details, contact them on 07969665419.

### **Youth Group**

Sue Cullup-Smith would like also to start another group for 14- to 16-year olds in the future as at this age they can feel so very isolated when all the others of their age are at school taking GCSEs. It seems as though you are the only one not doing so.

Currently SMEG have four members aged 9.7-16.5 years. A group for younger members seems a good idea to think about if numbers increase after the May conference. The conference will be on the problems of ypwME as well as those of older age groups.

Further information from Shropshire ME Group Secretary, Peter Rubery, [peter.ruberry@btinternet.com](mailto:peter.ruberry@btinternet.com) and <http://www.shropshiremegroup.org.uk/>

## **Parent Partnership Service, Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin**



### **Parent Network Meetings**

If your child has got special educational needs (SEN) would you like the chance to find out more about how the SEN system works, and to meet other parents/carers? We invite you to our friendly and informal local meetings led by someone from Parent Partnership Service. Just turn-up or contact us if you would like more information. This Project is supported by the BIG Lottery "Reaching Communities" Fund.

All meetings are term-time only, 10 am – 12 noon. Dates in Oswestry and South Shropshire to be arranged.

Telford – 1st Thursday every month at Old Park Primary School Centre, Malinslee, Telford TF4 2ED

Contact Julie Collins on 01952 457439

Shrewsbury – 3rd Thursday every month at The Lantern, Sundorne, Shrewsbury. SY1 4NG

Market Drayton – 4th Thursday every month at Market Drayton Library, 51 Cheshire Street . TF9 1PH (no meeting in February)

For Shrewsbury and Market Drayton contact Alex Hiam on 01952 458018.

### **New local groups**



THE place for information on  
disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)



- Wellington under 5s

A new group for disabled children 0-5 years set up by Sure-start every Wednesday 12.45-2.00pm at Wellington Children's Centre, Wrekin View Primary School, Wellington. Contact Jaimie - 01952 388077

- The Dyspraxia/Developmental Co-ordination Disorder Parents Group has been set up by a group of parents and meets on the first Friday of every month – term time only from 9.45 – 11.30 am at the Stepping Stones Centre, Brunel Road, Malinslee, Telford. TF3 2BF.

Contact Alex for more information on 01942 458018 – [alex@pps-shropshireandtelford.org.uk](mailto:alex@pps-shropshireandtelford.org.uk)

### Other events

<b>Monday 7 Feb 5.30 – 7 pm</b> The Lantern, Shrewsbury. SY1 4NG	<b>Young people with eating disorders – parents/carers group</b> Caren (Advanced Nurse Practitioner) 01743 450800
<b>Thursday 10 February 10 am – 12 pm</b> <b>Haughton School, Telford. TF7 4BW</b>	<b>STAA Group – Telford</b> <b>Parents' group – ASD, ADHD and associated difficulties</b> <b>Julie (PPS) - 01952 457439 or Lesley(PPS) - 01952 617758</b>

## PACC Events

- Next Spectrum Meeting** Thursday, 03 February 2011, at the **Lord Hill Hotel**, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury at **8pm**.

Spectrum is a support group for parents/carers of children with ASD/ADHD, Aspergers, with or without a diagnosis.

At our February meeting we have Juliet Koufou coming to do a Stress Workshop Plus Debbie Gibbons from Parentpartnership will hopefully be attending and be available for advice on Educational issues.

More at <http://spectrum.t83.net/>

- Shropshire Annual Information Day**, Thursday, 17 February 2011, Shrewsbury Sports Village, Sundorne, Shrewsbury, SY1 4RQ, 10am – 2pm

Drop-in information event for families who have a child with a disability or additional needs.

Information available on Benefits, Youth Services, Sports clubs, support groups etc. Specialist equipment on display including trikes, car seats etc. Refreshments and children's activities available, including the Animal man, Scrappies, Jack the Jester

Come along and meet service providers, gather information and advice on local groups and try out specialist equipment

- PPS Meeting** at the Lantern, Thursday, 17 February 2011, 10.00 am – 12.00 noon, Large Meeting Room, The Lantern, Sundorne, Shrewsbury. SY1 4NG

At these Parentpartnership meetings for parents/carers of children with special educational needs we will aim to share information and a Parent Partnership Officer will be available to give advice about education issues. We also hope to welcome visitors from Child and Adolescent Health Services, Autism West Midlands and occasional speakers to our meetings.

- Autism Westmidlands Feb half term events**, Monday, 21 February 2011, 1.30 pm – 3.00 pm
  - Roller-skating, for children of all ages, (skates available to borrow in sizes small size 12 to adult size 9), OSWESTRY, Marches School Sports Hall, Marches School, Morda Rd,



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)



Oswestry SY11 2AR, Everyone welcome—no skating experience needed, COST £3 per child - discounts for large families

- ▶ Tuesday 22nd February 10.00 am –12.00, Multi activity session, for children under 11, SHREWSBURY, Cromoor Children's Centre, Crowmoor Primary School, Cromere Road, Shrewsbury, SY2 5JJ, Games, crafts and other activities, FREE— £1 donation per family to cover refreshment costs
- ▶ Wednesday 23rd February 10.30—12.30, Craft session For children 7-17 years, SHREWSBURY, The Lantern, Sundorne, Meadow Farm Drive, Shrewsbury SY1 4NG, Be creative with experienced "Scrappies" art & craft workers to help, Parents are welcome to join in— parents of older children can wait in the café if they prefer. FREE— £1 donation per family to cover refreshment costs, In partnership with Scrappies recycling & resource centre

For more information or to book a place, contact Hilary McGlynn, Phone 07971 261334, email [mcglynn.h@shropshirelg.net](mailto:mcglynn.h@shropshirelg.net)

- **Let's Celebrate!** Friday, 25 February 2011, 1-4pm, London Road Sports Centre, London Road, Shrewsbury SY2 6PR

'Let's Celebrate!' is an afternoon for families to watch the premier showing of a Short Breaks slide show created by a group of young people which includes photos and interviews taken during some of the 'All In' activities. Some 'All In' providers will be running activities during the afternoon for children and young people to take part in and include:

More information at <http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/events/225-lets-celebrate>

Arts and Crafts • Drama & Dance • Trampolining • Archery • Tri Golf • Wheelchair Sports • Cycling • Inflatables

There will also be other providers and organisations at the event with information stands and refreshments will be available. Please come along to help celebrate the opportunities provided by 'All In' during the last year.

We look forward to seeing you there!

## Bridgnorth Buddies Calendar



Date	Activity	Time	Venue	Cost	Details
05/02/11	Multi-Activities	10.30am-12	St Leonards Church Hall	50p per child	Fun & games for all with Ping Pong John & other guests.
11/02/11	Coffee Morning	9.30am onwards	Cinnamon Cafe	-	A great opportunity to have a chat & swap experiences.
13/02/11	Swimming	5-6pm	Bridgnorth Leisure Centre	Free	Buddies have exclusive use of the pool. Bring the family!
05/03/11	Multi Activities	10.30am-12	St Leonards Church Hall	50p per child	Fun & games for all with Ping Pong John & other guests.
11/03/11	Coffee Morning	9.30am onwards	Cinnamon Cafe	-	A great opportunity to have a chat & swap experiences.

**Carers Contact Centre Events:**


# Carers Contact Centre

Event	Date	Venue
<b>Pamper Day</b>	1st Feb	09.30am-12.30pm at Haybridge Hall, Hadley. Booking essential, phone 01952 240209
<b>Carers Forum</b>	2nd Feb	See <u>Carers Forum</u> or phone 01952 240209 for more details
<b>NEW Carers Support Group</b>	10th Feb	10.30am-12.30pm at Leegomery Community Centre. For all carers of adults.
<b>Carers Walk - Apley Castle</b>	16th Feb	10:30am start. Meet at Leegomery Community Centre
<b>Pamper Day</b>	1st Mar	09.30am-12.30pm at Haybridge Hall, Hadley. Booking essential, phone 01952 240209
<b>Information Stand</b>	2nd Mar	10am-4pm at the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford
<b>Carers Walk - Town Park</b>	16th Mar	10:30am start. Meet at Meeting Point House, Telford Town Centre

**MS Events:**

Event	Date	Venue	Contact
<b>Telford &amp; District Branch:</b>			
Gym Sessions	Wednesdays 12.30pm to 1.30pm	Gym at the PRH	Assessment required prior to joining this group. Please call Sian 01952 256009 to arrange an assessment
Yoga Classes	Mondays at 1pm – 2pm	Wellington Leisure Centre in the Committee Room	Sian 01952 256009
Swimming	Thursdays at 3pm	Wellington Leisure Centre allows the branch to have a small section of the pool during public swimming	Call the leisure centre on 01952 382720 for more information
Monthly Social - Come and join us for an informal session of chat, gentle exercise, light refreshments and a guest speaker/ demonstrator	<b>2nd Thurs of the month, 12.30pm till 3.30pm</b>	<b>Salvation Army Hall in Oakengates</b> (adjacent to the railway station)	01952 250038
<b>Shrewsbury &amp; district Branch:</b>			
Shropshire MS Support Group	1st Thursday of every	Hamar Centre in the grounds of the Royal	These sessions start with a one hour physiotherapy



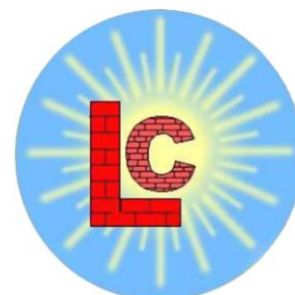
Meetings	month, 10:30am - 4:00pm. 3 <sup>rd</sup> February & 3 <sup>rd</sup> March	Shrewsbury Hospital, Mytton Oak Road, speaker Hugh Hannaford 'Community Archaeology in Shropshire' (3/02) and Joan Waller 'A Tale of Three cities' (3/03)	session followed by lunch. The afternoon starts at about 1.00pm and takes the form of guest speakers, demonstrations, entertainment etc. and varies throughout the year. A care assistant is available all day to help with your personal needs. For further information contact the branch on 01743 364484.
Abbey Lunches	February 10 <sup>th</sup> & March 10 <sup>th</sup> , 12 noon	"The Abbey" pub, Monkmoor Road, Shrewsbury. Join an informal group of MS Society members and friends for lunch at "The Abbey".	 Multiple Sclerosis Society

## Lingen Davies Cancer Relief fund

**Saturday 19th February** - Snowdrop Walk at Winsley Hall, Westbury

**Sunday 20th February** - Snowdrop Walk at Winsley Hall, Westbury

Further information from the Appeal's Office 01743 492396



## Shrewsbury March Against the Cuts, 19<sup>th</sup> February

**11 am – 3 pm, Meet at the Shirehall at 11 am, organised by Shropshire Fights Back and Shropshire & Telford Trades Council**



We believe **ordinary people** should not be forced to pay for the banking crisis with our jobs and services, while the banks that caused this crisis are allowed to carry on gambling with our future.

Super-rich individuals and corporations are given tax breaks- Why?

We believe cuts are unnecessary and that jobs and services could be protected if we stopped Trident, which will cost £76 billion, collected the estimated £127 billion which is avoided in tax by wealthy individuals and corporations, and took full control of the banks which we now own.

**We Oppose all Cuts.**

Shropshire Fights Back: <http://www.shropshirefightsback.org.uk/>

Shropshire & Telford Trades Council: Secretary: R M O'Harney, PCS Office, 4 Wing Fulton Block, RAF Cosford, Wolverhampton WV7 3EX, Email: [hoharney@aol.com](mailto:hoharney@aol.com), Tel: 01902 377294

Shropshire County **NHS**  
Primary Care Trust

**NHS**  
Telford and Wrekin

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital **NHS**  
NHS Trust

# Keeping it in the County

**Securing the future of hospital services in  
Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin**

***Come along to one of our public events and ask  
questions as part of our consultation***

**Wednesday 9th February, 7pm -Craven Arms Community Centre**

**Friday 11th February, 7pm -Shrewsbury Town Football Club**

**Wednesday 16th February, 7pm -Holiday Inn, Telford**

**The following meetings have been organised by the  
Montgomeryshire Community Health Council**

**Friday 18th February, 7pm -Community Centre, Llanidloes**

**Wednesday 23rd February, 7pm -Royal Oak Hotel, Welshpool**

**Thursday 24th February, 7pm -Elephant & Castle Hotel, Newtown**



**If you would like to send us your questions in advance or have queries, please email them to:**

**ournhsinsat@nhs.net or send a letter to: Reconfiguration of Hospital Services, Oak Lodge,**

**William Farr House, Shropshire County PCT, Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury SY3 8XL**

**For more information about the proposals, please visit : [www.ournhsinshropshireandtelford.nhs.uk](http://www.ournhsinshropshireandtelford.nhs.uk)**



**HOLLYWOOD STAR**

WALK The RED carpet!

OSCAR PRIZES FOR THE BEST DRESSED!

NEW DATE! Oscar PARTY

beat the winter blues

ADMIT ONE

No extra cost! But please book your tickets!

Taking Part  
01743 36339

ESCAPE to the HIVE  
7-10pm Feb 2<sup>nd</sup> 2011

Taking Part, Reflex, takes place on 16th January

Further details from

<http://www.takingpart.co.uk/index.html>





## Does your child have co-ordination problems?

They may have been diagnosed with Dyspraxia or DCD (Developmental Co-ordination Disorder).

We are a new group of parents/carers whose children have co-ordination difficulties and would welcome you to come along to our friendly, informal meetings.

**First Friday of every month - term time only\***

**9.45am -11.30 am**

**The Andrew Broughton Family Room, Stepping Stones Centre,  
Brunel Road, Malinslee, Telford, Shropshire. TF3 2BF**

**Next Meeting: Feb 4th, for chat, cake and coffee.  
All welcome!**

**Contact Alex or Clare**

**Tel: 01952 458018**

**Email:**

**[telforddcd@btinternet.com](mailto:telforddcd@btinternet.com)**



**Find us on  
Facebook**

**Telford DCD Group**

Supported by Parent Partnership Service BIG Lottery  
"Reaching Communities" Fund



Supported by  
**The National Lottery**<sup>®</sup>  
through the Big Lottery Fund



**Living with a child with additional needs can be challenging, difficulties with social skills and communication can lead to isolation for the whole family**



**"Friendship group for special children and their families"**

**Meeting fortnightly at**

**Craven Arms Community Centre**

**On**

**Saturday**

**8th Jan & 22nd Jan**

**5th Feb & 19th Feb**

**5th March & 19th March**

**2nd April & 16th April**

**from 2 - 4 pm**

**Aims to combat this and provides**

- **Wide range of play equipment**
- **Regular activities**
- **Trained volunteers on hand**
- **Safe and positive environment**
- **A focal point for families to meet, network and enjoy some family time**

**£5/family**

**£3/family for PACC members**

**For more details contact Sam on 077905 84987**

**Hosted, funded and supported by**



autism • west midlands





# CHINESE NEW YEAR FESTIVAL YEAR OF RABBIT 2011

**6<sup>TH</sup> FEBURARY 2011 AT 12.30 PM TO 4.30 PM**

**ARCADIAN CENTRE, HURST STREET, BIRMINGHAM, B5 4TD**

**ATTENDANCE TIMES ARE OPTIONAL ALTHOUGH IT START AT  
12.30 PM. THE SHOW WILL KICK OFF WITH THE DRAGON DANCE,  
FIRECRACKERS AND SPEECHES**

**OTHER PROGRAMMES AND TIMES ARE AS SHOWN BELOW**

13:00	Acrobatics Performance (Bai-Ling Chinese Acrobats UK)
14:00	Dragon Dancing on Poles and Kung Fu Demonstration
14:20	Children's Dances (Overseas Chinese Association School)
14:30	Cantonese Opera Performance (Pak Ming Opera)
14:45	Children's Dance Performance (Birmingham Chinese School)
14:55	Acrobatics Performance (Bai-Ling Chinese Acrobats UK)
15:55	Traditional Chinese Dance (Chinese Community Centre B'ham)
16:05	Final appearance of the Dragon Dance
16:30	Close

**FREE ENTRY FOR ALL FAMILIES, CHILDRENS AND ADULTS**

\*\*\*\*\*

**If you interested, further details and to confirm your attendance contact  
Olivier Jamin, Community Development Officer**

<b><u>MINICOM:</u></b>	<b>(0121) 678 88 50</b>
<b><u>VOICE TO TEXTPHONE:</u></b>	<b>18002 (0121) 678 88 50</b>
<b><u>EMAIL:</u></b>	<b><a href="mailto:olivier.jamin@deafplus.org">olivier.jamin@deafplus.org</a></b>
<b><u>FAX:</u></b>	<b>(0121) 643 45 41</b>
<b><u>SMS:</u></b>	<b>07920060165</b>

**deafPLUS** is the working name of Breakthrough  
Deaf-Hearing Integration, a company limited by  
Guarantee. Registered Company number: 3680467.  
Registered Charity number: 1073468







The Deaf Sports Project has been designed to promote sports and allow deaf children and young people to try different and new sports.



# street games

## deaf sports project

BID Staff and volunteers will be on hand to make sure everything runs smoothly.

Activity	Age	Date	Time	Venue	Cost
Uni-hoc (Hockey)	8 - 11	Wed 9th Feb 2011	4:30 - 7pm	NIA Community Hall	£1
Circuit	8 - 16	Wed 16th Feb 2011	4:30 - 7pm	NIA Community Hall	£1
Vigor Boarding	11 - 25	Wed 23rd Feb 2011	3:30 - 6pm	NIA Community Hall	£1

Please note that the enclosed programme is subject to change.

All children and young people must complete a registration form before they can participate in any of the activities. Parents must fill in parental consent form for those under 18.

All completed forms can be sent to Alison Leach via email or posted to the address below.

Email: [Alison.leach@bid.org.uk](mailto:Alison.leach@bid.org.uk), tel: 0121 246 6100, textphone: 0121 246 6101, fax: 0121 246 6125 or mobile (SMS only): 07872403781.

BID Services, Deaf Cultural Centre, Ladywood Road, Birmingham, B16 8SZ.



# **Drop-in information events for families who have a child with a disability or additional needs.**

**Thursday 17<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

**Shropshire Annual Information Day**

**Shrewsbury Sports Village,  
Sundorne, Shrewsbury, SY1 4RQ**

**10am – 2pm**

**Information available on Benefits, Youth Services, Sports  
clubs, support groups etc.**

**Specialist equipment on display including trikes, car seats  
etc**

**Refreshments and children's activities available at all events.**

**Come along and meet service providers, gather information  
and advice on local groups and try out specialist equipment.**



For further details, please contact:  
Sarah Thomas (PACC) – 0845  
6012205 or email  
[enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk)



THE place for information on  
disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

## Community Council of Shropshire Carers Support Service



# Discrimination, employment and family carers

**Be protected by equality  
and human rights law**

**Free evening seminar by  
Jagdish Shemare-Singh, Policy Officer,  
Equalities and Human Rights Commission  
Thursday 17th February 2011**

**6.15-7.45pm at**

**Community Council of Shropshire,  
4 The Creative Quarter, Shrewsbury Business Park,  
Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY2 6LG**

**What will be covered:** The new Equalities Act introduces new rights for carers, protecting them from being discriminated against because of their caring role in the workplace and in the provision of goods and services. Find out how employers can protect themselves against directly or indirectly discriminating against carers and how carers can ensure they are protected by the law.

**Who will this benefit:** This event is for carers, local employers, advice agencies and community organisations. Feel free to ask if you are not sure if it is for you.

**Who is hosting it:** The Community Council of Shropshire Carers Support Service. The CCS is a registered charity.

**How to book your place:** Please call **01743 341995** or email  
**[carersupport@shropshire-rcc.org.uk](mailto:carersupport@shropshire-rcc.org.uk)** by Mon **14th February 2011**.

When booking please include information or requests that will help us facilitate your participation, including any reasonable adjustments, communications support or access. **Refreshments will be provided.**

The Community Council of Shropshire, A Company Limited By Guarantee No 4652487 and Registered Charity No 1096779



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[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)



## Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company

- **Half Term LIKE Youth Dance: Light and Movement project**

**From: Saturday, February 19th, 2011 - To: Sunday, February 20th, 2011**

It's play time with digital media and dance!



Have lots of fun exploring digital media and dance movement in this 2 day workshop - there's something for everyone.

For young people aged 13 - 18 with and without disabilities and additional needs.

For further information and to register interest contact Moya Malekin on 01743 210830 or email [admin@blueeyedsouldance.com](mailto:admin@blueeyedsouldance.com)



**Venue:** The Gateway Arts and Education Centre, Chester Street, Shrewsbury SY1 1NB

**Type:** Workshop

- **LIKE Youth Dance 'Flying' aerial dance workshop - Bishops Castle**

**From: Monday, February 21st, 2011 - To: Wednesday, February 23rd, 2011**

'Fly' at low level with harnesses and ropes: explore new creative ways of moving! These sessions prove highly popular with adults and young people alike.

For young people aged 6-18 years, with and without disabilities and additional needs.

Times:

6 - 12 year 11am - 1pm

13-18 years 2pm - 4pm

To book contact SpArC directly on 01588 630243

For additional information contact Blue Eyed Soul on 01743 210830

**Venue:** SpArC Leisure Centre, Bishops Castle Community College, Brampton Road, Bishops Castle SY9 5AY

**Type:** Workshop

**Cost:** Free to disabled participants up to 18 yrs (Shropshire Council funded). £20 for 3 sessions non-disabled.

- **Half Term LIKE Youth Dance: Creative Dance Workshops**

**From: Monday, February 21st, 2011 - To: Tuesday, February 22nd, 2011**

2 day creative dance workshops for young people with and without disabilities and additional needs.

10 am - 12 noon. Ages 5-8 years. 'Once Upon a Time - Stories in Movement'.

1pm - 3pm. Ages 9-12 years. Learn some new dance moves and make your own!

For further information and to book a place contact Moya Malekin on 01743 210830 or email [admin@blueeyedsouldance.com](mailto:admin@blueeyedsouldance.com)

**Venue:** Park Lane Centre, Park Lane, Woodside. TF7 5QZ

**Type:** Workshop



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[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

**Cost:** Free to disabled participants. £5 non-disabled.

• **Aerial Dance Workshop for Adults - Bishops Castle**

**Monday, February 21st, 2011**

One night only, back by popular demand!

An aerial 'flying' workshop for disabled and non-disabled people aged 18 and over.

Low level flying on ropes with harnesses, this is an invigorating new way of moving - and harder than it looks!

5pm - 7pm

To book contact SpArC directly on 01588 630243

**Venue:** SpArC Leisure Centre, Bishops Castle Community College, Brampton Road, Bishops Castle SY9 5AY

**Type:** Workshop

**Cost:** £8 per person / £5 concession per session (students, receipt of benefits: proof must be shown).

• **Half Term LIKE Youth Dance: Open Envision Dance session**

**Wednesday, February 23rd, 2011**

An open session of our funky street/contemporary dance club.

Come along and join Blue Eyed Soul and Transit-Trix dance to find your moves!

For young people aged 12 - 18 years, with and without disabilities and additional needs.

For further information contact Moya Malekin on 01743 210830 or email [admin@blueeyedsouldance.com](mailto:admin@blueeyedsouldance.com)

**Venue:** Park Lane Centre, Park Lane, Woodside. TF7 5QZ

**Type:** Workshop

**Cost:** Free to disabled participants. £5 non-disabled.

**LIKE Youth Dance 'Flying' aerial dance workshop. North Shropshire**

**From: Tuesday, March 1st, 2011 - To: Thursday, March 31st, 2011**

'Fly' at low level with harnesses and ropes: explore new creative ways of moving!

For young people aged 6-18 years, with and without disabilities and additional needs.

Final details are being confirmed, so register your interest for these popular sessions with Moya Malekin on 01743 210830 or email [admin@blueeyedsouldance.com](mailto:admin@blueeyedsouldance.com)

**Venue:** North Shropshire, TBC

**Type:** Workshop

**Cost:** Free to disabled participants up to 18 yrs. Cost tbc for non - disabled based on number of sessions.

More information on all the above at <http://www.blueeyedsouldance.com/calendar-of-events/#events>



Fun, friends and activities for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs

Packed with activities for Half Term. Download [here](#)

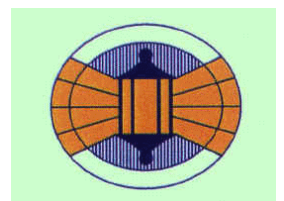
## Shropshire Association of Senior citizen Forum – Shropshire Seniors Forum Roadshow, 24<sup>th</sup> February

At the Wynnstay Hotel, Oswestry, 1.30 – 4.30 pm

In view of the cuts to government spending both nationally and locally which are imminent it is more important than ever that older people have a high profile presence in the conduct of local affairs. It is almost inevitable that in any squeeze older people seem to be the first to suffer. We must do all we can to ensure that the effects on older people are minimised. Participation by Oswestry Forum is vitally important if we are to achieve this aim.

The event is designed to be friendly, interesting, and to make sure that you all have the opportunity to express your views and opinions about the concerns and aspirations of the senior members of our Shropshire community. A variety of speakers will be on hand to provide the basis for a full debate on the matters of most concern to you in Oswestry. Take this opportunity to make your voice heard. Tea and coffee will be served from 1.30 pm

Please call the Association office on 01743 244640 so say if you are able to attend.



## 4<sup>th</sup> – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2011 – National Deaf Children's Society Free weekend for families with a deaf child who also has additional complex physical or learning disabilities.

This will be held in Manchester and includes accommodation in a hotel specially chosen to cater for the needs of you and your children. The hotel and meals are included and we will cater for all dietary requirements including providing Halal and vegetarian



meals. We may be able to help with travel costs if necessary – please talk to us. Prayer facilities will be provided. There will be interpreters for all languages needed, including BSL.

For further details please contact:

The National Deaf Children's Society, tel 0121 234 9820 (voice and Minicom), email [events@ndcs.org.uk](mailto:events@ndcs.org.uk). Website: [www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)

## 27<sup>th</sup> March 2011 – Telford & District MS Branch 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations

At Patshull Park Hotel (near J3 M54) – further details from [http://www.mssociety.org.uk/branches/west\\_midlands/telford/diary.html](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/branches/west_midlands/telford/diary.html)



## The Deafest 2011 Film Festival

20 – 22 May at Light House in Wolverhampton. Deaffest are asking for films to be submitted for screening (by 31 March 2011) and for competition (**by 25 February 2011**).

For more information, contact Festival Coordinator, tel 01902 421919/331871, email [zebra\\_uno@hotmail.com](mailto:zebra_uno@hotmail.com) or Marketing Coordinator Lindsay Wigin, tel 01902 719821, email [lindsay@light-house.co.uk](mailto:lindsay@light-house.co.uk). Or go to <http://deaffest.co.uk/>



“MARTHA ROBINSON” POETRY COMPETITION 2010  
is open to all mental health (ex-)service users in the UK  
Organised by National Perceptions Forum

The winning entries will be published in  
“Perceptions” Magazine

**P R I Z E S   1 s t   £ 1 0 0   2 n d   £ 5 0   3 r d   £ 2 5**

For an entry form please write to: Rachel Brett, Poetry Competition, National Perceptions Forum, Rethink, 89 Albert Embankment, London, SE1 7TP  
Or Email: [rachel.brett@rethink.org](mailto:rachel.brett@rethink.org)

Deadline for entries Monday 28th February 2011

autism • west midlands



## autism west midlands half term activities—February 2011

- Events for children with autism & Asperger syndrome and their brothers & sisters
- Children get a chance to mix with others
- Parents meet other families and relax in a sympathetic atmosphere
- autism west midlands staff on hand to support and answer questions

All events (unless stated otherwise) are family events so parents must remain with their children.

**To book a place on any of the events  
contact Hilary McGlynn**

**Phone 07971 261334**  
**email [mcglynn.h@shropshirelg.net](mailto:mcglynn.h@shropshirelg.net)**



Woodlands Outreach



LOTTERY FUNDED



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Partnership  
[www.shropshirepartnership.org.uk](http://www.shropshirepartnership.org.uk)

**grassroots**  
grants

Funded by the Community Development Foundation



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[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

**Woodlands Outreach,**  
Tilley Green, Wem SY4 5PJ Tel. 01939 236181





Multiple Sclerosis Society

Shrewsbury &  
District Branch

***Our biggest fund raiser of the year is without doubt 'The Patch'.  
This is the 12th year that Mrs Margaret Owen has opened her  
garden for MS and the branch has benefited from over  
**£33,000.*****

***Please come and support us again this year.***

\*\*\*\*\*

## **SNOWDROPS & HELLEBORES**

also Winter Flowering Shrubs Cyclamen, Small Narcissi and many more

### **Open Garden**



The Patch  
Acton Pigott  
Nr. Acton Burnell  
Shrewsbury



by kind permission of Mrs Margaret Owen MBE

**Sunday 27th February 2011**

11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Entrance £3 per person

Hot Soup Luncheon on sale; also Tea, Coffee, Cakes, Jams & Chutney

NOT suitable for wheelchairs. There is an outside toilet and boots are a good idea.



LOTTERY FUNDED



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Partnership  
[www.shropshirepartnership.org.uk](http://www.shropshirepartnership.org.uk)

**grassroots**  
grants

Funded by the Community Development Foundation



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## Events - Conferences, etc.

autism • west midlands



### Autism Awareness workshop

Thursday 3 February 2011  
6.00 to 8.00 pm  
Craven Arms Community Centre

*A FREE workshop aimed at Community Leisure  
Providers and Coaches*

#### Find Out:

- What is autism (including Asperger Syndrome) and how it affects the child/young person
- How to address the challenges faced by children and young people on the autism spectrum

#### Workshop participants will come away with:

- A greater understanding of how children with autism and Asperger Syndrome experience the world
- The ability to identify some of the difficulties associated with the autism spectrum and identify ways of supporting children with autism in leisure settings

To book a place contact:

Becky Evans  
Sports Development Officer  
Leisure Development  
Shropshire Council  
01743 255097  
07582003525

## 20% off IT and Management Courses

To kick start the new year County Training are currently offering 20% off a large selection of our IT and Management Courses. We have recently had a brand new brochure produced,

listing the full range of courses available between January and April 2011, and your voucher can be found on page 28 of the document. To claim your 20% discount, go to <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/lets.nsf/open/2CC68F399E4DAB938025751400542DCF>, which will take you to the schedule, check the course you are looking to do is listed on the reverse of the voucher and send it in when you make a booking!



### Courses available include:

- Word Processing
- Email
- Presentations
- Spreadsheets
- Social Media
- Team Leading
- Communication
- Time Management
- Project Management
- and many more

For further information you can call **Rachel Hallam on 01743 255191**, email [countytraining@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:countytraining@shropshire.gov.uk)

or visit: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/lets.nsf/open/2CC68F399E4DAB938025751400542DCF>

## Community Council of Shropshire Events:

### Knowledge and Nosh 2011

FREE Breakfast Briefings, 8.30 am - 10.30 am

Breakfast Included - Booking Essential

#### Funding

Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February 2011 – Ellesmere Boat House

Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 – Church Stretton, The Longmynd Hotel

Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2011 – Shrewsbury, Lord Hill Hotel

Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2011 – Much Wenlock, The Gaskell Arms

#### Monitoring and Evaluation

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> February – Ellesmere, The Boat House

Monday 28<sup>th</sup> February – Bridgnorth, Parlours Hall

Friday 11<sup>th</sup> March – Church Stretton, The Longmynd Hotel

Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> March – Shrewsbury, Lord Hill Hotel



Please contact Lisa Darkin to book a place T: 01743 342 177 or E: [lisa.darkin@shropshire-rcc.org.uk](mailto:lisa.darkin@shropshire-rcc.org.uk)

More information at <http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk/>

## Westminster Health Forum Events

- The future of regulation in healthcare – the changing roles of the Care Quality Commission and

Westminster Health Forum



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## Monitor – 2<sup>nd</sup> February

- **Obesity – time for a new approach? – 8<sup>th</sup> February**
- **Social care reform – the next steps – 10<sup>th</sup> February**
- **Health Inequalities – one year on from the Marmot Review – 17<sup>th</sup> February**
- **Improving nutrition – in hospitals, in social care and in the community – 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

Further information at

[http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/forums/index.php?fid=westminster\\_health\\_forum](http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/forums/index.php?fid=westminster_health_forum)

## A variety of Social Care & Health Training opportunities announced for February and March 2011



### Joint Training Team Event Time Table

Spaces are available on the following events for February and early March 2011:

**MAXIMISING INCOME FOR OLDER PEOPLE:** 2nd Feb 2011, Shrewsbury – Training & Development Centre, 9.30am to 4.00pm

**BEREAVEMENT AND LOSS WORKSHOP:** 7th Feb 2011 – Shropshire Wildlife Trust, 9.30am – 4.30pm ♦ *You are advised not to attend if you have had a bereavement in the last 12 months* ♦

**VALUES BASED CARE AND HEALTH PRACTICE IMPLEMENTING EQUALITIES:** 8th Feb 2011 – Shropshire Wildlife Trust, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, 9.30am - 4.00pm

**TT DEMENTIA AWARENESS:** 9th Feb 2011, Ludlow – Ludlow Conference Centre, 1.30pm - 4.30pm

**TOWARDS AN UNDERSTANDING OF PARKINSON'S DISEASE:** Awareness Level – for Direct Care staff, 17th Feb 2011, Shrewsbury – Wildlife Trust, 1.00pm - 4.30pm

**UNDERSTANDING MOOD (BI-POLAR) DISORDER:** 3rd March 2011, Barnabas Centre, Shrewsbury, 9.30am – 4.30pm

### Costing:

Costs for each course will depend on who you work for, and are banded into categories A, B, C or no charge.

Please determine the charging band for your organisation/yourself by following the link below to the Joint Training Team's Website, and referring to the details provided under the heading of Course Information.

Further information at

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/schtraining.nsf/open/DBDF577A74AAE0EF8025710E00387A7E>

## Shrewsbury Social Media Surgery is back! 7<sup>th</sup> February

At a **new venue**, in partnership with Likeaword Consulting, we are pleased to announce the third Shrewsbury surgery to be held on 7th February 5-8 pm.



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Drop in and have an informal chat with people who can enlighten you about all things Social Media such as twitter, facebook, blogging, but also have knowledge about websites and how you can promote yourselves to the on-line community in general.

Join us at:

**HCS Computers' Log Inn Internet Café, 55 Castle Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY1 2EJ**

Although it's a drop in, please do book a space so we know you are coming. Please phone 01743 342169 or visit <http://socialmediasurgery.com/events/136>

For more information see

<http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/ourservices/training/shropshiresocialmediasurgery/> or give me a call.

## RDN Seminar: 2011 – Are you ready? 8<sup>th</sup> February

The RDN project is holding an event for Disabled people's organisations entitled 2011: Are you ready? There are a lot of changes expected this year and the event, which will be held on February 8th in Coventry, is designed to make organisations aware of what these changes are, how they will impact on their funding and how to ensure they have the capacity to continue to thrive in to 2011 and beyond. For more information or to enquire about booking a place at the event please contact us on 024 7671 6217.



## Volunteer Play Workers Needed - Plus Free Training Workshops

South Shropshire Empathy group are looking for enthusiastic volunteer play workers to help with their fortnightly play sessions for children with additional needs and their families. The role will involve interacting with the young people and engaging them in play activities such as sports, arts and crafts among other things.

### What is the Empathy Group?

Empathy has been set up by a small group of parents with support from a variety of organisations and looks to bring together children with additional needs and their families on a fortnightly basis. The group offers children and their siblings the opportunity to take part in fun development activities while members of their family are able to network with other families who may have similar experiences. The group also aims to inform families of services that are available to them in Shropshire.



### Free Training Available

A series of free workshops that are relevant to the role of a volunteer play worker working with Empathy. The following workshops are due to take place in south Shropshire in the next few months:

- **Sports for All** - Saturday 26th February – 9.00am – 4.00pm – Craven Arms Community Centre
- **Autism Awareness Training** - Thursday 3rd February – 6.00 – 8.00pm – Craven Arms Community Centre



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[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)

- **Play Training** including take 5 for play, Child Protection and Basic First aid – Monday 28th February, Tuesday 1st and Wednesday 2nd March – Craven Arms Community Centre

As well as this being a brilliant development opportunity for anyone wishing to work with children in the future it is also a very rewarding role and a brilliant opportunity to work with a great group of children. Paid opportunities may also arise from working with this group.

If you or anyone you know of is interested in working with this group please contact:

Becky Evans on:

01743 255097 or 07582003525

E-mail: [becky.evans@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:becky.evans@shropshire.gov.uk)

## Introduction to Welfare Benefits

Our Introduction to Welfare Benefits courses are running at the following locations soon-

**Cardiff 8/2/2011**

**Birmingham 15/2/2011**

**London 17/2/2011**



"Excellent course content, very understandable, tutor very willing to answer questions." Jacqui Roughton, Motor Neurone Disease Association

"Enjoyable course and good refresher." Kinsey Shepherd, The Royal British Legion

"Good course as an overview of benefits and maximising income." Tracey Tuckwood, Rhondda Housing Association

The British Social Security system is notoriously complex due to the huge number of qualifying conditions, the many changes each year and not least the interaction between the different benefits. There is a clear structure that can be learned whether you are looking to signpost claimants in the correct direction or provide basic advice. A guide to proposed benefit changes by the Coalition Government is included.

This course will include—

- why we have different categories of benefits
- the structure of the benefits system
- the qualifying conditions for some of the main benefits including job seekers allowance, employment and support allowance, income support, housing and council tax benefit, child and working tax credits
- valid claims and appeals
- maximising benefits; underclaimed benefits and premiums
- how to sign post and refer cases
- at a glance guide to structure of the benefits system
- at a glance guide to proposed benefit changes

for non-benefits specialists, those needing a refresher and inexperienced advisers"

duration— 1 day

email us to book a place giving name of participant, their email address, job role, organisation name and any dietary/ accessibility requirements. We will then invoice you. £95 per place.

Best regards.



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Neil Arnott

Social Welfare Training  
info@socialwelfaretraining.co.uk  
www.socialwelfaretraining.co.uk  
Tel. 0117 9514 337

## Shrewsbury Football Club, Legacy 2012 Games

**Free workshop on how to create Games inspired  
volunteering opportunities**

Bring the 2012 Games into your organisation.

Come along and find out how you can create Games inspired volunteering opportunities at this free workshop.

**Details and Booking:**

**Date: Thursday 10 February 2011**

**Time: 10am – 3pm**

**Venue: Shrewsbury Town Football Club, Oatley Road, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ST**

**Host: Community Council of Shropshire**

More details at <http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/blog/events/shrewsbury-football-club-legacy-2012-games/>



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strengthening the voluntary sector together

## Awareness Raising in Safeguarding & Protecting Children

**Multi-agency Training Programme**

**January - December 2011**

**Basic module**

**Overview**

This 3-hour training programme has been developed for anyone working with children and young people in Shropshire. The training meets the basic level of training required by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 guidance for anyone in Group 2 or above. SSCB and Working Together guidance recommend that this training is refreshed every 3 years by re-attending this level of training. If, however, a delegate continues their professional development by attending a more advanced SSCB Developing Practice module over this 3 year period then there is no need for them to re-attend Raising Awareness. It is the individual agency's responsibility to ensure that staff/volunteers continue to attend at least one Developing Practice module every 3 years or re-visit the Raising Awareness module every 3 years.

The aims of the course are to:

- Recognise child abuse and the signs and indicators
- Understand how child development may be impacted by abuse
- Recognise the *Framework for the assessment of children in need*
- Recognise own safeguarding roles and responsibilities to work together to identify, assess



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and meet the needs of children where there are Safeguarding concerns

- Identify how domestic abuse is linked to Safeguarding
- Respond to concerns, record and share information

## FORTHCOMING DATES

Tuesday 15 February 2011 – 9.30am to 1.00pm – Ludlow  
 Wednesday 6 April 2011 – 9.30am to 1.00pm – Oswestry  
 Wednesday 18 May 2011 – 9.30am to 1.00pm – Shrewsbury  
 Wednesday 22 June 2011 – 9.30am to 1.00pm – Wem  
 Thursday 7 July 2011 – 9.30am to 1.00pm – Ludlow  
 Tuesday 18 October 2011 – 9.30am to 1.00pm – Oswestry  
 Tuesday 1 November 2011 – 9.30am to 1.00pm – Shrewsbury  
 Wednesday 7 December – 9.30am to 1.00pm – Ludlow

To apply for any Raising Awareness session, please complete the SSCB Application form. All delegate places will be confirmed in writing, preferably by email where an email address is supplied. For further information on any session, please contact Tracey Bowen, SSCB Inter-agency Safeguarding Training Administrator, Email [tracey.bowen@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:tracey.bowen@shropshire.gov.uk) Telephone 01743 254370 Fax: 01743 254260

## Localism, personalisation and leadership in the provision of services for older people – RAWM, 18<sup>th</sup> February



9.30 am – 16.30 pm, at Network House, 174-178 Barford St., Birmingham, B5 7EP

An invitation to voluntary sector organisations across the West Midlands, providing services to older people. RAWM and Age UK are working in partnership to host this conference which will have three key themes:

- **Personalisation and GP commissioning** – are you gearing up to deliver?
- **Engaging older people in the shaping of services** – how can VCS organisations ensure older people's voices are heard and taken into account?
- **Providing direction and leadership** – leading your organisation through this time of change

Informed by a series of key speakers, and focused workshops you will have the opportunity to explore, listen and contribute your organisation's experience.

The conference will also ask you to comment on the first draft of the evidence based document commissioned by RAWM and Age UK to support voluntary organisations in engaging with commissioners, funders and public sector bodies to secure contracts for delivery of services to older people.

To book go to <http://www.rawm.org.uk/news-events/events/coming-age>

## Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company

'50 Ways to Lead a Workshop' training - South Shropshire



Sunday, March 13th, 2011

To complement our LIKE Youth Dance programme, Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company are delivering a FREE professional development training session for people within Shropshire, Telford



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and Wrekin (remaining spaces will be offered to those outside the region at a cost of Â£25).

Inspiring and informative training, it's an 'absolute must' for all those involved in inclusive arts. '50 Ways' is tailor-made training for artists, dancers, community workers, educationalists and organisations. The dance leaders are able to adapt the workshop to the specific needs of the participants.

For further information contact Rachel Liggitt on 01743 210830 or email [admin@besdance.com](mailto:admin@besdance.com)

**Venue:** Ludlow Assembly Rooms, 1 Mill Street, Ludlow SY8 1AZ

**Type:** Training

**Cost:** Free to residents of Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, £25 outside of region subject to spaces.

More information at <http://www.blueeyedsouldance.com/calendar-of-events/#events>

## SHROPCAMP

**19th April 2011, 1pm-5pm**

**ShropCamp: How can online tools transform your services?**



This is an event bringing together people working to deliver public services at a local level across Shropshire, Staffordshire and the UK. It is part of the family of 'localgovcamps' taking place across the UK. It will focus on how service providers (police, health service, councils, social enterprises and charities) can use open data and social media to deliver better services together.

### Who is it for?

- **People working to deliver services to the public who are curious about this agenda, or have challenges to raise. Especially if you're based in Shropshire, Powys, Cheshire, Staffordshire or the West Midlands. If you deliver services, please come. Request workshops, join in, challenge, learn, take part.**
- People who have already used social media or open data to deliver excellent services. Come and offer a workshop. We really want to hear what went well, and less well. We want to find out how you came up with your ideas and what you learned from the project
- People working with online tools. If you build apps, do fabulous things with social media or make cool things happen with open data we need your insight.

ShropCamp is brought to you by Ben Proctor from the likeaword consultancy, UKITA and Harper Adams University College.

Book via <http://shropcamp.eventbrite.com>





# Disability Inclusion Training Course



**Venue: Craven Arms Community Centre,  
Craven Arms, SY7 9PS**

**Date: Saturday 26th February 2011**

**Time: 9:00am - 5:00pm**

**Free of Charge**

**Contact: (01743) 255071**

**[www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)**



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[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)





# Play Training Course

Monday 28 February - Wednesday 2 March 2011

**Craven Arms Community Centre**

A 3-day play training course covering the basic requirements to start a career in **child care** or **play work**, including:

- **Take 5 for Play**
- **Basic First Aid**
- **Child Protection**

The course provides the opportunity for candidates to progress onto a **Level 2 Certificate in Playwork** or a **Level 3 Diploma in Playwork** (formerly NVQ levels 2 and 3).

Please call **Leisure Services** on **01743 255069** for more information or to book a place.

*A crèche facility will be available for children of attendees, although spaces are limited.*

[www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk)





TRAINING

# Learn British Sign Language (BSL NVQC 3)

- Learn a New Language
- Communicate with Deaf people
- Explore new and exciting career opportunities

Remark! Training are pleased to announce the opening of our new Midlands office, where we will be providing quality British Sign Language (BSL) training. Remark! Training have provided BSL training with qualified, friendly deaf tutors for over seven years, and have an excellent track record with consistently high pass rates.

Our Birmingham based NVQC Level 3 course will start on Saturday 5th March and Sunday 6th March 2011, and run for one weekend per month for seven weeks. This course is designed for those that have completed their BSL Level 2 and are looking to develop signing skills and improve opportunities whether as a hobby or career.

The cost of the course is £1,800 (including assessment fees). Please contact Remark! Midlands to secure your place.

If you require more information or have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us using the details below.

**Remark! Midlands**  
**43 Temple Row**  
**Birmingham**  
**B2 5LS**  
**0121 230 1719**  
**[www.remark.uk.com](http://www.remark.uk.com)**  
**[info@remarkaccess.co.uk](mailto:info@remarkaccess.co.uk)**

## Community Council of Shropshire Training Courses:

### Successfully Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> March, 1pm – 4.30pm, Community Council of Shropshire Training Room, Shrewsbury

### Volunteer Management

Tuesday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 9am – 1pm, Community Council of Shropshire Training Room, Shrewsbury

Cost just £15 per session for voluntary/community groups. For more information or to book either of these courses, contact Lucy Cooke on 01743 342167 [lucy.cooke@shropshire-rcc.uk](mailto:lucy.cooke@shropshire-rcc.uk)



## Articles Needed!

Send your news, views and events to me at [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)

Please also **let me have your feedback**. Do you find this Newsletter useful, and if so, how? Would you like to see other things included? What don't you like about it?

## Crippen's Blog

<http://crippencartoons.wordpress.com/>

## Take Action Against the CONDEMs benefits scam on the 24th January 2011

Atos Origin have just been awarded a £300 million contract by the Condem government to continue carrying out 'work capability assessments'. It is claimed that these assessments are to test what people can do rather than what they can't do.

This testing system has already led to many disabled people, people with terminal illnesses and severe medical conditions being declared fit for work and having their benefits cut or completely removed. Intervention by GP's are ignored in favour of ill informed decisions made by inexperienced Atos staff. Plans announced for the scrapping of Disability Living Allowance have also revealed that this intrusive testing is likely to be extended to everyone on some form of disability or health related benefit.

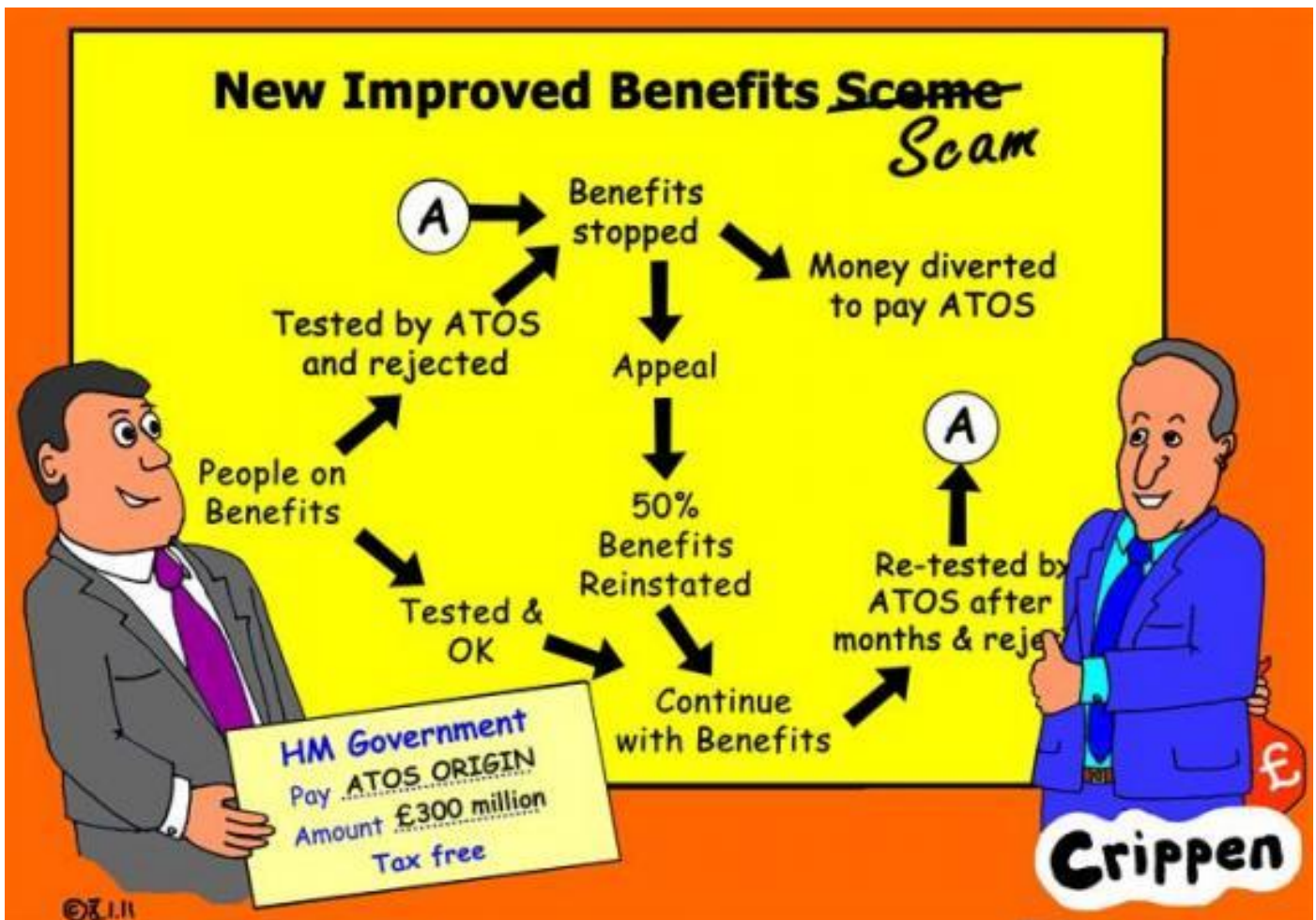
We all know that the real purpose of these tests are to strip benefits from as many people as possible and although almost half of the decisions made by Atos have been successfully challenged, the period between the benefits being stopped and their reinstatement due to a successful appeal means that many people receive no income during this time. We understand that not all benefits, once reinstated are back dated to the time they were stopped so the government is then able to retain this funding in order to pay their friends Atos. Devious little money maker eh?!

The Government also plans to cut £2.5 billion from Employment Support Allowance. Plans to limit the benefit to just one year will mean that even those who are deemed unable to work will be presumed to have made a miraculous recovery after 12 months. Meanwhile the budget for Disability Living Allowance is to be cut by 20%.



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.  
[www.shropshire-disability.net](http://www.shropshire-disability.net)





With the recent changes in Housing Benefit and possible changes to Council Tax benefit, these cuts will leave hundreds of thousands of disabled people and those with severe health problems without enough money to feed themselves and heat their homes. That's if they aren't forced into unpaid labour, no doubt inflicted on them by poverty pimps like SERCO and Action for Employment. Whilst millions of people face homelessness, disruption, debt and ill health the gravy train is being extended for those companies which seek to profit from the misery of others.

Atos Origin do not just do health related testing. They are a global IT and Consultancy company with offices around the UK. One speciality they boast of on their website is having: "a team of Organisation and HR professionals who undertake the analysis, design and execution of headcount reduction." In effect hatchet men! It's time to fightback and hold the government and these companies to account.

If you're organising an event in your area on 24th January and wish it to be added to the protest website or Face Book page then please contact Johnny Void ([thevoidblog@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thevoidblog@yahoo.co.uk)) and say Crippen sent you!

*We are indebted to Dave Lupton for the use of his Crippen cartoons*

#### Disclaimer

SDN aims to provide a forum for people to air their concerns about matters affecting people with a disability as well as providing a central source of information for them, their families and carers. The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those held by SDN. If you have a problem with any of the content of this newsletter, please contact the Editor, Sally Barrett, on [newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net).

## Late News

From VCS Assembly News Update 28 January  
(Issue 58) [www.2shrop.net/shropvcsassembly](http://www.2shrop.net/shropvcsassembly):

- **Active4Health Launched Across Shropshire County**

A new initiative has just been launched by Shropshire County Primary Care Trust (PCT) which provides information and support for local people who are looking to become more active and improve their overall health and wellbeing; helping to make it that little bit easier to at least stick to one New Year's resolution.

The new Active4Health webpages help bring together people who may have become inactive through ill-health, age-related conditions or who have never enjoyed formal exercise or sport with local exercise and activity providers. The online tool ([www.shropshire.nhs.uk/active4health](http://www.shropshire.nhs.uk/active4health)) provides information to public and patients on suitable exercise opportunities that can be matched to individual's needs, wants and level of experience. It also provides a simple-to-use search facility to enable people to find appropriate exercise classes in their local community in Shropshire and put them in direct contact with those providers.

The PCT is still looking to add new services and exercise providers to the Active4Health site, and would encourage anyone who wants to be a registered provider of activities on the site to contact Miranda Ashwell by email [Miranda.ashwell@shropshirepct.nhs.uk](mailto:Miranda.ashwell@shropshirepct.nhs.uk).

- **Pride of Shropshire Awards 2011**

The search begins once again today for the "Pride of Shropshire" . . . people, communities or organisations who go the extra mile, without seeking reward, to make the county proud. This year, judges are again looking to crown an overall champion, who will be selected from the winners of nine individual categories. Last year's Pride of Shropshire champion, Christopher Breakwell, pictured, from Burford, near Ludlow, again came from the Learner category. This year's individual categories are for:

- Best New Innovative Company
- Courage
- Good Neighbour
- Environmental Project
- Special Young Person
- Healthy Life
- Community Group
- Carer
- Learner

Please consider making a nomination. Visit the following web page for more information.  
<http://pride.shropshirestar.com/>

- **Invitation for charity secondments**

The John Lewis volunteering programme, which is handled by the Golden Jubilee Trust, has issued a call for charities to apply for secondees from the company for periods of up to six months. See:

<http://www.johnlewispartnership.co.uk/Display.aspx?&MasterId=302088b7-fc0b-4b0c-b0d3-fe2389abdbca&NavigationId=624>



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## • Digital Switchover Grants Scheme

The Digital Switchover Help Scheme is available to support people who:

- are aged 75 or over; or
- get or could get Disability Living Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Constant Attendance Allowance or mobility supplement; or
- have lived in a care home for six months or more; or
- are registered blind or partially sighted.

VCS groups and organisations in Shropshire interested in finding out more about the grants scheme can contact Clare Hockett at Gloucestershire Rural Community Council. Clare is the DOL Lead Organisation Project Manager. Email: [clareh@grcc.org.uk](mailto:clareh@grcc.org.uk). Phone: 01452 528491. There are a number of documents relating to the grants scheme so these will be made available on the VCS

Assembly website from Tuesday 1<sup>st</sup> February see the latest news page at:

[www.2shrop.net/shropvcassembly](http://www.2shrop.net/shropvcassembly)

## • Baxi Community Challenge – Deadline 28 February

Do you know of a worthy cause looking for some help? Maybe it's your local village hall which needs a new water heater or the scout hut which is in need of a new boiler. **Building Services & Environmental Engineer (BSEE)** has teamed up with Baxi Commercial Division to offer one person the chance to help out their local community in the 'Baxi Community Challenge'.

[http://www.bsee.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/7130/Make\\_a\\_difference\\_in\\_your\\_community.html](http://www.bsee.co.uk/news/fullstory.php/aid/7130/Make_a_difference_in_your_community.html)

## • Bus Strategy for Shropshire 2011- 2016

Bus Strategy for Shropshire Council 2011–2016. The consultation will be undertaken during January to March 2011. Comments from the consultation process will be considered in the final Bus Strategy which will be submitted to the Council in April 2011. The Strategy and details on how to respond to the consultation can be viewed at:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/transportconsultation>

## • Local Transport Plan for Shropshire Consultation

The bus strategy forms part of a wider Local Transport Plan (LTP) which covers all aspects of Transport and Highways. The Council is currently consulting on a new LTP which sets out our policies and priorities for the next 15 years. You can get involved by:

Completing a simple web based survey on spending priorities available now at: <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/transportconsultation>

Commenting on the draft LTP which includes area based strategies, which will be available in mid January at:

<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/traveltransport.nsf/open/2A79133CD32676E98025709E002EEF2B>

For further information on the LTP please contact Jan Cook. Telephone: 01743 253066. [jan.cook@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:jan.cook@shropshire.gov.uk)