

yourvoice

ISSUE NO. 9 March 2011



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Volunteer Editor required for Shropshire Disability Network



Due to the forthcoming retirement of Sally Barrett the Editor of our vibrant newsletter “**Your Voice**” Shropshire Disability Network are looking for someone with an interest in people, who enjoys writing and has IT skills to take on this role or join in the Newsletter team.

Sally says “Publishing this newsletter has been a fascinating task and brought me into contact with many inspiring people. I think it would be an ideal role for someone newly retired or would just like to make a difference”

Shropshire Disability Network was formed in May 2008 to provide a collective voice for persons with disability throughout Shropshire. What we do at Shropshire Disability Network Is all aimed at achieving our vision of respect and equal opportunity for all by 2025. Current activities include

- Holding four Open Meetings a year at Mereside Community Centre, Shrewsbury (the next is 10th March at Mereside Community Centre, Shrewsbury.
- Running and managing the website **www.shropshire-disability.net**
- Publishing a vibrant monthly newsletter **www.shropshire-disability.net/newsletter/**
- Running sub groups targeted at achieving our vision in the key areas affecting all our lives.
- Running Shropshire Disability Awareness Day – 16th Oct
- Fundraising
- Working with volunteers

If you would like to be involved with the Newsletter or in any of the areas above please email Sally **newsletter@shropshire-disability.net** or ring me, **Geoff Forgie on 01691 830662.**

DWP ‘sluggish’ over benefit errors

by Alex Stevenson, 21-01-2011, [politics.co.uk](http://www.politics.co.uk),
[\\$21386791.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/news/welfare-and-pensions/dwp-sluggish-over-benefit-errors-$21386791.htm)

Iain Duncan Smith's department is failing to address errors in the benefits system worth £1.1 billion, a spending watchdog has found.

The National Audit Office's (NAO) head Amyas Morse said the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) faced a "significant challenge" in dealing with customer errors - and had not demonstrated it was doing anything about it.

Four years have passed since the DWP launched a strategy for tackling error. Since then there has not



Iain Duncan Smith

been sufficient attention paid to reducing losses due to customer mistakes, the report found.

"The department has demonstrated a firm commitment to tackling administrative error, while its resolve to tackle customer error has so far been less evident," Mr Morse said.

"It now needs to bring its focus on customer error to the same level. The key to success in each area is a coherent strategy supported by good information on what works to deliver the best results."

The DWP estimates it lost £1.1 billion in 2009/10 because of overpayments to benefits claimants caused by 'customer error' - mistakes made by claimants when filling in benefits forms.

It failed to pay out £800 million in underpayments to claimants, causing unnecessary hardship for the families affected.

A lack of information on the part of DWP officials appears to be at the heart of the problem, the report states.

There is not enough consistently measured data on the costs and benefits of its interventions, the NAO points out. The DWP does not know whether any patterns exist which would help it target its interventions better.

'Misery' warning on £30m cuts proposal

This was the Shropshire Star's headline on 12th February 2011.

Moves to scrap council projects across Shropshire in a bid to save more than £30 million will cause a "lot of misery for a lot of people" it was claimed today.

The concern about the proposed cuts was voiced by Geoff Forgie, who is a leading campaigner for the disabled. The capital programme hit-list is being presented to the Shropshire Council cabinet next week.

It includes a proposal from officers to reduce by £2.4 million over the next four years the "top-up" made to the Disabled Facilities Grant received from Government.

Mr Forgie, chairman of the Shropshire Disability Network, but expressing a personal view, said: "These cuts are going to cause a lot of misery for a lot of people, and not just the disabled.

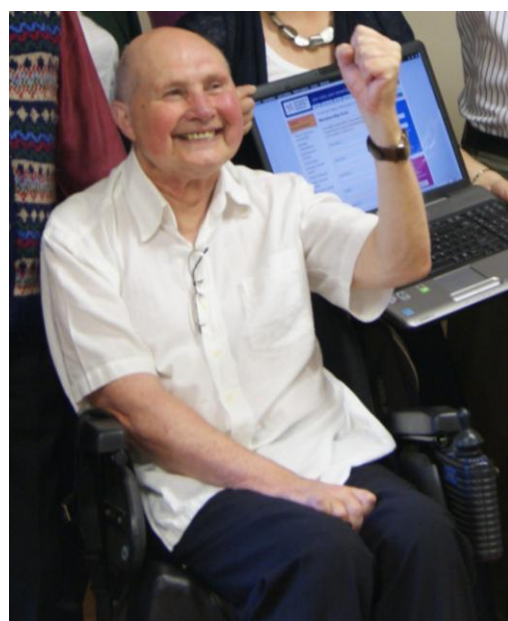
"As a disabled individual I am deeply concerned over the proposed cuts, and particularly the Disabled Facilities Grant.

"The cuts will mean, for example, that a disabled person unable to go upstairs, will need facilities down-stairs such as a shower or bath, but without the help of a grant, what will they do? In this current climate, moving is not an option"...

On 11th February Shropshire Star reported
(<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/11/shropshire-council-cuts-will-devastate-many-lives/>)

Shropshire Council cuts 'will devastate many lives'

A leading Shropshire councillor today warned of the "devastating impact" on people's lives from plans to



Geoff Forgie

save more than £30 million by scrapping projects across the county.

A variety of capital projects face the axe to generate savings of £19 million for Shropshire Council next year and a total saving of £31.5 million by 2014/15.

Labour group leader Alan Mosley said that **£8 million for adult social care would also be coming out of the council's revenue budget.**

He said: "A new dawn has broken in Shropshire in that people can see for the first time the devastating impact of cuts on the quality of their life, and the services that are going to be slashed.

"Despite what is being said about frontline services being protected . . . vulnerable people are going to be seriously damaged.

"We will be identifying the true impact of the cuts and seeking to mitigate the effects."

NHS 'has forgotten we're humans'

By Alex Stevenson, 15-02-2011, [politics.co.uk](http://www.politics.co.uk/news/health/nhs-has-forgotten-we-re-humans--$21387240.htm), [http://www.politics.co.uk/news/health/nhs-has-forgotten-we-re-humans--\\$21387240.htm](http://www.politics.co.uk/news/health/nhs-has-forgotten-we-re-humans--$21387240.htm)

Older people are being let down by an NHS failing them both personally and institutionally, a damning report out today has concluded.

Health ombudsman Ann Abraham's examination of ten complaints led to her concluding that the NHS is not treating older people with care, compassion, dignity or respect.

Its shocking findings identified failings with the personal attitudes of NHS staff towards their patients as much as systemic structural problems.

One elderly woman who had broken her collar bone after a fall in hospital was sent to a care home soaked in urine and wearing clothes that were not her own, held up with large paper clips. Her niece, her only relative, was not told about her falls while in hospital.

"These often harrowing accounts should cause every member of NHS staff who reads this report to pause and ask themselves if any of their patients could suffer in the same way. I know from my caseload that in many cases, the answer must be 'yes'," Ms Abraham said.

"The NHS must close the gap between the promise of care and compassion outlined in its constitution and the injustice that many older people experience. Every member of staff, no matter what their job, has a role to play in making the commitments of the constitution a felt reality for patients."

Nigel Edwards, the acting chief executive of the NHS workers' organisation the NHS Confederation, said the stories made for "distressing reading".

He called for the ten examples to be put into "perspective", however.

"The NHS sees over a million people every 36 hours and the overwhelming majority say they receive good care," he said.

"But I fully appreciate that this will be of little comfort to patients and their families when they have been on the receiving end of poor care."



A bleak outlook for elderly patients in the NHS.

The highest-profile instance of poor care in recent years has come from Stafford hospital, where hundreds of people are believed to have unnecessarily lost their lives because of poor standards.

Local campaigning group Cure The NHS has succeeded in its campaign to secure an independent inquiry. But its founder, Julie Bailey, continues to monitor problems within the NHS.

"As alarming as the contents of these dreadful stories are, and our hearts goes out to all of the loved ones involved, the lamentable accounts of 'what happened next' are just as disturbing," she said.

"We know from bitter experience that what each hospital promised to do is meaningless, it will already have happened again, over and over again.

"Who can change this? One group of people only; the million staff that make up the NHS. Legislation cannot change the culture in an institution as large as the NHS, it's a fundamental change of behaviour by the frontline staff in particular that is needed."

Need help writing your CV?



KnowHow is a charity that 'Helps civil society flourish'. They say

'It's a tough time for workers in the voluntary sector at the moment. The deepening cuts mean that people are losing their jobs, and new jobs are hard to come by. We hope our affordable CV products will help you stand out from the crowd and continue your professional journey in the sector.'

If you think that their CV bundle might help you, check them out at <http://www.knowhownonprofit.org/people/your-development/future/five-real-cvs-that-got-real-jobs-charity-cv-bundle>.

KnowHow also offer information on

- working for and setting up charities and non-profit organisations
- management of staff and volunteers
- the operational, financial, legal and strategic processes that make an effective non-profit organisation
- funding & income
- campaigns & awareness
- leadership.

Telford council vow over respite care closure

By Alex James, The Shropshire Star, 16-02-2011,

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/16/telford-council-vow-over-respite-care-closure/>

It was feared that hundreds of people would lose the care they currently receive when Shropshire Crossroads Care in Newport closes at the end of March due to funding cuts.

But Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council have now taken up the mantle of providing the help, although the future of the 35 staff at Crossroads Care remains in doubt.

Crossroads Care chief executive Jo Hesketh said she was delighted care would still be offered to their clients.

She said: "We are definitely closing in March but Shropshire Council and Telford & Wrekin Council will be providing care for those people affected.

"I'm not sure exactly how they are going about it at the moment but the important thing is that the care will still be offered.

"We have been in touch with clients to keep them updated about the situation and what is going on.

"It is good news of sorts because we wanted to ensure the care carried on."

However, she added: "We are still not sure about the staff yet.

"We hope that some will be okay to transfer across but obviously it depends on what the new provider wants.

"At the moment it is a case of wait and see for staff which is a shame because we would like that resolved. I am hopeful it will be by April 1 because we will close at the end of March."

Councillor Jacqui Seymour, Telford & Wrekin Council cabinet member for adult care and support, said: "Telford & Wrekin Council's social work teams have spoken to all people who live in the borough and currently receive the Crossroads service and we have reassured them council funding is in place for their service.

"We are due to meet a representative of Crossroads to clarify the arrangements to close down the service."

Stephen Chandler, Shropshire Council's assistant director for adult social care, said: "We are confident we can achieve a successful transfer to a new Crossroads provider with minimal disruption to people receiving the service."



More than 350 elderly and vulnerable people will continue to be looked after in their own homes despite the closure of a leading Shropshire respite care provider, council bosses vowed today.

Average chief exec salary tops £150k

Inside Housing report, 23/09/2010,
<http://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/average-chief-exec-salary-tops-%C2%A3150k/6511782.article>

The chief executives of England's largest housing associations are paid £11,000 more

INSIDE HOUSING

than the prime minister on average, according to an *Inside Housing* survey.

Fifty two bosses of the largest 100 UK housing associations took home more than the £142,500 earned by David Cameron. The average salary of those polled was £153,353.

The results emerged as housing minister Grant Shapps' rounded on chief executive pay at the National Housing Federation conference, stating that the public 'want to know how many people [here] think that their job is tougher than being prime minister'.

'I want to know how it can be justified to pay enormous salaries which are ultimately being paid for either through the hard work and toil of taxpayers or worse, from the rents of tenants who may be the people in society least able to afford your salary,' he said.

Mr Shapps also called on associations to follow his department's lead and publish details of all spending of more than £500 in a new 'spirit of openness'.

***Inside Housing's* annual chief executive salary survey reveals that the highest paid housing head in 2009/10 was Jane Ashcroft, chief executive of Anchor Trust. She received a total package of £290,000.**

Anchor chair Aman Dalvi said: 'Remuneration as a proportion of turnover remains significantly less than many housing associations pay to their chief executives.'

Other high earners include David Bennett, chief executive of Sanctuary Group, who took home £285,444, and David Cowans, chief executive of Places for People, who received £279,095.

The highest bonus of £22,000 went to Keith Exford, chief executive of Affinity Sutton.

There are signs housing associations are showing increasing restraint when awarding bonuses. Sixteen per cent of housing association chief executives received discretionary performance related pay in 2009/10 – compared with 71 per cent in 2008/09.

David Orr, chief executive of the NHF defended the high salaries received by housing heads. 'Running a housing association is a complex task,' he said.

Editor's note: Anchor Trust and Sanctuary Group both have properties in the Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin area.

Why Register or Join our Network (SDN)



A message from the Chair

Hello friends and supporters,

Shropshire Disability Network was formed in May 2008 to provide a powerful collective voice for persons with disability, their families, carers, advocates, and supportive organisations; to enable us to work towards our Vision which is to achieve by 2025 "Respect and equal opportunity for all."

Everything we do is directly or indirectly aimed at achieving this goal. See below.

By Registering with SDN you will help strengthen our voice with government and statutory bodies such as the NHS.

More immediately you will gain access to our vibrant newsletter containing local and national disability news, inspirational articles, and a guide to current events.

You will be able to comment on News items and Blogs stimulating discussion and wider understanding of various issues.

Benefits also include the opportunity to meet new people, increase your support network, gain and share coping strategies, raise issues affecting you, become involved in sub groups and join our campaigns working to achieve improvements and make a difference. You can also help us and yourself to reach our vision of "Respect and equal opportunity for all."

There are two ways to Register (it's free):

- 1) Online – www.shropshire-disability.net
- 2) If you do not have an email address or if you wish to give a membership/registration form to someone else you know, just download the form from our website (see Join) so that you can fill it in and post it the address provided on the form. Alternatively ring Val on **01948 840726** if you have any questions.

I hope you will register **now**. It only takes a few minutes. With many thanks.

Yours sincerely

Geoff Forgie. Chair **01691 830662**

End this arts apartheid

Dea Birkett, 21-02-2011,
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/21/disability-galleries-theatres-access-tate>

When Tate Modern opened, it shouted inclusivity. Now it makes my disabled daughter enter through the back door

There's a major cultural institution my family can only enter through the back door. We pass buckets of cleaning materials, staff health and safety notices and piles of cardboard boxes. We're checked in to the building at the same desk at which a stationary package arrives, and are handled as if we were one. This place is Tate Modern. And my family have been relegated to accessing this high-minded cultural institution through the tradesmen's entrance because my daughter is disabled.

We used to be able to enter by the same door as every other visitor. But when work on the Tate's £215m extension began last year, overnight all the disabled parking bays were removed. Instead, if there's room, disabled visitors and their families can park at the rear and use the staff entrance. If, like my family and many other disabled people, you can't use public transport, this is your only option.

When Tate Modern opened 10 years ago, the disabled community cheered. Here was a building of national and international significance whose entry was a whopping great ramp. No other building of such importance shouted inclusion quite as loudly.

It's particularly disappointing



when that same building lets us know families like mine don't matter. In another place, when one section of society was condemned to a different, less attractive, unseen entrance it was called apartheid.

Tate Modern isn't the only cultural powerhouse to treat its disabled visitors differently. The National Gallery boasted that it was lowering some of its collection, "enabling visitors in wheelchairs to examine the paintings at close distance". Just three of the gallery's 2,300 works were lowered – Van Gogh's *Sunflowers*, Constable's *The Hay Wain* and Monet's *The Gare St-Lazare* – and for one night only, just two and a half hours, which had to be booked in advance. By the next morning, these iconic paintings were at full height again – inaccessible, along with 2,997 others.

Tate Modern also defends removing the disabled parking bays by pointing to all its special events for disabled visitors. It brags of workshops for the learning disabled and tours for the visually impaired. But these acts of largesse for the needy ("We like to help the needy," the Tate guard told us as he chaperoned us through our special entrance) is not access; it's the opposite. It's compensating for the lack of any real access and hoping we won't notice. I don't want special or different for my family; I want what every other visitor takes for granted – everyday access to art.

The view of disabled people as separate from all other users runs across the whole cultural sector. The Old Vic theatre failed to imagine that any of its regular audience might be wheelchair users. When it first introduced a scheme of special cheap rates for local residents, none of the theatre's wheelchair spaces were included in the deal. If you lived in the area and happened to be a wheelchair user, you had to pay four times as much as any non-disabled person living in your street. The very scheme that was designed to broaden access excluded disabled theatregoers.

When these cultural powerhouses talk about their audiences, they implicitly define them as non-disabled. The art world can't believe families like mine might be independent visitors, admiring the post-impressionists or Ai Weiwei's sunflower seeds. They can only envisage us siphoned off in a separate room.

This is cultural apartheid. One night with a lower *Hay Wain* won't make any difference. A few dozen people being able to see a few works of art for a couple of hours is not access. The cultural sector needs to use its creative powers to see us as part of their audience and let us in through the front door.

Shrewsbury County Court is to close in September



The Shropshire Star reported 17-02-2011

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/17/shrewsburys-county-court-will-close-in-september/>

It is one of six criminal and civil courts across Shropshire being axed as part of Government spending cuts.

Magistrates courts in Market Drayton, Oswestry and Ludlow, will close on March 31. County courts in Ludlow and Oswestry will also close in September. Work at Oswestry and Market Drayton magistrates court is proposed to move to Shrewsbury.

Editor's note: The only way for someone using a wheelchair to get from Oswestry to Telford is to use a taxi, which will hit people with a disability very hard, and those on low income may well find themselves excluded from the legal process because of their inability to attend court.

What disability living allowance means to me



Anthony Rew, 44: "What the hell am I meant to live on? If they take away my mobility, I won't be able to do anything. It is horrendous. When I was stuck at home, it made me angry and frustrated. Coming to the day centre has helped me become more independent. Without the DLA I am back to square one. My ambition is to work with other disabled people – act as an advocate. I want to do a course at college. But without transport, I won't be able to. I will end up sitting in bed all day."

Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/gallery/2011/feb/09/disability-living-allowance-reform-scope-in-pictures#/?picture=371497728&index=>

Rubina Jetha, 48: "I'm worried about how I will afford the basics, like clothing. DLA also helps me pay to travel to the mosque, which is a big part of my life."



Shropshire Council's £370,000 for four new jobs

By Dave Morris, the Shropshire Star 15-02-2011, <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/15/shropshire-councils/>

The move has "absolutely astounded" the Shirehall's biggest union whose members are facing sweeping changes to their employment terms and conditions. And it has angered leading councillors in the county's market towns where planned council schemes may be ditched due to lack of funds as budgets are cut back.

But council chief executive Kim Ryley has strongly defended the need for the new posts, saying the authority needs "excellent managers" to oversee change.

The council has advertised on its website for an area director with a salary up to £110,000, a corporate head of finance and commerce with a salary up to £100,000, a group manager for business growth and prosperity and group manager for public protection, both with salaries of up to £85,000.

The website notice says: "These four roles will be at the core of an era-defining change – one that will see us become leaner, more integrated, more accountable and more creative in our thinking."

Details of the jobs emerged after the council last week revealed proposals to cut 50 schemes which will save it £31.5 million by 2014/15.

Among the projects to go are a £1 million revamp of Ellesmere market hall and a £100,000 Wem Town Square initiative.

Pat McLaughlin, Mayor of Ellesmere, said the news could cause people in the town to feel "despondent" after it emerged cash for the market hall was now at risk.

"I find it rather amusing that Shropshire Council have been shedding jobs and then find £370,000 for four new staff," she said.

"That's more than £90,000 a post. We were looking forward to being able to bring the market hall up to date because it's in a poor state."

Patricia Wilson, Shropshire Unison branch secretary, said the union was "absolutely astounded" at the creation of the new roles.

However Mr Ryley said it would be "entirely wrong" to look at the advert in isolation and criticise the council for recruiting to high level posts, as this was part of a review of management which will save at least £4 million a year overall.

He said: "The restructure is removing management layers and bureaucracy, to develop a more efficient organisation delivering good quality, value for money local services for the people of Shropshire."



Shropshire Council is recruiting people to four newly created jobs at a cost of up to £370,000 a year, at a time when it is trying to slash £30 million from its budget by axing dozens of projects.

How cuts will hit every area of Shropshire life

By Dave Morris, the
Shropshire Star, 16-02-2011,
<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/16/137082/>

Shropshire councillors have approved plans to save nearly £42 million by 2014 amid warnings that service cuts will be felt right across the county and will be “devastating”.

On a black day for the county:

- Council capital projects were slashed to save a further £35 million.
- Plans to axe nine schools moved a step closer despite Shirehall protests and pleas from councillors.
- West Mercia Police Authority warned difficult decisions would have to be made after announcing a £14.7 million shortfall.
- The loss of five criminal and civil courts was confirmed.



The full, stark picture of how cuts will impact on nearly every corner of Shropshire life has been laid bare in grim detail.

The Shropshire Council cabinet decision on plans to save £41.6 million taken yesterday includes just over £8 million from a reduction in senior staff, and changes to staff terms and conditions.

A further £8.1 million may come from a review of adult social care services.

Councillor Alan Mosley, Labour opposition group leader, said there would be “devastating” cuts for the people of Shropshire, the result of increasingly flawed national policies.

He hoped council colleagues would scrutinise the effects of the cuts.

Councillor Mosley said he was particularly concerned over the lack of public consultation.

But council leader Keith Barrow said the authority would consult and added: “I look forward to you coming forward with sensible solutions as to where we can make savings.

“Come up with some good ideas. I am looking forward to it, but I won’t hold my breath.”

On the capital programme savings of £35 million, Councillor Mosley asked if any thought had been given to the “negative impact” on Shropshire’s economy. The loss of schemes would hit the building trade and other suppliers.

But Councillor Barrow said economic development was a top priority and the council would still be spending £171 million on schemes.

He also said schemes deleted from the programme would not be “dead and buried” and could be revived when money allowed.

His comments came as West Mercia Police Authority agreed a budget of £205.6 million for 2011/12 yesterday. The force, which covers Shropshire, will see a 17 per cent cut in its core Government grant over the next four years — leaving it with a £14.7 million shortfall in 2011/12 alone. Police authority bosses said reserves would have to be used for the shortfall to minimise the impact on the West Mercia service.

Her Majesty's Courts Service said magistrates courts in Market Drayton, Oswestry and Ludlow, would close on March 31, and county courts in Ludlow and Oswestry will close in September.

The news comes despite warnings witnesses, defendants, victims and families in north and south Shropshire could suffer hardship because of limited transport links to Shrewsbury and Telford, where the bulk of the county's legal proceedings will be held once the courts on the hit-list close.

Consultation on school closures starts on February 28 and last for six weeks. The cabinet will meet on May 14 to consider feedback and decide whether or not to proceed with its plan for tackling empty classroom places.

The council is proposing to reduce overall capacity by closing the Wakeman School and Arts College in Shrewsbury and village schools at Hopton Wafers, Barrow, Onibury, Maesbury, Stiperstones and Lydbury North. At St Martin's near Oswestry, Ifton Health Primary would combine with Rhyn Park School, while at Shawbury there would be a single school.

Councillor Aggie Caesar-Homden, portfolio holder for children and young people's services, said the council had already consulted on an unprecedented scale on the future of county schools. She said no decision had yet been made on any school.

Egypt: disabled people fight for democracy

As the photographs show, disabled people were involved in the Egyptian revolution, taking a full part in the events in Al-Tahrir Square.

DAA salutes our sisters and brothers in Egypt!!



Reprint of article in 'Our Rights', issue 30, Feb 2011, newsletter of daa, The International disability and Human Rights Network, <http://www.daa.org.uk/>

See also <http://www.apcdfoundation.org/ec/afe/node/599>

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FRIDAY & SATURDAY
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The Olive Tree is a restaurant in Ironbridge supporting jobs for 19 people with learning disabilities.

Employment updates



Reprinted from the Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership Newsletter, Issue 9,

<http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/blog/spotlight/shropshire-infrastructure-partnership-newsletter/>

What information is there available for charities and their employees about redundancy?

Trustees of a charity should make sure that they are aware of their legal obligations as an employer and keep up to date with any changes in legislation. Employment law is a complex area and the trustees may need to take professional advice especially where its staffing levels or terms and conditions of employment are being reviewed.

The following websites offer guidance and support for trustees and employees:

- The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)
<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1365>
- Directgov
<http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/Employment/RedundancyAndLeavingYourJob/index.htm>
- NCVO – Have a redundancy checklist for employers
- Business Link <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/layer?topicId=1074019927>
- Department for Business Innovation and Skills
<http://bis.ecgroup.net/Publications/Insolvency/RedundancyProcedures.aspx>

Do you use agency staff in your organisation?

If you do and use, or could use, the same agency temp for more than 12 weeks, then read how the Agency Workers Regulations 2010 which come into effect on 1 October 2011 may affect your organisation. For more information see http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/emplaw/tacofemp/_equal-treatment-agency-workers.htm?lsSrchRes=1, re-directs to Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

Volunteer Management Toolkit

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 reviewed them and can signpost you around the plethora of useful information that is available. <http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/volunteering/volunteer-management-toolkit/>

Department of Health Long Term Conditions Team



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.
www.shropshire-disability.net

Items from the DH LTC Team Newsletter No. 1, email richard.kenyon@dh.gsi.gov.uk, www.dh.gov.uk:

Pain & Self Care Toolkits

You may already be aware of the Pain and Self Care toolkits – simple information booklets, written by a patient with Long term Conditions, that provide handy tips and skills on how to self-manage their condition on a daily basis. You can order hard copies of the Pain toolkits on www.orderline.dh.gov.uk or by telephoning 0300 123 100. Quote 403298/Pain Toolkit. If you are experiencing any difficulties in ordering the Pain toolkit please contact us at longtermconditions@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Hard copies of the Self Care Toolkit are no longer available however, if you would like to print your own copies please contact the Long Term Conditions team at the above address and we will send you the print file.

QIPP

The LTC QIPP workstream seeks to improve clinical outcomes and experience for patients with long term conditions in England and maximise the use of resources. The workstream will focus on improving the quality and productivity of services for these patients and their carers so they can access higher quality, local, comprehensive community and primary care. The workstream seeks to reduce unscheduled hospital admissions by 20%, reduce length of stay by 25% and maximise the number of people controlling their own health through the use of supported care planning. To find out more information about QIPP workstream please join the network at <http://www.networks.nhs.uk/nhs-networks/commissioning-for-long-term-conditions/?searchterm=COMMISSIONING>

Community Council of Shropshire Carer's Newsletter, Feb 2011



<http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk/carers/carerssupportnews> - extracts

BT Basic – how can it help me?

BT Basic is a simple, low-cost telephone service that's easy to understand and helps you keep in touch, even if money is a bit tight. If you're on a low income, why not find out more?

Costs £13.80 for 3 months line rental including £4.50 to spend on calls.

You must be getting one of these benefits:

- Income Support,
- Pension Credit (Guaranteed Credit),
- Income-based Jobseekers Allowance,
- Employment & Support Allowance (income related)

For further details 0800 800 864 or www.bt.com. (Terms & Conditions apply)

If you don't qualify to get BT Basic there may be other beneficial Calling Plans available to you. For further details call 0800 800 150 or e mail bt.com/callingplans

Carers Allowance for people who receive a state pension

If you are a pensioner, you can claim Carers Allowance (CA). This may come as a surprise to many people as the message seems to be that they cannot claim this benefit if they are of pensionable age. You cannot be paid both CA and a pension however, you can still claim Carers Allowance that gets you what is known as underlying entitlement to that benefit.

This has a "knock on" effect regarding other entitlements. It is worth your while claiming Carer's Allowance as it may give you:

- Eligibility for Pension Credit
- Extra pension credit (a carer's premium)
- Housing and Council Tax Benefit

Other things will be taken into account when your eligibility for benefits is assessed but claiming Carers Allowance can only help your case. To make a claim, call 0845 6084321.

Message in a bottle

Data Link is a voluntary scheme for anyone who feels vulnerable, and would be reassured to know that essential information is readily available to the emergency services should they suffer an accident or sudden illness.

The packs contain a specially designed canister or pot in which a person's basic medical information is kept along with details of who should be contacted in an emergency. The pot is then placed into the fridge with two stickers - one inside the main entrance door of the home and the other on the outside of the fridge to alert emergency personnel that the system is in place.

Data Link provides the emergency services with vital data such as current medication, if the person is allergic to any medication, what their blood group is and details of their doctor and carer, if applicable. It can save valuable time as the emergency services will know exactly where it is and can get the information they need quickly.

Why in the fridge? Should an incident occur causing damage to your home the inside of your fridge often survives intact longer.

If you would like a Data Link pot please call 01743 341995. More information at <http://www.churchillvillage.co.uk/images/datalink2poster.pdf>



New disability test 'is a complete mess', says the man who designed it

By Amelia Gentleman, 22-02-2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2011/feb/22/new-disability-test-is-a-complete-mess>

One of the architects of the new sickness benefit system has warned it would be a mistake to start introducing it nationwide from the end of this month because of serious ongoing problems with the medical test designed to assess whether claimants are genuinely sick or disabled.

"The test is badly malfunctioning. The current assessment is a complete mess," Professor Paul Gregg, an economist and welfare reform expert, said.

During the preliminary roll-out of the test, people with terminal cancer, multiple sclerosis and serious mental illnesses have been found fit to work.

Since early 2009, more than 240,000 cases contesting the result of the health tests have been accepted for tribunal hearings and, of the cases they hear, judges overturn about 40% of test findings.

Over the next three years, 1.5 million people claiming incapacity benefit will undergo a work capability assessment (WCA) to determine whether they are eligible for a replacement benefit, employment support allowance (ESA).



Chris Grayling, the employment minister, acknowledged the problems with the test but insisted that reforms would go ahead. Photograph: Paul Ellis/AFP/Getty Images

The new test is much tougher than the previous one and in pilots 30% fewer people have been found unfit for work and 70% fewer people have been found eligible for the full-rate, unconditional support benefit; in both cases claimants have been shifted to a lower benefit. The reform is expected to save the government £1bn over five years. The system has been in place for new claimants since 2008, but will be expanded to retest existing claimants from the end of this month.

An independent review of the test in November last year found serious flaws in the way it was functioning and called for major improvements. Although the government has promised to implement these recommendations before people begin to be retested, at a rate of 11,000 a week, some politicians, charity workers and academics think the roll-out is going ahead too fast.

Gregg, who helped design the new ESA, recommends a further trial before it is introduced nationally.

"In the first trial, the system did not work. We need to trial the new, proposed, reformed system to check and prove that it works and avoids the serious stress and misclassification of people that we have already seen, before we start implementing it on a large and vulnerable population," he said. "The test so far has caused a huge amount of anguish to the people who have gone through it. We need to have something that is working accurately before we apply it nationally.

"We shouldn't roll this out until we have something that is working."

Stephen Timms, the shadow employment secretary, is also anxious about the speed with which it is being implemented. "In principle, this is the right thing to do," he said. "My worry is that this exercise is being rushed. We know that there are some changes that need to be made to the WCA. There are risks with the roll-out. I think that the government is in a rush with the welfare reform."

Chris Grayling, the employment minister, acknowledged that there had been problems with the test, but said reforms were being introduced and would be in place in time. "I see this as a constant process of refinement and improvement," he said.

Deaf Research

MANCHESTER
1824

- Katie Rogers is looking for deaf volunteers to take part in her research (study one).

The study one involves looking at whether the BSL version and the English version of a well-being assessment tool will be useful for a future study.

If you are interested in taking part, you will be asked to complete the questionnaire about well-being online, which is available both in BSL and English. It will take about 10-15 minutes to complete. Once you have completed the questionnaire, you will receive a £15 voucher as way of saying thank you for taking part.

If you want to take part or want more information, please go to www.manchester.ac.uk/deafwellbeing

- Manchester University is also seeking a research assistant involving the project on the BSL translation of the assessment tools.

For further information, including the application form please go to <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/aboutus/jobs/vacancies/research/vacancy/?ref=93728> . The deadline for this application is 07/03/2011.

New clues to sight loss from AMD

NHS Choices, 7-02-2011, <http://www.nhs.uk/news/2011/02February/Pages/clue-to-age-related-amd-sight-loss.aspx>

Scientists have developed “a new treatment for the most common form of blindness”, *The Daily Telegraph* has reported. The newspaper said researchers have found that the lack of a protective protein, called DICER1, is behind one form of age-related macular degeneration (AMD).

The findings come from a study which looked at “geographic atrophy”, an advanced stage of the common condition known as dry AMD.

In dry AMD, light-sensitive cells in an area at the back of the eye (the retina) begin to break down. The researchers examined donor eyes with the condition, human retina cells in the laboratory and the eyes of genetically engineered mice. They found that a lack of DICER1 in retina cells caused a toxic molecule (called *Alu* RNA) to build up, which led to the death of retina cells.

This extensive research has provided an insight into the potential causes of the death of retina cells in one form of AMD. It is not yet clear whether the laboratory methods used in this study could also be used as a treatment in humans, as some newspapers have suggested. Further rigorous animal and human studies are probably needed before we can tell if these or similar methods can be used to treat this form of AMD.

Where did the story come from?

The study was carried out by researchers from the University of Kentucky and other research centres in the USA, Korea, Australia and Canada. The researchers were funded by several charitable and governmental bodies. The study was published in the peer-reviewed scientific journal *Nature*.



AMD gradually causes loss of central vision

The study was reported by BBC News, the *Daily Express* and *The Daily Telegraph*. BBC News covered this story in a balanced way, its headline indicating that this research has found a clue to understanding the causes of this type of AMD rather than developing a therapy. The headlines in the *Telegraph* and *Express* highlighted the possibility of new treatments, and the *Telegraph's* report stated that one of the researchers has "created two treatments that could potentially halt the march of the disease". The newspaper said that these are being patented and could begin to be tested in humans by the end of this year. The study itself does not state whether the methods used are being considered for testing in humans.

Smart technology for people with a disability!

There are many IT developments that can make life easier or more enjoyable for people with a disability. A few examples are:

► **Smartphones** are the indispensable accessory for the young these days and they can do all sorts of things that would also help people with a disability. BUT the drawback has been that, with their touchscreens instead of phone keypads, they are no use for the visually impaired.

OUT-LAW.COM <http://www.out-law.com/page-11440> 11/10/2010 reports that:

'A law has been passed in the US which demands that mobile phone makers and networks and cable television companies and broadcasters ensure that their services and technologies are accessible to disabled users.

BlackBerry claim 'Tactilely Discernible Keyboards – Place phone calls, compose messages and enter text on familiar keyboards with keys you can feel' – I think a lot of help from a well-qualified advisor is needed here before buying!

Mobile Accessibility <http://www.mobileaccessibility.info/> suggests that Motorola, Samsung, and Nokia all make smartphones that are suitable for the visually impaired – you can input your own needs on their site and various devices are suggested. The Motorola Flipout, for instance, has Keypad Depression Feedback, Audible Alerts/Feedback, Brightly Backlight Displays and High Contrast for visual impairment.

Fighting Blindness, The British Retinitis Pigmentosa Society, <http://www.brps.org.uk/index.php?pageid=328&tln=resources>, say that the Apple iPhone 3GS and iPhone 4 are accessible out of the box using the Voice Over screen reader via gestures on the phone's touch screen, or using Zoom screen magnification. These phones support Email, Internet access, storing and playing music, audio books, photographs, and videos. You can download an accessible GPS application, and a basic OCR application. You can also download dozens of other accessible applications for getting the latest news and weather and stock prices, playing games, keeping fit, recording and organising voice notes, interfacing with social networks, and lots more. The iPhone can connect to the Internet at no cost using wifi (via your domestic broadband wireless network) or at some cost using the mobile phone network. Windows smart phones. These use the Windows Mobile operating system and support a similar set of functions to the Apple iPhone. Windows smart phones can be made accessible by installing software like Code Factory's Mobile Speak for Smart Phones.



Motorola Flipout

► Fighting Blindness also point out that some phones also support **optical character recognition** (OCR) so that you can photograph printed material and have it read to you using synthesised speech.

► They also give details of Loadstone free **GPS software** which can be downloaded onto ordinary mobile phones. Kapsys, the French developers of the first ever entirely voice-driven GPS navigators, have now developed a smartphone navigation tool for visually impaired.

► The RNIB also gives factsheets on mobile phones – go to http://www.rnib.org.uk/livingwithsightloss/computersphones/mobilephones/Pages/mobile_phones.aspx This site also gives details of the Owasys 22C **talking mobile phone**.

► **Ebook Readers** offer another source of assistance for the visually impaired. But be careful what you buy – an Ebook like Amazon's Kindle is not compatible with many of the 'books' available.. There are various comparison sites for Ebooks - Ebook Readers Review is just one <http://www.ebookreadersreview.co.uk/6-inch-ebook-reader-comparison-matrix/>.



► **Facebook** can help people overcome difficulties in maintaining social contacts, whether they have mobility problems or suffer from conditions like Autism – and it's free! Go to <http://en-gb.facebook.com/>. But you do need to be circumspect about personal information that you make public. Facebook has different security settings (accessed in Account) which are worth using, and at the risk of not receiving so many birthday cards, it's worthwhile NOT entering your date of birth or any other personal details that could be used to steal your identity. Another point to bear in mind is that very few people are completely truthful about themselves on Facebook, so if you haven't met your 'friends' you might find them completely different from how they came over. In fact, arranging to meet up with people you've only met on the internet is a very bad idea altogether, and if you have to do it, arrange to meet in a public place and make sure other people know where you are and when to expect you back – and never give your home address! Help about safe internet use can be found at the Information Commissioner's Office <http://www.ico.gov.uk/> and at Staying safe online on Directgov http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/YoungPeople/CrimeAndJustice/KeepingSafe/DG_10027670.



► **Skype** is wonderful for friends and family who are divided by distance. For a modest subscription and a cheap webcam (many laptops have them installed anyway) you can make free video calls via your computer to anywhere in the world (well, almost anywhere) – details at <http://www.skype.com/intl/en-gb/features/allfeatures/skype-to-skype-calls/>



► Lastly, the BBC's Click programme reported on 7th January 2011 about an amazing welfare monitoring device which helps seniors to social network and remember appointments as well allowing others to check that they are well and healthy – go to http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/click_online/9345709.stm

Sally Barrett

Prima Vista scores a musical hit for visually impaired people

Martin Wainwright, 15-02-2011,
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/feb/15/prima-vista-musical-visually-impaired>

Louis Braille is famous for the alphabet he created nearly 200 years ago for blind and partially-sighted people. Less well-known is the fact that he was a talented cellist and organist, which led him to also produce a system of recording music in braille.

Each piece of music is two or three times the bulk of a printed score and production is laborious and slow. Scores were generally only available on demand and most had to be created manually – often by charities or volunteers – using a braille typewriter.

But now, when music scores are published, the braille edition can be produced at the same time, thanks to Lydia Machell from Leeds.

Machell, whose squint in childhood delayed her usable eyesight until a series of operations ended successfully at the age of six, has developed software that converts musical symbols into dots. The score can then be printed out on a braille printer, meaning that music scores are now more easily available to visually impaired musicians.

Machell's innovation came after a spell distilling complex classical pieces into mobile phone ringtones after apprenticeships in music, computers and publishing respectively. She was pondering other uses of the software when she took a lift and noticed the small braille dots by the floor buttons.

Last year, Machell launched a website, branded as Prima Vista, with an unprecedented range of samples to download, to run off on a braille machine or to be printed at source and posted to arrive within a few days. The response from users was immediate.

"It is making a real change," says Clare Gaillans, a blind teacher at the Royal College of Music. One of her partially-sighted pupils, 17-year-old Maya, is happily working her way with guitar and voice through songs from Glee, the American high school TV comedy whose material is on the Prima Vista playlist.

Tomoko Endo, a pianist and postgraduate student at the RCM, no longer has to wait her turn at the embossing machine that turns out scores for blind and partially-sighted players such as herself. Running her slender finger along the lines of dots that decode a complex run of quavers and semi-quavers in a Schumann concerto, she says: "Reading the braille is only the beginning. Then you have to memorise it. But this system is giving us so much more, so quickly."



Visually impaired postgraduate music student Tomoko Endo demonstrates using the braille score.

Recovery from Alcohol Addiction

By Patsy Staddon

Reprinted from Shaping Our Lives Newsletter, Issue 18,
<http://www.shapingourlives.org.uk/ourpubs.html>



I wanted to write about this because I know people are frightened of being called alcoholics and even the well-known 'Alcoholics Anonymous' (AA) embodies the very idea of shame and secrecy in its very name—anonymity; hiding your identity behind a life-long condition.

I was called 'an alcoholic' for most of my life and certainly my drinking, which I did initially to help me deal with manic depression, but subsequently to deal with unhappiness and isolation, came to take over my life. I lost jobs and my family; I ended up drifting around the country and living in abandoned buildings.

That was 22 years ago. I don't drink any more—just don't fancy it---and I deal with my mental health issues, and my epilepsy, using prescribed drugs and alternative remedies. How did this happen? Is it unusual?

The truth is that there are as many roads to recovery as there are people to take them. In my case, I got 'adopted' by a couple of groups of what I suppose you'd call alternative people; one group were lesbian women with many friends and contacts, the other a mixed household who



were--well, very alternative. The big deal for me was that they seemed to want my company and to talk to me but although not really drinkers themselves, they never at any point tried to stop me from drinking.

Nor did they show disapproval. I drank less and less over about a year, as I got to feel safer and more confident among them all. They also took me to social events where people talked about interesting things—politics, social deprivation, new music, alternative sexualities. I could tell them of the many adventures my downbeat life on the road had led me into, and found I could still make jokes even without a drink in my hand.

Later, when I no longer drank at all, I went to an alcohol recovery unit, but I will have to write about that another time. Let's just say it was an experience.

What I want to say here is that we can both drop labels—I hardly ever use the word 'alcoholic'; after 22 years it seems a bit of an anachronism---and adopt them. I do call myself a service user, because I may need help with my mental health and epilepsy issues at any time, even though the initial 'presenting issue' of alcoholism has disappeared.

What we must try to avoid is having our lives bound down by these labels and that can happen if you are being called 'an alcoholic'---someone who will never recover; someone with a 'relapsing condition'.

I now hold a PhD in the sociology of women's alcohol use, and the news is that most people do recover from alcoholism and that they do so without the help of any of the known 'authorities' such as medical treatment and AA. Anyone who is doubtful about this is welcome to email and I will send them academic references which evidence this. The reasons the old information about alcoholism is still taught in many medical schools and colleges are complex and interesting but would take up too many words to lay out here.

However recovery does take the sort of kindness and unconditional positive regard shown in more enlightened treatment centres and certainly in Shaping Our Lives. This regard can be hard for relatives and 'significant others' to give. During my research a women's group developed to try to provide the kind of support I had received myself, and it ran for several years. Now I am seeking funding to run a special social network online which can offer this to women but also to other groups; to anyone who has not felt comfortable with traditional treatment. If we get the money, you will read about it, and be able to join, here in the SOL newsletter!

Patsy Staddon

One of the directors at Shaping Our Lives, Patsy.staddon@plymouth.ac.uk

Care funding commission rules out compulsory insurance

David Brindle, 15-02-2011,
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2011/feb/15/elderly-care-funding-commission>

Compulsory insurance has been ruled out by the government commission investigating reform of the funding of long-term care of elderly and disabled people, commission member Lord Warner has indicated.

Despite a clear need to get people to make provision for care and support in their old age, the idea of compulsion "doesn't feel to me as though it fits the public mood music at the moment, or the mood music for the foreseeable future", Warner said today, in one of the first public signals of the commission's thinking.



There is a need to get people to make provision for care and support in their old age. Photograph: Christopher Furlong/Getty Images

The three-member commission, headed by economist Andrew Dilnot, has hitherto insisted it is considering all options to meet the costs of care of the ageing population. An estimated one in five of today's 65-year-olds will need care costing at least £50,000.

Addressing a seminar organised by the Association of British Insurers and the thinktank Reform, Warner said the commission would be "extremely wary" of any solution involving compulsion, as "the social support for that approach is simply not there".

The commission – the third member of which is Dame Jo Williams – is due to report to ministers by July. It was set up by the coalition government after controversy before the general election over how Labour would have funded its reform plans. The Conservatives accused Labour of wanting to impose "death taxes" on people's estates.

Warner, a Labour peer, said the key to reform would inevitably be "a partnership between the state, individuals and families", adding: "Any fantasies about 100% universal state provision – forget it."

Arguing that people should be given "the opportunity to be protected against the costs of care and support", he said: "There is good evidence now coming through in the latest social surveys that people no longer expect the state to sort out all their problems from the cradle to the grave. We are not in the 1940s any more."

Some experts warned that reform would fail without an element of compulsion. Richard Humphries, senior fellow at the King's Fund health and social care thinktank, said: "All the evidence says that people will not voluntarily insure for the full cost of care."

In its evidence to the commission, the King's Fund is calling for the state to meet 50% of people's care costs, with those able to do so paying a compulsory charge or contribution towards the balance.

Are Telford & Wrekin Retreating?

Blog posted bny JMac on 16-02-2011
on <http://www.shropshirefightsback.org.uk/apps/blog/show/6173767-aretelford-wrekin-retreating->

SHROPSHIRE FIGHTS BACK

Tonight's Shropshire Star reports on Telford & Wrekin Council's partial climbdown on budget cuts. It reports that 'Council rethinks budget measures'. More than 800 residents have apparently been consulted for their opinions on budget cuts and the council is reviewing certain parts of their budget as a result:

- £60,000 worth of spending on footways, roads and kerbs will remain in place
- A free pest control service, previously targeted for scrapping, will remain in place, although homeowners will have to pay
- Free concessionary bus travel before 9.00am will also remain in place. Previously it was scheduled to start at 9.30.

Meanwhile, Shropshire Council is forging ahead with their cuts resulting in day care centre closures, and school closures despite public protests and pleas from Councillors.

So why the stark difference in outlook concerning the cuts? Would it be disingenuous to suspect it is because the councillors pushing through the cuts are up for re-election in May whereas Shropshire Councillors aren't? And will Telford & Wrekin Tories follow through with these cuts if re-elected?

Editor's note: Telford & Wrekin Council will lose £13.6m from its Government grant next year and £25m over the next four years.

Cuts to Bus Services

From Shropshire Fights Back:

Public Meeting, Saturday March 19, 2011 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Gateway Centre, Chester St, Shrewsbury. SY1 1NB

Shropshire Council is planning to remove the subsidy from many of Shropshire's bus services - town and rural. This will almost certainly mean the end of those services. Every town in the Shropshire Council area is under threat with every town affected. Your bus service gives you freedom and independence to get out: to work, visit family, go shopping, chill out with friends, go swimming, to the cinema, to the hospital, and home again and is an essential lifeline if you are on a limited budget.

Shrewsbury Transition Town in association with Ludlow21 is organising a public meeting to **Save our Shropshire buses** (speaker Prof Lumsdon, Director Institute of Transport Tourism)

Transition Town Shrewsbury says (<http://www.transitiontownshrewsbury.org.uk/>):

'There are proposals to cut back on many of the bus services in Shropshire with the Council cutting some or all of its subsidy from many services. Please let the council know what you feel about this now by going on line to the **Bus Strategy Consultation document** – <http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/traveltransport.nsf/>. Evening and Sunday bus services are likely to go completely. To find out more please go to the Mind How You Go Forum and see what we are doing. You can get direct information by emailing Paul at slimfinn@yahoo.co.uk. Please let other people know about these proposals.'

The deadline for the Bus Strategy Consultation is 21st March. The survey is on <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/2R8HPYV>, and you can complete it online or phone 01743 253013 or email passtrans@shropshire.gov.uk to let them know what you think.

Disabled protesters hemmed in by police barricades

Reprint of article in 'Our Rights', issue 30, Feb 2011, newsletter of daa, The International disability and Human Rights Network, <http://www.daa.org.uk/>

Police in London 'kettled' (confined within metal barriers) a group of disabled people who were demonstrating peacefully against Atos Origin, the company contracted by the government to deal with the administration of disability benefits. It is alleged that in many cases Atos have unfairly recommended that disabled people should lose benefits.

See also <http://www.bhfederation.org.uk/federation-news/item/1061-atos-protests-concerns-over-police> and <http://disabledpeopleprotest.wordpress.com/2011/01/24/atos-origin-and-triton-sqwe-were-kettled/>



Protestors outside Atos building in London

£3.2m Cancer Centre Development at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Reprinted from the Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS website

http://www.sath.nhs.uk/media/news_archive/Cancer_Centre_Development_at_RSH.aspx

08 February 2011

A major development to cancer services at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital is set to start later this spring, thanks to the generosity of local communities through the Lingen Davies Cancer Appeal

Dr Srihari, consultant clinical oncologist and newly appointed Cancer Chief for The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, said:

"Firstly, I would like to extend my deepest thanks to everyone who has helped to raise the fantastic amount of £3.2m for the Lingen Davies Cancer Centre Appeal.

"I also want to reassure fundraisers that we will be providing everything we said the money would be spent on - a new outpatient unit for haematology, chemotherapy and head and neck cancer patients, and improved head and neck cancer inpatient services including en-suite facilities.

"The money raised by Lingen Davies will be used for a major new development to the Cancer Centre at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. This is not part of the 'Keeping It in the County' consultation and work is due to start on this in the Spring.

"The only change since the appeal started is that we are currently consulting on proposals to keep safe and sustainable hospital services in the county. As part of the consultation, it is proposed that head and neck inpatient surgery will move to the Princess Royal Hospital. This means that the majority of head and neck cancer patients will continue to receive most of their care as now, including chemotherapy, radiotherapy and outpatient services in improved facilities at the RSH thanks to these generous donations. About two to three patients each week need head and neck inpatient cancer surgery requiring overnight stay in our hospitals. In the 'Keeping It In The County' consultation it is proposed that this will be at the Princess Royal Hospital. A decision on the location for this care will be made following consultation, and we guarantee that this will include en suite facilities for head and neck cancer surgery inpatients."

Adam Cairns, Chief Executive of The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust, added:

"In order to address the very real risks facing children's services, and the deteriorating women and children's building at RSH, we are also proposing that children's inpatient services will move to the Princess Royal. This will include a new children's cancer unit. I know that the Rainbow Children's Cancer Unit is an excellent facility that is highly regarded by the local community and it has provided a fantastic service over the last six years. But, it is attached to a building that does not have a long term future and we must plan to move clinical services within five to ten years. However, I can assure you that, if the proposals go ahead, we will provide an even better children's cancer facility at the Princess Royal, carrying on the incredible legacy and superb standards from the fundraisers and families who helped to create it. This will also include strengthening our links with regional specialist hospitals with the aim of bringing more services more local.



"As part of the proposals the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital will continue to have a vibrant role and a long term future. For example, alongside its specialist cancer facilities it would also develop as a centre for acute surgery for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid Wales, for colorectal, upper gastro-intestinal and vascular inpatient surgery, helping to keep the services safe and sustainable and keep them in the county.

"This week we have also moved a step closer to establishing a Screening Centre for abdominal aortic aneurysm screening at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, but we will only be able to do this if we move to a single site for inpatient vascular surgery at the RSH."

Telford care home standards criticised

From the Shropshire Star 1st February 2011, Alex James <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/01/telford-care-home-standards-criticised/>

A Shropshire care home has been ordered to make urgent improvements after a series of inspections highlighted failures to meet basic standards.

A freeze has now been put on any new admissions to St George's Park Care Centre in Telford and a relief management team has now taken over the running of the home, which provides nurse-led care for the elderly and has 70 residents.

The Quality Care Commission (QCC) has visited the centre and on each occasion found the home was not meeting a number of essential standards.

Today Southern Cross, which owns the home in School Street, St Georges, said it has voluntarily suspended admissions while it awaited a report by the QCC.

A QCC spokesman said: "We have told the management team at St George's Park that they must make immediate, urgent improvements and we will be monitoring the home to make sure that they meet their legal obligations to do so.

"We are taking further action to protect the safety and welfare of people who use services and we will publish a report which sets out those concerns."

Telford & Wrekin Council has written to relatives.

Councillor Jacqui Seymour, council cabinet member for adult care and support, said: "We have decided that for the time being Telford & Wrekin Council will not purchase any more placements at St George's Park.

"We will keep the safety and welfare of the existing residents under close review, while we work with the home to help them to improve the care and support which they provide."

Pam Finnis, regional director for Southern Cross Healthcare, said: "Following recent visits by the QCC and the local authority, we have voluntarily suspended admissions to the home whilst we await their recommendations.



St George's Park Care Centre in Telford

"An action plan for improving practises and standards of care at the home has recently been accepted by Telford & Wrekin Council and we are keeping them up to date with progress.

"Regular meetings for staff, residents and their relatives are being held to answer any concerns."

Anyone with concerns can call the borough council on (01952) 381244.

Crippen comments on Liz Carr's brilliant, gutsy speech at the People's Convention

Reprinted from Crippen's Blog on Disability Arts Online, 21-02-2011,
http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/?item=855&itemoffset=1&unique_name=crippen-blog

I was recently privileged to see Liz Carr make a brilliant, gutsy speech at the People's Convention on 12th February 2011. She spoke from the heart on behalf of every disabled person facing the uncaring attitude of this government. I'd like to share it with you...

"Thank you ... I can only dream of being on the platform. One day ... One day we'll make it" (this was due to the fact that Liz was relegated as a disabled speaker to the area in front of the stage - the stage, as usual being inaccessible!).

"Disabled people make up 20% of the population. That's a conservative estimate. We are hidden impairments, we are visible, we are old, we are gay, we are lesbian, we are black, we are white, we are all sorts of people, that's who we are.

But what we are not is... We are not victims. We are not scroungers or frauds. We are not vulnerable or work shy. We are not charity cases or burdens or 'unsustainables' or useless eaters. We are fighters, survivors, leaders, comrades, brothers & sisters in arms, campaigners, citizens and equals.

This, like for many of us, is not a new struggle. Our history is littered with disabled people being scapegoated, demonised, discriminated against and oppressed. It is also a history of disabled people fighting back against this.

From the League of the Blind who unionised in the 19th Century to fight for their rights, to the war veterans who marched on Whitehall for the jobs and respect they were due, to disabled people fighting to escape residential care in the '60's and '70's forming the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation, to those of us in the '80's and '90's who chained ourselves to buses to secure equality in public transport and in law ... We have been here before.

However, we are faced with a horrific onslaught of attacks from all directions. The cuts that we're all talking about today, we encounter those cuts too – whether it's the increase in VAT, privatization of our basic services, of the NHS, of cuts effecting the public sector – we experience



Liz Carr – disabled artist and activist

them too as disabled people but on top of that we're having our benefits whipped from us, we're being assessed by ATOS. People in care homes are having the mobility component of their DLA (Disability Living Allowance) removed. We're being charged for the basic right to have a wee, our Independent Living Fund money that allows us to be independent within the community is being removed in 4 years' time, Incapacity Benefit is being scrapped and replaced by the unforgiving ESA (Employment Support Allowance), on top of that there is hate crime, limits to housing benefit, Access to Work, to transport and if we want to challenge it, to Legal Aid too. That's fucked as well.

Disabled people are living in fear. We are living in poverty. We are going to be living in the Dark Ages where they decide between the deserving and the undeserving poor.

But, we will not let this happen. Because through our history, what we have learnt is that the media, the policy makers and the Government will try to separate us into our different groups. They will try to weaken us. They will try and make us compete against each other for whatever crumbs are on offer, fighting amongst ourselves, individualizing this struggle, dividing us so that they may conquer and change the balance of society in favour of financial capital rather than social capital and equality. That's what happening. We cannot afford to let this happen.

We are fighting for our lives, for our freedom, for our existence. That's how important it is to disabled people and for everybody here today. It is about our basic liberty, our basic right to life. We will not be hidden away. We will not be hidden away behind closed doors, out of sight out of mind, in our homes or institutions.

We will not settle for charity rather than rights. We will not be forgotten. We will not be silenced. We must mobilise and in doing so not forget those who cannot take to the streets in protest but who can through virtual protesting.

We must politicise. We must educate ourselves and others in what's happening in our own and wider campaigns. We have to radicalise. This is about revolution not reformation anymore. We must unite. As disabled people, as disabled people and allies, as everyone - we must unite. Together we are stronger. Thank you."

Family Information now available on Facebook

Shropshire Council's **Family Information Service (FIS)** has launched a new Facebook page today for parents and carers of children and young people aged 0-19 years to access information.



Shropshire Family Information Service has been established to help parents and carers make the best use of childcare and children's services available, and will now be posting information on issues that many families may experience, including, looking for things to do and places to go, advice on healthy eating, staying safe, money matters, childcare and issues facing parents of children with disabilities.

Research shows that 70% of parents feel they need advice and support in their parenting role. Yet most are either unaware of the services that already exist or they have difficulty accessing them. The Family Information Service will be using Facebook as a means through which to provide free, impartial information on options and possibilities that might otherwise remain unknown and therefore inaccessible to families.

Having this dedicated Facebook page enables the Family Information Service to provide information to parents who prefer to use the Internet as a way of gathering information to support

them in their role as parents.

To access the Family Information Services Facebook pages, parents and carers will need to go to <http://www.facebook.com/search.php?q=Shropshire+Family+Information+Service&type=all&init=srp#!/pages/Shropshire-Family-Info/172684646092129>

The Family Information Service has been running for over 10 years and since it was launched in 2000, it has dealt with almost 50,000 enquiries from families.

Telephone: 01743 254400, Email: shropshireFIS@shropshire.gov.uk

Website: www.shropshirefamilyinfo.co.uk

Sally's Snowdon Challenge

A firefighter working in the control room at Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service who broke her back in a horseriding accident hopes to raise £5,000 in a second charity mountain climb to celebrate her recovery and thank The Firefighters Charity who helped her regain her health.

Sally Barnett (38) has already raised hundreds of pounds for The Firefighters Charity and Oswestry Orthopaedic Hospital's physiotherapy department since her accident five years ago.

"They were both instrumental in my recovery," said Sally, of Hinstock, near Market Drayton, who works at the Shrewsbury fire HQ in St Michael Street.

"Climbing Snowdon was a personal goal for me after breaking my back and facing the bleak fact that I may never have walked again. Oswestry Orthopaedic and the Fire Service Therapy Centre at Penrith helped me immensely."

Sally fractured a vertebra in her back after a fall from a friend's horse in a Bridgnorth field which left her unable to stand. She spent two months in a metal "torso frame" and a further six months of gruelling physio and hydrotherapy.

"During my recovery a lot of my therapy was undertaken at Jubilee House, a therapy centre funded by The Firefighters Charity."

"I decided to give myself a goal to get fit enough to climb Snowdon a year to the day of breaking my back to raise money for charity. On 28th June 2007 I achieved my goal accompanied by seven friends and two dogs."

"This year will be five years since I broke my back and I plan to climb Snowdon again on June 22 this year to raise money for the Firefighters Charity."

A Just Giving Page has been set up for donations at <http://www.justgiving.com/SallysSnowdonChallenge>



The Campaign For A Fair Society

If you are worried about coalition government cuts to services for disabled people, we invite you to join **The Campaign For A Fair Society**.

Launched today (February 8th) with the publication of a full-page advert in The Times, we hope that in the coming days and weeks many thousands of you will join the campaign.



In the government's comprehensive spending review, announced on October 20 last year, Chancellor George Osborne insisted that those with the "broadest shoulders should bear the greatest burden." In fact, the government is implementing cuts that will impact on some of the most vulnerable people in society, including people with learning disabilities and disabled children. Cuts include:

- Reductions in local authority budgets of up to 25%, which lead to similar reductions in funding to all local authority funded care and support services.
- The closure of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) and the loss of funding, which will affect 21,000 of the most severely disabled people in the country, and may prevent many from continuing to live independently in the community.
- Changes to Support for Mortgage Interest benefit effectively rule out shared home ownership for disabled people.
- A threat to the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people in residential care, which helps meet some of the cost of things such as electric wheelchairs, mobility aids and taxis where there is no accessible public transport. Without it many people could be isolated at home.

The campaign argues that cuts to benefits and services are counter-productive and unfair:

- Counter-productive, because there is evidence that, when people have the support to lead fulfilling lives, their needs become less severe and the cost of supporting them actually reduces over time.
- Unfair, because they will prevent disabled people enjoying many of the things most of us take for granted: our own home, loving relationships, work, an income.
- The campaign is not just about protest, but also about making a positive contribution. It proposes seven principles to guide decisions about policy and funding, and seeks to engage policy makers in dialogue.

To join The Campaign For A Fair Society, and find out more about the principles it promotes, visit www.campaignforafairsociety.com

Please help spread the word by circulating this email to your friends, family and colleagues.

The Campaign For A Fair Society Is Supported By:



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.
www.shropshire-disability.net

Advance Housing and Support, Altrum, _Alzheimer Scotland, Ambrey Associates, _Baroness Jane Campbell, Centre for Inclusive Futures, _The Centre for Welfare Reform, Choice Support, Coalition of Care and Support Providers in Scotland, _Generate Opportunities Ltd, ibk initiatives, Jackie Downer MBE, Enough Is Enough, The Association for Supported Living, The Foundation for Families, Professor the Baroness Hollins, Housing Options, _Learning Disability Alliance Scotland, LivesthroughFriends, Lives Unlimited, _Personalisation Forum Group, Professor Jim Mansell, Tizard Centre, Paradigm, _Peaks and Dales Advocacy, _People First (Scotland), _Wendy Perez, See Me As Me, Progress Care Housing Association (member of the Progress Housing Group), Bob Tindall, United Response, _Self Direct, Skills for People, Values Into Action Scotland, _Jan Walmsley Asso

Whizz Kids ask Families to support them in securing reforms of Wheelchair Services

Reprinted from Parent & Carer Council Shropshire,
<http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/home/pacc-news/257-whizz-kids-ask-families-to-support-them-in-securing-reforms-of-wheelchair-services>

Whizz-Kidz is a charity that is all about giving disabled children the chance to lead a more independent life. Its aim is to ensure that every disabled child has an opportunity to be something special...a kid. There are an estimated 70,000 disabled children and young people in the UK waiting for a wheelchair that fits their young lives. That's where Whizz-Kidz comes in. It provides disabled children with the essential wheelchairs and other mobility equipment they need to lead fun and active childhoods and now they are asking for families to support them in doing this by signing up to their Fast Forward petition. For details of how you can support them see below;



Whizz Kids is calling on the government to Fast Forward reform of NHS wheelchair provision for disabled children and young people. This will ensure that all disabled children in the UK can access the right mobility equipment and ongoing support that they need without undue delay.

An estimated 70,000 children are waiting to receive the mobility equipment that is right for them. This wait often takes months, even years. In the meantime, children are missing out on their childhood as they're unable to fully participate in family and school life, and keep up with their friends.

The government has made a commitment to reform NHS wheelchair services on many occasions. Following the recent General Election, we would like to urge the new government to Fast Forward improvements to NHS wheelchair provision for disabled children. This Government has also pledged that if we can raise 100,000 signatures on one petition this would bring forward a debate in parliament about the need for Wheelchair Reform. So please sign this petition, it will take two minutes but could change the lives of disabled children all over the UK.

You will find the petition at either of the websites below:

<http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/fastforward/fastforward-petition/>

<http://tinyurl.com/5wznuvt>



US payday loan firms plan rapid expansion in cash-strapped Britain

- Credit at 30% a month can take minutes to secure
- One group sees opportunity for 800 new branches in UK

By Peter Walker, the Guardian 11th Feb 2011,
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/money/2011/feb/11/us-payday-loan-firms-expansion?INTCMP=SRCH>

US corporations offering loans to poorer customers that often charge more than 30% in interest a month are planning a massive expansion in the UK, prompting warnings that thousands of families could become trapped in a cycle of debt, a problem already seen in America.

One large "payday loan" group told investors it aims to almost quadruple its UK presence – opening some 800 stores and expanding into deprived rural communities – to target families affected by redundancy or loss of income.

Payday lending, in which relatively small sums are offered for the short-term at a cost regularly exceeding 30% a month, is hugely controversial in the US. A number of states have passed laws capping maximum interest rates or limiting the number of loans per customer.

The UK industry is growing fast – one web lender, Wonga.com, began sponsoring a Premier League football team, Blackpool, less than three years after starting business – but remains relatively small.

A US loans giant, Dollar Financial, which already operates 370 Money Shops in the UK, has just bought PayDay UK, the biggest British internet payday operator. Last month its chief executive, Jeffrey Weiss, told investors that recession-hit Britain – where the sector is relatively unregulated compared with the US – was a prime market. He said: "I think we're maybe 25% of the way towards a full country build-out in the UK. That includes having large stores in highly dense areas and – an area we really haven't moved to yet – smaller stores in more rural areas.

"If you extrapolate from our current 350 stores I think there is a potential universe for us of 1,200 locations."

The news has alarmed debt advice groups in the UK and US. While acknowledging payday loan firms fill a gap vacated by banks, which in recent years have largely denied overdrafts to customers with mixed credit ratings, they argue that the way the industry operates is flawed.

Payday loans are marketed as a source of instant funds to meet a one-off financial emergency. Via a shop or a website, customers can borrow around £75 to £750, which is deposited in their bank account in as little as 15 minutes, to be repaid in around two to four weeks. While the interest is extremely high, this is seen as manageable if the debt is paid off as scheduled. However, debt advice groups warn that many borrowers repeatedly "roll over" the loan, which grows exponentially as interest and extra administration fees mount up.

Someone who has suffered is Paul Stephens, 23, from Cornwall, who is married with a 14-month old child and another on the way. He said: "We started off with one loan for £75 over



Financial crisis, job losses and lack of regulation has made UK a prime market for loan companies. Photograph: Brank Baron for the Guardian

28 days. We both work in the care industry so don't earn much money and that month we had a couple of extra bills. The loan was for basics – a big food shop.

"We found ourselves rolling the loan over again and again, still being short of money every month, and then taking out other loans to cope. We owe maybe £3,000. Of that, £1,200 is a £600 loan which has doubled in 47 days of being late.

"It's so easy to take these loans out – it takes maybe five minutes on the internet. You almost don't think about them properly. When you pay a loan back your trust rating goes up, meaning you can borrow even more."

Research in the US indicates this cycle of debt is common, with the average payday loan customer taking out almost 10 loans a year. Some US campaigners argue that lenders encourage such repeated borrowing to boost profits.

Uriah King from the North Carolina-based Center for Responsible Lending said payday lenders were "utterly dependent" on snaring customers in long-term debt. "If you go to the website of every payday loans company they stress that this is short-term lending to meet a one-off need. But in private, these companies are telling their investors different things. It is a system designed to trap borrowers."

The Consumer Federation of America takes a similar view, noting that after Washington state imposed a maximum of eight payday loans per year the industry lobbied for its repeal of the law, saying that it made their business unsustainable. The sector insists that Office of Fair Trading rules on irresponsible lending prevent such excesses. British payday loan customers tend to be better off than in the US, they add. However, evidence presented as part of an OFT report last year claimed 30% of payday loans in Britain are not paid off on time.

British debt groups are also concerned. Damon Gibbons, from the Centre for Responsible Credit, said: "It's very difficult to gauge the situation in the UK because we don't have access to the same amount of data that is available in the US. UK firms don't seem to be willing to provide any of this, which would seem to indicate that they have something to hide. There is a risk that this is the same business model operating, and that some people are becoming trapped in a cycle of roll-over loans."

The Consumer Finance Association, the trade body for many payday loan companies, says it is working on a code of practice which could cover areas such as a cap on loans per customer and affordability checks.

John Lamidey, its chief executive, said: "The UK models are not the same as in the US – nor could they be because of the very high standards of UK regulation.

"Every business wants repeat customers. There is nothing wrong with repeat custom so long as the lending is responsible, which is what the new regulations ensure. If you lend money to those who cannot repay, you go out of business."

You can't cut £18bn from the poorest without pain

Polly Toynbee, 18-02-2011, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/feb/18/18-billion-cuts-will-hurt-poor>

Iain Duncan Smith claims there'll only be winners in his welfare reforms. Many of us will soon discover how wrong he is.

Government by hyperbole and bald assertion was an aggravating Blair-Brown habit, but it has reached new heights with David Cameron. Toynbee Hall in Whitechapel – a bit of deprivation handy for Downing Street – is the spot for prime ministerial flights of fancy on welfare and poverty. Here Tony Blair astounded a hall full of economists with his pledge to abolish child poverty by 2020. Here this week, David Cameron laid claim to "the most ambitious, fundamental and radical changes" to welfare since Beveridge, which would lift 300,000 children out of poverty.

But with no plan B economic policy, Cameron can only leave many more poor children in his wake. The Institute for Fiscal Studies expects the numbers to rise. Taking £81bn out of public spending as unemployment rises and real wages fall, how could it be otherwise?

But Cameron's gift for planting great political myths in the popular imagination, aided by his mighty press, means he wins most arguments – until found out. This week it's welfare. Polls show the public deeply believes immigrant/teen mother/druggy idlers live the high life on others' hard-earned taxes. One anecdote is worth a hundred facts, but phoney facts can be very useful too – until found out.



By the time Iain Duncan Smith's universal benefit begins, £18bn will already have been stripped out of benefits of all kinds. Photograph: Martin Argles for the Guardian

Was there a serious problem of a ballooning welfare bill? Mike Brewer of the IFS says unequivocally no. "Labour deliberately increased spending on specific things, such as pension credit and child tax credits." These had precisely the planned effect, taking a million pensioners and 600,000 children out of poverty. The Department for Work and Pensions bill didn't rise until the crash.

Next myth: there are growing legions of families where no one has ever worked, Shameless for generations. But here are the facts from the Office for National Statistics, well spotted by Channel 4 News. Long-term unemployment hasn't risen – it has fallen tenfold over the last decade. In 2000 47,700 had claimed jobseeker's allowance for five years or more. By this year there are only 4,220 long termers. Research by LSE Professor John Hills shows low earners in the bottom 20% move in and out of insecure work in temporary jobs, never getting their foot on a ladder. The growth of agency work consigns willing workers to a life revolving through the jobcentre door. That is not Cameron's "benefits culture": it is a miserable, underpaid culture of outsourced jobs with no future. Labour's tax credits made this work just about worth taking, but taxpayers' money subsidises employers not to pay a living wage or pension. (No thanks, ever, from the CBI.)

True, numbers on some disability benefits grew: Labour had started to tighten the screw. There will always be bogus "bad backs" caught running marathons, but it is another myth that disability claims were inexplicably out of control. Most of the rise in disability living allowance claimants is due to disabled children and young adults who used not to survive, together with the increase in old people – and campaigners encouraging more people to claim.

It's a myth that incapacity benefit rose: it plateaued for a decade. Will it shrink now? The DWP has earmarked hefty savings of £2.1bn. Tougher medical tests for the new employment support allowance are finding 30% "fully fit" – but let's see how many of these borderline cases employers actually take on. As for the work programme, to help people into jobs, only two of its 35 prime

contractors are from the "big society" voluntary sector: the rest are big firms who will subcontract the real work to specialist charities, skimming 21% off the top: watch out for this unfolding story.

The housing benefit bubble was another convenient myth. The bill did rise 30% in a decade, but that's surprisingly little when house prices and rents rose 50%. Cameron has backed off one housing benefit cut, but other deep cuts will see many evictions and the poor removed to lowest-rent zones.

So will universal credit mean work always pays? Yes, but it already did for most. There will be more incentive to work, but keeping 35p in every £1 they earn is only an extra 5p for most – hardly life-changing.

What of work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith's great claim that universal credit (UC) will have virtually no losers? True, it will be a better-run system, so long as the massive new computer system works. Once UC starts in 2013, there will indeed be more winners than losers.

But here's the catch – and it's such a breathtaking swindle that Duncan Smith's sanctity should be taken rather less than at his own valuation. By the time UC begins, £18bn will already have been stripped out of benefits of all kinds. These cuts over the next two years will leave millions of losers, many losing a lot – and children most of all.

The Child Poverty Action Group, adding up the cuts, shows a baby born this April will have £1,500 less than one born in April 2010. Meanwhile, the IFS points out, everyone drawing any benefit will lose 1%-2% every year forever on the reduced CPI inflation measure. No losers? This £18bn will feel a mighty loss – and before long it will flash up in lights in the poverty figures.

This bill has been published without two vital ingredients: policy on paying for childcare and council tax benefit is, as yet, undecided. Daycare Trust research shows nursery prices rose twice as fast as wages last year, yet childcare credits will be cut by 10%. How are all these extra single mothers to be helped into work while losing another £430 a year in childcare support? The DWP expects savings of £300m from childcare cuts – but if just a few working mothers fall back on to benefits, the welfare budget will lose more than it gains.

This is still frustratingly only the surface of what's going on. The government has escaped this week because most media accept its word and don't read the small print. But the facts will emerge soon. Claimants who have not yet understood will find April's sudden drop in income a terrible shock. Real hardship – and a political storm awaits. Hold on to just one big fact: you can't cut £18bn from the poorest and neediest women, children and disabled without causing harm. Lurid examples of scroungers and cheats will only disguise what's happening for a short while. Will people protest as much about children as about trees?

Discrimination in Parliament?

It has often been difficult enough for disabled people to get through the stigma and prejudices of others in the world and country at large without those problems existing in parliament. However in recent weeks there have been concerns that the House of Commons itself may not be completely non-discriminatory.

Paul Maynard, Conservative MP for Blackpool and Cleveleys, has cerebral palsy because he was strangled by his umbilical cord at birth. This means that on occasions he slurs his speech. He was also diagnosed with epilepsy when he was 22 which forced him to give up alcohol.



During a speech concerning the axing of child trust funds opposition MPs appeared to make 'really exaggerated faces' to the MP. This was confirmed by an unnamed Labour MP and criticised as "utterly unacceptable". She did however state that they were unaware of his condition and stopped when they realised.

The mocking may therefore have purely been concerning his role as a Conservative MP rather than because of his disability which makes such occurrences difficult to prove. The MP stated that "Only they know for certain whether they were taking the mick out of my disability. But it felt like it". The fact that the camera was focused on the MP and not the MP's opposite means that anything non verbal couldn't have been picked up, especially as other MP's would have been concentrating on the speech and not anything else going on.

Parliament itself can be very rowdy, especially at Prime Ministers Question Time but whereas opposition MP's mustn't be afraid to treat disabled MP's any differently than they would any other in the chamber, there shouldn't be any discrimination because of the disability. Besides if we can't have equality in parliament what chance has it in society at large?

Chris Moorcroft

Concerns over Welfare Reform Bill

There has been concern by disability charities about the Welfare reform Bill recently published by the prime minister.

The Independent reported that The National Autistic Society (NAS) and Leonard Cheshire Disability (LCD) are worried that disability Living Allowance has been moved to Personal independence Payment (PIP).

The concerns are that those with hidden disabilities may miss out on benefits that they were receiving. Autism is a complex condition and it's much harder to assess the impact of the disability on daily living than for other disabilities. This has already proved to be hugely problematic with the work capability assessment for Employment Support Allowance (ESA), resulting in costly appeals and unnecessary distress for an already socially isolated and vulnerable group."



Guy Parckar, Acting Director of Policy and Campaigns at LCD, said: "The Bill proposes replacing DLA with the new PIP. With this change comes a drastic reduction of spending - in the future the Government plans to spend £1 billion less each year on DLA..."

"We need assurances that reforms to this benefit will not push even more disabled people below the poverty line."

Mr Cameron's reply was that while people with a disability should be encouraged to seek work if they can, support will be guaranteed for those unable to work.

NAS is a charity for people with autism (including Asperger syndrome) and their families, LCD aims to change attitudes to disability and provides services to support disabled people.

Therapies can moderately improve ME

It has been reported that "exercise and therapy can help ME sufferers.

In the Daily Telegraph through the NHS.UK website it was stated that according to recent research behavioural therapy and exercise can help ME (also known as chronic fatigue syndrome, CFS) sufferers.

In the study, over the course of a year, 641 people with CFS received 1 of 4 treatments, specialised medical care, or specialised medical care and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT), graded exercise therapy or adaptive pacing therapy (helping people adjust to their illness).

After the study CBT and exercise therapy/specialised care led to the greatest improvement in fatigue and physical function. Adaptive pacing was however not effective. There were no differences in the rates of adverse events in any of the 4 treatments.

33 (5%) didn't complete the study but not from any particular group. After 12 months, the CBT group had average fatigue scores that were 3.4 points lower than those in the SMC alone group (95% confidence interval [CI] 1.8 to 5.0 points). Fatigue scores in the GET group were 3.2 points lower than the SMC alone group (95% CI 1.7 to 4.8). There was no difference in fatigue score between SMC and APT groups.

The CBT and GET groups also demonstrated improved physical function scores. Compared with SMC alone, average physical function scores were 7.1 points higher in the CBT group (2.0 to 12.1), and 9.4 points higher in the GET group (4.4 to 14.4). There was no difference in physical function score between SMC and APT groups.

There were similar numbers of serious adverse events or serious deteriorations between groups (including death, hospitalisation, severe disability and self-harm). These occurred in 1% (2 out of 159 participants) of the APT group, 2% (3 out of 161) of the CBT group, 1% (2 out of 160) of the GET group, and 1% (2 out of 160) of the SMC group.

The study was undertaken by Barts and the London School of Medicine, Kings College, London and other UK institutions. Funding was provided by the UK Medical Research Council, the Department of Health, the Department for Work and Pensions and the Chief Scientist Office of the Scottish Government Health Directorates. The study was published in the peer-reviewed medical journal *The Lancet*.

Read the full NHS Choices review at

<http://www.nhs.uk/news/2011/02February/Pages/therapies-moderately-improve-CFS.aspx>



CFS causes long-term fatigue that affects everyday life

Hearing loss early warning for dementia

It has been reported in the *Daily Telegraph* (through NHS.UK) that "Hearing loss could be an early warning for dementia. The study could therefore mean that Alzheimer's disease can be detected earlier and measures used to help prevent it.

639 adults from 39-90 were studied for 12 years on average in order to see if those with hearing loss were more likely to develop dementia. Approximately 9% developed dementia and those with



It is unclear why hearing loss was linked to dementia

hearing loss were more at risk from developing the condition.

Those with greater hearing loss were more likely to be male and have high blood pressure. 58 people (9.1%) suffered from dementia and of these 37 had Alzheimer's disease.

Dementia was ruled out for some of the adults from the start; however larger studies would be required to further validate the theory. Also it is unclear exactly why hearing loss may lead to the condition. Whether it contributes to the condition or is an early sign for the onset of dementia affects whether improvements in hearing can have any effect. If the latter is true, improvements in hearing loss will sadly have no effect.

The results were divided as follows.

- In the normal hearing group, 20 out of 455 people developed dementia (4.4%).
- In the mild hearing loss group, 21 out of 125 people developed dementia (16.8%).
- In the moderate hearing loss group, 15 out of 53 people developed dementia (28.3%).
- In the severe hearing loss group, 2 out of 6 people developed dementia (33.3%).

After differences between the groups, such as age, were taken into account, for every 10 decibels of hearing loss, there was a 27% increase in the risk of developing dementia over the follow-up period (hazard ratio 1.27, 95% confidence interval 1.06 to 1.50).

However although hearing loss was directly associated with dementia more study will be required as to what degree loss of hearing leads to the illness.

Read the full article at <http://www.nhs.uk/news/2011/02February/Pages/hearing-loss-sign-of-cognitive-decline.aspx>

New prescription delivery service

A new service has been set up in Shropshire delivering prescription medicine FREE of charge. The service is based on Oswestry and run from a registered pharmacy, and delivery vans will work daily. Outside that area prescriptions will be posted (still free of charge). In theory Dispense2U will post to anywhere in the UK, although in Wales, for those who would have had to pay if living in England, users will have to pay the standard NHS prescription charge if they want to use the service.

Phone 01691 670292 or email orders@dispense2u.org.uk if you want to use the service. A website www.dispense2u.org.uk is being developed.



Round up of Shropshire Cuts News

Shropshire Cuts Protest March

Shropshire Star, 21/02/2011, <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/21/shropshire-cuts-protest-march-in-pictures/>



cuts-protest-march-in-pictures/

People from across Shropshire gathered together in Shrewsbury to chant their opposition to the coalition Government and how the planned cuts will affect people in the county.

Anti-cutback protesters on the streets of Shrewsbury

Ambulance station axe fear dismissed

Shropshire Star, 26/02/2011, <http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/26/ambulance-station-axe-fear-dismissed/>

Sources in Whitchurch said they had been made aware of claims that the town's ambulance station was facing closure.

In response, ambulance service officials today said there were no plans to axe the station and one in Market Drayton.

It comes after Phil Tinsley, who manages a sheltered housing scheme for the elderly in Whitchurch, said he was concerned by claims that the town's ambulance station was under threat of closure.

He said if true, it could pave the way for thinner ambulance cover in the north of the county.

He said: "I have heard from a good source they want to close the ambulance station in Whitchurch.



Rumours that ambulance stations in some Shropshire market towns are facing closure have been dismissed by officials who say there are no plans to shut them in the "foreseeable future".

“It’s caused a lot of concern for us as we use the ambulance service quite often.

“If it closed and they moved the service to Shrewsbury it would become at least a 15 to 20- minute drive for them to get here.

“Already twice this week we’ve called for an ambulance and crews were able to attend shortly after we put the phone down to the control centre.

“We’ve grown used to the reassurance of the crews knocking on the door moments after we place our 999 call.

“If this is true it’s going to be a bigger wait for us until an ambulance is available and we have lots of residents who are in their 70s and above. Many have health problems.

“I’m worried for the town and the area as Whitchurch has quite a high elderly population who rely on these types of essential services,” added Mr Tinsley.

Suzie Fothergill, a spokeswoman for West Midlands Ambulance Service, said: “West Midlands Ambulance Service has every intention of maintaining an ambulance facility in Whitchurch and Market Drayton for the foreseeable future.”

Senior Shropshire Council officers to take ‘pay cut’

By Dave Morris, Shropshire Star, 25/02/2011,
<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/25/senior-shropshire-council-officers-to-take-pay-cut/>

Shropshire Council chief executive Kim Ryley and the five members of his senior team are to take a five per cent pay cut.

Mr Ryley, who earns £180,000 a year, said the money would be used to create a charitable trust to help young people.

It was revealed at a meeting of Shropshire Council yesterday and comes as staff are being consulted on sweeping changes to their terms and conditions.

Thousands of workers are being asked to reduce their contracted hours from 37 to 35 hours a week – a move which would effectively be a pay cut of about five per cent.

But it appeared that Mr Ryley and other members of his top team would not see a salary reduction as they were not contracted to work set hours.

Now it has emerged that Mr Ryley as well as five members of his corporate management team, who earn between £110,000 and £130,000, are prepared to take a five per cent cut.

Council leader Keith Barrow said the trust was being set up to avoid the money being “lost in the budget.”

A letter read out on behalf of Mr Ryley stated that they had been considering how they could “appropriately apply a fair approach” to their own contractual arrangements.

“This has not been easy, because we have no defined working week and so cannot choose to move to annualised hours and a slightly shorter working week, as is being proposed,” he said.

The charitable trust would provide grant aid to sponsor young people in care, and from deprived backgrounds, to undertake apprenticeship training or higher education courses in public administration or social care, which would equip them for future jobs in public services.



Shropshire Council chief executive Kim Ryley

Mr Barrow today said it had been a “voluntary offer” from the council’s senior management team. It was not a one-off cut and pay scales would be adjusted.

Shropshire Liberal Democrat leaders today said they were delighted at what they called a climb down over a refusal to implement “pay cuts” for senior management at the council.

Nigel Hartin, group leader, said: “We thought that it was unfair and immoral that council staff like cleaners and classroom assistants, who are on low wages, take what is in effect a pay cut while senior staff escaped with their pay levels intact.”

Appeal over Shropshire Meals on Wheels shake-up

Shropshire Star, 25/02/2011,

<http://www.shropshirestar.com/news/2011/02/25/appeal-over-shropshire-meals-on-wheels-shake-up/>

Worried town councillors have called for urgent action over the revamped Meals on Wheels in Shropshire amid concerns following a shake-up of the service.

Wem Town Council last night called on Shirehall social services officials to update them on the new look service after reports of elderly people struggling to re-heat frozen meals.



Selattyn and Gobowen Parish Council wrote to the town council about the service, which was overhauled by Shropshire Council last year, amid concerns about a decline in people using it.

Last night Wem Town Council said they had also encountered problems and councillors asked for an update from the unitary authority.

Under the changes, many Meals on Wheels users are now delivered frozen meals, which they can re-heat themselves in microwaves.

Shropshire Council today said the service review was “aimed to ensure the council provides the best possible care, including support with community meals”.

The Grange Day Centre Update

Information on how personal budgets and finding new placements are going for the users of The Grange Day Centre is sparse. The only information we have is as follows:

- The Staff of The Grange have been given notice.
- The remaining two Champions for Personal Budgets were asked to do workshops with the help of pioneers but when the Champions met with staff of The Grange, The Grange Users and Trident it was decided workshops were not needed as a “one to one” approach was more appropriate.
- Displays about Personal Budgets were provided by the Champions for My Life My Choice and Trident has also been meeting with the Users.
- A letter was received from Stephen Chandler in response to proposals put forward by SDN



after we held a meeting regarding “the pending closure.” In it he thanks us for our response and our offer of help to those who use The Grange Day Centre facilities and informed us he was holding fortnightly stakeholder meetings with The Grange Users.

- Despite a rumour that the closure of the Grange would be postponed until next December, to allow time for the Personal Budgets to be worked out, it appears that the Grange is now going to close in April, and a couple of the social workers who have been involved with the Grange have now ceased work there.
- The Advertiser has done an article with Helen & Sidney Grimes, whose son uses the Grange, outlining their hopes of setting up an alternative in Oswestry and asking for help.

SDN very much hope that the users of the Grange are receiving all the help they need to find satisfactory alternatives, and would like to hear of your experiences. Please contact Your Voice Editor at newsletter@shropshire-disability.net. Likewise, we also hope all the staff at the Grange – for whom there has been glowing praise from the users we are in contact with – have managed to find alternative employment. We are not, unfortunately, surprised about the lack of information now – that seems to be the pattern for all organisations that are being cut!

Ruby Hartshorn, SDN Steering Group member
and Personal Budgets Pioneer

Events

Shropshire Family Info Dads and Male Carers Group

Albrighton Children's Centre, Albrighton Primary School site, New House Lane, Albrighton.

2ND SATURDAY EVERY MONTH 10-11.30AM

Feb, March & April - Music Makers

May, June, July – HENRY



DEAFvibe Staffordshire has been launched!

Ali France and Rowan Butler founders of **DEAFvibe** who are both profoundly deaf fully understand the experiences of being Deaf in a hearing world. We understand the daily frustrations and barriers of those who have a hearing loss regardless of the level of deafness. All the DEAFvibe Trustees all have experience of being deaf and / or work with Deaf, Hard of Hearing and Deafblind people.



THE place for information on
disability throughout Shropshire.
www.shropshire-disability.net

DEAFvibe's philosophy is **Deafness = Equality & Access = Fairness** and we strongly believe in this motto. Everyone who has a hearing loss whether it is mild or profound all want to be treated equally and fairly and we all want to have the same access to services that hearing people receive throughout Staffordshire.

DEAFvibe has been successful in obtaining funding from the Robbie Williams Give it Sum Funding for start-up costs and from the Big Lottery Awards for All for the set-up of 2 DEAFvibe Cafés.

The DEAFvibe Cafés are held on the 2nd Saturday of every month with the morning session for British Sign Language users - this session starts at 9.30am - 12.00 noon. The afternoon session is for those who are Hard of Hearing or Deafened and starts at 1.00pm - 3.00pm.

The Cafés are held at Newcastle Library, Ironmarket, Newcastle-under-Lyme ST5 1AT and we can be found in Meeting Room 1 (downstairs). The Library is fully accessible with a lift.

The aim of the Café is to bring people together who have a hearing loss so that they can offer support to each other and work together. Families, friends and carers are also welcome to come along. We plan to invite speakers to the Cafés and are looking at the development of new projects that Deaf people themselves can get involved in within their Community. There is a small charge of £3.00 which goes towards some of the costs of running the Cafés. BSL Interpreter(s), an Electronic Notetaker and Loop system are also available.

As we are a voluntary group, we are reliant on funding and donations and will be looking at setting up a range of sponsorship activities to enable DEAFvibe to continue and for local people to get involved!

Check out our website for more details: www.deafvibe.co.uk.

Feel free to come along and find out more information.



LIKE Youth Dance

Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company is pleased to present **LIKE Youth Dance** - a programme of local out of school dance activity for disabled and non-disabled people aged 5-18, within both Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire. We are now building a core of enthusiastic young people who want to work creatively with dance.



Projects are delivered to 3 different age ranges:

5 – 8 years, 8 – 12 years and 13 – 18 years

Aerial dance (low level flying on harnesses), site specific/outdoor and dance for screen projects will be taking place in locations across the county.

Successful projects include a partnership with SpArC Life at Bishops Castle to deliver a weeks programme of aerial dance, and an exciting digital dance project in Shrewsbury. See our **LIKE Youth Dance facebook page** for photos, future event updates, and to add yourself as a fan!



A weekly dance club for disabled children aged 5-8 years takes place on Thursdays at Severndale school in Shrewsbury. Children explore creative dance movement, with freedom of expression.

Envision Dance Group runs on a weekly basis at Telford - a fusion of funky street and creative contemporary dance, with Blue Eyed Soul Dance and Transit-Trix Dance. It's a fun, friendly group, giving those involved a range of skills and techniques to create their own dance routines

We aim for equal numbers of disabled and non-disabled participants, and disabled participants are eligible for free of charge concession places.

If you're interested in participating in any of our activities or would like to hear more about the work of Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company please contact us at: admin@blueeyedsouldance.com or ring 01743 210830. You can also sign up for our **e-newsletter** to be contacted about future events that might interest you, or keep an eye on our **events calendar** at <http://www.blueeyedsouldance.com/calendar-of-events/>

This activity is funded by Telford and Wrekin Council, and Shropshire Council Short Breaks for Disabled Children.



Prostate Cancer Awareness Month: 1 – 31 March

Raising awareness events across the UK. Visit the website for more details: <http://www.prostate-cancer.org.uk/>



Self-Injury Awareness Day 2011 – 1st March

Each year, the 1st of March is designated as SIAD around the world. It's a time when we can all come together to help raise awareness about self-injury and self-harm. SIAD has been running for many years, and has become more and more popular in the UK over the last few years, and FirstSigns (previously LifeSIGNS) is proud to lead the UK in self-injury awareness by providing support, information, fact sheets and posters for everyone to use.

Go to <http://www.firstsigns.org.uk/siad/>



Shropshire Family Info Dad's Event – 12th March

Shropshire Family Info Sure Start Children's Centres will be holding a special Dads Event at Ellesmere Children's Centre on Saturday 12th March 10 am – 12 pm. For dads and other male carers with their children aged under 5. Come and take part in sporty fun & games, including balancing, skipping, dribbling footballs, spinning hula hoops and lots more!! Ring 01691 657513 for further info. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Shropshire-Family-Info/172684646092129>



Bridgnorth Buddies Calendar



For children with additional needs and their families

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.
13/03/11	Swimming	5-6pm	Bridgnorth Leisure Centre	Free	Buddies have exclusive use of the pool. Bring the family!
19/03/11	Multi Activities	10.30am-12	St Leonards Church Hall	50p per child	Fun & games for all with Ping Pong John & other guests.
25/03/11	Coffee Morning	9.30am onwards	Cinnamon Cafe	-	A great opportunity to have a chat & swap experiences.
02/04/11	Multi Activities	10.30am-12	St Leonards Church Hall	50p per child	Fun & games for all with Ping Pong John & other guests.
17/04/11	Swimming	5-6pm	Bridgnorth Leisure Centre	Free	Buddies have exclusive use of the pool. Bring the family!
07/05/11	Multi Activities	10.30am-12	St Leonards Church Hall	50p per child	Fun & games for all with Ping Pong John & other guests.

Carers Contact Centre

Carers
Contact Centre

Event	Date	Venue
Pamper Day	1st Mar	0930am-12.30pm at Haybridge Hall, Hadley. Booking essential, phone 01952 240209
Information Stand	2nd Mar	10am-4pm at the Princess Royal Hospital, Telford
Carers Walk - Town Park	16th Mar	10:30am start. Meet at Meeting Point House, Telford Town Centre
Carers Surgery - David Wright MP	16th Mar	1100am-12.00noon at Carers Contact Centre. Book a 10-minute session, phone 01952 240209
Pamper Day	5th Apr	0930am-12.30pm at Haybridge Hall, Hadley. Booking essential, phone 01952 240209
Carers Walk - Granville Country Park	13th Apr	10:30am start. Meet at Granville Country Park Car Park
Pamper Day	3rd May	0930am-12.30pm at Haybridge Hall, Hadley. Booking essential, phone 01952 240209



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.
www.shropshire-disability.net

Parent Partnership Service



Wed 2 March 2pm – 4pm Haughton School, Telford	Haughton Drop-in session - Telford Parents of pupils with complex special needs Joy or Mike 01952 387551 / 387552
Thurs 3 March 8pm – 10 pm Lord Hill Hotel, Shrewsbury	Spectrum – Shrewsbury Parents' group – ASD, ADHD and associated difficulties Alison 01939 220567 or Jeannette netgriffiths@gmail.com http://spectrum.t83.net/
Thursday 3 March 10 – 12 am Old Park Primary School Centre, Malinslee, Telford	PPS Parent Network Meeting For parents of children with Special Educational Needs Contact Julie Collins on 01952 457439
Fri 4 March 10 am – 12.00 noon Stepping Stones Centre, Telford	Dyspraxia/Developmental Co-ordination Disorder (DCD) Parents Group – Telford Alex (PPS) on 01952 458018
Friday 4 March 9.30 am – 2.30 pm The Lantern, Shrewsbury	Session 1 Your child in school – SEN training for parents Booking by 23 rd February please Contact Alex on 01952 458018 or alex@pps-shropshireandtgelford.org.uk
Saturday 5 March 2 – 4 pm Craven Arms Community Centre	Empathy Group – Craven Arms Family group and activities Sam on 077905 84987
Saturday 5 March 10.30 – 12 am St Leonard's Church Hall, Bridgnorth	Bridgnorth Buddies Multi-activity session Family group – disabilities & special needs
Monday 7 March 5.30 – 7 pm The Lantern, Shrewsbury	Young people with eating disorders – parents/carers group Caren (Advanced Nurse Practitioner) 01743 450800
Wednesday 9 March 10 am – 12 noon Craven Arms Community Centre	PPS Parent Network Meeting For parents of children with Special Educational Needs Contact Alex on 01952 458018
Thursday 10 March 10 am – 12 pm Haughton School, Telford	STAA Group – Telford Parents' group – ASD, ADHD and associated difficulties Julie (PPS) - 01952 457439 or Lesley(PPS) - 01952 617758
Friday 11 March 9.30 am onwards Cinnamon Cafe, Bridgnorth	Bridgnorth Buddies coffee morning Family group – disabilities & special needs
Friday 11 March 9.30 am – 2.30 pm The Lantern, Shrewsbury	Session 2 Your child in school – SEN training for parents Booking by 23 rd February please Contact Alex on 01952 458018 or alex@pps-shropshireandtgelford.org.uk
Sunday 13 March 5 pm – 6 pm Bridgnorth Leisure Centre	Bridgnorth Buddies – swimming session Family group – disabilities & special needs
Wednesday 16 March 10 am – 12 noon Oswestry Library	PPS Parent Network Meeting For parents of children with Special Educational Needs Contact Alex on 01952 458018

Thursday 17 March 10 am – 12 noon, The Lantern, Sundorne, Shrewsbury	PPS Parent Network Meeting For parents of children with Special Educational Needs Contact Alex on 01952 458018
Saturday 19 March 10.30 am – 12 noon, St Leonard's Church Hall, Bridgnorth	Bridgnorth Buddies Multi-activity session Family group – disabilities & special needs
Wednesday 23 March 8 pm Red Lion Pub, Shrewsbury.	Shropshire Down's Syndrome Group Committee Meeting 01743 233802 or 01948 880110 or 01588 640319 www.dsa-shropshire.org.uk
Thursday 24 March 10 am – 12 noon, Market Drayton Library	PPS Parent Network Meeting for parents of children with special educational needs - Alex 01952 458018
Friday 25 March 9.30 am onwards Cinnamon Cafe, Bridgnorth	Bridgnorth Buddies coffee morning Family group – disabilities & special needs
Monday 28 March 11-1.30pm Park Lane Centre, Woodside - everyone is welcome to attend	PODS Open Meeting Forum for parents/carers of children with disabilities and additional needs. All welcome Contact Jayne on 07824 631297 or Julie on 07850 682149 Email - podstw@yahoo.co.uk

Shrewsbury & District MS Branch

Shropshire MS Support Group Meetings

- 1st Thursday of every month – next one 3rd March
- 10:30am - 4:00pm
- Hamar Centre in the grounds of the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Mytton Oak Road



These sessions start with a one hour physiotherapy 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. Speaker: Joan Waller, 'A Tale of Three cities'. For further information contact the branch on 01743 364484.

Abbey Lunches

12 noon once a month on Thursdays, at "The Abbey" pub, Monkmoor Road, Shrewsbury.

Join an informal group of MS Society members and friends for lunch at "The Abbey", next one 10th March. For further information contact the branch on 01743 364484.

Community Council of Shropshire

❖ Carers Events – Learning Together

"Practical workshops for family carers"

The workshops.....

Learning Together are free workshops offering family carers the opportunity to access practical, realistic and relevant advice and information on topics around being a carer. Topics covered include nutrition & hydration, medication, shifting not lifting, hand massage and time for you.



THE place for information on disability throughout Shropshire.
www.shropshire-disability.net

You are the Experts.....

Every family situation is unique. Learning Together provides workshops that acknowledge your expertise and build on your already acquired skills. They are relaxed and fun.

Carers can attend any venue.

SHREWSBURY 11th & 18th March 2011
 11am - 3pm
 General programme for all carers
 Community Council of Shropshire
 Shrewsbury Business Park
 Shrewsbury SY2 6LG

Lunch is provided and transport costs can be reimbursed.

Any respite support requirements can be discussed when you book.

For further information or to book a place please contact 01743 341995

❖ The 2011 Census will take place on 27th March

The 2011 Census will provide the first ever opportunity for comparative data on changes in the caring population over a ten year period. It is essential that an accurate comparison exists to measure the impact of this change, and the resultant impact on, for example, carers own health, and the number of carers in employment.

Information on the change in the number of carers will also be important at a local level, in the planning of services for carers and services that impact on carers.

Please don't miss the opportunity to record your caring role.

Find out more at www.census.gov.uk

March 2011	
1st	Alzheimer Carers group 10.30-12 noon Roy Fletcher Centre, Shrews
2nd	Fly Fishing Group for venue/times contact Diane Cuff 01743 342164
2nd	Church Stretton carers group 2-4pm Mayfair Centre, Easthope Rd
7th	Market Drayton Carers group 10-12 Methodist Church Hall
8th	Ellesmere Carers group Town Hall 11am-1pm
11th	STACS 7-9pm Community Council Shrewsbury Business Park SY2 6LG
11th	Alzheimer Carers group 2pm-3.30pm Mayfair Centre Church Stretton
16th	Church Stretton carers group 2-4pm Mayfair Centre, Easthope Rd
16th	Shrewsbury Carers group St Nicholas Hall United Reform 11am-1pm
17th	Bridgnorth Carers group 10.30-12.30 The Bungalow Innage Lane
17th	Ludlow Carers group 2-4pm Red Cross Hall, Smithfield Car Park
31st	Oswestry Carers group 11am-1pm The Qube, Oswald Road
For more information on the above contact 01743 341995 carersupport@shropshire-rcc.org.uk www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk	
ALD Carers Groups:	
Oswestry – Last Wednesday of the month – Memorial Hall	

Market Drayton Every two months, dates vary, Raven House,
For more information contact Jackie Taylor 01743 261300 ext 2862, Julie Apted 01743 851074 Tanya Miles 01743 254080

SDN General Meeting – 10th March

For the first time we are delighted to welcome the **Leader of Shropshire Council, Keith Barrow**, to talk to us about **the impact of the Big Society on Shropshire**. This should be of interest to every one of us who uses Services in Shropshire.



Before that, we welcome back as our first main speaker **Ann Johnson, Chair of our Employment Working Group**, which is leading the way in Shropshire on employment issues for people with disability. Ann is an expert on **the 2010 Equality Act**, and will explain what it means for people with disability in Shropshire. Again, this is something that it is essential for us all to know.

This year, Shropshire Disability Network is launching a number of new initiatives, and we want to tell you about them at this meeting, so that as many people as possible with disability can take part. These include

- **Walk and Roll 2011 – 10th April @ The Quarry**
- **Shropshire Disability Awareness Day - 16th October Shrewsbury Sports Village**
- **Shropshire Disability Challenge**

We hope as many people as possible will come to the Meeting and enjoy this excellent program. **Please email me davidhewetson@talktalk.net as soon as possible if you would like to attend, and by Friday 4th March at the latest.**

Once again, we are offering an opportunity to 2 organisations to have a display stand at this Meeting. For a cost of £25, you can have your display and the chance to speak to the Meeting about your Organisation. Please contact me if you would like to take up this opportunity.

Kidz in the Middle – 10th March

At the Jaguar Exhibition Hall, Ricoh Arena, Coventry.

One of the largest, FREE UK exhibitions totally dedicated to children with disabilities and special needs, their families and carers, and the professionals who work with them. Information on mobility, seating, beds, communication, access, education, toys, transport, style, sensory, sports, leisure and much more... Once again we have some excellent speakers presenting our free seminars sessions who can provide you with information on best practice, new research and good practical advice. For our professional visitors, certificates of attendance are available to support your continued professional development. Children and parents are very welcome to attend. Attending the 'Kidz' exhibitions is more crucial now than ever. The Government is investing £340million in equipment and wheelchair services, short breaks and palliative care for disabled children. In addition, the introduction of individual and personalised budgets may enable the children and/or parents to have a greater say in what equipment and services are most appropriate. The information you gather at the 'Kidz' events can ultimately improve the life of children, their parents and extended family.



For more information on any of our Kidz events, or to order your visitors free entry tickets visit <http://www.kidzupnorth.co.uk/kidzinthemiddle.php> or contact the Exhibition Team at Disabled Living on 0161 214 5959/5962. Organiser: - Disabled Living, Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Cheetham, Manchester, M8 8QA. Tel: 0161-214-5959 Fax: 0161- 835-3591 Email: info@disabledliving.co.uk

Blue Eyed Soul Dance – 50 Ways to Lead a Workshop, 13th March

Blue Eyed Soul Dance are running a '50 Ways to Lead a Workshop' professional development training session at Ludlow Assembly Rooms on Sunday 13th March 2011. This is FREE to people within Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and spaces for those outside the region will be allocated following the **deadline of Tuesday 1st March** - so do get in touch if you're interested. It's an opportunity to learn more about our inclusive dance practice, take away some ideas to use yourself, and meet some new people. Contact Moya on 01743 210830 or admin@blueeyedsouldance.com. <http://blueeyedsouldance.com/>



Blue Eyed Soul Dance – Aerial Dance 'Flying' projects, 20th March

Blue eyed Soul Dance are pleased to announce a further inclusive aerial dance workshop at Moreton Hall in Oswestry on Sunday 20th March 2011.

Times: 11.00am-1.30pm: ages 11 – 15
2.00pm – 4.30pm: ages 16 - 19

The support of harnesses and ropes provides those with physical disability or sensory impairment with a unique experience of movement, it allows them to explore new ways of moving in a safe and encouraging environment.



We 'fly' at a low level, sometimes very close to the floor allowing people to push, spin, rock and swing themselves in contact with the floor or another dancer. The activity will combine creative dance and aerial work with partners and as a group. The participants can expect to develop their skills, and have lots of fun along the way!

If you're interested in attending please contact Moya on 01743 210830 or admin@besdance.com. Spaces are free to disabled participants via Shropshire Council funding, with a fee of £7 / £4 concession for non-disabled. <http://blueeyedsouldance.com/>

The Shropshire Big Society Debate – 30th March

9.30 am to 1.00 pm, at The Education Centre, Shrewsbury Hospital.

For more information go to <http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/blog/events/2011-trainingevents/>



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www.shropshire-disability.net

Deaffest 2011 Film and Television Festival

The Deaffest 2011 Film Festival takes place **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 or Marketing Coordinator Lindsay Wiggins, tel 01902 719821, email lindsay@light-house.co.uk. Or go to <http://deaffest.co.uk/>



IBS Awareness Month: 1 – 30 April

If you have irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), you are not alone – IBS is common with worldwide prevalence estimated at 9% to 23%. Yet many people remain undiagnosed and unaware that their symptoms indicate a medically recognized disorder.

For more information and a free IBS information pack, go to <http://www.aboutibs.org/site/about-ibs/april-ibs-awareness-month>



World Autism Awareness Day – 2nd April

The World Autism Awareness Day resolution encourages all Member States to take measures to raise awareness about autism throughout society and to encourage early diagnosis and early intervention. For more information go to <http://www.worldautismawarenessday.org/>



SDN Walk & Roll Shrewsbury 2011 – 10th April

Walk or Roll for SDN! Three routes of varying lengths starting from The Quarry. 11.30 am for 12 noon, phone Geoff Forgie on 01691 830662 to register and get a sponsorship form. A family day out.



Shrewsbury & District MS Group Spring Lunch – 15th April

12.30 pm at the Radbrook Community Centre, Calverton Way, Radbrook Green, Shrewsbury

Please book with Carole Thomas **by 8th April** on 01743 247650

Followed by the Annual Meeting at 2.15 pm.



MS Week – 23rd to 29th May

MS Week is a great opportunity to raise awareness and funds for local branches and the Society's work nationally.

We are delighted that the Cake Break will again be supported by the Hairy Bikers and Wrights Bakery.

Please contact your local branch, Branches and Local Groups, or our Fundraising Development Officer Andy Jarrett or on 0208 438 0943 to find out more or to get involved.

More information at http://www.mssociety.org.uk/regions/west_midlands/diary_dates.html



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BDFC 90th Year Anniversary



We would like to invite you to celebrate our Birmingham Deaf Football Club 90th Anniversary on 23rd April 2011.

This will be a 5 a side tournament at Perry Barr Goal, Birmingham and a party venue is at Deaf Culture Centre, Ladywood, Birmingham.

The price is £85 per team which includes ticket to party on the night. There will be 7 players per team.

If you are interested to come to play the tournament and the party, then we can send you the information.



Voices of the Valley

FRON

MALE VOICE CHOIR

With

Guest Artistes

Saturday, 14th May, 2011 - 7.30 p.m.

St. Chad's Church, Shrewsbury

Tickets: £15



Fron Male Voice Choir

Profits from this Event will go to:

Fresh Start New Beginnings
www.fsnb.org.uk

Charity No: 1130368

Fresh Start New Beginnings
 Shropshire
Community Chaplaincy
Together we embrace our differences

Nightingale House Hospice
www.nightingalehouse.co.uk

Charity No: 1035600

 Nightingale House Hospice
Hospice Ty'r Eos



Tickets available from:

- Illuminate Bookshop, Wyle Cop, Shrewsbury, 01743 233657
- Annamarie Balram, Fresh Start New Beginnings, 01743 273179
 - Theatre Severn Box Office, Shrewsbury, 01743 281281
 - Simon Baynes Books & Music, Shrewsbury, 01743 244833



Improving support
for a stronger third sector



GRAB-A-GRANT "SURVIVE & THRIVE"



Is your group looking for funding?
Are you looking to develop other funding options?

If so, why not come along to one of the following session: -

Dates for 2011:

Newport Cosy Hall	Wednesday 23 rd March	10:00am
Meeting Point House	Wednesday 11 th May	10:00am
Woodside Park Lane Centre	Wednesday 21 st September	10:00am
Meeting Point House	Wednesday 9 th November	10:00am

The session will last about 1½ hours and be very informal.

Interested?

To book a place:

☎ 01952 291350 ask for Maureen

Telford and Wrekin Council for Voluntary Service
Meeting Point House, Town Centre, Telford TF3 4HS

Events - Conferences, etc.

Shrewsbury Social Media Surgery update

The third Social Media Surgery took place earlier this month and we have had some great feedback! Shropshire Mind went home with 3 fully set up Twitter accounts, lots of information and tips on how to use this excellent publicity/networking channel and also a Blog complete with initial post.



LOTTERY FUNDED



Shropshire
Partnership
www.shropshirepartnership.org.uk

grassroots
grants
Funded by the Community Development Foundation



THE place for information on
disability throughout Shropshire.
www.shropshire-disability.net

These sessions are proving ever popular so we have put together a programme for the coming months, all to be held at the new venue:

HCS Computers' Log Inn Internet Café, 55 Castle Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY1 2EJ
from 17:30 – 20:00 hrs.

- Monday 4th April '11
- Tuesday 7th June '11
- Monday 5th September '11
- Monday 7th November '11
- Monday 9th January '12
- Monday 5th March '12
- Monday 14th May '12



Drop in and have an informal chat with people who can enlighten you about all things Social Media such as Twitter, Facebook, blogging, linked-in, open source website technology. Our surgeons are all volunteers who have extensive knowledge and experience on how you can promote yourselves to the ever growing on-line community.

Although it's a drop in, please do book a space so we know you are coming and ensure we have enough volunteers on the night. Please phone 01743 342169 or visit

<http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/our-services/training/shropshiresocialmediasurgery/>

- If you are reading this from the Telford & Wrekin area, a surgery is now being set up in your area too (by Telford & Wrekin CVS), the next one taking place on Monday 7 March 2011 6.30PM – 8.30PM at Holiday Inn Telford. See <http://socialmediasurgery.com/events/139#> to book

❖ **FREE on-line seminar to improve your media coverage:**

If you need to save money, gaining media coverage remains the cheapest and most effective way of raising your organisation's profile, increasing donations, gaining volunteers and attracting service users. This FREE online seminar offers you five simple things you can do right now – whatever your expertise - to gain more media coverage for your charity

http://www.charitymediatraining.co.uk/uploads/dscvid.htm?dm_i=6S7,D102,1B4HAE,11LLO,1

It is only 8 minutes long and if your PC doesn't have audio, there is a transcript of the presentation on the site too.

❖ **Think Mobile:**

Media Trust and Google have teamed up again to hold the 4th annual FREE event focussing how mobile can help you reach new audiences and make the most of the applications and resources out there. A range of interactive sessions will be delivered by industry experts including Pierre Far and Luke Smith from Google, Elizabeth Kessick, from JustGiving and Rachel Slade from Depaul UK.

Wednesday 2 March 2011, Google London, Belgrave House, 76 Buckingham Palace Road, SW1W 9TQ, 3-6pm (registration from 2:30pm)

To book, call 020 7871 5600 or email thinkmobile@mediatrust.org

❖ **A digital toolkit for community workers:**

Social Enterprise West Midlands are running this course in Birmingham on the 18 March 2011

Are you sure that you have the best marketing and sales strategy for your social enterprise or small business? Do you have the understanding to make it work in practice to reach your target markets and sales? Or are you moving into a new product area and want to refresh your



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knowledge of the main principles? For more information please contact Rupinder Kaur Drew, 024 7663 3911 ext.113. Cost for the course is £69.

Also see : <http://www.socialenterprisewm.org.uk/events/getting-sales-and-marketing-right-from-the-start/> for more information.

Knowledge and Nosh 2011

FREE Breakfast Briefings 8.30 am - 10.30 am. Breakfast is included but booking is essential.

Trustee Recruitment: (30 places available)

- Thu 24th Mar - Ellesmere
- Tue 29th Mar – Bridgnorth
- Thu 31st Mar – Market Drayton
- Thu 31st Mar – Shrewsbury - Please note this one is a LUNCH 12am- 2pm

Monitoring and Evaluation: (24 places available)

- Mon 28th Feb – Bridgnorth
- Fri 11th Mar – Church Stretton
- Tue 15th Mar – Shrewsbury **FULL**

These sessions are very popular but we have some limited spaces left

For more information see <http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/our-services/training/breakfast-briefings>. To book a place please contact Lisa Darkin 01743 342 177 lisa.darkin@shropshire-rcc.org.uk



Social Welfare Training Courses:

Maximising Disability Living Allowance & Attendance Allowance

Birmingham: 21st March 2011

Maximising Housing Benefits

Birmingham 29th March 2011

Maximising Employment and Support Allowance

Birmingham 28th April 2011

All are from 10 am – 4 pm, at The Bond Company, 180-182 Fazeley St., Digbeth, B5 5SE, cost £95 includes lunch and comprehensive course guide.

Contact 0117 9514 337, info@socialwelfaretraining.co.uk



Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership

- 13th May

Roots HR CIC will be delivering a session on recruitment, restructuring and downsizing and also one on redundancy and redeployment.

- 28th June



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Legal briefing from Nigel Harrison from Hatchers Solicitors LLP on

- Differentiating between employees and self employed
- Contracts of employment
- Minimum wage

For more information please phone 01743 342169

Westminster Food & Nutrition Forum - 3rd March

Westminster Food & Nutrition Forum

Improving nutrition – in hospital, in social care and in the community

At the Princess Alexandra Hall, Royal Over-Seas League, Over-Seas House, Park Place, St. James's St., London, SW1A 1LR

Further details at <http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/forums/event.php?eid=187>

Blue Eyed Soul Dance – 50 Ways to Lead a Workshop, 13th March

Blue Eyed Soul Dance are running a '50 Ways to Lead a Workshop' professional development training session at Ludlow Assembly Rooms on Sunday 13th March 2011. This is FREE to people within Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, and spaces for those outside the region will be allocated following the **deadline of Tuesday 1st March** - so do get in touch if you're interested. It's an opportunity to learn more about our inclusive dance practice, take away some ideas to use yourself, and meet some new people. Contact Moya on 01743 210830 or admin@blueeyedsouldance.com. <http://blueeyedsouldance.com/>

Adding Value - Winning Contracts – 15th March

Free Training Workshop for Voluntary Organisations and Social Enterprises, led by Mick Taylor of mutualadvantage. Because it is a practical workshop, Winning Contracts is suitable for a whole range of organisations, from start-ups, to mature organisations who want to develop or improve their business. One place per organisation is available and to gain most benefit those coming should have a good overview of their organisation.



9.30 am – 4 pm at The Community Council of Shropshire, FREE (charge of £20 for non-attendance). Further information at <http://shropshirevcs.org.uk/site/blog/events/winning-contracts/>

Westminster Health Forum – 24th March

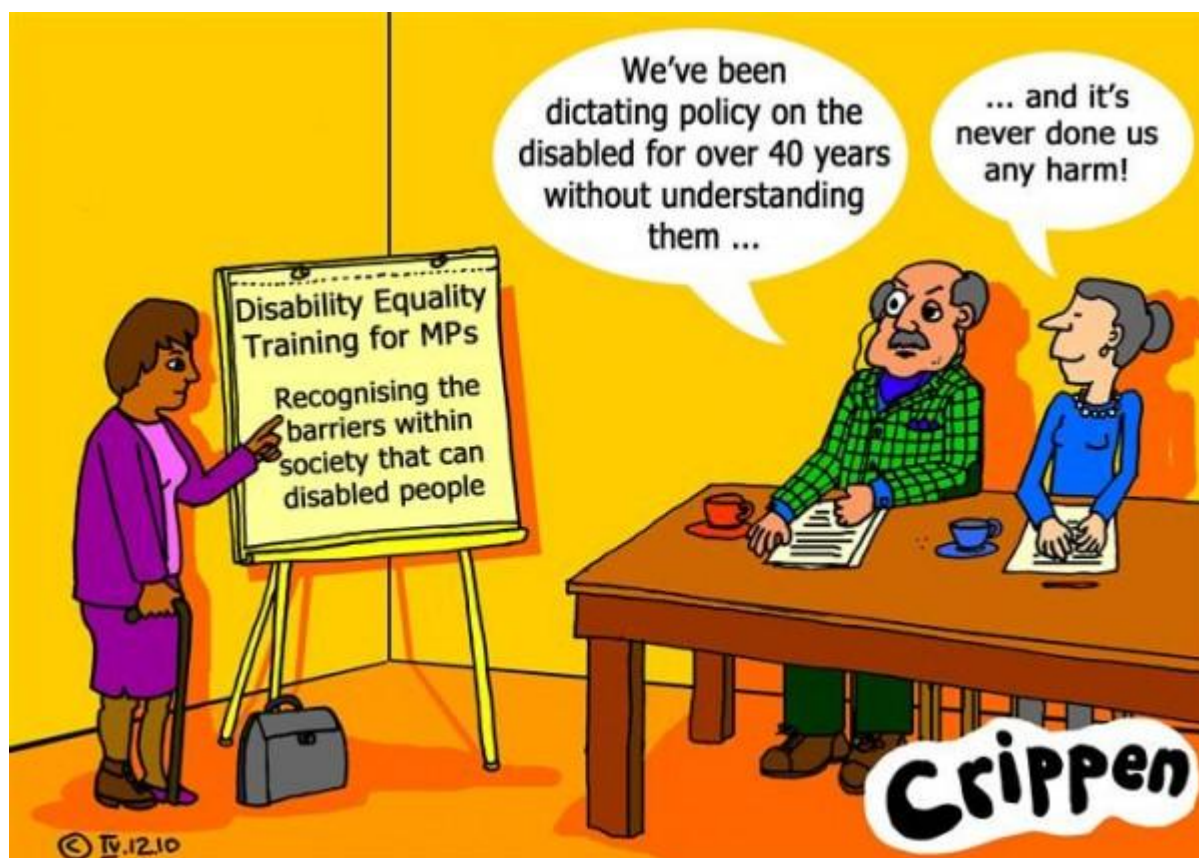
Westminster Health Forum

GP consortia and the changing role of the General Practitioner

At the Edward Lumley Hall, the Royal College of Surgeons of England, 35-43 Lincoln's Inn Fields, London WC2A 3PE

For more details go to

<http://www.westminsterforumprojects.co.uk/forums/event.php?eid=208>



We are indebted to Dave Lupton for the use of 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.

Protecting the Rights of Disabled People to Independent Living – Call for Evidence

From the Regional Disability Network, West Midlands, E-bulletin, March 2011,
<http://www.rdn-wm.org.uk/Consultations/Protecting-the-Rights-of-Disabled-People-to-Indepe.aspx>

On 15 February the UK Parliament Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry (JCHR) launched its inquiry into the implementation of the right to independent living for disabled people.

The deadline for responding is 29 April.

There have been several Government proposals made in the last few months which could have a negative impact on Disabled people and challenge our independence. So it is really important that



RDN members encourage individual disabled people to respond to this inquiry, and also for Disability organisations to respond with their views too.

The Joint Committee of Human Rights is chaired by the Member of Parliament Dr Hywel Francis MP, You can read more about the Joint Committee of Human Rights at <http://www.parliament.uk/jchr>

The Committee wants to hear from disabled people and their families about independent living. They would like to find out how Government policies and practices can implement the right to independent living in practice.

The Committee wants evidence on these recent developments:

- the decision, announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review (20 October 2010), to remove the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance for all people living in residential care. You can read more about this on the Mencap website by going to <http://www.mencap.org.uk/news.asp?id=20623>
- changes to the Independent Living Fund. You can read more about this proposal on the Disability NOW website by going to <http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/anger-as-if-changes-threaten-independent-living>
- “the Big Society”
- restrictions on local authority funding, social care budgets and benefits reassessments

The right to independent living is guaranteed by Article 19 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

You can read more about this UN Convention at <http://www.disabilityrightswatchuk.org/index2.php>

The Committee invites interested persons and groups to submit evidence on this issue and would welcome written submissions by Friday 29 April 2011.

You can look on the JCHR website for further details or in this word document. (which is an extract from the website). This document lists the questions the Committee intends to address. Please note, you do not need to answer all of these questions in your written submission.

This Call for Evidence has also been prepared in an Easy Read version which is available on the Committee’s website: <http://www.parliament.uk/jchr>.

Copies can also be obtained by contacting the Committee on 020 7219 2384

With thanks to the UKDPC for providing the information for this article.

How to respond: A copy of the submission should be sent by e-mail to jchr@parliament.uk and marked “Independent living”. An additional paper copy should be sent to: Greta Piacquadio, Joint Committee on Human Rights, 7 Millbank, London SW1A 0AA.

Deadline for responses: 29/04/2011