

December 2012 - January 2013

yourvoice

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SDN recently took space at a tabletop sale in Radbrook Community Centre and we were lucky enough to have the Rural Community Council, in the person of chocolatier Julie Wenlock, at the neighbouring table. Lucky, that is, because of her sparkling wit and erudite conversation... absolutely nothing to do with the delicious chocs she was selling.

When not doing her RCC duties,

Julie has a stall in Shrewsbury Market.

By the time you read this another tabletop sale will probably have taken place, this time at Minsterley Parish Hall. It has been organised by AllCare Shropshire Ltd, a company which does so much good for the community and which last year chose SDN as its special charity. This year AllCare has chosen Hope House.

Council and SDN to talk on Blue Badge use

A disabled Shropshire war veteran made headlines when he was given a parking ticket while attending a remembrance service in Shrewsbury on Armistice Day. He had displayed his Blue Badge incorrectly on his dashboard.

Shropshire Council acted as quickly as possible to cancel the fine, but the incident has raised concern that Blue Badge holders might be unaware of the rules surrounding their use.

As a result, the council contacted SDN for help in looking at ways of ensuring Blue Badge holders do not have similar problems in the future, and two council officers will attend next month's SDN meeting to see how we might take this forward.

This being the time of year that it is, YourVoice is combining the December and January issues. The good news is that there are four extra pages!

SPELLING OUT BIG CHANGES

SDN backs event to explain welfare shakeup

The next 12 months will see sweeping changes in the welfare system, particularly the introduction of Universal Credit - replacing much of the benefit and tax credit system for people both in and out of work - and the replacement of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) for eligible working age people.

These and other changes add up to the biggest shake-up in the system since its inception some 70 years ago. They have been surrounded by controversy and protest since the Government first introduced its ideas for reform, but now they are about to become reality through the 2012 Welfare Reform Act.

Amid all the controversy there is also much confusion about what the new Act will mean for individuals and the organisations that represent them.

Here in Shropshire an event is planned for 17 January to help clarify the situation. SDN is collaborating with Citizens' Advice (CAS) and the Pan Disability Forum to present four seminars on key issues:

- Colin Smith from the Department for Work and Pensions will speak about PIP
- Kairen Frances from Job Centre Plus will explain Universal Credit
- Replacement Schemes for Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefits will be discussed by a speaker from the local authority, and

• Jackie Jeffries from Citizens' Advice Shropshire will look into the implications for local service users

The event, called 'Getting ready for Welfare Reform Changes' will be held at the Shrewsbury Football Ground, from 1.30 to 5.00. It is aimed at local organisations, particularly advocacy organisations and groups that communicate directly with service users who will be affected by the welfare reform changes.

'In all the controversy around these proposals over the last couple of years there has been rather more heat than light shed on what is happening, so our three organisations have got together to help people and organisations in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin be clear about what is going on and how they will be affected,' said SDN chairwoman Sonia Roberts.

For more information contact Sonia Roberts on 01952 245015 or Jackie Jeffries at CAS in Shrewsbury.



New voice for carers across county

In the last couple of months a few people have got together to discuss the possibility of having a Forum for Carers. There are some carers' groups but they need a stronger and concerted voice.

It is hoped a new Forum for Carers will be launched in summer 2013 with the aim of bringing carers together to create a more united voice on things which matter to carers and ensuring this is heard in the right places, such as the Family Carers Partnership Board and other key bodies. It will be independent of statutory services and open to all carers and carers groups.

Anyone interested in helping to set up the forum or who would like to register interest in joining can contact Jackie Taylor on 01743 253796 or call Ruby Hartshorn of SDN on 01743 340832.

Carers' newspaper

There is now an online newspaper for family carers. It touches on the big issues and remains firmly committed to being cheerful and bright. Here's the link:

http://paper.li/Chill4usCarers/1313066703?utm_source=subscription&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=paper_sub&goback=%2Egde_2489294_member_183600098#

First-hand stories tell the truth behind ESA

A report written by people who have serious illnesses or disabilities, *The People's Review of the Work Capability Assessment*, contains 70 first-hand accounts of taking the fit-for-work test, which in large part determines eligibility for employment and support allowance (ESA).

ESA replaced incapacity benefit four years ago. These testimonials about the eligibility test clearly show how ministers have misled the public and used the media to demonise this vulnerable group. The report proves it is a shocking betrayal of those most in need.

Since the test's introduction in 2008, more than 400,000 people have appealed against the decision to strip them of state support, and 40% have been successful.

Many disabled and sick people have

died after being found 'fit to work' and a survey has found that 6% of GPs have come across a patient who has attempted to take or has taken their own life as a result of the test.

It should have been so different. When Labour introduced the ESA, the eligibility test was intended to look at what the disabled person could do, not what they couldn't. There were three possible results:

- The person was too ill or disabled to work so they would go into the long-term support group (SG);
- The person had a significant illness or disability but might be able to work, or would like to work with the right support - they would go into the work-related activity group (WRAG) and have access to training or adaptations and expert help to find a job;
- The person would be found able to work and would move to jobseeker's allowance.

Charities and campaigners supported this concept. But politicians have made the test far too limited. It ignores whole classifications of illness or disability: people with mental health conditions, learning difficulties, autism or Asperger's, and conditions that fluctuate. Cancer patients have found themselves at the job centre between chemo treatments, paraplegics have been told that they are fully mobile.

Politicians and the media suddenly became obsessed with 'scroungers', 'skivers' and 'cheats'.

The truth is otherwise: we have one of the lowest rates of support for sick and disabled people in the developed world; we also have the lowest fraud rate - less than half of 1%; a third of sick or disabled people live in poverty; and 60% of disabled people work. [Based on an article in The Guardian 12.11.2012]

SDN quarterly meeting - don't miss it!

SDN's next general meeting - on Thursday 13 December - will include two fascinating speakers.

Margaret Williams will talk about the work of Limb India and, closer to home, Ann Shaw of West Mercia Police will discuss

the relations between the police and the disability community.

For very different reasons these are two subjects not to be missed, so the place to be is Meeting Point House in Telford Town Centre, and the times are 10.30am - 1pm.



Atos caught cheating - but nobody cares!

Atos has been caught out making misleading statements to help it win a £400m contract to provide assessments for PIP, which is due to replace the disability living allowance from next year. But the Department for Work and Pensions says there is no need to do anything about it.

Leaked information from the tendering documents reveal that the firm named a number of disability organisations it said it planned to work with to carry out eligibility tests.

But four of the organisations said they had no contact with Atos before being named as possible partners and strongly objected to any suggestion that they planned to co-operate with the company.

Atos said it would be working in partnership with charities "such as" the Essex Coalition of Disabled People, the Greater Manchester Coalition for Disabled People and Disability Cornwall.

Both the Manchester and Cornwall

groups said they had only learned about the claims by Atos when contacted for comment by the Disability News Agency.

The Manchester group said it was "absolutely outraged" that Atos should seek to "gain credibility in the sector ... trying to curry favour by putting our organisation's name on this contract."

Linda Burnip, co-founder of Disabled People Against Cuts (DPAC) said the group would be making a formal complaint to the National Audit Office. It was "difficult to know whether to laugh or to cry ... given that we have organised so many protests outside their offices."

Disability Cornwall said it had been horrified to see its name used by Atos: "We would not consider working with an organisation which has caused so much distress to so many disabled people."

The Department for Work and Pensions has previously said the suc-

cessful PIP bidders had "demonstrated strong evidence... of close working with disabled people's representative groups". However, when asked about the misuse of disability group names by Atos, a spokeswoman said the inclusion of proposed partner disability organisations was not central to the decision to award the bid to Atos, and so there was no need for any investigation.

Anne McGuire, the shadow minister for disabled people, said the Labour Party would ask the public accounts committee to refer the matter to the National Audit Office if there were no rapid answers.

Atos Healthcare said: "We would hope that disabled people and their organisations will work with us to make the delivery of PIP as smooth as possible for those going through the process. We are making contact with those named in our tender document to ask them to share their expertise and knowledge with us."

[Edited from a Guardian article, 30.11.2012]

Dementia tests for pensioners

Pensioners will be given memory tests every time they visit a doctor or nurse under plans to improve the diagnosis of dementia. And a million people, including bank and shop workers, will be offered basic training under a 'Dementia Friends' scheme so that they can identify the condition and assist those who need extra help.

These proposals are part of a government drive to diagnose and treat dementia earlier. David Cameron said recently that awareness of dementia was shockingly low and that

more than a million people would soon be sufferers in this country. There are currently 670,000 people with dementia in England.

There will now be a requirement on all health-care professionals to ask all patients aged 65-74 about their memory during a check-up. Over the next three years people will be invited to training sessions on how to recognise dementia and provide support. The Government also plans to educate children about the condition.

More on dementia - page 14

Dial 111 proves a hit

The new NHS 111 service, which means patients can reach the whole of the NHS through just one simple free-to-call number, has dealt with well over a million calls since its introduction in August 2010. The University of Sheffield has published its 'Evaluation of NHS 111 pilot sites' final report into the first four sites to go live. The report found that overall the new service achieved its goal of getting patients to the 'right place, first time' and that the four sites exceeded the national standards for the number of calls answered within 30 seconds. [from Health Information News November 2012]



Care Farming - a positive rural experience

By Stewart Scull

Mention the words 'Care Farming' to most people and they tend to think 'care' relates to the provision of personalised care or associate the word 'farming' with ploughing, tractors or other types of agricultural machinery.

Understandable perhaps, however, neither assumption is true! So what is Care Farming? Simply put Care Farming describes a range of therapeutic, land based activities which help deliver a positive rural experience.

Land based activities are varied but might include collecting eggs, feeding and watering livestock, mucking out, tending to crops in a raised bed or Polytunnel, mending fences or

participating in a guided nature walk. Care Farming helps develop the potential in people by looking at what they can achieve rather than what their disability might restrict them to.

Activities not only build practical skills but also social skills, confidence, a sense of achievement and a connection with nature.

No two Care Farms are the same. Each Care Farm is different not only in size and what is offered but also in the groups of people catered for.

For example, activities may be aimed at specific groups of people such as those experiencing mental health issues, depression or stress; young people with special educa-



Andy proudly shows off the fruits of his labour! (image: CFWM)

tional needs or adults and children with physical disabilities. Each Care Farm will offer a personalised service dependent upon the nature of the farm and the level of independence and confidence of the participants.

Daily attendance charges and the source of the payments will vary too. Funding may come from personalised budgets, payments through the health sector, a charity or via the education sector.

If you would like to know more about Care Farming opportunities in Shropshire please contact Stewart Scull, Regional Development Officer for Care Farming West Midlands (CFWM) at stewart.scull@carefarmingwm.org.uk

'Market' day for voluntary services

Shropshire Council's social inclusion officer is planning a 'Market Place' day to promote the services that the voluntary sector offers to children and their families. She is focusing on services that are provided at no cost to local people.

'This day would be an opportunity for your service to showcase what you are offering local children and to educate families, carers, front line staff and others about the services that are available,' said Michelle Ragdale. 'It will be an opportunity for the various services to get together to share good practice and support each other.'

The 'Market Place' day will be 7 December, from 9.00-1.00, at Shirehall Council Chambers in Shrewsbury.

Have your say on tax support

Shropshire Council is encouraging as many organisations as possible to have their say on a proposed new Council Tax Support Scheme. Responses will enable people's views to be taken into account before the final scheme is agreed. The closing date for the survey is Friday 14 December. To reach the survey go to: <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/CTSScheme>

OSCA finds a new home

From 3 December OSCA (Oswestry and Shropshire Citizen Advocacy, mostly volunteers who support and represent people with learning disabilities) will be based at the Roy Fletcher Centre in Shrewsbury. The number is the same - 01691 671700. Find out more about OSCA at <http://www.osca-advocacy.org/index.html>

Charities' guide on banking

'Banking for Charities' is a short guide, produced in collaboration with the British Bankers' Association, aimed at those who manage the financial affairs of a charity or voluntary organisation. The guide can be found at:

<http://www.cfg.org.uk/resources/Publications/cfg-publications.aspx>.



4000 deafblind children ... why are they left out in the dark?

There are about 4000 deafblind children in the UK but the charity Sense says only 10% have been identified by local authorities. That means only one in 10 has any chance of specialist support from highly trained 'intervenorers', specialists who help deafblind children communicate with the world and learn. In reality, only some three out of 10 are getting intervenor support. The Government has recently been lobbied on behalf of deafblind children and urged to find funding to expand the work of intervenors, but given its track-record on compassion it hardly seems likely that anything will be done.

County charity's success with first deafblind course

The Shropshire-based Woodford Foundation has helped to set up the first specialist Deafblind Studies course in the UK – with great results. A total of 113 people have successfully completed the course, with 80 of them achieving the diploma. These include people on bursaries funded by Woodford.

Woodford is a registered charity working to improve the lives of deaf children and young people around the world, 'helping them to become full and active members of their families and communities' in the words of its website. It currently supports projects in Malawi, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. 'To be a deaf child or young person in sub-Saharan Africa is to be one of the most vulnerable

and marginalised people in the world – living without communication, financial security or protection.'

Deaf children are eight times more likely to be victims of sexual abuse than hearing children, so have a much higher risk of contracting diseases such as HIV/AIDS. They will most likely be rejected by their community and sometimes even their family, because of fears and superstitions about deafness. Less than a third attend school compared to three-quarters of hearing children.

Woodford's office is in Shrewsbury, from where it seeks to involve local people, community groups, schools and organisations.

Woodford is now sharing its office

with the development manager for Shropshire Christian Association with Deaf people (SCAD), which works with vulnerable deaf and hard of hearing people in Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.

"This is such a good opportunity for Woodford and SCAD to work more closely together and learn from one another. It is also a great way to forge links between deaf people in the UK and further afield, to share ideas and concerns," says the latest Woodford newsletter.

Woodford's details are: 9 College Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1LZ
info@woodfordfoundation.org.uk;
01743 364644

Lip-speaker for Forum

Shropshire Council is to fund a lip-speaker for future meetings of Shropshire Deaf and Hard of Hearing Forum. Hugh Battersby of the Forum says that although the service is vital to some members, it is not expected that many will need it. "We would therefore appreciate it if, in order to avoid a waste of scarce resources, anyone needing this service could advise me (hugh.battersby@gmail.com or 01691 624669) say a fortnight before the

meeting if they wish to attend," he says.

Clinics on the move

In other news from the Deaf and Hard of Hearing Forum, since 1 November all Oswestry Audiology clinics are being held at the New Oswestry Health Centre in Thomas Savin Road, Oswestry, SY11 1GA (the former railway engineering works). There will be no more repair or other clinics at the Orthopaedic.

From 1 January 2013 there will be

an audiologist or a senior technician at Oswestry every weekday and appointments will have to be made for all consultations and for repairs.

Because of the increased attendance, it should be easier to be seen promptly; appointments should be made by telephoning or e-mailing the main audiology number at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (Tel: 01743 261482; Fax 01743 261483; Text 01743 261213; Email audiology@sath.nhs.uk; Mobile texting 07913 798 467.

Speak out and speak up - if you are someone with a disability or a carer you have thoughts which are valuable, and we would like to hear them. Talk to YourVoice, be heard. Change things for the better!



£1m scheme to aid Paralympic sport

Sport England is investing £1 million in training coaches, carers and parents to develop skills to include disabled people in sporting activity. Culture secretary, Maria Miller, said the scheme – designed to complement a £1 million investment from Sainsbury's in training teachers – could provide a new model for community sport.

'The Paralympics made the UK think about disability differently and I hope that it is the first of many pub-

lic/private partnerships aimed at developing disability sport at the grassroots,' she said. 'I am determined that disabled people of all ages get the chance to play sport, both at school and in community sport clubs.'

But there are continuing questions about the level of government investment in school sport and the impact of local authority cuts on facilities. The British Paralympic Association hopes that the momen-

tum generated by the Paralympics can help improve access and inclusion in community sport.

The next £450 million funding round for national governing bodies, to be decided within the next month for the next four year period, is likely to include a requirement to sign up to new commitments on disabled sport. One in six disabled people play sport regularly, compared to one in three non-disabled adults. [From The Guardian 09.11.2012]

Dyspraxia: Someone near you is likely to be suffering

Dyspraxia affects co-ordination, spatial awareness and sensory perception and is suffered by between 2% and 6% of the population. That means there is likely to be at least one person with the condition in every school class or workplace. Around 70% of those affected are male and many had a premature or difficult birth. Dyspraxia can also run in families.

Someone with mild dyspraxia may be able to pass it off as a quirky foible. In severe cases though, it may mean being unable to walk up stairs without holding on, or forgetting to take off your clothes before having a shower.

Dyspraxia is poorly understood compared to the related conditions dyslexia, ADHD and Asperger's syndrome.

According to the Dyspraxia Foundation, an undiagnosed dyspraxic child is five times more likely than an average child to suffer from mental health problems by the age of 16. [From The Guardian 29.10.2012]

Firms 'more positive' about the disabled

In recent years employers have become much more positive about receiving applications from graduates with disabilities. A report on the disabled graduates of 2009 showed that six months after graduation 42.4% were in full-time paid employment compared with 46.2% of able-bodied graduates.

The law prohibits employers from treating people with disabilities less favourably than anyone else. And that law defines disability as a physical or mental impairment with a substantial, long-term adverse effect on the ability to carry out day-to-day activities. This covers many different sorts of impairments - from sight and hearing to dyslexia, severe asthma and HIV.

There is a get-out clause if a disability genuinely prevents someone from doing a job, but employers must make 'reasonable adjustments'. These might include, for instance, a physical modification to equipment or the work environment, allowing flexible working hours, or, in the case of job applicants, giving more time to complete a recruitment test.

Some government funding is available to employers to pay for alterations to

the workplace and equipment to enable a disabled person to be employed.

Prospects, the UK's official graduate careers website, offers some good tips to people with disabilities who are job hunting, whether or not they are graduates. These include:

- You should be ready to apply for all opportunities that suit your interests and qualifications. However, you may want to look out for employers who show a positive attitude to disability through:
 - Their literature, advertising and website – including the 'two ticks' symbol which guarantees an interview to all applicants with disabilities who fulfil the minimum qualifications for the job.
 - Being members of the Employers' Forum on Disability, or advertising with disability organisations and websites.
 - Encouraging applicants to disclose a disability.
 - Offering their application forms in alternative formats.

Many organisations offer advice about employment to people with disabilities and it is worth doing an internet search or asking at any main branch library for advice.



The Hardest Hit campaign is a coalition of more than 90 disability groups, organised jointly by the Disability Benefits Consortium and the UK Disabled People's Council. Its website is always worth a visit to keep up to date with news, events and general info about what's going on.

At the moment it is particularly busy because of 'The Tipping Point' report. This brings together a survey of over 4,500 disabled people, a poll of more than 350 independent welfare advisors, and more than 50 interviews with disabled people. It is a must-read for everyone in the disability community and all those who support them. HH lists ways that the campaign for decency and fairness can be pursued, so have a look both at the Hardest Hit website [<http://thehardesthit.wordpress.com/>] and Tipping Point, which is reported below.



Where have you heard this before?

'The Tipping Point' was published recently and it reads uncannily like the lead story in last month's YourVoice, which was a report by Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson on how the 2012 Welfare Reform Act will affect the disabled.

The former paralympian had been asked to examine what 'Universal Credit' and other proposed changes would mean. In a two-word summary of her report she said it was 'hard reading.' Now The Tipping Point report goes further in exposing how the Government's welfare cuts are hitting disabled people hardest. It reveals some shocking statistics:

- 85% of disabled respondents say that losing their Disability Living Allowance (DLA) would drive them into isolation, and would leave them struggling to manage their condition.
- 95% fear that losing DLA would be detrimental to their health.
- 78% said their health got worse as a result of the stress caused by their Work Capability Assessment for Employment and Support Allowance.
- 65% felt that ESA assessors did not understand their condition.
- 87% of welfare advisors said the constant re-assessments for benefits are damaging people's health.
- 90% of welfare advisors said too many disabled people are left without adequate support.

The report highlights that disabled people are twice as likely to live in poverty and even a small loss of income can tip people with a disability into greater dependence

on health and social care services or friends and family. Some 87% of disabled people said their everyday living costs were significantly higher because of their condition.

Tipping Point says the nation's perception of its 11 million disabled citizens is changing, with plummeting levels of public support for giving benefits to disabled people who cannot work and increasing reports of hate crime.

It goes on to question the Government's ability to do sums. Half a million disabled people are expected to lose out when DLA becomes Personal Independence Payment (PIP) next April. The Government claims this will save about £2.2 billion, but Hardest Hit estimates the costs of abolishing DLA will be about £1.6 billion – the savings are a drop in the ocean compared with the £9 billion being lost in tax evasion and avoidance. Some 450,000 disabled households are set to lose out under the new Universal Credit. For example, 100,000 families with disabled children stand to lose up to £28 a week. The Tipping Point Report can be downloaded in full in PDF format or as a Word document, and an executive summary is available as a PDF. Go to: <http://thehardesthit.wordpress.com/our-message/the-tipping-point/>
See page 15 - A person behind the statistics



Cameron equality attack shocks disability groups

On 19 November David Cameron gave a speech to the Confederation of British Industry conference about plans to help British business thrive, in which he said 'we are calling time on Equality Impact Assessments'.

The speech referred to proposals for cutting back on judicial reviews, reducing government consultations, streamlining European legislation, and stopping the 'gold-plating' of legislation at home.

A number of Equality and Diversity Forum member organisations, and others, have responded with alarm, criticising the Prime Minister's comments.

Among them is Disability Rights UK which said it was appalled at the Prime Minister's announcement. 'The public sector equality duty is an important safeguard to ensure that decision-makers do not discriminate against disabled people,' it pointed out

'Equality impact assessments help to develop and deliver policies and services that work for everyone. Far from being a tick-box exercise, they

are a useful way to highlight potential barriers and to identify effective solutions.

'Without equality impact assessments public bodies are more likely to make bad decisions that cost a lot of money in the long run.'

For examples of how equality impact assessments make a positive difference, it urges people to visit <http://www.radar.org.uk/publications/lights-camera-action/>

'The Government is currently reviewing the public sector equality duty with a report expected in spring 2013. We call on the Prime Minister not to prejudge the outcome of the review,' said Disability Rights UK.

Equality impact assessments were introduced by Labour to make sure officials took account of disability, gender and race in their decisions. But in his address to business leaders, David Cameron said officials had gone 'way beyond the letter of the law' on official tests to ensure that government policies comply with equality laws.

The prime minister said there was too much 'bureaucratic nonsense'

and policy-makers should use 'judgment' rather than 'tick-boxes'.

Equality impact assessments, introduced in the 2010 Equality Act, involve assessing 'the likely or actual effects of policies or services on people in respect of disability, gender and racial equality'.

Supporters say they are essential to improving fairness, while opponents argue they are ineffective, expensive and time-consuming.

David Cameron said: 'Let me be very clear. I care about making sure that government policy never marginalises or discriminates. I care about making sure we treat people equally. 'But let's have the courage to say it: caring about these things does not have to mean churning out reams of bureaucratic nonsense. We have smart people in Whitehall who consider equalities issues while they're making the policy. We don't need all this extra tick-box stuff.'

'So I can tell you today we are calling time on equality impact assessments. You no longer have to do them if these issues have been properly considered.'

Mobility tips: Don't lose your grip!

SDN member Martin Maley continues his series of 10 top tips on mobility for the disabled. Martin runs Mobility Homecare, which is based in Shrewsbury Market but covers the whole county.



Tip 7 Fitting New Handgrips on Scooters/Wheelchairs. Changing worn handgrips can be a

stressful job but if you have some cheap hairspray it acts as an excellent lubricant to help you slip new handgrips onto mobility scooters and wheelchairs. Drying tacky, acting as a sort of glue so that they do not slip off or rotate!

Tip 8 Leg Height Adjustment on Wheelchairs.

Many wheelchair users do not adjust the height of their footplates. But it is important not to ignore the

footplates, due to the fact that if your knees are too high, all the pressure will be on the hips and lower spine, and this can lead to avoidable long-term discomfort and back problems. Set your footplates so your weight is spread evenly along your thighs.

Cushions will provide extra height and more comfort and should always be considered when purchasing a wheelchair.



Car caution over PIP

ME sufferers receiving the DLA high rate mobility component are unlikely to receive the equivalent PIP award, and people receiving DLA low rate personal care will not qualify for PIP at all as there is no equivalent PIP award. Those with a mobility car are being warned not to take out a new lease agreement without careful consideration. If someone has a Mobility car and they don't qualify for PIP when it comes in next year, then the contract will be cancelled and the car will be reclaimed by Motability. It seems most people would be better off owning their own vehicle and using the DLA towards its upkeep. [From SMEG Newsletter Nov 2012]

Views sought on NHS Constitution

Proposals to strengthen the NHS Constitution have recently been set out for public consultation, with patients and the public as well as the NHS itself all being asked to respond.

Three major changes are proposed:

- A responsibility for staff to treat patients with compassion, dignity and respect as well as the highest standards of care
- A pledge making it explicit that patients can expect to sleep in single-sex wards
- A 'duty of candour' - NHS staff must be open and honest with patients if things go wrong or mistakes happen.

The closing date for comments is 28 January 2013.

To download the consultation document go to:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2012/11/constitution-consultation/>

Personal budgets target cut back after warning

The Government has scrapped its target for councils to move all service users in the community on to personal budgets by next April. Instead, care minister Norman Lamb, has set a new target of 70%.

But he said the 70% target was a 'staging post' and should not be seen as a ceiling.

The decision to back away from 100% followed talks with the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, and Adass president Sarah Pickup strongly welcomed the announcement. She said it would mean councils could stop 'chasing a number' and focus on outcomes.

In March this year Adass explicitly

questioned the wisdom of the target and deadline, saying personal budgets were being 'artificially driven by the timetable over and above ensuring that real choice and control is delivered.'

It warned that many older people, particularly those with dementia, were anxious about taking personal budgets, and it would be wrong to push them on to personal budgets simply to meet a target.

The Adass intervention perhaps did more than anything to undermine the credibility of the target, as it came from an organisation that had long championed councils' progress on personal budgets take-up and had taken a tough line on authorities with low rates.

Mr Lamb also issued a strong personal commitment to implementing the Dilnot Commission's proposals of a cap on the care costs faced by individuals.

'We must do Dilnot, and soon,' he said, but did not specify details on how the Government would do so.

Significant questions remain over the level of the cap, whether it would be universal or voluntary, and when it would be implemented.

He also said he 'recognised' the funding pressures local authorities were under in adult social care, without signalling how social care would fare in the next government spending review. [From Community Care] **See page 20**

New social care info website launched

The Social Care Institute for Excellence has launched the 'Find Me Good Care' website to help people find the right care and support to suit their needs and lifestyle, whether at a time of crisis, as they plan for the future, or as they change care services. Find Me Good Care is a comprehensive source of adult social care information and advice, combined with a searchable, comparable directory of care and support services. Visit it at <http://www.findmegoodcare.co.uk/> [from Health Information News November 2012]

Craven Arms event

Encouraging community spirit and helping people to help themselves and others in the area, Craven Arms Medical Practice patient group and practice staff recently invited organisations to come along to promote the range of services they offer and thus help raise awareness about them. [From VCSA Newsletter]



Hate crime is a horrible fact of life for many people with disabilities and other minority groups. Here and on the next page we report on some recent developments to combat it

The Equality and Diversity Unit of the Crown Prosecution Service has published a comprehensive report on hate crime. Called *Hate Crime and Crimes Against Older People*, the report runs to 44 pages and covers crimes motivated by hostility on the grounds of race, religion, disability and sexual orientation.

In an introduction the Director of Public Prosecutions, Keir Starmer QC, says the latest British Crime Survey records 260,000 such crimes, which can 'remove a person's dignity, their sense of security, their right to live free from harassment and, in extremis, their lives.

'This escalating scale of behaviour has the effect of belittling, exploiting and demeaning and is totally unacceptable.'

He says there is now a better understanding within criminal justice agencies, including his own, of the seriousness and of the impact of hate crime on both individual victims and communities. The CPS has

made clear commitments to encourage increased levels of reporting, including more targeted community work.

But as regards just disability hate crime, the statistics fail to impress. The report shows that the number of prosecutions actually fell by almost 17.5% last year after steadily increasing since 2007-08. The success rate dropped to the average rate for the past five years.

The volume of cases referred to the CPS by the police for a charging decision fell in 2011/12 to 643 from 690 in the preceding year. Broadly, 70% of all such referrals have resulted in a charge over the last three years.

The total number of completed prosecutions fell from 726 in 2010/11, to 621 in 2011/12. Of these, a smaller number and proportion (480 or 77.3%) resulted in successful outcomes compared to 529 and 79.8% in 2010/11.

The proportion of all outcomes that

produced a guilty plea increased by almost 3% to 68.3%.

The proportion of cases failing due to victim issues increased last year from 15.6% (23) to 19.1% (27). Some 4.3% of victims unexpectedly did not attend trial in 2011/12 which is slightly below the national average for all prosecutions of 5.2%.

At the end of a prosecution, cases are allocated a principal offence category to indicate the type and seriousness of the charges brought. Offences against the person and public order offences were the most common, representing 53.8% of all disability hate crime prosecutions (41.7% and 12.1% respectively).

There was a more significant range of other offence categories represented within disability hate crime prosecutions than for any other strand of hate crime, perhaps reflecting the exploitative nature of much disability hate crime.

[The report can be found at www.cps.gov.uk]

Victims urged to speak out

There is a new website dedicated to highlighting and combating hate crime in all its forms. True Vision is run by the Association of Chief Police Officers and it has a double purpose: to report on hate crime and to urge victims to tell their stories.

'By reporting it, you may be able to prevent these incidents from happening to someone else,' the site rightly says. 'It is important that if hate crime happens to you or someone you know, that you report it.'

The site makes it simple to report

hate crime incidents and to find information about people who can help and support victims.

'Reporting makes a difference – to you, your friends, and your community. By reporting hate crime when it happens, you can help stop it happening to someone else.

'You will also help the police to better understand the level of hate crime in your local area, and improve the way they respond to it,' the site says.

It has a lot of information about dis-

ability hate crime, including a well-designed easy read book.

The working definition of disability hate crime it uses is simply this: 'Any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by a hostility or prejudice based on a person's disability or perceived disability.

'A page on the True Vision site explains how to report an incident and what you can report, and includes a self-reporting facility and a list of organisations that can help.



More needs to be done to ensure that harassment of disabled people is taken more seriously, according to the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

Last year it carried out a groundbreaking inquiry into disability related harassment, which found that there was a systemic failure by public authorities and transport operators to prevent it.

A follow-up report details the responses taken since then by government, other authorities and transport operators. It shows that many are taking significant steps and making progress, individually and collectively.

These steps include:

- A commitment to monitoring Section 146 of the Criminal Justice Act and data sharing which will help to identify 'at risk' individuals;
- Addressing cyber bullying;
- Tackling anti-social behaviour in social housing

But the Commission says its evidence shows that action to prevent and tackle harassment is patchy, with some authorities doing very little or nothing at all.

The Disability Hate Crime Network still shows daily postings of reports on attacks against disabled people.

Disability hate crimes recorded by police forces in England and Wales for 2011/12 increased by 24.1% on the previous year which suggests there are more hate crimes towards disabled people or at least that more people feel comfortable reporting it.

Yet other figures show that less than 3% of disability related hate crime is reported or recognised as such.

Agencies 'should do more' to tackle disability harassment

In its report *Out in the Open: a manifesto for change*, the Commission makes recommendations in seven strategic areas which need to be addressed if disability harassment is to be reduced:

1. Improved reporting, recording and recognition of disability related harassment so disabled people know their account of being tormented or worse, is taken seriously at every stage. This also makes it easier to capture the true extent of harassment.
2. Gaps in legislation and national policy to be addressed, such as tougher use of sentencing for those found guilty of harassment and more involvement of disabled people in public life, eg jury service.
3. Adequate support and advocacy to be provided, especially for those with a learning difficulty who may need someone to speak up on their behalf or provide emotional support.

4. Improved practice and shared learning. Government and others need to work together to drive up standards and learn from any mistakes.

5. Better redress and access to justice. A disabled person's account should be equally as credible as that of a non-disabled person in a court of law.

6. Improved prevention, deterrence and understanding of motivation. If research is invested in understanding why people commit hate crimes, it will be easier to profile potential perpetrators and thus intervene earlier on.

7. More transparency, accountability and involvement of disabled people in developing policies and responses to disability related harassment.

Lead Commissioner Mike Smith said: 'The public's response to the London 2012 Paralympic Games

goes some way to creating more positive attitudes towards disabled people.

'But there is still a discrepancy between this and the day-to-day reality for many disabled people who report abuse and often suffer from a "postcode lottery" in the way their allegations are dealt with.

'The issue of disability-related harassment might be "out in the open" but it is, most certainly, not yet sorted. It is incumbent upon us all, especially in times of austerity, to work to overcome this blight on our society.'

• The report *Out in the Open: A Manifesto for Change* by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, October 2012 can be downloaded at: www.equalityhumanrights.com/disabilityharassmentfi

June likely as date for PIP claims

The latest information about PIP from the Department for Work and Pensions suggests new claims for PIP will start from next April in five areas of England, with new claims starting from June for the rest of the country, including Shropshire. Existing DLA claimants aged

16–64 will be moved over to PIP from DLA on renewal, when a fixed-term claim comes to an end from October 2013 onwards, or if there is a change in circumstances from October 2013, or in a 'managed' fashion between January 2014 and April 2016.



Why are there so few disabled teachers?

According to figures from the Department for Education, less than 1% of the teaching workforce has a disability. But the statistics are unreliable as not everyone admits to being disabled when completing forms and questionnaires.

Those numbers are likely to fall further. As school budgets decline, the costs of employing disabled staff and making building modifications and equipment available may prove too great for many schools, depriving pupils – both those with special needs and the able-bodied – of important role models.

Professor Rita Egan, a retired teacher-trainer and a wheelchair user, says that neither schools nor the teacher training system are equipped for teachers with disabilities.

Professor Egan, who submitted written evidence to a Commons select committee inquiry on the training of teachers three years ago, said successive governments had

not encouraged disabled people to apply to teach, which had led to thousands of highly qualified and able candidates not considering teaching as a career option.

"New schools are built to accommodate disabled pupils, but not teachers. So, you might get larger classrooms for wheelchairs, and specialist equipment for the sight and hearing impaired, but the teacher may still be perched on a podium they can't climb up," she says.

The challenges are the same in colleges for disabled employees, says Jill Saunders, who has recently been part of a team that drew up a national strategy for schools and further education colleges on best practice in the recruitment and employment of disabled people. "I have no doubt that disabled people are put off working in education because of the lack of thought given to their needs," she says.

[Edited from a Guardian article, 12.11.2012]

Boots cancer training

Macmillan Cancer Support is giving special training to pharmacists so patients can talk through any problems that may have arisen as a result of having cancer.

The team of Boots pharmacists not only help with advice about medication but can also point sufferers or their carers in the right direction for information or financial and emotional advice. So far, more than 500 pharmacists working at Boots have received the training. <http://www.pifonline.org.uk/boots-macmillan-information-pharmacists-coming-to-a-high-street-near-you/> [Health Information News Nov 2012]

Santander grants

Grants of up to £5,000 are available from the Santander Foundation to help with specific costs, such as salaries, equipment or materials, for projects that directly benefit disadvantaged people. The scheme is open to small local UK registered charities. Visit: <http://www.santanderfoundation.org.uk/aboutus.aspx> [From VCSA Newsletter]

Fear of falls 'shatters confidence'

The Women's Royal Voluntary Service has published *Falls: measuring the impact on older people*. The research reveals that fear of falling means 225,000 people aged over 75 won't leave the house by themselves. The report reveals how common falls are among older people - 35% have fallen in the last two years with 32% of those living alone suffering a fall in the last year.

The impact often goes beyond the physical. A fifth of older people who had suffered a fall in the last five years have lost their confidence as a result, with 10% now less independent. This lack of confidence is often exacerbated during the winter months as most older people (52%) say they feel much more vulnerable to falling in winter. The report highlights the devastating impact falls can have on the mental well-being of older people and how lack of confidence, as a result of falling or worrying about falling can lead to isolation and loneliness. Despite this, 38% did not inform their doctor about their fall. [Health News]



You are not alone

Going to our site is all it takes to meet others who understand what you are going through:

www.shropshire.gov.uk/community.nsf

Shropshire Self Help Groups
Telephone
01691 656882

Sponsored by Shropshire Council,
Telford & Wrekin Council,
and the NHS



This article, which is taken from the website of Qube in Oswestry, is the first in an occasional series about venues and services in Shropshire and surrounding counties that are user-friendly for the disabled community. If you know a venue or service that you have found helpful and would like to tell others about, please contact the editor at newsletter@shropshire-disability.net

Qube: Serving the local community in many ways

Qube is an Oswestry-based charity serving the needs of the local community through:

Community Transport: Dial-a-ride and community cars providing accessible transport services door-to-door and low-cost for people who cannot access public transport or who live in areas not served by local transport companies.

Arts and health: Art exhibitions in our contemporary gallery space, creative workshops and events, arts in the community projects and original arts and crafts for sale.

Volunteering: Our accredited Volunteer Centre offers volunteering advice and opportunities for individuals as well as supporting voluntary organisations and community groups through access to information, advice and guidance on training and funding for the sector and by promoting volunteering and local volunteer-

ing opportunities.

Care: We manage the countywide Shropshire Health and Social Care Information Providers project as well as shopping and support services

Community Facilities: Qube is a community building with a large and airy meeting room fully equipped for meetings, conferences and training. It also houses an art studio and a computer learning centre.

All our services are supported by our fabulous volunteers, without whom we could not continue to operate.

Qube's services and activities assist, inform and foster the skills and aspirations of the community and respond to people's needs.

Qube is a fully accessible building housing the Qube Gallery, Dial-a-ride office and Volunteer Centre as well as having rooms for hire in this unique space in Oswestry. A town

centre location makes it an ideal meeting point

Conference Room

This is a light, airy room that can seat up to 40 people, theatre style, with wi-fi connection. A projector, flip chart and refreshments are also available. Room hire is £15 an hour.

Art Room

The art room is ideal for workshops and courses, having sink, cleaning area and space for art materials. The hire cost is just £7 an hour for art and community groups and £10 for other groups.

Pictured above is the main entrance to Qube.

<http://qube-oca.org.uk/what-is-qube>

NEXT TIME:

THE COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

What is it?

Where and how can I access it?



Women's health equality group seeks local links

The Women's Health and Equality Consortium (WHEC) provides expertise on improving the health and well-being of women and girls in England. It represents a diverse network of more than 500 women's organisations providing health-related services.

WHEC is keen to grow its network,

particularly with organisations in the Shropshire area.

The WHEC Network ensures the voices of women and girls can be heard by government to inform decisions about health.

WHEC is committed to reducing female health inequalities by build-

ing the capacity of the women's voluntary and community movement, and strengthening the voice of women at a national and local level. For more information email

Shazia.Ahmad@platform51.org, phone 020 7490 9511 or see www.whec.org.uk.

[From SIP Newsletter 07.11.12]



New £50m dementia fund 'to develop calm rooms'

A new fund of £50 million to create calming environments for people with dementia, which aid treatment by helping sufferers to avoid confusion, has been announced by health secretary Jeremy Hunt.

The money will be available to NHS trusts and local authorities working in partnership with social care

providers to help tailor hospitals and care homes to the needs of those with dementia.

Critics say the money will make an insignificant impact and does not address long-term funding for thousands of sufferers who need constant care but are increasingly left to fend for themselves in the private sector.

Mr Hunt said there will be a real impact upon the lives of patients across the country. The money will be used to expand the range of care services offering dedicated dementia-friendly environments, and to promote further use of design techniques to help the growing number of people with dementia get the best possible care.

Options for the money include specially-designed rooms that include hi-tech sensory rooms using lighting, smells and sound to stimulate those with dementia, or specially-adapted outside space to prevent patients from wandering.

Research by The King's Fund has shown that cluttered ward layouts and poor signage in hospitals and care homes were the top reasons for causing confusion and distress in people with dementia.

New research into brain scans

Ministers have also announced a £9.6m research project that will study 8,000 brain scans to help determine why some people develop dementia while others do not. A £1 million prize fund will also be offered to any NHS organisation which successfully improves diagnosis.

Dementia costs the economy about £23 billion a year and there are growing concerns within the Government about the increased costs and challenges for public services associated with an ageing population.

By 2030 the number of pensioners is expected to be 51% of the population, with the proportion over 85 more than doubling. The number of disabled older people is expected to rise by 61% to four million.

Concerns over new housing benefit reform

Parents Opening Doors (PODS) has sent Telford & Wrekin Council a six-page report expressing concerns that have been raised by families in relation to the new Housing Benefit Reforms which come into effect next April 2013.

It is particularly concerned about how these reforms will affect families with disabled children who are not able to share a bedroom for one reason or another. PODS is working closely with the Disabled Children's Team/Specialist Services to address these concerns and will keep members informed of developments and responses.

Third WCA review published

Professor Harrington has published his third independent review of the Work Capability Assessment (WCA) - on the same day the Government responded to the recommendations within the review.

The first two reviews concluded that the WCA is the right concept but needs improvement. All the recommendations of these reviews have been accepted by the Government though not all have been fully acted upon yet. These include:

- Clearer and less threatening written communications to claimants, more fully explain the process.
- The ESA50 questionnaire including a section for the claimant to express the issues they face with a personalised justification.
- An Atos customer charter setting out clearly what claimants can expect.

- Improved training for Atos Healthcare Professionals and DWP Decision Makers.

- A help line for Decision Makers to contact Atos professionals when they need advice.

- A Quality Assurance Framework to assess Decision Makers' consistency and accuracy.

- Decision makers to attempt contact with claimants by phone before a final decision is taken, to explain the process and offer the opportunity to provide further evidence.

- Decision Makers outlining their reasoning, to explain how they have come to their conclusion.

The year three review has examined the scale of change that has occurred, driven forward outstanding areas of work from previous reviews and has proposed additional recommendations to further the scope of change.



Social care gave my life back ... don't take it away!

Maddy Hamp said her world fell apart after she was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis but social care - specifically, direct payments - gave her back her independence; now she fears that council cuts will take this away

I was diagnosed in 2001, aged 27, with multiple sclerosis ... My husband did all he could to meet my increasing care needs while working full-time, but our marriage eventually broke down due to my illness and we separated in 2006.

After the split I found myself totally dependent on the help of friends, which although willingly given, made me feel guilty and a burden on them. Then I was granted a social care package via direct payments, and it's hard to convey the amount of dignity, self-respect and independence I gained as a result.

I now employ three fantastic personal assistants; they help me to live my life my way and have never been fazed by any aspect of my fluctuating condition. They prepare

There are a lot of statistics in the Hardest Hit article on page 7, but statistical truths can hide individual realities. This article was submitted to Community Care online magazine by Hardest Hit and we are pleased to reprint part of it.

food and drive for me, accompany me shopping and to appointments, and order and collect my medication. They also do my housework and gardening and help me with personal care, which can be anything from

drying my hair and doing up buttons on better days to assisting me with my toilet and personal hygiene needs on worse ones.

Whatever needs to be done and wherever I have to go, they make it as easy as possible for me ...

The social contact during the times that I am housebound by my illness is incredibly important to me too, as is the emotional support they offer as I have also suffered with depression since being diagnosed.

I am no longer frightened of my future thanks to my social care package; my only fear now is that it might be affected by budget cuts ...

I know I would be totally unable to manage my daily life, depressed and socially isolated and during relapses I would probably be an inpatient in hospital.

My world fell apart when my marriage ended, but receiving direct payments allowed me to pick up the pieces and has given me my life back.

Employment statistics show how society really creates disability

Society can often disable people more than health condition or disability, with attitudes and assumptions preventing people from reaching their work-related goals.

Employment statistics show the imbalance between disabled and non-disabled people in employment.

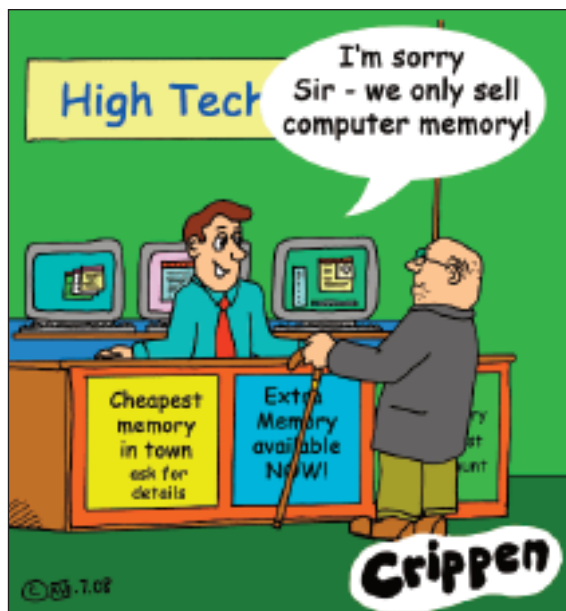
The Shaw Trust, which believes everyone should have the right to work, is committed to supporting disabled and disadvantaged people

into employment.

- There are currently 1.3 million disabled people in the UK who are available for and want to work
- Only half of disabled people of working age are in work (50%), compared with 80% of non-disabled people
- Employment rates vary greatly according to the type of impairment a person has; only 20% of people with mental health problems are in employment

- 23% of disabled people have no qualifications compared to 9% of non-disabled people
- Nearly one in five people of working age (7 million, or 18.6%) have a disability
- The average gross hourly pay for disabled employees is £11.08 compared to £12.30 for non-disabled.

Source: Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey, Jan - March 2009
[From Shaw Trust website - <http://www.shaw-trust.org.uk>]



Young spinal victims forced into homes for elderly

Research from the spinal injury charity, Aspire, shows one in five sufferers is likely to be discharged into residential or nursing homes for older people because of a lack of appropriate housing. According to the research, the average stay is two years but young people with spinal injuries can languish in care homes for more than three.

The study, called *Understanding the Health and Wellbeing of Spinal Cord Injured Adults in a Care Home*, says those with spinal injuries struggle to get the specialist care they need in care homes, meaning that their condition is likely to deteriorate. They are also likely to experience depression and become dependent. About 1,200 people a year have a spinal injury, about half of whom are under 30. Of these 1200, 240 end up in care homes. Living in a care home also affects mental health, the report says, pointing out that victims are forced there because they have no choice.

Stigma of claiming benefit - why the public gets it wrong

Turn2us this year commissioned a team of policy experts co-ordinated by the University of Kent to carry out a major research study on any stigma attached to applying for benefits.

The central findings were that:

- The public vastly overestimated the numbers of people 'claiming falsely' or 'committing fraud'.
- 1 in 5 people believe most claims are false, while 14% believe most are fraudulent. The Government's own statistics indicate an actual fraud rate of around 1%.
- The public now see claimants as less deserving than they did 20 years ago, with noticeable shifts in opinion in the late 1990s and early 2000s.
- Evidence was found to support the idea that negative media coverage is linked to stigma – with people who read more stigmatising newspapers perceiving higher levels of fraud and greater personal stigma.
- Both a national survey and use of focus groups demonstrated that stigma is impacting on both take-up of tax credits and benefits. Many are making a choice whether to 'heat or eat' because of a deep-seated sense of shame at the prospect of claiming.

- Non-take up of benefits has risen concurrently with stigma. The report makes a number of recommendations on reducing stigma. These include:

Design of the benefit system

- More universal, contributions-based and generous benefits systems seem to be less stigmatised.

Role of the media

- Newspapers should try to avoid suggesting that claimants who are not meeting the conditions of benefit entitlements are typical of the wider population claiming benefits
- Journalists should operate within the code of ethics set out by the National Union of Journalists Disabled Members Council.

The role of policymakers and public messages around benefits

- The UK Statistics Authority should consider two sets of changes to the Code of Practice for Statistics:
 1. For official statistics to be a credible contribution to public debate, full details need to be available to the public. Providers of statistics should accept responsibility for predictable and repeated media misinterpretations, and act to correct these

2. Those trying to reduce benefits stigma should not attempt to do this by demonising 'undeserving' claimants. There should be a move away from the individual characteristics of claimants and towards the issues behind benefit receipt.

Politicians should emphasise typical rather than atypical cases. Most benefit claimants have paid contributions in the past and will take part in paid work in the future, or contribute in other ways such as caring.

Read between the lines: confronting the myths about the benefits system

This is the title of a shorter report which will help campaigners tackle the inaccuracies that have for too long dominated the discussion around benefits.

As a next step, Turn2us is widely publicising the findings and recommendations of the study to policy makers.

If you have any enquiries about the research, please contact Rob Tolan, Head of Policy & Research, telephone: 07807 967466, email: rob.tolan@elizabethfinn.org.uk



Why cutbacks are a good thing for the disabled...

Technological and social progress mean the Government is right to look at reducing benefits and support for disabled people. Campaigns against cuts risk undermining inclusion (argues disability issues consultant, trainer and activist Simon Stevens)

It appears to be currently extremely fashionable to be against the welfare reforms and cuts. I must make it very clear I do not believe either the reforms or cuts are being implemented perfectly but I can see the logic of them for the economy and for society.

The welfare state was designed on the basis that a proportion of the population was unable to make a contribution to society and was therefore excluded, warehoused and/or compensated. I strongly feel that this is no longer an acceptable premise and that society has changed to a point where everyone can make some sort of meaningful

This article, by a disabled person, argues in favour of the cuts regime which the Government is implementing. It was originally published in Community Care online newsletter and drew critical comments from several readers. It also drew support from others. We are reproducing the article in full but only have space for a few readers' comments. We would be pleased to know your thoughts on the subject!

contribution. If we compare society in 1992, when disability living allowance (DLA) was introduced, to now, we can see huge technological, environmental and other advances that have enabled so many disabled people to have greater control over their lives and ability to make a difference.

This is the success of the social model, a concept disabled people themselves fought for on the condition that when they achieved the rights they needed they would take up the responsibilities which went along with them. The Government is now asking disabled people to honour this as greater accessibility and inclusion means they are in a lesser need for compensation payments

like DLA or its prospective replacement, personal independence payment, for some disabled people. This is, however, falling upon deaf ears as a new generation of disabled people appear to seek to revert back to a medical model concept of disability, where people with impairments are victims who are portrayed as unemployable and naturally inferior. Overnight it appears a new movement of disabled people has forgotten the opportunities they have as they revert back to a Victorian idea of disability and dependency. As someone who fought all my life to make a difference, I find this very insulting.

The same can be said about the reaction to social care cuts. I feel financial cuts do not necessarily mean reductions in outcomes as technological and social changes have altered how we do things. Should someone have a shopping call when they are able to do online shopping? Care packages have been reduced but these are not the crisis cuts that were happening in the 1990s when community care was finding its feet.

Among the comments by readers were these three:

Which planet are you on mate? The real issue is 2.5 million unemployed plus three million healthy bodied unemployed... Which employer is going to go out of their way to employ anyone for whom they may have to make allowances when there are so many able and healthy to choose between? ... If you really want inclusion examine the real barriers to work, which aren't people with disabilities... but a misguided economic policy that accepts mass unemployment

I would support this argument if the technology referred to was given to those who need it in place of the money. Unfortunately this doesn't appear to be happening. The social model is about levelling the playing field and removing barriers which disadvantage the disabled.

As someone who totally believes in the social model of disability, I really understand where you're coming from. I struggled with this and eventually realised that a great deal of the difficulty is around the difference between sickness and disability. Whilst there is a great deal of overlap, there is a difference and one of the Government's biggest mistakes is failing to understand that difference.

Rights are meaningless without responsibilities and right now, whether we like it or not, we have a responsibility to play our part in these difficult times. That means being honest about what we really need and how we are able to change how we do things to save costs for others, rather than unhelpfully using a misguided notion of rights that could destroy the inclusion we have fought for.



PAGE X

Names and numbers that might help

If your organisation or cause is not listed here please let us know.
Email the editor at newsletter@shropshire-disability.net or write to him: Peter Staples, 8 Gorse Lane, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, SY3 0JJ

Shropshire Council Disability Services -
www.shropshire.gov.uk/disability.nsf

Telford & Wrekin Adult Social Care Directory - services available and how to access them
http://www.telford.gov.uk/site/scripts/download_info.aspx?fileID=116&categoryID=100010

A4U Disability Advice Centre - Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury SY3 8HQ; 01743 256218; advice@a4u.org.uk

Autonomy - self-help and social for Aspergers in Shropshire, Telford and Borders - autonomyschropshire@yahoo.co.uk

Care Farming West Midlands - www.carefarmingwm.org.uk; stewart.scull@carefarmingwm.org.uk or Mobile:07957 839634

Carers Direct - 0808 802 0202
www.nhs.uk/carersdirect/Pages/CarersDirectHome.aspx

Community Council of Shropshire - www.shropshire-ccc.org.uk/
4 The Creative Quarter, Shrewsbury Business Park, Shrewsbury, SY2 6LG; 01743 360641; fax: 01743 342179

Community Directory for Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
<http://www.shropshire.gov.uk/community.nsf>

Disability Arts in Shropshire -01743 272939/271676; www.dasharts.org

Disability Directory – Information, aids and mobility services
www.ableize.com/Disabled-Groups-and-Clubs-by-County/Shropshire/

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

Disability-friendly holiday accommodation
www.friendly-places.com/categories/disability-friendly/disability-friendly.asp?Location=Shropshire

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

Disabled and Wheelchair Athletics Directory
www.apparelyzed.com/disability-directory/adaptive-sports/disabled-athletics/

Enable - supported employment services for people with disabilities in Shropshire and Telford. 01743 276900; ss-enable@shropshire.gov.uk;
www.shropshire.gov.uk/enable

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

Landau - supported employment services for people with disabilities,
5 Landau Court, Tan Bank, Wellington. TF1 1HE, 01952 245 015,
admin@landau.co.uk

Listen Not Label - User Led Organisation for disabled and carers in Telford and Wrekin (Tina Jones, manager), 01952 211421
Meeting Point House, Southwater Square, Telford, TF3 4HS

Parent & Carer Council Shropshire

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

Marches Community Enterprise

01584 878402 or 07891094901

ME Connect - Helpline 0844 576 5326 between 10.00-noon, 2.00-4.00 and 7.00-9.00; meconnect@meassociation.org.uk

Motor Neurone Disease Association - MND Connect 08457 62 62 62
mndconnect@mndassociation.org

Multiple Sclerosis Society - 01952 250038;
www.mssociety.org.uk/telford

NHS Choices - www.nhs.uk/Pages/HomePage.aspx

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

Parent Partnership Service - www.parentpartnership-shropshire-andtelford.org.uk/#/useful-links/4551168089

PODS - independent forum in Telford for families of children with disability or additional need; Jayne Stevens 0777 534 2092 or 07824 631 297; info@podstelford.org; www.podstelford.org

Primary Care Trust www.shropshire.nhs.uk/Get-Involved/

Scope (Cerebral Palsy) - www.scope.org.uk/services/shropshire

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

Shrewsbury Hard of Hearing Club - URC Church Hall, Coleham Head, Shrewsbury, SY3 7BJ; Contact Erica Horner 01743 873540, erica-horner2@googlegmail.com

Shropshire LINK - EarlyWorld House, Darwin Court, Oxon Business Park Shrewsbury, SY3 5AL; 01743 343223; www.shropshirelink.org.uk;
info@shropshirelink.org.uk



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Shropshire MIND - www.shropshiremind.org
Observer House, Holywell St, Shrewsbury, SY2 6BL 01743 368647

Shropshire Peer Counselling and Advocacy Service
www.shropshirepcas.co.uk/default.htm

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

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

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

VCSA - Voluntary & Community Sector Assembly
www.shrop.net/shropvcsassembly

Voluntary Association for the Blind (linked to RNIB)

YV services directory

This is a 'bulletin board' of services to the disability community. Any service that is genuinely for the benefit of people with disabilities is welcome to up to 40 words free. If you have a logo or artwork we will try to include it, but can't promise. Email your text to the editor at newsletter@shropshire-disability.net or write to him: Peter Staples, 8 Gorse Lane, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, SY3 0JJ

Sign as you speak: 1Starfish - to become a better communicator learn how to sign as you speak. Total Communication Training Courses for private, public and voluntary sectors. Also Makaton courses. Contact Mandy at www.1starfish.co.uk or 01743 891885 or 07939 600126

Used medical and mobility equipment: The British Red Cross sometimes has donated medical and mobility equipment for sale for a reasonable donation. At present we have two of the three-wheel rollators and one four-wheel rollator with a seat available. We also have two wheelchairs and various other small items. Call Christine Hunt on 01743 280073 for further information. The donations received help maintain the medical loan department, which is an invaluable service offered by the Red Cross.

Shropshire Handyperson Service: Small jobs at £15+ VAT per hour, no call-out fee, 01743 458 347 mhishropshire.enquiries@mearsgroup.co.uk

Wrong numbers!

When the disability advice service A4U moved to a new address it publicised the wrong phone number. Here are the A4U correct details in full: The Guildhall, Frankwell Quay, Shrewsbury, SY3 8HQ. The new contact number is 01743 256218, fax 01743 365659 or email advice@a4u.org.uk

Speaking of wrong numbers, gremlins got into the works at YourVoice last month and we published a number as the SDN helpline. Even if we had a helpline, and we haven't, it would have been the wrong number because it is actually the number of Shropshire Council's Benefits Options Team. Apologies.

Parent group monthly meetings

PODS (Parents Opening Doors) in Telford now holds a regular parent group on the first Monday of the month at Hadley Learning Community, from 10am-noon. The guest speaker for Monday 3 December is a team leader from Early Intervention - an opportunity to ask questions about how they can support you as a family.

PODS goes to the panto

With support from ASDA supermarket and Severn Trent Water, PODS has been able to extend its opportunities for families in Telford to include a trip to this year's pantomime at Oakengates Theatre, The Place, on 13 December. It is able to offer a ticket for the reduced price of £5 to admit one adult plus one child with disability/additional need.

The PODS website is www.podstelford.org

Dimensions cinema

The next Disability/Autism Friendly cinema screening will be on Sunday 16 December at Odeon Telford or Sunday 2 December at Cineworld Shrewsbury. For more information visit the Dimensions website: <http://www.dimensions-uk.org/what-we-do/autism-care/autism-friendly-films/>

Disability campaigner wins Liberty honour

Baroness Jane Campbell has won the Liberty human rights lifetime achievement award in recognition of a career dedicated to defending and upholding the rights of disabled people in the UK.

'She has fought hard to change attitudes towards disabled people, focusing on much-needed support as opposed to charity', Liberty said. She was one among numerous outstanding human rights leaders honoured at Liberty's annual Human Rights Awards in London.

Christmas funds boost

Disability Rights UK is asking people to sign up to www.easyfundraising.org.uk to help raise money for it while Christmas shopping. Shop with over 2,000 well known retailers, including Amazon, Tesco, Argos and many more, and every time you shop you'll earn a donation for Disability Rights UK at no additional cost to you,' the charity says. 'It's really simple to do, and please tell your family and friends.'

Hunger strike

A disabled man, fearful of losing his benefits after being declared fit to work by Atos Healthcare, has staged a week-long hunger strike outside the Department for Work and Pensions office in Cardiff. Christos Palmer, aged 32, has thyroid disease and clinical depression.



Advice services offered lottery cash

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) has launched the Advice Services Transition Fund ensuring that vital front-line advice services will receive a multi-million pound support package.

The Cabinet Office is supporting BIG's programme by contributing half of the funding. Up to £65 million

will be available to partnerships of advice organisations that will enable them to identify new ways of delivering and funding their services.

Grants of between £50,000 and £350,000 will be available to partnerships of local not-for-profit advice providers who can come together in an area and demon-

strate that they have compelling plans to improve services and make them more viable.

To get more information and get access to the application forms please visit http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/prog_advice_services_transition_fund [From VCSA Newsletter]

Encouraging results in personal budgets study

For more than three years, the Office for Public Management has been working with Essex County Council and a local user-led disability organisation on examining the impact of personal budgets on the lives of the people who use them. With the Government wanting all those eligible to be on personal budgets there is a pressing need to understand their impact and how best to support people in using them.

The rationale behind personal budgets is a simple yet powerful one: to empower social care users by giving them greater choice over the services they receive. In practice, this enables people to take direct control over the money allocated to them.

They can use this money to pay for traditional care services, such as a personal assistant or carer, as well as less conventional services, including leisure activities and opportuni-

ties for personal development. The study has found that many older personal budget holders and their families prefer to use the new system to purchase more traditional forms of care, in more positive ways.

For example, a lot of older people use the increased choice their personal budget offers to secure consistent, flexible daily care from the same carers or personal assistants, whereas previously they were reliant on whoever the care agency happened to send at whatever time.

Older users also benefited from being able to employ someone directly, rather than relying on family members, citing the positive effect they felt this had on their dignity.

On the other hand family members who manage personal budgets on behalf of younger people with learning disabilities, preferred employing someone with intimate knowledge of

their child's needs, often a family member themselves.

Personal budget holders of working age were far more inclined to use the system creatively to access community services such as swimming, bowling, gym membership, or theatre trips. Some reported that these activities have a significant positive impact on their physical health, as well as making them feel more independent and improving their overall wellbeing.

The processes of securing, setting up and reviewing a personal budget can be more difficult and protracted than users would like. The local market also has a big role to play in ensuring the services wanted by budget holders are available. After all, a personal budget is only as useful as what it can be spent on, and supply in some cases needs to catch-up to demand. [edited, from The Guardian]

Down Under buses blunder

Disability groups in Brisbane, Australia, are accusing the City Council of trying to sidestep new disability laws to avoid spending \$260,000 on handrails for buses, although it is planning to spend \$4 million on CCTV for its fleet. The council says spending \$259,340 on

upgrading handrails would constitute an 'unjustifiable hardship' but acknowledges that no public consultation had taken place - to avoid committing 'additional funds and effort'. As one disabled woman observed: 'They can't afford to fix the

handrails on the buses, but they can stick cameras in them. I'm guessing they'll have CCTV evidence of people actually sustaining severe injuries, so that when they get sued they'll have evidence of their own negligence.' [From Google]