

April 2013

# yourvoice

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## How does shopping online give SDN a boost?

If you ever go shopping online, you can now do so and benefit SDN at the same time. We have signed up with 'Givingabit', a company that enables internet shoppers to nominate a charity to which retailers then make a donation. This is a well-established system to which most major retailers belong.

It costs the shopper nothing, it costs the charity nothing. The retailer gains in PR.

The first person to nominate SDN as their chosen charity tested it with two retailers

while making purchases, and a little while later SDN was better off to the tune of £2.77. Joining in is simple. You go to Givingabit at <https://www.givingabit.com>, click on the 'sign up' button and provide your name, a user name and a password.

But you do have to remember to use it! And be sure to click on Givingabit and then go to the retailer, not the other way around. No one except you and the retailer know what you have bought. All Givingabit knows is the name of the retailer, nothing about you.

SDN's March quarterly meeting saw fascinating speakers talking about two subjects close to all our hearts - our health and our wallets.

Wendy Southall and her colleague Karen Higgins (seen below at the meeting) spoke about their work in Health Care Commissioning, which involves developing services and pathways to secure the best quality and value both for patients and the community.

Wendy stressed the need for organisations in the reshaped health care system to work in collaboration, to ensure that what is developed actually fits local needs, and to continually monitor and seek quality improvements.

Next, Jackie Jeffrey of Citizens Advice (below, with BSL interpreter Paul Siroky) talked about the sweeping benefit and welfare changes that are being introduced from this month. She urged people with disabilities to report back - 'We must find some way to collect your evidence,' she said. Jackie also urged people never to fill in forms on their own - always to get help from CAB or a similar organisation, or at the very least to ask a relative or friend to help them.



## Pick a card, any card!

Magician Paul Ray knows even more tricks than the Government, but his tricks entertain and delight you. Paul, and his father Geoff, put on an evening of magic, music, comedy and impersonation at Bayston Hill Memorial Hall in March at an SDN fund-raiser. A packed hall was kept alternately spellbound and laughing for the entire evening. And at the end of it Paul said they had decided to waive their usual fee because SDN was such a genuinely good cause. So many thank you to the Ray family, and see you again!

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# All change - rules on NHS get a last minute workover

**In an eleventh hour reversal, ministers have withdrawn controversial regulations governing competition in the NHS. Just weeks before major reform was due to take effect, placing GPs in charge of over half the £100 billion budget, the rules on contracting with the private sector are to be re-written.**

The climb-down, announced by Norman Lamb, the Lib Dem health minister, was hailed as a victory by campaigners who have opposed increased private involvement in the NHS.

Fears about privatisation have been at the centre of the dispute over the reforms throughout the passage of the Health and Social Care Act, which became law last year.

Regulations published recently which govern how the Act should be implemented from this month were greeted with dismay. Critics said they would open up many more services to competition from private companies and would lead to fragmentation of the service.

A petition against the measures by the

lobby group 38 Degrees gathered more than 600,000 signatures and over a thousand doctors wrote to the Daily Telegraph protesting that they made virtually every part of the NHS open to private firms.

The Academy of Royal Medical Colleges warned that the regulations could cause dangerous fragmentation of health services.

Mr Lamb admitted the wording of the regulations had 'inadvertently created confusion.' He said that there would be no privatisation of the NHS and that competition should be a means to improve the NHS not an end in itself. He did not accept claims of wholesale privatisation but agreed to rewrite key parts of the regulations 'to remove any doubt.'

The changes would include assurances that the new GP-led Clinical Commissioning Groups, responsible for buying services for patients, would decide when and how competition should be sought, would not have to put all their services out to tender and could not be forced to do so by the NHS regulator, Monitor. [From The Independent 07.03 2013]

## New abseil tower for wheelchair users

An abseil tower designed for wheelchair users has been officially opened at the Pioneer Centre near Cleobury Mortimer.

Thought to be the only one of its kind in the Midlands, the 13ft tower, which cost £20,000, was launched by Paralympics athlete Melissa Nicholls and former West Indian fast bowler Winston Davis, who was left paralysed after a fall.

The Pioneer Centre manager said they were working hard to increase the number of activities available to disabled people.

The abseil tower came about because the centre had dug out 400 cu metres of soil to create two rafting ponds and needed something useful to do with it. Melissa Nicholls can testify that it works well – having cut the ribbon, she tried it out! [From Shropshire Star]

## MS hopes cake success recipe is set to rise

The MS Society is hoping to raise £350,000 from its annual and highly successful Cake Break this year. It's money that will make a huge difference on research, campaigning and providing information and support.

Cake Break is a simple and fun way to raise money for the MS Society, which says: 'All you have to do is get friends, family or colleagues together, provide them with some cake – and then watch your donation box fill up. You can host your event at home, at work, at school – wherever you like'

This year, people are being encouraged to take part in Cake Break on 3 May to help the charity reach its goal of £350,000 – though those for whom the date might not work can hold their Cake Break on any day that's more convenient.

An estimated 100,000 people in the UK have MS, and it affects almost twice as many women as men. It is the most common disabling neurological condition affecting young adults. Most people are diagnosed between the ages of 20 and 40.

MS is complex and there are lots of different symptoms. They can include loss of sight and mobility, fatigue and depression. There is no cure and there are few effective treatments.

To get a free Cake Break pack visit [www.cakebreak.org.uk](http://www.cakebreak.org.uk), or email [cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk](mailto:cakebreak@mssociety.org.uk), or call 0845 481 1577 [From <http://www.access-magazine.co.uk>]



# Stammerers find words in music

Twenty year-old music student Matt Bond (pictured) has produced an EP, featuring himself and four fellow artists - all of whom have a stammer.

Because music and stammering have been two hugely influential and defining factors in his life 'I wanted to merge them somehow' as part of his music course at Falmouth.

'I'm always fluent when singing,' said Matt. 'No one knows for certain why this is, but I've often heard that of the brain, which is why some people with other disabilities such as Tourette's also find they can sing without their disability interrupt-



ing them.' His inspiration for an EP came from the story of a man with autism who had rarely spoken aloud, but found he could sing and went on to make a charity album.

'I've found that there's a lack of understanding about stammering and what it's like to have a stammer, so I decided to make my own awareness-raising recording.

'The British Stammering Association kindly sent a call out via their social media pages, asking for interested musicians who stammer to contact me. Adam Lovell, Brandon Marchant, Oli Cheadle and Ben James came

forward. They each wrote, performed and produced their songs about stammering and then sent them for inclusion on the EP that we named *Voices Found*.

'The song that I contributed, *Part of Me*, expresses the problems stammering causes me in day to day life but is also an acceptance that stammering is part of who I am, hence the title.

'Stammering can be extremely frustrating at times, causing feelings of isolation, depression and anxiety. I hope the album will show there's more to someone who stammers than what comes from their mouths, and I hope it will inspire others in the same situation, giving music they can relate to.' [From BBC Ouch]

# 'Disability' charity at centre of new doubts

**A charity which claims to speak for the sick and disabled is caught up in controversy, and not for the first time.**

Disability Rights UK was formed just over a year ago from three struggling charities, and has already been criticised for the following:

- ▶ Its role in helping Capita win a contract to assess PIP claimants and for convening the new Disability Action Alliance.
- ▶ Its chief executive, Liz Sayce, also wrote a report recommending that the Government end support for Remploy factories - which has now happened and has led to many disabled workers losing their jobs.
- ▶ Its accounts for 2011-12 reveal it made a loss of more than £300,000 from an income of over £2.6 million.

Now, new concern surrounds the revelation by the Disability News Service that one of the directors of Disability Rights UK works for a company that carries out secret surveillance on claimants of disability insurance.

Directors of the company include Professor Sir Mansel Aylward, a former DWP medical director and now director of the Centre for Psychosocial and Disability Research at Cardiff University, which was previously sponsored by Unum.

Another director is Al Hemond, who spent 23 years with Unum, and is a 'recognised expert and world leader in disability claims management.'

Unum is an American company reviled by many UK disabled

claimants because its staff played an important role in the introduction of the much harsher fitness for work regime in this country, from which Unum stands to profit by selling private health insurance.

In yet more controversy, the Disability News Service reports that Disability Rights UK has angered other disability organisations because it was given the role of helping the Department for Culture, Media and Sport decide which disability organisations would be given free tickets worth £1500 to the Olympics opening ceremony. And guess what, by coincidence, it was among the lucky recipients. [From Shropshire MEG newsletter March 2013]

**Unum's unsavoury past - see next page**





# Tougher welfare rules play into the pockets of US firm

**The American insurance giant Unum has repeatedly denied attempting to influence Incapacity Benefit (IB) reform over the last two decades, despite mounting evidence that it has done so.**

Unum is the largest provider of 'income protection insurance' (IPI) in the UK, and tougher welfare rules – including replacing incapacity benefit with Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) – are likely to persuade more people to take out IPI, boosting the company's profits.

Unum even launched a major media campaign in 2011 just as the coalition began a three-year programme to reassess about 1.5 million existing IB claimants through the new, stricter Work Capability Assessment (WCA.)

There is strong and widespread criticism of Unum in its home country, where it is embroiled in a series of insurance scandals. Trenchant criticism has been published in an article by Yale Law School. It can be read in full at <http://www.cfids-me.org/disinissues/discandal.pdf>,

and although particularly relevant to the American situation there are many striking parallels to the UK.

Just to give a flavour of Unum's tactics, the Yale article reports that 'Unum instituted the "Hungry Vulture" award as a recognition for claims review personnel who showed special determination in denying claims...Pressures on employees to deny claims peaked in the last month of each quarter ...when claims managers exhorted staff to deny enough claims to meet or surpass budget goals.'

Yet the UK's new Work Capability Assessment is very similar to the Unum assessment system which has caused such a scandal in the United States.

The article says that many US federal courts have commented on Unum's aggressive claims denial practices, speaking of 'selective review of the administrative record', 'lack of objectivity and an abuse of discretion by Unum', claims evaluation practices that 'defied common sense' and 'bordered on outright

fraud' and 'revealing a disturbing pattern of erroneous and arbitrary benefits denials, bad faith, contract misinterpretations, and other unscrupulous tactics.'

It is hard to believe this same company in the UK is so involved with government that it has 'bragged about "driving government thinking" on incapacity benefit reform' according to a report from the Disability News Service on 15 February (<http://tinyurl.com/b2j9s6g>).

Disabled activist Mo Stewart said: 'This entire situation confirms the dangers of a government that confuses its priorities, and places the welfare budget as a much higher priority than the needs of its own chronically sick and disabled people.'

'The WCA is a replica of the assessment system used by Unum to resist funding insurance claimants. It is a bogus, dangerous assessment and, with this evidence, it is now time that this DWP medical tyranny was ended.'

[with thanks to Shropshire ME Group's newsletter]

## Forced labour was, at least briefly, illegal

A university graduate and a mechanic took the DWP as far as the Court of Appeal over being forced to do unpaid labour in return for benefits - and won! Most of the Government's back-to-work schemes were declared illegal and sanctions against claimants who failed to participate in forced labour will have to be repaid. But that same day the employment minister said the Government is already exploring ways to avoid repaying benefits and new regulations will try to ensure that forced labour can carry on as before. [Shropshire MEG newsletter]

## Most disabled face the greatest cut under UC

Draft regulations for Universal Credit released in December confirm that there will be large cuts for the severely disabled under UC. There will be no equivalent of the Severe Disability Premium (worth £58.20 at present). Also, claimants who are recognised as both sick but also a carer by the present system are another group who will lose out as the carers' element of Universal Credit cannot be paid at the same time as the two sickness elements (LCWA and LCWRA elements).

Help SDN to help you - speak up and speak out about the issues that matter. The world won't do anything for people with disabilities until they do something for themselves. Get active!



# Derwen hosting new skills competition

**Independent specialist colleges which provide Further Education for young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities have launched a new inclusive skills competition, with Shropshire's Derwen College, near Oswestry, hosting for the event.**

Natspec, the membership association for the colleges, developed its Inclusive Skills Competitions in response to work by WorldSkills UK, which runs vocational competitions in the FE sector and the annual Skills Show at Birmingham NEC.

Natspec shares the WorldSkills belief that competitions help prepare students for work, but it wanted to create a series of inclusive competitions aimed at students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

The competitions, running at six colleges nationally, are designed to reflect the broad range of curricula at Natspec colleges. Derwen's challenge is 'Display your Wares', a retail competition.

Derwen welcomed Natspec's new

## New magazine survey ideas

An MA Magazine Journalism student who is creating a new sports magazine for the disabled has posted on the Scope website that he would like feedback and ideas via a short survey. To take part, visit

<http://www.surveymokey.com/s/newmagazine>



**Students promote Derwen's own sausages during Farmhouse Breakfast Week earlier this year. From left: Robin Ferguson, Tom Graham, Tori Ward of Jamie Ward's Free Range Pork, Philippa Morley and Rachel Mulkern (seated)**

Inclusive Skills Competitions Patron, Jane Hatton, to speak at the launch. She is an entrepreneur who runs Evenbreak, a not-for-profit specialist job board for disabled jobseekers. Jane began her working life as a non-disabled person advising employers on why they should employ disabled people. Later in life she became disabled with a spinal

condition but stayed in work, developing a training business. After complications her condition worsened and she was forced to run her business lying on a platform with a laptop suspended above her.

Jane said it was during this time that she had the idea for Evenbreak: 'My trainers and I talked to lots of employers who said they understood the benefits of employing disabled people but struggled to attract disabled applicants when they advertised jobs. Likewise, disabled job seekers were sick of having their applications rejected the minute they declared their disability.'

'I set up Evenbreak to help bring these two groups together and help promote inclusivity within the job market. It's important that we start challenging employer attitudes towards disabled job seekers, from the moment students begin looking for work experience at college to the point at which they are looking for a job.'

Evenbreak's website is <http://www.evenbreak.co.uk/about-us/>

## See and Hear returns next month

See and Hear 2013 will be held at Sundorne Sports Village, in Sundorne Road, Shrewsbury, on Wednesday 15 May from 10 - 4.00

The popular event will showcase products and services relating to sight and hearing loss, with special presentations including the Bionic Ear and the Sensory Tunnel.

The Bionic Ear Show, which was a big hit last year and is set to be a major centre of attention again, is an interactive presentation on how the ear works by Tobin May of Deaf Research UK. You can get a sneak preview at [www.bionicearshow.org](http://www.bionicearshow.org)

Visitors to the Sensory Tunnel will walk through a pitch black tunnel and experience a variety of touch and smells sensations - a real taste of a life without sight.

See and Hear also includes complimentary eye screening by the Shropshire Local Optical Committee.

BSL & deafblind Interpreters will be available throughout the day, and a free shuttle bus service will run every half hour from Shrewsbury train station, with the first bus at 9.30. For further details visit: <http://bit.ly/AhQEuv>



The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) has stepped up to the crease on behalf of disability cricket. It says that as the governing body responsible for all cricket in England and Wales, it wants to become the world's leading governing body in providing access to cricket for people with disabilities.'

It wants to deliver a culture of inclusion at all levels and ensure that people with any impairment are respected and valued for the contribution that they make to the game. To find out more about the ECB's vision and what it is doing to deliver



across various areas of activity, there is a PDF on its website that can be downloaded. Anyone needing help can contact [disabilitycricket@ecb.co.uk](mailto:disabilitycricket@ecb.co.uk)

All disabilities initiatives and activities take place under the auspices of the ECB, and it features regular news items on the various England

disability teams.

If you have any questions about disability cricket, want to get involved, or find opportunities for participation just email the ECB at the address already given.

The website is <http://www.ecb.co.uk>, and go to Disability Cricket in the site directory.

# Government accused of 'massaging' cuts stats

**The Government has been accused by MPs of manipulating its own benefit statistics in a bid to justify scrapping working-age Disability Living Allowance (DLA).**

The Department for Work and Pensions had claimed that the number of DLA claimants was increasing, but neglected to point out that the number of working-age recipients has actually been falling.

On the same day that Channel 4 aired a Dispatches investigation into the reforms, the DWP released a 'statistical update' which it said showed the number of successful claimants of DLA had risen by 15,000 between February and May 2012.

But analysis of DWP figures by Disability News Service has shown that the rise in claimants is due to increases in the number of children and older people receiving DLA, while the number of claimants aged 16-64 actually fell by more than 1,600.

This is important because the

reforms and cuts will only affect working-age claimants, with DLA for that group being gradually replaced by Personal Independence Payment (PIP) from this month.

Stephen Lloyd, the disabled Liberal Democrat MP, who has previously criticised the coalition for 'pandering to the Daily Mail' – after it published a misleading press release about the results of its fitness for work tests – said he was extremely angry at this sleight of hand by the DWP.

He is writing to Esther McVey, the Conservative minister for disabled people, to highlight his concerns about her department's 'massaging of the stats'.

Anne McGuire, Labour's shadow minister for disabled people, said it was 'yet another example of the DWP manipulating the figures on DLA to suit their agenda of abolishing DLA.'

The DWP used its new figures to persuade two right-wing newspapers to run stories claiming that the rise in DLA claimants proved the need for

reform. *The Sun* claimed the number of DLA claimants was 'soaring' at the rate of 'one every ten minutes', and that ministers believed the figures 'proved they are right to scrap DLA from April' and replace it with the 'tough' new PIP.

The *Daily Mail* claimed that a new DLA claimant was 'signing on' every nine minutes, and that 'the rush to secure the state payout is thought to be because its replacement will have tougher eligibility tests.'

The DWP said that, although its press release did not make it clear that the number of working-age DLA claimants had fallen, the statistics were available to 'anyone who wants to dig down into those figures.'

When the Disability News Service asked how the Mail and the Sun knew in advance about the figures, a spokeswoman said: 'I am not going to give you a blow-by-blow description of who the press office deals with.'

[From <http://www.thefedonline.org.uk>, Centre for Independent Living, and DNS]





# Blue Badge drivers are in a grey area over loading bays

**Following on from our feature in the last issue of YourVoice about Blue Badge parking, the question has been raised by an SDN member about parking in loading bays in the Shrewsbury area. He understood that it was allowed, but when he asked traffic wardens about it they were unsure what the regulations said.**

So we took the question to Grania Miller, Team Manager of Environmental Enforcement at Shropshire Council, who had so helpfully provided the information in our previous feature. She told us:

‘Unfortunately the question of whether Blue Badge holders are entitled to park in loading bays is a very grey area. The regulations and operational guidance issued by the De-

partment for Transport contradict each other as to whether Blue Badge holders are exempt from the parking restrictions in loading bays or not. The consequence of this is that different local authorities may take different stances on the matter.

‘The Blue Badge Rights and Responsibilities booklet clearly advises Blue Badge holders to check with each local authority as to whether they are entitled to park in loading bays or not, so I would urge your members to use caution if parking in a loading bay, as different policies may apply in different areas.

‘In Shropshire, although we don’t enforce against Blue Badge holders parked in loading bays, we do actively discourage it because of the

knock-on effect it has for drivers who need to use the bays.

‘If a loading bay is taken up by a Blue Badge holder’s vehicle, the lorries and vans that need it are often forced to drive around town several times whilst trying to find an available loading bay.

‘Clearly, this adds to both congestion in town and to pollution levels. There are many other, more suitable, places within the town centres that are available for Blue Badge holders to park and we would prefer that they used these places instead.’

She added that the DfT is seeking to clarify the law, and any final decision is likely to be that Blue Badge holders are not entitled to park in loading bays.

## Advocacy group’s new home

OSCA has moved, which is a good opportunity to say something about it. OSCA is a citizen advocacy group that supports and represents those with learning disabilities in Shropshire.

Mostly made up of volunteers, OSCA offers a range of services, including creating and supporting partnerships between volunteers and people with learning difficulties. OSCA provides short-term and crisis-based advocacy as well as supporting long-term partnerships and has staff who will give talks about citizen advocacy and can provide training on advocacy and related issues.

Enabling people with learning difficulties take more control of their own lives is central to OSCA’s work. In pursuit of this it works with other agencies and organisations such as the British Institute of Learning Disabilities, social services, local health authorities, the

police, employment services, and other advocacy and similar interest groups in Shropshire, such as Taking Part, Mencap and PCAS.

OSCA provides rewarding volunteering opportunities to local people who are interested in supporting, representing and speaking up for those who find it hard to get their views and voices heard. It currently has more than 80 volunteers across Shropshire, who effectively advocate for people with learning disabilities in our communities. There is also a team of six volunteer trustees. Anyone interested in finding out more about volunteering should click onto the new Osca website [www.oscacitizenadvocacy.org.uk](http://www.oscacitizenadvocacy.org.uk)

But we began by saying OSCA has moved.... and can now be found at the Roy Fletcher Centre, 12-17 Cross Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1JE.  
Email [info@oscacitizenadvocacy.org.uk](mailto:info@oscacitizenadvocacy.org.uk)

## Rent arrears set to soar

**A report commissioned by the National Housing Federation has found that:**

- 84% of housing associations believe that rent arrears will increase as a direct result of welfare changes. The average increase expected is 51%, which, if replicated across the sector, would mean an additional £245m of arrears.**
- More than half of associations (57%) believe that their tenants know little or nothing at all about the benefit changes.**
- The size criteria (bedroom tax) is expected to have a significant impact for more than 60% of associations. For direct payments the figure is 80%.**



# Disabled will be hardest hit by new 'bedroom tax'

**Gill Payne, a director of the National Housing Federation, says that 660,000 people – two thirds of them disabled - will be hit by the bedroom tax.**

'For decades, housing associations have been encouraged to build bigger family homes so that families settle in one home for life, creating happy and stable communities. Now the housing policy has changed and those same people are being penalised. It is desperately unfair,' she said.

Meanwhile, another aspect of the Government's welfare changes is leading to evictions – the cap on housing benefit.

An example recently given by Disability Now is of a woman named Jane, who is visually impaired and has mental health issues. She is facing eviction because the cap on housing benefit does not take account of disability-related costs like gardens for assistance dogs and step-free access for wheelchair users.

The owner of the property she occupies no longer wants to rent to a housing association because he can make more money in the private market.

'Since November, I have only seen two places that fall within the £220 which is what the council is prepared to pay a week,' she said.

'One of them was 20 minutes away from public transport, the other had 12 steps going up to the front door with a very low edge on either side and no rail.'

## Use spare rooms for homeless young - call

Meanwhile, a charity has come up with a plan (not strictly disability related, but that's a detail)...

As the Government tells people in social housing to use their spare rooms or lose them (spelling disaster for foster carers), one charity is urging homeowners to use their extra space to help combat youth homelessness

Depaul UK has launched its Spare Room Campaign, joining forces with

local charities to urge the 7.5 million households with a spare room nationwide to consider taking in a young person who needs emergency or temporary accommodation

The charity supports 37 safe emergency accommodation services UK-wide, called Nightstops, which place homeless 16-25-year-olds with over 700 volunteers. Last year they helped more than 5000 young people.

[from Community Care]

There is little or no possibility of moving to another area because the chances of securing support or mobility training from a local authority elsewhere are minimal due to local government cutbacks.

'I don't know what's going to happen to me. I was promised that this wasn't going to happen but all I can see is that I'm going to end up in bed and breakfast. I can't say that I could cope with that, my consultant regards me as a high suicide risk.'

[From [www.disabilitynow](http://www.disabilitynow)]

People love cute animals on film, and if the animals have a disability they seem to be even more cute and loveable. Here are just a few recent examples that have found their way into the media around the world.

A Loggerhead sea turtle has successfully been fitted with a pair of artificial flippers – after 27 attempts – because she lost her own to a shark five years ago. Since then, scientists have been searching for the most workable prosthetics. Her high-tech flippers are attached to a jacket, which slips over the turtle's head.

Eddie the sea otter has been trained to play basketball in the hope that it will help his arthritis. At 16, he's rather elderly for an otter, but with a treat in store for every ball



he gets through, Florida-based Eddie rarely misses a hoop.

Chris P Bacon (you can guess what type of animal he is) was born without the use of his hind legs. A vet responded by making a wheelchair for the piglet using parts from children's toys. A video of Chris learning to use his chair has gone viral, even making it on to the BBC's Canada pages.

Wonky needs a home. The Dogs Trust says the mobility impaired Staffordshire bull terrier was taken from her mum too early and then abandoned. Poor diet hampered development of Wonky's front legs. [From BBC Ouch]

**Pictured is Chris checking if his wheelchair is edible**





Celebrating 30 years as the UK's original consumer mobility and independent lifestyle event, dedicated to disabled people of all ages, this year's Mobility Roadshow is being held at the Telford International Centre from 27-29 June

# Mobility Roadshow 2013

This very popular annual event has been held at various locations around the UK since first established at the Transport Research Laboratory at Crowthorne in 1983.

It never fails to attract many thousands of disabled people from across the UK, Europe and even beyond, wanting to see, and even test, the latest developments that enable them to maintain an independent lifestyle through enhanced mobility.

Organisers say that for first-time visitors the roadshow opens the door to a new world of optimism and possibility.

The Telford roadshow will be ground-breaking, because for the first time in the show's history test drives will take place on public roads around the venue, offering visitors a more 'authentic' driving experience.

The Mobility Roadshow was the first event to offer opportunities to test drive production model vehicles with a variety of adaptations, enabling people with disabilities the rare opportunity to 'try before you buy' - something that the able-bodied just take completely for granted.

Test drive vehicles at Telford will not just be cars - they will also include



**Visitors to a previous Mobility Roadshow try out mobility equipment to suit their needs**

wheelchairs, powerchairs, scooters and cycles

'We are very excited to be hosting the 30th Mobility Roadshow at Telford,' said Jacqui Jones, executive director of Mobility Choice, the charity that organises the event.

'We've had three excellent years at Peterborough, but it's time to move on and give visitors from the west of the country the chance of easier access to the event.

'We are looking forward to the exciting new opportunities that Telford International Centre can offer, including all-indoor exhibition space.

'The innovation behind some of the robotic products we saw at the roadshow last year is light-years away from what was available back in 1983 - we therefore have much to celebrate 30 years on.'

Expert help, information and advice are other features of the roadshow, and visitors can also join in sport and watch demonstrations. There are also activities for all the family.

Here are the details to find out more:

Website  
<http://www.mobilityroadshow.co.uk>  
Tel  
0845 241 0390 / 01344 750400  
Email  
[info@mobilityroadshow.co.uk](mailto:info@mobilityroadshow.co.uk)

Visitors to the roadshow will have the chance to join in a game with some of the GB wheelchair basketball team, and to try out other sports including wheelchair rugby league and roller hockey. There will also be advice available on a wide range of sports



## Sudden mobility change in PIP rules could be illegal

A group of claimants has secured legal support to challenge the last-minute change to the PIP regulations which deny enhanced rate mobility to anyone who can stand and move more than 20 metres.

They will be arguing that the failure to consult about the reduction of the limit from 50 to 20 metres means that the change is unlawful and

should thus be quashed. If successful the DWP would be obliged to consult all over again on the changes before they can be introduced.

To find out if your experience can help bring about a rethink go to <http://tinyurl.com/amzxkwl>

### Footnotes:

The Channel 4 Dispatches programme on PIP which

aired on 25 February is available at <http://tinyurl.com/a2boardl> There is a petition to save the DLA at <http://links.causes.com/s/cll2lh?r=xUCr>

It says: 'We say use the proceeds of a "Mansion Tax" to protect people living with disability.' [From Shropshire MEG newsletter March 2013]

# Why a disabled man is heading PIP company

**When Capita begins to assess claimants in June for Personal Independence Payments (PIP), all assessment centres will be on ground floor locations.**

Stephen Duckworth (right), head of Capita's PIP programme, says this with a wry smile. Although it seems an obvious measure, the ground-floor location is important, given that many applicants may be unable to manage stairs. It is also significant because the failure of Capita's rival disability assessors, Atos, to make sure that all its centres had ground-floor wheelchair access became symbolic of how earlier assessment schemes had gone wrong.

Applicants for the benefit will be met by meeters and greeters, many of them disabled, 'to ensure that people



aren't overly anxious as they wait for their assessment', Duckworth says. Capita plans to employ up to 40% of disabled people in its team. 'The rationale is that the more disabled people are involved, the more disability confident, disability knowledgeable, disability aware, the organisation will be,'

Duckworth says. Paralysed from the neck down since he was 21, Duckworth has a sharper understanding of the importance of DLA, and now PIP, than most people administering benefit reforms.

He sees them as enabling benefits, which partly remove some of the costs which are disabling barriers imposed by society. 'So it is a very, very, important benefit – which is why I was

attracted to the contract. I thought that through my own experiences and my understanding of the importance of the benefit, I'd rather have disabled people involved in as large a way as possible to contribute to the decision making.'

He says Capita spent a lot of time talking to disabled people and their organisations in order to use their advice and information on how to build the service. One result is that about 60% of Capita's appointments will be in claimants' homes. The company is also trying to recruit nurses and occupational therapists with disabilities.

Duckworth says another key ambition is transparency, and wants to publish monthly 'all that is said about the service we are offering.'

[From The Guardian, edited, 05.03.13; Guardian photo by Sarah Lee]

## Charities concerned that tests are just a gloss on cost-cutting agenda

Whether Capita's wish to have a sensitive approach in its implementation of the DWP contract will be enough to quell mounting anxiety about PIP remains to be seen.

There is much unease among charities that PIP was launched with a cost-cutting agenda, with the Government promising to reduce the pro-

jected cost of the benefit by 20% (£2bn) by 2015-16.

Scope, among others, wonders aloud how the Government can predict how many people will receive support before they have even been tested. 'This raises the alarming question that the Government is working to set targets,' it says. The MS Society warns

that the mobility criteria for the benefit are too strict. Duckworth says Capita should not be held responsible for the Government's decisions. His team is not responsible for policy but for how best to deliver a service.

He stresses that Capita has no DWP mandated target to reduce the number of people found eligible.



# Anxiety as PIP advisers give out-of-date answers

**The Government's programme to replace Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payment has been thrown into confusion – by the Government. Its own telephone helpline advisers have been giving out-of-date information to anxious claimants.**

The Tory minister for disabled people, Esther McVey, promised MPs in December that no current claimants of DLA with lifetime or indefinite awards would face reassessments for PIP before October 2015, unless they reported a change in their condition.

The programme to replace working-age DLA with PIP is set to begin this month, with letters going out in pilot areas in the north-east and north-west.

But reports have been passed to members of the *WeAreSpartacus* network of campaigners that existing DLA claimants were being told by DWP helpline advisers that the Government

would begin reassessing all current DLA claimants from October this year.

They were told there would be no exemptions, even if they had lifetime or indefinite DLA awards, directly contradicting the assurances given by McVey.

When Disability News Service rang the helpline, an advisor said the reviews would take place 'sometime between October this year and the spring of 2016 for existing customers', and that some people with indefinite awards would be assessed for PIP before 2015.

When DNS asked her to confirm that some of those being assessed this year would be existing claimants with indefinite awards, she said: 'Yes. Someone could have a one-year award or an indefinite.'

'They will all be reviewed. That is the instruction I have got. There is nothing to say that indefinite awards will be reviewed last.'

This matched the information that DLA claimants said they had been receiving from the helpline.

The number of working-age people claiming DLA and PIP, and spending on working-age DLA and PIP, will be cut by as much as 28% by 2018 as a result of the reforms, with 900,000 fewer people receiving PIP than if DLA had not been replaced.

Beth Gregson, from *WeAreSpartacus*, said she was 'not at all convinced the DWP are ready to deliver or manage the process' of moving from DLA to PIP. She was 'deeply concerned' about the level of fear and anxiety over the move to PIP being shown by DLA claimants.

'The Government has accused us of scaremongering in the past. However, given the poor information, mixed messages and the confusing language used in letters from the DWP, is it any wonder people are scared?' she said [From Centre for Independent Living]

## When the stats make no sense

The UK poverty threshold for a single person is £119 a week. The maximum ESA payment for a disabled person is £105.05 – already under the poverty threshold. This poverty level payment makes no allowance for the higher living costs that disabled people experience, while the much-criticised 1% cap on annual increase in benefits over the next three years will leave disabled people deeper in poverty.

## Social entrepreneurs get their chance

The Lloyds Banking Group Social Entrepreneurs Programme is open to anyone who has an idea that can make a difference in their community. The programme offers a place on one of the School for Social Entrepreneurs' innovative learning programmes, PLUS a grant to help develop the project – £4,000 if you are just starting up or £15,000 if you have any existing organisation. [From VCSA]

## Make your voice heard says local MS branch

The Shrewsbury branch of the Multiple Sclerosis Society is urging supporters who disagree with the way the health and benefits systems are being changed, to make their views known by logging on to <http://www.38degrees.org.uk/campaigns>. It says 38 Degrees is one of the UK's biggest campaigning communities, with more than a million members sharing a desire for a more progressive, fairer, better society. Current campaigns include disability benefit claims testing and local NHS services.





# Carer group campaigns to change system that is 'now dying on its feet'

**Carer Watch is a campaign group for carers across the UK run by independent, unpaid carers. Its website doesn't mince words: 'We have experience of the care system as it operates in the UK today and we consider it to be desperately under-funded and not fit for purpose.'**

Carer Watch aims to provide 'a non-party-political campaign platform to change the way that opinion-formers, politicians and journalists think about carers. But first and foremost we intend to get the system changed.'

It goes on: 'The welfare reform programme is

proceeding at an ever increasing pace. Every day we hear of local authorities closing, withdrawing or cutting back on essential facilities and services. The already inadequate care system is dying on its feet. We have to halt that process, not next year, not the year after that, we have to halt it now.'

Carer Watch picks up on the same issues that YourVoice bangs on about month after month. It points out that mental health services are already woefully underfunded and the latest round of cuts is too much for them to bear.

Likewise, 'If you give up work to become a carer

you will be expected to use up all your own assets and probably lose your home before the state will give you any financial support. 'When pensioners become carers it is all too often a matter of those in need of care, caring for those in need of even greater care.'

Also like us, they want to hear from you. 'Please post your experience and tell us how you would like the care system changed - give your testimony! Then come on to the main forum and help get things changed - join the discussion and campaigning group! You can also follow us on Twitter and Facebook!' - <http://carerwatch.com>

## Carers have their rights under law

Carers have rights enshrined in UK law. The Government might not be in a hurry to tell you about them, but they are real and a phone call (01743 341 995) or a visit to the website of Shropshire Rural Community Council ([www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk](http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk)) would be a good way to find out more.

This is just a partial list of a carer's rights, which include:

- To be involved in the assessment of the person they care for, unless that person is over 18 and does not wish this to happen.
- To have their own needs assessed to ensure they are able to continue caring and to have someone present to support them at meetings or assessments. This could be a friend, relative, or advocacy worker, for example.
- To have their needs assessed in respect of their leisure, education/training and employment (These needs must be considered but there is no absolute duty to meet them).
- To use direct payments for the delivery of relevant services.
- To be involved in discharge planning.
- To request a reasonable amount of unpaid time off from work - to arrange care, provide care or for other reasons related to caring.
- Parent carers with children under 18 who have worked for their employer for 26 weeks or more can apply for flexible working arrangements
- Carers looking after someone at home can apply for the same arrangements (a number of conditions apply)

The RCC website provides links for details about carer assessments, direct payments, and breaks for carers. Its support helpline is open Monday - Friday from 9-4pm on 01743 341 995

## Shocked by lack of thought

Helena Herklots, chief executive of Carers UK, grimly expects 'devastating consequences' for carers as a result of present changes.

'Carers fear finding themselves in the centre of a perfect storm, as, on top of cuts to already overstretched social care services, they may face a combination of cuts to disability benefits, changes to Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit and the introduction of the household benefit cap.

'We are shocked and disappointed at the lack of adequate analysis of the impact all these changes will have on carers. There is the real risk that

the combined impact will have devastating personal consequences for carers and their families but will also bring greater costs to society and the economy in the longer term.

'Government should urgently publish full analysis of the impact of their changes to benefits on carers and disabled people, taking account of simultaneous cuts to vital social care support.'

Carers UK is gathering evidence about the financial costs of caring. They need carers' stories on the extra living costs they face and the impact on their ability to earn. Visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/carerspanel>



# Links that take you to the heart of disability debates and campaigns

There is so much going on in the world of disability that it is impossible in YourVoice to report more than a fraction. So rather than bring all the information to you, we will take you to the info by regularly providing lists of links that you can click on to get facts, figures and opinions about everything from the latest government gloss on how compassionate and wonderful they are, through to

how carers are coping in these difficult times, and on to details of more cheerful subjects like children's holidays.

Links don't help those readers who get our paper version, but your local library, or perhaps a relative or friend or neighbour with a computer, can help you get access. If all else fails, contact YourVoice and we will

find a way. One last word – we can recommend websites and provide links to them, but we can't take responsibility for what they say.

They are all independent and free to do and say as they wish, so with the best will in the world we have no control over their content or the way they express it. Here's our first instalment of very worthwhile links:

► <http://illegal.org.uk/> (particularly

<http://illegal.org.uk/thread/7140/dwps-esa-reassessment-programme-chaos?scrollTo=17912&page=1>, a page that shows how the DWP has a fairytale way of making its sums add up)

► <http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/38182> - a petition to stop the abolition of DLA

► <http://welfarenewsservice.com/r-i-p-the-nhs-killed-by-politicians-with-a-vested-interest-in-its-demise/> - a personal warning about money-hungry politicians selling the soul of British health care

► <http://johnnyvoid.wordpress.com/2013/02/25/sue-ryder-claim-they-will-undertake-a-phased-withdrawal-from-workfare/> - forced labour for free, how the Sue Ryder charity got caught in the crossfire

► <http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/> - wide-ranging and informative site

## Alzheimer's training DVD for homecare workers

The Alzheimer's Society has launched a new training DVD for homecare workers. *Supporting people with dementia at home* is designed to provide the knowledge and skills needed to provide high quality, person-centred care.

The society says the package is easy to use, comprising a DVD and CD which contain all facilitator notes, learner notes and handouts.

It can be delivered to staff for a one-off cost of £249+VAT. Visit the Alzheimer's Society website for information on its full dementia training portfolio [From Community Care 4 February 2013]

## Hearing charity wants Shropshire help

Action for Hearing Loss wants Shropshire people with hearing loss or tinnitus to take part in studies that it runs. Volunteers will complete short on-line surveys and take part in one-to-one interviews and focus groups.

Roger Wicks, director of research at the charity said: 'Our research panel is a great opportunity for residents from across Shropshire with hearing loss or tinnitus to help shape work.'

For further information go to [svy.mk/researchpanel](http://svy.mk/researchpanel) or email [panel@hearingloss.org.uk](mailto:panel@hearingloss.org.uk)

## Celebrity eBay auction for Small Charity Week

The Small Charity Week celebrity eBay auction, in partnership with eBay and MissionFish, is open to all small charities (those with an annual turnover under £1.5m).

This year's Small Charity Week is from 17-22 June and there are hopes of bettering last year's auction result of more than £12,500 for participating small charities and also boosting a lot of profiles. Charities need to call on celebrity supporters, patrons, businesses or anyone else who can provide an auction item. Once you have secured an item the Small Charity Week team will do the rest. For further information email [info@smallcharity-week.com](mailto:info@smallcharity-week.com) [From VCSA]

## Health centre's lift goes full circle

The walk-in health centre in Monkmoor Road, Shrewsbury, is just that – if you are in a wheelchair or pushing a pram or pushchair, forget it. Just three years after the centre opened the Shropshire County Primary Care Trust has put forward plans for a ramp to replace the current hydraulic lift, which keeps breaking down, to the great disadvantage of those relying on wheels.

The irony is that, when the building was converted from offices, a temporary ramp was installed to replace a faulty hydraulic lift. [Shropshire Star]



# Mobility scooters: 34 ways to be safe and considerate

**A member of SDN's management group recently witnessed a mobility scooter being driven aggressively along a footpath and suggested YourVoice might run an article about scooter etiquette.**

**Bad or aggressive driving by scooter users is not only dangerous to themselves and others, but also allows the mindless minority to feed their prejudices against anyone who is different to them.**

So we spoke to Philip Duffy of Salop Mobility in Market Drayton to see if he could help us with an article. But between us we had a better idea. Much of what an article on scooter etiquette would say is included in advice that Philip gives to all his mobility customers. He has kindly put all this information together as a list of tips, and we are pleased to print it here.

1. Make sure you get a scooter that is appropriate for your needs. Always get professional advice and an initial assessment
2. Make sure you understand the scooter's equipment and how it works
3. Make sure the scooter is regularly serviced through the year - for daily drivers that should be at least every quarter. Always refer back to the manufacturer's handbook
4. Keep the battery fully charged before setting out and re-charge upon return
5. Insurance: although you don't have to have insurance it is strongly advised that you do
6. Plan your journey, expect crowds on busy days and be patient in pedestrian areas
7. Don't drink alcohol and check with your doctor about prescribed medication
8. See and be seen. Wear suitable clothing to protect you from the

weather, and wear fluorescent tops and marking for your scooter. Use you lights if you have them

9. Be careful not to wear loose fitting clothing. Scarves and belts should be tucked away

10. Do not carry children or another adult on board. Don't carry pets either

11. Don't overload the scooter. Buy storage bags/baskets as necessary

12. Be careful of kerbs. Don't use kerbs higher than recommended for your type of scooter.

13. Take care when approaching a corner where a wall or hedge restricts your view. Also, reduce speed when approaching corners

14. Be aware of loose gravel when braking to stop or on a corner

15. Slow down in plenty of time (some scooter have a delay on braking)

16. Always be aware of pedestrians and road users. Pedestrians may not see or hear you approaching, especially from behind. Look carefully before you move off or change direction

Philip points out an obvious but easily forgotten truth: 'You are responsible for your own safety and the safety of others.'

17. Some scooters are only designed for pavement use. Class 3 scooters therefore must be slowed down to 4 mph or less when in use on pavements

18. When riding your scooter on the pavement, give way to pedestrians. In a crowded area, such as a shopping precinct, you must make sure that you don't run into anyone or cause damage. The top speed

allowed on pavements is 4 mph, but this can be too fast in crowded areas

19. To drive a scooter on the road, up to 8 mph, you must have head-lights, rear lights, flashing indicators and a horn

20. Remember that you are driving a very small and vulnerable vehicle! it is wise to avoid busy roads

21. When using the road you must follow the same rules as other traffic and keep to the left

22. You must obey all traffic signs and road signals

23. You must give way to pedestrians

24. At night use all your lights and reflective clothing to be seen

25. Although not recommended, you could use a dual carriageway but you need an extra amber warning flashing light

26. Do not use your scooter on a motorway

27. You are not allowed to use bus lanes or cycle tracks

28. Always indicate when turning

29. When passing parked cars look out for doors opening

30. Remember that other vehicles are almost certainly moving faster than you are and may reach you before you expect them too. Be sure that you have plenty of time to carry out your actions

31. Don't rely on your mirror, it may give a false impression

32. In turning right, it may be safer to pull onto the pavement and use a pedestrian crossing, or stop and wait until safe to do so

33. Use your hazard lights if you cannot move for any reason.

34. Do not park your scooter where it would cause an obstruction and make it difficult for others to use the pavement.

Philip Duffy, Salop Mobility Ltd  
27 Cheshire St, Market Drayton TF9 1PH  
Tel: 0776 681 6003  
email: [info@salop-mobility.co.uk](mailto:info@salop-mobility.co.uk)  
Website: [www.salop-mobility.co.uk](http://www.salop-mobility.co.uk)





## Shropshire Council lead on homelessness among young

Shropshire and Staffordshire Councils have formed a Homelessness Prevention Partnership to develop innovative and shared solutions that will help reduce rough sleeping and single homelessness. Mental health issues often go with such homelessness.

Shropshire Council, on behalf of the partnership, is commissioning a 12 month pilot scheme to test ways to

increase access to the private rented sector and to expand the range of high quality shared accommodation on offer

The councils' analysis indicates a need to increase access to the private rented sector for single homeless and potentially homeless people. [from VCSA]

❑ Internationally known photogra-

pher and film-maker Georgina Cranston spent eight months documenting the lives of homeless women. As the blurb accompanying her film *Lucy* says: 'It's not easy to watch but it offers hope, and her struggle sheds light on issues that so often go ignored.' The film lasts eight minutes and 40 seconds. It's time well spent. Start spending it at [carerwatch.com](http://carerwatch.com) or the St Mungo's website <http://www.mungos.org>

## Dementia Action calls for change in hospitals

**The Dementia Action Alliance is the coming together of organisations from across the charity, public and private sectors in an effort to radically improve the lives of people with dementia.**

Its members are united behind the National Dementia Declaration, a set of seven outcomes developed by people with dementia and their family carers with support from initial signatories.

The Alliance, working in partnership with the NHS Institute for Innovation and Improvement, is launching 'The Right Care: creating dementia friendly hospitals'.

The Right Care is a call to action to transform the acute hospital experience

for people with dementia and for their carers.

Hospitals across England are being asked to commit to becoming dementia friendly and to undertake a series of actions, from improving the design of wards to establishing dementia champions.

To find out more about the Call to Action or to sign up, go to:

[http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/info/2/action\\_plans/165/the\\_right\\_care\\_creating\\_dementia\\_friendly\\_hospitals](http://www.dementiaaction.org.uk/info/2/action_plans/165/the_right_care_creating_dementia_friendly_hospitals)

or email

[dementiaactionalliance@alzheimers.org.uk](mailto:dementiaactionalliance@alzheimers.org.uk)

In Shropshire, the VCSA has been asked by Dementia Action Alliance to promote the National Dementia Declaration. It is liaising with Shropshire Partnership to see how the Alliance links in with the Shropshire Health& Well Being strategy.

## Ask a (politically) silly question...

Asked if he would commission an independent inquiry into government policy on ME, the Secretary of State for Health said 'No'. But he went on to add: 'The department acknowledges that services have not always been sensitive to the needs of people with chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis (CFS/ME.)'

This apparent glimmer of light was quickly snuffed out. The Rt Hon gentleman waxed lyrical in a written reply about the new Health and Social Care Act which 'sets out a range of reforms that will improve outcomes, improve access to services and give people, including those with CFS/ME, more choice and control ...' And, just so we know whose fault it is when things go wrong, he continued: 'We expect NHS professionals to ensure that they fully involve patients and their family and carers to enable them to be part of that decision-making process.'

## Coming to a shelf near you ...

GPs and other health professionals will soon be able to provide prescriptions for patients with mild to moderate mental health conditions for self-help books, which will be accessible in all English libraries. 'Books on Prescription' is a national scheme for England developed by the Reading Agency in partnership with the Society of Chief Librarians, and with the support of Arts Council England and the Department of Health.

It will also offer people mood-boosting novels and poetry plus social reading activities like reading groups. Libraries will be able to help claimants of Universal Credit when it comes into force - providing internet access and support to complete the application and manage their account online. Librarians will also be able to signpost claimants to local advice agencies where needed.



# Home residents with dementia 'are more likely to be admitted to hospital, stay longer, and die there'

The words in the headline are a warning from the Care Quality Commission, based on an analysis of hospital statistics in England from July 2011 to June 2012. The regulator found that:

- Care home residents with dementia were admitted to hospital with 'avoidable conditions' significantly more frequently than people without dementia in 52% of primary care trust areas. Avoidable admissions include urinary infections, dehydration, pressure ulcers and severe malnutrition.
- In 29% of hospital admissions for a person with dementia, the dementia was not recorded for their most recent admission by hospital staff, despite having been recorded in the past.
- In 96% of NHS acute trusts, people with dementia stayed significantly longer than those without the condition when admitted in an emergency.
- In 70% of trusts, people with dementia were readmitted significantly more than people without the condition.
- In 85% of trusts, people with dementia were significantly more likely to die in hospital than those without the condition.

Commenting on the CQC's findings, the Alzheimer's Society said they showed care home staff were not being trained adequately to support people with dementia and suggested the NHS was not commissioning adequate healthcare services to meet the needs of care home residents with dementia.

This was leading to residents deteriorating and being admitted to hospital, where a lack of knowledge and training on the part of NHS staff resulted in their dementia not being identified or their needs not being appropriately met.

'This report lays bare the scandalous extent to which the NHS is failing people with dementia,' said Alzheimer's Society chief executive Jeremy Hughes. 'Hospitals are supposed to be places of recovery but people with dementia are going in too often, staying too long and dying in a hospital bed much more than those with any other condition.'

'A quarter of hospital beds are occupied by someone with dementia. Staff better trained in dementia care will reduce the length of hospital stays and save the NHS millions of pounds.'

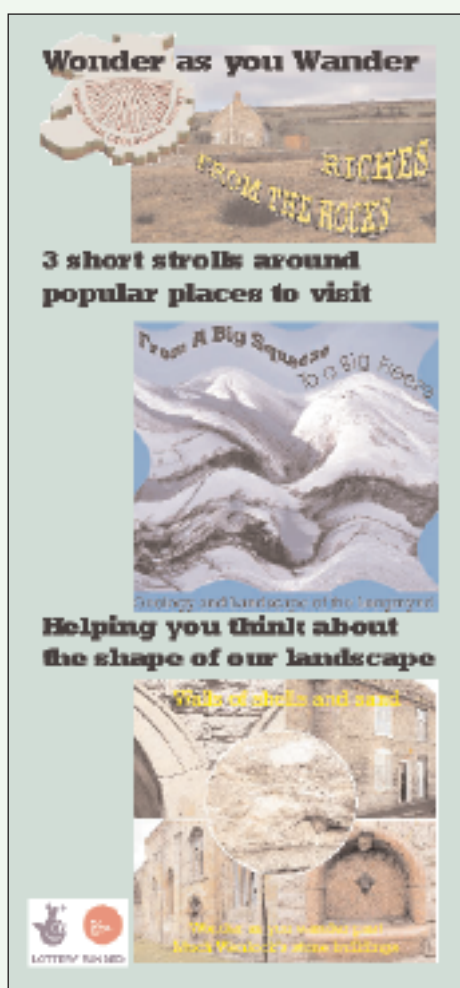
[From Social Care 12.03.2013]

Shropshire Geological Society has produced details of three disability friendly walks in the south of the county. In their words, this is 'A series of short routes taking you around three popular destinations, making you think about what you can see in a different way.'

The countryside around The Bog on the Stiperstones is quiet and wild now but it was not always like this. Why are there several ruined buildings? What are the ponds for? Why does the grass not grow properly? Follow the trail around the old mine workings and find out.

Why is the Longmynd the shape that it is? How did the valleys form? This easy walk from the National Trust car park will let you see the clues to the past that you might otherwise miss.

What are the buildings made of in Much Wenlock? How were those rocks made? Where did they come from? Take a gentle stroll around the town and answer these questions and more!



Written by Andrew Jenkinson, Projects Officer for Shropshire Geological Society, each leaflet contains route information and an easy to follow map.

They are available free from local outlets or online from [www.shropshiregeology.org.uk/wonder/default.htm](http://www.shropshiregeology.org.uk/wonder/default.htm)



# Views sought to set social care standard

**Care and Support**  
Minister Norman Lamb is conducting a three month consultation to establish a full set of quality standards and guidance for social care.

His department is seeking ideas from care users, their families and carers, service commissioners, care providers and front line staff to help decide on future topics for National Institute for Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidance and standards.

Official opinion seems to be that a full set of NICE quality standards and guidance will help improve the quality of social care. Topics for discussion in the consultation include:

- falls
- deprivation of liberty safeguards
- medicines management in home-based settings

'Improving the standard and quality of care and support services is one of our top priorities,' said Lamb. 'From April of 2014, NICE will join us in this challenge and take on an important role in driving up the quality of care.'

'That is why we have started a consultation in which everyone can have their say on which topics NICE should focus on for future work. So please do get involved.'

NICE provides evidence-based guidance to support healthcare professionals and others to make sure that the care they provide is of the best possible quality and offers the best value for money. The 12 week consultation ends on 26 April.

For further information visit:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/health/2013/02/nice-socialcare-2/>

**By making space available for paid advertising SDN hopes to offset the costs of the printed version of YourVoice, which is proving a great asset to readers who do not use computers.**

**This is a basic advertisement space - 98mm by 66mm. It costs £10 per issue, and advertisers get a free design and copywriting service. Their product or service will be seen both by our print and online readerships. It's a bargain! Interested?**

## Statistical study shows the reality behind rhetoric about disability

**A couple of months ago we began publishing stats on disability from a new statistical summary that gives a 'snapshot' of disability across the entire United Kingdom in the year 2010. Here is the second instalment.**

It is worth repeating that the authors had to grapple with the question of definitions. For instance, what exactly is a disabled person?

Different surveys produce different estimates of the number of disabled people according to the definition used.

In this summary most of the information is based on the definitions used in the Disability Discrimination Acts of 1995 and 2005.

### Employment

At 2009, there were more than 6.9 million or 18.3% of working age people (one in five) who were disabled.

The average employment rate for the working age population is 74% but the employment rate of working age disabled people is 49.7%

The gap between the employment rate of disabled people and the UK average employment rate is 24.3%

### Ethnicity and geography

People of Bangladeshi and Pakistani origin have the highest rates of disability of all ethnic groups

Rates of disability are highest within deprived and poorer areas and in areas with a legacy of heavy industry, especially coal mining

According to the 2001 Census, Wales has the highest proportion (23.3%) of people with limiting long-term illness, followed by North-east England (22.7%). The South-east and London are the lowest English regions at 15.5%

[From [www.papworth.org.uk](http://www.papworth.org.uk) Disability in the United Kingdom, January 2010]

*Next time - figures from around the world, putting ourselves in an international context*





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**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](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net) or write to him: Peter Staples, 8 Gorse Lane, Bayston Hill, Shrewsbury, SY3 0JJ**

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

**Telford & Wrekin 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](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](mailto:advice@a4u.org.uk)

**Autonomy -** self-help and social for Aspergers in Shropshire, Telford and Borders - [autonomyschropshire@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:autonomyschropshire@yahoo.co.uk)

**Care Farming West Midlands -** [www.carefarmingwm.org.uk](http://www.carefarmingwm.org.uk); [stewart.scull@carefarmingwm.org.uk](mailto:stewart.scull@carefarmingwm.org.uk) or Mobile: 07957 839634

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

**Community Council of Shropshire -** [www.shropshire-ccc.org.uk/](http://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](http://www.dasharts.org)

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

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

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

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

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

**Enable -** supported employment services for people with disabilities in Shropshire and Telford, Unit 4, Owen House, Radbrook Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 9SR [enable@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:enable@shropshire.gov.uk). 01743 276900

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

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

**Listen Not Label -** User Led Organisation for disabled 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](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups)  
PACC provides an index of support groups for children with disabilities in Shropshire. The following groups are listed on the PACC site. Where possible we list direct contacts, but refer to the PACC site for full details)  
Allsorts (South Shropshire, for behavioural conditions) 07813043841  
[www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/71-allsorts](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/71-allsorts)  
Bridgnorth Buddies (Parent-led, Special Needs) 07968 544182 or 07790 780631; email [Buddies20@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:Buddies20@yahoo.co.uk)  
[www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/72-bridgnorth-buddies](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/72-bridgnorth-buddies)  
Haughton School, Telford, drop-in for parents of pupils with more complex special needs) 01952 387551 or 01952 387552; [www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/83-haughton-school-drop-in](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/83-haughton-school-drop-in)  
Onevision (visual impairment) 01952 385269  
[/www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/77-onevision](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/77-onevision)  
STACS (Aspergers, 16+) 01952 254594 or 01939 260273; email [louise.griffiths@carerscontact.org.uk](mailto:louise.griffiths@carerscontact.org.uk)  
[www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/76-stacs](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk/parent-and-carer-groups/76-stacs)  
Autistic Supporters (if you suspect your child is autistic, or has recently been diagnosed) 01743 356298  
[www.shropshireautisticsupporters.co.uk/?q=node/2](http://www.shropshireautisticsupporters.co.uk/?q=node/2)  
Deaf Children's Society 01952 770019; email: [nat4sdcs@aol.com](mailto:nat4sdcs@aol.com)  
[www.ndcs.org.uk](http://www.ndcs.org.uk)  
Down's Syndrome 01743 233802, 01948 880110 or 01588 640319  
[www.dsa-shropshire.org.uk](http://www.dsa-shropshire.org.uk)  
Dyslexia Association 01743 231205; [www.thesda.org.uk](http://www.thesda.org.uk)  
Wheelchair Users 01743 350460 or 01952 252243  
SKiD (Shropshire Kids Insulin Dependent, associated with Diabetes UK) 01743 873724 or 01743 364366; email: [home@morkot.go-plus.net](mailto:home@morkot.go-plus.net)  
SPECTRUM (Autistic Support group) email: [netgriffiths@fsmail.net](mailto:netgriffiths@fsmail.net)  
[www.spectrum.t83.net/](http://www.spectrum.t83.net/)  
Telford STAA (supports parents/carers of children with ASD, ADHD, and challenging behaviour) 01952 457439 or 01952 617758; email: [julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk](mailto:julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk) or [lesley@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk](mailto:lesley@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk)  
Steps (help for parents/carers, lower limb abnormalities) 01743 355363  
PODS (Parents Opening Doors - Telford, forum for views on services) 01952457439; email: [julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk](mailto:julie@parentpartnership-shropshireandtelford.org.uk)

## 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](mailto:meconnect@meassociation.org.uk)

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

**Multiple Sclerosis Society -** 01952 250038;  
[www.mssociety.org.uk/telford](http://www.mssociety.org.uk/telford)

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

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

**OSCA Citizen Advocacy -** Roy Fletcher Centre, 12-17 Cross Hill, Shrewsbury, SY1 1JE; 01743 368370; [info@oscacitizenadvocacy.org.uk](mailto:info@oscacitizenadvocacy.org.uk);  
[www.oscacitizenadvocacy.org.uk](http://www.oscacitizenadvocacy.org.uk)

**Parent and Carer Council (PACC) Shropshire -** making parents and carers aware of developments that affect their children and giving them a voice - [www.paccshropshire.org.uk](http://www.paccshropshire.org.uk); PO Box 4774, Shrewsbury, SY1 9EX; 0845 661 2205; [enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@paccshropshire.org.uk)

**Parent Partnership Service -** [www.parentpartnership-shropshire-andtelford.org.uk/#/useful-links/4551168089](http://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](mailto:info@podstelford.org); [www.podstelford.org](http://www.podstelford.org)

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

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

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**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, ericahorner2@googlemail.com

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

**Shropshire ME Group** - www.shropshiremegroup.org.uk; 07516 401097

**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

**Sight Loss Shropshire** (formerly Voluntary Association for the Blind) The Lantern, Meadow Farm Drive, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, SY1 4NG; 01743 210808; SVABadmin@shropshire.gov.uk

**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** (see Sight Loss Shropshire)

## 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](mailto: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](http://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. 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](mailto:mhishropshire.enquiries@mearsgroup.co.uk)

## Mental Health first aid course

Shropshire Independence Advocacy Scheme is running a mental health first aid course on 12 and 17 April at The Redwoods Centre, in Somerby Drive, Bicton Heath, Shrewsbury. Contact Carys Baskeyfield at [carys.baskeyfield@siasonline.org](mailto:carys.baskeyfield@siasonline.org)

## Health Information Week set for big push in July

Health Information Week is a campaign to improve access to health information, and this year it runs from 1-7 July. In the West Midlands, staff from local authorities, public libraries, NHS, the voluntary sector, and independent information and advice centres have been working together to make their health resources more available to the public.

In most areas local libraries and information centres will have extra health information available, leaflets for you to take away or sessions to show how to use the computer to find good quality health information.

Look out for posters in your area or visit your local library to find out more. There will be more information available on the EQUIP area on NHS Local's learning site - <http://learning.nhslocal.nhs.uk/feature-list/health-information>  
Contact [sarah.greening@westmidlands.nhs.uk](mailto:sarah.greening@westmidlands.nhs.uk) for more information. [From Health Information News]

## ME group meets across county

Shropshire ME Group holds informal meetings around the county every month. All are welcome to drop in for a chat, or for more details call the numbers given  
**Bridgnorth** (01902 758822) first Tuesday from around 12-2.00 at Parlour's Hall Hotel

**Oswestry** (01691 657730) third Thursday, Wynnstay Hotel, Church Street, 11.00-1.00, phone to confirm venue.

**Shrewsbury** (01743 356018) first Thursday, 11 am and 1 pm front foyer lounge of Lord Hill Hotel, Abbey Foregate

**Montgomery/South Shropshire** (01686 669685) In Montgomery about every two months, usually on Wednesdays. Contact [karen@kandm46.plus.com](mailto:karen@kandm46.plus.com)

## Broseley events for carers

Wyldwoods charity, which is supported by Telford & Wrekin Council and Community Health Services, runs many events for carers. Wyldwoods is based at Dean Corner Farmhouse, Broseley, just off the B4376 Broseley to Much Wenlock road. Coming up are:

Thursday 4 April - Young Carers - Creative art activities  
Thursday- 11 April 2013 - Carers and Cared for - Relax and Unwind - a chance to meditate and have some peaceful time

## County blind group changes name

Shropshire Voluntary Association for the Blind has changed its name to Sight Loss Shropshire. At the moment all its other details remain the same, and these are: The Lantern, Meadow Farm Drive, Harlescott, Shrewsbury, SY1 4NG; 01743 210808; SVABadmin@shropshire.gov.uk



# Spring 'All In' full of info for 2013

**Shropshire Council has just produced the spring edition of *All In*, its magazine packed with info about activities for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs. It starts with the good news that Short Breaks funding for 2013/14 has been confirmed and Short Breaks will begin from this month.**

The 'All In' team are hoping to get photos of children and young people taking part in activities which could be used as part of a new photo banner for the activity programme or as part of the main pages within the activity programme. Parents who would like photos to be considered can send them via email to [harry.cade@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:harry.cade@shropshire.gov.uk) with a sentence stating that they give permission for them to be used and at what *All In* activity they were taken at. There is no guarantee that all photos will be used.

The magazine emphasises that Short Break opportunities can only be accessed by Shropshire children and young people up to and including age 18 who have a disability or additional needs that make attending mainstream clubs, groups or facilities difficult. To get an All In Registration Form contact Harry Cade on 01743 250225 or email [harry.cade@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:harry.cade@shropshire.gov.uk). Alternatively, the form can be downloaded via Shropshire Council's website [www.shropshire.gov.uk](http://www.shropshire.gov.uk) (search: 'Short Breaks' and follow the links to Short Breaks 'All In' activity programmes).

## Moving and Grooving

The Moving and Grooving Team continues to provide ongoing group support at the Shrewsbury Sports Village Saturday Club and Cycling

Sessions. The team will also be supporting staff at the new swimming sessions across the county.

## Riding

The Perry Riding & Carriage Driving Centre at Yeaton, near Baschurch, is privately owned and the Group Organiser will do everything possible to provide a session to suit individuals. If the regular days and times of the sessions are not suitable, please contact the centre to see what they can do to help. For further information call Jane Barker on 01939 261147

## Sports mix at Town ground

Shrewsbury Town FC Community Sports Trust is offering two weekly Activity Development Centres including match day visits for children and young people with disabilities or additional needs. The sessions will be delivered in half termly blocks and coached by STFC Community Staff. They will offer a variety of sports which may include: Athletics, basketball, cricket, football, hockey, netball, and tag rugby, all of which will focus on the FUN-damentals. The aim is to help build confidence and improve social skills in a fun and safe environment. For details contact Lee Pugh on 01743 289177 ext 216 or Jenny Daniel 01743 289177 ext 239

## Taking Part

Taking Part runs 'Art Start' and 'Art Cart' which provide creative opportunities for young people 7-18 with learning and or physical disabilities. Sessions are artist-led, structured and well supported with trained staff. Young people explore their own creativity whilst trying out new things. There are locations in Oswestry, Bridgnorth and Shrewsbury. For further information contact Julie on 01952 597434 or 07970 451933

## YV's point of view: Bedroom tax under spotlight

There's a joke that 99% of politicians ruin the reputation of all the honest ones. YV couldn't possibly comment, but it was interesting to read about Ed Milliband and David Cameron arguing over the bedroom tax in Parliament.

Milliband said hundreds of thousands of disabled people will lose an average of £700 a year, while Cameron argued that the Government was simply ending a "spare room subsidy" in social housing.

Lots of mindless political posturing and tribal abuse-swapping followed, but the really important point is that this iniquitous proposal had forced its way to the despatch box at the House of Commons.

If common sense and common decency ultimately prevail it won't be thanks to politicians, but because people with disabilities, their families and carers joined forces with other despised minorities, the poor and the chronically ill, to flex their political muscle. People power can still change things – it's just a pity it isn't used more often.

**All SDN members are welcome to express opinions in YV.**

Email us at  
[newsletter@shropshire-disability.net](mailto:newsletter@shropshire-disability.net)  
or write to the editor at  
8 Gorse Lane, Bayston Hill,  
Shrewsbury, SY3 0JJ