

Information and news for disabled and older people
and family carers

Edition 100 – March 2011

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The deadline for article contributions for our next newsletter is the 2nd May
Don't forget the prize for every star letter/article printed is **£25!**

A regular column to keep you up to date on developments at SIL, in Herefordshire Social Care and nationally.



Hello Everyone,

'We don't accomplish anything in this world alone ... whatever happens is the result of all the weavings of individual threads from one to another that creates something'. (Sandra Day O'Connor)

SIL is supporting the creation of a new organisation - **Herefordshire Disability United (HDU)**. The aim of HDU is to bring together the individual threads relating to disability in Herefordshire.

Why is another organisation needed? Well for a long time there has been no united voice for disabled people in the county. Family carers have excellent support from Herefordshire Carers Support, but no equivalent independent organisation for disabled people exists.

We believe it is more than ever important that disabled people and their organisations come together to present a united voice. The independence of disabled people is

threatened by cuts to benefits and services, but opportunities also exist to participate more fully as local Councils' are expected to engage with disabled people and family carers.

So please support this new voice for disabled people and family carers by attending the launch event at Bartestree Village Hall on the 6th April, and help make Herefordshire a better place for disabled people and the carers who support them.



Focus on Forum and Task Group

SIL Service User Forum

The SIL Service User Forum meets every six weeks to discuss current issues.

At the Last Forum Roy and Sylvie Nicholls came to the forum to

discuss setting up

Herefordshire Disability

United Their aim is to unite

all disabled people and disability organisations.

across the county. Launch

day will be on the 6th April 2011 (see page 7). Also, Mark Watson, the Putting People First Programme Manager came to discuss how he is trying to build a fair system for personalisation in Herefordshire, within the financial constraints. Herefordshire are rolling out personalisation and aim to have it in place within the next 3-6 months. All new Service users and people who are undergoing reviews will be put onto a personal budget. If you request a Personal Budget you cannot be turned down.



ILS Task Group

The ILS Task Group meets every two weeks between 12 and 4 at the Fred Bulmer Centre. The group has had funding to purchase film making equipment and has made one DVD called 'How to be a good support worker' which has been used as a training tool by Disabled People and Social

Health Care students and professionals.

The group is currently producing a 'talking heads' DVD which, again, will be used to promote, inform and train. No experience of film making is necessary—just a

willingness to get stuck in!

New members welcome!

Co-production of AGM

At both recent meetings and following on from last years theme, Wendy Rutter-Butcher

discussed the idea of co-production of the SIL 2011 AGM. Members from both groups will be represented in a steering group to plan the process and make the decisions about theme, content, speakers, entertainment, location, refreshments etc.

This group will meet at the start of each ILS Task Group meeting (between 12 and 1).

If you would like more information on how to get involved and put your opinions into the mix in this please contact

Wendy@s4il.co.uk

For details of future Forum or Task Group meetings, please see SIL website s4il.co.uk and click on 'Become a Volunteer' and 'Future meeting dates' or if you would like more information on how to get involved at SIL, please contact amy@s4il.co.uk 01432 353397.

Switchover Help Scheme

FREE Assistance with switching your TV over to digital



TV is going digital all over the UK and soon the traditional signal will be turned off in your area. If you don't have digital TV by the time of the switchover, your screen will go blank.

The Switchover Scheme is run by the BBC, under

an agreement with the Government. The scheme assists older and disabled people who may find it difficult to switch over to digital TV.

If eligible, an approved installer can be arranged to come out and supply everything you need to switch your TV set over to digital with no need to change your TV.

Am I eligible?

The Switchover Help Scheme is available to

- those aged 75 or over
- OR
- has lived in a care home for six months or more
- OR
- receives Disability Allowance, Attendance Allowance, Mobility Supplement
- OR
- registered blind or partially sighted

You will not be asked to pay if you are in receipt of Pension Credit, Income Support, Income related employment and support allowance or Job Seekers allowance. The cost for the service is £40 if you do not receive any of the benefits mentioned above.

For more information phone the Switchover help scheme on 0800 40 85 900 or visit www.helpscheme.co.uk

Grants Available for Fuel Assistance

The following Trusts are awarding utility grants and other assistance payments to 'enable individuals to make a fresh start and to relieve fuel poverty'. All are managed by Charis Grants Ltd and are available to cover the payments of gas and electricity debts.

EDF Energy Trust <http://www.edfenergytrust.org.uk/index.php?page=grantsorg>

British Gas <http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/>

Npower <http://www.npowerenergytrust.org.uk/>

ACT Advocacy Service

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

People are entitled to be in control of their own lives. Sometimes they may find themselves in a position where their ability to exercise choice or represent their own interests is limited. In these circumstances advocates can help ensure that an individual's views and needs are heard, respected and acted upon.

Act Advocacy work in partnership with you to support you in expressing your views and needs. They promote social inclusion, equality and social justice.

Act Advocacy is a charitable organisation funded by Comic Relief. They are part of Herefordshire Mind and have been established since 2006. Act Advocacy speak as an independent, confidential service.

The organisation work with adults living in Herefordshire who suffer significant mental distress and have an issue that Advocacy can help with.

ACT ADVOCACY CAN HELP

- Support you to access and receive quality services from statutory and voluntary organisations including: CMHT, Social Services, Residential Homes, Mind, Child & Family Services, Charitable Organisations.
- Help you identify services you may be entitled to and ensure these services meet

your needs and requirements.

- Ensure you receive fair and equitable treatment within these services.
- Support you in overcoming obstacles and enable you to access appropriate expertise.

PRACTICALITIES:

ACT Can Help You With:

- Making complaints
- Writing letters
- Preparing for meetings
- Accompanying you to meetings, reviews, tribunals, court etc.
- Speaking with you, or on your behalf to professionals

LIMITATIONS OF THE SERVICE

There are some areas of work that other organisations specialise in and as such for the following issues Act would signpost you to specialist agencies:

- Benefits
- Finance
- Private Company disputes
- Non instructed Advocacy

To discuss if Advocacy can help you or to arrange an appointment please call:

01432 344334



For better
mental health

INVEST IN IMAGINATION

Independence Using Assistive Technology

FREE EVENT

In partnership with Age Concern Hereford and Localities, Herefordshire Carers Support (HCS) and Herefordshire Council, SIL are hosting a one day event which will bring telecare and assistive technology to disabled and older people, family carers and Health Care Professionals in Herefordshire.

Assistive Technology (AT) is any equipment that helps people to do things they would not be able to do otherwise. It can be linked to a remote monitoring centre or be a stand alone device. AT includes mobility devices such as walkers and wheelchairs, as well as equipment that makes computers or other information technologies easier to use. It can also help to manage chronic long term conditions such as blood pressure, diabetes, heart and lung conditions.

Technology can provide substantial benefits in caring and support situations. It can enhance an individual's safety, dignity and independence and different systems will suit different people and situations. The requirements and wishes of everyone involved, need to be respected and every effort needs to be made to ensure all parties understand how the equipment and any

related service will work. This event has been designed with this in mind will address many of these issues.

Who pays for the Technology?

If you already have some help towards the cost of care and support, you may be able to use some of this funding to pay for Assistive Technology. In some instances it can be a real saving. For example having a prefilled medicine dispenser linked to a Telecare provider may reduce the need for somebody to call just to check that medication has been taken.

The conference is **free** to all Disabled and Older people and Carers and a **free buffet lunch is provided.**

On the day:

- Find out how AT can help you
- Try out different AT in the provider market place
- Ask the experts

To reserve your place at 'Invest in Imagination' visit www.s4il.co.uk and click on AT Event and complete the online booking form or email sueblack@herefordshirecarers.co.uk or phone SIL on 01432 353397 or HCS on 01432 356068

Herefordshire Disability United (HDU)



Herefordshire Disability United is the newly formed organisation specifically devoted to all disabled people living in Herefordshire. So why do we need yet another organisation devoted to disabled people?

Within the market towns and rural communities many individual support groups already exist and it is these which HDU aim to unite to become a stronger voice to be reckoned with.

A website is currently under construction and individual disability

groups will have their own link so that events can be promoted to a wider audience.

Consultation documents from both government and public sector can be emailed directly to HDU members, bringing timely information directly to the people who are affected.

There is usually the opportunity to respond to these documents and this makes the process more efficient.

Also, Public sector organisations tend not work with individuals or minor organisations, but will work with a major 'united' group. Hints of this from some Herefordshire sectors have already been received so the future is promising.

SIL have agreed to endorse HDU, and the SIL board are financing the HDU inaugural meeting to be held at all Bartestree Village Hall on Wednesday 6th April 2011.

Refreshments from 10.30 to start at 11:00am. programme is under construction, which will combine disabled people/ carers/public sector and individual support groups, and everyone is invited to attend. We will establish what is needed in Herefordshire and highlight priority issues to be addressed. All groups should bring a voice to the meeting and let us know their concerns. Please watch the local media for further updates and tell others who may benefit.

United has a vacancy for a Membership Secretary, and is also seeking business connections. Membership forms will be available on 6th April 2011. If you wish to know more, or want to register for the event please contact the HDU founder, Sylvia Nicholas by email sylvia.nicholls@btinternet.com. Or phone Sylvia on 07817 473813.

Best Feet Forward - Getting the Socks on and Off Independently

Elsbeth McPherson, who has MS, has been searching for a sock aid which will 'do the job' for those both with limited movement in trunk, legs and, in Elspeth's case, in her hands. The device supplied through the OT service was too difficult to manipulate and broke within days of use. After searching the internet she found a new, young company www.sock-aid.co.uk. Elspeth says "The benefit of this product is that it is stable, it comes with a device to lift the sock aid to your lap to fold your socks or tights over, then using the same 'hook' get the device back to floor level. The device also helps remove socks. It has anti-slip grips on its base and really has revolutionised my

morning routine. I have foot drop in both feet as well as difficulties with bending and hand dexterity. Please mention my name to Daniel, who runs the Company, and has kindly offered a discount off the market price if you do so. I can send out leaflets to anyone unable to access the internet: contact can be made with me on 01531 670847".



Equality Act 2010

FROM 1 October, 2010, the *Equality Act 2010* replaced various targeted pieces of anti discrimination legislation such as the DDA. Disabled people are now protected from indirect discrimination, making it unlawful to have a policy that applies to everyone but particularly disadvantages disabled people. The Act also introduces protection from "discrimination arising from disability", which occurs when a disabled person is treated unfavourably because of something connected to their disability. As before, businesses and service providers of all types have a duty to make "reasonable adjustments" to ensure that people with disabilities can access their services to the same standard as non-disabled customers. If you believe you have been discriminated against, harassed or treated unfairly by a person or organisation providing any kind of service, facilities, goods or public functions, you can: make a complaint to the person or, organisation directly yourself, use an alternative dispute resolution service, so that someone else helps you sort it out, make a court claim (within six months of the discrimination occurring) You can get advice from the *Equality And Human Rights Commission*, whose helpline number is 0845 604 6610. The Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) can also provide free and impartial advice.

Vitalise Centre Breaks

Vitalise offers an alternative to traditional respite care. They have three purpose built and CQC registered Centres across England and offer short breaks with 24-hour on-call nursing care for adults in a relaxing holiday environment.



Each break is full board and offers a great range of excursions and entertainment. All Centres have restaurants, licensed bars and lovely gardens to relax and meet new people. The Vitalise centre in Southport also has a fully accessible heated indoor pool.

Vitalise offers fully accessible adventure activities for families, individuals and groups at their Centre in Lanlivery, Cornwall.

The Centre is set in beautiful green countryside with beaches and attractions such as The Eden Project just a short drive away. A wide range of on-site activities include a challenge course, a small working farm, climbing tower, nature reserve, activity lake and archery range.

Vitalise Churchtown offers fully accessible self-catering lodges and are ideal for guests who wish to take a break in the stunning Cornish countryside with family or friends. Each lodge sleeps 6-9 people and allows groups to have a traditional holiday experience in accessible accommodation

There are a number of ways making a Vitalise break more affordable. They are able to fund customers directly for a break in certain instances and can advise on possible funding sources from local authorities, other charities and organisations.

Visit www.vitalise.org.uk or call 0845 345 1970 to find out more about respite break provision and to view Vitalise funding and travel advice.



Are you interested in meeting new friends, increasing your social circle and expanding your skills and Knowledge? If so, Services for Independent Living have an exciting opportunity for a volunteer to help out on the reception desk in the office.

Working along side SIL staff and other volunteers you will have all the support and training you need. If you would like more information about the role, please contact Ann Sparks on 01432 353397 or e-mail ann@s4il.co.uk



Photograph competition

To be in with a chance of winning £30.00 we are asking our service users to send in photographs of themselves which best demonstrate the essence of independence. SIL would like to use the winning photos in future publications and on our website with your agreement. Photographs should be sent in to Vicky George by e-mail: vickyg@s4il.co.uk or post to : Services for Independent Living Rockfield Road, Hereford HR1 2UA



Cheaper CRB Checks

To reduce costs, as of the 1st of Mar 2011, SIL will be changing CRB providers to Lloyds Law.

Employers who use the DPSS will also benefit from a reduced rate from £57.00 per CRB to £45.60.

If you would like support to do a CRB check for a new employee please contact a DP advisor.

This newsletter is available in colour to view or download on the SIL website. It can also be made available on CD, large print and in Braille on request. You can also subscribe through the website to receive the newsletter by email.

www.s4il.co.uk

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