

Information and news for disabled and older people,
and family carers

Edition 98 – September 2010

In this issue.....

- | Pg | |
|-------|---|
| 2. | Marion's Column |
| 3. | Carriage Driving Success |
| 4. | Tributes to Gill Owen |
| 5. | The Future of Attendance Allowance |
| 6 / 7 | SIL AGM and Service User Conference |
| 8. | Get involved - Service User Forum |
| 9. | Disability news - Threats of cuts for Services for Elderly people Government Targets Disability Benefits |
| 10 | Families of Disabled Children 'Struggle to Pay Bills' |
| 11 | New safety regulations for Scooters / Driving refresher course |
| 12. | Useful information / adverts |



The deadline for article contributions for our next newsletter is the 1st November
Don't forget the prize for every star letter/article printed is **£25!**

Chief Executive SIL

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



The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities

What does it mean for you?

The **Convention** is an agreement between different countries. Countries who sign the agreement must make sure disabled people get their rights. The UK government has signed the convention and must now stick to the agreement.

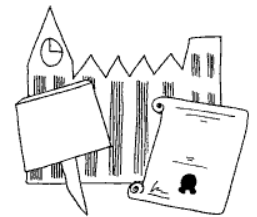
Rights are things that should happen for everyone.

The Convention does not give disabled people any new rights. But it does say what countries should do to make sure disabled people get the same rights as everyone else.



These include the right to:

- Life
- Have the same chances and rights at work as other people
- Have the best possible health
- Live in the community
- Say what you think
- Go to school, college or university



It is important that you know your rights and how to challenge unfair actions and decisions. Please see our website for more information about the convention, your rights and what the government has to do.

With best wishes,

Marion

Carriage Driving Success!

Star
Story!

Nick Jones started using a personal budget (PB) about 18 months ago, and he has felt very much supported by SIL over this time.

His PB has enabled him to become increasingly independent, most significantly he has been able to move out of his parents' house and into a flat of his own.

Using his personal budget Nick has been able to pursue his passion of Carriage Driving. Nick started Carriage driving in 2000 through the RDA after Horse riding became too painful for him; Nick now owns his own horse which has increased his independence further.



Nick trains with his horse and carriage once a week, fitting it around his part-time work and volunteering at the RDA.

Nick enters into many competitions, in the exercise vehicle class and has his PA's with him while he is in the carriage to help him. He has to prepare his horse for the show as Nick and the Horse both have to be immaculately presented.

It can take a whole day to prepare for the event. Nick has won many categories which he has entered including being the reserve champion in the exercise vehicle class. Nick said, "Without my personal budget I would not be able to live as independently as I do, and I would definitely not be able to do my carriage driving".

Nick is also a Peer supporter and shares his experiences of PB's with others who are looking into getting a PB.

If you would like more information on PB's please contact the office to talk to one of our advisors 01432 353397 alternatively visit our website www.s4il.co.uk



Gill Owen 1957 - 2010

Service User and former member of staff Gill Owen sadly passed away in July.

Below are tributes from friends & colleagues.



Gill and I worked together at SIL between 2004 and 2008 and during that time we became firm friends. I very much enjoyed working with Gill and always admired her dedicated and forthright approach and her ability to see things in many different ways.

David Norsworthy

Personally, Gill was somebody who taught me an awful lot about disability issues and somebody I greatly admired for her dedication to work and her family.

Wendy Rutter-Butcher

I will always be grateful to Gill, not only for all the time, effort and exceptional work she put into the Service User Forum, helping to 'get it off the ground' and to make it the success it is today, but also for all the support and encouragement (and confidence!) Gill always gave to me in chairing the Forum and to all service users.

Maggie O Neill

Gill was always using her gift of practical empathy, to help us service users, dealing with each person's need as it came along. When I needed her advice once, she spent about 30 minutes helping me to see that in my home one person was verbally abusing me. Her rallying phrase, 'Oh! Come on, you can do it!' was always used wisely, and was accepted as encouragement because we saw it being worked out by Gill in her own life.

Anthea Penfold

Services for Independent Living

Website: www.s4il.co.uk

E-mail: contactus@s4il.co.uk

Tel: 01432 353397

Fax: 01432 267599

Fears Remain on the Future of Attendance Allowance

By Ian Macrae

The Government has once again indicated that Attendance Allowance may be rolled up into a national social care service, contributing to fears that the allowance may disappear.

In its published response to a petition which asked for assurance on the future of Attendance Allowance and Disability Living



Allowance on the Number 10 website, the Government states: "We have ruled out bringing Disability Living Allowance for those under the age of 65 into the national care service."

But the response also says: "We are looking to see if bringing together a new care and support system and some disability benefits into a single system may be a better way forward."

Attendance Allowance is currently paid to

disabled people over the age of 65 who need help and support with personal care.

Disabled people over 65, or those who become disabled after that age are not

entitled to claim Disability Living Allowance.

This response is likely to disappoint disabled campaigners who have lobbied for the retention of

Attendance Allowance, among other things, through the petition on the Number 10 site.

The Government's final decision will not be made clear until the publication of an anticipated white paper on social care which is expected ahead of the forthcoming general election.

Extracted from www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Driving Refresher Course

People used to drive for pleasure but driving has become faster and more congested now. If you would like to update you skills or feel you have lost confidence, a refresher session could be the answer. Herefordshire Council is sponsoring two hour practical driving refresher sessions for Herefordshire residents aged 70 or over. At a subsidised cost of £10 you will receive two hours induction in your own car from an approved driving instructor. Ring Herefordshire Council on 01432 260946.



SIL AGM and Annual Conference

Our AGM and Conference event in July was a great success and we were very pleased to see so many service users and social health care professionals there.

Our first speaker, Dr Martin Stevens talked to us about his own research about the rural implications of personalisation.

Secondly,



Above: Dr Martin Stevens

Herefordshire's Acting Director of Adult Social Care, Wendy Fabbro, spoke and gave a presentation about the challenges, opportunities and intentions in our County. How the Local Authority needed to reduce budget and demand by 25% by looking at charging, self assessment, community action (e.g. community networks versus day opportunities), volunteering, fairer pricing, open competition, staffing savings, electronic monitoring and Personal Budgets.



Sally Percival and Alan Crone, who lead a Department of Health group to develop policies and guidance within the 'Putting People First' white paper, then shared their positive experiences of co-production. This led nicely on to our final presentation of the morning by our own Peer to Peer support team (facilitated by Angela Higham and Helen Whitmore) who showed how SIL are already working together (co-producing) with Service Users in Herefordshire for better outcomes.

Below L to R: Andrew Cann, Ginnie Jaques, and joint winners of the Support Worker Of The Year Award Elaine Powell and Mike Lawrence



They advised the importance of and value of Peer Support and of being equal partners, being listened to, being valued and making a difference. The overwhelming feedback from Service Users who are involved with Peer Support is that *“It makes us feel proud”*.



Above: Comedian, Laurence Clark

exceptional and that Laurence Clark’s routine was ‘hilarious’ and a fantastic way to end the conference. If you were unable to attend or would like a refresher, all presentations are on our website s4il.co.uk and can be accessed at the bottom of the home page

All agreed that the lunch provided was

Thank you to our Photographer Ben Jones

Service User Survey

Thank you to all service users who took part in our questionnaire. Numbers who responded were disappointing. However the overall feedback was very positive and the clear messages were:

- Very positive responses which value the SIL service
- Ability to get involved is important to Service Users
- Feeling of increased Independence
- Preference for disabled people and family carers to be on the Board
- Like personal approach of knowledgeable, friendly staff

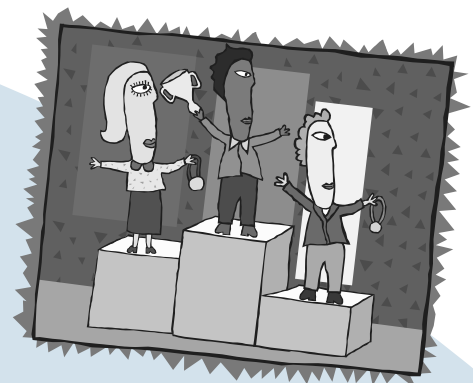
The purpose of the annual survey is to continually evaluate and improve the services that SIL, which is YOUR User Led Organisation, provides.

We are considering how we can improve on this low level of response in future and would value any feedback or suggestions on how we could make it easier for you to contribute to future surveys.

There were one or two suggestions for improvement of services and we are discussing ways of acting on these.

Results for the M and S vouchers are as follows:

| | |
|---------------|----------------|
| Winner of £50 | Paula Chambers |
| Second of £25 | Alice Cowdell |
| Third of £15 | Viv Hicks |



Well done to our winners and we hope you enjoy whatever you use your vouchers for.

Get involved - Service User Form (SUF)

By David Norsworthy

After hearing from members about how they had influenced policies both within SIL and local government I decided to join SUF and have been a member for just over a year now. In that time we have given our opinions and suggestions on some very

important and wide ranging issues. We've also been kept up to date on such things as SIL's film: How to be a Good



Support Worker and the Peer to Peer Support Project.

The Peer to Peer Support Project has been of special interest to me as I am applying for an Individual or Personal Budget (PB).

Recently I met a person through the Project who has a PB and was able to advise me on the process. Now, at each meeting I give an update on how my PB is progressing and hope to announce soon that my application has been successful.

As well as issues to discuss we have speakers from other organisations



such as Age Concern. There is also the social side of the SUF where members can speak with each other over lunch. Last year we had a really good day out at Hampton Court gardens that included lunch and cream teas!

I would encourage service users to consider joining the SUF as it's a great opportunity to express your views and know that you will be heard. Speakers



are often invited back to give updates on how previous issues have moved forward, and feedback is regularly given on items that have been discussed. Plus, the more people who join the stronger the voice we will have.

Meetings are held every 6 weeks and the next meeting will be on Tuesday September 7th 11-1 pm, 2010 at the South Wye Learning Centre, Hereford.

For further details please contact Claire Baker the SIL office on 01432 353397 or e-mail Claire@s4il.co.uk

Threats of massive cuts in services for elderly and disabled people

Warwickshire County Council are considering plans to increase by up to ten times the cost of services for disabled and elderly people.

would rise £4.13 to £51.80, day care charges from £5.55 to £25 and hourly rates for home care would go up from about £9 to £16.

A council official said, "In the present economic climate, with the prospect of tighter budgets for years to come, the council must save tens of



millions, for each of the next four years, to balance its books."

As an example of what to expect, it is estimated that daily rates for respite care

The council claims that the poorest would be protected. Nonetheless, they are also considering lowering the threshold at

which customers pay no charge. This would mean more people being liable to pay for services.

Source: BBC News website

Government targets disability benefits

The Coalition Government is taking a hard line on cutting spending on incapacity benefit (IB)/Employment and Support Allowance (ESA). These benefits are for sick and disabled people between 18 and 65 who because of ill health or impairments are unable to work. 2.6 million people receive IB or ESA.

The chancellor, George Osborne, said that efforts to take more of those on incapacity benefit off welfare will form a significant part of plans to cut the deficit, saying: "It's a choice we all face. It is not a choice we can duck."

It has also been suggested that the

government is considering whether the new system can be operated by a private company.

As we reported in our April edition, the previous government's similar effort to cut back incapacity benefit, led to disabled and seriously ill people being deemed fit for work. This included people with advanced Parkinson's Disease, Multiple Sclerosis, with severe mental illness and those awaiting open heart surgery.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/2010/jun/28/welfare-incapacity-benefit-claimants-assessment>

Families with disabled Children ‘Struggle to Pay Bills’

Families with disabled children are struggling to pay household bills as the downturn hits their already stretched finances a survey suggests.

Contact a Family surveyed 1,113 people about how they were coping financially and found 23% went without heating and 14% missed meals to make ends meet. The group said the slump has left many parents at “breaking point”.

It is calling on the government to protect families in the forthcoming comprehensive spending review.

Srabani Sen, Chief Executive of Contact a Family, said “Many families with disabled children are in financial dire straits.

Everyone has been hit hard by the recession but families with disabled children were already having to cope with a harsh combination of extra living costs and the difficulty of holding down a job and caring.

These financial pressures have been worsened by the economic slump and have left many at breaking point.”

Researchers found that 23%, almost one in four, had to turn off their heating to save money and one in seven, 14%, are going without food.

Almost three-quarters, 73%, said they had to forego leisure activities and days out, while 68% are not taking any holidays.

Bryan Clover of the charity Elizabeth Finn Care warned the situation will get worse when the government switches the measure of inflation its uses to calculate benefit rises, from the Retail Price Index to the Consumer Price Index, which excludes housing costs.

Disability in the UK

770,00 children under 16 are disabled

98% of disabled children live at home with parental support

16% of mothers with disabled children work

Raising a disabled child cost three times more than one without disabilities

£15,270 is the average income for families with disabled Children

The Minister for Disabled People, Maria Miller, said that the coalition government was “committed to supporting the most vulnerable groups in society.”

“We’re radically reforming and simplifying the welfare system to make sure that families with disabled children get the help they need.

For more news visit our website, www.s4il.co.uk

Source: BBC News website

New Safety Regulations for Scooters

The Government are planning to introduce new safety regulations for mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs – and look at the capabilities of people who use them.

Transport secretary Sadiq Khan said:

"Evidence suggests that over the last few years there has been a steady increase in the number of mobility vehicles and, with an ageing population, this trend is likely to increase.

"On top of this, the technology for the vehicles themselves is becoming increasingly sophisticated. It is only right then that legislation is brought



up to date to reflect these advancements.

"Mobility vehicles are a vital lifeline for many people and we want to ensure that everyone who needs one is able to use them safely and securely."

The consultation – which will run until May 28 – sets out a number of ways in which safety might be improved including:

Changes to the legal definition of scooters;
Changes to the maximum permitted weight of scooters, and whether they should continue to carry only one person;

Changes to design speeds and permitted speeds for those vehicles which can be used on the highway;

Moving to mandatory, rather than voluntary insurance; Changes to the registration arrangements, either through reforms to the current DVLA system or through a move to a more locally based scheme;

Improving the collection of data regarding the number and safety of these vehicles.

The consultation will cover both mobility scooters, which are intended to help people with reduced mobility, and powered wheelchairs for those who need help with

everyday movement.

www.dft.gov.uk/consultations





Tan Brook Centre **Hereford**

Aspire have been successful in receiving UK online centers Smarter Government funding.

This funding has gone into the Tan Brook Centre to launch Herefordshire's first

FREE UK on line centre specifically for adults with a learning disability. (16years+)

Tan Brook has volunteer tutors on hand every Tuesday and Thursday (10-3pm) to get you registered,

providing help and

advice that will help you get started, using computers and the internet.

This will give you your own email address.

Sessions are by appointment only, to book your FREE session(s) please

contact Tan Brook either by phone

01432 279056 or email

jane.colbourn@aspirechoices.com

(Please note that a session is for ½ hr, you can book up two sessions per day)



WHY PAY MORE FOR A MEAL TO THE DOOR



Not only do we deliver tasty and nutritious meals but we also pride ourselves on our personal caring service.

Only
£2.70
for 2 courses

Our friendly drivers can deliver hot or frozen meals to your door

Choose from our wide selection of main courses and desserts

Tel: 01432 267555 for further information

Services for Independent Living

Website: www.s4il.co.uk

E-mail: contactus@s4il.co.uk

Tel: 01432 353397

Fax: 01432 267599