

Information and news for disabled and older people

Edition 95 – December 2009

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Chief Executive SIL

A regular column to keep you up to date on developments at SIL.



Hello Everyone

Well, here we are with less than 20 shopping days to Christmas, and if like me you feel it should only be October by now, you are probably about as prepared as me – not much!

What does 2010 hold? A general election in May could mean a change of government and subsequent change of policies and priorities. Budget cuts are inevitable. Here at SIL we don't think that direct payments or personal budgets will become less popular; the drive towards more personalised services will continue. But what we do expect to see is increasing emphasis on the role of communities, families and volunteers in supporting older and disabled people.

The politicians name for this is 'social capital'. However, the idea that there are lots of people out there waiting to be asked to help their neighbours; or able to give more time to caring for their relatives, doesn't fit with our experience.

The new Health Act means people using direct payments that, due to increasing

health care needs, become the funding responsibility of the Health Service, could continue to have a direct payment. This is excellent news for those people that we know of who, just at the time they most need continuity of support, have experienced the major disruption of having to receive their support from an agency and staff who they have not chosen, who they do not know and who don't know them.

Social Care is moving much higher up the political agenda, mainly due to our ageing population and the financial pressures this brings in order to meet their health and care needs. It is interesting to see that as the adult children of older people come into contact with social care for the first time they are not impressed by what they see, and are championing the rights of their relatives. Campaigns such as Dignity in Care and the National Dementia Strategy are very welcome.

In 2010 SIL will continue to make the case for the right of disabled and older people

and their families to decent levels of service, good quality services, and assessments which take account of all of people's needs, not just personal care.

We will support campaigns and initiatives that challenge prejudice and tackle discrimination.

We will continue to speak out on your behalf, but most importantly we will make the case for

the voice of disabled and older people to be heard directly.

I expect 2010 to pass as quickly as 2009 has!

With best wishes for a Happy Christmas and New Year 2010

Marion

What's on the Website?

Some of you may have noticed that the website is going through a series of changes and improvement. The aim of these changes is to ensure that web users get to the specific area they require in the shortest time.



New on the website is a dedicated area to our service users and new items are:

- Lists of accessible Doctors and Dentists Surgeries, Opticians, Health Clinics and Hearing Clinics the county – this information was designed and produced by Access for All
- Downloadable employer related forms such as interview questions, job descriptions, person specifications, draft contract of employment and PA application form
- Facility to complete and submit PA timesheets on line or download hard copy
- Facility to put recruitment adverts and for potential PAs to apply for positions on-line

Please see the homepage of our website www.s4il.co.uk and click on ' What's New'

If you have any feedback on the website about what you would like to see,

please contact Shane Milward-Kennedy on 01432 353397

shane@s4il.co.uk

It happened to me – by Julia Mathevosian

I had always felt that having just one PA to cover my support needs would be absolutely fine, although I did have a niggling doubt that I may be slightly vulnerable should anything untoward happen. Occasionally, my PA and I would mention cover but we both thought our arrangement was fine. With hindsight, I definitely should have been prepared for all eventualities.

The situation worked perfectly well until my PA was in a serious accident while on holiday which left her unable to return to work for 4 months.

Even after this time, she did come back to work for me but it proved too much for her so she was unable to continue.

Losing my only PA and, therefore, all of my support was an absolute nightmare and was compounded by the fact that my own health was deteriorating. I used various agencies and also brought in the SIL Short Term Support Service who were fantastic but this did not solve my long term problem.

With the help of the SIL Employers Support Service, I subsequently recruited 3 PAs to cover the hours I needed and I now feel reassured that I won't be left without appropriate support as it is far less risky for me.



A word of warning to other disabled employers who only have one PA – if the worst happens (which you never think it will until it does!) and your PA is unexpectedly unable to work for long periods then you could be left 'in the lurch'. My advice would always be to minimize the risk of a situation like mine arising by ensuring that you always have at least two PAs.

Pictured: Julia Mathevosian

For more Service User stories and experiences see our website and click on 'News Articles'

www.s4il.co.uk

Caroline Hill's Trip to Minehead

Star
letter

My Personal Assistants packed the van and we were ready to go. The sun was shining and the sky was blue. Little did we know that we were going to get rain, rain and more rain - a good excuse to stop off and enjoy lunch that my PA's had put together!

The weather soon cheered-up as we arrived in Minehead and found our hotel, which was lovely. Our rooms all had a sea view and were very spacious. We went for a walk, there were lots of gift and craft shops. We then returned back to the Hotel for supper, we were all pretty tired by then. The next day we were treated to a full English breakfast. We then headed off to a big market where I bought some nice glasses and a ball that lights up when you throw it. We then went on an old steam train to Dunster which was great fun.

Dunster is a small town, the pavements are all cobbles and there are lots of lovely shops. The weather was very changeable; sunshine and showers! I got soaked through but it was all great fun!

We did some more shopping and then Gill, my PA, treated us to a cream tea in a really nice cafe.



Pictured: Caroline relaxing on the sea front

On our last day, we enjoyed sandwiches and ice cream on the beach. Later that evening we went for our supper back at a pub called the Quay. We returned to the Hotel and enjoyed coffee with the people there. It really was a lovely hotel, but above all the whole holiday was so enjoyable!

With special thanks to both of my Personal Assistants Gill Gray and Kim Bereza.

Caroline is supported by
The Independent Living Service.



Pictured: Caroline enjoying a ride on the steam train

Star Letter

SIL will be offering a £20 prize for the star letter or story which is published. Please write in with your stories and experiences for your chance to win!

Service User-Led Organisation

As part of the ULO project we carried out a survey regarding User Involvement. The response we have received will be used to involve service users in areas of interest and we hope this will not only support the organisation, but increase skills. Through news items and word of mouth we hope more service users will be encouraged to take part.

Below are some of the opportunities which service users can get involved in..

- * Become a Trustee
- * Service user Forum
- * Independent Living Service Task Group
- * Employers Support Service task Group
- * Recruitment/ interviewing of future SIL employees
- * Training
- * New Projects
- * Office Volunteering
- * Peer mentoring
- * Marketing/ presentations

SIL have also been working closely with Age Concern Bromyard and Leominster and the ESS team have provided 3 training days to Age Concern staff and volunteers. This has enabled them to support older people considering Personal Budgets, by

helping them to complete their self assessment form and understand and to have a better understanding of the Personalised Budgets.

We have also produced a new improved trustee induction pack and volunteer induction pack - both can be downloaded from our website www.s4il.co.uk .



Service User Forum members have also reviewed the purpose of the Forum and the new remit is to oversee new fixed term projects. The Forum will give suggestions and advice during the application for funding and work to plan and oversee achievements and outcomes.

If you would like to find out more about getting involved with any of the opportunities at SIL please call Mary-Jane Muir or Ann Hyde on 01432 353397 or visit our website www.s4il.co.uk

Can your experience of Personal Budgets help others to get to grips with them?

SIL has received funding to host a project called the 'Peer Support Scheme' which aims increase awareness of Personal Budgets by providing information, advice and peer support to disabled people of all ages and impairments and assist them to access, understand and use them.

The project will be co-coordinated by Helen Whitmore and Angela Higham who both have first hand experience of Personal Budgets and wide expertise in planning using person centred methods. They will also develop and deliver training that includes the peer supporters and will be using supporting material from the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation.

The intention is that disabled people & family carers will be able to book a 1-1 session with an existing Personal Budget user, who will explain the process, the advantages, and possible pitfalls of a Personal Budget and help individuals to explore ideas about how to use it to suit them best. Some telephone and email support will also be available for people who are unable to attend the sessions.



We are currently recruiting Peer Supporters who are managing their own Personal Budgets and have learned from their own experiences.

If this is something which interests you and you feel you can share your experience to benefit others you will be involved in:

- Offering advice and support to others, who have yet to go through the process, about what you have learned and what you found difficult.
- You will be a valuable source of information and a role model to enable others to gain confidence in the process of getting and using a Personal Budget.

You will be supported by Helen and Angela who will offer training and on-going support and ensure that any reasonable expenses are met.

For more information please call Angela or Helen on 01432 353397 or e-mail

helen@s4il.co.uk or angelah@s4il.co.uk .

Also, for further information, please go to the SIL website s4il.co.uk and click on 'What's new'

Maggie Goes Up The Wall –For Fun!

I am a member of the British Polio Fellowship, and, in July, I attended a ‘Super Forum’ held in Bristol by the Wales & Western region to celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Fellowship. It turned out to be a very enjoyable and informative day. We were treated to a delicious buffet lunch, and then were directed to various workshops. However, it meant going past the chocolate fountain and needless to say, temptation got the better of me—strawberries, mini doughnuts, brownies, flapjacks, marshmallows, etc, all just waiting to be dipped into flowing, melted chocolate and devoured! With hindsight, I maybe should have delayed this particular treat until **after** volunteering to have a go at one of the main attractions—the climbing wall! All 10 metres of it (that’s over 30ft to you and me!) Once I was strapped into the seat-like safety harness, complete with not-so-flattering safety helmet,



I realised I was at the point of no return and the only way was up!

I actually surprised myself, and by using the pulley, I managed to reach the top of the wall. At this point I thought I heard the

angels singing, but opened my eyes and was able to press the alarm to let everyone

know I had made it! It was a great sense of achievement, especially as it proved that my arms haven't weakened as much as I thought they had.

The afternoon was rounded off with a raffle (I was even lucky



enough to win a prize), speeches by the National Chairman and the

Chief Executive, and the cutting of the anniversary cake, but the



‘icing on the cake’ for me was getting to the top of the climbing wall!

Maggie O’Neill

Pictured: Maggie O’Neil taking part in the rock climbing activity

To contact the British Polio Fellowship

phone: 0800 0180586 or e-mail

info@britishpolio.org.uk

Challenge of becoming a Trustee by Colin Javens

Challenges are what make life interesting; overcoming them is what makes life meaningful. As a satisfied Service User myself and having experienced a few challenges in my personal life, I jumped at the offer of becoming a Trustee for Services for Independent Living (SIL), a Hereford based social enterprise that provides services which allow older people and disabled people to live independently at home.

A question that I am often asked is, "What is the price of independence?" For me, and many others, the answer you will hear is, "It is priceless!" Having a disability and being reliant on others to live an independent life can often seem like an insurmountable challenge in itself. Without the services SIL provides, such as employment advice, payroll, recruitment support and financial management, this challenge would be even greater. Since I've been using SIL's services I can honestly say that my life has become vastly more independent.

Becoming a trustee felt like my opportunity to give something back to an organisation which has made such a dramatic impact in my life. My appointment demonstrated the

professionalism of the role, revealing the strategic concepts of the meetings, outlining goals and targets and illustrating where they'd be achieved. I feel that becoming a trustee of a vibrant organisation like SIL has provided me with a role where I can use the professional skills I have gained throughout my life, to assist with the strategic steering of the organisation.



Whether the skills have been gained in business; marketing; the third sector or first hand experience of living with a disability they can all make a difference. It is not only about passing on the benefits of one's own experience, it is also about learning from others.

My Trustee role has been both interesting and meaningful. SIL has dynamic leadership; a dedicated work force and a vision of making life more independent for those who face more obstacles in life. I would challenge anyone to take up the role of Trustee and contribute to such a worthwhile cause and really help make a difference to people's lives.

Pictured: Colin Javens

For more information about becoming a trustee please see our website home page

Computers for Rural People From The Arthur Rank Centre



If you live in a rural area, whether on a farm miles from anywhere, or even in a country town, you have to spend travelling about to get things done. That is in addition to commuting of course.

Email and internet provide enormous opportunities when you can't just pop around the corner to the shop or library etc.

Yes computers are usually expensive items, and few people want to buy one "just to see if one day it might be useful".

Once you have one and know how to use it and appreciate what it can do, you won't mind paying, but that first step is often inhibited by the cost.

The Arthur Rank Centre is committed to supporting the rural community, and has set up the "Computers for Rural People" scheme to provide computers at very low cost to encourage people to take the first step.



- If you are retired or approaching retirement, and have seen how your own computer could enrich your life
- If you are a really busy person, and find that organising things by telephone and letter are just too slow
- If you have children at school, and want them to be able to keep up with their work

The Arthur Rank Centre can help you. At a really low cost they can provide a computer of your own, pre-loaded with Microsoft software, and delivered to your door, to get you started.

The Arthur Rank Centre has made an arrangement with the global charity Oasis, to supply re-furnished computers at charity prices. We ask that you make a voluntary donation of £12 minimum to the ARC.

Get in touch to see if we can supply what you need at a price you can easily afford.

Tel: 02476 853066 or email info@arthurrankcentre.org.uk

www.arthurrankcentre.org.uk

National art collection finds its home in Hereford

The Royal National College for the Blind (RNC) has given a permanent home to the national BlindArt Collection.

This is the world's first permanent showcase of fully accessible visual art and includes over 30 exceptional paintings, sculptures, installations and other works of art that appeal to a multitude of senses.

The BlindArt Collection is now on display in a dedicated gallery space at RNC and visitors are encouraged to explore and interpret these diverse and thought provoking pieces through texture, sound and smell as well as sight.

The Collection will open to the public every Thursday (1-7pm) and Sunday (10am-5pm). It will also be open for education projects with local schools and community groups, and will participate in local, regional and national arts events.

The Collection is fully wheelchair accessible, includes large print, Braille and

audio descriptions of artworks and hearing induction loops are available.

Entry is free of charge and there is free parking at the College.

Ian Pickford, CEO/Principal at RNC said, "As a key player in national and international innovations in teaching and training for people who are visually impaired, and as a leading resource centre for

professionals working in the field, it is fitting that RNC can now play a part in making the world of art more accessible, particularly to

those affected by sight loss. We are thrilled to be able to give the BlindArt Collection a home."

Sheri Khayami, Founder and Director of the charity BlindArt said, "RNC is

absolutely the right place for the Collection, which is all about access, interpretation and inspiration. The Collection is living and breathing proof that visually impaired people can and do create great art. RNC can help us to encourage more people to appreciate that, while inspiring others to express themselves through creating great art too."



Chalk & Cheese
Michael Cahillane



Loll Goble Choc Bomb
Stephen Farley

Herefordshire Disability Forum

Herefordshire Disability Forum

Herefordshire Disability Forum is an organisation run entirely by and for disabled people, and is therefore strongly, morally and politically positioned to represent the interests of all disabled people. Many organisations in the disability world are run by non-disabled people and, as a result, are badly placed to reflect our interests.



We believe that the position of disabled people in society is a human and civil rights issue, and that society must be changed to allow our full inclusion. We believe that our disability arises from Society's negative

treatment of us; it is not an inevitable consequence of our impairments. Equality is possible, and can be achieved through removing the barriers to our social inclusion.

We aim to be a successful leader in campaigning to improve Herefordshire's treatment of disabled people. We offer all disabled people in the county, the opportunity to get directly involved in working together to change our society.

If you are a disabled person who can relate to this statement, and are interested in joining us, please telephone Hillary on 01989 562842 or email us: hdforum75@yahoo.co.uk

Herefordshire LINK Young Persons Group

Herefordshire LINK has established a younger person's group committed to "looking at the issues that affect them". there are a number of younger people from the colleges who wish to take part as well as groups such as 2XL etc. Herefordshire LINK are keen to make this activity as inclusive as possible and "to this end have contacted some younger people".

Clearly this matter offers important opportunities for disability awareness raising and for some young disabled individuals

may be a means for increasing their own political awareness, political consciousness and skills in presentation and negotiation etc. Involvement will also be a real opportunity for disabled individuals to experience a socially valued role.

For more information contact

Richard Gallagher:

Telephone: 01432 373605

E-mail: r.gallagher@carersfederation.co.uk



Ability Net is a national charity helping disabled adults and children use computers and the internet by adapting and adjusting their technology. Their special expertise is ensuring that whatever your age, health condition, disability or situation you find exactly the right way to adapt or adjust your ICT to make it easier to use.



Complete, specially designed, computer systems

AbilityNet can set up your computer, install the specialist software and check that it works with any specialist technology you may have selected. If you need further help AbilityNet can arrange for a personal installation in your home, so all you need to do is turn the computer on.

You can buy your system on-line from AbilityNet if you wish.

AbilityNet Advice and information

Freephone and minicom: 0800 269 545



Making ICT easy for all - Myguide

myguide is a website designed to help people take their first steps with computers and the internet. Registered users get access to an easy-to-use email system and a wide range of online courses that cover everything from turning a computer on to surfing the internet.

www.myguide.gov.uk offers free, easy-to-use email and web search tools from a simple, banner-free website. It also includes basic ICT courses from how to use a keyboard and mouse to keeping safe online, using government e-services, social networking and even online job-hunting.

Myguide allows people to personalise and save settings, change colours, font size and even choose to use a built-in 'hear it' function which reads the text on screen. Because it's for absolute beginners, it's also designed to be supported, so people's first steps onto the internet are supervised and so positive they'll want to keep on using it.


If you would like to know more about the myguide website then you can ring the UK online centre Support Line on 08000 921129



Questions and Answers

Q. Our family is currently making arrangements to support my mother so that she can remain in her own home. We have looked into Personal Budgets (PBs) to enable her to have people come to her home. However, we are very confused about the responsibilities which this entails around becoming an employer.

A. Yes, the Employers Support Service can provide a complete service which can help your mother with all aspects of her employer responsibilities including recruiting staff and ongoing advice and support to managing her employer responsibilities. As part of this service we also run a monthly payroll service which can make payments to staff and meet all Inland Revenue requirements. Also, a financial management service which manages the Personal Budget funds by making all necessary payments and providing the Local Authority with reports which they require to evidence spending.



Q. I am a young person with a physical disability and am just changing over my direct payment to an IB and I have been told that when my plan is reviewed, I may be able to look at other opportunities to support my independence. What are the options?

A. As long as the opportunities are within the eligibility criteria and meet your assessed needs there are many options open to you. Here are just a few activities that people have used their Personal Budget on; horse riding, theatre group, music group, singing lessons, employing own staff, entrance costs, college fees. Also with a personal budget if you started having sing lessons and decided that you didn't enjoy them you could swap them for a theatre group, this is known as like for like. This flexibility will let you change your activities as your tastes change.

We would like as many of our readers to contribute to this part of the newsletter either by sending in letters or emails with questions, or giving their opinions on a particular issue or maybe just sharing information which would be useful to others. Also, you may have ideas for an article or a case study which other readers would find useful, informative, interesting or just funny! Please send any letters to the SIL offices or email letters@s4il.co.uk or, if you prefer, leave a message by phone on **01432 353397**.

Newsletter Calendar 2010

If you would like to contribute to future newsletters our deadlines for articles are as follows..

Month	Article theme/ideas	Article deadline	post out
March	<p><u>Service user contributions</u> What is it like to be a peer mentor and what is peer support? Awards for All update</p>	4 th February	26 th February
June	<p><u>Service user contributions</u> Disabled people's experiences of using IB's.</p>	5 th May	28 th May
September	<p><u>Service user contributions</u> What it's like to be a forum member SU holidays and experiences.</p>	2 nd August	27 th August
December	<p><u>Service user contributions</u> Service user reviews on equipment, services, restaurants, venues etc.</p>	1 st November	29 th November

Let us know what else you would like to see more of in our newsletter and website.
 E-mail: contactus@s4il.co.uk

SIL Payroll Service

Could we remind all service users to pay their quarterly HMRC (Inland Revenue) liabilities as soon as possible? We have had a number of reminders from HMRC recently.

Payments should be received by HMRC before 19th of the month and late payment in future might incur an interest charge. The next payment will be due by 19th January.

Marches Home care

Mobility vehicle hire

01568 617669

Marches home care are now offering mobility vehicle hire.

Vehicle details are as follows:

Renault Kangoo

Single wheelchair accessible



Vauxhall Zafira

7 Seater

(not wheelchair accessible)



Hire rates:

Daily	£55.00 (£35.00 1/2 day)
Weekly	£275.00
Weekend special	£137.50

TRANSITIONS DANCE GROUP

A weekly dance club for people with learning/physical disabilities aged 18+. Join the Jigsaw team for creative dance sessions as you learn new dance skills,

and meet new friends

Starts Monday 5 October

4.00 – 5.00pm

£3.00 per week

Westfields Community Hall

53 Highmore Street

Hereford HR4 9RX

If you need 1:1 support please bring a PA/carer with you

Book your place today by contacting the

Dancefest office on 01905 611199 or
info@dancefest.co.uk

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

www.s4il.co.uk



We need your feedback!

Please let us know what you think of our newsletter.

What would you like to see in future newsletters?
Do you like the new black and white look?

E-mail: contactus@s4il.co.uk

Telephone: 01432 353397

Services for Independent Living

Website: www.s4il.co.uk

E-mail: contactus@s4il.co.uk

Tel: 01432 353397

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