

Information and news for disabled and older people
and family carers



Edition 103 – December 2011



In this issue....

2. Marion's Column
3. Climb Every Mountain!
- 4-5. Josie Pearson
6. Alice Cowdell
7. Naidex Conference
- 8-9. Choosing to Work
10. Social Workers' Role
11. DLA changes - Have Your Say



In line with our environmental policy and in order to reduce production costs, we are aiming to send out more newsletters via email. If you have one, please forward your email address to lucy@s4il.co.uk.
Many thanks for your support.



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



Hello Everyone,

Firstly and most importantly, “croeso” / “welcome”, to all our new service users in Torfaen, Wales. We started to provide the Direct Payments Support Service for people using direct payments in Torfaen on the 1st October 2011, and we are enjoying meeting new service users, Council staff and staff from other voluntary sector organisations.

Although there are differences between England and Wales in respect of social care and direct payments policy, there are also many common themes. In England the social care community has recently produced ‘Making it Real’ which is a *‘framework for organisations to check their progress and decide what they need to do to deliver real change and positive outcomes with people’*. Interestingly they have borrowed the idea of ‘citizen directed support’ from Wales, and here at SIL we prefer the term ‘citizen- focused agenda’.

The framework takes, as its starting point, statements (made by people who use services) about what is important to them.

These include:

- ✓ Having the information I need, when I need it
- ✓ Living life my way
- ✓ I am in control of my care and support
- ✓ Feeling in control & safe
- ✓ My money (I know the amount of money available to me for care and support and I can determine how it is used)

We think these statements will be as relevant to people living in Wales as they are to disabled people, older people and family carers in England.

SIL are making a commitment to using the framework and asking our service users to help us to check on our progress and let us know how we can improve.

Very best wishes for the festive season.

Marion

Climb every mountain!

To celebrate a milestone birthday next year, I have decided to climb Mount Kilimanjaro in June 2012. It's all booked so no turning back!

I am very excited about the challenge of making the summit of Kilimanjaro, but I have another challenge too.

I am going to fundraise for SIL for a project close to our heart. We intend to give a grant or grants, to disabled people living within Herefordshire and Torfaen, for projects that inspire and showcase the achievements of disabled people. The main criteria for the grants will be:

- Applicants will need to demonstrate that their project will bring real benefit to them as an individual **and** will enable them to bring positive benefit to their community.
- Their project must be unlikely to be funded from other sources.
- Applicants must show they have, or have had help to, think carefully about their project and can demonstrate they will complete the project
- The applicant must be willing to share their experience, in some way, with support as necessary. For example they may give a presentation, write about it for our newsletter, or make a short film.

Each application will be judged individually. No prior experience or qualifications are necessary. Individuals may receive support from family or friends with their project as long as the achievements of the disabled person remain the focus. Information about how to apply will be in our next newsletter. Please phone the office on 01568 616653 or see the website www.s4il.co.uk for more information about how you can donate. Perhaps, like the staff at SIL, you may wish to make a donation rather than send Christmas cards this year. All funds raised will go **directly to Services for Independent Living**. I am personally paying ALL the trip costs. Absolutely nothing that you give will fund any part of my trip.

Marion

Kilimanjaro Facts

- Rising 19,340 feet above sea level, Kilimanjaro is the tallest mountain in Africa and the world's highest free-standing mountain. The structure is composed of 3 volcanoes: Kibo (19,340 feet), Mawenzi (16,896 feet), and Shira (13,000 feet).
- Kilimanjaro lies 205 miles South of the equator and stands on Tanzania's northern border with Kenya. It supports 5 major eco-zones: rainforest, heath, moorland, alpine desert and glaciers. Today, about 15,000 people attempt to climb Kilimanjaro each year, as a spiritual journey or as a personal challenge.



Josie Pearson

SIL service user, Josie Pearson, from Herefordshire, was the first female ever to force her way into the hitherto all-male domain of wheelchair rugby.

Following a road smash near Abergavenny at the age of 17, Josie got chatting to an out-patient who played wheelchair rugby. "That conversation changed everything for me," she says. "Before my accident I was a competitive horse rider and I wanted to stay in sport in some way. Wheelchair rugby sounded so good. Horses had been my life, my passion, but the level of my disability doesn't allow me to compete in disabled equestrian events. I have no trunk muscles or feeling in the lower half of my body and no mobility from the top of the chest downwards".

"After completing my A-levels I went on to university in Cardiff and decided that was the time to get back into sport and I started playing wheelchair rugby and fell in love with it. I've never regretted my decision to try

something different." Paralympians call this sport "Murderball" and, in reality, it has little in common with the sport seen at Twickenham! It is played with a round ball and it is more an amalgam of wheelchair basketball.

Her historic selection for Team GB came when she was selected for the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing,



when being named for the 12-strong squad made her not just the only woman in the team, but also in the Paralympic competition. The team finished fourth.

After Beijing her desire to compete again as an individual athlete reasserted itself and she decided to make the risky decision of changing

sports to athletics. She was very lucky in meeting her coach, Peter Eriksson, arguably the best wheelchair racing coach in the world, as he offered to coach her. "Opportunities like that don't come very often so I jumped at the chance"

After two seasons of racing and being selected for the World Championships in New Zealand in January of this year Josie currently ranks 4th in the 100m and 5th in the 200m. "I was a bit disappointed with my performance in New Zealand as I know I could have done better but I'm still very new to the sport and I have since then produced some A-standard qualification times for 2012 so I'm hopeful for London"

Not only is Josie sprinting within the athletics discipline she has recently taken up discus and club. Her coach, Anthony Hughes, is a hugely successful throws coach and has great plans for Josie. "I have been throwing since the beginning of the year and already I'm ranked 1st in the world for discus.

I can't quite believe it myself but it makes the run up to London 2012 that bit more exciting."

Josie will find out which events she has been selected for in June next year and until then she has a lot of hard training ahead of her so watch this space.....

We all wish Josie the best of luck and will be supporting her in 2012.

Looking for disabled people to interview about experiences of education!

The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) is a national campaigning and information-sharing network led by disabled people. They campaign for all disabled learners to have the right to access and be supported in mainstream education and are working together with the British Library to record the educational experiences of disabled people over the last 100 years. They want to interview at least 50 disabled people and record a wide range of experiences of education so that they can reflect these experiences with the changes in society over this time. To find out more and get involved in this project, please see the ALLFIE website at www.allfie.org.uk



Flower Power

It has always given me great pleasure to support events in my home town of Kington. I was particularly delighted to support Kington show by presenting the Alice Cowdell Perpetual Cup for the best exhibit of pom pom dahlias again this year.

My keen interest in gardening has been handed down from my family. My grandfather was a very keen gardener. Uncle Bill was Head Gardener at Hergest Croft for the Banks family in the 1950s. My Uncle Fred was Head Gardener at Huntington Court for Dr Jack and his family.

I have got a lovely big garden, I employ a gardener to help keep it looking lovely! I manage the flower arranging myself.

Alice Cowdell



Alice presents the cup for the best exhibit of pom pom dahlias

My First Health and Safety Committee Meeting by Alice Cowdell

When asked by SIL, I felt I should be on the Health and Safety Committee because it needs the views of a service user.

This was my first meeting and I loved it. Before, when I used to get letters and information about Health and Safety I thought that changes would be made to my home, so I would rip the letters up or tell my support workers to "bin it". But I have now learned that Health and Safety isn't really about just making changes, its more about looking for a safe way to do things and adapting things if we need to.

I have got my home just as I like, I make sure everything is used and put away properly. I talk to everyone about the little things and Health and Safety.



Thank you to Alice and to all service users who offer their support in this way. Your contribution to SIL is vital to us as a User Led Organisation.

Naidex Conference

Naidex is a free annual exhibition covering all aspects of disability. It is held in Birmingham in the spring and London in the autumn. We found it beneficial and informative when we went in October.

At Naidex, we were able to access information from independent means which alleviates the "can't afford it, so can't implement it" point of view. Being open minded allows you a sneak preview at the open Market and provides a fuller picture of equipment, services, support and seminars. One can trial power chairs, Motability vehicles, technology, children's play equipment, furniture and so much more. While much of this is at your finger tips via the Internet, sensory aspects and personal testing can determine what is most suitable before a financial transaction takes place.

We have visited both venues in previous years and we were especially impressed with what was on offer at Naidex in London this autumn. There were opportunities for personal consultations with people from the Equality and Human Rights Commission, independent occupational therapists and also physiotherapists. These were free and without restriction – so no waiting for an NHS appointment in six months time! We certainly found it a very professional service.

We spent forty five minutes with a top physiotherapist and came away with an exercise regime tailored to Roy's specific condition, Spinal Muscular Atrophy. We were also offered an assessment in two weeks at a hospital in Oxford to trial nerve stimulant equipment similar to that offered to some Stroke/Parkinson patients. We plan to feedback how successful this is to readers in the next edition of the newsletter.



Another appointment we made at Naidex was with an occupational therapist who pointed us in the direction of suitable therapeutic equipment. This broader approach is so different to that provided by social care services where generalised equipment is offered as standard council property. Now, with Personal Budgets allowing more freedom, it is essential to purchase what will benefit the specific needs of the individual, making it imperative to know what is available on the open market, not just in your council's central stores.

Naidex Birmingham - 1st- 3rd May 2012
Naidex London - 17th- 18th October 2012

Sylvia and Roy Nicholls

Many thanks to Roy and Sylvia for this informative piece, we look forward to hearing how the trial goes.



Roy Nicholls

Choosing to work

Choice isn't just about how money could be spent on support, but can also help people into the world of work and transform lives. That's the choice David, 41, made when he decided to make his dream of running his own business a reality. When David's support was reviewed he wanted to focus on work, but in a way that would suit him. His employment-focused review, with a person-centred planning officer who knew him well, looked at how his skills and interests could fit in with paid employment. He wanted to sell locally sourced produce in his hometown and decided to investigate self employment.

Making positive decisions

David decided to redirect some of his personal budget away from leisure pursuits which he felt "were not going anywhere" and he paid for membership of a local organisation, MiEnterprise, a social enterprise which supports people with learning disabilities to set up and run their own micro-enterprises.

MiEnterprise was developed in partnership with the local Jobcentre Plus district and this has been a crucial part of the success of the approach. By working together, it has been easier for Jobcentre Plus to explore supported self employment with some

disabled customers.

MiEnterprise helped David develop a business plan, source produce and start trading from a local church coffee shop which was familiar to him. He has now established a market stall where he sells cakes, bread, produce and other locally produced items. He uses more of his budget to pay for his personal assistant to support him whilst he is working on his stall.



Choice leads to success

Business is going well for David. He sold out of produce at his first church coffee morning within an hour and since then turnover has continued to increase. He is thinking about expanding into baking his own bread and adding that to his range of products. Other opportunities are also appearing, he has been approached to run his market stall in another location and has an idea for a door-to-door box scheme for older people in his community.

The growth of his business is under his control and this is very important to him as he builds his confidence and skills.

David is being supported by miEnterprise to explore the application process for Access to Work. He could use this funding alongside his social care budget to employ a job coach. This would help him with the next stages of developing his business.

Business builds confidence

David is confidently making decisions for himself for the first time in his life and now travels independently on the bus.

MiEnterprise helped David apply for an enterprise grant, which he has used to buy an iPad and learn how to email his orders.

The swimming session that David used to pay for out of his support budget is now

paid for out of earnings from his business.

David, a naturally very shy person who chose not to speak for a few years, said that it is good to make his own decisions.

David says “I feel in control of what I am doing and it is good to make my own decisions. I feel I can talk to people

because there is no pressure on me and I have something to say. I am very confident about travelling on the bus to fetch my produce”.

Thanks to the Department of Work and Pensions Choice and Control website www.choice-control.org.uk

Evenbreak job site

SIL have recently started using a new website called Evenbreak to advertise for job vacancies and felt it would be useful to promote it to our readers.

Evenbreak is a not-for-profit social enterprise which was set up to help:

- Employers who recognise the business benefits of a diverse workforce but find it hard to attract disabled candidates; and
- Disabled people who find it hard to find employers who will look beyond their disability.

To contact Evenbreak telephone: 0845 658 5717 or www.evenbreak.co.uk



evenbreak

Matching employers who value diversity with talented disabled candidates.

Social workers' support planning role 'must be cut back'

Social workers' role in support planning should be radically reduced so that service users can take control of deciding how to spend their personal budgets, an influential paper said recently.

The report for *Think Local Act Personal*, the sector coalition set up to support the delivery of personalisation, said the default position that care managers supported people to develop a support plan needed to be reversed.



"Requiring that people always have professional interventions in order to perform what for many can and should be a relatively simple task, is fundamentally disempowering as well as inefficient and costly," it warned.

The paper said that there was good evidence that external support planning services, such as those provided by user-led organisations, were better at helping people take control than council care managers.

A key factor in making the model work was for councils to provide eligible service users with their personal budget without having a detailed support plan in place, leaving users with the time to develop this subsequently.

The paper has been endorsed by Think Local Act Personal's board, which includes the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services, the Department of Health and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

Although social workers play a reduced role in support planning under the "new script", they are given increased freedoms, notably being able to sign off personal budgets up to a certain value.

Supporting people living with dementia

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) have been focusing on dignity and dementia. Dementia can affect those who are well below retirement age and early onset dementia is the subject of one of three new films about dementia from Social Care TV. It looks at the particular challenges faced by people who are diagnosed with dementia at a relatively young age. SCIE now have extensive resources on dementia which can all be accessed through their Dementia Gateway. Meanwhile SCIE's Dignity in Care guide has plenty of practical ideas for improving the care experience of people who use services.

For more information, guides and films please go to www.scie.org.uk/socialcaretv and click on dementia.



Have your say on the UK Government's plans to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) with the new Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

The Work and Pensions Committee plans to hold an open meeting on the UK Government's proposal to introduce Personal Independence Payment (PIP) from 2013, replacing Disability Living Allowance for working age claimants by 2015/16.

PIP will be similar to DLA in that it will be a non-means tested, non contributory, tax free cash benefit paid to people whose disabilities mean they incur extra costs in everyday life.

However, the Government aims to simplify the benefit and reduce expenditure by introducing a new assessment for PIP and by changing some of the current rules. The changes include:

- periodic review of most PIP awards
- ending automatic entitlement for specific conditions
- replacing the Disability Living Allowances' three rates in the care component with two rates in the new daily living component and extending the qualifying period from 3 months to 6 months

The Committee of MPs is interested to hear your views, particularly if you, or someone you support or care for are a current working age recipient of DLA. They are keen to learn about the following:

- Do you think that DLA needs to be reformed?
- How well do you understand the purpose of DLA?
- How would you cope if you didn't qualify for the new PIP?
- Do you receive help from other sources, such as the Local Authority?
- Is it right to assess everyone for PIP, or should people with some disabilities qualify automatically?

- How do you think a six month qualifying period will impact on people?
- Is it important that PIP should act as a gateway to other benefits such as Carers Allowance, Motability, the Blue Badge scheme etc., in the same way as DLA?
- How do you feel about having a face-to-face assessment for PIP?
- Have you experienced the Work Capability Assessment for Employment and Support Allowance and are there lessons to be learned from that assessment?
- What's the best way for the new assessment to deal with fluctuating conditions?
- Is it right for the assessment to take account of aids and appliances which help people to overcome their difficulties?

Contact: The Clerk, Work and Pensions Committee, House of Commons, 7 Millbank, London, SW1A 0AA

Email: workpencom@parliament.uk



More information in next issue about PIP payments.

Ambassadors Confidence courses:

"If you want to gain more confidence with careful explanations, fun and enjoyment why don't you join the Ambassadors confidence course" They will be held in Ross on Tuesday mornings (Starting 17th Jan) and Hereford on Thursday mornings (starting 19th Jan)

**Monthly Mr Bassy detective workshops:**

In the monthly workshops you can become a Mr Bassy agent and test out shops and services, then have a go yourself and bring back your findings! The shops and services which are found to be friendly and easy to use will then be presented with Mr Bassy awards

The next workshops will be on December 14th at Advocacy house, Hereford 12.30-2.30pm and Jan 25th at Advocacy house, Hereford 12.30-2.30pm

Contact Caroline or Nicky on 01432 263 757 / 07754606023 or advocacy@herefordshire.com for details



FREE Training @ Wye Learn

- Starting with a keyboard
- Starting with a mouse
- Using email
- Using the Internet Safely
- Using Online Searches
- Public Services



Plus after your free training, choose to come back to us progress further from just £4.50 an hour

- Computer skills refreshers
- Creating a successful CV
- Applying for a job
- Online applications
- Interview skills
- Computer skills refreshers



2 Bridge Street Hereford HR4 9DF
Tel: 01432 266235
Email: info@wyelearn.co.uk
Web: www.wyelearn.co.uk



The deadline for article contributions for our next newsletter is the 1st March 2012. Don't forget the prize for every star letter/article printed is **£25!**

Office Opening hours over the Christmas Period
Closed
26th and 27th December
and
2nd January 2012

Merry Christmas

Registered Office:

Services for Independent Living, 1 Owen Way, Leominster Enterprise Park, Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0LA

T: 01568 616653 E: contactus@s4il.co.uk W: www.s4il.co.uk

SIL's newsletter aims to be accurate and fair and while we endeavour to keep the information up to date and correct, we make no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied, about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability or availability with respect to the content or products, services, or related graphics. Any reliance you place on such information is therefore strictly at your own risk.