

Independent Living News

Spring edition:

June—August 2026



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If you would like a regular copy of the SIL quarterly newsletter, please forward your email address to shelagh.callaghan@s4il.co.uk

Deadline for article contributions in the Autumn newsletter is Wednesday, 26th August 2026. Please email your content and any images to shelagh.callaghan@s4il.co.uk

Welcome from SIL's Chief Executive, Euan McPherson



Recent national news has focused on a major report led by Alan Milburn, highlighting the growing number of young people who are not in work or education. The warnings are stark, with talk of a "lost generation" if action is not taken.

It's an important conversation, and one that feels very real for us in social care.

Because while the country is rightly concerned about young people struggling to access opportunities, our sector continues to offer those very opportunities every day.

Across the UK, there are thousands of vacancies in care and support roles, roles that don't require prior experience, that provide full training, and that give people the chance to build confidence, skills and a career.

At SIL, we see firsthand the difference that these opportunities can make. Social care is often misunderstood, but those of you in receipt of services know the reality: you are not just receiving care - you are getting independence, building relationships, maintaining friendships, and much more.

For many, social care is not just a job, it's a starting point. I know that personally. I began my career as a care worker with few formal qualifications, and through the opportunities this sector provides, I've been able to develop, learn and progress to where I am today.

So as this national debate continues, I want to take a moment to recognise the role our staff all play, not just in supporting the people they work with, but in demonstrating the value of this profession and the opportunities it offers.

Don't forget, if you know of someone who is struggling to enter the workplace and who has not even considered care/support work as an option, encourage them to have a look at the opportunities available on www.s4il.co.uk, we are always looking for good people.

Thank you for using SIL's services.

SIL's Annual General Meeting

This year SIL is celebrating its 30th anniversary, quite a milestone for a local not-for-profit care company. We are proud of our charitable status as it means that any surplus we make goes back into the business to improve our services and provide better care to our service users.

To mark this milestone we will be hosting our celebratory AGM at The Courtyard, Hereford on the 1st October.

Everyone is welcome to join us at this special occasion. Invitations will be sent to all our service users nearer the time, but if you're not a service user but would like to attend, let us know and we can send you an invitation too. Email shelagh.callaghan@s4il.co.uk to have your name added to the invite list, or call 01568 616653.



Mental Health Ambassadors

Mind Herefordshire is looking for passionate individuals in businesses and organisations to become Herefordshire Mind Ambassadors.

As an ambassador, you'll help promote mental wellbeing in your workplace while championing the work that they do to support people in need.

This scheme is open to anyone who is employed or volunteers.



Ambassadors

Become an official Mind Mental Health Ambassador today!*

What will I do?

-  Share campaigns at work
-  Make recommendations to make your workplace mental health friendly
-  Be a named contact between us and your workplace
-  Signpost colleagues to mental health services
-  Hold a fundraiser or awareness event
-  Encourage conversations to reduce stigma
-  Have access to our official Mind mental health resource booklets

What's in it for me?

-  A FREE in-person training session with a Mind director in Mental Health Awareness & Suicide Prevention
-  Connect with like-minded individuals across sectors
-  Boost your professional development
-  A Mind Ambassador button badge & email logo
-  Make a meaningful impact in your workplace
-  Quarterly Ambassadors newsletter
-  Be a recognised Mind mental health advocate

***Only 1 employee per business may apply for this scheme**

Autism Workshops

Autism West Midlands has a series of online workshops organised for this June. The workshops are specifically for autistic adults, but are also open to parents, carers and professionals.

Reasonable Adjustments Workshop with Autism West Midlands

Monday 15th June 10am-11:30am

An online workshop hosted using Microsoft Teams by Autism West Midlands for autistic adults living in Herefordshire and Worcestershire with an extended invite to parents/carers and professionals. Designed to build your knowledge on what reasonable adjustments are and why they might be helpful; the legislation around reasonable adjustments and how and when you might communicate these.

Booking Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1987380413315?aff=oddtcreator>

The Positives of Autism Workshop with Autism West Midlands

Wednesday 17th June 2pm-3:30pm

An online workshop hosted using Microsoft Teams by Autism West Midlands for autistic adults living in Herefordshire and Worcestershire with an extended invite to parents/carers and professionals. This online workshop is designed to celebrate and explore the strengths, abilities, and unique perspectives of autistic adults. Rather than focusing on challenges, this session highlights the many positive characteristics associated with autism and how these can be recognised, embraced, and applied in everyday life.

Booking Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1987381211703?aff=oddtcreator>

Personal Independence Payment Workshop with Autism West Midlands

Friday 19th June 12pm-1pm

An online workshop hosted using Microsoft Teams by Autism West Midlands for autistic adults living in Herefordshire and Worcestershire with an extended invite to parents/carers and professionals. Designed to build your understanding about PIP, this online workshop will cover eligibility, how to apply for PIP, and organisations who might be able to support you with this application where Autism West Midlands is not able to do so.

Booking Link: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1987380737284?aff=oddtcreator>





The Cart Shed
Transforming Lives

Monty Don

in conversation with

Mary Rhodes

Weobley Church
Friday 11th September 2026, 7pm
Tickets £30 to include light refreshments



Monty Don (BBC Gardeners World) will be 'in conversation' with Mary Rhodes (BBC Midlands Today), talking about a life in gardening, emotional wellbeing and living well. Enjoy an evening in the beautiful Church of St Peter & St Paul in Weobley. Tickets available to purchase online following the link or QR code:



<https://www.trybooking.com/uk/GHUO>

Let's Go Wild: Pottery for Wellbeing



Ready to unwind and get your hands in the clay? Herefordshire Growing Point is incredibly excited to announce that Miles Johnson, ceramic artist and star of The Great Pottery Throw Down, is leading four exclusive workshops every Tuesday throughout June.

This year's theme is "Let's Go Wild." More than just a pottery class, these sessions are about nurturing your mental health.

It's a chance to explore the concept of "rewilding"—both in nature and within ourselves—while finding peace through the tactile, grounding process of working with clay.

Why join in?

Mindful Creativity: Lose yourself for a couple of hours each week, focusing on the present moment in their tranquil outdoor marquee.

Inclusive & Supportive: This workshop is fully accessible and specifically designed for anyone looking to boost their wellbeing and connect with others.

Cake & Conversation: Enjoy a slice of delicious cake while you create in a relaxed, friendly environment.

The Details: The course is free to attend, though attendees are asked for a £20 contribution to cover the costs of clay and professional glazing. But, hurry - there are only a couple of spaces left! Taking time for your mental health is vital, and there's no better place to do it than in the garden. To grab your spot, call Herefordshire Growing Point on 01432 805705

Colour and Foam Run

ECHO's annual Colour and Foam Run is taking place on Saturday, 6th June starting on The Grange, Leominster at 10am.

Registration is followed by a warm up at 10.40am, with an 11.00am start. There is a 5k, a 2.5k and a 1k accessible route.

As well as paint stations ECHO is introducing the Amazing XL Monster Cannon, so yes, as well as paint you can be covered with foam! (paint and foam 100% safe).

If you would like to raise some sponsorship on top of your entry fee, all the money you raise will go towards the ECHO Summer Activities programme. Please contact the ECHO office to book your place, 01568 620307, or visit [Colourfest, Leominster Herefordshire - ECHO](#)

Entry is £12 adults, £7 for under 16's or £30 for a family of four.



Singing for the Brain



Singing for the Brain brings together those living with dementia and their partners/carers in a friendly, fun and social environment.

There are two groups in Herefordshire, one in Ross on Wye, which meets at Walford Village Hall, Walford Road, Walford, Ross-on-Wye, HR9 5QS and one in Hereford, held in St Martins Church Hall, Ross Road, Hereford, HR2 7RJ.

The Ross on Wye group will meet on the following Wednesdays between 2pm—3.30pm: 10th, 17th, 24th June and the 1st and 22nd July.

The Hereford group is scheduled to meet between 10.30am—12pm on the same dates.

There is no charge for attending, but a suggested donation of £2 per person would be welcomed.

For more information call 07756 771134 or email denise.wood@alzheimers.org.uk



The Big Fat Duck Race

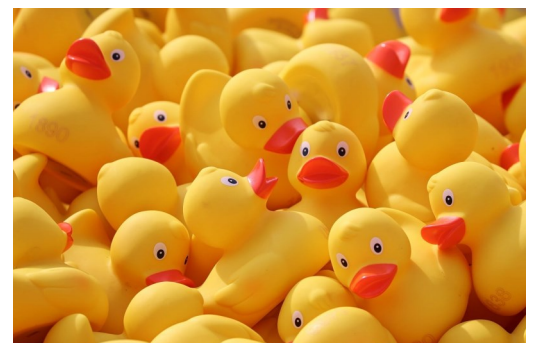
Saturday 25th July, sees ECHO Leominster launch their annual Big Fat Duck Race at Sommergalls Farm (HR6 8EA).

Big Fat Ducks are £2 a ticket and the winning duck will bring its owner a quacking £250. This year corporate green ducks are being sold for £60, or £100 for a racing pair, so if you work for, or own, a company why not buy a duck? Corporate ducks can be named and decorated to reflect their characters, and their business, as a bit of fun. First prize is £200.

ECHO would like to thank Caldicott Lettings and T.Dines Electrical who have agreed to be the event sponsor.

The Big Fat Ducks will take to the water at 12 noon. ECHO would love to see you there cheering them on their race to the finish line. To buy your ticket visit:

[ECHO's Big Fat Duck Race - ECHO](#)





Herefordshire Growing Point



Rewilding Without Barriers

6-week immersive Rewilding Courses for all abilities. Designed for those living with mental or physical challenges.

What we cover:

Birds & Pollinators: Discover the secret lives of your local wildlife.
Habitats & Biodiversity: Learn the science of a healthy ecosystem.
Sustainability in Practice: Future-proof your environment.

What You'll Master:

Surveying: Become a citizen scientist and track local species.
Habitat Building: Get hands-on creating homes for nature.
Wild Planting: Transform your own garden into a biodiversity haven.

The "Rewilding Without Barriers" Promise:

Fully Accessible: Activities are adapted to your physical pace and mobility.
Mental Sanctuary: A supportive, low-pressure environment to de-stress and reconnect.
Purpose-Driven: Gain the tools to make a real difference, starting in your own back garden.

Course Details:

Begins: Every Monday 2026

Time: 10:30 AM — 2:30 PM

Place: Herefordshire Growing Point
To register telephone 01432 805705



Spring Snapshots from Independent Living at Home

Our service users have sent us lots of photos of what they've been up to during the past few months. We enjoy seeing how busy they've been, so we'd like to share with you some ILH snapshots from Spring 2026.

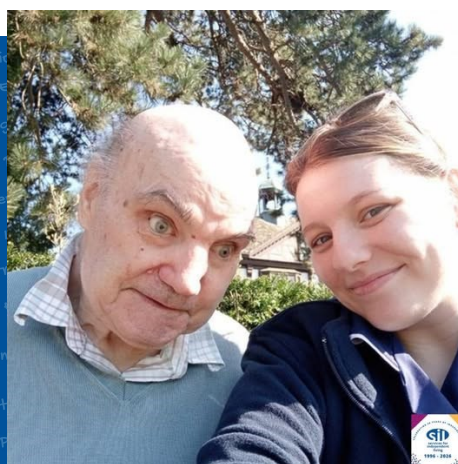
Thanks to all our support workers who take the photos.



Spring Snapshots from Homecare Services

Homecare support workers have been making some short videos of service users, but unfortunately we can't share those here! But, we have lots of lovely photos below.

If you'd like to see the videos you'll need to keep your eyes open on SIL's Facebook, Instagram and our new TikTok.



Supporting Mental Health at Burghill Tillington Weobley Cricket Club



This season, Hereford Men's Mental Health (HMMH), part of the SIL family, is proud to have installed a new sponsor board at Burghill Tillington Weobley Cricket Club (BTWCC), as well as sponsoring two first-team players.



Pictured is Barney Morgan alongside the new sponsor board. BTWCC competes in Division 1 of the Worcestershire Cricket League. Following the tragic loss of a player last season by suicide, the club has placed a strong emphasis on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of both players and supporters.

HMMH warmly invites the community to come along on a Saturday during the summer to enjoy a match, hopefully in the sunshine. It's a great opportunity to connect, support the team, and have a chat with Paul Stevens behind the bar, one of the two HMMH coordinators.

Free Energy Advice

Managing energy bills can be stressful at the best of times, and for people already dealing with difficult circumstances, the worry of mounting debt can feel completely overwhelming. Severn Wye is a charity which provides free, impartial advice on managing energy bills, and offers energy adviser visits at home as well as practical support. Their advisers can work directly with energy suppliers to resolve tariff, billing and debt issues, and are experienced in resolving complex energy issues to support people across rural Herefordshire.

A story from Ruth, a Severn Wye adviser

Ruth recently worked with a young woman who had left care and was living alone for the first time. She was struggling with her mental health and had built up an energy debt of nearly £1,000. There was no payment plan in place and no bank account to set one up. Helping her switch to a cheaper tariff, applying successfully to the British Gas Energy Trust to clear her debt, and showing her how to read her meter and manage her account online Ruth helped clear her debt and her anxiety. Today she has a payment plan she can afford and, for the first time since moving in, is paying regularly towards her energy use.

Severn Wye can help:

- prevent and reduce energy debt
- cut down on energy use
- save money on your fuel bills
- access help when times are hard

For free energy advice

Call the freephone advice line on **0800 500 3076** (Mon–Fri, 9am–5pm)

Email: communityadvice@severnwyne.org.uk

Visit: www.severnwyne.org.uk/advice-support



Accessible Courtyard

If you think that it's too early to talk about pantomime, we would have to shout, Oh, no it isn't!

The Courtyard, Hereford is promoting its accessible performances of both Cinderella, this year's main winter event, and The Snow Queen, a very special production for the tiny tots.

At 2pm on Saturday, 12 December there is an audio described performance of Cinderella, and on Friday, the 18th there is a special relaxed performance.



The Snow Queen hosts two Relaxed performances, one on Sunday, 13 December at 11am and the other on Tuesday, 22 December at 4.30pm. Designed to be welcoming and inclusive for all young audiences, the relaxed production means everyone can enjoy the adventure in their own way – wiggles, giggles and wonder are all very much encouraged.

The Courtyard hosts a range of other accessible events throughout the year including live performances and film. It is also an award winning dementia friendly organisation and holds many events especially for those with dementia and their carer.

GENEVIEVE (Dementia Friendly Screening)

Tue 30 Jun | 2pm

Two British couples pit their vintage automobiles against each other in an exciting cross-country race.

In this upbeat British comedy, two friends enter an antique car rally. Alan McKim (John Gregson) drives his beloved 1904 automobile, named Genevieve, while Ambrose Claverhouse (Kenneth More) takes his vintage Spyker car. Alan and Ambrose bring their wives (Dinah Sheridan, Kay Kendall) along for the wild ride from London to Brighton, and the trek soon turns fiercely competitive, each driver devising clever ways to sabotage the other in hopes of winning the race.

The lights will be dimmed and the sound a little quieter for a dementia friendly experience.

DEMENTIA FRIENDLY TEA PARTY : Tue 15 Sep, Tue 3 Nov, Tue 8 Dec | 2pm

Join the team at The Courtyard for a joyful, dementia-friendly celebration tea dance that will brighten anyone's day. Enjoy an atmosphere of warmth and nostalgia, filled with:

- ✦ Beloved music from yesteryear
- ✦ Delicious tea and cakes
- ✦ Gentle dancing with friendly students

A welcoming environment for all

Enjoy a relaxing afternoon in good company, surrounded by the sounds and tastes of the past. It's the perfect outing for a bit of fun and relaxation!

Visit www.courtyard.org.uk for tickets to these events and to learn more about all their accessible events.

SIL's Charitable Fund



In 2024 SIL's trustees set up a charitable fund, offering some financial help towards those things that will improve someone's life, but that they may not be able to afford.

As well as supporting service users the fund was also established to support organisations experiencing financial difficulties, that deliver services within the county to vulnerable people.

Many grants have been awarded over the past two years and SIL's trustees have now topped up the fund to ensure even more service users and local organisations can benefit.

Organisations that wish to apply must have a turnover of less than £500,000 and must deliver services via volunteers. The services should support people who are disadvantaged and live in Herefordshire.

SIL's Chief Executive Euan McPherson said: "We know the challenges many small volunteer led organisations are facing due to pressures on funding and increases in the cost of delivery.

"We want those who benefit from their services not to miss out, and so hope that any organisation that meets our criteria and needs a small amount of cash will contact us".

The process is very simple. Complete an application form and send it to SIL. A panel meets regularly and will assess the application and make the award if it is felt appropriate. In return, the organisation must be willing to prove that funds have been spent in line with the application and be able to provide a summary of what impact the funding has made to them.

SIL's service users who would like some financial support should contact the office or speak to one of their support team. Case studies and more information about the fund can be found on our website: [Charitable Fund | Services for Independent Living](#)

For an application form, call 01568 616653 or email: contactus@s4il.co.uk

Easter Eggstravaganza



Our annual Easter Eggstravaganza took place on the 9th April and we were delighted to see so many service users, children and staff. This year, guests were treated to a session with Herefordshire Growing Point, our charity of the year, learning how to create Kokedama, a way of planting a small houseplant, flower, or succulent, in a mixture of soil and moss, wrapped in moss and secured with string.

As well as Hot Cross buns and cake, there was a raffle raising £64 for Herefordshire Growing Point.

