

Information and news for disabled and older people and family carers

Independent Living News



Find us on Facebook



Follow @S4ILiving

Edition 139 – December 2020

#partofthesolution - Promoting independence for over twenty years

Inside this edition



- 2 A Message from the Chief Executive
Office Opening
- 3 Days Out with Luke / Action Deafness
- 4&5 Three Times Winners at the Hereford Times
Health & Social Care Awards
- 6 All Change at Megan Baker House
- 7 Safe Haven / MS Group South Wales
- 8 SIL's AGM & Annual Support Awards



If you would like a regular copy of the SIL newsletter, and to help us adhere to our environmental policy to reduce production and postage costs, please forward your email address details to shelagh.callaghan@s4il.co.uk

Deadline for article contributions in the Spring newsletter is Friday, 29th January 2021. Email to shelagh.callaghan@s4il.co.uk or post to the address on the back of this newsletter. Don't forget the prize for every star letter/article printed is £25.

Welcome to the latest edition of the SIL quarterly newsletter. In these odd and uncertain times I hope you find the content useful and interesting.



The Hereford Times Health & Social Care Awards did provide some light during the dark months for SIL again this year, more of which you can read further on in the bulletin. The event was videoed and live streamed this year; another reminder of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am sure you will have seen the recent news about a potential vaccine possibly becoming available later in the year. This is the sort of news we have been waiting for and does give a sense that there may be an end to the current restrictions on our daily living. That said there are still a number of challenges to overcome and the infection rates are still rising nationally and locally. We really need your help to keep our services safe, it is really important that we all continue to follow the lockdown rules and any further guidance so that we can minimise any further surge in numbers prior to a suitable vaccine being available.

It will be a very different Christmas for most of us this year and I know for many people that may mean being isolated from friends and family; please let us know if you are feeling lonely or down and we will see what we can do to help.

Stay safe, stay warm and stay well, Euan



Office Opening



Although SIL's Leominster office is not fully operational we would like to reassure you that any answerphone messages you leave or any letters that are posted, will reach the appropriate person - it may just take a little longer to respond. Changes to office working are in direct response to Government guidelines, but even when office working is permitted an appointment will still be required to speak to someone in person. Please do not arrive at the office without a prior agreement.



Caveat: Please note we print articles provided by third party organisations in good faith. SIL takes no responsibility for the accuracy of the information or content. Dates and times of events and activities are correct at the time of going to print.

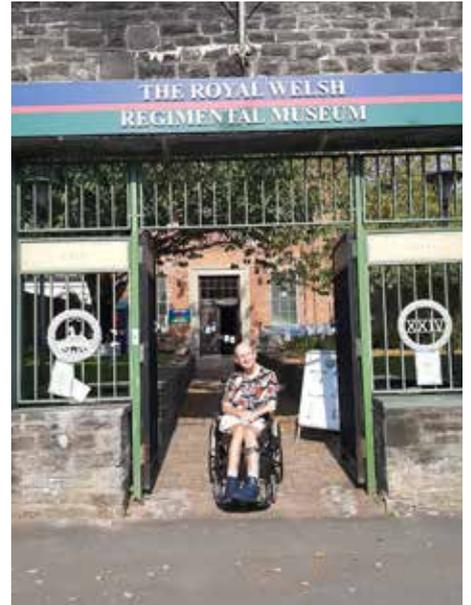
Days out with Luke



Luke, one of SIL's service users, and PA Kristina have had a busy Autumn making the most of some lovely weather. Luke's first trip was to Westonbirt Arboretum where he said he had a splendid day. "The sun was shining, we had a relaxing picnic and a three-hour expedition around the vast variety of trees, including one which smelt like candyfloss!"



A second trip took Luke and Kristina to the Royal Welsh Regimental museum. Kristina said that Luke didn't stop talking about all the different wars and who was involved and which years they took place. Luke said he was ecstatic when he came out. Thank you to Luke and Kristina for sharing their adventures with us.



Action Deafness



Action Deafness, formerly Deaf Direct, have launched a new Equipment Service and Equipment Brochure, to support the new services for those with hearing loss. The Equipment Service aims to support people with hearing loss to live as safely and independently as possible. Action Deafness offers equipment such as flashing and loud doorbells, amplified phones, vibrating fire alarms, baby alerts, listening devices and much more.



To order a copy of the new brochure email info@actiondeafness.org.uk, call 01905 746301, or text 07725 244129.

For an extra charge Action Deafness offer a home visit to assess what equipment is suitable for where you live. They also offer full training or "try before you buy". Visits taken place following Covid-19 guidelines.

Three times Winners at the Hereford Times Health & Social Care Awards



Three times a winner of the Outstanding Contribution to Social Care, (that's the winner for each year it's been held), three awards at this year's event, and all three finalists in the 2020 Domiciliary Care Worker category were from SIL. We are usually very modest about our achievements, but we want to shout this from the rooftops – SIL is an outstanding, caring organisation that puts the service user at the centre of everything we do – and being recognised each year in this way proves it!



The Hereford Times Health & Social Care Awards began in 2018 and SIL was delighted to win an award in two categories and be a finalist in three others. This success was repeated in 2019 and now in 2020, we have achieved five finalist places and three awards.

Ruth Davies was a finalist in 2018 so did not expect to be nominated a second time. However, she was nominated this year and took one of the three finalist places in the Domiciliary Care Worker category, and won the award. After winning the award Ruth, who supports a quadriplegic man with cerebral palsy, who cannot communicate verbally and requires round the clock support, said: "It is very worthwhile helping someone to get the most out of their life, knowing they are achieving what they can." Ruth and the service user make the most of their time together and last year took a trip to London where they visited the Houses of Parliament; a day at the pantomime meeting the cast and crew; and visits to the theatre, restaurants and bowling.



The Mental Health Award went to SIL's Chief Executive Euan McPherson, for his work with City Councillor Paul Stevens, in setting up the Hereford Men's Mental Health Group (MMHG).

Euan, who is also a qualified Mental Health First Aid trainer, met Paul after giving a talk about his personal battle with mental health problems. The two agreed that



men found it difficult to confront issues around poor mental health and so the MMHG was formed. The Group now has over 30 members and despite Covid has managed to meet on line and continue its work in supporting people. Euan said: "The group offers coffee and space – even on-line! It's a men's group because men are notoriously slow at talking about their problems to family and friends or accessing support. Three out of four suicides are male. Paul and I are ambassadors with the message that talking about your feelings is a strength."

The judges believed that with the increase in mental health issues because of Covid, the MMHG has made, and is continuing to make, a positive impact on the mental health of those who attend. Because of this the duo were awarded the Outstanding Contribution award much to their surprise.

But we aren't resting on our laurels. SIL continues to deliver first class care and support its staff to be the best they can be. And of course, we are looking forward to the challenges of next year and hope that we may be lucky again in the 2021 Hereford Times Health & Social Care Awards.

If you have read this and think you may have what it takes to be a support worker for SIL, or you would like to discuss having SIL support you or a loved one, please phone or email us: 01568 616653 or contactus@s4il.co.uk



All Change at Megan Baker House



Regular readers of our newsletter will know that this year we had chosen Megan Baker House (MBH) to be our charity of the Year. Sadly, because of Covid we have been unable to host our usual events and so we haven't been able to support MBH as much as we would have liked. However, it's been a busy year for the charity.

This summer MBH left their premises in Moreton, Eye and established four outreach centres plus the main MBH HQ Ledbury. From the Ledbury centre, MBH runs a full timetable of sessions, including project REACHOUT, delivering the movement-based classes for children and adults at three more venues in Herefordshire, one in Shropshire, one in Cheltenham and soon at 'Life after Stroke' in Bromsgrove.

Being able to operate where clients are most in need of their services has enabled MBH to help more people to live their lives as independently as possible. During the initial period of lockdown clients were unable to attend classes so they developed virtual sessions via 'Zoom' which were so popular that many clients have asked for them to be continued.

There was a two week's holiday club in August for those who live further away, with one family travelling from Yorkshire, which they have been doing for eight years - such is the value they place on the outcomes their children achieve with MBH.



The main challenge for MBH is finding the £7,000 per week needed to operate, especially as the pandemic put a stop to community fundraising and is unlikely to start any time soon.

MBH is now establishing a programme of activities that can go ahead safely within Covid restrictions and this begins with a Cyclathon (Blood, Sweat and Gears) on the 10th and 11th April 2021. For more details on their fundraising or the work they do, visit:

www.meganbakerhouse.org.uk

Safe Haven



If you find yourself in crisis or need urgent support with your mental health, the Safe Haven at Herefordshire Mind is a safe and friendly place that helps people with mental health support and advice.

The Safe Haven Team provide empathy, support and safety to anyone experiencing high emotional distress and/or suicidal thoughts. They offer a non-judgemental listening ear and an exploration of coping strategies, should this be needed. As well as offering support, they will be able to signpost you to further services if you need them.



Safe Haven is open for telephone calls and emails on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday evenings from 5pm to 10pm. They also offer face to face, one-to-one support, but due to social distancing measures this is by appointment only. You need to ring on the night you want to attend and an appointment will be made. Safe Haven is also operating a limited social space but due to social distancing, this is only for two people at any one time. The social space includes board games, cards, art and conversation.

To speak to the team or make an appointment call: 07776 706843 or 01432 372407, or email: safehaven@herefordshire-mind.org.uk

MS Group South Wales



A new MS Society Group, The Monmouthshire, Newport and Torfaen MS Society Group, has been launched in South East Wales. This new Group is a merger of Chepstow, Monmouth & Abergavenny and Torfaen MS Society Groups.

A dedicated team of eight volunteers under the leadership of Ann Hodgson, Group Coordinator, will develop services, activities and support for people living with and affected by MS in this area, whilst also ensuring that pre-merger services continue. The Group is very excited to have received almost £10,000 in funding from National Lottery Awards for All. This will enable the Group to deliver a programme of new activities online throughout lockdown and face-to-face when circumstances allow.

If you would like more information about the Group contact MNT@mssociety.org.uk or Ann.Hodgson@groups.mssociety.org.uk



SIL's AGM & Annual Support Awards



It was an unusual AGM for SIL this year with no get together over lunch, but instead an interactive event via Zoom. Members were able to take part as usual and vote on the election of trustees and other proposals. However, the highlight of the event was the award ceremony, when a number of awards were made to support workers within SIL's Independent Living at Home (ILH) Service and a new award given for the Homecare Support Worker of the Year within SIL's Homecare Service, which started just over a year ago. There were six nominations from service users for the Homecare Support Worker of the Year, confirming what a committed, caring team work within Homecare Services. The runner up was Rebecca Guerin and the winner was Chloe Howells.

There are three annual awards for those in ILH. The Adam Cove Award, given to the Team Leader of the Year, was won by Donna Tranter. The Ian Jones Award, for the Support Worker of the Year, was given to winner Elaine Parry. The final award, The ILH Team Award, was won by Sheila Carr's Team. This award goes to all the members of the winning team reflecting how well they deliver care and support as a team.

We would like to say a big thank all service users who took the time to write a nomination and of course huge congratulations to all nominees.



Elaine Parry is pictured with service users Beth Jarvis and Lindsey Muckles receiving her trophy and certificate.



Donna Tranter is pictured with Gemma Lewis, HR Manager, and Lisa Bradley, awarding her the shield and certificate.

Registered Office:
Services for Independent Living, 1 Owen Way, Leominster Enterprise Park,
Leominster, Herefordshire, HR6 0LA
T: 01568 616653 E: contactus@s4il.co.uk
www.s4il.co.uk