

Information and news for disabled and older people and family carers

Independent Living News



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Edition 137 – June 2020

#partofthesolution - Supporting disabled people for over twenty years

Inside this edition



- 2 A Message from the Chief Executive
SIL Events
- 3 The Cart Shed | Volunteering Matters
- 4 SSAFA Needs You! | The Rejuvenation
- 5 Building Better Opportunities | Carer Links
- 6&7 Rainbows and cakes
- 8 Advance Decisions and Covid-19
- 9 Companion Calls | Letter Writing
- 10 SIL's Alan Titchmarsh | Goodbye
- 11 Disability Advice | Disabled Facilities Grants
- 12 Cancer Support
The Tackling Loneliness Campaign



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 Autumn newsletter is Friday, 31st July 2020. 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.



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.

Welcome to the latest edition of the SIL newsletter

An awful lot has changed since the last newsletter came out and I know many of you will be anxious about the future, and especially risks to health and finances. We have put together some helpful resources on our website, www.s4il.co.uk, to help support you through this period and we are continuing to operate all of our services, albeit remotely with office based staff working from home.

We will continue to follow government guidelines to keep you and our staff safe over the coming months. This does mean we will continue to work from home for the foreseeable future and use telephone and video links rather than face to face meetings. We will continue to provide information and updates as and when we receive them. In the meantime, it is important that we still minimise contact with others so that we can reduce the risk of infection.

Stay safe and please contact us if you need to.

SIL Events



It was with regret that SIL had to cancel its planned VE Day Celebrations. This of course was on Friday, 8th May during the lockdown. However, with the uncertainty around measures being put in place across the year we are reluctantly putting a hold on all future events until further notice.

We will naturally update readers of the newsletter with future plans once we can deliver events safely to staff and visitors.

The Cart Shed



The Cart Shed has redesigned its courses and is now offering a horticulture and mindful sculpture programme which will be delivered online. To join the programme participants need to be over 19 years of age and living in Herefordshire; OR aged 15-24 living in Herefordshire, and at risk of being neither in employment nor education/training; OR a parent/carer of a young person who is struggling with their learning/not engaging with school and living in Herefordshire.



Anyone interested in joining one of these courses has to be prepared to commit to the full course including completing all written tasks, though help can be given by an individual's carer if they need support. The courses will be run daily via a closed facebook group to keep all participants safe. Course information, enrolment forms etc will be sent via google drive, so potential participants need to have access to a lap-top/smart phone and any help they may need to access it. For more information E: info@thecartshed.co.uk

Volunteering Matters



Volunteering Matters are now delivering their Mind Matters Mental Health Champion Training online and supporting our SAFE (Sexual Awareness for Everyone) Program with online resources. This education programme has been extended to include updated internet safety information and pregnancy modules and caters specifically for people with physical or learning disabilities.



The employability program, Activ8 offers online resources and telephone interviews with a new peer mentoring role to young people aged 18-24 who are neither in employment nor education/training. The mentor can support people that need extra help with application forms, job searches and CV's.

Due to the Covid-19 situation there are new volunteering roles in telephone befriending services, dog walking services, prescription collection and other essentials. To support all of these services, Volunteering Matters is seeking social media champions to collect and create content for their new Youth 4 Social Action Instagram account - which is helping young people by providing entertainment and wellbeing info about staying safe at home.

The organisation is also providing the wider community with information on risk assessments and their national #VolunteerSafely campaign. All of the safety information can be found on the Volunteering Matters website and information about their local projects for Gwent on Facebook: Volunteering Matters Wales. For more information contact them on 01495 750333 or via the Facebook Page.

SSAFA Needs You!



Regular readers of this newsletter will know that SIL signed the Armed Forces Covenant last year and is proud to support the armed forces and veterans.



SSAFA, The Armed Forces Charity, is recruiting volunteers in Gwent to help across the three divisions covering the area and SIL has been asked to get this message out and about.

They presently have 25 case workers and helpers, but are looking for enthusiastic people who would like to join the team and work in a variety of posts such as case workers, helpers, and treasurer as well as fundraisers. Volunteers come from a variety of backgrounds and they welcome applications from those who have not served in the Armed Forces. Full training is given and all volunteers have full support at local and national levels. All expenses while carrying out SSAFA work is refunded.

If you would like to take part in this very rewarding work as well as learning new skills then please make contact Alan Denman MVO MBE, on 01633 246269, E: alan.denman@gwent.ssafa.org.uk

The Rejuvenation



In the climate of social distancing and self isolation, Rejuvenate! like many other organisations, is having to change the way it supports people.

Instead of monthly meetings, group organiser Maggie is working with a small team to produce a regular online newsletter called The Rejuvenation. The newsletter is distributed every two weeks to Rejuvenate! members, as well as being sent to professionals in health and social care across Herefordshire; local church groups and wellbeing practitioners. The newsletter includes lots of creative activities for carers to do at home, recipes and some supportive articles on wellbeing.



If you would like to receive a copy of the newsletter, or find out more about the group, email Maggie. E: rejuvenate@creativecarergroup.co.uk

Building Better Opportunities



Building Better Opportunities (BBO) offers supported volunteering, training, work placements and assistance finding employment to people, especially those who may have the most difficulty finding work.



In Herefordshire, this project is delivered through the work of eight partner organisations all located in Herefordshire. The project, which is jointly funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund, helps people 19 years of age or older who are not currently working. If you are interested in finding out more or joining the BBO project please email our team at bboherefordshire@landau.co.uk

SIL has supported this project for over twelve months and has successfully appointed two young people to its staff, who are both proving to be a real asset to the organisation.

BBO is still supporting people throughout the Coronavirus shutdown with online courses and help finding employment so they still welcome people getting in touch.

CarerLinks



Crossroads Together – CarerLinks has made some changes to the way it is working through the Coronavirus. Whilst the office in the Fred Bulmer Centre, Hereford is now closed, its staff are continuing to give support while working remotely.



CarerLinks provides support to individuals, of any age, who are new to caring for someone, or to existing carers who need additional support. Through their team of Carer Advisors, they work in the community to identify hidden carers or carers needing support.

Their Carer Advisors are still working with the assessments tool the Outcome Star, but this is currently being done by phone and email.

Carer Advisors listen to individuals and offer a range of services and support to help carers improve their health and wellbeing, including; 1:1 support, information, advice, advocacy and signposting. Their information and support line for carers, 01432 663057, is open between 9am–5pm Monday to Friday.

They now have a local Facebook group, CarerLinks Herefordshire, which is linked to Crossroads Together page. The Carer Advisors are updating this on a daily basis. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/CarerlinksHerefordshire>

Rainbows and Cakes



During recent months it's been difficult to see much to smile about in amongst the sadness, disruption and unhappiness that is affecting many people's lives.

However, at SIL we have been trying to find ways to keep our staff positive and also to involve their families. Children have been encouraged to create rainbow pictures with the Stay Safe message and we particularly liked the ones pictured here. Nellie, the granddaughter of one of SIL's Team Leaders, Elaine Powell, drew her picture to show her support for NHS and Keyworkers, while the Stay Safe message was picked up by Ronnie aged 4 and 6 year old Pippa, the children of Jade Perks, one of SIL's Homecare Services Team.

Meanwhile despite some of the challenges in buying home baking ingredients, the Direct Payment Support Service team decided one weekend to hold their own Bake Off competition. Unfortunately, the judges Gemma Lewis and Karen Hunt from the HR team were unable to taste the bakes, but they were sent photos and judged on visual merit. There was one outstanding entry from Senior DP Advisor Amy Deacon, who wowed the judges with her loo roll! The runners up were Christy Dallow, the Finance Admin & Payroll Team Leader, with her hedgehog; and Briony Phillips, Finance Admin and Payroll Officer, with her trio of treats.

Gemma and Karen have also been working to keep up morale and set a quiz for all staff to mark the Queen's birthday. They put together some prizes and Nick Gray, ILH Support Worker, swept the board with his knowledge of Herefordshire cattle, taking first prize – chocolates and a bottle of Bucks Fizz.





Advance Decisions and Covid-19



The current crisis is making many people think about their care in the event of contracting the illness and what they would like to happen to them. If you have discussed with loved ones about what you would like to happen in the event of becoming critically ill, then an Advance Decision may be something you should consider. Fewer than one in ten people have recorded their wishes in a legally binding way by making an Advance Decision ('Living Will') which allows someone to state whether they want to refuse life-prolonging treatment in certain circumstances. Some people want to be given all possible medical treatment to help them get better if they become seriously ill. Others do not want some types of treatment and would rather stay at home, receive only the necessary treatment to keep them comfortable and make sure their life is not artificially prolonged. This is sometimes known as a "living will" or "advance directive", but the legal name is Advance Decision to Refuse Treatment.

**COMPASSION
IN DYING.**
SUPPORTING YOUR CHOICES

This is legally binding in England and Wales. An Advance Decision allows you to record any treatments that you do not want to be given in the future, in case you later become unable to make or communicate decisions through injury or illness. It allows you to remain at the heart of these choices, giving you peace of mind that if the worst does happen your wishes will still be followed.

Compassion in Dying gives step-by-step instructions on how to specify the kind of treatment you want if you become seriously ill with Coronavirus. If you would like to be given all treatment available then you can write this in an advance statement, but it will only be used if you cannot make or communicate a decision for yourself.

Compassion in Dying has a form template you can use to record your wishes. It takes you through different conditions, including coronavirus, in which you could lose capacity or the ability to communicate, so that you can record your treatment wishes for each scenario clearly and concisely. It is free, straightforward, and doesn't require a solicitor.

There is space to include details of your Lasting Power of Attorney for Health and Welfare, if you have one, or anyone else you want to be involved in your care.

In the event that you already have an Advance Decision in place, there are instructions on how to amend it to include your wishes on treatment for COVID-19. You can complete the form online, or if you prefer, download it to fill in by hand. You can also have a copy sent to you by post. To contact Compassion in Dying call their free information line on 0800 999 2434 or visit the website compassionindying.org.uk/

Companion Calls



Companion Calls is a brand new service that Alzheimer's Society (AS) is putting in place in response to the Coronavirus crisis. All current AS service users are receiving welfare calls from their dementia advisers – the plan is to contact people each month while the crisis lasts. During the welfare call, the advisers will determine whether the client would benefit from Companion Calls. These are calls, made by volunteers, that will take place at agreed intervals. All volunteers are receiving training on telephone skills and other skills they will need, and then starting to make these Companion Calls. The purpose is to touch base and have a conversation and companionship, not to provide specialist dementia support.



The service is for people that AS already supports, but if there are other people living with dementia or caring for someone who does that AS is not aware of, they can ring the Dementia Connect service on 0333 150 3456. The line, which is available for anyone who is living with dementia and for their carers is open: Monday to Wednesday 9am – 8pm; Thursday and Friday 9am – 5pm; and Saturday and Sunday 10am – 4pm.

Letter Writing



Age Connects Torfaen are launching a letter writing scheme for older people and are calling all boys and girls to pick up pens or pencils and get writing or drawing.



Covid 19 has presented difficult times for many older people, especially those living alone who may not have anyone to talk to, so the children of Torfaen are needed to help by writing a letter or creating a drawing which Age Connects will send out to the older people of Torfaen. Children can write about anything at all, their favourite book or hobby, or draw a picture of the last holiday they went on.

Completed letters or drawings should be sent by email to Laura.Rehman@ageconnectstorfaen.org or Becky.lewis@ageconnectstorfaen.org. These staff members will print them off and send your special post out to their many clients living on their own.

SIL's Alan Titchmarsh



SIL Service User, Sheila moved into a new home a few months ago. Together with her support worker Chelsey, they decided to make the best of the glorious weather in April and set to work to make Sheila's new garden a place of beauty. Sheila said that while Chelsea filled all pots with compost and levelled it out she planted a variety of shrubs and bedding plants, including early flowering carnation, pot carnation, ivies, conifers, aquilegia and fuschia. Once the plants were in the soil Chelsey bedded them in and Sheila secured them and made sure any pots and containers they were in the right place. We all bet she's disappointed the Chelsea Flower Show has been cancelled this year. Who knows Sheila's garden design might have taken Gold!



Goodbye



One of SIL's longer serving support workers has had to leave her job as a support worker due to ill health. Colleague and friends were sorry to see her go, but received a lovely message from her. Sonia wrote, "I would like to say a big thankyou to all staff and service users. I have worked for SIL for 10 years and regrettably I have had to leave the company due to illness. I have had a great time working for SIL. I thought I would be there until I was on my Zimmer frame, but you never know what may happen. Fond memories to all who know me. Stay safe".

We all wish Sonia the very best and think her sentiments are a ringing endorsement of how we hope all SIL's team feel about working for us.





Disability Advice Project

HOW TO GET ADVICE DURING THE CORONAVIRUS OUTBREAK

We are able to deal with enquiries and give advice through our office number 01633 485865.

You can also email your enquiries to info@dapwales.org.uk

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We will continue to assist clients with completing claim forms by phone or video.

Keep an eye on our Facebook page As we will be sharing any information we receive from the DWP and HMCS.



Disabled Facilities Grants



The government has made £505 million available in 2020-21, for the Disabled Facility Grants (DFG) supporting local authorities to help older and disabled people to live independently and safely in their own homes for longer. Research suggests that receiving a Disabled Facilities Grant can delay the time at which someone needs to go into a care home by four years – a significant extension of independent living, and associated cost saving. Adaptations that can be funded include ramps and stairlifts to allow access to all parts of the home; widening doorways to accommodate wheelchair access: level access showers and comfort height toilets to enable independent use of these facilities; home extensions to provide ground floor bedroom and bathroom facilities; and accessible gardens. To find out more about the DFG managed by Herefordshire Council, eligibility and how to make a referral, phone 01432 260101

Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)

Everything you need to know

Cancer Support



With cancer screenings being put on hold due to the Coronavirus, treatments cancelled or operations to remove cancer postponed, it's a daunting time for those living with cancer. Tenovus Cancer Care is doing its very best to represent and support those patients during this difficult time by offering a free service staffed by professional cancer nurses. The Freephone Support Line is open every single day, so that a trained nurse is available to offer support, advice or sometimes what's needed most: a friendly voice and a listening ear. The helpline number is 0808 808 1010.



If you would like to support Tenovus by donating to the charity, text HELPGIVEHOPE to 70085. The call will give £5 to the charity and costs one standard rate message. If you would like to donate but don't want further communication from Tenovus text HELPGIVEHOPENOINFO to the same number.

The Tackling Loneliness Campaign



The Government has launched a campaign to try and combat the loneliness caused by COVID-19 lockdown.

If you live alone, the current situation will find you very much reliant on your own company - the more so if you are shielding. Maybe not too much of a problem if you are tech savvy and accustomed to connecting with others online, but for many older and vulnerable people there may not be that access available. However, loneliness can affect anyone, whatever their age and

circumstances. The Campaign wants to encourage people to talk openly about loneliness and national loneliness organisations will be allocated a guaranteed £5 million worth of funding to continue and adapt their critical work at this time. Loneliness charities, including Age UK the Jo Cox Foundation, British Red Cross, Campaign to End Loneliness, Co-op Foundation, The Cares Family, Mind, Sense and the Samaritans will be supported to help individuals affected, so if you feel you would like to speak to someone about isolation and loneliness, either for yourself or someone you know, call one of the charities above or go on to their website.



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