

Information and news for disabled and older people and family carers

Independent Living News



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Edition 142 – September 2021

#partofthesolution - 1996-2021, celebrating 25 years of promoting independent living

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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 Winter newsletter is Friday, 29th October 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.

Well SIL is buzzing again.



The new offices have people working there - masked and super hygiene conscious - but there. We service users, albeit cautiously, are getting out and about again. After all the restrictions and disruption we have faced with Covid and its aftermath we are on our way towards a more liveable normality. More importantly we are beginning to feel a party coming on!

On Thursday 7th October from 11:30am to 3:00pm at The Courtyard, Edgar St, Hereford HR4 9JR we are holding our AGM and, perhaps of even greater significance, we will celebrate SIL's 25th year.

I hope as many of you as possible can attend. I have been asked to emphasise that places are restricted so please when you receive your invitation, reply and confirm your attendance. Sadly, if you are not on the guest list you will not be admitted.

The AGM is an important occasion to catch up with our business - how SIL is performing now, our plans for future development and if you are a Member you have a voice selecting our Trustees and agreeing other important motions.

But back to the celebrations! As well as looking forward, this year we are also enjoying reminiscing about our past. With the venue being in a theatre we wanted some drama, so we have entertainment, stories from the past and current service users, staff and managers.

Whilst we are looking forward to the AGM, normal business has been ongoing in the office. We are making strident progress with our new IT system which should help staff respond more quickly to the requirements and decisions of service users and their families, whilst making staff admin work a little easier. We are still dealing with issues arising from Covid including maintaining our PPE supplies and obtaining all the appropriate funding available to cope with the additional expenses we have faced.

Which with great sadness, brings me to giving my personal thanks, and those of all SIL's Trustees, to Mike Moyles, who is leaving SIL. All I need to say is that during his time with us Mike has been vital to SIL's financial and business success. He will be sorely missed by his colleagues, and also be the Trustees who send their best wishes for the future.

On a happier note, I hope to see as many as possible of you in person on the 7th October.

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.

Action Deafness - equipment to keep you safe



Action Deafness offers free impartial support and information on hearing loss, Community Support, Support Workers and Communication such as Sign Language Interpreters. They also run an equipment shop from 36 Widemarsh Street, Hereford, every Monday from 10am – 1pm, offering information and advice and giving people the chance to try out the devices.



Depending on your circumstances, you may be entitled to a free home assessment to see what equipment might benefit you and free equipment funded by the council.

So, if you miss visitors at the door because you can't hear the bell, get up late because the alarm doesn't wake you or worry you might not be able to hear the smoke alarm at night, Action Deafness may be able to help. They also provide equipment for those who struggle to hear people on the phone or hearing people during on-line meetings.

From flashing doorbells, to amplified phones, personal listening devices and more, Action Deafness can help. For more information call 07850 796131, or email: info@actiondeafness.org.uk

Safe Haven



Herefordshire Mind is delighted to have recently expanded its Safe Haven service so that it is now open 7 nights a week from 5-10pm, at Heffernan House, 130-132 Widemarsh Street, Hereford, HR4 9HN. The service offers a safe space to anyone in Herefordshire over 18 who is experiencing emotional distress. They work with people experiencing a wide range of issues and can be contacted by telephone and email as well as providing face to face support and a social space. If you are struggling emotionally, please get in touch. Tel: 01432 372407, or email: safehaven@herefordshire-mind.org.uk



My Life with SIL – A personal View by Dave Hughes



Dave has been with SIL since the very beginning of its journey in 1996 and to mark our 25th Anniversary he has written an insight into the changes he has seen as a dedicated service user, a trustee and a huge supporter of the organisation.

Around 1990 I started to go to meetings at Hereford County hospital. I met a lady called Barbara Milman, who told me about a group I could go to. The group talked about having support staff in your own home, here I met Maggie O'Neil and the late David Price.

Ladies called Marion and Caroline, (Caroline is still working in SIL's direct payments team today,) plus David Norsworthy, started an office, HCIL, by The Tan Brook Centre in Hereford. In 2003 Ginny Jaques joined, starting Independent Living at Home (ILH).

We had monthly meetings to discuss things and a new lady came to one of the meetings. Amy, then got a position working there and helped me a lot when I was on direct payments. She was very good with me and in 2009 helped with my transfer to ILH. Amy still works with direct payments today.

SIL moved to Leominster and they were growing every day. In 2014



Marion said she was leaving so Kate from HR replaced her as the new chief executive for a while. Then after Kate left and Gemma Lewis got promoted to the head of HR. After a while Ginny said she was leaving. I heard the office was having a lot of new people starting so I went to Leominster and I met Euan who was about to be the new chief executive.

We had an AGM at Point4, and I met Lisa and her team from "Wish". Wish was a contract managed by SIL and went all over the county with information. When the contract ended Lisa got the position of deputy manager at SIL. I went to the SIL Garden Party in 2017 and Euan asked if I would like to be a trustee.

In 2019 Lisa became Registered Manager and in the same year SIL acquired Abelia Home Care Services.

SIL has events throughout the year, publish a monthly bulletin, a quarterly newsletter and a Year Book, celebrating everything SIL has achieved throughout the year. Even during the office lockdown SIL has

worked hard to keep everyone safe and communicated with.

I have seen many changes over the years, and I think SIL is getting better and better.

A snapshot of life as a SIL Support Worker



SIL Support Worker Lisa Spencer, sent us this insight into a recent event with service user Sheila, when meeting a colleague for the first time.

Despite working on the same team for months we had never met, always just another name spoken by our SU or written in the daily paperwork. So when we both arrived at our service users flat one Friday morning with our suitcases in hand and smiles glued in place ready to take SC on her annual holiday we didn't expect what happened next.

Straight away we fell into an easy banter between the three of us and worked side by side with a natural ease. I chauffeured and Abi juggled between reading the satnav and being DJ, loading the next CD so we could sing along to banging tunes as we drove around the Derbyshire countryside.

It's been delightful to see Sheila enjoying herself with family time, carriage rides, and a multitude of other things done this week. We even watched the Euros footie final. Three football hating women sat with the volume off while Abi commentated in a Welsh "Nessa" accent. We gave all the Italian players pasta names, Ravioli was in goal, Tagliatelle took the penalties. We laughed until we cried. The three of us barely got to bed before midnight as we sat laughing and storytelling every evening. We hope Sheila has enjoyed this week as much as we have. Two strangers, now the best of friends on their service user's grand adventure. Now we just need a holiday to get over it...



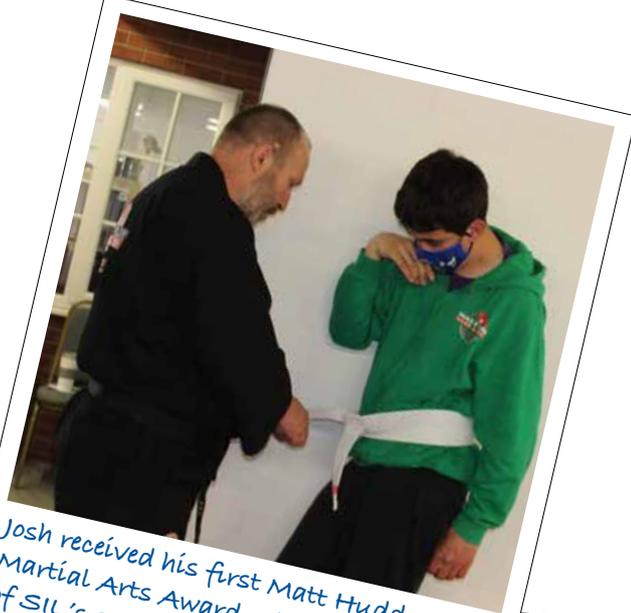
SIL's Summer of Fun



We may still have had some restrictions due to Covid over the summer months, but it hasn't stopped our service users and support staff from enjoying themselves!



After two years of only speaking on the telephone due to Covid good friends Sheila and VM finally got together for a tea party at Wellington garden centre.



Josh received his first Matt Hudd Martial Arts Award, while another of SIL's service users John, received another tag on his belt - well done guys!

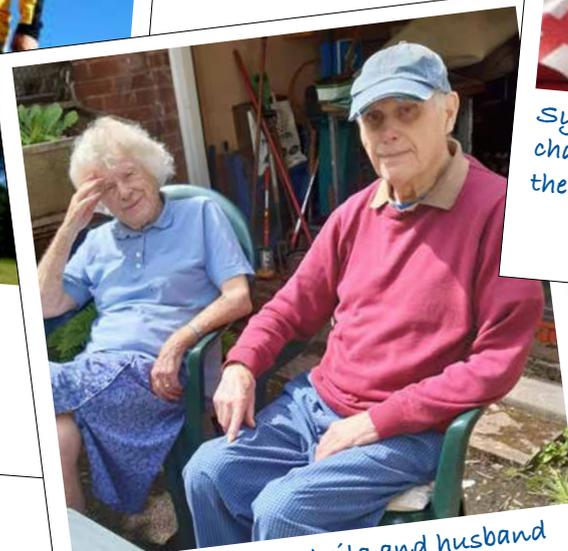


Alan, was finally able to get back to football training.

Summer of Fun



Sylvie did her best to boost England's chances in the Euro's final by flying the flag.



New service user Sheila and husband Dennis enjoying a balmy summer's day

Snippets



Long Covid course, Wales – runs for 6 weeks each Tuesday from the 7th September, on-line between 10.30am – 12.00pm. To book a place contact Jules Godden, jules.godden@gavo.org.uk

Expert Patient Programme courses, Wales – a number of new 7 week courses start in September. These are free to attend and include Living with Long Term Conditions; Surviving Cancer; and Pain Management. To sign up for these on-line courses contact Jules Godden, jules.godden@gavo.org.uk

Rejuvenate! - Meets for the first time face to face again on the 2nd September. The group will get together in the new Nell Gwynn Room at the Courtyard, Hereford, between 10.30am – 12.30pm. If you are a creative carer and would like to join other like minded people for a monthly get together contact Maggie to book your place: rejuvenate@creativecarergroup.co.uk

Granny Gets a Grip - Needing equipment around the home need not compromise your choice of décor or make your home look unwelcoming. grannygetsagrip.com sells a range of stylish and practical products designed to make life easier and more comfortable – and beautiful!

Challenge Care Decisions - The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is launching a new inquiry into the right to challenge social care decisions. The inquiry wants to find out if people feel able to challenge a decision easily, if they feel that it leaves them without the right support. To have your say, take part in the survey, the link for which is on this page: www.independentliving.co.uk/industry-news/right-to-challenge-care-decisions/?omhide=true Closing date is the 15th September.

The Channel - This is a place where children and young people with epilepsy can get information, advice and guidance when they want it, where they want it and written in language they can relate to. Developed by Young Epilepsy in partnership with The Young Reps, The Channel uses animation, blogs and video. Visit <http://thechannel.org.uk/>

Office Opening – SIL's offices are staffed but are not open to the public. The majority of our staff are still working from home. Our phone number, 01568 616653, is only answered between 9am and 5pm.

SIL's Red Carpet Event



To mark our 25th Anniversary, SIL is hosting an extra special event this year as part of its AGM.

We are rolling out the red carpet, polishing up the spotlights and going all out to have a film and awards show unlike any we have had before. Naturally, we will hold the formal part of the AGM, but this will be brief, as what we really want to do this year is celebrate with all our service users, trustees, staff and friends who have supported SIL through the good times and those times which have been a challenge!

To coincide with our 25th year, SIL is commissioning a new set of videos to reflect where we are now, in the 21st century, and these will be launched at the event, along with a video being made in-house by the creative trio of Paula Palmer, Briony Phillips and Chib Alexander.

The awards ceremony, which is a regular feature of our AGMs, will be slightly different this year with new categories, including an award for outstanding PA, nominated by DPSS service users.

Numbers are very strictly limited due to capacity at the venue, so if you would like to attend the event, which takes place on Thursday, 7th October at the Courtyard, Hereford, you do need to get in touch as soon as possible. Sadly, if your name is not on the guest list, you will not be admitted to the event.



Our 20th anniversary celebrations in 1996. Lady Susan Darnley, cutting the cake with Euan McPherson, CEO.

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