



THE PHOENIX

Campaign for Independent Living in Lewisham
May 2009

A message from Denise Smith, Co-ordinator, CILL



We have been very quiet for the last six months so to those of you who missed us I send apologies but we are back now and to those of you who did not miss us well the same apology really – sorry but we're back! From this month The Phoenix will go out each month in order to raise awareness of issues, both local and national, of interest to our disabled community and at the same time provide an alternative version of real issues affecting real disabled people to the non-disabled community.

We are not funded by Lewisham Council but generate income through consultancy and training work we do and through seeking small grants to provide specific services. This means we really have to make the best use of the little money we have but it also means that although we are a small user led organisation we remain completely independent.

CILL was initially set up to promote independent living and support disabled people in achieving this if that was their choice and that remains our mission. We are hugely concerned at the lack of information available on independent living generally and direct payments, individual budgets and funding specifically. This is particularly worrying given that huge changes are coming – all users must have a self assessment of needs and an individual budget (including direct payments) by next March, a social care Green Paper with proposals for funding care is expected before the summer and the law is likely to change this year to allow individual budgets and direct payments in the NHS to those with long term conditions.

The Trustees at CILL have decided that what is important is communication, knowledge and Independent Living support if disabled people are ever to achieve equality. This means that CILL goes back to basics with communication as the key to what we do. We offer information, advice and support through The Phoenix, our website www.cill.org.uk, windowCILL (our online network) and one to one advice and support by telephone and email. We do not have an office or regular face to face meetings to keep costs down but in this way we still get information out, provide assistance and peer support.

The website is being updated so please have a look at it and let us know what you think and if there is something you would like to see there let us know. We are also trying to make windowCILL easy to access so once it is up and running why not join in.

From this month we have decided to add our comments to some of the news we include and please feel free to tell us what you think on windowCILL.

As always this is your organisation and your voice matters. If you need us we are only a phonecall or email away so please get in touch: Telephone: 020 8776 6967, Email: campaign@fsmail.net

Local News and Campaigns



Lewisham MPs - Figures recently released by Parliament gave the figures for expenses claimed by MPs. On top of their salaries (£63,291 plus a 2.3 per cent pay rise this year) local MPs claimed: Bridget Prentice (Lewisham East) - £131,352 (£30,198 of that on office running costs); Joan Ruddock (Lewisham Deptford) - £131,237 (£1,179 of that on stationery); Jim Dowd (Lewisham West) - £131,165.
(News Shopper 8 April 2009)

(I'm glad to see our MPs are not being outdone in the 'get as much as you can out of the

taxpayer' scheme being operated by Parliament and poor Joan Ruddock must be buying a hell of a lot of paperclips! But what I really want to know is how much we're paying our councillors, Mayor and Cabinet - DS)

'Secretive' Council criticised – The Taxpayers Alliance (who campaign for lower taxes) has criticised Lewisham Council for failing to give information about the earnings of senior council officers. Lewisham were asked 'who are the senior staff, what are their jobs and how much does each of them earn in salary, bonus and other perks'. However they only disclosed 7 employees earned more than £100,000 in 2007/8 and 6 in 2006/7. 'We believe taxpayers have a right to know who is being paid these large salaries, how much they are getting and what job they are meant to be doing'. After pressure from News Shopper Lewisham gave details for 9 most senior staff. These include: Barry Quirk, Chief Executive. - £188,384; Frankie Sulke, Executive Director for Children and Young People, - £132,618; Lesley Seary, Executive Director for Customer Services, - also £132,618; Janet Senior, Executive Director for Resources, - £130,053.

(News Shopper 25 April 2009)

(I think it only fair that we know what the councillors got so I'll try to find out. It is after all our money – DS)

Prescriptions – If you are 'a person with a continuing disability' and 'cannot go out without the help of another person' you may be able to apply for free prescriptions. Ask your GP for form FP92A.

Directory Enquiries – If using telephone directories is difficult you may be able to access free directory enquiries. Call 195 for advice on how to apply.

Lewisham LINK – This is a network of groups and individuals concerned with health and social care issues. If you live in Lewisham you can join. If you want to say what you think about health and social care services in Lewisham please contact: www.lewishamlink.org.uk or lewishamlink@parkwoodhealthcare.co.uk or call 020 8390 6900.

NHS Lewisham Launches Four Self Care Guides - NHS Lewisham has launched four self care guides to empower patients living with long-term conditions to take more care of their health and well-being. The Self Care guides entitled 'Positive about Epilepsy', 'Controlling IBS', 'Living with COPD' and 'Understanding Sickle Cell' are for people who are newly diagnosed or those learning to live with these long-term condition.

As well as explaining each condition and their treatment, the guides provide practical day-to-day management advice and information on healthy eating and exercise. This way, individuals can take more control of their own health.

Developed in collaboration with Lewisham residents, local and national voluntary organisations and local clinicians, the booklets offer an additional resource that compliments the information given by the doctor or nurse. Copies of the guides are available from University Hospital Lewisham, GP practices and health centres in Lewisham.



Council Tax - Lib Dems proposed freezing Council Tax this year (like Greenwich and Southwark) without any cuts to services and using Council reserves to fight the recession. However Lewisham Labour councillors with conservative support agreed a 2.5 per cent tax rise.

(Perhaps the reserves are in the Bank.....in Iceland – DS)

Expert Patient Programme – This is a free 6 week course for people living with any long term health condition and who want to manage it better. For more details contact Grainne Bellenie on 020 30493204 or email epp@lewishampct.nhs.uk



Manor House Library

The Grade II listed building has been extensively refurbished and now has lift access to all floors. It re-opens on 5 May 2009. For more information or to book a place on a building tour call 020 8314 8024 or email manorhouselibrary@lewisham.gov.uk

Walk for Life – On Sunday 7 June the Crusaid Walk for Life 2009 takes place. This is the biggest fundraising walk for HIV in Europe. It is a 10km leisurely walk starting in Potters Field Park and also around Tower Bridge, the Tower of London and St Paul's Cathedral. PPC (Positive Parenting for Children) is a local charity that provides home based and community services for children and families affected by HIV and AIDS. They will be taking part and aim to raise £2000 for their services. If you would like to take part (either as an individual or to join their team) or to become a sponsor please contact Deb Harter 020 7738 7333 or email debs@ppclondon.org.uk

Campaign to Bring Back Democracy to Lewisham – Lewisham Council called a referendum, by postal vote, in October 2001 for an elected Mayor. The Yes vote was 51 per cent with 49 per cent saying No. However only 18 per cent of eligible voters took part which means that only 9.2 per cent of the electorate voted in favour. 'The result was controversial, with the Electoral Commission noting 'the number of ballot papers which could not be included in the count because of invalid declarations was greater than the difference between the yes and no vote' and 'representatives were concerned the counting officer had not invited them to observe the adjudication of the doubtful ballot papers'. If 5 per cent of people on the electoral register present a petition seeking a referendum on whether the Council should operate under existing arrangements for an elected Mayor then there has to be one. A campaign to get a petition in place has started and if you are interested in joining please contact Gerryindependent@aol.com



(News Shopper, Your Views, 8 April 2009)

(Our Mayor and Cabinet, it seems to me, have too much control while local councillors – the people we elected - don't get much of a say. I'm all for the majority vote winning but this postal referendum hardly sounds like democracy! – DS)

The Budget



In the recent budget the Chancellor, Alistair Darling announced increases to child trust funds for disabled children. In presenting his budget to MPs in the House of Commons he said that the Government would make available an additional £100 per annum for disabled children and a further £200 every year thereafter for what he termed "Severely disabled children". The benefit will start in April 2009.

Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM) said it would like the Government to do further work on increasing the take-up of Disability Living Allowance to ensure that all families who are eligible receive support.

The Chancellor also announced that the Winter Fuel Allowance will be retained, giving £250 to those over 60 and £450 to people over 80, but there does not appear to be any plans for extending this allowance to all disabled people.

(Great news for disabled children that the extra costs of living with a disability are really being recognised. BUT when will the Government accept that the extra costs of heating are not met by DLA and that giving the winter fuel allowance to disabled people will mean many will not have to choose between heating and eating – DS)

New Care Quality Commission (CQC) – Edited from Disability Now

With the Care Quality Commission (CQC), replacing three former care regulators on 1 April, the Commission's Chief Executive Cynthia Bower has said,

"We're committed to building on the rights-based approach of both the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) and the Mental Health Act Commission. It must be driven by the people who use social care."

When it comes to personalisation, currently uppermost in many disabled people's thoughts and high on the care wish list, Bower said, "It's the sort of thing regulators shouldn't get in the way of."

That's partly because personalisation inevitably means that responsibility devolves away from over-arching regulatory bodies, with individuals making their own choices and assembling their own service packages.

But one concern about personalisation as it's currently proposed is that it will work well for those who know the system and how to work and use it. Bower believes that in those cases the new Commission can act as a backstop.

"It strikes me that most people can be supported in making the right choices. We can say to them quite clearly that, on this menu from which you can choose, we will regulate these sorts of options and we don't regulate these others."

Across the board she is clear about the *raison d'être* of the CQC.

"We're an organisation that exists solely to ensure quality and safety of services. We have no other remit."

[\(I agree that the views of service users must lie at the heart of inspection and regulation. Here in Lewisham just how personalisation will take effect is anyone's guess – we never did get our promised Individual Budget trial. CILL website gives more information – DS\)](#)

Social care - a users' wish list – Edited from Disability Now

Users' views captured in a new report say that social care reform could go much further than current Government proposals. Co-author Professor Peter Beresford explains

All current Government talk is of reforming social care to put disabled people and other service users "at the centre". Yet the lead on "personalisation" and "self-directed support" has largely come from non-disabled "experts", making it difficult for disabled people to get their views heard, let alone included.

Now findings from a national consultation event jointly organised by the Commission for Social Care Inspection and Brunel University challenges this. It brought together policymakers and a very wide range of disabled people. Crucially this user-led consultation shows that disabled people want:

- a universalist service, everyone is entitled to, free at the point of delivery, like the NHS, not one rationed by charges and eligibility criteria
- services based on the values of independent living and people having rights
- services that see service users as whole people
- all the services people need linked up – housing, health, benefits, education, leisure and so on
- better organisations to provide support – less bureaucratic, more accessible and not concerned with profit-making
- much greater user involvement
- a better workforce with improved conditions and training
- better services
- and, of course, improved funding generally to make all this possible.

While Government talks of social care's "total transformation" in three years, disabled people have realistic suggestions to make about what's really needed to achieve this. Social care will have to become more attractive to gain more support. More individual budgets and direct payments will help here. Its status and profile will have to be raised. There needs to be more

joined up campaigning and lobbying in which service users are centrally involved.

The media must play a more active role This links with the key need to challenge the stigma now faced by service users and indeed often by those working with them, which has meant that they are now frequently not seen as valuable or worthwhile. Last but not least, user controlled organisations must have a stronger voice to bring about change with increased and more secure funding. This user-led programme for change offers a real prospect of achieving rights-based support for disabled people in the future.

To read Transforming Social Care: Changing the future together, by Peter Beresford and Frances Hasler , visit www.shapingourlives.org.uk/consultations.html

(Next issue of The Phoenix will look at what's happening in Lewisham – DS)

Welfare reform - threats and promises – edited from Disability Now

Ruth Patrick takes a critical look at the current welfare reform bill.

Good news and welfare reform are not phrases that generally sit comfortably together but one recent amendment to the bill currently before parliament gives one section of our community reason to celebrate. Following sustained campaigning, from 2011 those with severe visual impairments will be able to claim the higher mobility rate of Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

The general thrust of the welfare reform bill continues to concern many in the disability movement and beyond. The bill, which is currently before the House of Lords and looks set to become law shortly, continues the Government's tired emphasis on work as the best form of welfare. There is the additional threat of sanctions for those benefit claimants who refuse to engage in programmes to support them into work.

Thus, for disabled people conditions are attached to the receipt of the new Employment Support Allowance (ESA). Claimants are initially divided into two groups – those thought capable of work and those whose impairments are judged so severe as to prevent them from engaging in paid employment. These divisions are based on a medical model of disability where the impairment is all, neglecting the importance and impact of disabling barriers in society.

This bill affects all welfare claimants. The philosophy behind the reforms appears to be quite simple: paid work is the best (if not only) way for an adult to contribute to society. This seems particularly ironic in the current economic climate, where unemployment continues to soar.

Fortunately, the bill has aroused protest and dissent from within the disability community. The message must be to “carry on campaigning” and to continue to highlight the real inadequacies and fundamental issues with the current welfare reform proposals. Most importantly, we must continue to demand (loudly) that the voice of the real experts on disability – disabled people themselves – is heard. Only then will Government policies reflect the needs and aspirations of disabled people.

(It's not so cut and dried as 'fit' or 'unfit' to work because of the nature of impairment, other barriers exclude us. We seem to be in danger of losing the Social model of disability –DS)

Rights bolstered by new bill says Eagle by Paul Carter - Edited from Disability Now



The new equality bill will strengthen rather than remove existing protections for disabled people, the government has said.

Maria Eagle, deputy minister for women and equality, told Disability Now that the government had “no intention” of removing rights achieved by disabled people, despite the replacement of the Disability Equality Duty with a new single Equality Duty.

The new bill, which brings together nine pieces of discrimination legislation into one place, introduces several new elements relevant to disabled people.

It will place a new duty on landlords and managers of residential properties to make reasonable adjustments to common areas such as hallways and

stairs, as well as altering the legal protection that disabled people have following the controversial House of Lords ruling in the Lewisham v Malcolm legal case.

There will also be an amendment to the definition of disability to incorporate those with hidden and fluctuating conditions, while employment tribunals will also receive wider powers.

Carers of disabled people will also be subject to protection under the new bill.

Several disability charities and organisations have reacted initially favourably to the bill, which pending parliamentary approval is due to come in to force from Autumn 2010.

Claire Dawson, a solicitor from law firm Russell Jones and Walker, who specialise in disability employment discrimination, said that although the measures in the bill were “on the whole generally positive”, she retained some real concerns over certain areas, specifically the concept of indirect discrimination, introduced in response to the Malcolm case.

Learning disability services are under-funded by £200 million a year - Mencap

Learning disability services are under-funded by £200 million a year, says Learning Disability Coalition. The Coalition has called on the government to raise investment in services for people with a learning disability.

The Coalition – a group of 12 learning disability organisations including Mencap – has submitted evidence to the Treasury showing that services are under-funded by at least £200 million a year. It indicates that government spending on essential learning disability services has failed to grow with the rise in population and the increasing complexity of care needs.

The submission recommends that the social care shortfall be bridged through the NHS part of the Department of Health’s budget.

“Finding the £200 million we need from the NHS budget of £106 billion must be possible,” said Andrew Lee, director of People First and co-chair of the coalition. “And in the long run it would save money by preventing people needing more expensive care due to neglect.”

[\(Given the recession and looming spending cuts I think this shortfall –much needed though it is - will be hard to find – DS\)](#)

New rules protect those who cannot give consent - Mencap

The Mental Capacity Act Deprivation of Liberty safeguards came into force on 1 April. These new rules will protect people who need to be kept under the care of a hospital or care home to receive treatment, but do not have the mental capacity to consent to this.

The rules put systems in place that ensure an individual’s freedom is restricted no more than is necessary, and that any restriction is in their best interests. If a care home or hospital think they need to deprive a person of their liberty, they will need to get authorisation. Checks will be made if anyone raises concerns.

David Congdon, head of campaigns and policy at Mencap, said: “These new safeguards will mean that around 20,000 people currently receiving care will have their cases assessed and we will be watching closely to see how the rules are applied.”

Obama drops the ball - Edited from Disability Now



Disability activist and campaigner Alan Holdsworth, who now lives in the US reports:

The US President, Barack Obama, made his first gaffe on disability with his off the cuff remarks on the Jay Leno show about the Special Olympics and his bowling ability, insinuating that his bowling was pretty poor. It was a bad gaffe on his part. Politicians go on these shows to promote a man of the people image, the message being “like me: like my politics”. They take a risk as they are not scripted and sometimes something falls out of their mouths they regret. The next day those who run the Special Olympics accepted his apology and as

far as it went that was it for the national media over here.

Anyone who thought we had got rid of the negative attitudes and stigma that disability has in our society is clearly plain wrong. Just as educational was that Leno and his audience laughed at the remark showing their own ignorance.

Obama is merely expressing what most people think about us. It's a mistake, but folks in the US would think a lot better of him if he would sign the Community Choice Act into law, requiring all states provide services to keep disabled people in the community. Parents and disabled people would forgive him if he used some of the stimulus to drive inclusive education forward.

Finally, if he created universal health care with no penalties on people with preconditions we would celebrate in the streets.

Apologising for a gaffe is easy, especially when the archaic and patronising organisation immediately accepts his apology, but delivering on the change we can really believe in will be the true test of this President.



RNIB and Action for Blind People Officially Join Forces

From April 1 2009 the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) and Action for Blind People will officially join forces in an Association to share resources, skills and expertise to engage and reach more blind and partially sighted people with even better services.

Action for Blind People is now an Associate Charity of RNIB. This means that the two organisations will combine regional service delivery across England whilst maintaining their individual brand identities, boards of trustees and strategic management teams.

April 1 also marks the beginning of RNIB's new five year strategy which sees RNIB committing to focus on three key priorities which have been identified as being the highest priority for blind and partially sighted people: supporting independent living, stopping people losing their sight unnecessarily and creating an inclusive society.



Heart disease and stroke expert calls for GPs to help reduce £365 million cost to the NHS

Professor Roger Boyle, National Director for Heart Disease and Stroke is calling on GPs and primary care staff to improve recognition of dual sensory loss in older people.

Sense, the national deafblind charity estimates non-recognition of deafblindness is currently costing the NHS £365m per year. Older deafblind people have higher rates of a range of conditions, including stroke, arthritis, heart disease, hypertension, falls and depression and failure to recognise deafblindness stops them taking part in preventative measures which their peers can take.

Professor Boyle comments "Heart disease and strokes are the greatest causes of serious ill health in older people. Whatever can be done to prevent high risk groups from getting these, will help the health of the nation. I urge GPs to start making sure deafblind older people are identified and get the help they need."

Sense has produced a simple checklist and booklet "It All Adds Up" to assist primary care staff to find out if patients could be deafblind and help them to get appropriate support.

If you would like a copy of Sense's 'It All Adds Up' booklet and checklist please phone 0845 127 0060.

Breakthrough in the search for genetic links to autism

The National Autistic Society (NAS) welcomes authoritative research which might add to our knowledge and understanding of autism, and which could therefore be used to benefit people with autism in the UK; for example, by enabling earlier diagnosis so support can be put in place at an earlier stage.

Research into autism is constantly evolving but the exact causes are as yet still unknown. The studies published in the Nature journal move us a step closer to understanding the genetic links to autism but they are not conclusive and there is a great deal more research to be done. Genetic testing for autism is still a very long way off, and in fact may never be possible as the nature of autism is so complex.

The difficulty of establishing gene involvement is compounded by the interaction of genes and by their interaction with environmental factors. Various studies over many years have sought to identify candidate genes but so far inconclusively.

Whilst it is important that this research continues, the NAS strongly believes it is also crucial that those living with the condition have access to appropriate advice and information, as the right support at the right time can make an enormous difference to peoples lives.

You can read more about the research published here: <http://www.nature.com>

National BSL Charter Conference at Bristol City Council

Bristol City Council hosted the BSL Charter Conference on Tuesday 17 March 2009 to celebrate the Government's recognition of British Sign Language as a language in its own right.



Carolyn Nabarro and Iain Sutherland organised the conference, with the Equality and Human Rights Commission funding the conference, which everyone was grateful for. Jeff McWhinney, former CEO of the British Deaf Association chaired the event and the conference was opened by Barbara

Janke and Helen Holland, group Leaders of Bristol City Council. Bristol City Council was the first local authority in the UK to adopt the Charter so it seemed fitting that the conference was held in Bristol.

Institutional hospitals a thing of the past

Orchard Hill in Sutton was the last NHS hospital for people with a learning disability which closed on 30 April, marking the end of an era of a "disgraceful" level of care. Hospitals for people with a learning disability were originally created as benevolent institutions - but ended up being prisons.

Instead of large, isolated institutions, people with profound learning disabilities are now being cared for in small community residential homes, with increasing amount of personalisation and independence.

The closure of long-stay hospitals started in the 1980s when people with a learning disability were moved to residential care homes in the community. Residents who had lived in long-stay hospitals reported extreme poor standards of care, which included being locked up; having no clothes of their own and sharing everything they did have with a large group of people.

Mark Goldring, chief executive of Mencap, said, "People with a learning disability are increasingly able to live independent lives with choice. It is important that quality of care continues to improve and will only do so with sufficient investment in social care."

Mental health services failing young and old



under 65 years old.

Two reports published by the Healthcare Commission *Equality in later life* and *Adult specialist community mental health services* show significant failings in the care and treatment offered to mental health service users over and

Highlights of the two reports include:

- Older people discriminated against in accessing psychological therapies, crisis care and other services
- Almost half of service users still have no access to out of hours crisis care
- 55 per cent of people with schizophrenia have not been offered psychological therapies despite this being recommended by NICE schizophrenia guidelines
- Over 40 per cent of people do not have a copy of their care plan

Commenting on the stark findings, Mind's Chief Executive Paul Farmer said:

"Mental health care isn't just about going to the doctor for a prescription; it involves a range of services of which emergency out-of hours care is a crucially important part."

"Although there have been some improvements, four in ten people still do not have a copy of their care plan, which sets out what treatment and care they should be receiving. At a time when health care is moving towards greater patient choice and involvement, the most basic level of involvement still isn't happening."

"The situation is even worse for older people – one Trust reported that only 4 per cent of referrals for talking therapies were for older people, while in some areas emergency crisis care isn't even available for the over 65s. This is more evidence that in mental health care, there is a culture of de-prioritising older people, who are picking up the leftovers of what treatment is available. Mental health care should be allotted according to need, not according to age."

Significant research announcement during MS Week



Scientists specialising in Multiple Sclerosis (MS) and presenting at the annual American Academy of Neurology convention in Seattle have reported research findings that take the field of MS treatments to a "new dawn". Head of Research at the MS Society, Dr Lee Dunster, said: "This week's announcements herald a step change in treatment options for people with

the most prevalent form of MS at the time of diagnosis.

"News of the development of two oral therapies for MS marks a new dawn and this could be a huge step forward for people who currently have to inject their treatments.

"We are looking at treatments that could be available on the NHS by the end of next year that will make a real difference to people's lives."

Government is denying disabled people full human rights says leading campaign coalition

The Government is failing in its commitment to ensure that disabled people have equal human rights, according to a coalition of over 30 disability organisations.

Following the publication on 17 April of the Joint Committee on Human Rights' response to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the United Nations Convention Campaign Coalition (UNCCC) is calling on the Government to respect disabled people's human rights by ratifying the Convention in full without any reservations.

The Government has indicated that it wishes to opt out of four areas of the treaty, concerning education, immigration, defence and benefits. The UNCCC - an alliance of key disability organisations - believes that the reservations are unreasonably cautious and will deny disabled people equal status and citizenship.

The coalition calls on the Government to:

- Underline its commitment to full human rights for disabled people by ratifying the Convention in its entirety without its proposed opt-outs
- Respect the views of disabled people and the 50,000 signatories to the UNCCC's petition who are calling for full ratification
- Publicly restate its commitment to increasing inclusive education opportunities for disabled children and young people

Rosemary Bolinger from disability organisation Scope, a leading member of the coalition, said:

“We are extremely disappointed that the Government is denying disabled people in the UK their full human rights by not ratifying in full this important UN Convention.

“Every day thousands of disabled people are being denied basic rights such as equal educational opportunities, equal access to life-saving medical treatment and access to justice.

“We call on the Government to demonstrate its commitment to disabled people’s human rights and set an example to the international community by ratifying the Convention in its entirety.

(Just in case you haven’t got it; we don’t have equal human rights and we are less worthy of equality simply because we are disabled. For all its rhetoric about equality and citizenship this Government continues to fail us. Let’s not be naïve this, like everything else, is about money. Full rights could give us more leverage for better funded services and benefits, so while there’s money for everyone from the banks to car owners (and don’t even think about the cost of the Iraq War) we can’t have full human rights. AND it’s ok to expect us to work, to contribute to the economy and society, to take our taxes but equality? Not now maybe one day..... - DS)

Postscript

Fuel Poverty: The Scandal of Cold Homes

6 million people shiver through winter because their homes are so poorly insulated they can’t afford to keep them warm. This is the scandal of ‘fuel poverty’.

- In Lewisham alone nearly 3,000 older people have to choose between eating and heating
- In Lewisham there will probably be 800 ‘excess winter deaths’ in the next decade.
- Fuel poverty costs the health service £1.9 billion every year. averaged out that’s nearly £9 million wasted in Lewisham.

The Fuel Poverty Bill, if made law, would enact measures to end the scandal of cold homes . It has strong cross-party support, including from former Labour Ministers. It would reduce emissions of carbon dioxide – so reducing dangerous climate change. The works it would require would generate tens of thousands of ‘green jobs’ and cut costs to the health service.

**ON FRIDAY, 20TH MARCH, LOCAL MP, JOAN RUDDOCK,
BLOCKED THIS BILL IN PARLIAMENT**

In doing so, she rejected appeals from all sides to negotiate and reach a national consensus on these important issues – appeals that came from the sponsors of the Bill; from Labour MPs; from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Parties; and from Green Party Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Deptford, Darren Johnson.

The Bill comes before Parliament again on 12th June.

CILL supports this Bill and you can help it succeed.

ACTION - PLEASE ASK JOAN RUDDOCK TO:

- 1. Take up the offers to negotiate on this Bill; and**
- 2. Support the Bill in Parliament on 12th June**

A sample letter/email is below:

‘Dear Joan

I ask you to please take up the offers to negotiate on the Fuel Poverty Bill and to support it in Parliament on 12th June.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely

[your name and address]’

Contact details for Joan Ruddock:

Email her at: ruddockj@parliament.uk , write to her at Joan Ruddock MP, House of Commons, SW1A 0AA or phone her on her constituency number (020 8691 5992) or her Parliamentary number (020 7219 4513). If she is not there ask to leave a message and say you are a constituent.

There is also

LEWISHAM FUEL POVERTY BILL PUBLIC MEETING PLEASE HELP SPREAD THE WORD

**The End Fuel Poverty Coalition is organising
a public meeting in Lewisham on the Fuel Poverty Bill.**

Details for the public meeting are:

Date and time: Thursday 28th May 2009, 7pm to 9pm

Venue: St Andrew's United Reformed Church, corner of Brockley Road and Wickham Road, Lewisham, London SE4 2SA

Chair: Ron Bailey - Fuel Poverty Coalition

Invited: Joan Ruddock MP - Labour Member of Parliament for Lewisham Deptford and Climate Change Minister

Speakers:

Mervyn Kohler - Age Concern and Help the Aged Special Advisor

Ruth Bond - National Federation of Women's Institutes Chair of Public Affairs

Dave Timms - Friends of the Earth Senior Parliamentary Campaigner

Gemma Townsend - Conservative Prospective Parliamentary Candidate for Lewisham Deptford

Cllr Chris Maines - Liberal Democrat Group Leader on Lewisham Council

Cllr Darren Johnson AM - Green Parliamentary Candidate for Lewisham Deptford

**Please note - we hope very much that Joan Ruddock MP will attend but in case she does not we are also trying to arrange another Labour speaker.
(Updates on the campaign will be on our website)**

AND FINALLY

Phoenix Housing Association are holding a GRAND PHOENIX FESTIVAL in Forster Park on Saturday 9th May 2009 12.00 Noon to 4.00 pm – ALL WELCOME and they promise the best fun this side of Brighton Pier!

***"Independent Living is not a service,
It is freedom;
It is liberation;
it is equality for disabled people"***