



THE PHOENIX

Campaign for Independent Living in Lewisham

April 2006

Message from Denise Smith, Chair, Campaign for Independent Living in Lewisham (CILL)

CILL is now busy trying to get funding for various services for its Centre of Independent Living. The first new service that we will be trying to set up is an advocacy project for disabled people with disabled volunteer advocates. We already have two volunteer advocates and, supported by a training grant from Capital Community Foundation, they will be getting accredited advocacy training shortly. Last month, I told you about a meeting to discuss Active Life Projects (ALPs) and I am happy to report that three groups were set up, so that is the second new service that we are trying to get funding for. We are also being joined by another group DISC who are a social group for young (18-30) disabled adults. Work has started on our web site, again supported by a grant from Capital Community Foundation, and I hope that will be up and running soon.

Active Life Projects (ALPs)

The three ALPs groups that have been set up are:

- Hydrotherapy – to continue and develop CILL's use of the hydrotherapy pool at one of Lewisham's special schools. Plans include group sessions with non-disabled supporters to assist and a physiotherapist to provide an exercise programme.
- Out and About – to promote exercise and using the parks. Plans include regular meetings to walk, wheel or cycle and setting up disabled cycling.
- Exercise – plans include gym workouts and yoga.

DISC

An open meeting will be held in early April regarding the new Disabled Interactive Social Club (DISC) in Lewisham. The club will be for physically disabled people aged 18-30 and will incorporate social activities like trips to the cinema, bowling and any other suggestions that people come up with. If you want to know more about DISC or want to attend the meeting call David Bourroughs on 020 9659 6762 or e-mail davidbourroughs@hotmail.com.

Campaign Updates

Inaccessible New Shop Front in Catford – Lewisham Council have now granted permission for this shop front to be retained. CILL had objected to the retention as it contravenes DDA Part 3. We have written to John Lloyd Stephenson at LBL Planning for information regarding how DDA Part 3 is taken into account and CILL has also referred this matter to the Disability Rights Commission.

Bus 185 – Transport for London (TFL) has now responded – but their reply does not relate to either CILL's complaint or to Bus 185! CILL has pointed this out and asked for the correct reply – we have also contacted London TravelWatch the independent watchdog.

No GP Home Visits – A disabled person has been refused home visits by a practice in Catford. To get medical care she managed to get to the practice using a mobility scooter but sat in the waiting room crying in pain. CILL is investigating.

Bowley Close Rehabilitation Centre

There is a Rehabilitation User Network Group (RUNG) at the NHS Rehabilitation Centre at Bowley Close. Its core membership is people who use their services for prosthetics, orthotics, wheelchair service or assistive technology, and interested carers. If you want to find out more either ask the centre reception next time you are there or write to: Bernadette Coffey, Bowley Close Rehabilitation Centre, Farquhar Road, London SE19 1SZ.

Wheelchair Survey

The Care Services Improvement Partnership is conducting a review of wheelchair services in England on behalf of the Department for Health. If you are a wheelchair user you can take part either by telephone on 0800 106011 or email on www.cat.csip.org.uk/wheelchairsurvey

MS Week: 22nd - 29th April, 2006

MS Week, 22-29 April, is an opportunity for people affected by multiple sclerosis (MS) to have their voices heard. 85,000 people in the UK live with multiple sclerosis and over half a million are directly affected by MS. Each person's experience of MS is unique and the MS Society aims to support every single person with MS. Information Pack available at www.mssociety.org.uk

Care workers to register – Edited from Disability Now, March 2006

About 750,000 care workers will be registered for the first time, as part of a bid to professionalise the social care workforce.

Domiciliary and care home staff for both adults and children will have to join the Social Care Register run by the General Social Care Council (GSCC).

But groups such as day services staff and those working for disabled people on direct payments will not yet be included. The GSCC will start a consultation shortly.

It has been compulsory for all social workers to be registered since April 2005.

Deborah Kitson, director of the Ann Craft Trust, said registration would reduce opportunities for staff to abuse vulnerable people, including those with learning difficulties.

She added: "This registration must be in conjunction with increased training on identifying and preventing abuse."

Mencap welcomes Mental Capacity Act Code

After 15 years of campaigning, Mencap welcomed the publication of the Code of Practice for the Mental Capacity Act. The Act sets out how to respect the wishes and act in the best interests of people who have a limited ability to make decisions for themselves, and the Code of Practice explains in more detail how the Act will work to those who will have to use it.

Mencap's chief executive, Jo Williams, said: "The Mental Capacity Act ... will strengthen and protect the right of people with a learning disability, their families and carers to have their voices heard and their views properly considered."

Accessible information on the Code of Practice, along with accessible consultation questions, will be produced alongside the standard documents to ensure that people with a learning disability can be fully involved in the consultation process.

The Act will improve safeguards around medical treatment for people who lack capacity to make or express decisions and whose lives are not always properly valued by the public and the medical profession.

Food labelling plans announced

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) has today agreed its recommendation for a consistent approach for all food labelling to help make it easier for people to choose a healthier diet.

The recommendations have been developed using feedback from consumers and organisations, including Diabetes UK.

"However, voluntary food labelling will only work if manufacturers adhere to these guidelines," said Cathy Moulton, Care Advisor at Diabetes UK.

"Giving confusing information is likely to be little better than giving no information at all, so it's really important that the food industry is consistent."

The recommendations still allow supermarkets and manufacturers to maintain their own individual look. The key principles include:

- Providing separate information on fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt
- Using red, amber or green colour coding to indicate whether levels of these nutrients are high, medium or low
- Using nutritional criteria developed by the FSA to determine the colour code
- Giving information on the levels of nutrients per portion of product.

ASDA fines for parking abuse – Edited from Disability Now, March 2006

Blue badge holders in one area of Leeds should find it easier to park at their local Asda store, after the supermarket introduced on the spot fines for people who abuse disabled bays.

The supermarket has teamed up with Leeds City Council to tackle the misuse of bays at its Pudsey store. Parking attendants will issue £60 fines to cars parked in bays without a valid blue badge.

An Asda spokeswoman said: "It really did get to the stage where we needed to do something different. We think it's making quite a big difference."

She said managers would introduce the scheme in more stores if necessary.

Threat of "genetic underclass" - Edited from Disability Now - Elizabeth Choppin, March 2006

Genetic testing could lead to the development of a new "genetic underclass" if the government does not introduce safeguards against discrimination, campaigners have warned.

A coalition of 45 organisations and individuals, including the British Council of Disabled People and the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), has called for new measures to ensure that employers and insurance companies cannot use genetic test results as a "vetting tool".

One concern is that the Disability Discrimination Act does not cover people who are not yet disabled but whose genetic tests show the possibility of future issues.

The DRC has just finished a consultation with various organisations and policy makers on widening the definition of disability to protect those with a diagnosis, but no symptoms, from unfair treatment.

A spokesman for the Association of British Insurers admitted genetic testing was "something we talk about" but denied reports that the group had applied for permission to use tests which show a predisposition to breast and ovarian cancer.

RNID and TUC warn employers to take hearing damage more seriously or face wave of staff compensation claims - 7 March 2006

With only weeks to go, RNID and the TUC are warning employers and employees to take hearing damage more seriously in preparation for the new Control of Noise at Work Regulations coming into effect on 6 April 2006. The tighter Noise at Work regulations will provide improved protection for workers from one of Britain's most serious occupational diseases.

RNID and the TUC are calling upon employers to lower or eliminate employees' exposure to noise through the following ways:

- Replace old machinery with newer, quieter models.
- If you are thinking about buying new machinery, ensure that you find out about noise levels before you decide what to buy.
- Discuss with the supplier ways of ensuring that equipment makes as little noise as possible.
- Reduce noise from equipment by changing how it is mounted or installing silencers or enclosures.
- Have equipment regularly maintained.
- Keep noisy machinery in a separate work area.
- Ensure that employees do not spend longer than absolutely necessary in a noisy working environment or create a noise-reduced enclosure for employees.
- Reduce reverberations by changing the acoustics of the room or work area with material that absorbs sound.

Demos: UK systematically fails disabled people

The UK systematically fails disabled people: this is the damning conclusion of a new disablism audit from think-tank Demos, which documents for the first time, the extent of systemic discrimination towards disabled people in the UK across education, employment, housing and social care, transport, leisure and their social status.

'Disablist Britain: Barriers to independent living for disabled people in 2006' was commissioned by disability organisation Scope in partnership with Disability Awareness in Action (DAA) and presented at the second Disablism Summit in London on 9 March. It draws upon statistical data from the largest number of sources yet committed to one volume on the subject, including government statistics, census figures and not-for-profit and think-tank polling, to outline disabled people's experiences of British state and society.

Tony Manwaring, Chief Executive of Scope, said: "Disablism runs wild in our society because the evidence illustrating how disabled people are treated is rarely publicised or collated. *'Disablist Britain'* shows that whatever stone one upturns in this country, disablism lies beneath. We must find it and stomp it out. Only then will disabled people have the right, in practice, to make the same choices as non-disabled people to live the lives they choose."

Demos, and the disability partners behind the report, hope that the audit will contribute towards the creation of a benchmark against which we can measure, identify and eradicate disablism. The validity and methodology of measuring disablism is also addressed by the authors.

Sarah Gillinson, researcher at Demos and one of the report's authors, said: "Measuring the extent of institutional and cultural prejudice against disabled people is the first step to making disablism history. Empowering individual disabled people to use measures of discrimination to highlight and begin tackling the daily injustices they face, is the crucial next step."

'Disablist Britain' takes inspiration from Professor Colin Barnes' ground-breaking 1991 work, *'Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination'*.

New resource for supporting deaf college students

RNID has developed a new edition CD-Rom for a variety of professionals working with deaf students. *Deaf Students at College* has radically revised the *Deaf Students in Further Education Guidelines* publication to reflect developments in the college sector, including work experience placements, funding issues and changes in the age 14-19 curriculum.

Deaf Students at College is of particular interest to tutors and lecturers, disability officers, inclusion managers and career advisors, and particularly for those staff who may be working with deaf learners for the first time. The CD-Rom gives information on topics such as support personnel, physical environment, deaf awareness training, technical support, personal issues & counselling and social inclusion.

If you would like to order a copy of the CD Rom, please contact the RNID Information Line on 0808 808 0123, textphone 0808 808 9000.

Government confirms dyslexia is not a myth

Edited from the House of Lords Dyslexia Debate – 7 December 2005

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Education and Skills (Lord Adonis):

The noble Lord, Lord Addington, expressed serious concern about the controversy raised about the nature of dyslexia, including whether it exists at all, following the recent Channel 4 "Dispatches" programme. The very title of that programme, "The Dyslexia Myth", gave rise to understandable anxiety that children's needs might no longer be recognised and supported. As the noble Lord said, it is important that we reassure parents that that is not the case.

I begin by stating clearly and categorically the Government's view that dyslexia is a complex neurological condition and that people with dyslexia need proper support to develop the reading, writing and comprehension skills essential to succeeding in school, in life and in work. An authoritative report on dyslexia by the British Psychological Society in 1999 contained a helpful definition that many felt allowed professionals to move on from unproductive arguments of the kind that have surfaced again in recent months. The society defined dyslexia in the following terms:

"Dyslexia is evident when accurate fluent word reading and or spelling develops incompletely or with great difficulty. This focuses on literacy learning at the 'word level' and implies that the problem is severe and persistent despite appropriate learning opportunities. It provides the basis for a staged process of assessment through teaching".

UK's favourite illustrator backs disabled kids campaign

Quentin Blake, the much loved illustrator best celebrated for his work with Roald Dahl, is backing a new initiative to put disabled children, literally *In The Picture*.

Scope, the national disability charity behind the project, argues disabled children are under-represented in young children's picture books and stories, and face further alienation because of this.

To redress the balance, *In The Picture* aims to increase the visibility of young disabled children in picture books by working practically with publishers, illustrators and writers.

Quentin Blake said of the project:

"A picture book has an effect on a child not so very different from a good lesson. *In The Picture* will help reflect disabled children's experiences, and all children will benefit. I am delighted to be involved."

Eating Together is Important for Elderly Patients – British Diabetic Association

What you eat is important, but busy hospital wards may not be conducive to meal enjoyment. Researchers have found that patients were likely to eat less from meals served bedside, than meals served in a dining room. "How much you eat, is influenced by where you eat it" says lead researcher, dietitian Lucy Wright.

Researchers looked at hospital in-patients, with an average age of over 80 years. Older people in hospital often have poor appetites, and benefit from eating more. The researchers found that there was a trend towards a greater number of people gaining weight in a dining room group than in the control group, and Improved intakes of foods in a vulnerable patient group on an acute elderly medicine ward are welcome; the detrimental effects of poor nutritional status on patients' rehabilitation, length of stay and chances of complications has been well documented. Eating enough food is preferable to the use of supplement drinks often used to boost nutrient and energy intakes in patients with poor appetites. Adequate intakes of nutritious foods are an important part of rehabilitation and recovery from illness, and eating in the social environment of a dining room, appears to support eating more.

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

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