



# THE PHOENIX

Campaign for Independent Living in Lewisham

September 2006

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

The Disabled Persons (Independent Living) Bill has passed its second reading in the House of Lords. Although the Bill has received a warm welcome it is clear that the Government has reservations at this stage. Without Government support it will be a lengthy process if the Bill is to become law, just as it was to get civil rights legislation in the 1990s. We have to convince the Government that the legislation is needed and needed now. The DRC and NCIL are preparing case studies from disabled people who are currently not able to live independently and the review of independent living, which was announced by the Government during the debate on the Bill, will highlight why we need legislation. CILL will be campaigning to support the Bill and at the moment you can still sign our petition. If you support the Bill you can help by getting up to five signatures on the enclosed form.

## Campaign Updates

Lift at the Civic Suite – The new lift should be installed next month and as soon as this has been confirmed CILL will report back to you.

Job loss caused by Council funding cuts – While the funding for a work placement for a Lewisham blind man has been confirmed until April of next year, his family and supporters are still pursuing the issue of what happens then and are continuing to argue that it is in his best interest for the funding to continue. It may also be the most cost effective use of funds for the Council.

Inaccessible New Shop Front in Catford – CILL first started asking questions about this over a year ago. Since then planning permission has been confirmed even though we argued that to do so contravened DDA Part 3. After CILL complained again and asked how DDA Part 3 is taken into account when planning permission is given we were told that Lewisham was to undertake a review. That was in April and we have heard nothing since then. CILL has now asked Marianne Aberly (LBL Policy and Partnerships) to let us know what is going on.

If there is an issue affecting you and your independent living please contact CILL for advice and support.

## Cycling for All

Every four weeks at Croydon Arena you can go along to 'Cycling for All' and try out a variety of cycles for disabled people. Jenny Spencer, Out and About's co-ordinator, is usually there along with a few 'Out and About' regulars. It is really good fun and a great way of meeting new people while you get some exercise. If you want to know more please contact Jenny on 020 8697 7103 or by email at [jenfilein@gmail.com](mailto:jenfilein@gmail.com)

## Deptford Advocacy Project

This new service is for disabled people living in the Deptford area and will be available every other Wednesday at The Albany, Douglas Way, Deptford SE8, from 1 to 4 p.m. starting on 20 September 2006. All our independent living advocates are themselves disabled so they have first hand experience and knowledge about the issues facing disabled people and are all accredited advocates.. If you need advice or support on any issue please come along and talk to one of the advocates, Leah Noel, Marcia Jones and Denise Smith. If you want to check meeting date or if you cannot get along to a scheduled meeting please contact CILL to arrange an alternative meeting.

## No Go DisabledGo

DisabledGo is a commercial enterprise that has been contracted by Lewisham Council to provide access information about 1,000 venues in Lewisham in their on-line directory. This was all agreed last year without any input or consultation from local disabled people. CILL does not support this initiative.

The Trustees at CILL believe that disabled people must be consulted about their own services and are best served by their own 'not for profit' organizations where they are in control. CILL believes that this is the only way disabled people can start to become involved, get training, skills and jobs and be empowered. Recent Government thinking supports this view and encourages local authorities to use their local organizations of disabled people rather than place contracts elsewhere.

A local organisation of disabled people could have been contracted to provide this project and this would have provided valuable opportunities for local disabled people through training (audit access and

computer skills), volunteering and paid employment. At the time that this was all agreed CILL did not exist and this was one of the issues, local disabled people not being consulted, that led to CILL being formed. So this is not about CILL losing out on a contract it is about Lewisham Council choosing to spend your money outside the Borough and missing an opportunity to support one of their most socially excluded communities. At a time when the Government is desperate to get disabled people into work and so reduce the number of people claiming incapacity benefit it would seem to make sense for local authorities to offer support by creating jobs for disabled people through local organisations of disabled people. Obviously Lewisham do not agree and while they are ignoring disabled people more worryingly they are now ignoring Government views.

#### **Air travel advice – Diabetes UK**

Following talks with the Department for Transport (DfT) over the tightening of security at airports, Diabetes UK has issued guidance to people with diabetes who are planning to fly:

For information and advice on travelling and diabetes, please call Diabetes UK Careline on 0845 120 2960 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

#### **Independent living hope - Edited from Disability Now, Priya Kotecha, August 2006**

A cross-government review looks set to put independent living (IL) for disabled people at the heart of the political agenda. A review of government policy on IL was announced during the second reading of Lord Ashley's Disabled Persons (Independent Living) Bill, in the Lords.

Led by the Office for Disability Issues, the review will gather views from local and central government and disabled people and their organisations, on how the government can use IL to develop "imaginative new solutions in health, social care, transport, employment and housing". The review, to be chaired by Dame Jane Campbell - co-founder of the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) - comes in response to recommendations in the Improving Life Chances report, produced by the prime minister's strategy unit in January 2005.

But disabled people voiced their frustrations at an IL conference organised by the NCIL. Sue Bott, national strategic director for NCIL, said afterwards: "Disabled people are asking, 'how many reviews do we have to have? We only have one chance of living our life. How long can we realistically wait until things are put right and disabled people have the chance to a full life?'"

Anne McGuire, minister for disabled people, reportedly told the conference the government had reservations about how much the bill would cost to implement. The DRC is preparing a "cost-benefit analysis" of the bill, which should be available in time to be considered for the government's comprehensive spending review next year.

Meanwhile, NCIL and the Association of Directors of Social Services signed a revised protocol aimed at encouraging local authorities to understand the contribution made by centres for independent living and user-led organisations. It also urges councils to create a level playing field for local user-led organisations that bid for contracts to provide services.

#### **More chances for kids in mainstream - Edited from Disability Now, Priya Kotecha, August 2006**

Children with special educational needs (SEN) have a better chance of developing their academic, personal and social skills in a well-resourced mainstream school than in any other educational setting, according to a ground-breaking new report.

The Ofsted report, published last month, also showed that while children with SEN could learn well in mainstream and special schools, there was "more good and outstanding provision in resourced mainstream schools than elsewhere".

The report singled out high quality specialist teachers and commitment from school leaders to include all pupils, as keys to effective provision.

But inspectors found fewer pupils with severe or multiple learning difficulties placed in mainstream schools than other groups, even where specialist provision was available.

And the report said pupil referral units - individual schools for children with learning difficulties - were the "least successful of all settings".

The Department for Education and Skills said it was already working to improve poor provision highlighted in the report and said it was pleased with the report's finding that "children with SEN are able to make outstanding progress in all types of settings".

#### **Another View - Schools policy risks failing disabled children - DRC**

The Disability Rights Commission (DRC) is calling for a five point plan to be adopted by the Government as a matter of urgency to deal with an inflexible and under-demanding education system that delivers low opportunities and holds low expectations for many disabled and Special Educational Needs (SEN) children. The DRC has brought forward these recommendations after the publication of the Commons Education and Skills Committee report into Special Educational Needs.

The DRC would like to see the following five point plan to be established to under-pin the development of real choice and real opportunity for disabled children and children with SEN.

- A strong message from the top level of Government saying that high standards means supporting all children to achieve their potential.
- Incentivise schools to ensure that they are not only meeting the basic needs of disabled children and children with SEN, but reward progression.
- Directors of Children Services to ensure that it becomes a reality for all services including health, social care and education deliver high quality support for disabled children.
- The current Discrimination Law Review, conducted by the DTI, must consider education and disability to resolve problems with the current legislation.
- Ensure that parents of disabled children can make informed choices around schools publishing transparent information on their effectiveness in supporting children with SEN to achieve their full potential.

### **Petition on Mental Health Act reform - Mind**

To Her Majesty's Government:

Mental health legislation is very powerful. It allows the state to deprive people of their liberty purely because of their medical condition. We believe that any compromise of a person's rights and freedom should be balanced by safeguards. People with mental health problems should have the right to help when they ask for it. Patients should only be detained against their will if it will benefit their health. They should have access to an advocate and their carers and family should be involved. Reform of the 1983 Mental Health Act must be taken seriously. Stakeholders should be fully consulted on the Government's proposals before they are published and a comprehensive Race Equality Impact Assessment on the whole Act should be conducted, considered and published alongside the Bill.

To add your name to the petition click on [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

### **Organisations join forces to call for prescription charges reform**

Nine key patient organisations have joined forces to lobby Government to review the current prescription charges system. They have written a joint letter to the Government urging them to consider the Health Select Committee's findings on prescription charges - an issue they have all been campaigning on for several years.

The Health Select Committee report on NHS charges highlighted the system of prescription charges as being particularly unsatisfactory and confusing, with an outdated and anomalous list of exempt conditions and inadequate mechanisms for protecting those who cannot afford to pay.

The organisations argue that the current system means many people with long-term conditions who need on-going medication - adults with arthritis, asthma, cancer, cystic fibrosis, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's or anyone with a mental health problem - are not exempt from prescription charges and are often unable to afford their medication. They are calling for Government to consider the Committee's recommendation for a full-scale review, in order to find out the costs and benefits of alternative systems.

### **Call for free patient parking – Disability Now**

Cancer patients should receive free hospital parking and help with travel costs, according to a leading cancer charity. New research by Macmillan Cancer Support, published in June, showed huge variations in the cost of travel and parking at hospitals around the UK.

The charity has called for an end to this "stealth tax on illness". Findings showed that cancer patients in London and the South East paid over £400 a year for travel and parking.

The charity has launched a campaign calling on the government to extend its hospital travel costs scheme, which entitles people on certain benefits to receive financial help with transport. It also said the government should do more to advertise the scheme.

A Department of Health spokeswoman said it was looking at how to raise awareness of the scheme but parking charges were a matter for NHS trusts.

### **Carers forced to change people on dirty toilet floors - campaign calls for change - Mencap**

A new campaign, Changing Places, has been launched to tackle the problem faced by over 40,000 people across the UK caused by the lack of fully accessible public toilets. The Changing Places consortium is calling for Changing Places toilets to be installed in all large public places, including city centres, shopping malls and leisure venues.

A Changing Places toilet is a room equipped to allow people to use the toilet with assistance or have their continence pads changed. This room should include a toilet with space for a carer on either side, an adult-sized height adjustable changing bench and a hoist.

While many buildings now include a disabled toilet, these facilities do not meet the needs of everyone. Having continence pads changed on toilet floors is unhygienic and also extremely dangerous, as carers

must physically lift the person they care for on and off the floor.

To date the Changing Places consortium has identified 10 Changing Places toilets across the entire country - on average this works out at a minimum of one toilet per 4,000 people.

To find out more and join Changing Places visit [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org)

### **Government kick starts children's review** - Edited from Disability Now, Priya Kotecha, August 2006

Disabled children's charities and campaigners swung into action last month, after the government launched its review into provision for disabled children and young people. The joint Treasury and Department for Education and Skills review, which will feed into next year's comprehensive spending review, will focus on how services can improve the life chances of disabled children.

The review forms part of a wider analysis of services for children and young people. Launching the review, Ed Balls MP, economic secretary to the Treasury, whose ten-minute rule bill helped highlight the issue earlier this year, said every disabled child deserved the best start in life.

He said: "This review will look hard at how we provide services for disabled children, high risk families and to deliver a step change in youth services so that teenagers have places they want to go and things they want to do after school and at weekends."

### **London's Disability Rights Festival**

Liberty is a major one day festival that showcases the talents of disabled artists and performers and is organised by the Mayor of London working together with Deaf and disabled Londoners.

Liberty 2006 celebrates 20 years of the London Disability Arts Forum with a host of performers plus family arts workshops, stalls and displays, organic cafe

Liberty is a festival for everyone and is organised to be inclusive and accessible. On the day the following facilities and services will be available at Trafalgar Square:

- Information points
- Trained stewards and BSL interpreters
- Programmes in large text and braille
- BSL interpretation and palantype relayed onto large screen
- Audio description
- Accessible toilets
- Changing area with hoist
- Viewing area
- Induction loops at information points
- Wheelchair loan service
- Charging point for electric wheelchairs and scooters
- Assistance dogs area
- Lifts
- Free mobility bus between Westminster Tube and Trafalgar Square, courtesy of Metroline
- Free parking nearby for blue badge holders. Limited availability, booking only 0207 983 4094.

### **European News – Access to Goods and Services**

Social Services – Directive on Services of General Interest

In the first half of 2006 a highly controversial "Services Directive" which aims to liberalise the market in services within the European Union was debated. The objective is to make it easier for service providers to provide services in other Member States.

In February 2006 the European Parliament voted on the "Services Directive". Among the most debated issues were which services would be excluded from the scope of this directive, i.e. would social services, health services be concerned, etc... As an example, it would have been possible for a French company to deliver inaccessible services in the UK.

In the end, among others, health services and social services of general interest were excluded from the scope of the services directive mainly thanks to the pressure of the European Disability Forum amongst others.

### **Disabilism - SCOPE**

Disabilism' is not in the dictionary but it is everywhere.

Disablism n. discriminatory, oppressive or abusive behaviour arising from the belief that disabled people are inferior to others.

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

**SUPPORTED BY CAPITAL COMMUNITY FOUNDATION – NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL UNIT**

CILL, 5 Silverdale House, Silverdale, London SE26 4SD

email: [campaign@fsmail.net](mailto:campaign@fsmail.net)

## What is going on and How to contact CILL:

### What and When:

What's On	When	Where
Drop-in	18 August 2 to 4 p.m.	The Clubroom 21 Marton Close Off Firhill Road Bellingham SE6 3SS
CILL 30+	1 September 2 to 4 p.m.	The Clubroom 21 Marton Close Off Firhill Road Bellingham SE6 3SS
Out and About	3 September 1 to 3 p.m.	Ladywell Park Ladywell Road Ladywell SE13 (By the café)
Drop-in	15 September 2 to 4 p.m.	The Clubroom 21 Marton Close Off Firhill Road Bellingham SE6 3SS
Out and About	17 September 1 to 3 p.m.	Ladywell Park Ladywell Road Ladywell SE13 (By the café)
Out and About	1 October 1 to 3 p.m.	Ladywell Park Ladywell Road Ladywell SE13 (By the café)

If you are interested in any of these events and would like to know more, if you need advice or support or advocacy or just have an issue about your independent living that you do not know how to deal with please contact CILL at [campaign@fsmail.net](mailto:campaign@fsmail.net) or call 020 8776 6967.

# A Petition Supporting The Disabled Persons (Independent Living) Bill

The Disabled Persons (Independent Living) Bill introduced by Lord Jack Ashley challenges the key problems and barriers to independent living faced by disabled people. This includes anyone of any age who has an impairment, illness, health condition, is recovering from illness or has become frail through old age.

Independent living means that disabled people of all ages have the same freedom, choice, dignity and control as other citizens at home, at work, and in the community. It does not mean living by yourself or fending for yourself. It means rights to practical assistance and support to participate in society and live an ordinary life.

Part 1 of the Bill sets out the principles which must underpin the delivery of independent living by local authorities, health services and their partners, including enabling freedom, choice, control and participation.

Part 2 places a duty on local authorities and NHS bodies to co-operate to promote independent living and improve outcomes for disabled people.

The Bill requires local authorities and NHS to support user-led organisations including Centres for Independent Living.

Each disabled person is entitled to a self-directed and comprehensive assessment and to be informed of the level of resources to be provided to them, with the choice of a cash payment (individual budget), services or a combination of both.

Disabled people will be accorded rights to advocacy or support from a nominated friend. Also rights to portable support – if you move you can retain your individual budget.

In Part 3 disabled people in residential care must have an independent living agreement which sets out how the provider will meet their requirements for choice, control, freedom and dignity.

Part 4 includes a duty on housing authorities to set up a disability housing register to ensure disabled people can choose properties for rent which match their access needs, and stronger duties on local housing authorities to plan for current and future housing needs of all disabled people in their area.

By giving stronger entitlements to practical support the Bill ensures that disabled people will be able to decide where we live, who we live with, and how we live our lives For the first time we move towards equal citizenship.

The Disability Movement supports Lord Ashley's Bill and we ask for your support too by obtaining 5 signatures and returning the form to **CILL, 5 Silverdale House, Silverdale, London SE26 4SD**. All signatures collected will be sent to Lord Ashley showing Lewisham's support for his Bill.

Thank you.

## Trustees of CILL - Lewisham's Centre for Independent Living

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>	<u>Signature</u>