



THE PHOENIX

Campaign for Independent Living in Lewisham

April 2007

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

I have been busy setting up our two new advocacy projects. I have not yet finalised the details but it is likely that they will be based in Lewisham and Downham and like the project already running in Deptford will run one afternoon every other week. The new 'Independent Living Support Groups' will be part of the projects and will be an opportunity for disabled people to get together and provide peer support. If you are interested in coming along to a meeting, getting information or support or working with us as a volunteer please get in touch.

Activities and Campaigns

Downham Health and Leisure Centre – This new Centre has just opened last week. During a visit by our Chair, to find out if there was a meeting room we could hire, staff at the library and Access Point were tremendously helpful and informative. At the Leisure Centre there is no hoist/transfer seat at the pool for wheelchair users and staff had no idea when it would be in place. CILL has written to Lewisham Council and the Leisure Centre Manager about various barriers to access for disabled people and have asked for an assurance that full access will be available by the time of the official launch by the Mayor on 30 March.

'Choices' and Direct Payments – CILL recently attended a meeting at NCIL as some disabled people are still facing difficulties, such as owing monies to the Inland Revenue. If you were affected or are still unsure about your position please contact us for support.

Recycling in Lewisham

Please help us to reduce our impact on the environment, and to make Lewisham a greener place to live work and study. The following items are all accepted for recycling in Lewisham:

* Paper, * Cardboard, * Tins/Cans, * Glass Bottles/Jars, * Plastic Bottles.

Recycling is collected via a number of means:

1. the green box recycling scheme – available to all households with ground-floor access (i.e. those properties that have their own wheelie bin for their rubbish). If you think that you are eligible to receive a greenbox, please contact CallPoint Environmental Services on 020 8314 7171, or email recycle@lewisham.gov.uk
2. estate recycling facilities – now available for all residents on estates. Please use the large green communal recycling bins on your estate, for all of the materials listed above. If your estate does not have recycling facilities please contact CallPoint Environmental Services on 020 8314 7171, or email recycle@lewisham.gov.uk
3. Bring sites are located around the borough, and are for use by all residents. To locate your nearest bring site, please visit the recycling section of www.lovelewisham.org, or contact CallPoint Environmental Services on 020 8314 7171.

If you have any comments, feedback or suggestions regarding the recycling service in Lewisham, please email recycle@lewisham.gov.uk, or contact CallPoint Environmental Services on 020 8314 7171.

Mental Fight Club and Shoestring Theatre Company present Fifty Feet and Falling

I've been watching telly for the last two hours. It's not even turned on ...

Poignant, funny, moving, inspirational ... Based on his actual diaries, 'Fifty Feet and Falling' is a one man play about the life and death of a friend of Shoestring theatre company who committed suicide.

Where? The Robens Suite, 29th Floor, Guy's Tower, Guy's Hospital - Wed 21 – Thurs 22 March, 5.00 p.m., Tues 17 April, 3.00 p.m., Wed 18 – Thurs 19 April, 5.00 and 7.30 p.m. TICKETS FREE! - FREE BUFFET PROVIDED!

This Project is Funded by Guy's and St. Thomas' Charity. Dedicated to the memory of Terry Jenkins.

Previous audiences said; "*Fantastic Play ... I could really relate to it ... very moved by it ... Very powerful and moving, very intense, brilliantly acted... Inspirational ... the performance was riveting. The pace almost breathless - the conclusion left me stunned.*"

This Shoestring theatre production is brought to London by local group Mental Fight Club as part of their 'The Play's The Thing' project. The project aims to help SLAM NHS Trust develop and improve suicide prevention services in the area. There will be an optional discussion session after each performance in which you will be invited to give your thoughts on the play and on the subject. For further information or to book tickets, Tel. Steve Hennessy on 07790 980688 or email steve.hy@blueyonder.co.uk

FREE Fire Prevention Advice

London Fire Brigade is offering FREE Fire Prevention Advice tailor made to the lifestyle needs of individual Alcohol and Drug Users (social users, dependant or otherwise). The presentations and talks may be tailor made to individuals or groups either formally or informally and to any of the following: Managers and other professionals - Key workers and Care workers - Service Users and clients alike with any of the following (alcohol and drug dependencies, Mental Health, chaotic lifestyle/hoarding, disabled adults, Young People's Services etc).

The Special Fire Delivery Alcohol Team at Lewisham consists of 3 fully trained Fire Fighters (Male and Female), who have had extra training in the areas of drug and alcohol issues. The team is fully mobile and supports the

initiative wholeheartedly. The Lewisham Borough Team wishes to provide this vital information to those who are more at risk, in the hope that it prevents more fire related injuries, accidents and even deaths. Within the last two years, 5 out of the last 6 fire deaths have been alcohol related.

London Fire Brigade also provides FREE Home Fire Safety Checks (not statutory), FREE Smoke Alarms where needed, and can provide literature in any number of languages other than English, provides TV and DVD/VIDEO Units to show footage on and provide other handouts etc.

For further information contact Fiona Burton, Fire Community Safety Officer, London Fire Brigade - M: 07919014324, T: 020 7587 6355 (FCSO Office), E: fiona.burton@london-fire.gov.uk

Disabled People Do Not Trust Local Authorities

The National Centre for Independent Living are broadly in support of the recommendation in the report 'Reviewing the Future of the Independent Living Funds' which has been produced for the Department of Work and Pensions by independent consultants Melanie Henwood and Bob Hudson.

In particular, NCIL are in support of the recommendation not to transfer the ILF to local authorities. As the report rightly observes: - *"We need to avoid a rerun of the FACS (Fair Access to Care) scenario in which LAs have the discretion to ration eligibility for support in ever-decreasing circles."*

Menghi Mulchandani, Chair of NCIL "The ILF has made a difference to thousands of disabled people enabling us to live independently and have control over our lives. This would never have been achieved had matters been left to local authorities alone. We are opposed to the transfer of the ILF to local authorities now or at any time in the future. "NCIL urges the Government to ensure that the long-term future of the ILF and the drive towards personalised budgets, which NCIL fully supports, involves disabled people and our organisations in line with the report from the Prime minister's Strategy unit 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' for a user-led organisation in every locality based on the model of existing centres for independent living.

"Whilst welcoming the recommendations as a whole to widen the remit of the ILF, to increase those eligible to apply for support, to increase publicity about the ILF and to improve structures and governance, NCIL is concerned that without additional resources the ILF will not be able to meet the demand on its resources. Support and extension will require a cash injection. This is badly needed if independent living is to be a reality in disabled people's lives. Ministers are urged to take urgent action to address the crisis in resources for social care and to halt the process of disabled people's lives being reduced to a mere existence which is unacceptable in a modern society."

For further information please contact Sue Bott, Director NCIL - 020 7587 1663, e-mail director@ncil.org.uk

Final Report of The Equalities Review sets out why Equality is not a 'minorities-only' zone

The Equalities Review's Final Report, Fairness and Freedom warns that despite the significant progress achieved over the past 60 years, some kinds of inequality are set to remain at intolerable levels, and calls for a new approach to tackling discrimination and disadvantage.

The Phillips' report proposes a ten-step programme to help make Britain a fairer, more equal country at ease with its diversity and ready to face the challenges of the 21st century, including:

- a new framework to measure progress towards equality, including an 'Equalities Scorecard' which employers, public service providers and others can use to get a true picture of equality gaps;
- a new, simpler but broader positive duty for public sector bodies to tackle inequality - both as service providers and as employers;
- a simpler legislative framework which will enable groups as well as individuals to take action;
- new flexibility for employers to use positive action (though the report does not argue for positive discrimination);
- a more sophisticated and proportionate enforcement regime, overseen by the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR);
- targeted action on persistent inequalities in the fields of early years and education, employment, health, and crime and criminal justice.

The Review recommends that the CEHR, which will become operational in October 2007, should report on progress against the ten steps to greater equality within its triennial State of the Nation report.

Tell the government what you think about disability equality

The Office for Disability Issues has launched a consultation to find out what you think about equality for disabled people. The Office for Disability Issues aims to make sure that government departments work together to deliver equality to disabled people by 2025.

This consultation, which runs until 9 May 2007, aims to find out what equality means to disabled people. It will also help them to measure the progress of achieving equality.

They are asking disabled people:

- What does equality mean to you?
- Can you describe any examples of equality for disabled people you have experienced or know about?
- Do you think that there should be a single measure of equality, or that we need to measure progress on different aspects of disabled people's lives?
- If you think we need more than one measure, what do you think should be the five main features of equality that are measured?

It also includes questions on topics such as early years and family support, becoming an adult, employment and living independently. If you would like to take part in the consultation or to find out more information visit the Office of Disability Issues website (external link, opens new browser window), or contact Michael Cooke: Office for Disability Issues, Department for Work and Pensions, The Adelphi, 1-11 John Adam Street, London WC2N 6HT, Telephone: 020 7712 2548, Textphone: 020 7712 2332, Email Michael.cooke@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

RNID launches search for champions who are changing the world for deaf and hard of hearing people

Do you know someone who is changing the world for deaf and hard of hearing people? If so, RNID would like to hear from you!

The RNID Community Awards and nominees will be celebrated as part of this year's **Deaf Awareness Week (7 –13 May 2007)**. The awards aim to acknowledge the efforts of individuals who have in some way made a positive difference to the lives of deaf and hard of hearing people, no matter how big or small. RNID is calling on local people to nominate individuals or even local businesses whose efforts they believe should be recognised. All those who have made a significant contribution to deaf and hard of hearing people in their community will be recognised. The RNID Community Awards are open to deaf, hard of hearing and hearing people across the UK. For more information about the Community Awards or for a nomination form please contact RNID's information line on telephone 0808 808 0123 textphone 0808 808 9000, visit www.rnid.org.uk/deafawarenessweek (external link) or email informationline@rnid.org.uk

Survey report on new deafblind advocacy training is published

Sense's Voluntary Services Team has published a report on the survey it conducted recently. The survey focussed on developing the new training around communication for advocates and advocacy organisations intending to provide the new Independent Mental Capacity Advocacy service for people who are deafblind and unable to make their own decisions.

Key findings are:

- Advocacy schemes require more confidence in providing advocacy for people who lack capacity and have no formal communication. The training will aim to build skills and confidence in providing non-instructed advocacy
- Knowledge of communication approaches is important. The training will provide this information with a specific focus on multi-sensory impairment
- Advocates need to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches to supporting people to take part in the decision making process: the training will evaluate ways of doing this
- There are ethical and practical issues in trying to identify the wishes and preferences of the incapacitated person.
- Sense will provide training which is practical, imaginative, and aims to build confidence and knowledge. The training will complement IMCA training and will aim to have longevity after the end of the three year funding, possibly by becoming part of any future national advocacy qualification.

The survey results have been used to create a comprehensive training course and accompanying toolkit. The training programme will begin to roll out across the country by Sense from May this year.

Scope response to claims of discrimination from the UKIP against a disabled candidate

Responding to claims of discrimination from the UKIP against a disabled candidate, Andy Rickell, Scope's Executive Director for Diversity, Politics and Planning, said:

"We are shocked by this blatant act of disablism against this candidate. We fail to see why Mr Biggs was told he could only be a 'paper candidate' given that there are several alternatives to traditional forms of campaigning on foot, including canvassing by email and telephone, as well as speaking to community groups.

"The Disability Equality Duty, which came into force last year, places a duty on local authorities to promote equality. How can this be achieved if disabled people are prevented from standing for election? Disabled people are often 'invisible' in our society which is why it is imperative that more disabled people are represented in public life. An incident like this will deter many from entering politics in the first place and is indicative of the entrenched discrimination in our society towards disabled people.

"We hope that the British public will use the ballot box to send a message to political parties that discrimination against disabled people like Mr Biggs is totally unacceptable "

Tackling crime against disabled people must be an urgent priority, says DRC

A third of disabled adults say that they don't feel safe in their locality and almost a quarter say they have difficulty using police services, a new poll by the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has revealed.

The poll, conducted by Ipsos MORI (1), came on the day the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) unveiled its new policy to deal with cases of disability hate crime and to promote greater confidence for disabled people in the criminal justice system.

The poll also found that 35 per cent of women with a disability or long-term health condition disagreed when asked if they felt safe from harm in their local area. This finding rose to almost half of all adults (44 per cent) who have a mental health problem.

The CPS policy is a new and proactive approach to tackling disability hate crime. For example: ensuring all elements of the criminal justice system – such as the police giving the right support to a disabled victim, through to the sentencing process – are accessible and equitable to disabled people. The CPS will also start monitoring hate crime against disabled people from April this year.

The DRC is running a cinema advert highlighting the serious impact that harassment and hostility has on disabled people. 'Nice Day', which features the everyday abuse that a young man with a learning disability experiences from strangers in the street, will be in selected cinemas at the end of March.

New measures to improve support for carers

Formally launching details of the government's 'New Deal for Carers', Ivan Lewis, Minister for Care Services, announced a range of measures designed to recognise the essential work that carers carry out across the country, including:

- £25 million to be spent on providing short-term home based respite care for carers in crisis or emergency situations in every council
- £3 million towards the establishment of a national helpline for carers
- a wide ranging review of the 1999 national carers strategy
- £5 million to support the development of an experts carers programme.

Ivan Lewis, Minister for Care Services said:

"Millions of people in this country are hidden heroes who keep families together through their support and devotion. Our carers often provide care 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, taking on that precious role that enables a friend or family member to stay at home and live with the dignity, independence and security the rest of us take for granted.

Short Breaks Bill falls - now Government must deliver

Despite 5 hours of debate on 23 February and with MPs from all parties speaking in support, the Disabled Children (Family Support) Bill failed to get its Second Reading.

The government and the Conservative front bench stated that they could not support the Bill, primarily on the grounds of cost. Although many MPs spoke powerfully in favour of the Bill, there were less than the 100 MPs present who would have been needed to force a vote. As a result, the Bill now goes to the back of the private member's bill queue and although it will be read again on 29th June, it is highly unlikely it will make progress.

Gary Streeter MP (Cons, Devon SW), who sponsored the Bill, said:

"The provision of short breaks is still a lottery, where only a handful of families get the support they need. Extra cash and new guidance will be welcome, but I strongly believe that these families need and deserve a right to breaks.

"What we must see now is a clear plan of government action - nothing less will do. If we don't see real improvements in services offered to families, I'm certain that I or one of my colleagues will be introducing another Bill this time next year."

Mental Health Bill amendments must not be reversed, says Alliance

The Government has seriously misunderstood the importance of recent amendments made to the Bill in the House of Lords, the Mental Health Alliance said today.

Responding to the comments made by Health Minister Rosie Winterton today, Andy Bell, chair of the Mental Health Alliance, said:

"The decisions made by the House of Lords are based on evidence of what works and on the experiences of psychiatrists, doctors, social workers, and people with mental health problems. The Alliance believes these amendments are an important improvement to the Bill and they will certainly not fail to protect patients or the public. The best way to protect everyone is to ensure that mental health services have the resources to help everyone who needs their assistance."

What the amendments will do:

- Retain the existing safeguard that means people treated against their will in hospital must be given treatment that will improve their health or will prevent their condition worsening. *This allows doctors to be doctors, not jailers.*
- Close loopholes in the supervised community treatment proposals that would have allowed people to be eligible for community treatment where it would be an unnecessarily restrictive way to help their mental health problem.
- Ensure that people *whose ability to make decisions about their health is fully functioning* cannot be forced to have treatment they do not believe is in their best interests.

Research suggests diabetes will be bigger problem than predicted

Research from Canada shows that diabetes prevalence rates in Ontario have increased by 69 per cent between 1995 and 2005. This increase already exceeds the 39 per cent global rate predicted by the World Health Organisation (WHO) between 2000 and 2030.

The study also confirms that the increase is mainly due to the rise in Type 2 diabetes, which is also driven by increasing obesity levels and an ageing population.

"This research is very interesting," said Matt Hunt, Science Information Manager at Diabetes UK.

"By 2010, we estimate that the number of people with diabetes in the UK will increase by around 30 per cent to 3 million. This is a widely accepted conservative estimate - however, this new study shows that rates of diabetes could rise to an unprecedented level.

"This is particularly worrying because the UK has an ageing population and spiralling rates of obesity that could mean that the Canadian model could be replicated in the UK in the future."

WANT TO TRAIN AS AN ADVOCATE?

If you are disabled or a mental health services user or survivor and think that you might like to work as a volunteer advocate in one of CILL's advocacy proj