

Working for Choice, Independence & Lifestyle

Wiltshire Independent



Newsletter of Wiltshire Centre
for Independent Living

www.wiltshirecil.org.uk

January 2012 Issue 21



Happy New Year! With New Year comes new opportunities from Wiltshire CIL for Independent Living which link into the new on-line information resource we told you we were developing last time and also some workshops to gain new skills.

First there is lots to tell you on the subject of training. Thank you to all those who completed the training survey we circulated last time which gives us a really good picture of what workshops you want so that we can plan them into our Spring training programme. Read more inside!



In November and December we ran 3 workshops on introducing Direct Payments for people considering changing from Direct Services to purchasing support through a Direct Payment. These all worked very well. This photo shows the course at Trowbridge.

Finally, on training please see the new opportunity for more general workshops on the flyer circulated with this newsletter. Do come to hear more about it.

We often say "information is power" and it is certainly very important for self directed support in independent living. We gain information in all sorts of ways but more and more people are using the Internet and we have joined in partnership with DotComUnity to develop the Wiltshire page of this site for which there is a link from the Wiltshire CIL website. We hope you will come to the **Launch in January** and use this site to gain information and tell others things they will find useful. Read more about all of this inside! This photo shows Mel and Louise, Social Work students on placement, learning how to add information to the Website.



Dates for your Diary:

Thursday, January 26th 2012

11.30 am for 12 noon
**Devizes Bowls Club,
Long Street, Devizes
SN10 5BY**

Launch of our online
Information Resource
(please see flyer enclosed)

Tuesday 7th February 2012

11.00am—1.30pm
**Devizes Sports Club,
London Road, Devizes
SN10 2DL**

Joint Peer Support Network
and Self Funders Meeting
Speaker: Emma
Rubython, Goughs
Solicitors on Lasting Power
of Attorney

Tuesday February 14th 2012

10.30 am – 12 noon
**Devizes Sports Centre,
London Road, Devizes
SN10 2DL**

Meeting for those
interested in skills
workshops
(please see flyer enclosed)

Happy New Year to all our readers

NEWS FROM WILTSHIRE CIL

Peer Support Group Network

The October meeting brought together the 4 contracted providers from the Help to Live At Home tender for Direct Payment users to meet and discuss issues of concern about domiciliary agency use together with Nicola Gregson from Wiltshire Council who has led in developing the contract. We learnt that Direct Payment users and Self Funders will be able to access these providers directly for the same price as Wiltshire Council is paying. In future new Direct Payment users will have the negotiated rate provided through their Direct Payment and concern was expressed this might mean they could not afford to use other providers whose hourly rate was higher. Variations in the way Direct Payment regulations were interpreted by different operational teams across the County was identified and this will be followed up for future Peer Support Group meetings.

Self Funders Forum

Unfortunately the speaker dropped out at the last minute of the December meeting but we had a useful discussion with the four Bath University Social Work students who are developing an Online Forum for domiciliary agency users to learn about all the agencies registered in Wiltshire and give feedback about how they find them. This facility will be developed in the first few months of 2012. For our next meeting we are joining with the Direct Payment Peer Support Group members to hear about putting in place Lasting Power of Attorney from a local solicitor.

Developing our Online Information Resource for Independent Living

Louise and Mel, two Social Work students from Wiltshire College have been kick-starting this by feeding in lots of useful information about events, accessible places to visit etc, and we hope you will attend the Launch advertised on the Flyer. You can access the Website from the hyperlink on the Wiltshire CIL Website. The students write: "The good thing about this website is that you can add upcoming events that you know are taking place. If you don't like using the computer there is always someone at Wiltshire CIL who could add this for you. Wiltshire CIL are currently looking for volunteers who would like to add information once we return to college in February. This is something you could help with from home! Please contact us at the Wiltshire CIL Office or see us at the Launch – full training will be given."

Online Care Agency Discussion Forum

In an extension to the general information website mentioned above we are keen to give you an opportunity to share information on agencies for other agency users to read so have asked 4 Bath University students to set this up. They write:

"This year, Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living has teamed up with us (Bath University student group) to run a project which we all hope will benefit Agency Users such as yourselves.

Our project involves updating the popular DotComUnity website Agency list and to introduce a new service feedback option online to give you the chance of exchanging views of what you think about particular agencies. In order to design this facility we want to know what is most important to you in the service agencies provide, and whether they are providing it. With this information we hope to provide a service which helps you make better informed decisions about the agencies you choose. To gather the initial information needed on agencies we would like to get in touch with some of you to discuss this. So, if you have agreed, you will be getting a call from us in the coming months and we would be delighted with any feedback you can give us on the agencies you have used. Please contact us through the CIL office.

We hope this new facility on the website will be highly successful and look forward to your feedback, Hannah, Kate, Fran and Jo (Bath University Student Group)"

Peer Mentoring



The first group of Peer Mentors completed their training and are pictured having received their certificates. They are already hard at work contributing to workshops on Introducing Direct Payments and will be giving advice to those making their support plans as they are requested. If you would like a Mentor to support you please contact Geraldine at the CIL office.

We now have a few carers who would like to train as Mentors but need other interested Direct Payment users to make up the number for the 2nd course. Have you considered passing on the knowledge you have gained about using Direct Payments to those just starting? This is an ideal opportunity to gain the skills and understanding about Support Planning and the Mentoring role. The Course is 6 sessions and travel can be paid/arranged. If you want to join the course or discuss what it involves please contact Geraldine.



Training Survey Results

Thank you to all who completed the survey circulated with the last newsletter. We had 99 replies and so have a good picture of what sort of workshops you want us to provide. The 4 most popular topics were: **Planning and support; Managing Personal Assistants; Dealing with problems that arise; Accounting for expenditure.**

We will be building these into our Training Programme starting in March 2012. Twenty of you also said you would also be interested in a Course for your employees so we are investigating how we can do this by learning from a Course run by the Cardiff organisation of disabled people which provides an NVQ Level 1 qualification. This may take a little time to set up but we are working with Skills for Care and an Awarding Body to make this a worthwhile learning opportunity for PA's. A full report of the survey results will be available on our Website in January or in hard copy from the CIL office.

Volunteering



In this photograph Wiltshire CIL is working with the other user-led organisations, Karen Scott of Wiltshire Council and Emma Johnson and Madeleine Webber from GROW to improve the opportunities of volunteering for people with high support needs.

Clare spoke to volunteer managers across Wiltshire in December to describe the support Wiltshire CIL could give them in planning for more inclusive volunteering. We are trying to "practise what we preach" by making sure disabled people who volunteer for Wiltshire CIL have a good experience! We are also circulating with this newsletter a flyer about opportunities to learn new skills and put them into practice with Wiltshire CIL. This is funded by a Grant from the Office of Disability Issues in the Department of Work and Pensions. Do consider taking part by coming to the meeting on **14th February, 2012**, you can shape the sessions!

Trustees and Staff Away Day

At the end of October Trustees and Staff met to examine their Vision, Mission and Values in the light of today's situation. Here is a picture of them in Session.



ECBL – International Day of Disabled People Celebration

Wiltshire CIL was pleased to help co-ordinate a meeting of the ECBL Equalities Network on 6th December 2011, on the “characteristic” of Disability. There was an opportunity for people to learn about how disabled people saw themselves using the Social Model of Disability and Independent Living concepts, the Equalities Act 2010, disabled people having a voice through their own organisations, Hate Crime and employment barriers.

Information on Leisure

Thank you to all who contacted us about our focus on Transport last time. We were quite rightly corrected by a blind reader for calling buses in Wiltshire “accessible” when they are not “talking” buses giving oral information about journey stops etc to make them truly accessible to blind travellers. Our apologies for this! This time our information is on Leisure and do send in anything you would like to share on this subject or on next time’s topic of “Equipment and Useful Aids”

Hotels in the UK – Vision Hotels have several hotels including in the Lake District, Weston-Super-Mare and Teignmouth in Devon with facilities for Guide Dogs and some wheelchair accessible rooms at a reasonable price. Contact them on Tel. 01539 445801 Website www.visionhotels.co.uk to receive regular bulletins of special offers etc.

Travelling Abroad – Are you thinking of travelling abroad for the first time and need some support in planning your journey? Contact Accessible Travel on Tel. 01452 729739 Website www.accessibletravel.co.uk who know about accessible venues and transport across the world. Andy Wright their CEO is a wheelchair user himself so they understand the importance of the correct information.

Tourism for All – used to be known as Holiday Care and has information about all aspects of accessible travel and accommodation here and abroad. Website: www.Tourismforall.org.uk Tel. 0303 303 0146

Time Out Guide to Accessible London – was published in November 2011 to assist anyone with mobility or accessibility issues for the Olympic and Paralympic Games priced at £10.99p Email: info@tourismforall.org.uk or call 0303 303 0146.

Days Out – the Independent Living Centre at Semington is updating their book about local places to visit and it will be available at Easter. Tel. 01380 871 007 Website www.ilc.org.uk The National Trust has good value membership for disabled people because carers go free and they have a publication about Access to all their Properties. Website www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Reading – Lots of us find difficulty holding a book or turning pages so Audio Books are the answer to hearing both Fiction and Non-Fiction books. Listening Books is a Charity disabled people can join to loan Audio Books Tel. 020 7407 9417 Website: www.listening-books.org.uk

For national reports on benefits plans etc. please see the “News” section of our website: www.wiltshirecil.org.uk

This newsletter is available in a variety of formats on request from the office: info@wiltshirecil.org or telephone 01380 725400. We are always pleased to hear from anyone who would prefer to receive their newsletter electronically thus saving postage and trees! Please e-mail the office and put “Electronic Newsletter Copy” in the subject. Please consider contributing a photo or short article for our next edition. Copy date: 31st March 2012. Our information theme will be Equipment and Aids - so send in your contributions! Email to info@wiltshirecil.org.uk

Disclaimer

The information in this newsletter is provided by Wiltshire CIL as a service to readers. Wiltshire CIL cannot guarantee that the information provided is accurate, verified, comprehensive, or complete. For this reason, you should not rely, nor act upon any of the information contained in these pages without professional advice. If you do so, it will be entirely at your own risk. The views expressed in these articles are those of the individual author and are not necessarily endorsed by Wiltshire CIL.

Use of external links on the Wiltshire CIL website

Wiltshire CIL accepts no responsibility for the content of external websites. The decision to include these links should in no way be seen as an endorsement of the views expressed, they are those of the author or the organisation.

Contact Us : Wiltshire CIL, Unit 1, 11 Couch Lane, Devizes, SN10 1EB Tel: 01380 725400

www.wiltshirecil.org.uk Email: info@wiltshirecil.org.uk Company No. 5480761 Charity No. 1120611

Funded by: **Wiltshire Council**
Where everybody matters

VF volunteering fund
health & social care