

# Disability Cambridgeshire

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## Disability News Issue No 18 June 2008

### **New Ridgeons Independent Living Centre**

At the end of April 08 Ridgeons opened a new Independent Living Centre at Station Road (Solopark site), Near Pampisford, Cambridge CB22 3HB. You can telephone them on 01223 902000 or fax 01223 902001. The Centre is open Tuesday to Saturday 8.30am – 5.30pm.

They have everything you need under one roof. You can try out the best mobility equipment to get around, find the perfect product to make life easier and get the best independent advice.

Chronically sick and disabled people can qualify for VAT exemptions on a range of goods. You will need to complete a declaration form to prove you are eligible.

- Displays of Accessible Bathrooms, Showers & Kitchens in room settings
- Household Aids for Daily Living
- Adjustable Beds
- Assistive Technology
- Rise & Recline Chairs
- Hoists & Stairlifts
- Bathing Aids
- Scooters & Wheelchairs
- Controls & Alarms
- Walking Aids
- Pressure Care Products
- Footwear.....and much more.
- Website: [www.rilc.co.uk](http://www.rilc.co.uk)

## **Care Home Residents Wrongly Being Denied Attendance Allowance**

NHFA Care Fees Advice is aware of increasing evidence of the DWP getting the benefit rules wrong – so people are losing out on Attendance Allowance, worth around £3,500 per year at the higher rate. Attendance Allowance is a non-means tested benefit paid to people who have to sell their homes to self fund their care.

It does not matter if care home residents are receiving the NHS Nursing Care Contribution to their fees. The DWP state that Attendance Allowance should continue in these circumstances. It is the opinion of NHFA and well supported by our own experiences that DWP decision makers are confusing the NHS Nursing Care Contribution with fully funded NHS Continuing Care – to the detriment of many vulnerable, compliant older people.

NHFA care fees advice is available to all, regardless of means. Find out more at [www.caredirections.co.uk](http://www.caredirections.co.uk)

## **Pension, Disability and Carers Service**

From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008, The Pension Service and Disability and Carers Service joined together to form the above new agency. The main reason for the decision was that, increasingly, the agencies share a common customer base. More than fifty per cent of Disability and Carers Service customers are also customers of The Pension Service. The new agency allows them to deliver more seamless products and services designed around their customers' needs.

For more information, please visit the Touchbase website at [www.dwp.gov.uk/publications.dwp.touchbase](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/publications.dwp.touchbase)

## **New Strategy for Independent Living**

The government has launched a new independent living strategy to give disabled people more choice and control over the support they need and greater access to employment, Transport, health and housing.

Six departments will work with user-led organisations to promote the strategy, which includes a review of the local authority charges for care services, the piloting of individual budgets for disabled children and a review of how disability living and attendance allowances can better support independent living.

Disability Now – Issue 6 – April 2008

## **New Cambridge Eczema Support Group**

A new support group has been set up in Cambridge to support adults and children living with eczema, and their families, to meet, share experiences and make new friends.

For more information please contact Charlotte Ash on Tel: 07790 352489 or Email: [charlotte.ash@ntlworld.com](mailto:charlotte.ash@ntlworld.com)

## **Family Fund**

### **Good news for England's 16 year olds**

Severely disabled young people and their families are to receive extra financial support for everyday items, thanks to an £8.4 million boost for the Family Fund from the Department of Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). This will enable the Family Fund to extend its support, from 1<sup>st</sup> April this year, to severely disabled young people in England aged 16. The fund was previously not able to help young people after their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. Families will still have to fulfil the same criteria that covers families with 0-15 year olds, including not having been helped by the Fund in the 12 months prior to this application.

17 year olds will also be helped but not until 2009/10, at the earliest, as the money is to cover the three years 008-2011 and is being introduced in a phased way.

### **Simpler benefit claims for older people**

On 5<sup>th</sup> December 2007, the government announced changes that will further simplify and make the benefits system less intrusive.

#### **From October 2008**

- When a customer applies for Pension Credit over the telephone and, at the same time, for Housing and Council Tax Benefit, The Pension Service will automatically send their claim information to the appropriate local authority. The customer will not need to complete another claim form, or provide a signature, or send the form themselves.
- Customers will be able to spend up to 13 weeks abroad (up from 4 weeks) and still retain their entitlement to Pension Credit. This brings it into line with Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit.
- Backdating of Pension Credit claims will be limited to three months, bringing it into line with other means-tested benefits. This will significantly cut the amount of personal information we need to request – and speed up claims. At the moment, arrears can be backdated for up to 12 months, but this requires pensioners to provide details of their circumstances for the past year, which can be burdensome and stressful.
- Backdating of Housing and Council Tax Benefit claims will also be limited to three months (for pensioners and working age customers).

From April 2009 (subject to the successful passage of the Pensions Bill) most Pension Credit customers aged 75 and over will no longer need to tell us about changes to their retirement income. This includes income from their retirement pension, capital and annuities.

Further information: [www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk](http://www.thepensionsservice.gov.uk)

## **What kind of a future?**

This is the title of a new booklet supporting young people with Down's Syndrome to lead full lives after they leave school.

Jill Davies from The Foundation for People with Learning Disabilities has written the booklet which is aimed at giving information and advice on how to lead a busy life after leaving full-time education.

The booklet covers information on person centred planning, how to get direct payments, going to college or getting a job, moving away from home as well as how to travel around and money management.

This booklet is for young people and their families and supporters to read and talk about together. It is not easy to bring about lots of changes all at the same time! You may want to read about different topics at different times. It can take a long time to bring about changes in your life. It is not always easy.

You can download the booklet from [www.learningdisabilities.org.uk](http://www.learningdisabilities.org.uk) or you can order a hard copy by calling the publications department on 0207 803 1101.

## **A reminder about tax**

Banks and building societies are required by law to take 20% tax off all the interest they pay

If you are a non-taxpayer whose interest payments are being taxed you will need to complete form R85 - which comes with a helpsheet –and hand the completed form to their bank or building society.

All future interest will be paid without having tax deducted.

Form R85 is available from banks, building societies, the HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) website: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/tdsi/forms.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/tdsi/forms.htm) and any HMRC office.

A third party – for example a friend, relative or neighbour – can help if someone lacks the mental capacity to manage their own affairs or is in poor health. They can complete form R85 using the saver's details but must also sign the form themselves.

Tax can be claimed back for earlier years by filling in a repayment claim form R40. This is available from the claim office on 0845 366 7850, the HMRC website or any HMRC office.

A third party can also claim tax back on behalf of anyone unable to do this for themselves.

## **Community Legal Advice**

Community Legal Advice is the new name for Community Legal Service Direct – the free and confidential legal advice service, paid for by legal aid.

As well as being rebranded, the service has launched a new website: [www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk](http://www.communitylegaladvice.org.uk)

Designed to be easier to use, this allows people to:

- download leaflets and factsheets
- use the legal aid calculator
- search for advice or browse by topic
- find out about local and national organisations that could help with their legal problems.

The website is currently being tested by the Shaw Trust, the largest voluntary sector provider of employment services for disabled people in the UK, to ensure it meets their Accessible Plus mark.

Plans for the coming year include a pilot of sign language videos and podcast versions of leaflets.

Community Legal Advice is also developing client-led services through their national telephone helpline – 0845 345 4 345. This provides high-quality specialist legal advice on debt, housing, employment, welfare benefits and education.

The helpline is open from 9.00am to 6.30pm, from Monday to Friday and calls cost no more than 4p per minute from a BT landline. (Calls from a mobile phone usually cost more.) Messages can be left outside office hours – and clients can request to be called back within 24 hours.

The helpline has Welsh speaking operators and advisers, and offers a three-way translation service in 170 languages, through Language Line.

## **Information about the Fitzwilliam Museum**

The Fitzwilliam Museum houses world-class collections of works of art and antiquities spanning centuries and civilisations. Highlights include masterpieces of painting from the fourteenth century to the present day, drawings and prints, sculpture, furniture, armour, pottery and glass, oriental art, illuminated manuscripts, coins and medals and antiquities from Egypt, the Ancient Near East, Greece, Rome and Cyprus.

### **Museum Opening Hours**

Tuesday - Saturday:  
10:00 - 17:00

Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays:  
12:00 - 17:00

CLOSED: Mondays, Good Friday and 24-26 & 31 December and 1 January

## **What's on at the Museum**

For information on tours and exhibitions please contact the Outreach and Access Officer on 01223 764392 or Email [gmh33@cam.ac.uk](mailto:gmh33@cam.ac.uk)

## **Pre-Visit Information**

Pre-visit information is available in audio format (CD or tape), Braille or large print. We can also supply large print and tactile floor plan diagrams, and an audio description of getting into the Museum.

## **Getting to the Museum**

Cambridge Train Station is approximately 20 minutes walk from the Museum, with taxis and frequent bus services to the city centre (Citi 1 and Citi 3 routes).

The Museum is 10 minutes walk (approximately 500 metres) from the city centre, on Trumpington Street. There is a bus stop on the Citi 4 bus route from Madingley Road Park and Ride and Addenbrook's Hospital directly outside the Courtyard Entrance to the Museum.

## **The Building**

The Courtyard Entrance to the Museum provides street level access through automatic push-button double glass doors. From this entrance, visitors can access all floors without using stairs.

The main entrance to the Founder's building of the Museum is reached by a flight of 18 stone steps from street level. This entrance has revolving doors. From this entrance, visitors have either to climb 24 stairs to reach the upper galleries, or to descend 16 stairs to reach the lower galleries.

## **Lifts and Stairs**

A glass lift to all floors (with the exception of a balcony area in Gallery 3) is situated close to the Courtyard Entrance. There are a number of staircases throughout the building – not all have continuous handrails.

## **Number of Floors**

The exhibits are on the ground and first floor. The Shop and Café are accessible and are located on the ground floor, near the Courtyard Entrance. The Education Seminar Room, Education Studio, School Lunch Room, Public toilets, Accessible toilets and Cloakroom facilities are on the lower ground floor.

## **General Access**

Most areas inside the Museum have flat or slightly sloping floors, and all rooms (except the balcony in gallery 3) are accessible via the lift. There are

several heavy doors. Floor surfaces are smooth and slightly slippery in some areas. Staff are available to help in most rooms.

### **Facilities available**

Wheelchairs      Stools      Seating in galleries

## **Mobile Hairdresser (Advanced CRB check)**

### **Anita Corbett**

Qualified hairdresser with 24 years experience will visit you in your home. Please call Anita on 07966 455815

Several members of Disability Cambridgeshire staff can personally recommend her.

## **College's new accessible facilities**

Cambridge University's Madingley Hall site has installed new facilities to make life easier for disabled students. The university's Institute of Continuing Education has installed ramped access, specially designed bedrooms and bathrooms and a stair lift.

At an opening ceremony Mr Ian Willis, the hall's general manager, said that the disabled facilities would enable more students to benefit from the courses held at Madingley Hall.

## **Charity Flowers Direct**

Charity Flowers Direct is the UK's only flowers-by-post service to be wholly-owned by a major national charity : Age Concern. Every time you choose Charity Flowers Direct, you will be making a valuable contribution to important charity work. You will be giving more than just beautiful flowers, you will also be helping both Age Concern and Directions Plus. Prices start at just **£13.99 for a Seasonal Bouquet including delivery**

**Please quote DTP each time you order them and Disability Cambridgeshire will receive 15% of the order price.**

So whether it's Happy Birthday, Happy Anniversary, Happy Christmas, Happy Easter, Congratulations, a present for Mother's Day or just to show you care, order from Charity Flowers Direct.

Charity Flowers Direct, PO Box 555, Guernsey, Channel Islands GY1 6JA;  
Tel: **08705 300 600** (24-hour order hotline);

## **Disability Forums**

### **Cambridge Forum of Disabled People**

Campaigning for equality of opportunity for people in Cambridge.

Contact: Gerri Bird on 01223 569601

E-mail: [thecfdp@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thecfdp@yahoo.co.uk)

If you are interested in joining the Cambridge Forum please contact Gerri.

### **South Cambridgeshire Forum of Disabled People Sawston Branch**

Gerri Bird has set up a forum in Sawston with the help of local residents. The forum, which meets once a month, has been running since February 05. If you have a disability/ are a carer/older person/organisation working with or for disabled/older people or carers and are interested in joining, please contact Gerri.

One of the things the forum is involved with is campaigning for better access in all areas.

Contact: Gerri Bird Tel: 01223 569601

E-mail: [gerri@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk](mailto:gerri@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk)

### **Cambourne Forum of Disabled People**

Coming soon: Cambourne forum – if you know an older or disabled person who may be interested – please contact Gerri.

Contact: Gerri Bird Tel: 01223 569601

E-mail: [gerri@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk](mailto:gerri@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk)

### **East Cambridgeshire Access Group**

The group looks at all issues to do with disability e.g. access to shops, buildings etc. They also have a sub group for plan vetting of new buildings and alterations to older buildings. If you are interested in joining or would like more information – please contact Gerri.

Contact: Gerri Bird Tel: 01223 569601

E-mail: [gerri@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk](mailto:gerri@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk)

Gerri is looking into setting up a forum for the Chatteris/Littleport area. Anyone interested should contact her as above