

# Disability Cambridgeshire

1 Orwell Furlong, Cowley Road, Cambridge CB4 OWY



City and South Cambs: 01223 569600

East Cambs: 01353 669431

Fenland: 01354 659179

Fax: 01223 506470

info@disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk

[www.disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk](http://www.disability-cambridgeshire.org.uk)

## Disability News

### Issue No 19 September 2008

**The Management Committee hereby give notice that the Disability Cambridgeshire Annual General Meeting will take place on Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> October 2008 at St Andrews Hall, St Andrews Church, Chesterton, Cambridge commencing at 11am.**

**The meeting will be asked to approve the following resolution:**

**That in the light of Cambridgeshire County Council's revised core funding arrangements for disability advice and information services the Management Committee is authorised to enter into partnership negotiations with any other voluntary, statutory or not for profit organisation that shares the aims and objectives of Disability Cambridgeshire. Such negotiations will fall short of a merger document but will take into account the need to plan contingently for the establishment of a Centre for Independent Living within the County of Cambridgeshire.**

**In so far as the CIL will accord with Department of Health guidelines and will not be at variance with our charitable remit the Management Committee is further authorised to investigate, jointly where appropriate, a funding model that may include Third Sector loan finance provision, subject to the safeguards for Trustees as specified in our Memorandum of Association.**

## **A VAT Break for Older People**

The over 60s who have difficulty walking or chronic health problems which affect their mobility could benefit from a VAT break for modifications to their home.

This can lead to a reduction of hundreds of pounds in bills for modifications to your home. Instead of paying 17.5% VAT, disabled over 60s only have to pay 5%. 4.6 million of Britain's 11 million disabled people are over 60.

Chronically sick and disabled people, no matter how old, can qualify for VAT exemptions on a range of products and services, such as medical appliances and alarms.

Organisations such as Stannah Stairlifts, will automatically discount VAT on production of your declaration form when they install the item.

Call the Charities and Disabled Reliefs helpline on 08345 302 0203 in order to obtain a declaration form to prove you are eligible which you can show to your plumber or professional installer.

If you have had modifications to your home in the past three years and have discovered you are eligible for reduced VAT, you can claim it back from the company. Find out how at [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk).

## **Independent Living Strategy**

The aim of the Independent Living Strategy is that by 2013 disabled people have more choice and control over how their needs for support and equipment are met and to make marked progress in overcoming barriers to health, housing, transport, and employment opportunities.

The Government continues to state that change can be brought about through the existing framework, permitting only that, the need for legislation will be reviewed if 'sufficient' progress (which is not defined) has not been made by 2013. This ignores the advice of the Review's Expert Panel that, without a new legislative framework rooted in Independent Living principles, which guarantees a minimum standard of support and provides for individual redress, the Strategy risks having a limited effect and failing to meet the aspirations of disabled people. Another identified weakness is that the Strategy does not flag up Independent Living as a human rights issue. Nor does it explain how it is crucial for gender equality, ending state exploitation of carers or safeguarding the rights of children.

### **What does it say?**

The 'Independent Living Review' was set up by the Office for Disability Issues in July 2006 to come up with practical proposals to deliver Independent Living, develop the business case for investment and consider the need for changes to the law. The Review Team was advised by an Expert Panel chaired by baroness Jane Campbell DBE.

The Strategy includes Government commitments in the following areas. In order to promote Independent Living the Government will:

- Develop materials which practitioners can use to effectively explain the case for Independent Living and the ways of promoting it.
- Ease the transition into adulthood for young disabled people concentrating on areas such as housing and education.
- Educate National Health Service staff on increasing choice and control and on the Disability Equality Duty.
- Enhance personal mobility and transport choices for disabled people
- Maximise disabled people's housing opportunities and choices.
- Support disabled parents in areas such as employment and childcare.
- Encourage disabled people into employment by addressing issues such as reforms to the benefits system and charging policies within adult social care and improving access to and support within employment.
- Transform social care to enable choice, control and high quality preventative services through the use of individual budgets and direct payments and better information and advocacy.
- Aim to form a 'universal information, advice and advocacy service for people who need support to exercise real choice and control.'
- Develop an information service for Government departments on Independent Living for older people at a national, regional and local level. To look into investing in Independent Living for older disabled people who are in residential care or at risk of moving into care.

There are strategies in place for measuring progress. However as Radar points out 'It is not made clear what level of progress would be considered acceptable before further action is deemed necessary.' Radar identifies the fact that the Strategy is not backed up by legislation as being a major flaw. The main argument against a legislative commitment to Independent Living is a financial one. However, Radar argues that investment now will be cost-effective to the Government in the long-term.

To view the full Strategy please see [www.officefordisability.gov.uk](http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk) and you can contact the review team at [independent-livingreview@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:independent-livingreview@dwp.gsi.gov.uk).

## **BEWARE OF CRUSHING YOUR PILLS!**

If you like many other people have difficulty swallowing pills or capsules and resort to crushing them ...you should be aware that this may be dangerous.

Certain pills, such as slow release, can change the way the active ingredients are absorbed by the body with potentially severe and even fatal complications.

The opening of a capsule or crushing of tablets prior to taking will (on the whole) make their use 'unlicensed.' Consequently, the manufacturer assumes no liability for any harm that may occur to the patient or person administering the medication.

You should only open capsules or crush tablets if the prescriber permits it in writing.

If you are having difficulty swallowing your medication, you should talk to your GP or pharmacist as liquid alternatives or non-oral methods of administration may be available.

## **Cambridge Cancer Help Centre**

The CCHC offers support to people who have or have had cancer and their carers. In order to do so, a meeting place with a welcoming, friendly environment is provided, in which people with cancer, their families, friends and carers can get together. Those attending may benefit from the understanding atmosphere and the provision of a 'listening ear.' Access to qualified counsellors can be arranged.

CCHC does not give medical advice or treatment, but instead offers a wide range of complementary therapies. It is not suggested that these therapies will cure people, but it is our belief that this self-help, holistic approach engenders the 'fighting spirit' which helps people to combat the disease. Visitors can also make use of a wide range of information about cancer and its treatment in the well-stocked library.

Our support group meets from 10am to 4pm every Tuesday and Wednesday, and from 5pm to 7.30pm on the first Thursday of every month, in the brand new David Rayner Centre at Scotsdales Garden Centre, 120 Cambridge Road, Great Shelford, Cambridge CB22 5JT. Please note we are closed during August. From September 2008 we will also be open on Thursday mornings for therapies by appointment only.

More information can be obtained by contacting the CCHC Coordinator Ann Dingley on (01223) 840105 or email [cch@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cch@hotmail.co.uk) or visit our website at [www.cambridgecancerhelp.org](http://www.cambridgecancerhelp.org)

## **New Air Travel Laws which Improve Access for Disabled Passengers.**

New European Union Legislation regarding assisted travel, compensation for damaged mobility equipment and disability equality training for airport and airline staff is going to come into force on 26<sup>th</sup> July.

The legislation gives disabled people the right to expect assistance for departure from arrival at an airport to the aircraft and then on arrival from the aircraft to leave the airport. This includes both getting on and off the plane.

The new laws apply to disabled passengers who use commercial flights which arrive or depart from European Union countries.

Disabled passengers will also be entitled to compensation if a wheelchair or piece of specialist equipment is damaged during a flight or by airport ground staff. However, the Equality and Human Rights Commission urges people to insure equipment because compensation for any damage will be low.

Airport staff who work with the public will undergo disability equality training.

The Civil Aviation Authority will enforce the legislation in the UK. Having one body in charge of enforcing the legislation will prevent airlines and airport authorities from dodging their responsibilities by blaming each other.

The first stage of the legislation came into effect in July 2007 and made it unlawful for airlines to refuse bookings from disabled passengers or to prevent them from boarding a plane. However, it did introduce a grey area by giving a captain the right not to allow a disabled passenger to board a plane on grounds of safety.

Maria Nyman, policy officer at the European Disability Forum, would like to see a clearer definition of the safety grounds governing a captain's right to bar disabled passengers. Nevertheless she views the EU legislation as a positive step forward.

## **Help In The Kitchen!**

### **One Touch Can Opener**

This new can opener from Culinare is the perfect tool for those with limited hand mobility. Simply place it on top of the can and press the button. It will automatically rotate around the rim, removing the lid, which is then lifted off by the magnet in the base. It can handle most tins easily. Batteries are included.

One Touch is available direct from Culinare (tel 0870 1601319; [www.culinare.com](http://www.culinare.com)) or from cookshops around the UK.

### **Dycem Grip-It Jar and Bottle Openers**

Dycem is a unique non-slip material that solves many gripping problems met by people with limited dexterity, reduced mobility or reduced wrist or upper limb strength.

The Dycem Grip-it jar opener assists people with a weak grip or decreased sensation in their hands to open jars or pots. It is specially shaped to fit the hand and is textured for extra grip. The Grip-it can also be used to open doors or turn on taps.

Also available is the Grip-it bottle opener which is designed to fit a range of bottle and cap sizes including medicine and pill bottles. It can also work with small cupboard doorknobs.

Grip-it jar and bottle openers are available direct from Dycem (tel: 0117 955 9921; [www.dycem-ns.com](http://www.dycem-ns.com)) and selected stockists.

## **Easi-Grip utensils from PETA**

PETA (Practical Ergonomic & Therapeutic Aids) produces a range of Easi-Grip ergonomic tools, aids and assistive devices for those with reduced grip strength, such as bread knives, a carving fork, cheese slicer, grater and spatula.

These utensils are designed to allow you to keep your wrist and hand straight, avoiding unnecessary strain and preventing accidents.

For further information and details of other Easi-Grip products, contact PETA tel 01245 231118; [www.peta-uk.com](http://www.peta-uk.com).

## **New Products from the Mobility Roadshow:-**

### **Handle Easy Mobile Phone**

This is a mobile phone with no tricky features to use and that can be modified for visually impaired users. The large size keypad makes it ideal for those with dexterity problems.

Price: £99.87

Available from Hagger UK Ltd on 01462 677 337, or visit [www.doro.com](http://www.doro.com)

### **Disabled Holiday Information**

This service is designed to allow people to modify their search according to their individual needs. It is possible to search for specific features such as ceiling hoists, right or left hand transfer to beds and toilet etc. People can search within a specific radius of a geographical location. All the accommodation includes wheelchair accessibility and wetroom/wheel-in showers.

To get a copy: contact Disabled Holiday Information at [info@disabledholidayinfo.org.uk](mailto:info@disabledholidayinfo.org.uk), or visit [www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk](http://www.disabledholidayinfo.org.uk)

### **Easycare Genie Wheelchair**

This is a wheelchair that allows you to stand up so you can talk to people face to face. It can be controlled simply by using your head which gives independence to people who are unable to use hand controls.

Price: £5000

Available from Easy Care products on 01952 610 300

## **Tell your story about Raising a Disabled Child and enter 'Contact a Family's' Competition**

'Contact a Family' is running a competition to highlight the issues surrounding bringing up a disabled child. The entry could take the form of a short video, a written story, an audio recording or a photograph which shows the joys and challenges involved in caring for a disabled child.

Entries are welcomed from any family member or friend involved in the care of a disabled child since 1979 when the charity was set up.

The best clips, pictures and stories will be displayed on Contact a Family's website and other online channels such as You Tube, My Space and in our parent magazine, Connected.

Entries can be a diary account, show a day in the life, or focus on a specific time raising your child, such as around diagnosis. Or entries can highlight a particular challenge – using public transport, coping with behavioural problems, peoples' attitudes, attending endless assessments and meetings.

All entries will be considered in a category alongside others of the same medium, with a chance to win a digital camera – and for the overall winner, a laptop.

The closing date for entries is 30<sup>th</sup> November 2008. Video entries should be no longer than three minutes and written stories no longer than 2000 words. Videos, podcasts, word documents and digital photos can be submitted by email to [new.media@cafamily.org.uk](mailto:new.media@cafamily.org.uk) with Competition in the subject header. They can be submitted either as an attachment or a link. All printed stories, photographs, tapes, DVDs can be posted to: Competition, Contact a Family, Freepost Lon8801, London EC1B 1EE.

## **The New Website for Cambridge Council for Voluntary Service.**

The CCVS website was re-launched last November and the number of visits to the site has increased in every subsequent month.

The CCVS directory, which is a list of over 400 voluntary and community groups in Cambridge City and South Cambridgeshire, has proved to be the most popular download. The CCVS newsletters and project reports are also popular downloads.

In addition there are two new facilities on the website to allow member groups to advertise their events and job vacancies.

The Community Calendar enables members to publicise their own events. This helps as many people as possible to hear of the event and also helps to avoid clashes with any other events organised. CCVS asks to be informed of any events organised and they will publish the details on their website. You can email: [enquiries@cambridgecvs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cambridgecvs.org.uk) or phone 01223 464696.

A new page added to the CCVS website allows members to publish their job vacancies for free. If you wish to take advantage of this service please e-mail brief details to [enquiries@cambridgecvs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@cambridgecvs.org.uk) or phone 01223 464696.

## **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);

### **Volunteers Wanted!**

If you can spare half a day or a day each week to volunteer at Disability Cambridgeshire please get in touch with Peter Wetherell or Gerri Bird on 01223 569600.

## **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.

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

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)