

# Integration

June 2008



## Leicestershire Centre for Integrated

### Inside this issue...

**LCIL has a new team, A regional IT success, Receives an awards for employment and much more...**

**Also...**

**Braille- guided Touch Tour- Where?**

**Updates on the UN Convention**

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**Radio Leicester interviews LCIL! About what?**

## Read on...

**LCIL would like to thank the following...**





## News in Brief

### Equality & Access Team

A new team has emerged at LCIL brought about by the merger of projects that are related to equality and access issues. The team will continue to provide the secretarial and co-ordination role of the Equality and Diversity Partnership in addition to chairing and secretariat role of the Inclusive Design Advisory Panel. The team is also responsible for the co-ordination of access audits. The later being undertaken by qualified access auditors. The team is already set to increase its work as two new projects are lined up – more about this next time.

#### **For further details contact**

Eric Day- Project Manager Equality & Access Team

 Tel: 0116 2859440 or 0116 2225005  Fax 0116 2225008

 Email: [admin@lcil.org.uk](mailto:admin@lcil.org.uk)

### Leicester City Council Streamline their Blue Badge service

It will now be easier for City residents to apply for, or renew, a Blue Badge. Leicester City Council has launched a new while-you-wait service at the Brite Centre, New Walk Centre, New Parks and Saffron Lane customer service centres. Application forms will be processed and in most cases, Blue Badges issued on the spot.

For information on Blue Badges visit [www.leicester.gov.uk/bluebadge](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/bluebadge) or call 0116 252 7900.

### Leicester City PCT is aiming for World Class Commissioning and wants your views

In a partnership arrangement with LCIL, Leicester PCT is organising a range of events which focuses on inviting people to express their views about the services they want in the future.

If you are a disabled people, represent disabled people or are a member of a disability organisation and would like to have your views taken on board then contact James Nightingale or Madhu Parmar on 0116 2225005 e-mail us on [admin@lcil.org.uk](mailto:admin@lcil.org.uk) and leave us your contact details quoting PCT involvement and we will send you further information on how you can get involved.

We will send detailed information to you in August all events and involvement programmes will take place after the 11<sup>th</sup> August 2008.

**If you have any success stories or opinions which you would like to share with fellow Integration readers, please feel free to forward them to us and you never know, you could featured in our next edition!**

**Details of where to send your contribution(s) to are listed on the back page.**

## **LCIL awarded for their commitment to the employment, of people with Disability**

The RNIB College in Loughborough held their annual Partnerships for Employment Awards on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008, to recognise organisations from Leicestershire and beyond who have helped college learners with disabilities find work placements and gain other essential employment skills.

During the last 12 months LCIL has taken on a number of students for a variety of roles including work experience in a variety of areas, reception experience, administration and assisting in teaching blind and partially sighted people to use access technology in our ICT Suite, and receipt of this year's main award is recognition our ethos that everything is possible with the right support.

Geoff Haynes, our Lead ICT Tutor and I, were delighted to represent LCIL and receive several awards from Stephen Peete, Chairman of Governors at the RNIB College.



Above pictured, David peak, Geoff Haynes and Stephen Peete.

# UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol come into force in May 2008



The United Nations (UN) convention which aims to safeguard the human rights of disabled people around the world has come into effect from 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2008. The convention was adopted by the UN's general assembly in December 2006 but it could not take effect until it had been ratified by 20 member states.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 that hurdle was cleared when Ecuador became the 20th country to ratify the convention.

As of 23<sup>rd</sup> June, 2008, there are 27 ratifications of the Convention and 16 ratifications of the Optional Protocol. Currently, there are 129 signatures to the Convention, and 71 signatories to the Optional Protocol.

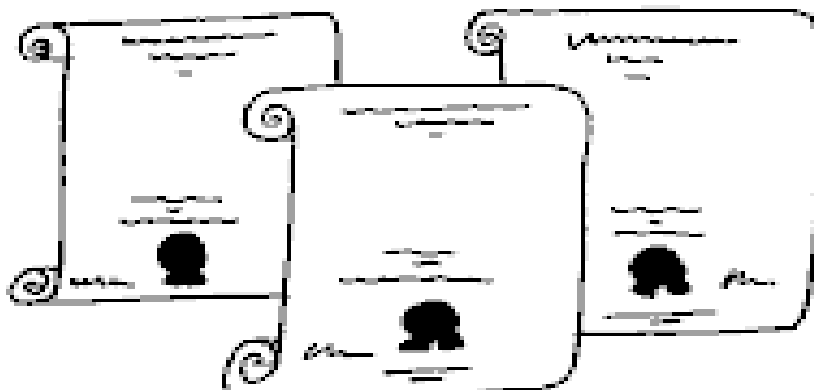
States that ratify the convention must enact laws to improve disability rights and abolish discriminatory legislation, customs and practices.

The UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon said the convention would be a powerful tool in eradicating discrimination, and added: "It is a historic moment in our quest for realisation of the universal human rights for all persons, creating a fully inclusive society for all."

The UK government has so far failed to ratify the convention but has set a target for ratification by the end of 2008.

Baroness Jane Campbell, chair of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's (EHRC) disability committee, warned that the UK risked losing its status as a beacon for disability rights by continuing to delay ratification.

There is growing concerns from disabled people's organisations that the government would ratify the treaty by the end of 2008, as promised, but opt out of some articles, including the right to inclusive education or independent living.



## ICT Suite @ LCIL



The ICT Suite has been “a hive of activity” since the circulation of the last Newsletter.

We continue to provide our classes in basic computer training for disabled people, from beginner lessons for those who have never used a computer before, to New CLAIT (an OCR accredited level 1 qualification) using a wide range of keyboards, mice, switches and software to assist access to computers.

We allow learners to progress at their own speed and in their own way. Thanks to our adaptable, enthusiastic team of staff and volunteers, we have created a relaxed, friendly learning environment.

To quote a volunteer who recently left to take up employment:

“I think the interactions between paid staff, volunteers and service users are unique and invaluable in building the community as you have. I have not seen this done in any other community based organisations, either in the paid or voluntary sector, so well done everyone who contributes to that philosophy.”

### **Three new IT projects:**

In partnership with the RNIB the pilot programme prepares visually impaired people for work. Six visually impaired learners are taking part. The first participant received tuition in Microsoft applications and JAWS, another was supported to a new learning approach as his sight deteriorated. Two people required assistance in using the internet for job search, and we are pleased to report was then offered two jobs. Our final two people used the experience to improve their speeds and typing skills.

The programme engaged two part-time JAWS tutors and was further supported by a volunteer who had previously experience of teaching IT to visually impaired learners. The pilot led to new materials being produced and LCIL’s workbooks updated to make them more friendly to JAWS users.

JAWS is a software programme designed to provide access to IT for Blind people.

## 16 – 25 interested in IT then this course is for you

LCIL has secured a three year project, funded by Connexions which is aimed at increasing the skills of disabled people aged between 16 – 25, who are not in employment, not in education or currently not receiving any training (NEET).

The course is specifically designed to encourage young people to use computers and the internet to increase their potential employability. This is done by gaining basic computer skills, developing a C.V., job searching, on line job applications and accessing e-government websites including directgov.com, connexions-direct.com and many others.

The project is open to any young person in the “NEET” category, who has been identified as requiring additional learning support or who, due to their individual access needs, are unable or unwilling to attend other mainstream providers. The following quotes from a participant, shows how the relaxed, friendly atmosphere in the ICT Suite can help young people in achieving their aims.

“I’m glad that I chose this course as I wanted to improve my computer and communication skills”

“I enjoy it a lot because you can have fun and the staff is great”

So if you meet the age range, consider yourself to have an impairment or disability (physical, sensory or learning disability), speak to your careers officer and tell them about this newsletter. We look forward to seeing you in the near future.

## Annual Celebration Event

We are proposing to hold the ICT Suite celebration event on **Wednesday, 6<sup>th</sup> August**, between 11.00 am and 2.00 pm, in the Training Room, and Jo Fisher from UK Online has agreed to present certificates to anyone who has attended since September 2007.

The event is an opportunity for people to socialise and also to receive recognition for their hard work and achievements.

A light buffet will be provided and students and former students are asked to contact our Admin team to reserve a place.



## LCIL's first IT Regional Contract – Sustaining Switched on Communities

AbilityNet is a national charity helping disabled adults and children use computers and the internet by adapting and adjusting technology.

The 'Sustaining Switched On Communities' is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and aims to make a lasting and sustainable impact on Voluntary & Community Organisations by supporting individuals with a disability through ICT technology and training.

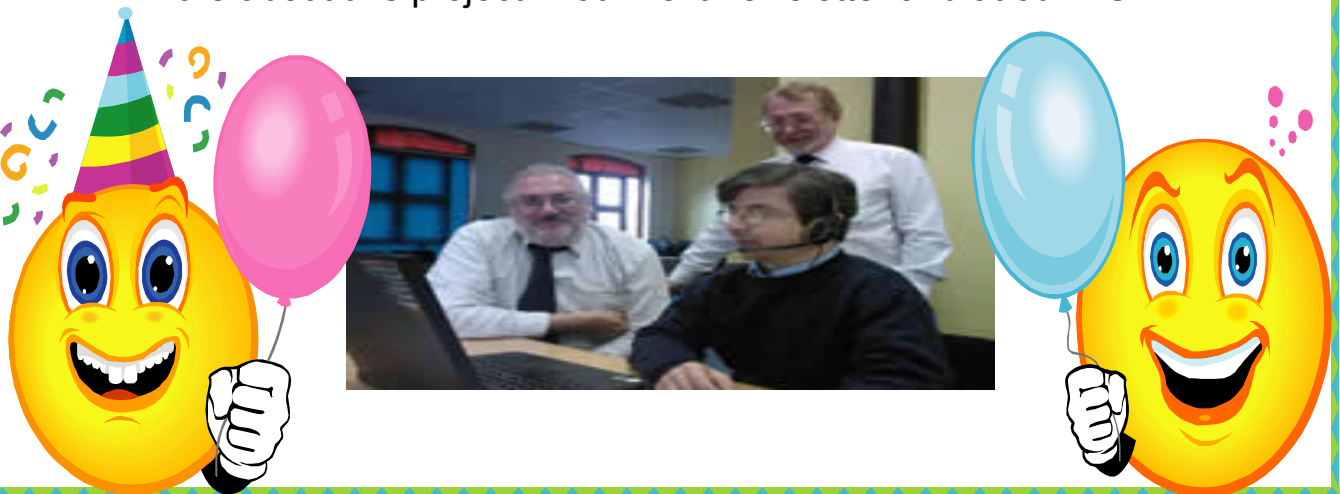
In April, LCIL was appointed East Midlands Regional Partner despite strong competition from various other organisations throughout the region.

### Our role in this project is:

- To promote the use of assistive technology to overcome barriers and provide opportunities for disabled people.
- Work with and assist Voluntary & Community Organisations in the East Midlands region who wish to offer accessible IT services to members of their local community.
- Provide on-going advice and support to these VCO's and their beneficiaries regarding the use of assistive ICT technology.

To help fulfil this role we have engaged a new member of staff. Alan Rowsell joins our ICT Suite team as Accessible ICT Officer. Alan who previously worked for the RNIB, has a wealth of experience in ICT accessibility and we welcome him to the ICT Team. The picture below shows Alan (in the background) at a recent AbilityNet training event.

More about this project in our next newsletter and at our AGM.



## LCIL's Annual General Meeting

This year our AGM will take place on Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2008 at 2.00pm. Our special guest of national fame is a leading writer on disability issues and a key person in Independent Living.

If you are interested in finding out more please contact Julie Newton and leave your contact address and we will send you further details in the post

We will be launching information about some of our new services at the AGM.

**We look forward to seeing you there...**

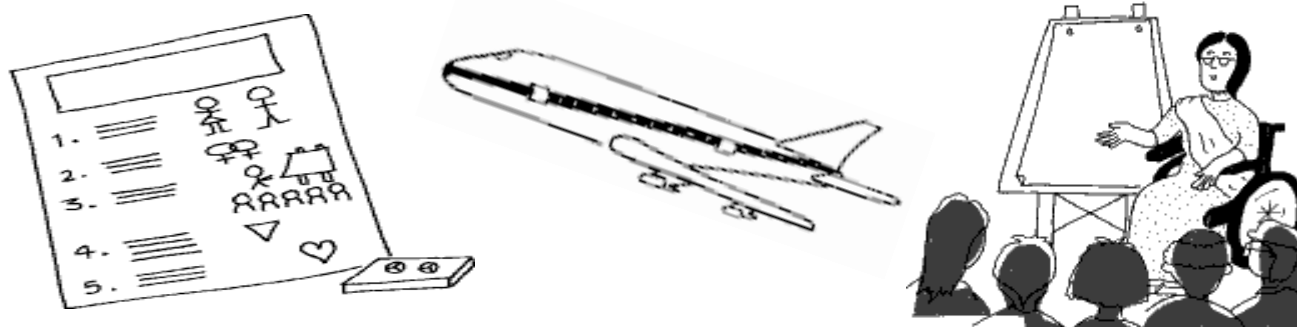
## Women banned from plane...

A woman who advises the Government on disability rights claims she was banned from a plane because she was in a wheelchair.

Furious Michelle Daley, 36, said the Air France pilot refused to let her on board because she was a "health and safety" risk. And last night she fumed: "It was humiliating and degrading and it was blatant discrimination."

"I'm advising the Government on disability equality and ironically I was prevented from doing my job properly. That type of discrimination is just not on."

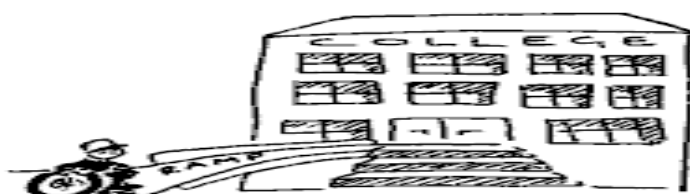
Michelle eventually made it to Belfast on a BMI flight after taking a taxi to Heathrow. Air France has pledged to investigate.



## Aimhigher targets recruitment of disabled learners

Aimhigher has produced a new guide as part of their 'Enabling disabled learners to successfully participate in summer school' project. The guide discusses the barriers that can inhibit the recruitment of disabled learners. It also includes information on strategies for creating accessible outreach activities.

For copies visit: [www.actiononaccess.org](http://www.actiononaccess.org)



## Disabled Persons Railcard

There have been some enquiries relating to the Disabled Persons Railcard. I have contacted the Disabled Persons Railcard office and have been given the following information.

The Disabled Persons Railcard gives a third off rail travel. It can be used in the morning peak. It cost £18 for a year or £48 for three years. If a Disabled Railcard Holder is travelling with a companion that person also gets the same discount.

### A person is eligible to buy a Disabled Persons Railcard if they are:

- registered as having a visual impairment
- registered as deaf or use a hearing aid
- receive Attendance Allowance
- receive Disability Living Allowance (at either the higher or lower rate for getting around or the higher or middle rate for personal care)
- have epilepsy and have repeated attacks or are currently prohibited from driving because of epilepsy
- receive severe disablement allowance
- receive War Pensioner's Mobility Supplement for 80% or more disability
- revive Long Term Incapacity Benefit
- are buying or leasing a vehicle through the Motability

### Concessionary fares for people who do not have a Railcard:

Ticket Type	Discount
First Class/Standard Open Singles or Returns	34% off
First Class/Standard Day Single	34% off
First Class/Standard Day Return	50% off



### Blind or visually-impaired customers Travelling with a

#### companion

If you are registered as blind or visually impaired and you are travelling with another person, the above concessionary fares apply for both you and your companion. You cannot get a discount if you are travelling on your own. You must show a document confirming your disability when you buy your ticket and when travelling. It must be from a recognised institution, for example, Social Services, your Local Authority, The Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) or St Dunstons'.



## People who stay in their own wheelchair for a rail journey

if you need to stay in your own wheelchair during a journey and you do not have a Railcard, you are eligible for the above concessionary fares.

The discounts apply if you are travelling alone. They are also available to one adult travelling with you.

## Season tickets

If you are blind or visually-impaired you can buy one adult season ticket that enables a companion to travel with you at no extra cost (so two people travel for the price of one). It doesn't have to be the same person travelling with you on every journey. Please take evidence of your visual impairment (as described in 'concessionary fares') with you to prove your eligibility. These tickets can be purchased from staffed stations.

## Eric Day Access Officer



## Adult Learning and Skills – Investing in the first steps

The Government is investing £1.5 billion per year in pre-level 2 learning, to ensure adults can become engaged in learning, improve their skills, progress in learning and, ultimately, gain sustainable employment. The question is how much of this funding will be geared at disabled people? Or will be continue ot be left out in the cold.

Government figures show that 64% of the public in deprived communitis which includes disabled people do not have access to computers within their homes and we still face barriers in getting into venues and getting appropraite support. LCIL will be seing if we can access this funding to provide additional free palces for disabled people and as out approach has always been people who face other barreirs which includes lone paretns people from BME communitis etc.



# **Westminster Abbey to launch unique Braille-guided Touch Tour for blind and partially sighted people**

Westminster Abbey is to launch a self-guided Braille Touch Tour - believed to be the first guide in the UK that allows blind and partially sighted visitors complete independence within such an historic monument.

Touch Tour participants will have the opportunity to touch and feel parts of the Abbey dating back nearly 1,000 years.

The tour - which has been endorsed by the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) - will go live today (April 21) and, for the first time, will allow blind and partially sighted people to use a Braille guide to guide themselves round one of the country's most famous and historic landmarks.

A copy of the tour is also available in large print. For blind and partially sighted people, this represents a major step towards independence, as it allows them to take the tour alone and unguided if they wish, without the need for pre-booking or special requests.

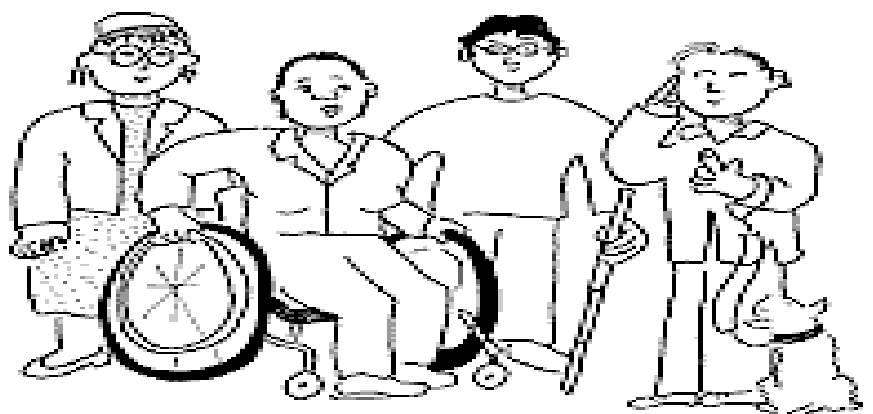
Alternatively, they can bring a friend or carer with them, or be guided by one of the Abbey's staff. Reverend Dr Jane Hedges, Canon of Westminster, hopes the project will take forward the Abbey's aims to provide better facilities and access for the disabled, while bringing the Abbey to life in a totally new way for blind and partially sighted visitors.

Canon Hedges said: "This tour allows our blind and partially sighted visitors to really experience the Abbey in a unique and fulfilling way, getting close to history in a way which other historic and famous landmarks can't always offer."

The Abbey already provides Braille literature, but is hoping this unique and pioneering Braille-guided touch tour will allow even greater access to the historic Abbey for blind and partially sighted people.

The Abbey, which welcomes many disabled visitors every year, is thought to be the first historic place of worship of its kind to offer this type of tour, and has worked closely with RNIB to ensure it offers an effective and useable service.

[www.westminster-abbey.org](http://www.westminster-abbey.org)



## **Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson has thrown her weight behind a petition to make the front door of 10 Downing Street accessible for wheelchair-users**

The petition to Gordon Brown's office, fronted by disability access consultant David Burdus, has called for the government to address the fact that wheelchair-users cannot enter through the front door of Number 10 because it has a step.

Andy Rickell, an executive director at Scope, said: "Wheelchair-users should be able to enter the front door of one of the most famous addresses in the world, which houses the centre of British political power, and not enabling them to do so sends out a very negative message to disabled people. It appears to suggest that their needs are not important and politically are a peripheral issue."

Disability campaigner Rachel Hurst said: "It's important for 10 Downing Street to be visibly accessible to disabled people. The fact that they're proposing to bring us in around the side reflects how they're dealing with us politically all the time, by sidelining our issues."

A spokesman for Number 10 said the petition would be answered "in the usual way" following the closing date for signatures in August.

To sign the petition, go to <http://petitions.pm.gov.uk/Access10/>

## **Radio Leicester interviews LCIL about the findings of a transport select committee report**

Can we get you to come into our offices to talk about an article in the Times? Was the question! Actually not the first paper I read in the morning but the issue of parking is and will always be a major area of concern for disabled people. As it turned out the Times had got an advance copy of the Transport Committee report but we were prepared. Through our contacts, we secured transcripts of the discussion and referred to the notes that had been submitted, so, armed with facts we agreed to take part.

The discussion was centred on one comment- "GP's were giving away too many blue badges" how do we feel about this. The reality is that, like many people we value the time that GP's spend on Health issues. Whilst they may know many of us, the move to larger and larger surgeries has taken away the "personal factor". The reality is that pilots in other areas of the country, has proven, by training a specialist team to understand the barriers, genuine disabled people feel blue badges are provided under the criteria as specified by the Department of Transport and not the many different interpretations that are applied by different local authorities. More importantly, GP's are available to provide the very services that they are best equipped to do namely health support.

To provide you with an overview of the actual report read on we have tried to summarise the key issues below.

### **Parking rights for disabled people are a postcode lottery, says Transport Committee**

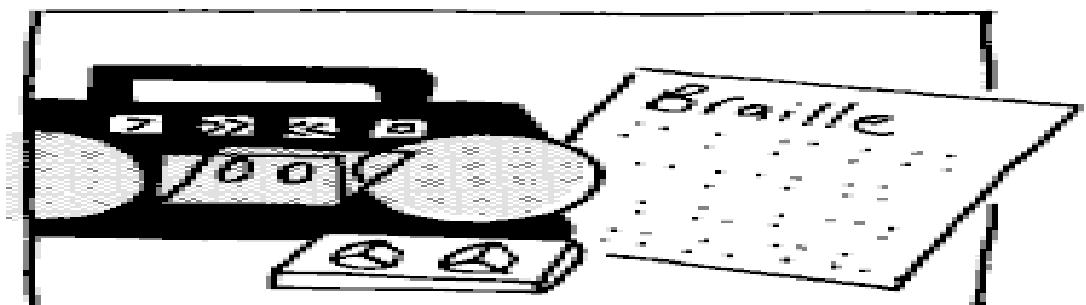
Disabled people may be missing out on special parking concessions because of where they live. This is the main finding of a Transport Select Committee report out today into the Blue Badge Scheme, which offers parking concessions for disabled people. It comes as the Government carries out a strategic review of the scheme.

The Committee found wide differences in the way the eligibility criteria are assessed by different local authorities. It wants to see more done to promote consistent good practice across the country.

Transport Committee Chair Louise Ellman said: "The parking needs of people with disabilities must not be decided by what is effectively a postcode lottery. There must be greater consistency in the way in which the eligibility criteria for blue badges are applied across the country, and those who use stolen badges must face the consequences. This is a fundamental matter of fairness."

#### **The Committee's conclusions include:**

- The Committee wants to see the minimum issue period for a badge reduced from three years to one, to include those with short-term or temporary disabilities. It would also like to see "smart card" technology developed so there could be even more flexibility over the issuing of badges.
- In cases where a blue badge holder's condition is unlikely to improve they should not usually have to undergo regular three-yearly assessments, but have their badge renewed automatically.
- The Government should consider including central London, which currently has its own regime, in the national system.
- Eligibility for a blue badge should be based on mobility in a wider sense than simply on an applicant's ability to walk. But the Government should also look to more appropriate ways of helping people with other disabilities, such as bowel disease.
- For those who knowingly abuse the scheme the Committee want to see tougher penalties. In particular, those who use stolen badges should have their vehicles impounded. A national database should also be established to help combat fraud.
- The Security Industry Authority should take steps to prevent vehicles displaying a valid badge from being clamped when they are parked on private land.
- The Committee also found that Asda was the only example given of a major national company which consistently fined people who abused its disabled bays.

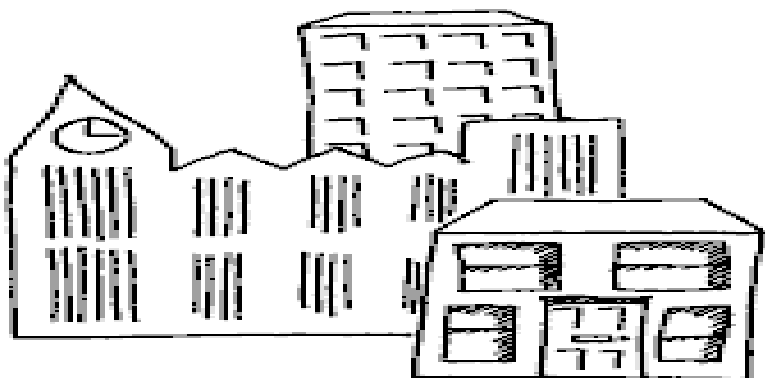


## Government pledges £900,000 towards independent living and launches support programme for councils

On 4 June, Minister for Care Services Ivan Lewis announced an extra £900,000 to help disabled people work towards having more independent lives.

Speaking at an Office for Disability Issues consultation event on delivery of the Independent Living Strategy, the Minister pledged new funding to help create up to 14 user-led organisations become new Action and Learning Sites. These organisations are led and controlled by disabled people and aim to help disabled people lead more independent lives.

The event also saw the launch of the Personalisation Resource Toolkit, part of the early work on the Personalisation Programme. This programme will work with leaders in the adult social care field to help councils transform their systems so social care service users have more control over the care they receive. The toolkit is the first product of the programme and will provide advice and examples of good practice to local authorities as they move to implementing a personalised system.



### Sir Bert Massie and his new role...

**Sir Bert Massie** was appointed as the government's new "Commissioner for the Compact" at the beginning of April, has wasted no time in galvanising the disability rights movement. In one of his first interviews since his appointment, he wants user-led groups to be far more bold about seizing the campaigning initiative and contributing to the goal of independent living.

"You need to prove your case on your own grounds," he says. "It is no good saying, 'we empower disabled people,' and local authorities saying, 'we want to put them in a day centre.' We need to sell the fact that the issue is led by disabled people."

Sir Bert is clearly pleased with his new appointment, in which he will take responsibility for overseeing the government's relationship with voluntary and

community organisations in the area of service provision. Phil Hope, the third sector minister, welcomed his appointment and said: “Sir Bert Massie has the passion, knowledge and experience to get the job done.”

Sir Bert, for his part, says that he has a big task on his hands in terms of educating government about the ways that third sector organisations function. It is unlikely that he will spare the government his trenchant views. Despite the fact that he says that he is still “getting his feet under the table”, he says: “I know from my days as chief executive of Radar that the way in which government responds to funding needs is extremely frustrating because of a lack of appreciation of how the third sector operates. At the moment, the relationship is not right and the Compact is not operating as effectively as it might do.”

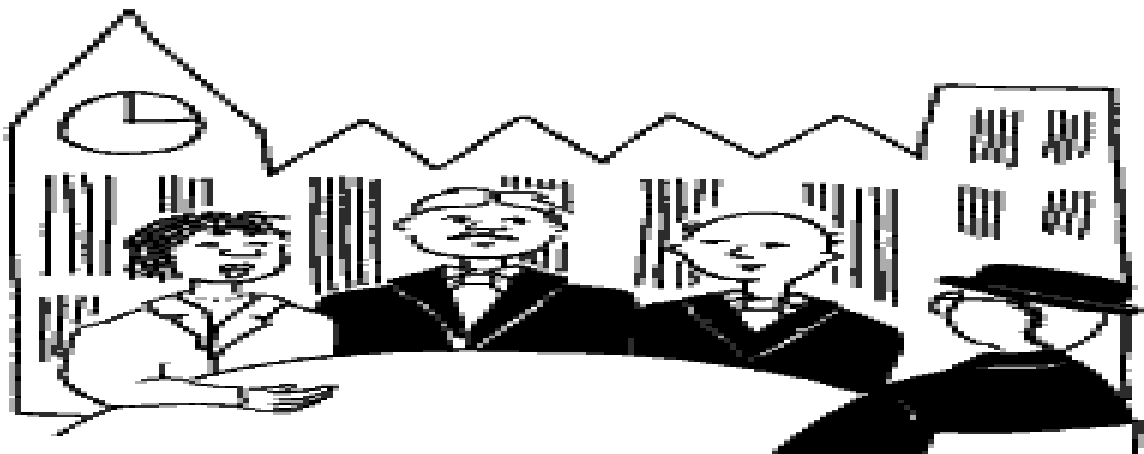
Sir Bert has worked in the voluntary sector for 40 years – most notably as the high-profile head of the Disability Rights Commission. He is also a commissioner at the DRC’s successor, the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which he has criticised for its lack of attention to disability issues.

He expects to outline his plans for improving the relationship between the statutory and third sectors later this summer. But some of the issues he will be addressing include how third sector organisations are run and funded and the resources they have at their disposal. He will look at the difficulties that charities have in competing for contracts against businesses – and at government consultation periods. Many disability organisations criticised the government for sneaking out its plans for the EHRC over last summer, for example.

Sir Bert says that the government must realise that smaller third sector organisations often struggle to comment on government papers and documents.

“There needs to be a recognition that voluntary organisations do not have vast armies of people. It is not helpful for government to publish a document in July and say you have to have the answer in September when most people are off in August.”

Sir Bert concludes by saying that he wants the Compact to be “a living document that influences action”.



## **Motability, the leading car scheme for disabled people, has launched a new free guide to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles**

The guide has been produced in association with Ricability, an independent consumer research charity who specialise in practical and unbiased reports for older and disabled people.

Recent developments to the Motability Car Scheme, which offers a choice of over 3,000 new cars to people who receive mobility benefits, has seen the affordability of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles improve considerably.

Around 15 per cent of the makes and models available on the Motability Car Scheme are now Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles.

The new publication is designed to make it simple to choose a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle and offer step by step assistance throughout the planning and ordering process. From the extensive range of affordable Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles - over 500 makes and models - there are currently over 50 options for less than £500 advance payment, and 20 of these are available for no advance payment.

This means that anyone who receives the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or the War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement can transfer their monthly payment to fund the cost of their new car or Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle with no further charges, excluding petrol.

Highlights of the new 'Your Guide to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)' include:

- Simple explanations of common features that allow wheelchair accessibility, such as folding ramps, raised roofs, winch and lift systems
- A series of important considerations to help customers choose a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle that best matches mobility needs, such as space for additional luggage, the number of passengers that will be travelling in the car, visibility for the wheelchair user and much more
- An introduction to models that allow wheelchair users to drive from their wheelchair and the process of getting one of these specialist conversions
- How to arrange test drives and a check list to assist with key points when choosing a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle
- Frequently asked questions such as how to get help towards costs and how to choose a conversion company
- Further sources of independent advice and information, including driving assessment centres, membership organisations and research providers

Mike Betts, chief executive of Motability Operations explains: "This new guide to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles is the first of its kind, bringing advice and information to those who want to remain in their wheelchair either as a driver or

passenger. Motability is very proud of the major enhancements that have been made to the Car Scheme over the past few years, in particular with the improvements made to allow those with the most complex requirements to get mobile. The huge increase in the number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles has allowed access to a wide selection of highly affordable choices. This new guide provides practical guidance on a range of features and options available for anyone considering a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle as their next car."

To support the publication of the new free guide, Motability has also added factsheets for the most popular Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle models online at [www.motability.co.uk](http://www.motability.co.uk).



## Office for Disability Issues improves Blue Badge Map

The online **Blue Badge map service**, which makes it much easier for disabled people to find places to park, has now been significantly improved. The map on the **Directgov** website, was first launched in July 2006

The map, produced by the **Office for Disability Issues**, allows users to search by postcode or town name for designated Blue Badge parking bays, parking bays that fall on red routes in London as well as accessible stations, toilets and petrol stations. Find the blue badge map on the [Directgov website](#).



## **Three-quarters of people in the UK want to see prescription charges scrapped in England, a BBC poll suggests**

The survey of 1,000 adults, to mark the 60th anniversary of the NHS, reveals discomfort with different health policies across the devolved nations. Seven out of 10 said the differences mattered, although the government ruled out any change to English charges. Charging has been removed in Wales, is set to disappear in Scotland and is under review in Northern Ireland.

Prescription charging is the most obvious divergence of NHS policy since responsibility for healthcare was given to the Welsh and Northern Ireland assemblies, and the Scottish Parliament. In England, each item costs £7.10, raising approximately £430m for health service funds. Only 12% of prescriptions are actually paid for - the vast majority are covered by exemptions for children, pensioners and those with long-lasting medical conditions such as epilepsy.

Prescriptions have been free since 2007 in Wales, and will be free from 2011 onwards in Scotland. In Northern Ireland, the issue is 'under review'.

People who answered the BBC poll of more than 1,000 adults were more likely to call for the abolition of charging if they lived outside England - 84% from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, compared with 73% in England itself.

This is by no means the only way in which the NHS has become different depending in which part of the UK you live. Waiting times have fallen faster and further in England compared with Scotland and Wales, while Scotland is the only place to provide free personal care to the elderly. In total, 71% of those questioned felt that these differences 'mattered', and this was a view found most often in older people and women.

A spokesman for the Department of Health said that no changes to English prescription charges were on the way. "Prescription charges provide a valuable contribution to the NHS in England, they raised £430m in 2007-08. Abolishing them would significantly reduce the money available to deliver other health priorities."

But Beth Taylor, of the Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain, said the current situation needed to be reviewed urgently. "There are clear disadvantages under existing arrangements, particularly for non-exempt patients, such as asthma and arthritis sufferers, who require long-term medication for multiple chronic conditions. "There is a case for abolition of prescription charges in England."

# Battling Chronic Illness

## How Desire And Motivation Lead From Benefits To The Boardroom.

A PA was Forced to abandon her full time job after being diagnosed with a rare and debilitating illness. Julie Woods became dependant on the state with limited income, unable to work and battling depression brought on by her disability, she faced crisis point.

Diagnosed with Arnold Chiari Malformation (ACM), a condition involving malformations of the brainstem, cerebellum and upper spinal chord, where the flow of crucial fluids into the brain is blocked.

Julie faced complex brain surgery, leaving her in the position of having to relearn all of her basic motor functions in order to live a 'normal' life. Unable to return to the workplace due to the effects of the illness, yet desperate to regain financial independence she turned to the World Wide Web and started up her own business helping disabled people gain the opportunity to purchase an affiliate/franchise website, fully stocked with products ready for an ever growing niche market. Support is offered via a technical help desk, as well as via the Mystic Charms Community Forum.

Today that business has won awards celebrating its growth and its commitment to enabling others in her position to work for themselves. Julie is eager to help people on disability or sickness benefit return to work.



## Room Hire at LCIL

**We now have an extra room available for hire.**

We have extremely competitive prices for organisations of disabled people, as well refreshments and catering available to suit all needs.

So, if you need to book a meeting, please consider our fully accessible rooms and contact us on the number below.



### Contact:


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**Disclaimer:** Opinions expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of LCIL or the editor. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure that the facts are correct, we do not accept any liability for errors.

Produced by Mina Mistry