

THE BULLETIN



Summer Issue 2008

disABILITY
is our business



working together,
working with others

“Times they are A Changing”

In this edition we are reporting on some issues which potentially will have a substantial impact on Worcestershire people with any kind of disability, their carers and the professionals who support them.

- **Personalisation Agenda**
- **New scrutiny arrangements covering social care as well as health care**

In the autumn we will give an update on these and also on the implementation of the changing benefits system reported in the last edition of the Bulletin (**see website for back copies**).

Dial In Worcestershire

There are currently two Disability Information & Advice Lines (**DIAL**) in the county. We cover the three districts in the north and a sister organisation covers the southern three districts. The Trustees and Management of both organisations are having ongoing discussions about how to best provide together a quality service to all of the clients we work with and could potentially work with. Volunteers are central to our operation and internal discussions are planned so as to fully involve them in any developments. Watch this space for further information. **Additional volunteers always needed across the county.**

Dial UK

Following consultation with member organisations (we are one) and a ballot at a special meeting, Dial UK, our network organisation, has merged with Scope, one of the largest disability bodies in the UK. Detailed work is being done to make the Dial services even better than previously - bringing together strong local organisations and a robust national partner.

(Stop press, our Bulletin funding has been agreed up to March 2009)

Alternative Transport Week

Wyre Forest District Council is running an event promoting **European Mobility Week**, with a focus on alternative transport. The event will be held over two days - **Friday 19th of September** in and around Kidderminster Town Centre, and on **Saturday 20th September** at the Glades Leisure Centre in Kidderminster.

Various organisations, including DIAL and Disability Action Wyre Forest, will be present. DIAL will be offering advice about accessing transport for disabled people, blue badges and mobility. There will be plenty to see, including family activities and a wide range of transport advice.



There will be electric vehicle demonstrations and train companies Chiltern and London Midland will have information about their offers.

There will be promotional offers, prize draws and giveaways. The Glades Leisure Centre are going to be offering free membership passes also Health Trainers will be there offering advice on health and improved lifestyles.



Local bus companies will be offering timetables, promotional discounts and advice about routes and accessing their services. **This may be of interest to our readers, especially after the last issues article about bus passes.** There will also be advice available on cycle and walking routes in the Wyre Forest.

The event will run between 10am and 4pm on both days (19th and 20th September).

Walking the Way to Health

Alison Williams, is Health Walks and Green Exercise Officer, Worcestershire County Council Countryside Service working in partnership with Worcestershire Primary Care Trust.

For most people walking is the simplest and most natural form of regular exercise. As long as you can put one foot in front of the other you can always walk more and soon begin to feel the difference regarding your health and wellbeing.

The Government's Chief Medical Officer recommends that for a healthy lifestyle adults should undertake at least 30 minutes a day of moderate intensity physical activity (**such as brisk walking**) on 5 or more days of the week. The 30 minutes don't have to be done all in one go, 3 ten minute walks a day can be just as beneficial to good health.

Walking at a pace brisk enough to make you feel warmer, breathe a little deeper and perhaps raise your pulse a little is best for good heart health. If you're walking with a friend and can't continue a conversation with them then you're walking too fast. Slow down a bit and continue building up your fitness.

Taking a walk in a green environment, such as your local town or country park, enhances your mood. Nature has a positive effect on your mental wellbeing and taking time to be a part of it can help to relieve stress.

If you don't know where to go, or would prefer to walk with someone else, why not consider joining a health walk group?

Health walks are free, short walks led by trained volunteers. They go over easy terrain and walks can take up to about an hour. Most walks end with a social 'cuppa and a chat' so you can make new friends at the same time as improving your health.

For details of your local health walks group use the **WHI Walk Finder** at **www.whi.org.uk** or contact **Alison Williams** on **01905 768289**

Changes in Adult Social Care

Nationally and locally Adult Social Care is set to change with the advent of the '**Personalisation Agenda**', a Government – led scheme that will increase the amount of control people have over their care.

Choice and Control

"Service users' needs are currently met via a '**one fits all**' approach. In the future, the implementation of the Personalisation Agenda for Adult Social Care - which we've named '**Choice and Control**' – will enable service users to make decisions about their care, and choose support that most appropriately meets their individual needs".

What will the main changes be?

"People eligible for, or already receiving support, will be allocated a '**Personnel Budget**' based on their needs. They can then choose to spend the money themselves on support services or ask the County Council to spend their budget on their behalf. Importantly it is the Individual who makes the decision."

When will we see this in Worcestershire?

"This programme will make major changes to Adult Social Care service delivery, and will need to take place gradually and over a period of time. The Government wants all councils to have made progress by 2011. We have already run a small pilot around personalised support planning and personal budgets for people with learning disabilities and hope to extend the new type of service delivery to other groups of people in 2009".

Can you give us an example of how this could work?

"Under the current system, following a stroke, a service user '**Mrs Jones**' could be assessed for a need such as '**getting up and going to bed**', and, on qualifying for support, be assigned a home carer. Under this system Mrs Jones' needs are met, but due to the demand for the service, her care will be scheduled for a set time on a home carer's schedule. In other words, Mrs Jones has little choice or control over the times that the home carer comes to her.

“Under the new system, Mrs Jones herself, or someone on her behalf (family, friends or a social worker) will be able to complete an assessment that asks her about the support she wants. For instance she may wish to get up at different times on different days, and have more choice about what time she goes to bed. Mrs Jones may also want to have some control over who comes into her home to help her. For example, she may wish to pay her neighbour to help her get up during the week and use an independent Home Care service on the days her neighbour cannot help.

“Once Mrs Jones or her representative has completed her assessment, her choices will be considered in relation to her needs, and the appropriate support will be given a financial value. This value will equate to her ‘Personnel Budget’. Which Mrs Jones can spend, or nominate the council to spend on care services to serve her needs. The joint Benefits Team will also ensure that Mrs Jones is getting all the benefits and pension credit she is entitled to, and assess any contributions to her care she may need to make depending on her circumstances (she would be told about this before her support is put in place).

There will then be various support arrangements to consider, and a support plan will be developed alongside her **‘Personal Budget’**. The **‘Personal Budget’**, along with benefits such as attendance allowance will pay for the support for Mrs Jones to get up and go to bed everyday.”

Does this mean the County Council is taking a step away from responsibility for service users?

“No not at all-the council wants to make sure that people have the choice and opportunity to be as independent as possible. There will still be an assessment process to make sure that people are eligible to have support and that the right level of support is provided. This new style of working enables people to make decisions about their lives but they will certainly not be alone in the process.

Changes in Adult Social Care (continue)

“We will still have the responsibility to ensure that vulnerable people are safe and we will need to make sure that informal carers such as family, friends and neighbours are appropriately trained and properly checked where needed. We will also still need to make sure that the services people use are giving high quality care. We will check on how people are spending their money to make sure that the council’s money is spent fairly, appropriately and on good value support and services.”

And finally....

“This change in services is a really exciting and immensely challenging programme for the council, but the potential gains for service users and carers are great. Crucially we need the help and involvement of service users, carers, staff, providers of services and the other agencies that we work with, to help us get it right. We are working hard to ensure this can be the truly positive opportunity that allows people who need support to really have the choice and control they deserve, over their lives.”

For more information, contact Programme Manager,
Charles Huntington on **01905 728674** or
email chuntington@worcestershire.gov.uk

Volunteering with Dial:

Dial’s essential operational work is mainly undertaken by volunteers. If you can offer some time to support our work in Bromsgrove, Redditch and Wyre Forest please get in touch. Team members get; training, expenses and perhaps most importantly, the satisfaction of a job well done. Some volunteers use prior skills and experiences, others are able to develop and practice new skills and knowledge. Roles include; advisory work - face to face and by telephone, PR and marketing support, fund raising and representational tasks. Times and locations are flexible. A new opportunity is to help with the free-phone helpline from your home, on our phone, maintaining your anonymity and privacy even if you cannot leave the house.

For more information contact the office for a chat.

Vital LINK to better care

We know it's not very interesting to explain how the County Council was given responsibility to appoint a host organisation to establish a Local Involvement Network to examine health and social care issues in the country. Much more interestingly, however, the Local Involvement Network - or **LINK** - will involve members of the public who have the power to enter and view hospitals, care homes and other health care settings. The LINK can demand information, canvas a range of views and then report their findings to health care commissioners and providers to seek improvements.

The LINK will be Worcestershire's advisory group for health and social care, improving services for all of us. This work behind the scenes may seem quite boring, but the results are vitally important.

In April the national charity Shaw Trust was appointed as the host organisation to support the LINK. The County couldn't do it themselves because it runs the Health Scrutiny Committee that the LINK will report to, so it has to avoid conflict of interest. The LINK will be completely independent of council and health services, so it can examine, compliment or criticise county council services and others providing health and social care.

County Head of Community Leadership, Simon Adams, said Shaw Trust "has a wealth of experience for carrying out this role," while Paul Bates, Chief Executive of Worcestershire Primary care Trust said the LINK "will be able to provide us with effective information about what communities want from their health service".

Patients, carers and anyone interested in getting involved can visit www.communityvoiceonline.org

for information about LINKs, and sign up to the Worcestershire LINK. Residents can also call Carrie Chappell at the Shaw Trust on **0779 030554** or email carrie.chappell@shaw-trust-org.uk

**Covering Health + Social Care Provision in
Worcestershire**

Useful Contacts

Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance Helpline:	08457 123456
Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL):	0800 88 22 00
Pension Credit:	0800 99 1234
Social Services:	0845 6072000
Out of hours Emergency Number:	01905 768020
Worcestershire Carer's Unit:	0800 3892896
Worcestershire Association of Carers:	01905 26500
Blue Badge Offices:	
Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre:	01527 881288
Redditch One Stop Shop:	01527 534123
Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre:	01562 732928
Community Legal Advice (CLA):	0845 3454345
Age Concern Bromsgrove & District:	01527 871840
Age Concern Redditch & District:	01527 584653
Age Concern Kidderminster & Wyre Forest:	01562 827788

NW DIAL can help with your queries about all manner of issues related to impairment / disability, access, holidays, discrimination, support organisations both local and national, transport etc. We can also help with form filling.

Helpline: 0800 970 7202
Office: 01562 60241
Fax & Minicom : 01562 68248
Text Line: 075 000 27 030
Email: info@nwdial.org.uk
Website: www.nwdial.org.uk

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North Worcestershire D.I.A.L.
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in Connect (Wyre Forest)
10-12 Blackwell Street
Kidderminster, DY10 2DP

