



FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED

News from Scottish Disability Equality Forum Incapacity benefit change

While SDEF welcomes enhanced prospects for social inclusion and equality, we are clear that changes must be introduced with the support of those affected. Naturally, there will be concern amongst people receiving Incapacity Benefit if they believe that reform is being introduced for reasons other than improving their life opportunities. The publication of the Green Paper on Welfare Reform marks the start of a 12 week consultation period up to Friday 21 April 2006.

Changes proposed to the present system involve the creation of a new benefit entitled "Employment and Support Allowance". Claimants will be split into two groups, those judged to be permanently incapable of work and those capable of work with support.

They will be encouraged to undertake work-focused interviews, or face benefit cuts. Central monitoring of sick notes by GPs is a feature of the new reforms, with incentives being offered to local authorities and other organisations to lift people off this benefit. SDEF welcomes initiatives that provide help and support for people with disabilities to take up and maintain employment. However, SDEF has a number of concerns regarding the implementation of the proposed changes. Care will have to be taken to ensure that:

- People with disabilities are not persuaded into inappropriate employment.
- Job interviews are conducted by personnel with an understanding of disability issues, including mental health issues, to avoid stress and hardship. The early signs are not encouraging that this will be the case.
- There is not a perverse incentive for local authorities or employment services to push

people into work. Any attempt to

- Adequate support is provided to disabled employees to continue in employment.
- There is clarity on the circumstances of people with disabilities who leave employment as a result of poor health or a worsening medical condition. There must be transparency on: the ease with which benefits can be resumed; the potential loss of certain benefits in the interim period; and any additional procedures required of people with failing health to maintain entitlement.
- Job interviews are conducted by personnel with an understanding of disability issues, including mental health issues, to avoid stress and hardship. The early signs are not encouraging that this will be the case.
- There is not a perverse incentive for local authorities or employment services to push people into work. Any attempt to persuade people with disabilities into unsuitable employment may create churning, with people forced into a never ending cycle of training schemes and low paid and work experience.
- The doctor-patient relationship is not compromised by incentives to GPs to remove people from benefit entitlement. Particular care should be taken not to deter people from seeking help for health problems.

Readers with access to our website can also read an SDEF Report on the London Conference on Reforming Incapacity Benefit, posted on 7th February 2006. The web site address for SDEF www.sdef.org.uk and you can contact them info@sdef.org.uk

NEWS From the D.R.C

The Disability rights commission have changed the layout and Scotland now have there own section on the D.R.C. web site it's URL is www.drc-gb/scotland

The Disability Rights Commission launched the Disability Equality Duty Statutory Code of Practice for Scotland on Thursday 9 March at the Scottish Parliament.

The new responsibilities – called the Disability Equality Duty (DED) - affect all public bodies including local councils, government departments and agencies, NHS Scotland and universities, colleges and education in schools. The statutory Code of Practice has been produced by the D.R.C to give practical guidance to public authorities on the new duty.

Lynn Welsh, the DRC's Head of Scottish Legal Affairs, said: "The DED will help public bodies to be more efficient in targeting services, ultimately helping to save resources; deliver better information and therefore better services which help meet the needs of disabled people and provide an 'early alert' system to potential patterns of discrimination.

The duty will also shift the emphasis away from the need for a disabled individual to complain about discrimination after the event. Instead, good practice and proactive planning should be in place so discrimination doesn't happen, which means the public sector as a whole will be less at risk from legal proceedings, and more likely to hit targets around the inclusion of disabled people in service provision and delivery."

The Disability Rights Commission (D.R.C) can provide support and information about what Disability Equality Duty means, including a code of practice. More information is available at www.dotheduty.org Please take some time to go and read this as it is important news .

Profile On A Member



Name: Jeff Adamson

Age: I am the same age as Blue Peter, Donny Osmond and Osama Bin Ladin answers on a postcard please.

I have lived most of my life in Danderhall, Midlothian.. Educated at Dalkeith High School I left to study at Edinburgh College of Art graduating in 1980. After a variety of jobs I began a career with Royal Mail spending most of my time working in Training & Development.


I have been happily married to my wife Elizabeth for 6 years and will be celebrating our 17th wedding anniversary this year (an old one I know but I couldn't resist).

In 1999 a sudden illness resulted in my paralysis. When I heard of a meeting to discuss the idea of an organisation based in Midlothian which would "promote the voice of disabled people" I was intrigued enough to attend. This meeting, which was to lead to the formation of Forward Mid. For my sins I have been chairperson for most of the organisation's life. Thankfully this as an easy job as those that attend our meetings are fairly civilised. The only raised voices being over who gets what piece of cake? I have received a lot of personal satisfaction as a member of Forward Mid and plan to continue to contribute to the organisation's growth and success.

I would urge anyone who wants to help resolve the issues faced by disabled people in Midlothian to join us at future meetings.

Computing Made Easy

Computers are a mystery to some people so this section will help people who know nothing and might also help those who are more developed in using a computer. Lets start with E-mail.

 It does not matter what system you use whether outlook express or microsoft outlook or another, if you are sending E-mails then you must set up your contacts in the address book to make it easier on you the address book can be found on your E-mail page by going to **tools > address book > new contact** and then enter the details. It can also be found in **start > programs > Accessories > address book**

Once you have the required names in the address book you can then start a new E-mail by clicking new in the top left hand corner then click on **> tools > Address book > double click** on the person to get the E-mail and it now has the address to send it to on the screen. You can also get to this position by pressing the **ctrl button and the shift button and B** all at the same time. The Shift Button looks like this ↑ on the key board and double click the name required and then click OK.

If you are sending the same E-mail to more than one person then keep on double clicking on the people you wish to send it to and then click OK, if you wish to send and E-mail to more than one person and do not wish them to see all the other people you are sending it to , you will see in the open address box three box's you can enter names in the first says **To** the second says **CC** and the third says **BCC**, they stand for **Carbon Copy** and **Blank Carbon Copy** if you send one name to the **TO box** and then other names to the **BCC box** then the names you have sent your E-mail to are withheld from the document. By doing this you only pay for one letter and the Internet service provider separates them and forwards them accordingly. The **CC box** will still add the names to all it is sent to.

Warning !!!

Please be careful of the content of your E-mail as all E-mails are scanned automatically for content and if you use words in certain context then the E-mail will be intercepted and forwarded to the computer police in this country.

Etiquette

Physically disabled person and not a Cripple

ECAS

Equality Choice Action Support is running classes for disabled people, their definition of disabled is "By physically disabled we mean any person who is long-term and significantly disabled through a physical impairment of the musculo-skeletal, neurological or cardio-respiratory system of the body."

All the classes are led by skilled group leaders and tailored specifically for physically disabled adults. Classes are held in various venues throughout the city, and are open to people living in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Ecas provides transport from classes to home for those Edinburgh residents who require it. Class fees are not charged for clients who meet certain criteria. The class that is running at the moment are Art, Calligraphy ,Craft, IT classes (beginners - experienced), Swimming and Yoga

Anybody wanting to find out more should contact E.C.A.S at 57 Albion road, Edinburgh EH7 5QY phone number 0131-475-2344 and ask for Janice or Wendy, there is also, a web site at www.ecas-edinburgh.org and you can also contact them via E-mail address info@ecas-edinburgh.org

Extract From Disability Equality Duty

Whilst many people have positive attitudes towards disabled people, some express pity, fear, lack of respect and sometimes even contempt. These attitudes are hurtful, can lead to discrimination and can also place unnecessary restrictions on disabled people.

Holidaying in the United Kingdom

All countries within the United Kingdom have their own web sites and most islands have their own sites as well please find listed below a selection of web sites for the respective areas.

England, www.visitengland.com

Scotland, www.visitscotland.com

Wales, www.visitwales.com

Northern Ireland, www.discovernorthernireland.com

Jersey, www.jersey.com

Isle of man, www.isleofman.com

Isle of wight, www.iwight.com

It is alright having all these places to visit but being disabled even if it is just a minor disability still requires a lot of planing so please find listed below a list of web pages that say that they can accommodate disabled travellers.

National rail travel, www.nationalrail.co.uk

Coach travel,

National express, www.nationalexpress.co.uk

Scottish Citylink, www.citylink.co.uk

Car hire is not straight forward they all wish to check your medical conditions before hiring you a car and there is usually a premium to pay above the rental charge and automatic cars need to be booked well in advance.

Bay watching

Connie syne from the Scottish disability equality forum is reporting that the Scottish Executive is gathering information on how wide spread the abuse of Disabled parking bay's is, The committee looking into this abuse has recommended that traffic wardens need disability awareness training but have also commented that traffic wardens might not have any powers to deal the abuse of disabled parking bays if no traffic regulation order is in place. They are suggesting a possible solution might be to use yellow lines to control disabled parking instead of white line marking

More travel information

There is a web site called www.thedisabledtraveller.com that has reports from disabled holiday makers from sites all around the world if you still haven't decided where to go on holiday then this site is well worth a look, not only does it give you information on sites it also allows you to write your own story and pin them on this site for others to see and maybe follow in your footsteps. If you don't see anything that takes your fancy they also have a forum page where you can request information about the country you have decided to visit. As this is a new web site they are looking for any information that you can send to them. Anything that makes travelling for disabled people easier must be shared for all to use.

The Mobility Roadshow

I attended the roadshow on Thursdays the 6th of April and was amazed by the amount of side show information available on all the different stands for differing ailments. All the stands with wheelchairs for sale where very helpful and allowed me to test drive a wide range of wheelchairs with some even offering to come and show their merchandise and a meeting of **FORWARD MID**. This show had something for everyone that was disabled and not just for someone in a wheelchair, If and when this roadshow comes back to Edinburgh maybe **FORWARD MID** should see if enough people are interested and run a group trip as I only managed to go for two and didn't have enough time to see it all. Supplied by Iain tait