

Newsletter issue 10 May 2007

www.forwardmid.org.uk

FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED



Citizenship Academy

On the 21st of March 2007 Leonard Cheshire Foundation launched the citizenship Academy at the Scottish Parliament. Start Date 22nd May 2007

What is it?

The Citizenship Academy will run a course designed for disabled people throughout Scotland to empower participants to be actively involved in their local community, with an emphasis on learning about the Scottish democratic processes. The Academy aims to give participants the confidence and skills needed to voice their opinions, reinforce their rights and influence decision-making processes in society. Once participants have completed the course, they will go on to provide peer support for new participants and use their skills to develop active citizenship groups in their local area. The course is free to attend and all travel cost will be covered.

What will you learn?

How Scotland is run. Who makes the decisions that affect our lives and how they are made. How you can be involved in the decision making process. The voting process and what it means. Your rights as a citizen. How to contact decision makers. Campaigning skills.

How the Academy will be run

The course is split into six modules, each delivered as a one-day session spread over a . Nine-month period with self-study activities Carried out in between modules



What is in it for you?

The opportunity to learn new skills and use these to encourage other disabled people to be involved. Learn how to make your voice heard in society. Develop your knowledge of the Scottish Democratic process. Meet others campaigning for disabled people's rights and find out how they are achieving this support through the Academy's interactive website. To play a key role in an exciting new opportunity promoting disabled people's rights and involvement in society.

Who should apply?

Be over 18 years of age. Have a genuine interest in becoming active in their community and to work with other disabled people to share their knowledge and skills. Have or take part in training to develop IT skills in relation to the course. Be willing to study at home.

For an Application Pack contact Amy Parker on 0131-346-9056 or e-mail amy.parker@lc-uk.org

Eleni Strati, Independent Living Officer
Midlothian, L.C.I.L

I have been working at the Lothian Centre for Integrated Living for the last five months now. I am honoured to be part of a support organisation rooted in the disability movement in Britain with continuing impact locally and more widely in promoting the principles and practice of independent living.



In Britain, the Independent Living movement was active as early as 1980s with self-organised groups of disabled people operating and providing peer support in the community. It marked the movement from segregated care to social inclusion and the first traces of campaigning for Direct Payments as means to independence. “Seven Needs” were collectively identified to this end: accessible housing, personal assistance, accessible transport, accessible environment, peer support/counselling, information, and technical equipment

Independent Living formed a philosophy emphasising disabled people’s rights as citizens rather than recipients of care. Independence was seen in terms of being able to achieve personal goals, by exerting “choice- over where to live, how to live, who provides assistance” and “control- over who assists, how, when and what they do”. The term of “personal assistance” reflected these aspirations and challenged passive understandings of “care”. In so far as Direct Payments allow for self-directed care, they have become crucial means for Independent Living.

Organisations managed by and for disabled people have increasingly developed since on international, national and local levels. Crucially, their values remain based on a shared experience of a social rather than individual disability. Disabled people have defined “disability” as the physical and ideological

barriers to their equal participation in society, rather than a personal attribute¹. This became known as the social model of disability, which in contrast with medical understandings pointed to the need for social change and gave voice to disabled people as experts on the matters that concern them.

The disabled people’s movement has come a long way in shifting rhetoric and meanings of disability in wider public as well as influencing policy in this way. Government initiatives acknowledge now disabling barriers existing in further and higher education, employment and leisure,² housing and transport, and health and social care services for people with physical or learning difficulties³. Alternatively the removal of barriers to social inclusion, provision of support and empowerment of people to exert choice and control over how their needs are met, are seen as central for full equality and improved quality of life.

The movement was largely conducive to creating legal and political duties in UK government with regards to disability equality (Disability Discrimination Act 1995; 2005) and independent living (Community Care (Direct Payments) Act (1996; 2002; 2006) The Disability Equality Duty (2005) is the first piece of pro-active legislation against discrimination, which also enforces consultation of disabled people at first instance in producing such schemes. Social work practice is now increasingly geared towards more personalised services and self-directed care. User led organisations remain crucial in making rhetoric a reality. The Scottish Parliament Health Committee’s most recent Care Inquiry in the implementation of the Community Care and Health (Scotland) Act 2002 found that increased up take of Direct Payments is determined by presence of user-led support organisations and user involvement in planning in local authorities.

The Lothian Centre for Integrated Living was the first organisation led by disabled people in Scotland to provide services in the community and support the right for individual choice and control. Working “at arm’s length” with local authorities (SE 2006), L.C.I.L continues to promote social inclusion and provide information, advice and practical support with independent living.

1. Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) 1975
2. Scottish Parliament Equal Opportunities Committee Disability Inquiry 2004 Removing Barriers and Creating Opportunities
3. The Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit “Improving the life chances of Disabled people” (2005)

Grapevine provides a whole range of information on disability (0131 475 2370). The **Independent Living Team** assists with self- assessment and identifying funding, and organising one’s care with Direct Payments. This includes in particular support with recruiting Personal Assistants, legal responsibilities and good employment practice **payroll** supports with financial responsibilities of employers. Training provided by disabled people aims to build on skills knowledge and experience of independent living. **Training** courses are also available for Personal Assistants on the philosophy of independent living and disability equality. **Peer Counselling** provides one-to- one emotional support.

Forward MID meetings

Please put the following dates for Forward MID meetings, meeting are between 2 pm until 4pm at the open door, Penicuik North Kirk 95 John Street Penicuik. EH26 8AG.

July No Meeting (Holiday)

Thursday, August 9th 2007

Thursday, September 13th 2007

Thursday, October 11th 2007

Thursday, November 8th 2007

We look forward to see you there, anyone needing transport please phone Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471, All are is welcome

The Train Journey By Lawrence Clark

I checked my wallet, for the second time as I purchased my ticket for the train to London. First class, no that was outside my price range, so I agreed for a second class saver ticket to London.

I arrived at the platform and the porter brought the ramp to get me and my wheelchair aboard the train, I was placed in the wheelchair recess and looked around, it was very small. The train left on time and I thought this



was a good sign then the train conductor came round to check my ticket, I asked “where are the toilets for disabled please”, “Just past the food and beverage canteen”, I looked and said “it is not wide enough”, he also looked and said “sorry but that’s where it is”.

I then looked around and thought this is not second class it is more like third class. Then just as the train left York, the food trolley set off and I glared at it, thinking I can’t move from this area can’t get to the toilet like the rest of second class and now the food trolley sets off down the train, that is when I realize I am a fourth class traveller I can’t afford first class on my benefits, I am not second class for I can’t go to the toilet on the train, I am not third class for the food trolley can get up and down the train. So I am a fourth class traveller.

The train arrived in London three minutes early and I sit waiting for the porter to bring the wheelchair conveyer, I sit and watch it come to the train door and then they push the food trolley onto it and drive off, I looked on in amazement then a guard came past and asked if I was going to Edinburgh, I said “no I am still waiting for help to get off the train”. If only all things were equal but then I would have nothing to say.

If only FORTH CLASS, I thought then again maybe not.

FORT KINNAIRD SHOPPING SITE



Site Manager LIAM SMITH was very interested and happy to listen to comments about the Blue Badge parking spaces outside the newly upgraded site by Argos.

When pointed out that although very nice to look at and use, shrub areas and wooden benches by the parking areas where not helpful as it meant wheelchair users or people with walking difficulties would be unable to access the pavement unless they went round the back of the parked cars and along the road.

Liam Smith is not responsible for the planning but has passed the comments on to the architects. He would be happy to hear of any suggestions that would make shopping easier, any issues that arise and what facilities could be of use.

Contact: liam.smith@fortkinnaird.com

This article Thanks to Anne Wood

Computing Made Easy

Getting more out of your computer, I have mentioned using Google in the past, I am going to impart more information about this web search engine, some you may know some you may not.

On the main page you may notice from time to time they add pictures to reflect the time of year, you will find two versions of Google, to use Google more effectively use the U.K. version of the site www.google.co.uk

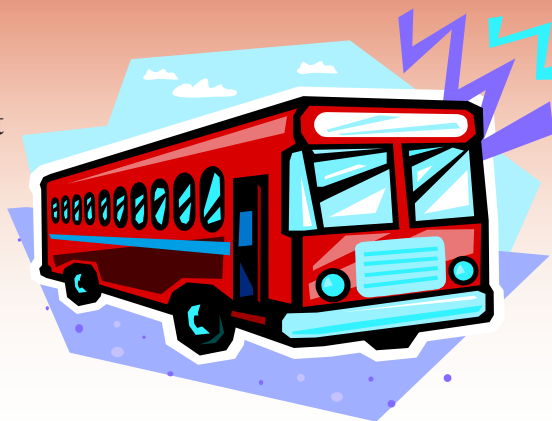
If you now click on the **more** icon a new page will open up, then click on web search features do more with search, if you click on **local**, at the end of your search question put the first four letter/numbers of your post code I.E. **EH22** then the search engine will only look in that area.

There is now so much on Google for you to try out you can even receive a foreign E-mail and ask Google to translate it. So go on have a look and see if google can help you find what you want. I find that by searching through Google keeps your history off the computer.

Public Transport

Monro's of Jedburgh will start operating a summer service bus between Dalkeith and Vogrie Country park the service will operate hourly and will run as number 529. It will operate between 0900 hours and the last bus back will be 1830 hours.

Lothian buses have announced that they will be running with low floor, wheelchair accessible buses that are less than two years old. The bus routes upgraded to this service are service 3/3A Birkenside or Mayfield through Edinburgh to



Clovenstone, service 29 Birkenside/ Gorebridge through Tesco Hardengreen, Edinburgh through to Silverknowes, service 31 Bonnyrigg / Polton Mill through Edinburgh to East Craigs, service 37/47/X47 Penicuik through Loanhead, Straiton, Edinburgh to Granton/ Silverknowes, Service 49 Rosewell through Bonnyrigg to E.R.I to Edinburgh and onto the Jewel. All these buses are wheelchair accessible unless you know different ?

Alternative Publications

The editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or a E-mail publications For alternative publication please E-mail to eric.johnstone@mvacva.org.uk or call Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471 or write to him at MVA 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE with your request.