

Newsletter issue 15 March 2008

[www.forwardmid.org.uk](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk)

# FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED



## Lothian Joint Physical Disability Strategy Response from Forward Mid, 31st January 2008

There was a meeting for the above strategy on December 10th 2007, here is an extract from Forward MID response to the strategy. To view a full report please visit our web site

The general strategy contains some solid recommendations and a useful framework for delivery of potential quality services for people with Physical and complex disability. Some key areas and concerns we would wish to highlight; It is important to establish an accurate information about the disabled populous and to build more efficient, open communication with this community. The strategy consultation process and consultation events themselves demonstrate how much work needs to be done in engaging with disabled people themselves, This document refers to figures from the 1980's. Surely this is a stark indication of how poor our information currently is. How can we deliver a service to people when we don't know who/ where they are?

The absence of **Employment** from these work streams is a major shortcoming of this strategy. Elsewhere the strategy refers to person centred and ordinary lives. Most people are fairly well defined by their employment. It is essential that disabled people are supported to contribute

positively and much work need to be done with local employers, local authorities and individuals themselves to move towards this. This is a serious and flawed omission in the strategy.

**Housing.** We propose all new build housing to be barrier free and fully accessible. This is a long term approach with a vision for future generation and best value in the long term. Why build poorly accessible housing in 2008 and beyond which will require to be rebuilt in fifty years with and ever increasing ageing population and ever developing equalities legislation?

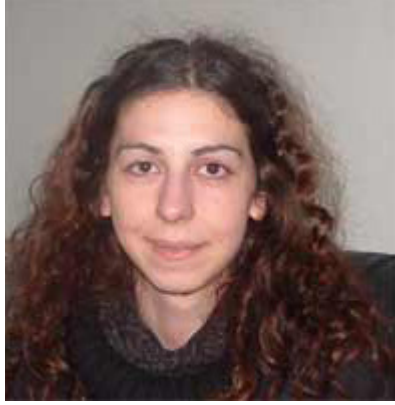
This is not just about disable people living in accessible accommodation but that they may wish to visit friends, family and be prevented from doing so because of restricted access.

**Independent Living.** Detailed Action-no mention of Direct Payments! There seems to be a lot of reference to "In Control", but it is important to learn first from implementation of Direct Payments so far and improve existing practice on Direct Payments.

**Transport-Development** required: the quality of people's lives. Need to involve transport providers as part of the development.

## Eleni Strati

Eleni Strati is leaving L.C.I.L. Eleni was very pro-active in the Role of Midlothians L.C.I.L. officer she brought with her a wealth of knowledge and understanding on how people with disabilities live and interact.



We at Forward MID would like to wish Eleni all the best for the future, we hope that she finds happiness throughout her life. so in true Scots fashion Eleni "Lang may your lum reek".

Lothian centre for integrated living will still provide support and are looking to provide a new Midlothian independent living officer.

## Including you

It is estimated that as many as 190,000 people experience some degree of hearing loss throughout Lothian, Edinburgh, and Fife. Deaf Action, a long-established organisation working with deaf people throughout Scotland, has launched a new Project - Including You - to help address these problems across those three areas.

Over the next three years, Including You will employ two project workers who will offer one to one and group support to the many people who experience problems associated with hearing loss across Midlothian. Support will include advice about hearing aids, benefits available, community and support groups who can help increase peoples' confidence, and advise friends, families and employers of hard of hearing people to improve the way they communicate with those who have a hearing loss.

For further information contact Jackie Erskine, Deaf Action's Head Office in Edinburgh on 0131 556 3128 (v/t) 07775620757 (sms) or email [admin@deafaction.org](mailto:admin@deafaction.org)

## Shelter

**Finding and keeping a suitable home isn't always easy. This section looks at housing issues you may face as a disabled person and explains your rights**

**If your situation is urgent, you can call Shelter's free housing advice helpline between 8am and Midnight on 0808 800 4444 and speak to an adviser straightaway. You can get immediate practical assistance and they also offer advice and guidance. If you want to talk to someone face-to-face, you can go to see an adviser at a housing aid centre, Citizens Advice Bureau or local disability information centre.**

**Getting help from the council If you're finding it hard to cope at home, the council's social work department can help make life a bit easier. You can find contact details for your council on their website [www.midlothian.gov.uk](http://www.midlothian.gov.uk), in the phone book or in the Advice Services Directory.**

**If you've nowhere to live or need to move out of your home because of serious problems, you should always approach your council's housing department to see what help they can offer you. They should give you somewhere to stay while they look into your situation. If your disability makes you particularly vulnerable, the council may well have a duty to find you a new home.**

**If the council refuses to help you, go and see a housing adviser and check exactly what you're entitled to. There may be a national organisation for people with your particular condition that can offer specialist advice and perhaps put you in touch with other people in a similar situation. Use the database at the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations website to find out more [www.scvo.org.uk](http://www.scvo.org.uk). If you don't ask you will not get.**



## Care in a New Welfare Society

### Unpaid care, welfare and employment

A report by the institute for public policy report by Sophie Moullin December 2007.

Unpaid care is critical for individuals to flourish, and for society to function. Literally from cradle to grave, receiving care from others can promote rather than diminish our capacity to live independently and in dignity. Whether we consider the terms of economics or ethics, the care provided within families and communities makes an enormous contribution to our lives.

The care given within relationships, families and communities holds value. Personally, caring is a valued experience. Socially, caring is a valuable contribution. Yet here remains an undue imbalance between the value placed on employment and that placed on caring. To redress this balance, policy should recognise and support the contribution of caring as well as of employment.

Policy should not set an opposition between working and caring, but should recognise both forms of activities as responsibilities and opportunities. Both caring and employment should be expected and valued contributions - for men and women alike. Policy should consider the spectrum of caring across the life course, recognising the value of all forms of caring, from caring for children through to caring for disabled and older people in need of support. But unpaid care is not 'free'. When a carer is excluded from the labour market as a result of their caring, they will forgo significant earnings.

Any consideration of the costs of care services must recognise the cost of formal care, but also the costs of people being unable to undertake paid employment because they are caring at home. At some time, we all give and receive care. Right through life, to varying degrees, we rely on care from others, and may be relied upon

to care ourselves. When we think about the group called 'carers', which people use to describe those who provide unpaid care for an adult who is ill, frail or disabled in some way, it is helpful to consider the wider context of caring.

Despite the overall importance of employment status among those who are employed and caring, Caring often shapes the types of employment they choose, and their career progression, and therefore social and economic inequalities. All the key groups highlighted by the Equalities Review (2007) as suffering employment penalties in the labour market provide above average levels of care.

There are two notable relationships between caring and inequalities associated with disability. Disabled people

are more likely to experience exclusion from the labour market and poverty than non-disabled people, and the same is true for those who care for them. This is largely because caring can prevent employment. Whereas nearly two-thirds of mothers with non-disabled children were in paid work, only 16 per cent of mothers of disabled children were. To recognise both the value and the costs of care throughout life we cannot simply add new frontiers to an old welfare state. We need a new welfare society with a clear, coherent approach to caring at its core.

The proposed policy from Institute for Public Policy Research.

- ▶ Single income-replacement benefit.
- ▶ A flat-rate benefit.
- ▶ Ability to top up income through work.
- ▶ Conditions for receipt of benefit on what the claimant must do and what can do, ▶ personalised to individual circumstance

Optional features: Universal period, then means-tested rather than earnings limit  
Non-contributory/individual entitlement.

To view the full report visit our web site [www.forwardmid.org.uk](http://www.forwardmid.org.uk) and view publications.





## Penicuik Centre

This letter came to Forward MID on 2nd February 2008.

The Penicuik Centre is an excellent example of barrier free access to a range of community and leisure facilities. These include a library, swimming pool, sauna, spa and steam room, as well as fitness suite and space for fitness classes. The focus of my visit was the library area.

This entrance has automatic doors and a wide open reception/meeting area, that is equipped with a seating area and also tea and coffee machines. The entrance invites you to visit the library. There is a power chair and a couple of delta walking frames with trays that are available to anyone with a mobility problem to ensure that everyone can enjoy access to the facilities available. The books are all presented within easy reach and sight of wheelchair users. For those with children, the children's area is equipped with fun seating pods and activity areas e.g. games consoles. For a small charge it is also possible to borrow CDs and DVDs. There are a couple of rows of computers in an IT area which are available for public use with free access to the internet, and wi-fi for those using their own laptop. The staff are able and happy to help anyone who is not totally confident with technology.

There are accessible toilets and changing areas throughout the centre. The library staff could not have been more helpful and are obviously very proud of the facilities that are on offer. It should also be noted that these facilities are available seven days per week.

Name and address withheld

## Direct Payments

An interview with a Tetraplegic in Edinburgh, Mr. D has been on direct payments for ten years, prior to his disability he made tiles for the space shuttle, Mr. D receives a full care package which he manages himself with the aid of Lothian Centre for Integrated Living He has total control over who his P.As are and if one is unable to attend he has a number of Agencies that he can call for care to come to him. These agencies are 121 homecare and Trustcare Scotland.

Mr. D has L.C.I.L. manage his accounts to pay wages to his staff and also to keep his records and pay the inland revenue, they also send Mr. D three copies of his accounts every three months and this should tally with the bank account statements that he set up for doing this work, L.C.I.L. take a token payment per person he employs for this service, he then sends one copy of records to Edinburgh Direct Payments Officer Jack Black, he sends one to the inland revenue and keeps one for his own records. Mr. D States " I find this very easy to manage, all I have to do is manage the time sheets for each of my personal assistants and if one of my P.As is off sick for a prolonged period I can always ask for a special payment to cover this cost, I know I will be assessed for this as it will incur an overspend".

Mr. D has to send in returns for every three months period, he informed me that he is working with Edinburgh Direct Payments Officer Jack Black, to have people that have less than a full package have their returns done annually to cut down on work load for the Council and also reduce costs of running direct payments. Mr. D is glad that he joined the direct payments scheme as now he does all the arrangements himself instead of relying on someone else to get care at the time he needs it, this is far better than trying to contact the council to say someone has not appeared.

Forward MID is committed to working Lothian Centre for integrated Living to promote Direct payments in Midlothian.

## 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](mailto: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.