

Newsletter issue 16 May 2008

www.forwardmid.org.uk

FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED



Forward MID and Local Area Co-ordinators planning day at Newbattle Abbey College

On 18th February 2008 Forward MID and Midlothian Local Area Co-ordinators had a joint creative planning day at Newbattle Abbey College. The challenge of the day was "How to work best to support disabled people across Midlothian". The group used a planning tool called MAP to support a positive overview of good work that had been done and also how we could meet the shared challenge of promoting and supporting positive lives for disabled people in Midlothian as well as challenging some of the attitudinal and access barriers. Some of the important areas and ideas that were generated by the day were:



▶ Working better together for disabled people in Midlothian providing advice, support and information.

▶ Having a focus on transport as a key challenge.

▶ Developing a clear communication strategy for Forward MID

▶ Promoting direct payments and self directed support for disabled individuals in Midlothian.

Forward MID continue to grow from strength and purpose, if you would like to be part of this success, do get in touch or join us at one of our meeting.

Your Call Telephone counselling
for disabled people
by disabled people

call our appointment line Mon - Tues 11am - 3pm
Wed 11am - 1pm

Your Call

call our appointment line on
0808 801 03 62
Free, confidential counselling
for disabled adults
in Scotland

Direct Payments a Short History

Direct payments were introduced by the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act 1996 and came into being in April 1997 for adults of working age. They were extended to older people in 2000.

Since April 2001 direct payments have been available to carers, parents of disabled children and 16- and 17-year-old service users. Availability has also been extended to people with short-term needs, like those recovering from an operation, and to Children Act services to help disabled parents.

In April 2003, regulations came into force requiring councils to offer direct payments to all people using community care services. They do not apply to long-term residential care or services directly provided by councils, while they cannot be given to an agent to manage services on behalf of a person who lacks capacity.

Individual budgets were first mooted in January 2005 in a paper by the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, and seen as a way of personalising services.

Take-up of direct payments has risen significantly in recent years but still remains low as a proportion of people receiving services.

As of March 31, 2006, 32,000 adults and older people in England were receiving a direct payment, up from 22,100 the previous year. In Scotland, payments rose from 1438 to 1829 between 2005 and 2006

Relatively low take-up has been explained in two ways - the reluctance of local authorities to promote direct payments and bureaucratic barriers they place in the way of take-up; and reluctance on the part of service users to take them up due to the real or perceived burdens they bring.

However, a 2004 report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection found many

barriers originated from councils including:

- ▶ Lack of information for service users.
- ▶ Low staff awareness of direct payments and what they are trying to achieve.
- ▶ Patronising attitudes on the part of staff about the ability of people to manage a direct payment.
- ▶ Inadequate or patchy advocacy or support services for direct payment users.
- ▶ Unnecessary and bureaucratic paperwork.

There is no doubt councils are getting better on direct payments but the step change in take up demanded by government and independent living activists has not happened yet.

Risk

Another key issue in the direct payments debate is around risk. Independent living activists have long argued that to have true independence, service users should be able to employ who they want to care for them.

Adult protection campaigners, while admitting the importance of independence, have argued that people employed as personal assistants should face the same employment checks as others to ensure users' safety.

Currently there are no plans to force direct payment users to submit those who they employ to checks. The government resisted attempts to impose checks through the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006, Doing so would compel a service user to only employ a registered person.

BY Mithran Samuel from Community care

Creature Discomforts

Leonard Cheshire are running a disability awareness campaign to support them visit and sign up www.creaturediscomforts.org





Thanks A Lot

This letter came to Forward MID on 18th February 2008.

My name is Mary and local area co-ordination led me to get my life back on "track". I was a very active person until a fall put paid to me getting out and about, I could no longer participate in doing the things I enjoyed, hill walking for example. After years of living with chronic pain, my physical and mental health deteriorated, I became isolated.

When it got to the point that I difficulty in taking care of my own personal hygiene, I made contact with the local area co-ordinators to see if I might qualify for some assistance in getting a walk-in shower installed, I never did get that shower. But as a result of making contact I began to get some semblance of my life back. One particular local area co-ordination encouraged me to re-introduce myself to friends and the local community.

She took me for teas and coffee and during one of our chats I told her there must be others in the same situation as me. We got down to setting up a walking group, which we called the "Walkie talkies" and we an inclusive group. As a result of our weekly jaunts we have all noted a vast improvement in our physical and mental well being and an increase in our social activities. We walk, talk and laugh a lot and always ensure that we enjoy tea, coffee, scone and cakes at the end of our journey. We also support one another through difficult times and this helps us on the road to our recovery.

My own personal recovery has taken some difficult routes and it has been an uphill struggle, but I got there. One particular local area co-ordinator ensured that I realised a dream. I made it to the top of

a hill- what an achievement.

The Midlothian local co-ordinator team are the tops. They are a group of lovely caring people.

Midlothian local area co-ordinators are located in Woodburn, Dalkeith, on ☎ 0131-454-1785 also located in Bonnyrigg, Eskbank, Mayfield and Easthouses on ☎ 0131-561-9657.

Name withheld

Disabled Parking

Disabled parking, in some places it is becoming pro-active, Forward MID would like to thank both Kinniard park shopping and Asda Edinburgh for imposing fines on people abusing Disabled persons parking bays, On visiting Kinniard shopping centre you will see signs at all areas that are marked as Disabled parking bays warning that if you abuse them it will cost you £60. When I visited there were parking wardens patrolling, I was informed by the parking warden this scheme was introduced in November 2007. Once initial costs have been recouped Kinniard Park will any surplus revenues to a charity of their own choosing

During our conversation I was informed that shopmobility will shortly be opening an outlet at Kinniard Park,

However some shopping car parks do not hold the same value as Kinniard and Asda and allow things like this to happen, a Picture of a roofing van in a well known car park in Midlothian.



We look forward to the day that all disabled persons parking bays are monitored and sites like this become a thing of the past.

Sport For Disabled people In Midlothian

Over the Christmas holidays I was watching a program on television about sporting achievements for disabled people, some Physical, some blind, some deaf and some with learning difficulties. I then started to search the Midlothian area for sports for disabled, Below is a list that I have compiled if there are any more sports in Midlothian for disabled please let us know and we will tell everyone else. The person in charge of sports for disabled in Midlothian is Gary Fraser you can contact him on 01875 619070 or E-mail him gfraser1@eastlothian.gov.uk for further information.

Multisports

Allstars Sports Club, Beeslack High School. Tuesdays 6.45pm-8.45pm & Sundays 1pm-3pm

PHAB (physically handicapped able bodied) , Lasswade High School, Midlothian Wednesdays 6.30pm-8.30pm

Penicuik Town Hall, Midlothian Tuesdays 6.30pm-8pm, All abilities, 16+

Mayfield leisure Centre, Midlothian, Fridays 10.30am-12pm, All abilities, 16+

Cherry Road Activity Club, Lasswade High School, Midlothian Thursdays 7pm-9pm

Swimming

Loanhead Dolphins, Loanhead Leisure Centre, Midlothian, Thursdays 6pm-8pm , Don McFarlane 01968 675 131 All ages, all disabilities.

Dance

Loanhead Leisure Centre, Midlothian Tuesdays 4pm-5pm, All abilities, 5-16 years

Midlothian, Skiing

Alternative Ski Club
Sit, bi and two skis available
Hillend Snowsport Centre, Midlothian
Mondays 6.30pm - 9pm
Contact centre prior to attending



Athletics

Athletics Club, Dalkeith campus, Saltersgate, Thursdays 6.30pm - 8.00pm

All ages, all disabilities, Gary Fraser 01875 619070)

Basketball

Mayfield Leisure Centre, Midlothian Mondays 6.30pm-7.30pm All abilities, 8-16 years

Bowls

Mayfield Sports Centre, Thursdays 10am-12pm, Ages 16+

Boccia

Beeslack High School, Penicuik, Sundays 3pm - 4.30pm, All ages, all disabilities. If like me you don't know what Boccia is, pronounced 'Botcha', it is similar to bowls, it originated in Greece when competitors threw large stone at a target. This a Paralympic sport. The 2007 Boccia finals were played at Easterhouse sports centre.

Lothian Disability Sport is very keen to increase the number of sporting opportunities available to people with any disability in the Lothian area. There is something for everyone If you would like more information on sports that are organised for people with disabilities in the Lothian area then please visit the Lothian Disability sport web site at www.lothiandisabilitysport.co.uk.

Alternative Publications

The editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or at www.forwardmid.org.uk 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.