



Disability Essex

(Essex Disabled People's Association Ltd)

Centre for Disability Studies, Adult Community College, Rocheway, Rochford, SS4 1DQ.

Telephone: 0844 412 1771 - Fax: 0844 8800 614 - Helpline: 0844 412 1770

Email: info@disabilityessex.org - Website: www.disabilityessex.org

Charity Reg. No.: 1102596 - Company Reg. No.: 4980118

Stansted Airport Consultative Committee

A new committee has been created to be a link between the airport company and the airlines operating at Stansted, and representatives of users and neighbours.

The committee includes representatives of councils, the travel and air-freight industry; transport organisations; businesses; and passengers.

Richard Boyd (Disability Essex CEO), in his capacity of co-ordinator for the Disability East consortium of charities, has been appointed to represent all disabled people who work at, or use, the airport. Anyone who wishes to raise an issue regarding services at Stansted Airport can contact Richard by phone on 0844 412 1771, or by emailing him on richard.boyd@disabilityessex.org.

New Recruits

Kay Ilott and Shane Parker have recently joined Sue Nicholls to become part of the Disability Essex team. All three come to us from the Shaw Trust, as part of the Return to Work programme.

Sue now assists Stuart Kirk on the build project administration and is receiving special training to join Roy Joslin on the CRB processing team. Kay is working closely with Pete Collings on the regional database, while Shane plans to train as an Access Auditor, and Access to Work practitioner.

We wish them both well and are confident that they will fit into an organisation that focuses on employment opportunities.



Update on our new HQ

In spite of a few minor set backs with the timetable, as you can see from the photo above, our sedum (green) roof is now in place.

Pictured is the south wing of the building, which will ultimately be the training hub of the organisation. Environmental testing by the Building Research Establishment—to the 2009 standard—has started. First tests on air tightness show that we are 30% better than the new standards. It is to be noted that the new standards are 10 times more effective than those for conventional buildings.

We are on target to complete final test by the end of 2009. All the furniture will come from Remploy and will be installed in January 2010. We expect to be at our new desks in February.

We still await a final decision on our choice of solar panel for the buildings. Our consultants have submitted a planning application for a small, 6kW wind turbine which, if successful, will provide more electricity than the building needs—allowing us to sell the surplus to the adjacent college.

NCVO Annual Conference

NCVO's Annual Conference, 'The Good Society – a time for action', is being held on 23 February 2010, London. For further information and a booking form, please visit www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/annualconference2010.

Source: COVER E-Bulletin, 122, 10.11.09



Christmas Shopping Event for Disabled People

We were delighted to hear that a Christmas Shopping Event for Disabled People is being held on 3 December 2009 at the Basildon Eastgate Centre, from 5.30 to 7.30 p.m.

Tea, Coffee and a Choir will be provided. Disabled people requiring assistance to manoeuvre around the Basildon Eastgate Centre will need to be accompanied by someone to help them.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Karyn Ellis of Basildon District Council's Inclusion and Diversity team on 01268 294344 (Mon/Tues & Wed).

Source: email from Basildon District Council, 4.11.09

Funding relationships

COVER is researching the difficulties faced by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in the East of England, in accessing public sector funding. Please respond and tell us your views! More information at:

<http://www.cover-east.org/News.asp?selidx=1&viewmode=ViewRecord>

Source: COVER E-Bulletin, 122, 10.11.09

Improve the lighting in your home



A free booklet, produced by RNIB and The Pocklington Trust, shows how older people need more light due to the ageing of the retina. Using task lighting for an activity can give you 25 times more light than a ceiling-mounted fixture, helping to avoid falls.

Visit www.onlineshop.rnib.org.uk for more information.

Source: Age Concern via Chelmsford CVS Update, Autumn 2009

ODI launches Independent Living and Older People website

This month the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) launched a new resource, the Independent Living and Older People website. Developed in conjunction with the Centre for Policy on Ageing (CPA) and the National Development Team for Inclusion (NDTI), the website was set up following the identification, by the government's Independent Living Strategy, of a need to increase choice and control for older disabled people in all areas of their lives.

The website is aimed at policy makers and professionals in commissioning roles, and explains what is meant by 'independent living' and 'person-centred services'. The site aims to demonstrate the principles of independent living and how they can inform the creation of new services. It includes practical tips on how to plan, commission and provide appropriate support for older people.

For more information, visit the Independent Living Resource website

www.independentlivingresource.org.uk

Source: Centre for Accessible Environments, Access Newsletter, October 2009

Mature workers make their mark at McDonald's



McDonald's have found that employing people aged 60+ has given their business a significant boost.

According to research of 400 McDonald's restaurants in the UK, customer satisfaction was on average 20% higher in those restaurants which employ staff aged 60 and over.

The managers of the restaurants in question were asked why they thought it boosted business. Over two thirds (69%) said the older workers empathised and connected well with customers; almost half (47%) cited their ability to go the 'extra mile' to deliver the best possible customer service; and 44% believed they brought mentoring skills to the workplace which helped their younger colleagues to develop and mature.

Fact: 40% of McDonald's restaurants now employ at least one person aged 60+.

Source: 50+ Matters, September 2009, Issue 03

We are fast approaching winter and the additional risk that this poses to health. This is particularly true for older people, families with young children, and those who have chronic illness or who are vulnerable to illness due to disability.

As you may already know, *Keep Warm Keep Well* is an annual campaign providing useful advice on how to stay warm in the winter months, together with information about the financial and practical help that is available. The Department of Health is supported in this campaign by their partners, Age Concern and Help the Aged, Consumer Direct, National Energy Action, and WRVS.

During last winter's campaign, over 2.5 million copies of the three different versions (over 60s, families with young children, and those with disabilities) of the campaign booklet were distributed.

Clubs can order copies of the 2009 booklet, for distribution to their members, by going online at www.orderline.dh.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can telephone DH Publications Orderline on 0300 123 1002.

Source: Keep Warm Keep Well flyer, September 2009

Calling all Disability Essex club secretaries!

Disability Essex Chief Executive Richard Boyd was surprised, on a recent visit to one of our member clubs, to learn that most members were unaware of our monthly newsletter.

Sadly, we don't have sufficient funding to cover the cost of printing and mailing multiple copies to each club—so this is a heartfelt plea to all member club secretaries to share the information we provide each month with your members. For those of you with IT skills, the monthly newsletter is available on our website www.disabilityessex.org – at the foot of the Disability Essex News page.

We can also send a pdf version of the newsletter by email. If anyone would like to go onto a monthly e-mail distribution list, please contact the Disability Essex office on 0844 412 1771 or email

info@disabilityessex.org

Employers are failing arthritis sufferers

A new survey by Arthritis Care for World Arthritis Day (12 October) criticises the lack of employer support to help arthritis sufferers stay in work. According to the survey, although the 75% of respondents still currently in work say that their employers made reasonable adjustments to help them to stay, only 39% of those now not in work said they had received such adjustments.

In addition, 70% of the non-working respondents directly blamed leaving their jobs on arthritis. Of these, although almost two thirds had requested reasonable adjustments, only one in three had got them. Flexible working and an understanding attitude by bosses to arthritis-related absence, topped the Arthritis Care survey as the employer support most valued by respondents.

Rachel Haynes, Arthritis Care's director of public affairs, said: 'Arthritis Care's poll shows an inescapable link between an employer's support for someone with arthritis and their ability to stay in work. Arthritis is the UK's biggest cause of physical disability, and more must be done to enable people with the condition to have a full working life, not existence on disability benefit by default.'

As a result of the survey, Arthritis Care launched an 'Employers Pledge' on World Arthritis Day, which urged UK employers to affirm their commitment to improving life at work for people with arthritis.

The full report is on the **Arthritis Care website** www.arthritiscare.org.uk/NewsRoom/Statementsandpressreleases/GNzt

Source: Centre for Accessible Environments, Access Newsletter, October 2009

Parkinson's Patch

A major hurdle for treating Parkinson's Disease is getting medication to work consistently, so that symptoms, like stiff muscles or tremors, don't get worse before it's time for the next pill. An easy-to-use dopamine style skin patch called Neupro slow releases the drug over 24 hours—improving movement and helping sufferers stay more active during the day and sleep better at night. For more information, please speak to your GP or specialist.

Source: Reader's Digest, via Parkinson's Disease Society, Southend Branch newsletter, Summer/Autumn 2009

O2 waives VAT charges for charities

Mobile phone network operator O2 has implemented a system so that VAT previously charged on text donations will be passed to charity. Any UK charity that uses a dedicated five-digit short code beginning with 70 through the O2 network will qualify for the additional cash on donations of £10 or less. The move follows an announcement earlier in the year by the Mobile Data Association. More information available at <http://www.themda.org/mda-press-releases/vat-waived-on-charity-text-message-donations.php>

Source: COVER E-Bulletin, 122, 10.11.09

Can where you live make you fat?

Almost 19,000 people diagnosed each year could stay cancer-free by maintaining a healthy weight. This was shown by WCRF/AICR's Policy Report, *Policy and Action for Cancer Prevention*, published earlier this year. However, in recent years there has been a rapid increase in the number of people who are obese. Why is this? And are different parts of the UK equally affected by obesity?

Research shows that people living in cities tend to be more overweight, as are those on lower incomes. Research from across Europe found that people living in green areas are three times more likely to be physically active and 40% less likely to be overweight than those living in more urban areas. We cannot all move to the country, but research shows that initiatives to make cities safe and pleasant for cyclists and pedestrians can cut obesity rates. Even urban areas have parks which can be enjoyable places to take a walk.

Here are the top ideas from the World Cancer Research Fund for staying healthy wherever you live:

- Aim to use nutritious ingredients and eat a balanced diet
- Try to walk or cycle short journeys if your health allows
- No green space near your home? Plan an interesting walk through the streets to a place of interest – a library or museum perhaps
- Alternatively, try an indoor activity like Pilates, or swimming, for a change
- Enrol in a local 'learn to cook' class, to ensure that your diet stays healthy.

Source: WCRF Newsletter, Issue 76, Autumn 2009



Weathering the storm – latest economic survey

According to the Charity Commission's third Economic Survey, published in September, while some charities are seeing their situation improve, others continue to experience difficulties.

What is apparent is that the proportion of charities surveyed who are being impacted by the recession has risen to 56%, from 52% in March. Given that 38% reported being affected in September 2008, it's clear the effect of the downturn is still being felt by many charities. Perhaps unsurprisingly, 69% of charities with investment income cited it as the main source of income which had decreased.

What was encouraging was evidence that charities have become more proactive in counteracting the downturn's effects. The 12% who had taken action in September 2008 had risen to 52% in the latest survey—using number of different strategies. Over a third of respondents had looked at reducing the cost of things like stationery, mobile phones and energy costs and 8% had increased their fundraising activities.

It seems that large charities are more likely than others to reduce their outgoings – 57% compared to 21% generally – and also to have reviewed their risk policies, at 40% compared to 13% more generally. Obviously, larger charities may have more to gain from efficiencies of scale, but all charities can, and should, consider steps to minimise risk and improve efficiency. One of the most obvious ways, of course, is to consider working collaboratively with other charities.

Source: Charity Commission News Issue 30, Autumn 2009

Help with Healthcare Travel Cost

You may be entitled to help with the costs of your travel to healthcare appointments if:

- You are in receipt of a qualifying benefit or on a low income
- You are travelling to an appointment made for you by a doctor or dentist
- The appointment requires you to make an additional journey

For more information on the scheme, please visit www.ppa.org.uk/healthcosts or call 0845 61 1110.

Source: Southend Blind Welfare Organisation's 'In Touch' newsletter, Autumn 2009

Swine flu vaccination programme

GPs will be writing to all patients in the 'at-risk' groups to offer them a swine flu vaccine. Dr Andrea Atherton, Director of Public Health, NHS South East Essex said:

"We do know that the infection is generally mild, although some people will experience more severe symptoms. The bottom line is that not getting vaccinated means you're taking a risk with your own health, and the health of others.

"Even if you are eligible for the vaccine, but think you have already had swine flu, it is still important you get vaccinated as there are many flu viruses circulating and you may have had one of the seasonal flu viruses rather than the swine flu virus.

"There have been some scare stories in the press so I'd like to reassure people that the swine flu vaccine is safe and that if you are eligible for the seasonal jab too, it is safe to have the swine flu vaccine at the same time as a seasonal flu jab.

"Everyone can help reduce the spread of the swine flu virus by maintaining good hygiene and remembering to 'Catch it, Bin it, Kill it.'"

Source: NHS press release October 2009

Have you got what it takes?

Disability Essex is seeking additional volunteers from the Rochford, Rayleigh, and Southend areas to help man its disability information advice line (DIAL), which currently operates between 10.00 am and 4.00 pm every weekday. We provide advice and guidance to disabled people, their carers, and relatives on issues relating to disability—signposting where necessary to other charities and appropriate organisations.

Training will be provided in-house and, initially, you will work alongside one of our existing team of volunteers. As a member of DIAL, we have to ensure that the majority of our helpline advisors are disabled. However we will consider applications from anyone with time to spare to help others, and who feels they have the ability to empathise, and the commitment, that this role requires.

Subject to suitability, applicants will also need to have a current CRB disclosure, the cost for which will be met by Disability Essex.

If you would like to find out more about this volunteering opportunity, please ring Jenni Kelly on 0844 412 1771 (Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays) or Maggie Marlowe (Thursdays).

National Autistic Society launches Don't Write Me Off campaign



Following a report by the National Autistic Society (NAS), which criticises the Government and Jobcentre Plus for failing people with autism, the charity has launched a campaign to improve services, entitled Don't Write Me Off.

According to the report, a third of people with autism currently live without a job and without benefits. It states that while the majority of the 300,000 working-age adults with autism in the UK want to work, only 15% are currently in full-time, paid employment. The report found that:

- almost 80 per cent of people with autism on Incapacity Benefit wanted to work
- over a third said their Disability Employment Advisor's knowledge of autism was 'very bad' or 'bad'
- half of people with autism have spent time with neither a job nor benefits with over three-quarters of those forced to rely on family and friends as a result

- over 82 per cent needed some kind of help to apply for benefits, but few were made aware of their right to an advocate.

The report also criticised the procedure for applying for the new Employment and Support Allowance (ESA), which replaced Incapacity Benefit. It said that the system did not provide sufficient support for people with autism.

The NAS is calling for a national strategy from government to transform access to employment for people with autism across the UK. The charity is also campaigning for a number of measures to make the employment and benefits system fair for people with autism, including the introduction of autism coordinators to work with frontline staff, local employers and employment support services. For more information on the campaign, visit the new Don't Write Me Off website www.dontwritemeoff.org.uk/

Centre for Accessible Environments, Access Newsletter, October 2009

Southwark Council fined following death

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is urging service providers to have safe procedures in place for loading and unloading wheelchairs and mobility scooters, following the death of a motorised scooter user.

The court heard that on 20 September 2006, a trip to an exhibition had been organised for people attending the Aylesbury Day Centre, which is run by the Council. As the group was preparing to return from the exhibition, they were being loaded into a welfare bus via a tail lift at the rear.

One of the group was using a motorised scooter and was being loaded into the bus. Whilst on the raised tail lift, his scooter came off the back and fell to the ground. He died from head injuries sustained in the fall.

The HSE investigation found that Mr Delaney's scooter did not fit on the tail lift. As a result, the tailgate plates, which would have prevented the mobility scooter from falling off, did not lock into position. Crucially, there was no risk assessment or procedure covering the loading and unloading of people with motorised scooters.

All service providers had been warned of similar risks involving wheelchairs by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) in 2005, following a number of fatal accidents across the UK. Simple measures could have been taken such as loading the motorised scooter onto the welfare bus without William Delaney sitting on it.

HSE's investigating inspector said: "Had basic health and safety measures been carried out, this loss of life could have been prevented. HSE will not hesitate to use the full force of its enforcement powers in such circumstances."

Source: HSE news release, 14.10.09

Please note that all responsibility for adverts within this publication is between the buyer and the seller. Disability Essex can accept no liability for equipment advertised.

We wish to remind all wheelchair users that there is a recommended wheelchair "Highway Code", copies of which we can supply on application. Furthermore, Class 3 Invalid Carriages must be registered with the DVLA.



New legal rights for NHS patients

NHS patients will have legal rights to maximum waiting times for elective procedures and urgent cancer referrals, and to an NHS Health Check every five years for those aged 40-74, if proposals published today are taken forward.

The proposals, set out in 'The NHS Constitution: A consultation on new patient rights', mean that from April 2010, patients will have the legal right to maximum waiting times to start treatment by a consultant within 18 weeks of GP referral, and to be seen by a cancer specialist within 2 weeks of GP referral.

If the NHS cannot meet this commitment, it will have to take all reasonable steps to find a range of alternative providers that can. In addition, those aged 40-74 will have the right to an NHS Health Check every five years to assess their risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes and kidney disease.

Joe Korner, Director of Communications for The Stroke Association, said: "We could save up to 40,000 people from having a stroke every year if we could make sure that their blood pressure, and other risk factors for stroke, were kept under control.

"Stroke is the biggest cause of severe adult disability and the third biggest killer in the UK. NHS Health Checks will help to identify those at a higher risk of stroke and how to do something about it."

Source: News Release issued by the COI News Distribution Service on 10 November 2009, via www.wired-gov.net

FOR SALE FOR SALE FOR SALE

Shop Rider 4 wheel red Scooter

6 years old, full yearly service. Good condition, kept inside.

£300 ono.

Contact tel: **01268 771154**

2 x Nebulisers – Omron CX

Free to good home!

In need of servicing.

Masks and tubes not included.

Can be viewed in Chelmsford area.

Please telephone **01245 442169**