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A VOICE FOR DISABLED PEOPLE

Loud & Proud

Issue 16 - Summer 2006

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NOW THE NEWS

Here is the Calendar News – Choices and Rights are here!

As part of a team building day, the staff were invited to look around the Calendar TV studio in Leeds. The idea was to discuss how more news stories of disabled people can be broadcast and to have a behind-the-scenes tour of Calendar as it is broadcast live across Yorkshire.

On an extremely hot day, (thank goodness for air-con in the car), we arrived outside the Yorkshire TV complex where many thousands of programmes have been



Back row: Duncan Wood (Presenter), Fiona Rees, Melanie Wakefield

Front Row: John Gilling, Christine Talbot (Presenter), Denise Canniffe and Jude, Mark Baggley

made; Emmerdale, Darling Buds of May and of course Calendar!

After a presentation of 50

years of ITV programmes, we had a general question and answer session with Mark Covell, Head of Regional

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If you have any comments/suggestions for **Loud & Proud**, please let us know.

We'd like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue of Loud & Proud.

Affairs and a brief session with the producer of Calendar.

We then moved into the viewing area behind the studio, so we could see the production team at work. They are looking at a large bank of TV screens, showing all the different inputs into the programme, i.e., what's on ITV before they link up to the network, subtitle screen, the actual studio, outside broadcast unit, etc. Interestingly the studio is behind the wall in front of the production team, so you can only see the presenters on a TV screen.

We were able to hear all the different directions and commands being given to the presenters whilst they are talking. This must take a lot of practice to get right - try to imagine having a conversation with one person whilst someone else is whispering in your ear. The thirty minutes went incredibly quickly and you could feel the tension and excitement of broadcasting "live".

After the programme, we moved into the studio and met the presenters, Christine Talbot and Duncan Wood who were both very friendly and down to earth. We finished by having a couple of pictures taken around the Calendar table.

All in all an interesting visit and an unusual team building session. More importantly, it gave us another important link with the media and if you have a story that you think may be newsworthy, please let us know and we will contact the Calendar team. Thanks to all staff at Calendar who were very welcoming and made the visit extremely interesting.

IS IT REALLY 2006?

Sometimes at Choices and Rights, we see some news stories and struggle to believe it's 2006 .

Story One

The Hull Daily Mail recently reported that Anthony Hunt a 'Local Community Hero' (YUK!) travelled to London to receive his award from Beverley and Holderness MP Graham Stuart.

Mr. Stuart states that "Anthony has worked tirelessly for his local community". Nice story, but Mr. Hunt's volunteer work has been with an organisation called ... wait for it! ... **The Beverley MENTALLY HANDICAPPED Social Club!!**

We are sure that Mr. Hunt is quite a nice bloke, but if he really wants to work "tirelessly for his community", for goodness sake get the organisation to have a more modern and appropriate name.

If anyone from that organisation doesn't know why it's so offensive, it's time they talked to some disabled people who have a learning disability and ask them whether they really want to attend such a club with such a crap name.

Story Two

Inside Housing recently reported that John Grooms Housing Association launched a report by inviting 3 MP's to

battle their way round an obstacle course in wheelchairs.

How modern.

Maybe instead the MP's and John Groom's organisation could ASK wheelchair users what the issues are!!

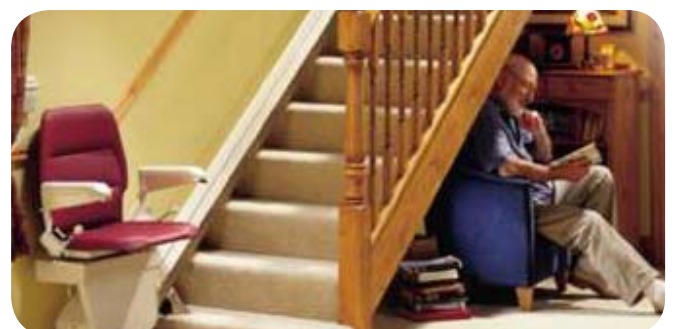
We would imagine most of them wouldn't need to have a "fun" obstacle course designed, but simply show them their nearest town centre and how much "fun" they have struggling to find accessible shops, night clubs, restaurants, etc.

Honestly, it's so much "fun" we wonder how wheelchair users ever stop laughing.

Next month, John Grooms invites MP's to "black up" so they can understand race issues and then wear women's underwear to understand women's issues ...

Guide to Stair Lifts

The British Healthcare Trades Association has published a guide for people looking at buying a stairlift. "Get Wise to Buying a Stairlift" is available by sending a A5 SAE to BHTA, New Loom House, Suite 4.06, 101 Back Church Lane, London. E1 1LU



CAN'T KILL US OFF!

The issue of whether disabled people should be given the “right to die” is a controversial one.

Some disabled people claim that they want the “choice” when to end their life because of the amount of pain or suffering they are in.

Other disabled people (including Choices and Rights) believe that there is no law that could be passed that could not lead to some disabled people being killed due to a medical person’s view of our “quality of life”.

We would also argue that although on a particular bad day or time in our lives, we may have thought we wanted to die, but the following day or week, our view has changed.

If a law was passed that gave us this “right”, how soon would some people feel under pressure not to be a “burden” to families, carers, etc or that we have no quality life. This may well be due to lack of support, correct medical treatment or a temporary crisis in our lives.

On top of disabled people’s views, various religious groups have got involved claiming to support our right to live, although for some of these, their aim is simply to stop abortions being carried out.

Probably the most cynical move in this debate has been by the Voluntary Euthanasia Society that has now renamed itself “Dignity in Dying”. This phrase was used by the palliative care

and hospice movement to show the importance of getting good care, support and health services for people with a terminal illness. It certainly didn’t mean that people should be “legally killed”!

There is some good news in this controversial and dangerous subject as the Assisted Dying Bill, introduced in the House of Lords by Lord Joffe, has been “killed” (ironic!).

For the issue to resurface a new Bill will have to be resubmitted, starting at the bottom of a long process in trying to get legislation through parliament.

Choices and Rights believe a far more effective and useful object for the House of Lords to achieve would be to ensure that disabled people can:

- Get quick and appropriate access to community care and health services
- Understand that anyone can become a disabled person and that it is not the end of the world

We are sure that the Bill will resurface and it is important that organisations like ours keep pushing the equal rights issues.

For example, until researching this article, I didn’t know that it is illegal for babies to be aborted after 24 weeks, but that disabled babies can be aborted up until FULL TERM

Maybe we should be grateful that some of us got here at all !!!

TAKING THE 'DIS'?

There has been much in the news over the past year about getting disabled people into work, including the Green paper on Welfare reform, and overhauling of the Incapacity Benefits system.

However, a new Civil Service Diversity Champion (Bill Jeffrey) has been appointed to ensure diversity is a key part of the Government's Civil Service reform programme. His job is to set targets for 2008 for women, BME staff and disabled staff working within the Civil Service sector. The target for disabled staff for 2005 was set at just 3% but even that low target was not reached - the number recorded was a miserable 2.3% (an increase of only 0.8% over seven years). The 2008 target has been reviewed upwards to the dizzy height of 3.2%. If the Government is serious about getting disabled people into work it must start leading by example.

Further to this, Bert Massie, the chair of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) has recently accused the government of having a 'lazy' attitude to tackling disability discrimination at work.

At the launch of an advertising campaign to highlight the impact of disability discrimination in the UK, he attacked the government for failing to break the culture of low expectations surrounding disability.

"There is a lazy fatalism that too often shapes the perceptions that politicians have of disabled people" he said. "The

inequality experienced by disabled people affects us all. For some reason, and despite all the facts, public policy makers are not thinking about disability. It is considered something for the specialists to deal with, something to do with wheelchairs and ramps."

The DRC's campaign, 'Are we taking the Dis?' includes a range of posters that capture the unfair treatment towards disabled people and aims to promote a better culture for disabled people.

The £1.2m national poster, press, radio and online campaign will run for one month. In one ad, a person in a wheelchair is shown sitting at a desk with the caption: 'I'll never get a seat on the board. I've got the wrong chair.'

Only 17% of people with learning disabilities are in paid work, and disabled people in work earn 10% less on average than their non-disabled colleagues, according to the DRC.

Bert Massie set three challenges for the government:

- To increase the parliamentary representation of disabled people by ensuring a disabled candidate is on the short list for all vacant seats.
- A 20% increase in the representation of disabled people on public bodies.
- Private and voluntary sector bodies delivering public services to outline how they will ensure disabled people play an active leadership role within their organisations.

ACTION ON ABUSE

An organisation which tackles abuse of elderly people, Action on Elder Abuse, is campaigning for better legislation, in line with children and domestic violence victims, to guard vulnerable adults from abuse.

The organisation found of 639 abuse cases in nine English local authorities over six months, more than half involved elderly people, and two-thirds involved women.

They are now calling on the government to give abuse of vulnerable adults the same status as that of child protection and domestic violence. In addition to legislation to protect vulnerable adults they are also calling for a national data collection, and reporting requirements where people are referred for protection measures.

Without legislation, authorities and agencies were not compelled to put measures in place which would protect

vulnerable adults, the author of the report, Daniel Blake said.

“It is sickening to think that in the 21st Century vulnerable adults are still being subject to abuse”, and Choices and Rights support calls for abuse of vulnerable adults to be given the same status as that of child protection and domestic violence.

In previous research, Action on Elder Abuse had found there was no standard



system which local authorities used when dealing with cases of abuse.

In this latest research, nine authorities - Essex, Hertfordshire, Brent, Redbridge, Liverpool, Hull and East Riding of

OF ELDERLY

Yorkshire, Poole, Bournemouth and Dorset - were given a framework to work to.

Just over 200 of the 639 cases related to abuse which had occurred in a person's own home, compared to 188 in care homes. In 116 cases, the person carrying out the abuse - usually physical in nature - was working in an institution, such as a nursing home or hospital. In the cases of the people who were abused at home, 65 involved a paid care worker, with abuse by family members other than a partner or carer making up the next largest group.

The government said measures were planned to tackle the problem.

Abuse of vulnerable adults can include
Physical abuse: such as hitting, pushing, shaking, giving too much medicine or otherwise causing physical harm.
Sexual abuse: sexual activity where a vulnerable adult cannot or does not give their consent.
Financial or material abuse: such as fraud or theft or using a vulnerable adult's property without their permission. This could involve large sums of money or small amounts from a pension or allowance each week.
Emotional or psychological abuse: such as the use of threats, or bribes to deny an individual's choices and wishes, using racist language or preventing someone from enjoying activities or meeting friends and neglect where a person suffers because her/his health or

physical needs are being neglected by a carer. This could include failure to keep someone warm, clean and well nourished or neglecting to give prescribed medication. If you have been or still are the victim of abuse, or you know someone who you think is being abused, then it is really important to seek help, even if the circumstances appear trivial.

You should contact Social Services as soon as possible as they are the main organisation responsible for co-ordinating investigations of abuse and organising services to assist vulnerable adults in the community. Your concerns will be taken seriously and urgent action will be taken where appropriate. However, no action can be taken or information shared with others without the consent of the person being abused except where there may be public interest considerations (e.g.: others at risk of abuse) or the adult concerned lacks the capacity to make an informed decision.

In an emergency the Police should be contacted by calling 999.

Action
 on elder abuse
www.elderabuse.org.uk

Image used with kind permission of:
CCHR Mental Health Abuse website -
www.mental-health-abuse.org

CONCESSIONS - ARE THEY FAIR?

“Disabled people are often offered ‘concessions’ - but why? And are they fair to ALL disabled people?”

Disabled people are often offered ‘concessions’ for different things. For example, some disabled people can get free passes to travel over the Humber Bridge, discounts on tickets for football games, theatre and cinema tickets. But why are we offered concessions and are they fair to ALL disabled people?

The first time I remember getting something for free because I was disabled (I use a wheelchair) was free entrance to football games. I never thought about why I was offered this, just accepted it as a “perk” of being disabled. I imagine this started as a result of the Second World War and injured servicemen being allowed in free, but I am not certain about this.

As I got involved in the disability movement I started to question these concessions and wondered why they applied to some things and not others. I was never given a concession to go to the cinema, music gigs, theatre, etc, so

why football? Then as access started to improve and the DDA hit home, I questioned why I should have them at all and also why did they apply to some disabled people and not others?

I believe there are three reasons why some disabled people were offered concessions:

a) It was seen as a ‘nice’ thing to do to offering people less fortunate an opportunity to do something. This is clearly seeing disabled people as objects of pity or charity.

b) Access to some services was restricted for disabled people and charging full price wouldn’t be fair.

c) Some disabled people need a friend/personal assistant or carer with them. To charge them for two people would clearly be unfair.

If this is the case, then only b) and c) should be used and hopefully the need for b) should reduce as places become more accessible.

The problem with c) is that services are having difficulty in deciding what the requirement is for someone requiring a carer. For example, most services seem to think this only applies to wheelchair users who need escorting, they don’t think about people with a visual or hearing impairment.

Even so, it is difficult to decide how

and who should get concessions.

Choices and Rights were recently asked for advice on this issue via a service provider. Their policy of providing free admission is being abused by (possibly) non disabled people. They have had people asking for the concessions, because they are 'caring' for their children and for people who appear not to require assistance (and may or may not be disabled) to visit the facility.

They are keen to provide a concession for disabled people who require assistance and want to do the 'right' thing. But they have to make money and can't afford to lose income because of abuse of their concessions scheme.

If they decide that only wheelchair users get concessions, this discriminates against other disabled people who may require assistance. (However, this probably would not break the DDA)

There is no real documentation, benefit, etc that offers 'proof' that a person needs assistance. They can't ask for medical evidence (something we would obviously strongly object to), they can't operate a registration scheme (it's not like a cinema where you may go regularly or buying a season ticket for a sporting fixture) so what should they do?

The difficulty is that concessions don't have to be offered at all. If they give no concessions, they wouldn't be breaking the law, but they feel that they want to be socially responsible and recognise that there is an extra cost to disabled people who need assistance. We could only point out the different schemes and that none of them are perfect.

There appears to be no clear idea of what concessions are, why they are given and who should have them. To show how varied they can be, here are a couple of examples.

Humber Bridge Passes - to get free bridge passes, you have to be in receipt of the higher rate of the mobility component of the Disability Living Allowance and have a tax-exempt vehicle (i.e. a Motability car), but you don't have to be a driver.

This immediately excludes anyone over the age of 66 who becomes disabled as they can't claim the Mobility Component after this date, unless they are in receipt of it before they are 65. We wrote to the Humber Bridge board about this discrepancy and they responded with a simple, "We have no intention of changing this policy".

Hull Truck Theatre - their web site states "Concession - applies to students, the unemployed (ES40), retired over 60's, registered disabled and under 16's. Proof of eligibility is required"

We are aware that wheelchair users have been given discounts without any "proof of eligibility", but what do they mean by "registered" and what "proof" would be required? If you have used the theatre and aren't a wheelchair user, please let us know if you asked for a concession and what happened?

We would like to know what you think about concessions. Do you have any good or bad examples? What would you do if you were offering concessions? Contact us at the Choices and Rights office to let us know.

INDEPENDENT LIVING BILL

Older and disabled people will be given the right to determine the way they live for the first time, if Lord Ashley's Independent Living Bill becomes law.

Under the Independent Living Bill no-one will be forced into residential care against their will, and the disabled and elderly will be able to choose for themselves what they want help with and where they live.

The private members bill is being introduced by Labour peer and veteran disability campaigner Lord Ashley, and it was given its second reading on 14th July 2006.

Lord Ashley says he hopes that the bill will get all-party support. He goes on to say that, for too long, disabled people in Britain have been treated like second class citizens. He argues that they are less likely to be employed, and they are denied educational opportunities, are more likely to live in poverty and encounter prejudice in their daily lives.

Lord Ashley told the BBC new website that "All this adds up to an underclass, and the object of this bill is to change that completely,"

Freedom

The proposed legislation sets out key principles for local authorities, the health service and other partners to help make independent living a reality:

- People should have freedom, choice, control and participation
 - Disabled people should have the right to self-determination and, where necessary, support in expressing their needs
 - There should be positive action to address the disadvantage experienced by older disabled people and those from minority ethnic groups
 - People's dignity must be protected and family life must be respected
 - The health and well-being of carers must be safeguarded

Lord Ashley wants closer co-operation between local authorities, the NHS and other organisations to improve the range of care options available to disabled people.

Where necessary various partners will have to pool funds in order to avoid multiple assessments, delay and fragmentation.

Disabled people would have the right to a comprehensive assessment of their needs - often this would be conducted by the individual themselves, with support for some people where necessary.

'Postcode lotteries'

Resources would then be made available as a cash payment - or the individual could choose to have the funds managed on their behalf by a third party.

Lord Ashley's Bill also aims to end so-called "postcode lotteries" enabling people to take their support package from one part of the country to another.

Funding people individually will enable them to live at home, making it easier for them to work and participate in education, family life, as well as social and cultural activities, he says.

Lord Ashley wants the legislation to enshrine the right of people to determine where and with whom they live: no-one would be obliged to live in an institution against their will.

On the cost implications contained in the legislation, Lord Ashley urged people to consider the likely gains.

"For example, if a disabled person is drawing benefits and then finds a job, and support for that job, he or she is earning money, no longer getting benefits and probably making fewer visits to hospital," he said.

Optimistic

Lord Ashley says that he is "fairly confident" that the Bill will receive considerable support in the Lords, and "If the government is lukewarm, it needs reminding that the prime minister says

he supports independent living," Lord Ashley also says that he is encouraged that Conservative leader, David Cameron, who has a disabled son, has committed himself to helping disabled people.

The DRC says the legislation contains what is needed to bring the UK's social care system into the 21st century. "It should have the backing of the government and the main political parties: if it doesn't, I should like to know," said DRC chairman, Bert Massie.

Junior Work and Pensions Minister Anne McGuire said: "Enabling independent living is at the heart of our strategy for disabled people, so I welcome this opportunity to

raise awareness about the barriers faced by disabled people and to have a real debate about the way we tackle them."

Please support The Right to Independent Living Bill

Tell us about your experience and send it to:

The National Centre for Independent Living

4th Floor, Hampton House

20 Albert Embankment

London, SE1 7TJ

Telephone: 020 7587 1663

Fax: 020 7582 2469

Minicom: 020 7587 1177

E-mail: nfo@ncil.org.uk

Download the form: www.ncil.org.uk



EQUALITY 2025

HM Government Office for Disability Issues is recruiting for members of a new body - Equality 2025.

Members of the Network will be expected to talk to and work with other advisory, disability and equalities organisations and disabled people to ensure that everyone is working towards the same goal and that their work complements, supports and strengthens each other.

They will share information and experiences, and make proposals for the Government to consider when making policies and designing services that affect disabled people's lives.

Some of the work of the Network will be confidential. It means that members of the Network will be expected not to tell others about things that they discuss and are asked to keep confidential until a public decision is made.

Network members will be appointed in their own right, and not to represent a particular organisation or impairment.

All members of the Network must be disabled people.

The Advisory Network will reflect as wide a range of disabled people as possible including disabled people from marginalised groups for example disabled young people, people who have learning disabilities, people who have mental health issues, disabled people from a black or other minority ethnic group, those of different sexual

orientation, people with different faiths.

Due to the unique challenges of Devolution the Network should have some members who have knowledge of the issues facing disabled people from Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

The Network should have some members who do not have previous experience of working in a disability organisation or working on disability issues at a national level.

The Network will make sure that notice is taken of the views and ideas of disabled people from all levels of society.

It is important that members understand disabled people's lives, are committed to representing the full and diverse views and interests of disabled people, and are a strong advocate for rights, independent living and choice.

For further information, or to request an application pack in large print, Braille, easy read or audio format then please contact us.

Telephone: 0870 609 4218

E-mail: equality2025@capita.co.uk

Textphone: 0870 609 4219

Fax: 0870 833 3790

Post: **Capita Resourcing,
Innovation Court, New
Street, Basingstoke,
Hampshire, RG21 7JB**

Website: www.equality2025.co.uk

The closing date is 8th September 2006, and interviews will be held during the period 16-27th October.

ILF REVIEW

A government scheme which helps Disabled People live independently is being reviewed.

The Independent Living Funds were set up as a national resource dedicated to the financial support of disabled people to enable them to choose to live in their own homes rather than in residential care.

The Independent Living Fund (ILF), which is run by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), will provide about 17,800 disabled people with a total of £263m in 2006/07.

The review, set to report in December 2006, will consider options which include ending the fund, cutting funding levels and changing the criteria for who receives funding from the scheme.

The DWP insisted there that there was “absolutely no agenda to scrap the ILF”.

A spokesperson added: “Regular reviews of non departmental bodies are normal practice and required under Cabinet Office guidance.”

The review, which will include a consultation exercise, will be carried out by a consultant following a report from

the Prime Minister’s Strategy Unit.

Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire stressed that the study must be handled with “sensitivity”. She said: “I do not want any suggestions that we are conducting the review to end the Independent Living Funds, as this is not the case, although we are looking at their future in the context of new development.”

“ILF’s enable thousands of severely disabled people to live independently and we need to consider the future direction of the funds in the light of our goal of equality for disabled people.”

However the prospect of a review has caused concern among

both individual disabled people and organisations of disabled people who have clients who benefit from the scheme.

Any review which threatens to endanger the amount of funds available to disabled people is playing with independence of disabled people in a way that is unacceptable.



ADVERTISE

Competitive advertising to a wide ranging audience

Loud & Proud is the newsletter of Choices and Rights Disability Coalition and is published quarterly.

We publish on a limited budget, but our content is always excellent and our newsletter is read by a great many more people than the number of copies we distribute.

We hope that by securing sponsorship and advertising we can increase the number we print, allowing us to reach a great many more people, and to increase the publication to bimonthly or even monthly!

Most of the articles are written by disabled people, for disabled people, with professionals and organisations involved in disability issues often writing articles specifically for the Loud & Proud readership.

We edit as little as possible to give our writers the freedom to speak their minds, and encourage positive thinking about the Social Model of disability as well as addressing key points regarding disability issues in the United Kingdom and our local area.

Who gets Loud & Proud:

- Disabled People
- Disability Groups
- Council Offices
- The public
- Parents/Carers
- Social Services

Loud & Proud distribution:

- Hull
- Beverley
- Holderness
- Leeds
- Goole
- Selby

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Advertising Rates

Choose the level at which you want to sponsor us by selecting your advert size and number of issues you want to run the ad for.

Your contribution helps to cover the cost of design, publication and distribution for the issue/s that you sponsor. The newsletter is printed in black and white on 80gms paper, and currently spans 20

pages. It is also published on the Choices and Rights website in full colour PDF.

These figures are correct at July 2006, but are subject to change:

Rate per issue:

Size	Cost (£)
Sixth page	20.00
Full column	25.00
Half page	40.00
Full page	75.00

ONLINE FILING

Direct Payments and Online Filing of Employer's End of Year Return

The Government have introduced a cash incentive for employers who file their end of year returns online.

Direct payment users are entitled to these payments (a total of £575 over a four year period) as employers of Personal Assistants.

There has been some confusion over who was entitled to these payments.

Employers who live in Hull

Originally, Hull CVS (who process payroll for direct payment users) asked users to sign a statement agreeing these payments should be made over to Hull CVS.

Hull CVS have now received further advice from the Inland Revenue and realised this was incorrect.

They have now written to all direct payment users and sent them cheques for £250. (For future years, direct payment users will have to claim the rebate themselves).

If you have not yet received a letter or cheque from Hull CVS, please contact them on Hull (01482) 324474

Employers who live in the East Riding

We understand that originally there was a similar debate in the East Riding, but this too has now been sorted out.

If you have not received a rebate, please contact Premier Business Services on (01964) 542193

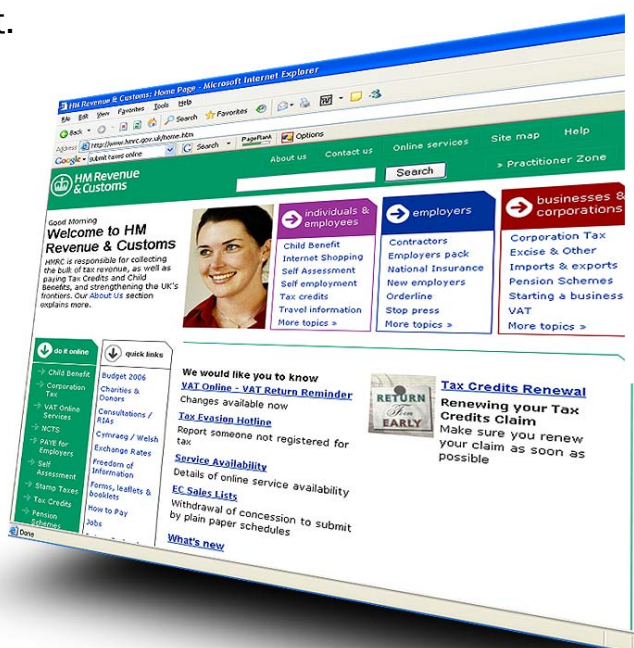
Amount of Cash Incentive

It is definitely worth claiming the incentive and it breaks down as follows:

File online for 2005-06	£250
File online for 2006-07	£150
File online for 2007-08	£100
File online for 2008-09	£ 75

We would like to thank the person who contacted us originally to make us aware of the problem. They didn't want to be named, but you know who you are!

Thanks for making sure disabled people get a financial boost!



BIT OF THIS ...

TRUST

GET INVOLVED, HAVE A SAY and MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Humber Mental Health Teaching NHS Trust, who provide mental health, learning disability and addictions services to people in Hull and the East Riding, is applying to become a Foundation Trust.

The Trust will work very closely with local people to provide the kind of services they need. To do this, the Trust will need members; anyone over the age of 14 living in Hull and the East Riding (no age limit for people who use mental health services). These members can opt to be informed or involved and will be kept in touch with what is happening.

Members also elect a board of governors, who work with the board of directors to guide the strategic direction of the Trust. Any member can stand to be elected as a governor. Governors will take the views of the membership to the board, giving members a real say in how the Trust is run. The Trust needs as many members as possible so that it can be truly representative of the local community. Your views are crucial in deciding the direction of the Trust.

If you are interested in becoming a member of the Foundation Trust, please:

- visit: **www.humber.nhs.uk**
- call **freephone 0800 915 5064**
- write to Freepost RLZB-RKZB-

AJSJ, Foundation Trust Office, Trust Headquarters, Willerby Hill, Beverley Road, Willerby HU10 6ED.

You're joking ... Right?

Planning permission is being sought for a stair lift on one of Dartmoors most iconic rock formations. Alex Murdin has applied for planning permission for the stair lift at Haytor Rocks. He says that the application is deadly serious and that he has the backing of disability groups but Dartmoors preservation society says that it will oppose the application and called it a joke.

If you have any strong view, or know of another unusual location that you would like to be made accessible write and tell us about it.

Guide for Mobility Scooter and Electric Wheelchairs

RADAR has published it's first ever guide for buying a mobility scooter or electric wheelchair, aimed at older and disabled people. The guide called "Get Mobile" also details many ways in that you can purchase scooters or wheelchairs, including how the NHS Wheelchair Service may be able to help. The guide is free and to get a copy, please ring RADAR on 020 7250 3222, Minicom 020 7250 4119 or download a copy at: **www.radar.co.uk**

British Gas Winter Warmers

British Gas is offering a Winter Rebate scheme to households buying gas and/or electricity from British Gas and where

... BIT OF THAT

someone in the house is receiving certain benefits. The rebates are as follows:

Gas - £60 a year paid in 2 instalments (£30 in last quarter's bill of 2006 and the first quarter of 2007)

Electricity - £30 a year in 2 instalments (£15 in last quarter's bill of 2006 and the first quarter of 2007)

Benefits list for eligibility – Disability Living Allowance, Carer's Allowance, Child Tax Credits (with income less than £14,600), Working Tax Credit with income less than £14,600), Severe Disablement Allowance, Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Income based JSA, Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, War Disabled Allowance and War Pension.

To register, you need to phone 0845 601 2006 and have your British Gas and/or British Gas Electricity account numbers available. Registration is simple and effective for Autumn 2006. Don't wait to register as there is only a short period available for registration

(You may get a cheaper deal with another fuel provider. This information does not mean we are recommending British Gas as the cheapest provider.)

Free Concessions for Humber Bridge

If you are in receipt of both the High Rate Mobility component of DLA and the free tax disc for your vehicle (you do not have to be the driver), you can claim

for free concessionary travel over the Humber Bridge.

For further details, or to request an application form, contact the Humber Bridge Board on (01482) 647161.

Choices and Rights recently wrote to the Humber Bridge Board pointing out that the scheme excludes any disabled person over the age of 66 who can't receive DLA if they become disabled after that age.

The Humber Bridge Board's reply was that they have no intention of changing the criteria. If you are affected by this, please write to your MP and we might be able to try and get a change of policy.

Finally on the Humber Bridge, with a risk of showing North Bank bias, an interview with TV personality Janet Street Porter who was in Hull recently made us laugh.

When asked what she thought of the bridge, she replied that it was a beautiful structure, but pointless as "it only goes to Grimsby!"

If you are a Hull City fan, no doubt you will agree with this statement ...

STOP PRESS

Watch out for our **Ramp No 10 Downing Street** Petition.

Details will be sent out shortly and available online.

Send us your articles:

office@choicesandrights.org.uk

THE RIGHT STUFF?

Why Not Get More Involved?

So, you've read the newsletter, maybe you've even used some of our services or think we should do more? Well, why not get involved in the running of the organisation? We are always on the look out for disabled people to become more involved and one of the best ways is to join our Management Committee.

So what does the Management Committee do?

Basically, it ensures that the organisation is working in the way it should, both legally and morally. Below are some of the key tasks that the management committee has to deal with. Don't be put off, it doesn't mean that you have to understand all of them straight away! We will also provide support and free training if required.

What's in it for me?

Well, we will pay your travel expenses and out of pocket expenses for any duties you carry out for Choices and Rights. But more importantly, it means that you gain experience in a wide range of issues that you find useful for employment, training or just to give you a voice in a leading organisation run by disabled people.

So what do I do if I am interested?

Basically, committee members are elected each year at our Annual General Meeting (It will be held in November

2006). But, if you are interested, please ring the office and speak to our chair, Mark Baggley. He will be able to discuss it in more detail with you and you may be able to attend a meeting to see how it works.

KEY TASKS FOR THE MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

FINANCIAL

- Monitoring the budget
- Understanding and approving the accounts
- Managing the financial status of the organisation
- Establishing a funding strategy and assisting the Treasurer
- Looking for opportunities for fundraising and sponsorship

LEGAL

- Maintaining and amending the constitution
- Implementing, monitoring and assessing Coalition policies including Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, etc
- Supporting and assisting staff
- Ensuring that decisions taken at board meetings, etc are implemented within a reasonable agreed time period
- Contributing to and supporting any disciplinary or grievance process

REPRESENTATION

- Representing the Coalition on external

bodies (both voluntary and statutory sector)

- Establishing and contributing to sub committees and advisory groups
- Establishing key public relations
- Listening and representing the views of our members
- Safe guarding the image and values of the Coalition

PUBLICITY

- Writing articles for Loud and Proud newsletter
- Promoting the work of the Coalition including the Centre for Independent Living Services

QUALITIES REQUIRED

- Willing to attend meetings and accept responsibility for key tasks
- Commitment to the values of Choices and Rights

Think you've got what it takes?

Get in touch; we'd love to hear from you!

How to send us your articles ...

We prefer you to send articles by email or as computer files since this makes our layout work easier. If you don't have access to a computer, handwritten articles are best submitted in BLOCK CAPS where possible.

Computer generated files:

Save/Export your file as:
Plain Text (.txt) or in
Rich Text Format (.rtf)

Please DO NOT save the files in native format as we may not be able to access them.

Media:

3.5" Floppy Disc
CD-ROM

Notes for email:

Please either insert as a file attachment, or clearly mark where the article starts and finishes.

Disability Information Service

Using local and national data provided by DIAL UK we are able to offer you lots of practical information on all sorts of topic including:



- Law & Rights
- Education
- Transport
- Holidays
- Social Issues
- Accommodation
- Direct Payments
- Volunteering
- Personal Matters
- Arts & Leisure
- Aids & Equipment
- Sports & interests

10am to 4pm weekdays, or leave an answer phone message at all other times:

 - **01482 878778**

Text: 01482 370986 - Fax: 01482 370999

Contact Details

Staff

Denise Canniffe	Access Direct and Direct Payments (Children)
John Gilling	Direct Payments (Adults)
Fiona Rees	Community Care Advice
Mark Bagglely	Disability Housing Service



Rachel Carpenter	Administration
Melanie Wakefield	Administration

Email: office@choicesandrights.org.uk
Website: <http://www.choicesandrights.org.uk/>

Disability Housing Service

Tel: 01482 370983
 Mark Bagglely MBagglely@habinteg.org.uk

DISCLAIMER: The views in Loud and Proud do not necessarily reflect the views of Choices and Rights Disability Coalition.

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