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Chair's Remarks

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERYONE!

I was very busy in the run up to Christmas including attending some of the Empowerment Boards along with a visit to the White Lodge Christmas Fair where I had a lot of people showing interest in SILC and the work that we do.

At the end of November SILC hosted a visit by members of Bromley's Experts by Experience group who are in the process of setting up their own Disabled People's Organisation and hope to emulate some of the work done by SILC. Over a working lunch Judith Ellis, Brenda Griffiths, Mike Moorwood, Richard Davy and I met, discussed and shared a range of ideas with Bromley trustees Barry McDonald, Richard Comaish and their Development Officer, Justine Jones. It was a very positive example of the benefits of different Disabled People's groups working together and we hope to be able to continue supporting each other in the future.

Another piece of work I have been closely involved in is the Pathways to Independence project. This project, managed by Social Information on Disability (SID), is looking at ways to improve the information and support available to disabled people who want to move into Independent Living.

At the heart of the project is the sharing of experiences of people who have already successfully made that journey. As well as me, Dean and Lorna from SILC are also closely involved, along with James Chilton from Surrey County Council. Yet another great example of the benefits of joint working.

At the start of December SILC added another string to its bow when it took over the management of the Host arrangements for The Surrey LINK.

The Surrey LINK is a countywide network of individuals and organisations who are involved in promoting peoples involvement in health & social care issues as well as obtaining people's views on related changes and supporting & monitoring of health & care services.

This can involve carrying out visits to and



inspections of Foundation Trust hospitals, mental health and learning disability services, community hospitals, nursing and rest homes (where they are publicly-funded clients) and GP practices and to make recommendations about any changes or improvements that may be needed.

If you want to find out about The Surrey LINK and its work contact James Campbell at the Surrey LINK office on 01483 447 131 or email admin@surrey-link.org.

In this issue you will find details about Surrey County Council's Direct Payment consultation, the outcome of which has major implications for all Direct Payment users so please get involved if you haven't already.

I would also like to take this opportunity to welcome Stephen Pugsley as a new addition to SILC's team of advisors. Stephen's job is to provide advice and support to Carers and will be focusing on the development and support of Carer's Support Payments, more details of which you can find on page 10 of this newsletter along with an introduction to Stephen. Welcome also to Pam Gough who has joined us as a volunteer and is doing a wonderful job in sorting out the office. If you or anyone you know wants to join Pam as a SILC volunteer just let the office know.

On a sad note Wendy Nevin left us in November after working for 2 years as one of our Financial Monitor Advisors. Wendy did a massive amount of great work for SILC and the Direct Payment recipients she supported and we wish her and her family all the best for the future.

Congratulations to Mike Moorwood, the Chair of SILC's Publicity Committee, who received a Special Recognition Award from Princess Anne at the Hearing Unheard Voices awards last month on behalf of Trailblazers, the Muscular Dystrophy Campaign group.

Lastly I would like to thank all the SILC trustees and staff along with all our members, partners and supporters and wish you all the best for the coming year.

Jason Vaughan - Chair

PA FINDER COMES UP TRUMPS

In July, Claire, my longest serving PA, (she had been with me for more than 11 years) gave in her notice. She had been offered the position of Scheme Manager at a retirement group of dwellings nearby and I was very pleased for her but her going would leave big gaps in my PA cover. Claire, thinking both of her situation and mine, stipulated that she could not take up her new position until 1st October. I don't know whether her decision to leave was destabilising to my other PAs but within a week or so two more PAs had also given in their notice. So, suddenly, I was in the somewhat unenviable position of having to find replacements for three of my six PAs who, between them, had provided over two thirds of my cover.

Almost the whole of August went by before I was ready to start looking seriously for PAs. I was working on the theory that people would be getting back from holiday by September. As time was by then short, I decided on a three prong attack. Claire had answered an advert in *The Lady* in 2000 and I thought I might be fortunate again. I placed an advert in the issue dated 2 September - this turned out to be the first time *The Lady* had come out on a Friday. I gave my own phone number in the advert and was very pleased when I found later that SILC would help with processing any applications if I asked applicants to phone SILC. Next, following a recommendation from the agency I use, I contacted the Job Centre and gave them my requirements. Finally I phoned SILC to register my needs and to ask for a quick reminder on using PAFinder.

I spent the first three weeks of September busily sifting through applicants and was beginning to become concerned.

Although I had seen some very good applicants, apart from one lady who could offer 'bank' work, they all lived 3 or more miles away. Remembering last winter's weather, I felt it was essential to try to find local helpers. Once more I spoke to the Job Centre and scrutinised the PAFinder list. I spoke to a lady who could take my evening work – and she lived within the town – Hurrah! And then, on 28 September, a lady phoned me – a friend had passed on to her *The Lady* with my advert. Yes, she could cover all my daytime hours – yes, she could walk to me in snowy weather – yes, she could start immediately – but hadn't I seen her details on PAFinder?

I hadn't but I quickly did! Suddenly, I had a full complement of PAs again and when I looked to see where my new PAs had been recruited from they had all appeared on PAFinder. I want to say a big Thank You to PAFinder and to Dean and Bryan whose support with the various tasks of recruiting made what could have been a daunting process so straightforward.

Judith Ellis



DAILY DUTY SYSTEM

SILC is now operating a daily duty system for general Direct Payment queries.

One of our Independent Living Advisers will be available to answer calls Monday to Friday between noon and 2pm.

In addition to this any general Direct Payment enquires that come in outside of duty times will be sent as a message to the duty e-mail box and followed up by the next duty ILA.

We hope that this development will further improve the service we offer and we will be reviewing its operation over the next two months.



Employers Liability Insurance

Anybody who employs a Personal Assistant has a legal responsibility to have Employers Liability Insurance (ELI) in place. Having ELI in place is also a requirement of Surrey's Direct Payment Agreement.

ELI insurance provides cover for employees and others who provide services to you in case they are injured, become ill or die in circumstances which are deemed to be caused by your negligence. Reported incidents can range from back injuries and animal bites to broken bones and some claims are due to simple everyday occurrences such as spectacles getting broken, slipping on spills or falls resulting in broken bones.

Examples of more complex claims include one employer who accidentally ran over a PA who slipped on an icy road and a PA who slipped on some loose stones and was badly injured whilst taking her employer out for the day.

Many Employers Liability Insurance Policies also contain Employers Legal Protection and access to an employment advice helpline which covers employers in situations where there are employment disputes. Policies cost between £99 and £140 a year and can be funded as part of a Direct Payment.

David Ashley of FISH Insurance has summarised for us the main employment issues that his company deals with:

Most common topics raised

Disciplinary Issues – these range from time-keeping, refusal to carry out certain tasks, bullying, theft to serious safeguarding & negligence problems

Changing Terms and Conditions - anything from employer's needs changing to employer's funding changing

Redundancy – historically due to employer's circumstances but increasing in the last 12 months due to funding decisions

Health & Safety – e.g. confusion about training responsibilities or where behavioural issues can cause higher risks

Resignation – with grievances which can escalate
Employment Relationship Breaking Down - often there are no clear grounds to end the contract lawfully

Sickness Absence – frequent failure to attend work or continuing health problems which are difficult to cope with long term

Grievances - about other staff, family/friends or the employer

Capability – inability to do all or some of the required tasks due to ill-health or inability

And the easy ones! Statutory Entitlements e.g. Maternity Leave, Holiday Entitlement, Rest Breaks and Wages.

If you need to make a claim on your policy or a PA raises a complaint or grievance against you try not to worry and make sure to contact SILC and your insurer. It always helps to talk things through with someone.

June's gift to SILC



June Highams, a long-standing member and friend of SILC very kindly designed and made a cross-stitch for our office. Hanging pride of place in our reception June's cross-stitch depicts the SILC logo along with symbols to represent our various activities.

Pictured above is June giving the cross-stitch to our Operations Manager, Richard Davy.

THE BLUE BADGE SCHEME IS CHANGING

50,000 Surrey residents with severe mobility problems are currently issued with blue badges that allow them to park closer to shops and services they need to access.

From January 2012 a number of changes are being made to the production of the badges, such as including holograms and scanned photographs to help prevent forgery. A new national database of blue badge holders is being developed for parking enforcement teams to refer to in order to confirm the validity of a badge.

Generally lasting for three years, the cost of each badge will be increased from £2.00 to £10.00. This has been agreed by the Department for Transport in consultation with disabled people, local authorities and other stakeholders. A full online application process will make renewing a blue badge quicker and easier.

HILLARY'S QUESTIONS

Q I use an agency to provide some of my care. The staff they send often arrive late and leave early and when I have spoken to them about this, they say they need time to travel to their next person.

I am not happy with this, but don't want to make a fuss in case the Agency think I am a trouble maker. What should I do?

A This is problem that quite a few people experience and you should make the Agency aware of your concerns, which does not make you a trouble-maker.

Firstly, the agency staff are contracted to stay for the full time you have agreed with the Care Agency and you will be charged for the full time.

Secondly, it is the Agency's responsibility to ensure their staff have sufficient travel time. This should not be deducted from your contracted hours.

In the first instance, you should contact the manager of the Agency to inform them of your concerns and this can be by telephone or in writing or e-mail. Make sure that you keep a note of any telephone conversation you may have. If this doesn't resolve the situation you should contact your local Social Care Team.

If you would like support to do this SILC are here to help and would like anyone who is experiencing any problems with a Care Agency to please let us know.

SUPPORT WITH CONFIDENCE PERSONAL ASSISTANTS FOR SURREY



Support with Confidence
SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL

SILC has been providing FREE training courses for people who are thinking of becoming Personal Assistants (PAs) to help disabled people who want to live a more independent life.

In December 2011 some of those who successfully passed the course met to receive their certificate from the SILC Chairman, Jason Vaughan.

Adam, Norah, Nikki, Chris, Susan and Carol attended and passed the 5 day training course and completed an enhanced Criminal Records Bureau check. This has given them an accreditation on the SILC PA Finder website (www.pafinder.org.uk) in line with Support with Confidence, which is a new quality assurance scheme run by Surrey County Council Trading Standards in partnership with SILC.

Carol, one of the PAs, said "Attending the PA training course was inspirational for me. Finally I knew what I wanted to do with my life! The trainer was fantastic with huge patience and tremendous skill in passing on her knowledge.

I learnt so much both in the theory and practical sessions and am now keen to put this into practice. I know that I have the support of SILC as and when I need it and I am most grateful".

If you are interested in attending a course please see the SILC website (www.surreyilc.org.uk) or contact Kate on 01483 458111 or kate@surreyilc.org.uk





Changes to Direct Payments in Surrey

Surrey County Council are currently carrying out a consultation about three major changes that they would like to make to the way that Direct Payments in Surrey are paid.

Firstly they are proposing a change from paying Direct Payments gross to paying them net. This means that if you pay a financial contribution to the council for your support, your payment will be made net of the charge. So for example if your Direct Payment is for £200 per week and you are assessed to pay £50 per week, you will receive £150 per week. This is instead of the Council paying you £200 per week and then charging you £50 per week. If you don't pay a contribution you will not be affected.

The reason they give for wanting to introduce this change is because it will help to reduce their costs so that they would have more money to spend on direct support to people rather than on back office staff and systems and because they say they have received feedback that many people would find this easier:

Secondly they propose to change from paying Direct Payments quarterly to paying them every four or five weeks. The reason they give for this is that they think it will make Direct Payments easier for people to manage and that they have feedback that some people find quarterly payments difficult to manage and have asked for this change.

Lastly they are proposing to reduce the amount of money that people can keep in their Direct

Payment bank account as a contingency from 13 weeks to four weeks.

The reason they give for wanting this change is because some people build up very large balances, which they then need to reclaim.

They go on to say that they want people to have an appropriate level of contingency to make sure they can meet their needs but believe that 13 weeks is too large and that if they made this change you would still be able to budget for any large items you might need later in the year and this wouldn't be counted as part of your contingency amount.

Every person in Surrey who receives a Direct Payment should have received a questionnaire from the Council asking them for their views about these changes. The deadline for this consultation was 13th January but if you haven't received the copy or would still like your views included, please call the SILC office.

There will also be a small consultation event on Tuesday the 31st of January at Astolat, Coniers Way, Burpham GU4 7HL between 1pm and 4pm and if you would like to attend this just let us know.

As an organisation SILC will be making its own formal response to these proposals which we will publish in our newsletter. As well as this some individual Direct Payment recipients have already responded to the proposals at the SILC AGM in July and a summary of their response can be found on page 8.

SPOTLIGHT ON

Support Planning

As part of Surrey County Council's new Self Directed Support approach to organising social care, Direct Payment recipients and users of directly provided services are increasingly being asked to complete Support Plans to show how they want to arrange the care and support they need.

This month's Spotlight looks at what support is available to help with this.

Planning your support

With Self Directed Support once you have completed your Supported Self Assessment, you will be given what's known as an Indicative Budget. This will give you an idea of how much money needs to be spent on your support.

Once you know this you can start planning.

Writing your Support Plan

Your support plan is where you describe what is important to you, the support you receive and how you want to meet the assessed eligible social care needs that were identified in your Supported Self Assessment.

You can think about spending your indicative budget in all sorts of ways, provided it keeps you safe and is lawful, effective and affordable.

How you put your Support Plan together is up to you. You may feel you want to do it yourself in which case it's a good idea to ask someone who knows you (like a member of your family or a friend) to look at it with you.

Help with writing your plan

If you would like some help writing your plan you have a number of options, all of which are free.

- The person from the Social Care Team who is working with you.
Normally the person who you have regular contact with about your care and support.
- A Support Broker from the Social Care Team.
Someone who works in the Social Care Team and specialises in helping to plan and arrange support.
- An Independent Organisation approved by Surrey County Council.
There are seven specialist independent organisations that have a contract with Surrey County Council to provide help with planning and arranging your support. They're known as External Brokers.
- If you are already in receipt of a Direct Payment and want to use your Support Plan to review your Direct Payment arrangements you can contact SILC directly for help.

If you decide to use one of these options please let the person from the Social Care Team who is working with you know and they will make the necessary arrangements.

If you would like some help but are not sure what to do you can discuss which option might be best for you with the person from the Social Care Team who is working with you or contact us on 01483 458 111.



Putting your plan into action

Once you've completed your support plan you will need to send it to Surrey County Council so that they can agree it.

External Brokers

These are the independent organisations that have a contract with Surrey County Council to help you plan and arrange your support:

deafPLUS supports deaf, hard of hearing, visually impaired and older people to realise their legal and civil rights and entitlements through personal budget brokerage, information, advice and guidance. Clients can be assisted at home or at local venues.

Just Advocacy has been providing professional advocacy services in Surrey since 1993 supporting people who live with: Learning Disabilities, Profound Learning Disabilities, Autistic Spectrum Conditions, Mental Health Issues, Dementia and Head Injury. They have experience of working with all age groups.

Oakleaf Enterprise offers you friendly, expert advice and local knowledge to help you find and access the services you want. They have over 15 years of experience helping people to gain the best possible service and to live independently.

SAVI has been working with vision-impaired people for ninety years and has provided specialist services for people with combined sight and hearing loss since 2002. During that time they have worked with a wide range of people from all client groups - young to old and from sensory loss to learning disability. Their experience and professional staff enable them to support diverse needs in an individual way. They would be happy to work with you to help you achieve your individual goals.

Surrey Disabled People's Partnership is an independent organisation run and controlled by disabled people for disabled people. They aim to promote, enable and increase disabled people's involvement in all aspects of the community by providing a range of support and information services across Surrey including: professional advocacy, a disability information service and a brokerage scheme.

VoiceAbility helps people understand their rights, explore options and make the choices that they want. VoiceAbility provides support planning services across Surrey. If you are eligible for a personal budget, they can work with you to plan how you want to spend this and gain more choice and control over your life.

What is meant by?

Supported Self Assessment means the full assessment you complete which gives a detailed description of your situation and tells Surrey County Council why you need help and identifies your assessed eligible social care needs.

Assessed eligible social care need means Surrey County Council has agreed that it has a responsibility to meet a need that is identified in your Supported Self Assessment.

Indicative Budget means the amount of money that could be available from Surrey County Council to meet your assessed eligible social care needs.

Safe means that your support plan will keep you safe and does not leave you exposed to unnecessary risks.

Lawful means that the plan does not break any rules or laws.

Effective means that the plan is going to meet your needs.

Affordable means that the plan is within your indicative budget.

Direct Payments Feedback Summary

SILC AGM – 26th July 2011

At the SILC AGM staff from Surrey County Council carried out a consultation exercise about three proposed changes to the way Direct Payments in Surrey are managed.

The objective of the exercise was:
To listen to people's experiences of receiving, managing and monitoring a Direct Payment.

To get people's input into the re-design of forms and processes, to make these easier for people to use and so to encourage take-up and on-going use of Direct Payments.

To get people's views on the proposed changes to Direct Payments:

The responses from those taking part can be summarised as:

Net payments rather than Gross

Not many people were affected by this proposed change. There were two comments that it 'made sense' and one person said they could understand why the person should pay the assessed charge into their Direct Payments account.

One group asked what would happen if there was a dispute about the assessed charge.

Paying 4 or 5 weekly instead of quarterly

The groups had varied opinions about this although all the groups had some concerns.

Some people felt that paying 4/5 weekly would be difficult and if the payments had to change from quarterly, they should be 4 weekly (one group) or monthly (one group).

Several groups said they should be aligned with Independent Living Fund payments and one said they should also be aligned with Access to Work payments, as otherwise this created additional complexity in managing the payments. The groups said that Independent Living Fund and Access to Work are paid four weekly in arrears.

Some groups questioned why the council was doing this and suggested it was so that the council rather than individuals benefited from the interest.

Overall, people felt it would be more difficult to manage their support with monthly rather than quarterly payments. It would make budgeting more difficult especially for people who have fluctuating needs. It would make covering holidays and sickness more difficult and didn't take account of the fact that some times of year and particular events were more expensive than others. There would be a reduction in flexibility and the ability to plan and make the money go further.

Some groups felt that this change would not be so much of a problem if the contingency wasn't also being reduced. They said that it wouldn't be a problem as long as they had enough in their account to meet their emergency needs. There was concern that people had got used to the current quarterly payments and it would be confusing to get a smaller amount.

One group suggested it be applied to new Direct Payment recipients only.

Reducing the Contingency

There was a lot of concern about the impact on people with fluctuating needs and high levels of needs. One example was when the person's PA was on holiday, the agency costs are more expensive and the contingency helps to cover this. Most groups felt it would decrease people's flexibility to change their support when they needed this.

Overall, people were against this change and said they were concerned about how quickly the Sourcing Teams could respond if they needed an emergency payment.

Reconciliation

The groups were asked to feed back on the DP reconciliation process and the communication they received from the Sourcing Teams.

Most of the groups said that the reconciliation forms should be redesigned. This should be in consultation with SILC. There were suggestions that having a simple user guide or help sheets and creating audio or video guides would really help.

Some people received help from SILC with reconciliation and felt that they had got used to the process but there should be better guidance for new people.

There were comments that SCC asked for the forms back too early, before people had received their bank statements.

Two groups said there was a lack of clarity on what the payments could be spent on and this needed to be addressed.

Several groups said the letters from the Sourcing Teams could be improved, although one group said this had improved recently. One particular letter had caused a lot of upset and anger.

Other Issues

Most groups raised other issues, these included:

- difficulties with opening bank accounts and dealing with the banks
- concerns about the closure of the Independent Living Fund and what would happen when it ended
- concerns about the consultation process and feeling penalised by the Council
- the lack of response from care managers generally
- great concerns about the recent reorganisation and the lack of any response from the teams since then



UPDATE ON THE RIGHT TO CONTROL

jobcentreplus

Department for
Work and Pensions

On 13 December 2011, the Right to Control project celebrated its first anniversary – the pilot is running until December 2012, in the boroughs of Reigate & Banstead and Epsom & Ewell.

The Right to Control is a legal right for disabled people designed to give them more choice and control over the funding they receive from the six 'funding streams' involved.

These funding streams are:

- Adult Social Care – Surrey County Council
- Disabled Facilities Grant – administered by the Borough Councils
- Independent Living Fund – this is no longer open to new applicants
- Supporting People – government funding, administered via Surrey County Council
- Access to Work – a Jobcentre Plus programme, to support people in work
- Work Choice – a Jobcentre Plus programme, to get people into work and help them maintain their job

Over 300 people have now had pre-assessment checks under the Right to Control process. These have been carried out by professionals from the teams involved, as well as by volunteers at the Redhill and Epsom Hubs who have made a substantial contribution to the total number completed.

Training around the Right to Control has been given to over 250 people – including the Hub volunteers who enjoyed a morning of team games and competition using Monopoly-style Right to Control money!



Co-production has continued to be a key component at all levels of the project and there is close collaboration between the project team and the volunteers at the Hubs and other disabled people.

The first Right to Control cases are now at the Support Planning stage and some combined Support Plans are being developed. There are also two cases where Direct Payments are due to be received under the Work Choice programme. For more information about Work Choice, Kim Bowering – the Disability Employment Adviser seconded to the project – can be contacted direct on 07917 979766.

New Approach to One Off Direct Payments for Carers

From December 2011 a different way of organising the One Off Direct Payments to Carers that SILC administers has been introduced and these are now known as Carer's Support Payments.

What is a Carer's Support Payment?

A Carer's Support Payment is an amount of money given to a carer to support them to take a break from their caring role.

Who can get one?

- Anyone who provides regular and substantial unpaid care.
- Young Carers (under the age of 18 years).
- Carers need to be registered with a Surrey GP practice to receive a Carer's Support Payment from their Doctor.

Where can a Carer get a Support Payment?

They can ask for a Support Payment from their Doctor or from their local Carer's Support Group.

Either can agree a payment and ask Surrey Independent Living Council (SILC) to send this to the carer.

How can you use a Carer's Support Payment?

✓ Carer's Support Payments from carers support organisations are funded by Surrey County Council. These can be made to give a carer something for themselves that supports them in their caring role.

✓ A Carer's Support Payment from a Doctor can be used to cover the cost of replacement care and can include personal care for the person being cared for.

They can also be used to give the carer a break from their caring role.

What can't a Carer's Support Payment be spent on?

Carers have the freedom to spend the money on things that will make a difference to them. They can be as creative as they like but the items they purchase must meet their identified needs and they must be legal.

How will the money be paid?

Carer's Support Payments are administered by SILC and sent out by cheque along with a stamped addressed envelope for carers to send back receipts for the purchases they make with their payments.

STEPHEN PUGSLEY Carer's Support Advisor

1. Have you always worked in Social Care?

I have spent the last 25 years as a qualified Social Worker in the social care arena. I have been responsible for assessments and service delivery in support of disabled children and adults. I have worked for two local authorities both as a front line worker and manager. Prior to that I have been both a Senior Navigation Officer in the Merchant Navy (having started as a young cadet when I was 16 years of age) and worked in business as a manager and as a Consultant.

2. What made you decide to work for SILC?

Although retiring from full-time employment I wanted to continue to work within the social care arena. Acknowledgement of carers and promoting access to services in their own right has been at the forefront of my work in delivering plans to disabled children and their parents (in the main) for 25 years. Despite difficult national decisions (currently being made) to reduce funding for essential services there are some exciting 'new initiatives' and one of them is a wider choice for carers to access small funding opportunities for taking much needed respite. I was aware of SILC's commitment to disabled people and their Carers as they have long been a key stakeholder in the care planning I have been responsible for.

3. Can you give me a brief outline of what your job involves?

My job here at SILC is to be part of a team to promote a new GP Carer Support Fund which will be distributed through General Practitioners based in the surgeries across Surrey. GPs will refer carers whom they have assessed should receive a small one off direct payment to contribute to some form of respite/leisure activity which will benefit the carer directly. My job will be to take referrals from GPs, to

contact the carer direct to discuss the payment of the grant, to listen to how the carer wants to use the money and then to ensure that the funds are released quickly into the hands of that carer. It is likely that I will also support in some way the great team work (here at SILC) that is carried out daily with regard to direct payments which have been initiated usually by a social services department. And finally To continue to reassure carers that they WILL receive greater recognition in their own right – from all of us here in SILC.

4. When you are not working what do you like to do in your leisure time?

Theatre, travel in Europe (will not fly anywhere now!) and Great Britain and am interested in and will generally participate in anything nautical or in particular all things that float on water!!

I am fully committed (with my partner) to ensuring our two disabled 'grown up' children have equal opportunity and any 'shared care' is appropriate for them. A time consuming, and lifelong 'labour of love'.

5. If you had one wish what would you wish for?

I suppose as a 'pipe dream', I would like once more to return to sea and take command of a ship for one last time (however I doubt that my licences from years ago would still be valid!). But in the real world I would wish to continue to ensure for as long as I am able, that I am part of this world in which works towards carer's receiving greater recognition in their own right. This important issue has still to develop enormously, but progress is so slow – due to the major implications any changes in favour of carers would have on the national economy.



DIGITAL SWITCHOVER HELP SCHEME

As you may have seen in the media, TV transmission within our area is due to switch from analogue to digital in February, March and April 2012 depending on your transmitter.

- If you currently have an analogue TV you will need to convert your TV or you will lose channels at switchover.
- If you have Sky TV, Virgin Media or Wightcable you already have this service on all of your TV sets so you won't need to do anything.
- If you have Freeview, BT Vision or Top Up TV you will need to re-tune your digital TV or box at switchover.

Surrey Community Action are working with Digital UK to coordinate and deliver the Switchover Help Scheme Community Programme. This has been designed to assist all eligible people in Surrey.

Eligible people include everyone who:

- is aged 75 and over, or
- gets (or could get) Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Attendance or Constant Attendance Allowance or Mobility Supplement, or
- is registered blind or partially sighted.

The standard offer includes:-

- Easy-to-use equipment
- Installation by an approved installer
- 12 month aftercare service including a free helpline.

This service is available for £40 all inclusive or free for eligible people listed above.

The Help Scheme will write to all eligible people nearer the time.

Please be assured this is an easy process

and if you are having difficulty please firstly ask a friend or relative to help you or you can get further information from The Switchover Help Scheme on 0800 408 7654 or www.digitaluk.co.uk. You should not need to pay excessive amounts for someone to come into your home to do any retuning.



The Stroke Association is piloting a scheme (with funding from the Surrey Stroke network) to offer stroke survivors of working age post stroke workshops across Surrey and they are holding a local event which we hope will interest you.

They will be looking at the emotional impact of Stroke and the journey towards a new life now as well as celebrating talents and new skills we may have and not thought about using before or learning new ones.

They may have guests who have experienced stroke and returned to work and people with disability who have found a new way of working to inspire and encourage us.

They hope you will meet like minded people and you will be able to support each other in your life after stroke; meeting informally for coffee or simply keeping in touch on the phone.

The meetings will be held across Surrey in 2012 and if you would like to come along, please contact any one of the following Stroke support workers for further information- you will be welcome!

Alex Moore (Elmbridge, Mole Valley and Epsom)
mobile 075155 96888
alexander.moore@stroke.org.uk

Anne Sargeant (Guildford and Waverley) mobile
075155 96967 anne.sargeant@stroke.org.uk

Carolyn Cheetham (Spelthorne and Runnymede)
mobile 075155 96968
carolyn.cheetham@stroke.org.uk

Carolyn Parfitt (Surrey Heath and Woking) mobile
075155 96889

Zuher Panju (Reigate and Banstead & Tandridge)
mobile 075155 96732 zuher.panju@stroke.org.uk

The Stroke Association would really like you to attend the sessions and then let them know what you think and what you would like included in future programmes.



KEEP THE DATE!

March 8th 2012 – International Womens' Day
 To celebrate this special day the **halow project** is holding an early evening event at the House of Fraser store in Guildford. Listen to our inspirational speaker Adelle Tracey, three times "Guildford Youth Sports Personality of the Year" (www.adelletracey.co.uk), try the latest perfumes and cosmetics, watch a fashion show, and enjoy a glass of wine and canapés – all for only £15; tickets would also make unique presents! The store will be closed to the public so as a participant at this event you will also be given an exclusive shopping opportunity.

For more details or to book a place at either of these events, contact



Sally Taylorson
 email sally.t@halowproject.org.uk
 phone: 01483 447 960
www.halowproject.org.uk

ELECTRONIC CRIMINAL RECORD BUREAU (ECRB) CHECKS

SILC recommend that CRBs are carried out on all Personal Assistants who are directly employed.

In situations where Personal Assistants are being directly employed to work with children or are going to be in an environment where they will come into unsupervised contact with children these CRB checks are a requirement.

Soon all CRB checks carried out by SILC will be done electronically instead of on paper forms. This will be done so less mistakes are made which reduces the costs and speeds up the process. Currently the aim is to have clean CRB disclosures back in approximately 4 days!!

Ideally the new process will require the Personal Assistant to arrange a time to come along to the SILC offices in Burpham with their identification documents which will be needed to start the CRB process. Then they could immediately complete their part of the process which can be submitted.

If the Personal Assistant is unable to come into the SILC offices they can send in their ORIGINAL documents via Recorded Delivery for inputting. Their documents will then be returned, again via Recorded Delivery and the Personal Assistant will be sent instructions and a password via e-mail for them to complete their section. Only once both the SILC and the PA's section have been inputted correctly and submitted will the electronic forms be sent.

If you feel you need a CRB check carried out please contact Kate at the SILC office and she will arrange for this to take place.

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Spot the 15 differences

