



Fife Independent Disability Network Newsletter

March Edition 2007

The Care for the Future Report 2007

Michael Tonks. Chairperson FIDN

As you will have seen in TV coverage and Newspapers some Care Homes have not been performing well. FIDN felt very strongly that we needed to promote good care for the future, so in partnership with the Fife Elderly Forum we staged an all day conference on 24th August 2006 in The Rothes Hall, Glenrothes to raise awareness on best practice and standards.

The Report was launched on the 6th of February 2007. The following is a brief snippet of what it contains.

One of the key points to come out of the conference is the importance of communication. Communication with the user/client is a key part of their life and many people forget that communication is a two way street. How can you be informed and make decisions which affect your daily life if you cannot communicate fully with the person you are trying to inform?

If the client feels they are being treated as an individual which makes them happier, and the staff is getting a more realistic and more positive response you have a happier environment.

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Brian Henderson - Reid Howie Associates

It is difficult to distil more than 12 hours of detailed, often impassioned discussion, into a few key points. The topics discussed, while all related to care, were diverse and often, in themselves, quite complex. Despite these caveats, there is a range of key messages which are clear and which are worth setting out here. These key messages are in no way a substitute for the whole report.

- ?? Care, whether it is for older people, for disabled people or for younger people is taken very seriously. It affects everyone in some way, and at some time.
- ?? Care is multi-faceted. It includes not only those in care homes, but also the increasing numbers living independently, enjoying the benefits of direct payment. It also includes the provision of respite, which is growing in importance as more and more people choose to live independently.
- ?? Choice is critically important. Service users and their families must have viable, cost-effective and well-informed choices.
- ?? Service providers also have a responsibility to deliver the principles set out in the National Care Standards. These are dignity, privacy, choice, safety, realising potential and equality and diversity.
- ?? Listening isn't enough in itself. It is perhaps stating the obvious, but people have to be given the appropriate encouragement to provide their views. Older people do have a lot to say but they are often apprehensive. They feel they should be grateful. Many care users are vulnerable. They may be worried about speaking out. It is important that they have the reassurance that not only will their views be valued, but that there will be no consequences for them.

Summary

It is clear; not only from the keynote speakers, but from the workshops themselves that the training of staff, lack of information and the sharing of information are key factors to be taken into consideration for improving care in the future.

It was said that older people in care homes are entitled to have a quality of life and that Fife Council are duty bound to help them achieve this.

`We have no right to assume that we know it is that gives someone that special element in their life, but we have a responsibility to find out what it is and try to ensure that we can make it happen.`

The above is a very brief snippet of what you can find in the report.

If you would like to see more, The `Care for the Future` Conference Report is available from the FIDN office. **Tel: 01592 203993**

YOUR CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Welcome everyone. All our Management Committee is busy attending different meetings and consultations. With the new DDA legislation the Disability Equality Duty which came into force 5th December 2006 creating a lot of new work. The Management Committee are involved in meetings with Scottish Executive, Fife Council and NHS Fife in setting up their schemes



The launch of the Home Report went very well and Christine May MSP said she would take the report to Holyrood; the main report is on the front page. We must not sit on our laurels there is still a considerable amount of work still to be done judging from the report in the Scotsman 27th February "The scandal of Scotland's care homes". FIDN will be looking for funding in order to continue the work we have started.

Some good news, FIDN went through a difficult financial period 2 years ago I am now in a position to announce FIDN are in a much stronger financial position and can move forward. I am pleased to declare we have taken more office space, ordered a new infra-red loop and sound system and will be shortly be recruiting a part-time development worker and admin support staff, the adverts for the vacancies will be going to the papers in April all of which should help us do better.

In order for the newsletter to remain topical we need input from the members so if you have any articles or pictures could you please send them into the office. In order to encourage young people to take a more active part in FIDN's work we are looking for individuals a group or groups of young disabled people who would be interested in putting their views, experiences into articles for the quarterly newsletter.

Michael Tonks
Chairperson

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**THE FOLLOWING PHOTO'S WERE TAKEN AT
THE LAUNCH OF THE
CARE IN THE FUTURE REPORT
ON THE 6TH FEBRUARY 2007**

**Mr Jack Carr
explaining how to use
the loop system**



**Mr Michael Tonks,
FIDN Chairperson
opening the meeting**

Christine May MSP



**Kenny Leinster
Fife Council, Older
People Service**



Councillor Jim Brennan

**Rachel Webb
Team Manager,
Care Commission**



**Brian Henderson,
Reid Howie Associates**



What is txt2traveline?

txt2traveline is a mobile phone texting service which allows you get bus times sent to you for any bus stop you choose. The service covers all bus companies and is a partnership between Fife Council and Traveline Scotland. You can get the bus times for ANY bus stop in Fife.

So, how does it work?

Simply text an 8-digit bus stop reference code to the txt2traveline number - 0777 608 2 608 - and you will get back the departure times of the next few buses from your chosen stop. You can actually customise your message too, to allow you to pick a destination, a specific bus service, time period or date. The service is automated and operates 24 hours-a-day, every day.

How much will it cost me?

The message you send is charged at your normal network provider charge. The returned message from txt2traveline costs 25p. (Please note that you will still be charged if you send an invalid or incorrect message). Pricing information correct at time of publication (25/01/06).

How do I find the bus stop reference code?

Bus stop reference codes are unique and so, information received relates only to one specific bus stop. You might want to pick the stop nearest your house, the stop you use to get to work or even the stop nearest your favourite pub/restaurant. Why not store the code of your favourite stop in your phone? You can then check it's times from anywhere. All codes are 8-digit numbers beginning with '343' - the prefix for Fife. Codes are obtainable in 2 ways - either individually on a small panel on the bus stop flag or, for a full list of all stops in Fife contact the below.

For more information contact

Gary Moyes, Lead Officer, Travel Information

Tel: 01592 413825 **Fax:** 01592 413111 **By Post:** Fife Council, Rothesay House , Rothesay Place , Glenrothes , KY7 5PQ **www.fifedirect.org.uk**

The above information was taken from the Fife Direct website www.fifedirect.org.uk/

Guidance on digital TV

Ricability (Research Institute for Consumer Affairs), an independent research charity, has launched a new unbiased website for consumers to help you choose the best value kit. It gives reports of independent performance tests of Digital TV products including widescreen IDTVs, set top boxes, digital TV recorders and indoor aerials.

The site also has information on audio description, sub-titles and signing services.

www.ricability-digitaltv.org.uk

Home Heat Helpline

The Home Heat Helpline gives advice to people who are worried about meeting their heating bills or keeping their homes warm. It can advise on grants for energy efficiency measures, carry out a benefits check and access priority service teams in gas and electricity suppliers.

The Helpline, available Monday – Friday 9am – 8pm and Saturdays from 10am – 2pm Tel: 0800 33 66 99 minicom: 0800 027 2122

www.homeheathelpline.org.uk

Award for RNID ScreenPhone

The newly launched ScreenPhone available from RNID was awarded the DNEX 06 Innovative design Award at the 2006 Disability North Exhibition in Newcastle. The ScreenPhone was one of 20 products entered for the design category. It works like a traditional telephone with the addition of a large screen, which displays incoming speech.

Tel: 0870 789 8855

minicom: 07733 238020

www.rnidshop.com

Direct Payments Service (Fife)

Direct Payments

Under the Community Care (Direct Payments) Act, Social Work are able to make direct payments to people who are assessed as eligible for Community Care services to allow them to buy their own services, rather than receiving them from the Social Work Service. With effect from June 2003, people will be able to use their direct payments to buy services they receive from any local authority. This will help people who are happy with the services they receive from their local authority but would like more control over the delivery of those services.

You may be eligible for a Direct Payment if:

?? You are given a high or medium priority and are assessed as eligible for Community Care services

?? You are over 16

You wish to have a direct payment and Social Work have assessed you as able to deal with it with help from others if this

is needed

There are a number of rules about how you may use direct payments, who you may buy services from and how you must account for any direct payments you receive. If you need it, we can arrange for help with all these tasks.

Your Social Worker can tell you more about direct payments and will discuss all the requirements with you to help you to consider whether this is a suitable option for you. Not everyone is eligible for a direct payment. If we are not able to consider you for a direct payment, we will tell you why.

Please note: From June 2003

Where it is clear that the person requiring the service is unable to give consent, representatives, for example parents or guardians, will be able to consent to, receive and alter direct payments on behalf of that person. This will help make direct payments available to people who are clearly, even with assistance

Social Work Office
Talbot Cottage, Leven
TALBOT COTTAGE
STATION ROAD
LEVEN
KY8 4QU
tel: 01333 592656
fax: 01333 592304

Fife People's Panel

People Power is coming to Fife - everyone's cut out to get involved.

Can you help us to ensure that everyone has a voice?

The council and community planning partners (Fife Police, Fife Fire & Rescue, NHS Fife and the voluntary sector) are establishing the Kingdom's first local People's Panel - a group of 3,000 Fife residents who are interested in making their views count.

We need to gather people's views for lots of different reasons and this is a real opportunity for local people to have their say. The Panel will be a cross-section of the community to make sure we get a fair representation of views.

What does a People's Panel member have to do? - Panel members give their views on public issues. These might include views on services that we provide or on things such as community safety or local economy. This involves filling in a questionnaire around four times a year. Members can also provide views in other ways, for example by taking in focus groups or other group discussions.

If any of your member/clients are interested in getting more involved in your local community then perhaps they would consider becoming a member of the Panel.

For more information about the People's Panel call 08451 55 56 51. You can also register your interest online at www.fifedirect.org.uk/peoplespanel Or you can pick up information from your local library or Service Centre.

The Telephone Preference Service

From Editor:

I received a phone call from BT asking if I would like any of the new services they had available or did I have a service I did not require any more. I mentioned the unsolicited calls I had been getting though not many it was still to many. The person from BT said yes they could do that, about a week later I got a letter from TPS explaining the service and I am passing it on to you. So if you are having problems with unsolicited phone calls this may be of interest to you.



Welcome to TPS Online.

The Telephone Preference Service (TPS) helps you to make sure your telephone number is no longer available to organisations, including charities and voluntary organisations who may telephone you with offers and information you do not wish to receive

Under Government legislation introduced on 1st May 1999 and replaced on 11th December 2003 by the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003, it is unlawful to make unsolicited direct marketing calls to individuals who have indicated that they do not want to receive such calls.

You can either do this by contacting companies directly and asking them not to call you or you can register with a central register - the TPS.

Before you register however...

You should reflect on the fact that registering may well prevent you from receiving information which you would really like to have - thereby cutting you off from relevant and worthwhile opportunities. For charities, telemarketing is an economical way to raise awareness and much needed support.

If you are happy to receive telemarketing calls from some companies but not others, contact the companies who you do not wish to hear from and ask them to remove your details from their call lists. Registering your telephone number on TPS will stop telemarketing calls from all companies, charities and voluntary organisations not just some!

Registration will also prevent organisations who regard you as a customer, or in the case of charities, donors from calling you again, unless you have previously told them that you have no objection to them calling you.

Do you know you can register mobile telephone numbers?

The Telephone Preference Service can accept the registration of mobile telephone numbers, however it is important to note that this will prevent the receipt of live marketing voice calls but not SMS (text) messages. This is because under the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2004 it is unlawful to send an unsolicited sales and marketing text message. Telemarketing companies who send SMS messages need your prior permission. There is no obligation therefore for companies sending SMS messages to people who have agreed to receive them, to screen against the TPS file. If you wish to stop receiving SMS marketing messages, please send an 'opt-out' request to the company involved. The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) is responsible for the enforcement of these regulations. Please click on the useful links page for their details.

REGISTER

Mailing Preference Service (MPS)

DMA House

70 Margaret Street

London

W1W 8SS

MPS Registration line - 0845 703 4599

Tel 020 7291 3310

Fax 020 7323 4226

Email mps@dma.org.uk

Web www.mpsonline.org.uk

Licence Department - 020 7291 3327

Complaints Department- 020 7291 3321

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Scottish public bodies could face legal action for failing disabled people

One in six public sector organisations in Scotland could be facing legal action after they failed to meet a new duty which came into force last year to promote equality for disabled people.

A survey by the Disability Rights Commission (D.R.C.) found that one local authority, three Scottish colleges, three national arts and cultural organisations and a further 38 public bodies have still failed to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, almost three months after the 4th December, 2006 deadline.

Aberdeenshire Council was the only one of Scotland's thirty-two local authorities that failed to produce a scheme setting out what they will do to promote equality for disabled people.

Major national attractions were also identified: the National Museums of Scotland and the National Galleries of Scotland have both failed to produce schemes.

The D.R.C., which has responsibility for overseeing the new Disability Equality Duty in Scotland, released these disturbing figures today. The D.R.C. is now writing to all of those bodies identified by the survey, demanding an explanation from them.

Adam Gaines, the D.R.C.'s Scotland Director, said: "Ultimately these public bodies could face enforcement action in the Courts for their failure to produce a competent scheme.

"The Duty was introduced to ensure that public sector organisations respond to the needs of the whole community. The harsh reality is that if you are disabled in Scotland you are twice as likely to be unemployed, have low skills or live in poverty. It is a real concern that so many organisations have not complied with the law – Scotland's one million disabled people have a right to expect equal treatment from providers of public services."

Mr. Gaines added, "Many public authorities – including, ironically, some of those named today – have done some good work in the past to stop discrimination and to improve employment opportunities for disabled people, but this new duty is different. It aims to accelerate change and to stop discrimination from occurring in the first place."

The further education sector fared among the worst in the D.R.C.'s review of the public sector. Shetland College, Kilmarnock College and Coatbridge College have all failed to publish a Disability Equality Scheme. And two-thirds of Scotland's 47 further education colleges who did not properly involve disabled people, another requirement of Duty.

Mr. Gaines said: "We are particularly concerned at the lack of buy-in from colleges, given the importance of further education in tackling disability inequality across Scotland, and their vital role in helping people get skills and qualifications. In failing to meet the duty, these colleges are letting down not only their own disabled students and staff but also the

communities around them and local employers.”

“Failing to meet this duty will cost public money. If a disabled person is discriminated against because a council or health board has not identified and eliminated the cause, then they can be taken to court and made to pay damages. Similarly, designing or contracting services without thinking about the implications for disabled people means they will have to make changes later and this is an unacceptable drain on public

Individual Support Grants

MS Society Scotland provides grants to assist people affected by Multiple Sclerosis with items such as aids and equipment, adaptations to the home or car, top up funds for respite care breaks, replacement of essential household items and so on. We have always aimed to help people affected by MS obtain funding for items they need because of their disability but for which they cannot get statutory help. National Office and local branches can provide support and assistance to apply for an Individual Support Grant and also provide advice on other sources of funding. To apply for a grant application pack please contact Denise McKay, Grants Co-ordinator at the National Office on 0131 335 4050. email: denise.mckay@mssocietyscotland.org.uk



Fife Independent Disability Network,
West Bridge Mill,
Bridge Street, Kirkcaldy,
Fife, KY1 1TE
Fax: 01592 203786

The next North East Fife Project/Network Meeting will be held in the Newburgh Church Hall, on Tuesday 13th March 2007 2 - 4pm

The Guest Speakers will be:

Alison McKay - Blether Together

And

Patrick Nyamurundira - Intergration & Access Manager, ScotRail

Do Come Along And Join Us

All disabled people and their carers are welcome to attend.

Please remember that the Network pays travel expenses (receipts required or note of mileage). Simple complete and return a form available at the meeting and hand it to Muriel.

The venue is fully accessible.
Refreshments will be available

A sign language interpreter will be provided if required.

Please contact Muriel for details of this by Friday 2nd March 2007

Any other queries or access needs, please contact Muriel at the office on: 01592 203993 Minicom: 01592 646885

Email: muriel.macgregor@fidn.co.uk

Insurance Firms Offering Insurance for Wheelchairs or Scooters

Alexander Forbes Mobility Services

4th Floor Higham House

Newbridge Street West

Newcastle Upon Tyne

NE1 8AN

Tel: 0845 602800

Head Office 0207 9332241

Fax: 0191 261 3060

Email: mobility@forbes.co.uk

Web: www.alexanderforbes.co.uk/

Chartwell Insurance

292 - 294 Hale Lane

Edgware

Middlesex HA8 8NP

Tel : 020 8958 0900

Fax: 020 8958 3220

Email: info@chartwellinsurance.co.uk

Web: <http://www.chartwellinsurance.co.uk/>

Freephone: 0800 6521653

En-Route Insurance

3 Huntingdon Road

Thrapston

Kettering

Northamptonshire

NN14 4NF

Tel & Fax: 01832 73222

Email: info@enrouteinsurance.co.uk

Web: www.enrouteinsurance.co.uk

Fish Insurance

3 - 4 Riversway Business Village

Navigation Way

Preston

Lancashire

PR2 2YP

Tel : 01772 724442

Fax: 01772 733773

Email: info@fishinsurance.co.uk

Web: www.fishinsurance.co.uk/

Freephone: 0500 432141

Mark Bates LTD

MBL Insurance

Premier House

Harlaxton Road

Grantham

Lincolnshire

NG31 7JX

Tel: 01476 593887

Fax: 01476 591543

The Insurance company details shown on this page were taken from the Department of Transport website: www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/mavis/mavisinfo/contact/5insurancefirms

Mobility scooters - what you need to know

Do I need to register my invalid carriage?

Under the Use of Invalid Carriages on the Highways Regulations 1988 invalid carriages are separated into 3 categories:

Class 1

Manual wheelchairs, i.e. self-propelled or attendant propelled, not electrically propelled. These are not required to be registered with DVLA.

Class 2

Powered wheelchairs and scooters – intended for footway use only with a maximum speed of 4mph and an unladen weight not exceeding 113.4kgs. These are not required to be registered with DVLA.

Class 3

Mechanically propelled invalid carriages that are constructed or adapted to be capable of exceeding a speed of 4mph but incapable of exceeding a speed of 8mph on the level under its own power (generally powered wheelchairs and other outdoor vehicles including scooters intended for use on roads/highways). They must be fitted with a device capable of limiting the maximum speed to 4mph for use when travelling on footways. The unladen weight must not exceed 150kgs. These are required to be registered with DVLA.

How to I apply to register my class 3 invalid carriage.

Class 3 invalid carriages need to be registered for road use, be licensed in the "disabled" taxation class and display a nil duty tax disc. Unlike ordinary cars, invalid carriages do not need to provide evidence of VED exemption when licensing in the disabled class. Also, they are exempt from paying the first registration fee and are not required to display registration plates.

In order to register and license a class 3 invalid carriage the user will need to complete form V55/5 (for used vehicles) or V55/4 (for new vehicles) - and take or send it to their nearest DVLA local office (addresses can be found on the website at

www.direct.gov.uk/motoring or in the V100 information leaflet which is available from post offices that issue tax discs or by telephoning 0870 243 0444 – you will need to quote your postcode). Evidence of the vehicle's age (if available) will need to be submitted with the application together with documentation confirming the keeper's name and address.

Should I have insurance?

Although it is not a legal requirement, it is strongly advised to have insurance. Suitable schemes are not too expensive and are available to cover your personal safety, other people's safety and the value of the vehicle.

Where can I get further advice about the use of invalid carriages?

Useful information for class 3 vehicle users can be found at

www.dft.gov.uk .

NATIONAL KEY SCHEME (RADAR)

Accessible Toilets for Disabled People

Available from Fife Independent Disability Network, West
Bridge Mill, Bridge Street,
Kirkcaldy Tel: 01592 203993 Fax: 01592 203786
Text Phone: 01592 646885

Opening Hours: Tuesday - Friday 9:30am – 1pm

There are 5,600 accessible toilets in the UK using RADAR keys.

For further information please contact Muriel MacGregor at
Fife Independent Disability Network.



What does it cost? £4:50

How do I get one? Visit FIDN with identification (e.g. Blue badge) photo copy of both sides and you will receive a key at the cost of £4:50. If it is easier simply put a cheque in the post along with identification and your address details and we will send your key to your door!

Is it only for wheelchair users? No! Speak to us for clarification. You are entitled to use a RADAR accessible toilet if you require assistance in toileting, have a visual impairment etc.

Where can I use it? All over the UK



Please Send in Letters or comment's that may be of interest to FIDN readers to the FIDN office (address on page 3). Please state for Newsletter!

Please note that this is no guarantee that it will be place in the newsletter.

Please send any comments on this newsletter to the FIDN office, so I can make any improvement if necessary or if you have something that maybe of interest to the FIDN readers.

Editor & Publisher: Robert A Hunter

FIDN WebSite

You can find this newsletter and previous newsletters plus lots more information on our website. www.fidn.org.uk

We now have 2 web sites the one above from Digital Fife and our new one we are building ourselves which is www.fidn.co.uk

Disabled Person Housing Service (Fife)

DPHS(F) is a new organisation dedicated to providing information, advice and support for disabled people either living in, or wanting to live in Fife, who have particular housing needs or issues. The service is independent and user-led with a Board made up with 50%+ disabled people at all times. We are funded via a variety of sources including local statutory organisations and charitable trusts and in this way remain independent of any services we may liaise with. We believe that everyone has the right to quality, affordable and accessible housing. DPHS(F) will give disabled people the chance to consider, at their own pace, housing options that are right for them. We will talk to disabled people, get to know their housing needs, learn about the current housing situation then discuss with them the possible solutions. The service is free to disabled people.

?? Would you like to talk to someone about your housing needs?

?? Keen to have your details added to the Disabled Persons Housing Register?

?? Interested in being involved in our future planning?

The Disabled Persons Housing Register is an active register of disabled people seeking housing. The DPHS(F) will consult with each person on the register to better match vacant properties with the profile of needs and preferences unique to each disabled person.

A Housing Options Register is currently being developed and will be a detailed computer based information system on all current and planned housing stock including accessible, barrier free and supported housing across Fife.

Resource Library. We are also building a resource library of information related to housing that our clients can access via our usual contact routes.

The cheerful and willing help of our volunteers enables us to deliver our service better. Would you like to volunteer? Get in touch so we can give you more information and pass you a recruitment pack!

DPHS(F)

63 Evans Business Centre

Mitchelston Drive

KIRKCALDY

KY1 3NB

Tel: 01592 657772

Fax: 01592 657773

Email: dphsfife@orange.net

Inclusion Scotland was recently contacted by a lady called Elizabeth Gourley who lives in Kinghorn, Fife. When Elizabeth was a teenager she had encephalitis (or inflammation of the brain). Elizabeth told me that her confidence has really deteriorated over the years and that the

thing she feels would really help would be a support group, with other people who have had similar experiences to herself. There is such a group in England but despite Elizabeth's requests, they say they can't help her to set up a group in Scotland. If you know of anyone in the Fife area who would be interested in helping to form such a group, or if your organisation could offer her some support in her endeavour, please contact her on 01592 891 332. Please pass this message on to anyone who you think might be able to help.

**USEFUL
TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Inclusion Scotland

Info@inclusionScotland.org

Tel 0141 887 7058

Fife Advocacy

Tel: 01383 511155

**Scottish Disability Equality
Forum**

Tel: 01786 446456

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife

Tel: 01592 412230

NHS/Fife Health Council

Tel: 0800 587 4008

Disability Rights Commission

Tel: 08457 622 633

FIDN OFFICE

CONTACT DETAILS:

Muriel MacGregor

West Bridge Mill

Bridge Street

Kirkcaldy KY1 1TE

Tel: 01592 203993

Fax: 01592 203786

Text Phone:

01592 646885

Email:

enquiries@fidn.co.uk

Website: www.fidn.org.uk &

www.fidn.co.uk

Please visit the website for more

Information.

**If you have any relevant information
you like to share please contact the
Office.**

**THE BELOW ARE SOME
USEFUL CONTACT
NUMBERS
RELATED TO SAFETY**

Homecheck

Tel: 01592 599599

Fife Fire and Rescue Service

Tel: 01333 439497

Fife Constabulary Home

Security Help / Advice

Tel: 01592 418506

Fife Constabulary

Safety Officer (East)

Tel: 01334 418745

Trading Standards

Tel: 01592 416830

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife

Tel: 01334 412845

**Home Energy Management
Service**

Tel: 01592 416904

Care and Repair

Tel: 01592 631661

Getting better care, controlling your life

By MS Society Chief Executive Simon Gillespie

Direct Payments promise people better control over their lives, and new `Individual Budgets` offer even more choice and control. MS Society Chief Executive Simon Gillespie says people need more support so they can take up these options.

For several years now, anyone assessed by their local council as needing care can receive that via their social services, or if they are willing, receive cash payments - known as Direct Payments - to arrange the care themselves.

Why Direct Payments? They can give people control. Direct Payments provide money for people to pay for precise care needs as assessed by the local council, and can assist `continuity of care`. For example, having one person coming into the home who knows about you and your needs is far better than having a large number of care workers, who might also change frequently. With direct Payments, you can employ your own Personal Assistant, or Assistants. You can be an employer in your own right, or use an agency.

So far, however, uptake among people with MS is low, and only around 22,500 disabled people in total in the UK use Direct Payments. There are signs of a `north-south` difference, where the uptake in England is a bit higher than in Scotland, for example, but the UK picture is patchy. If people are to switch from `receiving` care to `managing` care, they are likely to need support, and whether you are given the right information and support to use Direct Payments effectively depends on where you live.

Individual Budgets - more choice and control

The move to self-management is not just a fad. It is here to stay, and it is being developed further. The government is testing several projects, including one which allocates disabled people their own Individual Budgets to spend in the way they help choose.

People using Individual Budgets agree an overall management plan, which can give them even flexibility and choice over the way they run their lives. People with MS are taking part in the pilot projects now. Full evaluation is not expected until 2008, but reports so far indicate that Individual Budgets are working well.

The best support for these schemes quite often comes from other disabled people, like Centres for Independent Living and other `user-led` organisations. The fastest growing Direct Payments schemes have been in areas where support services have been led by disabled people themselves, and so it is disturbing that a number of these support services are under threat of closure. Local council staff also have a big role to play and need to be comfortable with the idea that, with the right information and support, disabled people can manage for themselves.

The MS Society strongly supports people with MS having more control over their lives. In Cheshire, the Society is funding a specialist adviser aiming to more than treble the number of people with MS on Direct Payments in the area over three years. Key tasks are to identify the barriers people face and ways to overcome them. We are also considering how we can better support people with MS to use Individual Budgets.

It is about getting better care and controlling your life. Getting the

Continued on page 23

**Some Photo's Taken at the North East Fife Project/
Network Meeting in the Old Course Hotel, St Andrews
on the 18th of January 2007**

**Some of the people in
attendance at the
meeting**



**Some of the people in
attendance at the
meeting**



**Guest Speaker Doug
Fleming - Managing
Director Stagecoach**



**Scott Mands -
NHS Fife Operational
Division Equality &
Diversity Co-ordinator
& NHS Fife Lead for
Disabilities**



L.E.A.D Scotland (Linking. Education. And. Disability)

What does Lead offer?

- Educational guidance and information
- Computer home loan scheme
- Volunteer support

Our services are free and confidential. We work with disabled people and carers in some areas of Scotland. Find a local Lead Scotland Organiser. Tel: 0131 317 3439

Educational guidance and information

One of our Lead Organisers can arrange to visit you at home, or somewhere that suits you best, to talk about what you want to learn. We can give you the information you need to get started and ongoing support for you to continue your studies. **What interests you?** You might want to learn the guitar, speak French, learn to paint, write creatively, send an email, brush up your reading and writing skills. The lists, of course, are endless! Talking to an Organiser about your interests might help you decide what you want to learn.

There are many reasons for learning. What is yours? Do you want to learn for fun, gain skills for work, or fulfil a lifetime ambition? Perhaps you have recently become disabled and you want to talk to someone about how to get back into learning?

How would you like to learn? Learning opportunities are becoming more and more flexible.

Do you want to learn at your own home, at college, at a local learning centre or maybe over the internet? Do you want to learn a few hours a week round your other commitments or are you looking for a full-time opportunity? Talk to an Organiser about what would suit you.

Fife Organiser - Norma Mackenzie tel: 01383 312200

**THE BELOW PHOTO'S WERE TAKEN AT THE
NORTH EAST FIFE PROJECT/NETWORK
MEETING ON 1ST OF DECEMBER 2006 IN THE
CRAW'S NEST HOTEL, ANSTRUTHER**



**Some People in Attendance
at the meeting**

**Some People in Attendance
at the meeting**



**Guest Speaker Belle
Hammond - Remap**



For more information on REMAP
phone 01259 781 606 or
belle@fiferemap.fsnet.co.uk

or website: www.remap-scotland.org

Have you ever thought about using your Power Wheelchair/Scooter on a Stagecoach accessible bus but are frightened to try.

I attended the FIDN's North East Fife Project/Network Meeting in The Old Course Hotel, St Andrews on the 18th of January 2007. One of the speakers was Mr Doug Fleming, Managing Director, Stagecoach. One of the things that came up was the sizes of Electric Mobility Scooters and the sizes of the wheelchair spaces in the buses that have them. Which should be as:

The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 - Guidance say's:

(a) a wheelchair space shall not be less than -

(i) 1300mm measured in the longitudinal plane of the vehicle;

(ii) 750mm measured in the transverse plane of the vehicle; and

iii) 1500mm measured vertically from any part of the floor of the wheelchair space.

Stagecoach has brought out their own pamphlet called `Making your journey easier` this document contains information for people with disabilities using Wheelchairs, Powered Wheelchairs and mobility scooters who may wish to access one of Stagecoach's easy access buses. The document state's that in the case of wheelchair's, the maximum size they will allow on the easy access buses is 1200mm long and 700mm wide and in the case of mobility scooters the maximum size is 1000mm in length and 600mm in width.

One of the people present at the meeting was Mr James Page FIDN's transportation spokesperson. Mr Page uses his 3 wheel mobility scooter to access buses on the number 7 route (Burntisland) and his scooter is a shade under 1018mm in length which is over the sizes stated in the Stagecoach pamphlet, this was bought up at the meeting and we were told that Mr Page had his scooter health and safety assessed for access onto easy access buses. It was, as I understand it passed on some of the easy access buses but not on others.

I myself have a 3 wheel mobility scooter but it is 1200mm in length and 610mm in width, so it also was outside the sizes in the Stagecoach pamphlet. I normally use my car to transport my scooter to where I wish to use it (if not using it from my home). I find that I sometime get fed up driving and since the number 19 service goes through Lochgelly (my home town) I thought it would be great if I could get my scooter on it so I could visit my daughter in Hill of Beath and friends in Dunfermline, both on the number 19's route. So at the St Andrew's meeting I asked Mr Fleming how would I go about being accessed.

Mr Fleming was very helpful, he said that I should phone up my local Stagecoach Depot, which for me was Cowdenbeath, I should ask for a Mr Sandy Scott (The Depot Manager) and he should be able to arrange the assessment.

A few days later I phoned up Mr Sandy Scott (The Depot Manager) but got a lady, she passed on the message to him and was told that Mr Scott had not heard of such a thing but that he would look into it and get back to me. It took about 4 days for Mr Scott to get back to me, he told me that there would no problem and would arrange for an easy access bus to be made available. A date was arranged for me to visit the

Continued on page 22

Cowdenbeath Depot (which would have been difficult if I did not have my car).

It was a beautiful day for the assessment; I was signed in at the depot office (health & Safety) and introduced to Mr Scott and to Mr Jim Penrose the Depot Engineering Manager. I was then taken out to the main road where an easy access bus was waiting for me. Well I managed to get in the bus door easy enough, but there was a narrow passage between the ticket area and the passenger area/wheelchair bay, I did get through but just, and that was as far as I got. The wheelchair bay was largish, big enough probably for my scooter but there was a pole in the way, so I could not turn in any direction. The only thing I could do was to reverse back out, so that was that, no go.

If you are a bit like me a bit shy about going down to your local bus stop to try access an easy access bus with your mobility vehicle in front of maybe a bus full of people to maybe find yourself stuck and with a red face because your vehicle will not fit. Instead you could contact your local bus garage if you think your power wheelchair or scooter might be able access easy access bus so you can utilise the service, ask for an health & Safety assessment of your Power Wheelchair/Scooter.



Mr Scott and Mr Penrose were great, very helpful. Thank you! They told me that the bus I tried was one of the buses that have a larger wheelchair space and if my scooter could not fit on it would probably not fit on any of their other buses.

So unless you have a wheelchair, a very small scooter or I would think a smallish power wheelchair you probably will not be able to access a stagecoach bus.

The regulation in the UK for people with mobility problem trying to access public transportation is all based on people using wheelchairs. The regulations are well out of date, more and more people with mobility problems are now using power wheelchair's or mobility scooters which give them more independence. So it's about time the regulations are updated so the spaces on public transportation are able to accommodate a large variety of personal mobility vehicles.

Yes, I know that there are a lot of very large scooters out there so there will have to be a limit. So how about using the governments own class scheme, Class 2 or below are mobility scooters that's **max** speed is 4mph which is also a pavement only scooter.

Just an idea.

Robert A Hunter

Continued from page 17

right information and the right support will be key.

I would like to thank the MS Society's Chief Executive Simon Gillespie for allowing me to use this article which was published in the MS Society's magazine MS Matters issue 70. To subscribe to this magazine is to join the MS Society and at just £5 a year. I have just recently found that being a member of the MS Society allows in to the members part of there website which has loads of information in it. For more information on membership phone 020 8438 0759 or you can email: . membership@mssociety.org.uk

Nickirian Care

Its now 2007 and I hope you had an enjoyable festive season, Nickirian Care is available and raring to care /support individuals aged 16-65 years who are in need of respite/short break service. Learning disabilities, physical disabilities,

cerebral palsy, epilepsy, peg feeding, wheelchair users etc. We offer a quality service from staff who have the commitment and skills to enable individuals to reach their potential and actualise their goals. We offer a non institutional, user led, friendly, warm, welcoming homely environment. We offer exceptional value (much cheaper than many other providers) £8.04 - £10.42 per hour for 2:4 ratio, 1:1 ratio respectively. These fees include accommodation, all meals, personal care, medication administration, laundry, activities, social inclusion. You are welcome to visit the Bungalow and to contact us 01592564483 with any questions/enquiries.

Look forward to hearing from you soon

Mrs Sandra Bremner -manager

8 Ballingall Drive

Glenrothes

KY6 3QD

nicjinian_care@hotmail.co.uk

Fife Independent Disability Network website

I also look after FIDN's website www.fidn.co.uk. In the last 3 months there has been over 6201 page viewed. From December 2005 to January 2007 there have been 16970 Page Views. The most popular pages viewed where: The Gallery Home Page , History of FIDN, Sensory Impairment Home Page, Contact Us and Accessible Vehicles.

It is not just people in Fife that are looking at our website but also people from all over the world. There is a list below of the country's that people have viewed our website from

Countries the Fife Independent Disability Network has been viewed in, in 2006:

UK, Israel, Germany, Sweden, Sri Lanka, Japan, Ghana, Canada, Poland, Netherlands, Mexico, Romania, Italy, Australia, India, Spain, Estonia, Taiwan, Portugal, France, Czech Republic, Brazil, New Zealand

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