



# Fife Independent Disability Network

Winter Edition 2010

## Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance

Disabled people call for important new rights for disabled bus and coach passengers.

The Scottish Accessible Transport Alliance (SATA) calls upon the UK Government to support and sign up to legislation which would ensure the right to accessible travel

information and make disability awareness training mandatory for all bus drivers and terminal staff, here in the UK and abroad.



SATA represents disabled people's organisations and individual transport users across Scotland in order to achieve better access to all forms of transport.

Negotiations to seek agreement between governments and the European Parliament were due to start at the end of September, with the UK playing an important role in the negotiations. Unfortunately some governments, including the UK government, do not support the proposed improvements.

The European Parliament is proposing new rights for disabled passengers using buses and coaches which could significantly improve the journey experienced by bus passengers here in the UK. If the proposals are accepted they would ensure:

- accessible information (e.g. accessible timetables or information about delays)
- mandatory disability awareness training for all bus drivers and terminal staff.

However EU governments, including the UK government, are not supportive and do not want new rights to apply to local bus and coach services. We need to make sure our Ministers understand that the proposed regulations are urgently needed to deliver equal access to transport for disabled people - and they should apply to ALL bus and coach transport in the UK.

Mr Stanley Flett, Chairman of SATA, said "Bus travel is essential for many of us to be able to lead an independent life. Currently too many disabled people have problems accessing bus and coach services. These measures would greatly improve this and the journey experience."

### Inside This Issue:

**An example of what goes wrong from the disabled persons point of view.** 4

**SMART User/Carer Network** 8

**SAYNOTO08 70.COM website** 10

**Deaf Action launched a new information guide** 14

**RNIB - Urgent campaign action** 15

**Saturday Opening At Glenrothes Shopmobility** 19

Over the next few weeks, we have a once in a generation opportunity to secure important new rights for disabled bus and coach passengers and we call upon the UK Government to act now to bring these about! Please help us put pressure on the UK government to change its position before these vital negotiations begin.

To prove just how effective this can be, for over two years, two of our members, James Page and Jack Carr have taken part in equality training of Stagecoach bus drivers.

This is welcomed not only by Stagecoach, but by the drivers themselves as they agree that Disability Training is essential if they are to be able to give an equal and full service to disabled people.

As a result we have received many reports of improved attitude of drivers towards disabled people and a better understanding by them of the problems we face in accessing public transport.



## **Bill Thomson**

It is with great sadness that we have to inform you that Bill Thomson has passed away.

Bill over came many difficulties to become the Adult Learner in 1997. Bill has won a variety of awards for his outstanding achievement.

Bill's poem "A Humorous Look At the First Night" was published in the British Poetry Review.

- May 1997 - Won First Place in the Scottish Television's Adult Learners Award Ceremony.
- June 1999 - Bill attended a reception at Downing Street at the invitation of the Prime Minister, Tony Blair, to celebrate the UN Year of the Older Person.
- January 2000 - Bill's work exhibited in the Royal Museum of Scotland in Edinburgh and invited to the opening by made by the Queen and Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh.
- July 2000 - Bill won the Nationwide Award for Voluntary Endeavour -giving a donation of £500 to the SDA.
- November 2000 - Bill is a runner up in Sunday Daily Mail's Great Scot of the Year Award giving a donation of £250 to the SDA.

There are many other awards to numerous to mention and Bill was a shining example to disabled people and will be missed greatly.

FIDN would like to convey our condolences to his wife and family and wish them all the best in the future.



# Chairperson's Report

Well it is that time of year again and the bad weather arrives with a vengeance making it virtually impossible to travel with more snow predicted for Christmas.

This year has been a difficult year and next year could be even more difficult with all the financial constraints that the voluntary sector will be subject to. FIDN will have to look at all the services we provide and see if we can be more creative in how we provide them in order to reduce costs.

But on a more positive note I believe that Muriel and the Committee Members have performed magnificently in their roles and I wish to thank the members and the people who attend the Network meetings for all the help throughout the year.

It only remains for the Committee Members and the staff to wish every body a Merry Christmas and a happy New year and hope to see you at the next Network meeting.



**Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year**

## FIDN need`s more Management Committee members

**FIDN need more Management Committee members, would you like to be more involved in making decisions and becoming actively involved in disability issues. FIDN need more voices to raise awareness of the difficulties disabled people encounter.**

**Telephone Muriel for more information.**

**Muriel MacGregor Office Manager**

**Fife Independent Disability Network**

**The Foyer, West Bridge Mill, Bridge Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife**

**KY1 1TE**

**Tel: 01592-203993 Fax: 01592-203786**

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## **An example of what goes wrong from the disabled persons point of view.**

**By Pauline Medd**

Just when I thought we were starting to get things right, things go all pear shaped and attitudes are still the same in some quarters.

For the first time my Fife Council Home Care Carers were both off on holiday at the same time, for a week, according to policy this should never happen. The first week when only one of them were off we had somebody in shadowing, first of all she sat outside for a quarter of an hour trying to get in touch with the office to let them know that she wasn't at all comfortable coming into our house where there was a dog, she and the office insisted that the dog be put in the garage, which we did to appease everybody. After four days on the Friday, she went off sick, during the time that she had been in the house she continually complained about having sore hands and that she wasn't able to peel potatoes or carrots, (not that she was doing that in my house) (1) although she did manage to wash my back as if she was scrubbing the front doorstep. The whole episode seemed to be all about her and what she was prepared to do and not prepared to do. How on earth did the office think that she was going to be any use to me with sore hands when she was in to do personal care? (2) I notice that when she was in she carried a plastic bag around with her, she said she liked to carry her own towel hand cream and etc, I asked her how long she had been carrying that particular plastic bag around with her, she said two weeks, but it looked a lot older than that, she asked why I was asking, I pointed out to her that the last time I saw that bag it was lying on the floor and now it's on my breakfast bar, and that if she has been in a lot of houses in the last two weeks she's brought infection from house to house to house. On Monday morning she was still off sick, (which by the way she had done the last time she had been in my house) an after hour girl was sent in which was very nice because she loved dogs.

Tuesday 19/10/10 I phoned up the office to thank them for sending somebody different in, and suggested that it would be good not to send the other person back that didn't like dogs, I explained that my dog had been a rescue dog and it was confusing to her to be put out of the way in our garage. (3) She said something is better than the alternative, I paused because I couldn't believe I'd heard what I'd heard, I said what do you mean, she said left lying in your bed all day, I said and what happened to continuity of care, at that she backed off realizing I knew what I was talking about I was completely gassed at a comment like that from a manager off a department, I believe in the tumbling effect and if the manager has an attitude like this then the people below her will have a similar attitude, if they don't at the moment they will soon adopt it. We have supposedly gone from being medical centered to people centered, well all I can suggest is more disability

awareness training, and if people are in the job as a convenience to them as opposed to helping others, then I suggest that they go and find a job elsewhere. I did not ask to be disabled I am certainly not going to be treated badly in my own house, by people who are invited into my house because I need help, they don't have the God-given right to be there.

1. I suggest disability awareness training, moving too quickly around somebody who has multiple sclerosis will only put them into spasms.
2. Training in awareness of infection control, and the implications of bad practice.
3. I took this comment as a threat; Fife Council has a duty of care, and therefore cannot leave someone lying in the bed all day unless it was that person's choice. Also it is a known fact Home Care gets few complaints, I hate to think how someone else would have felt getting a comment like this.
4. Some people may need reminded that they have to fit into a normal running off a house, and that things should not have to be changed in order to accommodate somebody who is only very occasionally coming into the house.
5. I know we are in very difficult times just now financially etc but the disabled and the very vulnerable will still have to be taken care off, and let's hope with dignity.

And lastly can I state I know what I'm talking about I have been involved with Fife Councils Home Care Reviews.

I am on the Fife's NHS's disability, group and also the wheelchair group. I am a Lay Assessor with the care commission.

And I am a founder member and secretary of Fife Independent Disability Network, where I am involved with access and facilities, in new hospitals schools etc.

This is an e-mail I received from someone it make you thing there is something wrong somewhere.

## **Let's put all retired folk in jail and the criminals in a nursing home.**

This way the seniors would have access to showers, hobbies and walks.

They'd receive unlimited free prescriptions, dental and medical treatment, wheelchairs etc and they'd receive money instead of paying it out.

They would have constant video monitoring, so they could be helped instantly, if they fell, or needed assistance.

Bedding would be washed twice a week, and all clothing would be ironed and returned to them. A guard would check on them every 20 minutes and bring their meals and snacks to their cell.

They would have family visits in a suite built for that purpose.

They would have access to a library, weight room,

Continued on page 6

spiritual counseling, pool and education.

Simple clothing, shoes, slippers, PJ's and legal aid would be free, on request.

Private, secure rooms for all, with an exercise Outdoors yard, with gardens.

Each senior could have a PC a TV radio and daily phone calls.

There would be a board of directors to hear complaints, and the guards would have a code of conduct that would be strictly adhered to.

### **The "criminals"**

Would get cold food, be left all alone and unsupervised.

Lights off at 8pm, and showers once a week.

Live in a tiny room and pay £900.00 per month and have no hope of ever getting out.

Justice for all we say. I do hope as many Councilors' MP's MSP's see and read this because very few people are going to go through life without needing cared for at some point in their life.

## **Ask the Experts**

### **How to avoid battery charge**

**Q** When I bought a battery for a wheelchair, I expected it to be zero-rated for VAT, but I've been told that this is no longer the case as people would buy these batteries for wheelchairs and then use them in golf buggies. I wrote to HMS Customs & Excise who told me that the only way not to pay VAT on a battery is to buy the battery as part of a service at a wheelchair centre. This solution will incur extra charges as well as travel costs. Does Disability Now know of any way to avoid paying VAT on batteries, as it amounts to about £60?

**David May, by email**

### **Answer**

**Agnes Fletcher says:** People with a long-term illness or disability don't have to pay VAT on certain goods and services that they buy or bring into the UK. Some building work can also be free of VAT.

In general, items covered by the zero-rating scheme are of practical help to someone because of an illness or disability.

Zero-rating applies to the following items:

- adjustable beds, chair lifts, hoists and sanitary devices
- auditory training aids
- low vision aids
- medical and surgical appliances designed solely for the relief of a disability
- alarms
- motor vehicles, boats and other equipment and appliances designed solely

for use by chronically sick or disabled people.

The scheme also applies to any charges made for the installation, repair and maintenance of these items, or on any spare parts and accessories needed for them.

Zero-rating on building work includes work on:

- ramps, doorways and passages
- bathrooms, washrooms and lavatories
- lifts.

For any general purpose goods adapted for use by a disabled person because of their condition, anything paid to have them adapted will be VAT free, but the normal rate of VAT will apply on the goods themselves.

Also, people over 60 may not have to pay the full standard rate of VAT if they get certain mobility aids installed in their home.

Where you may be falling foul of the regulations is when it comes to the criterion about “equipment and appliances designed solely for use by disabled people”. As you say, batteries of the type you need may have other purposes. However, the fact that you have been advised that the batteries can be bought from wheelchair centres implies that this is not the major factor.

Another relevant aspect of the regulations is that it is the supplier who is responsible for ensuring that all the conditions for zero-rating are met. Specialist centres will be experienced in this and will usually simply have a form for people to sign self-declaring a disability.

The site [www.vbat.co.uk](http://www.vbat.co.uk), which sells mobility equipment including batteries, for example, quotes the following:

“The price we quote excludes VAT and assumes that a simple one page form is completed and returned to us. On the day we receive your order we will dispatch the form to you together with a stamped addressed envelope for its prompt return. Upon receipt of the completed form your mobility solution will be dispatched to you.”

I’m assuming your question means that these sorts of sites are offering batteries at a premium and/or charging extra for delivery when you could collect the battery from somewhere local if VAT was non-chargeable. Perhaps you can find a local mobility centre and pick up a battery from them, thus avoiding the battery charges.

From [www.disabilitynow.org.uk](http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk) 28/10/2010 and Disability Now Magazine Issue 37 November 2010

## **SMART User/Carer Network**

There are now over 250 members from across Lothian, Fife and Borders on the SMART User/Carer Network. The network aims to provide service users and carers with an opportunity to get involved with the development of the service. Anyone who is interested in joining the network or who would like further information can contact Les Malone, Modernisation Manager on Tel. 0131 537 9436 or by email at: [Lothian.smartmanagement@nhs.net](mailto:Lothian.smartmanagement@nhs.net)

### **Standards and Eligibility Working Group**

The NHS Wheelchair and Seating Services (WSS) Standards and Eligibility Working Group was established by the Scottish Government to deliver on the following actions within the WSS Modernisation Action Plan:

- National service and clinical standards will be developed for WSS; and
- National eligibility criteria will be reviewed within the context of other health and social care equipment provision.

The group consists of representatives from the NHS, the voluntary sector, Scottish Government, NHS Quality Improvement Scotland (QIS) and users and carers. Mike Dolan was appointed as Clinical Advisor to lead the work of the group which is due to finish by the end of June 2011.

Web pages are being created about the work of the Working Group. Once ready, these will be added to the Wheelchair and Seating Services Project Board website at Borders has identified accommodation to run a satellite clinic once a <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Health/health/wheelchair> NHSmonth in Hawick Community Hospital. The Wheelchair and Seating Service will offer patients the opportunity to be seen locally at the community hospital as part of a six month pilot project starting in October. There will also be information located within the reception area about the Wheelchair and Seating Services and other services which are available to users.

If you would like further information about the pilot project, please contact Kathleen Henderson, Lead Occupational Therapist, NHS Borders on Tel. 01896 824 527 or you can email [Lothian.smartmanagement@nhs.net](mailto:Lothian.smartmanagement@nhs.net)

### **Planned Clinical Reviews**

From 1 September 2010 planned clinical reviews will be offered to users of the Adult Wheelchair and Seating Service. The reviews are currently offered within the Children's service. This means that where clinically required, service users will be given a routine review appointment. If you would like further information on planned clinical reviews, please contact the SMART Centre on Tel. 0131 537 9445 or by email at: [Lothian.smartmanagement@nhs.net](mailto:Lothian.smartmanagement@nhs.net)

The SMART website was launched in July 2010 and provides information on SMART services. The SMART Centre provides a wide range of rehabilitation technology services for the South East of Scotland,



covering Lothian, Fife and the Borders. These include mobility and postural services (wheelchairs and special seating), prosthetics, and bioengineering services (artificial limbs and special equipment), a Disabled Living Centre and Gait Analysis Service. We also provide a national Driving Assessment Service.

The website can be viewed at [www.smart.scot.nhs.uk](http://www.smart.scot.nhs.uk)

If you have any comments about the website or have any other queries, you can complete the feedback form which is available on the website.

## **Fife Council Libraries' online catalogue**

Did you know that you can search the **Fife Council Libraries' online catalogue to search for books and DVDs in Fife Council's libraries.**

- You can renew items currently on loan to you.
- You can also place a request via this website

Go to the Fife Direct website [www.fifedirect.org.uk](http://www.fifedirect.org.uk). And type in Libraries in the search box at the top right of the page when the Libraries page comes up click on the find, request and renew link in the second paragraph.

Or copy the below web address:

<http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/topics/index.cfm?fuseaction=catalogue.home&subjectid=F6E580D1-E419-48D7-BCF2BB754F5E949F>.

## **Guest features – Let us hear your experiences!**

Do you have anything you'd like to share with FIDN members? Perhaps you or someone you know does a lot to champion equalities. Or perhaps you have experiences or thoughts you'd like to share with other disabled users. Maybe you just want to get something off your chest! If so just let us know by e-mail, phone or fax and you could see your views in print. Ideally submissions should be between 200 and 700 words in length and you can send photos too – although it's not essential.



Call 01592-203993, Fax: 01592-203786, e- mail [enquiries@fidn.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fidn.co.uk) or write to FIDN, West Bridge Mill, Bridge Street, Kirkcaldy, KY1 1TE

## **SAYNOTO0870.COM website**

The site lists many well known companies, and their equivalent geographical numbers.

**Alternatives listed for 0500, 0800, 0808, 0844, 0845, 0870 and 0871 numbers.**

**The SAYNOTO0870.COM web site has been featured on BBC's Working Lunch TV programme, Five's The Gadget Show, BBC Radio 2 (Jeremy Vine Show), BBC Radio Norfolk, and also appeared in many newspapers & publications, including The Guardian, Which Magazine, Readers Digest, and many more.**

Many people don't realise that there are many phone providers offering cheaper calls to standard telephone numbers (those beginning with 01, 02 or 03), which don't apply to 0844, 0845, 0870 or 0871 telephone numbers. - Please see the links page and click on Cheapest Call Provider for price details. This shows that by using multiple providers, you can reduce your call cost on standard telephone numbers to as little as 4p fixed cost (regardless of duration), whereas the cheapest provider to 0870 numbers during the day that I am aware of charges 6p/min (+ 9.3p connection fee [with BT]) to call.

Worst still some companies that use these numbers are actually receiving a cut of the phone call costs.

If you have an 'inclusive landline calls' phone package, then it is very rare that 0844, 0845, 0870, and 0871 numbers are all included in your 'free minutes' allocation, unlike normal numbers. Many mobile phone packages also exclude freephone 0800 and 0808 numbers for your bundled minutes. BT and some other companies are starting to include 0845 and 0870, but this only applies to certain packages, and does not apply to 0844 and 0871 numbers.

Many companies advertise a separate number that can be used when calling from abroad - This usually begins in the format +44 - There is nothing to stop you using this number from the UK (as it is a normal rate telephone call), and will be included in any inclusive minutes provided by your landline or mobile phone provider. Many others will give you a standard number if you ask.

This site is all about listing these numbers, saving you money, without having to pay additional charges.

**On the following chart the numbers highlighted in yellow are charged at a lower rate and will save you money.**

The below are some examples of Alternative phone numbers of some local companies including Fife Council from SAYNOTO0870.COM

Company Name	0870 / 0871	0844 / 0845	01 / 02 / 03	Freephone	Other Information
<u>Consumer Direct (DTI)</u>		0845 404 0506	01851 822401		Scotland
<u>Fife Council</u>		0845 155 0011	01592 551198		Repairs
<u>Fife Council</u>		0845 155 0000	01592 551199		Switchboard
<u>Comet</u>	0870 542 5425	0844 800 9595	01592 647900		Kirkcaldy Retail Pk
<u>Currys</u>	0870 154 5570	0844 561 6263	01727 202101		Customer & Store Support Team
<u>Asda</u>	0844 481 5000			0500 100055	Services Menu



**Locked out  
of the Disabled Toilet?  
use a RADAR key**



**How do I get one?**

- Visit FIDN with identification (e.g. Blue Badge). If It's easier simply post a cheque along with a photocopy of both sides of your Blue Badge and we'll send your key directly.

**Is It only for wheelchair users? NO**

- Speak to us for clarification, but you are entitled to use a Radar accessible toilet if you require assistance in toileting, have a visual impairment etc.

## USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

**Inclusion Scotland**

**Tel 0141 887 7058**

[Info@inclusionscotland.org](mailto:Info@inclusionscotland.org)

**Fife Advocacy**

**Tel: 01383 511155**

[enquiries@fifeadvocacy.org](mailto:enquiries@fifeadvocacy.org)

**Scottish Disability Equality  
Forum**

**Tel: 01786 446456**

[general@sdef.org.uk](mailto:general@sdef.org.uk)

**Citizens Advice & Rights Fife**

**Tel: 0845 1400 095**

[www.cas.org.uk/](http://www.cas.org.uk/)

**NHS/Fife Health Council**

**Tel: 0800 587 4008**

[www.scottishhealthcouncil.org](http://www.scottishhealthcouncil.org)

**Equality & Human Rights  
Commission**

**Tel: 0845 604 5510**

[scotland@equalityhumanrights.com](mailto:scotland@equalityhumanrights.com)

### **FIDN OFFICE CONTACT DETAILS:**

**Muriel MacGregor**

**West Bridge Mill**

**Bridge Street**

**Kirkcaldy KY1 1TE**

**Tel: 01592 203993**

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**Mobile (SMS Text): 07841504318**

**Email: [enquiries@fidn.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fidn.co.uk)**

**Website: [www.fidn.co.uk](http://www.fidn.co.uk) &**

**[www.fidn.org.uk](http://www.fidn.org.uk)**

**Please visit the websites for more  
Information.**

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

**Scottish Charity No: SC 026112**

## 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**

**Consumer Direct**

**Tel: 08454 04 05 06**

**Citizens Advice & Rights Fife**

**Tel: 01334 412845**

**Energy Saving Trust**

**Tel: 0800 512 012**

**Care and Repair**

**Tel: 01592 631661**

**Fife Police Non-emergency**

**Tel: 0845 600 5702**

**All Articles are presumed to be  
correct, but the Fife Independent  
Disability Network takes no  
responsibility for any inaccuracy's  
of Articles in this newsletter.**

## **Fife Council - Public Toilets - Comfort Break Scheme**

Fife Council has launched a Comfort Break Scheme which, with the co-operation of local businesses, will enable members of the public to access the toilet facilities of participating businesses. A similar scheme is already successful in neighbouring authorities.

Businesses will benefit from a potential increase in custom through increase footfall in their premises and they will also have the additional benefit by way of publicity through Fife Council as a Comfort Break Scheme location.

The scheme follows a comprehensive review of the publicly available toilets. During this period, it was established that members of the public were generally dissatisfied with some of the existing council facilities on offer. The condition of the toilets did not meet customer expectations, and the users - particularly women - would seek to use alternative facilities such as cafes and restaurants.

We:

- have created an administrative system for registering businesses and processing quarterly payments
- carry out periodic inspections of participating businesses making sure that they meet Fife Council's criteria
- display external signage directing the public to participating businesses
- update our website on locations of participating businesses

For more information Contact

**Diane Brand, Cleansing Officer (Job Share) Thursday & Friday**

**Tel:** 08451 55 55 55 + Ext 45 09 05 **Fax:** 01592 583158

<http://www.fifedirect.org.uk/atoz/index.cfm?fuseaction=page.display&pageid=6803BEB0-F378-1CBB-B43645835560D4C6&objectid=5BDBA980-C41F-F318-530538248ADEBD67>

### **The FIDN would be interested in knowing if you have used the scheme and how you got on with it.**

What I would like to know

\*Has anyone used this Scheme

\*Was the Toilets accessible e.g. Accessible to wheelchairs without too much difficulty, was the toilets somewhere in the premises that was easy to get to, if you have sensory difficulties did you find the toilets

\*How did the staff treat you when you tried to use the facilities

\*How did you find out that the business was part of the scheme

Please get in touch with us with your comments either by using the contact details on page 12 or we have a page on FaceBook which can be accessed through our website's Homepage [www.fidn.co.uk](http://www.fidn.co.uk) (please note you will have to log in to FaceBook to leave comments).



On Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> October in Dunfermline City Chambers Deaf Action launched a new information guide for hard of hearing people in Fife. The Information guide has been developed by the 'Including You' project Workers and the Development Manager.

Thanks to an award of £222,454 from the Big Lottery Fund, Deaf Action launched a new project 'Including You' – aimed at providing support, advice and learning opportunities to hard of hearing people.

The project improves the quality of life of hard of hearing people in Fife and helps to give them the tools needed to continue leading positive independent lives. Project Workers provide advice about hearing aids, benefits available and community and support groups who can help increase people's confidence. The project also works with friends, families and employers of hard of hearing people to provide advice on how they can improve the way they communicate with those who have a hearing loss.

The 'Including You' team can also deliver a range of free courses on topics such as:

- Mobile phone texting
- Building confidence and assertiveness
- Helping family and friends communicate with you more effectively

They also produce a 'Specialist Equipment Guide for Fife' which has been put together to give deaf people, and those who work with them, a better understanding of the kind of specialist equipment available to help improve their quality of life.

At the moment Deaf Action have an office in Dunfermline but are shortly moving in to the Fife Sensory Impairment Centre, taking the place of Fife Council's DCS which it is hoped will mean great changes in the services available to HOH people in Fife, a thing which has been long needed and argued for.

As a start, one of the presenters on the day was Carol Sinclair, Acting Head of *Audiology Services* NHS Fife who announced a new collaboration between the audiology department and Deaf Action in giving combined support to new hearing aid users in the form of training on hearing aids and their maintenance. This will soon be spread to cover all hearing aid users and should be of great benefit.

**Fife Office** Dunfermline Tel/Textphone: 01383 730997 Mobile/SMS: 07775 838338  
Email: [fife@deafaction.org](mailto:fife@deafaction.org)

## **RNIB - Urgent campaign action**

Over the next few weeks, we have a once in a generation opportunity to secure important new rights for disabled bus and coach passengers, but **we have to act now!**

Read more about the campaign and send an email to your MP at <http://bit.ly/do5WAN>

### **Help us fight for better rights on buses!**

A law is being debated at the European level. It would ensure a right to accessible travel information and make disability awareness training mandatory for all bus drivers and terminal staff, here in the UK and abroad. Unfortunately, some governments, including the UK government, do not support the proposed improvements.

Earlier this year, RNIB campaign supporters emailed Gordon Brown telling him not to weaken the proposed European law. Final negotiations are due to start this September, so please act now by sending a personalised email to your MP in three easy steps. It will only take a few minutes and could make all the difference at this final stage of the campaign.

The campaign webpage gives further information about how to get involved: <http://bit.ly/do5WAN>

Thank you

Carine  
European Campaigns Officer, RNIB.

### **From Their Website:**

#### **Your support is essential**

Bus travel is essential to many of us being able to lead an independent life. Currently, too many disabled people have a bad experience when travelling by bus and this urgently needs to improve.

The European Parliament is proposing new rights for disabled passengers using buses and coaches which could significantly improve the journey experienced by bus passengers here in the UK. If the proposals are accepted they would ensure:

- accessible information (e.g. accessible timetables or information about delays)
- mandatory disability awareness training for all bus drivers and terminal staff.

Continued on page 17



## THE ILEOSTOMY AND INTERNAL POUCH SUPPORT GROUP

### What is IA?

**IA** is a national support group for people with ileostomies and internal pouches.

- Listen
- Inform
- Support

Established in 1956 as the Ileostomy Association by a group of people with ileostomies and some members of the medical profession, the organisation now has 54 member organisations in the UK and Ireland. These local groups are:

<p><b><u>Ileostomy</u></b> Certain Inflammatory bowel diseases such as ulcerative colitis or Crohn’s disease, sometimes cause such damage to the large intestine (colon) that it becomes necessary for this to be removed. The lower end of the small intestine which is called the ileum is then brought out through the abdominal wall, forming an ileostomy, so that bodily waste matter can be collected in an externally attached bag.</p> <p><b><u>Ileo anal pouch</u></b> With the advances in modern surgical techniques some people now have an internal pouch formed. This surgery involves removing the colon and rectum and a reservoir (pouch) is constructed from small intestine. A temporary ileostomy may be necessary whilst healing of the pouch takes place.</p>	<p><b><u>Temporary ileostomy</u></b> This is often referred to as a ‘loop’ ileostomy, as it is formed by bringing a loop of small intestine out onto the abdominal wall. A temporary ileostomy may be formed to enable an ileo-anal pouch to heal, or to allow a join between two ends of large intestine to heal, when a section of intestine has been removed, most commonly for bowel cancer.</p> <p><u>What does IA do?</u> Listen-Inform-Support Although major surgery of this nature, with a change of bodily function, will disrupt a person’s lifestyle, especially if the illness has lasted for many years, recovery will often be assisted by contact with people who have been through a similar experience.</p>	<p>The following core activities are provided by IA for people of all ages with an ileostomy or internal pouch:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visiting</li> <li>• Members’ meetings</li> <li>• IA Journal</li> <li>• Website</li> <li>• Young IA</li> <li>• Internal Pouch</li> <li>• Advisory services</li> <li>• Medical research</li> </ul> <p>IA’s core objectives are to help those facing these operations to return to a normal active lifestyle as soon as possible after surgery. IA is totally funded by donations and subscriptions and most of the 10,000 members have either an ileostomy or an internal pouch, allowing us to use the ‘because we know, we care’ strapline with confidence.</p>
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My name is **Betty McNeil** and I am secretary of the Fife IA Support Group. We meet three times a year at The Staff Club, Victoria Hospital, Kirkcaldy. Our members consist of people who have ileostomies, pouches, colostomies and urostomies. We also have members who are family or friends of our ostomists and come along to support them. Our meetings are very informal and friendly with lots of talk and discussions. Everyone is welcome.

If you wish to find out more about the Fife IA group please contact me at the address , telephone or e-mail below. I will be more than willing to help with information or support.

Mrs B McNeil  
117 Primrose Avenue  
Rosyth Fife KY11 2TX  
Telephone 01383 416320  
E mail [betty.mcneil@talktalk.net](mailto:betty.mcneil@talktalk.net)

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Continued from page 15

However, EU governments, including the UK government, are not supportive and do not want new rights to apply to local bus and coach services. We need to make sure our Ministers understand that the proposed regulations are urgently needed to deliver equal access to transport for disabled people - and they should apply to ALL bus and coach transport in the UK.

### **A rare chance for change**

An opportunity at this level to influence accessible transport provision comes around once every ten to fifteen years.

Negotiations to seek agreement between governments and the European Parliament will start at the end of September, with the UK playing an important role in the negotiations. Please help us put pressure on the UK government to change their position now before these vital negotiations begin.

### **Act now and email your MP!**

#### **Further information**

This campaign is supported by **Sense**, **Radar**, **Scope**, **RNID**, **Leonard Cheshire Disability** and **Age UK**.

If you would like to know more about this campaign or would like a template letter in an alternative format please contact [campaigns@rnib.org.uk](mailto:campaigns@rnib.org.uk) or call the campaigns team on 020 7391 2123.

# Photo`s taken at the FIDN AGM 2010, in the Kingswood Hotel, Burntisland

Top Table from left to right, Guest Speaker: Ken Andrew , Jack Carr (FIDN Treasurer) , Michael Tonks (FIDN Chair), Muriel McGregor (FIDN Office Co-ordinator), Steven Harper MIW, (Acc) (FIDN Vice Chair), Pauline Medd (FIDN Secretary)



Some of the FIDN Members and members of the public in attendance at the AGM

Some of the FIDN Members and members of the public in attendance at the AGM



## **SATURDAY OPENING AT GLENROTHES** **SHOPMOBILITY**

Fife Shopmobility's Glenrothes service will be open on Saturdays for a trial period from 10am to 2pm on Saturday 6 November until Saturday 11 December 2010.

Thanks to the Kingdom Shopping Centre owners, CIS/AXA, this will enable people with mobility difficulties to access the shops and business facilities in and around Glenrothes town centre on a Saturday for the first time since the service opened in 1995.

Please book early to ensure the equipment you need is available.

Contact us on 0844 335 6414, option 1 and [www.fifeshopmobility.com](http://www.fifeshopmobility.com) for all three services' opening hours.

## **Come and join our Community Dance Project in 2011**

Attfife (Arts and Theatres Trust Fife) hopes to obtain funding for a community dance project which will commence in 2011.

The dance project will involve different people of all ages working alongside professional dancers and tutors from Smallpetitklein Dance Company in Dundee. There is the chance of performing the pieces that you will create.

The project will run in Dunfermline, Kirkcaldy and Rothes Halls. Part of it may also be in Lochgelly.

For more information or if you are interested in taking part in this project please contact Anna Darmody at Rothes Halls, Glenrothes on 01592 612121.

**Please Send in Letters or comment's** that may be of interest to FIDN readers to the FIDN office (address on page 12). Please state for Newsletter!

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

### **FIDN Website**

Only FIDN Member`s now get the new editions of the FIDN newsletters but previous editions of the newsletters plus lots more information can be viewed on our website.

[www.fidn.co.uk](http://www.fidn.co.uk)

**Photo`s taken at the FIDN AGM 2010, in the Kingswood Hotel, Burntisland**



**Guest Speaker:  
Robert Ferguson,  
Access Officer, Fife Council**

**Guest Speaker:  
Ken Andrew,  
Mobility & Technology  
Manager, Queen Margaret  
Hospital, Dunfermline**



**Guest Speaker:  
Ian Newman,  
Fieldfare Trust**

**Videos of the Guest Speakers can be viewed on the FIDN website;  
[www.fidn.co.uk](http://www.fidn.co.uk) follow the Video or Gallery links on the Home Page.**

## **DLA recipients to face medical assessment**

All new and existing claimants of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) will be subject to a medical assessment from 2013-14, the Chancellor has announced.

Revealing the move as part of the coalition government's emergency budget, George Osborne claimed that plans to reform DLA would 'ensure support is targeted on those with the highest medical need,' and that payments would only be made 'for as long as a claimant needs them.'

No further details have yet been released as to what form the assessments will take, or who will be responsible for carrying them out.

The budget document claims that the cost of DLA has quadrupled in real terms since its introduction, and that the proposed assessments would save the government £1.4bn by 2015.

It was also announced that the rate of inflation of DLA, along with other benefits, would be linked to the lower rated Consumer Price Index, rather than the current Retail Price Index, which is likely to lead to below real-terms increases in future years.

Many charities and disabled people's organisations have reacted with trepidation to the news, claiming that the new plans are likely to be expensive, counter-productive and could increase the burden on an already struggling local authority social care system.

Neil Coyle, Director of Policy for Disability Alliance told Disability Now that his organisation was "deeply concerned" that medical assessments would be used, pointing to concerns that already exist where they are used in assessing Employment and Support Allowance (ESA).

He said: "It is likely that the assessment used will be the highly criticised Work Capability Assessment which is generating significant concern for its inability to recognise the impact an impairment or health condition has on a disabled person's life."

He said the move raises fresh concerns over the government's on-going approach to reform of the benefit system which is being led by Lord [David] Freud.

"Lord Freud has also announced a DLA review to examine why only 17 per cent of DLA recipients are in work. The combined changes are a significant concern and Disability Alliance is seeking further information from the new Government on both measures at the earliest opportunity.'

Richard Hawkes, Chief Executive of Scope, said that the proposals appear designed 'purely to reduce the number of people eligible for this support.'

'DLA is not a benefit, but a basic recognition that it is more expensive to live as a disabled person in our society,' he said.

Rich Watts, Director of Policy and Development at Essex Coalition of Disabled People (ECDP) said he felt the proposals were being implemented for ideological,

not financial reasons.

'The potential savings from introducing the medical assessment aren't particularly big, in absolute or relative terms,' he said.

'This suggests to me that this move by the coalition government is ideological: they are out to get the 'scroungers' rather than provide real support to people who need it.

'Part of the increase in DLA uptake relates to the fact more people are living independently rather than in a residential setting. Effectively cutting DLA risks reversing this rise in independent living.'

From [Disability Now](#) November 2010

<http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/medical-test-for-dla>



## A National Concern: Safe Scoot

There are around 330,000 users in the UK for whom scooters provide a lifeline to the outside world, giving them their freedom and independence. With models ranging from the 4mph class 2 up to the 8mph class 3, these machines can be difficult to manoeuvre and so accidents do happen.

Norfolk Constabulary has recently joined forces with leading mobility retailer, Halfords in order to roll out its landmark Safe Scoot campaign nationwide.

Following enquiries from police forces, councils, carer and mobility organisations nationwide, Norfolk Constabulary launched Safe Scoot at the Royal Norfolk Show 2010. Safe Scoot is a best practice guide to running awareness courses, complete with a short film starring Benidorm actress Sheila Reid.

As a result of Norfolk Constabulary's successful pilot scheme of awareness courses in Great Yarmouth, Superintendent Jim Smerdon and Crime Prevention Officer Penny Carpenter are now advising the Government's Transport Committee on how best to address the issue.

Anne Campbell, Norfolk Constabulary spokesperson said: "We developed the idea of creating mobility scooter awareness information packs complete with DVDs after receiving complaints from shoppers about mobility scooter users driving too fast and bumping into market stalls."

"At mobility scooter awareness courses users are taught basic manoeuvres such as starting off, reversing and negotiating shopping aisles and are made aware of speed limits. While the film provides essential information for responsible scooter users to help them, and others, stay safe."



## Trainers Guide

The Safe Scoot Trainer's Guide and DVD is essential information for organisations that may wish to run mobility scooter safety awareness events nationwide. The pack contains the full length DVD, Trainer's Guide and promotional materials. The training materials are available to purchase or license for use online. For further information please contact the Social Marketing team on 01953 425556 or [socialmarketing@norfolk.pnn.police.uk](mailto:socialmarketing@norfolk.pnn.police.uk)

Norfolk Constabulary: A national concern : Safe Scoot  
<http://www.norfolk.police.uk/safetyadvice/safescoot/anationalconcern.aspx>

## **40,000 'hit by housing benefit cut'**

Housing benefit cuts will hit about 40,000 people in Scotland, the shadow work and pensions secretary has warned.

Douglas Alexander said communities across the country would be affected - not just wealthier parts of London.

The Paisley and Renfrewshire South MP hit out at the Conservative- Liberal Democrat Westminster coalition during a speech to delegates at Labour's Scottish conference in Oban.

Mr Alexander said: 'The Conservatives have worked hard in advancing what they called their fairness argument to suggest these cuts in housing benefit will be a problem that affects few families in one city.

'I tell you today the cuts in housing benefit they are proposing will affect thousands of families and communities across our country. The Department of Work and Pensions' own figures show that here in Scotland we will be hit hard.

'Forty thousand people in Scotland will have their housing benefit cut from next year, losing £7 a week or over £350 a year on average, because of their change in housing benefit rules.'

He said a family in a two-bedroom flat in Aberdeen will lose £16 a week while a family in a three-bedroom flat in Edinburgh would lose £19 a week. A family in a one-bed flat in Glasgow would lose £7 a week on average.

Mr Alexander's comments came as Prime Minister David Cameron urged opponents of benefit caps to 'think again'.

The planned moves include a £400-a-week housing benefit cap for four- bedroom homes and a 10% reduction for the long-term unemployed.

The Government estimates that 21,000 households will be affected by the cap on different size homes - 17,000 of them in London. But more than 750,000 claimants could be affected by changes to the way Local Housing Allowance levels are calculated.

The Herald

[www.heraldscotland.com](http://www.heraldscotland.com) 30 Oct 2010

## Half of charities fear funding blow

Almost half of charities believe that David Cameron's "Big Society" is a threat to their funding.

One in three also said that they were not interested in running public services, a key tranche of the Government's plans.

And the vast majority of those asked, 88%, believe that smaller charities and umbrella organisations will lose support because of the Tory agenda.



Mr Cameron has made it a personal priority to increase the role of charities in society. However, many warn that charitable organisations are already under pressure following the recession, with falling donations and increased take up of their services.

Experts warn that the Government's massive public spending cuts programme could force many more to turn to charities for help.

Already Citizens Advice Scotland has announced that it is to close two branches, in Arran and Largs.

Last night Labour's Cathy Jamieson, the MP for Kilmarnock and Loudoun, warned that the Coalition's decision to scrap Consumer Scotland and transfer its role to Citizens Advice Bureaux would add to the problems.

"The Government has continually told us that Citizens Advice will handle the workload of Consumer Focus, but it is becoming increasingly clear that this is simply not possible," she said.

'This latest development just goes to show that the Coalition's "Big Society" is falling apart. They have rushed through these proposals without any assessment of how it will impact citizens' rights in Scotland.'

The survey was carried out by Lasa, a charity that offers welfare rights and technological support to the third sector. More than 425 charity workers took part in the poll.

Terry Stokes, chief executive of Lasa, said the poll revealed the "extreme frustration" felt in the sector. He added: "Charities don't run on thin air. The Big Society dream cannot be achieved by the Coalition Government if support organisations have their funds taken away."

The Herald