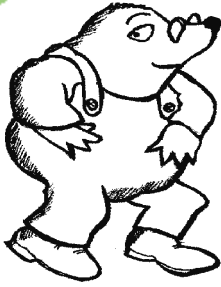


* disability advice service lambeth



September 2008

The Mole

News and information for disabled people in Lambeth

Welcome to another newsletter packed full of news about what's happening at DASL and in Lambeth. There are updates on housing issues, care charges, our new Stroke User Involvement Network and the Lambeth Local Involvement Network (LINK) as well as the usual practical information about events and useful services. As always, we welcome your suggestions and contributions so please contact our Information Worker, Vasiliki Boutopoulou, on 020 7738 5656 if you have ideas or comments.

A NEW DISABILITY STRATEGY FOR LAMBETH

Work is starting on a new Council joint commissioning strategy for adults aged 18–60 who have physical or sensory impairments. It will cover the period 2009-2014 and will succeed the current strategy *Ability, Choice & Independence*.

It is vital that users and carers are fully involved in shaping this new plan as it will

decide what services are needed.

DASL will be supporting users to

have their say.

Contact David

Strong at DASL

for more

information.



DASL AGM

12th November

A date for your diary. Our Annual General Meeting is on Wednesday 12th November from 11am–1pm followed by lunch. We look forward to seeing many of our members and friends there. More details nearer the date.

Add DASL's website at www.disabilitylambeth.org.uk to your Internet Favourites for news, views and information

independent living for disabled people

Direct Payments Support Service



Margaret Farrell
Direct Payments
Service Manager

Since May, almost 50 new clients have been referred to our service and we have given intensive support to many users to recruit personal assistants. Our users' meeting in June was well attended and gave valuable feedback on the revised direct payments user guide on which we are working with the Council. We have continued to take a leading role in policy discussions about the development of Self-Directed Support at national and local levels and look forward to further dialogue with the Council and other partners now that Jamie Nevin, the new Divisional Director Personalising Services, has come into post to lead on this agenda.

Advice & Information Service



Robin Ramsdale
Advice Service
Manager.

It's been a busy time in the Advice Team and, due to the constant demand for our service, that looks set to continue. Changes are coming thick and fast. In the last issue of Mole, I described the introduction of Local Housing Allowance as a new way of calculating Housing Benefit. This time, on page 7, I have looked at the new Choice Based Lettings scheme and how it is likely to impact on disabled people who are looking for council or housing association accommodation.

(Continued on page 3...)

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Advice & Information Service

We are also seeing some changes in the advice team. Steve Golding, our industrious Information Worker, left us in July. We wish Steve the best of luck in all his future plans. However, we are delighted to introduce Vasiliki Boutopoulou as our new Information Worker.



Hello my name is Vasiliki and I am the new information worker within DASL. I am very excited to be embarking on this position bringing together skills from my diverse working backgrounds. That includes my work with service users within psychiatric services as an Occupational therapy assistant, registration worker within a London PCT, and administrator within mental health and the arts. Lambeth is an incredibly diverse borough and I hope to be able to bring into light the services and support available. Please ring me with queries, however big or small, if I am not able to help you, I will make sure to link you to someone who will.

User Involvement Service

Hannah Gordon, our User Involvement Worker for the past 4 years, left in August. She is training to be a primary school teacher. We wish her every success in her new career. We are currently recruiting to this post.



Hannah Gordon

Hannah left us with some thoughts :

"There have been big changes over the last four years, in Lambeth and in the way my project is run. I hope that my successor will take the project forward successfully. So what still needs to happen? Disabled people in the borough still do not have a strong voice. The Council's Disability Equality Scheme (2006) promised that by December 2009 there would be a borough-wide umbrella group to increase the visibility and participation of disabled people. We are still a long way from achieving genuine involvement and it is vital that the disabled people of Lambeth join their voices together to make sure that the Council and other major service providers are held to account."

Meet DASL's volunteers

Volunteers are a vital part of our organisation and are involved in delivering front-line services as well as in a range of support roles. James and Fay are two of the volunteers in our Advice and Information Team and introduce themselves and their work here ...



My name is James. Before joining DASL in January 2007, I worked as a housing officer and welfare officer and have over ten years experience of

filling out forms to apply for Disability Living Allowance (DLA).

After an accident that temporarily left me in a wheelchair, I wanted to return to work and even more so with disabled people.

I work on Thursdays from 10.30am - 3.30pm and specialise in DLA applications and appeals. I have a B.A in film and love the English language. I feel in many ways that the DLA forms are confusing and I like to think that helping people to express themselves articulately about the effects of their disability leads to more successful applications.

When I am not here, I am with my red Staffordshire terrier Missie, who I got from Battersea Dogs Home.

My name is Fay. In the early '70s I became a Lambeth employee and soon became a resident as well by 1977. I responded to an advertisement in *Lambeth Life* and started volunteering here at DASL at the beginning of 2007.

I am semi-retired but determined to stay on foot and thought volunteering should help me as well as others. Whether in f/t or p/t work I have done some volunteering. I am at DASL on Fridays from 11am to help clients with the completion of applications for Community Care Grants, Freedom Passes, Taxicards and Blue Badges amongst other requests that may come up

from time to time. I try to get the kind of information from clients that may put across best

what their issue is, in an attempt to get the most positive results.



Lambeth & Southwark Stroke User Network

Work is continuing at DASL to develop the exciting new Network for people living with stroke in Lambeth and Southwark. Nearly 250 people have now joined the Network and we will be arranging meetings and events during the Autumn to consult people on what they want from the Network and how they can be involved.

Government Stroke Grant

Local authorities are receiving extra money for the next 3 years to help them deliver better social care services for people living with stroke and their carers. DASL and Network members have been talking to Lambeth Council about ideas for how funding might be used to coordinate community-based services better and give people more access to advice and advocacy to help with problems. More news soon on this subject.

Healthcare for London Stroke Project

The NHS is looking at how stroke services can be



improved for Londoners. A 'preliminary' strategy for acute stroke services has just appeared and plans for prevention and rehabilitation services will be out soon. There will be full public consultation early in 2009 and the Network will make sure that local service users have a chance to give their views.

Peer Support Scheme

Through this very successful scheme, people living with stroke meet with others who have had strokes to share experiences, tips and information. In June, six additional trained peer supporters joined the scheme and will soon be taking on clients. You can find an information leaflet and referral form for the scheme on DASL's website at www.disabilitylambeth.org.uk/dasl/involvement/ or contact David Strong on 020 7642 0040 for more information



Peer supporters meet regularly to share ideas *[Photo courtesy Connect]*

Budget consultation 2009/2010

Residents have a chance to tell the Council what they think it should spend its money on in 2009/2010 in a new round of Budget Consultation. The first phase started in August with drop-in sessions across the borough but there will be other opportunities to raise your concerns in the coming weeks. As ever, it is vital that the Council hears from disabled residents what services they think are important for them and should be given a high priority. For further information on how you can have your say, contact the Council on 020 7926 0867, email consultation@lambeth.gov.uk or visit www.lambeth.gov.uk/budgetconsultation.



Update on care charges

On 28th July, Lambeth's Cabinet agreed in principle to freeze care charges at the current rate of £17.50 per hour rather than to raise them again to £20 as originally



planned. The Council would use some of the £23 million it got back from the Government to offset the lost income. Cabinet will review its financial situation on September 8th to decide whether to recommend this proposal to the October Council

meeting which must agree it. We await a report from the Council on the impact of massive increases in charges on users and Lambeth SOS will continue to campaign for a review of the current charging system

Celebrating Age Festival October

The 11th festival for the borough's older residents organised by Age Concern Lambeth takes place in October. As usual, a wide variety of activities and events take place throughout the whole month. The brochure of what's on is out now and can be picked up free in libraries and other community centres. You can also download it from the website at www.ageconcernlambeth.org.uk



Lambeth Housing Strategy and Choice Based Lettings

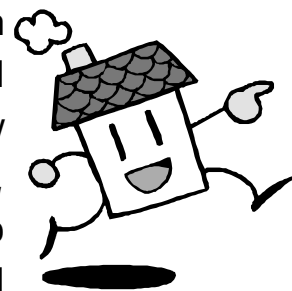


Getting the right housing is a key issue if disabled people are to be able to live independently.

Lambeth Council is currently preparing a new Housing Strategy for the next 5 years. It will explain what the Council will do to increase the supply of affordable homes, improve existing housing and promote independence and housing options for vulnerable residents. The Disabilities Partnership Board has been talking to the Council to try to make sure that disabled people's housing issues are fully reflected in the new strategy. If you want more information about the strategy contact Yetunde Hinton in Housing (yhinton@lambeth.gov.uk) or David Strong at DASL.

In April Lambeth introduced a new system of allocating council and housing association properties to people on their housing waiting list. The scheme is called Choice Based Lettings, and it allows prospective tenants to bid for any suitable vacant properties rather than rely on Lambeth to make them a direct offer. There is more information about the scheme on the Council's website at <http://tinyurl.com/566q3x>

While, in theory, this offers some people a greater say in where they live, for many disabled people there are flaws in the system that could make it much harder for them to access suitable housing. Every week Lambeth advertises all its available properties on its website and also in leaflets in libraries and other council buildings. This is fine if you have access to the internet at home and have the IT skills to use the system. or if you can get to your local library without much difficulty. But for many disabled people this isn't the case. Lambeth have been slow to address this and have not offered the support which would make the system fairer to disabled people. For example, the website does not have audio description or BSL interpretation which could leave users with sensory impairments disadvantaged. Other disabled people will need independent advice and support to use the scheme. Lambeth have said that no Choice Based Lettings scheme in London has managed to get disability access right. Maybe, but what we want to see now is action and not excuses.



OUR NEW NEIGHBOURS - ALLFIE



We are very pleased to welcome The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) to 336 Brixton Road where they have recently moved into new offices. ALLFIE is a national network led by disabled people and supported by allies that include parents, educators and head teachers. It has campaigned successfully over the last 15 years for the rights of children with Special Educational Needs to secure a supported mainstream placement and to strengthen the right of disabled young people to protection from discrimination within the education system.

ALLFIE has an exciting new project to develop two youth forums, to be led by disabled young people, in Lambeth and Newham. Their aim is to increase the engagement of young disabled people in their local areas, to promote inclusion and the social model of disability in the wider community. They want to make consultation with young people dynamic and fun and will use games, drama, music, poetry and film to ensure that the views of young

people are heard by key stakeholders. The project will also support parents to be good allies for their disabled young people and other disabled peoples' organisations, schools, and youth services to enable them to better include the views and opinions of the young disabled people they work with. DASL hopes to work closely with ALLFIE to support the work it will be doing in Lambeth and to learn how to involve disabled young people more effectively in our own organisation.



You can contact ALLFIE on 020 7737 6030 or email info@allfie.org.uk. Their website is at www.allfie.org.uk. If you are a disabled young person or parent who wants to find out more about the plans for an inclusive youth forum in Lambeth you can email Lucy Mason at lucy.mason@allfie.org.uk

In 2006 the British Government took an important role in getting the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities agreed by member states. Now, there is growing concern that the Government is backsliding on its commitment to full recognition of disabled citizens' human rights. It wants to opt out of protecting some of those rights by placing reservations against some of the key articles when it ratifies the Convention later this year. This includes article 19 (the right of disabled people to live where they want and with whom) and other

provisions including those on a right to supported mainstream education. Pressure must be kept on the Government to ratify the Convention without reservation. Contact your MP about this and sign the 10 Downing Street petition at <http://petitions.number10.gov.uk/noreservations/>

You can find out more about the campaign on the independent Human Rights & Disability web site at <http://www.un-convention.info/index.html>



LAMBETH LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK (LINK)

Age Concern Lambeth has been appointed by Lambeth Council as the host organisation for the Lambeth Local Involvement Network (LINK), initially until March 2011. Local Involvement Networks are a new Government initiative. They aim to ensure that more people have a stronger say in how their local health and social care services are planned, commissioned and delivered. The main task of the host is to help establish, develop and provide ongoing support to the new LINK. A team of 3 staff is being recruited to work with the LINK and when they are in place Age Concern Lambeth will launch a programme of events and information to spread the news of the LINK. This will also tell everyone interested in health and social care services about how they can become involved to influence how local services are developed and run. DASL is delighted that the contract to act as host organisation has gone to a Lambeth organisation and we expect to work very closely with Age Concern Lambeth to ensure that disabled people have every opportunity to play a full role in the LINK. You can find out more from Julia Shelley at Age Concern Lambeth on 020 7733 0528 or e-mail her at j.shelley@aclambeth.org.uk

SHARE Community is pleased to announce the start of a new two year project - *My Future*, to support people experiencing mental health problems who are finding it difficult to get back into work. Students will have access to employment and IT training sessions and life coaching. To be eligible, students must be over 18, unemployed, in receipt of a disability related benefit (e.g DLA or Incapacity Benefit) and live in Lambeth, Croydon, Wandsworth, Southwark or Lewisham. A leaflet is enclosed. For further information, please contact the Brixton Team on 020 7326 5460; or email newstart@sharecommunity.org.uk ; or visit Share's website at www.sharecommunity.org.uk.

Mosaic Clubhouse employment and education (E&E) unit

Mosaic Clubhouse E&E unit offer a Job Club every Monday 2-5pm where people with mental health problems can get support with CVs, job applications, practice interview skills, look for work. Every Tuesday from 5-7pm is E&E eve where support is available for any employment or education issue.

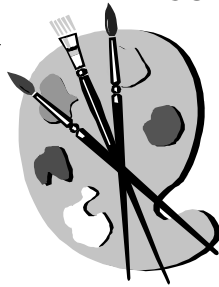
Mosaic Clubhouse is at 126 Atkins Rd, Balham, Tel: 020 8674 2349, email: info@mosaic-clubhouse.org.

Status Employment is a registered charity that aims to assist disabled people to find and retain paid employment. Status consultants work extensively with candidates to determine the right job for each person. Once in work, they provide on-the-job training and/or support depending on the individual needs of each candidate. They have an office at 65 Effra Road, Brixton SW2 1BZ Tel: 020 7926 1050 Email: louise.bain@slam.nhs.uk

Employment Café at 64 Railton Road, Brixton offers fast internet access, a personal employment adviser, free CV service, jobs to mobiles, and more. All this takes place in a relaxed environment with jazz music. Open from Monday - Saturday 9am to 5pm. For further information, phone 020 7733 8878; or email them at info@employment-cafe.co.uk



NOTICE BOARD



Disability hate crime

Yvonne Okiyo, the Hate Crime Co-ordinator at Lambeth's Community Safety Division, has produced a leaflet to raise awareness of the issue and give information about local support services. There is also a form to report any incidents of disability hate crime. Contact DASL on 020 7738 5656, or Adina Bozga at Lambeth on 020 7926 2737, if you'd like a leaflet or a reporting form.

Disabled or elderly clients with BT 'phone accounts should contact Lambeth Adults' & Community Services on 020 7926 5555 who will register you with BT's Consumer Affairs and Inclusion Team. Once registered, if you have a fault on your line, you should get priority service and be exempt from call-out charges.

Disabilities Partnership Board 2008
23rd September - 336 Brixton Rd
25th November - venue to be confirmed
Contact David Strong at DASL on 020 7642 0040 for more information

Free personally tailored mentoring services available for disabled artists in London that can offer support and back up in all aspects of the artists' process including enhancing your business skills, commissioning, marketing techniques etc. The services are available to each artist for up to a year and will offer support that could set you up in your arts career for life. **Tel: 08448 008 851**

Email info@amplondon.co.uk
www.amplondon.co.uk

Dentist home visits

If you can't visit the dentist because of age or disability, two who make home visits in Lambeth are :

Myatts Field Health
Centre

Tel: 020 3049 4003

Mr W C Yeap

Tel: 020 8670 8889



Eye care home visits

If you can't visit an optician for an eye test these practices make home visits in Lambeth:

The Outside Clinic

Tel: 01793 610252

London Eye Care Centre

Tel: 020 8670 1845

Julia Manning Eye Care

Tel: 020 7708 0683

who we are & how to contact us

www.disabilitylambeth.org.uk



We are an independent charity serving disabled adults with all types of impairments in Lambeth, providing:

Advice & information on
living with a disability

Direct Payments Support Service
direct.payments@disabilitylambeth.org.uk

User Involvement Project for people with
physical & sensory impairments
user.involvement@disabilitylambeth.org.uk

Advice casework in
welfare benefits, housing
and community care

Lambeth & Southwark Stroke User
Involvement Network

You can contact us Monday to Friday 10am to 1pm on :

020 7738 5656

enquiry.line@disabilitylambeth.org.uk

Teams: Advice & Information
020 7738 5656
Direct Payments
020 7642 0041 / 2016
User Involvement
020 7642 2054
Stroke Network
020 7642 0040

Fax: 020 7924 9621
Post: 336 Brixton Road
London SW9 7AA

Join us ... DASL
membership is free!

DASL provides vital services to local disabled people. Building a strong and active membership is a key part of our organisation's future. We want more disabled people and others who support our work to become members. When you join you will receive this newsletter regularly and have opportunities to get more involved with what we do.

Contact us on 020 7738 5656 for more details.

DASL is funded by Lambeth Council, Lambeth Primary Care Trust, City Bridge Trust, The Rank Foundation, Guys & St Thomas' Charity, Southwark Health & Social Care and London Catalyst Charity No. 1087399

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