

# \* disability advice service lambeth

# Lambeth SOS

# The Mole



March 2007

News and information for disabled people in Lambeth

## LAMBETH SOS CAMPAIGN SPECIAL



The Lambeth SOS campaign to stop Lambeth Council's cuts in essential services to vulnerable adults and carers has gained huge support from people in all parts of the borough and from further afield. The campaign, in which DASL is playing an important role, is protesting against massive cuts in funding of voluntary and community groups and proposals to restrict access to community care services and to increase charges for homecare. On 28th February, Lambeth saw one of its largest rallies for many years as 450 angry protestors marched on the Council meeting at Lambeth Town Hall to present a petition signed by over 7,000 people and to tell the Labour administration why these proposals are wrong. Find out inside what happened that night and why Lambeth SOS will be continuing the campaign.

**independent living for disabled people**

## LAMBETH COUNCIL MEETING 28TH FEBRUARY 2007

Protestors interrupt the Council meeting



The Council meeting on 28th February was held to agree Lambeth's budget and Council Tax for 2007/08. The Labour administration's proposals for cuts in social care services were included in the budget for the Adults' and Community Services Department. Lambeth SOS sent a deputation of eight people to present its petition : Dorothy, Yvonne, Sabina and David addressed the councillors and told them that they must vote against the cuts. Early in the debate, protestors who were frustrated that Labour Cabinet members had not accepted an invitation to address the audience in

the Assembly Hall made their way to the public gallery and forcefully made their views known to the councillors. When the meeting resumed, the Lib Dem and Conservative parties spoke against the cuts and put forward their own alternative budgets which would have made savings in different areas of the Council's budget. These were defeated, as was a LibDem amendment asking Labour to delay changing the eligibility criteria for services to 'Critical' need only for a year while the Government was lobbied for more resources. After four hours debate, Labour's budget, with all the cuts, was agreed — no Labour councillor voted against. Council Leader Steve Reed did state that Labour was reluctant to introduce the change in eligibility and said he would listen to the results of the public consultation before making a final decision on whether to go ahead with the eligibility and charges proposals in the summer.

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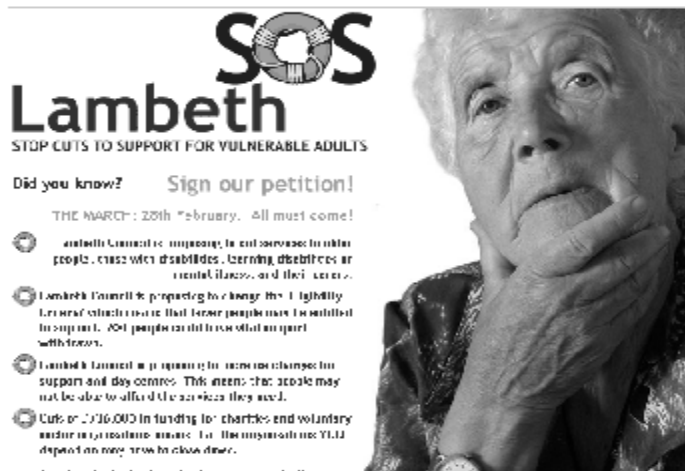
Lambeth SOS deputation with petition



THE PETITION AND MARCH

LAMBETH SOS WEBSITE

As soon as details of the cuts became known in January, Lambeth SOS organised a petition so that people could show their opposition to the proposals. It was presented to the Council at the meeting, by which time over 7,000 people had signed it. You can continue to show your support by signing it on-line at [www.lambethsos.org.uk](http://www.lambethsos.org.uk). The march to the Council meeting was a great success, bringing together 450 disabled and older people, carers and staff, volunteers and Committee members of organisations facing funding cuts. It made its way from the Accord Centre in Brixton Road to the Town Hall with demonstrators carrying banners, waving home-made placards, blowing whistles and chanting slogans against the cuts. At the Town Hall, marchers filled the Assembly Hall and watched the debate in the Council chamber via a video link.



Lambeth SOS was set up in January 2007 by a group of local voluntary and community organisations, including DASL, which work with vulnerable adults and carers. Over the past two months, it has been coordinating the campaign against the Council's cuts proposals, building support from users, carers and others who are concerned at the damage the cuts will do. The Lambeth SOS website has been a vital part of the campaign and it will continue to be updated with news and information. Visit [www.lambethsos.org.uk](http://www.lambethsos.org.uk) regularly to find out what is happening.



The march in full swing



Campaign placards at the Town Hall

Thanks to Gethyn Williams, Janet Paske and John Martin for use of campaign photos

## COUNCIL CONSULTATION

## WHERE NEXT?

Pressure from Lambeth SOS has forced the Council to delay a final decision on the eligibility and charging proposals until June at the earliest. It has now extended the consultation period on these proposals from April 16th to June 4th. Users and carers should continue to make their views known. Ring the Council on 020 7926 8200 or visit [www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/HealthSocialCare/ACSBudget.htm](http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/Services/HealthSocialCare/ACSBudget.htm) to



Arriving at the Town Hall

do this. The Council has been holding public meetings to explain its proposals and may organise more of these. The next confirmed meeting is for all client groups and is at Waterloo Action Centre, 14 Baylis Road, SE1 from 6-8pm on 28th March.



Rallying at Lambeth Accord

Local voluntary organisations have been finding out by how much their Council funding will be cut : vital projects and services will inevitably be lost as a result and Lambeth SOS will be publicising the damage this will do. The campaign to stop the eligibility proposal and for a sensible and fair charging policy will also continue. The next phase of the campaign is being planned and will include :

- Producing new campaign materials for users, carers and the public;
- Attending all public consultation meetings to oppose the proposals;
- Keeping the profile of the campaign high in the media;
- Lobbying the Government to highlight the risks the cuts present and to ask for more money for Lambeth;
- Organising further campaigning events and meetings

Keep in touch — your support is vital.

**SOS**  
**Lambeth**  
 STOP CUTS TO SUPPORT FOR VULNERABLE ADULTS

c/o 336 Brixton Road  
 London SW9 7AA

Tel: 020 7738 5656 /7733 0528

Email: [info@lambethsos.org.uk](mailto:info@lambethsos.org.uk)

Web: [www.lambethsos.org.uk](http://www.lambethsos.org.uk)

Louise Holden, DASL's information worker, went to see Susan to talk about her experiences of becoming an "unable" person.

Susan has lived in Lambeth all her life. In November 2005 she was involved in a traffic incident that resulted in her becoming a wheelchair user. Since then Susan's day-to-day life has changed drastically. She told me that with the help and support of her family and friends she has managed to remain a force to be reckoned with and is anything but unable! And that's why she has got what she is entitled to. She has become aware first-hand of the issues that many disabled people have to face - dealing with all the different agencies, sorting out care, finances, specialist equipment and adaptations and, most importantly for her, accessibility.

When a bus driver told Susan that he couldn't move the bus so she could get on with her wheelchair, he didn't realise who he was dealing with. Susan moved her wheelchair in front of the bus and, after 45 minutes of requesting that the bus



driver let her on the bus, she called the police. The bus driver let her on only after the police arrived.

"I felt demoralised and embarrassed," Susan told me, "Regardless of race, gender or disability, all people have rights and should be treated equally." Susan feels that she was lucky to get into contact with DASL and is concerned that not enough people have easy access to information and services. "I sometimes feel like I am being hidden away,"

Susan said.

Because of her concern for people who are less able to advocate for themselves, she has become involved in DASL's work and is now a Management Committee member.

She feels that DASL could provide more information on how accessible local services are. DASL would like to hear from members who feel the same way so we can look into setting up an access project. This would involve investigating and rating how easy it is to go to a nightclub or go high street shopping, for example.

If you think that this is something you would be interested in, give Louise a call on 0207 738 5656.

## DASL AGM 23rd November 2006

Our fifth AGM was attended by over 40 people and we were pleased to welcome Derrick Anderson, Chief Executive of Lambeth Council, as our guest speaker. Derrick talked about his long term vision for improving Council services and accepted criticisms from members of the audience about the standards of services for disabled people from some key departments such as housing. He gave a tough message about voluntary sector funding : the Council would need a more strategic approach to the services it funded, some groups would lose out and the emphasis would be on better partnership working as there would be very few new resources.

Isabelle Clement, our Chair, talked about how DASL was planning to move forward to achieve the objectives of our new Strategic Plan and the Treasurer, Trevor Critchley,



Isabelle Clement and Derrick Anderson

reported on the tougher financial climate within which DASL is operating. New trustee Susan Hamilton was elected to serve on the new Committee alongside returning members Isabelle Clement, Ebenezer Akinsanmi, Trevor Critchley, Boz Borowy, Judy Fink, Annie McDowall, Eureka Shabazz, Ameena Berkowitz and Ernest Hamley [see opposite].

Finally, a reminder that members who wish to receive a copy of DASL's Annual Review for 2005/06 should contact our office.



## Your Mole in 2007

As you are aware, each issue of this newsletter usually covers topics around a particular theme.

The editorial team here at DASL have been looking into what themes to have for our issues in 2007.

This is what we have come up with so far: -

MAY 2007

SPORTS, LEISURE &  
HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

JULY 2007

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY &  
ADAPTATIONS

SEPTEMBER 2007

HEALTH

NOVEMBER 2007

OPEN FOR SUGGESTIONS!

If you have an idea for what theme to do for the November issue of the Mole or have an idea for an article, get in touch!

You can call Louise on 020 7738 5656, email or write in. Full contact details are on the back page.



## Ernest Hamley 1926 - 2007

We were deeply saddened to hear of the death of one of our trustees, Ernest Hamley, in February, after a short illness.



Born in Lambeth and a lifetime resident of the borough, Ernest was a remarkable and engaging man. It is impossible to do justice to his many achievements in a short tribute. Wounded in the war, he went on to work in senior Government and United Nations positions in Europe and the Far East.

He gave a huge amount of time as a volunteer including 40 years service with the St John Ambulance Brigade, eventually becoming Senior District Staff Officer for London.

In recent years, he was active in the Transport for All organisation, the Expert Patient Programme, the Rehabilitation Users Network and many other causes, fighting for the rights of disabled people with passion. He will be a very great loss to Lambeth and his many friends will remember his tireless contribution with gratitude.

New DASL service

New ICE Service



DLA SERVICE

DASL has started a new service to help people complete their Disability Living Allowance (DLA) forms. We are lucky to have two new volunteers

providing the service, James Kearney and Fay Gordon. Both have experience with vulnerable clients and both have been trained in completing DLA forms.



Accessing the new DLA Service:

If you are confident that you are entitled to DLA then call the Department for Work and Pensions on 08457 123 456 or freephone 0800 88 22 00 and ask for a DLA application form.

Once you have it, call the Enquiry Line on 2027 738 5656 to make a booking.

If you are not sure if you are eligible, call us to find out more.

INDEPENDENT COMPLAINTS SERVICE TO BE INTRODUCED ACROSS THE WHOLE OF THE DWP

The government has announced that an Independent Case Examiner (ICE) is to be appointed to provide an independent complaints service for the whole of the DWP, following a successful pilot.

The ICE service will handle complaints relating to Jobcentre Plus, The Pension Service, The Disability and Carers Service, The Rent Service, Debt Management and the financial assistance scheme.

The ICE will undertake, 'impartial investigations of customer complaints about the service they have received,' said Anne McGuire, Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the DWP, "and will work closely with the department to help improve the service it offers."

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Benefits Uprating

It's nearly that time of year again, with welfare benefits increasing from April. You should get a letter informing you of the increases. If you have any concerns, call our enquiry line.

## Advice Forum

Janet Paske, Advice Service Manager, has been actively involved in helping set up the new Lambeth Advice Forum.

This is a membership body consisting of the voluntary and community sector organisations, private sector solicitors and public sector agencies who play a key role in providing legal advice to Lambeth residents.

The Forum is the point of contact for information, consultation and communication on all issues relevant to legal advice.

In its initial stages the Forum is raising the profile of the advice sector in the borough, which has been poorly funded compared to similar authorities. The Forum is meeting with the Council Leader to express our concerns in the spring.



The Forum will also be inviting speakers from agencies which have a big impact on our clients, in an attempt to influence policies and improve the way clients' problems are handled.

## Direct Payments Support



Margaret Farrell, Direct Payments Manager

This is a very busy time for our service. Our current contract with Lambeth Council is coming to an end and we are now in the middle of tendering for the new contract which is due to start on 01/07/07. We are confident that, despite competition from large national organisations, our track record of providing high quality support to our clients, our constructive partnership work with the Council and our strong reputation as a vibrant, local, user-led organisation mean that we can win the contract again. We should find out whether we have been successful in May and we will let clients know the outcome as soon as we can.

Due to recent changes in council service locations, we thought it may be useful to list the main services provided and how you can access them. Please contact DASL's enquiry line on 020 7738 5656 if you are unsure about where to call.

### HELP WITH TRAVEL

Accessible Transport Unit, Hopton House, 243A Streatham High Road SW16 6EY. Email: [accessibletransport@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:accessibletransport@lambeth.gov.uk)

The ATU is the place where the council process and grant Taxicards, Blue Badges and Freedom Passes to people meeting the eligibility criteria.

For Taxicard and Blue Badge enquiries, call 020 7926 7591.

For Freedom Pass enquiries, call 020 7926 0747.

For general accessible transport enquiries, call 020 7926 4990.

### HELP TO STAY INDEPENDENT

Community Occupational Therapy Services, Hopton House, 243A Streatham High Road SW16 6EY [occupationaltherapy@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:occupationaltherapy@lambeth.gov.uk)

Provides adaptations or equipment you need to remain living independently at home.

Community Services, Phoenix House, 10 Wandsworth Road, SW8 2LL.  
[disability@lambeth.gov.uk](mailto:disability@lambeth.gov.uk)

Teams based at Phoenix House are Disability & Older people's service, Adult Learning Disabilities Service, Substance Misuse Service.

There are two mental health teams based at other locations: -

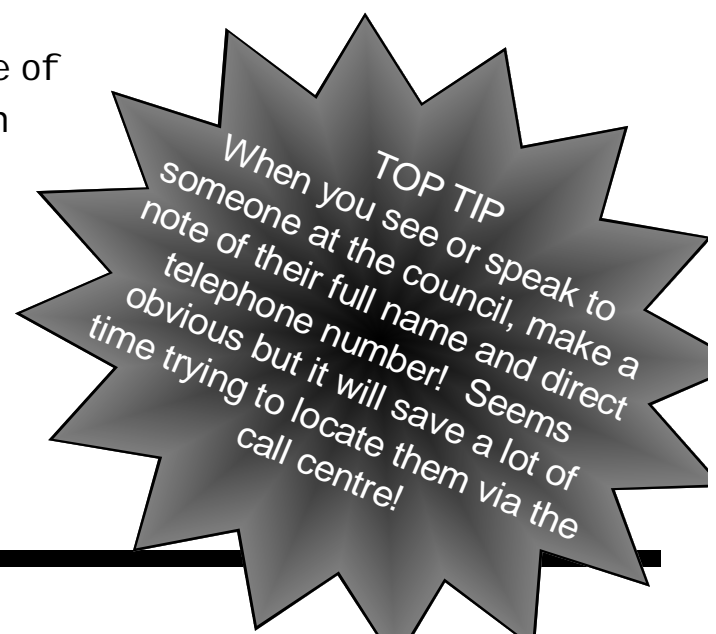
**North Lambeth Mental Health Team**, 190 Kennington Lane, SE11—provides services for adults in the Waterloo, Vauxhall, Oval and Stockwell areas.

**South-East Lambeth Mental Health Team**, David Pitt House, 24/28 Norwood High Street, West Norwood SE27 9NR—

Provides services for adults in the Upper Tulse Hill, Thurlow Park, Knight's Hill, West Norwood and Gypsy Hill areas.

Provides assessment of needs and a range of services that aim to make sure people can continue to live as independently as possible.

To contact any of the teams above, call Adults' and Community Services on 020 7926 5555.



The Government plans to set up a financial advice service designed to help people in lower incomes manage their money. It has set up a task force to design such a service and said it would bring forward proposals before the end of 2007.

Health secretary Patricia Hewitt has written to banking bosses about the problems disabled people



using Direct Payments have in using financial services. She told the British Bankers Association she had found that disabled people had been prevented from opening accounts because they lacked acceptable proof of identity.

You can look at the letter Patricia Hewitt and the reply received by following this link: <http://tinyurl.com/2kym47>

**GET HELP PAYING YOUR GAS & ELECTRICITY BILLS**

Appointments available

**FREE ADVICE**

You could end up with money in your pocket!

**CENTRE 70  
ADVICE**  
46 Knights Hill  
West Norwood  
SE27 0JD  
Tel: 0208 670 2195  
Email [fueldebt@centre70.fsbusiness.co.uk](mailto:fueldebt@centre70.fsbusiness.co.uk)



## CARERS BREAKS GRANTS

The Fix Yourself a Break Scheme fund enables Carers to purchase a break or treat. This fund has been financed from the Council's Carers Special Grant money.

You may be eligible for a financial contribution of up to £200 for a break. It may be possible for a partner, another relative, or possibly a grown up child who assists the main Carer in a significant way. Only one application per household will be considered and you must be aware that there is no automatic right to a grant and applications are assessed on a panel basis.

You are only eligible to apply once every three years. If you have had a break but can't remember when it was, contact Lambeth Carers with your details and we will tell you when you are next eligible.

Contact Tom Haworth, Carers Breaks Officer, Lambeth Carers on 020 7733 9600.

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# who we are & how to contact us



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

Initial advice & information  
on all aspects of living with  
a disability

Direct Payments Support Service  
[direct.payments@disabilitylambeth.org.uk](mailto:direct.payments@disabilitylambeth.org.uk)

User Involvement Project working with  
disabled people  
[user.involvement@disabilitylambeth.org.uk](mailto:user.involvement@disabilitylambeth.org.uk)

Advice casework in  
welfare benefits, housing  
and community care

You can contact us Monday to Friday, 10am to 1pm, by calling our enquiry line:

**020 7738 5656**  
[enquiry.line@disabilitylambeth.org.uk](mailto:enquiry.line@disabilitylambeth.org.uk)

Teams: **Advice / Information**  
020 7738 5656

**Direct Payments**  
020 7642 0038/0041  
020 7642 2016

**Disabilities  
Partnership  
& Involvement Project**  
020 7642 2054

Minicom: 020 7978 8765

Fax: 020 7924 9621

Post: 336 Brixton Road  
London SW9 7AA

**Join us ... DASL  
membership is free!**

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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 Louise on 020 7738 5656 for more details.

DASL is funded by Lambeth Council, Lambeth Primary Care Trust, Bridge House Trust, Lambeth Endowed Charities, Stephen Clark 1965 Charitable Trust, Chelsea Building Society Charitable Trust and Lloyds TSB Foundation  
Charity No. 1087399 A company limited by guarantee registered in England & Wales No. 04214688

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