

April 2008

The Mole

News and information for
disabled people in Lambeth

INSIDE THIS ISSUE ...

A NEW STROKE USER INVOLVEMENT NETWORK FOR LAMBETH AND SOUTHWARK

Some great news which we think will be of interest to many DASL members and to local organisations. DASL, working with Blackfriars Settlement, has been awarded funding for the next three years to coordinate and develop a two borough network to support people who have had strokes and their carers. We will be taking forward exciting user-led projects which have already been carried out under the Stroke Modernisation Initiative and working to involve many more people in the new Network. More on page 5 and on our website at www.disabilitylambeth.org.uk/dasl/involvement/

Latest news on Lambeth homecare charges +
Complete the national survey on charges — details on page 6

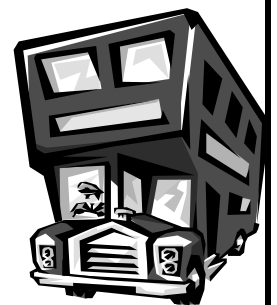


LORNA CAMPBELL
Lambeth's new Cabinet
member for Health and
Care Services

In a recent re-shuffle of the Lambeth Labour Cabinet, Councillor Lorna Campbell has taken over from Councillor Donatus Anyanwu as lead member for adult social services. We welcome her to her new job and look forward to working with her with our voluntary sector colleagues

FREEDOM PASSES

Latest news
on renewing
your Freedom
Pass—page 9



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

Direct Payments Support Service

WOULD YOU LIKE TO TRY THE MOLE BY EMAIL?

We send out 500 copies of the Mole by post, some in large print or on tape. We will always make our newsletter available in the format our readers prefer but if you would like to try it by email please ring Steve on 020 7738 5656. This may suit some of you better and does save on postage. The Mole comes as a pdf file so it is not too big a size for your email and you can easily open it.



Margaret Farrell
Direct Payments
Service Manager



On March 12th the Direct Payments User Group met at 336 to discuss their experiences (good and bad) of Direct Payments and to share their ideas for future meetings. Thirteen Direct Payments users attended and were joined by Jim Heron, the Lead Commissioning Officer for DP's and Yvette Fowles, the Direct Payments Finance Officer from Lambeth Adult and Community Services who gave an update on developments within the Council and answered questions; unfortunately, Jyoti Shah the interim DP Project Lead could not attend due to illness.

Hannah Gordon, our Involvement Worker, then facilitated a discussion on developing Peer Support and what that might look like; it was decided that to make sure that the views of all our service users are heard we should send out a questionnaire, which we hope to do before our next meeting. The full minutes of the meeting will be sent out within the next few weeks. Thank you to all those who attended and we hope to see you at the next meeting.

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Advice Service



Robin Ramsdale,
Advice Service
Manager.

2008 is going to see a lot of changes to the benefits system. The first of these will be the introduction of the new Local Housing Allowance (LHA) which will replace Housing Benefit from the 7th April. If you live in council or housing association accommodation you will continue to receive Housing Benefit, as will tenants who are currently renting in the private sector. However, if you take out a new private sector tenancy from the 7th April you will have to claim LHA instead. The LHA is going to be a flat rate allowance. The amount you get will depend on your individual circumstances and the area in which you live. We'll take a detailed look at the LHA in The Mole in another issue..

Disabilities Partnership Board 2008

20th May - Gracefield Gardens

15th July - Lambeth Resource
Centre, West Norwood

23rd September - 336 Brixton Rd

25th November -
Lambeth Resource Centre.

User Involvement Service

The User Involvement Service Needs You! The service encompasses two client groups, two voluntary sector organisations and two statutory bodies. It would be easy for smaller things to get missed or for one client group to get priority over the other. To ensure that this does not happen the project has a steering group. This meets quarterly to look at my work plan, assess



Hannah Gordon

progress and make sure I am doing what I am supposed to be! David Strong of DASL and Julia Shelley of Age Concern Lambeth sit on the group,

as do representatives from Adults and Community Services at Lambeth Council and Lambeth Primary Care Trust, as the project partners and funders.

The next time the group meets in April we would like to have an older person and a disabled person on the group. We want to check that we are doing what you want us to, and be accountable to you if we're not. If you are interested in either position call me on 020 7642 2054 or email

hannah.gordon@disabilitylambeth.org.uk

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. Leila and Veronica are two of our volunteers and introduce themselves and their work here ...

Hello,

My name is Leila. I came to the UK from Guyana over 45 years ago. Having trained as a physiotherapist at St Thomas' Hospital in London, I worked in the NHS until I retired in 2004.



I am delighted to have the opportunity to use some of the skills acquired there, as a volunteer for DASL's Advice and Information Service.

While manning the Enquiry Line Tuesdays and Wednesdays (10am to 1pm) my assets have included a knowledge of medical conditions and their symptoms; and the communication skills perfected throughout my professional life.

My interests are politics, foreign travel, flower arranging and, of course, people. I am a Soroptimist, a Pastoral Leader and Steward in the Methodist Church, and a serving member on the executive of the Bishops High School Alumni Association UK/Europe — which raises funds for my alma mater.

Hi,

My name is Veronica, I have lived in Lambeth all of my life and started volunteering at DASL in September 2007. I needed some work experience after my studies and decided that I should use some of my personal experiences as a disabled person to help others.

I am mainly involved in the DLA service, helping people to complete their Disability Living Allowance forms.



Appointments with me are on Tuesday mornings (10am to 1pm). I also help clients with any DLA appeals, and to complete Incapacity Benefit forms and Freedom Passes.

During the appointment, I try to find out from the client what kind of issues they face and how these affect them on a daily basis, and then explain this on the DLA application.

Lambeth & Southwark Stroke User Network



Local users have been involved in improving stroke information and resources

In the last 3 years, stroke services in Lambeth and Southwark have improved greatly through the Stroke Modernisation Initiative, a major programme funded by Guy's and St Thomas' Charity. Clinical and therapy services in hospitals and for people going home, information resources and training of GPs and other health staff have all benefited greatly from the contributions of users.

With the programme coming to an end in March 2008 it was vital that this innovative approach to user involvement was not lost. DASL and Blackfriars Settlement have worked closely with colleagues from health and social services in the two boroughs over the last 6 months and we now have funding for the next 3 years to build an inclusive and active Stroke User Involvement Network for Lambeth and Southwark. The main funding will again come from

Guy's & St Thomas' Charity with further support from Lambeth PCT, Southwark Health and Social Care and London Catalyst.

The Network will be coordinated by a new worker based at DASL but it will be led by users. It will organise meetings and events, provide information and support people who have had strokes to access services in the community. Users will deliver key services including peer support and training and contribute to the planning and design of stroke services. If you have had a stroke at any time, are a carer for someone in this situation or have a professional interest, please contact us on 020 7738 5656 or see our website at www.disabilitylambeth.org.uk/dasl/involvement/ for more information.

We enclose a membership form which you can return to DASL if you wish to be involved in the Network.

The Lambeth SOS campaign against the Council's cuts in services for vulnerable adults continues into 2008. The situation over the increase in community care charges is still very worrying. Having raised homecare charges from £7.55 to £17.50 per hour in 2007/2008, the Council meeting on 27th February voted for a budget that included a further rise to £20 from 1st April. Days later, at Scrutiny Sub-Committee on 6th March, the Council announced that it would not introduce the £20 charge until September 2008. Before deciding whether to go ahead with the increase, it is promising that it will carry out a full review and 'impact assessment' which will go to Cabinet in July. Based on the review and on its budget position, the Cabinet will decide whether to keep charges at £17.50 or increase them again. Lambeth SOS will be providing evidence of the serious difficulties which the increased charges are causing to people and asking for the charge to be reduced from £17.50 which is the highest in London.

What do we know about the effect the increase to £17.50 is having? The Council's figures show that 62 people cancelled their services between September, when the increase to £17.50 came in, &

November 2007. 20 of these specifically gave as their reason that they couldn't afford to pay for their service. There are fears that some of the adults with learning disabilities who have been assessed as liable for charges for the first time, who have not yet had their bills, will also cancel their services. The Council admits that 388 disabled and older people [nearly 50 more than it originally estimated] are having to pay more in charges and we calculate that they are paying an average extra of £31.42 a week. Please let us know how you have been affected by the increase in charges so we can build a strong case to present to the Council in July. We are also asking users to take part in a national survey on homecare charges organised by the Coalition on Charging which will be preparing a report to send to the Government on this issue. You can find the survey on the DASL website or ring us on 020 7738 5656 and we can email it to you or post you a copy. The survey needs to be returned by 1st May.





There have been worrying developments at the Independent Living Fund, the public body set up in 1988 to give financial support to severely disabled people to enable them to live in the community. Over 18,000 people use the scheme in the UK, most of them combining ILF payments with direct payments from their local authority.

A major review of the ILF was carried out during 2006/2007 to look at its long-term future. The Government ruled out a significant expansion of the scheme but the ILF say they cannot cope with the 27% increase in new applications when they have a fixed annual budget for the next three years.

As a result, the ILF is making major changes to the way the scheme works from 1st April 2008:

- The weekly amount that local authorities have to pay for personal care support before an application to the ILF can be made, will rise from £200 to £320
- The ILF will only give funding from the time that an offer has

been accepted by the applicant.

- There will be a new system of priorities for assessing new applications :
 - 1st: applicants working for at least 16 hours a week
 - 2nd: those on the lowest incomes [ie receiving Income Support, Income-Based Jobseekers Allowance, Pension Guarantee Credit or equivalent incomes]
- It is also being proposed that people who have received substantial compensation for personal injury will normally be excluded from the ILF.

Disabled people's organisations are very concerned that local councils will struggle to pay a larger share of care packages and the implications of prioritising people in work. There may also be an impact on existing recipients of ILF if their circumstances change or their conditions deteriorate and they need to apply for additional support.

More information is on the ILF website at www.ilf.org.uk. The National Centre for Independent Living is campaigning on this issue — see www.ncil.org.uk. DASL's Direct Payments team [contact details on back page] can also give further information about the ILF.

Disability hate crime is considered as "any incident perceived to be based upon prejudice towards or hatred of the victim because of their disability (physical or mental impairment) or so perceived by the victim or any other person." Being a victim of this kind of crime can be particularly distressing due to being victimised because of who you are, or what the perpetrator perceives you to be.

There have been a lot of reports in the press recently of very serious crimes against disabled people including murder, rape, arson, verbal abuse, violent attack, robbery and damage to property. Some victims of robbery were also ridiculed, laughed or spat at.

In September, *Disability Now* published an in-depth investigation into the serious crimes — including murders, manslaughter and torture — against five people with disabilities, and their investigation showed that none were identified as potential hate crimes. The Director of Public Prosecutions, subsequently announced that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) must be more "proactive and aggressive" to investigate whether crimes might be motivated by an underlying hostility towards the victim based on their impairment. Statistics from a recent

report '*Another Assault*' from the charity Mind (at www.mind.org.uk) reveals that people with mental health issues are 11 times more likely to be victimised; 71% had been victimised in the community at least once in the past 2 years; 34% had been victims of theft; 10% had been sexually assaulted.

Locally, Victim Support Lambeth offer practical advice, support and counselling. You can contact them on 020 7820 0007/8 or email admin@vslambeth.org.uk; or you can call VictimSupportline anonymously on 0845 3030900.

SaferLambeth

A number of disability organisations including People First Lambeth, Lambeth Mencap and DASL are working with the Council's Hate Crime Coordinator on practical aspects of Lambeth's Hate Crime Strategy 2007-2010 [www.lambeth.gov.uk/SaferLambeth/HateCrime]. This will include a new disability hate crime reporting form.

Finally, *Disability Now* ask any disabled victims of crime to contact editor@disabilitynow.org.uk with details of their experiences e.g. what happened and where, did you report it, who to, how did they respond? Take care. *Steve Golding*

Lambeth Savings & Credit Union

The LSCU was set up by some active members of the community as an alternative to taking loans from sharks going door-to-door, which accrue high rates of interest and tend never to be repaid. We fought for five years to establish a credit union in Lambeth knowing that Southwark and other boroughs had thriving credit unions to serve those residents mostly on low incomes and, therefore, less likely to qualify for a loan from a high street bank. LSCU has been serving Lambeth since February 2006 and operates from a refurbished office at 244b Brixton Hill. So far, over 800 Lambeth residents and employees have joined the LSCU and are benefiting from the following advantages:

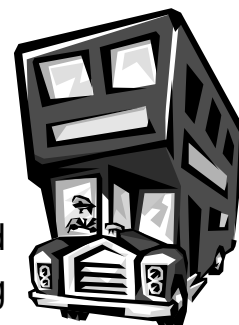
- a safe place for savings
- because there are no shareholders, profits from running the business are returned to the members as dividends
- members can take out loans at competitive rates, with free insurance and flexible repayment terms
- LSCU is a local co-operative run on ethical principles, which means more money staying locally working for the people of Lambeth.

To find out more about becoming a member, you can fill out your details online at <http://www.lscu.org.uk/enquiry.html> or pop in to the branch at 244b Brixton Hill, or call them on 020 3256 0000 for an application pack - and join the money revolution today!

By **Fay Gordon**, Committee Member of LSCU.

Advice on Freedom Passes

People applying to Lambeth Council to renew their Disabled Persons Freedom Passes for April 2008 onwards are receiving decisions on their applications as we go to press. Some people will be turned down for the Freedom Pass. There are particular concerns about the situation of people with mental health problems who have previously received their Pass at the discretion of the Council. If you are turned down you have a right to appeal. Lambeth MI ND and DASL have been working together to prepare further advice and tips to help people to appeal. You can find this information on DASL's website or contact us on 020 7738 5656 and we can post or email it you. If you have not yet had a decision on your application the Council have told us that your current Pass remains valid until the end of April 2008 while they deal with your case.



News from other Lambeth community organisations

Community Support Network (CSN) South London was set up in 1993 by a group of people with experience of mental health services. Since 1996, CSN has been funded to provide advocacy to Lambeth mental health in-patients, and now also provides forensic and community advocacy services. For further information, please contact Cherry Pedler Manager of CSN, on 020 7274 4490.

CSN have recently launched a befriending service by volunteers. If you'd like to access the service or are interested in volunteering, please contact Michael Edwards by email to medwards@csnsl.org.uk or phone him on 07942 201254.

Lambeth Carers provide carers with support, information, advocacy and outreach services including: benefits, community care, local services and resources. They publish a free quarterly newsletter with details of events and activities for carers.

Please 'phone Lambeth Carers on 020 7733 9600, or email them at info@lambethcarers.org.uk, or visit their website via this link <http://www.lambethcarers.org.uk/>

Jamyang's Repaying the Kindness team supports and provides respite care for carers who live in Lambeth or Southwark. They :

- * offer carers respite in a day.
- * provide life-enhancing experiences for carers in a day
- * strengthen carers' sense of well-being and reduce stress levels through a range of activities.

They have been awarded some funding from the National Lottery Awards for All to offer a programme of Healthy Lifestyle events to carers in Lambeth and Southwark from January 2008.

For further info 'phone Repaying the Kindness on 0207 820 9020, or email: repayingthekindness@jamyang.co.uk

Lambeth Mind is run by mental health service users and survivors. Their helpline is open Mondays 11am-1.30 pm, Tuesdays & Wednesdays 2.30-5pm - call 020 7735 3505. Their website <http://www.lambethmind.org.uk> also enables people with experience of mental distress, and their allies, to access useful services and support and to make informed choices.



NOTICE BOARD

More accessible transport in London.

TfL say that all London buses and trams, the Docklands Light Railway and most river services are now accessible to wheelchair users and those with mobility issues.

There is a booklet published by TfL called "Getting around London: Your guide to accessibility" and it can be downloaded from the TfL website www.tfl.gov.uk or by calling TfL on 020 7222 1234 .

A series of assisted performances starting in March will take place in the Downstairs Theatre at Oval House Theatre this spring. For further details, please contact nazneen.nawaz@ovalhouse.com or debbie.vannozi@ovalhouse.com call them on 020 7582 0080 ext 222/202.

Lambeth Mental Health & Disabled People's Action Group — NEW Sports Club at Brixton Recreation Centre. Free sessions with a trainer, for mental health service users over 18 and their carer, at various hours from Monday to Friday. A flyer is enclosed. For further information, please call Mary Roberts on 020 7793 7435 or email Mary at lmhdpag@tiscali.co.uk

Lambeth Tenancy Support Service
For individual housing related support and advice for people (18+) who need additional help to live independently in Lambeth, ring 0800 707 6615, email lambethss@onehousinggroup.co.uk or check out their website at <http://www.onehousinggroup.co.uk>

Every Pound Counts

Lambeth Council is working with local advice agencies to help people with disabilities to claim their full welfare benefits. Call an experienced benefit adviser on 020 7926 5555 or email EveryPoundCounts@lambeth.gov.uk or visit <http://www.lambeth.gov.uk/everypoundcounts>

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:

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

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

User Involvement Project working with
disabled people
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

Teams: Advice / Information
020 7738 5656
Direct Payments
020 7642 0041 / 2016 /
Disabilities
Partnership
& Involvement Project
020 7642 2054

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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