

Disability *news*

ISSUE 11 MARCH 2010



IT Can Help is a national network of volunteers who provide computer help for disabled people in their own homes. The service, which is a charitable programme run by the British Computer Society, is completely free of charge. If you have a computer problem or just want some advice, then you can contact Peter Allison, the Wiltshire coordinator at wiltshire@itcanhelp.org.uk or on 07932 321708. Alternatively, ring the Ability Net advice line on 0800 269545.

Don't forget

Computer training is also available from Westlea through the 'eprojects'

eCalne

Jen McDonald
07810 657 429

eChippenham

Chris Mahoney
07770 310 853

eCorsham

Pam Burton
07771 957 775

Notes from October's Forum

If you missed the event in Wootton Bassett then here are some helpful notes and contact details.

How good is your hearing?

RNID

Find out by calling 0844 800 3838. Did you know that 50% of people over the age of 60 will have a hearing loss? Libbie Sheppard, Information Officer for the RNID, urged everyone to take a hearing test by phone. It takes five minutes and costs only a few pence. The RNID provide a range of information and services for people with hearing loss. **For more information contact Libbie on 01225 485765, text 07903 246101 or minicom 01225 485791.**

Carers Support

Sandi Wilson works with Westlea residents who are also carers. **You can contact Sandi on 01249 444110 or email sandi@carersnw.co.uk.**



Carers Support North Wilts provide support, advice, information and opportunities to people who have caring responsibilities for a relative, neighbour or friend, which may be for 24 hours a day.

Westlea's Support Services for Older People

Angela Hulston, is the Support

Coordinator for Older People. She explained that the support service aims to help people stay independent and carry on living in their own home. Support workers can help in different ways, e.g. help you manage money, apply for benefits, fill out forms, talk to social services or occupational health on your behalf, help you get adaptations in your home if you have a disability and provide a monitoring alarm system. **For more information you can contact Angela on 01249 466291, 07836 600354 or angela.hulston@westlea.co.uk.**

Adapting your property to meet your needs

At the Forum we asked what your experience of getting an adaptation had been like and whether you had any suggestions for improvement. You mainly asked for a quicker, simpler process. Some of you thought that Westlea should do more to keep you updated through different stages of the process. While most people were satisfied with the work itself there were a couple of issues about follow up work needed. There was an interest in having more help with form filling. Your comments were taken back to the team and will be taken into consideration. We will keep you updated on this service.

Calling all photographers

If you have a photo that you would like included in the slide show at the Forum, please contact julie.bielby@westlea.co.uk before April if possible. We are looking for photos with 'disability' as a theme. This could be about obstacles you face or achievements you are proud of... it is up to you.



Welcome

to this first issue of 2010. We try to get a good balance of practical information and opinion in this newsletter. If you have a helpful tip or would like to pass on information about a service that you have found helpful, please let us know. For any item printed you can win a £10 shopping voucher.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Rod Case

Disability Steering Group



Correspondence:

c/o Julie Bielby
Westlea Housing
Methuen Park
Chippenham SN14 0GU
julie.bielby@westlea.co.uk
01249 466054

Money Advice

Since 2006 nearly 700 people with disabilities



have been supported by the Westlea Adviser and Moneyfriend at Citizens Advice. They can be contacted on 01249 445115 ext 3, text 07890 733919 or email moneyfriend@northwiltscab.org.uk.

Our next Westlea

Disability Forum

Thursday 8 April 2010

Lansdowne Hall, Derry Hill (between Calne & Chippenham) • 10am-1.30pm

Lunch included

- Westlea maintenance staff want to ask residents about; issues with condensation; electrical testing – are there changes we could make (e.g. with fittings) when we are visiting your homes?
- Images of disability, problems faced or difficulties overcome presented by the steering group.
- Try out indoor curling.
- Representatives from Citizens Advice, Job Centre Plus and Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living will be at the Forum to answer your questions.
- Find out about the services offered by MIND.

To book your place please fill out the separate booking form – postage paid envelope.

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No Barriers Day 2009

'No Barrier to Fun'

The No Barriers Day held in December was an opportunity for people to try different activities, from arts, crafts and photography to gentle exercise such as armchair aerobics, pilates and curling. There will be another chance to try curling at the Forum in April.



PICTURED:
People taking part in activities from the day.



USEFUL TIPS

Did you know?

What does it mean to 'register' as disabled?

If you have a disability that is 'substantial and permanent', you can register as a disabled person with Wiltshire Council. They keep a register of disabled people living in the area to help plan services.

What are the benefits of being registered disabled?

- You may be eligible for a blue badge (for parking)*
- Reduced admission charges for leisure centres, cinemas, concerts etc
- Reduced fishing license cost
- Some public transport and ferry companies offer discount at their discretion
- You may qualify from extra points with housing societies
- VAT exemption for equipment to support your disability.

There is a separate register for people who are blind and partially sighted (a medical examination and report is required for this register).

For further information contact the Social Care Help Desk on 01225 713001 or email socialcarehelpdesk@wiltshire.gov.uk

***Don't forget** – if you have a 'blue card' it is your responsibility to make sure it is up to date. You will be sent reminders but a card that is out of date is not valid.

The District Forum Members would like to invite you to their

Annual General Meeting 2010

Friday 30 April • Hullavington Village Hall
9.30am to 1.30pm including a buffet lunch

Guest speaker

Hilary Gardner, Chair of the GreenSquare Board of Management – Hilary will give a talk about her journey to become the Chair and what the future holds for Westlea?

Find out more about what the District Forum has done in 2009 and what 2010 looks like for them.

A £10 gift voucher could be yours if you attend (one per household which can be claimed after attendance – not applicable to District Forum members)

Raffle, free buffet lunch and transport can be provided if necessary or we will reimburse you if you drive yourself or come by public transport. To book a place please contact Sue Rendell on 01249 466167 or susan.rendell@westlea.co.uk



Hidden side of disability Chronic Pain

Chronic pain is endured by a lot of people suffering from a large range of hidden and other disabilities. Chronic pain means that you have suffered it for several months or more. It means that once the injury has healed the pain is still there. It sometimes means there is no reason for the pain at all.

It can interfere with many of your daily activities, can cause irritability, memory loss and needs treating with kid gloves.

You won't forget how to lock the back door, just to do it. You may make the shopping list and leave it behind or have lost it completely by the time you get to the shops. Never mind forgetting names, you may forget faces too.

Often you may feel lonely and frustrated because no-one understands you. If you have close family members or friends you may be able to talk to them and explain how isolated you feel. You may think "Oh they don't want to hear all my moans and groans", but if you never explain, how will they know. You may be feeling a loss of confidence with all this going on and find yourself easily hurt by other peoples' comments. You may feel

angry. But that is quite usual as well.

There will be days when you have pushed yourself and you think that you have 'got away with it', until the next day. There will be time when you have done nothing to aggravate your pain, yet all of a sudden you have a flare up and end up in bed for a day. This is all quite normal for sufferers of chronic pain. Just don't forget that you still must gently stretch your muscles. Still take your pain killers. Still pace yourselves. Oh yes, I know how much you hate that phrase!

Don't set unrealistic goals for yourself, just take it gently until you are back on track. Most of all, just remember that there are many people in the same or similar situation to you, and if you expect patience, try to give a little back, no matter how much you are hurting. If you will, I will.

**Sue Simmons
Disability Steering Group**

If you would like to have any part of this document explained or translated, or in a different format such as larger print or on audio tape, please contact Westlea on 01249 465465 to discuss your needs.



SSAFA FORCES Help

The Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen and Families Association – Forces Help

SSAFA offer support to ex-service men and women and their immediate dependants.

"If you have served a single day in any of Britain's Armed Forces, we are here to serve you and your dependants"

We provide experienced, non-judgmental and friendly advice, as well as a variety of practical services which cover a range of social, family and financial issues. All our dealings are confidential and anybody who approaches us for help is treated with dignity and respect.

Contact details

SSAFA Forces Help
19 Queen Elizabeth St
London, SE1 2LP
0845 1300 975

Wiltshire Branch
01985 222 842

www.ssafa.org.uk