



Independent  
LIVING ASSOCIATION

# NEWSLETTER

News from the Independent Living Association

## Accessible Play in West Sussex

See page 7



### ILA will be closed on the:

29th April for the Bank Holiday and 15th April from 1pm for an office refit.

We will re-open at 8am on 18th April

# ILA supports people facing cuts

Faced with huge cuts in government spending allocations for public services, West Sussex County Council is removing funding for the 'moderate' category of assessed needs - which will mean 4,500 people having their care budgets reduced or removed.

Adult Services Cabinet Member Peter Catchpole has decided the cuts must go ahead with effect from April, with the effect on individuals being felt after social care needs have been re-assessed.

There was widespread protest when the changes were proposed, with many campaigners mounting a demonstration at County Hall and presenting a petition signed by 6,500 people calling for the eligibility categories to be left unchanged.

They highlighted the hardship that the loss of moderate provision would cause, and the importance of meeting moderate needs to prevent them developing into much more costly higher needs.

Over 2,000 people responded to the council's consultation, with a large majority resisting the proposed cuts, saying they were harmful, unnecessary and not cost-effective.

*continued on page 2...*

### SPRING 2011

#### In this issue

ILA briefs minister on DP support

Inquiry raises key DP control issues

Conciliation service on offer

Email group will help ILA's printed word

Tax refund options explained

Could you be an ILA trustee?

Customer support groups proving popular

Accessible Play in West Sussex

New tax year brings changes

Default retirement age ends

New web site for young people in West Sussex

More commitment to personalise services

ILA care service extended

...continued from page 1

But some people voiced concerns about the campaign, describing it as misguided. They said the spending cuts were inescapable so it was better to have them in the open in the form of eligibility changes.

One commentator on the ILA website forum said: "By changing the eligibility criteria, at least there's a chance that the cuts will be reasonably transparent. There will also be more chance of eventual political backlash which could lead to some repair."

At a demonstration at County Hall on the 1st March, disabled people made their voices heard.

Paul, a blind and partially deaf service user who attended with his guide dog, Wilton, said he was worried about the younger generation coming along behind as sensory disabilities are often assessed as moderate needs. He felt that some people would be disadvantaged and 'isolated from their right to equality of life'.

Anna, who has been diagnosed with Asperger's Syndrome and anxiety disorders, was concerned about developmental conditions and how the cuts would affect access to preventive services. She said "prevention of crisis for mental health sufferers is important to their good health in the long run".

And Joy, who attends support groups run by MIND, was concerned that lack of funding would affect people's ability to access transport to day centres and groups, as well as making it difficult for individuals to contribute to activities such as sports and outings for healthy living and prevention of isolation.

It is estimated that around 4,500 residents who currently receive adult social care have at least one moderate need. However, many of those also have some substantial or critical needs and it is only the funding for moderate needs that will be affected.

The proposed change will secure net savings of £2.2 million in 2011/12 and £4.3 million in

#### KEY POINT

The ILA will support people facing care funding changes.

2012/13 and bring West Sussex in line with nearly 80% of local authorities in England, which fund substantial or critical needs only. Of these savings, £750,000 will be reinvested in the voluntary sector each year, towards community development and activities that promote wellbeing and other alternative services.

The ILA is in conversation with the council about how the voluntary sector can work creatively and effectively to help support people who will see the sharp end of the cuts.

Chief executive Philippa Thompson said: "We have to respond positively and creatively to this situation, and we will continue to support our members, working for and with them to develop new, cost effective ways of meeting their needs. The essential thing is to enable them to carry on leading independent lives."



# ILA briefs minister on DP support

The ILA is helping the government to better understand how disabled people can achieve independence with the help of good support.

Disabled people's minister Maria Miller visited the charity's Worthing offices to learn first-hand how effective grass-roots support can transform lives and enable people to play a full part in society.

Mrs Miller heard advisers taking calls from the general public about independent living and from direct payments customers about employing personal assistants (PAs), and she saw how information and factsheets can be accessed directly from our website or sent out to customers. ILA research and information executive Cara McQuistan said: "The minister was

impressed with the scope of employment topics covered and the range of ways that people can access the ILA's information."

The minister heard about the concerns of ILA members, including attracting enough PA job applicants and the widespread worries about reductions in care funding. Inge Reynolds of the ILA quality and customer engagement team explained how the ILA helps disabled people maximise use of their personal budgets by offering Direct Payment budgeting advice.

ILA's chief executive Philippa Thompson said: "The visit was a fantastic opportunity to talk with Maria Miller about our members' views on topics including ILF, cuts to the DLA, the need to ring-fence funding for disabled people's services and the importance of



avoiding a postcode lottery for levels of service."

The importance of achieving good quality of life was also highlighted, recognising that people are entitled to more than what one ILA member described as 'just being fed and toileted'. Mrs Miller heard how the ILA's own board chairman is supported by PAs, enabling him to contribute to the development and running of the ILA.

A key theme from the visit and in continuing contact with the minister and her team is the benefit to society of helping disabled people use their direct payments effectively so that they can access and be involved with their local communities.

## KEY POINT

The ILA is helping the government understand independent living.

## Inquiry raises key DP control issues

A government inquiry into independent living will probe whether social care provisions are meeting the basic rights of disabled people.

The inquiry by the Joint Committee on Human Rights raises important questions about current policies and practices on support planning and council rules on DP spending.

Chaired by Dr Hywel Francis MP, the committee is looking into the implementation of the right to independent living for disabled people, as guaranteed by Article

19 of the UN convention on disability rights.

The committee wants to hear from disabled people and their families about how government policies, practices and legislation or the activities of public authorities and others can affect the right to independent living in practice.

The inquiry has been welcomed by disability campaigners who believe that many local authority practices, including compulsory support plans, the use of support planning in budget-fixing, and

control over individual DP expenditure once personal budgets are set, are unduly intrusive and deny equality to disabled citizens.

The committee invites interested persons and groups to submit comments April 29. More information and links are on the website [www.parliament.uk/jchr](http://www.parliament.uk/jchr) (then scroll to Inquiries).

## KEY POINT

An inquiry will look at people's rights to independent living.

# Conciliation service on offer

Help is being offered to DP employers and their PAs to prevent disputes ending up in the Employment Tribunal.

ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) is promoting its free pre-claim conciliation service to help people resolve their disputes without the costs and stress associated with tribunal cases.

When both employers and employees agree to conciliation, there is an 80% success rate in reaching mutually acceptable outcomes without going to tribunal.

The service is available for any type of workplace issue that could turn into a tribunal claim,

## KEY POINT

ACAS can help solve disputes early.

including disputes over:

- dismissal
- all forms of workplace discrimination
- redundancy payments or selection procedures
- wage deductions or unpaid notice or holiday pay
- rights to time off or flexible working
- equal pay.

Anyone can request the service - all ACAS asks is that those

involved have tried to resolve the problem by mutual agreement and that the issue is of a type likely to end in a tribunal claim if not resolved.

The pre-claim conciliation is made as simple as possible, starting with a discussion with a specially trained conciliator.

If the parties can agree a basis for settlement, the conciliator will also offer to help them to record the terms in a binding written agreement to avoid further problems.

More information is on the ACAS web site at: <http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2744> or from the ACAS helpline on 08457 474747.

# Email group will help ILA's printed word

Volunteers who use email are being asked to help the ILA get its printed material as user-friendly as possible. A focus group is being set up involving members willing to receive draft leaflets and other documents by email and give their comments on them.

Inge Reynolds of the ILA's quality and customer engagement team said: "We are very keen to ensure that our printed material

is easy to understand and not overly complicated in the way it is written, so this focus group will see draft documents in advance and give their views on how they might be improved.

"For people comfortable with email it provides a quick and easy way to circulate documents, so the focus group will provide an efficient way to get customer views. When we are revising or developing new

customer documents, we will contact the group by email and attach the relevant documents for their feedback."

If you are interested in taking part please email Inge with your name and email address: [inge.reynolds@ilawestsussex.org](mailto:inge.reynolds@ilawestsussex.org)

## KEY POINT

An email focus group will give feedback on ILA leaflets.

# Tax refund options explained

Help may be available from the taxman when DP employers need to make a tax refund to a PA but don't have a big enough total tax deduction to pay for it.

Tax refunds are normally taken from the total tax deducted from all employees before it is passed

on to HMRC, but this doesn't work when the refund is bigger than the total of deductions.

Clawing back the refund from subsequent HMRC payments is acceptable, but on tight DP budgets the wait can cause cash-flow problems.

Funding from HMRC to cover the outlay can be applied for, provided the employer's tax affairs are up to date.

The rules for applying for this funding are precise and must be followed exactly. The details are available from the ILA or from the HMRC website: [www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers/payefunding.htm](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/employers/payefunding.htm)

Reminder: You must always tell HMRC if you have no PAYE payments to make to them for any reason. If you use a payroll service you should tell them too.

## KEY POINT

HMRC funding can make it easier to make PA tax refunds.

## From the chairman ...

Dear members

I thought I should bring you up to date with what has been going on in a period of significant change for the ILA.

After the departure of Audrey Lynas in September last year I was very pleased to welcome Philippa Thompson as our new chief executive and I am delighted at how well she is taking over the reins. We were fortunate to appoint Anthony Hewson, MBE as an adviser to the board in the interim and he gave us invaluable help in preparing to recruit the right person to head the organisation.

I would also like to welcome Barry Ruffell to his new position as secretary to the board - a key position to help the board operate efficiently. Which brings me to our next big challenge - the governance of the organisation.

We have a fantastic board of trustees but we need to strengthen it. We particularly want members with direct experience of living with disabilities and using direct payments, as well as other key skills for a well-balanced board. This newsletter includes an interview with an existing trustee, Gill Calderhead, which I hope will inspire you to become involved in your organisation.

The trustees all put in a lot of time and commitment and I would like to thank them all for their support. The organisation is in a very strong position, and with our new chief executive and a strengthened board I am sure it will continue to flourish.

I have indicated that I intend to step down as chairman at this year's AGM, having held the office for 11 years. I feel strongly it is time for some new blood with new ideas to take the organisation through its next exciting phase of development.

With best wishes,

John Yeats,  
*Chairman*

# Could you be an ILA trustee?

ILA trustee Gill Calderhead has been speaking about her role - and urges others to consider joining her on the ILA board.

The trustees set the charity's policies and oversee its work. They are the equivalent of non-executive directors in the business world.

Gill volunteered to become a trustee after getting to know the ILA through its former advocacy service. After 30 years in professional social work and care management, she could see that her skills and experience were relevant to the ILA's work.

"Trustees have a wide range of backgrounds and skills, and this is what makes the trustee role valuable to charities," said Gill.

"Being a trustee is rewarding because it gives us a chance to



develop new ideas and proposals and we get to see what outcomes are achieved.

"Working with a group of very positive people is exciting.

We build up good working relationships and share a laugh from time to time. It's also good to be able to contribute to the work of the organisation.

"You have to be prepared for meetings by reading and taking an interest so that you can participate in discussions. Your role is to ask questions and be willing to help make decisions."

The ILA is developing a new trustee induction and training programme, and is particularly keen to attract disabled people. It is voluntary work but expenses are met and the ILA will support disabled trustees in any appropriate way, including paying for PA time to enable attendance at meetings.

Anyone interested should contact the ILA (details on back page).

### KEY POINT

The ILA is looking for new trustees.

# Customer support groups proving popular



Support groups set up to help ILA customers manage their direct payments are proving increasingly popular.

The groups are organised by the ILA and focus on various training topics according to what customers say they need. They also provide an opportunity for customers to share experiences and ideas.

Celia, a PA from Chichester, said: "I was made to feel at ease from the start with a warm and friendly welcome. The subject matter of the training was interesting and well presented. I thought that being open to questions throughout was good as it broke up the intake of the information and gave 'bookmarks' to remember things."

As well as the topics of the day, the meetings have open question-and-answer sessions. A wide range of queries arise - here are two recent examples:

**Q: How can I find out about getting voice recognition software as I am struggling to use my computer keyboard?**

**A:** Contact your OT (occupational therapist) or WSCC contact centre 01243 642555 and ask to speak to OT Connect. You can also contact the ICIS enquiry line 0800 859929 (freephone) to ask what services are available and whether there would be any funding available from charitable grants.

**Q: How can I get some training for my PAs?**

**A:** The ILA web site has a page of information on training options and there is also an interactive PA induction tool that you can use: [www.ilawestsussex.org/pa\\_training.html](http://www.ilawestsussex.org/pa_training.html) or phone the ILA helpline on 08456 0123 99.

Join us at a support group meeting near you.

A light lunch is provided, so please let us know if you are attending and whether you have special dietary requirements. Tel 08456 0123 99, text phone 01903 823173, or email [iaa@ilawestsussex.org](mailto:iaa@ilawestsussex.org)

## BURGESS HILL

*Gateway Baptist Church, Station Road, RH15 9EQ*  
1pm-2.30pm

*Facilitators: Andrew Eyre, Fran Hughes*

**Apr 13** induction, management & supervision

**Jun 20** recruitment & interviewing

## CHICHESTER

*Newell Centre, Riverside, PO19 7LW*

1pm - 2.30pm

*Facilitators: Karen Nesbitt, Chrissie Zyga,  
Inge Reynolds*

**Apr 28** absence & sickness

**Jun 30** open forum

## CRAWLEY

*Broadfield Community Centre, RH11 9BA*

12.30pm - 2pm

*Facilitators: Judith Nabagereka, Nicky Kentell*

**May 12** health & safety

**Jul 14** open forum

## HORSHAM

*Roffey Millenium Hall, Crawley Rd, RH12 4DT*

1pm - 2.30pm

*Facilitators: Rebecca Bond, Emma Brooks*

**May 26** disciplinary, grievance & ending employment

**Jul 28** recruitment & interviewing

## LITTLEHAMPTON

*Dove Lodge, 49 Beach Rd, BN17 5JG*

12 - 1.30pm

*Facilitators: Tamsyn Munday, Yvonne Farenden*

**Apr 27** open forum

**Jun 29** disciplinary, grievance & ending employment

## WORTHING

*Sydney Walter Centre, Sussex Road, BN11 1DS*

12.45pm - 2.45pm

*Facilitators: Bernie Reilly, Tina Knight,  
Cara McQuistan*

**May 24** disciplinary, grievance & ending employment

**Jun 26** induction, management & supervision

## KEY POINT

Lots of people are helped at DP support groups.

# Accessible play in West Sussex

The We Play Too project has brought the first fully inclusive public playground to the South of England, creating inclusive play for children of all abilities, their families and friends.

The park at Brooklands Pleasure Park in Worthing currently includes a wheelchair swing, accessible roundabout, supported see-saw, buddy nest swing, harness swing, a sensory play area, accessible picnic tables and a fully accessible toilet/ equipped changing facility with



hoist (slings not provided) as part of the traditional playground.

There are plans to introduce musical sensory equipment, assisted saddles for the pony rides, a fully accessible

wheelchair train carriage on the 'Diddly' train and a fully accessible motorised swan boat.

The next phase of the project will introduce We Cycle Too, created to enable children with disabilities to experience the joy of cycling with specially adapted bikes and purpose built track.

For further information contact Lyn@weplaytoo.org.uk, telephone 01903 203819/0771 220 2100 or go to the Brooklands Pleasure Park website at [www.diddlys.co.uk](http://www.diddlys.co.uk)

## New tax year brings changes

Changes to PAYE, National Insurance and statutory pay are affecting DP customers and their PAs from April 6.

For people using a payroll service, the changes will be applied automatically but employers who calculate their PA's contributions themselves must ensure that they make the necessary alterations.

Earning levels at which NI contributions become due are rising both for employees (to £139 per week) and employers (to £136

per week), but the percentage rates are all going up by 1%.

This means that employers will be better off by up to £3.71 per week for any employee earning below £468 per week.

The tax-free personal allowance for income tax is going up by £1,000 to £7,475, meaning a employee can earn an extra £19.23 per week before paying tax at 20%. But the higher rate thresholds are going down, so most higher earners will pay the same or more in income tax.

There are also some small changes to statutory sick pay and maternity pay. Full details are available from the ILA.

### KEY POINT

The new tax year is bringing tax and National Insurance changes.

## New web site for young people in West Sussex

Reach Out is a comprehensive new online information directory for disabled young people, their

families and professionals. It contains a calendar of local events, communication tools and techniques, an inspirational video library, publications and more.

Following its launch in February it has received positive reception from young people and parents who see it as a valuable source of support. The website is at: [www.reachoutwestsussex.org.uk](http://www.reachoutwestsussex.org.uk)

## Default retirement age ends

With more people taking up or continuing care work in their later years, the government's proposal to scrap the default retirement age will affect DP employers.

From October 1 this year, employers normally won't be able to require an employee to retire at 65 - workers will be able to choose to carry on working.

The only exception is if the employer can justify compulsory retirement as a 'proportionate means to achieve a legitimate aim', and there will be very few circumstances where this will apply.

Under the current rules, 6 months notice is required to retire someone, so the change in effect rules out notifying employees of compulsory retirement from March 31.

If older employees start to struggle to do a job this will need to be treated as a performance or health issue and managed accordingly, just as with any other employee.

### KEY POINT

DP employers must follow new retirement laws.

## More commitment to personalise services

The personalisation of care and health services has been pushed forward with the publication of a sector-wide commitment to faster progress and more national consistency.

Think Local, Act Personal has been endorsed by a wide range of government, local government and NHS agencies, independent living organisations, charities and service provider groups.

The document represents a joint agreement to tackle uneven progress across the country, to encourage continued reform and to strive for "efficient, effective and integrated service delivery alongside partnership working."

The document and more information is on the website [www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk](http://www.puttingpeoplefirst.org.uk)

## ILA care service extended

The ILA's care service, Lend a hand, has been extended to cover more hours. It now operates to midnight seven days a week.

The service offering direct care support was launched at the end

of last year as a sister service to the domestic help agency under the ILA's Lend a hand banner. The care service offers support with personal care, meal preparation, shopping, social and leisure activities and a range of other flexible support.

All profits from Lend a hand support the ILA's charitable activities.

More information from Roger or Sam on 01903 227813 or [info@lendahand-ila.co.uk](mailto:info@lendahand-ila.co.uk)

**Lend a hand**

**We offer:**

- General household cleaning
- Tidying
- Dish washing
- Laundry
- Ironing
- Room re-arrangement

All staff CRB checked  
Full liability insurance  
Competitive pricing  
Friendly service  
Profits help to fund local charitable services

**Independent Living Association**  
Contact the ILA on:  
Phone: 01903 219482  
E-mail: [info@lendahand-ila.co.uk](mailto:info@lendahand-ila.co.uk)  
[www.lendahand-ila.co.uk](http://www.lendahand-ila.co.uk)

### KEY POINT

The ILA's care service now operates till midnight, 7 days a week.

## Lend a hand

Quality care in your home

**We offer:**

- Personal care
- Meal preparation
- Domestic help
- Shopping
- Support with social and leisure activities
- Other flexible support

All staff CRB checked • Full liability insurance • Competitive pricing • Friendly service • Profits help to fund charitable services



**Independent Living Association**  
Contact Lend a hand on:  
Phone: 01903 227813  
E-mail: [info@lendahand-ila.co.uk](mailto:info@lendahand-ila.co.uk)  
[www.lendahand-ila.co.uk](http://www.lendahand-ila.co.uk)

## The Independent Living Association

### We aim to:

- provide a range of services to help you gain and maintain your independence.
- listen to what you want and develop our services around your needs.
- invest all surpluses into improving and widening our services.
- be led by our members - people with health and social care needs and their carers.

## Newsletter is published quarterly by the ILA



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Text phone: 01903 823 173  
Fax: 01903 227 811

Calls to 0845 numbers from BT landlines are charged at local rates. Calls from other landline and mobile operators may vary. If your service provider will charge you more than the local rate, call us on 01903 219 482

#### Emails:

**General office:** [info@ilawestsussex.org](mailto:info@ilawestsussex.org)  
**Customer comments:** [feedback@ilawestsussex.org](mailto:feedback@ilawestsussex.org)  
**Newsletter:** [newsletter@ilawestsussex.org](mailto:newsletter@ilawestsussex.org)  
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