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voicebox

The magazine for professionals working in Personalisation and Social Commissioning

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Welcome

AN INTRODUCTION FROM THE GROUP EDITOR



Dear friends and colleagues, welcome to the first Voicebox e-newsletter. Voicebox is the magazine for people working and living within the ever changing and developing Personalisation environment.

Voicebox is full of news, features, events and real life stories and is published every two months. In this issue we look at personal health budgets, the launch of 'Disability Rights UK' and feature Brandon Trust and Napier Homecare Services. Finally we take a look at upcoming workshops and events.

If you have a story to share, would like us to feature you in the next 'spotlight on services', or have an event to promote please contact me on cathy@voicemarketing.org.uk

Please circulate Voicebox to friends and colleagues or alternatively send us any new contact details to ensure that they will receive future issues on a regular basis to cathy@voicemarketing.org.uk

Catherine Titherington
Group Editor

All at Voicebox Magazine wish our readers a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year

**We welcome your feedback, comment and contributions .
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PERSONAL BUDGETS OFFERED TO PEOPLE WITH CONTINUING HEALTHCARE

PEOPLE RECEIVING NHS CONTINUING HEALTHCARE SUPPORT WILL BE ABLE TO ASK FOR A PERSONAL HEALTH BUDGET BY APRIL 2014, HEALTH SECRETARY ANDREW LANSLEY HAS ANNOUNCED.

Personal health budgets are allocations of money given to people to enable them to choose what they require to meet their health and wellbeing needs. This announcement builds on early evidence from a pilot programme which involves 1,300 people receiving personal health budgets for a range of conditions. NHS Continuing Healthcare is NHS funding for people living in non-hospital settings but who have the same needs or greater than people in hospital.

Personal budgets form a key part of the ongoing personalisation agenda. Alzheimer's Society Chief Executive Jeremy Hughes is chairing the personalisation work stream ahead of the government's white paper on social care.

Alzheimer's Society comment:

“Holding the purse strings can help people to have choice and control over their care needs. It is therefore promising to see personal budgets being rolled out to more people, including people with dementia who receive NHS Continuing Healthcare support.

However, conditions such as dementia often put incredible strain on families and carers. Unless the system is made easy to understand and people are properly supported, the complexities of personal budgets could become the straw that breaks the camel's back rather than the empowering tool they are intended to be. But if done in the right way, this could be a key milestone in the ongoing mission to create a health and social care system that works for everyone.”

Head of Policy & Public Affairs, Andrew Chidgey





Netbuddy launches access to new parenting siblings advisor

Netbuddy and sibs.org.uk have launched an exciting new Parenting Siblings Advice forum. Netbuddy knows that parenting siblings is a huge issue for people who have disabled children and are extremely pleased that their new offering will help ease some of the strain for these parents.

Their Parenting Siblings Advisor will be available online, 24 hours a day, to answer parents' concerns about issues such as explaining disability to siblings, giving siblings attention, helping them with their feelings and supporting them through difficult situations.

There are over 1.5 million people in the UK who have a brother or sister with a disability. Siblings often feel socially and emotionally isolated, and have to cope with challenging situations. As a parent, it can be difficult supporting siblings – answering their questions about disability and dealing with issues that arise.

To access the forum or to contact netbuddy's parenting sibling advisor visit www.netbuddy.org.uk

United Response launch Moving on and Planning Ahead

The national disability charity, United Response has launched a new free guide to help people with learning disabilities, who want to live more independently, make financial decisions about their future.



The new edition of the easy read Moving on and Planning Ahead guide is fully updated and includes sections on getting and managing Direct Payments, employing a personal assistant and benefit entitlement. There is also up-to-date information on the new Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

The guide is part of the Making Money Easier series – a set of resources which aim to support people with learning disabilities to make informed decisions, by presenting financial information in a simple and straightforward way.

Diane Lightfoot, Director of Communications at United Response, said:

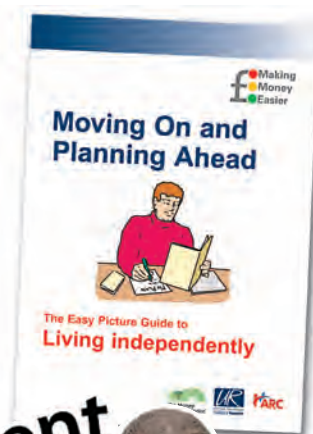
“As funding mechanisms such as direct payments are making it possible for people with learning disabilities to manage their own support for the first time, it is becoming ever more important for people to have access to easy to understand financial information.

“With its easy read format, we hope this new guide will help as many people as possible to make informed financial decisions about their future.”

Moving On and Planning Ahead was produced in collaboration with the Money Advice Service.

Alice Howard, Manager of the Adults Strategy and Development team at the Money Advice Service, said:

“We are delighted to help make this guide available for people with learning disabilities, their families and carers. We believe that publications such as this are essential to help them make good choices about their money matters and take charge of their life. The guide is an invaluable resource to help people understand the costs of living independently; different ways of paying for the support they need and managing Direct Payments.”



NEW ADASS PERSONALISATION SURVEY SHOWS COUNCILS ON TARGET FOR 2013

ACCORDING TO A SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE ASSOCIATION OF DIRECTORS OF ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES, COUNCILS HAVE TAKEN SIGNIFICANT AND SUFFICIENT STEPS - SUCH AS MAINSTREAMING, RE-ENGINEERING SERVICES, IDENTIFYING NEW SUPPLIERS, AND STAFF TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT - TO ACHIEVE THEIR TARGET OF PROVIDING UNIVERSAL PERSONAL BUDGETS BY 2013.

According to the report, "The findings suggest that the (Government's) Vision for Adult Social Care has given the sector the autonomy and confidence to lay the foundations of creative, varied local practice and sector-led improvement on personalisation by councils, some of which has the potential to be scaled up and transferred. The sector will now need to look at how it supports the transfer of good practice across local government."

Findings included:

- 98% of respondents have a clear strategic approach for meeting the 2013 ambition of personal budgets through direct payments for everyone,
- 97% say they are on target - but two councils participating in the survey admitted that 'progress is slow',
- 50% clearly state or imply that current take up of personal budgets stands at less than 60%, and 23 councils (40%) state or imply their current take up level is at 60% or above. Six councils either did not respond, or did not provide sufficient information to allow for further deductive analysis.
- Three councils suggest that they are on target for a 100% take up by the end of 2011-12.
- 98% are confident that they have accurately identified the target group for achievement of universal personal budgets by 2013. Only one respondent (2%) is not confident about this.

The number of people eligible varied from council to council. For instance large counties typically have eligible target group populations of more than 15,000 users or potential users, whereas some London Boroughs cited target groups of fewer than 5,000. A significant number (more than half) of respondents said that they had mainstreamed personalised budgets across the service, while others were early adopters of self-directed support.

The findings indicate as well that nearly all respondents have, and continue to promote proactively, direct payments at the same time as personalised budgets.

directors of
adass
adult social services

2013

National Charity announces Martha Lane Fox and Sir Terry Pratchett as patrons

The national disability charity, United Response has launched a new free National disability and e-accessibility Charity, AbilityNet, is delighted to welcome Digital Champion Martha Lane Fox and bestselling fantasy author Sir Terry Pratchett OBE as Patrons, announces Chairman Dr Michael R Taylor.

Martha Lane Fox, whose Race Online 2012 campaign aims to facilitate internet access for all UK citizens and Sir Terry Pratchett, himself a keen user of adapted computer technology, are both enthusiastic supporters of the Charity's work with disabled people and those with accessibility needs.

Says Martha: "Nearly half of the 8.7 million adults in the UK who have never used the Internet are disabled. AbilityNet's pioneering work is playing a crucial role in reducing digital exclusion by enabling people with disabling conditions to access technology with the adjustments and adaptations they need."

"For those with limited mobility, the internet is a vital link with the outside world as I discovered for myself when recovering from a serious accident. In the same vein, I have observed the transformative impact that technology (in the form of a smart phone) is having on my tetraplegic uncle's quality of life."

'Discworld' creator, Sir Terry Pratchett, has become a devotee of voice recognition technology since losing his ability to type effectively – a symptom of his Alzheimer's diagnosis. He said recently that should his dexterity return he would have absolutely no interest in returning to the keyboard: "I'm on my third book using this technology – it's my right hand now!"

Says AbilityNet CEO, Nigel Lewis: "As the leading experts in e-access for people with disabilities and accessibility needs, we are acutely aware of the empowering influence of digital technology. Whether at home, at work or in education, full access to computers and the internet can be life changing – economically, socially and psychologically."

"The Board of Trustees are thrilled and honoured to welcome Martha and Sir Terry as Patrons and know that with their commitment and enthusiasm, they will make an invaluable contribution to the Charity going forward."



LEADING DISABLED PEOPLE'S CHARITIES VOTE TO FORM 'DISABILITY RIGHTS UK'

Disability Alliance, the National Centre for Independent Living and Radar have agreed to unify to form 'Disability Rights UK'.

After more than a year of negotiations and supporting recommendations from the current Boards of Trustees, the AGMs of the three existing charities have now formally agreed the process to unify on 1 January 2012.

Liz Sayce, Chief Executive Designate of the new Disability Rights UK, says:

"It is fantastic that the members of the three organisations have voted overwhelmingly in favour of coming together to create the largest pan-disability national organisation led by disabled people, which will enable many more disabled people to have a voice."

The current charities have over 600 member organisations across the UK as well as over 500 individual disabled people as members. Disability Rights UK will be well placed to represent the views of all disabled people across a range of different impairment groups and health conditions.

Sue Bott, chief executive of NCIL adds:

"Disability Rights UK will continue to provide the existing charities' services and support – including the Radar key, DA's Disability Rights Handbook and NCIL's Direct Payments and independent living support. We will also continue some of the important former Skill services which DA has been delivering. But we aim to increase the services, consultancy, training and support we offer to disabled people, governments, employers and beyond as an ambitious new organisation dedicated to achieving equality for disabled people."

The new organisation will offer a range of support for disabled people, education providers, employers, welfare rights advisors, local and national government, journalists and parliamentarians.

Richard Gutch, currently Interim CEO of DA and project manager for the merger adds:



Liz Sayce

"With so much change in public services it is now more important than ever that disabled people and the people supporting disabled people have one source of expertise and advice to call on. Disability Rights UK will be that source of independent, authoritative support. As one organisation, it will also be more sustainable and better placed to respond to the challenges faced by the sector."

Councils urged to sign up to new personalisation indicators

COUNCILS AND PROVIDERS HAVE BEEN URGED TO SIGN UP TO A NEW SUITE OF INDICATORS ON PERSONALISATION AND PUBLISH DETAILS OF THEIR PROGRESS AGAINST THEM.

Sector coalition Think Local Act Personal has drawn up a series of markers in consultation with users and carers to define what successful personalisation looks like.

The "Making It Real" markers replace the milestones established by the last government to track progress on personalisation from 2008-11, which included having 30% of users and carers on personal budgets as of April 2011. The new set includes the coalition government's target of having all users of ongoing council-funded support on personal budgets, preferably as direct payments, by 2013.

The indicators will not be compulsory but the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services will be encouraging members to use them and they will be expected to form part of local reports councils are due to publish from this year on their performance in adult care.

The Department of Health will also use them to inform the development of its national adult social care outcomes framework.

Besides the Making It Real process, TLAP will be carrying out a survey of service users next year to build up a picture of national progress on personalisation by next summer.

The indicators

- Everyone eligible receives ongoing council-funded support as a personal budget, in most cases as a direct payment.
- Self-funders receive the information and advice they need to have maximum choice and control.
- Direct payment users, self-funders and carers are supported in the recruitment, employment and management of personal assistants.
- Assessments are kept to a minimum, are portable, where possible, and do not cause difficulty or distress.
- Staff have the values, attitude, motivation, confidence, training, supervision and tools to facilitate the outcomes users and carers want for themselves.

New advice for providers to personalise support in traditional services

A NATIONAL PROVIDER OF SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AND AUTISM HAS BROKEN NEW GROUND IN ITS ATTEMPTS TO PERSONALISE SUPPORT IN RESIDENTIAL CARE.

Described as 'brave and challenging' by sector specialist Bill Mumford, a new book detailing a practical approach to personalisation is to be released for social care professionals embarking on the personalisation journey.

The book "Making it Personal for Everyone", written by Dimensions Chief Executive Steve Scown and Helen Sanderson Chief Executive of HSA, is launched at a time when the hot topic amongst social care providers is how to achieve the government's ambition of personal budgets for everyone by 2013.

The book explains how over a eight month period, Dimensions worked with a team of people living and working in a typical care home – 'Old Street' – to break down block contracts into Individual Service Funds to pilot the new approach. Using person-centred practices it details how the people supported can have more choice and control over their life – what they do, where they go, how they are supported and who supports them. The key issue was how to make the money work, including developing an equitable way to divide the budget available.

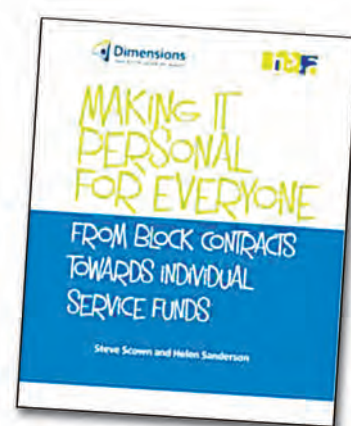
"Making it Personal for Everyone" takes into account three perspectives – "Anne-Marie", who lives in the house; Becky, who works there and Carolyann, the manager. It describes how the new person-centred approach "Just Enough Support" enables people to enjoy a life of their choosing, within budget, while increasing the chances of people connecting with local communities.

Critically, it provides a clear and honest account of lessons learnt and tips for other providers taking a similar journey for finance, HR, rota planning, management and working practices.

Dimensions Chief Executive Steve Scown says: "We decided, albeit very reluctantly, to face the hard reality that in the current financial climate, closing all of our traditional homes and helping the people who live in them to acquire their own home and co-design and produce their own support was not going to happen. So what should providers with large numbers of traditional services do? We feel this was the most important challenge Dimensions will face over the coming years.

This book offers fellow travellers a 'warts and all' story; about our learning, about what we tried, what worked well and what didn't, and how the participants coped. We've written this in the hope it makes others' journeys quicker and smoother."

Chief Executive, Helen Sanderson, of International training and development consultancy HSA says: "This book shows how providers of residential care can change how they provide support in a way that gives people choice and control. Person-centred approaches – like 'Just



Enough Support' – offer a practical yet structured way to think differently about support for people. The person-centred thinking tools highlighted in this book are ways to think with people about what a great week looks like, how to match staff to people based on interests and characteristics, and make it work through a personalised rota."

Bill Mumford, Chairman of Voluntary Organisations Disability Group and Chair, National Market Development Forum for the Think Local, Act Personal Partnership has also voiced his support for the work, saying: "What I find most impressive about the approach taken by Dimensions is the determination to ensure early successes are sustained through lasting culture change and the fundamental re-engineering of all systems. Anne-Marie's [resident of Old Street] household must feel like a very different place to live and her future expectations for herself have been transformed. The discussion on the concept of "just enough support" is both brave and challenging, but vital in unlocking existing barriers to maximising personal choice and control."

"This book shows how providers of residential care can change how they provide support in a way that gives people choice and control."

HOW TO PERSONALISE SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE BY INTEGRATING SERVICES

THE DILNOT COMMISSION'S PLANS FOR REFORM OF SOCIAL CARE FUNDING APPEAR TO HAVE STALLED, BUT A NEW FOCUS ON JOINING UP SERVICES COULD PRODUCE BIG SAVINGS

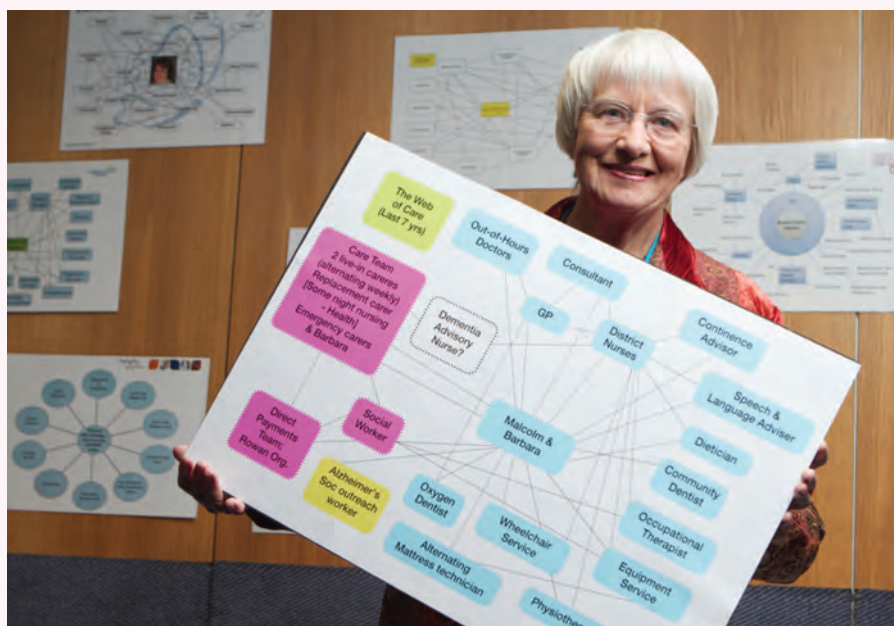
There's nothing new about the aspiration of integrated health and social care services. But with hopes fading of any early implementation of the Dilnot commission's plan for reform of social care funding, the focus is shifting to integration as the means not only to deliver better, more personalised care to people, but also to make better use of resources already in the system.

Among those taking a particular interest will be National Voices, the coalition of 130 health and social care charities working to strengthen the patient voice, which, in evidence earlier this year to the government's listening exercise on its health reforms, spelled out the three priorities for the care system as "integration, integration, integration". The group is currently developing a set of principles for integrated care, based on the experiences of people who have had to find – and often fight – their way round what it calls the "web of care".

One such person is Barbara Pointon, whose husband, Malcolm, lived with Alzheimer's disease for 16 years until his death in 2007. Their struggle was portrayed in a powerful television documentary, but the chart that Barbara has drawn to trace all the professionals and agencies involved in Malcolm's care and support, and the lack of co-ordination of their input, offers an equally shocking insight into what people with long-term conditions and their carers can be up against.

The benefits of integration for individuals look obvious. But what of the potential savings? Especially in the present public spending climate, this is critical.

Delivering integration will, however, require a fairly abrupt gear-change on the part of a social care system that for the past three years has been concentrating on the task of giving personal budgets to those entitled to state funding. It is now just 18 months



until all those eligible should have their own budget, whether taken in the form of a direct payment or simply allocated in notional form on paper. But a recent report published – The Future of Personalisation for those with Complex Needs – calls for a rethink of this approach.

According to the report, by the Demos thinktank in association with Sue Ryder, the charity supporting people with complex long-term and end-of-life conditions, personal budgets are not the key to true personalisation of services for all – especially many of those within Sue Ryder's remit – and "we must move away from the narrow focus on personal budgets and the mindset which assumes that without [them], personalisation cannot be achieved".

Personalisation can be realised by fostering a "personal touch" by care workers, the report says, or in care homes by involving residents in their design and running. But integration of services is crucially important and social care, health and housing are "unlikely to come

together in a seamless package through the force of an individual's purchasing power alone. Additional steps will need to be taken".

The report's recommendations included:

- **For providers to receive support to transform their financial systems to enable them to offer service users individual service funds to give them choice over their support.**
- **More training for staff in helping people make decisions towards the end of life.**
- **Increased support to help people move from residential care into supported living.**
- **Giving care home residents the right to have a say over key aspects of homes' running, including recruitment.**

For recruitment and retention policies to prioritise an enabling and empowering attitude on the part of staff and good relationships between staff and service users.



BRANDON TRUSTS INSPIRING SUMMER CAMP

IN AUGUST BRANDON TRUST HELD ITS ANNUAL SUMMER CAMP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AGED BETWEEN 13 AND 19, AT THE SCOUT AND GUIDE CAMP IN ALMONDSBURY.

The residential week was packed with activities like archery, abseiling, go karts, rifles, assault course, crafts and football. Each day ended with a camp fire, we celebrated an 18th birthday and even went offsite to use the ceramics studio at Fired Up and press apple juice at Elm Tree Farm.

The Brandon Trust Summer Camp is an important resource for young people with learning disabilities, giving them the opportunity to meet new friends, build social and independence skills and have some tasters of options open to them in their adult life. It also provides parents with much needed respite. We received very positive feedback from all attendees and parents, but we only have space to report two of them:

"I just wanted to say a big thank you for all your skill, patience and experience that gave Kendal such an enjoyable time! You made it happen for him, in a difficult situation with little time to plan for his needs" Gill Smith.

"Could you pass on my thanks to all those who ran the Summer Camp? Adam had the best time and said he definitely wants to attend next year. I am also very grateful for the information that you sent back. I will spend some time looking through it but Brandon Trust have already been recommended to me for the Travel Buddy scheme: I am in the process of applying for a diamond bus pass and accompanying carer's pass for Adam as I would like to get him used to using public transport and hopefully being able to use it on his own eventually. Also, he would really like to attend the Brandon Trust Farm for a day, if the opportunity arises. Again many, many thanks" Anita Smith.

18 year old Jacob has Cerebral Palsy but he doesn't let this interfere with his plans to start a Higher Education course in Drama and Art and his ambition to be a

film director or music journalist!

Jacob attended the Summer Camp earlier this year. The camp provides young people like Jacob with a challenging, supportive and confidence building experience at a pivotal stage in their lives. Many are reaching an age when they are looking to make the move from school to higher education or the workplace; they may also be hoping to leave their parents' home to live with friends, or in a place of their own. This can be a very difficult time for both them and their families. The camp provides a unique opportunity to explore the options available and for individuals to develop their self confidence, build friendships and experience independence.

Since his week at camp, Jacob has secured a voluntary job working with younger children: "I enjoyed being a role model to some of the younger people at the camp, and I liked meeting younger people with different needs to me. I'm looking forward to helping others in my new role".

Napier Homecare Services

Continuing to Embrace Personalisation

Facing the challenge of budget cuts head on Napier Homecare Services have taken a different approach by offering additional services to their clients.

In addition to providing services in the community, Napier homecare services also have a Residential Care Home; Napier Lodge. This has given them the opportunity to involve their clients in the community with events taking place within Napier Lodge.

They run community events across Blackpool involving their clients, neighbours and friends. The care staff go with their clients to the events and everyone takes part in the activities and games.

Napier Homecare Services provide the refreshments and their staff provide their time free of charge. Volunteers are enlisted to help at the events and both volunteers and staff provide prizes for the games.

Trudie Cooper Director of Napier Home care services comments; "The events are fun and aimed at stimulating clients both physically and mentally. All of our events have been voted a huge success and described as "buzzing" therefore lifting the spirits of all of our attendees."

Napier has also identified that family carers require support and advice now that care packages are being reduced. To help family carers, Napier has arranged a Training Programme at their Head Office in Blackpool. A awareness sessions have been organised on topics such as Dementia, Caring for a very poorly loved one, Preferred Priorities of Care and Advanced Care Planning, Activities for Older People, Fire Safety and Benefits Advice.

Napier works in Partnership with Blackpool Carers' Centre to



ensure that family carers can access all of the help, advice and guidance offered by the Carers' Centre.

Outcomes from this approach have proved to be:

- Enhancing the life of our clients
- Forging links for our clients with neighbours whom they did not know
- Staff and clients working together to achieve one aim
- Family carers feeling more comfortable and confident about the care of their loved ones
- Family carers familiar with benefits and services which they can access
- Increased job satisfaction of our staff
- Volunteers gaining work experience and new friends
- Residents at Napier Lodge forging links with people in the community and vice versa
- Napier – as a company going from strength to strength with understanding and providing the care that clients and their families expect



For further details of the Domiciliary Care of Napier Lodge Residential Home, please contact:

Trudie Cooper, Director
 Napier Homecare Services Ltd, 39-41 Harrowside,
 Blackpool, FY4 1QH
 Tel. No. 01253 403047

Email: Trudie.copper@napierhomecare.co.uk

SHOP4SUPPORT AT THE HEART OF BIGGEST REGIONAL SOCIAL CARE E-MARKETPLACE

SHOP4SUPPORT HAS BEEN APPOINTED AS PROVIDER FOR THE BIGGEST SOCIAL CARE E-MARKETPLACE EVER DEVELOPED IN THE YORKSHIRE AND HUMBER REGION.



Caroline Tomlinson

The e-Marketplace will help people access the support they need all in one place, by visiting a “shop” online, viewing care services, leisure services and other activities that promote health and wellbeing.

Web users will be able to use their own money, or funding they get from their local council, to safely purchase online services that meet their social care needs, the same way as they would purchase their grocery shopping.

Martin Farran, Executive Director of Adults & Communities at Barnsley Council and Chair of the Association of Directors of Adult Social services (ADASS) in the region, said:

“The Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership in Yorkshire and Humber provided the funding needed to kick start this important piece of web work. The regional Joint Improvement Partnership, which commissioned the e-Marketplace project, would like to congratulate shop4support on their successful tender. It represents a major step forward for the government’s personalisation programme of social care in the region.”

This highly innovative regional e-Marketplace will give people needing social care more control and say over their own support, through the use of

Amazon-style local authority websites.

Joan Beck, Director of Adult Services in Doncaster - the council leading the region on this initiative - said:

“Each local authority will have its own gateway to the Yorkshire and Humber e-Marketplace, enabling it to tailor the solution to its own citizens needs. The e-Marketplace as a whole will harness the strong ethos of collaboration across the region. This collaborative approach will result in people being able to access local, regional and national information, advice and services in a way that has never been possible before.”

Tim Gollins, who is overseeing the rollout programme said:

“The partner local authorities worked in a truly collaborative manner to develop a very strong vision and a detailed specification for this project. After an extensive evaluation process we are confident that shop4support is the perfect partner, delivering value for money and economic sustainability. Using shop4support, participating local authorities are able to realise their shared vision of providing a web-based resource that will benefit all of the region’s residents and support delivery of the Government’s ‘Think Local Act Personal Agenda’.”

The arrangements also allow for other

UK local authorities to use the e-Marketplace solution without having to undertake a procurement process. The first to do this will be Manchester City Council.

Caroline Tomlinson from shop4support said:

“We are delighted to be working across the Yorkshire and Humber region and we commend all the local authorities that are involved for their foresight and determination. shop4support was originally conceived for this very purpose, and we know from our experiences that it will provide true choice and control for people in need of support and their carers. We would also urge local authorities outside of the region to contact us to find out how they can also participate.”

“After an extensive evaluation process we are confident that shop4support is the perfect partner, delivering value for money and economic sustainability.”



LISA'S VISIT TO ANNE FRANKS HOUSE

LAST YEAR LISA DUFFIELD, FROM IPSWICH, MADE HER LIFELONG AMBITION COME TRUE; SHE VISITED AMSTERDAM AND THE HOUSE WHERE ANNE FRANK WROTE HER FAMOUS DIARIES. LISA AND HER UNITED RESPONSE SENIOR SUPPORT WORKER, JAN SUTHERLAND, TELL US ALL ABOUT THE TRIP OF A LIFETIME.

It was at school that Lisa first heard about Anne Frank and the diaries she wrote during the Second World War.

Lisa says: "I found her story very interesting. She was very brave and it has always been a dream of mine to visit her house in Amsterdam."

Lisa told Jan all about her interest in Anne Frank and Jan said that she would help Lisa organise the trip and go with her. As Lisa is deaf and has impaired sight, it was important that everything was as accessible as possible for Lisa, and so Jan and Lisa planned their trip very carefully.

Jan: "Lisa chose to go by ferry and coach as she did not want to fly. We went together to the coach trip company to book everything and make sure it was accessible for Lisa. The coach company helped us choose a hotel that didn't have too many steps to climb and where we could have rooms next to each other, in case Lisa needed anything."

Finally the day arrived for Lisa and Jan to set off on their trip. After travelling for 15 hours they arrived at their hotel in Amsterdam. They were very tired, but after a good rest Lisa was up bright and early the next day, ready to start her visit.

Lisa: "On Saturday morning, Jan woke me up at 7am. I got washed and dressed and

then I looked out of the window and saw some Dutch houses and a stream with ducks. We got in the lift to go to the restaurant for breakfast. There was a lot of different food to choose from, both Dutch and English. I enjoyed it a lot"

After breakfast, Lisa and Jan travelled by bus and tram to Anne Frank's house.

When they arrived there was a big queue. Jan knew that Lisa would find the crowds and the waiting difficult and so she had planned ahead and pre-booked the tickets on the Internet.

Lisa: "The lady at Anne Frank's house was very helpful. Jan explained to her that because of my disabilities it would be difficult for me to do the tour in 30 minutes. She said that this was no problem and that we could take as much time as we needed. She also offered us a Braille guide, but Jan said that she would sign for me."

Lisa spent a long time looking at all of Anne's things.

"They still had the original wallpaper in Anne Frank's bedroom and I could see the posters that she had put on the wall. In the warehouse part of the tour there were a lot of monitors telling us about Anne and her family.

"At the end of the tour we saw Anne



Frank's diary. It was in a glass case and I was able to see Anne's writing. It was really interesting."

After some shopping in the museum shop and lunch, Lisa and Jan set off to see the rest of Amsterdam.

Lisa: "The canal boat tour was really good and we saw lots of interesting things. I also took lots of photos for my scrapbook."

The next few days flew by with coach trips to a traditional Dutch village and the Windmill Museum. Before they knew it it was time for Lisa and Jan to start on their journey home, but not before a quick stop at a Belgian chocolate shop.

Lisa says: "Visiting Anne Frank's house was my dream. It was a fantastic holiday."

Jan says: "It took Lisa four years of hard saving to accomplish her dream, but now she has done it we hope our story will be an encouragement to others and show them that dreams do come true."

Asked if they had any advice for anyone else looking to plan a trip like this, Jan says: "We travelled 'off-peak'. This meant it wasn't as busy and crowded and so Lisa could take her time and experience everything more fully. We also managed to avoid the queues by pre-booking the things we wanted to see before we left England."

Thanks to United Response for this story



Outstanding women rewarded at gala event

Wheelchair tennis star Lucy Shuker has been named the Vitalise Woman of Achievement 2011 at a gala award ceremony in support of national disability charity Vitalise.

Lucy, 31, from Hampshire, is Britain's number one ranked women's wheelchair tennis player and 10th ranked in the world.

She received the award in recognition of her inspirational achievements in the world of disabled sport, having overcome being paralysed from the chest down following a motorbike accident in 2001.

Lucy's partner in wheelchair doubles tennis is Birmingham professional Jordanne Whiley, with whom Lucy is ranked 10th in the world.

Lucy follows in the footsteps of previous Women of Achievement and Courage Award winners including Katie Piper, whose personal story *My Beautiful Face* inspired millions, and disabled yachtswoman Hilary Lister, who became the first ever quadriplegic person to sail solo across the English Channel.

Linda Duberley, Vitalise's Director of Fundraising and Communication, said:

"At Vitalise we want to enrich the lives of disabled people by helping them achieve their personal goals, and Lucy is a fantastic example of that spirit. I'd also like to thank the thousands of women who have supported this event over the years. Their generosity has helped us to continue providing life-changing opportunities for thousands of disabled people each year."

The Vitalise Business Woman of the Year Award went to Julie White, MD of West Midlands company D-Drill in recognition of her work modernising the family firm.

Proceeds from the event were donated directly to Vitalise. Over the previous 28 years, the awards have raised around £500,000 for Vitalise.



GO!Support Launch their new and exciting service for 16+ adults with Autism and Aspergers

Wednesday 14th December 2011

1.00pm - 4.00pm Refreshments provided

Venue: Positive Steps, Media Place, 80 Union St, Oldham. OL1 1DJ

GO!Support is a Social Enterprise that has been developed as a result of demand from parents, families and carers in Oldham. It provides inspiring support and personal development opportunities for all sixteen plus individuals with autism and their families. Mark Finch, of GO!Support and Graeme Jackson, MD of Stonerand New Homes have been working together to realise a bespoke, purpose built Autism Awareness Centre within the borough.

Sheard House will be a community hub, a centre of knowledge, learning, development, and fun. It will also serve as the central point for numerous on and off site care packages and opportunities.

The project is a break from the traditional funding model with private investment providing state of the art facilities outside of the local authority provision model and Marks strong desire

to provide the best possible facility for his service reflects his mantra "to make a difference you have to do things differently". Sheard House will be the embodiment of these principles and the whole space will be designed to offer the maximum in flexibility and versatility of use whilst incorporating all latest building technologies and academic autism specific research into environmental space, lighting, heating and psychology.

Mark added, "Personalisation is all about tailoring services to suit the actual needs of individuals, but to achieve this it is essential that people tell us exactly what they want. We urge people to take this opportunity to do so as this will fully ensure an appropriate, joint, unique, and exciting venture that will go a long way in shaping a brighter future for people in Oldham with ASD, their families/carers".



It is hoped that Sheard House will be ready late 2012 but until then Mark has just secured temporary premises at Media Place, 80 Union St, Oldham and will be working in partnership with Positive Steps and Connexions.

GO!Supports new service is scheduled to commence in early Feb 2012 and if you require any further information or have any ideas, comments, or suggestions please contact Mark Finch on 07951 763 601, finchmark@hotmail.com or attend the launch next month.



Optimising the Learning Environment

A one-day workshop with tutor: Mike Beard PhD FHGI

Saturday 25th February 2012

Venue: Gainsborough Library, Clapgate Lane, Ipswich, Suffolk IP3 0RL

This workshop is for anyone working with clients; children, young people and adults (we were all a child once) including psychotherapists, counsellors, social workers, youth and social workers, family support workers, family therapists, psychologists, teachers, GPs, health visitors and those involved in mental health or the caring professions.

Whether your interest is in developing high quality and creative therapeutic practice to promote positive and sustainable changes or to provide a teaching and learning environment that enables children, young people and adults to absorb information most effectively, this day will stimulate, challenge and inform.

Through this experiential day you will discover how to create optimum environments for successful and sustainable learning. Increase your understanding of the underlying causes of emotional instability and behavioural difficulties and how to respond constructively.

To book onto this course or to request further details please contact: Angela Emmerson 01473 727197 or 07793679489 or email angela_emmerson@yahoo.co.uk



Voice Events

Personalised Approaches towards people with dementia

19th January 2012

Guildford YMCA, Guildford, Surrey. 9.00am - 4.30pm

This one day workshop is for individuals who work with people with dementia. Throughout the day we will look at how people with dementia can incorporate a self directed approach into their current health and social care plans and how it can be taken further to put themselves at the centre of all decisions taken.

Cost: £220 +VAT

Re-alignment of Services

25th January 2012

Croston Old School, Croston, Lancs. 9.00am - 4.30pm

This one day workshop is for Law Firm (Owner/ Managers, Senior Partners, Business Development managers) who are responsible for ensuring success and survival of their organisation by exploring the opportunities and threats posed by the Legal Services Act in force from October 2011.

Cost: £120 +VAT

For more information or to book a place email:
Catherine@voicemarketing.org.uk

Integrated Wellbeing in Suffolk

Voice are pleased to be working with Suffolk County Council on the Integrated Wellbeing Third Sector Support Programme

At Voice Social Marketing we are delighted to announce that we are working with Suffolk County Council on the Integrated Wellbeing Third Sector Support Programme.

This programme has been developed in response to the production of a new substantial three year Integrated Wellbeing Service Contract that is being developed by Suffolk County Council and NHS Suffolk.

Initial research by the Clinical Commissioning Group panel members brought about the decision to award the contract to one accountable provider and other NHS main contract bidders would have to sub contract or partner with the third sector to provide the social inclusion, social support and recovery

elements of this contract.

Consequently third sector providers who are currently providing wellbeing services in Suffolk now need to improve and innovate their service offering and knowledge of commercial drivers in order to meet the aims, objectives, governance and measurement criteria required by a main contractor.

The provider support programme consists of five workshop sessions split over eight weeks plus one or two one-to-one sessions that give in-depth support.

To discuss how this programme could help you or to have a programme tailored to your needs please email cathy@voicemarketing.org.uk or call 01772 601853

Voice Launches the Provider Innovation Accelerator Programme in Scotland

Voice Social Marketing are pleased to announce that we are working with Scotland Social Care Ideas Factory on our exciting Provider Innovation Accelerator Programme™.

This programme of support is designed to assist provider organisations working within support for people requiring social care to achieve alignment and readiness to maximise opportunities within the new commissioning environment and structures of personalisation.

Provider Innovation Accelerator Programme™

The Provider Accelerator Programme™ project enables organisations to develop

an understanding of their current position, capacity and capabilities to deliver services within the personalisation agenda. Furthermore it will assist provider organisations to develop a plan aligning their business model and indeed changing their business model were required; delivering achievable and balanced changes, appropriate cultural adjustments with appropriate external support where required.