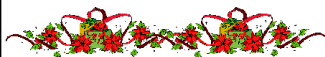


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**Support Group
Christmas Lunch**

The Christmas Lunch will take place on

**11 Dec at
The Star
in Kingsclere.**

Anyone interested should contact Pam Williams on 01635 848750 or email pam.d.williams@hotmail.com.



Santa's helper, Pam Champion, will be pleased to see you at the lunch.



“Only a fraction of those eligible opt to have direct payments. It is designed to help carers and disabled people take control, buying in the help they want rather than simply accepting what the local council can offer.” Allen Sinclair, BBC South

A Quiet Revolution



In June 2007, as part of National Carers Week, BBC South broadcast two items about West Berkshire direct payment users. Sally Taylor opened the first with these words;

“Imagine, as an adult being told when you had to go to bed or that a stranger would be helping you with your most personal needs. In the past those with disabilities have been forced to accept the care they were offered by the local council, like it or not.

But things are changing. To mark National Carers Week, Allen Sinclair has been finding about a quiet revolution that is changing lives.”

David Stirland, Len and Mo Harding and Sian and Amy Cook, all of whom use Direct Payments in West Berkshire, in very different ways, took part in the two pieces.

In David's piece Allen Sinclair said *“In the past he (David) would have had no choice over a rigid timetable of meals, baths and bedtimes. But, the direct payments system puts disabled people and their families in the driving seat, able to make decisions the rest of us take for granted. David can now work and enjoys a social life. Neither would have been possible before he controlled the purse strings.”*

David says, *“I did enjoy the experience and seeing how the film was put together. I will try anything once. Seeing myself on TV felt quite strange, but I imagine it would do even if you were able bodied. The more you do something the more normal it would seem. I feel I was portrayed fairly and hopefully it gave a brief explanation about direct payments. If asked I may do something again.”*

In Len and Mo's piece, Allen Sinclair said *“Things were virtually at breaking point, until Len was offered part of the money that would have gone to pay for Council run Social Services to instead, be paid direct to Len. The direct payment system allows Len to choose how to spend that money. He employs a cleaner to help around the house, allowing him to take a break.”*

Len said, *“If I don't have that break I would be at Maureen's throat all the time. The pair of us would be at each other. Direct payment is paid into my special bank account and then I draw the money out and pay the cleaner every week. So it's helpful.”*

Sian Cook said, *“Amy's needs are many. She's profoundly disabled, both physically and mentally. I have to do absolutely everything for her. She's essentially a baby, but a very big baby. The help that Sally gives me is invaluable. It means I can actually do normal things with the family because two or three hours every evening is taken up in caring for Amy, with little time for the rest of the family.*

She added after the interview *“I was glad to help and be interviewed in a bid to create more awareness for DP. As ever with these things, it's a pity that more time could not be devoted to the piece so that viewers have a chance to grasp what it's all about. It was good that a cross-section of clients were portrayed and also that carers were also featured. I enjoyed the experience and am fortunate that I have done TV interviews before. I would gladly do it again for DP - anything that might help.”*

Thanks to Nina Wheeler for helping to get these items on the TV. It was excellent publicity and helps to spread the message.

Direct Payment Support Group

Is open to all including people thinking of using DP. The group will meet on the following dates at the Ormonde Centre, Newbury, College, Monks Lane, Newbury Berkshire. RG14 7TD .

Open to all including people thinking of using DP. The meetings are from 1.30pm – 3pm.

Future meetings:

Dec 4th Cancelled
Jan 22nd
Feb 19th
March 18th
April 15th
May 13th
June 10th

Transport is available

Further dates will be notified in due course. Or check the Support Group link on our website
www.westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk

Thanks to the Volunteers!



Pam Williams
Direct Payment user and Volunteer.

Pam has a Direct Payment for respite and generally uses it to go to a hotel she has found in Wales (see the May 2007 WBDP newsletter).

Pam attends the WBDP service user group and co-ordinates lunch outings etc for Direct Payment users to meet in a social environment and get to know each other.

David Stirland
Direct Payment User and Volunteer

David uses Direct Payment for his 24-hour care and has recently featured on the BBC as a good example of how managing your own care can improve your quality of life. David lives in his own home, works in the family business, and pops down his local in his spare time for a well-deserved pint.

Somehow David also finds time to volunteer for WBDP helping to deliver training for care managers, as well as being the service user representative providing a link between the WBDP service user group and West Berkshire Council.



Disability Information in West Berkshire

A website for information on all aspects of disability, the aim being to provide a one stop shop for all people with a disability or people with a connection to disability - carers, families or professionals in the district of West Berkshire. It provides up to date information, links and news.

Visit
www.diwb.org

www.westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk

Don't forget to visit our website!

In it, you will find loads of useful information, for prospective and current DP users and professionals. This includes an overview of the DP process, Using an Agency for Care, Care Agencies, Employing Someone, Payroll Companies, Keeping Records, Respite, Carers Register, Support Group, Job Shop, Carers Support, Newsletter, FAQ's, Useful Links, In an Emergency. Plus lots of useful downloads and templates including; Task Based Self Assessment Form, Self Assessment Form, Job Application Form, Sample Contract of Employment, Disciplinary Procedure, Labour Relations Agency Disciplinary Practice and Procedures in Employment booklet, Example of a Job Description. The message board is currently down due to a lot of undesirable guests signing on. When we sort this out it will be up and running again. You can also see the two BBC programmes, just click on the link on the homepage.

If you have any personal experiences we could include in the website or newsletter please contact us, by phoning Pam Champion on 01189 419183 by letter, Direct Payment Service, Greenfield House, High View, Calcot, Reading, RG31 4XD. or email info@westberkshiredirectpayments.org.uk