



Welcome to this month's Disability News. My name is Sue Simmons and I am one of the members of the steering group. I am fairly new and enjoy the challenge of working with Westlea to try and cover what we want and they can do.

So if you have any good ideas or thoughts on the subject please come and join us. Just ring Julie Bielby on 01249 466054 and she will fill you in on the how, when and where.

October's event will be the second anniversary of the Disability Forum and we couldn't have got here without you. We have arranged a visit from Carers Support and Social Services. Also, courtesy of Westlea, there will be a free bingo session to end the Forum. I hope to see you all there.

*Sue Simmons*

## Shaping future services for disabled residents

Thank you to everyone who came to the meeting in June which was held in Cricklade. We asked disabled residents and carers what they thought about Westlea services. We wanted to find out what the main problems are, what we are doing well and what improvements you would like to see. Your contributions made this a very lively and productive event. The information you gave to us in the workshops and through the surveys is helping us to plan services for the future.

### What matters to you

#### Communicating with Westlea

##### *What matters to you:*

- The majority of people thought it was easy to contact Westlea but you would prefer to have more information about who to contact – names and phone numbers.
- You wanted more feedback from staff. Some people reported waiting a long time for their call to be returned or their enquiry answered.
- 75% of you prefer to contact



Westlea by phone.

- 47% would prefer the direct contact of a home visit.

##### *We are going to:*

- collect better information on your needs and how you would like us to communicate with you.

#### Getting the right home

##### *What matters to you:*

- You wanted more time to make ▶

*You are invited to the next Westlea Disability Forum...*

## Disability Forum

*October 2007*

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

**Tuesday 23 October 2007**

**Kington Langley Village Hall**  
10.30am–12.30pm

(with lunch and bingo until 1.30pm)

**Including** Carers Support, What do Social Services offer for disabled people in this area? and An update on Westlea's Disability Equality Scheme  
Free transport / Creche facilities

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- ▶ decisions about moving into a new property. 50% of you said you also needed more information about the property.
- You would like more support from staff throughout the moving process. 78% of you would like advice and someone to contact. 75% would like some practical help.
- You didn't think there were enough of the right kind of properties

#### **We are going to:**

- set up a disability housing register to make sure that we match accessible properties to the people who need them;
- improve the information we hold on people's needs;
- look at options for providing more help with moving; and
- review if we can give people more time without leaving properties empty for too long.

#### **Does your home suit your needs?**

##### **What matters to you:**

- Heating and bathrooms came

top of the list of things that you would like improved.

- You thought it would be helpful to have a member of staff at Westlea who could keep you up to date with the adaptation process and liaise on your behalf.
- You felt that the time it takes from applying for a disabled facilities grant to getting the work approved and completed is too long.

#### **We are going to:**

- look at the issue of heating as part of our Affordable Warmth strategy;
- review our aids and adaptations process during 2008; and
- look at employing a member of staff to liaise with residents.

These ideas form part of our Disability Equality Scheme. This highlights what the main concerns are for disabled residents, what is happening now and what needs to happen in the future.

We will be talking about our action plan at October's meeting.

## Working together

One in five people will suffer from a mental health problem at sometime in their lives. These problems range from depression which can be treated with drugs and does not return, through lifelong depression to conditions like schizophrenia and manic depression. I know that some people with a physical disability also have to battle depression, due to the circumstances of their individual situation.

People with mental health problems and people with physical disabilities have much in common. Both suffer from the prejudices and barriers erected by society. Both are on the receiving end of the ignorance of others. I think you can only know what it feels like if you have actually lived with an illness.

This is why it is really important that people with mental health problems and people with physical disabilities work together. Both have to live with a life more limited than they would want it to be. Those with lifelong mental health problems can only try to manage their illness. For them there is no cure. They also bear scars, but theirs are less visible.

There are also very real differences between mental illness and physical disabilities. That is why it is important that we do all we can to learn from each other.

Together we can be strong and fight for a better deal for all, regardless of disability or illness.

*Paul Jones*

District Forum Member



### New website for young disabled people

For information about what's on locally, holidays, activities, jobs, housing, and a lively message board just go to: [www.dontdisme.co.uk](http://www.dontdisme.co.uk)

Don't be shy – get in touch!

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.

## Gadgets and Gizmos

Have you got an unwanted gadget or piece of equipment for a disabled person? Would you like to give it to someone else or swap it for something more useful. Come to the meeting on 23rd October and tell us more.