

Spring 2010

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## The New Faces at DASH

Thanks to funding from The Community Foundation for Merseyside and St Helens Council, DASH has been able to employ four Information and Advice Officers. The increase in staff has meant more help is available for people who need information and advice.

DASH also now has an Information and Advice Officer located at two separate outreach locations.

They are based at Lowe House Primary Care Resource Centre, 09:30am – 16:30pm on Mondays and Tuesdays and at St Helens Hospital 09:30am – 16:30pm Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. This has meant those people attending clinics there have had immediate access to information and advice.



Windle Pilkington House – King Street

## DASH's New Home

As many of you may know DASH moved from its former location in the Gamble Building to its new home in Windle Pilkington House on King Street just before the winter holidays. This has proved to be popular with clients as we have been able to accommodate their needs due to the improved accessibility of our office.

## A Little More About DASH

Disability Advice and Information St Helens (DASH) is a local charity that has been providing a free and impartial information and advice service to St Helens residents for 20 years. Information and advice is available on a variety of topics such as:

- Accessible holidays and insurance
- Access (including Access Audits)
- Disability Discrimination Act
- Disability related benefits
- Disability Aids & Equipment (and where to get them)
- Housing
- Local services
- Local transport
- Motoring, Motability and blue badges
- Pension Credit
- Welfare benefits
- .....and much, much more.

DASH sells RADAR keys for accessible toilets at £3 each and they also run a free form filling service for St Helens Residents.

As part of our ongoing development we also work in collaboration with Shopmobility St Helens which provides scooters, wheelchairs and other aids and equipment for hire or sale and is located in Chalon Way car park. The two organisations have worked in close partnership for years often introducing clients to one another's services. This collaboration has led to a merging of the Management Committees and allows for a more seamless service across the two organisations. For more information about Shopmobility phone them directly on 01744 613 388.

Do you have internet access?

DASH has recently launched a new fan page on Facebook called **Disability Advice & Information St Helens – DASH**. We hope to use this fan page for as a forum for fans to discussions various topics that are important to them. If you are on Facebook come and join us!

You can also follow us on Twitter under the name **DASHStHelens**. Twitter will provide DASH followers with updates, information and links about topics relating to various subjects from discrimination to voting.

You can find links to all of these pages as well as our blog on DASH's website located at **[www.informationsthelens.org](http://www.informationsthelens.org)**.

## As of April 6<sup>th</sup> 2010 – The Sick Note Has Become a Fit Note

The new fit note is called the 'Statement of Fitness for Work' and is to be used in England, Scotland and Wales. It has more information than the previous doctor's sick note.

The main changes mean:

- your GP will be able to say if they think you are 'not fit for work' or 'may be fit for work'
- your GP can add advice to the note for your employer on how simple changes to the job you do may allow you to return to work earlier
- there will be fewer kinds of medical statements forms issued by GPs

source: Directgov

## Changes to the State Pension

You can claim your State Pension once you reach your State Pension age. You do not have to claim it straight away, and you can increase the amount you get if you put off claiming it. Previously, the State Pension age for women was 60, and 65 for men, but this changed from 6th April 2010.

National Insurance credits mean you can continue to build up your State Pension entitlement. From the 6th April 2010 you will be able to build up some basic State Pension on credits alone. Depending on your situation, your credits may also contribute to an additional State Pension.

- Credits for people aged 16 to 18
- Credits for people in full-time training
- Credits for parents and carers
- Credits for people who are unemployed but looking for work
- Credits for people who are ill, disabled or on maternity leave
- People getting Working Tax Credit
- Credits for spouses of members of Her Majesty's forces

The additional State Pension has gone under different names. You used to build up additional State Pension in the State Earnings-Related Pension Scheme (SERPS). You now do this using the State Second Pension. The State Second Pension is more generous for low and moderate earners, certain carers and people with a long-term illness or disability.

From April 2010, you can build up entitlement to additional State Pension if you are:

- employed and earning over £4,940 (from any one job)
- looking after children under 12 years old and claiming child benefit
- caring for a sick or disabled person for more than 20 hours a week and claiming Carer's Credit
- a registered foster carer and claiming carer's credit
- receiving certain other benefits due to illness or disability

Source: Directgov

## What is going on in and around St Helens?

<p><b>Acorn Farm</b> offers Riding Lessons for the disabled. These sessions run on Fridays from 10am–12pm and cost £5 for a 20 minute session.</p> <p>To book a place please phone them on 0151 548 1524</p>	<p><b>Healthy Living Sessions for Men Age 50+</b></p> <p>Meets every Thursday 6-8pm at Park Farm ACYP Centre, 54 Kentmere Avenue</p> <p>For more information contact the centre 01744 754 367</p>
<p><b>Sight Loss</b> Drop In Sessions at the Rehabilitation and Resource Centre located in the Millennium Centre</p> <p>Provides advice and displays products designed for people experiencing sight loss.</p> <p>Every Wednesday 9:30am-1pm</p> <p>01744 677 338 for more information</p>	<p><b>St Helens New Gateway Club</b></p> <p>Social Club for people age 18+ with profound/multiple disabilities.</p> <p>Meets every Friday from 6-9pm. Charge per session is £5.</p> <p>Please ring Sally Griffiths for more information on 01744 606 676</p>

## Support Groups

### St Helens M.S. Society

Meets weekly.

Please ring for more information as to time and place.

Rita Scott 01744 735 242

### St Helens Cancer Support

Drop In Sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am-3pm

93 Corporation Street

For more information ring Denys Floyd on 01744 884 097

### The Oasis Group

Mental Health Service User Run Support Group

Mondays 9am-1:30pm

United Reformed Church  
Ormskirk Street

Ring Leslie Thomas for more information 0784 334 6699

## DASH Contact Information

If you require information and/or advice please feel free to contact DASH. We are located at:

Windle Pilkington House

King Street

St Helens

WA10 2JZ

Our office hours are Monday – Friday 9 am until 4:30 pm

You can also telephone us: 01744 453 053

Please leave a message if you phone out of normal office hours and someone will return your call as soon as possible.



Halton and St Helens