

Summer 2010

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Putting People First

In 2007, the government put out a document entitled **Putting People First**, which states that people should be given more choice and control over how they want their individual needs to be met. These changes are also known as "Personalisation" which means the support you receive is tailored to your individual needs. St Helens Council has the **My Life, My Choice** programme to meet individual's personalisation needs.

DASH can help by providing individuals with information and advice to help them make informed decisions on a wide range of topics such as:

- Benefits
- Community Care
- Disability Discrimination
- Education
- Employment and Disability
- Leisure Activities
- Local Services
- Sources of Aids and Equipment
- Support Services
- Transport



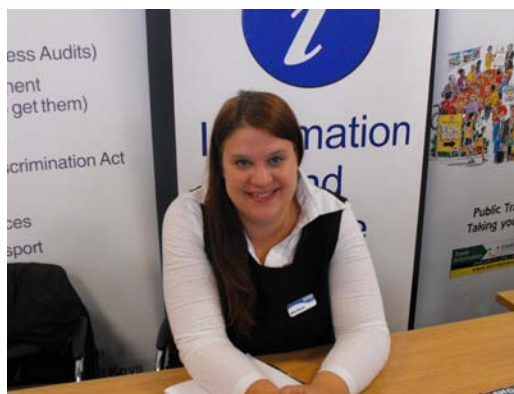
DASH Links with Macmillan Cancer Support

Thanks to the help of the Macmillan Cancer Information and Support Service team, DASH was able to secure an outreach base at St Helens Hospital earlier in the year. The Information and Advice Officer for DASH is now present at the hospital from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. They provide information and advice free of charge to those attending the clinics. During the months of March and April over 400 pieces of information or advice was provided to hospital attendees by a DASH employee based at the hospital. Feedback has been very positive and people seem pleased to have such immediate access to information and advice.

Transitions

On June 17th DASH employees were available at the St Helens Chamber for the 2010 transitions event. In addition to DASH, employees from St Helens Council, Connexions and many other organisations were on hand to promote the wide range of opportunities and support for young people with learning disabilities and their families. The transition event provided a venue for those young people gearing up to leave full time education to learn about the various benefits, education, employment and other services available to them. The event was well attended.

Billie Woods - DASH



Mike Holt - People's Choice



Listen to US!

By Les Owen

After receiving an invitation by St Helens People's Choice, a Self Advocacy Group for people with Learning Disabilities, I was given the opportunity to attend their Listen to Us Event on Monday 14th June 2010. The aim of this event was to gain the views of people with learning disabilities and find out what is important to them.

At this we also saw a play called See no Evil, Speak no Evil, Hear no Evil put on by a group called Dream Makers. This group is made up of people with many disabilities but instead of just putting up with it, they seem to want to change the way they live. The group put on the play to highlight the way in which people with disabilities were treated in life. This highlighted that they are expected to do what they are told, ask no questions and just get on with it.

What I liked to see was the way both People's Choice and Dream Makers would get up on stage and talk about how they were treated and how they wanted it put right. They were not saying treat us differently but just the same as everybody else. They have enough problems, they don't need more. They knew what they wanted to say and depending on what problem they had, who to say it to, and didn't need to be told how to do it.

People's Choice holds their own meetings and conventions to listen to people. Just some of the problems for discussion on the day were:

- The way, in which the police would handle a situation, involving a person with disabilities versus someone else who didn't have a disability.
- The poor access to public transport and public buildings for people with disabilities.
- Opportunities available in a work environment.
- Being able to meet like minded people.

TRAVELLER'S THROMBOSIS

With the summer holidays upon us **all travellers** should take precautions to avoid getting a deep vein thrombosis (DVT) not just those flying.

If you plan to spend a few hours on a plane, train, bus, or in a car the following advice will help reduce your chances of getting a DVT:

- drink plenty of water
- avoid excessive alcohol as it can lead to dehydration
- avoid taking sleeping pills as it can cause immobility
- perform simple leg exercises, such as regularly flexing your ankles
- take occasional short walks when possible
- wear proper fitting elastic compression stockings

Half of all DVT cases cause no symptoms. If you do have any of the DVT symptoms below -- especially if they occur suddenly -- call your doctor right away:

- Swelling in one or both legs
- Pain or tenderness in one or both legs, which may occur only while standing or walking
- Warmth in the skin of the affected leg
- Red or discoloured skin in the affected leg
- Visible surface veins
- Leg fatigue

This document is intended to provide general information only and is not intended to provide personal advice or as a substitute for advice covering a specific situation. Readers should seek appropriate advice before taking or refraining from taking any action in response to information contained in this document.

Whilst DASH: Disability Advice and Information St Helens has taken every precaution to ensure the accuracy of material in this document neither DASH nor any contributors can be held responsible for any action (or lack of action) taken by any person or organisation as a result, direct or otherwise, of the information contained in it.

Falls Prevention

Everyone is potentially at risk of having a fall, but certain groups of people are more vulnerable than others such as adults who are over 65 years of age. Making small changes in and around your home can make a big difference in reducing accidents.

Some general advice for preventing falls includes:

- mop up spills straight away,
- remove clutter, trailing wires, and frayed carpet,
- use non-slip mats and rugs,
- use high wattage bulbs in lights and torches so that you can see clearly,
- organise your home so that climbing, stretching, and bending are kept to a minimum, and so that you do not bump into things,
- get help to do things that you cannot do safely,
- do not walk on slippery floors in socks or tights, and
- avoid wearing loose-fitting, trailing clothes that might trip you up.

Research has shown that older people who take part in regular strength and balance training are less likely to have a fall.

Research that was carried out in 2009 found that taking daily vitamin D and calcium supplements can strengthen muscles and bones, helping to prevent falls in people who are 65 years of age and over. However, the vitamin D and calcium supplements that are found in supermarkets often do not contain a high enough amount to provide full protection. Therefore, if you think that you would benefit from having daily supplements, you should speak to your GP who will be able to prescribe stronger supplements.

If you are concerned that the side effects of medication that you, or your relative, is taking is putting you (or them) at an increased risk of a fall, you can request a medication review with your GP. There may be alternative medications that you can use, or the dose of your current medication could be lowered or, in some cases, stopped altogether.

If you are concerned that poor vision is increasing your risk of having a fall, you should make an appointment to have a sight test so that your vision can be tested and assessed.

If you are concerned that you or a relative may be at risk of having a fall, or if they have recently experienced a fall, you may wish to request a home hazard assessment. This assessment involves a health professional with experience in fall prevention visiting a person's home in order to identify potential hazards, and provide advice about how to deal with them. For example, as the bathroom is a common place where falls can occur, many older people would benefit by having bars placed inside their bath to make it easier to get in and out. The health professional carrying out the assessment may also recommend getting a personal alarm system so that you, or your relative, can signal for help in the event of a fall. Alternatively, it is a good idea to keep a mobile phone in close reach so that you can phone for help in the event of a fall. You should contact your local authority and/or your GP to see what help is available in your local area.

<http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Falls/Pages/Prevention.aspx>

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Summer Awareness Events

Dementia Awareness Week is taking place in England and Wales the week of the 4th – 10th July 2010. Dementia is a term used to describe various different brain disorders that have in common a loss of brain function that is usually progressive and eventually severe. Alzheimer's Society is a membership organisation, which works to improve the quality of life of people affected by dementia in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. To contact them directly ring 020 7423 3500.

Migraine Awareness Week (MAW) is a yearly affair starting on the first Sunday in September. In 2010 it runs from Sunday 5th September to Saturday 11th September. The week aims to raise awareness of this much-misunderstood condition and encourage those affected to seek information and advice to help manage their migraine. For more information contact: Migraine Action on 0116 275 8317.

Know your Numbers! Week takes place 13th -19th September 2010. The Blood Pressure Association's runs this awareness campaign to encourage adults across the UK to know their blood pressure numbers and take the necessary action to reach and maintain a healthy blood pressure. The Blood Pressure Association can be contacted on 0845 241 0989, weekdays, 11am - 3pm.

World Lymphoma Awareness Day (WLAD) is held on September 15th every year and is a day dedicated to raising awareness of lymphoma, an increasingly common form of cancer. It is a global initiative hosted by the Lymphoma Coalition (LC), a non-profit network organisation of 36 lymphoma patient groups from 30 countries around the world. WLAD was initiated in 2004 to raise public awareness of both Hodgkin and non- Hodgkin lymphoma in terms of symptom recognition, early diagnosis and treatment.

World Alzheimer's Day 21st September 2010 has the theme 'Dementia. It's time for action!' The materials and activities will focus on the need for governments and the general public to take any action they can to raise awareness of dementia and improve service provision for people with dementia and their carers. Every year associations across the globe unite to recognise World Alzheimer's Day in many ways and 2010 is no exception with events taking place internationally.

International Ataxia Awareness Day takes place on the 25th September 2010. People with ataxia have problems with movement, balance, and speech. Over 10,000 people in the UK have a form of ataxia. There is currently no cure. Ataxia UK run a helpline on: 0845 644 0606.

What is going on in and around St. Helens?

<p>Acorn Farm 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>Healthy Living Sessions for Men Age 50+</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>St Helens M.S. Society</p> <p>Meets weekly.</p> <p>Please ring for more information as to time and place.</p> <p>Rita Scott 01744 735 242</p>
<p>Sight Loss 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>St Helens New Gateway Club</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>	<p>St Helens Cancer Support</p> <p>Drop In Sessions on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 11am-3pm</p> <p>93 Corporation Street</p> <p>For more information ring Denys Floyd on 01744 884 097</p>
		<p>The Oasis Group</p> <p>Mental Health Service User Run Support Group</p> <p>Mondays 9am-1:30pm</p> <p>United Reformed Church Ormskirk Street</p> <p>Ring Leslie Thomas for more information 0784 334 6699</p>

Contact Details:

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.

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My Life, My Choice.

www.sthelens.gov.uk/mylifemychoice