# Lothian Disability News

# Winter 2014

### The Smith Commission

During the Independence Referendum the UK political parties said that if Scotland voted ‘No’ then they would agree to back more powers to be ‘devolved’ to the Scottish Parliament. After the majority of Scotland’s voters decided ‘No’ on September the 18th, the Smith Commission was set up to seek views on further devolution for Scotland and recommend the way forward. Everyone was invited to send their views for that.

The report has now been published and suggests where the Scottish Parliament should have more control, including in the areas of raising tax and borrowing money. Consultation responses related to offering more extensive welfare powers, including in the areas of disability and carers benefits, appear to have attracted a lot of interest. Some people wanted the report go further in recommending more powers to be devolved.

The report suggests that the administration of certain benefits should be devolved, for example, Attendance Allowance, Carer’s Allowance, Disability Living Allowance (DLA), Personal Independence Payment (PIP), Industrial Injuries Disablement Allowance and Severe Disablement Allowance. This could include new arrangements for how Motability will operate in Scotland for DLA/PIP claimants.

The report recognizes that overall there needs to be closer joint working between Government departments, particularly when it comes to the needs of disabled people. This was highlighted by Inclusion Scotland’s response where they stated that better links need to be made across departments, so that if policies are introduced to open up jobs to disabled people, they must also take into account other factors which have an impact on this e.g. accessible transport so people can get to and from work.

### In this edition:

### Christmas processing dates from Payroll

### Cold weather payments

### Grapevine new publications

We wish all our readers a Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for the New Year!

To read the full version of the Smith Commission’s Report go to: <http://www.smith-commission.scot/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/The_Smith_Commission_Report-1.pdf> If you want a hard copy please get in touch with Grapevine on 0131 475 2370 or email: grapevine@lothincil.org.uk We will keep you posted with developments as we find out about them via our website and in future editions of Lothian Disability News.

## Lothian Centre for Inclusive Centre (LCiL)

## News and events:

### The Scottish Independent Living Fund (ILF)

The UK Government made a decision on 6 March 2014, to close the Independent Living Fund (ILF) on 30 June 2015. Now the UK ILF is working with the Scottish Government to look at how users in Scotland will be supported in the future.

The Scottish Government have said they will protect users’ current awards in Scotland as long as they remain eligible and will develop a national system along with voluntary organisations to support existing users from 1 July 2015.

The ILF will continue to support all users until it closes on 30 June 2015.

### A Scottish ILF

A Scottish ILF system will be developed by working with: Scottish Government, disabled people, Disabled peoples organisations, local authorities and social workers. There will be a pilot project at some point next year.

The Scottish Government has not only been working with the ILF in Nottingham, but they have also been working closely with a number of organisations including Self Directed Support Scotland (SDSS) on transferring all Scottish ILF users to the new arrangements. A project board has been set up, to ensure that all the arrangements needed to make this happen smoothly will be in place.

Whilst the project board will mainly be working on the transition for existing users. It will also support some early work around forming the fund for new users of the Scottish ILF.

We’ll be sure to keep you informed of developments with the Scottish ILF as we

hear more.

Important information concerning processing dates at Christmas and New Year for Payroll Service users:

We would like to remind our service users that our offices will be closed from midday on Wednesday the 24th December 2014 until we return to work on Monday 5th January 2015.

In order to ensure that we can process everyone’s payroll by Christmas Eve on the 24th, we would ask you to ensure that your timesheets reach us no laterthan the dates shown below:

Run 3 service users – who would usually have their timesheets in for the 10th of December, please send/email timesheets in for Monday 8th December

Run 1 service users – who would usually have their timesheets in for the 20th of December, please send/email timesheets in no later than Monday 15th December

Run 2 service users – who would usually have their timesheets in for the 1st of January 2015, if you require your payroll to be processed prior to our office closing on the 24th December you must send / email your timesheets in to us no later than Monday 22nd December, otherwise they will be processed on our return to work on Monday 5th January 2015.

Service users who process on a four weekly basis – NO Change, please continue to send/email as per your usual processing schedule.

Season’s greetings to everyone from Payroll!

### Hot off the press – Autumn Statement 2014 information for PA employers:

Last year you may remember that PA employers, unlike other small employers, were told that they would not be benefit from being able to reduce the amount of National Insurance they pay for their employees, by up to £2000.00 per annum. (This is called Employers Allowance). The **good news** is that in his Autumn statement delivered on 2nd December 2014, the chancellor George Osbourne, announced that from April 2015 employers of carers /personal assistants will now be able to take advantage of this Employers Allowance.

Payroll will keep you advised of this nearer to April.

## Training and Learning Opportunities

## Training for Personal Assistants (T4PAs)

LCiL is running a series of two day training courses for Personal Assistants or those who are thinking about becoming Personal Assistants that is now ILA Scotland Accredited!

A limited number of free places are also available for those who cannot access Individual Learning Accounts.

The topics covered include:

Disability and Equality - cultural representations of disabled people and barriers faced by disabled people

Social Model of Disability – and how to apply the principles in your PA role

Understanding the importance of appropriate language

Exploring roles and relationships

Knowing the Relationship Boundaries

Exploring potential dilemmas

Responding to Your Employer’s Needs

The next confirmed date LCiL is running the T4PA Course at Norton Park, Edinburgh are: 27th and 28th January 2015 from 10.00am to 4.00pm (Lunch provided)

Want to know more about the course or ILA Eligibility? Contact us on 0131 475 2350 or email: amanda.beech@lothiancil.org.uk

## Introductory Health & Food Safety Course

LCiL Training Service in Partnership with Greggs is offering this popular 4 hour training course for disabled people who want to learn more about:

Bacteria and causes of food poisoning

Personal hygiene and hand washing

Storage of food and kitchen safety

Choosing the healthy option and more!

Date: 25th February 2015

Time: 11.30am—3pm

Venue: Greggs Bakery, Greggs Bakery, 36, Dryden Rd, Bilston Glen Industrial Estate, Midlothian EH20 9LZ

Participants receiving their certificates after the course in December 2014 in photo above.

Book your place now! Call Amanda on 0131 475 2350 or email: amanda.beech@lothiancil.org.uk

## Living and Work Choices Project

The Living and Work Choices is a BIG Lottery funded project which providesfree courses and one to one support for disabled adults and people with long term conditions living in Edinburgh and the Lothians.

Stephen Forrest is 21; he attended our course in May and has been supported on a one to one basis to look at his goals for the future. Stephen used to swim competitively but gave it up. Stephen is now looking to get back to doing what he loves and this is his story in his own words…..

Swimming by Stephen Forrest

‘When I was 6 or 7 years old I used to go swimming and I became really good so went to competitions. I won silver and bronze medals in 2013 and I was really happy that I won them. I gave it up for a little while but now in 2014 I have decided I am going to go back to it so I can try and win gold medals and maybe some more silver and bronze medals too. I am going to keep working hard on my swimming as it is my life. I think I am the best swimmer ever and this year I need to work hard so I can be good again at swimming.

I would like to meet my favourite swimmer Rebecca Adlington; she is the first British swimmer to win two Olympic gold medals since 1908. She also won bronze medals in the women's 400m and 800m freestyle events in the 2012 Summer Olympics in London

Winning medals mean everything to me, swimming keeps me fit and focussed and I love it!’

## Independent Living Team, a Christmas Reminder

It’s the time of year to think about Santa and mince pies but here in the Independent Living Team (ILT), we thought we’d give you all a little reminder about how we support Personal Assistant (PA) employers and things they should keep in mind.

Employing your own PA/s can give you greater flexibility and control but it also brings some added responsibility, which ILT can advise you on, for example:

### Terms and Conditions of Employment

All employees are entitled to a statement of the terms and conditions of employment (or contracts) within their first 8 weeks of starting the job. A contract has details of both the employer and employee’s responsibilities, including contracted hours and rates of pay, and it can help make dealing with any dispute easier.

### Job Descriptions

It is always a good idea to write a job description which details all the different tasks that you expect your PA to do for you. This ensures that there is a clear understanding of what is expected of them and forms part of the contract of employment.

### Recruitment

ILT provide a comprehensive recruitment service from placing adverts, sending out application packs and advising on safe recruitment practices to short listing and interviewing and making the job offer.

### Staff management

ILT can advise on various staff management issues such as managing sickness and annual leave, conduct and performance, managing relations and boundaries, timekeeping, maternity/paternity and adoption issues, relief arrangements, and probationary periods.

### Disciplinary and Grievance policies

If you feel you need to take some formal action to address a PA’s performance or conduct then there are procedures and guidelines that you can follow. This can seem like a daunting thing, but with the right advice and support from an ILO you might find the issue was easier to deal with than you first thought.

### Employer’s Liability Insurance

It is a legal requirement that all employers have this type of insurance in place. If you take out the enhanced version of the policy (which is a very good idea) you can get access to professional employment advice. It can be easy to forget to renew your insurance so please check that you still have a valid policy in place. ILT has details of policy providers.

### Statutory Sick Pay (SSP)

If your PA is off sick, they may be entitled to SSP. PA employers are no longer reimbursed for the cost of statutory sick pay by the HMRC and so this is a cost that must be covered by your budget. If you are concerned about not having enough funding to cover the cost then speak to us for further advice.

### More information:

ILT can provide you with lots of information and advice on how to be a good PA employer (contact details below). We run a Peer Support Group for PA Employers which is always looking for new members. There’s also Employer’s Skills training which can help you to develop your skills and gain confidence in your role as an employer. We also provide training to PAs.

If you are interested in finding out more about this, or if you require advice with any of the above topics then you can contact the Independent Living Team on 0131 475 2350 or by emailing ilteam@lothiancil.org.uk

## Free workshop for Parents and Carers

LCiL is hosting a series of two workshops for parents of disabled children and children with additional support needs living in Edinburgh. In these workshops you will have the opportunity to:

Meet other parents and carers

Hear directly from a parent and young person about the journey to getting support and the young person it has made

Explore ideas and opportunities around support

Gain the confidence to ask for the support you need

Find out practical information, resources and information on who to ask

When: 1st workshop Thursday 22nd January 2015 10.30-2.00pm

 2nd workshop Thursday 5th February 2015 10.30-2.00pm

Where: Both workshops will be held at Norton Park Conference Centre in the Training Suite, 57 Albion Road Edinburgh EH7 5QY

Lunch and refreshments will be provided. To make a booking or find out more information about the workshop, contact Emma Wynack at LCiL on 0131 475 2350 or email emma.wynack@lothiancil.org.uk

Last minute online Christmas Shopping to do?!
Help raise funds for LCiL whilst you do it! We have registered with Easy Fundraising: www.easyfundraising.org.uk an online shopping directly which lists over 2700 popular retailers, utility companies and other businesses, including Amazon, Marks and Spencer, Argos, John Lewis and many more.

To register you need to go to [www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk) and nominate ‘Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living’ to support – this is completely free and we can receive up to 15% from every purchase you make. There are no hidden costs, additional costs to your purchases or administrative charges. What’s more joining this service will give you access to hundreds of exclusive discounts and voucher code so not only will you be helping us – you will be saving money too!

# Other News and Events:

## Cold Weather Payment/Sign Up

Cold Weather Payments are made by the Government to households in receipt of qualifying benefits during periods of cold weather. These payments are to help with the extra heating costs if the average temperature where you live is recorded as 0°C or below for seven days in a row.

Eligible households will get £25 for each seven day period between 1 November and 31 March, paid in the same way as their normal benefits. To qualify for cold weather payments you will need to fit on the criteria below:

Have a child living with you who was born on or after 01 April 2008;

Receive Incapacity Benefit or Severe Disablement Allowance;

Receive Disability Living Allowance or you receive Disability Living Allowance on behalf of a child living with you;

Receive War Disablement Pension;

Receive Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit;

Receive an additional payment (such as the work-related activity group or support component of Employment and Support Allowance) because of sickness or disability.

You will be required to contact your energy provider and complete the registration form. We have details for some of the energy suppliers below, most ask that you do this before their deadline so we suggest registering ASAP:

British Gas: [www.britishgaswarmhomediscount.com](http://www.britishgaswarmhomediscount.com) or call: 0800 072 8625

EDF Energy: [www.edfenergyonline.co.uk/supportplus/form.html](http://www.edfenergyonline.co.uk/supportplus/form.html) or call 0800 015 0960

E-on Energy: [www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/warm-home-discount/warm-home-discount-form](http://www.eonenergy.com/for-your-home/saving-energy/need-little-extra-help/warm-home-discount/warm-home-discount-form) or call: call 0843 506 9877

N Power: [www.npowerwarmhomediscount.com](http://www.npowerwarmhomediscount.com) or call 0808 172 6999

Southern Electric: [www.southern-electric.co.uk/HelpAndAdvice/ExtraHelp/PriorityPlan](http://www.southern-electric.co.uk/HelpAndAdvice/ExtraHelp/PriorityPlan) or call: 0800 300 111

Scottish Power: [www.scottishpower-warmhomediscount.co.uk](http://www.scottishpower-warmhomediscount.co.uk) or call: 0800 027 0072

Guaranteed Pension Credit customers are automatically considered for the discount and the Government will write to all those potentially eligible for the winter 2014/15 discount in autumn 2014.

## What are Your Views and Experiences of Welfare Support and Sanctions?

An Invite to take part in a major national research project:

### What is the research about?

Welfare support and benefits increasingly require people to meet particular conditions and behave in certain ways. The study aims to understand the effectiveness of these conditions, and the support and sanctions linked to them, for different groups of people accessing welfare.

The research is funded by the Economic & Social Research Council, and is being conducted by independent researchers from six UK universities.

### Who do they want to speak to?

Those who have direct experience of support and sanctions, including:

Disabled people who’ve been assessed for ESA, DLA or PIP;

Jobseekers on JSA;

Lone parents with youngest child aged 3+;

EEA or Third Country National migrants;

People affected by anti-social behaviour interventions (e.g. ASBOs, Parenting Orders, FIPs etc.);

Homeless people;

Ex-offenders who have served a prison sentence.

### How do I take part?

Interviews will be carried out by a trained university researcher at a time and location that suits you. They will ask you about your experiences and views of welfare support and sanctions. They will ask to record the interview with your permission. They will also ask whether you are happy for get in contact to do follow-up interviews 1 and 2 years from now.

Each interview will last about an hour. You do not have to talk about anything you don't want to discuss and you can withdraw from the research at any time. Everything you say will be treated in confidence – names will not be used and no details will be passed onto anybody else.

### Will I get paid?

As a thank you for taking part you will receive a £20 shopping voucher for each interview. You will be given this on the day you are interviewed.

Interested? Contact Kirstie at Grapevine on 0131 475 2370 if you are interested in taking part or email: Kirstie.henderson@lothiancil.org.uk General information about the study can be found at [www.welfareconditionality.ac.uk](http://www.welfareconditionality.ac.uk)

## The Tax Disc is no more:

You may have heard that from 1 October 2014, the DVLA will no longer be issuing tax discs. Instead the DVLA will have an electronic record of the tax status of your car and class 3 scooters.

Checking your car is taxed

You can check your car’s details online at gov.uk/check-vehicle-tax Click on ‘check now’ and enter the registration number and make of your car. Alternatively you can call the DVLA on Tel: 0300 790 6802.

The DVLA should send you a letter at least a week before the tax on your car is due

to expire to let you know to arrange it for another year or 6 months. If you do not hear from them you can call their Customer Services team on 0300 790 6802.

### If you have a Motability lease:

As part of your Motability lease, they will arrange for your car to be taxed each year for the whole of your lease. So that Motability can let you know that your vehicle has been successfully taxed each year, it’s essential that they have your up to date address. If you move, please let them know by filling out the online form at [www.motability.co.uk/updatedetails](http://www.motability.co.uk/updatedetails) or by calling their Customer Services Team on Tel: 0300 456 4566.

## Powered wheelchair users and their views

Findings from a powered wheelchair user survey in the summer have now been published. The survey was carried out by Rica, in partnership with other disability charities – Disability Rights UK, Muscular Dystrophy Campaign, Scope, Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) and Whizz-Kidz.

The survey reportfinds that disabled people and their families often struggle to locate relevant information about funding options, make an informed choice about provision and to get value for money when buying and maintaining their powered wheelchair. Statutory provision is limited and powered wheelchairs are predominantly purchased privately or with charitable help.

The survey of 364 powered wheelchair users finds that:

48% didn’t get the right information

Over a third (37%) get no assessment

A quarter (26%) are turned down for NHS funding

32% had to fund their own powered wheelchair completely themselves

If you require information on where to hire or purchase wheelchairs in Edinburgh, Midlothian or East Lothian please get in touch with the Grapevine service on 0131 475 2370 or email: grapevine@lothiancil.org.uk We can also provide you with lists of grants and trusts who may be able to contribute towards the costs of a wheelchair.

If you’d like to read a copy of the report you can download it at: <http://www.rica.org.uk/content/powered-wheelchair-user-research> or request a hard copy from the Grapevine service on 0131 475 2370.

## Everyday Disablism

Everyday Disablism is a website which seeks to collect and archive examples of disabling encounters and/or disablist incidents from around the world. These could be personal or institutional and happen anywhere at any time.

Rights & Choices for

Disabled people, people with long term conditions and older people in

Edinburgh and Lothian

**Refreshments provided by Greggs**

This will help to build a resource to be used by academics and policy-makers to gain insight which will help them continue to remove disabling barriers to inclusive participation of people with impairments in ordinary community life.

Check out the website at: <http://www.fletcherism.co.uk/disablism/>

Or on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/everydaydisablism>

& Twitter: <https://twitter.com/everydayablism>

## Date for your diary:

Saturday 17th of January 2015 is Disabled Access Day!

Disabled access day is all about getting out and visiting a venue that you’ve never been to before - whether a cinema, coffee shop, sports centre or anywhere else...

### Who is behind it?

A group of disabled people and family and friends, including the Euan’s Guide team who are sponsoring the event (See Euan’s Guide here: <http://www.euansguide.com/>)

This will be the very first Disabled Access Day. Want to find out more? Visit: <http://www.disabledaccessday.com/home/> or write to: Disabled Access Day, c/o Euan’s Guide, 10 Constitution Street, Edinburgh, EH6 7BT

## Grapevine updates:

## New Publications!!!

You can now request copies of our new publications:
Independent Living Aids Suppliers in Edinburgh and the Lothians

Emotional Support Services in Edinburgh, East and Midlothian.

Call us on 0131 475 2370 (Mon-Thu, 10am-4pm) or email: grapevine@lothiancil.org.uk

## Christmas message from Grapevine:

There will be limited availability of the Grapevine service from Tuesday the 23rd of December 2014 until Monday the 5th of January 2015due to office closure. If you require information and advice during the festive break please see a list of other telephone services which are available:

Breathing Space - 0800 83 85 87(Mon to Thurs 6pm - 2am) (Fri to Mon 6pm - 6am)

Samaritans - 08457 90 90 90 (24 hours)

Emergency Social Work Service - 0800 731 6969 (out of hours only)

NHS 24 Helpline (111)

NHS Inform Helpline – 0800 22 44 88 (8am to 10pm, 7 days) - can give you details of all pharmacies, GP practices and dental practices in Scotland.

You can still leave a voice message with your name, telephone number and short explanation of what your enquiry is about, or email us at: grapevine@lothaincil.org.uk and we will respond when our office opens again on Monday 5th of January 2015.

## Grapevine Disability Information Service

Providing up to date, reliable and accessible information to disabled people and their supporters in Edinburgh, East Lothian and Midlothian. We cover all disability related matters and our service is completely free and confidential.

This publication is available on request in a range of alternative formats, including Large Print, Audio Tape and Braille.

The Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL) is a Company Limited by Guarantee Registered in Scotland 129392. Scottish Charity No SC017954. Copyright © 2014 LCiL. All Rights reserved.