Lothian Disability News, Winter Edition 2023

Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living

# **Welcome to the Winter Edition**

# In this edition, we will be highlighting our wonderful Independent Living Team. We hope that you find this issue informative and inspiring.

Hello,

We hope you all have been keeping well during the winter season so far. The cozy jumpers, festive decorations over the fireplace and special holidays certainly make this time unique, however in light of the cost-of-living crisis, it has not been without its challenges.

This is why we thought that in addition to keeping you up to date with the latest Lothian Disability News, we would also share some ideas on keeping well and finding community spaces around you.

Thank you for taking the time to read this edition and for your support of LCiL.

Supporting you as always,

**Hubbiah Rafaqat**

**Social Media & Marketing Administrator**

# **Small Steps to Keeping Well**

**Some tips from the Independent Living Team on staying healthy this winter**

Spring is just around the corner but the cold, wet and dark days are still here. It is tempting to fill up on comfort food and stay on the sofa, but there are lots of small things we can do to maintain our physical and mental wellbeing.

What you eat has a huge influence on your health. You don’t need to suddenly cut out all your favourite foods; making some healthy swaps really does make a difference. Many of us rely on the same meals week to week, so bring in some variety to ensure you are getting a broader range of nutrients.

Try to ‘eat the rainbow’ every day. Different colours in fruits and veg reflect the different micronutrients we need. Add tomato and cucumber to your lunch, some blueberries to your breakfast, sweetcorn with your dinner, an orange for a snack, a handful of nuts and you are well on the way. Swap out wholegrain for white bread and limit how much processed foods and soft drinks you have. See if you feel any different!

Getting out in the fresh air and moving where you can helps with strength, flexibility, digestion and sleep, which all affect your mental wellbeing. Not everyone can get out and about to exercise, but there are plenty of exercise videos online. Try YouTube and see what you can find. If you are sitting at home, just keep reminding yourself to move, whether that is seated exercise or running up the stairs! Try box breath: Sit or lie comfortably, let your eyes close. Start to notice your breath, then count as you breathe in for 4, hold for 4, breathe out for 4 and hold for 4. Continue this for a few minutes then allow your breath to return to normal. Notice how you feel. If this is not for you, concentrate on your breathing, slowing down and focusing on your breath, trying to extend the length of your exhalations.

Loneliness and isolation can affect how you feel both mentally and physically, and lockdown made this worse for many people. Stay in touch with friends and family; even just a text can make you feel better. Community organisations can be a lifeline and during the current cost-of-living crisis many are opening their doors as Warm Spaces (see article on page 5), providing hot drinks, maybe food and offering somewhere you can meet and connect with others.

# **Warm Spaces**

Places to stay warm this winter

In response to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, many organisations are opening up ‘warm spaces’; council and community-run buildings where people can meet with others, take part in activities or just keep warm while the weather is cold and the cost of utilities remain high.

The four Lothian local authorities all have directories on their websites where you can find a warm space near you. Some spaces also offer free, subsidised or by-donation hot drinks and/or food. Find out more by visiting these resources:

City of Edinburgh

<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/warmandwelcoming>

East Lothian

<https://www.eastlothian.gov.uk/warm>

West Lothian

<https://www.westlothian.gov.uk/warm-welcome>

Midlothian <https://www.midlothian.gov.uk/info/200301/cost_of_living/645/support_coping_with_rising_living_costs/4>

LCiL Updates

Read on to find out more about new staff and PSL Team updates

**Zoe**

Hello! I joined the Independent Living Team as an Independent Living Officer in August. As an Independent Living Officer, my job is to support disabled people to access various social care options. This could be, for example, helping people to recruit staff, draft up employment contracts, or get a social care assessment. Although that is not an exhaustive list!

I have really enjoyed working at LCIL so far as no two days are the same, and I’m continually learning new things. Prior to joining LCIL, I have enjoyed working for disabled children and adults in a variety of supporting roles. From being a personal assistant to delivering training to health and social care staff, I have been involved directly in various aspects of social care delivery.

Peer Support and Learning Team

Napier University Visit with LCiL Champions

Amanda Vickery, Julie Murray and three of our amazing volunteer Champions – Kirin, Lesley and Susie - attended Napier University in Edinburgh in January to meet with first year social work students.

The session began with Amanda welcoming the group and introducing LCiL, providing an overview of the services our organisation provides to support disabled people and those living with long-term health conditions.

The CEO, Sandy Devers, from Streets Ahead based in the Borders also attended alongside his colleague, Karen, to speak about the work they do supporting people with learning disabilities. Their support has now extended to working with people with mental health problems and people with dementia.

The session continued with three stations where the students split into groups and had the opportunity to hear from both LCiL Champions, and those who attended from Streets Ahead. Kirin and Lesley talked about their experience of good/not so good relationships with professionals and what makes these interactions positive as well as what is not helpful. The students were asked to think about and discuss what important things they should consider when visiting someone in their own home.

Susie talked about what LCiL does, including Peer Support, what this means and how it helps. Students were asked to think about their own peer group and what they can do to support their peers.

There were ten students and a few lecturers, who were all very engaging and gave such positive feedback on hearing about service users’ lived experience of self-directed support. We will be attending another session on Tuesday 28th March and will update you all on how it went.

Guess the Payroll Desk Answers:

A: Dianne McKeown. B: Sarah Burchett. C: Lindsay Richards

D: Richa Singh. E: Richard McFadden. F: Gemma Innes

Change PA Recruitment

Information on keeping Personal Assistant (PA) recruitment efficient and safe

# The Independent Living Team (ILT) is here to support you with recruiting Personal Assistants (PAs). However, you are well placed to extend the reach of the advert to as many suitable applicants as possible. Right now, recruitment is very slow, so finding more creative ways to reach potential PAs is essential.

**Some ideas on where to advertise**

* Job websites. Be aware there may be a charge for this.
* Social media e.g. Facebook, Nextdoor app, etc.
* Community noticeboards, local shop windows etc.
* Word-of-mouth can be the best route to find someone local to you. The school gate, for example.

**Keep recruitment safe**

* Use the link to your advert on LCiL’s website. This means applicants are going through the formal process and you can maintain anonymity.
* Where possible, keep your personal details private until you have met with or spoken to the applicant.

ILT would love to hear what has worked (or not worked) for you when recruiting staff. Let us know your thoughts by contacting your Independent Living Officer (ILO) directly, or email the team at ilteam@lothiancil.org.uk

# Peer Support and Learning EventsJanuary to March 2022

All events start at 11am We look forward to seeing you there!

**West Lothian Disabled Person Peer Support**

Thursday 12th January

Carmondean Community Centre

**Parent Carer Peer Support**

Monday 16th January

Online via Zoom

**Online Disabled Person Peer Support**

Thursday 19th January

Online via Zoom

**Edinburgh Disabled Person Peer Support**

Tuesday 24th January

Norton Park

**West Lothian Disabled Person Peer Support**

Thursday 2nd February

Carmondean Community Centre

**Intro to Self-Directed Support Workshop for Disabled People**

Tuesday 7th February

Online via Zoom

**Online Disabled Person Peer Support**

Thursday 16th February

Online via Zoom

**Parent Carer Peer Support**

Monday 20th February

Online via Zoom

**Edinburgh Disabled Person Peer Support**

Thursday 23rd February

Norton Park

**Intro to Self-Directed Support Workshop for Parent Carers**

Tuesday 28th February

Online via Zoom

**West Lothian Disabled Person Peer Support**

Thursday 2nd March

Carmondean Community Centre

**Outcomes and Support Planning Workshop**

Thursday 9th March

Norton Park

**Parent Carer Peer Support**

Monday 13th March

Norton Park

**Online Disabled Person Peer Support**

Thursday 16th March

Online via Zoom

**Edinburgh Disabled Person Peer Support**

Tuesday 21st March

Norton Park

**PA Employer Forum**

Wednesday 22nd March

Online via Zoom

# **Support LCiL**

With your help, we can do more to support disabled people, people with long term conditions and older people in Edinburgh and the Lothian’s.

As a registered charity in Scotland, we depend on the support of the public and funders to be able to continue providing our services in Edinburgh and the Lothians. One of the ways you can help support LCiL and our essential services is by helping to raise funds, or by directly supporting our work through a donation.

If you want to directly support our work, you can now do so simply and securely online by Debit/Credit card payments, on either a one-off or recurring basis.

We welcome donations from individuals and organisations. Your donation to LCiL will help us to deliver our services, advance the rights of disabled people and ensure that Independent Living is a reality for disabled people, people with long-term conditions and older people in Edinburgh and the Lothian’s.

* £5.00 could help to provide independent up to date disability information and advice.
* £10.00 could help to run peer support workshops and groups for disabled people and parents/carers.
* £50.00 could help to train volunteer Champions to inspire and educate peers, professionals and policy

**Visit us online to find out more** [www.lothiancil.org.uk/support-us/make-a-donation](https://www.lothiancil.org.uk/support-us/make-a-donation/)

**Get in Touch**

Thank you for reading this edition of Lothian Disability News - read on to see how you can get in touch with feedback and suggestions.

**Contact Us**

If you have questions or comments about anything you have read in this newsletter, or have feedback on how we can improve this newsletter for future editions, we would welcome your feedback.

Please email callum.ogden@lothiancil.org.uk to pass on any questions or comments!

**Spring Edition Preview**

That wraps up this Winter edition of Lothian Disability News. We hope the articles and look into the Independent Living Team were an interesting read.

In the next edition of our newsletter, we will bring you more of the latest disability news updates around Edinburgh and the Lothians. We'll be offering a behind the scenes look so you can get to know the LCiL team, the work they do, and how you may benefit from the services they offer!

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