

THE BULLETIN

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Autumn Issue 2007

North Worcestershire



DIAL

Disability Information Advice Line

DIAL Up

A round up of Dial activities; as we go through the change of seasons so too there are ongoing changes for Dial's clients, volunteers and staff.

After a long period of living out of a suitcase we now have an office base at Connect (Wyre Forest) in Kidderminster where we have had a long standing working relationship and lots of support. Thanks to everyone who has kept things going during this difficult period.

As the article inside on "Modernisation" expresses there are changes to County Council services. We are working with staff in Bromsgrove and Redditch Connects to enhance the information and advice available to their service users as well as the population at large. We are also working more closely with our sister organisation South Worcestershire Dial with the intention of ensuring a high quality seamless service across the County.



Dial Helpline Volunteer at Connect Wyre Forest

Worcestershire County Council Modernisation of Day Opportunities for People with a Physical Disability or Sensory Impairment in Worcestershire

The Background

Prior to 2005 Worcestershire's day services for people with a physical or sensory disability provided access to social, education, sport and leisure pursuits, mainly from day centre buildings.

Although many service users gained a great deal from these 'traditional' services, few people moved on to further education, employment or to accessing ordinary leisure or social activities independently from the day service.

It had been acknowledged for some time that, although existing service users in the main felt happy and comfortable with this model of service, it can set limits on people and lead to segregation.

The 2003 Joint Review of Worcestershire Social Services, carried out by the Audit Commission and Social Services Inspectorate, stated that day services for people with a physical or sensory disability needed to be reviewed and developed to promote social inclusion and personal independence.

This was closely followed by the Physical Disability Best Value Review which stated that Sandalwood, the Wyre Forest service, should pilot a project which would change the way it delivered its services – from a mainly building based, exclusive service to a community based, inclusive service.

Following the Wyre Forest pilot, the remaining day services in Worcestershire would follow in a rolling programme of modernisation, each changing its name to 'Connect' followed by its area. To date Bromsgrove, Redditch, Malvern and Worcester City have modernised and become 'Connects'.

The New Connect Services

Each service will use a person centred approach to assist people who are newly referred by their social worker, to gain more control over their lives, by using their network of family and friends and other contacts in the community.

This might include independent access to education, better quality leisure and social activities in ordinary settings and supporting people to gain and to keep work. This '**one to one**' service is intended to be short term and will ascertain the aims of the individual and the steps they need to be supported with, in order to reach their goal.

Each service will provide a weekly drop-in, at its base, to enable people to maintain social contacts and peer group support. Transport will not be provided, however, individuals will be supported to find alternative methods of transport such as car sharing, community transport such as Dial a Ride or public transport. As personal care is not provided, support will be available to find alternatives provision such as Direct Payments. Anyone with a physical or sensory disability will be eligible to attend the drop-in, there is no upper age limit and they do not have to be referred by a social worker.

Each service will provide a personal care suite, for people who are unable to access conventional toilet facilities. **The suite will contain a tracking hoist, Closomat Toilet, variable height changing bed and hand wash basins.** The personal care suites that will be available in Worcester City and Wyre Forest will be open 24 hours daily and will be accessed by trained service users and carers only. Although these facilities will not be staffed 24 hours daily, they will be monitored constantly and procedures will be in place for emergencies.

Each service will also provide information and advice regarding disability, to individuals with disabilities, their carers and to the general public. The belief that underpins this process of modernisation, from day centre to community inclusion is that every one, no matter what their ability, has the right to become full and active members of their community.

This is described, by a person with a physical disability, during a discussion about her future, as being able to live "**A Life like Yours**".

The Connect services are striving to make ordinary lives for people with physical disabilities a reality.

Editor's Note: This article on the modernisation of part of Adult & Community Services (Social Services) refers to "**Direct Payments**". For a detailed explanation ask your Social Worker, or, contact our office for a fact sheet, also available on our website.

Disability Independent Advisory Group (IAG)

West Mercia Constabulary's' Disability IAG provides specialist, independent advice to the force. Members are volunteer individuals drawn from the community, who have a disability, who can advise from their own experience and specialist knowledge and who have a desire to work constructively with the police to improve public service.

The work is pretty varied and certainly challenging involving impact assessment, policies & procedures, accessibility, monitoring disability equality scheme, input into live operations and support.

The Disability IAG meets 6 times a year, with further meeting's as and when required. Travel expenses and sessions fees are supported.

Application packs are available from:

Diversity Team: 01905 747080

Website: www.westmercia.police.uk

Social Work Action Group (SWAG)

NEW College Bromsgrove has offered a degree in Social Work for several years and has an established, nationally recognised group of Service User and Carer consultants, SWAG, to this course. SWAG is a '**decision making-stakeholder**' on the course and thus has considerable influence in the way the next generation of social workers are taught.

SWAG comprises an overall steering group with special sub-groups covering '**student interviews and selection**', '**practice learning assessment**'. '**written work assessment**' and '**teaching**'. Members can have input into as many (**or as few!**) of these areas as they prefer. Training is provided for members to fulfil their chosen roles.

Meeting times/frequencies vary according to the roles you choose.
Travel expenses and hourly rate supported.

Application pack available from:

Jen Close: 01527 572532 **or email:** jclose@ns-worcs.ac.uk

Contact for both posts:

Kate Arnett: 07791 958509 **or email:** kate.arnett@zen.co.uk

Working with “disABILITY”

A Community Event in Kidderminster Swan Centre

Friday 30th November 2007
10am – 3pm



All Welcome

DISABILITY ACTION
Wyre Forest
and partner organisations

Volunteer Training and Recruitment and Client Consultation

A very productive training day with a national welfare advice specialist was enjoyed recently at the Ecumenical Centre in Redditch. Guest participants from partner organisations were involved; we continue to strive to work with statutory and voluntary partners to complement each others service to our shared communities.

We have also been fortunate to recruit more volunteers; in Redditch, Bromsgrove and Kidderminster who will help enhance DIAL services as part of our team. **Further volunteers, willing to take confidential messages at home, on a provided phone out of office hours, would be welcomed.** There are not a lot of calls but every one is important, if you can perhaps help please contact our office.

There is also an ongoing process of consulting clients and potential clients about our services and their needs. If you would not like to be a member of one of our local focus groups, or receive a telephone quality follow up please complete and return the appropriate part of the feedback form, or contact our office direct, – **your needs and views count** and all feedback is confidential.

Country Walks in Worcestershire

Malvern Hills

01684 892002

Malvern Hills Conservators, Manor House, Grange Road, Malvern, Worcestershire, WR14 3EY

Website: www.malvern hills.org.uk

The largest area of open common land in the West Midlands over 3000 acres of open space, providing good walking and wildlife viewing. The Malvern Hills Conservators have completed work on the disabled parking bays and the Easy Access Trail on to the ridge of the Malvern Hills. This trail, some 900 metres long, has a gentle gradient up to the plateau above the car park. The track has been specially treated, so as to be suitable for wheelchairs and pushchairs. Parking is close at hand.

Clent Hills

01562 712825

Nimmings Car Park, Hagley Wood Lane, Clent, Nr. Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, B62 0NH

Website: www.nationaltrust.org.uk

Over 440 acres of woodland & heath land rising to over 1000 feet, offering panoramic views as far as Cotswolds & Welsh borders. Miles of footpaths & bridleways with easy access trails all less than 8 miles from Birmingham city centre. Clent Hills have an easy access trail to the top of the hill, it has ample parking and disabled toilet access.

Lickey Hills Country Park

0121 447 7106

The Visitor Centre, Lickey Hills Country Park, Warren Lane, Rednal, Birmingham B45 8ER

Website: www.birmingham.gov.uk/lickeyhills

The Lickey Hills Country Park covers an area of 524 acres. The hills are covered by a mosaic of mixed deciduous woodland, conifer plantations and heathland, all are rich in a variety of wildlife. Included within the park boundary is an eighteen hole Golf course, bowls, tennis and putting green as well as a purpose built wheelchair pathway and viewing platform allowing easy access to panoramic views over the surrounding countryside.

Waseley Hills Country Park**01562 710025**

Gannow Green Lane, Rubery, Worcestershire, B45 9AT

Waseley Hills Country Park comprises of a large flat picnic area, adventure playground, cafe/visitor centre (which is open every day), ample parking and disabled toilet access and would be accessible for people with mobility problems. They also have 150 acres of grassy hills with way marked trails, but unfortunately, these would not be suitable for people with mobility problems.

Kingsford Forest Park**01562 710025**

Wolverley, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, DY11 5SL

Kingsford Forest Park has ample parking and disabled toilet access. They have a half mile trail which is disabled friendly; the rest of the site is hilly and has a sandy base. The on-site circular trails have been designed to give an enjoyable woodland experience to a range of participants.

Pershore Bridges Picnic Place**01905 766493**

Located on the B4084 Evesham-Pershore, road 0.25 miles south of Pershore, Pershore, Worcestershire, WR10 1AX

The water and banks of the River Avon are home to a large range of plants, animals and birds, insects and fish. Pershore Bridges Picnic Place has ample parking and disabled toilet access and hard surfaced paths.

Worcester Woods Country Park**01905 766493**

Wildwood Drive, Worcester, Worcestershire, WR5 2LG

Worcester Woods has 100 acres of ancient Oak woodland where you can stroll through carpets of Bluebells or listen to woodland birds. Or maybe you would prefer to wander through romantic wildflower meadows, alive with bees and butterflies feeding on the sweet nectar in early summer. Or perhaps you just want some wide open space to let off steam, fly a kite, kick a ball or exercise the dog. Worcester Woods Country Park has ample parking and disabled toilet access; they have got hard flat surfaced trails.

Website and Email for all the above places.**Website:** www.worcestershire.gov.uk/countryside**Email:** countryside@worcestershire.gov.uk

Useful Contacts

Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance Helpline:	08457 123456
Benefit Enquiry Line (BEL):	0800 88 22 00
Pension Credit:	0800 99 1234
Social Services:	0845 6072000
Out of hours Emergency Number:	01905 768020
Worcestershire Carer's Unit:	0800 3892896
Worcestershire Association of Carers:	01905 26500
Blue Badge Offices	
Bromsgrove District Customer Service Centre:	01527 881288
Redditch One Stop Shop:	01527 534123
Wyre Forest Customer Service Centre:	01562 732928
Community Legal Service Direct (CLS):	0845 3454345
Citizen's Advice Bureaux	
Bromsgrove:	01527 831480
Redditch:	0845 415 2221
Wyre Forest:	01562 823953

NW DIAL can help with your queries about all manner of issues related to impairment / disability, access, holidays, discrimination, support organisations both local and national, transport etc. We can also help with form filling.

Helpline: 0800 970 7202
Office: 01562 60241
Fax & Minicom : 01562 68248
Email: admin@nwdial.org.uk
Website: www.nwdial.org.uk



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