

# NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE D.I.A.L.

Registered Charity No. 1053933

## THE BULLETIN

Summer  
Issue 2005

Community  
Legal Service



## Welcome

Summer has definitely arrived, welcome to this our 6th edition of The Bulletin. We hope that you are finding its contents useful? Please remember that the information provided, is included only as a direct response to what our readers ask for. If something is featured it is because people have requested it. So get your thinking caps on, what would you like to find out about? We will do our best to provide it.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to send back their feedback forms for the last edition. Accompanying the Bulletin is a new feedback sheet, if there are any issues you would specifically like us to cover in the next issue, please send it back to us. If you would prefer you can ring, our free phone Helpline and leave a message on 0800 970 7202. We look forward to hearing from you and providing you with useful information and contacts.

## Changes at Social Services

From July 25th 2005 Social Services changes the way you can contact them for **new** enquiries. There is now a countywide telephone number for all of Worcestershire area which is **0845 607 2000**.

(If you are known to or are already working with a department you can still contact them directly)

### You can also contact them:-

**Post:** Social Services, Po Box 585, Worcester WR4 4AD

**Fax:** 01905 768056

**Minicom:** 01905 768052

**Website:** [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/socialservices](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/socialservices)

**Email:** [socialservices@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:socialservices@worcestershire.gov.uk)

### Or by visiting you nearest customer centre:-

**Bromsgrove:** Next to the Dolphin Centre, School Drive, Bromsgrove.

**Redditch:** Town Hall, Alcester Street, Redditch.

**Wyre Forest:** Contact **0845 607 2000** for local information.

The Emergency Duty Team for Social Services **01905 768020**  
(emergencies only - out of office hours)

## Special points of

### interest:

- Changes at Social Services
- NHS Expert Patients Programme
- Information Technology Can Help / AbilityNet
- New Benefit Rates April 2005
- Useful Contacts

# NHS Expert Patients Programme

The Expert Patients Programme is a NHS initiative to help people who are living with long-term conditions to maintain their health and improve their quality of life. It is a course that helps you to take control of your condition and make a difference to your life.

The course is aimed at anyone who is living with a long-term health problem, regardless of what it is. People with conditions such as arthritis, asthma, diabetes, heart disease, ME, MS, and Parkinson's have all benefited.

The aim of the course is to learn important skills so that individuals are able to cope more easily:- Manage symptoms, Deal with stress, depression and low self-image, Manage pain, Develop coping skills, Relax, Eat healthily, Work more closely with those caring for you and plan for the future.

The courses cost nothing, only regular commitment from you to attend, They are lead by well trained lay people who are also living with long term health conditions. Courses are run by Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust and Redditch and Bromsgrove Primary Care Trust over a number of weeks. The content of the courses are varied, there are short talks and lots of opportunities for participants to share ideas and to make individual action plans to improve their health and well being. The Expert Patient Programme is run in addition to any hospital classes about how to cope with particular conditions and complements such sessions by giving you skills to help with self management.

Experience and research has shown that, whatever your condition, the things people with long term health problems have to deal with on a day-to-day basis are similar, e.g. tiredness and pain. The course gives you the opportunity to put into practice the skills you learn, with the support of others who are facing similar challenges. The course is special in this way by being a safe place to share skills and experience with other people who are dealing with the same things as you are.

Both Primary Care Trusts are currently taking applications for places on courses coming up in the very near future.

Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust are running their next course from The Red Cross Centre on Lax Lane in Bewdley. Starting on Tuesday 27th September to Tuesday 1st November the course runs for six weeks every Tuesday from 9.30am to 1pm. A course is also planned for January 2006 for the Stourport Area. If you would like any more information or to request an application form please call **Wyre Forest Primary Care trust on 01562 826329**.

Bromsgrove and Redditch Primary Care Trust are starting their next course on Tuesday 13th September at Rubery Youth and Community Centre at New Road in Rubery. The course will take place at 10.30am to 1pm weekly for 8 weeks, future courses are being planned. If you would like more information or an application form please contact **Vicky Ramsay on 01527 507061 or Bethan Flynn on 01527 507058**.

The courses have benefited many people over the last few years here are a few of there comments.

“It made me reassess my condition realistically”

“I have learnt skills that have made a real difference to my life”

“I appreciated the group support”

This might just be a course which would benefit you or others that you may know, please call and find out more.

# Information Technology Can Help / Ability Net

ITCH stands for Information Technology Can Help. The purpose of ITCH is to offer computer assistance to individuals with disabilities by providing volunteers who will visit disabled people in their homes and at other locations such as day centres. Since its establishment, the Network has been providing disabled people with effective Information Technology solutions. In the past two years alone, ITCH Network has made over 2,000 visits, solving many hardware and software problems, as well as helping people to gain confidence using a computer. The service is built around a network of skilled volunteers who are prepared to offer disabled people free, computer assistance. Everyone involved in the Network is a volunteer and it has over 250 volunteers, covering over 40 UK counties.

## Who's behind the Network?

ITCH Network is a programme of the British Computer Society. The British Computer Society (BCS) provide service and support to the community, including individual practitioners, employers of IT staff and the general public. ITCH Network originally began life as IT-Can-Help.

The project was devised by Ken Stoner, who is himself severely disabled by Motor Neurone Disease. Ken Stoner joined the Board of the British Computer Society Disability Group (BCS-DG) in 1992. The project was launched in 1994 following a two year development programme. ITCH Network aims to address the current shortfall in the availability of technical assistance for disabled people using computers.

The BCS-DG is a special interest group of the British Computer Society that focuses on how computer technology can help disabled people and has been working within the voluntary disability sector for over 20 years.

## How can they help you?

They can help you in the following ways:

- Provide impartial advice on computer hardware and software.
- Install new equipment and software.
- Help you get connected to the Internet and use e-mail.
- Get you started with standard packages such as word processing.
- Solve technical problems that may arise.
- Give advice and assistance with hardware and software upgrades.
- Help you to get the most out of your computer and software.

## Please note:

They cannot provide funds for the purchase of computers, software or peripheral equipment, such as printers or scanners. Neither are they able to conduct assessments for specialist access devices. But they can put you in touch with other organisations that may be able to assist you.

**ITCH NETWORK Client Helpline via AbilityNet Freephone (and Minicom): 0800 269545**

For all other communication please contact them on:

**Telephone: 07985 779071** (Mobile)

**Address: ITCH Network, PO Box 28951, London, SW14 8WL**

**Website: [www.itcanhelp.org.uk/index.htm](http://www.itcanhelp.org.uk/index.htm)**

## Useful Contacts

Alcohol Advisory Service	<b>01527 870707</b>
Alzheimer's Society (Wyre Forest Branch)	<b>01562 823800</b>
Arthritis Association Helpline	<b>0207 4910233</b>
Arthritis Care (young) Helpline	<b>0808 8004050</b>
Website: <a href="http://www.arthritiscare.org.uk">www.arthritiscare.org.uk</a>	
Samaritans Helpline	<b>0845 7909090</b>
Website: <a href="http://www.samaritans.org.uk">www.samaritans.org.uk</a>	
Asthma Helpline	<b>08457 010203</b>
British Council of Disabled People	<b>01332 295551</b>
Charford Resource Centre	<b>01527 874880</b>
Deaf Blind UK	<b>0800 132320</b>
Diabetes UK - Careline	<b>0207 4241030</b>
Website: <a href="http://www.diabetes.org.uk">www.diabetes.org.uk</a>	
Disability West Midlands	<b>0121 4141616</b>
Disabled Parents Network	<b>0870 2410450</b>
Guide Dogs for the Blind	<b>01905 332910</b>
IT Can Help / Ability Net	<b>0800 269545</b>

## New Benefit Rates April 2005

### Attendance Allowance (AA)

High Rate	£60.60
Low Rate	£40.55

### Disability Living Allowance (DLA)

#### Care Component

Higher	£60.60
Middle	£40.55
Lower	£16.05

#### Mobility Component

Higher	£42.30
Lower	£16.05

<b>Carer's Allowance (CA)</b>	£45.70
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### Incapacity Benefit (IB)

Long-term IB	£ 76.45
Short-term IB under state pension age	
Low Rate	£57.65
High Rate	£68.20
Short-term IB over state pension age	
Low Rate	£73.35
High Rate	£76.45

**All rates are weekly**

## NORTH WORCESTERSHIRE D.I.A.L.

NW DIAL can help with your queries about all manner of issues related to impairment / disability, access, holidays, support organisations both local and national, discrimination, transport etc. We can also refer you to our benefits service which undertakes benefit health checks, form filling and representation at appeals.

**Helpline:** 0800 970 7202  
**Fax & Minicom :** 01562 68248

**Office:** 01562 60241  
**Email:** [northworcs.dial@dsl.pipex.com](mailto:northworcs.dial@dsl.pipex.com)

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