

Adapt (North East)

News JANUARY 2011



• A very happy new year to all our members. We hope that Adapt (NE) will continue to grow in 2011 despite the uncertain financial climate - please see our projects update on the next page.

Apologies to anyone who has had problems telephoning us recently; we have had a new phone system installed and had some initial problems — hopefully now resolved! All calls now come in through the general office (01434 600599).

We are aware that places on our transport outings can get booked quite quickly and that some people who have wished to go on trips have not been able to. We would like to try a slightly different way of organising these, where members interested in going on outings ring us to let us know which area they live in and we can then organise trips from particular areas. You can also give us suggestions for where you might like to go. To register for trips from your area, please contact Natasha on 01434 600599.



We would also like to let you know that we now have a dedicated **Community Helpline** for those needing help or advice. Our staff can work with you on any problems you may have to help you find a solution, and can signpost to other relevant organisations if you wish. You can contact the Helpline by either phone or text on **07891 194 422** or by e-mailing info@adapt-tyndale.org.uk.

Liz Prudhoe, General Manager

In this issue

Project news: Updates, changes to Disability Living Allowance, members' feedback.

Transport news: New booking system, Dial-a-Ride feedback and timetable.

Other organisations: Post-employment support, accessible theatre, helpline & grants for disabled children, MS sessions, Northumberland handyperson service, Attendance Allowance, Hextol decorating service, carers' healthchecks, CABs new number, IT Can Help.

Working with all the community



Projects Update

Green Light to Work is continuing to provide access to work and training through both travel planning and vehicle hire. While the number of contacts has fallen, in part due to the current economic climate and it being a quieter period around Christmas, we have already received a higher number of referrals than this time in the last quarter. The scheme has been operational for 18 months with current funding ending in March and is on target to achieve all of its outputs. Unfortunately the future is less certain but we are working hard to try to ensure that a service remains in place as it has proved crucial to unemployed people throughout Northumberland.

Adapt holds the contract for the host role of **Northumberland LINK** and works in partnership with Northumberland Community Development Network on the delivery of this role. The LINK (Local Involvement Network) invites the community to work together and with the NHS to help improve health and social care services. The LINK's role is evolving and it is to be renamed HealthWatch.

Dial-a-Rides

Adapt currently delivers 14 dial-a-ride services which are well used and appreciated by all the people using them. We continue to identify new areas and solutions.

Day Activities

We started a pilot scheme to deliver day club activities in Haltwhistle in June 2010 and are delighted to let you know that it has been successful and will be continuing. The group meets on Mondays and Wednesdays and 10 people currently attend.

CLS Quality Mark

Following the review of our Community Legal Service Quality Mark, we are delighted that Adapt has been formally re-certified. The Quality Mark auditor was happy to note, "Many congratulations to you all, you have a lot to be proud of!"

Future Developments

As we are all aware, the economic climate is difficult and Adapt is not immune to this, therefore the Trustee Board is currently considering how best to weather what could be considered 'a perfect storm'. Whilst we recognise the challenges, we also feel that we are well placed to meet them.

Project News



Changes to Disability Living Allowance

The government is proposing to replace Disability Living Allowance with a new benefit - Personal Independence Payment - and has produced a consultation document which seeks people's views. Come and have your say at meetings set up across Northumberland:

Tuesday 8th February 2011

at **St. James's Church Centre, Pottersgate, Alnwick (10.30 - 12.30)**

and **Blyth Community Enterprise Centre, Ridley Street, Quayside, Blyth (2 - 3.30)**

Wednesday 9th February 2011

at **Hexham Community Centre, Gilesgate, Hexham (10.30 - 12.30)**

To confirm your attendance, please contact Catherine on 01434 600599 or by e-mailing: catherinew@adapt-tyndale.org.uk

For a copy of the consultation document:


Phone 0207 449 7688 (or textphone 18001 2027 449 7688) - both are answer machines where you can leave your details. The consultation document is available in a number of formats such as large print, Braille, audio or Easy Read

Or e-mail: consultation@dlareform@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Or write to: DLA Reform Team, Department for Work and Pensions, 1st Floor, Caxton House, Tothill Street, London SW1H 9NA

Or access it online at: www.dwp.gov.uk/dla-reform or www.official-documents.gov.uk

Responses to the consultation document are invited by 14th February 2011.

A good turnout at our AGM last September gave us an opportunity to ask our members for feedback. It was agreed that the annual report will be available on a CD and that visiting speakers will use a Powerpoint presentation at the AGM to make their information more accessible. Members also noted that the organised outings can become fully booked quickly and requested more and varied outings for more people. It was queried whether Adapt could provide specialist advice (e.g. on benefits and welfare, and help with forms, and also provide a direct payments/personal budgets helpline). We have been able to address all these points since the AGM; please see the front page for details of our Community Helpline. 

Transport News



Transport Booking

As an efficiency savings measure, to help save money through a better organisation of operations and administrative procedures, we have made some changes to our transport booking system and will no longer take bookings over the phone.

Instead, if you wish to book transport, we would be grateful if you could send us in a completed booking form at least 7 days in advance (except for emergencies). We can e-mail, post or fax you a booking form, or you can download one from our website, which you can then fill in and return to us. A member of staff will then be able to contact you to discuss the availability of buses and confirm booking details.

As ever, we tried to provide as normal a transport service as possible for our members during the snowy weather. The users of a Hexhamshire Dial-a-Ride service sent us a Christmas card to spell out how they felt:



Always friendly
Do anything to help
A great service
Pick up at your home
Take you back again!



Dial-a-Rides

A Dial-A-Ride timetable showing all the routes and fares is available — call us on 01434 600599 and we'll send you one out.

Other Organisations



Post-Employment Support

Practical advice and/or training is being offered to help people make the most of employment. It can help those who are already working with:

- Claiming in-work benefits
- Childcare advice
- Learning ways to manage finances
- Careers advice and guidance
- Accessing training to develop skills and improve job prospects.

The service, run by Newcastle College and the Wise Group, can refer you to the organisation with the best support for you if they can't provide the help you are looking for.

For more information, ring 0191 200 4810 or e-mail: pesreferrals@ncl-coll.ac.uk

Accessible Theatre

Access performances, which can enhance productions for people who are deaf, hard of hearing, blind or partially sighted, are available at Newcastle's Theatre Royal, Live Theatre and Northern Stage.

Access performances use **captioning** (text displayed on a unit for deaf or hard of hearing patrons), **audio description** (live commentary via personal headphones for blind or partially sighted people) and **British Sign Language** (sign language interpreted for deaf BSL users) for selected performances.

Visitors with a disability can join the free Access List where they be eligible for tickets at concessionary prices, or getting 2 tickets for the price of 1 if bringing a companion to assist. To join, ring the Theatre Royal on 08448 112121 or see their website www.theatreroyal.co.uk

Helpline and grant information for families with disabled children

Contact a Family's freephone helpline (0808 808 3555) is now open from Monday to Friday, 9.30 am to 5 pm, providing advice, information and support to families on any aspect of raising a disabled child (and also to professionals working with families).

Contact a Family also keeps a list of charities that provide grants for families with disabled children, including grants that fund holidays, specialist equipment and wish granting. To order a copy, e-mail: northeast.office@cafamily.org.uk or call 0191 213 6300.

Other Organisations



MS sessions in Hexham

Friday afternoon free complementary therapy sessions are being held at Hexham Hospital for anyone who has MS, or their carers. To book an initial consultation with a therapist, call 01670 505829. Following a simple system involving GP consent, you can then book sessions in blocks of three. The sessions are funded through the MS Research and Relief Fund which has a therapy centre in Morpeth.

The **Northumberland Handyperson Service** previously provided by Northumberland Stars is now being provided by Northumberland Care and Repair and the Three Rivers Housing Association. The telephone number for appointments remains 01670 351135.

The handyperson service focuses on older and vulnerable people and will carry out small repairs and maintenance jobs in people's homes and their immediate external environment. It aims to promote independent living, reduce accidents within the home, improve quality of life and maintain a sense of well-being, safety and security for the residents of the county. Also, a minor adaptations service aims to ensure that residents are safe and can live independently in their homes. Home safety assessments, jobs to facilitate hospital discharge and the installation of sensory and telecare equipment can also be carried out.

Attendance Allowance - you may be more eligible than you think

Northumberland Care Trust wants to make sure that residents are aware of what they may be entitled to in terms of Attendance Allowance.

Although it is a disability benefit, you don't need to be registered as disabled or be receiving help from social services to qualify. You might satisfy the criteria if you need help with things related to your personal care like getting in and out of bed, getting dressed, having a bath, eating and drinking or if you need someone to keep an eye on you to keep you safe. Also, if you are over 65 and have physical or mental difficulties, you may be eligible. You don't have to be receiving help from someone to claim and you don't need to answer questions about any pension, savings, investments or private pensions when making a claim. It is a tax-free benefit which does not affect other benefits. To find out more, call the department for Work and Pensions telephone helpline for disabled people and their carers on 0800 882200 or visit the www.direct.gov.uk website.

Other Organisations



Hextol Decorating Service

Two apprentices from the Hextol Foundation have been working with a City & Guilds qualified decorator and are taking orders for home or work re-decoration.

The Hextol Decorators are happy to come out and review what needs to be done and will give a competitive quote for any job.

The Hextol Foundation's enterprises are provided by local learning disabled people. Chief Executive Chris Milner says the apprentices have had some excellent client feedback for the jobs they have already completed.

For more information, ring 01434 605253, e-mail: contact@hextol.org or see their website www.hextol.org

Northumberland CABs have a new contact number

There is now a single telephone number for all the Citizens Advice Bureau in Northumberland. Dial 0844 4111309 and you will be given menu options that allow you to transfer to a helpline, listen to recorded information on a range of advice topics or speak to an assessor who will evaluate the problem and decide what needs to be done next (this may include a referral to your local CAB for face-to-face advice).

Health Check for Carers

Health checks for carers are available through a pilot service running until April 2011. The checks take into account carers' physical and emotional health and the impact that caring is having on them. Many carers suffer physical strains and injuries and increased stress which can lead to other health problems.

How to get a health check

Call 0844 800 7354 and someone will take your details. A community nurse will then contact you to arrange an appointment. You can have the health check in your own home if you wish and, if needed, care can be arranged to allow you time with the nurse. The health check also links to other support to:

- make sure you are accessing benefit entitlements
- offer a free home security and safety check
- provide healthy living information or support
- help you to continue in your caring role

The health checks are provided by the Northumberland NHS Care Trust through Carers Northumberland.

You can also call Carers Northumberland on 0844 800 7354 about any carer issues (line open 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. on weekdays but leave a message at other times and they can call back when it suits you).

Other Organisations



IT Can Help is a network of volunteers who are able to offer free local computer assistance to disabled people. They can:

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

They cannot provide tuition courses for software or training for specialist assistive technology software, nor provide funds for the purchase of computers, software or printers/scanners, but may be able to put you in touch with other organisations that can.

To ask for help from an IT Can Help volunteer, contact AbilityNet Freephone (and textphone): 0800 269545 or e-mail: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk

For all other communication, e-mail: info@itcanhelp.org.uk or write to them at:
IT Can Help (BCS), 1st Floor, Block D, North Star House, North Star Avenue, Swindon SN2 1FA.

IT Can Help is a programme of BCS (the Chartered Institute for IT) working in partnership with AbilityNet.

Adapt (North East)

Bluebird House, Haugh Lane Industrial Estate, Hexham, NE46 3PU

General office phone: 01434 600599 Transport office phone: 01434 606156

Email: generaloffice@adapt-tyndale.org.uk

Website: www.adapt-ne.org.uk

Community
Legal Service



Opening hours

General office: Monday to Friday 9.00 a.m. — 5.00 p.m.

Transport office: Mon to Fri: 9.30 a.m. — 2.30 p.m.



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