

# Lifestyles News

Sept, 2011

Volume 21, Issue 21

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Visit: [www.facebook.com/thehardesthit](http://www.facebook.com/thehardesthit) for information.



Waving placards with slogans such as "I didn't chose to be disabled" and "Easy Target: cuts to disabled disgraceful", thousands of people took to the streets of Westminster in May, to protest at the government's spending cuts and benefit reforms.

The protesters, many of whom had never been on a demonstration before, included people who are virtually immobile. With an army of supporters, relatives, charities and friends, those who were able to walked, while others used wheelchairs to make the trip past the Houses of Parliament. Two thousand people had signed up to speak to their MPs after the march, according to organisers.

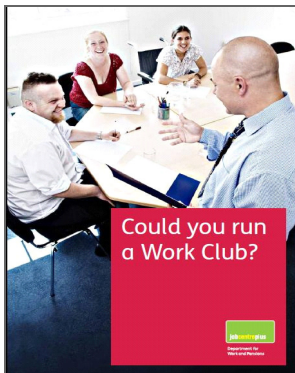
Many were angry about cuts in mobility allowance, which they say will limit their independence; others at the changes to payments from disability living allowance to child benefit, which they claim will hit them hardest. Many of the demon-

strators fear that, despite changes that have already affected them disproportionately, the worst is yet to come.

Richard Hawkes, the chief executive of the charity Scope, said that he hoped the march would give disabled people a sense that they were not alone. "We know there's a deficit, but government has said we're in it together. Taking away the DLA mobility allowance for people in residential care, which means that they can't go out, is not a sign that we are all in it together. Britain is going backwards towards Victorian times when people were either very rich or very poor." But further action is needed. So the Disability Benefits Consortium (DBC) and the UK Disabled People's Council (UKDPC) are working together to support Hardest Hit events across the UK on and around **22nd October. Bristol is the nearest venue.** Despite having promised to protect the most vulnerable, the Government is

pressing ahead with swingeing cuts to benefits and services vital to the lives of disabled people. It is simply not listening to us. These events will let us come together again, across the UK to send a clear message: stop these cuts.

The events in October will have a local dimension, highlighting cuts to local services received by disabled people. However, the Welfare Reform Bill continues to be a key target, since it promises deep cuts to disability benefits including DLA/PIP and ESA. The Bill will be in the House of Lords in October and a strong showing by us will lend strength to the support from sympathetic Peers. It is also important that we continue to engage with MPs who need to understand the strength of opposition to the Government's unfair cuts agenda. People can support the campaign today by writing to their MP, signing up for a Hardest Hit event taking place near them on 22 October or joining our online protest. Find out more at [www.hardesthit.org.uk](http://www.hardesthit.org.uk) or ring us for information.



*national***workclubs***network*

## Want to Work?

There are two groups of people receiving the new Employment and Support Allowance: one group is the WRAG group—the Work Related Activity Group, and the other is the Support Group, where it is deemed, after having taken the Work Capability Assessment, that the claimant is not able to work. The Job Centres are in the process of setting up

**Work Clubs**, in partnership with other agencies such as local libraries, and private companies such as 'Icandoit'. These clubs are drop-in and interview based groups which meet regularly and help people with the skills to gain employment. They can help with CVs, finding suitable work, improving interview techniques and will point people in the direction of other support agencies.

Job Centres have a Work Programme also designed to help people to get work and they give subsidies to employers to give jobs to with disabilities.

They have an 'Access To Work' programme, which helps ESA recipients with 'independence and self-reliance', with a view to overcoming barriers to working. If you want to work, part-time or full-time, then get in touch with us for advice and guidance.





**DWP**  
Department for  
Work and Pensions

## Feedback to Maria Miller

One of our members, Major The McCoy, was recently asked by Dr Sarah Wollaston MP, to give some written feedback about the issues facing people with disabilities, and in particular partially-sighted people to Maria Miller, the Minister for Disability ( Parliamentary-Under Secretary of State for Work and Pensions), on her recent visit to Totnes. He was unable to attend personally, but

sent her a very comprehensive list of issues which need to be addressed by the government. These included concerns about: training of NHS staff, ensuring financial security for the future, employment support, independent living support through adaptations and equipment, good access to transport, access to goods and services and access to good quality care services. He reiterated that the laws should reflect all of the above

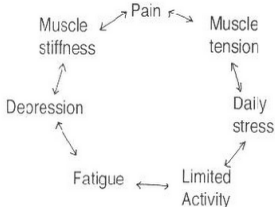
issues and address discrimination in all areas of society.

He received a very thorough response, and thanks, from Maria Miller, MP and we would like to also thank Major Tim for keeping the issues to the fore, at the very highest level of influence. Major Tim also sits on the SCOPE National Assembly, so is really 'doing his bit' to ensure that the views of disabled people are heard by policy-makers.

★  
I have a Disability  
yes that's true, but all  
that really means is I  
may have to take a  
slightly different path  
than you.



### Fibromyalgia Cycle



## Fibromyalgia Support Group.

We realized that many of our members have a condition called Fibromyalgia—a 'hidden' disability, but nevertheless painful and debilitating. The defining symptoms of fibromyalgia are chronic, widespread pain, fatigue, and heightened pain in response to tactile pressure. Other symptoms may include tingling of the skin, prolonged muscle spasms, weakness in the limbs, nerve pain, muscle twitching, palpitations and chronic sleep disturbance. A lot of symptoms to deal with! It

can often be triggered by trauma such as an accident or a viral infection. There are Tender Points on the body and some people say that it is like living with flu symptoms all of the time. Our Advocacy Worker, Jean, had an initial meeting with some of our members, and they have now started to meet regularly at the Scout Hut in Ivy-bridge, which has easy parking and is fully accessible to all. The first meeting was on Friday, September 9th, from 12 –2pm. There will now be regular meetings

as it is very useful to be able to share with others and support each other to find ways to deal with symptoms. There will be ideas such as how to deal with pain and minimize the effects of other symptoms. Ring us to find out dates.

Ann and Tracy from our group, have produced a very comprehensive fact sheet on the subject of Fibromyalgia, and have included accounts of their own everyday living experiences. Get in touch if you would like a copy. The group will also look at all the avenues of support available through other agencies, and their effectiveness.

## Healthy Cooking and Herbs.



We are very keen to help people to eat healthy foods, and so we invited Jenny Macdonald from Totnes' Greenlife Health -Food Supermarket', to talk to us on 2 occasions recently. Firstly she gave us a cookery display and cooked some easy soup with pumpkin, and some fruit kebabs—showing us alternative ways to have a healthy snack. She showed us that there are alternatives to sugar and alternatives to jams and spreads, and she gave us some tips on making snacks fulfilling, yet sugar-free..

**Treatie Healthy Truffles**  
Ingredients:

Coconut Oil  
Xylitol  
Seeds – sunflower, pumpkin, chia, hemp  
Dried Fruit – goji berries, dates, figs, apricots  
Desiccated Coconut  
Roasted cacao nibs  
Melt the coconut oil and xylitol over a bain-marie. Add the assorted ingredients to your personal preference (roughly chopped or blended in a food processor). Allow mix to cool in fridge. Use a tea spoon to roll into balls and roll in either chopped nuts, desiccated coconut to finish.

### Heal All Balm

Comfrey Oil  
Calendula (Marigold) Oil  
Chickweed Oil  
Bees Wax

### Instructions:

Add your combination of oils to a bainmarie over a saucepan of boiling water. Grate in bees wax, approx 3-5g for a 60g pot. The more wax the thicker the balm. Leave until wax has melted and then pour into pot. Within 10-15 mins a skin should form and then the balm will solidify completely within an hour.

# Life Skills Session

Our new Development Worker, Karen, was an Occupational Therapist before having her children, and she put her knowledge and skills to good use recently, by offering members of our group, a session on Life Skills and how to make sure life is balanced and our self-image is positive. This all has a positive effect upon general health. The session was attended by over 20 members and we received funding from Devon County Council's Adult and Community Learning Department, towards the costs of this session.

The session focused on how people can create a more bal-

ourselves and each other. We all came away from the session feeling a lot more positive about our lives. Everyone in the group shared experiences and looked at ways to cope with problems in life. Each person shared some of the problems they faced in daily life, and we all helped to find solutions. This helped us to get our problems into perspective. To develop as people, we need certain skills— to know and understand ourselves better, to live more

consciously and deliberately and to attain personal satisfaction. This session fitted with our Lottery Grant Outcomes which state that, as an organisation, we should be helping people to live healthier, more balanced and stress-free lives. We are progressing well with the spending of our grant and hope that we will meet all our targets for this year, so that we can build upon these sessions next year. We will resume our very popular 'Gentle Exercise' sessions with Penny Grevat, very soon to help people remain mobile.



## Changes to Learning Concessions.


The effects of the 'Recession' are still to be seen in all aspects of life; especially in the public sector. We recently discovered that there have been changes to the benefits which are acceptable for concessions in the Adult and Community Learning sector. The colleges include; KEVICS at the Mansion House, Kingsbridge and Ivybridge Community Colleges— Adult and Community Learning Departments.

The government will no longer subsidise people on Income Support. Only people who might be able to work in the future are now being subsidised.

However, many courses are still free—Literacy and Numeracy qualifications—10 week courses leading to GCSE equivalence are a good way to gain skills. If you have no formal qualifications there are huge concessions on fees. We are very keen to help people to access courses in their local areas and are looking at ways to find funding. If you are interested in any training, especially if you want to gain basic Literacy and Numeracy qualifications, then please ring Karen on the number overleaf. We can

also give extra help to help you to pass the tests and are willing to attend courses with people if they feel under-confident about going along to their learning centres.

We are setting up our own training groups and the first one is on 30th September—1pm at the Methodist Hall, Totnes—**Money Matters!** All are welcome. Come to find out how to make your money go around and how to budget, and how to deal with debts. Budgeting is a skill, so come along to learn how!!



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Placing one foot in front of the other, I've climbed to higher lengths. Reaching beyond my own limitations, to show my inner strength. No obstacle too hard, for this warrior to overcome. I'm just a man on a mission, to prove my disability hasn't won.

★

## Bag-packing at Morrisons'.

We had a very successful Saturday, bag-packing at Morrisons' in Totnes. We applied at the beginning of the year, as Morrisons' bag-packing is very popular. We waited for nearly a year for our opportunity to come-up, and only 8 of our members were able to attend the day. Starting at 10am, some members stood at the ends of aisles, and asked shoppers if they wanted help to pack their

bags. Many did and even those who didn't, often put money in our buckets or collecting tins. We were able to borrow buckets with collecting slots, from the Red Cross and some members sat outside the store, or in the doorway, and many people put money in on the way out. Altogether we raised £450! This was a fantastic sum of money for our group's coffers and we

have written to Morrisons', thanking them for the opportunity and asking for another 'slot' next year.

Thanks to Lin and Barry, Sue C, Ryan and Yaz, Judy and Ian for all the effort which they put into this excellent fundraiser!

We will be letting members know the date very early in the year, and would be very grateful for more help. The more packers, the more funds we can raise!!



**South Hams Lifestyles**  
Reg. Charity No; 1078705

The Boatshed  
Steamer Quay Road  
Phone : 01803 849229  
Fax: 01803 849229

Email:  
shlifestyles@btconnect.com  
or  
www.shlifestyles.org.uk



Affiliated to  
**SCOPE**

**What Can We Offer?**

**Drop-ins—see above for dates.**

**Advice on any issue relating to your disability.**

**Benefits Guidance.**

**Social Outings.**

**A Handyman Service.**

**Help with your Computer.**

**Help with funding for equipment to make your life easier.**

**Training sessions**

**Campaigning for better rights**



## **WE ARE AN ORGANISATION WHICH HELPS PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES TO LEAD A QUALITY OF LIFE WHICH IS OF THEIR OWN CHOOSING.**

Development Manager—**Gail Tucker**

Chair—**Barry Griffin.**

Advocacy Worker—**Jean Lewis.**

Development Worker— **Karen Walbank**

**Our Drop-ins—Where are they held?**

**Fridays: Totnes** Methodist Hall - 12.30 –3pm fortnightly from Friday, 16th September, 2011.

**Fridays: Ivybridge** Scout Hut 1–3pm monthly from Friday, 23rd September, 2011.

Look-out for our programme of events. Meet like-minded people, share problems and make friends.

Give us a call if you need a lift to drop-ins as we may be able to arrange transport.

## **Lifestyles News**

**RIP Terry. We are very saddened that one of our members, Terry Lilly, died in August aged 48. He was a local character and fiancé of Sue Cannell and we send out our condolences to her. Terry could be seen around Totnes in his wheelchair and was known by all. We will miss his quirky comments and witty repartee!**



Thanks to Sue, Lin and Judy for organizing the Summer Bingo session in August at Follaton Hall. Healthy food—fruit and vegetables, were the theme of the prizes and the afternoon was enjoyed by all. Lucky winners went home with bags of lovely food and a good time was had by all—and we made funds for our group!

Disability Focus, the Charity which supports people with disabilities to administer their payrolls and generally deals with all financial matters relating to disability benefits, has moved premises. They have grown so large that they have had to have much larger office space and have moved over to 'Dartington Space'. Their new phone number is:

**01803-849519.**

Good luck to their ever-expanding team—without them, the Direct Payment Scheme would be difficult to administer for individuals. We will miss you at the Boatshed, where they used to be our next-door neighbours!



We cancelled our Summer Outing to Dartmoor but will set another date and let you know soon.

### **Back to Fridays!!!**

From 16th September, we will be resuming our Friday afternoon meetings in Totnes and the Methodist Church Hall.



Well done to Nick for taking part in 2 Jubilee Sailing Trust voyages this year. Thanks to Barry for helping him to get to Southampton and back for each voyage.



Our thanks go out to the 3 boys who came to us on Work Experience from local schools. —Ian, Ryan and Fabian. They were a great help, both in helping our members, at drop-ins and in raising our profile in the community by leafletting to many venues and representing us in the community. Thanks a lot and good luck !!