

## NEWS UPDATE

**We have had a reasonable response to the Questionnaire but I would urge anyone of you who has not done so to please give us 5mins of your time to complete this questionnaire & return it to us free of charge. WE WANT TO KNOW WHAT YOU WANT SO THAT WE CAN PLAN THE FUTURE OF THE GLOUCESTERSHIRE DISABILITY FORUM. AT A TIME WHEN BIG CHANGES ARE TAKING PLACE THAT WILL AFFECT EACH AND EVERY ONE OF YOUR ORGANISATIONS & MEMBERS ITS IMPORTANT TO MAKE SURE WE ARE GETTING IT RIGHT.**

**Choice Based Letting or Home Seeker** Is a central government driven initiative which councils have had to adopt and replaces the previous Housing List & allocation of properties to people on a waiting list. From 23<sup>rd</sup> September a county wide database/website was set up on which all social housing in the county is advertised. For people seeking social housing they now have to register on line (taking about 20mins) and look weekly for properties & then bid for them (much like estate agents & buying a property). For the majority it is a step forward and very good but many others unable to access the internet or whose literacy skills are poor the effects could be very serious. The Equality & Diversity Advisory Group (EDAG) decided at their last meeting to write to all council Chief Executives expressing their concerns about the impact this change will have on a range of people and asking to see their Equality Impact Assessment Statement for this change. If your members are experiencing difficulties please let me know and I will add them to my list.

**Personal Budgets** Gloucestershire Social Services & Gloucestershire PCT are beginning to hold briefing sessions on the changes to funding of Care provision in the county. It is important to ensure that you are aware of the changes and how it will impact on your organisations & your members. ***Nadia Noveli from MENCAP will be the speaker at the next GDF meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November*** and I would urge you to come along and find out how people in this county will be affected by this massive shake up in the delivery of Care.

### **County Single Equality Schemes**

GCC & District Councils are committed to developing and progressing equality and diversity issues within the county. They say they aim to have a structured and fair approach to dealing with equality issues. Equality is broken into seven strands which are currently looked at individually, and at present they have three schemes in place looking at the Disability, Gender and Race strands in more detail. However they want to look at these strands more collectively by developing a **Single Equality Scheme**, which will cover all 7

"Gloucestershire Lifestyles (GLS) prepares and issues notes of the Gloucestershire Disability Forum (GDF) with due care, but cannot accept responsibilities for any reporting errors. Views reported are those of the presenters and do not necessarily reflect those of either GLS or GDF."

GDF is kindly funded by Gloucestershire Association Disability

Equality strands. Their survey asks you for your views on equalities issues in Gloucestershire, what you think about their existing equality schemes and also what you think about a future Single Equality Scheme.

<http://ww3.gloucestershire.gov.uk/surveys/Single%20Equalities%20Scheme/>

It should take no longer than 15 minutes to complete and your views will allow us to make sure the Single Equality Scheme concentrates on the issues that are important to our communities and residents.

The survey closes on the 16<sup>th</sup> November.

*I have tried to obtain hard copies of this survey for any groups without internet access and if I succeed I will include it in this Newsletter Sue Mcclung*

### **Gloucestershire Service Users Forum**

The Service Users Forum has been involved in several consultations during the last 12 months. Some of our members attended the County Council budget meetings held in Gloucester and Cheltenham. The consultations were held throughout the County and involved a wide range of people giving their views on how they felt the budget should be spent.

We have had meetings with the Putting People First team from the County Council. The aim is to transform Social Care. Service Users were asked how they thought things should change and give ideas about which things need to be done differently. It is all about people being given more choice and control to be able to live the life they want to as part of the community.

Our recent meeting with the PPF has lead to us collecting member's views on the Following questions. What did they think good person-centred working should be? Who did they think should be working in a person-centred way? Why did they think things don't happen in a person-centred way? What is the most important thing to ask people about in their review?

This all seems very promising.

Some Service users have been helping with the Social work courses at Gloucestershire University. We are hoping to get more people involved again when the economic climate improves.

We had a training day in May which was an introduction to Personalisation & Self Direction. Everyone found it enjoyable and in September a five day training course will start. It will run a day each month following.

Lifestyles held an Advocacy consultation at the GDA Community centre and several Service Users attended. We were asked to answer several questions and to give our views on Advocacy.

Following this some of our members attended Self Advocacy training. They said that the training was excellent in fact two of them used their new skills directly after the second session and both had successful outcomes.

Each year we are working with new organisations and hopefully this will continue.

John Print, GSUF

## **DIGITAL TV**

Older and disabled people living across the West TV region will soon be offered help from the Switchover Help Scheme to switch over to digital television. The Switchover Help Scheme is run by the BBC through an agreement with the Government to help eligible older and disabled people to make the switch to digital on one of their TV sets.

Eligible people in the West TV region will be offered a **Freeview** set top box at a subsidised cost of £40, or free if they also get income benefits. Most households will be able to receive more than 40 Freeview channels via an aerial; approximately 20 of the most watched Freeview channels will be available throughout the region. The help also includes installation if requested, a demonstration of how to use the equipment, an aerial check and upgrade if necessary for those that own their own aerials, and a free help line to ring for advice while they get used to it.

Eligible people living in the West TV region served by the Mendip transmitter (Bristol, Dorset, Wiltshire, Gloucester and parts of Somerset) are due to switch over on 24 March 2010. Those living in the Cheltenham and Gloucester area are served by The Ridge Hill transmitter and will switch in 2011. Please note a press release is now live on our site <http://www.helpscheme.co.uk/en/press/release/2009-08-24-switchover-help-scheme-announces-standard-offer-west> and an alert has been issued to national media.

The Switchover Help Scheme has appointed Caroline Byng as its Manager for the West region. Caroline will work with interested bodies from community groups to local politicians, act as a spokesperson and ensure that the Help Scheme listens to eligible people's needs and views. If you would like more information about the Switchover Help Scheme in the West TV region, please do not hesitate to contact Caroline on 07590 306930 or [caroline.byng@bbc.co.uk](mailto:caroline.byng@bbc.co.uk)

## **RADAR**

In an historic development, RADAR is joining forces with Tourism for All, to merge our holiday and tourism guides and to create a new information resource for disabled people. Where to Stay and There and Back (both published by Radar publications) have now joined forces with Easy Access Britain (published by Tourism for All) to create a new guide and web site: [www.openbritain.net](http://www.openbritain.net)

In addition, RADAR is expanding our own publishing activities. We have completely revamped our hugely popular If Only I'd Known That a Year Ago - covering all aspects of information needed by anyone who is recently disabled or has developed a health condition, from equipment to employment opportunities and benefits; our guide to the National Key Scheme accessible toilets and our Doing Life Differently series (Doing Work, Money, IT Differently - and watch this space for additional titles).

**OPENBRITAIN** will consist of a new high quality printed guide backed by a comprehensive new website on all aspects of tourism.

For some time now we have been aware that surveys have highlighted disabled people want an easier way to get the information they need, not just about accommodation, but about travel, things to see and do, places to eat and drink.

The National Federation of Shopmobility has joined with RADAR and Tourism for All to promote the guide and website. In addition, existing partnerships with national tourist boards VisitEngland, VisitScotland and VisitWales have been boosted by support from the Automobile Association, the British Hospitality Association, and the Regional Development Agencies.

### **0800 BUSTER - Instructions**

1. Dial **01200 49 0800**
2. Enter the 0800, 0808, or 0500 number you want to phone
3. Press # to start the call

### **Call 0800, 0808 & 0500 Numbers Free\* From Your Mobile**

Most mobile phone providers in the UK still charge their users for calls to 0800, 0808 and 0500 numbers. 0800Buster lets you call these numbers using your mobile's inclusive minutes, by providing you with a UK landline number to dial instead. No registration or set-up is necessary, and the service is completely free\*. Just dial **01200 49 0800**, enter the full free-phone number you want to call at the prompt, then press #—it's that simple!
