

Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board

AGENDA

Date: Thursday 28 March 2013

Time: 10.30 am

Venue: Seminar Room 1, Green Park, Aston Clinton

No	Item	Timing	Page
1	Apologies for Absence / Changes in Membership	10.30	
2	Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising	10.35	1 - 30
3	Wycombe District Council's review of service towards disabled people Update from Ted Piker and Councillor Brian Pollock.	10.45	31 - 96
4	Presentation on Better Healthcare in Bucks Update from Ms Tehmeena Ajmal, Reconfiguration Programme Manager, Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust.	11.10	
11.40 - Break			
5	Carers Strategy Report from Nadiya Ashraf	11.50	
6	National Benefits update (standing item)	12.10	
7	Dignity in Care (standing item)	12.25	

8	PSDPB Action Plan	12.35	
9	Any Other Business	12.50	
10	<p>Date of the Next Meeting The next meeting of the Board will take place on Thursday 30 May 2013, 10.30am, Seminar Room 1, Green Park, Aston Clinton.</p> <p>Dates of future meetings for 2013;</p> <p>25 July 26 September 28 November</p>		

If you would like to attend a meeting, but need extra help to do so, for example because of a disability, please contact us as early as possible, so that we can try to put the right support in place.

*For further information please contact: Sharon Griffin on 01296 383691
Fax No 01296 382421, email: sgriffin@buckscc.gov.uk*

Members

Stephen Archibald, Carers Bucks

Maureen Armitage, Buckinghamshire Alliance of Neurological Organisations

Patricia Birchley, County Councillor - Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing

Paul Bootle, Service User Representative

Trevor Boyd, Head of Commissioning and Business Improvement, Adult Social Care

Sue Brooks, Connexions

Andrew Clark, Bucks Disability Service (BuDS)

Jackie Wheeler, Action on Hearing Loss

Deborah Dow, CEO, Bucks Vision

Steve Goldensmith, Lead Commissioner Housing, Housing Related Support and Prevention

Brian Jones, Bucks Vision

David Keston, Carer Representative

Mathew Koshy, Consultant in Rehabilitation Medicine

Gillian Manning-Smith, Transformation Programme Manager

Dr Maggie Murphy, CNRS

Elaine Norris, Department for Work and Pensions

Barbara Poole, People's Voices

Michael Quinlan, Action on Hearing Loss

Christopher Reid, Joint Planning and Commissioning Manager (C)

Julie Richardson, The National Society for Epilepsy

Paul Rogerson, Cabinet Spokesman - Health & Wellbeing

Rachael Rothero, Service Manager, Strategic Commissioning

Gillian Sherwin, Service User

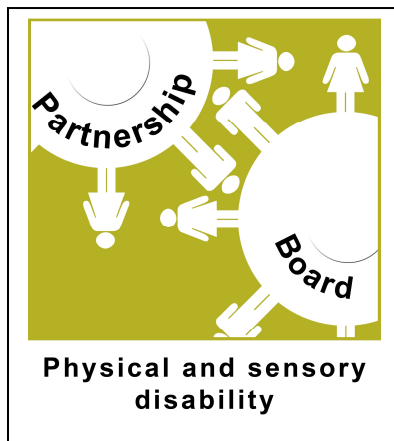
Jane Taptiklis, NHS Buckinghamshire

Andy Tyerman, Bucks & Milton Keynes Brain Injury Service Network

Tony Upward, OWLS / Carer Representative

Louise Wakelam, Chilterns MS Centre

Adam Willison, Assistive Technology Commissioning Manager



Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board

Minutes

Thursday 31 January 2013

Those in attendance:	
Maureen Armitage	Buckinghamshire Alliance of Neurological Organisations
Ian Barham	Buckinghamshire Manager for the 2012 Games
Patricia Birchley	County Councillor - Cabinet Member for Health & Wellbeing
Andrew Clark	Bucks Disability Service (BuDS)
Debi Game	Bucks SUCO
Sharon Griffin	BCC
David Keston	Carer/Service User
Ronel Murray	AFW, Service Provision
Elaine Norris	Department for Work and Pensions
Sarah Pady	BCC/PCT
Michael Quinlan	Action on Hearing Loss
Christopher Reid	Joint Planning and Commissioning Manager
Paul Rogerson	Cabinet Spokesman - Health & Wellbeing
Andrew Shipley	Bucks Vision
Zoe Sutherland	Breathe Easy
Tony Upward	OWLS



No	Item
1	<p>Apologies for Absence/Changes in Membership</p> <p>Apologies for absence for received from Sue Brooks and Stephen Archibald.</p>
2	<p>Minutes of the Previous Meeting and Matters Arising</p> <p>The minutes of the meeting held on the 26 November 2012 were agreed as a correct record.</p> <p>Matters Arising</p> <p>Page 5 – Report on Hate Crime The new Police and Crime Action Plan is currently out for consultation. Link to be circulated to Board Members. Action: Andrew Clark/Sharon Griffin</p> <p>Page 10 – Dignity in Care The Delivering Dignity Action Plan is still in draft form awaiting sign off by the Adults and Family Wellbeing Board. Once the Action Plan has been agreed it will come to the PSDPB for comments. Action: Christopher Reid</p>
3	<p>2012 Olympic/Paralympic Legacy programme for Buckinghamshire</p> <p>Ian Barham, Buckinghamshire Legacy Manager, was welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>Mr Barham explained that he was appointed Buckinghamshire Manager for the London 2012 Games to ensure the county was prepared for the events at Eton Dorney and Stoke Mandeville in 2012.</p> <p>There was an incredible array of success during the Olympics and Paralympics which included;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 30,000 visitors to Eton Dorney• 90,000 residents took to the streets to welcome the Olympic and Paralympic Torch Relay• Over 80% of Buckinghamshire Schools became Members of the Get Set Education Network giving them free tickets to the Games.• The Reactive Bucks campaigns have supported an increase of over 3% in sports participation in the county between 2006 and

2012.

- The Driving Inspiration project is aimed at raising awareness of the Paralympic Games by bringing school pupils into contact Paralympic athletes and disabled artists, working with them to produce a piece of art based on the story of the athlete and the artist. To date 500 children have been involved in learning more about the Paralympic Games from 20 countries

In preparation for the Flame Festival Celebration at Stoke Mandeville on August 28th 2012, Buckinghamshire County Council and Aylesbury Vale District Council worked with BuDS (The Buckinghamshire Disability Service) to undertake the first phase of the Stoke Mandeville Way, a 2.4 kilometre accessible route between Aylesbury Town Centre at Stoke Mandeville Stadium.

Stoke Mandeville is recognised as the birth place of the Paralympic sport and was recognised in the naming of the Paralympic Mascot (Mandeville) and in the creation of the Paralympic Flame.

The next challenge is the delivery of a post games legacy programme. A high level strategic group has been established. Proposed membership includes Adrian Moorhouse (Chairman) and representatives from Bucks County Council, District Authorities, Health and Sports and Voluntary Business Sectors. The group met for the first time in December 2012 to steer the next phase of activity. The programme will be delivered around the following seven operational strategic priorities;

- Co-ordinating the positive use of the Stoke Mandeville Brands and Paralympic heritage
- Driving inward investment, job creation & enterprise – Assisted Living & Healthcare technologies
- Delivering a permanent sporting, cultural and health legacy for Buckinghamshire
- Developing a framework for enhancing volunteering & community support
- Promoting Bucks as a base for major international events and developing a stronger focus for disability sport
- Developing Bucks as an accessible & welcoming destination for visitors
- Continuing to inspire & educate a generation

Strategic priority 1 is the coordination of the positive use and promotion of the Stoke Mandeville Brand and Heritage which includes

- ensuring a link with the International Paralympic Committee (IPC) to secure the Paralympic Flame Lighting Ceremony will be hosted

at Stoke Mandeville for all future winter and summer Paralympic games.

- Relocation of Poppa Guttmann Memorial Statue
- The production of a master plan for Stoke Mandeville Stadium Site redevelopment

During discussion, Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

A member said he was very impressed with the ambition, role models and intentions of the programme. The Paralympics have demonstrated the potential that disabled people have and can achieve with the appropriate support, resources and training facilities. There are role models in other walks of life not just sports i.e. educational setting. Is the programme going to raise awareness and provide support to enable disabled people in other walks of life to achieve their potential and what tools could be provided to benefit training and coaching? One of the primary aims of the programme is to provide a learning resource and support to the disabled residents of Buckinghamshire. The programme will initially focus on sport & culture but will be extended across a range of other services.

Service provision is driving up the quality of new developments and District Council planning policies. A greater concern is private sector building control and how this can be influenced. Are those who are responsible for policy implementation aware of their moral responsibilities etc. In many cases, planning regulations are already in place in Local Authorities and are not always as strongly enforced as they could be. Part of the Action Programme is to get some Development Control Leads together to ensure full implementation of planning policies. Aylesbury Vale is an area of greatest growth in the UK. We need to ensure that standards around disability are not at the minimum but that Aylesbury Vale is seen as an area of best practice.

Has there been user involvement in the master plans and will there be access to these plans. Ian Barham explained that a meeting has been arranged with Andrew Clark, BuDS to discuss who needs to be involved in the programme and key areas where the biggest differences and influence on policies can be made.

The involvement of disabled people is key to this programme. More details are required so that disabled people can be involved i.e. members of the PSDPB, SUCO and other disability organisations in Buckinghamshire. A copy of The London 2012 Strategic Priorities, Key Programmes and Activities (circulated with the

agenda) gives an outline of the initial work programme and framework.

Andrew Clark advised that BuDs has been involved with the Paralympics from the early stages including writing a strategy to address the access needs for disabled people at public events. The strategy was used during the Paralympics but there are still a large amount of problems to address. There is concern that the vision and ambition relies on perception. There are so many potential trip wires which make the vision always fragile. The Buckinghamshire Legacy Steering Group is committed to the programme. It gives the opportunity to be at the heart of policies for Buckinghamshire. There are a lot of resources available to help, share and process information. The challenge is to meet all the needs of people with disabilities.

The Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing expressed concern of possible duplication of work in Buckinghamshire. She explained that she had recently met with Mark Ormerod, Bucks Sport and who appear to have a lot in common (workwise) with the Legacy Steering Group. Ian Barham said that both Mark Ormerod and Roger Fennemore from Bucks Sport are part of the legacy board and that the two workstreams had many complementary objectives.

Is there a central access point of information for disabled people interested in exploring sporting opportunities? Parasport is a national database which has been designed to inspire, educate, inform and signpost disabled people and those interested in disability sport to their nearest resources. The website has the facility to enter their postcode to find a disability friendly sports club in the local area.

www.parasport.org.uk

There also needs to be inclusion at a national level to achieve the time frame set out in the programme i.e. with MP's. Are Buckinghamshire MPs involved are if so how is this being done? An initial meeting has taken place with Carl Etholen, Vice Chairman, BCC, Neil Gibson, Strategic Director, Place and Built Environment, BCC, Chris Kemp, Bucks New University and with David Liddington, MP for Aylesbury to highlight the ambitions of the county and further briefings are scheduled for other MP's. A discussion has also taken place with Tim Hollingsworth, Chief Executive of the British Paralympic Association. Membership of the Government Advisory Board includes the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Chancellor.

Media coverage in other areas of the country is needed to support the programme. A full communication plan is being developed to link with national publications and broadcasters with an interest in this subject.

	<p>The Chairman thanked Mr Barham for his very informative update.</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards / Mental Capacity Act</p> <p>Sarah Pady, Joint Mental Capacity Act Co-ordinator and DoLS Lead, Supervisory Body and Safeguarding office was welcomed to the meeting.</p> <p>Ms Pady began her update by explaining that her post is joint funded by Health and Social Care and is situated within the Local Authority. Part of her role is to look at the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act (MCA).</p> <p>The MCA is now part of legislation/law which came into effect in 2007. It provides a framework to empower and protect people who may lack capacity to make some decisions for themselves. The MCA is applicable to individuals aged 16 years+ when there is a crossover from child legislation to adult legislation.</p> <p>The MCA has five key principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every adult has the right to make his or her own decisions and must be assumed to have capacity to make them unless it is proved otherwise. • A person must be given all practicable help before anyone treats them as not being able to make their own decisions. • Just because an individual makes what might be seen as an unwise decision, they should not be treated as lacking capacity to make that decision. • Anything done or any decision made on behalf of a person who lacks capacity must be done in their best interests. • Anything done for or on behalf of a person who lacks capacity should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms. <p>The MCA is an important piece of future planning for individuals who are unable decisions at certain time.</p> <p>With the process there is a Code of Practice which professionals and those involved with the individual are expected to follow. There is a framework to access the capability of the individual. Within Buckinghamshire Local Authority there is an assessment form developed to document the outcome of a capacity assessment.</p> <p><i>Best Interest Checklist</i></p> <p>Anyone making a decision on behalf of a person they believe to lack mental capacity must do so in that person's best interests. To work out</p>

what is in the person's best interests, the decision maker must:

- not assume the decision should be based on the person's age, appearance, condition or behaviour
- consider if the decision can be postponed until the person has sufficient mental capacity to make the decision themselves
- involve the person who lacks mental capacity in the decision as much as possible
- find out the person's views (current or past), if possible, and take these into account
- consider the views of others, such as carers and people interested in the person's welfare,
- where appropriate, and take these into account
- not be motivated by a wish to bring about the person's death if the decision relates to life-sustaining treatment.

Power of Attorney

Anyone aged 18 or older who has the mental ability to make decisions for themselves can arrange for someone else to make these decisions for them in the future. This can be done at any time. This legal authority is called 'power of attorney'. There are two types of power of attorney – Property and Affairs and Health and Welfare.

If a person does not have capacity to appoint an attorney, then a request can be made to the Court of Protection by family, friends or professionals to be appointed as a deputy.

Assessments are time and decision specific. Each decision is looked at individually at the time. Some people might be able to manage their day to day finances well but they may lack capacity to make decisions in other areas of their life.

The Court of Protection is the final arbiter. If there is a dispute of care i.e. treatment is being withdrawn with which the family does not agree, they can go to the Court of Protection to challenge the decision. The Court of Protection will look at the circumstances of the individual at that time and make a decision based on the best interest of the individual.

A family can also challenge the Local Authority about the provision of local services. The Courts want to see that any issues around care have tried to be resolved locally; however a judge can make an interim decision at any time.

Section 44 of the MCA creates an offence of ill-treating or wilfully neglecting a person who lacks capacity. This applies to anyone helping a person who lacks capacity to make his or her own decisions and also

to deputies and attorneys. If a person is found guilty of ill-treatment or neglect they may face a prison sentence of up to five years and/or a fine. There have been some successful prosecutions in other areas of the County. This provides some degree of safeguarding and protection.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS)

Sometimes, someone will need to go into a care home or hospital in order to get treatment, but will lack the capacity to make their own decisions about whether they want this. In order to prevent people being detained against their will inappropriately, the 'Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards' is part of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, and came into force in 2009.

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards are necessary to protect against unlawful deprivations of a persons liberty. If Health or Social services think that someone you care for needs to be deprived of their liberty in their best interests, and that person lacks the capacity to make the decision about whether they would like to accept services or care. If they are being held in a hospital or care home (which includes private care) and they feel as though they are being deprived of their liberty, DoLS should have been followed. If a Care Home or Hospital believes that they are depriving someone of their liberty, they must follow the DoLS process.

A Care Home can request an independent person to look into the case as and make an assessment as they have been deprived of their liberty and are not free to leave.

The MCA DoLS apply to anyone:

- Aged 18 and over
- Who suffers from a mental disorder or disability of the mind – such as dementia or a profound learning disability
- Who lacks the capacity to give informed consent to the arrangements made for their care and/or treatment

MCA DoLS covers patients in hospitals, and people in care homes registered under the Care Standards Act 2000, whether placed under public or private arrangements.

- The Best Interests assessment must be carried out by someone who is not involved in that person's care or in making decisions about it.
- The assessment must be made by at least two assessors - a best interest assessor and a mental health assessor. The supervisory body appoints the assessors, and they must have appropriate training and experience.

- Referrals for a DoLS assessment can be made via a Local Authority, Hospital or third party.

During the discussion, Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

What is the role of a MCA Advocate? An Independent Mental Capacity Advocate (IMCA) has a key role within the MCA as they ensure that the person's views are represented, regarding decisions about the care and treatment of an individual who does not have any family members or friends to support them. An IMCA must be brought into when an individual is 'unbefriended'. IMCA's can also be used in the safeguarding process to offer support. In Buckinghamshire the organisation PohWER, provides an independent advocacy service. If a DoLS assessment is carried out for an individual who is 'unbefriended' they must have an IMCA to support them through the process.

Does this also apply to those in supported living service or are they supposed to go straight to the Court of Protection. Are Individuals in supported living also entitled to an IMCA? Individuals in supported living can also use an IMCA. If a Deprivation of Liberty occurred in a supported living environment, then the request should be made straight to the Court of Protection.

How are the decisions of those with extreme conditions such as Locked in Syndrome or Motor Neurone Disease managed as they have limited capacity to communicate, how is safeguarding applied and how are decisions made in terms of capacity. This also applies to end of life care. The case may need to go to the Court of Protection as it may not be able to be resolved locally. Clarification is to be obtained.

Action: Sarah Pady

With Locked in Syndrome and other debilitating illnesses there could be issues with Power of Attorney as the individual may not be able to manage physically but can manage mentally as the capacity to make decisions is still there. Part of the MCA is an assessment of capacity to ensure that the decision made is being understood by the individual i.e. communication via eye movement. If there is conflict over the decision, the best place to resolve this would be the Court of Protection. An emergency decision can be made. The Court is the final arbitrator to look at the best interests of the individual.

Who determines who is the decision maker? Legislation identifies the decision maker i.e. the Doctor or Nurse. An individual over the age of 18 years of age is viewed as an adult. Unless there is a Power of Attorney, the Next of Kin should not be involved in the decision being

	<p>made. The Code of Practice supports the MCA and provides guidance to all those who care for and/or make decisions on behalf of adults who lack capacity to make their own decisions.</p> <p>Is it your job to encourage and enforce good practice around those individuals who have the capacity but not the ability to communicate due to medical incapacity? Sarah Pady advised that encouraging and enforcing good practice was part of her role. The MCA also applies to end of life care. If an individual has requested not to be resuscitated but lacks the capacity to make the decision, there should be a consultation with all family members and anyone else involved in the care to come to a Best Interest decision.</p> <p>Ms Pady said that further information about the MCA and DoLS is available on the BCC website and can be accessed via the following links:</p> <p>http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/adult_social_care/planning_for_future.p age http://www.buckscc.gov.uk/bcc/adult_social_care/deprivation_of_liberty _safeguards.page</p> <p>Information leaflets from the Alzheimer’s Society and Age UK are to be circulated with the minutes.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Sharon Griffin</p> <p>Sarah Pady’s advised that she can be contacted by email at: Spady@buckscc.gov.uk</p> <p>Please send any general DoLS/MCA queries for the DoLS team should be sent to DOLS@buckscc.gov.uk.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Ms Pady for her update.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Wycombe District Council’s review of services towards disabled people</p> <p>This item was deferred to the April meeting as Councillor Pollack was unable to attend.</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Department for Work & Pensions - Benefits update</p> <p>Elaine Norris, The Department for Work and Pensions began her update by explaining that from the 8 April 2013 the Government is introducing a new benefit called Personal Independence Payment (PIP)</p>

to replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for eligible working age people aged 16 to 64.

- PIP will be introduced in the North West of the county in April for new claimants. During this period new claimants in all other parts of the country will continue to claim Disability Living Allowance. From June 2013 new claims for Personal Independence Payment will come into effect in the rest of the country.
- The DWP will write to all existing DLA claimants in February and March 2013 with more information about PIP to tell them what their new benefit rate will be.
- Any claimants who have a reduction/disallowance will receive a telephone call from the decision maker asking if there is any further evidence they would like to be taken into consideration.
- From October 2013, if an individual reports a change in how a health condition or disability affects them, they reach the end of an existing award of DLA (and haven't already received a DLA renewal letter), or they are approaching the age of 16, the DWP will invite them to claim Personal Independence Payment.
- All claimants including those who have a lifetime award will be re-assessed for the new benefit (PIP).
- A new appeals process will also come into effect. Cases will initially have to be reconsidered by the DWP following which the claimant can lodge an appeal themselves to Her Majesty's Courts and Tribunal Service.

The assessment criteria for PIP have been finalised. There are 10 Daily Living Activities and 2 Mobility Activities against which claimants are awarded points.

PIP is payable in two rates:

Standard – a score of 8 plus points

Enhanced – a score of 12 plus points

During discussion, Members asked the following questions and made the following comments:

There are currently three rates of DLA – will those on the mid rate lose out? The reassessment is taking place to look at simplifying the process. Consultation has taken place with disability groups and

service users.

How does the criteria of daily living and mobility compare with standard and enhanced payments. Do claimants with high care needs and low mobility qualify for enhanced payment? There are two criteria under mobility. Each criteria is looked at and the claimant is scored accordingly against this i.e. how well they can do things without support.

There is the understanding that there will ultimately be a single payment for all claimants. When will existing claimants migrate to this and is there a handout providing further information. The new single payment is called Universal Credit. Unfortunately there is no handout on Universal Credit as yet.

Is a telephone call the only way of informing claimants of the decision about their benefit? A letter is initially sent from the DWP which will be followed up by the decision maker if there is any disallowance or reduction in benefit.

There are concerns that those with a hearing difficulty would struggle to understand information being relayed to them over the telephone. Text phone is also being used to contact claimants.

Will those with a hearing difficulty receive a note to advise them of this? Yes those individuals with a hearing difficulty will be sent a letter to advise them of this. Alternative ways of communication are also being looked at.

Key concerns are linked to the Appeals Panel Review. There is the worry that there will be a disproportionate representation of medical view and social view and not enough representation in terms of social feedback. There needs to be a fair balance of representation. Decisions are quite often overturned with additional evidence. The Appeals Panel Review is not part of the DWP so it is seen as an independent (court) process.

The process is envisaged as contact being initially made by telephone with straightforward questions being asked such as name, national insurance number, residential checks, place of residence (nursing home or hospital etc). The claim form will be completed and the claimant assessed against the criteria. There is the opportunity for the claimant to say how their condition affects them. Some assessments may be completed at this stage. Most will be asked to attend a face-to-face consultation. A Health Assessor (Atos) is able to give medical advice to help DWP decision makers reach an appropriate decision on entitlement to benefit. The DWP Case Manager reviews the evidence

they've received – including the report from the health professional. They make a reasoned decision on entitlement, level of award and the length of any award. A decision letter is then posted to the claimant. There is a maximum of 70 days for the decision to be made.

Has the assessment guidance and tool been publicised prior to the letter being sent to claimants so they can see the effect of the changes. There has not been any publicity of the assessment guidance and tool. Claimants will be sent a letter and a link to the information on the DWP website.

Could the county do anything to promote awareness of the changes? BuDs are already promoting the changes. They have made a large number of presentations to voluntary organisations in the last 12 months and they continue to do so. There are significant changes to the DLA and PIP but it is difficult to work out what the changes will be. An example is those with uncontrolled incontinence currently receive a higher rate of DLA. With PIP they will have to manage their incontinence unaided as they are not regarded as disabled. Points are only scored if assistance is required.

The context 'unaided' needs to be taken into account i.e. those needing help with a catheter should not be classed as 'unaided'. This has been taken into consideration.

There is also the issue of knowing how to fill the forms in correctly. Part of the role of the DWP is to engage with organisations to prepare them for the ongoing programme and upskill staff. There are 120 pages of assessment criteria which is mainly for those involved in appeals. Leaflets will be issued nearer the time.

DWP need to ensure that information is accessible in a format for all otherwise voluntary organisations could be put in an awkward position.

The DWP are looking at the accessibility of all products.

Can a claimant go to the DWP to talk about the letter they receive? The DWP are looking at all means of access to the claims process including signposting for those with hearing loss.

Link to the Disability Rights UK website to be circulated to Board members.

Action: Andrew Clark

There is concern about lack of recognition of a change to payment. If there is a change to the payment being made, will the claimant receive a text or telephone call to advise them of this The

letter from the DWP advises changes to be made to a benefit from the following month. The DWP will endeavour to try and contact all claimants who will have a disallowance or reduction in benefit due to change to PIP.

How will the process be managed? The DWP will manage the process the same as it does now but they will also try to put safeguarding measures in place.

Individuals with a sensory disability, mental health or learning difficulty may have a problem replying to a letter. The DWP will make follow up calls and reminders will be sent out.

What happens if the change in benefit results in hardship for the individual? Will there be signposting to appropriate services in the letter they receive. The letter from the DWP is notification about a change in benefit. The individual should contact Local Authority if they need extra support

Individuals such as those with a head injury or stroke victims lack awareness of how to carry out tasks such as completing forms. A lot of clinical time is being diverted to help individuals complete forms etc. The form can be completed by a family member or support organisation on behalf of the claimant.

During the initial telephone call will individuals be asked about the format they wish to receive information in – will there be a script to prompt this? Yes the caller will identify any issues of understanding and make a note of this.

Is it possible for an advocacy organisation to complete the forms and how direct are the forms? The forms have been simplified. They are still quite lengthy but the questions are not repetitive. At the end of February there will be a toolkit available on the DWP website and one of the forms will be part of the toolkit.

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/disability/personal-independence-payment/pip-toolkit/about-pip/>

There is concern about the reliance on the internet to find out information as those with a physical or mental disability may not be able to use a computer. There is a working organisation who are able to offer further advice which includes a small team who are able to visit and support the more vulnerable people.

Universal Credit will replace most of the benefits received by those of working age i.e. income support, JSA, Employment and support allowance. When Housing benefit ceases, claimants will be paid on a

	<p>monthly basis to replicate salary. There is the element of getting used to working within this budget accordingly.</p> <p>Will Universal Credit be paid calendar monthly. Universal Credit will be paid four weekly. Pilots are being carried out to look at how individuals are managing making payment to their landlords.</p> <p>Will users and carers receive a list advising how much they are receiving for each element of their benefit? The benefit will give details about personal allowance and rent etc. Benefits have been capped so that individuals are not better off claiming benefits rather than being in work. Universal Credit should have been introduced in April but this has been delayed. A pilot is currently taking place with London Authorities as more people are affected in the London area by the benefit changes. The Government announced an intention to cap total household benefits. The cap will be based on average earnings (after tax and National Insurance) of working families – £500 a week for couples (with or without children) and single parent households, and £350 a week for single adults.</p> <p>Many households will be exempt from the cap including all households which include someone receiving a disability-related benefit: (Disability Living Allowance / Attendance Allowance / Personal Independence Payment / Industrial Injuries Benefit / support component of Employment & Support Allowance).</p>
<p>7</p>	<p>National Benefits update (standing item)</p> <p>Andrew Clark explained that BuDs has been involved for a while with issues arising from the proposed changes to benefits. There has been some alarm at the size and number of changes proposed as taking place this year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A corporate County-wide response to the benefits changes has been encouraged as the change to income via benefits will have a knock on effect to Social Services etc. Bucks County Council has now set up a Task and Finish Group to look at the effects of the changes. Meetings of the group have taken place and the outcome has been reported to the Bucks Network. The residual budget has been tapped and a leaflet will be produced explaining the changes. This leaflet is designed for use by all front line staff in organisations across Buckinghamshire as well direct to residents to explain the changes. There will also be a publicity campaign via posters and email to try and increase awareness. • BCC have commissioned an excellent report entitled ‘Welfare Reform: Figures at a Glance’ which gives a detailed statistical analysis of benefits claimants in Bucks, including disabled people

and jobseekers.

- National changes and Local Authority changes to Council tax benefit, and changes in the NHS will impact on vulnerable households at the same time. A cumulative impact assessment looking at the overall impact these changes will have on particular groups such as disabled or older people is being prepared by BCC with wide input, including from BuDS.
- Funding has been obtained for a programme of training for front line staff in the voluntary sector about benefit changes.
- There is a new information section about the benefits reform on the BCC website;
<http://www.bucksc.gov.uk/bcc/community/benefits-changes.page>
- Community Impact Bucks are carrying out finance literacy training for households that are affected by the changes i.e. benefits being paid to individuals in a lump sum.
- Main concerns are those individuals with a disability and households where there is a disabled person who currently receives a low rate of DLA care and/or mobility – there is a strong possibility of these individuals losing their benefit entirely. The ‘middle rate care’ claimants are also in the danger zone.
- The new disability benefits system is designed to support only with high support needs or severe disability. The current disability benefits model provides support to a much broader range of disabled people – this will change drastically after 2013.
- BuDS continues to increase awareness of the changes to benefits. The cumulative impact is now their main focus. Information workshops for individuals are also planned.

During discussion, Members asked the following questions and made the following points:

One of the biggest areas of concern is the possible loss of budget for Council Tax from the Government through non payment of council tax by individuals. The PSDPB needs to highlight this issue for the budgets next year.

Is there any protection for those who could have an unreasonable judgement made against them? Elaine Norris said that exceptions will be taken into account and the possibility of paying landlords directly is being looked into. The DWP are funding a Direct Payments Project to look at how to manage this.

BuDs are encouraging the production of a vulnerability index which includes details on accessibility circumstances and the grading of vulnerability. It would be good to have this information in the local

	<p>community to be able to see if those who are disproportionately affected and for support to be available in a crisis.</p> <p>The County Council has produced a leaflet to make sure that advance notice is given to organisations affected by the new initiative i.e. disability organisations and to enable changes to be made within their own organisations to prepare staff and websites etc</p> <p>There are increasing problems in Healthcare as more and more people are in financial crisis. Will staff be upskilled to be able to deal with this? Will seminars be provided? BuDs have made a presentation to the Clinical Commissioning Groups about the changes. The pressure on the Healthcare system has been recognised. This will be taken up at the next meeting of the Working Group.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Andrew Clark</p>
<p>8</p>	<p>Dignity in Care (standing item)</p> <p>Paul Rogerson, Cabinet Spokesperson – Health and Wellbeing advised that there were 100 attendees at a recent Dignity in Care day held in Buckinghamshire. Dignity in Care has been recognised as an increasing issue that needs to be addressed.</p> <p>The Older Peoples Champions Forum is trying to develop a Dignity in Care Standard. There are currently 400 Dignity in Care champions. The aim is to increase this number to 700.</p> <p>The main issue is how to use the Dignity in Care elements which are not being applied properly. The overarching question is how patients feel and look after their stay in an establishment. Did they feel safe, were their needs met and were they called by an appropriate name. There needs to be a contract in place to measure Dignity in Care Standards. There are more details to emerge.</p> <p>During discussion, Members made the following comments:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Dignity in Care message needs to be strongly applied • Health needs to be accountable • Professional behaviour is expected from all <p>Mr Rogerson advised Members that this would be his last meeting as he is not standing for re-election.</p> <p>The Chairman thanked Mr Rogerson for his contribution to the work of the Board.</p>

<p>9</p>	<p>PSDPB Action Plan</p> <p>The action plan is to be updated. A column is to be added to confirm work that has taken place. The action plan will be circulated with the minutes</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Chris Reid/Sharon Griffin</p>
<p>10</p>	<p>Any Other Business</p> <p>Workability website Bucks Business First (BBF) are helpfully and voluntarily helping to try to find a solution to the demise of the Workability website. It is not part of the role of BBF to secure its future. The PCT should be taking the lead. The Chairman will look into this further.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Action: Chris Reid</p>
<p>11</p>	<p>Date of the Next Meeting</p> <p>The next meeting of the Board will take place on Thursday 28 March 2013, 10.30am, Main Hall 2, The Coach House, Aston Clinton.</p>

Chairman

Mental Capacity Act 2005

The Mental Capacity Act 2005 is a law that protects and supports people who do not have the ability to make decisions for themselves. This could be due to a learning disability, or a mental health problem or condition such as [dementia](#). The act applies to people aged 16 and over in England and Wales. It also provides guidance to support people who need to make decisions on behalf of someone else. This factsheet explains what mental capacity is, outlines the key principles (rules) of the act, and looks at how it can be applied when planning for the future.

Northern Ireland has different laws around capacity. People in Northern Ireland should contact Alzheimer's Society's Northern Ireland office and ask for factsheet 472NI Enduring power of attorney and controllership (see 'Useful organisations' for contact details).

The Mental Capacity Act covers important decisions relating to an individual's [property](#), [financial affairs](#), and [health and social care](#). It also applies to everyday decisions, such as personal care, [what to wear](#) and [what to eat](#). It can help support people with dementia, their carers and professionals to make decisions, both now and in the future.

What is mental capacity?

Mental capacity is the ability to make decisions for yourself. People who cannot do this are said to 'lack capacity'. This might be due to illness, injury, a learning disability, or mental health problems that affect the way their brain works.

To have capacity a person must be able to:

- understand the information that is relevant to the decision they want to make
- retain the information long enough to be able to make the decision
- weigh up the information available to make the decision
- [communicate](#) their decision by any possible means, including talking, using sign language, or through simple muscle movements such as blinking an eye or squeezing a hand.

People should be assessed on whether they have the ability to make a particular decision at a particular time. The mental capacity of a person with dementia will fluctuate. As an example, there might be times of the day when they are able to think more clearly.

The five main principles of the act

People who support or make decisions on behalf of someone who may lack mental capacity must follow five main principles:

1. Every adult has the right to make decisions for themselves. It must be assumed that they are able to make their own decisions, unless it has been shown otherwise.
2. Every adult has the right to be supported to make their own decisions ? all reasonable help and support should be provided to assist a person to make their own decisions and to communicate those decisions, before it can be assumed that they have lost capacity.
3. Every adult has the right to make decisions that may appear to be unwise or strange to others.
4. If a person lacks capacity, any decisions taken on their behalf must be in their best interests. (The act provides a checklist that all decision makers must work through when deciding what is in the best interests of the person who lacks capacity ? see below.)
5. If a person lacks capacity, any decisions taken on their behalf must be the option least restrictive to the person's rights and freedoms.

Making decisions in a person's 'best interests'

Anyone making a decision on behalf of a person they believe to lack mental capacity must do so in that person's best interests. To work out what is in the person's best interests, the decision maker must:

- not assume the decision should be based on the person's age, appearance, condition or behaviour
- consider if the decision can be postponed until the person has sufficient mental capacity to make the decision themselves
- involve the person who lacks mental capacity in the decision as much as possible
- find out the person's views (current or past), if possible, and take these into account
- consider the views of others, such as carers and people interested in the person's welfare, where appropriate, and take these into account
- not be motivated by a wish to bring about the person's death if the decision relates to life-sustaining treatment.

Once the decision maker has considered the relevant information, they should weigh up all the points and make a decision they believe to be in the person's best interests.

Planning for the future

Lasting Power of Attorney

The Mental Capacity Act introduced a new type of power of attorney that replaced the Enduring Power of Attorney (EPA). It is known as a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA). An LPA is a legal document. This allows people to choose someone who can make decisions about their health and welfare, as well as their finances and property, if they become unable to do so for themselves. The 'attorney' is the person chosen to make decisions on their behalf.

There are two types of LPA:

- **Property and affairs LPA** ? this gives the attorney(s) the power to make decisions about the

person's financial and property matters, such as selling a house or managing a bank account.

- **Personal welfare LPA** ? this gives the attorney(s) the power to make decisions about the person's health and personal welfare, such as day-to-day care, medical treatment, or where they should live.

For more information, see [factsheet 472, Enduring power of attorney and lasting powers of attorney](#).

Advance decisions

An advance decision allows someone to specify the types of treatment that they do not want, should they lack the mental capacity to decide this for themselves in the future. This may include refusal of life-sustaining treatment. Valid advance decisions are legally binding and must be followed by health professionals, provided the treatment and circumstances set out by the advance decision apply to the situation.

Before the implementation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005, people could already make advance decisions (more commonly known as advance directives or living wills). However, the Act introduced a number of conditions that must be followed when making an advance decision in order for it to be valid. If someone has an advance directive from before 1 October 2007, they should check that it meets these more recent conditions if they want it to remain legally binding ? particularly if it relates to refusing life-sustaining treatment.

For more information, see [factsheet 463, Advance decision](#) (which provides both explanatory information and a form).

Deputies and the Court of Protection

Deputies are appointed to make decisions for people who lack the capacity to do so themselves. This applies particularly in situations where formal arrangements have not been made ? for example, if a person loses capacity and has not set up a Lasting Power of Attorney or an advance decision. A deputy is usually a friend or relative of the person who lacks capacity, but could also be a professional. To become a deputy you must apply to the Court of Protection. Deputies must make decisions in the best interests of the person lacking capacity. These might be about [property](#) or [financial affairs](#), such as redeeming an insurance policy or selling a house.

The Court of Protection also has authority to make official decisions (called orders) about any healthcare, welfare or financial matters.

For complex or ongoing [financial decisions](#) ? or where a series of steps may be needed over a long period ? the court can appoint a deputy to make decisions. Again, the deputy must always act in the best interests of the person who lacks capacity.

The Court of Protection does not usually appoint deputies to make ongoing decisions about someone's health and welfare. These decisions can usually be made in the person's best interests by those providing care and/or treatment. If there is a disagreement as to what is in the person's best interests or the decision relates to specified serious medical treatment, it may be necessary to ask the court to intervene. You do this by applying for what is known as a court order.

Safety measures

The Mental Capacity Act established some significant safety measures:

- **Court of Protection** ? (as mentioned above) a court that can make declarations about whether someone lacks capacity, and can make orders or appoint deputies who can act on behalf of someone who lacks capacity. The court has the final say on most decisions.
- **Public Guardian** ? a public official whose duties include registering Lasting and Enduring Powers of Attorney (LPAs/EPAs), supervising deputies appointed by the Court of Protection and investigating concerns about the operation of a registered power or deputy. The Public Guardian is supported by the Office of the Public Guardian (OPG).
- **Independent mental capacity advocates (IMCAs)** ? individuals who help people without capacity to express their views and wishes and, if needed, speak for them about the decisions that are being taken on their behalf. IMCAs mainly become involved in decisions about serious medical treatment or the person's long-term accommodation where it is provided by the NHS or a local authority. Local authorities and the NHS can also ask IMCAs to be appointed to help represent the person's views and wishes on decisions that are based on safeguarding the person without capacity, if it would benefit them and be in their best interests.
- **Clear guidelines for research** ? designed for any research involving people who lack capacity. The research must be approved by an appropriate body. This body must also ensure that the research is safe and relates to the person's condition. It must also ensure that the research would be less effective if it involved people who had mental capacity.
- **Criminal offence of ill treatment or wilful neglect of a person who lacks capacity** ? a person found guilty of this offence may be liable for up to five years in prison.

The code of practice for the Mental Capacity Act 2005

The code of practice for the Mental Capacity Act gives guidance on how the act should work on a day-to-day basis. It provides case studies and explains in detail the key features of the law.

The following people have a formal duty to follow the code of practice:

- those working in a professional capacity
- people receiving payment for work dealing with people who lack capacity
- anyone appointed as an attorney under an LPA
- a deputy appointed by the Court of Protection
- someone doing research covered by the act.

Family, friends and other unpaid carers will find it helpful to use the code for guidance when making significant decisions for a person, eg about where they live.

For details of Alzheimer's Society services in your area, visit [alzheimers.org.uk/localinfo](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/localinfo)

For information about a wide range of dementia-related topics, visit [alzheimers.org.uk/factsheets](https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/factsheets)

Useful organisations

Alzheimer's Society

Devon House
58 St Katharine's Way

London E1W 1LB
T 0300 222 1122 (helpline 9am-5pm weekdays, 10am-4pm Saturdays and Sundays)
E info@alzheimers.org.uk
W alzheimers.org.uk

Alzheimer's Society Northern Ireland

Unit 4 Balmoral Business Park
Boucher Crescent
Belfast BT12 6HU
T 028 9066 4100
E info@alzheimers.org.uk
W alzheimers.org.uk

Office of the Public Guardian (OPG)

PO Box 16185
Birmingham B2 2WH
T 0300 456 0300 (customer services)
E customerservices@publicguardian.gsi.gov.uk
W www.gov.uk/office-of-public-guardian

The OPG supports and promotes decision making for those who lack capacity or would like to plan for their future, within the framework of the Mental Capacity Act 2005. The Office of the Public Guardian provides a range of useful information online on the Directgov website, including the Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice.

Court of Protection

Royal Courts of Justice
Thomas More Building
Strand
London WC2A 2LL
T 0300 456 4600 (Textphone 020 7664 7755)
W www.gov.uk/court-of-protection

The Court of Protection helps people who have difficulty making their own decisions. They do this by making the decisions for the person or appointing someone else to do so.

Factsheet 460

Last reviewed: March 2012
Next review due: March 2014

Reviewed by: Caroline Bielanska, Chief Executive, Solicitors for the Elderly and Natalie Melling, Best Interests Assessor, (Mental Capacity Act), Registered social worker and Approved Mental Health Professional (Mental Health Act)

This factsheet has also been reviewed by people affected by dementia.

A list of sources is available on request.

Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline

England, Wales and Northern Ireland: 0300 222 11 22

9.00am-5.00pm Monday-Friday

10.00am-4.00pm Saturday-Sunday

Registered charity no. 296645. A company limited by guarantee and registered in England no. 2115499.



What are the
Mental Capacity
Act 2005
Deprivation of
Liberty Safeguards?



What are the Mental Capacity Act 2005 Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (MCA DOLS)?

Do you work in a hospital or care home that provides care for people who can't make decisions about their care or treatment?

A new system which applies to all hospitals and care homes begins on 1 April 2009.

Some people living in hospitals and care homes can't make their own decisions about their care and/or treatment because they lack the mental capacity to do so. They need more care and protection than others to ensure they don't suffer harm. Caring for and treating people who need extra protection may mean restricting their freedom to the point of depriving them of their liberty.

The European Court of Human Rights has said that the rights of people who can't make decisions and who need to have their liberty taken away in hospitals and care homes must be strengthened. People's liberty should not be taken away if they can be cared for in a less restrictive way.

The MCA DOLS will protect people who can't make decisions about care or treatment, who need to be cared for in a restrictive way. For example, some people who have dementia, a mental health problem or a severe learning disability.

The law says the MCA DOLS must be used if people need to have their liberty taken away in order to receive care and/or treatment that is in their best interests and protects them from harm.

What does the law say hospitals and care homes must do?

For every person living in the hospital or care home who lacks capacity, you should think about the following questions:

- Does the care and/or treatment being provided take away the person's freedom to do what they want to do to the extent that they are being deprived of their liberty?
- Do you believe that the care and/or treatment is in the person's best interests?

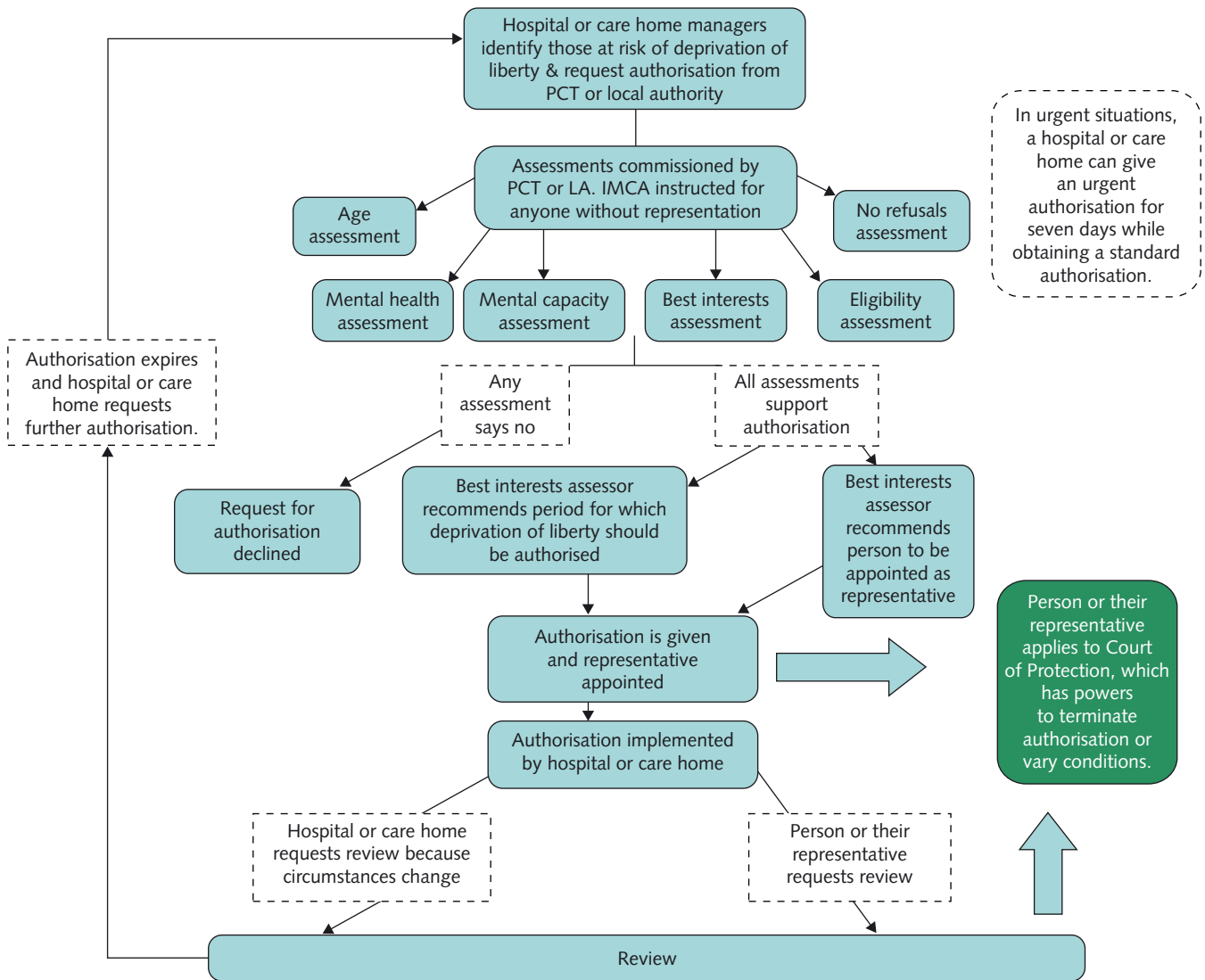
If the answer to these questions is 'yes', you need to ask yourself whether the care and/or treatment could be given in a way which does not take away the person's liberty. If the answer to this question is 'no' and the person cannot be (cared for and/or treated) in any other way, the Primary Care Trust – PCT (for hospitals) or the local authority (for care homes) must be asked to carry out an assessment to decide if it is right to take away the person's liberty.

Not every assessment will result in an authorisation. However, once a person in a hospital or care home has an MCA DOLS authorisation, a representative is appointed to support them and look after their interests.

The hospital or care home (together with their PCT or local authority) must:

- Make regular checks to see if the authorisation is still necessary
- Remove the authorisation where it is no longer necessary
- Provide the person who has an MCA DOLS authorisation and their representative with information about the authorisation and their rights and entitlements

Overview of the MCA DOLS process



If the person deprived of their liberty or their representative does not agree with the decision to deprive them of liberty, the new system gives them the right to appeal against the decision in a court.

When will the system be needed?

The MCA DOLS are for people who are aged 18 and over in NHS hospitals, or in independent hospitals or care homes that are registered under Part 2 of the Care Standards Act 2000.

The Government expects that there will be more people in care homes than in hospitals who will have an MCA DOLS authorisation.

The Government thinks that only a small number of people will need an MCA DOLS authorisation.

Before thinking about applying for an authorisation, hospitals and care homes are expected to think about providing care in different ways which avoid depriving someone of their liberty.

Record-keeping

Hospitals and care homes must keep detailed records as part of the MCA DOLS process. To help with this record-keeping requirement, and to make sure the administration of the MCA DOLS systems is as simple as possible, a number of standard forms have been developed for hospitals and care homes as well as PCTs and local authorities. Use of the forms will help ensure that hospitals and care homes do as the legislation requires them to do and keep their records up to the required standards.

Further information about the MCA DOLS

If you want to find out more, contact your local Regional MCA DOLS lead.

Region	E-mail Contact Details	Mobile
Yorkshire and Humber	Bruce.Bradshaw@nimheneyh.nhs.uk	07940 361 335
North East	Pat.Stewart@csip.org.uk	07799 343 356
North West	christine.hutchinson@csip.org.uk	07795 963 519
East Midlands	Robert.Nisbet@eastmidlands.csip.nhs.uk	07824 707 985
Eastern	Joseph.Yow@csip.org.uk	07917 184 109
South East	Keith.Nieland@csip.org.uk	07711 980 057
London	Maggie.Goff@londondevelopmentcentre.org	07932 612 977
	Steve.Chamberlain@londondevelopmentcentre.org	07967 347 764
South West	David.Pennington@csip.org.uk	07799 627 244
West Midlands	Ralph.Hall@csip.org.uk	07825 402 599

Or visit our website at:

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/SocialCare/Deliveringadultsocialcare/MentalCapacity/MentalCapacityActDeprivationofLibertySafeguards/index.htm>

This leaflet is available in other languages and alternative formats on request.

Contact and information details

Post: MCA DOLS Implementation Programme
Unit 124, Department of Health
Wellington House
133-155 Waterloo Road
London SE1 8UG

email: dols@dh.gsi.gov.uk

Information on the new MCA DOLS is brought to you by the following organisations:



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www.dh.gov.uk/publications



**Improvement and Review Commission
Task and Finish Group – Final Report
Services to adults with disabilities in Wycombe district**

Officer Contact:

Ted Piker, Tel: 01494 421261, Email: ted_piker@wycombe.gov.uk

Membership of the Task and Finish Group (TFG)

The following WDC Members served on this TFG

Cllr Brian Pollock (Chairman)

Cllr Julia Adey

Cllr Paula Lee

Cllr Michelle Neudecker

Cllr Matt Knight

Cllr Wendy Mallen represented Bucks County Council

There were also two co-opted members

Alison Lewis is Chairman of both Wycombe Area Access For All and the Bucks Service User & Carer Organisation / Self-Directed Support Service User and Carer Reference Group.

Ian Cormack is Co-Chairman of Buckinghamshire Carers Partnership Board and is Vice Chairman of the Self-Directed Support Service User and Carer Reference Group and is himself a carer.

Meetings and Methodology

The Task and Finish Group held its first meeting on 28 February 2012 and its final meeting on 14 August 2012.

The TFG met with a range of WDC officers and received written reports from the relevant business units at WDC (see Appendix A). The officer specialist support during the course of the review was provided by the WDC Cohesion & Leisure Manager.

As Alison Lewis has an advocacy role that also touches upon a wide range of physical and sensory impairments, the actual meetings of the TFG were opportunities for elected members and officers to be made more aware of the following:

Hearing Loop

The type of hearing loop supplied for the meeting was the sort only suitable for one-to-one meetings. Alison said that personally she would be fine without the loop given the small size of the group, as long as the other members did not look away or have their hands across their mouths while speaking.

Disability Accessible Toilets and Signage

The toilets near WDC reception which are designed for the disabled do not have any signage on the doors to indicate this. The sign on the nearby pillar pointing towards them is all in upper case, and needs to be changed to normal case. Other signs were noticed where the same applies. Laminating notices, unless in matt, causes unhelpful reflections.

Bucks CC support of the review

A countywide perspective for the TFG was made possible by the welcome extended by the two partnership boards most directly connected with the subject area of this review, namely the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board (with participation in two of their meetings by the TFG Chairman – see Appendix B) and the Carers Partnership Board, visited by TFG member Cllr Matt Knight.

Councillors were extremely impressed by the range of both the nuts-and-bolts and the strategic issues being addressed at these boards, whose membership provides an effective interface between commissioners and providers, as well as service user representatives.

Visit to Northampton Centre for Independent Living

Several members of the TFG visited the Northampton Centre for Independent Living where they met with the Chief Executive, the CIL Manager and the CIL Disability Rights & Inclusion Officer.

Appendix C is the write-up of the visit to Northampton

Consultation meeting in Marlow on 24 May 2012

“Improving services to adults in Wycombe district with disabilities”

Appendix D is the report of the meeting in Marlow

Scope of the meeting

To gather insights and narratives from service users and providers, in order to identify areas of improvement in service delivery within Wycombe district.

This invitation was sent to those with physical disability, sensory loss, learning difficulties, and to those with access needs because of mental health or growing older.

Invites were sent to service users included elderly local residents and people with:

- Physical disabilities
- Sensory loss
- Learning difficulties
- Mental health issues

Of those attending, the largest group was ten (10) people with access needs living in Marlow

Members of the TFG expressed their particular appreciation of the attendance by the Chairman of the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board who is also the Joint Planning and Commissioning Manager

Others who attended were representatives of the following:

- Carers Bucks
- Local representative of AGE UK
- Connection (part of Bucks Floating Support)
- District coordinator of befriending service

- Community Occupational Therapist
- Bucks Connect
- Aureus Care
- Cressex Supported Solutions

The following WDC elected members attended and assisted with the event:

- Cllr Matt Knight
- Cllr Brian Pollock
- Cllr Paula Lee

Also attending:

- Alison Lewis, co-opted member of review group
- Sandra Masini, personal assistant to Alison Lewis
- Ian Cormack, co-opted member of review group
- Mrs Viv Pollock
- Ted Piker, WDC Scrutiny Support Officer
- Carolina Lindahl, Engagement Officer, WDC

The meeting focused around two questions which participants were encouraged to discuss in smaller groups of 5-7 people:

- What services are working well?
- What services need to be different or improved so that there is independent living is made more possible?

Appendix D gives the detailed responses to the above questions.

Commitment to a follow up meeting to the Marlow event

Cllr Brian Pollock asked those attending if they would like a follow up meeting in the autumn to be briefed on the recommendations that arose from the meeting and other work of the TFG, as well as how those recommendations were received and any commitments to action that were made as a result. Those assembled gave their enthusiastic support.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The theme of the review was as follows:

Removing current barriers and avoiding future barriers, to enable open access to independent living, in the following key areas: Housing, planning, the built environment, transport, employment, leisure, and information.

At the first meeting of the Task and Finish Group (TFG) it was agreed that many older people experience similar limitations to those more traditionally classified as disabled, in that they too may have needs for enhanced personal care with daily living and for access to transport, particularly to hospitals.

Those with learning disabilities and mental health needs may also have other physical and sensory impairments.

It was agreed to focus more on the specifics of what an individual was, or was not, able to do. Otherwise there was the danger that some could be alienated if their needs were not considered to be within the remit of the group.

The Task & Finish group started with the view that their investigations should be based on the social model of disability and not the medical model thereby ensuring that a holistic view of disability needs was investigated, not just based on a person's medical needs.

People need to access a range of services from a whole range of providers, including WDC. Many services are delivered as cross authority working, presenting partners with opportunities to achieve efficiencies that benefit service users and that can be more cost effective.

What is working well?

At the open meeting held in Marlow on 24 May 2012 (See above section "Consultation meeting in Marlow on 24 May 2012" and also Appendix D) the TFG was able to get an insight into the breadth of provision that is valued by those with a disability.

The following were mentioned when participants were asked what they felt was working well:

Some compliments on advice from WDC on benefits and housing
The operation of Wycombe District Council area offices
Shopmobility
Park & Ride buses
Good access to the Swan Theatre
Extra blue badge parking places on Marlow High Street
The befriending service - fantastic for vulnerable people
Age UK offer (toe nail cutting service, hairdressing and handyman)
Blue Badge parking
Red Cross Transport
Age Concern – good benefit advice and information line.
Marlow 'Town Bus' service
The Hub lunch clubs

Appendix A sets out how WDC services engage with needs of those with a disability, both currently and planned for the future

Some examples from Appendix A are as follows:

Waste collections

Assisted waste collections for residents with disabilities are available, this entails the contractors going onto the property taking the bins to the vehicle and emptying them and then returning to the agreed collection point.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

This grant provides financial aid to any disabled person wishing to make adaptations to their home. These adaptations include - level access showers, ramps and stair lifts.

Website accessibility

We have a website that has been tested for accessibility and are looking to work towards the BS8878 Accessibility standard. Our website is accredited by the Digital Accessibility Centre and has won a national award for website accessibility.

Sports Development

2012 Projects – We actively seek to engage and educate young people through disability sport. Recent examples include the Stoke Mandeville Experience days, run with WheelPower, where over 120 children took part in wheelchair basketball, rugby and a historical tour of the stadium.

Wycombe And District Sports Association for the Disabled (WADSAD) provides facilities (via Handy Cross Sports Centre) for all types of disabilities to engage in sports and social activities.

Progress needed and additional issues raised

As well as its successes, those with a disability still face considerable challenges in being able to access transport, employment and housing, even in the light of training and awareness raising both within the council and by the council (district and county).

Those on the Task and Finish Group who had been involved with the issues for a number of years kept the group informed of the background of previous times that the issues it was exploring had been already been raised and the frustration over slow progress in some areas.

This report updates the reader on the measures in place at WDC and the goals for further improvements

Centres for Independent Living

The WDC Task and Finish Group made a visit to Northampton Centre for Independent Living (CIL) (see Notes from visit attached to this email). The picture of the provision for Buckinghamshire is very different from Northamptonshire/Bedfordshire. Bucks CC (in consultation with districts) has decided to focus much more on a locality basis (to establish 6 locations across the county) for the provision of day opportunities. As well as offering a range of activities, also on hand in Bucks will be information about how to access other service provision.

This is a different approach to the Northampton CIL where there is the space to have on-site a range of specialist equipment and adaptations, and where staff with a disability act as advisors to, and advocates for, others with a disability.

In addition to the above Buckinghamshire day opportunities, service users and of course Bucks CC itself, would like to see a replacement of the provision at the previous independent living centre. The understanding of the TFG is that this is very much a work in progress at the time of the writing of its report but would like to emphasise its view that the provision of information and advocacy provided at the Northampton CIL was highly desirable and meant that there is currently a differential in the provision that a disabled resident of Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire could receive compared to a Buckinghamshire resident.

The role of the WDC access function

The role of the WDC access function changed in 2004 from a developmental role a compliance role. This was at the time when changes in legislation took out from the planning application arena all but a building's access route. Another factor in the change of role was that matters controlled under Building Regulations are not material planning considerations and cannot be taken into account when determining a planning application.

The TFG felt that the original combination of legislation and specific disability advice at the planning application stage (usually before the detailed design work for the building had been completed) had been very valuable and resulted in many positive changes to building design. There were also benefits to other WDC services (in addition to the Planning Service) and on occasion elected members, who made good use of that officers knowledge of the obstacles to independent living faced by those with a disability.

Nonetheless, legislation has changed and WDC had to respond to those changes. The function now resides within Building Control, whose role primarily is to check applications for compliance with the building regulations.

Marlow Post Office

The relocation of post office provision to the location on Institute Road, unlike the previous facilities, does not make provision for wheelchair access nor can the inside be reached by some frail elderly. The TFG believes that this inevitably creates a differential between the able and the disabled. It also believes that there are valuable lessons to be learned by the partners and organisations involved.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendations to Cabinet

Some of the recommendations may have financial implications and WDC Cabinet will need to consider whether there is funding available.

The Equality Act 2010 makes reference to public authorities considering the adverse impact on groups protected by the general equality duty. See Legal Implications set out at the start of the report.

Accessible Housing

Recommendation 1

The needs of those with a disability that are referred to in sections 35 and 50 (see note at foot of recommendations) of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) Department for Communities and Local Government) to be incorporated in the Local Plan review

Recommendation 2

For residential properties, targets to be established for

- Improvement of number and size of parking spaces that are wheelchair accessible
- Numbers of new houses built to disability access standards
- Numbers of existing properties brought up to disability access standards and Lifetime Homes standard

Recommendation 3

Increase the maximum Home Independence Grant from £500 to £1,000, within the current total budget, whilst seeking to maintain a balance between the range of improvement works eligible and the total number of applicants who can benefit

Recommendation 4

Within a timescale appropriate to available resources:

4a Establish an accessible housing register that captures data so that suitable properties can be matched with the clients' needs

4b Produce an update on the proportion of social housing that has wheelchair access

4c Review how the current WDC Choice Based Letting scheme is working for those with a disability (to include feedback from clients)

4d Review the current policy of who can be given accessible properties: Can greater flexibility be introduced based on needs as well as age?

Accessible Public Toilets

Recommendation 5

Increase number of wheelchair accessible toilets and more publicity about this

Recommendation 6

Where wheelchair accessible toilets are external to other buildings these should all be RADAR-key only accessible to reduce risk of vandalism

New sports and leisure centre

Recommendation 7

Seek advice of disability access specialist at each stage, with particular attention to be given to:

7a Inclusion of a high dependency toilet and changing room, built to standard of www.changing-places.org

7b Sufficient blue badge parking bays. Enforcement of abuse of spaces

7c Signage

7d Push buttons at wheelchair height to open doors

7e Door widths for scooters

Access to information

Recommendation 8

Appendix D as disability guidance notes covering Making Written Information Accessible, Dietary Requirements, Selecting a Venue, and Accessible Venues in Wycombe district
The above guidance notes were created by:

Wycombe Area Access for All

Wycombe District Council

Bucks Vision

on behalf of the Wycombe Partnership. The Partnership accepted these in 2006 and 2007 with commitment to adopt them.

The recommendation is that Wycombe District Council updates the guidance and implements it throughout all services of the Council.

Recommendation 9

WDC services provided the TFG with summaries of current provision and planned improvements of how the needs of those with disabilities are being addressed. The recommendation is that these reports are available as a download on the disability page on the WDC website.

Recommendation 10

The Customer Service Centre the CSC is requested to do a disability related mystery shopper exercise, by telephone.

Disability Awareness

Recommendation 11

A member training session to present the TFG report, with a focus on what ward councillors can do to improve the lives of those with a disability, especially in regard to the Disability Facilities Grant. An all member email be sent to identify if sufficient numbers to warrant this (minimum of 10 confirmed member bookings)

Recommendation 12

Run a disability awareness event (special goggles, wheel chairs, etc) and involve local media to participate alongside elected members.

Employment

Recommendation 13

The Skills Centre to explore the potential of a job club specifically focused on the needs of those with a disability, and to pursue the external funding for this initiative as appropriate.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

Recommendation 14

A meeting between taxi drivers and licensing – to seek the help and support of drivers (also include private hire as well as Hackney Carriage). Amongst issues to be raised: Charging, availability (especially during school term times)

Recommendation 15

An advice note to be placed on the disability page on the WDC website that, when using Hackney Carriages, passengers should expect the driver to only start the meter once they are ready to commence the journey

When using private hire vehicles, before starting the journey, passengers should seek confirmation of the price that was agreed when the vehicle was booked.

Publicising the report

After the report has been to both the Improvement and Review Commission and WDC Cabinet:

Recommendation 16

Offer the report to Bucks CC (Overview & Scrutiny and Health Scrutiny) and to other districts within the county

Publish report on the Centre for Public Scrutiny website

Recommendations to Bus Companies

The Task and Finish Group acknowledges the progress that has been made by local bus services to improve both the upgrading of the fleet for wheelchair/scooter access and the access to disability relevant timetable information

Since making the publication of the report, there has been a response to Recommendations 17 through 25 from Transport for Buckinghamshire, so this release of the report includes those responses alongside the original recommendation.

Recommendation 17

The TFG would like to see improvements over time in the following areas, with the aim of achieving consistency of disability access on all routes

Recommendation 18

More stops to have access for both wheelchairs and scooters

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

Most low floor buses have ramps or can kneel at stops, though both the operators and ourselves recognise that, despite driver training, there are still some drivers who are not always using this facility appropriately. We are working with them to address this. We also recognise that infrastructure improvements such as hard-standing at rural stops, raised kerb heights etc would be of benefit at a number of stops. However, we are in a climate where budgets are being steadily reduced and we do not have a dedicated capital budget for these types of works currently. We are though, bidding for dedicated funding for this area of work in our current business planning process. It is also possible for any specific problem locations to be made the source of a bid for funding through the Local Area Forum.

Recommendation 19

A smaller bus is needed that can go up the slope to directly outside Wycombe Hospital main entrance.

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

The incline leading to the hospital entrance is a recognised issue. However, it is difficult to resolve without funding for a dedicated shuttle vehicle, and even then, there is the question of who this would serve and/or how it would connect to the rest of the bus network. When this has been tried previously, as with the cressexpress service, the service proved unsustainable partly due to the size of the bus. A taxi shuttle that operated from the bus station for a number of years had to be withdrawn due to lack of use.

Recommendation 20

All buses between Wycombe Hospital and Stoke Mandeville, and also to Amersham Hospital and Wexham Park Hospital, to meet the needs of those with a disability

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

The vehicles used on these routes are already low-floor, easy access buses. We recognise that there are issues over the location of the stops, particularly for High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville and are working with the Hospital Trust over these. It must be borne in mind however, that Wycombe Hospital is very difficult to serve directly by bus, as per the response to recommendation 19, and Stoke Mandeville, though very well

served by Red Route 9 from Aylesbury, would require an unacceptable diversion for passengers on Line 300 for buses to get much closer to the hospital entrance.

Recommendation 21

In the roll out of accessible vehicles, prioritise areas of greater social housing and lower car ownership

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

The County Council already specify accessible vehicles when tendering new services. On routes operated commercially, which account for the vast majority of bus services, the vehicle choice is entirely in the hands of the bus operators. However, after considerable investment in recent years by the operators, most buses in Buckinghamshire are now low floor, accessible vehicles and this includes all Carousel buses and all but 14 Arriva vehicles. In addition, legislation will mean all single deck buses are accessible by January 2016 and all double deckers by January 2017.

Recommendation 22

Better access to information about timetables for those who do not access the internet, and clearer information on the internet

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

We strive to ensure our Internet information is clear and accessible, and the Transport for Buckinghamshire Service Information Centre has won awards for this. We would welcome any specific comments as to how we could further improve the clarity of information.

We also produce comprehensive timetables in booklet form (also available in large print) that supplement the operators own publications. These are distributed widely across the county and we have a comprehensive network of distribution channels. Also, most bus stops have a printed timetable or electronic display. A recent national survey has ranked us 6th in the country for resident's satisfaction with Passenger Transport information. Again, we would welcome any specific details of how we could improve the information we produce within our budget.

Recommendation 23

Real time information in accessible format at bus stops. Take into account the needs of wheelchair users when setting the heights of the data boards, the effect of sunlight reflecting off the boards and the provision of audible announcements for those with visual impairment.

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

We will try to take more account of this need when locating displays. Our 'Ibis' real time display units already have audible timetables, but unfortunately the current range are not very user friendly, requiring pre-knowledge of exactly where to press the screen to get the audible display. We are working with the company that designs the units to resolve this for the next generation of display, and we are also trialling a retro-fit solution for the current ones.

Recommendation 24

The website Next Bus tells you which routes and which stops have wheel chair access, which is commendable. However times are given as number of minutes from the starting point of the route to the bus stop you want to use, making it complicated to work out in some cases.

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

The real time display gives the number of minutes the bus will take to get to the stop you are looking at, not the time from the start of the route. If the bus is not being tracked, then the display shows the scheduled arrival time.

Recommendation 25

Additional publicity needed on new arrangements for scooter users

Response from Transport for Buckinghamshire

We will liaise with the bus operators to clarify what wording they would like us to use and incorporate in any new publications as appropriate.

Note to Recommendation 1

National Planning Policy Framework - March 2012
Department for Communities and Local Government

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/2116950.pdf>

35. Plans should protect and exploit opportunities for the use of sustainable transport modes for the movement of goods or people.

Therefore, developments should

- be located and designed where practical to accommodate the efficient delivery of goods and supplies
- give priority to pedestrian and cycle movements, and have access to high quality public transport facilities
- create safe and secure layouts which minimise conflicts between traffic and cyclists or pedestrians, avoiding street clutter and where appropriate establishing home zones
- incorporate facilities for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission
- vehicles; and consider the needs of people with disabilities by all modes of transport.

50. To deliver a wide choice of high quality homes, widen opportunities for home ownership and create sustainable, inclusive and mixed communities, local planning authorities should:

- plan for a mix of housing based on current and future demographic trends, market trends and the needs of different groups in the community (such as, but not limited to, families with children, older people, people with disabilities, service families and people wishing to build their own homes)
- identify the size, type, tenure and range of housing that is required in particular locations, reflecting local demand;
- and where they have identified that affordable housing is needed, set policies for meeting this need on site, unless off-site provision or a financial contribution of broadly equivalent value can be robustly justified (for example to improve or make more effective use of the existing housing stock) and the agreed approach contributes to the objective of creating mixed and balanced communities. Such policies should be sufficiently flexible to take account of changing market conditions over time.

Appendix A

How WDC services engage with needs of those with a disability, both currently and planned for the future

Environment

Parking – Off Street car parks

- Disabled bays with extra room are provided in our car parks
- People with disabled badges can also use any bay within the car park. Carers and personal assistants are covered when accompanying the badge holder.
- Enforcement – Genuine disabled badge holders are provided all assistance and extra help if badges have expired or incorrectly displayed to avoid sanctions.
- Blue badge abuse is reported to the badge issuing authority to protect the disabled badge system integrity.
- We are investigating new technology in streamlining parking systems and control for car parks and disabled issues will be evaluated and considerations explored regarding future options.

Assisted waste collection

Assisted waste collections for residents with disabilities are available, this entails the contractors going onto the property taking the bins to the vehicle and emptying them and then returning to the agreed collection point, this is known as a “collect and return service”.

Public toilets

Toilet sites are available with facilities for disabled throughout the district although not all sites have this access is by use of radar key.

Private sector housing team

The Private Sector Housing team in the Environmental Services division engages with people with disabilities, including children, and the elderly by providing information, advice and assistance by ensuring that they can gain access to and facilities within their home.

Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG)

There is a mandatory statutory duty placed on the council to provide financial aid by way of a Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG) to provide adaptations to homes occupied by disabled people. These adaptations include Level Access showers, ramps and stair lifts. This assistance is ‘means tested’ (except for children) to ensure that the most vulnerable are not disadvantaged. Each DFG is to a maximum of £30,000

Any proposed works must be supported by Bucks County Council Occupational Therapy Service (the Welfare Authority) confirming that the works are necessary and appropriate to meet the disabled person’s needs. Wycombe are then required to determine whether the works are Reasonable and Practical.

A county wide group, comprising of Aylesbury Vale D.C., Chiltern D.C., South Bucks D.C., Wycombe D.C., Occupational Therapy Service, and the larger Registered Providers meets quarterly to exchange ideas, information and best working practices to ensure that there is a consistent and joined up approach throughout the county. A protocol has been agreed and implemented ensuring that all parties are aware of the others responsibilities.

With the constant realignment of services and staff the group has been able to mitigate any shortfalls by reviewing the working practices.

At the operational level good working relations are in place with the Occupational Therapists so ensuring that the disabled person needs are identified and met as soon as possible.

These DFG's have been in this form since 1989 when 'means testing' was introduced. The works are funded by a yearly contribution from Government (£482,000 for 2011/12) and from the councils capital funds (approx £409,000 for 2011/12). We have yet to be informed of next years (2012/13) allocation from Government but the council have provisionally agreed a five year programme of £800,000/£805,000 which will include any allocation. It should be noted that within this total other assistance may be funded e.g. Energy efficiency works

There has been no notification that the DFG mandatory requirement will be altered although we have been advised that the way the Government calculates their allocation to Councils may be reviewed.

Within the system there is approx £390,000 committed with a potential spend of approx £800,000 within the system.

Home Independence Grant

We are also able to help disabled people quickly with small works to their homes to enable them to be discharged from hospital quickly or indeed stop them being admitted. An example was to replace the shag pile carpet with laminated flooring to allow a disabled person to propel their wheelchair.

At present the limit is set at £500 but consideration is being given to increasing this to £1,000. This form of assistance is financed from the £800/850,000 mentioned above.

Flexible Home Improvement Loan

Wycombe is a founder member of a consortium of 15 Local Authorities that has successfully bid to Government for funding to help elderly (over 60 years of age) homeowners to carry out improvements works to their home. This assistance is in the form of an equity loan at a competitive interest rate

The original bid was for £14m some two/three years ago. There has been no indication that any of this monies will need to be returned, in fact additional monies for another project has been successfully bid for. This money will be available until spent but as it is a loan the balance of the fund should increase in the longer term.

Property Services

Property Services interact with providing services for people with disabilities in three areas:

Estate Management

This is the management of the investment property estate. There are occasional requests from groups representing or supporting people with disabilities to lease or acquire properties. These are considered sympathetically alongside our duty to obtain best price reasonable obtainable for our income generating portfolio. The team are also involved in adaption of properties for access and use by people with disabilities, either by giving Landlord's consent or instigating adaption work at a tenant's request

Facilities Management

This service manages and maintains the Council's operational property. A budget is held to allow adaption of public buildings for disabled people's use based on access audits carried out in conjunction with the Council's Access Officer. The team work with other Council departments, mainly Community, to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are accounted for in any work done. Recent examples are the adaption of lifts at WDC and the Swan MSCP to comply with the latest recommendations on disabled access.

Major Projects

The needs of people with disabilities are taken into account in the development of major projects. This is done through the initial public consultation exercise as well as direct contacts with representative groups. Final design is also scrutinised during the planning process to ensure compliance with legislation.

Homes and Housing

In terms of strategic housing and enabling, the District Council's Housing Service has supported funding bids to the Homes and Communities Agency by Registered Providers for the development of supported housing for people with disabilities – programmes in partnership with Buckinghamshire County Council. The Housing Service also continues to engage with Steve Goldensmith at Buckinghamshire County Council regarding supported housing issues.

The Housing Options team works closely with the County and other professionals to identify the needs of clients in order to make an appropriate allocation to the client. All applications to the housing register are welcome and each individual will be assessed on their needs

The allocation of social housing is made to enable the applicant to be able to live independently, sometimes with support which is often provided through a care package.

As long as the Council has a statutory duty to maintain a housing register, we envisage that we will be working more in partnership with others as there will always be vulnerable people in need of housing who need help to find suitable accommodation.

Democratic Legal and policy Services

Communications

We have a website that has been tested for accessibility
Our publications are available in large print.

Democratic Services

Councillors are entitled to claim for carer allowances.

We do make specific arrangements for meetings when requested, for example, sign-language interpreters have been used in the past.

Community Services

Community Safety

Community Safety is a service dealing with crime, disorder and Anti Social Behaviour. Work is delivered in Partnership. We offer the same approach to all people.

If we had a request for anything special we would investigate and provide an alternative approach if appropriate.

CCTV

This service undertakes monitoring public space CCTV. Operators will respond to help point calls and assist all members of the public.

Operators will 'keep an eye' on any one who appears to be struggling for whatever reason to ensure we protect these individuals - this may include people with a disability but will also include people who are temporarily less capable of looking after themselves through drink or drugs.

Equalities

Support to members of the public with disability related issues. (If they phone or use the equality mailbox).

Advertising of external organisations and their events via WySpace and the internet (NAS mainly, but others are included in the Equality Framework).

Overseeing of projects, policies etc via Equality Impact Assessments, working to ensure that the 3 aims of the Public Sector Equalities Duty are met.

Grants

There are no organisations in receipt of small community support grants that specifically supply services to people with disabilities and their carers. Of the large revenue grants, there are 5 organisations:

- Age UK Bucks
- HW Citizens Advice Bureau
- Community Impact Bucks (indirectly through organisations they assist)
- Shopmobility
- Dial a Ride

LEISURE CENTRES

Automatic entrance doors at all leisure centres

Wycombe Sports Centre

Facility - Access ramp, Lift, a section of low counter for Wheel Chair Users, Disabled toilet / changing area. Disabled pool side hoist

Activities

WADSAD – meets alternate Sunday evenings using a variety of facilities

Horizons – club meets weekly

Around 35% discount for specific groups

Discount – Leisure Card (depending on circumstances). Carers swim free. Disability Swim charged at standard discount rate.

Court Garden Leisure Complex

Facility - Access ramp at CGLC to Court Garden House allows access to Leisure Complex. Rear of Centre via Higginson Park through to Café ramp does not conform to DDA compliance.

Evacuation chairs. Fire doors held open on magnets to assist access.

Disabled pool side hoist. Lift.

A section of low counter for wheel chair users

Disabled toilet / shower facilities

Activities

Discount – Leisure Card (depending on circumstances). Carers swim free. Disability Swim charged at standard discount rate.

PHAB – disability social club meets weekly

Risborough Springs Swim & Fitness Centre

Facilities – One level throughout building.

Disabled toilet / shower area / changing area

A section of low counter for Wheel Chair Users

Poolside hoist

Activities

Discount – Leisure Card (depending on circumstances). Carers swim free. Disability Swim charged at standard discount rate.

Carers free on most activities. Disability Swim Session

Wycombe Resource Zone

No ramp access – although wheeled entry is possible through main door
Volunteers include people with disabilities

Woodlands Service

Volunteers and sessions are accessible. Links to local organisations exist to run regular weekly sessions with adult social care. Work with the pupil referral unit.

Access points into woods have mobility friendly gates and paths are made as accessible as the landscape will allow and this includes increasing the number with steps on very steep sections.

HALLS AND COMMUNITY CENTRES

Reggie Gove Centre

Automatic front door
Accessible ground floor and toilet

Small lift to first floor with limited access to first floor

Guildhall

Automatic front door

Accessible toilets

Lift to first floor

Castlefield Community Centre

Automatic front door

Accessible toilets

Museum

- We have sloping paths and ramps to the front door and to all learning and exterior store spaces
- All ground floor doorways sufficiently wide for wheel chair use
- Full equipped disabled accessible WC internal to the museum
- Steps are all equipped with handrails and are gently pitched; flood lit in evenings
- Car park has a dedicated disabled parking space
- Signposted drop off point part way up driveway allows wheel chair users to disembark to use long sloping path to front
- Induction loop available to carry around for use with AV aids in gallery
- Stairs to first floor have yellow nosings and double handrails; every attempt has been made to investigate means of providing direct access to first floor for walking impaired visitors and the current plans for relocation of the museum arise in large part because of the impossibility of making sufficient alteration to the building to accommodate his need.

- Reminiscence boxes were prepared during 2010/11 for use with elderly groups in care home or other settings
- The Informal Learning team remains responsive to all invitations to develop events of possible special interest to disabled individuals or groups; the current lottery bid will also target activity and events on such groups
- Redevelopment of the museum following the HLF bid will provide comprehensive new facilities to extend the use of induction loops, alternative means of communication such as QR panels, sound guides and feelie tours

Health Promotion

Support Movers and Shakers project with partners.

Support local Older Persons Action Groups and have representative on Older Peoples Partnership.

Two Health Fairs run annually.

Green Space

Kingsmead, The Rye, The Cemetery and Gossmore Rec Ground

We have several changing rooms with disabled shower areas including Shelley Recreation Ground, The Rye, Hazlemere and Kingsmead.

We also provide items of play equipment suitable for disabled access across our sites.

Several of our recreation grounds also have disabled parking bays.

Arts Development

The Arts Development service is a district council responsibility but works closely on projects in partnership with other local authorities in Buckinghamshire through joined up working. In our arts project planning we assess the needs of all service users including people with disabilities.

Examples:

- 1) In consultation with our Access Officer we work with operators of our Arts buildings such as Wycombe Swan and Arts4Every1 to help them to meet the physical and programme needs of disabled people. We require reporting on this either through client/officer meetings or through performance indicators. In the case of Wycombe Swan we have DDA works programme.
- 2) For our one-off arts projects, in consultation with other providers, we do risk assessments which integrate the needs of all our service users including people with disabilities
- 3) We advise when requested by 3rd party arts organisations that wish to engage specifically with people with disabilities in their projects either in consultation with our Equality Officer or through knowledge of providers

Arts Development service engages as follows:

- Devised in partnership with other Buckinghamshire local authorities (Creative Bucks) a 3 year project which brought inward investment to Buckinghamshire from Arts Council and Legacy Trust. In the project called Driving Inspiration* we worked with

Paralympians, disabled artists, and disabled and non disabled students at Cressex School.

- We require Wycombe Swan to report on how its management is addressing access. DDA is an agenda item in each Wycombe Swan quarterly client officer mtgs. And in 2010/11 we carried out refresh works which included works to enable the building to be DDA compliant where it hadn't previously.
- Art at the Shelter project with Wycombe Museum and Wycombe Homeless Connection is working with a number homeless people that have mental health issues.
- Working with Signdance Collective (disabled dance organisation based at Bucks New University in Wycombe) which includes ensuring they are part of the development of Arts4Every1. Signdance Collective regularly performs at the Arts4Every1 centre.
- With local artists targets specialist groups. A local artist runs weekly art sessions with Wycombe Mind and we have contracted her to work on the Art at the Shelter project with us.
- With Garsington Opera who want to target Special Schools in setting up their Community Opera Group

The above examples are typical of work done and similar will be done in the future because the Arts is an area that can engage very well with people with disabilities

Sports Development

Holiday Activities – All holiday activities advertised are through local sports clubs, the vast majority of which are accessible for people with disabilities

2012 Projects – We actively seek to engage and educate young people through disability sport. Recent examples include the Stoke Mandeville Experience days, run with WheelPower, where over 120 children took part in wheelchair basketball, rugby and a historical tour of the stadium. We have also commissioned work to Ian Rose, the 5 time Paralympic Judo Competitor, who will deliver visually impaired judo sessions to over 600 Secondary School children.

Grants – Our sports grants, individual grants and Sir Steve Redgrave grant schemes are all available to disability groups, providing they meet the criteria in the application forms.

Sports Awards – Our sports awards, due to start in 2012, will be open to disability groups for all categories (including coach of the year, volunteer, young volunteer, project, club and the lifetime achievement award).

Coach Education – Our coach education booklet, produced with Bucks Sport, incorporates the disability awareness courses but for all courses, we ensure that the venue used is accessible.

Sports Club Development – The Sports Accreditation Award is available to all clubs, including disability clubs or clubs with a disability section.

Active Universities – Working with Bucks New University, all projects are open to all students and community members.

School Games – The competitions are run through the School's with the Sports Development Teams assistance and there are specific competitions for disability groups.

Live Site – The Community Festival on The Rye (August 5th) will be open access with tracked walkways and disabled parking to ensure that all people have equal opportunity to view the big screen or the stage areas.

Bucks Legacy Project – The LOCOG Inspire Marked project, endorsed by Sir Steve Redgrave, has numerous local events and clubs that cater for people with disabilities and are clearly marked within the publication.

Tourism

Princes Risborough Tourist Information Centre (TIC), Marlow TIC & HW TIC

- All offices have sufficient width doors to allow access for wheelchairs
- All office internal layouts have been tested and comply with wheelchair accessibility
- Disabled toilet available at HW TIC only, but there are disabled toilets within a close proximity to other 2 offices.
- We have a 'lower access' counter available at all offices
- All information is displayed at a reasonable level to allow everyone to be able to reach and access it
- All posters we create meet the needs of the DDA using the correct font and colour schemes etc.
- We offer the same service to all visitors no matter what disability they have but will adapt it to suit where necessary.
- Hearing loop available at HW only at present
- Princes Risborough and Marlow offer a wide range of information on disability benefits and other information

Planning & Sustainability

Spatial Planning

District responsibility:

Scope of work

- Planning Policy: production of the Wycombe Development Framework (statutory planning policy for the district), and input to regional planning policy and county/local transport strategy
- Research and Information: monitoring of development, progress with WDF delivery, etc
- Provision of specialist technical advice on conservation, trees, landscape planning, and ecology/biodiversity
- Environmental Co-ordination: corporate work on the promotion of sustainability and drafting of sustainability policy

Current level of engagement and service provision

There is no data/information available that suggests the service is affecting particular groups of people as it impacts on everyone.

Particular efforts are made to promote:

- Checking of all policy wording in the WDF for consistency and that where opportunities for the provision of development / services in line with the seven equality strands, including disability, have been identified, that these are reflected within policies.

There is a requirement to engage/involve all sectors of the community including those which are identified as 'hard to reach'. Experience to date suggests that effective engagement with these sectors remains low.

All leaflets are available in large print upon request.

Future Plans

Consultations are evaluated to determine whether improvements can be achieved in future rounds of consultation for the WDF and other planning policy documents.

The wording in the customer charter for the service will be reviewed to reflect the accessibility to the service for all user groups

Development Management

District responsibility:

Scope of Work

- provision of Planning Regulation Advice,
- processing Planning Regulation applications, consultations and notifications,
- pro-active compliance/ reactive enforcement action,

- pro-active Urban Design, and,
- defend the Council's decisions against Appeals (Public Inquiries, Hearings & Written Representations)

Current level of engagement and service provision

There is no data/information available that suggests the service is affecting particular groups of people as it impacts on everyone. But suitable accessibility is considered for all planning applications.

Extensive public consultation is integral part of the work and Planning Notices are printed on a matt yellow paper to assist those with visual impairment.

Currently legislation enables planning application fees to be reduced for those with disabilities.

The planning web pages have been reviewed and more information is now provided on line.

All leaflets are available in large print upon request.

Future plans

The wording in the customer charter for the service will be reviewed to reflect the accessibility to the service for all user groups

Building Control

District responsibility:

Scope of Work

- To ensure building work complies with the minimum standards of Health, safety and welfare under the Building Regulations (this includes provision for inclusive accessibility)
- Street Naming and Numbering
- Dealing with dangerous structures, demolition

Current level of engagement and service provision

Equalities questionnaire carried out of Building Regulation applicants for several years until 2008 when it was amalgamated with the customer satisfaction questionnaire in 2010. The results do not suggest that people with disabilities are any less satisfied or treated less favourably than non disabled customers.

Where adaptations to buildings for people with disabilities are covered by a Disabled Facilities Grant, liaison between the two departments helps "smooth the process" for the applicant.

Where work is solely for the benefit of a disabled person, the legislation exempts this work from Building Regulation charge.

All leaflets are available in large print upon request.

In circumstances where a person who is elderly and/or has a disability and is unable to access the service adequately whether in person, on the internet or on the telephone, we

can arrange home visits or to another location (eg area office) to discuss the Building Control process and help with forms and give advice.

It is important to note that customers can chose the Private Sector for Building Control and so not all building projects are “supervised” by Wycombe District Council, however, both private and public sector Building Control apply the same Building Regulation requirements

Future plans

Customer survey including equality survey just ended for Street Naming and Numbering service. Results to be examined to identify levels of customer satisfaction and any differing levels of satisfaction from minority groups, including those who have disabilities - further action will depend on the results.

Response will be provided on the government consultation on changes to Part M (inclusive access) of the Building Regulations.

The wording in the customer charter for the service will be reviewed to reflect the accessibility to the service for all user groups

Human Resources, Information & Communications Technology, Customer Services

Monitoring

- The Council monitors the following in terms of age and disability:
 - Recruitment and selection activity
 - Make up of the workforce
 - Access to training and development
 - Incidents of harassment and bullying
 - Benefits and reward
 - Disciplinary and grievance cases
 - Reasons of employees leaving the Council’s employment
- The Council benchmarks itself comparator authorities in terms of the proportion of its employees who are disabled/in management positions
- An employee disability survey is carried out every two years and anomalies addressed individually
- Every three years the Council undertakes an Investors in People formal review where the assessor interviews a cross section of staff across the Council. The assessor collects evidence across various indicators which include equalities

Recruitment

- The Council holds the “Positive about Disabled People” award given by Job Centre Plus to employees who have agreed to take action to meet five commitments regarding the employment, retention, training and career development of disabled employees.
- The recruitment website conforms to web content guidelines. On-line applications allow for wide participation. Applicants may request a hard copy application form if desired. Accessibility checks are made on the format and language of the forms.
- The application process includes a commitment to shortlist disabled people who meet the minimum criteria and allows for reasonable adjustments to the process. Adjustments to premises, equipment or working practices may be made to enable a person with a disability to carry out the work.
- A health check is made on take up of post and any reasonable adjustments required identified and implemented.

Through the lifecycle of the employee

- A range of people management policies help to support protected groups including:
 - Stress management policy
 - Sickness absence and ill health policy and procedure
 - Grievance policy
 - Fair Treatment at Work Policy
 - Equalities and Diversity – Employment Statement
- The Council will make any reasonable adjustments required over the life cycle of the employee. Advice is taken from the occupational health service and from experts such as the British Dyslexia Association as required
- Software provided to support staff with special needs includes screen readers for the visually impaired and voice recognition software for employees with difficulties using the keyboard
- Where possible The Council will aim to retain the services of an existing employee who becomes disabled through adjustments and/or consideration of suitable alternative work and appropriate training.
- Sickness absence is managed in accordance with equality principles. Manager’s identifying any underlying medical conditions will consider reasonable adjustments which can be made, for example changes to working practices, patterns or workload.

Staff Training

- “Valuing Others” diversity training was delivered to all staff between 2008-2010
- Other training available to staff includes:
 - Disability Awareness
 - Deaf Awareness and Sign language
 - Hidden Disabilities Awareness

- Autism Awareness
- Dementia Awareness
- Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults
- Equal Opportunities and Child Protection
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Stress awareness for staff and managers
- Preparation for retirement
- The Council's e-learning system E-Train conforms to disability guidelines and incorporates screen readers for the visually impaired

Building

- There are designated parking bays for disabled people at the front and rear of the building
- The Council's main reception area is wheelchair accessible
- Accessibility guidelines are published for meeting rooms. Many are wheelchair accessible and have hearing loops available.
- A wheelchair platform stair lift allows access to the Council Chamber and the Committee rooms
- Evacuation Chairs are situated throughout the building to allow safe evacuation of those unable to use the stairs in the case of a fire
- Regular access audits are conducted. From these, improvement works are identified and action taken as appropriate. For example the passenger lift in office building C has been equipped with DDA compliant call buttons.

Customer Services Centre

- CSC recruitment policy promotes diversity and equality. The workforce is in balance with the community.
- Customer surveys which include equality data are conducted monthly and findings analysed and reported quarterly. The CSC use Service Mail to record comments, complaints and compliments. Each month these are reported on as part of monitoring Northgate's contract with the Council. Any relating to equalities are monitored by the Community Development Officer and the Strategic Equalities Group.
- Monthly meetings are held with service areas to discuss operational issues, trends and matters arising, these meetings are documented and feedback is formally recorded and logged on a service area specific spreadsheet
- The CSC are part of a benchmarking group and measure performance including diversity against other group members on a quarterly basis
- CSC staff undergo an annual e-learning diversity workshop and assessment
- The CSC offer various adjustments for customers which include hearing loops, a signing officer, visual and auditory announcements for visitors, private interview rooms and a floor walking service

Appendix B

Feedback from the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board meeting held on 26 July 2012

Attended by Cllr Brian Pollock and Ted Piker

During discussion the following comments were received.

Added note:
The following includes points that relate to districts as well as points that refer to Buckinghamshire as a whole

Transport

- Access to transport is poor.
- There is a lack of public transport services where needed i.e. villages.
- There are problems with mobility scooter access on public transport
- Taxis are hard to get and are expensive. Councillor Pollock explained that any new licensed taxi has to have disability access. Comments about the charging structure will be fed back to the relevant department in Wycombe District Council as reports received have been about private hire vehicles.
- A voluntary sector organisation is providing Community Buses in the Risborough area (a registered bus service using volunteer drivers) as the disappearance of bus services in rural areas has multiplied.
- There is the need for real time information about public transport in an accessible format i.e. text messages

Employment

- There is the need for carer friendly and carer supported employment practices
- Respite for carers on a daily or long term basis needs to be provided. The Bucks Connect website signposts to services which provide respite for carers but only three homes cater for young people.
- Young people is an important area to look at as more and more young people are being diagnosed with multiple sclerosis and are on the disability register.
- People need to be educated on how they can access services.
- Young people need to be signposted to services who can give them advice on areas such as match funding and brokerage.
- There is a variable response from employers. What should employers be doing? Councillor Pollock advised that employment was not originally in the scope of the review as the ability to employ a disabled person fluctuates i.e. multiple sclerosis. The review is not about discrimination in particular areas; it is about what is accessible. Elaine Norris advised that The Access to Work programme is a

Jobcentre Plus grant scheme, which assists disabled people who are in paid employment, or with Job/Work Trial, by providing practical support in overcoming work related obstacles resulting from their disability. Access to Work grants will contribute to the additional employment costs.

Housing

- There is a gap in the general housing stock of the delivery of specialist housing. There needs to be closer working with planners and District Councils etc.
- Design standards in housing plans need to be addressed i.e. larger parking spaces and larger front doors.
- There is the need for dedicated wheelchair accessible housing.

Town Centres

- There needs to be an improvement in wheelchair access on paths and pavements. Mobility in general is important.
- A wheelchair can be tilted but a mobility scooter cannot. There needs to be dropped kerbs to accommodate mobility scooters.
- Pavements are very often obstructed by vehicles
- Shared surfaces in the town centre are of concern especially for those with sight impairment

Access to Information

- Access to information on the internet – should there be the provision of a generic service and a specific person/body to contact to give help and assistance.
- Could libraries supply this service for the elderly without a charge?
- Outreach provides excellent services and advice. They can give a good insight into how things work.
- In general the ability to access information is variable. The DWP provide very good support.
- UK Online co-ordinate the network of community based UK online centres across England, which assist people in getting started with computers and the internet.

Appendix C

Notes from Visit to Northampton Centre for Independent Living 28 June 2012

Northamptonshire Centre for Independent Living
Gladstone Road Resource Centre
Gladstone Road
Northampton
NN5 7EJ
Tel: 01604 588501
Website: www.northamptonshirecil.org.uk

Present

Cllr Brian Pollock

Alison Lewis

Sandra Masini

Viv Pollock

Ted Piker

Mick Dillon, Chief Executive, The Disability Resource Centre

Ashley Poulton, CIL Manager

John Smith, CIL Disability Rights & Inclusion Officer

The Northampton Centre for Independent Living is funded from Northamptonshire County Council

Life Choices for Disabled People - Legislation in 2005/2006

By 2010 all first tier authorities should have Centres for Independent Living

They have a user scrutiny panel with 12 trustees

County council role is to promote personalisation

District council role is information and advice led

Due to geographical proximity, some people from Buckinghamshire use the Disability Resource Centre in Dunstable

Further information can be found at www.drcbeds.co.uk Tel 01582 470900

The service delivery at the Northamptonshire CIL is staffed as follows:

1) Information & Equipment Officers

Equipment Service

A Service that facilitates access to technical aids and daily living equipment including demonstrations of low level equipment allowing customers to have more choice and control. The service will also be able to signpost to other local and national sources as well as developing assessable information libraries.

2) Welfare Benefits Officers

Information and Advice Service

A countywide DIAL UK and ADVICE UK accredited independent disability information and advice service to Disabled People, their Carers, family and advisors.

The service will embrace the full breadth of disabilities, including but not restricted to, physical and sensory impairments, mental health and learning disabilities, which are experienced within the county.

3) Carers Information Officer

Enhanced Carers Information Service

A dedicated service within the CIL, which acts as a focal point for free and independent information and advice for Family Carers (i.e. informal Carers) normally resident in Northamptonshire. The service is promoted countywide throughout the CIL Disability Information, Outreach and Welfare Benefits services and facilitates the Carers Voice group.

4) Disability Rights & Inclusion Officer

Disability Rights Service (collective advocacy)

A focal point for Disabled People throughout Northamptonshire to understand their rights and equal opportunities, as well as improving awareness, understanding and respect for Disability People's rights by non-disabled people. The service addresses individual and collective issues where discrimination may prevent access to a service or environment within the community. The Disability Rights Officer also delivers a planned programme of talks and training to a range of stakeholders, service providers and customers.

5) Direct Payment Support Workers

Personal Budget and Direct Payment Support Service

A service that supports and enables Disabled People to take on and employ Personal Assistants

6) Payroll and Holding Accounts Administrators

Points covered in discussion

- A Payroll Service for people employing personal assistants from timesheet to payslip.

- There are 24 members of staff (only few are full time) as well as volunteers.
- There is a good tie-in between equipment advice and welfare advice.
- Although clients are encouraged to use the normal drop-in days, the CIL is very flexible in responding to people coming in on other days.
- It is still a challenge to ensure that people know we are here.
- We provide outreach at public events to promote the service.
- We do home visits.
- There is an equipment user group
- There is a user led organisation for the housing needs of those with a learning disability
- We speak up for those who do not have a voice
- John Smith, Disability Rights & Inclusion Officer who works 16 hours over 3 days said that some clients do not know their access rights or who is their care manager
- John mentioned the five principles for better information for disabled people.
 - 1 Ensure that disabled people are involved from the start.
 - 2 Provide information through a range of channels and formats.
 - 3 Ensure your information meets users' needs.
 - 4 Clearly signpost other services.
 - 5 Always define responsibility for information provision.

Taken from the toolkit for local authorities to help them producing better information for disabled people

<http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/wor/imp/toolkit.pdf>

Appendix D

Consultation meeting held in Marlow on Thursday, 24th May 2012

Improving services to adults in Wycombe district with disabilities

Scope

To gather insights and narratives from service users and providers, in order to identify areas of improvement in service delivery within Wycombe district.

This invitation was sent to those with physical disability, sensory loss, learning difficulties, and to those with access needs because of mental health or growing older.

Invites were sent to service users included elderly local residents and people with:

- Physical disabilities
- Sensory loss
- Learning difficulties
- Mental health issues

Of those attending, the largest group was ten (10) people with access needs living in Marlow

Members of the TFG expressed their particular appreciation of the attendance by the Chairman of the Physical and Sensory Disability Partnership Board who is also the Joint Planning and Commissioning Manager

Others who attended were representatives of the following:

- Carers Bucks
- Local representative of AGE UK
- Connection (part of Bucks Floating Support)
- District coordinator of befriending service
- Community Occupational Therapist
- Bucks Connect
- Aureus Care
- Cressex Supported Solutions

The following WDC elected members attended and assisted with the event:

- Cllr Matt Knight
- Cllr Brian Pollock
- Cllr Paula Lee

Also attending:

- Alison Lewis, co-opted member of review group
- Sandra Masini, personal assistant to Alison Lewis
- Ian Cormack, co-opted member of review group

- Mrs Viv Pollock
- Ted Piker, WDC Scrutiny Support Officer
- Carolina Lindahl, Engagement Officer, WDC

The meeting focused around two questions which participants were encouraged to discuss in smaller groups of 5-7 people:

- What services are working well?
- What services need to be different or improved so that there is independent living is made more possible?

The following comments were made by participating services users and providers during the group discussions:

What services are working well?

- Park & Ride buses – brilliant service, essential that there is free parking (? For blue badge holders?) and a continuation of the excellent circular route if moved to the coachway/leisure centre
- Marlow ‘Town Bus’ service takes people to Maidenhead and High Wycombe and around Marlow. The drivers are very obliging and drop people off at surgeries and near their own house. It’s a very flexible service.
- Dial-a-Ride is good although limited hours
- New leisure centre could have high dependency toilet (with hoist) included
- Sheltered accommodation – the availability of bungalows is good
- Good access to Swan
- Information Office in Marlow-Very useful
- Hub Lunch Clubs – Wednesday
- Movers & Shakers
- The befriending service - fantastic for vulnerable people.
- Age UK Offer (toe nail cutting service, hairdressing and handyman)
- Blue Badge
- Red Cross Transport
- Advice from Council very good re benefits, housing, etc.
- Age Concern – good benefit advice and information line.
- Extra parking places on Marlow High Street.

What services need to be different or improved so that there is independent living is made more possible?

Health, Social and Employment Needs

- Need to keep services at Wycombe Hospital. Amersham & Stoke Mandeville are too difficult to access for disabled.
- Hospital and community health care workers passing jobs to carers
- Concerns over new arrangements for public transport from Wycombe Hospital to Stoke Mandeville
- Lack of referrals by GPs to organisations from GPs
- Day Services by BCC being cut, especially mental health. Can WDC (in partnership) make more facilities available e.g. day centres, drop-in, craft, etc.
- We need a decent lunch club in High Wycombe for vulnerable people – with transport.
- Not satisfied with social housing for the those with a disability and the elderly
- More nursing home care for younger people with disabilities, so not stuck in home with the very elderly
- Improve access to leisure centres
- Holywell Mead – long walk from London Road if coming by public transport

Buses and Taxis

- Taxi services lack of accessible vehicles, need for voluntary code of conduct. Taxis difficult to get on school days
- Need for voluntary code of conduct
- Some drivers reportedly start the meter as they begin to assist the wheelchair user – they should not start the meter until they are ready to depart
- Taxis (Hackney Cab) /Private Hire - There was one example given of a private hire firm charging an exorbitant charge for a return journey in an allegedly accessible vehicle. The electric wheelchair had to be manhandled at the top of the ramp into the vehicle, because the gradient of the ramps was too steep and so it grounded.
- People felt that there should be statutory enforceable regulation on these vehicles both in terms of price and accessibility
- Taxis should be allowed to stop in unauthorised areas to drop off disabled without interference from parking wardens.
- Accessible buses – not frequent enough on all routes.

- One guest complained that Arriva buses don't pull close enough into kerbs to enable more infirm passengers to get onto the bus easily as they should do.

Access to buildings

- A recent example was given of the conversion Sainsbury's had undertaken in Marlow to the store that had been Waitrose. Previously there had been level access to the store, which had been ideal for disability access. Now there are steps up into the store and although a ramp had been provided this takes people straight up into the congested till area, which was not ideal.
- Shops – not enough room in aisles, Marks & Spencer (new shop) very poor disabled access.
- Educate shop owners on requirements on requirements/attitude towards people with disability.
- WDC be active in casting their eye over plans particularly of buildings used by the general public, such as shops and Post Offices and to proactively use their expertise, good offices and influence to ensure that best practice disability access will be achieved, before the building work actually starts.
- Sheltered accommodation bungalows for disabled – too small if there is a lot of equipment needed (wheelchair, hoists)
- Shower modifications provided by Council – carers get soaked and the pump system extremely noisy.

Access to information

- There needs to be some sort of standard induction/information pack given to disabled and elderly people by councils when they first contact them to give them the relevant information and how to make a comment, make a complaint or seek advice.
- This should be a proactive process, as otherwise many of these people would not be reached.
- Mobile Advisor from WDC on housing, benefit etc to visit vulnerable people at home.
- It was emphasised that most older disabled people in their 80's and 90's did not use the internet to access information, but increasingly, on grounds of cost, that is the only place that statutory authorities place certain information.
- WDC's automated telephone helpline re Council Tax Benefit and Housing Benefit were said by a professional attending the event to be very difficult and frustrating to use even for her and she felt many customers would find it impossible to use. Difficult to get through to the right person at Customer Service Centre
- One lady, who had a visual disability said that what she had difficulty with nowadays was reading her bank statements and similar documents. The problem was that this can be very confidential information and she wanted someone trustworthy and independent to help her with this. It was suggested that Bucks Vision might be able to offer help in this respect, but also that it is the sort of minor individual help to maintain independence, which might be addressed through the new Prevention programme.

Access around and about

- Shopmobility in High Wycombe – lack of dedicated free car parking.
- Need more disabled bays in Parade at Bourne End and the signage and painted lines need improvements.
- Parking on pavement (especially Frogmoor/Crendon Street) hard for wheelchairs to get past. Paving slabs in poor state of repair, not enough supervision on works carried out badly. Wheelchairs hard to push in town centre due to surface.
- Generally, High Wycombe Town Centre was seen as been being more accessible than Marlow Town Centre to people either walking with walkers or using wheelchairs and mobility scooters. High Wycombe Town Centre – the older shops are not very accessible
- Adverse cambers often sloping outwards towards the carriageway could cause discomfort and danger of lurching out into the road. Dropped curbs needed to be at the corner of the road junction and this was not always the case
- Tree roots and uneven paving stones could make pavements uneven and dangerous to a person with a walker or a wheelchair.
- Particular mention was made about free standing shopkeepers advertising boards on shopping streets in Marlow, which could make the pavement like an obstacle course. These obstructions are often placed on level pieces of pavement forcing disabled pavement users out onto adverse cambers. One guest said that she felt the police should stop them doing it.
- One attendee, who lived in Marlow did all her shopping in High Wycombe. She said that Shopmobility in High Wycombe was really helpful and would bring a mobility scooter out to her and the shops and pavements were more accessible. She felt Shopmobility in Marlow was in the wrong place in Court Gardens and that it's not really any good for mobility scooters in Marlow.

Questions Raised

- How are access issues dealt with now that the role of the previous access officer has changed?
- Is there a WDC area facility in Bourne End as in Marlow and Princes Risborough?

Commitment to a follow up meeting

Cllr Brian Pollock asked those attending if they would like a follow up meeting in the autumn to be briefed on the recommendations that arose from the meeting and other work of the TFG, as well as how those recommendations were received and any commitments to action that were made as a result. Those assembled gave their enthusiastic support.

Appendix E

These documents were produced in 2006 and 2007

Recommendation 8 in the report is that Wycombe District Council updates the guidance and implements it throughout all its' services.

WDC Disability Guidance – Leaflet No. 1

MAKING WRITTEN INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE

Why should I make information accessible?

We should produce our information in a way that ALL our customers and staff can read because:

... it's fair –

- Deaf, Blind or partially sighted people, or those with a learning disability should receive information that is accessible to them. Information enables all of us to make decisions and lead independent lives.

... it's the law –

- There is now a legal duty to meet the information needs of all of our customers following the implementation of Section 21 of the Disability Discrimination Act in October 1999.

... it makes business sense –

- There are two million people in the UK with a sight problem alone, plus many more who are deaf or have a learning disability and who may benefit from documents in plain English. (There are also those who have English as a second language and may find reading Plain English preferable). This is a sizeable customer base which must not be ignored. Meeting the needs of all our customers makes good business sense.

How can I make information accessible?

Blind and partially sighted people read information in different ways. For many partially sighted people, well-designed print information is all that's required.

For some who are deaf or have a learning disability clear print in Plain English with relevant images is beneficial.

How much does it cost?

Making information accessible is often cheaper and easier than many people think. When compared with how much the council spends on standard print information, the cost is probably very small, and adopting Clear Print guidelines can be done immediately.

Basic checklist to use when writing letters or reports (rules apply to both letters and numbers)

DO

- ✓ Ensure the typeface is at least 12 or above (Royal National Institute for the Blind recommends 14 point)
- ✓ Use a sans serif (plain) font (such as Arial regular or bold)
- ✓ Use text aligned to the left margin
- ✓ Use short sentences (max 20 words) and paragraphs
- ✓ Ensure that text contrasts clearly with the background (eg. Dark text on Light coloured paper)
- ✓ Use paper or laminate folders that have a matt finish
- ✓ Use plain English and avoid unnecessary jargon
- ✓ Use pictures to help explanation where necessary

DO NOT

- × use glossy paper as this can obscure print as a consequence of glare or reflection
- × use centrally aligned text (except for headings)
- × write whole words or sentences in capital letters (except occasional important words)
- × use unnecessary jargon or abbreviations
- × split words between two lines
- × underline text

- × use italics
- × overwrite images or photographs with text or other images

If producing large numbers of documents, or if you want to specifically target your document you may wish to use the following information in addition to that already listed.

DO

- ✓ Have 60–70 characters per line
- ✓ Allow enough space between columns and paragraphs
- ✓ Use a page layout that is clear and unfussy
- ✓ Use page numbers and headings consistently and in the same place on each page
- ✓ Separate paragraphs using line spacing, numbering, bullets etc
- ✓ Provide a contents list
- ✓ Write text horizontally
- ✓ Allow enough space for large hand written responses. Care should be taken when double siding that any tear off strip does not have important information on the reverse.
- ✓ Clearly and plainly describe images
- ✓ Place images next to the text they are explaining, but clearly separated
- ✓ Use a page size which is easy to handle
- ✓ Produce a document that can be flattened, so it can be placed under a scanner or magnifier
- ✓ Separate out elements of a page layout –headings, photos, illustrations text captions
- ✓ Use consistent features in one or a series of documents
- ✓ Use dark text on white or light coloured paper

- ✓ Choose paper that weights over 90gsm (a sheet of photocopying paper usually weighs 80gsm)

DO NOT

- × Have any uneven gaps between words or letters
- × Set text around shaped illustrations
- × Have folds that obscure the text
- × Print text too close to the page edge or centre of the spine

Other guidance

- If necessary split a line of text using two columns with a wide separator (gutter) or preferably a vertical line.
- Reversed type e.g. white type on a black background is not recommended, and you should always avoid switching between regular and reversed type
- For some people with a visual impairment core information is best conveyed through text and by use of white space, headings, boxes and ruled lines. For those where Plain English is most important pictures will really help explain the topic
- In a multi-page document consider using images to help the reader find their way around, e.g. insert one at the start of each section
- For illustrations Line drawings with thick, dark strokes or outlines are preferred by those with visual impairments
- For those with a visual impairment pictures such as pale watercolour paintings and abstract images are best avoided unless this is the purpose of the document
- Print Room can professionally recreate black and white or colour A4 documents as A3 (increasing font size by approx. 40%) – ask them for assistance

- For further guidance please contact Alan Switalski (Access Officer) on 01494 421438, or Claire Hook (Community development Officer) on 01494 421833
-

This document was produced in July 2006 and will be reviewed annually, and reissued as required.

WDC Disability Guidance – Leaflet No. 2

SELECTING A VENUE

When organising a meeting or conference The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 requires that a venue is accessible to everyone.

The key thing is to ask invited people of their needs **before** the event, this way you will be able to determine which, from the following list, are most relevant to your meeting. It is also useful for you to know what is required before the meeting so that you don't waste effort in unnecessary provision.

However, for an open public meeting it is important to remember that anybody may turn up without previously informing you so you and your venue need to be prepared.

The following Checklist may help:

DO

- ✓ Provide invitations and joining instructions in clear English in a plain font of minimum size 12. All documentation should be available in larger print (large print is 16-22 point)
- ✓ Ensure that the paper is of sufficient quality and thickness so the print is easily readable if you need to print on both sides (90 gsm)
- ✓ Enquire about access requirements and if they will be bringing a personal assistant or be accompanied by an assistance dog. Arrangements should be made to provide water for the dog, and, if the meeting lasts for more than 2 hours the dog may need a place to exercise
- ✓ Enquire as to whether an interpreter or signer is needed
- ✓ Ensure the venue is accessible by public transport if attendees will be arriving this way
- ✓ Determine if there is a taxi rank near the bus and train station and ensure invitees know where these all are. It may be beneficial to arrange to meet a disabled person there
- ✓ Reserve parking bays as close to the entrance as possible - remember, a person with a disability is no more disabled than any other person when in a car, problems start when parking the car

- ✓ Check that parking bays have a transfer zone alongside and at the rear of the bay to allow for the safe unloading of a wheelchair or other equipment
- ✓ Check that the route from the parking area to the main entrance is level or gently ramped, and if being used at night time well lit - a building with level access is always the best option
- ✓ Check that any ramps leading to the entrance are as shallow as possible, with handrails on both sides to allow those who have limited use of one side of the body to use the rail. - A shallow ramp will allow a user of a manual wheelchair to access the building independently
- ✓ Provide access via automatic or semi automatic doors if possible
- ✓ Provide clear signs using symbols or plain English
- ✓ Consider having someone on the door to assist attendees into the building and direct them to the correct room
- ✓ Ensure the reception is at a wheelchair accessible height
- ✓ Ensure there are wheelchair accessible toilets in the building (minimum required size is 2m by 1.5m)
- ✓ Check that if there is a lift it is suitable, it should be 1100mm x 1400mm. If not, there needs to be a platform stair lift that can take a wheelchair and is equipped with a fold-down seat
- ✓ Provide an attendant to operate the lift and assist as required
- ✓ Ensure that all 'accessibility' equipment is in good working order, and that someone is available in the event of a break down
- ✓ Check the staircase has continuous handrails on both sides, treads whose rise do not exceed 170mm and going of 250mm, plus colour contrasted nosings - some people prefer steps to ramps
- ✓ Fit the room being used with a hearing induction loop, or other hearing enhancement system
- ✓ Ensure adequate circulation space is maintained to allow a person with a disability to access the seating area, refreshments and toilets

- ✓ Ensure that the speaker / presenter has full access to all equipment, and the stage if necessary
- ✓ Enquire about special dietary needs if providing food. E.g. Soft diet, gluten free, nut allergy. Food should be appropriately labelled

DO NOT

- × Use portable ramps unless as a last resort, and then only with assistance

- For further guidance please contact Alan Switalski (Access Officer) on 01494 421438, or Claire Hook (Community Development Officer) on 01494 421833
-

This document was produced in April 2007 and will be reviewed annually, and reissued as required.

WDC Disability Guidance – Leaflet No. 3

DIETARY REQUIREMENTS

Dietary requirements can be required on health or religious grounds, below are some guidelines to help you plan menus,

Gluten Free Diet

All foods that contain gluten must be excluded in this diet. Gluten is present in Wheat, Rye, Barley and Oats with wheat being the most common. This diet is very complicated due to the diverse range of food that has to be avoided. Wheat, rye, barley, oats and their flours are also used in staple foods such as bread, cakes, biscuits, pasta and breakfast cereals, these must also be excluded or a gluten free alternative used.

Foods that are naturally gluten free include rice, corn, soya, potato, pulses, fresh meat, fish, dairy products, fruit and vegetables.

Gluten free drinks include wine, cider, tea, coffee and fruit juices.

For more information visit: www.coeliac.co.uk

Wheat Free Diet

In this diet it is wheat that must be excluded and not gluten. Again Rye, barley and oats are suitable for a wheat free diet and can usually be eaten freely.

For more information visit: www.nutrition.org.uk

Soft Diet

Beverages – allowed All

Soups – allowed mildly seasoned broth, bouillon, or cream soup; strained vegetable soup

not allowed - bean, gumbo, split pea, or onion soup; chunky soups or chowders

Meats – allowed any moist, tender meats, fish, or poultry (lamb, veal, chicken, turkey, tender beef, liver stewed pork); eggs (see exceptions); creamy peanut butter.

not allowed Fried chicken or fish; fish with bones; shellfish; fried, salted, or smoked meats; sausage; cold cuts; raw or fried eggs; dried beans; nuts and seeds

Dairy - allowed all low-fat milk products, smooth yogurt, mild-flavoured cheese, cottage cheese

not allowed (avoid milk if lactose-intolerant), yogurt with nuts or seeds, sharp or strong cheeses, cheeses with whole seeds or spices

Fruits – allowed cooked or canned fruit, soft, fresh banana or avocado, fruit juice **not allowed** all raw fruit (except banana or avocado), dried fruit (dates, raisins), and coconut

Vegetables – allowed soft-cooked or canned vegetables (see exceptions), fresh lettuce or tomato, potatoes (mashed, baked, boiled, or creamed), vegetable **not allowed** gas-forming vegetables (broccoli, brussell sprouts, cabbage, cauliflower, cucumber, green pepper, onion turnip), whole kernel corn, raw vegetables (except lettuce or tomato), fried vegetables, french fries, hash browns

Grains - allowed Refined cooked or ready-to-eat cereal; refined white, wheat, or rye bread, rolls, or crackers; plain white rice; pasta **not allowed** whole-grain breads and cereals (bran, rye with seeds, or whole wheat); breads or rolls with coconut, raisins, nuts, or seeds

Fats - allowed butter, margarine, mild salad dressing, mayonnaise, gravy, cream, cream substitute, sour cream, vegetable oil **not allowed** Spicy salad dressings, fried foods

Desserts and Sweets - allowed smooth ice cream, ice milk, or frozen yogurt; sherbet; fruit ices; custards; puddings; cake or cookies made without nuts or coconut **not allowed** desserts or candy made with dried fruit, nuts, coconut; candied fruit; peanut brittle

Seasonings - allowed ketchup; cheese, cream, tomato, or white sauces; soy sauce; chopped or ground leaf herbs **not allowed** garlic, horseradish, chilli powder, whole or seed herbs and spices, barbeque or cajun seasonings, worcestershire sauce

Vegan Diet

The vegan diet completely excludes all animal products including meat, poultry, game, fish, animal by-products, dairy products, eggs and often honey.

Fruitarian - This can be also be classed as a vegan diet.

For more information visit: www.vegansociety.com or www.veganvillage.co.uk

Vegetarian Diet

A vegetarian diet excludes meat, poultry, game and fish, and animal by-products such as gelatine and animal fats. There are different divisions of the vegetarian diet and therefore dairy products and eggs may also be included.

For more information visit: www.vegsoc.org

Lacto-ovo-vegetarian - This diet includes dairy products and eggs. This diet is the most common class of vegetarianism.

Lacto-vegetarian - This diet includes dairy products but not eggs.

Halal Meat

Animals must be (slaughtered according to Islamic Rites) in order to be suitable for consumption.

Halal meat should not be eaten by a Jew (although a Muslim can have Kosher meat).

Kosher Meat

The mammals and birds that may be eaten must be slaughtered in accordance with Jewish law. This method is widely recognized as the most humane method of slaughter possible.

- For further guidance please contact Alan Switalski (Access Officer) on 01494 421438, or Claire Hook (Community Development Officer) on 01494 421833
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This document was produced in April 2007 and will be reviewed annually, and reissued as required.

WDC Disability Guidance – Leaflet No.4

ACCESSIBLE VENUES IN WYCOMBE DISTRICT

Please note that this list is not exhaustive and that the information is subject to change at any time.

Please also read in conjunction with the other WDC disability guidance, particularly Guidance 2 – Selecting a Venue.

Please also note that to use a ‘designated’ parking bay you must be a ‘blue badge’ holder, and that accommodation sizes quoted do not allow for any extra room that may be required by individuals to meet specific needs.

High Wycombe Town

The Oak Room

Accessed via lift or stairs from the Town Hall Lobby, the lift is smaller than recommended and it would be advisable to have an attendant on hand to assist people when using it.

The room is level and creates no major access difficulties, although the bar does not have a lowered section for wheelchair users.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet by the entrance doors.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Town Hall

2 designated parking bays (not suitable for larger vehicles) are directly outside the side entrance to the hall. This entrance is accessed by a shallow ramp.

The hall is level and creates no major access difficulties.

There is no access onto the stage, and the bar does not have a lowered section for wheelchair users.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Swan Theatre

Theatre can accommodate up to 1076 people.

Multi-storey car park next door with 5 designated parking spaces.

Theatre has a number of wheelchair spaces available.

Has ample wheelchair accessible toilets within toilet blocks, plus a unisex facility close to the main entrance.

Has a hearing enhancement system.

To book any of the above ring 01494 552885

Reggie Gove Centre

In the centre of High Wycombe and easily accessible by public transport.

2 designated parking bays within 30m of the entrance (however, these bays are usually full on market days).

Access in the main hall is level.

A wheelchair accessible toilet is in the foyer, or alternatively a small lift at the rear of the building gives access to the upper floor, where there is a 2nd wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 421883

West End Hall

There is on-street parking opposite the hall and a small drop off area in front of the doors. The nearest designated parking is in Desborough Road car park approx. 50-60 metres away.

Automatic doors open into a lobby which contains a wheelchair accessible toilet, and the main hall is level.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 421883

Guild Hall

2 designated parking bays nearby, but quite often in use, especially on market days. Semi automatic door opens on to a lobby containing lift and stairs. Lift comes up into main hall.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet on the landing at the top of stairs.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 421883

The Environment Centre

Located on the Rye, has designated disabled parking close to the entrance ramp.

The upper floor meeting room is accessed via a small lift or an ambulant disabled staircase, and this room is level.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet on the ground floor.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 511585

Wycombe District Council

Portable hearing induction loops are held in the Customer Service Centre.

The Council Chamber (WDC)

Can accommodate 143 people boardroom style, or 133 if an informal style is used.

2 designated parking bays are in front of the council offices.

A wheelchair platform stair lift is in the foyer, or by prior arrangement the staff lift can be used.

Changes in level mean the chamber is not suitable for all.

A wheelchair accessible toilet is near to the Chamber.

Has a hearing enhancement system.

Committee Rooms 1 & 2 (WDC)

Room 1 can accommodate 28 people.

Room 2 can accommodate 16 people.

The 2 rooms can be joined together.

2 designated parking bays are in front of the front of the council offices.

A wheelchair platform stair lift is in the foyer, or by prior arrangement the staff lift can be used.

Neither room creates any major access problems.

A wheelchair accessible toilet is next to the Committee rooms.

No hearing enhancement system.

Paul Ensor Room

Can accommodate up to 6 people.

No access problems, although furniture may need to be moved to accommodate a wheelchair user.

No hearing enhancement system.

Bob Barber Room

Can accommodate up to 4 people.

No access problems although furniture may need to be moved to accommodate a wheelchair user.

No hearing enhancement system.

Edwin Burrows Room

Can accommodate up to 8 people.

No access problems although furniture may need to be moved to accommodate a wheelchair user.

No hearing enhancement system.

Joan Cooper Room

Can accommodate up to 10 people.

This room causes no major access problems,
No hearing enhancement system.

Training Room (WDC)

Can accommodate 12 people.

The training room is on the ground floor of building C.

3 designated parking bays are in the rear car park - during office hours arrangements need to be made with main reception to allow visitor access.

The publicly accessible toilet is in main reception, a staff wheelchair accessible toilet is on the 2nd floor of building C.

No hearing enhancement system.

Briefing Room

Can accommodate up to 5 people.

No access problems although furniture may need to be moved to accommodate a wheelchair user.

No hearing enhancement system.

Use the Intranet booking system to book any of the above.

Princes Risborough

Risborough Area Information Centre

This is located in the centre of Princes Risborough opposite Budgens Supermarket, with the nearest parking next to Budgens.

A pelican crossing with tactile paving allows people to cross the busy road safely. The Information Centre is accessed via a short ramp up to automatic sliding doors.

Ground floor meeting room

Can accommodate 12 people.

There is a wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

First floor meeting room

Can accommodate approx. 12 people, but is not suitable for people with mobility problems, as it is stair access only.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01844 274795

Princes Risborough Community Centre

Can accommodate approx. 60 people.

5 designated parking bays next to the community centre, and ample general parking in the nearby Mount Car park.

The Community Centre has 2 large halls which both have easy level access.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet cubicle, but this is slightly undersized and does not meet current standards.

No hearing enhancement system in either hall.

To book ring 01844 343287

Marlow

Court Garden House

Situated in Pound Lane Marlow next to the leisure centre and overlooking Higginson Park and the River Thames.

Designated parking is available close to the building, although the slope leading to the ramped entrance is steep and some users may require assistance. The ramp leads to a level platform with a semi-automatic entrance door.

The General Higginson Room

Can accommodate 55-140 people dependant on room layout.

There are toilets next to the room, but the nearest wheelchair accessible one is about 15m away next to the café.

Has a hearing enhancement system.

The Jane Seymour Room

Can accommodate 15-40 people dependant on room layout.

In certain layouts circulation space for wheelchair users will be restricted.

The doors into the room are quite stiff to open and those with a disability may have difficulty opening them independently.

No toilet facilities. A wheelchair accessible toilet is about 15m away.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Steve Redgrave Room

Can accommodate about 12 people in a conference style setting.

No toilet facilities. A wheelchair accessible toilet is about 15m away.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Shelley Theatre

Can accommodate up to 250 people.

Located on the 2nd floor of the leisure complex.

The theatre is accessed via stairs or a small lift located in the back of the Leisure Centre. There is currently no access to the removable stage.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet on the floor below, next to the lift.

Has a hearing enhancement system.

To book any of the above ring 01628 405205

Little Kimble

Stewart Hall

Can accommodate about 80 people.

Reasonably large car park, with uneven gravel in places.

No designated parking.

Ramped access to side entrance door.

Main hall is level throughout.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet in lobby.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01296 615844 (evenings only)

Lane End

HTS Pavilion

Can accommodate over 100 people.

HTS is a large conference centre, but only certain areas are accessible to people with disabilities.

Large tarmac car park.

No designated accessible parking bays although one can be reserved on request. A paved pathway leads from car park to pavilion.

Main Hall has level access throughout.

The bar does not have a lowered section for wheelchair users.

Smaller room is suitable for buffets or sit down lunches.

HTS have their catering team so specific dietary requirements can be requested.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

To book ring 01494 881171

Adams Park Conference Facilities

Large car park with a number of designated parking bays. The largest number of which are located close to the Woodlands Suite and are undercover.

Wycombe Wanderers Football Club has its own catering team to meet specific needs.

Induction loops are available on request.

Woodlands Suite

Can accommodate 220 people for a formal meeting, or 150-180 if tables are used.

Accessed via a lift or ambulant stairs, and a 70m level corridor.

Manual entrance doors to the suite.

Circulation around the room is not a problem, although care should be taken if tables are used.

The bar does not have a lowered section for wheelchair users.

Has a wheelchair accessible toilet.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Vere Suite

Can accommodate up to 500 people depending on the layout.

Access into and around the main room is not a problem.

Unisex wheelchair accessible toilet in the foyer.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Ercol Boardroom

Can accommodate up to 30 people.

The nearest Unisex wheelchair accessible toilet is located in the foyer of the Vere Suite.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Hypnos Lounge

Can accommodate up to 100 people.

Toilets available, but no wheelchair accessible cubicle.

No hearing enhancement system.

Joyson Holland Lounge

Can accommodate 30 people.

No toilet facilities.

No hearing enhancement system.

The Chiltern Room

Can accommodate up to 20 people.

No toilet facilities.

No hearing enhancement system.

Executive Boxes

Can accommodate up to 15 people.

Accessed via the corridor leading to the Woodlands Lounge.

No accessible toilets (although one is located in the first aid room at the entrance to the suite).

No hearing enhancement system.

To book any of the above ring 01494 455718

- For further guidance please contact Alan Switalski (Access Officer) on 01494 421438, or Claire Hook (Community Development Officer) on 01494 421833
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T&F Disability Action Plan

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
Accessible Housing			
<p>Recommendation 1 The needs of those with a disability that are referred to in sections 35 and 50 (see note at foot of recommendations) of the National Planning Policy Framework (March 2012) Department for Communities and Local Government) to be incorporated in the Local Plan Review</p>	<p>Planning <i>Ian Manktelow</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work commences - Spring 2013 • Consultation and Refinement – 2013 to 2014 • Cabinet agrees final Plan – end 2014 • Plan Examination and Adoption - 2015 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timetable for the Local Plan has been agreed by cabinet and follows statutory stages.
<p>Recommendation 2 For residential properties, targets to be established for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvement of number and size of parking spaces that are wheelchair accessible • Numbers of new houses built to disability access standards • Numbers of existing properties brought up to disability access standards and Lifetime Homes standard 	<p>Planning <i>John Callahan</i> Planning <i>Ian Manktelow</i></p> <p>Environmental Services/Retained Housing <i>Keith Coldham</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target for car parking spaces – end 2013 • Target for houses built – same as timescale above for Rec. 1 as this forms part of the work on the new Local Plan. • See comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It has been agreed that there is to be a Bucks-wide review of car parking standards, coordinated by BCC, which will look at this. Whilst a detailed timetable is awaited from BCC the exercise should take place during 2013. • Approx 70 properties a year are adapted to meet the needs of the disabled occupants by the use of the Disabled Facilities Grant process
<p>Recommendation 3 Increase the maximum Home Independence Grant from £500 to £1,000, within the current total budget, whilst seeking to maintain a balance between the range of improvement works eligible and the total number of applicants who can benefit</p>	<p>Environmental Services/Retained Housing <i>Keith Coldham</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes to the Home Independence Grant are awaiting the review of the transformation of Public Health work involving District Councils and other agencies.
<p>Recommendation 4</p>	<p>Environmental</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4a - See comments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4a All information is currently set up

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
<p>Within a timescale appropriate to available resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4a Establish an accessible housing register that captures data so that suitable properties can be matched with the clients' needs • 4b Produce an update on the proportion of social housing that has wheelchair access • 4c Review how the current WDC Choice Based Letting scheme is working for those with a disability (to include feedback from clients) • 4d Review the current policy of who can be given accessible properties: Can greater flexibility be introduced based on needs as well as age? 	<p>Services Housing <i>Steven Tucker</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4b - See comments • 4c - See comments • 4d - See comments 	<p>on locata to enable the right person to be matched with a property. Disabilities are recorded as notified by the applicant. This system we have allows for flexibility however it is led by clients choosing and we would not match applicant directly. If an officer is aware of a suitable match we will either contact the applicant or place an expression of interest in the property.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not maintain an accessible housing register and once a property is advertised we will match all applicants who fulfil the criteria. • 4b Not available at this time. • 4c There is a survey on the Buckshomechoice (BHC) website whereby applicants or advocates can make comments. There is no planned regional review of Choice Based Lettings (CBL) for clients with a disability at this moment • 4d This is beyond the scope of the BHC policy and is for the Registered Providers to lead on. The authority no longer owns any housing stock and it will be for a provider to review the policy. WDC could only ask for an update on what each provider is doing.
Accessible Public Toilets			
<p>Recommendation 5 Increase number of wheelchair accessible toilets and more publicity about this.</p>	<p>Environmental Services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2013 	<p>Management of facilities currently under review due to joint contract with Chiltern D.C.</p>
<p>Recommendation 6</p>	<p>Environmental</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2013 	<p>Management of facilities currently under</p>

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
Where wheelchair accessible toilets are external to other buildings these should all be RADAR-key only accessible to reduce risk of vandalism	Services		review due to joint contract with Chiltern D.C.
New sports and leisure centre			
<p>Recommendation 7 Seek advice of disability access specialist at each stage, with particular attention to be given to:</p> <p>7a Inclusion of a high dependency toilet and changing room, built to standard of www.changing-places.org</p> <p>7b Sufficient blue badge parking bays. Enforcement of abuse of spaces</p> <p>7c Signage</p> <p>7d Push buttons at wheelchair height to open doors</p> <p>7e Door widths for scooters</p>	Major Projects and Property Executive Charles Brocklehurst	April 2015	All items listed will be completed to the standards described in the recommendation.
Access to information			
<p>Recommendation 8 Appendix E as disability guidance notes covering Making Written Information Accessible, Dietary Requirements, Selecting a Venue, and Accessible Venues in Wycombe district. The above guidance notes were created by: Wycombe Area Access for All Wycombe District Council Bucks Vision on behalf of the Wycombe Partnership. The Partnership accepted these in 2006 and 2007 with commitment to adopt them. The recommendation is that Wycombe District Council updates the guidance and implements it throughout all services of the Council.</p>	Community Services Claire Hook	COMPLETE	6 Dec 12 - Documents updated by Claire Hook and Carol Courcha. Being formatted in line with Engagement toolkit, will then be linked to Toolkit and re-published on WySpace.
Recommendation 9	Communications	COMPLETE	This has already been completed by Paul

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
<p>WDC services provided the TFG with summaries of current provision and planned improvements of how the needs of those with disabilities are being addressed. The recommendation is that these reports are available as a download on the disability page on the WDC website</p>			<p>Wells in Communications. http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/council-services/community-and-living/health-well-being-and-care/disability.aspx</p> <p>All work (including disability related) that meets requirements of PSED pre 2012 is available on the Equality and Diversity page of the WDC website</p>
<p>Recommendation 10 The Customer Service Centre is requested to do a disability related mystery shopper exercise, by telephone.</p>	CSC		<p>Customer services conduct monthly surveys which include data relating to disability. If additional details are required should this not be council wide as the CSC do not cover all services provided by the council? Survey results are on the wdc website.</p> <p>http://www.wycombe.gov.uk/Core/DownloadDoc.aspx?documentID=6339</p>
Disability Awareness			
<p>Recommendation 11 A member training session to present the TFG report, with a focus on what ward councillors can do to improve the lives of those with a disability, especially in regard to the Disability Facilities Grant. An all member email be sent to identify if sufficient numbers to warrant this (minimum of 10 confirmed member bookings)</p>	<p>Environment Services Keith Coldham</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> February 2013 	<p>Session on Disabled Facilities Grant, Home Independence Grant and Flexible Home Improvement Loan to be run by Environment Services (Keith Coldham) on 12 February 2013 in the Council Chamber, if there are a minimum of 10 confirmed bookings. Democratic Services to ensure entry in council diary.</p>
<p>Recommendation 12 Run a disability awareness event (special goggles, wheel chairs, etc) and involve local media to participate alongside elected members.</p>	<p>Community Services Claire Hook</p>		<p>Community have do not have the resources to run such events. Previously these have been organised by the Access Officer (whose hours have since been reduced) and have used an external trainer.</p>
Employment			

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
Recommendation 13 The Skills Centre to explore the potential of a job club specifically focused on the needs of those with a disability, and to pursue the external funding for this initiative as appropriate.	Community Services – Skills Centre Satbir West		N/A – The Skills Centre will be closing.
Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles			
Recommendation 14 A meeting between taxi drivers and licensing – to seek the help and support of drivers (also include private hire as well as Hackney Carriage). Amongst issues to be raised: Charging, availability (especially during school term times)	Environmental Health Licensing (Neil Stannett)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be arranged by end March 2013 	
Recommendation 15 An advice note to be placed on the disability page on the WDC website that, when using Hackney Carriages, passengers should expect the driver to only start the meter once they are ready to commence the journey. When using private hire vehicles, before starting the journey, passengers should seek confirmation of the price that was agreed when the vehicle was booked.	Environmental Health Licensing	COMPLETE – Jan 2013	COMPLETE
Publicising the report			
After the report has been to both the Improvement and Review Commission and WDC Cabinet:			
Recommendation 16 Offer the report to Bucks CC Overview and Scrutiny and to other districts within the County. Publish report on the Centre for Public Scrutiny website	Democratic Services (Ted Piker)	COMPLETE	COMPLETE
Recommendations to Bus Companies			
The Task and Finish Group acknowledges the progress that has been made by local bus services to improve both the upgrading of			

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
the fleet for wheelchair/scooter access and the access to disability relevant timetable information			
Recommendation 17 The TFG would like to see improvements over time in the following areas, with the aim of achieving consistency of disability access on all routes	Democratic Services <i>(Ted Piker)</i>		Awaiting response from Passenger Transport, Transport for Buckinghamshire
Recommendation 18 More stops to have access for both wheelchairs and scooters	Democratic Services <i>(Ted Piker)</i>		Most low floor buses have ramps or can kneel at stops, though both the operators and ourselves recognise that, despite driver training, there are still some drivers who are not always using this facility appropriately. We are working with them to address this. We also recognise that infrastructure improvements such as hard-standing at rural stops, raised kerb heights etc would be of benefit at a number of stops. However, we are in a climate where budgets are being steadily reduced and we do not have a dedicated capital budget for these types of works currently. We are though, bidding for dedicated funding for this area of work in our current business planning process. It is also possible for any specific problem locations to be made the source of a bid for funding through the Local Area Forum.
Recommendation 19 A smaller bus is needed that can go up the	Democratic Services <i>(Ted Piker)</i>		The incline leading to the hospital entrance is a recognised issue. However, it is difficult to

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
slope to directly outside Wycombe Hospital main entrance			resolve without funding for a dedicated shuttle vehicle, and even then, there is the question of who this would serve and/or how it would connect to the rest of the bus network. When this has been tried previously, as with the cressexpress service, the service proved unsustainable partly due to the size of the bus. A taxi shuttle that operated from the bus station for a number of years had to be withdrawn due to lack of use.
Recommendation 20 All buses between Wycombe Hospital and Stoke Mandeville, and also to Amersham Hospital and Wexham Park Hospital, to meet the needs of those with a disability	Democratic Services (<i>Ted Piker</i>)		The vehicles used on these routes are already low-floor, easy access buses. We recognise that there are issues over the location of the stops, particularly for High Wycombe and Stoke Mandeville and are working with the Hospital Trust over these. It must be borne in mind however, that Wycombe Hospital is very difficult to serve directly by bus, as per the response to recommendation 19, and Stoke Mandeville, though very well served by Red Route 9 from Aylesbury, would require an unacceptable diversion for passengers on Line 300 for buses to get much closer to the hospital entrance.
Recommendation 21 In the roll out of accessible vehicles, prioritise areas of greater social housing	Democratic Services (<i>Ted Piker</i>)		The County Council already specify accessible vehicles when tendering new services. On routes operated commercially,

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
and lower car ownership			which account for the vast majority of bus services, the vehicle choice is entirely in the hands of the bus operators. However, after considerable investment in recent years by the operators, most buses in Buckinghamshire are now low floor, accessible vehicles and this includes all Carousel buses and all but 14 Arriva vehicles. In addition, legislation will mean all single deck buses are accessible by January 2016 and all double deckers by January 2017.
Recommendation 22 Better access to information about timetables for those who do not access the internet, and clearer information on the internet	Democratic Services (<i>Ted Piker</i>)		<p>We strive to ensure our Internet information is clear and accessible, and the Transport for Buckinghamshire Service Information Centre has won awards for this. We would welcome any specific comments as to how we could further improve the clarity of information.</p> <p>We also produce comprehensive timetables in booklet form (also available in large print) that supplement the operators own publications. These are distributed widely across the county and we have a comprehensive network of distribution channels. Also, most bus stops have a printed timetable or electronic display. A recent national survey has ranked us 6th in the country for resident's satisfaction with Passenger Transport information. Again, we would welcome any specific details of how we could improve the information we produce within our budget.</p>
Recommendation 23 Real time information in accessible format at bus stops. Take into account the needs of wheelchair users when setting the	Democratic Services (<i>Ted Piker</i>)		We will try to take more account of this need when locating displays. Our 'Ibis' real time display units already have audible timetables, but unfortunately the current range are not

Recommendation	Who	When/Timescale	Comment
heights of the data boards, the effect of sunlight reflecting off the boards and the provision of audible announcements for those with visual impairment.			very user friendly, requiring pre-knowledge of exactly where to press the screen to get the audible display. We are working with the company that designs the units to resolve this for the next generation of display, and we are also trialling a retro-fit solution for the current ones.
Recommendation 24 The website Next Bus tells you which routes and which stops have wheel chair access, which is commendable. However times are given as number of minutes from the starting point of the route to the bus stop you want to use, making it complicated to work out in some cases.	Democratic Services <i>(Ted Piker)</i>		The real time display gives the number of minutes the bus will take to get to the stop you are looking at, not the time from the start of the route. If the bus is not being tracked, then the display shows the scheduled arrival time.
Recommendation 25 Additional publicity needed on new arrangements for scooter users	Democratic Services <i>(Ted Piker)</i>		We will liaise with the bus operators to clarify what wording they would like us to use and incorporate in any new publications as appropriate.

