

Wiltshire & Swindon Users' Network

Newsletter - Winter 2010

**Seasons Greetings to
all of our members**



Louise Rendle— Head of Network Services

Once again we are coming to the end of another very busy year for the network. It has been a year of significant change for the organisation and for the country.

The network has seen a number of staff changes over the year and I have been really pleased with the way my colleagues have pulled together, accepted new roles and complement each other so that we have a strong and committed team. The WITS project has continued to expand and be very successful with a large increase in the numbers of service users undergoing travel support and gaining more confidence and independence as a result.

Although we closed our office in Swindon in April we are still very actively involved in the Borough and undertook some large consultations for them over the summer. We have some new pieces of work to do for them in the New Year.

Nationally, the new government has proposed some very significant changes to the Health Service, to the funding of public services and the way in which people will be able to access those services. Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire NHS and Swindon Borough Council will, as every other public service in the country, be affected and this, in turn, will present challenges for WSUN. We have been told that there will be funding cuts from April from both Swindon Borough Council and Wiltshire Council. We will have to work harder with less funding in order that we can continue to support service users during very important and fast changing times.

We are already actively seeking new funding sources. As an example, we have been commissioned by English Heritage to assist in an access audit for their proposed new Stonehenge visitor centre which we carried out in the summer. We have now been commissioned by them to run a project over the next year to look at the numbers of people with disabilities visiting Stonehenge, you can read more about this on page 4. So, although the next few months and indeed years are going to be challenging for WSUN, I am sure that with your valued and continuing support the network will remain a strong and vibrant organisation representing your issues and interests across Wiltshire. May I wish all of you a very peaceful Christmas.

Brian Warwick—retiring Chair

Having spent in excess of 15 years supporting the Wiltshire and Swindon Users' Network (WSUN), the last three as Chair, I believe that it is time to make way for active younger members to be given the opportunity to lead the Network through the next decade. There is a need for new ideas and energetic enthusiasm from younger members to be given the opportunity to drive WSUN in the months and years ahead to meet the needs and aspirations of disabled and older people within our communities.

I strongly believe that after spending decades in the workplace trying to provide for their loved ones, most seniors look forward to retirement as a time when they can relax and do more things that they really enjoy. For many people, this means finding a restful hobby that allows them to take it easy. There are a growing number of senior citizens, however, like myself that are not quite ready to slow down just because they have stopped working. For many spry seniors, voluntary work is an exciting and popular alternative to the traditional retirement pastimes. It keeps the old brain box working and it also keeps you pretty active and is very satisfying. We are hearing a great deal about the Big Society these days and I welcome that recognition at long last from politicians. It must not, however, be allowed to replace the local authorities and national governments obligations to provide the right levels of services. The Voluntary sector can do a great deal and play a leading role in improving the quality and standard of life for vulnerable members of our society, particularly disabled and older people who need a strong voice to support them to have their voices heard and that is the key role of WSUN.

I hope that my colleagues on your management committee will never overlook that obligation and will speak out strongly and continue campaigning for equality in our society.

In the coming months with the cuts in benefits and resources to support essential services, there is a need to be even more alert in protecting the needs of vulnerable people. I, on my part, will be taking on a new role at regional and national level by helping to provide an input into government policy making for an ageing society. Hopefully that will allow me to speak out where necessary on any issue that I believe is going to affect the quality of life of older people rather than improve their well-being. Those who know me will appreciate that it is a role that suits me well, and provides an opportunity for me to remain active yet at the same time endeavouring to be constructive in striving to bring about a better and fairer society.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff and your management committee for all the support they have provided to me and for their dedication to the work of the network. I would also like to link my thanks to those dedicated officers at Wiltshire Council and NHS Wiltshire, who have listened to all my moans and groans on your behalf over the years yet have still supported the role of the network and myself so well during my period in office.

Best wishes to you all

Brian Warwick

Management Committee

At the last Management Committee Meeting, Brian Warwick stepped down as Chair and it was unanimously agreed that Dorothy Roberts and Linda Griffiths would become co-Chairs. There were two interests for the Vice Chair role so there was a vote, April Hammond has now become the Vice Chair of Wiltshire & Swindon Users' Network.

In our next newsletter we will be hearing more from our Management Committee with newsletter articles from the co-Chairs.

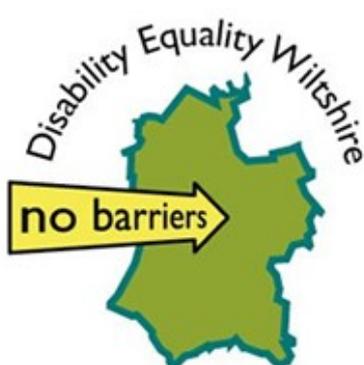
Our new Management Committee for 2010-2011 is as follows:

Linda Griffiths—Chair

Dorothy Roberts—Chair

April Hammond—Vice Chair

Debbie Burse, Angela Clapp, Martin Eggleton, Jim Law, Elizabeth Moss, Pat Putland, Brian Warwick, Alfred Webley, Shiena Bowen—Associate Member, Katie Ford—Associate Member



No Barriers Week 2010 is from **29th November to 5th December**, if you would like to either get involved, join in or plan an event, please email equalities@wiltshire.gov.uk or phone 01380 871800.

Working together to promote disability equality in Wiltshire

You can also visit our website www.wsun.co.uk,

click on **No Barriers 2010** and have a look at the events that are running during this week.

Pension Service

On page 7 of this newsletter, there is a page which provides information about the Pension Service and how to contact it. As a partner organisation with the Pension Service, WSUN can signpost people to the right place for pension/ pension credit provision. WSUN can also electronically refer you directly to the Pension Service.

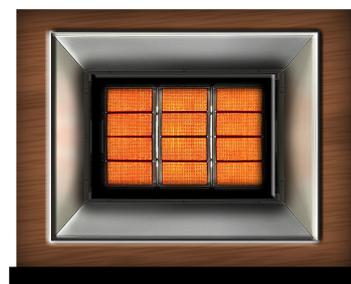
Top Tips for Winter

- Eat for Warmth
- Claim Your Rightful Benefits
- Keep Moving
- Apply for Grants
- Dress for Warmth
- Insulate Your Home
- Get a Flu Jab
- Keep Your Home at 21°C
- Keep Warm at Night

For more information visit:

www.wiltshire.gov.uk/dcs-pub-winter-well-being.pdf or call

Wiltshire Council on 0300 456 0100



Development Outreach Team



Denise Cooper



Nick Crane



Dot Kronda

In the last newsletter, Martin Fortune announced the new **Commissioning Structure for Physical Impairment** (under 65 years). At the last meeting in July, it was great to see how your views **do** shape services. After a presentation by a representative from the Wheelchair Service, attendees worked together on an Action plan to agree priorities.

Representatives subsequently attended a **Joint Commissioning** meeting and had an opportunity to take issues such as the need for information to be accessible and in a choice of formats, directly to managers in charge of commissioning or delivering community services. The next meeting is scheduled for the **8th Dec** but we are waiting to hear whether this will go ahead in light of the Government's Spending Review and changes within Wiltshire Council.

The Wheelchair Users Group (WUG) in Wiltshire meet on a regular basis and it is attended by WSUN members. The group help to shape the future of the service by representing the views and opinions of Service Users. The group is given regular feedback about service updates including waiting times. The group has recently received feedback from Wiltshire Community Health Services on a report they undertook to look at wheelchair service users and carer's satisfaction with the wheelchair service. 30 users were randomly selected and interviewed using questions that had been agreed by the WUG. The findings will be used to improve the service.

Care Mobility Plus have made presentations to the group about their service.

Melksham Hospital League of Friends have agreed to purchase a Pressure Mapping device and a specialist hoist which will significantly improve the service. The group has also assisted in commenting on a guide for wheelchair users in Wiltshire.

Membership of the group is open to all service users and their carers or family. If you would like to join us then please contact Barbara Buchan for details of the next meeting 01225 899130 or you can speak to Dot Kronda for more information on 01380 871800.

Young People Wanted

If you are aged 18-30 years and would like to help WSUN develop plans to reach and engage young people who use health, social or community services, please contact Denise 01380 871800.

Stonehenge



During the summer WSUN were commissioned to run two consultations on the proposed new visitor centre for Stonehenge. This we completed at the end of June and submitted the final report to English Heritage at the same time that the Government announced it was withdrawing its share of the funding for the project. At the moment the visitor centre is on hold as English Heritage tries to find other ways of making up the shortfall in money. WSUN has, however, been commissioned by English Heritage to undertake a national piece of work on Stonehenge.



We have been commissioned to set a focus group of service users to assess up why Stonehenge, out of all the top ten English Heritage attractions, receives fewer visitors who have a disability. Stonehenge even receives fewer visitors with a disability than Tintagel Castle in Cornwall which has very awkward access issues.

The group has been asked to try and come up with reasons why so few disabled people, proportionately, visit Stonehenge and see if there are any ways, putting the visitor centre to one side, that those numbers can be increased. The group met for the first time on October 7th. A site visit on November 10th has already produced some issues and raised some questions to be discussed at the next meeting. It is intended that the group will meet on another seven or eight occasions over the next year.

To find out more contact Nick Crane on 01380 871800.



Older Peoples Groups

For the last two years WSUN has established and facilitated four older peoples groups across Wiltshire, funded by Wiltshire Council to raise issues and concerns of older people in health and social care. The four groups then feed these through to a central group (Involved Group) and so influence the commissioning of services for older people.

Wiltshire Council has now informed the Involved Group that it will not be funding these four groups from next April as they are wishing to switch the emphasis of older people involvement to the Community Area Partnerships. The Involved group will continue to be funded. Members of the four groups are distinctly unhappy with this, mainly because the four groups are becoming more and more active and the Community Area Partnerships are not all at the same stage of development or are all easily accessible. The main concern is that if the four district groups have to disband before the Community Area partnerships are truly functioning and accessible then the voice of older people could well be disadvantaged.

To find out more contact Nick Crane on 01380 871800.

Dementia

As Wiltshire's population of older people is set to increase so will the number of people with Dementia. WSUN would very much like to establish a focus group of people who have had an early diagnosis of dementia illness to come together to raise their issues and concerns and work towards making their futures as positive as possible by influencing the way services are delivered. We are actively seeking funding to do this. It is also important for WSUN to raise awareness and understanding of dementia and funding is also being sought for training for our staff.

In recent weeks WSUN has been in contact with dementia organisations like the Alzheimers Society to see how we might work more closely with each other. We have been very fortunate to have been invited to a 'Memory cafe' in Marlborough and a 'Singing for the Brain' group in Corsham to look at some of the activities that people with dementia can become involved in.

News which may be of interest?

Mental Health Support Group takes Affect. A new mental health group has been set up to help people in Corsham area. The AFFECT! Group is a recently created community group and is being led by local mental health service-users.

Corsham resident Samiha, chair of AFFECT!, said: "Our members all have an interest in culture and the arts, and seek to use the group as a platform for their individual and collective projects, which include writing, crafts, photography, film and digital design. They also plan to organise arts projects and events for the local community.

"We want to enable people with mental health issues to reach their creative potential and to promote mental wellbeing, both for self and the community, through the arts."

This article is from the Wiltshire Times Newspaper.

The group meets fortnightly and if anyone is interested please contact us on 01380 871800 and we will put you in contact with Samiha.

Confused about bus passes?

Bus passes can be issued on the grounds of disability or pensionable age. To see if you qualify contact Wiltshire Council on 01225 713004.

The Ramblers Association are happy to welcome new members of all ages. With planned introductory walks throughout the year why not contact them for more info. Carol Cockrell on 01373 823320

Key Safe—there is a new, easier to use key safe available to buy from Wiltshire Bobby Van service. This small box will hold your house key so that Emergency services or a carer can gain entry if necessary. Please ring 01225 794652 for more information.

Ridgeway Care and Repair helps people to stay safe and independent at home. From practical advice to overseeing building extensions from start to finish! They may be able to help people to find the money to pay through local authority grants, charitable funding or loans. Tel: 01380 735473 (Devizes) or 01722 820910 (Salisbury)
Email: wcr@ridgewaycommunity.org.uk
Web: www.ridgewaycommunity.org.uk

Free Fire Safety Checks. Wiltshire Fire Service offer a free check to make sure fire alarms are in working order & replace alarms free of charge! Please contact 0800 3897849 for more info.

Going Green—We would like to highlight the cost of sending out information, booking forms, minutes etc via post and would like to ask our members if they would like to opt to receive information via email from now on? If so, please let us know and let us have your up to date email address.

The Pension Service

The Pension Service is responsible for delivering Benefits, entitlements and other services to nearly 12 million Pensioners in Great Britain and abroad. It operates through a Network of Pension Centres that are open 8am to 8pm, Monday to Friday and can be contacted by phone, textphone, post, or email.

Disability and Carers Service

Provides financial support to disabled people and their carers, whether they are in work or not. It is responsible for delivering Attendance Allowance, Disability Allowance and Carer's Allowance and Vaccine Damage Payments.

The Pension Service Local Service

Local Service operates in the community in partnership with Local Authorities and voluntary sector organisations offering a face-to-face service to vulnerable customers who are unable to access our services through the normal channels such as by telephone or post.

Local Service provides a 'whole person' approach to the customer—a holistic financial assessment and benefit service, helping customers to complete application forms for benefits such as Pension Credit, Attendance Allowance, Housing Benefit and other complementary services.

For more information visit: www.direct.gov.uk

If you have an enquiry or you wish to make a claim please contact the appropriate number below.

Pension Centre	English Language Line	0845 60 60 265
	Welsh Language Line	0845 60 60 275
Textphone	English Language Line	0845 60 60 285
	Welsh Language Line	0845 60 60 295

State Pension telephone claim	English Language Line	0800 731 7898
	Welsh Language Line	0800 731 7936

Pension Credit telephone claim English and Welsh Language Line 0800 99 1234

Benefit Enquiry Line 0800 88 2200

Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance Helpline 08457 12 34 56

Carers Allowance Unit 0845 608 4321

Vaccine Damage Payments 01772 89 99 44



Swindon—Lisa Chadwick

Contact Details

Tel: 07592034480 Monday & Thursday pm

or 01380 871800 Tuesday

Email: Swindon.wsun@virgin.net

Christmas greetings to you all. Well Swindon office may be out of sight but not out of mind!! We have been involved in many events since our last newsletter in the Spring. In July we held two group **consultation events** in Swindon, at the Pilgrim Centre and Park South Community Centre. We also held five individual consultations where we went out to visit the service users. They were given the opportunity to express their views and opinions on any services that are developed, in response to local peoples' needs. We discussed the services that would be most appropriate and how to gain access to those services and also identified any gaps in the current services. All the information was recorded and a report was then compiled and sent to Swindon Borough Council (SBC).

Earlier this year we held a **wheelchair event**. Everything you would want to know about wheelchairs was available. Following this event, a focus group was set up and several of our members expressed their interest to become involved. The meetings are held bi monthly and give the group members the opportunity to express their views and opinions, and, so far, has proved very successful. A new wheelchair leaflet is currently being produced by the Wheelchair Service and members of the group have had the opportunity to contribute to the content. If you are a wheelchair user and would like to join the group or would like any information, please contact me.

BME Women's Health Event July 2010

This annual event was organised by SBC at the Broadgreen Centre, Gladstone Street, Swindon. It raised awareness of Mental Health and Wellbeing, how to build low self esteem and self confidence. We held a display and many of our members attended and had the opportunity to contribute and share their experiences and views.



Senior well being day October 2010

This was another successful annual event for older



people. To deliver information through various service providers, about living safely and healthily. It was an opportunity to offer information about the many services and benefits available to them. This event took place at the Fire Station, Drove Road, Swindon. We attended and promoted our network information. Other exhibitors included Age UK, Bobby Van, Keepable, Swindon Lifestyle and many more. Many of our members participated in this event and had an enjoyable day.

End of Life Care Seminar October 2010

I attended an extremely interesting and informative seminar held at the Jury's Inn, Swindon. The event was organised by Voluntary Action Swindon (VAS). Although the subject we discussed is of a very sensitive nature, it is extremely important to bring this subject to people's attention and respect people's wishes when they reach the end of their lives. Many of our members attended, however if you were unable to attend but would like any of the information please contact me.

If you would like further information regarding any of the above events, please get in touch - my contact details are above.

I hope you all have a happy Christmas and look forward to seeing you all in the New Year!!

Lisa Chadwick
WSUN Swindon

Two New Consultations from the Department of Health

As part of the Governments plans to reorganise and re-shape the NHS the Secretary of State for Health has begun two public consultations. These two consultations are now available for public comment. Any responses to these consultations need to be returned to the Department of Health by January 14th 2011.

The two Consultations are:

'Liberating the NHS: Greater Choice and Control' in order to:

- Increase the current offer of choice of healthcare provider
- Enabling people to choose a named consultant-led team
- Giving people more choice of where to have their treatment after a diagnosis has been made
- Offering more choice in maternity services, mental health services and in end of life care
- Ensuring people are offered a choice of treatment as a matter of course wherever possible
- Ensuring people with long term conditions can make choices about their care and are given the confidence to manage their condition.

'Liberating the NHS: An information Revolution' in order that:

- People will have greater access and control of their health and social care records
- More information on treatments, conditions and choices helping people look after their own and their family's health and care
- More importance given to information provided by patients and service users to help the NHS become better at responding to people
- More providers giving information to the public will help meet the needs of individuals
- Better use of technology to provide safer, higher quality care

If you wish to take part in either or both of these consultations then you can find all the documents by following this link: www.dh.gov.uk/liberatingthenhs

You can also find this link and information on WSUN's website www.wsun.co.uk

If you would like a paper copy of the consultation papers and questions then WSUN will be happy to provide you with them. Please call and ask.

Wiltshire Involvement Network (WIN)



The Wiltshire Involvement Network is the Local Involvement Network. It gives people in Wiltshire the opportunity to influence local health and social care services. Anyone can get involved, and it has been set up to make sure that people in Wiltshire get the health and social services they need. Members of the WIN are made up of individuals and community, voluntary and user groups who share an interest in health and social care. WIN reflects equally the health and social care interests of people in the community and as such are accountable to the local community. The role of WIN is to find out what people like and dislike about local services, monitor the care they provide and use their powers to hold services to account.

The Wiltshire and Swindon Users Network provide the Host function for WIN. WIN has a support team that is made up of Lucie Woodruff who provides administration support, Martin Fortune from WSUN and Mary Rennie from Age UK who are the WIN support workers and Dot Kronka who is the WIN officer. The support team's role is to assist WIN with their work plan and agenda.

We are pleased to let you know that WIN has hosted a series of very successful open meetings, aimed at influencing the way health and social care services are provided in Wiltshire. In April 2009, over 80 attendees discussed how people with dementia and their carers can best be supported. In September, Wiltshire people "had their say" on the Green Paper on Social Care. Following both these events, WIN submitted formal reports to NHS Wiltshire and Wiltshire Council, detailing the concerns and wishes expressed at the meetings.

Last November, WIN tackled the delicate subject of End of Life Care. Again, a report was submitted to NHS Wiltshire and already some practical changes have been put in place by the Neighbourhood Teams. Training for staff to understand the needs and support of carers has been introduced, "Just in Case boxes" have been issued with the aim of supporting a more timely response to patients needing medication for symptom control, Advanced Care training has begun to help staff support difficult conversations, and an Aadastra End of Life Care Register is to be piloted where staff from different organisations (community, GPs, ambulance staff, A&E Out of Hours) will be able to see patients' wishes about their preferred place of care. An Implementation Group meets regularly to take this work forward.

On 11 May 2010, WIN broke new ground by holding a Sensory Impairment Day to discuss the development of appropriate services for people with hearing and visual impairments. Issues raised will be fed back to Wiltshire Council as it develops its strategy for provision of these services locally.

“All attendees felt they could contribute – this was most important for a group which is often marginalised” Jan Evans, Wiltshire Council.

You too can become a member of WIN and contribute to these debates. Joining is free and our WIN team are always happy to hear your thoughts and concerns. If you would like to talk to any of the WIN Team, their contact details are below:

Dot Kronda (WIN Officer): 01380 871800

Martin Fortune (WIN Support Worker): 01380 871800

Mary Rennie (WIN Support Worker): 01380 735525

Lucie Woodruff (WIN Administrator): 01380 871800

Wiltshire Independent Travel Support (WITS)



The WITS project is still going from strength to strength, and we have just successfully supported over 200 service users to travel independently, since WITS was launched in 2007.

Unfortunately we have been informed by Wiltshire Council that they will not be continuing the funding after 31st March 2011. This means we are all working very hard to try to secure some more funding.

The Travel Supporters continue to be really busy especially as Wayne has taken some time off from work to travel the world and the last time we heard he was travelling to sunnier climates in Australia.

We have seen an increase in younger service users being referred for travel training for accessing full time education and work experience, with the fantastic news that one has been offered a job.

The WITS Team from left to right and top to bottom:
Lisa Hawkins, Wayne Martin, Christine Keepence, Indie,
Sally Cobb and Peter North



Wiltshire Independent Travel Support



Louise Rendle
Head of Network Services



Peter North
WITS
Co-ordinator



Indie



Christine Keepence
Travel Supporter

Community Development



Lisa Hawkins
Travel Supporter



Wayne Martin
Travel Supporter



Sally Cobb
Travel Supporter



Dot Krona
Development Outreach Worker



Denise Cooper
Development Outreach Worker



Nick Crane
Development Outreach Worker



Martin Fortune
Research & Academic Liaison Officer

Finance



Claire Selway
Finance Officer



Lisa Chadwick
Admin Assistant



Caroline Snow
Personal Assistant



Gemma Holdway
Office Manager



Jessica Johnston
Admin Assistant



Sue Sims
Admin Assistant

Administration

Wiltshire & Swindon Users' Network's Contact Details



01380 871800



Wiltshire & Swindon Users' Network, Independent Living Centre, St. George's Road, Semington, BA14 6JQ



info.wsun@btconnect.com