

**Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group
Tues 27th January 2009 - Compass Disability Meetings Room**

Those Present

Lisa Redston – Policy Support Officer, Taunton Deane Borough Council

Sarah Hill – Telecare Services Team Manager, The Deane Helpline.

Rosie Reed – Caseworker, Home Aid Partnership

Christine Snowdon – Taunton Deane Grants Officer.

Equalities

Lisa Redston gave an update on the legal duties that the council have to consult with people on policies and services and the contacts at the Council for equalities. Both Helen Phillips and Lisa will be involved in the forthcoming work.

Equality Impact Assessments last took place in 2006 and are currently being reviewed. 60 assessments are being reviewed across all functions. An impact assessment is a tool or framework that allows a service to thoroughly assess the impact of its services in terms of the customers it serves and the staff that it employs using data, consultation and any other information that is available. Findings have to be translated into equality action plans and service plans are monitored and have named responsibilities for action and identified resources if appropriate. The impact assessment is a public document.

Lisa discussed possible opportunities for the group to get involved in the review of the impact assessments, documents could be provided in advance for people to review and then a meeting could be held to discuss further. A representative from the Macular Disease Society requested documents to be printed in Arial font size 12-14 with left justification.

Other future plans to involve people include a consultation at Deane House to get to know Taunton Deane better. Lisa agreed that individuals could contact her with any issues they have (see details at the end).

Many people present at the meeting expressed concerns over a number of locations where access was an issue, particularly for wheelchair users and scooter users. The areas discussed were;

- Hamilton Road/ Bridgwater Road.
- Crossing to Morrisons Garage – one side is level one is not.
- Travelling on Galmington Road from Trull Road – no pavement.
- Gulleys outside the Police Station.

Many other areas were discussed. A question was raised as to what the local council can do as most issues are the responsibility of highways? Lisa agreed that as this is an area of concern to many the Council can discuss this with Highways to see what can be done, however more specific information on locations would be needed.

Following the meeting it has been agreed that SAIN will look into this further as a wider piece of work to give all members a chance to participate. The purpose will be to identify the issues and report collectively to Somerset County Councils Highways Agency. We will be discussing this further with Somerset County Council to establish how this can be done. More information will follow on this.

The need to consider visually impaired people at crossings and in public buildings was raised. Changes currently taking place at Musgrove hospital include the addition of building names on the floor at the entrance. Concerns over the accessibility and lighting of Taunton Deanes reception area were raised. Lisa advised that South West One were now responsible for Customer Service and that a contact person is sat at the entrance to the building for assistance if required. A suggestion was for the group to visit to give their views on area.

One member asked if the Council could help when they have a complaint with organisations such as petrol stations where poor customer service (access) has been experienced. Lisa explained that the Council could not help with this. The Equality and Human Rights Commission provide advice on how to complain to organisations, contact details can be found at the end of this document.

Deane Helpline

Sarah Hill – Telecare Services Team Manager provided information on the Lifeline service and the different types of equipment available through the service such as;

- Smoke Detectors
- Movement Detectors
- Heat Sensors
- Flood Detectors
- Fall Detectors
- Bogus Caller Button

To access the service you can self refer by contacting the Helpline directly. Someone will visit you to discuss your requirements in more detail. The service was fortunate to receive a grant from Telecare last year to spend on additional

equipment. They are currently trying to seek additional grant funding again for this year.

There is no charge for installation, £3.48 per week is the charge for the service. Extra items are supplied at no additional charge at the moment and is dependant on the Helpline receiving funding for this service.

They also act as key holders for approximately 4,000 people in the area with procedures to contact the emergency services where necessary.

Home Aid Partnership

Rosie Reed gave an overview of the Handyman Scheme which is available to Elderly and Disabled residents living in the Taunton Deane area. The service is a mobile repairs service making home visits to carry out small repairs or other jobs. Referrals may be taken from individuals or via organisations. The charge for the service is £8 or £12 per hour depending on your financial circumstances. For services such as changing light bulbs there is small charge.

Warm Front

Christine Snowdon then provided information on Warm Front which is a government funded scheme providing grants to make your home warmer, healthier and more energy-efficient. Grants are available for people on certain benefits and own their own home or rent it from a private landlord. Improvements that can be provided include;

- Loft insulation
- Draughtproofing
- Cavity-wall insulation
- Hot-water-tank insulation
- Gas or oil central heating
- Glass-fronted fire (conversion from solid-fuel).

If your grant from Warm Front does not cover the whole costs of the work, top-ups are available from Taunton Deane.

Questions raised by the group;

Q: In Council occupied property where heating is not adequate, why isn't it possible to obtain gas heating to the premises?

A: Christine to enquire with property services.

Q: Neighbourhood care – concern that the costs to decorate a hallway was quoted high (£500), the group would like to know more about the charges.

A: Rosie to enquire and feedback.

Contact Details

Equalities – Taunton Deane Borough Council

Lisa Redston – Policy Support Officer 01823 356481 ext 2746

Email: l.redston@tauntondeane.gov.uk

Equality and Human Commission Disability Helpline

FREEPOST

MID02164

Stratford Upon Avon

CV37 9BR

Tel: 08457 622 633

www.equalityhumanrights.com

The Deane Helpline 01823 257185 (Lifeline Service)

Community Handyman Service Tel: 01823 356327

Warm Front

Benefit Entitlement Check Team 0800 072 9006

General Enquiries 0800 316 6011