



**Compass
Disability
Services**

Pointing you in the right direction

April 2011

NETWORKER

BBC heads for Disability Somerset!

BBC Radio Somerset will be attending our Disability Somerset exhibition next month.

Presenter Emma Britton (pictured right) will officially open the exhibition and then host the Morning Show live from the BBC Somerset Bus.

The radio show will feature a variety of disability-related issues, stories and discussions, including interviews with visitors and exhibitors and a phone-in throughout the morning.

Disability Somerset has been organised by Compass Disability Services and takes place on **Thursday, May 19 from 10am to 6pm** at the **Sedgemoor Auction Centre**, just off junction 24 of the M5 near North Petherton.

It will cover the entire spectrum of disability and feature organisations exhibiting services, products, equipment, mobility aids – anything that relates to disability.

The event will provide disabled people, carers, older people and professionals with a great opportunity to view the wealth of information and support available to enhance quality of life.

All facilities at the Sedgemoor Auction



Centre, including cafes and licensed bar, are fully accessible with ample free parking available.

Richard Pitman, CEO of Compass Disability Services, said: "Disability Somerset is the county's first major disability exhibition and will be an invaluable event for exhibitors and disabled people, professionals and carers across the region.

"We're delighted BBC Somerset will be attending the event and helping promote independent living across the county."

■ There is still time for exhibitors to book a stand at Disability Somerset.

To enquire about availability and to request an exhibitor pack, email greg@compassdisability.org.uk

Visitors can register for free tickets by filling out a form on our website, www.disabilitysomerset.org.uk

Entry is free but tickets will entitle visitors to priority entrance and a goody bag, which will include a copy of Disability Now magazine.

■ **FOR more Disability Somerset news, see pages 12 and 13.**

The Networker is produced by Compass Disability Services,

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Website: www.compassdisability.org.uk Registered Charity Number: 1099376.

COMPASS POINTS

COMPASS Disability Services is an innovative, enlightened and positive organisation.

Our mission is 'to enable disabled people to have equality of opportunity'. Our values, beliefs, and mission have allowed us to spread our influence not only in Somerset but also into North Somerset and Wiltshire.

Compass Disability Services is a user-led organisation and our Board of Trustees is comprised of at least 80% disabled people. Our guiding principles give us the authority to explore options to give a voice to disabled people. Compass Disability Services works through consultation, representation and service delivery, facilitating various projects.

Please help our fundraising push!

GIVEN the harsh economic climate, Compass Disability Services is becoming increasingly reliant on the generous donations we receive from our supporters.

Fundraising is essential to allow the organisation to continue enabling disabled people to have equality of opportunity through improved access to all services and facilities.

There are many ways that you can support Compass Disability Services to continue its good work – most without even spending a penny!

You can raise valuable funds by recycling jewellery, foreign currency or



even old cars, through the Giveacar scheme.

By surfing the web with the 'easysearch' search engine, which combines the results of Yahoo!, Bing and Ask, you raise half a penny for Compass Disability Services every time you search.

And, if you shop online using links through Easysearch's Easyfundraising site, a cashback donation will be generated for our charity.

You might consider leaving a donation to Compass Disability Services in your will. We have teamed up with Legal365.com to offer you the opportunity to create a bespoke legal will online completely free of charge.

Or, when someone close to you dies, you may wish for people to remember them by donating to Compass Disability Services instead of sending flowers.

You can, of course, also support our work by setting up a regular donation or by giving a one off donation of your choice.

For more information on all of these fundraising initiatives, visit our website www.compassdisability.org.uk and click on 'Support & Fundraising' or contact Michelle Edwards on 01823 282823 or email

michelle@compassdisability.org.uk

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Back Welcome to Livewire readers

We gain prestigious quality accreditation!

COMPASS Disability Services has achieved a prestigious internationally-recognised quality accreditation.

The organisation has been awarded certification to the ISO 9001:2008 standard after a stringent assessment.

ISO 9001:2008 is a quality mark for company management systems.

It means Compass Disability Services has quality systems, practices and

procedures in place to ensure service users are given the best possible standards of service. Many of the world's top firms and leading High Street brands in Britain have gained ISO 9001:2008.

Michelle Edwards, Compass Disability Services' Operations Manager, said: "To sit alongside so many top, well-established firms is an extraordinary achievement for us."

Follow Parliament march on Facebook and Twitter

YOU can keep up to date with the 'Hardest Hit – Defending disabled people's future' march on Parliament on May 11, by following us on Facebook and Twitter.

Compass Disability Services' CEO Richard Pitman will be attending the demo, organised by UKDPC, and posting live blog, photo and video updates to Twitter and Facebook.

Thousands of disabled people, family members and friends are marching to

express solidarity and anger at the cuts threatening benefits, services and rights.

After the march, protestors will lobby MPs as the Welfare Reform Bill reaches a critical stage in the House of Commons.

To follow the march become a fan of Compass Disability Services on Facebook and follow @Compassdis on Twitter.

Let us know what you think about the march by posting comments and observations on our pages.

Become a member and have your say

DISABLED people will get an opportunity to have a say on the issues important to them by becoming a member of Compass Insight.

Compass Insight is a new project established by Compass Disability Services to gain a snap-shot of opinion on disability-related issues in Somerset and North Somerset.

Members will be asked to complete regular surveys – of no more than five questions. The information will then be published or passed on to commissioners such as local authorities, health service and the police force to use when developing services and facilities or formulating policy.

Compass Disability Services CEO Richard Pitman said: "We believe



Compass Insight

Compass Insight will provide disabled people with a simple but effective way to communicate their views on important local issues.

"Surveys will take no more than a couple of minutes to complete but, as long as enough people take part, will produce an accurate measure on a range of disability-related issues. Remember, this is your chance to make a difference."

Anyone living in Somerset and North Somerset, who would like to become a member of Compass Insight should email greg@compassdisability.org.uk and provide your name, age, address, phone number and disability. Internet access is preferable but not essential as we can contact you by phone.



Compass Disability Network

Join the Network today and have your say

THE Compass Disability Network brings together disabled people, their carers and organisations that represent disabled people, to access views on various topics.

It works with local authorities and other agencies to ensure the views of disabled people can be used to shape and influence the way services and facilities are developed.

This may take the form of focus group meetings, questionnaires, interviews or other means, whatever is appropriate to the piece of work that is being undertaken.

There are currently two Networks operating in different areas.

The Network in **Somerset** was formerly known as the Somerset Access and Inclusion Network (SAIN) and was established in May 2000.

The Network in **North Somerset** was started in 2010 and is still in the early stages of development.



Membership of the Network is **free**. All members receive a free copy of the Networker newsletter and can be involved in as many or as few of the projects as they wish. So, why not join today?

Anyone interested should contact us on 01823 282823 for an information leaflet and membership form.

You can also complete an online form by going to www.compassdisabilitynetwork.org.uk and following the links for membership.

The Compass Disability Network also aims to bring together groups, organisations and professionals that work with or represent disabled people.

Contact us if you would like your organisation to become an associate member of the Network.

■ **CATCH up with the latest news from the Compass Disability Network Somerset and North Somerset in the next three pages of Networker.**



Regeneration on agenda at Sedgemoor Forum

THE next meeting of the Sedgemoor Disability Forum will take place on Wednesday, June 8 from 10.30am until 3pm at Victoria Park Community Centre in Bridgwater.

At the last forum, held at the Princess Hall in Burnham, participants posed questions to representatives from Sedgemoor District Council, Avon and Somerset Police and Homes in Sedgemoor on a host of issues relating to disability in the area.

Mandy Seaman, coordinator of the Network Somerset, said: "The Sedgemoor Disability Forum has gone from strength to strength since it was established. It gives disabled people an invaluable opportunity to engage with important service providers and have a say on issues that affect their day-to-day lives."

Angela Farmer, Equalities Lead at Sedgemoor District Council, who attended the last meeting, added: "The forum is an

excellent way of joining together with like-minded people, to work with the council and other public sector bodies to understand issues and find solutions."

Topics to be discussed at the next Forum in June include regeneration. Teresa Harvey, Sedgemoor District Council's Group Manager of Community and Wellbeing will be attending to give an update. The new provider of care and repair services, Ridgeway Care and Repair, will also be attending and a short survey concerning access to buildings will be carried out.

Future Forums and topics include:

- September 2011 – Cheddar, covering local issues and next year's Budget Consultation.

- November 2011 – Burnham On Sea, Highways and Benefits Update.

Transport can be provided to enable you to attend the Forum – for more information please contact us.

Deane group discuss Orchard Centre seating

LEADER of Taunton Deane Borough Council, Cllr John Williams, attended the Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group on March 29.

Cllr Williams fed back to the group on some of the issues raised at the September meeting. He updated the group on the development of the Castle Green area in Taunton and the extra funding that has been given to the SLINKY bus service as a result of the reallocation in funding of the taxi voucher scheme.

The group also discussed the new seating in the Orchard Centre in Taunton, abuse of blue badge parking bays and shared experiences of using public transport.

A report from the meeting will be available shortly. Please contact Mandy if

you would like a copy.

Issues that group members stated they would like to discuss at future meetings include Highways, Project Taunton, Housing and Establishing links with Young Disabled People. Taunton Deane Borough Council will be carrying out a Budget Consultation at the next meeting in June, and the new Home Improvement Agency in Somerset, Ridgeway Care and Repair will be attending.

Future meetings take place on: Tuesday, June 28 2011, 10.30am to 12.30pm; Tuesday, September 27 2011, 10.30am to 12.30pm; Tuesday, November 29 2011, 10.30am to 12.30pm; Tuesday, March 27 2012 10.30am to 12.30pm.

■ Network Somerset news
continued on page 6

Group's bid successful!

THE Taunton Deane Disability Discussion Group is delighted to report it has been successful with an application to Taunton Deane's Voluntary and Community Grants Fund. It enables the group to continue running for another year.

Tell us what you think about the Network

IT is the time of year again when we distribute our Annual Membership Evaluation questionnaire.

The aim of the questionnaire is to obtain your valuable feedback on your experience of being a member of the Compass Disability Network Somerset and use this information to develop our services accordingly.

You should hopefully have received a

copy in the post by now.

If you prefer to complete this electronically, we are offering the option to complete the questionnaire online at www.surveymonkey.com/s/6PD9NXV which is also available on our website.

We are very grateful to our members for taking the time to complete this and will publish some of the results in the next Networker.

- For more information on the **Compass Disability Network Somerset** or to advise us that you will be attending an event, contact Mandy Seaman on 01823 282823 or email mandy@compassdisability.org.uk

Network North Somerset news Network North Somerset news Network North Somerset news

Local transport schemes playing a vital role

COMMUNITY transport groups and voluntary car schemes offer tailored services for the elderly or those with mobility problems who have trouble using public transport.

They play a vital role and cater for thousands of journeys across North Somerset, in many cases transporting residents who have no other means of getting out and about.

Within North Somerset there are two large dial-a-ride providers operating a fleet of wheelchair accessible minibuses for dial-a-ride, shopping trips, group hire and numerous day trips throughout the year.

The trips have also proved to be a great way for people to make new friends.

The vehicles cater for wheelchairs and most walking aids and the friendly staff are on hand to help passengers get on board.

North Somerset also has numerous car schemes run by volunteer organisations.

These mainly provide transport to medical appointments, including to the Bristol hospitals and local health centres. These organisations really embrace community spirit and are always on the look out for new volunteers.

To find out about your local scheme, pick up a copy of the latest Directory of Services leaflet in your local library, or contact the council's Public Transport Team on 01934 426716 for more information.



Find us on
Facebook

You can now connect with
Compass Disability Services
on our social media sites



follow us on
twitter

Council responds to consultation report

The **Compass Disability Network North Somerset** has received a response to its consultation report (from meetings held last November) from the Public Transport team at North Somerset Council.

The Council has provided the following information to feed back to members in response to the topics raised.

Wheelchair access on bus services

North Somerset Council ensures that many of the contracted bus services use low-floor, wheelchair accessible vehicles although this is not possible on all routes.

There are occasional issues of reliability in operating these vehicles which understandably has a knock-on effect on user confidence.

Legal requirements mean that all local bus services will be low-floor, wheelchair accessible buses by 2015 and North Somerset is ahead of target with the installation of raised kerbs to complement this.

The Council also provides a Diamond Travelcard to qualifying disabled residents, which makes bus travel free for cardholders. For more information about the Diamond Travelcard scheme contact Care Connect, whose details can be found on page 15.

The North Somerset Travel Map also provides details on accessible bus stops and low floor services. These are also available from our outlets or on request by calling 01934 426711. The Travel Map is also available on the Council website.

Accessible Taxis

North Somerset Council is aware that there are a number of accessible taxis operating across the district – but

acknowledge that the largest concentration is in Weston-super-Mare – and that these can be booked in advance.

The issues raised during the consultation will be discussed further with the Taxi Licensing Team.

Community Transport

North Somerset Council has recently commissioned the Weston and District Community Transport and Nailsea and District Community Transport groups to provide wheelchair accessible dial-a-ride services covering the vast majority of the district.

The Council also supports a network of voluntary car schemes which provide a transport link to health services.

The support that the Council gives to community transport will be affected by budgetary pressures, but they are committed to supporting the important work these services do in the community.

Last year North Somerset Council also published the first comprehensive Community Transport Directory, which showcases all of the schemes available within North Somerset. This directory is available from libraries, information centres and the Town Hall. Copies can also be requested by contacting 01934 426716 or by following links from the North Somerset Council website.

Information

The West of England travel website www.gettingaboutgreaterbristol.org – being developed by North Somerset Council and other authorities – is currently undergoing an overhaul which should bring improvements and better updates.

● Anyone interested in becoming an individual or associate member of the **Compass Disability Network North Somerset** should contact Nat Stevens on 01823 282823 or email: nats@compassdisability.org.uk

Free course for carers

ST John Ambulance Somerset, in association

St John Ambulance



with Somerset County Council, are putting on free courses for carers.

If you are caring for someone at home, feel isolated and under pressure and would like more skills and knowledge, the course is for you. The programme consists of four weekly sessions of three hours each, starting at 10.30am.

Week one will include an introduction and the carer's role, week two first aid and preventing falls, week three safer moving and handling, continence, and benefits, and week four dementia and stress management.

The courses take place in nine towns across Somerset. To find out more and to book your place, contact Emily Lang on 01278 726740 or email emily.lang@somerset.sja.org.uk

Unique opportunity for disabled dancers

NATIONAL Star College, near Cheltenham, is offering a unique opportunity for disabled dancers and theatre makers.

The College is looking to recruit ten artists for their 'Ignite' development programme, which is designed to develop skills in choreography, leadership and teaching.

The programme, which is led by leaders in the field, is based on the UK-wide recognised 'Passport to Practice' course. For more information on the programme and to apply, go to www.gloucestershiredance.org.uk

ASBAH launches campaign

A NEW campaign urging all women who might become pregnant to take the correct dose of folic acid everyday has been launched.



Go Folic!

The Go Folic! initiative was launched at the House of Commons by the Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (ASBAH).

Go Folic! calls on all women who might become pregnant to take folic acid each day.

Folic Acid is recommended by the NHS because it helps prevent birth defects such as spina bifida.

For more information, go to www.gofolic.co.uk

Take a Walk on the Wild Side

A PROMOTIONAL film has been made for the 'Walk on the Wild Side' challenge, to raise funds for the charity Mind's 'Go Wild, Stay Well' project.

The challenge – a 30-mile or 15-mile walk on the stunning Quantock greenway – takes place on



Saturday, July 2. To view the film go to <http://bit.ly/egtcBM> or contact Dave Urwin (daveurwin@mindtws.org.uk or 01823 334906) for more information.

The Go Wild, Stay Well project, funded by Ecominds, has been set up to enable people who experience mental distress to undertake physical activity against an inspiring backdrop to improve overall mental health.

Springboard celebrates 25th anniversary

A NORTH Somerset children's charity is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2011.

Springboard Opportunity Group supports children with disabilities and additional needs from birth to five years.

The organisation offers specialist play sessions at its purpose-built nurseries in Clevedon and Weston-super-Mare.

It also offers parents and carers the advice, information and emotional support they need in order to help their children.

Springboard was established by a small group of parents in 1986. Since then, it has worked with almost 900 children, and now provides a vital service to over 90 families each and every week.

Children and families are sometimes referred to Springboard via their health visitor, speech and language therapist, or physiotherapist, but parents and carers are welcome to contact the charity directly to arrange a visit or informal discussion.



The charity also runs a successful Early Years Inclusion Service, supplying support to enable individual children to attend their local pre-school or nursery, and has two Family Support workers to offer additional help and advice.

Springboard works with local education, health and social care professionals. It benefits from a strong team of qualified and experienced staff, dedicated and hard-working volunteers, and a successful fundraising group, the Friends of Springboard. It has also been named as Bristol Airport's charity of the year.

As a charity, Springboard relies on the generosity of individual donors and Friends of Springboard to enable it to continue supporting local children.

If you would like to find out more about the support offered by Springboard, call 01275 341113, email info@springboardweb.org.uk

Players coached by past and present British No 1s

PAST and present British No 1 wheelchair tennis players visited Taunton Tennis Club in March for the latest Tennis Foundation Wheelchair Tennis Camps.

Players had chance to benefit from the experience of four-time Paralympian Janet McMorran, the last British women's No 1 before the current reign of world No 7 Lucy Shuker, who trains at the Taunton facility and also visited the camp.

"It was great to have Janet and Lucy along to encourage our new players at the camp in Taunton. While some players may decide to go on and play wheelchair tennis



as part of a fun and healthy lifestyle, we hope many will also enjoy the chance to play in our new Development Series tournaments."

For more information about any of the upcoming camps, tournaments or disability tennis in general visit www.tennisfoundation.org.uk/disabilitytennis

Mobility aids market study launched after concerns

THE Office of Fair Trading (OFT) has launched a market study into mobility aids after concerns about the sector were raised.

The study will cover wheelchairs, scooters, stair lifts, bath aids, hoists and adjustable beds, and specialist seating.

It will consider whether consumers are able to access, assess and act on the right information to purchase the right mobility aid and help drive competition among firms. It also aims to find out if consumers are treated fairly by traders and suppliers.

Many consultation responses raised concerns about consumers' inability to make informed decisions when purchasing a mobility aid, which could lead to them being overcharged, purchasing low quality products, or purchasing products that either fall short of or exceed their needs.

Concerns were also raised about traders' or suppliers' use of high pressure sales tactics.

Ann Pope, OFT Senior Director of

Goods, said: "Mobility aids are important products for elderly and disabled people, which can significantly improve the quality of their lives. For many, they are an absolute necessity.

"Consultation with the industry, consumer groups and others has supported our initial view that there are consumer and competition issues in this sector that need examining, to see if outcomes for consumers can be improved.

"We have had positive engagement with a wide range of parties and look forward to working constructively with the industry and others during the course of our study."

The UK mobility aids sector was estimated to be worth around £500 million in 2008. It attracts a large number of calls to Consumer Direct, the OFT-managed advice service, from people complaining or asking for advice. In 2010, over 4,500 such calls were made.

The OFT aims to publish its market study in September 2011.

Calls for evidence in inquiry into rights of disabled people

THE Joint Committee of Human Rights is conducting an inquiry into the implementation of the right to independent living for disabled people, as guaranteed in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

As part of the inquiry, the Committee is inviting interested persons and groups to submit evidence on this issue and would welcome written submissions by Friday, April 29th 2011.

The Committee particularly welcomes submissions from disabled people and their families about independent living and how Government policies, practices and legislation or the activities of public authorities can implement the right to independent living. For more information, go to <http://bit.ly/hSYk2R>

Extra £11m made available to DFG

THE Government has announced an extra £11m has been made available to the Disabled Facilities Grant (DFG).

It means £180m will be allocated to local authorities for the Grant, which helps disabled people to live as comfortably and independently as possible in their own homes through the provision of adaptations.

The Disabled Facilities Grant programme has been protected within the spending review.

For full details, go to <http://bit.ly/e4hMhn>

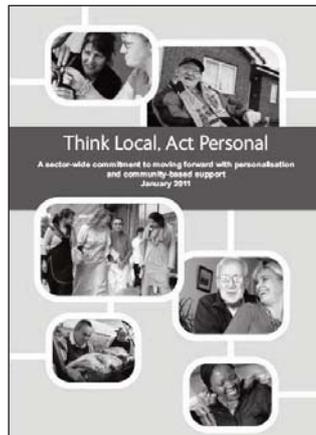
Personalisation is the future in new social care document

A NEW document setting out the future of social care has been produced.

Think Local, Act Personal sets out how councils, health bodies, providers and other community organisations will work more closely to enable individuals, their families and carers to have greater choice and control over their care and support.

The sector-wide statement incorporates the Government's plans for social care – to make services more personalised – and has been endorsed by 24 leading national organisations such as the Department of Health and Age UK.

The personalisation of social care is the process of enabling people to have maximum choice and control over the



services they receive, such as taking a Direct Payment – a cash payment from Adult Social Care based on an assessment of the amount of support needed.

Local authorities, such as Somerset County Council, are responsible for social care and have been encouraged to implement a personalisation agenda, but are at different

stages of the process.

In September, the Department of Health, ADASS and the LGA produced a number of 'milestones' for authorities to chart their progress on personalisation, including a target of having 30% of users and carers on personal budgets by April 2011.

View the full document at <http://bit.ly/igGutH>

Guidance issued on definition of disability

THE Government has published draft guidance on what must be taken into account when determining questions relating to the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010.

Existing guidance was produced under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the updated guidance reflects the revised definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010. The Act provides that

a person has a disability if he or she has a physical or mental impairment, which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

The guidance, expected to come into force on May 1st, can be found on the Office for Disability Issues website – <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/docs/law/ea/ea-draft-guide.pdf>

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E-mail: Highgrove14@sky.com



Grants for gardening

HELP could be at hand for people who have a passion for gardening but struggle due to health problems.

Gardening for Disabled Trust awards grants so people may continue to garden, despite advancing illness, age or disability. Please go to www.gardeningfordisabledtrust.org.uk for more information or to apply for a grant.



Thursday, May 19th, 10am to 6pm
Sedgemoor 24 Auction Centre
(just off jct 24 of M5 near North Petherton)



Promoting disability awareness in the South West

DISABILITY Somerset is an exhibition promoting independent living and all things relating to disability.

Our mission at Compass Disability Services is to enable disabled people to have equality of opportunity.

The exhibition has been organised with this in mind and to help promote disability awareness throughout Somerset and the South West. As Somerset is a very rural county and some people are hard to reach, Disability Somerset is the ideal opportunity to increase awareness of the products, services and information that could enhance quality of life.

So why not come along to Disability Somerset? The excellent Sedgemoor Auction Centre venue is fully accessible,



■ An exhibition at the Sedgemoor Auction Centre.

with two cafes, a bar and plenty of parking. We are also in discussions with First Group over the possibility of buses driving up to the venue's entrance on the day of the exhibition.

■ **If you're interested in exhibiting, sponsorship/advertising, applying for free tickets or would simply like to find out more about Disability Somerset, please contact Greg Jackson on 01823 282823 or email greg@compassdisability.org.uk**

Reach thousands as event main sponsor

IF your organisation is unable to exhibit at Disability Somerset but would still like to be involved, there are a number of exciting sponsorship and advertising opportunities to take advantage of.

The exclusive offer of Disability Somerset **MAIN SPONSOR** will allow your organisation to reach thousands of disabled people and disability-related organisation throughout Somerset and beyond. For £600, your logo will appear on exhibition posters, flyers, tickets as well as the front and back cover of our special Disability Somerset programme, along with advertising and editorial space.

There will also be generous rates for eighth, quarter, half and full page adverts in the event programme – a 16-page colour publication, distributed to doctor's surgeries, Active Living and Day Care Centres, Citizen Advice Bureaus and many more locations in Somerset and North Somerset.

An information stand will be set up in the main exhibition hall where organisations can display their leaflets, brochures or flyers, for a small fee.

If you are interested in any sponsorship/advertising opportunities, please contact us.

April focus: Disability Somerset

Networking opportunity

COMPASS Disability Services' associate members will have the opportunity to link up with fellow voluntary and community organisations at a special networking event at Disability Somerset.

Lucy Nicholls, from the Somerset LINK, and Jo Purvis, Project Manager for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), will explore how voluntary, user-led and civil society organisations can use the opportunities presented by the JSNA to demonstrate the value of their work to commissioners.

Also on the agenda will be a workshop focussing on the government's 'Big Society' and its implications for voluntary and community sector organisations.

To get involved or to find out more, please email Nat Stevens – nats@compassdisability.org.uk

The logo for Somerset Care & Repair features the text "Somerset Care & Repair" in a bold, sans-serif font, with a large blue ampersand symbol. Surrounding the logo are several circular icons representing different services: "STAIRLIFTS" (red), "EASY ACCESS BATHING" (teal), "ADVICE & SUPPORT" (light blue), "DISABLED ADAPTATIONS" (pink), "GARDENING" (green), and "PLUS OTHER SERVICES!" (dark blue). Below the logo, a blue banner reads "The recommended Care & Repair service".

For **FREE ADVICE** on: • Stairlifts • Handyperson • Decorating • Easy Access Bathing • Small/large building work and more ...

Call today **01749 345379**

Email: melina.buckling@somersetcareandrepair.co.uk
www.somersetcareandrepair.co.uk

Barley House, The Old Brewery, Charlton Estate
Shepton Mallet, Somerset BA4 5QE

Industrial & Provident Society with Charitable Status Reg No. 28896R

 Home Improvement Agency
Making Homes Warm, Safe & Secure

■ **DISABILITY Somerset will be far more than just an exhibition. There will also be a number of activities for visitors to take part in, such as visually-impaired football and wheelchair line dancing, as well a networking event for charities and voluntary organisations to attend (see article above).**

Find out who will be exhibiting at Disability Somerset

A WIDE variety of exhibitors will be attending Disability Somerset.

To find out whose services, products and equipment you will be able to view, see the list below. However, these are only the confirmed exhibitors as of March 23, when

the Networker went to press.

The final list will include many more and you can keep up to date with who will be exhibiting go going to www.disabilitysomerset.org.uk and clicking on the exhibitors list.

Acacia Training and Development • Active Assistance • Active Design Ltd • Advocacy in Somerset • Age UK Somerset • The Alzheimers Society • Arelle Products Ltd • Arthritis Care • Association for Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus (ASBAH) • Automated Door Systems • British Red Cross • Calvert Trust • Canine Partners • Care Focus Somerset • Careflex Ltd • Cerebra • Dame Hannah Rogers Trust • Disability Claim Management • Dolphin Computer Access • ETAC • Fish Insurance • Flourish Homes • Gerald Simonds Healthcare • Guide Dogs for the Blind • Humanware • Jubilee Sailing Trust • Kirton Healthcare/AJ Way • The Magdalen Project • Mountaintrike • Multiple Sclerosis Society • The National Autistic Society • Orthotix • Parkinsons UK • Queen Alexandra College • Quest 88 Ltd • Remap • Royal National College for the Blind • RNID • Scope • Somerset Active Living and NHS Somerset • Somerset Care and Repair • Somerset Continence Service (NHS) • Somerset County Council (Community Directorate) • Symmetrikit/The Helping Hand Company • The Mobility Aids Centre • Thera South West • Vision Aid Technologies • Vitalise • Wiltshire Farm Foods •

What's been making news?



Catch up with the disability-related stories that have been hitting the local and national headlines

QC urges hate crime crackdown

YOBS who name call and verbally abuse disabled people can expect to be prosecuted for hate crime, the country's top prosecutor has said.

Keir Starmer QC, the Director of Public Prosecutions, warned name calling, mimicking and bullying of disabled people are all crimes but not enough victims realise. He urged more to come forward and also admitted prosecutors are "still in the foothills" when it comes to prosecuting such offences.

■ From the Daily Telegraph, March 3 – <http://bit.ly/fLD7B5>

Blue Badge changes welcomed

DISABLED groups are welcoming a government crackdown on the widespread abuse of the 'blue badge' parking scheme in England.

There are an estimated 2.5 million badges in circulation, allowing drivers to park on yellow lines as well as avoid parking and congestion charges.

The changes will see local authorities gain more powers to seize badges they think are being misused.

■ From BBC News website, Feb 14 – <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-12435529>

Local woman's new lease of life

A DISABLED Taunton woman has told how her dog has given her the courage to live again after a serious road accident left her unable to walk.

Ann Norcott, 51, became paraplegic after being involved in a serious road traffic accident aged 34.

■ From the Somerset County Gazette, March 11 – <http://bit.ly/hv1LVQ>

New disabled cycling scheme

A SCHEME that allows disabled children and their families to rent special bicycles has launched at Six Cycles in Taunton.

The initiative is part of Somerset County Council's 'Aiming High' programme, which seeks to create and improve services for disabled children across the county.

■ From the Somerset County Gazette, February 23 – <http://bit.ly/eE1bdH>

Protestors on remote offensive

MANY disabled people are horrified at the proposed changes to benefits but, for some, street protests are unrealistic.

Instead, disability rights campaigner Kaliya Franklin is fighting government cuts to disability benefits through the website The Broken of Britain.

■ From the Guardian, March 23 – <http://bit.ly/hSZKIA>

Emergency SMS scheme success

A SCHEME that allows disabled people to contact the emergency services by text message should be made mandatory, independent regulator Ofcom has advised.

Ofcom's proposal follows a year-long trial of the text service, used predominantly by deaf and speech-impaired people who find it difficult to use the phone. The scheme, which has 14,500 registered users, has been successful with around one emergency text a day requiring emergency services.

■ From March 2 – <http://bit.ly/gVDeUO>

Hub members help produce Somerset social care guide

COMPASS Disability Services' Somerset Adult Social Care Learning and Development Hub played a key role in the production of a new guide for social care staff.

Hub members helped develop two service user sections of Somerset's '**Social care governance: a workbook based on practice in England**', produced by Somerset County Council and the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

They provided audit questions for the 'involvement of people who use services and carers' and 'compliments, comments and complaints' sections of the workbook. The workbook is a quality assurance guide for social care staff and questions provided by the Hub are designed to help social care staff and organisations explore and improve practice.

The guide is available at www.scie.org.uk.

The Hub brings together groups of disabled people who are interested in the learning and development of adult social care staff in Somerset. The Hub provides opportunities for disabled people to share their experiences and skills to make social care staff improve their working practices and how they relate to service users.

The Hub meets bi-monthly – if you would like to get involved, contact Rachel Bye on 01823 282823 or email rachel@compassdisability.org.uk



USEFUL CONTACTS



Somerset Direct

PO Box 618, Taunton, TA1 3WF
Tel: 0845 3459133 Minicom: 0800 7834518
Email: adults@somerset.gov.uk

Care Connect North Somerset

North Somerset Council, Town Hall,
Weston-super-Mare, BS23 1UJ
Tel: 01275 888801 Minicom: 01275 888805
Email: care.connect@n-somerset.gov.uk

Somerset Primary Care Trust

Wynford House, Lufton Way
Yeovil, Somerset, BA22 8HR
Tel: 01935 384000 Fax: 01935 384079
Email: headquarters@somersetpct.nhs.uk

Somerset Patient Advice & Liaison Service

NHS Somerset, Freepost RRKL-XKSC-ACSG
Yeovil, BA22 8HR Tel: 0800 0851067
Email: pals@somerset.nhs.uk

North Somerset Primary Care Trust

Waverley House, Old Church Road,
Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 6NN
Tel: 01275 546770 Fax: 01275 546769

North Somerset Patient Advice and Liaison Service

Waverley House, Old Church Road,
Clevedon, North Somerset, BS21 6NN
Tel: 0800 923 2222 (Freephone)
Email: pals@nsomerset-pct.nhs.uk

NHS Direct Tel: 0845 4647

Equality and Human Rights Commission Disability Helpline

FREEPOST MID02164,
Stratford Upon Avon, CV37 9BR
Tel: 0845 6046610
Textphone: 08457 622644
Website: www.equalityhumanrights.com

RADAR

12 City Forum, 250 City Road, London,
EC1V 8AF Tel: 020 7250 3222
minicom: 020 7250 4119
Email: radar@radar.org.uk

Crimestoppers Tel: 0800 555111

■ IF you have an opinion or view on any of the articles or issues highlighted in the Networker, we want to hear them. Contact Greg Jackson on 01823 282823 or email greg@compassdisability.org.uk

Warm welcome to readers of Livewire!

A WARM welcome to all readers of Livewire who are receiving their first copy of Networker this month.

Networker is a free publication, produced by Compass Disability Services for anyone in Somerset and North Somerset with an interest in disability.

It is published every other month and carries news about the organisation, its services, members and associate members as well as the latest local and national disability-related stories.

Compass Disability Services is a user-led organisation whose mission is 'to enable disabled people to have equality of opportunity'. Our values, beliefs, and mission have allowed us to spread our influence not only in Somerset but also into North Somerset and Wiltshire.

If you would like to continue receiving Networker, we would be delighted to add you to our mailing list. All you have to do is fill out the form at the foot of the page, tick the box stating you would like to continue receiving Networker, and send back to us at the freepost address.

However, you might wish to become more involved with the organisation by becoming a member of the Compass Disability Network. It's free to join and by becoming a member you will be able to attend regular events, meet like-minded people and have a say in the way services and facilities are developed in Somerset.

To find out more about the Network, turn to page four, and to receive more information about joining, fill out the form below and tick the relevant box.

NETWORKER/NEW MEMBERS FORM

I would like to receive Networker

I would like more details about joining the Compass Disability Network

In which format would you prefer for any correspondence?

Written Large print Braille

Tape Email CD Other

Please state _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Is there any aspect of Livewire that you would like to see introduced to Networker? Please state: _____

Please send your completed form to the freepost address: **Freepost RRAA-RLEX-XXRU, Compass Disability Services, Unit 11-12 Belvedere Trading Estate, Taunton, TA1 1BH.**

Your personal information will be held and used in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998. The information you have provided will be used to contact you in association with Compass Disability Services' activities only. It will not be used for any other purpose or shared with any other organisation. You can ask us to remove your details from our records at any time by writing to us with your full name and address or by emailing info@compassdisability.org.uk