



# The Horse's Mouth

**A NEWSLETTER FOR USERS OF  
DIRECT PAYMENTS, INDEPENDENT  
LIVING FUND OR THOSE WHO SELF- FUND**

**June 2007**

## **From our Chief Executive**

The two months between each issue of the Horses Mouth seems to go past very fast, but there is still a great deal to put into each issue. Users have said that they find the content useful and I hope that continues to be so. We continue to look for suggestions as to what you would like to see in this news sheet, so do get in touch if you have any ideas.

I need to inform you all of a change to the managing organisation of the Direct Payment Support Service. We are now called 'Compass Disability Services'. The change from Somerset Access and Inclusion Network was long overdue as we have been operating outside Somerset for some time and the shortening to SAIN caused confusion. The service in Wiltshire will still be known as the Wiltshire direct Payment Support Service (WDPSS), so the only way we see this affecting Wiltshire service users is in the way our head office telephones are answered.

Richard Pitman, Chief Executive

## **Service User Meetings**

We will again be holding meetings for any Direct Payment or ILF user in Wiltshire. Although attendance at these last year was not great, the events were enjoyed by those who attended. They are a chance to meet up with the Direct Payment Advisors and staff from our head office, and this year our contracts manager from Wiltshire County Council also hopes to attend. There will be an opportunity to ask any questions you may have. The meetings will take place in four different venues around Wiltshire and contributions of up to £5 can be made towards transport, so we hope many of you will attend. We will be fixing dates and venues shortly and will send out invitations to you all.

## **Radar Keys**

The keys are for disabled toilets and for access to some other padlocked places, such as nature reserves. They are obtainable from our offices for the price of £3.60. Large handled keys are available for those people who have manual dexterity problems. If you would like one please forward a cheque made payable to Compass Disability Services to the address on the back page, stating whether you require a large handled or small handled key.

**The copy deadline for the August issue  
is  
Friday 20 July**

## Payroll Pieces

<b>Pay increases</b>  If the rate of pay for your PA increases, it is easy to let us know. Please phone the office and ask for, or leave a message for, Pam. You will be sent a form for signature. This authorises the pay increase, and just makes sure that no one else can increase payments to your PA without your consent!	<b>Yellow Payslip Booklets</b>  Some people have not received the booklet of payslips they use to make their tax and NI payments to Revenue and Customs. A little research has revealed that in many cases these have been sent to Rowan, despite notifying the tax office that they should now be sent to each employer. As Rowan will not	<b>(cont)</b>  tell us whose booklets they have received, our best suggestion is that employers who have not received their booklets should contact Revenue and Customs and request that another booklet be sent out. If you find this difficult, please contact our office and we will phone on your behalf.
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## News from Other Organisations

### GOJO to ease travel on public transport

GOJO is a new campaign from the DRC to help young disabled people make the most of public transport. The campaign is being launched to highlight recent changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which gave people who are disabled or have a long-term health condition the right, for the first time, to fair treatment on public transport.

The GOJO website is packed with useful information, such as an interactive journey planner, information on local services as well as hints and tips on planning ahead. Young disabled people, their friends and families can feed back their experiences of using public transport on the GOJO website.

Visit the GOJO website at [www.mygojo.co.uk](http://www.mygojo.co.uk)

### Know your rights - assistance dog owners

Disabled people who use assistance dogs quite often experience discrimination in doing everyday things other people take for granted. This is because shops, restaurants and other businesses sometimes object to assistance dogs being brought onto their premises.

It will usually be against the law to discriminate in this way. The DDA says that anyone who provides services, goods or facilities to the public cannot refuse to provide their service to a disabled person for a reason relating to that person's disability.

For advice and more information for assistance dog owners the DRC have produced a publication '[Know your rights guide - Assistance dog owners](#)' This can be downloaded from the DRC website.

## **Employer's Responsibilities**

This is just a gentle reminder for all those people employing their own Personal Assistants. There are responsibilities that go hand in hand with this. These cover such areas as accounting for tax and national insurance, ensuring PA's receive adequate training, providing a safe working environment and having employer's liability insurance. These responsibilities need to be taken seriously, but if anyone needs further clarification or support to ensure that they are meeting their obligations, please contact our office or your usual Direct Payment Advisor.

## **Employed or Self Employed?**

Before treating your PA as self employed rather than employed, you need to ensure that the tax office would agree that they are self employed. If you treat them as such and they disagree, the employer (i.e. you) could be responsible for the unpaid tax and national insurance. If you are not sure contact us or look on the Revenue and Customs website [www.hmrc.gov.uk](http://www.hmrc.gov.uk). From their home page click onto 'self employed' on the 'individuals and employees' list and then follow through 'employed or self employed'.

## **Monitoring our Services**

Our service monitoring meeting with Wiltshire County Council took place in May as planned and went quite well. However, no service users were present and the Council's are struggling to get users involved in feedback. They are therefore currently considering how best to do this. We will update you further as soon as we know more.

## **The Networker**

Compass Disability services produce a newsletter called 'The Networker'. It has general information about what the organisation is up to and other things going on within Somerset. We do not generally send it to people outside Somerset, as it has less relevance, but if anyone would like to be added to our mailing list please phone the office and ask.

## **WCC Disability Equality Scheme**

Every Council in the country should now have a disability equality scheme with an action plan. Not all Councils do yet and the DRC are beginning to chase those who don't. Wiltshire County Council do have a scheme and the following is an extract from their website:

'The Wiltshire Disability Equality project is ongoing and has to make a real difference. We have made a plan of actions to make changes in the services we provide and to make changes in council job opportunities to help disabled people. The action plan is part of a document "[The Disability Equality Scheme](#)", which was published in December 2006. People of Wiltshire were consulted on a summary version of the action plan during January, February and March 2007. The 3 year Action Plan will be updated every 12 months.

We have to remember that doing what the law tells us is important, but more importantly, we all need to question our attitudes if we want the Disability Equality Scheme to work in Wiltshire'.

The action plan referred to can be downloaded from the Wiltshire County Council website. Non computer users should be able to obtain one by telephoning the Council.

## DP User's Corner

Have your say! This space is for DP users to give to or ask for advice from one another. If you have any difficulties in managing your Direct Payment, or have found any great solutions, share them with others. Alternatively let us have any comments you have about Direct Payments or our service for printing. If anyone wants an entry here please let Alison know through the contacts below.

## CIL AGM

The Wiltshire Centre for Independent Living are holding their Annual General Meeting at the Independent Living Centre's Conference Room in Semington, near Trowbridge on the morning of 21 June 2007 and WDPSS will be there to answer informal questions over lunch. We appreciate working closely with CIL and look forward to meeting up with members again.

## Disability Information Service

For computer users have you come across the website for the Disability Information Service [www.diss.org.uk](http://www.diss.org.uk) ? It has lots of interesting information and a search tool so you can find things relevant to your area. I typed in Wiltshire and came up with loads of contacts.

## Increases in DP and Care Agency Costs

Everyone should by now have received notification of the 2.1% inflationary increase in Direct Payment rates, which will be backdated to April. This is intended to pay for increases in PA wages, or agency rate increase. This is therefore the time of year that agencies notify you of their increases. The increase will probably not match the WCC rate increase, and may often be more. It is therefore very important that your budget is reviewed to ensure that you have sufficient money to cover the agency increase. This might be more complicated if you have ILF as well as Direct Payment. If you would like help with reviewing your budget, please ask your Direct Payment Advisor, or contact the support service using the contact details below.

We would like to send this letter by email to as many people as possible. This will save both paper and postage. If you would like to receive it electronically, please let Alison or Pavla have your email address.

If you would like this newsletter in any other format or language, please tell us.

## Contact Us

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