

Issue No 9 Spring 2005

Newsletter

for deaf and hard of hearing



Welcome to the newsletter. This edition is the first one which we in Social Services are sharing with colleagues in Gwent Healthcare NHS Trust so you will see their logo imprinted as well as the one from Newport City Council. We have begun with an item from Nicola O'Hara, the Hearing Therapist from the Audiology Clinic at the Royal Gwent Hospital.

Update: The Royal Gwent Audiology Department

Audiology staff at all the Gwent NHS sites are working very hard to reduce waiting list times for the fitting of digital and analogue hearing aids. We are currently understaffed and there are staff vacancies advertised. To date we have been unsuccessful in recruiting extra staff. This shortage of staff does not help with waiting time but along with this dilemma we have a high percentage of last minute cancelled appointments. Due to the late cancellations we are unable to reappoint. We also experience a lot of appointments where people fail to attend without letting us know. This results in many hours of wasted time slots that could have been allocated to those who want to see us. This in turn results in the waiting times being kept to their maximum.

We at the Gwent Health Care Trust would very much appreciate where possible 48 hours notice of any cancellations so we can reallocate that time slot. By working together we can effectively reduce wasted appointment times. Thus resulting in a more efficient department.

Hearing aid users are reminded that if they have any difficulties with their hearing aids they can attend the Audiology department in our open repair session times.

Monday -Thursday 9.00am - 5.00pm

Friday 9.00am - 4.00pm

Please note the department is closed for lunch everyday at 1.00 - 1.30pm

Along with Modernising Audiology Services Wales and the digital aids, the Welsh Assembly Government has set up a project called Newborn Hearing Screening Wales and as the name implies it is about identifying deafness in children at the earliest possible time.

Llantarnam

Richard Godwin, the Head of the Hearing Impaired Resource Base at Llantarnam School in Cwmbran recently accompanied a group of deaf students from there to take part in a Community Involvement Day at the Police College, Cwmbran. This involved the students acting as witnesses and suspects in different situations such as shoplifting and suspected car crime. The trainee policemen and women had to assess the situation, communicate with the students and make arrests if necessary!

All the police trainees involved thought that it was an excellent day and that it would certainly help them to be more Deaf Aware when they are out on the beat.



Disability Sports Cymru Cycling Event

This was held on the 29th January. Young people and adults with disabilities were invited for a taster afternoon to see if they would fancy cycling. The session involved a number of different tasks:-

- Managing the 'turbo' independently
- Riding in tandem with an experienced cyclist
- Learning how to cycle independently around the velodrome.

Elinor Scott one of the participants, is photographed. She managed to successfully complete all the tasks. After doing this Elinor met Anthony Hughes the National Performance Manager for FDSW (Federation of Disability Sports Wales). He invited her along to an athletics club at UWIC in Cardiff. Anthony could use BSL and communicated with Elinor very well. Further information can be obtained from Katherine Butt, Disability Sports Development Officer for Newport or on the FDSW website www.fdsww.org.uk.



Do You Lipread? Could a Lipspeaker HELP YOU?

We are grateful to Linda Williams from Bridgend for details on her work as a Lipspeaker.

Lipspeakers are hearing people who act as professional aids to communication between deaf and hearing people. They silently repeat a speaker's message as it is being spoken and the deaf or hard of hearing person lip-reads them. They reproduce clearly the shape of the words and the natural rhythm and stress used by the speaker. They also use facial expression, gesture and, if requested, fingerspelling, to aid the lip-reader's understanding.

Always remember that lipspeakers:-

- Are completely neutral
- Work in total confidence
- Are vessels through which the message is passed in a clearly lip-readable way

- Are bound by their own professional Code of Practice.

Service providers are responsible for the cost of providing lipspeaker support for users of public sector services such as education, health, local authority and the legal system. Under the Disability Discrimination Act, employers should provide lipspeaker support for interviews, appraisals, meetings and training courses.

Over the last few years Wales Council for Deaf People has facilitated the training of a number of Level 2 lipspeakers through monies from the European Social Fund. As a result there are now many lipspeakers in place to support people to live their lives independently. It is very important to encourage people to use this facility to enable individuals to have access to information.

Details on lipspeaking services can be obtained as follows:-

www.lipspeaking.co.uk where you can find some useful information, including details of some Welsh lipspeakers

Wales Council for Deaf People on

Tel: 01443 485687; Fax: 01443 408555;
Text: 01443 485686;

email: wcdeaf@freenet.co.uk
Or the RNID Communication Support Unit:

Tel: 01792 324477; Text: 01792 324455;
Fax: 01792 324422
Email: csuneath@rnid.org.uk

Diversity Officer

We are pleased to have a contribution from PC Molly Williams, the Diversity Officer currently working at Newport. She is the community liaison officer for all minority groups within the area. One of her tasks is to liaise with and assist or offer support or advice to victims of Hate Crime (any offence committed against a person or property, which is motivated by the offender's hatred of people because they are seen as being different). It may be bullying, harassment, verbal abuse, attacks, damage to property, bullying or graffiti.

This behaviour is now seen as unacceptable and can be dealt with.

If anyone, family or friends have been subjected to this type of behaviour and would like information or advice you can contact Molly at Newport Central Police Station 1-3 Cardiff Road, NP20 2EH. Her direct telephone number is 01633 245444 or (Fax) 01633 245310

National Developments

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 extends the scope of the 1995 Act to include :-

- New rights to use public transport and set and end date for all rail vehicles to be accessible
- Giving disabled tenants and leaseholders a right to reasonable adjustments & auxiliary aids and services

For more details contact either the websites of the Disability Rights Commission www.drc-gb.org or the Disability Law Service www.dls.org.uk

Deaf Awareness Week - at the time of writing this was due to take place from 2-8 May 2005. The theme of "Look at Me" was aimed at improving people's understanding of deafness by highlighting the different types of communication used by Deaf, Deafened, Hard of Hearing & Deafblind People. Cinemas throughout Britain were due to screen an increasing number of sub-titled films

The Royal National Institute for Deaf People (RNID) has helped to create a new logo so that British Sign Language Users can see where

video interpreting is available. An accompanying users charter will also ensure quality standards. For more details the RNID on 02072 968000 or Email vis@rnid.org.uk The Telecommunications Action Group (TAG) is keen to have feedback from people about electronic communications, broadcasting (especially digital), telecommunications and DVD / Video. They would like Deaf / HOH People to make an effort to report any problems which come to light as soon as possible after the programme is broadcast. Feedback from individual viewers is highly valued by broadcasters because it is proof that someone actually watched the programme. If you are not satisfied with the response from broadcasters you can ask Ofcom and / or TAG to investigate. For more details contact 01923 283127 (Fax) or Email r.myers@merula.co.uk

BSkyB is dedicating Sky Box Office Channel 738 to in-vision signed output. Since February this year deaf & hard of hearing subscribers have been able to enjoy a recent movie release every week without leaving the comfort of their sofa. This good news follows the broadcaster's recent commitment to an enhanced film offering for deaf and hard of hearing viewers.

Newport Developments

BSL Classes

There has been a commitment by staff within Social Wellbeing & Housing to undertake training in BSL. Firstly, fieldwork and reception staff from the Corn Exchange and Royal Chambers did a 6-week course.

People will recall from our last edition that some flats at Woodside were being made available to Deaf People. 7 Deaf people are now resident there and a Signing Group is now meeting each Monday afternoon. This is led by Nadine Scott, a Deaf person from Newport. It is hoped that this will lead to members of the group obtaining their Level 1 Certificate.



Services to Deafblind People

Following on from the item from the Spring 2004 Newsletter, about 90 people from Newport have now been identified as being Deafblind. Specialist services such as Guide Helpers are now being provided for a number of these.

A Guide-helper can fulfil a vital role for someone with a dual sensory loss

assisting with tasks such as reading mail, shopping and accompanying a person for business appointments or social activities. In a recent workshop held by the Welsh Assembly for local authorities in South-East Wales, Peter Chamberlain the Service Manager within Social Services highlighted the work carried out in Newport and the considerable progress made which has put us in the forefront of developments. We would wish to encourage more Deafblind People or those working with them to be referred for specialist assistance.



Regional News

National Deaf Children's Society Cymru

The society is running its annual Family Fun Day which this year will be held at the Caldicot Castle & Country Park. The event will be held at Castle Green Saturday 4 June and commence 10.00am. There is quite an interesting & varied programme including Face Painting, Rugby Coaching and a visit to the castle. For more details contact 02920 384277 or Email ncdswales@ndcs.org.uk

Deaf Association Wales (formerly BDA Wales)

A welcome to Carol Capp who joins the association in May as the new Advocacy Officer for South Wales. Jeff Wilson who had been in the post will now be working in the area of Quality Assurance.

Local Groups

The Newport Hard of Hearing Group has continued to meet on the 3rd. Wednesday each month at 2.00pm at the Deaf Community Centre. Over the past few months quite a varied programme has taken place including talks on Caerleon Hospital, Care & Repair service and a Welsh Tea plus a visit to Bridgend Club.

The programme for the summer months is as follows:-

Wednesday May 18
Ralph Diaper - Holidays as a Courier

Wednesday June 15
Social Meeting - Outing to Cadbury's Garden Centre

Wednesday July 20
Pete Strong - Women in Gwent in the World War Two

AUGUST - NO MEETING

Wednesday September 21
Graham Jarvis - Old Maindee

More details from the Secretary
Beryl Thomas Tel: 01633 277441 or
Email beryl@40glangwern.fsnet.co.uk

The South-East Wales Deaf Church will be having its Annual Meeting on Wednesday 25 May 2005 when Bishop Dominic, Bishop of the Monmouth Diocese will be present to chair. For information please contact the Chaplain for Deaf People Margaret Le Grice. Tel: 01633 281942 / 278701 (text) or Email legrice@fish.co.uk

Personal

Sadly two long-time members of the Deaf Community died within the last few months. They had both been regular members of the Thursday Club.

Beatrice Richards who had been living in Caerleon was 80 years old and Beattie Barnes who had been living at Curzon Court (opposite the Deaf club) was 88. Pat Pincott, a Hard of Hearing member of the Thursday Club also died during April.

On a happier note congratulations to Karl & Ellen Roberts on the birth of their son Owain in February and also to Michael Wetten & Brenda Fallon on the birth of their son Callum Anthony in January.

Local News

The Counselling & Befriending Service which supplies support to a number of young people and their families, is still running the Parents Group. This is always held in the Castle Room in Newport Centre and future meetings will take place as follows:-

Wednesday 25 May	10.00 - 12.00noon
Wednesday 8 June	1.00 - 3.00pm
Wednesday 22 June	10.00 - 12.00noon
Wednesday 6 July	1.00 - 3.00pm
Wednesday 20 July	10.00 - 12.00noon

In addition a Families Weekend is to be held at Llangrannog, West Wales between 3 - 5 June.

For more details contact Shelley Twose on 02920 333034 / 333036 (Text) / 333035 (Fax)

The Youth Club continues to meet on Friday evenings from 6.00 - 8.00pm at the YMCA, Mendalgief Road, Newport. The leaders are Jan Cleverly & Heather Edwards from the City Youth Service and the club is also supported by staff from the Counselling & Befriending Service

RNID

The RNID is pioneering a new smoke alarm. It has a flashing strobe light & vibrating pad as well as an audio alert. It is placed under the mattress to shake the user awake. Research revealed that 1/3 of those with a hearing loss say they would have difficulty waking up to a conventional smoke alarm. Many Deaf & Hard of Hearing People have been involved in the development of the new alarm. The product will be launched later in the year.

For more details go to the website www.rnid.org.uk

Mental Health Services for Deaf People in Wales

Nigel Bone has been co-ordinating an All-Wales Reference Group looking at the lack of access to health services and in particular to specialist mental health facilities for Deaf People living in Wales. This is following a Conference held in May 2004 attended by the then Minister for Health & Social Services, Jane Hutt. She approved the establishment of the group whose role is to report to the Minister with some recommendations for planning future services. It is the intention that the group will complete its work by March 2006.

National Deaf Childrens Society

The National Deaf Children's Society is looking for parents of

deaf children between the ages of 3 - 11 years

to attend consultation days and to share experiences of parenting a deaf child. Feedback from these sessions will be used to develop a range of support programmes being developed for parents. They would especially like to hear from black and minority ethnic families and also families of deaf children with additional needs.

For more details contact Tel: 02074 908656 or Email ndcs@ndcs.org.uk



Finally we would like to offer congratulations to Jackie Strong on successfully completing her Post Qualifying Award in Deaf Studies.

Best wishes

Anne Thomas

Email anne.thomas@gwent.wales.nhs.uk
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