

Bright future for independent living



community living alternatives for people with additional support needs

Welcome to RUILS' new-look and re-named magazine

The change of name from 'dpNews' to 'OPTIONS - for Independent Living', is an attempt to give readers a clearer idea of the magazine's future content. For, as you will see from this issue (See page 8), there are major changes proposed in the area of social care and whilst Direct Payments (DP) will remain a key option, the means by which older and disabled people maintain their future independence will include other innovative schemes and models of support.

So, not only will recipients of DP pick-up 'OPTIONS' to read about how to get the most from their payments, but anybody who currently uses or who may need to use social care services in the future, will also find that 'OPTIONS' gives advice and information about ALL ways and means of living independently at home, in the local community or workplace.

To reassure our regular readership that there is still much in this issue to interest them, we include our customary 'Brief News' and an article (page 3) about Richmond Social Service's future monitoring of DP monies. On (page 4) we introduce Karen Block, our new 'paFinder' administrator, and use the opportunity to remind you of how we can help readers find a personal (care) assistant. Last but not least, (page 6) records the journey of our solo mountain biker, whose fundraising ride exposed the poor chap to a deluge of water that a round-the-world sailor would find hard to duplicate !!

Have a good, informative read and all best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

The RUILS Editorial Team



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Ed.

The RUILS office (see back page for contact details) will close for Christmas on Friday 22nd Dec 2006 and open again on Tuesday 2nd January 2007.

Direct Payments (*) – another way of getting care to live at home

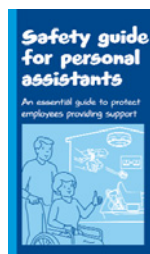
- Direct Payments are a way of helping you to live independently in your own home.
- A Direct Payment is money your Social Services Department can give you.
- You use the monthly cash payments to buy the support you want and need.
- Social Services give you the money instead of arranging a care service for you.
- You spend the money on getting support that meets your needs.
- You can have a Direct Payment for all your support, or for part of it. If you only want a Direct Payment for part of your support, social services will arrange services for the rest of it.
- A Direct Payment is not a benefit. It does not affect your benefits or state pension and is not liable to income tax.
- It is your choice as to whether you want Direct Payments or not.
- Direct Payments is another way of giving you the support you need and for some people, it offers greater choice, flexibility and control over how this care is provided.

Interested? Look inside for more news and information.

(*) Direct Payments from Social Services are NOT the same thing as the 'Direct Payment' where your state pension or benefits are paid directly into your bank account.

News in brief

New Health and Safety Guide



A helpful advisory booklet is now available to Direct Payment recipients who employ personal (care) assistants and want to give them some guidance in matters of health and safety in your home. Called '*Safety guide for personal assistants: an essential guide to protect employees*', the booklet is published by

the Fish Insurance company and includes a range of easy-to-read advice, including: safe housekeeping, helping a wheelchair user, using handling aids and infection control.

The company provide one copy of this booklet free of charge to customers who purchase their Personal Assistant Employment Protection Policies. Extra copies cost £2 each, including postage.

Fish Insurance
2-4 Riversway Business Village
Navigation Way
Preston PR2 2YP

Tel: **01772 724442**
Website: **www.fishinsurance.co.uk**
Email: **dp@fishinsurance.co.uk**

Ed.

An article on health & safety is featured in Issue 14 of our 'dpNews'. Website readers can access this by clicking on www.ruils.co.uk/events. A free printed copy of the article is available by contacting RUILS (see back page).

New Chair for RUILS

We are very pleased to announce that Richard Kember has been elected as the new Chairperson of RUILS. Richard has been a dedicated trustee for many years and has worked tirelessly to ensure that Direct Payments and Independent Living remain high on the local authority's agenda. We wish him every success in his new role.

Alternative Payroll Service

We know that some recipients of Direct Payment prefer to use and pay for a local payroll service rather than Rowan's free service. So, in the interest of promoting choice and without inferring a recommendation, we re-print the following;

From: epayroll@blueyonder.co.uk

Dear Sir/Madam

I was wondering if you were interested in offering your Direct Payment Users some alternative cost effective payroll services?

Our cost for running a payroll, for up to 4 employees at any one time, is £8.00 for a Basic Electronic Payroll (per run); £8.50 for a Basic Postal Payroll (per run) and £9.00 for a Basic Payroll (per run) that has extended reporting facilities.

In our experience, the Basic Postal Payroll has proved sufficient to meet the needs of most of our client The payroll is run either 4 weekly or monthly and comes with a Security payslip for the employee/s, copy payslips for the clients records, a Cheque/Cash or Bank Credit report that gives the client the amount to pay, and a Payment report. Once a quarter we also do a Quarterly return that was set up with the Quarterly Return from the Council in mind. We do not charge a set up fee and there are no hidden costs for phone calls or visits, within reason. We only invoice our clients once a quarter to tie in with the Quarterly Returns and Inland Revenue payments.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries. Our freephone number is **0800 9774905**

Di Spruit
BUSINESS MANAGER
Tel: **07958 306861**
Freephone Ansaphone: **0800 977 4905**

paFinder has a new co-ordinator

LET ME INTRODUCE MYSELF. I'M KAREN AND I STARTED WORKING AT RUILS IN SEPTEMBER.



Before joining RUILS, I worked in Marketing for several years in the education and training field and trained as a journalist. I have also worked as a classroom assistant at a school for children with special needs and have undertaken initial training as a counsellor.

I am married with two young children and in my spare time, I enjoy socialising with family and friends, cooking and reading a good book.

I manage paFinder at RUILS, so it's me who you'll speak to when you're looking for a personal assistant. I meet and interview all PAs before they go on the register so that I have an idea of who might be a suitable match.

I also spend some time advertising locally for people who want to work as personal assistants. I will deal with all the enquiries, send out information on paFinder and register new PAS.

If you have any queries about paFinder or would like to register, give me a call on Tel: 020 8831 6084 (Mon, Tues, Thur, Fri 10am to 2pm) or Email: pafinder@ruils.co.uk

These are some of the things people using paFinder have to say:

"I found out about paFinder from my Independent Living Adviser. I was looking for someone to help with cleaning, housework and looking after my wife. My PA is very keen and it's really helped me."

A man in his eighties

"I started on Direct Payments last year and have employed several PAs that I found through paFinder. It's worked really well for myself and my mother and father who needed the support to help me. Since I started living on my own, I now need someone to work nights and I have PAs who help me clean my home and do personal care. I'm very happy with the PAs I've had."

A woman in her twenties with hypermobility syndrome and cerabeller ataxia

"I've been on Direct Payments for about a year after talking to my social worker. It was just great to have paFinder. It's quite time consuming to find the right carer so it was good to be able to tell RUILS exactly what we needed and not have to deal with people directly. The people that I found on paFinder were great. As a carer you don't have much time so it saved me having to plough through lots of applications that are not suitable. It's worked really well for my son."

A mother with a young son who has cerebral palsy and a visual impairment

paFinder – What's it all about?

paFinder is a resource that we have at RUILS that you, as a recipient of Direct Payments and a prospective employer, can use to find a suitable personal assistant (PA).

Here's how it works:

- You fill out a registration form with details of the kind of PA you're looking for and send it to Karen by post or email (pafinder@ruils.co.uk).
- Karen will look through our register and try to match your needs with the skills and availability of the PAs.
- Once Karen has selected suitable people, she will contact you.
- You will receive the contact details of the PAs and basic information about their experience, skills and availability.
- If you decide that you would like to meet with any of the PAs, it is then up to you to contact them and set up an interview.
- Karen can assist with the interviews in our office by helping you with asking the right questions and sit in with you when you are interviewing.
- If you decide to employ one of the PAs, you will be responsible for setting up the employment contract and arranging payroll. Your Independent Living Advisor is available to assist with this if you require it.

RUILS can also help you to advertise for PAs locally and use our contact details to deal with all the enquiries.

As Karen says, "paFinder can cut through a lot of the effort involved in getting the right PA. Also, some people using Direct Payments to employ a PA use paFinder when they need someone to cover holidays or for emergency cover. So it can be worth registering so that we have your details on file for when you want to use the service."

Ed.

If you have used our paFinder service to recruit a personal assistant then you will have been asked to complete our service user's monitoring card. This will only take a moment but it is very important to us to know if our service is helpful, so if you get this postage paid form in your mail, please complete and return. Alternatively, please ring 020 8831 6084 and complete the form by speaking to Karen.

Source to Sea

YOU'VE HEARD OF SCOTT OF THE ANTARTIC AND EDMUND HILARY OF EVEREST, NOW MEET ROBIN OF SOUTHEND!!

For four days in September Robin cycled over 220 miles following the Thames from source to sea. What is more, he did this solo trek to raise much needed funds for RUILS whilst also demonstrating that you don't have to be mad to ride a bike along a river – but it helps.

Sit back and read his first-hand account of the epic solo journey.

Day 1 – an unpromising start!

I caught the train up to Kemble on Thursday afternoon arriving at 4.30pm. I'd planned to get a bit of a head start on the Thursday, finding the source, and covering the 25 or so miles to Lechlade for my first stop. That sort of distance I should be able to cover in 2-3 hours or so, therefore I wasn't particularly worried. The first setback happened however when it came to actually finding the source. It wasn't enough to just be in Kemble, I had to start at the official source and follow the route of the river. After about an hour of asking directions, walking across railway lines and a bit of guess work I eventually got there. Sun shining I took a few pictures and set off, across fields! I suppose I was expecting some kind of path and to be fair on foot it would be quite passable but on a bike the fields, and gates and styles were a nightmare, instead of being able to travel at the 10-15mph as I'd expected I was travelling at 4 or worse walking and carrying the bike, and spending as much time lost as not! Eventually at about 9pm, exhausted, downhearted, cold and on the verge of tears I arrived at my B & B in Lechlade. Seriously beginning to question the sanity of what I was hoping to achieve.

Day 2 – things can only get better, can't they?

Friday morning feeling slightly better and assured in my own mind that the going would have to get easier soon I set off toward Oxford, planning to stop in Henley that night. This meant having to cover some 80 odd miles that day, only to find more fields and sheep everywhere. An hour into my journey the heavens duly opened and I started to get wet. (Having taken the executive decision before leaving not to carry waterproofs with me!) By the time I arrived in Oxford I closely resembled a drowned rat. My trainers were squelching with each step. I was miserable, downhearted and feeling thoroughly desperate.



Having decided that if I had to cross another sheep filled field and carry my bike over another gate I'd finally flip I decided to cover the 50 remaining miles to Henley on the roads, still just as wet but I'd be able to move at a better rate. It is a testament to modern electronics that my MP3 player managed to keep working despite the water I could see inside the main casing. The journey to Henley, despite being exceptionally wet was quite dull and uneventful. Cars, lorries, water, cars, lorries, water for mile on mile. Eventually the weather broke and I arrived in Henley to something approaching sunshine, and very gratefully checked into my hotel. The hotel staff were very helpful and let me hang my clothing, which was all soaked, in their boiler room to dry out overnight. I'd like to thank Anna & Jason in Henley also for helping to raise my spirits.



Day 3 – from liquid trouser to a liquid dinner!

Saturday morning with the sun shining and a beautiful day forecast I set off again, aching like hell but determined to keep my spirits up as I had to get this thing done and only had 50 miles to cover that day to get to my next stop in Shepperton. In a complete reversal of the previous day the sun shone and I had a lovely ride through some beautiful countryside and lovely villages. There were few fields and I arrived in Shepperton by 4.30 on Saturday evening in time to see a wedding coming out of the church next to my hotel. I was now feeling much happier about the trip, a couple of my friends came to meet me in Shepperton and we had a nice evening with a few drinks.

Day 4 – homeward bound

Sunday morning, the last day, the most painful I'd felt yet and 70 miles to cover! Still it should all be path and road now so I should be able to make some good time at least. I had a pleasant ride down to Richmond where I met Gareth, Cathy and a few other people from RUILS the Charity I'm doing it all for. They'd arranged to do a collection. I stayed for about an hour and set off again towards London. The going was pretty good until I arrived in Central London and a combination of a very disjointed path and tourists made it quite slow going up to and past Tower Bridge. Finally arriving at the Thames Barrier at around 4.30pm it was time to say goodbye to the Thames path and hello to the ever so exciting A13 to Southend.

I set off along the A13 slightly daunted by the fact that I had many miles to cover that day, but excited about the adventure nearing its conclusion. While this section of the trip was by far the duller, at one point near the Dartford Crossing I paused (for one of many very needed breaks) and looked back only to see a truly breathtaking sunset over London. I pushed on going through one pain barrier after another inching steadily

closer to my goal, not so much eating the road as steadily nibbling away at it, as the traffic roared on past. Finally after what seemed like an age I arrived in Southend. All I had to do now was find the seafront and I was there. Not the easiest thing to do in Southend, particularly as tired as I was but after 20 minutes of poor directions and wrong turns I made it. The feeling was overwhelming and I couldn't quite process in my mind the distance I'd travelled and everything I'd come through. I met my friend Lionel who had driven to collect me, we loaded the bike and that was it, over, finished, done! A general feeling of numbness set over me as we battled with late night traffic through East London.

I would like to say thank you to a few people: to Lionel for picking me up in Southend and coming to give me support in Shepperton along with Becky. To everyone who came down to Richmond, to everyone who sent me messages of support along the way, they were more helpful than you might imagine and to the inventor of the MP3 player, I couldn't have done it without it. And most importantly, all the people who have sponsored and helped raise money for an extremely worthy cause.



Ed.

A big thank you to Robin for his efforts. As it turned out he was not the only one to be giving freely of his time this summer and to be deserving of a special mention. Once again Jean Hamilton, a RUILS volunteer, Committee Member and recipient of Direct Payments, presented us with a cheque for £100 after having completed the Hydro Active 5K Challenge. On behalf of RUILS and the people we support, thank you Jean.

Director outlines the future provision of our **social care**



INDIFFERENT WEATHER AND A NEW MEETING PLACE DIDN'T STOP OVER FORTY PEOPLE TURNING OUT TO MEET AND CHAT WITH OTHER DIRECT PAYMENTS USERS, TO OVERSEE THE FORMAL BUSINESS OF OUR AGM AND TO WITNESS JEFF JEROME (DIRECTOR OF ADULT SERVICES LBR) DOING A SPOT OF CRYSTAL-BALL GAZING!



The Director's talk made mention of both local and national initiatives that will affect the future well-being of Richmond's elderly and disabled residents, particularly with regard to independent living. (see Panel.1.) He forecast that Individual Budgets, the

Independent Living Bill, Continuing Care and the 'In Control' project, will all play significant parts in our social care provision.

Individual Budgets (IB) or Personal Budgets are the means by which most future support will be funded. They give disabled people more choice and control over a wider range of support services and the option

to coordinate their delivery. The monies from different services are gathered together in one money pot so that the recipient can use these pooled funds to pay for their social, housing, employment and continuing health care needs. The recipient of an IB also gets access to this virtual money box by way of an easier needs assessment.

The Independent Living Bill. If it becomes law (and there is concern that it will not get through), the bill will give disabled people the legal right to be independent members of the community. Some of the practical benefits of such a right include: no one being placed in residential or nursing home care against their will, accessible housing would become the norm and anyone moving to another area could take their

resources and entitlement to services with them rather than having to start again from scratch.

Continuing Care. Many people with a long-term condition have social care as well as health or medical needs. Proposed changes include the introduction of joined-up support that will be managed by united health and social care teams and the development of integrated Personal Health and Social Care Plans, if the person with on-going, complex needs wants one. Like the Independent Living Bill and Individual Budgets, it is predicted that the closer working together of health, social care and the local authority will help people maintain their independence.

In Control. www.in-control.org.uk. The Director made mention of a project currently being tried out in Richmond which aims to give people with learning disabilities (PLD) more control over the money (Individual Budget) for their social care and help with decision-making. In particular, participants are supported in planning what they need help with and how they can get that help. Called 'self-directed support', the scheme includes guidance in Person Centred Planning, risk assessment, how to cost a service and different types of support arrangements. The learning acquired from this pilot will be used to shape future developments across all client groups.

In regard to local developments, Jeff Jerome expressed a wish for the wider use of Direct Payments and scope for people to use agents if they are not willing or able to take them on themselves. He also indicated that the days of fragmented responses to people's needs and the duplication of resources may be coming to an end.

Finally, on a more cautious note, the Director anticipated future constraints on Council budgets and the need to revisit whether individuals with savings should continue contributing to their support costs.

Panel 1

What is Independent Living?

All elderly and disabled people having the same choice, control and freedom as any other citizen – at home, at work, and as members of the community. This does not necessarily mean disabled people 'doing everything for themselves', but it does mean that any practical assistance people need should be based on their own choices and aspirations.



Financial monitoring of Direct Payments

THE YEAR FLIES BY, THE SEASONS CHANGE AND ONCE AGAIN IT IS TIME TO COMPLETE YOUR DIRECT PAYMENT QUARTERLY RETURN.

This return is the monitoring form that informs Richmond Council how you have spent your Direct Payment (DP) over the past 3 months. Although this should be a relatively easy process it seems to strike fear in the hearts of even the most experienced DP recipients. Is it the forms? The figures?

We have been working with the council to try to make the process easier for DP recipients. A number of issues around the monitoring process have been raised e.g. some individuals were not informed about the financial monitoring procedures when they started their DP, some individuals were not sent the Quarterly Return to complete and DP recipients were not receiving any feedback from the finance team.

The council has taken steps to rectify some of these problems. This quarter they are auditing half of all Direct Payment Recipients Returns and next quarter they will audit the other half. From this audit they will be able to see where the problems lie and will be able to make any changes that are necessary.

From next year a new auditing process will be in place. To ensure that new DP recipients are completing their forms in the correct way, each new DP recipient's forms will be audited in their first quarter. Established DP recipient's forms will be audited once per year. After each audit you will get feedback from the finance team so that you will know if you are filling in the forms in the correct way. These forms are available electronically and can be completed and then emailed to Andrew Page a.page@richmond.gov.uk and he can be contacted on 020 8891 7246.

If you are having difficulty completing your forms please contact us at RUILS, your Care Manager or your Independent Living Advisor (ROWAN). If you are unable to manage your financial returns it may be possible for you to pay your Personal Assistant to assist you. You would need to talk to your Care Manager about this and it will be assessed on a case by case basis.

If you have any comments that you would like to make that we could take back to the council please feel free to contact Cathy at the RUILS office.

A Fond Farewell

WE ARE SAD TO ANNOUNCE THAT MAL HUGHES WHO WORKS AS AN INDEPENDENT LIVING ADVISOR FOR THE ROWAN ORGANISATION WILL BE LEAVING THIS MONTH.



Mal has been a dedicated member of staff and has worked hard advising and supporting individuals on the Direct Payment Scheme. His calm, pragmatic approach and willingness to help will be missed by his clients and colleagues alike. On behalf of Direct Payments users we would like to thank him for all his hard work and we wish him well for the future.

The Rowan will be recruiting a new advisor. In the mean time if you are one of Mal's clients and you need advice or support please call Jackie Jones on 07977 269 568, Jackie Pilcher on 07968 204 846 or you can contact the Rowan Helpline on 0800 783 1755. Alternatively you can call Cathy at the RUILS office on 020 8831 6083.

Obituary – Alan Pinn

MANY OF YOU WILL ALREADY HAVE HEARD THAT ALAN PINN, THE RUILS CHAIR, DIED RECENTLY AFTER A SUDDEN AND UNEXPECTED DETERIORATION IN HIS LONG-TERM CONDITION.

Alan was an 'ever-present'. He grew up in the borough and has been a life-long supporter of disabled people's rights. He was a founder member of both RUILS and Richmond Aid and always put himself forward to serve on committees in order to articulate the views and expectations of people who, like himself, were disadvantaged by society's prejudices and negative attitudes.

Alan was one of the first people to get Direct Payments (DP) and, with a few others, worked from home to set up RUILS as the supporter, champion and representative of DP users. He managed with admirable efficiency a team of personal assistants that provided round-the-clock support and with his guidance and control he carved out a measure of personal independence that demonstrated the real benefits of DP.

Under his chairmanship, Alan saw RUILS develop into a registered charity, capable of delivering services and giving other disabled people the opportunity to do voluntary work and gain work experience. His determination to be an 'ever-present', meant that latterly, and despite failing health, he would attend meetings wearing a breathing aid!

The borough, and RUILS, has lost someone who helped push the disabled movement forward by getting personally involved and demonstrating a dogged determination to promote independent living.

Richard Kember



Richmond Users Independent Living Scheme (RUILS) is an independent, grassroots, self-help organisation that acts as the champion, representative and peer supporter of all those local people who use Direct Payments, personal assistants and other means to achieve a more independent and inclusive lifestyle.

Help us to help each other

As a self-help group of individuals who are receiving Direct Payments, we value your knowledge, skills and experience and invite you to share your know-how with others.

For further information about volunteering opportunities, the services and events mentioned here, or a copy of this newsletter in Braille, large print, audio tape or community language, please contact us at;

RICHMOND USERS INDEPENDENT LIVING SCHEME (RUILS)

Disability Action and Advice Centre
4 Waldegrave Road
Teddington
TW11 8HT

T: 020 8831 6083/4
E: info@ruils.co.uk
www.ruils.co.uk

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Disclaimer

The information contained in this newsletter is intended to provide only a general outline of the subjects covered. It should neither be regarded as comprehensive nor sufficient for making decisions, nor should it be used in place of professional advice. The editor and RUILS disclaim all responsibility for any loss arising from any action taken or not taken by anyone using the information in this publication.

Per informata te metutjeshme lidhur me sherbimet, mundesite per tu bere vullnetare ose per kopjen e ketij botimi ne gjuhen e te verberve (Braille), me shkronja te medha, ne kasete ose ne gjuhen tuaj, ju lutemi kontaktoni

如欲查詢更多有關各項服務、義工工作機會的訊息，或者索取這份出版物的盲人點字、大字體印刷、錄音帶或另一種語言的印本，請聯絡：

ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਜਾਂ ਵਲੰਟੀਅਰ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੋਰ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਪੀ ਬਰੇਲ, ਵੱਡੇ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ, ਸੁਣਨ ਵਾਲੀ ਟੇਪ 'ਤੇ ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਕਰੋ

સેવાઓ વિષે અથવા સ્વયંસેવક તરીકેની તકો વિષે તમને વધુ માહિતી જોઈતી હોય, અથવા આ પુસ્તિકાની નકલ અંધલિપિ (બ્રેલ)માં, મોટી છપાઈમાં, ઓડિયો ટેપ પર અથવા ગુજરાતી ભાષામાં જોઈતી હોય તો મહેરબાની કરી સંપર્ક સાધો:

للمزيد من المعلومات حول الخدمات و فرص العمل التطوعي او للحصول على نسخة من هذا المنشور مطبوع بلغة برايل او مطبوع بالاحرف الكبيرة او نسخة مسجلة على شريط تسجيلي او مترجم بلغة الجالية الرجاء الاتصال على



The logo for RUILS (Richmond Users Independent Living Scheme) features the word 'ruils' in a bold, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letters 'r', 'u', 'i', and 'l' are black, while the 'i' is red. The 's' is black. The logo is positioned at the bottom right of the page.