



**To contact Directions Plus:**

Helplines:

Cambridge and South Cambs: 01223 569600

East Cambs: 01353 669431

Fenland: 01354 659179

(10.00 – 12.30 & 1.30 – 4.00 weekdays)

Web:

[www.directions-plus.org.uk](http://www.directions-plus.org.uk)

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[info@directions-plus.org.uk](mailto:info@directions-plus.org.uk)

1 Orwell Furlong, Cowley Road, Cambridge CB4 0WY

## **Disability News from Directions Plus Issue No. 16. October 2007**

### **Annual General Meeting 2007**

Tuesday 13th November 11.30 am to 2 pm

This year we have decided to hold our AGM at our office, so those of you who have not been to Orwell Furlong get the chance to see where it all happens! The office and toilet are accessible.

Please contact us by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> November if you are coming so that we can organise catering, with details of any dietary or other special needs.

#### **Motion for the AGM:**

(Your Trustees recommend this and the Charity Commission have given permission.)

**“This meeting instructs the Trustees to change the name of Directions Plus to Disability Cambridgeshire.”**

If you wish to nominate a person to become a member of the Directions Plus Management Committee please phone Kate on 01223 569604 for details of the procedure or email: [admin@directions-plus.org.uk](mailto:admin@directions-plus.org.uk)

## Closure of the Disability Rights Commission

The Disability Rights Commission closed on Friday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007 and the Commission for Equality and Human Rights (CEHR) opened its doors on 1<sup>st</sup> October. It will take on key aspects of the DRC's work.

The CEHR will enforce equality legislation on disability, age, gender, race, religion or belief and sexual orientation and encourage compliance with the Human Rights Act 1998. More information at: [www.equalityhumanrights.com](http://www.equalityhumanrights.com)

## Advice for adult children with elderly parents needing Care

### Top Ten Tips

NHFA Care Fees Advice unravels who pays or who is responsible for what. Its Top Ten Tips will take a lot of the worry out of paying for care.

1. **Attendance Allowance** is a non-means tested, non-taxable DWP benefit paid weekly at the lower rate of £43.15 if care is needed by day or at the higher rate of £64.50 if it is needed by day and night. This continues to be paid in all cases when the person in care is self-funding. **Saving:** up to £3,354 pa.
2. **Twelve Week Property Disregard and Deferred Loan Agreements:** The local authority must disregard the value of your home for the first 12 weeks of residential care and contribute towards your care fees if your other capital is below £21,500. **Saving:** approx £3,500.
3. **Council Tax Exemption:** If you move into a care home and nobody is living in your previous home, the property should receive full exemption from Council Tax until it is sold. **Saving:** your Council Tax.
4. **Pension Credit:** Subject to other income and capital, Pension Credit (including severe disability addition) with Attendance Allowance can be claimed whilst your property is on the market. **Saving:** £167.50 pw.
5. **NHS funding in nursing homes:** The NHS will pay a Registered Nursing Care Contribution (RNCC) towards nursing home fees, even if in a nursing home for short periods. You may get full NHS funding for nursing home fees if you meet the health authority's criteria for continuing care. **Saving:** up to £139 pw for RNCC or the full cost of care for NHS Continuing Care.
6. **Couple's savings:** The local authority only has the right to make a financial assessment of the member of a couple that requires the care. Individuals who are paying for their accommodation from joint savings with a partner at home, should split joint accounts into separate single accounts, drawing the care home fees from the account of the person in care only thus ensuring State assistance arrives earlier than if depleting joint capital. **Saving:** your partner's savings.
7. **Enduring Power of Attorney:** Drawing up an enduring power of attorney when fit and well, for a small solicitor' fee, could save a lot of expense and complications if in the future you were unable to cope with

your own affairs and had to involve the Court of Protection. **Saving:** the cost and complications of dealing with the Court of Protection.

8. **Section 117 After Care:** Older people with mental illness who are admitted to hospital under Section 3 of the Mental Health Act 1983 for assessment and treatment are, on discharge, entitled to Section 117 aftercare under the same Act. This can include full funding for a care home place. **Saving:** the full cost of care.
9. **Immediate Need Care Fee Payment Plans:** Designed for older people with an immediate need for care, can deliver a regular guaranteed tax-free monthly income higher than can normally be achieved from traditional investments or annuities. Paid tax-free if direct to the care provider, they are a way of meeting and capping the initial cost of care to the cost of the plan for as long as care is needed. Normally requiring only part of the proceeds from selling a home, they enable older people to fulfil their wish of leaving an inheritance for their family. **Saving:** an inheritance and capping the cost of care.
10. **Investment Bonds** that contain an element of life insurance, usually 1% of the value of the fund, as a death benefit are currently disregarded in the means tests for both care and Pension Credit. Protecting your savings.

NHFA care fees advice can give guidance and ease the burden on families.

Contact Care Directions website:

[www.caredirections.co.uk/frame\\_comment\\_60.htm](http://www.caredirections.co.uk/frame_comment_60.htm)

## New EU rule on air transport

New rules aimed at ending discrimination against disabled passengers on flights within Europe came into force on 27<sup>th</sup> July 2007. The EU regulation, which is being phased in over the coming year, means airlines will no longer be able to refuse to carry passengers on the basis of reduced mobility.

Airlines and airports will also be obliged to provide equipment like wheelchairs free of charge. You may recall that Ryanair was previously sued for refusing to provide a free wheelchair to a passenger and has also been criticised for refusing to allow more than four disabled passengers on any one aeroplane.

The rules will be introduced in two steps: the first will ensure disabled people and those with reduced mobility have the same access to air travel as others; the second step will come into force next year and will mean disabled passengers will be assured that they can expect a consistent and seamless level of service from airports and airlines.

Complaints can be made to the Commission for Equality and Human Rights who can advise passengers and is able to refer the matter to the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) which will have power to prosecute. If found guilty, an airline could face an unlimited fine.

For more information: EC Regulation 1107/2006: Factsheet for passengers at: [www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/consulcivilaviationreg07/newrightfactsheetec](http://www.dft.gov.uk/consultations/closed/consulcivilaviationreg07/newrightfactsheetec)

## **Entrepreneur invents device that opens up the Internet to blind people**

Inventor Chris Mairs, who himself is blind, is set to launch a gadget in a few months that will make a wide range of web content available to non-technical blind and visually impaired people.

SpeakOn is a free program that runs on your PC and is a speech enabled environment containing applications for listening to various media. SpeakOn has been developed for people who are comfortable using computers. It does not require a screenreader or magnifier; it does not have a visual interface and in fact does not require a screen at all. You communicate with SpeakOn using a numerical keypad or the standard keyboard and SpeakOn responds with speech. With a low cost external USB slimline numerical keypad, you can operate SpeakOn with one hand from the comfort of your armchair.

The product is being rolled out in two phases. The first will have a simple interface for people who already know how to use a computer and the second phase device will assist people who are “technologically frail”.

SpeakOn will take the form of a box with a keypad with about 12 keys and should retail for around £300. It is hoped that the SpeakOn will appeal to people who want access to information but who are reluctant to acquire a computer.

[www.a-technic.net/speakon.htm](http://www.a-technic.net/speakon.htm)

## **What it's like to be a deaf teenager?**

A new film highlights what it is like to be young and deaf.

Made by the mother of a deaf teenager and featuring a group of young people who are hearing impaired, Deafness Matters is being aimed at universities, schools and parents of deaf children.

Producer Erika Stevenson said: “Several of the young people had cochlear implants, some people signed but didn't lip read, some could lip read but didn't sign and there were two hearing siblings.”

Using role-play, the young people acted out scenarios based on their own experiences, including buying a ticket at a train station, a job interview, having a driving lesson with an unsympathetic driving instructor, and interviewing people in the street.

Copies of the DVD are available, price £7.50 including postage from:

[www.erikastevenson.co.uk/deafnessmatters.htm](http://www.erikastevenson.co.uk/deafnessmatters.htm)

## **Parent Partnership Service – Forthcoming events**

### **Autumn Road Show**

Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2007 9.15am – 12.20pm

Cambridge Professional Development Centre (CPDC), Trumpington, Cambridge. CB2 9NL

**Focus: Anti-bullying week:** four separate seminars each with a different focus on anti-bullying.

**Spring Road Show St. Neots**

Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> March, 2008 9.15am – 12.30pm  
Priory Centre, The Priory, St Neots. PE19 2BH  
Seminars: to be announced

**Confidential Advice Line:** 01223 714111

10am to 12noon and 2pm to 4pm Monday to Friday, term time only.

## **NHS Direct – Interactive digital TV**

You can get all the best bits of NHS Direct straight from your TV if you have Freeview or Sky Digital.

To access the service on Freeview, simply go to channel 108. If you can't access channel 108, you may need to retune or rescan your digital box or television so it sees the new channel. For more information about retuning, see the Freeview website: [www.freeview.co.uk](http://www.freeview.co.uk)

To access the service on Sky Digital, press the INTERACTIVE button on the remote control, and scroll down the menu to NHS Direct Interactive and press the SELECT button.

NHS Direct Interactive boasts a wide range of information on conditions and tests, commonly asked health questions, hot topics hitting the headlines and a guide to healthy living. You will also find a helpful guide to the NHS, including information on registering with a GP, finding an NHS dentist and more.

The Sky Digital version of NHS Direct is also on the web at: [www.nhsdirect.tv](http://www.nhsdirect.tv)

## **Formula 1 design applied to the wheelchair**

Ex-Formula One motor racing car designer Mike Spindle has just spent the last 5 years designing a very different mode of transport, the wheelchair.

The result is a new off-road wheelchair called the Trekinetic K2 which he launched at the Mobility Roadshow in Gloucestershire in early June.

His new wheelchair uses a carbon fibre monocoque chassis instead of tubular. The K2 has three wheels – two large ones at the front and a smaller one at the back. Also the wheels have an easily adjustable camber so that the chair can have a slimmer profile for going through doorways. The K2 is aimed at active people with good upper body strength.

Mike brought a lot from the world of automotive design to his creation. For example, the seat is made of carbon fibre and is a sculptured shape to suit the user's body. The K2 is also extremely light and has quick-release wheels.

[www.trekinetic.co.uk](http://www.trekinetic.co.uk)

## **Bullying is wrecking children's lives, says Mencap**

Eight out of ten children with a learning disability (LD) are bullied and they are scared to go out because they are frightened they might be bullied, according to a survey by leading disability charity, Mencap.

Launching their Don't Stick It, Stop It! Campaign during Learning Disability Week, Mencap says bullying wrecks children's lives, leading to social exclusion in childhood and adulthood.

The charity now wants 5,000 children, young people and adults to visit the website [www.dontstickit.org.uk](http://www.dontstickit.org.uk) where they can make an online 'sticker' to show their support for children with LD who are being bullied.

The 'stickers' will then be used to show the Government that action needs to be taken to stop children and young people with LD being bullied.

More than 500 children and young people with LD across England, Wales and Northern Ireland took part in their bullying survey – the most extensive survey to date about the experiences of bullying of children with a learning disability.

## **Letterbox Library**

Over the years, Letterbox Library has built up a collection of exciting and original disability titles. These include books about disability but also, and perhaps more importantly, titles in which the protagonist or other characters just happen to be disabled.

For a (free) copy of their catalogue: email [info@letterboxlibrary.com](mailto:info@letterboxlibrary.com)  
Tel: 020 7503 4801 or visit their website: [www.letterboxlibrary.com](http://www.letterboxlibrary.com)  
where you can see all their books and search by theme (including 'disability')

## **The Schizophrenia group closes doors**

The schizophrenia Association of Great Britain has closed its doors for the last time after 37 years. Based in Bangor, Gwynedd, it was set up by husband and wife Bill and Gwynneth Hemmings after Mr Hemmings was diagnosed with the condition.

The 3,000-strong membership is being transferred to the Ness Foundation in Inverness.

## **Robert Sayle re-opens as John Lewis on 8<sup>th</sup> November at 10 Downing Street**

There will also be entrances in St Andrews Street and a tunnel from the car park. The remainder of the Grand Arcade will open in the Spring.

## **Charity Flowers Direct**

Charity Flowers Direct is the UK's only flowers-by-post service to be wholly-owned by a major national charity: Age Concern. Every time you choose Charity Flowers Direct, you will be making a valuable contribution to important charity work. You will be giving more than just beautiful flowers, you will also be helping both Age Concern and Directions Plus.

**Prices start at around £15 for a Seasonal Bouquet including delivery**

**Please quote DTP each time you order and Directions Plus will receive 15% of the order price.**

So whether it's Happy Birthday, Happy Anniversary, Happy Christmas, Happy Easter, Congratulations, a present for Mother's Day, Thank You or just to show you care, order from Charity Flowers Direct.

Charity Flowers Direct, PO Box 555, Guernsey, Channel Islands GY1 6JA

**Tel: 08705 300 600** (24-hours)

or **[www.charityflowers.co.uk](http://www.charityflowers.co.uk)**

## **Disability Forums**

### **Soham Disability Forum**

Do you have any disability issues? If so, there will be a meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2007 in the Soham area from 11-00am – 1.00pm to discuss these issues, followed by a free lunch. For more information please contact Gerri.

Contact: Gerri Bird Tel: 01223 569601

E-mail: [gerri\\_directionsplus@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gerri_directionsplus@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Cambridge Forum of Disabled People**

Campaigning for equality of opportunity for people in Cambridge. If you are interested in joining the Cambridge Forum please contact Gerri.

Contact: Gerri Bird on 01223 569601 E-mail: [thecfdp@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:thecfdp@yahoo.co.uk)

### **South Cambridgeshire Forum of Disabled People Sawston Branch**

This forum has been running since February 05 and meets once a month. If you have a disability, are a carer, an older person or an organisation working with or for disabled / older people or carers and are interested in joining, please contact Gerri:

**Tel: 01223 569601 or e-mail: [gerri\\_directionsplus@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gerri_directionsplus@yahoo.co.uk)**

One of the things the forum is involved with is campaigning for better access in all areas.

## **Cambourne Forum of Disabled People**

Coming soon: Cambourne forum – if you know an older or disabled person in the surrounding villages who may be interested – please contact Gerri.

We already provide a service vetting plans for South Cambs District Council

Contact: Gerri Bird Tel: 01223 569601  
E-mail: [gerri\\_directionsplus@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gerri_directionsplus@yahoo.co.uk)

## **East Cambridgeshire Access Group**

The group looks at all issues to do with disability e.g. access to shops, buildings etc. They also have a sub group for plan vetting of new buildings and alterations to older buildings. If you are interested in joining or would like more information – please contact Gerri.

Contact: Gerri Bird Tel: 01223 569601  
E-mail: [gerri\\_directionsplus@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:gerri_directionsplus@yahoo.co.uk)

### **Next Forums:**

We are hoping into set up forums in the **Chatteris / Littleport** area and around **Whittlesey**. Anyone interest should contact Gerri as above.

### **Keep Warm Keep Well:**

The winter 2007 – 08 guide is now available with lots of helpful advice:

- keeping warm and healthy
- home improvements
- heating your home
- help with bills.

It is published in several languages; there is an easy read guide and an audio cassette.

### **Copies from:**

**Tel: 0870 155 5455**

**Fax: 0162 372 4524**

[www.direct.gov.ukkeepwarmkeepwell](http://www.direct.gov.ukkeepwarmkeepwell)

**or DH Publications, PO Box 777, London SE1 6XH**