

Mencap West Lancs, The End Is Near!

This year we celebrate 50 years of caring and although this is a great achievement the celebrations have been dampened by the fact that in December 2011 Mencap West Lancs will be unable to continue to provide a service to its members because of lack of funding.

For several years now we have struggled on and worked endlessly to raise additional funds and although we have been successful with some funding bids, unfortunately it still isn't enough. We now have funds to continue to provide a service until the end of this year but after that we will be unable to continue and **all our services will stop.**

It is with regret that we have had to issue redundancy notices to Linda Brunt who has worked with us for 14 years and Anne Digwood who has been with us for the past 7 years. Having the funding to employ Linda and Anne has enabled us to adapt and deliver a unique service based on the needs and requirements of our members.

How our members will be affected?

In the current climate this is a very scary thought, particularly for our learning disabled members who over the past number of years have seen a reduction in services such as advocacy, education and day services.

The closure of Mencap West Lancs will affect our members in many different ways but here are the main key areas:-

- • The Drop In Centre at Chapel Gallery will close

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- The Arts and Crafts lessons on a Thursday at Chapel Gallery will finish
- The Singing lessons on a Thursday at Chapel Gallery will finish
- The Arts and Crafts lessons at the Engine Rooms Skelmersdale will finish
- The Mencap Choir at the Engine Rooms will finish
- There will be no more NAG newsletter
- There will be no more DVD newsletter
- Mencap West Lancs will no longer be able to support learning disabled people who are victims of hate crime
- Members and other agencies will be unable to call the office for information and advice
- Other agencies will be unable to promote their services and activities in our newsletter
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The society has survived for 50 years purely due to the fact that so many volunteers have given so much of their time and effort to make a difference. Only last month George Weeks and Hilary Webb were presented with flowers from the members of the Drop In Centre as a way of saying thank you for everything that they do and have done of many years.

Our battle still goes on, we have not given up and we will continue to try and obtain further funding.

We know how much our members value the service we provide because of the number of people attending the session, people requesting the Nag and DVD and people writing to us, pleading for us to continue with our service. However this is still not enough. **We need all our members to return the questionnaire we recently sent you** because when we are applying for funding your comments are invaluable. If you can't answer all the questions then please answer the ones that apply to you. If you need us to send you another questionnaire then please call Anne Digwood 01695 731010.



George Weeks - Chairman
Hilary Webb - Secretary



BBC Radio Lancashire invites Mencap members to speak up for learning disabled people

Last month as part of Mencaps campaign 'Stand By Me', Paul Scott and Debbie Critchley were invited on to the Sally Naden show on BBC Radio Lancashire to talk about their experience of disability hate crime. Debbie spoke about how she has been verbally abused and called names when using public transport and how difficult it is for people with learning disabilities to talk about their experience. Paul spoke about how he had suffered from disability hate crime in the work place. Work colleagues played practical jokes on him but the final straw came when someone used a hot gun to heat up a door handle knowing that Paul was about to go through the door. Paul ended up in hospital with treatment for burns and walked out of his job, even though he had been there for 10 years.

Anne Digwood from Mencap West Lancs accompanied Debbie and Paul and spoke about the campaign. She explained how important it is for the public to 'Stand By' people with learning disabilities and report all incidents they witness in their neighbourhood, on public transport, or out in the community.

For further information on disability hate crime call Anne Digwood on 01695 731010 or email

anne@mencapwestlancs.org.uk

**Report Hate Crime on
0845 125 35 45**

If you don't want to give your personal details, you don't have to.

Alternatively you could call into your local police station.

Care home top-up fees

Lancashire Link say they have heard that some homes are sending letters to resident's relatives, telling them that as they are getting less money from Lancashire County Council, they are going to charge top-up

fees. We would like to know how widespread this practice is. If you have received a letter like this, please let them know. Their contact details are :-

e-mail address is: lancashirelink@theBHA.org.uk

Alternatively you can write to them, using their FREEPOST address:
FREEPOST RSCB-RHTB-UXKS, Lancashire LINK Support Team
LEYLAND PR25 3GR

Living with Dementia

The Royal College of Nursing is currently leading a project to help improve the care of people with dementia in general hospital settings. The project is being supported by the Department of Health and is being undertaken jointly with other professional bodies and voluntary sector organisations.

Are you someone living with dementia, or a family member/friend?

Do you have direct experience of care in a hospital setting?

If so, we would like to hear your views about what works, what makes it difficult and what really makes a difference.

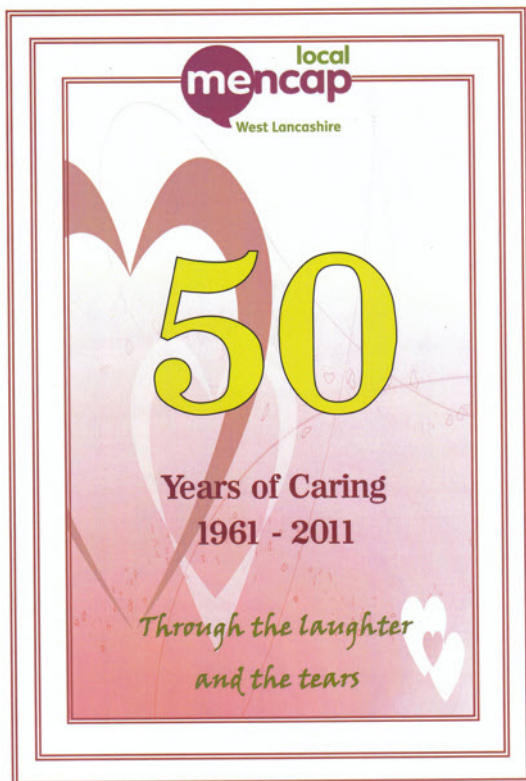
For your chance to win £100 of John Lewis vouchers and to help us learn more about your experience of care in hospital, please take a few moments to complete the survey which can be accessed online at

www.employmentresearch.co.uk/dementia_carers.htm

If preferred you may complete the survey by hand by printing it off directly from their website www.rcn.org.uk/dementia and returning it to Nikki Mills (Dementia Project Administrator), 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN nikki.mills@rcn.org.uk Tel. 020 7647 3757

Alternatively you contact Nikki Mills who can send you a paper copy in the post along with a pre-paid envelope.

Mencap West Lancs History Book



To celebrate 50 years of Mencap West Lancs, George Weeks, Chairman has put together a booklet about the societies history. There are over 50 pages with pictures and stories going back over the past 5 decades. If you would like to purchase a booklet at a very cheap cost of £6.50, all you have to do is call Anne on 01695 731010 or call into our Drop In Centre at Chapel Gallery, Ormskirk, any Thursday between 9am - 4pm.

Don't Stand By, 'STAND BY ME!!'



On the 20th June Royal Mencap launched a three year campaign called 'STAND BY ME' asking the Police, Courts and the Criminal Justice system to end hate crime for people with learning disabilities.

To help raise awareness of the campaign Anne Digwood together with Sergeant Beardmore of Lancashire Constabulary, organised two

events during learning disability week. The first was a disability hate crime event at the Concourse Shopping Centre, Skelmersdale. Over 80 service users and carers turned up to support the campaign by wearing bright yellow T-shirt with 'Don't Stand By, STAND BY ME' printed on the front and over 500 leaflets with information about disability hate crime were handed out to the public.

At 12 o'clock the Mayoress Mrs Sue Murrin Bailey, and the Deputy Mayoress, Mrs Louise Greenall both arrived just in time to hear the Mencap choir sing. The various



agencies supporting the event were given the opportunity to discuss with the Mayoress how each organisation can support people with learning disabilities and their family if they suffer from disability hate crime.

The second event was a visit to Ormskirk Magistrate Court and Police station. The objective of the visit was to try and alleviate people's fears of reporting crime to the police or appearing as a witness in court.

Everyone arrived at the court at 10 am and were greeted by the Magistrates and then



taken on a tour to see the different court rooms and what they are used for. Those people who wanted to, had the opportunity to sit in the magistrates chair and also stand in the witness box. The whole experience allowed people to have a basic understanding of the legal system and what support systems are in place for vulnerable adults who are victims or witnesses of crime.

At 12 o'clock everyone walked over to the police station where lunch was provided. However before everyone was given their lunch they were shown what type of food prisoners have to eat and not surprisingly everyone opted for the sandwiches we had pre ordered. Lunch, although delicious was eaten in the police cells at the station. Why? because the group wanted to and after lots of laughing and taunting each other the group went outside to meet members of the mounted police and two very clever police dogs with their handler. There is a saying that every women loves a man in uniform and although the two mounted police officers looked quite the part, it was the 2 beautiful horses that the ladies, and men swooning over.



All the service users that attended would like to say a big thank you to the magistrates and the police officers from Lancashire Constabulary for a very enjoyable and informative day.

Diary Date
Fundraising

Morrisons Ormskirk, collection on 20th October. If you would like to help collect donations for Mencap please call Anne Digwood 01695 731010

Mencap Christmas Party
2nd December 2011, Burscough Institute.

Safe Trader Scheme – electricians

There are now a range of electricians covering West Lancs on the Safe Trader scheme who between them can deal with every type of job from the smallest to the largest. Clients can access this information via the website www.safetrader.org.uk or by calling Help Direct on 0303 333 1111.

Letter of the Month

On Sunday 26th June 2011 the Southport and Formby special athletics football team took part in a special Olympics football tournament representing Merseyside at Sheffield University playing fields. My group won five games and lost one and we finished in first position in the league. We won a gold medal and we all sang 'we are the champions' by Queen. We all had a wonderful day and really enjoyed the experience.

Paul Cowap
Athlete Representative.



GRAND OPENING

Friday 29th July
9am till 5pm

The Sensory Zone
2 Gorsey Place
Gillibrands
Skelmersdale WN8 9UP

Come along to our grand opening and see our brand new facilities which are available to people of all ages and abilities.

Sensory Room
Hydrotherapy Pool
Tactile Room
Snack area and much more

**Staff will be there throughout the day to answer
all your questions.**

Or call 01695 559035

HAVE YOU GOT A DISABILITY?

Would you like to make a splash?

**Come and join us every Friday evening
between 8pm and 10pm at the Park Pool, Ormskirk.**

- **Hoist and Life Vests available**
 - **Life Guards always on duty**
- **Helpers and Instructors on hand to help you**
 - **Families welcome**
- **Social calendar and weekend holiday breaks**
 - **Light refreshments available**

**For more information call:
West Lancs Swimming Club for the Disabled
Reg. Charity no. 1036502
Tel: 01695 573000, 01695 727622
or 0151 931 2035**



Mencap West Lancs

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Telephone 01695 731010

Committee Members

(From 15th February 2011)

<i>President</i>	Hazel Weeks	01695 420730
<i>Chairman</i>	George Weeks	01695 420730
<i>Vice Chair</i>	Ken Smith	01704 840149
<i>Secretary</i>	Hilary Webb	01704 892646
<i>Treasurer</i>	Frances Evans	01704 893120
	Ann Gallagher	01695 423859
	Renee Harding	01695 732785
	Joan Travis	01704 893180
	Maureen Wainwright	01704 893941

There is room for several more Committee Members. If YOU would like to influence the society, please contact an existing committee member and get yourself co-opted.

Monthly Meetings 2011

Committee

Starts 10.30 am at Certacs House, 10/12 Westgate, Skelmersdale WN8 8AZ

18th May

20th Jul

21st Sep

16th NOV

General

starts 10.30 am at Guide Hut Moorgate, Ormskirk.

15th Jun

AUG - BREAK

19th Oct

DEC - BREAK

DISCLAIMER

This newsletter is intended to be informative and light hearted. Whilst we do try to ensure that things are accurate and truthful, Mencap - West Lancs. and the Editor can accept no liability for the contents.

DO YOU NEED ADVICE?



WANT TO TALK TO SOMEONE?

Call Royal Mencap HELPLINE 0808 808 1111

Or email: helpline@mencap.org.uk

West Lancs Disability Help Line

Second Floor, Whelmar House, Southway, Skelmersdale WN8 6NN
FREEPHONE number 0800 220676

The Helpline is manned Mon, Tues, Thurs, 10am-4pm and
Wed & Fri 10am-1pm.

Mental Health Helpline

The service offers a confidential and supportive listening ear and information on sources of help. It runs Monday to Friday from 7pm until 11pm and Saturday and Sunday from 12 noon until 12 midnight. Freephone number 0500639000.

Welfare Rights

Welfare Rights Service exists to help you with claims for the whole range of social security and local authority benefits and tax credits. Whether you are unemployed, sick or disabled, retired, a carer, on low wages, or finding it difficult to manage, our aim is to ensure that you get your full entitlement to benefit. The contact details for the West Lancashire Area Team are the LIBRARY, Southway, Skelmersdale WN8 6NL Phone: 01695 651300.
Email: westlancswrs@lancashire.gov.uk

West Lancashire Citizens Advice Bureau

128 Sandy Lane, Skelmersdale, Lancashire, WN8 8LH

Telephone: 01695 723 110. Email:

advice@westlancscab.org.uk

24 Hour Advice is available from www.adviceguide.org.uk