

# Kingston Independent

WINTER 2016



## *In this issue*

**Update from CEO**  
.....

**User's Journeys**  
.....

**Living with Disabilities  
Conference**  
.....

**What's new at KCIL**  
.....

**AGM**  
.....

**Pre-paid Cards**  
.....



**CHOICE AND CONTROL FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

# Update from the CEO

**Welcome to the winter edition of The Independent.** This newsletter contains the highlights from the past few months including KCIL's Disability Conference which was held at Chessington Safari Hotel in September, KCIL's AGM, and information about new staff and projects here at KCIL. There is also useful information regarding changes and opportunities for Direct Payment users and our members. We are particularly excited about our new Heritage Lottery project, "**Fighting for Our Rights**", which will be capturing the stories of disabled people from Kingston who were vital to the Disability Rights Movement in the UK.

## **Direct Payment (DP) Support and Advice Tender**

The last few months have not been without their pressures, in particular with the "**Support for Direct Payment Users**" tender needing to be completed and submitted by early October. This was a substantial piece of work, the outcome of which will have a significant impact on the future of KCIL. If successful, KCIL will be awarded the contract to deliver DP Support for Adult Social Care and Kingston Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for the next three to five years.

If unsuccessful, another organisation will be providing DP Support in Kingston. Should we be successful with our bid, it would provide some stability for KCIL, enabling us to plan for the future knowing we have funding for our largest service. We feel very positive about the work put into this bid, and we will continue to work to improve our services following feedback from our users, Council and CCG over the next few months.

## **Consultation on Charges**

Another challenge over the past few months has been the council's proposal to increase charges for social care. The Council held a consultation with users regarding increasing the contributions paid by disabled people from 75% to 100% of their disposable income. On 29th September, the Adults and Children's Committee of Kingston Council voted to raise these contributions despite overwhelming opposition to the increase.

A group of supporters, including KCIL, have now requested a call-in of this decision as we feel it will lead to social isolation, debt, an increase in mental illness and potentially suicide, all of which were identified by people who responded to the consultation. This means that the full Council will need to debate this issue on 13th December at 7.30 pm. We hope that as many people as possible will come along to have their voices heard on this issue as it will affect many of you.

We appreciate your support during these very challenging times. I hope you will enjoy reading our newsletter.

*Lia M. Eble*



# Service User's Journey

## DAVID

David\* was not attending school when his family was referred to KCIL for support accessing an Education Personal Budget under the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Reforms.

David has high functioning autism and, although extremely intelligent, he struggled to engage with schooling provided in the traditional setting of a mainstream school. So much so that when KCIL's broker met the family, David had been out of education for over a year and was becoming increasingly despondent with his situation. Although he was engaging with the Tuition Service provided by the local authority for several hours a week and was receiving a few hours of additional tuition paid for by his family, it was very clear to all involved that David had the ability to perform well. It was felt that he would be able to achieve GCSEs if services could find a way to develop an education package that supported David effectively.

The broker was able to work with the family to draft a support plan which outlined the funding required to support David to engage with tuition with a view to undertaking his GCSE exams in 2017. Whilst there was some concern amongst the family and statutory services that David might struggle to engage in mainstream education later on, David really wanted to return to traditional education to gain A-Levels. KCIL sought to work with David to suggest routes into volunteering to help him achieve this goal.

Another member of the KCIL team made contact with the family to see if she could support David to access volunteering roles. David was clear from the beginning that he wanted to have more information about her before they met, so details about her role and a photo were sent to ensure that he felt confident to engage with her. After two meetings offering some guidance and encouragement, David felt able to pursue voluntary work independently.

Once the plan was approved by Achieving for Children the broker worked with the family to set up the budget. Because David would be undertaking exams many discussions were had around exam boards, complications arising from practical assessments and which exam centres offered the appropriate assessment environment.

The budget is now off the ground. David is accessing the tuition he needs and is working toward undertaking his GCSEs next year. Although in the early stages all appears to be going well and David and his family are happy.

**KCIL wishes David good luck with his exams next year!**

\*Not his real name



# CREATE YOUR OWN ADVENTURE



## LIVING WITH DISABILITIES IN KINGSTON CONFERENCE

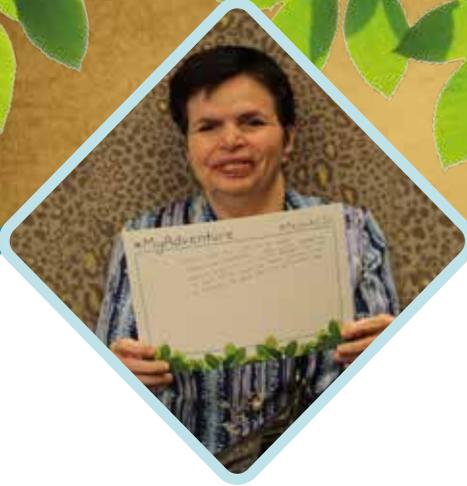
Nearly 100 delegates joined KCIL at Chessington Safari Hotel on Monday 12th September for the first conference exploring living with disabilities in Kingston.

An impressive collection of speakers, including Paralympian Ross Morrison, transport activist and campaigner Alan Benson from Transport for All, Paul Featherstone from Balance talking about the route to employment and Colin Morris from the Department of Work and Pensions discussing the change from DLA to PIP, started the event.

Finally we heard from the young people who shared their view for the future commenting, "Treat us as equals and also as individuals. We are not defined by our disabilities."

In the afternoon, the delegates had the choice of attending two of four workshops covering topics such as living well, complaining effectively, sharing views on the local NHS services and planning accessible units. They also had time to find out more about other services available to them in the borough at an exhibition that was open throughout the day.





Inspired by the day, delegates shared their dreams for the future using #MyAdventure. As Baroness Jane Campbell commented, "Personal adventures can only be travelled if we have a right of social and economic access, and this only comes with equality for all. So please keep supporting KCIL; work as a team and never give up. This way your adventures in life will never stop."

KCIL's patron, Ann Macfarlane OBE, closed the conference saying, "Today has been fantastic. We should dream our dreams." KCIL would like to thank RBK for a grant towards the cost of this conference, and to FISH Insurance, BL Claims Solicitors and Paypacket for their sponsorship which allowed KCIL members to attend the conference free of charge.



**We received some very positive feedback including:**

*"It was very interesting and engaging."*

*"Very informative and positive."*

*"Thank you. Please make this a yearly event."*

**Due to the success of this conference, plans are afoot for another one in 2017. Watch this space!**

# Fighting for our Rights

## Kingston's Role in the Disability Rights Movement 1960s – 1990s.

KCIL has been successful in its bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund for £76,900 to capture the oral histories of disabled people living in the borough between 1960s and 1990s.

During this period, disabled people from Kingston were at the forefront of the Disability Rights Movement in the UK and were instrumental in the changes that were brought about; from the closure of large institutions to the creation of independent living, to the formation of user-led organisations and the introduction of direct payments and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

A user-led group was formed in Kingston in 1967 (eventually becoming KCIL in 2001) when local people decided there needed to be change.

They demanded more choice and control, and the chance to live independently in their local community. They campaigned for equal rights and acceptance. At the heart of this lobbying was a network of disabled people and their supporters who fought to have a more equal society through letter writing, demonstrations and campaigning to local and national government.

Working with our partners at Kingston University, Kingston Archives and St Philip's Special Educational Needs School in Chessington, the HLF grant will help us preserve these stories and share this heritage with the local community through a series of exciting events and exhibitions.

Patron and founder member of KCIL, Ann Macfarlane OBE, thanked the Heritage Lottery Fund for making this possible, saying, ***“Without this funding, this heritage would be lost. By sharing these stories, we will make it relevant to today and inspire a new generation.”***



**If you have a story to share, contact Jen Kavanagh on 020 8546 9603 or at [jen.kavanagh@kcil.org.uk](mailto:jen.kavanagh@kcil.org.uk).**

# KCIL welcomes new members of staff

## **JEN KAVANAGH** **ORAL HISTORY PROJECT MANAGER**

Jen has been working in the heritage sector for nearly a decade, as a curator and oral historian. She's worked at museums including the Science Museum and London Transport Museum, and has most recently curated an exhibition about punk culture at the Museum of London. She's excited about joining KCIL and looks forward to the meeting service users as the project develops.



## **SOPHIE CAMARA** **VISUAL IMPAIRMENT PARLIAMENT CO-ORDINATOR**

I have recently taken over the running of the VI Parliament and hope to empower people who are partially sighted or blind to become more confident in their everyday lives. I am going focus on organising more fun events and activities to give people a greater chance to socialise with other visually impaired people in the borough.



## **SEYE NORMAN** **SDS ADMINISTRATOR**

I joined KCIL in September to support service users to recruit Personal Assistants (PAs) and help PAs find suitable employment. I have lived in Kingston for about 15 years and previously worked as an administrator for Welmede, where I supported adults with learning disabilities.



## **TAHIRA VENABLES** **PLACEMENT STUDENT**

I am a Social Work student currently working at KCIL to develop my learning and experience. I look forward to meeting you all in the near future and appreciate any support you can give to me as part of my Social Work training.



# Annual General Meeting

**On 22nd November 2016, KCIL staff, trustees and members met at the Holiday Inn in Kingston for the Annual General Meeting. Following opening remarks from the Mayor, Councillor Geoff Austin, and the business of the AGM, we heard from three interesting speakers.**

We heard from Sue Bott CBE, a disabled person with visual impairment from birth, who has been active in the disability movement in the UK for many years and is currently Deputy Chief Executive at Disability Rights UK. Other speakers included intrepid adventurer, Joe Gadd, whose disability has not stopped him climbing both Mount Snowden and Pen y Fan, and Jen Kavanagh from KCIL who talked about KCIL's exciting oral history project and the roles our service users could play in it. The delegates then enjoyed a delicious lunch with plenty of time available for networking.



# Introducing Direct Payment Pre-Paid Cards

Following consultation with Direct Payment/Personal Budget users, the need for the council to identify an alternative to the paperwork heavy processes for recording and keeping records of the budget spend became apparent. In response to this feedback, the council is planning to introduce a voluntary Pre-Paid Card system mid-2017.

## Introduction

A Pre-Paid Card is a flexible, fast and convenient way to manage your direct payments. You can use it to pay for services that meet your needs as agreed in your support plan, and you can also load money onto your card to pay your assessed contribution if applicable.

## Benefits of a Direct Payment Pre-Paid card

- Less paperwork and record keeping
- Safe and easy to use
- Cannot go overdrawn or get into debt

## Using a pre-paid card

1. Your card would be set up by Kingston Council and sent to you or a nominated person. You will receive a PIN separately.
2. You would need to activate your card.
3. You can get up to date information, pay invoices or bills and update your account details by:
  - Going on the internet and logging into the member's area, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
  - Talking to the card provider's customer service centre, Monday to Saturday.

## Making payments using your card

- You can pay your personal assistant (PA) or other service providers using telephone or internet banking
- You can transfer wages into your PA's bank account
- You can set up a direct debit or standing order from the card to make regular payments to your PAs, other service providers and organisations

## Loading money onto the card

If you have been financially assessed to contribute towards the cost of your support, you would also need to put your assessed weekly charge onto the card by bank transfer, online or telephone banking.

## Direct Payment Reviews

With a pre-paid card we will be able to complete the financial review of your direct payments online which will be easier, less intrusive and reduce the amount of paperwork you need to keep.

All transactions on your card account will be monitored to make sure the direct payments are being used as agreed in your support plan.

**By Carol Parker, Interim Service Manager,  
Adult Social Care, Royal Borough of Kingston**

# Stay Well This Winter

Winter conditions can be seriously bad for our health, especially for people aged 65 and older and people with long term health conditions.

Below are some helpful tips to keep well over the winter months, including local services.

## MAKE SURE YOU GET YOUR FLU JAB

The flu virus strikes in winter and it can be far more serious than you think. Flu can lead to serious complications such as bronchitis and pneumonia. There are a number of ways you can protect yourself against flu; one of the most effective is to make sure you get your free flu jab from your GP.

### Keep Warm

Living in a cold home during winter can be bad for your health, especially if you're over 65 or living with a long-term health condition. Kingston Council offers **'Thinking Works'**, a free home visit service that ensures your home is a warm and healthy place to live.

Keeping warm in the winter months can help prevent colds, flu and more serious health conditions.

**To book your free visit call 0800 118 2327 today.**

### Five things RBK Public Health team recommend you do

1. Make sure you get the flu jab.
2. Keep your home at 18 degrees or above if you can.
3. Contact Thinking Works if you are struggling with a cold home.
4. Visit your local pharmacist as soon as you start to feel unwell.
5. Look out for other people who may need a bit of extra help over winter.

**For more information visit [www.kingston.gov.uk/info](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/info)**

# In The Community



## A visit to Ham House

Thanks to Heritage2Health, a group of service users, their PAs and two members of staff were able to enjoy a day out at the National Trust's Ham House on 8th July. Heritage2Health is a partnership between the School of Nursing at Kingston University and heritage sites that links people to the arts and nature in order to support recovery, inclusion and shared learning.

A team of volunteers from nursing, healthcare and the arts organised a wonderful day for us and other local disability organisations, with activities including storytelling, memory art activities, the chance to try yoga or singing4health amongst other things. Volunteers from the National Trust also gave us a tour of both the house and garden, sharing with us stories of the House in the 17th century.

A very big thank you to Heritage2Health and the National Trust for a wonderful day out.

**More information can be found at:**

**[www.heritage2health.co.uk](http://www.heritage2health.co.uk) and [www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/ham-house)**

## London Marathon 2017

This year, University of Law student Hannah Eastaff will be running the Virgin London Marathon to raise both our profile and essential funds. Hannah, aged 23, is a dedicated long distance runner, having already completed 2 marathons and numerous half marathons. Not only is she keen to raise money for KCIL but she also hopes to beat her last London Marathon time of 3 hours 39 minutes.

***“Having been awarded a ‘good for age’ place, I am so pleased to be able to choose my own charity to support. I know how important the work is that KCIL does to assist local disabled people to live independently and am delighted to be able to help.”***



You can support Hannah supporting KCIL at: <https://localgiving.org/fundraising/londonmarathonhannah/>

# Get in touch

For further information, please get in touch.

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