As most of you will be aware, the Disabled Persons’ Parking Places (Scotland) Bill was unanimously passed at Stage 1 on 26 November. This is a significant milestone and the momentum behind the bill is now virtually unstoppable.

I am very grateful for all the support you have given the bill with many of you filling the public gallery during the debate. My attention is now fixed firmly on the amendment stage, followed soon after by the final Stage 3 debate in the chamber. It looks as if this might be on 28 January, but this is still to be confirmed.

For a copy of the Stage 1 debate you can access it at [http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/10-disAbParkg/index.htm](http://www.scottish.parliament.uk/s3/bills/10-disAbParkg/index.htm) or on [www.fidn.co.uk](http://www.fidn.co.uk)

Once again, many thanks

Best wishes

Jackie Baillie msp
Fife People’s Panel

People Power has come to Fife - everyone’s cut out to get involved

Can you help us to ensure that everyone has a voice?

People Power is coming to Fife. The council and community planning partners (Fife Police, Fife Fire & Rescue, NHS and the voluntary sector) are establishing the Kingdom’s first local People’s Panel - a group of 3,000 Fife residents who are interested in making their views count.

We need to gather people’s views for lots of different reasons and this is a real opportunity for local people to have their say. The Panel will be a cross-section of the community to make sure we get a fair representation of views.

What does a People’s Panel member have to do? - Panel members give their views on public issues. These might include views on services that we provide or on things such as community safety or local economy. This involves filling in a questionnaire around four times a year. Members can also provide views in other ways, for example by taking in focus groups or other group discussions.

If any of your member/clients are interested in getting more involved in your local community then perhaps they would consider becoming a member of the Panel.

For more information about the People’s Panel call 08451 55 56 51. You can also register your interest online at www.fifedirect.org.uk/peoplespanel, Or you can pick up information from your local library or Service Centre.

Home Visiting Opticians

The Outside Clinic is the largest and longest established national provider of home eye testing in the United Kingdom, bringing urgently needed services. The Outside Clinic is available for all those who have difficulty, regardless of age, in accessing a high street optician.

The company established in 1987 now has nearly 20 years experience in providing this very specialised services. The Outside Clinic is also a founder member of the Federation of Ophthalmic and Dispensing Opticians (FODO).

FREE SERVICE: For those entitled to NHS domiciliary services, their service is absolutely FREE of charge with no obligation to purchase spectacles. For individuals not entitled to the above there is a private charge of £35 for the first visit and eye examination.

For more information or to book an Outside Clinic, please call Freephone 0500 295 245.
Chairperson's Report

Merry Christmas everyone. Things are progressing with the Equality diversity within the voluntary sector. FIDN have been involved in several meetings with Fife Council in how to progress the issues. Ronnie Hinds FC Chief Executive informs me that Michael Enston will be taking the lead of Equality and Diversity in December.

With regard to home care I have received a reply from Gordon Brown regarding the issue of the EHRC and who should be dealing with the matter. The reply has created some confusion and I am seeking to clarify the matter with Gordon Brown and Alec Salmond.

The winter event at Carnegie Business Centre went very well. The speakers for Independent Living were Yvonne Jones Service Manager Social Services, Rhona McCallum Direct Payments. The transport speakers were, from Stagecoach Steve Walker, Operations Director and Phil Sharp Trainer, Ryan McQuigg Policy & Parliamentary officer, Leonard Cheshire. There was a presentation by Disabled Persons Housing Services from John Sandie Vice Chair, Jackie Morrison Development Worker and Wendy Riveiro Case Worker there are more details on the back page of the newsletter.

Michael Tonks Chair

Canine Partners

The purpose of Canine Partners is to assist people with disabilities to enjoy a greater independence and a better quality of life and, where possible, to help them into education and employment, through the provision of specially trained dogs, whose well-being is a key consideration.

Canine Partners is incorporated under the Companies Act 1985 and is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. The Charity was formed on 27 June 1990 as Assistance Dogs for Disabled People. The name was later changed to Canine Partners, which is a registered Charity.

Assistance Dogs UK

We are proud to be active members of Assistance Dogs (UK), Assistance Dogs Europe and Assistance Dogs International. The main aims of ADUK are to improve access mobility independence and quality of life. Currently our colleagues in ADUK are The Guide Dogs for the Blind Association, Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, Dogs For the Disabled and Support Dogs.

Continued on page 13
Our vision
A society built on fairness and respect. People confident in all aspects of their diversity.

Our mission
The independent advocate for equality and human rights in Britain, the Equality and Human Rights Commission aims to reduce inequality, eliminate discrimination, strengthen good relations between people, and promote and protect human rights.

The Commission challenges prejudice and disadvantage, and promotes the importance of human rights.

The Commission enforces equality legislation on age, disability, gender, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation and encourages compliance with the Human Rights Act.

In order to bring about effective change, the Commission uses influence and authority to ensure that equality and human rights remain at the top of agendas for government and employers, media and society. We will campaign for social change and justice.

Acting directly and by fostering partnerships at local, regional and national levels, the Commission stimulates debate on equality and human rights.

The Commission gives advice and guidance to businesses, the voluntary and public sectors, and also to individuals.

Developing an evidence-based understanding of the causes and effects of inequality for people across Britain, the Commission will be an authoritative voice for reform.

Our priorities
To analyse, define and target key equality and human rights challenges – The Equality and Human Rights Commission will analyse and measure inequality at all stages of people's lives to build up a sound base of knowledge and evidence to inform our policy work and enforce the law.

To change policy and organisational practice to provide better public services alongside an efficient and dynamic economy – The Commission will seek to transform the policies and practices of government departments, public institutions and private sector organisations through our role as an enabler, persuader and enforcer. We will show how promoting equality and diversity helps to create better public services, thriving businesses and an efficient and productive economy.

The Commission will also negotiate memorandums of understanding with all major public service inspectorates, encouraging a strategic approach to promoting equality and diversity with public services.

To engage, involve and empower the public, especially people from disadvantaged communities and areas – The Commission wants to give individuals the chance to participate fully in our local and national democracy, as well as in local communities.

To anticipate social change, develop new narratives, and reach new audiences in ways that strengthen equality and human rights – The Commission will commission research to help them fully understand the forces that create inequality in Britain. The
The Equality and Human Rights Commission helpline

The Equality and Human Rights Commission helpline is here to give information and guidance on discrimination and human rights issues. All of our helpline staff have been specially trained to provide this service.

You can contact us by telephone, text phone, letter, email or fax. If you are contacting us by post about an issue for the first time, please do not send any documents with your letter. We will come back to you to let you know what documents we will need to see.

If you would like to contact us in a language other than English, please do so by using any of the ways above and tell us what language you would like to use. We will arrange to contact you in your language of choice as soon as possible.

Below you will find the helpline addresses and contact numbers available to you. If however you wish to submit an enquiry please use the web enquiry form.

The Helpline offices do not accept visitors and only provide a phone and correspondence service. They do not provide face to face advice.

Phone numbers and addresses:

Scotland
Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline Scotland
Freepost RRLL-GYLB-UJTA

The Optima Building
58 Robertson Street
Glasgow
G2 8DU

0845 604 5510 - Scotland Main
0845 604 5520 - Scotland Textphone
0845 604 5530 - Scotland – Fax

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri 9:00 am-5:00 pm; Wed 9:00 am-8:00 pm (last call taken at 7:45pm)

Call charges

Calls to 0845 numbers are charged at Local call rate tariff if you are using a BT landline. Call charges from other telephone operators and mobile networks will vary. To find out exactly how much you are paying for 0845 calls you should consult your telephone provider or their latest published tariffs.
Care funding is ‘flawed’ and ‘unfair’

Sunil Peck

The system which determines who is eligible for social care funding is flawed and unfair, according to a new report.

The report by the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) also found that the assessment of a person’s eligibility for support varied from council to council.

The CSCI said some councils have stopped providing homecare workers for so-called low-level services like help with shopping and cleaning and cooking, on the flawed basis that people with high support needs, like homecare from a qualified nurse, do not need low-level support.

The review was commissioned by the government after the CSCI found in January that nearly three-quarters of councils were predicting they would restrict care to those with substantial or critical needs by the end of the year.

The review also found that inadequate assessments mean that groups including people with long-term conditions, young people in transition, blind and partially-sighted people and people with autism, miss out on support.

It recommends that everyone should have an assessment of their support needs, which should include information and advice to help them make the right choices; that the government should decide on new eligibility criteria which relate to the urgency of a person’s situation; and that the government should ensure there is a consistent approach to applying eligibility criteria across the country.

CSCI chair Dame Denise Platt said: “Whilst most people accept that not everything can be provided by the state, they want a fairer and clearer system and one which both promotes their well-being and, if they need care and support, enables them to make informed decisions about the options available.”

Sue Bott, director of the National Centre for Independent Living, welcomed the report and said she agreed with the need for a more transparent system which provided more information and advice.

She said: “Everybody should receive some support from the social care system, even if the local authority are not going to provide any resources.

“It is their responsibility to ensure that people can navigate the social care system and that they're able to have their needs met.”

And she said there was a need to address the use of charging for community care as a means of rationing eligibility for social care.

“If there's an assumption that you can afford social care it’s ‘go away’. But the people who do find their way through the system and find they can't meet the charge give up. So they are not supported by the social care system either.”

Care service minister Phil Hope said: “CSCI has helpfully highlighted the differing ways that councils interpret the current Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) guidance.

“In light of this evidence, we will work with stakeholders to update the guidance to ensure councils can use their resources in
Campaigners have welcomed the Scottish Government’s decision to extend its fuel poverty programmes to some poorer families with disabled children.

The help for families who have disabled children under 16 and are on income support will apply to its two fuel poverty programmes. The Central Heating programme provides heating, insulation and advice, while Warm Deal offers a £500 grant for a package of insulation measures and additional funding and support for pensioners. In addition, another £10 million will be invested in the Central Heating programme, so it can be offered to more families and pensioners.

An Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland spokesman said: “The most recent research we have seen suggest that up to 40 per cent of families with disabled children are living in fuel poverty in Scotland.

“We know that families with disabled children face higher fuel costs related to their disability or simply because they are spending more time in the house.

“This announcement of an extension of cover for support with central heating costs to families with disabled children under 16 is welcome, particularly at a time of rocketing fuel costs”.

A Scottish Disability Equality Forum spokeswoman added: “Disabled people between the ages of 16-60 are still missing out because the measures taken tend to mean they aren’t catered for, even though their needs do need to be tackled.”

Bill Scott, policy officer at Inclusion Scotland, also welcomed the action, but called for more to be done, including increased funding for specialist advice programmes, and greatly increased investment and grants.

4 November, 2008  From Disability Now Website www.disabilitynow.org.uk
Drivers at risk of £1,000 fines for expired licences

Thousand of motorists are unwittingly driving without a valid licence as photocard licences automatically expire after 10 years. The expiry date is featured on the plastic licence as point 4b. However, the significance of 4b is only explained in very small type on the reverse of the licence.

The first batch of photocard licences were issued in July 1998 and the DVLA figures reveal that 16,136 expired this summer, with only 11,566 drivers renewed their cards. With another 300,000 photocard licences due to expire over the coming year, experts fear the number of invalid licences will soar.

Motorist who fail to renew their licences in time are allowed to continue driving. But the DVLA says they could be charged with “failing to surrender their licence”, an offence carrying a £1,000 fine.

Motoring organisations said the majority of drivers believe their licence is for life. Edmund King president of the AA says; “There appears to be a lack of information that people will have to renew these licences”.

From Disability Now Website www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Scottish Government extends fuel poverty support

Campaigners have welcomed the Scottish Government’s decision to extend its fuel poverty programmes to some poorer families with disabled children.

The help for families who have disabled children under 16 and are on income support will apply to its two fuel poverty programmes.

The Central Heating programme provides heating, insulation and advice, while Warm Deal offers a £500 grant for a package of insulation measures and additional funding and support for pensioners.

In addition, another £10 million will be invested in the Central Heating programme, so it can be offered to more families and pensioners.

An Equality and Human Rights Commission Scotland spokesman said: “The most recent research we have seen suggest that up to 40 per cent of families with disabled children are living in fuel poverty in Scotland.

“We know that families with disabled children face higher fuel costs related to their disability or simply because they are spending more time in the house.

“This announcement of an extension of cover for support with central heating costs to families with disabled children under 16 is welcome, particularly at a time of rocketing fuel costs”.

A Scottish Disability Equality Forum spokeswoman added: “Disabled people between the ages of 16-60 are still missing out because the measures taken tend to mean they aren’t ca-
catered for, even though their needs do need to be tackled.”

Bill Scott, policy officer at Inclusion Scotland, also welcomed the action, but called for more to be done, including increased funding for specialist advice programmes, and greatly increased investment and grants.

4 November, 2008

From Disability Now Website www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Movement slams watchdog's first year

Britain’s single equalities watchdog is facing broad criticism as it celebrates its first anniversary. Senior figures from across the disability sector have criticised the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) for its failure to speak out on behalf of disabled people, tackle disability discrimination or build on the legacy of the Disability Rights Commission (DRC), which it replaced last October.

One senior figure said the EHRC’s first year had been “chaotic, unimpressive and disengaged”.

Among the strongest critics was Caroline Gooding, the former director of law reform at the DRC, who told Disability Now: “I think the EHRC’s performance is not impressive…On disability it is particularly poor.”

She said she was appalled at the lack of “visible leadership ” shown by the EHRC following a hugely important Lords ruling on the Disability Discrimination Act in June.

Sue Bott, director of the National Centre for Independent Living, added: “I think it is a complete muddle. It doesn’t feel that disability is owned by the commission as a whole.”

Some critics pointed to the performance of the EHRC’s helpline, which dealt with just 26,000 queries in its first 11 months, compared with 104,000 queries dealt with by the DRC’s helpline in 2006-07. There were also 3.6 million “visitor sessions” on the DRC website in 2006-07, compared with just 1.2 million in the first ten months of the EHRC’s site.

One critic was furious that the website did not include much of the DRC’s work, including official guidance written for the government.

The EHRC’s chair, Trevor Phillips, faced further criticism after concentrating only on race and gender issues at a fringe event at the Liberal Democrat party conference in Bournemouth.

He told us afterwards: “If people want to go around saying this, it would help if they said what more we should be doing.”

Baroness [Jane] Campbell, about to step down as chair of the EHRC’s disability committee, described the commission’s performance as “creative” and “dynamic” but accepted that some of the criticisms were “understandable” in its first year.

She added that improving the helpline figures was an “urgent priority”.

John Pring  From Disability Now Website www.disabilitynow.org.uk
Locked out of the Disabled Toilet?  
use a RADAR key

How do I get one?  
Visit FIDN with identification (e.g. Blue Badge). If it's easier simply post a cheque along with a photocopy of both sides of your Blue Badge and we'll send your key directly.

Is It only for wheelchair users? NO  
Speak to us for clarification, but you are entitled to use a Radar accessible toilet if you require assistance in toileting, have a visual impairment etc.

Cost £3.50

Contact Muriel at FIDN’s office Tel: 01592-203993 full contact details page 16

Please Send in Letters or comment's that may be of interest to FIDN readers to the FIDN office (address on page 16). Please state for Newsletter!

Please note that this is no guarantee that it will be place in the newsletter.

Please send any comments on this newsletter to the FIDN office, so I can make any improvement if necessary or if you have something that maybe of interest to the FIDN readers.

FIDN Website  
You can find this newsletter and previous newsletters plus lots more information on our website. www.fidn.org.uk
We how have 2 web sites the one above from Digital Fife and our new one we are building ourselves which is www.fidn.co.uk
Life is better with individual budgets, says report

By Sunil Peck

Disabled people prefer the independence they gain by using individual budgets to choose and pay for their own support, an evaluation of a pilot scheme has concluded.

The Department of Health-funded report looked at the 13 local authorities which piloted the scheme, in which disabled people are given a pot of money to spend on services such as equipment, access to work and housing adaptations.

Mental health service-users on individual budgets were able to access more appropriate services, leading to a better quality of life, said the report.

Younger disabled people were more likely to report a better quality of care, and were more satisfied with the support available to them and the choice and control they experienced. They also felt that individual budgets enabled them to build better support networks.

People with learning difficulties felt that individual budgets gave them more control over their daily lives, said the report.

There were also “indications” that individual budgets could save money.

But the report found that older people did not find the system as easy to use as the other groups, and did not appear to like the idea of managing their own support.

Care services minister Phil Hope said: "This report is invaluable in helping us understand the benefits of individual budgets, as well as the action we need to take so that everyone can benefit from them."

Sue Bott (pictured), director of the National Centre for Independent Living, said the results of the report were "no surprise".

She added: "I noticed that in the Department of Health response to the report they highlight the importance of user-led organisations in providing support for individual budgets, and I would echo that."

She said the report builds on previous research which showed that direct payments work best where people receive support from user-led organisations.

And she said that it would be wrong to conclude that individual budgets are not appropriate for older disabled people, who she said would benefit from more information and support.

The results of the research will feed into work to introduce pilots of personal budgets for healthcare from 2009.
USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

Inclusion Scotland
Info@inclusionscotland.org
Tel 0141 887 7058

Fife Advocacy
Tel: 01383 511155

Scottish Disability Equality Forum
Tel: 01786 446456

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife
Tel: 01592 412230

NHS/Fife Health Council
Tel: 0800 587 4008

Equality & Human Rights Commission
Tel: 0845 604 5510

THE BELOW ARE SOME USEFUL CONTACT NUMBERS RELATED TO SAFETY

Homecheck
Tel: 01592 599599

Fife Fire and Rescue Service
Tel: 01333 439497

Fife Constabulary Home Security Help / Advice
Tel: 01592 418506

Fife Constabulary Safety Officer (East)
Tel: 01334 418745

Trading Standards
Tel: 01592 416830

Citizens Advice & Rights Fife
Tel: 01334 412845

Home Energy Management Service
Tel: 01592 416904

Care and Repair
Tel: 01592 631661

FIDN OFFICE CONTACT DETAILS:
Muriel MacGregor
West Bridge Mill
Bridge Street
Kirkcaldy KY1 1TE

Tel: 01592 203993
Fax: 01592 203786
Text Phone: 01592 646885
Email: enquiries@fidn.co.uk
Website: www.fidn.org.uk & www.fidn.co.uk
Please visit the websites for more Information.
If you have any relevant information you like to share, please contact the Office.
Scottish Charity No: SC 026112

All Articles are presumed to be correct, but the Fife Independent Disability Network takes no responsibility for any inaccuracy's of Articles in this newsletter.
RNIB and Action for Blind People set to merge

By Sunil Peck

RNIB's planned takeover of the charity Action for Blind People will be good news for blind people, both charities have claimed.

The legal details of the agreement are yet to be agreed, but both charities are hopeful that the agreement will come into effect in April, 2009.

RNIB’s chief executive, Lesley-Anne Alexander, told Disability Now that Action would become a subsidiary of RNIB.

She said there were a huge number of charities that provide similar services to visually-impaired people, which was leading to unnecessary competition and duplication in the sector.

She said: "We won't both have to compete for contracts for employment or eye clinic liaison which means that resources that we would have expended on tendering, competing and branding can be spent on delivering services."

She said RNIB had been in negotiations with Action about improving the quality of services for visually-impaired people for "many months". But she said the current credit crisis had had no influence on the decision.

Action’s chief executive, Stephen Remington, said the agreement would be "fantastic news for visually-impaired people".

He also denied that the move had been hastened by the looming recession.

He said: "This is not a cost-cutting exercise. We are two successful organisations joining forces in a structure which is going to make sense."

He said that Action already works with other organisations to provide services to visually-impaired people, and the agreement with RNIB was a natural progression.

The announcement follows the merger of the library services of the RNIB and the National Library for the Blind last year.

27 October, 2008 From Disability Now Website www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Continued from page 3

2008 is the Year of the Assistance Dog in the UK and along with our colleagues there will be many events held throughout the year and we will be advertising them as and when we have further information.

Scotland Office
Annemarie Devlin, Canine Partners, PO Box 3460, Glasgow, G62 7AT
Tel: 08454 811915
Helping you to support your disabled users

Through the switchedOncommunities project we can provide you with:

- **Training** showing you how to adapt computers to meet the needs of disabled users
- **Resources** a range of keyboard and mouse alternatives; software to support struggling readers and CD-Roms with further information.
- Help and **support** to identify the access needs of your learners

Opportunities to link with

**About Switched On Communities**

switchedOncommunities is a three year community investment programme funded by DSGi, best know for their high street brands PC World and Currys digital.

Through switchedOncommunities we hope to impact the lives of thousands of disabled people, bringing within easy reach everyday tasks such as banking shopping, communicating, education, volunteering and work opportunities.

**Working with You**

To do this we are working with grass-roots community organisations, like yours, providing you with equipment, training and support so that you can support disabled users in your area.

PC World staff nationally will be getting involved in volunteering and fundraising. We will be developing links with our local PC World stores during the project.
What will it cost?
The training, equipment and support is free to voluntary sector organisations. All that we ask is that you provide us with reports on your beneficiary numbers:

Like to find out more?
Talk to:
Derek Kelter: derek.kelter@momentumscotland.org
Garry Ryan: Garry.rvan@momentumscotland.org

'Typetalk'

First ScotRail are implementing New Technology in the form of 'Typetalk' to replace the out-dated minicom technology, mainly for hard of hearing users who may want to contact us before or after using our trains/stations and the new number is 18001 0800 912 2 901. However, this may be an opportunity for making sure that we get the news to all those who may need this number whom we have not yet been able to reach at the moment.

Typetalk technology connects those who cannot speak or hear on the phone with other people using a telephone by providing a text-to-voice translation.

This advanced technology will begin on 7 December and the minicom number will not operate after this date.

All other disabled customers wishing to contact us, will continue to use 0800 912 2 901.

I would like to ask all of you to help us with getting this message to all the groups and disabled people within your areas and can I also appeal that if you have any issue that need to be discussed with us, please email me, invite me to your meetings and will try to attend and talk about our services with you. I am also able to respond to you if I cannot attend.

Patrick Nyamurundira
Access and Inclusion Manager
First ScotRail

DISCLAIMER: Advertisements of items for sale in this Newsletter are a private matter and FIDN has no responsibility for items offered or sale for any contract or agreement arising from such adverts.
Inclusion Scotland: Join and back their campaign for more varied and flexible housing across all tenures [www.inclusionscotland.org](http://www.inclusionscotland.org)

Scottish Federation of Housing Associations: [www.sfha.org.uk](http://www.sfha.org.uk) Join their campaign for 1% for 100% to increase the amount of rented housing built in Scotland

LifeTime Homes – raise the issue with your Councillor and MSPs. [www.lifetimethomes.org.uk](http://www.lifetimethomes.org.uk)

Shelter Scotland – their website is regularly updated with their campaign materials. Many disabled people face homelessness as their housing no longer meets their needs and Shelter Scotland campaigns on homeless issues affect housing in general. [www.shelterscotland.org.uk](http://www.shelterscotland.org.uk)

If your housing does not meet your needs, contact Disabled Persons Housing Service (Fife) to discuss your housing options. DPHS(Fife) work across all tenure types – owner occupiers, council and housing association rented and shared ownership, shared equity scheme and with private landlords. If current house stock does not meet your needs DPHS(F) will advise you what to do to ensure your needs are known about. DPHS(Fife) provides community profiling for housing development teams to highlight unmet need so that provision of housing can start to meet needs of everyone who needs it.

As mentioned at our presentation at Carnegie Business Centre – policy needs to change to ensure that future housing meets the needs of everyone. There are currently no targets for accessible housing in Scotland. If you care about this……get on to the national organisations and try to collectively get this to change for the future!

DPHS(F)
The Roundhouse
Priory Campus
Victoria Road
Kirkcaldy
KY1 2QT
Telephone No: 01592 223905
E-mail: enquiries@dphsfife.org.uk