

February 09

**ABERDEENSHIRE
DISABILITY
ACTION Ltd**
*Supporting the **individual***



ISSUE 17

Editorial

Well here we are again in the midst of severe weather conditions. Not unexpected for February but quite disruptive all the same. In view of this, we have included information on Cold Weather & Winter Fuel payments and schemes available from fuel suppliers. We hope they may be of benefit to you.

Also included is the news of the new Reflexology class starting at ADA which is available free of charge to people with disabilities. The tutor comes from Aberdeen College and will teach pupils how to practise reflexology on other people.

We had a very useful visit from Alex Salmond, First Minister and his Inverurie Office Manager, Hannah Bardell, just after the New Year, when the Board of ADA met & chatted with Alex. He was very interested in our plans for an on-line Forum as well as attending one of our primary school presentations with the Disability Education Service.

It was pointed out to us recently that we should make everyone aware that we have a colour photocopier which does brilliant copies for a very reasonable charge of 10p per A4 sheet. Therefore below is listed all the other services we offer here at ADA .

Large meeting room hire

Small meeting room hire

Fax service

Laminating

Binding

Photocopying

Photo prints

Projector hire (using your laptop)

Flip chart hire

Board Report February 2009

This is going to be a longer than usual report as ADA is at a crucial point in terms of the key challenges we will need to meet in 2009 in order to maintain our existing services and develop new activities that will enable us to make a real difference on behalf of disabled people in Aberdeenshire.

These challenges were identified at a planning day attended by Board members, employees and representatives of both Aberdeenshire Council and the Scottish Government. The key aspects are;

Continuing the existing education service and looking to expand on the basic principle of increasing awareness by developing programmes that can be used across the whole education/learning sector and, possibly, other organisations, e.g., business enterprises.

Continuing the existing information service and looking to develop it further via contact with other agencies and organisations, e.g., libraries. We will also consider how we can best provide "outreach" services.

Looking at all ways that we can ensure effective consultation and connection with disabled people so that we explain needs, wishes etc. This would involve the local forums that we are already working on, an online forum, a chat room, a vibrant, "interactive" website and investigating others who we can work with/partner.

A new employment project, aimed at providing a "one stop shop" service for disabled people who want to work towards obtaining employment. This would involve developing relationships with local employers and providing access to training, volunteering opportunities, work placements, aftercare arrangements and relevant information to individuals. This would require full funding and we have requested that Aberdeenshire Council transfer the money from the now defunct Banff/Turriff network service for this purpose.

The introduction of a formal counselling service, which would require new funding. We would probably look to grant funding for such a project.

Becoming more involved, on a selective basis, in dealing with individual cases and "campaigning" on issues of general interest. We would also be clear about how our representation on various bodies could best be used to the benefit of disabled people.

Board Report February 2009 (contd.)

Unfortunately, whilst what we describe above gives a good idea of how ADA wants to progress, the thorny problem of funding cannot be ignored. Currently, we have submitted a funding request to Aberdeenshire Council that would allow us to undertake most but not all of what we want to do. However, this funding application does ask that the funding from the Banff/Turriff networks be transferred to the new employment service. At the same time funding for the education service currently ends in June and we have still to agree any extension with the Education Department.

It is then fairly easy to see that without agreement on our current funding proposals to the Council and the Education Department the services we provide will be curtailed, unless we can obtain grant funding from elsewhere. In our experience this will be extremely difficult to do.

So, we are at a point where, whilst the Board believe they have identified constructive roles for ADA in terms of awareness, information, active assistance and consultation etc., there is no guarantee that we will be able to pursue them in the way we want and think we are capable of doing.

What the Board will do is to try as hard as possible to ensure that ADA does develop along the lines described. This will require effective team working from all concerned with ADA, as well as sheer hard work from those involved, which can be rewarded because our aims are achievable.

We will keep you informed as it becomes clearer what funding is to be available to us and what this will mean in terms of our ability to deliver valuable services.

Seminar



Disability Equality, Past, Present and Future!

NHS Grampian Involvement and Consultation Seminar, 10am to 3.30pm on Thursday 19th March 2009,

at the Doubletree Hotel (formerly the Patio Hotel)
Beach Boulevard, Aberdeen AB24 5EF

NHS Grampian wishes to involve disabled people and carers in assessing the progress they have made to date, to achieve the objectives set out in the NHS Grampian Disability Equality Scheme 2007-2010. We also wish to actively involve disabled people and carers in setting the priorities for the 2009/2010 NHS Grampian Disability Action Plan, hence this Seminar.

The Doubletree Hotel is a wheelchair accessible venue. Presentations will be provided in accessible formats and staff will be on hand to support, guide and assist. The format will be structured group discussions, with time allowed for networking. To enable carers to participate, if required, a day care facility will be provided at the Hotel, staffed by trained nurses.

Morning refreshments, lunch and afternoon refreshments will be provided. Transport can be arranged for participants free of charge, or reimbursement will be provided for car, taxi or bus journeys.

The venue can accommodate up to 80 people. If you wish to participate please complete the attached Registration Form. A copy of the Programme is attached.
(Forms and programmes available at ADA)

Update on Scottish Gas discount scheme

Following on from the article in the last issue of our newsletter regarding discount on gas & electricity bills from Scottish Gas, we can report that this scheme is no longer in operation. Also the telephone number given in the article has changed to 0800 072 7100 which is the contact no. for the Energy Saving Team. Customers may now be eligible for free cavity wall and loft insulation, if they are on certain benefits. Phone the number above for more details. Another scheme may be introduced in April but no details are known to date.

Scottish Gas Energy Trust

Also of interest, to Scottish Gas customers, is the Scottish Gas Energy Trust, which considers applications for financial assistance from customers receiving their gas and/or electricity from British Gas or Scottish Gas. They will consider helping you if you are in need, poverty, hardship or other distress and are struggling to pay your debts. Grants are available to help individuals and families in need to meet arrears of energy charges and other household bills and costs.

To apply you can download an application form from the following link,

http://www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk/files/British%20Gas%20Application%20Form%2003.11.08_0.pdf or you can apply online.

If you require any assistance or want a form posted out to you, we would be happy to help at ADA.

Social Tariffs

It is clear after doing some research that there are a variety of social tariffs available for vulnerable and fuel poor customers from the various energy providers. The following are contact nos. for the tariffs from the providers who can provide further information on availability and eligibility criteria.

NPower	Spreading Warmth Tariff	Tel. 0800 975 1373
Scottish Hydro Electric	Energyplus Care	Tel. 0800 300 111
Scottish Power	Carefree Plus	Tel. 0845 2700 700
E.ON	CaringEnergy	Tel. 0800 051 1480
EDF	Energy Assist	Tel. 0800 269450

Winter Fuel Payments

A Winter Fuel Payment is an annual tax-free payment made to eligible people aged 60 or over to help towards their winter heating costs. People aged 80 or over are paid an extra amount. It is a lump sum and in most cases is paid automatically, but some people will need to claim. It is a regulated payment and not subject to a budget. As long as you fulfil the conditions below you will be paid.

Who can get Winter Fuel Payments?

You could qualify if you normally live in Great Britain or Northern Ireland and are aged 60 or over during a specified qualifying week which is the week commencing with the third Monday in September each year. For example, the qualifying week for winter 2008/09 is 15 – 21 September 2008.

You will not be able to get a Winter Fuel Payment if during the qualifying week you:

- live in a care home, an independent hospital or Ilford Park Polish Resettlement Home (and have been for the preceding 12 weeks or more), and get income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (income-related) or Pension Credit
- have been in hospital getting free in-patient treatment for more than 52 weeks
- are in custody serving a sentence set by a court
- are subject to immigration control and not able to get help from the Department for Work and Pensions

If you are living with a partner who is getting income-based Job Seeker's Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance (income-based) or Pension Credit, any Winter Fuel Payment will be paid to them.

Do any savings you have affect the payment of Winter Fuel Payments?

No. Savings do not affect Winter Fuel Payments.

How to claim Winter Fuel Payments

If you got a payment last year or you will be getting a State Pension or other social security benefit (but not Housing Benefit, Council Tax Benefit or Child Benefit) during the qualifying week you will not usually need to claim. Otherwise you will need to make a claim.

All claims must reach the Winter Fuel Payment Centre by the 30th March following the winter being claimed for.

You can get a claim form if you need one, by ringing the Winter Fuel Payment help line on 08459 15 15 15 (08545 601 5613 for text phone users), or you can get a copy from the DWP web site www.dwp.gov.uk. Alternatively, you can get a copy from The Pension Service web site www.thepensionservice.gov.uk/winterfuel.

The Non-Pollution Cleaning Solution

Our grandmothers didn't need an arsenal of cleaning products under the sink – no power drain unblockers, limescale destroyers, tile grout cleaners or loo water colourants. And neither do we. It is possible to do many household tasks by simply using ingredients from the store cupboard, which are also safer for the environment.

So here are some tried & trusted natural ways to get your home sparkling:

- ◆ To clean up spills in the oven, sprinkle them with salt straight away. When the oven has cooled, the burnt food will come away with a damp sponge.
- ◆ To remove marks on lino, rub the spot with toothpaste, then wash off.
- ◆ The best window cleaner is a mixture of one part white wine or cider vinegar to three parts warm water. Put on your rubber gloves, immerse an old towel in the solution, rub it on to the windows, then scrunch up a piece of newspaper and use it to buff them up. Use a dry cloth to remove any streaks.
- ◆ To clear a drain mix 60g bicarbonate of soda, 30g table salt and 1 pint white wine or cider vinegar, and pour into the drain. It will bubble and fizz, pushing the salt through the pipe and scouring away deposits. After 20 minutes, follow with hot water (much cheaper than calling Dyno-Rod, but don't do this after using chemical cleaners, as they don't react well together.)

Reflexology Class

Would you like to learn how to practise Reflexology for free?

Do you have a disability and/or are claiming benefits? Do you know someone else who may be interested?

Aberdeenshire Disability Action has some spaces in its new Reflexology class for those who meet these criteria. The class runs on a Thursday afternoon at Unit 4 Blackhall Industrial Estate, Inverurie between 1- 3 pm.

Please contact us here at ADA for further information.

Cold Weather Payment

If you're on a low income, a Cold Weather Payment will help you with extra heating costs during very cold weather in your area.

Who is eligible?

You may be eligible for a Cold Weather Payment for each week of very cold weather in your area if you get Pension Credit.

You may also be eligible for a Cold Weather Payment for each qualifying week if you are getting Income Support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance and have a child under five or get one of the following:

- a pensioner premium, higher pensioner premium or enhanced pensioner premium

- a disability premium or severe disability premium

- a disabled child premium

- Child Tax Credit that includes an individual element for a child or qualifying young person who is disabled or severely disabled

[Pension Credit](#)

[Income Support](#)

How much do you get?

This year you will get £25 when the average temperature where you live is recorded as, or forecast to be, zero degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days during the period from 1 November to 31 March. Specified Meteorological Office weather stations are used to obtain this information.

Effect on other benefits

Cold Weather Payments will not affect other benefits you may be getting.

How to apply

You don't need to apply; you'll get a Cold Weather Payment automatically as long as you qualify.

Tell your pension centre or Jobcentre Plus if you think you should have received a Cold Weather Payment but you have not had one.

Gloves In A Bottle

Gloves In A Bottle is a shielding lotion which absorbs into and bonds with the outer layer of skin, creating a protective layer and preventing moisture getting out.

Gloves In A Bottle state: "It has long been thought that [eczema](#) is caused by an allergic reaction. But, recent research suggests that many [eczema](#) cases are caused by a defective skin barrier which predisposes [eczema](#) sufferers to damage from environmental irritants. These findings are completely changing the way that scientists look at [eczema](#) treatment. Many dermatologists are now recommending the use of a [shielding lotion](#). This is a new type of skin care product that mimics the skin's protective outer layer. This treatment may become the standard way of treating [eczema](#) in the future."

Gloves In A Bottle appears to be getting good reviews and is recommended for conditions such as eczema, dermatitis, psoriasis and dry skin.

Anyone constantly washing their hands such as health professionals or hair dressers may also find it useful as well as swimmers. It is fine to use on the face and body too.

Distributed in the UK by Abbliss Ltd. Address: Freepost Abbliss. Telephone 0800 3894710.
Order online via <http://www.giab.co.uk/order.php>

To obtain your free sample of Gloves In A Bottle simply send a Stamped, Self-Addressed Envelope to 'FREEPOST ABBLISS' - Remember to mark your return envelope after your name 'GIAB' - A small envelope with a regular 1st or 2nd class stamp will suffice.

Five Minute Chocolate Mug Cake

4 tablespoons flour

4 tablespoons sugar

2 tablespoons cocoa

1 egg

3 tablespoons milk

3 tablespoons oil

3 tablespoons chocolate chips (optional)

A small splash of vanilla extract

1 large coffee mug

Add dry ingredients to mug, and mix well. Add the egg and mix thoroughly. Pour in the milk and oil and mix well. Add the chocolate chips (if using) and vanilla extract, and mix again.

Put your mug in the microwave and cook for 3 minutes at 1000 watts (high). The cake will rise over the top of the mug, but don't be alarmed! Allow to cool a little, and tip out onto a plate if desired.

EAT! (this can serve 2 if you want to feel slightly more virtuous). And why is this the most dangerous cake recipe in the world? Because now we are all only 5 minutes away from chocolate cake at any time of the day or night!



Short fast sprints 'cut' diabetes

Short bursts of intense exercise every few days could dramatically cut the risk of Type 2 diabetes and heart disease, according to an expert. Rather than slaving away for hours in the gym, people should focus their attention on quick "sprints" with each workout lasting just a few minutes.

James Timmons, Heriot-Watt University professor of exercise biology has studied the effects of quick exercise. He recommends 4 x 30 second sprints on an exercise bike three times a week. He said people could reduce their risk of diabetes and heart disease substantially with short, intense workouts - with such "time-efficient" exercising appealing to busy workers.

In his study, published in the journal BMC Endocrine Disorders, 16 men exercised for three sessions a week for two weeks. Each session was made up of 4 x 30 second sprints on an exercise bike. This involved the men going as fast as they could for 30 seconds and then taking a few minutes of complete rest between each sprint.

After two weeks, Prof Timmons said the results were "substantial", with a 23% improvement in insulin function. While his research focused on young men, Prof Timmons said it would work for people of all ages and for both men and women. He said: "This study looked at the way we break down stores of glycogen. "Think about diabetes as being glucose circulating in the blood rather than stored in the muscles where it should be. "If we take out the glycogen from the muscles through exercise, then the muscles draw in that excess glucose from the blood."

He added: "If you go for a jog or a run you oxidise glycogen but you are not depleting the glycogen in your muscles. "The only way to get to this glycogen is through very intense contractions of the muscles. "If we can get people in their 20s, 30s and 40s doing these exercises twice a week then it could have a very dramatic effect on the future prevalence of diabetes." He said the effects were bigger than the traditional "one hour of running per day". The exercise routine is known as "high-intensity interval training" or HI T for short.

Prof Timmons said current guidelines on how much exercise people should take may need revising.

Diabetes UK research manager Victoria King said short duration, high-intensity training improved insulin action in young healthy males but the research had only been undertaken in a small group of people without diabetes. She said: "Whilst the improvement in the control of insulin action in those who undertook the training is interesting, it's limited at this stage as to what we can learn as only whole body sensitivity has been measured."

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Please note that ADA does not necessarily endorse or subscribe to any of the items included or opinions expressed in the newsletter.

This publication available in alternative format on request.

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