

NewsLink

News, views and information from Peterborough Disability Forum

October 2018

Half of DLA claimants still losing higher mobility rate support on moving to PIP



A Freedom of Information (FOI) Act response to DR UK shows that around half of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) claimants who were in receipt of its higher mobility rate are still being refused it on their moving to Personal Independence Payment (PIP). In effect, this means that around half of DLA claimants have lost potential entitlement to the Motability scheme. The DWP says that 471,000 DLA claimants who were receipt of the higher mobility rate of DLA had been reassessed by 31 October 2107.

Its FOI response says that:

241,920 (52%) were awarded the enhanced PIP mobility rate;
65,200 (25%) had their benefit reduced to the standard PIP mobility rate;
65,200 (23%) lost their mobility rate entitlement altogether.

Those people whose entitlement has been reduced to the standard mobility rate of PIP have lost £37.10 per week (the equivalent of £1929 per year). They have also lost their entitlement to the Motability scheme (as it is restricted to those receiving the enhanced mobility rate of PIP). People who have lost all entitlement to mobility support have lost £59.75 per week (the equivalent of £3107 per year).

The figures given by the latest DWP FOI response show almost the same loss of mobility entitlement to the FOI response DR UK obtained in 2017.

Ken Butler DR UK's Welfare Rights and Policy Adviser said: "The latest DWP figures continue to show how damaging PIP is to disabled people's income and independence. One of the main reasons for lower PIP mobility rates is the introduction of the "20 metre rule", used to assess mobility in PIP assessments. Under DLA, someone was awarded the highest mobility rate if they could not walk the measure was 50 metres. Now, the PIP benchmark is just over 20 metres (roughly the length of two double-decker buses). The distance of 20 metres is an arbitrary figure that lacks an evidence base and is barring thousands of disabled people who need the benefit the most. While the DWP does publish some PIP statistics it does not publish information that shows the actual effect of the 20 metre rule."

Shopmobility and City College Peterborough hoping to launch groundbreaking partnership



Shopmobility has operated successfully for more than 35 years from its base in the heart of Queensgate Shopping Centre. And for 35 years, the region's leading mobility scooter and wheelchair hire charity has relied on its loyal bank of volunteers to maintain vehicles, provide training and information for potential users and help Manager Chrissie Forvague in the day to day operations.

As Chrissie says "We are so grateful to our volunteers. They really are the backbone of Shopmobility, however, like many charities, we just don't have enough! People are living longer but, with more health or mobility problems. Service providers like ours are getting busier and busier and the need for volunteers increases."

Over the past few months Shopmobility, Queensgate and Disability Peterborough have been exploring ways of recruiting more volunteers. The first name on the list to contact was Tash Dalton, Tutor at City College Peterborough.

Tash met with Chrissie, Carol Wakelin from Queensgate and Bryan Tyler from Disability Peterborough to look at ways of providing young students with volunteering opportunities at Shopmobility and at the same time learn new or enhance existing numeracy, literacy and social skills.

Tash (who is pictured getting mobility scooter training from volunteer Mark) says "it's very early days but there are endless possibilities for the students and also Shopmobility. I know Bryan is working with LNER and the Train Station to set up a Shopmobility outlet run by "Mobility Aiders" at the Station for disabled passengers or those that struggle with mobility. A passenger may need support to get into the City Centre. If so; our students will be there to help. If a disabled passenger needs a hand with their shopping and getting back to the station, our guys will be there to assist."

Tash added "we have lots to work out but everyone involved is so excited about the possibilities. We hope to encourage more people with disabilities or health problems to get the train, come to Peterborough for their shopping or day out and let one of our "Mobility Aiders" meet you off the train with a friendly face and a wheelchair or mobility scooter. What's not to like?"

Spot the signs! And no swearing!



Disability Forum regular Colin had a visit from overseas based friends recently. To say his visitors were underwhelmed with the signage (or lack of) in the City Centre would be an exaggeration. One of Colin's friends walks with the aid of sticks and his partner is partially sighted.

Colin said "it's not until you try to get around the city do you realise the paucity of useful signage. I'm a Peterborian so I know where I'm going but for a visitor trying to get around, either by foot or by car, it must be a nightmare.

There are no signs to Shopmobility (my friend was in need of a wheelchair). There are no indicators to where the disabled parking is and we only found out that Peterborough has a Changing Places because we parked in the Haven Car Park. My friends enjoyed their stay in Peterborough but no thanks to whoever is responsible for wayfinding!"

Do you struggle keeping your tyres roadworthy?



With the onset of winter, it becomes increasingly difficult for lots of older drivers or those with mobility problems to take care of car maintenance jobs such as oil changing and tyre pressure checks.

Bryan Tyler from Disability Peterborough and Cllr John Fox are talking to local tyre companies asking them if they could offer free tyre checks and advice-together with a courtesy tyre pump up for people associated with the Disability Forum. More details in next month's NewsLink

Walks on Wednesday group celebrate its 7th year!

Back in 2011 members of the Disability Forum were asking if there were any walking groups in Peterborough that "accommodated" people with disabilities or long term health issues. Sadly such groups were few and far between, so the Disability Forum set up its own.

It was agreed to offer a 6 week trial period, if it didn't work, the group would stop. However! Walks on Wednesdays at Ferry Meadows are now in its 7th year and still growing.

The group will be taking a well deserved break in December but if you want more information. lindajeanparsons@gmail.com

Inclusive Skating is back



We are pleased to announce that Inclusive Skating returned on Monday 24 September 6.30 to 7.30pm, £2 pp, every other Monday at Planet Ice, Bretton.

Play on the ice or learn to skate with qualified coaches, skates and penguins included. Skating is suitable for all the family, friends and carers. To

book please visit www.bookwhen.com/inclusiveskating

Waity's Massive Challenges continue at full throttle

David's next challenge is Island Peak in the Himalaya's, which is 6,189m high!



Now he's got the parachute jump out of the way this is challenge that daunts him the most. The Island Peak, one of the highest peaks in the Himalayas

It's not that the intrepid Mr Wait doesn't think he can do it physically, but as it's at altitude, no matter how fit or mentally strong the climber is-The altitude takes no prisoners. We asked David some questions about the challenges:

- 1. You are half way through - any regrets?** Absolutely none, it's been a great experience but hard work. The training has been the hardest part in the hope that if I train hard it will make the challenges slightly easier!
- 2. What have been the best and worst of it so far?** The best has been the sky-dive, which ironically was the one that scared me the most, it is something I will be doing again and could potentially be my new hobby. The worst has been spraining the ligaments in my ankles, which happened during the 100km race, there was 6 weeks from completing the 100km to going to Nepal to climb Island Peak so have had to adjust how I train as I'm not able to do any impact work
- 3. What gave you the motivation to take on so many challenges?** A variety of things really, as I spend more time with Disability Peterborough the more I can see the good work they do and how many people they help. I've also been jokingly saying these challenges are a mid-life crisis but starting to think it's true – I've always taken part in challenges but wanted to really challenge myself to see what I could achieve. People and companies actually donating money is also helping me to keep motivated, money is tight for most people so anyone parting with their hard-earned cash is quite humbling – Thanks has to go to companies such as EML Electrical who make a new donation on the completion of every challenge.
- 4. What would your message to be someone else considering even just one of these challenges, and what has it done for you personally?** I would say just do it, book it pay a deposit and commit to it. I genuinely am quite lazy and was massively overweight 6 months ago and these challenges have forced me to change some of the bad habits I had (or still have), it's still not quite perfect but hoping the changes are now for life!
- 5. How are you helping Disability Peterborough and why did you choose that charity?** As the challenges are being self-funded all of the donations go direct to Disability Peterborough. The charity has recently lost one of its main funder's so any donations go towards ensuring the charity can operate and offer ongoing support and help to anyone within Peterborough who lives with a disability. I first met Disability Peterborough through hosting an awareness month at Serpentine Green, during this campaign I could see how the charity benefits so many local people - It also made me realise that not everyone knows about the charity so hoping that these challenges not only raises money but helps raise awareness of what Disability Peterborough can offer.

Barry's Monthly Moan: Have disabled people given up the struggle?



Every couple of months, for the past ten years, the Disability Forum has met. Not clandestinely or under cover like agents of a shady foreign power, but out in the open, and, at an accessible venue near you. If my maths are up to scratch, the Forum has welcomed over 200 guest speakers over the years including, Council Leaders, Sports and media personalities as well as key decision makers from Council, NHS, Community, Business and officers from local disability charities.

The Disability Forum is an arena where important issues are discussed and debated. But, significantly, the Forum is managed by local disabled people, for disabled people and their families. There is no big business pulling the strings and the Forum has no political allegiance to any party.

Bryan Tyler, who chairs the Forum, is busy working on several issues, such as: improving access to the new council offices, improving wheelchair services, building better relations between taxi companies and disabled passengers, getting a new ramp built between the Train station and Queensgate and lobbying for a new Changing Places in Westgate. Work has begun on next year's Disability Awareness Week at Serpentine Green and Sporting Saturday at the Cresset.

I could write about previous successes such as the Train Station redevelopment, improved access in the City, at the Cathedral and at Ferry Meadows, but I think it's far more important to look to the future. Every day brings a new challenge! We have doctors' surgeries and law courts without proper access, sport and leisure providers with barely accessible facilities, we have major high street shops, cafes and restaurants who give scant regard to wheelchair users or the visually impaired. The list is endless, but little is going to improve until more disabled people get involved with groups like the Disability Forum.

According to the Councils own figures there are about 35000 city residents who live with a disability or health condition. Where do they all go to get their voices heard? Certainly not to any of the number of disability related meetings I attend throughout Peterborough. Let's be honest, we all like to moan about the Council or NHS, but how do these massive organisations know what the issues are if we don't tell them! If you want to make Peterborough a better place to live for disabled people, why not come to the next Disability Forum. 10am on Tuesday 27th November at Centre 68 in Westgate. You gotta be in it to win it!

Wednesday PHAB Club are in need of volunteers

Can you spare up to 3 hours per week on Wednesday evenings to be a volunteer at our PHAB Social Club for Adults?

Wednesday PHAB Club has been established in Bretton, Peterborough for almost seven years. Around 50 young adults take part in indoor Sports, Crafts, Dance, Judo, Wii, Pool & Table Tennis and disco. There are also coach trips throughout the year.

Due to family issues, ill-health and work commitments this year, the club has lost several of its longstanding volunteers.

The club has had to close for all of September for the first time since we began. Would you be interested in volunteering? The club would provide a DBS through PHAB Head Office. To find out more please contact: Ann Deane 07799972176. Email: ann44home@gmail.com

SPECIAL OLYMPICS PETERBOROUGH PRESENTATION EVENING

A fantastic night was had by all at the Special Olympics Presentation evening on Saturday 22nd September. Over a hundred athletes and their families joined together to celebrate the achievements of athletes and commemorate 40 years of Special Olympics Great Britain.



Cllrs John and Judy Fox, Deputy Mayor and Deputy Mayoress, Sandie Burns CEO Disability Peterborough and Laurence Dobney a donor for the swimming team were in attendance to present over fifty certificates of achievement, medals of inspiration, commemorate pin badges and trophies.

Athletes from

Special Olympic sports: Athletics, Boccia, Equestrian, Golf, Rhythmic Gymnastics and Peterborough Boccia Club.

A special commemorate pin badge was presented to our coaches in recognition of their commitment to Special Olympics Peterborough was also presented.



A fish and chip supper followed and then it was time to put the dancing shoes on to dance the night away.

A brilliant night was had by everyone.



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And finally.....Some useful numbers

Age UK 01733 564185

Care and Repair 01733 863895

CareZone 01733 575083

Carers Trust Peterborough 01733 645234

City Care Clinic 01733 293800

Child Benefit 0845 302 1444

Department of Work and Pensions (new claims) 0800 055 6688

Disability Peterborough (DIAL) 01733 265551

Fire and Rescue Service 0800 917 9994

Headway Cambridgeshire 01223 576550

Housing Options 01733 864064

Inland Revenue – Tax Credits 0845 300 3900

Inspire Peterborough 01733 330815

Peterborough Association for the Blind 01733 344 844

Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme 0844 4994120

Peterborough Direct 01733 747474

Peterborough City Hospital 01733 678000

Peterborough Pensioners Association 01733 270528

Peterborough Police 101

Samaritans 08457 909090

Shopmobility 01733 313133

St Georges Hydrotherapy Pool 01733 453583

YMCA GYM 01733 313 085