

GDA February Newsletter

If you would like a large print version of this newsletter please contact Karen on 07781 467316 or Ben at info@disabilityalliance.org.gg

GDA talks to the Head of Civil Service

February's guest speaker at our GDA meeting was Paul Whitfield, Chief Executive of the States of Guernsey.

He spoke about his role as Guernsey's senior civil servant and the changes he is making in the way the States approaches customer service.

Over the past 14 months he has visited every States site and is now working on a program of training for frontline civil servants. This will include how letters are written, how people are spoken to, as well as simplifying processes. Part of the training will involve how to communicate with people with an impairment as well as providing more accessible ways to interact with the States of Guernsey.

If you were unable to attend the GDA meeting but want to let the states know about good or bad examples of customer service, email serviceguernsey@gov.gg



Access for All



Richard Evans introduced himself and the new group 'Access for All' which has been formed to Work in partnership with the community to improve accessibility, in its widest context, for islanders and visitors alike.

If you would like to learn more or get involved:

chair@access.gg

www.facebook.com/accessforallgsy

www.twitter.com/access_gg

Thank you Jean!

Jean recently presented Karen with a cheque for £200 which she had won in a competition from Good Neighbours News.



GDA seeks Chair of Trustees

At the AGM you may remember Shelaine saying that this is her last year as Chair. She will remain on our committee as Social Policy Adviser. We are actively looking for a new Chair of Trustees but the role will be different to Shelaine's - more formal and focused on leading the Exec Committee. To find out more, go to www.disabilityalliance.org.gg.

Shelaine in the States

The final Billet in the rush before the end of this States term of office contains yet more proposals relevant to disabled islanders. Plus a new abbreviation to chew on - "SWBIC"!



1. Changes to the benefits system (SWBIC)

The Social Welfare Benefits Investigation Committee (SWBIC) is proposing a new benefits system called Income Support, starting in January 2017. This would bring together the Supplementary Benefit system and the Rent Rebate system (for social housing tenants). Everyone who may be affected should have received a letter from the States which includes a phone number for any questions.



Please note - these are only proposals at this stage and will be discussed by the States at their March 8th meeting. For more detail, Cotils Shelaine on shelaine@disabilityalliance.org.gg or 07781 451 310

2. New "Extra Needs" Allowance

Do you have to have the heating turned up because your disability means you feel the cold? Do you wear through your clothes and shoes rapidly? Are you on a costly special diet?

If so, the States are proposing that, from January 2017, Supplementary Benefit claimants can apply for an additional "Extra Needs Allowance" of between £5 and £20 a week (if they aren't already getting Severe Disability Benefit).

This will be debated at the March 8th States meeting as part of the "SWBIC" proposals.

3. Supported Living and Ageing Well (SLAWS)

Thanks to everyone who came to the 'Ageing Well in the Bailiwick' discussion about the Supported Living and Ageing Well Strategy (SLAWS) - there was a really good representation from the GDA. For a copy of the Ageing Well letter to deputies and the notes of the meeting go to www.disabilityalliance.org.gg/blog



4. Capacity Legislation

The States has just published proposals to modernise the legislation that allows someone to make decisions on someone else behalf (see March Billet). We are currently finding out whether there will be any presentations to explain the changes.

Your Voice - Practical Policy

6. Shopmobility - is there a need?

The States Transport team have asked GDA members what the demand would be for a Shopmobility scheme in Town. View Jersey's scheme for some ideas: <http://www.shopmobility.org.je/>



7. Door to Door service

The Transport team have asked for our views on the demand for a door to door transport scheme for people who can't use the bus service. Who would be keen to use it, for what (work, social, charity event or meeting), how often per week or month?

8. Are you a blue badge holder?

Do you have a view of the positives or challenges with the Blue Badge scheme? Are there areas or times of day that you have problem finding a blue badge parking space? If you have any feedback please contact Karen or Caroline.



9. Are you a wheelchair user?

We have been working with the HSSD team on their wheelchair service review. If you have any feedback for this team please contact Peter Hill-Smith who is our GDA rep on the team (or Karen at Cheshire Home or Karen at GDA).



10. Information Hints and Tips

Access for All has made its first factsheet. It gives people hints and tips on how to make printed documents more accessible. It has been included in the official Information for Prospective Candidates (Deputies) to make their manifestos more accessible.

We would welcome your feedback on the factsheet which can be seen at www.access.gg



11. Cornet Street crossing

Access for All joined the States Transport team for a tour around Town. They reviewed the Cornet Street crossing (thumbs up), blue badge parking, bollards, chains, ramps, visual obstacles and clear signposting / contrast to increase safety and accessibility as far as possible.



Join us for a session on disability law:

Why do we need it, and how does it work? This will help us build up our own knowledge, and prepare for when the States are ready to consult. There will be an intro at our regular meeting on 2 March, with a more in-depth session on Wednesday 9 March at 7pm. Please let Karen know if you want to attend.

Voting... coming soon

6th April is the date for a practice polling session at Beau Sejour. We hope it will be followed by a Disability Hustings. Don't forget to register by 29th February. Visit www.election2016.gg



Sailing Trust Paralympian Dinner Supporting GDA / Cheshire Home

On the 7th April the Friends of the Guernsey Sailing Trust will be holding a black tie dinner at St Pierre Park where Paralympians Hannah Stodell and Steve Thomas will speak. Tables of 10 or 12, cost £50 per person, individual tickets are also available. The GDA will benefit from ticket sales. For more information visit www.disabilityalliance.org.gg/blog/



Diary of Dates

HUB La Grande Soiree Evening

12th February
St Pierre Park Hotel

SLAWS/CYPP States Debate

16th-19th February
Royal Court

Deadline for Voting Registration

29th February

GDA Members Meeting

Disability Legislation introduction and Election 2016
2nd March, 7pm
Cambridge Room, Beau Sejour.

Disability Legislation Follow Up

9th March, 7pm
Venue to be confirmed

GDA Members Meeting and Voting Practice

6th April, 7pm
Beau Sejour

Sailing Trust Paralympian Dinner Supporting GDA / Cheshire Home

7th April, 7.30pm
St Pierre Park
www.disabilityalliance.org.gg/blog/

Postal Vote Application Deadline

22nd April

Election 2016

27th April

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