

Calderdale D.A.R.T. Autumn 2012 Newsletter

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(This newsletter is available on our website we can also add individuals/organisations to our newsletter mailing list on request. A large print copy is also available on request)

Health & Well Being funding

We were recently informed that our application to fund a pilot project to provide a comprehensive life planning process for up to 40 clients was successful. We will receive just under £10,000 to run the pilot from November to April 2013. The pilot will be primarily aimed at newly disabled people.

Prom event at St Annes in the Grove, Southowram

On Saturday 1st September the Clifton and Lightcliffe brass band, supported by guest Soloist Anne Woodhouse put on a concert to help raise funds for DART and the church. The event was very successful, well attended and enjoyed by everyone. A profit of over £1,000 was made to be shared between DART and the church. It is hoped we can hold a similar event in the future.

Charity stall/street collection

The charity stall had been held as planned on 24th August. It was relocated at the last minute to Northgate. The stall raised £280.00. Our thanks go to everyone who helped out on the day and to the people who purchased items from the stall.

Local Giving

On 25th September Localgiving.com will encourage new supporters to make one-time and/or on-going monthly donations on the website by matching up to £10 per donation. They have got a pot of £500,000 to match donations, and will match up to £10 per donation until the pot is gone, raising awareness and funds for local charities and community groups across England.

So when a supporter gives £10, they will double it to £20! The new monthly donations feature will enable supporters to give automatically and regularly to local charities through online Direct Debit.

Visit <https://localgiving.com/charity/calderdale-dart> or go to the DART website <http://www.calderdaledart.org.uk/> and click on the green 'make a donation banner on any page.

Council Funding

April 2011 – March 2012

For 5 years commencing April 2007, we had a funding arrangement with the Council to deliver a specialist disability advice service, this arrangement came to an end on 31st March 2012. The Council funding we received during the last year of the funding agreement (£68,000) covered the cost of the Manager, some Adviser and clerical support hours, and a small contribution towards running costs. The rest of the running costs were covered from contributions from other funders and from donations and our own fundraising activities. The core service delivered an office based advice and information service. We dealt with enquiries over the phone; by letter/email/fax and through office appointments. Enquiries ranged from simple signposting through to assisting with various application forms, calculating benefit entitlements right through to preparing submissions for appeals.

We dealt with numerous one off enquiries and we also had many clients who have repeatedly used the service as well as those who have used the service over many years as their circumstances change. We would emphasise this isn't all about client dependency as some clients particularly those with mental health problems; learning disability or sensory impairment just couldn't cope with lengthy benefit application forms. Nor could they access the same help they receive from DART from other advice providers in Calderdale. We had been told in a critical way that we provided a 'Rolls Royce' service but we believe we offer the service our client group needs; in terms of the time they need to articulate their problems, **before** we can even start to address their advice needs. We also find that by giving sufficient time during the initial stages this can actually reduce the time it takes to conclude a case as our expertise can negate the need for a reconsideration or appeal against a benefit decision. Reconsiderations and Appeals are generally the most time consuming issues we deal with at DART. Yes we could just give out forms and self-help packs but is this really advice? We know that this kind of approach would increase the enquiry rate and client numbers but it will ultimately reduce the quality of our service and we believe that many clients would just go away and put their application forms and self-help packs in the nearest bin. This is a very worrying time for people with disabilities who appear to be one of the main targets of the austerity cuts. Many clients tell us they just wouldn't know where to start with the many confusing and complicated benefit application forms and that without the help they have been receiving from DART Advisers they would probably just give up. We believe that many clients will suffer even more from the cuts if they are not able to obtain the advice they need from specialist advice services. It is therefore ironic that a time when advice services are needed more than ever, Calderdale Council reduced its spending on advice services from £491,000 down to £370,000 from April 2012 (for a 3 year period) and all of this funding has gone to one organisation which is Citizens Advice (formerly the Citizens Advice Bureau). We currently have some transition funding from the Council which only allows us to offer a limited service to clients as we search for potential new funders of the service. If we are unsuccessful with these efforts then inevitably Calderdale DART will have to close. At the moment we have to turn lots of clients away and signpost them to other services, this is extremely frustrating for us, but we currently have no alternative.

Voluntary Sector Commissioning

Calderdale DART welcomed the Report which went to the Communities Scrutiny Panel on 16th August (The full report is available on the Councils website by searching the council and democracy section) The report covered many of the points we had raised previously around the difficulties of smaller organisations being able to apply for contracts and in doing so, acknowledging that this is often due to both capacity issues and other particular difficulties faced by organisations such as ours, in attempting to develop a consortium approach.

That we have traditionally received our funding through the Communities Directorate for the provision of advice services was because this was the way we had been directed over the years. Whilst our primary focus has always been the provision of advice, we believe that DART offers a much more holistic service than advice alone, and as such we suggested that there was scope for smaller organisations such as DART, to receive funding from other Directorates within the Council. As an established and well respected specialist organisation, DART has always received referrals from other Directorates such as; Adult Health & Social Care and Children's Social Care, as well as from NHS funded sources such as; Community Nursing Teams and The CMHT.

We noted that at part 2.3 of the report it was recognised that putting too much of Council Funding through competitive procurement processes, and that using larger contracts to achieve savings, had reduced the amount of funding available to smaller organisations such as DART. It was also acknowledged that if funding reduces too much, small local organisations such as ours will disappear.

We noted that at part 2.5 of the report it was stated that officers are working on an advice strategy to include the impact of welfare reform. We and our colleagues in the advice sector have for some time been reporting that the implementation of the welfare reform act is undeniably going to have a major impact on advice services. We advised that the demand for help and support was going to increase considerably at a time when funding for advice services in Calderdale had been reduced.

Our client group is already affected by changes to Incapacity benefit (migration to Employment and Support Allowance), and with the further changes to DLA; Housing Benefit and Council Tax and the introduction of a Universal Credit still to come, the expected increase in demand for our services at a time when our future remains uncertain is cause for concern.

We asked that the scrutiny panel acknowledge that any consideration of the Council that will impact upon the voluntary and community sector overall, will likely need to involve other Directorates, and we would welcome discussion around a full scrutiny review of voluntary sector commissioning involving other scrutiny panels and discussions around what support the Council could offer above and beyond the contractual and commissioning relationship.

The Impact of National Welfare Reforms on Calderdale 2011-2017

(report by Rory Deighton Chief Executive Citizens Advice Bureau, Calderdale)

Summary

The welfare reform agenda in 2011-2017 from government will combine with unexpectedly austere economic conditions and associated cuts to the voluntary sector and legal aid. Thousands of existing Calderdale welfare claims will be converted to a new super-benefit namely Universal Credit, with many existing payment levels being reduced, and all capped at £500 per household per week.

At the same time, the reassessments in incapacity benefit will continue, alongside a new benefit the Personal Independence Payment, designed to replace Disability Living Allowance and with a stated aim to reduce costs in this area by 20%.

An estimated sum of £19.9 million pounds per year will be lost from the local economy by 2017. Large family households, headed by a lone parent, will face considerable pressures. The effects will be economically felt much wider than just the claimants' households. If the £0.6m estimated loss as a result of the Benefit Cap is added to this figure (The latest data from the DWP estimates that an average of £73.59 per week will be lost by 157 households in Calderdale alone) then Calderdale's loss will rise up to £20.5 million.

To read the full report, go to:

<http://www.calderdaleforward.org.uk/workspace/uploads/files/impact-of-national-welfare-ref-50759e6d34756.pdf> or just Google welfare reform in Calderdale.

In the 12 months ended 31st March 2012 we helped our clients to claim welfare benefits amounting to £2,325,262 (on an Annual basis) This figure has been calculated on information reported back to us by clients.

Labour will make cuts to welfare budget if it wins 2015 election, says Liam Byrne

Labour's Liam Byrne has outlined the need to "reinvent social security for modern times" as he signalled the party intends to make savings in the welfare budget if it returns to power in 2015. Pointing to the growing resentment of benefit claimants by some sections of society, the shadow work and pensions secretary said he believed the fact that social security no longer enjoyed "widespread support" was linked to the fact it did not offer the same level of security as it once did.

He said in an era in which "jobs for life" had gone, the system needed to work differently to reflect the fact that different things were needed from social security, with a "much bigger push" to get people back into work, new investment in areas such as childcare, and being "much smarter" about how the system set up to help disabled people worked.

He told the BBC Radio 4 Today programme: "The truth is the world of work has changed very

radically since social security was set up back in the 1940s and for many people in work they don't actually feel they get much out for the pressures they have to contend with in everyday life, so I think that fractures support and I think that's why we do have to reinvent social security for modern times and the world today."

Asked whether a Labour government would introduce further welfare savings, Byrne conceded cuts were likely because of the "dog's breakfast" Labour would inherit if it returned to power.

"The national debt is going to be over £400bn higher than it was at the last parliament," he said. "Savings are going to have to be made and I think there will be savings that are needed on welfare spending too, and our challenge is how we spend that money differently to support people in work."

Byrne said the "zero-based review" that Ed Miliband Would conduct if Labour won the 2015 general election would look at the "balance" between universal and targeted benefits.

"There has always been a balance in the welfare state between universal benefits and targeted benefits and I'm afraid as part of Ed's zero-based review that balance has got to be looked at, but the chief focus has got to be on getting as many people into jobs as possible. It's good for living standards, it's good for growth and it's good for tax."

Byrne also used the interview to call for a government rethink on its plans to set one national benefits cap, saying it would make "much more sense to have a different cap in different parts of the country".

Speaking before Miliband's party conference speech in Manchester, Byrne suggested an independent panel of experts should examine the issue to ensure "no matter where you live, you are better off in work".

He backed the principle of a cap on benefits, but added: "They have, in a clumsy and pretty politicised way, tried to set one national cap for the country whereas everybody knows that one cap for the whole of Britain would be pumped up a bit by the very, very high levels of rent and housing benefit that you see in London.

"We've said, 'Look, come on, think about this carefully. It would make much more sense to have a different cap in different parts of the country and let's try and take the politics out of that a bit.'

"Let's get an independent panel of wise experts who can look at this and say what is the right level in different parts of the country, so that no matter where you live, you are better off in work"

(Guardian October 2nd 2012)

New disability action alliance announced to deliver disability strategy

The Government recently announced the formation of a new disability action alliance to help respond to the ideas put forward by disabled people and their organisations on living fulfilling lives.

Convened by Disability Rights UK and supported by the Office for Disability Issues, the alliance will consider thousands of suggestions put forward by disabled people earlier this year as part of the

'Fulfilling Potential' discussion.

Minister for Disabled People, Esther McVey said:

"The Paralympics truly captivated the hearts of the nation and have undoubtedly helped shift attitudes and perceptions towards disabled people. What we have now is an once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to capitalise on this and to work with disabled people to deliver lasting change.

"I want to ensure that there is a clear focus in place across Government and will be working with disabled people and their organisations on developing the new disability strategy so that this country remains a world leader in disability equality."

Last December the Government invited disabled people to help shape a new cross-government disability strategy. The 'Fulfilling Potential, the Discussions So Far', published today, summarises the issues raised, and shows how actions are already being taken across Government to address many of the issues.

We have also published 'Fulfilling Potential, Next Steps' which sets out the vision and principles; outlines further public sector reforms; and announces a new disability action alliance, involving organisations from across the private, public and voluntary and community sectors.

The alliance – similar to the age action alliance created last year - will put disabled people and their organisations at the heart of creating inclusive local communities and changing attitudes to disability.

The launch of Fulfilling Potential – 'the Discussions So Far' and 'Next Steps' follows an Ipsos MORI poll which showed eight out of ten (81%) British adults thought the Paralympics has had a positive impact on the way disabled people are viewed by the public.

- The documents are published here: www.odi.gov.uk/fulfilling-potential
- To get involved in the Alliance visit here: fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Website: www.dwp.gov.uk

Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/dwppressoffice

Motor Neurone Disease association (MND)

MND will fund and promote research to bring about an end to MND. Until then, we will do all that we can to enable everyone with MND to receive the best care, achieve the highest quality of life possible, and die with dignity. We will also do all that we can to support the families and carers of people with MND

West Yorkshire Branch

MND Association David Niven House, 10-15, Notre Dame Mews, Northampton, NN1 2BG

West Yorkshire Regional Care Development Adviser – Sue Smith, P.O.Box 168, Leeds, LS16 8WY

Telephone 08453751822

Email sue.smith@mndassociation.org Website www.mndassociation.org Contact Sue Smith

We will:

- Focus everything we do on the needs of people living with MND
- Empower people living with MND
- Value everyone who contributes to our work
- Expect and encourage the highest possible standards in everyone

We have local highly trained volunteers [Association Visitors] who are trained, supervised and managed by the Regional Care Development Adviser [always a paid Health or Social Care Professional] who visit and support people affected by MND in their own homes.

Our branch arranges regular social events in garden centre cafes across West Yorkshire and regular fundraising events for the Association.

We provide some equipment on loan and fund other equipment etc. if needed by a person with MND but only when statutory services cannot or will not provide. These are funded in part by the branches fund raising.

The Association has a website, interactive forum and national helpline MND Connect to provide info/advice for anyone affected by MND including professionals.

RCDA provides support to individuals and families, education at all levels both to professionals and carers, influencing regarding service developments. Is a member of YHANO [Yorkshire and Humber Association of Neurological Organisations] and works closely with other paid workers from neurological charities to increase influencing and education and is involved at national level with other relevant organisations.

We do not charge for services and membership is free to people with MND and their main carer.

Voluntary Action Calderdale

Mission statement

VAC is a catalyst for positive social change in Calderdale, working to promote and empower vibrant and cohesive communities.

Address

Resource Centre, Hall Street, Halifax HX1 5AY **Phone Number** 01422 348777 Email info@cvac.org.uk **Website** www.cvac.org.uk

VAC Aims

We provide services to support voluntary organisations build their own capacity and sustainability.

Our volunteering services are also provided to the general public, to enable them to undertake voluntary work within Calderdale.

Summary of services for DART clients

Volunteer drop-ins to help people understand more about volunteering and to talk to someone about volunteering. This service can also help you find a placement.

Do-it website – www.do-it.org.uk – online database of volunteering opportunities

Volunteer Voice – newsletter for volunteers

Volunteer Directory – full of the latest volunteering opportunities

Mentoring projects – suitable for those who wish to support others to volunteer

Personal Independence Payment (PIP)

Personal Independence Payment **will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA)** for people of working age from April 2013.

It retains the key features of DLA – non means tested and non-taxable payable both in and out of work but introduces a more objective assessment process

Awards will be based on the

- Individual circumstances of the person claiming
- Impact of their disability / health condition
- Extent to which they are able to live independently and participate in society

Personal Independence Payment is being introduced in stages:

- April 2013: Initially take a few thousand new claims in areas including

Merseyside, North West England, Cumbria, Cheshire and North East England

During this period new claimants in all other parts of the country will continue to claim Disability Living Allowance as now

- June 2013: The plan is to take new claims from all claimants in all parts of the country
- Oct 2013: Begin to reassess about 30,000 mostly randomly selected existing DLA cases
- Jan 2014: Full national reassessment likely to begin
- March 2016: All current DLA claimants of working age will have been contacted about claiming Personal Independence Payment

Key elements of Personal Independence Payment

Personal Independence Payment is made up of:

- A Daily Living component
- A Mobility component

Awards will be made up of one or both of these components.

Each component will have two rates:

- Standard
- Enhanced

Which components or rates claimants are entitled to will be based on an assessment of individuals' circumstances and their ability to carry out a range of key everyday activities.

The assessment process

- Assessment for Personal Independence Payment will involve health professionals considering the evidence provided by the claimant and any professional that may support them on a regular basis.
- Most people will also be asked to a face to face consultation with this health professional as part of the claim process
- The health professional will provide advice to a benefit decision maker at the Department for Work and Pensions
- The benefit decision maker will then use all of this information to decide your entitlement to Personal Independence Payment

Universal Credit: Disabled people 'to lose out'

Up to half a million disabled people and their families stand to lose out under the government's proposed Universal Credit, a report says.

The Children's Society, Citizens Advice and Disability Rights UK say 100,000 households with children could have incomes reduced by up to £28 a week.

They are urging a rethink, particularly on help for future claimants.

But David Cameron said greater support was being targeted at the most disabled and overall funding was going up.

The Universal Credit will replace Jobseeker's allowance, tax credits, income support, employment and support allowance - formerly known as incapacity benefit - and housing benefits with a single payment.

The system will be "piloted" in parts of north-east England next April and will come into force across Britain for new claimants from October 2013.

Existing claimants will be transferred to the new system in stages until 2017, while Universal Credit will be capped at £26,000 per household.

The report argues that the changes will mean 230,000 severely disabled people who do not have another adult to assist them will receive between £28 and £58 less in benefits every week.

It also states that around 116,000 disabled people who work will be at risk of losing around £40 per week.

The report says the impact of the cuts in support for disabled children could be "extremely severe" for families currently receiving the mid-rate "care component" of the Disability Living Allowance, a payment made where a child can be severely disabled but does not need care overnight.

Of those families affected, one in 10 expressed fears that they could no longer afford their own home, while two thirds said they would have to cut back on food, and more than a half said it would lead them into debt.

Some families said the changes to support for disabled children could result in their children having to be placed in full-time residential care.

Biggest losers, according to the report

- 100,000 disabled children who might lose £28 a week.

- 230,000 severely disabled people without an adult to assist them could be out of pocket by £28 - £58 a week.
- 116,000 disabled people in work who are at risk of losing £40 a week.
- However, the government says no current claimants will be out of pocket when the Universal Credit is introduced.
- Anyone facing a reduced benefit payment will receive a cash top-up to match their current payment.
- This payment, called "transitional protection", will be frozen at the time of the switchover and not index linked. Thus, over time it will be devalued by inflation.

The report says 83% of those eligible for the severe disability premium, which will be abolished under the changes, reported that a reduction in benefit levels would mean they would have to cut back on food and 80% said they would have to cut the amount they spent on heating.

The changes start to come into force from October next year and current benefit claimants who move on to Universal Credit will not see an immediate reduction in their payments.

'Clear message'

But they will have their level of benefit frozen, with no increases to take into account rising prices, campaigners say, and they may see their support cut immediately if their household circumstances change.

Independent peer Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, who shares the title of Great Britain's most successful female Paralympian with cyclist Sarah Storey, said the findings of the report did not make "easy reading".

She told the BBC: "Under the new system it is going to be difficult for a number of disabled people. The government say people are protected but it's only for current benefit claimants.

Prime Ministers Questions: David Cameron on disability benefit and universal credit

"What we want to do is ask the government to think again. We are in a situation where the regulations of the Welfare Reform Bill are coming to us quite soon and we can make changes. I think we can improve the system to help disabled people lead better lives."

But, asked about the issue at prime minister's questions, Mr Cameron defended changes to disability benefits, saying overall funding would increase from £1.35bn in 2011 to £1.45bn in 2015.

"Under the plans, no recipients will lose out unless their circumstances change and all current recipients are fully cash-protected by a transitional scheme," he told MPs.

"What we are doing, and this is a decision and a choice we have made, is for future recipients we are going to increase the amount we give to the most severely disabled children and there will be a new lower amount for less disabled people.

"That is a choice we are making. Increasing the overall amount of money, focusing on the most disabled - that I think shows the right values and the right approach."

The report summarises the findings from three research reports based on evidence from surveys of almost 3,500 disabled people and their families, as well as a parliamentary evidence session. (Source BBC website 17th October 2012)

Council Tax Support Scheme

The Government announced that from April 2013, Council Tax Benefit will be replaced by a scheme called Council Tax Support, which will be run locally by individual Councils.

As part of this change, the Government has given Councils the freedom to create their own Council Tax Support Scheme. Calderdale Council is proposing a scheme as outlined in its Council Tax Support Guide Proposed Scheme Rules document

Calderdale Council currently spends around £16 million per year on Council Tax Benefit and this is paid for in full through Central Government funding. From April 2013, the amount of money that the Council will receive to support residents who are unable to pay their Council Tax will be reduced by about 10%. This means that as well as having to create a local Council Tax Support Scheme they will also have to work within a reduced budget.

This shortage in funding means they may have to make some difficult decisions about who gets financial support and how much they will get.

Why is the Council Tax Benefit scheme being abolished?

The Government is committed to reforming the current Welfare System and replacing Council Tax Benefit with Council Tax Support. This is one of the many changes that will be introduced over the next few years by Government. At the same time, the Government has introduced the Localism Bill which involves the Government handing over control of a number of budgets and decision making powers to local councils.

What the changes mean

- Every Council will have their own local Council Tax Support scheme, with its own eligibility criteria.

- From next year Calderdale Council will have ten per cent less money for Council Tax Support than it currently spends on Council Tax Benefit. It will also have to manage what it spends on helping people within this budget, even if more people start to claim benefit.
- The Government has set out that certain groups such as pensioners will be protected and should see no changes to their entitlement - however, it is up to each Council to consider whether to protect other groups - and how to fund any extra protections.
- The Government wants Councils to encourage people to find work, by making the system support them better when they move into work.

The Council's Members have considered these changes and put together a proposed scheme which they wanted to hear your views about. The Council had already decided to set some money aside to help reduce the impact on those claiming help in the first two years.

- It is proposed that in the first year 2013/14 that people would continue to receive the same level of support as they currently receive under the Council Tax Benefit scheme.
- In year two of the proposed scheme, 2014/15, all those of working age with Council Tax Liability will have to pay something towards their Council Tax bill. There will also be some other differences between the current Council Tax Benefit scheme and the new Council Tax Support Scheme, the proposals include:
 - That claims for Council Tax Support will only be paid from the date a claim is received;
 - People receiving Disability Living Allowance will not receive an exemption for other adults living in their household;
 - That people with more than £3,000 in savings will not receive support and will be asked to pay their full Council Tax liability;
 - The minimum level of Council Tax Support anyone can receive will be £2 a week.

The consultation period ended on 5 October 2012. Responses will be considered by Members at the Cabinet meeting on 12 November 2012.

(Information from Calderdale MBC website)

Disability Rights UK

Disability Rights UK was formed on 1st January 2012 through the merger of Disability Alliance, National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) and The Royal Association for Disability Rights (Radar). Our vision is a society where all disabled people can participate equally as full citizens.

The latest edition of the invaluable 'Disability Rights Handbook' is now available; it provides information and guidance on benefits and services for people with lived experience of disability or health conditions.

Opening doors to independent living - the Radar NKS Key, guide and smartphone app Your key to over 9000 locked accessible toilets across the UK.

Plan your holidays with our brand new guide 'Holidays 2012' or 'Get Caravanning'
Other publications include 'If Only I'd Known That a Year Ago', 'Children first' and our 'Doing Life Differently' guides covering topics such as Work, Money, Sport and Transport.

Further information about Disability Rights UK can be found by visiting www.disabilityrightsuk.org
If you have any queries or problems with your order or wish to pay by alternative methods please call 020 7566 0122.

Gateway to Care

Introduction

Gateway to Care is your first point of contact for adult social care and for advice and help to get back your independence, mobility and confidence after an accident, illness, injury or deterioration in a condition.

The Gateway to Care team now includes dedicated nurses, social workers and trained advisors who are working together to make sure people receive coordinated care, help and advice.

The improved service was set up after the Council and NHS Calderdale asked patients, the public and staff about the kind of services they would like.

People said that they wanted a way to get help and advice quickly and easily, with one assessment. People also said they wanted to avoid being admitted to hospital and wanted services to work together to care for them safely at home instead.

If you already use services provided by Calderdale's social care teams you can contact Gateway to Care to provide them with information (such as your holiday dates) or to ask them to contact you. We hope that the Gateway to Care number will make it easy for you to contact us so that we can improve our provision of services.

- **Contact:** Gateway to Care
- **Telephone:** 0845 111 1103.

Your queries

Do I need to contact Gateway to Care if I want to speak with my named social worker?

If a social work professional has been assigned to you, you may have been given their direct number in which case you do not need to contact Gateway to Care if you wish to speak to them. If you have not been given their direct number, or there has been no answer to their line and you need to speak to someone, you can ring Gateway to Care.

If I contact Gateway to Care will I have to give you my details?

The simple answer is no, although this depends upon the type of service you require. If you require a visit from a social work professional, or would like us to install some equipment for you, we will need to take your details. Our Advisors will also ask you for permission to go through the contact questions which will help them to identify any other areas that you might need some help with. If you simply want to get some information from us, you will not be required to provide us with your details though we may ask for some basic information to help us monitor the services that we are providing.

How will Gateway to Care use my details if I give them to you?

If you require a service, we will open a file for you on our computer system. This file will hold details of your contact questions and the services that you are receiving from us. If you have a named social worker, their details will also be held on our computer system so that our Advisors know who is involved in your case.

If you ring for information, you will not be obliged to provide us with your details. If you do decide to provide us with your details, we will record it on our computer systems along with a note of your query so that we can see the type of calls that we are dealing with and the areas from which calls are received. This will help us to identify areas that require more services or where our information needs to be improved.

I don't want to speak to a different person every time I call Gateway to Care. How will I make sure I speak to the person that knows about my case?

Our Advisors will not have direct telephone numbers for you to call them on. If you would like to speak to a particular Advisor, just telephone Gateway to Care and ask for them. If they are free, the call can be transferred straight to them and if they are unavailable, you can ask for them to call you back.

How is the Gateway to Care number different to 0845 245 6000?

This number is the general enquiry line for Calderdale Council and the number to call if you have a general query about a council service. There is also a Streetcare helpline number, 0845 245 7000, that you need to call for problems with road defects, refuse collections, pest control etc.

Gateway to Care is staffed by dedicated nurses, social workers and advisors who are trained to give people help and advice with social care and some health services.

It doesn't matter if you ring 0845 245 6000 by accident though. The advisors there will be able to transfer your call to Gateway to Care.

What are the opening hours for Gateway to Care and who do I contact outside these hours?

Gateway to Care will be open between 8.45am to 5.30pm Monday - Thursday and 8.45am to 5.00pm Fridays. Outside these times, we will not be able to answer your calls. If there is an emergency, you need to call the Emergency Duty Team on 0845 1111 137.

Who will I contact if I have a complaint or a compliment about the new Gateway to Care service?

At first, you may wish to speak to the senior advisor or team manager with any compliment or complaint you have about our service. This will enable your comments to be passed to the team or investigated further.

If you wish to take your compliment or complaint further, you should fill out the Compliments and Complaints Form and send it to our Compliments and Complaints Unit. The form is available on our website. Alternatively, it can be sent to you if you call us and ask for it or you can put your complaint in writing and send it to us at 1 Park Road, Halifax, HX1 2TU. <http://www.calderdale.gov.uk/socialcare/social-services/gateway-to-care>

(Information from the Councils website)

If you would like us to put an article in the next edition of our newsletter please send your information to our email address: calderdaledart@hotmail.co.uk

Whilst every effort is taken to ensure that the information given in this newsletter is accurate, Calderdale DART cannot accept responsibility for the description or other circumstances relating to information given in this newsletter