

Updates to Borders Advocacy, Advice and Support Forum, March 2013

Independent Living Fund (ILF)

The full closer of the ILF has now been announced for 30 June 2015, where support of former claimants will fall to local authorities in England and be devolved in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Following the last delays, closure activity is now on-going again.

A Ministerial Statement was made in the House of Commons on 6 March, and following this a letter and information sheet have been sent to all claimants.

(Copy of the statement is available from Kathleen)

Citizens Advice Bureaux

There are a number of new CAB outreach sessions in the following locations:

- Innerleithen Family Centre (Peebles CAB)
- Stow Town Hall and Lauder Public Hall (Central Borders CAB)
- Newcastleton Health Centre, Coldstream Library, Hawick (Burnfoot), Jedburgh Health Centre, Reston Village Hall, Greenlaw Medical Practice. (Roxburgh & Berwickshire CAB)

Times for all of these sessions vary so anyone wishing to find out more details should contact the relevant CAB.

Berwickshire Housing Association

Berwickshire Housing has received £568,213 from the Big Lottery Fund to help build the financial skills of tenants who may be unable to access mainstream financial products and services such as bank accounts or relevant benefit entitlements.

The 'Financial Inclusion Project Borders' will also work in partnership with Waverley Housing Association and Scottish Borders Housing Association who will refer tenants on to the programme. Each person will receive tailored one to one support from a Financial Capability Worker followed by an action plan geared to their specific circumstances and needs.

Sessions and action plans will cover a range of topics including household budgeting, affordable credit and energy suppliers.

Customer Services Director, Jean Gray, said, "This is fantastic news for the Borders and we are delighted that the Big Lottery Fund has given us this funding. We now have the opportunity to help people who are financially excluded and struggling to cope with the changing environment and this project will enable us to help them to respond to and cope with these changes.

"Working in a rural area where people are experiencing poverty are often in isolated settlements, we need to reach out to those most affected as transport is a major challenge for those families. This project, working across three housing associations, offers us the opportunity to work together and learn from each other as well as reaching out to our tenants in all parts of the Scottish Borders in these difficult times. "

Launch of Self-directed Support in the Scottish Borders

Giving people and their families greater choice and control over the supports they receive is a key principle of the new Social Care (self-directed support) (Scotland) Act 2013.

To celebrate and launch the implementation of this new approach in April 2013, an event will be held on Tuesday 25th March in Council Chamber, SBC Headquarters.

Cornerstone – new learning disability day opportunities

Will take over from Brothers of Charity on 31st March. There was a family open day last week, and some of the people they will be supporting started for half day sessions on Monday. This went very well. Hoping to attend future BAASF meetings (*more details available from Kathleen*).

New Berwickshire Access Panel

A meeting to establish a new access panel will be held on Wednesday 30th April at the TEDDA Centre, Wellbraes, Eyemouth, from 11am-1.45pm (*more details available from Kathleen*).

Employment Support Service launched

Scottish Borders Council (SBC) has launched a new service for people who require additional help to find and sustain paid work. The Employment Support Service provides a range of services, all designed to assist an individual to enter the workplace and move onto being able to work independently.

Support is available for looked after and accommodated young people leaving care (16+), disengaged/ disadvantaged young people and people with a learning disability, physical disability or sensory impairment, as well as people who are recovering from a mental health condition or on the autistic spectrum. Anyone who is homeless or under threat of being homeless can also access the service.

More information about the Employment Support Service is available from:

www.scotborders.gov.uk/employmentsupport<<http://www.scotborders.gov.uk/employmentsupport>>

Self Directed Support – Exploring Option 2: Individual Service Funds

The Borders SDS Providers Consortium is running a day on the above, on 2nd April 9.30am-3pm, at Ettrick Riverside in Selkirk. *More details and booking form available from Kathleen.*

Easy Read Training

The 'Tell Me' project, launched by People First Borders, is providing free training in easy read.

Training dates and towns are:

- Monday 31 March – Duns
 - Tuesday 15 April – Jedburgh
 - Wednesday 1 May – Kelso
 - Monday 12 May – Selkirk
 - Thursday 15 May – Galashiels
 - Tuesday 3 June – Eyemouth.
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The training is free. It is particularly aimed at anyone who works or volunteers in health and social care in the Scottish Borders. However, anyone with an interest in learning how to produce easy read documents is welcome to attend. *More information from Kathleen.*