

ISSUE 74

AUTUMN 2008

VIEWPOINT

A quarterly Newsletter providing information for and about people who
have a physical or sensory disability



0161 480 7248

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Registered Charity No 1006025

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE CHAIR

Make sure you have your say!

Are you happy and content with your life?

Would you like to be able to influence decisions that are taken on your behalf?

Disability Stockport want to compile a list of Stockport residents who are willing to be consulted about developments that the local Council, the health authority, the police force and the transport authorities are considering, especially those that affect people with a disability of any kind.

It is often said that consultations are a means whereby authorities tell the public what they are going to do. Yes, this is sometimes the case because people either do not know about consultations or are not prepared to participate.

If enough of you are willing to be consulted, then your voices will be listened to and you really will help to make a better Stockport. Better for yourselves and for your families.

Please send your name, address and telephone number to Disability Stockport, as well as any issues that you are concerned about.

Then you will be able to have your say and influence the services for which we pay.

Contact: Disability Stockport
on 0161 480 7248 (Telephone/Fax)
Email: disabilitystockport@btinternet.com

Peter Rowe
Vice Chair Disability Stockport

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SELF-ADVOCACY FORUM

You are invited to come and share your experiences and get some answers from a host of reliable sources

**Every third Monday
of the month**

**Next meeting is
20 October 2008
7.00 pm – 9.00 pm at
Eyeline, 112 Shaw Heath**

**For more information
Contact: Michelle on
0161 480 7248**

BENEFITS

New Benefit Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

As some of our readers may know, Income Support and Incapacity Benefit is being replaced by a new benefit, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) from October 2008. This will only affect new claimants: existing claimants of Income Support and Incapacity benefit will continue to receive their benefits as long as they still satisfy requirements.

ESA focuses on support for customers to return to work if they are able to do so. Claims to receive ESA can be made by phoning Jobcentre Plus on 0800 055 6688 or Textphone 0800 023 48 88. Alternatively, an interpreter or representative may make claims on the claimant's behalf by filling in a form at any Jobcentre.

Once a person has made a claim for ESA, initially they will be paid the basic rate of benefit for the first 13 weeks. After this time the claimant will be required to attend a Work Capability Assessment, carried out by a healthcare professional appointed by the Secretary of State to determine which category the claimant should be placed into.

There are two categories a person may be placed into once the Work Capability Assessment has been completed: The Support Group or The Work-Related Activity Group:

The Support Group

People placed in this category will be deemed incapable of working and as a result will receive the higher rate of ESA. However, people in this category can, if they wish, volunteer to take up some form of work-related activity.

The Work-Related Activity Group

Customers placed in this group will be given support to find work via a Pathways provider through six work-focused interviews held once a month to discuss the most suitable type of work for the customer and any training or condition management support the customer may need.

For Further information visit <http://www.dwp.gov.uk/esa>

New Claimants:

To make a claim: Telephone Jobcentre Plus on 0800 055 6688

Textphone: 0800 023 48 88

BREAKING NEWS

Hate report launched

Disability Now, Scope and the UK's Disabled People's Council have published their report on disability hate crime, "Getting Away With Murder", written by Disability Now's news editor, Katharine Quarmby, the 50-page report looks at all aspects of disability hate crime.

It highlights the wide gap between official data on disability hate crime and the results of self-reporting surveys by a growing number of disability organisations; the disparity between sentencing for disability hate crimes and other forms of hate crime; and the language used to describe disabled people ("vulnerable") and the crimes against them ("bullying").

The report also looks at examples of best practice often conducted by disabled people locally, to fight disability hate crime; and the progress made at national level to make the criminal justice system more responsive to disabled people.

The report has a long list of recommendations for the government, police, prosecutors and judges, as well as for the media, local authorities, housing officers and social care professionals.

The report has several key calls to action. It calls on the government to commission a review of all violent deaths of disabled people over an agreed time period to see if a disability hate crime offender profile can be constructed. It wants a society-wide discussion of disablism and why disabled people are often seen as less worthy. It calls for guidance to key practitioners to help them spot early warning signs of a hate crime. Most importantly, it says a discussion is needed about how best to prevent hate crime.

The report will be formally discussed at a series of events in the autumn at which key disability rights activists will be speaking. The report was endorsed by the Crown Prosecution Service, The Trades Union Congress, the Home Office minister Vernon Coaker, the National Disabled Police Association and the Metropolitan Police's lead on hate crime, Alfred Hitchcock.

**Excerpt taken from Disability Now
September 2008**

FREE THINKING AND INDEPENDENT LIVING

For much of the 1980s I worked abroad and a good deal of time was spent in the USA. I always remember thinking about how working in the USA would compare as I heard a lot about their high-tech skills and unionised ways. So when I first encountered my USA equivalents I was suitably impressed when they greeted me by telling me how much they knew and how good their equipment was.

To my horror I quickly discovered that where they were needed they either ran around like headless chickens or disappeared off the radar. And a lot of their equipment didn't work properly. To be fair, there were one or two individuals that were exceptionally good and occasionally left me in awe of their abilities, but for the most part no one seemed to be able to think for themselves in a crisis.

I then learned that a lot of British and European workers were employed in telecoms, IT, construction etc for the very fact that if they came upon an obstacle they would usually find a way to overcome it. Unlike their US counterparts who would simply down tools until a person was found to solve it. I would hope that this has changed for the better in the last 20 years, but it does seem that free-thinking is something we are good at in this country.

One of the most positive steps the Government has taken in the promotion of Independent Living principles wherein all disabled people have the same choice, freedom and control as any other citizen. It also recognises that this does not mean disabled people doing everything for themselves but support should be based on their own choices.

Individual budgets are a further step towards meeting these aspirations and again, does not simply entail handing over responsibility and walking away. It does, however, encourage free thinking and offer individual solutions to individual situations. This could mean an escape from dogma and one-size-fits-all remedies. If budgets can be imaginatively used they can provide the stimulus to transform the way support is provided and the dependency culture that surround support.

At present, we are all locked in to a system no one believes does the best job. Like the people I mentioned at the beginning of this article, we all tend to go along with the status quo and wait for someone else to get us out of our difficulties. Once given tools to think and act for ourselves, I am convinced a change in culture is not only possible, but become inevitable. Partnerships of equals can flourish and who knows, one day we might even be able to drop the word 'disabled' and just talk about 'people'. Or is that too free thinking?

Kieran McMahon
Director, Disability Stockport

TRADING STANDARDS

Trading Standards advice on how to watch TV in 2009.....

The TV transmitter that broadcasts BBC1, BBC2, ITV1, Channel 4 and Channel 5 to Stockport and surrounding areas, will be converted to digital broadcasting at the end of **2009**. Any TV set or video recorder that has not been converted to digital when the switchover takes place will no longer receive TV programmes so you will probably want to ensure that you can receive digital TV.

Be aware that there will be unscrupulous traders that will cash in on the digital switchover by offering unnecessary goods and services and by overcharging.

You do not have to buy a new television set unless you want to, because with very rare exceptions, all current TV sets (even black and white ones) can be adapted by connecting to a digital box or 'Freeview' satellite. You make a one-off payment of about £50 for a digital box or £150 for a Freeview satellite dish (with a box and viewing card). No ongoing subscription is involved. If you do buy a new TV make sure it has the digital 'tick' logo on it so it will work after switchover.

You may not need a new aerial so don't believe any one who cold-calls to sell you one. If you decide to get a digital set-top box your current TV aerial should be adequate but a few homes will need a new aerial – the cost should be between £80 and £150. Make sure your aerial installer carries the 'digital tick' logo or is registered with the Confederation of Aerial Industries (CAI).

Any TV set that you use just to play videos or DVDs, or with a games console, will **not** need to be converted.

To record TV programmes you may need to connect your recorder to a digital box, or replace it with a digital recorder or else it will only record the channel you are watching.

There has been some confusion about radio broadcasts but in fact our radio services are unaffected by the digital TV switchover. You will still receive your favourite radio programmes and there is no need to buy a digital radio.

Digital UK will not be sending anyone around to your house. Please note that the company trading as 'Digital Conversion Scheme' has no relation to the Government, or to any public authority or to Digital UK.

You may also be eligible for a subsidised scheme that means you would only have to pay £40 to get the basic equipment if you are aged over 75 or are disabled. If you are eligible for this additional help you will be contacted by Digital UK nearer the time of the switchover.

Information about the switchover is available from Digital UK, the not-for-profit organisation set up by the public service broadcasters.

Tel 0845 6 50 50 50 or Textphone 0845 234 0380. Or www.digitaluk.co.uk

MONEY MATTERS

In these tougher times people are feeling the pinch so we would like to tell everyone about the Finance Services Authority (FSA) **MONEYmadeclear** 'Making your budget work for you' guide.

No selling. No jargon. Just the facts!

The guide shows how to plan a household budget, gives practical tips for keeping it under control and answers some common questions about money and debt. There is information about where to go to get the expert help needed if you find yourself with serious debt problems.

The free, impartial Budgeting Guide supports the new MONEYmadeclear advertising campaign from the FSA and Government. The campaign is being **launched on Monday 13 October and runs for five weeks.**

The guide is for you if you want to make your money work for you. It's about planning your budget and:

- ◆ Suggests ways you can see where your money is going so you know where you stand
- ◆ Sets out how you could make your money work for you; and
- ◆ Answers some of the questions you may have

If you would like 'MONEYmadeclear' from the UK's financial watchdog (FSA) it's available from the Consumer Helpline 0845 606 1234 or the website: www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk

On the 'MONEYmadeclear' website you can find:

- ◆ A **Budget** calculator
- ◆ A **Mortgage** calculator
- ◆ Compare products
- ◆ A **Debt** Test
- ◆ A **Financial** healthcheck

**If you would like the guide in Braille, large print or audio format, please call the Consumer Helpline on: 0845 606 1234
Minicom/Textphone: 08457 300 104 (call rates may vary)**

CONNECT PLUS & LEYFIELD PRIMUS

Can you spare a couple of hours a week?

You could make a difference to people's lives, by becoming a volunteer with **Connect Plus** or **Leyfield Primus**.

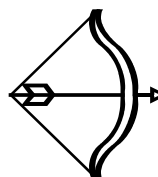
We are always looking for new volunteers, to accompany or assist our disabled members on a variety of leisure activities, and if you are over 16 years old, you could become a Volunteer Leisure Companion with Connect Plus or Leyfield Primus. Some of our volunteers are disabled, so don't think that having a disability stops you from volunteering!

The benefits of volunteering include a chance to meet new people and make new friends. Experiencing new leisure activities, having fun, and improving your social life. Also, free training and a chance to learn new skills, experience of working with disabled people and to gain a reference.

We are always on the look-out for accessible leisure venues such as pubs, clubs and restaurants, so let us know if you come across any you would recommend.

If you, or someone you know, would like to volunteer or would like to hear more please call

Tony Williams on 0161 474 0048



LIBRARIES

Home Library Service

Does age, disability or caring prevent you, or someone you know, from visiting the library?

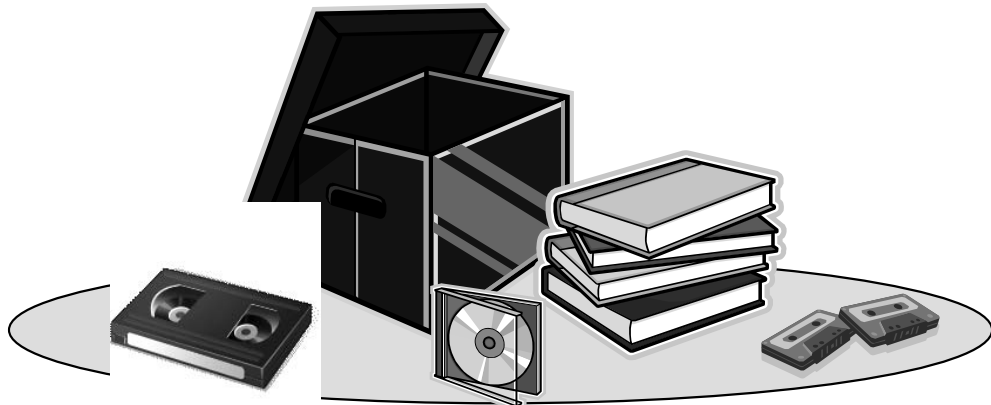
If so the Home Library Service will deliver your choice of books, music and films direct to your door, free of charge.

For more information call

474 5600

or e-mail

homelibraryservice@stockport.gov.uk



Stockport Library and Information Service

 **STOCKPORT**
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

ACCESS TO WORK (AtW)

“Starting your first job after becoming disabled is stressful in itself,” says Michelle Dutton, Advocacy Worker at Disability Stockport.

“I was starting a new job, setting up a project from scratch and did not have any software or equipment in place to enable me to do this effectively for the first few months. I used a job broker and they didn’t tell me about alternatives to getting equipment from AtW in the early days. For example, Action for Blind People could have loaned me equipment whilst waiting for my AtW assessment and equipment: www.actionforblindpeople.org.uk, tel: 0800 915 4666.

The system for assessment and getting the equipment is far too slow. You obviously need to be in the job to fully assess your needs, but more information needs to be available before you start work. AtW could be providing this, e.g. information on other organisations that can assist you in the short term. It would be useful to have parallel support to AtW. For example, something that explains how the process should work and the pitfalls. To get other people’s experience of AtW, I would have liked the opportunity to visit other people with my impairment to see what works for them.

The technical assessment from AtW was excellent, really good. They gave me very expensive equipment, which has been extremely helpful. Cost didn’t seem to be an issue but I don’t think that has been everyone’s experience.

The other big thing for me was ordering. I was lucky because work gave me time to do it, but this would not always be the case. It’s the burden of ordering everything on the assessment form, especially as a visually impaired person as there was a lot of different technological stuff to order. It all has a big impact on my working hours. AtW can be difficult to navigate. My main issue with AtW has been the claim forms, especially for travel within work. I’m quite bright but I found them very complicated as well as difficult to read. The forms were not in an accessible format and the e-mail versions they sent did not take all the digits of my bank account number...kind of defeats the object really!

Five months of struggling to fill out forms that were not in an accessible format led to a crisis. I was paying out half my wages to the taxi firm and this was causing me a lot of stress. I couldn’t carry on worse off than on incapacity benefit. It was affecting my work. Individuals were very nice but could not leave the building nor could I visit them for assistance.

I was so distraught the only thing I could do was to ring them and say I would have to either get help with my forms or resign. That day things changed dramatically. They actually started taking some action to sort things out with my travel claims. They sent an adviser to my home and we sat and worked things out. We decided I needed support to fill the forms out and some other things at work which were taking up lots of my time. I was given permission to employ a support worker. It’s still not perfect. I have a great relationship with my adviser and feel really supported.

A CASE STUDY

Organisations need to work together to ensure that disabled people are aware of all the options open to them. The 'Find Out' Guide in Stockport is a good example of this. Information is the key, it is the first point in the seven principles of independent living that disabled people have drawn up for a reason.

Information needs to be publicised correctly as well as just existing. People need to know where to go and they need to know that the information is available. It's no good hiding information away where people can't get at it, it needs to be out there in places where disabled people go – pubs, doctors' surgeries, chemists, libraries etc.

We need to feedback disabled people's real experiences to AtW. It would also be useful if people going through the process could link in with others with similar experiences. (People are welcome to talk to or visit me at Disability Stockport to find out how I managed). Everything is very individualised with AtW so it's useful to talk with other people in a similar situation to break down the isolation.

My advice for other disabled people would be to network with others who have been through the process. Find ways – maybe through impairment specific groups - to seek people out who may have similar requirements to yourself. This really helped me. It can help you not to lose heart. It can be despairing at times because not only do you have to do your actual job and prove yourself, but compared to a non-disabled new starter you're also going to have to do all this for the first seven weeks without the equipment you need.

AtW could have a template on their website that you could use to see how to fill out the forms correctly and maybe some training sessions on how to put the forms in. This could be part of the assessment. It would be a good subject for a skills workshop looking at filling out the forms, who is in their team, how the system works etc. You should also be able to attend courses beforehand so you can find out how to use the technology you might need. I would have felt much more confident if I had done my course before going back to work.

In employment-related training they could also add in some training on using access technology and equipment. They also always seem to go for the most expensive equipment suppliers. It would be good if people could research the options available before starting a job, e.g. attending Independent Living Centres, going to suppliers' events, so you have a clear idea of what could be useful to you.

I have to say that each team member has been fantastic. It's the system, the forms. I've built up a good relationship over the years so they know what I need, but I haven't seen any changes to the bureaucracy - in fact, only today I received a letter saying that all forms should now be posted to Glasgow, so here we go again!!!."

Michelle Dutton

TRANSPORT AND ACCESS

Disability Stockport Transport and Access Forum Incorporating the DisabledGo Steering Group

Your chance to become involved or influence the Transport and Access Strategy

The remaining meetings for 2008 will be held

Wednesday 12 November
Wednesday 10 December
at 2.00 pm – 4.00 pm

at
Stockport Town Hall, Committee Room 1, Edward Street
Stockport SK1 3XE

Telephone/fax/textphone us on 0161 480 7248
E-mail disabilitystockport@btinternet.com

or Richard Barnes on 0161 474 4394

STOCKPORT DISABILITY FORUM

The next two meetings of the Stockport Disability Forum
will be held on

Wednesday 10 December 2008
Wednesday 11 March 2009

at 10.30 am – 12.30 pm
at

The Quaker (Friends') Meeting House
Cooper Street
Higher Hillgate
Stockport

For information about the forum please contact
Kieran McMahon or Barbara Bowden at Disability Stockport on
Telephone/textphone/fax: 0161 480 7248
E-mail: disabilitystockport@btinternet.com

HELP AND SUPPORT



Macular
Disease
Society

The Macular Disease Society Stockport

Community Support
and Information Desk

For advice and information every
**First and Third Wednesday
of the month**

at

**The Wellbeing Centre
Graylow House
Chestergate**

12.30 pm to 2.00 pm

Just drop in!



There are now five care schemes in Stockport. The schemes help with transport, shopping, offer befriending and carers support as well as run social and activity groups.

Do you need help or
would you like to volunteer ?

For further information contact:

Gatley/Cheadle East

0161 426 5142

**Cheadle West/Cheadle Heath/
Edgeley**

0161 426 5128

**Reddish/South Reddish/
Heaton Norris**

0161 476 2812

Offerton/Great Moor/Central

0161 477 8782

SHELTER New Advice Service

Shelter has expanded its services across Greater Manchester and now offers free, independent legal advice in the following areas:

Bolton, Bury, Oldham, Rochdale,
Stockport, Tameside and Trafford

If you would like any further information or to discuss this service further contact:

**Kate Pilley, Team Leader,
Manchester**
Telephone: 0844 515 1657
E-mail: manchester@shelter.org.uk

Greater Manchester Police CITIZEN Focus” “Your opinion Counts”

They need to know when they get their quality of service right and where they can improve. If you have contacted the police recently they would like to hear your opinion and feedback regarding the way you were dealt with.

If you contact them they will ask you a few questions about your experience and record your comments. The information you provide will help them in the delivery of continuous improvements to the services they provide. **Contact the Public Service Team on 0161 856 9697. “Proud to Protect Stockport Communities”**

Focus on...

...*Carecall*

What is Carecall?

Carecall is the telemonitoring service provided by Stockport Homes to our customers and also to the private sector.

How does Carecall work?

Carecall is an alarm system which is connected to a dedicated Stockport Homes' office. It only takes an hour to install the equipment in the customer's home. The customer is given a tutorial on how to use the equipment and also given a pendant which they can wear around their neck. If they have a fall or find themselves in difficulty whilst in the home, they can press the emergency alarm on their pendant. If required a mobile warden will then go out to their property to help them.



Who would benefit from Carecall?

Carecall is predominately used by the elderly. However it is for anyone who feels vulnerable in the home young or old. It may be that you've recently had an accident and during your recovery period require that extra bit of help in case of an emergency.

How much does Carecall cost?

Carecall costs as little as £5.07 per week with a one off installation charge of £24.04.

If you require any further information or if you know anyone who you feel would benefit from Carecall, then please contact a member of the Carecall Team on 0500 130 585 or email carecall@stockporthomes.org



Always there when you need us...

Carecall

All alarm calls received and made from the centre are recorded.

- Independence
- Reassurance
- Peace of mind

A rapid response service for older or vulnerable people

Direct link 24 hours a day 365 days a year

For more information or a free *Carecall* demonstration in your home ring *Carecall*

**F R E E P H O N E
0500 130 585**

or write to:

Carecall, Stockport Homes,
Unit 9, Southside, Bredbury
Park Industrial Estate,
Bredbury, Stockport SK6 2SP
or email:
carecall@stockporthomes.org

NOTICE BOARD

FOR SALE

Stairlift – Acorn, straight fit 14' 6",
brand new cost £1,700
Will sell for **£1,000 ono**
Recliner, adjustable bed Cost new:
£1,200 will sell for **£1,000 ono**
Contact: Mr & Mrs Owen on
0161 483 5734 (pm only)

AW Cabs

Luxury 8 seater Mercedes Vito
Wheelchair adapted

Contact 0780 243 0022

FREE

Four-wheeled fold-up **walker** with
basket and seat
Contact: Anthea Grand on
0161 456 7018

Fully Licensed

LUXURY London Taxi

Licensed to carry 5 people

Contact 07885 666 616

FOR SALE

Brand new Child's Wheelchair
(would suit a 10 year old)
Price negotiable

Contact: Mrs Lonsdale on
01663 744 139



For information about access to shops,
restaurants, pubs, and cinemas in Stockport

Contact: www.disabledgo.info
Email: info@disabledgo.info

FREE

Television, on stand, 20" – 22" with
digital signal with remote control (5-6
years old)

Contact: Patrick Meads on
0161 443 2542

Tameside Healthcare Ltd

Approved repairers for Department of Health

Mark Loughlin

Mobile 07773 427049

Email: mark@tamesidehealthcare.co.uk



Everything you need to live a confident carefree life

for 100s of mobility and healthcare products

- visit our store
- call us for a free 96 page catalogue
- or call us for a free no obligation home assessment

- Scooters
- Wheelchairs
- Stairlifts
- Walking Aids
- Continence Care
- Bathing Aids
- Rise / Recline Armchairs
- Adjustable Beds
- 100's of Daily living aids
- Hire Service Available
- NHS Vouchers Accepted

0161 480 4999 136-140 Shaw Heath Stockport SK2 6QS

NOTICE BOARD

FOR SALE

Jet 3 Electric Wheelchair **£300**
 DMA strider electric scooter **£400**
 Battery operated bath lift **£50**
 Linton Commode chair **£75**
 Over bed table **£25**
 Set of 4 elephant feet **£5**
 Rope ladder hoist **£5**
 Tempur mattress **£50**
Contact: Tony Jones on
0161 427 3034

FOR SALE

Ztec manual folding wheelchair
£200 ono
 Lightweight 4-wheeled aluminium walker
£30 ono
 Raised toilet seat with surround
£20 ono
Contact: Mrs Wilshaw on
0161 283 7531

FOR SALE

Green winged **Chair** in very good
 condition **£70 ono**
Contact: Mrs Chapman
on 0161 282 2244

FOR SALE

'Joystick' **electric buggy** battery & charger
 included plus padded leather seat cover, bears
 weight up to 200 lbs/91 kg fits in boot **£200 ono**
Contact Mrs Irene Kent on 0161 440 9407

FOR SALE

Brand new 4-wheeled
Scooter with accessories
£500
Contact Mrs Taylor on
0161 456 5459

FOR SALE

4-wheeled electric motor
 scooter excellent condition
£450 ono
Contact Derek Etchells on
0161 431 3256

FOR SALE

Huntlea Bath Lift
Seat 3 years old
 hardly used
£200 ono
Contact:
Anita Harries
0161 456 9201

FOR SALE

4-legged **Tripod**
 almost new **£10**
Contact: Helen Bird
0778 934 0966

FOR SALE

DMA maxi scooter 1 year old
 Cost £1,800 **will sell for £800**
Contact: Mrs Jean Fisher on
0161 427 7151

FOR SALE

Rise/Recline Chair
Contact: Ms Wallis
on 0161 427 7244

FOR SALE

Enigma power chair
 (would suit weight 11
 stones or under) **£450**
Mrs Cressey
0161 221 3677

FOR SALE

Stryder scooter **£800**
Contact: Olaf Seale
on 0161 226 2665

FREE

Steel walker
Contact Mrs Rice on
0161 430 5171

Thank you to all those who contributed to this issue. Viewpoint is a **FREE** publication and is available in large print, on audio tape, disk or e-mail. Please let us know which format you prefer.

If you do not wish to receive further copies of Viewpoint, if you have changed address or if your address label is wrong, please contact the office on **0161 480 7248**.

Opinions expressed in this issue do not necessarily reflect the views of members, staff or committee nor have holidays or other services been vetted by Disability Stockport members. All factual information checked and correct at the time of printing.

Issue 75 of Viewpoint will be circulated end December 2008. Information to be included in the next issue should be sent to:

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