

# active



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## Welcome Members and Supporters

Welcome to our second edition of active, the newsletter from Active Independence. We are a 100% Disabled people's user-led organisation working towards increasing Disabled people's quality of life through training, advocacy, peer support and campaigning. May has been a busy month for us and this edition includes articles on events we have held and updates on progress we have made working with those who provide services.

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## Employing a Personal Assistant Event



On Tuesday 15th May we held an event, part of our contract with Skills for Care, which looked at the support available to those employing Personal Assistants. There were heartfelt personal stories from Dawn, who employs PAs and Alex who became a PA after life as a trained nurse. There were also two workshops: one discussed the equality responsibilities of being an employer and the other, as this photo shows, looked in-depth at the Skills for Care Toolkit for new employers which everyone felt is excellent!

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## Help recruiting a Personal Assistant

In our experience advertising for a personal Assistant is not easy. Newspaper advertising is very expensive and placing adverts through Job Centre Plus's Employment Direct service has not been successful. Now, following fruitful meetings with JC+ we are able to place adverts directly with Doncaster's Job Centre! If the advert is not successful there is the chance of placing a free advert in the Free Press within the Job centre's own page.

When it comes to interviewing we always advise Disabled people not to interview PA's in their own home if at all possible and so JC+ are also offering free use of an interview room. Please contact us if you would like any support through any stage of the recruitment process, from advertising to interviews and employment.

We will be meeting and chatting with people interested in a career in social care at the 'Five Rings to Success' Jobs fair at The Hub on 5th July from 10.30 – 3.00.

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## Funding success – ‘From Carer to Personal Assistant’ course

We are very pleased to announce that a bid to the Humberside Learning Consortium was successful. The grant will fund a pilot course for those interested in becoming a PA. The idea for this course came directly from Personal Assistants we work with particularly those from a traditional care background, who said they felt unprepared for the role of being a PA. The 6 week course will run in Doncaster in the autumn and Rotherham in the New Year. More details will be published in future newsletters.

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## Brian talks to the Mayor



At a recent event for Alzheimer Awareness week Brian chatted to Doncaster’s elected Mayor, Peter Davies. Peter spent quite some time asking about what our group does and how we were able to

work with Council officers to shape the future of Personalisation and went away with a copy of our popular first newsletter.

During the events Brian met with over 30 partners and spouses of those with dementia. All of them said they receive domiciliary care for their partners through a brokered care package organised by the council but this was not working well; Everyone said “there is no continuity of carer”. One person described having to cope with four different carers a day (not helpful for someone with dementia). When some asked the care managers about how much training care staff have on working with people with Dementia they were told it was only half a day. Unbelievably, some had no training whatsoever. Can this be right?

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## Indirect Payments come to Doncaster

Doncaster Council has announced that people who are eligible for a Personal Budget may now receive their payment through an Indirect Payment. This is when a partner, family member or close friend manages the money on behalf of the service user. It can be particularly relevant when the service user is not able to manage the care package themselves due to dementia, for example.

The service user is still the legal employer (for as long as they have capacity to understand this) and chooses how they want their care and support to be provided. The person nominated to

manage the money on behalf of the service user is responsible for managing the care package according to the wishes of the service user. They must ensure employees are employed legally and responsibly and comply with council procedures around managing a Direct Payment.

We feel this is a very welcome development because it allows many more people to benefit from being able to choose and control who provides their care and support. It can also avoid many of the problems, noted above, associated with using a brokered care package.