



# Connect

Welcome to *Connect* - a quarterly news and information bulletin for ASBAH Local Associations

Feb 08

## Compact raises standards for service users

Service users are benefiting from closer relationships between ASBAH and the local associations developed through the Compact agreement.

The Compact, launched in 2005, was developed following a year-long consultation with local associations throughout England, Wales and Northern Ireland.

The aim was to improve standards both at ASBAH and within the local associations, to benefit everyone involved, particularly those with spina bifida and hydrocephalus, their families and carers.

Three years on and 17 local associations have signed up to the Compact and are enjoying the benefits of being under one ASBAH umbrella.

ASBAH's Chief Executive Andrew Russell said: "The need for local contact and support is as important now as it was for founder members of the local associations back in the 1960s.

"We all share the same aims and these form the basis of the Compact between ASBAH and the local associations, which we have found very helpful to communication over the last three years."

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### Your comments



*"Surrey felt the development of the Compact would be useful in bringing the local associations closer to national ASBAH.*

*"We have benefited by receiving help producing leaflets and we have recently been offered a tailor-made CD with logos on for use on our literature and our website.*

*"It is good to know that ASBAH is there if we need help and support but I would like to see ASBAH being more proactive in its work with local associations.*

*"For example when people in the Surrey area call the Helpline it would be useful if they were given details of the local association and its website."*

**Liz Tadd from Surrey Local Association**

Helpline Manager Linda Lewis replies:

*"The helpline team work hard to find solutions*

*continued overleaf*

for anyone contacting the service. Our aim is to provide callers with the information they need and signpost them to other sources of help, including local associations.

"We do give out contact details of local associations in their area, and also include the Surrey (or other) Local Association leaflet, when sending our information leaflets in the post, but we have learned that providing callers with information doesn't necessarily mean they will follow it up."

"The Compact Agreement has brought us closer to the national charity, we now work together more effectively for the benefit of our members."

**Claire Treveil from KASBAH**

"We decided to sign up to the Compact because of our desire to ensure that our activities complemented those services offered by other Associations and by ASBAH itself, in terms of the way in which we go about our business and measure our effectiveness.

"It effectively gave us a set of guidelines that, if followed, would ensure best practice.

"But we didn't necessarily need the Compact to ensure a close relationship with ASBAH - this has always been good.

"For some time we had debated revising our rather dated logo and coming into line with ASBAH's logo. We waited until the new ASBAH template was ready for local Associations to use before going live with our new logo that we will launch in April this year.

**Mike Mason from the North Wales Local Association, which celebrates its 40th anniversary this year.**

## Support group welcomes all

**A Dunstable-based support group is still going strong after an impressive ten years.**

The group, which meets up on the second Monday of every month, welcomes anyone – children included - who have spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus.

Lorraine Watson from the Herts and South Beds local association, said: "Sometimes someone comes to give a talk or we just have a general chit chat amongst ourselves... and of course there's always tea and biscuits. John Richards, our area adviser, also attends most of our meetings.

"There's no membership, it is just a drop-in group and we're always delighted to see new faces."

The group meets on the second Monday of every month from 1pm to 3pm at The Disability Resource Centre, Poynters Road, Dunstable.



## New networking scheme could help you

Some local associations have intimated that they would like to have some way of networking informally – to air ideas for fundraising; ask others how they have organised an event; discuss what has, or hasn't worked well as a social outing etc.

To try to facilitate this, Gill Winfield, ASBAH's Marketing and Communications Manager, suggests an email forum. Gill would act as the contact point and forward emails to others who join the network.

Even if your association doesn't have an official email address, you could join if a committee member is willing to use their personal email to receive/send messages.

If you are interested in this idea, just send your email address to Gill at [gillw@asbah.org](mailto:gillw@asbah.org) then any emails sent to the 'forum' will be forwarded to all members of the network for information/discussion.

If any items arise that might be suitable for inclusion in *Connect* or *Link*, Gill will follow these up with the originator.

# Keeping on top of the bills

ASBAH has launched a new leaflet packed with helpful advice covering all aspects of handling your cash.

The six-page Money Management leaflet, which has been generously funded by the Abbey Charitable Trust, was launched in February.

The comprehensive guide, written by a youth finance specialist, includes all aspects of budgeting and also provides a wealth of resources where service users can access more information.

ASBAH's Director of Services Mary Malcolm said: "Moving out of the family home is exciting, but, alongside freedom comes new responsibilities.

"Gone are the free meals, free lifts and the cheap accommodation. Not only do you have to do all your own washing; you'll also need to learn how to pay for your new-found independence too.

"We knew there was a real need for a financial information leaflet and thanks to the Abbey Charitable Trust we have been able to put Money Management together.

"Many people have been involved with its production, to make sure that nothing was missed out, and I would like to thank everyone for their invaluable help."



Contact the helpline on  
0845 450 7755 for your copy.

## Keeping in touch with... Surrey

Introducing a new series of articles about what's going on in local associations around the regions.

This time Link columnist Linda Corbett, a volunteer with Surrey ASBAH, writes about how her local association is organised and reveals some of the events and fundraisers held during the past few months.



Like many local associations, Surrey ASBAH covers a wide geographical area - basically the county of Surrey plus the London Boroughs of Croydon, Hounslow, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton.

We also have a wide spectrum of members including parents with babies, young families and adult service users, so finding activities to interest everyone can be a bit of a challenge.

The committee meets bi-monthly and we try to arrange regular get-togethers throughout the year. Our most recent social event was a theatre trip to see *Stomp* at the Woking theatre, which was thoroughly enjoyed by those who attended.

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At the beginning of March, we hold our AGM, and this is traditionally preceded by a meal at a local pub, so the start time for the AGM can vary a bit depending on how quickly the desserts are eaten!

The meal is subsidised and transport is arranged for anyone who needs it, and we usually have a good turn out. At the AGM, we have a bit of a round up of the year's events and it is an opportunity for the committee to let everyone know what is being done on their behalf.

Another mainstay of the social calendar is our summer picnic which always has an indoors-if-wet contingency plan, but in recent years we have been fairly lucky.

Last year we nearly had to do that "we're British so we don't mind the rubbish weather" thing but thankfully the rain stopped just in time.

Later this year we will also be having a Prize Draw, and so far (with a bit of haggling) we have accumulated some excellent prizes including an MP3 player, a Nintendo game and some Marks & Spencer vouchers.

Ticket sales are not restricted to Surrey ASBAH members so apply now to avoid disappointment!

If you would like to submit an article for the next issue, please email Gill Winfield at [gillw@asbah.org](mailto:gillw@asbah.org)

# Working towards disability equality

Last year in Connect we asked local associations - along with YV members - to send us their views to feed into ASBAH's response to a consultation on disability equality.

The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) wanted to focus on what equality means to disabled people and ASBAH was able to use the direct experience of those with SB/H in its submission to the ODI.

Responses to the consultation helped the ODI to develop a set of measures that will be used to find out if changes being made by government lead to improvements to disabled people's lives.

A summary of the consultation responses (Disability Equality: How will we know we are making a difference?) is available on the ODI website at [www.officefordisability.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk/consultations) where you can also find the set of measures they have developed, in Annex 2 of their Annual Report 2007.

## Exciting times for KASBAH

KASBAH is looking forward to extending its programme to help young members live independently with the acquisition of a new property.

The Kent local association, working in partnership with HABINTEG Housing Association, has taken over 1 Weatherly Close in Rochester.

This new project will have a shared living environment for our young members to live independently, with regular support from KASBAH's Support Team at Seabrooke House.

The new property does need some structural changes before residents can move in and KASBAH is keen to recruit volunteers and fundraisers to help get the scheme up and running.

*If you can help, or would like more information about the project, call KASBAH on 01474 536501.*

24.09.08

## ASBAH Annual General Meeting 2008

**Wednesday, 24 September in Leicester**

**This year our AGM will be in a completely different style at a new venue - and we very much want to welcome you.**

We're moving to a week day and hope that this is a more convenient time for members and families who usually have to give up a precious Saturday.

This time we're combining the AGM with the annual meeting of field staff including advisers and regional managers, so it is the perfect chance to meet new faces and renew old contacts.

There will be a series of interesting presentations on current issues in the field of hydrocephalus and spina bifida, plus plenty of opportunities to raise questions and suggestions.

The AGM is your chance to speak up and say what is important to you, and where ASBAH should be using its influence.

So please put the date in your diary. Attendance is free and lunch will be provided.

## Change of role

Gill Winfield, formerly ASBAH Principal Policy Officer has moved to the post of Marketing and Communications Manager.

Contact Gill with any ideas or comments on *Connect* or *Link*.

If you want to take advantage of the new logo artwork available for Local Associations who have signed up to the Compact, she can arrange this for you. Gill is usually in the office at ASBAH House from Monday to Friday and her direct line is 01733 421361 or email [gillw@asbah.org](mailto:gillw@asbah.org)



helpline **0845 450 7755**

Monday to Friday, 10am-4pm  
Low Rate Call