WELCOME TO OUR ACQUIRED BRAIN INJURY NEWSLETTER

Welcome to the latest issue of Regard’s Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) services newsletter, which features our latest news from this specialist field.

At Regard, we provide supported accommodation and outreach services to adults with a traumatic or non-traumatic ABI and varying degrees of cognitive, physical, behavioural and emotional difficulties.

Our ABI services include supported accommodation at Wren Park, near Caterham, East Surrey, and Livingstone Road, in Gillingham, Kent, both of which provide 24-hour support, including personalised, one-to-one support based on assessed skills and needs. We also provide outreach support in Surrey, Kent and south-east London, to Service Users living in their own homes.

Our services provide stepping stones towards a more independent life and we have a strong track record in achieving substantial reductions in the level of support required. In every case, we work closely with the person affected and those closest to them to develop bespoke strategies for shaping their new lives.

For more information about our ABI services, please contact us.

NEW OPERATIONS DIRECTOR JOINS REGARD

I am delighted that Narinder Singh has joined us as the Operations Director for Regard and I have asked Narinder to officially introduce himself below.

Sandie Foxall-Smith, CEO

After having spent 15 years in retail I made the decision to join the healthcare sector in 2006 and did so at Bupa Care Homes as a Regional Manager with responsibility for 1,200 beds across 15 care homes. Spending my first full month managing a residential care home helped me fully understand the challenges of providing care whilst also needing to generate a return in order to be successful and reinvest for the future.

In 2010 I joined Anchor Trust as Regional Operations Director responsible for over 400 services in the North of England providing care and support in rented, leasehold, extra care and care home locations. Whilst previous retail organisations I had worked for were customer-focused and had a heavy emphasis on quality this really does pale into insignificance when I think of the importance this has in the care sector.

Since I joined Regard in August I have had the opportunity to visit over 60 of our services across the four regions and have been extremely impressed by the level of care and support we provide those that live with us.

Meaningful activities give the people we support purpose and something to look forward to every day and I have quickly realised that whilst this newsletter contains lots of examples this is just a fraction of what happens on a day-to-day basis.

A key ingredient in any activity is staff enthusiasm and I have been delighted to see first-hand how motivated our staff are whether it is taking someone swimming, helping feed animals right through to assistance with every day household chores. The success of these activities is down to the staff and management team who should be very proud.

Narinder Singh, Operations Director
SPOTLIGHT ON WREN PARK

Wren Park is a supported living scheme for adults with traumatic or non-traumatic Acquired Brain Injuries (ABI).

It is home to 17 tenants with varying degrees of cognitive, physical, behavioural and emotional difficulties. The project, housed in three separate flats, provides a stepping stone for individuals to move towards a more independent life following post-acute rehabilitation. It provides round the clock shared support, including personalised one-to-one support based on assessed skills and needs, plus occupational therapy and neuropsychology support.

The scheme is designed to reflect "real life" living. Tenants buy and cook their own food, toiletries and clothing; pay their own bills and budget for their transport and activities. Support varies for each task, according to the ability of the Service User.

Rents are typically claimed through Housing Benefit, with Regard's specialist benefits team providing support and assistance with claims. Service Users initially move into one of two flats – Gresham or Wadham – depending upon their age and previous life experience, where they relearn skills and work towards improving independence.

A third self-contained flat – Pembroke – offers a further step for tenants who have proved their ability to manage more independently, where the onus rests on them to seek support and advice. Tenants hold their own meetings and are actively involved in all aspects of supported living life.

Success at Wren Park is measured in goals achieved, rather than measured outcomes as might typically be found in a rehabilitation unit.

“Our focus is on empowering each person we work with to maximise their skills and make informed choices to help them develop greater control over their lives,” says Locality Manager Carol Foord.

Recent success stories include Matthew, who joined Regard in 2006. He initially lacked confidence and routine and needed support with new structures to help him live as independently as possible but by 2008 had a reduced package of support. He has now gained an NVQ Level 2 Child Care qualification and works with children at a local after school club for three days a week, one as a paid employee and two as a volunteer.

Service User Stephen volunteers two days a week, working on general gardening and fencing, with Caterham-based charity the Downlands Project, while Service User Shaun, who has a problem with his memory, has over a period of time learned the route to and from Wren Park and walks back from playing chess and Scrabble with an elderly man, who looks forward to his visits.

Other Service User success stories include:

• taking up paid employment at a local garden centre
• moving back into her own home following slow-stream transition, with ongoing support from Regard’s ABI outreach team
• completing five years as a volunteer at a local charity shop
• involvement in befriending and visiting the elderly
• clearing ponds and river banks for a local charity.

Carol adds: “We quantify progress with tenants being more accepting of their lives, less frustrated and feeling they have something to live for and strive towards. This can mean acceptance and contentment for some, and constantly striving to complete goals for another.”
CHRIS SAYS ‘THANK YOU’ TO AIR AMBULANCE LIFESAVERS

A client of Regard’s outreach support service has had a chance to meet and say thank you to the air ambulance team that saved his life.

Chris Sole also heard how Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance staff treated him following a road accident in which he was knocked off his bicycle and suffered injuries including a fractured skull, and admitted he had been “a little bit emotional” when he met the team.

He travelled to the air ambulance’s base at Dunsfold Aerodrome, Sussex, for the meeting, which was filmed and broadcast by the BBC’s South Today news programme.

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Chris was told he had been 15 minutes from death but the arrival of the air ambulance, with Dr Magnus Nelson and critical care paramedic David Wright on board, at the crash scene in Horsham in September 2011, made all the difference.

They were able to save vital minutes by treating him at the scene, including putting him into an induced coma to prevent secondary brain damage, before taking him to St George’s Hospital in London.

Chris underwent two operations but has made a recovery said to have amazed doctors. He now lives at home in Horsham, where he receives several hours of outreach support a day from Regard, six days a week.

It costs around £5 million a year to keep the Kent, Surrey & Sussex Air Ambulance’s two helicopters operational but the service, a charity, receives no government funding and is dependent on voluntary donations. More information is available at www.kssairambulance.org.uk
SERVICES CELEBRATE AWARDS SHORTLISTING

Regard has narrowly missed out on two titles in a prestigious healthcare sector awards scheme.

The company was named as a finalist in the Domiciliary Care Provider of the Year and Community Support Provider of the Year categories of the HealthInvestor Awards 2013, organised by HealthInvestor magazine.

The shortlistings were achieved against tough competition, with organisers reporting that submissions had been up by more than ten per cent on 2012, making these awards the most competitive to date.

Entrants to the awards had to provide evidence of the way they achieve innovation and excellence in their services and the Regard entries featured several case studies highlighting Service User success stories, including one focusing on a Service User with an ABI due to alcohol misuse.

After a long spell in hospital, he was discharged into one of Regard’s supported living placements, with no possessions or money. Regard’s in-house benefits team took on the management of his benefits and successfully applied on his behalf for Employment and Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance (DLA), including the highest rate of the DLA care component.

Support staff assist him with budgeting and his extra income has enabled him to pursue his passion for painting and photography, including enrolling on relevant courses at a local college. He is also able to visit his family regularly and enjoy a more active life.

After the shortlisted entries were considered by an independent judging panel, Regard was pipped at the post when the winners were announced on 12 June at a ceremony at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London.

Earlier this year, Regard was also selected as finalist in the Personalisation and Supported Living categories of the Independent Specialist Care Awards 2013.
The government is making fundamental changes to the welfare system, with the goal of making it simpler and fairer for the claimants. These changes were contained in the Welfare Reform Act 2012, which became law on 8 March 2012.

It introduces:

- **Universal Credit**: this combines a number of benefits into one monthly payment. It replaces income-based Employment and Support Allowance, income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance, Income Support, Housing Benefit, Child Tax Credit and Working Tax Credit

- the **Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**: this will replace Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for working age people. Current DLA claimants will gradually transfer to PIP between 2013 and 2016. PIP uses a new assessment process that will take account of a range of abilities, but maintains a very similar structure to DLA.

The **benefit cap**

The government will set a maximum amount of benefit each household can receive. Currently, it is capped at £2,167 per month for a family with children and £1,517 per month for a single person.

The rule does not apply where a member of the household receives DLA, PIP or constant attendance allowance and/or the support component of ESA.

**Temporary absence**

Universal Credit is payable for up to a month if the claimant is absent from the UK. Benefit can be paid for up to six months if they travel abroad for medical treatment and have proof of this.

**Transitional protection**

Claimants with an existing benefit claim that are moved to Universal Credit will be entitled to protection to ensure their benefit remains at the same level. This will be lost if the claimant reports a significant change in their circumstances.

**Overpayments and penalties**

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has the power to recover any overpayment, regardless of whether it was due to an error by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) or the claimant. If a claimant gives the DWP incorrect information, even by mistake, they will receive a civil penalty of £50.

All Universal Credit claimants will be expected to fulfill their obligations under the client commitment agreement. Service Managers must ensure Service Users understand and comply with the requirements in their agreement.

**Personal Independence Payment (PIP)**

In 2010, the government said it wanted to replace DLA with PIP for everyone of working age (16-64). Its aim was to reduce the cost of DLA by moving people off benefits and into some sort of paid employment.

PIP replaced the DLA from 8 April 2013 in the United Kingdom to help with costs caused by a health condition or disability. It is non-means-tested and non-contributory, and can be paid whether the recipient is employed or not. It is based on the effects of a condition on a person rather than the condition itself.

**How will this affect people claiming DLA?**

All people of working age (16-64) claiming DLA on 8 April 2013 will be affected by the introduction of PIP, even if they have been awarded DLA for an indefinite or lifetime period. All claims will undergo a review between 8 April 2013 and 2015. However, if there is a reported change of circumstances prior to a claim being reviewed, the claim will be looked at under and treated as a PIP claim.

DLA will continue to be paid for children until they are 16 and existing recipients aged 65 or over.

**Possible implications of Universal Credit and PIP**

- The new way in which PIP will be awarded contains an implication that low rate care has effectively disappeared altogether. Depending on the level of learning disability, you may now find that the claimant may move up to standard rate PIP or lose entitlement altogether.
- From looking at the new set of descriptors, it appears that anyone who has a mental health problem only will find it very difficult, if not impossible, to receive an award under PIP. If they have some form of learning disability as well as mental health problems, they may still be able to obtain PIP.
- In some acquired brain injury (ABI), it will be easier to see where award points can be made, depending on the level of the ABI and the effects on day-to-day life.
- There will be losers and some gainers in all areas of PIP with the introduction of the new assessment. It is anticipated that 20 per cent of people will no longer qualify for the benefit once PIP has been fully introduced or the claims have been reviewed. This may be due to mental health claimants finding it more difficult to qualify for PIP.

- All Universal Credit claimants will be expected to fulfill their obligations under the client commitment agreement.
- Universal Credit payments will be made calendar monthly. Service Users should be supported with budgeting to ensure they are able to pay their rent, utility bills, client contribution and other outgoings.
Regard is featured on a new website created to assist people with a brain injury to find the right service, at the right time, on their journey through rehabilitation and beyond.

Brain Nav, the National Brain Injury Services Directory, has been set up as a not-for-profit project by charity Optua UK, the United Kingdom Acquired Brain Injury Forum (UKABIF) and Thompsons Solicitors.

The website can be accessed at www.brainnav.info

HITTING THE HEADLINES!

Regard sports star Reuben Atkinson has been hitting the headlines in more ways than one.

His story was recently featured in the newsletter of The Silverlining, a brain injury charity with which Regard has long-established links.

The Silverlining supports clients to take part in and organise charity challenges – from physical activities, such as swimming, to staging art exhibitions or running a fundraising bowling group – that help people with brain injuries through active goal setting and achievement as well as benefiting the wider community.

The newsletter has also featured the Silver Screens film club, which welcomed Service Users from Regard’s Wren Park service on a recent outing.

Please contact our Kingston office on 020 8255 4433 to be put through to a member of the team or email info@regard.co.uk