

## Age Concern England Working Differently With You

By Hilary Bath, Interim Head of Regional Fieldwork (North and Midlands)

During the summer of 2005, Regional Fieldwork undertook an extensive exercise, Project Excellence, the aim being: *“To define the strategic direction of ACE Regional Fieldwork for the next 5 years, ensuring we add value & achieve excellence in all our work”*

The recommendations from Project Excellence are now being implemented including developing a flexible, team-based approach (TBA) to respond to requests for support from Age Concerns. This new way of working draws on the knowledge and experience of all members of the fieldwork team, not just your main contact, and is scheduled to be implemented across all of Regional Fieldwork by April 2007, having been successfully piloted in the South. It is now the turn of the Midlands to implement a team based approach as part of our work with you. Regional Fieldwork is the team in Age Concern England (ACE) which works directly to support local Age Concerns (ACs). Many ACs in the East Midlands will know Regional Fieldwork best through Simon Main and Liz Nagra who are part of the Midlands Regional Fieldwork Team. Simon and Liz have been working with the Group Support Workers, Pam and Linda, to ensure that AC Groups are supported in dealing with the issues that you face. As an AC Group your first port of call for help and support should remain Pam and Linda; the AC Groups Helpline should also be on your speed dial for signposting to support from a variety of sources within Age Concern, as should your Age Concern Organisation. The Midlands Regional Fieldwork

Team can now be called upon to help you as well. Requests for help whether big – “Can you help us with a strategic awayday for our Board?” – or small – “Have you a copy of an involving older people policy that we could adapt and adopt?” – can be asked of us. The support received by you can be from any member of the Midlands Regional Fieldwork Team. Beginning in October, if you have a request for support from ACE’s Regional Fieldwork you should call **01604 234151** where a member of the Midlands Team will respond to your request. We see the TBA as enhancing the service we give to federation members and as further support to Pam and Linda. If you are an AC Group which has direct support from Regional Fieldwork from one of our Fieldwork Officers, your working relationship will not change and they will continue to be a primary means of support to



Hilary Bath

your Group. In the future however, requests for support through your RFO may not be delivered by them, but will be addressed by the Team. Over the coming months, we will be monitoring the effectiveness of the TBA and of Regional Fieldwork in general. I hope that you will give us your feedback as the new systems kick in.

Any queries regarding the TBA, please contact the Regional Office **01604 234151**.

Any queries regarding the TBA, please contact the Regional Office **01604 234151**.

**AGE**  
Concern

### Inside this issue:

Celebration	2
New Officer	2
Internet search	3
Employment	3
Quality Counts	4
Volunteering	4

## News and Views from AC Groups

### What a celebration! - a report from Middleton Cheney

On Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> July, Age Concern Middleton Cheney held a very special occasion for members and their friends by putting on an Old Tyme Music Hall. This was performed by our local amateur dramatic group, The Lynden Players, with over thirty members of their group taking part. We charged £1.00 entrance which included light refreshments of ice cream, biscuits and orange juice and a free raffle ticket.

Members of Age Concern were asked if they would dress up in Victorian Costume.



The event was generously donated by the family of June and Alan Parrymore as a 50<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary present for the couple and a truly 'golden' evening it was. The Lynden Players, who are extremely professional, (although amateurs), performed such acts as "If I Were Not Upon The Stage" and

"The Pheasant Plucker". The Master of Ceremonies, Graham Wilton, was extremely witty with his announcements; five children, who had been in "Annie" earlier in the year, gave performances and a Barber Shop Harmony Club also took part. The evening was attended by over 100 people and prizes were awarded for the best costumes. Requests were made for a repeat performance as everyone had enjoyed the evening so much. For Group Secretary, June and husband Alan it was a very special night for their very special celebration.



June and Alan pictured with some of the performers

### New Chief Officer for Hinckley and Burbage

My name is Lindsey Short and I have been appointed as Chief Officer to run Age Concern Hinckley and Burbage as of the 1<sup>st</sup> August 2006. I have worked in the voluntary sector for 10 years and have been employed by S.N.I.P.S working with special needs children and adults and also at Work-Link working closely



with vulnerable adults of all ages often with mental illness and learning disabilities. Previous to these posts I have worked for over 20 years in administration and business. I greatly enjoy working with people to empower them and am told by various colleagues, family and friends I am a great talker, I'm sure that this not the case!

**We want to hear from you if you have something of interest to share with other groups. Next issue out January 2007 - items to Pam or Linda by 8th December 2006 please.**

### Roy Holland, East Midlands Lead Adviser on Age Discrimination

Roy is available to answer queries on the new legislation. He can be contacted on:

Email: [roy.holland@ageconcernleics.com](mailto:roy.holland@ageconcernleics.com)  
Tel:01664 410253 Mob:07977 078 443

## Top Ten Tips for internet searching

1. Enter 'keywords' – words that describe what you are looking for in the search box e.g. 'policy on volunteering' would be **policy volunteering**.
2. Put the most important word first e.g. **volunteering policy**, this makes 'volunteering' the priority word to search.
3. To look for the exact words or phrases enclose them in quotes e.g. **"Volunteering Policy"**.
4. To look for a word in any form and variety of its endings put in a '\*' e.g. to look for 'volunteer, volunteers and volunteering' enter **volunteer\*** in your search and it will find references for all three variations. This is called a 'wild card' search.
5. Wild card searches using the '\*' symbol can also be used to find facts e.g. **"\* volunteers in England"** will look for that fact.
6. Use a 'fuzzy search' when you do not know the exact thing to search for by using the symbol '~' e.g. searching for **~policy** will give a variety of policy subjects.
7. Using a '+' between key words ensures that both words are in every search result e.g. **volunteer +policy**. (Include a space before the plus sign.)
8. Putting a minus symbol/short dash '-' before a word excludes it from the search result e.g. **volunteering -overseas** will leave out search results with 'overseas' in their content. (Include a space before the minus sign.)
9. If looking for a word definition put 'define:' before a word e.g. **define:volunteer** will bring up definitions for the word 'volunteer'.
10. Adding a date/year to your search will limit the time span covered by the search e.g. **volunteering policy 2005** will only bring up the entries from 2005.

**Author: Pam Simmonds**

## Employment Issues: Part Three - National Minimum Wage

The **minimum wage** is a legal right which covers workers above compulsory school leaving age. It sets hourly rates below which pay must not be allowed to fall.

### The National Minimum Wage has increased again in October 2006

- **On 1 October 2006**, the main rate for workers aged 22 and over increased from £5.05 to **£5.35**
- The development rate for 18-21 year olds increased from £4.25 an hour to **£4.45**
- The development rate for 16-17 year olds increased from £3.00 an hour to **£3.30**

Employers should note that:

- they are required by law to ensure that their workers are paid at least the minimum wage;
- they need to keep records sufficient to prove that they are paying the minimum wage to their workers.

These should show the gross pay paid and the hours worked for each pay reference period (i.e. the period of time for which a worker's wage is actually calculated, usually a week or a month). The employer must keep records for a minimum of three years following the pay period that the records cover. For example, if a person is paid each calendar month, his records for the month of May 2006 would have to be kept until the end of June 2009. The records can be kept on paper or on computer.

A minimum wage helpline run by the Inland Revenue is available if you require further clarification on any aspect of the minimum wage. The helpline also deals with complaints about non-payment.

**Helpline 0845 6000 678**

**Author: Linda George**

## Quality Counts

### Quality Counts made easier

Smaller Age Concern Groups often approach their Quality Counts reporting slot and what follows with some trepidation; not least about the amount of work involved in producing the report and responding to recommendations. Groups in the East Midlands have had the advantage over the rest of the country as they benefit from the Big Lottery funded Group Support project, which has just completed its first year. A typical group's experience of this input is ably demonstrated by Age Concern Deepings. This Age Concern operates in a very rural location, serving the needs of the older inhabitants of a group of small vil-

lages known collectively as 'The Deepings'. The group provide some high quality and much needed services which received praise from their assessment; however the group knew they were deficient in some of the paperwork they should have in place. Working in partnership with the Group Support Worker they have put together an 'Action Plan', a step-by-step method of tackling the work. By this approach the group will have succeeded in getting all their policies in place by next month, a task that seemed totally daunting at the outset and a real achievement for all the voluntary members of the group involved in this task.

**If you think that your group would benefit from this kind of help and support with Quality Counts please get in touch with Pam or Linda on the numbers below.**

### What our volunteers do

Before any recruitment for new volunteers takes place it is important for a group to look at exactly what they will be expected to do. If your group has a variety of tasks for volunteers to do then it is a good idea to divide these up as individual roles. For example, if the group operates a minibus the roles of driver and of escort would be separate with different skills needed for each role and would suit different volunteers. It would be easy to write out the tasks for each role, describe what skills and experience a volunteer would need for the role and include any training offered. This could be used as a handout to give to prospective volunteers. An attractively produced handout can be used as a means of promoting your group's volunteering needs.

### Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers - 2

Thinking through in advance what tasks your volunteers will be expected to do is going to give a good impression of your group and how it values its volunteers. No-one likes to start a new job without a clear idea of what is expected of them and volunteers are no different to paid staff in this respect. The role descriptions are for guidance only as some flexibility may have to be shown to individuals with different capabilities or who have a disability. It is also important to show that volunteers are part of a team providing a service and that if they wish they can take on other roles or cover for absent colleagues which can enhance their experience and offer them new opportunities.

**Author: Pam Simmonds**

#### Contacts

Linda George - Tel: 01623 820283    Mobile: 07816 894562  
e-mail: [lindageorge.acem@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:lindageorge.acem@tiscali.co.uk)

Pam Simmonds - Tel: 01509 828268    Mobile: 07816 894554  
e-mail: [pamsimmonds.acem@ntlworld.com](mailto:pamsimmonds.acem@ntlworld.com)

