

IT can Help



British Computer Society Group helps disabled people get more from life with the aid of Information Technology

Special points of interest:

- LiveNet Business Plan submitted to Big Lottery
- Lisburn volunteer describes a typical visit
- Disability Action Switches on Communities in N Ireland
- EverybodyOnline empowers older people

LiveNet Funding Progress

Mencap and its Project Partners, **CitizensOnline**, the **British Computer Society** and **IT Can Help**, secured funding through **Big Lottery Fund's Live & Learn programme** to develop a Stage 2 application and business plan for the *LiveNet* Project. The business plan has now been prepared and submitted, a decision about funding is expected in April 2009.

The *LiveNet* project aims to empower Northern Ireland's learning-disabled community – children and adults with a learning disability, their families, carers, volunteers and professionals – to utilise the huge potential of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) for their varying needs.

Assuming the project proceeds, it is an opportunity for IT Can Help's volunteers to bring their expertise to bear on a really



Mencap LiveNet fun day Omagh with (L to R) Cathy Elliot of Curry's, Roseleen Maguire of LiveNet, and Paul Moss, Killadeads Day Care.

worthwhile and relatively neglected part of the community, in terms of 'digital inclusion'.

However it does mean that we will need more volunteers, especially in those areas where Mencap's groups are located, namely, Armagh, Coleraine, Cookstown, Dungannon, Enniskillen, Londonderry, Newry, Omagh, and Strabane.

If you know of anyone who may be interested please pass on contact details

nireland@itcanhelp.org.uk

IT Can Help was founded in 1994 as a programme of the British Computer Society.

It offers free computer support to disabled people.

To request assistance from the IT Can Help call the AbilityNet helpline freephone (and Minicom) on: 0800 269545 or e-mail: enquiries@abilitynet.org.uk. More information can be found at www.itcanhelp.org.uk

To unsubscribe to this newsletter, send an email with 'unsubscribe' as the subject to nireland@itcanhelp.org.uk

Lisburn Volunteer—a typical visit

The following is an account of IT support for a lady in Lisburn, a referral from Age Concern. I think it illustrates a particular type of IT Can Help callout, where the support required is not of a particularly technical nature, but rather with giving instruction and encouragement.

Joan is retired and is a widow, living alone. My first call was over two years ago; it was to help her with email attachments and scanning. I gave her some instruction and she seemed to be happy enough. I told her to contact IT can Help if she had any problems but

after a couple of weeks with no call, I assumed everything was OK.

My next visit was 4 months later, when she wanted help with Word document formatting and backing up files. I didn't hear any more until last September when she needed help to get her email working. Her Hotmail account had lapsed due to lack of use and she was unable to log on to her ISP via Outlook.

Joan, like many people, seems to be wary of making a nuisance, despite assurances to the contrary. For some-

one living on their own, IT can make such a difference to life.



Lisburn Volunteer
Colin Atkins

Switched on Communities

A scheme designed by national computing charity AbilityNet to enable more people with disabilities to get in touch with technology will have enhanced the lives of some 40,000 disabled individuals nationwide by the time it finishes in 2010. Initially funded by PC World with a cash injection of £600,000 further funding from the Big Lottery Fund has allowed the project to extend its reach. AbilityNet has recruited partners in 12 regions – including Northern Ireland.

AbilityNet's voluntary sector community Partner in Northern Ireland is

Disability Action but all have an established expertise or interest in providing IT services to people with disabilities. AbilityNet provides a specialist accessibility kit incorporating many of the most commonly used adaptations. The 'technological toolkit' supplied comprises differently shaped and sized keyboards, mouse alternatives, a full screen magnifier, a screen reader, voice recognition technology and a wide range of software for those with dyslexia and other reading and writing difficulties.

IT can Help is pleased to support

Switched on Communities.

The local contact for Switched on Communities is Nicola Walker at Disability Action. Telephone: 028 9029 7880, Textphone: 028 9029 7882 or email

nicolawalker@disabilityaction.org

EverybodyOnline makes a difference in Knockmore

Officially launched in Northern Ireland in January 2007, EverybodyOnline is a project delivered by the charity Citizens Online and jointly funded by BT and the Delivery and Innovation Division within the Department of Finance and Personnel, to help communities get online.

Five EverybodyOnline Project Officers work at grassroots to help older people in the community and living in sheltered accommodation, running courses and offering guidance,

Since its launch, EverybodyOnline has helped 6,000 individuals get online by empowering people with the skills and confidence to log on to the internet to showing them how the internet is relevant. EverybodyOnline also works in partnership with IT Can Help to improve access to digital technologies in the



community. Recently EverybodyOnline and IT Can Help worked together to help residents in the Knockmore area of Lisburn get online. IT Can Help provided free technical support, bringing Knockmore Community Association's IT suite back to life while EverybodyOnline equipped residents with the confidence and skills to log on to the internet and email family and

friends.

Working in partnerships with organisations like IT Can Help, EverybodyOnline is making a positive difference within the communities it serves, boosting skills, education and employment prospects, improving communication and increasing access to information and services.

To find out more log on to www.everybodyonlineni.org.uk