



# DERBYSHIRE COALITION OF DISABLED PEOPLE.

## rights of passage

OPEN DISCUSSION ON TUESDAY, 6TH APRIL, 1982 AT 10a.m.

DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL,  
COUNTY OFFICES,  
MATLOCK,  
DERBYSHIRE.

The International Year of Disabled People may now be over but the task of achieving its main aim - 'full participation and equality' - for all disabled people remains. One way of tackling this is by setting up in Derbyshire an independent living centre, drawing on the experience of such service centres in other countries. The Coalition has been working on its Derbyshire Independent Living Project throughout I.Y.D.P. with the in principle support of the County Council and more recently through a Joint Working Party, set up with County Council Officers. This open discussion will help to raise awareness of the principles and practices embraced by the independent living movement and its relationship to social welfare provision in Britain.

- 10.00a.m. Introduction by the Chairperson of the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People - Mr. George Woods.
- 10.05a.m. The Independent Living Movement - recent developments in the U.S.A. and Europe - John Evans of Project '81, Le Court, Hampshire.
- 10.20a.m. C.I.L. Berkeley - Philip Scott of Project '81, Le Court, Hampshire.
- 10.30a.m. Video film - "Rights of Passage"
- 11.36a.m. Questions and discussion
- 12.45p.m. Lunch

There will be a limited number of parking spaces for disabled people on the terrace car park. Wherever possible, however, the main car park should be used. Please let us know on Chesterfield 865305 if you have any special requirements and we will try to make all appropriate arrangements.

A buffet lunch will be provided at a cost of £1.50 per head. To assist in organising this meeting it would be appreciated if you would fill in and return the reply coupon below not later than Monday 29th March.

## DERBYSHIRE INDEPENDENT LIVING PROJECT

The Independent Living Movement began in the USA in the '70s, developing its own philosophy and services. These are based on Independent Living Centres, the first of which was CIL Berkeley. The DILP will build on the American experience and adapt it to the very different social welfare system here in Britain. The following notes give background information on the philosophy, development, organisation, and range of services offered at CIL Berkeley. They will serve to illuminate some of the issues taken up by films emanating out of the ILM in the USA.

### Philosophy

The Independent Living Movement had three main guiding principles from its early stages:

- 1) Those who best know the needs of disabled people, and how to meet those needs, are disabled themselves.
- 2) The needs of disabled people can be met most effectively by comprehensive facilities that provide the full range of services.
- 3) Disabled people belong in their community, as fully integrated members.

Since the movement began among people with orthopaedic impairments, theirs were the problems that received emphasis at first. A wide common ground with visually impaired people was soon recognised, and the two groups joined in coalition at an early stage. Before long, it was a major principle of ILM philosophy that their programmes should serve all disabilities.

### Historical Development

Along with much other upheaval in social thinking in the last 20 years, CIL can be traced back to the campus of the University of California at Berkeley. The University began to admit severely disabled students in the early '60s, and at first their accommodation was in a separate wing attached to the campus hospital. Their lives were largely confined to the campus, as obstacles to wider mobility in the town community were too great.

In this environment, the disabled students (a dozen of them by 1969 - came to some crucial realisations: that their lives were largely controlled by other people, and not necessarily in their best interests; that hope for change lay in action as a group; that their cause was not isolated, but had common ground with other groups developing their political awareness and effectiveness in that period. At the same time, the problems of moving out into the community became more pressing as some of the students approached the end of their academic courses.

The students' first thoughts were of communal living facilities partly modelled on the ones they were about to leave, but this idea called for funds

that were not then available. The Education authorities, however, already had an allocation of funds for a programme of services to disabled students. It was the terms of this funding source that determined the nature of a scheme the students set up under the title PDSP - Physically Disabled Students Program. The aims of PDSP were a fundamental departure from the fragmentary provisions for particular needs that already existed. They were to provide an integrated programme of all the services that disabled people need to be fully independent - a pool of care attendants for domestic needs, fast wheelchair repairs for dependable mobility, money benefits for independent resources, and so on.

With a small staff of mostly disabled people, PDSP began operation in 1970, co-ordinating all the services needed by disabled students moving out into the community. The next pointer for the future was an increasing number of enquiries from non-students who had heard of the unique services provided by PDSP. The students were reluctant to withhold help from non-students, but the added pressure of enquiries soon began to strain their resources. There was a clear need for a parallel organisation serving disabled people in the wider community - a Center for Independent Living.

CIL began in April 1972, with no regular source of funds. The first of various short-term piecemeal grants came through soon after, but hopes for a comprehensive package of funding were not realised and the strategy became one of setting up specific programmes as funds became available. Despite these restraints, the scope of services was soon wide enough to form a basis for the first consumer-controlled, non-residential service centre for disabled people.

#### Organisation

The basis for an ILP is a core group of people - in practice the number has varied from 7 to 13 - who form a board of directors. Recommendations are 1) a majority are disabled; 2) all main disabilities are represented, with a balance of sex and race; 3) some expertise is covered in the fields of welfare services, incorporation procedures, financial records, management, and fund-raising; 4) means are available to set up a minimum of five basic services: care attendance counselling, peer counselling, claims advocacy, housing lists, and an information/referral service.

An ILP starts with a mixture of paid and voluntary staff, and aims to pay an increasing proportion as funds come available. In the U.S.A. it is essential for an ILP to 'incorporate' - obtain tax-exempt status as a non-profit making organisation - as this is a condition for nearly all funding. Most ILP's get starter grants from state vocational rehabilitation agencies. These are renewable for up to three years, with the requirement that an increasing percentage

is matched by funds from other sources. Multiple sources of funds are preferred once a Programme is established.

#### Services provided

A survey to assess disabled people's needs in a particular community is an early requirement for an Independent Living Programme. With local variations in detail, services include the following:

- help to obtain information about social, medical, and rehabilitation services.
- financial and legal counselling on availability of funds under the various legislated state and local provisions.
- peer counselling to fit services to the particular needs and wishes of the individual consumer.
- help to locate accessible housing or modify existing housing.
- job development and placement services.
- wheelchair repair and maintenance.
- transport services, including charter.
- mobility training and reading services for blind people.
- interpreters for deaf and hearing-impaired people.
- news services.

Other schemes have developed around the main objectives of the Independent Living Movement. For example, a residential training programme set up in 1976 at Houston in Texas aims to help disabled people move from dependent living situations to more nearly independent ones. The intensive course instructs participants on the practical services just listed, and also builds up their psychological readiness for greater independence by discussing sexual relationships, use of leisure, and participation in social issues.

CIL Berkeley attracts visitors from all over the world who are seeking new models for providing services which do not, at the same time, create dependency. Phill Scott and John Evans from Project 81, based at Le Court Cheshire Homes in Hants are two such visitors and will be available to answer questions on 6th April 1982 after the showing of a video film entitled 'Rights of Passage'.