

## **Introduction from Gordon Pybus, Chair of DAD**

Darlington Association on Disability has continued to take a leading role in changing negative attitudes that prevent disabled people participating fully as equal citizens. Led by disabled people, we have supported the recommendations for legal reforms that can make more legal rights a reality. We have been extremely active in awareness raising, responded to consultation locally and nationally, and have provided direct advice and support to the public, private and the voluntary / community sector.

This year has seen Darlington Association on Disability's work recognised nationally in relation to a model of good practice that exists between ourselves and Darlington Borough Council. A delegation from Pendle Council in Lancashire visited Darlington to see how the Council works with the Association on Access issues. They were delighted and encouraged by what they found. It is heartening to report that visits from other towns and cities are pending, but frustrating that this model is not being emulated more widely by others within Darlington's own public and private sector. I warmly welcome the recognition we have received and thank all who have worked hard to bring about this working model based on openness, honesty and respect.

Envied by other towns, I believe that Darlington Association on Disability is an asset to our local area because what makes life easier for disabled people makes life easier for all. Its vision that disabled people should be able to live in a society without discrimination can be achieved but requires partnership working and support to reach this goal.

I am extremely grateful to all our financial supporters. The constant struggle to secure core funding is ever present; this funding is vital if Darlington Association on Disability is to continue to be the Association that disabled people and carers in Darlington want and deserve.

I would like to thank all our staff and volunteers for their professionalism in continuing to deliver a high quality service. The dedication of manager Lauren Robinson and her deputy Jacki Hiles in what at times has been a very difficult year is very much appreciated and to them I express my extreme gratitude. I am very grateful for the commitment of my fellow trustees who take a hands-on approach as volunteers in supporting the association to make our vision a reality.

Gordon Pybus

## **Dimensions Disability Initiative**

### **Aims in 2004-5**

- Continue to develop as a 'user led' initiative through self progression, consultation and inclusion, in respect of education, training, leisure, voluntary experience and employment.
- Recruit new members to ensure that Dimensions reaches full capacity and potential.
- Promote the Social Model of Disability and a positive image of Disabled People.

### **Impact**

- 39 members attended during the year
- Completion of personal development plans which included a Disability Equality Training for Trainers course, business planning, digital photography, creative writing, Learn Direct, calligraphy, Deaf awareness, confidence building and job search
- Members involved in consultation, including the Social Inclusion Strategy, the pedestrianisation of the town centre, Scopes Free 2 Pee campaign and DAD's definition of 'Disabled Person'
- Involvement in the Social Services Inspection
- Work with Social Services and others to raise awareness of the philosophy and criteria for accessing Dimensions.
- Development and delivery by members of a ten week 'Disability Self Awareness' course, focussing on physical, financial and attitudinal barriers.

### **Aims for next year**

Dimensions intends to carry forward and further develop this years aims

## **Access Interest group**

### **Aims in 2004-5**

- Highlight good practice around access issues
- Involve disabled people in the work of the Access Interest Group
- Raise access issues and concerns with planners and providers
- Promote the Disability Discrimination Act and other legislation

### **Impact**

- Second 'Access for All' awards held in partnership with Darlington Borough Council to recognise and encourage organisations and businesses striving to be accessible for everyone
- Visit by a party of ten councillors and officers from Pendle District Council in Lancashire to see how Darlington Association on Disability and Darlington Borough Council deal with disability access issues. The visitors were particularly impressed by examples of joint working and saw Darlington as a model of good practice
- Worked closely with Darlington Borough Council to make progress towards making all of their public buildings accessible
- Worked with Darlington Primary Care Trust on access for disabled people to their new buildings in Hundens Lane, Park Place and to the new Walk-In Centre at Dr Piper House
- Built on previous successful work with Darlington Borough Council Highways Department to prioritise the provision of dropped kerbs

- 6 Awareness sessions on the Disability Discrimination Act held with businesses, organisations and disabled people informing them of their rights.
- 80 businesses sought and acted on advice given on Disability issues
- Regular surveys by volunteers, encouraged and supported by Darlington Borough Council's Highways Department, led to the removal of most A-boards from town Centre pavements

### **Aims for next year**

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year the Access Interest Group intends to-

- Strengthen the working relations with all local public bodies to form good practice for dealing with the governments 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People'
- Respond to requests from other grass roots disability organisations nationally, to work closely in partnership
- Continue the popular Access for All Awards
- Encourage disabled people to take up their rights under the Disability Discrimination Act

## **Carers Support Service**

### **Aims in 2004-5**

- Raise awareness of Carers Support Service and encourage carers to identify themselves
- Provide support to carers through the provision of information, advice and groups
- Maintain the Carers Register. Increase the number of carers on the register from 787 to 900
- Encourage and support carers to monitor and shape local services through consultation and involvement
- Improve the quality of local services through involvement in Darlington Carers Strategy and by delivering training on Carer awareness and assessments to Care Managers and other professionals

### **Impact**

- Increased the number of carers on the Register to 953
- Moved to new premises which has given the service an improved identity, a meeting place for carers and space to develop and run groups
- Distributed over 1800 leaflets about the service including 500 within GP surgeries and produced 9 fact-sheets for carers
- Produced a bi-monthly newsletter for carers on the Register
- Edited and produced a separate newsletter for carers of people with a learning disability in partnership with the Learning Disability team, users and carers

- Provided 20 carers with opportunities to relax and share information through a relaxation group and mental health support group
- Provided individual support to 397 carers
- Developed a Parents Forum; an opportunity for parents of disabled children to feed in views and concerns to the Childrens Trust Board. The Forum had a circulation of over 50 parents by the end of the year
- Delivered a training course for carers providing skills in speaking with confidence in meetings
- Produced Guidelines for Consulting with Carers for the Learning Disability team
- Administered the Carers Short Break Holiday Fund which distributed £8000 from the Carers Grant to enable 33 Carers and 7 young carers to take a short break
- Delivered Carers Assessment training as part of a single assessment training programme to over 150 staff from health and social services

### **Aims for next year**

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year, the Carers Support Service intends to –

- Appoint a Health Link worker to raise awareness and support carers in GP surgeries
- Work with Social Services to double the amount of support available for mental health carers
- Add 300 new carers to the Register
- Ensure that parent carers continue to be supported

# **DASH**

## **Aims in 2004-5**

- Provision and promotion of fun and inclusive play opportunities for disabled children living in Darlington and the surrounding districts

## **Impact**

- Restructured the schemes to increase capacity of service
- Evaluated the re-structure using the University of Northumbria
- Provided 1245 places to 127 children between summer 2004 and Easter 2005
- Provided 4 play schemes across two sites for children of different ages and needs.
- Worked with Darlington Borough Leisure Services to enable their programme of out of school activities to become more inclusive for disabled children. Small groups of disabled children were supported to attend these activities.
- Provided support and advice to Darlington Borough Council Leisure Services for children attending two `Sportsability` taster sessions
- Worked with Sedgefield Positive Inclusion Partnership and Sedgefield Borough Council to enable their SPLASH / Holiday leisure sessions to become more inclusive. Larger groups of disabled children were supported to access this provision.
- 115 inclusive places accessed by children attending 9 inclusive sessions in mainstream settings. (See DASH to Inclusion Better Play Project report for additional achievements).
- Provided a weekly after school club for 10 children. The club was closed in April because of an increase in overheads and a reduction in number of children accessing the service.

- Provided 100 hours training to staff and volunteers on topics including Disability Equality Training, Manual Handling, Child protection, Non-violent crisis intervention, Paediatric resuscitation, and First Aid
- Employed a team of 24 staff and over 70 volunteers
- Rated by an Ofsted inspection as providing a 'good' standard of childcare, which is the highest outcome available

### **Aims for next year**

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year, DASH intends to -

- Continue supporting other mainstream play and leisure settings in working towards inclusion

## **DASH to Inclusion Better Play Project**

### **Aims in 2004-5**

- Work at a strategic level to improve inclusive play for disabled children in Darlington and Sedgefield
- Increase opportunities for inclusive play within DASH
- Work with external organisations to become more inclusive
- Work with individual children and families to locate and use opportunities for inclusive play and leisure
- Provide training to DASH staff and Community Partners

### **Impact**

- Additional capacity in all four DASH schemes created by disbanding the extra support scheme and moving children to more age appropriate schemes
- 3 external play providers supported to develop their service to be more inclusive of disabled children
- Over 40 children supported to enjoy mainstream play and leisure opportunities. Sometimes the setting, once made aware of child's support needs, re-designed an activity to accommodate the child or provided additional support from its own resources to meet the need
- Training delivered, using a national provider - Kidsactive, for DASH staff and external play and leisure providers

- Training package developed for delivery to external play providers, includes sessions on inclusive play, communication and Disability Awareness
- Involvement in Sedgefield Positive Inclusion Partnership and with key planners in Darlington ensured that inclusive play was considered at a strategic level

### **Aims for next year**

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year, Better Play intends to –

- Seek funding and support for a bridging service to ensure the continuation of the project
- Market and deliver training to external providers
- Ensure that inclusive play remains on the planning agenda for health and social services

## **Disability Equality Training**

### **Aims in 2004-5**

- Promote the Social Model
- Enable disabled people through training to develop an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Social Model. Give them the skills and confidence to share and promote this knowledge to others
- Generate continuous sources of unrestricted income for DAD

### **Impact**

- Training delivered to a wide range of professionals representing organisations in Darlington and the surrounding areas, including contracts with
  - Durham University
  - Darlington Borough Council
  - Darlington Memorial Hospital
  - Learning and Skills Council
  - Teesdale Disability Access Forum
  - Darlington College of Technology
- Disability Equality Training delivered to over 240 participants
- 97% of participants stated in evaluation that the training was 'very relevant/relevant' to career development
- Tutors presentation skills, interest and knowledge rated as either excellent/good by 98% of participants
- Over 125 students at Darlington College of Technology attended a one hour session on Disability Awareness
- 75% of students wanted to learn more about disability issues

- Ten week Disability Self Awareness course delivered to 12 Dimensions members
- Disability Equality Training for Trainers course led to ten students being awarded full accreditation by the Open College Network North East (formally TROCN) at Level 2
- Of the 10 students who completed the course, half are still currently active within DAD; the remainder are using their skills and knowledge in other areas
- Teaching staff achieved the Further Education Teaching Certificate, City and Guilds at Level 4

### **Aims for next year**

- Promote the Social Model through Disability Equality Training and Disability Awareness
- Continue to enable disabled people to have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the Social Model. Using skills and confidence to share and promote this knowledge to others
- Generate continuous sources of unrestricted income for DAD
- Increase awareness of DAD's work throughout Darlington and the surrounding areas
- Secure new contracts for Disability Equality and Disability Awareness Training
- Examine the possibility of becoming a member of the Open College Network North East and devising new accredited courses

## **Direct Payments Support Service**

### **Aims in 2004-5**

- Provide support to people who use or are considering using a direct payment
- Provide support which is as flexible and responsive as possible, to enable service users to manage their direct payment and achieve control and choice over how they live their lives
- Develop and promote service user involvement at all levels of the development of direct payments in Darlington
- Promote and support equality of access to Direct Payments in Darlington

### **Impact**

- 87 people using Direct Payments supported to access leisure, education, community service, voluntary work and in some cases employment
- Worked with a further 30 people towards using a Direct Payment
- Increased the capacity of the support to include two dedicated recruitment support workers and an Independent Living officer
- Developed robust mechanisms for user involvement including an active peer support group, user representation on the Local Implementation Group, a support service steering group and a User Involvement forum
- Secured temporary funding from the Department of Health Direct Payment Development Fund

### **Aims for next year**

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year, the Direct Payments Support Service intends to –

- Actively develop ways of making direct payments accessible to people living in Black and Minority Ethnic communities
- Promote Direct Payments as an option for people who experience autism
- Promote user involvement and self assessment
- Promote direct payments within the voluntary and independent sector

## **Information Service**

### **Aims in 2004-5**

- Provide high quality information and advice, on a wide range of subjects, to meet the needs of disabled people and carers
- Enable disabled people to independently access information increasing choice and control
- Promote the social model by providing information through the Disability Options Community Rehabilitation Team

### **Impact**

- Responded to 352 enquiries over the course of the year. The most frequently requested topics were aids and adaptations, holidays and benefits. The service also worked to obtain funding to assist individuals with holidays and items for independent living
- Continued work towards maintaining the Community Legal Services Quality Mark at General Help Level. This included monitoring and reviewing record keeping procedures, Service User feedback and Case File reviews
- Ongoing work to meet the full audit requirements of the Dial UK Quality Standards Award at Level One. Key pieces of work have included standardising staff personnel files and collection of statistical data relating to enquiries
- Secured funding from Community Legal Services to up-date and re-launch the DAD Information Guide, and to produce a web based version. Work is scheduled for completion in summer 2005
- Completed an internal audit of DAD's stakeholders which assessed how aware stakeholders are of DADs objectives and what the organisation does. It also examined whether stakeholders believe DAD is working effectively

- Maintained a link with the Disability Options team during a significant restructuring process

### **Aims for next year**

- Provide high quality information and advice, on a wide range of subjects, to meet the needs of disabled people and carers
- Enable disabled people to independently access information increasing choice and control
- Reassess location of service following restructuring of Disability Options
- Maintain the Community Legal Services Quality Mark and achieve DIAL Quality Standard level 1 following full audit
- Launch the new version of Information Guide

# Shopmobility

## Aims in 2004-5

- Provide the free loan of electric wheelchairs, scooters and manual chairs for anyone with a mobility impairment to shop and use the facilities of Darlington Town Centre independently
- Produce an online access map so residents or visitors of Darlington can find accessible premises within the Town Centre

## Impact

- Service used 3171 times
- 296 new customers were registered
- Funding secured from Awards for All used to provide training for volunteers and trips for service users to other towns with a Shopmobility service
- 9 out of 10 responders in an evaluation indicated that the service was very good or excellent
- Three new electric scooters purchased to meet an increased demand for the service
- New 3 wheeler scooters enabled more flexibility when accessing town centre premises
- Wheelygood access map almost completed. Data regarding the accessibility of premises, dropped kerbs and accessible parking was collected and a draft of the site prepared

## **Aims for next year**

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year, Shopmobility intends to –

- Launch the wheelygood website ([www.wheeygood.org](http://www.wheeygood.org))
- Promote the new and innovative online access map including a presentation at the National Federation of Shopmobility's Annual Conference
- Develop a marketing strategy to sell software associated with the wheelygood website

## **Volunteer Project**

### **Aims in 2004-5**

- Act on the evaluation of the Sitting and Befriending Service and set targets according to its recommendations
- Develop the volunteer project to promote a positive image of disabled people
- Continue to recruit and support volunteers

### **Impact**

- Completion of evaluation which concluded that the Volunteer Project should refocus on positive outcomes for disabled people, and should look at Peer Support as a method of encouraging disabled people to explore volunteering
- Recruitment and placement of 6 new volunteers
- Successful funding bid to the Home Office in February secured £86,000 over two years to develop the project
- Launch in March of Equal Access Volunteering Project which focuses on recruiting disabled people as volunteers, providing peer support and promoting a positive image of disabled people to the wider community
- Volunteer Support Worker recruited and appointed, bringing experience as a disabled person, service user and volunteer to the project

## **Aims for next year**

- Set up a peer support group & reference group
- Identify and meet training needs of volunteers
- Update volunteer and service user guidelines
- Produce and distribute promotional material
- Recruit 10 disabled volunteers
- Recruit 6 members for the peer support group
- Identify and establish links with deprived wards in Darlington
- Develop links with and place volunteers within three external organisations
- Organise a volunteer recognition event
- Update volunteer web page on the D.A.D web site

## **Thank you**

The Trustees would like to express their appreciation and thanks to the many and varied funders who support our work. They include-

### **Awards for All**

**Barnardos**

**Childrens Fund**

**Coutts**

**Cummins Engines**

**Darlington Borough Council**

**Department of Health**

**Durham County Council**

**Glassport Charity**

**Home Office**

**Lankelly Foundation**

**Latimer Hinks**

**Radar**

**Royal Oak**

**Sedgefield Borough Council**

**Tees Valley Learning and Skills Council**