

Chairs Report

Over this past year we have been focused on driving forward the culture change needed to break through the most significant barriers facing disabled people and to this end we remain committed to partnership working with others who share our vision and values.

As a disability organisation led by disabled people we recognise the importance of disabled people being involved in the decisions that will affect them and we have been extremely active over the last year supporting and encouraging disabled people to be involved in consultation both locally and nationally as well as keeping people well informed of the many changes that could impact on their lives.

Demand on our services continues to grow and I am very grateful to all our staff and volunteers for their professionalism in meeting this demand and delivering a quality service.

I would like to acknowledge the role played by the Manager Lauren Robinson and her deputy Jacki Hiles in making Darlington Association on Disability an organisation that is envied by other towns. This is particularly important at a time when the Government is calling for all towns to have organisations such as ours in its “Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People” strategy.

I am immensely thankful to all our financial supporters and offer them our warmest thanks. However the constant struggle to secure core funding is ever present and it is this funding that is vital if Darlington Association on Disability is to continue to take a leading role in changing negative attitudes that prevent disabled people participating fully as equal citizens.

Last but not least I would like to thank my fellow trustees, for their continued hard work and commitment to Darlington Association on Disability.

Gordon Pybus

Access Interest group

Aims in 2005-6

- 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

- Third '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 from Pendle Council to look at the partnership work between the Access Interest Group and Darlington Borough Council. Following the visit Pendle Council produced a recommendation document based on Darlington's model of good practice. Pendle Council also intend to set up their own disability group.
- Paid administration support secured for the Access Interest Group
- Continued work with Darlington Borough Council Highways Department to prioritise the provision of dropped kerbs following completion of a survey
- Put together a recommendation document for access requirements whilst work is being carried out on the Pedestrian Heart.
- Continued to work closely with Darlington Borough Council to make progress towards making all of its public buildings accessible, including plans for the Arts Centre and a sensory room within the Dolphin Centre

- Made links with Police probation officers. Probationers spent time at DAD gaining an understanding of disability and access issues
- Businesses and individuals continued to seek and act on advice given on Disability issues

Aims for next year

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

- Work with Darlington Borough Council to develop and produce their Disability Equality Scheme
- Continue the popular 'Access for All' Awards
- Encourage disabled people to take up their rights under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Review the format of meetings for the Access Interest Group and explore the possibility of themed meetings
- Received agreement from Darlington Memorial Hospital to attend a future Access Interest Group meeting

Better Play Project

Aims in 2005-6

- Increase opportunities for inclusive play within DASH
- Work with individual children and families to locate and use opportunities for inclusive play and leisure
- Provide training to DASH staff, volunteers and Community Partners
- Work with external organisations to become more inclusive
- Seek funding and support for a bridging service to ensure the continuation of the project
- Market and deliver training to external providers
- Work at a strategic level to improve inclusive play for disabled children in Darlington and Sedgefield
- Ensure that inclusive play remains high on the planning agenda for health and social services

Impact

- Positive feedback from parents in a report on the restructuring of DASH prepared by a student from the University of Northumbria.
- Range of joint activities provided in partnership with other organisations
- 32 children experienced inclusive play supported by the Better Play project
- Inclusive play training delivered to DASH staff and external partners through Kidsactive

- Training package developed, comprising four short courses including Communication, the Disability Discrimination Act, Disability Awareness and Inclusive Play
- Enabled two DASH co-ordinators to attend PIP (Planning Inclusive Play) Training to extend their skills in working in inclusive play settings
- Planned and delivered a Sportsability programme, in partnership with Darlington Borough Council Leisure Services and the Children's Trust. The six week programme allowed disabled children to experience a variety of sports
- Secured 3 year funding from the Big Lottery to continue the development of inclusive play and leisure, which began in March

Aims for next year

- Combine existing work with children, young people and their parents into a new service – Children and Young People Service (ChYPS)
- Secure match funding for first year of new service
- Develop systems for consulting and involving children and young people
- Support the development of a local inclusive play strategy
- Support 10 children to access inclusive play and leisure activities
- Continue to ensure high quality play opportunities through DASH

Carers Support Service

Aims in 2005-6

- Raise awareness of the 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 943 to 1000
- Encourage and support carers to monitor and shape local services through consultation and involvement
- Improve the quality of services through involvement in Darlington Carers Strategy and by delivering training on carers awareness and assessments to Care Managers and other professionals

Impact

- Increased the number of carers on the Carers Register to 982
- 10 Fact Sheets available providing specific information to carers
- Guide for carers of people with Mental Ill-Health printed
- Conference held during Carers Week where carers were given the opportunity to share their views with policy makers
- Ensured that all carers groups had input into planning and development of local carer services
- Successful grant application in partnership with Darlington YMCA secured the development of a local computer facility with an opportunity for carers to receive training
- Piloted an outreach service at Darlington Memorial Hospital

- Provided 424 individual support sessions to carers
- Administered the Carers Short Break Holiday Fund which distributed £6643 from the Carers Grant to enable 39 carers and 2 young carers to take a short break
- Recruited a Health Link Worker to raise awareness and support for carers in GP surgeries
- Identified and secured funding for a second Complimentary therapist following the positive evaluation of the Saturday therapies

Aims for next year

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

- Train GP Surgery staff on carers issues and identify a carers champion in each surgery
- Develop a Healthy Living course
- Work with the Carers Strategy Steering Group to move forward the development of staff training at Darlington Memorial Hospital
- Distribute the guide for carers of people with mental ill health
- Replace support groups with regular daytime and evening social opportunities for all carers
- Run an Introduction to Caring course for new carers
- Work with Social Services to develop mechanisms for sharing key information to enable both services to map carers
- Prepare for the forthcoming Tendering process

CSCI Service User Involvement Project

In July 2005 the Commission for Social Care Inspection (the Commission for Social Care Inspection) commissioned a piece of work – the Service User Involvement Project - using the skills and experiences of nine user-led organisations (one per CSCI region) to try out different ways of engaging service users locally in inspection activities. DAD was asked to bring together a group of people – ‘Experts by Experience’ –with sensory impairments, who work with DAD on this short-term project.

Aims

- Explore ways of providing CSCI with a range of mechanisms with which to improve their inspection process, focussing on obtaining information from, and involving, people with sensory impairments
- Deliver training to local Commission for Social Care Inspection Inspectors
- Support Experts by Experience to accompany Inspectors on 10 inspections
- Develop a toolkit of information for Inspectors
- Produce a report for the Commission for Social Care Inspection detailing the work done by the project and outlining ways in which the Commission for Social Care Inspection could better engage with people with sensory impairments

Impact

- Brought together a group of people who experience sensory impairments to look at ways of improving communication between inspectors and service users in residential homes in the region
- Held three consultation meetings where members gave their views on issues that inspections in residential and nursing homes should be focusing on with regard to equality and inclusion for residents with sensory impairments

- Delivered Disability Equality Training to 21 Inspectors. Very positive feedback was received
- Six inspectors were accompanied by Experts by Experience on a total of 10 inspections
- Reviewed the CSCI comments card from an Independent Living perspective and made recommendations on access to the card for people with sensory impairments
- Worked on removing some of the communication barriers that prevent inspectors from seeking the views of people with sensory impairments and deaf people
- Developed an on-line Toolkit for Inspectors and Residential and Nursing Homes managers to use, which outline ways of removing barriers to effective communication
- Gave a presentation on the pilot project to 200 home owners/managers.

Aims for next year

The project was time-limited but the Commission for Social Care Inspection have indicated that a longer term project will emerge from the findings. DAD may have an opportunity to tender for some of this work.

DASH

Aims in 2005-6

- Provide inclusive play opportunities for disabled children living in Darlington and the surrounding districts
- Provide play in a safe, welcoming and fun setting to ensure that all children and young people who use DASH enjoy themselves
- Continue to support other mainstream play and leisure settings in working towards inclusion

Impact

- 132 children used DASH between summer 2005 and Easter 2006
- Provided 1200 places over this period
- Ran 4 playschemes on two sites to cater for children of differing ages and needs
- Achieved Ofsted 'Good' rating
- Provided a wide range of free play, structured activities and outings which gave children the opportunity to play in an inclusive setting and have new experiences
- Employed a team of 24 sessional staff
- Recruited, trained and supported over 70 volunteers over the year

- Provided a broad range of training to staff and volunteers including:
 - Kids active inclusion
 - Disability Equality
 - Manual Handling
 - Policies and procedures
 - Child protection
 - Non-violent crisis intervention
 - Paediatric resuscitation
 - Working with volunteers
 - Working with parents and carers
 - First Aid

Aims for next year

- Provide inclusive play opportunities for disabled children living in Darlington and the surrounding districts
- Provide play in a safe, welcoming and fun setting to ensure that all children and young people who use DASH enjoy themselves
- Continue to support other mainstream play and leisure settings in working towards inclusion
- Ensure that Ofsted continue to rank DASH as a good or excellent setting
- Secure longer term funding for DASH

Dimensions Disability Initiative

Aims in 2005-6

- Continue to develop as a user led initiative
- Promote the Social Model of Disability and a positive image of disabled people
- Promote self progression and inclusion in respect of education, training, leisure, voluntary experience and employment
- Recruit a sufficient numbers of referrals ensuring that Dimensions Disability Initiative reaches full capacity

Impact

- 39 members accessed Dimensions
- Continued to campaign for 'effective consultation'. This has included:-
 - Darlington Borough Council Transport Provision
 - The Green Paper: Proposals for the future of Social Care.
 - Darlington Borough Council Equalities Consultation
 - Community Carnival
- Developed and maintained strong links with Social Services Department and Health Services and reinforced the Social Model approach by offering Social Services and Occupational Therapist students work placements
- Piloted an Outreach Service supporting disabled people to access Dimensions
- Continued to work with Darlington Borough Council Social Services Department and other local organisations on promotion and the recruitment of new members
- Personal Development Plans have been devised by all members

- 87% of members have accessed education, training courses, voluntary work and or community projects
- Two members have devised and delivered courses to other members:-
 - The Art of Calligraphy – levels 1and 2
 - Deaf Awareness
- Six members received Adult Learner Awards
- Contract secured by Dimensions Art and Design with Darlington Football Club to design and deliver 200 Valentine Cards which were presented to guests at a promotional dinner
- Continued to support members who wished to prepare for employment. This included accessing-
 - ‘Make Work Happen’ conference
 - Job Centre Plus
 - Advance Employment
- Six members completed exit strategies which have led to further education, new learning opportunities and employment prospects

Aims for next year

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year Dimensions Disability Initiative intends to-

- Explore ways to recruit young disabled people (18 – 25 years)
- Develop additional disability related courses
- Secure funding for additional learning opportunities

Direct Payment Support Service

Aims in 2005-6

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

Impact

- 109 people supported by the Direct Payment Support Service to use direct payments
- Received and supported new referrals from 81 service users.
- 90% of service users used their direct payment to employ a personal assistant, giving them the greatest control over how their assistance is provided
- Increased the number of referrals from carers and parents of disabled children
- Information on direct payments, D.A.D and the role of other organisations produced in community languages
- Racial equality training delivered to staff
- Resource pack under development to provide support for projects within DAD to be accessible to people from minority communities
- Resources acquired to enable information to be provided in a pictorial format

- Doubled the number of people using direct payments from minority communities as a result of active engagement with communities to deliver information about direct payments
- Promoted direct payments to 20 different community organisations
- Developed and facilitated an active peer support group and User Involvement Forum
- Increased the awareness of the use of ‘self assessment’ as a tool to achieve independence
- Held a Celebration Event in July attended by over 50 people which brought disabled people and other stakeholders together to recognise the achievements of direct payments and to identify the work which still needs doing to make independence a reality. Alan Desborough from the National Centre for Independent Living spoke at the event which also included Moveable Feast, a disabled person’s theatre and training company

Aims for next year

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

- Ensure direct payments are available to people with mental health needs
- Find solutions to the barriers which some people encounter in accessing a direct payment. This work will include people who do not wish or are not able to become employers
- Improve the ways in which employers are supported
- Continue to work actively to promote direct payments as an option to people from Black and Minority Ethnic Communities

Disability Equality Training

Aims in 2005-6

- Promote the Social Model through Disability Equality Training (DET) and Disability Awareness
- 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 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

Impact

- Training delivered to a wide range of professionals representing organisations in Darlington and the surrounding areas. This has included contracts with the following organisations;
 - Commission for Social Care Inspectorate (CSCI)
 - Darlington Borough Council
 - Sedgefield Positive Inclusion Partnership
 - Pioneering Care Partnership
 - Darlington College (Darlington & Catterick sites)
- 180 participants received a full days training.
- 99% of participants evaluated the training as 'very relevant (74%) or relevant (25%)' to career development.

- Tutors presentation skills, interest and knowledge were rated by 98% of all participants as either excellent (76%) or good (22%).
- Over 230 participants received Disability Awareness Training. This included staff, volunteers and students from the following organisations:
 - Darlington College students
 - DASH volunteers
 - Sedgefield Borough Council Leisure Services staff
- Interest from the Commission for Social Care Inspection, following local training, to roll out Disability Equality Training nationally
- Staff from the project invited to join the British Council of Disabled People (BCODP) DET Steering Group as consultants to explore accreditation of DET across the network
- DAD commissioned by BCODP to do a piece of work examining the financial implications of Open College Network membership, accreditation of a training course and running a Training for Trainers course.

Aims for next year

- Continue to provide training to a wide variety of organisations, increasing DAD's profile throughout Darlington and the surrounding areas
- Continue to secure new contracts for Disability Equality and Disability Awareness Training
- Examine the possibility of extending the number of qualified trainers employed by DAD.

DET participants' comments

“Many thanks for an informed, interesting and enlightening training session delivered with passion and insight”

“This was one of the best courses I have done in recent years. Thank you very much”

Information Service

Aims in 2005-6

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

Impact

- Responded to 326 enquiries over the course of the year. The most frequently requested topics were equipment and adaptations, holidays and benefits
- Assisted individuals to obtain funding for holidays and equipment for independent living
- Reviewed the working arrangements with Social Services and the Community Rehabilitation Team, and agreed to provide a monthly information session from Hundens Lane Centre after moves are complete
- Continued work in maintaining the Community Legal Services (CLS) Quality Mark at General Help Level. Passed the annual audit by the CLS. Work to maintain the quality mark included monitoring and reviewing record keeping procedures, obtaining service user feedback and conducting case file reviews

- Continued work to meet the full audit requirements of the Dial UK Quality Standards Award at Level One. Audits have been put on hold at the moment due to Dial UK re-structuring
- Secured funding from Community Legal Services to update and re-launch the DAD Information Guide
- Completed an on-line version of the Guide.

Aims for next year

- Continue to provide high quality information and advice on a wide range of subjects, to meet the needs of disabled people and carers
- Maintain the Community Legal Services Quality Mark and achieve DIAL Quality Standard level 1 following full audit.
- Enable disabled people to independently access information increasing choice and control
- Monitor the Information Guide and ensure that the information is correct and kept up-to-date
- Re-organise and re-assess the information on file to ensure it is up-to-date and relevant
- Set up an information service session in partnership with Social Services at the Community Rehabilitation Service at Hundens Lane

Parents Forum

Aims in 2005-6

- Raise awareness of the Parents Forum and encourage parent carers to become members of the forum
- Support parents to attend the forum and ensure they are involved in the decision making mechanism within the Children's Pathfinder Trust

Impact

- Increased the number of forum members to 75
- Increased the number of parents attending Forum meetings
- Produced a regular news sheet in an accessible format after requests from parents for local up to date information
- Developed a web page for parents with meeting dates, details of meetings and news sheets included
- Ensured that parents of disabled children under the age of 3 were involved in the development of the Early Support Programme in Darlington
- Delivered a training course for carers providing skills in speaking with confidence in meetings
- Participation of parents and carers in Darlington Childrens Trust used as an example of good practice by 'Pathways to Success', a good practice guide for disabled children's services published by the Council for Disabled Children
- Worked with Darlington Borough Council to ensure that parents of disabled children gained free access to all Borough Council Leisure Services settings

- Supported over 50 individual parents throughout the year
- Developed and maintained good relationships with statutory services
- Ensured effective parental involvement in the Childrens Trust Board and sub-groups

Aims for next year

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year the Parents Forum will:

- Ensure that parents of disabled children in Darlington are given an opportunity to share their views with decision makers across the various services in Darlington
- Deliver Voice and Choice course to parents wanting to develop confidence in meetings
- Support the involvement and participation of parents in the recruitment of staff within Childrens Services
- Ensure parental involvement in the development of the new Childrens Trust Board

Quote from a parent about the Parents Forum

“Parents of disabled children in Darlington now have an effective voice; contributing and changing the delivery and relevance of Children’s Services. The benefits of an open access policy to the board of the children’s trust allows a full contribution to decision making especially within the agenda of ‘Every Child Matters”

Shopmobility

Aims in 2005 – 06

- 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
- Prepare for the move to new premises
- Develop an interactive access map for the Town Centre
- Continue to promote the Shopmobility Service

Impact

- Service used 3433 times, an increase of 8.26% on last year
- 216 new customers registered
- Promoted the service through a leaflet distribution to 10,000 homes in the Darlington area
- Conducted a survey on how customers get to Shopmobility which fed into a larger mapping survey from Darlington Borough Council on local transport usage
- Organised a trip to Durham for Shopmobility customers
- Made the decision, to stop the long term wheelchair loan service after an evaluation concluded that the costs of continuing the service was prohibitive and that there was inadequate space to deliver the service effectively
- Prepared for the move to new premises
- Developed and launched the Wheelygood website, and an interactive map of the Town Centre

- Gave a well received presentation on the Wheelygood website model at the National Federation of Shopmobility Conference in Derby

Aims for next year

- 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.
- Move Shopmobility to its new site
- Develop a marketing strategy to sell software associated with the Wheelygood website
- Promote the Shopmobility Service once the move to new premises is completed

Quotes from customers:

"After several months in Hospital etc, my first day back in town with your service was fantastic, wonderful service marvellous staff!"

"Thank you so much for your help and service, it made such a difference to our trip to Darlington"

Volunteer Project

Aims in 2005-6

- Set up a peer support group and reference group
- Identify and meet training needs of volunteers
- Update volunteer and service user guidelines
- Produce and distribute promotional material
- Recruit 10 disabled people as volunteers
- Recruit 6 members for the peer support group
- Identify and establish links with deprived wards
- Develop links with and place 3 volunteers with external organisations
- Organise a volunteer recognition event

Impact

- Reference group set up to monitor and direct the project
- Peer support group established to encourage and support other disabled people into volunteering
- Internal training delivered on Disability Equality, confidentiality, data protection and adult protection
- Training opportunities provided including telephone training, team building, Deaf awareness, visual impairment training and British Sign Language
- Two volunteers successfully completed NVQ level 2 in business administration

- Volunteer and service user guidelines updated
- Recruited twenty seven new volunteers, eighteen of whom are disabled people
- Volunteer presentation event held in September at which each volunteer was awarded with a certificate of recognition for their work and commitment to DAD
- Advertised in community newsletters
- Held an event with Central Ward Partnership which increased recruitment from these areas
- Successfully placed four disabled people as volunteers with external organisations

Aims for the next year

- Provide training to develop peer mentor support
- Provide a further four external placement opportunities
- Establish ward 'champions' in 4 wards to promote volunteering
- Develop and implement appraisal strategies for volunteers
- Secure future of the project when current funding ceases in December 2006
- Continue to promote a positive image of disabled people as volunteers throughout Darlington
- Update the volunteer web page on the D.A.D web site

Training

DAD is committed to developing its workforce. Staff and volunteers have taken part in training throughout the year, ranging from NVQs and certificated courses to in-house cascade training sessions. Training has included the following:

Adult Protection
Business Administration
Carers Assessments
Community Care Law
Confidentiality
Cultural Diversity and Race Equality
Disability Equality
Social Model of Disability: Language
Early Support
First Aid
Induction
Information Technology: Databases, E-mails and using the Web
Language Line
Lets All Play
Managerial Skills including managing organisational change
Moving and handling
Getting the message across
Non Violent Physical Crisis Intervention
Professional Development birth to 3
Risk Assessments
Single Assessments
Valuing People
Visual Awareness
Website Promotion
Welfare Rights
Working with Volunteers and the Community

Funding

DAD is immensely grateful for the support it has received from the following funders:

1st Mobility

Alchemy Foundation

Awards for All

Barnardos

Big Lottery Fund

Christ's Hospital in Sherburn

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Cummins

Darlington Borough Council

Darlington Children's Fund

Darlington Lions

Darlington Primary Care Trust

Darlington Rotary Club

Department of Health

Durham County Council

Good Neighbours Trust

G Weston

Home Office

Hospital of God at Greatham

Northern Electric

R & L Jackson

Radar

Sedgefield Borough Council

Sunlight Nails

Tees Valley Joint Strategy Unit

WRVS