

Chairs Report

As in previous years Darlington Association on Disability has actively encouraged and supported disabled people to get involved in consultation.

However consultation and involvement that is tokenistic with no real willingness to take on board disabled people views or advice is a waste of time.

Meaningful consultation and, more importantly, involvement of disabled people in issues that could impact on their lives, is vital if positive changes are to come about.

Darlington Association on Disability recognises that consultation often forms one part of a larger decision making process, and that outcomes may not always reflect the balance of views that we have provided or the outcomes that we have advised. However organisations can not expect Darlington Association on Disability to endorse decisions made, following a process of consultation or advice-giving, where the final outcome does not reflect the views of disabled people or carers.

Darlington Association on Disability is a valuable asset to Darlington, envied by other towns that do not have a well established and respected Centre for Independent Living led by disabled people.

I give the credit for Darlington Association on Disability's accomplishments to all the dedicated staff and volunteers who under the excellent managerial skills of Lauren Robinson and her deputy Jacki Hiles have once again done an outstanding job and I thank them all.

Also I would like to acknowledge the hands on role, as volunteers, played by my fellow trustees and thank them for their commitment and support.

Securing core funding is a constant struggle and I am immensely grateful to all our financial supporters without them we would not be able to continue to take a leading role in changing negative attitudes that prevent disabled people participating full as equal citizens. To them all I offer my warmest thanks.

Access Interest Group

The Access Interest Group aims to highlight good practice, make people aware of access issues and promote the Disability Discrimination Act and other legislation. Using committed volunteers the group brings together disabled people with others who are interested in access issues. The group works closely with Darlington Borough Council to promote access within the local Borough.

Aims in 2006-2007

- 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
- 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
- Strengthen links with Darlington Memorial Hospital

Impact

- Sub group of disabled people took the lead on Darlington Borough Council's Disability Equality Scheme, launched in November 2006
- 'Access for All' award received 35 nominations and was won by the Education Village

- Provided advice on the Disability Discrimination Act to over 100 individuals
- Supported 15 individuals to take forward complaints under the Disability Discrimination Act
- Agreed after extensive consultation with members to hold regular themed meetings
- Held meeting with Darlington Memorial Hospital's Chief Executive to discuss access issues ranging from physical barriers to service delivery
- Continued to work with Darlington Borough Council (DBC) on significant refurbishment projects such as the Pedestrian Heart, Dolphin Centre and Arts Centre
- Continued to work with DBC's Estates, Transport, Highways, Children's and Adult Services to eliminate where possible all barriers which exclude disabled people from services and facilities
- Worked with Darlington Police's new probationary officers on awareness of disability and access issues

Aims for next year

- Ensure that local Public Bodies are aware of their Disability Equality Duty and working to their Scheme.
- Continue to encourage more disabled people to take up their rights under the Disability Discrimination Act.
- Work more closely with Durham Constabulary on issues relating to disabled people.
- Develop an Access Interest Group working party
- Seek funding to enable the group to continue to expand
- Encourage more disabled people to get involved in matters that affect them

Children and Young People's Service (ChYPS)

ChYPS was developed during the year, enabled by a grant from the Big Lottery, to further develop and enhance the range and quality of services for disabled children and young people provided by DAD. Bringing together DASH, bridging work and the Parents Forum, the new service also has a strategic role to ensure that inclusive play and leisure is high on local and national agendas

Aims in 2006-2007

- Combine existing work with children, young people and their parents into a new service
- Ensure that inclusive play is high on the planning agenda for local statutory and community services
- Support the development of a local inclusive play strategy
- Influence other local strategic plans relating to disabled children and play
- Link regionally and nationally with other organisations to influence the government agenda on play and leisure for disabled children and young people
- Ensure that parents and families have a strong voice in the planning and development of local services

Impact

- Brought DAD's services for children together to deliver an enhanced service as its Children and Young Peoples Service (ChYPS)
- Represented the voluntary sector on the newly structured Childrens Trust

- Supported the Council for Voluntary Service to develop and strengthen its Children and Young People's network, which aims to share information and lobby for change
- Participated as a member of a working party in a review of the Darlington's Children and Young People's Plan
- Ensured that Darlington Borough Council make a commitment to signing up to the 'Every Disabled Child Matters' campaign
- Persuaded Darlington Borough Council to adopt Kids National Development Department model for developing inclusive play/childcare services for disabled children
- Represented the views of voluntary sector partners on several sub-groups of the Childrens Trust
- Worked with statutory partners as a member of the Children's Services Departmental equalities Group
- Worked as a member of Darlington's Play Partnership to develop an inclusive local Play Strategy

Aims for next year

- Ensure that the 'Every Disabled Child Matters' agenda is delivered in Darlington
- Working through the Play Partnership, ensure that play and leisure are developed inclusively
- Continue to work with Darlington Borough Council partners to support their work in developing and delivering inclusive services
- Work with Kids National Development Department through its regional advisory forum to influence the Governments agenda regarding disabled children and play

Carers Support Service

A carer is someone who provides support to a family member, friend or neighbour who has a long term health need or impairment. The Support Service provides advice, support and information to carers of any age, whatever their caring situation and signposts carers to other agencies and carers support groups, where people can meet others in similar situations. The Carers Support Service also ensures that carers have a voice in the planning and development of local services.

Aims in 2006-2007

- Raise awareness of Carers' Support Service and encourage carers to identify themselves
- Provide support to carers through the provision of information, advice and groups
- Increase the number on the Carers Register to 1050
- Identify and develop ways for GP surgeries to identify, record and support carers
- Run a training course for new carers
- Run a modular health course for carers
- Support carer representatives at strategic meetings
- 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 Steering Group
- Work with Social Services to develop mechanisms for sharing key information to enable both services to map carers.
- Develop clear agreed principles in partnership with carers and Adult Services for supporting and involving carers
- Prepare for the forthcoming Tendering process

Impact

- Increased the number of carers on the Register to 1131
- Developed 10 Fact sheets providing specific information to carers
- Completed a Health course for carers which it is anticipated will maintain and improve the health of those carers who took part
- Identified a Carer Link Worker within each GP surgery which will enable carers to be more readily identified
- Established protocols in each GP surgery setting out the guidelines for identification, referral and recording of carers
- Created a generic support group which has provided the opportunity to meet carers' social and emotional needs
- Provided 513 individual support sessions to carers
- Administered the Carers' Short Break Holiday Fund which has enabled 21 carers and 4 young carers to take a break

Aims for next year

- Provide a weekly coffee afternoon to bring carers together
- Encourage all GP surgeries to offer health checks for carers
- Facilitate Saturday therapy sessions in a central location
- Work in partnership with Alzheimer's Society regionally, to develop specific support for Alzheimer's carers in Darlington
- Further develop carers support services for carers supporting people with mental ill health
- Further develop outreach services and opportunities for carers to receive one-to-one support

DASH and Bridges

DASH aims to provide and promote fun and inclusive play opportunities for disabled children who live in Darlington and surrounding districts. As well as providing services the project also works with other play providers to become inclusive through its Bridges project.

Aims in 2006-2007

- Increase opportunities for inclusive play within DASH
- Work with 10 individual children and families to locate and use opportunities for inclusive play and leisure
- Work with external organisations to become more inclusive
- Market and deliver training to external providers
- Work at a strategic level to improve inclusive play for disabled children in Darlington and Sedgefield
- Combine existing work with children, young people and their parents into a new service
- Develop systems for consulting and involving children and young people
- Support the development of a local inclusive play strategy

Impact

- Provided over 1200 places to 138 children
- Re-structured to provide three play schemes for children of different ages and individual requirements

- Supported consultation and participation activities including the Dolphin Centre soft play area and a new bouldering facility
- Provided support and advice to Darlington Borough Council Leisure services on a Sportsability programme aimed at encouraging disabled children to access mainstream sports activities
- Worked in conjunction with Sedgefield Borough Council to provide inclusive play sessions within a local leisure centre
- Worked with Coleridge Children's Centre to support them to become more inclusive in the work they undertake
- Given "Inclusion into practice" presentations at regional and national seminars hosted by Kids National Development Department

Aims for next year

- Further develop Bridging relationships with the Coleridge Childrens Centre and other play and leisure settings
- Support 12 disabled children into play and leisure settings
- In partnership with Darlington Borough Council develop a consultation and engagement group providing disabled children who use DASH with opportunities to influence local play and leisure
- Continue to develop DASH, and secure long term funding to enable the provision of high quality holiday play services
- Work strategically with local, regional and national partners to promote inclusive play

Disability Equality Training

DAD delivers up to date Disability Equality Training exploring the concept of Disability, reviewing the Social Model, offering guidance on current legislation and reflecting the philosophy of the Disability Movement.

Aims in 2006-2007

- 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

Impact

- Delivered training 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
 - Darlington College
- 105 participants received a full days training
- 100% of participants evaluated the training as very relevant (58%) or relevant (42%) to career development
- Tutors presentation skills, interest and knowledge were rated by 97% of all participants as either excellent (60%) or good (37%)
- Members of the Experts by Experience from the Commission for Social Care Inspection received training over a period of two

days. For this an 'easy read' version of all handouts was created. The 'easy read' handouts are now available on request

Aims for next year

In addition to carrying forward the aims from this year the Disability Equality Training project intends to:-

- Ensure disabled people have access to Social Model training and will therefore have greater awareness of their rights within the Disability Discrimination Act

DET participant's comments

- The DET trainers did a great job of approaching a sometimes difficult topic. I found their course informative and interesting. I was very happy with the whole presentation. Thanks
- I very much enjoyed this training and found it to be very informative.
- I attended this course to see if it would be relevant for my staff. I will now be putting all staff through the course
- Excellent course. Well paced and enjoyable
- Enjoyed course – interesting. Would recommend as mandatory to all where I work
- This was an excellent day. Very useful in my day to day practices at work and thought provoking in general. I would recommend this course to anyone

Dimensions Disability Initiative

Dimensions is a user led initiative which promotes and maintains empowerment, self progression, independence and choice. Members work at their own pace to devise Personal Development Plans, setting goals which include access to education, training, leisure and employment

Aims in 2006-2007

- Continue to develop as a 'user-led' initiative, whilst promoting 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 new members, particularly targeting 18-25 year olds, to ensure that Dimensions reaches full capacity
- Develop additional disability related courses and secure funding for additional learning opportunities

Impact

- Increased the number of members by 5%
- Delivered Social Model of Disability awareness training attended by students and staff from Bishop Auckland College
- 98% of members devised Personal Development Plans (PDPs) Personal targets are set and achieved on a daily basis
- 37% of members accessed education and external training courses; 35% had accessed leisure opportunities
- 12% of members progressed into voluntary work. Two have successfully completed a Mentor Training course through DAD's Volunteer Project

- Presentation delivered by members based on the 'Choice and Risk Framework' seminar which they had attended
- Participated in consultation regarding Social Services Department transport
- Involvement in the Darlington Community Carnival gave members the opportunity to promote equal access to the wider community regarding the affect of the environment on disabled people
- As a direct result of arranging access for herself and two others on a ceramic course, one of our members is now part of the steering group of the Open Arts Studio in the Arts Centre
- Personal experience has led to one member exploring the process of setting up a Local Disabled Parents Network
- Six members have enrolled on an art and craft course and another is utilising his knowledge of accountancy.
- Secured funding from the Libraries and Community Learning Service of £2,500 for two new learning areas at Dimensions
- Supported members to challenge or deal with a wide variety of issues such as coming to terms with life changes, disability, relationships, communication differences, lack of access to housing and transport
- Members volunteers and staff have utilised every opportunity through networking, training and community events to raise the profile of DAD

Aims for next year

In addition to carrying forward aims for this year the service aims to-

- Ensure that the 'self directed support agenda' remains a key issue in the development of Dimensions Disability Initiative

Direct Payment Support Service

From April 2003 every local authority offers those who are eligible money, instead of arranging services for them. When local authorities gives someone money in this way, it is known as a Direct Payment. The Support Service provides individuals with support and guidance to manage their Direct Payment.

Aims in 2006-2007

- 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
- Promote service user involvement at all levels in the development of direct payments.

Impact

- 127 people supported by the Direct Payment Support Service to use direct payments
- 146 people on average support per month supported to consider and use direct payments. Support has included providing a payroll service, support with recruitment, peer support , user involvement and information and advice
- Increased the number of parents of disabled children accessing Direct Payments by 65%

- Received and supported 61 new referrals from service users
- Worked with care managers and social workers to increase the take up of direct payments in under represented groups including people with mental health needs, older people and young people
- Increased referrals from carers and parents of disabled children
- Further developed user involvement by facilitating a forum for people who use direct payments and key local authority staff involved in the development of direct payments
- Supported the Local Authority to implement a national direct Payments Take Up Programme
- Enabled DAD to become involved in other developments of self directed support including individual budgets
- Increased the number of people accessing peer support by providing a peer support group and drop in groups
- Worked with other agencies to enable people to have the benefits of choice and control within their direct payment without the need of becoming an employer
- Provided improved facilities to people who use direct payment by moving into new offices with access to interview and meeting spaces

Aims for next year

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

- Continue to improve greater equality of opportunity for all people eligible to access direct payments
- Provide a forum for service users to be involved in the development of self directed support in Darlington
- Continue to increase the number of people accessing Direct Payments

Experts by Experience: Commission for Social Care Inspections Project

Experts by Experience are people of all ages, with different impairments and from diverse cultural backgrounds who have experience of using social care services. DAD was commissioned to bring together a group of disabled people to take part in CSCI inspections and talk to people using care services in order to enhance the inspection process.

Aims in 2006-2007

- Recruit 'Experts' to assist inspectors with the inspections of care homes, domiciliary care agencies and service inspections.
- Recruit support workers to support Experts during inspections
- Deliver training to Experts and Support workers
- Support Experts to be fully involved in the inspection process.
- Through Experts, to have positive impact on the lives of people who use social care services

Impact

- Successfully advertised and promoted the project both locally and regionally.
- Recruited six Experts by Experience
- Undertook 9 inspections between October 2006 and March 2007
- Delivered training to Experts on the following:
 - The role of an Expert by Experience
 - Confidentiality
 - Equal opportunities

- Person centred planning
 - Rights and choices
- Supported two Experts to attend service inspection training in London
- Ensured the future of the project through successful tendering until March 2008
- Worked in conjunction with the national Centre for Independent Living to recruit experts for domiciliary care agency inspection.
- Enabled 4 people with learning impairment to access paid employment
- Developed a recruitment procedure for experts which was accessible and inclusive to all those applying.

Aims for next year

- Secure funding for the project when it goes to tender in October 2007
- Recruit further Support workers
- Ensure all Experts and Support Workers attend Disability Equality Training
- Undertake approximately 60 inspections between April 2007 and March 2008
- Hold an event to promote good practice and evaluation of the project so far with Experts and Support Workers

Information Service

Good quality, up-to-date information is the key to empowerment, independence and choice. The Information Service provides free and confidential information on a wide variety of subjects and welcomes enquiries by telephone, e-mail and fax. Enquirers are very welcome to drop in or to make an appointment with DAD's Information Worker. The Information Service also has an on-line guide giving a comprehensive overview of local and national issues that might affect disabled people. Information can be provided on request in a wide range of formats.

Aims in 2006-2007

- Enable disabled people to independently access information increasing choice and control
- 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
- Maintain the Information Guide
- Maintain links with other local information providers
- Pilot an outreach information service based at Hundens Lane rehabilitation unit
- Secure Dial UK Quality Mark

Impact

- Responded to 404 enquiries. The most frequently requested topics were aids and adaptations, holidays and benefits. There has been a marked increase in requests for support in getting funding to assist individuals with holidays and items for independent living.

- Maintained statistics to record the number of enquiries dealt with by DAD's projects as a whole, totalling 1062 requests for information and advice.
- Worked in conjunction with Shopmobility to manage enquiries and promote both services. The move to new premises has resulted in a huge increase in the number of customers and enquirers.
- Continued work towards maintaining the Community Legal Services Quality Mark at General Help Level.
- Carried out work to meet the full audit requirements of the Dial UK Quality Standards Award at Level One. Following submission all audits have been put on hold ending Dial's internal re-structuring.
- Recruited three volunteers to update the Information boxes, keep the database up-to-date and collate statistics.
- Piloted monthly information sessions with the Community Rehabilitation Team in September 2006. Because of the nature of the clinic the service was not well used and future plans are on hold pending the possible development of an equipment service.
- Worked with GOLD, Age Concern and other local services to deliver a range of awareness raising information events

Aims for next year

In addition to carrying forward the aims for this year, the Information Service intends to -

- Conduct a full revision of the Information Guide
- Set up a pilot information service in Dimensions
- Continue to make links with other information providers in the area
- Work with Citizens Advice Bureau to establish outreach provision for disabled people and carers
- Identify ways to make younger disabled people aware of the service

Parents Forum

The forum gives parents of disabled children an opportunity to find out more about local services. Parents are invited to forum meetings, receive regular information and, through elected representatives, are able to feed their views to those to plan and provide services in Darlington.

Aims in 2006-2007

- 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

Impact

- Increased the number of forum members to 140
- Continue to increase the number of parents attending Forum meetings
- Produced 6 news sheets in an accessible format after requests from parents for local up to date information
- Continued to use website of DAD to provide information
- Undertook an evaluation of the service with parents

- Supported over 20 parents to apply for funding towards inclusive play and leisure
- Supported a small group of parents to receive specialist mobility equipment for their children
- Supported 40 individual families on a variety of issues
- Organised a social event for families at local soft play centre
- Ensured there was parental involvement in specialist multi-agency meetings
- Ensured that the views of parents of disabled children were heard on the local authority carers strategy group
- Supported parents of disabled children to be involved in the recruitment of Assistant Directors within Children's Services

Aims for next year

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

- Ensure that parents of disabled children continue to be given an opportunity to share their views with decision makers
- Secure long term funding for the Forum
- Deliver Voice and Choice course to parents
- 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
- Continue to provide information, advice and guidance to parents
- Strengthen links with the Darlington Parent Partnership

Shopmobility

Shopmobility provides electric wheelchairs, scooters or manual wheelchairs for anyone with a mobility impairment to shop and use the facilities of Darlington Town Centre independently. The service is free, and has free parking for customers.

Aims in 2006–2007

- Continue to provide the free loan of electric wheelchairs, scooters and manual wheelchairs for anyone with a mobility impairment to shop and use the facilities of Darlington Town Centre independently.
- Develop a close working relationship with DAD's Information service.
- Secure funding for new electric scooters, manual wheelchairs and accessories.
- Continue to promote the Shopmobility Service

Impact

- Equipment has been used 3670 times, an increase of almost 7% on the previous year.
- Registered 275 new customers, an increase of 20% on last year.
- Produced a new Shopmobility Leaflet with support from the Graphics Department at the Town Hall. This was distributed to GP Surgeries, the hospital and other venues in the Town Centre along with a promotional poster. This publicity has partly been responsible, along with the relocation, for an upward surge in new customers.
- Relocated the service to its new corner site, which has provided improved access, better storage and a more visible presence, all of which have resulted in an increase in usage.

- Signposted a total of 147 people to other projects within the organisation and a further 187 externally, 57 of which were to Darlington Borough Council within a two month period.
- Continue to provide the Wheelygood accessible website

Aims for next year

In addition to carrying forward the aims for this year, Shopmobility intends to -

- Develop a work plan to take Shopmobility through to March 2008, to include fundraising, publicity and marketing.
- Purchase new equipment to meet the increasing demand for the service.
- Develop a new database for storing membership as well as the collection of statistical data.
- Assist in developing a North East Regional Collective, the main aim of which is to lead, strengthen and support Shopmobility services by providing an arena for discussion, the exchange of information and a creative, strategic voice for the services.
- Secure longer term funding for the service.
- Work alongside the Information Service to produce fact sheets for Shopmobility and Reception staff to give to enquirers. This will reduce the waiting time for people and will also allow the Information Service to concentrate on more complex enquiries.
- Further increase the usage of the service

Volunteer Project

Disabled people are often seen as the passive recipients rather than the provider of services. The Volunteer Project provides opportunities for people to share their experiences and skills, and focuses on recruiting and supporting disabled people into volunteering. Without DAD's volunteers its valuable work would be impossible to achieve.

Aims in 2006-2007

- Continue to promote a positive image of disabled people as volunteers throughout Darlington
- 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
- Update the volunteer web page on the DAD web site

Impact

- Recruited 17 new volunteers
- Provided an Introduction to Mentoring training course for 12 disabled volunteers
- Accessed training for volunteers on a wide range of subjects including, active listening, key skills, first aid, career planning, writing funding applications, issues facing charities and fundraising

- Secured Goldstar funding from the Home Office in December, in recognition of the work done to promote volunteering with under-represented groups. The funding will allow the project to spread good practice locally to other partner agencies
- 4 volunteers placed externally at Age concern, Town mission and with Diabetes UK
- Appraisals have been implemented with volunteers
- Widely advertised the project in the local paper and community newsletters.
- Shared good practice such as CRB checks, accessibility standards etc with several local organisations
- Promoted volunteering in 4 wards
- Updated the Volunteer page on the website to include a downloadable application form

Aims for the next year

- Continue to promote a positive image of disabled people as volunteers throughout Darlington
- Pilot the mentoring and befriending programme
- Promote and provide more external placements
- Organise an Equalities conference for local partner agencies
- Arrange an event to promote good practice within volunteering
- Continue to carry out supervisions and appraisals for volunteers
- Secure the future of the project when current funding ceases in March 2008
- Continue to use the volunteer web page on the DAD web site to provide up to date information regarding volunteering

Training

DAD is committed to developing its workforce. Staff and volunteers have taken part in training throughout the year. Training has included the following.

Managerial Skills
Certificate in Counselling Skills
Induction Programme
Minute Taking
Continuing Care
Mental Capacity Training
NVCPI Refresher
Pensions Meeting
Fire Risk Assessment
Manual Handling
Basic Food Hygiene
First Aid
Increased knowledge of SEN Law
Befriender Training
NAIDEX Exhibition
Support & Supervision
Disability Equality Training
Direct Payments
Debt Management
Fire Extinguisher Training
Sexuality Training
Roles & responsibilities of Executive Committee
Risk Assessment
Disability Equality Training
Understanding Charity Accounts
Effective meetings
First Aid Training

Funding

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

The Big Lottery

Home Office

Darlington Borough Council

Durham County Council

Easington PCT

Mayor Charitable Fund

North East Ambulance

Rothley Trust

Sedgefield Borough Council

Tees Valley Strategic Grant