



Breaking Through Barriers

---

# Young Leaders Evaluation report

---

# What's in this evaluation report?

Young Leaders evaluation - what it needs to do - Page 3

Young Leaders evaluation - what Tricia did - Page 5

About Young Leaders - Page 6

What Young Leaders have achieved over the past three years - Page 7

What Young Leaders say about Young Leaders now - Page 14

What other people say about what Young Leaders have achieved and what they should do next - Page 17

What Tricia thinks! - Page 22

# Young leaders evaluation - what it needs to do

Three years ago, the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) gave Darlington Association on Disability (DAD) Young Leaders money to help the group get really strong and be a voice for young disabled people in Darlington.

This funding finishes in **January 2013** and Young Leaders need to show the EHRC the work it has done with the money - this is called an evaluation.

DAD asked Tricia Nicoll to work with the group to write the evaluation. Tricia is a disabled woman and is independent from the group. Tricia has lots of experience in advocacy and supporting people to speak up and have a strong voice. This report is Tricia's evaluation of Young Leaders.

Tricia worked with the group to think about what the evaluation should be like. You said it should be:

- Young people friendly
- Show how lives are changing
- Tell people what we have done over the past three years
- Be good for marketing and promoting the group
- Get more people involved - disabled and non-disabled young people
- Show people we are a team
- Show how good we are and how people are involved
- Show how we make it fair for young disabled people

- Be accessible to lots of different people - whatever their access needs
- Have pictures and photos, be eye-catching and easy to read
- Show how as a group we can work together to make things happen
- Show other young people how they can achieve things
- Let other young people know we exist!

# Young leaders evaluation - what Tricia did

Tricia had a planning meeting with the Young Leaders to agree who to talk to and the questions to ask. We decided that there were three big questions to ask everyone:

1. How do you know about young leaders — what has your involvement with them been?
2. What are the highlights for you of the group's work (in Darlington and beyond)?
3. What would you like to see Young Leaders do next?

The rest of this report tells you:

- About Young Leaders and the work they have done over the last three years
- What people say about Young Leaders and the work they do

# About Young Leaders

Some facts and figures:

- Young Leaders first met on **19th August 2009**. Katie Lawson supported the group in the early days
- There have been over 150 meetings of the Young Leaders group since then
- 24 young people have been involved with Young Leaders over the past 3 years. 18 young people are still members - either coming to meetings or using the Facebook page.....AND.....
- .....582 pizzas have been eaten (our favorites are pepperoni, chicken and sweetcorn and margarita!) and more than 500 litres of juice have been drunk!

# **What Young Leaders has achieved over the past three years**

The first Young Leaders meeting was on **19th August 2009**. From October 2009 the group started meeting every week.

The money that got Young Leaders going was from the Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE). The first Young Leaders were Gerry, Lewis, Adam, Andrew B, Chantelle, Chris Y and Victoria.

## **November 2009**

Gerry, Sammie, Mike and Lewis become representatives for Changemakers

Emma and Hannah start working for Young Leaders (Rachel joined in July 2010)

*'I remember interviewing for staff'*  
Sammie

## **December 2009**

Christmas trip to the Centre for Life

## **January 2010**

Gerry and Jamie went to the House of Lords to launch the 'Pushing for Change' document

YMCA Young Inspector training

## **March 2010**

Young Inspectors inspect local Connexions office and the new office that Young Leaders were planning to move into

*'I remember ALLFIE funded 3 projects and we got together to show what our projects do and launch 'Pushing for Change'*

Sammie

*'ALLFIE is really please that Darlington are still supporting such a fantastic group of young disabled people. We were always sure that they were committed to sustaining the group's future and really hope their work can be embedded into the wider work of Darlington Association on Disability. We would love to work together with Young Leaders in the future!'*

Tara Flood

*'I remember the Young Inspectors training - we got certificates!'*

Daniel

## **March 2010**

EHRC fund Young Leaders

## **April 2010**

Training from Ally John - all about the social model of disability and empowering young disabled people

First DAD Young Leaders forum; 'What matters to you?'

## **August 2010**

Changemakers Youth of Today residential - leadership, mentoring and making projects happen

## **September 2010**

David Thomas started working as  
Inclusion and Participation coordinator

## **October 2010**

Met Peter Barron - Editor of the Northern Echo

## **November 2010**

Met Jenny Chapman MP

Disability Lib filming on involving young disabled people in  
disabled people's organisations

## **December 2010**

Christmas trip to the Metro Centre

*'I remember making a video for a project about getting my  
point across - we won £50 for our idea!'*

Sammie

## **January 2011**

Darlington Association on Disability inspected by Young  
Inspectors

DASH volunteers

## **March 2011**

Young People's 'Matters that Matter' forum

*'I remember speaking for the first time in front of a crowd'*

David G

## **April 2011**

To Birmingham for the Disability Lib conference

*'I remember we stayed the night before to celebrate the end of the ALLFIE funding. We did a presentation - it was scary but exciting. We got a lot out of meeting with the other young people'*

Sammie

### **September 2011**

Jenny Chapman MP visited Young Leaders

### **September 2011**

Met Bill Dixon - leader of  
Darlington Borough Council

### **October 2011**

DAD Young People's forum

Equality Act training

T3 youth service meetings

Met Murray Rose - Director of People at Darlington Borough  
Council

Seminar on the SEND Green Paper (Brian Lamb)

### **November 2011**

DAD AGM - 25 year anniversary. Focus on, 'where do we see Young Leaders in 25 years?'

*'I would like to think that Young Leaders will keep going and raise more awareness. I would like to work with other organisations in 25 years and keep fighting against Disablism'*

James

*'It's hard to say what might happen in 25 years but hopefully prejudice and discrimination will be a lot less, or to be really optimistic, non-existent. As Young Leaders, we will have*

*done lots more to promote DAD and at the very least the Facebook page will be up and running!*

Chloe

*'Young Leaders should be more publicised and not just Disabled Young people. I would like to see more impact on other services around the country and more groups set up like Young Leaders'*

Sammie

*'Young Leaders will definitely survive for the next 5 years. However towards the end of the period in question Young Leaders are likely evolve into another project or disintegrate as Young Disabled people become more socially included. I would like the project to go into a large viable part of DAD but largely independent of it and completely user-led, as well as more inclusive to all ages and disabilities'*

Gerry

*'I would like Young Leaders to do everything for other people like we have in the past and we are in the present and will in the future. What I like about Young Leaders is that we are working for everyone and everyone likes to hear about us. In the coming years I would like to actually see us on TV and I would like us to be celebrities and be famous. We are loving the future, so come on the future!'*

David G

*'I would like to see Young Leaders progressing further and looking towards the future I would love to see the Young Leaders have a new name and aiming towards any age and let any individuals in for the right reasons'*

Damian

**November 2011**

Meeting with SpLinter Group in Northumberland  
Deaf awareness training  
York Trip

*'I remember locking Damian and Abigail in Jail at the Castle Museum in York!'*  
Sammie

### **January 2012**

Darlington Borough Council Young people talking together event  
Meeting the Young Carers worker  
Internet Safety Training

### **March 2012**

Education Village visit  
DAD Stakeholder forum  
North East Young People's Forum and evaluation/celebration event

*'I remember being really happy that Cindy Hughes came to our evaluation event ....we had been trying to contact her for a long time!'*  
Sammie

### **April 2012**

Young People's transport forum

### **June 2012**

Carnival!

### **July 2012**

Independence Day party  
Investing in Children  
Young Leaders Facebook page!

*'I remember we got lots of new members at the Independence Day event!'*

Sammie

*'I remember when we were given the all clear for Facebook - it was a bit of an anticlimax and people weren't that bothered!'*

Damian

*'I love Facebook - when I can't get to Young Leaders I can still feel included in what's going on'*

Sammie

## **October 2012**

Young Inspector training

Children and Young People's collective meeting

## **November 2012**

DAD AGM, 'You said, we did'

Metro Centre trip

## What young leaders say about young leaders now

*'It teaches you to be more grown-up and get more used to meetings. It teaches you to be more social. I learned that disabled people don't always get a fair chance - like getting on the bus'*

Ruth

*'I've really got my confidence since I joined Young Leaders. I have progressed onto other opportunities and other projects through Young Leaders. We share ideas and opinions'*

James

*'We work as a team and support one another to make our voices heard. We have choice and control at Young Leaders. We have excellent support workers who make sure we are heard'*

Sammie

*'From the beginning we've been involved in every decision. We even employed the staff who support the group. We plan what we want to do, we talk to Rachel, Emma and David and say, 'can you do this please....' then we organise it!'*

Sammie

*'We had disability equality training from Alison John - this was REALLY important. We don't talk about disability, we don't label people. We don't have conversations about autism or cerebral palsy and I like that'*

Sammie

*'I think Young Leaders should get more money for the future because we deserve it!'*

Abigail

*'We're all very different in our own way'*

Damian

*'Young Leaders is my voice for what I want'*

Sonny

*'Young Leaders is about making friends. It has given me the strength and confidence to shout out about the things we believe in and the things that are important'*

Daniel

*'I found out about the Young Leaders project through my parents, who were both involved with DAD, and decided to get involved because I wanted to make some sort of tangible difference. I was one of the first members, and have been with the group since its inception on 19th August 2009.'*

*One of the things I am proud of with Young Leaders are the contacts it has made. Over the years, we have made contacts with the local MP, Jenny Chapman, as well as the Head of Darlington Borough Council, Bill Dixon. We have also participated in various conferences, particularly DisLIB conferences, at which I was able to speak. Through this, I also gained the opportunity to speak at a rally in London on 11th May 2011.*

*I think it is imperative that Young Leaders maintains its contacts with influential figures in Darlington. Through them, we can have influence necessary to make a tangible impact in Darlington. It is also important for Young Leaders to make*

*use of connections with other similar groups, as not only will these form a network that will work to Young Leader's advantage, but to many members of Young Leaders it will allow an opportunity to meet like minded people with whom they share something in common.'*

Gerry Hart

*'Young Leaders has come on since we started in 2009. We have the Facebook page, which has been really successful, gained more members and made us stronger as a group. We've talked to MPs, people in education and been a few places promoting the group and making connections with other groups'*

Chloe

# What other people say about Young Leaders

Over the next few pages there are quotes from people who know Young Leaders and worked with you over the past few years. They have shared their answers to your three big questions:

1. How do you know about young leaders — what has your involvement with them been?
2. What are the highlights for you of the group's work (in Darlington and beyond)?
3. What would you like to see Young Leaders do next?

## **How do you know about young leaders? What has your involvement been?**

*Andy Whittam - Darlington Borough Council*

I have always had a close working relationship with Darlington Association on Disability and when young leaders was set up the young people invited to a meeting. Within my role as Participation Officer for Darlington Borough Council, I facilitate the projects promoting the Voice of young people including Darlington Youth Partnership (DYP) and Darlington Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) I have met with Young Leaders with DYP and MYP on a number of times.

*Bill Dixon - Leader of Darlington Borough Council*

They took the initiative and invited me to meet with them in September 2011. I've met with the group formally and I've also met individual members of the group informally at other events and in other settings. I'm really pleased and proud to

know them — hopefully knowing me is helpful to them and knowing them is certainly helpful to me.

*Jenny Chapman MP*

I have been to meetings with the group and they have come to meet me. I've been able to find out from the group a bit about what they have been doing.

*Lauren Robinson - Darlington Association on Disability*

A member's meeting prioritised children and young people to receive the support they needed to ensure they had choice and control in their lives. That prompted me to complete a questionnaire that was circulated asking about young people's involvement in DAD and the support offered to children and young people, as a result a) I realised just how much potential DAD already had for involving young people and b) funding was then offered to DPULO's who wanted to pilot work to plan for the sustainability of their organisations by further encouraging the involvement of young disabled people.

We completed an application form and were thrilled to be invited to London for an interview, even more thrilled when we were chosen to be one of only two pilot sites originally, later extended to three. I am embarrassed to admit that, at that time, I thought it would take a lot of work supporting young people to understand the Social Model of Disability - how wrong I was! Literally in the first session or two not only did they understand it but were embracing it as something that totally made sense to them. We really owe ALLFIE (Tara Flood and Kevin Caulfield) a huge amount for giving us the opportunity to support the development of Young Leaders in DAD and everything they have achieved (and will go on to do).

Funding for the pilot meant that young people could come together and identify issues that affected them and that gave us the groundwork and the confidence to apply to the Equality and Human Rights Commission for the (almost three years of) funding that has supported the Young Leaders work to date.

*Eleanor Seed - Investing in Children*

I met with 8 of the young leaders group in October 2012 to re-evaluate their Investing in Children award.

**What are the highlights for you of the group's work, in Darlington and Beyond?**

*Andy Whittam*

Their involvement looking at raising the profile of young people with disability and the transport campaign at local and national levels.

*Lauren Robinson*

In Darlington ....Young Leaders successfully applying for employment in DAD and also having young people involved and presenting at the Annual General Meetings; their input has been invaluable, given a different perspective and given them a platform to influence the rest of the organisation, presenting what they do and setting the standard. (PS most embarrassing are those on-line films where we were interviewed!). Beyond Darlington – the presentations that the group gave to the national DisLIB event in Birmingham. The group really did Darlington proud and gave an excellent presentation on their work and demonstrated how young people could be supported to be actively involved in a DPULO. This was followed by a rousing political speech from Gerry that got a huge cheer

from the audience – I was sooo proud! I hope he remembers us when he is an MP!

*Bill Dixon*

When we met their questions to me were spot on and well thought out. They have taken part in several consultations and I wish there were more groups in society like them as it makes the process so much more valid; they are interested in making a real difference and not just in complaining. I know that they will not let us just pay lip-service to finding out the views of young disabled people — they are very clearly not interested in tokenism! I think I might have met a future Councillor in one of their members — he's certainly got the qualities you'd hope for in a leader.

*Eleanor Seed*

There is clear evidence that the Young Leaders are involved in dialogue that really does result in change. Things like speaking up about Council Cuts, getting together with other young people to find shared issues and promoting their work in local schools and colleges.

## **What would you like to see Young Leaders do next?**

*Andy Whittam*

To continue to develop as a group and look at how they can become more involved in the running of Darlington Association on Disability

*Lauren Robinson*

What's next? We are on track to at least have one young person as a DAD trustee which will be a fantastic outcome. It would be great if we can continue the balance of influencing externally and addressing issues affecting young disabled people and influencing internally how we work,

across all areas and all projects. Promoting the social model in a young persons way. Without young people we don't have a future for DPULO's

*Bill Dixon*

Clearly, I'd like to make sure they continue — they've made such a good start it would be a pity to loose their expertise and passion and Darlington would be the poorer without them. You need a really good sounding block whether you are consulting in times of plenty or when budgets are tight, that way we make sure that services and support really are what local people need. We might not always like what they say, but we need to hear it. The group is mature enough to make their own decisions about what they do next - I wish them well.

*Jenny Chapman*

I would like to see them take positions of responsibility, in the voluntary sector or elsewhere, and influence the services provided. And achieve their personal aims in life too.

## So what did Tricia think?

Getting to know Young Leaders has been great! I've been really impressed by how mature the group's thinking is - particularly in their understanding of the Social Model of disability (most adults I work with don't really get it!).

I think that the key things that the evaluation of Young Leaders have shown are:

- The power of self advocacy: The Young Leaders all talked about getting support from each other to speak up, about getting more confident and about taking control of their own lives and their own futures - as well as thinking about and feeling responsible for the future of all young disabled people
- The power of relationships: Young Leaders has made excellent links with local leaders and built some strong and valued relationships - people rely on them and they know this counts
- The power of together: Young Leaders know that young disabled people can have a stronger voice when they link with other young people, and in particular with non-disabled young people

### What next?

I think the sky is the limit! Young leaders have some clear ideas about where they want to be in a few years time and I have no doubt that they will get there. I think that there are 3 things that they could focus on:

1. Work to develop a programme of peer support beyond the Young Leaders group — young disabled people with particular experience supporting other young people. This could include focused support around self-directed

support and personal budgets, transition reviews and planning for life after school, work experience and finding a job

2. Give all the members of Young Leaders the chance to develop their own personal achievement profile - collecting and documenting the things that they have been involved in personally as part of the group. This will really help Young Leaders as they become adults
3. Work even harder to make the links to other groups of young people to show that 'together we are better'. The group has a strong understanding of the Social Model and they could teach other young people - particularly non-disabled young people. All young people are struggling with getting a job and finding somewhere of their own to live - Young Leaders could take the lead in bringing groups together to fight for the future!

**Thank you to all the Young Leaders and to Darlington Association on Disability for making me so welcome. Good luck for the future!**