

October 09

**ABERDEENSHIRE
DISABILITY
ACTION Ltd**
*Supporting the **individual***



ISSUE 20

Editorial

Welcome to the October edition of Aberdeenshire Disability Action's newsletter. It's incredible how quickly the time goes past and we are approaching Autumn already.

Those of you who are closely connected to Aberdeenshire Disability Action will know that due to financial constraints, the post of Executive Officer at ADA was made redundant. This meant that we had to say goodbye to Yvonne Macdonald who has been a stalwart of the organisation for 8 years. Her staff and volunteers were very sad to see her go. We wish Yvonne all the best for the future and success in any future enterprise.

At this point in time, our organisation is re-focussing on its aims and objectives mindful of budgetary controls and available staff. Our Disability Education Service continues to thrive and interestingly, as can be seen from an article published in Disability Now, bucks the trend as seen in England. It is reported there that primary schools need to do more to change the way children think about disabled people. We have press coverage of our visits to primary schools as seen in the Press & Journal article included overleaf.

Also included in this newsletter is a request from our Disability Information Service Development worker to our readers to promote the Information Service with presentations all over Aberdeenshire to anyone who may find them useful. There is news also of the follow up to our Holistic Housing Conference held in June.

Pupils learn about challenges faced by disabled people

Demonstration of how to manoeuvre a wheelchair — and what it's like to have sight problems

Published: 24/09/2009 The Press and Journal

A successful workshop to instil an awareness in north-east primary pupils of people with disabilities is likely to be repeated. Youngsters in class seven at Aberchirder Primary School took part in the session organised by Aberdeenshire Disability Action. They learned about the challenges faced by people in wheelchairs and those with sight problems. Class teacher Gemma Bruce said 17 pupils took part and added: "It highlighted physical disability and visual impairment. Two of the volunteers with the group were in wheelchairs and the pupils got a chance to manoeuvre the chairs through a door, turn round and come back again. They also learned how to dismantle and reassemble the chairs, to give an idea of the tasks faced by carers and others helping the disabled."

Pupils also donned special goggles to replicate how people with sight problems cope. Miss Bruce said: "Perhaps the biggest lesson the pupils learned was that people with disabilities should be treated as equals. It was a fun, exciting workshop."

Holistic Housing Follow Up

Following on the success of our recent Holistic Housing for People with Disabilities Conference, a new group has been formed to be known as the Social Housing Advisory Board with special interest in disability. The group is made up of representatives from Momentum, Disabled Persons Housing Service Aberdeenshire, Direct Payments Caledonia, and Aberdeenshire Disability Action.

The group has been formed to pursue initiatives and gain access to those who make decisions regarding the provision of housing for people with disabilities. Several avenues of advance have been identified, for example, inviting all of the housing managers in the area to a meeting, and arranging a meeting with occupational therapists, who have a say in how people with disabilities are assessed for housing needs. For further information please contact Stephen Leeman, Disability Information Service, on 01467 629909 or email him at stephenleeman@tiscali.co.uk.

The Emergency SMS Text Messaging Service

A new service is being trialed that lets deaf and speech-impaired people send a SMS message to the UK 999 service where it will be passed to the police, ambulance, fire rescue, or coastguard.

Simply by sending a SMS message to 999 you can call for help and the emergency services can reply to you.

You will need to register your mobile phone before using the trial emergency SMS service. This can be done online via the website www.emergencysms.org.uk or text 'Register' to 999.

How to use the emergency SMS service:

Step 1.

Register for the service before you are in an emergency situation – see above on how to register

Important: You need to register again if you change your telephone number or mobile supplier

Step 2.

When you need to send a SMS to 999 and you can not use the standard voice 999 service or the 18000 textphone service, create a SMS with the following information:

- | | |
|--------|--|
| What? | What is the problem |
| Which? | Which emergency service is needed – Ambulance, Coast Guard, Fire, Police |
| Where | Give the name of the road and town, if possible
Also give more information like
a) A house number
b) Or a shop name (for example The Post Office)
c) or a landmark (for example the church or the phone box).
Be as accurate as possible. |

Your Call

Your Call, Scotland's national freephone telephone counselling service for disabled people, has just been awarded £162,000 in a grant from the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland Self Management Fund.

Coordinator Ian Fuller says

"Since 'Your Call' started work in January 2008, the professionally qualified disabled volunteer counsellors who staff the service have offered over 800 hours of telephone counselling to 52 disabled people from all over Scotland. The recently completed evaluation of our first years' work provides an indication of how much our clients value the 'Your Call' service. We are grateful to the Long Term Conditions Alliance Scotland (LTCAS) for this funding, which will allow Your Call to expand its opening hours to include some evening work, to recruit more disabled counsellors, and to develop towards long-term sustainability of the service."

Your Call is currently open from 11am -3pm Monday-Wednesday on its appointment line 0808 801 03 62. It is operated by the Lothian Centre for Inclusive Living (LCiL).

The Self-Management Fund is funded by the Scottish Government with £4 million available over two years.

Regeneration Funds

Aberdeenshire Council has welcomed the announcement that two local projects will benefit from a share of national regeneration funds.

Councillors had agreed a plan to access cash for many areas of Aberdeenshire, but only two from sixteen applications have been successful.

Approximately £40m of the £60m total was awarded in this round with £436,500 being awarded to two projects in Aberdeenshire – Stonehaven Town Hall and a project in Fraserburgh to regenerate two eyesore buildings in the town centre.

The Stonehaven Town Hall bid was submitted by Aberdeenshire Council on behalf of community partners such as Stonehaven Town Partnership and stressed issues such as the need to make it comply with disability legislation.

A total of £297,000 will go to a project seeking to buy and repair two adjacent dilapidated properties in Fraserburgh's town centre.

Disability Information Service

It's Stephen here. I would like to take this opportunity to say that, as part of my job as Disability Information Service worker, I would like to see the profile of our organisation raised to its highest level. One of the ways in which this can be achieved is to arrange presentational talks to any interested groups. I visit the group, give a short talk and presentation, hand out leaflets and posters, and take any questions.

It is absolutely essential that as many groups, as many people as possible, hear about Aberdeenshire Disability Action, who we are and what we do, and what the Disability Information can do for them.

It is with that intention that I would ask each one of you to think of at least one organisation or group who would be interested in such a presentation, and to let me have their details.

The more people who spread the word, the more people will hear about us and the work that we do. We cannot grow unless people know about us, know we are here, and know what we do. My email address is stephenleeman@tiscali.co.uk or you can phone on 01467 629909.

A2B Bus Service

Users of Aberdeenshire Council's A2B dial-a-bus service have praised the helpfulness of drivers in a recent review of the service.

The dial-a-bus services, the first of which was established in Alford in 2004, provide local door to door transport for 11 areas of Aberdeenshire.

Earlier this year, 187 service users took part in a council survey to gauge views on the A2B services and the council's travel dispatch centre.

Passengers were asked to consider a range of factors, including operating hours and area, service reliability and availability, fares, vehicle cleanliness and comfort, and ease of access to vehicles, and comfort and the helpfulness of drivers.

A total of 94% of respondents rated the helpfulness of drivers as 'very good', with a further 6% rating them as 'good'. And the service as a whole was rated as 'very good' by 90% of those surveyed, and as 'good' by the remaining 10%.

In every aspect of the service offered, over 90% of the respondents gave a good or very good rating. Passengers were asked to consider:

- Operating hours
- The operating area
- Service reliability
- Service availability
- Fares
- Cleanliness
- Ease of access to the vehicle
- Comfort
- Helpfulness of the driver

Passengers were asked to compare the A2B service with other timetabled services operating in their area; of those who responded 99% preferred the A2B service.

Anyone wishing to enquire about the A2B dial-a-bus can phone the booking hot-line on 01224 665599 between 9.30am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday.

Leaflets for each area service are also available here at ADA as part of Disability Information Service.

New library direct service in Garioch

Local libraries across Garioch have launched a new service to deliver books, DVDs and more to customers in the community who cannot make the journey to the library themselves.

Cultural services manager Helen Dewar said: "The service will be trialled in Garioch before being rolled out across Aberdeenshire.

It's a free delivery service available to residents of Aberdeenshire who are temporarily or permanently confined to their home due to disability, infirmity, illness, or care for someone affected by these conditions and can't get out of the house to a library easily.

"So far the service is going well and customers have been delighted to receive their monthly deliveries, tailored to their interests and needs."

The library service has been working in partnership with the WRVS, local health workers, social work staff at Aberdeenshire Council, church ministers and the Garioch Community Partnership Group to establish the service.

Findings from a recent 'Ageing Well' conference undertaken by Aberdeenshire Council highlighted that many older people are unaware of library services and resources available to them.

These include books as well as multi media resources; talking books, music CDs, DVDs and large print books – resources equally suited to the needs of the sight impaired and the frailer elderly

Local branch staff at Inverurie, Kemnay, Kintore, Newmachar, Westhill and Insh libraries have been delivering bags of resources in the local towns and villages.

Meldrum and Turriff libraries have also started to deliver resources and once reviewed the project will be rolled out to all libraries across Aberdeenshire.



Library Direct

Aberdeenshire's housebound library service

Who is it for?

This is a **free** delivery service available to all residents of Aberdeenshire who are temporarily or permanently confined to their home due to:

- Disability
- Infirmity
- Illness
- Being the carer of someone affected by these conditions

What can you borrow?

- Books
- Talking books
- Music CDs
- DVDs

If you or someone you know would like to be considered for this service or you would like to volunteer to deliver items to our customers contact your local library or phone **01651 872707** for an Information Pack and Application Form.

Workshop in Ellon

The Formartine Local Community Planning Group, in partnership with Housing and Social Work, is to hold a workshop on Wednesday, 7 October 2009 from 9.45 am - 3.45 pm at The Kirk Centre, Ellon to find out whether there are actions providers of services can take that will improve opportunities for people with mental illness, learning disability or personality disorder.

This is the second of a series of six workshops to be held across the shire during 2009 and will be facilitated by Kevin Hutchens (Social Worker - Community Development Learning Disabilities) using the templates recommended by "With Inclusion in Mind", a Government paper which offers guidance to Local Authorities on their duties under the Mental Health Act 2003. The format used will make a significant contribution towards evidencing attainment of the associated National and Local outcomes.

Users of services have been invited to the session and it is anticipated that the morning sessions will draw out their positive and negative experiences and the afternoon sessions will look at the positives from the morning and how we might "celebrate" them and how we might strengthen the negatives. We hope the session will generate suggestions for improved, inclusive services and provide a baseline assessment of some of the most relevant, practical aspects of inclusion in Formartine.

The subject areas to be covered in the workshops include:

Communities - including volunteering; anti-social behaviour; community safety; attitude of shop keepers, bus drivers etc; befriending schemes; access to all amenities, faith groups

Lifelong Learning - transition from school; further/higher education; educational inclusion; marketing materials reflecting need

Housing & Social Care Services - applying for housing; housing allocation; service provision for over 65 years; self-help groups; support to take risks; use of Direct Payments

Workshop in Ellon (contd)

Arts & Culture - cultural inclusion; timing of activities; joining wider groups; use of libraries; identifying what works

As you will see issues are likely to be raised that are relevant to you and your organisation. Therefore an invitation has been extended to you or your representative to attend the workshops either all day or for the morning or afternoon session only. Please let Sarah Rennie at Formartine Area Office (tel no. 01358 726455) (email sarah.rennie@aberdeenshire.gov.uk) know whether or not you or a representative would like to attend and if you are joining us for lunch, if you have any special dietary requirements.

If you would like any further information relating to the workshops please contact Jill Sowden, Garioch Community Planning Officer 01467 628338.

Schoolkids need lessons in disability

Primary schools need to do more to change the way children think about disabled people, according to new research from the University of Leeds.

The study found that typical misconceptions held by children include disabled people are not able to work, they are unlikely to have a partner or get married, disabilities are passed onto children and disabled people have tragic lives, often cut short by their impairment.

The research also found that learning materials, particularly children's books, frequently reinforce those stereotypes.

Researchers talked to groups of children in year two (aged 6-7) and year six (aged 10-11) in six schools as well as sending out questionnaires to 500 primary schools. Quotes from children that answered the questionnaire revealed that some feel disabled people wouldn't get a boyfriend or girlfriend because "people think they're ugly" and one is quoted as saying "disabled people can't work. They have to go in the house and just sit down. And they can watch TV."

Schoolkids need lessons in disability (contd)

Dr Angharad Beckett, leader of the study and a lecturer at Leeds University, said: "We looked at what non-disabled children know about the lives of disabled people, and what primary schools were doing to tackle misconceptions about disability. We found that although some schools are tackling this issue, many schools are doing very little, sometimes nothing."

She added: "As of December 2007 all primary schools in England were supposed to have a Disability Equality Scheme in place that, amongst other things, included the school's plan to promote positive attitudes towards disabled people. Only 30% of the schools surveyed actually had a plan in place that included that dimension".

A Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) spokesman said: "All schools have a duty under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 to promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and their peers, eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote positive attitudes towards disabled people.

"This is vital so that schools can challenge any perceived attitudes towards disabled people and receive the support they need to help ensure that all children are able to fulfill their potential. The DCSF are working hard with organisations such as Mencap and the National Aids Trust, as well as National Strategies, to raise awareness further amongst schools of their duties," he added.

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Please note that ADA does not necessarily endorse or subscribe to any of the items included or opinions expressed in the newsletter.

This publication available in alternative format on request.

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