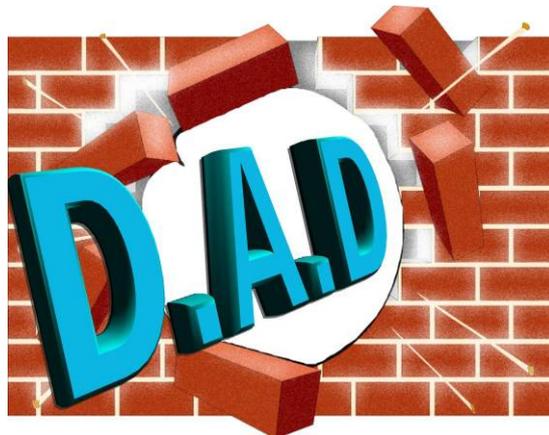


# **Darlington Association on Disability**

**Registered Charity 1125848**



**Breaking through Barriers**

**Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for  
the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011 to 30<sup>th</sup> March 2012**

**Darlington Association on Disability is an organisation led by disabled people, which exists to promote independence and choice.**

**DAD supports disabled people and carers through the provision of services, support and information and by tackling issues affecting disabled people both locally and nationally.**

## Chairman's report 2011 - 2012

Disabled people have been going through extremely difficult times. The demand on our services has increased immensely at a time when disability organisations like Darlington Association on Disability are finding themselves in a more competitive financial arena. The demand for funding has increased with fewer funders in a position to meet that demand. I can not overstate how appreciative I am to all our financial supporters, especially in these times of uncertainty, and offer them my sincere thanks.

As a disability organisation led by disabled people we recognise the importance of disabled people being involved in decisions that affect them and their carers. To that end we have actively supported and encouraged disabled people to be involved in consultation locally and nationally. To strengthen disabled peoples input into Darlington Association on Disability we setup our Stakeholder Forum. The Stakeholder Forum is to help Darlington Association on Disability be as user led as possible. Though it is a non-decision making forum it offers opportunities to bring new ideas and influence the Trustees and the Senior Management Team. I would like to acknowledge the role played by staff and volunteers in making the Stakeholder Forum a success and thank them for their loyalty and dedication to Darlington Association on Disability and enabling disabled people to participate fully as equal citizens.

I express my extreme gratitude to our senior managers Tracey Roberts and Rosemary Berks, our Chief Executive Lauren Robinson and Assistant Chief Executive Jacki Hiles who have all done an outstanding job by continuing to make Darlington Association on Disability an organisation envied by other towns, and I thank them all.

Finally, I am immensely grateful to my fellow trustees, for their continued hard work and commitment to Darlington Association on Disability.

# Advocacy

DAD supports disabled people and carers to say what they want, secure their rights and get services that they need. DAD also encourages self-advocacy.

Examples of our work in this area include:

- Supporting people to challenge instances of discrimination; cases include enabling someone to challenge a Housing Association's assessment policies which resulted in the Association changing its policies, and assisting a number of people to take further action when complaints against a local transport provider went unresolved
- Supporting Darlington's People's Parliament, a self-advocacy group for people with learning difficulties. As well as being involved in consultations on budget cuts, commissioning strategies and the development of a website, members have delivered workshops, training and awareness-raising events on Self Advocacy, Hate Crime and bullying.
- Encouraging people at the Independent Living Hub to improve skills such as confidence building as a step towards using their experience positively.
- Working with disabled people and parents of disabled children to make sure their views are included in the assessment process.
- Supporting people to challenge financial decisions made during the assessment process which impact on their ability to live independently.

'Advocacy is about enabling every person to have a voice of their own and ensuring that they are not excluded because they do not express their views in ways that people understand' (A voice of their own, BILD, 2006)

## Access

DAD brings disabled people together to improve access for disabled people by addressing barriers created by both the physical and attitudinal environment. It does this by promoting good practice around access issues, and by working with planners and providers to improve access to services. DAD also advises public bodies how to carry out the duties imposed on them by the Equality Act.

Examples of our work in this area include:

- Consulting with architects to develop plans for the proposed new Department store in Crown Street.
- Working with Borough Council staff to create a lowered counter at the Dolphin Centre reception, making it accessible to wheelchair users.
- Monitoring the frequency and sites of goods and A Boards on the pavement, and supporting the Council to enforce regulations to keep pavements clear.
- Supporting the implementation of the Disability Equality Duty by scrutinising Impact Assessment documentation
  - Developing an Accessible Taxi list with the Darlington Borough Council Tax Licensing Department.

## Campaigning

DAD is a non-political organisation; however it actively campaigns on issues which affect the lives of disabled people, families with disabled children and carers. DAD listens to its members and tries to influence decisions that are being made at a local and national level.

Some examples of our work in this area are:

- Joining national campaigns led by organisation such as the Alliance for Inclusive Education and Scope on a range of topics, including changes to the Benefits system and proposals to change Special educational Needs (SEN) provision
- Gathering evidence and making the Council and other public bodies aware of the impact of the cuts on disabled people and carers.
- Submitting consultation responses where the Government calls for evidence on issues such as welfare reforms
- Supporting young people to speak out about issues that affect them. This has included encouraging one member of the Young Leaders group, after speaking publicly at a Disability LIB (Listen, Include, Build) event, to go on to speak to 5,000 campaigners on Victoria Embankment in London about the government's cutbacks in such areas as Education Maintenance Allowance and the impact on young disabled people.
- Working with other organisations on the A2B campaign which aims to fight the discrimination towards disabled passengers by lobbying Parliament for better transport regulation
- Working closely with other independent carer services across Tees Valley to create a media campaign designed to raise awareness of the services available to carers. This has involved a TV and radio campaign, and posters and leaflets, which were widely distributed across the region.

## Peer Support

DAD offers opportunities for disabled people of all ages and carers to learn from one another, and to work together to tackle issues. This is called peer support.

Examples of our work include:

- Bringing people who use Direct Payments together for peer support in a regular monthly group meeting, enabling them to share experiences and influence service development.
- Recruiting young disabled people as volunteers on DAD's playschemes, enabling them to develop skills as peer mentors and providing disabled children with positive role models.
- Enabling members of the Dimensions (now the Independent Living Hub) to support each other to build confidence and find solutions to barriers which impact on their independent living.
- Facilitating a number of groups for carers, who are often isolated by their caring role. Bringing people with similar experiences together, such as male carers, enables members to share their stories, gather valuable information and maintain their own health and wellbeing in a supportive environment
- Running a Young Leaders group which enables young disabled people aged 14-25 to develop confidence and skills and gives young people a voice

## User Led

DAD is a user led organisation (ULO) is an organisation that is run and controlled by people who use services, including disabled people, mental health service users, people with learning difficulties, their families and carers. (Definition provided by the Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2009)

This is fundamental to the way that DAD works, as it-:

- Retains a commitment to being user-led, by enabling DAD to develop from a small charity led by disabled people, to a company limited by guarantee with a Board of Trustees, the majority of who are disabled people, who direct the work of DAD.
- Commits us to develop policies which actively support the recruitment and retention of disabled people as staff and volunteers
- Encourages us to work with young people to produce leaders of the future; supporting them to get involved at all levels within DAD – as volunteers, staff and hopefully in the future as trustees.
- Facilitated the development of a regular Stakeholder Forum where any member of DAD can raise issues of concern and consulting widely with our members
- Involves disabled people in all recruitment and selection decisions. Two Young Leaders were involved in the interviewing and appointing of new staff members to the DASH Playscheme. Both Young Leaders fully participated in the process and offered insightful comments during the process.

“A ULO is an organisation based on clear values of independence, involvement and peer support. Unlike other voluntary sector organisations, service users control the organisation. ULOs are uniquely identified by their knowledge, which is based on direct, lived experience. These three criteria define a ULO” (Shaping Our Lives 2009).

## Co-production

DAD supports and encourages co-production, ensuring that disabled people and carers are involved fully and at the earliest possible opportunity when policies or services are being developed.

Co-production refers to a way of working where decision-makers and disabled people and / or carers work together to make a decision or develop a service which works for everyone. Co-production is built on the principle that those who are affected by a service are best placed to help design it.

Examples of co-production include:

- Supporting carers who sit on the Carers Strategy Steering Group, which determines how services for carers are developed and delivered in Darlington
- Working with the People's Parliament to enable people with learning difficulties to develop skills which they can use to co-produce local services.
- Developing and supporting a Citizen Experts model, which contributed to disability impact assessments, and supported other disabled people and carers around the issues of Personalisation. Four Citizen Experts were involved in recruiting for Darlington Borough Council Life Stages Team Manager posts.
- Developing a Volunteer Handbook for DAD
- Championing the Co-production model with Darlington Borough Council as a way to effectively develop personalisation locally
- Ensuring that parents of disabled children have opportunities to influence the development of the local Special educational needs (SEN) Pathfinder programme

## Training

DAD organises and offers training on a wide range of topics to practitioners and advisers, voluntary sector organisations, disabled people and carers.

Examples of training during the year include:

- Support planning training, including a session at Mind co-facilitated by Robin Murray-Neill (national trainer) and with peer support by Citizen Experts, was followed by training events at Age UK and other venues to provide disabled people with the skills and knowledge to enable them to organise their own self-directed support.
- Equality and Diversity NVQ level 2 was successfully completed by several staff and volunteers across DAD including members of the Independent Living Hub.
- A workshop on rights under the Equality Act 2010 was delivered to Young Leaders.
- Behaviour and Communication training was delivered to external childcare providers in Darlington.
- Carers Awareness training was provided to staff groups based at Darlington Memorial Hospital and GP surgeries
- The Independent Living Hub and Mentoring for Independence Project developed training in Independent Living Skills, including Cooking, Money Management, Travel Training and Personal Care.
- Members of the People's Parliament attended a two day Skills for People course in Sunderland, which trained the group members to become Health Checkers, enabling them to carry out Health Checks at GP surgeries in Darlington.
- An Awareness training session on assisting with a manual wheelchair was delivered for volunteers with the Town Mission

## Personal Budgets and Direct Payments

DAD is committed to disabled people, parents and carers having more choice and control over the assessed services they receive. DAD offers information, advice and support to people to explore and use Personal Budgets, Direct Payments and Personal Health Budgets. Staff can also assist with the self-assessment process and support planning.

Some examples of our work are:

- Working with the Local Authority Pathfinder Pilot towards a single assessment process for disabled children and young people, which includes support planning.
- Developing a peer mentoring service which enables people with experience of Direct Payments and Personal Budgets to support others
- Supporting a number of people to have their financial contribution disability related expenditure reviewed. As a result, several people have had their contribution reduced.
- Enabling disabled people and carers to explore imaginative and cost effective ways to receive assessed services. As an example one young person with a learning disability was supported to get their support plan agreed which included innovative ways for the young person to be supported in voluntary work and developing a micro-enterprise.
- Launching the Direct Payments Toolkit which provides people with information about Direct Payments and Personalisation in accessible formats.

“I live 170 miles away from my parents so the Direct Payment support service is invaluable as they would find it hard to manage the direct payment scheme.”

## Choice, Control, Flexibility and Inclusion

As a Centre for Independent Living (CIL) DAD provides unique practical services which enable disabled people and carers gain and maintain control over their life. People using DAD have access to a wide range of support, including personal assistance, person centred support services, information and advice, co-production and training.

Some examples of our work in this area include:

- Supporting disabled people to devise Personal Development Plans, including community involvement, education, training, leisure and employment
- Developing an Outreach service so that people can receive support to access independent living, community and leisure services. Dimensions has also expanded to include support at evenings and weekends.
- Increasing the range of equipment available through Shopmobility
- Delivering a range of holiday activities through DASH playschemes. This has included the development of close working relationships with a nursery and out of school provider, sharing premises and planning joint activities.
- Operating a Personal Assistants Register and a Bank of Support Workers for people wanting to recruit a PA with their Direct Payment.
- Working together to add value to the service we provide. Examples include-
  - jointly supporting a family through the Direct Payments Support Service and Carers Support Service with the assessment and care planning processes
  - Supporting someone with a visual impairment to purchase a laptop from her Direct Payment contingency fund with additional support from the Information Service to apply successfully for funds to purchase appropriate software.
  - Providing an Information service alongside Shopmobility to enable first time customers to explore other sources of support.

## Information and Advice

DAD provides comprehensive, up to date information and advice on a wide range of topics. The organisation also supports disabled people and carers to make informed choices and increase independence through access to disability rights based information.

Some examples of our work in this area are:

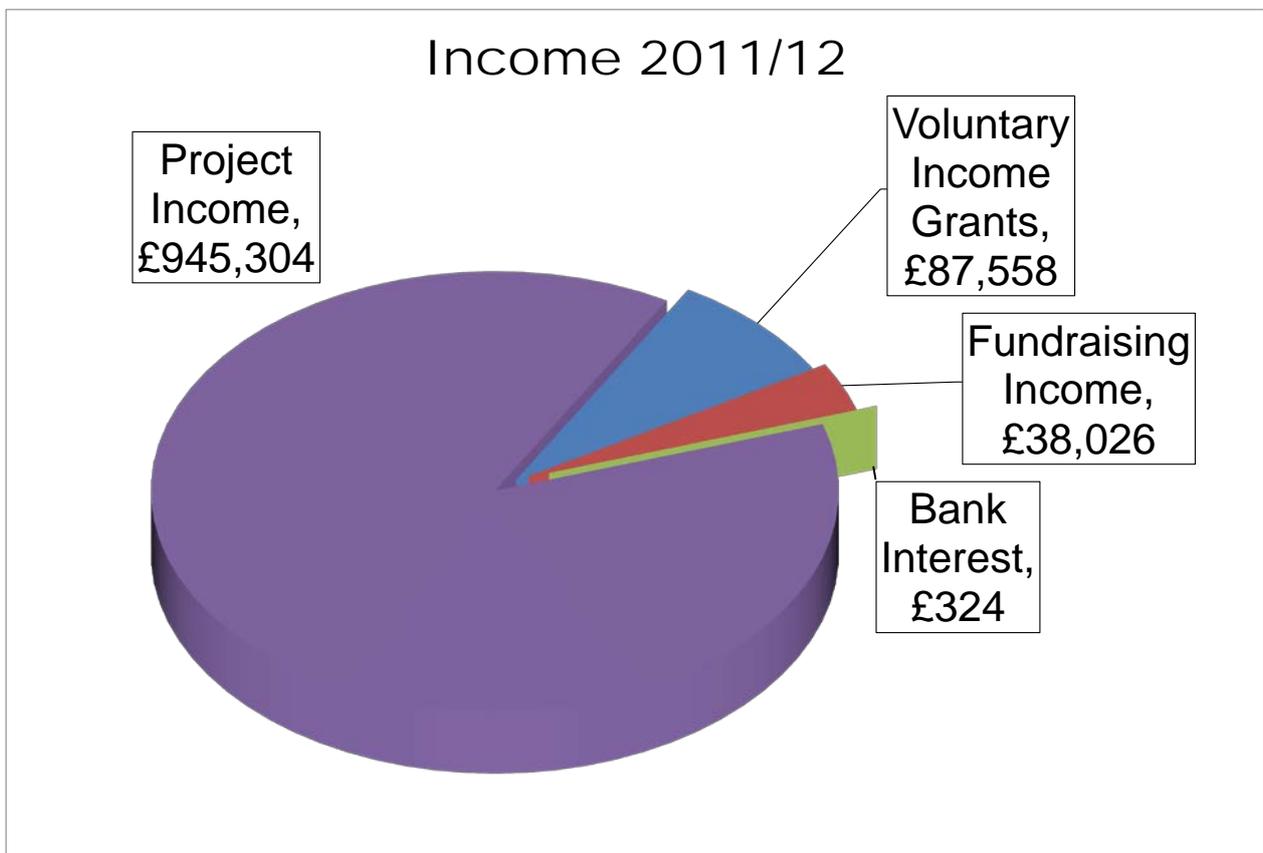
- Enabling several disabled people through the Equal Access project to get free high quality specialist legal advice about the judicial review process, leading to them gaining knowledge about their rights and how to challenge decisions.
- Working with other local services to deliver information and advice at community events throughout the Borough
- Guiding people through the support plan process to ensure that disabled people and carers are fully involved in the creation of their plan.
- Broadening opportunities for carers to seek support by providing Information Boards in all GP surgeries and in several locations at Darlington Memorial hospital.
- Providing rights based information and advice to disabled people and carers on a wide range of topics including education, employment and social care
- Supporting people to access information in suitable formats; for example in response to a request the Information service now stocks standard, large print and audio versions of the Blue Badge guide to ensure they can be offered directly to customers with specific access requirements.

### Financial Summary 2011/2012

The following figures are taken from the Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012 for Darlington Association on Disability.

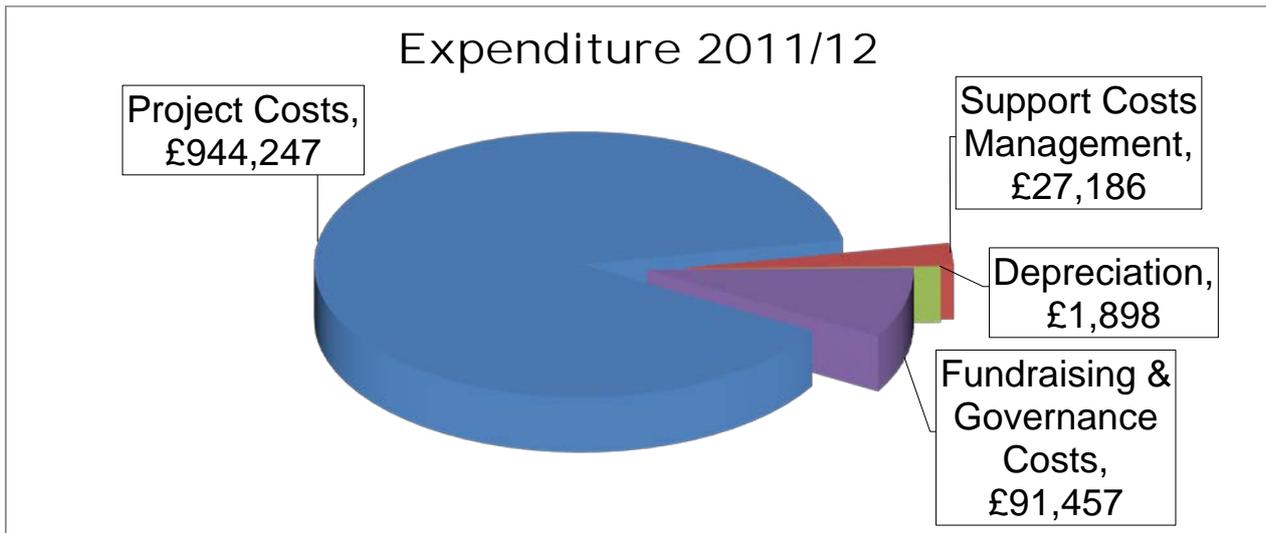
The following graph shows the breakdown of the Total Income £1,071,212 split into:

Project Income of £945,304; Voluntary Income Grants of £87,558; Fundraising Income of £38,026; Bank Income of £324.



## Financial Information

The following graph shows a breakdown of the Total Expenditure £1,064,788 split into:  
Project Costs of £944,247; Fundraising & Governance Costs of £91,457;  
Support Costs Management of £27,186; Depreciation of £1,898



DAD would like to thank our funders and partners for their continued support:

Aiming High for Disabled Children, Capacity Builders, Changemakers, Children in Need, Coleridge College, Darlington Borough Council, Darlington Primary Care Trust, Department for Education, Durham County Council, Equality and Human Rights Commission, Evolution, Future Jobs Fund, Investing in Children, Life Stage Team, New College Durham, Northern Rock, Parent Forum, Respite Association, Scope, Sunderland University, Tees Valley YMCA, The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE), The Big Lottery, The Home Office, and Transition Fund.

## DAD Services

**Access Interest Group** brings disabled people together to improve access for disabled people by addressing physical and attitudinal barriers.

**Carers' Support Service** provides free information and advice to anyone providing support to a family member, friend or neighbour because of age, illness or impairment.

**Children and Young People's Service** provides inclusive and accessible play and leisure opportunities and support. It runs **DASH** inclusive play and leisure sessions during holidays for disabled and non-disabled children between the ages of 3 to 16 years.

**Direct Payments Support Service** provides a range of support about Direct Payments; one way to get more choice and control over social care support.

**Information Service** provides disability information and advice on options.

**Shopmobility Service** provides the loan of manual and electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters in Darlington Town Centre for anyone with a mobility impairment.

**Volunteer Project** recruits and supports volunteers to work in DAD and other organisations.

**Independent Living Hub** offers support to disabled people to increase self confidence; to identify and work towards personal goals. It also offers opportunities to meet new people, peer support and take part in a range of social activities.

**Stronger Voices... Strong Support** for disabled people who have used personal budgets to support others through advice and guidance, workshops, peer support and mentors.

**Equal Access to Information and Advice Project** supports disabled people and carers to make informed choices and increase independence through access to information about rights.