

DAN News

Issue 7 Spring 2008

Plymouth
Disability Action Network

DAN

Introducing new DAN Development Worker

My name is Chris Wetherill and I started as the DAN development worker on 3 March this year. My post is jointly funded by Plymouth City Council, the Primary Care Trust and Plymouth Hospital Trust. I am employed for seventeen and a half hours a week.

My work will include encouraging new members to join the DAN as well as producing the DAN newsletter. Volunteers are needed to help write it!

One of my key roles will be to develop a consultation and participation framework so that the DAN members can be more closely involved in local decision-making.

My background is 25 years of Community Development working with all sorts of people including a group of older people who wanted their own computer project.

You can contact me at the Guild in the following ways:

Phone 01752 201766
Fax 01752 202214
Email chris@plymouthguild.org.uk

New home for Hearing and Sight Centre

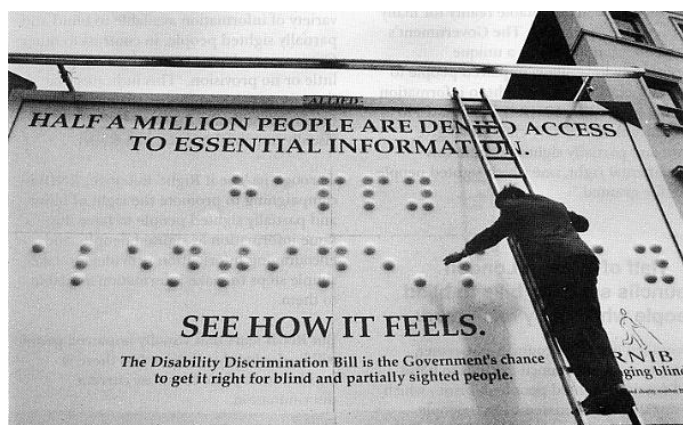
After many years at Pounds House, HAS can now be found at the Guild's offices in Buckwell Street.

"We are very pleased to welcome HAS and look forward to working together for the benefit of our many users," said George Plenderleith, Director of Plymouth Guild.

There is a range of services offered by HAS including equipment, support, Tinnitus group, awareness training and computer coaching.

Contact HAS in the following ways:

Phone	01752 201766
Textphone	01752 241087
Fax	01752 202214
SMS text only	07792 833929
Email	has@hascentre.org.uk



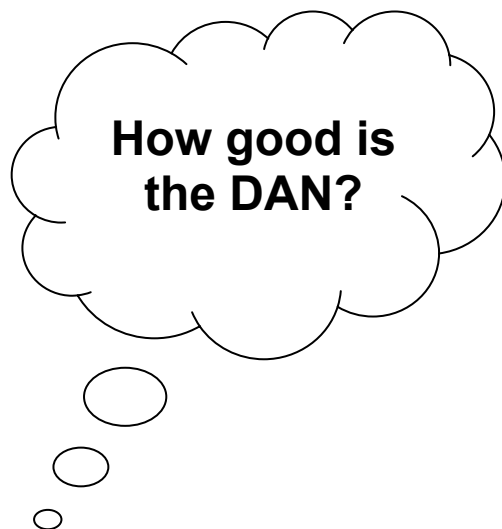
DAN THOUGHTS AND WISHES

During the April meeting, DAN members spent some time discussing what the network meant to them. A lot of ideas were aired about how to improve DAN meetings and what needs to happen to further develop individual members and the network itself.

DAN meetings offer members peer support and understanding, somewhere to share feelings and ideas about disability. Getting information, help and support reduces feelings of isolation. There is always the opportunity for socialising, learning from each other and realising that the DAN can influence attitudes and decisions.

There were some things that members felt needed improvement such as deaf awareness and the development of a membership pack. Members acknowledged that the third Thursday afternoon of every month for meetings didn't suit everyone. There was also interest in moving the venue of the meetings around the city.

DAN members were proud that their group was the first to hear about new developments. It was agreed that monthly meetings would alternate between invited speakers and the development of members and the network as a whole.



There was a desire to raise awareness about the Access Sub-Group and some discussion about how that could be achieved.

DAN members wanted to see the idea of a Disability Festival continued and perhaps the making of a DVD to explain the DAN and what it does.

Expectations about the DAN Development Worker and what the post should do included the empowerment of members, an advocate for the DAN and disability issues generally.

DAN members were asked what they could do to help develop the network. Members suggested speaking up at meetings, getting involved where they could, skills mapping, one to one support, working on the newsletters and becoming speakers in their own right.

There was discussion about accessible venues around the city with a list of suggestions.

When asked where the DAN should be in twelve months time, members said they would like:

- To increase membership
- Have more support
- Have a festival
- Become more powerful
- Increase recognition of the network and achieve regular funding
- Hope that information and training would be available to support the development of the DAN.

Got any thoughts? Please let Chris know!

GOODBYE GEORGINA

Georgina Thompson worked at Plymouth Guild in the Disability Information & Advice Centre (DIAC) from January 2005 until May 2008. She provided advice and guidance to disabled people about employment, training and access. This work raised awareness of disability issues with employers, encouraging the employment and retention of disabled people.

Georgina provided a great deal of support to the DAN and its members as Secretary. It is difficult to do her justice in this short piece. She played a key role in the development of the Network and the DAN would not be as strong as it is today without her hard work. This work was over and above her job description but she was committed to developing the DAN and felt it was an important part of her work at DIAC.

Georgina will be fondly remembered for her cheerful attitude to all the work we gave her and her 'can do' approach. As DAN Chair I cannot thank her enough for her efficient support.

Unfortunately, funding from Jobcentre Plus and the Learning & Skills Council ended in March 2008. Without alternative funding to continue her employment and training work, very sadly, Georgina was made redundant in May. I know that anyone who worked with her will be wishing her luck for the great future that she deserves.

Dawn Clarke
DAN Chair

What is Ouch?

Ouch is a website from the BBC that reflects the lives and experiences of disabled people. It has regular columns, features, quizzes, a monthly near-cult podcast, a blog or two and a community messageboard amongst other stuff. All contributors, well, 99% of them, are disabled - and Ouch's editorial team is rather wonky and deserve big fat special diversity badges too.

What is Equality South West?

Equality South West (ESW) is a registered charity and England's first regional equality and diversity body. We are pleased to be supported by a range of key strategic organisations including: the South West Regional Development Agency, the Government Office for the South West, the South West Regional Assembly, South West Forum and the South West Trade Union Congress.

<http://www.equalitysouthwest.org.uk/index.html>



FUTURE DAN MEETINGS

Thursday 19th June

Thursday 17 July

No August meeting

Thursday 18 September

Thursday 16 October

Thursday 20 November

No formal meeting in December

All meetings run from 2pm to 4pm

**Please check agendas
for venues**

or phone Chris on 01752 201766

Prejudice is a burden that confuses the past, threatens the future and renders the present inaccessible.

Maya Angelou

Disclaimer

Although every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct at the time of going to publication, Plymouth Guild will accept no responsibility for the accuracy of text. Views expressed in articles in the DAN News are not necessarily those held by Plymouth Guild.

If you require this newsletter in a different format, please contact Chris.

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