



BCM ADP, London WC1N 3XX

Tel/Fax: 01204 431638

Email: adp.admin@ntlworld.com

Registered in England and Wales as a charitable company limited by guarantee.

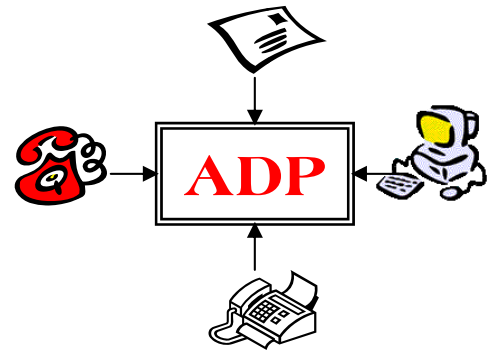
Registered Address: 16 Aintree Drive, Cowplain, Hampshire, PO7 8NG

---

## Annual Report 2008

### Contact with the ADP

The ADP has, in the year 2008, handled 6435 enquiries which represents a phenomenal increase of 90%. These are dealt with by part-time staff and amount to more than 100 enquiries in one week (our Development Officer works only 25 hours a week).



Additionally, as the ADP has been operated on a budget of £51,000 from October 2007 to March 2009, the management of resources in the ADP are proving to be highly cost effective. Copies of the accounts for the ADP are available on request from the ADP office.

The ADP is and remains a professional organisation of and for disabled people to provide information, advice and support on all career issues. The vast increase in the volume of enquiries represents a much broader spectrum of issues and widely felt needs. The ADP provides free advice and support to each enquiry. But, it is stressed that the ADP considers that the public perception of disability as a burden can be very mistaken, that disabled people are greatly underrated and can be, with a suitable scale of support, a valuable asset to society.

As well as the appendix, showing more detailed examples of the types of enquiries, a brief overview of the enquiries received has been broken down to show the months in which they were received, as well as the nature of enquirers' requests. The table of enquiries follows:

	Jan to Mar	Apr to June	Jul to Sep	Oct to Dec
Individuals	631	492	463	784
Organisations	697	556	564	728
Membership and Administration	352	310	354	505

The answerphone only service continues to be effective, although in peak periods, the answerphone has become full. Generally, regular checking, notation and deletion of messages ensures that callers are able to leave a message, although there have been a few occasions when unfortunately the answerphone has been full.

Additionally, due to a long period of sick leave and a gradual return to work, we had to make the decision to suspend the answerphone service, as the Development Officer was unable to talk to enquirers. Emails were forwarded to the Chair and Executive Committee, but the enquiry figures for June, July and August were significantly reduced.

In terms of the nature of enquiries, we still receive many general requests for advice and information about disclosure of impairments, career options and job hunting tips. Additionally, this year has seen a further rise in the number of enquiries in relation to benefits and work. Again, it has been noted that many individuals contacted us for advice in relation to employment or self employment and any potential impact upon Incapacity Benefit, Disability Living Allowance and contributions towards personal support through the Direct Payments or Independent Living Funds.

Furthermore, the introduction of the Employment and Support Allowance in October 2008 seems to have created further worry and confusion for many disabled individuals. Indeed, there was an influx of calls relating to how the introduction of Employment and Support Allowance would impact on those

already in receipt of Incapacity Benefit following various reports in the media.

We are increasingly being asked by disabled people, who want to return to work, if they will be better off financially. This is worrying as despite contact with various agencies before coming to the ADP, few disabled people with aspirations to return to work seem to know about Working Tax Credit. Moreover, we often inform people about "permitted work" and "linking rules" to reduce their fear of trying work and of being unable to return to benefits if ventures into employment, and particularly self employment, are not successful.

Enquiries about poor employment practices and potential discrimination by employers remain at very high levels. Requests for names of disabled solicitors who specialise in disability issues, including Community Care, benefits and discrimination are therefore still evident in our enquiries. However, we are also being contacted by very many people who feel that they need to consider alternatives to employment or a change in career purely because they have been told that they have developed an impairment. This suggests that people are still not receiving the appropriate information about support services or schemes to enable them to stay in employment as a disabled person.

We have also, as always, received a number of enquiries about the Access to Work Programme and have supported employed and self employed individuals through every stage of the process, from informing them of the Programme and providing contact information, through to the provision of support to challenge an inappropriate decision. To this end, we have been able to ensure that a number of disabled people are able to access the programme in order that they can begin and maintain work, with appropriate support and equipment. Furthermore, we have contributed to a number of forums in relation to the Access to Work Programme and have been able to provide evidence about some of the experiences of our members and enquirers in order to improve the service.

There has been a prolific increase, this year, in our work with disabled people who want to run their own business. We have distributed our

Resource Guide Pack, "Setting up in business? A Resource Guide for disabled people and their advisors", along with the accompanying Directory of Support, to individuals, statutory and voluntary organisations, social work departments, hospitals, educational establishments and business support agencies. Additionally, we have provided in-depth support to very many disabled people in the process of setting up and maintaining a business. Again, unfortunately, many of the individuals who approach us have already had contact with various other agencies and have not always been supported appropriately. However, after reading the Guide Pack and seeking further advice or information from the ADP, they appear to be much better equipped to start up and maintain successful enterprises.

There has also been an increase in referrals from social workers, Connexions services, University Careers Services and occupational therapy departments. This may be attributed to our greater presence on websites, such as the Directgov site, but could also be due to the fact that there has been much research to support the fact that employment and self employment not only have financial benefit to disabled people, but can also improve self esteem and general health.

The diversity of contact with organisations continues to be reflected in the types of organisations approaching the ADP and the requests received. We have been contacted by organisations of disabled people, impairment specific organisations, statutory authorities, educational establishments, the private sector, the media, the voluntary sector, organisations who offer support into employment and various consultants working on behalf of organisations. Requests for information included support on employment or educational issues; support with diversity policies; support with staff training; questionnaire or interview responses; policy and practice guidance; requests for the ADP to be represented at events, on various committees or strategic boards and media requests for ADP's input. We have also had numerous requests to join consortiums and meet with European agencies working on employment opportunities for disabled people. Unfortunately, due to the vast amount of work we carried out in the UK, we were unable to pursue further partnerships in Europe, although we did meet with delegates from Poland to share ideas and I was invited to attend the European Day of People with Disabilities in Brussels in December (see below).

In relation to government departments, ADP has contributed to work on Information Prescriptions; has attended a number of conferences and forums in relation to disabled people and work, including "Ready to Work, Skilled for Work: Unlocking Britain's Talent conference"; has contributed to research in relation to self employment for a number of Regional Development Agencies; has been asked to provide careers profiles to Jobs4U, the government's careers website; has contributed to the Olympics Legacy and Equality Framework; and has supported the Home Office and HMRC to ensure that their services are accessible to disabled people.

Finally, as we receive numerous requests to advertise jobs and non executive vacancies, we have continued to provide this information through our email distribution list, as well as to advertise positions on our website. This service will continue as advertisements on the website create a small revenue for the ADP and enable our members to receive details of vacancies.

The ADP perseveres in the pursuit of core funding. We were very grateful to receive a contribution of £30,000 from the John Ellerman Foundation towards the Development Officer's salary for two years. However, other bids to grant providers have not been successful. It is hoped that pro-bona consultancy obtained from NCVO, as a result of winning a consultancy competition, will enable us to improve this situation and continue to pursue alternative means of funding to sustain the organisation.

## **Communication**



As in previous years, the ADP has maintained minimal costs through the use of electronic means of communication between the Executive Committee, staff, the membership, network groups and the public. Additionally, where possible, we have maintained the use of email distribution lists for our membership information, in order to minimise postage costs, without compromising access for those members who do not have email.

The website has been updated when possible, although there have not always been adequate resources (in terms of time) to ensure that the jobs section is updated on a weekly basis.

The Committee has continued to explore alternative ways of meeting to avoid the travel costs and expense of hiring a room, but there is still a need for face to face meetings to ensure that the access needs of all participants are met.

## **Disabled Entrepreneurs' Network**



The work of the Disabled Entrepreneurs' Network (DEN) has been prolific. Enquiries are still being dealt with by the Chair, the Executive Committee and the Development Officer. We are currently updating the details on the DEN website and hoping to include many of the resources we have been able to produce as part of our work on disabled entrepreneurship.

We have also been involved in a consultative capacity with various Business Links, support organisations for disabled entrepreneurs and have established a mutually beneficial relationship with Business Link London.

## **Partnership Working With Business Link in London**

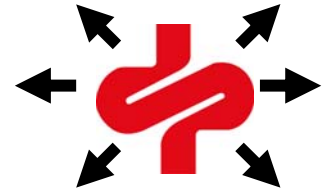


Following on from the successful delivery of a bespoke one day event for senior management staff on delivering business advice to disabled entrepreneurs, we were asked to train front line staff.

The disability equality workshops were a success, particularly with individuals who were answering the telephones and needed clearer guidelines on how they could provide the most appropriate support to enquirers contacting Business Link in London. This also led to us being able to provide support to Events staff by ensuring that many of the written materials provided by Business Link in London (to individuals at start-up stage), as well as the evaluation forms given at the end of workshops, were accessible and "user friendly" to disabled people.

The ADP also held a very successful bespoke workshop for people with learning difficulties in Leyton and were invited to hold an exhibition stand at the Idea to Business Event in December.

Finally, Business Link in London have sponsored some of the printing of the Resource Guide Pack and this has enabled us to ensure that disabled people are able to obtain our Guide Pack for the cost of postage and packaging.



## Links

The ADP has maintained and built further links with many government departments including the Department of Works and Pensions, the Office for Disability Issues, the Department of Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform, as well as with various regional development agencies around the country. We also sustain and expand upon our collaboration with various disability related and impairment specific organisations, job brokers, employment agencies, educational establishments, information technology access organisations, as well as with the media. This past year has also enabled us to contribute to the equalities work of the HMRC, many Regional Development Agencies and various statutory organisations.

The work of the ADP sustains and preserves the core aims of the organisation to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people in employment, education and daily living issues.



## ADP becomes a Charitable Company

The ADP became a charitable company limited by guarantee on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2008. This involved changes to our Memorandum and Articles of Association as well as a change in our charity number and a new company number being issued to the Association. We held an EGM in October 2008 to discuss the Special Resolutions generated as a result of our change in status. It was also decided to maintain the level of membership fees for 2009, at the previous year's rates, as follows:

Full Membership Fee	£ 20.00
Sustaining Membership Fee	£ 25.00
Student Membership and Reduced Fee	£ 10.00
Overseas Membership Fee	£ 25.00

## European Day of People with Disabilities

I was delighted to be invited to attend the European Day of People with Disabilities in Brussels. The conference was entitled, "Acting Locally for a Society for All" and focussed on how EU action and legislation impacted upon local communities.

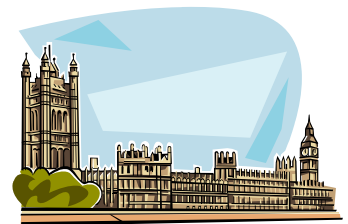
Plenary sessions included:

- Disability rights through mainstreaming at regional and local level: putting the UN Convention into practice
- Involving persons with disabilities in all decisions affecting them
- From EU to local community and from local community to EU

There were also demonstrations of accessible voting booths and assistive technology, as well as a film by Erik Lamens on the impact of stuttering on his life.

The event which took place on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2008 generated a lot of interest in the ADP's work on the Resource Guide Pack, "Setting up in business? A Resource Guide for disabled people and their advisors". Indeed, we were invited to take advantage of a demonstration area and had distributed all copies of the Guide Pack that had been sent for the event by the end of the first day!

## Parliamentary



A summary of parliamentary activities follows:

### **Improving Protection From Disability Discrimination**

The ADP responded to this consultation paper on the review of disability provisions in the Equality Bill to take a different approach to disability discrimination from that taken in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

The proposals based protection for disabled people on the concept of "indirect discrimination". Indirect discrimination occurs when rules, regulations or practices put a particular group of people at a disadvantage to

others and is currently applied in relation to legislation with regard to sex and race.

The introduction of these proposals resulted from a House of Lords ruling (*Lewisham v Malcolm*) that has made it more difficult for a disabled person to show that they had been discriminated against for a reason related to their disability.

As well as promoting the introduction of indirect discrimination for disability, the Government also propose to include a requirement that "those people and organisations that are under a duty to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people must make any reasonable adjustment that the Equality Bill will require them to make before they can seek to justify indirect discrimination". This requirement aims to have a broadly similar effect to the provisions made under the employment section of the Disability Discrimination Act.

The ADP supported these proposals.

### **No-one written off: Reforming Welfare to Reward Responsibility**

The ADP provided a detailed response to this *Green Paper*, broadly welcoming the proposals to give disabled people more support into work. We also welcomed the promotion of volunteering opportunities, proposed increases to the Access to Work budget and the rights for disabled people to be given an individual budget should they so wish.

However, it was pointed out that as there was so little detail in the document, this was a difficult exercise and any support provided had to ensure that disabled people were given the opportunity to choose their own support staff and the requirements/qualifications of any such staff. Additionally, we raised concerns about potentials for inappropriate sanctioning of disabled people, the suitability of those undertaking the Work Capability Assessments and the importance of training for Personal Advisors in relation to their understanding of impairment related issues.

The consultation and subsequent responses resulted in the publication of the White Paper, "Raising expectations and increasing support: reforming

welfare for the future" in December 2008. It is stated in the document that:

"Our goal is a system where everyone has personalised support and conditions to help them get back to work, underpinned by a simpler benefits system and genuine choice and control for disabled people".

Unfortunately, we are yet to see this vision as a reality for many of our enquirers.

### **Closing Remark**



A dramatic year on year increase in demand for the FREE service offered by ADP to disabled people and organisations on employment and on issues about working for themselves, shows the service is needed. The ability to tailor the queries, whilst simultaneously meeting access needs, is a skill which ADP has and is able to offer. This would not have happened without the continued support and dedication of your Development Officer, Kath and her assistant, Kirsty. The ADP board thank them very much for their excellent work.

Jane E Hunt  
On behalf of the Board

## Appendix

### Examples of issues supported by the ADP

#### **Employment**

##### Case Study 1:

We received a referral from Business Link in London to discuss a potential business venture with a visually impaired gentleman. The gentleman had already spoken to a number of organisations, both impairment specific organisations and business support organisations, but had become increasingly confused about how to move his complementary therapy business forward.

After telephone discussions with the gentleman, where we were able to discuss all his options, the gentleman decided that he would undertake some voluntary work providing his services to his local hospice in order to gain the practical experience and confidence needed to progress his career and business.

In a follow up email, the gentleman commented:

"The advice and support you have given me, will benefit my career and business choices. I am not surprised, that you are in demand, I am just glad I got the opportunity to spend a little time talking with you."

##### Case Study 2:

We were contacted by a civil engineer, based in Scotland, who had been retired due to ill health. After several years of receiving disability benefits, because of underlying depression, he asked for our support to assist him to find funding to update his skills on design packages, in order that he could return to work. He had already been in touch with a number of employment support agencies and had been told that he would not be eligible for funding until he had signed confirmation from an employer that he had secured employment.

We were able to put the gentleman in touch with a number of statutory authorities (including Learn Direct and ILA Scotland), educational grant organisations and local funding organisations. As a result of our advice, he was able to secure the necessary funding to update his skills and as a result is now in paid employment.

## **Self employment**

### Case Study 1:

We were contacted by a woman in her late 20s who had chronic fatigue issues and was on disability related benefits. She wanted to start her own business in jewellery making, but did not have a business plan, did not know how to market her products and had extreme issues with managing her fatigue.

In terms of ensuring that she had the appropriate support to take the venture forward, we were able to provide her with the following support:

- **Fatigue**

We discussed the lady's current personal care situation and explained that she may be entitled to a *Community Care Assessment* and thus, personal support during the day from social services. Additionally, we informed her of the *Access to Work Programme* and how this may benefit her in her working day.

- **Business Plan**

We were able to issue a copy of our *Resource Guide Pack* to the lady and she commented:

"This information is invaluable. I finally feel that I have the information I need to get my business off the ground."

We were also able to put the lady in touch with her local *Business Link* and provided her with further support in writing her business plan, as *Business Link* were unable to assist with this.

- **Marketing**

After discussions, the lady decided that online marketing of her goods would be the most appropriate way for her to progress. This would

enable her to minimise fatigue issues, whilst still allowing her an avenue to sell her products. We were also able to suggest that she sought the services of an IT student at a local college to set up her website at minimal cost. She has pursued this and is currently working with the student to establish a suitable website, with secure encryption to enable her customers to purchase goods.

### Case study 2:

We were contacted by a disabled IT professional who wanted to start his own franchise, but who had previously had serious financial issues due to having to give up work when he first became disabled. He needed to raise approximately £10,000 to begin a web based franchise.

We were able to discuss the potential issues that the gentleman may face as a result of his previous financial status and gave him various options for funding, including grant and loan based resources.

We were also able to put him in touch with Business Link East Midlands and the British Franchise Association who provided him with regional funding opportunities and specialist financial advice. He has now secured the necessary finances to begin his franchise.

### **Organisations supported by the ADP**

#### Cyfle:

We were contacted by Cyfle, the training company for the TV, film, animation and interactive media industries in Wales, about placing advertisements on our website about recruitment for their Diversifying the Workforce programme. After receiving the documentation, it became apparent that the documentation/recruitment procedure could present difficulties for disabled people in terms of access requirements.

We were informed that the organisation had sought advice from a number of other organisations, but that these issues had not been raised. After further discussions with Cyfle, we were able to make significant changes to the documentation, in terms of layout, text size and font colour. Additionally, we were able to advise on particular aspects of the person

specifications for the various posts, in order to ensure that disabled people would not be prevented from applying.

### Digital Switchover Campaign:

We worked with Fishburn Hedges to provide information to our membership on the Digital Switchover Campaign. In addition to an article in our ADP Quarterly, we were able to place information about the switchover on our website. This was well received by our membership and disabled people who visited our website, as many were unaware of the additional support available through the Digital Switchover Help Scheme. This Scheme is available for those who are aged 75 or over, disabled and on certain disability related benefits, blind or partially sighted and provides help to convert one TV set.

### Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC):

The ADP worked with HMRC on a number of issues, including:

- the provision of support and advice, along with other third sector organisations, on their Disability Strategy. This work is continuing into 2009 and our Chair is a member of the Disabled Customers Consultation Group;
- attendance at their Business Advice Days, where the ADP held an Exhibition Stand and provided support to disabled entrepreneurs; and
- the identification of appropriate disabled entrepreneurs for HMRC films about tax issues.