

Spring is here!



Disability Discrimination Act: taking the work forward

This newsletter comes to you just as we are moving from winter into spring so it's a good time to reflect on progress and what we have achieved so far. This edition of the newsletter for Disability Discrimination Act: taking the work forward, contains an overview of project progress from Christine Nightingale and a researcher's perspective from Lisa Doyle.

We have found that many people are unaware of the materials that have already been produced to support the implementation of the DDA so Liz Maudslay has provided a summary including the direct weblinks. She also gives the dates of the forthcoming DDA conferences, which are being organised by Skill. Book early to secure a place.

Despite blizzard conditions the Suite B action research training again received very positive feedback and Christine Nightingale writes about them. Helen Simpson at Morley College has produced a simple summary of her project to explain to learners and staff what it is all about and Jean Hewitt writes about her last project network meeting.

And finally, don't forget to check out the project website:

<http://www.lsda.org.uk/programmes/dda/index.asp>

I want to thank everyone involved in this project for their energy and enthusiasm – it isn't all plain sailing, but some fascinating work is underway and I look forward to hearing about it.

Sally Faraday
Research manager
(LSDA)

Advertisement

Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities

DDA and Beyond
May, June and July 2004

Three *FREE seminars for staff in further education, adult community learning, work-based learning, and local Learning and Skills Councils.

*** Places are free for LSC-funded providers.**

(Continued on page 2)



Birmingham, Friday 21st May
London, Monday 14th June
Manchester, Monday 12th July

There are new changes to the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA), which will affect all providers including further education, adult community learning, and work-based learning. Practitioners are encouraged to attend with a senior manager from their institution / organisation.

These events will focus on practical solutions. They are funded by the Learning and Skills Council, and organised by Skill on behalf of the LSDA, NIACE and Skill consortium, with the support of the DRC. Delegates will also benefit from the networking opportunity.

Presentations will include changes to Part 2 of the DDA and the Draft Disability Bill, the recent landmark DDA Part 4 (Education) case and physical features legislation coming into force in 2005. We will also be bringing you up to date with LSC strategy, the DDA Projects and resources available.

There are a selection of workshops including sessions targeted at specific providers and ones to cater for different levels of expertise and experience. As a taster, proposed workshop topics include: Disclosure, Critical Success Factors – where to next?, Risk Assessment,

Capital Works, Work Placements, Designing Curricula, Starting Out – Sources of Support, Effective Classroom Practice, and IT Support.

NB: This is not a final list – some of these titles may not feature in every event and other titles may be included. Let us know what you would like. Workshops will vary from location to location but will cover an appropriate range of issues and topics relevant to staff attending.

We anticipate a heavy demand for places and allocation will be made on a first come first served basis. Therefore, to register your interest, please send an email to:

sally@skill.org.uk

with your postal address and a booking form will be sent to you as soon as they are available.

Registered Charity Number: 801971



Overview of project progress



Despite the Christmas break coming in between, a huge amount of progress has occurred with all projects since the last newsletter.

Projects held their first network meeting in November or December. Following on from this all project sites have produced an action plan of the work they plan to carry out between January and the end of June. These action plans are now available to project members on the LSDA DDA Programme Website:

<http://www.lsd.org.uk/programmes/dda/index.asp>

All sites involved in Suite B projects were invited to a second day of action research training delivered by Lesley Dee from Cambridge University and Christine Nightingale from NIACE. This included workshops on a range of research methods: interviewing; observation; documentary analysis; focus groups; questionnaires and how to involve people with learning difficulties.

One very positive fact is that so many of the original sites have stayed in the project. There have, of course, been occasional exceptions when staff changes or illnesses have made it impossible for a site to continue with the work, but these have been rare.

The over-riding impression received by talking to site members or reading

evaluations of the first network meetings is of the enthusiasm of individual participants. While acknowledging that the project often means extra work, participants still welcome the opportunity to have a small space in which they can reflect on their work and look at how it could be changed in a particular area. Network meeting evaluations also revealed how much staff enjoyed having the opportunity to share their issues and concerns with other members. It was very revealing to see how much members of a specific project had in common. Despite their very different organisational base (further education, adult and community education and work-based learning) members still found many similarities between their work.

Involving learners

The active involvement of learners is a key aim in the overall plan of the DDA projects, and sites have been encouraged by project leaders to show explicitly how they will do this in their action plans. Sites have come up with a variety of ways in which to try to elicit learners' views – interviews, questionnaires, focus groups, and, in one instance, using painting and drawing (see the article on rich picture technique below). Although practitioners often assume they are involving learners all the time, many have said how good it has been

(Continued on page 4)



to have this specific, allocated time to gain learners' views which can often be significantly different from those of staff.

Collaboration

Another key tenet of the overall project plan was that individual project members should not have to carry out their work in isolation but should collaborate both within their own organisation and also with other sites in their project. Many sites have succeeded in drawing together a team within their organisation and it is clear that projects are far more likely to be successful if they gain the support of a range of staff within the organisation including senior managers.

Collaboration between sites has been more problematic. The network meetings clearly show how important such collaboration is and how highly valued it is. However, when people go back to their own workplaces they easily become immersed in their workload and find it hard to make the time to communicate with each other. It has become apparent how important it is for senior managers to recognise the value of collaboration and to realize that allowing a member of staff time to visit another organisation can reap huge benefits. Also, even when visits are impossible, it is important for project members to seek other ways of sharing their work, for example through emailing ideas, draft papers, questionnaires etc or

through telephone calls. Where project members have emailed draft action plans to each other, they have clearly stated how valuable comments from other practitioners have been.

Next stage

The next stage of the project is for all sites to produce an Interim Report by 31st March. The format of this has been written in such a way as to give sites an opportunity to reflect on their project, to record both successes and problems, and to recognise any changes which might have occurred to their original action plan. Action plans are very important but they should not be seen as being set in stone. Projects take on a life of their own and some of the most interesting outcomes are often those which were unexpected and unplanned.

Christine Nightingale
NIACE

An LSDA Researcher's Perspective



Being involved in the DDA projects has been an exciting experience. Participating in such a wide-reaching programme of research with such a diversity of projects is a rare opportunity and makes for a very interesting working day.

Since starting to work within the programme, I have undertaken many and varied tasks, and expect this to continue in the near future as sites embark on their data collection and report-writing. My work, so far, has included doing literature reviews, assessing audit tools, attending network meetings, advising sites on the development of their action plans and selection of research methods, as well as participating in the training days in Leeds and London.

Taking part in the training days has been a highlight of my involvement. It is wonderful to spend time with so many enthusiastic people doing such interesting research. It is also great to see how we are all part of something much bigger than the individual tasks at hand. Like many others, the main problem I experienced with the last London training day was due to weather-related transport disruption. Who would have thought it could take two hours to travel from Stoke Newington to Oxford Circus?!

I look forward to my continued involvement in the projects, and now the Researcher team at LSDA has expanded, visiting sites from one end of

the country to the other will be a much easier, and less exhausting, task!

Lisa Doyle
LSDA

Resources



The LSC has produced a range of materials to support providers in carrying out their duties under DDA Part 4. However, people have sometimes found these hard to track down, so we are listing here precise website locations:

Ten leaflets have been produced addressing ten categories of staff (admissions staff; teaching staff; library and learning resources staff etc). The leaflets give a brief description of duties under the DDA and then say how these responsibilities will need to be addressed in a specific staffing area. Large numbers of leaflets were distributed to all colleges and adult education organisations. They can also be found on the LSC website

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/DisabilityDiscriminationAct/Leaflets/default.htm>

Staff training materials designed for different types of staff have also been

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

produced. These are only web-based:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/DisabilityDiscriminationAct/TrainingMaterials/default.htm>

A Resources Review has been produced, also only web-based. This contains a range of useful publications related to the DDA and also gives details of useful organisations. This was produced over 18 months ago and hence is already out of date and currently being updated. Watch out for the new edition which should be ready in two to three months:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/DisabilityDiscriminationAct/ResourcesReview/default.htm>

Guidance on Disclosure, Confidentiality and Passing on Information

This document looks at the legal requirements for disclosure under DDA Part 4 and also at the boundary between these and duties under the Data Protection Act. It gives clear examples, from a learner's perspective, of the need to have clear, workable and monitored policies and procedures in place and also gives guidelines for drawing up disclosure and confidentiality policies. Copies have been distributed to all LLSCs and the guidance is also available on the website:

<http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/DisabilityDiscriminationAct/Guidance/default.htm>

Making the Case



This is a DVD containing a video of a 'mock trial' under DDA Part 4 and accompanying training materials. It was professionally produced with the help of Skill, National Bureau for Students with Disabilities and LSDA. The roles of the judge and prosecution and defence are played by members of Bond Pearce Solicitors who were involved in the working party which wrote the DRC Code of Practice for DDA Part 4. The DVD has proved a particularly effective training tool when working with groups of governors or senior managers. Free copies have been distributed to each college and adult education organisation. Extra copies can be bought from Skill, and the National Bureau for Students with Disabilities (tel. 0207 4500620).

Conferences

LSC will be running, with the support of Skill and LSDA, three DDA conferences in June and July:

- Friday 21st May
- Monday 14th June
- Monday 12th July

The aim of these events is to update delegates on recent and forthcoming changes to the DDA and other relevant disability legislation. There will also be workshops on a range of issues concerned with putting DDA into practice.

Places are FREE for all people who work in LSC funded provision.

Liz Maudslay
SKILL



Blizzard hits Suite B Action Research Training



First of all well done to those of you who managed with 'Dunkirk spirit' to get through to the second London Action Research training event on possibly the worst day of the winter. Condolences to others who were reported to be standing on desolate train stations waiting for non-existent trains, and others who had to wait to be dug out of various snow-bound villages. We couldn't have chosen a more difficult day!

For those of you that missed the Leeds or the London days, we had, as before, two very packed days. A tight schedule where everyone had the opportunity to think about up to three different methods of collecting data (observation, interviewing, questionnaire design, working with people with learning difficulties, documentary analysis and focus groups) in workshop situations.

Handouts and the instructions for the interim task are all available on the project website:

<http://www.lsda.org.uk/programmes/dda/index.asp>

You will be prompted for your user name and password. If you have forgotten the password or have difficulties in gaining access, contact Al Lockhart Smith by phone or email.

We were pleased as ever that so

many of you were able to contribute specific examples or experiences of these approaches that were contributed to the various discussions. As usual Lesley Dee and I went away having learnt so much about the issues you are dealing with.

At the next and final Action Research Days we will be considering how to analyse data and write up your findings for your report. We have asked that you bring with you a sample of the data collected, be it transcripts of interviews or focus groups, documents, details of an observation, questionnaire responses, photos, videos or audio tapes, to share. If you need any special equipment please let us know immediately as we have to locate it or ask you to bring it well in advance!



We look forward to seeing you in spring-like weather, at either Leeds on Tuesday 27th April or London on Friday 7th May. Details will be out to all Suite B projects soon.

We would be grateful if you could respond by return of post as it is a logistical nightmare ensuring that you are all accommodated in the right venue, offered the right workshops and most importantly are all fed and watered!

Christine Nightingale
NIACE

An Education Research Project at Morley College



Have you ever thought about producing a simple summary of your project to help explain to learners (and others) what is going on? Helen Simpson at Morley College has done exactly that.

Recognising and Recording Progress and Achievement (RARPA) in Non-Accredited Learning



Morley College has agreed to take part in this national research project, which is led by the Government's Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA). Your tutor is one of a group of thirty, who are working with me. The work began in September 2003 and will run until June 2004. As you know, a large number of Morley College's courses do not lead towards qualifications and the work done in these classes is therefore known as non-accredited.

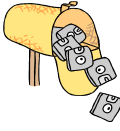
It is necessary for the tutor of your class and the college to know that you are learning and developing knowledge and skills whilst the course is running, as well as at the end. The focus of the research project is on this recognition and recording of learning coming from you, the student. Your tutor will allow you time for thought and collection of ideas of what you are learning, what you now understand more fully than at the beginning of the course, what you are able to do that is new etc. Much of this is dependent on the subject of your course.

Many classes are used to demonstrating their learning and final achievements in exhibitions or performances in the Foyer or other rooms. Some classes are used to having videos made of their work in progress or their final presentations. Is there anything that you could suggest to your class that might help to show your class in action, even if your subject is not performance or visual art? Please discuss this with your tutor and the class.

Morley is a college that is known for its challenging and invigorating atmosphere, and students often tell us how much they enjoy their time here and the friends and colleagues that they make. This is important information for your tutor and the College to receive and it is something that is valued highly by us and by the Government.

There will be a final report written in June at the end of this project which will be available through the library or through me, should you wish to read it. Thank you for your involvement in this project.

Helen Simpson
Advanced Practitioner, Quality in Teaching and Learning



And finally: Feedback from 2 of the projects.



Project 4: Access to Premises

We had our second network meeting at Witham Technology College, which was interesting on several counts:

The venue was very interesting as it had a combination of management and physical access challenges and our kind host was good enough to share his access survey report. Our wider reference group members provided a valuable contribution with short presentations on two important access issues. They did so with zest and enthusiasm and gave concise and practical information on two challenging areas: cultural access, and dealing with assistance dogs on the premises.

Our local LSC office member, Paul Busby, gave some excellent information on funding for access improvements to buildings, and some much welcomed clarification on methodology. Attendees were able to view some useful resources first hand - the latest text books, measuring equipment, best practice guides, and a short presentation on Personal Emergency Evacuation Planning - managing fire egress for disabled people was given.

All this was in addition to the official business agenda so, all in all, it was a busy and productive day! (One of our

wider reference group members reported at the end of the day that she felt so involved, she was beginning to think she had an interim report to do).

Jean Hewitt
Cromer Property Consulting

Project 10: Developing appropriate Learning Programmes

Making Person Centred Planning Real

Making person centred planning a reality is one of the key challenges we are addressing as Project 10 develops and our action plans progress. Project 10 is examining good practice in further and adult education in developing appropriate learning programmes which contribute to Person Centred Planning for adults with learning difficulties.

At our second network meeting, we updated each other on our progress and we had a stimulating presentation and training session from 'Speaking Up', an organisation which supports people with learning difficulties to take control of their own lives. A number of themes and questions are beginning to emerge and we would like to share some of these with you.

(Continued on page 10)



The **nature of choice** is a key theme

- Where are choices made and how is the process managed?
- How can we work with learners to define their aspirations and how can these in turn inform curriculum choice?
- Are we clear about the underlying purpose of the curriculum offer?
- How can we avoid educational and vocational 'positioning' – challenging professional assumptions and enabling learners to do what they need to achieve their aspirations?
- How do we ensure learners make the choices they are entitled to and how do we make choices accessible?
- How can we foster and support learners in making real choices?

Funding is crucial

- What are the implications of defining choice in this way for funding mechanisms?
- What is achievable within current resources, acknowledging the differential funding levels between ACL/FE?

Changing Attitudes between Education/Social Services/Health is vital

- How can we challenge the prevailing concept of caring ?
- What is the nature of the care/education interface?
- What is nature of the interface between guidance and the formal curriculum?
- What can we learn about adult

guidance processes that can help us understand the relationship between Person Centred Planning and developing appropriate learning programmes?

And finally

- We need to continue to develop multi-agency working through joint training sessions and understanding more about each others' roles and perspectives.

As Project 10 develops we are beginning to find answers to some of these questions through identifying what constitutes good practice as well as some of the barriers that inhibit progress. Whilst we all acknowledge that there is a lot of work to do at all levels, including organisational change, if working in a Person Centred way is to become a reality in post-16 education, it is very rewarding and stimulating to be contributing to these developments.

Project Leader : Lesley Dee

Project Sites : Karen Woods
Lesley Sweeting
Vivienne Berkeley
Elaine Duerden
Amanda Torbitt
Helen Thompson

WRG: Paul Smith
Debbie Williams

Advisors : Yola Jacobsen
Janet Chadwick



Want to know more?



Contact the project administrators or the research manager:

Sally Faraday

Research manager
LSDA
Regent Arcade House
19-25 Argyll Street
London
W1F 7LS

Email: sfaraday@lsda.org.uk

Office: 020 7297 9098



Louise Brennan

DDA project co-ordinator
LSDA
Regent Arcade House
19-25 Argyll Street
London
W1F 7LS

Email: lbrennan@lsda.org.uk

Office: 020 7297 9188



Gurjit Kaur

DDA finance administrator
LSDA
Regent Arcade House
19-25 Argyll Street
London
W1F 7LS

Email: gkaur@lsda.org.uk

Office: 020 7297 9036



Al Lockhart Smith

DDA administrator
LSDA
Regent Arcade House
19-25 Argyll Street
London
W1F 7LS

Email: asmith@lsda.org.uk

Office: 020 7297 9179



Newsletter Contribution

If you would like to contribute to future DDA newsletters with project progress or anything else that you feel to be relevant then you could be filling this space! Send all relevant articles / documents to Al Lockhart Smith.

Any comments or advice in terms of content readability and design are also welcome.