

# Here comes the summer!



## Disability Discrimination Act: taking the work forward

### Project Update

This newsletter comes at the end of the last few months which have been a very busy time for all projects. All sites produced their Interim Reports and these have clearly shown both the hard work and the significant results achieved by everyone involved. Project Leaders have now assimilated the results into their Project Interim Reports. The reports are now available for everyone involved to look at on the project website:

[www.lsd.org.uk/dda](http://www.lsd.org.uk/dda).

All projects have held their final network meetings and are submitting their site final reports. This newsletter includes articles on site reports and reflections on the action research training days. We are now actively planning the next stage which will include a wide range of publications and activities. We look forward to working with you on these. We also include information in this issue on: the CHANGE Picture Bank which we have used to illustrate the newsletter; the thinking behind the next stage of the project and plans to date; the Learners' Experiences video; the DDA

and beyond conferences; reflections of a project leader and a project site, and a longer article on the importance of good management and housekeeping in ensuring accessible facilities.

Meanwhile, thank you all, both for the work you have carried out and the effort you put into your projects. We hope you have a thoroughly enjoyable and restful summer.

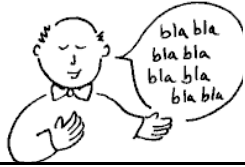
Sally Faraday  
Research Manager (LSDA)

### Site Reports

These reports display many very interesting developments and clear messages to be shared with a range of audiences – other practitioners, managers, LSC officers etc. Although the reports vary enormously depending on the topic, certain themes run across many of them:

- We have all been very impressed by and grateful for the hard work and enthusiasm with which sites have entered into these projects. Several sites have commented on how good it has been to have the space

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# Project Update



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and structure to look at an area of work which they have been wanting to examine for a long time. They have also really valued the opportunity to have some time at the network meetings to share their ideas with others and to have a space during which they can think about and reflect upon their work.

- Several sites have managed to carry out their project work within a team (sometimes consisting of other staff in their organisation and sometimes including staff from other agencies). Where this has been possible members feel it has certainly enhanced their work.
- Several sites have directly involved learners in their project and have reported how much listening to learners' views has helped them to focus and direct their work. In some instances learner quotations or case studies have been incorporated into their report. This has greatly enhanced report content.
- Sites have come across blocks in carrying out their work. There has been the inevitable difficulty of finding enough time to carry out the

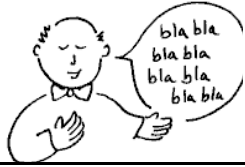
work, exacerbated by additional factors such as staff sickness or staff changes, and also inspection which seems to cause an almost total shutdown of anything not directly related to the inspection. In other cases practitioners have sometimes found that internal organisational processes and lack of management support has thwarted their work. It is very important that we note the difficulties as well as the successes.



Development work is not a straight forward process and often an attention on the problems and how / if you were able to overcome them can elicit very important messages.

- The reports have also revealed interesting differences between the three sectors – further education, adult and community learning and work based learning. While these three sectors do have much in common in terms of direct work with disabled learners, they also have very different organisation, structure and history. It has become apparent that the final outputs of the projects must articulate these differences clearly.

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# Project Update



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## Action Research Training Days

The third action research day was very much organised around giving practitioners time to reflect upon the process of their research and look at the major themes which were emerging out of their key findings. The evaluations of the days were very positive and the organisers, Lesley Dee and Christine Nightingale, were very enthusiastic about the way in which sites were understanding and responding to the process of action research.

Concern has been expressed for some time by the Project Executive over the fact that the action research days have only been available to sites in Suite B projects. The initial rationale behind this was that Suite B projects were more developmental while Suite A were about bringing together good practice. However, it quickly became apparent that all projects whether in A or B were wanting to work developmentally hence they all could have benefited from the action research training. This is something we would certainly bear in mind in future.

Liz Maudslay  
Skill



## New to the newsletter

The drawings featured in this newsletter come from the CHANGE picture bank.

CHANGE is a national organisation. It is for people with learning disabilities, including people with learning disabilities who are blind or deaf.

If you wish to contact the organisation and find out more about the people at CHANGE then please use the various methods of contact given on this page.

### Address:

CHANGE units 19-20  
Unity Business Centre  
26 Roundhay Road  
Leeds  
LS7 1AB

**Telephone:** 0113 243 0202

**Fax:** 0113 243 0220

**Minicom:** 0113 243 2225

### Web address:

[www.changepeople.co.uk](http://www.changepeople.co.uk)

### Email:

[changepeople@btconnect.com](mailto:changepeople@btconnect.com)



# Presenting the findings & making a difference



The DDA Project Executive has been having considerable discussion about how to present the final outcomes of the projects in a way in which information is made easily available and recommendations are acted upon.

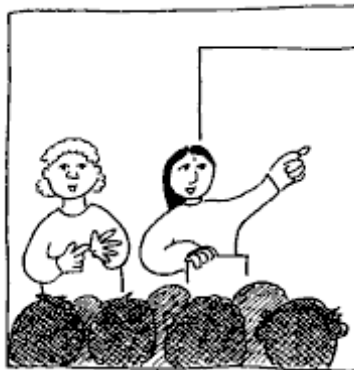
During July and August Project Leaders will be writing up the final report of their individual projects and we certainly want these and sites' reports to be freely available on the website. However, we have also been thinking about how best to present the findings of the project as a whole.

We are clear that we do not want merely to produce a single document which is a compilation of all the reports to be disseminated at a series of national conferences. All too often when this happens the document is taken back to delegates' workplaces and then sits on a shelf with nothing actually being done to implement the findings. Instead we are attempting to focus far more directly on whom the particular audiences are that we need to reach and to produce materials specifically related to their role.

## Audiences

We have already consulted widely about this and some of the audiences we feel are key are:

- **Regulators**, e.g. National LSC, Local LSCs, Inspectors
- **Audiences in provider organisations**, e.g. senior managers, a range of middle managers (e.g. Quality Managers, Premises Managers, Curriculum Managers, Inclusive learning Managers, Teaching Staff and Non-teaching staff). We are also clear that at times audiences will need to be differentiated by type of provision, e.g. colleges, adult and community learning and work-based learning.



## Key Drivers

While, for those of us engaged in these projects, this area of work is central, we realise that we have to be aware that for some of the people we wish to reach it might not hold the same importance. We recognise that, in order to engage them, we have to make the work relevant to some of the key issues which are currently driving their work and find ways of showing them how the findings we have come up with impact upon these key drivers.

Key drivers so far identified include:

- Inspection.

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# Presenting the findings & making a difference



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- Funding (particularly in relation to current funding changes).
- Planning.
- Current national strategies and targets, e.g. Success for All, National Skills Strategy and Skills for Life.

## Formats

We are also aware that the outcomes we produce will need to have different formats depending on the different audiences. For example:

- Policy regulators will need shorter papers focussing specifically on the overall messages coming out of the projects.
- Some topics will need longer documents which give greater detail about particular ways of working.
- Some managers, e.g. Estates Managers, will require specific information gleaned more from certain projects than others.

## Dissemination

We recognise that the format of providing information needs to be closely linked to the dissemination strategy. We do not want solely to produce publications but rather to

establish a process of change. We plan to have dissemination activity taking place in smaller, regional or local groups so that people can work together and embed the lessons learnt from the projects into their own practice. We hope to work through already existing groups and networks so that progress and development can continue well beyond the life of this project.

## Conclusion

We recognise that all of the above is an ambitious programme and we cannot carry it out without your help. We would very much welcome any ideas you have about final outcomes and dissemination strategy. Also, there will be some resources available for those sites involved with the dissemination strategy. There is further information in the next article ('Next stage'), and we will be sending out details to invite sites to be a part of this work.

Liz Maudslay  
Skill



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# Presenting the findings & making a difference



## Next stage 2004/05

We are now looking forward to the next phase (2004/05) which will be designed to have maximum impact. It will consist of a wide range of publications and regionally based activity and will include sites involved in the current phase of research and development projects. Plans are still being developed, based on the consultation process and these are our ideas at the moment.

Publications might include:

- Web based publication of site reports and project leaders reports.
- A leaflet for work based learning providers.
- A series of short briefings targeting specific groups of staff.
- Short briefings on topics or themes.
- Guidance or implementation documents on various topics and themes.
- Staff development materials.
- Papers on the research process.
- Articles in a range of journals and other media.



involve a partnership of providers in a regional action research project.

## Project site involvement 2004/05

## Regional activity

In the autumn term a group or network in each region will be invited to host an event to begin the process of dissemination in the region and to decide how to take it forward. There will be a 'menu' of project outputs and resources to select from and it will be for people in the region to determine which are their priorities and to make plans. In addition, each region will identify a priority for improvements or development which we hope will

We wish to continue to work with all projects sites that have met the requirements of the 2003/04 programme and submitted their final reports. Sites will be invited to continue and will be issued a further contract for £1,000 for the following activities:

- Internal dissemination of the project. (For some small, work based learning providers this might involve dissemination outside your organisation to your consortium or partnership.) We will request an action plan and a brief report back on the outcomes.

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# Presenting the findings & making a difference

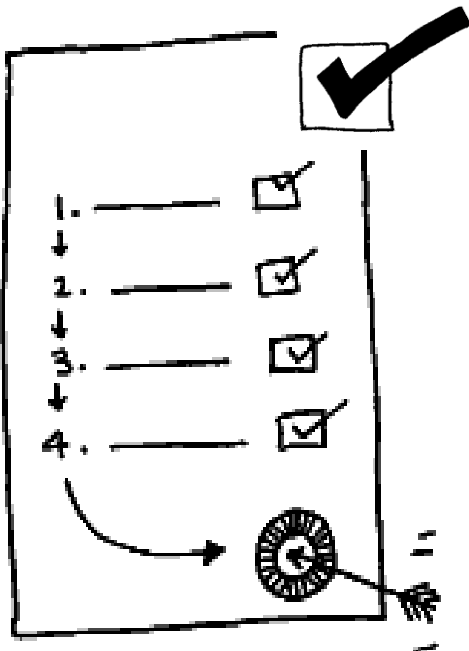


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- Attendance and possible contribution to a regional network meeting in the autumn term.
- A brief update report on progress over the year to be submitted in June 2005.

Sites may also be invited to contribute to other dissemination activity for which additional funding will be paid.

Sally Faraday  
Research Manager (LSDA)



## Learning for Living

NIACE kick started a new project on developing access to Skills for Life for adults with learning difficulties and / or disabilities with a seminar, which allowed providers to find out more about the programme and how they can become Pathfinder sites. See the NIACE website:

<http://www.niace.org.uk/news/Archives/Jun04.htm#Expert%20Seminar>

The project will involve working collaboratively with teachers, managers and learners to test what works best in the teaching and learning for literacy, language and numeracy skills. If you would like to take part in the second phase of work, which will be starting in September 2004 and will continue until July 2005, please contact Narzny Khan.



**Telephone:**

0116 2044293



**Email:**

[Narzny.Khan@niace.org.uk](mailto:Narzny.Khan@niace.org.uk)



## Learners' Experiences: A New Resource



In the past few months staff at LSDA have been creating two versions of a video entitled **Learners' Experiences** in which a range of disabled learners give their views about how their educational experience has been for them.

The first, short version is approximately 9 minutes long and offers a brief but powerful stimulus to discussion which can be shown in its entirety to raise awareness. It is the version which was used at the DDA and beyond conferences in 2004.

The second, longer version is approximately 26 minutes long and contains the same material but offers greater background to some of the issues.

Both versions give fascinating insights into how disabled learners experience education and, while showing much good practice, also point out ways in which we all need to change things to ensure that disabled learners really do have the opportunity to gain full access to and real benefit from learning opportunities.

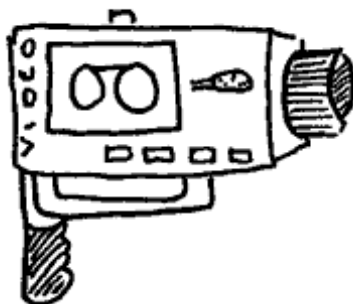
Both versions of the video are currently being transcribed onto DVD. On another disc there will be Facilitator Notes which go through the

issues raised by the learners and suggests questions which providers need to be asking themselves to ensure that their organisation is responding fully to these issues. Free copies of the DVD will be distributed by local LSCs in July.

Liz Maudslay  
Skill

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## Learning from the learners



### The making of the film about learners' experiences

Recently appointed as researcher on the Disability Discrimination Act research and development projects, one of my first assignments was the making of a film on the experiences of learners with learning difficulties and / or disabilities. This involved visiting sites in a variety of educational settings throughout England and talking to groups of learners. The focus of the film was not simply to find out about their learning experiences but more importantly **what it is that staff do** that impacts on these experiences. The overall objective was to capture the voices of learners and to

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## Learners' Experiences: making the video



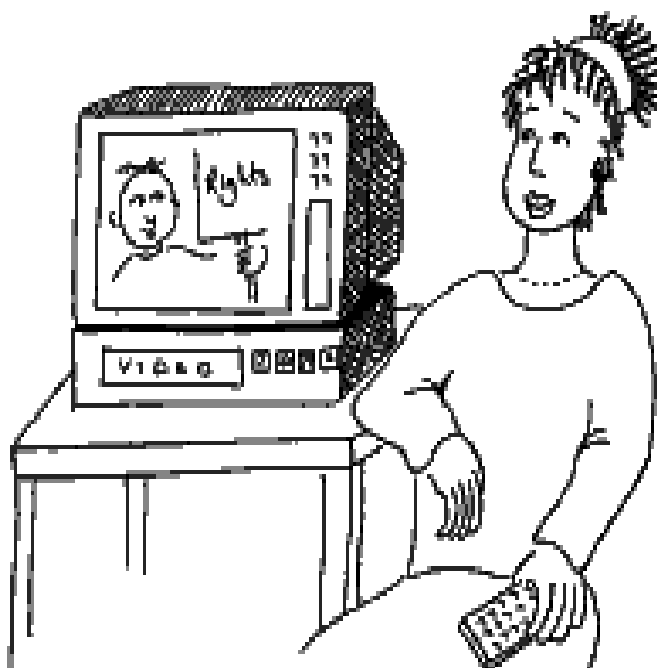
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**listen** to what they have to say in order to learn from them.

It was hard to envisage how it would all turn out largely depending on the sites we visited and the learners we met. The time frame for shooting the film was tight, with lots of rushing up and down the country, grabbing the odd sandwich and couple of hours sleep (the movie industry is not what it's cracked up to be!). Overall it went smoothly (with perhaps the odd hitch!), largely because of the fantastic co-operation we received from the sites whose excellent organisation made the whole process exciting and fun. The learners all told us how much they had enjoyed the experience and welcomed the opportunity to talk about the issues that were important to them.

For myself, I felt very privileged to listen to and share their stories. It was a learning curve to hear first-hand the issues the learners themselves

considered important, and to learn more about what they enjoyed about learning, about their ambitions, and their difficulties. Often we are not very good at listening to what learners have to say; this was an opportunity for me, and one which I hope will allow others the same opportunity when they are able to watch the final product.



After the filming was complete I reflected on all that I had learned. Talking to learners first-hand has without doubt been the best induction I could have had to the project. Although I have learned a great deal from a variety of other sources, spending time

with learners, hearing their stories was crucial for me and the project – that of putting the learners at the centre. In addition, I enjoyed meeting some very dedicated staff who showed enthusiasm about the project, and getting to see some great learning projects in practice.

The atmosphere during the filming

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# Learners' Experiences: making the video



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days was such a happy one, and all those involved at the sites spoke of it as a really positive happy experience. Even the film crew who were involved in the technical side of the filming were clearly moved by the experience, and as we left each site I think we had all made many more friends as a result.

If the film succeeds in fulfilling its purpose, improving practice so that future learners gain more positive learning experiences, then the whole venture will have been very worthwhile.

Gill O'Toole  
Researcher, LSDA

## DDA and beyond conferences: May, June & July

DDA conferences have been held in Birmingham, London, and Manchester. The events were hosted by Skill on behalf of LSDA with the support of other consortium members. All three events have been hugely oversubscribed which meant that sadly several potential delegates did not receive a place. We hope that other events held in the next phase of the DDA projects will help to ensure that these people are able to catch up with the issues addressed at

the conferences.

The conferences included four plenary speakers. The first of these was Dianne Keetch from the Disability Rights Commission. Dianne spoke of forthcoming changes to the DDA which included:

- A widening of the definition of disability.
- Changes to Part 2 duties for employers which brought work placements for those following a vocational programme under the legislation.
- The inclusion of small employers.
- New duties given to

Professional Bodies (currently this excludes examination awarding bodies but Dianne spoke about how DRC and Skill are jointly lobbying to try and ensure that these are included).

Dianne also went through certain cases (one of which has been to court, the others which have not reached court but have been arbitrated through the DRC). The



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## DDA conferences



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overriding message coming out of these cases was the importance of providers listening to learners when they voiced a complaint and trying to work out solutions with the learner rather than adopt a confrontational position.

Liz Maudslay from Skill then spoke briefly on general implications for colleges which included:

- The danger of being more concerned with trying to ensure compliance with the legislation and forgetting to always keep the learner at the centre.
- The importance of building on existing good practice.
- The way in which fulfilling duties under the DDA will require organisations to work in partnership with other providers (e.g. local Disability Organisations).
- Not to forget the many resources which have already been produced and are available on LSC, LSDA, NIACE, Skill and DRC websites.

After lunch there was a presentation by Kit Roberts from the LSC who endorsed the LSC's commitment to

this area of work. Kit spoke about the restructuring of the LSC including the creation of a restructured Equality and Diversity Committee and emphasised that the Forum for Learners with Disabilities and Learning Difficulties will be an ongoing conduit for information to be channelled into this new committee.

Kit's speech was followed by Sally Faraday from LSDA giving an overview of the workings of the DDA projects. The final plenary was a screening of the recently produced Learners' Experiences DVD (see the article on pages 8, 9 and 10 of this newsletter).

In between the plenary events delegates had the opportunity to choose from a variety of workshops some of which covered topics of general interest such as 'Starting Out', while others were specific to individual groups or sectors, for example, encouraging disclosure and respecting confidentiality.

In general the evaluations of the events has been very positive. However, there are some clear messages which will need to be addressed in the future. These include:

- The importance of ongoing work in this area. Existing staff need continuous updating while new staff need to gain the full range of information – at one

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# DDA conferences



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event a show of hands revealed that only about twenty out of a hundred delegates had attended any of the DDA events held in the previous two years.

- The specific need for more targeted work for work based learning providers. Historically they have had far less support in the area of learning difficulty and disabilities than other sectors and their issues are different from people working in FE and ACL.
- The importance of continuing to target different groups – some providers are well established in this area, others are still beginning to address certain areas, and both deserve to have their particular needs met.
- The danger that positive developments in this area of work could be mitigated by the current situation in which Government priorities are so strongly focused towards 14-19s, level 2 & Skills for Life. This is an important policy issue.

Liz Maudslay  
Skill



## Reflections of a project leader



### A project leader's perspective

Being a project leader for a number of the DDA4 projects has been an incredibly rewarding experience. It is great to work with providers who are committed to improving the experience of learners with disabilities and learning difficulties.

We have all had 'ups' and 'downs' as the projects have progressed. One of the 'ups' has been the network meetings where it has been great to share experiences and problem solve together. Sites have appreciated taking time out to meet together, share their progress, both successes and difficulties, and generally discuss how they might best move forward.

One of the 'downs' has been inspection for some sites, often because everything is 'put on hold' for at least two months, and this can have a serious impact on individual progress. There can also be post inspection 'fall out' if a difficult inspection has led to an impact on morale or a restructuring of posts.

Looking back, it has been interesting to see how issues within individual projects have overlapped. For

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example, discussions about disclosure and confidentiality amongst sites in project 1 has led to discussion of areas which overlap with work being done by other projects, such as the potential conflict between a request for confidentiality and health and safety / risk assessment (project 5) and cultural difficulties with language and disclosure (project 9).

Sites within each of the projects I am involved in have generally made considerable progress in producing new procedures, new documentation, identifying different ways of doing things better, and all of this on what is, for most if not all, an incredibly busy workload. There is a tremendous amount of enthusiasm and commitment displayed by staff, and a real dedication to improving the learner experience. It has been a privilege to work with everyone on these projects.

Christine Rose  
Morton Hodson



## Liverpool Community College

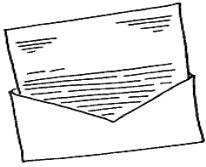
### Project 9: Responding to the Specific Cultural Requirements of Learners from Minority Ethnic Groups

#### What the project has done for us:

This research project has given us an enjoyable opportunity to engage with a group of learners whose opinions on matters directly concerning them have never been sought in such depth before by our institution. Through the process of consultation, we have gained a wealth of valuable information and new insight into what these students think is important in their education and relationship with the College.

A number of important issues, that previously have perhaps not been given the consideration they deserve, have been highlighted. For example, more than one student has highlighted the importance of food in making people feel that they belong to an institution. Changing canteen menus to include cuisines from a variety of cultures could have a substantial

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## News Article: Liverpool Community College



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positive impact on the students' perceptions of the College. This ought to be a relatively simple and low-cost intervention, and could even act as an opening to further consultation.

Other concerns have prompted us to consider more systematic reforms. For example, disclosure is an issue that has cropped up repeatedly, and is also an integral part of the Act. Procedures for ESOL students have particularly come under the spotlight. Application and enrolment for this group tends to be more informal and less reliant on forms and paperwork, which means that disabled students here have fewer opportunities to disclose. It has also become apparent that some students may not disclose because their cultural background or upbringing leads them not to consider themselves 'disabled', a label which can have very negative connotations in some societies. Findings from the focus group conducted with trainee black tutors indicated that more staff 'role models' - from ethnic minority backgrounds, possibly with disabilities - may encourage disclosure as a result of feelings of kinship; a more balanced staff would in any case provide greater choice for the individuals concerned. The

importance of suitable training and structures for staff to deal with emergent issues has also been underlined.

We anticipate that through our Control groups - one students with disabilities from non-ethnic minority backgrounds, the other non-disabled students from ethnic minority backgrounds - we will gain further appreciation of the relative importance of the two variables of disability and ethnicity when it comes to discrimination, unwitting or otherwise. This analysis, together with collating our in-depth Case Study information from

two of our participants, and devising our staff development project, are the main tasks that lie ahead of us over the next few weeks. Oh, and there's a little report to write, too.



Maureen Hughes  
Liverpool Community College

# Access & Inclusion: Facilities Management & Housekeeping Issues



Continued accessibility relies on effective day to day vigilance in all aspects of facilities management.

Sometimes improvements for disabled persons are allowed to progressively decline through lack of attention to accessibility when cleaning or maintaining the building so a clear mandate should be established for day to day maintenance of finishes, standards of cleaning, storage protocol and signage and information rules.

The following are recommendations that should be taken up as part of an overall good housekeeping policy and adopted within standard building management routines to ensure they are not overlooked:

## ARRIVAL POINTS

- Introducing a management control system to ensure drivers do not abuse designated parking spaces for disabled persons. This is the responsibility of management and a policing system should be introduced to prevent abuse or obstruction. Retracting barriers to individual spaces are now available and these can be controlled by the vehicle requiring the space if known in advance - this may be an option where the car park users are regular visitors such as a student or

employee, where a device to operate the barrier can be issued.

- Dropping off points should be checked regularly to ensure that no hazards exist and the Local Authority notified if any deterioration occurs. Directional signage for the drop off point should be located in positions unlikely to be obstructed or hidden by temporary obstacles to line of sight, such as other vehicles.
- Paths and walkways should be clear of debris such as leaves and litter. Foliage must be trimmed back regularly to path edges and overhanging branches should be removed if they are low enough to cause injury.



- By having an appropriate registration process for meetings and events, it is possible to plan ahead for specific needs. Where possible, members of staff involved in such arrangements should ask about parking needs, access requirements, special dietary needs, assistive aids etc. This can save embarrassment and inconvenience on the day of the event.

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# Access & Inclusion: Facilities Management & Housekeeping Issues



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## DELIVERIES

- Ensure delivery drivers are aware that they must NEVER park in designated disabled bays to unload.
- Corridors, means of escape and general access routes must be kept clear of debris and obstacles at all times. Storage of temporary materials or deliveries in such areas can quickly make a building inaccessible and pose a hazard to everyone.
- Check that heating, ventilating and air conditioning systems are properly maintained and consider the needs of all building users – some medical conditions affect a person's sensitivity to changes in temperature and air quality.
- Ensure blinds remain in good repair – blinds are critical to some people with vision impairments who may find glare highly uncomfortable.

## MAINTENANCE

- Endeavour to keep primary external routes, ramps and steps reasonably clear of loose debris, surface water, leaves, snow etc.
- Check that manoeuvring space remains unobstructed in the vicinity of ramps, steps, corridors or double doorways (e.g. plant displays, freestanding furniture, promotional stands).
- Regular maintenance of air conditioning systems reduces background noise levels which will be beneficial particularly to those with impaired hearing.
- Ensure lift car levels align accurately (this could be adopted as a Service Level Agreement within the lift maintenance arrangements).
- Doors and handles should be checked regularly for loose fittings.
- Door closers should be adjusted to an acceptable door pressure for all users (internal doors should ideally be no more than 20-25 Newtons opening force).



## CLEANING

- Floor cleaning is of particular importance as it presents a hazard whilst wet; as such it should be

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# Access & Inclusion: Facilities Management & Housekeeping Issues



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washed at times when the building has its lowest occupancy levels and suitable temporary signs and cones used to mark the hazard whilst drying takes place.

- Where hard floors are in place, care must be taken to communicate to cleaning and caretaking staff that these should not be polished or buffed, as such processes introduce glare problems which will particularly affect people with sensory impairments and may make the floor slippery for everyone.
- Regular cleaning of light fittings and windows maximises available light sources. Dirty or dusty light fittings may reduce light levels, this affects many people with lower vision, (most people over sixty require twice as much light as twenty year olds).
- Cleaning staff are the most likely to notice any locations where floor junctions are lifting or mats have become loose and should be encouraged to report this so that remedial action can be taken immediately.

## **TOILET AND WELFARE FACILITIES**

- The toilet for disabled people (accessible WC) should NEVER be used for miscellaneous storage.

Introduce a policy for cleaning staff to unravel the ends of new toilet rolls before placing on holders in all WC compartments – this is particularly helpful for people with reduced dexterity or loss of ability on one side of the body.

- Ensure waste and sanitary bins are NOT placed in the wheelchair transfer space.
- Ensure vending machines do not obstruct manoeuvring space.
- Ensure the orange alarm cord is not tied up and has the correct pull bangles at two heights, the lowest being very close to the floor.
- Alarm and call provisions from WC's must be regularly checked for function and audibility, ensuring that proper control systems are in place for response and attendance.

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Regular testing of hearing enhancement systems – if you do not have a hearing aid wearer who visits the building on a regular basis and



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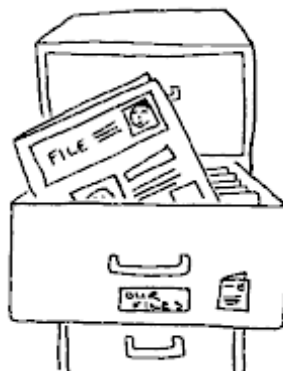
# Access & Inclusion: Facilities Management & Housekeeping Issues



(Continued from page 17)

uses this facility, make sure you can check that it is working by purchasing a loop testing device.

- The need to communicate the presence of aids is also important – e.g. are visitors aware that an induction loop system is available for those with hearing difficulties? The hearing loop symbol should be displayed.
- Temporary signage, posters and information sheets should be carefully monitored to ensure they do not compromise an otherwise clear wayfinding system. Temporary or ad-hoc displays can be confusing for someone who is partially sighted trying to negotiate the building.
- If laminating temporary notices, use only matt sheets and assess under the lighting conditions where the information will be displayed.



clear of debris and obstacles at all times.

- Storage of temporary materials or deliveries within inappropriate areas can quickly make a building inaccessible and pose a hazard to everyone.
- Contractors and suppliers must be instructed on designated storage areas so that they do not compromise access with materials.
- It is helpful to mark with hatching or a different colour where items may be safely but temporarily stacked.
- Careful selection of storage media and appropriate containers to maximise storage potential is extremely important where space is restricted.

For example:

Floor to ceiling wall storage can give excellent utilisation of all available space, and also improve the sound separation between rooms.

## STORAGE

- The accessible WC facility for disabled people should NEVER be used for miscellaneous storage
- Corridors, means of escape and general access routes must be kept
- Regularly review storage cupboards and dispose of unwanted or surplus items on a frequent basis.

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# Access & Inclusion: Facilities Management & Housekeeping Issues



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- Centralised storage options can avoid duplication of records providing they are well managed but care should be taken to ensure that all users can access this information independently or a management procedure is in place for assistance when needed.

## TRAINING

Designing and running a building in an accessible way does not guarantee that discrimination cannot take place.

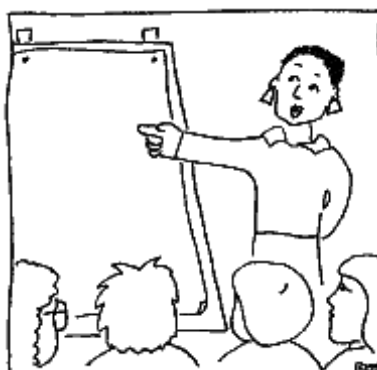
Although every effort should be made to allow disabled people to remain as independent as possible through the provision of good physical access, clear signage, good acoustics, and the installation of hearing enhancement systems, a fully inclusive service will also need management policies and procedures which address attitudinal change and training in disability awareness. This will embrace the training of staff (both in-house and out-sourced) and ensure that they allow time to assist disabled people.

- All staff receive some quality and awareness training as part of their induction.
- Staff at key points, such as car park

facilities, reception and help desks, are comprehensively trained to deal with diverse user needs.

- Reception and front of house staff must have disability awareness training and be aware of the variety of potential user needs on registration. Signing in procedures may need adjustment for some visitors, and an explanation of health, safety or fire practices for the building may need to be communicated in a different way.

- An emergency egress procedure that addresses the special requirements of disabled people must exist (see section on Fire and Emergency Egress).



- Some buildings have fire instructions on the rear of visitor badges, which is a useful way of ensuring that

this information remains with the visitor at all times during their visit. Ensure this information is easy to read, with key bullet points printed in a minimum of 12pt sans serif font such as Arial or Helvetica with good contrast against background and in adequate colour contrast. Apart from the main heading, block capitals should be avoided – they

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# Access & Inclusion: Facilities Management & Housekeeping Issues



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are slower to read by everyone but may cause additional difficulties for some people with dyslexia or vision impairments.

Periodic review meetings on management issues should invite discussions with employee and student representatives with disabilities; these provide an invaluable contribution to the development of an environment encouraging true integration and inclusion. However, before implementing any works suggested by user groups, double check that they do not compromise the wider, pan disability needs of other users.

## REFURBISHMENTS

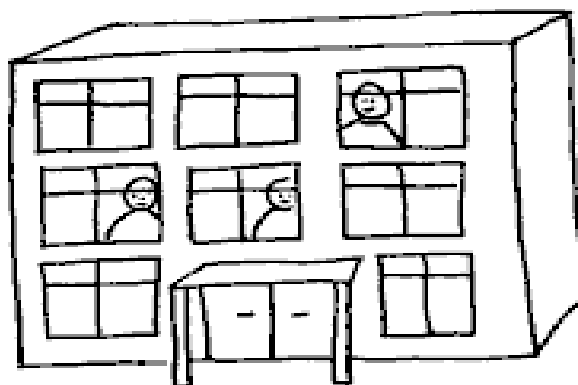
Routine maintenance and refits can provide opportunities for further improvements to accessibility at little or no additional cost.

Sometimes original plans for access are overlooked when refurbishing or changing parts of the building. Permanent records on standards for internal finishing can prevent previously established parameters for good access being compromised through lack of awareness. An established colour palette can ensure that adequate contrast is maintained when redecoration occurs and can be particularly helpful across a property

portfolio in controlling the use and application of colour in a sensible way.

Contractors and suppliers must be supervised to make sure safety guidelines are observed and access to the building maintained or properly adjusted under temporary conditions.

Many college refurbishment works take place during partial or low occupation of a building. Consider including in your contracts with suppliers and contractors the need for maintaining reasonable access for all potential building users throughout and appropriate consideration towards the storage of materials and equipment to avoid introducing barriers and trip hazards. For example, unless specifically pointed out to contractors, they may establish a temporary entrance route which is a barrier to some building users or has unacceptable risks for some individuals. In the contractor's statutory risk assessment under CDM,



# Access & Inclusion: Facilities Management & Housekeeping Issues



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consideration must be given to all users, especially where disabled people are known users of the space and appropriate adjustments or management procedures put in place, such as temporary ramps of a suitable type, and very clear signage for alternative routes.

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## Newsletter Contribution

If you would like to contribute to future DDA newsletters with your 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.