

Disability Action Head Office

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Disability Action Annual Report

2002-2003

This document is also available, on request, in Braille, audio, large print, computer disk or as a pdf document.

Disability Action is a registered Charity: Charity No. XN71868A



CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWARD

Disability Action like many other voluntary organisations has had a difficult few years. We have now gone through a period of restructure, which has made the organisation stronger and better equipped to face a future still full of political uncertainty and increased pressures on public expenditure.

I would like to commend the Board, staff and volunteers of Disability Action for their efforts during the year, the Board for their diligence in executing their corporate responsibility and the staff and volunteers for their continued hard work and loyalty.

We now look forward to the future with renewed hope and faith in the sector to meet the needs of people with disabilities. We welcome the review of how the sector is to be resourced and hope that this will lead not only to more resources but to greater equality in their distribution.

This Annual Report clearly outlines the high quality services Disability Action provides to thousands of disabled people and their families each year. We look forward to continuing with these and to improving the support we provide to our existing and potential members.

I hope the forthcoming year brings you progress and prosperity.

Thank you for your continued support.



Ken Roulston,
Chairperson



Ken Roulston, Chairperson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Chair	Ken Roulston	
Vice Chair	Geraldine McKeever	(until January 2003)
	Kieran Harris	(until January 2003)
	Gerry Maguire	(from January 2003)
Honorary Treasurer	Tom Coard	(from January 2003)
Members	Tom Carter	
	Robert Sands	
	Brian Fox	(until May 2002)
	Geraldine Fennell	
	Margaret Haddock	
	Thomas McGrath	
	Norman McKinley	
	Hugh McPoland	
David Mackey		
Rena Shepherd		
Ronnie Hanna		

I start this report by expressing the condolences of Disability Action to the family of Joan McClelland, our Publications Officer who died during this year. Joan was a vibrant committed, contributing individual who will be sadly missed and well remembered.

This has been an important period for disability organisations. Pressure on funding sources and the narrowing of funding criteria have made it much more difficult to access the resources this sector needs to deliver relevant and high quality programmes to disabled people and their families who remain among the most excluded groups in Northern Ireland society.

The barriers to accessing mainstream funding have been compounded by the difficulties in applying for short-term programmes such as Peace.

We understand the public sector demands for efficiency, effectiveness and innovation. However the public sector should be careful not to destroy the innovation this sector so obviously brings by introducing over burdening regulations and monitoring systems.



If the disability sector is to continue as a place of innovation and good practice development, then there must be recognition by government of the need to take risks and sometimes to fail.

Consultation processes and policies need to be developed in ways which put disabled people at the centre rather than at the periphery of the process. During this year we have continued to work to achieve this end responding to 175 consultations and organising a series of focus group meetings to explore issues of inclusion.

We have maintained our focus on equality and human rights and are clear that these issues along with resourcing, inclusion, representation and participation will continue to be on our agenda for the foreseeable future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Monica Wilson'.

Monica Wilson,
Chief Executive

MEMBERSHIP

Disability Action's 180 members continue to be the foundation of our success as an organisation representing disabled people.

The membership through meetings and dialogue has enabled us to develop policies in areas such as human rights and housing during the year. We have also continued to deliver advice on organisational issues such as human resources to the membership and have endeavoured to ensure that the needs of our sector have remained on the agenda of local politicians and government departments.

It is our intention to be more focussed on the corporate services we can deliver to members in the incoming year, whilst continuing to represent the sector at local, regional and national government level.

EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT

2002-03 was a difficult year for Employment Support with the re-introduction, by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL), of a freeze on recruitment and the development of a revised scheme. Staff provided opportunities for employees and employers to express their views on the proposals for change at consultation meetings on consecutive weeks in September 2002. Feedback from these meetings, was forwarded to the Department for Employment and Learning with Disability Action's own response.

Staff continued to offer a high quality service to 198 disabled people and their employers. Service development was also very much on the agenda with a focus on operational issues such as action planning and progression.

The team continued to work on a number of issues, including equality of opportunity within NICS and with the Inland Revenue on the Disabled Person's Tax Credit. The year also saw work commence with the Disablement Advisory Service on confidentiality guidelines.



TRAINING SUPPORT

621 people with disabilities were referred to and supported by the Training Support Service during 2002-03. This year 31% of leavers secured employment and 17% moved on to further training. Employment outcomes were badly affected by the freeze on Employment Support and representations were made to the Department for Employment and Learning to highlight the impact of the freeze.

Discussions were initiated during the year with the Careers Service and a number of Training Organisations on best practice in offering training to young people with disabilities.

Young Women Making it Work

Work began in partnership with Youth Action (NI) on a project funded under the Equal initiative, which addresses the particular barriers faced by young women in accessing training and employment. The project brings together Disability Action, NICEM, Derry Travellers, the Western Education and Library Board, YouthNet and Youth Action, to identify the barriers faced by disadvantaged young women and to build a programme to meet their needs.

The project has targeted a group of young women with a range of disabilities in the Dungannon/Armagh area for its first phase of consultation.

TRANSPORT

During 2002-03, Disability Action's door-to-door transport service had 1527 registered passengers and completed 33,544 passenger trips throughout the North and West Belfast area. The number of passenger trips was a reduction on last year's figures due to the lack of vehicles as highlighted in the previous report. New vehicles will become available in the New Year and we hope that our service levels will increase to previous levels.

The group transport service carried 19,000 passengers on 932 trips throughout Ireland and the United Kingdom. This was also a reduction on last year and was partly due to the uncertainty of vehicle insurance at the start of the year. Insurance has subsequently been secured, and this service has begun to grow again.

MOBILITY CENTRE

The Northern Ireland Mobility Centre has seen an increase in the number and variety of assessments with the main referral agent still being the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland. 643 assessments have been carried out

during 2002-03 with the majority of these being full assessments.

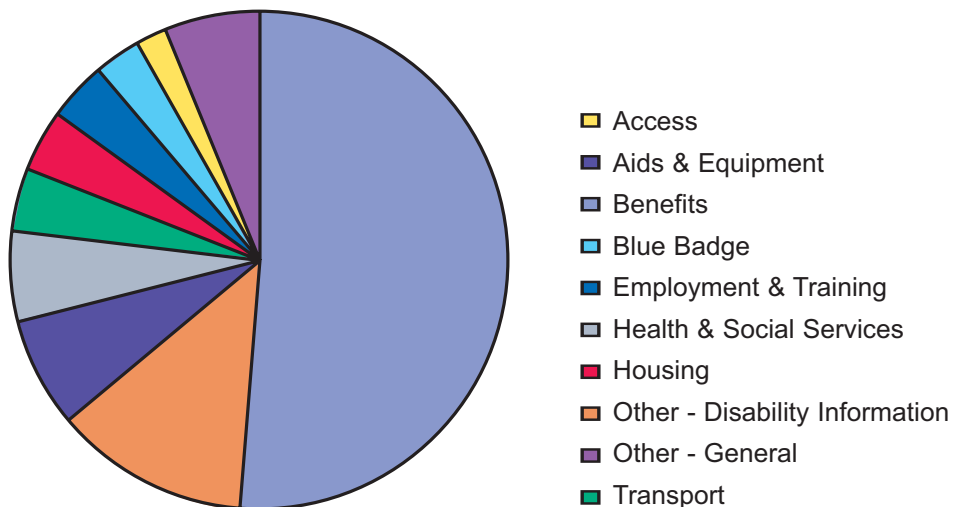
In addition, there has been a marked rise in the demand for assessments outside Belfast and this year we have carried out 61 days of assessments at Disability Action's regional offices in Dungannon, Newry and Derry.

Disability Action currently employs two Driving Instructors, who have delivered 884 driving lessons during 2002-03.

Due to the increased awareness of the service, Disability Action is clear that we need to develop our coverage of rural areas. Calls from people with disabilities, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Doctors, Social Workers, Carers and Disability Action member organisations all support that demand.



Disability Action's Information Unit provides specialist information and advice to people with disabilities, their families and others concerned with disability issues. In the year 2002-03 the unit dealt with 13,314 information queries.



Breakdown of Information Queries 2002-03

Disability Action continues to influence government policy, ensuring that the disability sector is represented in consultation processes. In this year we received and responded to 175 government consultation documents.

In January 2003, Disability Action held a series of consultation workshops across Northern Ireland on behalf of the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM), with children and young people with disabilities to determine the key issues they felt should be included in the Childrens' Strategy.

The Mobility Show was used to launch the Social Security Agency's A-Z Guide for People with Disabilities, the first document of its kind in Northern Ireland. The A-Z Guide was produced in partnership with Disability Action and throughout the year over 10,000 copies were distributed.

The aim of the day was, with the support of our membership, to encourage participation and to place the issue of human rights for people with disabilities on the agendas of political parties.

The following activities took place to mark the day:

European Commission Offices

A group of disabled and non-disabled people wearing t-shirts with the slogan 'Human Rights for Us' demonstrated at the European Commission Office in Belfast. Each was holding a statement relating to areas in which people with disabilities are not equal:

- Education
- Health and Social Services
- Housing
- Employment and Training
- Transport

Presentations to Politicians

Political parties were presented with the Alliance for Human Rights for People with Disabilities submission to the Human Rights Commission. Each party was asked to '**recognise that people with disabilities are first and foremost human beings, entitled to the full range of human rights**'. They were also invited to '**commit to ensure this recognition is physically and economically possible**'.

Similar presentations were made in Ballymoney, Belfast, Derry, Dungannon, Magherafelt and Newry and involved Ballymoney Disability Forum, Equality 2000, Magherafelt and District Disability Forum and Newry and Mourne Users Consortium. A good example of member involvement!

EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Disability Action has continued to play an active role in the process of mainstreaming equality of opportunity and good relations in public policy decision-making.

This year saw the continued production of Public Authorities draft Equality Schemes, consultation on the screening of policies and the introduction of the Equality Impact Assessment process.

In response, Disability Action organised and facilitated numerous consultations, workshops and seminars for Public Authorities resulting in Disability Action's membership engaging in meaningful consultation on the policies, services and functions that directly affect them.

The challenge of the implementation of the Statutory Duties (under Section 75 of the N Ireland Act 1998) will be a key one for Disability Action and its members in the future.

TRANSPORT ADVISORY COMMITTEE (TAC)

This year's major consultation was on the Regional Transportation Strategy, which sets out the direction of transport policy for the next 10 years. Another important consultation was on the proposals to lift the exemption for transport services from some of the civil rights duties in Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act, undertaken by the Department of Transport in London.

The TAC raised other issues with Government including the concerns about shared pedestrian and cycling facilities and the difficulties of access for disabled people to pedestrian areas.

Special mention must be made to changes in the Concessionary Fares Scheme in Northern Ireland. The TAC has worked with its partners to highlight the need

for an extension of the present scheme to cover wider groups of disabled people. The Department for Regional Development announced in February 2003 their proposals to do this.

A key theme for the TAC this year was improving transport information. Two publications were produced - the first is a series of transport factsheets providing information signposts to where disabled people can get information on accessible transport. The second is a set of guidelines for transport providers in making information accessible to older and disabled people.

The TAC continues to work closely with Translink to further improve disabled people's access to bus and train services. This year we have been involved in advising Translink on the design of new trains and working with them to highlight the benefits of new accessible transport to wheelchair users.



FOCUS CONSULTANCY

Disability Action's Focus Consultancy, which provides a comprehensive training consultancy service, delivered 205 training sessions to over 3,100 participants. This included Government departments, as well as public, private and voluntary sector clients.

Key successes included:

- The extensions of its contract with the Government Purchasing Agency as one of only three approved Human Rights and Equality Training Development and Advisory Services providers
- Consultancy with the Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards to develop a bespoke cross border Consultation Skills training course
- The delivery of a large training programme to Causeway Health & Social Services Trust, Homefirst Community Trust and the Department for Regional Development
- Delivery of an accredited Capacity Building Programme to people with disabilities

ACCESS

The Access Team has worked in partnership with external agencies and other professionals this year to raise awareness of access and the DDA 2004. The team brought together Building Control officials and disability organisations to agree upon an interpretation of the Building Regulations and good practice in relation to disability access.

We worked in partnership with the Health and Safety Executive and the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland to produce 'Balancing Health and Safety and Disability Rights - A Guide for Employers'. We have also participated in the Built Environment Advisory Forum and have advised on the content of other important documents including the draft Development Control Advice Note 11, the review of Approved Document M and the new British Standard BS 8300.

We worked closely with Translink and audited their 41 stations and 37 halts. We undertook access audits for Leonard Cheshire of the accessibility of youth provision in the Southern Board area.

Much of the Team's effort is spent advising professionals involved in the design of the built environment as well as disabled people themselves.

Over this period the Access Team checked 865 planning applications and advised the design teams involved on how to provide accessibility in these schemes. The Team also responded to 1149 enquiries for technical advice and information.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Development Unit delivered capacity and group development Training to over 270 people with disabilities and 159 disability organisations throughout Northern Ireland.

Our researchers completed 7 surveys on the community needs of people with disabilities and we hosted 8 seminars with disability organisations to discuss the outcomes of the surveys.



In August the unit completed work on a 'Disability Community Development Handbook'. In November, the Unit hosted a major conference in Antrim on the issue of User Involvement with over 100 people in attendance.

A key element of our work has been our involvement in the Campaign for an inclusive "Human Rights Bill" for Northern Ireland. Any Bill must include the rights of people with disabilities to be recognised as human beings and therefore entitled to the same human rights as every other citizen.

DIVERSITY MATTERS

Diversity Matters, aims to promote co-operation and a partnership approach to diversity issues in the workplace.

'Action 2' of Diversity Matters officially began on the 15th May 2002. Early June saw two staff members begin work on how to fulfil the objectives of the project as decided by the 9 organisations which make up this innovative partnership. Working groups were established, monitoring and evaluation systems were set up and initial meetings and mailings introducing the project began. Other work involved:

- Establishing the concept of 'reference point organisations' for the project to ensure that the projects' activities reflected the views of a broad range of communities of interest
- Organising 8 focus groups from a variety of these communities of interest to ensure that the diversity training being developed was user lead

The next year will hopefully see the delivery of pilot diversity training, continued development of work with our European partners and an increase in information dissemination to decision makers.

MARKETING & FUNDRAISING

During 2002-03 the Marketing Unit undertook new events, established business partnerships and implemented marketing strategies with the aim of achieving growth in fundraising activities. The Unit also continued to provide a marketing function for the organisation as a whole, assisting other departments in the production of publications, providing PR support and event management services.

Business Support Scheme

Disability Action's Business Support Scheme was re-launched at a breakfast seminar held at the Europa Hotel in September 2002. The Business Support Scheme has now been formatted so that businesses work through a number of key areas in order to achieve a model of good practice in relation to disability issues and to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

The scheme is supported by Invest Northern Ireland and was launched with their assistance. As a result of the seminar a number of high profile organisations have joined the scheme including the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Progressive Building Society. Longstanding members of the scheme such as SX3, the Inland Revenue and NIE have also signed up to the new scheme.

Mobility Show

The bi-annual Mobility Show was held at the Kings Hall on the 31st May and 1st June. Over 4000 people attended the exhibition, which showcased products, services and information available to people with disabilities. Among the attractions was the opportunity to test-drive a wide range of accessible cars, scooters and wheelchairs as well as trying out a variety of innovative home and personal equipment.

Parity Graduates Community Days

Graduates from the Premier 2 programme, which is provided by Parity, organised two events to raise funds for Disability Action.

Mini Challenge - The graduates were set the challenge of breaking the world record for Mini Cramming. This involved getting as many people as possible into a new Mini Cooper, which was kindly provided for this event by Bavarian Garages in Belfast. The Graduates succeeded in breaking the record at the Odyssey Arena, getting 24 people in the car!

Leap of Love - On Valentines Day a group of 30 people from Parity and Disability Action took a 'Leap of Love' by abseiling down the Europa Hotel. Our thanks to the Belfast Activity Centre for their assistance in organising the event and to the Europa Hotel for its continued support of Disability Action.

Schools Programme

Seventeen Teen Zone and fifteen Kids Zone presentations were delivered to schools across Northern Ireland. The programme continued to be funded by the Nationwide Foundation during the year. Additional funding for the programme was provided by the staff of the Inland Revenue, who raised over £3,000 for the project.

Disability Action (NI)**Directors' statement on summarised financial statements**

The directors present the summarised financial statements, embracing the accounts of the company and its subsidiary company, Disability Action (NI) Employment & Training Services, for the year ended 31 March 2003.

Summarised financial statements

(a) These are not the statutory accounts but a summary of information relating to both the Statement of Financial Activities and the balance sheet.

(b) The full financial statements from which the summary is derived have been audited and there was an unqualified audit report.

(c) A copy of the statutory accounts from which the summarised financial statements have been prepared can be obtained by contacting the Company Secretary at:

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Textphone: 028 9029 7882
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(d) The full statutory accounts were approved at a meeting of the directors held on 26 August 2003.



M Wilson, Secretary

Disability Action (NI)
Consolidated Statement of Financial Activities (incorporating an Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31 March 2003

	Unrestricted Funds 2003 £	Restricted Funds 2003 £	Total Funds 2003 £	Total Funds 2002 £
Income and Expenditure				
Incoming Resources				
Donations	4,484		4,484	5,979
Activities in furtherance of charitable objectives	369,757	3,186,887	3,556,644	3,379,299
Activities to generate funds	168,982		168,982	93,696
Investment income	798	1,718	2,516	12,548
Other income	26,645	600	27,245	34,275
Total Incoming Resources	570,666	3,189,205	3,759,871	3,525,797
Resources Expended				
Cost of generating funds				
Fundraising and publicity	199,705		199,705	93,834
Charitable expenditure				
Grants payable		40,000	40,000	23,124
Activities in furtherance of charitable objectives	160,657	3,163,859	3,324,516	3,219,176
Support costs	155,700	8,033	163,733	196,714
Management and administration	18,746	2,248	20,994	20,843
Total resources expended	534,808	3,214,140	3,748,948	3,553,691
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfer	35,858	(24,935)	10,923	(27,894)
Transfers between funds	(305)	305		
Net movement in funds	35,553	(24,630)	10,923	(27,894)
Balances brought forward at 1 April 2002	835,498	773,622	1,609,120	1,637,014
Balances carried forward at 31 March 2003	871,051	748,992	1,620,043	1,609,120

The company has no recognised gains or losses other than those disclosed in the Statement of Financial Activities.

Disability Action (NI)
Consolidated Balance Sheet as at March 2003

	2003		2002	
	£	£	£	£
Fixed Assets				
Tangible assets		1,814,804		1,863,557
Current Assets				
Debtors	763,963		664,514	
Short-term deposits	185,083		246,720	
Cash at bank and in hand	87,563		50,987	
	1,036,609		962,221	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(921,543)		(601,309)	
Net Current Assets		115,066		360,912
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		(309,827)		(615,349)
Net Assets		1,620,043		1,609,120
Funds				
General funds		153,690		118,137
Designated funds		717,361		717,361
Restricted funds		748,992		773,622
		1,620,043		1,609,120

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 26 August 2003 and signed on its behalf by

Director 

Director 

Independent Auditors' Statement to the Members of Disability Action (NI)

We have examined the summarised financial statements on pages 19 to 20.

Respective responsibilities of directors and auditors

The directors are responsible for preparing the summarised Annual Report in accordance with the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements within the summarised Annual Report with the full annual accounts and Directors' Report, and its compliance with the relevant requirements of Article 259 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and the regulations made thereunder. We also read the other information contained in the summarised Annual Report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

Basis of opinion

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 1999/6 "The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement" issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom.

Opinion

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full annual accounts and directors' report for the year ended 31 March 2003 and comply with the applicable requirements of Article 259 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 and the regulations made thereunder.



Muir & Addy

Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors

Muir Building, 427 Holywood Road, Belfast, BT4 2LT

26 August 2003