

## Gateshead Access Panel

### Disabled People Adult Learning Opportunity Project

It was identified in earlier work between Gateshead Access Panel and the Adult Learning Team at Gateshead Council. That disabled people have complex requirements to access Adult Learning. This project was set up to support disabled people into Adult Learning.

The aim of this project was:

- Support disabled people into learning
- Support providers to develop suitable systems to ensure disabled people get suitable support.
- 30 adults would be helped in this way

#### Findings

The project started well and I was reasonably confident that we would reach the figure set for the project of 30 disabled people. But unfortunately we did not meet this target set and only support 14 adults into learning. This was due to the time it took to advise and support an individual learner through the process.

<b>Gender</b>		<b>Employment Status</b>	
7	Female	2	employed
7	Male	10	Sick/Incapacity
		2	Retired
<b>Ethnic Group:</b>			
All White/British			
<b>Age:</b>		<b>Main impairment:</b>	
Two in age range	16-25	Physical	8
Eight in age range	26-55	Visual	1
Three in age range	55-64	Mental Health	2
One in age range	65+	Learning Disability	3

This of course is a simplistic breakdown of impairment groups, and this is probably the way impairment groups are seen/broken down for most of the statutory bodies. As with many disabled adult learners the nature of an

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individual's impairment can be/or are complex. The next set of figures give a more realistic picture of the range of impairments the volunteers have.

### Multiple Impairments    Main Impairment

Physical	10	8
Visual	1	1
Mental Health	3	2
Learning Disabilities/Difficulties	6	3

### Support Needs

Support needs varied within the people supported. Mostly sourcing a course for them, one that would not only satisfy their need but also one that preferably free, was near to their home as possible, as transport is still an issue with some disabled people, and also courses that were conducted in the daytime. Nobody wanted to attend a course that was held on an evening.

Time taken in assisting each of the fourteen adult learners varied from two hours of my time to thirty hours of my time on an individual learner. All in all I spent approximately 125 hrs collectively with adult learners. This time was made up of;

- One to one interviews
- Home visits
- Telephone calls
- Emails
- Research/internet
- Letters
- Travel

Where assistance was needed for equipment/adaptations to allow a disabled person to participate in learning this proved to be a more difficult task.

- One person needed training on voice activated software which would enable him to use a computer and then start computer courses in the borough. Only private avenues were available at great considerable cost to the individual who was on benefits so this was not a viable option. Training was eventually sorted from a national charity based in London.
- One person who wished to attend a course run by community based services was visually impaired he had been using a computer for several years and knew which software best suited his needs. We informed the

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course provider who argued the point that they had other software that was just as good and suitable for the learners needs even when the learner quite clearly expressed that indeed the software they had did not suit his needs. DET training is needed on this occasion with people understanding that it is individual need that needs to be addresses. Whilst two people attending a course may well be both visually impaired their impairment will probably differ quite substantially and they may well need different equipment.

- Another learner was going to attend a couple of courses run by Gateshead Council. We requested a height adjustable table as the person in question is a wheelchair user. They were not sure if they could provide this person with that piece of equipment. I directed them to the adult learning team to see if they could liaise with them on this occasion.

One of the tasks we agreed to take on with this project was to also feed back to Gateshead Councils Adult Learning Team as to if programmes/venues are not relevant or suitable.

At the start of this programme we did inform Adult learning of a number of issues that disabled people had given us around Facilities and procedures etc that they had problems with when they had tried to engage with Adult Learning provision. We have also found and highlighted in this report that the courses that have been advertised in the Council news and run by the Adult Learning team are not relevant to the needs of these fourteen disabled learners. As mentioned earlier due to issues with affordable and available accessible transport disabled people prefer accessing a course closer to home or through direct learning (Learning Direct) some need one to one tutoring when it came to basic skills in numeracy and literacy.

### **Appendix 1**

This is a list of the kind courses the fourteen disabled learners attended.

### **Appendix 2**

This is the template for the agreed Personal Training Development Plan agreed upon.

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Appendix 1.

Courses Taken

- Numeracy and Literacy with Learning Direct/Challenge Project
- Basic Skills Literacy with Skills 4Life
- Level 2 English with Skills 4 Life
- Computer courses with Community Based Services
- Employment training with Community Based Services
- Assertiveness Training Economic Development
- Voice Recognition Software Training Aidas Trust
- Photography AS Level Newcastle College
- Computer course and Literacy course at Blaydon Learning Shop

Advice given on community activities as adult learning opportunities to those who were disillusioned with courses advertised.

- Sage music activities (Drums and singing)
- Krocadile Club
- Volunteering opportunities in charity shops etc
- Distance learning, Lampateer University
- Lawnmowers
- Connect Café
- Link Up for the over 50's
- Gateshead Stadium (Gym assisted by Ralph Sample)
- Older people Forum
- Age Concern the Runabouts Project
- Tea dance
- Tai Chi Qi Gong
- Also information and leaflets sent on Taxi Link and Link up Transport.

Although these are not recognised Adult Learning courses it has been acknowledged that volunteering is an avenue for adult learning. And while these people were showing enthusiasm to engage in activities that would suit their individual needs I felt it was prudent to encourage and engage with them to show them other options within the community instead of turning them away. This of course took up more of my time with initial interviews and research.

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Appendix 2.

### Personal Training Development For Disabled Adult Learner

<b>Date</b>	
<b>Learner</b>	
<b>Contact Details</b>	
<b>e.mail</b>	
<b>Address</b>	
<b>How they heard about us</b>	
<b>Enquiry</b>	
<b>Action</b>	
<b>Outcomes</b>	

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