

Loud & Proud

Summer 2003

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YOUR RIGHTS - RIGHT ON!

DRC in Key Partnership with Choices and Rights

Loud and Proud are pleased to announce that Choices and Rights have been successful in establishing a ground breaking partnership with the Disability Rights Commission (DRC).

The DRC in Manchester have established a Yorkshire and Humberside Partnership Pilot Project aiming to ensure that more disabled people find out about their rights under the DDA, promote good practice and to provide casework for conciliation hearings, etc.

Choices and Rights were invited to tender to the DRC and it should lead to a number of positive benefits for disabled



people including:

- Two new posts; a DDA Information/Advice Worker and a DDA Caseworker to join the team at the Centre for Independent Living.
- Fill the gap in disability rights that has been missing in Hull since the Humberside Law Centre's funding ran out for their disability rights worker.
- Enable local disabled people to influence the national disability picture.
- The opportunity for sharing resources, enabling us to be able to access key DRC services, relevant training sessions and to consult with the DRC's legal experts on cases involving local disabled people.

In addition, Choices and Rights Chair, Mark Baggley had

the opportunity to speak at the DRC's away day for all staff and Commissioner's on 16th July in Manchester, around Partnership Working and Capacity Building.

The away day was an important event in helping to plan the future work of the DRC and involved many important people in the disability movement including Andy Rickell (Chair - BCODP), Tom Shakespeare (Centre for Life), Kate Nash (RADAR), and Bert Massie (Chief Executive, DRC).

We hope to have more news about the new posts shortly, so if you are interested or want to apply for one of the posts, please keep an eye on the local press and our web site at:

www.choicesandrights.org.uk

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If you have any comments or suggestions for future issues of Loud & Proud, please let us know.

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to this issue of Loud & Proud.

DISCLAIMER:

The views in Loud and Proud do not necessarily reflect the views of Choices and Rights Disability Coalition.

Campaign

To Close SCOPE's Segregated Institutions and Schools

Dr Laurence Clark Joint Chief Secretary, BCODP

Disabled people have launched a new website to campaign against the segregated schools and residential institutions run by SCOPE, the UK charity for disabled people with cerebral palsy currently celebrating its golden jubilee. Using facts and figures derived from their own publications, it show how they have oppressed disabled people time and time again, by taking public money to run out-dated segregated services. Facts from the website include:

In 2002 SCOPE still run 17 residential institutions in England and Wales, incarcerating up to 367 disabled people. During the financial year 2000/1, SCOPE received £11,545,000 from local government to run "non-community based" residential services. They spent £11,456,000 running these services, meaning that they made a net profit of £89,000 from the incarceration of disabled people in residential homes. Currently only 2.98% of Scope's 3,789 employees are disabled people. SCOPE are currently not even eligible for the "two tick" system, the government's kite mark for employers who are positive about disabled people.

Cases of child abuse are not uncommon in segregated schools, including those run by Scope. For example, in November

1997 Scope closed Hawksworth Hall School under allegations that children "were thumped, force fed, made to walk upstairs and held in chairs."

The only money received by SCOPE to go directly to disabled people are their grants, which account for 0.75% of their £90 million annual income. In other words, out of every pound that you give them, less than one penny will go directly to a disabled person.

Responding to the website on Yourable.com, a spokesperson from SCOPE admitted that: "there were many people working for the charity who would agree with some of the website's views."

SCOPE have often said that they look forward to a day when their organisation is no longer needed. Our website asserts the belief that the day has arrived, since we now have organisations, such as the British Council of Disabled People, competently run and controlled by disabled people themselves. The days of disability charities are over.

Visit the website at:
www.spastics-society.com

For more details contact:
 Dr Laurence Clark at
lc@laurenceclark.co.uk

(Source: 'Activate' from BCODP - November 2002- Issue 51)

Amanda Dunn

We are sad to report the death of one of our members, Amanda Dunn who passed away this July.

I first met Amanda a number of years ago when she was employed as a mental health worker and I was working for social services. Amanda was a lively, intelligent and fun person and had a great deal of interest in the people she worked for. A few years later, I met Amanda again after she had become disabled and had tried to continue working, despite lack of support from her employer.

Eventually, she left her job, but then got heavily involved in trying to improve the rights of disabled people and particular disabled parents. Amanda instigated one of the first studies into issues for disabled parents by the University of Humberside, was featured on BBC Radio 4 campaigning for access into her local bank and constantly tried to improve the services provided by the social services department. She also single-handedly improved access for disabled people at her local swimming pool, lobbying councillors, etc until she was successful.

Amanda's death is not just a loss to the disabled people's movement, but to society as a whole. To quote a close friend of hers: "It's awful to lose such a dynamic, intelligent and vibrant person, someone who was so full of life and such a loyal friend to so many people."

Amanda leaves behind a daughter Henrietta and Choices and Rights would like to offer our sympathy to Amanda's family, friends and former colleagues who we know will miss her greatly.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY DAN

DAN the disabled people's Direct Action Network is 10 years old.

Over the past 10 years DAN has been at the forefront of the Campaigns for Accessible Public Transport, Civil Rights and the right for disabled people to live in their own communities and not institutions.

DAN like Ghandi, Martin Luther King and the Suffragettes before them use tactics of non-violent civil disobedience to advance the cause.

This year we are campaigning for organisations run by disabled people to be fully funded and for charities to move out of our lives. £99 in every hundred the government spends goes to charities, the other pound goes to organisations run by disabled people. The government thinks we can not run our own lives. The government is wrong.

Charities employ political lobbyists because they believe we can't speak for ourselves - we can!

It's time our voice was heard. It time the government had to deal with the real people not the people they pay millions to lock us up.

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US!

If you are interested in joining DAN or supporting our actions please contact our national office at

30 Hayward Road

Whetstone

London.

N20. OHA

Telephone - 0208-343-7402

Email ANDY.GILL@fsmail.net

JOIN DAN TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!



RANT: The Disabled?

It may just be me, but I have a growing pet hate for the phrase "The disabled". I personally prefer "Disabled people", and I get a little niggled when I read things like '... new low level counter for *the disabled*.' or 'Access has been improved for *the disabled*.' I would prefer to read '... new low level counter for disabled people' or 'Access has been improved for disabled people.'

It sounds like a herd of thing-a-me-bobs, you know, like this one big huge blob of people with disabilities. "We have worked on this project with the disabled ..."; you've worked with the entire community of disabled people and consulted everyone with a disability?

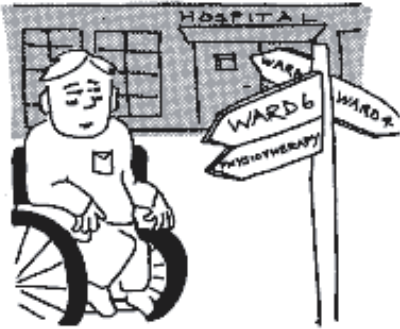
You'd be hard pressed to find material referring to black people as 'The blacks', and should blind people be happy being called 'the blind' or deaf people be commuted to 'the deaf'?

Like I've said, it's a pet hate, a personal gripe, but I wonder if anyone else feels the same way - shouldn't people with disabilities be 'disabled people': individuals in their own right, a person, not clumped together with every other disabled person in one sweeping phrase?

Maybe I'm just taking this too far, or maybe what I'm saying makes crystal clear sense. I would like to hear from 'disabled people' about what they think of 'the disabled' !

Shaun Hague - shaun@dtowebdesign.com

The Visit



“Can you manage that ok dear?”

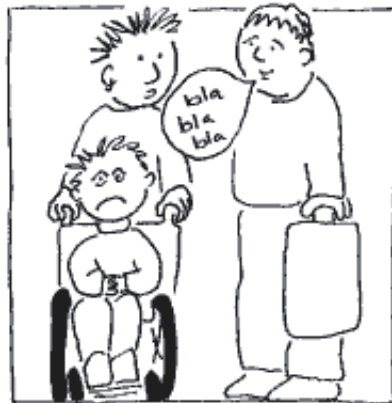
Said the middle aged, homely looking nurse as she handed me a small piece of paper with five yes/no questions on it. Can I manage it? Well, I don't know, I mean I'm only 42, in full time employment with a number of qualifications to my name. Can I manage to do what with it? Colour it in, make it into a model of the leaning tower of Pisa or maybe just answer the questions.

She doesn't realize that such a simple phrase can really piss me off for the rest of the day. I'm sure she was just being nice, but would she have asked any other man the same question or could it be perhaps, because I'm the only one she has seen today that happens to use a wheelchair?

Hospitals are bad enough places to be with out having to put up with this kind of attitude. Surely the staff are aware that disabled people are just like anyone else or because of their training or they only see us as a condition, Look Mavis, it's the

epileptic, the cancer patient, the one with the constant diarrhea. Maybe they can't identify that we are also friends, lovers, family members, workers and yes, some of us are even doctors and nurses.

What should I have said? Yes, I think I can, now please piss off and patronize someone else. Would that have shocked her or would she have just ensured that I had some despicable treatment once I reached the doctors room. Would she have made sure I waited an extra two hours for my “cheek” or would she have looked hurt as I rebuffed her caring attitude.



Maybe I should have asked her if she could manage to read my answers. Did she need a hand with that injection on the hemophiliac in cubicle 3, or assistance with the removal of the spina bifida spleen?

“Can you manage that dear”, such a short sentence and yet it set off an explosion of emotions. So what did I do? ... nothing. So

why did I do nothing? Well, all of the above thoughts happened in a matter of seconds. You're always a bit surprised when it happens, even though it happens a lot, more often than it should (i.e. never).

You're in a room with lots of other people. Most of us (disabled or not) don't want to cause a fuss, we don't want to have a row in public, or appear to be aggressive (verbally or other wise). And I was in a hospital, a place that I don't particularly want to be in and where we are all disempowered at various times. We don't understand the language that medical staff use and when they mutter together, I tend to think they're saying some really bad news that they're dreading telling me.

So I sat there, quietly seething as I completed the simple form in a matter of seconds. Eventually, she returned and I handed it back, with a sarcastic “I think I managed it ok”. Then immediately after she'd gone, I thought what if she didn't get the sarcasm and thought I was asking her to check I'd done it ok? Would she come back again and unintentionally patronize me again with something like “Yes, dear you managed it fine!”?

Thankfully she didn't but by then I was kicking myself for not saying something in the first place or at least having a snappy reply

when she picked the form up.

The interesting thing about this is that it sums up quite nicely the question that I sometimes get asked. "What's it like to be disabled?" The question itself is a bit daft anyway, as depending on your impairment (i.e. if your deaf, blind or a wheelchair user, your reply is always going to be different), but what links all disabled people together is attitudes.

Changing physical barriers (i.e. ramps, electric Doors) is easy. But changing people's attitudes is a lot harder. I know of blind people who have had people talk to their guide dog, but ignore them, deaf people who can't hear have been shouted at as a way of trying to communicate with them and disabled people who have been out with their friends being ignored as their friend is asked "What do they want?", "Can they understand anything?", (Etc). From my perspective this is far more annoying than any other aspect of disability because it's harder to sort out.

Wait a minute I hear you say. Ok, it happens, but it doesn't happen all the time. Surely, you can just ignore it and put it down to that person's lack of knowledge, understanding or ignorance? Okay, you can, but imagine each time you do that it cuts away at you. So by the end of the week, month or year, each

act of patronization has grown from a small annoyance to a huge pressure gauge waiting to explode.



Unfortunately, when it does go off, it isn't guaranteed to go off at the person who maybe needs it the most. So it could be some small remark that sends you over the edge, but only because you've held back over much bigger ones over a period of time.

Imagine how you would feel (assuming that you are not disabled) and you go out for a romantic meal with your partner. You arrive at the restaurant, happy, in love, having had a great day together.



As you enter the restaurant, a few people stare at you, the waiter approaches and asking your partner (never you) if you have a booking. You reply, shocking the waiter who the shows you to your table. Somehow you're table is in the corner, out of the way from the other diners. Were you put here because the restaurant is full or is there another reason? You don't complain, but settle down to enjoy your meal. The food and the service is good, but then a man whose been watching you from another table, walks past on his way out. As he does, he turns to your partner and says "He's enjoying that isn't he?" and continues walking. He leaves the restaurant before you have time to swallow that bit of steak and issue a reply. Do you still feel as romantic as you leave the restaurant or do you feel frustrated and disempowered?

On a bad day, that's what it can feel like to be a disabled person and the sad thing is, none of the people who have made you feel bad, had any intention in doing so. Going back to my nurse; hospitals are for making people feel better and she could have made me feel better with any treatment, prescription or miracle cure. All she needed to do was treat me the same as anyone else, or is that too much to ask for in the 21st Century?

Mark Baggley

Cheap computers?

Regular readers of Loud and proud may be wondering why this issue has taken so long to come out.

Normally, we try to provide at least three issues a year and we are sorry for the lack of information to our members and allies in recent months.

Unfortunately, as well as pressure of work, etc, back in April we came into the office to find it had been burgled. Thieves had broken in to the centre, kicked down our door and stole five computers.

They cut the cables on many pieces of equipment to get away with the hard drives and left us with no access to the internet (and therefore no email), no way for our computers to link together and in some cases, staff couldn't even write letters, reports, etc.

In addition, Denise was particularly restricted as her text phone couldn't be used because it links through her computer,

Staff worked exceedingly hard to deal with the police, insurance, sorting out what was salvageable and trying to continue offering some sort of service to the many people who need our assistance.

10 days later, the computers were replaced, the door was replaced and normal service was resumed - well, for four days! The burglars came back, stole the new computers and created even

more mess. To say it was a kick in the teeth was an understatement.

Staff were gutted as they once again tided up and tried to make the best of an awful situation.

The centre had already tried to improve its security, but it was clear that more was required.

CIL staff met and thrashed out a contingency plan. The decision was taken not to replace the stolen IT equipment until security

The Board of Choices and Rights want to give their thanks to the staff for their dedication and hard work in trying to ensure that our key services continued throughout the difficulties caused by the burglaries. Sadly, the thefts have continued to cause us problems with our IT equipment, but we are working hard to get everything sorted out as quickly as possible.



had been improved further. We have now put new methods into place and may be moving to new premises later in the year.

Although we are insured, the issue isn't just about money, but about the stress, inconvenience and sheer hard work that goes into putting things back to "normal". Also, all the effort the staff spent in dealing with the crimes could have been better spent helping disabled people and their families.

It was reported in the Hull Daily Mail recently that computer theft had greatly increased in recent months and that thieves were then dismantling them to steal the chips inside for around £15 each.

Either way, if you do get offered a computer or computer parts on the cheap, think twice about buying them. They may have come from an organisation that you support or from a relative that has been burgled!

Golf Balls and Beer!

When the class began, wordlessly, the professor picked up a very large and empty mayonnaise jar and proceeded to fill it with golf balls.

He then asked the students if the jar was full?

They agreed that it was.

So the professor then picked up a box of pebbles and poured them into the jar. He shook the jar lightly. The pebbles, of course, rolled into the open areas between the golf balls.

He then asked the students if the jar was full.

They agreed that it was.

The professor picked up a box of sand and poured it into the jar. Of course, the sand filled up everything else. He then asked the once more if the jar was full.

The students responded with an unanimous – yes.

The professor then produced two cans of beer from under the



table and proceeded to pour the entire contents into the jar effectively filling the empty space between the sand. The students laughed.

"Now" said the professor, as the laughter subsided, "I want you to recognise that this jar represents your life.

The golf balls are the important things – your family, your partner, your children, your health, your favourite passions, things that if everything else was lost and only they remained, your life would still be full.

"The pebbles are the other things that matter like your job, your house, your car. The sand is everything else – the small stuff."

"If you put the sand into the jar first," he continued, "there is no room for the pebbles or the golf balls. The same goes for your life. If you spend all your time and effort on the small stuff, you will

never have room for the thing that are important to you.

"Pay attention to the things that are critical to your happiness - Play with your children - take time to get medical check-ups - take your partner out dancing, Play another 18 holes.

There will always be time to go to work, clean the house, give a dinner party and fix the disposal"

"Take care of the golf balls first – the things that really matter. Set priorities. The rest is just sand".

One of the students raised her hand and inquired what the beer represented.

The professor smiled. "I am glad you asked. It just goes to show you that no matter how full your life may seem, there's always room for a couple of beers!!!".

Your funny stories and anecdotes to:

lp@choicesandrights.org.uk

Advertising in Loud & Proud

Loud & Proud is the newsletter of Choices and Rights Disability Coalition and is currently published quarterly.

We publish on a limited budget compared with many glossy publications, but our content is always excellent and our newsletter is read by a great many more people than the number of copies we distribute.

We hope that by securing sponsorship and advertising we can increase the number we print to allow us to reach a great many more people, and if successful, increase the publication to bimonthly or even monthly!

Most of the articles are written by disabled people, for disabled people, with professionals and organisations involved in disability issues often writing articles specifically for the Loud & Proud readership.

We edit as little as possible to give our writers the freedom to speak their minds, and encourage positive thinking about the Social Model of disability as well as addressing key points regarding disability issues in the United Kingdom and our local area.

We provide a great variety of content covering many aspects of disability and life in general, and get regular 'Thank You' letters and emails from people who have enjoyed reading Loud & Proud and like the way we say what we feel without pulling any punches.

Advertising and sponsorship of Loud & Proud tells our readers that you are serious about them as people, as well as customers.

We don't accept everyone as a sponsor, you have to show us that you are positive about disability issues - if you are, we want you on board !!

Who gets copies of Loud & Proud:

- Disabled People
- Disability Groups
- Council Offices
- Members of the public
- Parents/Carers
- Social Services
- etc ...

Loud & Proud distribution:

- Hull
- Beverley
- Holderness
- Leeds
- Goole
- Selby
- etc ...

Contact us:

Contact the Choices & Rights office and ask for Liesel:

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Minicom: 01482 788668
Email:
lp@choicesandrights.org.uk

Advertising Rates

We offer advertising space with four options to suit most budgets.

You decide the level at which you wish to sponsor us by selecting the advertisement size and number of issues you wish to run the advert for.

Your contribution helps to cover the cost of design, publication and distribution for the issue/s that you sponsor.

The newsletter is printed in black and white on 80gms paper, and currently spans 16 pages.

These figures are correct at January 2003, but are subject to change:

Advertising rate per issue:

Size	Cost (£)
Sixth page	20.00
Quarter page	25.00
Half page	40.00
Full page	75.00

Full page - £75.00

Half page - £40.00

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An Irish Man's Diary

The history of people with disabilities in an Irish context has never been easy, glossy or happy, the introduction of limited Disability Equality Legislation about 5 years ago, which covers accessibility, education, employment and a few other aspects that remain in the 'grey' area, have had little impact upon improving the situation for us.

The general opinion of 'disability' is one based upon the premise 'there but for the grace of God ...', and little or no relevance placed upon the person having feelings, or a capacity for individuality. Therefore it can only be expected that having spent the past five years under the microscope of various Governmental Departments the Disability Bill will not be implemented in 2003 the European Year of the Disabled.

In 2002 a draft Bill was circulated but hastily pulled when discovered that its implementation would actually discriminate against the disability sector. You will notice that I used the term 'disability sector', to comprises a separation from the mainstream. I do this because that separation is real, a daily experience for myself and anyone else who has a disability. We exist in an environment that has been designed by the able body world with very little regard, understanding or interactive discussion between both sectors as to what 'we' need. I believe it is legislation and the environment that has the most profound

impact in preventing us from equal access.

Everyone should have the basic right to equal opportunity and the Irish Government would have you believe that the rights of the disabled are paramount to their administration. But the reality is cuts in disability funding, a major rise in people with mental illness ending up homeless, no medical care for cancer patients and everything else in-between going down the drain. To be disabled in Ireland means poverty, isolation, legislative barriers to rights and equal access, poor exposure to education, training and employment, little knowledge of individual rights, lack of basic information, and preconceived mainstream image of people with disabilities having no personal identity, having dreams, wanting to achieve, wanting the chance to break free of poverty and dependency on state aid etc.

Ireland has experienced unprecedented wealth in the past five/six years under the Celtic Tiger, yet around 400,000 disabled people live in abject poverty receiving only weekly Disability/Training allowances which are far below the recommended income rate. A horse breeder can make several million on one stallion and yet pay not one cent in tax, this also goes for Pop/Movie Stars who come to Ireland during their countries tax year to avoid paying returns on the millions they make. How many disabled people are in such a position, how many make up

the top 1000 richest list, how many are given the opportunity to achieve such? 'Enabling people to achieve', is giving them realistic supports to reach their potential talent, it is clearing the path of hard edges, covering in deep holes, ramping large hills, it is dismantling barriers, being heard, respected, recognised as a person, it is individuality, but also being part of a community, it is realising a dream, feeling good about who you are, it is people before profit.

At 37 years old I find myself in quite a scary place, that of being homeless in a society where house building is on a scale never before seen. On November 27th 2002 at approximately 7:50am flooding destroyed my accommodation. By 9:00 am of that morning I realised I had dug a 10 foot trench through a wall allowing the water to subside, it was an incredible feeling of despair, loss of 90% of possessions, but what really caused the most dread after the shock wore off was having to deal with Governmental Services like housing etc.

I knew that my prospects for getting help were zilch, and seven months later the situation is very much as I feared. Yes, I am quite depressed at what I have learned. Mix this with plenty of anger, a dollop of confusion, a smidgen of helplessness, basted with worry and served to a poly-cotton white shirt sitting behind a desk who is displaying a sneering not caring attitude at my distressed state,

June 11th 2003

leaving me to feel worse than before I entered his office and you have some idea. I had gone in to request assistance in getting other accommodation, thinking and hoping for a sympathetic hearing, but no.

I'm not bitter; homeless – yes; at my wits end about my future - for sure; tired and emotional – definitely; some days unable to cope – absolutely; realising I subsist in an uncaring Social Services System not wanting to help because they do not have to!

I'm not one to criticize needlessly; I'd gone into the Housing Section open and honest stating my needs. What I got made no sense. After all, my Government were constantly making statements on the importance of rights for the disabled, but I speak as I find and the response. All I got was 'we can not help'. From there I made enquiries via the internet and recently discovered that my Government have refused to implement the European Social Charter (ESC) guaranteeing fundamental economic and social rights to disabled people, they particularly refused the right of disabled people to Social Housing Grant aid. Around 95% of disabled people receive Disability/Training Allowance and as you need to be in full employment the majority of the disability sector can NOT apply for Social Housing Grants leaving us at the mercy of grubby shady landlords who charge huge rents

on bedsits that are even beneath the standards set by cockroaches.

As you can imagine it leaves me in quite a pickle; houses, houses everywhere, but not for disabled or so I was told. I believe that my Government have deliberately refused the ESC as it allows building contractors to make vast profits by building homes for the private sector. The grant aid needed by the majority of the disability sector to enter the housing market would not make those millions, and that statement can also be used to cover every aspect of a society that is driven by greed.



I know my Government will not be pleased to read this and be marked as fuelling discrimination by refusing to implement the ESC. If they really do care about disabled people then they must act with legislation that is flexible, works for us, makes a difference and meets our needs.

I have continued to seek assistance in obtaining grant aid to enter the housing market. I

have contacted the Equality Authority and various other rights organisations on this matter. I have had one good response and await the outcome with baited breath. I am positive and look with optimism to my future of having a home with a small garden where I can grow some vegetables, have a nice grass verge, some wild flowers in the right corner, with a patio and wooden picket fence, some garden furniture, wooden floors inside, a solid fuel stove, compact kitchen, walk in wardrobe, sliding doors, power shower and welcoming friendly atmosphere. It does seem like a realistic dream to me and clearly it is a right I should be able to enjoy, it is certainly one I have no other option but to pursue through to a conclusion as I am not happy being homeless. In Ireland today disability intolerance/prejudice manifests itself in education, employment and legislation, but it does not have to be or remain this way, the goal for every disabled person should be independence, have power over of our lives, that we know best what we need and do for ourselves rather than always having that power/choice taken away. Then we may look towards an international movement of empowerment.

I thank you for allowing me the opportunity to sound off and I will keep you informed of my situation.

Sincerely,
Anthony Newsome
Email: introart@iol.ie

Bit of this ...

Look at Me

Look at me, not my disability
I'm in here if you care to look
Don't just gaze at the 'cover'
Come in and read the book!

Please don't pass me by or avert
your eyes
Prejudiced on half truth and lies
Find out for yourself and come
aboard
It is a 'price' you can easily afford

What burns inside we both can
share
No need for the open-mouth stare
You don't have to be musical to
strike a chord
A caring gesture, we can all
applaud

You've broken the ice, a thaw has
begun
All the rest can be so much fun
So tell the others what you have
found
Then we will build upon solid
ground

Brain Thompson

Volunteer: Luma

My name is Luma Anayi; I have just started to work as a volunteer for Choices and Rights. This is good as it gives me some useful experience as I hope to find a job.

I enjoy working at the computer, I like computers, Internet and emails, college, bowling, swimming, theatre, films, art interest, and I enjoy making friends and meeting people. I am able to speak two languages (English & Arabic).

Disabled Employees Not Good Enough?

An article in the Guardian Newspaper stated that some of the biggest disability charities have some of the lowest proportions of disabled staff. Of the 7,650 people employed by Leonard Cheshire, who describes himself as "The leading charity provider of services for disabled people", only 2% are disabled people. The survey also found that of the 3,846 staff employed at Scope only 3.1% were disabled.

The Royal National Institute for the blind says that 7% of its employees were disabled, and the Royal National Institute for the Deaf has 16.9% disabled employees. These are charities that supposedly campaign for equality for disabled people.

There is a great deal of hypocrisy here. Far from helping disabled people these large charities may as well come right out and state 'we believe that we need non-disabled people to do this job because disabled people aren't capable'. What a terrific incentive this is for employers to hire disabled people - the large organisations that exist to help disabled people balk at employing them themselves.

If you have supported these organisations in the past please think carefully before doing so in the future.

Choices and Rights are 100% run and controlled by disabled people, and exist to provide services that increase the quality of life for disabled people.

This year is the European year of Disabled People and we are keen to ensure that disabled people and the issues facing them are kept in the spotlight. We aim to continue campaigning for better rights for disabled people and empowering disabled people to take control of their own lives.

If you would like to make a donation, no matter how small, we would greatly appreciate your help. You can send cheques made out to Choices and Rights to the address on the back of this newsletter, or if you would prefer to make a donation by standing order or gift aid please contact Choices and Rights on 01482 788668 and we will send you the appropriate form.

Rainbow Ripples 'Summer Event' 13th September 2003

Rainbow Ripples, a group of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual (LGB) disabled people based in Leeds are holding a 'late summer event' as part of the European Year of Disabled Peoples Events. The theme is 'LGB disabled people, human rights and the law'. Ruth Bashall will be one of the key speakers. There will also be food and plenty of time to meet with other LGB disabled people and our allies from the Yorkshire and Humberside Region.

The event is open to LGB disabled people, disabled people, and our friends and allies.

... Bit of that

It will be held at HOST Media Centre in Chapletown, Leeds on Saturday, 13th September 2003 from 3pm to 8pm. The venue is wheelchair accessible. Personal assistance will be provided along with sign language interpretation.

The event is part funded by Leeds City Council European Year of Disabled People Fund and by Leeds Involvement Project.

A Raspberry Ripple member said 'It is very rare that we, as LGB disabled people, have the opportunity to debate issues together. We are often excluded from the LGB community mainly by access barriers and poor attitudes around impairment. We hope this event can strengthen the LGB disabled people's network within the region and that we will gather support from the wider LGB community.'

If you would like further information, or want to book a place, please contact **Helen Davies**, LGB disabled persons worker at Leeds Involvement Project, Tel: 0113 307 3280, Minicom 0113 307 3282. Email infor@leedsinvolvement.org.uk Places are limited and must be booked in advance.

Launch of new property website

A new property website specialising exclusively in accessible and adapted property opened in April:

www.accessible-property.org.uk

The Accessible Property Register is the brainchild of

freelance writer Conrad Hodgkinson and General Social Care Council member Dr Christine Barton. Christine has MS and is a wheelchair user. The couple's Sheffield home has been extensively adapted.

'I know there are some local schemes to identify accessible property' Conrad says, 'but I don't think it's been tried on a national basis before. If we are successful, it will benefit older as well as disabled people.'

The website will accept adverts for accessible and adapted property for sale or rent throughout the UK. In addition, it will be possible for potential buyers/tenants to register on the site and to record details of the type of property and access features they are seeking.

Christine believes this is a step forward for disabled people. 'The Accessible Property Register will help to emphasise the fundamental principle of appropriate housing', she says. 'Achieving rights and independence means bringing access issues into the mainstream.'

Private individuals, estate agents and other businesses will pay to place adverts, but the aim is to allow non-profit making providers of public and social housing to advertise free. 'But', Conrad points out, 'This will be dependent on our ability to attract sponsorship and other funding.'

National organisations of older and disabled people are enthusiastically supporting the aims of the Register. They include

RADAR, Help the Aged, the Spinal Injuries Association, the Centre for Accessible Environments and the MS Society.

'The Accessible Property Register will be hugely beneficial to disabled people', says Rob Jackson, Director of Derbyshire Coalition for Inclusive Living. 'Especially those who need to move for career purposes.'

All property advertising on the site will be free for the first six months following launch.

Opportunity to appear on Channel 4s 'Grand Designs'

Channel 4 property series 'Grand Designs' are currently looking for disabled participants for a future programme. The producers want to hear from people interested in purchasing and adapting property in Portugal.

All aspects of purchase and adaptation will be undertaken by a specialist company and full details are available on the Accessible Property Register website:

<http://www.accessible-property.org.uk/atrs012.shtml#content2>

If you have any short articles, poems, rants, or anything else you'd like featured in Loud & Proud, email it to:

lp@choicesandrights.org.uk

Well done Tesco

DISAPPEARING REAPPEARING PARKING BAYS!

I went shopping recently at the Tesco store on Orchard Park. I wandered toward the entrance half asleep (I'm a man, I have more important things to stay awake for than shopping!), but was woken up by my baby sister (and part-time chauffeuse) Alison. She pointed out that all but four of the accessible parking bays were not available and that two of the four were occupied by cars that were not displaying a Disabled Parking Badge.

I decided to do exactly what Tesco ask of their customers and filled in one of their customer feedback forms, available by the main entrance, and left my work phone number on it.

Four days later I received a phone call from one of the stores assistant managers. She told me that the accessible bays were cordoned off because they were extending the dropped kerbs leading to the accessible bays on the day that I visited and that now the bays were back in use.

Then she added that they will be doing more work on the accessible bays soon, as they will be increasing the number of accessible bays and will be moving some so that they are closer to the main entrance.

She also apologised for the available bays being occupied by people who do not have an Orange/Blue Badge. The bays are supposed to be checked by



the trolley collectors and by Tesco's security staff. She stated, in slightly ominous tones (perhaps she's a fan of The Sopranos), that she would "have a quiet word" with both the trolley collectors and the security staff to make sure they were more diligent in future.

So complaining does work, I think, but you may know different!

If you have problems with access at Supermarkets complain to the manager or assistant manager, fill in the "comments" forms if they are available.

If you do not get a response, or do not get the response that you want, you might like to visit or phone the Reference Library (at the Central Library on Albion Street - 01482 210055) where the staff will be happy to help you find the address of the Supermarket's Head Office and complain direct to their Head Office.

I have found that, on some occasions, a Supermarket chain's Head Office gives a different and more favourable response than a

store manager.

If you do not fancy doing this, or you need advice about how to approach the Head Office of a Supermarket chain or any other chain store that you are not happy with, you can ring me, Duncan Edge, on 788668.

Can You Help?

We recently received the following letter in our office. The letter is signed by 17 people, but unfortunately they haven't given us any contact details. If anyone from the group reads this, please get in touch with us again as we would like to see if we can help.

To whom it may concern

We are all people with learning disabilities, who live in and around the Goole area. Some of us are lucky and live in supported housing or have lots of family support. Other people do not have the same help. We would like you to take up our points and bring it to the Government's attention.

One of our friends did not

qualify for any help with his wife's funeral expenses. He could not get a grant and has no money lefty at all. He paid all he could from his savings.

We receive no help or support from Mencap as there are not enough resources to cover Goole.

There is no advocacy service in Goole. There are no befrienders.

There is no care in the community. There is not enough money. There are only two Home Makers and thee are no supporting people. We feel that no one is bothered about our friends who live in the community and cannot get any help.

Charity? What do you think?

Loud and Proud's position on the larger disability charities that are run by non disabled people has been made clear in the past, i.e. We don't like them! But two stories that have reached us recently have just reinforced our beliefs.

CHEAP ACCOMMODATION

The first one was reported in Disability Now and concerned a young disabled couple who live in a one bed roomed flat in Cleveland. The property is owned by Leonard Cheshire (who are always saying in their advertising blurb, how much they support and help disabled people) and the couple have complained about the amount of rent they are being charged. We hope you are sitting down when you read this as they are being charged ... wait for it ... £321.50 PER WEEK!!! Yes, that's rights, £321.50 PER WEEK FOR A ONE BEDROOMED FLAT!. Now I'm pretty sure that as nice

as Cleveland may be, it's not in the centre of London. When you think that I can stay in a hotel in London for less than that for a week it seems incredible that Leonard Cheshire can charge such an incredible amount. On top of that, the couple even had to apply for a separate grant to make the property more accessible!

Thankfully, Leonard Cheshire has agreed to 'review' their rent. But it just proves what we always thought. The big charities love to pretend how much they 'care, support and empower' us, but the reality is they just want to use us to keep lots of non disabled people in comfy, well paid jobs, rather than give us our freedom.

Donation Not Enough?

The second story to reach us concerns one of the Choices and Rights relatives. This person's mother has been regularly giving £2.50 a month for a number of years to another national charity. She's trying to do her bit, she's not wealthy (in fact, she's a pensioner), but she's caring and wanted to contribute to help others (in this case, a children's charity). But her £2.50 isn't enough. The charity has started to ring her on a number of occasions to try and 'persuade' her to increase her contribution. Quite simply, she can't afford to, but the charities call centre continues to ring her and tries to make her feel guilty about her small contribution. Is this what charity is about? It's probably costing the charity more money than this person is donating in order to keep pestering her. We understand that all organisations need to keep attracting funding, but surely, making current supporters feel guilty isn't the answer?

How to send us your articles ...

We prefer you to send articles by email or as computer files since this makes our layout work easier and quicker. If you don't have access to a computer, handwritten articles are best submitted in BLOCK CAPS text where possible.

Tips for sending computer generated files:

Save/Export your file as:

Plain Text (.txt)

Rich Text Format (.rtf)

Please DO NOT save the files in your programs native format as we may not be able to access them. To send us a computer file please use one of the following media types:

(IBM / PC Format)

3.5" Floppy Disc
Zip 100/250MB Disc
CD-ROM

(MAC Format)

3.5" Floppy Disc

Notes for email:

Please insert as a file, or clearly mark where the article starts and finishes.

Where to send your articles:

Email:

lp@choicesandrights.org.uk

Post:

Choices & Rights
Arthur Richardson Centre
Savoy Road
Hull
HU8 0TX

Fax:

01482 719590

STOP PRESS

New Email and Website Address

We now have our very own internet domain name and we are currently in the process of transferring our website and email addresses to use the new domain.

We'd like everyone to update your address book and web browser to use the new details.

Website

Our new website address is:

www.choicesandrights.org.uk

Email

Our new email addresses:

office@choicesandrights.org.uk
liesel@choicesandrights.org.uk
duncan@choicesandrights.org.uk
john@choicesandrights.org.uk
denise@choicesandrights.org.uk

NOTE: Our old Demon Internet addresses will be phased out and discontinued over the coming months so please update your address books to **remove any references to:**
choicesandrights.demon.co.uk

Disability Information Service



Using *local area* data and national data provided by DIAL UK, we are able to offer you lots of practical information on all sort of topics including:

- Law & Rights
- Education
- Social Issues
- Holidays
- Transport
- Accommodation
- Direct Payments
- Volunteering
- Personal Matters
- Arts & Leisure
- Aids & Equipment
- Sports & Interests

Contact the office 10am to 4pm weekdays, or you may leave an answerphone message at all other times.

 - **01482 788668**

Text - **01482 719591** Fax - **01482 719590**

Contact Details



Telephone: 01482 788668

Facsimile: 01482 719590

Textphone: 01482 719591

Email

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Website

<http://www.choicesandrights.org.uk/>

Disability Housing Service Tel: 01482 719584

Mark Baggley MBaggley@habinteg.org.uk

DISCLAIMER:

The views in Loud and Proud do not necessarily reflect the views of Choices and Rights Disability Coalition.

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