

*"A Voice for disabled people"*

# Loud & Proud

Issue 10 - Winter 2003

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**MERRY CHRISTMAS**  
**From everyone at Choices & Rights**



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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.

# Abuse happens

When we talk about abuse of disabled people, many will say it doesn't really happen anymore as society is more caring and understanding than ever before. But abuse does happen and in many different ways.

Parents can abuse disabled children by refusing to allow them any independence, residential homes, special schools, etc. can abuse disabled people by denying them any freedom and thieves may target disabled people as an easy target.

Some forms of abuse are easier to detect than others, but the conviction of former nurse Sheila Sinyard who was found guilty of stealing £5,500 from an elderly person who was living at the time in a residential home in Hull should act as a warning to us all.

Since she left the residential home concerned, Sinyard has worked for at least two other organisations working with disabled people in the Hull and East Riding area.

In the same way that some paedophiles will look to work with children, some adults will adopt the same attitude towards disabled people and its important that organisations like Choices and Rights highlight these cases when they happen and try to ensure that our staff recruitment processes are as rigorous as possible.

Unfortunately, even with police checks, etc., possible abusers may only be detected if they have a conviction or if a reference indicates a problem.

It's vital therefore that any disabled people who feel they have been abused or think someone is being abused can speak to someone who will listen to their concerns.

Anyone who feels that they are in this position, please don't hesitate to ring any of us at Choices and Rights and we will guarantee to listen to your concerns.

## Abuse by another name?

How many times have you picked up your newspaper and seen pictures of someone handing over a cheque to some nursing home or special school?

You can guarantee that in each picture, there will be someone who has sat in a tin of baked beans, etc. handing a cheque over to the director/head teacher. There will also usually be a couple of disabled people (normally in wheelchairs) sat at the front.

But is it right to use pictures of disabled people (particularly children) in this way?

I wonder if the parents are consulted before the pictures are taken?

Let's face it, what child is going to say no to having their picture taken for a newspaper?

Most disabled children aren't aware of empowerment, image of disability, especially those in special schools. To them, it's fun, something different on a boring school day, but is it right?

# Residential Care?

## Over my dead body!

In a recent Loud and Proud, I wrote about my concern over residential and nursing homes and suggested that until they're all closed I wouldn't be happy. The article generated some discussion and it was suggested that I was possibly being unfair as not all such homes are bad places to be.

Although I would accept this, (but let's not forget that the majority of them are there to make money, so it's clearly a profitable business), a recent programme on Channel 5 reinforced my beliefs.

The programme McIntyre Undercover featured Donald McIntyre, a well know journalist who sent his brother to work in two residential homes to look at

standards of care. They didn't choose the worse home they could find, but looked at homes who had been inspected by the National Care Standards commission and picked one that was under a weekly inspection due to failing standards and another that was seen as "acceptable".

The programme made me feel extremely angry and upset. I haven't listed all the things that went on and although, there was no physical abuse of any residents, the findings included:

- A deaf user who's hearing aids weren't fitted as no member of staff had been trained to do it
- The washing of sheets etc was done at too low a temperature, so the sheets remained marked and

soiled

- Users often given medication late and by untrained staff
- Users sat in their own urine whilst staff gossiped for hours
- Bells for assistance frequently ignored, especially at meal times
- Some staff were unhappy at the lack of care and left, but didn't report it
- Even when the National Care Standards Inspector arrived unannounced, staff covered up for each other and a missing manager who was actually away in London but was reported as having "popped to the bank"!

Remember, these aren't the worst homes, but homes that are still open and running. If people think I'm exaggerating, I'm not and I have had personal experience of some of these issues.

A few years ago when I ran a youth club, one 16 year old girl went to work in a residential home in East Yorkshire. Within four weeks of being there, she was working 12 hour shifts, dishing out medication with no experience and worked nights with very little support. The owner meanwhile drove around in a sports car and no doubt made a packet. So the next time I hear a residential home owner moaning about having to meet new care standards, I would ask, what about all the money you've made over the years, you weren't moaning then. If a decent bathroom, a bedroom with a lock on the door and well trained staff is too much for you to cope with, get out of the business. Personally, anyone I found running a sub standard home, I wouldn't fine them or send them to prison, I'd make them stay in their own home as a resident and see how they liked it.....

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ALL SIGN CLASSES ARE RUN BY QUALIFIED DEAF TUTORS

# Access Direct:

Those who managed to attend our Conference on 27th November will know what an excellent day it was.

All the presentations were very interesting, and feedback from the conference has been fantastic. I think everyone who attended would agree the day was a real success.

We knew the conference had been successful because during the day so many delegates told us how they were enjoying it, and how informative and interesting it was.

Some comments from the conference feedback included:

“The program was lively and stimulating because of the contrast and authoritative perspectives which helped to generate new thinking on key issues”

“The exhibitions were very informative. Excellent, very purposeful day”

“An excellent day, informative and interesting – the timings were good allowing space to reflect and meet other people”

“What a good conference! Congratulations and thanks for the invitation to attend”

“Just wanted you all to know that the conference was an inspiring event. Well Done”

“All the presentations were clear and precise. The information supplied was all relevant and not too long winded. Exhibition stands again informative. On the whole an excellent day that has raised my awareness.”

And comments from someone who was unable to attend:

“I did not get chance to attend your conference, but did get the chance to talk to someone who went and made me really jealous by enthusing about how superb it was”

The conference was held as part of a Choices and Rights Research Project called “Access Direct”. The current aim of this project is to investigate how service providers in Hull and the East Riding of Yorkshire communicate with the public and the difficulties disabled people experience in obtaining, interpreting and responding to communication.

It aims to examine how service providers can make information accessible to all disabled people. This means, where possible, producing information that can be accessed directly by disabled people rather than having to rely on somebody else to interpret it for them, and ensuring that qualified interpreters are available when required.

The objects of the proposed service are:

- To make available specialist support for people who experience substantial communication difficulties so that they can access and deal directly with public and other services.

- To support public and other services to enable them to make their services accessible to people with communication difficulties and so comply with the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

- To support public service and other employers to carry out

equal opportunities policies, and

- To provide training and advice for front-line staff in public service and other organisations, on responding positively to people who experience substantial communication difficulties.

Why is the project needed?

When people think about equality for disabled people, the issue that many people first consider is access to buildings, but this project aims to look at access to information, access to the knowledge that information gives, and access to power that knowledge brings.

Generally people have become increasingly dependent on information in order to participate fully in society. Many disabled people have become increasingly unable to participate fully in society due to a lack of correct and up-to-date information.

The time in which we are living has been described by many as the “Golden Age of Communication”. We need to hear and be heard, to understand and be understood.

There are a wide variety of different forms of communication, and it can be hard to determine exactly what communication is.

One useful definition of communication is – ‘the passing of information, ideas or feelings from one person to another.’

This definition clearly implies the presence to two or more people. If you tell your children that supper is ready, but they are listening to the TV turned up loudly, and they don’t respond, has there been successful

# Communication

communication? If you gesture to someone who doesn't see well to 'come over here' and they don't respond, has there been communication?

There are several important components to communication:

- sender - the person who conveys the message
- receiver – the person who receives the message
- message – the information, thoughts, ideas, feelings to be conveyed
- feedback – the response to the message, which shows that it has been received and understood (or not, as may well be the case of disabled or hearing impaired people)
- medium – the way the message is sent. This can be speech, letters, Sign Language etc.

Communication is one of the most basic human needs; language has evolved for this purpose. Having correct, up-to-date, information is fundamental to any decisions we make, and indeed has been described as “the fourth right of citizenship”.

The true power of messages lies in their ability to influence the thoughts and actions of the people who receive them. It is worth paying attention to how the message is delivered if you want the best chance of being understood.

For example, if you want a small child to eat his dinner, it is unlikely that you will succeed in persuading him of the nutritional value of the food before him by using long scientific arguments as

to the benefits of green vegetables over a packet of salt and vinegar crisps. Equally, someone whose first language is not English will hardly respond positively to a document filled with long words and complex phrases. The same principles apply to information for disabled people.

Most people take their ability to communicate for granted, and can hardly begin to imagine what life would be like if they had real difficulties in communicating.

Information empowers people in several ways;

- by enabling them to participate in the democratic process,
- by enabling them to claim their rights and entitlements as citizens and as consumers,
- and most importantly by enabling them to take responsibility for the quality of their own life.

A lack of accessible information is as much a disabling barrier to some disabled people and just as discriminatory as a flight of stairs is to a wheelchair user.

As the old cliché says, “knowledge is power”.

Disabled people who lack access to information will therefore be excluded and disadvantaged in terms of making informed choices, influencing decision-making and social inclusion.

A lack of information can have a direct effect on a disabled person's well being. Disabled people should be able to receive

information in a way that is accessible to them. This is the case in all aspects of disabled people's lives, for example, health, welfare benefits, personal assistance, education, and employment.

Other personal gains from having access to information include improved self-esteem and confidence.

The very concept of communications is that it requires that all participants understand what is being said. It is therefore, important that all service providers are able to communicate effectively with all disabled people, regardless of the nature of their impairment.

Information has been included as one of the seven fundamental needs for putting the social model of disability into practice and removing the barriers to independent living. (Derbyshire coalition of disabled people, 1988; Davis 1990).

In addition the project is crucial to the Centre for Independent Living's aim of ensuring that disabled people are kept aware of current legislation and how it affects them. It is only by keeping disabled people informed about their rights that they are able to make balanced and valid decisions, thereby enabling them to become more fully included and less dependent on today's society.

**If you have communication difficulties and would like to take part in this research please contact us.**

# 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:

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

Tel: 01482 788668  
Fax: 01482 788668  
Minicom: 01482 788668  
E: 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 July 2003, but are subject to change:

Advertising rate per issue:

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

## Full page - £75.00

180 mm (W) x 262.5 mm (H)

## Full column - £25.00

59 mm (W) x 262.5 mm (H)

## Half page - £40.00

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# Can you help?

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Email: [sandi.tatam@netmindz.co.uk](mailto:sandi.tatam@netmindz.co.uk)

Dear Loud & Proud reader,

I am writing to ask for your assistance.

I am in the second year of a counselling diploma course. One of the requirements of the course is an original piece of research. I have been interested for some time now as to the availability and appropriateness of counselling services for people with disabilities. I would therefore like to do some research around this issue.

Currently I am thinking it would be useful to be in contact with about twelve people

- *who have had experience of being counselled*
- *and twelve people who would have liked counselling but felt there was no suitable service for them.*

I am asking for your help in publicising this request. It may be that you have a newsletter, or personal contacts with individuals.

I would be very grateful if you could pass my name and telephone number on to anyone who might be interested in assisting with this research. Obviously confidentiality would be respected and individuals can remain anonymous in the finished paper.

- **Sandi Tatam (01873) 830161 email: [sandi.tatam@netmindz.co.uk](mailto:sandi.tatam@netmindz.co.uk)**

Thank you very much for your help.

Sincerely yours

Sandi Tatam

# Disabled Parliament

Choices and Rights were well represented at the first ever UK Disabled People's Parliament (UKDPP) held in Birmingham at the start of October.

The idea of the UKDPP is to give disabled people a national 'voice' in the many areas that affect our daily lives.

The idea of the parliament was developed by the British Council of Disabled People and over 100 disabled people attended with over 70 people being elected as disabled MP's.

The main difference between the disabled and the country's Parliament is the lack of money! Unlike our MP's, members of the UKDPP received no funding for attending and the elected MP's will have to find their own sponsorship, funds for attending meetings, etc. Despite these barriers and maybe showing more commitment than many of our MP's, those elected were keen to raise the profile of the UKDPP.

One clear advantage of the UKDPP was the amount of media interest it attracted, with SKY News, local TV stations in attendance as well as many articles appearing in both the national and disability press.

In the morning there was a

great opportunity for disabled people to question key figures involved in disability issues in the UK, including the Minister for Disabled People Maria Eagle, Bert Massie, Chief Executive of the Disability Rights Commission as well as Labour and Liberal MP's.

develop further the Disabled People's Rights and Freedom Bill and that ideally this should replace the DDA.

□ The UKDPP is a very good idea and that BCO DP should look for funding to



The session was organised very much like the BBC's Question Time and this led to a lively and dynamic debate.

The parliament agreed:

□ The UKDPP should include one representative from each member group of BCO DP, as well as members who already represent the regions.

□ That there is a need to

develop the aliment and to enable further meetings to take place.

Locally, Hull and East Riding has two elected UKDPP MP's, both from Choices and Rights. Mark Baggley, was elected as the Housing and Access spokesperson and Danny Brown as the Health and Social Services spokesperson. If you would like any more details on the UKDPP, please contact Mark or Danny via the Choices and Rights office.

# sky disability service

Thousands of disabled subscribers to Sky digital, the UK's most popular digital television service, are set to benefit from improved customer service following the launch in June of a dedicated Disability Service Team.

Based at Sky's customer contact centre at Dunfermline, the Sky disability service team provides an easy-to-use one-stop shop that can respond to queries from disabled customers seven days a week. The launch of the initiative took place on the 12th June and coincided with an event organised by the Broadcasting and Creative Industries' Disability Network (BCIDN) and attended by Culture Secretary Tessa Jowell.

The service is designed to be fully accessible. Direct access to the Disability Service Team for people who find the telephone difficult to use has been improved with the installation of a text phone and an email service. Each member of Sky's Disability Service Team, which includes a number of disabled employees, has received disability awareness training to help them to understand and respond to the needs of disabled customers.

In addition, Sky is improving the provision of printed material such as customer letters, statements and subscription forms in alternative media such as Braille, audio and large print. For the first time, this now includes publication of Sky The Magazine in audio format.

Kay Allen, BSKyB's Disability Manager, says: "The launch of the Sky disability service team demonstrates Sky's continuing

commitment to extending the opportunities available to disabled people. Although we recognise that there is still much to achieve, we have made real progress in the 12 months since the publication of our first disability action plan."

Kay explains that access to information is an important part of Sky's new approach to disability. "We have launched a dedicated web site that will help keep people updated on our services," she says.

"However we know that there can be access issues for disabled people using the web, so Sky Online has implemented an access auditing process and is working to raise awareness of the issues and to improve accessibility."

Improved access to programme services is another focus of Sky's disability strategy. "We now subtitle 45,000 hours of programmes per year on Sky channels," says Kay. "This includes at least 50 per cent of each day's output per day on Sky One and Sky News Bulletins and every movie broadcast on Sky Box Office." In addition, 6.7 million Sky digital households have access to more than 3,000 hours of audio described programmes on Sky channels. Kay explains that Sky is currently the only television company that offers audio description for satellite viewers. "We are encouraging other broadcasters to use the audio description capability that we have built into every Sky digibox. The public service broadcasters, for instance are presently transmitting their audio described programmes only to a very small number of homes via the digital terrestrial

platform, when it could be simultaneously broadcast to millions of satellite homes using the technology we already have in place".

So how does Sky intend to improve choice and opportunity for disabled people in the future? Kay says the company is committed to involving disabled people in this ongoing process. "We have established customer focus groups, enabling disabled people with a range of impairments to experience Sky services and to give us feedback on what they would like to see improve," she says. "We have also been listening to organisations for disabled people and experts in this field. This consultation exercise raised our awareness on a range of concerns and helped develop the Sky disability strategy."

Kay concludes: "Disabled people should account for a larger segment of our customer base. Promoting Sky services and delivering excellence in customer service for disabled people makes good business sense."

As part of this drive to deliver services to more disabled viewers, Sky is offering viewers the chance to sign up for Sky digital and pay just £1 for standard installation (normally £60) when they subscribe to a Sky World package before 31 August 2003.

To contact Sky's Disability Service Team, customers should call **08705 66 33 33**, text phone 08702 40 19 10 or

email: [disability@bskyb.com](mailto:disability@bskyb.com)

Website: <http://www.sky.com/disability>

# Canine Carer

A disabled woman from Woking in Surrey has become the first person to receive an assistance dog as part of her Direct Payments care package. Surrey County Council has developed a scheme involving the use of an assistance dog as part of someone's care arrangements.

The wheelchair user has been given 8 pounds a week to pay for the food and vet bills for her Canine Carer. Her Labrador, trained by the charity Canine partners for independence helps with everything from undressing, loading the washing machine and using a cash point machine, to reminding her to take her tablets.

The use of an Assistance Dog will save the council thousands of pounds because it will no longer have to fork out for nighttime care. It also has benefits for the disabled person. People who have these dogs are returning to work, or their partners/relatives are, because of the reassurance and safety net the dogs provide in the home. Recipients of Assistance Dogs report benefits such as feelings of greater confidence, self-esteem and well being and a reduction in stress from having a constant devoted companion.

It seems that everyone's a winner. Choices and Rights would

like to hear your views about the use of assistance dogs as part of a persons care package.

Other registered assistance dogs are Hearing Dogs for Deaf People, which are trained to alert deaf owners to specific sounds such as the alarm clock, telephone/textphone, doorbell, baby alarm and smoke alarm.



Support Dogs, which help people with uncontrolled epilepsy, physical disabilities and medical conditions. Seizure alarm dogs trained by Support Dogs can give their owners up to 45 minutes advance warning of the onset of a seizure, enabling them to find a place of safety. Dogs for the Disabled are trained to carry out pulling and retrieval work such as bringing in the milk, opening and closing doors, pushing lift buttons and activating alarms. The final dogs to come under the umbrella of Assistance Dogs UK are Guide dogs for the Blind, which are trained to provide their owners with greater independence, mobility and freedom.

## 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

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### Notes for email:

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

### Where to send your articles:

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#### Fax:

01482 719590

## STOP PRESS

### CHRISTMAS CANCELLED!

In a press release issued this afternoon we are advised that Christmas is cancelled due a walkout by Santa's helpers.

*Bob Topelffen*, chief executive of **Elffen Packaging** says: "Our members thought long and hard before walking out. We have a number of ongoing issues with Santa that have yet to be resolved.

We tried to approach him to discuss terms for this coming Christmas, but were told he was unavailable for comment."

*Rudolf Rednosovich* of **Reindeers 'R' Us** added "Santa is always unavailable. When we call his office we are told he is busy. If he want's to make his deliveries to the little boys and girls this Christmas, then he better start talking!"

The walkout is due to last until December 28th, but deliveries of presents are not expected to be in full operation until early January.

### CHRISTMAS IS BACK ON!

In a last minute deal struck by Santa, Christmas is BACK ON - HOORAY!!

We have no specifics but believe the deal involves newer model sleigh's and shorter working hours for the elves.

#### DISCLAIMER:

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

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

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