GMCDP ANNUAL REPORT 1996/97

"we know where we're going"

"we have our own viewpoint"

"young disabled people say..."

"strike out the barriers"

"we know where we're going"

"young disabled people say..."

"we have our own viewpoint"

"two halves of lager and a large slice of civil rights please"
DIRECTORS REPORT

"It's just the way things are" has become a familiar phrase to GMCDP over the past year. In that time GMCDP has tried and failed to install a new Team Leader to replace Michele Brookes. Although a suitable replacement was "appointed", despite the huge efforts of GMCDP staff, directors and the appointee over a period of several months, no suitable (and available) housing could be found, no assessment could be arranged by the local Social Services departments (in several boroughs) in advance of housing being found, and the PACT system threatened the withdrawal of even his existing level of support.

After months of banging our heads against the brick wall of institutional discrimination, the Coalition and the appointee had to agree that the situation was unlikely to be resolved within any reasonable amount of time, and the appointment was, by mutual agreement, reluctantly cancelled. This story is an indictment of today's society. It is not a fair or equal society when mobility and flexibility in employment are lauded as highly desirable qualities in workers, yet disabled people are denied the opportunity to move away from their own locality to another part of the country to improve their employment position.

We are agreed that we cannot let this matter drop; we must campaign to remove at least some of the barriers we have come up against. With the support and input of our membership we hope we can succeed.

As a result of such organisational problems, a recent meeting of the GMCDP Board of Directors decided to carry out a major organisational review, which will involve our whole membership, and guide the way forward for GMCDP. The Team Leader saga has necessarily resulted in the past year being a "holding operation". But a positive aspect of this whole situation has been the excellent way in which Thelma Tomlinson is carrying out the role of "acting" Team Leader.

Over the last few years no effort has been spared to establish the Disability Action Training project as a self-operating, self-funded concern. Despite this DAT continued to lose money and this year we have reluctantly had to reduce it to "ticking over" status. However a new "DAT Development Group", with a core group of experienced trainers committed to building a better future for DAT is already in place. Other projects have prospered, despite some changes of staff. Projects such as the Young Disabled People’s Forum and the Advocacy/
Outreach project have enhanced GMCDP’s already considerable reputation as an organisation which is capable of involving and supporting disabled people to make their own demands on how society operates and how services are delivered.

It seems that never a year goes by without GMCDP having to come to terms with the death of a committed and active member. This year, Michael Peel, who was a stalwart member of the Information/Publicity Sub-Group, passed away, and left another great gap in our organisation as well as in our hearts. Michael constantly urged us to “get into the 21st century” with our information systems, and was responsible, along with Kevin Hyett, for GMCDP’s presence on the Internet, designing our Web site for us and keeping the information there updated. Michael will be sorely missed.

On a more positive note, we have welcomed Gill Elsworth to a new post and Maureen Green as a permanent staff member; however we have said a reluctant goodbye to Brian Hilton, an imaginative and innovative worker with a keen eye for new opportunities to bring money into GMCDP. We wish him well in his new post.

As a final note, and one which causes us much sadness, we must formally announce that, as a result of recurring bouts of ill-health, Ian Stanton will be retiring from the Board of Directors at the Annual General Meeting. Ian wishes to pass on this personal message:

“I still hope to remain in close contact with GMCDP, and will continue to edit the “Coalition” magazine until a replacement can be found. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the people involved in GMCDP, directors, staff and members, for all the support, friendship and comradeship they have provided over the 14 years I have been involved. Being a part of GMCDP has been the most empowering experience of my life - long may it continue to liberate the lives and minds of other disabled people.

Ian Stanton/Lorraine Gradwell
(Co-Chairs, GMCDP)

ACTING TEAM LEADER/
ADMINISTRATOR

December 1996 saw the departure of our team leader, Michele Brookes. In January I was asked by the GMCDP Officers to take on the role of Acting Team Leader. Below is an overview of the organisation for the whole year even though part of it was from a different perspective.
1996/97 was a very mixed year for GMCDP. It saw the organisation widen its scope of work from purely project work, to undertaking consultancy work for North West Arts Board, supervision of an arts apprenticeship for the Arts Council, managing a research project for Liverpool City Council and development work around the setting up of a new disabled people’s organisation on behalf of Manchester City Council. All these together with the ongoing activities of the Young Disabled People’s Forum (YDPF), the Outreach/Advocacy Project and the DAT project made for another very busy year.

The year was not without its downward side though, an application to the National Lotteries Charities Board for an independent living project was unsuccessful, the loss of a friend and close work colleague in September 1996 had huge repercussions on staff and management. In total the organisation lost 6 members of staff plus one member of staff off on long term sick. With the difficulties in covering their work temporarily and in recruitment for their replacements, staffing issues have been high on the agenda for a greater part of the year and this leaves me only one more thing to say on this subject - Hooray for GMCDP volunteers!

As the organisation moves into another year, we see the move of Gill Elsworth from Outreach Advocacy Worker to GMCDP Information Worker and welcome new member of staff Maureen Greene to the post vacated by Gill. There is still the ongoing fight for full and comprehensive Civil Rights, still the problems with the Access to Work Scheme. There is the need to identify funding to continue two more projects that come to an end in 1998, and much more recently the decision that GMCDP should have an organisational review.

Financially GMCDP has faced its 6th year of core funding being on standstill. Each year we have successfully raised enough funds from other sources to meet the annual budget, this year was no exception, although from 1997/98 our core funders AGMA have agreed an extra annual amount to cover any necessary employer contributions to the Access to Work scheme. GMCDP membership numbers have remained fairly constant this year, some losses being replaced by new members.

And so as I come to the end of my allocated “space” I leave this report, Acting Team Leader for a little while longer, a few more grey hairs but ready for another busy year ahead.

Thelma Tomlinson
Acting Team Leader/Administrator.
INFORMATION SERVICE

GMCDP continues to lead the field in the provision of disability related information. The Bulletin provides an interesting mix and varied range of news, views and comment. Coalition magazine has continued to stir up debate and reflect current thinking within the disabled people’s movement. The telephone information service is often the main point of contact for disabled people and service providers when contacting GMCDP. Enquiries involve requests about entitlement to benefits, aids and adaptations, groups and housing. The Disability Discrimination Act has brought enquiries about employment law and tribunals. GMCDP publications continue to prove popular. Sales have been steady over the year and we are always on the look out for new ideas.

Unfortunately, due to funding constraints, this year has seen the Information workers hours reduced, but the employment of an Information assistant has meant most of the work still being completed. The end of this year also sees a change of staff, Brian Hilton has moved on to a new job and Gill Elsworth took over in July 1997. A major aim for the next year will be to sort through the information base making it more streamlined and efficient.

Gill Elsworth
Information Worker.

DISABILITY ACTION TRAINING PROJECT

The DAT Project took a knock with the departure of the Business Development Worker, Helen Cogan, at the end of April and ground was lost during the subsequent recruitment period.

However, the year saw a successful series of briefings around the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 for Manchester City Council and its various departments, a disabled people into employment course entitled “Training into Employment” in conjunction with City College, this course was one day per week for thirty two weeks. Other activity included two “Off the Peg” courses namely “Disability Issues” in April and Training the Trainers” in December, which, despite the weather were well attended; a ten day Independent Living Skills course spread over ten weeks in Leeds and other one day and half day courses around Greater Manchester and other parts of the country.
This year the DAT Project headed in a new direction of work with a contract to carry out Access Audits on over 20 buildings for Preston Community Health Care Guild and one for a museum in Heywood.

Following recruitment Gemma Nash was appointed as Project Co-ordinator in October but departed at the end of April. It was at this time that it was agreed to scale down the DAT Project for a review and development of a marketing plan. Although the project then had no staff, training is still being carried out on request and administered through the GMCDP core staff.

Thanks go to the pool of DAT trainers for their support, hard work and commitment during what has been a difficult year for the project.

Robin King
DAT Admin Worker.

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GMCDP YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLES FORUM

This has been an exciting year for the Young Disabled People’s Forum. We began the year with a group of twenty young disabled people who got together for a “Design The Forum Space Project”, this was huge fun and a great success. Following the day a group of ten young disabled people decided it was time to redesign and paint the “Forum” room. In only eight sessions the group produced various designs, which were then transferred to the walls in their own space.

By far the biggest success of the year has been the Poster Project. Co-ordinated by Liz Crow and Chris Ledger a professional disabled photographer working alongside eight young disabled people, the group were able to produce four positive image posters around young disabled peoples issues. This was achieved through the use of drama, group discussions and visits to pubs, cafe bars and a ten-pin bowling alley around the Manchester area. All participants received their own camera and were encouraged to take photographs of their lifestyle. This provided the basis for young disabled people to decide which positive images they wanted to project on their posters.

On the 30th August 1997 we celebrated the launch of the posters and the ongoing achievements of the Forum with a “Barbecue”. It turned out to be a great day, the sun shone the food was delicious and over sixty young disabled people attended. Events were taking place throughout the day, the Forum Drama Group did a presentation of “A Simple
Night Out" which has proved to be very popular. Everywhere, people seemed to be sporting badges that they had made on the day. Music was provided by a young disabled D.J. who kept the atmosphere buzzing all day until Karaoke time. A crowd of young disabled people gathering round the Design-a-Tee Shirt stall were actively producing over eighteen individual positive image tee-shirt designs, three of which were then chosen to print onto tee-shirts. The day finished on a high note with over sixty young disabled people vying for 1st prize in the Pop/Soaps quiz.

Over the past twelve months, the "Forum" drama group have performed at two major conferences in the country. The first performance being the Barnado's National Conference in Manchester which was a huge success with over 300 delegates at the conference. The presentation was followed by a questions and answers session which the group developed themselves. From this Shared Care invited the group to perform at their Conference in Leicester this September and once again performing to 250 delegate took the place by storm.

The advocacy project continues to support young disabled people, who would otherwise not be reached by the disabled peoples movement. Young disabled people who have had support from the advocacy service within the Forum have become more self confident. Two young disabled women have just returned from five weeks in South Africa on a Youth Exchange as a direct involvement with the forum, with support being given by the advocacy worker. Two young disabled women are now living independently, one young disabled man living independently and three young disabled people coming into the forum as volunteers on a regular basis.

The list goes on and on with young disabled people taking more control over their own lives as a direct result of being involved with GMCDP’s Young Disabled People's Forum.

It has also been encouraging to see, over the past year, young disabled people becoming involved in other GMCDP activities such as becoming volunteers in other GMCDP projects, attending the AGM, and joining the executive committee.

Our main aims in the next twelve months will be to produce A Young disabled People’s Survival Guide to Manchester, develop the young disabled women’s and the young disabled men’s groups, and increase the advocacy provision.

Audrey Stanton
YDPF Admin/Advocacy Worker.
OUTREACH/ADVOCACY PROJECT

The Outreach/Advocacy project was developed after research was conducted by the "Who Cares" Trust in 1995 highlighting the situation of young disabled people living in residential care.

Funded by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation the Outreach/Advocacy Project is now into its second year and has already successfully supported a number of young disabled people to gain access to mainstream services and to negotiate the provision of independent living services with external agencies. Despite difficulties in locating those who live in residential care, we now have a growing number of young disabled people who are involved in the project and The Young Disabled People's Forum.

The Outreach/Advocacy Project has also participated in several seminars raising awareness of the need for independent Self Advocacy provision to ensure that the needs of young disabled people are accurately represented.

I took up the post of Advocacy/Outreach worker in July 1997, taking over from Gill Elsworth who is now the Information Worker at GMCDP. My main aim over the next few months will be to progress the "Say So" group. Here young disabled people will have the opportunity to attend discussion and training sessions pertinent to independent living.

In the short time I have been the Outreach/Advocacy Worker I have observed the need to have Independent Advocacy Provision since many young disabled people are clearly not being consulted and have little control over their lives.

Maureen Greene
JRF Outreach/Advocacy Worker.

MANCHESTER DISABLED PEOPLE’S INITIATIVE

Manchester Disabled People’s Initiative (MDPI) started in October 1996, the previous name for the project was “Manchester Disabled People’s Project”. From October 1996 to March 1997 a research survey was carried out to ask disabled people in Manchester what they would want a new Manchester based disabled people’s organisation to do, if indeed they actually wanted a new disabled people’s organisation in Manchester. The result was an overwhelming YES. People definitely did want this new organisation and they wanted it
to provide a very wide range of services and activities. The method of research used was a questionnaire. Approximately 2,000 of these were sent out and we had an 87.8% response. The main findings were that people wanted everything from issue groups to social groups. One of the things that came high on the list of wants from this new organisation was a disabled people's resource centre in Manchester. One of the unpleasant results of this questionnaire was that in 1996/7 disabled people in Manchester still have an overwhelming feeling of isolation. The results of the questionnaire all point to the fact that MDPI has a lot of work to do to meet the needs of disabled people in Manchester. Apart from some of the above issues MDPI will be strongly campaigning alongside our colleagues for full civil rights.

From the very beginning of this project there has been a Steering Group in place which has had the task of writing the new organisation's policies, for example, the constitution and the equal opportunities policy. But, around June 1997 we soon became aware that time was running out fast and it became obvious that we would not achieve our target of setting up the new organisation by March 1997. So, to give us more time, the project has now been extended to March 1998. This will enable us to hold fuller discussions and we will now be able to meet our objectives at a more reasonable pace.

MDPI will probably remain under the management of GMCDP for a further year, so it is envisaged that the new organisation will be launched by the year 2000.

Tina Dearden
MDPI Project Co-ordinator.

Copies of this annual report are also available in large print, braille and on cassette tape from:

GMCDP,
"Carisbrooke",
Wenlock Way,
Gorton,
Manchester M12 5LF.

Tel:
0161 273 5155 voice & minicom.

The report front cover illustration is of two of the Young Disabled People’s Forum Positive image Posters one entitled "we know where we're going" the other "we have our own viewpoint". Both posters are from a set of four available from GMCDP Publications. Price: £4 plus £1 postage & packaging.
WORK ACROSS THE 10 BOROUGHS

GMCDP have benefited disabled people of all ages across the 10 districts through training courses, group work, contact and liaison with statutory bodies etc. A few of these memorable activities/events are noted below.

BOLTON:
* Young Disabled People's Forum contact & liaison with Bolton Institute of Higher Education in relation to young disabled people's issues;
* GMCDP Roadshow exhibition visited Bolton Market Hall.

BURY:
* Outreach Advocacy Project established links with Bury Advocacy Service, CVO and Advocacy Workers to identify young disabled people in residential care.

MANCHESTER:
* Young Disabled People involved in YDPF produced a set of positive image posters. * GMCDP Roadshow Exhibition attended Disability Information Day at Abraham Moss Centre. * Continued training by Disability Action Training Project for MCC and M/c University etc. * Input into the Manchester Disabled Children's Register.

OLDHAM:
* Advice role in consultation exercise for New Vale House developing from service led to user led. * GMCDP Roadshow Exhibition visited Spindles Shopping Centre.

ROCHDALE:

SALFORD:
* Continuing programme of training for Salford Arts & Leisure - 25 days over 12 months disability issues training for staff through GMCDP Disability Action Training Project. * Outreach/Advocacy Project liaised with young disabled people setting up an independent living scheme.

STOCKPORT:
* DAT Project - inset on GNVQ Social Care course/inset into DIP Social Worker course for Stockport College. * Outreach Advocacy Project established links with two advocacy projects, working together on an advocacy awareness event and an advocacy training/child protection day.

TAMESIDE:

TRAFFORD:
* Outreach/Advocacy Project supported young disabled woman with move from hospital accommodation to own flat.

WIGAN:
* Presentation to Youth Service staff meeting on work with young disabled people. * GMCDP Roadshow Exhibition at Youth Service presentation.
GMCDP Publications & Merchandise

“On Our Own Behalf “
by Martin Page.

“On Our Own Behalf” provides a starting point for anyone interested in the growth of the Disabled People’s Movement.
Price: £2.50 (plus 50p p&p).

A Dangerous Woman.
by Sue Napolitano.

A collection of witty, pithy, poignant and most of all POLITICAL poems.
Price: £2.50p (plus 50p p&p)

Direct Action and Disabled People.
by Liz Crow.

"Are we succeeding in getting the right message across?"
This and other questions posed by Direct action are addressed in this 14 page discussion document.
Price: £1.00 (plus 50p p&p)

“...distress or disability?”
by Anne Plumb

This discussion paper lays out some of the issues, arguments and history from a Mental Health System Survivor’s point of view.
Price: £2.50p-£5.00 | contact GMCDP for details.

ILS Training Manual & Video.

Available separately or as a package these two resources developed, tried and tested by GMCDP, are invaluable training tools for work around Independent Living Skills with young disabled people.

price:
Video..... £10.00 - £20.00
Manual... £15.00 - £30.00
Both...... £20.00 - £50.00

(Limited stock on this item)

Where prices vary, is dependent upon type of organisation wishing to purchase items.
GMCDP Publications & Merchandise

Disability Is....
A 4 minute animation video made by young disabled people, exploring the issues around positive imagery and role models as experienced by young disabled people.
price: £20.00p-£50.00p (plus £3.00p p&p)

Disabled People Bite...
The Hand That Patronises Postcard.
A Full colour postcard taken from the "Disability Is..." animation video, also available as an A2 Poster.
Price:
Poster- £1.50p (plus £1 p&p).

GMCDP Logo-Bugs 50p each (plus 50p p&p)

Designing For Everyone
A leaflet aimed at providing information and advice to Designers of areas in and around buildings.....
price: £1 (inc. p&p)

GMCDP Mugs
75p (plus p&p)

GMCDP Key-Fobs
£1.00 each (plus 50p p&p)

Young Disabled People Say...
A set of 4 positive image posters, two of which appear on the front cover of this report. Poster size - 420mm x 594mm
price: £4 (plus £1 p&p)
Projects Past and Present

The Young Disabled People's Forum

DAT Disability Action Training

GMCDP

The Young Disabled People's Advice & Resource Centre

MDPI

Volunteers Project

ALL GMCDP INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN BRAILLE, LARGE PRINT AND ON CASSETTE TAPE

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GREATER MANCHESTER COALITION of disabled people

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