

PLEASE NOTE THIS REPORT IS FOR INFORMATION ONLY.

RECOMMENDATIONS / SUGGESTIONS WILL FOLLOW IN A FURTHER REPORT

GMCDP LONG TERM PLANS.

WHICH WAY FORWARD? - A QUESTIONNAIRE.

This questionnaire was sent to all members, full and associate, to ask for comments on the way people would like to see GMCDP developing and progressing.

The total response from members was 61 completed questionnaires, 48 from full members and 13 from associate members, out of a total number of questionnaires distributed of approximately 260. Given the length and complexity of the questionnaire this can be considered a good response rate.

A detailed compilation of the results has already been distributed to Executive Council members; this paper is intended to draw out from those results the priorities identified by members and to highlight their responses to specific questions asked. These priorities and responses may form the basis of the long-term strategy of GMCDP.

Responses from full members were analysed separately to those responses from associate members: where there are significant differences these will be highlighted in this paper, otherwise results will relate to responses overall.

1. Issues / Information.

1.1. Please place in order of priority those issues you think we should be tackling, or dealing with:

The answers to this question were "ranked" on a basis of allocating 11 "points" for every 1st, 10 for every second, and so on.

They were then "ranked" by counting only those issues / items where first or second placings were given, this was to highlight any issues / items which were consistently felt to be of a high - rather than overall - priority.

Responses from full members:

Employment and Access were placed first and second, respectively, and income / benefits came fourth, using either method of ranking. This is a clear indication of issues considered important by respondents.

Education was placed fifth overall, but rose to third when counting only first and second placings.

Also given high priority, but less easily identifiable as a first or second priority was housing.

Transport, training, and advocacy were consistently placed in the middle of the table of priorities.

Occupying the last three places consistently were aids and adaptations, press and television, and national items.

Responses from associate members;

Training, access, and advocacy were consistently in the top four, with education and employment being given a middle to high priority. Housing and aids and adaptations were given middle ranking, whilst transport and national items were ranked low in the table.

Benefits and income were placed seventh overall, but when counting only first and second rankings this item rose to third place, indicating that those who identified it as a priority gave it a high priority.

Significant differences;

Full members attached a much higher priority to employment, education, and benefits and income than did associate members.

Full members also gave transport a higher priority than associate members.

Associate members gave a much higher priority to training and advocacy than did full members.

Similarities;

Most respondents gave access a high priority, whilst giving low priority to press and television, national items, and aids and adaptations.

Other issues cited as important, though not necessarily prioritised by full members were;

- * "Disability Now", magazines and local papers;
- * information about rights (appeals tribunals, etc)
- * arts
- * campaigns about Mobility Allowance
- * counselling, esp peer counselling for newly-disabled people
- * recreation and leisure.

- * working with and coordinating all the groups with the same objectives.
- * housing, though placed last, is important but it will improve as other issues are tackled.

Other issues cited as important by associate members were

- * children (given 1st priority)
- * recruitment of members (2 mentions)
- * arts and media
- * discrimination

comments from associate members:

- * cannot answer on behalf of others
- * all are equally important
- * community care would be my top priority, all the unemployed people could be found jobs caring for disabled people.
- * prioritisation was very difficult as in Derbyshire we take the wholistic approach and feel all core issues need to be addressed if disabled people are to achieve true integration.

1.1.(a) - the National Disabled People's Movement; GMCDP supports the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People by sending two representatives to the National Executive Committee. Do you feel that

(i) It is important to support our National and International organisations?

(ii) We should continue to support both our National and International organisations?

With over an 80% response rate to these two questions the answer was almost unanimously yes.

1.2. Are there issues we should be saying "no" to? For example, requests to provide information to national, rather than local, bodies?

The majority, though not a large majority, of respondents said that there were not issues we should be "saying no to".

Several FULL members stated we should "say no" to anything which could be used against us by able-bodied people / professionals.

Full and associate members observed that local issues should come first.

1.3. Are there any issues tackled in the past by GMCDP which you think should NOT have been tackled?

The answer here was an almost unanimous no, though again there was a comment that we should concentrate our efforts on disabled people rather than furnishing knowledge to able bodied people.

1.4. Should we be highlighting national issues which affect people locally, eg legislation?

Full members responded with an almost unanimous yes, whilst associate members were evenly split on the question.

1.4.1. If yes, can you indicate those issues you think most important?

Poll tax was given a high priority, as were benefits and incomes, and low pay. Most of the issues quoted individually related to statutory and legislative issues, and to local authority and/or national government practices.

1.5. Should we be merely informing members about things, or should we be acting on issues?

Most people said acting, but a large proportion also said both.

Full and associate members made the observation that GMCDP should be reflecting the concerns of members.

2. Centres for Independent / Integrated Living.

2.1. Should GMCDP be aiming to set up CIL's?

The answer to this was an almost unanimous yes.

2.2. If yes, should it be on a county level or a district level?

More people said district, though not by a large margin. A few respondents did not know what was meant by a CIL, or felt they did not know enough to comment. About 30% of respondents said they would like to be involved.

3. Staff.

3.1. Do you think GMCDP should have more workers?

The majority of respondents said yes, though one comment was that the case should be made as to what more workers would do.

3.2. Should we have a worker in each borough of Greater Manchester to work with local groups of disabled people?

Again the majority said yes, although points were made about the need for, or the difficulty of, coordination; the importance of recognising local needs; and the possibility of causing bad feeling amongst local groups.

3.3. Should workers each deal with specific issues? (eg, one worker responsible for dealing with education, another with housing?)

The majority of respondents said yes, however it was observed that this depends on worker skills, that there is a need to consider the career development of individual workers, and the need to guard against duplication occurring.

4. Activities.

4.1. Should we produce more publications?

Full members were emphatic in saying yes; associate members said yes although with a much smaller margin.

4.2. If yes, can you say what type?

The majority of respondents indicated a preference for material on "practical" issues (such as access) and "policy" issues (such as discrimination).

There were many other suggestions which are listed here in total;

- subjects identified by full members were; employment; employ-

ment rights; books by disabled authors; housing; transport; pain therapy; grants for training schemes; a poetry anthology; the philosophy of the disabled people's movement; training materials; booklets to counter stereotyping; aims and ambitions of GMCDP and past successes or a brochure incorporating all issues; recommended reading lists.

- subjects identified by associate members were holidays; access; the ideology behind GMCDP; books on disability; confidence building and ways in which disabled people can be actively involved; class and discrimination - there's a very different service to those disabled people living in private accomodation and those in council property.

4.3. Should we do more campaigning, demonstrations, "days of action", petitions, etc?

The majority response was yes, though this was more marked in the response from associate members. Points were made that this sort of activity could be counter productive, and that maybe resources could be better used.

4.4. Or should we concentrate on trying to influence local authority services by working with local authority officers? For example, provision of housing and care support?

The majority of respondents said yes.

4.5. Should we be doing both of these?

The majority of respondents said yes.

4.6. Should we spend more time trying to reach specific groups?

Again the majority of respondents said yes.

4.6.1. If yes, can you indicate which groups?

In responses from full members there was a clear majority in favour of trying to reach disabled school leavers, whilst responses from associate members gave no clear preference. Many other examples were given:

full members gave the following - deaf people; people with acquired hearing loss; people with learning difficulties; elderly

disabled people; newly disabled people; housebound people; blind diabetics; people living in Housing Associations; disabled people who are isolated from other disabled people; disabled people in mainstream schools; "successful" disabled people - as role models; groups we have evidence of not reaching; people who live all over Britain; people who live outside Greater Manchester who have no support groups; disabled parents, also provide an opportunity for kids to meet other kids of disabled parents and learn about disabled peoples' issues; disabled people currently living independently with no knowledge of the disabled peoples' movement; aim to influence designers, architects, innovators before they do the damage.

Associate members gave the following - psychiatric patients; children; SSD's; local authority housing departments; existing self-help groups who are not campaigning at present; learning disabilities; people whose beliefs are politically different from GMCDP.

4.7. If yes, should we employ more staff to do this?

The almost unanimous response was yes.

4.8. Should we be looking at ways to provide a service?

The majority response was yes, though the observation was made that current resource levels make this impossible.

4.8.1.. Can you suggest examples of ways that GMCDP could provide a service?

The following suggestions were made by full members:

- * advice/service on specific housing problems
- * training
- * central information service able to refer caller to a trained, appropriate counsellor
- * supporting new organisations OF disabled people outside GMC.
- * convene a meeting with the aim to form a consultative body of disabled people who can then become involved with health authorities, social services, and the voluntary sector to influence future planning and the improvement of services for disabled people.
- * facilitate regular meetings between groups in the 10 districts - they have a lot in common
- * help with paperwork and design problems relating to home adaptations
- * freephone for people who are depressed & want someone to talk to
- * educate about independence

- * register of other disability groups in the GM area
- * develop into a regional resource
- * welfare rights worker
- * counselling
- * access information line
- * diabetic groups in Greater Manchester
- * set up a trading company
- * advocacy
- * advice service to designers (buildings, adaptations, etc).
seek them out.

The following suggestions were made by associate members:

- * legal advice workers for people and disability.
- * door-to-door transport service
- * more details on childrens' requirements, particularly in relation to play - perhaps we could work on this with you.
- * more drop-ins for ex-psychiatric patients

Some suggestions were made which did not constitute service provision, these have been omitted.

4.9. If you are a group member, would you like GMCDP to provide more resources/support?

Four respondents said yes and three said no. Comments were made that advice is available, if needed, and that "struggling" together makes (us) strong.

4.9.1. Can you suggest HOW you would like GMCDP to provide more support?

- * more drop-ins for disabled and psychiatric patients in central Manchester
- * training for disabled people
- * structures about consultation before making plans
- * low income - money.
- * training to service workers and volunteers, parents, awareness rights, etc.

4.10. Should we be working towards the setting up of borough-wide disability groups where they do not currently exist?

The majority of full members and 60% of associate members said yes.

Comments were made about the need to ensure consumer control. to be aware of what disabled people want, and to remember that geographical boundaries are not always "natural" constituencies.

4.11. Should GMCDP have "Drop-In" days in the districts? Eg, a GMCDP worker and/or committee member having office space locally for one day a month so that local members could "drop-in" and talk about issues, problems, events, etc.

The majority of full members and 60% of associate members said yes.

One respondent said that GMCDP need to be more approachable and welcoming.

5. Members

5.1. Would you like to have more involvement in Coalition work or activities?

The majority of full members, and 60% of associate, said yes. Many people were either too far away or had too many commitments already. One respondent felt their past contribution had been either "tolerated" or seen as a "threat".

5.2. If "yes", can you say how?

The majority suggested either giving talks or doing articles.

5.3. Would you like to receive a "summary" of discussions and decisions at GMCDP meetings?

The majority response was yes.

5.4. Would you like to receive summaries of the work and activities of staff?

Again, the majority response was yes.

6. Meetings.

6.1. Do you think GMCDP hold too many, not enough, not on the right subject, meetings?

Only one respondent felt we held too many meetings. Some general comments indicate a need for more socialising, for welcoming people, and for being less "cliquey and hostile"; comments otherwise were very mixed.

6.2. Should meetings be about - local topical items, national issues, should they be social events, or just business?

Full and associate members gave national issues first or second priority - this is a direct contradiction to the indications at section 1 at the beginning of the questionnaire - although all respondents also gave local, topical issues as a joint first priority.

A few respondents felt that there should be some element of socialising.

6.3. Should we provide transport for meetings?

Only one person said no although some suggested conditions - for AGM's only, as an example.

7. **Other comments.** If there are any other points or comments you would wish to make, please detail them here.

Comments are reproduced in their entirety:

Full members;

* Unless GMCDP actively involves its membership by taking the initiative of approach and welcoming and encouraging members contributions I see this questionnaire as a total waste of time. I have first hand experience of trying to get involved, taking the initiative but getting nowhere - feels like GMCDP response is hostile, or indifferent, or feel threatened. I know others who have given up - probably the best thing to do.

* I am very interested in literature and advice to enable me to give talks / lectures to ensure I project a positive image of issues relating to disability.

* stay with BCODP, we will change BCODP to be more positive.

* are your meetings always in the evening, and do they have to be in Manchester?

* good ideas - advertise more - less paper wasting!

* I had hoped, when I joined, that GMCDP was to be the umbrella

organisation for all disabled people's organisations - another tier we don't need - cohesion and coherence is what is needed. Why don't we try and pull all the disparate groups into one clear, unified and articulate body?

* Overall I think the work involvement, activity in various matters, the feedback provided both on paper or physical results, is exceptionally good. The fact that people from outside the GMC area seek advice and / or membership justifies this point. I think that after another twelve months operations it would be worthwhile to go through our strategy and look to the weaknesses and strengths to ensure the best and most successful ways of approaching the problems - which are numerous, to say the least.

* a) a support group for disabled people working outside the area, ie in voluntary groups or local authorities, where individuals have the opportunity to "catch up" on important issues. It often feels as if we spend so much time working on disabled peoples' issues that we don't have the time to read / keep up with new issues.

b) look forward to receiving the infosheet, like the short but informative paragraphs, and resource lists that are provided.

c) We have put a lot of effort in raising the awareness of able-bodied people to a point where they are able to "oppress" other disabled people who have not had access to the same info - feel we need to counteract this fairly quickly!

* There should be more open days.

* I live in Staffordshire where no organisation OF disabled people exists and I joined GMCDP because I felt empathy with its aims. I would like to become more involved and hope to use the knowledge I gain to hopefully establish a similar group in Staffs.

* I think your infosheets are brilliant and "Coalition News" an excellent publication. I like the militant tone of GMCDP - long may it continue.

* Training, disability awareness, aids and adaptations, social events and communication.

* Being from Cumbria, attitudes tend to be backward towards disability. Individuals are dotted around who are fairly radical. They need support. A county-wide Coalition would be worth establishing, drawing from existing disabled groups. You would need to organise this. Also, if we are truly self-advocates, and want a common identity, we need to learn the different languages among disabled people; BLS, braille, Makaton. But most importantly we need to encourage the involvement of people with learning difficulties.

* I feel you have validity because of your membership and your high profile. So, for me, you need to keep both going....the local and the national. People like me (who live in the sticks)

need you....and I guess, eventually, you would be the poorer if you lost people like me. You lot do a pretty good job - keep going.

* Disabled people on TV - disabled MP's - shout out about getting better rights for us all.

* GMCDP gives an excellent service to the members via the info-sheets - but could do with more workers to spread the heavy load.

* Too many questions are obvious, questionnaire too long. GMCDP is doing a terrific job, but if it grows any bigger the limits will be reached of activists' time (eg, for the management committee) and structural problems need to be faced.

* Perhaps promote more regional job positions - info on accessible hotels / apartments abroad (through a questionnaire). Promote awareness, not about disability to disabled people, but to general public via small press ads \ drip feed, one ad a week for five weeks in one area, eg Bolton, Sale / Altrincham Messenger to entice readers to enquire about services / info. I only heard about GMCDP because I went to a disabled swimming club - until then I never knew they existed except for the Spastics Society.

Comments from associate members;

* keep up the good work!

* none really, it's nice to observe an organisation constructively trying to improve it's relevance to the relevant community, ie disabled.

* you rightly quote examples of bad (or non-) practice in respect of the disabled. Why not occasionally (assuming you can find them) award a brownie point for some public / voluntary body which has actually done something creditable?

* I feel very strongly about free bus passes for disabled people

* I would like to thank you all for your info sheets (I steal from them avidly for our newsletter.)

* would it be possible to include drawings, graphics, cartoons in the infosheet to alleviate the waves of type? I am a cartoonist and would be happy to supply either cartoons or common images free to GMCDP.

* wanting to know about attendance allowance when everything has to be done by partner, having had a medical last year my husband was asked to send my book back as I was on the low allowance before Xmas 1988. I have to have more help now more than ever all round the clock 24 hours a day.

* The newsletter is very useful to me and the people I work with You do a great job with little resources, it's difficult to see how you can manage more. I meet a lot of people who could be very helpful within your organisation, but are wary of being with other disabled people, not finding adequate help, this is why I mentioned the outreach work.

* more work needed on positive awareness and of good models and good practice, ie success stories; more work by and for people

with learning disabilities.
ref analysis.sum/LG/10/89.