Minty & Friend

Involving Disabled People in the DCMS

Disability Action Plan

Results of a survey carried out on behalf of

the DCMS using specifically designed

disability questionnaire

Prepared for Colleen Bowen
Department of Culture, Media & Sport

30th March 2007

Report index

DCMS Disability Questionnaire Report

Introduction

Context
The DCMS published a combined equality scheme in December 2006 covering race, equality and gender. The department involved its own diversity network, which includes disabled people, in developing the scheme. However, they were less successful in involving external disabled stakeholders.

Minty & Friend were asked to carry out additional research with disabled people to fill this research gap. This disability questionnaire was devised in order to further inform the development of the scheme before they publish a revised scheme on 30th April 2007.

Objective
Specific objectives for this work are:

- to explore the views of disabled people on key actions which the department has included within the DCMS equality scheme to meet the specific and general disability equality duties and
- to seek views on any areas which have not been addressed in the existing scheme.

Method
Minty & Friend's consultant Mary-Anne Rankin carried out this research following discussions with Colleen Bowen - Head of Policy and Capacity, Strategy Division DCMS. A questionnaire was devised and over 20 disabled people were approached and asked to take part. They were offered the choice of either completing the questionnaire themselves and emailing it back to Mary-Anne, or answering the questions over the telephone, with Mary-Anne recording their answers.

As it was only possible to give potential participants a few days' notice, a number of people were unable to respond in the given timeframe.

Each participant was offered a 'thank you' by way of a £25 gift token.

Participants
Fourteen people completed the questionnaire:

Male– blind - National Federation of the Blind of the UK (Stockport)

Male – autistic - Autism & Neuro Diversity Policy Advisor to the Disability Rights Commission (Manchester)

Male – blind (Nottingham)

Female – wheelchair user – actor (Manchester)

Female – hearing impaired - Summerfield Management Training & Media/Capability Scotland (Edinburgh)

Female – wheelchair user - Access Officer Basingstoke & Deane Borough Council/disability trainer (Bracknell)

Female – wheelchair user - Assistant Operations Manager – Warrington Disability Partnership (Warrington)

Female – mobility impaired – Minty & Friend Associate (Greater London)

Female – mobility impaired - Disability Arts Cymru (Cardiff)

Male – blind (Fife)

Male – blind – RNIB Development Officer (Edinburgh)

Female – blind – RNIB Scotland (Edinburgh)

Female– wheelchair user and of small stature - Minty & Friend Associate (Bath)

Male – deaf (Dunfermline)

Executive Summary

Although only 14 people took part in this questionnaire, based on our experience we feel that the comments made represent the views of many disabled people. We feel that it has been a useful exercise and that this full report contains much useful information for the DCMS.

Although the participants think that the Disability Action Plan (DAP) looks comprehensive on paper, several share a concern that is based on their experiences to date of discrimination. They want to believe that the DAP is effective but they are somewhat sceptical and hope that the DCMS will work within the spirit of the law rather than just 'ticking the legislation box'. It will be important for the DCMS to constantly review the effectiveness of the action plan and to ensure that it is embedded into all areas of its work.

All of the points raised in this report should be given careful consideration but we recommend that the DCMS pays particular consideration to the following comments made by the participants:

- Although they were pleased that all employees receive disability equality training, they were concerned that the training should be followed up by some method of measuring employees' performance regarding their management of disability issues.

- All felt that the most effective way to encourage employees to disclose a disability was to create, and positively maintain a culture in which employees are confident that it is in their best interest to declare a disability. Interestingly several felt that within the DAP there was too much emphasis on the person's disability, or impairment, rather than on the skills they had to do the job. There was a feeling that if the action plan was effective and robust, and its delivery monitored, DCMS employees would become comfortable about disability, and that this in itself would reduce the impact of a person's impairment.

- As an 'umbrella' organisation, the DCMS is in a position to provide a strong lead to its non-departmental public bodies and other groups under its auspices. It was hoped that the DCMS would lead by example and require those within its 'family' to produce and implement robust Disability Equality Schemes and Action Plans.

- It was felt that in order to reach disabled people effectively, the DCMS should develop and maintain links with disability organisations and use the disability media as well as the mainstream press. By promoting job vacancies and public appointment opportunities in these ways, the DCMS would stand more chance of achieving its goal of employing/involving more disabled people. Working with these organisations would also be an excellent way of promoting the leisure activities for disabled people that take place in The London Parks – none of the participants were aware of these.

- It was suggested that the DCMS could make employment opportunities more accessible and some particular recommendations were made:
  - be flexible in recruitment and promotion procedures e.g. adapting the "formal" interview technique to a more relaxed style will help people with low confidence or self-esteem
  - take into account life experience rather than relying solely on academic qualifications
  - set up specific training schemes, work experience placements targeted at disabled people
  - offer fixed term traineeship to encourage people with disabilities who have little formal education
  - establish mentoring schemes where the mentor is him/herself disabled
  - organise a Disabled Recruitment Programme for the DCMS, having Open Days and inviting disabled people

- Access to information was a key issue and it was requested that the DCMS ensures that its printed information is accessible to all e.g.:
  - Keep information jargon-free – use Plain English.
  - Display clear statements about information being available in a range of formats including plain text, large print, audio, Braille, CD and an Easy Read format, for people with learning difficulties and for those for whom English is not their first language (and this includes Deaf people, not just foreign language speakers).

Minty & Friend could provide assistance with all of these recommendations should this be helpful to the DCMS.

Summary of responses to the questionnaire

General comments about the disability action plan (for specific comments see table below)

- Optimism about what some see as a 'comprehensive scheme' but anxiety too, lest it does not live up to aspirations.
- Concern about the use of jargon – use Plain English. Also clear statements needed about information being available in a range of formats including plain text, large print, audio, Braille, CD and an easy to read format for people with learning difficulties and for those for whom English is not their first language – including Deaf people.
- Mixed feelings about the Guaranteed Interview Scheme – some like it, others do not. Similar feelings about other forms of positive discrimination.
- Hope that the stakeholder group is genuinely representative of all disabled people.
- Hope that it will lead to the DCMS and its employees feeling comfortable with disability and that employees will be measured on how well they reflect disability awareness in their work.

What do you think is missing from this disability specific action plan?

- Some have concerns that Access to Work may not fund reasonable adjustments for Civil Service departments. A statement is needed to demonstrate the DCMS's financial commitment to meeting the needs of disabled people.
- Assessing the impact of the Department's policies seems like a huge task and it is unclear how far down the "supply chain" this extends e.g. into organisations effected by DCMS policies?
- Meat!! It seems like the basic bones of an action plan, maybe this is manageable – some of the actions they should be doing anyway for example improving disabled employees access. They should explore their role as a leader and champion in connection with promoting disability equality.

How can the DCMS best encourage its disabled staff to declare a disability?

- The most obvious way to encourage staff to disclose would be a cast-iron confidentiality clause, with severe penalties for breaking it, and policies in place for dealing with other staff who are aware that there is something different about the person (for example, getting time off to attend hospital) and want to know why - or they may make assumptions about the person's condition and let these affect their behaviour (for example, assuming the person has AIDS, because their condition is invisible).
- By fostering a culture that values diversity and people and ensuring that everyone bats from a level playing field and so has the same opportunities as everyone else – with or without reasonable adjustments. Also "thinking outside

the box" where you look for solutions to challenges, rather than seeing problems as obstacles. There has to be mutual trust and acceptance for someone to feel confident enough to declare a disability.

- By being open about the purposes of gathering this information, by asking job applicants to complete the form on application, but with the proviso that the personal details are not stored with the person's name, etc.

What methods do you suggest DCMS uses in order to achieve its target of increasing its number of disabled employees by 2008 across all grades?

- By carrying out its action plan.
- Publishing job vacancies in disability magazines/websites such as Disability Now, New Beacon (RNIB).
- Employing more disabled people. Advertise in disability press as well as regular press. Promote applications from disabled people. The more often talented disabled people are seen in high-profile positions, the more likely they are as a group to become accepted.
- By:
  - being flexible in your recruitment and promotion procedures;
  - adapting the "formal" interview technique to a more relaxed style to help people with low confidence or self-esteem;
  - taking account of life experience rather than relying solely on academic qualifications;
  - offering work experience;
  - accepting applications in alternative formats.
- Setting up specific training schemes, work experience placements, flexible working patterns and mentoring, all targeted at disabled people.
- Liasing closely with disability groups - many charities have employment officers and similar.

How should the DCMS best promote these public appointments in order to ensure that it reaches potential disabled applicants?

- Publish job vacancies in disability magazines/websites such as Disability Now, New Beacon (RNIB).
- Make the process more democratic and transparent. A system that is more trusted will attract more people, particularly disabled people, who often feel left behind.
- By having a list of disability-related organisations to circulate with information – for example, (some) local authorities have Disability Equality Forums, whose members include both individuals and organisations, and who would be likely to assist in promoting vacancies among them in every process.
- Go beyond the disability charities and professional disability lobbyists; use mainstream media; maybe create different levels of bodies to encourage those who have never done this to have a go and learn, e.g. a sub-committee rather than a Board level position.
- Pay honorariums that don't affect any benefits they receive.

- Create a national disabled register and inform through website access, jobcentres, TV announcements etc.

Royal Parks: Community, Sport and Education (we gave a list of examples of initiatives aimed at disabled people in London Parks) Are you aware of these examples?

- No one was aware of these events. The majority of the participants live outside London

How can The Royal Parks ensure that disabled people are aware of these initiatives?

- Make sure information about these is promoted through regular TV, radio and also through disability media, disability organisations, public libraries, carers organisations, local societies and groups, schools, health centres.
- Correct marketing and consultation with local groups.
- Do work with London schools and youth groups, publicise the events on park notice boards, have a disabled kids-line or website.
- By networking with organisations who work for and with people with disabilities.

How can we improve the DCMS scheme to show the links to our non-departmental public bodies?

- Wide publicity of the role of the DCMS and its links with these 60+ organisations, possibly a campaign.
- Make full use of the internet, and make sure these bodies include your details on all their promotional material.
- Advertise more e.g. show the connection with the DCMS when the lottery draws appear on TV.
- Use media and press more to make the general public aware of the full remit of the DCMS and promote the links through this publicity.
- Make your information easier to access, simpler to read, with information on where and how to access the full transcript. Make it relevant to people in the community.

How can we improve the DCMS scheme to make it easier for disabled people to understand our priorities for disabled people?

- Regular consultation.
- As with other questions, better publicity and liaison with national charities.
- Make full use of the internet, and make sure these bodies include your details on all their promotional material..
- Keep it simple, avoid jargon and "office speak". Make it available in a range of formats including Easy Read format/plain text.
- Show more "grass roots" examples.

What ways of involving disabled people could we use to make it easier for disabled people to participate in developing our scheme?

- Set up a DCMS Disabled Working Group, comprising of a spectrum of people within the disabled community and DCMS staff. This group would meet at reasonable intervals and be able to give direct feedback to the DCMS, and personal experience of being disabled.
- Consultation days such as focus groups – not just in London but around the UK. Advertise these opportunities on the radio and TV.
- Have systems that not only make it easy for people to comment on your services, but also to get feedback about what you're doing about their comments.
- Be flexible so you can meet the needs of potential contributors. Hold meetings at alternative times of the day so people can attend day or evening as it suits. Hold meetings in their locality, rather that at an office block which may be difficult to get to by public transport. Don't hold unnecessary meetings if the business can be done by correspondence or in some other way e.g video links/emails. Keep it simple, jargon free and informal.
- Start an open forum website. Offer incentives for people to participate.
- Use of email lists and discussion forums on the internet - this can be very empowering for people who otherwise might feel it difficult to 'speak up' in a group situation.

Full DCMS Questionnaire and all participants' comments

Question 1 – Disability Action Plan
A   What comments would you like to make about the Disability Action Plan?

Comments made about specific elements of the Disability Action Plan are entered into the table below. General comments are listed below the table.

10. Focused action for disabled people		
1 **Task and *responsibility***	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/ success measures**
Involve disabled people in the development of Departmental policies and practices *Responsibility* *Equality and Diversity Team*	As a priority, we will be contacting disabled organisations and groups of disabled people in January 07 in order to set up a stakeholder group for the department. This will be finalised by the end of March 07.	Department's policies and practices reflect the needs and priorities of disabled people
	It is good that there are specific dates. The DCMS should ensure that the consultations involves an adequate cross representation of disabled people.	
	Going for just disabled organisations and groups misses out such a large section of disabled people. Advertise more broadly to get at greater number and variety of disabled people.	
	It is to be hoped that actions will speak as loud as words.	
2 **Task and *responsibility***	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/ success measures**
Assess the impact of Departmental policies and practices on equality for	Equality impact assessment tool will be available in December 06 and training in	Department's policies and practices reflect

disabled people *Responsibility Divisions (with support from Equality and Diversity Team)*	its use provided from January 07	the needs and priorities of disabled people
	Did disabled people have input into this EIA? Will personnel be measured on their performance? How accurate is the information the DCMS is starting with – do you have statistics to measure whether real improvement has been made?	
	What is an Equality Impact Assessment Tool and is this in the public domain?	
Under Responsibility, no mention of management – responsibility seems to have been devolved to specific departments, which may not result in culture change throughout what is inevitably a hierarchical organisation.	**Can we see the Equality Impact Assessment Tool? Is it on the internet?**	
	It is to be hoped that staff will be properly trained in its use.	
3 Task and *responsibility*	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/ success measures**
Eliminate unlawful disability discrimination *Responsibility Human and Business Resources*	The Department is accredited with 'Positive About Disabled People – Two Ticks Symbol. We were re-accredited in November 2006. The Department is taking part in the Employer's Forum for Disability Standard in Feb 2007. All new staff attend compulsory equal opportunities training as part of their induction.	Department's policies and practices reflect our legal requirements. Benchmarking against other Public Sector Organisations. New entrants will receive training within 6 weeks of

	Promotion of mediation skills training.	starting.
	If it is true that Access to Work is being cut with regard to the Civil Service, this could undermine the DCMS's targets.	
	The way that this is expressed makes it seem very 'in house' – no statement that staff then take this on in the work that they do in practical terms within their working environments. What guidelines are there to ensure that the staff actually implement this.	
4 **Task and *responsibility***	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/ success measures**
Eliminate harassment of disabled people that is related to their disabilities *Responsibility* *Human and Business Resources*	We are reviewing our diversity training, including disability training which will be completed by Spring 2007. The Department is reviewing its policy on 'reasonable adjustments' for staff to ensure that we are dealing with staff quickly and efficiently. This will be completed by Jan/Feb 2007. Staff Opinion Survey to begin in 2007.	Monitor and improve take up of training. Improved response and satisfaction rate. Improve satisfaction in key diversity areas
	Ensure that disabled people are involved in delivering the training. **Make sure that disabled people also attend the training. Just because a person is blind does not make them an expert on hearing impairments.**	

	Will the opinion survey be made public? **Will there be an objective external assessment of this review?** **Harassment is a subjective issue as what one would perceive as harassment another would not.**	
	It seems very 'in house' – what is in place to reflect this in the working environment?	
5 **Task and *responsibility***	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/ success measures**
Promote equality of opportunity between disabled people and other people *Responsibility* *Human and Business Resources*	We provide positive action training for disabled staff which is ongoing. The Department also provides mentoring and coaching for all staff, including disabled staff. Increase awareness of In-Service Fast Stream by Spring 2007.	Representation take-up by under-represented groups and take up of positive action training opportunities.
	The DCMS should ensure that the effort applied to this focus on disabled people is as robust as it will be in other diversity areas.	
	Wording seems to create too much positive discrimination – 'all staff' *includes* disabled staff so you don't need to state it.	

	There is no mention of checking whether disabled people (or any minority) are reflected in all staffing grades. The higher up an organisation you go, the fewer minorities are represented, and older people are pensioned off in favour of cheaper younger people, putting an additional burden on the taxpayer to finance pensions that we outside the public sector can only dream of.	
6 **Task and *responsibility***	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/success measures**
Take steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled people more favourably *Responsibility* *Human and Business Resources*	Re-accredited with Two-Ticks Symbol in November 2006. Guarantees interview for applicants with a disability who meet the minimum criteria for a job vacancy.	Increased number of applicants/successes from under-represented groups.
	Proceed with caution on this – you should interview all people who meet the minimum criteria whether disabled or not.	**Could end up with some disabled people being chosen because they are disabled not because they are good at what they do. Avoid tokenism at all cost.**
		Will figures be produced on this?

	Needs explaining – how are disabled people going to get equality if others think they are being treated *more* favourably? Positive discrimination could lead to the wrong person getting the job which could set disabled people back 10 years.	
	Guaranteed interview is a good thing and this does encourage disabled people.	
	I have reservations about positive discrimination. Most disabled people wish to be appointed on merit – and if disabled candidates who meet the minimum criteria are guaranteed an interview, there tends to be an assumption that they meet only the minimum, and so few are appointed. However, the organisation can point to its recruitment policy and say that disabled people are not excluded from applying. Those that are appointed are constantly under pressure to out-perform their peers.	
7 Task and *responsibility*	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/ success measures**
Promote positive attitudes towards disabled people *Responsibility Human and Business Resources*	We provide disability awareness training to all staff. A review is currently taking place which will be completed by Spring 2007.	Improved training for all staff.

	People may take part in the training but their attitudes may not change. Will increased performance in the area covered by this training be linked to the individual staff member's annual review?	
	Mentions staff but no plan to take this into the workplace i.e. with the agencies they work with. Needs to be taken further than just referring to staff.	
	Who delivers the training, and do you know the difference between disability awareness (not liked by disabled people) and disability equality or inclusion training? It's generally accepted that only disabled people are qualified to deliver equality training. Do Caucasians deliver training in BME rights?	
8 **Task and** *responsibility*	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/success measures**
Encourage participation by disabled persons in public life *Responsibility* *Public Bodies Division*	The department is researching ways of targeting disabled persons to increase our database of contacts and raise awareness about public appointment opportunities.	Applications from disabled persons will be received and board membership will be representative of the disabled community.
	Targets need to be set to implement the research.	
9 **Task and** *responsibility*	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/ success measures**
Gather information on the effect of the Department's policies and practices on the recruitment, development and retention of the Department's	Improve monitoring across all areas of HR practices to ensure clear and concise information by Spring/Summer 2007	Improved and meaningful statistics.

disabled employees *Responsibility Human and Business Resources*		
	There is so much emphasis on disability that the disabled person would be monitored so much that they would not be able to concentrate on their job. Too many reminders that they are disabled when they just want to be a regular employee.	

10 **Task and *responsibility***	**Target date and progress**	**Outcome/ success measures**
Ensure that the department is accessible to disabled people and that disabled colleagues are consulted with on a regular basis about their changing requirements as and when appropriate *Responsibility Facilities Management and Human and Business Resources*	The department is currently undertaking an extensive refurbishment programme which will be completed in Summer 07. This includes and improved facilities for disabled staff. DSE virtual desk assessments are being rolled out across the department and will be completed by summer 07. We are also looking at improving our management and delivery times of reasonable adjustments for staff.	Disabled colleagues are able to perform their jobs to the highest standard possible. Disabled colleagues are able to attend meetings and other events that enables them to perform their jobs on a daily basis

Consultation documents in accessible formats should be made available *at the same time* as the non-accessible version. **So many consultation papers come in after the deadline in the accessible formats – having to ask for information in an accessible format delays access. Can ask for an extension time but this not be necessary.**	**Desk hopping can be a problem for people with some disabilities either because reasonable adjustments are needed or because, in the case of a blind person, they need to know their space well and where everything is placed.**	
	Make sure when someone starts work that the environment is accessible for them as an individual, and then make sure they know who to consult when they need changes to be made. This would be less intrusive than the employer always asking and give the disabled person control over their needs.	
	What do the initials DSE stand for?	
	With reference to attending conferences etc., it seems to me that public bodies could not only improve their record on disability inclusion but reduce their travel time and expenditure, carbon footprint and congestion by using videoconferencing more. More disabled people would take up employment if they could work, at least when feasible, from home. This could have knock-on benefits for all staff.	

11 Task and *responsibility*	Target date and progress	Outcome/ success measures
Gather information on the extent to which the DCMS services and functions take account of the needs of disabled people

Responsibility Equality and Diversity Team | Five sets of provisional results from the Taking Part survey have been released and annual results will be released on 14 Dec 06. A detailed annual report will be published in Spring 07.

Establishment of diversity forum with NDPBs will facilitate exchange of information on particular services | Evidence and statistics on the involvement of disabled people will be used to shape policy and functions of the 'DCMS family'. |
	It is important that disabled people are able to take part anonymously so that if they have any negative comment to make they can be sure that this will not impact on them as individuals.	**How carefully is the DCMS 'family' going to be monitored on this?**
	The emphasis is about gathering information rather than actually putting things into practice.	
		Jargon! What exactly is meant by 'DCMS family'? Do you mean group of related organisations, or actual staff? It seems disingenuous to me to regard the staff of any government department as a kind of family!
12 Task and *responsibility*	Target date and progress	Outcome/ success measures
Review on a regular basis the	By December 2007 publish	The department is

effectiveness of proposed steps *Responsibility* *Equality and Diversity Team*	first annual report on the steps we have taken towards the fulfilment of the general duties, the results of information gathering and the use we have made of that information	legally complying with equality legislation. Living documents which steer the way we operate as a department
	Would hope to see evidence that these comments being made by me and other participants have steered a revised plan. Invite comment from disabled organisations on the results.	**It would be preferable if the DCMS's outcome were to work within the spirit of the law rather than just the legal framework.**
	I agree!	
		What exactly are 'living documents'? Please express this differently
		What is a 'living document'?

General comments

- It looks like a good DAP. However the actions need to match the rhetoric.
- There is little information on the stakeholder group - what is its composition, what is its remit, are members from organisations or are they individuals, or both etc? Will it complement other methods of involving disabled people? Will it be truly representative of all disabled people?
- I feel that the plan is quite comprehensive and reading through the plan parts of it should already have been completed.
- It seems comprehensive.
- Too much jargon. All sounds good, but it will be interesting to see what happens in practice.
- As a blind person, using a speech system, I found the above plan very hard to read and understand. This is mainly because of the way in which it was laid out in table format. For me, it would be far more straightforward to understand if the text had been written in a more flowing style.
- I am not sure that the plan emphasises enough the aim of moving towards a state where disability awareness becomes a natural state for all staff rather than just a process that is 'gone through' by new staff and periodically by existing staff. People have to be educated, but ultimately one would hope that the overall aim is for it to be a natural state that all staff are comfortable with.

- I think that 'treating disabled people' more favourably than other people has to be done only in clear situations e.g. where 2 applicants for a job are judged to be difficult to separate otherwise. One has to avoid discriminating positively in a unconsidered way as it is very likely to be viewed as patronising by the disabled person and unfair by other people. This just breeds resentment and has a chance of undoing all other good works in this area. Most people with disabilities want to be treated fairly and not given disproportional bias.
- Two tick symbol; can you identify any employee given an interview under this scheme who has subsequently attained work with you? Reporting these statistics would encourage people who have gone through interviews and were still unable to secure employment.
- There are a number of grand statements and no means of measuring these. I would like to see greater demonstration of some of the aspects, and/or broadening. For example the two ticks does not hold much faith by many disabled people while its valuable for some – therefore what other initiatives can be taken? The department is in a good position to lead… so it is not just their daily operations but what actually initiatives are they also backing? Some of the context needs exploring for example definitions and understanding of discrimination and/or harassment from a disability equality perspective.
- Very interesting and clearly outlined, but overwhelming to take all in.

B What do you think is missing from this disability specific action plan?

- Nothing. Unless the DCMS can influence manufacturers of digital equipment for when digital switchover takes place. Currently there are no affordable accessible set top boxes available – was one but taken off the market. Only accessible box on market costs £1,000. There was one at £100 but the company producing it was very poor and because of the amount of hassle they got, it was taken off the market.
- A section that encourages additional feedback from disabled people and welcoming of amendments to the DAP.
- Seems more 'policy' focused than practical. Something about the staff implementing their disability training knowledge into their work i.e. actively seeking disabled participants in the schemes that they oversee.
- It mentions building adaptations and reasonable adjustments, but not how these will be funded or provided. Is there a ring-fenced budget for this, since Access to Work no longer applies to civil service departments? Who makes the decisions on what equipment or facilities a particular person can or cannot have? What happens if someone needs a piece of equipment in order to do their job and the money isn't available? There is little detail about specific actions or measurable outcomes as targets are quite general. How will you know when you have achieved xxx?
- I am not sure anything much is missing. They have obviously consulted with a number of agencies and individuals in relation to this plan and it seems they have read plenty of others.

- Assessing the impact of the Department's policies seems like a huge task and it is unclear how far the "supply chain" this extends e.g. into organisations effected by DCMS policies?
- There is no acknowledgement of different disabilities – the needs of someone who is hearing impaired are different from someone who cannot see. I don't like the use of the term 'disabled people' – there is no acknowledgement of the breadth of disabilities within this plan.
- To be honest, I find this question hard to answer in the context of what I say above - because the plan is hard to read for me, I find it difficult to hold the detail in my head and hence don't have any specific comment here. I may be mistaken, but was there any specific mention of the provision of information in appropriate formats for staff and/or for job applicants? Was there any mention of having in place procedures for producing these appropriate formats when they are requested?
- The fact that the DCMS is aiming to be an organisation that reflects best practice and be a leader in disability employment practice.
- Meat!! It seems like the basic bones of an action plan, maybe this is manageable – some of the actions they should be doing anyway for example improving disabled employees access. They should explore their role as a leader a champion in connection with promoting disability equality.
- Links for access to information (more specific information).

Question 2 – Self-declaring a disability

Ethnicity, disability and sexuality monitoring for DCMS staff is conducted on the basis of voluntary self-declaration through a self-serve database which was re-launched in October 2006.

How can the DCMS best encourage its disabled staff to declare a disability?

- Be sure you explain that if you declare your disability, it can be noted by your employer and appropriate measures can be taken – if you don't tell them they can't make adjustments. Convey effectively your reason for asking: 'In order that we can make the appropriate reasonable adjustments it is advisable that people declare a disability.'
- Promote a culture where staff feel comfortable to disclose their disability, without fear of feeling like 'second class citizens'.
- By being able to produce hard evidence that it won't affect their career prospects. It's so personal. It needs to be viewed in practical terms – how to put in place necessary reasonable adjustments. Create a culture where people feel safe to disclose. The more disabled people within the workforce, the safer other people will feel to disclose a disability.
- This is difficult. There are issues of confidentiality and relevance. Some impairments may have no effect on a person's ability to perform their job, so the only advantage of disclosure accrues to the employer, who can claim to provide equality of opportunity, but the worker may subsequently suffer discrimination. Invisible impairments, like mental illness (past or present) often suffer worse discrimination than visible ones where the disabled party may be

pitied. The most obvious way to encourage staff to disclose would be a cast-iron confidentiality clause, with severe penalties for breaking it, and policies in place for dealing with other staff who are aware that there is something different about the person (for example, getting time off to attend hospital) and want to know why - or they may make assumptions about the person's condition and let these affect their behaviour (for example, assuming the person has AIDS, because their condition is invisible).

- By fostering a culture that values diversity and people and ensuring that everyone bats from a level playing field and so has the same opportunities as everyone else – with or without reasonable adjustments. Also "thinking outside the box" where you look for solutions to challenges, rather than seeing problems as obstacles. There has to be mutual trust and acceptance for someone to feel confident enough to declare a disability.
- This is a problem faced by all major employers and to be honest this is something that you can't force people into – self-declaration. I recently had this conversation with BNFL and Warrington Borough Council, but not real solutions were found. We discussed the possibility of it being in the interest of the employee as the employer would be able to offer help and support if someone found particular tasks too difficult.
- Making it clear that DCMS is genuinely keen to employ disabled people and not just "box ticking"; creating an open work environment.
- Encourage them to be proud of it and wear it like a badge of courage e.g. don't make them feel different if using walking sticks etc.
- Encourage people that if they declare barriers will be removed rather than put in their path. Give people the confidence to declare and take away the fear and stigma that some people imagine is attached to having a disability.
- By being open about the purposes of gathering this information, by asking job applicants to complete the form on application but with the proviso that the personal details are not stored with the person's name etc.
- Ensuring the database is fully accessible i.e. to staff with visual impairment; by ensuring that there is privacy of information; having a specific Dept/employee who works with disabled people to ensure they will support the individual and ensure the dept is meeting the needs and entitlement of disabled staff.
- The DDA definition is not helpful as its negative - other means should be used, also they need to sell the benefit of self-declaring.
- One to one consultancy & assessment of disability

Question 3 - Employment

The DCMS has set itself a target of increasing its number of disabled employees by 2008 across all grades.

What methods do you suggest DCMS uses in order to achieve this?

- By carrying out its action plan.
- I'm not in favour of positive discrimination as I believe the best person should get the job, regardless of their attributes, be it colour, gender, age, disabled, etc. However, more disabled people should be encouraged to apply for jobs at

the DCMS. This could include organising a Disabled Recruitment Programme for the DCMS, having Open Days at DCMS inviting disabled people along, providing additional media types for disabled people being able to access and apply for jobs at DCMS, for example; allowing people to apply conventionally, but also online, over the phone, Word document, web chat, etc thus making the DCMS as accessible; both virtually and physically as possible.

- Publish job vacancies in disability magazines such as New Beacon (RNIB).
- Employ more disabled people. Advertise in disability press as well as regular press. Promote welcome applications from disabled people.
- This target isn't clear from the list provided above, hence my earlier comments. Having said that, you can't legislate for attitudes, no matter how worthy this aim may be. This is a long, slow process, and the disability movement is a few years behind the civil rights, women's and gay movements. I actually believe that only time will achieve equality. The more often talented disabled people are seen in high-profile positions, the more likely they are as a group to become accepted.
- By being flexible in your recruitment and promotion procedures. Adapting the "formal" interview technique to a more relaxed style will help people with low confidence or self-esteem. Often people have low self-esteem because they have had so many rejections in the past. Taking account life experience rather than relying solely on academic qualifications. Offering work experience – helps both parties see if the job is right for them. Accepting applications in alternative formats eg a CV. Make sure you advertise in the disability press and on websites as well as the normal channels e.g Talking News, Disability Now etc. Consider alternative working patterns e.g home working or job share or part-time working.
- The posts need to be properly advertised, but I am a firm believer that the person should be capable of doing the job and not just given it because of a disability, as has happened in some organisations.
- Set up specific training schemes, work experience placements, flexible working patterns and mentoring, all targeted at disabled people.
- Inform disabled employees that work is not as hard as they might think. There are breaks in a working day, which sometimes people forget to give themselves if unemployed.
- Don't just advertise in standard press – use disability media – accessible websites, disability press etc.
- Close liaison with disability groups - many charities have employment officers and similar.
  Many charities also have internal and external magazines and other forums for distributing information of this sort.
  Standard means such as local and national press etc.
  Use of broadcasting media etc.
- Offer fixed term traineeship to encourage people with disabilities who have little formal education. Consider workplacements and mentoring schemes.
- Encourage placement from schools for pupils with disabilities. Create links with organisations who work with people who are further removed from the labour market. Sponsor recruitment training for future vacancies.
- See RNIB Scotland for example of pre recruitment training which was successful.

- I hope this is done on merit as you are otherwise setting people to fail, lead by example demonstrate commitment, adverse and explore their recruitment and benefits packages.
- Publicise the fact that suitable vacancies are to be filled by people with certain disabilities.

Question 4 – Public Appointments

Public bodies assist Ministers and Departments to deliver their objectives and priorities, especially where specialist expertise and an independent view are needed. The Department draws up role specifications, advertises vacancies, searches for suitable candidates, supports the independent interview panel, and advises Ministers on whom to appoint. The DCMS has ambitious targets to increase the representation of disabled people serving on public bodies.

How should the DCMS best promote these public appointments in order to ensure that it reaches potential disabled applicants?

- Always remember to contact the blind media – don't expect to reach them through the standard press. Talking Newspapers only read the highlights of the magazines, never the advertisements.
- Make the process more democratic and transparent. A system that is more trusted will attract more people, particularly disabled people, who often feel left behind.
- Publish job vacancies in disability magazines such as New Beacon (RNIB).
- Mass advertising and ensuring that the disability press is used. Don't just use mainstream press and state welcome applications from disabled people.
- By having a list of disability-related organisations to circulate with information – for example, (some) local authorities have Disability Equality Forums, whose members include both individuals and organisations, and who would be likely to assist in promoting vacancies among them. You should circulate to disability websites, too.
- Normal publicity channels and the disability press including websites. Make them appealing i.e people are more likely to want to participate if it is meaningful to them at a personal level. Avoid jargon and complicated language.
- Correct marketing and having disabled people involved in every process. I would use the relevant Disability Press.
- Go beyond the disability charities and professional disability lobbyists; use mainstream media; maybe create different levels of bodies to encourage those who have never done this to have a go and learn, e.g. a sub-committee rather than a Board level position.
- Pay honorariums that don't affect any benefits they receive.
- Don't just advertise in standard press – use disability media – accessible websites, disability press, radio, etc. Promote the vacancies to local disability groups/organisations.
- By targeting organisations which deal with people with disabilities, contacting Disability Employment advisers, hold open information events.

- I have been on their reserve list for years and so I hear are others maybe we are not suitable but who is? If you apply will you be successful the criteria seems a little vague? Great to get people to apply, but will it come to something?
- Create a national disabled register and inform thro' website access, jobcentres, TV announcements etc.

Question 5 – Royal Parks: Community, Sport and Education

The Royal Parks provides educational resources for local schools and teachers. It also provides opportunities to involve local people in the running of the parks as volunteers and also consults about the way in which the parks can address the different needs of local people.

Children's playgrounds are designed to take account of the needs of disabled children and are equipped with specially adapted equipment. In partnership with PHAB (a national charity dedicated to promoting the integration of people with and without physical disabilities, at all levels of society) TRP has been running the Holly Lodge centre in Richmond Park for over ten years. The centre offers opportunities for mentally and physically handicapped adults and children to use the park and its buildings to develop skills. Both Richmond Park and Bushy Park work with Companion Cycling, which provides disabled people with an opportunity to enjoy the park sharing specially adapted cycles with able-bodied volunteers. A 'manege' has been created in Hyde Park, in partnership with the owner of local stables, to hold sessions of Riding for the Disabled and there is also Riding for the Disabled at Bushy Park. In Regent's park, the Hub staff run sports activities for disabled people including:

- A weekly walk and exercise session for people with mental health conditions (in partnership with the Central and North West London Mental Health NHS Trust);

- A weekly exercise session for people with learning difficulties (in partnership with the Westminster Primary Care Trust);

- Annual events including the London Youth Games for people with mild learning difficulties;

- The London Sports Forum annual football tournament for young disabled people; and

- Football and rugby days for the National Deaf Children's Society.

A Are you aware of these examples?
- No - but pleased to hear about them.

- No, but this is probably down to me not living in London. The events listed are encouraging and events like this should be extended to other parts of the country.
- No. This all seems very London based – what about the provinces and regions?
- No – I know the places, but not the examples. Please don't use the word 'handicapped' to describe disabled people.
- They're all in London so I'm a bit bemused. If this questionnaire is going to people all over the country, they will be too. If not, why am I included? Are you interested only in the London area for the purposes of this exercise, or do you intend to build up a national database of activities like the ones listed above? In 2003, I developed an inclusion training programme for FABB Scotland (Facilitating Access, Breaking Barriers). FABB is the Scottish offshoot of PHAB which changed its name when I joined it, as Physically Handicapped/Able-Bodied was regarded as an old-fashioned way of describing disability. FABB's objective is to include disabled people in mainstream leisure activities, as dedicated disabled activities still exclude them. My training course was attended by staff from various different children's leisure services in Edinburgh.
- I was not aware of these events but probably would be if I lived or worked in London. I think that this is just isolating people and giving credence to people who are saying that the Olympic and Paralympic Games are just for London.
- No – except Riding for the Disabled, which I have heard of (lives in Greater London).

B How can The Royal Parks ensure that disabled people are aware of these initiatives?

- Make sure information about these is promoted through regular TV and also through disability media.
- Promote these initiatives to disability organisations, public libraries, carers organisations.
- Tell local groups, families, schools, internet, disability press.
- The only Royal Park I have experience of is the Queen's Park, around Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh, and I've been saying for some time that banning cars on Sundays discriminates against mobility-impaired people.
- Disabled people read the papers, watch the TV, listen to the radio, go to clubs and pubs and go out after dark! Use the normal channels, if disability is included in mainstream activities disabled people become part of everyday society rather than having to live on the edge of it. You can also target specific local disability groups, Talking News, Disability Now etc. And avoiding the term "handicapped" as in the paragraph above will help!
  'The centre offers opportunities for mentally and physically handicapped adults and children to use the park and its buildings to.'
- Correct marketing and consultation with local groups.
- Do work with London schools and youth groups, publicise the events on park notice boards, have a disabled kids-line or website.
- By networking with organisations who work for and with people with disabilities.

- Have you ever worked with a group of disabled people/children to develop something either play or part of the park for example sensory (either in terms of sculpture or plants)
- Publicity through health centres etc, disabled groups own magazines, schools and TV announcements, etc.

Question 6: Our non-departmental public bodies

DCMS has responsibility for more than 60 non-departmental public bodies, which include museums, galleries, lottery funding, sports, tourism, the Olympics and heritage organisations. Many of these have a duty to publish their own disability equality schemes.

A How can we improve the DCMS scheme to show the links to our non-departmental public bodies?

- Wide publicity.
- Publicise the role of the DCMS and its links with these 60+ organizations, possibly a campaign.
- More practical hands on set targets, not just internal policies.
- Make full use of the internet, and make sure these bodies include your details on all their promotional material. I realise there is the temptation to invest in a high-profile TV campaign, but this doesn't 'embed' (as they say) the policy across the board – once these campaigns are over, they're over.
- Don't know! Too many cross-references and appendages just complicate matters. Simple is best.
- Consultation is the key to this question and each department talking to each other. There is no point in duplicating things. Each department will in turn need to produce its own DES (Disability Equality Scheme) as it is handling public funds which could very well have an increase in awareness as they consult with the wider communities in the development of their plans
- The DCMS does show links from its website clearly but then those organisations do not show their own DES information.
- Advertise more e.g. show the connection with the DCMS when the lottery draws appear on TV.
- Use media and press more to make the general public aware of the full remit of the DCMS and promote the links through this publicity.
- Make your information easier to access, simpler to read, with information on where and how to access the full transcript. Make it relevant to people in the community.
- Leadership and champion, develop initiatives/ projects linking in these departments.
- DCMS's own logo to show that the public bodies are disability friendly.

B How can we improve the DCMS scheme to make it easier for disabled people to understand our priorities for disabled people?

- Regular consultation.
- As with other questions, better publicity and liaison with national charities.
- Make full use of the internet, and make sure these bodies include your details on all their promotional material. I realise there is the temptation to invest in a high-profile TV campaign, but this doesn't 'embed' (as they say) the policy across the board – once these campaigns are over, they're over.
- The fact that you ask this question means you still have a long way to go. This is an issue of corporate culture and staff and society's attitudes as much as providing information.
- Firstly, whose priorities? I thought the DES was all about establishing what disabled people see as the priorities. Keep it simple, avoid jargon and "office speak". I am assuming it is available in alternative formats such as Braille and audio. Is it available in Easy Read format? Don't make the document too weighty or too wordy as this is a barrier for a lot of people.
- It needs to be in easy to read formats not only in large print and braille but using pictures, Makaton (a form of sign language often used to support communication with people with learning difficulties) and reading books.
- Showing more "grass roots" examples.
- As I said above, I think the way in which this document has been written makes it very difficult for me (as a blind person) to absorb the information. A more flowing textual style in plain english would be far better in my view.
- By ensuring it is their priorities not yours. How can a non disabled person judge what is a priority for a person who is blind, deaf or someone who uses a wheelchair? Using a group of people with a variety of disabilities to assist with it and making sure they are included in the final outcome will help. Not just an exercise where they are asked for their opinion but not credited when it is implemented.
- Sell achievements to the disabled community and involve.
- Leaflets, audio and visual discs (DVDs) in plain English.

Question 7: Involving disabled people in developing our scheme
DCMS is required to, and wishes to, involve disabled people in developing our equalities scheme.

What ways of involving disabled people could we use to make it easier for disabled people to participate in developing our scheme?
- Already answered in previous questions.
- Setting up a DCMS Disabled Working Group, comprising of a spectrum of people within the disabled community and DCMS staff. This group would meet at reasonable intervals and be able to give direct feedback to the DCMS, and personal experience of being disabled.
- Consultation days such as focus groups – not just in London but around the UK. Advertise these opportunities on the radio and TV.
- Meet more disabled people – group panels, go out into the community. Pilot schemes – try before you buy. Set up groups each focusing on a different area

of the DCMS' work e.g. museums, libraries, galleries, cinemas. Encourage the venues to themselves carry out local research amongst disabled people. Hold open days demonstrating the facilities they have for disabled people. Get the venues to do the outreach work to contact these people to broaden their knowledge and awareness.

- Set up targets and a monitoring and evaluation process for each of your initiatives, to build up a databank of feedback for each one. I'm sure you're already onto this.
- Have systems that not only make it easy for people to comment on your services but also to get feedback about what you're doing about their comments.
- It is all the usual stuff about effective consultation. The important thing is be flexible so you can meet the needs of potential contributors. Hold meetings at alternative times of the day so people can attend day or evening as it suits. Hold meetings in their locality, rather than at some swanky office block which may be difficult to get to by public transport. Don't hold unnecessary meetings if the business can be done by correspondence or in some other way e.g video links. Provide easy read documents for people with learning disabilities or those who have English as a second language. Keep it simple, jargon free and informal.
- Disabled people should be able to be a part of each and every target. This could be achieved by holding events and focus groups to engage with disability.
- Start an open forum website. Offer incentives for people to participate.
- Workshops based as locally as possible.
- Focus groups – not too big so that everyone has a chance to contribute. You would have to do regional focus groups. Make sure that they are held in accessible venues and perhaps provide assistance with transport to make it possible for a broad spectrum of disabled people to take part.
- Use of focus groups - possibly located in premises of organisations of and for disabled people.
- Use of email lists and discussion forums on the internet =- this can be very empowering for people who otherwise might feel it difficult to 'speak up' in a group situation.
- Open events where you are able to provide information and form focus groups, offer transport and assistance to encourage people to attend. Contact organisations to encourage people who use their service to see it as worthwhile.
- Use a range of methods, make it sustainable i.e. long term and work on a series of topics to keep the focus. A long term advisory with other information and involvement initiatives, conferences, new updates etc.

Question 8: Priorities for DCMS
The DCMS has a very wide remit and is in a position to influence external agencies.

Under the following headings, can you briefly suggest key priority actions that are relevant to your own access needs?

Access to employment

- Carry out this action plan and make sure that it is enforced and regularly updated.
- Recognising and understanding neuro-diversity (a term that covers conditions such as dyslexia, dyspraxia, ADD, ADHD, Tourette's syndrome and Autism Spectrum Disorders. Many believe that these conditions have many commonalities and overlap each other, that most Neuro-diverse people have more than one of the mentioned conditions, hence the definition of Neuro-diverse. The majority of the population are referred to as Neuro-typical.)
- Take specific measures targeted at the very high unemployment rate of visually impaired people, preferably with ministerial authority.
- Less universal discrimination. As an actor I am only invited to audition for parts of a wheelchair user. Influence directors to see the bigger picture than disability.
- Don't make it harder for everyone by implementing policies to treat everyone exactly the same. I have recently been asked for my passport and birth certificate to apply for work on a project lasting for only 450 hours over 9 months. The rationale is that this is the only way not to discriminate against foreign applicants permitted to work here. Sledgehammer and nut come to mind. Decide what you need to know, and don't demand intrusive information. The majority of disabled people acquire their impairments through illness or injury in the course of their working lives. Therefore all workplaces should be as accessible as is feasible – and homeworking should be available where practical.
- Having key regard to my abilities rather than my disability. I disagree with Trevor Phillips when he says that there should be positive discrimination for disadvantaged groups. I want access to real jobs not "charity" jobs. Where is the self-respect in that? I get the job because I have the ability, not because I am disabled. Also having access to the right equipment and facilities that I need to do the job.
- A fundamental right and a means to self esteem. Need to raise the awareness around disability to employers to make them realise that disabled people are less likely to go off sick, are more loyal and there is no extra cost in employing or training a disabled person.
- Disabled people need to be able to find out about the vacancies in the first place. Provide application forms in people's preferred formats. Provide assistance at interviews. Make sure that HR are fully aware of sources of support for disabled employees.
- More opportunities, fairer recruitment processes, accessible information.
- Flexible working practice and opportunities.
- Lead by example.
- Range of opportunities.

Access to the external environment

- Make sure that adequate tactile and audible signage is provided. Signs that speak as you walk past them. The technology is there – make sure it is used.
- Making it as friendly and easy going as possible.
- Improve signage on buildings – adoption of the RNIBs guidance on signage.
- Remove gates, styles, steps. When looking at access to outside environment think beyond the access to buildings and look at countryside too.
- Don't use highly textured footing to alert visually-impaired people. My mother fell and broke her femur on the knobbles alerting blind people to a pedestrian crossing. A less dramatic difference in texture would have the desired effect. Provide accessible parking close to outdoor attractions, and tactile or auditory.
- Transport is key to everything. If you can't get out of the house because of poor transport links you are housebound and isolated. Having a mobility impairment means I cannot be spontaneous but have to plan journeys to the last detail. Accurate and easy to understand information is critical.
- This needs to cover Public Transport as a means get around.
- Do not put pavement furniture in the way – don't place obstacles in the way.
- Prevent people from parking on pavements. Audio announcements that tell you where you are. More audible pelican crossings.
- Public spaces need to invite and reflect the needs of disabled people

Access to buildings
- Adequate tactile and audible signage and access to information.
- Ensuring there is accessibility for all.
- Not a lot to say from a visually impaired person's point of view.
- Remove steps and provide wider doors and lifts. Always provide accessible toilets.
- Curb the excesses of architects. Mortonhall Crematorium in Edinburgh is virtually inaccessible to people with mobility impairments (and, obviously, the majority of its visitors are elderly) because the architect has introduced 'texture' in the form of large, widely-spaced rough-surfaced setts on the ground immediately surrounding the chapels. Try walking on that with walking-sticks. The waterfront development at Leith Docks is the same.
- Don't have the wheelchair access round the back beside the dustbins, and if you must have an entry phone system, don't make it ONLY at a height accessible to wheelchair users – deaf people may know someone is speaking, but be unable to respond without kneeling down. Provide both stairs and ramps, both with handrails. All doors (including fire doors) should either open automatically or have a push-button. A member of staff should be on duty if there's a security risk.
- Wheelchair access and accessible toilets, low counters, parking.
- Don't use health and safety as an excuse to exclude wheelchair users – the National Library of Scotland's fire escape procedure does this (or used to).
- To enable integration. If there are stairs, some indication that you are coming to a flight of stairs, different surface.
- Good colour contrast for partially sighted, easily accessed reception points/information points

- We need to have access to our heritage as well, and this can be done rather than used as an excuse. Again buildings should reflect that disabled people are valued and the modifications integrated into the overall scheme of things.

Access to information
- Make printed information available in alternative formats at the same time as standard version.
- Providing this in different ways. People think in different ways and a way that is compatible with that way of thinking can make a huge difference.
- Always make information available in accessible formats. Promote educational materials in accessible formats. Try and equal out the price of books so that blind people don't have to pay more if they want to buy an unabridged audio book.
- Provide information about disabled access into buildings/outside environments within the general information – not special brochures.
- Don't use unnecessary jargon, but don't provide only 'easy words' – for those who don't need the latter, it's patronising. Have two versions. And have everything available in all formats.
- And have a human being on the end of the phone – it's not just deaf people who can't deal with auto-switchboards. The elderly, people with learning difficulties or mental illness find them confusing. Everyone else just hates them with a vengeance.
- Information has to be clear, reliable and accessible.
- Available in all formats in a number of outlets.
- Make sure that information is easily available in alternative formats. No more than a slight delay in providing this.
- Variety of formats able to be provided on request (or at least in a reasonable timescale).
- Plain English and easy English along with other formats need to be provided – where the information is shared is important.
- Access and availability to communication support

Other
- Be aware that what improves access for one group may reduce it for another (re my comments on trip-hazards and entry systems). And be aware how health and safety can be used unnecessarily to exclude. Wheelchairs per se are not a fire hazard. Disabled people know that there will always be venues and activities covered by your department that some of them will never be able to access, because it is simply impossible – for example, museums set up in historical buildings may be impossible to convert or equip, and the totally blind will never see the paintings in galleries. But new-build should take physical access into account.
- The most important thing is the attitudes of staff. I can accept that some buildings are not going to be wheelchair accessible but if the staff are friendly,

helpful and non-patronising that will go a long way to alleviating any inconvenience. I know one chain of shops where every shop is stacked so full of goods that you cannot get a wheelchair or pushchair down the aisles or even two people in the same aisle at the same time. They acknowledge that it is difficult, but do nothing about changing it. "We will help you". Well yes they will help you (if staff are available!) but I would rather help myself at my own convenience. If they did reorganise the stock they would probably get more customers because it would be a much more pleasant experience for everyone.

- Influence/apply pressure re disabled access to those organisations coming under the DCMS policies – this is one of the biggest areas of difficulty e.g. lack of cinema access, theatre access, sports facilities access etc.
- Access to training opportunities, information, advice and guidance relevant to particular needs.
- Having specialist staff within voluntary organisation who can offer the same level of advice and guidance as does careers/employment/training organisations. At present staff have some knowledge but not at the level required to be able to offer a fully inclusive service and often people are sent to a particular voluntary organisation. Acknowledge it is impossible to have staff fully versed in all disability issues etc and work towards having specialists.