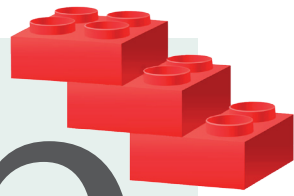


# link-up



**No. 3, April 2014 Disabled People's User-Led Organisation Newsletter**

Welcome to the third DPULO Newsletter. Link-up is intended to provide you with a flavour of the programme and the types of projects we are supporting as well as sharing best practice and good news stories. We hope you find this useful and we would really welcome your input and feedback.

## Programme delivering results

Mercian Ability Partnership (MAP) runs Shopmobility on behalf of Tamworth Borough Council.

Financial support from the Office for Disability Issues "Strengthening DPULOs Programme", in addition to some other funding, has enabled MAP to purchase ten mobility scooters, six manual wheelchairs and three rollators, all of which are now in service at Shopmobility Tamworth, based in Ankerside car park.

Shopmobility's equipment can be hired by anyone who has difficulty walking, either due to a disability, a temporary injury, or illness. You do not have to have a blue badge to use the service, and likewise, you do not need to be registered disabled, all MAP ask to see is photo ID and proof of address when you first join.

Telephone 01827 709392 for details of equipment available to hire, or to join Shopmobility. Information on hire fees is available at:

<http://www.mercian-ability.org.uk>



To visit MAP's Independent Living Centre please call 01827 307712.

**Right:** Shopmobility scooters for hire

## The DPULO Programme — The Facts

We believe communication is vital, and are really keen to keep in touch with as many DPULO's as possible. To do this, we:

- email our DPULO network (around 450 DPULOs) regularly
- add information to the DPULO Website at: <http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-projects/user-led-organisations.php>

• post information to the Strengthening DPULO's Facebook page

- tweet using #dpulo

Please contact us if you would like to join the network. Also, do take the opportunity to review the website, or follow us on Facebook and Twitter.



## Have your say...

Please share what challenges you face as a DPULO. How have you overcome them? Is there a question you need advice on, or just let us know what you would like to see in the future issues, email [odi.businessperformance@dwp.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:odi.businessperformance@dwp.gsi.gov.uk)



Above: Hao2 virtual environment

### DPULO's Using Technology

The Hao2 Foundation with the working name 'Autus' is a DPULO using online 3D digital technologies to provide both life skills and employment skills training to young people with complex needs, particularly those with Autism and Asperger's.

Training participants use 3D learning environments to navigate and communicate using avatars (digital versions of themselves) supported by a learning supervisor. These environments are designed to represent places found in the real world such as a classroom, office, supermarket amongst others.

Three evolutionary courses are available, starting from life skills, through work preparation to employability and personal development. This course comes with a City and Guilds qualification. The Foundation has recently secured funding to research and

develop peer-to-peer job collectives – see <http://www.autus.org.uk/projects>

The Foundation's 3D work and learning platform means that people with confidence issues are more willing and able to participate by being able to access the courses from a place they feel 'safe' and in a way that makes them feel empowered and supported.

The government recently published Think Autism, a new strategy for improving the lives of adults with autism in England. The strategy includes the 'Autism Innovation Fund', £4.5 million available throughout 2014/15 to support delivery of some of the government's key priorities. The Think Autism strategy includes the funding of organisations putting forward proposals from July that enable people with Autism to gain and grow skills for independence and employment. Proposals should demonstrate the core characteristics of: Innovation, including either technology or innovative service design or provision Partnership: an integrated approach to local services and/or partnership with local businesses, employers or other services

Autus, with its innovative technology and services, are well placed to apply for funding meeting these criteria and would like to hear from other DPULOs wishing to explore a potential partnership.

More can be learnt about the work Autus does at [www.autus.org.uk](http://www.autus.org.uk)

### Useful Links

- Promoting independent living in Hull and the East Riding area - visit a new PA database at <http://www.padatabase.org/>
- Disability Rights UK new guide 'Into Apprenticeships', written by and for disabled people. Free to download at: <http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/default/files/pdf/IntoApprenticeships.pdf>

### Next time...

Look out for the next edition of this newsletter for our special feature on the regional events hosted by DPULOs around the country.