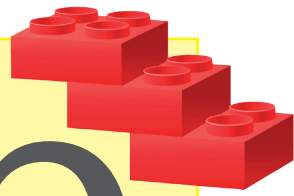


# link-up

East Midlands



**July 2014 Disabled People's User-Led Organisation Newsletter**

Welcome to the first issue of the East Midlands regional Link Up newsletter. This is going to be a regional newsletter to let you know what other DPULO's are doing within the East Midlands and keep everyone informed of what's going on.



## **Louise Hunt DPULO Young Ambassador**

My role with ECDP and Wilts CIL as a DPULO Young Ambassador:

I have been working in my young ambassador role now for just over a year, and in that time I have had the pleasure to work closely with 2 different DPULO's, Wilts CIL and ECDP. What was so brilliant about both DPULO's was that they saw great significance in making the voices of disabled people heard, especially young disabled people, and ensuring that these voices are involved in shaping their own futures.

In January I worked alongside ECDP on a series of focus groups, with the aim to learn more about the lived experiences and opinions of young disabled people. Part of my role in these focus groups was to share my life experiences, from success in my

sport, education and work, to overcoming barriers and how I have dealt with them to allow myself to pursue my dreams and ambitions, despite my disability. I believe that everyone has a potential to fulfill, and with a little bit of support, both emotional and practical, there is no reason why anyone, disabled or not, can't achieve their ambitions or goals.

A couple of months after working with ECDP, I helped run an event with Wilts CIL in Marlborough, Wiltshire. In the lead up to the day, I helped organise and publicise the event via Twitter and other media outlets such as local radio. On the day, my role was more centred around interacting with participants, encouraging and supporting them to try new things.

The aim of the day was to inform about opportunities and encourage disabled people to get involved with sports and leisure activities in their local area. It was a great chance for disabled people young and old to meet/socialize, share experiences and discover new possibilities together.

I would really encourage any DPULO to think about ways to interact with young disabled people following on from these two exciting examples. Not only does it provide a great opportunity for young disabled people to have a voice, but also helps the DPULO to discover new and improved ways to support the young disabled people to fulfill their potential and ambitions.

## 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:** Louise Hunt, left, at **ecd p**

### Future Focus at **ecd p**

Working in partnership with DPULO Ambassador Louise Hunt to shape a better tomorrow for young disabled people in Essex

One of our greatest values at **ecd p** is making the voices of disabled people heard and ensuring that decisions concerning disability are not made without the input of disabled people.

Supported by Paralympic tennis player and DPULO Ambassador Louise Hunt, **ecd p** ran a series of focus groups in January and February 2014 to discover the experiences and opinions of young disabled people. We wanted to forge a

network of people that could offer support to each other from their shared lived experience. These were the Future Focus groups.

Louise Hunt attended many of the groups and shared her experience and expertise with the focus groups and helped collect valuable insight from attendees.

The Future Focus groups allowed opinions to be collected from key disability groups including physical disabilities, sensory impairments, mental health, and learning disabilities.

William Snagge, Director of Policy and Development at **ecd p** said, 'there was an excellent turn out at all the events delivered and we've had lots of positive conversations. The experiences and opinions that attendees shared have given us real insight into the everyday experiences of young disabled people in Essex. This has enabled us to identify some key issues.'

**ecd p** is now ensuring that Future Focus research helps to shape services available to young people locally for the future. The full Future Focus report is available at [ecd p.org.uk](http://ecd p.org.uk) and participants from the groups met recently for a peer led social evening.

The whole initiative is a great example of how individuals can provide real input into regional and national services and policies - and work together to address local needs and personal aspirations.

### Useful Links

Remember to Link us on Facebook !

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Young-DPULO-Ambassadors/446601028760890?fref=ts>

And follow us on Twitter ! <https://twitter.com/DPULOAmbassador>

Coming Soon:

**Young Ambassadors's Community Challenge**

