

Disability Action Alliance Steering Group Meeting 03.11.15

Attendees:

Pat Russell	Director, Office for Disability Issues DWP
Stephanie Harvey	Office for Disability Issues (ODI, DWP)
Stephen Brooks	Disability Hate Crime Network
Liz Sayce	Disability Rights UK Chair
Cam Nicoll	Digital Accessible Centre (Telephone)
Carol Pearson	Surrey Coalition
Dan Sumners	Signature
Charlie Willis	Independent Lives
Julie Jaye Charles	Equalities National Council
Andy Rickell	ADWUK
Sarah Yiannoullou	NSUN (Telephone)
Kerry Williams	Disability Action Alliance (ODI, DWP)
Maxine Thompson	Disability Action Alliance (ODI, DWP)
Jacqui Wyatt	Disability Action Alliance (ODI, DWP)

Apologies

Jim Edwards - Signature

Ray Ashley - English Federation of Disabled Sports

Chris Smith – Disabled Golf Association

Future of Secretariat Support

Pat explained the key considerations to the changes to the secretariat function. The Minister for Disabled People believes that the DAA is key to the Fulfilling Potential strategy and remains committed to supporting the work of the group. The DAA has moved from the start-up phase. As such it is appropriate to review how we work and what the long term strategy is to help the DAA deliver its aims and grow its projects.

As discussed at the May and August meetings, the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) may no longer be best placed to run the Secretariat, though it wishes to remain on the steering group and support projects by opening doors to relevant departments. The DAA steering group must consider how secretariat functions will be delivered more long-term. Stephanie outlined a proposed approach. The Secretariat day to day handling will be transferred to the new arrangements in March; the ODI will continue to facilitate rooms.

ODI are looking at how best to support the transition period and the funding required and are currently exploring a grant arrangement. This is likely to be awarded in February in order to ensure there is sufficient support during the transition period. The grant would help support the Steering Group (SG) to develop and implement a Strategic Plan that will lead to long term sustainability and cover 9 months to 1 year. The grant would be made to an organisation on the SG that is uniquely positioned to deliver the strategic and financial requirements of the grant terms – a discussion amongst SG members ensued.

Key Points raised during discussion:

- SG need to work quickly to get this in place by February, so simplicity of arrangements is key.
- A DPULO should get the grant.
- It was noted that a number of parliamentary committees have their Secretariat support provided by an external organisation.

- The new strategy is an opportunity to get more members of the alliance engaged.
- With the projects the SG can use the ODI in the right way to help to open doors.
- Post the new arrangements, the DAA membership agreement citing that the DAA does not campaign or lobby remains.
- The grant could be used to pay for a dedicated person working on this project, or fund some part-time workers.
- More details about current arrangements were discussed, and the way that elements in the future may remain the same or change.
- The Digital Accessibility Centre (DAC) are happy to continue to provide the web platform and technical support.

Strategic Plan for 2016

Stephanie outlined the history of the DAA, the initial aims of the group and areas that the SG may wish to focus on when developing the strategic plan. Stephanie has had a meeting with Mark McLean, Global Head of Diversity and Inclusion for Barclays, who has offered some of his time in supporting a strategic plan; this was welcomed by the group. The intention is to make key decisions at the next SG meeting in February, writing it up in March/April. Key areas for consideration are:

- Future direction of the DAA and priorities.
- Projects and their evaluation.
- Development of long term sustainability and continuity.

Stephanie asked the group what help the secretariat team could provide for the February meeting to aid decisions about the Strategic Plan. Points raised included:

- Important to start with a review of the mission statement and priority areas.
- To review priority areas - SG members may have useful material in their organisations strategic plans that could be drawn upon. We may also wish to undertake a survey of what our members consider to be the priority areas.
- Some of the SG were aware of potential sources of funding that they will share with the Secretariat team to collate ahead of the next meeting.
- Stephanie and Stephen are meeting with local organisations in Blackpool to discuss setting up a regional DAA network.

The SG asked the secretariat team to provide the following papers for the meeting in February:

- Restrictions resulting from ODI/government involvement,
- Where DAA can push on open government doors/government interest,
- The current mission/vision statement, and a draft revised one emphasising the unique position of working across sectors,
- Evidence on which to assess DAA 'priorities' (as discussed above),
- Funding opportunities that the DAA could draw on,
- Resources available to DAA through members – i.e. rooms, people etc,
- Proposal on how to evaluate project progress – could include different structure ideas.

AP1: Secretariat to check if DRUK research can be shared.

AP2: SG members to provide Secretariat with potential sources of funding and resources they can make available to the DAA in 2016.

AP3: Secretariat to produce and collate papers to inform the meeting on the strategic plan.

AP4: Secretariat to survey DAA members on priorities to help inform the strategic plan.

Projects evaluation

Kerry explained that at the last meeting it was agreed that the SG would look at projects in a more focused strategic way and that the Secretariat would not be able to continue providing the same level of support to projects in the new year. ODI would, however, continue to provide the strategic links through its membership of the SG and the greater strategic oversight role the SG will now take.

Select project leads, Andy Rickell and Stephen Brookes, were asked to consider 5 questions to assess the progress of projects as a test for future evaluation formats. Revisions were suggested and the secretariat will make them accordingly.

AP5: Secretariat to revise template according to suggestions made.

Previous Action Points

22/09/15 - AP1: Maxine to send Claire Wickham the new plain English versions, of key sections of the DAA website, to review - Plain English doc that has been developed for the website. This was sent to Claire and has received feedback to say they are excellent, so work can now be progressed to the other pages.

22/09/15 – AP5 and 6: Stephanie to take back comments about perceived barriers to physical activity to DWP policy leads and Secretariat team to work with DWP colleagues and Ministers on a positive statement about encouragement of physical activity - During his speech at the Making Lives Active conference on 24 November, the Minister will give a positive message about encouraging disabled people to get involved in physical activity.

Website and Social Media updates

- Page viewed and number of return visitors are up on the previous month.
- We have new pages which we hope will bring more visitors to the website.
- October figures are down but this is due to other work and staff leave.
- The Volunteer Charter has 112 pledgers; the goal was 100 by December.
- We would love more DAA members to post on the website and send us articles.
- Charlie helpfully advised that if a full stop is put in front of @DisActAll we will reach a wider audience.

AOB

On the 24th November there is the DAA physical activity and sport mini conference taking place at Central Westminster Hall London. More DPULO signed up is wanted as the event is primarily aimed at them – please can the SG use their networks to promote it.