

## X-Card Event – 5<sup>th</sup> October 2015

### **Introductions and X-Card Report**

Andy Rickell, Disability Action Alliance (DAA) X-Card Project Chair, opened the event with introductions and a brief description of the journey of project. (A list of speakers and attendees can be found at the end of this document.)

Stephanie Harvey/Maxine Thompson, DAA Secretariat introduced the X-Card report published on 28<sup>th</sup> July 2015, and gave a summary of highlights/conclusions from the report. Attendees then discussed the findings, and raised the following points:

- It would be good to have a DAA resource page which highlighted all of the different types of access cards/schemes that are out there, so people know what is available. **(Action Secretariat)**
- The Government Bus Pass scheme administered by Local Authorities could be used more widely for other schemes. It was also noted there are several transport type cards already available, which can be confusing.
- Though there are risks of fraud associated with 'passporting' existing cards/schemes, were this to happen (in a light touch way) it would be a cheap way of administering an access card/scheme.
- Qualification criteria - would be difficult to decide who is eligible. Any provider developing this would need to test the robustness of their criteria.
- There are already robust systems in place when applying for DLA/PIP/ etc, but they are all different and would be hard to use as a large number of disabled people do not qualify for any entitlement.
- Rather than assistance cards being provided, there are awareness issues which need to be tackled to enable disabled people to be able to access the goods and services they would like to, both for the supplier and the individual.
- Any new card/scheme would need to be recognised and widely acknowledged, which is likely to be challenging to achieve particularly if on a large scale.

### **Existing access cards / Schemes**

The five speakers gave short presentations on their existing card schemes explaining why the cards were developed, why they were developed the way they were, where they are going next and what would help achieve this. Information about the card schemes can be found using the links included at the end of this document.

Following the presentations there was an open floor discussion on current cards/schemes, what is available, and how they could be improve/expanded. The key points raised were:

- If using electronic cards, do venues/services need to have readers? - Mostly they do, though some organisations can offer a telephone service to verify the card holders' details.
- Persuading people who don't want to embrace the card schemes can be difficult, though this can be overcome once an organisation understands the benefits.

- Some organisations will embrace cards for bookings made at a venue but not for online bookings, as using a web portal service can be too expensive for them to use. Even though once a person is registered on an online portal, their details are recorded at point of sale, and the same information does not have to be requested or recorded on further occasions which provides an admin saving.
- Some theatres only have a limited number of concessionary places due to structure/layout of the theatre, or due to needing to make enough money to put on their next production – so in some cases the number of accessible places will always be limited.
- It was noted that not all disabled people want to take a personal assistant with them for free, which has a cost to a venue/service. Often a person just cannot queue for a long time, needs an end of row seat or to be positioned near a bathroom, which has little or no cost to the venue and should be easy to accommodate.

There was then a discussion on whether there should be a single access card in the UK. The options considered were should organisations be in competition, or work collaboratively.

It was broadly felt that organisations should not be in competition, but should work together if possible. By collaborating, they could build collective numbers of critical mass, which would enhance services and offer the schemes more opportunities to expand/continue. It was felt that an endorsement from Government might help raise awareness and confidence.

We noted that some disabled people do not want to be labelled, so would not wish to use any type of card/scheme; any introduction of a card/scheme must be voluntary.

There was a discussion about who could administer such a large scale scheme successfully and Local Authorities were the most popular suggestion. Blue Assist mentioned they are working with a Health Authority to provide support to disabled people leaving hospital, which could be a model that could be expanded. The DID card is exploring having age-identification holograms on their cards, and is working with special schools. This is another area which might have potential to expand within.

It was acknowledged that choice and control is very important for disabled people, and by making sure there is an increased awareness of all the available schemes this would give a disabled person the information needed to choose if they wish to take part, and if so, in which scheme.

Participants generally felt an access card/scheme should be about facilitation and communication, rather than entitlement. It was agreed that discounts can be useful for disabled people as they tend to have higher living costs than non-disabled people.

After a short lunch break and opportunity to network the discussions moved on to the European Mobility Card.

## European Mobility Card Introduction & aims

Stephen Thrower from the Office for Disability Issues, (ODI), explained he is the EU lead within the office and has been to some initial discussions about the introduction of a possible EU mobility card. He stated that, as part of this project, there did not seem to be an intention to harmonise the definition of disability in more detail across the EU. It was noted that different countries also have different levels of eligibility, so creating a single EU card would be tricky.

It was noted that the UK is not amongst the initial pilot areas, but that there was still a possible opportunity to support and advise other EU countries taking the pilots forward. Stephen and Barbara Dewar (Blue Assist), who was due to meet the EU Commissioner Marianne Thyssen leading on this card, would explore this.

Participants discussed their thoughts on the possibility of an EU mobility card, and were concerned that there would be a lot of practical issues in creating such a card, including the work needed for commercial partners to recognise any such card. There was also a suggestion that if this card was introduced it might try to replace existing cards.

The possibility of funding (1.5m euros) to take forward an EU mobility card was discussed, and it was thought this could be used in a way which enabled existing schemes to come together to work collaboratively on a new card scheme. It was noted funding would not be available unless this was taken forward in the UK, and only then if Government agreed to a certain level of involvement.

Stephen clarified that should a card be introduced, it would be up to commercial organisations if they want to accept the cards, as they would be under no legislative requirement to do so.

It was noted the European Disability Forum (EDF) engages with disability organisations but doesn't have much of a link with UK organisations at present. This was something Andy suggested should be considered by DPULOs outside of this event.

Stephen advised he is meeting with the EU in a few weeks, and would ask if the UK could observe and advise a project. He would also speak with the EDF. **(Action: Stephen)**

And finally, participants were asked to send any further thoughts on an EU mobility card direct to Barbara after the meeting, so she could take these to her meeting later in the week with the EU. **(Action: Participants)**

## **Conclusion & next steps**

Andy thanked everyone for attending, and confirmed that a note of this meeting would be sent to participants by email (as everyone had agreed their details could be shared with one and another), and put on the website in due course.

He also suggested that if participants would like to continue to be involved/updated on the issues discussed today they could join one or both the virtual networks being created following this event (Access Cards/Schemes & EU Mobility Card). The Secretariat would set up the networks and be in touch with the interested participants in October/November.  
**(Action: Secretariat)**

Andy ended the event by thanking many of the attendees for joining the new virtual networks and looked forward to continuing to keep in touch on these important issues.

## **List of 'X'-Card attendees/apologies**

### Speakers/Attendees:

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| Andy Rickell            | (ADWUK & 'X'-Card Project Chair)            |
| Barbara Dewar           | (Blue Assist)                               |
| Martin Austin           | (Nimbus)                                    |
| Graham Griffiths        | (Attitude is Everything)                    |
| Tanya Beaney            | (DID card)                                  |
| Neal Smith              | (Hynt & Cinema Exhibitors Association Card) |
| Stephen Thrower         | (Office for Disability Issues, DWP)         |
| Professor Roger Mackett | (University College London)                 |
| Jane Hatton             | (Evenbreak)                                 |
| Sally Blake             | (Live Nation)                               |
| Holly Remzi             | (Music Group)                               |
| Michael Paul            | (Disability Rights UK)                      |
| Elcena Jeffers          | (Elcena Jeffers Foundation)                 |
| Mick Dillon             | (Disability Resource Centre)                |

### Others (DAA Secretariat, Office for Disability Issues):

Stephanie Harvey  
Maxine Thompson  
Kerry Williams  
Jacqui Wyatt

### Apologies:

|                  |                                     |
|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Stephen Brookes  | (Disability Hate Crime Network)     |
| Andrew Carpenter | (London Brokerage Network)          |
| Andrew Clark     | (Buds)                              |
| Brenda Tunstall  | (Cherry Orchard Gardening Services) |
| Chris Smith      | (Disabled Golf Society)             |
| Ian Wells        | (Cherry Orchard Gardening Services) |

## **Information on Speakers Organisations' Cards/Schemes**

For more information about the organisations our speakers are from you can visit their websites using the links below:

[Blue Assist website](#)

[Nimbus Disability website](#)

[Attitude is Everything website](#)

[Disabled Identification Card \(DID\) card website](#)

[Hynt Card website](#)

[Cinema Exhibitors Association \(CEA\) Card website](#)