

The DAA: Something to Celebrate!

This month's edition of the Newsletter celebrates all of the fantastic work that DAA members have been doing over the last year. Please do take a look below at all that has achieved in collaboration!

2015: A year of achievement

Our profile has been growing year on year since the DAA's launch in early 2013 with over 400 members across sectors having joined us. Our social media profile also continues to grow with an ever expanding Twitter following, (risen to ~1100 from ~400 just one year before), and our Twitter reach going from an average of ~3,053 in early 2015 to ~26,000 in late 2015.

In response to a [DAA member survey](#) in late 2014 about how the website was working for you all, we made a number of changes when the new website was launched in March 2015. You asked for frequent news items and more resources. Since the new website was launched we:

- post an average of 15 stories per month, up from 8 in the previous year
- added 9 new [resource pages](#) that have has great hit rates, the most popular are [Disability Awareness](#), [Awareness for Children](#) and [Funding](#)
- include member information where possible on the members list
- tweet and add member events to the [DAA events calendar](#)
- and share policy up-dates in this monthly newsletter.

Our presence is growing, and with that so is our impact. People are engaging with the network on social media, across government and other sectors to bring about collaborative action. New partnerships have been forged and networks born under the DAA umbrella. One of the latest examples is the [Lancashire North West regional network](#), formed initially by 5 DAA members.

2015 also saw a focus on driving forward DAA projects. This has resulted in a fantastic set of achievements that all those involved in can be very proud of:

[Commissioning](#) – In spring 2015 the group delivered training sessions at the prestigious commissioning academy to influence public-sector commissioners of 'independent living' and to increase opportunities for DPULOs to compete for contracts. In addition, the DAA publication on Inclusive Communities was included in the commissioning academy's resource bank for commissioners.

[Digital Inclusion](#) – The group ran a survey about digital inclusion, and received over 200 responses. The final results were compiled into [a report](#) that was published in early December 2015.

[Financial Support](#) – Following winning a Disability Smart award for their ‘life event’ page and the ‘Illness and Disability’ pages, developed in collaboration with the DAA, The Money Advise Service came back to the group for further support in revising their pages – this work is still on-going.

[Public Appointments](#) – The group produced a ‘[myth buster](#)’ and [Q&A](#) document for disabled people interested in school governorships. This was published in December 2015 on the DAA and SGOSS websites.

[Raising Disability Awareness amongst Children](#) – A [resource pack](#) for teachers was created and published and uploaded to TES and SEND gateway in November 2015. This resource pack is already attracting downloads, indicating interest from teachers.

[Sports and Physical Activities](#) – The project group held a hugely successful half-day [conference](#) in November 2015. It brought DPULOs together with sports and leisure organisations, with DAA members having priority place. Over 70 organisations attended. This work is now being expanded with the project delivering training to DPULOs locally under the DAA brand.

[Transport](#) – The group focused on delivering Disability Awareness training, which was incorporated into driver training at Blackpool Transport. This has led to significant customer service improvements in Blackpool and agreement from Blackpool Transport to champion this approach across industry.

[Volunteering](#) – 2015 saw pledges to the DAA Volunteer Charter increase from around 38 in February to over 120 organisations today. To celebrate this in December 2015, the group published [case studies](#) of people who have benefited as a result. Additionally DAA members the FED produced a [video](#), and BlueAssist provided a [statement](#) of what they have done since pledging.

[Work](#) – Evidence from DAA members, and importantly from Disabled People through those on the group, about what disabled people say best supports them to get and retain in work was provided to DWP at their request. This has encouraged other teams to engage collaboratively with the DAA, increasing direct engagement with disabled people in the development of public policy.

[‘X’-card](#) – A survey was undertaken and [the report](#) was published in July 2015. This was followed up by a [small conference](#) with 5 speakers, which resulted in two [DAA networks](#), recognition at an EU level that good work is

taking place in the UK and increased partnerships between DAA members delivering cards or interested in the cards.

2016: What next?

The Steering Group is currently considering how the DAA can build on this fantastic work, continuing to support the network to grow and evolve according to the needs of the wider membership. Building on our successes, information about how our website is being used and feedback from yourselves to the secretariat over the last year, the Steering Group will discuss this evolution at the next steering group meeting on the 2nd Feb 2016.

Calls for Action

1. If anyone has plans for celebrating World Day of Social Justice on the 20th February, please do send details through to us at: fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk.

Updates on Govt Policies/Changes to publications

[Department for Culture, Media and Sport](#) promoted an ITU Council Working Group consultation through the DAA. The consultation on "Access to the Internet for Persons with Disabilities and specific needs" closed on 29 January. The physical meeting of this consultation is scheduled on 15 February 2016. To register to attend, [click here](#).

Website news

New members may have noticed a slight delay in adding you to the members page on the website. We would like to reassure you that we are in the process of resolving this issue.

Additionally, we can now add videos directly into our site. If you have videos that you think would be appropriate for our resource pages, do let us know.

Volunteering Charter

Don't forget, you can still pledge to join [the Volunteer Charter](#). Find out more on our [Volunteering Charter webpage](#).