

Planning Ahead for Disability Nottinghamshire



“Providing a free, confidential and independent advice service relating to any aspect of disability to disabled people, their family, friends, carers, professionals and students.”

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Purpose

Providing a free, confidential and independent advice service relating to any aspect of disability to disabled people, their family, friends, carers, professionals and students

Services

- General information and advice, specialists in disability, welfare benefits, equality and rights
- Information on developments and services for people with disabilities
- Help with form filling e.g. Disability Living Allowance, Carers Allowance etc
- Taking up issues affecting people with disabilities and seeking to influence appropriate policies and practice
- Helping people with disabilities to manage their own welfare benefits appeals
- The sale of RADAR keys
- Training for organisations on disability related issues
- Developing other user led disability organisations
- Undertaking access audits

Strengths

- We are a user led organisation where services are delivered by people who have a disability or have direct experience of caring. Consequently we understand the issues people are experiencing.
- We have a strong track record of success and a good reputation
- We have experience of working with equality and diversity issues.
- We have a commitment to quality and the development of our staff, Trustees and volunteers as evidenced by the “Investors in People” kite mark
- Nearly all of our services are provided by trained volunteers so we offer excellent value for money
- We have links with many voluntary and statutory partners
- We can be flexible to respond to new challenges

Aspirations

- Increase understanding of the changes to the benefits system amongst people with disabilities and help them deal with the implications so reducing anxiety, stress and ensuring that individuals receive the right entitlement
- Raise awareness about the challenges facing people with disabilities to address increasing negative attitudes in society
- Help people with form filling to reduce inaccuracies which can lead to expensive and lengthy appeals
- Continue to develop support systems that empower people to manage their own appeals and similar undertakings.
- Influence new planning and policies to ensure that they take account of the needs of people with disabilities
- Provide support and advocacy to help people articulate their needs
- Work more effectively with other partners to deliver a better service for users
- Maintain and improve the quality of our services and the development of our volunteers, staff and Trustees
- Develop and improve the provision of generic advice and information on aspects such as personal budgets and care support
- Develop our capacity to signpost elsewhere
- Improve our internal information system
- Increase our ability to influence policy by identifying opportunities to engage with policy makers and with consultation exercises
- Develop a funding strategy that sustains and develops the service we provide

Introduction

This Plan sets out a future direction for the organisation and is the result of an extensive consultation and evaluation exercise. This started with 3 consultation exercises across the county and an online questionnaire, which targeted service users and stakeholder organisations. This produced extensive feedback and a summary of this is attached as an appendix. This ensured that the starting point was user need, which is important given Disability Nottinghamshire's status as a User Led Organisation. There were then two Business Planning sessions with Trustees, staff and volunteers (plus some interviews) to develop the content and another session to review a final draft. This all ensured ownership of the content across the organisation.

Future planning in the current environment is very difficult. The context is constantly changing and opportunities appear and disappear very quickly. Planning ahead without options can be very risky.

In the current environment, there are a couple of choices for organisations such as Disability Nottinghamshire that deliver services primarily through volunteers. They can shrink and become almost entirely volunteer driven with very low running costs or they can seek to expand their areas of operation to open up new funding opportunities. This plan takes the second approach. The reasoning behind this is that the consultation and planning process demonstrated a clear need for present services and also for new provision. It was also clear that Disability Nottinghamshire has some particular strengths that make it ideally suited to deliver such services, particularly the empathy with the client group as a result of being a user led organisation. It is important that Disability Nottinghamshire build on its strengths.

This Plan identifies a number of key areas for development and then sets out a range of actions. There is a lot in here but it is produced with the expectation that some of the suggested activities will not take place because it will not be possible to attract resources or the context will change again to make them less of a priority. What the Plan does, is put enough irons in the fire for Disability Nottinghamshire so that it has the flexibility to follow the ones that become important as the future unfolds.

At the same time, the Plan also looks to pull out priorities; the areas where it is felt that Disability Nottinghamshire needs to take action or grasp opportunities. These are set out as Critical Indicators at the end of the Plan and within an outline Year One Action Plan, which sets out suggested activities in the first and second parts of the year (together with a traffic light indicator to mark red, amber or green). Both of these should provide the Board with a simple measure of keeping track of progress.

Raising Awareness; Marketing, Promotion and Evaluation

The need to better promote the organisation has come through in every facet of the planning process. There is a lack of awareness amongst stakeholders, partners and the wider community as to what Disability Nottinghamshire does. This is particularly true in areas outside Mansfield and Ashfield as Disability Nottinghamshire looks to work in other areas of the county. At the same time the organisation has to be careful not to generate expectations and demands that it can't meet and it has to try to increase promotional work at a time of tight resources.

Objective	Activity
Promote Disability Nottinghamshire services to funders, stakeholders and the wider community	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Be clear about the messages we want to get across; the audiences we want to reach and the mechanisms we want to use.• Revise and simplify a mission statement• Identify someone to lead on marketing; look at existing skills within Board members and volunteers, look at potential recruitment of volunteer, look at possible link with colleges/universities or private business. Ideally we would want a Communications Officer• Allocate a small budget if possible, look at possible sponsorship opportunities• Put together a short promotional leaflet that can be used with different audiences• Develop a link person with the local media and look at regular feeding through of news stories• Explore ways of using the free press• Ensure that we use “events” as a way of promoting the organisation and the wider issues of disability to key stakeholders. Invite the press to attend and/or send briefings.• Hold a county wide meeting on Healthwatch and engage key stakeholders, MPs etc• If possible identify some “dealing with the media” training to send key people on• Build in a staggered approach to marketing our outreach service so that we are able to manage demand• Set these out in a simple marketing plan

Influencing Policy

The desire to see Disability Nottinghamshire focus on influencing policy came through strongly in the consultation and planning process. This is an area where DN has not traditionally done so much work.

Objective	Year One Activity
<p>Develop a platform for influencing policy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build strategic relationships with bodies that are generating policy impacting on people with disabilities, (Clinical Commissioning Group, Social Services, Children’s Services, Public and Private Transport agencies, Government Departments, Dept. of Work and Pensions, CAPITA, etc) • Build links with Healthwatch • Build on the consultation events to ensure that DN has a simple way of keeping in touch with and collecting the views of disabled people. • Identify key existing and developing policies that will impact on people with disabilities, assess impact and make representations. The outcomes of the consultation exercise provide a starting point and suggest that key links are around health and social care (Think Local Act Personal), transition from children’s to adult care, employment, benefits, volunteering and transport. There is also a need to make organisations realise the cumulative impact of different policies on people with disabilities in terms of isolation and vulnerability. • Offer to help policy makers engage with and consult with people with disabilities • Develop the consultation outcomes into a document that can be shared with appropriate policy makers to help establish the new policy role. • Identify and link with other organisations that have a policy role to make representations and use resources more effectively • Look at offering to audit new policies to ensure that they consider disability issues
<p>Identify Resources to undertake the work</p>	<p>There was a strong feeling from the consultation feedback that this was an area that Disability Nottinghamshire should pursue. The problem is that this is not an area that the organisation focuses on at present and it can be one which is resource intensive and requires particular skills. To address this, Disability Nottinghamshire will need to identify resources to undertake this kind of policy influencing/development type work. Discussions with key partners/stakeholders such as the CCG may be helpful if this is a barrier that is preventing the CCG from gaining the maximum value from the work of Disability Nottinghamshire. And it may be worthwhile looking at a lottery bid. If funds cannot be found the cheapest option would be to work with other policy influencing organisations and even get them to take some of these issues forward.</p>

Working with others

Working effectively with other organisations is time consuming and can be challenging. However developing and sustaining successful relationships will be an important focus for Disability Nottinghamshire over the next few years. Joint working will help the organisation improve the service for clients and manage the challenge of meeting increasing demand on limited resources. It may also open up new avenues of funding. The consultation process with organisations and the internal planning sessions suggest that joint working is an area that would benefit from more work. Limited resources that are focussed on project delivery rather than strategic development means that it is not easy to find the time to develop partnerships and this has been exacerbated by feelings that the organisation has not always been recognised or treated equally in previous partnership arrangements. In essence, the consultation and planning process suggest that it will be important for Disability Nottinghamshire to be less passive around partnership working and be more proactive in developing relationships.

Objective	Year One Activity
Identify and prioritise key relationships to work on	<p>Look at potential relationships,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Other advice providers- Statutory organisations (providers and/or policy makers)- Providers that deliver services to similar clients <p>Identify the importance of the relationship,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Will it help to meet a need we have identified?- Will it improve the service for clients?- Will it help raise our profile and/or give us access to funding opportunities?- Can we work with them? (Do they have compatible values, aspirations, and expectations?)- Have we the resources to develop and make the relationship work? <p>The consultation and planning exercise suggested that the following relationships were important to develop.</p> <p>1) <u>APTCOO</u> APTCOO works with children with disabilities and/or special educational needs and consequently there is a shared client base. APTCOO are keen to work with Disability Nottinghamshire and there are policy areas such as transition from child to adult care where joint activity would make much sense. There are also possibilities around shared accommodation, services and purchasing. For example, APTCOO share concerns about the impact of benefit changes; they have an internet café area, which might lend itself to support from Disability Nottinghamshire to individuals filling in new online forms for Universal Credit.</p>

2) Advice Transition Fund Partners

The economic situation, cuts in services and the changes to the benefits system will continue to generate increased demand for advice services. At the same time reductions in grant funding and the disappearance of legal aid limit the resources available to meet this demand. In such a situation it is important that advice agencies work together to recognise and make the best of each other's strengths. The Advice Transition Fund bid developed through the Nottinghamshire Advice Network (NAN) attempts to do this. It will train up more advisors, look at a new social enterprise approach and give Disability Nottinghamshire a lead role in outreach work using ICT to help with advice and form filling. Regardless of the success of the ATF bid, it will be important for DN to clarify and develop the relationship with other advice providers. It would also help DN to have a stronger profile within NAN.

3) Clinical Commissioning Group, NHS providers and Adult Social Care

DN has not developed strong relationships with NHS bodies but there seems to be real potential for links with the new Clinical Commissioning Group. Potential areas for links include;

- Engaging with CCG work on self-care, (this has been working in Newark under the title PRISM). This is about helping individuals to look after their own health issues and develop coping skills to reduce demand on services. This could include opportunities for peer support/buddying. DN will be given an opportunity to join the Task and Finish Group on self-care, which will provide a chance to explore work in this area.
- Further develop work with GP surgeries.
- Responding to consultation exercises (including providing opportunities to engage and summarising responses online)
- Supporting people with disabilities, (particularly learning disabilities) to attend annual assessments and reviews.
- Working to support children with disabilities and their families and in particular the 18-25 year old age group as individuals transition from child to adult services.
- Supporting telehealth arrangements to provide basic health follow up by mobile phone
- Crisis support for people whose home support needs on discharge have changed following hospital treatment
- Possible input in future to support services for people with autism

There are also potential links with other parts of the NHS. It seems possible that future commissioning will be for large "pathways" of care, where successful contractors may be large providers such as Trusts working with voluntary organisations. Some initial contacts with large providers may be worthwhile. Finally NHS bodies may be interested in DN providing disability awareness training and equality proofing policies. Links here would be the equality leads identified on websites.

This could be a fruitful relationship and it is suggested that DN has some initial dialogue to explore the possibilities with the new CCG.

	<p>4) <u>Department of Work and Pensions, CAPITA and the Job Centre</u> As already identified, the impact of benefit changes and fitness to work assessments will have a significant impact on many people with disabilities and their opportunity to volunteer for Disability Nottinghamshire. Although it may be difficult it will be worth exploring relationships to build awareness, understanding and establish protocols. Disability Nottinghamshire may also be able to empower individuals to challenge and take forward their own cases. It will be important for DN to capture successful outcomes through follow up so that it can assess whether the time spent is yielding results.</p> <p>5) <u>Smaller Community Based Organisations</u> DN will want to continue to develop links with smaller specialist organisations working in communities where it is expanding activities. This fits with the marketing work and the activities funded by the County Council</p> <p>Other joint working possibilities could exist with other organisations that work with linked clients, (Age Concern, MIND etc) where there may be opportunities to pursue joint tendering, make joint funding applications and collect evidence to make joint representations. There may also be opportunities to work with organisations on opening up arts/sports/quality of life opportunities to people with disabilities. Stronger links with the CVS may also help with volunteer recruitment and access to key partnership bodies such as the Mansfield and Ashfield Area Partnership.</p>
<p>Be clear what we have to offer to partners</p>	<p>Other organisations considering joint working will also be thinking about the partners they want to work with. DN needs to be clear about what it can offer to potential partners building on the strengths that have already been identified and make this known. An action that would strengthen DN would be to look at how volunteers/staff can be trained to a quality standard recognised by the advice sector. This would help to sell the service and give other potential partners confidence. The Nottinghamshire Advice Network bid to the Advice Transition Fund may help with this as it establishes a new accredited training centre that will train volunteers in gateway assessment and as advisors.</p>
<p>Identify resources to undertake the work</p>	<p>One of the messages from the consultation work was that DN needs to be proactive rather than passive with its partnership activity and needs a higher profile. This means instigating and making relationships happen rather than just having an open door policy and responding to any approaches made. However this is not easy, as effective partnership working requires an investment of time and resources. Presently much of the paid capacity within DN is focussed on delivering projects, so capacity here is only available if it fits with the project activity (for example with the outreach and adult social care work undertaken by Simon).</p> <p>At this level of resourcing, DN can try to make partnership links where there is a fit with particular projects. It might also be possible to identify/recruit Trustees who could take the lead on external relationships and act as “Ambassadors”. Links with CVS may also help because of their knowledge and access to various partnership activities. The role of developing and sustaining relationships with other organisations is usually undertaken by a Lead Manager of an organisation because of the corporate commitment required. The lack of such a post in DN does limit what can be done.</p>

Funding

Funding is a major challenge for DN. It is a low cost organisation as much of the service provision is undertaken by volunteers. Despite this, the organisation faces funding challenges going forward against a background of significantly increasing demand and a desire to expand service provision into other areas of the county. DN needs to attract funding to sustain current activity but the consultation has also identified new priority areas of need for which funding is needed. Given the uncertainty around funding, DN needs to ensure that it is bringing in funds from a diverse range of sources to spread the risk.

Have a clear funding strategy

DN can have a simple funding strategy based around trying to attract funding from a diversity of sources. It is important to ensure there is a broad portfolio of activities rather than relying on any one income stream. The funding strategy would be composed of; grant income; project income; earned and trading income; income through tendering and sponsorship/help in kind. Alongside this the organisation could continue to look at cost savings through joint /shared purchasing with other organisations. Different types of income will suit different kinds of activity. Increasing capacity to deliver or developing a new area of work will best fit with grant, project and commissioning opportunities. Earned and trading income can support those activities most difficult to support. It is important that any project, grant or tender funded project is based on full cost recovery and includes an element towards management and administration costs.

Generate funding through sales and trading

There are a range of possible ways of generating income through sales and trading. Some of these may be best delivered through a trading subsidiary; some through the charity.

- Continue to develop the charity shop and look at the possibility of extending this to other areas. This could be on a “pop up” shop basis in conjunction with outreach advice sessions to cover operating costs. Extension of the shop concept would need recruitment of appropriate volunteers.
- Look to strengthen and develop existing income generating services such as the provision of access audits, training and consultancy around disability issues for organisations.
- The Board is exploring a number of enterprise options including charging for services and if a viable product can be found, it would provide an important, alternative source of income that could be invested in general priorities such as the need for more policy/development capacity.
- Work can be done to promote, encourage and increase the income that comes in from private donations.
- One of the most positively rated services by users is the sale of RADAR keys and the associated Smartphone app. It has been suggested that sales could be extended to include other aids and equipment and supplemented with a RADAR map.
- Other services which could be sold and were suggested are; an online eBay store (linked to the charity shop); offering premises access audits; training for organisations on disability awareness and developing personal social services. There is also the possibility of becoming a direct payments provider although this scored less highly than other areas in the consultation and taking this on would require competing with existing established providers.

	<p>The sales and trading approach needs careful thought and planning. The possibilities outlined above need examining against criteria such as potential profitability, level of competition, level of need, level of investment required, impact on charitable reputation etc. A decision then needs to be taken on which and how many concepts to go with. It is suggested that DN start with a couple as if they are to succeed they will need doing properly. A different set of skills and approach are also needed to run a profit making enterprise. DN already has a Board Member with such skills who is an obvious lead and others may need to be found either from within or outside the organisation. If an opportunity opens up then DN needs to be able to act promptly to take advantage of it. The framework within which trading will take place also needs to be right and be flexible enough to allow for future development.</p>
<p>Explore new grant and tendering opportunities</p>	<p>DN will want to try and attract additional funding for the central advice, information and form filling services. In addition it may want to expand its services to take on some policy influencing and advocacy/support work. Such activity would ideally need 3 year funding to allow for development and planning, which would mean looking at grant funding and commissioning. This will be challenging given that funding for advice work is becoming more difficult to attract. It is suggested that DN;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looks at different Trust and grant funds focussed on the activities described above, • Explores areas where it may be possible to work with other organisations to make joint bids. This could be with organisations working with children, older people, operating in articular communities etc and would provide DN with access to funding streams it currently doesn't have. • There may be opportunities for DN to tender for services. To take advantage of this DN would need to be aware of the commissioning priorities of bodies such as the Clinical Commissioning Group and identify what could be provided to meet these. It would also mean developing strategic relationships with key senior commissioning staff and ensuring that DN had access to the skills required to tender. It may be again that DN might want to look at like-minded organisations that it could work with to provide the critical mass necessary for larger tenders.
<p>Supporting funding bids</p>	<p>Competition for funding is high and DN needs to ensure that it can put together the best case. It is suggested that DN looks at how it can quantify the impact it has and the value for money that it provides. This can be done in a number of ways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Looking at the funds (benefits etc) that individuals receive as a result of support which is then re-invested in the local economy, • Using indicators to assess the saving to the statutory sector as a consequence of the services provided. For example the resolution of an individuals problem might result in, better health (fewer visits to GP), avoiding homelessness, improved mental health etc. There are indicators that put a cost to these interventions and it would be possible to identify the degree to which DN was responsible for such an outcome. • Keep statistics and data on the number of people using the service including age and location • Review how we collect and hold data/information at present and develop and keep updated a more sophisticated database that enables us to hold and have easy access to the data we need.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake an annual client satisfaction survey • Undertake a 6 month follow up on clients <p>This information will be invaluable in supporting bids</p>
Identify resources to undertake the work	<p>Identifying funding sources and putting together funding bids can be time consuming, as can calculating impact and value for money. Work to establish a trading and sales approach requires a different set of skills as does responding to commissioning opportunities. The latter is linked to activities set out elsewhere around joint working and marketing.</p> <p>Within existing resources the best approach would probably be to identify any existing skills and establish a funding group made up of Trustees and key staff. It would be relatively easy to find training for these individuals on making funding bids and assessing impact. This would ensure a body of skilled people within the organisation.</p> <p>Beyond this the organisation could explore taking on a fundraiser who was paid on results or someone with the skills willing to take the work on a voluntary basis.</p> <p>Again the lack of a Co-ordinator/Chief Officer post is a disadvantage as this would be the post that would usually make the strategic contacts around commissioning.</p>

<h3>Service Development</h3> <p>Through the consultation and Business Planning sessions we explored existing and potential new services. We looked at how things might be improved to meet anticipated needs and what new services might be appropriate to meet some of the priority issues raised by people with disabilities. Existing services focus on information and advice, form filling, appeals work and outreach activity. The potential to undertake policy work is considered elsewhere and the other new service covered here is support and advocacy. One of the factors that might affect the development of DN services is the submission of a bid to the Advice Transition Fund by the Nottinghamshire Advice Network.</p>	
Providing information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop the website to provide more interactive and downloadable information including self help packs, the ability to communicate via Skype/webcam and the opportunity for interactive online chat with an advisor. • Provide more extensive information including links to cultural and sports activities accessible to people with disabilities, advice on holidays and accessible toilets. Such published information might lend itself to sponsorship and funding from the Heritage Lottery. • Link with partners to provide a Directory of Advice services (part of the Advice Transition Fund bid) • Develop an online newsletter to supplement the website • Where possible ensure that information provision takes into account the needs of particular groups such as people with learning difficulties and visual/hearing impairments • Consider offering information sessions to organisations on disability issues (Department of Work and Pensions has been suggested!)

	Resourcing such work could include charging for information sessions, looking to utilise the services of other voluntary organisations and seeking sponsorship.
Help with Form Filling and general advice	<p>The consultation exercise and the Business Planning sessions suggest that this is a much-needed service. Getting the initial forms right can prevent the need to go through an appeals process later. A new approach will also be needed to help with the move by DWP to encourage as much online form filling as possible, starting with Universal Credit. This provides the additional challenge of helping to provide clients with the skills, confidence and opportunity to fill in online returns. The following actions were suggested as a means of improving this service,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a whiteboard that sets out appointments • Improve the process for booking appointments including the consideration of back up arrangements if a volunteer advisor is not available and having drop in appointments • Try to improve response times and ensure that contact is made quickly, even if it is to inform the client that there will be a wait and how long this will be. • Ensuring that the organisation maintains its strength of delivering a person centred service and putting people at ease • Increasing opening times and providing time for people to access services in the evenings or weekend • Opening a crisis line for those in severe need • Undertaking outreach advice and home visits • Helping clients fill forms in online • Create online video tutorials to help clients complete forms online • Link with other organisations to provide basic computer training to clients, (this is also part of the ATF bid) <p>It is recommended that DN map a client journey as a way of identifying service improvements such as the above. This should also identify what improvement could be done within existing resources and what will require additional investment. Ivan and Karen were suggested as best placed to lead the work.</p> <p>The possible planned office share with APTCOO also provides opportunities. Better and more accessible space will improve the service for clients. It may also provide an opportunity to look at shared reception/first contact and to explore the use of the internet café as somewhere to help people with online form filling.</p> <p>Charging for some services has been considered but the feeling is that the environment is not conducive to this at the moment</p> <p>The resource implications of an ideal service are significant. As a priority, the organisation would really benefit from a Development Manager post that could look at policy engagement, new opportunities and oversee operations. In addition the organisation would benefit from a new FTE Benefits Officer, a new FTE Training and Information Post (that would train volunteers, ensure the information</p>

	<p>system was effective and provide support on personal budgets), a new FTE Administrative post and a FTE Reception post. There are a number of possible approaches around funding. Charging for the service is being considered and it may be possible to look at a grant application. It may also be something that key statutory funders are interested in supporting if a case can be made for the savings that will be made by avoiding later interventions and for the additional funds that could be put back into the local economy. It may be worth approaching the Department of Work and Pensions for support as properly filled out forms will save them time and money and talking to the Job Centre about financial support, given the number of referrals that are made.</p>
Support with Appeals	<p>The demand for support with appeals is likely to grow significantly as agencies withdraw support because legal aid funding will no longer be available. Disability Nottinghamshire has limited resources so it will;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Support effective form filling to reduce the likelihood of having to go to appeal - Empower and build the capacity of individuals to manage and take forward their own appeals - Provide phone support where necessary - Talk with other advice providers as to how organisations can best work together to meet this rising need
Support and Advocacy work	<p>There was a lot of support in the consultation exercise for DN taking on some support and advocacy work. This was expressed as;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting individuals as they came into contact with “the system”, for example; GP appointments, Consultant appointments, court appearances, - Helping people with personalised budgets and budgeting with the new monthly paid universal credit and the forthcoming personal health budgets - Providing support to individuals who are finding things difficult but are outside the benefits system - Provide low level counselling support - Helping those who have difficulties communicating with others <p>This kind of support/advocacy could fit with the existing DN advice and information functions to provide a more complete service and there would be advantages for clients in being supported through a process by the same people who have provided advice. It also seems to be an area where there would be the greatest opportunities for attracting NHS and possibly lottery funding. However this would also require DN to model a new service, build a particular package and seek funding for it. It is also an area where further analysis would be worthwhile into existing provision, either because the service may already be available or because there is scope for some partnership working.</p>
Outreach work	<p>Existing project funding supports outreach work into the county. Moving forward it will be important to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a rolling programme of target areas to ensure that the expectations generated can be managed • Develop links with community and statutory partners in these areas to explore shared service delivery and the potential to

	<p>fund/host DN services within these areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look at how new technology might be utilised to give people access to DN services in outlying communities • Play a lead role in the Advice Transition Fund concept of training up new volunteers to work in the community • Explore the viability of using the “pop up shop” approach to fund advice sessions in communities • Have a position on what will happen when project funding ceases
<p>Adult Social Care and Health</p>	<p>Again this is currently funded work and the focus for activity is likely to be more clearly set in the future around “Think Local, Act Personal”. This could include;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping to support micro provider development • Stimulating peer support around managing personal budgets and deciding where to spend them • Helping individuals to identify need early • Supporting the implementation of the new “Choose My Support” website, an online directory of where to go for help There could also be scope to look at other broader relationships with Adult Social Care and Health. For example; • Helping to identify the needs of people with disabilities and feed into planning processes • Commenting on the effectiveness of existing provision • Looking at how DN services might help to meet Health and Social Care priorities such as reducing hospital admissions and supporting effective discharge • Promoting issues of concern such as transition from child to adult care services and helping to address these where appropriate <p>A broader and more extensive engagement with Health and Social Care bodies is important if DN is to pick up the many health and social care issues identified during the consultation exercise, however this requires resourcing. Such a relationship would normally sit with a Chief Officer and the current lack of such a post makes this difficult. It is hard to see a Board Member being able to take on such responsibility and the narrow remit of project funding makes it unlikely that project staff could do such work.</p>

Internal Governance and Management

Board, staff and volunteer development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue to review whether the Board has the necessary range of skills and undertake any necessary training or recruitment. This would include looking at key challenges around marketing, ICT, partnership working and enterprise. Look at Board recruitment if gaps are identified. • Look at specific support/training for the organisation on managing and dealing with change. • Look at staff development opportunities • Ensure that there are clear protocols in place that set out how the relationship works between volunteers who are Trustees (and therefore employers with management responsibility of staff) and staff who will have management responsibilities of the same individuals in their volunteer advisor capacity. The priority need already identified to put in place an Operations/ Development Manager would help to address this issue, as the Manager would be responsible for developing such protocols and acting as an interface between the Board and staff/volunteers. • Look at training for staff and volunteers on dealing with stressed clients as part of on-going training provision. • Provide training to a standard recognised across the advice sector (fits with the Advice Transition Fund bid)
Implementing the plan	<p>The Board will act as the driver for the Plan, making this a standing item on agendas so that it can monitor progress and take any action as necessary.</p>
Look at management capacity	<p>The current structure has project officers reporting directly to the Chair. This works well in ensuring that projects are meeting their targets and delivering. However because officers are focussing on their projects and the time of Board Members is restricted, this is limiting the organisation in its ability to take advantage of opportunities. The consultation highlights the need to develop strategic relationships with key statutory and voluntary sector partners and explore potential new service areas such as policy influencing and the potential for funding in these areas. These activities would fall within the remit of an Operations/Development Manager and the lack of such a post means that DN struggles to make the most of opportunities. The problem with addressing this is the lack of funding. An Operations/Development Manager role would have both an external and inward facing role. It may be that if such a Manager role is not achievable, it could look at a role that focuses on external relationships. Alternatively it could look at the potential to amend existing job descriptions to pick up some of these responsibilities. There may be value in talking to strategic funders such as the County Council and the CCG about trying to manage some investment. It may even be that this could be an initial short-term contract arrangement with the post required to bring in funding to sustain the role.</p>
Establish a consistent way of collecting data	<p>DN would benefit from a consistent approach to collecting data. It needs to decide what information it needs to collect, (which would include information useful for measuring impact and marketing and for potential funders) and then decide on a process for capturing and collating it. DN will need to review the existing data/information system and decide on what needs to be done to improve it. It would also be good to set out a simple way of evaluating activity, again to help with making the case about impact and to pick up any areas for improvement or where efficiencies can be made. This would include looking to capture the impact in areas such as joint working.</p>

<p>Managing increasing numbers of volunteers</p>	<p>The organisation is receiving higher than average requests from individuals to take part in some kind of voluntary capacity. The challenge it faces is managing, training and supporting new recruits whilst balancing the needs and expectations of its users.</p> <p>Currently, no specific responsibility to co-ordinate volunteering by any member of staff or board member. Expectation is that project officers will carry out this role with support from board members. Future recruits need to be measured for suitability through an application and interview process to ensure their skills meet gaps within the organisation.</p> <p>The following actions are suggested;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review volunteer recruitment process • Look at whether new and more diverse volunteering opportunities can be created • Look at what can be done to retain volunteers • Monitor volunteer outcomes and review on annual basis • Ensure appropriate training, induction and support is available before recruiting any new volunteers • Liaise with the CVS Volunteer Bureau as part of the Advice Transition Fund bid, to support volunteers • Identify resources for a Volunteer Manager post
<p>Continue to get value for money on expenditure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly review financial deals on utilities • Explore the potential to bulk purchase and share services with others (there may be opportunities to do this with APTCOO)
<p>Identify more accessible premises</p>	<p>The current premises are a barrier to improving service provision because of problems with size and access. Looking at new premises, possibly with APTCOO would improve delivery and open the door to sharing services</p>
<p>Ensure an appropriate trading structure</p>	<p>Consideration is being given to trading activities that will generate income for DN. It will be important to have the right structure to deal with this. Some activities could be delivered through the charity although delivery through a new trading subsidiary would enable the organisation to pursue activities and work in areas outside its constitutional objectives. It would also enable the organisation to separate out fee-paying services. Thought would also need given to the skills required to make a trading venture work, how often profits would flow back into the charity and whether there would be charging across organisations for services provided.</p>

Year One Timeline

6 months (July to December 2013)

9 months (to March 2014)

12 months (to June 2014)

Set up a process for implementing the Plan	○	Drive forward and evaluate progress	○
Identify a Marketing Lead + contact universities for help	○	Put together and implement a marketing plan	○
Develop a diverse funding strategy	○	Implement funding strategy	○
Plan a large event that will engage different stakeholders	○	Deliver event	○
Build strategic relationship with Clinical Commissioning Group	○	Sustain relationship and seek to develop funding opportunities	○
Work with partners to agree delivery of Advice Transition Fund	○	Deliver ATF actions if bid is successful	○
Identify and follow through premises move	○	Settle into premises and look at opportunities for shared delivery	○
Explore ways of helping with online form filling of Universal Credit including possible Internet Café approach	○	Deliver approach that builds computer skills capacity amongst clients and supports online form filling	○
Agree Trading structure; develop charity shop and one other trading product	○	Trading structure in place, charity shop running in conjunction with pop up shop and one other product rolled out	○
Identify any skills gaps on Board	○	Recruitment of Board members to fill any skills gaps	○
Explore potential of new policy influencing and/or support, advocacy services	○	Funding opportunities explored and decision made as to whether to deliver either of these services	○
Develop and implement a new data collection service	○	New system active	○
Agree an approach to measuring impact	○	Assessment made of impact of DN work	○
Discuss with partners how best to manage the Appeals demand, Look at how to empower individuals to take forward and manage their own appeals.	○	Strategic joined up approach rolled out	○
Look options for delivering development/operational/policy influencing management functions	○	Additional capacity in place to develop strategic partnerships, influence policy, manage operations and open up new opportunities/attract funding	○
Clarify delivery around the contract with Adult Social Care and Think Local Act Personal	○	Reflect in service agreement	○

Critical Indicators

Retain User Led Organisation status

The production of a simple marketing plan supported by sponsorship for some of the activities

Further development of the website to provide wider and more interactive information

A strategic relationship in place with the new Clinical Commissioning Group

A move to new more accessible premises where there is also the potential to share services

Stronger relationships with other advice providers through NAN that recognise DN strengths and take a joint approach to tackling support for Appeals

The development of a clear funding strategy

The implementation/development of the charity shop and one other trading activity

The production of evidence of the impact of DN services and the amount its work saves the state

A new data collation process that supports marketing and funding applications

A walk through the advice and form filling service which leads to service improvements for clients

An assessment of the potential to undertake policy influencing and support/advocacy work

The establishment of a Development/Operations Manager role or the delivery of such functions in another way

Appendix One

Feedback from Consultation Sessions

Disability Nottinghamshire held three consultation sessions across the county to gather views from users, carers and organisations on the key future challenges and what Disability Nottinghamshire might be able to do to help. These sessions generated a lot of material that is captured here. The content does not necessarily reflect the views of Disability Nottinghamshire.

Challenges facing people with disabilities

Health and Social Care

- Accessing services, lack of information as to what is out there, confusing, advocacy/support when trying to access/in system (GP appointments, prescriptions, initial access etc)
- Long waits for GP appointments
- Cost of medication can determine treatment
- Discharge from consultant to GP not always smooth or appropriate
- Greater understanding of impact on wider family of caring for someone with a disability
- Supporting people who develop a disability as a result of a life changing event and have not been in the system
- Lack of support for carers
- Preparing for possible personal health budgets
- Improving end of life care
- Issues of quality of service and attitudes where services are put out to external providers, (ambulance provision)
- Issues of support for children with disabilities transitioning into adult services. Adult services are often focused on older people. Feeling that children are sometimes inappropriately encouraged into HE/FE because care costs can be met from education budgets
- Barrier systems at hospital car parks difficult for car users with disabilities
- Concern about standards of investigation at residential homes
- Time it sometimes takes to access a social worker and delays in assessments
- Co-ordination between health and social workers
- Problems with home care, time orientation and demarcation of duties means that services can lack compassion or be flexible. Use of agency staff instead of District Nurses also reduces quality and confidence in service
- Culture of saving money leads to short term fixes/reductions which will lead to long term problems
- Lack of investment in preventative work
- Families can be reluctant to ask for help for fear of children being taken away from them
- Loss of experienced staff means that existing relationships and understanding disappears

- Reductions in Disabled Facilities grants
- Support/advocacy needed for people with personal budgets
- Reductions in funding allowances for some services can lead to some of the cost being passed on to the user. For example, one organisation tells of a £13 a week gap between the funding allowance and the cost of delivering the service for people with autism.

Benefit Changes

- Extensive changes to benefits are causing great anxiety and confusion
- Worries about under occupancy tax and in particular how it will affect people who have a bedroom for a carer
- Concerns about the need to have regular assessments; some conditions will not improve so assessments cause unnecessary anxiety
- Worries about lack of support on appeals in future as organisations are dropping support services because of funding cuts
- Need for help in filling in forms correctly as so much depends on getting the content right
- Concerns about more forms going online, some find new technology daunting, some don't have access or can't use it
- Challenges of making the assessment process sensitive to the range of disabilities and their impact on ability to work including recognising the impact of caring for a family member with disabilities and the impact of poor mental health
- Need for support/advocacy in benefits process
- Need for clear, easy to understand information
- People don't understand what they are entitled to
- Support needed to help people with managing monthly allowance, danger that this will be spent quickly with no budgeting
- Worry that if take employment may not be able to go back on benefits if too much
- People not wanting to volunteer because of perceived impact on benefits, affecting volunteer provided services.
- Concerns that the results driven culture means that people most unlikely to get employment are inappropriately referred to other organisations

Attitudes

- Perceptions that attitudes towards people with disabilities have become more negative because of the link between benefits and "shirking", not helped by media
- Increases in hate crime but at the same time sense that police do not take problems relating to people with disabilities seriously
- Lack of awareness about the impacts of different conditions leads to lack of understanding and inconsiderate behavior and actions. One example was parking on pavements.
- Attitudes flow into people providing services, particularly in the private sector but also in health and social care agencies
- Difficult economic time are leading some employers not to consider people with disabilities because of the perceived additional employment costs

Information and Access

- Difficult to get information on the range of things available
- People can be passed around different organisations, system bureaucratic
- Information needs to be simple
- Information not in format that is accessible to people with learning
- People with severe disabilities need help to communicate
- Automated answering services put people off
- Not everyone finds it easy to access online information
- Information needs to be current
- The Nottinghamshire/Derbyshire boundary can create issues for accessing the most appropriate service
- People with disabilities need greater opportunities to access quality of life services such as arts, cinema and theatre

Transport

- Lack of accessible public transport (buses don't have appropriate seats or lower)
- No wheelchair access on tram
- Accessible services are reducing in frequency and are often not thought through (e.g. no services on market days!)
- Lack of services means things have to be booked in advance which means you cannot act spontaneously
- Taxi drivers not trained to support people with disabilities
- Higher charges for wheelchair users of taxis makes services less accessible
- Lack of enforcement of illegal parking
-

These challenges are often dealt with by organisations in silos so that the cumulative impact of all these challenges on people with disabilities is not understood or recognised. This range of challenges can lead many people with disabilities to being very isolated, vulnerable and anxious.

What could be done by Disability Nottinghamshire?

A number of suggestions were made as to what Disability Nottinghamshire might do to meet the above challenges and how it might do it.

Awareness Raising

- a) Raising awareness of Disability Nottinghamshire. It was felt that more needed to be done to raise awareness about the work of Disability Nottinghamshire across the county to people with disabilities, carers, voluntary organisations and statutory stakeholders. It was felt that this could be done through;
 - Links with professionals working with people with disabilities
 - Links with voluntary and community groups
 - Engaging and instigating networking events (there is one for organisations at the Crossing in Worksop)
 - Ensuring details are in directories of support services
 - Engaging in partnership initiatives

- b) Raising awareness about the range of different disabilities, the challenges facing people with disabilities and their cumulative impact. This could be done by;
 - Organising a high profile county wide event that involves MPs
 - Use press and local radio
 - Undertake work in schools
 - Build on the Paralympics
 - Engage in partnership forums

Influence policy

- Campaign to promote the need for joined up person centered services
- Work with DWP and TUC to educate on impact of disability including issues relating to people with learning difficulties
- Work with DWP and JobCentre Plus to establish protocols on referrals and clarify the position on volunteers and benefits
- Link to national campaigns
- Pick up issues related to transport and take forward with key players
- Raise the issue of post code lottery for services
- Engage in policy partnership forums and with individual organisations to support equality and diversity strategies
- Act as a point of contact for engaging service users and provide a user voice

Information

- Translate policies, guidance etc into plain language
- Generate publicity leaflets and put them in places such as GP surgeries
- Promote the need to produce information in a way that is accessible to people with learning difficulties
- Support people with disabilities who find communication difficult
- Produce a newsletter that can also be accessed online
- Make sure website is up to date and that information can be printed from it
- Produce a Directory of services
- Produce a RADAR map

Form Filling

- Help people to fill in forms effectively
- Train other smaller groups to provide such support
- Open up an internet café which would enable people to fill forms in online with support in a relaxed environment

Advocacy and Support

- Provide support to people with hospital visits, GP appointments, court appearances, tribunals etc
- Support people through the system as they are signposted
- Link with Age Concern UK, the Carers Federation and Power, that have complaints functions to see where there may be added value in working together
- Provide meditation to help people to understand why they have failed assessments

Other Areas

- Support to people with monthly budgeting
- Sell aids and equipment
- Provide advice
- Signpost to deals and make recommendations on where to save money, disability friendly companies etc
- Work with other organisations to provide increased access to arts and other quality of life opportunities

How might this be done?

- Through partnership with other organisations. This might be with other similar providers, smaller community organisations, and groups dealing with associated areas such as arts or children's services and organisations working across the Derbyshire/Nottinghamshire border.
- Working with other organisations to reduce duplication, use strengths to maximum impact, ensure consistent quality and deliver the best possible service
- Linking with self help groups
- Fundraising to generate funds for individuals in need
- Ensuring that staff/volunteers are fully trained so that they are delivering to a high quality and are up to date with changes
- Look at a dedicated volunteer fundraiser for Disability Nottinghamshire or across a number of organisations
- Use Skype
- Ensure we have a fully accessible base; look to relocate
- Explore how we might be able to respond more quickly to calls, possibly establish a crisis line
- Look at increasing outreach work, possibly in partnership with local organisations, maybe using Pop up Shop idea to cover costs
- Explore a range of new funding possibilities including charging, donations, legacies, sponsorship etc
- Develop strategic relationships with key statutory partners

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