

Gateshead Access Panel



Unit K38 The Avenues
11th Avenue North
Team Valley
Gateshead
Tyne and Wear
NE11 0NJ.

Traveling by Bus:

No 94 from/to Gateshead Interchange every 15 mins
No 1 from/to Gateshead Interchange every 30 mins

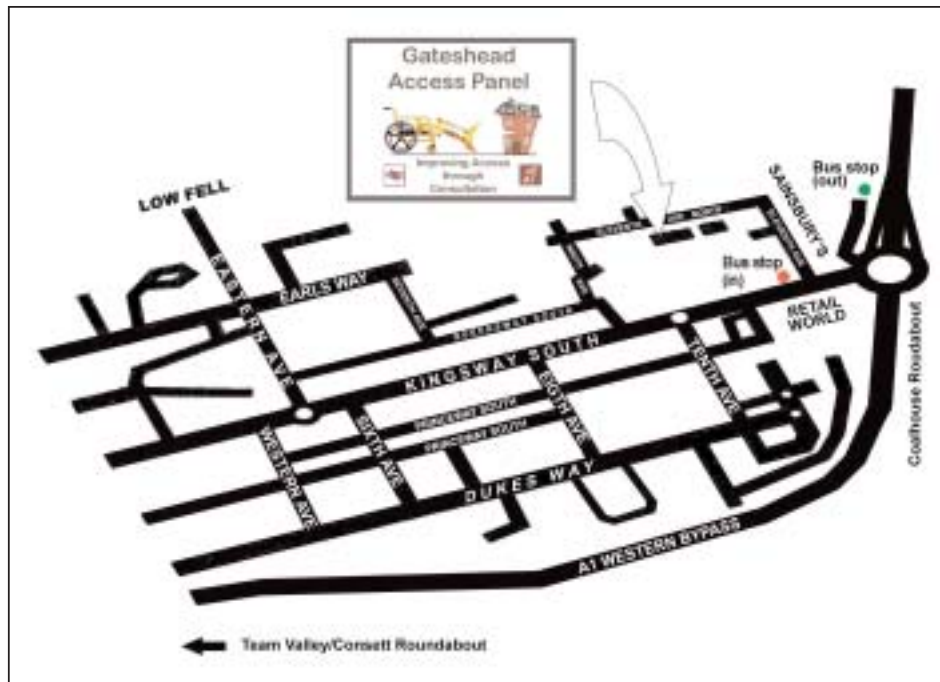
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Tel: 0845 60 60 260



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The Regular Newsletter from Gateshead Access Panel - Registered Charity No. 1063858

GAP Gossip



Sponsored by



Easter 2007

www.access.gateshead.dsl.pipex.com

Disclaimer - Please note that articles by individual members contain views that are their own and not necessarily those of Gateshead Access Panel.

Congratulations!



Congratulations to one of our Volunteers Darren Taylor.

Darren has been offered the post with Gateshead Council Community Based Services as a Health Trainer. He starts this post on the 2nd of January 2007. Darren has rung GAP to thank us for all the support he has received from the volunteers and staff here at GAP, because he was initially signposted to this employment opportunity by Julie our Volunteer Coordinator and later she was able to give him a reference.

We wish Darren every success and best wishes for his future in his new role.

Hello, and welcome to this easter edition of GAP Gossip. Much has changed since the last issue, so this is our chance to share our news with our members and for our workers and volunteers to share their thoughts and experiences. Therefore, a big thank you to all those who have contributed this time around.



We are at present waiting to hear back about our latest funding bids for the advocacy project, but are continuing to utilise our knowledge and experience through our new Advice, Information and Support Service.

This service, organised by disabled volunteers who are supported by GAP paid workers, offers support to disabled people

and their carers in their dealings with for example Social Services, housing, transport and education.

We can assist you to remedy situations that are worrying you before they become full blown complaints, and we can provide you with advice, information and support should you want to make a complaint. We will never pass on any information we get about you that you don't want us to.

We are always keen to recruit new Advice, Information and Support volunteers, and users of the project would make ideal volunteers!

To contact the Project - if you want information or support, or if you are interested in becoming a volunteer advocate.



E-mail: advocacy.gap@dsl.pipex.com



Ring: 0191 443 1152 (Voice)



Fax: 0191 487 7298

Write to: GAP Advocacy Project
Freeport NEA9072
Gateshead NE11 0BR



Easter Word Search



I	A	N	E	L	Y	B	J	M	K	P	E	N	C	V	I	Y	F	H	U	A	F	E	D	S	C	E	W	F	G
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- | | | |
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| Basket | Dye | Rabbit |
| Bonnet | Easter | Roll |
| Bunny | Egg | Spring |
| Card | Find | Yummy |
| Chocolate | Fun | |
| Dinner | Hunt | |
| Duck | Lamb | |





The Cinema Exhibitors' Association Card

Did you know that the Cinema Exhibitors' Association runs a national card scheme that entitles the holder to one free ticket for a person accompanying them to the cinema?

To apply for the card, you will need to meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Be in receipt of the disability living allowance or attendance allowance
- Be a registered blind person

The card is valid for 3 years from the date of issue and costs £5 per card. This is payable via cheque or postal order and must be accompanied by a passport photo and copies of the relevant entitlement documents.

Cineworld Boldon

Tel: 0871 200 2000

Web: www.cineworld.co.uk

Tyneside Cinema

Tel: 0191 232 8289

Web: www.tynecine.org

UCI/Odeon Gateshead/Silverlink

Tel: 0871 22 44 007

Web: www.odeon.co.uk

Whitley Bay Playhouse

Tel: 0191 252 3505

Web: www.whitleybayplayhouse.co.uk



A VOLUNTEERS JOURNEY

Two years ago I was introduced to Gateshead Access Panel (GAP), at the time I was a mature student at Northumbria University.

My self-esteem was practically non-existent. I thought I was not likely to be able to graduate. In fact, I rather thought the staff at the university had made a mistake by even allowing me to join one of the degree courses in the first place. I was living on what was very much a day-to-day basis and giving little if any thought towards the future. When I did consider it I found it seemed to be unremittingly bleak. The extent of my planning for the future was the somewhat vague idea that I would like to do work which somehow involved working with books. When life did present me with a choice I was paralysed by decision and would just wish that someone else would take responsibility for taking the decision off my hands. Looking back I probably missed out on several opportunities to help myself simply because I thought that I was not 'worthy' of

being considered an equal to the 'normal' people that I would have had to come into contact with. I was worried that even the sight of me would have caused them offence. When strangers tried to speak to me in the street I would put my head down, continue walking and pretend I had not heard them. If anyone tried to physically approach me I would run and hide. At this time I lacked any vocational and interpersonal skills whatsoever.

In less than two years with the help of the others in the GAP office my life has been completely turned around. I started there as a volunteer working one day a week updating the office's files. I recall when I was new to the group being asked if I wanted to contribute to an article concerning volunteers' experiences at GAP and declining. I was afraid to do anything that would attract attention to my presence. The idea of speaking to strangers produced in me an unreasoning fear.

Since the first time I met everyone at GAP they have treated me like any other member of the community.

That is, someone who is capable of learning to perform complex tasks even though I may have made the occasional mistake along the way. In the early days of my association with GAP my inability to make a decision must have been exasperating for the others who worked there. Looking back I practically needed permission from one of the others before I picked-up a paperclip from the floor.

Over time they have given me more responsibility for my work. Also the extent of my duties has increased. I now work on the reception desk two days per week and my duties include answering the phones and welcoming callers to the offices, as well as basic office administration and finances.

In addition to these duties I also participate in the Focus Group, which normally meets on Fridays for the purpose of giving service providers information about how the services they provide effect the lives of people with impairments.

I have recently started helping out in a charity shop in Newcastle two days per week. This requires me to have more contact with members of the public than I would have been able to imagine myself doing before I started at GAP.

I have completed my university degree obtaining a 2-1 and I am looking forward to a career. I do not think I would have been likely to even have completed my course at university had I not had the support of my friends and the people at GAP to rely on. Although it is unfair to single any one person out for praise when everyone has been so generous with me, I have relied on Julie Earl the Volunteer Coordinator at GAP, who given me support and advice continuously throughout my volunteer placement.

Outside the office I am now finding it easier to become involved with community activities. To choose just one example I have recently joined a book group that meets in Newcastle's town centre. I had always wished I could join one of these groups but before finishing university and my association with GAP I did not have the confidence to apply. I had imagined that they would reject me at once as being beneath their notice. My future has never looked brighter than it does nowadays. This is largely as a result of my association with GAP and is the reason I hope that GAP will continue to exist and to improve the situation for other people with impairments for many years to come.

Alternatively, if you would prefer to circulate a hard copy of the questionnaire to your members, please email us at info@patient-view.com, and we will send you a PDF version of the questionnaire which can then be faxed or posted to PatientView, the administrator of this survey.

The administration costs of this survey are being supported by an educational grant from NovoNordisk.

Signed on behalf of the QALYity Project,
Alexandra Wyke,
CEO, PatientView
and
Simon Williams,
Together4Health

For general enquiries about this study, please feel free to contact Dr Wyke at:

Woodhouse Place
Upper Woodhouse
Knighton
Powys, LD7 1NG, Wales

Tel: 0044-(0)1547-520-965
Fax: 0044-(0)1547-528-501
Email: info@patient-view.com

For more information: <http://www.patient-view.com>

For more about the QALYity Project see
<http://www.patient-view.com/qalyity.htm>

Thank You



We were delighted to have been awarded a total £125.00 from the North Eastern Co-op's South Tyne & Wear Area Committee from the Community Dividend Fund.

This money will enable us in part to produce our newsletter 'GAP Gossip' which allows our disabled volunteers an opportunity to use or gain new skills assisting to produce it. It also allows us to inform all our members a majority of who are disabled residents in the Gateshead area on our work here at Gateshead Access Panel.

Julie Earl

The QALYity Project

Dear Co-ordinator,

Do you believe that doctors and the NHS should do more to improve the quality of life of patients and people with a disability? If you do, one problem is that the medical profession, managers, civil servants and politicians cannot always be expected to know what you (and everyone else) mean when you use the phrase 'quality of life'.

To help overcome this problem, we would like to invite the members of your organisation to give their viewpoints on the subject of their quality of life to a study taking place in England and Wales.

The QALYity Project (an alliance of prestigious patient groups, medical professionals, academics, and journalists) is conducting the study in order to develop an index that can measure how effective each individual medical treatment or form of care/ support is at improving the quality of life of people with a long-term medical condition (or a disability)—as determined by the individuals themselves, not by clinicians. The results of the survey, and the tools that emerge from it, will be made publicly available, will be submitted for peer review, and will also be presented to the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE), the government-funded body that decides which treatments and care should be paid for by the NHS [for more about the QALYity project: <http://www.patient-view.com/qalyity.htm>]

A December 2006 QALYity Project survey collected the views of over 270 patient/disability/carer organisations throughout England and Wales. These groups have kindly provided a wealth of potential definitions of the phrase 'quality of life' [results of the December 2006 quality-of-life survey can be read at the above web address]. But people are different, and not all of the December 2006 definitions are likely to apply to everyone. This second questionnaire aimed at your members should allow these individual differences to be collated.

We would be most grateful if you could give your members a chance to input their opinions to this survey on their quality of life (the short questionnaire can be filled out online using the following address <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.asp?u=723883484804>).

Disability Equality Duty Update

In December 2006 Public Authorities such as Council's, Primary Care Trusts, Schools, NHS, Police Authorities and Government Departments had a new duty placed on them. The Disability Equality Duty means that public authorities have to be proactive in ensuring that they treat disabled people equally.

The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 has slowly brought about changes for disabled people in that services and buildings should now be designed to accommodate disabled people. This Duty is about fast tracking further changes by involving disabled people and user led disability organisations in their work to bring about a huge cultural change in the way public authorities think about disability.

Last year we worked in partnership with the Disability Rights Commission to provide training for other disability organisations on the Public sector Disability Equality Duty 2005. Since then GAP along with other disability organisations has been working with Gateshead Council and Nexus in particular to inform their processes for the new Duty.

Essentially Disability Equality Scheme's have to be drawn up and an Action Plan of how the authorities are to promote disability equality has to be agreed. The first plan is for 3 years and the required outcomes must be decided through the involvement of disabled people and their organisations based on disabled peoples priorities.



GAP members who have been involved so far have determined that being involved in monitoring processes of the Schemes is very important for their success. Some authorities are having monitoring meetings only once a year. The Council and Nexus have agreed to regular meetings with representatives of various disability organisations in Gateshead (Council) and Tyne & Wear (Nexus). This means that disabled people can assess performance and remedy any shortfalls in the Action Plans. In this way disabled people, their representatives and officers as members of the Monitoring Groups can work in Partnership to ensure that the authorities are on target and can provide positive outcomes for disabled people.

To fulfill their General Duty under the Act, Public Authorities must be:

- Promoting equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
- Eliminating discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
- Eliminating harassment of disabled persons that is related to their disability
- Promoting positive attitudes towards disabled persons

- Encouraging participation by disabled people in public life.

GAP has also had more limited involvement in meetings with the Gateshead Housing Company, Gateshead College, Gateshead Health, One North East with regard to their Disability Equality Schemes.

If you are interested in hearing more or would like to become involved in the work of the Access Panel around Disability Equality please contact Ian Atkinson on:

Tel: 0191 443 0058
E-mail: ian.gap@dsl.pipex.com

Development and Enterprise Group



Gateshead Access Panel and the Development and Enterprise Group at Gateshead Council work in Partnership

- Planning and Environmental Strategy
- Review and Support

GAP and the Council's Development & Enterprise Group are now working in partnership to promote equality of opportunity for disabled people in and around Gateshead. GAP and Development & Enterprise have worked closely over the years with the Council using GAP's expertise on disability issues and inclusive design to inform their various projects and briefs wherever possible.

The Panel has regular meetings with the services and an Access Champion has been nominated within each of the seven services. This means that disability issues will be positively promoted within each service area. At the meetings we discuss various Projects and Policies that Gateshead is developing. Our members are involved to ensure that local disabled people are informed and have input into the work of the Council. Our Access Consultant, Steve Hudson and / or General Manager, Christine Pickersgill advises on accessible and inclusive design, guidelines and legislation.

The Group covers a diverse range of services concerned with the built and natural environment including regeneration initiatives. The key service areas included are:

If you are a disabled person and are interested in joining us for these meetings or you are a disability organisation please get in touch for information on how you can get involved.

- Design
- Property Services
- Economic Development
- Transport and Highways
- Regulatory Services

- **Benefit details were handed into the Adult learning centre and this information has not been passed onto the Centre as they have repeatedly asked for this information.**

I have also signposted two non-disabled persons who are in full time employment to Adam Clemerson from the Challenge Project, they needed assistance in numeracy and literacy.

If you want assistance to find the right learning opportunity for you or indeed if you have experience any similar difficulties to ones highlighted above please contact Julie Earl on:

 Tel: 0191 443 0058

 Fax: 0191 487 7298

 E-mail: julie.gap@dsl.pipex.com

Kerry Dunn helped me to get the application forms and she helped me to fill them in. I felt so overjoyed when I got the job. I started on the 22nd of August, I felt so nervous but excited at the same time. My boss has helped me and other people who I work with.

When I was at home I was looking at the voluntary organisations on the computer because I was bored and fed up. I found Gateshead Access Panels Website and I thought that it looked interesting so I sent Julie Earl a e-mail saying that I was interested in becoming a volunteer. So now I am working at Gateshead Access Panel as a volunteer in the new Gold Star Project with Sharon Dixon as an admin assistant. I have met lots of new people and made many friends. Gateshead Access Panel has made me more confident and has helped me with the admin side of things as well.

Kirsty's New Beginnings

Hi my name is Kirsty Douglas, I am 23 years old and I live in Gateshead. I am a Disabled person. I am currently working at Gateshead Council in the Community Based Services and I am the Partnership Clerk.

I am a student at Gateshead College where I am doing an admin course level 2, English course level 2 and a maths course. I get support from my support worker at college with work or personal problems. I have to put up with some rubbish with people picking on me and taking the Mickey because I have a stammer, but I am a strong person and I am determined to finish my course. I would like to work full time.

The Disabled Learners Project

The aim of the Adult Learning Project is to assist disabled people into Adult Learning throughout Gateshead. There are several barriers into Adult Learning for disabled people, these barriers were identified in research that was carried out by GAP. The three main barriers are Transport, Aids/Equipment and Someone to go with/ support to the course. My role is to meet with the disabled person and assess their needs in preparation for the course of their choice, and help negotiate these barriers. Pamphlets have been designed by GAP in a simple easily read format, as handouts for individuals and posters for venues across the borough. I have spoke to not only volunteers but also other disabled people within the borough and offered support and advice on other learning opportunities this may well be Adult Learning, college courses, Skills 4 Life or community opportunities. In this project I have assisted twenty disabled people in this way, for e.g: people who have been wheelchair users needing height adjustable workstation, visually impaired persons needing compatible software or CCTVs, making sure support workers in place or maybe just finding a suitable activity for the individual.

We have also been able to report to the Adult Learning Team management any difficulties that disabled people have experienced in their endeavour to participate in adult learning opportunities recently for example

- Course details changed from introductory to advanced with no prior notice
- Date and time changed from lunch-time to early morning. This causes problems with bus passes as they are not valid until 9.30am
- Tutor having no knowledge that people with disabilities were attending a course.
- Separation of disabled people from the main group of adult learners.
- No additional support was offered at the beginning of the course for both service user and tutor
- Tutor referred to the service users we supported as people with brain injuries when discussing them on the first day
- The weight for the lift inside the centre was not suitable for one service user with a large wheelchair
- The kerbs outside of the Centre are not suitable, there was dropped kerb, a wheelchair user had to travel on the road from outside the centre until the bus stop where there are lowered kerbs

Gateshead Local Engagement Board

Gateshead Access Panel are pleased to inform our members that The Primary Care Trust have reintroduced their Local Engagement Board meetings. These meetings will be held every two months, alternating with an integrated business Board meeting. The Local Engagement Board will be an important part of

the Primary Care Trust's formal Board processes. It will give local people, patients and other stakeholders the opportunity to engage with PCT Board members on an issue which is important and developing. In the past GAP members have found them an affective way of raising concerns about local issues.

If you would like to attend any of these meetings or for more information please contact Gillian Stanger on:

Tel: 0191 4971526

E-mail: gillian.stanger@ghpct.nhs.uk

For Sale Acorn Stairlift

- **Designed to fit any standard straight staircase**
- **Less than 1 year old!**
- **Serviced just a matter of weeks ago**
- **Cost £2300 when new but open to offers**

Buyer responsible for it's removal

Mrs Bell

Tel: 0191 410 5779

GoldStar @ GAP



GoldStar @ GAP has been up and running since July last year.

The project is called GoldStar @ GAP as the funding comes from the GoldStar Volunteering and Mentoring Exemplar Programme - a government initiative which promotes good practice for volunteering from groups of people who are socially excluded e.g. disabled people and people with limiting long term illnesses (www.goldstar.org.uk). Good practice could mean anything from easy- read publicity, accessible workspaces, meeting individual support needs to providing staff training on disability equality awareness.

GoldStar @ GAP is all about working with organisations to develop good practice when it comes to involving disabled people in the volunteering opportunities they have on offer. To do this, the GoldStar team, Anna, Frank, Kirsty, Steven and Sharon are designing and developing 'Practice to Include', a good practice manual and training workshops, aimed primarily at volunteer involving organisations in the voluntary, public and private sectors. The team are also promoting the initiative in a variety of ways.

Over the last 8 months GoldStar@GAP has made good progress in working towards the goal of promoting and spreading good practice in the recruitment, management and retention of disabled people as volunteers.

- ❖ Frank and Anna have run a number of focus groups to consult with disabled people on issues of good practice
- ❖ Steve has uploaded information onto GAP's website and has also designed promotional leaflets and posters which are being distributed at exhibitions and throughout the voluntary and public sectors.

- ❖ Frank put together a PowerPoint presentation, which has been used to let voluntary organisations and public authorities about our work.
- ❖ Kirsty has been providing admin support to set up the systems we need in place to monitor the work and preparing training materials.
- ❖ Everyone was involved in the short presentation of GoldStar @GAP at GAP's AGM in January 2007.
- ❖ Sharon has been providing overall support for the team.

In late February and early March GoldStar@GAP delivered the first 2 training workshops of 'Practice to Include', which were facilitated by Frank, Anna, Kirsty and Sharon. These 'pilot' sessions were well received, and so, with a few revisions, the team is now able to plan a training programme for the coming year. These one day training sessions will be held on:

15th May 2007 5th June 2007 3rd July 2007 31st July 2007

Further details about the courses and a booking form are available to download from GAP's website - www.access-gateshead.org.uk.

The next challenge for the team, in particular Steven and Sharon, is getting the good practice manual produced ready for a launch in early summer.

During the coming months GoldStar@GAP will also be creating opportunities to further promote the team's work of spreading good practice around including disabled people in volunteering opportunities.

If you would like more information about GoldStar @ GAP please contact Sharon



Email: sharon@access-gateshead.org.uk



Tel: 0191 4430058

