

One Voice

Service Agreement Report 2009/10



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Introduction

This report is to let people know what work One Voice did in 2009/10 and how One Voice performed in relation to the targets we agreed with the Council in our Service Agreement.

Almost all of the work discussed is funded via our grant from the Community Initiatives Team. We are also able to host and run an advocacy project for disabled people, funded by Adult Services, because of the core funding we receive from the council. The service details and performance for the advocacy project is not covered in this report, but may be found in the Annual Advocacy Project report (www.1voice.org.uk/downloads.htm)

We have taken the decision to unilaterally increase some of our targets. While we continue to meet or exceed our target for advocacy/representation, we are able to refer many disabled clients to our advocacy service*, so we have found time to increase some of our other targets – this year we increased our “other publications” target from 4 to 5, and increased our updating the website target from 12/year to 24/year.

We are pleased to confirm that we have met these increased targets, and we will continue to look at ways that we can increase targets when time or volunteer capacity makes this possible.

You can find more detailed information on what One Voice has been doing in each target category in the main body of this report. It tells you how much of everything we did (called quantitative monitoring). At the end of the section we have included some user data for the first time.

The next section, beginning on page 18 tells you how well or how badly we did things according to our users, and how we responded to praise or criticism – this is called qualitative monitoring. We have included details on complaints and compliments received, and the comments from our Impact Assessment.

In section 3 we look at how our work has assisted Wolverhampton in the delivery of Wolverhampton Local Agreement (LAA) outcomes.

The final part of the report is the appendices; they provide evidence in support of the work discussed in the main part of the report – including samples of our work.

You can get a copy of this report in large print or on audio cd by contacting the One Voice office.

You can download a copy as a document file from the One Voice website:

www.1voice.org.uk/downloads.htm

If you need a copy in Braille, or in a different written language, let us know.

Performance Table 09/10

category	target pa (tbc by funders)	1st Quarter Apr-Jun	2nd Quarter Jul-Sep	3rd Quarter Oct-Dec	4th Quarter Jan - Mar	Totals
Information and Advice	150	55	51	43	57	206
Counselling	5	2	3	1	3	9
Newsletter	6	3	1	2	1	7
Other Publications	5 (4in SA)	1	2	2	3	8
Training: packages	1	1	1	1	0	3
Sessions/workshops	3	1	1	3	1	6
Consultation /partnership working	10	N.B.: Most of these partnerships are ongoing or cover more than one quarter, so an annual total is given				21
Product/Service Tests	2	0	0	1	1	2
Research	3	2	2	0	0	4
Publicising/promoting One Voice and the website	12	5	6	6	4	21
Updating website	24 (10 in SA)	9	7	9	9	34
Website hits	300					45,953
Meetings/Events: General	2	1	2	0	0	3
Access Meetings	4	3	1	2	4	10
Transport Meetings	4	0	1	2	2	5
Advocacy/Representation	6	8	9	6	7	30

Performance in detail

Information and advice		Target 150(exceeded)
Money and Benefits	43	
Debt	14	
Access	21	
Transport	11	
Disability Discrimination Act	18	
Other legal	10	
Employment	17	
Education/Training	6	
Involving disabled people	8	
Housing issues	11	
Aids/ adaptations/equipment	5	
Leisure/sport/Exercise	11	
Setting up a group	2	
Impairments	3	
Information/communication	7	
One Voice Services	13	
Care/Independent Living	4	
Campaigning	2	

We met 206 requests for information and advice, exceeding our target.

Sometimes a request can be dealt with over the telephone, or by sending out some printed or audio information. Sometimes we have to do some research to find out the information, or

what options are available. With some clients providing suitable information and advice can take several face-to-face meetings, however most requests for information and advice are dealt with on the telephone or by email.

In the last year most requests for information or advice concerned money, benefits and debt, a large number of people contacted us around legal advice, rights and information – a significant number of disabled employees contacted us to find out their employment rights under the Disability Discrimination Act. We expect to see more contact on legal, employment and money/benefit matters, as a result of the continuing recession and cutbacks.

We also provided advice or information on transport related issues, access, aids and adaptations, information on specific impairments, education, training, parent rights, housing, tenant rights, access to leisure, information about health and wellbeing, information on our chairbics exercises, care and independent living, exercise and impairments, including disabled people, accessible consultations, campaigning, writing letters of complaint, and setting up and running disabled people's groups.

Counselling

target 5(exceeded)

We provide 9 counselling sessions to 4 individuals.

Since we no longer have our volunteer counsellor, this is not a service we promote, but for disabled people unable to find or afford an accessible counsellor we will provide this service on request. We have assisted clients in working through issues associated with going back to work, bereavement, and becoming disabled.

Newsletter

target 6(exceeded)

We produced 6 bi-monthly newsletters in line with our target. We also produced an additional AGM special which was made available at our AGM and on our website – we did this to inform members of some news on big access projects taking place; the publication was very popular with attendees at our AGM who were updated with information that they couldn't get from other sources.

All of our newsletters are now available to read or download on our website, and from this year, they will continue to be available in the archived area of our site.

Other Publications

target:4(exceeded)

This year, we spent a lot of time researching and producing version 2 of our Directory, with help from 7 volunteers. The new Directory is about a third larger, and bound¹. We have included an assessment form with each copy we send out, so people can tell us what they think about it. We will be redesigning and updating the website version of the Directory in the coming year.

In 2009/10 we also produced a new One Voice leaflet, How to be Disability Friendly (a guide for shops)², Sport & Leisure leaflet, disabled student guide, Debt/money management self-help pack.

We updated our product/service test report and we updated our Employment (into work) booklet.

Training/workshops/seminars

targets: 1 training pack, 3 training sessions (exceeded)

We wrote packages for a workshop on access in Wolverhampton, management group training, and materials for the Care Debate workshops.

We ran a Snakes & ladders access workshop, and a training session for members of the management group.

We ran 3 Big Care Debate workshops, to give disabled people a say in the future of the care system. Contributions were combined into a response, and submitted to the Government Consultation.

We also ran an accessible web design workshop for Direct Payments Group.

We also gave a talk on Disabled People's Organisations at the User Led Organisations conference.

¹ Copy attached to the report

² Copy attached to the report

Consultation and partnership working

**target: 10
(achieved 21)**

One Voice continues to do a lot of disability-related work in partnership with other organisations in Wolverhampton. The time and input into these partnerships can vary. Sometimes staff or volunteers attend meetings and represent disabled people's views as they have been expressed to us, or highlight disabling barriers in a service or facility.

Other partnership work requires a more sustained commitment and involvement for the co-ordinator and volunteers.

One Voice has continued to promote disabled people's access needs or act as an expert advisor in a variety of building or refurbishment projects, including the Interchange project, the new Bus Station, St Peter's Church visitors centre, Bilston Leisure Centre, Phoenix Park, Wednesfield Library, and The Civic Trust. We also began working with project managers and architects on the 2 Wolverhampton BSF (Building Schools for the Future) projects – Tettenhall Learning Community, and Highfields School, since there were access problems with the original designs.

In our access work, we look at original architect plans and proposals, in a group of disabled people, we highlight any areas to disabled people's access and propose changes and solutions. Here, when we can convince architects and project managers of our case, the promotion of good access and inclusivity makes better buildings and services, and helps to make sure that design is inclusive and does not require costly adaptations afterwards in order to meet legal requirements regarding disabled people's access.

In 2009/10 we have also attended meetings and contributed in working groups such as Public Information Group, the joint accessible information group, the education access initiative partnership, long term impairments board, LiNK, Disabled Tenants Action Group, ring & ride users group, the 3rd sector forum, care quality commission, BBAP, Waste Management Services, WEAD, and the women's design group.

Product and Service tests

target: 2(achieved)

This is an element of our service agreement that is always carried out by One Voice volunteers who identify a product or service that may be of particular use or interest to disabled people. They then test out the product, and write a report which is added to our downloadable Product and Service Tests document. This year the iDECT home telephone, and Dragon Dictates 10 (computer software to assist people who have difficulty typing) were tested.

The findings are added to our product and service tests document which can be downloaded from our website (<http://tiny.cc/f5tp5>)

Research

target: 3(exceeded)

The most substantial piece of research was in preparation for producing the updated and expanded One Voice Directory 2.0. We also did some research and auditing on sport and leisure facilities, a survey of service users in a 3 month period to find out their opinions on the services offered by One Voice and what alternatives were available to them³, we did some secondary research on hate crime in preparation for an unsuccessful multi-organisation funding bid to the Equality & Human Rights Commission – this research will be used as a basis for future pieces of work on disability hate crime and bullying. Volunteers also did some research on accessible pubs and restaurants as the basis for a forthcoming publication this research is not yet complete.

Website

SLA targets: 6 updates, 200 visits

One Voice increased Target: 24 updates, 3,000 visits(exceeded)

We decided to increase the target that we had agreed with the Council, in line with comments we had last year via our compliments, comments and complaints forms and user contact.

Service users have asked us to add more information, more news and pages on specific things, to update more regularly, and provide information on new things, so we revised our updates target to at least 24 per year – or roughly twice a month.

We updated the website 34 times, we also added a blog that has a number of disabled contributors, we added 17 new pages, as well as 41 new blog posts (not included in website updates figure). Our website now has 68 pages (excluding the Blog).

This expansion is reflected in the number of “hits” we have – 45,953 in the year, an increase of 11,551 or around 33%.

Our website is now a wide ranging resource for disabled people and others who provide services for disabled people, we also use it as a means of providing disabled citizens with more up – to –date information of what One Voice is doing and how they can get involved.

³ This can be found in the Qualitative monitoring section on p17

People have been directed to our site by searching Google and other search engines for a large number of things, including, DLA, can I get a budgeting loan on Incapacity, applying for council home, accessible pubs, disabled student support, access audit document, can deaf person get a grant to buy home, dda court decisions, fibromyalgia, funeral grant, emergency chemists Wolverhampton, blister paving, bedsits Wolverhampton, mobility, MP for Bilston, disabled directory, toilets Wolverhampton, 1voice blogs, disability access symbols, external steps building regs, phoenix centre, dentists in wolverhampton taking on new nhs patients, DLA special rules, disabled Seetec, doll hearing aid.

Some of our front page stories this year have included wheelchair tennis day, the care debate, Flourish2BU, Disability Hate Crime, supermarkets tackling parking abuse, EHRC, mental health strategy, independent living, Bilston Leisure Centre, and Wolverhampton Homes.

This year, we also welcomed 2 new website content writers.

Promoting One Voice

target: 15 (exceeded)

This year, we have promoted One Voice widely with our general service leaflet⁴, information to libraries, Scope, Thomsons Directory, The Carer's Directory, Wolverhampton Online Directory, Fibromyalgia UK, We made new links on other websites of interest to disabled people, including Uhad2bthere. We had our contact details included on a Royal Hospitals Trust leaflet for patients who are deaf or hearing impaired. We had an article about One Voice services published in the Wolverhampton Tenants federation Newsletter. We had a stall at the World Mental Health Day where we were able to tell lots of new people about our services. We also did outreach to disabled people's groups and places disabled people meet, including the Well Women's Centre, WEAD, Rethink, A2B, Seetec, Shop Mobility.

We also did some leafleting at the Steam Rally and the City Show.

Meetings

targets:2 general, 4 transport, 4 access (exceeded)

We had 3 general meetings (open to anyone): our Annual General Meeting, and 2 meetings around Care.

We arranged more transport meetings than usual, so that disabled people could meet with the

⁴ Attached to this report

project managers on the Interchange project, and the architects and transport planners for the new bus station design.

We had access meetings on general access issues as well as 2 meetings on the Bilston Link, 1 meeting on the Bilston Leisure Centre and 2 meetings on Wednesfield Library.

Advocacy and representation

target 6(Achieved 29)

We are able to offer an advocacy service to many more people with long term impairments through our Adult Services funded advocacy project, we supported over a hundred people via our advocacy project – those figures are not represented here.

Our service agreement with the Council via the Community Initiatives Budget funds support we offer in terms of advice and representation to users which is outside the scope of advocacy.

In 2009/10 we helped 13 people with disability living allowance claims and represented a further 4 at Tribunal.

We represented 2 people who were victims of hate crime and referred a further 2 to our advocacy service.

We also represented 3 people at incapacity/employment Support allowance tribunals, and represented 1 person with their employer, in order to get reasonable adjustments so she could continue to work.

We represented and supported 2 terminally ill people and their families to help them sort out financial, care and other issues.

We helped 2 people to negotiate changes to their community care plan.

In addition we provided advocacy for 3 people with mental health problems who could not access the Rethink Service.

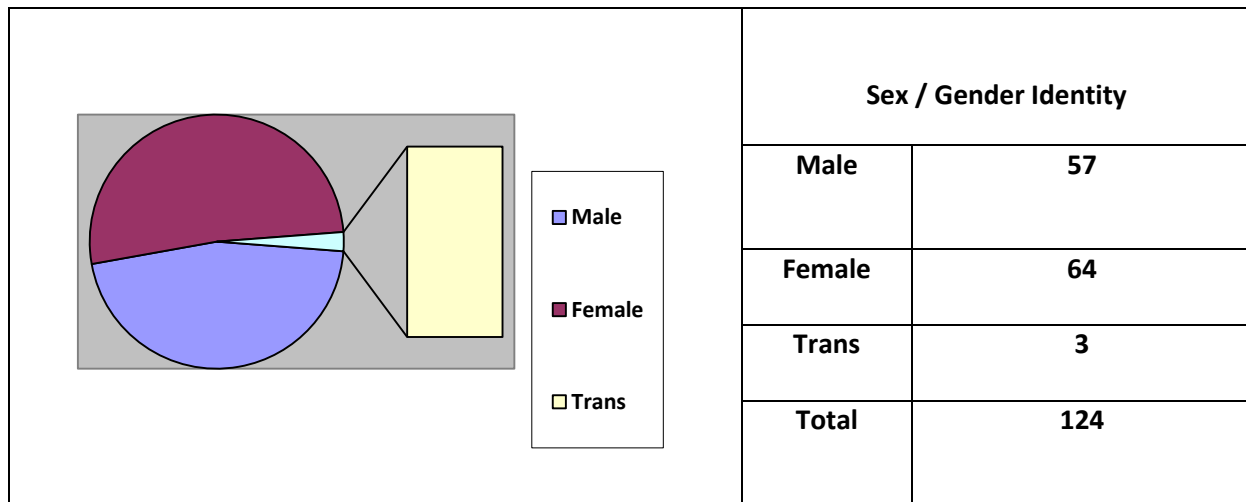
Service User Data

This is a new area of reporting that we added at the suggestion of the Community Initiatives Team.

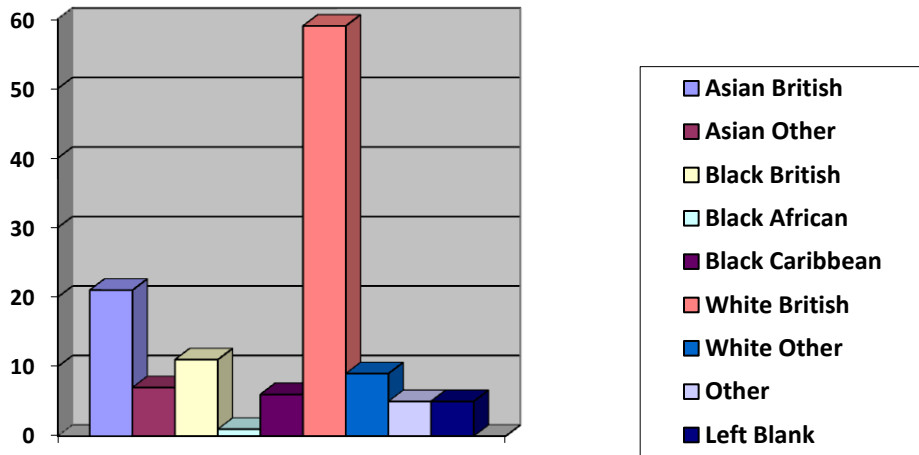
We encourage each service user that we meet *face-to-face* to fill in our user equality data forms. The breakdown of service users who *completed* forms is below.

Number of user monitoring forms completed and returned: 124

Sex/Gender Identity of service users who returned forms:

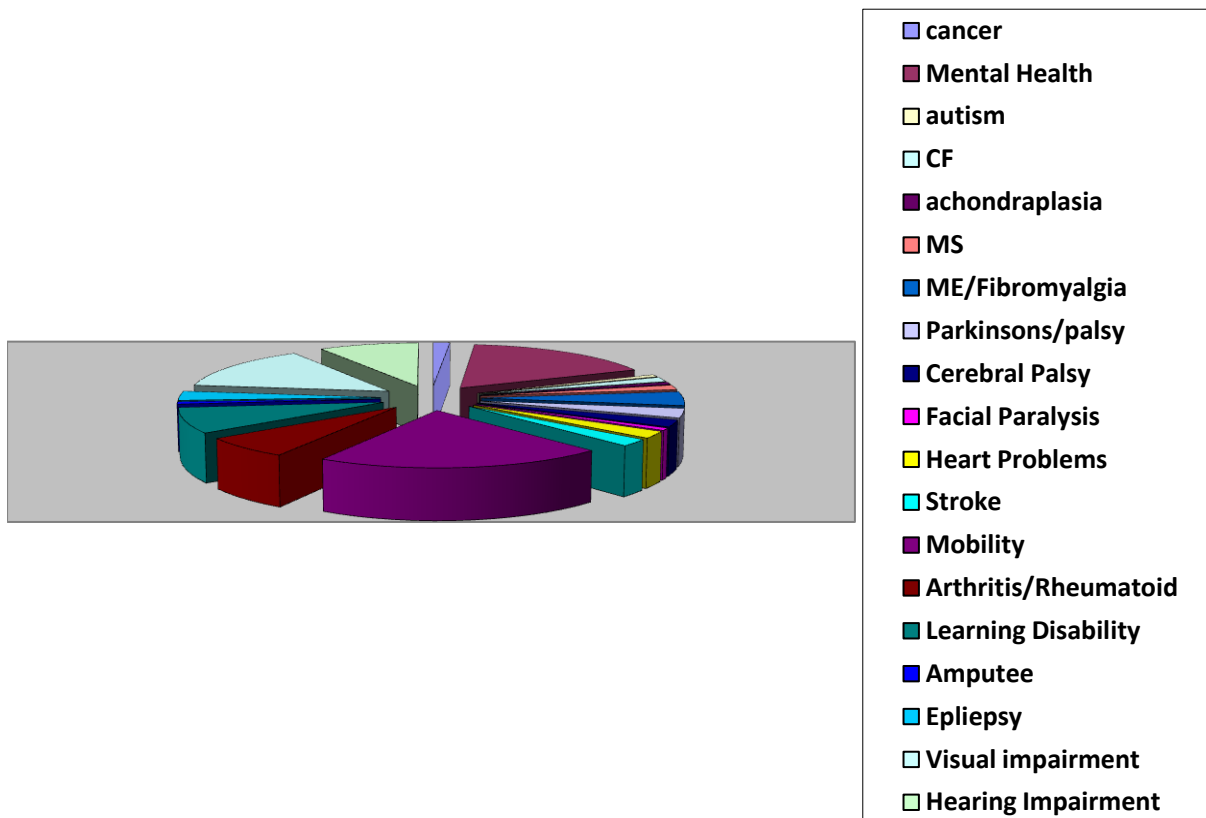


Ethnic Group of service users who returned forms:



Impairment

Of those users that completed and returned forms, 116 stated one or more impairments, 8 stated no impairment or left the form blank



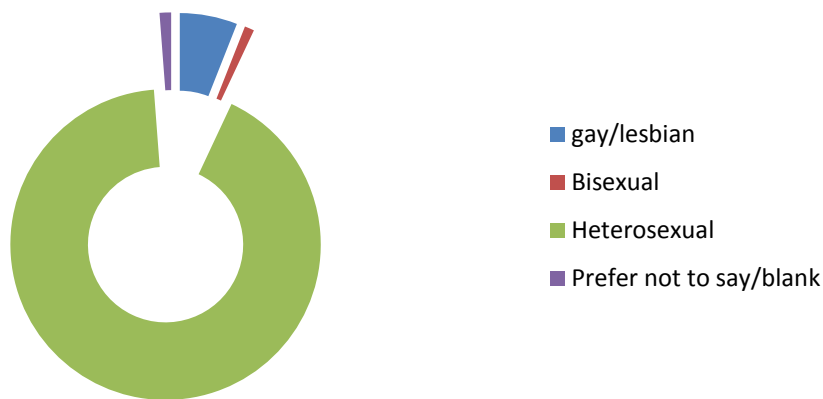
NB: More impairments than forms filled in because some listed multiple impairments.

We also asked users what (if any) reasonable adjustments they required in order to use a service. We were able to meet all of these adjustments, as it is a facet of our service that it is adaptable, accessible, and without disabling barriers.

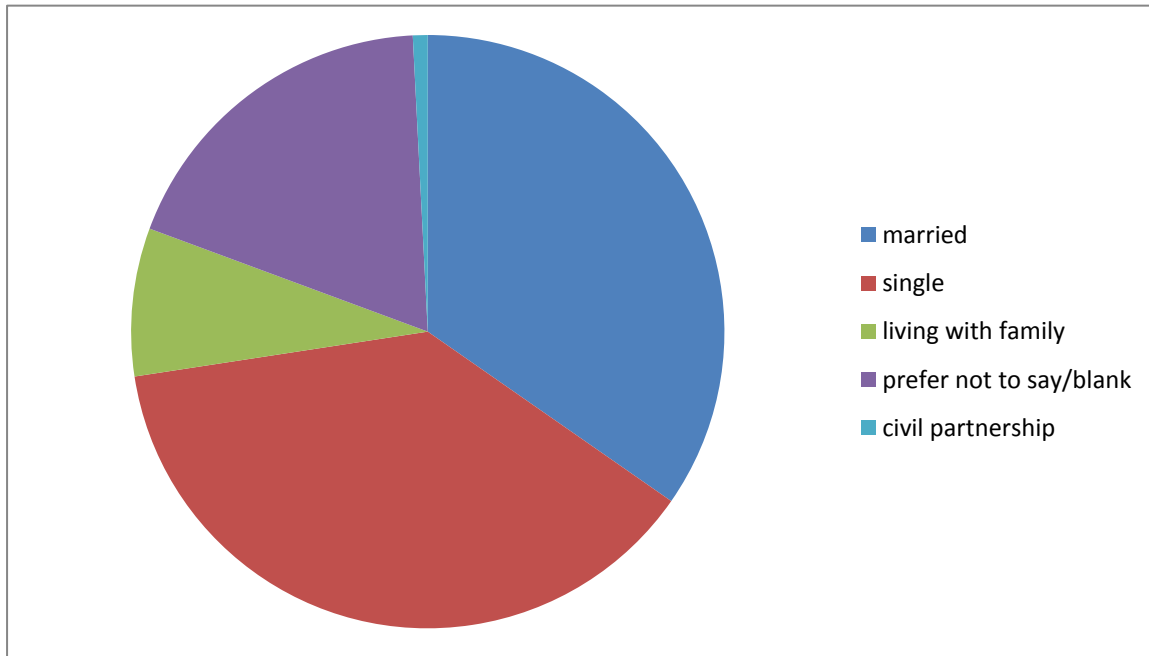
The following impairment related requests were made and met:

Plain English:	10 people	(all our user information is in Plain English)
Home Visit:	9 people	
Visit to Centre:	7 people	
Good/Access:	7 people	
Parking space by entrance:	19 people	(we were not able to guarantee this, so offered home visits where necessary)
Information on audio CD:	17 people	
Large Print:	6 people	
Chair with arms:	4 people	
Comfy chair:	2 people	
Longer appointment/ more time:	5 people	
reminders:	1 person	
Help with reading & writing:	4 people	
email summary	7 people	
Breaks:	3 people	

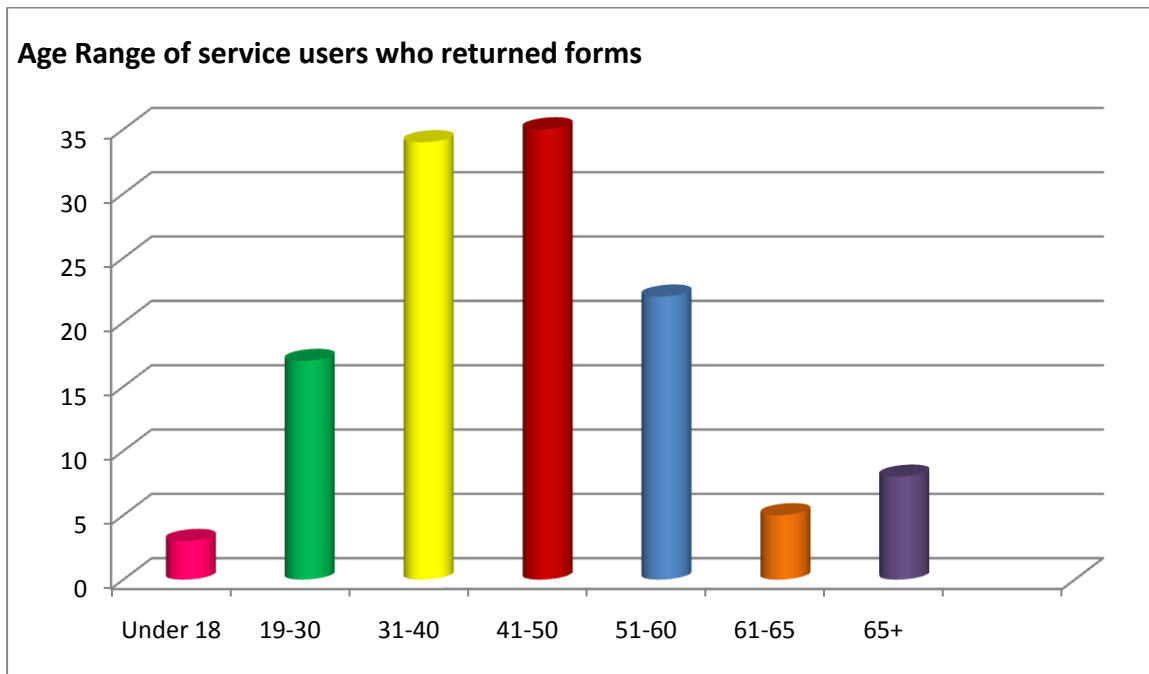
Sexual Orientation of service users who returned the form:



Marital/Family Status of service users who returned forms:



Age Range of service users who returned forms



Part 2 – Qualitative Monitoring

We assess the quality of our services based on the feedback we get from users.

This year in addition to our Comments, Compliments and Complaints Form, we asked all our service users who visited the office or our website in September and October to fill out a questionnaire as part of our impact assessment on where disabled people could get services from if One Voice closed due to a funding shortfall – we did this as part in the context of 3rd sector funding review being conducted by the Community Initiatives team, and because it is our policy to equality impact assess any major new policy or service change One Voice undertakes.

We have also begun to work our way through the PQASSO quality assurance system, and have appointed a PQASSO champion from our management group to oversee this.

1 Equality Impact Assessment

Here are some of the comments:

“One Voice is a full access disabled people's service - I can't think of another one in Wolves”

"One Voice is a service run by and for disabled people, no other service could replace that"

"One Voice came to my house when I had brain tumour and helped with all different problems. No one else can do this"

"one voice has specialist knowledge on a vast range of disability services"

"The website has more information on it than any other disabled website and easy to understand and easy to find things"

"One Voice meetings are great – where else do you get Chairotics and have a say!"

"One Voice listens"

"We have strong links with this group, and currently call on them for their involvement in projects across the city, for consultation purposes which prove invaluable and always result in a positive outcome" (council officer)

"I came to One Voice because the Council could not help"

"one voice understand our problems first hand"

"If one voice closes it will mean no one to turn to when I need help, more isolation, less sense of being part of a city that cares that I exist"

"...without One Voice I would not have had anyone to go to when I became ill, and no help to make things ok at work"

"There is a duty under the DDA to consult disabled people..This group enables us to include disabled people" (council officer)

"loss of one voice would be loss of a helpline"

(one voice)"speak up for disability rights and help to change things to disabled friendly"

"there would be no more training opportunities to be able to develop my skills"

"one voice gives us chance to have a real say"

"I use the directory many times"

"Most community services are no good for blind people, [One Voice] information is always on audio. If I need help I use the audio directory or ring up"

"We use the group for consultation and to seek firsthand knowledge from disabled people to gain as much information as possible" (Council Officer)

"Especially for people with disabilities - all services under one roof"

"keep up the good work - we need you!"

"One Voice helped me, now I volunteer for them so I can pass it on."

"If one voice closed it would be bad for disabled people"

"Without One Voice I wouldn't be here. They really helped me when my dad died"

"One Voice plays a significant role in helping Wolverhampton Homes to develop its services and support for disabled tenants" (Wolverhampton Homes Officer)

"One Voice does things differently from other organisations because it understands disabled people's needs - we don't have to put up with the usual barriers when we go to One Voice"

"One Voice finds out what we think by coming to us and asking us, then trying to do something about any problems"

(Without One Voice) "I wont have a say and I wont have anywhere to go for help - most places I cant even get in the door"

"One Voice helped me with my employer when I got sick - I didn't know where else to go, I am not in a Union. I kept my job thanks to One Voice!"

"One Voice gave me free counselling in my home when I was suicidal - I might not be here without them"

"One Voice comes to our group to ask us what we think. They come back and tell us what has happened - no one else seems to do that"

"Stop Hate Crime UK told me about One Voice - they have really been there for me"

"One Voice came to Tribunal as my representative, no one else does this"

"CAB said they couldn't help but One Voice spoke up for me at the Tribunal and got my DLA back"

"I never heard of One Voice, but when I got in trouble with money, I found them on the internet. They helped me sort things out, money's tight but at least I can sleep nights"

“One Voice is our voice!”

2 Complaints, Compliments & Comments

We give forms out to every client or user we see in person. We have a very poor return rate, even though we encourage people to fill them in – this year we had 17 returns.

Sometimes people contact us to let us know about our service in other ways. We had 3 emails from website users commenting positively on information they found useful from the website. We had contact from a refurbishment company outside the area who asked if they could use our access guidance in their staff training, 2 thank you cards from clients, we had 2 telephone calls of thanks from bereaved families of disabled people, we had one call from someone who found the blog difficult to read, and a call from a blind website user who said the search facility was in the wrong place on the page.

2(a) Responses

We received 17 completed Comments, Compliments, and Complaints forms which provided the following information:

Did you get the help you needed?

Yes	17
No	0
No response	0

Comments

“very good”

“helped me to understand”

“didn’t rush me”

“I wouldn’t have know where to start without you”

“good at explaining”

“The office was cold”

“really understood my problems”

“can’t fault it!”

Happy/Unhappy with service?

Happy/very happy 17

Unhappy 0

Improvements?

“more news on the website”

“more staff”

“The newsletter is boring to look at”

“more people should know about the work you do”

“None! One Voice was exactly what i needed!”

“newsletter has loads of spelling mistakes”

“bigger office”

“information on language”

“downloadable help on dealing with debt”

“more of you”

“come to my church group”

“Drop-in centre”

2(b) What we did in response to comments

Our approach with complaints or constructive suggestions or criticisms is to try to use them to improve the service. In some cases, the issue is a matter of personal taste, often though the comments either point out an impairment related problem, or helps us to develop the service or information we offer. For example we had placed the search bar close to the top of the homepage on our website, so that people can search our site. But for a blind visitor who used a text reader to access our website, this was the 5th item on the page, so when she alerted us to this, we immediately moved it right to the top of the page, so it is the first thing the text reader reads.

Of the other suggestions for improvement offered this year, some areas we are not in a position to address – *more staff*, and *bigger office*, *drop-in centre*, for example. With regard to office temperature, we offer home visits for impairment related reasons. We also now have a fleece blanket in the office if it is needed by a client.

The newsletter *does* have spelling mistakes – we were using a software spellchecker and having it checked by the editor, we now have an additional person checking for spelling and typo errors, but sometimes mistakes still get through.

We had already made a decision to increase the news updates on the front page of the website, and we started this in the first quarter of the year. We also have plans to redesign the blog section of the website, so it is easier to read.

We have scheduled a redesign of the newsletter in line with comments.

We continue our efforts to publicise our organisation and services; some of our service users are now distributing leaflets on our behalf.

We followed up the language comment which was about how to provide information in Plain English – this information is on our website and in all of our training sessions.

Part 3 - One Voice & Wolverhampton City Council's LAA targets

Organisations that receive funding from Wolverhampton City Council must explain how the work they do helps the City Council to meet its targets derived from National Indicators.

You can find a list of these targets at the www.wolverhamptoncity.co.uk website.

Below is an explanation of the relevant LAA target outcomes that One Voice is contributing to with the work it does.⁵

Improve the quality of life for and service delivery to residents (2b)

The aims of One Voice, as laid out in our Constitution⁶ include:

⁵ The headings relate to those in the document "Local Area Agreements – Briefing Note" (July, 2006)

- i) bring together disabled people as one voice, with the aim of extending their rights and meeting their needs.
- ii) provide information, advice, and representation, and to raise awareness and campaign on issues concerned with disability.
- iii) provide other practical services that may be required by disabled people.

- Improving the quality of life and services experienced by disabled citizens is central to our purpose. We achieve this by providing One Voice services to disabled individuals and groups, encouraging disabled people to become involved and have a say on things that affect their lives as citizens, and by helping existing service providers to remove disabling barriers, and deliver services that are appropriate to disabled people's needs and requirements.

One of the ways in which we assist other service providers in providing better service delivery for disabled citizens is via our partnership work with a wide range of organisations such as Wolverhampton Homes, various Council departments and officers, St Peter's church, etc (see page 9 for a fuller list).

Our support services to disabled groups and individuals include information and advice (in person or via the One Voice Directory) to assist people in improving their choices and life chances, and one-to-one support such as advocacy, representation, and counselling.

Increase local participation in governance (2c)

One Voice operates on the Disability Movement principle "Nothing about us without us", so disabled people are encouraged and supported to get involved or have a say about the wide variety of decisions made that affect our lives.

We have groups of disabled volunteers who reply to Government and local consultation papers on behalf of disabled people in Wolverhampton.

We encourage people to go to local meetings for themselves or on our behalf, or we set up meetings with decision makers so that a group of disabled people can have their say on a topic. We also go out to groups of disabled people to find out what issues are important to them in an environment they are comfortable with and feed back their issues, ideas and concerns to decision-makers.

⁶ Document available at: <http://www.1voice.org.uk/Publications/constitution2009.rtf>

Since, disabled people often have many difficulties with attending public meetings and events, due to a wide range of access barriers, including the way meetings are run, start times, duration, access to and into a venue, lack of support at the meeting etc, we provide a document on our website or on request called “Organising accessible meetings and Events”, which was written by One Voice on the basis of what disabled people’s groups told us. We encourage all our partners to refer to this document. We also provide a more tailored information service to various agencies on how to make a meeting or event more accessible.

We encourage disabled people to vote and get involved in local democracy – we have worked with Electoral Registration on access problems disabled people have had with voting arrangements, and publicise positive changes in our newsletter. We also gave information on how people could get postal votes and encouraged election debate on our blog.

As this year was an election year, we asked disabled people to come up with questions that we could put to all Wolverhampton Parliamentary Candidates that could then be published in an election special newsletter.

Increase key public services delivered by the voluntary sector (2d)

Most of our services to disabled people in effect increase the key public services delivered by the voluntary sector, either because they are unique services, or they are uniquely accessible.

We have the expertise of a wide range of disabled people to draw upon via our Management Group and our membership, and this increases the quality and appropriateness of our services.

We also provide expertise to a wide range of agencies in Wolverhampton as experts on issues to do with disabled people.

We provide advice and support to disabled people and others on issues such as employment, benefits, accessible environments and the legal issues.

We provide a *complete* service for disabled people in many areas that is not wholly available elsewhere – for example we can and do assist an individual with applying for a job, preparing for interview, dealing with the benefits agency, dealing with disability related problems and work, knowing their rights and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act and other employment related legislation, supporting them in preparation for employment tribunals, providing information and advice on qualifications and training, providing information and

advice on accessibility of training and potential reasonable adjustments ⁷ etc.

With regard to disability benefits we help people with applications, help them with tribunal preparation, and represent them at tribunal.

These services are provided in an accessible environment, and in a way that does not create disabling barriers.

One Voice is believed to be the only body in Wolverhampton offering a free counselling service to individuals.

We provide training on disability related issues of very good quality that is not available elsewhere.

We provide an access auditing and advice service, including a “try it out service” where disabled people will try to use a service at the request of the provider, and highlight any difficulties and proposed solutions – this facility has been used by the Library service and the Council website designers, amongst others.

We provide information and advice on a wide range of issues related to disabled people and their lives that is not available elsewhere, our online Directory gets a lot of traffic and is used by Council officers, the library service, and disabled individuals in Wolverhampton, and across the Country.

Encourage growth of the voluntary and community sector and increase volunteering (2e-f)

We provide a safe and flexible environment for disabled people to volunteer with us. All of our volunteers are disabled people, many have never volunteered before, some have volunteered elsewhere, but have had access or health/commitment difficulties that have led them to stop. We take on disabled people who may not get opportunities elsewhere. We help them to volunteer whether they want to work with us several days a week, once a month, or irregularly.

We provide individually tailored training for each of our volunteers over the year, in order to increase their skills and knowledge. As well as job-related training we also provided some self-development training on topics requested by our volunteers – access auditing, using computer packages and website design, running a meeting, writing an article, making a poster, setting up a blog etc.

We also recruited disabled volunteers to advocacy training, many of whom have gone on to become advocates, and some of whom have left the service to enter full time work or

⁷ Reasonable Adjustments – as facilitated by the Disability Discrimination Act

education – these are disabled people who previously had never worked or had not worked for a long time.

Improve housing and ensure that there is decent social housing by 2010 (2h)

One Voice plays a key role through it's involvement with Wolverhampton Homes at the Equalities Circle Forum and the Equality & Diversity Steering Group in improving the quality of access afforded by public housing stock, and promoting disabled people's requirement that the Decent Homes programme improves housing in an accessible way and to an accessible standard. We have been influential in ensuring that the Choice Based Lettings scheme is set up in a way to minimise any disabling barriers.

We continue to offering guidance to officers and tenants on accessibility, policy and the equality duty. We provided training for managers and staff to this end.

More older/vulnerable people maintaining a high quality of life by living independently (3a)

This is at the core of what One Voice does – the 7 needs of Independent Living are:

- Access to information
- Peer support and counselling
- Housing
- Technical aids and equipment
- Personal assistance

Transport

Access to the built environment.⁸

We provide information on a wide variety of issues relating to disabled people's lives interests, and needs, in a wide variety of formats, including: print, Plain English, Large Print, Braille, audio cd, signed video, and via website. We provide information and advice on housing, care, and aids and equipment, all of which are part of the 7 needs of Independent Living.

We provide peer support via our advocacy service, as well as a counselling service. In some cases this type of support helps people to remain independent and in their homes, in all cases it

⁸ These needs are widely subscribed to by the disability movement and independent living centres, are listed in "Life chances for Disabled People" (p70-71) and are the basis for the Government health and wellbeing report "Better Outcomes, Lower Costs" (p17ff)

allows our clients to pursue and support a reasonable quality of life. We are also licensed to provide help with debt and money management which helps people with their life quality and independence and has in some cases allowed people to continue living in their homes by making a settlement to prevent or halt repossession orders.

Disabled People need accessible housing and local facilities in order to live independently. We promote accessible housing with housing providers and advise of accessible design for new housing projects, our access work aims to increase access to wider community and social facilities also.

Transport is a major difficulty for many disabled people. We have contact with transport providers and our transport group works with the Taxi Licensing officers, Travel West Midlands, the Ring and Ride Users Group and the Transport Users Forum in order to promote disabled people's transport needs. We also raise the issue of accessible parking and drop-off points on every building project where we are consulted.

As described above we do a lot of access work: promoting the built environment. Also, in all the work we do, with any of our partners, we use the opportunity to encourage them to think about removing disabling barriers – this can be obvious things like making sure a drop-in doesn't happen in a building with only stepped entrance, to making sure meetings are conducted in a disability friendly manner. All of these interventions promote disabled people's independence of involvement and quality of life.

Improve health & well-being(3b)

Health and wellbeing can be a major problem for disabled people – often ways of maintaining health – through healthy eating information, attending leisure venues, or following exercise

routines and using exercise equipment can be more difficult for disabled people because of problems of accessible venues, equipment, information.

One Voice continues to work with leisure centres in Wolverhampton to ensure that disabling barriers are removed, and that new venues are as accessible as they can be.

We are also seeking funding to organise some health & wellbeing events across Wolverhampton Leisure venues for disabled citizens.

Through listening to disabled people's groups we found that many could not do standard exercises because of impairment, so One Voice commissioned and produced chairobics exercises for sedentary people. We have put the exercise leaflet on our website and in our newsletter, and all of One Voice's General Meetings now begin with a Chairobics exercise session. In this way we try to promote a healthier lifestyle on a practical basis.

Improve employment skills of residents (4a)

Reduce unemployment and incapacity (4b)

Increase employment, reduce gap between priority areas and the city (4d)

Disabled people are more likely to be unemployed than their non-disabled counterparts – fewer than 50% of disabled people of working age are in employment, for many disabled people lack of work experience, or few opportunities to volunteer in an accessible environment is a huge disabling barrier.

One Voice continues to take on disabled volunteers who are on disability benefits such as Incapacity Benefit, Employment Support Allowance and Disability Living Allowance. Many of these people have never worked, or not worked since their period of incapacity.

Both Seetek and Disability Employment Advisors have referred people to us for volunteering opportunities. We provide a first step for them into a more regulated world, as well as providing an opportunity to learn new skills, which will help in moving towards work. In the last year, one of our volunteers went on to full time work, one has begun a part-time job, 2 have undertaken work related courses.

Disabled adults are 3 times more likely to have no qualifications, compared to adults without a disability, and this lack of qualifications is a major barrier to many disabled people's employment opportunities.⁹

This year we have begun recruiting a second set of unemployed disabled people to be trained

to NVQ level 2 for our advocacy project; we are recruiting new trainees because some of our first group have moved on to regular or full time employment. The advocacy project is funded through a different funding stream, but the core funding we get through Community Initiatives means that we are able to help advocates in a way that improves their future job prospects. Successful trainees will learn many skills and experiences as paid sessional advocates for One Voice, but as part of our service we also provide help and encouragement to all our trainees to find paid employment, and provide support in applications forms, mock interviews, vacancy information etc.

We also provide a general service for any disabled individuals helping them with job applications, and interview preparation.

⁹ Office for National Statistics Labour Force Survey

We provide advice and help on what to do when disabled employees are having impairment related problems at work, and to try to help them work with their employers to stay in the job

In these ways we contribute uniquely to the City's targets on employability and reducing capacity.

Appendix 1 – Pages from website

photos and pages in the [Access-1000](#) & Bad section: tactile surfaces, bollards and obstacles, signage, and steps. [>>>](#)

[Relaxation Techniques\(doc\)>>>](#)

What is One Voice up to?

Check out this new page to find out what One Voice is working on at the moment - and find out how you can get involved! [>>>](#)

What's the access group doing?

[>>>](#)

New DVD reviews

[>>](#)

Newsletter..

'no-frills' version of our print newsletter:

[December 08 newsletter](#)

[Autumn 08 newsletter](#)

[Summer 08 newsletter](#)

[Spring 08 newsletter](#)

On the Website.....



Access

Resource for disabled people and others interested in making the environment accessible.

Includes help on doing access audits, advice on improving access, information on access in Wolverhampton. [Read more →](#)

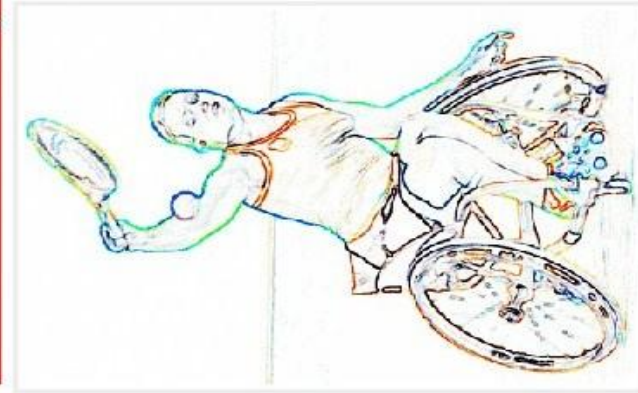
Wolverhampton Disabled People Directory

Information and advice on transport, work, money and benefits, health, living and driving.

"Come along, have fun and get involved."

The event is being supported by Wolverhampton Homes' Decent Homes contractors Bullock, Frank Haslam Milan and Thomas Vale.

Wheelchair Tennis Day



If you are a wheelchair user, and always fancied playing tennis, or think your backhand or serve lack menace, then there is an event just for you at Tipton sports Academy in June!

Wolverhampton's sports Development officer has got together with Sandwell to put on a free wheelchair tennis day.

Whether you want to improve your skills, or just find out more about wheelchair tennis, you can turn up on the day - with your wheelchair - and get professional coaching and information

The event is on 27th June from 10-2, at the [Tipton academy](#)

To find out more, contact Marcus Astbury (01902) 556223

One Voice Advocacy Project Update

Check [here](#) to find out more about the Advocacy Project over the coming weeks.

Here is a sinned video about the advocacy project.

Homepage www.1voice.org.uk May 12th 2009

Homepage www.1voice.org.uk June 22nd 2009:

Welcome to the One Voice website

News

Bilston Leisure Centre Meeting



One Voice is having an Access Meeting with architects and managers about the Bilston Leisure Centre on Wednesday

22nd July, from 10-12 in committee room 4 – civic centre 3rd floor.

We have already highlighted concerns regarding the turnstile entrance system, colour contrasting, length of route to accessible changing rooms, lack of provision for assistance dogs, vertical circulation problems, and potential fire evacuation problems

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Google Custom Search Search

New to site....

Interchange Project

Notes from the Interchange Project meeting>>>

Web Lurker

Welcome to the One Voice site a new columnist who calls himself **Web Lurker**

One Voice - action for disability

Access Directory Funstuff Downloads Blog About Us

Welcome to the One Voice website

News

Supermarkets tackle parking abuse

Sainsbury's supermarket has announced that it's 400 largest stores will introduce biker parking wardens to patrol disabled people's an parent/toddler parking spaces and fine people who are misusing them.

This news comes as a welcome relief to disabled supermarket users who frequently find they cannot park close enough to a shop to use it without pain or difficulty.

Anyone found parking in the spaces improperly will be fined £50, with the penalty charge given to charity.

This follows a move by ASDA last year, who fine their parking abusers £60.

Sainsbury's report that when they trialed this scheme at 60 shops, parking bays available for disabled customers and customers with toddlers improved by 70%.

One Voice Annual General Meeting

The One Voice AGM on Saturday 20th June, was pronounced a great

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One Voice - action for disability

[Access](#) [Directory](#) [Funstuff](#) [Blog](#) [Downloads](#) [About Us](#)

Welcome to the One Voice website

News

Disco



Get your dancing shoes on, because it's DABS Disco time again.

The Disco is on **Wednesday 22nd July from 7-10 at the Civic Hall**

There is a licensed bar.

The organiser tells us there are spot prizes too - go on, you know you want to!

DABS organises discos for disabled people and their friends, so you know you will be welcome, and access will be good.

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Have your say on independent living

Wolverhampton Council gets money from the government to help groups and organisations to provide housing related support for vulnerable adults.

Vulnerable Adults includes Disabled people and older people who have support needs.

The Council would like your help to write a strategy for the next 5 years that will help "vulnerable people" to live as independently as possible.

This will look at things like helping people to stay in their home, helping them with managing their money, helping them to be involved in their community etc.

Have your say at a drop-in session on **Friday 14th August, 2009**
1.30-4.00 at
WVSC Training Room, 16 Temple Street.

(This is the building opposite the Casino, down the road from the signing on office)

You can fill in a questionnaire, or tell people what you think, or put your views up on a board.

If you can't make it on the day, you can ask for a questionnaire from One Voice, or from the organisers:

Shen Brown (01902 551040) [email](#)
Jane Viner (01902 328973) [email](#)

contact us if you want to blog on our site

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Have a look at his most recent column>>>

One Voice Blog!

Check out our blog, written by One Voice disabled bloggers.

Have a look, leave a comment.>>>

[contact us](#) if you want to blog on our site

News

One Voice Impact Assessment

The Council is in the middle of making difficult decisions about what groups to fund - they will be cutting funding to the voluntary and community sector by 20% over the next few months, this means some groups wont get funding anymore, and some may have to close down..

To help them make these decisions, groups are being asked what impact they make in Wolverhampton, and what would happen if they didn't exist.

We need you to fill in our Members & Users Questionnaire, so that we can let the Council know what people think of us.

You can fill in a form on this website, [here](#).

You can download a form to fill in by pen or pencil [here](#)

Or you can [contact us](#) if you want to give your information some other way.

Please fill in the form and give us your views, to help the Council make it's budget cut decisions.

City Council Access Team

Wolverhampton City Council's Access Team, led by Paula Lewis, works closely with One Voice on a wide range of developments that affect Wolverhampton's disabled citizens.

You can find out more about the access team at [here>>>](#)

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Poll

Which Mander Centre shop do you think has the worst disability access?

- Beatties
- Bhs
- Bon Marche
- Boots
- HMV
- Iceland
- Marks & Spencer
- Tesco
- W.H. Smith
- Wilkinson's

[View Results](#)

One Voice - action for disability

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Welcome to the One Voice website

News

Assisted Suicide Rules

In the summer, disabled woman Debbie Purdy brought the UK assisted suicide laws before the House of Lords. Her question was, if when the time comes, I ask my husband to help me to end my life, is it fair that we do not know if he will be prosecuted or not?

The Law Lords said this wasn't fair, so it is likely that there will be changes to the law within the next year or so.

In the mean time, the Director of Public Prosecutions has issued some guidance to try to clarify the situation, by outlining the factors to be looked at in deciding whether to prosecute the person who assisted. These are:

Whether a person stands to benefit financially from assisting a suicide
If the individual wanting to die was deemed competent enough to make such a decision. Particular attention would be paid to issues such as being under 18, and having a mental illness
Whether the person was persuaded or pressured into committing suicide, or if it was their own decision.

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- Boots
- HMV

News

Big Care Debate

The Government is planning massive changes to our care system, with people living longer and needing more support, care is costing the Government more and they want to make a big shake-up to how it is paid for.

The Government's new Green Paper "Shaping the Future of Care Together" sets out their vision for a National Care Service for all adults in England. Big changes are proposed to how we get and pay for care and disability benefits.



One Voice has held meetings and discussion groups for disabled people to have their say on this.

We have made a submission based on what you told us

You can read a copy of the One Voice response [here](#)>>>

You can download a copy of the One Voice response [here](#)>>>

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New events on [funstuff](#)

New [weblurker](#) page

Updates to [what one voice is up to](#)

[New Downloads](#)>>

New additions to the Product & Service Tests [document](#)

Recent Blog Posts:

[HIV vaccine](#)

[Man with epilepsy jailed](#)

[Voting Access](#)

[Taxi Access](#)

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[One Voice Blog!](#)

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Welcome to the One Voice website

News

EHRC starts disability hate enquiry

The Equality and Human Rights Commission has chosen International Day of Disabled People to launch an inquiry on disability harassment.

In the wake of the death of the Pilkingtons - a mother who took her daughters and her own life because they could no longer cope with the disability harassment they received at the hands of local youths, the EHRC has begun an inquiry to look at the steps taken by public bodies to eliminate disability harassment. Public bodies like the police, local councils and the health authority have had a public duty to eliminate disability harassment and present positive images of disabled people since December 2006.

The EHRC says that local authorities could face legal action to make them carry out these duties.

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[Health Authority Job](#)

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Welcome to the One Voice website

News

New Mental Health Strategy

The Government has launched a new 10 year mental health strategy.

They say the focus needs to change from better treatment to better prevention, and a role must be played in this by teachers, employers, and GPs, so that people with mental health difficulties have early help, and support from employers to return to work.

The Government plans to have mental health co-ordinators in local job centres.

The plan also looks at more help on housing issues for people with mental health problems.

You can download a copy of the plan [here](#)>>>

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