

One Voice

action for disability

Service Level Agreement 2005-2006

Report

Table of Contents

Introduction	p3
Quantitative monitoring	
Performance summary (table)	p4
Information and advice	p5

Counselling	p5
Training	p6
Consultancy and Partnership working.....	p6
Product/Service Tests	p7
Newsletter	p7
Publications	p7
Research	p8
Website	p8
Publicising One Voice	p8
Meetings	P8
Advocacy/Representation	p9

Qualitative monitoring

Complaints and compliments	P10
----------------------------------	-----

Appendices (attached)

Appendix A - Product Test	(p13)
Appendix B – Election Special newsletter	(p14)
Appendix C – Visually Impaired persons guide	(p23)
Appendix D – compliments/complaints form	(p27)

Introduction

The aim of this report is to let people know how One Voice performed in relation to the targets we agreed with the Council in our Service Level agreement.

It will also let you know about most of work we have been doing over the last year.

There is a table on page 3, so you can see at-a-glance, what targets we have met, or failed to meet, and where we have done better than expected.

The main part of the report – from page xx to page xx gives you more detailed information on what One Voice has been doing in each category. It tells you how much of everything we did (called quantitative monitoring).

The next section, beginning on page xx tells you how well or how badly we did things, and how we responded to praise or criticism – this is called qualitative monitoring.

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 tape by contacting the One Voice office.

You can download a copy as a pdf file (which can be read by software designed for blind and visually impaired people) from the One Voice website: www.1voice.org.uk.

If you need a copy of this report in Braille or in another language, please let us know.

Performance summary

category	target pa	1st Quarter	2nd Quarter	3rd Quarter	4th Quarter
Information and Advice	150	49	43	37	53
Counselling	6	3(2)	2	6(2)	2(1)
Training: packages	1	0	0	0	
sessions	2	1	1	0	
Consultation /partnership working	10	11	6	1	
Product/Service Tests	2	0	1	1	
Newsletter	6	3	1	1	
Publications	5	0	2	1	
Research	3	1	0	1	
Publicising One Voice and the website	15	1	7	3	
Updating website	6	2	2	2	
Website hits	200				
Meetings: General	2	2	0	0	
Access	4	2	3	4	
Transport	4	1	2	2	
Advocacy/Representation	6	7	9	7	15

Information and advice

**Target 150
Achieved 182**

DDA	17
Other legal	09
Money and Benefits	33
Information/communication	08
Housing	06
Power companies	03
Equipment	05
Access	37
Disabilities	03
Employment	13
Leisure	06
Transport	12
Aids and adaptations	11

Education	03
One Voice	11
home	05

We met 182 requests for information and advice in the last year, exceeding our target (150).

We gave people and organisations information and advice on a wide range of things; most requests were related to disability benefits, the law, and access, the same as last year, although there were fewer people requesting disability benefits information (much of which is now available on our website) and a significant increase in the number of individuals and organisations wanting advice on disabled people's access.

We also provided information and advice on employment, bankruptcy, health issues, adaptations, accessible information, leisure, shops, car parking, housing, holidays, gardening and many other issues.

Counselling target 6

Achieved 13

We have provided 14 sessions to 5 individuals. We provided more than twice as many sessions as our target required.

The counselling we provide to disabled individuals is free and person-centred, helping them to work through a variety of issues such as becoming disabled, bereavement, and returning to the labour market.

Training/workshops/seminars

targets:

1 training pack

2 training sessions

Achieved: 1 pack

2 sessions

We met our training targets.

One Voice produced a training package on doing disability access checklists.

We also ran 2 Involving Disabled People sessions for the Involving People network, and prepared 2 other sessions but they were cancelled by the Involving People network.

Consultation and partnership working

target 10

Achieved 19

One Voice continues to do a lot of disability-related work with

organisations in Wolverhampton. This can be anything from a few meetings to running workshops, testing sessions, auditing or consultation sessions.

Some of this work is done by volunteers.

One Voice engaged in 19 such partnerships over the year, almost twice as many as required by our target.

This has included getting involved in setting up a regional disability access group called West Midlands Access Group, which meets every 3 months to share ideas and experience.

We have also worked with Council officers or architects on a variety of issues including the Interchange transport hub, the A+M development of the city centre, the refurbishment of queen square, arrangements for the Christmas Fayre, Bilston town hall, and Tesco's.

We acted as a judge for the Civic Trust Awards – offering accessibility expertise on the Wolverhampton buildings under consideration.

We have strengthened our relationship with Housing officers and we are involved as a critical friend, commenting on their policy and strategy issues to do with equality. We have also fed into their examination of the Disabled Facilities Grant System.

We have continued to work with Black Country Knowledge Society on design and use of ID or smartcards, to help the makers get them right for disabled people. This year we have been testing software for them. We have become involved with a Council group looking at unmet transport need.

We have worked with the Disability Network on developing the network, and have been involved in recruitment and selection of their staff, arranging their budget, and the Co-ordinator now represents One Voice as a Director of the Disability Network.

We continue to work on the Education access initiative group, the Public Information Group, the Disabled Tenants Action Group, Ring and Ride Users Group, Physical and Sensory Strategy group, and the Education Access Initiatives Group.

Our work with the Public information Group this year included taking part in tests on the Council's changes to their website.

Product and Service tests

target 2 Achieved 2

One Voice produced 2 product tests this year, meeting our target. The tests were conducted by volunteers.

Our product and service tests involve critically examining a product or service that may be of use to disabled people, and drawing conclusions based on its accessibility, client group, usefulness etc.

An example is included in Appendix A

Newsletter

target 6
Achieved 6

We produced 6 bi-monthly newsletters, meeting our target.

This included an Election Special newsletter where many of the candidates answered questions put to them by disabled citizens. (see appendix B).

Publications

target:5
Achieved:5

We produced 5 new publications, including 2 product information sheets, a factsheet on bankruptcy, a booklet on legal issues and a guide to accessible film and television for visually impaired people.(see appendix c)

All of our publications were produced in large and standard print, audio tape, and CD-Rom.

Research

target: 3
Achieved: 3(/5)
(one ongoing)

We have spent a lot of research time on the Disabled People's directory, with 5 volunteers now involved in helping with this. We have researched and completed sections on employment, health and well-being, and transport. These are now available online at www.1voice.org.uk/Directory.htm

We also have done some research into accessibility issues in multimedia like film, television, and DVD.

Website

targets: 6 updates, 200 visits
Achieved: 6 updates, 1,653 visits

We updated our website 6 times during the year. Including our first ever podcast – an interview with the MP Rob Marris by One Voice staff. Of the many visitors to the One Voice website, our access material was downloaded and used by several companies in Wolverhampton as well as statutory and voluntary bodies from Scotland, and other places in the UK.

Promoting One Voice

target: 15
Achieved 16

This year One Voice met the publicity target by handing out promotional literature at several events as well as getting One Voice listed with Thomsons Directory, the Yellow Pages, Streetwise, DIAL-UK, and the Parent partnership and Mencap directories. We also got 5 new disability-related websites to provide links to our site.

Meetings

targets:2 general, 4 transport, 4 access
Achieved: 1 general, 6 transport, 6 access

We had 2 mass meetings – in addition to our AGM, we held an access meeting in May about the city centre plans with a presentation by A+M developers. The meeting was very well attended and was chaired by Councillor Rowley.

We also had 9 core group access meetings and 6 transport meetings.

Advocacy and representation

target 6
Achieved 38

One Voice had a massive number of requests for representation or advocacy of the year. We met all 38 requests. We now regularly receive referrals from social workers, housing officers and other organisations. Many of the people we advocated for needed representation concerning a variety of benefits, employment, or legal problems, and problems related to difficulties with fuel, housing and other services.

We began a relationship with the tenants of Holloway House, a residential home for disabled people, who are in the process of moving, and One Voice is acting as an advocate for a number of individuals there.

We also represented 2 tenants living at Wrottersley Park residential home.

This year we were asked to take 5 cases to benefits tribunals, we had 3 wins, 1 loss, and 1 client cancelled on the day of the tribunal.

Qualitative monitoring

It was agreed that this year we would use any compliments and complaints received as a basis for assessing One Voice's services qualitatively.

We give a compliments and complaints form (see appendix D) to every client we see, at the end of our dealings with them. They are told what the form is for and encouraged to fill it in.

We received few returns, analysed as follows (NB percentages rounded down to one decimal place):

Service required:

Benefits advice 3

Representation tribunal 1

Representation transport 1

Advocate 1

Information regarding health services 1
Advocate re family services 1
Representation tax issue 1
Representation housing 2
Representation employment 1

Did you get the help you need?

Yes 100% No 0%

Comments:

Really good
Cant complain
Put us at ease
Absolutely wonderful – a godsend
Very helpful
There should be a One Voice in every town
Couldn't have done it myself

Un/happy with service?

8.3% no comment
91.6% happy

How could One Voice improve it's service?

No response/no suggestion 91.6%
Make it a freephone number 8.3%

What action would you like to see as a result of your comments

No response 58.3%
Credit for work done 16.6%
A positive result from the advice 16.6%
Everything resolved 8.3%

In addition to the questionnaire, we also received 3 unsolicited letters/cards of thanks, a copy of which is included (p11).

One Voice action as a result of comments

We have learnt from this that those people who responded have a very positive experience of the service offered by One Voice. However only a minority of clients filled in the forms. We also learned that some of the questions on the forms were poor or unclear. We have resolved to redesign the form, and to encourage more clients to offer us feedback on the work we do. We are unable at this time to consider offering a freephone service, as

we do not have the budget to cope with this additional cost.
We already offer home visits to clients who cannot come to the office by reason of impairment. We shall endeavour to offer a call-back, for those people who only want to have contact by telephone, insofar as this is reasonable given the scope of our budget.

One Voice

Election Special Newsletter

May 2005

no.: 66



Welcome to the 2005 Election Special newsletter.

One Voice sent 10 of your questions on disability issues, to all of the candidates standing in the 3 Wolverhampton Seats.

We have included the questions separately on a yellow sheet, so it is easier for you to see what question is being answered.

We have put together the answers/information that was sent to us **in the order we received it**, this is why the information is not grouped by party or parliamentary seat.

At the top of each answer sheet, you will see the name, party and seat of the candidate.

We hope you find this useful in making up your mind how to vote.

If you are voting at a polling station, One Voice would like to hear from you – let us know whether the experience of voting met your access needs.

We are taking part in a National campaign on polling station access, arranged by SCOPE, and will pass information on your polling station on to them.

There will be another slim newsletter out in June.

If you want to have something included in this newsletter, please send it to us by June 1st.

The views in this newsletter are those of the contributors, they are not always what One Voice thinks.

One Voice, Regent House, Bath Avenue, Wolverhampton, WV1 4EG
(01902) 810016 minicom: (01902) 810018 (when office is staffed)
e-mail: mail@1voice.org.uk

Response from Ken Purchase (Labour Party candidate Wolverhampton NE) To One Voice Questions to Parliamentary Candidates

“Thank you for your email asking questions of Parliamentary candidates. I do understand how important this matter is to as many as 10% of our community who have disabilities of varying degrees.

Some of your questions do need an individual answer and I'll do my best with these, but the wider perspective is fully covered in Labour's policy documents which can be freely accessed by all your members who are online @Labour.co.uk/manifesto. For those who are not, you may wish to circulate them with the full text, a copy of which I am enclosing for information [see “Full Civil rights for disabled people”, below].

Before attempting the more individual questions, I preface by saying it is my philosophy that disability does not always have to be a handicap. Thought and sensible planning can avoid the many situations which currently do handicap the disabled. I will always support measures which overcome such obstacles. Now

for your questions.

Q5 My presumption is always to allow people to these basic rights. I understand my view is not shared universally and I would concede the right of those who disagree to campaign for their views. However, when a clash is unavoidable I support the right of the affected individual to choose.

Q7 No. The high profile cases arise because failure of care on the part of a fellow human being and does not justify an inappropriate loss of liberty for anyone else.

Q8 There are no problems with postal votes which should affect people because of disablement. The problem I hear about is related to illegal practises. If you know of anyone who is otherwise affected, please contact the Electoral Registration Officer.

Q9 If unfortunate enough to be trapped on a desert island, the person I would most like for company would be a well read, jazz loving socialist and I don't mind if the person is able bodied or not.

Thanks,
Yours sincerely,
Ken Purchase"

Full Civil rights for disabled people

In the 18 years before 1997, the Conservative government resisted 14 separate attempts to legislate for disability rights. At first it blocked and then – when the pressure grew too great – diluted laws designed to give disabled people the protection they needed. As a result, in 1997 only the most outrageous direct discrimination was outlawed, and – with no Disability Rights Commission – there was no mechanism for enforcement.

Labour has worked to transform disability rights since 1997, making Britain a world leader in the field. We've introduced a range of policies to protect people from discrimination on the grounds of disability and to help more disabled people to find and stay in a job. But we understand that disabled people still experience disadvantage and discrimination and that there is more to do.

Labour established the Disability Rights Commission in April 2000. Since then it has provided practical support to thousands of disabled people, employers, providers of goods and services, and has helped raise awareness of disability issues. The new Disability Discrimination Act will extend protection in respect of transport, housing and the law. By changing the definition of 'disability' it will extend legal protection against discrimination to at least an extra 175,000 people. It will also introduce a new commitment to promote equality of opportunity and outlaw institutional discrimination in the public sector. Our reforms will ensure disabled people enjoy greater access to shops, banks, leisure facilities, transport and educational services. We are opening up access to education services for over a million young people through the Special

Educational Needs and Disability Act.

There has been a very sharp rise in the number of disabled people who are working, so that old stereotypes are challenged as more than half of those of working age are now in jobs for the first time. We believe work doesn't just raise incomes; it gives people an opportunity to live fuller lives and opens doors for the future. That's why we've helped disabled people get into work through the New Deal and the Pathways to Work programme, which combines specialist employment help, NHS rehabilitation, and a £40-a-week credit to ensure work pays.

Pathways to Work is already active in several areas, and in these areas twice as many people on incapacity benefit are being helped into work. Disabled people are now also entitled to extra help through tax credits – for the first time disabled people who work 16 hours or more are guaranteed a weekly income of £150, and a single disabled person working 35 hours is guaranteed a minimum weekly income of £194.

The Working Tax Credit delivers extra help for disabled workers, reducing stigma by creating a single system for topping-up wage packets. Around 80,000 households are benefiting from the disabled worker element of the Working Tax Credit, more than double the number who received support through its predecessor, the Disabled Person's Tax Credit.

The Child Tax Credit (CTC) provides extra support for disabled children – 116,000 families are currently benefiting from this. The disabled child element of the CTC now provides a supplement of up to £2,285 a year for each disabled child and a further £920 a year for each severely disabled child. The disabled child premium has increased by 70 per cent in real terms compared with the equivalent support in 1997.

But we need to do more to help disabled people fulfil their own ambitions to work. The expansion of our Pathways to Work scheme across the country will be accompanied by reforms to incapacity benefit which will replace a system focused on what people can't do with a system focused on what they can do. All claimants will be guaranteed a basic rate of benefit and there will be increases to above today's long term rate of benefit for claimants who actively engage in taking steps back to work. It will mean more disabled people, who want to and are able to, will be supported into work.

We will never forget our obligation to provide security for those that can't work, and our reforms to incapacity benefit will ensure that people with the most serious conditions will receive an automatic increase in their benefit, while being able to access employment support on a voluntary basis.

For more information on incapacity benefit see section 3a, 'Full employment and a highly skilled economy' chapter.

With legal rights for disabled people now in place, the next stage will be to move on to practical changes to improve the life chances of disabled people. In January 2005, the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit explained how serious the obstacles to the life chances of disabled people remain, and set out an ambitious program to deliver full equality and opportunities to disabled people by 2025. We will now take forward the recommendations of the report including:

- Help for disabled people to achieve independent living through individual budgets, more control over the services and support they need
- Support for families with young disabled children and their subsequent transition into adulthood
- Much better joining up of the traditionally piecemeal support available to disabled people
- Support and incentives to get and stay in a job.

Response from Doug Hope (UKIP candidate Wolverhampton SW) - To One Voice Questions to Parliamentary Candidates

Here are my answers to your questions

(1) It is wholly unreasonable to wait 15 years. Wolverhampton South West constituency contributes £300,000 per week to the EU. This would be much better spent locally on projects such as this

(2) Legislation alone is not enough. It is necessary to raise awareness. A key area to target is Job Centre staff.

(3) Sorry I don't know if we have any disabled candidates. Nothing specific in the manifesto. Clearly something we must look at!

(4) A positive step, but only having been law a short time many businesses are simply not aware of their obligations.

(5) I have personally had contact with an organisation in Switzerland called Dignitas who provide assisted suicide to people at their wits end. There is much we can learn from them. It is a difficult area. Personally I would favour a national referendum on the subject.

(6) Keep the pressure on Wolverhampton Council.

(7) Each case should be judged on its merits

(8) We must look to technology like the internet and interactive TV. If our banking details can be made secure, so can the voting process.

(9) Yes

(10) Tanni Gray-Thomson. Her personality transcends her disability. Inspirational.

Sincerely,

Doug Hope, UKIP candidate Wton SW.”

Response from Kevin Simmons (UKIP candidate Wolverhampton NE) - To One Voice Questions to Parliamentary Candidates

Thank you for the 10 questions, I found them quite thought provoking. Here are my answers:

1. There should be no wait. UKIP are committed to investing heavily in rail & road transport.
2. Perhaps there should be financial inducements made available to encourage employers to consider and take on disabled staff - some people only listen when money talks! Disabled people should not be forced into work by Benefit staff. There should be full training and help available so that people can go to work when they feel ready to.
3. I will ask for more information on this point.
4. It may take more time before any benefits become fully apparent.
5. I believe that it is for each individual to decide - not the State.
6. There should be regular consultations between Planners, disabled groups and organisations.

7. Civil Liberties should never be ignored. This is the way to Fascism.
8. Perhaps Proxy voting could be encouraged, so that carers could vote on their behalf according to the their instructions. Political Parties should not be allowed to touch any postal votes.
9. A very good idea that would get my support.
10. Stephen Hawking for 2 reasons; 1 - time would pass quickly by him trying to explain his theories to me - what a way to improve one's mind!. 2 - we could use his intelligence to try to find help and away off the island.

Regards

Kevin Simmons”

Response from Peter Mullins (BNP candidate Wolverhampton SW) - To One Voice Questions to Parliamentary Candidates

The British National Party have, at the core of their policies, three fundamental principals.

- 1) Is it fair.
- 2) Is it feasible.
- 3) Is it in the best interest of the British people. That's it.

Working to these criteria I shall now try to answer your questions.

- 1) To improve the lives of British people who are disabled we would require all those in local and central government who have anything to do with executive decisions affecting the lives of the disabled to experience what it is like to be so. A Planning officer would be required, for instance, to get himself or herself into a wheelchair or to be completely blind folded for a period of a whole day and to then try to navigate their way around a city centre or shopping mall. This would, we believe, concentrate their minds to the difficulties faced every day by our disabled.
- 2) We propose setting up local panels of disabled people to hear the applications of fellow disabled folk who wish to return to work. We believe that the vast majority of unemployed disabled would dearly love to be in work that they enjoy and to assert their independence. The tiny number that, by any stretch of the imagination, are work shy would continue to receive benefit in the hope that, they too, when they feel the need, would

- approach the local Assessment Board to consider their case to return to employment. Once the Assessment Board has approved an application to return to work, that disabled person would then approach suitable employers of his or her choice. Should that potential employer fail to come up with a very good reason for not offering the applicant a position they would be summoned to appear before the Board to explain their position.
- 3) I honestly do not know the answer to this question. I myself am in receipt of a war pension and I know of several other members of my party who are obviously disabled. If a member of the party wishes to stand in either council or national elections they would be more than welcome and any disability would be of no consequence whatsoever.
 - 4) The Disability Discrimination Act has had a small; as yet, positive effect on peoples' understanding of the problems of the disabled but there is a long way to go. The danger may be in creating a "disabled industry" in a similar way that a "race industry" has been created under the enormously expensive CRE. The able bodied members of our society must be taught and shown in an inclusive way what sort of problems the disabled have to face on a day to day basis and this will not be achieved by bringing in draconian measures on "the height of steps" or the "width of doors" without firstly explaining why these measures could mean the difference between a disabled person using a store or shop or service or not. This is a hearts and mind operation and, if handled sensitively, will benefit all members of our community.
 - 5) If a person is of sound mind and judgement and requests a termination to an intolerable life a panel of, let's say, three doctors who are intimately involved with the patient should make an assessment as to the long term viability of the life quality of the patient and if they agree that the patient's request is reasonable then termination should be allowed. The problem arises with a patient who has lost the mental faculty to make such a studied assessment of their own case and, unless your name happens to be King Solomon, is impossible to lay down hard and fast rules.
 - 6) I refer you to paragraph 1.
 - 7) Certainly not. People with severe or even mild mental disorder should be cared for in the same way as any other sick person or, in fact, probably more intensely.
However, where a danger to the public and/or the patient is apparent it must be right and sensible to secure that patient in a caring, progressive environment until the condition is demonstrable improved. This is in the best interest of both society and the patient.
 - 8) Sort out the problems of postal voting, which is probably the best way for disabled people to vote. The corruption and lies surrounding the recent cases particularly in Birmingham could and should be sorted out if the political will exists.
 - 9) Not only the W.F.A. but a whole new approach to caring for the disabled, the sick and their carers will be urgently addressed by a British Nationalist Government.
 - 10) Professor Stephen Hawking. What a man and what an intellect! Could

anyone ever tire of sitting at his feet and having the Universe explained?

I hope my efforts have been of some help in explaining the position of the British National Party. Many thanks for allowing this.

Yours Sincerely,
Peter Mullins, Candidate Wolverhampton S.W.

One Voice Questions to Prospective Parliamentary Candidates

- 1) What do you think should be done to improve on the transport for disabled people, or do you think they should wait until 2020?
- 2) Political parties want to get disabled people off benefits and into work – what do you think can be done to make sure employers employ these disabled people – what procedures in place to ensure people not forced into work before they are ready?
- 3) How many disabled MPs or candidates do your party have and what is in your party manifesto specifically for disabled people?
- 4) In what ways, if any, do you think the Disability Discrimination Act has improved the lives of disabled people?
- 5) What is your opinion on an individual's right to decide on their own right to life and right to death?
- 6) Many disabled people have expressed concerns about the city centre refurbishment plans what would you do to ensure our city centre remains accessible to all its citizens?
- 7) Should the civil liberties of all those suffering from mental health problems be disregarded in the wake of a few recent high profile cases of serious crimes committed by the severely mentally ill?
- 8) Given that many voting stations are inaccessible and there are some problems with postal votes, what other ways can be employed to increase the number of disabled citizens and others to vote?
- 9) Some 140 MP's across all parties have supported the campaign for severely disabled adults to receive the winter fuel payments. Do you support this?
- 10) If you were trapped on a desert island, what disabled person would you like with you, and why?

The One Voice Guide to accessible film and TV Services for Blind and Visually Impaired people

New technologies and formats like DVD and digital film and television mean that it is now possible for most films and television programmes to be made more accessible to disabled people by using features like subtitles at the touch of a button or audio description soundtracks.

Technology combined with Government legislation about broadcasting and the Disability Discrimination Act should ensure that over the coming years, disabled people have the same access to these media as non-disabled people.

The aim of this leaflet is to help people with visual impairments to get more out of a trip to the cinema, or their TV or DVD experience.

Government Legislation now requires that 10 per cent of ITV1 (channel 3) and Channel 4 programmes must have audio description by the end of 2009. At least 10 per cent of programmes on Channel 5 must be audio described by the end of 2007.

The BBC must audio describe at least 8% of its programmes a week.

What is Audio Description

Audio description is a soundtrack to a programme or film that helps visually impaired people to know what is going on.

An Audio described soundtrack features a narrator's voice that tells you what is going on in the gaps when no one's talking.

It is very useful for setting a scene, letting you know who is in a room, the expression on someone's face, what is happening when no one is talking, etc.

So for example in the scene from the Wizard of Oz where Dorothy talks to the Wizard, an audio description soundtrack would have all the dialogue in the scene, but the narrator would also say something like, "as Dorothy is looking up at the great Oz in a pleading manner, Toto the dog pulls at a curtain and reveals that Oz is nothing more than a man speaking through a machine, Oz looks at the dog and frowns".

Audio Description and Television

You cannot get audio described television if you only have analogue (old style "Terrestrial") TV, but digital television can carry an audio described soundtrack, alongside the standard soundtrack.

A lot of digital channels do not have any audio described programmes, but these channels have *some*:

all BBC and ITV Channels, Channel 4, E4, Channel 5, UKTV channels, Living TV, Discovery Channel, Bravo, Sky 1, Sky 2, Sky 3, Sky Travel, Sky Sports, Sky Movies, and Sky Box Office.

BBC puts all its audio described output on the BBC London channels, so you need to retune to these.

Very few programmes have audio description at the moment – popular programmes like East Enders Doctor Who, Buffy the Vampire Slayer, CSI Relic

Hunter and Neighbours are audio described, as are some of the more recently made documentaries showing on Sky/BBC/UKTV, but most programmes are not. Government targets aim for this to improve.

To find out what audio described programmes are available on television each week, visit:

<http://www.tvhelp.org.uk/audes/schedule.php>

If you get your Digital Television via a **freeview** box, you will need new equipment in order to get any programmes audio described – at the moment only 1 freeview box is able to play audio described soundtracks:

the Netgem i-player (£99, contact Netgem on 0800 015 3092)

There are two other ways to get audio description via freeview: you can put a freeview card in your computer (Nebula Electronics PC card call 01689 897090), or the most expensive solution is the **portset digital media centre**. This is a totally accessible stand-alone machine, providing freeview with Audio Description and talking TV guides, along with a range of other services. This system starts at £849 (Call 01489 893919 for more information).

The easiest way to get any audio described programmes is with Sky digital or a cable tv provider like Telewest.

People with Sky tv

You can set up your sky box to always receive audio description when it is available, by pressing “Services” on you sky remote control, then select 4 “system setup”, from the next menu select 3 “languages and subtitles” from the next menu, and then turn audio description on.

Another way to find out if there is audio description on the programme you are watching is to press the “help” key on your remote control, while you are watching a programme on Skytv. This will bring up subtitle and audio description options.

If they are available just turn them on.

BBC puts all it’s audio description output on BBC London – if you have sky, you can get BBC London on channel 974

Telewest Users:

Press **home** on your remote control, this is the large oval-shaped button at the top. Then press the down arrow and then the left arrow to get to "settings and services". Press **ok** (button in the middle of the arrow keys)

In this menu, press the up arrow followed by the left arrow – this will bring you to "display and audio". Press **ok** to select.

Now press the down arrow 4 times until you come to "Audio Description", press the right arrow to turn it on.

DVDs

DVD menus can still be quite difficult to navigate if you have little or no vision, but once you get to the setup or language selection menu, you will often find that you are able to select an “English Audio Described” soundtrack.

Pleasingly, a lot of the titles with disabled characters, like Ray and Dancer in the Dark, Closer, The Hours, Frida, Garden State, and Finding Neverland have audio description. Also, many of the Disney titles from the last 3 years have audio description, so children are well served.

There is a growing selection of DVD's for sale or rent in the UK that have audio description soundtracks.

Below is a list of recent DVDs with audio description that you can rent or buy (checked by One Voice volunteers):

Aladdin
Bleak House
Dancer in the Dark
Deuce Bigalow European Gigolo
Doctor Who
Finding Neverland
Flighplan
Frida
Garden State
House of mirth
Harry potter
Kill Bill
Layer Cake
Legend of Zorro
March of the penguins
Mary Poppins (Anniversary edition)
Narnia
Peter pan
Ray
Seabiscuit
Shawshank Redemption
The Island
The Village

Online video rental company **Screen Select** (<http://www.screenselect.co.uk>) allow you to browse through all their DVD's with audio description:

http://www.screenselect.co.uk/visitor/searchresults.html?field=main_languages&page=1&search_keywords=English+Audio+Description

Remote Controls

You can now get a wide variety of remote controls with good colour contrasting

and big buttons.

Some are programmable so that you can make the remote control work for all your equipment (Hi-fi, tv, video, skybox etc)

Argos sell a large button all-in –one remote for about £20, and Maplin Electronics sell a £15 model.

Cinema

The UK Film Council is providing funding for many cinemas and film festivals to increase the number of films they show with audio description soundtracks.

In Wolverhampton, the **Cineworld** cinema has 10 screens and usually shows at least one blockbuster film per week with audio description, and gives it several showings per day. To find out what's on with audio description, call Cineworld on (01902) 304318, or check the Disabled Access page on the Wolverhampton Cineworld website: www.cineworld.co.uk
Cineworld is at Bentley Bridge, Wednesfield Way, Wednesfield.

Wolverhampton's **Lighthouse Cinema** has only 2 screens, but manages to show several audio described features per month.

Check their website: www.light-house.co.uk for details.
Or ring (01902) 716055

The lighthouse also offers a free ticket to those registered disabled people who need a helper with them.

The Lighthouse is in the centre of town, at the Chubb Buildings, Fryer street,
Wolverhampton. **One Voice**

Complaints and Compliments form

name _____

(your name will be kept confidential, if you do not want to give it, please fill in your initials)

What help did you want from One Voice

Did you get the help you needed?

yes **no**

Comments:

On balance were you happy or unhappy with the service?

How could One Voice improve it's service?

What action would you like to see as a result of your comments?
