



Enhancing the everyday lives of disabled people
in Essex and beyond

Our work in Essex and beyond

We are an organisation run by and for disabled people. Established in 1995 our origins are firmly rooted in a belief that the voice of disabled people, both as individuals and collectively, is vital if the lives of disabled people are to be enhanced.

We currently provide a wide range of support, information, advice and guidance services. We also play a key role in influencing the agenda of tomorrow to effect real social change to enhance the everyday lives of disabled people.

Over time, we have extended the areas in which we work throughout and beyond Essex. For example, we provide support services not only to the area covered by Essex County Council but also in Southend, which has control over its own social services. As we have grown, we have also started and continue to deliver services and projects beyond Essex – for example, in Cambridgeshire, Hertfordshire and Suffolk.

Throughout this strategy, wherever we write ‘Essex’ we therefore also mean the other areas in which we currently, or in future, might work (unless specified otherwise).

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Foreword from the Chairman, Steve Carey

In 2012, the Paralympic Games will be held in London. As the world focuses on elite disabled sportsmen and women, what will life look and feel like for disabled people in Essex? It is this question which acted as the catalyst for our thinking about our own organisation:

- What are we?
- What do we need to be?
- What can we be?
- How will we do this?

I am very proud to share our answers to these questions in this Strategic Plan.



What are we?

For 13 years we have built our reputation and become a leading authority representing the voice of disabled people in Essex. This was the vision of one of our co-founders and first Chief Executive, Phil Miller, who passed away in 2005. We have moved from a small shop on a housing estate in Witham to a fully accessible base in Chelmsford, employing over 40 people. We have seen a ten-fold increase in the number of people we support and have extended our services and projects to provide support, information, advice and guidance to disabled people.

What do we need to be?

The landscape for disabled people's organisations is changing rapidly. We need to adapt and evolve if we are to meet the challenges head on, and ensure we continue to provide high quality services to disabled people.

At a national level the introduction of self-directed support will transform the social care agenda for disabled people. Personal budgets – will provide greater control and flexibility in how disabled people live their lives. More widely, government is committed to enabling disabled people to live independently. The government is also looking increasingly to the voluntary sector to take greater responsibility for the delivery of front line services. To do this, organisations like us will need to come to the fore and consistently provide a well-run professional service which strives to meet the changing needs and demands of this market, and is fit for purpose to deliver its agenda.

What can we be?

We are an ambitious organisation. We believe we are the right organisation to meet the challenges ahead and provide an exemplary model of practice for disabled people's organisations which others can follow. We don't want to be seen purely as an organisation for disabled people, but as a modern voluntary sector organisation working as an equal partner with key public and private sector bodies.

Central to our success will be disabled people. Our Trustees all have a self-declared impairment. A significant number of our staff identify as disabled people, and we will be putting in place further disability-focused policies and practices to ensure we continue to identify, recruit and develop talented disabled people to lead this organisation in the future. We also need to reach out to ensure we represent all those individuals who have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act.

How will we do this?

To be what we want to be we have set ourselves some challenging goals. But I believe we have put in place a coherent and robust strategy that will deliver the goals set and I am extremely optimistic that we can fully contribute to a positively different world for disabled people in Essex and beyond by the time the Paralympic Games arrive.

Steve Carey
Chairman, ECDP

Enhancing the everyday lives of disabled people in Essex and beyond

Disabled people have a central contribution to play in the social and economic prosperity of Essex. From the raising of education standards, upskilling of the workforce, the health of its people, the quality of public transport, future housing needs, or involvement in community-based developments, the issues that impact on everyone affect the lives of disabled people. At regional, county, borough, district, parish and local levels, disabled people need to be actively involved in the shaping and creation of solutions which address old problems and seek new innovations to future challenges.



We are best placed to provide the credible voice of disabled people to support the innovation and solutions required to proactively enhance the everyday lives of disabled people.

This Strategic Plan sets out clearly the vision for our organisation and how we intend to get there. It covers the period 2008–2012, although it also indicates the longer term outcomes we would like to achieve.

On pages 8 and 9 we outline the wider context which has informed our strategic thinking, highlighting both the recent internal changes to the organisation, and the broader national, regional and local developments which we have needed to consider.

On pages 10 and 11 we set out in detail our new mission, vision and the values which will drive everything we do.

On pages 12–25 we outline the detail of what we intend to do under our three overarching strategic aims. These are:

- 1 To consolidate and develop further a range of effective and personalised support services to meet the day to day needs of disabled people**
- 2 To consolidate, develop and establish strands of work which will shape and influence the future life chances of disabled people**
- 3 To align our structures to deliver quality outcomes for disabled people**




ECDP as the ‘voice’ of disabled people

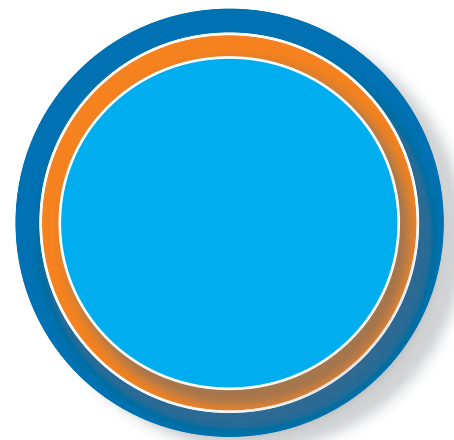
It is important to define what we mean by us being the ‘voice’ of disabled people. In 2008, we work directly with around 2,500 disabled people. We are therefore able to listen to their concerns, distil the information and articulate views to relevant organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. As we begin to deliver this strategy, however, we will increasingly use the experiences of the people we come into contact with to shape both our work and our interactions with other organisations (for example, see the Policy Forum proposed in Objective 2.3 on page 19). We will also work to increase the representation of disabled people by disabled people at meetings where decisions are made or formed.

We fully acknowledge and have been part of the struggle for full civil rights for all disabled people. Much has been achieved over the last 30 years, but the journey continues. We believe it is right to focus our efforts on increasing our credibility – with disabled people and relevant stakeholders – in order to articulate the growing, collective voice of disabled people. In doing this we will provide a clear voice for issues that will arise, whilst continuing to acknowledge individual issues. To achieve this, we will use a range of innovative methods, and not just traditional forms of campaigning.

Our approach to supporting disabled people

Current
2008

-  Social services support
-  Formal support
-  Informal support



Please note: this diagram is not to scale

To achieve our strategic aims requires a clear understanding of who we are actually here to support and how we deliver our work.

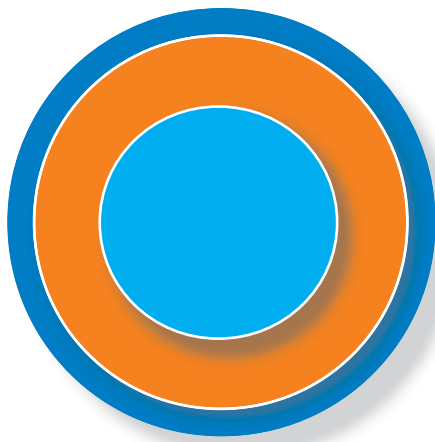
The diagram above illustrates our current approach to supporting disabled people and where we would like to be in ten years time. The middle circle identifies our ambitions for 2012, which covers the period of this strategy.

Each circle represents the sphere of our activity. We currently focus the significant majority of our time and resources on supporting those individuals who are in receipt of some form of social services support – typically a Direct Payment. This group is represented in the inner ring of the circle. The middle ring represents those disabled people who receive formal support through some form of benefit etc, but do not meet the eligibility criteria for social services support. We currently provide limited support

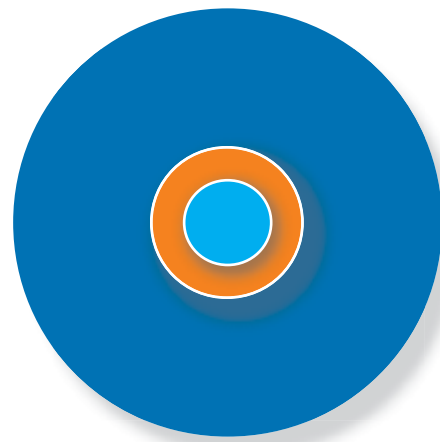
services for this group. The outer ring represents disabled people who do not qualify for any formal support but nonetheless may have needs which are unmet and almost certainly still face barriers due to their impairment. This includes people who fund their own care. At the present time we provide little direct support to this group.

At present, we focus most of our effort on providing support services, i.e. to the inner group of disabled people at the end of the social care assessment process. We are aware that, the outer group form the greatest percentage in terms of numbers of disabled people in Essex. As an organisation it is imperative that we, over time, place a greater emphasis on identifying and meeting the needs of this group if we are to truly reflect and provide the voice of disabled people in Essex. With appropriate and timely support through, for example early interventions, we

4-year ambition
2012



10-year ambition
2018



might prevent individuals moving from the outer ring towards requiring specific and significant support.

Our strategy is therefore geared to growing our organisation to better support the needs of those individuals currently in the outer ring, whilst maintaining and enhancing our provision for the other two defined groups. The middle circle outlines our progress towards achieving this longer term outcome by 2012.

The rest of this document outlines how we intend to deliver our strategic aims. We also set out how we intend to align and use our resources to deliver our strategic aims and how we will measure our progress.

Who do we mean by 'disabled people'?

Our work revolves around disabled people. Our strategy, however, will require engaging with disabled people beyond the 'traditional' view of disability – which includes those with physical, sensory and mental health impairments – to those with learning disabilities and long-term health conditions. Over time, the definition of disability has expanded so that some people who have rights might not even know it, such as people with HIV/AIDS or cancer. Similarly, evidence also strongly suggests that some of those who are aware they have rights do not access services in the traditional way they are provided. We will therefore need to think innovatively about how we reach everyone with rights and consider different models for delivering our services.

The changing context

In October 2007, Mike Adams was appointed as our new Chief Executive Officer. We have also taken the opportunity to restructure the management team, and subsequently brought in new members of staff and internally promoted others.

Our Management Board

We have also recently had a number of changes to our Management Board. As of 1 April 2008 our Trustees are:

- Steve Carey (Chair)
- Ann Nutt (Vice-Chair)
- Terry Collin
- Gina Gardiner
- June Harper
- David Matthews
- Marilyn Williams

Reflecting the aims of this strategy, we have undertaken a major review of our governance structures and have recently submitted a revised set of Memorandum & Articles of Association to the Charities Commission. We fully expect these to be ratified at our AGM at the end of 2008.



The big picture: national policy

We were established the same year as the Disability Discrimination Act (1995). Although the legislation did not deliver full civil rights it did create rights in law for disabled people to challenge discrimination. Being able to make things better after the event, however, is only part of the answer. The policy must work to ensure disabled people have the same choice, freedom, dignity and control over their lives as non-disabled people.

The Government's 2005 'Life Chances' report was a proactive response to these challenges. This report sets out an ambitious programme of activity and policy – in areas such as social care, housing, transport, health, leisure and local communities – to address all issues affecting the lives of disabled people. It stated: 'By 2025, disabled people in Britain should have full opportunities and choices to improve their quality of life and will be respected and included as equal members of society.'

Local policy: what is the current picture and what are the priorities in Essex?

Many of the issues that face Britain as a whole are found in Essex.

As of 2006, approximately 16% of the population of Essex stated they have a limiting long-term illness. Disability-related statistics vary across the region. For example, levels of learning disability are significantly higher in north-east Essex and there is a 12-fold variation across the county in the rate of hospital admissions for people with mental health conditions.

In the future, traditional services – faced with huge increases in the number of older people – will not be sustainable. For example, Essex County Council estimates that local care costs for older people will rise by around 50% by 2017 and 100% by 2025. And in housing, it is anticipated that if more isn't done to promote independent living, there will be 125,000 people living alone and 10,700 living in care homes by 2025 – increases of approximately 50%.

Facing the challenges

Two key strategies in Essex – the Essex Strategy 2008-2018 and the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 – include aims to ensure more people can stay healthy and live independent lives as they get older. Similarly, public bodies are developing their strategies to focus on issues such as:

- providing greater access to universal services and information that are accessible to all
- ensuring good quality, value-for-money services are available for all people (including those who do not receive social services)
- shifting from 'cure' to 'prevention'
- working in partnership with key partners to achieve these aims.

With a significant local disabled population, Essex as a whole can only achieve its ambitious goals if the vision and strategies outlined above have disabled people as an integral part of them. This means both that the voice of disabled people across the county is strongly represented to those making decisions, and that our strategy shapes, and is shaped by, those of relevant bodies.

Our vision, mission and values

In putting this Strategic Plan together we have undertaken a wide ranging review of our organisation in terms of its strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. We have also consulted with and sought input from a wide range of stakeholders at all levels. Combined with an analysis of the external environment, this has led to the formulation of a new vision, mission and set of values, which are set out opposite.



Our vision

Enhancing the everyday lives of disabled people in Essex and beyond.

Our mission

Essex Coalition of Disabled People is an organisation run by and for disabled people. We empower disabled people to have independence, choice, flexibility and control. We do this by:

- actively involving and engaging with disabled people
- delivering a range of high quality services, projects and programmes
- working in partnership with a range of stakeholders in the public, private and voluntary sectors
- shaping and influencing strategy, policy and practice
- creating a professional, effective and efficient organisation that can and does deliver.

Values

Our new values will underpin everything we do and will shape our behaviour, both as an organisation and as individuals working within ECDP. Our values, (as well as what they mean), are outlined below:

- **Inclusive:** We include anyone who has rights under the Disability Discrimination Act within our definition of 'disabled people'. This includes anyone with a physical and/or sensory impairment, mental health condition, learning disability or long-term health condition (such as HIV/AIDS or cancer). We also

recognise anyone who declares themselves to be a disabled person.

- **Expert:** As an organisation run by and for disabled people, we have a unique and insightful perspective. Our history and work provides us with a depth of knowledge on the inequalities faced by disabled people in Essex. We use this knowledge to add value to our own work and that of the public, private and voluntary sectors in order to effect change for disabled people.
- **Innovative:** We are adaptable, embrace change and try new ways of doing things. We work in an imaginative and flexible way, seeking feedback to help us innovate.
- **Responsive:** We listen to the needs of and work in partnership with disabled people and our stakeholders. We respond in a timely manner and in a way that is enabling, supportive and professional.

What underpins and informs everything we do is the **social model of disability**. Furthermore, we will not accept discrimination in our work on grounds of disability, race, age, sexual orientation, gender or religion and will challenge it if it occurs, at an individual or organisational level. We aim to positively promote equality on these grounds.

Our strategic aims and how we will deliver them

To deliver our vision and mission, we have developed three strategic aims for 2008-2012, which provide the overarching focus for all of our work.



The following pages outline what key objectives we will deliver to meet our strategic aims.

Our three strategic aims are:

1 To consolidate and develop further a range of effective and personalised support services to meet the day to day needs of disabled people

2 To consolidate, develop and establish strands of work which will shape and influence the future life chances of disabled people

3 To align our structures to deliver quality outcomes for disabled people

Please note that, although there are differing amounts of text for each key objective, we regard each of them as equally important. Similarly, a key objective may belong to more than one strategic aim, even if this isn't recognised explicitly in the text.

1

To consolidate and develop further a range of effective and personalised support services to meet the day to day needs of disabled people

Through our existing support services, we have built a strong track record in delivering support, information, advice and guidance to disabled people. We will retain a strong focus in the provision of services which address individuals' day-to-day needs. The introduction of self-directed support across Essex provides real opportunities to expand the range of services offered and enable disabled people to have real choice about the types of services required and when and/or how they wish to access them. As the market for services develop, we will be both innovative and

flexible in evolving what we provide; we will continue to find ways to expand our services and make them increasingly personalised for individuals. During the next four years we will also explore other areas of support, information, advice and guidance where existing provision does not exist, or where it could be improved. This might include areas such as public transport, housing and employment. In some cases we will work in partnership with other organisations where this will clearly enhance the outcomes for disabled people.

Our key objectives to achieve this strategic aim and their associated outcomes are outlined below:

1.1 Provide timely support, information, advice and guidance to clients considering taking up self-directed support

Our approach will be to:

- Align our support, information, advice and guidance materials to self-directed support, specifically personal budgets
- Remodel our delivery services to meet the anticipated increase in referrals and the services required from it
- Explore the most effective ways of expanding our services in this area to provide seamless provision. Individuals can then choose which elements of the services they wish to use at any one time
- Work in partnership with other organisations to deliver shared services where this would be most effective

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A fit for purpose service which delivers high quality and timely support for disabled people
- Disabled people have the knowledge and access to appropriate systems to make real choices about and control over their own individual support
- A model of good practice which could be replicated in other areas of Britain

1.2 Provide a high quality personal assistant support service (PASS) and self-directed support (SDS) screening service for disabled clients

Our approach will be to:

- Implement the recommendations of our PASS review, completed in October 2008. This will evolve our current service into one which is much more personalised to the individual, and addresses the new protocols for personal budgets
- Continue providing high quality support to existing and potential Direct Payment users (including training) for as long as required
- Increase our communication with clients through electronic methods e.g. email, web etc. while continuing to offer choice for disabled people who prefer other methods of communication
- Explore bringing together our SDS-related services, providing a one-stop shop for individual clients
- Make our payroll services attractive to the public, private and voluntary sectors and increase our turnover in this area

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A personalised service for clients which provides choice, flexibility and control in terms of payroll/accounts facilities
- A responsive screening service which provides accurate and timely information to support disabled people and their families when considering self-direct support
- A service which is responsive to the needs of individuals and potential future service commissioners
- A service which could potentially provide additional income streams from the public, private and voluntary sectors

1.3 Provide support planning and brokerage services to disabled people in order to underpin the implementation and effectiveness of self-directed support

Our approach will be to:

- Explore the potential for developing new services – whether in partnership or by ourselves – related to the delivery of self-directed support, and then (where appropriate) delivering this provision where there is demand and it is cost effective to do so

Our expected outcomes will be:

- The creation of new services for disabled people in relation to self-directed support
- A wider menu from which disabled people can choose and control what services they want to use

1.4 Provide universal information, advice and guidance services to disabled people in Essex and beyond

Our approach will be to:

- Explore the unmet needs of those individuals not eligible for formal social service interventions and consider how we might be able – through information, advice and guidance services – to provide positive interventions
- Consider the development of information, advice and guidance services not directly related to SDS but which focus on other areas to enhance the every day lives of disabled people
- Establish formal relationships with other information and advice organisations to meet the universal information, advice and guidance needs of disabled people in Essex

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A broad range of information, advice and guidance services which will use innovative delivery mechanisms and which are provided in a timely fashion

Shaping: Through our Training & Development (T&D) and Volunteer & Mentoring (V&M) teams we currently provide a range of activities which focus both on the individual needs of disabled people and, to a lesser extent, the requirements of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. Whilst continuing our focus on disabled people themselves (the ‘demand’ side), we must also increasingly focus on organisations (the ‘supply’ side) if we are to positively shape and influence the life chances of disabled people.

It is vital we continue to raise the aspirations of disabled people to support the realisation of their own individual, and collective, potential. We recognise some individuals have met, and continue to meet, barriers which inhibit their own development; this has a major impact on their confidence, motivation and self-belief in their own ability. For those individuals who have acquired an impairment the processes may be different but the need to rebuild confidence, motivation and their own self-belief about what they can do is equally important.

We believe volunteering and mentoring are two key vehicles for providing support to individuals. We will consolidate existing programmes of work, build on those areas which have the potential for expansion, and develop new services where gaps exist.

We believe disabled people should have equal access to training and other ongoing development opportunities. We currently deliver a wide range of training courses. Again, we will consolidate existing programmes, expand into areas where there is demand and run courses where there is an identified gap. We will seek accreditation where appropriate for various elements of the training we provide.

Influencing: As we raise the individual and collective aspirations of disabled people we will ensure these new expectations can be met. We will therefore look to expand both our training and consultancy services to organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors. We will imbue them with the knowledge, capability and capacity to expand their own ambitions for disabled people as employers, employees and customers.

Our key objectives to achieve this strategic aim and their associated outcomes are outlined below:

2.1 Deliver a range of volunteering and mentoring activities which enable disabled people – and especially young disabled people – to achieve their goals

Our approach will be to:

- Further extend the current Independent Visitors Scheme to all areas in Essex
- Seek new funding to provide a range of volunteer and mentoring (including peer mentoring) opportunities for disabled people. Disabled people will be both the recipients and deliverers of these opportunities
- Develop a specific volunteer and mentoring programme for disabled people in residential care
- Establish a volunteer bank of skills and talents to support and underpin the volunteer and mentoring approach outlined
- Firmly establish young disabled people forums across the whole of Essex
- Build a strategic partnership with a sports-based organisation to increase the take up of sport by disabled people in Essex

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A greater number of disabled people – and especially young disabled people – actively engaged in volunteering and mentoring activities across the whole of Essex
- An increase in disabled people's confidence to take up opportunities to realise their potential
- An authoritative and representative voice of young disabled people in Essex
- At least one disabled person from Essex representing Great Britain at the 2012 Paralympic Games who is directly linked to our development activities

Young disabled people

Although we will engage with all disabled people, our strategy has an explicit focus on young disabled people as we acknowledge they are tomorrow's future. We will ensure all our work directly addresses the needs of this group; some activities will extend to incorporate the needs of young disabled people, while other activities will be specifically focused. The development of young disabled peoples' forums to provide a real voice is one such example of the latter.

2.2 Build a network of disabled people with knowledge and capacity to represent disabled people and us at a local level

Our approach will be to:

- Launch a programme to recruit, support and sustain Local Area Representatives (LARs) who will provide a link between disabled people, the localities and our organisation across Essex
- Provide a range of development opportunities to LARs so they can represent and champion the views and experiences of local disabled people and us at public, private and voluntary forums on behalf of our organisation
- Develop thematic specialists who can provide experience and expertise to local disabled people and represent us on particular issues e.g. housing, employment, transport etc

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A mobilised and informed group of disabled people proactively supporting our work in the localities across Essex
- A credible voice for disabled people in the different localities across Essex
- A growing number of thematic specialists
- An increasingly informed membership
- The ability to capture themes and issues at a grassroots level to support our shaping and influencing work

2.3 We seek member and stakeholder views to inform our own and other's policy and practice

Our approach will be to:

- Establish a Policy Forum from our membership to inform our ongoing strategic direction, as well as that of other organisations
- Introduce a range of communication methods and tools to increase stakeholder views of our work
- Co-ordinate meaningful engagement and involvement of our members on key issues

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A clearly defined and transparent method of developing our own policy and influencing that of others
- Improved engagement with our members
- Policy and practice which truly reflects the views of members

2.4 Develop and deliver a broad range of new and existing relevant training to disabled people and public, private and voluntary sector organisations

Our approach will be to:

- Consolidate the range of training we provide, and further expand into new markets including a greater presence in the private sector
- Develop a growing number of skilled and qualified disability trainers, and create a robust network for peer support
- Ensure our training expertise is better used to train and develop our own staff and volunteers, in parallel with our external work
- Run a high quality, fully accessible conference facility which is fully booked at a variety of different times throughout the week

Our expected outcomes will be:

- An increased reputation as a deliverer of high quality disability equality-related training
- Increased involvement and self-confidence of disabled people through their active delivery of training
- A better skilled and trained workforce
- To establish our conference facility as a key accessible venue in Essex
- Improved disability equality practice in organisations across Essex

2.5 Work with partners to develop and deliver disability-related academic courses and professional qualifications

Our approach will be to:

- Continue the postgraduate certificate in disability equality training
- Explore areas for new academic courses which will support the development of disabled people
- Seek accreditation for all courses delivered
- Re-establish the Phil Miller graduate bursary programme
- Identify and develop innovative practice on how the aspiration gap for 16 to 24-year-old disabled people can be narrowed
- Work with other partners to jointly deliver professional qualifications

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A greater number of disabled people with an academic qualification in disability equality training
- A suite of accredited courses
- Strategic partnerships with key organisations and institutions

2.6 Establish a leadership programme

Our approach will be to:

- Develop a leadership profile for disabled people, through the introduction and delivery of a 'Leading Ability' programme
- Develop high quality leadership materials and offer a range of delivery models
- Establish variations of the programme to meet particular needs e.g. leadership for young disabled people, leadership for those with a newly-acquired impairment or condition, etc
- Develop the programme in conjunction with partners from the public, private and voluntary sectors
- Tracking individual disabled people to understand the effectiveness of specific support mechanisms and interventions

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A highly regarded leadership programme for disabled people
- Increased leadership aspirations for those people who have undertaken the programme
- An understanding of effective interventions and capturing of lessons learnt
- A model of good practice for joint delivery across the sectors

2.7 Develop and deliver a range of disability consultancy services to the public, private and voluntary sectors

Our approach will be to:

- Establish a consultancy profile for the organisation
- Become a leading authority on the development and sustainability of user-led organisations
- Establish an efficient and effective model of disability organisations which enables us to undertake consultancy, working in partnership with other respected partners who share our values
- Respond to appropriate consultation and other exercises to inform, influence and shape policy and practice developments

Our expected outcome will be:

- An increasing consultancy profile, with a national reputation for our user-led organisation work

3

To align our structures to deliver quality outcomes for disabled people

To achieve our ambitions we will align our structures to ensure we deliver high-quality outcomes for disabled people in everything we do. Changes will be required on a number of different levels. As an organisation truly run by and for disabled people, we will ensure our membership fully reflects the widest constituency of disabled people across Essex. The membership will have a real say in what we do and how we do it. We will proactively look for ways to increase the involvement of disabled people throughout our organisation.

To be a representative and legitimate organisation we will ensure what we say has a strong resonance with the people we are representing. Therefore, alongside increasing our membership, we will improve our evidence base. We will also align our structures, processes and systems to focus on quality outcomes for disabled people. Ultimately, it is on this basis we will be judged.

This approach will require a review of our internal infrastructure: how we currently operate and what and how we will deliver in the future.

We have a strong commitment to our own staff. We will recruit, train and develop further talented individuals in our organisation and attract others to want to work for us. In parallel, we will improve all our other core services and ensure they enable us to deliver excellence.

As a relatively small organisation we cannot do everything so we will be clever, and maximise where we can deliver the greatest value. This will mean we will become more strategic in how we deliver our work. We will cultivate meaningful partnerships with other disabled people's organisations who share both our values and agenda.

We will reduce our financial dependency on our current funders by diversifying the source of our income streams. We will look to see the areas where we have a competitive advantage and promote products and services in the relevant markets. All surpluses will be used to fund those key activities for which we traditionally have not, or will not, receive funding to deliver.

Our key objectives to achieve this strategic aim and their associated outcomes are outlined below:

3.1 Develop a coherent set of membership services

Our approach will be to:

- Commission, develop and establish a robust membership database
- Use our membership database as a key tool for communicating with disabled people
- Use the membership database to promote and sell our services, both to disabled people, and other organisations/individuals
- Steadily increase the range and quality of services delivered, including our Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) service

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A more detailed understanding of who our members are, and the types of services they require from us
- Greater user-led involvement in our organisation
- Credibility among disabled people and other stakeholders that we do reflect the voice of disabled people
- The development of a robust framework to promote our potential commercial services

3.2 Establish a research, policy and development function to underpin our own, and the wider, evidence base

Our approach will be to:

- Establish Insight: solutions for disabled people by disabled people – a research, policy and development function within our organisation
- Create an evidence base throughout the organisation to inform everything we do
- Train and develop members to support functions of Insight by delivering its activities
- Work in partnership with organisations to deliver commissioned pieces of work

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A new high profile, high quality function providing a consistently robust and well founded evidence base for the organisation
- A mechanism for delivering commissioned pieces of work in the short, medium and long term
- A membership which is centrally involved in understanding the experiences of its peers, and is increasingly user driven

3.3 We work in an effective and efficient manner

Our approach will be to:

- Align our organisational structure to ensure delivery of our strategic aims
- Introduce policies, protocols and practice which support our values and strategic aims
- Review all our procurement controls and contracts to ensure best value

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A high performing organisation focused on achieving its strategic aims
- An effective and efficient organisation with the right structures and policies in place

3.4 Establish strategic alliances with appropriate partners to support the delivery of our strategy

Our approach will be to:

- Develop formal strategic alliances with a set of partners, which will include carers and older people's organisations
- Nurture these alliances to ensure they deliver the desired outcomes
- Seek innovative ways of working closely with a wide range of other partners

Our expected outcomes will be:

- Clear relationships with strategic partners which add real value to our work
- An identified mechanism and process for 'how we do business' with our partners

3.5 Communicate the position and role of us and our work through appropriate channels, both internally and externally

Our approach will be to:

- Develop a range of methods to improve communication within the organisation
- Develop a range of methods to support better communication with our membership and external stakeholders
- Raise our profile through dedicated, proactive marketing and public relations work
- Use new, accessible technologies to aid communication while retaining other methods – and a continued focus on alternative formats – for those wishing to use them

Our expected outcomes will be:

- A clear communications strategy for the organisation
- Where appropriate, utilisation of emerging technology to enhance our breadth and depth of communication
- Clear messaging on a broad range of key issues

3.6 Develop and deliver a range of core services – such as Finance, HR and IT – to underpin our work

Our approach will be to:

- Review all core services on an individual and collective basis, and implement identified recommendations
- Invest in developing our core services to meet our delivery plans

Our expected outcomes will be:

- Cutting edge core services which are fit for purpose
- A core services strategy with a clear investment plan and timetable for implementation

Further information on this key objective is on page 28.

Commitment to deliver and measuring our performance

The key objectives outlined in the preceding pages represent an ambitious programme of work until 2012. It represents a clear set of activities that will be delivered so that we achieve our strategic aims.

We will capture the operational detail of how we will deliver this strategy through a yearly, proportionate planning process. Through this we will reflect activities contained in existing project plans agreed with funders, our contractual obligations with commissioners, as well as determine other activities we will undertake.



Our annual operating plans will contain the details of how we will deliver this strategy, including timescales, and will be published at the start of each financial year (beginning in April 2009). Each operating plan will also include details on how we will measure the success – the outputs and outcomes – we expect to achieve. We will also develop a performance dashboard to enable us to capture and monitor our performance on an ongoing basis.

Over the course of the strategy, however, there will be a set of proxy Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the progress towards which will indicate our overall progress to delivering our strategic aims. The ‘current’ column indicates our position as at April 2008. The Year 1 column presents our realistic short-term aims for the first

Our AGM

As a charity and company limited by guarantee, we will hold an Annual General Meeting. This will provide us with an opportunity to update members and stakeholders on our performance against our strategy and associated yearly operating plan. It will also provide members and stakeholders with an opportunity to scrutinise our work and success over the previous year and to influence the activities we undertake in the following year.

year of our strategy. The Year 4 column indicates where we would like to be by the end of this strategy.

Key Performance Indicators	Current (Apr 2008)	Year 1 (Oct 2009)	Year 4 (Oct 2012)
KPI1: Number of disabled people using our support services	2,460	3,500	5,000
KPI2: Number of volunteers	60	120	225
KPI3: Number of wider stakeholders reached through training, consultancy and other engagement work	670	1,340	2,680
KPI4: Number of members	1,600	2,400	6,400
KPI5: Proportion of income by type*:			
• Contractual income	48%	–	65%
• Grant funding	27%	–	10%
• Self-generated income	25%	–	25%

* We have not estimated a short-term position after Year 1 regarding income, reflecting 3-year funding programmes we are currently delivering.

Organisational change

To deliver our vision, mission and strategic aims through the key objective outlined in this document, we will need to ensure the resources at our disposal are appropriate and fit for purpose. This section of the strategy highlights our current resources and how we plan to expand these in order to deliver our strategy.



Human resources

Our employees are our greatest asset: our committed workforce will be the cornerstone of everything we achieve in the next four years.

We have already started developing our workforce to meet the challenges we face. Within our current workforce of 39 (as at 1 April 2008), some five staff have joined us since 1 October 2007. Of these, 60% are new posts. Our continued growth will require more staff: over the course of the next four years we are aiming to increase our workforce by 25%. We aim to make our working policies exemplars of best practice in any sector.

As part of our strategy, we aim to develop and deliver an HR strategy to underpin our ambitions for delivery. This strategy will include the following:

- a performance management system, incorporating appraisals and merit awards
- continuous professional development for all staff
- a management development programme
- review of all HR policies and procedures
- equality impact assessments of key HR policies and procedures
- annual staff satisfaction surveys
- implementing appropriate HR systems.

To help deliver our ambitious HR strategy, we have recruited a consultant who is a leading disability equality HR expert in Great Britain.

Finance

Currently some 48% of our income is from contracts – with 25% of our overall funding generated through our own income streams. At the end of the four-year period of growth anticipated in this strategy, we wish to see the proportion of income from contractual sources stand at 65%, with grant funding dropping to 10% and the remaining 25% from self-generated sources. This reflects the growing importance of the voluntary and community sector in delivering services, as well as reducing our reliance on unsustainable funding sources. We believe this will give us a robust financial basis – with the vast majority of our income being within our own control – on which to deliver this strategy.

To help deliver this goal, we will develop and deliver a robust finance strategy, which will be underpinned by full-cost recovery (as far as possible) throughout the organisation.

Infrastructure

To expand and achieve our ambitions contained within this strategy, we will develop and implement an infrastructure strategy to support our expansion. This will take into account our premises, location and IT infrastructure. It will also require ensuring we meet all of our legal and statutory obligations, as well as implementing continuity planning and appropriate and proportionate risk management to ensure continuity of service for all our clients.

Financial overview

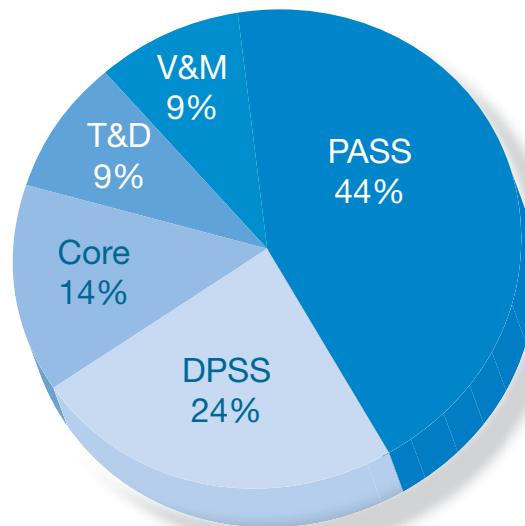
The following pie charts show our planned expenditure by department in 2007/08 and 2008/09 (all figures as at 1 April 2008). These pie charts show that our planned expenditure – which is robustly underpinned by the substantial increase in income we have already secured over the last 12 months – has

grown 49% in the last financial year. Over the course of the next four years, we wish to secure the income that will allow our total expenditure to rise by 50% or more so that it is above £2m.

The other pie chart shows our total income for 2008/09 by source.

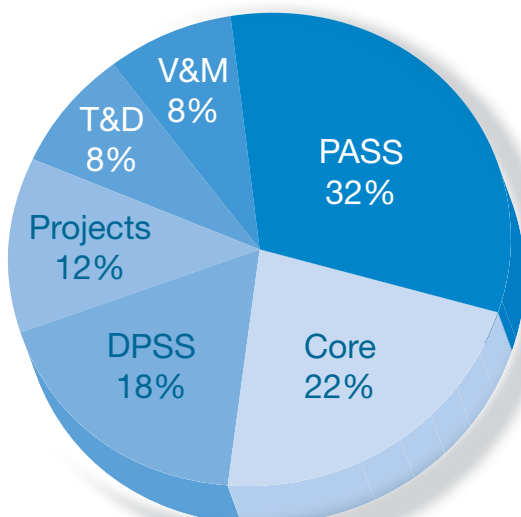
2007/08

Total expenditure: £906K

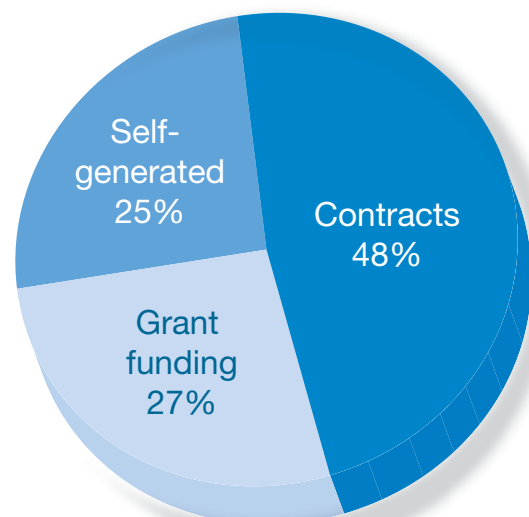


2008/09

Total expenditure: £1.35m



Total income for
2008/09



Feedback and obtaining a copy

We welcome your views on our Strategic Plan 2008–2012.
Please contact us using the contact details on the next page.

This publication can also be accessed on our website:
www.ecdp.org.uk. If you would like a copy in an alternative
format (such as Braille, audio CD or cassette, Easy Read or
Large Print) please visit our website or contact us using the
details listed on the next page.



Information

We are a Registered Charity number 1091293 and a Company Limited by Guarantee number 4217686.

For more information about who we are and what we do visit our website: www.ecdp.org.uk or contact us directly using any of the details below.

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