



Office for Disability Issues

HM Government



Improving Information for Disabled People

February 2007



Office for Disability Issues

HM Government

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*Pictured: Anne McGuire
Minister for Disabled People*

Foreword

Providing good information is more important now than ever before. High quality public services need to be able to respond to the challenges and demands of today's society and be both inclusive and accessible.

Disabled people are a particularly important group of customers. Over 10 million people have rights under the Disability Discrimination Act and disabled people tend to rely disproportionately on public services. No forward-thinking service provider can hope to meet its wider strategic objectives without first thinking explicitly about the impact upon disabled people. It is vital that services are focused around the needs of users and that users also have a greater say in service design and delivery.

Good quality information can play an essential role in helping us to provide and deliver services effectively. If our customers are not aware of the services that are available and the criteria needed to qualify for them, we will fail the very people we seek to benefit. We cannot provide responsive services unless citizens have a bigger say in what they receive and the places where they live.

The Disability Equality Duty (DED), which came into force in December 2006, requires all public bodies to look at the impact on disabled people of everything they do. An inclusive, user-led approach will not only benefit disabled people, but also all customers and the service itself. For example, if the information you provide on a website or in a leaflet has not considered the impact on disabled people, the result may well be that they do not get the very services that you are seeking to highlight. It is worth noting that different groups of disabled people may have very different information needs to others. However, by considering disabled people's needs from the outset, you can channel your resources more effectively. To really know whether the approach you take is working, you still need to consult with users.

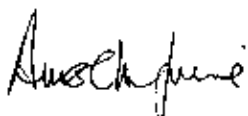
This publication is the result of work being co-ordinated by the new Office for Disability Issues (ODI). It marks the mid point in a project that seeks to improve the way that information is provided to disabled people. It reviews research evidence about the types of information currently available and the views and experiences of disabled people when they try to access information on public services. Through this research, we have identified some guiding principles which public sector organisations should apply to their work to improve services and information to disabled people and meet their obligations under the Disability Equality Duty. These are as follows:

- 1. Ensure that disabled people are involved from the start**
- 2. Provide information through a range of channels and formats**
- 3. Ensure your information meets users' needs**
- 4. Clearly signpost other services**
- 5. Always define responsibility for information provision**

More information about these principles can be found in our publication ***'Five principles for producing better information for disabled people'*** This is available from the ODI's website at www.officefordisability.gov.uk and in hard copy from **office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk**

We are all busy people, but we have an obligation to make a reality of the principle of inclusive and universal public services. To achieve this, it is crucial that we involve service users and disabled people in particular.

This document is a first step in a process of identifying the right approach. The ODI will continue to work with government departments and local authorities to test and further develop the principles identified here. We are also keen to know what is being done in practice in this area and would like to hear from you if you feel you are applying good practice. Please contact us at office-for-disability-issues@dwp.gsi.gov.uk



Anne McGuire
Minister for Disabled People



Executive Summary

1. This report summarises the first phase of a project being taken forward by the Office for Disability Issues (ODI), to develop a cross-government information strategy to ensure that disabled people can access good quality information about the services that they need.
2. Government's overarching ambition for disabled people is that they should have full opportunities to improve their quality of life and be respected and included as equal members of society. A strategy for realising this ambition is contained in the report, ***Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People***.¹ The strategy highlights the importance of the provision of information on public services to meeting this objective.

3. The scope of this first phase of ODI's project has been to:
 - review evidence about the views and experiences of disabled people when they try to access information on services, through a literature review²;
 - explore the types and sources of information provided to disabled people by government, through desk research and case studies; and
 - develop recommendations to improve information provision across the public sector through discussions with stakeholders, including a project board that included disabled people as well as government and non-government organisations.

4. The literature review produced a number of key findings about the views and experiences of disabled people, including:
 - A lack of, or misleading, information is an important factor in preventing people from accessing the services they need.
 - Disabled people and carers place a high priority on the need for information about a wide range of services at the onset of disability.
 - Disabled people need information at the point of life transitions; for example, starting school or entering adulthood.
 - Where disabled people and carers need different forms of support, information about how to access that support is often fragmented.
 - Many disabled people call for greater joined-up working between central government departments, particularly between the Department of Health (DH) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
 - There is also a need for greater 'tailoring' to make the information more personal and relevant to the individual.

5. The project also reviewed information provision about services for disabled people across a number of central government departments and local authority services. This work identified a number of issues that need to be addressed in the provision of information about those services:
 - Programmes and services for disabled people are typically organised under the traditional headings of central and local government departments, and often branded using policymakers' or service providers' 'jargon', which is not always clear to service users.
 - There is little signposting from one service to another, and relatively few examples where users receive joined-up information at a single point or are enabled to move easily from one service to another.
 - The voluntary sector often tries to fill this gap by providing more joined-up cross-service information in some areas, especially local information. However, government and local authorities are not usually linked into these information sources, so users do not benefit as much as they might.
 - Disabled people's involvement in the design and provision of information and advice can be seen in a number of important ways, such as in research and consultation. However, there is less evidence of disabled people's direct involvement at the **start** of the process, from design through to delivery.

6. The project identified a number of recommendations as the next step towards developing an information strategy for disabled people. In summary, the key recommendations include:
 - ***influencing at a strategic level***, by taking opportunities to highlight the importance of information provision within departmental Disability Equality Schemes and the Comprehensive Spending Review;

- **targeting key levers in government**, including consideration of how central government can encourage and incentivise local public service organisations to focus on information provision and encourage the sharing of good practice;
 - **embedding what has been learnt in current initiatives**, including, for example, the 'Individual Budgets' pilot programme, the Department of Health's 'information prescriptions' project, and further work to improve the Directgov website;
 - **delivering 'quick wins'**, which will be taken forward through bi-lateral discussions with key departments;
 - **furthering knowledge and learning across central and local government**, by seeking a number of local authorities to work with, to explore new approaches to information provision; and
 - **building the tools to support public bodies in improving information:** including a business case and the production of a guide to producing better information for disabled people³ from the material collated in the first phase and the next phase of the project.
7. The Office for Disability Issues looks forward to continuing to work with its partner organisations within and outside Government, and with disabled people, to take forward these recommendations in the next phase of the project.



Introduction

1. Government's overarching ambition for disabled people is that they should have full opportunities to improve their quality of life and be respected and included as equal members of society.
2. A strategy for realising this ambition is contained in the report, ***Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People***.⁴ This strategy highlights the importance of the provision of information on public services to meeting this objective.
3. This project has been established to develop an information strategy to ensure disabled people can access the information that they need about key public services. The scope of this first phase of the project is to:
 - review evidence about the views and experiences of disabled people when they try to access information on services;

- review evidence about the types and sources of information provided to disabled people by government; this includes central government, local government and government channels used for information such as statutory bodies and non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs), and the voluntary sector; and
 - develop recommendations to improve information provision.
4. The project is being led by a project board, which includes representatives from government departments, the voluntary sector, user-led organisations, and disabled people.
 5. This report sets out a summary of the findings from the first phase of this project, which began in October 2005. The structure of this summary report is as follows:
 - evidence about the views and experiences of disabled people;
 - national and local information provision for disabled people; and
 - proposed next steps in the project.
 6. This summary report is being published alongside a guide to producing better information for disabled people, which sets out some of the initial lessons from the practice that has been reviewed as part of the first phase of work.⁵
 7. This initial phase of project work involved a number of key activities as shown in the box on the next two pages.

Summary of key project activities

1. Reviewing evidence about the views and experiences of disabled people

- A review of government and academic literature examined 22 sources selected on the basis that they aimed to reflect the views of disabled people either through quantitative or qualitative research⁶.

2. Reviewing national information provision

- Information provision to disabled people about public services was reviewed across the nine government departments which provide specialist services.
- Information was reviewed by the way it is delivered (channels). The channels included printed information, online, phone and face-to-face support.

3. Reviewing local information provision

- Case studies were developed in eight local authorities. These case studies were selected as examples of where local authorities are improving the way they provide information to disabled people. The case studies covered a number of areas, including well designed web-sites and good user involvement in information provision.
- This was supported by desk-based research which mapped information provided by a representative sample of 50 local authorities according to the type of information and channels used to deliver it.
- Case studies were developed in nine voluntary organisations. They were selected because they provide information that is pan-disability and cross-service.

Summary of key project activities (continued)

4. Analysis of findings

- The evidence from these reviews was collated and analysed, by looking at the types of information that are provided by government and the voluntary sector, and the methods by which this information is provided.
- The findings were developed and validated with stakeholders in central and local government and the voluntary sector.

5. Recommendations

- Recommendations have been developed from the findings, which are set out in paragraph 57 of this report. Principles and examples of initiatives that have improved the way information is provided to disabled people have been published in parallel with this report.⁷



Evidence about the views and experiences of disabled people

8. The literature review produced a number of key findings about the views and experiences of disabled people, including:
 - A lack of, or misleading, information is an important factor in preventing people from accessing the services they need.
 - There is a strong need for information at the onset of disability.
 - There is also a strong need for information at the point of a life transition from one service (for example, starting school) or life stage (for example, entering adulthood).
 - A central problem is fragmentation where individuals must access different forms of support.

- Greater joined-up government working is urged by many disabled people, specifically between the Department of Health (DH) and Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
 - There is also a need for greater tailoring of the content of information.
9. Disabled people turn to a wide range of sources for information. There is an important role played by intermediaries. The key findings from the review identified a number of intermediaries critical to the **relationship** between disabled people and information:
- In the first instance, disabled people often rely on information provided by the voluntary and community sector, including independent advisory bodies, such as Citizens Advice and charities based on a specific condition.
 - On issues regarding employment, there is a prominent role played by general practitioners (GPs) and other health professionals, and line managers for those employed but currently off work through illness or disability.
 - **Informal** intermediaries, such as friends and relatives, often play a significant role.
 - Disabled people also call for DWP to make better links with local voluntary and community sector organisations.
10. There is support for one single information source in **Disabled for Life?**⁸, a DWP research report based on interviews with disabled people. However, the potential model or models such a source might constitute were not explored. Despite praise for the role played by voluntary organisations in providing information, disabled people felt that the only way to guarantee comprehensive information was from a single government-funded service.

11. There is a perceived lack of awareness as to which department has responsibility for disability issues. Research recorded low spontaneous recognition of the Department for Work and Pensions and lower still of the disability and carers service. Many disabled people assume that their queries will be dealt with by the Department of Health.
12. Research also highlights the importance of employers, when those in work are absent through sickness or disability and are seeking advice on a return to work.
13. The importance of local information provision is stressed by young people and their parents; for example that provided by schools and local authorities, during life transitions such as starting school or moving from school into work.
14. There is a perceived lack of ownership among providers as to who is responsible for raising awareness of national initiatives and policies. Local service providers may feel the responsibility lies with central government as the initiative had a national focus, whilst central government believes the opposite because the initiative would be implemented locally.
15. Information is an important driver of people's overall satisfaction with public services. Focus group data revealed that a lack of information about how applications were progressing was an important source of dissatisfaction with housing, benefits and health services.
16. Young people with chronic conditions require information to meet their psycho-social needs (such as managing daily living and dealing with stress) as well as their medical needs. This may hold for other groups as well.



National and local information provision for disabled people

17. The findings presented in this section are based on a review of publicly available central government information sources, coupled with desk-based and case study research into local authority and voluntary sector information sources. The findings are grouped under the following headings:

- structure of information provided;
- content of information provided;
- channels through which information is provided;
- user involvement in information provision; and
- the value of prioritising good information provision.

Structure of information provided

18. Services and programmes for disabled people are generally designed and organised by central government departments. Policy is then implemented on the ground by a range of bodies in the public, voluntary and private sector.
19. It is unsurprising that information is fragmented within a mixed economy of service provision. As a result, disabled people also depend on information and advice from a broad range of voluntary and community organisations.
20. Local authorities often have discretion about the scope and level of service they provide. Central government typically only stipulates that local authorities have the power to provide a service or that it has a duty to do so in broad terms.
21. Programmes and services for disabled people are typically organised under the traditional headings of central and local government departments. Generally, publicly available information for disabled people is organised along the same structural lines as the services.
22. Central government is moving in a new direction of categorising services by themes and issues; for example, the Life Chances report⁹ and Directgov.¹⁰ Conversely, the 'way in' to local services is often by first defining the person's disability by condition or impairment.
23. Many local authorities recognise the strength of organising information in terms of life events or the information query or issue that the individual needs resolving. Usually, however, service structures have the strongest influence on the way in which a local authority provides its information. Many local authorities arrange information along rigid service structure lines.
24. A small but growing number of national information services signpost to local information (Supporting People, Commission for Social Care

Inspection (CSCI) and Directgov). However, they use different criteria: some are based on type of disability; others are based on what disabled people are looking for.

25. The voluntary sector nationally is generally structured by condition or impairment (Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB), MIND, Multiple Sclerosis Society) or by social or demographic group (Age Concern, Contact a Family).
26. There are also attempts from the voluntary sector to provide joined-up information across disability (Disability Information and Advice Line, DissBASE). Generally, however, across the UK, the voluntary sector is marked by a host of differing systems, funded and supported in as many different ways, all aiming to provide information to the user.
27. There is a policy direction in favour of cross-government working; for example, the single assessment process in health and social care services. Sure Start, Connexions, and LinkAge all bring together a number of service areas. There is also a policy direction in favour of personalisation of services; for example direct payments and individual budgets, with implications for service organisation and culture (see '*User involvement*', page 19).

Content of the information provided

28. There are two broad types of information provided by Government on services and programmes for disabled people:
 - Information is provided directly on a specific service – where information is provided through a number of channels, such as the Early Support Programme (Department for Education and Skills – DfES), Mobility Advice and Information Service (Department for Transport – DfT) and Jobcentre Plus information on disability benefits (DWP).

- Stand-alone information services – where information is provided on a broader range of services through distinct channels (websites, directories) that provide national information and local contacts (Supporting People website, Directgov website and CSCI website).
29. The voluntary sector also plays an important role in providing information, for example, in transport, education and social care (Motability, Contact a Family and Elderly Accommodation Council, respectively).
 30. Information on services and programmes rarely provides comprehensive information about the range of services available.
 31. The voluntary sector and Government often provide complementary information. However, they do not always join up, so users do not benefit from both. For example: the CSCI website provides a search facility on social care (nursing, residential care) which includes relevant inspection reports; and the Elderly Accommodation Council's website, www.housingcare.org/search/database-searches.aspx, provides a similar search facility but with more descriptive information about a place's characteristics. Users would benefit from both but there is no signposting.
 32. There are a small number of examples of services that, in different ways, aim at cross-service or cross-government service delivery. Many of these are at the pilot stage. They are based on policy drivers, and are not centred on providing information. These include:
 - Pathways to Work pilots;
 - Individual Budget pilots;
 - Connexions;
 - LinkAge/LinkAge Plus pilots;
 - Early Support Programme/Sure Start; and
 - the single assessment process.

33. The nature and design of services based on the 'one-stop shop' idea means that they should be more likely to produce better signposting. The disadvantage is that these examples are likely to be exclusive and unique to the group being targeted; for example, Connexions is aimed at 13–19 year olds, LinkAge at older people (over 50s).
34. There is potential for existing information resources to be used for other groups. Some programmes targeted at particular groups or age ranges are likely to produce information equally helpful to other groups; for example, the Early Support Programme and Connexions.
35. The voluntary sector, in many ways, fills the gap and provides joined-up cross-service information, especially local information (organisations include DIAL, DissBASE, Citizens Advice bureaux, and the National Centre for Independent Living).
36. There is evidence of duplication of information provided. For example, there are five national web-based sources of information for parents with disabled children (from central government and the voluntary sector). There is also evidence of duplication within Government: examples within DWP include Jobcentre Plus, the Pensions Service and Disability & Carers Service which produce similar disability benefits material in printed and online formats. There is also evidence of inaccessible branding, for example the 'Benefits Enquiry Line' provides information on disability benefits.
37. Local authorities do often provide good information to disabled people that covers a wide range of disability issues. Most of this information is about the services that the teams in the local authority offer, but is often not holistic in terms of covering the categories of information that people say they want. In contrast, voluntary groups and independent information providers are more likely to provide information about particular needs related to life events such as finding a job, accessible leisure facilities and the availability of local peer support groups.

38. There is no consistent way of structuring local information content. Different local authorities are using different content headings and different ways of organising the information they provide. There is a variety of different types of information that disabled people need, to improve their independence and life chances. Our research has found a lack of consistency with content headings which leads to barriers to access. We found examples of local authorities that have attempted to provide all their content in one place and use content headings. Different local authorities are classifying and managing their information in different ways.

Channels through which information is provided

39. Services and programmes are widely available through a large number of channels: web; print; printed information available for download; phone; and face-to-face. Appendix B of this report sets out the range of channels available for the range of services and programmes for disabled people provided by central government. Overall, the evidence collected during this review suggests that the way in which information is provided is just as important as the content of that information.

40. Local authorities are using a number of different channels to provide information to disabled people. Traditionally, the way local authorities have provided public information to disabled people is via leaflets and printed material, in common with other parts of the public and voluntary sectors. Increasingly however, many authorities are using web-based forms of information provision to communicate key information to disabled people and other user groups. As some local authorities give more careful consideration to users' needs and information requirements more thought is being given not only to the content of information but also the most effective way of delivering it.

41. There is a vast amount of information leaflets for disabled people. Leaflets are a good way of providing a summary of services and signposting users to further information. Some local authorities have

introduced a corporate style to all of their leaflets which helps to inform the user of where the information has come from.

42. All social services or social care and health teams have a web presence within the main local authority website to provide information about their teams and services. Some local authorities have used the internet in an attempt to place all of their information for disabled people in one portal area.
43. Existing research suggests that face-to-face information provision is often how people like to receive their information. The majority of face-to-face contact points within local authorities are service or directorate wide rather than specific to disabled people. Many local authorities operate first contact one-stop-shops.
44. There are a number of different access routes to information locally. Frequently there is a shortage of clear signposting mechanisms between local authorities, the voluntary sector, and other partners, to help disabled people navigate this information 'maze', which can contribute to barriers to accessing services.

User involvement in information provision

45. User involvement in information provision is evidenced in a number of important ways. For example, information provision is generally tested on disabled people through market research. The voluntary sector may often be closely connected to disabled people, and Government can gain insights into user needs and preferences by partnering voluntary organisations. Finally, government research regularly surveys disabled people's views on services and information.
46. However, there is less evidence of disabled people's direct involvement in the design of information provision. The approaches to user involvement summarised in the previous paragraph are perhaps best described as 'indirect involvement'. There is a broad policy thrust in

favour of putting the user first (personalisation, choice and so on) but this not a reality at the current time. For example, whilst a vast amount of information is produced in leaflet form, it is not clear that the user plays a significant role in the process. Too many appear to be produced, they overlap and it is not clear where users can find them.

47. Many local authorities organise information provision around administrative or institutional structures rather than the needs of service users. However, some local authorities are beginning to change the focus of their information, and have prioritised service users' needs at the heart of their information. Examples of such improvements are published in parallel with this report.¹¹
48. The extent to which local authorities see service users being at the heart of the process of producing information varies. Those that have a clear aim to improve their information have often decided to involve users closely in designing information and deciding on the most appropriate format of delivery.
49. Where local authorities work with their user groups, they have managed to greatly improve the quality and accessibility of their information. However, this requires an openness to receiving challenging feedback from service users, and the local authorities who participated in this research indicated that a willingness to receive such feedback is key to making improvements in information provision.
50. Local authorities that have made the effort to engage and understand the needs of the local population of service users are in a much stronger place to deliver better information to them.

The value of prioritising good information

51. There are opportunities to provide comprehensive information from existing programmes, to ensure there is a focus on information as a component of policy development and to build on cross-government working. Areas where improvements should be made include improved signposting and cross-service or cross-government working (one-stop-shop models):

- signposting: adding basic contact information on other services to existing provision; and
- cross-service or cross-government working: effective examples are relatively new or at pilot stage and are well funded and aimed at specific policy goals.

52. A key consideration for departments in developing policies and delivery programmes, is to ensure that consideration is given to effective design and provision of information at an early stage, alongside the resource implications of doing so. The findings set out in this report indicate that a lack of effective information provision can be a key barrier for disabled people to access services, as well as an important driver of their satisfaction with the services they receive. Effective information provision is therefore a key to the overall effectiveness and value for money offered by new policies and programmes.

53. Funding of information provision is also a key issue for local authorities in the context of the need to demonstrate value for money in service design and delivery. High quality provision of well-produced and easily accessible information can represent a significant investment, and involving users early on in designing and developing effective information provision will be key to ensuring a return on this investment.

54. Maintaining and updating local information is also an important issue that has resource implications attached to it. All information has a 'best before' date and due to changes in legislation, the nature of local authority services and the dynamics of the voluntary sector, it is important that information is regularly refreshed and updated to ensure that it continues to be of value to users.
55. Improving information provision therefore has costs attached for local authorities, in the same way as it does for central government. However, effective information provision is often a key driver of the overall effectiveness and value for money offered by new policies and programmes in local government, in the same way as in central government. Early consideration of how best to design and deliver information about local services, and the associated costs, should therefore represent an important consideration for local authorities seeking improvements.
56. Finally, the examples set out in the guide published alongside this report illustrate that even when limited budgets exist, if there is the desire by staff to provide good quality information to disabled people, and if users are engaged and involved at an early stage, then there are improvements that can be made to information provision, with targeted and light touch investments of resources.



Recommendations

The project board's recommendations on the way forward

57. The project board concluded that the key task going forward is to raise the importance of effective information provision across government and the public sector, both locally and nationally. The board made a number of recommendations to achieve this. These include:

- ***Influencing at a strategic level:*** the Minister for Disabled People has written encouraging ministerial colleagues to consider information provision for disabled people as part of their Disability Equality Schemes. The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) is also engaged with the Treasury's cross-cutting review of the Third Sector, to ensure the importance of these issues is considered, and to influence the

broader communications agenda through engagement with the Central Office of Information (COI) and the Electronic Government Unit.

- **Targeting key levers in government:** the next phase of the project should consider how central government can encourage and incentivise service deliverers to see information provision as a priority, focusing on issues like how to share good practice, and the use of performance and regulatory frameworks.
- **Embedding what has been learnt in current initiatives:** there are a number of projects underway where useful linkages can be made, including, for example, the individual budgets pilots, DH's 'information prescriptions' project and work on the Directgov website.
- **Picking up some quick wins:** the research in the project picked some specific areas where access to information can be improved relatively easily, which will be taken forward through bi-lateral discussions with key departments.
- **Furthering knowledge and learning** by seeking a number of local authorities to work with and explore new approaches to information provision.
- **Building the tools to support public bodies in improving information:** ODI proposes to build a business case and has produced a guide to producing better information for disabled people¹² from the material collated in the first phase of the project.

58. The project governance arrangements and forward work programme will be designed to ensure that disabled people continue to be directly involved in leading and developing the project, and taking forward these recommendations.

Appendix A: Project scope and project board membership

Project scope

Long term strategic objective

To ensure that disabled people have access to the information and advice they need through appropriate channels.

Key recommendations that provide the basis of the project's scope

There are three key recommendations from the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*¹³, relating to information provision for disabled people:

- Recommendation 4.7: Assess existing information and advice provision and consider the case for submitting a spending review bid (DH lead);
- Recommendation 6.5: Disabled young people and their families should receive local and national information at transition (DfES lead, supported by DWP and DH); and
- Recommendation 7.19: National online directory of service providers and a national helpline (DWP lead, supported by DfES and DH).

This project is intended to be a key contribution to the delivery of these cross-government recommendations and will be led by DWP, but will require the close involvement of colleagues across Government and the voluntary sector. The project will make proposals for the next stage of cross-government activity. It will examine the current work in place to deliver against these recommendations both centrally and via local providers. It will identify gaps or areas that require co-ordination in partnership with all departments responsible for the recommendations.

Overall research objectives for Phase I of this project

- to establish the information and advice requirements of disabled people by reviewing available evidence;
- to establish evidence about the characteristics of information provided to disabled people by government (central government, local government and government channels used for information such as statutory bodies, NDPBs, voluntary sector); and
- to develop recommendations for further work in this area.

Project board membership

The Office for Disability Issues would like to thank the following people for their constructive and active participation as members of the project board during phase one:

Sylvia Agass	Counsel and Care
Sarah Bird	Department of Health
Chris Brace	Radar
Neil Churchill	Age Concern England
Sharon Crosland	Department for Work and Pensions
Tara Flood	Alliance for Inclusive Education (formerly of Scope)
Nigel Fulton	Department for Education and Skills
Frances Hasler	Commission for Social Care Inspection
Jacinda Humphry	Office for Disability Issues
Jos Joures	Office for Disability Issues
Brian Lamb	Royal National Institute for the Deaf
Rolf Lamsdale	Department for Transport
Fran McSweeney	Royal National Institute for the Blind
Jon-Paul Samuels	Office for Disability Issues
Hannah Terrey	Disability Rights Commission
Roy Webb	National Centre for Independent Living
Helen Wheatley/LuciaWinters	Council for Disabled Children (National Children's Bureau)
Roger Wicks	Office for Disability Issues
Jacquie Wood	Office for Disability Issues

Appendix B: Summary review of central government and voluntary sector information provision

Central government and voluntary sector information mapping summary:

Programmes, services and information for disabled people

Contents

1. Department for Education and Skills
2. Department of Health/NHS
3. Social care
4. Department for Communities and Local Government
5. Jobcentre Plus (Department for Work and Pensions)
6. Disability and Carers Service (Department for Work and Pensions)
7. Department for Transport
8. Department for Culture, Media and Sport
9. Department for Trade and Industry
10. Department for Constitutional Affairs
11. HM Revenue and Customs
12. Voluntary sector

Definition of channels used:

- Online – website information
- Online forms or leaflets – downloadable from a website to complete either online or print and send
- Phone – phone or text phone
- Print – printed material, forms, leaflets etc
- Face to face – adviser available
- Via intermediaries – any specific partnerships to provide information

I. Department for Education and Skills (DfES)

Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
Early support programme	DfES	Y	Y		Y		
Connexions	DfES	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Student Support/ help to students with disabilities	DfES	Y	Y		Y		
Parents centre	DfES	Y	Y		Y		
Every Child Matters website – disability pages	DfES	Y	Y				
Special educational needs and disability	DfES	Y	Y		Y		Y
National Parent Partnership Network (NPPN)	DfES	Y	Y				Y
TeacherNet website – SEN pages	DfES	Y	Y				

2. Department of Health (DH) / NHS							
Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
Department of Health website	DH	Y	Y		Y		
NHS Direct	NHS	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Help with health costs advice line	NHS			Y			
Health literature line	DH			Y	Y		
Valuing People	DH	Y	Y		Y		Y
A practical guide for disabled people or carers	DH				Y		

3. Social care							
Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
Commission for Social Care Inspection	CSCI	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Directgov	DWP, DH	Y	Y				
NHS website	NHS	Y					
Health and social care assessments	DH/DfES/ local authorities	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Direct payments	DH/DfES/ local authorities	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Individual budgets	DH/DWP/ DCLG/local authorities	To be confirmed (currently being piloted)					Role for advisors/ brokers TBC
Supporting People – see 'DCLG'	DCLG	Y					

There are a large number of private providers of information on social services. Here, however, we are concerned with public providers.

4. Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG)

Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
<i>Supporting People</i>	DCLG	Y	Y		Y		Local authorities
Disabled facilities grant	DCLG	Y	Y		Y		Local authorities

5. Jobcentre Plus (JCP)

Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
Access to work	JCP	Y	Y		Y	Via DEAs ¹⁴	
WORKSTEP	JCP	Y	Y		Y	Via DEAs	
Work preparation	JCP	Y	Y			Via DEAs	
New Deal for Disabled People	JCP/ New Deal	Y	Y (on New Deal site)	Y	Y	Via DEAs	Via Job Brokers
Job introduction scheme	JCP	Y	Y		Y	Via DEAs	
Industrial injuries disablement benefit	JCP	Y	Y		Y	Via DEAs	
Jobcentre Plus website	JCP	Y					
Directgov website	DCD	Y					
Pathways to work pilots	JCP	To be confirmed (currently being piloted)					

6. Disability and Carers Service							
Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for a person aged 16 or over	DWP	Y	Y		Y	Y	
Attendance Allowance (AA)	DWP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Carer's Allowance (CA)	DWP	Y	Y			Y	
Vaccine damage payments	DWP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Bringing up children with special needs	DWP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Industrial injuries disablement benefit (Diseases And Deafness)	DWP	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	

7. Department for Transport

Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
MAVIS	DfT	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Blue Badge scheme	DfT	Y	Y	N	Y		
Motability	DWP Motability	Y	Y	Y	Y	Via dealer network	
DVLA online	DVLA	Y	Y				
Car tax exemption	DVLA	Y	N	N	N		
Disabled Persons Railcard	National Rail	Y	Y	Y	Y	At stations	
DPTAC	DfT	Y	N	N	Y	N	
TRIPSCOPE	TRIPSCOPE	Y	N	Y	N	N	N
Door to door	DPTAC / TRIPSCOPE	Y					

8. Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
DCMS website	DCMS	Y			Y		
Arts Council	Arts Council	Y	Y	Y	Y		
English Heritage	English Heritage	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Sport England	Sport England	Y		Y			
English Federation of Disability Sport	EFDS	Y		Y			

9. Department for Trade and Industry

Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
DTI website	DTI	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Home Safety Network	DTI	Y			Y		

10. Department for Constitutional Affairs

Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
Her Majesty's Court Service	DCA	Y	Y	Y	Y		

11. HM Revenue and Customs Service

Programme/ service/information	Managed by	Channel Used					
		Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
VAT for disabled people	HMRC	Y	Y	Y	Y		
VAT: Vehicles adapted for disabled persons	HMRC	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Importing goods for disabled people free of duty and VAT	HMRC	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Blind person's allowance	HMRC	Y	Y	Y	Y		

12. Voluntary sector						
Organisation	Channel Used					
	Online	Online forms or leaflets	Phone	Print	Face to face	Via intermediaries
Disability Rights Commission	Y	Y	Y	Y		
Disabled Peoples' Advice Line	Y	Y	Some local DIALS only	Y	Local DIALS only	Local DIALS
Queen Elizabeth's Foundation (DissBASE)	Y					Local authorities and the voluntary sector
National Centre for Independent Living	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Citizens Advice	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	
Leonard Cheshire	Y					

Appendix C: Summary of local authority case studies

Local authority case studies		
Local authority	Case study area	Case study summary
Birmingham City Council	Disability Information Zone	<p>Birmingham health and social care team produces a large amount of public information about their services. In an attempt to provide this information in an easily accessible format they have developed a web portal called 'Disability Information Zone' that provides links and signposts to information sources about the authority's services and links to external sources of advice and information. The Disability Information Zone acts as a portal for all of the authority's information about its services for disabled people. It has six main sections:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Library services 2. Information for carers 3. Children and young people 4. Disability talk 5. Social care and health information 6. Transport information

Local authority case studies		
Local authority	Case study area	Case study summary
Cheshire County Council	Networks of user groups for older people and people with learning disabilities	Cheshire has established very close links with service user groups. They have a well established network of people with learning disabilities whom they involve in discussions about council services. They have run three 'valuing people' conferences that have provided a great opportunity to learn about the information needs of their users and to provide regular face to face information. They have also established an older people's user group who have participated in translating and summarising council information for their peers.
Halton Borough Council	'Valuing People' local information	The communications team invested in a separate web page source of information for people with learning disabilities. They were aware that just because something is understandable to them, this does not mean that their target audiences feel the same. Over the last two years, they have developed a range of information in an accessible format for people with learning disabilities. The objective was to make this information as easy to understand and widely available as possible. Their accessible documents are used to help service users in the community, in day centres and on authority groups to be fully consulted about various reports, policies and services and to find out information about the authority.

Local authority case studies

Local authority	Case study area	Case study summary
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham	Guide for parents of disabled children	The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has produced a guide for families and carers with help from parents and carers of disabled children and colleagues from education, health and the voluntary sector. The booklet is a guide to services for disabled children and young people and their parents and carers to find the services and support that they need.
Hull City Council	Voluntary sector information provision	<p>In Hull there is a voluntary organisation called HEROS whose aim is to provide people in Hull with helpful information about a wide range of services and topics related to healthy living and disability.</p> <p>Their target audience for this information is members of the public living in Hull and the East Riding, including disabled people, as well as health and social care professionals and advice workers. They hope that by providing people with knowledge, information and contacts, HEROS will empower people to make informed decisions about their health and well-being.</p>

Local authority case studies		
Local authority	Case study	Case study summary
Leeds City Council	Health and Social Care Information Store	<p>Leeds is currently developing a comprehensive information base for older people and those working with them in Leeds. The aim of this project is to support older and disabled people in maintaining health and independence, with a better quality of life, by being able to find out about and access the right services in good time. The project aims to establish a broad collection of information about organisations and services available for older and disabled people in Leeds, including: health services, the voluntary sector, private providers and the authority.</p> <p>At the centre of the project will be a database (the 'information store'), maintained on a website. It will be easily searchable by staff in all organisations, older people, friends, relatives and carers. It will be updated and maintained on a regular basis. There are already several very good sources of information on specific subjects and specialist information in Leeds. The objective for this project is to signpost to these sources whenever necessary.</p>

Local authority case studies

Local authority	Case study	Case study summary
Surrey County Council	Surrey Adult Linked Disability Registers (SALDR)	<p>Surrey has invested in a project called Surrey Adult Linked Disability Registers that provides information about disability registration for adults. This information includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information about the registration process; • registration paperwork; • registration documents; • quarterly information bulletins; • contact and changes to personal information forms; • consent forms; and • information about services in Surrey. <p>The provision of information for potential users formed a large part of SALDR's project brief. Ensuring the communication and information needs of users were accommodated from the start was considered important for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to engage people in the process; • to ensure participation in the project; and • to ensure minimum barriers to information. <p>This means that SALDR provides information to a number of different groups all of whom have individual communication needs.</p>

Local authority case studies		
Local authority	Case study area	Case study summary
Wolverhampton City Council	<p>Involving service users to produce high quality information.</p> <p>Improving face to face information provision.</p>	<p>Wolverhampton social services won a 2003 Plain English Award for a series of guides for carers and people with learning disabilities. The judges said: 'These guides are clear and to the point with not a word wasted.' The communications manager ensured there was attention to detail and that people with a learning disability were involved throughout the production process. The first 'easy read' booklet produced by social services for people with a learning disability was the care charter Better Care Higher Standards. Wolverhampton wanted to produce something that was easy for anyone to understand and to do this they decided to involve people with a learning disability.</p> <p>Wolverhampton are currently developing six high quality health and care centres for older people, people with disabilities and mental health service users, with links to leisure, libraries and adult education. The centres will be developed through the NHS Local Improvement Finance Trust – a partnership between the public and private sectors. At the heart of this project is modernising services in line with Every Child Matters¹⁵ and the new White Paper Our Health, Our Care, Our Say.¹⁶ The aim is for the centres to provide high quality face to face information provision for a number of target groups.</p>

Footnotes

¹Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, 2005 http://www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/disability/index.asp

²The literature review is an unpublished ODI document. If you would like a copy please contact the ODI – contact details are provided at the end of this report.

³Office for Disability Issues, *Five principles for producing better information for disabled people*, 2007 <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk>

⁴Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, 2005 http://www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/disability/index.asp

⁵Office for Disability Issues, *Five principles for producing better information for disabled people*, 2007 <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk>

⁶The literature review is an unpublished ODI document. If you would like a copy please contact the ODI – contact details are provided at the end of this report.

⁷Office for Disability Issues, *Five principles for producing better information for disabled people*, 2007 <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk>

⁸Ini Grewal, Sarah Joy, Jane Lewis, Kirby Swales and Kandy Woodfield *Disabled for life? Attitudes towards, and experiences of disability in Britain*, National Centre for Social Research/DWP 2002.

⁹The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, organised its work into the following categories: independent living; early years and family support; transition to adulthood; and employment.

¹⁰Directgov information for disabled people is organised by topics: education and learning; home and community; money, tax and benefits; travel and transport; crime, justice and the law; motoring; employment; health and well-being; leisure and recreation; and rights and responsibilities.

¹¹Office for Disability Issues, ***Five principles for producing better information for disabled people***, 2007 <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk>

¹²Office for Disability Issues, ***Five principles for producing better information for disabled people***, 2007 <http://www.officefordisability.gov.uk>

¹³Prime Minister's Strategy Unit, ***Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People***, 2005 http://www.strategy.gov.uk/work_areas/disability/index.asp

¹⁴Disability Employment Advisors.

¹⁵HM Treasury ***Every Child Matters*** 2003 <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk>

¹⁶Department of Health ***Our health, our care, our say***, 2006
<http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/OrganisationPolicy/Modernisation/OurHealthOurCareOurSay/fs/en>



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