

# action on disability

Life beyond barriers



annual review  
2015/16

# Chair's Report



After 18 years Action on Disability is leaving the Greswell Centre for a new facility kindly provided by Hammersmith and Fulham Council in nearby Lillie Road. This is the culmination of our plan to move to inclusive premises that began with the relocation of the Youth Service to Phoenix School and the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith. AoD ends the year with a small surplus which we plan to maintain during the current financial year.

The successful internship programme is now running on four sites across London and will shortly rise to six. Two new local schemes will operate in Hammersmith and Fulham Council and Charing Cross Hospital. This year we also secured over £300k to run the first pan-disability employment service in the borough for over eight years.

Our CEO, Kamran Mallick, is to move on after 12 years of leading the organisation. Kamran has shown vision, resilience and leadership combined with an ability to find new sources of funding and innovative ways to achieve our goals. He has streamlined AoD into a modern organisation, not least in overseeing its change of name from HAFAD to AoD, reflecting its broader scope beyond Hammersmith and Fulham. Kamran has agreed to stay on to help complete the move to the new premises and help recruit and hand over to a new CEO.

Jane Wilmot, OBE, is stepping down from the AoD Board after 25 years as a trustee and 11 as Treasurer and Co-Vice Chair. She has been tenacious in her campaigning for disabled people's rights. She has both nurtured AoD and fiercely challenged the charity to improve.

I would like to offer a big thank you to my fellow trustees who have supported AoD over the year and to all the other volunteers who provide essential support for our reception, the benefits team, peer support and youth service. Last but not least, another big thank you is due to staff for all their hard work and dedication.

Patrick McVeigh, AoD Chair

To read our CEO report of the year please visit our website:  
[www.actionondisability.org.uk](http://www.actionondisability.org.uk)

Our full accounts are available on the Charity Commission website:  
[www.charitycommission.gov.uk](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk)

## Action on Disability

is led by disabled people and works across London.

In this year's annual review, we are taking a closer look at some of the people who use our services and contribute to the organisation. Fiona Anderson, a co-opted member of AoD's Board, and Sarah Robinson, Head of Fundraising, went to interview them.

## Rough Diamond

What strikes you the minute you walk into Paul Mosen's sitting room is that he is a family man. Photographs of his family, his children and his young granddaughters fill the room. Paul's 58 now, and has lived all his life with a very rare and complex condition called arthrogryposis which, put very simply, means his bone joints are deformed.

That didn't stop him working as a diamond cutter, a driver, and running a market stall in Fulham's North End. Or following Chelsea Football Club, where fellow fans nicknamed him Sticksie because he walked with crutches. Paul says: "I've just cracked on with my life. I love my life, I wouldn't have it any other way".

**“He's prepared to push back against any barriers put in front of him”**

He's someone who won't readily take no for an answer and who's prepared to push back against any barriers put in front of him. And not just on his own behalf, but to help others too. He cheerfully enlists his Chelsea friends, footballers and fans alike, to help fundraise for other people. Recently he discovered a boy who was in need of a wheelchair at his granddaughter's school, and was having trouble getting one. He and his son Charlie raised the money for a new chair in 6 weeks.

That determination comes from Paul's own experiences. He'd never really thought of himself as disabled until he had a serious accident in 2000, when a bathroom wall collapsed on him. It led to him spending nearly 2 years in Stanmore Hospital, and a marathon series of over 400 operations and procedures, made worse by recurring infections.

No longer able to work but determined to go on living his life the way he wants to, Paul has struggled to find his way through the benefits system and to get the support he's entitled to. He now needs a power wheelchair to get about and the support of a full time carer. But he's been shocked by the lack of respect from professionals. For example, he was told he could always stay in bed if his wheelchair broke down. Not the right thing to say to anyone, but certainly not to a man who uses his power chair to get in his adapted van and drive himself, and other wheelchair users, to every Chelsea match!

And more recent changes in who pays for his care needs left Paul so confused and angry that he got to the point where he had begun to think life was no longer worth living. He found himself unable to pay his carers, and unable to work out what had happened to his care payments. "It was like a big snowball, I think I would have committed suicide, if it hadn't been for Action on Disability," he said. "It was just diabolical".



Fortunately Tina Martin from AoD's Advocacy service stepped in to help Paul. AoD had already worked with Paul on benefits, but Tina's role is to help represent a disabled person when they need to make their case with social services, wheelchair services, or any other organisation. Her work starts from the understanding that the disabled person is the expert on their condition and therefore they know best what they actually need.

Unfortunately, that often isn't the way central or local government services work, and Paul admits his frustration, over people making inaccurate assumptions about his rare condition and what he needs, can quickly boil over: "My style is bashing down doors. I'm hot-headed, I am very feisty".

So Tina's brought in a bit of diplomacy, smoothing the way and calming things down. It's a big commitment of time, she says: "Paul now has no meetings unless I am there. He has lost confidence in several services and doesn't feel he can trust people to show respect and give him timely replies, unless I am there helping him. What he wants is to live an independent life, enjoy his family and football, get out into the community and help others".

Our volunteer IT trainers supported 100 people to earn 138 certificates using the Learn My Way online tool.

Other staff at AoD have also helped Paul with benefits, care assessments, continuing healthcare, and a range of other issues including the Blue Badge and the congestion charge.

“I’d have been lost without Action on Disability,” he says. “Peter Gay helped me to get my Direct Payments set up and that has had a huge impact on my life. It has enabled me to feel more independent and in control. My care needs are now met in a way that suits me rather than me having to fit into someone else’s way of doing things”.

“Tom Kenny has had a massive effect on the lives of many disabled people in Hammersmith & Fulham. Tom ensures disabled people get what they are entitled to. Without him, I and many others, would be completely lost in a confusing benefits system. I can’t say a big enough thank you to Tina, Tom and Peter”.

Our welfare benefits service supported disabled people to get a rise in annual income of £1,504,137.

Paul wants to see more disabled people speak up to support AoD in helping them. He points out that when changes were made in the Direct Payments system (which helps Paul pay his carers) AoD wrote to over 550 people asking them to help by writing to their MPs about the changes, but only a few did. He said: “We’ve got to make sure every disabled person in this borough supports AoD, or it might not be here to help us next time we need it”

**“We’ve got to make sure every disabled person in this borough supports AoD, or it might not be here to help us next time we need it”**



A game of bocce in Bishops Park

# Finding Her Balance

“Would you like to follow me?” For a brief moment, I didn't recognise the smart young woman politely asking me to follow her from reception at L'Oréal UK's Hammersmith headquarters. Then I realised, it was Jodie Clark, with a poise and confidence I'd not seen in her before. Her new role as an intern working with the senior PA team clearly suited her, and was helping her master new skills.



I'd first met Jodie last August at the summer holiday project Action on Disability's youth service runs at the Phoenix High School in Hammersmith. She'd been coming to AoD's youth club in Fulham for a couple of years and was contributing now as a volunteer, helping run workshops and activities for young people throughout the holidays.

Jodie has a learning difficulty called global development delay. AoD's experience shows volunteering is a great way for people like Jodie to build up their self confidence and skills. Jodie's always been enthusiastic, but the responsibility of the role alongside the youth workers helped her develop a radar for the needs of other young people and know how she could help them.

Jodie, who's now 24, first came to AoD through a referral from a Job Centre to its employment service, but she soon got involved with the youth service. She'd just moved back to Fulham where she had few friends locally. She loved it: “It was a life changing experience for me”, she said. “And volunteering now gives me a chance to give something back”.

“**Joining the youth service was a life changing experience for me**”

32 young people will graduate this year from our internships at GSK, Hounslow, St George's Hospital and L'Oréal. Over 60% secure paid work as a result.

AoD's employment service soon put Jodie forward for a bigger challenge: to be one of the first group of disabled interns at L'Oréal UK & Ireland. The international cosmetics company, famous for its slogan “Because you're worth it”, wants to increase employment opportunities for disabled people globally.

So working closely with AoD, it started an internship programme entitled Headway, at its Hammersmith offices last November. The programme gives five young disabled people a 12-months work experience as interns at the company while studying at the Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College.

Jodie's a friendly and outgoing young woman, who likes to be kept busy. So it seemed a good match for her to intern with the PA team for the company directors. Jodie has the support of mentor Kate Jones, who is PA to the director of L'Oréal's Active Cosmetics Division. Kate volunteered for the role to get some management experience, but she says has found the role much more rewarding than she expected.

"It's been a learning curve, but I'd do it all again in a heartbeat," Kate said. "I'd one hundred percent recommend the mentor role to my colleagues. It does mean time out of your day as you need to check tasks are done right, and to realise you are there to help develop somebody."



The daily workload at a high profile global company can often be reactive and pressurised, but Kate has seen Jodie rise to the challenge. Earlier this year, when all the senior European directors were coming to London, Kate asked Jodie to prepare all the presentation books for the meeting, and Jodie simply responded: "I would be honoured to!"

"Jodie treats it as if it is a privilege to bind a book, which for us is just part of the job," Kate said. "She's helped me appreciate all the things we take for granted working here. It can be busy and stressful, so this has been about getting back to basics."

It has been a learning experience for the interns and all the people they work with. Jodie gave a presentation to her colleagues when she first arrived about the best way to work with her. For example, she hates loud noises, so if there is a fire drill, she needs someone to help her leave the building. It soon became clear it was really stressful for her to work across four different teams at once, and Jodie needed more consistency if her internship was to work out well.

Action on Disability has plenty of experience in running intern schemes and finding creative solutions to the different problems that come up. The charity already runs three internship schemes, including one now in its fourth successful year at the global pharmaceutical company GSK (Glaxo Smith Kline) in Hounslow; another at St George's Hospital, Tooting, and a third at Hounslow Council. A new scheme is planned for Hammersmith and Fulham Council this autumn.

What makes the difference and underpins the success of each scheme is the AoD trained “job coach” who is on site every day to help the interns and their managers solve day to day problems. For example, they help managers break down complex tasks in a way that makes it easier for the interns to do them. L’Oréal and AoD staff agreed to reduce the number of teams Jodie was reporting to, and bring in an extra job coach, funded by Access to Work, to give her one-to-one support.

When meeting Jodie with her job coach Ling Man, who used to work at Samsung, you can see the strong sense of trust between them. Jodie says she loves working with someone who understands the corporate workplace so well. Ling listens in when Jodie is briefed on her different tasks, and checks with her how she thinks she will do them, suggesting simpler ways when she can.



They’ve agreed buzzwords Jodie can use to signal to Ling when she’s feeling stressed. Jodie’s been able to make useful contributions too: seeing how much L’Oréal staff travel, she suggested changing the standard risk assessments after the Paris and Brussels attacks.

The Headway scheme has already been a success, according to HR officer Charlie Buckland, who’s now got the go-ahead to run the scheme again next year. “L’Oréal has found it significantly improves the disability confidence of the teams in which they are working,” he said. “Those teams have learned first-hand that someone with a learning difficulty, when given the right support, can truly become a part of the team and add real value to the business. It has been a pleasure to see these young people grow in their roles and take on any challenge put to them.” And he hopes by using all they’ve learned this year, that similar schemes will soon become commonplace across L’Oréal.

And what does the future hold for Jodie? More than six in ten of AoD’s interns have gone on to get paid work, so her chances are good. In the meantime, she can still enjoy what the youth service has to offer.

Our sports officer is successfully working with local sports clubs to make them accessible and welcoming to disabled people.

I walked with her the short distance from the L’Oréal offices to the Lyric Theatre, another AoD partner, where Jodie’s been taking part in dance classes every Monday after work. As she joined wholeheartedly in the class, I remembered Jodie dancing at the end of last year’s summer school. She’d performed an expressive and graceful dance

that she explained was about keeping her freedom and her struggle to stop anyone taking it away from her. That grace I saw again, in her polished greeting to me at L'Oréal.

Jodie was finally finding her balance.



## One Remarkable Woman

Yasmin Mian was born with a visual impairment and slight mobility problem, but her quiet determination meant that by her early thirties she was working as a receptionist in a busy office. Now she is in charge of her own project at AoD, supporting other disabled people to lead fuller lives.

Yasmin describes her younger self as shy and lacking confidence. She said she would advise the young Yasmin to try more things, get out and about and not to allow people to tell you 'that's not possible for you'. She said, "I would tell my younger self to think about what you want to do in the future. When I was younger I didn't really think about it as I thought there is plenty of time, but the time passes very quickly."

Our Health and Wellbeing group has over 40 regular members who enjoy the chance to share their experiences and exchange tips and strategies.

When you meet Yasmin now, you might assume she is still quite shy. She speaks quietly and tends to let others take the lead in conversation. However if you overhear her taking a call from a distressed disabled person, or watch her facing a room full of frustrated Deaf people, you will witness her strength and begin to understand the breadth of her knowledge and experience.

Yasmin's school life ended at 16 with little in the way of careers advice. She attended the John Aird School in Shepherds Bush which specialised in pupils with a

visual impairment. Her mum worked as a carer and Yasmin thought that she would like to take on a caring role, perhaps with children.

John Aird School had no 6th Form so Yasmin went to Hammersmith & West London College to study Community Care. After a year, Yasmin was told that child care was “not suitable for someone with a visual impairment.”

Though bitterly disappointed, Yasmin moved on to take up the next opportunity, a Business Admin NVQ at the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford. This was her first time away from home, on her own, a chance to mix with other young people and explore a new town. Yasmin consolidated her skills, back at home, studying Administration and Computer Skills and secured a voluntary position with the Citizens Trust. This soon turned into a paid job as Receptionist & Administrator.

As the century turned Yasmin’s career seemed on track. She was using her training to support the team publishing the Disability Times Newspaper 'a voice of conscience for a caring nation'. The newspaper highlighted the problems faced by disabled people and campaigned to put the Disability Discrimination Act on the statute books. Yasmin worked there for five years and represented the staff when presenting Lady Morris with a bouquet of flowers at a reception in the House of Lords.



Our Advocates enabled two service users to move out of separate residential care placements and set up home together.

In 2003, Yasmin had a bad cold which dragged on for ages and she began feeling pain in her legs and had difficulty walking. She was diagnosed with Guillain-Barré syndrome which occurs when the body's immune system attacks part of the nervous system.

Yasmin was in hospital for four months and needed many more months of recuperation at home. Following treatment and physiotherapy, Yasmin moved from bed to wheelchair to crutches and finally to a single walking stick, but during this long recovery she had given up her job.

Yasmin had lost confidence and was worried about her ability to work but her quiet determination prompted her to look for new opportunities. She had heard about

HAFAD (as we were known then) and offered to volunteer for us. She joined our reception team in 2005 and despite the many roles she has taken on since then she still keeps one foot firmly planted in reception. Yasmin has been the calm centre of the storm many times over the years, coping with the lost, the furious and the frustrated, supporting anxious visitors and standing up to sales people.

She worked as an administrator for the Employment Team and our Independent Living Service, she supported Fundraising and our Loyalty Card scheme and still maintains our membership database.

Her most recent role, Co-ordinator of Westminster Connect, is to support disabled people in Westminster to get out and about, connect with each other and to explore the opportunities and services that exist in London.

When Yasmin applied for this job, no one said “it’s not suitable for someone with a visual impairment” but even if they had, today’s Yasmin would not have listened. She explained the adjustments we needed to make for her to do the job and co-ordinated her Access to Work application - securing the equipment and support she needed.



Youth scheme artwork

Yasmin’s new role is not an easy one. Her first task was to listen and respond to Deaf people in Westminster who were frustrated that the council had commissioned peer support when they wanted direct, practical help. Securing referrals, fighting access battles, challenging people’s reluctance to face the world – this job will keep her busy. But she is enjoying the challenge, gaining experience and learning different skills.

**“Yasmin’s advice to her younger self, to try new things and not to accept the answer no”**

Yasmin’s advice to her younger self, to try new things and not to accept the answer no, is good advice for everyone, and particularly for disabled people with the extra barriers and discrimination they still face.

Clearly, she has taken her own words to heart and is reaping the rewards.

# Every charity needs a Jane Wilmot

Twenty-five years of service with one small local charity must be a record. That's the length of time Jane Wilmot OBE has been a trustee of Action on Disability, taking the lead as chair and then treasurer for much of that time.



AoD patron Baroness Rosalie Wilkins and former chair Maria Brenton sum Jane's work up succinctly: "Many small organisations have failed because they lacked a Jane Wilmot. She has been a really important backstop to the integrity of the organisation, insisting on fairness, due procedure and punctilious attention to financial control. The organisation would have got into serious difficulty many a time without her scrupulous attention to its governance and finances".

Jane herself is far too modest to acknowledge the critical importance of her role with AoD or HAFAD (Hammersmith & Fulham Action on Disability) as it was known when she first joined as a trustee in 1991: "It is amazing the charity is still here. I suppose I've brought staying power, and I've not walked away".

But at 73, she feels, it is time to review the volunteer work she is doing. She will remain a lay member of the Hammersmith & Fulham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and on several North West London advisory groups where she campaigns for better hospital transport, integrated wheelchair services and accessible information for patients and carers.

Diagnosed deaf at the age of four, Jane has never let her disability get in her way. A history graduate, she became a librarian at the British Library. But she got bored and retrained as a lawyer.

Perhaps it's that legal training that developed her ability to ask exactly the right question at the right moment. She says it was her deafness that led her to ask questions to check she'd understood correctly, but her incisive question style gets right to the point and ensures people stay on track

**“Her incisive question style gets right to the point and ensures people stay on track and come up with good evidence for their arguments”**

and come up with good evidence for their arguments. It's a talent honed over long years of experience on committees and forums at a national, London-wide and local level. She did battle with government and industry on the national Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, where she argued the case for audible and visual information on trains - and then moved swiftly to get the same service on buses.



That work earned her an OBE in 1998, a rare moment of recognition which was overshadowed by the death of her teenage son Jonathan from leukaemia. She'd lost her daughter Elizabeth the year before. But remarkably, Jane's personal tragedy seems to have led her to give even more generously of herself to help other disabled people.

She worked on the transport themes of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, she was vice chair of the RNID, now Action on Hearing Loss, for 12 years; she chaired the Disability Alliance (now Disability Rights UK), and she's been a member of Hammersmith and Fulham health consultative groups right through from community health council to the current Healthwatch committee.

She also chaired the Hammersmith and Fulham Disability Forum from 2006 to 2013. Typically, Jane says she has got as much from her work with Action on Disability and the Forum as she has given.

She says: "Being a trustee of AoD and chair of the Disability Forum gave me insight into specific issues faced by disabled people that I was able to follow up when working with other organisations. It was a privilege to hear testimonies from disabled people and to be able to do something about it. If I hear of good practice in governance or information, I share it with AoD, so it is a two way street."

In partnership with HF Mind we secured funding for the first pan-disability employment project in the borough in eight years.

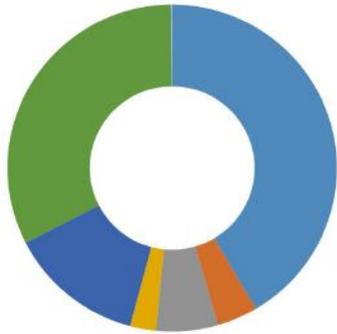
This two-year project will support people to move closer to paid work, understand their rights and look after their wellbeing.

What she'd like to see happen next at Action on Disability is to see more disabled people follow her example and step forward to help run the charity. Many use its services but, as she says, its vision is to be managed by disabled people for disabled people and carers. There's a vacancy for a trustee, volunteers are welcome!

## Finance and funding

### Money in

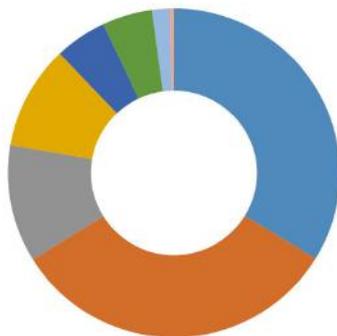
Income by source (%)



	2015/16	2014/15
LBHF contracts	41.5	35.8
LBHF grants	4.0	2.3
Lottery funding	6.1	10.4
Access to Work	2.5	3.1
Trusts/foundations	13.3	15.8
Fees/earned income	32.4	30.8
Fundraising & events	0.1	1.9
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

### Money out

Expenditure by service (%)



	2015/16	2014/15
Youth Service	33.7	36.0
Employment	32.5	30.5
Advocacy	11.5	9.0
Welfare benefits	10.2	9.3
Peer Support	5.1	3.4
Independent Living	4.9	8.2
Access to Work	1.7	1.9
Fundraising	0.4	1.4
	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Our Youth Service provided 136 supported places to young disabled people with high and/or complex needs to access our holiday projects.

Our individual programme evaluations, supported through a communications board, enabled all young people to feedback and evaluate the programme.

## Contracts and earned income



Access to Work

## Grant income



Supported by  
**ARTS COUNCIL  
ENGLAND**



**Hammersmith  
United Charities**



**LBHF**  
Dr Edward & Bishop King's  
Fulham Charity  
Duke of Edinburgh's Award  
The Daisy Trust

Trustees  
Angeleca,  
Victoria and  
Felicity at last  
year's AGM



### Front cover photos

- a Performing in Bishops Park
- b Learning archery at Linford Christi Stadium
- c Mural design by Jon Rees, created by young members
- d Trustees Jane & Angeleca
- e Graduation at St George's Hospital
- f Anna & Dejan



Young members trying out new sports

## Contact us

# action on disability

Patron: Baroness Rosalie Wilkins

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## We're moving!

From September 2016 AoD will be based on Lillie Road next to Normand Croft Community School. For the latest info on the move see our website.

