
West Cumbria Dyslexia Association

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Charity Number 1010118



Chair's Report 2nd Nov 2010

2010 finds the association busier than ever before, with the closure of North Cumbria Association we are getting more calls from that area. In total we have responded to 112 enquiries, 22 have been from parents, 10 of these were concerning boys, 12 have been about girls, 36 enquiries from adults, 15 from male 17 female. 20 of these enquires have been for assessments. 10 we have arranged assessments within the West, 7 we have passed on to Scuda, 3 we have referred to Sellafield as the callers worked there; they have an excellent learning centre which caters for all learners. Other enquires/contacts have been from organisations wanting information or looking for software.

These numbers do not include those contacts made direct to befrienders and other committee members, or the repeated contacts made with parents, adults and organisations throughout the ongoing support we offer after first contact is made. Also casual contacts made when people know us.

Initially these are phone contacts, which can last 5 minutes or over an hour depending how stressed parent are. Seeing your child constantly distressed can leave parents feeling helpless.

Concerns about children, these are passed on to befrienders who contact parents, and then an appointment can be arranged in college at a befriending session or a venue that suits both parties. Parents can become very frustrated not knowing where to turn for help.

Adults who contact us sometimes just need someone to talk to. A phone call can be all that is needed, while others want to meet another adult Dyslexic face 2 face to help them understand their difficulty.

Many are working, and because of changes in their work now need to have a qualification and find they are struggling with the paper work, having enough time to finish a task is always an issue. This is when an assessment can help. We can put them in contact with an assessor who will put them at

ease before the assessment begins. The assessment takes about two hours giving them the time to complete each task. This information will support their request for the help they need when taking exams, which can lead on to promotion. Adults can have very low self-esteem and need to know we are there to support them.

We have also facilitated two awareness sessions, one for Cumbria Police and one for Sellafield. Both sessions went well with some very good feedback. I have approached Connexions Cumbria with a view to running a morning session. They are interested as they have used our service frequently and I am to send info. This is an area we could expand on as it would bring in welcome revenue.

We've had 18 calls from organisations,

- Sellafield Learning Centre
- Cumbria Police - awareness session for staff,
- Cumbria county Council -information and help supporting adults and appropriate software
- Lakes College - help supporting adults
- West Cumbria Achievement Zone – help supporting young people
- Austin Friars School Carlisle - help supporting young adult
- Connexions - help supporting Adults
- Social Services - help supporting young person
- News & Star- support for website
- Cumbria Fire Service support for employee info/leaflets
- Cumbria County Council Extended Services Awareness session
- Carlisle Airport support for employee
- Adult Education Service Carlisle
- Newcastle College support for student in area
- Riverside Housing Assesment for employee
- Start Here information for Sign posting
- CAN Networking
- SEBEC helping young people find work

Enquires range from

- How can I help my child?
- What can I expect schools to do?
- Tribunals
- Explanation on how the system works
- Understanding Statements
- Information on Accesses to Work

- Training to work with Dyslexic
- Student's entitlements
- Software: what is available and demonstrations
- Help with literacy and numeracy
- A listening ear
- Assessments for both Children and adults
- Awareness Sessions

The number wanting assessments is increasing; we can arrange these for any age group with a qualified assessor at a cost of £185, £200 for DSA, of which the association get £20 for the referral. We are desperate to find another assessor to enable us to keep the travel to a minimum, having to send people to Scuda is not really satisfactory for all concerned.

The website WWW.WCDA.ORG.UK

Many of our contacts come through the website there have been over 10000 visits during the last year, with good feed back

From website analysis, we see many visits from automatic systems, such as Google and Yahoo. This is reflected in high ratings when doing searches in the web search engines. However there are many other places (than search engines) which refer to us, and we can see people arriving from

- BDA
- CFM Radio
- SCUDA
- Google and Yahoo search engines

Most common pages visited:

There are thousands of visits to the index page (the front page) but looking at the pages within the site we see 700 to 900 visits per page to:

- Children's checklist
- Adult checklist
- Adult support
- Overview
- Articles menu
- Links pages
- Visual Stress
- Befriending

Once the web page has been accessed these numbers shows the interest in all the information available

Ian has created an e-mail address called admin which we can use to reach members. It will have a message attached saying do not reply to this message, it is only for you information but we can use it to let members know we have received their membership and send information on meetings. We can also send info in a block to all members

Fund raising

We have this year only had one Fund raising event which was a collection at Dunmail Park in Dyslexic Awareness Week, we raised £326. The Awareness sessions for organisations raised £500 in the last year.

Future events

St Nicholas Church Soup kitchen Feb 2010

Awareness Session Connexions Cumbria

General meeting for Parents and children, Hands-On activities.

More open meetings/discussions to be arranged

I spent much of the summer preparing contact lists and charts of areas covered by our service, hoping this would help with our funding bids. Sadly we don't seem to be attracting any funders to help the Association move towards employing a paid worker for 12 hours a week, making the Association more accessible. This means more pressure keeping up with the enquiries, preparing handouts/information for open meetings, preparing for awareness sessions and dealing with general enquires. We must look at sharing this workload if the volume of enquires continues to increase.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for all their hard work throughout the year and giving their time, without this we could not function.

I would also like to give a big thank you to Sandy for keeping our accounts in order and Ian for keeping the website up to date. Also the long suffering husbands, daughters, sons, grandchildren and friends that get dragged along to help on all our fund raising events

Thank You Doris Pearce Chair WCDA

