

# **Somerset Access and Inclusion Network**

## **Membership Evaluation Report April 2011**

Information in blue indicates the results of the 2010 survey for comparison.

235 (32.6%) (249) (32.6%) completed questionnaires have been returned.

Of those returned.

### **Involvement**

64 (27.2%) 77 (30.9%) had participated in a consultation in the past 12 months

#### **Of those who had not participated the following reasons were given:**

16 (9.7%) 23 (14%) stated that the subjects were not of interest

15 (9.1%) 14 (8.5%) were not aware that there had been any consultation events

72 (43.6%) 72 (43.9%) stated that the date/timings of the event were not suitable

57 (34.5%) 51 (31.1%) felt that the venue was too far / not accessible

#### **Other reasons given included;**

"Subjects inappropriate to current situation."

"Have been housebound for a lot of the year - various medical problems."

"A lot of my time is taken up as a parish councillor."

"Course full, so I could not go to it."

"If there are no subjects of interest to a deaf disability, I would not be interested."

"I really only want info by post. I enjoy the newsletters and find them helpful."

"Away a lot of the time."

"Transport not available to venue locations."

"Difficulty in moving generally."

"Don't like being in groups/strangers."

"Local only, lack of funds, disability limitations."

"Only partly disabled."

"Too sick."

"Personal Illness + Carer Responsibilities (It's been a very difficult year)"

"Various stays in hospital."

"I don't have a motor vehicle and haven't had the time due to being a single parent."

"Do not quite understand what is involved + how to go about getting to events. (I cannot organize how to get myself to places I do not know)"

"I have limited communications."

"All seem to be in the Taunton area."

## **General Membership**

- |             |                    |   |
|-------------|--------------------|---|
| 108 (46%)   | <b>110 (44.2%)</b> | wished to be involved in future consultation events |
| 28 (11.9%)  | <b>46 (18.5%)</b>  | wish to be involved in representation               |
| 208 (88.5%) | <b>215 (86.3%)</b> | wish to receive information (i.e. newsletters)      |
| 118 (50.2%) | <b>135 (54.2%)</b> | wish to attend information events                   |

## **Are you happy with the amount of involvement you have had with the organisation?**

- 178 (86.8%) **198 (87.2%)** of those that answered are happy with their amount of Involvement

"Just feel not enough in South Somerset nearer to where I live - I feel it's isolated to only Taunton areas."

"If local to this far end of Somerset, + if the events are suitable for me situation as ex carer."

"Not able"

"Due to constraints of chronic illness."

"You do not hold events when working people can attend."

"Seem not to have been invited much in the past year."

"Only available in afternoon"

"I would simply have liked to have done more - I really enjoy working with your team/attending events"

"A need for Wellington based approach"

"Although I completed VIP training, have not been asked to do anything."

"Taunton is always difficult for me."

"I feel frustrated that when you have events on I am usually working and cannot easily get time off. I will certainly try harder this year"

"I am very busy working for deaf plus not enough time but would like to find the time"

## **Do you feel you have been discriminated against when using any of our services/facilities?**

- 8 (3.4%) **10 (4%)** members felt they have been discriminated against when using any of our services/facilities

### **Comments received are shown below;**

"Time of meeting."

"On envelope you send me you print in big print my name and articles - now everyone knows! Ta! For the blind."

"When my pal and I came down to be interviewed for a trustee's role, we felt we were

not wanted...."

"Parking - it is very difficult when in a manual wheelchair and likely to be at CDS offices for a few hours"

"Not enough of those wonderful doorstep sandwiches."

"No local meeting."

"Pointing people towards your website or other websites when further information is needed." – response provided.

"Stopped sending consultation info to myself and my daughter" – response given.

## Contacting the Organisation

82 (34.9%) **94 (37.8%)** members had made contact with the office in the past 12 months

### Of these

19 (23.2%) **26 (27.7%)** had contacted the office in person

61 (74.4%) **65 (69.1%)** made contact by phone

17 (20.7%) **18 (19.1%)** made contact in writing

22 (26.8%) **22 (23.4%)** made contact by email

55 (67.1%) **59 (62.8%)** of those contacting the office found it easy to find the contact details

### For those making contact by phone:

#### Of the 55 people that answered this question

54 (98.2%) **64 (100%)** state that the phone was answered quickly and efficiently

#### In response to the question 'Were you happy with the manner in which you were dealt with?'

#### Of the 59 people that answered this question

55 (93.2%) **62 (100%)** were happy with the manner in which they were dealt with

#### Of the 57 people that answered this question

50 (87.7%) **60 (98.4%)** felt that Compass were able to answer their query

#### Of the 56 people that answered this question

52 (92.9%) **58 (100%)** were happy with the quality of information they were given

#### Of the 34 people that answered this question

30 (88.2%) **43 (100%)** members stated that we had signposted them to someone who was able to help when we had not been able to

### Other comments:

"(You don't always answer e-mails) - I feel compass does not really want activist type members that are actually trying to change discrimination when it is seen in the area they live - My eyes are always open to things that could be made better."

"I asked person to speak more slowly - person kept gabbling - seemed unable/unwilling to offer help."

"I was given other possible points of information."

"Message taken never called back."

"Asked why we were not being contacted were told you'd look into and let me know - no info no change. Only received questionnaires."

"I tried to get on the trustees board - did not get in."

### **Newsletter**

211 (95.9%) **232 (99.1%)** of those that answered felt that the Networker is a useful publication

203 (94.9%) **219 (97.3%)** liked the layout and appearance of the newsletter

136 (57.9%) **160 (64.3%)** would like to see more articles on members' experiences

141 (60%) **155 (62.2%)** would like to see details on events and what's on

94 (40%) **107 (43%)** would like space for classified adverts

120 (51.1%) **143 (57.4%)** would like to see more readers' comments and letters

### **Do you feel it is published frequently enough?**

200 (95.2%) **213 (95.5%)** of those that did answered feel it is published frequently enough

### **Other comments concerning the newsletter;**

"I love reading it and look forward to receiving it."

"Feel monthly would give people more contact."

"More from South Somerset (Yeovil/Wincanton)"

"It's too like the advertising free papers."

"Relevant info - as released - made available sooner"

"It's too big and bulky. (Big Print reader)"

"I would prefer it to have more of the content to be about events of interest, how to do things, disability news, grants available to the disabled etc..."

"Don't tackle issues about benefit reform or other pressing governmental idiotism."

"Helps loneliness, more often would be good."

"Lack of info."

"The layout is too "busy". I find it hard to follow the articles. Too many colours and too many different fonts used"

"Could be more attractive and maybe once a month"

"OK as it is"

"I am hard of hearing. I read the Networker and take it to the Taunton Hard of Hearing Club, but it has little relevance to us, it's obviously useful to the disabilities"

"Maybe monthly ? Because of changes at present"

"Smaller to handle easier - thicker would be OK I would think"

"At the moment Deaf people do not see Compass as doing much for them, maybe a future issue could have 1/4 - 1/2 page to encourage Deaf people to join + come to meeting as Deaf people see Compass as just being for the physically disabled"

"Commentary on what's happening politically/changes to budgets/new equality"

"Something about events in my local area, Yeovil."

"Quite happy with newsletter."

"Articles on drug abuse treatment + rehab - Also mental illness + services."

"If you produced the Networker once a month it would be difficult to fund"

"I think your newsletter is most informative and a good read too"

"Maybe more about deafness being a disability"

"Items for sale i.e. disabled items - would be a good idea"

"Maybe experiences of people because of changes of ESA, DLA?"

"Details of places to visit that are Compass friendly"

## **Website**

47 (20%) **52 (20.9%)** respondents have used the Compass Disability Network website

40 (85.1%) **37 (71.2%)** found the information they were looking for

33 (70.2%) **37 (71.2%)** respondents felt that there should be more local information

22 (46.8%) **27 (51.9%)** would like to see more national information

28 (59.6%) **26 (50%)** would like to see information on holidays

19 (40.4%) **25 (48.1%)** respondents felt a chat forum for members was a good idea

## **Other comments relating to the website included;**

"Seems okay as it is"

"I look on facebook to get info on Compass, not being used to using a laptop I am only just getting the hang of it."

"General useful information"

"More international news."

"Information for young people, especially when transferring to adults."

"Plug to Facebook"

## Other Areas

**Members were asked to select the three areas they would like Compass to concentrate on in the next financial year from our Strategic priorities;**

73 (31.1%) would like Compass to develop in line with the needs of our users

43 (18.3%) would like Compass to work alongside the national agenda for disability and develop services in line with this.

93 (39.6%) would like Compass to ensure users are involved in decision making and policy development at District, County and regional level. Seek and promote opportunities for disabled people to express their views.

49 (20.9%) would like to see Compass develop as a Centre for Independent Living

104 (44.3%) would like Compass to be established as a provider of information for disabled people in Somerset and support other disability organisations within Somerset.

54 (23%) would like see educational opportunities to enable disabled people to enhance their quality of life given priority

66 (28.1%) would like Compass to actively seek to expand services to provide further opportunities / services for disabled people.

51 (21.7%) would like to Compass to actively promote equality of opportunity and oppose any form of discrimination

27 (11.5%) would like Compass to explore the issues connected to disability hate crime, raising awareness of the existence of hate crime in Somerset.

84 (35.7%) would like Compass to actively promote the need for physical access to premises and services within Somerset

36 (15.3%) would like Compass to adapt its services and in particular direct payment and personal budget support services to meet the changing needs of the personalisation agenda and the transformation of social care.

63 (26.8%) would like to see Compass actively look to change the negative attitudes and behaviours that disabled people can face.

To the question "What are the three main concerns that affect your daily living as a disabled person", these were the key responses given together with the comments made;

**Access** - "Access to shops (etc)"/ "Misuse of facilities designed for disabled use - i.e. blue badge bays, access slopes etc."/ "Lack of ramps to buildings/ "Getting to places and venues."/ "Wheelchair Access/"Accessibility."/ "Access to buildings within Taunton and at work."/ "Access to my scooter with regard to charging up."/ "Access to various public buildings/"The number of shops that still don't have automatically opening doors."/ "Some shops still inaccessible to buggies."/ "Facilities at meetings."/ "Poor building structure - even new buildings"/"Access - In south Somerset this is still an issue. Road Paths + Shops etc."/ "Narrow access within retail units (aisles etc)"/ "Many shops, have very heavy doors which are very difficult for disabled use."

**Attitudes and behaviour-** "The negative attitude the council has specifically to disabled wheelchair users etc..."/"Lack of deaf awareness"/"That I am seen as a person and not a woman in a wheelchair"/"Lack of understanding of others about my conditions being accepted."/ "Other people's behaviour."/ "People tend to 'look the other way' when I am out, I don't appear disabled enough!"/ "Ignorance to wheelchair users."/ "I don't like the way I am or the way I look with having my bad hand - I don't like showing my hand too much. I like to hide it under my sleeve frightened I put people off. Not very confident in myself."/ "When I go out on a good day, people glare at me, thinking that I abuse the blue badge."/ "Cruelty and comments from people when I walk slowly due to painkillers."

**Communication** - As a profoundly deaf person;- Hospitals and Doctors surgeries not capable of dealing with someone who is deaf – i.e. calling in to consulting room – can't hear them docs who look at computer on their desk"/"Loop systems not working or non-existent in shops etc."/ "Lack of communication with others. Not your family."

**Crime** -"Feeling Safe"/ "No police seen around"/"Vulnerability"

**Disabled Parking-** "Not enough disabled parking facilities in shopping areas, some are (if able to find) much too far away from shops and there are not a great deal of them, most are one or two places only,"/ "Parking in town at Musgrove Park Hospital"/"Not being able to park nearer to shops I wish to visit as non-disabled cars park in these spaces/"Access to parking spaces for w/chair users needing the wide sides "/ "People illegally parked in blue badge spaces."

**Direct Payments** – "Criteria for Direct Payments"/ "Potential decreases in Direct Payments"/ "Training for PA's"/ "The service provided (or in some cases not provided) by A4E."

**Discrimination** - "Discrimination."/ "Work discrimination."/ "Discrimination for example: attitude portrayed by Government on the sick/disabled"/"Institutionalized Discrimination e.g. - Housing Benefit dept Mendip District Council."/ "Lack of will to pursue discrimination cases."

**Education** - "I just exist - I find it difficult just getting ready for the day and getting through it. I would love to be able to actually enjoy a day - attend a course in e.g. - Russian or art - or how to learn English/Math's."

**Employment** – “Work Opportunities”/ “Energy levels are so low I cannot work”/“Inequality of opportunity in public sector.”/ “Work access.”/ “Getting an equal opportunity in jobs.”/ “Discrimination while looking for employment.”

**Equality** – “I know the government legislates for disabled to be equal and have rights, in reality disabled still = 2nd class person.”/ “To be given the same opportunities as able bodied people.”

**Government** - "Welfare Rights"/"Government changes to DLA"/"Government Policies"/ "Failure of local government to control misuse.."/ "Changes to qualifying criteria for disability benefits."/ "Changes to benefits."/ "Threat to DLA"/"The future for disabled people (Changes to DLA etc)"/ "The constant threat of this coalition reducing the already pitiful benefits to disabled people"/"Cutbacks in supporting people funding for Somerset."

**Health** - "Ignorance of NHS staff about condition. (ME/CFS)" "Cooking, shopping, eating a balanced diet"/"I have had some falls when they happen and I end up on the floor and need help to get up from the floor."/ "Access to good medical facilities." / "Managing my own health issues" / "G.P's lack of contact when incidents occur."/ "Changes to NHS services." / "Possible erosion of organisations as the NHS, Care and ageism in these services." / "Worried about deterioration in health, and my husband will not be able to cope."/ "Inability to keep up with non disabled people - i.e acute episodes of tiredness."/ "Keeping fit as possible whilst using electric wheelchair"

**Highways** - "Un-evenness of pavements + pedestrian crossings"/"Problems of pavements - people parking on + over dropped kerbs."/ "This on behalf of my husband who is brain damaged + registered blind. Crossing roads."/ "Not enough dropped pavements for wheelchair & scooter users"/"Pavements when out on wheelchair."/ "Roads not good for wheelchairs - pot holes!!"/ "Cars parking on pavements"/"Footpaths designated to be shared by bicycles and pedestrians - can't hear bikes come up behind me."

**Housing** - "Security of housing"/ "I live in a sheltered property + feel this should be a priority."/ "Living in a substandard home"/"Upkeep of flat."/ "Housing Costs"/ "Being able to live where you want."/ "No peace due to neighbours next door."

**Impairments** – “Being Blind”/“Profoundly Deaf”/ “Depression.”/ “Arthritis”/“Toileting - Weak internal organs”/“My disability getting worse”

**Independent Living** -"Ability to continue with independent living."/ "Not having independence being able to go out alone."/ "No independence."/ "Not being as independent as I was."/ "Be as independent as possible retaining as much of myself as possible."

**Information** -"Lack of information"/ Information on what help is available." /"Access to current information in rapidly changing times and circumstances."/ "Information - I do not have the internet so am denied access to information."

**Isolation** - "Loneliness."/ "Being on my own in the day time"/Feel at times very isolated and alone"/"No friends."/ "Generally confined to village."

**Mobility** -"I cannot walk far"/"Mobility - equipment e.g.: chair and hand rails both needed."/ "Not being mobile, unable to go out much."/ "Getting more disabled - walking limited - arthritis"/"Getting around"

**Money** -"Cuts to budget - reduced pa hours"/"Poverty"/"The benefits being cut and re-assessment done unfairly"/"Low income"/ "Cost of heating" "Cost of living going up."/Lack of funds./ "Cost of fuel (heating and transport)"/ "Paying the bills. Evaluating finances / monies"/"Small income (pension) does not meet disabled needs/"Cost of Carers and assistance"/"How I will manage financially in the future without work"

**Pain** /"Fatigue"/"Personal Pain Management - accessing more pain management programmes".

**Services** -"Taunton Deane and their attitude" /"No Day Centres available."/ "Lack of facility's in this town."/ . I find it more difficult to do DIY. Finding people + firms to help becomes more of a worry and often don't know what to turn to find that help that won't rip you off."/ "Difficulty of access to recreational / social facilities from where I live in West Somerset Village"/"Access to swimming pool and changing rooms (none!)"/ "Lack of services for disabled/mental health users"/ "Not being able to access disabled toilets when needed as the council don't bother with the radar key - their policy is for everyone to use disabled toilets (specifically Mendip D. Council)"/ "More targeted help to my age group (30-50 yrs)"/ "Finding + Using toilets - esp. in trains."/ "Lack of service provision"/"No advocate in Bridgwater but you lot great."/ "Cuts to services in evening"/"Police + Councils fail people."/ "Drop in centres are limited time out of the house, not long enough, nice to be able to talk to others with similar disabilities."

**Socialising** - "Going to places."/ "Not being able to do my hobbies (Fishing/Bird keeping)"

**Support** - "Dressing one's self."/ "Find good help / carers."/ "Help with difficult things like hovering and carrying bags etc..."/"Frustration at being unable to do everyday tasks."/ "Having to be dependant on somebody else sometimes"/"Being able to get help when needed."/ The concerns are too numerous to mention – “x”needs me or someone to take my place all the time - his daily living is totally affected."/ "Support groups."/ "No home help"/ Getting dressed first in the morning"/"Will there be help if I can't."/ "Hanging washing on line."/ "Feeling of lack of support in any way!"/ "Frustration - inability to do everyday tasks"/"Having to rely on my daughter for a lot of things."

**Technology** -"Not having computer can't afford to have one."

**Transport** - "Transport to courses + events etc"/"Public transport (I'm a non-driver) - recent cuts to bus services"/ "The proposed changes to public transport i.e. independent living."/ "Transport availability."/ "Not having transport suitable to my needs after adaptation - not enough seating"/"Lack of affordable transport"/"Transport - although slinky is wonderful."/ "Transport (Cost of getting about)" "Transport - Buses around Frome are not disabled people friendly."/ "Hope funding for 'slinky' bus continues - I depend on it."/ "Buses and trains - bus drivers mumble + train announcements at stations not clear."/ "Transport - don't drive need good bus service"/

"I go everywhere nowadays by taxi @ at the loss of the taxi vouchers is a blow."/ "Getting to hospital appointments."

## Other

"Age"

"Having to stand in queues in shops."

"No post box within easy walking distance"

"Finding representatives to help voice support for disabilities."

"Finding disabled holiday accommodation."

"Not being a husband and father"

"Form filling"

"Toilet facilities"

## Monitoring Information

### Age

5 (2.1%)	1 (0.4%)	members are 16-29 years old
5 (2.1%)	7 (2.8%)	members are 30-39 years old
22 (9.4%)	31 (12.4%)	members are 40-49 years old
47 (20%)	48 (19.3%)	members are 50-59 years old
53 (22.6%)	54 (21.7%)	members are 60-65 years old
94 (40%)	100	members are Over 65 years old
9 (3.8%)	8 (3.2%)	members failed to answer this question

### Where do you live?

34 (14.5%)	42 (16.9%)	members live in the Mendip area
0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)	members live in the North Somerset area
1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	members live outside the county
63 (26.8%)	65 (26.1%)	members live in the Sedgemoor area
56 (23.8%)	56 (22.5%)	members live in the South Somerset area
47 (20%)	55 (22.1%)	members live in the Taunton Deane area
20 (8.5%)	19 (7.6%)	members live in the West Somerset area
14 (6%)	11 (4.4%)	members failed to answer this question

### Do you consider yourself

25 (10.6%)	30 (12%)	members said they were not disabled or have left this question blank
210	219 (88%)	members said they do consider themselves Disabled

### Gender

75 (31.9%)	99 (39.8%)	members are male
128	141	members are female
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	members identified themselves as transgender

32 (13.6%) 9 (3.6%) members failed to answer this question

### **Religion/Faith**

4 (1.7%)	2 (0.8%)	members are Buddhist
163	189	members are Christian
1 (0.4%)	1 (0.4%)	member is Hindu
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	members are Jewish
0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)	members are Muslim
33 (14%)	26 (10.4%)	members are No Religion
11 (4.7%)	12 (4.8%)	members are Other
3 (1.3%)	0 (0%)	members are Sikh
20 (8.5%)	18 (7.2%)	members failed to answer this question

### **Sexual Orientation**

1 (0.4%)	2 (0.8%)	member identified themselves as bi-sexual
0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)	members identified themselves as gay
218	214	members identified themselves as heterosexual
0 (0%)	0 (0%)	members identified themselves as lesbian
16 (6.8%)	32 (12.9%)	members failed to answer this question

### **Ethnicity**

1 (0.4%)	0 (0%)	member identified themselves as Other Ethnic Group
213	231	members identified themselves as White (British)
0 (0%)	1 (0.4%)	members identified themselves as White (Irish)
3 (1.3%)	1 (0.4%)	members identified themselves as White (Other European)
17 (7.2%)	16 (6.4%)	members failed to answer this question

### **Summary**

There has been a slight reduction in the number of people that said they had participated in events over the last year. However this could be because we haven't had a large amount of events during the last year to provide different opportunities. The consultation work we were approached to carry out during the later part of 2010 used questionnaires instead of meetings to consult, which meant that some members felt that they haven't been sent information on events. An individual response was provided when requested.

For those that did not get involved, the highest number of people responded to say this was due to the date and timing of the event. This shows that we must continue to look at other methods of involvement such as evening meetings and/or the internet.

The area that events take place continues to be mentioned. The last event held took place in Sedgemoor, prior to that one event was held in South Somerset and two in Taunton. The ability to spread the events throughout the County is dependent on the resources we have. When arranging events consideration is also given to minimising transport costs and where we get the majority of response from service users, this being Taunton Deane and Sedgemoor. This could be due to the Forums we have

established successfully in these areas.

The number of people that are happy with their involvement has remained around 87% year on year. Concerning those that have contacted the organisation, although we have not achieved the 100% satisfaction that was recorded last year in most cases, the responses indicate a high level of satisfaction from those making contact.

In answer to some of the specific comments;

"(You don't always answer e-mails) - I feel compass does not really want activist type members that are actually trying to change discrimination when it is seen in the area they live - My eyes are always open to things that could be made better."

As the main User Led disability organisation in Somerset people will often approach us to do things that we aren't contracted to do which can mean that on occasions service users are disappointed. With regard to e mails there can be an unrealistic expectation of the time taken to respond and the degree to which we can respond to ensure all service users get the same consideration.

Many of our members require Large Print versions of documents which we distribute. All Large Print documents are marked 'Articles for the Blind', which means that postal charges do not apply, all of which help to ensure we keep our costs down.

"I tried to get on the trustees board - did not get in." – We have a fair and equitable selection process for anyone who wishes to apply for this which is always adhered to. Comments regarding the Networker will be fed into the future development of the publication. Over 90% of our members continue to feel that this is a useful publication.

The number of people using the website remains low at 20%. As we are now using other methods of engagement such as Facebook and Twitter we will also monitor the effectiveness of these and continue to promote the website.

In term of future developments, the highest response concerned providing information where 44% of respondents said they would like Compass to be established as a provider of information for disabled people in Somerset and support other disability organisations. The next area concerned user involvement and seeking opportunities for disabled people to express their views – 40% of respondents said they would like to see this given priority and finally the third highest response concerned access, 36% said they would like Compass to actively promote the need for physical access to premises and service within Somerset. This feedback will be used in future business planning.

The remaining comments concerning our members concerns which affect their daily living will be used to inform our consultation and research work and highlight key areas which need to be considered to improve equality of opportunity for disabled people.

## **Key Actions**

- Explore the opportunities for evening events.**
- Further develop and promote opportunities for on-line engagement.**
- General promotion of Compass website in all publicity.**
- Review literature to ensure project parameters are clear.**
- Further promote membership to reflect new Census data.**
- Review Networker content to reflect readers wishes as part of Networker development project.**