



Year 3 Annual Report

April 2014 – March 2015



SENDPO members networking at Commissioning Toolkit Launch Event



SENDPO members Networking at Conference

Introduction

SENDPO was set up in 2011 by a number of established Disabled People's Organisations across the South-East of England outside of London to improve communications and build capacity between those user-led organisations specifically run and controlled by disabled people. Its core funding continues to be provided by a grant from Surrey County Council.

This Annual Report sets out SENDPO's aims and objectives, its achievements during its third year and its priorities and plans for the year ahead.

SENDPO's aims are to:

- Create opportunities for South East based DPOs to share experiences and resources, learning from each other in a spirit of self-help and mutual co-operation to build sustainable organisations that may be small but will have a big impact
- Promote and practice an inclusive, non-impairment, non-age specific, non-discriminatory culture which celebrates and positively encourages equality, inclusion and diversity
- Promote disability equality as a human rights issue, as recognised in the Human Rights

Act and UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

The Network's objectives are to:

- Produce and promote evidence of the unique selling points of DPOs and the added value that they bring by being run and controlled by disabled people
- Audit members for skills, services, strengths, weaknesses and gaps, assess what resources we have already to help sustainability and mutual support, then source capacity-building funding and training
- Continuously learn about the priority issues facing DPOs in the South East, facilitating members to share knowledge and experience and targeting resources at key areas of concern.

SENDPO continues to be an unincorporated Network of DPOs, currently with 35 members. Its Board is made up of the six Chief Officers of its founder member organisations and its day-to-day work is led by Theresa Hodge, its Policy and Development Officer.

Year 3 Activities

SENDPO's Year 3 Business Plan set out SENDPO's values, aims and objectives, its governance and financial arrangements, its financial situation and its work plan for the third year.

Building Relationships and Being a Critical Friend

In line with its aims of developing relationships with key partners from the statutory and voluntary sector and being a critical friend to public bodies seeking user involvement in the planning and design of their policies and services, SENDPO has continued to maintain and develop relationships with:

- Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) South East branch
- Care Quality Commission (CQC)
- Disability Action Alliance
- The Fulfilling Potential Forum
- Disability Rights UK
- Think Local Act Personal (TLAP)

SENDPO's Members

During the past year SENDPO's membership has grown to 35 DPOs around the South-East. Our membership continues to represent disabled people with a range of impairments from all age groups.

It is important that SENDPO's membership is made up of DPOs of different structures and sizes so that we ensure that their varying needs and issues are represented. We must also continue to encourage the

development of new and emerging DPOs and to share the experience and learning of those which are more established.

We are keen to continue encouraging DPOs of different sizes and structures to join the network and we therefore take any available opportunities to network with existing and emerging DPOs from around the region.

Member Meetings

SENDPO members continue to benefit from attending our regular member meetings around the region. We held four main member meetings in SENDPO's coverage area (Kent, Brighton and Hove, West Sussex and Surrey), as well as one in London.

We aim to have a theme to each meeting which enables us to discuss a "hot topic" in depth. Having started a discussion between members in this way, we can then take topics forward as "special interest groups" where appropriate.



SENDPO members at their meeting at The Fed Centre for Independent Living's Space for Change, Hove

Topics for discussion amongst member organisations have included:

- The ODI's Fulfilling Potential Forum
- Delivering peer support based services
- A regional event organised jointly through the Disability Action Alliance and the English Federation of Disability Sports around sport and physical activity for disabled people
- Reviewing SENDPO's Terms of Reference
- SENDPO's disability manifesto



Gerry Zarb from Spectrum CIL presenting at SENDPO Members Meeting

Thanks to some regional networks funding from the Office for Disability Issues (ODI), we were able to hold three extra member meetings in areas where our member organisations find it more difficult to travel to our main member meetings or where we were engaging less well with DPOs. These meetings were held in Hampshire, Kent and Buckinghamshire.

Two of these meetings provided an opportunity for SENDPO's longer-standing members to meet face-to-face with those who had joined more

recently, and to discuss SENDPO's values, aims and objectives and its different work areas. We were also able to receive feedback from members who had been awarded small grants from SENDPO and to look at ways in which SENDPO could better support its members in the future.

In response to a request from two of our smaller member DPOs who were struggling to find funding for core costs, the third meeting focussed on a presentation around fundraising, which was delivered by a representative from one of our more established DPOs.

Our Website

Given that SENDPO covers a large region of the UK, the majority of our communication with our members and supporters is electronic. It is therefore essential that we have a website that enables us to promote our work and share information and resources relevant to DPOs, as well as an easy-to-use contact database that enables us to communicate efficiently with our members. We are always developing the SENDPO website so that it continues to meet the needs of our growing membership.

The News sections of the site enable us to continually keep our members and supporters up-to-date with the work of SENDPO and its member DPOs, and to share information on key issues affecting disabled people. The site also includes information on useful resources published by SENDPO, its member DPOs and partners, and other organisations working with disabled people.

Sign language has been added to the main pages of the site to make it accessible for deaf sign language users.

Our recently added “members only” area enables members to share information and resources with each other. Posts are categorised to make it easy for visitors to find information, and new categories will be added as and when members request different kinds of information to be included. Topics of information so far include: campaigning, funding, the Fulfilling Potential Forum, member meetings, policy documents, and Policy Officer updates.

Financial Support to DPOs

SENDPO has continued to offer small grants to provide support of up to £500 to small and developing DPOs across the South-East to help them take the next step towards longer-term sustainability.

Organisations which have received grants in the past year are:

Parability

Parability was launched in 2013 and began as an internet group. It was launched in response to a growing need for an Activity and Social group for disabled people in the Basingstoke area. Meetings vary from two or three people up to 12.

Chris Hall, Parability’s founder, said: “SENDPO’s grant of £500 has helped to fund the starting of our social group which now runs every third Saturday of the month. The group allows the whole community to come together to keep fit and healthy”.

Disabled People’s Voice Hampshire (DPVH)

DPVH is an umbrella organisation bringing together disabled people's user led organisations across Hampshire to give a stronger voice and covers all impairments.

Rachael Harrison, the organisation’s Chair, said: “The £500 grant we received enabled us to pay for a Consultant to work with our Management Committee on constituting as a co-operative, as well as paying for the costs of holding Management Committee meetings.

Wealden, Invisible Illness, Self Health, Employment and Empowerment Support (WIISHES)

Wiishes supports people with Invisible impairments by bringing them together for peer empathy to learn more about their conditions and effective ways of managing symptoms so that they can enjoy more in life. They particularly reach out to those at time of diagnosis when there is anxiety and fear and those in isolation.

WIISHES received a grant of £500 from SENDPO to help with the costs of keeping in contact with their members and running their Creative-ability craft workshops, which always included a healthy eating lunch.

Carol Steed, Secretary of WIISHES, said: “As a result of the grant, the membership of WIISHES has significantly increased. The workshops have enabled members to learn new skills and to begin to build up their confidence in their ability to produce saleable products, which will help us to develop a craft co-op”.

“Confident Commissioning: Building Relationships Between Local Authorities and Disabled People’s User-Led Organisations (DPULOs)”

Having completed the production of SENDPO’s ODI-funded commissioning and procurement toolkit, the resource was launched on 18 July 2014 at the ODI’s offices at Caxton House in London.



Presenters at Launch Event

The launch event included presentations from a mixture of Local Authority representatives and Chief Executives from DPOs who had contributed to the resource.

This is a valuable resource for both Local Authorities wanting to commission DPOs, and for DPOs wanting to be commissioned to deliver services to disabled people.

Confident Commissioning

Building relationships between local authorities and disabled people’s user-led organisations

To download your copy in either PDF or MS Word format from SENDPO’s website, please visit <http://www.sendpo.org/confidentcommissioning>.

Influencing Government Policy and Responding to Consultations

SENDPO continues to provide support to its member DPOs by collating their views in order to respond to Government consultations on various policy proposals that will impact on the lives of disabled people. We also attend focus groups, workshops and events on specific issues in order to input to policy development.

SENDPO has provided responses to government consultations on:

- Development of a new standard for health and social care providers around meeting the information and communication support needs of disabled people
- Implimentation of the Care Act, the cap on care costs and proposals for a new appeals system

We have also attended workshops on the Care Act and Making it Real, and ensuring there is a diverse marketplace of providers to deliver services under the Care Act.

Changes being implemented to the Jobcentre Plus Access to Work scheme have been of great concern to SENDPO members over the past year. We have joined a number of other DPOs and the Business Disability Forum to worked with Disability Rights UK to collate case studies of how the changes have affected disabled people around the country in order to highlight concerns to the DWP and engage in meaningful dialogue and come up with solutions.

Review of SENDPO's Terms of Reference

Given that SENDPO was set up back in 2011, the SENDPO Project Board felt it was time to review the network's Terms of Reference to make sure that SENDPO was still meeting the objectives for which it was set up.

In particular, we need to make sure that SENDPO's membership is made up of organisations which are truly user-led, but we recognise that not all developing DPOs will meet all of the 21 Department of Health ULO Design Criteria. Thanks to some work carried

out by Spectrum Centre for Independent Living (SCIL) as part of their ULO Development Project, we have identified the essential criteria which organisations applying for SENDPO membership must meet. We have also developed a protocol around partnership working with DPOs in neighbouring areas. Finally, we have developed procedures for electing SENDPO's Project Board in the future.

The revised Terms of Reference can be downloaded from our website at <http://www.sendpo.org/sendpo-documents>.

The Year Ahead

SENDPO will continue to promote the work of the network and to build up its membership, as well as continuing to build relationships with key statutory and voluntary sector partners.

Member meetings will continue to be held in different parts of the South-East Region to facilitate the networking of members and sharing of key issues affecting their organisations. These will include the chance for SENDPO members to share their successes in being commissioned to deliver particular services to local disabled people so that other members can learn about good practice across the region and use this to develop their own services in the future.

Given the practicalities of gathering members together across such a large region, and the fact that our members will naturally have different interests given their particular work areas, we will encourage and facilitate special interest groups and more localised meetings and workshops on key issues where appropriate. We will also continue to make use of teleconferencing and video conferencing to facilitate efficient use of time and resources.

Our website and integrated database will continue to be developed to make sure that we are able to provide up-to-date and relevant information, as well as communicate with our members and manage our work efficiently. In particular, we will build up the content in the Members Area on the site to

facilitate sharing of learning and best practice around the region.

As well as the above-mentioned continuing areas of work, SENDPO will also prioritise the following :

- We will explore alternative funding streams for SENDPO to ensure that it does not continue to be reliant on a single Local Authority.
- We will continue to encourage DPOs and key partners around the South-East to join SENDPO and sign up to its values, aims and objectives
- An up-to-date audit of member DPOs will be carried out. This will include their governance structures, services, skills, strengths, weaknesses and priorities, to inform plans for mutual support, building capacity and sustainability
- We will develop a bank of freelance disabled consultants which our members can draw on, enabling them to take up opportunities for short-term projects and increase their sustainability.
- We will hold a conference for members, supporters and people we want to influence, in late 2015. The theme will be how DPOs can help Local Authorities to meet their requirements under The Care Act to provide information, advice and advocacy to local disabled people.

SENDPO's Board



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Contacting SENDPO

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