



Passionate
about
possibilities.

Annual Report 2023

- Supporting and connecting local people



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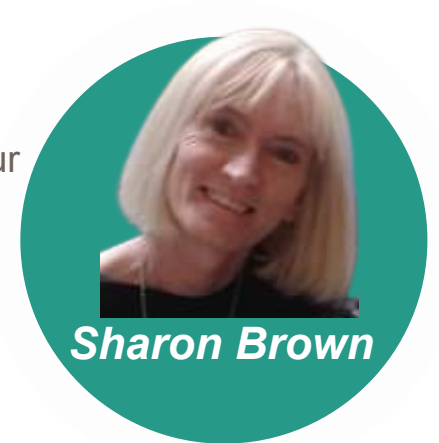


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A Message from our Chief Executive Officer

Welcome to our Annual Report in a year of new beginnings, change and innovation. We started the year by bringing together staff, trustees, volunteers and service users to write our new Strategic Plan and have continued to work on new 3-year delivery plans to underpin this.



We have new investment and new partnerships too. SCOPE has invested in our connections hub - Stronger Together - and The Trussell Trust has supported our work with Barnsley Foodbank Partnership in local foodbanks. Sheffield University, Building Stronger Communities are supporting us in our ambition to develop a user-friendly app to enable people to complete their own PIP forms and we are currently engaging with local people to determine how this will look.

We are forever grateful to all the Local Area Councils and ward alliances for their continued investment in our outreach provision across Barnsley.

We have recruited our first ever two apprentices this year, Kathy and Joe, who are working towards becoming advisors and will help us to fill the skills gap when recruiting.

Last but by no means least my thanks to all the people who make DIAL what it is today including staff, volunteers, apprentices and trustees. Your commitment and passion is unequalled!

A Message from our Chair of Trustees

I'm proud to welcome you to our Annual Report for 2023. It's great to see that DIAL isn't standing still, but looking for new ways in which we can support disabled people, their carers and families. Their involvement, with staff, trustees and volunteers, in writing our new Strategic Plan shows DIAL is truly led by disabled people. The development, with Sheffield University, of a user-friendly app for the completion of PIP forms, shows the type of innovation that I've come to expect while I've been a trustee.



Ian Turner

The confidence that partners have in DIAL to deliver services in Barnsley, shown by the investment they have made, is really pleasing, and I thank all of them for this. I regularly bump into former work colleagues who readily sing the praises of DIAL, without prompting, so I know we must be on the right track. The investment by the Lloyds Bank Foundation will allow DIAL to progress a number of developments. Again, this shows how DIAL stands out in a national competition for funding. However, for me, the most important feedback is from service users, who continue to show high levels of satisfaction with DIAL and are by far the most important source of information for local people on the help DIAL can give.

Of course, demands on DIAL's services show no sign of reducing, with no real let up in the cost of living pressures people face. That DIAL can direct people to sources of help, either through extra financial support or to local foodbanks, is comforting, even if we wish it weren't necessary. The skills, diligence and commitment of staff and volunteers in providing this help and advice is commendable. The recruitment of our apprentices, Kathy and Joe, to develop the skills needed to become advisors is welcome, given the continuing needs in the community.

The trustees continue to work well together, bringing new ideas and making connections, and providing advice and support to our staff and volunteers. I was sorry that one of our long-standing trustees, Gill Carr, felt the need to retire in 2023 for family reasons. Gill always made useful contributions in our meetings and, without her prompting, I would probably not have become a trustee. She has already been greatly missed.

The Annual Report for 2023 is a great read. Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this continuing success story!

About DIAL

Our Aims

- To improve access to information, advice and guidance so disabled people, their families and carers have increased understanding and are better informed to make choices
- To increase access to opportunities for disabled people, their families and carers to achieve their potential
- To reduce social isolation of disabled people, their families and carers
- To increase the opportunities for disabled people, their families and carers to have a healthy lifestyle

Our Mission:

To support and empower disabled people, their families and carers to address poverty and social exclusion and improve their health and wellbeing

**Our Vision:
A Community
that is truly
inclusive**

Advice Line
Foodbank Advice Sessions
Community Outreach
Warm Connections
ICAS (Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service)

Our 2023 Achievements

- Our advice team were re-awarded the Advice Quality Standard for delivering excellence in advice.
- We continued to receive funding to deliver our outreach services from: Penistone Area Council, Dearne Area Council, Central Area Council, North Area Council and Royston Ward Alliance.
- We successfully secured new funding from the North East Ward Alliance to deliver outreach services in Great Houghton, Grimethorpe, Shafton, Brierley and Cudworth Ward Alliance - Cudworth.
- We were awarded funding from Barnsley Council's Household Support Grant to deliver our Small Measures project, as part of our energy advice service.
- So far we have provided £4,160 worth of energy-saving items to 72 clients as part of our Small Measures project. This is an average of £58 per person.
- We supported 7,905 residents with advice and generated over £5.1 million in previously unclaimed benefits.
- Our ICAS (Independent Complaints and Advocacy Service) service has had 112 referrals and 2,960 individual contacts were made.

We are very grateful for all the help you have given us over the last few years and wouldn't have been able to do it without your support.

You made me feel at ease, explained things thoroughly and the outcome was successful. Thank you.

Dearne Area Case Study

Before DIAL

Mrs C is a 70 year old lady who lives in the Dearne area. She has Arthritis in all her joints and her daughter was helping her with her daily care needs. She attended our outreach at Goldthorpe Library for help with an Attendance Allowance form.

Advice Provided by DIAL

Mrs C came to see DIAL at our outreach at Goldthorpe Library. We helped her to complete the Attendance Allowance form and advised her about the process.

After DIAL

Mrs C was awarded higher rate of Attendance Allowance for needing help with her care needs during the day and the night. Her income increased by £101.75 per week. Mrs C said “When I looked at the form I didn’t understand it at all. A family friend told me about DIAL. They were very good and I am very happy with the help they gave me.”

Acknowledged Outcomes

- More money to live on and participate in hobbies and interests
- Less stress
- More confidence
- Improved health and well-being

Chances



Volunteering
Training
Trusteeship
Apprenticeships

Our 2023 Achievements

- 31 volunteers helped deliver our services. They helped on our advice line, supported our advisors at outreach, and volunteered at events and social our inclusion groups.
- We celebrated Volunteers Week with a tea party at Barnsley Carer's Community Garden in June, complete with afternoon tea, games and a choir!
- We recruited 2 apprentices who have joined the team as Apprentice Advisors.
- Our volunteers contributed over 1,432 hours to DIAL.
- The value of volunteer work is estimated at £19,618.

I choose to volunteer to pay back the wonderful support that DIAL gave to me when I needed it. Thank you to everyone at DIAL.



Volunteer Case Study

Before DIAL

Ronda had been unemployed for 18 months since leaving university, even though she was educated to Masters level. She came to Yorkshire 8 years ago as a political refugee and has physical disabilities that affect her back and legs. As a single parent of two teenagers, she was keen to gain employment but despite applying for many roles, she had not been successful.

During our informal interview, Ronda identified that she needed to gain more customer service experience, especially talking to clients. She is originally from Africa and was aware that her accent could be difficult to understand, which affected her confidence when talking to people.

Volunteering at DIAL

Ronda began attending the office and with her business and leadership background, she hit the ground running. She shadowed the First Contact team and by week three, she was taking calls herself, the first of which was a great achievement for her - she was really proud of her achievement and continued to deal with incoming calls from then on.

Ronda attended our First Contact workshop and 8-week Benefit Training programme. She showed great potential and continued to volunteer in the office, developing her communication and team-work skills.

After DIAL

Ronda gained the confidence she needed to believe in herself and went on to be successful in a job interview. She is now in full-time, meaningful employment.

“ Thank you for the opportunity to volunteer at DIAL. My time there has been productive and I was able to achieve my aims. I enjoyed it because there were no differences between volunteering staff and paid staff. One of the reasons why I decided to volunteer was to improve my customer service skills. Thanks to DIAL, I received training that helped me to confidently speak with customers over the phone. ”

Connect Together Together at the Table Stronger Together

Our 2023 Achievements

- 111 signed-up members to Connect Together who regularly attend weekly groups and events.
- Over 320 check-in calls to Connect Together members.
- Connect Together held 22 themed events from May to December.
- 69 Connect Together events and groups in total.
- 32 people attended Together at the Table, which commenced in October.
- 13 Together at the Table get-togethers since October.
- 20 members attending Stronger Together, which launched in late September.
- Stronger Together held 3 themed events from October to December.
- 14 Stronger Together events and groups in total, since September.
- We raised £400 at our first annual Jumble Sale, held in July.
- We held various events where we gave away 35 gardening kits, 28 cleaning packs and 27 picnic hampers.
- We held Get Fit sessions, where we gave away exercise DVDs and exercise bands, impacting on 23 members.
- 12 members attended our coach trip in November to Leeds Christmas market.





Connect Together Case Study

Before DIAL

Mrs H is an older lady who lives alone. She feels that living alone and being reliant on public transport are the two main causes of her isolation. Mrs H believes that the isolation has impacted on her mental health and confidence.

Attending Connect Together

Mrs H self-referred to Connect Together in June after being told about it by another member of the group. She has attended the group regularly since joining and made the suggestion of having a few games of bingo as well as a good old chit-chat. This went down a storm with the other members. Since starting the bingo on a weekly basis Mrs H has been micro-volunteering by handing out the bingo cards, checking the prize money and checking the winning cards.

Since Attending Connect Together

Mrs H has gained a lot of confidence, and feels that her mental health has improved, stating that she enjoys attending and interacting with other people.

Acknowledged Outcomes

- More knowledgable
- Less isolated
- More connected to the community
- More confident
- Made new friends

“ I have enjoyed the activities and things you do, it's a great support and gives so much to people with not much to do. Thanks. ”

Green Connections

Our 2023 Achievements

For the final 7 months of our Green Connections project, we held 23 sessions, including:

- Sketching and painting at Locke Park
- Nature walks along the River Dearne
- Historical visits to Monk Bretton Priory and the Maurice Dobson Museum and Heritage Centre in Darfield
- Visit to Cannon Hall's garden centre and cafe
- Bird watching at Elsecar Reservoir
- Nature inspired poetry writing
- Walk along the heritage trail in Darfield

The contact I've had with Jeff at Green Connections has led to getting support in other areas of my life. DIAL has helped me through a very difficult time in my life, I am very grateful.





Apprenticeships at DIAL

In May we recruited our first ever Apprentice Advisor, Kathy Morgan. Kathy successfully completed her DIAL benefit training in July and has achieved her NEA City & Guild Level 2 Fuel Debt Advice in the Community qualification. We recently recruited our second Apprentice Advisor, Joseph Parker, and in March 2024 we will be recruiting our third.

About the Apprenticeship

In partnership with Barnsley Independent Training Service, we provide ongoing support and mentoring throughout the apprenticeship. Our apprentices attend regular tutorials and have a mentoring supervision once a month to focus on their personal and professional development plan.

Our apprentices support the delivery of our telephone advice service and community-based, face-to-face outreach sessions. Upon completion of the apprenticeship, they will have developed the knowledge and expertise to support local people with impartial and confidential disability advice and information, and they will gain a Customer Service qualification.



“ I can honestly say I’m loving everything about the Apprenticeship. The staff I work with are amazing, it feels more like a big family, rather than work colleagues. Doing the Apprenticeship is helping me build so much. In my short time at DIAL, my confidence has grown. I’m also enjoying the challenge that the Apprenticeship gives me. (Kathy) ”

A Spotlight on Foodbank Advice Sessions

In partnership with Barnsley Foodbank Partnership and the Trussell Trust, we provide crucial face-to-face welfare advice and energy advice at 8 foodbanks across Barnsley.

We supported 198 people in total with information and advice about a variety of issues including Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payment, Carers Allowance, Pension Credit, Blue Badges, as well as offering benefit checks.

Our energy advisors provided much needed advice and information about how to tackle fuel debt, apply for discounts and grants and offered tips about how to improve energy efficiency. They identified clients who would benefit from a home energy assessment and delivered small measures, such as draught excluders and radiator insulation, to their homes.

*Based on our Foodbank Evaluation Form which was sent out to clients who saw one of our advisors at a foodbank between November 2022 and June 2023

- *90% of clients said that their health and wellbeing had improved since using the service
- *100% of clients said they are happy with the advice they received and they would use our service again
- *100% of clients said the advice they received was appropriate and explained properly

**We earned
clients £127,550
in previously
unclaimed
benefit amount**

A Spotlight on Crisis Support

The cost of living crisis, combined with the after-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic has disproportionately affected disabled people, their families and carers. As one of our core aims is to reduce poverty, we sought to tackle the cost of living crisis not only through our welfare benefits advice, which puts money directly into our clients' pockets, but also by the following initiatives:



Pants to Poverty - we delivered 294 underwear packs to clients in need.

Stronger Together - in November we held a Winter Swap Shop, where people could bring in items to trade. They also took away a free winter pamper pack.



Small Measures - we have provided 72 clients, so far, with radiator insulation, draught excluders, window and door insulation, hot water bottles, thermal curtains and electric heaters.

Connect Together - we've given away cleaning packs, gardening kits, Keep Fit DVDs and picnic hampers.



Sleep Warm, Sleep well - we gave away 189 warm, quality duvets to clients in need.

Innovation

A Spotlight on Innovation at DIAL

DIAL continually strives to innovate and develop new methods to support and advise disabled people. In the age of technology, we recognise the need to embrace the digital world whilst supporting our core client group. With this in mind, we are currently researching the feasibility of developing an interactive smartphone app, thanks to £9,000 worth of funding awarded to us from the University of Sheffield's Building Stronger Communities Programme.

This is an exciting new chapter for DIAL. We are working closely with a researcher from the University of Sheffield. With her expertise and input, we have already completed a Client Consultation, with overwhelmingly positive responses from local disabled people. The next stage is to run four Focus Groups with local disabled people, which will commence in February 2024.



Feedback



Making a Difference - *what our service users said*

100% of clients were happy with the advice they received at outreach

100% of clients would use our services again

“ They were caring, compassionate and eager to help. They eased my anxiety about my situation and it led to a face-to-face meeting to further help me with benefit forms. ”

70% felt more empowered after using our Choices services

“ Stronger Together gives me a reason to get out of the house, and I look forward to the next week. ”

“ Brilliant service - 10/10 again. Thank you! ”

“ Aimi is a very friendly person, always laughing and chatting. She gets on with all the group, she will go out of her way to help people. ”

“ I would like to thank Susan for helping my dad out with radiator insulation and a draught excluder. What a wonderful thing to do! ”

Financial Position

We brought forward:

Unrestricted funds of £94,874
Restricted funds of £96,393
Designated funds of £151,081

Final balance to carry forward on the 30th April 2023: £342,348

Total income for 2022 - 2023

£450,781

£354,684

Total expenditure for 2022 - 2023

Total reserves £150,721

Reserves help to cover future running costs in the event of a lack of funding; including £49,646 as Infrastructure Development Fund

The Board has reserved £76,000 in unrestricted funds to meet 3 months salary and running costs in the event of a winding up of the charity

And a contingency of £25,075 in the event of an emergency event

We received £6,168 in public donations

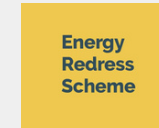
DONATE



Thank You

Thank you to all our 2023 funders

North Area Council
Penistone Area Council
Central Area Council
North East Ward Alliance
Cudworth Ward Alliance
Royston Ward Alliance
Trussell Trust
Energy Redress Fund
SCOPE
University of Sheffield, Building
Stronger Communities
Yorkshire Sport Foundation
UK Shared Prosperity Fund
Shaw Lands Trust
The National Lottery
South Yorkshire Community
Foundation
Public Donations





Passionate about possibilities.

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