

# DERBYSHIRE COALITION OF DISABLED PEOPLE



**BEYOND THE  
INTERNATIONAL  
YEAR**

19 81

# DCDP DERBYSHIRE COALITION OF DISABLED PEOPLE

Disabled people are so often overlooked and left out of things. That is why 1981 was made the International Year of the Disabled Person by the United Nations.

The IYDP slogan is "full participation and equality" because the United Nations wanted to spell out that disabled people have the same right to take a full part in society as anyone else.



## EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED PEOPLE

### "WORK IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT"

AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT PROPOSED BY THE DERBYSHIRE COALITION



DCDP was set up during the International Year to make sure that the aims of the Year were not forgotten after the end of 1981. Having the right to take a full part in society means having the right to work — and everyone knows how hard it can be to achieve this right. But for disabled people finding and keeping a job is even harder. Why is this the case? That is what the project "WORK IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT" intends to find out. If we know the problems we can find the solutions — and finding solutions is part of the project too.

#### Interested?

The project is backed by the County Council and Manpower Services and right now we are looking for 12 people — some disabled, some non-disabled — under the Youth Opportunities Programme. If you want more information, call the Careers Officer on Chesterfield 201581. You might just be in time to be considered for a place on the team.



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## DISABLED PEOPLE ON THE MOVE

No one who knows the real needs of disabled people would be silly enough to think that the International Year of the Disabled Person would remove their discrimination at a stroke. When IYDP is dead and buried, disabled people will still be isolated, segregated, done good to, stared at and talked over the top of! It would be foolish to think that a special "Year" could have anything but a marginal effect on such devaluing, deep-rooted attitudes.

Nevertheless, disabled people are on the move. Perhaps this was the last thing the Libyan representative to the United Nations had in mind when he proposed such a special year in our name. But — IYDP or no — disabled people are on the move now. And they are on the move in such numbers and in such a way that their collective voice can no longer be denied.

The disabled peoples movement extends far beyond the formation of the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People. In an historic moment this year, disabled peoples' organisations came together for the first time to form the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People. And representatives from the British Council met up with other disabled people from nations the world over at the first World Congress of the Disabled Peoples' International in Singapore at the beginning of this month.

The really significant — and exciting — thing about this gathering movement is that it marks a growing recognition that disabled people can no longer naively expect other people to solve their problems for them. At the start of the seventies, Alf Morris's "Charter for the Disabled" raised expectations which were not fulfilled. Disabled people who hoped for a new deal were disappointed — the goods were promised, but never delivered.

So we entered the eighties with a new promise — the promise of IYDP — full participation and equality. But this time, disabled people themselves had changed. They know that words on paper do not remove discrimination: patronising attitudes do not disappear overnight. Participation and equality have to be struggled for — and the struggle for these ideals has to be led by people who know at first hand the daily reality of disability.

So it is up to us to lead the way. That is what the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People is about. Disabled people and their organisations are coming together in this new, County-wide organisation to discover unity of purpose as they work together with their supporters to find new solutions to their deep-rooted problems. The answers will be found. They will not come overnight — but at least we're on the move.

## "MIXED ABILITY CO-OP'S"

Fed up with four walls? Bored with your basketwork? Dread being done good to? The Coalition reckons that disabled people can find a new sense of purpose by doing useful work the co-operative way. The basic idea is that able-bodied people could work with disabled people by setting up their own co-op. They could divide the work up in the best way for each worker to bring their own skills to the job. What the disabled

worker couldn't do — the ablebodied worker could, and vice versa. Think about it. OK — now stop thinking and act. Write to the Coalition with your ideas. If you've no firm ideas but you think it sounds interesting just let us know. Write DCDP, 4 Seaford Way, Cotmanhay, Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Got a phone? Give Dorothy a call on Ilkeston 321775 — she'll put you in touch with someone who can talk things through with you. Over to you.

## THE COALITION — WHAT'S IN A WORD

A coalition is an organisation made up of groups and individuals who want to come together to combine their strengths to achieve common concerns. The DCDP is one of many "Consumer Coalitions" which have sprung up round the world in recent years. They are organisations run by disabled people themselves, with the support of non-disabled people. Anyone who saw the ATV documentary on 24th November "We won't go away" will realise how vital it is for disabled people to unite in this way if they are to achieve equal rights. The American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities (ACCD) have won many major battles to achieve equality of opportunity to full social participation — but as the film showed, disabled people need to be constantly on guard.

The call to form a "consumer coalition" at the Derbyshire IYDP Conference last February has resulted in the formation of the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People (DCDP). Our intention is to strive towards unity of purpose among disabled people and our organisations in Derbyshire and to encourage mutual understanding, co-operation and support. At the "Beyond the International Year" Conference on 12th December 1981 the Steering Committee will present a draft Constitution for a Coalition having the following aims:-

"... to promote the active participation of disabled people in securing such help as may be necessary to ensure maximum possible independence in daily living activities and full integration into society with full control over our lives."

A Coalition member can be an individual or an organisation; a disabled person or a non-disabled person; over 18 years of age or under 18 years.

## WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Copies of the Constitution, application forms for membership, or just general information about the Coalition can be obtained from Dorothy Hemm, 4 Seaford Way, Cotmanhay, Ilkeston, Derbyshire. Telephone Ilkeston 321775.

## ARE YOU DISABLED — CAN YOU JOIN?

Who is a disabled person? The Coalition is suggesting that we take the IYDP definition as a guide — basically anyone with a physical or mental impairment who needs help to cope with his or her individual or social life. So full membership of the Coalition is open to people in this position — and will include physically and mentally

handicapped people, people who are deaf or hard of hearing; those who are blind or partially sighted or who have conditions such as epilepsy, psoriasis, speech impairment or problems linked to ageing.

## WHAT ABOUT THE PHYSICALLY AND MENTALLY ABLE?

You are more than welcome to apply to join, so that you can support disabled members in their effort to define their own problems out of their own direct experience of disability — and help them in the process of finding solutions and putting them into practice. For many, this implies a challenging new relationship: not one of doing things **for** — or taking over **from** — disabled people, but one of supporting disabled people in the process of gaining control over their own lives, and working **with** disabled people in overcoming their problems.

## RELATIONS WITH THE COUNTY COUNCIL

### *The story so far . . . . .*

It has been good news for disabled people that the County Council has taken the principals of the International Year seriously. It has supported the Coalition in a number of ways. Most importantly it has put its money where its mouth is. For instance, it has agreed a substantial sum of money to set up the Coalition's own office. We are working on this, and in the New Year we should be firmly established with, not just an office of our own, but also a voice of our own.

One of the first things which the Coalition did was to persuade the County Council to issue a Statement of Intent. The reasons for this was that disabled people, and their supporters throughout the county would know how the Council was thinking on key disability issues. Here's what it agreed . . . . .

**'Recognising the principals and aims of the Year as proclaimed by the United Nations, and accepting the rights of disabled people to full participation and equality of opportunity, the County Council reaffirms its existing policies and, in particular, pledges to participate with disabled people and other agencies seeking to achieve the following objectives:-'**

- 1 To actively involve disabled people on all advisory and consultative committees as defined in section 15 of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1971 and in other activities where their advice would assist the County Council.
- 2 To promote full integration of disabled people through the creation of a barrier-free built environment.
- 3 To develop and promote integrated independent living arrangements for severely disabled people in conjunction with Housing Authorities, Voluntary Organisations and Housing Associations.
- 4 To assist in the development of a co-ordinated public transport network accessible to all disabled people.

- 5 To secure integrated education at all levels for all disabled people for whom this would best meet their individual needs and wishes.
- 6 To promote and create opportunities for employment designed to use the skills and capacities of disabled people, taking account of their special needs in integrated work situations.
- 7 To assist in the dissemination of information and advice and the provision of practical help, advocacy and supportive counselling for disabled people and others with interests in disablement.

*Signed S. F. Collins  
Chairman of the County Council*

## SPOT THE DINOSAUR . . . . . ?

We can't offer a prize to the first discerning eye to spot the County Council's most backward department, but those familiar with 'Get out clauses' won't need any further clues.

**WRITE** and let us know what you think about how they think about **YOU**.

## MIXED — ABILITY CO-OPS . . . . .

### **MORE GOOD NEWS . . . . . !!!**

Another thing the County Council is supporting the Coalition on is the idea of Mixed-ability Co-ops. It is present council policy to promote co-ops and we've got a coalition representative on their co-ops working party. We've also got the services of a researcher who is looking at printing equipment to see just what is on the market and whether modern technology is really no problem for severely handicapped people. First reactions look really good.

**DON'T FORGET . . . . . CONTACT THE COALITION** with **YOUR** views and ideas if you are interested in co-ops, in particular, **PRINTING CO-OPS**.

## GETTING AROUND

**QUESTION:** Is public transport really public?  
Use a wheelchair ..... When did you last get on a bus?

In the United States, due to pressure from the Disabled Peoples' Movement out there, they've designed entrance steps which turn into ramps at the touch of a button. It serves old people, people with pushchairs and prams, and anyone else with a mobility problem, just as well as it does someone who uses a wheelchair. They make us seem pretty backward.

Getting around is a real problem, only those who have no transport of their own, and who rely on the good nature of other people know what it feels like to be in a trap.

And here's another thing - round the county there are dozens of vehicles with wheelchair lifts already fitted,

owned by voluntary organisations or bodies like Social Services. Are these resources being wasted . . . . . if so . . . . . WHY? OK . . . . . The County Council is looking at this, and so is the Coalition.

What the Coalition wants is to enable people to break out of their trap. We would like a system where any disabled person could phone a contact number and have both transport and help turn up at their door. We are working on it . . . . . but what about YOU !!! What do YOU think?

## **SIT UP . . . . . DON'T SIT BACK !!!**

Maybe you've got used to the idea of other people doing things **for** you. It's easy to get into the habit . . . . It's not so easy to break out but **DON'T FORGET** . . . . the world is there for your taking.

You may think you've nothing to offer, but everyone has got something of use to someone, and the more you put in, the more you get out . . . . !

## **BEYOND THE INTERNATIONAL YEAR**

This first newsheet is being launched on the same day as the Coalition Inaugural Conference. We are calling this 'Beyond the International Year' because it is one of the goals of the Disabled Peoples' Movement and the International Year of Disabled People that projects should be of lasting, permanent value to disabled people. We are committed to a regular newsheet which will become the voice of disabled people in Derbyshire.

### **What's happening at the Conference?**

We planned the Conference in two parts so that the business bit . . . . . discussing and adopting the Constitution and so on . . . . . came in the morning and the talks came after lunch.

The main idea behind having speakers was that we could all get a public insight into subjects vital to disabled people in Derbyshire.

### **Who's who at the Conference?**

Vick Finkelstein has kindly agreed to chair the morning session. Vick is disabled himself. He's a senior Clinical Psychologist, currently lecturing at the Open University. He has had a long and active involvement in the Disabled Peoples' Movement and was Chairman of the Steering Committee which brought the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People into being.

Councillor Sid Collins has been immensely helpful to the Coalition within the County Council. As Chairman of their I.Y.D.P. Committee, we could not have better help.

Ken Davis is well known to disabled people in Derbyshire. He has been actively involved for a number of years, notably in the setting up of D.I.A.L. Derbyshire, of which he is Chairman. He has also acted as Chairman of the Coalition Steering Committee during its first year.

John Jillings is well known to many of us as Director of Social Services in Derbyshire. Recent movement within the Social Services Department has been really encouraging towards disabled people, as it has set up many projects which make life more normal for physically and mentally handicapped people.

Brian Lewis, Vice-Chairman of the Steering Committee, has been disabled since 1957 and has been involved with various organisations for the disabled for many years. Brian, together with another disabled person, owns and operates a Haulage Company, and his particular interest within the Coalition is the advancement of the Independent Living Project.

Sharon Dimoldenberg, of the Co-operative Development Agency, has been helping and advising people all over the country on setting up co-ops; she has now turned her interest to how the Co-operative Movement might apply to disabled workers.

## **WHO HAS HELPED GET THE COALITION OFF THE GROUND**

The mandate to work to set up a "consumer coalition" came from the Derbyshire IYDP Conference which was attended by some 120 people from 70 organisations. The Steering Committee formed at that Conference has included:-

Ken Davis (DIAL Derbyshire) acting as interim Chairperson to date; Brian Lewis, acting as Vice-chairperson; Christine Schofield (Central Derbyshire CHC) and Dorothy Hemm of Ilkeston, acting as joint Secretaries along the way; Tony Furniss (Spinal Injuries Group); Jean Keller (Union of the Physically Impaired); George Wood (Derbyshire Association for the Blind); Mike Bramley (Whitehouse Breakers Club); Brian Cook (Cressy Fields); Jim Riches (Chesterfield & District Association for the Blind); Eric Hurford (Derbyshire Association for the Disabled); Charles Twigg (Chesterfield Spastics Society); Kevin Wells together with Pete Nelson, Karen Gowing (Rycote Centre for the Deaf); and W. Crowther (Chesterfield Multiple Sclerosis Group).

## **INDEPENDENT LIVING**

A key project has been a proposal for a Centre of Excellence along the lines of the Independent Living Centres in the United States of America and Canada.

### **DCDP — IDEAS FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING**

With the weight of all disabled people and their supporters in Derbyshire behind them, the temptation to take on prestige projects will be strong. Severely disabled people have traditionally been little more than second class citizens, and there is a lot of leeway to make up.

### **Breaking down dependency**

The United Nations, launching the International Year of Disabled People, reckoned 1 person in 10 to be disabled in some way. That means some 90,000 in Derbyshire. A good number of that pretty sizeable

'minority' will be severely disabled and dependent on other people for help. If you're among these, you're likely always to have been on the receiving end of other people's ideas of what is good for you. Those ideas can be pretty costly. Residential care for dependent disabled people in Derbyshire for 1980/81 averages out at about £100 per head per week. That's big money. Yet it's chicken-feed compared with the budget for maintaining disabled people throughout the country. And the bulk of that is just to maintain — not to improve and develop the remaining capacities of disabled people. Who can afford that!

### Disabled people serving disabled people

For years we've been throwing away tremendous resources: the skill, imagination and talents of disabled people themselves. No-one can really afford to throw away such vital human potential. An Independent Living Project is one way of harnessing it. No-one knows the problems of disability better than those who experience it. So, such a centre of excellence, could offer solutions derived from direct experience of the problems. What such a centre can offer is not dependency creating services, not sympathy, not pats on the head — but a new sense of direction, encouragement and support. Disabled people co-operating to support the independence of those in need of help.

### Foundation stones for independent living

It's fundamental that disabled people should aim to run and control any organisation or facility created to serve their needs. This is because disabled people, through the benefits of similar shared experiences, can best understand and work through problems in participation with their peers.

It is equally fundamental that such a centre should serve **all** disabled people. This is because people with different conditions, e.g. blindness, spinal injury, deafness, multiple sclerosis, ageing, intellectual impairment etc., all face the same problem of discrimination and stereotyping. Just as the Coalition offers all disabled people in Derbyshire an organisation dedicated to getting rid of all these forms of oppression — so a centre of excellence could offer concrete practical alternatives to isolation and discrimination.

### What could a Centre offer?

**\*Take housing;** a Centre could offer a whole range of advice drawn from the experiences of people who are severely disabled and who themselves have overcome the problems of living independently. It could offer technical services and direct labour to deal with adaptations, and draw together existing agencies and resources to ensure that disabled people have freedom to choose where and how to live in the neighbourhood of their choice.

**\*Take help;** providing housing for independent living without the help to go with it is like building a ship and forgetting the crew. But for severely disabled people, help has been the traditional missing link which has led to family breakdown or institutionalisation. Such a Centre could fill the gap in many ways: by compiling registers of helpers and those in need of help; by organising neighbourhood helping teams or localised helping clusters. And by ensuring that statutory services support both the independence of communities as well as disabled individuals.

**\*Take transport;** 'public' transport has always been a bit of a joke for disabled people: it provides a way of getting around for people who have no mobility problems who also design it specifically to exclude people who do. So until 'public' transport really is public, the Centre could bridge the gap by helping to organise a demand activated transport system which used all accessible vehicles in combination. The Centre could organise the link-up between the disabled person and the transport.

**\*Take information;** information — coupled with advice, practical help, advocacy and counselling is already everyday stuff for DIAL. A Centre could be a new home for an extended DIAL — not just to improve its 'passive' services of dealing with any enquiry from anyone with an interest in disability, but also to provide an active service of talks and films and a regular information update for Coalition members. Again, the service would be based on the philosophy that those with direct experience of disability know best how to deal with the needs and problems of disabled people.

**\*Take aids for independence;** without vital aids and equipment severely disabled people are denied independence and are forced into unnecessary dependency relationships with all the long term stress that this implies. A Centre could attempt to keep disabled people in touch with rapid technological advances through showroom displays and 'try' before you apply' services. It could also be a clearing house for unwanted aids, equipment and appliances.

**\*Take the needs of blind and deaf people;** drawing on the special experience and skills of those with direct knowledge of blindness and deafness the Centre could offer a whole range of specialised services. For the deaf, there could be access to interpreters, telephone contact and referral, signing classes and a public awareness programme. For the blind, a Centre could organise and extend mobility and orientation classes, talking book services, tactile map production and a reader referral service.

**\*Take employment;** disability and poverty often go hand in hand, since disabled people are clearly disadvantaged by the competitive nature of the world of work. But a Centre could organise job evaluation programmes, looking not just at training of disabled individuals, but also at the way jobs are organised. And a Centre could set up mixed ability workshops to make home adaptations, one-off aids, printing to serve the information service, workshops to service and repair all types of wheelchairs and other aids. Such workshops could engage disabled people themselves in socially useful work.

**\*Other services;** a Centre could stimulate many other activities, e.g. vehicle modification, access projects, counselling for the families of disabled people, research projects and public education at all levels, from infant school to community media outlets.

There are many other centres operating in different parts of the world all showing clearly that disability is not synonymous with passivity and dependence. An Independent Living Project would not just be an advance for disabled people in Derbyshire — but would also lead the way for disabled people elsewhere in Great Britain. It is worth thinking about seriously, and the Coalition could be the springboard for getting it off the ground . . . . .

MORE GOOD NEWS . . . . . the County Council has agreed to support it ! ! ! ! !

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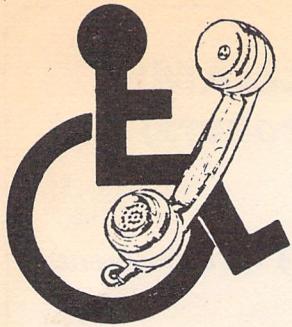
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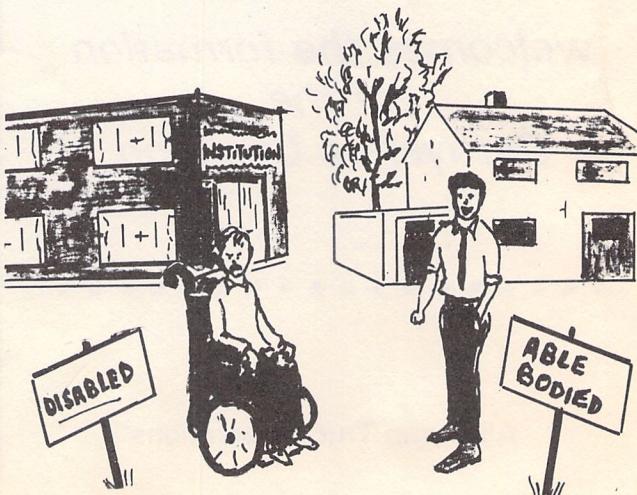
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Watch out for DCDP Interim Chairman, Ken Davis, in discussion on the ATV LINK series for disabled people. What has "our" Year achieved? A summary of the International Year of the Disabled Person 1981 by disabled people themselves.

**SUNDAY MORNING 20th DECEMBER 1981**

**EQUALITY IS**



**HAVING A PLACE OF YOUR OWN**