

## Disability Hate Crime – what does it mean?

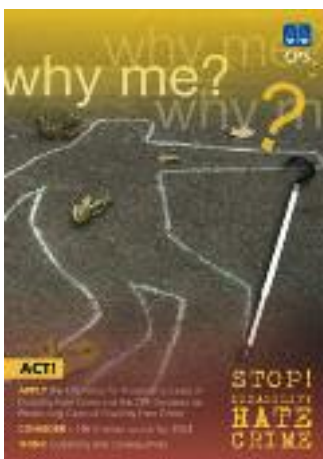
It has been recognised that certain sections of the community may experience physical attacks, threats or verbal abuse because of who they are. We will all have heard of racist or homophobic hate crimes in the news. Much has been done, especially around racist hate crime, following the report on the death of Stephen Lawrence.

Hate crime against disabled people has only recently been recognised by the police. However, do we understand or recognise hate crime as something that can happen to us as disabled people?

Disabled people can experience hate crime in different forms:

- Physical attacks – this might include assault, damage to property, neighbour disputes etc
- Threat of attack – this might include offensive letters, abusive telephone calls, being intimidated by groups of people etc
- Verbal abuse or insults – this can include abusive gestures, name calling, bullying etc

Two recent shocking national news stories have really helped bring this to the fore. Fiona Pilkington and her disabled daughter Francecca were found burnt to death in their car. Fiona had taken this drastic step as they could no longer put up with the abuse they had suffered for years. This was despite numerous phone calls to the police outlining what was happening to them. More recently there was the case of David Askew, a 64 year old man with learning disabilities, who collapsed and died outside his home after suffering years of abuse from local youths.



So why isn't more being done? Often disabled people don't report such incidents as they don't know how to, or they don't believe anything can or will be done. Police Stations may be inaccessible or difficult to get to without help. Police Officers may not understand the nature of disability hate crime and therefore do not report such crimes appropriately.

But the situation is changing. The Police and other public bodies are becoming more responsive to hate crime and harassment. Increasingly disabled people are no longer prepared to put up with this sort of treatment. This may be one reason why there appear to be more incidents of such crimes as more are being reported.

What can you do if you believe you are a victim of a disability hate crime?

Reporting it is the first step. Do this by calling Sussex Police either on 0845 6080999 (Text Users can use 07786 208090) or Victim Support on 0845 38 99 528. If you feel the situation warrants it then dial 999 and ask for the Police.



Don't put up with it – Report it!

## Contents

Disability Hate Crime .....	cover
Editorial .....	2
View from the Chair .....	3
News .....	4
ESDA services Fundraising .....	5/6
AskDES, Dada news .....	7
Information Service, Advocacy .....	8
ESDA Coach Services Ltd.....	9
News from local groups.....	10/11
LINK.....	12
Volunteering at ESDA .....	13
Skydiving .....	14
Letters .....	15
Events and contacts .....	back



**Editorial**  
**Nick Tapp**  
**CEO**

By the time you are reading this Spring will be truly with us and we'll all be feeling some benefit from increased sunshine and warm weather. Then again this is England so we could all be knee deep in snow! I really look forward to Spring. I love seeing the trees turn bright green, the first flowers appear, lambs in the fields and so on. I think it's the hint of what's to come that makes Spring so exciting.

So far so John Keats you're probably thinking but what has this got to do with ESDA? Well

for me this Spring coincides with many new opportunities – not just with my taking over the reins as Chief Executive, but also for ESDA and disabled people in the County.

What's going on then? We've worked with nine local organisations to help them become user-led. We've also prepared a 'toolkit' or guide for other organisations to use to help them take this important step. We've been user-led in practice for a number of years and some of you will recall we formalised that with the revision of our Memorandum and Articles back in 2008. It's important that people who use services have a major say in how the organisations who provide them are run. The motto of the disability movement is 'Nothing About Us Without Us' and this work helps that become a reality in East Sussex.

We've made a successful application to a Trust who will be equipping us with a state of the art Computer Training suite – there will be more details about this next time.

We're just about to get solar panels fitted to the building – again this has been through a successful funding bid. This will lower our electricity bills and eventually we'll be able to sell electricity back to the grid.

And nationally personalised services and individual budgets are being rolled out, there appears to be cross-party agreement that the future of social care funding needs to be looked at. And disability hate crime appears to be getting recognised as something to deal with. And there's an election coming up, and...

And then there's my new position – thank you all for your good luck messages. I'm passionate about what we do and what we can still do to support disabled people in the County. I am counting on your support and passion to back me as I lead ESDA forward. It's like a new spring for me and I'm sure what's to come will be very exciting! ■



## View from the Chair

Tony Powell

### Why be a trustee?

Looking out of the window of my study this bright sunny morning I am made aware that with the budding of the trees around the house Spring has finally arrived. Heralding the beginning of another new year for my garden.

In the same way, with Nick Tapp beginning his responsibilities as the Chief Executive Officer of ESDA, from the 1st April 2010, Spring heralds the start of another episode in the continuing journey along that well trodden path of providing services to disabled people by the Association.

As a newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of ESDA, Nick will be the first to agree that he will benefit enormously in successfully carrying out his role, by having the support and assistance of Trustees who recognise their key function is one of governance, rather than management. For governance is the process a management committee uses to make sure that an organisation operates effectively, has a clear mission and strategy and ensures that it is well managed, not the Trustees on the management committee doing the work themselves.

And speaking of that support, while the current Trustees bring a high degree of professionalism, knowledge and caring to the management committee, the Association does need to broaden its base of experience in all these areas. Which is the reason why ESDA needs to attract those who will find it personally highly rewarding and stimulating to put their skills and enthusiasms to good use in a new environment because they think the Association is doing something really worthwhile.

Being a Trustee offers terrific opportunity to help change things for the better, whether this means helping younger disabled people to find new ways of learning or expressing themselves, giving communities better facilities, changing people's attitudes to others, or generally improving the quality of life of all disabled people.

The most rewarding thing about being a Trustee is seeing things happen in the community which benefit all disabled people.

Will you make this happen by finding out if you are able to make a positive contribution to the Association by becoming a Trustee? No trustees, no Charity.

To do so you can contact me, Tony Powell – Chair of the Association or Nick Tapp Chief Executive Officer of ESDA.

Tony Powell

Chair of the Trustees of ESDA ■

# News



What is the disability symbol?

Jobcentre Plus awards the disability symbol to employers. The symbol is circular, usually green with two ticks and the words 'positive about disabled people'. Employers who want to use the disability symbol apply to the Jobcentre Plus.

If Jobcentre Plus decides they can use it, it means the company concerned have agreed to work positively with disabled people and help them stay in work.

It should also mean that the company have agreed to:

- ▶▶ interview all disabled people who apply for a job, if they meet the minimum requirements for doing the job
- ▶▶ make sure disabled workers can, at least once a year discuss their development
- ▶▶ make every effort to help any worker who becomes disabled to stay in work
- ▶▶ make sure all staff know about what support disabled people need from them
- ▶▶ review these commitments every year to look at what has been done

If anyone has experiences of companies good or bad that display the disability symbol we would like to hear from you.

Please contact Julia on 01323 514521 ■



No selling. No jargon. Just the facts.

Money made clear is a website of the Financial Services Authority. It contains step by step guides to managing your money, the information below is from the 'Say 'NO' to high pressure sales' guide.

Has anyone ever tried to sell you shares over the phone? Some firms use high-pressure techniques to sell high risk investment products such as Penny Shares and Contracts for Difference (CFDs). Often firms target people for whom these forms of investments are unsuitable.

Don't:

- \* be pressured into buying investment by anyone, particularly if they contact you out of the blue.
- \* be tempted by anyone promising you a deal that sounds too good to be true.
- \* feel that you have to agree to anything because you have been put on the spot. It's not rude to say 'No'.

Do:

- \* challenge the advice you're given and ask why the investment is suitable for your particular circumstances.
- \* your own research and make sure you fully understand products you're being sold and the risks involved before investing.

More tips are available on the 'stay safe' section of the website:

[www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk](http://www.moneymadeclear.fsa.gov.uk)

or call the Moneymadeclear helpline on: 0300 500 5000 ■

# ESDA Services

## Fundraising

It has been my first full financial year at ESDA and I am pleased to say that I am still enjoying the job as much as when I started. It has been a difficult job but very rewarding and I am thankful for all the support that our members have given me in our raffles, auctions and events during the year, without your help we would not be in a position to provide the services we do and it is very much appreciated.

One of the projects we have been working on is to develop an IT suite that will enable us to provide basic computer skills and employment training. I am pleased to announce that we have received funding from the Ian Karten Charitable Trust to do this and as we speak are currently in the process of preparing the room for the new

equipment. Make sure you take a look at the next Aware for details of the courses we will be running!!

The Importance of Donations to ESDA:

ESDA is reliant upon the generosity of our members for our day to day survival without which we would not be in a position to provide the services we do.

So if you are in a position where you are able to either make a single donation or a monthly donation to ESDA then please fill out the form below and post it to our offices ( address on the back page) it really does make a difference to us.

Alternately you can also donate to us at  
[www.justgiving.com/esda/donate](http://www.justgiving.com/esda/donate)  
 Mark Bond Fundraiser

Help ESDA raise money - Individual giving helps small charities budget and plan for the future. Even £5 a month will help us.



### My Details

Title \_\_\_\_\_ Full Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to give a single donation of: £10  £20  £50  £100  Other

I enclose a cheque/postal order made payable to East Sussex Disability Association.

### Gift Aid it!

You can help us - just by ticking a box! If you are a UK taxpayer, please tick the box we can receive an extra 28p from every £1 you give at no extra cost to you.

I am a UK taxpayer and would like all donations I have made to East Sussex Disability Association for the four years prior to this year and all donations I make in the future to be treated as Gift Aid donations.

Name of Taxpayer \_\_\_\_\_ Today's date

# ESDA Services

## Fundraising

Have you got an old mobile collecting dust in a drawer or do you use printer cartridges but just chuck them away, then please consider donating them to ESDA, we can recycle both mobile phones and cartridges through the Recycling Appeal website which gives ESDA money for every mobile phone donated to them. For example some Nokia phones can raise as much as £50 for ESDA and some printer cartridges can raise as much as £5 each for us. For more information and to see if your phone/cartridge is suitable for us to recycle please contact Victor on 01323 514500 or on [victor.fields@esda.org.uk](mailto:victor.fields@esda.org.uk)

Due to the assistance of Darren (see page 13) we have been able to really drive on the products we have listed on our Ebay shop. We are constantly adding new

listings so make sure you take a look and grab yourself a bargain. Previous items have included a signed QPR shirt, educational items and a wheelchair hoist. One of the ways of generating new income has been through Ebay auctions which can be found on the ESDA website. We would like to thank the following companies for donating items to us this month: AV Bristol, Cush N Shade, Concentrate Design LTD, DeltaForce Paintballing and Love2Shop.

If you are a company that would be interested in donating an item to ESDA please contact Darren on [darren.webb@esda.org.uk](mailto:darren.webb@esda.org.uk)



Office Use Only:	In database _____
Ref Number _____ Date Received _____	S/O Sent to bank _____
Notes _____	G/A updated _____
_____	First Payment Received _____

I WOULD LIKE TO GIVE A REGULAR DONATION TO:

EAST SUSSEX DISABILITY ASSOCIATION

INSTRUCTION TO YOUR BANK OR BUILDING SOCIETY TO PAY BY STANDING ORDER

Name and full postal address of your Bank or Building Society

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s) of Account holder(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Branch Sort Code    Bank/Building Society Account Number

□□□□□□    □□□□□□□□□□

Please pay to Lloyds Bank, Lewes branch. 82 High street, Lewes, E.Sussex, BN7 1XW to the credit of ESDA sort code 30-95-01 Account Number 00044635

I would like to support East Sussex Disability Association with a regular gift of:

£2  £5  £10  £20  £60  £100  other

Please pay this amount on \_\_\_\_\_ and then every:

Month  Quarter  Year  until further notice

Signature(s)

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Date

## Ask DES

WANT TO BUY OR SELL DISABILITY EQUIPMENT?

Then visit [www.askdes.org.uk](http://www.askdes.org.uk)

AskDES lists second-hand disability equipment being sold by individuals in specific areas. The lists are maintained by local disability charities working together to provide people with a way of linking together.

Our Disability Equipment Service listing second-hand disability equipment being sold by individuals in East Sussex, is run by ESDA volunteer Matt Colliard.

Currently in the East Sussex area the following are advertised on AskDES:

- \* Bathroom Equipment (14)
- \* Cars & Accessories (5)
- \* Children's Equipment (3)
- \* Electric Wheelchairs (4)
- \* Manual Wheelchairs (4)
- \* Miscellaneous (3)
- \* Mobility Aids (4)
- \* Scooters (9)
- \* Sitting (3)
- \* Sleeping (10)
- \* Stairlifts (7)
- \* Walking Aids (2)

For further information, contact  
Matt Colliard (ESDA Volunteer)

Tel: (01323) 514500

(Mon & Thur PM) or via email:  
[matt.colliard@esda.org.uk](mailto:matt.colliard@esda.org.uk) ■

## Dada News

Sign up now <http://www.dada-south.org.uk> for a free monthly bulletin edited by Colin Hambrook . Dada-News will bring you essential information about disability related arts events, publications, opportunities and news - in and around the South East Region.

Follow Colin's monthly blog as he reflects on the the work of disabled and deaf artists working with Dada-South's Dada-Exchange programme. His blog contains views and interviews on the things that make disability arts controversial, exciting, and accessible.

If you want to find out the latest goings on in the south east; advertise your services or send messages, Dada-News offers a free service dedicated to promoting your work. Whether you're an artist, work in the arts or just have a curious mind about disability arts, Colin will guide you through what's caught his imagination and is worth checking out.

Your comments, news stories, articles and artwork is always welcome. Just email the editor via [colin@dada-south.org.uk](mailto:colin@dada-south.org.uk) if you want to have anything considered for inclusion.

Dada-South supports Disabled and Deaf artists through the provision of inclusive and innovative opportunities. For more information about what we do go to <http://www.dada-south.org.uk/vision-mission-values.php>

Colin Hambrook (editor)

[www.dada-south.org.uk](http://www.dada-south.org.uk)

[www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk](http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk)

07950 745008 ■

# ESDA Services

## Information Service

The Information Service is seeking a reliable, confident volunteer to assist with our work.

He/She must have some understanding of disability and the barriers facing individuals. In-depth knowledge of information, advice and where to seek help would be an advantage. Training will be given on ESDA's databases and Information Tools but a background in giving advice is desirable for this post. Working initially Tuesdays and Thursdays then moving to Wednesday and Fridays after a successful induction period.

Please contact Steph on 01323 514509 for a Volunteer Application Form. ■



ESDA's Information Service provides a free and confidential Information Service where a team of staff and volunteers,

maintain an extensive database providing up-to-date local and national information on a wide range of topics relating to disabilities.

We receive numerous enquiries that come in via the telephone, website, emails and facebook, these all require attention and wide ranging research. There are also several fund finder enquiries that need extensive time put into them. As an Information Service it is also invaluable that we can go 'on the road', where we attend Older Persons Days, local town events, Senior Forums, 'Disability is Everyones Business' events, 'Every Child Matters' forums, Bathing events and many more. We often use these occasions to raise awareness amongst the people of East Sussex. ■

## Advocacy Service



Advocacy is concerned with ensuring that people are enabled to express their views and

feelings either directly or through an independent voice. ESDA's Advocacy project is now into its 10th month of a 12 month pilot scheme: the scheme provides independent advocacy for disabled adults throughout East Sussex.

To date there have been 71 referrals from a wide range of sources e.g. from Adult Social Care, the Chaseley Trust and A4e, however, many referrals are "self" referrals. Advocacy issues have been widely varied and have included complaints / appeals to ASC, housing issues, occupational therapy concerns and legal issues. The scheme has been successful, 55% of Advocacy issues have been resolved to date, 20% of cases are now closed and unresolved with 24% cases ongoing.

You may be eligible for advocacy if any of the following apply to you:

- ✓ You are receiving direct payments
- ✓ You have a rapidly deteriorating neurological condition
- ✓ You have requested or are receiving continuing care funding
- ✓ You are challenging Adult Social Care policies & procedures

More detailed information about ESDA's advocacy project can be found on the website [www.esda.org.uk](http://www.esda.org.uk) or by contacting ESDA ■

## ESDA Coaches Services

### Bus Stop...HERE PLEASE!

#### Outside Your Own Front Door?

Did you know that ESDA Coach Services not only provides a unique door to door service to ESDA member groups, it is available to any non profit making group\* that has one or more members with mobility difficulties?

Our service is to provide accessible coach outings for all, so that any person with mobility impairment can travel together with their group and not have to travel separately (they need not be registered disabled).



Fully accessible coaches with tail lifts can board and carry passengers in a wheelchair fixed in situ, so they don't need to transfer to a coach seat. Our driver attendants have completed specialist training in assisting disabled and vulnerable people of all ages.

If you or your group are planning an outing, call Wendy at ESDA Coach Services on 01323 514512 to find out how we can help you with travel arrangements to make planning your day out easier.

What's more, we're confident you'll be pleasantly surprised by our competitive prices!



Kew Gardens ♦ London Eye ♦ Arundel Castle ♦ Bluebell Railway ♦ Chichester Cathedral ♦ Tenterden ♦ Bluewater ♦ Arundel Wetlands ♦ Brighton Marina ♦ Rye Harbour ♦ Museums ♦ Theatres ♦ Gardens and Garden Centres ♦ Lunch Venues Throughout Sussex and beyond...

Wherever your group would like to visit, we can take you... Door to Door!

Call or email

01323 514512

[www.esda.org.uk/coaches](http://www.esda.org.uk/coaches)

[wendy.hiscox@esda.org.uk](mailto:wendy.hiscox@esda.org.uk)

*\* To qualify you must be a non-profit making community/voluntary group, with one or more member(s) who have difficulty travelling on conventional transport ■*

# News from local groups



Future meetings will be the 4th Monday of the month. Transport can be arranged.

**26th July 10.30 - 12.30pm**

**Christian community church, Hartfield Road. Forest Row.**

-----

**23rd August 10.30 - 12.30pm**

**Demonstration of disabled sport at Crowborough Freedom Leisure Centre.**

## Seaford Kurlers

Seaford Kurlers took up the sport of New Age Kurling just four years ago and has gone from strength to strength. We play every Tuesday between 2pm and 4pm. No membership fee, just £2.50 for the 2 hour sessions at the Wave Leisure Centre Seaford. The No 12 bus stops outside so we are easy to find at Sutton Corner.

Our latest contact is nearer home with Jo of the DAWNS group from within ESDA at Forest Row. We were asked to vet the hall by the Village Hall Committee and were pleased to say it was fine for Jo and her team to play. DAWNS has still to raise the money for equipment but we have offered to lend them a couple of ours. Let's wish them luck in joining the sport...

The sport is played on a Badminton Court, which creates two lanes, on equal terms by

both disabled and non disabled people. Although it can be played very seriously the whole two hours are filled with banter and laughter. We break for tea about half way through and have a cosy chat before returning to the game, we also have social outings from time to time.

Since starting we have become roving ambassadors for the sport. The suppliers of the equipment put the persons making the enquiry in touch with us and we visit them and invite them to our game to see how it is played. We are instrumental in giving advice in all aspects including where to go for funding.

So far we have return matches with Sittingbourne and Hastings. We are looking forward to matches with two new clubs that we helped set up in Basingstoke and Littlehampton. In addition to playing in the National Championships.

We have found fund raising can be useful in becoming known within the local community. So far we have been supported by The National Lottery, The Martello Rotary Club, Barclays Bank, Eastbourne Masons and by arranging fun evenings for outsiders like the Senior Forum verses Youth club, the Lions and also the Lionesses. We expect to play our local Councillors shortly.

If you want to know more or have us visit you to show you how it's played please don't hesitate to contact the Organiser:-  
Bob Matthews on 01323 892647 or e-mail [matbobshe@aol.com](mailto:matbobshe@aol.com). ■

## Hailsham 'Out and About'

In March we visited the Mechanical Musical Doll Collection at Church Road Portfield, Chichester. Tel: 01243 372646

The collection includes music boxes, barrel pianos and orchestrions and lots more primarily Victorian dolls, all working and playing. The Info says 'if it plays by its self its probably here'.

The venue is now only open to groups and must be booked in advance. Admission is £2 per head but there is a minimum of £40 payable. The museum is housed in a very old church - which is very cold, so beware, if you would like to visit the summer is probably better.

When making the booking, the info given was that it was accessible for wheelchairs etc. and, although there was a step at the entrance, a wooden ramp is provided and help was given when required.

On our arrival a nice gentleman, called Clive came out to greet us. He put down the ramp and then moved it into the Church for the second step after he had shepherded all the walkers in.



Clive then suggested that perhaps we would like to go round and have a look at all items first, before he gave us his talk and played the music. There were plenty of chairs for everyone who wished to sit down. Some did sit down whilst others preferred to walk around ( to keep warm probably). The walking area was narrow like church aisles.



Clive's talk was very interesting and he was happy to answer any questions, afterwards we listened to the music, which Clive started by putting a penny in the slot or turning a handle - this brought back many memories to most of us and it was great to hear and see them working. Everyone enjoyed the visit in spite of it being cold. The visit takes about an hour in the church.

As there were, of course, no facilities available at this venue, we had stopped at Arundel en route for a comfort break.

When we left the museum we visited a garden centre about 10-15 minutes away on the Bognor Road. This turned out to be a very good place and we were able to get a hot drink and some lunch - soup, baked potatoes, cakes etc. and of course use their loos.

Last but not least a big THANK YOU to our drivers for a enjoyable and safe day out. ■

# LINK



It is now the end of Year 2 for the LINK project and plans are already underway to compile our Annual Report. LINK participants will have the opportunity to adopt the report at the Annual Review Meeting on June 3rd, Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club – 11am - 1pm lunch included.

Lots of people have signed up to the LINK but we need more people to get involved, you can find out more by coming along to our Introduction to LINKs Workshop's. please call Debbie on 01323 514510 to find out dates and further information or email [info@thecountylink.net](mailto:info@thecountylink.net)

Another way to get involved is to become an Authorised Representative. The LINK can enter certain health and social care services to check for the quality of service delivery. If you are interested in becoming an Authorised Representative please contact Elizabeth Mackie, LINK Manager 01323 514510 or email: [manager@thecountylink.net](mailto:manager@thecountylink.net)

Since Christmas we have been very busy. We had to reschedule our January Meeting in Public in Robertsbridge because of the snow, but the meeting did go ahead in February, followed shortly after by the last in our series of meetings at the Llama Park in North Wealden. At our last meeting the focus was on Dementia, when Ivy Elsey, from the LINK Core Group, told her story about caring for a loved one with Dementia. It was a very emotional and difficult story to tell, but Ivy was passionate that people who plan and deliver services should hear her story. The LINK has also been working with an online service called Patient Opinion whereby local people can tell their story

and share their experiences. Our series of meetings looked at Putting People First and Mental Health issues. As well as local reports, there will be an overarching report of all the meetings in public due out shortly.

The LINK continually helps to bring about change by responding to concerns that have been voiced from the community. We are currently working on the following:

- Three representatives went along to Older Peoples Day Services in Uckfield (The Uckfield Club) the Phoenix Centre in Lewes and the Moreton Centre in Hastings. This was in response to concerns raised about how people who use services, carers and the local community were consulted about the proposed changes to their services. A report will be available shortly on our findings.
- Another eight participants are working jointly with Health Overview Scrutiny Committee (HOSC) around Food, Nutrition and Hydration in Hospitals.
- A project group are just starting to look at Wheelchair Services in East Sussex, if you are interested in taking part in this project please contact Elizabeth Mackie on 01323 514510
- Delays in Breast Screening Programme. The LINK is liaising with service providers on how plans to reduce the backlog are progressing.

As you can see it is really important everyone gets involved with their LINK, we look forward to hearing your views soon.

Elizabeth Mackie LINK Support Team ■

# Volunteering at ESDA



**Darren Webb**  
Fundraising Volunteer

For me, volunteering at ESDA has really marked the beginning of a whole new experience.

As someone who has recently known long periods of unemployment, assessing & reviewing purposefulness and usefulness has become something of an obsession. Looking for new ways to appeal to potential employers and being determined not to let lack of replies and interviews diminish my resolve to get back into regular paid work has brought me to understand that, to greater or lesser degree, everyone depends on everyone else.

Being involved with, and seeking to support those, who work hard to provide life-enhancing and life-dependent services and facilities to the disabled community, most who would otherwise know only a much more limiting daily environment, has made me realise that good health, well-being & independence (as an adult, at least) are not to be taken for granted. If things take a turn for the worse, you really do need the right kind of help and support to see you through.

I'm very glad to be able to contribute, in a small way, to this on-going provision of care, advice and support and look forward to a long association with work of this kind.

Before my time here began, I had very

little appreciation of the value and benefits of regular volunteering, let alone in the context of an established charitable organisation like ESDA. I am so glad that I was prompted by the gentle encouragement of one or two good friends to 'try it and see' (!).

In support of ESDA's fundraising responsibilities, I was initially involved in collating contact information from the entertainment & broadcasting world, such as TV and radio programmes, and theatre venues around the region. This quickly moved onto the project that I'm currently helping to co-ordinate for the fundraising manager, Mark Bond.

ESDA's Volunteer Expenses Project 2010 is designed to appeal to the widest range of potential donors and/or supporters, which in turn would hopefully provide a solid source of regular financial income. It forays into the world of online shops & businesses are anything to go by (in particular, the realm of Ebay), the possibilities seem endless (!).

So far we have received donations including: a guitar, sun shade bits, lunch boxes, school equipment, shop vouchers and paintballing tickets, these will all be posted for sale on our ebay site and advertised on our facebook page.

In the four months or so that ESDA have allowed me to grace their office areas (and their well-stocked kitchen!), I'm in no doubt about the vitality of their work and the merit they deserve for helping to keep the needs and rights of the disabled in the consciousness of the community.

Long may they receive generous support and donations. ■

# Skydiving

After a traffic jam free drive on the M25 & M40, my PA (Marianne) and I got to Hinton Airfield near Oxford in plenty of time to register at reception, chat to other prospective wheelchair using skydivers and watch several tandem parachute jumpers land very softly and seemingly effortlessly – which calmed the nerves somewhat...

After a short wait, it was time for my briefing, where an instructor went through the procedure of a tandem dive in a very light hearted manner; then, with the help of Marianne, they put a harness on me whilst still in my wheelchair and after a final check I was ready to go... I wheeled over to the plane, which seemed very small, and reversed my wheelchair towards my instructor, who was already sitting on the floor of the plane feet dangling out. I then got lifted up (with lots of other help) and my instructor clamped the back of my harness to the front of his. With a bit of shuffling around we were both in and the video cameraman velcroed my ankles to my instructor's and shut the door. By the time we took off my nerves had returned and by the time we'd reached 5000ft I was seriously wondering what the hell I was doing up there! The cameraman opened the door at 13000ft, climbed out and held on to the side of the plane, my instructor then shuffled us both to the edge of the plane, both our legs dangling out – at that point I was absolutely terrified. After a count of three we dropped head first towards the ground, levelling off very quickly and the combination of the air rushing into my face, and the realisation of freefalling towards the ground at 130+mph turned any nerves into complete elation. The fall lasted about 40 seconds and after a quick tap on the head, my instructor pulled the cord, the parachute opened and we seemed to shoot upwards. Within a second everything changed from noisy, exhilarating insanity to complete silent peace – the contrast was quite amazing.

We spent the next few minutes gliding down to earth, admiring the countryside and

enjoying the stillness - and after having witnessed another wheelchair user land safely on his tandem jump, my reservations on the landing had completely disappeared. Our landing was unfortunately not as smooth as I'd expected, we seem to hit the ground very heavily, but as I have very limited sensation in my legs and the fact I had no adverse reaction from the fall, I soon forgot about the landing, was lifted back into my chair and for the rest of the afternoon had a big grin on my face in realisation of what I'd just done...



Cutting a long story short, it turned out I broke my femur when landing, but despite an operation, 10 days in hospital and extra physio for 6 months, I never regretted doing the skydive. I fulfilled a lifetime ambition, raised over £800 for The Back Up Trust (a fantastic charity who arrange outdoor sports activity courses for those paralysed through spinal cord injury and made it all possible) plus got the adrenalin buzz of my life...! I was extremely unlucky to sustain an injury to my leg, and therefore urge any perspective disabled skydiver not to be put off and to go for it!

Matt Colliard

HINTON SKYDIVING CENTRE, Hinton Airfield, Brackley, Northants, NN13 5NS.  
Tel: 01295 812300 , [www.skydive.co.uk](http://www.skydive.co.uk)

BACK UP TRUST, Tel: 020 8875 1805.  
[www.backuptrust.org.uk](http://www.backuptrust.org.uk) ■

# Letters



Dear Disabled Living Centre

Thank you so much for taking the time today to show us around. We all found it really useful and it has given us a good idea of the types of equipment that are available.

It was nice to meet you, many thanks again.

Sharon - University of Brighton student ■



Dear ESDA,

I would just like to say a huge thanks to the Information Service for all the support and help they gave me with an issue I had surrounding transport. Without their advice and searches for alternative ideas I would have been stuck with what to do.

So thanks again.

Sam- Polegate ■



Dear ESDA Coaches

I write as leader of Crowborough Good Fellowship Group, we use your coaches each month to get our members from their homes out for a short drive in our lovely countryside, back to base for tea and home again. This monthly outing is a real highlight in their lives, a treat to be looked forward to and enjoyed and talked about. Our average age is 84yrs, and we just want to say a big THANK YOU, our usual driver is always cheerful and helpful and so reliable, we feel well blessed and we just wanted you to know it too.

Sam Holt Crowborough ■



Dear ESDA,

I am still enjoying my volunteering experience with ESDA, and would once again acknowledge my thanks for the silver merit award I received in year 2009. I enjoy working with the staff and volunteers, and feel well settled in the ESDA environment. The fact I have a mental disability and find myself working with a disability related organisation is good for me because ESDA helps disabled people, and I feel I am giving something back in return.

It's good to see ESDA has been able to continue providing its services despite the recession – long may it continue. I would recommend ESDA to anyone wishing to do some voluntary work as I have enjoyed it thoroughly. I volunteer at the ESDA Offices in Hampden Park Eastbourne for the Information Service, and do a lot of work on the computer, and update and edit the databases, and answer incoming calls to reception. I also carry out additional tasks on request.

From Andrew – ESDA Volunteer, April 2010 ■



Dear ESDA

Just a quick note to say thank you for the great send off. Thanks also for the cards and presents. The messages in the cards were very moving. I have been up since 8am, yes a lie in and have been playing with my presents since then.

I had a lot of kind words said at my farewell party but I could not have achieved what we have done without you. So a big thanks from me.

Reg ■

# Events and contacts

**Information Service** has a new mobile telephone number - this is for text enquiries only and will be switched on Tuesdays and Thursdays when the Information Service is open. The number is: 07564 932445

## LINK Annual Review

3rd June 2010 contact East Sussex LINK 01323 514510 or [info@thecountylink.net](mailto:info@thecountylink.net)  
Annual review of LINK activities including the publication of their Annual Report 09-10  
Venue - Sovereign Harbour Yacht Club  
Time - 11am - 1pm - Followed by Lunch

## LINK Public Awareness Information Event - Carers

25th August 2010 contact East Sussex LINK 01323 514510 or [info@thecountylink.net](mailto:info@thecountylink.net)  
Venue - Priory Meadow Shopping Centre Hastings - All day event

## ESDA Skydive

October 2010  
Jump for ESDA from 10,000ft - £70 Deposit required and a £325 minimum sponsorship.  
Contact Mark Bond our fundraiser for further details: 01323 514528 or email [mark.bond@esda.org.uk](mailto:mark.bond@esda.org.uk)

## ESDA AGM - Advance notice

Friday 22 October 2010 morning,  
will end with lunch at 1pm

### **East Sussex Disability Association**

1 Faraday Close, Eastbourne BN22 9BH

Tel: 01323 514500

Fax: 01323 514501

Text: 07564 932445

Email: [info@esda.org.uk](mailto:info@esda.org.uk)

Website: [www.esda.org.uk](http://www.esda.org.uk)

Form Filling Service

[info@esda.org.uk](mailto:info@esda.org.uk) - 01323 514500

Disabled Living Centre

[dlc@esda.org.uk](mailto:dlc@esda.org.uk) - 01323 514515

Information Service

[information@esda.org.uk](mailto:information@esda.org.uk) - 01323 514521

Meeting Room Hire

[info@esda.org.uk](mailto:info@esda.org.uk) - 01323 514500

Local Services

[localservices@esda.org.uk](mailto:localservices@esda.org.uk) - 01323 514500

Registered charity no. 1042071. Registered in England & Wales as a company limited by guarantee no. 2979027.