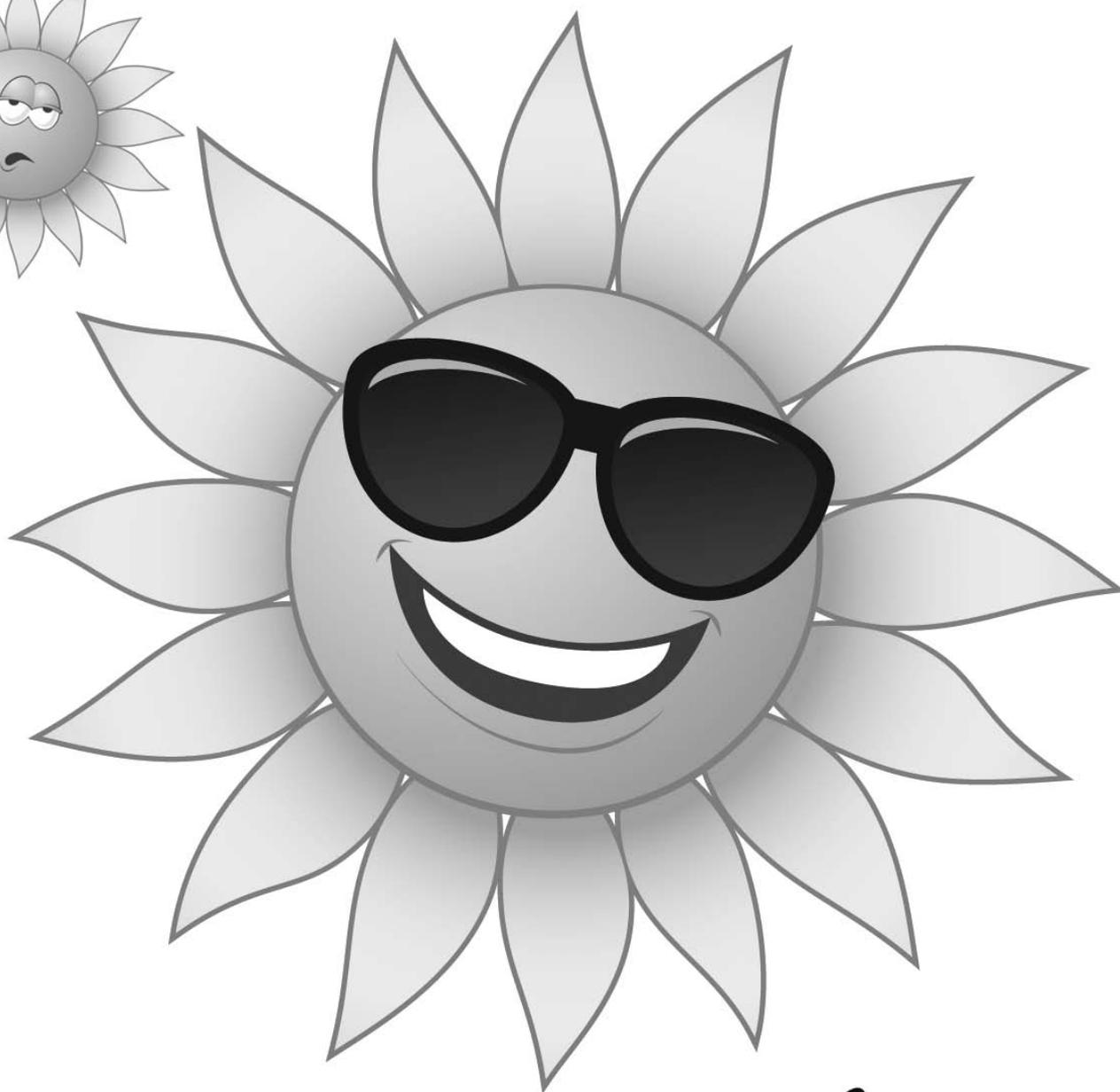
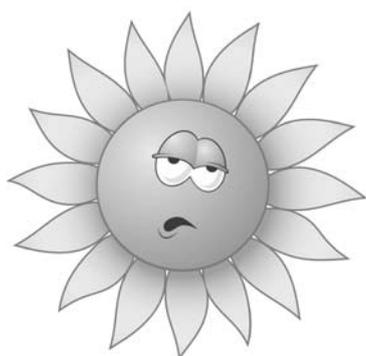


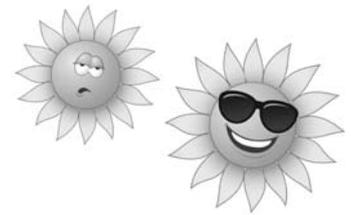
Holiday!

What Holiday?

Wednesday 29th October 2008, Edinburgh



ARC Scotland Report 2008 Conference



Holiday! What Holiday?

ARC Scotland hosted a conference on the 29th October 2008 in Edinburgh, which explored the reasons why many people with learning disabilities in Scotland are not able to have a holiday. The Conference was made possible by a donation from the ARK Trust.

170 delegates attended the conference and 100 of these were people who use services. The very high numbers attending highlighted to us the fact that NOT having a holiday is a major issue for many people with learning disabilities in Scotland.

The conference also gave nine organisations in Scotland the opportunity to showcase their good practice in helping people take a break/holiday.

The nine organisations were:

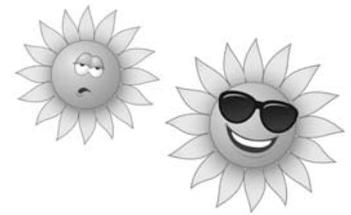
- Crossreach Scotland
- Turning Point Scotland
- Badaguish Centre
- Enable Scotland
- Travel Options (Unity Enterprise)
- Asha (Edinburgh City Council)
- ARK Community Networks
- dates-n-mates
- In-Control Scotland.

The three **Key Barriers**, which emerged from the conference, were:
Choice, Cost and Culture.

CHOICE: This was around the lack of choice of suitable holidays available to people with a learning disability

COST: Lack of finance was the most significant barrier to allowing people to take any type of short break let alone a holiday.

CULTURE: This centred on the conflicting pressures placed on many providers who are often not funded to provide holidays but who are expected to support people to have a break.



Setting the Scene

Wendy Spencer Chair of ARC Scotland (and Senior Operations Manager at Turning Point Scotland) opened the conference with a very informative presentation. She had analysed statistical and anecdotal information around the barriers to people with a learning disability taking a holiday. Her key findings were research:

- By Doctors has proved that holidays are good for your health
- That highlighted that people with learning disabilities are losing out on holidays because of access problems or lack of finance

People with learning disabilities have told us:

- Care packages cannot be used for holidays anymore
- Its hard to get support staff to go on holiday and their holiday has to be paid for making it very expensive
- People with low support needs cannot get the support they need when abroad
- Supporting People money cannot be spent on holidays and you can no longer “ bank” hours.

Control can get in the way of holidays. Risk assessments often don't get the balance right and support staff may mean well but have rules to work to that may stop people with learning disabilities doing what they really want to.

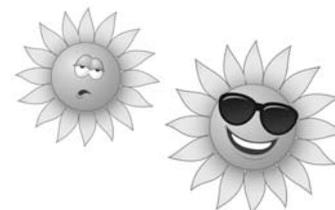
Some European countries give holiday vouchers to help those less well off to get a break

The delegates from the conference asked ARC Scotland to do 2 things:

1. Write up a conference report and circulate it widely to key people throughout Scotland. They wanted ARC Scotland to do this in the hope of persuading government and local authorities to try and look at imaginative ways of ensuring people with learning disabilities have a short break/holiday from their daily routine.
2. Host a meeting to look at the possibility of establishing a one-stop shop for holiday information and support including a rating system. (The rating system is to be developed by collating the views of people with learning disabilities who have used that particular holiday service). ARC Scotland is hosting a meeting with Enable Scotland, Update, Shared Care Scotland and Capability to explore the opportunities for joint collaboration on providing such a service in Scotland. We will circulate the outcomes from this meeting to all conference delegates.

Workshop summaries

ARC Scotland asked each of the nine workshop presenters to summarise their workshops and any relevant discussion, which took place during the workshop, for this report. ARC has presented their reports on the following pages together with contact names and addresses.



ARK Housing Association's workshop was called '**Here Comes the Sun**'. Its aim was to get people thinking in more detail about what it takes to have a good supported holiday. Speakers included 3 service users and 2 managers from ARK's supported living projects in Alloa and Perth, in addition there were two representatives from 'Caza Capaz', a care holiday company that has helped a number of ARK service users to have successful holidays in the Spanish Costa Blanca.

The workshop was well attended and there was plenty of time for discussion. The majority of questions from delegates were around how to access good quality care holiday packages. Some people were particularly worried about advance planning and partnership working between holiday companies, individuals and support staff. Others were keen to know more about how to locate reliable holiday companies. People also reported concerns about air travel and the fact that airports and airlines are not subject to the same regulations regarding access for people with disabilities.

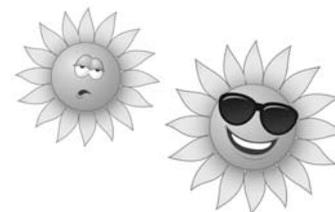
The concerns and questions raised during the workshop demonstrated that people are keen to think about the practicalities involved in helping people to make greater use of care holiday companies. This can be a viable way of enabling breaks abroad, which do not depend on extra input from the primary support provider.

Further Information

For further details on this workshop contact Miriam Leighton at ARK Community Networks on:

Tel: 0131 478 8196 or 07920 539063

Fax: 0131 478 8137



“Turning Your Dreams into Reality”

(The main aim of the workshop was to look at some of the barriers our service users face when going on holiday and how we overcome them)

Money/Funding - We spoke about how most of our service users have support with their finances and how our staff support them to budget for things like holidays. We also spoke of funding through Charitable Trust, ILF, Care Managers, Fundraising and how Turning Point Scotland has the Make It Happen Fund.

Volunteers – We spoke about how it can be difficult for people to get the physical support and how we approach our staff and family members and that some of our more able service users can support one and other.

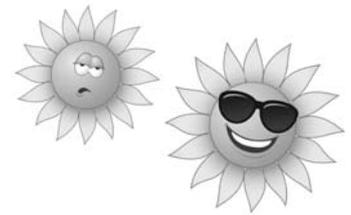
Organisational Culture – We spoke about how as an organisation we make sure our staff are aware of how they will be expected to support our service users to go on holiday. This is part of our recruitment and selection process; therefore our staff know what is expected of them before they accept the job. Turning Point Scotland has a policy on service users holidays. This helps the service users, the staff and the organisation plan, prepare and organise the holidays with the added help of our holiday planner and risk assessments process. This policy helps to ensure as much as humanly possible everyone is safe while at the same time taking the reasonable risks we have to take to help people achieve their dreams and ambitions.

Communication – We make sure that all our service users have as much information as possible and with the right support we help them to choose the holiday that is best for them. We usually find most of our information from travel agents, internet, and tourist information and more importantly through word of mouth.

Equipment & Aids – Again this information is usually found through travel agents and the Internet. Equipment can also be hired a little bit of research on the Internet and through the travel agents usually solves this problem.

Travel Insurance – This has also never proved to be a problem as long as everyone remembers to be very thorough and honest with all the physical and mental health problems they may have. We mostly get our insurance from the travel agent with whom we book the holiday.

We also asked Jane Fleming, one of our service users, to talk about her own personal experience of being support by TPS on holiday Jane spoke about how she has been supported by TPS for 2 years and has enjoyed two fabulous holidays one to Spain and one to Portugal. Jane spoke about how with the support of the staff she managed to pick her dream holidays with a priority list of what was important to her while on holiday i.e. swimming pool and pool table within the hotel.



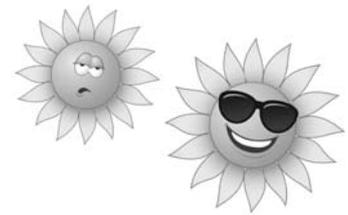
We also spoke about one of our service users, May. May has very high personal care needs and needs quite a large wheel chair for her to get about. Our staff managed to support May on holiday to Disneyland Paris one year and to Egypt another year. There did not seem to be any problems with either of these holidays i.e. sourcing equipment like a wet room shower facility, hoist, large rooms with wide doors and on both holidays the hotels prepared May's food exactly how she needed it and also offered alternatives for her every day so as May had as much choice as everyone else. May also had to be chair lifted on to the airplane and then had to be physically carried on to the plane by two male airline porters who had the right insurance to allow them to do that, her wheelchair was also stored on the plane.

Further Information

For further information contact at Turning Point Scotland:

Tel: 0141 427 8200

Edinburgh City Council Social Work Department



ASHA (Alternative Scheme for Holiday Aspirations) is an alternative respite scheme located within City of Edinburgh Council Short Breaks Team. ASHA enables adults with a learning disability to access ordinary holidays with the support of a volunteer Holiday Carer while their families take a valuable break from caring.

The aim of the workshop was to give an overview of the scheme and explore the positives and challenges for those involved, namely service users, family carers, volunteer holiday carers and workers.

Participants had the opportunity to hear from two women, matched through ASHA who have shared several holidays together visiting London, Fuerteventura and Dublin.

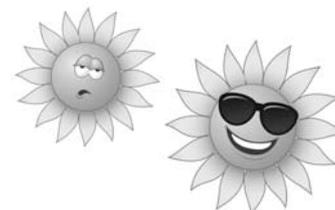
Participants were keen to know whether people with higher support needs were able to access ASHA. The scheme provides a service to people aged 16+ with a range of interests and support needs . ASHA workers confirmed that people with more complex needs have been matched with two volunteer carers to make the break more successful for all involved. There was also some discussion around preparation for breaks, in particular risk assessment. This is centred around the individual and enables people to take 'managed risks' in order to go on an ordinary holiday.

For all ASHA holidays the individual, family carer and holiday carer work collaboratively to ensure that information and knowledge is shared in a person centred way, thus building up trust, reducing anxieties and giving service users and their families' choice, control and flexibility.

Further Information

For further information contact Emma Cashmore or Jacquie Robertson on:

Tel: 0131 525 8050 or 0131 525 8051



Crossreach's, South Lanarkshire's Threshold workshop entitled '**Choices Short Breaks**' was aimed at giving people an idea of what can be done with regards to organising holidays for people with disabilities when people simply think out of the box. Within the session service users who would previously have attended respite centres only 5 miles from their homes and who have since been on holidays with the service, spoke of their experiences of holidaying in destinations such as Benidorm and Salou in Spain, Euro Disney in France and Ljubljana in Slovenia. With regards to many of the barriers faced with people with disabilities Alan Carmichael the projects managing coordinator and Michael Gibson, project worker for short breaks shared information on how the project seeks to proactively overcome these barriers. Alan and Michael spoke of issues with regards to finances - being overcome by means of group booking and travelling (in order to get discounted prices) with separation on arrival at a destination, with regards to communication - being overcome by sending out narrated DVD's and with regards to risk assessment – being overcome by means of a thorough risk assessment procedure. The workshop closed with a question and answer session, which allowed people to ask questions and feed back on their own experiences of services whether positive or negative.

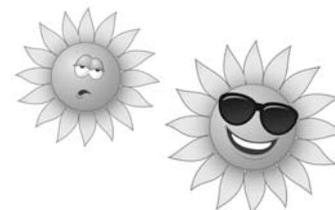
Further Information

For further information contact: Michael Gibson:

Tel: 01698 477323 or 07500160749

Address:

1 Barrack Street, Hamilton ML3 0HS



Workshop description: Life's sometimes not a holiday, but its better if you've got friends and relationships. This workshop will tell you about 'dates-n-mates' – a new dating and friendship agency based in Glasgow run by and for people with learning disabilities

Summary

Holly Millar, one of the Directors of the new agency and Keith Etherington, Development Manager, ran the 'dates-n-mates' workshop.

We gave some background about how dates-n-mates had started – how, in particular, although it was one of the aspirations in the 'Same as You' review, there is still lots to do to enable people with learning disabilities to have opportunities to make and sustain friendships and close personal relationships. 'dates-n-mates' was set up to change this and to increase enterprise opportunities for people with disabilities at the same time.

Dates-n-mates is hosted by the Glasgow based organisation, C-Change for Inclusion, on behalf of a number of organisations who contributed to a development fund to get dates-n-mates started.

'dates-n-mates' is a new accessible membership based dating and friendship agency run by and for people with learning disabilities, that was launched in June 2008 with a party at Hampden attended by more than 350 people

'dates-n-mates' offers members:

- matched one to one dates, with support available on the first date,
- dating events to suit people of different ages
- a calendar of varied social activities and events you can attend
- information on other activities, organisations and things that might be of interest

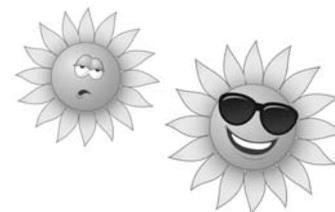
It is open to anyone over 18 years old who has a learning disability/difficulty and is willing to pay an annual membership fee. Some people have joined because they would like to get a date, but others have joined to make and meet new and old friends, or just to get involved in the events. 'dates-n-mates' organises a range of social events, depending what members want.

Further Information

If you want to find out more contact us on:

Tel: 0141 418 7167

Email: info@scotdates-n-mates.co.uk



Workshop Description

How individualised budgets and self-directed support can enable you to have a holiday.

Summary

The in Control Scotland holiday workshop was facilitated by Catriona Campbell, vice Chair of in Control Scotland and Keith Etherington, an independent member on the Advisory group.

Catriona started the workshop with some background about in Control – the system of self-directed support that enables people to be in control of their lives as full citizens. She presented a story about Jeannie, who is someone who used to go away from home several times a year to be supported in a respite service, but it didn't work for her. But Jeannie and her mum found out they could get an individual budget – an amount of money – to use more flexibly under an in Control project in the area where she lived. They made a plan – a support plan – to spend it in a way that would give them both a break, but in a way that Jeannie would really enjoy. The plan was agreed and Jeannie had decided to spend some of her budget on a holiday in Ireland – she even got to see her idol, Daniel O'Donnell in concert. It was much better for Jeannie (and her mum) and didn't cost any more than the respite service. She is now planning her next holiday.

Keith spoke about some of the plans he has been helping people to develop to use their individual budgets – because holidays are important to all of us, lots of people are using their money to plan holidays and short breaks as well as other things in their life. Three key words about in Control are **choice, control and flexibility**. In Control is different from direct payments because of the greater flexibility it gives – a direct payment is only one of the options you can choose in the in Control model. People were interested about whether their Council had decided to work in this way. So far, 11 local authorities in Scotland have become members of in Control Scotland, but more will follow...

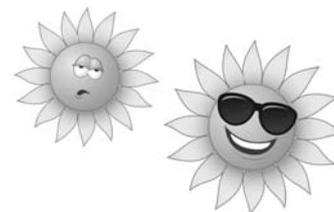
Further Information

If you want to find out more contact in Control Scotland:

Tel: 07748 150796

Email: johndalrymple@neighbourhoodnetworks.org

Badaguish Centre



The workshop gave an oversight of what Badaguish can provide for Children and Adults with learning disabilities.

It is a holiday with a difference for all people who want to be active and outdoors. It does not mean to climb the highest mountains, gangling of ropes and going down White Water Rivers. It means to have an outdoor experience at the level it suits each person.

Badaguish provides 24-hour care, so Individuals can enjoy a holiday on their own without their regular carers or parents. Our carers are trained and experienced to provide care at all levels, but also to promote independence for all.

We put together mixed groups of 10 people. All have some learning disability, some very able and some who require full care. We live and enjoy the holiday together as an extended family. We learn from each other and help each other to make it a positive experience for all.

There is no fixed programme. Each person is encouraged to choose from the activities provided, like walking, canoeing, biking, rock scrambling, swimming, fishing and many more. As a group we will put a programme together for the week. Each day there will be 2 or 3 groups doing different things, so there is plenty choices.

We also go out and about for visits to Landmark, Wildlife Park, and Cairngorm Mountain the Pub and Restaurants and any events happening in the area. There is plenty to do for all different abilities.

We use qualified Instructors where required, but our trained Carers will provide other session like Archery, swimming, orienteering walking etc.

The focus is on ability and achievement and lots of fun. Many people come on a regular basis, making friends one year and coming back the next to meet up again.

The cost of the holiday can be covered by direct payments, Social Work will pay from the Respite Care budget, Individuals cover the cost from their allowances or trust funds can help with the cost.

Referrals come from Parents and Carers, Social Work, Schools, Respite Buroos etc.

We are happy for people to come and visit prior the holiday.

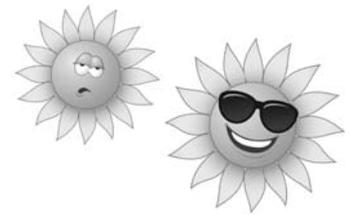
We ensure that we get all the information required to make the visit a positive experience for each person.

Further Information

If you want to find out more about Badaguish call:

Tel: 01479 861285

Email: info@badaguish.org



Useful Websites and Contacts for support in organising your holiday

www.carebreaksscotland.org

www.enable.org.uk

www.capability-scotland.org.uk

www.update.org.uk

www.holidaycare.org.uk

www.holidayaccessdirect.com/index.php

www.holidaysforall.org

www.accessibletravel.co.uk

ARC Scotland is a membership organisation, which supports non-statutory providers of services for people with a learning disability in Scotland.

ARC Scotland's mission is to champion the development of high quality person centred services for people with a learning disability across Scotland.

ARC Scotland believes that every person with a learning disability should be in control of their life, be actively involved in their community and have access to a range of high quality services to help them achieve this.

For further details about ARC Scotland or find out how to become a member then contact us:

Tel: 0131 663 4444

Email: Karen.Jackson@arcuk.org.uk

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