



SOCIAL VALUE & SOCIAL CAPITAL

EVALUATION OF: The Asian People's Disability Alliance (APDA)

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How does the Asian People's Disability Alliance help Asian disabled people to thrive in their community?

What is the Asian People's Disability Alliance (APDA)?

The APDA is a user-led, culturally tailored service for disabled Asian people whose needs may not be met in full in mainstream settings because of a lack of experience of Asian culture. The alliance works with service planners, however, to help them build the needs of Asian disabled people into their programmes so they are more likely to use mainstream health and social care services.

A resource for Asian disabled people and their families and carers, the APDA also ensures these groups are consulted, receive peer support and are able to share ideas and information and develop socially.

The organisation currently has 60 service users.

What does it provide?

Day centre

The APDA's day centre operates every day except Friday offering people with physical, mental and learning disabilities a variety of activities from music therapy, hairdressing and yoga therapy to gardening, horticulture and a range of sports such as curling, bowling and badminton.

Other activities include arts, crafts, painting, photography and videography and the organisation has set up Muskaan, London's only Bollywood and traditional Asian wheelchair dance group.

Celebrating religious festivals

A multi-faith group, religious festivities such as Eid and Diwali are celebrated.

Training, work experience and volunteering

Entry level courses in subjects such as computing, photography and health and safety are available for disabled people in conjunction with the College of North West London. There are also opportunities for people to carry out work experience in areas like office administration, leading to a certificate of competence.

A volunteering project recruits and trains people in health and social care. A number of those with a mental disability have benefited from the programme.

Homecare and befriending

Currently 13 families receive help through the organisation's homecare service, where trained care workers make daily home visits to help with everyday tasks, working closely with the disabled person and their friends and family to develop a care package.

Meanwhile 20 families are currently getting support through the APDA's befriending service, which offers conversation in a relevant Asian language and other social activities. The scheme helps give carers a break by allowing them to go shopping, socialise or visit a place of worship.

Advice and advocacy

Asian disabled people also have access to advice and advocacy, for example, assistance filling in forms and finding out about disability benefits, which can be particularly helpful if there are language barriers. The service can also refer people to other more mainstream providers.

Transport

The organisation has its own bus, which provides those with limited mobility with transport to the day centre. It is also used for outings.

Cultural focus

All of the activities and services provided are set within a South Asian cultural context – all major South Asian languages are catered for and staff have an awareness of different religious practices, dietary requirements and social customs.

Making a difference

Pradip and Reshmi Shah

Pradip has been involved with the APDA for more than 10 years. Born in Kenya, he is a Gujarati- and English-speaker and practices the Jain religion. He is a wheelchair user and requires help with all his physical needs. The centre has become a godsend for him because it not only allows him to be active in the community and to socialise other people, but it also gives his partner, Reshmi, who provides round-the-clock care, with much-needed respite. He explains: "It's very difficult. For most of my needs I have to rely on my partner. I'm in constant pain."

"Going to the day centre helps me to get out and meet people, to interact socially and to take part in the organisation's cultural programmes. A number of other members are also Gujarati and everyone is aware of people's religious backgrounds – you don't need to explain things, like your dietary requirements. Before going to the group I was totally housebound." He particularly enjoys the music events. His wife Reshmi comments: "When Pradip goes to the centre, it gives me time to myself so I can go out."

The couple also uses the organisation's advocacy services, which provides them with professional advice on what extra help is available.

Jyoti Rajah

Jyoti, who has been involved with the APDA since its beginnings in 1988, has a love of dancing. Originally from Uganda, she was affected by polio and has to use a wheelchair. She first joined an English dance group for disabled people but found that her inability to speak good English was a hindrance. So she along with her colleagues at APDA decided to set up an Indian dance group where she could speak Gujarati or Hindi with other participants. Since then, Jyoti has gone on to take part in the London 2012 Paralympic opening ceremony along with another APDA user.

She says: "APDA is a very unique organisation. It gives you inspiration. I go there for dancing practice and to be challenged. At the dancing group we can share ideas and there's no discrimination. It makes you feel good and the people who work with you try to push you. Sometimes people are very quiet and sit in a corner when they first come to the centre, but they soon start getting involved and chatting with others."

The dance group continues to receive invitations to perform at a variety of events, including in Trafalgar Square during Diwali celebrations.

Nilesh Shrimankar

Born in Yemen, Gujarati- and Hindi-speaking Nilesh has haemophilia and is partially sighted. He has in the past used the APDA's computer facilities to pursue his interest in photography and graphics. The organisation also helped him to get on a course to take these subjects further at his local college. Now he volunteers at a local library helping other disabled people to access computers.

"Sometimes my English is not very good. APDA helps me if I can't understand something or if I need to communicate."

"Everyone at the APDA is very nice and friendly," he says.

Yogesh Patel

Yogesh has been taking part in APDA's activities for 14 years. Born in the UK, he speaks English and Gujarati and is of the Hindu faith. A person with learning difficulties, he makes good use of APDA's transport service and is a regular visitor to the day centre where he enjoys a variety of activities.

He explains: "I like doing yoga, keep fit and sports like cricket, table tennis and curling. The APDA helped me to become involved in activities, so I gained confidence. I like listening to Indian music and doing computer courses and I got a certificate from the College of North West London. They've also taught me English and Maths and arts and crafts."

"The best thing about APDA is they offer me good advice about what is happening and help with communication skills. They also provide me with vegetarian food which is appropriate for my Hindu religion."

Working in partnership with local authorities and other agencies

The APDA has a strong track record of working with local authorities and other agencies both at home and abroad, providing services, raising awareness and contributing to debate. Some key examples include:

- carrying out overseas development work after obtaining external international development funds
- participating in disability sessions at the United Nations and the European Disability Forum and offering input on disability matters globally
- receiving awards for two consecutive years from REMPLOY, a government resource and support agency for disabled people, for helping people with disabilities into employment
- providing accredited day care for seven London local authorities: Barnet, Brent, Camden, Ealing, Harrow, Hounslow and Lambeth
- completing a regeneration project successfully under a central government regeneration programme
- establishing a volunteering project for people with mental health needs through funding from RADAR and the Disability Network
- organising sports activities for young Asian disabled people in partnership with Wembley National Stadium Trust

- involving the Asian community in the 2012 Olympics and Paralympics through funding from the John Lyons Fund and the London Borough of Brent
- working jointly with Brent Clinical Commissioning Group (formerly Brent Primary Care Trust) and Brent Health Action Zone to run a tuberculosis and diabetes awareness and patient support project
- publishing a children's book to raise awareness of asthma among the Asian community, in partnership with Asthma UK.

Adding social value

Through its work over the past 28 years, the APDA has been helping Asian disabled people by:

- Breaking down language barriers
- Acknowledging cultural and religious differences
- Tackling stereotypes and discrimination
- Promoting independence
- Reducing isolation
- Referring people to mainstream services
- Giving carers a break
- Offering tailored care in the home
- Providing information, advice and advocacy.

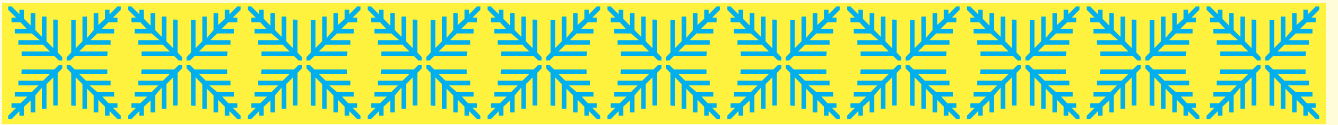
How do local authorities benefit?

APDA's service helps local councils' to deliver on their duties under the Care Act 2014, which include ensuring people get the right care and support to promote their wellbeing and providing information, advice and independent advocacy as well as person-centred care. The organisation can also help with promoting healthy living, giving people social support and ensuring services cater for the community's diverse needs.

Overcoming key challenges

Over the years, the APDA has faced a number of challenges. In the past, the organisation's day care service catered for over 400 users spread across 17 London boroughs while its befriending and home care service offered support for 80 people; however, with contracting out and the end of grant funding, the number of users had to be cut drastically. The APDA has seen off these challenges – it has shown resilience and an ability to withstand the decline in resources, sustaining itself and raising its own funding to cover core costs and ensuring that it continues to provide a valuable service.

Looking to the future, the organisation's next big concern is space. The APDA's day centre and offices are currently based in a community centre in a residential area of Harlesden; the space is shared with another organisation. With the popularity of the day centre increasing, the community centre's capacity is becoming more and more limited and a larger venue is now a priority.



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