Welcome to the latest issue of Open Door, Scottish Disability Equality Forum's (SDEF) quarterly newsletter.

This newsletter brings you the latest news and information from SDEF, Access Panels and Disability Groups and Organisations across Scotland.

Your Disability, Your Voice, Your Scotland…

SDEF is a member led organisation so we want to hear from you, our valued members!

Get in touch with us with your disability news by email at admin@sdef.org.uk or by calling on 01259 272064.
# Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page No.</th>
<th>Contents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Contents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Convenor’s Welcome</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Inform

| 4-5      | Staff Team                                   |
| 6        | What We Do                                   |
| 7        | Understanding our role with Access Panels    |
| 8        | Do you have what it takes?                   |
| 9        | ‘Include Us All’ - Inclusive Communication Hub |
| 10-12    | Transport Engagement                         |
| 13-14    | Inclusive Design Hub                         |
| 15       | New Changing Places Toilet Launch Edinburgh  |

## Policy

| 16       | Personal Independence Payment: What you think! |
| 17       | Why is the Equality Act failing disabled people? |
| 18-19    | Equality Act 2010: What is being done!         |

## Support

| 20       | Paneltown Websites                            |
| 21       | Changing Places Toilet Map                    |
| 22       | Panel Patter                                  |
| 23       | The Rings                                     |
| 24       | Getting support to develop inclusive communication |
| 25       | Access Panel Promotional Pack                 |

## Engage

| 26       | Crossing Countries: challenging boundaries, changing lives |
| 27       | First ‘Grace’s Sign’ Installed in East Lothian |
| 28       | Shaping Our Lives                                |
| 29       | Inclusive Design Equality Awareness Seminar     |

## Access Panels

| 30       | Access Panel Network Map                      |
| 31-43    | Access Panel News                             |
Convenor’s Welcome

Farewell and Thank You

I am delighted to bring you our latest issue of Open Door. The last six months has been an exciting and busy time for SDEF. This packed issue provides you with yet another insight to the areas we are working on from Accessible Transport and Inclusive Communication to Inclusive Design.

I would like to wish you all farewell as Convenor of SDEF. After seven years at the helm, I feel it is time to pass the torch to another, and I am delighted to hand over the reigns to Stephen Cruickshank who will be Interim Convenor. However, I will be staying on as Director on the Board, so you will still see me around!

Many thanks for all the support over the years.

Jackie Maceira

Welcome from our Interim Director

Hello Members, I would like to thank Jackie Maceira from myself, Board Directors and Staff for all the work, commitment and passion he has given to SDEF over the last seven years. I am delighted that Jackie has decided to continue as a Director on the Board and provide his valuable skills and knowledge. I am looking forward to taking up the position with trust that the Board have instilled in me and look forward to seeing some of you at our events.

Best Wishes

Stephen Cruickshank
Inform

Staff Team

Susan Grasekamp - Chief Executive
Susan works with the team to ensure that SDEF is effective in its aims to promote equality and to reduce barriers to Independent Living. Responsible for the strategic development of the organisation, Susan continues to advance the influence and impact of SDEF and its stakeholders.

Morven Brooks - Communications Manager
Morven assists in the implementation of the organisation’s strategy to work towards social inclusion in Scotland through the removal of barriers and the promotion of equal access for people affected by disability. Working alongside the CEO, she is responsible for the day-to-day running of the organisation from an operational perspective.

Maeve Bain - Senior Office Administrator
Maeve is responsible for the administration of our finances, keeping us right on book-keeping and payments, as well as supporting in other areas such as minute-taking and regular Board related duties. Maeve’s voice will usually be the one which greets you when you call us!

Vicky Innes - SDEF Administrator
Vicky is our administrator for the Equality Unit funded side of SDEF. Vicky is the principle administrative support to the CEO, but also works with the full team on activities such as our Access Panel Conference and AGM and other events.
Staff Team

Ian Buchanan - Access Engagement Officer
Ian is our Access Engagement Officer and it is his role to support, develop and promote the Access Panel Network. Ian has recently joined us from ENABLE Scotland and brings with him a genuine passion and desire to improve access to equality for disabled people in Scotland.

James Davidson - Online Research and Development Intern
James' internship involves researching and producing content for a new Inclusive Design Website that we intend to launch in the near future. The website aims to improve awareness and take-up of best practice in accessible design for planners, architects, and other building professionals.

Dave Crozier - Access Support Worker
Dave has joined us on a temporary basis to cover the Access Coordinator role. It will be Dave’s role to assist the Access Engagement Officer with a view to working with Access Panels across Scotland.
What We Do

SDEF is involved across a wide range of work, ensuring that the many voices of disabled people are heard and listened to on a local and national level. We work to bring real change to the lives of disabled people, to inspire and to motivate others to be inclusive and informed in their attitude towards disabled people, and to bring the message of equality to all. You can read more about our outcomes from our website: http://tinyurl.com/q9ramjb

Inform
We keep informed of new developments in disability news to pass on to our members

Policy
We work with our members to influence Scottish Government decisions and policies

Access Panels
We support Access Panels across Scotland to enable them to reach out to their communities

Engagement
We speak to members so that we know what the key issues are for disabled people in Scotland

Support
We hold events, training and give practical guidance on disability and access related issues

Joint Work
We work with many organisations on projects and initiatives aimed at improving equality

These are just some of the many key activities in which SDEF is involved. You can find out more about what we're doing by visiting our website at www.sdef.org.uk

Better still, why not become a member, it’s free! That way, you will be kept informed of disability related news through our printed publication ‘Open Door’, e-newsletters and consultations. More importantly you can become involved in what we do, giving us your thoughts and contributions.

SDEF work to make a difference for disabled people, promoting equality and inclusion across Scotland. Get in touch with us if you would like to know more or get involved.
We are:

● An umbrella body which seeks to provide support to Access Panels in Scotland

● A source of funding for Access Panels who are registered members with us, fully constituted, recognised by their local authority and have access to their own bank account.

● A Disabled People’s Organisation; this means that our Board have a minimum 51% majority of disabled people

● A national organisation with national perspective. We seek to influence change on a national scale, engaging with disabled people on barriers to equality, and working towards a more inclusive society

● A source of training and support for Access Panels

● A tool to make sure that disabled people’s needs and wishes are heard and heeded in planning and decision-making processes which affect them.

● A source of insurance for your Access Panel to help you provide services in your community. SDEF cover Access Panels’ public liability and professional indemnity

● A source of advice for Access Panel issues. If we are unable to help you, we will make sure that you speak to someone who can.
Do you have what it takes?

We are recruiting Board Directors

We are looking to appoint new Board Members at this exciting time of growth and expansion.

As a member of the Board of Directors you will work closely with other Board members to provide governance and contribute to the overall strategy of the organisation, ensuring that it meets its objectives and primary aims as a charitable organisation. You will also be required to:

- Ensure effectiveness of, and accountability for SDEF’s operations, aligned with our primary aims and criteria set by our funders.

- Communicate effectively with Board members, the Chief Executive Officer and staff, as well as other stakeholders, including Access Panels and their members.

- Championing the primary aims of the organisation and ensuring that our work is always focused on those it works to serve.

We value diverse networks and experiences and welcome applications from people with knowledge, experience and insight in any of the following areas:

- Human Resources
- Equality and Diversity
- Finance and Auditing
- Leadership Development and Coaching
- Media, Marketing & Communications

If you would like to know more about becoming a Board Director of SDEF, please contact Susan Grasekamp, Chief Executive Officer

T: 01259 272064   E: susan.grasekamp@sdef.org.uk
The Inclusive Communication Hub will be the first of its kind for Scotland. This will be an easy to use online tool, for all who wish to be more inclusive with the information they deliver.

Inclusive Communication is, quite simply, communication that is inclusive. It is an approach to communication which enables as many people as possible to access and engage with organisations.

The purpose of the Inclusive Communication Hub will be to provide a ‘one stop shop’ for information on Inclusive Communication in Scotland.

A lot of good work has been done already by many organisations throughout Scotland but finding this information can be difficult. The aim of the Hub would be to have an online place for all this information to be kept or signposted to.

The Scottish Government are now supporting SDEF, Scottish Accessible Information Forum and Sense Scotland to take forward the development of this Hub during 2016.

An Advisory Group is now being established to recognise the passion and long term commitment of individuals and groups currently working to improve Inclusive Communications in Scotland.

If you are interested in being a member on the Advisory Group, please contact: Morven Brooks, Communications Manager, Scottish Disability Equality Forum, T: 01259 272063 E: morven.brooks@sdef.org.uk

Your feedback is vital in the development of this Hub, to ensure that everyone can find the information they need to support those needing communication support.

Tell us what you think! http://includeusall.org.uk/tell-us-what-you-think
Transport Engagement Events

Following on from the Transport Summit held last year, Transport Scotland commissioned SDEF to deliver engagement events across Scotland in partnership with Access Panels. The aim of these events was to discuss with disabled people the draft Vision, Outcomes and Key Actions which will eventually take the form of their Accessible Travel Plan, due to launch later this year. Working with COSLA, DPOs, Disability Organisations, Transport Operators and other bodies, Transport Scotland are now in the process of developing the Plan, which is a long-term commitment towards safer, more accessible journeys for disabled people in Scotland.

The Engagement Events were held in Fife, Dumfries and Galloway, Perth, Edinburgh, Dalmuir, Berwickshire, Skye and Inverness and were well attended.

Transport Scotland's Jill Mulholland, Head of Transport Accessibility and Road Safety and Sharon Grant, Team Leader for the Transport Scotland Directorate attended several of these.

"It’s been a privilege to be part of the conversations, but also a real learning curve for us, hearing from disabled people about the profound challenges they face in using transport, whether that’s to do with access, information or customer service. It would be unrealistic to promise that these many issues will be fixed tomorrow, but we are committed to taking a long-term view at improving the services, policies and infrastructure which influence how successful a journey may be for a disabled person’.

This work is of particular interest to those who understand the need to ensure that disabled people are involved in the planning from the outset.

Transport Scotland have endeavoured to make this process as inclusive and accessible as possible, seeking advice and guidance on all aspects of the development process. This is greatly needed across many local authorities which are still consulting with disabled people (and some do not!) towards the end of the planning process, resulting in serious barriers to education, employment, housing and of course, travel. True coproduction can be a lengthy process as one takes into account a range of needs and challenges; however the benefits of working together and producing a genuinely accessible plan has the potential to yield far greater and long-lasting benefits for all.
Accessible Travel Plan: Progress Evaluation Group

To facilitate continued engagement with disabled people in the development of the accessible travel plan, SDEF have also been tasked with developing a progress evaluation group, comprising disabled people from across Scotland.

This group will commit to meeting twice per year to discuss the progress of the accessible travel plan, what's working and what's not. SDEF will report on the group's findings and this will further guide the plan.

Accessible Travel Plan Survey

There will also be a 'snapshot' survey to compliment the findings from the long-term group. The survey will go out across Scotland and provide an overview of disabled people's thoughts on the work being achieved at key points in the year.

If you would like to be involved, please contact Dave Crozier on david.crozier@sdef.org.uk. For those who are further afield we will also look at arranging meetings remotely.

Survey

The following survey will ask a series of questions about the Vision, Outcomes and Actions of the Accessible Travel Plan.

Your comments are valued and will help to guide the direction of the work of the Plan.

Survey link: [https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BM2X3MF](https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/BM2X3MF)
Inform

Accessible Travel Hub

Across all engagement events, one of the key issues discussed the most was the lack of staff training around equality and access. Many may wish to deliver adequate support to those they engage with but lack the training to support disabled people appropriately.

August will see the launch of the Accessible Travel Hub, an online space for information, guidance and links for disabled people, transport operators and providers wanting to know more about accessible travel.

So what will feature on this website?

● Articles/Information: on transport related issues, Transport Scotland News, etc

● Dedicated Transport Mode ‘Area’ for Transport Providers/operators to promote good practice in access related work

● Links - links to resources, eg., PAMIS map of CP toilets, Radar keys, Thistle Cards, Travelline, Hate Crime Reporting,

● Training Resources: signpost to relevant training courses

● Survey Page – access to surveys and related reports

● Blog - donated by Transport Providers, DPOs, Policy Officials. Also Champion’s Corner, promoting examples of good practice across Transport Providers, awards etc

● Case Studies - donated by disabled people and Transport Providers reflecting good practice and ongoing challenges for disabled people

● Archives/storage – access to past newsletters, documents, charters, templates etc

We hope that you will be involved with these exciting developments and help to shape the future of accessible travel in Scotland with us.
Scottish Disability Equality Forum is proud to launch the **Inclusive Design Hub**; an online information resource that aims to improve awareness and encourage the take-up of inclusive design in Scotland.

An inclusive approach to design ensures that buildings are accessible to as many people as possible. Inclusive design is not just relevant to buildings; it also applies throughout any internal or external environment, wherever people go about everyday activities.

**Inclusive Design Hub** will become Scotland’s recognised go-to place for inclusive design information and resources. The website features:

- Articles on the importance of inclusive design.
- Case studies that demonstrate innovative examples of inclusive environments in Scotland.
- A resources library that provides links to inclusive design guidance from a variety of sources.
- An up-to-date blog featuring; interviews, discussion points and all of the latest inclusive design news from across the country.

By providing information and insight, **Inclusive Design Hub** will help built environment professionals to be better placed to deliver inclusive environments. The website also contains accessible information that will develop the general public’s understanding of inclusive design.

To access our new website, please visit: [inclusivedesign.scot](http://inclusivedesign.scot)
Inclusive Design Hub

Inclusive Design Q&A with Pat McGuigan, SDEF Director

How inclusive is the built environment in Scotland?
“In my lifetime there have been big improvements in accessibility in Scotland, however we are still far from calling the built environment ‘inclusive’. In particular there is a lack of investment in inclusive design for the Highlands and Islands – the bulk of investment is ploughed into the central belt.”

What are the best examples of Inclusive Design in Scotland?
“Accessible transport has improved. There are now over 200 accessible train stations in Scotland. Northlink Ferries to Orkney and Shetland have four accessible overnight cabins. Two of the cabins are fitted with lifting equipment. Despite improvements there is still a lot of work to be done to make transport links fully inclusive”

How does Inclusive Design in Scotland compare with other countries?
“Like Scotland, there are good and bad examples of inclusive design in other countries. Scandinavia and Sweden have made great advances in inclusive design.”

What can built environment professionals (e.g. planners, developers, architects) do to improve Inclusive Design in Scotland?
“There is still a lot of ignorance. Environment professionals need to improve engagement with disabled people. There are too many brand new buildings in Scotland that are not fully inclusive. Often it is the cart before the horse, and consultation with disabled groups will not take place until after a building is completed.”

Should legislation and building regulations be changed in order to improve Inclusive Design in Scotland?
“Buildings regulations in Scotland do not go far enough and as a result we have buildings that are not fully inclusive. There is no requirement for hotels in Scotland to be fully accessible. In the summer months it’s a lottery if you can find an accessible room. The Equality Act is also still not good enough. We must improve legislation in order to achieve a more inclusive society.”

Read more blogs and Q&A from inclusive design.scot
New Changing Places Toilet Launch Edinburgh

PAMIS staff were delighted to attend the new Wetherspoons, ‘The Booking Office’, Waverley Bridge in Edinburgh on 14 June; not because they needed a wee bite to eat, but because it features a fully accessible Changing Places Toilet Facility being opened that day.

Jenny Miller, PAMIS, explained ‘This is fantastic news as it shows an understanding of the business case for places like this. Disabled people want to go out and enjoy themselves as anyone else does, and the provision of facilities such as these creates another accessible venue in Edinburgh where disabled people can go. It is especially exciting due to the central location of this facility and the long opening hours.

This is a real celebration of the work of PAMIS to raise awareness of the need for Changing Places toilet facilities and there are many more in the pipeline. A further Changing Places toilet was opened by First Minister Nicola Sturgeon on the same day at The Thistle Wellness Centre, Craigmillar, adding to the growing list of facilities in Scotland.

SDEF are pleased to see such a positive move and hope to see CP Toilets continue to be installed by other similar establishments.

Photo Caption: MSP Richard Lyle helped cut the cake provided by PAMIS to celebrate the opening of the Changing Places Toilet.
Personal Independence Payment: What you think!

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) began replacing Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for working age claimants in 2013. PIP, like DLA is intended to provide a contribution towards the extra costs caused by long term health conditions and disabilities.

In July 2015, the DWP began reassessing all remaining DLA working age claimants for PIP. The assessment looks at an individual’s ability to complete ten daily living activities and two mobility activities.

A review held recently suggested that many people who are likely to have low additional costs are being awarded the daily living component solely because they may benefit from aids and appliances across a number of activities, despite the relatively low points score awarded for them. Also, items like beds and chairs have been found to count as appliances and this has increased the level of claims significantly.

These developments are believed to be inconsistent with the original policy intent to award claimants with the greatest need. Therefore, the DWP decided to consult on how aids and appliances are taken into account when assessing a claimant’s need. They have suggested five options which could replace the current system. They are all different and provide different ways of claimants being assessed, and receiving their award.

SDEF consulted with members and Access Panels. Respondents are disappointed that this consultation fails to recognise the support that disabled people need for them to live equal and independent lives. This assessment is regarded as unfair and not understanding the broad spectrum of needs required for disabled people. There needs to be an assessment process which is flexible and supports the needs of all disabled people.

Further research has been conducted on behalf of Dundee Carers Centre, a charity which helps to support carers and disabled people. This report along with SDEF Consultation responses is available to download from http://tinyurl.com/z2b4fw3

Overall, this report aims to provide an oversight of the views and attitudes of PIP claimants concerning both the current system and proposed reforms. As participants are experiencing all aspects of the assessment and application process, they provide a valuable and informed viewpoint regarding the issues which affect them directly. This understanding is invaluable and should be drawn upon when developing disability benefits further in the future.
Why is the Equality Act failing disabled people?

The House of Lords Select Committee on the Equality Act 2010 and Disability investigating the Act's impact on disabled people has concluded that the Government is failing in its duty of care to disabled people. From taxi drivers refusing to take disabled people, to "disgraceful" accessibility at sports grounds, to pubs and clubs failing to provide disabled toilets, the report, entitled 'The Equality Act 2010: the impact on disabled people', says practice in all areas must be improved.

The Equality Act continues to fail disabled people. From poor access to the built environment, public bodies skirting round their legal obligations to changes in the judicial system, these are all areas where people with a disability face discrimination that other areas of society don’t. We have been hearing from Access Panels and through our Engagement Events that disabled people in Scotland continue to face horrendous difficulties in accessing the very basic of needs. The recommendations set out by the House of Lords select committee are encouraging but we have a long way to go. However, SDEF and other disability organisations across Scotland are up to the task of working towards improving equality and welcome these recommendations.

Susan Grasekamp, Chief Executive Officer said:

“The introduction of reasonable adjustment, whilst alluding to the need for society to go further in its endeavours to be accessible, simultaneously removed the teeth of the act, there being no definition or criteria around what constitutes 'reasonable adjustment' in any given situation. As a result, disabled people’s access to society and a life of their choosing is commonly hampered by those on a continuum between well meaning but often clumsy attempts to address barriers, and those with excellent knowledge of legislation and how its lack of definition can be circumnavigated without consequence.

We need to bring these two extremes somewhere into the middle, educating those with strong values in equality to be inclusive in an informed way, and to instil a sense of citizenship and personal accountability in others who can realise their potential to change a culture through leading by example.”

This report is available to download in alternative formats from http://tinyurl.com/zgvfv4q
Keys to life

The Scottish Government has developed an implementation framework for The keys to life. The framework has four strategic outcomes which relate to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities:

1. A Healthy Life: People with learning disabilities enjoy the highest attainable standard of living, health and family life
2. Choice and Control: People with learning disabilities are treated with dignity and respect, and protected from neglect, exploitation and abuse
3. Independence: People with learning disabilities are able to live independently in the community with equal access to all aspects of society
4. Active Citizenship: People with learning disabilities are able to participate in all aspects of community and society

The Scottish Government’s Delivery Plan 2016-2020

For several years now, the Scottish Government has been working to progress independent living for disabled people of all ages. They have done this in partnership with Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs) in Scotland, the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA), and others.

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) is the framework that The Scottish Government will use to deliver that change. By working with DPOs, they will better understand what disabled people need from policies, and will work together to protect and promote full equality and human rights for all disabled people in Scotland.

The Scottish Government have drafted a delivery plan which sets out their approach to implementing UNCRPD in Scotland over the period 2016-20. It looks in detail at the outcomes – or changes – that they want to achieve and the evidence that supports the need for change. It details a range of the commitments for each of the four outcomes that they are aiming to achieve.

The final delivery plan will be published summer 2016.
Equality Act 2010: What is being done!

Transport Scotland: Accessible Travel Plan

Transport Scotland are working with SDEF, disabled people, transport providers and other Disability Organisations to create a plan which seeks to tackle barriers to travel for disabled people in Scotland. These issues were themselves identified by disabled people and cover all aspects of transport from accessible taxis, trains and buses, access to information and signage, hate crime, customer services and training, to accessible toilets and non-emergency transport.

Key actions to begin the work of this plan have been identified and disabled people are now being asked to give their comments on these suggested actions, how workable they are, what could be improved and any other thoughts they may have.

Curriculum for Excellence (Education)

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 and 2009 provides a framework through which all children and young people, including those with disabilities, should be provided with the support they need to make the most of education.

Those with disabilities have additional legal protection provided by equality legislation that is designed to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

Disability is a protected characteristic under the provisions of equality legislation.

Education Scotland have produced support resources in line with the Equality Act

Paneltown Websites

We hope to strengthen the identity of the Access Panels as a Network, and provide one simple website interface which Panels can work with easily. The common layout for all participating Panels will also improve portability and communication for disabled people across Scotland.

PanelTown offers the opportunity to engage with other Panels through blogs and other means. This provides the opportunity for Panels to share information, ask questions and seek support.

We have developed a template which we use to create websites for Access Panels. Working with a web developer we will create Access Panel websites, paid for through Access Panel Grant allocation, which will not only meet the Panel's needs but identify it as being part of the Access Panel Network.

Lastly, we are offering training on the website software, WordPress. After the training, which should take no more than a half day to complete, Panels will be able to use this simple, intuitive, easy to update interface.

We are delighted that the following Access Panels have developed new websites, or upgraded existing sites, using our PanelTown template:

- AccessAble (Central Borders Access Panel) [www.accessable.org.uk](http://www.accessable.org.uk)
- Perth & Kinross Centre for Inclusive Living [http://cilpk.org.uk](http://cilpk.org.uk)

Good news for those of you who want a logo for their Panel or simply want to update their existing one! For a very reasonable price you can now have a logo created in collaboration with an experienced designer. This will help brand your Panel and help others identify who you are. This information will be sent out in the very near future.

With more currently in development we are looking forward to working with Access Panels to create their online presence. If you are interested in creating a new Access Panel website, or want to switch your current website over to WordPress, please contact Dave at SDEF [david.crozier@sdef.org.uk](mailto:david.crozier@sdef.org.uk) who will be happy to take you through the process.
On World Toilet Day last November, the Changing Places Consortium launched its new online Changing Places toilet map - http://changingplaces.uktoiletmap.org. This map was funded by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), The National Assembly for Wales and the Scottish Government, who together fully support the Consortium in their campaign to promote the installation of fully accessible toilets in public buildings.

The Changing Places Consortium commissioned the British Toilet Association (BTA) to design the map which uses Google map software to show the position of every registered Changing Places toilet in the UK. Each registered toilet will meet the British Standards BS8300:2009 and at the moment there are 834 such toilets in the UK with 135 registered in Scotland which is a wonderful achievement but many more are still needed.

The home page of the website allows you to enter a location and search for each Changing Places toilet in that area which are displayed by pins on the map and addresses in the left hand side. Details include, the exact location, type of sling needed, the size of the room, type of bench, and entry system. Also available are the opening hours and contact information of the venue.

Additionally at the bottom of each page is a feedback button which allows individual users or carers to feedback to the Consortium any useful information about each toilet. This allows us to immediately update the information or get in contact with the venue if there is a problem with the equipment.

A really useful additional feature of the software is the ability to be able to plan a route via the Changing Places toilets. In the figure shown, all the Changing Places toilets between Dundee and Newcastle are shown, allowing families to arrange stops at the appropriate places along the route.

The map also allows you to log in and save your favourite toilets for future journeys.

For further details of the Changing Places campaign or if you would like to become a toilet champion, please contact PAMIS - E: pamis@dundee.ac.uk
My first month with Scottish Disability Equality Forum has been fantastic! Only a month in and I have already met so many amazing people who dedicate themselves completely to promoting access for all.

I’ve been able to attend several Transport Engagement Events where the view of disabled people from across Scotland will be presented to Transport Scotland to form part of their 10 year Accessible Travel Plan. Everyone has had lots to say and were really passionate about so many issues that face disabled people when travelling.

Being able to attend the Transport Engagement Event on the Isle of Skye and meeting the Skye and Lochalsh Access Panel members was very rewarding. Hearing about the access issues that people experience in the Highlands and Islands gave me a fresh perspective on the issues that disabled people are presented with in the central belt. I’m excited moving forward to work closely with every Access Panel to provide the support they need.

Along with getting settled into my new role I’ve been getting out and about meeting some of the Access Panels. Just like the Transport Engagement Events, there are such a wide array of issues that differ from Panel to Panel and I hope that I’ll be able to offer you whatever support or guidance you need. Keep an eye out for the Access Panel Awards in this issue of Open Door! You can nominate yourself or any other Access Panel for one of the six awards. We will present the winners with their trophies and prizes at the Access Panel Conference which takes place in October.

In the meantime check out the Access Panel Network website for monthly updates from myself and the rest of the Access team and remember – if you need any help or support please get in touch.

Take care and best wishes

**Ian Buchanan**
Access Engagement Officer
Support

The Rings

Overview
The Rings is a fully accessible holiday cottage that is set in 90 acres of picturesque Fife countryside. The cottage is the brainchild of farm owners Moira and David Henderson. The couple embarked on a journey to create unique and much needed accessible accommodation, enabling holidays for all.

Background
Moira recognised the need for accessible accommodation after experiencing the challenges of finding suitable accommodation when holidaying with her late cousin, Alex. Moira soon discovered that many others had gone through the same experience when searching for fully accessible accommodation in Scotland.

Planning
Gaining planning permission to build accessible accommodation on the farm proved to be a lengthy and challenging process. The initial plan was to build two-storeys; however, this was rejected on the grounds that it would dominate the landscape. After a rethink, award winning architects Chambers McMillan, who specialise in creating accessible architecture, were approached to complete a re-design. Backed by a number of enthusiastic supporters, the new design was granted planning permission.

Inclusive Design
The cottage can accommodate families/groups of up to 16 people. All the rooms are on one level, corridors and doors are wheel chair accessible and turning circles have been planned into the cottage. Each of the eight bedrooms has an ensuite wetroom. There is a ceiling track hoists in three of the ensuite bedrooms and these have baths as well as the wet room, one has a lifter seat and spa. The decor takes account of those with sensory impairments and the sound proofed walls keeps noise to a minimum to promote a peaceful stay.

Result
The Rings officially opened for business during Easter 2016. Moira was encouraged to write a book about the journey to build The Rings. The proceeds of the book will help to buy equipment that had to be put on hold with the challenges that were faced.

For further information, please contact: The Rings, Ring Farm, Chance Inn, Cupar, Fife, KY15 5PQ T: 1334 828243 E-mail: ringfarm@hotmail.com

Visit the new Inclusive Design Hub website to read about more similar Case Studies http://inclusivedesign.scot
Getting support to develop inclusive communication

In this article Dr Paul Hart, Sense Scotland highlights where you can get additional information, advice and support around inclusive communication.

**Access Panels** themselves are a great source of advice and support, given that they are made up of people within our communities who may experience access challenges. **Website:** [http://accesspanelnetwork.org.uk/directory-panels](http://accesspanelnetwork.org.uk/directory-panels)

**Scottish Accessible Information Forum (SAIF)** supported by an advisory forum of volunteers who can draw on their own lived experience of communication and information needs, which offers advice and guidance to anyone with questions about accessible information. **Website:** [http://www.saifscotland.org.uk](http://www.saifscotland.org.uk)

**The six Principles of Inclusive Communication** are embedded within an information and self-assessment tool for public authorities. The six principles themselves remind us to be flexible in the way we provide a service and to keep trying if we don't quite get it right. **Website:** [http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/357865/0120931.pdf](http://www.gov.scot/Resource/Doc/357865/0120931.pdf)

People with communication support needs were also centrally involved a number of years ago in producing the **Talk for Scotland toolkit**. This is a practical toolkit for decision-makers and service providers, offering key advice on how to engage with people and help remove barriers that individuals with communication support needs may face in achieving equal access. **Website:** [http://www.communicationforumscotland.org.uk/2010/TK_Home.php](http://www.communicationforumscotland.org.uk/2010/TK_Home.php).

There are also resources on the website of Sense Scotland’s **Partners in Communication programme**. This programme learned directly from people with communication support needs about making communication more inclusive. **Website:** [http://www.partnersincommunication.info](http://www.partnersincommunication.info)

Finally, there are many organisations that can offer you advice in specialist areas such as hearing impairment, visual impairment, autism, learning difficulties, recovering from a stroke and dementia. Many of these are listed in the Partners in Communication resource guide highlighted above.

You can also find resources from **Include Us All: Scotland’s Inclusive Communication Hub**. **Website:** [http://includeusall.org.uk](http://includeusall.org.uk)

It would be great to hear about good practice examples from across our local communities and I would encourage you to get in touch with the Partners in Communication team at [pic@sensescotland.org.uk](mailto:pic@sensescotland.org.uk).
Access Panel Promotional Pack

Access Panels can now purchase ready made Promotional Packs from SDEF. The Pack contains Pop-up Stands, Posters, Leaflets and Business Cards all with room for both your Panel name and any logo you have on each item. A full pack costs £293, including delivery, and Panels can order more than one pack.

If your Panel would like to take up this offer please get in touch and we will send you an order form.

Contact Details
Address line1
Address line2
Address line3
Phone
Email
Web

Your Panel name here

Can we help you?
Ask us about access audits and surveys.

Can you help us?
Come volunteer with us.

Finding the solutions to access issues

Improving access in our community
Crossing Countries: challenging boundaries, changing lives

The Crossing Countries team has just returned from their second volunteering trip to Durban, South Africa. Crossing Countries is a new social enterprise that enables disabled people to volunteer abroad by matching a disabled person (the Traveller) with a non-disabled ‘Travel Pal’ to work together, with the support of a team leader, to fundraise and plan their trip.

Crossing Countries would not change lives if it was not challenging, and these challenges start before the trip.

The challenge begins…

At least six months before, the Traveller and Travel Pal work together to raise funds and plan for their trip supported by Crossing Countries.

If necessary the Travel Pal undergoes training associated with their Traveller’s disability.

A team is formed from pairs of Travellers and Travel Pals and a Team Leader, who work together before leaving for their adventure.

The challenge …

It is impossible to describe the challenges the team will face when they are abroad.

Some will be foreseen and others will be unexpected.

Some will be simple to overcome and others will be complex.

What is for sure is that there will be fun, laughter and the odd tear along the way!

The challenge continues…

Teams meet afterwards to identify and reflect on what they have achieved and to remember and build on what they gained from their experiences.

Change your life while changing the lives of others.

If you interested and want to find out more Email: cctravellers.edinburgh@outlook.com

Or visit https://crossingcountries.wordpress.com
First ‘Grace’s Sign’ Installed in East Lothian

Monday 21 March 2016, marked a milestone in the campaign driven by 10 year old Grace Warnock from Prestonpans, to raise awareness about the use of accessible toilets by individuals with ‘invisible disabilities’. Joined by her mum and grandmother, local Councillors, Deputy Provost Jim Gilles and members of the enjoyleisure Management Team, Grace officially unveiled the first ‘Grace’s Sign’ to be installed in East Lothian at the Loch Centre, Tranent.

Grace is a remarkable young girl, with an incredible story. The Prestonpans Primary School pupil suffers from the life-long chronic condition, Crohn’s disease. Living with Crohn’s disease means that being able to use an accessible toilet when out in public is important. This should be straightforward enough, but Grace’s experience of using accessible toilets has sometimes been less than positive. This is in part due to many people thinking that if you’re not a wheelchair user, or have another visible disability, you shouldn't be using them.

Since the launch of the campaign, Grace has achieved a great deal of support both locally and nationally, most notably from East Lothian MSP Iain Gray. He comments, “Grace has shown great determination to pursue this important issue and bring others on board with her idea. She has gained the help and support of Independent Living in Scotland and the Scottish Disability Equality Forum. I'm delighted that the first unveiling of ‘Grace’s Sign’ is here, in East Lothian; and I hope this is just the start of her door-signs going up at accessible toilets across Scotland in the future.”

The newly-created sign depicts a person in a wheelchair alongside a male and female with a heart icon on their chest. Beneath the icons is the description ‘Accessible Toilet’ which is displayed in both tactile lettering and braille.

From enjoyleisure Bill Axon, comments; “Living with a disability or chronic condition undoubtedly has various emotional and practical implications on individual’s lives. We appreciate that sometimes making small changes can make a big difference. It is our hope that by having ‘Grace's Sign’ installed into each of Sports Facilities across the county we are able to make life a little less challenging for those affected.

We are absolutely thrilled to have Grace and her family, officially unveil the first ‘Grace Sign’ in East Lothian.”
Engagement

Shaping Our Lives

Shaping Our Lives is a national organisation and network of user-led groups, service users and disabled people.

We are a user-led organisation committed to inclusive involvement and specialise in the research and practice of involving diverse communities in policy, planning and delivery of services.

Working with a diverse range of service users we developed a website for service user organisations, with a notice board and other facilities, to support networking and sharing of information and views. This site is open to all disability sites, social as well as campaigning groups. Through our work with service user groups and organisations it is clear that we all value the chance to meet, talk, share experiences and knowledge with other service users. We would like to invite your group to join the network.

It is FREE for service user led groups to join. We take issues of diversity and difference very seriously and would very much like to develop links. We try to be as inclusive and representative as possible and want to get a wide range of experiences to help us fulfil our commitment to speak up for seldom heard groups.

If you want to find out more about us look at our website www.shapingourlives.org.uk and click on join network or contact us if you want to know more message eamon@shapingourlives.org.uk.

Become an SDEF Member Today

Quarterly Magazine ‘Open Door’
News and Articles in accessible formats
Monthly e-bulletin ‘SDEF Voice’
Discounts and vouchers (visit online for latest)
Invitation to Member events

Membership is free. Go to www.sdef.org.uk or T: 01259 272064
Inclusive Design Equality Awareness Seminar

IDEAS Something to Think About

for Architects, Planners, & Developers

With the support of SDEF and the four Access Panels in Ayrshire, they have come together once again to hold a joint Awareness Seminar. This will take place in Irvine during September/October 2016. This event will build on our previous highly successful seminars.

The day will kick-off at 10:00 and finish at 15:45. We will have two guest speakers, with Fire Safety and Emergency Egress as well as the contentious issue of Shared Surfaces, as the possible subjects.

The Panels have organised four separate interactive pan-disability workshops for delegates to take part in, including;

1. Wheelchair Awareness
2. Visual and other Sensory Impairments
3. Mobility/Ambulant Impairment

The aim of the day is to make delegates more aware of disability and the impact good/bad design has on disabled people on a daily basis. Learn how some unexpectedly minor and relatively inexpensive changes can make a huge difference, just by approaching an issue from a different mindset.

Don’t miss this opportunity to expand your knowledge base and gain direct access to the experts in this field. We are sure you will enjoy your day with us and find the seminar useful, informative as well as humorous at times.

If you are interested in attending this free event, then please register your interest with the Joint Panel Committee E: 2016.access.seminar@Gmail.com
Access Panel Network
Geographical location of Access Panels in Scotland

WESTERN ISLES AND ARGYLL
Barra Access Panel
Cowal Access Panel (Dunoon)
Harris Disability Access Panel
Isle of Lewis Access Panel
Oban & District Disability Forum & Access Panel
Uist Disability Access Panel

SOUTH WEST
Cumnock and Doon Valley Access Panel
Dumfries and Galloway Disability Access Panel
East Renfrewshire Access Panel
Kilmarnock & District Access Panel
North Ayrshire Access Panel

FORTH VALLEY AND TAYSIDE
Angus Access Panel
Centre for Inclusive Living Perth & Kinross
Clackmannanshire Disability Awareness Group
Disabilities Fife
Dundee Access Group
Falkirk Area Disability Access Panel
Stirling Area Access Panel

HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS
Access Panel Orkney
Badenoch & Strathspey Access Panel
Caithness Disabled Access Panel
Disability Shetland Access Panel
Inverness Access Panel
Lochaber Disability Access Panel
Nairn Access Panel
Ross and Cromarty Access Panel
Sutherland Access Panel
Skye & Lochalsh Access Panel

GLASGOW & CLYDE VALLEY
East Dunbartonshire Access Panel
Glasgow Access Panel
North Lanarkshire Access Panel
Renfrewshire Access Panel
South Lanarkshire Access Panel
West Dunbartonshire Access Panel

NORTH EAST
Aberdeenshire North Access Panel
Aberdeenshire South Access Panel
Bon Accord Access Panel
Central Aberdeenshire Access Panel
West Aberdeenshire Access Panel

LOTHIAN AND BORDERS
AccessAble (Central Borders Access Panel)
Berwickshire Access Panel
East Lothian Access Panel
Edinburgh Access Panel
Midlothian Access Panel
Tweeddale Access Panel
West Lothian Access Committee
We are delighted to welcome two new members of staff to the SDEF team:

Ian Buchanan
Access Engagement Officer

Ian is our Access Engagement Officer and is the main point of contact for Access Panels requiring support and guidance. He works towards the development of a thriving Access Panel Network across Scotland and heads up the Access team within SDEF, which includes Dave and James, drawing on a wealth of skills and knowledge to improve the outreach and capacity of Access Panels.

Dave Crozier
Access Support Worker

Dave joined the Scottish Disability Equality Forum Team from the 1 June as Access Support Worker. He will be with us on a temporary basis for the next three months covering the Access Coordinator and working to support Ian as the Access Engagement Officer as well as the rest of the team.

Dave comes from a background in Community Education where he believes that education never stops and can come in many forms and has subsequently worked in many areas including youth work, working with the homeless, with adults with learning disabilities and most recently he was a Community Development Coordinator.
As part of this year’s Access Panel Conference we want to do something different. SDEF would like to celebrate the excellent and valuable work of Access Panels by holding an awards ceremony during this year’s Access Panel Conference. Achievements will be recognised with the following awards:

- Access Panel of the Year
- Access Panel Progression Award
- Most Innovative Project of the Year
- Best Access Panel Website Award
- Best Community and Online Engagement Award
- Access Panel with improved Outreach

If you would like your Access Panel to be in the running for an award then go to http://accesspanelnetwork.org.uk and download the Award Criteria and nomination form.

The Access Team is made up of Ian, Dave and James who will assess the nominations and decide on a winner. Entries close on 31 August 2016 so get your entries in quickly!

To submit an entry or if you have any queries you can either email ian.buchanan@sdef.org.uk or you can post it to Ian Buchanan, Scottish Disability Equality Forum, 2/4 e-Centre Cooperage Way, Alloa, FK10 3LP.

Thank you and good luck!
Access Panel News

The following pages provide an insight into the activities and hard work volunteers put into their local Access Panels.

If you are not yet a member with your local Access Panel and would like to get involved in improving access in your local community, contact your local Access Panel today. Contact details of each Access Panel can be found at [http://accesspanelnetwork.org.uk/directory-panels](http://accesspanelnetwork.org.uk/directory-panels) or contact Dave Crozier T: 01259 272064 E: david.crozier@sdef.org.uk

**Badenoch & Strathspey Disability Access Panel**

Tel: 01540 661797  Email: basapanel@gmail.com

Highland Council’s Principal Building Standards Surveyor attends all our Panel meetings, shows us plans for us to discuss and respond to. The most recent involves the Court House in Kingussie which is being converted to Council Offices and Public Service Point. It is a listed building which contains a cell with a very narrow heavy cell door. This is being converted into an accessible toilet for public use but Historic Scotland has insisted that the door is retained in situ. Outcome- beautiful disabled toilet with no wheelchair access—Watch this space…

The Panel has been pleased to receive the requested Promotional Pack from SDEF. We can recommend it very highly. The Pack proved invaluable on the Information Day organised by Badenoch Arthritis Support Group who invited the Access Panel and Caberfeidh Horizons to make presentations. Caberfeidh Horizons provides training and work experience in the community for adults and young people with a learning disability, mental health and/or addiction problem and long term unemployment.

Access Audits we have done recently, cover a wide range of subjects from a Beauty Salon, two Shinty Pavilions (one of which has no electricity), Wedding Licence for the Highland Folk Park where they plan to hold weddings in the School, the Church, the Shinty Pavilion and the Medieval Township, and a new open-plan office for a Timber Company, as well as advising on changes needed at a ramped access to a Village Hall.
The Access panel meet on a monthly basis in East Ayrshire Council offices in Kilmarnock with the Inclusive Design Adviser. We also have a Technical Team who meet outwith Panel meetings to discuss and review the content of both Planning and Building Warrant applications – to date we have reviewed in excess of 100 applications.

The Panel also meet with Architects and Agents on larger projects at the earliest possible stage in the application process - Several schools, Kilmarnock College, Loudoun Castle, East Ayrshire housing sites and recently Dean Castle.

The Panel also carry out site visits either to live applications to check the existing building and also to completed projects. This year some include the new Ayrshire College, various housing sites with East Ayrshire where wheelchair accessible housing has been provided, Kilmarnock Railway Station, Atrium House, Kilmarnock, Dean Castle, Crosshouse Hospital.

Several members continue to be actively involved in the Council’s Equality Forums and annual Equality Events.

The Panel also invite guests to their meetings to talk about various projects.

In 2013 the Panel established their Excellence Awards and continued with this in with awards being given to the designers of the Sir Alexander Fleming Centre and Galson Community Centre.

We are involved with other Access Panels across Ayrshire and are holding an event in Autumn 2016 for architects and architectural students regarding designing inclusively.

Out next meeting will involve Mystery Shopper training. The Council’s Corporate Equalities Strategy Group has agreed the Panel members undertake Mystery style shopping visits to Council services and feedback our findings.

The Panel are happy to continue to work with the Council to help make East Ayrshire a more inclusive and accessible place for people to live, work and visit.
Register

The Harris Disability Access Panel are currently developing a Register for individuals with disabilities in the community. This has involved us making registration forms and writing a data protection policy for handling personal information. We will be advertising the register locally and working to ensure it reaches the right people. By creating a register we hope that apart from gathering useful statistics, it will help us engage with more disabled people in our community and to be aware of the differing needs in our community. We hope it may also encourage some people to join the panel.

Airport Assistance Guide

We also have a project in the pipeline to create an airport assistance guide with Stornoway Airport who are interested to be involved. We have developed positive communication with them while working on access issues. We know from members experiences that arranging assistance for a flight and navigating an airport can pose it's own difficulties. We think it would be helpful for people to have the information available to them about the assistance facilities at an airport and useful tips we have learned from booking assistance with airlines and the service at airports. We look forward to working on this in the coming months. We have a small sub group who meet to develop and work on such projects which has proved successful.

Leaflets

The sub group recently completed our new leaflets, which we hope will help raise awareness of the panels work. We are fortunate to be involved with the Harris Voluntary Service, a valuable resource to the community, who printed and folded them for us. We also attend their meetings and share information between key community organisations which is most beneficial. We look forward to working on our projects this year and continuing to raise our profile in the community.
In recent months we have been extremely busy; in conjunction with four access panels, West Dunbartonshire, East Dunbartonshire, Glasgow & South Lanarkshire, we held an event in our office for the Healthier Scotland national conversation. It was a great day and we would like to thank Morven Brooks from SDEF for coming down to facilitate.

**Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park**

For many years now we have been working with Clyde Muirshiel Regional Park (Castle Semple for the locals) and within the last year we have assisted the park to obtain funding from the Postcode Community Trust for 2 bell boats and more recently we have obtained funding from The Big Lottery for side by side bikes which we hope to be able to order soon.

The bell boats are so popular that before they arrived at the park there was a waiting list for them. We currently have a competition in local schools to name the boats and hope to have the naming ceremony soon and we will update with photos of the day.

**Volunteer Friendly Award**

We are currently working toward receiving the Volunteer Friendly Award. The panel has been very fortunate to have a fantastic volunteer Bill Condy who is completing the five strands to obtain the award. Bill has worked for many years and has retired and is looking to help where ever he can. Bill is a wonderful asset for the panel.
Stirling Area Access Panel (SAAP) has been busy over the last year reviewing planning applications to Stirling Council and commenting on those that reveal crucial access deficiencies. Two applications in particular showed a lack of inclusion in terms of accessible accommodation. These were housing development in St Ninians and student accommodation in Riverside.

The student accommodation in particular raised concerns, first, because the application was submitted during the Christmas period which meant it may have progressed through planning without comment. Second, the public consultation event which is a requirement of a major development, was not widely advertised and was not inclusive for those with disabilities, due to the venue of the event being inaccessible.

There are a number of issues that SAAP commented on, the full comprehensive report is available on request. In summary:

- There are only 6 parking bays for a 208 bed eight storey building, there is no disabled parking.
- No suitable disabled room facilities are incorporated within this 208 bed student complex. None of the bedrooms or bathrooms are adequately sized for disabled students, particularly those who use a wheelchair.
- The design of this large building structure does nothing positive to enhance the topography of the area. SAAP saw this as a gross over development of the site, no other building in the area is eight stories from basement to roof space. It would negatively impact on the vista of the Ochil Hills and the river.

The above is just a snapshot of the issues raised. In short, SAAP did not support the planning application and commented that the development is unfit for any disabled individual and does not comply with Scottish Building Standards, or the Equality Act 2010. SAAP did suggest that it would be beneficial for developers to involve Stirling Area Access Panel or a disability organisation at the very earliest stages of development and consultation and that we offer relevant guidance and support around accessible buildings and the surrounding areas, based on the Standards that underpin that guidance.
Below is a summary of our work during 2015/2016. Please contact us direct if you would like any further information.

**Training**
We have a training programme which is ongoing and we now have a total of eight members trained. We are now going to roll this training out to other organisations in our area.

**Working Teams**
We have set up the following working teams in our Access Panel - Access Audit Team; Consultation Team; Welfare Reform team; Hate crime Team; Health and Social Care Team; Promotional Team.

**Clyde Shopmobility**
We now run Clyde Shopmobility working with various partners which include - Police Scotland; The National Parks; Path for all; Health and social Care; Community Planning.

**Planning Applications**
We engage with and make recommendations to The Licensing Board and Planning Committee where we review applications every month.

We are working closely and sit on the project board of new builds for greater Glasgow and Clyde and we are working on a new health centre and three care homes at this moment. We are also working on the new council buildings in Dunbarton and Clydebank.

**Events**
We have with the help of SDEF held a Healthier Scotland event bringing together panels from the Central West Scotland and Lanarkshire.

**Membership**
Our Membership is growing rapidly and we are looking to setting up a Access Panel which will be run by young people and be known as the Youth Access Panel.

We have been conscious that while our access panel was strong we need younger people to keep it going in the future and we can now see that our hard work is coming to fruition.
I wonder how many of you went to the pantomime this winter? It’s one of the great joys of life. First to go as a child with wide-eyed wonder, then with your own children and eventually as a grandparent getting caught up in your grandchildren’s excitement.

But have you ever dreamed of having a part in your favourite pantomime? Who would you want to be? I would want to play the Fairy Godmother in Cinderella and be able to say to somebody, “Yes, you will go to the ball.”

A few years ago members of Dundee Access Group walked along the City’s Perth Road, a favourite area of small shops and cafes, quite a different character from the city centre. We were taking notes of the numerous obstacles that impede the progress of people with mobility difficulties. We called our project ‘Hannah’s Highway’. Hannah was at that time a 14 year old schoolgirl using a power wheelchair.

Amongst the problems we encountered were that many of these shops and cafes had a step at the entrance to their premises. Hannah made it clear that if you are not able to pop into a local shop or have a coffee or a coke with your pals, then it diminishes the scope of your living. The Group thought, “If only these shops had portable ramps that they could put out when someone in a wheelchair or scooter wanted to come in.” Then the Group thought, “Why not?”

It was like that moment in Cinderella, when against all the odds, the Fairy Godmother says, “You shall go to the ball!” Only this Fairy Godmother was real!

Dundee Access Group’s ‘magic wand’ was hard work. Researching portable ramps, persuading shopkeepers and fundraising has resulted in the purchase of three ramps for the use of cafes on the Perth Road. We sincerely hope that the handover of the first of these ramps to Pacamara Coffee Shop and Restaurant on 11 March this year will set a precedent and before long portable ramps will be commonplace in premises with a front door step.
In addition to the usual constant flow of planning applications requiring assessment for accessibility, Edinburgh Council have been keeping the panel very busy with requests for consultation about a wide range of projects around proposed changes to many parts of the city. They are looking to revitalise various suburbs, streets and neighbourhoods to improve the quality of life for residents and to attract visitors. The Council is consulting us about many aspects including shared space, cycle paths and floating bus stops - ie bus stops that can be accessed by pedestrians only by crossing a cycle path.

Another Council initiative where we are involved is their Wayfinding project. The plan is to exploit the latest advances in digital mapping to provide maps and signage identifying enjoyable routes across Edinburgh for pedestrians and cyclists as well as routes and directions to tourist attractions. The panel is proposing that information for disabled people is highlighted, like accessibility and gradients for wheelchair users.

Access issues at Waverley Station are demanding a lot of attention too. We have met with our MSP three times and he has helped us arrange meetings with managers and executives from Network Rail and Scotrail where we have discussed our issues.

Finally, the panel has been approached by Edinburgh College for disability awareness talks to its staff and for access reviews of its three Edinburgh campuses. We are considering how best to respond - especially in the light of all the resources being consumed by the projects above!
Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Drivers Training

Centre for Inclusive Living Perth & Kinross (CILPK) have provided training to 40 taxi drivers to raise their awareness about disabilities. The areas that are covered in the training include:

- The basic rights of Independent Living and the medical versus social model
- Statistics about disabled people in Perth and Kinross
- Wheelchair users in Perth and Kinross
- Why taxis are important to disabled people
- The expectations of disabled people whilst in a taxi
- Discussion around safety, communication, the use of seatbelts and being clamped in properly.

There is also a practical element where the drivers get the chance to practice putting our members into their taxis.

All the sessions have had open conversations with our members attending and sharing their experiences. We have had very positive feedback from the drivers and from our members about their experiences using taxis since the training has started.
Nairn Access Panel held a Schools Access Awareness Day back in March 2016. The Awareness day is the panels annual event with the four local primary schools. It's a very successful day with hands on workshops.

The photos below show that the panel present an award to a local business/shop which have considered and implemented good access. This year the award was given to a local garden centre, Broadley Garden Centre.
6 ways to Get Involved

1. Join your local Access Panel
   www.accesspanelnetwork.org.uk/directory-panels

2. Be on our mailing list and join SDEF
   www.sdef.org.uk/index.php/become-a-member

3. Like our Facebook Pages
   Scottish Disability Equality Forum
   Access Panel Network

4. Follow us on twitter
   SDEForum
   AccessPanelNet

5. Come along to our events

6. Spread the word and encourage your friends, family and colleagues to join
Our Sponsors…
SDEF are proud to be supporting Scotland's Able magazine, a disability lifestyle magazine which provides news articles and information around disability issues in Scotland.

Scottish Disability Equality Forum is grateful for the generosity of its sponsors and their ongoing support as we work together toward achieving the goals of the organisation.

If you are interested in sponsoring our magazine OPEN DOOR, please complete our online registration form - www.sdef.org.uk/index.php/our-sponsors Alternatively, please contact Morven Brooks, Communications Manager for further information on morven.brooks@sdef.org.uk

OPEN DOOR is published by
Scottish Disability Equality Forum

Office 2/4, The e-Centre
Cooperage Way
Alloa
FK10 3LP
Tel: 01259 272064
Email: admin@sdef.org.uk

SDEF is Registered in Scotland as a Company Limited by Guarantee with Charitable Status
Charity Number SC031893, Company Number SC243392

Connect with us...

sdef.org.uk
Scottish Disability Equality Forum

Generously funded by: