



DIFFERENCE CIO

**ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
For the year ended 31 December 2020**

Charity Number 1170789

DIFFERENCE CIO

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

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TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

For the year ended 31 December 2020

The trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the period ended 31 December 2020, which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a Directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

1. Objectives and Activities

Difference is a unifying disability rights organisation that aims to represent disabled people in the North East of England and works to bring about significant and lasting social change. We are the first disability rights organisation dedicated solely to campaigning for disability equality covering the North East since the 1990s saw the closure of Disability Action North East. To achieve our objectives of increasing equality and tackling discrimination, we will:

1. Raise awareness of disability discrimination and influence public opinion and policy.
2. Represent and speak out about the needs and concerns of disabled people.
3. Use research as a tool to raise issues and influence change.
4. Mobilise disabled people to collectively advocate.

Difference grounds its ideas within the social and affirmation models of disability. It identifies disability as the personal experience of physical and social barriers, which exclude people with impairments from full participation in ordinary community life. The affirmation model takes a view of disability and impairment that encompasses positive social identities. It identifies impairment as a characteristic of human difference to be expected and respected on its own terms.

2. Achievements and Performance

At the start of 2020 we held a recruitment campaign to find a new Development Manager. With support from VONNE, we attracted a strong pool of disabled candidates, and were delighted to appoint Richard Boggie, who joined us on 18 March, just a few days before the first national lockdown began.

Richard's background as a senior Human Resources Manager, with lived experience of sight loss, brought a new perspective to our work, broadening our experience of barriers for people with sensory impairments.

Within the context of a global pandemic, it was clear that disabled people needed a strong voice more than ever. Early campaigning work therefore focused on the impact of COVID-19 on disabled people. Working in partnership with other Disabled People's Organisations and human rights charities in our region, we gathered disabled people's experiences lessons learned, collating these into our [Manifesto for a Better Normal](#). This gained significant regional press and TV news coverage, including this [report on BBC Look North](#).

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A second strand of campaigning work developed during 2020 was on digital inclusion, through our work as part of the regional Better ConNEcted campaign. Here, our focus has been on ensuring that accessibility is a fundamental part of the campaign, as it is so vital to the participation of many disabled people. Social restrictions made this work more important than ever. We were delighted to receive funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to allow us to develop and run a workshop series during the early part of 2021 with partner DPO, Enhance The UK. This series will boost knowledge and skills in the VCSE sector on digital accessibility, critical to supporting disabled service users as more and more services and activities are delivered online.

We have also been active contributors to national campaigns, such as the Disability Benefits Consortium, campaigning for a £20 per week uplift in disability benefits equivalent to that provided to other benefits like Universal Credit as a result of the pandemic. We have also actively engaged with the Disability Unit, submitting our contribution towards the development of a new national disability strategy.

During the lockdown, we have produced a disability equality training program aimed at places of work and other professional services. This is designed to increase awareness and access and reduce discrimination. It can be delivered in short or long the sessions depending on available time and need and also be a saleable product. We are looking to develop the training in the future, either when COVID-19's restrictions end or we can deliver it online. We have had interest from the North of Tyne Combined Authority to deliver the training when face to face contact is recommended. We hope this will become a sustainable income stream in the future.

Another highlight of 2020 was our launch event, 'Celebrating Difference'. Originally planned to be a physical gathering, we took the decision to opt for an online event rather than delaying further. With a mix of discussion and debate, creative performances and a fantastic keynote speech from our patron, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, the event generated some great energy and ideas.

We used the time to explore with our members the reasons behind the current inequalities generally across the UK, more specifically in the North East, and what they would like to see happen. We reconfirmed the barriers disabled people face through a collective reporting of disabling and enabling experiences, followed by an examination of what should be done about a culture which is inherently inaccessible to disabled people. The launch resulted in new members for the organisation, created a platform for further consultations and gave us the themes around which we have built our strategy. An initial evaluation of our launch received very positive feedback, with an overall rating of 4.7 out of 5.

We have sought out opportunities to amplify the voice of disabled people, for example speaking at events hosted by North East England Chamber of Commerce, the People's Powerhouse and Connected Voice.

In December, we marked International Day of Disabled People with a celebratory showcase of disabled creative talent from our region. '[Shine](#)' was designed to put disabled talent centre-stage – talent which is largely unrecognised by the mainstream media.

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3. Plans for Future Periods

Our plans for the future are to build on the progress of 2020, continue to grow our membership, reach and impact. We have set out our future aims and activities in our [3-year strategic plan](#). This builds on our members priorities identified at our launch event, namely:

- Improving the voice, influence and participation of disabled people.
- Increasing employment opportunities for disabled people.
- Improve public awareness through education and training.
- Improve access to physical and digital environments.
- Continue to monitor the impact of COVID-19 and campaign for disabled people's rights.

4. Reference and administrative details of the charity, its trustees and advisors

Charity Name Difference CIO

Registered Charity Number 1170789

Operational address 33 Forest Avenue
Newcastle Upon Tyne
NE12 9AH

Trustees	Caroline McDonald	Chair
	David Barker	Treasurer
	Gillian Lathan	Secretary
	Nicky Erevik	
	Valerie Milnes	

Independent
Examiner Jim Dodds
Connected Voice Business Services Limited
Higham House
Higham Place
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8AF

Bankers Cooperative Bank

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5. Structure, Governance and Management

Governing documents

Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation Model - whereby the only voting members are the charity Trustees. We have adopted the Charity Commissions Model Constitution to ensure we comply with the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and the General Regulations. This helps us to ensure we:

- Reflect recommended best practice; and
- Are legally compliant

Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are appointed for their individual knowledge, experience and skills that are considered essential to ensure the charity's effective administration and its continued sustainability, growth and development. Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees in a properly convened meeting. Trustees are also screened using a needs and skillsets assessment. This approach enables us to:

- Ensure we have the right skills mix on the Board to meet the administrative needs of the charity
- Ensure we do have a range of Trustees from diverse professional backgrounds to build knowledge and skills
- Mitigate any potential risks or threats to the charity, as far as possible; and
- Reduce, as far as is possible, the potential for any conflicts of interest with each Trustee and their existing professional occupations.

Organisation

The Trustees meet each quarter and deal with the administration of the charity encompassing the strategic vision, financial accountability and risk management. The operational management of the organisation is undertaken by the paid staff team.

Risk management

The Trustees have conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed, and systems have been established to mitigate those risks including the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects and for ensuring the consistent quality of the delivery of all operational aspects of the charitable company. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they still meet the needs of the charity.

6. Statement on Public Benefit

The charity carries out a wide range of activities in pursuance of its charitable aims. The Trustees consider that these activities, summarised above, provide benefit both to those who directly receive services, and the wider community in the North East of England. The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

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7. Financial Review

Difference CIO is primarily funded by grants. The total income for the year was £69,978 (2019: £22,004). This income is allocated across respective funds on the Statement of Financial Activities in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice.

The Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31 December 2020, shows a net surplus across all funds of £12,164 (2019: £4,339).

The Balance Sheet at 31 December 2020 shows total fund carried forward of £16,491 (2019: £4,327) of which there are £16,491 restricted funds (2019: £4,327).

Reserve policy

Difference CIO has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not invested in fixed assets held by the charity should be between three and six months of annual expenditure. At 31 December 2020 the free reserves currently £nil (2019: £nil) fell short of this target level, the trustees are aware of this and will be building up reserves with planned operating surpluses.

8. Chair's Report

The trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2020.

We are pleased with the progress made by the charity in what has been a challenging year for everyone. The disproportionate impact of the pandemic on disabled people highlights why our work is so necessary. In a year when we marked 25 years since the enactment of the Disability Discrimination Act and 10 years of the Equality Act, it is clear that disabled people are still a long way from enjoying equality. As a result, we have poorer educational attainment, employment prospects, incomes and health outcomes. We do not have equal representation and participation in representative politics or other decision-making bodies.

As a charity, we are now in a much stronger place to call out that inequality and to work to increase our representation and participation across society. We will continue to work constructively with partners to improve outcomes and build a 'new normal' where disabled people can thrive.

Our three-year strategy sets out an ambitious plan for growth, with members engaged and at the heart of everything we do. This will be underpinned by the decision in February 2021 from The National Lottery Community Fund to grant fund us for 3 years, which will provide the platform for our continued development.

As trustees, we are committed to better representing disabled people from all sections of our community and I will be taking action during 2021 to develop the diversity of our Board.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank all of our Trustees, our staff, volunteers, members and supporters for their contributions during this most difficult of years.

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9. Statement of Trustee Responsibilities

The charity trustees are responsible for preparing a trustees’ annual report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

The charity trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of incoming resources and application of resources. In preparing financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees on06 July 2021..... and signed on their behalf by:

Caroline McDonald
Chair



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ANNUAL REVIEW

For the year ended 31 December 2020

1. Introduction

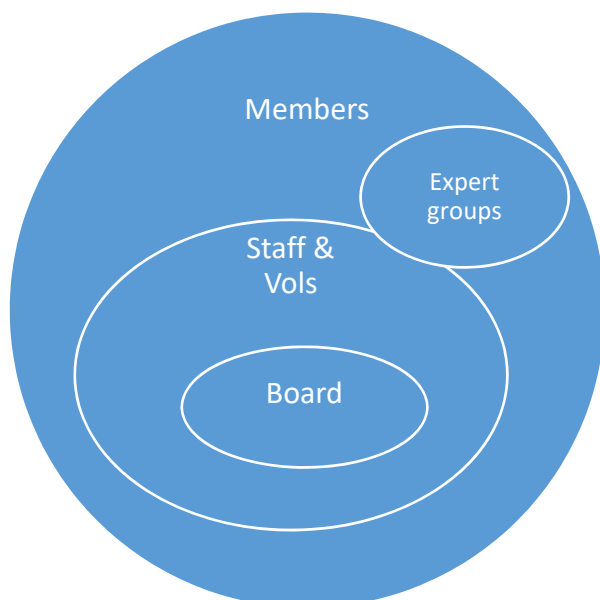
This report is a review of the first 12 months of Developing difference across the North East funded through the National lottery community fund and their Reaching Communities programme. It represents the end of a developmental period beginning of a new delivery phase and corresponds with the end of a funding period and the beginning of another.

Difference

Difference is a service user led disabled persons organisation (DPO), which began as a voluntary association in 2016, then became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) in 2017. It was created by a group of disabled people in response to research (Hartworth, 2016) which identified an absence of a regional voice organisation. Since that need has been identified, it has grown and now exists in its own right, with a committed Board of Trustees, a small and growing staff team, a growing number of policies and procedures and a strategic vision. For the first time since Disability Arts North East (closed in the 1990s), the region had a representative disability rights organisation, where everybody¹ involved in the organisation is disabled.

The organisational structure is made up of four levels: board; staff and volunteers; expert groups; and members. As a structure needs to be transparent and accessible to people who want to become part of our work. An individual can become a member of Difference here: and can become involved in all levels of the organisation².

Figure 1. Organisational arrangements within Difference



¹ Except a non-visually impaired personal assistant of the development manager who is visually impaired.

² With the caveat that they support the articles of our constitution.

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Strategic Development

Difference started with a broad equality approach aligned with the United Nations Charter for human rights which are set of universal entitlements shared by disabled people. The strategic direction therefore was an increase in equality and a decrease in discrimination. Thereafter, they were to be guided by their constituent members, i.e., the wider disabled diaspora in the North East who have associated themselves with Difference because they feel it is representative and worthwhile. In order to achieve the constituency (and therefore mandate), the organisation had to be created and present itself to the world, which it has been doing and which culminated in the short term, in the launch event in 2020. This was effectively the end of the development phase of the organisation.

Using the materials produced during the consultations (after analysis and review and further consultation), a first delivery strategy was produced. This process also tested the model of engaging members with policy, which was vital as the organisation works at the strategy/policy level there needed to be a route between strategy and policy work and members; from decision-makers to coalface.

The result of this was a focus on following five strategic areas:

1. Increase the **Voice, Participation and Influence** of disabled people
2. Increase **Employment** opportunities for disabled people
3. Increase **Awareness** of disability issues
4. Improving **Access** to both physical and digital §environments
5. Maintaining a focus on **COVID-19** related issues

These have been used to create an operational programme for the next three years (contained in appendix 1).

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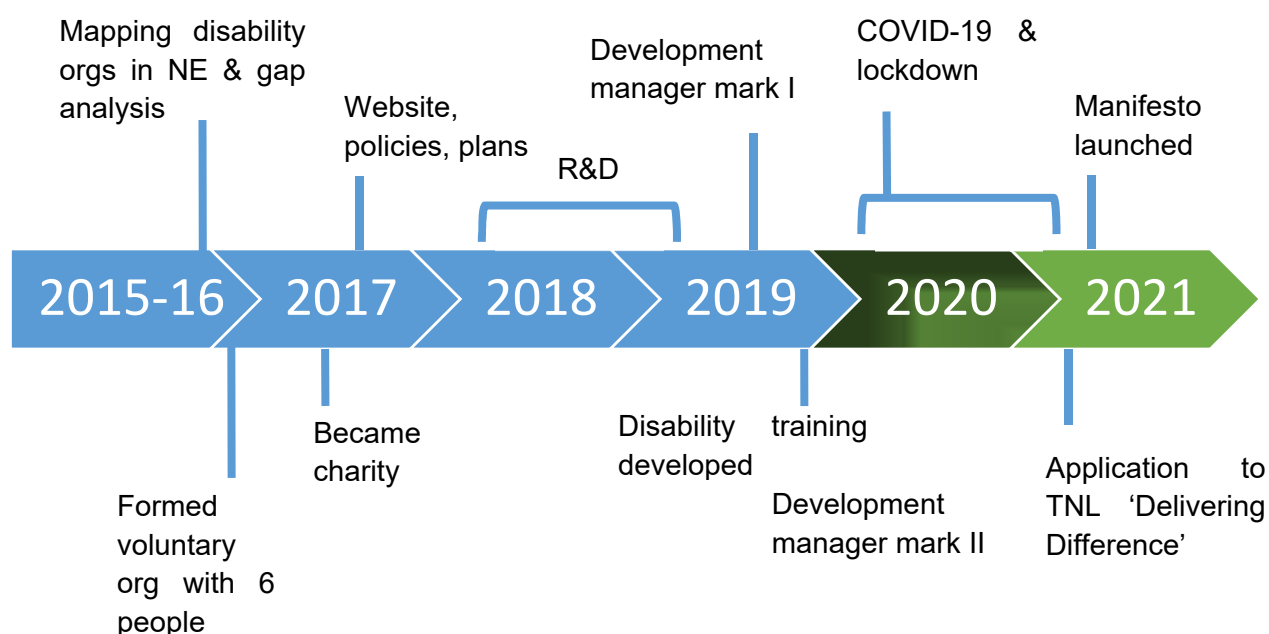
1.1 Operations

Operations have been driven by Difference's development director with support from trustees. This continued until a transfer of the majority of operational issues to the new development manager (starting April 2020).

2016 to 2017: finding our feet and deciding what type of organisation to become

2018 to 2019 fundraising for website

Figure 2. Development (blue) and delivery (green) timeline, 2015 to 2021



The organisation wanted to put their experiences of recruitment on record particularly as it relates to taking positive action to recruit disabled people, which is as follows:

After creating the person specification for the position of part-time development manager, the first job advert went into only Vonne's job pages. From a total of 12 applicants, we chose to interview three and appointed one. The organisation felt they needed a dynamic and fresh face to make the organisation into a credible regional disability rights organisation. And with the first candidate, we thought we had found that person. However, there was a mismatch in skills and the candidate was too junior and an experienced and despite a support package, was unable to take the organisation where we wanted to go. As such we parted company a little bit longer than six months into the funding, which was used to pay a half time salary over two years.

The second advert went into Third Sector Jobs and the voluntary sector infrastructure organisation for Newcastle, Connected Voice, who have an online jobs page, as well as Vonne's Jobs Ebulletin. This

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increased the audience by at least an order of three and this was reflected in the number of high quality candidates.

Difference was unable to specify on the advert that we were particularly keen to employ a disabled person and we wanted disabled people to apply. We were told we could not do this as a result of equal opportunities legislation. This left us having to ask the question in the personal statement to explain their relationship to disability, which indicated the nature of the disability or not.

Question: can we affect change in this area and allow it to be specified that disabled people wanted for a position.

1.2 Development Manager

The new development manager started work at the beginning of the first lockdown, by reaching out to disabled people and the organisations that support them, expanding the membership and developing awareness of our organisation. As the pandemic started to unravel, Richard started collecting the experiences of disabled people during the lockdown, both the bad and the good elements and documenting them. Through building bridges with a number of key voluntary sector organisations including, Disability North, Inclusion North, United Response, Newcastle Vision Support, Just Fair, Recoco and Skills for People, has worked together to come up with a 'Manifesto for a Better Normal'. Based on our experiences of communicating disabled people before and during the COVID crisis, we have set out aspects of policy and practice that have let disabled people down, and those that have helped and could continue to help as part of a new approach. This report was submitted to the government's Commission for Social Justice and there will be discussion about other areas across the country using this model to identify local strategies. The launch of the strategy manifesto in September 2020 was covered on television and radio. This is exactly how we envisage the work of difference; directly influencing policy at a strategic level and appearing on popular media role modelling examples of disabled people speaking up for disabled people's rights.

The manifesto 'is a call to action and we call on organisations across all sectors to produce an **EPIC** response for their disabled customers, service-users and employees:

Extra investment and support to ensure disabled peoples' rights are protected both during and after the current crisis.

Personalised support that is flexible enough to meet individual needs. Disabled people have a vast range of different needs –an individual, person-centred approach is key.

Involvement of disabled people in planning and decision-making, at an individual and community level. Nothing about us without us.

Compliance with existing disability and human rights legislation to make reasonable adjustments, reduce discrimination and protect human rights.

We hope that the manifesto will lead to improvements in the lives of disabled people by intervening in foundational approaches of organisations in the north-east. For example, one regional health trust, is interested in becoming an early supporter of the manifesto and its work. Through making changes on a fundamental level, for example giving disabled employees additional time to effectively engage in workplace

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discussions, facilitating homeworking and involving disabled people on committees and boards. By doing this, the organisation has contributed to early action on issues affecting disabled peoples lives. This manifesto work has also increased the shared nature of public spaces as we are arguing for and promoting increased involvement of disabled people in decision-making bodies. When this happens, access issues often get addressed, whereas otherwise they may not have.

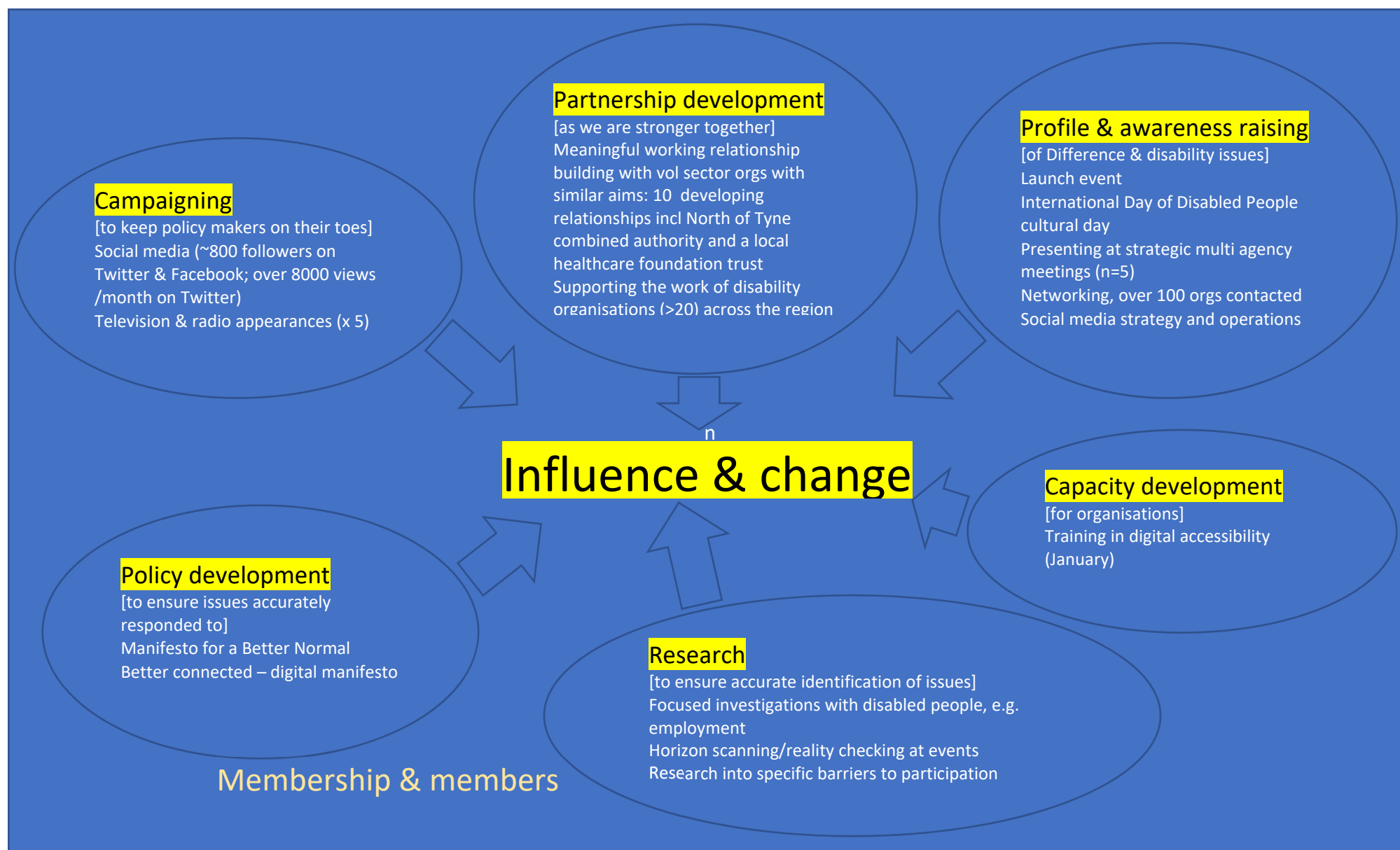
We have also been involved as co-creators of a regional campaign on digital inclusion – www.betterconnected.org.uk – using our expertise to promote the need for accessibility in order to help close the digital divide in the North East.

During the lockdown, we have produced a disability equality training program aimed at places of work and other professional services, and increasing awareness and access and reducing discrimination. This can be delivered in short or long the sessions depending on available time and need and also be a saleable product, if appropriate. We developed this training in response to the dearth of good quality disability training in the north east (most was disability awareness, which is a medical model approach to disability, something eschewed by disability politics movement; to provide an illustration as to the reason why this is, many disabled people think that sitting somebody in a wheelchair for an hour or putting oversized gloves on somebody and ask them to pick up small things, does not give an accurate representation of the complexity of disabled people's lives and how different characteristics interact with each other). We also develop this training in response to one of our trustees who was approached by her diversity and inclusion group at work and asked if there was anything Difference could do for them in the way of awareness raising or development work. We are looking to develop the training in the future, either when COVID-19's restrictions end or we can deliver it line. We have had requests from the North of Tyne Combined Authority to deliver the training when face to face contact is recommended. We hope this will become a sustainable income stream in the future.

As a result of COVID-19, we were unable to hold our launch event which we had planned to hold in the Newcastle Eagles venue (n.b.: finding an accessible venue in the north-east to host an event made up of disabled people, was very very difficult and the Eagles venue was the only one that could provide what we wanted). However, we decided to do an online launch, on zoom by making a varied program including performances, focused discussions, animations and speeches. We commissioned the services of a technical expert to help us through the process which was again invaluable.

Our launch was a great success with our patron, Baroness Tanni Grey Thompson giving a keynote speech and a local MP, Emma Llewellyn-Buck as a panellist, as well as performances from disabled artists. We used the time to explore with our members the reasons behind the current inequalities generally across the UK, more specifically in the North East, and what they would like to see happen. We reconfirmed the barriers disabled people face through a collective reporting of disabling and enabling experiences, followed by an examination of what should be done about a culture which is inherently inaccessible to disabled people. The launch resulted in new members for the organisation, created a platform for further consultations and gave us the material that we can build our strategy around. An initial evaluation of our launch received very positive feedback, with an overall rating of 4.7 out of 5.

Figure 3. How Difference has approached influence and effected change



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1.3 The Launch Event

Our launch was successful in a number of different areas,

- Announcing the arrival of the organisation
- Presenting our intentions,
- Demonstrating the intention of engaging with our members,
- Collectively identifying the problems
- Listening and acting upon what has been said;
- Demonstrating the viability of this method of communication and engagement.

Table 1.0 Top talking points of the day

Category	% covered
Experience of disablism	53
Reasons behind disablism	30
Voice & reputation	9
Young disabled people	9
Hate crime	5

Table 2.0 Top propositions for action

Category	% covered
Voice, profile & influence	48
Employment	33
Physical adaptations	20

Next steps

We will take the following themes into the next consultation:

- Voice, profile & influence: which directions?
- Employment: is there anything we have missed? [we have an ongoing employment campaign]
- Physical adaptations: where to start?
- COVID-19: continuing to monitor the impact of the pandemic on our community.

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The launch also affirmed our focus as a disability rights and collective advocacy charity. It was clear from the feedback of our members and participants that voice and representation, are fundamentally important to the lives of disabled people in our region.

We have identified three strategic games:

Voice and participation

- Consultation events
- Grow membership

Employment

- Mentoring and peer support, disability champions at places of work
- Volunteering

Awareness raising and training

- Disability equality, awareness and etiquette training
- Public speaking, role modelling

Increasing access to the physical environment

- Identify issue and run a campaign

Current 19

Examples of impact

Excerpt from post event letter, December 2020

I just wanted to say a huge thank you for speaking at the Webinar. Your insights were fascinating and it was great to see some really useful practical advice that our members can implement to improve their inclusivity in their organisations.

It was great to be able to bring this event to our members and their wider networks as it's something the Chamber feels passionate about discussing and we want to help break down some of these barriers in the regional business community. Please let us know if we can support Difference NE in the future in any way.

I'll send you over the recording and any follow up queries attendees might have ASAP. Would you like the manifesto shared in our follow ups to attendees? 😊

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Newcastle Chamber of Commerce

Partnerships

As a collective advocacy campaigning disability rights organisation, networking and relationship building is central to our approach. In the last 12 months we have been proactive in joining existing voluntary sector networks, National ones such as shaping our lives, disability rights UK; local ones such as the Sunderland disability inclusion and access group. We have appeared in local and national publications, such as the connected voice newsletter and disability rights UK publications. We have spoken with our regional Chamber of Commerce and agreed to present at a forthcoming members event on disability and inclusion. We have also started our own networks and groups, including our membership networks and the partnership grouping which we formed to produce the manifesto.

We will continue to carry out partnership work with members of the manifesto crew and supporters. For example, John Lawler OBE from Cumbria, Northumberland, Tyne & Wear NHS foundation trust, was a panel member at our launch and is interested to continue supporting our work through the manifesto and resultant action plans. As mentioned, we have been very active on social media and ran a very successful launch event via zoom. The MP for South Shields Emma Lewell-Buck was a panel member for our discussion and will continue working with us and represent us in the Houses of Parliament. Our patron Baroness Tanni Grey Thompson will use our work as examples in her work in the House of Lords.

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Appendix 1 Difference North East EPIC Action Plan 2021

Extra investment and resources

- We will develop a programme of events for our members, promoting their voice, participation and influence.
- We have already secured extra funding for digital accessibility training during 2021. We will aim to get maximum benefit for this investment and build our capacity to advise and support others in this area.

Personalisation

- We need to reach disabled people in marginalised communities. We plan to make connections with BAME community groups so that we can properly understand intersecting discrimination and represent BAME disabled people more effectively.
- We will set up a mentoring scheme during 2021, to help disabled people in the jobs market with a personalised mentoring offer.

Involvement

- We want members to be at the heart of what we do. We will set up a Members' Advisory Panel to help guide our work and ensure our relevance.
- We will seek to strengthen our Trustee Board during 2021 to ensure we have a broad range of skills and experience with which to guide our work.

Compliance

- We will continue to improve the accessibility of our website and social media communications, with better use of video and BSL.
- We want our events, both virtual and face-to-face, to be accessible and inclusive. Learning from our launch event, we will involve members in event design so that we can meet as many different needs as we can.

Collectively identifying the problems

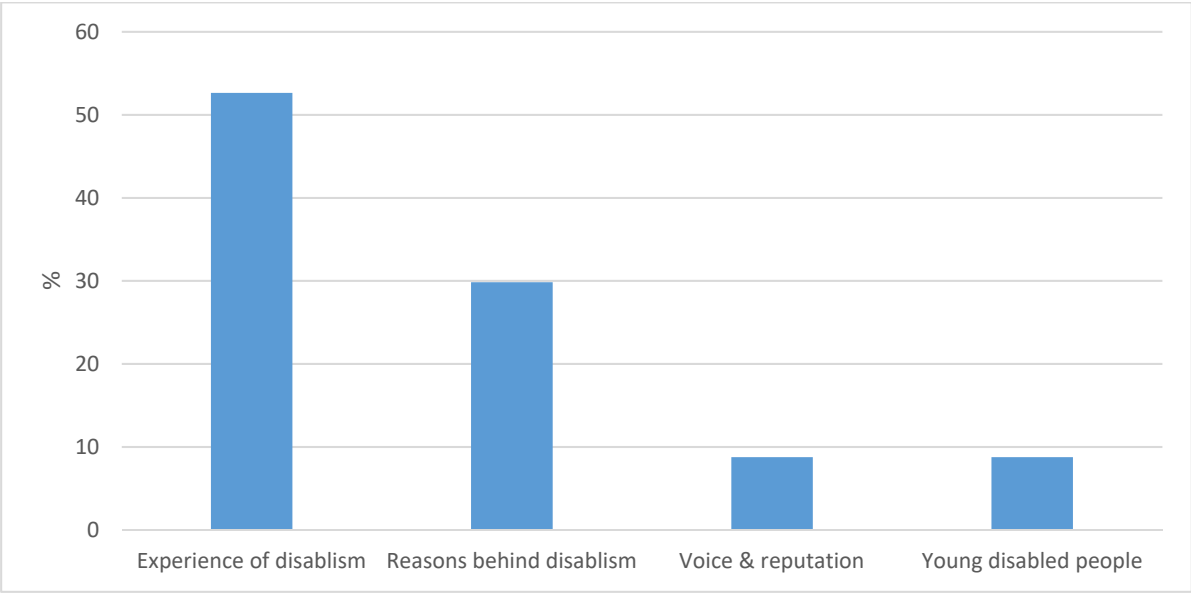
The top talking points of the day were: experiences of disablism; reasons behind disablism; voice & reputation; and being young & disabled. We examine each in turn after the graph with verbatim comments from participants in italics as illustrations.

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Figure 4.0 Top talking points of the day



2. Collectively Identifying The Problems

2.1 The Launch Event

Throughout the day participants talked about the daily experience of disablism from non-disabled people in all of its guises, for example:

The absolute daily level of low level discrimination that we get ... the out and out prejudice ...

People went so far as to say they there was a: hostile environment towards people with disabilities, which was influenced by the media and government. However, it was also noted that: two thirds of British people admit they feel uncomfortable talking to disabled people and go out of their way to actually not have to be in the same room or encounter anyone with disabilities.

An example of every day disablism was given by one participant, using the common response from nondisabled people when a disabled person refuses assistance:

How many times have you heard the really sarcastic voice said, "well sorry for trying to help you".

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2.2 Reasons Behind Disablism

There were many reasons given for disablism and all its forms, from ineffective legislation, negative stereotyping in the press, lack of role models, general perceptions of disability and low expectations. For example:

... careers adviser said there was no point in applying for university because the best job I could ever hope for was answering phones.

... films feature uplifting and heart-warming and stories about pity of the disabled person, but they're not allowed to be involved in the writing or acting or directing behind the scenes.

... I'm still dealing with cases of disabled children who are excluded from education ... the Academies Bill allows academies to refuse to take disabled children.

One of the key reasons for behind disablism was the non-adherence and an absence of enforcement of government guidance in the way of making reasonable adjustments to professional and public environments. It was pointed out that where businesses/organisations do make adequate adaptations to their physical environments, this should not be celebrated as them doing a good job, but just something which is standard. Currently this is not done and connected to other areas. This provides an overall backdrop of inaccessible environments, non-supportive government policy, and an attitude of benevolence when installing minimum access requirements.

2.3 Voice & Profile

The issue of voice was a thread throughout the day with the feeling from participants that disabled people were generally too quiet, too hidden and underrepresented. It was also discussed that not only is representation of disabled people generally quite poor in the media, there are very few inspirational characters to provide role modelling for adults or children. For example, Tanni Grey Thompson commented:

I get really excited when I see a disabled person on TV

Another participant said:

We're just invisible, you never see us, unless it's about benefits or on public picture in the press, you can forget about being inspired by disabled figures on the television!

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It was noted that members of our own community had a role to play in this:

We need to share the stories that we need to help people to empathise with us, that we're more than just benefits cases, or problems or difficulties.

There were several comments about tokenism, involving a disabled person but not really involving them as others were and about how tiring this was.

2.4 Being Young & Disabled

Although this was not a major focus of discussion, young people were mentioned at regular points throughout the day. It was felt that young disabled people were particular in need of education, inspiration and involvement. For example, one participant said:

We have to educate younger disable people who some of the young disable people I spoke to recently because we have a vaguely accessible toilet and vaguely accessible train system think we're done, and we're so not done.

Another participant talked about the absence of role models outside of Paralympians and also the absence of choices available to non-sporty disabled children.

3. The Response

During the day, as well as sharing experiences, we also shared proposals for improvements to counteract the disabling world we find ourselves in. We can generally group these into three areas of: voice, profile & influence; employment; and physical adaptations as shown the graph below.

One member succinctly encapsulated a general feeling amongst participants:

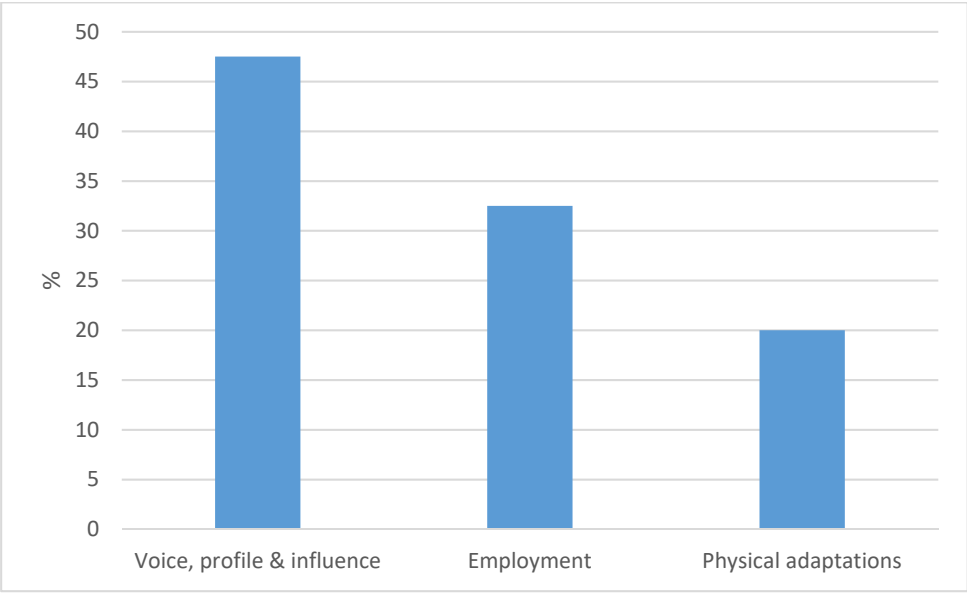
We want to get to a position where we're not disabled people, or a minority group that's just bolted on, we are part of the people and part of the normal of human life and experience and we're there from the beginning ... we're not something that is thought as an afterthought.

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Figure 5. Top propositions for action



3.1 Voice, Profile & Influence

The number one proposition was increasing the profile and the influence of disabled people, for example:

We need to shout, we need to listen, and we need to speak.

The way we need to do this was also discussed, with one participant urging us to:

We need people to shout at the edges, we need people to own that social media space and use it positively but use it. We need people to listen to the arguments and that are used against us and then tear them apart and we need people to talk to us.

It was felt that we should work in partnership with other organisations to increase our voice and influence. There was also a strong sense of coproduction, and the need for our own community to lead the process of change. For example, one participant said:

Disabled person needs to be the running and pushing and making suggestions.

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Another participant went into some detail:

There are incredible disabled equality strategists that we should be using to put that into place, and they can support other people, but it should be nothing about us without us. We need disabled people in positions of power and that's not a tokenistic box ticking exercise, it is people who are in positions to creatively and fundamentally drive the narrative for change. And this means being salaried, in leadership positions, being on boards, but this means that we need to have the skills to get us into those positions. So, it is about training. Not tick box training, it is about career paths and progressions and it is building that into organisations at every level. It is about recognising access needs and meeting them. It is recognising that learning disabled people may need a support worker with them to do that role, but they can and what they come out with and what we have together will be incredible.

The same participant continued:

It is about bringing people along with you, if you have an opportunity, it is opening it up to more voices at every possible time and bringing them on board with you. It's finding allies.

3.2 Employment

Employment was also a consistent theme throughout the day, with discussions focusing on the inequity of opportunity and general difficulties experienced by disabled people trying to find work. One participant illustrated:

The world of work tends to be a battle ground for people with disabilities.

An example of this was offered by another:

... Making a case for what you need can be more stressful than just carrying on putting up with things that weren't very good in the first place.

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There were consistent calls for employers to make adequate adaptations to enable participation. For example, one participant said:

Employers need to make real proper adjustments, not just pay lip service. So, we had the example from [name] who needed a quieter workspace so was put in a cupboard and continued to be used as a cupboard.

There were a number of reports explaining how difficult it can be at work and when you are there, you have no energy to do anything else other than your job. This was the reason behind a lack of disability activism in the workplace, as disabled employees are often unable to work beyond the expected hours. It was suggested that disabled people could be provided with the capacity to become involved in additional activities at work.

The North East area was felt to be particularly difficult for disabled job seekers as a result of high general unemployment rate. Before COVID-19, unemployment was three times the national average.

Tanni Grey Thompson brought the issue of the disabled pay gap which was recognised as an issue which was ignored. However it was pointed out, the difficulty of getting any parity with nondisabled people's employment and that a gender pay gap can only be aspirational.

3.3 Physical Adaptions

Access and the physical environment remains a perennial top priority issue with the majority of disabled people. Environments which could be made accessible, but remain not so, are a particular bugbear of ours. However this does demonstrate that if there was a concerted effort, a great number of environments could be opened up to disabled people. In the North East, with a higher proportion of disabled people than other areas across the country (one in four people in the North East are disabled), large numbers of people would benefit from this. Another member commented that disabled people have been arguing for more flexible homeworking for years, to no real affect. COVID-19 happens and non-disabled politicians implement homeworking for all in a matter of weeks. The flip side of this, changes to make services and environment equal take too long. Our patron pointed out:

I was promised in January first this year all trains would be accessible I remember being excited [but] a nondisabled person involved in train companies told me, that you know Tanni you just need to be a bit patient

One member succinctly put it:

I don't need help I just need access

There were a number of discussion points around improving lighting systems in public areas.

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4. COVID-19

Bearing in mind the seriousness of COVID-19 and its disproportionate impact on the disabled community, it is essential that we continue to monitor the situation. During the event, COVID-19 and its impact on disabled people was discussed, starting with the worrying statistic that disabled people are 11 times more likely to die from COVID-19 than a non-disabled person. There were a number of benefits reported, particularly the normalisation of sedentary/self-isolated living. Working from home was widely welcomed as it put disabled employees on an even footing with nondisabled employees for the first time. An additional impact worthy of note is a reduction in the number of disabling encounters, for example, our patron said:

For me I've had six months I haven't had any discrimination at all, it is amazing.

This holiday from disablism has had a positive impact on our self-worth and self-image as we are not constantly being reminded of our impairments` and the effects on us.`

However, post lockdown, there are real concerns about access and facilities needed by disabled people that are being used for social distancing or other public health purposes. One participant said:

... like the toilets that were closed and if you're getting on the bus, they taped up the front seats so you have to battle your way down the bus to get a seat and everything like that.

DIFFERENCE CIO

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES

For the year ended 31 December 2020

I report on the financial statements of Difference CIO for the year ended 31 December 2020, which are set out on pages 26 to 34.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Charities Act") and that an independent examination is needed.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act), and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no material matters have come to my attention which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a "true and fair" view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

However, not all future events or conditions can be predicted. The COVID-19 viral pandemic is one of the most significant economic events for the UK with unprecedented levels of uncertainty of outcomes. It is therefore difficult to evaluate all of the potential implications on the charitable company's trade, customers, suppliers and wider economy. The trustees' view on the impact of COVID-19 is disclosed in the accounting policies note.

I have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Jim Dodds
Connected Voice Business Services
Higham House
Higham Place
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE1 8AF
Date: 07 July 2021



DIFFERENCE CIO

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
Income from:					
Charitable activities					
Grants and contracts	6	-	68,206	68,206	21,404
Other trading activities	7	1,771	-	1,771	600
Total income		1,771	68,206	69,978	22,004
Expenditure on:					
Charitable activities					
Operation of the charity	8	1,771	56,042	57,814	17,665
Total expenditure		1,771	56,042	57,814	17,665
Net income/(expenditure) and net movement of funds		-	12,164	12,164	4,339
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward		-	4,327	4,327	(12)
Total funds carried forward		-	16,491	16,491	4,327

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities

The notes on pages 28 to 34 form an integral part of these accounts.

DIFFERENCE CIO

Charity Number 1170789

BALANCE SHEET

As at 31 December 2020

	Notes	£	Total 2020 £	£	Total 2019 £
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	15		1,357		952
Total fixed assets			1,357		952
Current assets					
Debtors	16	247		587	
Cash at bank and in hand	17	20,772		4,702	
Total current assets		21,019		5,289	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	18	(5,885)		(1,914)	
Net current assets			15,134		3,375
Total net assets or liabilities			16,491		4,327
Funds of the charity					
Unrestricted income funds			-		-
Restricted income funds			16,491		4,327
Total funds			16,491		4,327

The notes on pages 28 to 34 form an integral part of these accounts.

These financial statements were approved by the Board on:

06 July 2021

and are signed on its behalf by:

Caroline McDonald
Chair



DIFFERENCE CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

1 Accounting Policies

The principal accounting policies adopted, judgements and key sources of estimation uncertainty in the preparation of the financial statements are as follows:

2 Basis of accounting

2.1 Basis of preparation

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) – Charities SORP (FRS 102), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

Difference CIO meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102.

2.2 Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The charity reported total unrestricted funds at the year end of £nil has recently received funds of £9,000 and is currently seeking funds to employ a development worker.

The trustees are of the view that the immediate future of the charity for the next 12 to 18 months is secure and that on this basis the charity is a going concern.

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis. The Trustees have reviewed and considered relevant information, including the annual budget and future cash flows in making their assessment. In particular, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trustees have revised their forecasts to take into account the impact on the business of possible scenarios brought on by the impact of COVID-19, alongside the measures that they can take to mitigate the impact. Based on these assessments, given the measures that could be undertaken to mitigate the current adverse conditions, and the current resources available, the Trustees have concluded that they can continue to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the annual report and accounts.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has put many strains on all businesses. It should be noted that the charity is still able to meet its obligations to fulfilling its contracts with funders, who have been flexible about the timescale for delivery.

3 Income

3.1 Recognition of income

Income is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the resources, any performance conditions attached to the item(s) of income have been met, it is more likely than not that the resources will be received and the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

3.2 Offsetting

There has been no offsetting of assets and liabilities, or income and expenses, unless required or permitted by FRS102 SORP or FRS102.

3.3 Grants and donations

Income from government and other grants, whether 'capital' grants or 'revenue' grants, is recognised when the charity has entitlement to the funds, any performance conditions attached to the grants have been met, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount can be measured reliably and is not deferred.

Income received in advance of the provision of a specified service is deferred until the criteria of income recognition are met.

DIFFERENCE CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

3.4 Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are available to spend on activities that further any of the purposes of the charity. Designated funds are unrestricted funds of the charity which the trustees have decided at their discretion to set aside to use for a specific purpose. Restricted funds are donations which the donor has specified are to be solely used for particular areas of the charity's work or for specific projects being undertaken by the charity.

4 Expenditure and liabilities

4.1 Liability recognition

Liabilities are recognised when it is more likely than not that there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to pay out resources and the amount of the obligation can be measured with reasonable certainty.

4.2 Charitable activities

Expenditure on charitable activities includes the costs of represent disabled people in the North East of England and works to bring about significant and lasting social change and other activities undertaken to further the purposes of the charity and their associated support costs.

4.3 Governance and support costs

Support costs have been allocated between governance cost and other support. Governance costs comprise all costs involving public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice.

Support costs are those functions that assist the work of the charity but do not directly undertake charitable activities. Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity cost categories on a basis consistent with the use of resources.

4.4 Irrecoverable VAT

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

4.5 Creditors

The charity has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts.

4.6 Provision for liabilities

A liability is measured on recognition at its historical cost and then subsequently measured at the best estimate of the amount required to settle the obligation at the reporting date.

5 Assets

5.1 Tangible fixed assets for use by the charity

Individual fixed assets costing £250 or more are capitalised at cost and are depreciated over their estimated useful economic lives on a straight line basis, the charity does not currently have any tangible fixed assets:

Office and computer equipment	25%	Straight line
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DIFFERENCE CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

Analysis of income

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
6 Charitable activities				
<u>Income from grants</u>				
Community Foundation County Durham	-	7,714	7,714	5,000
DWP Access to Work	-	2,749	2,749	-
The National Lottery	-	57,743	57,743	16,404
	<u>-</u>	<u>68,206</u>	<u>68,206</u>	<u>21,404</u>
7 Other trading activities				
Employment allowance	1,771	-	1,771	600
	<u>1,771</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,771</u>	<u>600</u>

Income was £69,978 (2019: £22,004) of which £1,771 was unrestricted or designated (2019: £600) and £68,206 was restricted (2019: £21,404)

Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
8 Charitable activities				
<u>Direct costs</u>				
Staff salaries	1,771	21,847	23,618	9,687
Subcontract project staff salaries	-	23,500	23,500	4,500
Staff travel	-	64	64	327
Staff other costs	-	1,024	1,024	540
Training	-	3,990	3,990	-
Launch event	-	630	630	1,350
Room hire	-	-	-	72
<u>Support costs</u>				
Website development	-	1,119	1,119	-
Printing, postage and stationary	-	286	286	-
Insurance	-	604	604	223
Office costs	-	128	128	-
Telephone	-	733	733	280
Professional fees	-	1,231	1,231	119
Depreciation	-	419	419	123
Expenditure carried forward	<u>1,771</u>	<u>55,574</u>	<u>57,346</u>	<u>17,221</u>

DIFFERENCE CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £	Total 2019 £
8 Charitable activities (continued)				
<i>Expenditure brought forward</i>	1,771	55,574	57,346	17,221
<u>Governance costs</u>				
Independent examiner's fees for reporting on the accounts	-	468	468	444
	<u>1,771</u>	<u>56,042</u>	<u>57,814</u>	<u>17,665</u>

Expenditure on charitable activities was £57,814 (2019: £17,665) of which £1,771 was unrestricted or designated (2019: £588) and £56,042 was restricted (2019: £17,077)

9 Fees for examination of the accounts

	2020 £	2019 £
Independent examiner's fees for reporting on the accounts	468	444
Other accountancy services paid to the examiner	475	119
	<u>943</u>	<u>563</u>

10 Analysis of staff costs and the cost of key management personnel

	2020 £	2019 £
Salaries and wages	20,846	8,654
Social security costs	1,771	600
Pension costs (defined contribution pension plan)	1,002	433
	<u>23,619</u>	<u>9,687</u>

No employee received remuneration above £60,000 (2019: nil)

The key management personnel of the charity, comprise the trustees and the charity development consultant. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £23,500 (2019: £4,500).

11 Staff numbers

The average monthly head count was 1 employed staff (2019: 0.5) and 1 subcontracted staff (2019: 1) and the average monthly number of full-time equivalent employees during the year were as follows:

	2020 Number	2019 Number
The parts of the charity in which the employee's work		
Charitable activities	2.0	1.5
	<u>2.0</u>	<u>1.5</u>

DIFFERENCE CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

12 Transactions with trustees

None of the trustees have been paid any remuneration or received any other benefits from an employment with their charity or a related entity.

Trustees' expenses

No trustee expenses have been incurred in the year.

Transaction(s) with related parties

The following detail the related party transactions in the reporting period.

During the year the company paid a partner of a trustee of the charity amounting to £1,119 (2019: £nil) for web development on a normal commercial basis, there was no outstanding balance as at 31 December 2020.

13 Defined contribution pension scheme

The charitable company contributes to individual private staff pension schemes. The employer's pension costs represent contributions payable by the charity.

14 Corporation Taxation

The charity is exempt from tax on income and gains falling within section 505 of the Taxes Act 1988 or section 252 of the Taxation of Chargeable Gains Act 1992 to the extent that these are applied to its charitable objectives.

15 Tangible fixed assets

Cost

Balance brought forward

Additions

Disposals

Balance carried forward

Depreciation

Basis

Rate

Balance brought forward

Depreciation charge for year

Disposals

Balance carried forward

Net book value

Brought forward

Carried forward

	Office and computer equipment £	Total £
	1,075	1,075
	824	824
	-	-
	1,899	1,899
	SL	
	25%	
	123	123
	419	419
	-	-
	542	542
	952	952
	1,357	1,357

DIFFERENCE CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

16 Debtors and prepayments (receivable within 1 year)

	2020 £	2019 £
Prepayments	247	312
Holding account	-	275
	247	587

17 Cash at bank and in hand

	2020 £	2019 £
Cash at bank and in hand	20,772	4,702
	20,772	4,702

18 Creditors and accruals (payable within 1 year)

	2020 £	2019 £
Trade creditors	168	1,470
Pension	225	-
Accruals		
Independent examination of accounts	468	444
Holding account	5,025	-
	5,885	1,914

19 Events after the end of the reporting period

No events (not requiring adjustment to the accounts) have occurred after the end of the reporting period but before the accounts are authorised which relate to conditions that arose after the end of the reporting period.

20 Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

Year ending 31 December 2020

	Fund balances brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
Unrestricted funds					
General unrestricted fund	-	1,771	(1,771)	-	-
Totals	-	1,771	(1,771)	-	-

DIFFERENCE CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

20 Analysis of charitable funds (continued)

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

Year ending 31 December 2019

	Fund balances brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
Unrestricted funds					
General unrestricted fund	(12)	600	(588)	-	-
Totals	(12)	600	(588)	-	-

Purpose of unrestricted funds

General unrestricted fund The 'free reserves' of the charity

Analysis of movement in restricted funds

Year ending 31 December 2020

	Fund balances brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery	(205)	57,743	(43,379)	-	14,159
Community Foundation County Durham	4,532	7,714	(10,350)	-	1,896
DWP Access to Work	-	2,749	(2,314)	-	435
Totals	4,327	68,206	(56,043)	-	16,490

Year ending 31 December 2019

	Fund balances brought forward £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Fund balances carried forward £
Restricted funds					
The National Lottery	-	16,404	(16,609)	-	(205)
Community Foundation County Durham	-	5,000	(468)	-	4,532
Totals	-	21,404	(17,077)	-	4,327

Purpose of restricted funds

Restricted funds represent income resources used for a specific purpose within the charity as identified by the donor.

The National Lottery	Protect and promote the rights of disabled people in the North East of the country.
Community Foundation County Durham	To pay for capacity building

DIFFERENCE CIO

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

For the year ended 31 December 2020

21 Capital commitments

As at 31 December 2020, the charity had no capital commitments (2019 -£nil)

22 Guarantee

There have been no guarantees given by the charity at 31 December 2020.

23 Debt

There is no debt outstanding which is owed by the charity and which is secured by an excess charge on any of the assets of the charity at 31 December 2020.

24 Governing document

The organisation is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation - Foundation registered on 16 December 2016 as a body corporate under part 11 of the Charities Act 2011.

25 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	1,357	1,357
Cash at bank and in hand	-	20,772	20,772
Other net current assets/(liabilities)	-	(5,638)	(5,638)
	-	16,491	16,491

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2019 £
Tangible fixed assets	-	952	952
Cash at bank and in hand	-	4,702	4,702
Other net current assets/(liabilities)	-	(1,327)	(1,327)
	-	4,327	4,327