

Disability Awareness Day



Sunday 17th July 2022

Impact Report



www.disabilityawarenessday.org.uk

Disability Awareness Day 2022 (DAD 2022)

Background

Disability Awareness Day (DAD) is recognised as the world's largest 'not for profit' voluntary-led disability exhibition, held annually since 1992 in a huge tented village within the grounds of Walton Hall Gardens in Warrington. DAD is organised by Warrington Disability Partnership, a user led charity.

DAD Warrington has inspired other voluntary organisations to hold DAD events in towns and cities across the UK and as far afield as Cameroon, India, Uganda, Gibraltar, Denmark, Sweden, Egypt and Thailand.

DAD is a pan-disability event which promotes a can do culture focusing on what disabled people can do throughout life and work.

The show has three main aims:

1. To highlight what statutory, private or voluntary services are available to enable disabled people to stay independent.
2. To promote equipment and aids that could maintain or improve independence, not just what is offered by statutory service providers, we want everyone to see the best and/or latest designs
3. To provide an opportunity to showcase what disabled people can do, in the field of Sport, Arts and Entertainment

As well as fulfilling all these aims, every year the show also gives everyone who comes a good day out, filled with interest, fun and entertainment! Visitors to the show will find over 200 exhibitors, equipment suppliers, transport, holidays, leisure, employment, support groups and services. Plus a Sports Zone with free have-a-go events, a Performing Arts Marquee, two Arts and Crafts Marquees, Silent disco, Centre Arena and family entertainment. Many visitors report feeling inspired by what they find at DAD.

Business Case for DAD

Over 14 million disabled people and nearly as many carers living in the UK today, over 3 million of each living here in the North West. Eighty three per cent of disabled people acquire their disability during their working life; the majority are ill prepared for the life changing consequences, many are left feeling worthless, anxious and depressed about what the future holds for them and their families.

Although the internet is awash with information, advice and guidance about conditions and services, it is peer-to-peer support, supplied mainly by charities and community groups, which can make a meaningful difference.

DAD Facts

- Over 600,000 people have attended DAD events here in Warrington, and tens of thousands elsewhere
- Over £1million has been raised for other charities involved in Disability Awareness Day events

DAD 2022

Thanks to the ongoing support from our joint principal sponsors Expanse Learning and United Utilities, we were able to launch this year's 31st anniversary DAD at the start of the year.

During the planning stages, we became acutely aware of the ongoing adverse effects that COVID-19 Pandemic was still having on countless charities and community groups that provide valuable support to disabled people. Many were unable to operate fully due to lack of volunteers and funding. With the financial assistance from the Cheshire Community Foundation and the Steve Morgan Foundation, we were able to offer free exhibition stands to charities and community groups operating in Warrington, Cheshire and Merseyside.

Against a backdrop of soaring price increases applied by almost all of our suppliers, with the support of all our sponsors we were able to put on a great programme of events leading up to this year's DAD on Sunday 17th July.

Mobility and Independent Living suppliers from across the UK were invited to exhibit at this year's main event, but some regulars reluctantly had to refuse as they continue to struggle, as demand is outstripping supplies. That said the businesses that did attend, some travelling from Newcastle, Leeds and Wales, reported having a great day, resulting in many enquiries.

Health, social care, education, employment and training providers were well represented, with many reporting that it was their first time since the start of the pandemic that they had attended a community event.

Lord-Lieutenant of Cheshire Lady Alexis Redmond MBE DL and her husband Sir Philip Redmond CBE, the man behind TV greats Brookside, Grange Hill and Hollyoaks, were our special guests along with the Mayor of Warrington Councillor Jean Flaherty and her consort and husband Terry.

The week of complimentary activities, that included:

- Comedy and Curry Night, which raised funds for the 2022 Physical Disability Rugby League World Cup being held in Warrington in November
- Summertime Special Variety Evening, with performances from ELLA Together and Creating Adventures
- Carers Wellbeing Day, organised by Warrington and Halton Carers Centres
- Party in the Park for disabled children, young disabled people and young carers, organised by Warrington Disability Partnership, Warrington Youth Zone, Warrington Wolves Foundation, WIRED Young Carers
- Bingo Bedlam, fundraiser for Warrington Disability Partnership.

Sadly, two events were cancelled due to COVID.

Overall, our organising team are very happy with how it went; DAD week events were successful in showcasing the talents of dozens of disabled performers, raising valuable funds and awareness of the support available to adult and young carer, in addition to providing a hugely successful party in the park event.

Sadly, the extreme weather conditions did affect visitor numbers at Sunday's main event, with nearly 17,000 visitors, compared with over 24,000 in pre-pandemic years. All exhibitors, entertainers and visitors provided positive feedback on the day and week events.

Impact of DAD 2022

DAD 2022 involved over 1,100 volunteers:

- 112 charities and community groups involved
- 109 charities and community groups were amongst nearly 200 exhibitors
- With an average of 4 volunteers per exhibitor, over 400 volunteers promoted their services
- Over 600 volunteers were involved in performing in the Arts Marquee, Sports Zone and Main Arena
- Over 100 volunteers stewards and support workers, aptly named DAD's Army.

People always ask me about my memorable moments from DAD, this year I have two:

1. I saw a young disabled lad, a full-time wheelchair user, playing with the hand-control display on BAS (NW) stand, with great delight he turned to his mum saying, look mum, I will be able to drive when I'm old enough
2. I saw a middle-aged deaf guy who was using a mobility scooter turn to his interpreter, who was supplied by DAD, having a discussion with a woman on an exhibition stand.

Both reminded me that this is what DAD is about, inclusion, inspiration, information, advice and guidance.

As well as promoting their services, exhibitors were able to network with other organisations, and charities and community groups were able to raise much-needed funds through various fundraising activities.

More importantly, thousands of disabled people and their families are now better informed about services and products that can aid mobility and independent living. Visitors were entertained by acts in the Performing Arts Marquee and Main Arena, and others left inspired after participating in activities in the Sports Zone.

The contact details of all exhibitors are available for the next 12 months on the DAD website. They were included in 8,000 48-page full-colour event programme that were handed out free on the day, which also doubles up as a 2022 resource directory.

During the VIP Reception, both Expanse Learning and United Utilities confirmed their continued support as joint principal sponsors for DAD 2023 that will be held on Sunday 16th July.

Finally, a huge thank you for your continued support, and that of all our members of DAD's Army.

Kind regards.

Dave Thompson DAD Event Co-ordinator

Photos from DAD 2022





A Date for Your Diary: DAD 2023 – Sunday 16th July