



Annual Report Summary

April 2009

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Introduction

SAIF aims to improve the accessibility of information to disabled people, carers and everyone who needs it. SAIF supports the right of disabled people to have access to information directly and in their preferred format.

SAIF was set up as a result of the *Enabling Information* report, published by the Scottish Office in 1995. SAIF is funded by the Scottish Government, employs two part-time project workers, and is based in the Scottish Consumer Council (SCC). The SAIF advisory body is made up of 21 people drawn from disability-led organisations and information providers.

SAIF has:

- Produced the SAIF Standards for Disability Information and Advice Provision in Scotland, and a range of supplements to that publication.
- Established Update, the national disability information service.

SAIF is:

- Supporting and developing the SAIF Standards.
- Working with local authorities and others to encourage the development of accessible information policies and practices.
- Producing guidance material to promote accessible information and accessible ecommunication.
- Providing support and training to organisations and agencies interested in improving the accessibility of its information services.
- Acting as an advisory body to the Scottish Government.

Significant issues and developments in 2008

Funding

Our annual Section 10 funding was added to by the then Scottish Consumer Council, now Consumer Focus Scotland. In addition we had some credit at our printers.

Most of the additional funding went into our work plan and it has enabled us to do some things which at the last annual review we agreed would not be possible. The main benefits have been that we have been able to go ahead with the redesign of the website, hold our two-day annual review and produce more publications than expected.

Staffing

Susan returned from maternity leave in August. Joanne was funded by the SCC/Consumer Focus to cover while Susan was off. Joanne was funded full-time until September, and then for another year part-time.

Research

Joanne has been asked to carry out work on behalf of both SAIF and Consumer Focus, gathering the views of service providers on accessible information, the barriers, the progress made, and their awareness of SAIF.

This work is to enable Joanne ultimately to produce a report which will help SAIF consider its next steps and which will make a case for future funding, including whether funding could come from other sources. Joanne made a presentation at the annual review on her progress and even at this early stage some follow-up steps were agreed.

New SAIF members

In November and December we successfully invited people to apply to fill the three vacancies that had arisen on SAIF.

Ben Forsyth (SAIF chair) and Jean Dunlop (vice-chair) interviewed and subsequently appointed Bobby Park, Paul Ralph and Liz Urbanczyk. The annual review was their first SAIF meeting and they were very welcome.

- Bobby is an access consultant and disability equality trainer and is involved in a number of voluntary organisations in the west of Scotland.

- Paul is co-director of With People, an organisation which specialises in development opportunities for disabled people. Paul is an information technology specialist, trainer and author.
- Liz works for Clackmannanshire Council Psychological Service organising support for young disabled people as they move into adulthood and in to further education, training, employment or day services.

New website

The redesign and further development of our website was clearly identified last year as a priority which we thought we couldn't afford. SCC/Consumer Focus funding has made it possible for us to proceed.

Following a lot of work by Joanne, Susan and the Ecommunication Working Group, and a tendering and interview process, Jim Byrne was appointed to carry out the work and it is now at an advanced stage. There was a presentation of the new website at the annual review.

Funding limitations forced us to end the contract in May 2008 of our long-time website consultant Eva Bolander. Most of the work Eva did for us was taken on initially by Joanne and then by Susan on her return from maternity leave, and there has been help from Consumer Focus staff. All of this will become much easier with the new website and we will get comprehensive usage statistics.

Training

The development of SAIF training continued, an initiative which began in 2006. Three e-communication training events were delivered in May and June at Strathclyde University for all organisations and in-house training was delivered to NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde. However, most work was done in planning for 2009, examining the charging policy and developing an overall strategy.

Promotional materials have now been sent out and we have a training programme from March until November in Glasgow, Edinburgh and Aberdeen. We are also dealing with many enquiries, in particular from the health sector, about other training which we might deliver. This followed the targeted distribution of our promotional material *Making NHS Information Accessible* which we sent out earlier in 2008.

The development and organisation of the training has been a considerable amount of work for the Local Strategies Working Group and Jean Alcock in particular.

Social model publication

The development of the Social Model publication took time, with much work being done by the author Grant Carson, the proof reader Mary Evans, the additional proof reader Sandra Wilson and the Standards Working Group. Getting the content right and as accessible as possible needed particular attention to detail.

For the first time we are charging for a SAIF publication. It will be published by the Stationery Office and distributed through specialist and general retail outlets, many of which will be web based. It is an attempt to reach new audiences rather than make money. We have particular targets such as students and policy makers, and obviously if it really takes off then we could make some money as well. SAIF will also have complimentary copies to give away to our usual supporters and people on our database.

Easy-to understand A5 standards booklet

The development, publishing and initial distribution of the easy-to-understand standards booklet *Getting Information and Advice* was completed. Special thanks go to Michael Evans for producing the graphics for us and to FAIR for getting user feedback prior to publication, and again to the Standards Working Group for steering the project from beginning to end.

Easy-to-understand publications often bring a wide variety of comments, positive and negative, and there was debate within SAIF about the merits of this publication. It is an indication of how this work is still at an early stage. However, it is something SAIF shows a lead on and we need to encourage the production of more easy-to-understand materials. The debates about the quality and the target audiences can run alongside that increase in products and awareness.

Our publication has received positive feedback and we have already used over half of the initial print run.

Posters

We increased the number of A4 accessible ecommunication posters with the production of *Making PowerPoint Accessible for the Web*. The series was sent out to everyone on our database with the more general A3 poster *Making Information Accessible*, making up a pack of six posters. During the year about 1000 packs were sent out.

Research projects follow-up

In 2007 the SCC funded research by independent consultants looking at:

- the progress of local authorities and health boards with accessible information
- quality assurance systems which might embrace SAIF standards
- if work similar to that of SAIF is being done in England and Europe.

Subsequently Joanne, with the help of SAIF working group members, produced SAIF reports based on the first two research reports listed above but made considerably more accessible. These were sent out to appropriate agencies and whilst any further progress on the quality assurance systems issue is slow it has helped us to increase our interaction again with local authorities, health boards and other health sector agencies in particular

Consumer Focus Scotland

In October 2008 the Scottish Consumer Council became Consumer Focus Scotland which also takes in the former Postwatch and Energywatch. This has been a wholesale re-organisation, re-structuring and re-branding organised mainly from London.

It has embraced all the day-to-day infrastructure changes to such things as finance systems and computer systems as well as resulting in staff changes and staff uncertainties going on around us. There has also been a move from the 2nd to 3rd floor at 100 Queen Street.

SAIF staff have done their best to minimise the effect on SAIF work and SAIF outputs and we have been successful in that, but nonetheless we have had to devote some time to dealing with the inevitable internal issues.

That inconvenience apart, we again have much to thank the Scottish Consumer Council and Consumer Focus Scotland for. The additional funding and the funding of Joanne's post for two years, coupled with their day-to-day staffing and resources support, has had a considerable impact on our ability to meet our targets. A letter to Martyn Evans, the

Director, acknowledging that support and thanking him and the organisation was sent by SAIF during the year. We are assured that Consumer Focus Scotland will continue to see SAIF as a valuable project delivering on issues which it regards as important.

Summary

As ever it has been a very busy year, and given the distraction of the re-organisation issues referred to above it has also been a very productive one. There are some work plan targets which have not been met but in almost all cases there is a good reason for that. Much other work has been done which was not anticipated in February 2008.

It is also worth noting the increase in the profile of SAIF over the last couple of years. This is due to the increase in contact with many organisations through the training, the research projects and promotional work generally. This has led to a corresponding increase in the amount of day-to-day enquiries to the office, consultations, ad hoc meetings and other events to which we are invited.

SAIF held all its scheduled meetings and the working groups met regularly throughout the year. Many SAIF members again put in considerable and valuable work at and between meetings, developing work plan objectives and ensuring that we meet our targets. In addition members frequently attended events or made presentations on behalf of SAIF.

Lionel Long

Lionel Long, formerly Chief Executive of UPDATE and a long time member and supporter of SAIF, passed away on 2nd April 2009 after an illness. He is much missed by all of us in both organisations and by those who worked with him.

SAIF currently has four key strategic objectives. Each has its own work plan. Three are managed by working groups of SAIF members and other invited people; the other is managed directly by SAIF staff and the SAIF advisory body.

Strategic objective 1

SAIF Standards for Disability Information and Advice Provision in Scotland

To develop, publish, promote and support the SAIF Standards for Disability Information and Advice Provision in Scotland, monitor implementation, and develop accreditation mechanisms.

To develop, publish, promote and support the Scottish Formats Resource.

Background

The *SAIF Standards* were initially developed in 1999. A first updated and revised edition was published in 2004 and a second in 2007. The development of the second revised edition of the *SAIF Standards* was initiated in 2005 because the Scottish Executive Sensory Impairment Action Steering Group asked us to amend the Standards to take account of recommendations it had received from DeafBlind Scotland, the RNIB and the Scottish Council on Deafness. As well as being written in plain language, the latest edition has been edited significantly, is now accompanied by a double CD containing both the Standards and an electronic checklist, and a BSL version on DVD.

A range of support publications has been produced to support the Standards. In 2007 SAIF published a new edition of the A5 Standards booklet aimed at disabled people themselves *Information and Advice Services – What disabled people should expect and receive*, and in 2008 a new edition of the easy-to-understand version, *Getting Information and Advice*, was published.

The A3 poster *Making Information Accessible* is another support publication and it summarises a list of the key Standards on one side of A3. First produced in 2003 over 5000 have so far been distributed, 1200 were sent out in 2008.

SAIF aims to get key elements of the *SAIF Standards* incorporated into mainstream quality assurance systems. This approach, along with initiatives such as the publication of the *Guide to User-Led Reviews* (second edition published in 2007), has replaced the development of any separate accreditation system for the Standards. SAIF agreed separate accreditation would be likely to marginalise rather than integrate the needs, rights and aspirations of disabled people.

SAIF commissioned and supervised a consultant to develop the first formats directory and it was published in early 2001 on CD Rom. In all 1500 copies were produced and distributed.

In 2002 SAIF agreed to work in partnership with UPDATE to develop, publish, promote, support and distribute a new edition. It was published in September 2003 as the *Scottish Formats Resource* and the lead format was print. In 2006 the second edition of the *Scottish Formats Resource* was published in CD Rom format.

Standards Work Plan 2008

In 2008 the key targets met were the:

- Development and publishing of the new edition of the A5 easy-to-understand booklet *Getting Information and Advice*.
- Commissioning of a second pilot user-led service review using the SAIF guide.
- Development of the publication *The Social Model of Disability* which will be published in the first quarter of 2009.

Standards Work Plan 2009

In 2009 the key targets are to:

- Promote and meet ongoing demand for the SAIF Standards and other publications.
- Continue to follow up on the 2007 research project and negotiate with key quality assurance systems for inclusion of SAIF Standards.
- Publish social model of disability booklet, and press launch.
- Update the *Scottish Formats Resource* on-line.

Strategic objective 2

Local Accessible Information Strategies

To encourage the development of accessible information strategies by local authorities.

Background

SAIF initially sent questionnaires to local authorities in 1998 and followed up with a well attended conference in 1999. Promotional materials were then produced, and the issue was embedded within the SAIF Standards. In 2001/02 SAIF again wrote to all local authorities and health boards linking *Same As You* to local strategies and issuing another questionnaire. The results were collated and reported to the Scottish Executive.

Whilst the issue of local strategies was key to the SAIF Standards, in 2004 SAIF produced a separate publication called *Barrier Free Information* to help promote the issue. It is written as a practical guide for local authorities and others on how to develop a local accessible information strategy.

Very successful seminars and training events were developed and delivered during 2006, 2007 and 2008. They have been well attended with very positive feedback. They have increased our contacts and profile considerably in local authorities, health boards and other public sector bodies. Following the development of a charging policy and a training strategy a new training programme is being promoted for 2009.

In 2008 promotional material was sent out to the health sector and as a result a number of health boards are considering in-house training and SAIF has established increased links with that important sector.

Research funded by the Scottish Consumer Council and carried out for us by George Street Research in 2007 provided us with an update on the progress being made local authorities and health boards in the development of accessible information strategies and policies. It also significantly increased our contacts in that sector. Our own report based on the research findings was sent to all the local authorities and health boards and has again further enhanced dialogue.

Local Strategies Work Plan 2008

In 2008 the key targets met were the:

- Development of a training strategy and promotion of a training programme for 2009.
- Delivery of training courses.
- Production and distribution of a report with recommendations following up on the 2007 SCC funded research project looking at the progress of local authorities in implementing local accessible information strategies.
- Increased promotion of SAIF in the health sector, promotional material produced resulting in significant new contacts and additional training requests.

Local Strategies Work Plan 2009

In 2009 the key targets are to:

- Deliver the training programme.
- Review the current training programme and develop one for 2010.
- Develop a charging policy and deliver in-house training on request.
- Continue promotion of accessible information and SAIF training within the NHS, develop existing partnerships and seek new ones.
- Produce guidance on easy-read materials – a definition, some principles and a range of good practice examples.

Strategic objective 3

Ecommunication

To develop the SAIF website and promote good practice in the use of IT as a means of improving the provision of accessible information.

Background

SAIF established a website in 1999 with the help of the Making Connections Unit at Caledonian University. From 2002 until May 2008 we funded a consultant to initially help rebuild and update the website. Ongoing development of its content and accessibility made it an excellent example of good practice.

Our development plan objective to redesign and modernise the website looked to be unachievable until the then Scottish Consumer Council, now Consumer Focus Scotland, contributed additional funding to our budget for 2008/09. This meant we could go ahead and the new website should be up and running early in 2009.

In 2002 SAIF published *Making Websites Accessible* and it proved very popular. A new updated version, *Making Ecommunication Accessible*, written by Jim Byrne and Eva Bolander, was published at the end of 2006. A series of A4 posters on key accessibility issues has also been produced which can stand alone or accompany the publication.

Use of the website has increased significantly. From around 3,500 per month in 2005 visits to the website have increased to an estimated 12,000 per month, and publication downloads often exceed the amount of hard copies being distributed.

Ecommunication Work Plan 2008

In 2008 the key targets met were the:

- Maintained the website as an example of good practice and kept it up-to-date.
- Commissioned the development of a new SAIF website.
- One more poster produced, *Making PowerPoint Accessible*, making a total of five A4 ecommunication posters to accompany A3 poster *Making Information Accessible* and publication *Making Ecommunication Accessible*.
- Produced regular e-newsletters.

Ecommunication Work Plan 2009

In 2009 the key targets are to:

- Launch the new website and develop a marketing strategy.
- Monitor and evaluate use of the new website.
- Review *Making Ecommunication Accessible* publication and consider supplement on social networking.
- Investigate social networking tools for accessibility and produce a report.
- Consider further A4 posters.
- Produce regular e-newsletters.

Strategic objective 4

Promotional Strategy

To promote accessible information within particular sectors and to raise the profile of accessible information and SAIF.

Background

This objective initially had two key parts – to target the private sector and key national agencies in the public sector. In 2004 we worked with Scottish Business in the Community and produced a broadsheet targeting the private sector. The issue of raising the profile of SAIF and accessible information generally was added following the evaluation of SAIF which was completed in 2003.

Promotional Strategy Work Plan 2008

In 2008 the key target met was:

- The ongoing liaison work by Ben Forsyth with the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and HMRC (Inland Revenue).

Promotional Strategy Work Plan 2009

In 2009 the key targets are to:

- Work with the SCC press officer to press launch and gain press coverage for SAIF publications and other initiatives.
- Consider further ways or products to raise the profile of SAIF.
- Continue liaison work with key national agencies, the DWP and HMRC.

Other SAIF Objectives

Feedback to the Scottish Government about matters to which accessible information is relevant.

Represent the interests of disabled people and carers in the promotion of accessible information & user-led services.

SAIF:

- responds regularly to Scottish Government and other consultations
- reports to the Scottish Government and Consumer Focus Scotland as requested or appropriate
- works in partnership with Update, Scotland's National Disability Information Service
- responds frequently to requests for assistance or guidance on accessible information issues
- makes presentations, runs workshops or has information stalls at national or local events
- meets regularly with key national organisations or local forums which are trying to push forward accessible information.

Current SAIF publications

- SAIF Standards for Disability Information and Advice Provision in Scotland** (Third edition 2007 with accompanying CD Rom)
(A4 82 pages)
- Making Ecommunication Accessible** (2006) (A4 64 pages)
- Guide To User-Led Reviews** (Second edition 2007) (A4 20 pages)
- Barrier Free Information – How To Develop Your Local Accessible Information Strategy – A practical Guide for Local Authorities and Others** (2004) (A4 16 pages)
- Scottish Formats Resource** (Second edition 2006, CD Rom)
- Making Information Accessible** (A3 poster, 2004)
- Making Websites Accessible** (A4 poster, 2006)
- Making Word Documents Accessible** (A4 poster, 2006)
- Making Email Accessible** (A4 poster, 2007)
- Making PowerPoint Accessible for the Web** (A4 poster, 2008)
- Converting Word documents into accessible PDFs**
(A4 poster, 2008)
- Information And Advice Services - What Disabled People Should Expect and Receive** (Second edition 2007) (A5 8 pages)
- Using An Information Or Advice Service** (2000)
(Easy-to-understand, incorporating graphics, A5 12 pages)
- The Social Model of Disability** (2009, A5 32 pages, cost £2)

SAIF members – 2009

Name	Work place and/or area based
David Armstrong	Student Loans Company
Claire Brennan	NHS Education for Scotland
Grant Carson	Disabled Persons Housing Service Centre for Inclusive Living in Glasgow
Jean Dunlop (vice-chair)	Various, Kilmarnock and national
Mary Evans	Dyslexia Scotland
Ben Forsyth (chair)	Welfare Rights Officer Midlothian Council, Edinburgh
Andy Groves	Grapevine Information Service, Centre for Independent Living, Edinburgh
Margaret Hurcombe	Family Advice & Information Resource, Edinburgh
Lucie McAnespie	Speech & language therapist, East and Midlothian
Linda Miller	Grampian Accessible Information Taskforce
Nicola Noon	Scottish Council on Deafness, Glasgow
Bobby Park	Various, Glasgow and national
Paul Ralph	With People Community Interest Company, Edinburgh
Robert Sneddon	Wigtownshire Coalition of Disabled People
Liz Urbanczyk	Clackmannanshire Council Psychological Service
Sandra Wilson	Fife Employability Network
Carolyn Wyper	NHS Ayrshire and Arran