

Products, news and views from Hertfordshire Action on Disability

## Wheel Appeal

Why HAD's Occupational Therapists are sold on our new range of mobility scooters...

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Buy online at: [www.hadnet.org.uk](http://www.hadnet.org.uk)

# Cuts mean we have a new opportunity

**Travelling south, approaching Harpenden on the Lower Luton Road, you are greeted by a sign saying: "Welcome to Hertfordshire - county of opportunity."**

This statement has taken on a somewhat different meaning for HAD since we learned that we will lose all our local government funding over the next two years.

Long term we have always intended to become self sufficient - to be a thriving and vibrant social enterprise is our aim. But the swift and severe nature of the cuts has left us all thinking about short-term survival rather than gradual growth. We are having to look long and hard at which of our services can continue and which will be forced to close.

Already we have had to take our mobile equipment lorry off the road. 'Ivanhoe' has been providing this vital

outreach service for 12 years. It is a regular visitor to town centres providing products, information and advice. The vehicle is old and too expensive to run. However, we intend to seek sponsorship to help get this service back on the road.

But there are opportunities for HAD, especially if we can implement them speedily. On-line selling is one of them and our Business Development Manager Linda Cudmore outlines her plans elsewhere in this issue.

All members of staff have been positive coming up with inventive ways of helping us generate extra income. For instance Equipment Centre Managers Chris Bellia and Jonathan Hill are looking to introduce an outreach assessment service. Both Chris and Jonathan are experienced Occupational Therapists and will be offering advice at sheltered housing venues soon.

The Equipment Centre is already offering a range of new exciting products - mobility scooters and rise and recline chairs among them.

The magazine has a new name and change of editorial direction. *Helping Hand* will focus more on our products and services. The magazine, like the whole organisation, needs be more commercially aware. We now have a new opportunity - to become a dynamic social enterprise. If we all pull together we can make it work.

**PAUL BISHOP  
EDITOR**

## Death of Sue Howie



**It is with deep regret that we announce the death of Sue Howie.**

Sue started as a volunteer with HAD almost 20 years ago and rapidly became the visionary and inspirational Manager of our Equipment Centre. Sue quickly changed the organisation's approach when she started to sell mobility equipment.

Sue also created the Centre's Multi-Sensory Room. The room, which we plan to re-name in her honour, is designed to stimulate and enthuse children with disabilities.

She also 'named' HAD's mobile equipment and advice vehicle Ivanhoe as Chief Executive Annabelle Waterfield remembers: "We both travelled down to Dorset to take a look at the vehicle and decided that we should try and come up with a name for the bright yellow lorry.

"As soon as Sue saw it she said 'it's name is Ivanhoe' in such a way that it was never in doubt.

"I will miss her dreadfully. When we got very old we always planned to live in an old house fitted with all the latest mobility adaptations so we could cruise around the place like two ageing characters from *Easy Rider*. Sadly, I'll have to do it on my own now."

The family connection continues at the Equipment Centre - Sue's daughter, Tanya, is a valuable member of the present team.



## BBC TV news focus on HAD

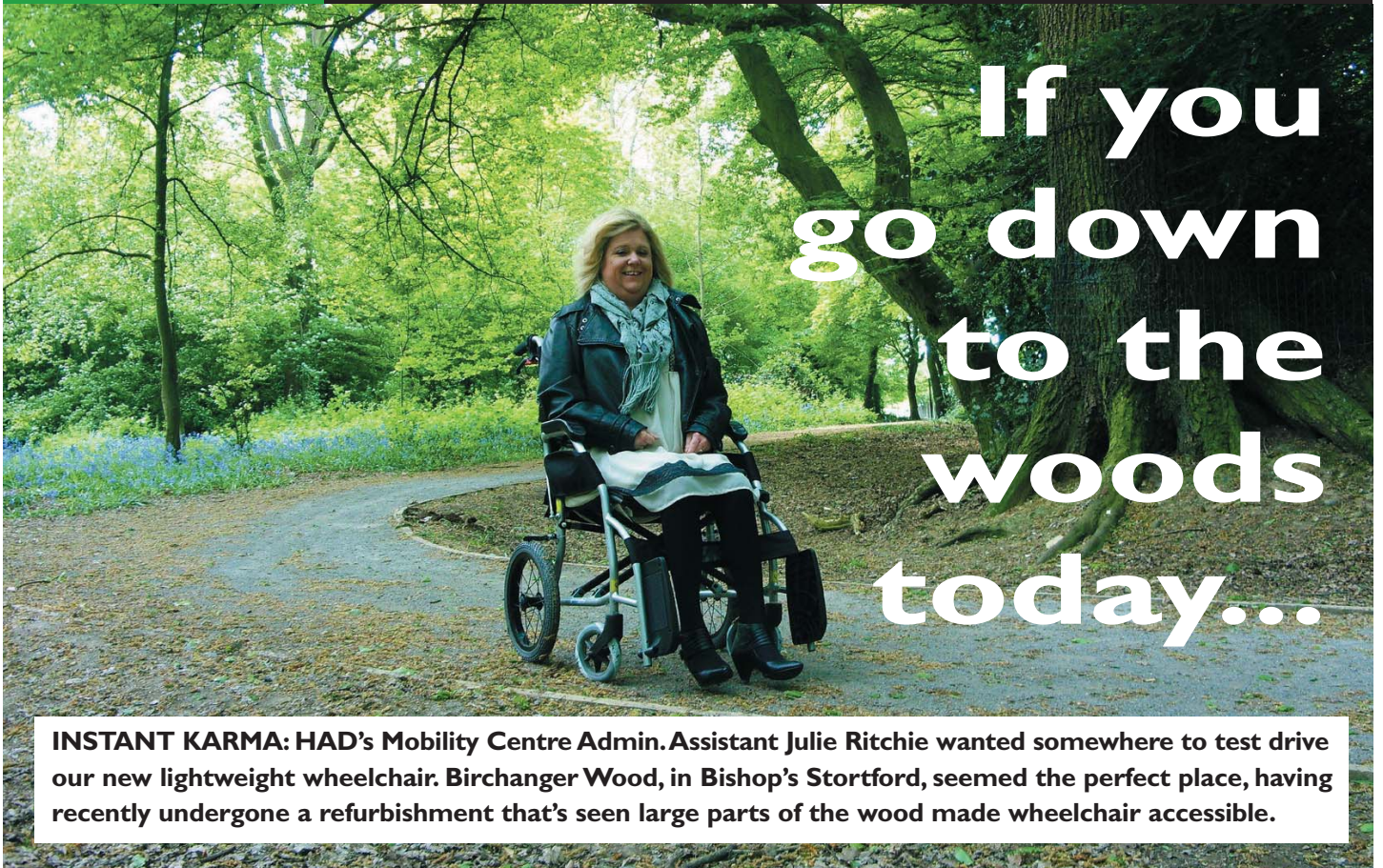
HAD has been at the centre of national TV news coverage.

Live broadcasts went out on BBC News 24 as part of their week-long coverage celebrating the 40th anniversary of the formation of the Disability Act and also World Disability Day.

HAD's Mobility Centre Admin. Assistant Julie Ritchie (pictured above,) and Volunteer Brett Waterman were both interviewed

'live' at the Woodside Centre by BBC news correspondent Nick Higham. They explained the importance of organisations like HAD, with Brett, who has cerebral palsy, highlighting how we had, not only given him a job, but 'a purpose in life too.'

HAD was recommended to the BBC by Assist-UK, a national organisation representing centres like ours.



**INSTANT KARMA:** HAD's Mobility Centre Admin. Assistant Julie Ritchie wanted somewhere to test drive our new lightweight wheelchair. Birchanger Wood, in Bishop's Stortford, seemed the perfect place, having recently undergone a refurbishment that's seen large parts of the wood made wheelchair accessible.

**Bishop Stortford's 69-acre Birchanger Wood has recently had a £50,000 makeover and now features a 1,400 metre accessible footpath.**

It's the first phase of a four-part plan funded by The Forestry Commission.

The path was officially opened at a special open day attended by Birchanger Wood Trustees together with volunteers and BBC gardening presenter Christine Walkden.

Also there was local wheelchair user David Richardson who has cerebral palsy: "The path is absolutely fabulous. Before now I've never been able to visit a wood before so to have one as beautiful as this on my doorstep is fantastic.

"It really makes a difference to be able to get out and about in the fresh air, especially now summer is here," he said.

Phase two will commence soon

## had product test

### Karma Ergo Lite wheelchair

Although the sales literature says this wheelchair is light it's only when you get to sit in it you appreciate just how light!

At 8.3 kg (17 lbs) this model is really manageable, both for user and carer alike.

It's comfortable, easy to assemble and tough too, coping well with Birchanger Wood's new Welsh granite surface.

Karma's patented S-Ergo seating system worked well but for tougher terrain I'd

purchase a HAD cushion for extra comfort.

The three-staged braking system was a big plus point for my carer for the day - Pat Forrest. He also said it was light to push, even with me in it!

The chair is also ideal for shopping and perfect for restaurants as it fits under tables which means you don't have to transfer to a seat.

**JULIE RITCHIE**

**Price: £444.00 inc VAT. Available now at HAD's Equipment Centre, call 01707 384260**

and will feature a 1,125 metre long circular route due for completion in early October.

Meanwhile young volunteers from the nearby Birchwood High School are helping build a pond as part of The Duke of Edinburgh Award

Scheme, under the supervision of the Wood's Warden Pat Forrest.

"It's so important to pass on what we have learnt about our woodlands to younger people. If we don't do this the wood has no future," Pat explained.

# The new life of Brian

**had** product test

**Shoprider Sovereign 4 scooter**

Since his stroke 15 years ago there are two massively important things in Brian Caro's life. Firstly the support and help of his wife Gill and secondly the independence afforded him by his mobility scooter.

Brian, from St Albans, bought a new scooter from HAD's Equipment Centre in April. He chose the four-wheel Shoprider Sovereign model. It's the first time he has gone for a four-wheel scooter, previously opting for three-wheelers. Brian, a former employee at British Aerospace in Hatfield and Stevenage, is an experienced scooter user and knows exactly what he wants from his machine. Here's his verdict:

"As I only have full use of my right side I needed more support and comfort when sitting on the scooter. That's why I chose to have a captain's seat fitted as an extra. Gill and I like to visit the woods near our home and frequently use gravel and mown grass

pathways, so solid tyres, preventing punctures, were a must too.

"Tanya Dickson and Cherie West at HAD's Equipment Centre showed me how set up the seat correctly and also helped me with the steering. This four-wheel scooter is generally more stable but is heavier to steer and has a much wider turning circle than I was used to. This is really noticeable in cramped spaces like supermarket aisles.

"Unfortunately my new scooter didn't come with stick clips as standard but HAD stock stick bags that fit perfectly.

"I'm getting on really well with the Sovereign 4. It fits neatly in the back of our Renault Kangoo wheel-

chair accessible vehicle and Gill and I have already visited several local parks. We also visit the shops in St Albans regularly and especially enjoy the market. As long as the rider is wary of fellow shoppers and takes care with dropped kerbs the scooter is fine.

"It's hard to believe that a few years ago I didn't want to use a mobility scooter. Now I couldn't imagine life without one. They give me so much independence and I'm so glad Gill persuaded me to get one!"

**Price: £960, ex VAT.**

**Extras: Captain's seat £150.**

**Solid tyres £120, plus £24 to fit.**

**Stick bag £31.**



**EXTRAS, EXTRAS:**  
Brian Caro decided to fit a few extras to his Shoprider Sovereign 4 scooter. Brian is pictured with wife Gill

**For more information or to book an assessment with one of our OTs call 01707 384260 or visit [www.hadnet.org.uk](http://www.hadnet.org.uk)**



● **Occupational Therapist Jeanette McDermott runs a weekly Seating Clinic at the Centre every Thursday. It is aimed at customers seeking suitable riser recline chairs, motorised scooters and wheelchairs and beds. Jeanette is pictured advising Eric Warner and Linda Murphy**

## Dedicated team of OTs point the way forward

**No department exemplifies HAD's core philosophy of professional, expert and friendly advice better than the Equipment Centre.**

For the past three years Occupational Therapists Chris Bellia and Jonathan Hill (above) have headed up the Centre's team with a hands-on approach to all aspects of the operation. They research, select and order stock and consult their team of trusted assessors. Most importantly they give customers accurate assessments ensuring they get the right products.

Here *Helping Hand* takes a look at Chris and Jonathan's careers and their hopes for the future.

### CHRIS BELLIA

Chris qualified as an Occupational Therapist in 1983, gaining the diploma of the College of Occupational Therapists.

Her career started in the NHS in a variety of settings. These included working on medical, surgical, geriatric and orthopaedic wards as part of a team at the Whittington Hospital in north London.

After getting married she moved

to the stroke unit at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage when these were a fairly new concept.

"I helped develop the OT input when cardiac rehab was introduced in North Herts," Chris explained.

"In the late 1980s I covered a colleague's maternity leave in social services. I decided that I preferred working in the community, visiting disabled people and their carers at home and assessing their needs."

Chris worked as a community OT in North Herts in 2001 and moved to HAD in June 2008.

"In the short time I have been here the pace of change has been remarkable," Chris continued.

"HAD continues to provide valuable services to disabled people and their carers in Herts and beyond.

"In the light of local government cuts this becomes more difficult but we remain determined to find new and innovative ways of providing services to help our customers which at the same time give us much needed revenue. These include offering home visit assessments and extending our range of equipment."

### JONATHAN HILL

Jonathan left school at 16 and spent 12 years working for Nat West.

Next came three years at Northampton College of Occupational Therapy gaining a 2.1 Bsc in OT.

He then worked for nearly three years in acute and community mental health before moving to social services for a further 12 years. Jonathan, who is married with two sons, joined HAD three years ago.

"Looking to the future I think HAD will expand the range of services we offer," Jonathan explained. "As a team we are looking at possible home visits for assessments and expanding the range of equipment. The removal of our funding has meant we have become more commercially minded.

"However we are determined that this should not be at the expense of our core philosophy - one which requires us to give high quality, impartial advice. Any sales we make are a 'by product' of the assessment, not the aim of it."

● **Contact Chris, Jonathan or one of their team on 01707 384260.**

WHY WE'RE ALL UP FOR THE CHALLENGE...

# All systems go as we look to the future

**I** am not going to dwell too much on the massive cuts we have received but needless to say 100 per cent loss of funding is devastating for HAD. However, this provides us all with an exciting and challenging year to come.

We are working hard to improve our established income streams and developing new initiatives to secure our future. We all know change is difficult to deal with but everyone at HAD is pulling together, showing strength and determination to work as a flexible committed team.

So what are we doing to secure our future?

My current project is to generate new income from our website. HAD will be launching our exciting new online shop selling disability products direct this Autumn. There will be an extensive range of equipment with lots of help and advice available on assessments to ensure the customer gets the right products.

Also key is ensuring the design is user friendly and easy to use. So keep visiting [www.hadnet.org.uk](http://www.hadnet.org.uk) and lookout for our new venture!

In the Equipment Centre Chris Bellia and Jonathan Hill our resident Occupational Therapists introduced a new range of Roma wheelchairs and scooters in September and the lightweight Karma wheelchairs arrived in February. We then rose to the challenge and added a range of riser/recliner chairs that HAD now retail direct to our customers.

Once again we will be present at the Mobility Roadshow in Peterborough for three days from June 30.

David Wooder and his Mobility Centre team will be there along with the Transport and Equipment Departments. The Mobility Centre continues to go from strength to strength, not even allowing the heavy snow to affect their performance towards the end of last year.

Transport Manager Phil Caley is busy submitting tenders for contract work and we are confident we will see some new business from this.



**GOING MOBILE:** HAD's Mobility Centre will again be at the ever-popular Mobility Roadshow in Peterborough for three days from June 30. Driving Assessor Darren Pratt, pictured above, right, at last year's show, and the team will be on stand OS 15

## Our new range of scooters



Cadiz



Cameo



Sovereign

Look out for HAD's  
online shop visit:  
[www.hadnet.org.uk](http://www.hadnet.org.uk)



**IN AT THE DEEP END: Brett Waterman takes to the sea in the Canary Islands and (inset) with Linda Cudmore, Sheila Parminter and the ship's captain**

# A life on the ocean waves\*

\* Well a week anyway

**The last issue of this magazine featured a life changing sailing trip for Brett Waterman and his Carer Sheila Parminter.**

I am happy to report it was a great success and Brett had a great adventure in the Canary Islands on board Lord Nelson, one of the Jubilee Sailing Trust ships. Some of you may know I decided to take a break as

well and joined the guys as a sailing "Buddy". It was terrifying and fantastic at the same time.

Brett has cerebral palsy and has been in a wheelchair all his life but that doesn't stop him working as a volunteer for HAD, supporting Arsenal FC and staying positive.

My thanks go to all the staff at HAD, friends and supporters for all

their hard work. Not only did we raise enough money for the trip we managed an extra £1,000 for HAD too.

As I have said there are tough times ahead but if we all remember how much we change lives for the better, the future will be bright!

● **Full interview with Brett at [www.hadnet.org.uk/news](http://www.hadnet.org.uk/news)**



## Robert Ashton joins as Patron

**Another positive piece of news sees Robert Ashton joining HAD as a Patron.**

Robert is an experienced social entrepreneur, campaigner and best selling business author.

He is also a Trustee of Norfolk Community Foundation and a Governor of Norfolk & Waveney Mental Health Foundation Trust.

Robert is a respected commentator on social enterprise and 'Big Society'.

## ethicTrade partnership on-line for success

**Your support is vital to us here at HAD, and with the economic climate affecting us all, we have been looking for new and innovative ways to raise funds.**

For that reason, HAD has teamed up with ethicTrade to bring you a new online shop.

You'll find everything from clothes and accessories to home-ware and toys, and the best part is that 20 per cent of the money generated before VAT by your

purchases comes straight to us, providing vital funds to help us continue in promoting independent living for all.

On top of this, ethicTrade is committed to ensuring that the products you buy have been ethically produced and fairly traded.

The products are high quality and reasonably priced so visit **[www.had.ethictrade.com](http://www.had.ethictrade.com)**.

Every purchase you make will help HAD take a step closer to independence. Happy shopping!

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## Meet new Mobility Centre Manager David Wooder

**1986:** Graduated from University of York with a second class honours degree in economics.

**1986-2002:** Various sales and management posts with B & Q.

**2002-04:** Qualified as an Approved Driving

Instructor (ADI). Worked as an Approved Driving Instructor for a local driving school.

**2004-06:** Self-employed ADI.

**2006:** Joined HAD as a Driving Assessor.

**December 2010:** Appointed Manager.

# Why David and his team are really driven

**HAD's recently appointed Mobility Centre Manager David Wooder leads a team that aims to provide the best possible service to customers.**

"I hope to broaden our geographical area with satellite centres in Dunstable and Enfield," David explained. "I also want to appoint another Assessor.

"There will also be an ongoing training programme to ensure all Assessors are up to date with the latest products and technology.

"In addition all Assessors will



complete the Forum of Mobility Centres' official training course with

Chester University."

David is also streamlining administration procedures, to allow more time for frontline contact with customers.

"We also hope to get out and about to open days. For example this summer's Luton Festival of Transport. Staff will also be giving talks about our services to interested parties," David concluded.

**The HAD Mobility Centre's team: Sean Lawrence, Matt Miller, David Wooder, Darren Pratt and Julie Ritchie (front).**

## Chris is such a good sport

**Like most 19-year-olds Chris Ryan loves playing sport and driving a nice car.**

Chris plays rugby and gets around in a new Audi A4 Avant. Chris is also a wheelchair user after being involved in a road accident as a passenger in November 2008.

Now, thanks to the support of his family and help from HAD's Mobility Centre, he's gained his independence and is on the fringe of the GB Paralympic Wheelchair Rugby squad.

After David Wooder gave Chris an initial assessment in late 2009, driving lessons started last spring. Chris passed his test last summer and has since taken the Pass Plus additional driving course with David.



"This covers night and town driving, poor weather, motorways, dual carriageways and country roads," David explained.

A key part of David's input involved the personal adaptations Chris needed for his car. These included electric seats, keyless entry and start-up button, electric hand-brake and automatic headlights and wash/wipe.

Chris's Audi also has push-pull hand controls instead of pedals and tetra-grip steering, both supplied by local adaptation specialists Brig-Ayd.

Now Chris can travel to and from the London Wheelchair Rugby Club in Stanmore where he plays and trains six days a week.

"I've been playing for 18 months and it's fantastic," Chris explained. "It's tactical and physically demanding. My specially adapted wheelchair takes quite a beating too."

Although Chris is not quite ready to represent Great Britain in next year's Paralympics, he's setting his sights on 2016 and has several national, European and World championships to look forward to in the meantime.

There was plenty of family fun at the eighth annual HAD charity Easter egg hunt and raffle - especially for the Beadle family.

David Beadle and his family joined more than 300 people at the event at 13 Lemsford Village, on Easter Monday. It was David's third time at the egg hunt and it proved to be lucky as he claimed first prize in the raffle, winning a giant 10kg Easter egg.

David, from Welwyn Garden City, was joined by wife Wendy, sons Adam and Stephen and their partners Lauren and Kelly as well as grandsons Isaac and George. They all enjoyed the egg, donated by Lessiter's of Woolmer Green.

Visitors enjoyed the beautiful weather at the event, once again held in the magnificent woodland garden of HAD Director Edna Stephens. The day also included a tombola, teas, cakes and chocolate eggs, many kindly



## David's egg-static!

donated by Amelie Chocolat.

The event raised almost £1500 and thanks must go to Edna and her team, including Margaret McCreadie and her tea ladies. Thanks also to Hans Luder and Phillip Levy of Lessiter's and

Amelie Chocolat respectively.

**OTHER RAFFLE WINNERS:** Mark Thackeray, Andy Morgan, Sally Laflin, Paul Thompson, Tony Sharpe, Richard Barber, Katherine McKay, Susan Craighead, Cherie West, Lauren Wintle, June Foot and Linda Frith.

HAD Fundraising Co-ordinator Seb Tull arranged a band night at the local Ludwick Arms pub on June 3 and raised a rockin' good £230. Thanks to Seb, his band Rough Outline, The Librarians and The Metatrons. Our host landlord Phil also deserves a mention.

● AS we went to press we learnt the sad news that HAD Patron Athene Sanders has died. Athene passed away just three days after her family hosted a fundraising garden party at her Brickendon home that raised over £900 for HAD. A truly unique lady, she will be sadly missed by all who knew her.

## New band added to Jazz Night bill

**HAD's Jazz on the Island Picnic is getting ready for the goats.**

This year's event, held at 13 Lemsford Village on **Saturday June 25**, features a new band. In addition to regulars Bob Thomas and the Thomcats we welcome the Jazz Goats to the bill.

Tickets cost £10 in advance or £12 on the door. Call **Edna Stephens** on **01707 321802** for more info. Don't forget your picnic.

Meanwhile here's a brief biography of the Hemel Hempstead/St Albans based Jazz Goats (pictured) by co-founder and pianist Ben Sherwood: **Martin Smith (trombone & bass) and myself had known each other**



**for many years. When Martin was involved with a scratch band formed out of friends and attendees at an open jazz session the idea of setting up a band playing jazz standards and anything else that might be good fun to perform was hatched.**

**Both Martin and myself had known Charlotte Gregory (vocals) for many years and had performed together over the years.**

**Chris Chinn (one of the original band) was recruited as guitarist and cornet and the South Hertfordshire nucleus of the Jazz Goats was formed in late 2007.**

**Les Arnold has become the resident drummer with the band and the inclusion of Chris Bowles, a lyrical sax player with the JG ethos saw the completion of the current line up.**

**Our musical influences are diverse - from the likes of Ella and Louis to Latin bossa.**

● On Friday September 23 the fifth annual HAD Golf Day takes place at Welwyn Garden City Golf Club. More details from **Paul Bishop** on **01727 858605**.

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Nolan Osteopathic Clinic working with HAD and also: **Herts MS Therapy Centre**, 30 Campus Five, Letchworth Garden City, Herts, SG6 2JF.

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## EQUIPMENT CENTRE

This permanent display of equipment provides informal help and advice and a wide range of products specially chosen to meet the needs of disabled people, their families and carers. Products include: continence management items, walking sticks, rollators, mobility scooters, riser recline chairs, wheelchairs, shower and bathroom equipment, bath lifts, kitchen utensils, all at competitive prices. Free OT assessments. Opening times: Monday – Thursday 9-5pm, Friday 9-4.30pm, Saturday: 10am-2.00pm.

More details from:  
**JONATHAN HILL/CHRIS BELLIA**  
01707 384260

## MOBILE EQUIPMENT

Following funding cuts this service has been taken off the road. We are seeking sponsorship to get 'Ivanhoe' back in action. In the meantime a 'skeleton' service is being provided. For regular updates visit [www.hadnet.org.uk](http://www.hadnet.org.uk) or call below.

More details from:  
**JONATHAN HILL/CHRIS BELLIA**  
01707 384260

## COUNSELLING

Counselling for disabled by disabled and able-bodied people.

More details from:  
**DANIELLA INGHAM**  
01707 324581



## MULTI-SENSORY ROOM

The Equipment Centre has a multi-sensory room designed to stimulate and enthuse children with disabilities.

More details from:  
**JONATHAN HILL/CHRIS BELLIA**  
01707 384260

## TRANSPORT

A 24-hour wheelchair accessible transport service seven days a week for people with disabilities. Each vehicle can transport up to two wheelchair users and three seated passengers comfortably. New vehicle with nine seats plus two wheelchairs just acquired. We also have three vehicles for self-drive hire. Quotes for one-off and regular journeys always available.

More details from:  
**PHIL CALEY**  
01707 375159

## ACCESSIBILITY

Access audit reports to ensure your premises comply with the Disability Discrimination Act.

More details from:  
**JONATHAN HILL/CHRIS BELLIA**  
01707 384260

## MOBILITY CENTRE

Driving lessons and assessments for people with physical disabilities are available in our own specially adapted and dual – controlled vehicles. Vehicle appraisal and conversion advice, disability awareness training for minibus drivers and minibus driver assessments are also available. The Centre has achieved full accreditation as a member of the Forum of Mobility Centres.

More details from:  
**DAVID WOODER**  
01707 384263

## THERAPIES

A variety of therapies are available including osteopathic consultations, assessments and treatments, acupuncture, nutritional therapy and foot care.

More details from:  
**DANIELLA INGHAM**  
01707 324581

## INFORMATION AND ADVICE

All staff currently provide this service. Last year HAD received 25,000 telephone calls seeking information. We also provide benefits information, given by a trained volunteer.

More details from:  
**DANIELLA INGHAM**  
01707 324581

Helping Hand is the news and information magazine for HAD (Herfordshire Action on Disability).

The organisation aims to deliver innovative, affordable, practical services to disabled people throughout Hertfordshire and beyond.

Correspondence is welcomed and should be addressed to the Editor at the address on the right.

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