

MOBILITY SERVICE
of the
DISABLED LIVING CENTRE (West of England)

ANNUAL REPORT 2005 / 2006



Mobility Service of the Disabled Living Centre
The Vassall Centre
Gill Avenue
Fishponds
Bristol
BS16 2QQ
0117 965 9353

Introduction

The Mobility Service of the Disabled Living Centre (West of England) is one of 17 members of the national Forum of Mobility Centres. This is a network of organisations, which aims to help older and disabled people achieve independent mobility as drivers and passengers. The Bristol Centre has focussed on car Driving Assessments, but has a growing proportion of Passenger and Wheelchair Assessments.

Background

The Mobility Service was started in 1995 with a grant from the Greater Bristol Foundation. A substantial grant from the National Lottery Charities Board in Sept 1997 enabled a considerable expansion of the Service, and the raising of standards to those required by Forum for accreditation. A further Lottery grant in 2000 enabled a large covered area to be created, and Department of Transport funding ensured the continuation of the Service when Lottery funding ceased.

Activity

Following visits from Jenny Fennel (independent Occupational Therapist), Peter Dench from Motability and Rolf Lamsdale from the Mobility and Inclusion Unit, Department for Transport, we have been re-accredited as a member of the FORUM of Mobility Centres from April 2005.

The focus during 2005 -2006 has been to complete an additional 100 assessments by increasing staffing and developing our outreach venues.

Building work in Bristol started in August 2005. Further improvements have been made to the office equipment and software, and the equipment in the covered area has been upgraded or replaced.

More lessons were given during 2005-6 and we have a new instructor Rita Birchall.

Staff and Volunteers

Clive Peters	Mobility Organiser	12 hours per week
Barbara Howes	Secretary	24 hours per week
Carol Firmin	Administration Assistant	12 hours per week
Daniela Meucci	Information Officer	37 hours per week
Diana Wolsey	Occupational Therapist	22 hours per week
Joanna Walsh	Occupational Therapist	7.5 hours per week
Kath Cooper	Occupational Therapist	Pool
Paul Farrall	Driving Instructor / Assessor	22.5 hours per week
Adrian Dobson	Driving Assessor	2 days per week
Rita Birchall	Driving Instructor	
Sandra Wright	Volunteer	4 hours per week
Heather Hegarty	Volunteer	6 hours per week
Alan Thackray	Volunteer	6 hours per week

Staff Changes

- Kath Cooper joined us as a Pool OT from April to September 2005
- Carol Firmin joined as Administration Assistant in July 2005
- Diana Wolsey left us in September 2005
- Rita Birchall joined us as an ADI / Assessor in February 2006

Information Enquiries

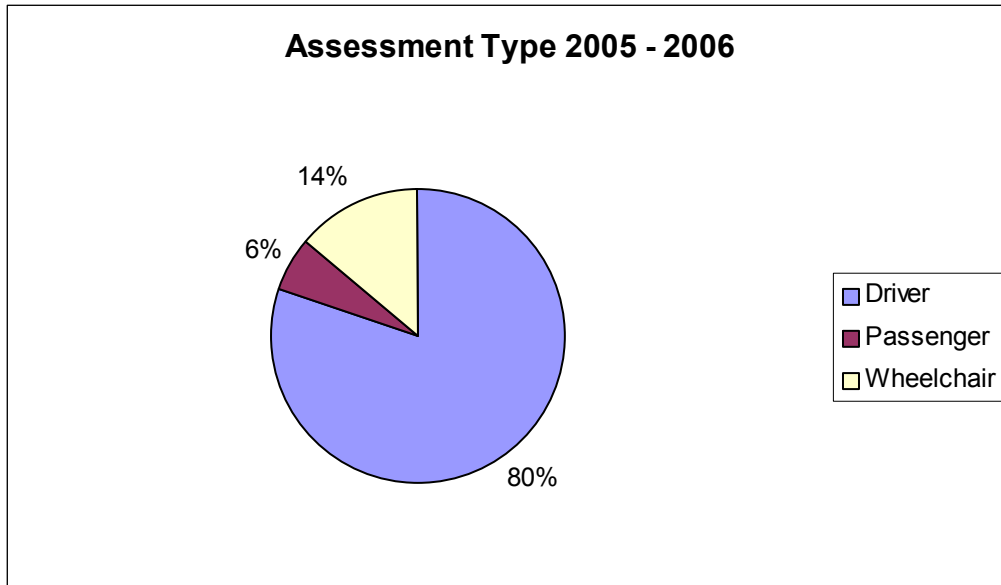
This year the number of enquiries has increased from 2174 to 2289.

Assessments

Year	Number of Assessments	%age increase on previous year
2002 - 2003	187	
2003 - 2004	228	22%
2004 - 2005	333	46%
2005 - 2006	369	11%

The total number of assessments has increased by just 11% rather than the 33% forecast. This was in part due to the several staffing changes that occurred during the year, which reduced our capacity. Of the 369 clients seen for assessment, 227 were male and 142 female. We also saw 87 clients for follow-up appointments.

Of the 369 clients, 295 were for Driving, 23 for Passenger, and 51 for Wheelchair assessments. Last year Passenger and Wheelchair assessments increased by 300% and 400% respectively. This year we have done 81% more Wheelchair Assessments. However, the number of Passenger Assessments has fallen by 35%.



Off Road Driving Area

At Bristol an area of the car park is coned off during assessments to provide an area free from other traffic.

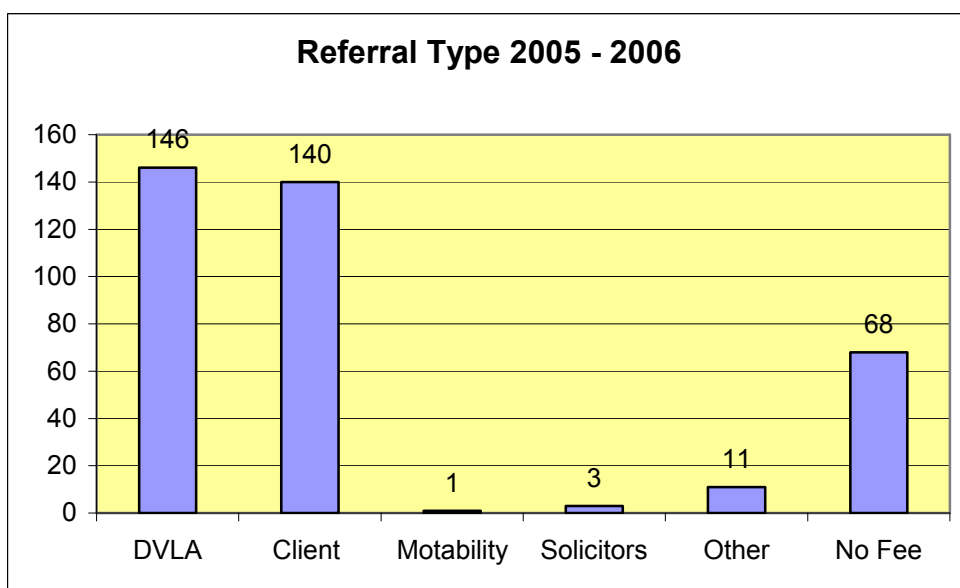
At Salisbury there is a little used small road layout at the rear of the venue.

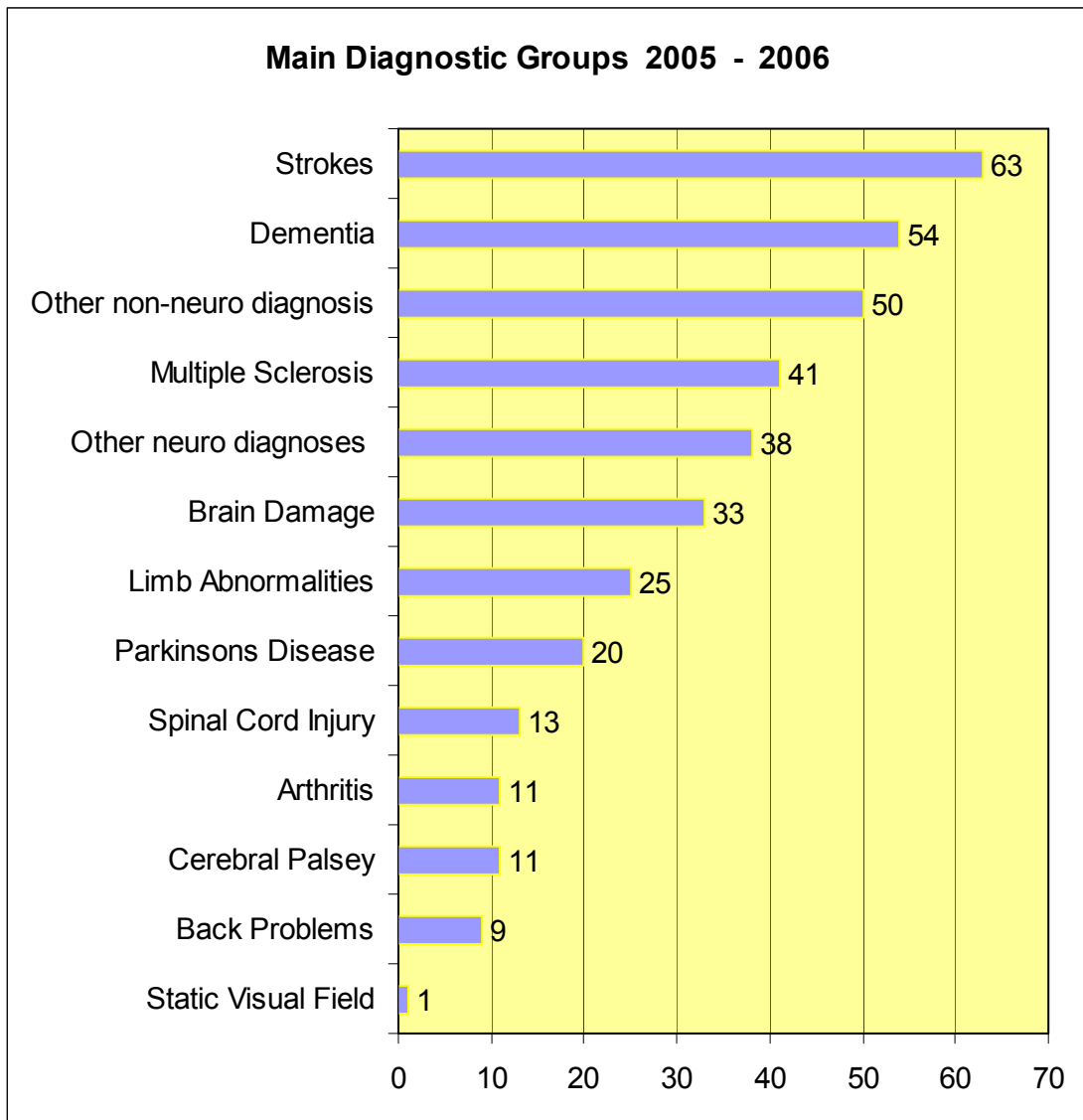
At Sparkford there is a gated off small track free from public access.

Referrals

The majority of clients still come from self-referrals (140 + 68) and the DVLA (146).

We do not charge a fee for Passenger and Wheelchair assessments unless the client wants a copy of the assessment report.





For almost half our clients, the main diagnostic groups were stroke, dementia and other non-neurological diagnoses.

Events

2005

April 2005	Re-Accreditation
April 6 th	Children's Open Day
May 10 th and 11 th	FORUM AGM in Edinburgh
July 7 th	Mobility Road show – Donington Park near Derby
September	Specialist courses for Driving Instructors given by Paul Farrall
October 19 th	Forum Business Meeting Cardiff

2006

February 7 th	Parliamentary Advisory Council for Transport Safety meeting in London (attended by Paul Farrall)
--------------------------	--

Paul Farrall, Diana Wolsey and Daniela Meucci attended the Forum AGM at Edinburgh in May 2005 and Paul Farrall, Diana Wolsey and Clive Peters attended at Cardiff in October 2005.

We started assessments at the Sparkford outreach venue in April 2005 and its use has continued. We are now assessing there every other week.

Assessments at the Salisbury outreach venue have been steady and we see clients there every week.

Our plans for 2005 – 2006 were to increase our workforce so that we had two driving teams, each with an OT and an ADI, and therefore increase the number of assessments done. Unfortunately, this has not been possible.

Training

Paul Farrall:	Completed Level 3 Greenwich Attended Manual Handling Training December 2005 in Cardiff
Adrian Dobson:	Attended Manual Handling Training December 2005 in Cardiff
Rita Birchall (ADI):	Attended a training session on Medical Conditions related to Driving at MAVIS February 2006

Daniela Meucci has attended a residential school and completed two modules of an Open University Course - Certificate in Management.

Finance

The Service had a revenue grant of £135,000 from the Department for Transport that ensured key staffing and premises costs were fully funded. From charges for services we raised £40,786. The Mobility Service has to pay the Disabled Living Centre the full economic cost of all services provided by the DLC, such as, cleaning, care-taking, rental of premises, reception services, and payroll and accounting.

In October 2005 the Department for Transport awarded us Project Funding of £26,100 to use to help improve the service we provide. We further upgraded our IT system in preparation for continued growth in the number of assessments done.

We purchased a 5 door Ford Focus from the manufacturer at the end of its loan to us for demonstration purposes. We upgraded the former toileting room ready for use as a waiting room with a nearby refreshment bay for people accompanying clients for assessment.

Centre Vehicles and Equipment in 2005 - 2006

1998 Vauxhall Astra Automatic 5 door estate (Centre owned) R752 GHU

- Hand controls fitted for use by right hand (single combined push/pull) (Techmobility)
- Infra red secondary control switching 9-way for use by either hand (Lodgesons)
- Left floor mounted hand control (Carospeed)
- Electric hand brake
- Electric thigh raiser-drivers side (KC Mobility)
- 90 degree Rotating seat passenger side (Elap)
- 4-Way wheelchair hoist (Techmobility)
- Reversing sensor
- Instructor dual control foot brake (He-Man dual)
- Braun Chair topper roof top stowage box (*use Quickie Breezy Manual 18inch seat without foot rests and with back rest down*)

2004 Nissan Micra 1.2 Automatic 3 door (Forum owned) BF04 VCL

- Hand controls fitted for use by right hand (single combined push/pull) (Gosling)
- Infra red secondary control switching 9-way (Lodgesons)
- Flip change left foot accelerator (Cowal)
- Instructor dual control foot brake
- Assorted steering aids (balls/spinners)
- Hoist for manual wheelchair (Autochair)
- 180 degree Max Rotating seat passenger side (Gowrings)

2006 Fiat Grande Punto Manual 5-door (loan) WV06 YTX

- Instructor's dual control foot brake and clutch

2005 Ford Focus 2.0 Ghia Automatic
5 door (Centre owned) AD05 DJK

- Hand controls fitted for use by right hand (single combined push/pull) (Techmobility)
- Flip change left foot accelerator (Brig-ayd)
- Infra red secondary control switching 9-way (Lodgesons)
- Assorted steering aids (balls/spinners) fitted for use by right hand
- Instructor's dual control foot brake

2004 Vauxhall Zafira 1.8 Design Automatic
5 door (Centre owned) VE04 NWW

- Centre-ring push accelerator (Guido Simplex)
- Trigger hand control right mounted (Guido Simplex)
- Instructor brake
- Telescopic hoist for electric wheelchair (Brig-ayd)

2005 Vauxhall Astra 1.8 Design Manual
5 door (Forum) VU05 WXP

- Instructor's dual control foot brake and clutch

2004 Peugeot Partner Combi Manual 1.6 (Forum) WR04 HBP

- Wheelchair accessible conversion with electric winch (Brotherwood)
- Instructor's dual control foot brake and clutch

The Future

The Vassall Centre in which the Disabled Living Centre is based is still undergoing major refurbishment by the landlord. Whilst this happens various departments will move to temporary locations, so that their permanent bases can be made ready. The Mobility Service is the 'last piece of the jigsaw', and work is expected to start in April 2007 to upgrade the premises.

Acknowledgements

To all staff and volunteers who have continued to give their commitment, time, energy and expertise.

Thanks are also due to the manufacturers who have supported the Centre, by the loan of their cars. Specialist Vehicle Options, City Motors Cardiff, Adaptacar, and Dave Bates have kept the car adaptations in good order throughout the year.

The Department of Transport has extended its revenue funding to enable us to expand, and provided capital funding for office improvements.

Our three disabled volunteers, Alan Thakray, Sandra Wright and Heather Hegarty continued to provide excellent support services to data collection and clerical work.

A special thank you goes to Diana Wolsey who left us in September 2005. Diana was a founder member of the team, and set up most of the administrative and professional recording systems. She paid great attention to detail, which enabled the Service to make rapid progress to Accredited status. You are very much missed Diana!.....

Clive Peters
Mobility Service Organiser
August 2006