

A day in the life



ELAINE Wellings is one of 70 Shaw Trust Development Officers working full-time throughout the UK, helping disabled people find work placements and long-term jobs. She has some 80 clients in Birmingham and Solihull and works from an office at her home. She is married with two teenage children.

8am I like to be at my desk early to make calls, get all my paperwork done and get organised for the day then I'm off. I really enjoy being out and about – I average about six appointments a day.

10am Meet new client Andy at the Jobcentre. He is recovering from a near breakdown, has low esteem and lacks confidence. He's recently qualified as a forklift truck driver and we talk about a Work Prep placement. During this six week period he'd still be paid benefits and work part-time until he is ready to go back into paid employment, when hopefully there will be a permanent vacancy to apply for. I've already prepared information packs for possible employers which I'll drop off later today.

“People with disabilities are generally not ill. That's what employers often don't see.”

10.50am Check on long-standing client Mary who works in the kitchens of a local hospital. She has learning disabilities and suffers from Muscular Dystrophy. Her boss is concerned about a couple of falls she's had recently. We talk about organising an assessment to make sure she's not at risk of an accident at work.

11.40am Across town to fit in an emergency visit to Sharon. She

is a chronic alcoholic with terrible problems including a partner who's dying of cancer. She works on a production line in a bakery and her supervisor is very concerned Sharon is being abused when she is drunk. She has stuck her job for two years and without it her life would be grim. I'm determined to help her keep it. We set up a meeting with her Community Health Worker to get her the support she's entitled to. I'm pretty tenacious, I won't give up when it comes to helping my clients.

12.50pm Call in on Tony, in long-term employment as a cleaner at a top Birmingham hotel. Because of his disabilities he'll always need Shaw Trust's support and he also gets loads from his caring manager Sally who keeps a close eye on him. Workstep placements are the mainstay of what I do – offering disabled people support so they can remain in employment. People with disabilities are generally not ill. That's what employers often don't see. They just need support to overcome barriers.

2.15pm Back across town to see John, another long-term employee in the workshops of a kitchen fitting company. We have a chat about his diet – he likes pies and chips but they don't help his diabetes or his weight problem. I pick up his Housing Benefit form from the company secretary who keeps a watchful eye on him. It's easier

if I sort things like this out for him otherwise he'll end up having to take time off. I notice his work boots are flapping around his ankles and make a note to drop off some laces for him!

“I'm pretty tenacious, I won't give up when it comes to helping my clients.”

3.10pm I never bother with coffee or lunch breaks. I prefer to keep going till I get home then I grab a sandwich. I drop off information packs and call in on several possible new employers. We are providing a free service to companies but they do have to be committed to the relationship.

5 – 6.30pm Back in my office to answer calls, catch up on paperwork and plan the next day. After 13 years with the Trust I still try never to take problems to bed with me. I'd rather put my energies into solving them. Yes it is rewarding. I believe people can turn their lives around with a little help from Shaw Trust. It's about the nicest way of earning a living I can think of.

For more information about Shaw Trust's services, please call 01225 716350, or log on to: www.shaw-trust.org.uk

network

Evelyn Glennie

Beats the drum for equality in a network exclusive

It's Now or Never

Shaw Trust's MD urges swift action to get 3.6 million back to work

Flower Power

Hampton Court winner to be recreated for children's hospice



**Issue 12
Summer 03**

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Growing pains

A national charity that provides training and employment opportunities for disabled and disadvantaged people.

Shaw Trust believes that to ensure an inclusive society, disabled and disadvantaged people should have equal employment opportunities. Employment not only brings individuals financial reward, but contributes to greater confidence, self-esteem and improved quality of life.

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Front cover photograph by James Wilson ©

Thousands of young people across the country will be given a fresh chance to succeed in education and work thanks to major new developments in Shaw Trust's services.

Shaw Trust is set to dramatically increase the number of young people it helps, reaching not only those who are disabled or have special needs but more children who are disaffected, excluded or in care.

"It's all about turning negatives into positives. We can make education more relevant to these young people," says Sharon Welch, newly appointed Business Development Manager for Young People's Services.

"All these young people want to succeed but often they don't possess the basic skills they need to get on in life and that's where we come in," she added.

This new expansion has been made possible by a £60,000 grant from The Lloyds TSB Foundation and a cash injection of £20,000 from Barclays.

Shaw Trust's Business Development & Marketing Director Tim Cooper believes the donations demonstrate an encouraging recognition of the importance and success of the Trust's work.

"Funding has been one of the main problems we've faced so we are very pleased to have these donations. We believe schools are starting to see how successful our approach is and that this is an affordable service they will buy into.

"We know there is a strong demand for our services to help many young people make the transition from the education system to employment and we know we are making a difference to people's lives," said Tim, who wants to increase the 300 young people a year currently being helped to nearer 3,000.

Sharon's new role will mean developing the services she has established in five Birmingham schools out across the West Midlands and eventually across the country.

"Employers are generally supportive and happy to encourage young people to shine."



A flexible approach is vital as students' needs vary widely. They may be disabled, have special needs, be excluded from school or be school phobic. Her softly softly approach uses a winning mix of persuasion, mutual respect and enticement and she is gaining a proven track record of success.

"We treat teenagers as adults, listen to them, give them the chance of a fresh start and the chance to try several placements until they find something they can shine at and believe me they

"I've seen aggressive, miserable teenagers heading for trouble completely turned around. They learn a skill, achieve something positive maybe for the first time in their lives, something that will set them on the right road."

do."

"Yes, they should be at school and we try to keep them there for part of the week but realistically if there's no hope we work with training providers so they are getting some education whether towards units of an NVQ or basic literacy and numeracy skills," she said.

Students have work placements which may last anything from two weeks up to a year. Employers are generally supportive and happy to encourage young people to shine.

"We've all seen youngsters hanging around shopping centres, its easy to dismiss them as no-hopers but what they need is help and guidance not

punishment," insists Sharon.

"I've seen aggressive, miserable teenagers heading for trouble completely turned around. They learn a skill, achieve something positive maybe for the first time in their lives, something that will set them on the right road.

"Rewarding? Of course it is and with more funding allowing us enough time for every student who needs us, we'd have a 100 per cent success rate. I always say to head teachers who may be sceptical, "Give us a couple of your worst students and we'll show you what we can achieve – and you know what? We always do."

Liam's story

18 months ago Liam was an aggressive, unhappy 14 year old with an attitude problem who was heading straight for serious trouble.

Today he has a full-time job as an apprentice electrician, attending college for further training and is enthusiastic, happy and settled.

"I never thought I'd see this day. It's fantastic," says mum Sue, who can barely believe the change in her son.

Liam's transformation began with a visit from Shaw Trust Development Officer Sarah Walsh who offered him a new start.

"We found him a place working one day a week as an electrician on condition the rest of the week he was at school. At the end of a successful year we found him a placement with a company who then took him on as an apprentice."

David Jones Managing Director of Harrold-Jones Services said: "I was just like Liam, I hated school but that needn't stop you from getting on in life if you are prepared to work hard like Liam is. He's a keen, enthusiastic apprentice who's doing very well."

www.shaw-trust.org.uk

Retail therapy

“They won’t be reliable”... “It’ll cost us too much money to employ them” ...“They’ll take more time off sick”...“They won’t be as good at the job”...

This is what we hear from employers time and time again, a long list of reasons NOT to employ a disabled person.

But at Sainsbury’s in Holborn, London, it’s a very different story. Already the store has employed six people in as many months and are delighted with their new staff.

Dipti Bhudia, Personnel and Training Manager at the store was responsible for the recruitment of Shaw Trust’s clients, “I know our Camden store works with Shaw Trust to employ local disabled people, and I was keen to bring their strategy to Holborn. We have equality and diversity policies in place to ensure candidates receive equal opportunities, and this is especially pertinent for disabled

people who simply want to be part of the working majority.

“Getting the job at Sainsbury’s has given me an immense feeling of self-worth and I now feel like a person, instead of a person with a disability.”

“There were some concerns at the start, but these were mainly health and safety issues. One of our new employees, Robert, is deaf and therefore we had to make arrangements for him to have a ‘buddy’ in case of fire alarms etc. Our flexible training takes specific needs into account and all staff (over 200) are given the appropriate information

and introduced through an internal newsletter to all new team members.”

Shaw Trust officers regularly contact the store and visit to ensure everyone is settled, and deal with any queries which may arise. The new employees are really enjoying the work, and for some, it has been a life-changing experience.

Michael O’Donnell is really pleased to have secured a job since recently moving to London, “Getting the job at Sainsbury’s has given me an immense feeling of self-worth and I now feel like a person, instead of a person with a disability.”

And for Dipti and the rest of Sainsbury’s team at Holborn, they say Michael, Robert and Co have had a big impact on the store working really hard and spreading a lot of happiness throughout!



News

Lunch date with the Mayor

Seven Shaw Trust trainees from a skills development project in Sutton paid a visit to the Mayor of Sutton in June to receive their certificates for newly gained retail qualifications. Councillor Robert Landeryou and his wife Ann invited the trainees to the Civic Centre where they had lunch in the Mayor’s parlour and were presented with their awards. Shaw Trust provides accredited retail

training at the project, which was set up by the London Borough of Sutton to support and develop skills in people with a learning disability to enable them to gain work. Other facilities at the project include training in horticultural skills and travel, plus a Job Broking service to help individuals explore employment opportunities. Shaw Trust officer Christina April accompanied the trainees to receive their awards,

“They have all worked really hard to achieve this qualification. We can see a development in their skills and their confidence has grown immensely. For many of them, the activities on this project are key to helping them move into a job.”



The Worshipful Mayor of the London Borough of Sutton Councillor Robert Landeryou and his wife Ann help Shaw Trust clients celebrate their achievements

A passion for fashion

Four disabled Shaw Trust clients are celebrating after securing employment with major fashion retailer New Look. Through the Trust’s Job Broking service in East London, they all attended a recruitment day for the retailer’s new flagship store in Oxford Street. The clients, who are all deaf, were accompanied by a sign language interpreter for the interview process,

and were employed alongside 163 other applicants out of around 1,400 who turned up for the recruitment day. Carrie Dodd, Oxford Street Store Manager for New Look said, “Shaw Trust has been extremely helpful and given me plenty of ideas to think about. These particular new employees will open people’s eyes and demonstrate that being disabled does not have

to be a barrier. I’m just very excited, not only about the store, but about developing the people, disabled or not. Everyone is good at something and it is down to the managers to find it!”

It's NOW or NEVER!

In July 2003, the long awaited announcement by Government finally came – the New Deal for Disabled People programme (NDDP) has been extended to March 2006. Encouraging news, but Shaw Trust's MD has issued a stark warning: this alone is not enough to achieve a national breakthrough in getting disabled people into work.

Ian Charlesworth says it is financial and social madness to fail to seize the opportunity to empower Britain's largest economically inactive group into employment, at a time when general jobless figures are at an all-time low and the country is facing a labour shortage.

"If we don't make the breakthrough now, we never will," says the Trust's forthright MD.

"Low unemployment provides us with the opportunity, and the drop in school leavers, coupled with an ageing workforce, gives us the impetus.

"I don't understand the rationale of not doing so, given that the cost of keeping people dependent on care and benefits is higher than the cost of the health service and double that of schools.

"It doesn't make economic or moral sense and, as a society, surely we'd be better off if we were not socially excluding such a large part – 20% – of the population?"

"Shaw Trust will deal with more than 20,000 clients this year, making it the largest provider of employment services."

The Government has pledged to redress the job market imbalance that means that there are 3.6 million people of working age without employment due to poor health or disability, compared to 700,000 jobless non-disabled people.

But Shaw Trust's MD contends that the measures are not radical enough. He is calling for action to turn the economic drain of an estimated annual disability benefits and care cost of £80 billion plus into a positive contribution to the economy through National Insurance and income tax payments.

Shaw Trust will deal with more than 20,000 clients this year, making it the largest provider of employment services. But the 3.6 million out of work figure indicates the scale of the challenge to meet the Government's imbalance redressing aims.

"We're going to need at least a 20-fold increase in the provision of services," Ian points out.

He says the extension of proven programmes such as Job Broking is encouraging, but will not go far enough. "This Government has achieved an awful lot, with the setting up of the Disability Rights Commission, NDDP, the extension of the Disability Discrimination Act and so forth," Ian says.

"But they need to stop piloting programmes and put the resources in to allow us to help hundreds of thousands of people, rather than 20,000."

In addition there are nearly three million less five to 16 year olds in education than in 1971, which means far fewer young people coming into the labour market. The workforce is also getting older, and consequently more likely to develop a disability or ill-health.

"Employers, supported by the Government, need to be much more pro active in developing policies and think carefully about what they do with people who develop a disability or ill-health while in work," adds Ian.

Ian suggests a five point action plan:

1. Adequate resourcing

"This would be self-financing and should soon return a surplus, through IT and NI payments, which makes the reluctance to move down this route even more surprising."

2. Enforcing employer legislation

"The DDA will shortly apply to all companies. I don't want to see more legislation, just a concerted effort to ensure effectiveness. There were only six prosecutions in 50 years under the old quota requirement."

3. Benefits overhaul

"Currently disabled people are caught in a trap of knowing that going back to work will probably mean they are worse off. The new tax credits are not high enough to counter the loss of all benefits."

4. Change in the medical view of disability

"Pathways to Work should forge vital links between employment providers and medical services. But it is vital that voluntary and private providers are in the loop too."

5. Altering attitudes at all levels.

"An attitude rethink is vital in order to eradicate the 'them and us' exclusive culture. In truth, disability or ill-health could hit any one of us at any time. Only 3% of disabled people are born with disabilities, and the Department of Health acknowledges that one in four people will suffer some sort of mental ill-health in their working lives."

"There are two solutions to the dwindling workforce. You either train the people we've got and get them back to work – and the biggest group is people with disabilities – or you open the gates to people from other countries.

"It's not for me to judge the rights or wrongs of that, but it is for me to say we should be looking at the first group, of which we estimate that at least 1.5 million could and want to work now.

"Then we need the resources and the support to make it happen. At Shaw Trust we know we can do 12 times as much as we do now, tomorrow. Why won't they let us?"



All about Evelyn

WORLD-renowned musician and Shaw Trust Patron Evelyn Glennie has scored an astonishing number of firsts, and collected a glittering array of awards, but she has long been dogged by a disability – the blind obstinacy of some writers who cannot see past the fact that she is profoundly deaf.

For Evelyn that fact is simply irrelevant: “I simply hear in a different way to most people,” she says.

Evelyn took time out of her hectic schedule – performing, studying for two degrees and attempting to persuade the Government to put instrument tuition for all back in schools – to share some of her thoughts with network.

network (n): “Please can you tell readers why you chose to support Shaw Trust?”

EVELYN (EG): “As with all the charities I support, I have to believe in their aims and what sort of difference they make to people’s lives. My whole aim as a musician is to make a difference, and that’s what I look for.”

“We all have to help each other because we are truly all disabled in one way or another.”

n: “How important is the Trust’s work, even in these supposedly more enlightened times?”

EG: “Hugely important. We all have to have a chance of employment, in the same way we all have to learn to create our own opportunities.”

n: “We’ve read you dislike categories, which can be more disabling than any so-called disability. But while you’ve clearly escaped typecasting, others are still struggling. How best can parents, siblings, friends, schools and Governments help them?”

EG: “It’s human nature to categorise. Our difficulty now is that our attention span is minimal. Everything is interactive, which means that human contact and understanding is at an all-time low. Individuals increasingly have to create their own opportunities to move forward. Imagination is probably our most important tool. We have to be really open to what is around us and to make that work to our advantage. More integration within schools is crucial, as is much more contact with disabled people. That way we forget their disability and quickly become enamoured with them as human beings. We all have to help each other because we are truly all disabled in one way or another.”

n: “We don’t have to ask how you hear music, because you explain it perfectly on your website. What irks you most about interviewers’ ignorance?”

EG: “The complete inaccuracy of newspaper accounts of deafness, where they will change the word ‘profoundly’ to ‘totally’, just to sensationalise the story. That is just one tiny example. People simply want to categorise, simplify and not think for themselves, and that is just unacceptable.”

n: “You spend a fair amount of time in the USA. Do attitudes differ there?”

EG: “Not really. People are very ignorant as a whole. I cannot really say there has been anywhere I have visited that has openness to their disabled people.”

n: “As a child you played the mouth organ, the clarinet and the piano. When and how did percussion come in?”

EG: “At 12, after watching the school orchestra during one morning assembly. I was intrigued and asked to have lessons, which were all provided through the school.”

n: “You can play up to 60 instruments in one performance. Do you ever forget what comes next, as an actor may forget his lines? How do you make yourself so focused?”

EG: “No, I don’t forget! I have no idea what makes me focused. I just do what I do because that’s what I want and need to do at that time. One has to pace oneself like a sports person and not overstretch the body. An institution teaches you to focus through examinations, but that does not work for all. I believe all schools should make it compulsory to learn some form of martial arts, which allow the body to open up, shape up and teaches incredible focus, not to mention teamwork, pride and achievement.”

continued...



Photograph by James Wilson ©

n: “Your performances are incredibly vibrant. Where does all that energy spring from and how do you protect your reserves?”

EG: “I have no idea! I’m blessed with good health, and a good temperament for travelling, in that I settle in at each place easily and without fuss. I definitely have to watch how much playing I do. I listen to my body and go with what it tells me.”

n: “What does sap your energy?”

EG: “Frustration. I hate laziness and sloppy work. I love it when I see people doing their absolute best. One can ask for nothing more.”

n: “You’re obviously an inspirational teacher but, now that you’re studying psychology and law degrees, are you a good student?”

EG: “No! I’m so behind, due to my work schedule as a musician. I don’t know if I’ll ever complete these courses, but I have a huge interest in them, which will last a lifetime. That’s the important thing.”

n: “You’re spearheading a consortium aimed at improving music education in the UK. What prompted this initiative?”

EG: “There is a sharp decline in the standard of music education in this country. My school region’s percussion teacher Ron Forbes retired about 10 years ago and still has not been replaced. There are too many stories like that. Not to mention the appalling lack of direction training teachers are receiving for working in primary schools. Of course, there is a funding issue, too.

“The basic aim is to address the teachers’ situation. We must be in a position to allow every single child the opportunity to learn a musical instrument free of charge, as I had.



Photograph by James Wilson ©

It’s appalling to think that is no longer happening in too many areas.”

“All schools should make it compulsory to learn martial arts, which allows the body to open up, shape up and teaches incredible focus.”

n: “You’re also collaborating with director Thomas Riedelsheimer on a new film. What’s it about?”

EG: “Thomas is looking at how sound and vibration are everywhere, whether we are aware of it or not. His films are often abstract so I’m intrigued what he will do with this one! He will deal with sound texture and movement and he is using me as the vehicle and showing sound through my percussion

instruments. His film *Rivers and Tides*, about the work of environmental sculptor Andy Goldsworthy, has won many major awards.”

n: “As a teenager, you dreamed of being a hairdresser. What might you have been if it hadn’t been for music?”

EG: “Actually, I still feel the urge to jump up and start playing with someone’s hair, and design something interesting for them! If I had not chosen music, then I would have gone in for visual art. A great many of my relatives are visual artists. However, they’re really talented, whereas I am merely an enthusiast who tries one’s best.”

To discover more about Evelyn Glennie, her amazing career in music and her work championing those with disabilities, tap into her website: www.evelyn.co.uk

News

New beginning for St Catherine’s Walled Garden

Shaw Trust’s St Catherine’s Walled Garden Project, Doncaster received its official launch in June 2003 after many months of hard work to prepare for its opening. The new project is based in the grounds of St Catherine’s Hospital, Balby, where the Victorian walled garden area has been completely transformed into a fully equipped site of vocational excellence. Working in partnership with Doncaster and South Humber Healthcare NHS Trust, the project received £50,000 of

Neighbourhood Renewal Funding to build indoor training facilities, toilets and a large greenhouse surrounded by three acres of planting areas. Shaw Trust staff will work with up to thirty individuals each week with a wide range of disabilities from Doncaster’s neediest areas, undertaking employability training and horticultural skills development. The project is one of a number of Shaw Trust projects based in Doncaster which supports over 300 local disabled people each year.



Madeleine Keyworth, Chairman of Doncaster and South Humber Healthcare NHS Trust with Shaw Trust trainees Michael Bee (kneeling) and Patrick McAndrew

Major boost from the Community Fund

The Community Fund has just announced in its latest round of grants that two areas of Shaw Trust operations have been awarded nearly £400,000. In Middlesbrough, £250,000 has been awarded for the construction of Shaw Trust’s new Employment Action Centre (EAC). The building will house the regional office of Shaw Trust and be a centre of excellence for

training, support services and creating employment for disabled and disadvantaged people living in Teesside. The £1.2 million project is due to be completed in Autumn 2004. In the South, nearly £145,000 will be released over a three year period for a number of Shaw Trust projects in Portsmouth delivering vocational training aimed specifically at disabled

people. The money will fund a full-time training officer post, plus a part-time support worker and administrator. Shaw Trust Portsmouth will support around 180 service users over the three year period, and hopes to move 15% of these into supported or open employment.

Flower Power

Shaw Trust projects instrumental in the production of the garden:

Shaw Trust Ashford
Shaw Trust Lincoln
Shaw Trust Portsmouth

Shaw Trust Horticulture:

Basingstoke
City & Docklands
Portsmouth
Salisbury
Stanmore Nurseries
Trowbridge
Woodfield Nursery



Picking up a silver medal at Hampton Court was a fantastic achievement after the months of hard work of Shaw Trust staff and project members. But to know that Shaw Trust's 'Garden of Words' will be transferred and re-constructed as a permanent area at the Shooting Star Hospice for Children is incredible news.

"It's beautiful, it's perfect, I would love it."

The 'Garden of Words' is based on the flowing lines of an unfurling fern, using organic shapes and sculptural planting to create a natural rhythm. A path runs into and gracefully around a central unique stone sculpture, carved with words of inspiration from disabled people on Shaw Trust projects. The garden also incorporates 21 alliums, chosen to symbolise Shaw Trust's 21st anniversary, and a crafted bench. The garden, designed by Liz Robinson and created by 10 Shaw Trust projects and

Barclays plc volunteers, caught the eye of Kate Turner, Founder and Chief Executive of the Shooting Star Trust. In between promoting her own garden, Kate was searching for a tranquil garden as a place for reflection for families of sick children, who will be taken care of at the hospice when it opens in 2004. "It's beautiful, it's perfect, I would love it," said Kate, and Barclays agreed instantly to fund the move and provide volunteers for the relocation.

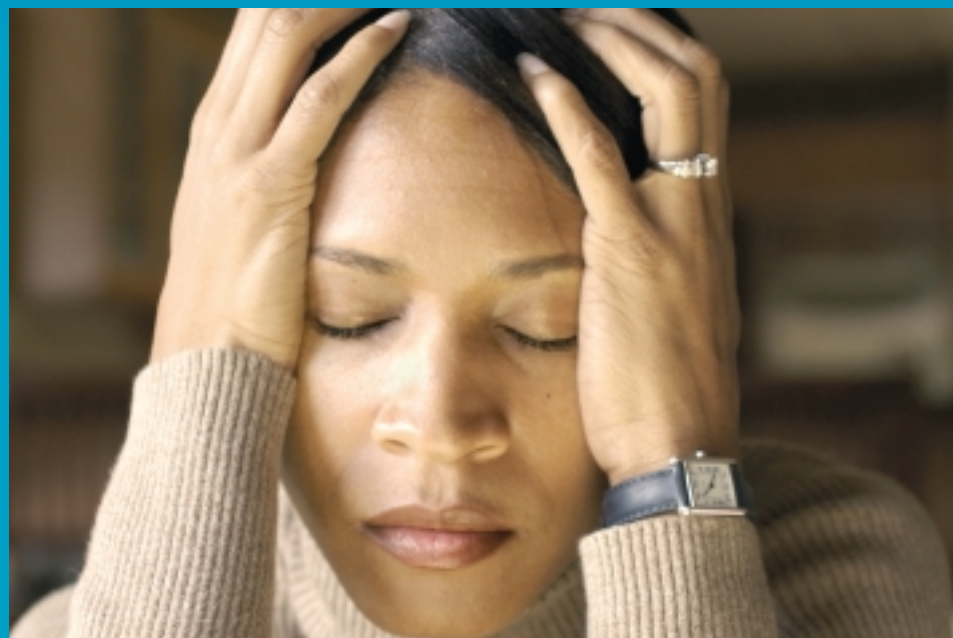
Barclays continued support has made the creation of the Hampton Court garden possible and its transfer to the Shooting Star Trust. Amanda Allchorn, Barclays Local Community Manager said, "We are delighted to have been able to support both Shaw Trust and The Shooting Star Trust. This is a lovely opportunity for us to help make a real and lasting difference to the local community."

Ian Charlesworth, Shaw Trust MD said, "I am very proud of the dedication, hard work and achievement of everyone involved in this success. This is made all the more worthwhile knowing the special contribution the garden will make at the Children's hospice in Hampton."

The Shooting Star Trust has raised in excess of £4 million. Located in Hampton, building of the Shooting Star Hospice for Children commenced in January this year and is due to open next summer.



In brief



New Director appointed for Shaw Trust South

We're delighted to announce that Angela Rice has been appointed as the Southern Regional Director for Shaw Trust, replacing James Hutchings who left in July. Angela has spent the last three years with the Enabling Partnership (previously Enham Trust) as Director of Services for disabled people, and was involved with the Partnership's formation in 2001. Before then, Angela spent many successful years working in the Middle East in human resources and general management.



Unique pain management programme launched

In South Wales, Shaw Trust has developed the first ever Vocational Pain Management Service (VPMS). This combines clinical and vocational solutions for sufferers of long-term chronic pain.

The new service, in partnership with Bro Morgannwg NHS Trust and supported by the local health board and a donation from GlaxoSmithKline, started in July at Shaw Trust's Disability Action Centre in Neath. Over 100 people from the local area will benefit from the service. They'll receive specialist help with pain management, plus vocational support for anyone wishing to return to work or retain their current job. Right now, no other programme like this exists in the NHS or private sector. If successful, it's expected to be used as a model for future national programmes.

A night with Russell Crowe

During this our 21st birthday year, all Shaw Trust projects, offices and employment centres are getting into the party spirit. Shaw Trust Grimsby mental health project decided to hold a special screening of the Oscar winning movie *A Beautiful Mind* at the local cinema. Around 70 people, including employers, local authority departments and other voluntary organisations attended the event and the response was overwhelmingly positive. Partially funded by the European Social Fund, Shaw Trust Grimsby supports people with mental health issues to help them improve the quality of their lives and give them confidence and skills to move towards or into employment.



Vote of confidence

As Shaw Trust's profile within local communities and Government continues to rise, so more and more of its projects, shops and employment centres are attracting the support of Westminster's finest. In recent months over 20 MPs, including Maria Eagle, Minister for Disabled People, have visited Shaw Trust sites, meeting up with staff and clients to see, at first hand, our work with disabled and disadvantaged people.

Fifteen to one

Have you heard of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA)? Are you up-to-speed with how it will impact on your policies and working practices? Currently, the employment duties of the DDA apply to companies with 15 employees or more. But from October 2004, it will apply to *all* companies (except the Armed Forces). Don't worry too much – support with recruiting and employing disabled people is available from a number of sources. Look out for more information in future issues of *network*.

