

MEETING NOTES

DATE: 16 July 2012, 5pm – 7pm

SUBJECT: APIL East Anglian Regional Meeting

LOCATION: East Anglian DriveAbility, 2 Napier Place, Thetford, Norfolk IP24 3RL.

ATTENDEES: Rachel Benford, Isabel Coe (C.E.O. East Anglian DriveAbility), Samantha Collins, Nick Connell, Colin Cook, Tom Cook, Mark Copley, Julie Crossley, Simon Davis, Janet Duke, Richard Foyster, Tim Gleave, Stephen Green, Diane Hilton, Pamela Hoare, Jeremy Ives, Roger Loomes, Trefine Maynard, Siobhan McWhinney, Adrian Mundell, Nick Peake, David Richards, Hannah Rutterford (Regional Co-ordinator), Anthony Shord, Mick Upton (Regional Secretary), Michael Wangerman, Geoff Young.

The set-up of this regional meeting was different to most regional meetings held previously. Those attending were split into small groups which then rotated around to different areas of the East Anglian DriveAbility premises where different talks, activities and demonstrations took place.

1. INTRODUCTION BY ISABEL COE (C.E.O. East Anglian DriveAbility) (“IC”)

IC welcomed everyone to East Anglian DriveAbility, she then gave a brief talk outlining the issues which can arise in relation to driving after somebody has sustained injury. IC gave a brief outline of the services East Anglian DriveAbility provide, where their offices are located (Thetford, Colchester and Spalding) and what their fees are for the assessments they carry out.

The team at East Anglian DriveAbility undertake comprehensive assessments of a person's physical and cognitive abilities to ensure that they are able to drive a vehicle safely and in comfort. They offer advice and information and make recommendations relating to aids and adaptations that may assist driving. The assessment process can include tests carried out on a Static Assessment Rig (simulator) which provides information on reaction speeds, vision, steering ability and braking strength.

In-car assessments with Driving Advisors, in a dual controlled vehicle, are also carried out.

East Anglian DriveAbility have a "Drive from Wheelchair" vehicle and they also have access to vehicles with more hi-tech controls. Assessments relating to wheelchair users involve all the elements of a standard driving assessment but they allow greater time for assessment of the need for in-car adaptations.

The team discuss the outcome of assessments, recommendations are made and a full written report is then produced which is then sent to the client or referring agency.

Assessment costs vary. Where a client has self-referred, the Department for Transport will subsidise the cost of assessment but the Department for Transport will not subsidise legal and insurance assessment costs. Contact East Anglian DriveAbility for details of assessment costs for legal purposes.

East Anglian DriveAbility have a directory of suitable, specialist driving instructors who are qualified to teach drivers with disabilities, those who have lost confidence in driving or drivers who require an adapted vehicle.

In certain circumstances East Anglian DriveAbility can carry out home visits.

East Anglian DriveAbility are currently developing a children's service which will look addressing issues such as the suitability of car seats.

2. OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY DEMONSTRATION

Assessments carried out by the occupational therapists usually focus on assessing physical and cognitive abilities. Two tests/demonstrations were carried out which illustrated how a person's

cognitive abilities are assessed. The first demonstration involved the use of a pack of cards. The person being tested had to give an appropriate response to each card shown to him, based on its suit compared to the suit of the card shown before. This test illustrated a person's thought processing ability and ability to cope with mistakes and get back on track. The second test involved carrying out a paper-based task whilst listening to a story and noting down each time the story mentioned anything to do with driving. This test assessed a person's ability to multi-task, to switch task and to cope with multiple pieces of information.

3. THE STATIC RIJ (SIMULATOR)

A demonstration was given to show how the simulator could be used to assess various aspects of driving such as reaction times, steering ability, steering strength, braking force and visual fields. In particular the demonstration illustrated how reaction times slowed significantly when people were engaged in a conversation whilst driving, as opposed to focusing solely on the task of driving.

4. ADAPTED VEHICLES

There were a range of adapted vehicles present which had a range of different adaptations made to them. Everyone who attended got to drive one of the adapted vehicles.

MICK UPTON (Taylor Vinters, Cambridge)
Associate

03.08.12