They aren't in the brief

A DISCUSSION PAPER PRODUCED FOR THE KING'S FUND CENTRE · 1989

ADVERTISING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

SUSAN SCOTT-PARKER

"This advertisement is blatant, emotive, exploitation of disabled people. The image presented is so far from the truth that it is detrimental to all our efforts to emancipate disabled people and achieve their full participation in society."

Complaint to the Advertising Standards Authority from a person with a disability

"The issue of impact on the lives of disabled people has not come up – it's not in the brief"

Advertising agency executive

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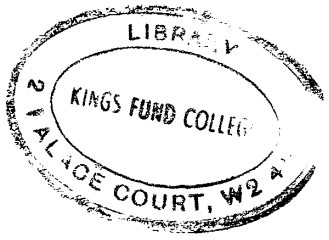

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Diana Twitchin and Andrea Whittaker from the Community Living Development Team for encouraging me to undertake this work. They believe it is essential to portray people with disabilities in positive ways if the team is to successfully promote the development of high quality local services. Their hope is that charity advertisers and advertising practitioners will become more sensitive to the pain and anger people experience when they see themselves portrayed in ways which they believe to be degrading and demeaning.

I would like to thank Marion Morton for her help and hard work on the project. I am also particularly grateful to Bill Felstead for his generous contribution of expert advice, commitment and unfailing enthusiasm.

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Introduction

'Charity advertising of people with disabilities is a growing, competitive industry'

The advertising of people with disabilities by charities is a competitive and fast-growing industry. The 18 top spending disability-related charities obtained media coverage worth well over £4.25 million in the 12 months ending June 1988, a scale of expenditure which can only be expected to grow with the advent of charity advertising on television.

People with disabilities comprise the largest minority group in Great Britain, and include an estimated 10-12% of the total population. Despite their numbers, however, they are particularly vulnerable, as they have no legal protection from discrimination. They may be (and often are) refused housing, jobs, transport and other basic services, simply and solely because they have disabilities. The quality of their lives is therefore influenced to an extraordinary extent by the assumptions and stereotypes held by members of the general public.

As charity advertising portraying disabled people becomes more visible and more expensive, and as in Britain charities are the only advertisers who use disabled people in their campaigns (unlike in North America), it becomes increasingly important to understand the way in which this advertising shapes the generally de-valued "public image" of people with disabilities.

'If campaigns fail to challenge stereotypes, they reinforce them'

If an advertising campaign fails to challenge widely held negative attitudes towards disabled people, it reinforces them, inevitably. It is therefore essential that those responsible for such campaigns have as much factual information as possible regarding the way important audiences are likely to respond to typical images and messages. No-one is simply a potential donor; they are also people who directly influence the day-to-day life of disabled people everywhere.

'The ethical implications remain unexplored'

The practical and ethical implications of charity advertising of disabled people remain largely unexplored. However, as people with disabilities begin to lobby more effectively and as expenditure of charitable monies on advertising increases, charities and advertising agencies must expect to come under increasing scrutiny:

- Can advertising demonstrate that the money spent on 'disability-charity' advertising promotes the long-term interests of people with disabilities?
- To what extent are ad agencies and charities accountable to people with disabilities for the way in which they are portrayed in the advertising produced on their behalf?
- Is it acceptable that there are more advertising industry guidelines governing the way toys are advertised to children than govern the way people with disabilities are advertised or portrayed to the general public?

This Discussion Paper sets out to describe the way disability-related advertising is currently undertaken. It highlights major issues which arose during wide ranging discussions with advertising practitioners, charity advertisers and people with disabilities. It ends with a series of suggestions to the advertising industry, charities and to The King's Fund regarding future action and development.

The King's Fund 'Fact Finding'

One aim of the King's Fund Centre is to promote the integration and empowerment of people with disabilities, a task which demands a sensitive understanding of the significance and impact of imagery, language, tone and presentation.

'Efforts to promote a positive view undermined'

The Centre has become increasingly concerned that its efforts to promote a positive view of physical and mental disability are undermined by the messages characteristic of much charity advertising. Furthermore, people with disabilities have come forward in increasing numbers to complain about the quality of charity advertising and to ask for support and advice. The prospect of television broadcasting even more powerful negative messages to an even wider audience [and at even greater costs] causes particular anxiety.

'Ads which offend disabled people still produced'

Standards vary considerably. Advertisements continue to be produced which are misleading, inaccurate and which promote attitudes and stereotypes which are deeply offensive to some disabled people. For example it is still not uncommon for ads to portray people with disabilities as hopeless,eternally childlike and naturally dependent on charity. Other campaigns take a more positive approach and actively seek to promote awareness and challenge damaging assumptions. Unfortunately it is difficult to systematically replicate or build on these examples of good practice, because so little information is readily available on which to base guidelines or professional development programmes related to marketing, advertising and disability.

A range of questions are encountered time and again:

- What types of images have been tested and proven useful when the aim is to promote positive attitudes or to raise funds?
- Can campaigns to raise money promote positive attitudes at the same time?
- What accountability can people with disabilities reasonably expect from advertising agencies and charities?
- What factual information would enable this advertising to be assessed impartially?
- How should people with disabilities be consulted in the process of planning and evaluating charitable advertising?
- Given standards fluctuate greatly from one campaign to another, what guidelines or code of practice is needed?

THE INTERVIEWS

'King's Fund commission a *fact finding* mission'

The King's Fund Community Living Development Team therefore commissioned a preliminary **"Fact Finding Exercise"** to identify the major issues and to bring together the research and evaluation findings which were felt by advertising practitioners in particular to be relevant and useful.

PARTICIPANTS

In early 1988 interviewers conducted exploratory informal interviews with advertising agencies, charity advertisers, people with disabilities and the Advertising Association.

Those agencies and charities participating were together responsible for obtaining media coverage worth more than £1.5 million in the preceeding 12 months. Ad agencies obtained discounts for these charity clients which are estimated to have reduced the total real cost by some 20-30% of that total bill. One agency, for example, offers all its services free of charge, a donation valued in six figures annually.

The advertising agencies who participated including some of the most successful and prestigious in Britain: Ogilvy and Mather; ARC Advertising; BMP Davidson Pearce; DMB & B; Aspect Hill and Holiday; and Young and Rubicam Ltd.

The **charities who participated** represented a mix of 'disease research' oriented organisations and 'disability-service-lobbying' societies: the RNIB, the RNID, the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Spastics Society, and MENCAP. They were chosen on the basis of industry figures showing that they each obtained media coverage worth more than £50,000 over the previous twelve months. (See Appendix A)

Most of the advertising under discussion was in the press, on posters and more rarely in the cinema. Direct mail was not included as it did not come within the remit of the advertising agencies consulted. Nor was it possible to consider the impact of imagery, 'tone' and presentation in fundraising telethons, public service announcements, radio, charitable publications - all of which have become increasingly controversial and which must be included in any future study.

'Charities are in desperate competition for money'

There was general agreement that charities are in desperate competition to raise as much money as possible for disabled people, who are in turn forced by political circumstances to rely on charities for vital services and products. This urgent need to raise money was seen to create constant tension with the desire to promote positive imagery: only "powerful" images could succeed when 150,000 charities were competing for the attention of potential donors. It was felt that this competition between charities made collaboration and the exchange of information unlikely: each charity being morally obliged to consider the needs of its own 'brand' of disabled people first. "It would be naive altruism to expect charities to share this information." (Advertising agency)

Many advertising professionals emphasised that these informal interviews had provided them with their first opportunity to consider the wider implications of disability-related advertising, particularly as it might affect the day-to-day lives of people with disabilities. There is as yet no forum for such debate within the industry, which leaves ad agencies totally reliant on their briefings by individual charities for guidance and information.

OUTCOMES

Advertising agencies and charities alike acknowledged the significance of the work they were producing and many were more than willing to consider the need for debate and collaboration in order to address the wider professional issues.

'Basic information about impact is simply not available'

It was impossible to collate the findings of research and evaluation regarding imagery, disability and advertising because such information simply is not available. None of the charities or ad agencies participating were aware of any research which considered the impact of different images and messages on audience assumptions and attitudes towards people with disabilities. Nor did they know how their various audiences currently viewed people with disabilities, be they people with specific disabilities or disabled people generally. Finally, no information was available regarding the impact of advertising campaigns on people with disabilities themselves, on their self-image and aspirations or on their quality of life.

'Research is confidential - even from people with disabilities'

Some charities had commissioned specific pieces of work to document public attitudes towards their charity, and more rarely towards 'their people', but that work was usually confidential and would not even be circulated amongst disabled people themselves.

Specific campaigns were rarely evaluated other than on a 'gut feeling' basis, or by considering the unsolicited response from regional branches of the advertiser charity. No evaluation had been done to examine the cumulative impact of individual charity campaigns, or of charity advertising across the board.

'People with disabilities not routinely involved'

People with disabilities are not routinely involved in the planning, research or evaluation of disability-related charity advertising. There are no 'pan-charity' guidelines recommending the extent to which people with disabilities should have a say in the advertising done in their name.

The brief for this piece of work was therefore changed by the King's Fund from a review of the research to a discussion paper designed to prompt debate and to consider what needs to happen next.

Questions and Answers

1. Why Do Charities Advertise?

None of the charities participating set out primarily or exclusively to promote positive attitudes towards either their own 'clients' or towards people with disabilities generally; "It is not our job to do generic attitude change" (advertising agency).

'Charities aim to raise *brand awareness*'

Charities which primarily fund research aim above all to create brand awareness which will promote fundraising. Other charities tend to combine a mixture of goals which might include: "raising awareness of the particular disability", "raising awareness of the charity", "educating the public", "building brand recognition", "fundraising" and "influencing attitudes". The need to "raise awareness" was mentioned frequently but rarely defined in concrete or measurable terms. Indeed one advertising agency expressed concern regarding a "lack of clarity regarding advertising objectives on the part of our charity client".

> "If it is a good campaign, it will soften people up for the next appeal."
> (a charity)
>
> "Our main goal is to raise money." (a charity)
>
> "Our priority is fundraising, not promoting a positive image of PD sufferers." (a charity)

The primary rationale of most of the charity advertising considered is the need to promote a "brand image of the charity" which will lead to more donations, which is linked (it is assumed) to an improved "awareness" of the people with disabilities concerned.

All charities promote the interests of their own particular 'brand' of people with disabilities. Only one said it worked "to get the public to change its attitude towards anyone with a disability, be it physical or mental." However even then, as that charity's advertising always goes out over its distinctive logo, the public could well assume it spoke only for its particular interest group.

'The issue of impact on disabled people has not come up'

The extent to which existing advertising reinforced or challenged prevalent attitudes had rarely been considered directly:

> "We have no brief to look at how advertising affects the lives of people on the street. We have not looked at general attitudes towards disability." (Advertising agency)
>
> "The issue of impact on the lives of disabled people had not come up." (Advertising agency)

2. "What Research Has Been Done Regarding the Impact of Charity Advertising on Disabled People and on Their Public Image or Quality of Life?"

> "I know of no research regarding language and the impact of words like disability and sufferer." (Advertising agency)
>
> "As far as I am aware, there is no research which deals specifically with images of disability." (Advertising agency)
>
> "I am not aware of any research on imagery which would be 'pan-charity', nor of any industry-wide study relating to visual imagery. I assume each agency does their own, as we do." (Advertising agency)

'I am not aware of any research on imagery'

'Research considers the impact on the charity'

As stated earlier, the aim of the vast majority of charity campaigns is ultimately to raise money, thus most of the little research that has been commissioned considers the impact of that advertising on the charity and the charity's image. Any questions regarding the public's perceptions of people with particular disabilities would focus on the extent to which those perceptions would influence someone's decision to donate money to a particular charity.

Some charities have done tracking studies to see how public awareness of their logo is influenced by particular campaigns, and others would present ideas and campaign strategies to small groups of people with their particular 'brand' of disability, but the results of such research remain confidential.

No research has been done to determine how a campaign for one particular disability could be expected to influence assumptions towards people with totally different disabilities. Given the general public may well assume all people with disabilities are somehow the same, particularly in terms of their assumed dependence and 'separateness', it is likely that one charity's poster campaign would influence attitudes towards a much larger group of people than those included in the brief .

While commercial advertisers such as breweries or car manufacturers pool resources to syndicate basic market research regarding their customers and the market place, no such collaboration exists between charities regarding imagery, disability and public attitudes. There is only the Charitable Aid Foundation's work related to league tables of donations.

3. "How are Campaigns Evaluated?"

'Evaluation is limited to *gut response*'

Very little formal evaluation of individual campaigns is undertaken, and no-one evaluates the impact of the range of campaigns running at any given moment, or over time. Again, given that the aim of any campaign is not specifically to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities, and given the target audience is not disabled people, evaluation when it is undertaken asks questions related to the impact on donors' awareness of the charity, not on the public image or quality of life of disabled people.

Many national charities rely almost exclusively on response from the branches for feedback and evaluation., yet no research has been done regarding the attitudes and assumptions of the people who constitute those branches. Indeed one agency commented:

> "Relying on feedback from the charity was a problem, given the people at the charity are so involved in the cause and so aware of the disability that they assume the general public shares their understanding. They are unable to relate to the general public and to the fact that certain frequently used terms inside the charity meant nothing outside."

'Advertising awards limited to creative criteria'

The coveted advertising industry awards given for charity campaigns reflect only creative criteria, and do not attempt to evaluate the impact of the advertisement on the people it portrays. One prestigious award went to a campaign which was later found to have been viewed by the general public as tasteless and degrading to people with disabilities.

4. "Are Negative Images Unavoidable if Charities are to Raise the Money They Need to Help Disabled People?"

'Negative imagery does not raise more money'

Charities and advertising agencies are in general agreement that negative imagery does not bring in more money than does positive imagery. However, the issue is anything but straightforward: what is negative to one person will be "powerful" and "successful" to another.

Many charities acknowledge that they need to 'tug at the heart strings' if they are to obtain the money they need to help people with disabilities. The distinction between what might be considered an acceptable degree of playing on people's sympathy and using negative imagery is obviously a difficult one to determine. Considerable research and debate will be necessary.

> "If dramatic visuals are not acceptable, then the alternative will not have the same impact." (Advertising agency)
>
> "If we could use the word 'death' we would raise more money and find the cure faster, but the person portrayed might read it." (Advertising agency)

"Advertisements need to be highly intrusive in order to draw attention to the needs of this group." (Advertising agency)

"We did some work on legacies and hired an outside company to do individual interviews a couple of years ago. We wrote a number of creative briefs and deliberately compared positive and negative images. People clearly preferred the positive to the negative." (Advertising agency)

"Any time death was in an ad for the charity, we bombed out." (Advertising agency)

"There is no evidence that I know of to say that negative imagery brings in more money." (Advertising agency)

"Positive imagery is not losing us money." (Charity)

'You can push success too far'

"Negative imagery won't get us what we want . . . but if you portray people as running happily and successfully and having fun, it can have a negative effect. People need to see there's hope, but you can push success too far." (Advertising agency)

5. "What Role do People With Disabilities Play in Determining How They are to be Portrayed in Advertising Which is Done in Their Name?"

People with disabilities have no generally acknowledged right to determine the manner in which they are portrayed to the general public, nor is there any routine way in which they are involved in planning or evaluating campaigns currently produced.

There are no charity or industry guidelines regarding the way in which people with disabilities could or should be consulted at any stage.

Some charities employ small numbers of people with disabilities who may occasionally meet advertising agency staff to comment on proposed creative strategies. Others will ask small groups of people with disabilities to comment on campaign proposals, comments which may or may not be reflected in the ads finally produced. The process differs from charity to charity. It is essentially ad hoc and heavily dependent on the attitudes and personalities of individuals within both agencies and charities.

"We have now established contact with a number of people who are disabled and are able to get their ideas, but these are essentially informal links and there are no guidelines laid down, whether this should be done as a matter of principle. " (Advertising agency)

'They are desperately anxious not to offend sufferers'

"People in the society felt morally responsible for the quality of the imagery and are desperately anxious not to offend sufferers." (Advertising agency)

'No matter how it upsets them, what we are doing is what we think is right'

"We can't open it up to what (people with handicaps) feel about it... no matter how it upsets them, what we are doing is what we think is right." (Advertising agency)

"We don't ask client groups for their ideas on advertising. We would try the ideas out on the disabled employed within the charity and have one on the committee probably for the attitude change campaign, but that is all." (Charity)

'We do not involve people with disabilities'

"I do not believe in committees. We do not involve people with our disability in the planning or evaluation of campaigns . . . feedback comes from the branches. " (Charity)

"The last marketing manager had disabled people she consulted within the charity. What disabled people really have to understand in the end is how difficult it is to get people to respond and give money, and that is what we are trying to do on their behalf." (Charity)

Any consultation with disabled people by charities is confined to that charity's particular 'brand' of disability: people with disabilities not associated with that charity, but who are nonetheless identified by the general public as "disabled", would not be consulted in any way.

Charities and the Advertising Industry: A Special Relationship

'Fiestas do not complain'

Advertising agencies and charities have a unique relationship, part business, part philanthropy, part mutual aid. While their way of working together is superficially modelled on the usual commercial relationship of agency and advertiser, there are important differences in the way things are done, why they are done, and how the participants view each other. The major difficulties arise simply because the commercial framework has no room in it for a human product: Fiesta cars do not complain that their job prospects are damaged by Ford advertisements.

Charities and agencies tend to share with the general public deeply rooted and unquestioned assumptions regarding charities and their natural right as charities to act with complete authority, not just for their model of disabled person, but for people with disabilities en masse. As one advertising executive replied when asked how people with the 'J Syndrome' felt about the last 'J' charity ad: "But J Syndrome is synonymous with the J Society."

'Charities act withtotal authority for their *brand* of disabled'

As it stands now, charities tend to commission campaigns as though they owned their particular "model" of disabled person, in much the same way that Ford owns Fiesta cars. The charity is assumed to have a similar expert authority, enhanced by unimpeachable motives, and can therefore present its product to the market in any way it sees fit.

To describe what happens in simplified terms:

The **charity** briefs the agency, pays the fee and becomes the **client.**

The **agency** remains the agency of course, but does a lot of work at less than commercial rates and saves the charity large sums in media discounts. The agency thus becomes a **benefactor.**

As charity campaigns are seen to operate outside the usual commercial constraints, agency creative talents have greater scope than usual and often win prestigious ad industry **awards,** thus the agencies become in a sense **beneficiaries.** Charity accounts also enhance their corporate image .

The **target audience** is the **potential donor/general public.** The **aim** of the campaign is to **raise brand awareness** for the **charity,** also described at this point as the **product.** Market research regarding the impact of such advertising naturally focuses on the target audience, that is, the potential donor, and the product, that is, the charity.

'The commercial model leaves disabled people out in the cold'

The entire *relationship* can be described *without reference to people with disabilities.* They are *not clients, not audience, not product, not customer.* Often even the people who actually feature in campaigns are 'able

bodied' models. Although people with disabilities are the ones who stand to suffer or benefit, the standard commercial model for managing advertising leaves them out in the cold. " They aren't in the brief" (Advertising Agency)

It is hardly surprising, therefore, that disabled people who are dissatisfied with the way they are advertised are automatically referred by ad agencies and indeed society generally, to their owner charity. (It would after all be Ford's job to explain the campaign to Fiestas, who couldn't be expected to understand the complexities of advertising given their highly subjective point of view).

'There will always be whingers'

Most importantly, because charities are seen to have legitimate ownership of the 'cause'; and because they are seen to be staffed by committed and hard working individuals, disabled people who express dissatisfaction tend to be quietly dismissed and are often seen in fact as part of the problem. They are described as 'ungrateful', 'militants', 'whingers', or most frequently as simply 'ignorant about advertising' too close to the subject, and therefore unable to judge.

> "The society cushions us from the militants" (Advertising agency)
>
> "There will always be whingers prepared to complain to Esther Rantzen" (Advertising agency)

'Ad. agencies become committed to the cause'

Advertising agencies become genuinely committed to the cause represented by their charity client: "PD is evil, we have to beat it," and willingly donate time and favours worth hundreds of thousands of pounds. The reality is however, that agencies still need to make a profit. They cannot afford to treat their charity clients as they would treat a commercial fee paying organisation. Junior staff rather than agency "top guns" may be assigned and there will be times when work commissioned at full commercial rates must take priority. One agency executive noted:

> "We recently did a time analysis on our charity account and found we were only getting 25% of the commercial rate, which has a definite impact on the way the account is handled in-house."

'Charities offer the freedom to be creative outside commercial constraints'

Advertising agencies and charities agree that charity accounts are nonetheless good for business from the agency's point of view. They provide a change from commercial work, staff see them as intrinsically worthwhile and as an opportunity to contribute to society, and they are good for the corporate image. Charity clients also provide what agencies describe as "the freedom to be creative outside commercial constraints". This in turn offers opportunities to win prestigious awards.

Disability-related charities occupy a special niche in the advertising industry, as witnessed by the fact that they do not usually join the Advertisers' Association or routinely participate in ad industry events.

For example, a national seminar for the advertising industry in 1987 examined "The Portrayal of People in Advertising".

It discussed the industry's responsibilities towards the portrayal of women, ethnic minorities and the aged. People with disabilities were not on the agenda, and the major disability-related advertisers were not represented. By the same token, there has been no major charity conference addressing issues common to disabled people who find themselves in advertisements for charities. Nor have charities come together to examine issues of concern, common to them in their role as advertisers.

'Standards not yet on the agenda'

From the British advertising industry point of view, people with disabilities never actually appear in *real* advertising, that is, not in commercial campaigns. The only advertisers who used disabled people are charities, and charities are intrinsically 'different'. Thus, unlike many issues which affect the advertising industry as a whole, responsibility for advertising standards in this specialist market is tacitly left to the individual charities. Generally however the question of industry standards and guidelines has yet to come up on anyone's agenda.

Questions which urgently need to be addressed by both charities and the advertising industry include:

- How does this unusual mix of business and philanthropy influence the way advertising is created?
- Would more research and standard setting have been done if the relationship were more clearly defined?
- Would charities and their clients benefit from relating to each other as fellow advertisers and beginning to syndicate the market research that is commonly required?
- How is it that advertising which has the potential to affect the lives of a large group of devalued individuals operates within fewer commercial restraints than advertising which promotes political broadcasts or toys?

One Approach to Rethinking the Portrayal of People with Disabilities

The following excerpts come from a publication commissioned by the American Department of Rehabilitation. It serves as an illustration of how practical guidelines can be developed for use by anyone involved in the portrayal of people with disabilities to any audience. It also highlights many of the issues which lie at the heart of this debate.

Show New Pathways to Social Esteem, Liberty and Competence

1. Does the presentation allow the public to see and understand how life works for people who need extra time and effort to move, communicate, learn and participate?

2. Does the presentation show how inventiveness and environmental adaptations for people with disabilities benefit everyone?

3. Does the programme surrender to the status-quo? Does it imply that current limits must be accepted? Does it concede to segregation and low expectations?

4. Do programmes help viewers see and understand the emotional impact upon people of situations that limit and undercut self-esteem? Do they contrast with endeavours that make people feel alive and important?

5. Does the programme suggest that any just vision of society, whatever its orientation, must include the integration and effective participation of people with disabilities?

'Challenge outmoded ideas'

"New" is the key. Outmoded ideas of what's possible for people with disabling conditions can be challenged by imaginative presentations of new communications systems, learning and teaching methods, industries, employment opportunities, laws, social values, interpersonal relations which have propelled people with "special needs" into social achievement and respect. Celebrate the productive powers of our society, both technical and human, so no-one can doubt the potential. Show how the opportunity to make life dignified and beautiful by valuing those with physical and mental disabilities triggers the power within people to create new worlds day after day.

Show that Everyone Makes a Contribution to our Lives

1. Are characters with disabilities shown as contributing, productive people? Social and family people? Do they evoke personal awareness and growth from others?

2. Are people shown becoming more resourceful as a result of association with persons who have a disability?

3. Does the presentation show persons with disabilities in the middle of things, enjoying what everyone enjoys, in full social and physical participation, experiencing and contributing to the full well-being and happiness of their friends and relations?

4. Is a full range of emotions drawn from characters who have disabilities; anger, frustration, love, sexuality, determination, humour, doubt, fantasy, sadness, pride?

'Will presentation startle and refresh?'

5. Will the presentation startle and refresh audiences by guiding them to identify and interact with persons who have special needs?

6. Are artists with disabilities used to play all sorts of characters as well as those with disabilities to enhance the competence of the portrayal?

Let's represent the 35 million people in the United States with disabling conditions as they really exist - as parents, workers, leaders, churchgoers, teachers, lovers, artists ... men and women growing. Some are good people, some are bad. Some brilliant, some not. But they are people first, full members of our society and economy, stretching our tolerance, challenging our complacency and dramatizing our interdependence. Every disability demands personal inventiveness which adds to the wealth of human accomplishment. The presence of people with profound disabilities ultimately enriches life and elevates the spirit for all people.

Eliminate Stereotypes and Handicappism

'Do people with disabilities speak on their own behalf?'

1. Do people with disabilities in your projects speak sincerely on their own behalf?

2. Do images convey the abilities, power and "accentuate the positive" of characters with disabling conditions, or is disability the sum total or most important part of the person?

3. Is evil, villainy, disease, menace, or the bizarre implied or thoughtlessly equated with disabling conditions?

4. Are conditions and social roles like mental handicap, cerebral palsy, polio, visual disability, deafness improperly shown as sickness and disease?

5. Does the use of disability labels and slang in dialogue awaken our understanding of how these stigmatise and display cultural insensitivity and cruelty?

6. Are disabling conditions or labels used to evoke ridicule?

7. Do the situations, associations, dialogue and symbols in which adults with disabilities are shown portray them as eternal children and thereby rob them of respect?

8. Do images stimulate pity, distance, charity or feelings of superiority over the person with a disability?

9. Has the use of patronising camera angles that diminish the humanising power of eye to eye contact and distortion to exploit stereotypes been avoided?

'Handicappism debases like racism or sexism'

"Handicappism" debases like racism or sexism. "Handicappism" is a cultural and social set of practices and attitudes which defines people as burdens, less than human or deserving or able to maintain and contribute to America. Stereotyped images make people with disabilities seem less than human. They play on pity. They play on fears. They stimulate illusions either of inadequacy or of superiority. They sensationalise physical deformities and unusual behaviour. They define people by their disability. They show people as helpless, hopeless, dangerous, animal-like, vegetable-like, eternally child-like, deserving only of charity. Let's re-think visual and verbal labels and images so that people with differences can be seen first and foremost as people.

The Need For Guidelines

" How can they justify a campaign which brings in money but reinforces an employers assumption that I am unemployable?" (a person with a disability)

"Money spent looking at imagery small potatoes'

"Money spent looking at imagery would be 'small potatoes' to ensure agencies aren't running away with negative imagery. The message to charities should be you have a responsibility to go to a reasonable length to present language and imagery that would not be offensive to the people represented" (Advertising agency)

There is an urgent need to develop practical guidelines governing the portrayal of people with disabilities in advertising:

- The virtual monopoly* held by charities in Britain over the portrayal of people with disabilities in advertising is unique and powerful. People with disabilities are used in advertising only to "promote" or personify other people with disabilities and the charities which act on their behalf.
- People with disabilities remain powerless to directly influence the nature and quality of the advertising done on their behalf and indeed, given their dependence on charities for basic services, are often reluctant to express dissatisfaction for fear of 'rocking the boat'.

'Agencies and charities share a moral obligation'

- Advertising agencies and charities clearly share a moral obligation to ensure that advertising promotes the long-term interests not only of individual brands of people with disabilities, but of people with disabilities generally. The interests of particular charities need not always be synonymous with the interests of disabled people.
- Neither the charities nor advertising agencies are yet able to demonstrate convincingly to people with disabilities that the advertising currently done in their name is truly in their long-term interests. Until the relevant research has been undertaken, the need for guidelines becomes even more critical.
- As people with disabilities and their advocates become more sophisticated in the use of marketing and advertising techniques, the advertising industry and charities will become increasingly vulnerable to criticism, particularly as expenditure expands to include TV advertising.

** In North America firms such as McDonald's Hamburgers, IBM and Levi's portray people with disabilities in commercial campaigns. This has yet to happen in Britain, and is unlikely to occur in the near future*

Any practical guidelines or code of practice will need to be developed by people with disabilities, advertising agencies and charities working in partnership. The following questions are intended only to help initiate debate regarding the nature of the guidelines which might be produced:

- What fundamental level of research and evaluation regarding imagery and campaign techniques should be undertaken, by individual charities and charities collectively, to ensure that advertising does not inadvertently damage the long term interests of people with disabilities?
- How should people with disabilities be consulted or given ultimate control over the way in which they are portrayed?
- How can one ensure that advertising promoting a particular interest group is not done at the expense of other people with disabilities who are in no way represented by a particular charity advertiser?
- What type of imagery, language and presentation is not only acceptable to people with disabilities, but also promotes their long-term interests?
- How should charities and the advertising industry be accountable to people with disabilities?
- What is needed to ensure people with disabilities understand their right to protest and how they should best go about it?

What Needs To Be Done

'Institute an award for ads . which promote positive attitudes'

1. Institute an *award for advertising* (as currently under consideration by *The King's Fund Centre)* which promotes positive attitudes, challenges negative stereotypes and which is considered to reflect standards of excellence by people with disabilities as well as authorities in advertising.

2. Develop a collaborative model so charities can *syndicate the basic market research* information they require and so they can circulate that information to all concerned parties, including people with disabilities.

3. Produce *Guidelines* or a *Code of Practice* for use by both charities and advertising agencies which are then widely promoted and monitored.

4. Create a "*Media, Advertising, and Disability Advisory Panel*" or "Social Advertising Board" which will:

'Promote standards of excellence'

a.) Promote standards of excellence and ethical practice in the field of disability-related advertising.

b.) Bring advertising agencies, charities and people with disabilities together as part of an on-going development and consultation process.

c.) Assist people with disabilities to advertise and campaign successfully on their own behalf, and to influence and inform charity advertisers and advertising agencies.

d.) Review the 'special relationship' between agencies and disability-related charities and recommend alternatives or a practical restructuring. Could the American Advertising Council model be adapted to suit the British situation?

5. Implement model 'pilot' campaigns to test alternative strategies which promote both positive behaviour and attitudes and to raise the public profile of people with disabilities. Possible pilot campaigns could include one sponsored by people with disabilities themselves, one undertaken by a 'neutral' charity like The King's Fund Centre, and one with an unorthodox sponsor such as a business or a church.

6. Implement a major communications programme to inform people with disabilities about advertising, the *code of practice,* and how to register complaints.

Conclusions

Every advertising campaign sponsored by a disability-related charity will inevitably run the risk of harming the very people who are meant to ultimately benefit - that is, people with disabilities.

Campaigns are still produced which reinforce those negative assumptions about disabled people which in turn contribute to their continued dependence on charity. Ironically, these same damaging campaigns are often commissioned by charities which in their stated goals aim to promote the independence and the dignity of those they serve.

'Few facts to be found'

The original 'fact finding' brief for this piece of work had to be changed simply because there were so few useful 'facts' to be found. No-one can predict the effect which a particular image, a particular campaign or series of campaigns is likely to have on the status and public image of disabled people.

'No one can predict the effect a campaign will create'

Charity advertisers cannot describe how important audiences, such as politicians or employers, currently view 'disability'; nor do they know how to design campaigns which are most likely to promote specific types of behaviours or attitudinal changes.

The issues are complex. The 'Brand Image' of a charity depends upon the image of its particular 'Brand' of disabled people in subtle ways which are not yet understood. Never, however, is it only the charity that is advertised.

'People with disabilities have little influence'

People with disabilities have little direct influence or control over the advertising which portrays them to the general public. Many do not complain publicly. They know full well that charities are in desperate competition for money in order to provide vital services and are naturally reluctant to seem ungrateful or destructive. Those who do complain are often ignored, either because they lack expertise in advertising, or because they are assumed to represent a minority, biased 'militant' view.

Neither the Advertising Standards Authority nor the charities themselves have developed relevant guidelines governing this kind of advertising, which makes it even more difficult for individuals to protest effectively, and which means campaigns can vary greatly in quality and effect.

Advertising which affects the lives of vulnerable people who can neither control it nor change 'sponsors', demands sophistication and sensitivity if it is to be done responsibly. The assumption that the practice of charity advertising can be modelled directly on the practice of commercial advertising may well prove to be counter productive.It is encouraging that there is a growing awareness amongst both charities and advertising

practitioners of the need to promote greater professionalism and accountability in this highly specialist field.

Small groups of charities are beginning to joint fund pieces of research, albeit in an 'ad hoc' fashion and advertising practitioners are beginning to acknowledge the specialist expertise required in this unique market place. The major charity advertisers now need to develop a joint, systematic approach to planning research strategies and to sharing the knowledge that becomes available. It is time to pool resources and to syndicate research and development activities. If highly competitive commercial firms can justify syndicated research, why not charities?

'Television advertising will be even more of a gamble'

As charities begin to use Television advertising, the need for a workable Code of Practice becomes even more urgent. If we do not properly understand the impact achieved by print, poster and cinema ads, how can we justify the risks created by the use of a much more powerful medium? What will the IBA and Cable Authority's more relaxed guidelines on charity advertising really mean for the public image and social status of disabled people?

The first step is for charity advertisers, people with disabilities and the advertising industry to come together to agree what needs to be done and to work together to ensure people with disabilities become genuinely "part of the brief". The proposed new 'Advertising Award', for campaigns which promote positive perceptions of disabled people should serve as a pratical and positive starting point for such collaboration.

APPENDIX A THE MISSING INFORMATION

We need to identify the common minimum level of on-going research and evaluation which should be done to ensure as far as possible that charitable monies spent on advertising can be justified by positive long-term benefits to both people with disabilities and to charities.The following questions are only meant to suggest a starting point. They highlight areas where inter-charity collaboration and syndicated qualitative and quantitative research could have immediate benefit.

1. What stereotypes, attitudes, assumptions characterise the general public's view of people with disabilities? Of people with specific disabilities? How do key segments of the general public differ in the way they view people with disabilities?

2. What impact does current charity advertising have on audience attitudes and assumptions and the public image of people with disabilities, and specific disabilities- that is, individual campaigns and campaigns en masse?

3. How does the constant juxtapositioning of people with disabilities with charities as their only public 'sponsor' or 'trade mark' influence their public image?

4. How do attitudes towards disability- related charities influence attitudes towards people with disabilities?

5. What impact does specific typical imagery, terminology and messages have on particular audiences?

6. What impact does one charity's advertising have on public response to disabled people who are not 'owned' by that charity ?

7. Does the general public accept that charities have a legitimate role to play as campaigners confronting entrenched negative attitudes towards people with disabilities? Do such campaigns influence their decision to donate money?

8. How do disability versus disease - research oriented charities differ in the way they use imagery and advertising? How does the advertising of research oriented charities influence attitudes towards lobbying charities?

9. What impact do specific advertising tools and techniques have on attitudes towards people with disabilities? For example, the use of amateurish black and white ads, specific charity logos, the use of models versus real people with disabilities, cinema, fundraising, films, public service announcements.....?

10. Is it possible for campaigns to aim successfully to simultaneously raise money and to promote positive attitudes towards people with disabilities?

11. How should campaigns to promote positive attitudes and behaviours be done? What impact would changing sponsorship away from charities have? What impact results from advertising done under a combined multi-charity trade mark?

12. Given widespread reliance on charity "branches" as evaluators of campaigns, what attitudes and assumptions towards people with disabilities are likely to influence branch member response?

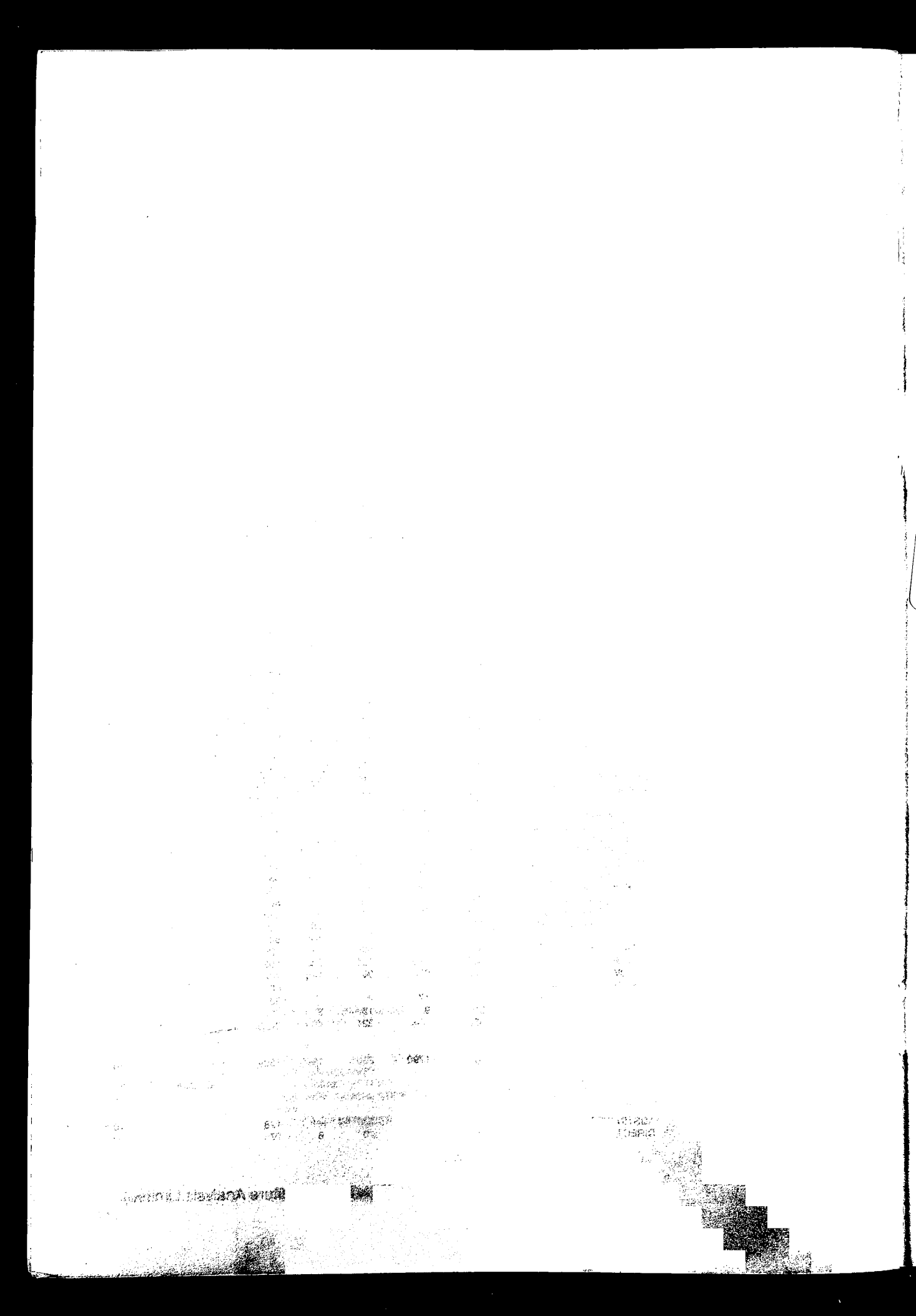
APPENDIX B Media Expenditure Analysis of Charity Advertisers

JUNE 1988		QTR TOTAL £000	APR £000	MAY £000	JUN £000	MAT £000	TV %	MAT RAD %	PRS %
PRODUCT DESCRIPTION	AGENCY								
AFRICAN NATL CONG FD									
ACTION AID	THE MEDIA SHOP	18	6	3	8	120	-	-	100
AMNESTY INTERN	YELLOWHAMMER	98	22	34	42	186	-	-	100
ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND	DAVIDSON PEARCE	23	1	5	16	75	-	9	91
ARTHRTS & RHEUM CNCL	SOCIAL SERVICE	16	8	2	6	72	-	-	100
ASTHMA RESEARCH CNCL	SOCIAL SERVICE	16	5	3	8	83	-	-	100
BLUE CROSS ANML HOSP	DIRECT	21	8	10	3	118	-	-	100
BRIT DIABETIC ASSOC	ASPECT HILL HOLIDAY	13	-	8	4	86	-	-	100
BRIT HEART FOUND	L GRAHAM BROWNE	77	19	19	39	108	-	-	100
CANCER RESEARCH CAMP	D M B & B	278	27	27	225	672	-	-	100
CHRISTIAN AID	YELLOWHAMMER	83	35	14	34	397	-	3	97
CHRISTIAN CHILD FUND	MEDIA CAMPAIGN/COHEN	47	15	32	-	112	-	-	100
DISTRESS GENTLEFOLK	BRIAN CLARK MEDIA	34	9	19	6	341	-	-	100
DR BARNARDOS		48	16	19	13	168	-	-	100
DONKEY SANCTUARY	SIGMA COMMUNICATIONS	12	8	-	4	119	-	-	100
ETHIOPIAN FAMINE	RIDGE ADVERTISING	12	10	-	3	92	-	-	100
FOSTER PARENTS PLAN	J W T LONDON	-	-	-	-	63	-	-	100
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH	BRUCE MATTHEWS/CHP 1	48	14	16	18	120	-	-	100
GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND	McCANN-ERICKSON	16	4	1	11	95	-	-	100
GREENPEACE	SOCIAL SERVICE	38	3	33	3	120	-	-	100
HELP THE AGED PRESS	BYGRAVES B V S/U H P	72	34	20	18	257	-	-	100
IMPERIAL CANCER RSCH	OGILVY & MATHER DRCT	67	41	14	12	328	-	-	100
INTERN FUND ANML WEL	KHBB	218	-	206	12	612	15	-	85
LEONARD CHESHIRE	MEDIA MARKETING	86	19	45	22	169	-	-	100
LEUKAEMIA RESEARCH	DIRECT	-	-	-	-	71	-	-	100
MARIE CURIE MEM FUND	SAATCHI & SAATCHI	145	142	1	2	178	-	-	100
METHODIST HOMES AGED	NICKLIN ADVERTISING	75	48	3	24	274	-	-	100
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS	CHARTERHOUSE	22	16	6	-	113	-	-	100
N S P C C	DAVIDSON PEARCE	122	35	53	34	396	-	6	94
NATL CHILDRENS HOME	SAATCHI & SAATCHI	36	13	-	23	530	-	-	100
NATL SOC CANCER RLF	DDM ADVERTISING	8	8	-	-	140	14	-	86
NATL TRUST	MEDIA BUS/DAVIS WLKN	136	50	67	20	490	-	-	100
OXFAM	DIRECT	49	15	21	13	91	42	-	58
R S P C A	D M B & B	8	1	8	-	117	-	-	100
R N L I	BRUCE MATTHEWS/CHP 1	46	8	-	38	279	6	-	94
R A F BENEVOLENT FD	BROOKES & VERNS LON	71	27	26	17	254	-	-	100
RED CROSS	DIRECT	18	4	7	7	83	-	-	100
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION	J W T LONDON	130	43	78	10	275	-	-	100
ROYAL HOSP & HOME	LONSDALE ADVERTISING	34	10	24	-	416	-	-	98
ROYAL SOC PROT BIRDS	J W T LONDON	16	7	3	7	72	-	-	100
ROYAL NATL INST BLIND	KHBB	91	13	38	40	469	-	-	100
R U K B A	ARC ADVERTISING	1	-	1	-	108	-	-	100
ROYAL NATL INST DEAF	AUSTIN WEST MEDIA	95	41	42	12	104	-	1	100
ST JOSEPH HOSPICE	OGILVY & MATHER ADV	14	-	12	1	111	1	2	99
SAVE THE CHILDREN FD		19	5	7	7	72	-	-	100
SPASTICS SOCIETY	OGILVY & MATHER DRCT	4	2	2	-	107	-	-	100
THE CHILDREN SOCIETY	D M B & B	110	36	73	1	630	-	-	89
U N I C E F	YELLOWHAMMER	77	57	20	-	285	-	-	100
WISHING WELL APPEAL	BSB DORLAND	-	-	-	-	99	-	-	100
GROUPED BRANDS (810)	COLLETT DICKENSON PR	6	-	-	6	715	-	-	100
OTHER BRANDS (200)	GROUPED BRANDS	13	3	5	5	72	-	-	100
		659	255	230	174	2479	-		100
								EDUCATIONAL	
TOTAL CHARITY		3350	1143	1262	946	13540	2	-	98
								-	
ACCELERATED LEARNING		20	13	-	7	66	-	-	100
B F P SCHL PHOTOGRPY		18	7	7	4	71	-	-	100
CHARTSEARCH BOOKS	DIRECT	177	85	42	50	1074	-	50	100
EARLY LEARN CENTRE	DAVID COLEMAN MEDIA	9	4	-	5	285	50	-	49
FINANCIAL I TRN PROG	BILLETT/THP	25	15	-	10	101	-	-	100
H I T E C C		2	-	-	2	100	-	-	100
I C S	B M P	61	22	18	22	271	-	-	100
LINGUAPHONE INST	CIA	98	39	35	24	493	-	14	100
MANCHESTER BUS SCHL	LEAGAS DELANEY	8	6	1	-	69	14	-	71
MEMORY CONCENT STUD	J W T MANCHESTER	83	6	34	42	244	-	-	100
N C V O	TMD ADV MANCHESTER	50	30	20	-	537	-	-	100
OPEN UNIVERSITY BUS	CIA	66	59	4	3	170	-		100
	ALL MEDIA SERVICES								

(Information courtesy of Media Expenditure Analysis Limited)

DECEMBER 1988		QTR TOTAL £000	OCT £000	NOV £000	DEC £000	MAT £000	TV %	MAT RAD %	PRS %
PRODUCT DESCRIPTION	AGENCY								
AFRICAN NATL CONG FD	THE MEDIA SHOP	7	2	3	2	61	--	--	100
ACTION AID	YELLOWHAMMER	142	28	31	83	410	--	--	100
AMNESTY INTERN	BMP DAVIDSON PEARCE	37	1	2	34	91	--	12	88
ARMY BENEVOLENT FUND	SOCIAL SERVICE	23	4	6	13	62	--	--	100
ARTHRTS & RHEUM CNCL	SOCIAL SERVICE	70	26	23	20	163	--	--	100
ASTHMA RESEARCH CNCL	DIRECT	6	6	---	---	84	--	--	100
B P S S	DIRECT	---	---	---	---	90	--	--	100
BLUE CROSS ANML HOSP	MEDIA INSIGHT Q W P	96	15	32	49	134	--	--	100
BRIT DIABETIC ASSOC	L GRAHAM BROWNE	57	19	19	20	154	--	--	100
BRIT HEART FOUND	D M B & B	82	55	19	9	747	--	--	100
CANCER RESEARCH CAMP	YELLOWHAMMER	157	38	25	94	493	--	2	98
CHRISTIAN AID	MEDIA CAMPAIGN COHEN	70	13	28	28	137	--	--	100
CHRISTIAN CHILD FUND	BRIAN CLARK MEDIA	143	66	31	47	363	--	--	100
COMMUNITY ACTION TR	DIRECT	267	48	177	42	271	--	--	100
DISASTER EMERG COMM	SMITH BUNDY	1	1	---	---	213	--	--	100
DISTRESS GENTLEFOLK		47	17	21	9	147	--	----	100
DR BARNARDOS	VALIN POLLEN LIMITED	260	76	87	97	284	--	--	100
DONKEY SANCTUARY	RIDGE ADVERTISING	54	3	11	40	93	--	--	100
FOSTER PARENTS PLAN	BRUCE MATTHEWS CHP 1	36	20	15	---	126	--	--	100
FRIENDS OF THE EARTH	McCANN-ERICKSON	30	3	7	20	81	--	--	100
FRIENDS OF ELDERLY	THE HARRISON AGENCY	31	13	16	2	62	--	--	100
GUIDE DOGS FOR THE BLIND	SOCIAL SERVICE	72	44	13	16	145	--	--	85
GREENPEACE PRS	BYGRAVES B V S UPTN	89	24	54	11	318	--	--	100
HELP THE AGED PRESS	OGILVY & MATHER DRCT	76	18	21	37	269	--	--	100
IMPERIAL CANCER RSCH	KHBB ZENITH	---	---	---	---	478	--	--	100
INTERN FUND ANML WEL	MEDIA MARKETING	19	14	---	5	172	--	--	100
INTERN LEG PROT HRSE	RIDGE ADVERTISING	61	4	56	1	80	--	--	100
LEUKAEMIA RESEARCH	SAATCHI & SAATCHI ZNTH	6	2	1	2	176	--	--	94
LONDON ASSOC BLIND	BMP DAVIDSON PEARCE	33	---	3	30	73	--	--	100
MARIE CURIE MEM FUND	NICKLIN ADVERTISING	134	53	65	16	270	--	--	86
MENCAP	YOUNG & RUBICAM	24	7	14	4	158	--	--	100
METHODIST HOMES AGED	CHARTERHOUSE	39	8	15	16	106	--	--	58
MULTIPLE SCLEROSIS	BMP DAVIDSON PEARCE	229	61	126	42	495	--	5	95
MUSCULAR DYSTROPHY	ASPECT HILL HOLLIDAY	118	113	---	5	200	--	--	94
MUSICIANS BENEV FUND	CONNELL MAY STEAVNSN	18	5	12	1	63	--	--	100
N S P C C	SAATCHI SAATCHI ZNTH	200	65	14	121	335	--	--	100
NATL CHILDRENS HOME	DDM ADVERTISING	25	---	---	25	110	18	--	82
NATL SOC CANCER RLF	MEDIA BUS DAVIS WLKN	154	41	51	62	420	--	--	98
NATL TRUST	DIRECT	7	1	4	3	79	43	--	57
OXFAM	D M B & B	82	53	19	10	145	--	--	100
R S P C A	BRUCE MATTHEWS CHP 1	134	48	36	50	319	--	--	100
R N L I	BROOKES & VERNS LON	90	13	56	21	291	--	--	100
R A F BENEVOLENT FD	DIRECT	25	11	11	2	89	--	--	100
RED CROSS	JWT LONDON	55	27	---	27	223	--	--	100
ROYAL COLLEGE SURG	WHITES BULL HOLMES	19	7	7	4	62	--	--	100
REDWING HORSE SANCT	LAVERY ROWE	22	14	---	8	142	--	--	100
ROYAL BRITISH LEGION	THE CAPPER GRNGR AG	381	35	347	---	444	--	1	99
ROYAL HOSP & HOME	JWT LONDON	8	4	4	---	65	--	--	100
ROYAL COMM SOC BLIND	SMITH BUNDY	63	10	40	13	63	--	--	100
ROYAL SOC PROT BIRDS	KHBB ZENITH	169	39	82	48	442	--	--	100
ROYAL NATL INST BLIND	ARC ADVERTISING	75	36	24	15	88	--	--	100
R U K B A	AUSTIN WEST MEDIA	108	59	47	3	216	--	--	100
ROYAL NATL INST DEAF	OGILVY & MATHER ADV	44	---	16	28	73	2	13	85
ST JOSEPH HOSPICE		30	7	7	16	80	--	--	100
STAR & GARTER	SOCIAL SERVICE	50	1	50	---	72	--	--	100
SPASTICS SOCIETY	D M B & B	424	220	125	79	1003	7	--	93
THE CHILDREN SOCIETY	YELLOWHAMMER	329	92	90	148	434	--	--	100
U N I C E F	BSB DORLAND/ZENITH	---	---	---	---	68	--	--	100
WORLD WILDLIFE CONS	OGILVY & MATHER ADV	19	17	2	---	68	--	--	100
GROUPED BRANDS (B10)	GROUPED BRANDS	31	9	15	8	70	--	--	100
OTHER BRANDS (206)		958	178	321	459	2425	--	2	98
TOTAL CHARITY		6035	1790	2301	1943	15093	1	1	98
								EDUCATIONAL	
ACCELERATED LEARNING	AUSTIN WEST/HIGGS L	34	11	23	---	128	--	--	100
AMERICAN COLLEGE	DIRECT	22	4	10	8	77	--	--	100

(Information courtesy of Media Expenditure Analysis Limited)

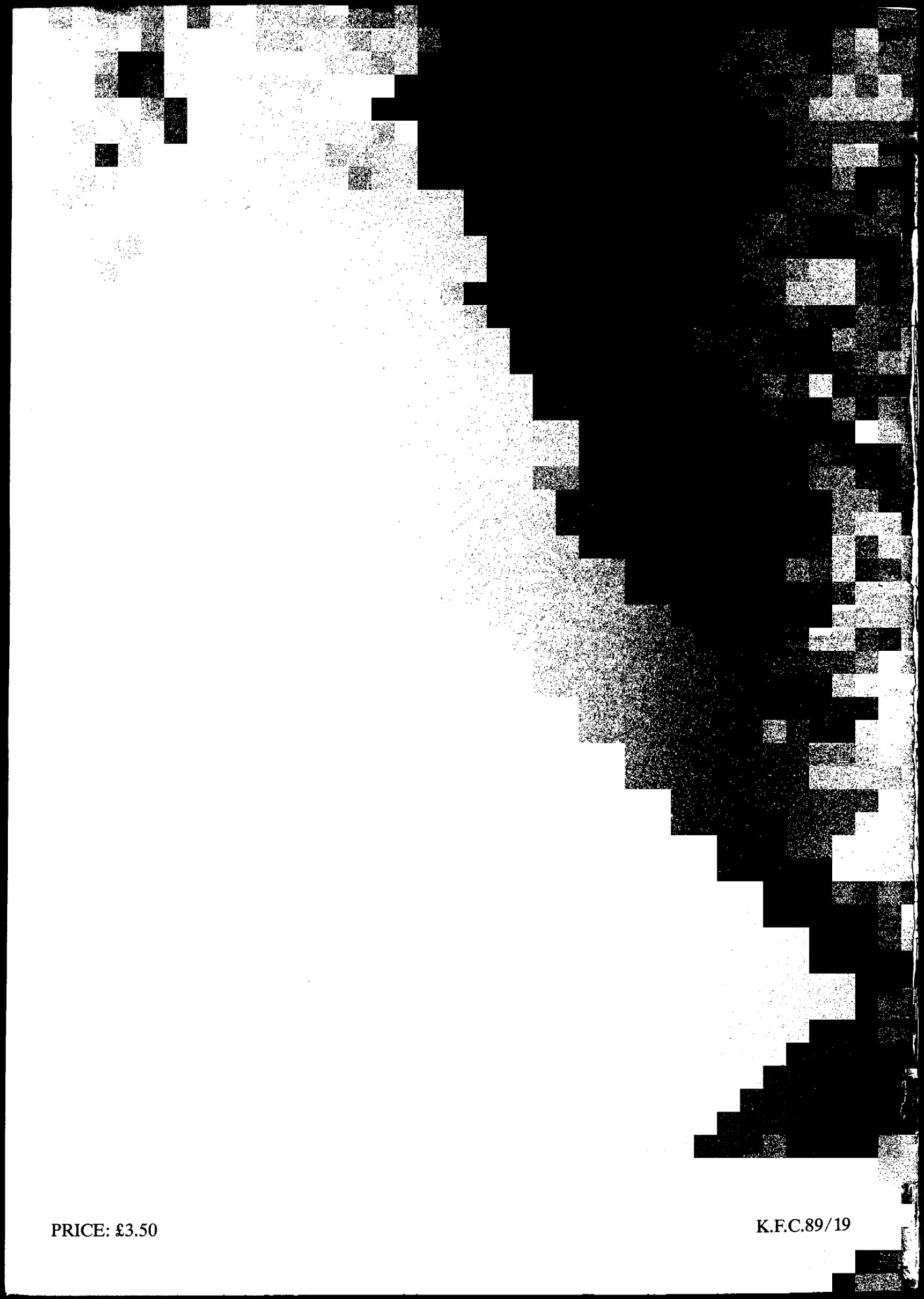


Susan Scott-Parker has worked as an independent consultant to consumer groups and to planners and providers of services to people with disabilities since 1978. In Canada much of her work involved advising disabled people on how to establish and market their own services and products.

Just before moving to England, she published Canada's first market research into employer response to campaigns promoting job seekers with disabilities.

In England she has worked for local and central government, voluntary organisations, consumer groups and the business sector. Much of her work involves promoting practical partnerships between services, disabled people and the business community, with particular reference to employment services.

She is Director of the "Employers' Forum on Disability" set up by Business in the Community, is a member of The King's Fund Strategy Group on Physical Disability, and is an associate of the Coverdale organisation.



PRICE: £3.50

K.F.C.89/19

Work with family once linked

Parents may be unprepared for inability to benefit from breaks because of anxiety/guilt. Where life has revolved around handicapped child, there may be a loss of purpose - some one else can cope. A delicate balance in the family may have been shifted. Parents may be unprepared for the strong attachment which develops between their child and the relief carers. Again what are the childs feelings? Are the family getting less support that the Relief Carers?

Monitoring Of Links

This is necessary because families' needs change: relief carers circumstances change. Are needs being met? Are relief carers being over-burdened? There may have been unspoken expectations on the part of parents or relief parents, e.g. child would be taken out more or that families would become close friends, differences may arise as to how child's handicap or behaviour should be coped with. Under-use of scheme - is this due to unresolved feelings or wrong choice of relief carers. How much choice do parents themselves get? Over-use of scheme - what is happening in family? Is long term care appropriate?

Review

Is six monthly review a minimum? This can take the form of worker checking out situation with both parties or could be meeting of all those involved in parents' or relief carers' home.

Ways of organising Support/Monitoring

Co-ordinator works with Relief Parent, Specialist or generic Social Worker works with family. The workers liaise.

Link worker appointed to each link e.g. Co-ordinator, Specialist Social Worker, parent, role to monitor Link and deal with problems relating to scheme - refer to Social Worker where appropriate, Link workers meet regularly.

Additional support can be provided by:-

Relief Carers - they can encourage use of scheme and open discussion of problems relating to care of child.

Groups for parents.

Joint workshops with Relief Carers.

Social gatherings.

Newssheets.

Support also needs to be extended to families on waiting list for scheme or where link has broken down.

In some areas these standards seem impossible to achieve

Do Co-ordinators then have a responsibility not to continue to expand the scheme? It may be inappropriate to link some families unless social worker continues to be involved.