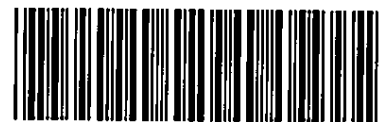


Company Number: 01658354

THE ASSOCIATION FOR REAL CHANGE

ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2007

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The Association for Real Change

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Charity Information

The Association for Real Change is a charity registered with the Charity commission and a company limited by guarantee. It is generally known in the sector by its acronym ARC.

Registered office	ARC House	Telephone number	01246 555043
& headquarters	Marsden Street	Fax number	01246 555045
	Chesterfield	Website	www.arcuk.org.uk
	S40 1JY	email	info@arcuk.org.uk

Registered Company no 1658354

Registered Charity no 285575

Auditors	Helmores, 35-37 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0BY	Bankers	Lloyds TSB Bank Plc, 27 Market Place, Chesterfield, S40 1PN
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Insurance Advisers Capita Insurance

Directors and trustees of the charity

The Directors who served during the year were

Paul Ashton	Roy Palframan
Jenny Pearce	David Adams (appointed 10/2/07)
Brian Perowne	Steve Inch
John Reed	Steve Jenkin
Janine Rose	Catherine Baines (appointed 12/12/06)
Charmian Ledsham+ (resigned 15/2/07)	Carole Sawyers
Martin Lett	Su Sayer OBE
Agnes Lunny OBE+++	Tony Shield++ (resigned 6/9/2007)
Neil McConachie	Paul Snell
Wendy Spencer+ (appointed 8/3/2007)	Gary Bye
Janine Tregelles	David Wandless
David Wilson	

+ Chair, ARC Scotland ++ Chair ARC, Wales +++ Chair ARC, Northern Ireland

Principal Officers and member organisations represented

Chair	Steve Inch, New Dimensions Group
Vice Chair	David Wilson, Robert Owen Communities
Hon Treasurer	Steve Jenkin, Elizabeth Fitzroy Support
Chair ARC Scotland	Charmian Ledsham, Brothers of Charity
	Wendy Spencer, Turning Point Scotland
Chair ARC Cymru (Wales)	Tony Shield, Cartref Ni Cymru
Chair ARC Northern Ireland	Agnes Lunny, Positive Futures
Chief Executive	James Churchill

Report of the Chair of ARC for the year ended 31 March 2007

When I re-read last year's report I was struck by how much things can change and yet still stay the same. Despite changes in the composition of Government, all service providers are affected by the radical new expectations around the delivery of service. It is clear that the current Minister and administration remain committed to the idea of the personalisation of services, with services for people with learning disabilities in the forefront. I am sure that ARC's members endorse the principles underpinning this agenda, but many are troubled by significant uncertainties surrounding the way it is to be implemented.

In the midst of all this, ARC's members are all experiencing enormous pressures over costs, staffing and regulatory requirements. Keeping the current services going whilst also at the same time trying to redesign them wholesale is not easy. ARC's clear duty in all this is to keep members well informed and up to date and to provide a means of sharing what is going on, how people are dealing with problems as they arise and enabling us all to learn from our collective experiences. Recent examples have been provided by commissioning practice around the retendering of services, which are, by common agreement, not handled as well as they should be by some authorities. We all need to make sure that in future, when services are up for re-tender, the process is handled with due care and attention to the needs of all the stakeholders.

A number of ARC members have embraced the 'In Control approach' to service provision whilst others remain sceptical about long term viability and the capacity (and willingness) of the current system to handle personalised services on a very large scale. This divergence of view is perfectly understandable and to be expected in a broad based organisation such as ARC. The unifying factor is the common desire to see good quality services being delivered to people with a learning disability in which they are the focal point of services.

In the past year, ARC has sadly had to let a number of its staff members go. To start with, our large ESF project wound down and was not replaced by other projects. Then, financial constraints forced us for the very first time for many years to make redundancies in order to have a balanced budget for this coming year. I would in particular single out for thanks Chris Mitchell, our Deputy Chief Executive, who left us at the year end. Council took these decisions with a heavy heart, but saw no alternative.

In spite of a financially difficult year, our report does show that we have still been able to produce good outcomes for members and the people they work with in a number of areas. A survey of members conducted at the beginning of this year clearly showed that the services ARC provides are highly valued by its members. [A summary of the survey results is attached for members to this report.] We very much expect that to continue into the next year and have just held a most successful Awayday for trustees to begin to refine our 5 year strategy and develop our business plan over the next two years. We will shortly be sharing the first draft of this strategy with staff and members.

During the year we have had occasion to hold two Extraordinary General Meetings (EGMs), neither of which was looked for by us. One was prompted by changes to the Memorandum and Articles, required by the Charity Commission. It is clear that further changes will be needed for ARC to register with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator so that we may continue to operate in Scotland in the future and yet more changes for Northern Ireland when new charity regulations come into force there. The other EGM was called to terminate the membership of a member organisation in ARC at the end of a long and disruptive process. It is the clear intention of the Council to put all this behind us and press on with ensuring ARC is able to support the provision of good quality services for people with a learning disability in the future.

Looking to the future members will know that the Government is planning a 'refresh' of Valuing People in England and that the future of many of the national and local delivery structures such as the Valuing People Support team and the role of local learning disability partnership boards will be reviewed. Changes in Government in Wales and Northern Ireland have led to something of a hiatus whilst the political processes have worked themselves out. The return of devolved government in Northern Ireland is welcome and will enable more direct access to Ministers in future. In Scotland, a new minority government now led by the SNP appears to be continuing with the previous policy contained in the *Changing Lives* agenda. Now that such political matters are more settled we are all aware of the potential for progress for services for people with a learning disability.

This past year saw the issue of housing and support for people with learning disabilities rising up the agenda. With other agencies ARC has long been pressing for some clarity on what has become known as the "Turnbull" issues, named after the Commissioner whose ruling on housing benefit is focusing attention and concern on how people living in their own homes can get enough support and benefit within the current rules in order to carry on living there. ARC recently had a letter from Peter Hain MP, the new Secretary of State at the Department of Work and Pensions which indicates the possibility of new thinking and a willingness to engage with the sector to sort this out.

As ever, I am very grateful for all the help which members of Council and the Executive Committee have given to me over the past year. ARC is a membership organisation and we are dependent upon the support of members to make ARC the effective organisation it has become. Again, our thanks go to David Ellis of SCIE who has been an Observer on our Board for this past and many previous years.

Finally, I would like to thank James Churchill and his staff team. Their commitment and hard work has seen ARC through another year in which much has been achieved. We look forward to more success this year with confidence.



Steve Inch
Hon Chair

Trustees' Report for the year ended 31st March 2007

Governing document

The charity was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee in 1982 and is governed in accordance with its Memorandum and Articles of Association and Standing Orders

Governance and membership

Membership of the Association is open to any provider of services to people with learning disabilities. Membership is drawn from the private, voluntary, not for profit, housing association and ex-NHS / Local Authority trust sectors. Activities provided by members include the provision of residential care, day care, domiciliary support, social work support, education and training services, employment services, leisure and recreation, supported living, adult placements. The Association's membership base is extremely wide, from large national organisations down to single small registered care homes, supported housing schemes and adult placement services as well as unregistered services.

At the close of the year ARC had a paid up membership of 420 organisations. ARC's members currently provide services and support to over 35,000 people with a learning disability across the UK.

ARC is governed by a Council of up to 28 members. There are 16 honorary officer posts held on an annual basis (UK Chair, UK Vice Chair, UK Treasurer, Chairs of ARC in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the nine English Regions and the UK Training Consortium Chair). In addition, elected on a rotating three year basis there are 12 seats for directly elected member organisations. All UK officer posts and those trustees retiring by rotation are elected at the AGM held during ARC's annual conference. At each AGM all member organisations are invited to offer candidates for all vacant posts and elections are held if needed. Country and regional posts are filled by elections in those areas and ratified by Council. Council also has an external Observer, David Ellis of SCIE.

Council meets twice a year in addition to the AGM and has delegated some of its powers to an Executive Committee which meets four times a year. In addition there is a Remuneration Committee which meets to review the salary of the Chief Executive.

Council members act as trustees and have the powers and obligations of company directors under the Companies Act 1985. No trustee was entitled to or paid any remuneration but £1,956 was paid to trustees (or their organisations) for travelling expenses. ARC also purchased insurance to protect it from any loss which might arise from neglect or any default of its senior staff or trustees and to indemnify the trustees against the consequences of loss or default on their part. This insurance cost £1,720.

At the close of the year the senior staff of ARC were

Chief Executive	James Churchill
ARC Manager in Northern Ireland	Siobhan Bogues
ARC Manager in Wales	Mandy Tilston Viney
ARC Manager in Scotland	Karen Jackson
National Training Manager	Janis Blackburn

National Policy & Information Manager	Jane Livingstone
Finance Manager	Martin Anderson
Black & Minority Ethnic Unit Manager	Bridget Fisher
Regional Manager	Yvonne Furze
Training Consortium Manager	Julie Crowther

Principal Aims and activities

In the Memorandum and Articles the charitable objects for which ARC is established are
 “The education and training of all organisations, associations and individuals concerned with the care of people with learning disabilities, and to promote study and research into all matters affecting people with learning disabilities and disseminate all useful results”

Our Vision is

to achieve excellence through diversity and quality of provision for people with a learning disability in which they are the focal point of services

Our Mission is

to provide services which are valued by members to help them provide good quality services to people with a learning disability throughout the UK

Our Objectives

We have set the following medium term objectives in the two years to 2007

- To remain the lead membership organisation for service providers for people with a learning disability
- To keep in touch with what service providers want and so offer valued services to help them deliver better support
- To be recognised and listened to as the voice of all providers in the sector at a local and national level
- To be easily accessible to all service providers across the UK
- To be a centre of excellence in training people who support individuals with a learning disability
- To keep our independence

These are currently under review for the period 2007-2012

ARC aims to achieve these objectives through four main types of activity

- 1) Providing information and support to members
- 2) Promoting best practice in services
- 3) Campaigning on behalf of its members
- 4) Developing as a competent organisation

The principal activities of the Association are concerned with promoting effective networks between providers, providing a range of services to members, developing training courses and publications, and using its networks effectively to represent to central and local government the views of service providers for people with a learning disability and the promotion of best practice in those services. These activities take place across the four countries of the UK and are adapted to meet the different situations in each country

Review of activities for the year 2006-2007

Measurement of success and achievements

Council has agreed twelve specific targets associated with the 2005-7 Business Plan. Each target has an agreed means of measuring progress. The monitoring of progress on these targets, together with monitoring of the annual budget is the responsibility of Council and the Executive Committee.

Beneficiaries

The direct beneficiaries of ARC's activities are member organisations and their staff who provide services to people with a learning disability. ARC has a membership in which registered charities are in the majority. Sometimes ARC's activities will also benefit non-members of the Association (eg European Social Fund projects must be open to all eligible organisations). The indirect beneficiaries of ARC's activities are people with a learning disability who benefit by more informed services, better trained staff, and a wider understanding at policy development level in the four countries of the needs of people with a learning disability and the agencies who support them.

1 Providing information and support to members

In a year of considerable policy changes ARC's information services were an essential tool for members trying to keep abreast of the implications of policy and practice decisions. The new website has proved its worth in terms of usage (over 16,000 pages viewed each month) and adaptability and all the countries of the UK are now making good use of the website and the members forum. Additionally it has proved possible for 'mini - sites' to be developed for projects but linked to the main ARC website, enhancing the overall service available to visitors.

In a year of considerable political change and uncertainty culminating in new governments in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales and a new Government team in England, policy development has been uneven. One constant in England has been the development of the 'personalisation' agenda within service delivery characterised by initiatives such as Direct Payments, Individual Budgets and In Control – all of which have an enormous impact on providers. Keeping members informed about such developments and advising them on possible ways forward is a key role for ARC and one which occupied many members throughout the year at meetings of Special Interest Groups and our Annual Conference. Policy makers in other countries in the UK are now beginning to pick up on this development and consider ways in which it might be developed outside England. In Scotland the Scottish Executive has funded *in Control* and it seems probable that the personalisation agenda will be picked up there.

There has been no let up in the demand for responses to policy consultations from all Governments on behalf of providers and for detailed work around funding and registration issues. A principal concern has been the deteriorating situation with regard to access to

housing and support for people with learning disabilities following a series of rulings on Housing Benefit. ARC has been a prominent player in attempting to foster progress on this difficult issue and there have recently been signs of movement from Ministers and civil servants which may bring some relief in 2007/8 and so prevent people from losing their tenancies through an inability to pay their rent as a result of Housing Benefit reductions.

In 2006/7 ARC enabled members to access over £1m of money for training via a variety of ARC regional and national training partnerships. Membership of our National Learning Disability Ethnicity Network climbed to over 1,400 organisations and individuals, all linking in to best practice advice and updates in a highly important specialised but often marginalised area of work. In Scotland a grant from the Scottish Executive (the Our Lives project) enabled us to continue to develop our work with networks of providers in a number of regions. This has led to a realisation of the great value of local networks as a place where people with a learning disability themselves can find their voice and be better heard at a local level. We are now looking to develop a major bid to expand this work in future.

2 Promoting best practice in services

Promoting best practice in services and helping providers achieve positive outcomes for the people who use their services is what ARC is really about. In all our projects we try to involve people who use services as much as possible and to promote their active participation in work. Our Big Lottery Fund funded Project in the North West of England *Calling the Shots* is a good example of this approach, in which the project trainers (including those with a learning disability) have all achieved external accreditation for the training they now do through the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health.

A similar story of how a project can inspire not only people who use services but also their families and supporters comes from the *Our Good Health* project in Anglesey, where the production of a booklet and DVD about healthy eating and developing a healthy lifestyle has captured the imagination of all those involved in the project on the island. It has not only increased awareness of such matters but also has proved to be the vehicle for considerable personal development for all those directly involved in the project team.

In Scotland our *National Involvement Network*, which consists of people who use services from 14 provider organisations, is supporting them to have more control over their lives and see how they can influence the organisations which provide services to them. We are hopeful that this will continue and that a successful funding bid (see above) will provide a means to develop it further. In Northern Ireland a further year of funding from the local statutory Community and Hospital trusts for our *Telling It Like It Is* project again reflected the recognition by funders of the added value training by people who use services can bring to the induction training of newly appointed staff.

This year saw more work on BME issues with our BME Unit completing an important project on working with Norfolk on promoting access to services from people within BME communities. We are hopeful that this might lead to work of a similar nature in future, since the need is undoubtedly there and people from black and minority ethnic communities do not use services to the extent that might have been statistically expected. A developing strand of

our work has been promoting access to financial services to people with learning disabilities – an increasingly important facility with changes to benefit payments and the increased use of direct payments. In a series of projects funded by the Department of Health and the Friends Provident Foundation, ARC has produced *My Money Matters* (guidance for services on handling people's money) *Banking Matters to Me*, (research by people with learning disabilities about banking services) *Managing My Money* (a training programme for support staff) and is currently working on *Making Money Easy* to simplify and explain how bank accounts work.

The EQUAL funded POISE project in Northern Ireland looks at ways of promoting best practice in recruitment and retention in the sector and encouraging career progression for women in the sector. After working with other voluntary bodies and statutory sector agencies to change the perceptions of the care sector in the minds of sections of the population who would not normally consider it as a possible career option a report was produced by Professor Roy McConkey on the impact the project has made. Funding has been used to offer women the opportunity to study Modules from the Higher Professional Diploma in Learning Disability (HPD in LD) as a means of achieving a route into management. The positive results of this initiative are already clear after many of those involved have been promoted to management positions. After a successful year we are now looking at ways in which the POISE project may be locally funded after EQUAL funding ends. This project also has a number of European partner agencies who meet to exchange experiences in their national project and promote better working in this area through mutual learning.

ARC has continued to work in the area of training which meets the needs of staff who work with people with learning disabilities. We were fortunate to help develop the first of a new series of Learning Disability Qualifications (LDQs) with the launch of the LDQ Induction Award towards the year end and we are pressing to see more such awards developed in future at levels 2 and 3. The HPD in LD (see above) continues to delight its students and tutors alike and is highly valued by those fortunate enough to find funding to take part. We are urgently looking for other ways to access funding for this course so that more can benefit from its undoubted value. This reflects a pattern for ARC across all our training activities – how to match up funding and appropriate training for staff of our member organisations.

Perhaps the most significant development in this year has been our successful delivery in England on a contract to Skills for Care of a set of Induction standards called the Common Induction Standards which have now been formally adopted by SfC and welcomed by the sector. Following on from this we are planning to produce our own induction materials in distance learning and directly taught formats and hope that these will be equally well received. We are also confident that it will in future be possible for us to ensure that the ARC induction materials are compliant with the emerging standards for the European Care Licence project's entry level certificate. This will begin to provide a Europe wide statement of values and knowledge in social care services and assist in the mobility of the workforce across Europe.

3 Campaigning on behalf of members

In our last annual report we commented on how ARC and many of its members in England rely on the DH Section 64 grant mechanism to provide funds for core and project grants in the following year. Last year we expressed fears about the way in which changes to the criteria for bids made for a much more restricted range of projects. Our complaints about the length of time Government took to decide on projects were accepted as fair by the Government, which later admitted that Voluntary sector 'Compact' had been broken. Our concerns were reflected amongst our members too and in the wider social care sector at large. In the event we secured just two new Section 64 projects (our lowest tally for many years) and the year ended with an announcement by the Department of Health of a future review of Section 64 funding, especially of core grants, in the coming year.

ARC is a founder member of the recently established Learning Disability Coalition which is seeking to ensure that the Government's policies and vision for the future lives of people with a learning disability are supported by sufficient resources. It has been clear for some time that even though more money is being spent on services, many individuals are experiencing cuts in support. ARC is part of a very wide ranging group campaigning to ensure that decisions at this and the next Comprehensive Spending Review are informed by accurate data on the level of unmet need and the difficulties local authorities are facing in continuing to fund current service levels in the face of increasing demand.

At a European level we continue to work via EASPD (our European umbrella body) and other national and European umbrella bodies in the social sector in Brussels. In spite of numerous efforts the detailed application of European court rulings to the Working Time Directive remain as problematic as ever. Various political initiatives at the highest level to resolve this have all come to grief and as yet no end is in sight to this thorny problem. The impact of the switching of European funding away from 'old' Europe to the accession countries is now beginning to be felt in the sharp reduction of ESF and other funding streams for projects in the UK.

ARC continue to develop partnership working with other agencies in a variety of networks. In Wales our National Manager is now Vice Chair of the restructured Learning Disability Wales organisation and we are with other LDW members examining ways to try to ensure that the difficulties providers experienced in the recent Cardiff re-tendering exercise are not replicated elsewhere. The recent re-tendering proposals in Scotland for a new partnership group to run the Scottish Centre for Learning Disability have concluded with the award to the new tender to the consortium of organisations which included ARC. In Scotland we are a member of the *in Control Scotland* Advisory Committee on behalf of SCLD. We are developing our own provider networks in Scotland as a means of influencing policy and practice at a local level. We also use these networks as a means to promote the inclusion of those who use services in discussions about the shape of future services. In Northern Ireland our Senior Managers Think Tank continued to provide CEOs with a confidential forum where members can exchange views on broad policy matters. In England networking, regional and branch meetings continued at a somewhat reduced level and included Skills for Care, the Residential Forum, CSCI's Learning Disability Improvement Board, the (revised) Learning Disability Task Force. In addition we have joined the Learning Disability Coalition (see above) and a housing and support group examining the impact of the Turnbull Housing Benefit decisions.

4 Developing as a competent organisation

Council has recently begun work on a review of ARC's five year strategy and will be producing a new business plan in the near future. This follows an extensive survey of members by questionnaire and by phone interview to find out what members thought our priorities should be.

ARC has not had an easy year financially and, as had been reported above, the year ended with the need for retrenchment and the departure of experienced staff due to the need to balance the 2007/8 budget. The financial situation of many providers has been difficult throughout the year and has been reflected in the increasing number of members who have either ceased trading or have been taken over. During the year we have been able to be part of some small research projects in Wales (for the Welsh Assembly Government on admissions to hospital) and in England (for the Department of Health on commissioning local services) and we hope to continue this consultancy work in coming years and widen the scope of consultancy services we can offer. Following an internal dispute with a member, ARC Council asked for and obtained the agreement of the membership to change the Memorandum and Articles of the Association to standardise the procedure for terminating membership of ARC. A Chair's subcommittee will review Standing Orders and make recommendations on any further changes following the Strategic review.

Fundraising report

For the majority of this period fundraising was undertaken by the Deputy Chief Executive in the absence of our fundraiser on extended maternity leave. Managers in Scotland and Northern Ireland undertook some local fundraising with local statutory bodies where having a local presence was a key aspect of making a successful bid. Our overall fundraising target of £96,000 was almost met.

The majority of ARC's income (£1.76m out of £3m) comes via restricted donations and other grants for specific purposes. This is in line with previous performance and reflects ARC's drive to promote best practice in services through projects and partnership working funded by third parties. We must therefore record our thanks to the Department of Health for their continued support of ARC via core and project grants and to our various other donors and supporters. These include the European Social Fund, the Welsh Assembly Government, the Scottish Executive, the Department for Employment and Learning, Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust, the Princess Diana Memorial Fund, the Friends Provident Foundation, the Lloyds TSB Charitable Trust, the Vodafone UK Foundation, the Big Lottery Fund, the Pfizer Foundation, TASS UK Ltd and Mr & Mrs Keith.

As ARC is an umbrella body and not a direct service provider, it is not easy to fundraise monies for in that many of our members are already well known to many charitable trusts and are more attractive to many funders. We are therefore especially indebted to those organisations who do support us. Our fundraising is often built around bids for specific pieces of work, often in partnership with other organisations, and Note 5 to the accounts details these restricted funds. All our members are reporting increased competition for charitable and other

donations and we are hopeful that we can improve our position and performance in 2007/8 following the return from leave of our in house fundraiser

Induction and training of trustees

All trustees are very senior staff from within member organisations with significant experience of providing services. Prior to agreeing to stand for Council they are sent an outline of what becoming a trustee of ARC involves, various criteria they must meet, and upon their election they are sent an information pack for new trustees. This contains details of the structure of and postholders within ARC as well as copies of the Charity Commission publications on the roles of trustees. Direct support for new trustees is provided on request by the Chair and Chief Executive.

Management of Risk

The Board has an established arrangement for the systematic assessment and periodic review of the risks facing the association, with appropriate measures being taken to prioritise, manage and minimise the risks identified. In the year the Board received a report reviewing the risks facing ARC and approved action to reduce them where possible and keep them under review.

Reserves policies

It is the stated objective of the Trustees of the Association to try to achieve unrestricted reserves equivalent to the costs of three months operations in order to enable an orderly shutdown of operations should it become necessary. Council has agreed the means by which these figures should be calculated and will review them each year when the budget for the coming year is set, taking account of redundancy liabilities, lease contracts and foreseeable operational costs to sustain an orderly closure. For the year 2007/8 the target for the reserves was calculated at £388,000 and by March 2007 ARC's total unrestricted reserves totalled almost £322,000 with a further £40,000 in two designated funds.

Investment policy

Investment decisions are taken by the Executive Committee, following recommendations from the Honorary Treasurer and the Finance Manager. ARC's current investment policy is to hold monies in high interest bearing accounts with banks for periods ranging from one to six months to maximise interest and accessibility. ARC has no permanent endowment and provides for capital expenditure from within budget and designated reserves.

Appointment of Auditors

A resolution for the appointment of Barber Harrison and Platt of Sheffield as new auditors for the coming year will be proposed at the forthcoming annual general meeting. Our thanks go to Helmores of London who have audited the charity since its foundation for their past services.

Financial Review

In the past year ARC has experienced a significant but not unexpected financial contraction with income falling by almost £1m to just over £3m. We have also seen a fall in our restricted funds of some £173k and in our unrestricted funds of some £75k. The financial activities of the year are set out in detail on the attached pages. Changes in fixed assets are set out in note 9 to the accounts.

The following figures in brackets indicate comparables from the previous year. Adjustments have been made (where necessary) to allow for the restatement of comparable figures to account for the need to comply with new SORP requirements.

The deficit for the financial year amounted to £255,484 (deficit of £7,978) of which a deficit of £172,986 (deficit of £98,522) forms part of amounts held on restricted funds which can only be used for the specific purposes detailed in the notes. Overall the Association's funds dropped from £757,899 to £502,415 (dropped from £765,877 to £757,899) at the year end of which £354,254 (£396,752) is unrestricted funds and £148,161 (£321,147) is restricted funds.

Principal funding sources and expenditure to support key objectives

Out of a total income of just over £3m more than half comes from restricted funds which can only be used for the purposes agreed with ARC when the money was donated. It is usually the case that a project meets more than one of ARC's key objectives. Note 5 to the accounts provides details of transactions in each restricted fund. These show ARC involved in promoting staff training at a national and international level (European Social Fund projects, EASPD LabOr project, LEONARDO European Care Licence project, LSC in Devon and Skills for Care TSI and Enabling fund work), work with BME issues and with some BME communities (Norfolk, Moving on Up, All join in), promoting access to financial services for people with learning disabilities (Banking Matters to Me, Making Money Easy), empowering people with learning disabilities to have a greater say in how they live their lives and who supports them to do so (Our Lives project, Our Good Health, TILII project, the BLF Active Support project in Wales) and work to improve our own efficiency as an umbrella membership body (Forbes Website project and Barings Foundation funding for our database development).

Our other principal sources of funding are training and conferences and membership subscriptions. Our membership income fell around £6,000 short of our target of £165,000 but was still at an all time high. Training and conference income did drop by around 10% compared with the previous year and that is a reflection of the increasingly competitive situation in which independent training providers find themselves. We are looking at alternative ways to generate income for our members' training activities and pressing for greater freedom for employers to choose the training which meets their needs.

Future Plans

The Trustees and staff have worked hard to produce detailed financial plans to bring ARC's budget back into balance in 2007/8. Voluntary and compulsory redundancies at the end of the previous year have reduced our payroll and a renewed focus on income generation is already showing positive results in 2007/8. An awayday for trustees and senior staff was held in July 2007 to review and renew ARC's vision and strategic direction in a rapidly changing world. From this a new two year business plan will emerge as well as a five year strategy for the association's future development. It is recognised that, as service provision is undergoing perhaps the most radical change of the last twenty years, it is appropriate for ARC to change too.

Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities

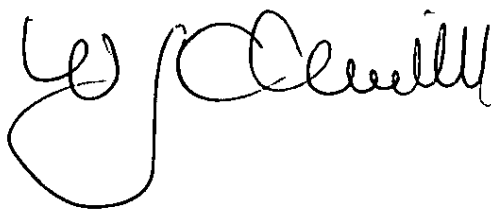
The trustees are required by law to prepare accounts for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of its incoming and outgoing resources for that period. In preparing those accounts, they are required to select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently, make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent, and prepare the accounts on a going concern basis where appropriate. The trustees are also responsible for maintaining adequate accounting records, safeguarding the assets of the Company, and for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

So far as each of the trustees is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's auditors are unaware, and each trustee has taken all the steps that he/she ought to have taken as a trustee in order to make him/herself aware of any audit information and to establish that the company's auditors are aware of that information.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of part V11 of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies.

By Order of the Board

dated



11/10/2007

W J C Churchill
Secretary to the Board

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS' REPORT TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ASSOCIATION FOR REAL CHANGE

We have audited the financial statements of The Association for Real Change for the year ended, 31 March 2007 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities, the Summary Income and Expenditure Account, the Balance Sheet, and the related notes. These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out therein.

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with section 235 of the Companies Act 1985. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and its members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors

The responsibilities of the trustees (who are also the directors of The Association for Real Change for the purposes of company law) for preparing the Annual Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice) are set out in the Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities.

Our responsibility is to audit the financial statements in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory requirements and International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland).

We report to you our opinion as to whether the financial statements give a true and fair view and are properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985. We also report to you whether the information given in the Trustees' Annual Report is consistent with the financial statements.

In addition we report to you if, in our opinion, the charity has not kept proper accounting records, if we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit, or if information specified by law regarding trustees' remuneration and transactions with the charity is not disclosed.

We read the Trustees' Report and the Report of the Chair and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements within it.

Basis of audit opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK and Ireland) issued by the Auditing Practices Board. An audit includes examination, on a test basis, of evidence relevant to the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. It also includes an assessment of the significant estimates and judgments made by the trustees in the preparation of the financial statements and of whether the accounting policies are appropriate to the charitable company's circumstances, consistently applied and adequately disclosed.

We planned and performed our audit so as to obtain all the information and explanations which we considered necessary in order to provide us with sufficient evidence to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement, whether caused by fraud or other irregularity or error. In forming our opinion we also evaluated the overall adequacy of the presentation of information in the financial statements.

Opinion

In our opinion

- the financial statements give a true and fair view, in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice, of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2007 and of its incoming resources and application of resources including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended; and
- the financial statements have been properly prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 1985, and
- the information provided in the Trustees' Report and the Report of the Chair is consistent with the financial statements.



Helmore
Registered Auditors
Grosvenor Gardens House
35/37 Grosvenor Gardens
London
SW1W 0BY

3/12/2007

Statement of Financial Activities for the year ended 31st March 2007

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2007 £	Total 2006 £
Incoming Resources					
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities					
Membership Subscriptions		158 827	-	158 827	154 157
Grants		90 000	1 582 979	1 672 979	2 351 777
Training & Conferences		701 240	-	701 240	774 257
Publications		8 081	-	8 081	2 588
Services to Members		344 204	-	344 204	283 564
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds					
Donations & Gifts		95 902	-	95 902	330 632
Investment Income		19 319	-	19 319	25 449
Total Incoming Resources		1 417 573	1 582 979	3 000 552	3 922 424
Resources Expended					
Costs of generating Funds	3	34 389	-	34 389	32 570
Charitable Activities					
Networking & Representation		21 765	-	21 765	26 758
Special Projects		-	1 755 965	1 755 965	2 297 718
Training & Conferences		693 526	-	693 526	900 286
Publications		3 371	-	3 371	977
Services to members		697 670	-	697 670	631 388
Governance Costs	4	49 349	-	49 349	40 705
Total Resources Expended		1 500 070	1 755 965	3 256 035	3 930 402
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources for the Year		(82 497)	(172 986)	(255 483)	(7 978)
Balance Brought Forward at 1/4/2006		436 752	321 147	757 899	765 877
Balances Carried forward at 31/3/2007	10	354 255	148 161	502 416	757 899

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March 2007

	2007 £	2006 £
Gross Income	2 981 233	3 896 975
Operating Expenditure	3 256 035	3 930 402
Operating Deficit	(274 802)	(33 427)
Interest Receivable	19 319	25 449
Deficit for the Financial Year	(255 483)	(7 978)

The Company made no recognised gains or losses in this or the preceding financial year other than the surplus or deficit for the year

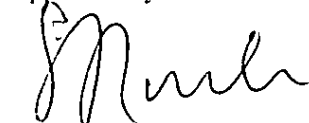
The notes on pages 20 to 29 form a part of these accounts

Balance Sheet at 31st March 2007

	Notes	2007 £	£	2006 £	£
FIXED ASSETS					
Tangible Assets	7		18 898		5 154
CURRENT ASSETS					
Trade Debtors		325 949		443 467	
Prepayments and Accrued Income		39 123		115 318	
Cash at Bank and in Hand		529 727		456 975	
		<u>894 799</u>		<u>1 015 760</u>	
CREDITORS: Amounts falling Due within one year					
Taxation and Social Security Costs		30 733		34 728	
Other Creditors		105 878		119 326	
Accruals		84 781		75 766	
Deferred Income	8	<u>189 889</u>		<u>33 195</u>	
		411 281		263 015	
NET CURRENT ASSETS			483 518		752 745
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES			<u>502 416</u>		<u>757 899</u>
FUNDS					
Restricted Funds	5		148 161		321 147
Unrestricted Funds					
General Fund		314 255		396 752	
Designated Funds					
Equipment Fund		20 000		20 000	
Project Fund		20 000		20 000	
		<u></u>		<u></u>	
Total Unrestricted / Designated Funds	9		354 255		436 752
TOTAL FUNDS	10		<u>502 416</u>		<u>757 899</u>

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of part VII of the Companies Act 1985 relating to small companies

Approved by the Board on 11/10/2007



Steve Inch
Chair of the Board of Directors



Steve Jenkin
Hon Treasurer

The notes on pages 20 to 29 form a part of these accounts

Notes to the Accounts for the year ended 31st March 2007

1. Accounting Policies

a) Accounting Convention

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention and in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP 2005) applicable accounting standards and the Companies Act 1985

b) Depreciation

Depreciation is charged at the following rates on all tangible fixed assets in order to write them off over their estimated useful lives. All assets costing more than £300.00 are capitalised at cost

Office Equipment	33.3% on cost
Fixtures	20% on cost

c) Incoming Resources

Income is accounted for on a receivable basis. Grants for specific purposes are included as income in the year of receipt with any unspent income carried forward at the end of the year as restricted funds.

d) Fund Accounting

The unrestricted funds comprise general funds which are available for use by the charity for its general objectives. The restricted funds are subject to restrictive conditions made by the grant making body or donor.

e) Operating Leases

The rentals payable under operating leases are charged to the statement of financial activities on a straight line basis over the lease term.

f) The recognition of Liabilities

Resources expended are accounted for on an accruals basis and are recognised when there is legal or constructive obligation to pay for expenditure.

g) Services to members

This expenditure includes branch costs, the costs of the national offices, the costs of providing the National Criminal Records Bureau service and the costs of the annual conference.

h) Support Costs

Support Costs have been allocated to activities based on their percentage of overall expenditure.

i) Governance Costs

Includes staff time and expenses for time spent in connection with Trustees meetings, plus the cost of auditing the Charity.

j) Costs of Generating Funds

This expenditure is an allocation of time spent and other resources expended in connection with fundraising.

k) Pension Scheme

The company contributes to a stakeholder pension scheme.

l) Training and Conference Income

Income from training course fees is recognised over the duration of the course. Fees are generally invoiced in full at the time of enrolment. Income is recognised as each stage of the course is completed by the candidate and an assessment of that stage has been carried out by our assessors.

Fees for conferences are invoiced in advance and recognised as income in the period in which the conference takes place.

2 Support Costs

	Fundraising Costs £	Networking & Representation £	Training & Conferences £	Publication Costs £	Services to members £	Governance Costs £	Total 2007 £
Finance & IT	553	455	15 245	17	10 728	692	27 689
Human Resources	392	322	10 795	12	7 597	490	19 607
Secretarial	169	139	4 645	5	3 269	211	8 437
Information & Design	513	422	14 134	15	9 946	641	25 671
Management	1 708	1 403	47 046	51	33 105	2 134	85 447
Office Costs	1 180	969	32 508	35	22 875	1 475	59 043
	4 515	3 709	124 373	135	87 520	5 642	225 895

3. Costs of Generating Funds

	2007 £	2006 £
Fundraising	34 389	32 570

This includes a relevant proportion of staff costs professional fees and associated office expenses relating to the fundraising of restricted income grants and donations
Publicity costs are included with 'publications' which are part of the direct charitable costs of the charity

4. Governance Costs

	2007 £	2006 £
Auditor's Remuneration		
Audit Fees	9 128	7 000
Other Services	2 360	1 935
Other Costs	37 861	31 770
Total	49 349	40 705

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5. Restricted Funds

	Movement in Resources		B / Forward	C / Forward
	Incoming	Outgoing	1/4/06	31/3/07
	£	£	£	£
Department of Health project funds				
Knowledge Centre	25 000	26 932	-	(1 932)
Banking my Time Too	52 322	37 469	-	14 853
B M E Network (via VPST)	15 000	10 601	-	4 399
S S S S Project	-	24	2 272	2 248
Equipping My Supporters Project	24 323	55 075	30 752	-
CAHMS Project	30 000	32 922	1 316	(1 606)
Making things better Conferences	-	26 251	26 251	-
DoH - Sub Total	146 645	189 274	60 591	17 962
Other Restricted Funds				
ESF10 - Scotland Registered Managers 2006	81 728	101 294	19 566	-
ESF11 - Scotland Registered Managers 2007	42 858	36 009	-	6 849
Princess Diana Memorial Fund (Transition Project)	53 696	68 322	14 626	-
I D A F Project	42 000	42 000	-	-
Hospital Research	9 772	7 986	-	1 786
Skills for Care ISI 2005/2006	152 950	264 590	111 640	-
Skills for Care ISI 2006/2007	682 005	682 005	-	-
Our Lives	28 500	28 500	-	-
S E Regional Project - SEI DPB	-	9 000	9 000	-
LRCN Conferences	15 000	12 634	(2 366)	-
NJ - Iliu project	-	18 806	26 915	8 109
EASPD	5 493	5 493	-	-
LSC Devon - Training	61 815	28 099	-	33 716
Our Good Health	44 203	21 842	-	22 361
BLF - North West	46 111	36 897	-	9 214
BLF - Wales	56 364	31 070	-	25 294
Banking Matters to Me	73 056	71 990	(1 066)	-
Lloyds TSB - All loan in project	-	29 148	30 640	1 492
Norfolk BME Project	-	39 660	39 660	-
Making Money Easy	-	83	-	(83)
ECL Project	2 852	2 852	-	-
Awards for All	7 931	6 295	-	1 636
Forbes Trust - Website Costs 06/07	-	5 000	5 000	-
Barings Foundation - Database costs 06/07	-	6 941	6 941	-
Vodafone - Moving on up	30 000	10 175	-	19 825
Totals	1 582 979	1 755 965	321 147	148 161

The expenditure against the Making Money Easy project the Knowledge Centre project and the CAHMS project will be covered by future grants for additional work on these ongoing projects

The Restricted Grants received were utilised for the purpose for which they were given as outlined below

Knowledge Centre

This DoH funded project is to establish a web based Knowledge Centre which will focus on three different groups service users families and support staff for people who have both learning disability and mental health support needs

Banking My Time Too

Time Banks enable members to share their time and skills. People with a learning disability traditionally have lots of time to spare and enjoying sharing this with others. This project will explore ways in which people with a learning disability can become active members of local time banks and contribute to as well as benefit from the opportunities they can offer.

B M E Network (via VPST)

ARC was part of a group of agencies commissioned by the VPSI to do further work on the extent to which local Learning Disability Partnership Boards had developed work around BMI priorities set by DH Ministers. Following a survey a report is to be produced next year showing what progress has been made in this policy area.

Small Scale & Specialist Services

S S S S is a grant from DoH to support partnerships working amongst key stakeholders and to help hold a conference on this issue in 2005/6.

Equipping My Supporters

This project funded by the DoH is to produce a Training Resource list for people who use services to equip them with the skills required to attend meetings and also to develop a national E-forum for supporters of self advocacy groups to network and share good practice.

CAMHS Project (also known as The Candle Project)

A DoH Project to develop resources for Tier II staff regarding learning disability, mental health and ethnicity.

Making things better conferences

A series of 5 regional workshop events were held including the following topics: improving services, overcoming obstacles and making links, developing strategies and plans, person centred planning, statutory duties and engaging with partnership boards. The overriding theme being people with learning disabilities from minority ethnic communities/groups. This was funded by a grant from the VPSI.

ESF10/11 - Registered Managers projects 2006/2007

These projects were to enable 36 registered managers to study for the Registered Managers Award during each year 2006 to 2007.

Princess Diana Memorial Fund (Transition project)

The aim of this project was to work with young people to establish what information would be useful on a website, what would work for them, their families and advocacy groups, and then build a website for young adults with learning disabilities from minority communities (see www.movingonup.info).

L D A F

This project funded by Skills for Care was to develop the Induction award following the results of the "LDAF Review". We liaised with QCA and awarding bodies and supported the dissemination of information.

Hospital Research

The Welsh Assembly commissioned ARC Cymru to undertake a short piece of research into the nature of support provided by support staff when a service user is admitted to hospital. From a sample of 244 responses from the perspective of service providers across Wales, the findings concur with those of other reports about health inequalities.

Skills for Care TSI 2005/2006 & 2006/2007

These projects enable provider organisations to claim monies for completing courses and gaining qualifications.

Our Lives

Our Lives project supports local networks of non-statutory providers to work together to try and influence the strategic direction of learning disability services. They do this in two ways: firstly by forming a constituted body which has formal representation on local authority planning structures and secondly by exchanging good practice on service user involvement.

S E Regional Project - SELDPB

These funds have been expended after the year end to organisations commissioned by SELDPB to carry out work in that geographical area.

LRCN Conferences

Funded by Skills for Care South West, we are to hold two regional conferences to disseminate lessons learned from LRCN projects in 2005/6 in the South West region.

TILII Project (Telling it like it is)

Through funding from Ulster Community and Hospitals Trust and Lloyd TSB Foundation ARC NI is supporting a group of men and women with a learning disability to run training sessions for staff. The sessions will be offered to staff in services across the trust area and will focus on the TILII Trainers sharing their views on what they want and need from staff who support them.

EASPD Projects

ARC is a member EASPD - a Brussels based Umbrella body for providers of social care services across Europe. ARC was a partner in the LabOr project on boosting employment options for people with disabilities in Europe.

LSC Devon Training

A learning disability specific training programme was developed for Level 2 NVQ and delivered to 25 candidates. 6 learning supporters and 5 mentors were also trained.

Our Good Health/ Ein Iechyd Da

This project was funded for 12 months by Pfizer Foundation, Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales and the Anglesey Health Alliance to look at the barriers to achieving good health that people with learning disabilities face. The project has made a sustainable difference at both a local and national level.

Big Lottery Fund - North West

This project aims to change services by training service users to deliver training to staff. The pilot group of 6 people who have a learning disability have been trained and 4 of them have achieved a Professional Trainers Certificate awarded by CIPIT. They are currently being supported to develop learning programs for staff which eventually be mapped against LDQ units. The next group of beneficiaries will begin the 'Train the Trainers' program next spring.

Big Lottery Fund - Active Support - Wales

Support staff and managers across Wales are being trained to use Active Support to increase the participation of people with severe learning disability in everyday life.

Banking Matters to me

This project funded by Friends Provident Foundation is a UK wide investigative project looking at the problems that people with a learning disability face when opening and managing a bank account. Teams of researchers with a learning disability have conducted interviews with local banks across the UK while providers, staff and service users have contributed both positive and negative experiences of managing a bank account.

Lloyds TSB - All join in project

This grant is a contribution to the BME manager and assistant's salaries spread over a two year period.

Norfolk BME Consultancy

Funded by Norfolk C.C. this programme of work is developing support services and increased participation to people with learning difficulties from minority ethnic communities. Its main aim is to focus on increasing the voices of individuals from BME communities and ensuring services that they use are culturally competent to meet their specific needs.

Making Money Easy

The ARC Banking Matters to Me research highlighted the need for resources to help people with a learning disability understand banks, banking products and services. We are working together with United Response to develop these. We will provide a range of accessible tools and resources aimed at making financial products and services accessible to people with learning disabilities. These will include a glossary of terms, a user guide and a website.

ECL Project

We are a partner in the development of an European Care Licence developing the Basic Social Care Learning outcomes and the assessment strategy. We are also planning pilots across the UK.

Awards for All

This grant from Awards for All is to further develop the skills of the management team

Forbes Trust - Website Costs 06/07

This grant is a contribution towards our website costs for the year 2006/7

Barings Foundation - Database Costs 06/07

This funding is to develop a streamlined database to facilitate communication with members and non-members

Vodafone - Moving on Up

This grant is to fund the continuing Moving on up work (See the Princess Diana Memorial Fund - above)

6 Staff Costs

	2007	2006
Staff Costs	£	£
Wages and Salaries	996 455	1 152 599
Pension Costs	35 977	35 128
Social security costs	96 806	110 839
Totals	1 129 238	1 298 566

The average number of employees on a FTE basis and the areas in which they work are as follows -

Charitable activities	29	39
Support Services	14	15
Fundraising	1	1
Average number of employees	44	55

Employees whose emoluments exceeded £60 000 were as follows

£60 001 - £70 000 pa	One	One
----------------------	-----	-----

Pension Contributions for the above staff member amounted to £3 335

The Directors who are the Trustees of the Charity were not entitled to and did not receive any emoluments from the Company during the year. Their expenses during the year amounted to £1 956

Staff Pension contributions unpaid at the year end were £3 721

7. Tangible Fixed Assets

Cost	Office Equipment £
Balance brought forward	61 483
Disposals during the year	(16 777)
Additions during the year	24 035
Balance carried forward	68 741
Depreciation	
Balance brought forward	56 329
Disposals during year	(16 777)
Charge for the year	10 291
Balance carried forward	49 843
Net Book Value 31 3 2006	5 154
Net Book Value 31 3 2007	18 898

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8. Deferred Income

Course and Conference Fees	2007 £	2006 £
Received in advance at the beginning of the year	33 195	25 610
Total Fees received in the year	857 934	781 842
Statement of Financial Activities	(701 240)	(774 257)
Received in advance at the end of the year	189 889	33 195

9 Unrestricted Funds

	Designated Funds			Total £
	General Fund £	Equip't Fund £	Project Fund £	
Opening Balances	396 752	20 000	20 000	436 752
Net Incoming resources before transfers	(82 497)	-	-	(82 497)
Transfers	-	-	-	-
Closing Balances	314 255	20 000	20 000	354 255

The Designated Equipment Fund has been set aside for the purpose of replacing and upgrading the office equipment

The Designated Project Fund has been set aside to complete or revise projects for which external funding is not available

10. Analysis of Net Assets between Funds

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
Tangible Fixed Assets	18 898	-	18 898
Net Current Assets	335 357	148 161	483 518
Net Assets	354 255	148 161	502 416

11. Operating Leases

	2007 £	2006 £
Rentals charged in this year		
- Land and Buildings	51 831	68 261
- Office Equipment	6 520	5 615
	58 351	73 876
Payments due in next year		
	Land and Buildings £	Others £
- Contracts expiring within one year	14 059	3 929
- Contracts expiring in two to five years	33 425	2 893
	47 484	6 822

ARC Members Survey Analysis

June 2007

The questionnaire was sent to all members with an overall response rate of 31.7 % across the UK. Northern Ireland conducted its own survey, 30 organisations were contacted with a response rate of 47% (14). The rest of the UK produced 102 responses (analysed below) within the timeframe. Although respondents were speaking on behalf of their organisations, it was clear from the telephone interviews that the view of one person was not necessarily the view of all in that organisation. What follows is a brief summary – the full document is available on the ARC website at www.arcuk.org.uk

SUMMARY

What ARC is getting right

- 1 Keeping a learning disability focus
- 2 Has good links to policy makers and can influence its development
- 3 Is seen as forward looking and embraces change
- 4 Disseminates relevant and useful information to its members
- 5 Represents organisations of all sizes and types of service provision
- 6 Providing a training and assessment service to members
- 7 Focuses on best practice
- 8 Is value for money

How ARC could improve

- 1 Create more local network opportunities
- 2 Ensure that information/material reaches the right person in the organisation
- 3 Market its services/products better
- 4 Consider the development of peripatetic assessment in the training consortium
- 5 Develop regional conferences
- 6 Develop a consultancy service to individual organisations on strategic and operational issues
- 7 Promote the use of electronic information and forums
- 8 Ensure members are more aware of BME services
- 9 Increase the profile of the management centre
- 10 Do more of what we are already doing!

The overarching message is that members approve of what ARC is doing

WHAT DO YOU THINK ARC IS?

The majority of respondents (number of respondents in brackets) felt that ARC is/does

- Nationally focused (100)
- Represent providers of all sizes (95)
- Speak out on important matters as best it can (86)
- A training provider (86)
- Professional in its approach (86)
- In touch with its members' concerns (76)
- Value for money (76)
- Represent all kinds of service provision (75)
- Represent agencies who embrace change (70)
- Effective in its actions on behalf of providers (65)
- Have good links to policy makers which helps members (62)
- Seen as modern, dynamic and forward looking (58)
- An independent minded pressure group (56)

A minority of respondents (numbers in brackets) felt that ARC is/does

- Seen as representing traditional care services (36)
- Seen as representing supporting living services (31)
- Represents small providers (30)
- Represents large providers (29)
- Is seen as being a bit behind the times (10)
- Represents agencies who resist change (9)
- Is out of touch with its members' concerns (6)
- Is too close to policy makers and Government departments (5)
- Puts commercial considerations of providers before best practice issues (5)
- Concentrates too much on promoting best practice (2)
- Is ineffective in its actions on behalf of providers (2)
- Is not value for money (2)
- Is amateurish in its approach (1)

Overall, responses were extremely positive about how ARC is viewed by its membership

WHAT FUTURE CHANGES FOR ARC?

The opportunity to comment on the future of ARC was taken by 58% (60) of respondents

The suggestions were wide ranging, but some emerged as particular themes

- 28 respondents specifically mentioned the wish to maintain a unique Learning Disability focus. Most others implied this in their answers. 4 favoured a merger to increase resources, but it was not clear if this was with other LD or generic umbrella groups
- There was also a call to establish stronger local links, with 15 respondents specifically requesting better local networks, and 9 saying that it is important to establish both local and national representation. 2 respondents felt that having both created a 'dilution' and favoured national work, and 2 specifically requested better national representation
- 10 respondents felt ARC should keep/improve links with National Government to influence policy and 2 felt that ARC was too government led
- 13 respondents felt that ARC should continue/develop its role in embracing change through the promotion of best practice. 1 felt we should go back to representing residential care

More detailed analysis of responses on members' views of ARC's services, publications, website, training and conferences can be found in the full report on the ARC website

There was a clear appreciation of the information service provided by ARC in keeping members up to date with new thinking and government requirements. There was also support for ARC's role as a pressure group, representing the interests of providers, service users and families (though these were sometimes seen to be in conflict). 2 respondents felt that ARC should not lead its members, but be led by them.

Conclusion

Despite all members being part of learning disability services, the ARC membership is a very diverse group and this is reflected in the range of specific interests raised by them in the survey. The general feeling from the membership is that ARC is right to remain learning disability focused, to be challenging old thinking and leading the way in best practice. Members value ARC's ability to influence policy, to disseminate information and to stimulate debate.