



2002 IN PROSPECT

**ASBAH Strategy for
the next five years**

INTRODUCTION

Every few years an in-depth review is carried out, examining ASBAH's overall position and operations, to see whether we are addressing aims that are relevant and realistic, in an effective manner. This strategic review, recently completed, was timely because of:

- (a) the changing context of disability and of charities;
- (b) the challenging financial climate;
- (c) the need to adjust our senior management structure on the retirements of the Finance Director and Assistant Director [Services]).

The Executive Committee, working with senior staff during the last few months, have reviewed ASBAH's overall position, aims and finances.

The Committee has reaffirmed ASBAH's unique role as a national centre of expertise, services, research and lobbying for all those with spina bifida and/or hydrocephalus. At the same time, the part played by disabled people at all levels of the Association is explicitly recognised and emphasis will be placed on encouraging participation, to ensure that ASBAH is properly an organisation of and for disabled members and all people with sb/h.

FINANCE

Income from all sources has been reviewed carefully and forecasts made for the next five years. We have a reasonable expectation of increased income each year to 2001/02. (This ignores the possibility of specific Lottery or similar grants).

However, despite this, an expenditure projection based on present staffing levels leads us to expect a deficit in each year to 2000/01, with surplus income thereafter.

ASBAH has sufficient general reserves to live through this five-year period, as long as the staff establishment is contained at the present level, other than in projects funded through specific grants.

Any surplus general income will be put to reserves in this period, to minimise the expected accumulated deficit.

INCOME

The main sources of income are: ASBAH (Trading) Ltd., Legacies, Appeals activities and Computer Sense Ltd (CSL). All these sources will be developed as actively as possible, and in due course ideas for a new subsidiary company will be examined.

CSL is the most likely immediate source of extra income, and the company is being developed as a priority. A new subsidiary company, Computer Sense (PC) Ltd., has been set up to expand the business from Apple computers into the personal computer market.

SERVICES TO USERS AND FAMILIES

The types of services at present offered by ASBAH to individuals are effective and should be sustained, and where possible built on. The types of Adviser employed are considered to be correct, being the result of long experience in our field. Therefore a strategy of field Advisers, backed up by specialist Advisers, remains highly appropriate and will be continued.

Because of the continuing financial status quo, and our five-year forecasts on income and expenditure, no increase in staffing can be contemplated. There will continue to be evolution in the deployment of field services staff, as people retire or leave. This will mean some redistribution carried out by the Services Department and Services Committee as time progresses.

It has long been recognised that it is unrealistic to plan for total cover of all areas by area ASBAH Advisers and some flexibility has been exercised regarding area boundaries, or "fieldwork patches". We plan to extend this flexibility as far as practicable bearing in mind workload and caseloads.

No blueprint is set for the balance of staffing but ASBAH will continue to provide Advisers in the fields of medical/health aspects, education, mobility and independence skills. The geographical distribution of staff will be as equitable as feasible, bearing in mind demand and the availability of finance.

ASBAH Advisers should be seen as professional team players bringing their own expertise to a Regionally managed team, or – in non-regionalised areas – the accepted groupings of staff in their area. Whilst teamwork is already working to an extent, the new strategy emphasises the need for this. This will mean area boundaries becoming less rigid.

REGIONS

The strategy of regionalisation will continue, but the geographical plan has been altered to reduce the eventual number of Regions from eight to seven. The North West is to be incorporated into the Northern Region and there will be some changes to the boundaries of the other four English Regions. Northern Ireland and Wales will be unaffected. (See map attached). These changes will take place from 1st April 1998.

The implementation of further Regions and the appointment of Regional Co-ordinators cannot be carried out until secure finance is available. However, specific grants will be sought which would allow projects and additional staffing to be introduced, including in areas which are not yet formally Regions.

LOCAL ASSOCIATIONS

We recognise the distinct role of local Associations and their value as a focus for information and family support. Many local Associations have become weaker over the years, and some have disbanded. However, local Associations should continue to be the democratic foundation of national ASBAH and no change is proposed in the constitutional structure or election procedure to the national Executive Committee.

ASBAH will consider how to offer improved support to local Associations by way of guidance on communications and networking, and on encouraging full participation by people with sb/h in their local area as well as at National level.

USER FORUM - 'YOUR VOICE IN ASBAH'

YVIA will be encouraged as the most effective way of attracting and involving adults with sb/h in ASBAH's thinking, policies and activities and the recent appointment of a YVIA Co-ordinator will assist in this progress.

Efforts to establish local groupings of YVIA may result in some new affiliations and will encourage some people to become individual members of ASBAH.

COUNCIL MEETING

The formal meeting of the Company ("Council") each Spring will be discontinued, because of the small number of local Association representatives who attend. The Annual Meeting of the Association and Company (Autumn) will continue. We will look at other ways of communicating and consulting with local Associations. A series of six meetings will be organised to communicate this strategic review to members around the country.

MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE

At the end of 1998 a new senior management structure will be introduced, to reflect the changes in the balance of work that have occurred recently, and to prepare for future years. The forthcoming retirements of Derek Knightbridge (December 1998) and Teresa Cole (January 1999), after many years of highly effective and dedicated service, will mark the change point.

The Senior Management Team, reporting to the Executive Director, will be as follows:-

A Finance Director will be appointed on a part-time basis, a person with commercial expertise who is a qualified, senior level accountant. This post will carry the responsibilities of Company Secretary of ASBAH, and Board membership of Computer Sense Ltd.

A new post of Assistant Director (Policy and Marketing) will be created to bring additional focus to ASBAH's policy formulation and representation, particularly on external issues. This post will draw together the functions of the Information, Publicity and Publications, and Appeals Departments and will assume line management responsibility for them. The marketing function is concerned with projecting to the world what ASBAH stands for in terms of aims, key policies and activities. This post will start in October 1998.

Assistant Director (Services) - Teresa Cole is being appointed to this post immediately, to give due recognition to the importance of services to users, in ASBAH's overall mission and aims. In January 1999 the Services Manager will be promoted to the post, and the post of Services Manager will be abolished.

From January 1st, 1999 the post of Assistant Director (Personnel) will become Deputy Executive Director and Director of Personnel and Information Technology, carrying responsibility for the Association's internal and staff policies and procedures.

No additional cost to ASBAH will be involved when this new structure is in place.

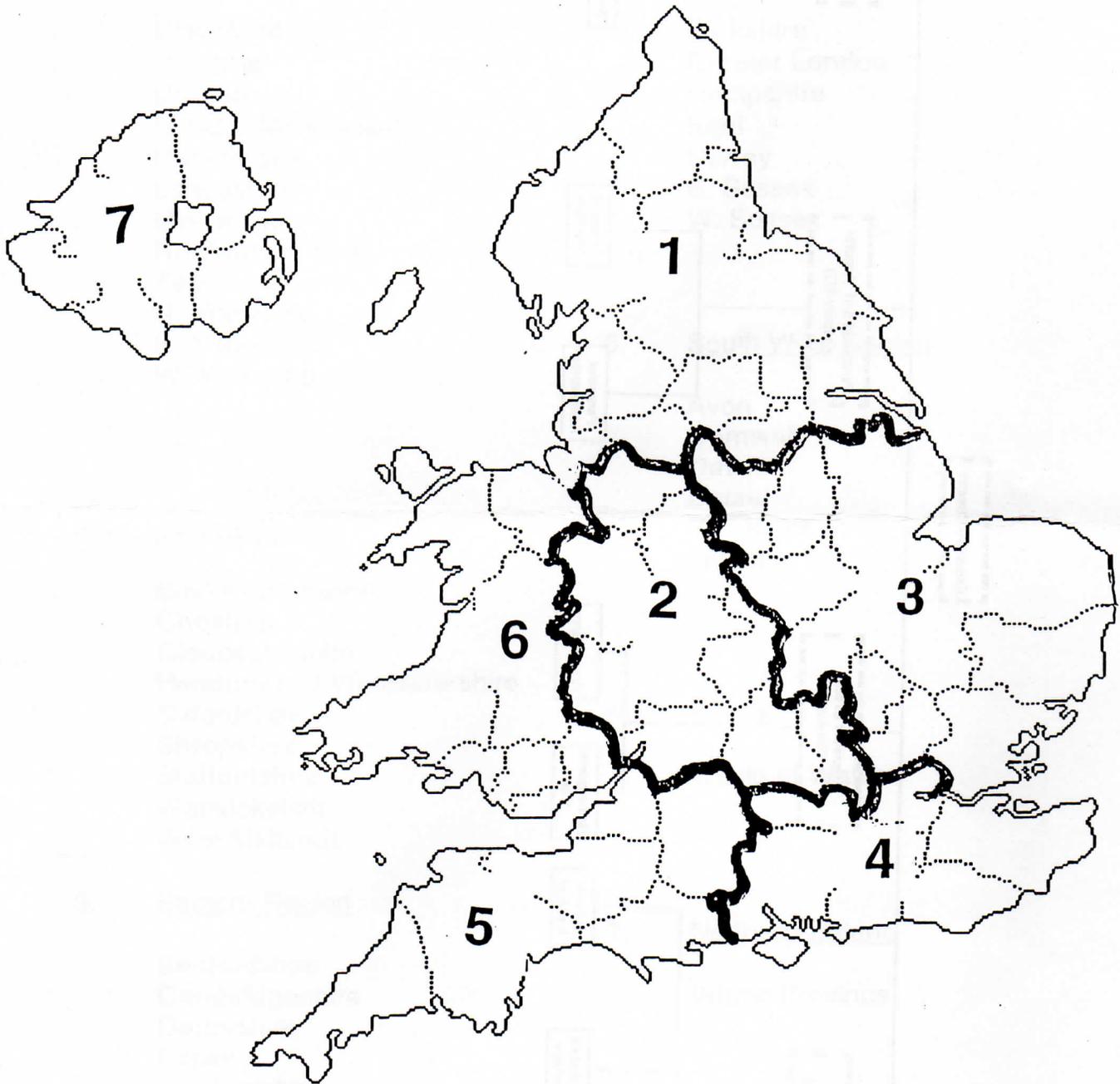
The management diagram of the new structure is attached.

This new structure should enable ASBAH to function successfully as a service provider, and to improve our policy representation and lobbying, into the next millennium. We aim to act in collaboration and partnership with other associations, but to remain a specialist organisation reflecting the wishes and needs of those with sb/h and their families.

IMPLEMENTATION AND COMMUNICATION OF THE STRATEGY

This paper, containing the important strategic direction determined by ASBAH's Executive Committee, is being provided to managers, national office staff and field staff. There will be a series of meetings with small groups of staff around the country to allow discussion and input from staff on the implementation of the strategy, and any implication for our work.

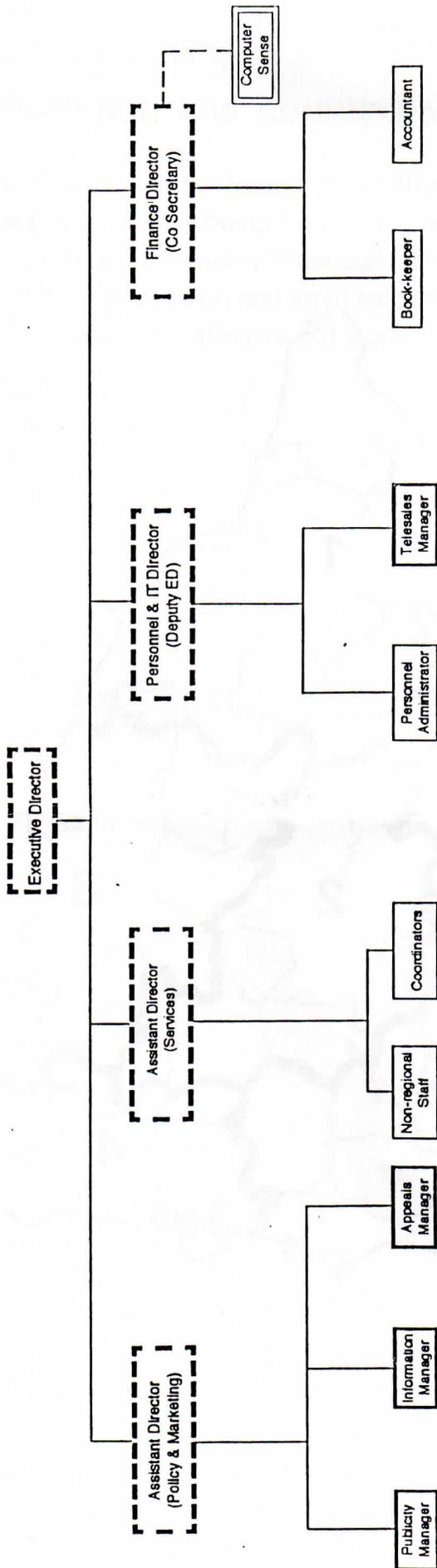
Andrew Russell
Executive Director
6/2/98



Legend

Directors

Managers



LIST OF COUNTIES BY REGION

1. Northern Region

Cleveland
Cumbria
Durham
Greater Manchester
Humberside
Lancashire
Merseyside
Northumberland
Tyne & Wear
N. Yorkshire
S. Yorkshire
W. Yorkshire

2. Central Region

Buckinghamshire
Cheshire
Gloucestershire
Hereford and Worcestershire
Oxfordshire
Shropshire
Staffordshire
Warwickshire
West Midlands

3. Eastern Region

Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire
Derbyshire
Essex
Hertfordshire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire
Norfolk
Northamptonshire
Nottinghamshire
Suffolk

4. South East Region

Berkshire
Greater London
Hampshire
Kent
Surrey
E. Sussex
W. Sussex

5. South West Region

Avon
Cornwall
Devon
Dorset
Somerset
Wiltshire

6. Wales

Whole of Wales

7. Northern Ireland

Whole Province