



Spotlight on Shane Dangar

Shane Dangar, aged 20, was the winner of the Communication Champion Award at the 2013/14 Shine a Light Awards. Shane, who has Asperger's syndrome, dyslexia, dyspraxia and ADHD, was recognised by judges for overcoming his communication difficulties in order to raise awareness of communication difficulties through workshops and projects.

Shane, who lives independently and is in his first year of a media course at University, has associated language and social interaction difficulties, irregular sleep patterns and struggles with the concept of time.

In March 2010, Shane became involved in Raising Your Game – a project led by Mencap in partnership with I CAN and Nacro. The project supports young people, aged between 14 and 25, with a learning disability or communication difficulty, who have been in trouble with the police or are at risk of getting into trouble.

After being part of an initial focus group, Shane was identified by a project worker and trained to co-deliver a *Talk about Talk* communication awareness-training workshop. Since this Shane has delivered 10 workshops on a completely voluntary basis.

Shane has developed an excellent understanding of his difficulties and has the ability to explain them well to others. Since his training Shane has developed the skills to take the lead on a number of activities and engage audiences with both the facts of ADHD and Asperger's, as well as anecdotal stories of his daily difficulties. He uses humour and clarity of speech to ensure people fully understand and remember his speeches.

Shane has delivered workshops to Housing Associations, The Job Centre, Youth Services and The National Trust. Whilst these organisations are regularly in contact with young people they have never had the opportunity to receive training about Speech, Language and Communication. Excellent feedback has been received from participants, many of whom simply never considered that people they met may have a SLCN, and that their method of communication could help or hinder them.

Shane is modest and hopes that by sharing his story he can provide a service to people who don't understand SLCN. He says: "If it helps just one other person then it's worth it".

Shane is also a long-term member of a local youth group that supports young people with learning disabilities and SLCN acting as a volunteer and mentor. Shane supports and speaks up for others in the group with real passion championing their causes and giving them a voice.

