

The **ESSENTIAL MAGAZINE** for people with disabilities, their families, friends and carers

14th Edition
£9.99

Living with Disability

Julia and Debbie's Walks for All



WHERE WORDS FAIL

Report highlights lack of support for disabled musicians



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3 Hoffmann Gardens
South Croydon
CR2 7GE

t 020 8686 4942

e chris@abilitypromotions.com

www.livingwithdisability.org

App: Living with Disability

 @livingwithDisa1

Editor: Clive Davis

t 07496 147911

e clive@livingwithdisability.org.uk

Design: Mark Stevens

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2 Glebe Road
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From us to you...

WELCOME TO THE 14th edition of Living with Disability.

As we head towards Christmas and a new year I'm sure, like me, you're wondering where 2021 went. Another year when the fight against the Coronavirus dominated the headlines and our conversation.

In the days of social distancing, many of us felt profoundly isolated. We weren't seeing each other at work, out shopping we didn't get to see another person's smile due to masks, and kids didn't get to play with friends the way they used to.

It's better than it was, but for the vulnerable the spectre of the pandemic is still very real.

What is encouraging is the support that's available – from professional organisations through to neighbourhood communities, online and face-to-face.

If you can help then help and if you need help then ask for help. Don't leave it to somebody else and don't suffer in silence. Refusing to ask for help when you need it is refusing someone the chance to be helpful.

Just take a look at some of the features in this edition and you'll see how many individuals and organisations are committed to helping disabled people live independent lives. Plus of course inspiring stories of those who are already living life to the full.

Like the team of 10 disabled and able-bodied adventurers who will be kayaking Alaska's iconic Inside Passage. Or blind woodturner Chris Turner who has become an inspirational YouTube star.

There's an overview of Paralympian Libby Clegg's memoir and TV presenter Mark Lane tells us about getting a grant to have your own bloomin' marvellous garden. Plus news of Avanti West Coast's social media platform to help disabled customers get around the network.

In our Equipment section there's updates on three wheelchair innovations. We also talk to Steve Nutt about 25-years of Computer Room Services – a company offering traditional computer support services alongside an online sales platform for innovative products for the blind and visually impaired.

And read about the organisations partnering up to give away 500 innovative soft shell prosthetic arms to children.

There's also comprehensive coverage of Reshape Music, a ground-breaking report into the inequalities and misunderstandings faced by disabled musicians.

As highlighted on our front cover, there's also an inspiring interview with Debbie North, an important campaigner for creating a countryside accessible to all. She's pictured with TV presenter Julia Bradbury, who with sister Gina runs AccessTOG, a great resource for finding accessible walks.

If you've got a story to tell then get in touch.

Clive Davis
Editor



Your guide to the 14th edition of

Living with Disability



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Virtual Art Display a Click Away

FOUNDED IN 2006, Outside In is a national charity providing a platform for artists who face significant barriers to the art world due to health, disability, social circumstance or isolation.

Works from Outside In's collection can be seen at <https://outsidein.org.uk/exhibitions/> in a new virtual gallery exhibition 'Layers of Creativity' curated by Jo Baring.

Jo is the director of the Ingram Collection of Modern British & Contemporary Art, a former director of Christie's UK and the co-host of the podcast 'Sculpting Lives'.

She has also curated exhibitions at museums and galleries across the UK, is a fellow of The Royal Society of Arts and a trustee of the arts charities Artists Collecting Society and ArtCan.

"I was delighted by the sheer creativity of the works," said Jo.

"It was so enticing to look through a collection which has a real breadth of materials being used in such an imaginative way. I deliberately did not stick to a theme or a particular style; for me the enjoyment was in being surprised, seeing how these artists were using textiles, unusual materials, abstraction or traditional figuration to create works which moved me.

"I would encourage people to look through the Outside In collection themselves and defy anyone not to find something they would happily have on their own walls!"

Outside In's work covers three main areas: Artist development, exhibitions and training. These activities all aim to create a fairer art world by supporting artists, creating opportunities and influencing arts organisations.

To find out more go to www.outsidein.org.uk ●



Jo Baring.

Commonwealth Games Countdown

The Commonwealth Games 2022 will be held in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8.

It will be the biggest multi-sport event to be staged in Great Britain for a decade and is set

to have the largest integrated Para sport programme in history, with eight sports: Para athletics, Para cycling, Para powerlifting, Para swimming, Para table tennis, Para triathlon, and wheelchair basketball 3x3, alongside

Para lawn bowls.

Para athletics events like the 100m T33/T34 and Para swimming events like the 100m breaststroke SB6 have been added for the

first time, featuring names such as Paralympic champions Hannah Cockcroft and Ellie Simmonds.

Information on how to get tickets, on the start and finish times for all 286 sessions of the Commonwealth Games and when the 283 gold medals that are up for grabs will be won is available at www.birmingham2022.com

"We're on track to stage a magnificent edition of the Commonwealth Games and we have seen huge interest in tickets," said Ian Reid, Chief Executive of Birmingham 2022.

"Now more than ever, people are searching for something to look forward to and that is certainly what we will deliver.

"There are millions of sports fans out there who, because of the pandemic, have not been able to attend events for a long time and we are anticipating a huge amount of interest." ●





POSTURAL SUPPORT SPECIALIST Jenx has unveiled a new product that it believes will change lives.

In conjunction with its UK distributor, Jiraffe, the company has brought to market the new Standz 2 - a versatile standing system offering prone or supine standing that accommodates abducted or neutral leg positioning for children between 5 -14 years old.

The new Standz 2 has not only been scaled up from Jenx's original Standz product, but it has also been designed to meet the needs of children who are older, taller, heavier and stronger, whilst keeping the much-loved simplicity of adjustment and use found in its original form.

The new product is designed for the needs of older users and is kept simple and safe for care providers to use. This allows for clinicians to support children and

adolescents as they move from postural development through to postural maintenance.

Standz 2 keeps all the versatility of the original Standz and completes Jenx's family standing products offering upright, prone and supine standing in either a neutral or abducted leg position.

"We are delighted to be bringing Standz 2 to market," said Holly Jenkins, Jenx Director. "This new product is a fantastic

development making the many clinical benefits of standing accessible to even more young children.

"Standing improves blood pressure and circulation, helps digestion, encourages good bone and muscle development, provides opportunities to increase social skills and is a great and effective way to improve a child's outlook on the world.

"Standing isn't just one position, the easy adjustability of Standz 2 enables children to stand in multiple positions, with each one offering different benefits. For children unable to stand unaided Standz 2 will be a life changing product"

Jenx was founded by a pediatric physiotherapist and a product designer in 1982, with the aim of enriching lives and changing perceptions about disability. Ever since, it has been researching, designing and manufacturing ground-breaking developmental postural equipment to support children with specific postural needs.

For more information visit www.jiraffe.org.uk ●

Deaflympics

After several changes of date and venue the 24th Summer Deaflympics will be held in Rio de Janeiro from November 6 to 22 2022.

Deaf athletes from all over the world will compete in the high-level facilities that were used for the Rio 2016 Summer Olympic Games. To find out more go to www.ukdeafsport.org.uk ●



Disabled Sports Fans Speak Up



THE LEVEL PLAYING Field charity has published the results of an in-depth survey involving more than 1400 disabled sports fans.

The focus of the Level Playing Field Annual Survey is to receive greater feedback year on year, helping to drive change towards better access and inclusion for disabled sports fans.

Level Playing Field has carried out a number of specific surveys in the past, but this is the most comprehensive survey ever, reviewing the matchday experience of disabled fans.

The survey is a first of its kind, with the emphasis on getting club-specific feedback that will help clubs target specific areas to improve their facilities and services.

Thanks to support from clubs, leagues and partners who helped to

publicise the survey, Level Playing Field received a total of 1408 responses.

Key findings include:

- 30% of respondents stated that there were sports or sporting venues that they felt unable to attend due to poor access for disabled supporters
- 25% of respondents said that 'anxiety or lack of confidence' was a barrier when attending live sport
- The top three Covid-19 measures that fans wanted in place when returning were: hand sanitising stations, hand washing facilities, and mask wearing (bar exemptions)

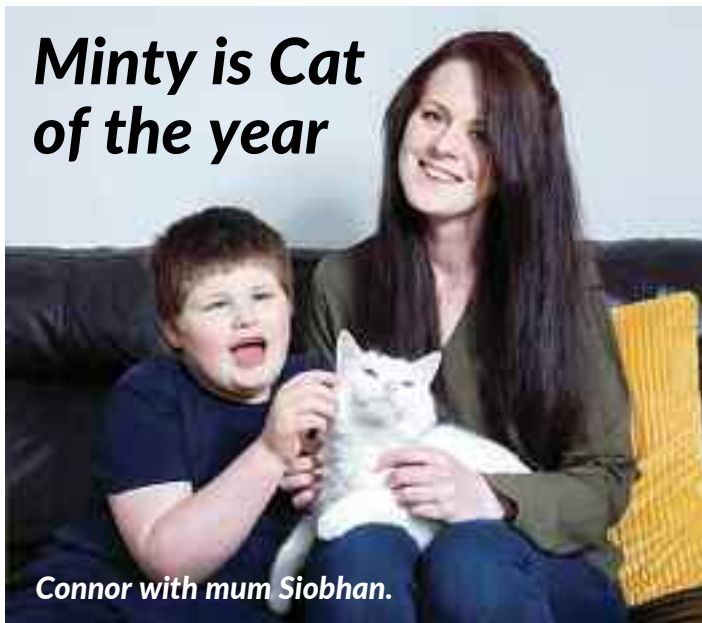
"This first Level Playing Field annual fan survey provides a great insight into the experiences of disabled supporters as they attend live sport," said Level Playing Field Chair Tony Taylor.

"We are grateful to the 1408 fans who took the time to share their experiences with us. It is our hope and expectation that their responses will serve to bring about improvements to services and facilities as clubs see their feedback and comments.

"There is clearly much that still needs to be done to ensure that disabled fans have an equal matchday experience to non-disabled fans. The fact that 30% of respondents said there was a sport or sports venue they felt unable to attend, due to poor access, highlights this inequality. Level Playing Field will continue to promote full access and inclusion for disabled fans and we expect that will be reflected in the results of our future fan surveys."

To find out more go to www.levelplayingfield.org.uk ● ►

Minty is Cat of the year



Connor with mum Siobhan.

A THREE-LEGGED cat who helps a six-year-old boy with learning difficulties has been named cat of the year.

Minty, from Holywell, Flintshire, beat hundreds of other felines to win the top prize at the National Cat Awards, held by charity Cats Protection.

He claimed top spot due to his 'special bond' with six-year-old Connor, who has severe learning difficulties.

"I'm over the moon that Minty has been recognised for the special cat that he is," said Connor's mum Siobhan. "He is a huge part of our family unit and it is lovely to share the unique bond the boys have."

"Minty demonstrates how clever, affectionate and dependable cats can be. We can always rely on him to make everything better, and he is the best friend that Connor needs and deserves."

Nine-year-old Minty was recognised by Cats Protection for the support he gives Connor, who also has a range of medical conditions, including ataxic cerebral palsy.

The cat, who lost a leg in a road accident, helps Connor cope with daily life, from keeping him settled at mealtimes to providing a calming presence at bedtime. Despite his missing leg, Minty has even helped Connor learn to climb the stairs.

"Having only three legs never stops Minty enjoying life, and I think that rubs off on Connor," Siobhan said. "Together, they are unstoppable, whatever comes their way. Minty's a really inspirational cat and we love him to bits." ●

The Autism Show

THE AUTISM SHOW will run at three venues in June 2022. If you're looking for information and direction pre or post diagnosis, are facing daily challenges, or approaching significant transition points, then The Autism Show can help you.

Held in association with the National Autistic Society, the show will run from June 10-11 at Manchester Central, June 17-18 at ExCel London and June 24-25 at the NEC Birmingham.

There will be over 100 hours of talks, clinics and workshops at the show, plus hundreds of specialist products and services. Once inside the event, all content is free to

access and CPD certified for professionals.

The highlights include talks from TV presenter and leading vocal coach Carrie Grant and her actress daughter Talia Grant; Tessa Morton and Jane Gurnett, Founders of Act for Autism; Dr Jacqui Shepherd, Lecturer in Education and Director of Student Experience at University of Sussex; Dr Ann Ozsivadjian, Principal Clinical Psychologist at Evelina London Children's Hospital, Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust; and Dr Georgia Pavlopoulou, Senior Teaching Fellow in Sleep and Mental Health at UCL. To find out more and to book tickets go to www.autismshow.co.uk ●



Next year's Virgin Money London Marathon will take place on Sunday October 2.

The iconic 26.2 mile race is one of the biggest events in the fundraising calendar and many charities have guaranteed places – so apply now to your favourite charity and get training.

If you want a bit more time to prepare, the London Marathon director, Hugh Brasher, has said that the 2023 race will be held in its normal Spring slot. ●

Funding Boosts Cycling Initiative



A DISABILITY SPORTS charity has received funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to provide daily adapted cycling sessions.

Herts Disability Sports Foundation has received £10,000 to increase its group cycling sessions to seven days a week from just the one day it currently runs.

It will also fund the launch of a 'bike library' and storage facility that will allow individuals and carers to hire the right adapted bike to suit their needs.

The cycling sessions, which take place at Stanborough Park in Welwyn Garden City, were launched in response to a lack of inclusive cycling

in the county and have recently seen a huge increase in demand since the end of COVID-19 restrictions.

The Herts Disability Sports Foundation provides a range of sports and fitness sessions for people with disabilities at facilities across



Hertfordshire, with activities including archery, wheelchair basketball, boccia, dance, and now cycling.

It currently caters for 30 adults with disabilities during its Tuesday sessions, but now hopes to welcome

as much as 120 each week to its extended programme with the help of the funding.

"When it comes to cycling, it was soon clear that many adults with disabilities miss out on an activity that most of us take for granted," said Ros Cramp, Charity Operations Manager at Herts Disability Sports Foundation.

"Many of our riders had tried to ride a bike when they were younger but had been put off by a negative experience. Some participants just beamed when first riding an adapted bike, with some saying it had been 40 years since they had been on a bike and that they felt free for the first time in years.

The Foundation is also looking to extend its community outreach work with the help of the National Lottery funding, which has previously seen it run Paralympic Roadshows during the Paralympic Games, taking wheelchair basketball, boccia and a range of sensory impairment activities into local primary schools.

The National Lottery Community Fund distributes money raised by National Lottery players for good causes. Thanks to National Lottery players, over half a billion pounds (£588.2 million) of life-changing funding was awarded to communities across the UK. ●

Rugby League World Cup

LEGENDS WILL BE made, nations will collide and champions will be crowned at the Rugby League World Cup – but not in 2021 as planned.

As a result of the Coronavirus pandemic and travel restrictions, the tournament has been postponed until next year.

And in 2022, for the first time, the wheelchair competition will be part of the Rugby League World Cup main event. It will be part of the same brand, with the same profile and will receive the same level of support.

Wheelchair rugby league is genuinely the most inclusive sport of all - not solely a disability sport, as non-disabled people are welcome to compete as well, and both men and women can play in the same team.

The world's finest disabled and able-bodied Rugby League stars will take to the field at the UK's top stadiums from Saturday 15 October to November 19 2022.

To find out more go to www.rlwc2021.com ●



Disabled Student Takes the Right Pathway

DISABLED STUDENT AISLING Gallagher is celebrating getting a job after training on the first Pathways Academy inclusive design programme.

Aisling Gallagher now works at Theatre Royal Stratford East in London as an Agent for Change, focussing on making the environment more welcoming for disabled people. Created by inclusive design and access consultancy Centre for Accessible Environment's (CAE), the 12-month Pathways Academy programme supports young disabled people to kick start a career in access and inclusive design.

"If it wasn't for Pathways, I would've probably never have had this role," said Aisling. "Even though access consultancy has been something I've been interested in for a long time, it wasn't until I joined Pathways Academy that I believed a career in inclusive design was right for me."

Aisling and the rest of the class of 2021 were the first intake onto the programme. Pathways Academy is part of City Bridge Trust's Bridge to Work initiative. It aims to tackle the disproportionately high level of young, unemployed, disabled Londoners.

"The virtual training format was an absolute life-saver as it meant I could attend every session, whether I was feeling well or not," said Aisling. "And while it's been everything from intense to educational, I can also say it's been inspirational."

Pathways Academy students have benefited from two days of training each month - 22 days over 12 months - plus on the job (and post training) shadowing and mentoring from industry experts matched to their area of interest.

"We know that disabled people face a number of complex barriers to employment," said CAE's Head of Business Development Fara Muneer.

"Pathways Academy seeks to help students overcome those barriers by giving them the technical knowledge and other skills needed to develop a career in inclusive design.

"Students develop essential communications skills to help them put their new knowledge to the test, which includes presentation and report writing skills. And, as we can see with Aisling, the programme is doing exactly what we established it to do."

The latest programme started in October, covering various topics including:

- access auditing
- access design appraisals
- principles of inclusive design
- website accessibility
- designing for neurodiversity.

To find out more about the Pathways Academy go to www.cae.org.uk ●



Congratulations

Stephen Ladyman.



TO STEPHEN LADYMAN who has been announced as the next Chair of The National Autistic Society.

He takes on the vital non-paid role after Carol Homden stepped down after nearly 10 years as our Chair.

Stephen first started advocating for autistic people and families in 1998 as an MP and he set up the All Party Parliamentary Group for Autism alongside our charity in 2000.

He's also been a minister and held various chair roles since, including within the NHS.

"If everyone understood autism and what it's like to be autistic, the world would be a much better place," said Stephen.

A spokesperson for the National Autistic Society said the charity was thrilled to appoint someone with such a wealth of experience, skills and passion for creating a society that works for autistic people.

For further information of the National Autistic Society go to www.autism.org.uk ●



Anne-Marie Flood.

Audio Guide Takes Centre Stage

BLACKPOOL GRAND THEATRE has launched an audio version of its show guide to boost accessibility for visually impaired visitors.

The guide, which is packed with over 50 shows, has been produced through a collaboration between the theatre and a previous employee, Anne-Marie Flood, who has recently launched a voice audio company.

The recordings promote shows ranging from the spine-chilling West End hit *The Woman in Black* to A-list comedians, Rob Beckett, Jason Manford and Alan Carr. Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* and Bizet's *Carmen* produced by Ellen Kent Opera return to Blackpool, as do spectacular Russian State Ballet of Siberia and of course this year's family pantomime *Snow White* and the Seven Dwarfs.

Available on Sound Cloud, theatregoers can easily access the audio brochure online <https://soundcloud.com/blackpoolgrandtheatre/sets/the-guide-blackpool-grand-theatre-autumn-winter-audio-21>

"Accessibility is one of our major priorities and we want all theatregoers to have a comfortable and enjoyable experience," said Andrew Howard, Marketing Manager at The Grand.

"Our website has a wealth of information on how to plan your visit and details on our facilities, including seating arrangements, assistance dogs, accessible performances, hearing loops and how to sign up to our Access Register.

"Blackpool Grand is also keen to support its past employees in new ventures as we fully understand that Covid has meant that many have needed to re-evaluate their circumstances and lives and so it was great to be back working with Ann-Marie on this project".

For more information on accessibility options and to book your tickets, please visit www.blackpoolgrand.co.uk ●



Hannah Pierce applying make up.

Building the Right Foundation

HANNAH PIERCE IS breaking boundaries after successfully completing an 'Introduction to Makeup Artistry' college course.

At just 18 years old and living with cerebral palsy, Hannah attended the GlamCandy professional creative course in Scotland to pursue her passion for makeup. She now looks set to become one of a tiny number of professionals with CP in the beauty industry.

Having spent all of her life in a wheelchair, Hannah is on a mission to rid the stereotypes within the industry and prove that regardless of a disability, you can follow your dreams.

"I've been interested in makeup for about eight years," said Hannah.

"I started teaching myself through online YouTube tutorials. During my time at college, I met some incredible people, including my tutors Vicky Cameron and Holly Martin. I also loved how the college gave you so much knowledge of makeup, but it didn't feel intimidating; it was

always such a relaxing, friendly environment."

The course helps students master the skillset required of a professional artist by studying specialist styles including colour theory, bridal basics, and product knowledge.



End result.

"It's been fantastic to welcome Hannah onto our course and showcase her incredible talent from skills that she originally taught herself," said Hayley Harvey-Smith, director at GlamCandy.

"We're an inclusive college, and we are open to students from all backgrounds, so it's a pleasure to have worked with Hannah.

To find out more go to www.glamcandy.co.uk ●



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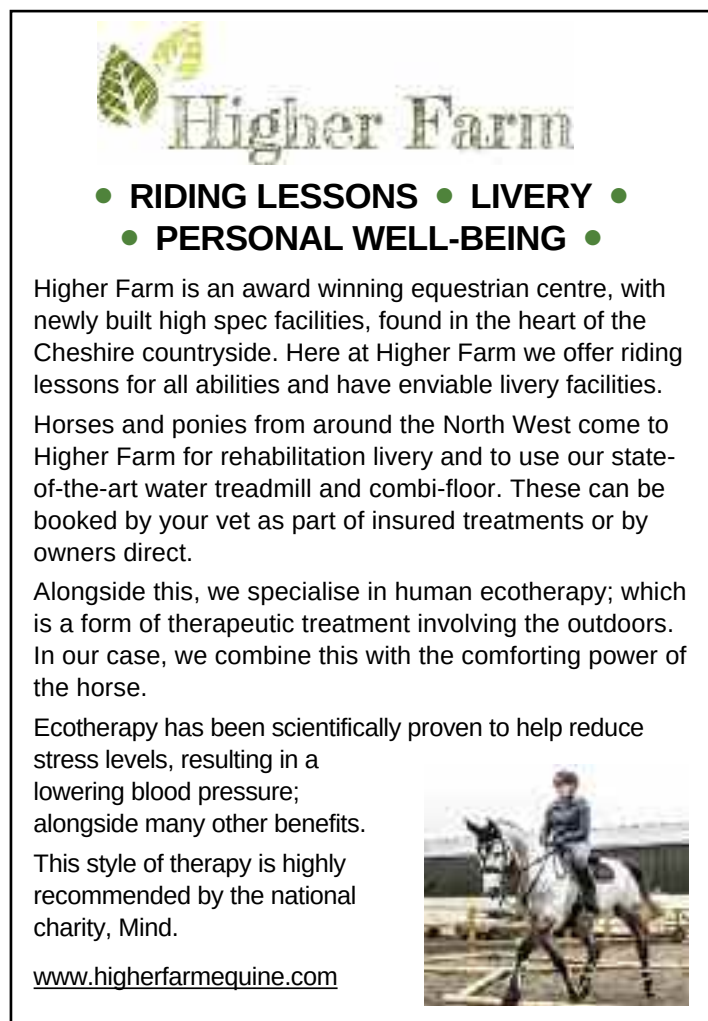
A Breakthrough Diet for Assistance and Support Dogs

Assistance dogs work hard every day to support their owners and help them live life to the fullest, which is why they need a diet that'll help them stay calm and focussed throughout the day. The Alert by Burns Pet Nutrition has been specifically formulated with assistance dogs in mind.

Developed by veterinary surgeon, John Burns, the Burns Alert Assistance Dog range contains healthy ingredients such as salmon oil, oats, chicken and green tea extract to support brain function and maintain alertness. For working dogs who need to perform important tasks throughout the day it helps maintain a calm temperament, good cognitive ability, a healthy coat, and all-round good health.

As with all Burns food, this range is hypoallergenic, highly digestible, and made with all natural ingredients. A pioneering pet food brand, Burns has been at the forefront of the healthy pet food industry for almost 30 years. Since then, they've won numerous awards, sold over 2 billion bowls of wholesome pet food to date, and have continued to support shelters and community projects across the UK by donating 25% of profits every year.

Shop the Alert Assistance dog range at www.burnspet.co.uk



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Higher Farm is an award winning equestrian centre, with newly built high spec facilities, found in the heart of the Cheshire countryside. Here at Higher Farm we offer riding lessons for all abilities and have enviable livery facilities. Horses and ponies from around the North West come to Higher Farm for rehabilitation livery and to use our state-of-the-art water treadmill and combi-floor. These can be booked by your vet as part of insured treatments or by owners direct.

Alongside this, we specialise in human ecotherapy; which is a form of therapeutic treatment involving the outdoors. In our case, we combine this with the comforting power of the horse.

Ecotherapy has been scientifically proven to help reduce stress levels, resulting in a lowering blood pressure; alongside many other benefits.

This style of therapy is highly recommended by the national charity, Mind.

www.higherfarmequine.com



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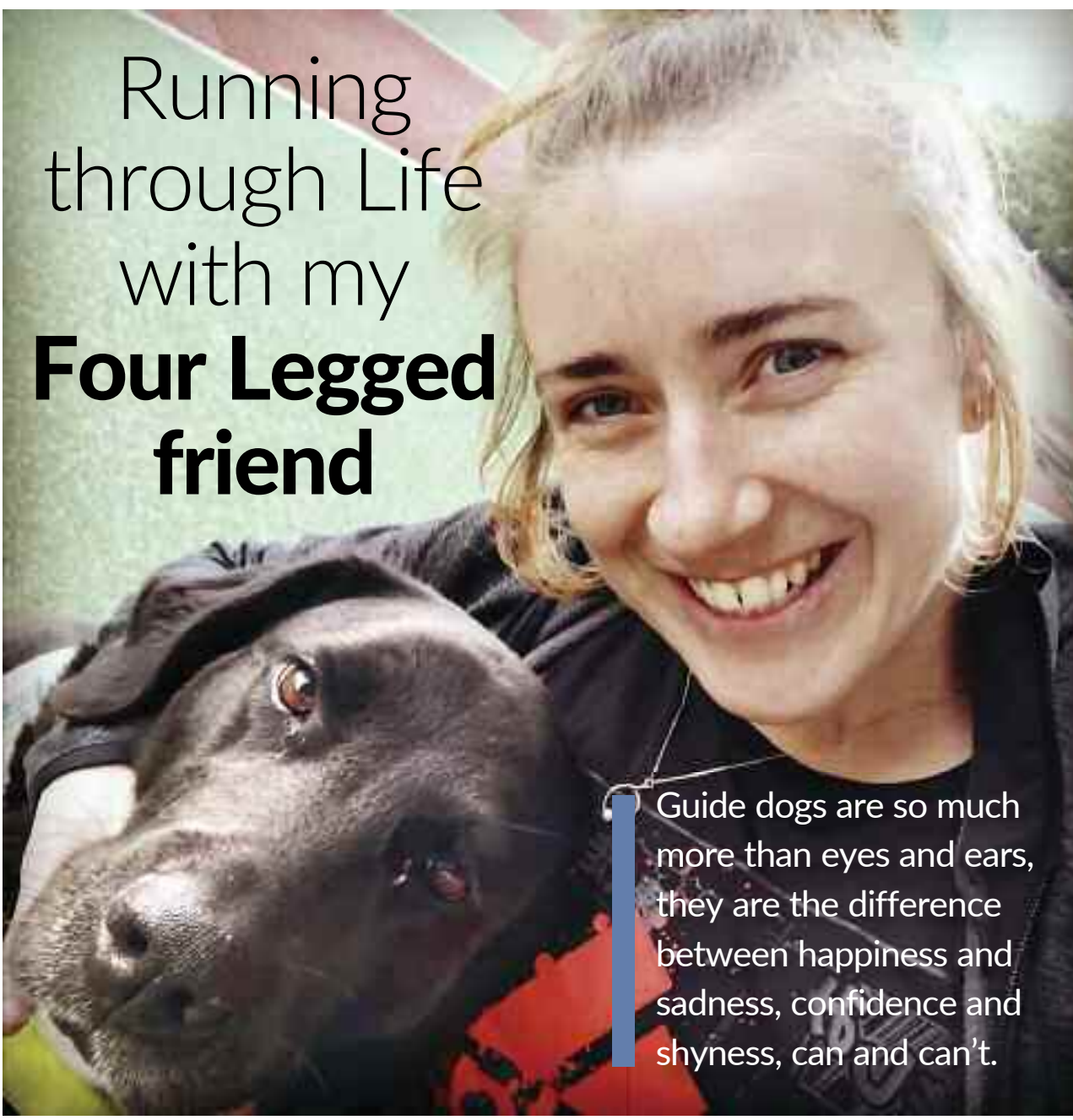
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Running through Life with my **Four Legged friend**



Guide dogs are so much more than eyes and ears, they are the difference between happiness and sadness, confidence and shyness, can and can't.

BLIND PARALYMPIAN LIBBY Clegg MBE was a popular and proven winner on the athletics track.

She retired after this year's Tokyo Paralympics. But when she spoke to Living with Disability from her home in Loughborough, Libby announced she was going to give para-cycling a go!

In the meantime, the 31-year-old multi-medal winning sprinter is promoting her memoir,

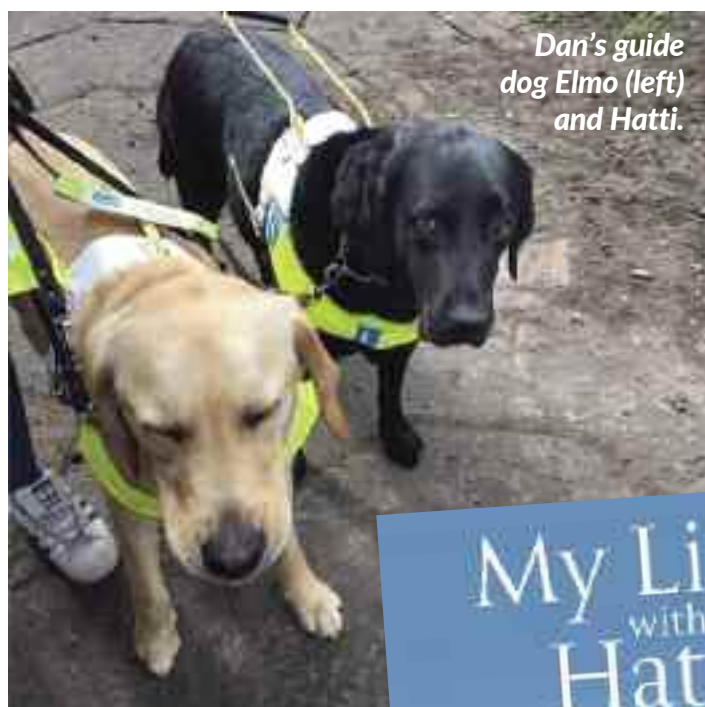
'My Life with Hatti: Six Years With A Dog Who Does Everything', published recently by Quercus.

The book is an honest, affectionate and

sometimes hilarious description of her life and running career, with much more than a grateful nod to Hatti, her constant companion in recent years.

"I had always wanted to write a book about the ups and downs in my life and of course the athletics that has been so much a part of me," said Libby. "But I didn't want to bore people with too much of a focus on the sport.

"Hatti has been at the heart of all that I've done for the past six to seven years and I've spent more time with her than any other



Dan's guide dog Elmo (left) and Hatti.

living thing, so I decided to focus on our relationship and write about my life and hers. It makes the sport bits a lot more interesting."

Libby is registered blind and has only limited peripheral vision in one eye. She was diagnosed with the degenerative eye condition Stargardt's Macular Dystrophy aged nine.

She won nine major gold medals as a sprinter, including the 100 T11 and 200 T11 at the 2016 Paralympic Games in Rio, Brazil, and returned home from Tokyo this year's with a silver medal in the mixed 4 x 100 relay.

"In many ways winning a medal as part of a team meant a lot more to me than my individual medals and it felt great to retire from athletics on such a high," said Libby. "Training and competing as a runner for more than 20-years takes its toll on the body. It was definitely time to stop."

So much like her book, we reverted to chatting about nine-year-old Hatti, the black Retriever Labrador cross who came into Libby's



Libby, partner Dan and Hatti.



life as a fully trained two-year-old guide dog.

"I was initially very reluctant to get a guide dog," explained Libby. "I saw it as a kind of defeat in that I couldn't cope with being blind. But I soon came to realise how very wrong I'd been and that thanks to Hatti I could cope so much better with being blind."

Constant companion

"Suddenly getting from A to B was so much easier, I had a new level of independence and with that came

an enormous boost to my confidence. Just entering a room with Hatti became less of an ordeal as people would instantly know I couldn't see. I didn't have to explain myself.

"Previously I would conveniently forget that I was disabled so as not to have to explain myself, which would lead to some funny situations. On more than one occasion I have got into the wrong car when friends were waiting to pick me up and once, when I pretended I could see, a very kind gentleman obviously didn't believe me and gave me his glasses!

"In a way Hatti was the one to train me. I didn't realise she would have such an impact on my life. She is a great companion."



*Promoting
Dancing
On Ice.*



*Royal Box
Wimbledon.*



*Libby with
her MBE.*

Libby is also well-known to the public from her ground-breaking appearance last year as the first blind contestant on ITV's *Dancing on Ice*, where she reached the final, winning her millions of new fans. With partner Dan Powell, himself registered blind and a judo Paralympian, Libby has a two-year-old son, Edward.

In the book she talks honestly of being in denial about needing help; about the difficulties of introducing Dan's guide dog Elmo to the family; about the depression she plunged into after winning two gold medals and about how Hatti helped her through it all.

A shared life

This affecting story will delight dog lovers and give an inspirational insight into living with a disability, as well as lots of laughs along the way as we meet Hatti, the diva and the dustbin, who has mingled with the great and good as well as being sick at the Wimbledon Championships.

"Dan and I had been invited to the tennis and people had obviously given Hatti a few extra nibbles that we weren't aware of," said Libby. "They didn't agree with her and the poor thing was sick all over the carpet in the Royal Box."

That hasn't stopped Libby, who has won Scottish Athletics Athlete of the Year seven times and Scottish Disability Sports Athlete of the Year six times, works tirelessly to raise funds and

awareness about guide dogs so that other blind and partially sighted people around the world can benefit from the same special relationship.

"Guide dogs are so much more than eyes and ears," she said. "They are the difference between happiness and sadness, confidence and shyness, can and can't. Even life and death, sometimes.

"From the moment I wake up until the moment I go to bed, Hatti will either be lying at my feet, sitting by my side or guiding me to wherever I need to be. She is with me through the highs and lows and we have shared countless adventures. I'm very happy to have been able to share some of that in my book."

My Life with Hatti: Six Years with A Dog Who Does Everything is available from all good bookshops and you can follow Libby on Instagram @libby.clegg and Twitter @LibbyClegg ●



Kayaking The Inside Passage

ALASKA'S SPECTACULAR INSIDE Passage is best explored from the water - which in most cases would involve a comfortable cruise ship and probably not the whole 1,200 miles.

In the case of a 10-man mixed disabled and able-bodied team from Forces of Nature it will be by kayaks and for the whole spectacular tidal route from just outside Seattle to Stagway.

The challenge to navigate through the dramatic glacial wilderness of one of the world's most stunningly beautiful archipelagos will take place next May in aid of injured veterans charity The Not Forgotten.



Important kit for the challenge ahead.

*No stranger to danger
Cayle Royce on a training
session to take on the
Inside Passage.*



The challenge was to have been a longer one – 4000km down the Amazon River through the heart of South America. A worldwide pandemic and a dramatic rise in the crime rate in Brazil and Peru put a stop to that.

A risk too far

“To put a team of 12 individuals into the Amazon basin, with our state-of-the-art kayaks and equipment, would make us a huge target and would be incredibly dangerous and grossly irresponsible,” said Team Forces of Nature Project Manager Theo Jones.



Martin Wilson (seated) training with Jim Taylor Ross from team sponsor Epic Kayaks UK.

“The main difference is that it is of course tidal and with that comes a whole host of challenges and potential dangers. We will have to be right on point when it comes to calculating the tides. You do not want to be taking a dip. Water temperature is cold, down to four degrees centigrade, and you do not want to be in that for long.

“Although the weather should be relatively benign during the spring and summer months, there is always the risk of storms, strong winds and low visibility due to fog.

Watch out for bears!

“The North Pacific rolls in on the coast and there are very open stretches around Cape Caution and the Dixon Entrance where we may get held up due to bad weather.

“Also, the rainfall in the area is extremely high between May and August with an average of between 6.6 and 9.8 inches per month, so the crew are in for a very damp expedition.

“We will not have the luxury of motorised support vessels so it will be an unsupported adventure for up to 90 days. We will have to

“Regardless of the mental or physical ability of the individuals, the risks and pressures placed on the team as a whole would be unprecedented. It was a no-brainer really to go back and take another look at the map.

“The challenge needed to be somewhere that still held the remoteness, level of skill required and indeed the endurance aspect of the Amazon adventure. The Inside Passage along the US and Canadian North West coast has it all.



The Inside Passage.

carry everything we need for up to a few weeks at a time. Which means a lot of our food, water and spare equipment will have to be sent ahead of the team by ship to strategic resupply points along the route.

"The team will be camping throughout. Not all of the islands along the route are particularly hospitable due to dense forests and rocky shores and could prove quite a challenge to find somewhere suitable before the tide changes or weather deteriorates. In some cases, long portages will be necessary in order to reach an area far enough away from the rising tide.

"And as if the kayaking itself was not challenging enough we will have to be mindful of the wildlife that thrives along this coast - black and brown bears, wolves, otters, seals, humpback whales and orca. The team are rehearsing their camp drills and will ensure food is hoisted high into the trees in order to avoid a midnight visit from a hungry bear."

A Crazy Challenge

The idea for the challenge came from a chance meeting at the 2015 Talisker Whisky Atlantic Challenge. After 44 days rowing 3000 miles, Theo and his rowing partner Shane Chadwick were beaten by two hours 33 minutes by Row2Recovery, the first physically disabled team of four to row an ocean.

"It was humbling and you can imagine the banter, but we spent several days together at the finish in Antigua and made a plan with the Road2Recovery Skipper Cayle Royce MBE to take on a fundraising challenge together in the future," explained Theo.

Fast forward six years and Theo, Shane and Cayle are in training with Neil Heritage, Martin Wilson, Tom Richardson, Markus Strydom and Dr Barry McKenna to take on the Inside Passage. It's hoped two others will sign-up for the challenge.

"When you see what so many wounded veterans do it is clear there is an ideology amongst



*Neil Heritage
enjoying a
breather.*

them to adapt and overcome their injuries and to get on with life," said Theo.

"With life changing physical injuries or mental illness as a result of their military service, change is not seen as the end of the road. It simply means 'a life with a difference' and a passion for ingenuity in order to continue to overcome any obstacle that should present itself.

When you see what so many wounded veterans do it is clear there is an ideology amongst them to adapt and overcome their injuries and to get on with life.

"Which is why Team Forces of Nature supports and is fundraising for The Not Forgotten."

Through social activities and challenges, The Not Forgotten combats the causes of isolation and loneliness; a blight that adversely affects so many wounded, injured and sick service personnel and disabled members of the Armed Forces community.

A tri-service charity founded in 1920, they support over 10,000 wounded service personnel and disabled veterans each year – no matter their Service, age, campaign, injury or illness – through a programme of Royal events, respite holidays and

outings, concerts and the provision of televisions, television licences and tablet computers.

Each of these events and activities is designed to enhance mental and physical wellbeing, restore confidence, boost morale and improve the chances of these individuals and their families enjoying a normal, if not better, life.

The therapeutic effect of time spent with like-minded individuals not only creates lifelong friendships, but an invaluable environment in which service personnel and veterans support one another.

Forces of Nature aims to raise £250,000 for The Not Forgotten and you can help towards that total by donating at <https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/amazoniankayak2020>

The Team

Cayle Royce MBE

Cayle spent 10 years in the military, deploying to Afghanistan as a sharpshooter as part of the Brigade Reconnaissance Force. He was injured when he stepped on an IED in 2012 losing both his legs above the knee.



By rowing across the Atlantic Ocean twice, skipping one of the teams, he has accumulated 95 days at sea in a rowing boat.

He flew a paramotor across Kenya, down the length of the West Coast of the USA and the length of Britain from John O'Groats to Land's End.

World Records Cayle has achieved:

- First and fastest amputee to fly a paramotor from John O'Groats to Land's End
- First double amputee to row an ocean more than once
- First disabled crew of four to row any ocean
- Cayle with be rowing across the Pacific Ocean in 2023

Marty Wilson

Marty served in the 2nd Battalion Parachute Regiment with tours of Northern Ireland, Macedonia, Iraq and Afghanistan.



In February 2011 he had been patrolling on his 3rd Afghan tour when he was shot in the head, suffering severe head injuries which resulted in the loss of basic communication and process skills. He spent over a year at Headley Court Military Rehabilitation Centre undergoing treatments including speech and occupational therapy. Slowly Marty regained the ability to speak, read and write but still processes slowly.

Ever since Marty has fundraised for the Not Forgotten Association events, including:

- Summiting Mount Kilimanjaro
- Running the New York Marathon
- Competing in the Marathon des Sables in 2017

Tom Richardson

Tom started his military career in 1973 by joining the local army cadets. He found real enjoyment and felt that he finally belonged somewhere. He joined the Parachute Regiment in 1979 and after passing his training he was posted to 2 Para and was a full corporal when he left in 1988.



Tom's tours included the Falklands, Belize, Northern Ireland, Oman and Kenya.

Tom was diagnosed with PTSD 28 years after leaving the Parachute regiment. He takes a huge amount of pride in his work assisting at The Not Forgotten events. The rest of Team Forces of Nature noticed immediately how he selflessly puts all others before himself. It is this quality that the rest of the team regard as a benchmark, thanks to Tom. ▶

Markus Strydom MC

Markus spent eight years in the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards, deploying to Afghanistan as a section commander within the Reconnaissance Platoon. In June 2012 he was shot twice and hit with a hand grenade whilst clearing a compound of insurgents.

Since leaving the army he works closely with the personal recovery unit in Colchester: sharing his experience and advice about leaving the army and joining the civilian workforce.

Skills and achievements:

- Markus was awarded the Military Cross for actions taken in the line of fire
- In October 2019 he was awarded Best Heroes Award for his support to fellow ex-service personnel.
- Markus was awarded the Military Cross for actions taken in the line of fire



Neil Heritage

Neil spent 11 years in the military, deploying to Bosnia, Northern Ireland and two tours of Iraq working as an electronic specialist as part of a bomb disposal team.

He was injured, losing both legs above the knee, following a suicide bomb attack in November 2004. He now works as a fitness instructor teaching able bodied clients on a residential bootcamp course.

Skills and achievements:

- Rowed across the Atlantic Ocean in 51 days as part of team Row2Recovery in 2012
- In 2015 he set up Climb 2 Recovery – assisting injured soldiers in their rehabilitation and



helping them gain qualifications to work in the outdoor industry

- Neil successfully summited the Matterhorn, becoming the first ever double amputee man to do so!

Shane Chadwick

Shane is from Perth, Western Australia. He has been working on super yachts for the past seven years and a couple of years ago rowed across the Atlantic Ocean in 46 days with Theo.

Skills & achievements:

- Finished 3rd out of 9 places, rowing across the Atlantic Ocean
- Currently working as Chief Engineer aboard a super yacht
- Hobbies include ski diving, scuba diving and surfing



Theo Jones

Theo wrote a bucket list a few years ago: Rowing the Atlantic was the hardest challenge he could think of. Once he had finished that adventure, it left him wanting more.

He has navigated himself to all sorts of different places around the globe upon the high seas whilst working on super yachts for 10 years and loves the sense of adventure it gives.

Skills and achievements:

- Project manager of Team Forces of Nature
- Currently works as a Navigational Officer aboard a super yacht
- Has summited Kilimanjaro and Mt Kenya
- Rowed across the Atlantic Ocean in 46 days



Dr Barry McKenna

Barry left Northern Ireland at 18 yrs of age to study engineering at Uni sponsored by the military. Following a few months in hospital paralysed by a condition called Guillain Barre Syndrome, he went to Headley Court, the Defence Services Medical Rehabilitation Unit.

There he learned the importance of fitness, his need for adventure and that physical exercise can be therapeutic. He continued with his studies and spent some time in the army. After leaving the army he worked for British Aerospace and took voluntary redundancy



after a few years to go to medical school in London and study to be a doctor.

Since qualifying he has spent 24 years in emergency medicine and General Practice but is now a full time GP in Devon.

As well as recognising the relevance of physical exercise in functional recovery, he co- founded a mental health charity 16 yrs ago. This unique

service provides direct access psychotherapy and EMDR for PTSD for patients.

- He will support the team on a medical, psychological and practical capacity ●



THE NOT FORGOTTEN



Everything in the Garden is Rosy

Thanks to the Gardening with Disabilities Trust.

Mark Lane, Trustee and Co-Chair.

THE TRUST AWARDS small grants to people to adapt their gardens in a way that makes gardening possible, in spite of their disability.

From funding raised beds and pathway handrails to tools and bags of bulbs, the Trust is committed to helping disabled people throughout the UK, by getting them back in the garden and showing how gardening can enhance their physical and mental well-being.

Benefits that the Trust's far-sighted founder, Peggy Kinsey, already understood more than 50 years ago when she set it up.

"Mrs Kinsey understood the real value of what



we refer to today as horticultural therapy," said Mark Lane, Trustee and Co-Chair of the Gardening with Disability Trust.

"That is getting outside in the fresh air, being active in the garden and as she put it 'getting the soil under the fingernails'.

"I call it 'my green pill' because gardening was instrumental in combating the physical pain and the depression that I felt being in a wheelchair following a car accident. It really did pull me back from a very dark period in my life.

"Gardening has changed my life on a physical, emotional and mental level and that's why I



Some of the projects completed thanks to a grant from the Gardening with Disabilities Trust.

jumped at the chance to be involved with the Gardening with Disabilities Trust.”

The Trust, which is entirely staffed by volunteers, exists to help people continue to experience the joy of gardening, despite physical or mental disability. It does that by awarding small financial grants.

The most common request is for raised beds and planting tables and it often pays for accessibility ramps, handrails for outside steps, adapted tools, polytunnels or simply seeds and bulbs to get a garden going again.

A growing success

“Whether you’re a passive or active gardener, having a green space in which to work or just sit will have an enormous effect of your well-being,” added Mark.

“I always refer to a study that was done in Japan during which volunteers were asked to look at a plain concrete wall and then an exact same sized wall but covered in a living hedge. The difference recorded in brain stimulation was staggering, from nothing to releasing an explosion of the serotonin that create feelings of well-being and happiness.”

Just what the Gardening with Disabilities Trust achieves through its grants scheme.

Once the Trust has received an application it is



passed to a case worker- one of the Trust’s experienced volunteers. If it fits the criteria and is considered viable it’s discussed by the Trust’s committee members. Successful applicants receive payment in the form of vouchers or arrangements are made to pay chosen suppliers when the work is completed.

As Living with Disability went to press the Trust has already made more than 1,200 individual grants totalling more than £46,000 in 2021.

All the money donated is raised by the Trust and it relies heavily on its generous, energetic and enthusiastic volunteers and supporters.

If you would like to donate, support by attending one of its regular webinars or organise a fundraising lunch party or a plant sale, an open garden or an open house event, a sponsored swim or a sponsored walk, then contact the Trust via its website www.gardeningwithdisabilitiestrust.org.uk

You will also find details of 'Cuttings', a book containing more than 500 gardening tips from famous and expert gardeners, such as Alan Titchmarsh, Mark Lane, Joanna Lumley, Julian Clary and Dame Helen Mirren, that you can buy.

"It's thought that more than three million more people started gardening during the recent Coronavirus pandemic and that will have

included many people with physical and mental disabilities," said Mark.

"It's important that they carry on with it and also that more people experience and understand the benefits and enjoy the achievement of growing plants and vegetables, indoors or outdoors, individually or as part of a community scheme."

To find out more go to www.gardeningwithdisabilitiestrust.org.uk ●

Bloomin' Marvellous Mark

MARK LANE IS the UK's first garden designer in a wheelchair as well as the first BBC gardening presenter in a wheelchair.

As a broadcaster he is a presenter of the award-winning BBC Gardeners' World, BBC Gardeners' World Live and coverage of the Royal Horticultural Society's Flower Shows at Chelsea, Hampton Court Palace and Tatton.

He is also the garden expert presenter on BBC Morning Live, as well as the garden design and plant expert for QVC, with his own programme 'Love Gardening with Mark Lane'.

Mark graduated from University College London in Art History with B.A. (Hons). He went on to become the Publishing Director for the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) and the Managing Editor for the leading international Arts publisher Thames & Hudson.

In 2001 Mark was in a car accident and had to have operations on his spine, which were complicated by him being born with Spina Bifida. Following a long rehabilitation period Mark studied garden design through an Open Learning course and has gone on to become the first recognised UK garden designer in a wheelchair.

He is passionate about promoting a positive image of disability, as well as the immediate and long-term benefits that gardening has on both our physical and mental health.



"I am living proof of how gardening can dramatically change your life," said Mark. "In a strange but positive way, my disability has made me more determined and if I can help promote the community and environmental aspects of the great outdoors to thousands of people then I am more than happy to do so."

As well as being a Trustee of the Gardening with Disabilities Trust, Mark is the Patron of Core

Landscapes, an award-winning mental health project that aims to improve people's mental and physical wellbeing through horticulture. It opens-up previously locked sites to create green havens for individuals and the wider local community.

He is also an Ambassador for Greenfingers, the national charity dedicated to supporting children who spend time in hospices around the UK, for

Groundwork, the community charity improving green spaces, and Thrive, the disability charity that uses gardening to positively change lives.

His passion for gardening has led to a series of accolades, including Most Innovative Landscape Designer (2021), Landscape Designer of the Year (2020) and Best Garden & Landscape Design Practice (UK) 2020. He has also been shortlisted in the National Diversity Awards 2021, which will be announced in February 2022.

To find out more about Mark Lane go to www.marklane.tv ●



CHRIS FISHER IS renowned as The Blind Woodturner.

On this year's World Mental Health Day he was the inspirational star of a short YouTube movie in which he shared the story of his own mental health challenges and the salvation he found in woodturning.

Dark days

In the 12th edition of *Living with Disability* Chris talked candidly about his sudden sight loss in 2008 and his subsequent mental battle in coming to terms with a disability.

"After waking up with blurred vision one morning to going completely blind with Toxoplasmosis took less than four months and I had to cope with that," explained Chris.

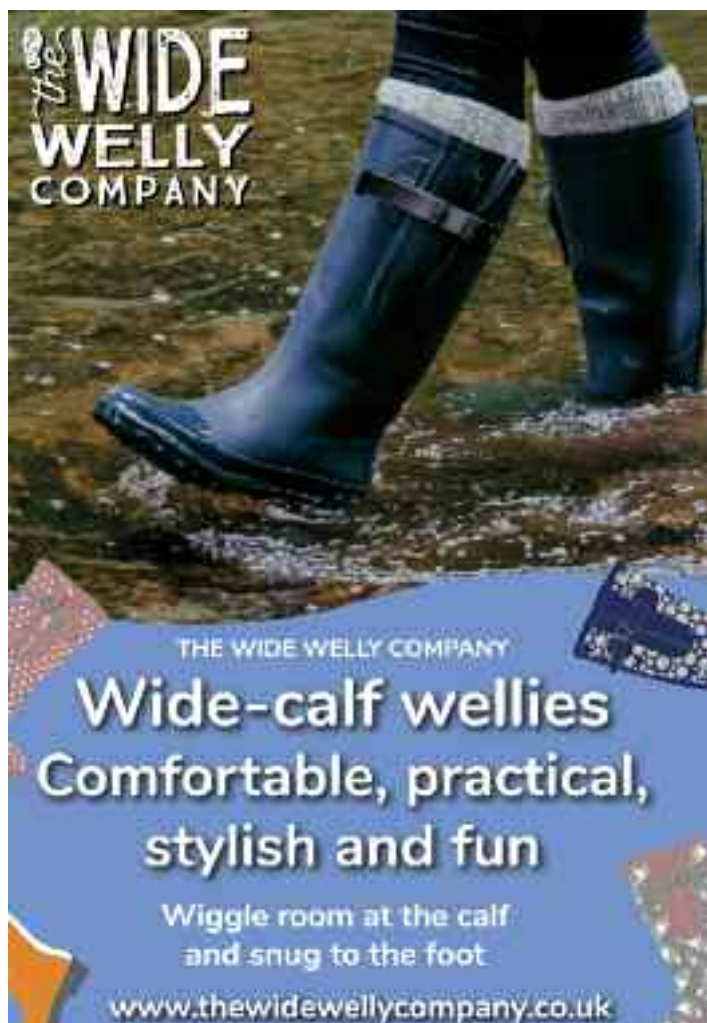
"But the feelings of hopelessness and, in those really dark, lonely moments, questioning whether there is any point in going on with life are not always immediate.

"The early days of my blindness were filled by social workers and professionals helping me to cope practically – how to make a hot drink, walk with a cane and work a range of talking and bleeping technological aids to help me live a 'normal' life."

"It was about a year later that I hit a mental barrier. I was doing a cookery course for the blind and one day just suddenly felt waves of panic. I was usually so

upbeat. It wasn't like me at all, but it all suddenly hit home and for three or four years I was at rock bottom, suffering from muscle spasms and hallucinations, seldom leaving the house and ▶





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* Hounslow West Underground Station
 is 'Step-free from Train to Street'



Chris in his workshop.

uplink to LA so that the filming could be viewed remotely and Chris was filmed through vintage lenses previously used by Stanley Kubrick.”

To find out more about Chris go to www.christopherfisher.co.uk



Chris with Bamber his guide dog.

consumed by feelings of nausea and panic.”

You can read how Chris made a surprising choice that turned his life around and gave him a new life-defining career here <https://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/html5/reader/production/default.aspx?pubname=&edid=848fa8b3-aae5-491a-bc69-7c9ee259be01>

Now aged 50, Chris has won recognition as a skilled and respected woodturner, becoming the first blind woodturner to be accepted on to the prestigious Register of Professional Turners.

He is in constant demand to give woodturning demonstrations at clubs and shows all over the UK. He has been featured on the BBC and in numerous publications and gives regular tutorials and updates on his new-found passion on YouTube.

Which is where you can catch the craftsman in his starring role for World Mental Health Day

<https://youtu.be/NvnBuSL4hyU>

“We had a crew of 12 here for 10 days,” explained Chris’ wife Nicola from their home in Derbyshire. “It was an incredible experience. There was a satellite



Example of Chris's work.



MND No Barrier to Pedalo World Record

THE GUINNESS WORLD Record for travelling the Thames fastest in a pedalo has been broken by a team from the charity Challenging MND.

Travelling through the nights and battling torrential rain the team was also the first to ever complete the 128 miles from Lechlade to Teddington Lock non-stop – in 51 hours and 59 seconds – and beat the previous record by seven hours.

The team was led by the charity's founder, 43-year-old Alex Gibson, who was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease four years ago. He was joined by ex-England Rugby Union player Andy Long, Alun Thomas and Joe Reed.

"No doubt about it, it's been a tough event to be a part of but it's going to make our record extremely hard to beat... any challengers out there, good luck to you," said Alex.

"I hope achieving this really boosts awareness of Motor Neurone Disease - this is at the heart of what we do at Challenging MND. I'd like it to send a message to anyone living with MND to say that despite your diagnosis, you can always do much more and deliver much more than you think you are able to, so go for it!

"It has been fantastic to be part of such a superb team, and all the support we've had has been amazing. I want to thank everyone that has been a part of helping us smash the Guinness World Record."

Helping others

Throughout his life Alex has had a huge interest in sport and fitness, representing Great Britain in the decathlon and playing rugby for Barking, Brentwood and Loughborough University. When he was

diagnosed with MND, a charity rugby match was arranged between Brentwood RFC and Barking RFC, with the sole aim to raise money for Alex and his family.

Alex was uncomfortable with being the recipient of the proceeds and wanted to use the money to set up a charity to help others. From this, Challenging MND was developed and gained official charity status in March 2019. The cruelty of this disease is although the body may fail, the mind is still sharp and therefore, Challenging MND's mission is to provide lasting memorable challenges and events for those affected and their loved ones.

Alex has raised £220,000 for charity in a series of challenges, including walking 100

miles in one weekend, cycling to Guildford RFC (70 miles) and back to Brentford the following day (70 miles), scaling the Three Peaks - Ben Nevis, Scafell Pike and Snowdon – and cycling the 480 miles in between over the period of a week and walking a double marathon (52 miles) in one day.

Motor Neurone Disease is a rapidly progressing neurological disease that affects the brain and the spinal cord. It can leave people locked in a failing body, unable to move, talk, swallow and eventually breathe. There is a 1 in 300 chance of developing the disease and up to 5,000 adults are living with MND at any one time in the UK.

To find out more go to www.challengingmnd.org ●

*Pedaling into
the sunset.*



Purple Sock Day

Josh Wintersgill founder of ableMove UK, Andrew Douglass, founder of Parallel Lifestyle and Shani Dhanda, founder of Diversability Card launch Purple Sock Day.

SOcial Enterprise PARALLEL Lifestyle is calling on people to pull their socks up in supporting International Day of Persons with Disability.

Not any socks. A pair of purple socks to mark and celebrate IDPD on December 3 and to help create a new fund for disability enterprise and entrepreneurship.

Pull on Purple Socks

Founded by Claudia and Andrew Douglass, Parallel's social aim is to support disabled people to be free to live life to the full in mainstream society.

With that in mind the couple have teamed up with the pioneering sustainable activewear brand,

32 Living with Disability

BAM, and the UK's leading enterprise support charity, Hatch Enterprise. The aim is to encourage businesses and the public to buy and wear a pair of Parallel's Purple Socks to shine a much-needed light on the challenges faced by D/deaf – people who are profoundly deaf and use sign language to communicate - and disabled entrepreneurs in the UK.

An inclusive world

IDPD was created by the UN to promote the rights and well-being of disabled people across society and raise awareness of disability in every aspect of political, social, economic, and cultural life.



Making the world of work more inclusive and accessible are constant barriers to employment opportunities for D/deaf and disabled people in the UK. So many people living with disabilities often turn to self-employment and entrepreneurship to create their own opportunities, with the UK employment rate being around 30% lower amongst disabled individuals versus non-disabled.

Businesses on board

Support for D/deaf and disabled entrepreneurs is also under-served, holding back the vast potential of this rich seam of talent and the benefits it can bring to society and the UK economy. Half (50%) of disabled business owners cited lack of finance or capital as a barrier to innovating.

Using this year's IDPD as a platform, the inaugural Purple Sock Day will engage businesses and the public to take part in a simple and effortless act of wearing purple socks.

The aim is to raise greater awareness of disability inclusion and D/deaf and disabled founders, with half of the Purple Sock Day profits going towards a new fund that will be used to provide grants to founders, professional advice, mentoring, networking opportunities and tailored business support across a range of disabilities.

Hatch Enterprise will oversee the fund; implementing the framework, governance, and expertise to support budding D/deaf and disabled entrepreneurs. The other half of Purple Sock Day profits will be reinvested into growing it into an annual campaign and other Parallel social enterprise projects.

"Part of our social mission at Parallel is to combine innovative thinking with action to achieve greater disability inclusion across society," said Andrew Douglass.

"Purple Sock Day will help deliver a sustainable and long-term solution to better support the potential of our D/deaf and disabled business talent; whilst also creating something fun which everyone of all abilities can take part in together. I hope everyone will wear a pair and show they care."

To take part in Purple Sock Day and sign-up to receive a pair of the specially designed BAM socks for just £5 visit www.parallellifestyle.com/purple-sock-day.

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Euan MacDonald MBE.

Wanted - Your Views on

Disabled Access

WHAT IS DISABLED access like in the UK today – better, worse or just the same as pre-pandemic?

We'll have a better idea of the impact of lockdown on disabled access provision in the UK when the results of the Euan's Guide Access Survey are published next year. In the meantime, get involved. There is still time to complete the survey.

Focus on access

Euan's Guide is an award-winning disabled access charity, best known for [EuansGuide.com](https://euansguide.com), the disabled access review website where disabled people, their family, friends and carers can find and share reviews on the accessibility of venues

around the UK and beyond. The website now holds thousands of reviews and is an invaluable tool for many disabled people.

The charity's current survey asks anyone who has ever had to consider disabled access to share their opinion on accessibility in 2021. And with all the changes in the post-lockdown world, it is more crucial than ever for people to take part this year.

The Euan's Guide Access Survey is the largest and longest running survey of its kind and in 2021 is being supported by Motability Operations, the UK's leading car scheme for disabled people.

Questions include how lockdowns and COVID measures are impacting those with accessibility



A typical accessible Changing Places toilet.



requirements, what are the barriers to getting out and about and what people think about disabled access at all types of venues from pubs to castles to stations – and everywhere in between.

The survey will also tackle the essential topic of toilets and ask people's views on the most common problems they encounter with accessible loos.

The data gathered will be used to provide a picture of disabled access in the UK and will be compared with previous results to find out if access is getting better or worse.

Opening doors

Key findings from previous surveys have included respondents rating historic castles as more accessible than pubs, 93% of respondents reporting that they need to find disabled access information before they visit somewhere new and 79% of respondents having to change their plans at the last minute because of poor accessibility.

Euan's Guide was founded in 2013 by Euan MacDonald MBE, a powerchair user, and his sister Kiki after Euan was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease and a lack of disabled access made everyday experiences stressful.

The pair soon realised that having access to good quality disabled access information inspires confidence and removes the fear of the unknown. It breaks down the barriers of exclusion and makes it easier for disabled people to find great places to go.

Speak up

"This survey is extremely important in establishing how the disruption of 2020-21 has affected disabled people, their families, friends and carers and whether the pandemic has pushed back the progress of accessibility," said Euan.

"It's vital that anyone who has had to consider disabled access makes their voice heard on what the impact of Covid has been on accessibility."

To complete the survey go to www.euansguide.com/access-survey



*The winning entry,
Smart Wheel.*

Smart Wheelchair Wheel Controlled by Phone

AN INNOVATIVE WHEELCHAIR wheel design has won the 2021 Design the Change Competition for UK-based university students.

The competition, run by law firm Bolt Burdon Kemp, is intended to raise awareness of the day-to-day challenges facing people with spinal cord injuries and how innovative designs can make a real difference.

Design Innovation

Students are invited to design a unique and practical product aimed at improving the lives of people with a spinal cord injury.

Winner Thomas Salkeld, 23, a third year Product Design BSc student from Cardiff Metropolitan University, designed the 'Smart Wheel', a motorised wheel which can be added to most wheelchairs and

provides users with assistance on uneven ground, elevation and on long journeys. The wheel can be controlled from the user's phone.

Thomas wins £3,000, with an additional £2,000 being awarded to Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Design the Change is supported by Bolt Burdon Kemp's charity partner Cerebra which works to improve the lives of children with neurological conditions. Part of the charity's work is to design bespoke equipment to meet families' needs at their innovation centre and as part of his prize, Thomas will have a week's placement at the centre in Wales.

Thomas really impressed the judges by researching his design thoroughly and taking into account the challenges facing those with a spinal cord injury who use a wheelchair. He bought a wheelchair himself and found travelling in it



Thomas working on his winning design.

exhausting, especially uphill. He spoke to several people who had sustained a spinal cord injury and who were also wheelchair users and ran his prototypes by them for feedback.

"I am ecstatic about winning the competition as designing to help people is my passion and what I wish to pursue in the future," said Thomas.

"The aim of my design was to really take into consideration what the users want and the problems they face every day in regards to their mobility in a wheelchair, then applying my engineering, design, prototyping and technology skills that were necessary.

"The aesthetics were designed to be functional but also pleasing to the eye, allowing the users to be proud of the product on their wheelchairs. I would like to thank James Dwyer, Louise Evans and Darren Povey for giving me feedback and a glimpse into some of the struggles they have in wheelchairs which really drove my project forward."

Highly commended in the competition and also offered a week's placement at

Cerebra was Anna Lis, 21, a third year Product Design student at the University for the Creative Arts.

Anna's Superhuman Shoe and Ankle Foot Orthosis design provides support for people with drop foot, a common side-effect of a spinal cord injury. The judging panel were impressed with Anna's detailed research and the fact her shoe celebrates the support it offers, rather than disguising its specialist features.

Quality shines through

"We were blown away by the quality of the entries this year and it's fantastic to see how much research went into everyone's designs," said Victoria Oliver, Head of the Spinal Injury Team at Bolt Burdon Kemp.

"A spinal cord injury is a life changing event that makes even the most mundane of tasks time-consuming, and innovative designs and products can really help make the world more accessible to the 50,000 people living with a spinal cord injury in the UK.



Anna Lis's Superhuman Shoe and Ankle Foot Orthosis design.

“Thomas’s design showed real awareness of the challenges facing those with a spinal cord injury who use a wheelchair and he went to great lengths to make sure his Smart Wheel design was practical, comfortable, and aesthetically pleasing.”

Thomas’s design was judged by a panel of experts including Christa Dyson, trustee for the Spinal Injuries Association, Dr Ross Head, Product Design Manager for the Cerebra Innovation Centre, Ian Hoskings, club chairman, vice coach and player for Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair rugby club, Lady-Marie Dawson-Malcolm, Support Network Officer for the Spinal Injuries Association and Doug Nevill, the Head of Mechanical Design at Williams F1.

For further information go to www.boltburdonkemp.co.uk ●



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Hundreds Benefit from Free Prosthetic Arm Initiative



Joanie (above) and Oliver with their prosthetic arms.

MORE THAN 500 children in the UK with below elbow limb difference have received free soft shell prosthetic arms.

#ProjectLimitless was launched in October 2020, in association with The Douglas Bader Foundation, The Alex Lewis Trust and Koalaa, to help children under nine with below elbow limb difference who may otherwise have difficulty accessing prosthetics.

Breaking Barriers

The aim was to raise £250,000 – to date the project has raised more than £500,000 and has proven so successful that the initiative is being extended to all those under the age of 18.

“The cost of prosthetics remains one of the major barriers for individuals with limb difference,” said Koalaa’s Chief Operating Officer Bryan Roberts. “So too is the design of traditional





Inventor Nate Macabuag and Koalaa soft prosthetics.

prosthetics, which are designed for adults and not light enough or flexible enough for children.

“Our founder Nate Macabuag was a mechanical engineering Masters student at Imperial College in London and became interested in finding a solution after talking to Alex Lewis, who at the time was volunteering as a guinea pig for a bionic arm controlled by muscle vibrations. Faced with such expensive cutting edge technology Alex challenged Nate to build something more affordable, comfortable and usable.

“Nate’s response was to come up with the idea of adapting the fabric technology used in training shoes to produce a highly flexible, adjustable and comfortable prosthetic mitten that can be fitted with a 3D printed dock into which a range of universal tools can be easily slotted.

“You just slip on the flexible sleeve and then tighten it to your liking, like tying your shoelaces, and then instead of having really complicated, heavy hands on the end you have simple tools that

you clip into, clip out of, and interchange.

“They can be fitted with a range of tool attachments that can be used for everything from bike riding and painting, to playing an instrument, holding a racket, building with Lego and holding cutlery or drinks.”

Alongside this, wearers become part of the Koalaa Community and are provided with a ‘limb buddy’, who supports them every step of the way.

Made to order

Having access to a prosthetic can be life-changing for children with limb difference, empowering them to live life to the full and inspiring them to pursue their passions and interests. Prosthetics can aid inclusion and independence, and support play, fun, exploration and everything else a growing child may wish to do.

Due to the unique design of the Koalaa soft prosthetics they can be ordered remotely and delivered in a matter of weeks. Each one can be

made to order from just a few measurements. This meant Koalaa were able to provide prosthetics throughout the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was a game changer and with The Douglas Bader Foundation spearheading the fundraising efforts, along with quadruple amputee and adventurer, Alex Lewis, #ProjectLimitless was launched. The project also has the support of leading limb difference charities including Reach, Limbo Foundation, Limb Power and I Am Possible Foundation.

"We've been blown away by the support that #ProjectLimitless continues to receive and we're absolutely thrilled to now be able to open it up to children of all ages," said David Bickers, CEO

of The Douglas Bader Foundation. "It's fantastic to hear the feedback from families and all the fun things the children are getting up to with their new prosthetics!"

Parents of the children receiving them have been quick to show their gratitude on social media, sharing photos and videos of the prosthetics being used for everything from bike riding to skipping, playing the guitar, to drawing and using cutlery.

If you're based in the UK and have a child with a below elbow limb difference or partial hand, you can register for a free Koalaa prosthetic at www.yourkoalaa.com/projectlimitless. Adults can purchase the revolutionary prosthetic sleeves online at www.yourkoalaa.com ●

Alex Lewis

QUADRUPLE AMPUTEE, ADVENTURER and founder of The Alex Lewis Trust inspired the original idea for Koalaa's soft shell prosthetic sleeve and continues to be heavily involved in its development today.

Alex was aged 34 when he thought he had 'man flu'. But he collapsed and was rushed to hospital, where he was given just hours to live and a 3% chance of survival.

He had contracted Strep A, followed by Septicaemia, which led to him having all four limbs amputated. As well as losing his limbs, Alex also lost his lips and nose. Surgeons have since grafted skin from his shoulder into lips leaving him, he jokes, looking like a Simpsons character and with a nose that constantly runs.



Alex Lewis.

Instead of spiralling into despair and retreating into a state of self-pity, Alex took a truly inspirational approach to what happened to him.

The story of his positivity and adjustment to a new life is truly remarkable and was the subject of a Channel 4 documentary "The Extraordinary case of Alex Lewis". Alex's progress and exploits have been well

documented in the media.


The positivity 40-year-old Alex has found since his life changing illness has been remarkable.


Many would find it hard to believe, but he says that great things have come of it.

"It's made me think differently about being a father, a partner, a human being," said Alex.

Alex Lewis Trust



In the past six years Alex has set up the Alex Lewis Trust to raise funds for his rehabilitation, which has given him a huge impetus to help others. Alex also participates in research projects with Imperial College, Southampton University, Bath and Loughborough University developing new technology ranging from the development of muscle whispering devises for the American Navy to ►


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prosthesis design and wearable assistive technology, such as Koalaa's soft shell prosthetic.

"#ProjectLimitless has been a fantastic collaboration between The Douglas Bader Foundation, Koalaa and The Alex Lewis Trust to enable children under 10 with limb difference to explore life with a prosthetic that's never been seen before," said Alex.

"End user led design is the only way we can improve provision of cool, functional prosthesis and throw into the mix empowerment and inclusion and you've got something pretty cool. These kids, their feedback and some great designers at Koalaa will help improve prosthesis for all upper limb difference individuals in the future. It's been a joy to be part of!"

Alex continues to break barriers by becoming the first quadruple amputee to kayak

around the southern tip of Greenland and complete a 320 mile expedition along the Orange River in South Africa.

The adventurer

Then in 2019 he became the first quadruple amputee to hand cycle 15,000 feet up the highest mountain range in Ethiopia in a



solar assisted four wheeled vehicle designed by Engineering students at The University of Southampton.

The project enabled Alex to try and challenge the cultural view of disability in Ethiopia and drive change in the attitude of

the people towards the disabled in their communities. Whilst the wheelchair manufacturing facility which became the legacy of the trip will transform the lives of hundreds of disabled people in Ethiopia every year.

Inspiring words

Alongside his research work, Alex delivers motivational talks entitled 'A Minor Setback' to organizations, conferences and educational institutions. His aim is to motivate others to overcome adversity and take on new challenges in life.

Alex inspires people to see life differently, take every opportunity that comes their way and live life to the full. His keen sense of humour and self-deprecating manner stays with his audience as a reminder that life can send us curved balls for any of us at any time.

"It's how you conquer it that defines you," added Alex. ●

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a story for
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A D V E R T O R I A L

Powering the worlds strongest disabled man

Darren Greenfield, 48, of Swadlincote, is a former Team GB wheelchair basketball player and para-canoeist but in the last three years has been concentrating on becoming a strongman — pulling and lifting a range of outrageously heavy items, including cars and trucks. He's the current and 2 x British champion in the seated class and now carries the title of the World's strongest disabled man.

Darren uses an Ottobock C-Leg to power him through his day-to-day life, the C-Leg 4 marks the start of a new era: It's safer, more dynamic, and modern. From stairs and ramps to varying surfaces and even walking backward the C-Leg 4 microprocessor knee adjusts itself dynamically to everyday situations. Darren also has the ability to control the C-Leg 4 with an app on his smartphone.



We sent Darren an Atom after meeting through the power of social media, and after reading his story and discovering his love of the outdoors, especially fishing we knew the Atom would make a difference to his lifestyle. Darren has to charge his leg every day as per the manufactures recommendation. This meant Darren

couldn't get out for more than a day knowing he had to charge up via a mains source.

Step in the Atom and it's all changed for Darren, he now has the flexibility to go out and stay out longer, Atom gives him the freedom to stay out overnight and even up to 5 days at a time coupling the Atom with the solar panel. "Since having the Atom power pack it gives me the option to stay out 24hrs no problem and I would easily go to France for a week trip now knowing I have the Atom and solar panel to charge the leg" Using the Atom Darren has found he can recharger his leg from around 70% to full and only use 5% power from the Atom.



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State-Of-The-Art Wheelchair Wins \$1m Prize



ANDREW SLORANCE IS on a mission to shake-up the wheelchair industry. The Scottish inventor and designer has won \$1m (£753,000) to fund the manufacture of his innovative SMART-wheelchair, which he believes will revolutionise the development and user experience of wheelchairs.

Andrew, who uses a wheelchair himself, won the Toyota-run global Mobility Unlimited Challenge for his Phoenix i prototype. The state-of-the-art wheelchair incorporates smart technology sensors to detect if the user is leaning forward or backwards and adjusts its centre of gravity to prevent tipping or falling.

"Toyota invited inventors to submit smart technologies to improve the lives of people with lower-limb paralysis," explained Andrew, who is Chief Executive of Phoenix Instinct, a company renowned for its range of travel and daily bags that allow easy, safe

and independent use by wheelchair users.

"The trouble with wheelchairs is the fixed centre of gravity. If the axle is too far back the user's bodyweight can cause the wheelchair to topple back, too far forward and the user's bodyweight bears down on the front wheels which makes the wheelchair difficult to manoeuvre.

"Somewhere in-between there is an agile position, much like a see-saw's balancing point. So we designed an intelligent centre of gravity that responds to the users bodyweight and position, a moving axle that will find the optimum position for the wheelchair not to tip and to maintain its agility.

"It is the very first intuitive wheelchair. Although still in development, when I use the wheelchair I feel connected to it and that it's working with me, responding to me. I don't need to worry about leaning ►

too far forward or too far back. The chair compensates for my movements.”

The Toyota prize money will be used to further develop the intelligent ultra-light carbon fibre wheelchair, bring it to market, and ultimately, transform millions of lives in the disability community for the greater good.

Andrew started using a wheelchair 38 years ago after injuring his spinal cord falling from a tree as a 14-year-old.

“Nothing has really changed in wheelchair design since then,” he said. “It hasn’t endeared me to the wheelchair industry but consumers should expect better. Selling the same basic angular designs, with the same inherent issues of manoeuvrability, comfort and aesthetics, seems to be a mindset that has been with us since the 1980s.

“There is a lack of invention, investment and inspiration. They’ve made them smaller or more compact but the technology hasn’t changed for four decades.”

Keeping it light

Andrew’s work on Phoenix i is not the first time he has broken through that mindset. He is credited with creating the original CarbonBlack wheelchair.

He wanted to design a lightweight, ergonomic and aesthetically pleasing wheelchair that complemented the user rather than defining them as disabled. So he approached a company that made carbon-fibre components for Formula One and the concept for CarbonBlack became a reality.

His use of the very light and incredibly strong carbon fibre in the CarbonBlack, complemented further by stylish and lightweight aluminium components for added strength and resilience, has been an integral part of the Phoenix i design.

Also the use of 3D printing, which has allowed the team of five working on the project to perfect their winning design, has completely revolutionised the way they worked.

“You 3D print it, hold it and look at it,” said Andrew. “You can sit in it and if it doesn’t feel right, you fine tune and tweak it before you print another one. Only when it’s right do you then make your mould tools.”

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Andrew Slorance.

Phoenix Instinct, based in Forres, Moray, will produce the Phoenix i in-house to keep it cost-effective and the aim is for it to cost £4,000-£5,000 and be on the market within two years.

“It’s still a lot of money for a wheelchair but for what it can do compared to the other brands that are still using 1980s technology it will be a good buy,” added Andrew.

Thanks to Toyota we are in a position to invest in developing a wheelchair that is actually designed for purpose.

“Thanks to Toyota we are in a position to invest in developing a wheelchair that is actually designed for purpose. Plus the development of smart technology has opened a massive door of opportunity to move away from using clunky inefficient mechanical designs to tackle the challenges faced by wheelchair users.

A winning formula

“Along with the ability to automatically adjust its centre of gravity the inbuilt intelligent system uses front-wheel power-assist to reduce painful vibrations and minimize strain on the user. The chair’s intelligent powered braking system automatically detects when the user is

going downhill and adjusts to manage the user's descent.

"With the prize money, we can now advance this work and bring the Phoenix i wheelchair to the consumer."

At its core, the Toyota Mobility Unlimited Challenge was developed to highlight the importance of collaboration with end-users and create inventions with the disability community in mind. It supports the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, specifically Goal #10 of reducing inequalities in supporting devices that help people with paralysis better access society for economic, social, educational and other opportunities.

More than 80 teams from 28 countries entered the competition and the five finalists included teams from Italy, Japan, America and of course Scotland.

Key specifications for choosing the winning invention included devices that will integrate seamlessly into people's lives and environments while being comfortable and easy to use, enabling greater independence and

increased participation in daily life. The judging criteria was based on innovation, insight and impact, functionality and usability, quality and safety, and market potential and affordability.

"The entire competition has been an enriching journey for us all, bringing together the efforts of many experts, mentors, advocates, and more to invest in the five finalists to develop their devices and bring them into the lives of people that need them," said Ryan Klem, Director of Programs for Toyota Mobility Foundation (TMF).

"The judges were impressed by the way the Phoenix i device incorporated intelligent systems in its design in a way that represents a true advance for the wheelchair and could see it having a clear route to market."

There is still a couple of years of development and plenty of testing to take place but to follow the progress of the Phoenix i go to

www.phoenixinstinct.com/phoenix-i-wheelchair ●



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From Social Worker to Designer



Emile far right with friends at the launch of the Bealies Joggers.

Caron Mcluckie tells us how Bealies Adaptive Wear came to be.

In January 2016, our family's lives changed forever.

One Saturday afternoon, my son Emile suffered a sudden spinal cord stroke with no warning, leaving him paralysed from the chest down.

From the outset, I was amazed at how well Emile coped with this traumatic event; his resilience was astounding. As a result of the stroke, he had no bladder or bowel function, and must wear a catheter to empty his bladder.

Emile worked hard, learning a new range of skills to make sure he could continue to live life to the fullest. But it soon became clear, once we got into our daily routine, that we still needed to sort out an important part of Emile's life – how to find him functional but still fashionable clothes.

His favourite brands of comfortable joggers didn't offer the right fit or fastenings and despite our best efforts, we couldn't find anything that fit properly or provided easy access to catheterise.

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That got us thinking

We set out to speak to a range of people including wheelchair users, carers, physiotherapists, and occupational therapists to find out the issues they faced when getting dressed or supporting someone getting dressed.

The Bealies Joggers are the holy grail of leisure wear for wheelchair users.

Equipped with our research and some initial ideas, I approached The Fashion Institute at Manchester Metropolitan University, who had been researching, with the Stroke Association, the difficulties stroke survivors face finding suitable clothes when they return to work. I worked closely with students Rebecca and Melissa Everett about the idea of creating fly front opening joggers, and they agreed to make a prototype.

What we've produced

Between us, we've now created bespoke joggers with a unique opening to enable comfortable dressing and catheterising. They're higher at the back to avoid sagging while sitting and transferring to ensure everything is covered!

I've also been working with a small focus group of people, who range from having a spinal cord injury in adulthood to people who were born with cerebral palsy. That helped us to re-fine the designs, to include both a slim fit leg and a regular fit for people with more muscle mass on their legs, to ensure a better fit for people with different disabilities and all shapes and sizes.



What's next

I have taken early retirement from my career as a mental health social worker to focus on the business. I believe in the product and feel that there is a gap in the market for casual wear for wheelchair users which is fashionable as well as functionable.

The business is called after Emile's nickname, Bealie, which only his sister calls him. I'm passionate about supporting manufacturing in the UK and our Bealies Joggers will be manufactured in the Mid-lands.

I have now been crowdfunding to raise money to fund the first run of the joggers to help identify any teething problems, fine tune the patterns and materials before producing the joggers on a larger scale. The Crowdfunder campaign is still live and open to pledges.

www.crowdfunder.co.uk/bealies-adaptive-joggers

Testimonials

Having been a paraplegic for over 35 years, I am familiar with the search for comfortable clothing that looks and feels great but is practical for the kind of user that sits down all day. The Bealies Joggers are the holy grail of leisure wear for wheelchair users, particularly if you self-catheterise.

With the offset zip it is possible to catheterise yourself easily, without fuss. With that is the quality of materials and construction of these pants. The material used is soft and durable, the zip is large and easy to grip, the seat is manufactured with a higher back to keep you covered. There is a phone pocket on the front/side to keep your mobile phone where you need it.

The Bealies Joggers have been well thought out, well designed and well manufactured.

Phil, Cheshire

I wore them on Tuesday for teaching PE. They were good as they did not fall like other pants. Plus, the zip bit at the side helped when catheterising. The leg part fitted well- especially when transferring. Plus, I was able to pull them up while in the chair. Overall, I loved them.

Andrew, Lancs ●



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We also recommend Lasting Powers of Attorney (LPAs) so you can appoint someone you trust to make decisions on your behalf if you lose capacity. There are two types, one for your Health and Welfare, and another for your Property and Financial Affairs. Both could be needed should you ever be taken into care or need treatment in the future.

Having these documents makes for a robust estate plan. Contact the office today on 01522 687 888 or visit www.willwriters.com to speak to a fully trained and insured Member of The Society of Will Writers to receive friendly, up-to-date, and professional advice.



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25 Years Connecting People and Products

Before buying them what's the best way of knowing if hi-tech products manufactured to help you if you're blind are actually useful?

Let another blind person test them. Which is exactly what Steve Nutt and his wife Angie have been doing for 25 years - before making them available to buy through their company Computer Room Services.

From talking button clocks and kitchen scales to innovative colour identifiers and a device that uses radar and augmented reality to guide the user around any obstacle, the couple have put them all through their paces.

Fit for purpose

"If it doesn't work for us then we don't sell it," explained Steve. "It's no use us selling some whizzy product that is not fit for purpose and will end up in a cupboard or drawer."

"We once tested a portable easy-to-use battery charger but the only way of telling if the batteries were charged was when a light came on! Come on, just integrate some sort of sound when the job is done."

"Angie and I are blind, so it stands to reason that we are best placed to test any products we supply to improve everyday living and the independence of our customers."



Blind since birth, Steve is a self-confessed technology geek but, as he is quick to explain, technology has opened-up his world and he likes nothing better than helping others 'see' into that world.

And it's not all about the 180 gizmos on the Computer Room Services website. Steve and Angie have developed a range of computer services to assist the blind and vision impaired in their daily lives.

They offer training and consultancy services on all the main screen reading packages and on a wide variety of software, computer technology and equipment.

Embracing technology

Using computer-based Braille translation software the couple also offer a range of Braille transcription services, from audio typing (from tape to print or tape to Braille) to transcription directly from electronic documents or hard copy print. They also offer a text-based OCR (Optical Character Recognition) or scanning service.

Diagnosed with retinoblastoma – eye cancer – soon after he was born, Steve had both eyes removed when he was just three months old.

He went to a boarding school for blind children when he was seven and got a good grounding in Braille. He left school at the age of 17 and went to the Royal National College for the Blind to study typing.

After four years at the college, he left and went straight into a job working as a typist for a life insurance company. When he was made redundant in 1996, he and Angie – who he had met at college – decided to set-up their own business from home in Hertfordshire.

"At the time I had a Bulletin Board System from which people could download Shareware – commercial software that is distributed free to users – called The Computer Room," explained



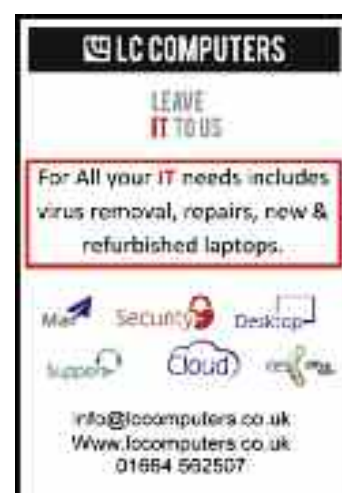
Clockwise: BlindShell Classic Talking Mobile Phone, Esys12 Braille Display, Megavoice Audio Bible Player, Stratus4 Daisy MP3 Player.

Steve. "So the name Computer Room Services came from that.

"We had the technical knowledge and experience and a passion for technology that could assist the blind and visually impaired lead independent lives. Most important, we had a unique selling point – we were blind and knew what blind people needed.

"There is a general lack of education about what technological support is available for blind people," explained Steve. "There's actually quite a lot and I don't think blind people get the most out of it.

"Technology can open up the world for a blind person, from using a GPS to





**Steve, Angie
and Debra.**

pinpoint where you are or an ultrasonic torch that will vibrate when you are near an object to a machine that tells you what colour clothes you're putting on."

Reading the screen

But it's setting-up computer hardware and software and training blind people on how to get the most from it that is at the forefront of Steve and Angie's work. And like any good computer services company they offer the full package of

remote computer support and maintenance.

Debra Clarke, affectionately known as their human 'guide dog', joined the team two years ago as the couple's fully sighted personal assistant.

"Obviously it's not as easy as it is for a sighted person," said Steve. "We can't go click, click, click and open a dozen windows in rapid succession until we find and read what we're looking for.

"The biggest challenge for them and us as trainers is that a blind person has to learn an extra layer, the language of their screen reader such as JAWS or SuperNova, before accessing programmes or websites."

So, what does 61-year-old Steve do in his spare time? Well, much the same. He is a dab hand at sound editing and restoration.

He recently managed to 'lift' the voice of a blind lady who had died from her mobile answerphone message, tidy and edit it to improve the quality and transfer it to a CD for a relative to be able to hear the lady's voice whenever she wanted.

He holds an Amateur Radio Licence – as does Angie – and he does a regular Podcast called Our Place, consisting of sound seeing tours, technology reviews and anything of audible interest.

To find out more about Steve, Angie and Computer Room Services go to www.comproom.co.uk ●

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Alex tests the Series 5 about town.

Wheelchair Powers to Market

A COMPANY SPECIALISING in the design and production of powered wheelchairs is seeking a cash injection to bring its ground-breaking Series 5 model to market.

Glasgow based Freedom One Life is looking to raise equity funding via crowdfunding platform Crowdcube to supplement the backing already received from existing investors and a £250k grant from the government agency Innovate UK.

The Series 5 is the result of years of research and development and thousands of hours of testing over 20,000km in real world conditions across the globe.

“In creating the Series 5 we have designed a powerchair that combines lived experience with industry leading design,” explained founder of Freedom One Life Alex Papanikolaou. “Test drives in our powerchair leave huge smiles on users faces.

“This fundraise will allow us to take the Series 5 to full commercial launch, including the manufacture of demo chairs for the well-established distributor market across the UK and Europe.”

Alex, who has cerebral palsy and has used a powered wheelchair on a daily basis since he





***The Series 5 making
Air Travel easier.***

was at school, was frustrated by constantly breaking down and being stranded by unreliable powerchairs. He decided to address the problem and founded the business in 2013 to enable wheelchair users to live the life they choose.

Live the life you choose

The project received initial funding of more than £400,000 from Scottish Enterprise, Scottish EDGE, the Prince's Trust and the Stelios Award for Disabled Entrepreneurs in the UK. Prior to the latest crowdfunding appeal there have been three funding rounds totalling more than £1.2 million.

"Powered wheelchairs exist to liberate and empower people like me, yet most powerchair users have their life choices restricted by range, breakdowns and fear of being stranded," said Alex.

"This can mean that users avoid travel, face social isolation and risk unemployment.

"I met people who were just as fed up of having to plan their lives around their powerchairs as I was. I set up the company with a mission, to stop powerchair users like myself from living in fear of being let down by their powerchairs and instead live the life they choose."

The Series 5 delivers reliability, a ground-breaking 40km real-world range, a compact on-board charger and a fully customisable and future proof set-up. It is agile enough to get into the narrowest of spaces on buses and trains and it also has an integrated flight mode to make air travel easy, quick and safe.

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Alexa is a Page Turner for the Blind

BLIND AND PARTIALLY sighted people can now say 'Alexa, open RNIB Talking Books' to get instant access to thousands of RNIB audio books.

Customers of the Royal National Institute of Blind People's (RNIB) Talking Books library will be able to access their audio books through Amazon's voice-controlled virtual assistant, as well as through RNIB's usual library services.

The Talking Books service was described by many users as a 'lifeline' during the Covid-19 pandemic, with more than 1.33 million Talking Books sent out in the last year.

Adapting to change

"We are extremely pleased to announce that Talking Books customers can now access the 34,000 books in the RNIB Library by asking Alexa," said David Clarke, Director of Services at RNIB.

"RNIB's Talking Books library is 86 years old yet continues to adapt to the changing landscape of how our library users want to read their books.

"There are some great advantages to accessing your Talking Books this way. If you start a book but don't like it, you can immediately choose another one rather than waiting for your next book to arrive in the post.

"Voice activated technology is bringing us closer to a world where blind and partially sighted people can consume books on a level playing field with sighted people."

RNIB worked with both Amazon and New Zealand based company Sonnar Interactive to develop the Alexa Skill.

"It's been fun to use, it's nice and simple to set up," explained keen reader Liam O'Carroll, who is

blind and tested the Alexa Talking Books skill for RNIB.

"One of my favourite authors is James Herbert and I was able to easily search for books by him. My seven-year-old son also benefitted from the Alexa skill. He loves books by David Walliams and enjoyed using the skill to listen to them."

"Alexa, open
RNIB Talking
Books."



*David Clarke, Director
of Services at RNIB.*



Award winning children's writer and illustrator Sally Gardner uses the Talking Books Library and has her books included in the library.

"This is a wonderful innovation with Amazon and anything that brings the world of talking books faster to blind and partially sighted people, and to the dyslexic community is something to be celebrated," she said.

The Talking Books service has revolutionised reading for people with sight loss since it launched in 1935 to help soldiers who had been blinded in the First World War and were struggling to learn braille. The first ever Talking Book created was Harper Collins' *The Murder of Roger Ackroyd* by Agatha Christie.

For more information, visit www.rnib.org.uk ●

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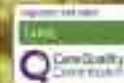
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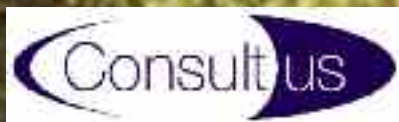
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Founded by the late Mrs. Anne Stevens, the company's ethos was built on the belief that anyone with domestic difficulties could be helped, whatever their needs may be, and that people feel better at home. We have stood by this sentiment and will continue to do so - the overwhelming response from the public and the requests for live-in carers and nurses has grown exponentially throughout the years which further supports the company's unwavering faith in its carers, nurses, and the Care at Home sector.

Consultus' approach to the pandemic and care at home, in general, has been recognised by the sector, with the company being publicly voted the "Most Compassionate Live in Care Provider in the South East 2021". The CEO, Peter Seldon, and his team have been central in developing a positive organisational culture which enables quality care by providing a constancy of relationships with carers. The exceptionally low Covid cross-contamination figures are also a testament to the staff's vigilance both within the office and clients' homes, thus emphasising their outstanding level of safeguarding and professionalism.

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Health Services Made Easy

A new guide for young adults with learning disabilities.

A NEW EASY to read information pack for young people with a learning disability about understanding and preparing to transition from children to adult's health services has been published.

Mencap, the UK's leading learning disability charity, has partnered with Bradford People First to better equip young people and their families with the information they need to navigate this key stage in their life when they start accessing adult's health services.

People with a learning disability face extra challenges at every point in their life, especially in healthcare.

The guide, 'Hospital care for young people with a learning disability', and video aim to provide people and their families with the knowledge and tools they need to help them get the right support and healthcare during this transition.

The resources aim to help them understand their rights, such as asking for reasonable adjustments or meeting with the transitions team or learning disability nurse at the hospital to discuss their move to adult's health services. This partnership is one part of Mencap's Treat Me Well campaign, which aims to



transform healthcare for people with a learning disability. The charity's campaign is currently focusing on ensuring better health outcomes for children with a learning disability, from the point of diagnosis and beyond.

Learning to adapt

Simple changes in hospital care can be vital for people with a learning disability. People with a learning disability face severe health inequalities throughout their life and are more likely to die avoidably and die younger. Having access to the right information at the right time and health workers making reasonable adjustments are fundamental to achieving the best outcomes for people with a learning disability and their whole family.

"People with a learning disability face extra challenges at every point in their life, especially in healthcare," explained Edel Harris, Chief Executive of Mencap.

"Transitioning from children's to adult's health services can be a really difficult time. It often involves going to a new hospital, being treated by new doctors and health workers learning how they can adapt to your specific needs for the first time.

"These resources will help young people with a learning disability and their families become more confident and relaxed at a time that can be daunting for them.

"We are incredibly grateful to partner with Bradford People First to help bring these resources to the young people and their families who need them.

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We hope that they will help make a huge difference to the lives of young people with a learning disability and improve their access to healthcare to enable them to lead healthy and happy lives."

Bradford People First

Bradford People First was started in 1993 a self-advocacy group, run by people with learning disabilities for people with learning disabilities. The group now has around 25 members who work in the office and around 60 community support members. It employs a Co-ordinator who supports staff to help the groups in making the lives of people with learning disabilities better in the Bradford district and throughout the UK.

"I think Mencap's new resources for young people with a learning disability are very helpful because now people know what to expect," said Saffron Farr-Hoey,



Saffron Farr-Hoey.

who has a learning disability, cerebral palsy and autism and is featured in the video.

"I wish I had something like this when I was at that age because I would have known more about what will happen and I might have been less anxious.

"It's important for young people with a learning disability to know what they are entitled to. Later down the line they may struggle if they didn't have the right support from the beginning. What I would say to young people going through the transition period is to be brave. Be prepared for all the changes but it will get better with time."

To find out more about Mencap's Treat me well: children campaign and access the new resources visit: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/get-involved/campaign-mencap/treat-me-well/hospital-care-young-people-learning-disability> ●

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Nurseplus Care at home

Following the launch of their Live-in care service, we caught up with Jacob Russell from Nurseplus Care at home to find out more about what Live-in care is and the many benefits it offers.

Realising that you or a loved one need some help at home can be tough and exploring the different options available to you can be daunting. When considering long-term care for the first time, many people believe that the only option is moving into a residential setting if you require round-the-clock support, but that is not always the case. Live-in care is a practical alternative that can be more suited to some people

and allows them to continue living in the comfort and safety of their own home. Live-in care means that a carer will come and live with you in your home to offer you support and assistance whenever you need it, whether that be for companionship, medication support or more complex needs, your Live-in care plan will be tailored to your lifestyle and needs.

One of the main differences between Live-in care and a residential home is that you are guaranteed one-to-one care, this can mean there are improved health outcomes when you receive care in your own home – fewer falls, lower

rates of infection and hospitals admissions as any changes to your health can be spotted earlier and prevented. Recent studies have also found that homecare has a multitude of benefits for dementia patients; staying within the familiarity of their own home can reduce anxiety and confusion as well as increasing awareness. Another thing that Care at home can offer is the opportunity to continue living with your family members or pet, so Live-in care is ideal if you'd like companionship and support throughout the day, but can't bear to part with your beloved dog, cat or even parrot!

Nurseplus Care at home is our fully-compliant homecare service offering a practical and affordable alternative to moving into a residential setting. To find out more about our homecare and how we can help you or your loved one, speak to a member of our friendly team today on 08000 448 848.



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The secret to a good sleep is to have your body temperature regulated, so you go into a deep, dormant sleep allowing the body to repair cells, fight illness and generally rejuvenate itself

There was a time when everyone in the UK slept under wool, but as many of you may well remember they were itchy and heavy and by the time winter came you were locked down under three blankets and even a quilt eiderdown. Oh happy days! And we had to make the bed up every day; all those blankets.

After the Second World War, more people travelled abroad where they discovered French wine, cheeses and the 'continental quilt', which eventually became known as the duvet. It was nice and snugly at night and you didn't have to make the bed, just shake it out.

But since then, times have changed for the better. The vast majority of us now have double glazing and central heating as well as loft insulation and so on.

Our houses are warmer, our beds are warmer and our duvets seem to have become hotter.

THE SECRET TO A GOOD SLEEP

The secret to a good sleep is to have your body temperature regulated, so you go into a deep, dormant sleep allowing the body to repair cells, fight illness and generally rejuvenate itself.

To go into that deep, dormant state our blood pressure must drop, our heart rate must go down, but most of all, our temperature has to drop.

Under normal duvet fillings, polyester, feather and even the most expensive down duvet, only one thing can happen during



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Over 7 million people or 18% of the working-age population in Britain are disabled as defined by the Equality Act 2010 (Source: Employers' Forum on Disability). Vitamin D helps regulate the amount of calcium and phosphate in the body. This vitamin is needed to keep bones, teeth, and muscles healthy. A lack of vitamin D can lead to bone deformities such as rickets in children, and bone pain caused by a condition called osteomalacia in adults.

Disabilities come in all shapes and sizes but what is clear is that low levels of vitamin D have been linked with a range of medical conditions.

For example, low vitamin D levels have been linked with an increased risk of getting MS, but also with more frequent relapses and increased disability in those with established MS. No single cause for MS has been found but in those people, who have a genetic predisposition for MS risk, a number of several environmental factors are implicated in causing the disease. Low vitamin D is one of these risk factors, which may

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work alongside other triggers causing the onset of MS.

Several large studies from around the world have shown evidence of this link. One study* compared 15,000 people with MS and 24,000 people without, and found genetically lower vitamin D levels in the people with MS. Two further studies looked at those joining the US Army or Nursing professions, and compared their blood levels of vitamin D with their subsequent chance of getting MS. Those with lower levels of vitamin D were more likely to develop MS.

Some forms of disability cause difficulties for individuals getting outdoors and causing

low levels of vitamin D.

In general vitamin D plays a major part within all our bodies and due to the UK being a country that does not see enough sunshine and warm weather it is advised that we look to supplement our low levels of vitamin D with a daily dose of between 400 -2000iu. Always check with your healthcare professional if taking higher doses of vitamin D.

*Reference to the study details <https://mstrust.org.uk/life-ms/diet/vitamin-d>

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GPs Encouraged to make Appointments Inclusive

For many people with learning disabilities and autism the doctor's surgery can make them feel uncomfortable.

And while COVID has created further challenges, the lifting of lockdown offers a great opportunity for us to think about how we can make in-person appointments more accessible.

Dr Mark Brookes MBE draws on his own personal experience to outline just how crucial the need for training programmes is to address health inequalities for people with learning difficulties.

GPs must have training to show them how they can support someone in an appointment and the reasonable adjustments they need to make to help everyone who has a learning disability and

autism feel safe and supported.

I also think other people working in GP surgeries should take training as well, including receptionists, nurses and other staff because everyone needs to know how to support someone from the moment they walk through the door.

People who are living these experiences should design training because GPs will know how to support us better if they have learnt from us. The feedback I have had from doing GP training has been really good and my involvement helps them to feel like they know how to support people better. That's why it's so important to involve people who have a learning disability and autism in training. ►



Dr Mark Brookes - MBE

Mark has a learning disability and a keen interest in ensuring people with learning disabilities are safe, while remaining independent.

He speaks publicly about disability hate crime and has more than 30 years' experience advocating for people with learning disabilities and autism to be treated equally. He is also employed by Dimensions as a Quality Auditor, a role that sees him visiting services to check people are supported in a personalised way.

Mark was awarded an honorary doctorate from the University of Kent for his work on Hate Crime, a huge accolade that has since been followed by an MBE, a place on the Shaw Trust Disability Power 100 list and membership of the Learning Disability Leaders List run by Dimensions in association with VODG and Learning Disability England.

Existing health inequality

On average, people with a learning disability die 25 years earlier than people without a disability and they are 8 times more likely to die of Covid-19. Furthermore, a recent report from the UK's Learning Disability Mortality Review (LeDeR) found that reviewers of 42% of deaths of people with a learning disability in 2020 felt that the care received had not met good practice standards.

I would encourage all healthcare professionals to take training programmes like Dimensions' #MyGPandMe.

This data clearly shows that there are health inequalities facing people with learning disabilities that need to be urgently addressed. Part of that solution must be improving the experience of visiting a GP. Going to the doctor can often cause real anxiety for someone with a learning disability

and can prevent them from regularly seeing their doctor altogether. Recent research from Dimensions has found that 33% of disabled people said they felt stressed going to see the GP and 43% said they felt worried.

This means that people with learning disabilities can miss out on crucial appointments like annual health checks, which have already been identified as an area for improvement by the LeDeR. It is very important that we do everything possible to encourage everyone to begin attending these appointments, and training programmes like Dimensions' #MyGPandMe will show healthcare professionals the reasonable adjustments that can help this happen.

Reasonable adjustments

Often, small changes can make a big difference. For example, it can be very helpful to have longer appointments for people with learning disabilities; if the appointment is 20 minutes rather than 10, it can help the person to feel much more relaxed.

Another good adjustment is to have a quiet area where people with learning disabilities and/or autism can sit. Waiting rooms in GP surgeries can be noisy and lack privacy, which can make people more anxious. Having a separate space that is less crowded can help people to feel calm and more relaxed before going into their appointment.

Waiting rooms in GP surgeries can be noisy and lack privacy, which can make people more anxious.

I've found it very encouraging that a lot of GPs have shown interest in learning about these kinds of changes. In a recent survey by Dimensions, 74% of GPs said they would like training on making

reasonable adjustments for those with learning disabilities and/ or autism, whilst 98% said they would benefit from training led by someone with a learning disability.

But, as you can see, these adjustments aren't just things that need to be made by GPs themselves – they can be made by any member of staff in a healthcare environment. This is why I'm really pleased that training like #MyGPandMe is freely available to all healthcare professionals, including nurses and support staff.

Listening to experience

It is really important that any resources that tackle health inequality include people with learning disabilities. I was very glad to help develop the #MyGPandMe training. The resources include videos from myself and many of my colleagues ►

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where we talk about our past experiences in GP surgeries and explain how they could have been made more accessible.

I'm proud that programmes like this are being made more widely available to healthcare staff, because it means that people with learning disabilities are making their voices heard. When it comes to our health, it's important to remember 'nothing about me without me'.

I would encourage all healthcare professionals to take training programmes like Dimensions' #MyGPandMe. The adjustments that can be made are simple and effective and will make a big difference in fighting health inequality whilst showing that the voices of people with learning disabilities are valued. ●



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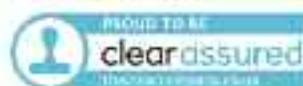
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- ★ TS is a wide spectrum condition.
- ★ People with TS commonly have other conditions, especially ADHD and OCD.
- ★ To be diagnosed with TS, a person must have had a combination of vocal and motor tics for at least one year.
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- ★ Management of tics include medication and behavioural therapy.

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Nothing by Internet type (Digital and) "Fiction and Fictional worlds" and
 something of "Fiction" type and, in other words, with specific and full
 aspects of the narrative process (2007) (see below).



CE

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founder-director
of a range of 40
specialist voluntary
organisations.
Background: See
A11 and A12.



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'Hear Me Now' App Improves Care

A NEW APP to improve quality of care for people with cognitive impairment has been launched by one of the UK's largest NHS Trusts.

Barts Health NHS Trust and UCLPartners have partnered with software developers Maldaba to design a new application and content-sharing remote web service for and with people with cognitive disabilities, specifically adults with a learning disability.

The Hear Me Now app can be used by the person or with support from family/carers. Information can be recorded in word, photo, audio, or video format which is then stored in easy-to-organise 'boxes'.

This information can then be readily shared with healthcare staff and carers, either in person or by using the internet-based sharing platform, also supplied with the app.

It was quite clear through the interviews with participants and their families that the Hear Me Now app was well-liked and effective.

The app aims to understand an individual's needs faster and more efficiently, saving time in appointments as a result. It also aims to empower patients, improve contact and communication between patients and clinical staff and create more joined care across clinical services as well as better management of transition between services i.e. from child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) to adult services.

Dr Richard Fitzgerald and the Hear Me Now App.



There are currently 1.5 million people with a learning disability in the UK, with the Covid-19 pandemic bringing another layer of healthcare challenges.

Under the leadership of Professor Amitava Banerjee, Honorary consultant cardiologist at Barts Health NHS Trusts and Dr Richard Fitzgerald, Academic Clinical Fellow in Special Care Dentistry at Barts Health, a pilot of Hear Me Now was conducted at the Royal London Hospital and people with learning disabilities were involved in the project team to create the project literature.

Nearly 40 outpatients living with learning disabilities were supported with the Hear Me Now app at the Royal London Hospital between May 2019 and January 2021. People with learning



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disabilities, their family and carers and staff were all trained on the app. Many self-reported improvements in their quality of care.

An easier way

After using the app for 12 months participants were followed up and 30 provided feedback. The majority (26/30) found the app helpful and easy to use and nearly two thirds agreed it helped communication at healthcare appointments.

The primary use for the app was to record healthcare information and other uses, including the collection of important information for emergencies, informing carers when no family were present at healthcare appointments, and keeping up-to-date on status of current health.

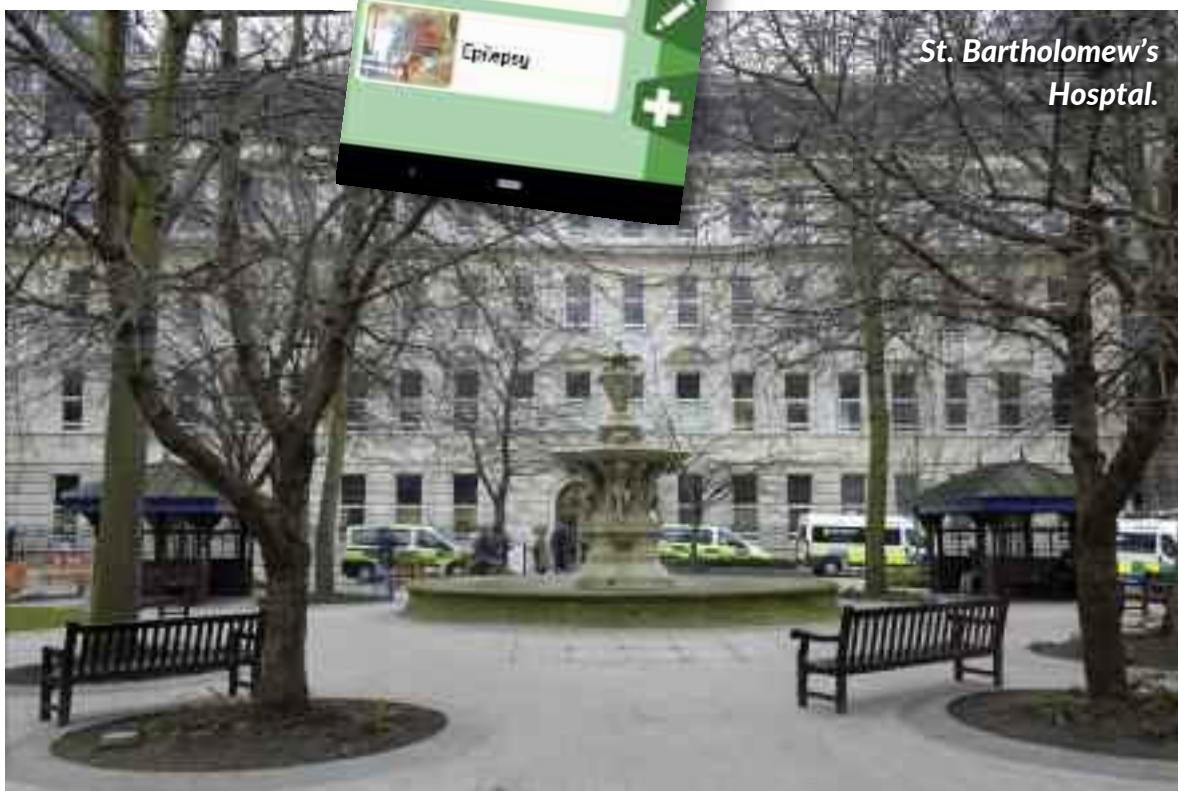
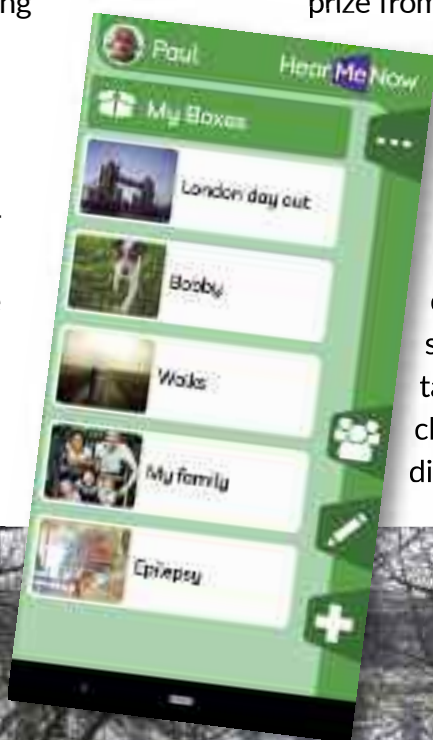
"It was quite clear through the interviews with participants and their families that the Hear Me Now app was well-liked and effective," said Dr Fitzgerald.

"One of the most interesting findings for me was that family members reported a feeling of reassurance that all medical information was in one place if it was needed for emergencies. Alongside this it was interesting to see that the self-reported use of the app was high, suggesting that worries about digital literacy in this population may be unfounded."

Research recognition

The project was awarded a research dissemination prize from the British Society of Disability and Oral Health to present project findings at an international conference and Dr Richard Fitzgerald was awarded a Digital Pioneers Fellowship by DigitalHealth. London for his work on the project.

Maldaba now plans to conduct other evaluative projects of Hear Me Now to see how it can enable and improve the take up and quality of the annual health checks for people with learning disabilities. ●



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Photo: Kevin Leighton.

Where Words Fail Music Speaks

A LANDMARK REPORT on the inequalities and misunderstandings faced by disabled musicians is a wake-up call to the whole music industry.

Reshape Music, published by the national music and young people's charity Youth Music, sets out the significant barriers faced by disabled musicians to access music education and music-making.

Developed with the Take it away Consortium, a group of leading music charities, the report includes the first-ever national survey into disabled people's experiences of music education and music-making. The research team, including eight co-researchers who are all disabled musicians, gathered the views of hundreds of music makers, music educators, and music retailers.

"Music has always been my way of expressing myself, it gives me a sense of purpose," explained Jess Fisher, disabled musician and Reshape Music co-researcher.

"Just because a musician is disabled or needs specialist equipment or adaptations or even support, shouldn't stop them from having the chance to make music.

"Disabled people often feel overlooked and excluded, but music-making can make you feel connected to others. Especially through the pandemic, it has been a lifeline for so many people. I hope by sharing my experiences it inspires others and helps music educators and the industry to understand how to make music-making more inclusive."

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Reshape Music co-researcher Jess Fisher.

Issues raised in the report include the majority of disabled people being unable to find teachers who meet their needs, not knowing where to source adapted instruments and a lack of understanding about how to access funding to make music-making possible.

It highlights the urgent need for educators, retailers, and the music industry to improve access and choice for disabled musicians, to increase representation of disabled people in the paid workforce, and to upskill music teachers to better support disabled musicians.

"The conversation surrounding inclusivity is without a doubt one of the most important ones of our time and much like the many other corners of social injustice, it often suffers from becoming rapidly politicised." Said Blaine Harrison, lead vocalist of Mystery Jets and spina bifida sufferer.

"What has always set the arts apart is its rare and unique ability to bring people together. As with a play or a painting, a piece of music can speak in a language which anyone can understand and ultimately belongs to the people. But access to opportunity is often a different story.

"Giant leaps in tech over the past 25 years have given artists new tools and instruments to realise



Blaine Harrison.

their creativity potential, but how many of these instruments are designed with possible adaptations in mind and how easy are they to try out?

"Reshape Music stands out because it is led by the people most affected by the conversation around inclusion in the arts – young people with a lived experience of disability themselves and I consider the findings to be of great interest."

Key findings involving learning needs:

The majority (52%) of disabled people surveyed have not been able to find a teacher who meets their learning needs and understands what additional support they require.



Only 25% of disabled people surveyed know how and where to source an adapted musical instrument.

Key findings involving financial barriers:

80% of disabled people surveyed find music-making a positive experience, but only 61% know how and where to access financial support to make it viable.

67% of disabled people surveyed cited financial reasons as a severe barrier to access.

Key findings involving music education:

Only 7% of disabled children and young people surveyed are making music in groups run by their local Music Education Hub.

Just 48% of music educators surveyed feel confident teaching music on adapted instruments and only 27% of Music Education Hubs provide adapted equipment as part of their instrument loan service.

Key findings involving music retailers:

63% of music retailers surveyed are unaware of any specialist products or adapted instruments to make music accessible for disabled people and only 38% know how and where to source adapted instruments.

**YOUTH
MUSIC**

Executive Summary

Reshape Music is an important, ground-breaking piece of research and as such Living with Disability is pleased to be able to publish the Executive Summary in full.

'This research explores the experiences and perceptions of music-makers, music educators and music retailers about music opportunities for disabled people.

Disabled people's needs are poorly understood when it comes to music-making and music education. Disabled people make up over a fifth of the population and yet they are hugely under-represented in the music industry and in music education. The research aimed to gather a national dataset that could be used to inform policy to help reshape this imbalance.

The data was gathered by the Take it away Consortium, a partnership of organisations working together to support disabled musicians. Funding from the National Lottery via Arts Council England enabled Youth Music to carry out this work.

The research findings are based on the results of three surveys that were distributed to different respondents: music makers (of all ages), music educators (specialists and non-specialists, across all settings), and music retailers (small to large and including both general and specialist outlets). Researcher Sarah Mawby led a series of sessions to interpret the findings with a team of eight co-researchers who are all disabled musicians. Their interpretation forms the basis of this report.

What barriers do Disabled people experience when it comes to making music?

Finding the right instrument

The choice of instrument disabled people learn is often dictated by their disability. Very few people reported that they were playing an instrument with an adapted feature. While a range of adaptations

and accessible instruments exist to open up access to instrumental playing, there is a lack of knowledge about them. Very few parents and retailers would know where to source one.

Just over one quarter of Music Education Hub respondents reported that their Hub held specialist equipment or adapted instruments for disabled children. Very few disabled young people are participating in extra-curricular ensembles run by Music Education Hubs, limiting their ability to practice and progress. Progression is further compounded by many accessible instruments not being included in traditional graded exams.

Purchasing an instrument

The majority of disabled people who responded to the survey owned their own instruments. Many disabled music-makers felt that music shops were generally accessible, however there is a lack of confidence and knowledge amongst music retailers when it comes to serving disabled customers.

Sourcing funding

There is a lack of knowledge among parents, educators and music retailers about sources of funding to support disabled people to make music. Funding application processes and eligibility criteria can make funding schemes inaccessible.

Accessing music lessons

Despite 80% of educators feeling confident adapting their practice to meet a range of needs, one quarter of music makers stated that their music lessons were not generally accessible. Just under half had found a teacher who met their learning needs. This suggests a need for teachers to be trained in inclusive practices, and greater inclusion of disabled people in designing and delivering such training.

Most parents were not familiar with their local Music Education Hub and less than half of music retailers felt confident signposting disabled

customers to teachers who could meet their learning needs.

Practicing and developing skills

Most disabled musicians are making music at home or at school. Their participation in public music groups (such as orchestras or choirs) is very low, and less than one quarter are making music informally. Almost half reported access limitations when they were practicing an instrument to develop their skills. Fewer access limitations were reported when it came to playing for pleasure.

Performance opportunities

Almost one third of music makers felt there were no suitable performance opportunities available to them and almost half had experienced a moderate or severe limitation in accessing instrumental performance opportunities in the last 12 months. The co-researchers stressed the need for performance opportunities to be appropriate to people's musical aspirations. The inaccessibility of venues is a major barrier limiting participation.

General barriers to access

When asked about barriers to access for disabled people, the views of music makers were often very different to the views of music educators. This suggests that music educators may not fully understand the lived experience of their disabled students.

What does the research tell us and what needs to change?

Disabled people face significant barriers at every stage of the journey to becoming a musician. They are underrepresented in the education, amateur and professional spheres of our music industries. Their needs are often poorly

understood and their lived experience is not being drawn on to open up access and make things more inclusive.

There are exclusionary barriers that prevent access to tuition, group playing, performance opportunities, music exams, and funding. These barriers can hinder musical progression at any career stage. We found involvement in music groups, both formal and informal, to be very low, meaning that disabled people may also be missing out on the social benefits of playing with others. There are many disabled people making a career from music, but their voices and experiences are often unheard.

At the end of the report, we have set out a series of recommendations directed to funders, educators, retailers, and all in the music industries.

The recommendations are designed to achieve:

- Improved access and choice for disabled musicians.
- Increased representation of disabled people in the paid workforce and positions informing policy and practice.
- Increased knowledge and skills among the workforce to better support disabled musicians.

Barriers to participation and progression are not insurmountable. They require positive action, and for people to work together. Crucially, the lived experience of disabled people needs to be at the heart of any solution.

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Here's what Victoria had to say following her visit to Wyndham's Theatre before the Coronavirus pandemic.

"I just wanted to thank you so much for the fantastic experience I had last night as someone with access needs. Entry to the access box was incredibly easy, and it was a bonus to have an en suite loo! Given the age of the theatre and our experience at other venues, this is no mean achievement.

I was delighted to discover that Wyndham's Theatre very much enabled my husband and me to enjoy a seamless evening."

Victoria G. (August 2019)

If you'd like to find out more or book, you can email us at access@delfontmackintosh.co.uk were a member of our friendly access team will do everything they can to assist.



“While there has been some progress, particularly over the last five years, Reshape Music illustrates in very stark terms that the views, lived experience and expertise of disabled people are still absent in the planning and delivery of music education and music-making,” said Matt Griffiths, CEO of Youth Music.

“As a result, policies, programmes and infrastructure are often developed in a way that excludes their involvement and participation.

This is discriminatory and particularly alarming knowing that there are 13.3 million disabled people in the UK equating to 21% of the total population.” ●

Youth Music and the research team want to hear from disabled musicians about their experiences, their successes, their struggles, their music: join the conversation on Twitter or Instagram using the hashtag #ReshapeMusic.

The recommendations are as follows:

- Music education and music industry organisations must increase the representation of disabled people, with an action plan and timescales in place.
- Recruitment should state explicitly where there is an underrepresentation of disabled people and opportunities should be targeted to reach disabled people. This includes salaried, freelance and contracted positions, as well as voluntary roles.
- Spaces need to be fully accessible for disabled musicians, performers and audience members. This includes venues, education spaces and retail outlets. Organisations should routinely seek to understand and address the broad range of access barriers.
- Music education and industry organisations should work closely with disabled musicians to better understand the barriers they face to progress in their music and careers. They should involve disabled people from the outset in all work that is designed to support them. This includes research, teacher training, curriculum development, access audits etc.
- Specific budget should be put in place at an equitable level to ensure disabled people can fully participate in music education programmes.
- The social model of disability should form the basis for music education approaches. Supportive environments should focus on broadening skills and experiences and not focus on what people ‘can’t’ do.
- Music education Hubs should connect with disabled people (and their parents, guardians or carers) in their local area to find out how they can be more accessible. Schools should support disabled students to engage with Music Education Hubs.
- Accessible instruments such as the Skoog and Clarion should be seen as instruments in their own right. Their use should be mainstreamed across all music education programmes as a way of opening up access to all students. Music Education Hubs should start to increase their stock of adapted instruments.
- Funding application processes should be made more accessible through flexible deadlines, accessible language, multiple formats for all forms and written information, Easy Read guidelines and 1-to-1 access support.
- Disabled people should be involved in decision-making for funds targeted at disabled musicians.
- Access funds should be made available as part of application processes.

Rapper with all the Right Words



With my music knowledge and the team's support I think this will be the start of a very important partnership.

RAP MUSICIAN KRAY-Z Legz has joined international disability charity Leonard Cheshire as a Global Youth Ambassador for music.

The announcement follows a successful collaboration between Leonard Cheshire and Kray-Z Legz, real name Mark Humphries, as part of the charity's Possibility with Disability campaign.

Kray-Z Legz helped to turn the spotlight on research which revealed nearly three quarters (73%) of disabled people believe more needs to be done for non-disabled people to understand that their words cause offence.

Born with spina bifida, Mark is a permanent wheelchair user, and has undergone numerous operations throughout his life. He is a passionate campaigner for increased venue accessibility and for more disabled artists to be included in line ups at festivals and events.

He has previously spoken about Boomtown in Winchester as leading the way in its support of disabled musicians and audiences.

Making some noise

"It's a true honour to be Global Youth Ambassador and I can't wait to start working with Leonard Cheshire and the team to make some serious noise around disability," said Mark. "With my music knowledge and the team's support I think this will be the start of a very important partnership."

Having released his first EP in 2013, Mark has collaborated with global superstars such as Snoop Dogg and supported Coolio. His track 'Gassed'

featuring Benny Banks has had more than 270,000 streams on Spotify.

"We are all thrilled that Mark has joined us in our work," said Ruth Owen OBE, CEO of Leonard Cheshire. "The support he gave us in the recent Possibility with Disability campaign was amazing. I'm really excited about what the charity and Mark will be able to do together to promote the rights of disabled people, change perceptions and create more opportunities for our community."

The Possibility with Disability campaign aims to dismiss misconceptions about disabled people,

encouraging the UK to think differently about disabilities and support the full inclusion of disabled people in society. The campaign recognises that it is not an

individual's disability which holds them back, but often the passive and active behaviours or attitudes of others.

"Words matter," said Ruth. "Sometimes language is explicitly used to cause offence. However, in many cases inappropriate words are used unintentionally by non-disabled people for sheer lack of knowledge."

"By teaming up with Kray-Z Legz we are on a mission to raise awareness of this important issue, get people talking and thinking. Everyone benefits from a more inclusive society where disabled people can thrive and their potential realised. No one should feel uncomfortable or excluded in a school or workplace because of the language used by others."

To find out more go to www.leonardcheshire.org ●



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THE JUBILEE SAILING Trust is offering would-be seafarers the experience of a lifetime on the ocean waves – fully paid for.

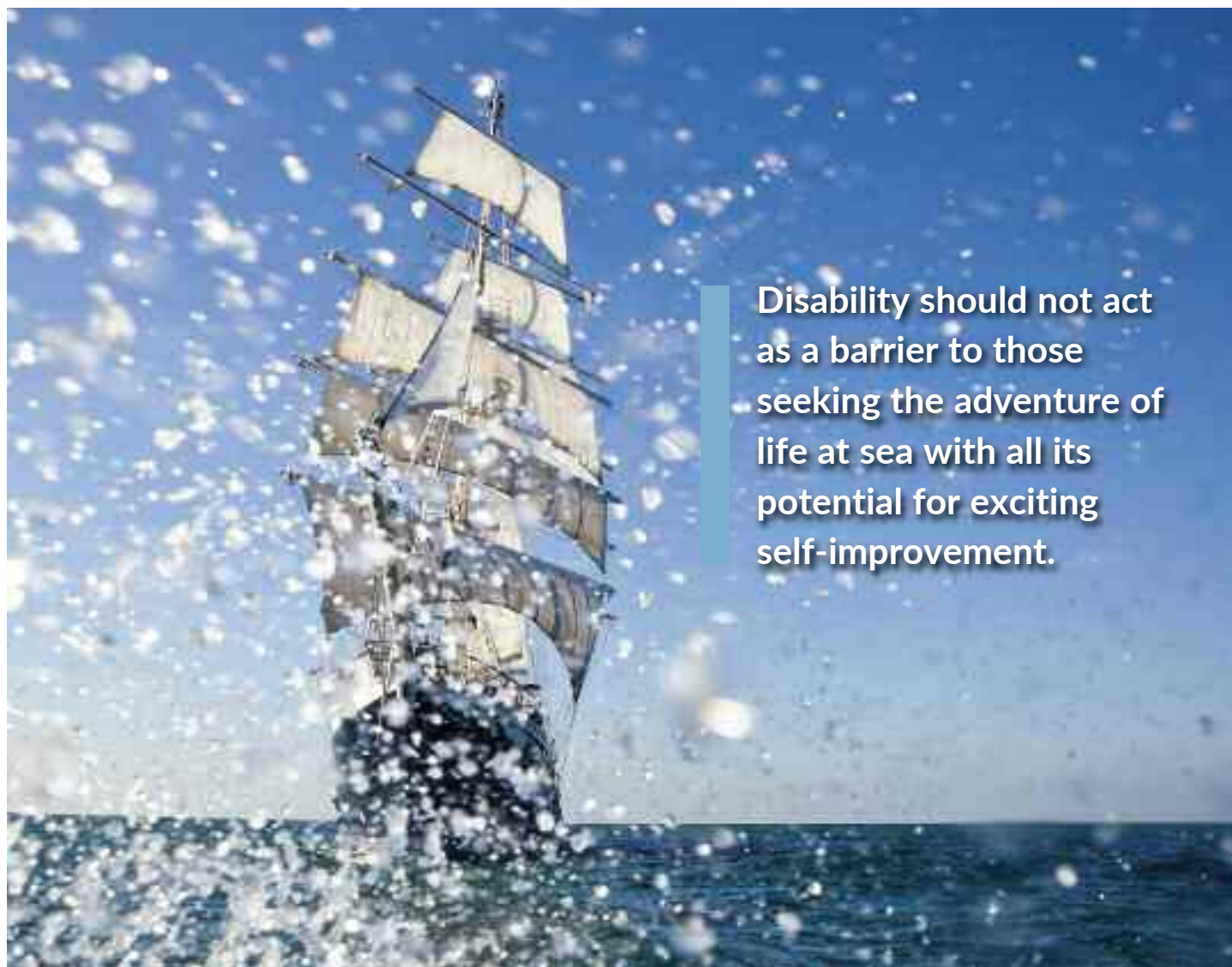
As part of its collaboration with the Gustavia Yacht Club and the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation, the JST charity has 80 paid-for placements onboard its tall ship SV Tenacious – the only tall ship in the world designed to be sailed by a mixed-ability crew.

The places will be during the 2022 Voyage Programme, which includes a Portsmouth round-trip, Liverpool to Dublin and Lowestoft to Portland from March to September 2022.

The collaboration between the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation and Gustavia Yacht Club is a unique programme, delivering voyages to people looking to build life and leadership skills, character and confidence – with particular focus for people facing challenges or limitations in their life.

The places have been given as part of the JST's partnership with the Stelios Philanthropic Foundation – a charity that

A Life on the Ocean Waves



Disability should not act as a barrier to those seeking the adventure of life at sea with all its potential for exciting self-improvement.

offers various opportunities to young people, including scholarships to schools and universities and opportunities to support entrepreneurship.

All aboard

The collaboration between the JST and the Stelios Foundation was announced during early 2020. But the Covid-19 pandemic forced Tenacious to stop sailing. Fast forward to 2021 and the voyages have now been given the green light.

“Disability should not act as a barrier to those seeking the adventure of life at sea with all its potential for exciting self-improvement,” said Sir Stelios Haji-Ioannou, Chairman of The Stelios Philanthropic Foundation and Commodore of The Gustavia Yacht Club.

“I am very pleased to be working with the JST so that as many as possible can share in the rewards that these experiences can bring to beneficiaries from our supported causes in the UK.”

The JST charity offers people of all abilities the opportunity to climb aboard their tall ship Tenacious for an immersive sailing experience and relies on funding from the public. Since its founding in 1978 the Jubilee Sailing Trust has welcomed more than 50,000 people on board.

“We are absolutely thrilled to be working with The Stelios Philanthropic Foundation and Sir Stelios has already demonstrated an outstanding philanthropic commitment to the beneficiary groups we serve and our missions are well aligned,” said Patrick Fleming, CEO of the Jubilee Sailing Trust.

To find out more go to www.jst.org.uk

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Alfred Wainwright



to become one of the country's leading campaigners for creating a countryside accessible to all.

In 2009, Debbie was diagnosed with a chronic degenerative spine condition which within three years had confined her to a wheelchair. She admits, that as a passionate hill-walker who lived for her walks in the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales, they were dark days.

Power of nature

"My husband Andy and I loved to get in the car early in the morning, drive to the Lake District, then climb up a mountain to see the sunrise," she explains. "Once

Debbie North with keen walker and tv personality Julia Bradbury.

you're outside and you're walking, all the stresses and strains of the day disappear. Being surrounded by the beauty of nature is a great way to switch off. It makes you feel good, not only physically, but mentally."

Debbie also carried her love of nature over into her job as the headteacher of a primary school in Lincolnshire. A job that as her condition deteriorated she was forced to retire from in 2011.

"I officially finished work on February 28 and the very next day I set up a blog as an outlet to vent my pent-up frustrations," explained Debbie. My first post basically said, 'yesterday I was the

OUR HEADLINE BY fellwalker and author Alfred Wainwright could not be more fitting to describe Debbie North.

A spine condition left her unable to walk but this hasn't stopped 59-year-old Debbie from literally and figuratively climbing mountains. It has also given her the drive, passion and determination

headteacher of a primary school – today, what am I? I used to be a walker and I'm not that anymore either...'

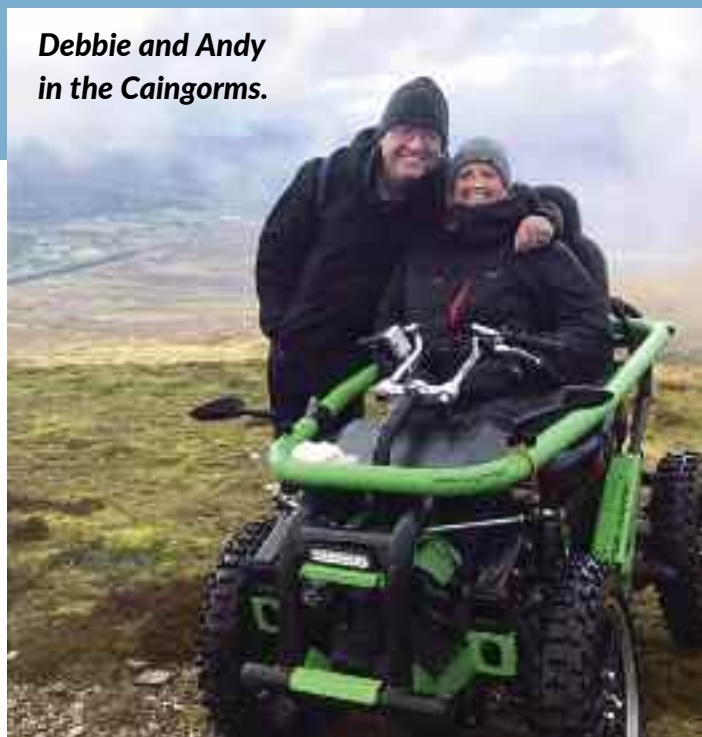
"Though Andy and I still tried to get outdoors, I wept when we parked up and I would watch other people don their hiking boots and sling their rucksacks onto their backs as I manoeuvred myself into my wheelchair.

"Though I had a fairly robust powerchair it would struggle on uneven ground and at the time it felt that my days of traversing fields and hills were well and truly over.

"But that first blog of Access the Dales created a lot of attention. I received many emails and messages from other wheelchair users who wanted to get out into the countryside but didn't know where to start looking.

"I guess you could say it was my first 'lightbulb' moment. It was the kick-up the backside I needed

**Debbie and Andy
in the Caingorms.**



and I vowed that I would do all that I could to flag up wheelchair walks. I went into overdrive."

"I became a member of the mid Lincolnshire Local Access Forum and a member of the Yorkshire Dales National Park Access for All Group. I spoke with the National Parks about accessible trails and

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the need for more challenging and exciting walks with wheelchairs.

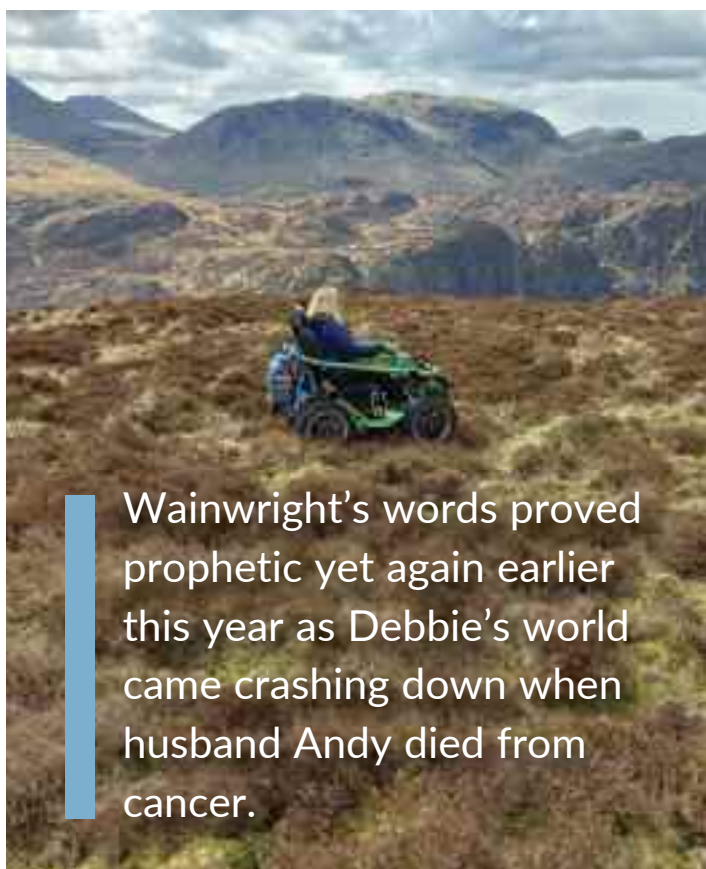
“On the back of my own frustrating experiences, I began researching all terrain wheelchairs and came across a company called TerrainHopper, which make off-road wheelchairs and mobility scooters.

“Their 4 x 4 scooters can tackle a range of surfaces, including rocks, snow, sand and steep inclines. So, in 2015 Andy and I decided to make one of my dreams come true by doing the famous Coast to Coast route again – this time thanks to TerrainHopper which lent me an all-terrain wheelchair.”

The iconic 192-mile route stretches from St Bees in the west to Robin Hood’s Bay in the east, crossing over the Lake District, the Dales and the North York Moors.

The epic journey took the couple 14-days and attracted considerable media attention. It was also Debbie’s second ‘lightbulb’ moment.

“Andy and I had walked Coast to Coast in 1999 and 2003 and our 2015 journey was equally as rewarding if not considerably more challenging,”



Wainwright’s words proved prophetic yet again earlier this year as Debbie’s world came crashing down when husband Andy died from cancer.



said Debbie. “I certainly learnt a lot about accessibility, or in many cases the lack of it, along the way.

The Bradbury connection

“Obviously like so many designated walks the Coast to Coast is a popular and well-trodden route – for walkers. Locked gates, stiles, narrow footpaths, blocked bridleways or debris caused by erosion - not so easy if you’re in a wheelchair.

“It was then that I knew that it was not enough just to flag up what perhaps well-meant, able bodied people considered wheelchair walks, but they would need checking for full accessibility.

“Coincidentally I had started fundraising to buy an all-terrain wheelchair for the Yorkshire Dales National Park and I had sent an email to the television presenter and avid walker Julia Bradbury asking for a signed DVD that I could auction.

In response Julia’s sister, Gina, got in touch and asked Debbie if she would like to work with them on their website The Outdoor Guide, trialling accessible walks for a new dedicated section AccessTOG.

“In 2015 when Julia and I were creating The Outdoor Guide it was paramount that we wanted to make the outdoors accessible to all,” explained Gina Bradbury, Co-Founder of The Outdoor Guide. ►

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NPDOR
Retail Experience Award

"Debbie's timely message was instrumental in us creating a section called AccessTOG for her to be part of."

As a result of her work for AccesTOG, Debbie started to raise accessibility issues that she felt could be resolved directly with the authorities that run the UK's National Parks and countryside. And she has been encouraged by the changes and improvements that have taken place over the last few years and impressed by the many UK schemes that have prioritised accessible walking routes.

"The concept of accessibility is not about sterilising the countryside to accommodate wheelchair users, such as putting down straight, flat tarmac paths," said Debbie. "It's not about changing nature, it's about changing the manmade infrastructure and working with what we've got so that wheelchair users can enjoy nature the way it was meant to be enjoyed."

In memory of Andy

Debbie is very aware that although many routes are accessible the sort of 4x4 all-terrain wheelchair that would be needed to fully enjoy the walk is expensive and she campaigns tirelessly for suitable wheelchairs to be available free or to hire in National Parks and at sites of natural interest all over the UK. There is a list on her website www.debbienorth.org

With so much going on, researching and writing up accessible walks, writing her regular blog



Access the Dales, television and radio appearances, a Get Outside Champion with Ordnance Survey and in demand as a keynote speaker, Debbie was once again flying high.

But Wainwright's words proved prophetic yet again earlier this year as Debbie's world came crashing down when husband Andy died from cancer.

From her farmhouse in Cumbria, Debbie told Living with Disability that Andy was her friend, partner and soul mate and that she grieved for him every day.

'Always there will be the lonely ridge, the dancing beck, the silent forest, always there will be the exhilaration of the summits'. Alfred Wainwright

"It is important to me and to his memory that I continue what we started together and ensure that everybody has the opportunity and the access to enjoy the breath-taking beauty of nature that we enjoyed together," said Debbie.

"It was his wish that we raised the money to buy an all-terrain wheelchair for children with disabilities for use in the Yorkshire Dales and I am really pleased that we have reached our target of £12K and I have already ordered the first TerrainHopper mini.

"But we think we can achieve more and for this reason we are setting up a charity called Access the Dales so that we can continue to raise money and buy more chairs that will be located in different parts of the Yorkshire Dales."

For Debbie there are still hills and mountains to climb – from the 214 English peaks known as the Wainwrights to Scotland's 282 Munro mountains – and to live up to her own motto of 'making the inaccessible accessible'.

To find out more about Debbie go to www.debbienorth.org or for accessible walks www.theoutdoorguide.co.uk





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The Outdoor Guide

>> Holidays

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THE OUTDOOR GUIDE (TOG) is a free online resource set up by outdoor television presenter Julia Bradbury and her sister Gina Bradbury Fox.

The inspiring site provides suggested country and coastal walking routes throughout the UK, with recommendations for places to visit, experience, eat, drink and sleep along the way.

TOG believes passionately in the value of enjoying a healthy outdoors lifestyle and that people of all ages and abilities have the opportunity to access walks and benefit from engaging with nature.

But just because the benefits to mental and physical health have been proved time and time again, it doesn't mean that everyone is able to access them.

Access all areas

Through a dedicated mobility 'arm', AccessTOG, the Bradbury sisters are committed to creating a countryside for all through the development of wheel-friendly walks for people with poor or no mobility.

Over the past six years AccessTOG has worked closely with accessibility expert Debbie North, who

has mapped and tested over 100 routes throughout the UK.

Details of the wheelchair-friendly routes for wonderful days out in the hills, towns and canals, including the perfect pitstops, the perfect accommodation and the perfect cuppa, can be found at www.theoutdoorguide.co.uk

Meanwhile Julia and Gina's latest initiative to get people out and about – launched through TOG Foundation – is in response to the World Health Organisation's warning that disabled and able-bodied young people face a looming global mental health crisis as a result of the Coronavirus pandemic. It reports that:

- 1 in 10 school children have a diagnosable mental health condition.
- 75% of all mental health problems are established by the time someone is 18.
- 75% of young people who are experiencing mental health problems aren't receiving any treatment.





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Tv presenter Gemma Hunt (left) with Gina Bradbury Fox at the launch of the Waterproof and Wellies Project.

Getting young people outside will of course have benefits:

- Educational benefits include an increase in concentration, hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills as well as self-awareness and improved sleep, which in turn leads to better behaviour.
- Isolation is a big problem with young people and the outdoors allows for them to work together and develop emotionally, increasing social interaction and empathy.
- The Children's Society says that spending time outdoors and in nature enhances a young person's short and long-term wellbeing. It is also known to improve mental development and personal fulfilment.

But very often the lack of access to weatherproof clothing is a real barrier for children engaging in outdoor learning. So TOG is hoping to raising £5 million to provide 20,000 primary schools with outdoor clothing and wellie boots to enable children of all abilities to experience, understand, protect and above all enjoy the outdoors.

The Waterproof and Wellies Project will use the money to provide 10 sets of high-quality outdoors kit, consisting of a waterproof jacket, trousers and welly boots to every state primary school across the country over the next six years.

Wheelchair capelets will also be available.

"We are passionate about promoting the benefits of getting outdoors, but it has become clear to us that this is not possible for children who don't have the correct outdoor wear," said Gina Bradbury Fox, who was at Edith Weston Primary School in Rutland to deliver kits.

"So the Waterproof and Wellies Project aims to donate 10 kits to every state primary school in Britain.



Gina Bradbury Fox delivers kit to Edith Weston Primary School.

"We have already seen incredible generosity from businesses and philanthropists keen to provide kits to schools across the country and have negotiated with respected outdoor wear suppliers to provide these kits at cost price."

If you would like to donate:

- £25 – will buy and deliver 1 complete kit to a school.
- £250 – will buy and deliver 10 complete kits to a school.
- £1,000 – will buy and deliver 40 complete kits.
- £10,000 – will provide kits for schools you choose in a specific area.

To find out more about The Waterproof and Wellies Project go to www.theoutdoorguide.co.uk ●



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Caring for the Carers



THOUSANDS OF SCOTS who struggle to find the time or resources to take a holiday can apply for a subsidised in-country short break.

It is hoped 2,500 Scottish carers and 500 families can benefit from VisitScotland's ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme, funded by The Scottish Government.

Representatives from VisitScotland, Shared Care Scotland, local carer's charity Voice of Carers Across Lothian (VOCAL) and the Family Holiday Association launched the scheme at Hampton by Hilton Edinburgh West, one of over 120 places to stay and visitor attractions signed up to the scheme.

The initiative is in response to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the health and well-being of families and carers and to highlight how important taking a break is.

"The last 18 months have been unbelievably challenging for unpaid carers, with many unable to access a break due to Covid-19," said Sebastian Fischer, Chief Executive of VOCAL.

"The new ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme is creative and enterprising – it breaks new ground and demonstrates how government and the hospitality and tourism industry can work together to create innovative solutions.

"ScotSpirit not only supports our economy, but above all recognises carers as equal partners, values their vital contribution to our country and supports their wellbeing."

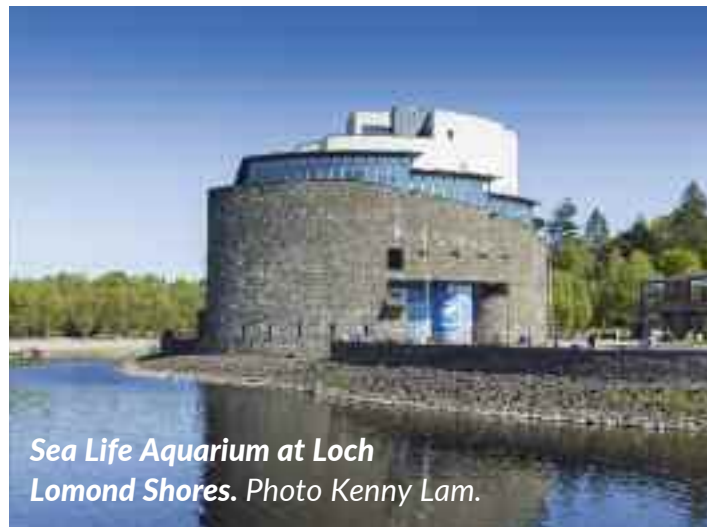
Enjoy a holiday break

The ScotSpirit Holiday Voucher Scheme is one of 10 initiatives funded by a £25 million tourism recovery programme. One of its aims is to help the Scottish tourism and events industry to recover by stimulating off-season domestic breaks and day visits in a responsible, socially sustainable and inclusive way.

"The last 18 months have seen quite a high level of stress," said Carole Jackson, an unpaid carer from Midlothian.



*Clydeside Distillery.
Photo: Matt Davis.*



Sea Life Aquarium at Loch Lomond Shores. Photo Kenny Lam.

“The thing I missed most was the social contact with other people. In the house 24/7 with your cared for person. So that was quite difficult. I ended up just going for walks. But it was the social thing, I really missed meeting friends.

“Getting a break is absolutely essential. This is just one thing you just have to do. Being with someone 24/7, it’s not fun at all. I’ve benefited from a few short breaks and you have photographs, things to talk about and remember. And also chat to other carers about it.

“We went to Dewar’s whisky trail thanks to VOCAL and that was fantastic. We got the tour of the distillery and tasted five whiskies, so we had a really super day. They were so kind to us. It was lovely and a really good memory. I’ve been to Dynamic Earth, Edinburgh Castle and Holyrood House. So really, really good. You need it, you need something else, a different four walls and something else to talk about.”

Unpaid carers across Scotland can apply to have a short break, or to have a break at a day visitor attraction, by contacting their local Carers Organisation. You can find out who is operating the scheme in your area at www.sharedcarescotland.org.uk/scotspirit-holiday-voucher-scheme

If you are a family and would like to apply for a ScotSpirit break your application must be supported by someone working with your family such as a teacher,



Photo: Chris Watt Photography.

Pictured above: Laura Bannerman, Chair, Shared Care Scotland; Marina DiDuca, Inclusive Tourism Manager, VisitScotland; Carole Jackson, unpaid carer with local carer centre Voice of Carers Across Lothian (VOCAL); Kat Lee, Chief Executive, Family Holiday Association and Danielle Clegg, mum, with Family Holiday Association, at the launch of the Holiday Voucher Scheme.

family support worker or social worker.

The person referring you must be registered with Family Holiday Association as a referrer. If they are not already a referrer they can sign up at www.familyholidayassociation.org.uk/scotspirit ●





Suffolk School Scoops top **SEN Award**

SUFFOLK SPECIAL SCHOOL Bramfield House has won the Education Business SEN Provision Award for the outstanding quality of education and care it provides for boys with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.

The Education Business Awards were set up to showcase the unsung heroes of the education sector and give teachers the recognition they deserve.

Bramfield House School gives young people extraordinary educational opportunities through its innovative, successful teaching approach inside and outside the classroom. It attracts interest for places from across East Anglia to support vulnerable young people to reach their full potential and prepare them for life beyond school.

The boys are taught in small, informal and relaxed classes, with clear structures in place. They forge strong working relationships with teachers and staff, who encourage their self-confidence and self-esteem through engaging learning and targets

tailored to meet their needs. Any previous negative experiences are replaced with a positive pattern of success and quantifiable educational achievements.

Award winning opportunities

As well as practical and creative lessons on-site, including sports pitches and an RHS accredited horticulture department, Bramfield House offers the boys a huge variety of off-site learning opportunities, including sailing qualifications on the Norfolk Broads, study along the East Anglian coastline, and numerous field trips.

Weekly boarding places at Bramfield House ensure that progress can be accelerated with a 24-hour, wraparound curriculum. The comfortable boarding facilities are located in the main house until the boys reach Years 10 and 11, when the emphasis develops towards semi-independent living, and preparation for life at college, an apprenticeship, university or work. ►

Short Breaks and Respite Care

For adults with learning disabilities



Activities might include cooking, swimming and trips to local attractions. If you also enjoy playing on a games console, watching a movie, or like to pop out for a drink then that's exactly what we'll support you to do!

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Shorts Breaks at Derwen, in north Shropshire, is respite with a difference. Guests with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) can experience a holiday of their own, taking part in trips, social activities, and learning independent living skills along the way. Meanwhile, families can rest assured that their loved ones are cared for by expert staff in a safe and comfortable environment.

Guests take part in a range of activities and trips, as well as making use of the exceptional campus facilities which include a gym and swimming pool. Holiday activities depend on guests' preferences (and the weather!) and are individually tailored to ensure guests enjoy themselves and are relaxed and comfortable. Some of the popular recent activities have included swimming, basketball, use of the gym and football, day trips, shopping, cooking, bowling, cinema, and even trips to the beach. But if guests also enjoy playing on a games console or relaxing in front of the TV, then that's exactly what they'll be supported to do.

Parents say: *"Our son loves to take part in the trips and activities at Short Breaks at Derwen, and appreciates that staff listen to his opinions and preferences. He has made friends of a similar age and learnt some home-making skills too."*

"As parents, we can rest easy knowing that he feels safe and is having fun in a home from home."

Derwen College, in Gobowen, near Oswestry, runs specialist care and a quality holiday experience in their Short Breaks provision, which is tailored for adults with learning disabilities and associated needs. The award-winning specialist college offers both day and residential respite for over-18s for 50 weeks of the year, only closing for two weeks over Christmas.

All guests are assessed as to how to best support and care for them, ensuring the best possible holiday experience.

For more information please email shortbreaks@derwen.ac.uk or telephone 01691 779243 www.derwen.ac.uk

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SRUC is a charity registered in Scotland, No. SC043712 539601/DW4250117

As well as academic and educational progress, Bramfield House School develops self-esteem and self-confidence to enable young people to progress and lead meaningful, successful adult lives.

The award judges applauded the school's therapeutic approach to building boys' confidence and its curriculum which offers a range of activities not usually accessed by students in settings of this type, ranging from rock climbing, sailing and archery to bi-annual ski trips.

A school farm, horticulture area and on-site construction and motor mechanics facilities help to build the boys' confidence and self-worth.



Davina Bell.



Staff celebrate SEN Award.

Over subscribed for the last two years, Bramfield is now looking to expand and build in the next year.

"This marks a fantastic end to a very challenging 20-21 year for Bramfield House School," said Headteacher Davina Bell.

"Despite the pandemic, Bramfield House has continued to flourish, the team have worked hard and the school is better than ever. The team and students alike are celebrating this amazing award which gives recognition for the quality of the provision we deliver, the heart that we put into it and the commitment we all have for our boys here at Bramfield.

This marks a fantastic end to a very challenging 20-21 year for Bramfield House School.

"It is inspiring the whole team to strive for even greater heights and deliver first class education and care better than anyone else in the country."

Bramfield House is part of Acorn Education and Care, which specialises in working with children and young people who have social, emotional, mental health (SEMH) and complex needs. The organisation builds care around the unique situation and individual circumstances of each young person. ●

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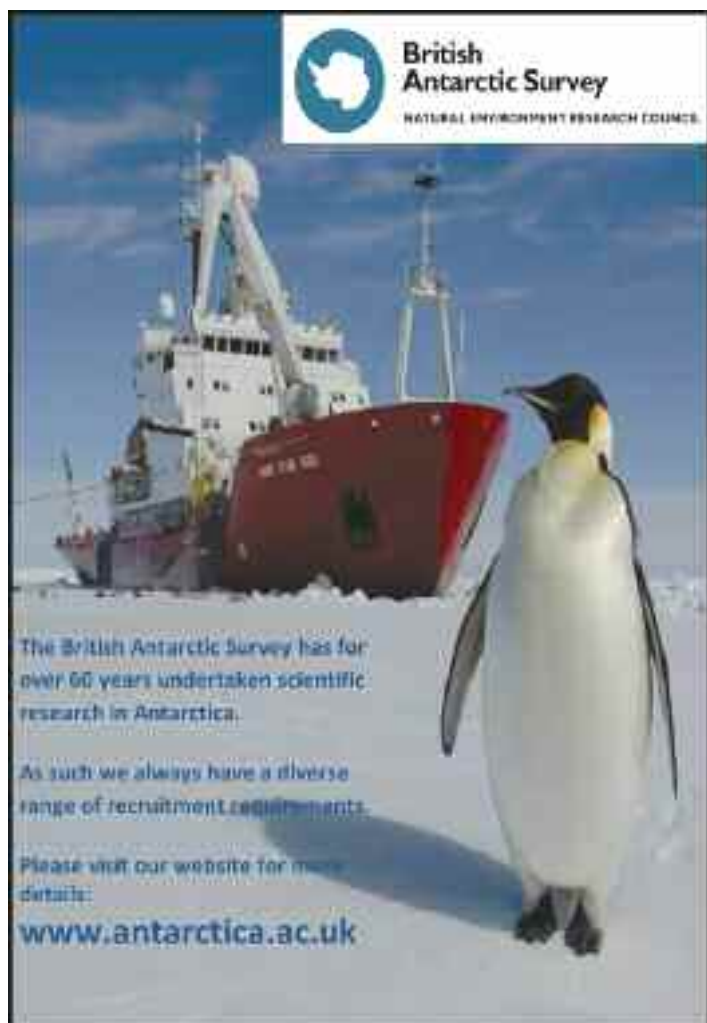


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*Interns at Kings College Hospital
NHS Foundation Trust.*



Project SEARCH Tops 70 Life Changing Programmes

DFN PROJECT SEARCH programmes continue to create life changing opportunities throughout the UK for young people with learning difficulties.

Today it is running over 70 UK schemes and has supported more than 1600 young people into work by offering them a one-year transition to work programme in their final year of school or college to enable inclusion and empowerment.

Evidence-based and outcome driven, the pioneering programme is a proven way of helping people with learning disabilities get long term careers as well as helping businesses get a more inclusive workforce.

Students on a supported internship programme stay on in a school or college role but spend the last year of their education at a host business site. The site is staffed by a qualified instructor

and job coaches to meet educational and training needs.

Programme grows

DFN Project SEARCH is a collaboration between the commissioning charity DFN Foundation, committed to transforming life outcomes for people throughout the country, and its delivery partner Project SEARCH, developed at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center in the USA by Erin Riehle and Susie Rutkowski in 1996.

DFN Project SEARCH holds the exclusive master franchise rights in the UK to the prestigious programme, which has recently been launched in Lambeth and Rotherham.

In Lambeth it will be run in partnership with Kings College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust,

which will be the host employer, Lambeth Council and Lambeth College, the education provider, and Unity Works, which is providing the job coaching element of the programme.

Seven young adults have joined the programme for the first year with the interns going on to complete three 10-week work experience placements within Kings College Hospital.

"It is really exciting to be working with King's College Hospital NHS Trust for our new DFN Project SEARCH programme in Lambeth," said Emma Lord, DFN Project SEARCH Programme Specialist.

"There are so many skills and opportunities for the young people to learn inside such a diverse and inclusive workplace. The commitment to change the life



City Health Care Partnership CIC: supporting colleagues with disabilities

City Health Care Partnership CIC (CHCP) is a co-owned 'for better' profit community interest company, providing mainly NHS services in Hull, the East Riding of Yorkshire, Knowsley and St Helens. CHCP is a Disability Confident Employer, working towards becoming a Disability Confident Leader. Our Supporting Disability and Wellbeing Staff Network group gives colleagues the chance to be involved in discussions and decision-making to improve equality, health and wellbeing.

Peer support is available for colleagues who have similar experiences, with a safe space to discuss concerns. We are proud to be an inclusive organisation and to have reached number 9 in the National Centre for Diversity Top 100 Most Inclusive Workplaces Index 2021. Our EDI Vision, The Principles of FREDIE is embedded throughout the company, promoting these values to our workforce and future colleagues <https://youtu.be/5I4TclETnds>

We collaborate with external organisations to support people with a disability into work and are supporting five young people through the Project Search Employability Programme, giving them skills to help them into paid employment.

Stuart's story

I did general admin and bookkeeping as a volunteer for a charity called 'Danny's Dream', whose aim is to take people with disabilities out into the community.

During the seven years I was there, the company went from strength to strength, growing so big, so fast, that we needed infrastructure support from a bigger organisation. But because we had merged with a larger company my role diminished and I left with a heavy heart.

I became disillusioned with volunteering and no prospect of paid employment at the end of it.

I thought "I'll be a volunteer and that will be that". But after a few years of gaming every day and having no reason to get out of bed, I told myself, "There must be more to life than this!"

I gave volunteering another chance with CHCP's Volunteer Hub, hoping it might turn into a paid role. I volunteered for three years, helping at various events. As a wheelchair user with cerebral palsy, which limits my physical ability, and having a slight stammer, these events were quite eye-opening and gave me even more

appreciation of CHCP's attitude to disability awareness and usefulness.

Coming out of the pandemic, I saw a job advert for an administration assistant with the EDI team, applied for and got the job. Without going into detail, we ended up having to get a new kitchen floor as I was so overwhelmed with emotion at the thought of having paid employment.

I have been in my role for three months and I can truly say it has been the best time of my life, as I never thought I would be in paid employment. I have found the general admin side of my role okay as I was already competent with the main office programmes. Note

and minute taking has been an extremely steep learning curve, but with the support of my manager and the great in-house training courses, I have been able to develop my skills.

I would like to say a big thank you to all my colleagues in the office; being financially independent is great, but I have gained much more from the office chat and I have grown as a person; they have welcomed me into the HR team. I look forward to working with them and within CHCP for a long time to come.



City Health Care Partnership CIC, 5 Beacon Way, Hull, HU3 4AE

www.chcpic.org.uk

chcp.webenquiries@nhs.net

The Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) is the UK's independent authority set up to uphold information rights in the public interest.

Our work is of ever growing importance to society, and we regularly seek to recruit people who can help to ensure that personal data and public information is handled properly.

Based in Wilmslow, Cheshire we also have smaller offices in Belfast, Cardiff and Edinburgh. We offer rewarding roles where staff enjoy great benefits and help to build a society in which everyone's information rights are respected.

Applications from all members of the community are welcome and we are proud to support Living with Disability magazine. To find out more about working at the ICO and to view our current job vacancies, visit www.ico.jobs

ico.
Information Commissioner's Office

Upholding information rights

chances of young people with learning disabilities and autism in the area is shared by all the partners in this great programme.”

Work Confident

Compared to the general population, young people with a learning disability are less likely to be in full time paid employment with nationally only 5.9% of people with special educational needs and disabilities gaining permanent paid employment in the UK.

“We’re excited for our young interns to be joining Team King’s and I look forward to watching their confidence grow in their new roles,” said Professor Clive Kay, Chief Executive at King’s College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.

“Entering the workplace can feel like a daunting prospect for many young people. For our interns, we are putting in place extra support including access to a mentor and on-site job coach, who will work alongside them in their new roles.”

Throughout the programme year, interns work on employability and functional skills. Training room activities are designed around: Team Building, Workplace Safety,

Jack Harrison and Emily Coombs, DFN Project SEARCH interns at Gulliver's Valley Theme Park.



Technology, Maintaining Employment, Self-Advocacy, Financial Literacy, Health & Wellness and Preparing for Employment.

“This is an exciting programme that will help young people in Lambeth get vital experience in the workplace,” said Cllr Jacqui Dyer, Lambeth’s Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety.

“Young people with learning difficulties or those with autism are often unfairly excluded from the opportunities afforded to their peers.

“This kind of on-the-job learning will improve their opportunities and

open up new avenues to securing long-term, fulfilling paid employment. The DFN Project SEARCH programme can be an important outlet as we look to create a more inclusive, equal borough where young people can thrive whatever their circumstance.”

Council visit

In Rotherham a party of senior councillors and officers visited Gulliver’s Valley Theme Park to meet with talented interns who are obtaining life-changing work placements at the resort. ►



A pioneering community interest company dedicated to helping learners with additional needs achieve positive outcomes is opening a national hub in Wellingborough.

ADHD WISE UK will offer a range of expert services and support for children and adults with an extensive range of conditions including ADHD, autism, and dyslexia from its new base in Silver Street.

The brainchild of former special needs teacher, Jannine Perryman the community interest company was launched following her collaboration with Anita Allerton as Co Director.

Jannine said: "Coming from a specialist teacher background has allowed us to create a team of experts, coaches and counsellors all dedicated to bringing about positive outcomes for young people and adults with neurodiverse conditions as well as skill-building programmes for parents and carers.

To date we have been incredibly successful in running courses for ADHD adults and autistic adults. We've also had fantastic results in the courses we have put together for teenagers with ADHD, as well as skill-building programmes for parents and carers.

We have a very inclusive environment focussing on



counselling, coaching and up-skilling. We will be offering an array of services, events and courses that people can book onto. We receive no central funding and nationally there are only four local authorities that fund our services to support their constituents. Unfortunately, Northamptonshire is not currently one of them but we hope to change that.

It is all about identifying the challenge and helping to mitigate it.

Quite often neurodiverse conditions are tagged with negative connotations.

We're here as experts to turn that perception around and promote the positive outcomes.



www.adhdwise.uk

Neurodiversity Hub

Championing Possibilities in Neurodiversity

ADHD Wise UK has been set up by adults who are diagnosed with ADHD themselves and use it to good effect.

We want to champion the possibilities, and promote positive outcomes for people with ADHD and other neurodiverse conditions.

ADHD can affect anyone. It cannot be 'cured' but it can be managed and developed.

We believe that it shouldn't be forgotten that neurodiverse people have incredible strengths and make good employees – once they are helped to find the right careers, with the right employers.

Contact us today to explore how we can help.

Visit: www.adhdwise.uk

Tel: 01933 222940

Email: info@adhdwise.co.uk



NeuroDiversity
NETWORKS





North Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service welcomes applications from all groups, for more information 01609 780150 or www.northyorksfire.gov.uk

Have you ever thought of a career in policing or with Greater Manchester Police?



We are an inclusive and diverse force, and welcome applications from all backgrounds. We aim to help develop individuals from all communities to follow their chosen career paths.

If you are interested in being part of our team, please see the link at the bottom which will take you to our website.

We want to ensure we are representative of the communities we serve and we welcome interest from all individuals and groups.

Our website can be accessed here - <https://www.gmp.police.uk/> and vacancies for police staff and police officers can be found here - <https://www.gmp.police.uk/police-forces/greater-manchester-police/areas/greater-manchester-force-content/careers/careers/>

Neurodiverse? We want to hear from you!

Research suggests that people with Neurodiversity have specialist skills and attributes that we want in our organisation. We have a range of opportunities available at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service (GMFRS) that we encourage people with Neurodiversity to explore.

Firefighters: Community focused, physical, practical, high intensity, structured environment leans towards people who have ADHD and Dyslexia. We are looking for physically fit candidates who are passionate about making a difference in their community regardless of ability.

Corporate Support: Your varying abilities may complement the range of other opportunities we have available, including Research and Digital roles.

To view and apply for our opportunities visit our recruitment websites:

www.manchesterfire.gov.uk/join-us <http://gmcajobs.engagearts.co.uk>



We are committed to providing an environment whereby people are treated equally, people are recognised as individuals, and difference is valued and respected.

www.plymouthart.ac.uk



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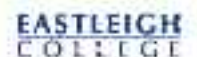
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At GXO, we take pride in creating a workplace where our employees feel they belong, and we're committed to fostering equality to ensure our people thrive. We have an opportunity to make an impact that can change people's lives by offering rewarding jobs and providing training to support career advancement.

We work with a number of organisations, including the Down's Syndrome Association whose WorkFit programme connects employers with individuals who have Down's syndrome. WorkFit provides training for employers to help support the programme's participants in the workplace. As part of our diversity agenda, we signed up to be Disability Confident Level 1, Committed and are currently working towards Level 2, which will be completed this year.

Logistics is a sector where we can offer tailored employment solutions that can help empower individuals with Down's syndrome. Through WorkFit, each employee has at least two "buddies" within the team and a designated trainer assigned to them. The trainer will stay with them as long as they need and works as part of the buddy team. The programme benefits everyone involved and is a way for us to contribute in a meaningful way to creating a strong community.



Every year, we also celebrate "World Down Syndrome Day" by wearing different socks. It's our very own contribution to "Lots of Socks" Day, a worldwide campaign aimed at raising Down's syndrome awareness. Over the past few years, a genuine movement has started with a lot of our employees now wearing mismatched socks on March 21.

www.gxo.com
f t i n





Rotherham Council chiefs meet talented young interns at Gulliver's Valley.

Managing Director of Gulliver's Valley Julie Dalton hosted the resort tour during which Rotherham Council members met with six programme interns, all from Rotherham and aged between 19 and 24, who shared insight into their personal journey on the programme and working day across various roles including retail, cleaning, housekeeping, maintenance and animal care.

Working together

The Gulliver's Valley DFN Project SEARCH programme is delivered in partnership with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, Rotherham Opportunities College, Newman Special Educational Needs school and Gulliver's Valley as the host business.

"I am delighted that Rotherham Council has been able to support this pioneering initiative which is having such a positive impact on the lives of young people from our borough," said Councillor David Roche, Cabinet Member for Adult

Claire Cookson.



Social Care and Health.

"As well as improving their chances of finding employment, it is helping to develop the life skills, independence and confidence which will benefit these young people in all aspects of their lives.

"This perfectly aligns with our ethos that all people have the opportunity to make sure each day in their life is meaningful. Doing things which have a purpose, being in ordinary places doing things most other people in the community would be doing, doing things that are

for the individual, making sure they receive the right amount of support and are in touch with local people, developing friendships."

DFN Project Search has a target of getting 10,000 young people into work during the next 10 years, which will be transformative for them, their families, communities and business.

"As a society we are not very ambitious when it comes to dealing with learning disabilities," said DFN Project SEARCH CEO Claire Cookson.

"We're very good at telling young people what they can't do, not what they can do. That's our problem.

"We believe that a collaborative approach between businesses, local authorities, colleges and schools and supported employment providers; partnered with our evidence-based DFN Project SEARCH programme, can be a force for transformative change in the lives of these young people."

You can learn more about DFN Project SEARCH at
www.dfnprojectsearch.org

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The SFO is a service for promoting equality and inclusion and we value diversity. We need people from all backgrounds with different perspectives in order to approach the same challenges in different ways. You are committed to ensuring that a very talented, committed and hardworking person has the opportunity to rise to the top, whatever their background and where they live.

- As a Disability Confident Employer we:
- Have underpinned and successfully completed the Disability Confident job guarantee
- Are taking on all permanent roles as a Disability Confident employer

We offering a level one ability to get the right people for our business and to take the ability to adapt and develop our people. When recruiting we go further than the standard approach to ensure that we have a diverse workforce. By ensuring that we have a diverse workforce we ensure that you meet the minimum level of competence required as well as having any of the qualifications, skills or experience defined as essential.

COMMUNITY HOUSING

Community Housing is a social business and one of Worcestershire's largest Registered Providers of social housing. We offer opportunities to work and develop a career in a variety of roles and have an award winning apprenticeship programme



We are proud to be a Disability Confident Employer and are committed to the mental and physical wellbeing of all colleagues. We have signed the Mindful Employer Charter and are accredited to the Worcestershire Works Well initiative.

We provide a fully inclusive and accessible recruitment process and offer an interview to disabled applicants who meet the minimum criteria for the job. We support disabled colleagues with a desire to progress and can adapt training as required.

We support our colleagues to manage their disabilities or health conditions through workplace adjustments such as flexible working and workspace adaptations. All colleagues have access to our Employee Assistance Programme and occupational health service and can access face-to-face counselling should they require it.

For more information about us and to see our latest vacancies, please visit our website at www.communityhousing.co.uk



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<https://www.royalholloway.ac.uk>



Everton Disability Players Embark On Coaching Journey With hummel

20 players from Everton in the Community's disability teams have taken their first steps into football coaching, thanks to funding from the Club's technical partner, hummel.

As part of its commitment to helping change the world through sport, hummel has pledged to fund an education and training initiative which sees participants from Everton Football Club's official charity undertake the FA's Play Maker and Introduction into football courses, creating opportunities for future employment as disability coaches.

Everton in the Community's Disability programme provides disabled people of all ages across Merseyside with access to bespoke sport and physical activities, alongside volunteer, work placement and accreditation opportunities - helping to address the barriers that

disabled individuals experience resulting in poor health outcomes and reduced social interaction opportunities in mainstream society.

The programme - the oldest targeted project within Everton in the Community - celebrated its 20th anniversary last year, with players from Everton's disability teams starring in the launch of the Club's 2020/21 hummel third kit. The initiative was recognised at this year's Football Business Awards, scooping the 'Best Club Marketing Activation and Best Brand Activation Involving Football - Premier League.'

Having already embarked on the first stage of the course, with all 20 participants completing the 'Playmaker' qualification online, the budding coaches will now start to take part in practical delivery, as the Club's Disability Manager, Steve Johnson explains:

"All participants were required to take a four-and-a-half-hour online course. For some, it was a challenge as they hadn't used a computer before, and some players can't read and write, so we sat and talked them through it with one-to-one sessions.

"We're delighted that all participants have received their certificate, and they'll now start their role as coaching assistants - shadowing our staff, gaining experience and making a real positive addition to the Club's workforce."

Steve is also hoping the 20 strong team of coaches can encourage the next generation of disabled people into coaching roles: "Traditionally, there's been low expectations of disabled people, so we want to create positive role models for other disabled people and inspire them to say, 'I can achieve that too.'"

Clinical and non-clinical vacancies

If you're looking to make a change in your career we might just have the role for you. Practice Plus Group is the UK's largest independent provider of NHS Services. We operate the healthcare departments in over 40 prisons across England, in addition to numerous NHS 111 call centres, GP Out-of-Hours services, GP Practices and we operate an estate of private hospitals, surgical centres and diagnostic services to both NHS and private patients seeking elective surgery. Collectively we treat over 80,000 patients a year.

At Practice Plus Group we embrace diversity, with over 6000 staff we have colleagues from all walks of life, including those living with disability. We operate supportive workplaces, with structures and development programmes in place for you to shape the career you want. We offer a competitive package of pay and benefits. We also recognise the value of a healthy work-life balance – we always try to be flexible, helping you fit your working life around your home life. At present we have vacancies for both clinicians and non-clinical staff.

Examples of our nursing roles include vacancies for nurse practitioners, mental health and substance misuse nurses, ward nurses, theatre practitioners, endoscopy nurses, primary care nurses, ophthalmic nurses and ENT specialists. Allied Health Professionals and clinical support positions include; imaging professionals, pharmacy staff, physiotherapists and healthcare assistants.

For those not from a clinical background we'll have a role for you to apply your transferable skills to too; whether it's in administration, as a call handler, driver, in HR, marketing, finance, IT, supplies and facilities or in senior management you can find the next step in your career with Practice Plus Group.



To see all of our current vacancies visit practiceplusgroup.com or email our friendly recruitment teams at careers@practiceplusgroup.com to find out more or arrange an informal chat.

Scheme for Senior Leaders with a Disability

A NEW PROGRAMME to support and develop senior leaders with a disability has been launched.

The scheme, called the Catalyst Programme, will bring senior leaders with a disability together from across the public sector, with the aim of developing them to CEO level in their respective fields.

Over 12 months, it will provide delegates with intensive residential courses, coaching, a diverse range of speakers from different backgrounds, and a network of peers to learn from and grow with.

Senior support

The programme will be run by the National Leadership Centre (NLC), which was launched by the government in 2019 to support public sector leadership. This will be the third such programme to support leaders with a disability or long-term health condition.

"The National Leadership Centre helps the country's most senior public service leaders develop the skills, knowledge and networks required to address society's most complex strategic challenges," explained Pamela Dow, Executive Director of the Government Skills and Curriculum Unit.

"We are proud to be expanding our programmes to further support leaders with broad and varied experience to continue rising through the ranks."

Pamela Dow.



Almost 15% of the economically active working age population of UK adults have a disability or long-term health condition. The Catalyst Programme will bring together 20 public service leaders from across the country.

Meeting the challenge

"The diversity challenge is complex and, in many respects, the work to understand and support the problems facing disabled leaders is much more limited and even less well understood," said Steve McGuirk, Advisory Board member for the NLC.

"The Catalyst programme seeks to help those leaders with a bespoke programme designed to empower disabled people to push

for - and break through - the highest levels of public leadership in the same ways as non-disabled leaders. Catalyst will create a network of people to sustain peer support and peer mentoring and create the opportunity for people to share their experiences about what works and what doesn't.



The Catalyst Programme.

"It will encompass similar content to the other NLC programmes, as well as exposing delegates to inspiring case studies and inspiring people. Most of all, I believe it will be, as the name suggests, a catalyst for liberating a pool of enormously talented leaders who will make a huge difference to the way public services are delivered in the next few years."

To find out more go to www.nationalleadership.gov.uk ●



The Long & Winding Road

MOTORWAY DRIVING CAN be stressful. But Highways England's new access guides for motorway services are making it just a little less fraught for disabled people.

Highways England, which operates, maintains and improves motorways and A roads, has partnered with AccessAble to help motorists plan where to stop for a break at any one of the 114 motorway service areas across England.

Disabled people and carers using AccessAble, the UK's leading provider of detailed accessibility information, have for many years been saying how much they would value having access guides for motorway services.

The guides, available online or via the free AccessAble app, contain the facts, figures and photographs to help motorists plan their visit. They cover key areas, including parking, toilets, petrol stations, shops and restaurants, with

detailed information on everything from staff training and hearing loops to walking distances and Changing Places.

The two organisations have also worked together to create virtual route guides. This new type of guide, which uses 360-degree imagery, enables visitors to 'virtually' explore routes to key facilities like accessible toilets and Changing Places, so they can find out exactly what to expect when they arrive.

It's the little things

Hull-based disability advocate and 'The Deaf Traveller' blogger, Ed Rex visited the Extra services at Leeds Skelton Lake on junction 45 of the M1 to test out the new guides.

Ed is profoundly deaf in both ears and relies on a hearing aid, cochlear implant and lipreading to communicate. Following his visit to the

Yorkshire services, Ed emphasised that it's the little things that can make a huge difference for people travelling with hidden disabilities.

"Being able to access the services they need is a big worry for deaf people or people who have hearing loss," explained Ed.

"Sometimes it's just about making sure that the accessibility information is there so that people know, when they travel, that it won't be stressful, and they'll feel empowered to do it on their own and be independent.

The guides, available online or via the free AccessAble app, contain the facts, figures and photographs to help motorists plan their visit.

"One of the features of Highways England's access guides for motorway services is information about assistive listening, which is really helpful for people who are deaf or have hearing loss, giving them confidence that support is there if they need it."

With disabled drivers representing five per cent of the driving population, the access guides are one of the many new services Highways England is introducing to break down barriers and help people reliably plan and feel confident about their journeys.

"We're delighted to partner with Highways England on this ground-breaking initiative to deliver a world class standard of access information across England's motorway service area network," said Dr Gregory Burke, Founder and Chair of AccessAble.

"It's clear that Highways England share our commitment to user-led service development and improving access and customer experience for the UK's 18 million disabled people and carers.

"The new access guides will not only give people all the information they need to plan a trip



Deaf travel blogger Ed Rex gave the new motorway access guides a positive review.

but also support Highways England and motorway service operators to see how facilities could be improved in the future."

The access guides are available free of charge at www.AccessAble.co.uk and on the AccessAble App. ●





Easier Travel Boost for Disabled Passengers

DISABLED PASSENGERS WILL have better access to public transport and a bigger say in how they travel according to the Department of Transport.

New initiatives have been announced to remove barriers for travellers as part of a national strategy to boost accessibility and inclusivity for disabled passengers following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The range of initiatives is aimed at improving the confidence of disabled people to use trains, buses and taxis across the entire network. An audit of all UK train stations, originally pledged in the Williams-Shapps Plan for Rail, is now underway – helping to identify improvements and highlighting existing areas of excellence. The findings will form a new public database so people can better plan their journeys and, along


with input from disabled passengers, will shape investment in accessible rail travel.

DfT is working with Network Rail to improve safety with a new programme to install all station platforms with tactile paving.

Although no commitment has been given on the timing of this, an initial £10 million has been made available this financial year to deliver tactiles at up to 200 stations.

Work is also taking place on developing a Passenger Assist App to simplify communication with rail staff and encourage better customer service.

The government will bring forward new regulations to force bus companies to provide audible and visual announcements onboard services. To help smaller companies achieve this, government grants will be boosted to £3.5 million. New research into the designs of bus



Disabled passengers should be empowered to use all forms of transport with the same confidence as everyone else.



Tactile paving at all stations on the way.



stops and stations will ensure they are accessible for all.

DfT will also support new legislation for taxis and private hire vehicles, protecting disabled passengers from being overcharged and to better ensure they get the right help from drivers.

“Disabled passengers should be empowered to use all forms of transport with the same confidence as everyone else – whether by taxi, train, bus or ferry,” said Minister of State at the Department of Transport Chris Heaton-Harris.

“These measures will have a positive, real-life impact and double-down on our promise to build back fairer from COVID-19.”

128 Living with **Disability**

A Strategy for Change

In addition, DfT will work alongside local authorities to reduce parking on pavements to declutter our streets and free up paths, so vulnerable pedestrians can make journeys more safely and easily.

And for longer journeys, new £450,000 funding will help deliver more accessible toilets, through the Changing Places programme, on top of the £2.2 million already invested, to ensure most motorway services have the right facilities for the quarter of a million people who cannot use standard accessible ones.

We regularly hear from people living with muscle-wasting conditions who have had to

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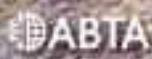
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cancel or cut short days out or don't consider them at all, because of poor accessibility," said Robert Burley, Director of Campaigns, Care and Support at Muscular Dystrophy UK.

"The strategy is a step in the right direction to helping tackle the exclusion that so many disabled people face on a daily basis."

The measures are part of the government's National Disability Strategy – an ambitious endeavour to remove barriers to disabled people's everyday lives. It makes solid commitments and sets out immediate practical steps to create a society that works for everyone.

It follows the 'It's everyone's journey' campaign, launched in 2020 to champion equal access across all forms of public transport and encourage people to be more considerate and supportive of others when using the transport network. ●



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Disabled Train Travellers Get Connected

AVANTI WEST COAST has become the first UK train operator to provide a dedicated social media forum for disabled customers.

The forum enables passengers on the West Coast Main Line to connect with each other as well as a social media team assigned to provide specialist support.

Launching the group called 'Accessible Rail Travel with Avanti West Coast' on Facebook, the long-distance operator hopes to build an interactive online community that aims to both help disabled customers directly and give them an opportunity to help others with the benefits of their experience.

A private and visible group, it is designed to provide a support network by connecting disabled customers who are planning or making a journey with Avanti West Coast's specialist social media team, as well as people who have a shared understanding of disability and rail travel. The aim is to create a community where valuable insights as well as information are shared to enable independent travel for all.

Managed by Avanti West Coast's social media team, the group can be easily found by searching Facebook – members and content can only be seen by those who have been permitted access.

Inspired idea

Members can use the group to contact Avanti West Coast directly – making it easier to receive direct support from the social media team, who will offer reassurance and help those who may need extra assistance when travelling.

This new approach of an exclusive social media platform for disabled customers is a first for the rail industry and is the idea of Emma Martell, Avanti West Coast's Head of Social Content.

Emma was inspired to create the group through her own personal experience. Following her diagnosis with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS) – a condition that makes connective tissue weaker – she found support by joining Facebook groups, which helped her to find ways to cope with some of the issues more practically.

From this experience, she worked with Avanti West Coast's external Accessibility Panel to change communication with disabled customers with the aim of building a community engaging in regular dialogue.

"We believe creating a sense of community with our customers through a private forum on social media can add real value for those who may need extra assistance," said Emma. "We want to both help them directly and enable them to help others, so everyone feels supported when planning or making a journey."

Improving the journey

"By connecting people who have a shared understanding we want to build a support network, where tips and experiences for journeys on our route can be exchanged. We hope this platform will help to improve the overall journey experience for disabled customers and encourage more people to travel by train."

As part of the platform's launch, Avanti West

Coast's social media team have received training on the social model of disability – a way of viewing the world developed by disabled people – to help them recognise barriers that make life harder for disabled people.

They are receiving further specialist training focused on how they communicate with disabled people that will equip them with the knowledge and skills to assist disabled people in the best possible way.

"Accessible social media plays an important part in welcoming and reassuring disabled people back onto the railways and helps with journey planning, giving us the confidence to travel," added Tony Jennings, Co-Chair of Avanti West Coast's Accessibility Panel.

Anyone on Facebook can find the group at this link: www.facebook.com/groups/accessiblewestcoast and request to join it. Their request will then be approved by the Avanti West Coast social media team. ●

Emma Martell, Avanti West Coast's Head of Social Content.





Innovations

Making Travel Easier



FUNDING TO HELP break down the barriers disabled people face when travelling has been awarded to five pioneering projects.

The Department for Transport in partnership with Connected Places Catapult will support the projects through the 2021 Accessibility Transport Research and Innovation Grants Programme TRIG: Accessibility.

These five innovative projects will help make our transport network more open, stress-free and simple for disabled passengers.

The programme is the first of its kind and has been designed to enable small businesses to develop technology that will make transport systems more inclusive, removing the barriers that prevent disabled passengers from travelling confidently, safely and with ease.

The Department of Transport recognizes that there are 13.9 million people with disabilities in the UK who need convenient access to travel for work,

The winning projects and companies are:

briteyellow* 
you're better connected

1 Briteyellow – BriteWay:

A journey planning and navigation system for impaired passengers that uses vision, voice and vibrations to help passengers move safely through stations.



2 Chrome Angel Solutions – Accessible Travel Virtual Reality Simulation for Passengers:

A highly realistic virtual reality simulation, immersing users in rail stations and carriages, to help improve staff understanding of the challenges faced by passengers and build the confidence of disabled passengers when travelling on the rail network.



3 Ostrum Tech:

The project aims to improve communication systems between disabled passengers and airport staff via an app.



4 **SightCall – TravelAssist:**

This initiative implements technology solutions that build on existing features like route planning and pre-scheduled support to empower vulnerable passengers with real time assistance. By adding visual assistance passengers can get immediate assistance while travelling with anything from reading signs and planning routes to confirming schedules and verifying their location.



5 **You Smart Thing – Travability:**

The project aims to increase the use of public transport modes by disabled people, especially when faced with undertaking journeys involving multiple operators. It addresses the complex challenges of integrating assistance support services offered by different and disconnected transport providers, which undermine the experience of disabled customers attempting to complete multi-transport journeys.

leisure and daily life. Currently 40% of disabled people experience issues when travelling by train in the UK. Additionally, by 2050 one in four people in the UK will be aged 65 years or over and might require additional assistance while travelling.

Almost £600,000 in grant funding from the TRIG: Accessibility Programme has been awarded to the five winning projects to develop promising new products and services during a trial period. All five have the potential to significantly improve access to transport services while increasing passenger confidence.

“It is great to be working alongside the DfT’s Accessibility Policy Team to deliver an expanded TRIG programme to the world of transport accessibility,” said Nicola Yates, CEO of Connected Places Catapult.

“The funding that the five winners will receive as part of the TRIG: Accessibility programme, alongside technical and commercial guidance from the Catapult will enable them to demonstrate their innovative solutions.

Nicola Yates.



“It is our aim that these solutions will enable access to England’s transport services for passengers who may need support when travelling to connect with the places around them.”

The trial period is due to finish by the end of November and working prototypes will be showcased to the industry following this.

“These five innovative projects will help make our transport network more open, stress-free and simple for disabled passengers and I’m proud that we’re investing in unique technology to improve accessibility across the UK,” said former Accessibility Minister Chris Heaton-Harris.

“We’re committed to making transport accessible for all and this investment, along with the Inclusive Transport Strategy, will build a better, fairer network for the future.” ●





Stress Free Travel with Hidden Disabilities Sunflower

WHETHER YOUR DISABILITY is obvious or non-visible, breaking down or needing assistance on a motorway or A-road can be stressful.

Displaying the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower logo on your vehicle indicates that you may need additional support.

Wearing the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower discreetly indicates to people around the wearer including staff, colleagues and health professionals that they need additional support, help or a little more time.

Safe travel

Since its launch in 2016, it has been adopted globally by major airports and venues and in the UK, by many supermarkets, railway and coach

stations, leisure facilities, the NHS, a number of police, fire and ambulance services, and an increasing number of small and large businesses and organisations.

Now the iconic Sunflower can be displayed on vehicles, enabling drivers and their passengers to let others know that someone in the vehicle has an invisible disability.

As a result of the scheme's latest partnership with National Highways, which manages England's motorways and major A-roads, the Sunflower sticker or magnet displayed on the rear of your vehicle will indicate to traffic officers that you may require additional support.

"We want all road users to feel confident that they'll get the help they need if they break down or need assistance on our roads," said Julian



*Sunflower wearer
Paul Pengelly.*

Horsler, National Highways Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager.

“For many disabled people our roads already provide the best travel option for them; enabling them to travel to work, go on holiday and visit family and friends. However, sometimes it isn’t the obvious barriers that prevent people from travelling independently, it can be the hidden or unknown ones that cause the most difficulties.

“To ensure our disabled customers can travel safely on our roads, we’ll continue to introduce new services, like the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower for vehicles, which break down barriers and help people feel in control of their journeys.”

The Hidden Disabilities Sunflower for vehicles is free to road users in England and can be ordered from the Hidden Disabilities Sunflower store at www.hiddendisabilitiesstore.com

“I have fibromyalgia along with anxiety and a personality disorder, which affects my general

mobility,” said Sunflower wearer Paul Pengelly.

“If a vehicle I’m travelling in, is broken down or in an accident, exiting the vehicle quickly and safely would be difficult for me.

“My anxiety in such a situation would already be heightened, and without support, I could become more distressed or agitated. Identifying my additional needs would be crucial to keeping everyone safe and preventing unnecessary distress or harm.”

“Having the Sunflower on the back of my car informs National Highways traffic officers that they should ask me what extra support I might need so that they can do their job safely while making sure that no harm comes to me, the other occupants and passing traffic.”

We want all road users to feel confident that they’ll get the help they need if they break down or need assistance on our roads.

If you get into trouble on the motorway, contact National Highways first, and then a breakdown provider. Use a free roadside emergency phone or call 03001235000. You can also text National Highways for roadside assistance on 0730283600.

Tell the operator that you are a member of the Sunflower scheme and they will make sure all the recovery and emergency services are aware that you have an invisible disability.

To find out more go to www.hiddendisabilitiesstore.com ●



Disability Rugby Star Kicks World Class Conversion

A BLIND RUGBY league player who kicked a successful conversion said he knew the ball had gone over when he heard his team-mates' screams.

Leeds Rhinos Physical Disability Rugby League star James King became an overnight viral sensation after a video of his conversion attempt in the team's win over Warrington 'Wire' was shared online.

It was an historic moment for the PDRL game, with James, 22, thought to be the first blind player to successfully make a conversion in an official match.



A lifelong Leeds Rhinos fan, James was diagnosed with macular dystrophy at age 12 and because of his visual impairment had never believed it would be possible to play Rugby League until he was invited by friend and now teammate Scott Gobin to join the team back in 2019.

Since then he believes that taking up PDRL has completely transformed his life, both physically and mentally.

Kick of a lifetime

"I honestly never expected anything like this to happen to me," said James. "Playing in PDRL has completely changed my life and given me a new lease of life and a new found confidence. Growing up before I lost my sight I wanted to be a rugby player, but I've never really had that confidence and I never backed myself to go out and do it.

"I remember sitting with my friend a year before starting PDRL and telling him I'd love to play, then just like that I was suddenly playing PDRL for the Rhinos which was incredible and a dream come true.

"I feel like I can do whatever I set my mind to do, and I feel like a different person. I love being part of the team and I enjoy every single training session or match we play."

With the Rhinos leading, James was given his chance to make history and fulfill one of his dreams by stepping up to make a conversion following a game-clinching try. It was a moment enjoyed by the entire Rhinos team, with jubilant scenes on the sideline as the ball flew over the posts in sensational fashion.

The video of the conversion- captured by Team

Manager Ben Berry- has been viewed more than 200,000 times. It made BBC News headlines and led to James carrying out interviews with local, national and international press.

James, who said he only realised the kick had gone over when his teammates began to celebrate, has been totally blown away by the response to his special moment.

You don't really feel the ball much when you connect so it was only when I heard everyone going wild behind me that I thought 'that's probably gone over.'

"Honestly, it's just mad. I never expected to receive all this support and admiration, I really appreciate all the messages of support I've received," he said.

"I had been practising the shot in training, but I didn't expect to get a chance to kick one in a game. I was so nervous to step up as there is so much pressure and I just didn't want to mess it up,



James playing for Leeds Rhinos.

because it could have gone so wrong with it being right in front of the sticks.

"I was counting the steps that I needed to take and then I just ran up and tried to strike it cleanly. Once I get so far from the ball I struggle to see it cleanly so I have to know I'm in the right place to strike it.

"You don't really feel the ball much when you connect so it was only when I heard everyone going wild behind me that I thought 'that's probably gone over.'"



Players in a Physical Disability Rugby League match.

PDRL – What's It all About?

PDRL IS AN exciting all-action variant of Rugby League. Full of big hits and spectacular tries just like the able-bodied Super League.

PDRL is a modified version of the game for anyone that has a Physical Disability and/or acquired brain injury that would usually stop them from playing Rugby League.

PDRL is a 9-a-side game played on a modified pitch. Each team consists of 5 full contact disabled players, 2 disabled tag players and 2 'able-bodied' players. AB players are there to facilitate the game. They can only run up to 10 metres with the ball and are not permitted to score or kick the ball.

PDRL was initially developed in Australia by founder George Tonna. PDRL made its way over to the UK where Warrington Wolves and Leeds Rhinos played the first ever game of PDRL in the northern hemisphere in early 2018.

Notably since then, landmark events have taken place such as Warrington travelling to Australia to play and win in the first ever PDRL World Club Challenge. The fixture was inspired by comedian – and PDRL player – Adam Hills who is an integral part of the Warrington side

Comedian and PDRL player for Warrington Wolves Adam Hills.



Photo credit: Vicky Outen Photography.

and had always wanted to play for South Sydney Rabbitohs.

Following the culmination of its first full league season in 2019 and the forthcoming PDRL World Cup coming in 2022, the sport has continued to thrive and gain momentum in the UK.

Players can join a team to get involved with training sessions, festivals, and competitions. ●

To find out more contact one of the current clubs involved in PDRL:

Castleford Tigers - matlancaster@castigers.com

Leeds Rhinos - Ben.Berry@leedsrhinosfoundation.org

Wakefield Trinity - info@wakefieldtrinityfoundation.co.uk

Warrington Wolves - community@warringtonwolvesfoundation.com

Wigan Warriors - s.burns@wiganwarriors.com



Time to See Sport Differently

A CAMPAIGN TO encourage the UK's two million blind and partially sighted people to get more physically active has been launched.

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) in partnership with British Blind Sport has received £1 million from Sport England to develop the See Sport Differently project.

The aim is to tackle lower levels of wellbeing amongst blind and partially sighted people by highlighting the benefits of physical activity and demonstrating to blind and partially sighted people, and the sports industry alike, that sight loss doesn't need to be a barrier to participation.

"I understand like most blind and partially sighted people how beneficial it is to stay fit and active, but for many of us having sight loss makes it difficult to actually get involved in physical sport," said David Clarke, RNIB Director of Services and former Paralympics GB footballer.

"It doesn't have to be that way and through the See Sport Differently campaign we want to show people that there are local activities to get involved in and we are also looking forward to working with the sports industry to help create more accessible and inclusive sporting opportunities."

New research behind the campaign, shows that blind and partially sighted people are being put off from sport and exercise and are twice as likely to be completely inactive as other people.



More than half of blind and partially sighted people (53%) do less than 30 minutes of physical activity each week, falling far short of the NHS recommended guidelines of 150 minutes of moderate exercise. This figure is almost double the national average (27%).

The research found that although eight in 10 blind and partially sighted people agree on the importance of regular physical activity, almost half (48%) said that their visual impairment prevented them from being more active and a similar number, 53%, said they didn't have the right opportunities. A third (33%) said there were fitness activities that they would like to try but haven't been able to, including swimming, cycling, going to the gym, playing tennis and horse riding.

See Sport Differently will address this by creating and promoting local opportunities to get more physically active and experience truly inclusive sport via the main campaign hub at:

www.rnib.org.uk/see-sport-differently.



We are thrilled to be working in partnership with RNIB on the See Sport Differently project,” said Alaina MacGregor, Chief Executive of British Blind Sport.

“In light of the pandemic, and the impact it has had on everyone’s mental and physical well being, there has never been a more crucial time to support blind and partially sighted people to get more active.

“Together we want to encourage adults and children to get involved, whatever their ability. Whether a complete novice or a seasoned athlete, we want to ensure there is something for everyone.”

British Blind Sport will work closely with leisure centres and national governing bodies, including The FA, England Athletics, Swim England, Goalball UK and the LTA, to develop services and support partners to meet the needs of blind and partially sighted people in sport.



Chris Skelley.

“Blind and partially sighted people who want to get into sport often find it difficult to find opportunities,” said Paralympic judoka Chris Skelley, who along with sprinter and fellow Paralympic gold medal winner Libby Clegg, officially launched the See Sport Differently initiative.

“Sport has played a huge role in my life to date and I’ve been fortunate to compete at two Paralympic Games so far. I’m backing the See Sport Differently campaign to get more people with sight loss into sport. It’s a great opportunity to make new friends and increase confidence levels.”

Georgie Bullen is 27 years old and has Macular Degeneration. She has been playing goalball since she was a teenager and is a visually impaired Goalball Paralympian, competing for Britain internationally.



Georgie Bullen.

“I’d say there is no such thing as a non-sporty person, you just need to find the right sport. Whatever the game, it’s not just to do with being fit or competing, but how it makes you feel. I enjoy goalball so much, there’s no way of replicating that adrenaline rush from winning a game.”

Kathryn Lindgren from Peterborough is 54 years old and has Retinitis Pigmentosa. Looking for an activity to boost her spirits after a challenging time in her life she took up rowing four years ago and is the only blind rower at her club, Peterborough City Rowing Club (PCRC).



Kathryn Lindgren.

“With rowing there’s a particular way of hearing what’s going on around you and concentrating on moving the boat. And you also get the feel-good sensation from doing exercise.

“My coach Peter told me recently that I’m a different person now to when I started rowing. ▶

I don't know what the future holds but I'm willing to grab what I can at the moment with both hands, especially with rowing."

Matthew Lancett from Malvern is 45 years old and has Left Hemianopia (LHH) after suffering a life-changing stroke in 2017 that left him without sight in both eyes.



Matthew is actively involved in rugby and cricket and in 2019 was selected to represent England as part of the visually impaired Rugby team at the World Cup in Japan.

"I was really active before losing my sight, having always gone running and played football. Having to readjust and learn to cope with everything so suddenly was a challenge.

"I spoke to another visually impaired person who told me about the Worcester rugby team, so I went along and got involved, and that's where I heard about cricket. The game is really fun, but the social aspect of it is amazing too – we've even won the local league!

"Playing rugby and cricket has made me realise that although I've lost my sight, I've gained other things through getting active again. It has improved my mental health after sight loss, introduced me to new people and I've had once in a lifetime experiences."

Sundip Tailor from Stanmore in North London is 37 years old and is partially sighted. He got into running in 2012 and since starting jogging Sundip has completed a number of marathons and has even taken on ultra-marathons.



"I try to run at least 1000km a year, some years I've done 2,000. I go after 50-mile races and double marathons as I just like the idea of going a huge distance. One of my aspirations is to run a marathon in less than 3.5 hours. I also have a dream of completing a 100-mile race, which takes 20 hours.

"Sometimes I struggle with a negative mindset where I think I haven't achieved enough in life – but I forget all about that when I'm running. I think I'm generally a happier, kinder person now. There are social benefits too; you meet some good friends through running.

"There can be challenges running when you're partially sighted. I have blind spots in my vision so I might not see someone in my path. For anyone who's visually impaired and taking up running, I'd advise to just try to build a habit - jog for ten minutes, then walk for ten minutes each day. The goals will come naturally." ●

To find out more about local opportunities to get more physically active and experience truly inclusive sport go to the main campaign hub at: www.rnib.org.uk/see-sport-differently



Cerebral Palsy Sport launches new Club Finder



PEOPLE SUFFERING WITH cerebral palsy can find local sport and activity clubs through a brand-new online club finder.

Cerebral Palsy Sport (CP Sport) is the national disability sports organisation supporting people with cerebral palsy to be able to access and enjoy being physically active throughout their lives.

The charity has now launched 'Club Finder' on its website www.cpsport.org to enable more

people with cerebral palsy the opportunity to connect with a club and find a sport to suit them.

Disabled people were disproportionately affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, with specific impairment groups advised to shield from the beginning of the restrictions imposed in 2020. Twice as many disabled people felt that Coronavirus greatly reduced their ability to do sport or physical activity compared to non-disabled

people, which has frequently resulted in physical and mental health being harder to manage.

Like so many organisations, CP Sport did what it could by moving into the virtual space, providing social cafes, an equipment rental service and a virtual challenge series to support people with cerebral palsy to stay active at home.

Now it is vital that opportunities to get active safely



It is free for clubs to be part of the CP Sport club finder and is free for anyone to access and use it to find clubs.

are available again, particularly for disabled people who are more likely to experience barriers to sport and activity. The physical, mental and social benefits of sport are widely reported and taking part in regular physical activity can be even more impactful for disabled people.

The Club Finder

In 2020 CP Sport began its mission to create a national club finder which could be used and be accessible to everyone through a simple postcode search. Almost 500 clubs have now signed up.

Adi Fawcett.



Cerebral Palsy Sport has always been able to provide information on a case-by-case basis, but there has been no comprehensive online

activity club finder for people to use in this way.

CP Sport works with clubs, national governing bodies and active partnerships across the country and has ensured the clubs included on the new platform meet the necessary criteria to support people with cerebral palsy, as well as bringing the community together.

“Our new Club Finder will be a fantastic tool for us to connect as many people as we can to the local clubs and activities up and running in their area,” said Adi Fawcett, CP Sport COO.

“Our aspiration is to provide a wide variety of choice for all ▶



ages that are easily accessible. We hope that we can not only help our community to keep and stay active but also support the clubs who are returning to sport following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions.”

The agreement between CP Sport and the clubs is to demonstrate that the clubs are committed to developing and promoting inclusive opportunities for people with Cerebral Palsy to access in a safe, inclusive and positive environment. It means meeting specific requirements set out by CP Sport, including affiliation with an NGB (where applicable), safeguarding and qualified coaches, and accessibility for disabled people.



It is free for clubs to be part of the CP Sport club finder and is free for anyone to access and use it to find clubs. The club finder will allow anyone to locate and then contact their nearest sports club through a simple postcode search.

To register, clubs need to complete the CP Sport Club Finder Agreement and a member of the club will need to sign up to its free Coach and Officials or Volunteers Membership. For more information about the club finder contact richard.kerr@cpsport.org ●

CP SPORT
cerebral palsy sport



The Disability Sports Channel

Our story is simple, the Disability Sports Channel is a nonprofit organisation designed by a group of athletes with a passion for promoting the sports we love. The organisation was founded after the realisation that there was a gap in the market for disability media. The staff that work for the organisation all have a variety of different disabilities.



We are passionate about showcasing disability sports. We believe that to inspire the next generation of athletes; there needs to be an equal opportunity to be able to view disability sports. As we know, disability sports do happen every four years for the Paralympics, but every week of every year there are other events and competitions going on. Our goal is to celebrate and share these events with the world.

Changing the Game isn't just about creating more sporting opportunities, but about ensuring the wider world has a better understanding of disability sport and generally a more forward thinking approach to persons with disabilities. We reflect this way of thinking within our own organisation as our core team is diverse in age, gender, ethnicity and abilities/disabilities.

We would love to hear from you! The team at The Disability Sports Channel are currently following the Government's recent guidance and home working. However, we are all still here to help and support our members and wider community. So for the moment our office phones will not be picked up, but you can still get in touch with us:

inquiries@disabilitysportschannel.co.uk membership@disabilitysportschannel.co.uk
media@disabilitysportschannel.co.uk data.protection@disabilitysportschannel.co.uk

www.disabilitysportschannel.co.uk



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