

Spelthorne

Committee

Access

Now



info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk
www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk



1992 – 2024



Included in This Issue

- 2 *Disabled Woman 'Trapped' On Overground Train Without Wheelchair Ramp*
- 3 *Business Disability Forum*
- 4 *Running Events Should Be More Inclusive*
- 5 *Every Day I Find Myself Masking And Code Switching*
- 6 *Hearing Loss Changed My Entire Life*
- 7 *Kew Gardens Walking Tours*
- 8 *Current Scams - Identity Theft and Identity Fraud*
- 9 *Diaries of Someone With Motor Neurone Disease*
- 9 *Not All Disabilities Are Visible*
- 10 *My Invisible Disability Means Commuters Refuse To Give Up Their Seats*
- 12 *Staines Shopmobility*
- 12 *Spelthorne Boccia Club*
- 13 *Spelthorne Para Sports Club*
- 13 *N Surrey Sports Association For Disabled People*
- 13 *From A Former Contributor SCAN's Newsletters*
- 14 *I Want To Raise Disability Awareness But It Doesn't Mean I'll Work For Free*
- 16 *ACS Hubs*
- 16 *Disability Rights UK - News Disability Rights UK Helplines*
- 17 *Disability Network – North Surrey & Surrey Wide*
- 18 *SCAN and (SPSCDF)*

April 2024



Sponsors for Newsletters 2024-2025

Disabled Woman 'Trapped' On Overground Train Without Wheelchair Ramp

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/transport/disabled-access-tfl-overground-trains-london-woman-stuck-wheelchair-b1142602.html>

Wheelchair user Katie Pennick was travelling to Highbury and Islington in north London when staff failed to meet her, leaving her stuck on the empty train. Unable to get off by herself, she was forced to shout for help.

“Everyone’s gotten off the train, and the cleaner has gone to try and look for someone for me,” she said. “But there’s just...I just can’t get off the train. It’s not the staff’s fault,” she continued. “They had been told my train was pulling in to a different platform.” But she added: “Transport makes cities. When disabled people contend with this stress, frustration and disempowerment each time we travel, it sends a message about who the city is for - and who is not welcome.”

Following her ordeal, Mark Evers, TfL’s Chief Customer Officer, apologised and said TfL and Overground operator Arriva are “urgently” investigating. “We’re deeply sorry for the stressful experience that Katie Pennick has had while travelling with us and we are urgently looking into this incident with Arriva Rail London, who operate the London Overground on our behalf, to understand what happened,” said Mr Evers. “Making public transport more accessible and inclusive is a top priority for us.”

An Arriva Rail London spokesperson said: “We are aware of a video on social media which shows a London Overground passenger unable to alight a train at Highbury and Islington station. The agency employee who was due meet the passenger was delayed due to handling an incident on another platform. The station team apologised for the delay immediately and assisted the passenger as soon as possible.

Step-free access is available at 92 of TfL’s 272 Tube stations, 62 Overground stations, and all Elizabeth Line and DLR stations. But TfL’s new Equity in Motion plan, introduced last month, sets out a raft of commitments to make transport more accessible and inclusive. Included are plans to ensure half of all Tube stations have step-free access.

Work to create step-free access at Northolt, Leighton and Collingdale Tube stations set to begin soon. Step-free access is set to be available at Knightsbridge and Paddington Tube stations later this year. The new TfL plan also aims to introduce mini ramps to cover the gap between the train and platform, at all London Underground platforms that have step-free access to train level.





Business Disability Forum

As part of our Changing the image of disability campaign, we commissioned new research from Ipsos. We also conducted our own research with disabled people,

communications and brand leads from within our business membership. Here are some of the key findings.

<https://businessdisabilityforum.org.uk/changing-the-image-of-disability/research-findings/>

Ipsos research

Ipsos conducted research for us which captured the views of over 6,500 adults aged 16-75 across the UK, including over 2,300 adults who identified as disabled, as defined by the Equality Act.

Disabled people are often 'missing' from the imagery we see in media, advertising or marketing. A third of adults surveyed (32 per cent) had not seen any disability represented in content they had seen, watched or read during the last 6 months.

Some disabilities are portrayed more than others in content. Images of wheelchair and mobility scooter users are the most likely to have been seen in content to represent disability (by 26 per cent of respondents).

Few disabled people agree that their own experience is reflected in the images they have seen. Less than a quarter (23 per cent) of people with a disability surveyed agreed that images of disabled people used in content they had seen, watched or read, reflected their own experience of disability.

Uncertainty exists around disability. 1 in 6 adults (17 per cent) said they did not know or were unsure if they had seen disability represented in content they had seen, watched or read during the last 6 months.

Respondents without a disability were significantly less likely to see disability represented in content than those with a disability. 2 in 5 (40 per cent) respondents without a disability had not seen disability represented in content in the last 6 months compared to 1 in 6 (17 per cent) respondents with a disability. [Ipsos 2023]

Note: Data has been weighted to the known offline population proportions for age and working status within gender as well as government office region, social grade and education. Fieldwork was conducted 3rd November – 12th December 2023



Four In 10 With Disabilities Wish Running Events Were More Inclusive

<https://talker.news/uk/2023/09/08/paralympian-richard-whiteheads-mission-to-empower-people-with-disabilities-in-sport/> One in three of the 700 disabled adults polled believe they do not cater for those with additional needs, and 56% think they won't be treated as a priority.

Almost one in five (17%) also feel they lack the support network needed to take part, while 16% were held back by the cost of entering events. But 12% feel inadequate representation in sporting events is a barrier, with 54 believing access to trained volunteers would give them the confidence required to take part in mass participation sporting events.

To help encourage participation, the official partner of the Great Run Series which commissioned the research, is working with The Richard Whitehead Foundation to help make running events more inclusive by providing support and encouragement to disabled participants.

Whitehead, the gold-medal winning Paralympian, marathon runner and Nissan GB's diversity, equity and inclusion ambassador, said: "Disabled people feel they aren't confident to enter sporting events. "As a Paralympic athlete and distance runner, I feel it's something we should change. "Whatever the race, whatever the distance, it's always a chance to give back to the running and disability community.

"Growing up and throughout my career I've witnessed the challenges that disabled people face in order to take part in sporting events, so I'm delighted to work with Nissan GB to help remove some of these barriers."

The study found the average disabled adult exercises for a total of just under 76 minutes each week, over four sessions. And 39% consider exercise as something they are passionate about.

Richard Whitehead added: "Sport should be accessible to everyone, so It's exciting that we can pilot the Supported Runner Project at the AJ Bell Great North Run and the AJ Bell Great South Run.



As A Disabled Person, Every Day I Find Myself Masking And Code Switching - *Samantha Renke is an actor, presenter and disability rights campaigner*

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/04/20/as-a-disabled-person-every-day-i-find-myself-masking-and-code-switching-18636528/> We all want to feel like we belong. To be accepted and loved by others. To feel 'normal'. It's human nature, and we instinctively gravitate towards

those who we feel safe around. Those we can see ourselves in.

So, what happens if you are 'different' and you don't fit into society's parameters of so-called 'normal'? I was born with a rare genetic condition called Osteogenesis Imperfecta. This meant that I looked and moved very differently to my non-disabled peers.

I am petite in stature, have scars from surgeries, curved bones and use a wheelchair full-time. I learned from a young age that being different wasn't always a good thing. Adults and kids actually stared at me – some would even cry when they saw me, because they were 'scared' of my appearance. I'd seldom get an invite to sleepovers and would be subject to intrusive questions about my condition, unique features or scars.

Nevertheless, I liked my uniqueness. I'd be cooed over, given sweets and bits and bobs from car boot stalls. When I went to Disneyland, I was asked to stay behind to meet my favourite characters, and the pity pats on the head, or the 'oh bless her' comments only seemed like adoration in my youthful eyes. In reality, it was ableist unconscious bias.

Over time, however, the stares made me question my beauty; the bullies made me question my worth and the inaccessibility of the world around me made me question my disability. I started to see it as a bad thing. Being more like them seemed to be my only chance of survival and success in an enabled world. I learned to be less disabled and to cover my true self.

This morphing skill can often be described as masking or covering, or code switching. Masking/covering means feeling too embarrassed to disclose your impairment; which can result in not asking for reasonable adjustments out of fear of being treated differently. Code switching involves adjusting one's style of speech, appearance, behaviour, and expression in ways to boost the comfort of others in exchange for fair treatment, quality service, and employment opportunities.

Masking or covering has been used in the autistic and neurodivergent community for a long time, but has also filtered through the disabled community in recent years. These terms are nuanced and reflect individuals' unique lived experience – they can take on different meanings for different people.

For my autistic friends today, masking can look like being told to make eye contact because this is what 'polite' people do – yet, it's something many neurodivergent people struggle with.

For my blind friends, it's being encouraged to hide their 'blindisms' – or not letting their eyes wander so that non-disabled people aren't distracted.

Give yourself permission to do these things. Yes, it can be hard to undo years of learned behaviour – but you don't owe an ableist

society anything. It's time to be yourself.

To be unapologetically disabled.



Hearing loss changed my entire life

<https://www.hellomagazine.com/healthandbeauty/health-and-fitness/513027/hearing-loss-changed-my-entire-life-heres-what-i-wish-id-known/> Amanda Philpott spent 28 years in senior leadership roles within the NHS, but at 52 she began finding herself frustrated at work.

"I put it down to the stress of the role taking its toll on me, but I was becoming increasingly irritated by people muttering in meetings. I was frustrated by other people's lack of communication skills before I realised I was the common thread,"

Attending a conference held by the Royal National Institute for Deaf People made things click into place for Amanda when she pieced the puzzle together and realised she was experiencing hearing loss.

"It was one of those really shocking moments and I immediately wished I could go back over the last few years of my career and do them again, knowing that hearing loss was the problem and not me," she says. "If I'd sorted out my hearing, I think I could have handled things much better because I wouldn't have had that additional unrecognised source of stress."

The stigma of hearing loss

On why people often fail to seek support with their hearing loss, Amanda muses: "There's a lot of stigma around hearing loss because there's a fear of looking frail. "The average age of a first-time hearing aid wearer is 75, but most people take 10 years to seek help, because they feel wearing hearing aids is a badge saying, 'I'm towards the end of my life,' and that frightens people. "Many of us would rather hide our hearing loss than let people think that we are old and frail,"

Rather than ignore her hearing woes, Amanda bit the bullet and invested in hearing aids. "I have a long life ahead of me, so spending money on hearing aids that improved my life was well worth it."

Amanda's own experience motivated her to set up Ear Gym, to help others access free hearing checks and end the stigma surrounding hearing loss. "I wanted to set up a business that would improve the quality of later life. I understand and empathise with hearing loss, so it was an obvious choice.

"The ambition of Ear Gym is to make hearing health accessible, to encourage users to love their hearing and see looking after their hearing as a self-care act."

Kew Gardens Walking Tours for People Living with Dementia, Sight Loss or Hearing Loss (incl. BSL)

Kew have started to run their walks around the beautiful setting of Kew Gardens that are designed to be accessible for people living with dementia, sight loss or hearing loss.

All walks start from Victoria Gate and last around 60 minutes. The walks are led by their volunteer walk leaders. Support workers, friends or family are very welcome and will also receive free entry to the Gardens. Please Check with Kew for any changes to the schedules

Forthcoming BSL Tour Dates

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/monthly-british-sign-language-tours>

Sunday 14 April 2024

Sunday 9 June 2024

Forthcoming Dementia Friendly Tour Dates

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/health-walks-for-people-living-with-dementia>

Wednesday 10 April 2024 11am to 12pm

Wednesday 12 June 2024 11am to 12pm

Forthcoming Sensory Tour Dates

<https://www.kew.org/kew-gardens/whats-on/sensory-guided-walking-tours-for-visitors-with-sight-loss-and-their-carers>

Sunday 14 April 2024 2-3pm

Sunday 9 June 2024 2-3pm

Walking tours have a limit to the number people who can participate for any of their Events and Walking Tours so it is essential that you register in advance for ALL walks and events at Kew. Email discovery@kew.org or Telephone 07341 114533.

Forthcoming Community Wellbeing Dates

<https://www.kew.org/learning/community-and-access/kew-community-access-scheme>

The community wellbeing walks are for members of the Community Access Scheme at Kew Gardens and are designed to be accessible for everyone. Starting from Victoria Gate and lasting around 60 minutes, the walks are led by Kew's volunteer walk leaders.

Please email discovery@kew.org or call 07341 114533 to book.

Wednesday 3 April 2024 11am to 12pm

Wednesday 5 June 2024 11am to 12pm





Current Scams

<https://www.friendsagainstscams.org.uk/>

We're all Going on a Summer Holiday; Maybe...

Before long we'll be booking our summer holiday, and booking it online most likely.

And we know, don't we, that there's a lot of scammers awaiting the unwary.

They do this by using fake websites, ads, emails, texts, social media posts and phone calls. The usual routes to engage with us, really. When we do deal with the seller for the first time we should never transfer money directly from our bank account into theirs. If they ask us to use PayPal Friends and Family (so they avoid charges) then we lose the protection of using PayPal proper.

Paying by credit card gives us more protection than other payment methods. (up to £30,000) When we are tempted by a low cost villa with a high deposit "to secure the booking" then that's a pointer to investigate; just to establish that the accommodation exists.

We should try to find it on Google Maps and ensure there's a number we can call to chat to the owner. To establish if they've their villa up for hire during the period we've targeted. Asking them for their favourite nearby restaurant and recommended dish will tell us if they're truly local.

One major bank has stated that in investigating its online buying scams that 75% of it originated in Facebook Marketplace. In this and other social media buying and selling platforms and forums, we might encounter requests for payment that are not guaranteed to be safe.

All this is a pain to research and research of course but less painful than arriving at a destination with our suitcases only to find an owner very surprised to see us on their doorstep.

If we book via Airbnb we must keep all communications and payments via the platform. Not, if requested, bypass this and deal direct with the claimed owner.

If we've booked the holiday via a travel agent then we must check that they are members of a trade association like ATOL or ABTA. Checking credit card and bank statements carefully after booking to ensure that the correct amount has been debited is a need, and also that no fraud has taken place as a result of the booking.

Let's think twice too about telling all, over social media, that our house will be without owners for a period of time. For that's a bit like having the front door key under the doormat or nearby potted plant for security



Diaries of Someone With Motor Neurone Disease

<https://www.suzyjagger.com/> Suzy was diagnosed with the Bulbar Onset version of Motor Neurone Disease in October 2016 and the first of her 'diaries' begins in August 2017 as this was the first point she felt able to step back and put some thoughts on paper. She was able to 'write' three all together all filled with the details of a journey she never thought she would have to embark on.

These words are for people who want to understand from the inside what it's like to be hit with this disease. There is online access to all of the diaries because many people had expressed how they helped them.

Mirror, Mirror

Mirror mirror on the wall
Who used to be my friend
Show me that person long ago
Who still resides within.
Gaunt face, head bowed
Eye tired and wary,
Who is this furtive stranger
Whose burden I will carry?

A fleeting glance as I wheel by
I turn and face you
Lift up my eyes.
I raise my chin as if to say
'Do your worst, come what may'.

But mirror mirror on the wall
I implore you to be kind
And in the image you deem to show
Reflect the person who lies behind.

Book One - Bittersweet - A Diary by Suzy Jagger

It's full of tears and laughter, sadness and joy as I begin a journey I never thought I would have to embark on.

Book Two – Rise of The Machines

I am now a woman of few words. This book gives me the opportunity to speak. I am grateful for that.



Not All Disabilities Are Visible And I Know First-Hand

<https://www.express.co.uk/life-style/health/1840766/Not-all-disabilities-are-visibleess.co.uk>

TO THOSE who pass me by on the street and smile at my newborn baby cuddled in my arms, I must look like any other young mum. But online I have another identity altogether – to my tens of thousands of social media followers, I am simply known as “Stoma Babe”. It’s a name I created in tribute to my hero, the late Dame

Deborah James, the formidable cancer campaigner, aka BowelBabe, who raised tens of millions of pounds and inspired people across the world with her relentless positivity after her bowel cancer diagnosis.

Like Dame Deborah, I hope to challenge stereotypes and inspire others with my personal experience. I share what it is like living with a stoma bag after being diagnosed three years ago with inflammatory bowel disease (IBD) – specifically, a condition called ulcerative colitis, which causes inflammation of the bowel and rectum.

While hidden disabilities have always existed, they are only gaining recognition now as people like me share our experiences. But what is one exactly? A hidden disability is described on the government’s website as “a disability or health condition that is not immediately obvious.

It can defy stereotypes of what people might think disabled people look like”. And I should know. I often challenge perceptions of what disability looks like by sharing photos and videos of myself online while proudly displaying my stoma bag.

In supermarkets and businesses, such as Sainsbury’s, they have added additional signage to their disabled toilets to highlight that other customers may have invisible disabilities. While this does go a way in helping bring some awareness of invisible health conditions, it has not entirely stopped bias and I have received many judgmental glances for needing to use such disabled facilities.

It is easy to make judgments on someone when you are an onlooker and not the person who lives it every single day. I never imagined I would be diagnosed with a chronic illness or be living with a stoma bag before I even turned 30. Unfortunately, disability can happen to anyone at any time, and it is important as a society we show compassion and understanding wherever possible.

Whether that is creating more accessible toilets or offering our seats to someone with a Sunflower lanyard, every small action goes a long way in stamping out discrimination and creating a better quality of life for those who are disabled.

Together, we can make a difference.



My Invisible Disability Means Commuters Refuse To Give Up Their Seats

<https://metro.co.uk/2023/08/30/my-invisible-disability-means-commuters-refuse-to-give-up-their-seats-19390897/>

To put it simply, my body doesn’t like standing up. Totally at random – often when I rise from a chair too quickly, or stand up for

too long – I faint.

It's called syncope – it's when you pass out, and lose consciousness for a short period of time. For me, it's caused by autonomic dysfunction as a result of my condition, Ehlers Danlos Syndrome.

It means that public transport, and travelling, can be hard for me. I need a seat, or I can pass out and seriously injure myself. It could even be fatal.

Except, not a lot of people seem to care at all about my invisible illness – especially not my fellow commuters, and transport companies. For me, it's a constant battle against prejudice for having a medical condition that doesn't allow me to stand still. In fact, as a result, I try to avoid travelling as much as physically possible.

My condition is genetic – I've had it since birth, but wasn't diagnosed until January 2015, aged 41. I'd been getting awful migraines since the syncope started and, the day before my husband's birthday, I suddenly collapsed after one. I ended up in hospital for a week, where I was put on epilepsy medication – but I continued to have excruciating headaches and fall unconscious, without explanation.

I was diagnosed with EDS and joint hypermobility syndrome. I was given autonomic tests including a tilt table, which is used to explore potential causes of fainting. The tilt table caused me to lose consciousness within 30 seconds, with my blood pressure dropping to 50/28. Since then, in eight years, the longest I've gone without fainting is six weeks. Sometimes, I can faint three times in one day.

The worst of it is, I can't tell when I'm about to faint, either. It comes on out of the blue. Because of it, I have to work from home now in my job as a Streetworks Manager. I'm proud that I'm still working though – and have participated in events with colleagues, raising awareness of my condition in attempts to minimise any stigma.

I choose to walk while I still can, but I want a safe, accessible and stigma-free environment to allow my independence – including when it comes to travelling. Train companies do not do enough to cater for those of us with both visible and invisible disabilities – and commuters let stigma of disabled people cloud their judgement.

I've been humiliated and upset so many times by people's judgement. Living with this condition is hard enough without stigma and humiliation to contend with. People may look completely healthy, but can have so much more going on underneath.

Staines Shopmobility

making staines accessible



**Two Rivers (West Car park),
Mustard Mill Road,
STAINES, TW18 4BL.**

Telephone 01784 459416

The service will be available Tuesday to Saturday from 9.30am until 4.15pm, with the last equipment hire time of 3pm.

All equipment is to be returned by 4.15pm.

stainesshopmo@gmail.com

www.stainesshopmobility.com

www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility

Membership Charges

Membership is available on a daily or annual basis. Please contact manager for details

Holiday Hire

Wheelchair- Overnight, Weekend, Week, Fortnight - maximum hire period of 6 weeks.

A Cash Deposit Of £50 Is Required.

Scooter - Overnight, Weekend, Week, Fortnight - maximum hire period of 4 weeks.

A Cash Deposit Of £100 Is Required.



Freedom

Accessibility

Independence

Confidence

**Charitable
Incorporated
Organisation
(CIO) 57628**



Spelthorne Boccia Club

Boccia is a disability sport that is similar to bowls and petanque. The aim of the game is to propel leather balls, coloured red or blue, close to a white target ball (the jack).

It is played from a seated position and the ball can be moved with players' hands, feet or an assistive device eg a head or hand pointer.

Our club is aimed at people aged 16+ with disabilities (young people aged 14+ may join with an adult carer present)

Where - Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines

When - Every Thursday 6pm - 6.55pm

Cost - £3 per week (no need to book, just turn up and join in)

For more information please visit the council's web site

www.spelthorne.gov.uk/boccia





Spelthorne Para Sports Club

Aimed at young people aged 5-25 and their siblings, Spelthorne Para Sports Club provides opportunities to play a wide range of sports as well as offering sport specific coaching for those interested in developing skills.

All sessions are overseen by enthusiastic volunteers although parents/guardians are encouraged to stay on side during the sessions. No need to book - come and try - first session free!

Where - Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines,

Cost - £3 a session (£2 for siblings) payable on the day.

When - 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month 10:15-11:45am (term time)

For more information please visit the council's web site

www.spelthorne.gov.uk/parasportsclub



North Surrey Sports Association for Disabled People (NSSADP) has been established by local volunteers to facilitate the provision of sports for disabled people within North Surrey and adjacent areas.

The association will initially focus on Boccia, with coaching for disabled people, training for coaches and arranging some competition. It is intended that the association will extend this principle to other sports, both paralympic or main-stream, facilitating the creation of other clubs aimed at providing sport for disabled people.

Membership is open to both individuals and organisations interested in furthering the association's work. For more information, please contact nssadp@gmail.com



From A Former Contributor to SCAN's Newsletters

Richard sustained a severe brain injury in a motorcycle accident in 1983 and he felt that although people tried to relate to his situation, they often couldn't understand.

He put his thoughts and experiences together as a collection of poems and articles about his life after his injury to help others in a similar situation to realise that they're not alone, and to try to give 'able-bodied' people a small insight into the world of disability.

Richard died in 2014, and his son shared his father's book with

Headway who provided a link to the book from their website <https://www.headway.org.uk/>.

Richard's personality and wit shines through the book.

HOSPITAL DAWN

In those moments of tranquil half-life,
sandwiched between consciousness and sleep,
when all is safe and warm and free from strife,
shielded from the zone where reality creeps.

A breeze blows you towards the edge,
in reluctant, slow motion, you float.
Away from the comfort of that mental womb,
like a castaway in a sinking boat.

Eyes open, you see the shark's fin,
once again, you must fight to survive.
Do you go on trying or just jump in?
It's the nature of the beast to stay alive



I Want To Raise Disability Awareness But It Doesn't Mean I'll Work For You For Free

<https://metro.co.uk/2024/03/12/want-raise-disability-awareness-doesnt-mean-work-free-20292011/>

As someone who hosts and speaks at events, it sounded like the perfect deal. The organiser of a conference, offering to be my personal chauffeur from London to Birmingham. But there was a twist – this was their offer after I refused to give up my time for free.

To say I was astounded would be an understatement. I'm an expert keynote speaker. I am paid in money, not miles, and I am sick of non-stop, relentless requests for me to speak for free. So, as politely as possible, I declined their invitation for the second time, but I never got a response.

Admittedly, becoming a keynote speaker wasn't in my initial career plans. But after an overwhelming response to my work in accessibility and disability inclusion, and plenty of requests to speak, I quickly developed a passion for it. Since then, speaking to and connecting with diverse audiences, motivating them to foster inclusivity and accessibility, has become my passion and my purpose. It's a genuine privilege.

My speeches always focus on implementing practical strategies for disability inclusion and accessibility, improving the experiences of disabled customers and employees within businesses and brands.

Often, when I explain to the organiser that my time will cost money, they attempt a guilt trip of 'but it will only be an hour.'

They're conveniently overlooking all the behind-the-scenes work: the emails, the briefs, the meetings, the tech checks and rehearsals. It all adds up. A one-hour event can easily turn into a 5-6 hour commitment for me.

When you throw in the limited accessible travel options to get to the speaking gigs – only a third of London's Tube stations are step-free, so I find myself relying on taxis and getting caught in hours of traffic – it only adds to the difficulty and expense. Beyond all of this, sharing personal experiences, whether uplifting or challenging, involves reopening old wounds, revisiting tough moments and confronting ongoing healing processes because I still live in a very disabling society that is entrenched in ableism.

Disabled people are almost twice as likely to be unemployed as their non-disabled counterparts, and nearly half of the millions of people in poverty in the UK are affected by a disability. Not to mention the fact that the disability pay gap is now estimated to be so large that research suggests disabled people effectively work for free for 54 days a year. Expecting us to work for free doesn't just do us a personal disservice, it adds fuel to the already raging fire of inequality our community faces on a daily basis.

It feels to me like organisations requesting our time for free, either as commentators or experts or, in my case, speakers, are effectively saying, 'Your expertise, your experiences and your time are not worth compensating. We'll take your insights, but we won't give anything in return.'

The irony is that these requests often come from companies that claim to champion diversity and inclusion. What annoys me most is that when I raise the subject of a fee, people seem genuinely surprised, often remarking, 'I thought you'd do it for free to raise awareness?' The assumption is that disabled people like me are just grateful and won't assert ourselves.

I wanted disabled people to feel emboldened, to know their value and to insist on it. That's why I created Fair Dues, a shared document where people can share their experiences and most importantly what they've been paid or what work they have rejected and why, anonymously.

When organisations request disabled speakers to give their services for no pay, they are making a conscious choice. So as these requests continue to populate my inbox, I'm now answering their questions with a very simple one of my own.

Would you work for free?





North West Surrey Drop-In Hubs
Addlestone – 2nd and 4th Wednesday
of each Month
KnapHill – Every Monday
Shepperton – 1st and 3rd Wednesday
of each Month

Surrey Downs Hubs

Epsom - 1st and 3rd Tuesday of each Month
Hersham - 2nd and 4th Monday of each Month
Leatherhead – Every Friday

To contact Action for Carers Surrey, Telephone 0303 040 1234
Email CSAdmin@actionforcarers.org.uk Text 07723 486730
Web site www.actionforcarers.org.uk



Disability Rights UK (DRUK) –

We work with our members to influence national policy on independent living, benefits, education, employment, transport, human rights and other issues – shaping policy through direct

experience and expertise.

We also work with our local individual and organisation members to empower and to influence local policy and services.

To contact Disability Rights UK (DR UK) see www.disabilityrightsuk.org/contact-us

News Issued By DRUK March 2024

Head over to our News page to read more of our policy updates and stories.

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url?u=66611&qid=12166094>

Disability Rights UK Helplines

Our helplines are operating as normal:

Personal Budgets Helpline

Opening hours: 9.30am-1.30pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays
Telephone: 0330 995 0404 personalbudgets@disabilityrightsuk.org

Disabled Students Helpline

Opening hours: 11am-1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays
Telephone: 0330 995 0414 students@disabilityrightsuk.org

Welfare Rights Helpline for Member Organisations

Opening hours: 10.30am-12.30pm Tuesdays and Thursdays
Telephone: 0203 687 0779 ken.butler@disabilityrightsuk.org





Disability Empowerment Network – North Surrey & Surrey Wide

Administration and management of the Disability Empowerment Network (DEN) meetings is arranged by the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People (SCDP)

All Empowerment Meetings Are Held Via Zoom Unless Otherwise Noted

Surrey Wide DENS all starting at 6pm - online only
Monday 20th May 2024

Surrey Wide DENS daytime with breakout rooms for the different areas. Online only.
Tuesday 21st May 2024 11-12.30pm

Members are requested to only come to either the daytime or the evening Surrey wide meeting.

For more information, please contact:

Involvement@surreycoalition.org.uk or Tel/SMS 07492 249 513 for details of how to participate in meetings remotely.



We're registered with **EASYFUNDRAISING**, which means you can help us for FREE.

Please remember to use easyfundraising every

time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us, including all the big names like eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Argos, ASOS, Expedia, M&S, Just Eat, Uswitch and many more!

This means you can raise FREE donations for us no matter what you're buying. If you haven't signed up to support us yet, it's easy and completely FREE. These donations really help us, so it would be great if you could take a moment to get started! You can find our easyfundraising page here:

<https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/>?



SCAN and Spelthorne Physical, Sensory & Cognitive Disabilities Forum (SPSCDF)



The meetings bring together service providers and users to influence the solutions to any problems or access issues

encountered by people with physical, sensory and cognitive

disabilities. We receive reports from a number of local groups and service providers. Send your news or reports to info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on our website pages at www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/

Further details for Spelthorne's Physical, Sensory and Cognitive Disability forum are on SCAN's web site at www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spscd-forum/



Donations for SCAN's Newsletters

This Newsletter project continues to seek funding/sponsorship to continue beyond April 2024.

We can offer Sponsorship and membership and subscription packages to any individuals, councillors or organisations interested in supporting SCAN's newsletter project – please use the contact options below for information about making donations.

If you have news that you would like included in the newsletter or on our web site, or to be reported at the quarterly meetings, please send an email to info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on SCAN's web page where you will also find more details about SCAN's work www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/



While every care has been taken in the compilation of information included in this newsletter, no responsibility is accepted for any loss, damage or inconvenience caused because of any inaccuracy or error in an article that has not been independently substantiated. The inclusion of information does not imply any endorsement or any association with a contributor's services or products.

If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter or any other correspondence from S C A N, please send your request to 'Unsubscribe' to the email address on the front page of this newsletter or send to the return address on the reverse of the envelope.

