

Spelthorne Committee Access Now



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SCAM Alerts

Amazon Scam

In the run-up to Christmas, many of us will be using Amazon to order gifts. But shoppers should be aware that some fraudsters are using a phishing scam where they pretend to be from Amazon.

One number it comes from is 07542 399484 and dupes the receiver into thinking that a new device has logged into your account. One text said: "Amazon: We detected a login into your account from a new device on 27/09/2022 at 15:10:08 UTC. If this wasn't you, you can terminate that session via: [<https://checkup-amazon.com>]." The message tempts the person on the link to stop unknown activity on their account.

Post Office Scam

Shoppers waiting for gifts to be delivered may also fall victim to this new Post Office scam if they are not aware. According to the consumer rights website Which? the Post Office text scam asks people to take action by telling them that their parcel has been sent back to their branch. The text then links to a legitimate-looking website, where it asks you to pay for the redelivery of your parcel. Which? warned people to never click on this kind of link or provide any personal data.

HSBC Scam

Another text scam claims to be from the bank HSBC. The fake message uses the sender ID 'PASSCODE'. Which? said this one could "easily seem legitimate", as the phrase 'one time passcode' (OTP) is used in the banking industry to describe the temporary security codes that banks send to customers. The message said: "HSBC: Your OTP is 429384 for a payment of 850.00 GDP to EXPEDIA - REF: HS9X. If this wasn't you, call us immediately on 0330 828 1274". If someone calls the number, they will hear an automated recorded message or interactive voice response (IVR) which asks them for their bank's branch sort code and 16-digit card number or customer identification number before being supposedly put through to an adviser, which isn't the case.

Missed Call

Fraudsters call your mobile but hang up as soon as it starts ringing. It's likely just an automated dialer and not even a real person. This then shows up on the phone as a missed call and many people will ring back in case it's urgent. In fact, the number used by criminals incurs premium-rate charges that can be sky-high, according to the police. Some common numbers will start with 0845, 0843 or 070.

Premium Number Rate

This scam tries to snare people who are searching online for telephone numbers of Government advice services. It works by displaying an advert for the phone number of the relevant

Government advice line. However, you'll be charged a premium for using this advertised telephone number – in some cases, as much as £20 or £30 a call. To avoid being ripped off in this way, you should never use numbers beginning with 084, 087, 090, 091 or 098 when calling Government advice lines. No official Government service would ever use these numbers to deliver a legitimate Government service.



Disabled Britain's – Doing It for Ourselves Series

Disabled Britain: Doing It For Ourselves, was a week-long series in July 2022 across the Daily Mirror's print and digital platforms,



showcasing the lives of disabled people and the issues important to us. The articles have been conceived by disabled people, written by disabled people, and photographs - where possible - taken by disabled people. Throughout this week, we aim to change

your mind about how you view disabled people.

After all, there are 14 million of us, and we aren't all the same, it's time the public stopped listening to lazy stereotypes and viewed disabled people in all our wide-ranging splendour.

Why are we doing this

- To amplify the voices of disabled people
- To reveal the richness of disabled lives
- To create greater empathy for those living with disability
- To spotlight something which affects 14 million people in the UK... and ultimately us all
- To demand the Government consult with disabled people before making any decision that affects their lives

The series was launched by Journalist Rachel Charlton-Dailey disability rights columnist and contributions to the series will be featured in some of SCAN's future newsletters. They will include

- wheelchair user Hannah Barham-Brown who spent a day rolling around London to share some of the challenges wheelchair users and other disabled people experience navigating the city
- Scottish percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie who at the Opening Ceremony of the London 2012 Olympic Games, led one thousand drummers, taking cues from a screen and not an earpiece as she relies on lip reading.
- Phoebe Snedker who will address eight misconceptions about disability, in the hope of encouraging others to revisit their understandings of what it means to be disabled.

Council Turn Funding Down For BSL Instruction

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/health/article-11420673/Deaf-childs-mother-told-quit-job-teach-sign-language-council-denies-funding.html>

Two-year-old Jack Gurney was born deaf and needs to learn sign language to communicate... yet his local council refused his funding application and instead told his mother, Kim, to teach her son herself

The National Deaf Children's Society says up to 40 per cent of local councils do not provide financial assistance for lessons, meaning families end up having to fund it themselves, which can cost up to £400 a week. Children may also need a qualified support teacher in school who can assist with their learning, and many councils are failing to provide this too, say campaigners.

Ian Noon, chief policy adviser at the National Deaf Children's Society, says: 'Cochlear implants, while an incredible tool, do not cure deafness, and for many families sign language is still a crucial part of their communication. 'Language development is so important in a child's early years. If they don't receive the correct support, the effect will be catastrophic. It's unacceptable that many families are being forced to pay thousands of pounds a year to communicate with their child.'

Spotting deafness as early as possible is crucial for the development of children, and the NHS runs a screening programme that is designed to identify problems within weeks of birth. 'Cochlear implants are not a fix for everything, but they are often treated that way,' says Professor Bencie Woll, a deafness expert at University College London. 'This has led to an increased hesitancy about teaching children sign language, because there is a mistaken belief that this will stop them learning English and leave them isolated from hearing people. But there is no evidence to support this.'

Grainne Siggins, executive director of Bracknell Forest Council, said: 'Jack is currently meeting all milestones for development, apart from communication, supported through weekly sessions with his teacher for the deaf at nursery. 'Some nursery staff are undertaking sign language training, which the council has offered to pay for. [Funding for the family] has been declined due to Jack's very young age and to allow time for the professionals to understand how his recently activated cochlear implants may impact his communication development.'



'You Don't Look Sick' – I Don't Have Diabetes Because Of My Diet. - Edited from *metro.co.uk* October 2019

metro.co.uk/2019/10/06/you-dont-look-sick-i-dont-have-diabetes-because-of-my-diet-its-an-autoimmune-disease-10814009/

In 2019 there were 13.9 million disabled people in the UK – and many of them have an invisible illness. When you look at someone with a hidden condition, you would have no idea they are ill, but they suffer debilitating symptoms and can face judgement for using disabled facilities because they **‘don’t look sick’**.

You Don’t Look Sick was Metro’s weekly series was about living with an invisible illness or hidden disability. They have spoken about living with their condition and the judgements they face because you can’t always see that something is wrong

Jade Byrne, 32, from Darlington, Co Durham, has type 1 diabetes, an auto-immune condition where the body attacks the pancreas and no longer produces insulin that controls blood sugar.

Type 1 diabetes, cannot be prevented and is not caused by diet – but often Jade faces judgement because people don’t understand the condition. She says: *‘People will say things like “But you don’t look diabetic” I usually respond with “and what does that look like?” ‘The response is usually, “well you’re not fat”.*

Only 10% of all diabetics in the UK have type one and so when we read about diabetes in the media, it’s referring to type 2 diabetes, typically brought on by lifestyle.

Jade looks healthy on the outside and when she occasionally needs to use facilities like a priority seat or disabled bathroom, she has faced stares from strangers. She explains: *‘If I had to ask for a seat on a very busy train because I was having a hypo (low blood sugar). ‘Nobody says anything to me, but they give me looks. I also sometimes get a look coming out of a disabled toilet when I’ve been changing my pump, but I just have to brush it off or just give them a really fake smile.’*

Jade was diagnosed at four years old after her mum read about the symptoms and recognised that Jade had some of them, drinking lots, weeing more often and feeling tired. The technology used to control it has become much more advanced and has helped to improve her quality of life. She explains: *‘I wear a continuous glucose monitor (CGM) and an insulin pump. I always have two cannulas inside my body that act as my pancreas. My phone knows what my blood sugar is and alerts me when it’s dropping.*

Jade works as an actor, writer and children’s book author. In 2019 Jade launched a children’s book called Daisy Donald on World Diabetes Day with £1 from every sale going to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation UK (JDRF). Daisy Donald wears an invisible cape to fight an invisible illness. A monster that she has to tame and sometimes even fight.



I Was Born With One Arm And Leg

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/real-life/model-disability-london-fashion-week-25518292> A woman living in London, who was born with only one full arm and leg has now taken the modelling world by storm - appearing in Vogue and dazzling on the catwalk at London Fashion Week.

Jessica Ping-Wild was diagnosed with CHILD syndrome (*Congenital hemidysplasia with ichthyosiform erythroderma and limb defects*) at birth - an extremely rare genetic disorder which causes limb underdevelopment and inflamed skin. There are only 60 known cases worldwide.

The 25 year old now uses a prosthetic leg or a wheelchair, but can move without both. During her teenage years, Jessica admitted her condition made her feel like an "outcast" who "didn't have a place of belonging or anyone who understood". She added: "The amount of discrimination and ableism I've felt in my life is unreal.

However, in 2019, she started therapy and began to understand that she "was allowed to take up space as a human being." Jessica then started a blog sharing her experiences. and by February 2022, Jessica walked in her first runway show for the adaptive brand Unhidden.

Now she's determined to use her platform to improve the representation of disabled people in the media and to "normalise disabilities". Jessica said: "I have a good level of confidence now. I want to be the representation that I needed as a kid and show people that disabilities are normal. My confidence has gone through some really high highs, and really low lows throughout my life. As a child, I didn't really consider myself disabled, I just did whatever I could. I didn't think of myself as different until I got older, and I realised people treated me differently."

Jessica continued: "One of the reasons I think I had so much fear and frustrations in my childhood as a disabled person is because I didn't have any disabled role models to look up to. There were none in media, TV or professional roles like politicians that was really hard. "I want to be that representation whether that's me writing, speaking at a conference or on Instagram doing a silly dance. It's lit a fire under me to change the world, make a difference and show people that disabilities are normal. I'm living my dream whilst inspiring and educating others on something that is so important."



Unhidden Clothing

<https://unhiddenclothing.com/pages/about-unhidden>

Victoria Jenkins is a garment technologist with 14 years experience in the fashion industry who became Disabled in her

20s. She founded Unhidden after a chance encounter with a woman with cancer that changed the course of her life.

“I have worked with many household name brands - from the high street to high end - over my career. When I became disabled, it should have been then that I realised that none of my old clothes adjusted to my new needs. But it was during a 10-day hospital stay in 2016 that I met a fellow patient who had survived cancer, but she was left with multiple other conditions.

Every time the doctors came round she had to remove all her clothing, usually in front of a team of doctors. Pyjama tops and loungewear were her only options - she told me she wanted to dress in nicer clothes - but nothing would adapt.

I remember watching her from the other side of the ward and thinking ‘there must be companies out there to help’ but Google returned few results. It was then, in that hospital, in front of that amazing lady that the idea of Unhidden was born.

Future plans include a not-for-profit arm training people with disabilities and chronic health conditions how to sew adaptive alterations so they can then work as and when they choose making adaptive alterations for anyone who doesn't sew.

Workshops are coming soon that will cover how to adapt clothing you already own yourself so there is no barrier to accessing adaptive clothing and re-loving your existing wardrobes.

Victoria is also a brand ambassador for Models of Diversity and co founder of No Comment Required, an ethical slogan clothing range focusing on positive representation for people with mental health issues and disabilities as well as all marginalised groups.



Why ‘Airport Wheelchair Fraudsters Don’t Exist – *Edited from article by Julia Buckley in Independent October 2017*

www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/airport-wheelchair-imposters-dont-exist-disabled-users-travellers-airlines-boarding-security-lazy-a8021061.html

Following a newspaper article that said ‘**Travellers are skipping airport security and boarding gate queues by hiring a wheelchair**’, journalist Julia Buckley, who has a chronic pain condition, wrote the following article in the Independent.

‘Let’s get one thing clear about this nasty little idea, as insidious as the premise that people on disability benefits are milking the system: nobody in their right mind would fake a disability at an airport. As someone who’s used assistance on and off for the past five years, I can promise you that. Not just because of the nuts and bolts

– that you must arrive at the airport no later than two hours

before your flight;

- the manhandling - passengers with no mobility are dragged off their seats and into aisle chairs by picking them up as you would a cat*

I've been accused of booking assistance in order to sit down and drink a coffee as I'm chauffeured to the gate like some kind of empress. I've been accused of being drunk. I've been scolded like a toddler when I've explained to cabin crew that reaching overhead storage can dislocate my shoulder,

And that's not even talking about the purser, who, on one flight, was so insistent that I, a cripple, couldn't be a frequent flyer and sitting in business class that she triple-checked her VIP list against their seat numbers, then turned to the man next to me, and said, "Mr Buckley, welcome onboard."

Roberto Castiglioni of Reduced Mobility Rights, who advocates for passengers with disabilities, agrees. *"Abuse exists, but it's not as widespread as the article suggests," he told me. "Abuse of wheelchair services is more common in the United States where queues at security checkpoints tend to be longer. The solution to this problem is to expedite the experience for all passengers, something TSA [the Transportation Security Administration] are constantly looking to improve.*

Travel should be fun. Travelling with assistance is not fun. And anyone who's ever had to do it can tell you that.



Woman Refused Assistance Because She Didn't Look Disabled. – Edited from *The Independent* January 2018

<https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/disabled-woman-stansted-airport-refuse-help-ryanair-nathalie-allport-grantham-a8138051.html>

Nathalie Allport-Grantham has Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, a connective tissue disorder which causes chronic pain and joint dislocation, as well as Marfan syndrome and postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome – a condition which affects the heart and can cause dizziness and fainting when the patient is standing.

Although she uses a wheelchair part-time, all are invisible disabilities. She had confirmed wheelchair assistance when she booked a flight in November 2017, opting not to bring her own chair because the airport would provide one instead. Airlines such as Ryanair log the assistance needs of their passengers, but it is the airports in question that fulfil the requests.

But while she was assigned a wheelchair at check-in, she says it was later taken away from her by airport staff who then told her that she was “wasting their time” by asking for help. When she said she was not allowed to lift anything which can dislocate her joints,

tear muscles or rupture internal organs – Nathalie was told “*Maybe next time don’t bring a heavy bag then.*”

After the encounter reduced her to tears, a male airport worker came over to ask what was going on, and the agent said, “*This lady is wasting my time.*” Nathalie’s name was checked against the list and confirmed that she was the passenger they had been expecting. “*He was really nice and found me a spare wheelchair, but the lady didn’t even apologise,*” she said.

“*It isn’t the first time this has happened to me, and I’m sure it won’t be the last. I want to make a fuss because I believe big companies have a responsibility not only to follow the law but also to educate their staff.*”

A spokesperson for Ryanair said: “*While we regret any inconvenience caused, wheelchair services at London Stansted are operated by Omniserv and London Stansted is responsible for this service and any problems with it.*” Stansted Airport said “*Of course, we are very disappointed to hear about Ms Allport-Grantham’s experience and apologise for any distress caused.*”

“*Special assistance is booked directly with the airline and handled by the airport’s provider Omniserv. We are speaking to the provider to find out more about the circumstances of the incident.*”



Sorry, Am I Not ‘Properly Disabled’ Enough For You?

Opinion by James Moore - Chief business commentator and columnist for Independent Voices – Edited from December 2022

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/disabled-enough-blind-wheelchair-user-disability-b2239777.html>

James Moore became a wheelchair user after he was seriously injured when cycling in London in 2011. He was knocked off his cycle and under the wheels of an oil tanker.

We like to think we are evolved in Britain, but society’s addiction to static tropes concerning disabled people is naggingly persistent. This has a real impact on our daily lives.

My friend recently started using a cane and is looking to get a guide dog. They started off shuffling at the side of the street because that’s what blind people do, right? “Then thought, no, why should I? Why should I conform to a stereotype that isn’t me? Now I walk confidently in the middle of the street because I can.”

I was almost tearing up at that point in the conversation. Because yes, I confess, I’ve been guilty of much the same thing. I have a terminal addiction to vinyl records but the racks are rarely at a wheelchair-friendly height. The thing is, I can stand. I sometimes wobble a bit. My balance isn’t great.

A woman I follow on Twitter recently told the story of how she got up out of her wheelchair to pick something up only to find herself

berated by another wheelchair user for, what, not being disabled enough? Note to the bloke who did this: disabilities aren't always consistent. Some of us have good days when we can maybe stand and, yes, pick things up – followed by days when we're not much good for anything. Which is when idiots like me have really nasty falls that lead to more broken bones.

There are two million legally blind people in Britain of which a proportion (like my friend) can see a little but are nonetheless severely sight impaired.

I can't help thinking that this sea of ignorance in which we're asked to attempt to swim stems from the lack of visibility disabled people suffer from – and the tendency of broadcasters, and the directors they hire, to tell "beneficiaries" to "be a bit more blind for me love" when they remember that we exist and decide to indulge in a little light tokenism. It is also true that disability languishes in the lower reaches of the equality and diversity league, which means that the problem is rarely discussed. Our government also bears a heavy burden of responsibility. It seems to view disability solely in terms of costs and has cynically encouraged a climate of suspicion around it as a result.

My friend handles this with remarkable grace. They are of the belief that it is better to be gentle, and politely try to explain that blind people can handle door knobs to directors whose attitudes towards disability are stuck in the 1950s. I wish I could be that way. When I'm not so exhausted that I have to content myself with swearing under my breath, I'm apt to go in with both barrels. Disability is bad enough without having to grapple with the disabling impact of people who ought to know better.



Disabled People Say They Are Being Left "Stranded" On Trains, Planes, And Buses –

https://www.buzzfeed.com/fionarutherford/disabled-people-say-they-are-being-left-stranded-on-trains-p?utm_term=.hp1k2Ak0wK#.ye4nWGNzj0

The travelling woes of disabled people such as Paralympian Anne Wafula Strike, and Frank Gardner, have become high-profile stories, but they aren't isolated.

The 2010 Equality Act requires all travel providers to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can use their services. Yet despite this, campaigners claim that people continue to face experiences that are often arduous, confusing, and embarrassing.

Layla Harding, 22, has lower-leg muscle weakness and so relies on crutches or a wheelchair to get around. After booking a holiday to Brussels, she contacted Eurostar directly to let the train

operator know she'd need to take her wheelchair. Ms Harding was told that because her chair isn't one that folds up to fit in a luggage rack, she'd need to pay an additional £60 "luggage fee".

"I was really annoyed, and I thought it must've been an error," she told BuzzFeed News. "They called me back and told me that it was their policy".

She was told by Eurostar that she could sit in first class, where there were adapted spaces but she'd have to pay for another seat in addition to the one she'd already booked. *"I wanted to be with my party. I didn't want to pay an extra £60 for luggage, and I also didn't want to pay extra to be in first class, where I didn't particularly want to be."*

Eventually, Eurostar dropped both proposed fees, and Ms Harding was able to travel in first class for no additional cost. A spokesperson for Eurostar told BuzzFeed News that Ms Harding was given the wrong information by the staff she spoke to – neither fee should have been charged. *"If the wheelchair needs to travel as registered luggage this service is exempt. She also should not have been asked to pay any first-class upgrade, as wheelchair users can travel in first class with a companion for the minimum fee available on any train. We are very sorry for the frustration this caused during the booking process, We will be speaking to the relevant teams at Eurostar, as a priority, to ensure they have the correct information regarding wheelchair passengers on board our trains."* But for Ms Harding, this was just another example of the exasperating lengths she has to go to simply to get from A to B.



How I Went Blind And Started Hearing Colours -

www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/synaesthesia-blind-colours-health-science-a7996711.html

Out of the blue, Vanessa Potter lost her sight. As she recovered, her senses mingled – hearing and touch changed the way she saw colours. Her quest to understand why introduced her to new technology that uses sound to help blind people see.

It took just 72 hours for me to lose my sight entirely, and for my hands and feet to feel like they were encased in ice. Just before my blindness hit, I had been laid up with an unknown virus that had left me suffering severe headaches and sweats. My body's immune system had gone haywire, responding to the virus by attacking my own nerves, causing my loss of sight and mobility – you could say I had been struck down by biological friendly fire.

Going blind was devastating. I hadn't just lost my primary sense – I had lost my livelihood too. As a television producer, my vision was my job, so I was desperate to see again. After a few weeks, I regained some movement and normal sensation in my legs and

feet, but my vision was another matter entirely.

The morning my sight finally started to return, I opened my eyes to a strange, supernatural view. At first I could only make out subtle light shifts; everything was just a swirling grey fog with no perceptible shapes. Slowly the grey mist dissolved into a brown muddy haze that obscured anything more than a few feet away. Colour eluded me, and my family, padding softly around me at home, were hollow ghosts: skeletal figures with no solidity or humanness. Even though my visual world was still predominantly black and white, it felt like colours were talking to me – not literally, but as if my senses were communicating in ways I didn't understand. Attempting to explain my new relationship with colour only provoked confused silences around me. It made no sense to my family, as they all had fully functioning sensory systems. And when I described it to the neurologists treating me, I was told that nobody knew what was causing this visual disturbance, but that perhaps my sensory system had become cross-wired.

My doctors told me I had experienced a rare form of monophasic neuromyelitis optica spectrum disorder, a condition that's estimated to affect just one in 100,000 people in Europe. One of my primary symptoms had been optic neuritis, inflammation of the optic nerves, which caused my blindness. It also eventually led to my unusual and curious form of what I now know as synaesthesia – and to my desire to find out more about this condition.

I am certainly more consciously aware of colour now. I suppose in a way it still speaks to me. My brief time as a synaesthete showed me an innate association that I believe I unthinkingly tapped to boost my recovery. The extent to which my newly found synaesthesia helped my recovery is likely to remain shrouded in mystery, both to me and, for now, to science.



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

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



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.



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HIGNFY Criticised for Not Being Inclusive For Blind Comedian. <https://metro.co.uk/2022/10/28/hignfy-criticised-for-using-picture-rounds-despite-blind-guest-panelist-17659765/>

The BBC panel show **Have I Got News For You (HIGNFY)** is revered for poking fun at the top news stories of the week, however the biggest talking point for viewers during a screening of the show at the end of October 2022 was not the subjects discussed on the show, but how the panel went about it.

Blind comedian Jamie MacDonald was a guest panellist on Paul Merton's team, however the show carried on with its usual picture and video rounds, where panellists are asked to either name people or describe what is happening in the clip.

The BBC has since issued a statement from a spokesperson stating: 'Jamie was fully briefed and consulted on all aspects of the show including visual rounds and he wanted to use the situation for humour.' At one point during the programme, the panellists were distracted by a noise in the studio that sounded like 'a bag of Maltesers' being rustled, with Jamie quipping: 'Finally, an audio round,' to peals of laughter.

Host Steph McGovern also pointed out the issue, as, introducing another picture round, she said: 'Sorry Jamie,' to laughter from the panel and audience. Throughout the picture rounds, Jamie repeatedly guessed Vladimir Putin as the answer in a joking manner as he was unable to see the visuals, with many watching from home growing frustrated by the lack of accessibility.

'The BBC are showing us all how to make zero accommodations for the visually impaired on #HIGNFY right now. Cringeworthy,' one viewer said.

'Am I missing something?,' another asked. 'Why've they not changed the format to make it inclusive for the guest panellist who is blind?'

Another agreed: 'You'd think #HIGNFY would make it accessible for its blind panellist to participate properly.'

Jamie is not the first blind comedian to appear on *HIGNFY*, with Chris McCausland having had several stints on the series under his belt. Jamie had earlier announced he would be appearing on the show and said it was 'a good night.'



How Does Chris McCausland Play The HIGNFY Picture Round? <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/disability-61924545>

When blind comedian Chris McCausland appears on **Have I Got News For You (HIGNFY)** complaints often follow. The Liverpoolian says viewers get very frustrated on his behalf and regularly turn to Twitter to vent their frustration. He says they

tweet. "It's appalling that the BBC are still using photographs and visual jokes',"

But Chris says "that's what the show is, and I want to do that show," he tells the BBC Access All podcast. It's a refreshing take on inclusivity and accessibility that people often tie themselves in knots over.

Many of the panel shows he appears on, including **Would I Lie To You**, rely on visual cues such as pictures, items or missing word rounds. He says it's not a slight that they continue to play such games in his presence, it's just part of the format which he doesn't want changed just because he is visually impaired.

"I do the News Quiz on Radio Four, but I don't want **HIGNFY** to be morphed into the News Quiz just because I'm on it. They're both great shows." The production effort behind these decisions relies on "far fewer" meetings than you might think and adjustments are made swiftly and without much fuss. "They meet me halfway," he says of the production teams. "They change one of the rounds to an audio round or something similar."

He also lets his team mates know: "If there's something you want to tell me, describe it. And if they want to leave it in the edit, they will. And if they don't, they won't." When he filmed the **2022 QI Christmas special**, there was a visual magic trick without description. QI team captain Alan Davies apologised that McCausland hadn't been accommodated. "It's cool mate," McCausland told him. "The world is visual, it's television and not everything has to be for me."

When he started his comedy back in 2003, a hobby away from his "soul destroying" call centre job, he would gloss over being blind. "I'd do a joke at the beginning and I literally wouldn't mention it again. I wanted them to forget that I was blind."

He says at the time he was trying to "challenge preconceptions" about blind people and the low expectations people might foist on them. "That was my clumsy way of doing it by not talking about it," he says. But as he approaches 20 years on the comedy circuit he's beginning to appreciate the unique insight he can offer. You can listen to the podcast and find information and support on the

Access All page

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02r6yqw/episodes/downloads>



Railway Station First As Audio Guide For Blind People Launched *Edited from Evening Standard December 2022*

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/railway-station-network-rail-emma-hughes-isambard-kingdom-brunel-thomas-pocklington-trust-b1044482.html>

Bristol Temple Meads railway station has become the first in the country to launch an audio guide to help blind and partially sighted people navigate the space. Network Rail has launched the guide, comprising of 12 audio files, along with Bristol Sight Loss Council to assist people at the station, designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and opened in 1840, that has become more challenging to navigate recently due to renovation works on its historic train shed roof.

Network Rail is planning to work further with Bristol Sight Loss Council and users of the guide, with the aim of rolling out the technology in stations across the country.

Bernadette Sachse, Network Rail's station manager for Bristol Temple Meads, said: "I'm so proud of the work we've done with Bristol Sight Loss Council to launch this audio guide, which will help to ensure that our station remains as accessible as possible for all passengers. We want everyone to feel welcome at our stations and are constantly looking to improve accessibility for people who experience disability. Alongside the audio guide, all our station signage has been designed in high contrast so that it can be more easily read. We install tactile paving on our platforms to improve safety and have ensured that Bristol Temple Meads can be easily navigated by those using a wheelchair.

The guide was launched on 2nd December 2022 ahead of International Disability Awareness Day on Saturday 3rd December 2022. Sight Loss Councils, funded by Thomas Pocklington Trust, are led by blind and partially sighted volunteers to advocate the needs of people and influence change.

Emma Hughes, director of services at the trust, said: "We are proud of Bristol Sight Loss Council's work with Bristol Temple Meads station to launch this first-of-its-kind audio guide to help blind and partially sighted people to navigate the station. We want to ensure all forms of transport are fully accessible to blind and partially sighted people across the country, enabling everyone to live the lives they want to lead in an independent way.

Coral Thomas, accessibility mentor at GWR, said the train operator was pleased to support the introduction of the guides. "We look forward to receiving feedback from customers which may be of use as we seek to improve accessibility at stations across the GWR network."



The Secret Life Of Some Antidepressants –

https://www.independent.co.uk/news/long_reads/why-third-antidepressants-prescribed-something-else-chronic-conditions-mental-health-a8110496.html

Doctors often use medicines 'off-label' to treat people with

conditions that these drugs haven't been tested on. We explore how uncovering the secret life of antidepressants in particular could open up a host of new treatments.

It was when he became a father that Michael Briggs resolved to somehow bring his ulcerative colitis under control. He was determined to avoid what many people with the disease end up needing – having part or all of their large intestine removed. A trained scientist, manager of a physics lab at the University of New Hampshire, he began reading medical research papers, looking for anything that might help him.

He knew there wouldn't be just one single cure, just as he knew there was not one single cause behind this inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). Eventually, he stumbled upon research suggesting that an antidepressant had an effect on Crohn's disease, another type of IBD where the immune system attacks the lining of the gut.

Briggs decided to give it a try. He's written about his research and experiences to help spread the word to others with colitis. And like any good researcher, he declares his interests: *"In research papers, it is typical for the author to disclose any vested interests that might bias their views."*

It seems surprising that antidepressants should work on other diseases, but perhaps it's time to stop thinking of these drugs as "antidepressants" and admit that they are not one-trick ponies, but Jacks of all trades.

This has happened in cases of people with dyspepsia, irritable bowel syndrome, chronic pelvic pain, chronic prostatitis, fibromyalgia, headaches and more.



Disabled Friendly & Accessible Holidays – Edited from <https://www.limitlesstravel.org/>

Angus Drummond, the founder of Limitless Travel, was a 22-year-old investment banker when he was diagnosed with a muscle weakening condition called Muscular Dystrophy. Angus was told that his mobility would decline over time, and that one day he would be confined to a wheelchair. This came as a devastating shock, and Angus knew that his life would never be the same.

Shortly after his diagnosis Angus spontaneously quit his job, donned his backpack and decided to travel the world in order to experience all of its wonders before travelling became too difficult. Angus and his wife traversed over 35 countries, canoed in Vietnam, and even climbed to the top of Machu Picchu.

Throughout his journey, Angus' mobility began to decline. He decided that travel should not be exclusively available to the able-bodied. Travel had allowed him to learn about different cultures, try new foods, make lifelong relationships, and generally improved

his outlook and positivity about life. He knew that he needed to do something that would enable the wider disabled community to travel without limitations, and so it was from Angus' first-hand experience of travelling the world with a disability that Limitless Travel was born.

Since then, Limitless Travel has flourished into a specialist holiday provider for people with a wide range of mobility restrictions and disabilities. The Limitless Travel team is made up of people who have disabilities themselves, and people who have specialist knowledge about disabilities and the care industry, so that our travellers can be assured that their needs are not only listened to, but understood.

Angus says "Limitless Travel is more than a travel company. To be Limitless is a mindset, it means to push yourself to experience things you didn't think it possible to achieve. We support people to see, achieve and experience the wonders that the world has to offer. From North Wales to the other side of the globe, we want everyone to be able to pursue their aspirations through travel."

To contact the Team at Limitless Travel, telephone 0800 711 7147, email holidays@limitlesstravel.org or visit the disabled holidays page at <https://www.limitlesstravel.org/disabled-holidays/>.



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)



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

PLEASE NOTE – *The news Bulletins received from **Disability Rights (DRUK)** and the **Surrey Adult Social Care Information & Engagement Team** is now being distributed as enclosures with each monthly SCAN Newsletter.*

Please contact me if you wish to receive these enclosures by sending a text message (with your name and postal address) to 07859 639025.

If your preference is for an electronic copy then please email me on info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or use the 'Contact SCAN' form on www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/



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 Continue To Be Held Via Zoom unless other wise noted

North Surrey Meeting Dates 2023 (TBC)

covers the areas of Runnymede, Spelthorne, Woking & Surrey Heath. **Monday 6th March 2023, 1pm-2.30pm,**

Surrey Wide Meeting dates for 2023 (TBC)

Monday 13th March 2023, 6pm

For more information, please contact:

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



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. Fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on our website pages at www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/ or send your news or reports to info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk

We started to hold Hybrid meetings during 2022 and the Goddard Room has been booked for the Joint Meetings of SCAN and the Disability Forum. The first meeting of 2023 will be on **Wednesday 18th January 2023** beginning at 12 Noon.

This meeting will be in the usual format, with the main part of the Agenda updating the Forum Reports from Service providers to the disabled community and finishing with updates of SCAN's operations.

Further details email info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or fill in the 'Contact SCAN' form on www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/.

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



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