

Spelthorne

Committee

Access

Now



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‘You Don’t Look Sick’ – I Was Born With Half A Heart - Edited from metro.co.uk July 2019

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 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

Will Goodenough, 25, from Sheffield, has a congenital heart defect called hypoplastic left heart syndrome (HLHS). Part of his heart didn’t develop properly in the womb but the ultrasound tests that are available now to diagnose the condition did not exist then. His parents only found out about his condition the day after he was born when it became apparent that his heart was not functioning properly. The next day, he had the first of his life saving operations and was given a 20% chance of survival.

Throughout his life, Will has had to live with the impact of reduced heart function and he also developed angina at the age of 20. But to people he doesn’t know, he looks healthy. He’s a dad to baby Ezra, living with his partner Emily and working as a pension administrator. He tells Metro.co.uk: *‘Being a parent now, I can’t imagine how my parents must have felt when told that I only had half a heart. At school, my parents had to fight really hard for me to get the extra help I needed, such as free periods for me to do homework in due to not having the energy when I got home. Teachers knew about my condition but really didn’t fully understand the effects that it had on my energy levels. I often don’t use disabled facilities for fear of being judged or having to explain myself. I would be more likely to struggle up three flights of stairs to use the gent’s toilet than to use the disabled toilet.’*

Will takes three different types of medication to manage his heart condition and says that with these, he can often function normally. *‘I have days, often on the weekend, where I don’t want to do anything other than just relax and sleep,’* he says. *‘However, when you have a baby, there’s not much time to do this’.*

HLHS is not always understood - just 1 in 5,000 babies are born with it. He says: *‘In January 2018, I spent five days in hospital due to both chest pain and the exhaustion. In the morning I felt unwell I went to the walk-in centre and was told to go straight to A&E. I was kept in overnight so that I could see a consultant and also so they could contact my consultant in Birmingham to get advice on how to proceed. I often find that unless I am in Birmingham, hospitals are unsure of how to deal with me due to the complexity*

and rarity of my HLHS'. Throughout his life, Will has been supported by his family but he also has a close connection to the charity Little Hearts Matter, who support people with HLHS.

<https://metro.co.uk/2019/07/14/you-dont-look-sick-i-was-born-with-half-a-heart-but-it-wont-hold-me-back-10190488/>



Disability Isn't Always What You Think It Is

– Edited from <https://www.stylist.co.uk/people/how-to-ableism-disability/536945>

Ableism, or discrimination against people based on their disability, is ingrained in our society. Disability rights campaigner, Meg Fozzard, sets out how we can acknowledge our own ableism and fully support people with disabilities.

I am going to be honest with you – before I became disabled, I didn't know what ableism was.

According to the disability equality charity Scope, one in three disabled people feel there is still a lot of disability prejudice in Britain today, but only one in five non-disabled people agree. The fact that many non-disabled people are not aware of what ableism is makes it even harder to confront.

To me, it is less talked about and more accepted as 'just the way that things are' compared to other forms of discrimination. Take, for example, the fact that disabled people are significantly more likely to experience unfair treatment at work than non-disabled people. Or, the fact that around a third of disabled people experience difficulties related to their impairment, including accessing public and leisure services.

As a disabled person, I experience ableism constantly. I have been waiting at the bus stop and pressed the wheelchair ramp button, only for the bus driver to ignore me and drive away.

You might be a disabled person reading this and think 'this doesn't apply to me' but it does. One of the hardest parts of being disabled is internalised ableism. This is when discrimination against disabled people by society means a disabled person starts to believe that ableism is right.

I think all disabled people experience internalised ableism from time to time. It can take many forms. For example, feeling like you don't deserve the reasonable adjustments that other disabled people get. I used to feel like I would be judged by people for using a wheelchair when I can walk a few steps, until I learnt the term ambulatory wheelchair user.

I would love it if we lived in a society where disabled people felt more equal to non-disabled people. If we want anything to change, we need everyone to call out ableism on a regular basis. Here are

some ways you can recognise your ableism and make real changes.

Meg's Practical Advice For Tackling Ableism

Expand your definition of disability

A lot of disabled people have hidden disabilities. You might have heard about hidden disabilities recently because of the sunflower lanyard people wear to let others know they need additional support, such as being exempt from wearing a face covering.

Also, a lot of disabled people's needs change from day to day. For example, someone with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome might have the energy to walk one day but have to use a mobility aid on another day. The next time you see someone using a disabled toilet that doesn't 'look' disabled to you, have a rethink.

Re-Think Disabled Stereotypes In The Media

*Consider the last time you saw a disabled person on your screen, and really think about the way they were portrayed. Does their limb difference mean they are the villain, an issue that dogged the recent remake of *The Witches*? Are they an object of pity or exist to make the non-disabled characters feel better about themselves (also called inspiration porn)? Are they portrayed with a kind of innocence, as assumed of people with intellectual disabilities, like in the film *Forrest Gump*? All of these are harmful stereotypes. If you know any disabled people, you will know we are so much more than what these stereotypes try to reduce us to.*

Listen To Disabled Voices

I saved the easiest one for last. The best thing you can do to confront your ableism and be a better ally to disabled people is just to listen to us and learn from us. When we say that something is ableist, if you are non-disabled, we probably know better than you.

Hear what we have to say on issues. One of the best things my friends do for me is checking a venue's wheelchair accessibility before we go, so I don't have to. They listened when I said that being invited places and not knowing whether or not they are accessible is stressful, and now they look it up themselves for me.

The more you listen to us, the more you will learn. We need disabled and non-disabled people to be fighting our corner and to make the world a better place.



Creature Dis Comforts – taken from Leonard Cheshire

Disability website and still images by Aardman Animation

In this newsletter the serialisation continues of extracts from the advertising campaign, on behalf of Leonard Cheshire Disability, that was launched on line at www.creaturediscomforts.org and in

print in November 2007. Then in January 2008 the campaign was launched on tv and radio with the intention of changing attitudes towards disability. The cast of Creatures was then extended later in 2008.

Based on the Aardman Animations' Creature Comforts series, the '**Creature Dis Comforts**' animations have the voices of disabled people describing, in their own words, the negative attitudes and barriers they experience. Each animation ends with the message "**Change The Way You See Disability**".

In each of these commercials there are animated 'Creatures' talking to camera. There is also a microphone slightly in frame which indicates that an interview is being conducted and they are being recorded.



TV Ad 6 - 'School - Sneaking Up' Callum the Chameleon is sitting on a log with a ladybird in a harness, and talks about how his limited vision affected his schooling, and how his other senses developed to help him out, Callum finally tracks and

catches a fly that has been bothering him throughout the recording.

Chameleon - Callum - voiced by Chris who was 41 and lived in Chatham in Kent. He was diagnosed with the degenerative eye condition Retinitis Pigmentosa at the age of 9, and could only distinguish outlines in bright light. With his life and business partner Fiona, Chris runs a successful business, Wicked Waists, producing bespoke clothing. *"Our business relationship is excellent as we're really positive and don't think anything's impossible, just that there are often obstacles for us to overcome, but we do this by working together."* *"My visual impairment has changed the way we work. As I can no longer see well enough to sketch, I often come up with ideas for the designs and will tell them to Fi who will sketch the design. We're both very visual and Fi can see exactly what I'm describing. She interprets my ideas to design and then to the finished garment."* *"We do spend most of the time working but we take time out for each other as well."* **Future ads feature; Ozzy - Owl, Cath - Cat and Sonny - Shrimp.**



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. They plan to run the Monthly series of walks up to and inclusive of November 2022. Please Check with Kew for any changes to the schedules

Forthcoming BSL Tour Dates TBA – see Kew Website

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

Forthcoming Dementia Friendly Tour Dates

14th September 11am – 12pm

12th October 11am – 12pm

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

Forthcoming Sensory Tour Dates TBA - see Kew Website

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

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.



Sainsbury's Manager Tells Blind Man with Guide Dog To Leave Store - *edited from Metro.uk 3 August 2022*

Keith Valentine, 55, says he was 'shaking and totally miserable' after being told to leave 'immediately' by the staff member – who reportedly even threatened to call the police.

The incident unravelled when Keith – who is the Chief Executive of charity, Fight for Sight – popped in to pick up food for dinner with his daughter. Three Sainsbury's workers soon appeared next to him, with the manager saying: 'You have to leave the store immediately, guide dogs are not allowed in Sainsbury's stores.'

Keith says he has experienced similar situations before after suffering from retinitis pigmentosa for years – but 'never as aggressively as this guy'. After telling the manager that guide dogs were, in fact, allowed, the staff member responded claiming the animals were banned around food or inside restaurants.

The Equality Act 2010 says disabled people have the same rights to services such as accommodation, restaurants, pubs and cafes as everyone else.

Keith says he kept repeating 'I will not leave the shop, I have a right to be here, I have a guide dog' after the manager wouldn't believe his daughter when she read out the law straight from her

phone. His daughter, who doesn't want to be named, was recently diagnosed with the same condition and will eventually also lose her sight. 'It was quite tough for me to have to see her witness this, it could be a glimpse of what she has to face in the future', Keith said. 'I was just speaking very clearly because I wanted the other people around us to hear. We didn't feel safe in that situation.' The situation escalated, with the manager allegedly asking staff to 'put the cameras' on the group and warning he could call the police.

But Keith carried on shopping with Dottie – and then stood waiting for an apology. He was eventually told: 'The rules have all changed recently, so I'll let you off'. But the dad-of-one now feels 'unsafe' returning to the Wapping store in east London, which is part of a route his guide dog Dottie is specifically trained to take him on.

A formal complaint has been submitted to Sainsbury's by Keith, who has since received an apology. An email from Sainsbury's to him said: I would like to confirm, as stated on our website, assistant dogs are absolutely welcome in our stores and petrol stations. I will be contacting the stores management team to highlight the concerns you experienced. Please be assured we have taken this seriously and appropriate action will be taken.

A Sainsbury's spokesperson added: 'We are in touch with Keith to apologise. We have a clear policy which welcomes guide dogs into our stores and we are investigating his experience and reminding all colleagues of our policy.'



Help For Businesses – Assistance Dogs

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has published short guides providing advice on the law and addresses concerns that business owners or other customers may have about assistance dogs accompanying their disabled owner onto their premises.

By providing this clarity, the guidance helps make sure businesses don't miss out on any valuable custom as well as helping them avoid reputational or financial damage through unnecessary legal action from disabled customers.

Thousands of disabled people rely on their assistance dog for day to day activities that many people take for granted. As well as the more familiar guide dogs which assist people with sight impairments, assistance dogs can also be trained to help people with hearing impairments, physical disabilities, diabetes and other disabilities.

Assistance Dogs: A Guide For All Businesses

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/assistance-dogs-guide-all-businesses>

EHRC have produced this updated guide to help businesses understand what they can do to meet their legal duties to assistance dog owners under the Equality Act 2010.

Take The Lead: A Guide To Welcoming Customers With Assistance Dogs

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/take-lead-guide-welcoming-customers-assistance-dogs>

EHRC have produced this updated guide to help tourism businesses welcome people with access requirements.



Be My Eyes: The Phone App That Lets You Lend Your Eyes To A Blind Person – *edited from www.bemyeyes.com/*



**be my
eyes**

Be My Eyes is a free mobile app with one main goal: to make the world more accessible for blind and low-vision people. The app connects blind and low-vision individuals with sighted volunteers and companies from all over

the world through a live video call.

Since the app was launched in January 2015 5,619,492 volunteers have signed up to assist blind and low-vision users. Be My Eyes users can request assistance in over 180 languages making the app the biggest online community for blind and low-vision people as well as one of the largest micro-volunteering platforms in the world! Every day, volunteers sign onto Be My Eyes to lend their sight to blind and low-vision individuals to tackle challenges and solve problems together.

The Be My Eyes story started in Denmark in 2012 with Hans Jørgen Wiberg, a Danish furniture craftsman, who is visually impaired himself. Through his work at 'The Danish Association of the Blind', he recognized that blind or low-vision people often needed a little assistance to solve everyday tasks. However, it wasn't until a blind friend told him that he used video calls to connect with family and friends, who could help him with these tasks, that Hans Jørgen got the idea for Be My Eyes. He believed that the technology of video calls could be used to visually assist blind or low-vision individuals, without them having to rely on friends and family, but using a network of volunteers.

Since the release of the iOS app, an Android version has been in high demand. The Android version was finally released in October 2017. In December 2017 Be My Eyes was chosen as Google Play

Best Apps of 2017 in the categories; “Most Innovative”, “Best Daily Helper” and “Best Hidden Gem”, and in May 2018 Be My Eyes won the Google Play Award 2018 for “Best Accessibility Award”.

In February 2018, the feature Specialized Help was launched with Microsoft as first partner company. Specialized Help enables blind and low-vision users to connect with official company representatives for accessible and efficient customer support. Be My Eyes now offers a variety of corporate solutions besides Specialized Help, including Be My Eyes for Work, Corporate Volunteering, Be My Eyes Experiences and Be My Eyes Careers.



An Experience of Moving – *extract from SCAN’s Archive of Newsletters 1997*

Richard, a former member of SCAN and a regular contributor to SCAN’s early newsletters, had sustained a severe brain injury in a motorcycle accident. He experienced multiple physical injuries and damage to his brainstem, but after a long spell in intensive care followed by intensive rehabilitation, he was able to live a reasonably independent life despite the ongoing effects of his injury. In 1997 he wrote about his experience of moving into a two bedroom housing association bungalow that was being adapted for his needs. The following is an extract from his comments

“At the arranged meeting with the site foreman, who had made lots of notes, I felt confident about the whole project. I made three visits during the completion of the bungalow. But what actually happened with several issues was that I ended up with what the site foreman perceived was appropriate for me rather than what I'd requested.

He disputed the height of the work surfaces in the kitchen. I can't cook so wanted them conventional height for my Carer. His response was to shrug and said 'this is for a disabled kitchen, mate, the level is supposed to be for a wheelchair'. Each problem had to be thrashed out and seemed to be regarded with irritation, as if I was being an ungrateful fuss pot. On other occasions if I had not dug my heels in I would have ended up with a situation that would have made life extremely difficult

In general there is a willingness to address the need for housing disabled tenants, but we are still perceived as stereo type wheelchair users (paraplegics with perfect upper bodies), not to see us as individuals with individual needs. Standard 'disabled housing' is a big step in the right direction, but necessary customisation is still regarded as a luxury.

I do have a lovely home but the struggle to get it the way that I wanted was unbelievable. Coping with a severe disability is an

achievement. Add the minefield of moving without sympathetic assistance and you have an Everest to climb. Unless experiences like mine are shared and discussed things will never change. The question is, is ignorance an excuse for economy and is awareness too expensive?



Staines Shopmobility

making staines accessible



**Two Rivers (West Car park),
Mustard Mill Road,
STAINES, TW18 4BL.
Telephone 01784 459416**

Days that the service has been open have been restricted during August but should change again in September.

Please check before you set out

stainesshopmo@btconnect.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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Spelthorne Para Sports Club



**Spelthorne
ParaSports 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



Day Respite Care In Spelthorne



In 2007, St Peter's Church Hall in Laleham Road was adapted and refurbished to create day respite care facilities with grants from Spelthorne Borough Council, Surrey County Council and the Diocese of London. Daybreak opened in 2008 and offers a high

standard of care, entertainment and delicious food to elderly and disabled people who are resident in the Borough of Spelthorne, whilst their carer takes a well-earned break. The Centre is led by a Nurse Manager and trained volunteers, some of whom also have medical qualifications.

DayBreak currently offers care on a Tuesday between 10 am and 3 pm. Most medical conditions can be accommodated but the building is unsuitable for those who 'wander'. Transport can be provided for those able to sit in a saloon car, others, including those in wheelchairs, use local transport companies to access the Centre. For more information, please contact: Sally Kidd, Nurse Manager, please leave a message on 07761 047 930. Email: daybreak@stmaryandstpeterstaines.co.uk



Shared Lives Schemes – Surrey Choices



Shared Lives is a national scheme that offers a unique and community-based model of care and support. We run Shared Lives in Surrey and the surrounding area.

Shared Lives Carers open their home, family and community life to sharing it with an adult in need of support. An arrangement can be long term where customers live with a Carer, stay for a short break or have day support. It's extraordinary because ordinary people open up their homes and lives to others all over the UK.

Living with a Shared Lives family provides our customers with independence in their own community. Carers are matched to their needs and these will be linked with a home that suits them, fully respecting their independence and choice.

The service is registered and inspected by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and we work closely with CQC to continually improve our service. One of the joys of Shared lives is how flexible it can be as it is personalised around the needs of individuals.

Support can vary for a few hours a week, to someone becoming a full-time family member. It can also support people short term for example when they are recovering from an operation, or emergency respite such as when a family member of full time Carer needs to stay in hospital.

If you would like any further information on any of our services please complete the form or contact us using the details below.

Head Office Address:

Surrey Choices, Fernleigh Activity Centre, Fernleigh Close, Walton-on-Thames, Surrey, England. KT12 1RD.

Telephone Numbers: Office – 01483 806806 (Monday – Friday 8.00am – 4.00pm)

Short Breaks – 01483 806550 (24 hours a day) Text – 07860 020130

Surrey County Council Emergency Duty Team – 01483 517898 (Monday – Friday 5.00pm – 9.00am and Weekends 24 hours a day)

Email: info@surreychoices.com



Transport For London (TfL) Wheelchair Access and Avoiding Stairs

Step-free access means lifts, ramps and level surfaces so you don't have to use stairs or escalators, and can avoid the step and gap onto our trains, buses and boats.

Step-Free Stations And Vehicles

All our bus routes are served by low-floor vehicles, with a dedicated space for one wheelchair user and an access ramp. Buses can also be lowered to reduce the step-up from the pavement.

Around a quarter of Tube stations, half of Overground stations, most piers, all tram stops, the Emirates Air Line and all DLR stations have step-free access.

Many boats have boarding ramps to give step-free access.

All taxis (black cabs) have a wheelchair ramp and some private hire vehicles (minicabs) have step free access.

Lifts Out Of Service

If you arrive at a Tube, TfL Rail or Overground station and the lift is unavailable, staff will help you to plan an alternative journey to your destination. If there isn't a reasonable alternative route, we'll book you a taxi (at our cost) to take you to your destination or another step-free station from where you can continue your journey.

Maps And Guides

Some step-free stations still have a gap and step between the platform and the train. The Tube map shows which Underground, Overground and DLR stations are step-free. The blue symbol shows step-free access from street to train and the white symbol shows step-free access from street to platform.

We also produce detailed maps for step-free journeys and avoiding stairs. We know some customers find being underground difficult, so we have a map which shows where the tunnels are across our network. Find accessibility guides and maps.

<https://tfl.gov.uk/transport-accessibility/accessibility-guides-and-maps>



Carers Don't Need To Be Paid Compliments – Just To Be Paid - Edited from Article by Dr Frances Ryan in The Guardian June 2018

It's estimated that in 2018 there were the 6.5 million unpaid carers in the UK – largely women – who are being left to pick up the pieces. Almost 180,000 of them are children (or as many as 700,000, due to underreporting).

There's a habit of romanticising caring: it's easier to focus on the altruism than the final electric demands. Many carers juggle work and caring responsibilities but one in five is forced to give up work altogether, meaning all that person has to live off is just ****£69.70** a week in carer's allowance for a minimum of 35 hours. More than 1.3 million people provide 50 hours of care a week or more but

receive no more social security for it. ****Current (2022-2023) Rate of Carer's Allowance**

Research by the Disability Benefits Consortium, a national coalition of more than 80 organisations, found the majority of people on out-of-work sickness benefits are struggling to afford to eat, pay bills or get to hospital appointments.

Is this the life we want for the people giving up their days and nights? Not only is increasing social security for Carers the right thing to do, it's economically prudent: Carers save the economy £132bn a year, an average of £19,336 per carer. This is often at the cost of their own health; almost three-quarters of Carers in the UK say they have suffered mental ill health as a result of caring, while well over half report their physical health has worsened, according to new research issued by Carers UK.

Family Carers are not human sticking plasters for squeezed council budgets. Rather, it's because there's a social care crisis that unpaid carers are under more pressure than ever. Those who suggest families should just take more slack are not typically the ones who are going to be suffering from exhaustion at 5am or counting out 50p coins because the Carers' Allowance doesn't stretch the week. If politicians wish to show they value carers, it's going to take hard cash, not platitudes.

www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/jun/14/hidden-workforce-saves-billions-more-state-support-hardworking-britain



In Britain, It's Not Just Train Toilets That Disabled People Can't Get Into – Edited from Guardian Article

written by Chloe Timms January 2017

When it comes to a day out, I don't do spontaneous. I'm an organisational bore. Booking a cab, looking up train times, finding a restaurant. This obsessive planning isn't out of choice but circumstance. I was born with spinal muscular atrophy, a genetic muscle-wasting condition, and I've used an electric wheelchair since I was a toddler. Like many other disabled people, I find the stresses of planning a day out are exacerbated when everyday activities, such as catching a train or finding a public toilet, are an obstacle.

In my lifetime the UK has become a more accessible place for disabled people, with efforts to adapt facilities and transport going some way to improving the ease of independence. But the mission isn't complete. The concept of accessibility is an inconsistent and unreliable one that can leave even the most rigorous plan in tatters. If I travel to London for the day, something I enjoy doing regularly, I can be forced to go 13 hours without the use of a toilet.

I've got the reputation of having a steel bladder, but this struggle also means anything more than three glasses of wine is a no-go and coffee is definitely out of the question.

So-called accessible toilets often feel like a box-ticking exercise, a list of features which meet "accessible" requirements. For a disabled person like me, who can't stand at all, adding a grab rail and an adjustable sink doesn't mean I can use it.

This hasn't gone unnoticed. An initiative called Changing Places seeks to improve this by creating toilets that cater for needs like mine and provide facilities such as ceiling hoists and changing tables. These facilities are life-changing, but not the norm. But you need to be in the right place at the right time if you're out and need the loo.

Not enough is being changed to make the UK fully accessible. Until disabled people's voices are heard, attitudes towards accessibility will remain complacent. Getting out into the world and having fun shouldn't be a struggle of organisational hell – but until accessibility is redefined, this is the reality for many disabled people. To see the full article use the following link into your web browser www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jan/05/train-toilets-disabled-people-anne-wafula-strike#comment-90560109



The Changing Places Consortium is a group of organisations working to support the rights of people with profound and multiple learning disabilities and/or other physical disabilities. Established in 2005, the Consortium campaigns for Changing Places to be installed in all big public spaces so people can access their community.



The management of the Elmsleigh Centre Changing are proposing that a Changing Places Facility will be installed in the centre adjacent to Costa. They have been liaising with the Changing Places Consortium on the layout and have taken into account all their requirements.

SCAN has been contacted and our Chairman has submitted a response to Centre Manager



Less Than 1% of MPs Are Disabled

The following is edited from Opinion By Grace Quantock

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/its-appalling-less-1-mps-27391412>

Just five MPs described themselves as disabled at the last election - less than 1% of the 650 elected parliamentarians - compared with one in five people in the UK who see themselves as disabled.

There have never been enough disabled people in public life – and the Covid pandemic has only made a bad situation worse. Take the very heart of our -democracy, the House of Commons, where only a handful of Members of -Parliament are disabled. At the last election, it seemed there were five MPs who had described themselves as disabled – Labour’s Emma Lewell-Buck, Marsha de Cordova and Marie Rimmer, and Tories Robert Halfon and Paul Maynard.

With 650 MPs in total, appallingly that is less than 1%. Contrast that with the one in five people in the UK who consider themselves disabled. Even those who make it to the Commons have faced significant difficulties to get there.

The data for disability is complicated, but in 2020 just 5.8% of new appointments were disabled, down from 6% in 2019. Recent data shows 4.7% of new public appointees reported a disability that reduced their ability to carry out day-to-day tasks. Lord Holmes of Richmond, a disabled peer, led a Parliamentary Review into opening up public appointments to disabled people in 2018. He says: “Ultimately, this is only a question of talent. All of that bright, brilliant talent, resting within disabled people up and down the UK. If you have the leadership, the culture and the unstinting commitment to go and seek out and connect with all of that talent, you will get to a far better place, and get a far better result.”

This lack of representation means our lives are being affected by people who do not represent the public they are there to serve. Can we risk excluding the best people for the job, just because they are blind, or autistic or use sticks?

Lee “Lost Voice Guy” Ridley, author, comedian and Britain’s Got Talent winner in 2018, says: “The current media portrayal of disabled people is where we’re either seen as superhuman or as a burden on the society. We want to live our lives as normal as we can, so we want to be treated just like everyone else too. But, unless we see more disabled people living their lives in the public eye, the way that society views us is never going to change.”

Getting into Parliament as a disabled person includes extra costs such as British Sign Language interpreters or travel assistance. But the Government closed the Access to Elected Office Fund in England (which covered these costs) in 2015, and the similar EnAble Fund lasted a year. Ms Lewell-Buck says: “There are millions of people with disabilities in this country and they’re not getting a voice in Parliament. What you need is those people at the table from the get-go, not just to tick a box towards the end. We’re

all essentially the same. We just all have different challenges in life.”



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 amount of relevant news being received from **Disability Rights (DRUK)** and the **Surrey Adult Social Care Information & Engagement Team** has become too extensive to continue to include all of it as part of the main SCAN newsletters and will now be distributed as separate documents that will be enclosed with each monthly SCAN newsletter and will only be sent to an abridged mailing list.*

*If you are interested in reading the news in a paper copy of these bulletins and have not received copies, please contact me by sending a text message (with your name and postal address) to 07859 639025 (Please Note our New Number). If your preference is for an electronic copy then please either email me on info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk or use the ‘**Contact SCAN**’ form on our website pages at www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/*



Disability Empowerment Network – North Surrey & Surrey Wide



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

covers the areas of Runnymede, Spelthorne, Woking & Surrey Heath.

All Empowerment Meetings Continue To Be Held Via Zoom

North Surrey DEN meetings Monday 5th September 2022 - 1pm

Surrey Wide DEN meetings Monday 12th September 2022 - 6pm

Please contact Yasmin Broome, Engagement Officer at Surrey Coalition email: Yasmin.Broome@surreycoalition.org.uk Telephone or SMS text 0745 5267424 for details of how to participate in meetings remotely.



More From Former SCAN Member Darren Swift

(Swift) - *From AFPST Website – Armed Forces Para-Snowsport Team* <https://afpst.co.uk/>

Darren Swift – Former Green Jacket, ‘Swift’ talks about his time on the slopes.... As an athlete and mentor, double above knee amputee ‘Swift’ has achieved enormous success on the snow. *“The charity has enabled me to make new friends in a group of like-minded people – an opportunity which is just as important as any new-found skills on the slopes”.*

In 1991, 26-year-old Swift, was caught up in a ‘coffee jar’ explosion that blew away both his legs. *“The AFPST has shown me that there is always more to be squeezed out of life. I would encourage others to come and have a go. There’s such a sense of community and a healthy rivalry between the disciplines. Being part of the team has inspired me to keep reaching onwards and upwards.”*

When Darren started to ski with a snowboard, there were no bindings for the boards that could accommodate his thighs. He designed his own, but he realised that he needed something that could suspend his legs above the board or risk serious injury to his hips and spine. Working alongside his good friend and co-founder Dale Rennard, the pair have created a solution that promises to revolutionise the para-snowboarding world. *“The AFPST has helped me to re-energise binding development by providing the necessary connections to sponsors who have made further advancement possible. Already we have tested and proven the design concept of suspension in bindings. We are now working out how to make them lighter, more ergonomic and cheaper to produce.*



I've also been fortunate enough to join and volunteer with organisations such as Blesma, The Not Forgotten Association, the Royal British Legion and The Soldiers Charity (ABF). Mentoring soldiers from the wounded, injured and sick community to return to an active and fulfilling, albeit slightly

different, life has been and still is hugely rewarding.

www.darrenswift.co.uk

Note from Editor – Darren will be hopefully attending our AGM in October (see below) either ‘in person’ or via ZOOM



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



The quarterly joint 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/

SCAN’s AGM will be on **Friday 7th October 2022 starting at 3pm.** It is intended to be a hybrid meeting and the Goddard Meeting Room at the council offices Knowle Green will be available for anyone who wishes to attend ‘in person’ but a zoom session will also be arranged for those who wish to join ‘virtually’.

Please use the contact details above if you require further information.

To mark our 30th Anniversary, this year’s AGM Guest Speakers will be former SCAN members and supporters who will be attending either ‘in person’ or virtually.

As in prior years, there will be a short break after the AGM and an abridged agenda for the **Spelthorne’s Physical, Sensory & Cognitive Disability forum** will follow. Details are on SCAN’s web site at www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/news/scan-news/spscd-forum/



EasyFundraising

Over 6,000 shops and sites will donate to

Spelthorne Committee for Access Now,

including all the big names like eBay, John Lewis & Partners, Argos, ASOS, M&S and Just Eat!

Plus, you could raise up to £50 donations when you use easyfundraising to save money on your household bills including car and home insurance, energy, phone contract or broadband. Uswitch, GoCompare, Confused.com and many more will all donate to us for FREE!

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!

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/



30th Anniversary For SCAN

The review of the archive of newsletters has uncovered a number of new projects and campaigns that have more than made up for anything in the archive that couldn't be traced.

Space in each of the paper editions of the newsletters is naturally going to be limited, but we will be trying to secure additional funding for a new newsletter project to run from April 2023.

Our web site will probably be able to cover anything that could not be included in the printed newsletters.

Anyone who has a connection with disability is welcome to send me their comments on any of the articles published or to send me details of your own experiences. Either fill in the '**Contact SCAN**' form on our web page www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/ or email me at info@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.

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