

Spelthorne

Committee

Access

Now



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1992 – 2024



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March 2024

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Disability Charity 'Disappointed' In Peterborough Station Quarter Consultation

<https://www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/politics/council/disability-charity-disappointed-in-station-quarter-consultation-after-sight-impaired-staff-given-visual-presentation-4502078>

The Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) is listed as one of four disability access groups which were invited to “specific engagement activities” around the £65m regeneration project in Peterborough in its 152-page outline business case.

But Bernie Reddington, RNIB regional campaigns officer, says that the charity was given a single visual presentation on the project last month, despite herself and her colleagues having sight impairments. “I am a little disappointed with what has been described as consultation so far,”

Ms Reddington told the Local Democracy Reporting Service (LDRS). “The engagement is a bit limited at the moment; so far, we’ve had one presentation.” It's really essential that that consultation is made accessible,” she continued, “because at the moment the presentation is visual, which doesn’t make it a very fair process.”

Ms Reddington has called on Peterborough City Council (PCC), responsible for coordinating consultation on the designs, to present their design proposals as tactile models and has also offered to take those involved in the project on a guided walk around the current station area wearing “simulation specs” which replicate different kinds of visual impairments.

A PCC spokesperson said they are “sorry to hear of any disappointment felt following the meeting in January” and that the Station Quarter project team “welcomes the opportunity for a guided walk to explore and discuss proposed options”.

The outline business case lays out possible consequences of the project and includes images of what the new redevelopment may look like. Plans include refurbishing the station’s current entrance, building a new western entrance and car park and creating a “characterful city quarter for the residents of Peterborough” with just over a hectare of new public land.

Aside from the RNIB, the other disability access groups listed as consultees in the Station Quarter outline business case are MPAG, or the Making Peterborough Accessible Group, an informal group of councillors interested in disability advocacy led by Cllr Bryan Tyler (Conservatives, Gunthorpe), Health Watch and the Disability Forum of Peterborough Council for Voluntary Service.

A spokesperson for the latter organisation said that it held talks with members and PCC’s chief executive Matt Gladstone in early January and “looks forward to a promising partnership aimed at

enhancing the city's infrastructure”.

The large-scale project is a collaboration between PCC, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA), train operator LNER and Network Rail.



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 10 March 2024

Forthcoming Dementia Friendly Tour Dates

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

Wednesday 13 March 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 10 March 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 6 March 2024 11am to 12pm





Current Scams

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

Identity Theft and Identity Fraud

In a sense our unique identity is all that we have. And alas it's not rare for our personal details to be known and on some occasion stolen by identity thieves.

They can readily get a hold of our personal information to use our stolen identity to obtain goods or services by deception. So keeping safe and not disclosing our personal details to all and sundry is best practice.

The first we learn of ID fraud could be when we get a bill or invoice for something we've not ordered, or when we have letters from debt collectors for debts that aren't ours. All a bit scary and then we have to take ASAP action to repair the damage.

Taking actions before the event is better of course, and sooner = better. Actions we should take are many, and include shredding any details about ourselves before putting in the rubbish bin; bank statements especially.

Any unsolicited contact from a claimed legit organisation like a bank or building society or tax office, say, requesting that we CONFIRM details about ourselves we must treat as a scam. Almost certainly it's someone who has some of our details, but is missing out on other security details bits that we're just NOT going to disclose.

Especially passwords, PINs, account numbers. We must ensure that our computer is software protected against malware, firewalled (see our computer support person re), and auto updates switched on for essential software. Otherwise we're leaving the back door open.

Never should we click on suggested links from someone we do not know. Never should we download files from non trusted contacts. Malware (malicious software) introduces bugs to our PC to steal information, often introduced via us downloading attachments to emails.

We must use different passwords for all the websites we log into. And they all have to be "clever". Particularly logins for any payments. Clever meaning that we use a 3 word password, like blueApplesunshine.

Any three words will do for this password style and is close to being hacker proof. The more digits that we can be bothered to use the better too. It's a pain to run with dozens of different passwords but a lot less painful than sorting out the mess once our stolen ID has been used to obtain a bank loan or buy a car or obtain credit cards or open a bank account, or, or....

Via social media it's dicey to accept invitations from people we don't know and best that we share our profile with only known and trusted contacts.

Even showing pics of our car number plate gives clues to a fraudster to seek our address from DVLA records. Thieves can steal personal information the old fashioned way too; from our wallet or purse by taking a driving licence, or credit or bank cards, or obtain our credit report by posing as someone who has a lawful right to the information.

Though banks are retreating from our High Streets we still need to interact with our provider; say if an expected debit or credit card statement doesn't arrive.

Let's not use mobile banking via public wi-fi networks either and if our identity is stolen then it's a must do to immediately contact our bank and credit card provider.

So; a heap of bewares and dos and don'ts here. All calling us to do something that requires effort. We all prefer an easy life but if we don't buy into this call to action then there's every chance that we could feature amongst the next scam statistics.

75% of fraud in the UK originates from outside of these isles and highlights why it's difficult to police the bad guys and bring them to justice. Thus we just have to be very vigilant and self protect against the tsunami of scams coming at us.



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.

Similarities with Granddaughter (at aged one year)

We both:

1. Have feeds (although mine isn't milk and is through a tube).
2. Have mashed food (although she's already overtaken me on this. I don't really have food at all now).
3. Are quite unintelligible, although she is a lot cuter than me.
4. Need help walking.
5. Face-plant in sand on the beach.
6. Drool.

7. Cry when unhappy.
8. Like honey-yogurt.
9. Choke on some food (but win in the end).
10. Have cool punk hairstyles.
11. Like Roy Orbison.
12. Have fat cheeks.
13. Like shiny objects



I Just Want To Be Able To Move Around My Own House.

Why Is That So Hard? <https://metro.co.uk/2024/02/14/think-moving-home-hard-try-a-disabled-person-20278320/>

Samantha Renke is an actor, presenter, metro columnist and disability rights campaigner.

What's the most stressful event you've had to go through? For many adults, it's either a wedding, a divorce, or moving home. Well, I've never been married or subsequently divorced but I do know that moving house late last year has given me more stress and grey hairs than I can count.

It's been frankly chaotic since I made a decision to leave my trendy flat in the heart of London to move back to my hometown in Lancashire after the best part of 12 years. My eventual moving day was two days before Christmas. I'm clearly a glutton for punishment.

Of course, this would be stressful for anyone – but I can't help but feel that living in a world that seems to not care much about disabled people can turn even minor, everyday problems, into colossal ones.

Ultimately, I wanted to be closer to family and friends and yes, I wanted to be woken up by birdsong in morning – not the noise of people urinating outside our flats, which was doubly grim for a wheelchair user as I couldn't hop over the puddle, having to simply roll through it! But my desire to leave the hustle and bustle of the capital was about so much more than that.

As a wheelchair user and someone whose needs have changed over the years, relying on more mobility equipment and support, my living space was just too small and impractical. All my space was being taken up by mobility aids like my large power wheelchair, and even small things that the homes of non-disabled don't need, like a pump for my wheelchair or a sliding board for me to move from my chair to other seats.

My flat was no longer fit for purpose. Leaving my home left me with mixed emotions. I fought for years to get it and it was in such a prime location, especially for work. But I had to think about my future, and put simply I needed more square footage.

There's also a devastating shortage of accessible homes – with just 9% of dwellings in England containing basic accessibility features like a bathroom at entrance level or wide doorways.

Realising how little appropriate accommodation is available makes me realise how warped and ableist housing policy is in the UK. I'm not asking for anything impossible – I don't want a robot cleaner or teleportation machine, I just want my basic access requirements met. And finding a home that meets even these is really only half the problem. If you are a disabled person who has found a home, you may not qualify for any financial support from local authorities to help adapt it.

The Disabled Facilities Grant helps disabled people fund alterations, but it is capped at £30,000 and hasn't increased by a penny since 2008. Over 15 years, through recessions, pandemics, and inflation, and disabled people like me haven't been deemed worthy of extra support to make our homes liveable.

I normally receive financial support to hire a PA, and had to wait weeks to find out if I would receive the same amount of money. Like every process of getting support as a disabled person, it can feel like there are wins and losses. I had the win of finding out I could hire a PA for 4.5 more hours a week, but my heating bills would increase and I would have to pay over £200 a year for an emergency alarm that was free in my old accommodation. It's all part of the disability price tag.

Since moving, I've felt a wave of calm come over me knowing this will be where I will stay for a long time. This is because life with a disability label is often filled with constant fear that support will be taken away from you. Austerity and cuts have always negatively impacted the disabled community. We seem to always be at the sharp end of an onslaught of cost-cutting.

I truly believe the lack of accessible homes and provisions, facilities and grants come down to the simple fact that disabled people are often not afforded the same basic humanity as non-disabled people. We are constantly measured by our productivity and what we contribute towards society in order to be considered 'worthy' of investing in.



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!

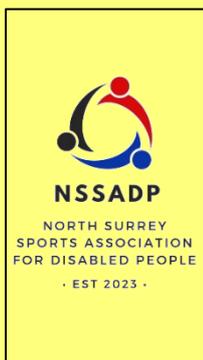
Where - Spelthorne Leisure Centre, Knowle Green, Staines,

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



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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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



Braille Menus Introduced As ASK Italian Aims To Make Restaurants More Inclusive

<https://www.standard.co.uk/business/business-news/braille-menus-introduced-as-ask-italian-aims-to-make-restaurants-more-inclusive-b1126831.html>

Braille menus to help blind and partially sighted customers have been introduced by ASK Italian as part of an initiative to make its restaurants more welcoming to everyone.

ASK will also add braille signage on toilet doors and roll out British Sign Language (BSL) training courses for front of house staff.

The initiatives come as a survey for the chain, which has 66 restaurants across the UK, found more than half (57%) of people with sight, hearing or speech problems have felt anxious about visiting a restaurant while four in 10 (41%) said they have felt nervous. One in five (21%) said they have felt intimidated and three-quarters (76%) said they had been put off visiting a restaurant in the past five years. On average, those questioned had missed out on three celebratory occasions due to their disability.

To mark the launch of braille menus, and as part of its annual local artist collaboration to decorate its venues for Christmas, ASK partnered with blind artist Clarke Reynolds, who created an artwork for the Park Street restaurant in central London which includes a snowflake made from the braille alphabet and part of the festive menu.

Mr Reynolds lost sight in his right eye aged six and was diagnosed in his early 30s with retinitis pigmentosa, a genetic condition which causes vision loss over time. "As an artist, I'm on a mission to make braille as powerful as letters in the visual world, and normalise blindness and sight loss using our universal language," he said. "I'm overjoyed to be creating the first braille window display in the UK and I hope it helps in educating the wider public around how important it is to those in the visually impaired community.

"Having the opportunity to showcase the beauty of braille at ASK Italian is amazing, and I hope that it brings the topic of sight loss

to the forefront of people's mind and get a deeper understanding of the struggles of inclusivity in a world made for those who can see."

Braille, developed by Louis Braille in the 1820s, enables blind and visually impaired people to read and write by touch, using combinations of raised dots representing the alphabet, words, punctuation and numbers.

ASK's marketing director Corinne Prior said it was "heartbreaking" that so many people with sight problems found it challenging to enjoy a meal out. "We're committed to making our restaurants a welcoming and inclusive place for everyone, and are always looking for ways to make our restaurants more accessible."

ASK is inviting suggestions on how to make its restaurants more inclusive and accessible as part of its Menu for Everyone initiative.

People can share comments on

<https://www.instagram.com/askitalian/> or by emailing info@askitalian.co.uk

Censuswide surveyed 1,000 UK adults who are deaf/hard of hearing, blind/visually impaired and experience speech difficulties.



London's Best Accessible And Disabled-Friendly Restaurants

<https://www.standard.co.uk/going-out/restaurants/accessible-restaurants-london-b1135451.html>

London's restaurant scene looks far smaller if you're disabled. Stairs, tiny toilets or a general lack of access awareness in our squashed, ancient Capital means swathes of restaurants have effectively hoisted a "no entry" sign to many with additional needs.

A Government survey in 2022 found 40 per cent of disabled people found it difficult to access restaurants, cafes or bars, highlighting the lack of accessible toilets, as well as large-print menus, hearing loops and autism awareness.

"The UK hospitality industry loses approximately £163 million every month due to accessibility issues," says Meera Mawkin, who highlights accessible restaurants at <https://www.letsgooutout.uk/>.

"I've seen disabled-access bathrooms used as storage rooms, emergency cords tied up, slippery floors, dimly lit corridors, and other issues which mean individuals like me may prefer to stay at home over feeling uncomfortable in a restaurant."

But some are brilliant at welcoming Londoners with disabilities. We tested restaurants around town with a wheelchair-user who required an accessible loo.



TV Personality Shared Video Of Being Helped Up Stairs After Lift On Jubilee Line Was Out Of Order

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/ade-adeptan-wheelchair-accessibility-public-transport-tube-step-free-b1124565.html>

TV presenter Ade Adepitan has hit out at the lack of accessibility on public transport after sharing a video of being carried up stairs on the Tube. The wheelchair basketball player and media personality shared a clip of two members of the public carrying him up a flight of stairs on the Jubilee line because the lift was broken.

He called the situation “dangerous” and said it was proof that public transport does not work for disabled people. “Have you ever had to be carried up the stairs on your commute to work, as the lifts you need to use are out of order and there is no one on the platform to help you?” he said in a message directed to senior Cabinet ministers, including Rishi Sunak. “This is dangerous and it proves that the transport system isn’t fit to cater to people with physical disabilities and you’re still gonna try demonise us?”

In the clip, the TV star can be heard to say: “Shout out to these guys who are carrying me up the stairs on the Jubilee line, but this is out of order ... what a liberty.” He then goes on to investigate whether a lift to take him down the stairs is also out of order, after being told that it is not working too.

According to campaigning body Transport for All, only 92 out of 272 London Underground stations have step-free access, although at around half of these there is no level boarding and so a manual boarding ramp is required.

Meanwhile, the Docklands Light Railway uses driverless trains and stations are generally unstaffed, meaning those requiring assistance may not be able to use it.

Plans announced for ten more stations, including Arnos Grove, Finchley Road and West Hampstead to become step free were announced in 2023.

The TfL website states that if a passenger arrives at a Tube, Elizabeth line or Overground station and the lift is unavailable, staff will help you to plan an alternative journey to your destination. It also promises to book disabled passengers a taxi at TfL cost if there are no reasonable step-free routes.

Mark Evers, Transport for London's Chief Customer Officer, said: "We're very sorry for the distressing experience that Ade Adepitan experienced while travelling with us and we understand the significant impact any unavailability of lift services can cause to customers who rely on them. "We are committed to making transport in London more accessible - there are now more than 200 stations with step-free access across London's transport network. We also ensure that lifts are repaired quickly and that

information about their availability is prompt."



Disabled Woman Has To Crawl Up Overground Station Stairs On Her Bottom Because Of Lift Fault

<https://www.standard.co.uk/news/london/wheelchair-user-dalston-junction-overground-station-lift-fault-disabled-b1138235.html>

Jennie Berry, a disabled content creator who runs a blog called the Wheelie Good Life, said there had been no prior warning of the lifts being out of service at Dalston Junction station . Ms Berry said she was forced to physically pull herself up the steps as there were no staff around to help.

Posting footage of the incident on Instagram, she said: "I crawled up the stairs and staff appeared when I was 3 steps from the top. They informed me that the lift has been broken for a month & 'didn't you know?'. "I explained I'm not from here and surprisingly I don't keep a log of functioning lifts in London. "At the top of the 15 min climb, the lift technician decides to announce that he's actually got the lift working. The two staff members behind me think this is hilarious and you can hear them laughing on the video about it."

The 29-year-old added that the staff laughing was "beyond belief", saying: "I literally just wanted to get back to my hotel before a busy day of work like everyone else."

The TfL Go app was showing Dalston as fully accessible but arrived to find the lift broken. There's no way I can get up those steps so had no choice but to go back a stop and get the bus.

In a message to Ms Berry on the post, a TfL spokesperson said: "We are sorry to hear this happened. We take this seriously and will be thoroughly investigating this. We have sent you a direct message."

Mark Evers, Transport for London's Chief Customer Officer, said: "We're deeply sorry for the distressing experience that Jennie Berry has while travelling with us and we are urgently looking into this incident with Arrival Rail London, who operates the London Overground on our behalf, to ensure that it doesn't happen again. We understand that lifts being out of service can have a significant impact on customers who rely on them, and we are committed to making transport in London more accessible. We are also working harder to ensure that lifts are repaired quickly and that information about their availability is published promptly. I regret that in this instance the necessary information wasn't readily available."





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) – News Roundup – February 2024

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 February 2024

Disability Rights UK responds to Government's 'Weak, Short-Term' Disability Action Plan

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/mailing/url?u=66703&qid=12184798> Last week, the Government launched its Disability Action Plan (DAP), which has been described by DPOs including Disability Rights UK as weak, and short-term. The plan prioritises accessibility - something it has to fulfil under the Equalities Act 2010 - whilst ignoring the grave and systemic forms of discrimination Disabled people face at the hands of this current Government.

DPOs have instead been calling for systemic overhaul and an implementation of our Disabled People's Manifesto, which you can learn more about on the Manifesto website. Find out more about the contents of the DAP and read the full response to the Government's DAP on DR UK's webpage.

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/mailing/url?u=66705&qid=12184798>

Bristol DPO Defeats 'Absolutely Unacceptable' Social Care Policy

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url? u=66706& qid=12184798> The proposed Fair and Affordable Care Act, which would have seen Bristol's Disabled residents forced into care homes if their independent living and at home care costs were seen as 'too expensive', has been scrapped due to the tireless campaigning of grassroots Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs).

Following a hard-fought campaign by Bristol Reclaiming Independent Living (BRIL) and allies across the movement, the councillor responsible for Social Chair Helen Holland wrote to BRIL and other Disabled campaigners to say the policy has been dropped and that the council will work with Disabled people in Bristol and across the country to come up with a new proposal.

DPOs Reject Government's Divisive 'British Homes for British workers' Policy

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url? u=66707& qid=12184798> DPOs have hit back at the Government's proposed 'British homes for British workers' policy for social housing. In their latest attempts to scapegoat migrants for their own housing policy failures, the Government plans to introduce 'priority housing' for people with 'closer connections' to Britain.

Housing should not be a scarce resource those of us precariously housed should have to fight over - it should be safe, affordable and accessible homes for all.

In their response, the DPOs stated 'no matter our backgrounds or circumstances, we all have a right to affordable, accessible housing that keeps us warm and safe. As the leading organisations for Disabled people, we all completely reject this divisive, appalling attempt to scapegoat migrants for the Government's failings.' Read the full statement of opposition on our website.

Disability Groups Call for More Accessible Housing for Private Renters

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url? u=66713& qid=12184798> There are around 9.8 million Disabled people in England, who historically have been overrepresented in social housing, the most affordable and secure form of tenure.

However, the shortage of social housing has meant that renting privately has become the only option for many Disabled people, with 18.8% of them currently relying on the private rented sector. Despite this, 1 in 3 Disabled renters in the private rented sector are forced to live in homes which are unsuitable for them.

Living in unsuitable accommodation has profound negative implications not just for Disabled people but for society at large.

Disabled people living in unsuitable accommodation are less likely to be in work, are more likely to experience a deterioration in their physical and mental health, are more likely to be admitted to hospital as a result of falls, are more likely to rely on social care and, most importantly, cannot live independently.

Following an open letter to the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, the Minister with responsibility for the Renters (Reform) Bill currently progressing through parliament, a meeting was held with ourselves and key officers from the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities (DLUHC) with briefs covering the Property Portal as well as those leading on disability issues.

We reminded the DLUHC officers that the existing housing stock across England is unfortunately often not accessible or adapted to meet Disabled people's needs and currently there is no requirement for landlords to provide basic accessibility information about their properties.

Additionally, only 6% of the Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) available to adapt properties to make them more accessible go to private renters.

Nearly Half of Families With A Disabled Child Living in Poverty

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url?u=66714&qid=12184798> The proportion of families with Disabled children who are living in poverty rose by nearly a third in two years, even before the cost-of-living crisis, according to a new poverty measurement being developed by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

The measurement – which aims to provide a more accurate way of calculating deprivation – shows that nearly half of all individuals in families with at least one Disabled child and one Disabled adult in the UK were living in poverty by 2021-22, according to a new DWP progress report and consultation.

This report found that people living in families with Disabled children were more than twice as likely to be living in poverty than those in families where no-one was Disabled in 2021-22. Those in families with both a Disabled child and a Disabled adult were more than two-and-a-half times more likely to be living in poverty.

Report Into Public Attitudes to Inequalities Launched

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url?u=66717&qid=12184798> Fairness Foundation have released their report entitled 'Unequal Kingdom 2024: Public Attitudes to Inequalities and their Impacts.' The poll looks into the different forms of inequality people in Britain are most worried about and the impact they believe inequalities have on different social and governmental areas.

Key Findings:

- 75% of people are worried about wealth and income inequalities, closely followed by health and educational inequalities; 62% also worry about social and political inequalities.
- Looking at inequalities between groups, people are most concerned about class, disability and ethnicity, as well as region.
- Most think inequality has a negative impact on crime, health, self-esteem, and fair opportunities and rewards, but fewer are aware of the impacts on economy, society and democracy.
- There is a broad consensus of concern about inequality; levels of concern are particularly high among Labour voters, women, and working-class people.

Fairness Foundation stated:

'The findings are broadly in line with the results from other recent attitudinal research in the UK, which consistently shows that people are concerned about economic and regional inequalities. However, this research suggests that many people are increasingly worried about inequalities of class, disability and ethnicity as well. Other inequalities - of health, education, political influence, and status and respect - are also increasingly noticeable.'

While there are political differences in attitudes and awareness, there is a broad consensus of concern, including across generational divides, although women and those on higher incomes are more worried than men and those on lower incomes.'

DR UK's Blog Spot! What Next for Disabled People Living In The Dark? by Dan White

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url?u=66720&qid=12184798> Now the Government quietly drops the energy social tariff whilst Ofgem resurrects Pre-payment forced installation, what next for Disabled people living in the dark? Our Policy Officer Dan White speaks about all the political, economic and social reasons for demanding an energy tariff. Read the blog piece on our website.

Community Reporting Hackathon

This hackathon - funded by the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) -

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url?u=66731&qid=12184798> will examine how Community Reporting and other methods of lived experience storytelling can be made more inclusive and equitable.

The event will bring together experts working with lived experience in research from academia, policy and practice - including experts-by-experience. Specifically, they are focused on making these methods accessible to people who don't communicate using

spoken word, suitable for people who are neurodivergent and actively anti-racist in techniques and delivery.

When and where? 10:30am - 4:30pm, Tuesday 21 May 2024, People's History Museum

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url? u=66732& qid=12184798>

Sign The Petition! Pledge Your Support to the Disabled People's Manifesto!

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url? u=66733& qid=12184798>

The Disabled People's Manifesto was created collaboratively by Deaf and Disabled People's Organisations in England. We have radical demands, aiming to transform society and dismantle the barriers we face in all areas of life. It is a manifesto with equality and justice for all at its heart. It is also available in Easy Read and BSL.

Want to show your support? Sign the petition

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url? u=66736& qid=12184798>

and write to your MP! Visit the Disabled People's Manifesto site to find out more.

Campaign to Reinstate the Access to Elected Office Fund

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/civicrm/ mailing/ url? u=66738& qid=12184798>

Until March 2020, the UK Government provided a fund to meet the costs of reasonable adjustments for Disabled candidates. However, despite evidence that such a Fund is necessary, the Government has so far failed to re-establish it.

We're calling on the Government to reinstate this Access to Elected Office Fund to support Disabled candidates to run in UK parliamentary and local government elections. To support the campaign, share the open letter and tool on your social media!

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 18th March 2024

Surrey Wide DENS daytime with breakout rooms for the different areas. Online only.

Friday 15th March 2024 1.30-3pm

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.



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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/>?



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.

At the moment, this newsletter will be the last issue that will be sent to the public hubs as printed booklets but it is intended to print and distribute single paper copies of the newsletters to these public hubs – libraries and community centres – and if the managers of these hubs send me their contact details I will arrange to add them to the mailing list to received electronic copies so that they can print their own copies. I hope to produce the booklets again as soon as new funding has been sourced.

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/



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/



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