

Spelthorne Committee Access Now



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1992 – 2026



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December 2025

Disabled Mum Ordered To 'Hurry Up'

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/disabled-mum-ordered-hurry-up-35784310>

Dr Jo Winter, from Moseley, was travelling to Copenhagen with her daughter Sally on July 7 for a seven-day trip. Jo, who underwent chemotherapy for **multiple sclerosis (MS)** in January that left her housebound for months, had bought a £1,700 travel wheelchair to help manage her severe fatigue.

Other passengers queuing on the stairs were said to have witnessed staff tagging the chair, before another worker later removed the tag, insisting it could not be taken on the "full" Scandinavian Airlines System flight (SAS). Jo claims she broke down in tears before being forced to walk across the tarmac and up the aircraft steps without her wheelchair. She was then reportedly told to "hurry up" by a staff member.

Jo was told the chair would remain at Birmingham Airport and that her husband would be contacted to collect it, but this did not happen. Instead, an "apologetic" SAS manager in Copenhagen arranged for it to be flown over and delivered to her hotel the following day. Until then, Jo says she had to spend extra on taxis to get around.

The mum admits she had not declared the chair at check-in desk as she was only travelling with hand luggage. Speaking about the ordeal, Jo said: "I was going to Copenhagen with my daughter, and I knew that I would need to do a lot of walking. Airports are incredibly difficult places for people with MS. Whilst I can walk, my greatest symptom of MS is my fatigue and standing up is really difficult. There is a lot of queuing in airports and just walking to the gates is really difficult.

When Sally, 18, tried to speak up for her mum by telling the staff that Jo is protected by various equality acts and that her chair is specifically designed for travel and meets the airline's carry-on requirements, one of them reportedly put his hand up in her face and told her that he was not talking to her.

In stark contrast, travelling home from Copenhagen Airport was a breeze for Jo and SAS staff accommodated her chair with no problems at all. Jo and her family now hope that sharing her story raises awareness of the need for competent disability training in the workplace.

The Mirror contacted Birmingham Airport and Scandinavian Airlines System for comment.



Strangers Grabbing My Wheelchair Must Stop

<https://metro.co.uk/2025/08/24/felt-a-stranger-grab-wheelchairs-handles-immediately-panicked-23968039/>

Melissa Parker

August 24, 2025

Wheeling myself around the town centre in July, I contentedly went about my day, running errands. I'd been about to enter a supermarket when I suddenly felt a heavy, foreign weight pushing on the back of my wheelchair. A man, a stranger, had grabbed hold of the handles and wouldn't let go. Silently, he started pushing me.

Immediately, the hairs on the back of my neck prickled, my skin began to crawl, and fear pooled in the pit of my stomach. Suddenly, I was aware how vulnerable I was. I was completely at the mercy of this man. And all I could think was 'what could he do to me? I have to get away'.

Taking complete control of someone's wheelchair in this way is one of the worst things you can do to a disabled person. It's a stark reminder of the power imbalance that exists between non-disabled and disabled people and that, whether we like to admit it or not, we are at a physical disadvantage.

Thankfully, another non-disabled man intervened and once he told my – for want of a better word – kidnapper that I looked visibly terrified he stopped pushing my chair and walked off without a word. I didn't leave the house alone for weeks after that. When I finally did, I was constantly anxious and fearful that it would happen again. And sadly it did.

No one place is safer than the other and it's become almost familiar and ordinary for this to happen – and that's what makes it most scary. That's why, when I go outside alone now, I try to keep my head down as much as possible and not make eye contact with anyone. I don't want to attract unwanted attention.

I see it as an invasion of my space, my freedom, my independence. Don't get me wrong, there are times when I do need help – like when I've been physically unable to handle the wheelchair because a ramp is too steep, or I am unable to get something from a higher shelf – and in these scenarios I am always grateful when people stop to help.

The fundamental difference though is that, before people interfere on these occasions, they always ask me if they can help. They always give me a choice rather than assume they know what to do for me or to me. I just wish more strangers understood that my consent to being helped always matters and that, when I say 'no', I mean it.



No One Should Have To Prove Their Disability Is Not A Scam <https://observer.co.uk/news/columnists/article/no-one-should-have-to-prove-their-disability-is-not-a-scam> It is deeply offensive to be doubted, even if there are always shameless people eager to take advantage of the system.

The Frenchwoman in the Alpine ticket office had perfected the art of the eye-roll. When we asked for a disabled ticket, she peered down through her window at me, undisguised in her cynicism. Unconvinced by my wheelchair, she demanded disabled ID (the French have a CMI, Carte Mobilité Inclusion). In the absence of any UK equivalent, I gave her my driver's blue badge. She was dismissive. "This is for parking, it's not ID." She was so spectacularly rude, in that priceless Gallic way, that I began to find it all very funny. I cheerfully offered to show her my catheter and urine bag. She shrugged, rolled her eyes again, sold us the concession tickets, sent us to the front of the long queue.

In the cable car up the mountain, as my loved ones fulminated, I was still chortling. I told them to get over it, because I gave up being angry years ago. It's exhausting. And it's boring. Besides, I can see both sides of a situation, sometimes with annoying clarity. I'd never cut it as an activist.

From a disabled person's point of view, of course it is deeply offensive to be questioned or doubted about their condition. As if life isn't hard enough for us, we face the injustice of an able-bodied world picking on us, asking us to prove our right to join in. That ever-present threat of a more sinister society does lurk.

And exploiters exist, always ready to destroy the trust everything hinges upon. It is a fact, publicly unacknowledged because the debate around disability is very polite (just not in France), that a small minority of opportunists try to game every system devised.

So a few shameless individuals will say they need wheelchairs when they really don't in order to jump queues. Others will exaggerate to seek priority treatment, or a concession seat at a concert, with a carer's seat free alongside.

I try not to be judgy. In my time in a chair, though, I've witnessed people taking advantage (and no, I'm not talking about invisible conditions). I've seen passengers get special assistance to board planes and trains and then spring up, sprightly as can be, at the other end; I've seen people misuse blue badges belonging to family members; I've been told by insiders that the reason I can't get accessible seats at a concert is that such concessions are abused.

So they're complicated, these real-world interactions involving distinction, one human compared against another. In the absence of an ideal world, systems set up to help disabled people remain crude measures. We can't legislate against eye-rolls. Nor, I hope, would we want to.



Itzhak Perlman - Polio-Surviving Classical Violinist

<https://ukdhm.org/itzhak-perlman-1945-polio-surviving-classical-violinist/>

Itzhak Perlman, born 31 August 1945 is an Israeli-American violinist, conductor, and music teacher. Over the course of his career, Perlman has performed worldwide, and throughout the United States, in venues that have included a State Dinner at the White House honouring Queen Elizabeth II, and a Presidential Inauguration, and he has conducted the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and the Westchester Philharmonic.

Perlman first became interested in the violin after hearing a classical music performance on the radio. At the age of three, he was denied admission to the Shulamit Conservatory for being too small to hold a violin. He instead taught himself how to play the instrument using a toy fiddle until he was old enough to study at the Academy of Music in Tel Aviv, where he gave his first recital at age 10, before moving to the United States to study at the Juilliard School with the violin pedagogue Ivan Galamian and his assistant Dorothy DeLay.

Perlman contracted polio at age four and has walked using leg braces and crutches since then.

As well as playing and recording the classical music for which he is best known, Perlman has also played jazz, including an album made with jazz pianist Oscar Peterson. Perlman has been a soloist for a number of film scores such as the theme of the 1993 film *Schindler's List* by John Williams, which subsequently won an Academy Award for Best Original Score. More recently, he was the violin soloist for the 2005 film *Memoirs of a Geisha* along with cellist Yo-Yo Ma.

Talking about how his own attitudes about his disability have evolved almost as dramatically as the attitudes of the wider public. "I didn't like it when, early on in my career, the media invariably mentioned how I came on stage using crutches and played sitting down," he confessed. "I wanted to be judged as a musician, to know if I was worthwhile as an artist. And eventually the stories stopped mentioning that. But once I was established I came full circle. I had no problem that people mentioned it. I just didn't want the two things to be mixed up."

Perlman's disability only became an issue when, at 13, he was invited to the U.S. to perform on the Ed Sullivan Show, "that variety hour in which monkeys and ballet dancers shared the stage." He soon entered the Juilliard School where he said he never felt stigmatized by his classmates, but questions about travel, and about playing concerts from a chair ("even though only solo violinists stand, while all those in orchestras and chamber groups sit, just like me") did begin to arise.

“The thing is, disability is not just one thing,” said Perlman. “I might not be able to move my legs, but I can move my brain. To a large extent it’s a matter of attitude. Back in the 1990s, in a ‘Sesame Street’ scene I did, a little girl violinist ran easily up the stairs to the stage, but had trouble playing the violin, while the steps were the curse of the world for me, but the violin was easy.”

Although “accessibility” has improved greatly in recent decades, Perlman said he still faces major roadblocks: Wrangling for permission to use his scooter in order to get to his seat on a plane; entering restaurants (where he sometimes has to use the kitchen entrance); using garbage elevators in hotels, and having to deal with badly planned “so-called accessible bathtubs” and super-high beds. “If designers would just get into a wheelchair and ride around a building many of the problems would be solved,”

Perlman plays the Soil Stradivarius violin of 1714, formerly owned by Yehudi Menuhin and considered one of the finest violins made during Stradivari’s “golden period.” Perlman also plays the Guarneri del Gesu 1743 ‘Sauret’ and the Carlo Bergonzi 1740 ‘ex-Kreisler’.



Disabled Schoolboy Told Wheelchair’s Battery Couldn’t Go On Flight <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-15066811/Schoolboy-tears-EasyJet-wheelchair.html>

Anthony Higgins, 14, from Liverpool, has Duchenne muscular dystrophy which leaves him unable to walk and was returning from a three-day trip to the theme park funded by Make A Wish Foundation when a pilot refused to allow his £1,000 battery on board - despite him flying out with it.

The teenager, also known as AJ, suffers muscle weakness from the progressive genetic disorder and has been 'stuck in his house' unable to attend school since being forced to dump the battery in Paris, his mother said.

Melissa Higgins, a full-time carer, and partner Christopher Harvey, 36, took their family for the 'dream' trip on August 27 but they were left 'humiliated' and in tears when returning home.

The mother-of-four said a pilot refused to allow the wheelchair battery onto the flight back from Paris Charles de Gaulle to Manchester airport on August 29 as the wattage wasn't visible.

When her partner tried to argue their case she claims the pilot's treatment became 'horrible' when he realised he was from Liverpool and said the battery posed a risk to other passengers.

She claims she had paperwork stating it was safe to fly - but was forced to leave the battery in Paris. Without his wheelchair, which

was donated by a charity, the teen is now 'stuck' inside and has 'lost all of his independence'.

Ms Higgins has received an apology from the airline but is hoping for the battery to be returned. The mother, from Speke, Liverpool, said: 'We've not had this problem before. I don't get why all the commotion's gone on for nothing. 'It was a lifelong dream of AJ's to go to Disneyland. He was able to fly to Disneyland with no problems. '[On the plane home] I disconnected the battery and one of the pilots was standing there.

'He walked in and got the other pilot and said to my partner "what's that?" My partner said "it's the battery for his wheelchair" and he said "you can't bring that on the airplane".

'It went through customs perfectly fine. If there was something wrong with it they would've known.' The mother said that a pilot complained there was no wattage on the batteries, despite the batteries not having wattage because they are dry not liquid.

An easyJet spokesman said: 'Safety is easyJet's highest priority and airlines must follow the safety regulations for the carriage of batteries, which are allowed to travel on the aircraft as long as the required information for safe carriage can be provided, and we advise customers of these requirements ahead of travel.

'Unfortunately as the necessary information could not be provided for this battery, in line with safety procedures it was unable to travel. 'However we fully understand the frustration this will have caused and are in contact with the family to offer further assistance and have arranged to return the battery to them today.'



E-Scooters Giving Blind People 'Mental Health Issues'

[https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/09/04/e-scooters-giving-blind-people-mental-health-](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/09/04/e-scooters-giving-blind-people-mental-health-issues/?msocid=3eb6f75425d96dd407c4e14824396ce9)

[issues/?msocid=3eb6f75425d96dd407c4e14824396ce9](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2025/09/04/e-scooters-giving-blind-people-mental-health-issues/?msocid=3eb6f75425d96dd407c4e14824396ce9) Just one in ten blind people are able to walk confidently on pavements in their own neighbourhood without fear of either being hit by electric vehicles or blocked by inconsiderately parked ones, said the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB).

The vast majority (92 per cent) of 1,197 blind or partially sighted people surveyed for the report said they have to walk into roads as pavements are obstructed by parked cars, bikes or e-scooters. More than a third (34 per cent) said they had collided with a street obstacle in the previous three months.

One person described how they now have to rely on a cane because their guide dog was withdrawn after becoming stressed by trying to walk along blocked pavements.

Many cities have introduced dockless rental schemes for electric bikes and scooters. Users are requested to park the vehicles in a way that does not inconvenience other people, but this does not always happen, with bikes and scooters often strewn across pavements.

Erik Matthies, RNIB's policy lead for travel and transport, who has sight loss, said it is getting harder for blind and partially sighted pedestrians and wheelchair users to move independently because of "more and more obstacles on the streets". He went on: "I'm always having to double check or think about how I am going to get around by foot. This is tiring, takes up more time and makes me feel unsafe too.

"E-scooters and dockless bikes left on pavements have added to the issues with cars being parked on pavements, and advertising boards strewn all over." He added that not knowing an e-bike or e-scooter is about to pass you "at speed" is causing "mental health issues" for some people.

The RNIB is calling on the Government to create "inclusive standards" for pavements "that can be robustly enforced", and urging local authorities to take action such as maintaining access to pavements during roadworks, better monitoring of food delivery courier cyclists, and improved regulation of rental e-scooter and e-bike schemes.

A spokesman for the Department for Transport (DfT) said: "Safety is our top priority, and private e-scooters remain illegal on public roads. "We've been clear that with any trial schemes, local authorities must make sure e-scooters don't obstruct others, particularly disabled people.

"To clamp down on reckless parking, we are bringing forward new powers to regulate e-scooters and e-bikes, letting local areas shape schemes to better meet their needs, whilst tackling badly parked cycles which are disruptive to many road users."

Tom Hunt, who chairs the Local Government Association's inclusive growth committee, said: "Councils take their responsibilities to ensure pathways and pavements are accessible for all very seriously. "The inclusion in the Devolution Bill of further regulatory powers for local authorities to manage shared e-scooter and e-bike schemes will help to tackle inconsiderate parking of such vehicles. "The Government must act on the use of an estimated one million privately-owned e-scooters, which remain illegal to use on our public roads and lack any of the safety restrictions of e-scooter hire schemes, and the increasing number of unlicensed and uninsured electric motorbikes being sold and used as e-bikes." Private e-scooters cannot legally be used in public areas in the UK, although they are a common sight in many

urban areas. Legal trials of rental e-scooters on roads have been ongoing in towns and cities across England since July 2020.



Staines Shopmobility

making staines accessible

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stainesshopmo@gmail.com

www.stainesshopmobility.com

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Disability Rights UK (DRUK) –



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

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

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

News Issued By DRUK

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

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

Disability campaigners urge chancellor not to target Motability

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/disability->

[campaigners-urge-chancellor-not-target-motability](#) The new Motability Campaign Collective, which is led by Transport For All and which DR UK is part of, has sent a letter to the Chancellor voicing concerns over reported threats to cut the Motability scheme.

The Motability Scheme, which started in 1995, offers an affordable way for Disabled people, who are recipients of Personal Independence Payments, to lease a car, including wheelchair-accessible vehicles, scooters or powered wheelchairs.

Following recent discriminatory media and political comment, there have been indications from Government that it intends to change the Scheme. Reports are that Rachel Reeves is considering removing the VAT exemption on Motability vehicles and or ending access to high-end cars, as well as some forms of insurance and breakdown cover.

The letter sent to the chancellor states that removing the VAT exemption on adapted vehicles would cause disabled people to pay thousands extra in advanced payments for vehicles noting that the VAT Act 1994 (Schedule 8, Group 12, Item 14) exempts VAT on vehicles used by disabled people.

The letter also states that any cuts to Motability would increase concerns around widening inequality and harm to the Disabled community.

The Motability Campaign collective letter states that: Conversations around Motability have unleashed rhetoric that fuels hostility towards disabled people and risks making our lives less safe.

Far from saving money, these cuts would reduce workforce participation, increase demand for health and social care, and cost the economy billions in lost productivity. Any government committed to equality and growth should be removing barriers, not building new ones.

There must be no changes to the Motability Scheme in advance of the PIP Review recommendations including in the November Budget 2025. Any future decisions should be based on full consultation and co-production with disabled people

Baywatch 2025 Reveals Widespread Misuse of Disabled Parking Bays Across UK Supermarkets

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/baywatch-2025-reveals-widespread-misuse-disabled-parking-bays-across-uk-supermarkets>

New research from Disabled Motoring UK's Baywatch 2025 survey revealed widespread misuse of disabled parking bays and a severe lack of accessible EV bays across UK supermarkets, with little evidence of improvement since the survey was last held in 2022.

During mid-July until 15th August people had the opportunity to complete a 5-minute survey each time they visited one of the following supermarkets - Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Morrisons, Aldi, and Lidl. It received 1,007 responses. Tesco was surveyed most frequently 32% overall, Morrisons least often but it still received over 100 surveys.

The survey's main intention was to reveal how extensively disabled bays are abused and misused while challenging parking operators to step up and improve their services. The survey also revealed information on other challenges Disabled people face and the number of EV charging bays per car park.

Dr Shani Dhanda summarises the need for change - *“Accessible parking bays aren't just a nice-to-have - they're a lifeline. Without them, so many disabled people are shut out of everyday life, whether that's getting to work, buying food, going to appointments, or just being part of their community. When bays are misused or not properly managed or enforced, it sends a really clear message that our access and independence aren't a priority. Baywatch matters because it's not just raising awareness - it's holding people to account and pushing for real change.”*

Results from some of the key areas of the survey are revealed below, the survey was split into two sections, a full report can be found on the campaigns page of DMUK's website.

DMUK's Marketing & Campaigns Manager, Zoe Rush says: *“The results are unfortunately not a surprise to us at Disabled Motoring UK, it is discouraging to see the numbers of misuse so high and to see such little evidence of change over the years, as well as such low numbers of accessible EV bays. Considering the Blue Badge system has been around for decades we'd like to see the scheme re-evaluated and ensure it fully serves the people it was designed to support.”*

What is Fitness to Disabled People? Gavin's Story

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/what-fitness-disabled-people-gavin%E2%80%99s-story>

As part of National Fitness Day (in October), DRUK launched a blog series with members of Get Yourself Active's Sounding Board. The Sounding Board are a group of Disabled people who meet every two months with the GYA team to discuss present barriers that Disabled people are facing in the sport and physical activity sector.

The aim of the group is to gain further insight into some of the issues Disabled people are facing at a local level, which can often be overlooked by sports sector organisations that operate at a national scale. This includes barriers surrounding access to physical activity, such as benefits and transport.

We wanted to spotlight Disabled people's experiences of activity

and sport – very often, fitness can mean something different to us than it might to non-disabled people. We're excited to share their stories and experiences in this series!

We're sharing Gavin's story of wheelchair-based rugby and the world of Disabled sport.

I have always been into fitness. From team sports to individual sports and gym work I am there for it. How I go about it has changed over the years.

I was born Disabled, with bone deformities in both legs. For me this meant not having any spring and having limited range of motion. I still played sports with everybody else but could never really keep up.

Nowadays fitness looks different from my younger years. Its predominantly wheelchair based or seated and I love it. I think the biggest thing it's taught me is how to adapt. As an example, I played rugby as a kid and loved it, but my legs were not made for it. I loved the physicality of it and worried about not having that as a wheelchair user - how wrong I was! Murderball anybody?

This shift has only really happened in the last few years, in part due to just not knowing I would qualify for disability sport - I always figured I'd be deemed not disabled enough but at the same time I was too disabled for non-disabled competition. Exploring this through Get Yourself Active has opened my world back up to sport and allows me to show my kids the true meaning of adaptability and drive to do the things you love.

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



Disabled Woman Refused Use Of Wheelchair Space By Mums With Buggies

<https://www.mylondon.news/news/south-london-news/disabled-woman-refused-use-wheelchair-32829900> A disabled woman rowed with two mums for refusing to move their buggies to get her wheelchair on the bus - only to be forced off by heckling passengers. Maria Whitefield tried to board the 432 Arriva bus

and was on her way to a hospital appointment but found two buggies in the priority space.

The 38-year-old shared footage of her asking the two mums on the bus to fold their buggies so she can get on with her wheelchair, but they refused to move. One mum replies 'he's a priority too' and refuses to move before Maria says, 'these people are being selfish and will not fold up their buggies'. Maria said other passengers acknowledged she had priority but asked her to get off as she was holding up the bus.

Maria, from West Norwood, London, said: "In London we only have one space. It was made law by the Supreme High Court that wheelchairs have priority. I said 'look on the floor, there's a sign that says it's a wheelchair priority area'. I was sitting there filming the situation. No one was speaking up for me or helping me. We weren't going anywhere for about 20 minutes."

The TfL website states: "All buses have a wheelchair space available. By law, wheelchair users have priority over the space as it is the only place they can travel safely. When a wheelchair user is not using the space, you can use it on a first-come-first-served basis. "If a wheelchair user wishes to board a bus, you should share the space, fold your buggy or move."

Maria said she complained to TfL and Arriva and was told the incident is being looked into but claims she has not heard back. I've tagged TfL and Arriva and none of them have made contact with me. "I hoped either TfL or Arriva would respond to the video but they haven't. TfL and Arriva need to take accountability for it and need to be telling bus drivers what they should and shouldn't be doing. I think the driver not doing anything speaks a lot about the way the bus company trains their drivers."

Arriva said queries regarding London buses are dealt with by TfL. Mark Evers, TfL's lead on Customer Insight, Strategy and Experience, said: "Wheelchair users have priority access to the priority area. We apologise to Ms Whitefield for her recent experience and appreciate the inconvenience and upset it caused her. "We work closely with all bus operators to make sure every driver knows what's expected of them and last year introduced a new disability training course developed with a specialist provider. We have also followed up with Arriva, the bus operator, to investigate this incident as a matter of urgency."



**Adults Wellbeing & Health Partnerships Monthly Briefing
Government confirms new East and West councils for Surrey**

The government has announced its decision on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR) in Surrey.

Surrey will move to two new unitary councils – East Surrey and West Surrey. This means the current two-tier system – where county, and district and borough councils share responsibilities – will be replaced by a simpler and more efficient structure. In a unitary model, one council is responsible for all services in an area.

Elections to the new shadow authorities will take place in May 2026. These elected members will help set up the new councils and operate in a “shadow” capacity until vesting day.

On 31 March 2027, Surrey County Council and the 11 District and Borough Councils in Surrey will be dissolved. From 1 April 2027 (vesting day), the new unitary councils will officially take over.

Surrey County Council is committed to working with government and partners across Surrey, including new unitary authorities once in place, to establish a strategic authority for the area.

Further information about the decision on Local Government Reorganisation in Surrey is available online.

Warm Welcome winter support for residents

Surrey County Council and partners are continuing support for residents facing the cost-of-living crisis and fuel poverty this winter.

The Warm Welcome scheme offers local spaces where residents can come to: warm up, get a hot drink for free, get energy advice and debt support, enjoy some social interaction, benefit in some settings from additional services such as free meals and activities. Further information about the Warm Welcome scheme, including details of venues taking part is available online.

Getting back to work after brain injury

Headway Surrey has launched a new programme for brain injured clients, called ‘Be Ready’. This free programme is aimed at getting people back to work or into education or volunteering. They can help with understanding goals, rebuilding confidence and skills, work preparation and support with employers.

Work can bring independence, purpose and confidence. Headway Surrey will work with people at their own pace to make sure they feel ready, supported and positive about the next step.

Telephone: 01483 454433 Telephone (via Relay UK): 18001 01483 454433 Email: enquiries@headwaysurrey.org Website: www.headwaysurrey.org

Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Plan 2025-2028 published

The Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board has published its strategic plan for the next three-year 2025-2028.

The strategic plan sets out:

- the vision of the board, and the outcomes it would like to achieve for the people of Surrey to live a life free from abuse or neglect
- the aims and objectives for a three-year period
- how the board will work towards these objectives in the form of an annual business plan

The Surrey Safeguarding Adults Board Strategic Plan 2025-2028 is available online.

Latest updates from Steady On Your Feet

The Steady On Your Feet Version 2 platform is now live. It offers a major upgrade to improve accessibility and user experience for older adults aiming to reduce their risk of falls. Developed from user feedback, the new version features a cleaner design, a simplified self-assessment process, and refreshed content to help users create personalised action plans. It also includes updated local links and improved imagery.

First Community launches Neighbourhood Navigation Service in east Surrey

First Community has launched a new Neighbourhood Navigation Service to help adults in east Surrey improve their health and wellbeing by connecting them to local, non-medical support.

The service offers social prescribing, enabling GP's and other healthcare professionals to refer people aged 18 and over to a team of neighbourhood navigators. These navigators work with individuals to understand their needs and link them to local groups, activities, and services that can address issues such as loneliness, financial pressures, stress, isolation, or drug/alcohol abuse.

The navigators use the Joy platform to signpost people to local services and to manage referrals. Community organisations are encouraged to register on Joy, so they can be easily found and connected with residents in need.

To access the service, east Surrey residents should speak to their GP or other healthcare professional to make a referral. They can also self-refer to activities of their choice via Joy.

The service is being introduced to east Surrey GP practices in phases, and the team will be liaising with practices directly to support them with making referrals. Further information about the Neighbourhood Navigation Service is available online.

Healthwatch Surrey Insight Bulletin published

The Healthwatch Surrey November 2025 Insight Bulletin focuses on thanks and praise for GP practices and the value of kindness and respect, confusion and mismanagement of complaints handling. They also spotlight on accessible information and

reasonable adjustments, the need for recognition and support for carers, the digital divide and homebased healthcare.

Reports published since their last bulletin include:

- What we're hearing about accessible information and reasonable adjustments
- The digital divide
- Home is where the care is? Experiences of people receiving care in their home

Volunteering for wellbeing campaign targets young people

Surrey's Public Health team is launching a campaign to encourage young people under 25 to consider volunteering. Volunteering is a simple thing we can all do to help feel more connected, learn new skills and gain experience. It can also provide opportunities to improve our mental wellbeing and practice all the Five Ways to Wellbeing:

- connect
- keep learning
- be active
- take notice
- give

A volunteering toolkit with social media messages and assets is available to download from Khub. Please support this campaign by sharing the messages on your channels as appropriate.

If you have any queries, please contact Surrey County Council's Public Health team: Email: sophie.matthews@surreycc.gov.uk

Latest news from Mary Frances Trust Nature Nurtures Programme

Mary Frances Trust runs free nature-based group activities for adults (16+) in Surrey Downs to support mental and emotional wellbeing.

The activities currently running are:

- Everyone's Garden: hands-on gardening sessions to nurture a local park on Wednesdays from 10am to 2.30pm in the Tadworth area
- Nature's Palette: Creative art inspired by the outdoors on Thursdays from 11am to 1pm in the Cobham area
- Move and Breathe: Gently exploring a healthier lifestyle on Wednesdays from 10.30am to 12.30pm in the Epsom area and on Thursdays from 10.30am to 12.30pm in the Tadworth area

Further information about the Nature Nurtures Programme and to register activities is available online. Alternatively, please contact: Email: naturenurtures@maryfrancestrust.org.uk

Visit the Epsom Safe Haven

Safe Havens offer a welcoming, supportive space for anyone experiencing a mental health crisis. A new short video provides a guided tour of Epsom Safe Haven and shares how the team supports people in times of need.

Community Connections' Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Support Group

Community Connections offer a range of groups and activities which are available in multiple locations across Surrey, as well as online. For example, the online Compulsive Disorder (OCD) Support Group aimed at individuals with mild to moderate OCD, provides a safe space to explore personal experiences, share coping strategies and how to manage OCD in daily life and takes place as follows:

- When: bi-weekly on Wednesdays, starting on Wednesday 10 December 2025
- Time: 11am to 12pm

Registration for the OCD Support Group is online.

For more information on dates, times and locations of all available groups, please see the full Community Connections activity timetable. Alternatively, please contact: Telephone: 01276 409415 Text (SMS): 07919 541424 Email: groups.cc@catalystsupport.org.uk

Information support groups from Oakleaf

Oakleaf is delivering a variety of new support groups and services which are being run to support individuals in the Surrey area. The groups include:

- a parent and carer support group: for those supporting a young person aged 18 to 30 years old experiencing mental ill health and possible suicidal ideation
- 'Open Door': a weekly drop-in for young people, aged 18 to 30 years old, facing mental health challenges
- a face-to-face peer support group: for individuals and groups affected by gambling related harms

In addition to these new groups, Oakleaf continues to provide a wide range of wellbeing activities. Details of the Oakleaf wellbeing activities can be found online.



SPELTHORNE DEMENTIA SUPPORT

Spelthorne Dementia Support, a group of volunteers based in Shepperton, Surrey have been awarded The King's Award for Voluntary Service for 2025. This is the highest award a local voluntary group can receive in the UK and is equivalent to an

MBE.

We are a small group of local volunteers who make a positive difference to the quality of life of people living with dementia and also their carers and families.

Spelthorne Dementia Support is one of 231 local charities, social enterprises and voluntary groups to receive the prestigious award this year. Their work, along with others from across the UK, reminds us of all the ways fantastic volunteers are contributing to their local communities and working to make life better for those around them.

The King's Award for Voluntary Service aims to recognise outstanding work by local volunteer groups to support their communities. It was created in 2002 to celebrate Her Late Majesty The Queen's Golden Jubilee and was continued following the accession of His Majesty The King. 2025 marks the third year of The King's Award for Voluntary Service. Recipients are announced annually on 14th November, The King's Birthday.

Award winners this year are wonderfully diverse and include volunteer groups from across the UK, such as a group of dog walkers clearing up their local area in Kincardineshire; a group providing unique flying experiences for people with disabilities in Hampshire.

A group providing support to veterans and their families across Welsh Valley communities; a group running a museum and nonprofit railway in Belfast, preserving Northern Ireland's railway heritage. Representatives of Spelthorne Dementia Support will receive the award crystal and certificate from Michael More-Molyneux, Lord-Lieutenant of Surrey in the coming months.

In addition, two volunteers from Spelthorne Dementia Support will attend a Royal Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in May and June 2026, along with other recipients of this year's award.



North Surrey Sports Association for Disabled People

(NSSADP) - has been established by local volunteers to provide funding for sports clubs to provide activities for disabled people. If anyone is involved with a sports club which has capacity to provide sport for disabled people please contact NSSADP via text on 07809 586153

Spelthorne Boccia Club -Team Spelthorne Boccia Club is supported by the association and meets at the Eclipse Leisure Centre, Knowle Green. Training sessions are every Thursday evening between 6.30 and 7.30 using two marked Boccia courts in the main sports hall. The cost is £3.

There are 4 Boccia courts marked out in the sports hall and these are theoretically available to book on the same basis as badminton courts although the company running the Eclipse Leisure Centre,

Places Leisure, fails to publicise this despite being requested to do so.

This may be because the Centre is not designed to provide safe and convenient access and facilities for disabled people. However, if anyone does want to book a Boccia court or establish how to gain access to the Centre, it is recommended that the Centre is contacted by phone. (01784 493493).

Although the days of 'phoning ahead should have been quashed by the Equality Act 2010, sadly that is not the case for the Eclipse Leisure Centre .

SCAN has been actively seeking improvements for disabled people since the Centre opening in October 2024 although neither Places Leisure nor Spelthorne Council, which owns the building, are prepared to co-operate. The matter has recently been taken up with the Local Government Ombudsman and SCAN is hopeful of action.



Spelthorne Parasports Club

The club was brought to the attention of the local MP, Lincoln Jopp MC and he spent a session at the club speaking to members and their carers. As a result of discussions between Places Leisure and Spelthorne Council, the Parasports Club has recently been transferred over to the management of Places Leisure will run by them.



**Action for Carers
Surrey**

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





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



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



These 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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