

Information Bulletin December 2014

International Day of Disabled People

3 December is the International Day of Persons with Disabilities (its official title). The day was instigated by the United Nations General Assembly in 1992, following the International Decade of Disabled People.



For the United Nations, the aim of the day is to promote an understanding of disability issues and develop support for the 'dignity, rights and well-being' of disabled people. Also, the day is intended to raise awareness of the benefits of including disabled people in all aspects of society.

The theme for 2014 is: 'Sustainable development: the promise of technology'. The focus is on the role of technology in creating accessible working

environments, inclusive development goals, reducing the risk of disaster, and technology's role in emergency responses.

If you are interested in issues of disabled people and development, contact Action on Disability and Development (www.add.org.uk).

For disabled people, 3 December has been a day for celebrating our lives, our work and ... that old phrase ... celebrating the difference. The 1981 International Year of Disabled People was the impetus for disabled people forming our own organisations, as it was the first time funding became more generally available to do this.

The International Day also falls within Disability History Month. Last year's Disability History Month theme was around disabled people's independence, and no return to institutions. A topical issue with the campaign to Save the Independent Living Fund and protests against cuts.

Disability History Month Events in Manchester

Disability History Month is celebrated every year from 22 November to 22 December.



The theme this year is: War and Impairment – the social consequences of disablement. UKDHM has produced a broadsheet on the theme, you

can find it at: www.ukdhm.org. If you do not have access to a computer, contact the GMCDP office and we can print it out for you.

Two talks and two exhibitions have been organised for Disability History Month by the Manchester City Council Disabled Staff Group.

1 December – 5 January 2015

First World War: Soldiers, Shellshock and Disability. A Manchester Story.

An interactive digital exhibition in the Virtual Archive Wall, which is part of the Archives+ exhibition on the ground floor of the Central Library, St Peter's Square, Manchester M2 5PD.

Open Monday to Thursday: 9am-8pm; Friday and Saturday: 9am-5pm.

3 December 2014: 12:30 – 1:30pm at the Central Library

Archives Handling Session.

This session in Archives+ offers an opportunity to handle archives and rare books which are usually kept locked away in the strong rooms of Manchester Central Library.

17 December: 5–7pm, at the Central Library

Hidden Histories of Disabled Veterans and the First World War

In this talk, Dr Ana Carden-Coyne explores the impact of the First World War on the two million men disabled by it. What happened to them and to the wider society

on their return from the war? BSL interpreter and refreshments available. Find out more from equalitiesteam@manchester.gov.uk

Until **22 February 2015** an exhibition of art named **The Sensory War: 1914 - 2014 is** at the Manchester Art Gallery, Mosley Street, Manchester M2 3JL.

The Sensory War explores the responses of a range of artists over the past century to the sensory effects of warfare through a series of themes.

Performance Celebrating International Day of Disabled People

On Saturday 13 December, Queer of the Unknown – a queer poetry, art and theatre collective – are hosting an evening of performance by disabled artists against government cuts.

The performance is from 7:30 – 10:30pm in the Birch Community Centre, (off Brighton Grove, which is off Wilmslow Road), M14 5JT.

There will be British Sign Language interpreters and personal assistants available; snacks, drinks and cake. The performance is free. Book a place by emailing: idodp2014@gmail.com

The centre is wheelchair accessible with a slope up to the door. Limited car parking is available in the Community Centre, on-street parking also. Accessible toilet available.

Assisted Dying Bill – Update

Many disabled people rallied outside Parliament on Friday 7 November to show their objection to the Assisted Dying Bill, which was being discussed in the House of Lords.

The outcome of the debate is an amendment proposing that a judge may make the decision whether someone with less than 6 months to live and a ‘determined’ wish to die can be assisted to die. This would be by a lethal dose of drugs prescribed by 2 doctors.

Several media articles about the case are listed on the Not Dead Yet news blog page. Go to www.notdeadyetuk.org



You can read the transcript of the debate on the parliamentary webpage:
<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/ld201415/ldhansrd/text/141107-0001.htm>

Discrimination in Employment Continues

The solicitor Leigh Day commissioned a survey of disabled people’s experiences in work. Findings show that 1 in 5 disabled people feel unsupported or discriminated against in the workplace. In addition, three quarters do not want to let their workplace know

about their impairment because of fear of discrimination, rather than embarrassment or other personal reasons.

- 1 in 6 respondents in work felt they were not supported by colleagues and 1 in 4 felt the management did not support them.
- Less than half of people in the survey had not asked for reasonable adjustments because they did not want to draw attention to themselves, and 1 in 3 of those who had requested adjustments felt they received little or no support.

For more detail, and a link to the report, go to the Leigh Day news page:

www.leighday.co.uk/News (Please note, this is not written in words GMCDP would use.)

Use of Abusive Language Continues

At the start of anti-bullying week, on 17 November, the Anti-Bullying Alliance released the results of their latest survey.



The survey found that 4 in 10 adults use the words 'spaz', 'spastic', 'retard' or 'mong' in casual conversation, with half seeing it as 'banter'.

1 in 10 adults have used abusive language to a disabled person in order to be insulting and 1 in 5 said they use such words in banter, while 65% of people surveyed had heard others use these words, and 37% had seen them used online.

A survey of teachers also showed that children use these words in school; with 70% of teachers hearing children use the words in conversation, half of the time being used casually, half as an insult.

For more detail, go to the Anti-Bullying Alliance website:

www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk

Rumoured Changes to Benefits

The Benefits and Work website has highlighted a leak of documents to the BBC which suggest a change to the Work Related Activity Group (WRAG) of Employment Support Allowance (ESA).

The papers suggest reducing the amount of ESA paid to people in the WRAG group to just 50p a week more than Job Seekers' Allowance. The Department of Work and Pensions has responded saying this is not official government policy.

You can read the BBC News item at:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-29821696>

The Disability News Service has also written an article about Disability Rights UK being named in a DWP

press release as the provider of disability awareness training to Maximus, the company taking over some of the Atos assessment contract.

You can read the article at:

<http://disabilitynewsservice.com/2014/10/maximus-fitness-for-work/>

Inquiry into Benefits Sanctions

The Work and Pensions Committee is holding an inquiry into its policy on benefit sanctions.

The Committee would like submissions of no more than 3,000 words from both organisations and individuals. Two of the areas the Committee is particularly interested in are:

- “Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) sanctions, including: whether the current ESA sanctions regime is appropriate and proportionate for jobseekers with ill health and disabilities; and the reasons for recent sharp increases in the number of ESA sanctions
- Whether particular groups of ESA and JSA claimants (by impairment type, age, gender, etc.) are proportionately more likely to be sanctioned than others.”

Deadline for submissions is 12 December 2014. For more detail, and how to submit, go to the Parliament

web page: www.parliament.uk/business Go to the heading 'Committees', click on 'Inquiries A-Z', then jump to the B list, there you will find 'Benefit sanctions policy beyond the Oakley Review.'

Updated Guidance on Personal Independence Payment

The Benefits and Work website has revised its guidance on claiming Personal Independence Payment (PIP) after the Department of Work and Pensions recently changed the guidelines for Capita and Atos assessors which include:

- to ignore problems with carrying things in the kitchen but take account of possible self-harm issues when preparing a meal;
- to ignore commode use in some circumstances;
- that in rare circumstances 'violent behaviour' and 'high suicide risk' may be relevant to scoring points for needing prompting to undertake journeys;
- that typically claimants 'will not have left their home for several years' if they are to qualify as being unable to undertake any journey – ignoring the fact that the legal requirement is that you have had the same level of need for just three months and are likely to have it for at least nine.

To find the new guidance, either go to the website www.benefitsandwork.co.uk or contact the GMCDP office and we could send it to you by email or post.

The Department of Work and Pensions has also updated its guidance for organisations who explain Personal Independence Payment to claimants and potential claimants.

You can find the guidance at:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-personal-independence-payment-toolkit-for-partners>

Training Manual – Peer Support for Independent Living

The European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) and Centre for Independent Living Sofia (CIL Sofia) have published a training manual on Peer Support for Independent Living.



Peer support is one of the key principles of Independent Living.

The training manual brings together materials developed for the Peer Support Training held on 21 June 2014 in Sofia, Bulgaria. Resources in the manual can be adapted to suit peer support training by other organisations.

For more information, and a link to download the manual, go to the European Network on Independent Living webpage:
<http://www.enil.eu/news/enil-cil-sofia-publish-a-training-manual-on-peer-support-for-independent-living/>

Lack of Access Highlighted Yet Again

Two disabled researchers in London, one a guide-dog owner and one a wheelchair user, recorded their daily experiences of access using pin-hole cameras.

The usual issues were faced: no ramp or level access; high tables in cafes; faulty bus ramp; guide dog owner being refused taxis.

To see the report, and a link to the film, go to the BBC webpage:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-29917990>

London Underground to be Made More Accessible

Those of you who travel to London for work, pleasure or protest may be interested to know that London Underground have announced that £75million is going to be spent to make it more accessible.



For more information, go to the Transport for All news page:

<http://www.transportforall.org.uk/news/london-underground-announce-75m-fund-to-improve-accessibility->

Information for Scooter Users

Rica is a consumer research charity. Rica has produced independent practical guidance for people who use, or are thinking of using, a scooter – Choosing a Mobility Scooter – which can be found at:

<http://www.rica.org.uk/content/scooters-and-powered-wheelchairs>

and a searchable database of scooter measurements – Mobility Scooters on Buses – at:

<http://bit.ly/1houLWp>

For more information about RICA, and other equipment reports, go to:

www.rica.org.uk

or phone 0207 427 2460



Extension to Trial Permit Scheme on Metrolink

Earlier this year GMCDP reported a trial permit scheme for scooter users to use the Metrolink in Greater Manchester.

On 30 September, Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) announced an extension of the trial scooter permit scheme until 1 December, with an evaluation report and recommendations going to the TfGM Committee on 14 November.

On 14 November, BBC Manchester reported that the trial has now ended and the scheme is permanent.

GMCDP has spoken to Shopmobility, who have confirmed this. Shopmobility are doing the assessments for scooter users to be issued permits.

To find out more, go to the Metrolink webpage:
<http://www.metrolink.co.uk/mobilityscooters>

Or contact Shopmobility by phone 0161 839 4060, or the contact form on their website:
<http://www.shopmobilitymanchester.org.uk/>

Shopmobility Manchester is at: L18 New Arkwright Way, Arndale Centre, Manchester, M4 3AJ.

Calling Out to Young Black Men - We Tell You Research Project

42nd Street & Hideaway Youth Project in Manchester are interested in hearing the voices and opinions of 500 young black males across the city of Manchester.



The We Tell You project aims to give young people a platform for their opinions to be heard and to explore what factors positively or negatively affect psychological wellbeing and what methods or support some young people use to maintain good psychological health.

The young men's ideas, experiences and opinions will be utilised to influence the design of future wellbeing services that support young men to better cope with stress.

For more details contact:

Paul Allen (Mental Health Practitioner)

email paul.allen@42ndstreet.org.uk

mobile 07823 349236

phone 0161 228 7321 (42nd Street admin line)

Young People's Forum at Manchester People First

People First have a group for people with learning difficulties who are 18 – 25 years old and live in Manchester.

“You can talk about things that are important, be listened to and learn more about issues.”



It is every Tuesday, from 2:00 – 3:30pm.

You can ring 0161 839 3700 to find out more.

People First is at: 3 Broughton Street, Cheetham Hill, Manchester.M8 8R

New Groups for Visually Impaired People Over 50

Henshaw's Society for Blind People is setting up coffee/tea mornings for visually impaired people aged over 50 living in Manchester.

The first south Manchester meeting took place on 13 November. Meetings will be set up in central

Manchester at the Deaf Centre (Booth Street East, off Oxford Road) and north Manchester meetings will be at the Avenue Library and Learning Centre, Blackley.

For more information, call 0161 872 1234 and ask to speak to a member of the Pathway Team.

Salford Disability Doorstep Football Club

This is a weekly football club for disabled people in Salford, every Wednesday 11am – 12noon, starting on Wednesday 26 November.

The club meets at Salford Sports Village, Littleton Road, M7 3NQ.

For more information, contact Andy Jones at Salford Community Leisure:

Phone 0161 778 0769

Email andy.jones@scll.co.uk

Call for Submissions to Art Funding

Unlimited, the initiative which supports disabled

UNLIMITED...

artists to create and present work across the art forms, has opened the second round of submissions for commission funds. Disabled artists and companies who are creating new disability-led work are invited to apply.

There will be surgeries on the application process in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Liverpool, London, Caernarfon and Cardiff. See weareunlimited.org.uk/ for more detail.

The deadline for applications is 2 February 2015. Funding decisions will be announced at the end of March 2015.

Unlimited is delivered by Shape and Artsadmin.
For more information, go to:
Website www.weareunlimited.org.uk
email info@unlimited.org.uk
phone Shape 0207 424 7330
phone Artsadmin 020 7247 5102

New Issue Raised for Disabled Actors

In an opinion piece for Disability Arts Online, Mik Scarlet has raised an interesting issue for those disabled people working in theatre, film and TV.

Whether it is acceptable for disabled actors to play a character who has an impairment which they do not have themselves.



The focus until now has been pressure for disabled actors to be cast in the role of a disabled character,

rather than non-disabled actors getting the roles, but this Mik Scarlet discussion takes the debate to a different level.

You can read the opinion piece on the Disability Arts Online webpage:

<http://www.disabilityartsonline.org.uk/disabled-actors-in-the-theatre>

Disabled Artists Commissioned for Parliament in the Making

2015 brings a celebration of 800 years of Parliament. Part of this is an exhibition of large scale banners highlighting key moments in the development of rights and representation, for example, the Chartists, the Levellers and Suffrage.

3 of the 9 artists commissioned to produce banners are disabled artists: Rachel Gadsden, a visual and performance artist; Jason Wilsher-Mills, a disabled digital artist; and Paula Stevens-Hoare, painter.

To find out more, click on arts and cultural events on the Parliament in the Making website:

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/2015-parliament-in-the-making/>

Ex-Remploy Worker Speaks Out

This article has been drawn to our attention by a GMCDP member.

Whilst GMCDP has never supported segregated employment, the treatment of the Remploy workforce since its closure has confirmed many of the worst fears of those that campaigned for its retention.

In an article on the Labourlist website, ex-Remploy worker and union convenor, James Stribley, says what life is like for many ex-Remploy workers now.

James says when he spoke to the people he used to represent, half were still out of work, and some had chosen to retire. James cites a GMB Union survey which showed that only a quarter had a new job, and quite a few of those were on part time, agency or zero hours contracts. James himself has also moved from skilled work to two part-time jobs.

The article is at:

<http://labourlist.org/2014/10/remploy-a-year-after-the-last-closure/>

Evidence from the Front Line – Report

Making Every Adult Matter has produced a report outlining the effects of policy changes on people with ‘multiple needs’.

Publicity about the report says:
“The interim report from our Voices from the Frontline project features the results of a survey of over 140 local services. Our findings suggest that recent welfare reforms are having a negative impact on people with multiple needs. The report also explores the effect of changes to the way services are commissioned.”



You can download the report from the MEAM webpage: <http://meam.org.uk/publications/>

MEAM is a coalition of 4 national organizations: Clinks, DrugScope, Homeless Link and Mind. MEAM promotes a coordinated approach to supporting people with multiple needs; encouraging local services to work together more effectively.

Failings in NHS Complaints Procedure

Healthwatch England has published a report following their examination of the NHS complaints procedure.

The results show that 3 out of 5 people who complained about poor treatment felt their concerns were not addressed, and:

- “Just 1 in 5 said they only had to complain once before someone listened to them.
- Less than 1 in 10 was provided with formal support to make a complaint.

- Well over 80 per cent of people say they would be more willing to complain if they could see it making a difference – e.g. informing inspections or improving services.”

As well as people’s views on the complaints procedure, the report contains some, “relatively simple and straightforward changes to complaints handling.”

The 3 recommendations are:

1. Make it easier for people to complain.
2. Ensure a compassionate resolution.
3. Hold to account those who fail to listen.

To download the report, go to:

<http://www.healthwatch.co.uk/resource/our-report-complaints>

For a copy of this report in a different format:

Email enquiries@healthwatch.co.uk

phone 03000 68 3000.

First Waiting Time Standards for NHS Mental Health Services

On 8 October, Nick Clegg, Deputy Prime Minister, announced that from April 2015, there will be new waiting time standards for mental health services.

These standards will bring waiting times for mental health services in line with those for physical health services: a maximum 18 week wait.

An extra £120 million was also promised to improve mental health services.

Annual State of Care Report Published

Each year the Care Quality Commission (CQC) produces a report about standards of health and social care around the UK.

This time, the CQC says:

“Over the past year, the Care Quality Commission’s (CQC) inspections have found front line staff delivering excellent care but inspectors have also found poor services where people were not getting the care they should expect. CQC says this variation in the quality and safety of care in England is too wide and unacceptable and has a detrimental impact on people who use health and care services and their families.”

You can find the press release, with a summary of details, on the CQC website: www.cqc.org.uk click on ‘news’, jump to press releases and click on ‘more press releases’.

CQC Report on Places of Safety

Under the Mental Health Act, anyone who seems to be experiencing a mental health crisis in a public place has the right to be taken to a health based ‘place of safety’, for example, mental health unit or Accident and Emergency.

Earlier this year, the Care Quality Commission undertook a survey to find out whether this is working in practice. They were looking at:

- “The availability, in practice, of health-based places of safety.
- Accessibility, including any exclusion criteria.
- Staffing and training of those involved in operating places of safety.
- Target times and delays in carrying out MHA assessments after people have been taken to places of safety.
- Governance, reporting and multi-agency working.
- The role of police and ambulance services.”

The CQC found 4 areas which need addressing:

1. “Too many places of safety are turning people away or requiring people to wait for long periods with the police, because they are already full or because there are staffing problems.
2. Too many providers operate policies that exclude young people, people who are intoxicated, and people with disturbed behaviour from all of their places of safety.
3. Too many commissioners are not adequately fulfilling their responsibilities for maintaining an oversight of the section 136 pathway.
4. Too many providers are not appropriately monitoring their own service provision. This makes it difficult for those providers and their commissioners to evaluate if provision is meeting the needs of people in their local area.”

For more detail, and links to the full report and a map of provision, go to:

<http://www.cqc.org.uk/content/safer-place-be>

Next Information Bulletin

Please send any news or events by 12 January 2015.

If you need assistance to access any of the websites or information given in this bulletin, please contact the GMCDP office.

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People
(GMCDP)
Unit 4, Windrush Millennium Centre, 70 Alexandra
Road, Moss Side, Manchester. M16 7WD

Phone: 0161 636 7534
Mobile for texts: 07508 537561

Email: info@gmcdp.com
Website: www.gmcdp.com

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