**The Accessibles #3**

**Access Denied - Until Future Notice**

This is a description of the cartoon comic called the Accessibles. The comic is a mix of text and drawn images. Drawn images are described.

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People



**Front cover**

The Accessibles #3

Access Denied Until Future Notice.

There is a lightning bolt down the middle of the page.

In the background there are people protesting outside Manchester Town Hall, some are holding a banner reading ‘Disability Equals Barriers’.

In the foreground Josh and the Time Traveller are facing each other, each holding a pocket watch.

Josh is a white young man with brown hair, wearing a Dr Who hat, black jacket and beige t-shirt. The Time Traveller is a dark skinned woman with lilac hair wearing a purple dress.

The logo for Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People is at the bottom of the page.

**Inside front cover**

The story so far …

In the first issue of The Accessibles, Josh and Hannah embark on a thrilling adventure through time to investigate the history of Disabled People in Manchester. There is a picture of the front cover of The Accessibles #1 and a small picture of Hannah and Josh from inside the comic. Hannah is hanging off the back of Josh’s wheelchair saying, “Whoa! What’s going on Josh?” Josh replies, “We’re travelling through time! Not sure where we are heading…”

In issue #2 of The Accessibles, Qaasim and Kat inform us about Disability Hate Crime: what it is, and ways to report it. There is a picture of the front cover of The Accessibles # 2 and a small picture from inside the comic of a young man having fallen out of his wheelchair with two youths standing over him. The young man is saying “They then started to block the ramp, and not let me in the shop. Things got proper vicious.”

**The comic starts**

And 3 months after the last comic, we join Josh at a rally ...

There is a crowd scene of people outside Manchester Town Hall, some holding placards which say: ‘End hate now’, ‘our lives our say’, ‘rights now’, ‘disability equals barriers’, ‘end hate crime’.Josh is thinking “Who is that strange figure watching us?”

A woman with a pocket watch walks towards Josh. He says “Hey, nice timepiece! I’ve not seen one like that before.” The Time Traveller holds up her pocket watch and says, “Latest model, - not out yet!”

Josh says, “So, I’m guessing you’re a time traveller from the future.”Time Traveller says, “And you must be Professor Accessible then!”

There is a close up of Josh and the Time Traveller’s faces. The Time Traveller says: “So, fellow time traveller, what exactly is going on here?”

Josh says, “Ha, please just call me Josh. Not everyone knows my secret!” Time Traveller says: “I’m Keira, and I come from the not-too-distant future.”

Josh and the time traveller are stood in front of a crowd of people. Keira says: “Ok Josh, so why all these people?”Josh replies: “Well, we are here because although we all have a range of different impairments, it’s the barriers we face every day that disable us.”

There is a close up of Josh and Keira’s faces again.

Keira says, “I think I know what you mean by impairments; the differences in our bodies and minds.” “I guess your legs may work differently to mine, just as my brain may work differently to yours.”

Josh says, “You’ve got it in one!”

Josh introduces Abdul who is holding a placard saying ‘disability equals barriers’. “Keira, this is my friend Abdul.” Abdul waves and says, “Hi, good to meet you!” Keira says, “You too, Abdul. What’s this ‘barriers’ business?”

There is a close up of Abdul, he is saying: “So basically, barriers are all those things in society that stop us as disabled people getting on with our day to day lives.”

There is a drawing of Abdul walking down a street full of obstacles, lamp posts, bins, shop signs, etc.

Abdul is saying, “Here’s the usual street slalom.”

Abdul is trying to cross a road between two parked cars, saying “and how am I supposed to cross here?”

Then Abdul says: “Barriers doesn’t always mean physical obstacles: there’s way more to it than that. The way places are run, and most importantly people’s attitudes as well.”

Josh is in his wheelchair next to some steps saying:

“Take me for example; it’s not just barriers like stairs and steps ...”

Even something like going to the shops with crowds, loud music and flashing lights can be overwhelming. There is a picture of a woman with her hands over her ears outside a clothes shop with loud music on.

The woman is thinking “Argh – sensory overload! This is all too much!”

There is a drawing of Keira, Abdul and Josh together. Keira says “We just don’t have these barriers in the future, guys! We’ve figured these things out.” Abdul says “Wow, I’d love to see that.”

Keira clicks her time piece, saying: “Come on then, I’ll show you the future!” Keira clicks her watch and they are transported into the future.

They are at the top of some stairs that can convert to a ramp. Keira says, “In the not-so-distant future, we’ve eradicated all those old barriers for disabled people. Look!”Josh points to the stairs that convert to a ramp saying, “Neat automatic stair ramp converter!” Abdul says, “Voice activated AND push button!”

There is a drawing of a futuristic city and monorail.

Josh, Abdul and Keira are at a ticket machine for the monorail. Keira says, “Have a go at buying a monorail ticket, Abdul.”Abdul says, “Ok, right then- ‘info format’, it’s got braille, large print - and here you’ve got British Sign Language, and - or I can just speak and do it that way!”

Josh says, “Wow, this place is Barrier-Freedonia!”

There is a drawing of Josh, Abdul and Keira sitting facing each other. Josh says, “This is so impressive!” Abdul says, “So what about attitudinal barriers? Have they been tackled yet here?”Josh, “People having negative views of us disabled people, discriminating against us and being prejudiced.”Keira asks, “Such as?”

Sometimes its low expectations of us or treating us like charity cases... There is a drawing of a couple and a young woman wheeling away from them looking sad. The couple are saying “She’s so brave! Poor thing!”

There is a drawing of a boy in a wheelchair with his dad in a cafe. A waitress is asking, “Does he want another napkin, just in case?” We get spoken down to, ignored and patronised too.

You wouldn’t believe the abuse some of us meet in everyday situations.

There is a drawing of a man in a shop, he has got out of his wheelchair in order to reach something from a high shelf. A man and woman are watching him with angry faces saying, “IMPOSTER! You don’t really need that wheelchair at all!” and “You should be ashamed, you fake!” It doesn’t exactly help when newspaper headlines paint us as scroungers, frauds or ‘fit to work’ but lazy.

There is a drawing of Josh saying, “Many people don’t understand that a wheelchair is a means of liberation – to get around. They assume if you use a wheelchair you can’t move; they expect you to be glued to it.”

There is a drawing of Abdul, Josh and Keira.

Abdul is saying, “All of this can really affect your self esteem you know.” Josh says, “I’m generally an upbeat person, but it can make some people feel lower than low.”

There is a drawing of Abdul and Josh, Abdul is saying: “Some attitudes have changed over time, but there’s a long way to go.”

Josh says, “If people can drop their negative attitudes and include us rather than ‘tolerate’ us, then we’d really be getting somewhere.”

Drawing of Keira, Josh and Abdul, getting off the monorail. Keira says, “We just don’t have these problems in the future; everyone is included.”

Abdul, “But how come? It’s like the Social Model of Disability has finally been understood and accepted.”

Keira, “Exactly.”

There is a drawing of Josh’s head saying, “So it’s because of the wider acceptance of the Social Model that all this has happened? Amazing!” Keira says: “Come on, let’s take you back to your time –“

There is a drawing of Keira, Abdul and Josh travelling back in time.

There is a drawing of Josh with a group of friends, including Abdul, saying, “- Friends, I’ve seen the future, and we can make this happen!”Someone in the group says, “We need to spread the word somehow, and help everyone understand the Social Model of Disability.”Someone else asks, “Yeah, but how?”Abdul says, “How about making a comic about it?...”Keira is watching on, and says “You already did!”

**Inside back page**

Disabled people have been discussing what it means to be a disabled person since the 1970s. We have developed a tool to help people understand our experience, called the Social Model of Disability.

Many people including doctors, other professionals and members of the public think of disabled people in a different way. We call this the Individual, or Medical Model.

The Individual Model says we are disabled people because we have impairments. An impairment is when part of a person’s body or mind does not work, is missing, or works differently to how society expects. Here ‘impairment’ and ‘disability’ mean the same.

The Individual Model focuses on changing the disabled person so we fit in with what society expects. For example: Trying to make people hear or see with operations; giving people drugs to make their minds work in a way which is thought to be more acceptable.

The Social Model explains the real experience of disabled people. It says that we (people who have impairments) are disabled people because we face barriers, discrimination, prejudice and fewer opportunities in society.

Here, the words impairment and disability are not the same.

‘Impairment’ is when part of a person’s body or mind does not work, is missing, or works differently to what society expects.

‘Disability’ is the word for the barriers, discrimination and prejudice disabled people face.

It is disability which makes us disabled people - not our impairments.

The Social Model focuses on the barriers disabled people face, so everyone can work towards removing these.

**Back page**

This comic has been produced by a group of young disabled people involved in GMCDP’s Manchester Disabled People’s Project (funded by Manchester City Council) and Shaping Our Inclusion project (funded by the Big Lottery).

**Contributors:**

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Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People

* Do you feel that you experience barriers in everyday life?
* Do you feel that there is still some discrimination and prejudice towards disabled people?
* Do you want to do something to change this?

**Or…**

* Do you need information?
* Would you like assistance with getting support you need?
* Do you want to find out about campaigning for rights?

GMCDP is an organisation of disabled people which is here to support disabled people. We may not have all the answers- but we should know someone who has! So please, do get in contact with us.

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