



Spring 2010

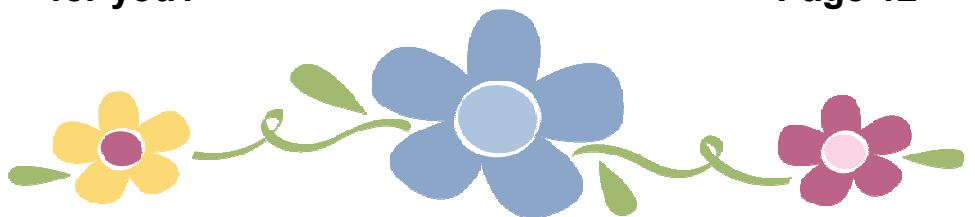


Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living
Newsletter

Welcome to the Newest Edition of the LCIL Newsletter!

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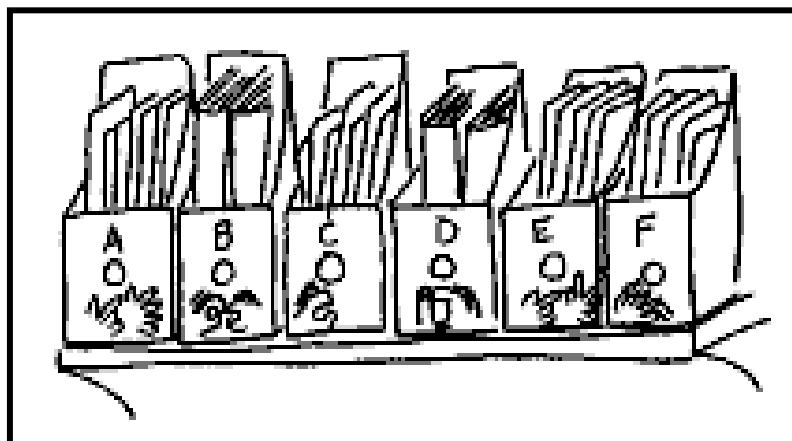
New Developments At LCIL !!!

When LCIL secured funding to establish our Library and Information Service we were inundated with enquiries. Each part time member of staff was dealing with over 900 enquiries each year and to a lesser extent this continues today but without funding to run the service it has been quite a challenge to deal with the range of enquiries we receive.

Enquiries range from information about blue badges, disability facilities grants, radar keys, parking, accessible toilets, direct payments, support in education, discrimination in employment, access issues and housing issues to name but a few.

This is about to change!

LCIL has recently appointed a Volunteer Co-ordinator and two Library and Information Officers. They are now working to re-establish this service which will be larger and more inclusive than before.



We will also be recruiting disabled and non-disabled people to work as volunteers within this new service and will shortly be advertising for people to join us in this journey. These positions will be advertised in April and the initial training will take place in May and June.

If you are interested and you want to get involved look out for further details on our website in April.

Dee Martin
Chief Executive Officer

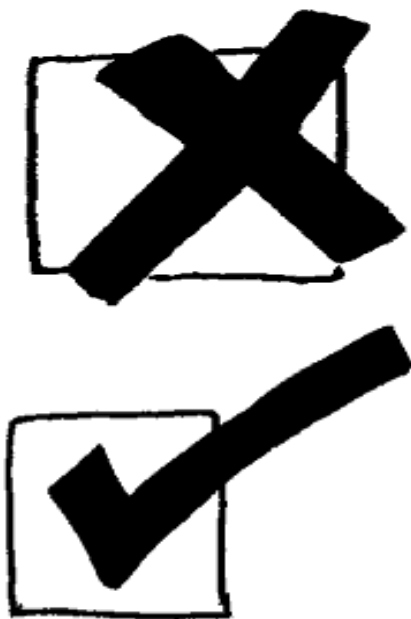
Election 2010: Democracy for Disabled People

By Amanda Batten, Head of External Affairs at the National Autistic Society

We know that people with disabilities simply do not enjoy the same rights and freedoms as the rest of society.

Nowhere was this more evident than at a meeting in March of the All Party Parliamentary Groups (APPGs) for autism, learning disability, disability, equality, eye care and visual impairments.

The meeting explored ways to make Parliament and voting more accessible for people with disabilities, as many disabled people feel excluded from the democratic process. Problems highlighted on the day included the inaccessibility of polling stations, difficulties understanding voting materials, and in the worst cases others taking advantage of their vote, because they were prevented from exercising it themselves.



The research speaks volumes. According to Mencap in the 2005 general election only 2 out of 10 people with a learning disability used their vote, compared to 6 out of 10 of the whole UK population. A post-election survey by Scope also found that over two thirds of polling stations had one or more access barriers such as there was no Braille template, staff demonstrated negative attitudes towards disability or voting tables were too high. In some cases people are forced to rely on postal voting, but without clear information on how to exercise your vote, this is not without its own pitfalls.

In fact one of the main reasons people with autism and learning disabilities, in particular, are unable to vote is due to a lack of accessible information and material. The National Autistic Society has also heard from people with Asperger syndrome who have experienced a great deal of anxiety and difficulty with managing the paperwork required. These issues affect everything from how they join the electoral register and the practicalities of how they cast their vote, to their ability to make an informed choice about who to vote for.

People with learning disabilities say they do not understand information on policies or what candidates and parties stand for - and they are not the only ones. A recent survey by Mencap showed that 90% of the voting population does not understand phrases in political literature.

Organisations such as Mencap, Scope, United Response and Speaking Up are doing much to campaign for people with disabilities to have the same opportunities to vote.

The Electoral Commission are leading a number of initiatives such as looking at how ballot papers work for people with disabilities and publishing appropriate design guidance, as well as ensuring that materials to join the electoral register are accessible to all through easy read, audio and Braille versions. In 2007, they also secured a change to the law which means that local people will be consulted about the location of polling stations, hopefully increasing accessibility for disabled people.

Historically, Parliament has lagged behind. Parliament simply does not represent the diverse mix of people in the UK today, including those with disabilities, and the public are receiving a narrow choice of who their MP can be. The Speakers Conference, however, has investigated the issue and made recommendations to make Parliament more representative.

Measures proposed include outreach and education from Parliament to ensure minority groups are interested and engaged in campaigning and voting and looking at political parties' recruitment procedures. Speaker, John Bercow MP pledged to continue to be a champion of disabled people and told the meeting that as soon as the General Election is called he wants to see induction packs for all new MPs which must push the disability agenda and that all parties should consider how their policies will impact on people with disabilities as a matter of course.



In conclusion, it will be difficult to ignore disabled people's demands for democracy going into the general election and those candidates who ignore their priorities will be missing out on important votes.

An Election Message from RADAR to all Parties

You are about to fight what will be, if many polls are to be believed, the closest-run election in many years. 11 million people living with injury, ill-health or disability, their families and their friends are a very big constituency.

Disability issues are not a minority interest; injury, ill health or disability affects or will at some point affect, directly or indirectly, every single person in this country, meaning that the rights to support, empowerment and inclusion matter to everyone. The housing crisis, scandalous delivery of social care, and disability-related poverty affect everyone. You should also bear in mind that disabled people are parents, employees, employers, home owners, transport users, students and members of every other conceivable interest group that you will be pitching your messages and policies to over the next few weeks.

Not only should your policies on every issue reflect this fact, your communications should also reach out to disabled people. This means producing electoral literature, local and national, in alternative formats and easy-read; this means ensuring that your public meetings are held in accessible venues, with induction loops and sign language available; this means making sure that your disabled supporters and activists are included in your campaigning.

This means doing campaigning differently, reaching out to voters with injury, ill health or disability and running an election which is truly inclusive and representative. We need more disabled people to be active and involved in politics at all levels; this is a great way to bring that about. Candidates with experience of injury, ill health or disability should be championed and brought to the fore.

RADAR Chairman Phil Friend OBE said:

"Every vote will count in the coming election; parties and candidates who make an effort to connect with people living with injury, ill-health or disability will be able to tap a rich seam of voters. There are 11 million of us. We live in every single constituency. We can strongly affect the result in marginal seats, and so can our families and friends. We cannot be ignored or taken for granted by any party; if the politicians want our vote, their policies will have to address our concerns."

For more information please contact: Aidan Hargitt (Press Officer)
Email: aidan.hargitt@radar.org.uk or telephone: 0191 383 0732

User-Led Organisation Action and Learning Site Project

As part of this project we have been working jointly with The Race Equality Centre (TREC) on developing a training module on “Disability Is a Human Rights Issue”. Eric Day (LCIL) has been working with Latifah Bailey (TREC) on this Project and they have been assisted by Sophie Mason (LCIL).

Those working on the Project have gained a lot from the experience and have found it to be a learning curve for themselves.

We have carried out two training sessions with disabled people using the module. Those that attended all said that it was worthwhile and that they had learned a lot from it. Many said that they did not know that the Human Rights Act could be used by disabled people.

A guide to “Disability Is a Human Rights Issue” has been written and includes a section on cases that have been brought by disabled people against various public bodies with their outcome included.

The last session was held on Monday 18th January 2010 and this photo was taken on the day.



If you want more information please contact Eric Day on **0116 2225005** or e-mail **eric@lcil.org.uk**

Deaf Text Users Urged to Sign up for 999 Trial

PEOPLE who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech difficulties are being urged to register for a UK-wide trial that allows people to send SMS text messages from their mobile phone to the 999 emergency services.

Guido Gybels, director of technology at the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, said: "It means that caller ID and location information are available to the emergency service in the same way as for voice calls from a mobile...Access to 999 could literally be a matter of life and death, yet until now many people who are deaf or hard of hearing have found themselves unable to contact the emergency services while on the move.

The service is being supported by the Government, emergency services, Ofcom, the telecommunications sector (British Telecom, Cable and Wireless, Vodafone, Orange, O2, T-Mobile and 3) and RNID.

To register you must **text the word 'register' to 999**, then follow the instructions. Alternatively, you can register online at **www.emergencysms.org.uk**

Website Success

I recently received a call via Text Relay from "Mandy" in Lincoln. She phoned to congratulate LCIL on its website, especially the News section. She found our site by mistake but now visits it on a regular basis. She says she gets most of her disability news items from our website.

She told me that the item "Deaf text users urged to sign up for 999 trial" was of great interest as this was the first she had heard of it. Since reading this item Mandy says she has signed up to the trial and is urging others to do so.

Let us know what you think of our website www.lcil.org.uk

Eric Day

Disability Equality & Office Manager

**text the word
'register' to 999**

Rough Guide to Accessible Britain

The fully revised 3rd edition of the Rough Guide to Accessible Britain is now available.

If you hold a **Blue Badge** or a **Disabled Persons Railcard** then the Accessible Guide is **FREE**. All you need to do is tell us the name of your Blue Badge issuing authority, or your Railcard number, when you place your order. The Guide is £6.99 (Including postage and packaging) for everyone else. You can order now online or call 0800 953 7070 – lines are open 8am to 8pm daily. You can order online by clicking on the link below:

<https://www.accessibleguide.co.uk/guide/order-guide/buynow1.php>

For a large print or Braille version of the Guide, please call on the number given above!

New Safety Regulation for Scooters

The Government are planning to introduce new safety regulations for mobility scooters and powered wheelchairs – and look at the capabilities of people who use them.

Transport secretary Sadiq Khan said: "Evidence suggests that over the last few years there has been a steady increase in the number of mobility vehicles and, with an ageing population, this trend is likely to increase.



"On top of this, the technology for the vehicles themselves is becoming increasingly sophisticated. It is only right then that legislation is brought up to date to reflect these advancements.

"Mobility vehicles are a vital lifeline for many people and we want to ensure that everyone who needs one is able to use them safely and securely."

The consultation which will run until May 28 sets out a number of ways in which safety might be improved. The consultation will cover both mobility scooters, which are intended to help people with reduced mobility, and powered wheelchairs for those who need help with everyday movement.

www.dft.gov.uk/consultations

The End of Pre-Employment Health Checks

This article below has been written by RADAR and we thought that it may be of interest to our readers

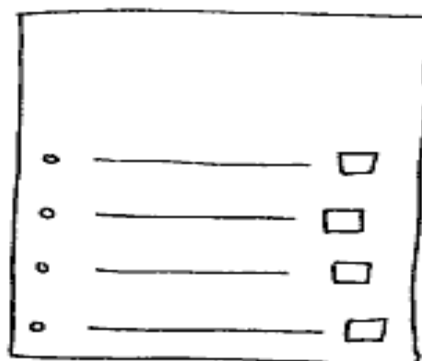
You've just completed a job application. You've listed your qualification, which you know will stand you in good stead. You've just written a great application letter, telling your prospective employers why you are the best person for the job, and why you want to do it. You're feeling confident. BUT....

There's one more piece of paper for you to fill out, and your heart sinks to the soles of your shoes just looking at it. The Employee Health Screening Form.

Have you at any time in the last ten years suffered from any of the following (please tick yes or no).

And that's it. That's the moment you know that you will never get that job. You will never even get an interview. You know this because you have had a history of depression (or HIV, or bi-polar, or schizophrenia, etc)

It is very unfair and why should you be forced to openly disclose your history of mental illness, when your prospective employer can use it to discriminate against you in secret, blissfully free from the risk of retribution? Why are they allowed to make such demands? Why can't they check your health after making a job offer? By this way if they decide not to employ you then you will know for certain the reasons why!



But this may all change! On the 19th January, amendments to the Equality Bill were debated in the House of Lords which would outlaw pre-emptive health screening once and for all. If these amendments are adopted, and there is now every chance they will be, employers will never again be able to pretend that a candidate with a physical or mental health condition was 'just not the best candidate on the day'.

As the Equality bill moves into its final stages on Parliament, we are hopeful that it will bring real change for the better, and are grateful to everyone who has worked to put a stop to this festering injustice and to remove one fig leaf that hides the shame of prejudice!

Appointment of Members to Equality 2025

Jonathan Shaw, Minister for Disabled People, has announced the appointment of nine members to Equality 2025, the UK advisory group for disability equality.

The membership includes five reappointed members and four new members. They will start their duties on 1 April 2010 for a three year term.

Members that have been reappointed to Equality 2025:

Haji Saghir Alam, Nick Danagher, Miro Griffiths, Andy Rickell and Fiona Wallace

New members appointed to Equality 2025:

Diane Mulligan, Rachel Perkins, Tracey Proudlock and Colin Young

Equality 2025 was established in December 2006 following a recommendation in the 'Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People' report. The group works towards the government's vision of equality for disabled people by 2025.

**Nine New
Members to
Equality 2025**

Rowen Jade remains as Chair of Equality 2025 and together the ten members will work with government policy-makers to advise government so they understand disabled peoples' views on a variety of issues, and are able to tap into their experiences.

Minister for Disabled People Jonathan Shaw said: "I am delighted to announce the appointment of nine members to Equality 2025. I look forward to working with them along with Rowen Jade, Chair of Equality 2025. These members bring a mix of experience, skills and enthusiasm to the job."

Chair of Equality 2025 Rowen Jade said: "I am looking forward to working with all of the Equality 2025 members at a time when so many government proposals and decisions are having such a significant impact on disabled people. I look forward to building on our advisory role within government, to carry forward the vision of disability equality."

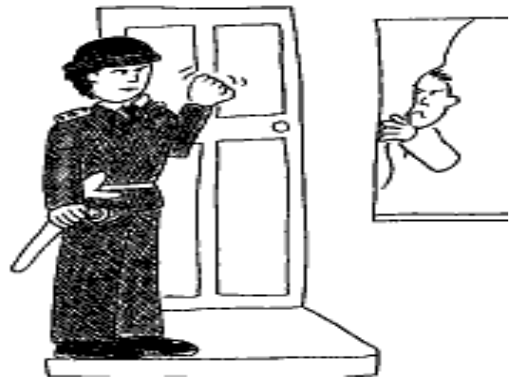
The recruitment exercise was carried out in accordance with the standards set in the Office for the Commissioner of Public Appointments Code of Practice. All appointments are made on merit and political activity plays no part in the selection process.

10 Police Officers Under Investigation

It has been reported in the Disability Now magazine that the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) has announced that ten police officers are under investigation as a part of a complex and ongoing inquiry into the handling of the case of Fiona Pilkington.

Mrs Pilkington killed herself and her disabled daughter Francecca Hardwick in October 2007 by setting alight the family car following years of abuse and harassment from a gang of local youths in Barwell, Leicestershire.

The inquest into their deaths revealed that Mrs Pilkington made 33 calls to the police over a ten year period, but received only eight visits from the officers. A statement from the IPCC said the commission had gathered variety of material from the police and local authority, who had all "co-operated fully".



The inquest heard how the pair's home was pelted with eggs, flour and stones, while Francecca was tormented because she had a severe learning disability.

The statement from the IPCC read: "We have now served advisory notices on a total of 10 Leicestershire Police officers and this situation is being kept under review.

"Such notices are not judgmental in any way, but are required under police misconduct regulations, and served on officers to advise that their conduct is under investigation. This complex inquiry is going back over police contact with Fiona Pilkington, her daughter and neighbours over a period of several years."

"We are progressing this rigorous investigation as swiftly as possible and will make our findings public in due course."

HMIC, the independent police inspectorate for forces in England, Wales and Northern Ireland spokesperson told Disability Now that part of the problem for police forces is that the distinctions between anti-social behaviour and crime are often blurred, and the report claims that members of the public on the receiving end of anti-social behaviour "find it hard to distinguish it from crime".

Room Hire at LCIL

We have extremely competitive prices for organisations of disabled people, as well refreshments and catering available to suit all needs.



So, if you need to book a meeting, please consider our fully accessible rooms and contact us on the number below.



Contact: LCIL, 5-9 Upper Brown Street, Leicester, LE1 5TE



Text: 07910 864594



Tel: (0116) 222 5005



Email: admin@lcil.org.uk



Fax: (0116) 222 5008



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