

Allfie Wants You !!



The Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) is working together with the British Library to record the educational experiences of disabled people over the last 100 years.

They want to interview at least 50 disabled people and record a wide range of experiences of education. They are particularly interested in the experiences of disabled people born before 1940.

The interviews will be carried out over the next 18 months. They will cover agreed expenses and they aim to meet the access needs of all interviewees.

ALLFIE may not be able to interview everybody who responds. However, they will let people know whether or not they will be interviewing them. For further information visit their Website: www.allfie.org.uk or contact Email: kevin.caulfield@allfie.org.uk Phone: 020 7737 6030

Vic Finkelstein – A Great Loss



GMCDP regrets to inform members, who do not already know, that Vic Finkelstein, one of the founder members of the Disabled People's Movement, and a pillar of the academic Disability Studies community, died on 30th November.

Vic's massive contribution to the development of academic debate and political discussion has been a corner stone of disabled people's self-organisation since the early 1970s.

After arrest, imprisonment and torture in South Africa for anti-apartheid activities, Vic came to the UK in 1968. Linking up with other disabled people, challenging the oppression of disabled people and developing a new way of explaining the experiences of disabled people, (which became the Social Model of Disability), Vic began his illustrious career in UK and global disability politics and academia.

Benefit Integrity Centre's



The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) has created Benefit Integrity Centres (BIC) to assess current claims to benefits. They say it is to ensure that claimants are receiving the correct amount of money. This is part of a wider programme to review almost one million cases each year.

BIC sites are contacting claimants by telephone and post to carry out full case reviews on Income Support, Job Seekers Allowance, Incapacity Benefit and Employment and Support Allowance.

They are also contacting claimants by SMS text to remind them to return forms, and of the need to notify DWP of changes in circumstances.

Information sent to us, says that if a BIC asks the claimant to provide information they must return it as soon as possible, as payments may be suspended if there is a delay in returning the information.

The BIC sites cannot be contacted directly, but if you have any queries you can telephone your Benefit Centre who will hopefully answer the query or arrange for the BIC to call you back within 3 working hours.

Worrying Changes To Motability Scheme



A number of changes to the Motability Scheme have been announced. Key changes include:

- A reduction in the selection of cars available.
- Up to a maximum advance payment of £2,000 (this limit does not apply to wheelchair accessible vehicles).
- Nominated drivers under 21 will only be permitted where they live with the disabled person.
- All nominated drivers need to live within five miles of the car owner's home.

The changes to car selection take place immediately, although Motability will honor all existing orders and commitments. Other changes will take effect from 1st January 2012.

There is no change for existing contracts, or nominated drivers named on current insurance certificates, for the remainder of existing leases.

These changes will have an adverse affect on many disabled people who employ PA's that don't live locally, as well as people who rely on family and friends to drive them.

If you want to complain about these changes, write to Motability at the following address:
Motability Operations
Crossgate House
Sothwark Bridge Road
London SE1 9HB

New EU Transport Regulations

The European Union have introduced new transport rights for disabled people, but there is concern that in relation to coach travel, disabled people will have to give 36 hours notice if they require assistance. The new regulations were approved in February and will come into force in 2013.



The new EU regulations will guarantee non-discriminatory access to transport and a right to accessible information before and during a journey.

The regulations also include a right to full compensation for lost or damaged wheelchairs and other assistive equipment, while information about passengers' rights will have to be provided in terminals and online.

For journeys over 250 kilometres (155 miles), disabled passengers will be entitled to free assistance at terminals and on board coaches.

If a passenger has made a request at least 36 hours before departure, and the transport provider is unable to provide suitable assistance, the passenger will have the right to be accompanied by an assistant at no extra charge.

The European Disability Forum (EDF), said this provides disabled passengers with a set of important rights, but added that the need to notify transport providers of a need for assistance 36 hours before the journey was too long.

End Of The Road For Discounted Coach Travel



The government has stopped the financial support which funded half-price long-distance coach travel for disabled and older people in England.

The decision was first announced quietly as part of last year's spending review, but the Department for Transport (DfT) has now confirmed that the funding stopped on 31st October.

The concessions have been in place since 2003 and were funded through a government grant to coach operators.

Close To Home

The Equality and Human Rights Commission's inquiry, 'Close to home: older people and human rights in home care', that was published on 23rd November 2011 says hundreds of thousands of older people lack protection under the Human Rights Act and calls for this legal loophole to be closed.

Equality and
Human Rights
Commission

equalityhumanrights.com

The inquiry, the first of its kind into this issue, found that around half of the older people, friends and family members who gave evidence to the inquiry were satisfied with their home care.

However it also uncovered areas of real concern in the treatment of some older people and significant shortcomings in the way that care is commissioned by local authorities. The inquiry highlighted a number of issues including; neglect, financial abuse, chronic disregard for older people's privacy and dignity, physical abuse and lack of appropriate information.

A copy of the full inquiry findings report is available on the EHRC website:
www.equalityhumanrights.com/homecareinquiry

If you require a copy of the summary report please contact Phil, Tel: 0161 273 5154.

E-petitions – A Way To Be Heard



E-petitions are a way to influence government policy in the UK.

You can create an e-petition about anything that the government is responsible for and if it gets at least 100,000 signatures, it will be eligible for debate in the House of Commons.

There are a number of e-petitions on disability related issues on the website.

One petition which has been brought to our attention by a number of members has been placed on the website by a group of disabled people, who are alarmed by the number of changes taking place in the benefit system and the effect on disabled people. It calls for the government to "Stop and review the cuts to benefits and services which are falling disproportionately on disabled people, their carers and families".

The link is:
<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/20968>

Hidden In Plain Sight

The EHRC are hosting a major consultation event on the 17th January 2012. The focus of this event is to help shape the recommendations contained in 'Hidden in plain sight' - the final report of the disability harassment inquiry

The event, to be held in Manchester, will offer the opportunity for disabled people's organisations to influence the development of public authorities' action plans and have a say about what their priorities should be in tackling disability-related harassment.

The EHRC would particularly like to hear from user-led disabled people's organisations and those working in the third sector that provide advice and support to individuals who have experienced disability-related harassment.

To express an interest in attending this event, Email: communications@equalityhumanrights.com

Fulfilling Potential – A Discussion

Office for Disability Issues

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, Maria Miller, announced on 1st December that the Government's discussion document, "Fulfilling Potential", has been published.

Maria Miller said the document builds on previous work, and: "sets out the Government's vision of enabling disabled people to fulfill their potential and have opportunities to play a full role in society."

There are three main areas for discussion: "realising aspirations, increasing individual control and changing attitudes and behaviours."

Responses to the document must be with the Office for Disability Issues by 5pm on 9th March 2012. You can download the document (including easy-read and audio) from their website:

[http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-](http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-projects/fulfilling-potential.php)

[projects/fulfilling-potential.php](http://odi.dwp.gov.uk/odi-projects/fulfilling-potential.php)

A British Sign Language summary is on YouTube:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eYjEYChzsJY>

See the ODI website for information about how The ODI are encouraging and assisting disabled people's groups to hold discussion events. You need to contact them for this by 23rd January.

Contact details for the Strategy

Team are: Tel: 020 7340 4000

Email:

fulfilling.potential@dwp.gsi.gov.uk

Write to: Office for Disability Issues

(Disability Strategy Team),

Ground Floor, Caxton House,

6-12 Tothill Street,

London, SW1H 9NA.

St Peter's Square Cenotaph To Be Moved?



In September, GMCDP and Manchester Disabled People's Access Group held a joint consultation to air disabled people's views about the 2nd City Crossing.

The proposed 2CC route is an additional tram link between Deansgate-Castlefield stop (formerly GMEX) and Victoria stop via Cross Street, running through St Peter's Square, Princess Street, Cross Street and Corporation Street.

We have now been informed that the Manchester City Council Executive and Transport for Greater Manchester Committee have agreed for a Transport and Works Act (TWA) application to go ahead. This is to gain the powers needed to build and operate the 2CC route.

Approval was also given for a design competition for the redevelopment of St Peter's Square.

For more information you can contact the 2CC stakeholder team on Phone: 0161 244 1444 or at: 2cc.metrolink@tfgm.com

The consultation summary report is at the following link:
http://www.transportforgreatermanchestercommittee.gov.uk/downloads/file/4197/item_6-metrolink_second_city_crossing

Mass Travel Pass Renewal



All of the National Concessionary Travel Passes issued by Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM, formerly GMPTE) will start to expire in April next year.

Starting in February 2012, they will write to each pass holder six weeks before their pass is due to expire, explaining how they can apply for their pass to be renewed.

Any pass holders who have changed address in the last five years need to contact Passes & permits

Tel: 0161 244 1050 (line open Monday to Thursday 9am to 4.30pm, and Friday 9am to 4pm),
Email: passes&permits@tfgm.com

Lounge @ 3



This is a new social group for adults with a learning disability who are over 55 and live in Manchester.

The group plans to meet up each Monday evening 5pm to 9pm, starting the 2nd week in January. They are planning various activities including nights out, meals, cinema, pool etc.

Manchester People First run a number of other social activities. For more information please contact Manchester People First, Tel: 0161 839 3700 or Email: mcrpeoplefirst@googlemail.com

CLEO

Community Lived Experiences Organisation is an independent user led group for people in Oldham, with lived experience of emotional and social trauma.

They are developing a 5 year project that includes; Advocacy, Awareness training, Peer counselling and support and working in partnership with service providers.

They describe themselves as “a collective who are actively working to promote wellness, recovery and thriving”.

They can be contacted via The Link Centre Tel: 0161 770 1293/4, Email: cleomt@hotmail.co.uk

Your Right - You Control!

The Right to Control is a new right for disabled people over the age of 18 who live in Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Stockport or Trafford and need support. It aims to give disabled people more control over the social care, housing related support and employment support they receive.

Initially Right to Control was only available to new applicants, but each of the five local authorities involved have now extended Right to Control to existing service users.



Breakthrough UK is offering one day's free training to User Led Organisations in Manchester, about Right to Control. The training will take place in February 2012.

For further details contact the centre for Independent Living:
Tel: 0161 273 5154
Textphone: 0161 273 5727
Email: cil@breakthrough-uk.co.uk

Service Providers And Transitions Event



The GMCDP Including Young Disabled People project are about to embark on their second Annual Service Provider and Transitions Event. The aim of the day is for young disabled people to talk to service providers (throughout the boroughs of Greater Manchester) about their experiences of transitions and how these can be improved in the future.

Last year's event was a roaring success according to the feedback from the service providers, and the young disabled people are working hard to ensure that this is repeated this year.

This event is planned for Wednesday 18th January 2012. If you are a service provider or work for a disabled people's organisation that has contact with young disabled people, you would be most welcome to attend.

Spaces are limited, but you can secure a place by contacting ASAP either Derek or Brett on:
Tel: 0161 273 5137 or by Email: dbroadbent@gmcdp.com

Next Information Bulletin

Please send any news or events you would like publicising by 14th January 2012.

If you need assistance accessing any of the websites or information given in this bulletin, please contact the GMCDP office and we will be pleased to assist.

Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP)

**BEVC, Aked Close,
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Phone: **0161 273 5154**

Typetalk: **1802 0161 273 5154**

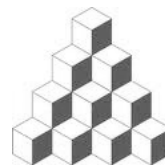
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