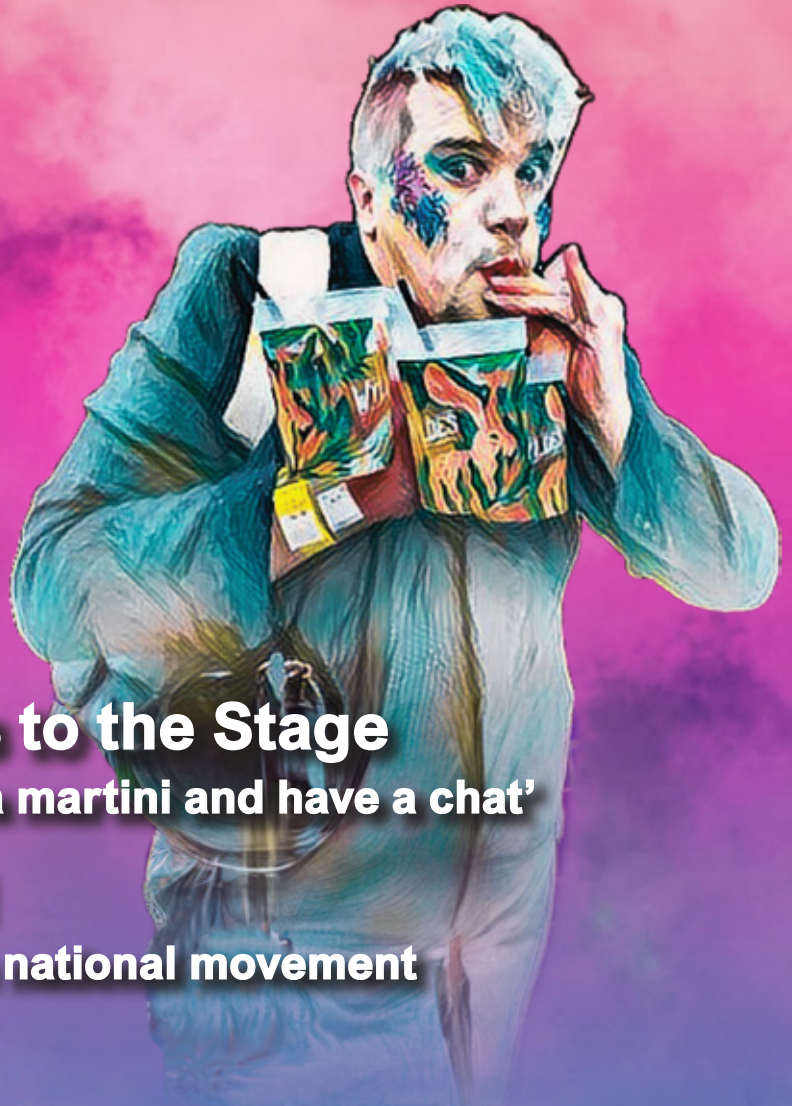


Issue 20 – Summer 2023

DISCOVER

FREE

*Alex
Gibson*



Pride Headliner Takes to the Stage

'Get the elephant in the room a martini and have a chat'

End Hunger Cornwall

One man's experience led to a national movement

Plymouth Argyle

Disabled Supporters Association

Samantha Renke

How to turn your passion into reality

Newquay Boxing Academy **Knocking down barriers**

Your full guide to welfare benefit entitlements

Plus interviews, local activities, reviews, your stories and more!

Welcome

Welcome to the 20th edition of *DISCOVER*. Did you know, prior to us taking on production of the magazine, an earlier 29 editions were produced between 1997-2004, all to promote the interest of disabled people in Cornwall. We still cherish our copies of those which were produced by Alldis, a sister charity that merged with us in the noughties, and the Editor then was Luke Murray, who some of our readers may remember.

Sadly, we're unsure if we will be able to produce more editions, due to the lack of future funding for it and its inevitable carbon footprint, but we will be building on our new podcast series with lots more hosts and subjects, so if you can, please tune in.

In this edition, we bring you some great people stories and you can read about the wonderful North Cornwall Care Farm, that's nurturing young people as co-farmers.

A great initiative is a community boxing academy, with the group 'Parky Blinders' especially for people living with Parkinson's, as boxing is proven to reduce tremors, increase motor skills and enhance wellbeing and the beautiful Samantha Renke treats us to more of her top tips. We feature the Plymouth Argyle Disabled Supporters Association that feels like the most inclusive and welcoming group, collaborative arts, and key campaigns, such as End Hunger Cornwall, Rights On Flights and the Spinal Injuries Association This is #Serious Sh1T campaign regarding the lack of bowel care.

We touch on the challenges of housing, prescription costs, and we provide welfare benefit fact sheets, so please look if you think there is something you should be entitled to.

We continue to live through the most difficult and challenging times, but as ever, please remember you are not alone, there are so many organisations here to assist you with advice, guidance and practical support, some of which we feature within.

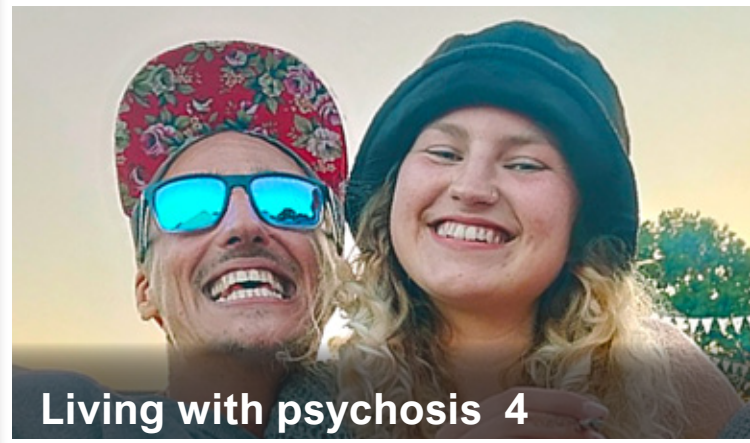
As always, we wish you well and we are here for you if you need us.

With very best wishes,

The dC Team x

DISCOVER 1997-2023

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Living with psychosis: How I've survived and begun to thrive

by Tom Barwell-Best

Battling with severe mental illness is no easy feat, but it doesn't mean you can't have a good life.

I've suffered from delusions and hallucinations all my life. It's been indescribably difficult, but as I turn 30, I'm finally building a life that resembles normality. Despite the probability that my symptoms will be lifelong, I hold an abundance of hope, clarity, confidence, and a hard-won strength that has a unique value to others.

To start at the beginning, childhood was challenging, to put it lightly. Panic attacks, night terrors, black outs, along with paranoid delusions about near enough anything, from demons and magic, right through to robots and vampires and even things I can't describe. The goalposts of reality were forever shifting.

Somehow, this never raised alarm bells, probably because I was always responsive, intelligent and at times, happy. I was always told that it was just my 'mind playing tricks on me', but as I got older it became apparent that my mind was playing more 'tricks' than other people's.

In secondary school, I slipped into the 'naughty kid' role, being destructive in a losing bid to escape the psychological turmoil. I did not have the vocabulary or understanding of mental health to communicate what I was going through or the reasoning for my behaviour. This left friends and family distraught, as I sunk into depression.

"The goalposts of reality were forever shifting."

Drugs and alcohol made it easier to cope briefly but worsened my condition. When I was expelled from school the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team intervened, prescribing the antidepressant Prozac, before moving on to anti-psychotics after a suicide attempt.

I remained on anti-psychotics for four years, time passing in a blur with few memories. The

medication did its job to prevent distressing thoughts and feelings, but it also stopped all thoughts and feelings. The hallucinations persisted, but did not trouble me, as nothing did.

Coming off medication, life hit me as if I'd been sleepwalking. I awoke an adult, working full-time in London, away from home, high on a cocktail of confusion and relief that I had been a shell of myself for so long. I knew I had plenty to figure out and a lot to be wary of, but I was happy and confident in my ability to build a good life. I began an access course for a law degree, to pursue my long-standing passion for justice and I started focusing on my wellbeing, diet and getting to know myself as a young adult.

Disaster struck when I was wrongly detained under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act after approaching the mental health teams for talking therapies for anxiety. After 12 days of incarceration, a three and a half hour tribunal and untold amounts of distress, I was free but unrecognisable. My mental health problems had worsened. After seeing a GP, I was told I had developed PTSD.

"After 12 days of incarceration, a three and a half hour tribunal and untold amounts of distress, I was free but unrecognisable."

The years since have been a fight to survive, to regain any kind of stability. To simply eat, sleep, stay hydrated and not break-down have been impossible most days, but through time, commitment and little help from the professionals I am not just surviving, but thriving. I am halfway through my second year of a Creative Writing and Journalism Degree.

I have overcome alcoholism, abusive relationships, homelessness and total dysfunctionality. I have dug



Photo by Tom Barwell-Best

Tom Barwell-Best with girlfriend Chloe Linley

deep through despair and hopelessness, fashioning the means to build a life worth living. I look back on my younger self and see a boy confused and frightened, and I have no doubt there are many other souls suffering in the same way. I am sharing my story for those individuals that I write for, as well as their support network.

"I look back on my younger self and see a boy confused and frightened, and I have no doubt there are many other souls suffering in the same way."

If I had one piece of wisdom that I could share across the world, it would be breathe. As cliché as it sounds, I never knew its value and the results of not reacting. I know now that my hallucinations and delusions are not what prevents me from living, it is how I react.

I regain control by putting all my willpower into consciously breathing through whatever distress I am in. By simply sitting with my pain, I gain strength, minute by minute. Every second is an achievement, to bear the unbearable. It is empowering.

In one of my darkest hours, I recall frantically scanning every bitter inch of my psyche, distraught in face of how overwhelming it all was. Rocking, I cried: "I can't do this, I can't do this."

Then it hit me: "If it hasn't been done, it is yet to be done."

Whatever you are facing, however impossible moving forward may seem, know that just because it hasn't been done before, it doesn't mean you can't be the first to do it. The first step is accepting that it's possible.

I believe medication saved my life and I don't advocate people stopping their medication, but I would hate to think that any young person would be sedated and brushed aside.

I am 10 years medication free and I'm in a healthy long-term relationship pursuing music, writing and taking steps to create my own business. I am living proof of another way. All I ever really needed was to be able to believe in, express and understand myself. To have the courage to keep trying and to pursue what I wanted.

You can help your loved ones to get all this and more by creating trust and holding space for them to be as they are. Providing consistent reassurance, topped with fresh inspiration.

DISCOVER VOICES

THE DISABILITY PODCAST NETWORK

DISCOVER Voices is a podcast network that discusses life through the lens of people living with a long-term health condition or disability.



Our first podcast series is by disAbility Cornwall & Isles of Scilly's very own residential researcher Dr Theo Blackmore.

Listen to Theo on his podcast series, where he shares conversations with Disabled Peoples Organisations and lived experience advocates and activists across the UK.

We will be introducing new series hosts soon, if you're interested in becoming a host email us via our details below.



Come with us to take a look around the facilities and services of Cornwall's 10 Disability Alliance Organisations and hear more about the work that they do to improve the lives of our citizens.*



Cornwall Disability Alliance

*Only available on Youtube

The podcast is available on all major audio platforms



discover@disabilitycornwall.org.uk

Newquay Boxing Academy: Knocking down barriers

The academy is a shining example of how a community can come together to create something truly special.

Established in 2017 by Richard Powers, it has quickly become a hub of activity for people of all ages and backgrounds.



With a team of dedicated coaches and a range of programs tailored to meet the needs of different groups, the academy is continually growing from strength to strength. It has already produced two Western County Champions and one English National Youth Champion, but there are many more people of all skillsets and ages who can benefit from the coaching and support that the academy provides.

They offer programs for mini minors, juniors, youth, and senior boxers, as well as free boxing sessions for people with Parkinson's and for military veterans. These programs provide people with community and support, helping them channel their aggression and focus, get fit, and gain confidence.

Parky Blinders is a boxing group for people with Parkinson's, they are free of charge sessions providing participants with an increased sense of wellbeing and motor skills. Many of the participants recorded less tremors and improved symptoms upon visiting the boxing gym. Boxing helps with balance, coordination and muscle memory and sessions end with a much-deserved coffee and cake! It provides more than just a workout, it is also

a valued social hub where people with Parkinson's can talk about issues they all have in common. This scheme was broadcast nationwide by BBC News and its success has meant it is now a blueprint for other boxing clubs across the country.

'Only Vets and Forces' is another popular boxing group and Steve Hayes, Co-founder told DISCOVER: "As an ex-army veteran of 24 years myself, I understand the importance of being actively social and we provide this at the academy."

This session also provides support to attendees who may be suffering with the likes of PTSD, depression, anxiety or any other issues they might be having at the time. Everyone who attends enjoys being part of a team as it reminds them of the comradeship they had when they were serving in the military.

For more information on how to get involved through funding or participation, contact:

✉ Shayes@bude-stratton.gov.uk

🌐 www.facebook.com/Newquayboxing



Parky Blinders at Newquay Boxing Academy

Get the elephant in the room a martini and have a chat

Alex Gibbon fuses laughter and lived experience to create comedy gold. A natural performer, Alex has a knack for taking the political and interweaving it with dark comedy to talk about their experiences as a non-verbal queer person living with Functional Neurological Disorder (FND), all whilst wearing a daring red lipstick and long painted nails. I guess you could say this is where disability and queerness intersect.

Alex describes their experience with FND as 'essentially being a Windows 10 update with a pulse'. They say it's a chronic condition that can either be constant or periodic, with as many variations in the way it can affect people as the common cold. Alex's condition began in dance classes, experiencing a 'chronic numbness' in the legs. The symptoms of FND gradually advanced to the point where Alex was having severe periods of fatigue, tremors and spasms, that would 'lay them out for several days at a time'.

In 2017, Alex's speech began to be affected, at first they experienced 'just episodes of mild aphasia, but then the episodes began to last longer, until in 2019'. At this point, Alex had an incredibly severe episode that 'took away their ability to speak entirely and physically left them bed bound for six months'. Since then, Alex has been unable to speak and now uses a text or speech app on their phone to communicate.

When asked about life now, Alex says: "I feel fortunate that through physiotherapy and determination I was able to regain some of my mobility and reduce my fatigue, so now I can have a fulfilled life with my friends and family. I am also able to now finally give back to the people who helped me hang on and motivate me to fight hard during physio."

Alex's latest show 'Fat, Femme and Crippled' is headlining all Cornwall Pride Parades this year and has been accepted to Edinburgh Fringe, after receiving the Phoebe Waller-Bridge Keep It Fringe Fund grant. Alex prides themselves in being a trustee for both disAbility Cornwall and Cornwall Pride, saying that the future is bright for inclusion, if organisations such as ours come together and think intersectionally.

So you're a trustee of both disAbility Cornwall and Cornwall Pride, how did you find yourself here?

It all started when Bude Pride was set up back in 2021. I literally thought I was just volunteering for the one event, but I guess it all kind of snowballed into something bigger from that. I had also been in contact with disAbility Cornwall when I first got sick and they fought so hard for me to get adaptations to my house, a PIP application and getting me back out of the house to have a life.

Later that year I became a disAbility Cornwall trustee, as I wanted to pay that kindness forward. Being a trustee for Cornwall Pride was a lot about disability representation for me, especially after having been to the UK Pride Organisers Conference and seeing there was literally no disabled people. I decided 'hell no!', there needs to be a disabled presence in these spaces to steer policies and events. Matthew (CEO, Cornwall Pride) is proper trendsetting in that he actually actively seeks out as many areas of intersectionalities onto Cornwall Pride's board of trustees to inclusively shift the conversation. I feel very lucky to have the platform I have, so I wanted to use it for positions such as these. I have been wanting to marry our organisations together for ages, because it just makes sense.

How do you feel being disabled and queer has effected your experience of the world?

Until recently, and even times when I actually leave Cornwall to go to more queer spaces, I feel that there is an unsaid undercurrent of being either too disabled to be queer or too queer to be disabled within both communities. I notice more in gay bars, for example when I order a drink and I catch the bartenders blatantly looking for my minder. I've found it easier to get by now in my hometown, because all the shops and locals know one another. Leaving the country is like trying to achieve world peace, because as well as not being able to go to queerphobic countries, that choice is narrowed down again by accessibility. I use the word 'recently' as more of a hopeful term.



Alex Gibbon, Comedian and trustee of Cornwall Pride and disAbility Cornwall

Do you think there's a way forward from this?

Since working with Cornwall Pride and actively having a platform in our county to normalise seeing disabled people just being happily mediocre with stupid life choices as everyone else. I say in my show that bad life choices are not a luxury of the able bodied, it would be good to see less exceptionalism. I would like to see the disabled community and the queer community come together more and unpick the unconscious bias that constrains us all to live in an ableist heteronormative society. I think the divide between the queer community and disabled community has not been largely explored within lived experience research, and I think this needs to be addressed.

Did these feelings inspire your performance Fat, Femme and Crippled? What were the key ingredients to creating your show?

They definitely inspired my show to get to where it is now. But before getting sick I was already a performer. Ironically I used to be a singer and vocal coach and did my degree in musical theatre. I became very depressed when I first got sick, but when I came out the other side people said I was mildly amusing so I was like f*** it, if people are going to treat me like I'm mentally deficient then I may as well make money off it. I always loved making people laugh as a kid though and so I started writing again in 2019. When I wrote my act I just wanted to lay it all out and be like: this is who your disgust and pity is going to. Yes,

disabled people are just as capable of having bad personalities, so lets talk about this.

Your comedy style is quite dark and self deprecating, where do you think this comes from?

People learn far better from laughter than lecture, you've got to get the elephant in the room a martini and chat. My dad definitely inspired me a lot cause we both had a very dark sense of humour, which to be honest saved my life at points when my depression was life threateningly severe. I think that if you let people in on the funny side of our problems then it makes them feel comfy and safe to ask any questions without fear of getting slapped for it.

The name of your show uses words people may interpret as slurs or insults, why did you choose to include them in the name?

It was definitely a reclamation, as well as an ode to the drag queen Kim Chi's RuPaul's Drag Race Finale song 'Fat Femme and Asian'. The title worked really well with the story I'm telling about myself. I definitely reclaim the word 'cripple' in my personal life, although I know some people still find it offensive. I want to take the negative connotations away from the word because I see it as quite powerful to still have autonomy over language despite some people still referring to disabled people by that name, assuming that we are little more than a burden of the state. Topics like this aren't in my Pride set, as it's not so suitable for kids, but it will be in my Fringe show,

I'm still in the fleshing out stages of how to make the message funny.

How does it feel to be going to Edinburgh Fringe?

Wild and expensive. My show got accepted in February and I'm still pinching myself. I will say I've been burning through my credit score to afford the registration fees, venue hire, ad space in the programme and printing fees, and that's before accommodation costs. But expenses aside I'm just so thrilled and happy to be given that platform to hopefully draw in the good reviews needed to get an agent and make this a career I can live off. I'm also very excited for the other two shows I've been booked for by Blue Badge Bunch, doing a 15 minute preview of my show in their showcase Disabled Cant's, and playing Disability Task Master.

Blue Badge Bunch are incredible, as they tour all around the country with their gameshow Disability Taskmaster, and are making such a difference in normalising disability in society. Benny Shakes and Mark Nicholas, who spear head the company, work so incredibly hard at giving as many disabled comedians as possible the opportunity to use their platform. I am really looking forward to being on Disability Task Master because I just get to be an absolute idiot for an hour. They design the tasks around your disability and a lot of the time the kids in the audience pick what you have to do. I've noticed that I have a much easier time around kids than with adults, because kids don't care and will laugh at anything. My nieces do this thing where they will constantly sneak up and grab my phone to press the 'please' and 'thank you' buttons. I know I should not encourage that, but it's hilarious to me, I'm just there like 'never do this to anyone else!'

Where do you see your comedy and shows going in the future?

I want to go as big as I can with this. Rosie Jones is my idol, so I want to be at her level worldwide. It sounds odd but my biggest 'I know I've made it' goals is if I get to go on 8 Out of 10 Cats Does Countdown.

Where would you like to see the future of disability and LGBTQIA+ justice going?

I think it's a long way off, but I want to see a future where disabilities are actively discussed in schools. So kids are not just learning about them, but learning how to normalise and interact with disabled people like you would anyone else. I'm loving the campaign for sign language to be mandatory for GCSE, but there is so much more we can do and I really think the best place to start is within primary education, whilst minds are still wide open in terms

of how disabled people are seen, because kids will very quickly adapt, whilst adults rarely do. As for government, our lives and how many of us there are need to stop being seen as statistics, because otherwise when they see lower percentages they just stop caring. They need to start working with us on a ground level instead, because there's very little sense of empathy for minority communities in our government.

We can definitely create a place for these things by having conversations and actively welcoming everyone into queer and accessible spaces. We need to actively design these spaces around accessibility first, however, rather than having this as just an afterthought in budget planning. I am loving Cornwall Pride's approach to accessibility this year, for example, we are working harder on accessibility signposting and collaborating with organisations such as disAbility Cornwall to make this happen. We are also pushing out surveys after the Pride Parades, so we can use any negative results to demonstrate our need of accessibility to funding bodies for next year. This way accessibility can get its own funding pot. This is why I think disAbility Cornwall and Cornwall Pride would make such a power couple to achieve things none of the other hundreds of Prides in the UK, including the big ones, are achieving.

For more information please go to:

www.cornwallpride.org

To find out more about Alex's Edinburgh Fringe shows:

Fat, Femme and Crippled | Comedy | Edinburgh Festival Fringe

www.edfringe.com

You can follow Alex on:

[Facebook.com/AlexGibbonComedian](https://www.facebook.com/AlexGibbonComedian)

[@AlexGibbonComedian](https://www.instagram.com/AlexGibbonComedian)

Cornwall Pride is very different from many of the Prides in the UK. Not only do we run 11 Prides over the summer months in order to reach our geographically disparate communities, but we work tirelessly the rest of the year, to put on events, create safe spaces and provide training and support to organisations, to help Cornwall become a more inclusive place to live.

Creating a platform for performers like Alex to showcase their work is just one of the beautiful consequences of our work in Cornwall. We are hugely excited to be part of building an inclusion alliance of organisations across Cornwall to help highlight and support the people of the county.

How to turn your passion into a reality

By Samantha Renke

Having just celebrated her 12 year anniversary of moving to London, a move that proved to be a turning point in Samantha's career, propelling it to new heights, *DISCOVER* catches up with her for a chat about turning a passion into a profitable business.

How did I get to this point? Well, I had recently left my postgrad P.G.C.E and was on my way to a vocation in secondary education as a modern foreign language teacher. I had also recently taken on the role of trustee for the Brittle Bone Society and all in all, life was good. In my personal life, I was gaining confidence in my own abilities and independence and breaking away from what could only be described as a rather toxic and unhealthy co-dependent relationship with my mum. Ultimately, the decision to move to London came after feeling stifled and still being infantilised by many people in my life, even though I was a graduate in my twenties. Those negative tropes that society offers up to many disabled people lingered around like a bad smell. I simply had enough and decided to seize the day. I wanted a new start and to put myself first, for the first time in my life.

The past twelve years have taught me so much about myself and also many lessons on how to create my own brand. To the outside world, one may be under the assumption that I have it all figured out and my career is safely in the bag. Far from it. One of the challenges of going at it on your own is that you never stop learning or being challenged. At the beginning of my journey, I was very much a novelty and one of only a handful of



Image by Nicky Johnston

Samantha Renke

disabled creatives who had significant notoriety within the creative industry. Many of whom I'm sure you all know and love: Sophie Morgan, Alex Brooker and Ade Adepitan to name a wonderful few. But with such a small pot of opportunities, it wasn't really the done thing to share the wealth and at times I lacked any guidance or team.

“One of the challenges of going at it on your own is that you never stop learning or being challenged.”

Now that I am in a position of wisdom born from my own successes and failures, I'm here to share the wealth with anyone who is interested in going at it alone or starting a new venture. So here are my top tips for all those budding entrepreneurs and creatives who are keen not to follow the mainstream:

1) Know your purpose

What is the purpose of your venture? Who is the consumer or target audience on the other end of your service and how are you helping them? The answers to these questions will serve as an anchor

and a guide throughout your career. Knowing 'why' will also keep you motivated through the challenging times as well as keep you aligned with your core business values when things begin to grow and you feel at times very overwhelmed. For me, it was the disability community. Of course, I wanted to help the entire community but having this wide focus at the beginning of my journey got me into hot water. I would say yes to any charity and organisation, take on many ambassador roles, and be a spokesperson for many campaigns.

This left me burnt out and unable to work to the best of my ability and at times let organisations down. Some projects didn't inspire me as much as others and this was apparent in my devotion and commitment. It's okay to say no. Only take on projects that really make your heart flutter because there is someone else who will fill in the roles you passed on. Don't feel guilty.

2) Be resilient and persistent

Challenges, obstacles and rejection are an inevitable part of everybody's journey. How you respond to those things determines where you end up. Do not be derailed by them, but instead more resilient. Allow them to teach you a lesson and give you an opportunity to grow. Be persistent, do not give up and keep going. It may sound like a cliché, but when one door closes another one will open, it just may not open when you want it to... be patient!

Typically, I am at my busiest from October to December year on year, then the new year comes and there is tumbleweed. My self-doubt and anxiety are in full swing. Even now I think 'is this it, am I done, is my career in the toilet?'. Freelance work can really impact your mental wellbeing, especially the inconsistency and fickle culture that surrounds it. I have learned over the years to see downtime as a luxury. I treat it as a time to regroup and replenish my energy. It is also a time to 'hussle', go back through your emails and reach out to all those people you've met and pitch your service to them.

Make yourself known. I also use this downtime to really invest in my social media platforms and make sure you are generating a presence even if I feel like I'm not really up to much.

3) Step outside your comfort zone

Keep encouraging yourself to transcend your fears and doubts and step outside your comfort zone. Take risks, put yourself out there, reach out to people, show up on social media and ask for help to grow. We have to do things that make us feel uncomfortable. Knowing your purpose and being clear on your 'why' will help motivate you to do this.

4) Turn envy into inspiration

It is natural to allow your fears and doubts to fuel feelings of envy when you see other people online appearing to be more successful than you, especially if they're in the same industry as you. In my case, like other d/Deaf disabled or neurodivergent individuals, I have become aware that opportunities are few and far between when you a part of a minority group.

This envy, which stems from a scarcity mindset, only serves to keep you stuck in a place of dead lock. Instead, see others' success as proof that it's possible. Be inspired by them and in doing so embody an abundant mindset which will help you keep attracting opportunities back to you. Harboring negative thoughts is draining and will derail you off your path and focus. Be kind and understand that jealousy is normal and it's okay to compare yourself, just don't let it consume you.

5) Be clear in your vision

We need clarity on our goals. Make a vision board for your business, practise visualisation meditation and get a crystal clear idea on where you want to be and the milestones you want to reach. Dare to dream is one of the chapters in my book and I can't express how much my own visualisation has helped me throughout my life. Dare to dream and dream big! Be courageous with your goals. Being clear on your vision and using these practises will remind you each day that you deserve to live how you want to live and negate any of those "naysayers!"

Building your own brand, your own business or just starting out in your career is both exciting and overwhelming. Although I've been at this now for over a decade, I still have roller coaster emotions from week to week. What I have learned is to trust the process and more so, trust that you made this decision because you wanted something for yourself and you deserve it all!

Follow me on social media @samantharenke or check out my debut book 'You Are The Best Thing Since Sliced Bread' via the QR code below:



BorrowBox App: The digital library

By Tamsin Thorne



If you're using BorrowBox for the first time, you'll need to register for an account. However, if you already have a BorrowBox account, you'll be taken directly to the main page. The easiest way to access free eBooks and eAudiobooks is through the BorrowBox app. iPhone and iPad users should download the app from the App Store (IOS version 6 or above). Android users should download the app from Google Play Store.

Once you have installed the BorrowBox app on your device you will need to register using the following steps:

1. Go to the 'Please select your library' option and start typing Cornwall. You will need to select: 'Cornwall Libraries' and log in with your library card number.
2. When you submit all of this information you will be asked to 'Agree' to the terms and conditions. Once you have clicked on 'Agree' you will be taken through to the app where you can browse, borrow, download and reserve eBooks and eAudiobooks.

Tamsyn, Library and Information Service Assistant at Redruth Library & Information Service, tells *DISCOVER*: "Tamsin has really highlighted the benefits of Borrowbox to readers who may find accessing their local library difficult. Here at Redruth Library & Information Service we are always looking for ways that we can extend our reach and be as inclusive as possible."

"We have been running a Digital Champion scheme since the beginning of the year that has been really successful, showing that access to information can be a real barrier for people. Tamsin is just one of our customers that has benefit from the scheme by being able to access books online, something that is really important to her. We would encourage anyone who would like to do the same to contact their local library."

For more information email or scan the QR code below:

✉ Tamsyn.dowling@liscornwall.org.uk



BorrowBox is a digital section of the library that is free and easily accessible from the comfort of your own home. It offers a vast selection of e-books and audio books that you can read and listen to on your own tablet or smartphone, making it much more convenient to hold and turn the pages like an actual book. If you need assistance setting it up or navigating the platform, your local library can help. I personally received free help from a lovely lady named Tamsyn at Redruth Library, who was happy to answer any questions I had.

To access instructions on how to use BorrowBox, you can visit the Cornwall Council website and search for 'Borrowbox eBooks and eAudiobooks'.

Where art meets activism: The power of collaborative portraits

Barbara Hulme is a disabled artist based in Manchester and over the years, she has had many artistic ventures, however, she has particularly honed her practice of watercolour portraiture, attending many life drawing classes over lockdown. From this, her craft grew into activist portraiture, inspired by her work with a woman named Laetitia, who contacted Barbara following her breast cancer surgery, asking if she could create a portrait of her. Barbara says that her work with Laetitia helped her to realise how empowering portraits can be for people who want to feel represented and want to see others like them being represented.

This prompted her various painting series 'Scars and All' and 'Mental Health and Mens Health', each of which have gained recognition for their depiction of real people with lived experiences of disability, mental health and long-term health conditions.

In her Scars and All project, Barbara painted women with scars from various surgeries and accidents, empowered to tell their story in a way that felt right to them. Subsequent to this, she decided she wanted to empower men in the same way, and thus her Mens Health series was born. She says that she believes men are much less likely to talk about their health, whether that be mental or physical. Barbara wanted to create a series of paintings that would give them the space to talk about their experiences and be painted in a way that feels authentic to them.

A key ingredient to Barbara's artistic talent, is her tenderness and understanding of the importance of collaboration with such intimate topics. She says she wants to ensure that everyone involved is comfortable, gives their consent to how the portraits will be used, and is able to write their own story in their own words. Barbara's process enables her to get to know her collaborators, discussing the image they would like the painting to be based on, listening to their story, understanding how they would like to be presented. Whilst there is such tenderness within her process, Barbara reminds us that her work melds activism with art, and this empowerment can be emboldening for all involved.

Trevor Palmer is one of the subjects in Barbara's Mens Health series. His portrait reference photo was taken by one of his carers on the morning Barbara asked for a reference photograph. When asked why Trevor reached out to Barbara to be a part of her Mens



Health series, he told us: “Barbara is a prolific artist that I have admired for a long time”. Trevor says that when he sees Barbara’s work he feels he can understand how her mind puts it all together, that he feels an affinity with her process, and wanted to get involved.

Trevor refers to himself as a co-producer with an interest in social justice and fairness. When asked how he felt about sharing his story of mental and physical health with Barbara and her audience, Trevor said he had no issues in other people knowing what he had been through or is going through, instead he would “rather people be aware of these issues than not aware of them”.

This sentiment of awareness and understanding transcends throughout Trevor’s very diverse portfolio of work. Having originally trained as a handbag designer, encountering a brief fascination with umbrella printing and manufacture and then establishing the Azure Gallery and Studio in London during the 1980s, Trevor became fascinated with disability justice, a cause he has well and truly sunk his teeth into. His work includes voluntary assignments for the British Executive Services Overseas, acting as a Director of Disability Wales, a trustee of See Around Britain, and as a member of the management committee of Disability in Wales and Africa. He also founded GL100 Services, a company that works to create more equitable employment opportunities through



Blair Maule by Barbara Hulme

presenting, coaching and advising. In 2005 Trevor founded ResponsABLE Assistance, a not-for-profit organisation that supports disabled people in desperate situations around the world. In 2019, ResponsABLE Assistance’s Fursa Initiative was set up in the Kibwezi region of Kenya, Fursa meaning opportunity in Swahili, to assist disabled people and their families to create sustainable enterprises.

When you look at Barbara’s portrait of Trevor, you can see plants in the background, primarily cacti. This begs the question ‘why the plants?’, Trevor promptly whips his camera around to show us the vast array of plants in his front room, saying they are only a small number of their ever growing collection. The collection is thanks to his wife, who is a horticulturalist. In a film created for DEEP (Developing Enriched Evidence Practice), a project Trevor volunteered for, you can see Trevor in his house surrounded by plants, accompanied by interviews with DEEP project workers talking about the similarity of growing an equitable society with growing a garden: you’ve got to make sure the foundation is right, else everything could rot. When Barbara and Trevor discussed the background of his portrait, Trevor showed Barbara this film, and they decided plants it had to be!

Alongside painting people like Trevor, Barbara paints herself in her projects too. She chooses to include herself in her work, as not only has she experienced some of the topics covered in her series such as Scars and All and Mental Health, but because she wants to encourage others to be more open. By placing herself in her art, she can access her own empowerment and show potential collaborators that she wouldn’t expect them to do anything she wouldn’t do.

Whilst Barbara’s Mens Health series is drawing to a close, she is readying herself for her new series, Womens Health, and she is looking for volunteers. If you feel you resonate with Barbara’s work and would like to be involved, please reach out to her.

@barbara.hulme

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To find out more about the work of ResponsABLE Assistance or to make a donation:

www.responsibleassistance.org

Rights On Flights campaign

The air travel industry must start taking the needs of disabled people more seriously.

The Rights On Flights campaign, launched by disabled TV presenter Sophie Morgan and MP Marion Fellows, sheds light on the lack of accountability in the airline industry when it comes to providing appropriate assistance to disabled passengers and their equipment. They call on the UK government to grant the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) powers to fine airlines and other actors for their negligence.

Sophie, who frequently travels internationally for her TV work, had her bespoke wheelchair and electric-powered front-wheel BATEC system damaged beyond repair on a journey between Los Angeles and London. Her story is not unique, and it highlights the consistent mistreatment and disregard faced by disabled passengers when travelling by air.

The current regime of oversight for accessible air travel, overseen by the CAA, is limited and ineffective in holding airlines and other actors accountable for their actions. Charters and codes of conduct have proven insufficient. The Rights On Flights campaign is demanding that airlines and other actors be held responsible for damage to wheelchairs and essential mobility devices, leaving disabled passengers stranded on flights for extended periods, and failing to provide appropriate assistance, despite prior knowledge of their needs.

Sophie’s message is clear, the campaign is not seeking special treatment but rather the same

experience as non-disabled passengers. Disabled people should not have to fear flying or the potential loss of their vital mobility equipment. The campaign is just the first step towards a complete overhaul of the airline industry.

The hashtag #RightsOnFlights will be used across social media to spread the message and raise awareness of the campaign. Marion Fellows MP has written to the Prime Minister and all parliamentarians, calling for support from the wider public.

This campaign is a powerful movement that aims to prevent more disabled passengers from getting hurt, losing their vital equipment, or even dying, due to inadequate assistance on flights. It’s time for the airline industry to be held accountable, and the Rights On Flights campaign is leading the charge.

Disability Rights UK strongly encourages everyone to write to their local MP concerning the Rights On Flights campaign, for more information on how to do this, follow the link provided or scan the QR code:

www.disabilityrightsuk.org/rights-flights



The National Trust: Access for all

The National Trust have made significant efforts to ensure that its estates are accessible to disabled people and putting forward initiatives to help carers.

Eleanor who works for the National Trust on the Cotehele Estate told *DISCOVER*: “We are currently installing a wheelchair ramp next to our reception exit so all visitors can enter the property in the same way. We’ve also purchased new wheelchairs this month and have a Tramper in partnership with Countryside Mobility. We’re currently working with them to increase the routes the Tramper can access so visitors can access more of the property.”

One of the primary ways in which the National Trust sets out its accessibility features is through its website, which provides detailed information about each site's accessibility features, for people with mobility, hearing, and visual requirements. Visitors can also find information about parking, toilets, and accessible paths and routes.



To find out more follow the link below or scan the QR code:

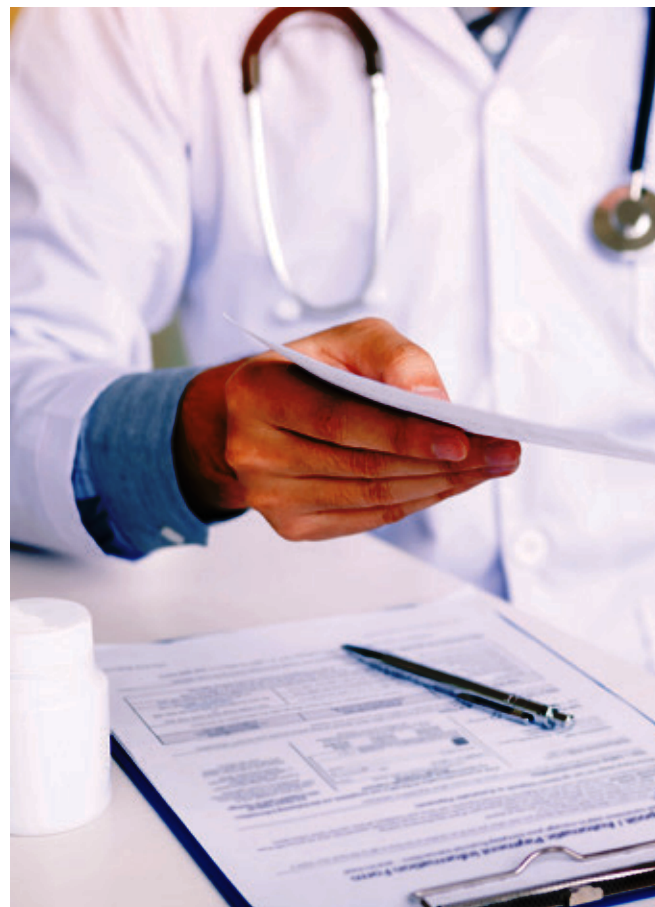
www.nationaltrust.org.uk/who-we-are/about-us/access-for-everyone



How can you save money on your prescription?

- Depending on how many medicines you need, it may be cheaper to buy a prescription ‘season ticket’ (prescription prepayment certificate) available from the NHS. You will save money if you need more than 3 items in 3 months, or 11 items in 12 months.
- Ask your pharmacist if there is an equivalent medicine costing less than the charge, which you can buy over the counter
- Ask your pharmacist or GP to review your medicines to ensure they are appropriate and that you get the best out of them.

To find out more, scan the QR code:



Cornwall’s housing crisis worsens, but how do we fix it?

The housing crisis is particularly acute in Cornwall, local and national authorities must do something about it.

This article is by Cornelius Olivier, Chairman of the Cornwall Labour Party, and frontline man for HUMANS Cornwall. He was a Cornwall Councillor for Penzance from 2013-2021, during which time he led a council inquiry into the conditions facing private rental tenants in Cornwall. Its recommendations were formally agreed upon by the council but have yet to be implemented.



Cornelius Olivier, Labour Party Chairman

There is only one positive thing to say about the current national housing crisis: at least it is now generally acknowledged. This is an improvement on the former attitude that the housing supply should largely be left to ‘market forces’ and that people who couldn’t afford their own homes simply needed to get a better job or work harder, spending less on luxuries.

Throughout the UK, many households are financially shut out of home ownership, unable to access social housing and are increasingly reliant on insecure private rentals that are often poor quality and overpriced. The number of households with dependent children living in private rentals is higher than any time since the 1980s. However, in the 1980s, private tenants were protected by rent controls and secured long-term tenancies.

Compared to other parts of the country, the situation is worse in Cornwall due to the growing gap between local earnings and local housing costs. Usually, low-wage areas like Cornwall have lower than average housing costs to reflect local incomes. However, Cornish households are caught between wages that are 75% of the national average and housing costs that are higher than the national average.

Perpetual Private Renting

The consequence of this is that private renting is no longer a transitional phase before moving to

more secure lifestyles, but a situation many are stuck in. Many tenants now spend so much of their household income on rent that their quality of life is eroded. That lack of disposable income for local households also undermines the local economy.

“Cornish households are caught between wages that are 75% of the national average and housing costs that are higher than the national average.”

Many families with children end up living in overcrowded housing, without gardens or adequate outdoor space and a landlord unwilling to modernise or even repair their homes.

However, probably the worst thing of all is the perpetual insecurity faced by private tenants, a key foundation of personal and family wellbeing is having a home you can afford to live in and know you can stay in. The reality and threat for many now is frequent moves with all the associated problems of costs, travel to work, childcare and school changes. High levels of social insecurity make it harder for individuals, families and communities to thrive.

There is no economic incentive for landlords not to charge exorbitant rents to modernise your property, to allow you to install independent living equipment or even carry out basic repairs.

Some landlords have no scruples about turfing out families to convert a home to a holiday let, while others are only deterred from doing so by the expense of converting their property into somewhere acceptable for paying visitors as opposed to local renters.

“Some landlords have no scruples about turfing out families to convert a home to a holiday let...”

So called ‘Reform’ of the welfare benefits system has made things worse, even before the pandemic and the subsequent surge in Cornish property prices. The maximum amount of benefit payable towards rental costs was less, often much less, than the rent being charged for two thirds of benefit claimants.

Unless other help is available, the difference must be made up by money allocated for other essentials, food, clothing, social contacts and school trips.

Home Buyers and Social Tenants

Although private renters bear the brunt of Cornwall’s housing crisis, many others are also affected. The housing affordability gap ensures home buyers have no choice but to borrow up to the limit, vulnerable to sudden shifts in mortgage interest charges and drops in income. This means that many of those reliant on local wages can’t afford the ‘affordable’ homes.

The failure to replace the council homes sold off under ‘Right to Buy’ has left Cornwall with far fewer social homes than are needed. As a result, many social tenants have homes that are secure but unsuitable. For instance, second floor properties which aren’t adaptable for an ageing population with limited mobility.

Some 10,000 social homes in Cornwall were sold off under Right To Buy, and it is estimated that about 2000 may have illegally ended up as second/holiday homes. There are also families that have outgrown their current home but can’t afford to upsize, leaving the young and not so young people with no choice but to live with their families.

How did things get so bad? There is one obvious cause, second and holiday homes

There are 13,200 ‘second homes’ and over 10,000 properties designated as ‘holiday let business premises’ in Cornwall, more than anywhere else in the country. That’s nearly 10% of Cornwall’s housing stock taken up by second/

Here are some statistics that really put Cornwall’s housing crisis in perspective:

- There are 22,000 households on the Cornwall Council Housing Needs Register
- 700 are in emergency accommodation, at a cost of £40,000 per day (£14.5 million per annum)

holiday homes and house prices pushed up by their owners. It’s not surprising there is a chronic shortage of accessible homes for people actually living in Cornwall.

The impact of second and holiday homes is felt everywhere. Linked to this is migration into Cornwall, predominantly of the retired and from places wealthier than Cornwall. House prices in Cornwall for this demographic now represent an investment opportunity, rather than an insurmountable obstacle.

This trend is matched by the departure from Cornwall of younger people seeking the opportunities and homes not available to them here. Cornwall’s population is older than the UK average, and that age gap continues to widen, creating a whole range of problems, quite apart from housing, in health, social care and workforce recruitment.

What can be done to ensure local people have homes they can afford to live in?

A substantial increase in the provision of council housing in Cornwall, available at a social, not an affordable rent: 60% not 80% of the market cost. This doesn’t need to be all newly built, existing homes can be purchased and commercial premises including holiday parks, converted to social housing.

The current plan for the provision of council homes in Cornwall (1500 homes built over seven years at a cost of £205 million financed by borrowing of £15 million per annum) is nowhere near enough. This is where a second home levy comes in. Plans to charge second homeowners in Cornwall an additional 100% Council Tax, should raise £26 million per annum.

This levy should be extended to owners of ‘holiday let business premises’, thereby raising another £18 million. If it isn’t, a lot of second homeowners will start calling themselves owners of holiday lets. The money wasted by the government on tax exemptions for holiday lets, another £18 million per annum, should be redirected towards the provision of ‘first homes’ by the council. It seems

incredible that in Cornwall, more is spent annually on subsidising second homes than providing council housing!

“It seems incredible that in Cornwall more is spent annually on subsidising second homes than providing council housing!”

Since exemptions from both Council Tax and Business Rates for holiday lets were introduced in 2012, their owners have benefited to the extent of £142 million. They also picked up £170 million in Covid business grants during the pandemic, even though over 60% of them don’t even live in Cornwall. If that money had been used to provide ‘first homes’ in our communities, Cornwall would be in a better place economically and socially.

If these simple measures are taken, the obstacles to the provision of council housing in Cornwall will no longer be financial, but technical. Finding sites, building appropriate infrastructure and a skilled workforce. A second home is a valuable asset, a potential source of income and a personal luxury. Taxing luxuries to provide necessities such as ‘first homes’ is very much political and social best practice.

The economic benefits of a council building programme in terms of wages earned, skills acquired and the increased disposable income of tenants, is considerable. The economic benefits of holiday lets in Cornwall are often exaggerated. Hotels, holiday parks, guest houses and so forth generate more per visitor than holiday lets in terms of jobs and the local economy.

Housing provision needs to be backed up by new planning controls. It’s no good creating new homes if the existing housing supply of first homes is still being eroded by property investors. The council needs the power to prevent primary residences from becoming second or holiday homes, in areas where such changes will make communities less sustainable. The rule introduced in St Ives and elsewhere that prohibits new build homes from becoming second or holiday homes should be applicable throughout Cornwall.

Whatever the benefits of reviving council housing provision, it will not heal the dysfunctional private rental sector on its own, greater regulation is needed. This means secure tenancies of three to five years to be made standard, with rent increases during that time capped at inflation.

Over 50% of private rental homes in Cornwall do not meet the official ‘decent homes’ standard. In particular, poor quality heating supply and

fuel efficiency result in punitive fuel bills and unhealthy homes.

In 2020, Cornwall Council agreed to the introduction of a private landlord licensing scheme for three Cornish towns. This mechanism has successfully been used in many other parts of the country to raise standards generally and guarantee minimum standards for private tenants. Regrettably, the council decided not to implement the agreed scheme.

The introduction of rent controls or rent caps linked to local incomes and property quality would help prevent both impoverishment of private tenants and public subsidy of an irresponsible landlord. If the rent on properties not classified as ‘decent homes’ was capped at the maximum payable via the benefits system, landlords would have the incentive to improve them.

“The council needs the power to prevent primary residences from becoming second or holiday homes, in areas where such changes will make communities less sustainable.”

Cornwall is overdependent on a holiday economy and has been over-romanticised

Local people face insecure seasonal employment, unskilled work for low wages and increasing difficulty in finding and paying for a home. Investment in Cornwall needs to be orientated towards the needs of the people who live here instead of treating visitors as a higher priority. Let’s have fewer second homes and more well-paid, skilled jobs in the ‘Green Economy’ as opposed to expensive eateries that pay the minimum wage.

Cornwall has already been de-industrialised, it now urgently needs to be de-romanticised. One of the biggest obstacles to challenging Cornwall’s problems is the perception that residents of Cornwall are living permanently ‘on holiday’, in a romantic but characterful lifestyle paradise.

There are many great things about Cornwall, but the idea that it’s wonderful as it is and that any change will spoil it is highly detrimental to most of the people who live here.

It’s easy to blame TV from the Doc Martin, or Rick Stein persuasion, as opposed to Simon Reeve’s more accurate depiction. I would really like to see a TV drama set in Cornwall that draws upon the finest traditions of social realism in British TV. It wouldn’t be pretty, but at least it would be true, perhaps Mark Jenkin can be persuaded?

Kernow Positive Support

Supporting You



We campaign against stigma and discrimination towards people with HIV.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We are a user led organisation with trustees and volunteers being a combination of people living with and without HIV, who all bring lived experience to their roles. We:

Empower people living with HIV to take control of their lives by providing tailored information, advice, guidance and support to complement their medical treatment.

Support people and their families with all non-medical needs, including advocacy and representation. We assist with benefit applications and appeals, housing, financial, mental health needs, domestic abuse, learning disability support and diagnosis, supporting clients with severe illness in addition to HIV, and people with a terminal diagnosis. We also provide counselling and mindfulness therapies.

We are available to all patients at the Royal Cornwall Hospital and support people to understand that if their HIV is properly controlled, it is not transmissible.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We also undertake educational work with young people and adults about HIV to prevent the continued transmission of, and stigma associated with it, by providing speakers to schools, colleges, businesses and frontline workers, tailoring our sessions to each organisations' needs. Our HIV Awareness talks for schools are suitable for years 9-13, so if interested in HIV awareness for your school or organisation, please contact us via our website.

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Plymouth Argyle Disabled Supporters Association

A pictorial guide to match day

Plymouth Argyle is one of the oldest football clubs in England and has a long and storied history with a passionate fanbase. The team plays its home matches at Home Park, a 21,500-seat stadium in central Plymouth. It also has a dedicated fanbase who travel to away games in droves, making the team an exciting club to watch and support.

Launched in 2009, Plymouth Argyle Disabled Supporters Association (PADSA) serves to support disabled members of the 'green army' as well as their carers. The association liaises with the club and other football clubs, to promote the enjoyment and experience of attending home and away matches.

Membership is free and includes events and regular updates on social media. This pictorial guide to match day has been produced to give a flavour of the Argyle experience to members and people planning to attend a match for the first time.

A great souvenir in itself, this article is an excerpt from the original photobook, providing a window into the experience of fans and is designed to make your trip to Argyle more familiar. PADSA is run by volunteers who are passionate supporters of Plymouth Argyle Football Club.

“PADSA is always on hand to help out with ticketing and happy to liaise on our members behalf.”

There are accessible windows at the ticket office at Home Park Stadium where you can collect or purchase your ticket. You can also buy your ticket online or by calling the ticket office.

Check your ticket for the block number. Doors to the ground are clearly signed with block numbers and stewards are available to show you to your seat. Finding your seat is easy as there is a large printed letter at the end of each row. Stewards and disabled ambassadors are available to show you to your seat. There are various viewing options around the stadium including unrestricted front row seats for wheelchair users and their carers.

Going to Argyle is a great way to relieve the stresses and strains of daily life... a place where you can meet friends and our football family. We have a laugh, sometimes we have a cry, but we are all in it together.

Congratulations to Plymouth Argyle F.C. who are League One champions and are playing in the Championship for the 2023-2024 season!



Stephen Helley, member of PADSA, at the ticket office



The Mayflower grandstand provides an excellent viewing area for our wheelchair users and ambulant supporters.



Soccer sight commentator Philip Lee providing in depth commentary of all the action for our visibly impaired supporters. Headsets are available from the main office to borrow free for the match.

“We have now moved on to the next chapter of our association with the opening of the new Mayflower Grandstand, which provides excellent facilities for people with disabilities and long-term health conditions”

We hope this excerpt from PADSA's photobook gives you a flavour of a day in the life of a disabled football supporter at Plymouth Argyle. We welcome you to join us at any game. Keep it Green!

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End Hunger Cornwall: One man's experience led to a national movement

By Andrew Howell



Councillor Linda Taylor, Leader of Cornwall Council and Andrew Howell from End Hunger Cornwall

Despite its humble beginnings, End Hunger Cornwall has become one of the most well known campaigning brands in the UK regarding the issues of food poverty, food insecurity, and poverty campaigning.

I often wonder how End Hunger Cornwall became what it is, and I love to share the story of how one person built a national brand and gave Cornwall this much needed voice.

First things first, I'm Andrew, the founder of End Hunger Cornwall, and ten years ago my life was very different to how it is today. I was literally on the scrap heap. A hideous back injury and failed surgery had left me out of work for a long time. I had a young family and no money. I had multiple battles with the benefits system to the point of ultimate despair, begging them for less than £100 a week. I had no money, no future and no hope; I felt failed by the system and left to rot. I couldn't pay my mortgage or feed my family. Any sense of

dignity, agency or power had been stripped away and all of this finally ended with an attempt to end my life.

"I had multiple battles with the benefits system to the point of ultimate despair"

I don't necessarily believe in fate, but a million to one chance event saved my life that day. Long story short, this eventually led me towards a journey of recovery and using my experience to help others.

Before I became ill, I worked in a world of high-profile meetings, governments and ambassadors, MP's and Lords. I also admit that I was openly as arrogant to those with struggles as most of my then peers, but after my experiences with my injury and the benefits system, I learned just what struggling felt like and I was hell-bent on doing something about it.

On paper though, I was a nobody with a history that meant no one would talk to me. So, in 2017, I reached out to the Positive People Programme at Cornwall neighbourhoods for Change (CN4C) where I met Frankie, a change coach, who helped me transform my life. He suggested doing some voluntary work to try and build up my CV and introduced me to The Cornwall Independent Poverty Forum which as it turns out, was looking for

someone to do a bit of research on food poverty in families. I jumped at the chance and soon realised that the more I researched, the more and more it opened my eyes to the struggle many people face.

I knew many great people gave time and food freely and that many people were hands on. There were also loads of people talking about what could be done...but there wasn't a single person asking those in power 'why?'. Why do you let this happen? What don't you do anything about it? Why do children go hungry? Why... Why... Why...? Suddenly I had found the niche and knew where I could be most effective. I love to ask why, and I won't be put off by any old answer.

As a part of this work, I was then introduced to Church Action on Poverty which had trialled a campaign called End Hunger UK. It had gained a bit of traction but never really taken off, so I talked to them about using the idea regionally and End Hunger Cornwall was born. Suddenly I had a brand and a label, I kept researching, I kept talking to people, I kept telling my story; no one could argue with it, so I kept asking 'why?'.

“Suddenly I had found the niche and knew where I could be most effective. I love to ask why, and I won't be put off by any old answer.”

All of this was great, but as I was getting better physically and mentally, I needed a job and I got another lucky break. By 2019, Frankie (the Change Coach from CN4C) was now working at the amazing Newquay Community Orchard and he suggested I applied. I thought I could use my experience to really help others just as he had helped me, so I gave it a go and got a job.

Newquay Orchard, as well as helping me with my job role, was also supportive of End Hunger Cornwall. The two were really complimentary. Suddenly I had a wage, I had access to all sorts of people through work and I could now network. I could point out the idiocy of food poverty, the injustice of it all and get the thoughts of a lot of good people on what 'they would do if they could' ... And then I did it.

Since founding End Hunger Cornwall, I have spoken on so many national platforms about food poverty I have lost count. Often to audiences who have never skipped a meal in their lives and really just don't get it. I don't dress it up though. Direct realism is a very effective tool.

I have written several reports for all sorts of agencies and have no idea how many radio and TV appearances that I've done. Everything from local radio through to global TV channels during the G7.

End Hunger Cornwall along with the Cornwall Independent Poverty Forum are also national lead

partners in Challenge Poverty Week. As a team, we have also led two national conferences on poverty that have produced incredible reports and really effected change.

Probably the biggest achievement however was playing a major part in getting the Food Poverty Index Bill passed through parliament. This means that it is now law that the government provide an index every year on the state of food poverty. A great campaigning tool for us and a real, and very useful, thorn in the government's side.

Here in Cornwall, I am now Chair of the VCSE Cornwall Food Access Alliance. We have a great mix of members from those who provide emergency food access, those who are developing more sustainable food systems and income opportunities, national food charities and campaigners, through to regional and national decision makers who really can make important changes to policies.

However, there is still obviously a lot to do. Whenever you think our decision makers can't make it any worse... they seem to manage to.

My career has moved on as well. I now work in a corporate role, based in London but working hybrid style from Cornwall. I should however end by busting a final myth. End Hunger Cornwall has no funding whatsoever. Not a penny. It never has. It has no board of trustees and no staff. In fact, End Hunger Cornwall (when you boil it down) is just an old bloke from Redruth with lived experience who tells it like it is; direct to the people that need to hear it and, when they do nothing, he tells them again... and again... and again... Then, every now and again, we get a victory and can give real people an effective voice and help them on a journey to restore their dignity, agency and power.

Anyone can make a difference. That anyone was me, it can just as easily be you!

To find out more please follow us on:

Facebook: EndHungerCornwall

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Email: endhungercornwall@gmail.com



Countless people with spinal cord injury affected by lack of bowel care

By Steve Paget MBE

The Spinal Injuries Association launched their campaign in spring calling for more to be done now to improve the state of bowel care for people with a spinal cord injury.

Sir Ludwig Guttmann once proclaimed 'Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) was the most depressing and neglected subject of all medicine' (Cole, 2004). Unfortunately, Sir Ludwig's proclamation back in the 1960's still remains true today.

In response to growing concern over certain aspects of healthcare provided by the NHS, the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) outlined that 72% of respondents to the 'What Matters? 2022' survey said bowel management was their biggest medical worry.

Countless people have been affected by the lack of bowel care as it undermines peoples' quality of life. The SIA has recorded shocking accounts of neglect across the country. One respondent to the survey stated: "I was instructed to get on with my own bowel care even if that meant messing the bed, so I soiled myself many times. I've been spinal cord injured for over 40 years and have never felt as humiliated and frustrated as I did then."

Another simply added: "It's criminal because it's the worse physical thing, I can take all the pain in the world but this... you feel like death warmed up." A major issue reported by SIA is the lack of policy and neglect, a matter also raised by the National Institute for Health and Care Research which stated: "A significant barrier to progress is the lack of training for ward staff in continence care." The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is eager to act alongside Spinal Injuries Association on what they consider to be a vital campaign. Fiona le Ber, Chair of the RCN's Bowel and Bladder forum, said: "No



healthcare professional should be expected to carry out specialist procedures without the correct training or support."

"We acknowledge standards of care need to change and The Royal College of Nursing support the training of more healthcare professionals in specialist bowel care technique so that no patient suffers both the physical and mental consequences of poor care."

This was something I felt that I needed to support as not only had I had first-hand experience of not receiving this healthcare in hospital, but I have been very much involved in helping the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust to address these issues through developing a fit for purpose co-produced pathway for people with new and existing spinal cord injury. So, I wrote an email to my own MP regarding this issue.

In my email, I requested that he attend the next meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group on SCI to support the above campaign specifically. However, the reply that I received merely stated:

"The report highlights a range of physical and mental health concerns affecting spinal cord injured people... On employment, progress has been made in reducing the disability employment gap, but we must go further to ensure that people with disabilities, such as spinal cord injury, can access employment opportunities."

"In July 2021, the government published the Health and Disability Green Paper, this considered how



to improve the current services provided by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) so that they are better and easier to use, explored how extra support can help people navigate the system, and considered what can be done to better support disabled people into employment.”

What he says can be perceived as being very laudable, but it completely ignores the crucial campaign issue he was requested to support.

I could not let this go, so I wrote back:

“Whilst your email was interesting, it failed in every aspect to address the issue raised.”

“Excuse my bluntness, but this demonstrates an ignorance and attitude that perhaps goes some way to explain why the standard of healthcare within many hospitals is bordering on negligent for those with an existing spinal cord injury. Perhaps when your researchers deem to reply to this email, they may spend a couple of minutes actually reading up on why this is happening and why the general standard of care in hospital for those with spinal cord injuries is so poor?”

“Perhaps your researchers or, even you in person might like to see what we have achieved at the Royal Cornwall Hospital by working closely to try and remove the barriers to inconsistent and

negligent care. The aim of this co-produced solution was to improve the healthcare experience for those with spinal cord injuries. I believe the work is recognised far and wide as an exemplar of good practice. Indeed, it is something you could use to help to raise the profile of the issue which may help in addressing the severe needs that this group of people has when going into hospital.”

“I hope that you will take this criticism of your response in the spirit it was intended and perhaps use it, to better understand the actual issue raised within my email.”

To his credit, he responded quickly offering a meeting to discuss the issues. I guess my message to everyone is don't accept that your elected representatives can fob you off with some meaningless political rhetoric that fails to address the central issue you want to raise. It devalues your efforts and democracy, whilst exposing the laziness of the politician and their office.

For more information of the Serious Sh1t Campaign, please visit:

www.spinal.co.uk/this-is-serioussh1t

Restaurant Review

Nimbus Kitchen

by George Le Hunte

Nimbus Kitchen is in the FibreHub building at Pool in Cornwall. FibreHub is the collaboration space where tech, software and digital businesses connect in Cornwall. It is open to the public and provides a wonderful brunch menu, fresh homemade cakes and lunches, made every day on site by the dedicated Nimbus team.

They believe that the best things in life are the simple things. Simplicity in food demands quality ingredients. Every ingredient is selected for the flavour, colour, texture or aroma it brings to their dishes that are freshly prepared by hand each day.

Nimbus Kitchen is fully accessible with toilets for wheelchair users and is open Monday to Friday from 8am to 4pm with breakfast until 11.30am then lunch served until 4pm.

The brunch menu includes: dairy free porridge with berry compote, avocado & egg on sourdough toast, bacon & cheese toastie, French toast with maple syrup, yoghurt & seasonal fruit, toasted banana bread with yoghurt, granola & honey and Nimbus beans on toast, from £4.50 to £7 each.

All the above is available for lunch, plus tasty soups, tajines, vegan meatballs with tomato & red pepper sauce & sourdough bread, plus pizza Friday, all from £5.50 to £8.25. Toasted sandwiches include vegan roasted veggies & passata bacon, brie & pesto, chicken schnitzel & crispy bacon.

You can pick from a range of tasty cakes plus hot & cold drinks all day.

Looking for something quick & delicious to take away? Nimbus Kitchen have a Grab & Go meal deal for food & drinks, perfect if you are busy.

Situated in a business environment, it also provides 'hot desks' where you can work on your laptop for just £15 for a full day (includes two drinks and lunch), or £10 for half a day (includes one drink and cake or lunch).

It can also be hired for private functions & events, such as networking breakfasts, lunches, parties or any other corporate or private hire.

☎ 07805 207625 🌐 www.nimbuskitchen.co.uk



Using TikTok to spread positivity

The much loved and popular video sharing app, TikTok, is a social media platform which is helping to spread awareness of disability rights by amplifying the voices of people with disabilities or long term health conditions.

Through the platform, people are able to share their stories and experiences and reach a larger audience. The platform is also helping to create a sense of community and solidarity among people through enabling them to connect, share content and learn. It's also a direct media channel to address misconceptions and steer the narrative on subjects.

DISCOVER subscriber, Niel Oats from Sennen, got in contact regarding a singing and dancing contest he had won, performing the song *Breathless* by The Corrs. Niel loves the app as it allows him to express his passion for song and dance, as well as share his positive experience with others.

Inclusion Cornwall

At this time, many people are facing problems with the cost of living, with energy bills, fuel costs, and basic food costs rising. Inclusion Cornwall has a resource library to help and signpost people.

Visit:

www.inclusioncornwall.co.uk/library

Or scan the QR code:



Six disability campaigners tell MPs: Government's benefit reforms are not fit for purpose

by John Pring
Disability News Service

Six disability campaigners have delivered criticism of the government's controversial new disability benefits reforms, in evidence to a committee of MPs.

The representatives of three Disabled People's Organisations and two disability charities joined a Conservative disabled peer in delivering an almost completely negative assessment of the Transforming Support white paper, which was published earlier in March.

The campaigners were giving evidence as part of a Commons Women and Equalities Committee inquiry into the government's National Disability Strategy. They mostly focused on plans set out in the white paper to scrap the work capability assessment (WCA), and to tighten the benefits sanctions regime.

Under the WCA plans, sick and disabled people who cannot work would only be able to qualify for a new health element of universal credit, if they also received the extra costs benefit, personal independence payment (PIP), disability living allowance, or the adult disability payment in Scotland.



This would mean that responsibility for deciding if a disabled person had to carry out work-related activity, would be handed to work coaches, who would likely have no healthcare qualifications.

Fazilet Hadi, Head of Policy for Disability Rights UK, told the committee the WCA reforms were "so problematic" and the "direction of travel was all bad," despite some apparent new money for employment support.

She said that leaving it to individual work coaches to decide what work-related activity a disabled person should carry out, would leave disabled people "extremely exposed to bad practice".

Further: "There would be people who were not fit for work, but who would not qualify for PIP and therefore would be ineligible for the new health element of universal credit under the proposed new system. There could be a lot of disabled people who get regularly assessed for PIP, who will live in fear of losing it because if they do, they then lose the health component of universal credit."

Fazilet said that 50 per cent of PIP claims are initially rejected and the linking of PIP, an extra costs benefit, with access to a higher rate of universal credit is so problematic. "If you combine the greater imposition of sanctions, the failure to understand in a consistent way across the service the fitness for work of disabled people, and the link to PIP, I think it is a very, very scary prospect. The day of the white paper, the phones were hot with disabled people with anxieties about what was happening. The WCA would only be scrapped through new legislation, and even then, the reforms would not initially affect new claimants."

Svetlana Kotova, Director of campaigns and justice for Inclusion London, said: "We have not seen evidence that sanctions work in relation to disabled people and it is just so disappointing to see that again and again, this is the main focus of policies to help as many of us as possible into work. There was 'very little' in the white paper about "improving the workplace itself."

Because of the number of people who currently receive extra support through the WCA system but do not receive PIP, this meant that: "obviously there will be big losers and many of them will be in real trouble." She added: "We are really worried that people will be pushed to work and with a detriment to their health." The disabled Conservative peer Lord Shinkwin told the committee: "In effect, it is one step forward, two steps back in terms of creating concern and anxiety among disabled people, particularly on the PIP assessment point. I do not think the PIP assessment was designed, or intended, to be fit for purpose for what it is now being proposed it should be used for."

Fran Springfield, Co-Chair of the disabled people's organisation Chronic Illness Inclusion, said: "Taking away the WCA and not replacing it with something else does not make any sense to me. I cannot see how you can move PIP into part of universal credit, either, because PIP is a completely different system."

She added: "We do not think this has been properly thought out at all, or that there has been any input into this from disabled people and this is going to make life much more difficult for those of us with invisible disabilities. We have to find a system that is compassionate and encourages people if they are well enough to go into work but accept that there are some people who will never be well enough to go into work, and those people deserve support and help."

Martin McLean, Senior Policy Adviser for the National Deaf Children's Society, said: "It was very disappointing that there was no recognition in the white paper that young people may need more tailored support, with an assumption that whatever was going to work for older adults was going to be effective for young people as well".

He said: "It is just frustrating that disabled young people have not been considered within that because they can face the biggest barriers in terms of moving into work."

"Disabled young people were often not aware what support the DWP offered, which increases the risk of disabled young people leaving education and falling into long-term unemployment."

Nil Guzelgun, Policy and Campaigns Manager for Mind, said the charity welcomed government plans to scrap the "difficult and oftentimes humiliating" WCA, but was concerned that it would be replaced instead by PIP assessments. She pointed to a report published by Mind earlier this month, which surveyed more than 1,000 people with mental health problems. Nearly half (46 per cent) of those who had been assessed for PIP said their benefits assessor did not understand mental health problems, compared with 36 per cent of those assessed through a WCA.

Nearly seven in ten (69 per cent) respondents who had been assessed for PIP said going through the assessment made their mental health worse, compared with 62 per cent of those who had gone through the WCA.

She told the committee that the PIP assessment criteria were: "not suitable for people with mental health problems because of the fluctuating nature of their conditions. We think the government really needs to review urgently and improve PIP assessments so they can be more appropriate for people who go through these assessments."

You can subscribe to the Disability News Service at:

 www.disabilitynewsservice.com



If you have a stay in hospital and have difficulties or barriers to returning home, then call us, our friendly professional team can:

-  Help to settle you in at home from day one, ensuring your comfort, safety and wellbeing
-  We can put in place longer term plans for shopping and prescription deliveries
-  Develop a support plan with you and take the pressure off, so you can focus on yourself
-  Assess if there is any equipment or adaptations you may need, to maximise your independence and source them
-  Ensure you have all the welfare benefits and extras you are entitled to, for maximising your household income
-  Deal with any concerns you have and provide grants for any items of home equipment needed
-  Arrange personal assistants or community carers, for daily support at home if required (whether short or longer term)
-  Absolutely anything else that's important to you!

If you are in hospital and would like to speak to a member of our team to arrange support, contact us, or you can ask a staff member on the ward to contact us on your behalf.

We are here to help and our service is FREE so keep our phone number in case you need us!

☎ 01736 697040
✉ hello@humanscornwall.co.uk



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Behind closed doors: Safety of people with learning disabilities in jeopardy

A damning report led by researchers at Kings College London has found that people with learning disabilities are twice as likely to die from preventable or treatable causes than the rest of the population.

DISCOVER throws light on the report, recalling Cornwall's care home abuse scandal in 2004, whilst hearing from BBC Line of Duty Actor Tommy Jessop on his recent Panorama documentary investigating hospital care for people with learning disabilities.



Budock Hospital in Falmouth, Cornwall, which has since been closed down and demolished due to a care scandal in 2004.

The study revealed that in 2020 alone, six in ten people with a learning disability died whilst under the age of 65, which is a staggeringly higher proportion of people than the rest of the general population, where the rate was less than two of every ten people. What is equally shocking is that nearly half of these cases were from preventable or treatable illnesses, whereas only 22% of the rest of the population died of preventable or treatable illnesses. What is truly hard to believe is that nearly a third of deaths of people with learning disabilities involved no evidence of good practices.

The report puts in question the state of hospital and care home standards, as people with learning disabilities are more likely to die within a hospital or a care home, compared to the general population.



49%

(People with a learning disability)



22%

(General population)

“49% of deaths were rated as ‘avoidable’ for people with a learning disability. This compares to 22% for the general population.”

In light of the Kings College-led report, BBC Panorama produced a documentary called ‘Will the NHS Care for Me?’ featuring actor, Tommy Jessop, who is best known in the role of Terry Boyle in the BBC hit series Line of Duty. Tommy, who has Down Syndrome, is also a disability rights campaigner who’s advocated for the need to have disabled actors in a wider range of roles, rather than appearing as victims. During the BBC investigation, Tommy and the Panorama team examined thousands of coroners’ reports from the past nine years and investigated why people with a learning disability are more than twice as likely to die from avoidable causes than the rest of the population. He found cases where disabled people were not listened to, where they were neglected, and where families had to fight for appropriate treatment, instead of their loved ones being allowed to die.

DISCOVER talked to Tommy about his desire to make the Panorama documentary, he told us: “I wanted to improve healthcare for people with learning disabilities and make sure they are respected and celebrated in their lives and when they are in hospital. My goal is still to find out what healthcare can do to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities.” Tommy was shocked by

what he uncovered whilst filming, he adds: “One thing that was surprising and shocking at the same time, is that people with learning disabilities are twice as likely to die of avoidable deaths than other people. This was not only shocking for me to find out, but also shocking for other people to find out as well. 40% of people with learning disabilities die of avoidable causes.”

Tommy says the lives of people with learning disabilities are not equally valued to that of the general population: “Our lives can be good, happy and healthy and worth celebrating. Medical staff in hospitals and care facilities should start listening to patients and their families more often. They are the ones who know what their normal life is like, or if they are a family member, and what the patient can manage. Learning disability nurses can also be used to help with communication which is key in a hospital setting.”

“Our lives can be good, happy and healthy and worth celebrating.”

Tommy emphasises that a lot of people with learning disabilities do not come out of their shells often enough, which hinders them from finding their own voice and their ability to have their say in what they want in life. “Enabling people to voice their opinion means that others can understand that their lives are worth living. It’s about time people have patience and listen to what they have to say as well.”



Tommy Jessop, Actor, at the 2019 BAFTA Elevate Launch in London

Tommy’s documentary is a stark reminder of how institutionalised ableism and discrimination of disabled people persist, despite proven inexcusable death rates and ill treatment. The extent of disabled people’s mistreatment may seem surprising to some, but when taking into consideration the history of medicine, the reality signifies how long dehumanising neglect has gone on, often unchallenged.

From an equity, diversity and inclusion perspective, there are patterns since the birth of modern medicine which have caused barriers to the health of disabled people and people with long-term health conditions. It has been evidenced that modern western medicine was structured around the treatment and care of predominantly non-disabled, white, cisgender men, meaning that people with more diverse identities are not accounted for in medical research.* This largely affects disabled people, people of ethnic minorities, cisgender women, transgender individuals, and other diverse identities, as their differences are not accounted for in medical systems and procedures.

It has been found that people with disabilities are less likely to be asked about their smoking history, contraceptive use and less likely to be offered mammograms, surgery or cancer treatment.** When a person holds multiple minority characteristics, the effects of discrimination can double in the healthcare system. For example, if someone is black and disabled, not only are they less likely to receive the necessary treatment, but if they do, they are less likely to be treated with care due to institutionalised racism.***

Tommy finishes his documentary with the statement: “People with disabilities have the right to be treated as a person”, and whilst this statement is remarkably simple, it symbolises the dehumanising experiences of disabled people in institutions. There is a deeply troubling history of ableism, sexism and racism within medicine, society must strive to implement strategies to change this. There needs to be an approach to these issues of discrimination from an holistic intersectional approach and encourage everyone to move towards equity through systemic inclusion, reshaping societal understanding of disability through the social model of disability and advocating for better care every day.

Tommy’s documentary highlights the tip of the iceberg of discrimination issues when it comes to healthcare, by sharing the stories of disabled people in the healthcare system, potentially more people will speak up against discrimination.

Some of our readers may recall the shocking abuse in 2004 concerning the former Budock Hospital in Falmouth reported in earlier issues of

DISCOVER. Budock Hospital became the centre of a scandal when it was revealed that some of its residents were being subjected to abuse. The story made headlines across the country and sparked a nationwide debate about the quality of care in care homes. A joint investigation between the Healthcare Commission and the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), commenced, following a complaint in October 2004, by the East Cornwall Mencap Society.

The investigation uncovered that the Lamorna Ward at Budock Hospital, was the worst, describing it as “poorly decorated, unstimulating, bare and depressing” in the report. The reports of emotional and physical abuse ranged from withholding food, pushing and shoving, to over-zealous use of restraint and a rough, poor atmosphere.

Over the five years prior to October 2005, 64 incidents of abuse were documented by government inspectors. A number of staff from the hospital were suspended and dismissed, with several Directors from the Cornwall Partnership NHS Trust board also resigning at the time the allegations came to light.

The 14 people with learning difficulties at Hospital were re-housed by December 2006. A representative from CSCI recalled there was “a catalogue of abuse and unacceptable practice”. At the time, Reg Broad, Chair of East Cornwall Mencap, said that few people had been held accountable for what happened and most people who were abused would be “absolutely appalled”.

The news story concluded in 2009 that shockingly, no further action was to be taken, as a Devon and Cornwall Police spokesperson later stated that a thorough and complex investigation had been conducted and that the CPS had informed the families involved there would be no further action. Budock Hospital has since been demolished.

Many people are calling for more to be urgently done as a plethora of abuse cases are exposed all too frequently. One such voice is Jayne Connery, the Director of Care Campaign for the Vulnerable (CCFTV), an organisation that advocates for the use of independently monitored camera systems in care homes. She argues that the usual responses to care hospital abuse failings are that “patient safety and welfare are a top priority”. However, nothing is ever learned, she adds: “from the Winterbourne scandal, or the Muckamore Abbey perpetual abuse culture, or the Whorlton Hall Hospital debacle, or the very many others over the years that have briefly entered our awareness, then faded to become distant memories”.

Jayne believes that the regulators need to completely re-visit how care services are

monitored, and how vulnerable people are safeguarded. She says we should explore what technologies can be used to deter abusers from even seeking employment in care facilities. And importantly, utilise systems that ensure visual evidence can be gathered to guarantee the perpetrators of mistreatment answer for their offences, so and vulnerable people have the justice they so rightly deserve. Care Campaign for the Vulnerable calls for the mandatory use of independent camera monitoring systems to safeguard vulnerable people.

*Why Are Health Studies So White?, Natalie Jacewicz, 2016.
 **Disability and Ableism in Medicine: A Curriculum for Medical Students, Hannah Borowsky, Leora Morinis, Megha Garg, 2021.
 ***How we fail black patients in pain, by Janice A. Sabin, 2020.

Care Campaign for the Vulnerable:
www.carecampaignforthevulnerable.com

Tommy's Panorama BBC Documentary 'Panorama: Will the NHS Care for Me?' is available until September 2023 on BBC iPlayer (UK Only).

Arts based charity Shallal celebrating diversity, ability and community



Performers from Shallal at the Newlyn Art Gallery takeover event

DISCOVER - Tea break

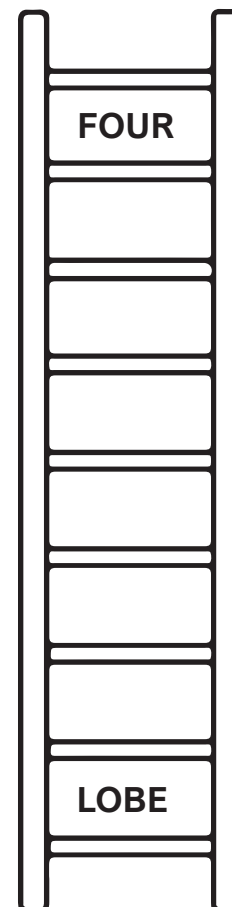
Sudoku

Sudoku is played on a grid of 9 x 9 spaces. Within the rows and columns are 9 "squares" (made up of 3 x 3 spaces). Each row, column and square (9 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, without repeating any numbers within the row, column or square.

		4		5				
9			7	3	4	6		
		3		2	1		4	9
	3	5		9		4	8	
	9						3	
	7	6		1		9	2	
3	1		9	7		2		
		9	1	8	2			3
				6		1		

Ladder

Change one letter of the word for each rung of the ladder to form a new word, the clues will help you figure out what the word should be.



The number 4 in letters.

To do something in sports.

A Jester.

The very bottom part of the body.

To get some treasure.

When you don't know where you are.

When you misplace something.

There are four of those in the brain.

The sudoku and ladder answers are on page 50

Shallal has been running for 35 years in Cornwall, we work with around a hundred artists weekly through our 12 creative groups. We are often described like a huge family for each other and have remained flexible to suit everyone's ideas. We work like a collective, our sessions are collaborative with the artists we work with. We work across multiple disciplines from dance, performance, painting, filmmaking, fashion, sculpture, printmaking. The way we develop our work, involving everyone who comes into it, means the creative process is constantly evolving, responsive and reflective.

What's important to us is that we listen to our artists and create supportive and fun environments, where lasting friendships are often created. We aim to always place people at the centre. We believe that everyone in society should have access to creativity and the opportunity to discover their potential.

We encourage and support people's development by working collaboratively. It's through these collaborations that we are aspire to achieve access and equity in the arts.

"What's important to us is that we listen to our artists and create supportive and fun environments, where lasting friendships are often created."

We are extremely motivated to stand up against climate change in this time of global crisis and are part of Culture Declares Emergency. This year we have been exploring sustainable textiles in Shallal Studios where we have been learning techniques such as seaweed weaving, French knitting, natural dyeing and creating using recycled materials. We

are currently planning an exhibition at a fish factory exploring the importance of soil in our ecosystem.

At the moment we are planning exhibitions, workshops and events celebrating the bicentenary of Passmore Edwards, who was a Cornish philanthropist who fought for equality in society. There will be lots of exciting opportunities to see and take part in Shallal's work across Cornwall over 2023 so please visit our news page on our website to keep up to date. Our door is always open at Shallal to welcome new people to get involved.



Scan the QR code using your smartphone or the visit the website below:

www.shallal.org

An interview with Shallal artist Zoe Wilton

My name is Zoe Wilton and I live in Cornwall. When I am not making art, I'm writing a detective novel, watching films and spending time with my family.

I have been doing art my whole life. My mum was a creative lady and we did a lot of art together growing up. I joined Shallal with my mum about 30 years ago. We wanted to work with people and teach them how to dance.

I do a lot of different art including dance, photography, painting, fashion, pottery and music. At the moment, I love drawing on my iPad. I love learning to use new equipment to explore my creativity. I am very interested in contemporary art and working from my imagination. When I make art, it makes me feel more confident and free because it helps me travel around the different ways I feel.

I like doing different things. When I dance, I can hear music and expand. Dancing is a different skill to when I am drawing. The dance which I can do will make the audience feel more free and comfortable and hopefully it will give them the confidence to dance too. By seeing me dance, hopefully they will be able to understand different abilities.

I have been dancing for 30 years. I am currently interested in exploring the relationship between fashion and photography with dance. Fashion changes the way you dance. I see fashion leading to photography. I like experimenting with using the camera and playing with close ups.

I recently had an exhibition at Dark Pony Cafe in Falmouth where I did a performance alongside my paintings. It made me feel delighted to get my work out there. I like people seeing my work so they can see what I do. It makes me feel confident.

Recently I have been building up my art portfolio and learning new skills such as French knitting in Shallal Studios. In the future, I would like to explore dance photography and have a bigger exhibition. I've also got lots of ideas for merchandise to start a shop!

Zoe's talk: Scan the QR code or search 'Shallal Arts' on YouTube:



Portrait by Zoe Wilton, Artist

RPS survey: Life-saving prescriptions uncollected due to cost of living crisis



A Royal Pharmaceutical Society (RPS) survey shows that the cost of living is affecting access to prescription medicines, with a record high level of patients not collecting their medications.

The results of the survey reveal that the cost of living is affecting people's ability to afford their prescription medicines, 51% of the pharmacists surveyed confirmed they saw a rise in the number of people not collecting prescriptions, and 52% confirmed they have been asked by patients to 'prioritise' items in their prescription list, with many patients asking their pharmacist what they can 'do without' due to increasingly higher costs.

The RPS has recommended the removal of prescription charges for financially vulnerable people and those with long-term health conditions. The current charge for a prescription in the UK is £9.35, while prescriptions are free in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The RPS argues that prescription charges create a financial barrier to patients receiving the necessary medicines to keep them well.

The concern over the cost of medication is not new. Last year, a survey by Asthma and Lung UK found that more than a million people in the UK were experiencing life-threatening asthma attacks after cutting back on medicine, heating, and food due to the soaring cost of living. Other health charities have also warned about the impact of the cost of

living, with the MS Society reporting that one in five people with multiple sclerosis did not have enough money to start the medication or treatments they needed. Macmillan Cancer Support found that around two million people with cancer were concerned about the cost of their bills.

The Chair of the RPS, Ms Thorrun Govind, expressed deep concern over people having to make choices about their health based on their ability to pay. Prescription charges are viewed as an unfair tax on health, which disadvantages working people on lower incomes already struggling with food and energy bills.

The Disability Poverty Campaign Group's Policy and Campaigns Officer, Dan White, argued that prescription charges must be abolished as they strip away an essential element of life-improving quality, relieve pain and give anyone at risk of their condition the ability to function.

He adds: "Any civilised society wouldn't think otherwise after seeing this report. It's no good just freezing the cost, ethically and morally, they have to go before the repercussions are felt by individuals and an already teetering NHS."

The concerns raised in this survey add to the growing body of evidence that people in the UK are struggling to afford essential medicines, which should be a cause for concern for policymakers and healthcare providers.

Search 'Royal Pharmaceutical Society Survey' on Google or scan the QR code:



Your Enquiries

to the disAbility Cornwall Advice Team

Get in touch...

📞 01736 759500

✉ advice@dialcornwall.org.uk

Financial advice needed

✉ Is there any financial assistance for a replacement cooker and fridge that were both damaged in a recent kitchen fire. I am a full-time carer and have no savings or means of getting additional income to pay for their replacement. I am unable to keep any fresh food or cook proper meals at the moment which is making things very difficult, and I am worried that the person I care for is not eating properly.

📝 Cornwall Carers Service has access to a grant called Carers Resilience Emergency Grant (CREG) which can be used to replace damaged or broken essential appliances. If you contact us on 01736 756655 we can talk you through the criteria and process, and complete the application with you over the telephone. If the application is accepted and the grant approved, the money will be paid into your account. Once the items are purchased you will need to send receipts and complete a feedback questionnaire.

Advice about dementia

✉ I am a full-time carer for my mother who has been recently diagnosed with Dementia. Sometimes I am unsure how to manage some of her behaviours as I have very limited understanding about what to expect and why they are happening and worried that I may make things worse.

📝 The Cornwall Carers Service can provide advice and support about appropriate steps and responses to difficult behaviours. The national Dementia Helpline is 0800 888 6678 where you can speak with an Admiral Nurse.

One of Cornwall Carers Service partner organisations is PROMAS who run dementia specific courses. These can be useful to help you understand the condition more. We can apply for a grant from the Respite Association to pay for someone to be with your mother, if it's difficult for you to leave her while you attend the courses.

PROMAS also offer courses to help manage stress along with activities with other carers and can be contacted via the Carers Advice Line on 01736 756655.

We can also refer you to our colleagues at the Cornwall Memory Cafe Network who can connect you to your local cafe for social sessions which you and mum might like to join.

Appealing a PIP application

✉ I've been turned down for PIP, but I believe I am entitled to it, what can I do?

📝 Statistics on the gov.uk website show that between April 2013 and January 2022, for applications under the normal rules and where an assessment was required, only 54% resulted in an award at this stage. So, you are not alone!

First, find the letter telling you that you've been refused – the decision letter. You'll see it says you have 28 days to ask DWP to look at it again – the mandatory reconsideration or 'MR'. In fact you have 13 months if you can show good reason for the delay. You can request the MR via post or phone, or by using a form called CRMR1 at www.gov.uk/mandatory-reconsideration. It's best to make the request in writing so you have a record of it.

Go through the decision letter with a highlighter or coloured pen and pick out all the statements you think are incorrect. Then make sure you cover each one in your MR request, explaining why you think it's wrong. You can give examples, and include information that you told the assessor, but which hasn't been considered or recorded.

If you didn't previously include supporting medical evidence, or if you have new evidence, include it at this stage if possible. The PIP form asked for your GP's contact details, but the DWP don't usually get in touch with your GP nowadays. So try to get a letter from your GP or other medical professional to send with your request.

There's lots of ways we can help with the MR – we can go through the PIP points system with you, we can help you with wording your MR request, or we can advise you on a late request, for example.

Befriending Needed

✉ Can you tell me if there are any befriending services still running? There were a few before Covid but the ones I knew about are gone and

I'm looking to find somewhere that could provide occasional companionship for my mum who I look after. She lives in a different property from me and although I'm there quite often I work part-time as well. I think she would like to speak with someone friendly, that wasn't me!

📝 Yes, unfortunately the pandemic has affected many local providers for this type of service. Have a look at the Cornwall Council support website www.supportincornwall.org.uk

Locally, MHA Communities have hubs for elderly people in West and East Cornwall offering a number of services including befriending.

📞 07483 926 953

🌐 www.mha.org.uk/communities/near-me/cornwall

Two national organisations offering befriending are: Silver Line for 24/7 befriending and other support for older people: T:0800 470 8090

Careline via professional referral, we could do this on your behalf if you contact Cornwall Carers Service: T: 01736 756655

There are also paid for befriending and sitting services, however you should carefully check out the credentials of any of these advertised.

Congratulation Shiners of 2023!

The Cornwall Accessible Activities Programme celebrated the graduation of six of its Time2Shiners in Spring at Tregenna Castle, St Ives. It was a fitting tribute to these exceptional young people's dedication and hard work.

CAAP's Time2Shiners program is designed to unlock the potential of young people aged 16 and above in Cornwall, by providing them with the skills they need to find employment. By allowing Shiners to run events, commission activities, and organise events for others, they are empowered to unlock skills and realise their full potential. This user-led organisation now supports an incredible 1000+ members and Claire, a mum of a former Shiner and founding member of CAAP, told *DISCOVER*: "We have people joining CAAP constantly, but we are at the point of full capacity. It shows how much of a success CAAP continues to be."

The glamorous evening was hosted by Ann Van Dyke MBE, a freelance consultant with extensive experience in designing and delivering services and support that tackle inequality and she makes a lasting difference to children, families and communities working directly to address inclusion.

The evening began with everyone congregating at the bar in their wonderful evening wear, and then making their way to tables with a warm welcome from Ann and a three-course meal then served.

Guests were entertained by Clive Blake (aka 'Clive Live') with his performance poetry, from his latest published anthology, Clive's Uni-verse, a Cornishman's take on life which is a life-affirming experience, light-hearted and comical, introspective and challenging. In this rhythmic exploration of both the mundane and the cosmic aspects of existence, no stone is left unturned. The promise of childhood, the uncertainties of youth and ageing, environmental apocalypse, 'disabilit-ease', historic whodunnits, love, death and escapee milk bottles, to name a few!



Images by Kilaen Photographic

Afterwards, the Shiners made a brief exit to put on their graduate gowns and were welcomed back to a roaring, standing applause by guests as they proceeded to make their way to their graduation seats on stage. One by one, the six Shiners were presented with a full graduation portfolio and a Shiner Fellow t-shirt by the following people: disAbility Cornwall's Chief Executive, Jane Johnson MBE and Development Lead, Amy Findlater. Kate Kennally, Chief Executive of Cornwall Council, Maggie Brindle, Roger Mead and Jane Rees, who spoke a few words about each Shiner,

focusing on one word and how it encompasses their character.

Kate Kennally, told *DISCOVER*: "I was honoured to attend the Shiners graduation. The event celebrated what truly makes us all shine as individuals, the personal attributes that we all bring to the world, making it a better place for ourselves and those around us. It was a lovely occasion, and really made me reflect on just how we all bring our own value, and how vital it is that everyone is given the opportunity to make the most of all they have to offer."

The Shiner Fellows with Kate Kennally, Chief Executive of Cornwall Council

After the ceremony, the celebration flowed into dance and celebration with some of the Shiners' favourite songs played by DJ Ash, who was one of CAAP's original Shiners. The candy bar of course was an instant hit... both before and after the meal!

Family members of the Shiners were truly proud. The parents of Max, a graduate Shiner on the night, said it was "a real proud moment for us as parents and events like this give the Shiners a chance to have their own school prom-type event with all their peers".



Marie, Vice-Chair of CAAP and parent of Shiner graduate Liddy, said:

“As a parent, I’ve never been so proud in my life because Liddy is never going to experience that type of graduation style event from university. To be able to wear the graduation gown and celebrate after all her hard work being a Shiner and working hard raising money and through the CAAP activities. The pride she has in being a Shiner fellow, I can’t put it into words how proud I am!”

DISCOVER congratulates the Shiners and wishes them all the very best with their future ventures.

To find out more about CAAP, visit their website:

www.caapuk.co.uk

PL-EASE

Don’t see only our disabilit-ease,
Don’t deny us basic facilit-ease,
Don’t ignore our many abilit-ease,
Don’t compound our varied difficult-ease,
Deal head-on with the harsh realit-ease.

You never know what life has in store,
You may fall one day and rise no more,
You may join our ranks, afraid, unsure,
You may write words to plead; implore.

We are not an alien race,
We have a voice, we have a face,
We have our part to play; a place.

Let us join life’s lively dance,
Let us have an equal chance.

by Clive Blake

The facts about fish oils

By Peter Stannett

Many of us have heard that fish oils and fatty acids are beneficial for people with arthritis, but what do they do?

We’re told time and time again that oily fish is good for us and that we should be consuming more as part of a healthy diet. But why?

Fish oils contain fatty acids, and only two of these, alpha-linolenic acid, an omega-3 fatty acid and linoleic acid, an omega-6 fatty acid, are essential for humans (hence known as essential fatty acids).

Fatty acids have a number of functions. Their main purpose in relation to arthritis is that they influence cytokine (proteins released by cells) production and eicosanoids (compounds derived from fatty acids), which are involved with anti-inflammatory responses.

How this is achieved, and the interaction between omega-3 and omega-6 fatty?

Acids is relevant to their role in arthritis. Apart from easing symptoms, they are also involved in the production of anti-inflammatory prostaglandins (tats), inhibiting the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines and preventing white blood cell proliferation, among others. Acids is relevant to their role in arthritis. Apart from easing symptoms, they are also involved in the production of anti-inflammatory prostaglandins (tats), inhibiting the production of pro-inflammatory cytokines and preventing white blood cell proliferation, among others.

How to get that anti-inflammatory effect

Oily fish such as mackerel, salmon, sprats and sardines are the richest sources of two types of long-chain polyunsaturated fatty acids (PUFAS). However, for an anti-inflammatory effect researchers suggest that if a serving of 150g is taken as an average, six to seven portions would need to be consumed in a week.

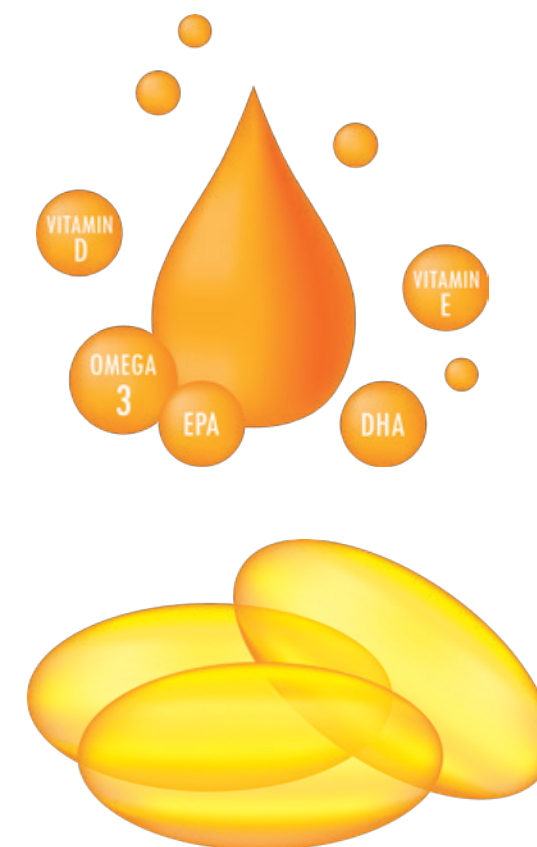
Other researchers have suggested almost double that is needed to help inflammation. However, this is unrealistic, and some fish may be contaminated with toxins, which could be harmful if consumed in excess. Fish oil supplements can be an effective alternative to increase the intake of long-chain PUFAs.

Fish oil supplements

The amount you should take per day depends on the content of the supplement and the number of fatty acids you are getting through your diet. If no oily fish is consumed, 21g long-chain omega-3 PUFAs are required. If two portions of oily fish are consumed per week, an additional 145g from fish oil capsules would be needed to bring it up to an anti-inflammatory or therapeutic dose.

Cod liver oil is not the same as fish oil but does contain a less concentrated source of long-chain PUFAs as well as Vitamin A, D and E. Vitamin D can reduce the risk of osteoarthritis progressing - low levels are often seen in elderly people.

Be aware, however, that excessive intake of vitamin A is harmful in pregnancy. As with any health advice, please consult with your local GP before taking any medication or supplements over the counter from any shop, or online.



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Keeping people safe with the Safe Places App

The Safe Places initiative is designed to assist people with a learning disability or autism who feel anxious or threatened while out in the community. Designated public places such as cafes, job centres, and shops, display a Safe Place sticker, and patrons can ask staff for help if they feel unsafe at any time.



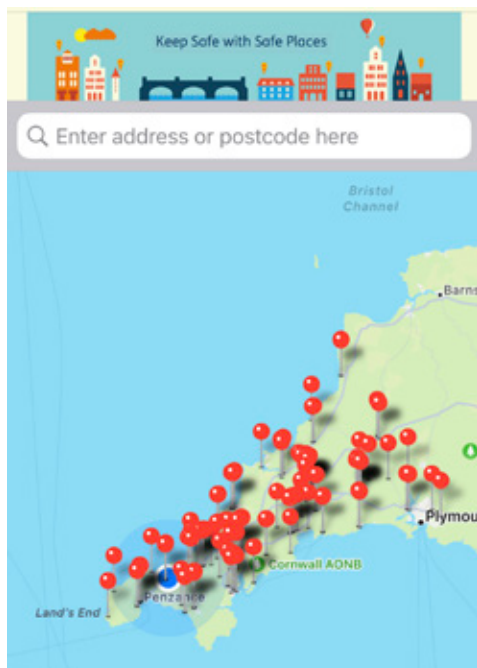
People who may need to know where these locations are simply carry a Safe Place card which will have their emergency contact details on and they can share it with Safe Place staff. In Cornwall, the scheme is managed by Healthy Cornwall and supported by Devon and Cornwall Police and Cornwall People First and is part of the national Safe Places Network.

While not all of Cornwall's Safe Places are on the app, it is a free resource that shows the user their nearest Safe Place. You can download the accessible app on the Apple Store or Google Play.

Or visit their website for more information:

www.safeplaces.org.uk

To request a list of Safe Places in a particular Cornwall area, please email: safeplaces@cornwall.gov.uk



Cornwall Safe Places locations on Safe Places App.



01736 756655

A Whole Age Service

hello@carersadvice.org.uk

www.cornwallcarers.org.uk

www.kernowyoungcarers.co.uk



Misunderstood: Navigating society's perceptions together

by Kyle Eldridge



Kyle Eldridge

It is without a shadow of a doubt that a person with autism is misunderstood by today's society, or any other society for that matter, whether it is current or old. The same could be said with a region of a country, whether that may be in the past or in its current state. So, how can society truly understand us and learn how to harness our strengths rather than look down upon our weaknesses?

My name is Kyle Jamie Eldridge and I am a 26-year-old autistic person, originally from Kettering, Northamptonshire in England and now currently living in Abergavenny, in Wales. Whilst I was living in Rushden, Northamptonshire, I was diagnosed with an autism spectrum disorder in Rushden Community Hospital in the fall of 2011, I was 14 years old at the time. All in all, I have lived in six different places and eight different homes and I am no stranger to change, no stranger to being classified as 'different' to my peers... the very thing autistic people fear the most, British society too perhaps?

Whether it is someone not making sense in a verbal way, or even a physical way, I have always been misunderstood for my actions. This could be from me being a pre-conceived 'difficult child' at the age of three, screaming and shouting when moved away from my toys, fighting off being controlled when I just wanted to do something my way, to people potentially breaking off their relationship with me. I have been fighting my whole life to maintain my unique identity today in the commonest way possible and I grieve heavily behind the scenes... but I keep going though.

The county of Cornwall is a historical one as well as a ceremonial one. Essentially, it is seen as one of the Celtic nations and is the homeland belonging to the Cornish people. Separated by the River Tamar, Cornwall forms the westernmost part of the southwest peninsula of the island of Great Britain with Land's End being its southernmost point. With an area of 3,563km² and a population of 568,210,

You are misunderstood, I am misunderstood, we are both misunderstood... So, where does that leave us going forward?

Cornwall has been administered since 2009 by a unitary authority located in Truro, its administrative centre and only city within the county.

Whether it is their picturesque harbours, sandy beaches, winding clifftop paths or the fact that it is surrounded by the sea, Cornwall has always been seen as 'mysterious' by the outside visitor, or hailed as the birthplace of the Cornish pasty. Although Cornwall is home to Cornish brandy, smuggling and the move to Methodism as an escape from its smuggling past, Cornwall is so much more. With a richer history, distinct own language and culture so unique it makes one feel that they are amongst the original Britons. It is for that reason, Cornwall is misunderstood as an entity in Britain today.

You can say Cornwall and I have similarities in understanding how society works and how it plays a role in our lives, being recognised and our want to live in peace and be treated as equals rather than outsiders. That can range from the common folk to actual government perceptions, whether that may be the adoption of autism friendly spaces, to devolution for the county, giving a real tangible voice to people who just wanted to be part of the group of people called society. However, why should we fight for something that is already ours?

But, there is always a flip side to success and we have to pay the price, whether that be people not taking us seriously after handing us breadcrumbs they call 'understanding', or not fully appreciating the very contribution we can have to the greater picture of things like economy and culture, if given the opportunity to do so. But perhaps there is a misunderstanding on my part as well as Cornwall's, in that you cannot get people to be on your side when they are hemmed in their comfort zones. Perhaps that is the barrier after all?

So, in conclusion... what is the way going forward for Cornwall and I in society exactly? Well, people simply need to conquer their fears and engage with autistic people like myself and Cornwall as a county, as we are ready to meet halfway if the conditions are right. However, you could say Kernow Bys Vyken or autistic superpower but misunderstanding carries a heavy price... we should not be willing to waste money on ignorance.

Kyle is a journalist based in Abergavenny, Wales, he is a former journalism student at the Academy of Disabled Journalists by Ability Today. For more information on this academy please visit:

www.abilitytoday.com/academy/

Teabreak answers

The Sudoku

8	6	1	3	9	4	7	2	5
3	7	5	2	8	1	6	4	9
4	9	2	5	7	6	8	1	3
5	2	6	8	1	3	6	7	4
1	3	7	9	4	5	2	9	8
6	8	4	7	6	2	5	3	1
9	4	8	1	2	6	3	5	7
2	5	9	4	3	7	1	8	6
7	1	3	9	5	8	4	6	2

The Ladder

FOUR, FOUL, FOOL, FOOT, LOST, LOSE, LOBE

DISCOVER VOICES

CORNWALL'S DISABILITY LIFESTYLE MEDIA NETWORK



Come with us as we take a look at one of the Disability Alliance Partner Organisations: Merlin - Cornwall's Neurotherapy Centre.

The Centre, located in Mid-Cornwall, is the only purpose-built facility in the county providing a comprehensive range of affordable therapies to adults and young people living with a long-term neurological condition and neuro diversities.



One year of war: National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine



Powerful and poignant words from the Secretariat of the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine.

One year of the war, a year of invincibility and struggle of Ukraine. A year of pain and loss of relatives and the unknown people who died defending our country. A year of sadness for the destroyed cities and villages. A year of hard, painstaking daily work to help people with disabilities and elderly people. A year of uniting efforts and a year of pride for Ukraine!

The war is still destroying the lives of many people today. Disabled people and the elderly are still losing their homes and are forced to seek shelter; they need medical and social support, financial support, and sometimes just a talk and to be heard. Some of them have lost their loved ones and feel they cannot carry on and some don't know where to go if their homes don't exist anymore.

Since the first days of the war, the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine (NAPD), uniting more than 100 organisations for disabled people from various regions of Ukraine, has been working to help disabled people, parents raising disabled children and elderly people by:

- Providing food, individual hygiene products, financial support, legal and psychological consultations.
- Having created, on the basis of the NAPD member organisations, centres of temporary stay for disabled people which are adapted for people with low mobility and which offer rehabilitation services to affected people.
- Addressing the issues of evacuation and the return home of disabled Ukrainians.
- Advocating and representing the interests of disabled people in national and local working groups.

We would like to thank all our international and Ukrainian partners, European and international organisations of people with disabilities, and citizens in various countries for their aid and support.

We deeply appreciate and we will always remember it. Your support and assistance has enabled many disabled people, families raising disabled children and elderly people to survive in wartime.

At the same time, Ukrainian public organisations of people with disabilities have gained invaluable experience in fast humanitarian response, evacuation procedures, provision of cash payments, delivery of food aid, creation of shelters, access to medical aid, operation of boarding institutions in the wartime, work with children and youth with disabilities, socialisation of the affected individuals in a time of war, and other areas.

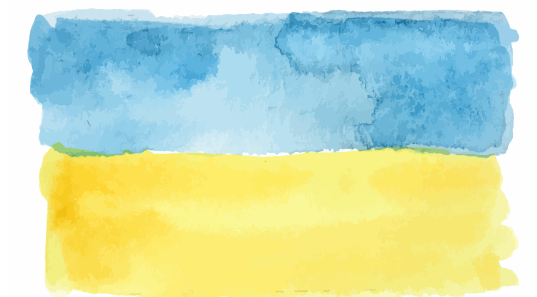
Today we are thinking about how to ensure disability inclusion in all national and international plans and strategies and how public organisations of people with disabilities can contribute to these processes. We hope for understanding of the importance of these issues and cooperation with state and international institutions to resolve them.

Sincerely,

The Secretariat of the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine

If you would like to donate to the National Assembly of People with Disabilities of Ukraine, follow the link below:

www.naiu.org.ua and find 'Donate button'





Supportmatch Homeshare

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Reliable live-in help

Supporting people at home to live independently

- Do you live alone?
- Do you have a spare room?
- Would you like help with practical tasks such as cooking, cleaning and shopping?
- Would you like the benefit of a friendly companion?

Cornwall Council have partnered with Supportmatch Homeshare and Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum to provide the Homeshare Service to our communities.

The Homeshare Service is based on intergenerational living, and is about people helping each other and creating meaningful relationships.

Contact **Supportmatch** for more information on how to apply

w: www.supportmatch.co.uk

e: Info@supportmatch.co.uk

t: 02036 336 066



Kevin and Jack's Story

Kevin is 75 years old and was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) in 2017. Kevin has 3 children that all live in different parts of the country, with the closest living 3 hours away.

Towards the end of 2018, Kevin's condition worsened and meant that he became a wheelchair user. Kevin has carers; however, the support was not enough, and Kevin could not afford more care unless he made the decision to sell his beautiful home and moved into a smaller property.

The main issue was the gaps in between carers, Kevin was left without care too often and for too long. Kevin was even finding it difficult to make a cup of tea or prepare food for himself. This was leaving Kevin frustrated and angry with himself, throwing him into a spiral of depression.

Kevin's children turned to Supportmatch Homeshare for help.



Jack is a 37-year-old council officer, who works 5 days per week with 2 of those days working from home.

Jack turned to Supportmatch Homeshare because he was relocating to take on a new job opportunity in the area. This new job would give him more flexibility and a slightly higher salary but finding affordable accommodation within his budget in the area was proving extremely difficult. Even with a higher salary it meant he still couldn't afford the rent. However, Jack decided to accept the job offer in hope he would find affordable

accommodation soon. He moved temporarily into a hotel, where he unfortunately remained for almost 3 months, costing him so much that he often regretted making that decision.

As a result, Jack was unable to afford to rent, because he was left with no savings for a deposit. He became increasingly desperate. Jack turned to Supportmatch Homeshare who introduced him to Kevin. Kevin liked Jack for his honesty, who explained his situation to Kevin.

Although Jack worked 3 days per week out of the house, Kevin thought they could make it work with a little compromise. Kevin offered Jack the Homeshare placement with him. Jack moved in two weeks after their first meeting. It took a few weeks to adjust and understand how Jack could support Kevin. Kevin and his family arranged with Jack to move the preparation of the lunch and supper care hours by carers to those days when Jack was out for work and decreased the carer's hours on the days Jack was at home. This adjustment allowed Kevin to have smaller gaps in between carers on the days Jack was out and someone at home all day during the days Jack was working from home.

The arrangement worked very well for both. Kevin felt more confident. Jack made small changes in the house to create more independence for Kevin around the home.



Jack and Kevin lived together for 16 months. The match came to an end as Jack was offered a position in his hometown and decided to move back. Supportmatch arranged for another homesharer to move in after Jack left.

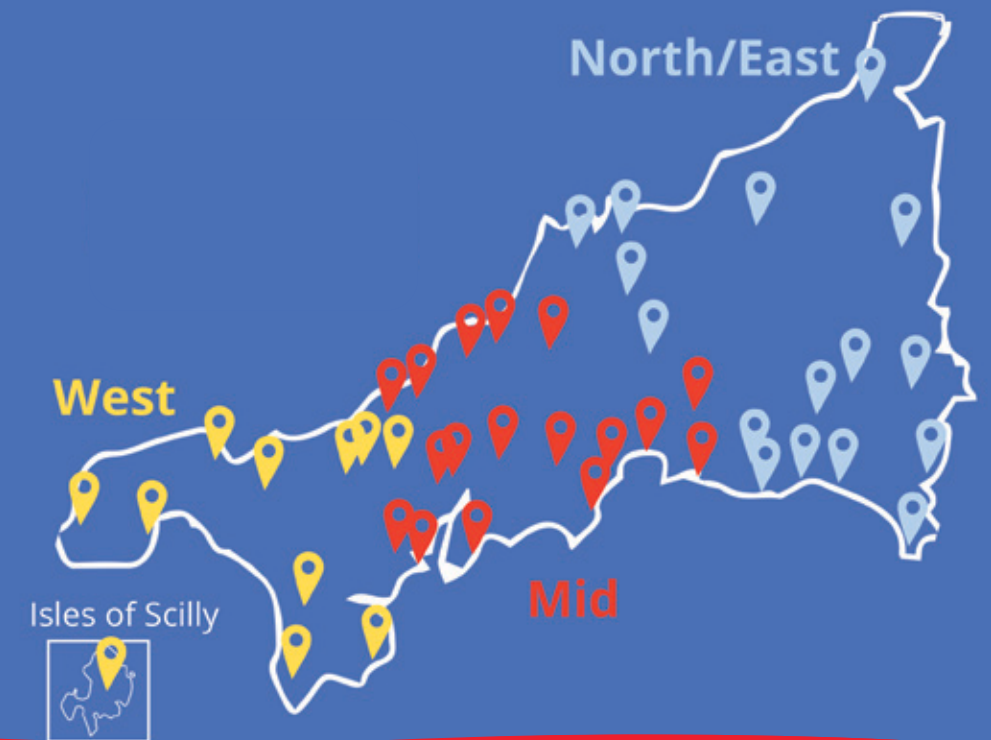


If you would like this information in another format or language please contact:

Cornwall Council, County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro, TR1 3AY

e: customerservices@cornwall.gov.uk t: 0300 1234 100 www.cornwall.gov.uk

The Cornwall Memory Cafe Network: Meet the lovely Doreens!



The lovely Doreens!

DISCOVER met with two Memory Cafe regulars from St Austell: Doreen Williams, who is wife and carer to Bow and Doreen Buscombe, who is wife and carer to Roy. Not only do they share the same first name but they have become firm friends!

The two Doreens found their own ways to the Memory Cafes. Doreen W says her GP recommended the Cafes in her area in St Austell, and Cuddra was the first on the list. Doreen B found her way to the Cuddra Cafe through an associate at Alexander House, a care service run by Cornwall Partnership NHS Foundation Trust, where she used to take her husband.

When asked whether they needed to convince their husbands Bow and Roy to attend a Cafe, it appears it all happened quite naturally. Doreen W says that when she phoned to make an enquiry, one of the facilitators of Cuddra Memory Cafe answered, and Doreen realised goes line dancing with her!

She says that this made it a little easier for her husband Bow to join, as there was a familiar face there already. Doreen B says that her husband Roy really enjoyed his first Cafe visit, and they've been going ever since. Both Doreens and their husbands have been attending the Cafes for over a year now and the volunteers made them feel extremely welcomed.

"They really look after you. To me they're like carers because they have that compassion in them. Even when they're doing something simple like

offering you a drink, their compassion, it just comes through. We as carers, as well as our loved ones, need that."

The Cafe helps people accept the changes that come about in their lives through long-term health conditions like dementia. It is a vital service that aids people who lack support from other avenues like family; whether it is a person with dementia or their carer. The Memory Cafe Network is at its core, a support network where people with the same lived experience and the same frustrations can back one another. "We couldn't go back to life without them, I think our lives would stop because then you're at home with no support, no one to talk to. The value of talking to other carers is everything to us, and I think meeting each other there and becoming friends has been invaluable for us both."

"I think because I have no siblings it's been really important having Doreen's support. We're there for each other and that's through the Cafes, our friendship."

Whilst the Cafes are invaluable for carers, the service is paramount to help stimulate and engage people with dementia. There is a real risk for people to withdraw from social interactions as the disease progresses. The Memory Cafe Network reinvigorates people with dementia as Doreen W points out: "At home, Bow won't do anything, he doesn't want to do activities that are good for the brain, so at the Cafes he is stimulated, he joins in with the activities. Oh, and he always sits with Roy!"

Doreen B added: "Roy's the same, he would just sit and play on his tablet all day. I actually said to him you talk when we're at the Cafes but you don't at home, since then he's started to talk to me, not all the time, but it's starting to come back. It's only since visiting the Memory Cafes; it's really brought him out of his shell."

The Cafes offer a varied range of cognitive activities for the attendees including from puzzles, word searches, quizzes, arts and crafts and of course, lots of cake! And they have some great entertainers too, like Rachel who sings songs from the 50s and 60s, and Cascade Theatre who did a play about the four seasons, everyone loved it! A number of professionals drop by too: "A solicitor dropped by to talk to them about Power of Attorney and a Carers Wellbeing Practitioner too recently. The Memory Cafe Wayfinders take time to talk to each person, what makes this service brilliant is the level of human-to-human support offered in a holistic manner."

Like the two Doreens, the Cafes have become an integral part of many peoples' lives across Cornwall. As Doreen B added: "I think one of the most important things about going to the Cafes is that it helps people get past that taboo because a lot of people won't talk about dementia or memory loss. But it shows you that it is nothing to be ashamed of and that we should talk about it because of more and more people are experiencing it."

To discover your local Memory Cafe please visit:

www.cornwallmemorycafes.co.uk

Or get in contact

cmcn@disabilitycornwall.org.uk

There are almost 50 Cafes within the Cornwall Memory Cafe Network offering support to anyone who may be affected by memory loss and their families. With regular meetings, the cafes are a welcoming, safe space, where people can socialise, get advice, share experiences, make new friendships as well as engaging in activities that are great for the brain.



Cornwall Disability Alliance

*Celebrating two years...
Stronger together!*

We are a pan-disability alliance supporting people with a long-term health condition and/or disability and local communities in Cornwall and Isles of Scilly, to improve their economic and social wellbeing.

Our vision is a fully inclusive and equitable society, with equality of opportunity for all.

We believe, through providing a collective and representative voice, we can work positively and proactively with service providers across all sectors which will enable us to create inclusive communities for all.

We are a proven and successful provider collaborative, working together to address gaps in provision, ensuring no duplication and achieving the best outcomes for people.



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A combined

360+

years experience of delivering support

The Alliance Members



Film Review

by **Issy Stephens**



It's a Sin is the heart warming and gut-wrenching story of a group of friends in London amidst the 1980s AIDS Crisis. Written by Russel T. Davies and inspired by his own friends and experiences, the five part series follows Ritchie, Roscoe, Colin, Jill, Ash and Gregory as they meet through university and London's gay scene.

Together they find their chosen family in each other, moving into what they affectionately term 'The Pink Palace', a rundown flat above a shop where they throw magnificent parties for all their friends. The episodes span several years of the character's lives, from the gang's first meetings, to the whispers of AIDS from America to England, to the crisis hitting all of the friends in ways they could never have imagined. The series is incredibly hard hitting, connecting the audience to each character as they journey through self-discovery and dream of their futures on Broadway, in night life, in suit tailors. One of my favourite elements of the series is the way Davies unites the characters so beautifully: the intimate touches of inside jokes the group repeat for years, the fond embraces and fluidity between romantic and platonic love, the way all of them meet in the middle, despite their differences.

Since the AIDS crisis, medicine has advanced considerably through the years, meaning that contracting HIV is no longer a death sentence, at least in many Western countries with affordable health care. This means that a lot of people who are HIV positive may not identify as disabled, however Under the 2010 Equality Act, HIV diagnosis is recognised as a disability. This means that workplaces need to make reasonable adjustments for employees with HIV, mostly for the side effects or fatigue associated with taking medications. The reality of the AIDS crisis was extremely different, however, as It's a Sin showed through long panning shots along hospital wards, various men segregated and alone in hospital beds, people in varying levels of PPE around them. In an interview with The Guardian prompted by the show, nurse Leigh Chislett, speaks to his experiences working in London AIDS wards in the 80s. His retellings

are remarkably similar to the series, saying that he couldn't handle the number of deaths he was seeing everyday, the mothers who didn't understand what was happening and the fathers who stood in shock not knowing how to respond.

It's a Sin really impresses on the audience the fear and shame that surrounded everyone at the time of the crisis, something that still hasn't subsided completely. In the series we can see examples of this through people believing that HIV is a conspiracy; not understanding how the virus is transmitted and not allowing gay men near them; to the religious aggressions of The Pink Palace's next door neighbour as one of the friends is lifted into an ambulance. As Leigh says, it wasn't only the virus that was debilitating, but the shame: 'people had found something to hang their hate on'.

It's a Sin handles all of the struggles, love, grief and rage incredibly, and I believe this is in large part due to the heartfelt writing and talented actors - no wonder it was nominated for 11 BAFTA TV Awards. Prominent actors feature Stephen Fry as a closeted Thatcher loving MP and Neil Patrick Harris as a dapper gay, suit tailor. Lydia West, who plays Jill Baxter, is also mesmerising as she acts as carer for HIV positive friends and strangers. It's not an easy watch, but it's a worthwhile one, just make sure you bring tissues.



Let's Innovate

The benefits of Technology

The ongoing advancements in technology greatly help independent living. *DISCOVER* has chosen two technologies that enable people with mobility restrictions or sight loss to access information and connect

with others. The following page showcases four mobile applications providing diverse services, including an accessible fuel station locator and an app to alleviate anxiety and promote mindfulness.

Xbox Adaptive Controller

The Xbox Adaptive Controller is a specialised gaming controller designed to meet the needs of gamers with limited mobility. It was created by Microsoft in collaboration with various disability organisations and individuals.



The controller features a large central unit with two large programmable buttons, a D-pad, and a USB port. It also has multiple 3.5mm jacks on the back, which can be used to plug in a wide range of assistive input devices, such as foot pedals, switches, and joysticks. This allows gamers to customise the controller to their individual needs and preferences.

The controller is designed to be highly customisable and can be used with a wide range of gaming devices, including Xbox consoles, Windows 10 PCs, and tablets. It also supports the Xbox Accessories app for remapping buttons and creating custom profiles. It's compatible with a large range of games across different genres.

The Xbox Adaptive Controller is an innovative device that enables gamers with disabilities to play video games with greater ease and comfort. It represents a significant step forward in making gaming more inclusive and accessible to people of all abilities.

Search 'Xbox Adaptive Controller' on Xbox.com

Hable One

The Hable One allows for greater ease of use for people who have sight loss to access their smartphone or tablet. Whether it is texting on social media, replying to emails, or writing down a memo in your notes app, Hable One is a totally accessible tool.



Simply connect to your phone or tablet via Bluetooth with no installation needed. The device uses advanced Bluetooth low-energy wireless technology which is more energy efficient than regular Bluetooth and won't interfere with other Bluetooth-connected devices. The battery has 50 hours of use which is approximately 2 weeks of battery life.

After a brief time getting used to it, you can navigate through different applications with ease. The Hable One also offers a practical VoiceOver and TalkBack function through the keyboard, meaning there is no need for the constant tapping of buttons. There is a full list of different commands, alphabets, and product manuals on the Hable website.

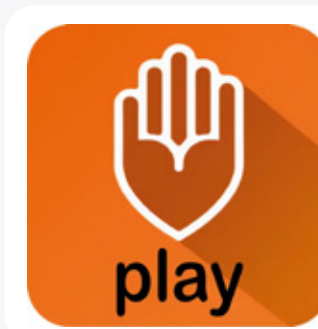
Other specifications include remote software updates, a safety strap to reduce the risk of damage, and even a free 30 minute training course to help you get started!

 www.iamhable.com

Let's Demonstrate

Autism iHelp

Autism iHelp is a language teaching aid aimed at helping children with autism specific conditions to improve their expressive vocabulary. It is a helpful tool for helping children develop their first words.



The app has a simple show-and-tell function, presenting an image with a label of what the image is. There is also an additional multiple-choice activity, where the user must match the image with its label.

There are 24 real-world photos all presented in an easy-to-label format. The 24 images are split into groups of eight images, as if all 24 images were available at once this could cause over-stimulation and confusion. When audio is selected, two voice options are available, male and female. Future updates will provide the option to turn the audio off, which would prompt your child to their own voice and label the learned words.

Available on iOS devices via the Apple Store.

fuelService

fuelService is an application that helps disabled drivers locate fuel stations that have re-fuelling assistance available. There are an estimated 750,000 wheelchair users in the UK, and many people need additional assistance with refuelling.



fuelService has a simple and effective function, simply find an accessible fuel station nearby by entering your location, it doesn't have to be entirely accurate as it will automatically find stations in your broad vicinity.

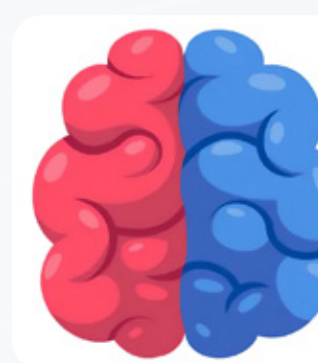
Next, click on the nearest fuel station and click the 'ask for assistance' button before you start your journey.

Once the fuel station has confirmed they have the assistance you need, state when you have arrived and they will be ready.

The application is available on Android devices via the Google Play store and iOS devices via the Apple store.

Brain Games - Left vs Right

Brain Games - Left vs Right is a mobile app that aims to help improve your cognitive function by testing your reflex, awareness, reasoning and patience through a total of over 46 unique activities and games. The app will encourage you to engage with it daily, you will be able to track your progress to build up a picture of where you excel and how you can improve.



The application is available on Android devices via the Google Play store and iOS devices via the Apple store.

Calm

Calm is a meditation app aimed at improving your mindfulness and wellbeing. Whether you are an expert on meditation or a beginner, Calm has a variety of meditative courses as well as sleep stories and music to help you fall asleep.



Each piece of music, narration or video strive to put you in a positive mindset and reduce anxiety.

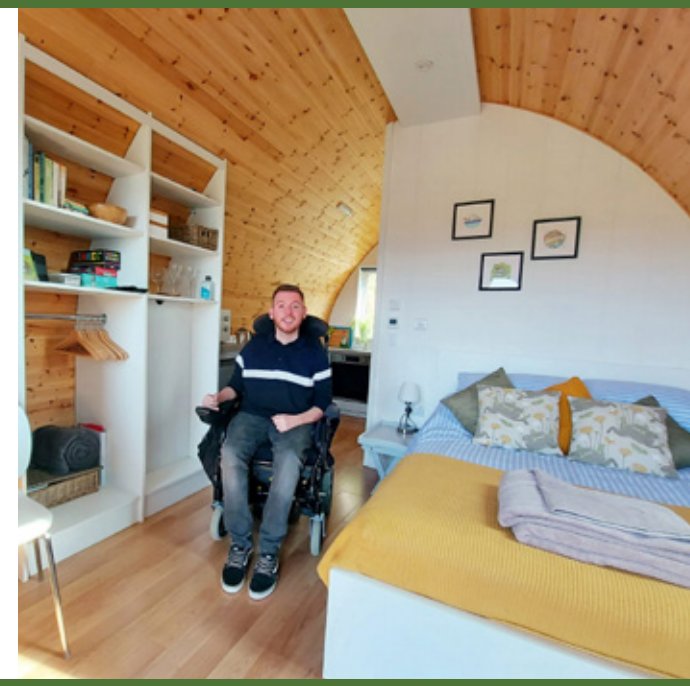
The application is available on Android devices via the Google Play store and iOS devices via the Apple store.

Southwest staycations

By Ross Lannon



Ross Lannon at the Knap Mill Omnipod, South Hams, Devon



The accessible hot tub at an adapted cabin, Forest Holidays Deerpark, Cornwall



I have no shame in admitting that I'm a home bug. As much as I crave a holiday abroad, laying in the sun with a cocktail in hand, I also know how stressful planning a trip with a disability can be. During Covid times, when travel was not an option, I think we all started to appreciate just how many hidden gems were actually on our doorsteps, and I, for one, am definitely more open to a staycation these days. The South West has so many beautiful, undiscovered hotspots, that it would be rude not to share some of my favourite travels with you today!

I recently stayed in an Omnipod, a luxurious accessible cabin with stunning countryside views. For me, this is the perfect alternative to camping, seen as I definitely can't "rough it" anymore like I used to.

The Knap Mill Omnipod is based in the South Hams area of Devon, a small, rural village at the head of the River Avon. I'm all for a quiet life, so this little countryside retreat was right up my street!

I loved the simplicity and quiriness of this cabin. Its open-plan design felt very warm and cosy giving a real homely vibe. Inside there is a 1.5 metre turning space for wheelchair users, and enough room to sleep up to 3 guests, and a doggo!

As a full-time wheelchair user, the most important thing for me when staying away from home is the bed and bathroom facilities. I was so impressed with the accessible wet room at Knap Mill. It was incredibly spacious and came fitted with wheelchair-friendly features, such as a wheel-under sink, tilted mirror and removable grab rails and shower seat.

Unfortunately, I struggled to find comfort at night without there being an electric profiling bed to independently adjust myself. However, I understand that not all disabled people require this feature. Luckily, I came prepared with extra padding to raise my mattress position.

Other key features of the Omnipod include:

- Smart facilities like the voice activated Google device, to control the lights and electric blind.
- On-site parking for 1 vehicle.
- Wi-Fi and underfloor heating.

If you'd like to stay at this awesome Omnipod in Devon, all you need to do is search for 'Knap Mill' on www.coastandcountry.co.uk or Airbnb. For those living outside of Devon and Cornwall, you'll be pleased to know that there are several other

Omnipod locations across the UK as well.

Another Southwest staycation which deserves a special mention, is a brand called Forest Holidays. I stayed in one of their accessible cabins called Deerpark, just 15 minutes away from the Cornish coast and the fishing villages of Looe and Polperro. Forest Holidays offer 'cosy cabins' in twelve secluded locations around the UK. Depending on your location, you can stay deep in the woods, on the edge of a loch, or even in a forest meadow.

As wheelchair users, we often get used to the fact that most 'quirky' holidays aren't always accessible, however, this was not the case. I stayed here a few years ago and it is still one of my favourite trips to talk about. And yes, that is mostly down to the hot tub fitted with a hoist...

Whilst the activities at Deerpark were limited for wheelchair users, I was more than happy to just relax in the cabin and play some board games with the family. There was also plenty to explore in the nearby towns.

The Silver Birch wheelchair adapted cabin had everything I needed on the ground level. The doors to the bedroom and bathroom were wide and fully wheelchair accessible, with enough room for me to

bring my own portable profiling bed. In particular, I loved the fact you could order meals directly to your cabin. Maybe that's just the anti-social in me, but surely that's what holidays are for? Pure relaxation, with minimal effort!

I would absolutely recommend both these locations for a little Cornish break. As I said in the beginning of this article... there are just so many hidden gems right here on our doorsteps!

Be sure to get in contact and let me know any of your favourite Southwest staycations! You can keep up to date with my adventures on social media by following: 'A Life on Wheels' on Facebook, or follow @rosslannon on Instagram, Twitter & TikTok.

For more accessible reviews, check out my blog:

www.alifeonwheels.co.uk

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A service brought to you by disAbility Cornwall & Isles of Scilly

Contact our friendly & professional team:

 hello@pamas.org.uk

 01736 751929

Meet the team: Issy & Pete

Issy: Our new Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Officer

I'm delighted to introduce myself as disAbility Cornwall's new Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Officer. I'm keen to work in collaboration with all of Cornwall's inclusion organisations and strive for collective and positive change for all.

My background is in the arts and social sciences, having just completed a Masters of Science in Contemporary Identities at the University of Bristol, specialising in gender and intersectional theory. My thesis centered on cisgender women who perpetrate sexual violence and how we can make our understanding of violence more inclusive to all survivors. Before this, I studied a Bachelor of Arts in Film at Falmouth University, where my project FAST FOOD encompassed a community platform and film about making online dating more inclusive.

While studying in Falmouth, I realised just how much I love Cornwall and the communities that reside here, I am so happy to be back! My other experiences include working as an EDI consultant for businesses, as well as my essay 'Queer-Friendly Classrooms: A Manifesto' being published by Bristol Institute for Learning and Teaching and distributed amongst teaching staff at the University of Bristol.



Issy, EDI Officer (she/they)

I'll strive to fulfil the charity's mission of an inclusive Cornwall, collaborating with our communities and user-led organisations to champion disability rights. I'm keen to promote inclusive language in conversation and legislation and help to ensure that all voices are heard and understood.

Pete: Our new Data and Impact Officer

Hello! My name is Pete and I began work at Disability Cornwall in December as a Data and Impact Officer.

I lived most of my life in Reading, Berkshire and worked predominantly in London. For many years, I wanted to move to a rural part of the country and eventually moved to Cornwall 3 years ago.

My interest in working for disAbility Cornwall is driven by a desire to challenge the limitations which seem to constrain disabled people. I have cerebral palsy which has, along with peoples' reactions to it, shaped much of my life. In my experience, most of the limits come down to prevailing attitudes rather than physical limitations. I'd like to see the predominately negative attitudes and beliefs change. I'd like to use my knowledge and skills for the benefit of others.



Pete, Data and Impact Officer (he/him)

I have a BSc (Hons) and an MSc in Psychology, post-graduate qualifications in Health and Disease and in Medicinal Chemistry. Originally, I'd hoped to work in a health profession, however, and perhaps paradoxically, there were many barriers and I have found that there is a great deal of published evidence of disability discrimination in these areas of work. I spent a number of years in the mobile

telecoms industry and then the pharmaceutical industry. However, the majority of my working life has been involved with disability charities mostly writing health information.

Outside work I like to have discussions about philosophy, I enjoy cycling, gardening and furniture making.



I promise tomorrow would NOT be the same without you.
YOU MATTER!

Georgia's Voice is a Cornish charity helping to support young women aged 18–25.

We provide small, free, confidential support groups for young women with mental health concerns. We offer a safe place for our members to come and talk, listen or just be.

We currently run groups across a 1/3 of Cornwall as well as a regular online group.

Through our support groups we have created a huge network of support, we provide safe spaces for our members to talk, or not talk! Somewhere they will really be listened to, with empathy, not judgement.

We help teach ways of promoting well-being, as well as making our members aware of the other services that are out there to help them when they are in need.



We run regular wellbeing activities for our members!

We can provide a huge support system tailored to our members individual needs, we will provide workshops and information days explaining things that can promote good mental health and positive emotions. We can help with providing a range of therapies and helplines, and even put our members in touch with the right people should they want to get back into education or employment.

Get in touch!

✉ info@georgiasvoice.co.uk

🌐 www.georgiasvoice.co.uk

North Cornwall care farm nurturing growth

East Langford Care Farm offers purposeful farm related activities for people with a learning disability.

DISCOVER talks to Founder, Victoria Stone, and takes a tour around the farmstead to meet some of the 'co-farmers' and see what they are getting up to.

East Langford Care Farm near Bude offers more than just work, it provides meaningful social inclusion and fulfilling employment opportunities that encourage its co-farmers to engage in every aspect of a real working beef farm.

Victoria founded the farm over a year ago and has over 16 years experience working in the adult social care sector working for Devon County Council as a mental health support worker, managing a drop-in centre in her community. She told *DISCOVER*: "The support we offered was very recovery focused. We ran educational and therapeutic groups, one-to-one goal focused outreach and a drop-in peer support session. Unfortunately, because of the pandemic, this service and the way we delivered support changed dramatically and forced me to look at alternatives."

Victoria's husband is a knowledgeable third generation farmer who initially suggested that they both explore the idea of care farming. Care farming is the therapeutic use of farming practices, where people attend a setting on a regular basis as part of their structured health, social care, or special education programme. The powerful mix of being in nature, belonging to a part of a group and taking part in meaningful farm related activities is what makes care farming so successful. Victoria had also experienced personal benefits from spending more time on the farm during Covid-19 lockdowns and her interest in farming increased when she and her husband were on their farm full time. "If I found peace and refuge in the beautiful green open space



Photography by Ruary Marshall

Victoria Stone, Founder of East Langford Care Farm

and by spending time with the animals, surely others would benefit from this as well."

There is no doubt that the lockdowns were a major reason for the kickstart of the care farm, however, there were many challenges to starting it and Victoria insists there are many challenges they still face to this day. She added: "It's not been easy. I realised from early on that we needed guidance with the initial set up, so we began by becoming members of the national charity Social Farm and Gardens, which helps with the setup of care farms. They were able to give us clear and practical support, listing all the necessary policies and procedures required. They also advised us on insurance and everything else we needed to consider to create a safe foundation for our business."

East Langford Care Farm is proud to be a member of this and has achieved its prestigious Quality Green Care Mark for a second year running. This accreditation is awarded annually, ensuring that establishments like this are delivered in a safe, professional, and effective manner.

“We are passionate about creating a small and intimate space for the adults we support, and intend on keeping group numbers to a maximum of five co-farmers for each session. Currently, we support seven co-farmers in total. We have spoken with local social care teams, social prescribing teams and local residential homes, but we’re still a new service provider and uptake has been slower than we originally hoped. However, we are very optimistic about this year and we have many wonderful plans for the vegetable garden and increasing our animals. We hope to have more chickens, our goats are expecting kids in May, and we have lambs arriving soon. Springtime is a fantastic time of year to be involved in a care farm and we are anticipating an increase of co-farmers over the next few months.”

Whilst talking to the co-farmers and looking at how the farm is managed, one of the key aspects of the care farm is the notion of peer support. This can be defined as the support given by a person who shares similar lived experiences. Research has shown that working this way can significantly increase a person’s chance of success. People are also more likely to feel the benefits and improvements to their wellbeing and confidence

far more quickly than when working with professionals alone. This is another huge benefit of attending a care farm: co-farmers gain support not only from the staff but from each other, which creates a sense of belonging and purpose and it also reduces isolation and loneliness. On occasions, Victoria will purposely take a step back and allow the co-farmers to figure out tasks, communicating and problem solving to overcome challenges together.

By working in small co-farming groups, Victoria believes that: “Everyone gets to know their peers on a personal level, feels valued and important, with opportunities to carry out tasks that are important to them as individuals, and enabling them to gain ownership of the areas they are passionate about.”

So, what do the co-farmers think about the farm? Becca and Clare were keen to show us around the farm, and Becca said: “I still love to come to the farm every Friday and to do my work experience. I love to see all the animals, especially the ponies, goats, and sheep. I have enjoyed collecting the eggs and help to make tea for people. I am proud that I now can clean out the animals and touch the hay and straw which I was very frightened of. I have also made some good friends.”

It is clear see that East Langford made such a difference in the co-farmers lives, giving them a sense of working fulfilment and social inclusivity. The farm could be described as community-led, as the co-farmers dictate what they would like to do on the farm, whether it is building their own

vegetable patch, or getting more involved with looking after the goats.

Co-farmer Claire said: “I think that the farm is a lovely place to come with someone you know, gain confidence in yourself and meet other co-farmers. I really enjoy going to see the calves and cows in the cow shed and the fields. I also really like coming to see the goats. When I first arrived, a few of the goats weren’t comfortable being petted by us, but now, they are very confident.”

“I think that the farm is a lovely place to come with someone that you know and gain confidence in yourself and meet other co-farmers.”

The farm is in a very rural part of Cornwall, so services in that area are often stretched to the limit in what they can offer, resulting in long waiting lists, and poor transport links, meaning people have to travel long distances to access services. The farm is available to people living in Cornwall and Devon, but generally there are difficulties for people with living on a county line as they find themselves falling between each county’s eligibility criteria. Victoria says she strives to have as few barriers as possible for people attending East Langford, hoping to make the farm accessible to the many, not the few.

With regards to increasing capacity on the farm, she said: “We intend on keeping our service small to keep the intimate, gentle environment we have created. We have, however, discussed developments for the future. This includes ambitious plans to expand our garden area in hopes of purchasing a greenhouse and implementing a no-dig method for the vegetable area which is thought to be more environmentally friendly. Our flower gardens will also provide a habitat to support pollinating insects.”

The farm are also exploring ways in which they can support carers, whether they are in a formal paid role or informal and caring for a family member. “We have plans in motion to set up a specific group that will include a warm friendly welcome, group discussion followed by some enjoyable time with our wonderful animals and beautiful surroundings. This group is due to start later in the year.”

“Whatever developments we explore, our co-farmers will remain at the heart of our business and their happiness and progress is what really matters to us.”

To follow and keep up to date with East Langford Care Farm:

Facebook: East Langford Care Farm
Instagram: @eastlangfordcarefarm



All photos courtesy of Ruary Marshall



Co-farmers Claire and Becca



WELFARE ENTITLEMENTS (BENEFITS) FACTSHEET



Many people are finding it difficult to make ends meet due to the cost-of-living price increases. Prices of household goods, particularly food and energy are rising at their highest rate for 40 years.

Here are the main welfare benefits and information about the confirmed 10.1% increases along with the cost-of-living payments for the next financial year.

This is not an exhaustive list, so please always check your individual circumstances with a professional welfare rights adviser.

Attendance Allowance – help with extra costs if you are over pension age, have a long term health condition or disability where you need someone to help look after you.

	2022-23	2023-24
Higher rate	£92.40	£101.75
Lower rate	£61.85	£68.10

Carer's Allowance – support for unpaid carers who care for more than 35 hours a week, are not in full-time education or earning over £132.00 per week. The cared for person must be eligible for certain welfare benefits.

	2022-23	2023-24
	£69.70	£76.75

Disability Living Allowance – for children under the age of 16 who have difficulties walking or need more looking after than a child of the same age who does not have the health condition or disability. There are two components and three levels of entitlement.

Care Component	2022-23	2023-24
Highest rate	£92.40	£101.75
Middle rate	£68.10	£61.85
Lower rate	£24.45	£26.90

Mobility component	2022-23	2023-24
Higher rate	£64.50	£71.00
Lower rate	£24.45	£26.90

**Personal Independence Payment is replacing DLA for adults with long-term health conditions or a disability.*



Employment Support Allowance (ESA) – support for people under state pension age who have difficulty working due to a health condition or disability.

Single	2022-23	2023-24
Under 25	£61.05	£67.20
25 or over	£77.00	£84.80

Couples	2022-23	2023-24
Both under 18	£61.05	£67.20
Both over 18	£121.05	£133.30

Housing Benefit - is being replaced by Universal Credit, most people will need to claim this instead.

Housing Benefit can help pay your rent if you're unemployed, on a low income or claiming other benefits. You can only make a new claim for Housing Benefit if you have reached State Pension age or are in supported, sheltered or temporary housing.



Single person's allowance	2022-23	2023-24
Under 25	£61.05	£67.20
25 or over	£77.00	£84.80

Couple	2022-23	2023-24
Both under 18:	£92.20	£101.50
One or both 18 or over:	£121.05	£133.30

Incapacity Benefit (IB) - is being replaced with ESA. You will be reassessed if you're already claiming IB to see if you're capable of working or eligible for ESA.

	2022-23	2023-24
Long-term	£118.25	£130.20

Income Support - you can no longer make a new claim for Income Support. If you're on a low income and need help to cover your living costs, you can apply for Universal Credit.

If you already get income support you will continue to get it, as long as you continue to meet the qualifying criteria.

	2022-23	2023-24
Under 25	£61.05	£67.20
25 or over	£77.00	£84.80

Jobseeker's Allowance (contribution-based) - You can apply for New Style Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) to help when you're looking for work.

Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based) - you cannot apply for income-based JSA anymore. If you're currently getting this, you'll keep getting payments while you're eligible until your claim ends.

Jobseeker's Allowance (contribution-based) & Jobseeker's Allowance (income-based):

	2022-23	2023-24
Under 25	£61.05	£67.20
25 or over	£77.00	£84.80

Maternity/Paternity/Shared Parental Allowance - is a payment when you take time off to have a baby.

	2022-23	2023-24
Standard rate	£156.66	£172.48

Pension Credit - is extra money to help with living costs if you're over State Pension age and on a low income. Pension Credit can also help with housing costs such as ground rent or service charges.

	2022-23	2023-24
Single	£182.60	£201.05
Couple	£278.70	£306.85

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) - can help with extra living costs if you have long-term physical or mental health conditions or disabilities that affect you doing certain everyday tasks or getting around. It's not 'means tested' so you can still claim PIP if you're working, have savings or getting other benefits.



PIP covers daily living and mobility, Whether you get one or both parts and how much you get depends on how difficult you find everyday tasks and getting around.

	2022-23	2023-24
Enhanced Daily Living Component	£92.40	£101.75
Standard Daily Living Component	£61.85	£68.85
Enhanced Daily Mobility Component	£64.50	£71.00
Standard Daily Mobility Component	£24.45	£26.90

The State Pension - The State Pension is a regular payment from the government which most people can claim when they reach State Pension age. Not everyone gets the same amount, it depends on your National Insurance record. If you were born on or after 6th April 1951 (men), or 6th April 1953 (woman), you must claim the new State Pension. Otherwise you claim the basic old state pension. If you're on a low income, you may be able to apply for Pension Credit.

	2022-23	2023-24
Full New State Pension	£185.15	£203.85
Basic Old State Pension (Category A or B)	£141.85	£156.20

Universal Credit - is a monthly payment to help with living costs if you're on a low income, out of work or you cannot work. More people on "legacy benefits" (child tax credit, housing benefit, income support, income based JSA, income related ESA, working tax credit) will be moved onto Universal Credit as part of government plans to streamline the benefits system throughout 2023 and 2024. If you have savings over £16,000, you are not eligible for Universal Credit.

	2022-23	2023-24
Standard Allowance: Single under 25	£265.31	£292.11
Standard Allowance: Single 25 or over	£334.91	£368.74
Joint Claimants both under 25	£416.45	£458.51
Joint claimants, one or both 25 or over	£525.72	£578.82

Cost of Living Payments 2023 to 2024

The government has announced further Cost of Living Payments will be made between spring 2023 and spring 2024:

- £301 for people on an eligible low-income benefit, paid during spring 2023
- £150 for people on an eligible disability benefit, paid during summer 2023
- £300 for people on an eligible low-income benefit, paid during autumn 2023
- £300 for pensioner households, during winter 2023 to 2024
- £299 for people on an eligible low-income benefit, paid in spring 2024

Further guidance will be available when more details are announced. The current level of inflation is making it particularly hard for people on a low income, including many disabled people. Even for those receiving their full entitlement to benefits it can be very difficult to manage financially.

Please contact our DIAL team on 01736 759500 for a Benefit Health Check, to see if more support can be provided.

Let's talk about spinal cord injury...

by Alex Dabek

According to the World Health Organisation, 20-30% of people with spinal cord injury (SCI) demonstrate significant signs of depression.

However, many people with a SCI are unable to access the mental health support they need. A recent report from the Spinal Injuries Association (SIA) published in 2022 revealed that only one in three people living with a spinal injury in the UK have access to mental health support, and out of those, a staggering 68% do not feel that the support services provided by the NHS are meeting their needs.

If you're concerned about your own mental health, or that of a loved one or a client/patient, here's what you need to know about how SCI impacts mental health, and what help is available.

Spinal Cord Injury can affect mental health

Sustaining a SCI brings about a sudden and drastic change to all aspects of one's life and adjustment is a slow and gradual process. The challenges that follow a SCI will significantly change day-to-day life, not only for the person injured but the family and friends that surround them. When you are first injured, adjustments to an individual's life can be huge, the impact on somebody's career, work life, relationships, social life, including body image or identity can change instantly and this can be very difficult and upsetting. Coming to terms with a SCI, and the impact it has had on a person's life, can and often does detrimentally affect people's mental health.

Depression and/or anxiety are often experienced after sustaining a SCI, and whilst many might say that experiencing such emotions is "part and parcel" of the adjustment process, it is crucial that mental health following injury is treated as seriously and as comprehensively as physical health and other SCI complications which may occur. After all, physical and mental health go hand in hand and are interdependent.

We are gradually beginning to see a change in the opinion surrounding the importance of mental health, yet stigmatisation can and does see many SCI people being reluctant to seek mental health support, until they already have severe symptoms.

Adapting to life post injury takes time and there can be many challenges along the way. Physical capability, pain, fatigue, financial and relationship struggles, ongoing medical and management of SCI complications, and access difficulties are some of the issues that are likely to not only adversely affect one's mental health, but also reduce their ability to seek or access mental health support.

What treatment and support is available

It is undeniable that resources are limited within the NHS and more needs to be done to provide adequate mental health support to everyone with a SCI including those families who need it. However, please don't be discouraged from seeking help for these reasons. If you, your loved one, or your client is struggling emotionally, please encourage them to reach out and contact their GP to find out the support available to them.

Support is available in the first instance

There are mental health treatment and support options for individuals with SCI, which can be accessed through the health service as well as charities, such as SIA:

- **Psychotherapy and Counselling** – Talk Therapy is often seen as one of the more effective treatment options for those struggling with their mental health. The goal of this type of therapy is to facilitate positive change in an individual's life, to teach or improve on positive coping mechanisms, helping to achieve better emotional and social functioning, and ultimately, improve their quality of life. Overall, psychotherapy and counselling are a great outlet for those who need to talk in an environment where they can feel safe and to receive reassurance that there is life after spinal cord injury. Depending on availability in the area, the NHS will be able to triage, refer and recommend an individual to different psychotherapy options. There can often be long waiting lists and it is worth looking into spinal injury organisations who will be able to offer free therapy sessions to those impacted by SCI. For example, the SIA not only offer amazing support for all SCI related issues through their support

line, Advocacy, Peer support through a national network of coordinators and medical support from SCI Specialist nurses, but importantly provide telephone and online counselling with their own in-house counselling and well-being coordinators who have lived experiences of such injuries.

Stephen Brookes, SIA Counselling and well-being coordinator, says the following about the Spinal Injuries Association's service:

"Spinal cord injured people seeking counselling want help with some form of psychological distress. Life 'isn't working' for them so they come with a reasonable expectation that a counsellor has the expertise to help with the problems. They may be suffering from depression, anxiety, trauma, or some other inner turmoil, or they may be having problems in their daily functioning – difficulties in their relationships, with their job or with some other aspect of the challenges of living post SCI. SIA counsellors and well-being coordinators have lived experiences of spinal cord injury and the counselling service endeavours to provide emotional support to SCI people and their families who need it".

- **Medication** – The main aim of treatment with antidepressants is to relieve the symptoms of depression, and to help prevent them from returning. Often medication is used temporarily to help an SCI patient feel emotionally stable again and enable them to focus on and improve their mental health. This is often used alongside talk therapy options, support groups and holistic lifestyle changes. A GP (or a psychiatrist – referred to by a GP) will be able to prescribe appropriate medication and dosages according to the individual's needs.
- **SCI support groups** – There are groups out there which bring together fellow spinal cord injured people, to discuss all issues relating to SCI. The support groups, such as the SIA's are a great treatment option to show those who are recently injured that many others face similar challenges, share advice on how to overcome those and to highlight that it is possible to lead a fulfilled life after SCI. Bolt Burdon Kemp's Spinal Team recently ran an insightful webinar

series, Sex, Relationships and the SCI Man, with help from individuals who have lived SCI experience. The webinars focussed on physical and emotional issues surrounding relationships and sex for men following a SCI.

For individuals who have acquired a spinal injury in the form of Cauda Equina Syndrome, there is a specialist support group. The Cauda Equina Champions charity also provides assistance to those who have developed CES, including peer support and regular support groups.

An individual (if they feel up to it), or their loved one or carer could also create a small support network of their own with friends and family who understand the challenges they're going through.

- **Lifestyle Changes** – Sustaining a SCI is life changing, but adaptation and lifestyle changes can help people to acclimate to life after SCI. Small changes to diet, exercise, sleeping patterns, meditation and mindfulness can all contribute to a healthy mind, and therefore improve prospects of overall physical and mental rehabilitation. Introducing physiotherapy and occupational therapy can also help improve one's physical health, which can in turn improve mental health. A GP may be able to provide a referral to a Dietician, as well as the other specialists mentioned above. Depending on the area, the individual can self-refer to a physiotherapist, or find an occupational therapist via the local council.

Specialist mental health support is an essential part of rehabilitation, and something that should be available throughout an individual's lifetime to help cope with various life events as well as SCI complications, which can occur at any point.

SIA's objective is a fulfilled life for everyone with spinal cord injury but many still struggle with the challenge of accessing mental health support through the NHS. Despite these challenges, there is help available via charities, local authorities and support groups.

Alex Dabek, Senior Associate Spinal Injury Team at Bolt Burdon Kemp

Citizenship For Life: Making Future Stars



What is our Mission?

Our Mission is to enable young people with significant personal challenges to develop their confidence and skills through an inspirational journey of learning, thereby enabling them to grow both as individuals and good citizens.



Citizenship for Life (C4L) has a strong track record of over a decade of delivery of high-quality support and motivation to young people aged 13-15 years who are based in Cornwall.

We have always targeted mentees who will gain most from the experience. We recruit a volunteer mentor for each of the young people, who we draw from the local business community and third sector.

We deliver a motivational 12-month journey of learning/activities and in so doing, take them to places and spaces that will broaden their horizons and enable them to meet inspirational people who have made their mark on society and who can share their lived experiences.

The focus is on encouraging our young people to become better citizens, but we also recognise their needs, to ensure that they are building their emotional resilience to help others, as well as caring for themselves.

Typically each programme we deliver will feature similar themes to ensure consistency across each year, these include:

Team Building

Courage and Challenge

Respect and Behaviour

Understanding Homelessness

Health and Wellbeing

Entrepreneurship and Social Enterprise

Celebrating Diversity

Social Responsibility

Civil Pride and Public Service

The Law

Volunteering

Presentation Skills

Sustainability and Environmental Responsibility

We are confident that, given our track record, we can keep the lights of Citizenship for Life burning brightly for the next three years as a minimum with our dedicated team of volunteers, supporters and stakeholders.

If you would like to find out more about Citizenship For Life, please explore our website or email us:



 www.citizenship-for-life.co.uk

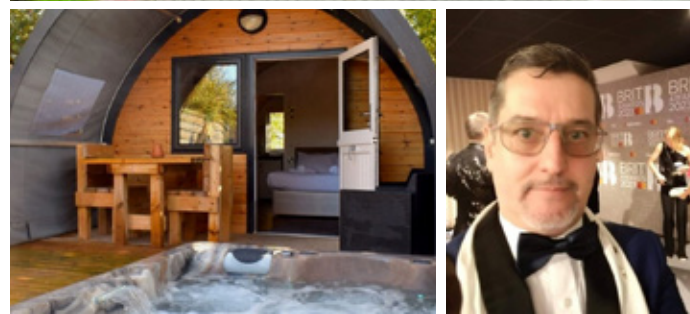
 admin@citizenship-for-life.co.uk

Accessibility Adviser striving for change

by Anthony Smitheram

Working in the leisure industry for over 30 years, Anthony's career took a significant turn in 2005 when he was involved in a road traffic accident, that left him with life-changing injuries.

After recovering, he decided to focus on making the holiday park industry more accessible, which led to him designing inclusive holiday park units.



Anthony at the 2023 BRIT Awards

I was raised in Hayle, as part of a large and hard working local family. In 2005, whilst I was on holiday in France I suffered life-changing injuries in a major road traffic accident. This left me in a coma and although I have recovered, my head injuries and my body still bare the brunt of the impact. I then took another major blow to my health in 2018, following a violent assault. My neck and spine were herniated, I lost my balance and degeneration is ongoing. I now await spinal surgery with urgency, as my mobility is in decline and the pain is constant. It's been a difficult few years to navigate, a situation that unfortunately some readers will relate to. But I believe in hope for me and for others. My condition has steered my career working in the holiday park industry to provide accessible holiday park units. I do hope my scribblings help others...

I have always loved art and antiques which made me have a very interesting start to my working life at a Fine Art Auctioneers in Penzance. At the age

of 16, I went to find a job I loved. As others studied and excelled in their chosen careers through a formal education, I took a chance to ask for a job related to fine art and got it! With the support of a local art enthusiast, I studied art hands-on in an environment now recognised as world class via the wonderful St Ives and Newlyn Schools of Art.

As a people person, I decided to follow my heart and passion and applied for a seasonal job at Butlins Holidays, as I liked their chips and ice creams... Needless to say I got the job in the complaints office which turned out to be a busy job! This was the beginning of a 30-plus-year career in the leisure industry throughout Europe.

Working at Butlins was a tiring but rewarding job, the holiday park I was situated in, in Minehead, caters for 10,000 holidaymakers a day with an additional 2000 staff. Taking on various management capacities over time, I learnt so much and grew as an individual, but I became

homesick and felt I was ready to take on my own management of a Cornish holiday park. I wrote to many parks in Cornwall, but I was still only 23... who would let me do it?

Well, I got a job offer as General Manager at one of Cornwall's most prestigious parks, Crantock Beach, Newquay. I felt elated, but it was harder work than Butlins, however my passion saw me through. New ideas and thousands of 'happy' holidaymakers, I loved it. It was at Crantock that I decided to put accessible accommodation into the Holiday Park industry, it just wasn't available back then. So, each of my lodge or caravan units was designed with disabled access in mind. Each year they were the first to sell out! For me, this was a real achievement and a pleasure to provide people with what they needed.

"It was at Crantock that I decided to put accessible accommodation into the Holiday Park industry..."

As my career continued in the holiday park industry, having a spell as senior manager at Trelawne Manor and the Director of the Association of Major Holiday Parks, I started seeing more and more need for accessible accommodation and satellite services, such as swimming pool and club access. I gained a new and valuable insight into the specifics and rather disappointing lack of available units of suitable accommodation for the less mobile. So, I then found a holiday park in France to fulfil my dreams, trial units and share my niche findings and experience. I bought the park outright in 2003. I went about building and developing with 10% of my caravan and lodge fleet/stock available to the disabled guest... a dream for me, which I made sure became a reality. Unfortunately, a car accident that left me with significant life changing injuries which changed everything, but what gave me hope was my son being born in a French hospital during the same period.

As I fought hard to recover, luck had it that out of the blue, I was invited to Loch Lomond, Scotland, to meet Sir Ivar Colquhoun, the Duke of Argyll, who wanted to establish a leisure department across tens of thousands of acres of beautiful Scottish Highlands. They said I was the only man for the job! Against all odds at the time, as my physical health was suffering, I was given full control and introduced disabled-friendly accommodation, including loch side pontoons for disabled access to boating. I realised I had to step back in some way as my health was suffering. I finished all projects, including many big projects in Scotland specific to my own experience and I was given a free hand.

"Against all odds at the time, as my physical health was suffering, I was given full

control and again introduced disabled-friendly accommodation..."

Homesickness struck once again, and I returned in 2008 to raise my eldest son and enjoy our time together. I was then delighted with the birth of my second son, I had two heirs to the empire!

I now consult and advise on holiday parks and try to create an awareness of the problems disabled guests find in holiday parks. I'm still learning but still trying after 30 years! I want to see every park adapt; I want to see people smiling and enjoying their holidays together irrespective of their disability. This is my pedigree, but it needs to improve across the leisure industry. I will continue whilst I can.

"I now consult and advise on holiday parks and try to create an awareness of the problems disabled guests find in holiday parks."

Personally, I still struggle to accept some of my limitations due to my injuries, such as travel, flights and accommodation, but I try and I always advise on areas of potential improvement. Whether people like to hear it or not, if I get my point across constructively, it is generally well received. I am very happy now having slowed down professionally and having met the fantastic lady in my life who is my biggest supporter.

In fact, we both recently went to the Brit Awards at the O2 in London. I enjoyed being back in the mix, of entertainment and leisure. It was fully accessible, and I got to meet many interesting people whilst checking out the facilities, acts and provisions. Wheelchair users were well looked after and I observed with a real intent to just keep going when I returned to Cornwall.

So, watch this space folks. I have a few local projects here in Cornwall to provide accommodation within the leisure sector, including beach access, buggies and wheelchair-friendly boating. I know the demand is there, and my heart keeps telling me to keep doing it. If anybody has any queries on the work feel free to email me.

Anthony Smitheram - Founder of Cornwall Tourism

📞 07759207505

✉️ tonylordt@aol.com



DISCOVER Directory

Advice and Support Organisations

ACAS (Employment Advice)	0300 1231100
Age UK Cornwall Community Helpline	01872 266383
Alcoholics Anonymous	0800 9177650
British Polio Fellowship	0800 0431935
CSW Group	0800 9755111
Charcot-Marie-Tooth UK	0300 3236316
Citizens Advice	0800 1448848
Cornwall Carers Service Helpline	01736 756655
Cornwall Complex Emotional Difficulties	01872 246884
Cornwall Eating Disorder Service	01872 246884
Cornwall Memory Café Network	01736 697459
Cornwall Rural Community Charity	01872 273952
Black Voices Cornwall	07891 001969
CRUSE Bereavement Care Cornwall	01726 76100
Direct Payments Scheme Advice Team	01872 324829
DIAL Cornwall	01736 759500
Dyslexia Cornwall	07716 639375
Epilepsy Action	0808 8005050
Headway (The Brain Injury Association)	0808 8002244
Hearing Loss Cornwall	01872 225868
Hearing Loss Cornwall text relay	18001 01872 225868
Huntington's Disease Specialist Adviser	07900 922535
iSightCornwall (Sight Centre)	01872 261110
Learning Disability Helpline	0808 8081111
Macmillan Cancer Support	0808 8080000
ME Connect	03445 765326
Merlin MS Centre	01726 885530
Mid-Cornwall Lifestyles	07967 822340
Motor Neurone Disease Association	0808 8026262
MS Helpline	0808 8008000
Royal Osteoporosis Society Helpline	0808 8000035
Parkinson's UK	0808 8000303
Relate (Relationship Counselling)	01752 213131
Royal National Institute of Blind People	0303 1239999
Sexual Health Cornwall & IoS	0300 3030714
Shelter Helpline (Housing Advice)	0808 8004444
Shine (Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus)	01733 555988
SSAFA Forces Support	0800 2606767
St Petroc's	01872 264153
Stroke Association Helpline	0303 3033100
The Advocacy People	0330 4409000
Truro Young Women's Centre	01872 260847
Versus Arthritis Helpline	0800 5200520
We are with you (drug & alcohol)	01872 263001
YMCA Cornwall Penzance	01736 334820

Cornwall Council

General Enquiries	0300 1234100
Housing	0300 1234161
Adult Social Care	0300 1234131
Council Tax	0300 1234171
Benefits	0300 1234121

Crisis Support

The Women's Centre Cornwall	01208 77099
Cornwall Refuge Trust (24 hrs)	01872 225629
National Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000247
Samaritans Cornwall	0330 0945717
Victim Support	08081 689111
West Cornwall Women's Aid	01736 367539
Women's Centre Cornwall	01208 77099

Health

Cornwall P'ship NHS Foundation Trust	01208 834600
Derriford Hospital	01752 202082
Healthy Cornwall	01209 615600
Healthwatch Cornwall	01872 273501
Humans Cornwall Hospital Discharge	01736 697040
Marie Therese House (MTH)	01736 758875
Millbrook Healthcare	0300 3030123
Neurology Care Advice Service	01209 318106
NHS Non-Emergency Service	111
NHS Complaints Advocacy	0300 3031660
NHS Kernow	01726 627800
Prosthetics Rehabilitation Service	01752 435502
Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust (Treliske)	01872 250000

Mental Health

Cornwall Mind	01208 892855
Cornwall Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	01872 322277
MIND Information Line	0300 1233393
Pentreath Ltd	01726 862727

Mobility Equipment Suppliers

Cornwall Mobility	0333 3053398
EPC Wheelchairs	01252 547939
Unique Mobility	01566 774030
Pro Mobility	01326 569494
Tremorvah Industries	01872 324340

Parents, Young People & Children

Active8	07800 876421
Childline	0800 1111
Contact (for families with disabled Children)	0808 8083555
Educational Psychology Service	01579 341132
Family Information Service	0800 5878191
NSPCC Child Protection Helpline	0808 8005000
Parent Carers Cornwall	07973 763332
SENDIASS	01326 331633
SIBS (for siblings of disabled children and adults)	01535 645453
Young Minds (Parents helpline)	0808 8025544
Young People Cornwall	01872 222477

Patient Advice Liaison Services (PALS)

Cornwall P'ship NHS Foundation Trust	01208 834620
Derriford Hospital	01752 439884
Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust	01872 252793

Police (Devon & Cornwall)

Emergency	999
Emergency text (Need to register)	18000
Crimestoppers	0800 555111
Non-Emergency	101
Non-Emergency text phone	18001 101

Taxis

A2B Truro	01872 272989
A2B Falmouth	01326 317898
Parnells Taxis Bodmin	01208 75000
Caradon Cabs	01579 340007
St Erth and Hayle Cars	01736 754000
Summercourt Travel (Minibus)	01726 861108
Travel 4000	01209 719961

Volunteers & Volunteer Transport

Age UK Community Transport (TAP)	01872 223388
Royal Voluntary Service	0330 5550310
Volunteer Cornwall	01872 265300

This information was correct at the time of going to press, but organisations' details are inevitably subject to change.

If you cannot find the number you need, please call DIAL Cornwall: 01736 759500.

Membership

From humble beginnings, delivering information and advice from a broom cupboard in St Michael's Hospital in Hayle, we have grown to become the pan disability Disabled People's Organisation for people living with a health condition or disability in Cornwall & Isles of Scilly, reaching thousands of people each year through our membership and services.

Through hearing the views and opinions of our members, we are able to use this intelligence to shape, influence and inform future policy and services across all sectors.

Can you get involved in our community of interest? Simply sign up! Membership is currently free and will ensure you are kept informed via a weekly e-newsletter, a copy of *DISCOVER* by post, in addition to being invited to our activities and events. You may also be eligible to join our Board of Directors.

To become a member please complete and return the form below.

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode: _____

Telephone (optional): _____

Email: _____

Please tick this box if you would like to receive our weekly email newsletter.

As a user-led, representative organisation, at least 51% of our members must reflect the people we are here to support (and 75% of our board).

Please tell us if you have a health condition / disability. Yes No

Please send us this form or let us know this information via phone or email.

🏠 disAbility Cornwall & IoS, Units 1G/H Guildford Road Industrial Estate, Hayle TR27 4QZ

✉ hello@disabilitycornwall.org.uk

☎ 01736 759500

We hold members' contact details in a database but you can be assured this is never shared with others. Our privacy policy is available on our website.

