

Issue 18 – Winter/Spring 2022

# DISCOVER

**FREE**



**Geothermal Fun at Jubilee Pool**

**Humans of the Peninsula**

**Digitalising social care**

**The Future of Health & Social Care  
& crisis in the system**

**Every Customer Counts Official Launch**

**Inclusion is everybody's business!**

**Our Pandemic Response**

**Plus interviews, news, local activities, your stories and more!**

# Welcome

We are truly delighted to bring to you this 18th edition of *DISCOVER*, which we've been unable to produce since pre the pandemic due to other pressures, but we certainly hope you enjoy this bumper edition.

*DISCOVER* enables us to reach people across the peninsula, especially important if you are not online or are unable to connect in other ways. We love to share updates, services and activities to engage with, raise awareness of issues affecting us all. We bring you the latest from government around social care reform, and changes happening locally within our health and care systems.

Given it's been a while and of course the whole world has changed this past couple of years, we have taken a slightly different approach compiling this edition. We know you always enjoyed other people's stories, so we have got plenty of those, featuring our own local people and the stories are informative, some hard hitting and others nothing short of inspirational, from surgeons to mayors, actors to bloggers! There's some fabulous initiatives for helping Cornwall to become more inclusive, like Every Customer Counts, and of course, that's in everyone's interest if businesses are to fully recover, and wouldn't it be great if we could be more active within our communities with physical barriers removed! And, Humans of the Peninsula, a humanitarian network so we can all get involved in the recovery of our communities through helping others.

We also asked how you got through the pandemic, so thank you for sharing, as difficult as some of your stories must have been to tell, and we bring you information to help get outdoors, safely of course, such as the Countryside Mobility 'Trampers,' the

geothermal pool and Trevassack Lake as we now need to start rebuilding our emotional, mental and physical wellbeing.

We have interviews with two of Cornwall's leading ladies, Kate Kennally, CEO of Cornwall Council and Kate Shields, CEO of the new Integrated Care System, as well as Steve Double MP. We have a feature from the lovely Miss Samantha Renke, actor and disability advocate, you will no doubt have seen her most recently in the malteser adverts!

*DISCOVER* is citizens' journalism, it's your magazine, your stories and at this time, the hardest many of us have probably have ever lived through, we hope it will show every reader how connected you are in our community of interest, as well as provide you with some essential information.

We have faced difficult times with loneliness, isolation and a lack of mobility which have hit hard and in various ways, but remember you're not alone. Within, we feature Cornwall's disability organisations who are doing some fabulous work supporting their members, so do try and connect with one if you can. As ever, our Disability Information & Advice Line can take your call five days a week and our friendly, professional advisers are here to help in any way they can.

We hope you enjoy reading *DISCOVER* as much as we have enjoyed bringing it to you and thank you to everyone of our contributors and to Cornwall Council for funding which has enabled us to produce this edition.

We send you, our readers, the best and warmest wishes for 2022 from the whole team at disAbility Cornwall & Isles of Scilly x

Front cover photo by Kitaen Photographic, the Cornwall Accessible Activities Programme (CAAP) families at Jubilee Pool.

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# Our Covid Response:

As a disabled people's organisation embedded within our community, we responded to the needs of our stakeholders in the best way we could. That meant some staff 'downing tools' and completely switching to new services and we are grateful to our dedicated team.

We enhanced our advice services through extra staffing and opening hours, and delivered some unique initiatives, as well as providing vaccine clinic marshals and we took some services online. We also ensured we represented our issues and concerns to central government. Here are a few examples of what we have done and how we are continuing to respond to the evolving issues.

## Hayle Community Kitchen

During the first lockdown we heard from many of our stakeholders how vulnerable they were, due to the nature of their health condition or age which meant they shouldn't leave home, yet had not been awarded shielding status by the government.

Families of course were unable to mobilise and support each other, so we set up a Community Kitchen, in partnership with Hayle Rugby Club and the Cornish Oven, supported by various other businesses, through which we delivered 11,278 free hot meals to 501 households!

Thanks to financial support from the Cornwall Community Foundation and the Masonic Charitable Foundation, we were able to buy ingredients, pay a chef, and supported by an army of 25 'Community Heroes', volunteers who delivered the meals twice weekly, we were able to provide sustenance, companionship and keep people connected with their community. Our Heroes took the time to have doorstep chats with many of the clients, to 'check in' with them. In many cases this led to referrals to other support services.

Local businesses and supermarkets donated hundreds of items for us to distribute too. The people we supported made gifts for one another and our Heroes delivered them, from NHS artwork to display, to drawings from children for our most elderly. It fostered a real sense of community spirit and it was not an usual sight for our Heroes to find half a dozen isolating people stood at their front doors, cheering them down the street!



## Wellbeing Friends

By June 2020, deliveries had to end due to society opening back up and our Heroes returning to work, but we ensured our Community Kitchen clients had other provision in place and could manage.

However, loneliness and isolation were then becoming the bigger issues and affecting emotional wellbeing, so we developed a 'Wellbeing Friends' service for a friendly listening ear, companionship and a link to the outside world.

We recruited extra team members with advice-giving backgrounds, with thanks to funding from the National Lottery, and they provided regular phone calls to isolated and vulnerable people, many of whose mental health had been severely affected by now. The phone calls were something clients looked forward to and for some it was the only contact they had with anyone for days, even weeks at a time and we built a really good rapport with them.

Our Wellbeing Friends provided emotional support, information, advice and practical support where needed. We had some wonderful feedback and there have been many grateful people who told us we kept them going when times were really tough. By March 2021, we had supported 472 clients resulting in 5,225 individual actions.

"You have been the only person from an outside organisation who has checked to see how I am, it's lovely. Thank you for all your help, you are genuine and caring and it has meant a lot. My Mum and daughter help me, but it's wonderful to know someone else cares."



## Advice & Wellbeing Café

A small charities government grant enabled us to expand wellbeing services, as the new emerging needs of our stakeholders was loss of confidence, fear of going out and declining mobility through not having usual treatments and therapies which all led to deterioration in health and wellbeing. We knew many were also facing loss of jobs and income, so we partnered with Citizens Advice Cornwall to broaden our offer to include expert debt advice and reach more people.

Our aim was to help give people the confidence to get outdoors with their wellbeing friend in a safe environment through a blended offer of advice, practical support, companionship and physical exercise using the clubhouse and grounds at Hayle RFC.

People has been unable to get trades people in when needed, or had essential household items which had broken such as fridges and microwaves, so we assisted people to address these issues, maximise income, help people get grants where they qualified, or buy new items, we delivered animals to vet appointments and various other errands!

We had wanted to roll out the advice cafés county-wide and scale them up with other community partners, but the right buildings would be required, which sadly are not available in county, in terms of accessibility, toilets, private rooms for one-to-one chats, and so on, and people have continued to tell us they still do not have the confidence to come and engage in this way, so we didn't pursue it.



## Highlighting the Impact of Covid-19 on Disabled People

The Government Office for Women & Equalities put out a call for evidence on the impact of Covid for people with protected characteristics, and we felt compelled to respond. We knew disabled people were not given appropriate and due consideration, and of the things that did happen only served to devalue our lives and threatened to undermine the gains made over 60 years in the independent living movement, which has been hard fought for.

We consulted with our members to determine their key issues and concerns and worked with our partners in the Exeter University 'Inclusivity Project' who compiled all responses into a comprehensive report with a set of recommendations to meet the needs of disabled people and carers. We then submitted 'A Rapid Assessment of COVID-19 Implications for Disabled People in Cornwall (UK)' to central government and it was subsequently published by the Parliamentary Committee.

## Have a Go Days

Usually delivered at two venues in Cornwall, we took these sports sessions for children and young people with additional needs or a disability 'online' via Zoom in partnership with Shilton Soccer. A Children in Need Booster Grant made this possible as well as buying them all a piece of sports equipment and have it delivered to their homes.

They chose things like basketball hoops, football nets, tennis racquets and fitness tracker watches and our sessions gave the children something to look forward to each week, encouraging them to engage with the coaches and with each other through exercising together.

## Hospital Discharge & Home Support Services

In 2021, we supported hospital discharge where there were barriers to people returning home. What we saw really concerned us, again, the impact of the pandemic. Unhygienic or cluttered homes as people were managing without support, or because mental and physical health had deteriorated, or they were dealing with bereavement. People unable to mobilise safely around their homes, no independent living equipment, no heating or even running water, unable to afford food or electricity, broken white goods, and an inadequate income to manage.

So, thanks to grant funding from Cornwall Council, we were able to secure funding for person centred and holistic support within the home. We recruited a dedicated team who have so far (September - December) provided over 6,000 hours of support to people and since September, we have had 420 referrals and delivered 182 deep cleans/declutters and provided 2,604 hours of additional personal assistant support in the home. We maximised people's income by over £300,000 through welfare benefits and grants and have facilitated 200 successful hospital discharges, stabilising the person at home through addressing these things and ensuring they were warm, comfortable, had food in and could manage.

We have made referrals for home solutions grants and fuel poverty support (new boilers and heating systems) and are now working with Adult Social Care in a 'Personalisation Partnership' to continue throughout winter. We have loved being able to support people to recover during these most difficult times and let them know they're not alone. We have been delighted to receive some wonderful feedback from individuals and professionals alike.



# Cornwall's own Bionic Surgeon



Neil, Rachel, Evie & Harry

Neil Hopper is a vascular surgeon at the Royal Cornwall Hospital (RCHT) and regularly carries out amputations, which is ironic, as he had both his lower legs amputated in 2019.

**N**ow back at work on snazzy prosthetics, his personal experience has given him a much deeper understanding of the issues facing amputees and he now campaigns for better rehab care in Cornwall.

Neil originally wanted to be an engineer, as he loved discovering what makes things work, but someone suggested he go into medicine, where he realised vascular surgery is not that far removed from engineering, involving as it does the vessels and arteries carrying blood around the body. He loves the fact vascular surgery is primarily concerned with fixing things, rather than removing them, so he finds amputations to be the saddest part of the job.

In 2019, Neil, his wife Rachel, and their two children, Evie and Harry, were due to visit relations

in Hereford, but Neil was unwell with a stomach bug so opted to stay home. When Rachel called him, she says he was speaking gibberish, so she asked a work colleague to check on him. They promptly called an ambulance which landed Neil in ICU at RCHT, of all places! It became clear Neil had sepsis in his lower legs and was transferred to Plymouth, where he had 15 sessions in the specialist hyperbaric chamber breathing concentrated oxygen, in an effort to improve the blood-flow to his legs and feet. Neil told *DISCOVER*: "Three hours at a time lying still in a metal tube, unable to read or even use headphones was torture. Worse still, it didn't work!"

Within a month, both of Neil's lower legs had been amputated. He says he has considerable sympathy for the surgical team who did the operations. "Can you imagine carrying out amputations on a colleague who does it for a living? The pressure to get it right!"

Neil was allowed to go home two weeks later and that's when he says "the wheels came off the cart." There was no discharge plan for him, and he sat at home in his wheelchair, unable to even get out of the house by himself because there were no ramps, his wife had gone back to work and the children back to school. He found himself lonely

and depressed, added to that was the level of care he received. Neil said, "Post-operative care for amputees has been a bit of a Cinderella service, particularly in Cornwall, as the primary prosthetic rehab centre is in Plymouth. Underfunding and cuts have reduced the support available, even there." He was given two sessions with a physiotherapist and sent away with a sheet of exercises designed for a man in his eighties with only one amputation, not two, so not a lot of use to him really.

He paid privately for physio from Andrew McCauley at Procure Physiotherapy in Truro who specialise in differently abled people, and also joined Morgan's Gym, where personal trainer, Sara Spary, specialises in rehab. Between them, they achieved significant improvements in both his physical and mental health.

Neil added, "For a single-leg amputee, it's possible to get about on crutches, but for people missing both legs, a wheelchair is the only option."

Another issue for Neil was the time it took to receive his prosthetic legs. He said: "The point of prosthetics is to get back to life as normal, as far as possible and while I'm not any more or less important than someone in their eighties, I had a career that it was possible for me to return to and a family to look after." At the time, young people and people of working age were not prioritised (most amputations are carried out on older people), and there wasn't a way, within the process, to give any priority to bilateral amputees. Neil says this was the first time he 'went into battle' for better services for people with amputations and the system has now thankfully been changed.

Despite being told it would take six months to walk again, it took Neil just three weeks and he was ready to return to work part-time within a month, and full time in just a few more, just before the pandemic arrived. He said, "My colleagues were amazing, and they helped me build tolerance and regain confidence in my skills after six months off. My first amputation was actually filmed by BBC Inside Out, which was very strange!"

Evie and Harry have been adjusting to their dad's prosthetic legs in their own ways. Derriford's prosthetic centre were able to recommend some children's books about prosthetics, including 'My Dad the Superhero' and after an initial struggle to adjust, Evie now says, "I didn't like your hairy feet anyway, Dad!"

Neil gave up trying to hide his prosthetics and now routinely wears shorts. He has 'loud' Welsh dragon covers for his legs, being a proud Welshman. "As an icebreaker



**for nervous patients due to have an amputation, it's second-to-none!"**

He plans to resume working towards better services for amputees, including ensuring that more specialist care is available in Cornwall and psychological support is offered alongside physiotherapy. He says, "There are 900 amputees in Devon and Cornwall. If that was lung cancer patients, it'd be a different story, but they are not classified as clinically urgent. Also, a lot are older patients, who don't like to 'make a fuss' if they receive less care than they need."

Neil also speaks at vascular surgery conferences about his experience as an amputee, ensuring surgeons have a true perspective of what happens after the patient has left the operating table. He's keen to emphasise that losing a limb isn't a disaster and demonstrates the sophistication of the NHS prosthetic limbs available. He says, "It's manageable and there are things we can do to make it even more manageable."

And to top it all, literally, Neil has now applied to become the world's first para-astronaut! The European Space Agency wanted healthy people with a medical degree and a lower limb disability to apply, and so far, Neil has made it through the initial round of tests. We wouldn't bet against him and wish him the best of luck.

#### Winter Wellbeing Top Tip

Having hot meals will keep your energy levels up and drinking hot drinks will help you to feel warmer for longer.

# Speak up on Climate Change



With climate change causing an increase in natural disasters, including flooding, wildfires, and extremes of hot and cold weather, the United Nations Human Rights Council says that disabled people are among those most adversely affected in such emergency situations.

The International Disability Alliance which comprises 14 global and regional organisations of ‘persons with disabilities’ advocates at the United Nations for a more inclusive global environment for everyone, raising awareness to ensure disabled people are included in conversations when climate change and solutions are being discussed. At present, disabled people are under-represented, despite making up 15% of

the world’s population and being more at risk of the consequences.

There are many reasons for these greater risks, as people with long-term limiting health conditions or a disability are also likely to live on lower incomes and lack the resources to easily travel or move to a new home or area, or rebuild their lives, and may not have been able to afford insurance to cover what they lost.

There’s also what is referred to as ‘systemic omission’, meaning the needs of disabled people are not taken into consideration in disaster planning, leaving them uncatered for in such situations.

Across the world, when evacuation has been required for example, due to flooding, it is often the case that evacuation equipment may not be accessible such as a wheelchair user needing to transfer into a dinghy, or evacuation centres not being equipped appropriately, with no accessible bathrooms, information may not be in alternative formats and sign language interpreters may not be available for example.

# My Reflection

There have also been issues around maintaining an oxygen supply to someone who relies on it, when there is a substantial loss of grid power too. Some treatments make us vulnerable to catastrophic events, such as medications to treat schizophrenia, which leave a person less tolerant to heat, meaning that they are at a greater risk of severe dehydration and heatstroke in the event of a heatwave.

Dr Sarah Bell is a critical disability and health geographer, at the University of Exeter, and she describes how disabled people have experienced a 'triple jeopardy' since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic "Climate change poses major risks to human health and livelihoods, in ways that are compounding and creating new forms of health inequality. Disabled people are disproportionately exposed to these risks, experiencing higher injury and death rates and fewer opportunities to influence climate policy or action.

However, this vulnerability is not an inevitable consequence of life with an impairment. Rather, it's an outcome of entrenched disabling socio-cultural and political structures and processes that undermine people's adaptive capacity and create unnecessary situations of vulnerability among disabled people. There are growing concerns about such marginalisation. In the last two years, we have seen rapid mobilisation and societal innovation in response to the global Covid-19 pandemic. Many of these transformations include 'reasonable adjustments' that have been advocated for and identified as essential by disabled people for decades.

Only by embedding the priorities of disabled people before the point of a crisis (climate, pandemic or otherwise) – will systems, policies and practices be designed and implemented that are more flexible, resilient and responsive for all."

 [www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org](http://www.internationaldisabilityalliance.org)



## Winter Wellbeing Top Tip

Remember to get your Covid booster & flu jab

You can check if you are eligible for a free flu jab by visiting [www.nhs.uk/flujab](http://www.nhs.uk/flujab) or speak to your local pharmacist or GP.

Call 119 for information on booking your Covid Booster appointment and local vaccine clinics.



David Wetherill is a three time Paralympian, two time European Champion and World Champion Medalist. Now looking to transition into corporate life, David looks back on his sporting career to determine what he has gained throughout his experiences.

# ons on Table Tennis

The gradual realisation that I am approaching the twilight of my professional table tennis playing career has been a long time coming. Our bodies don't get any younger and I feel like I have been clinging onto it for a while. But nothing could have prepared me for the feeling now the time has eventually come to wake up from such longstanding denial. It has probably been the most mentally challenging period of my life, certainly since I first properly picked up a bat at the age of 10. I started playing during a long rehabilitation period from a broken leg and I have overcome many further obstacles since then – from disability adversity and career threatening injuries to dealing with performance anxieties, high pressure situations and all the highs and lows that come hand-in-hand with the journey to competing at three Paralympic Games. This has been a whole new scary challenge for me.

For so many years table tennis has been my passion and my purpose, my release from physical pain, my reason to push through the blockades, to get fit and to stay fit, to de-concrete my bones and struggle up and out of bed in the morning. But recently it's been doing more physical harm than good and my multiple epiphyseal dysplasia condition has gradually worsened over the years to the point where I have found it increasingly more mentally challenging. It's never really been about the medals – but that's not to say I haven't wanted to win.

I'm addicted to getting better, to squeezing out every last tiny 1% gain, to having accountability and letting nothing stop the constant striving for improvement in whatever that may be, and to bringing all innovations and solutions together where ultimately collaborative team performance and results are the outcome. This has always been a huge motivation for me and when that gets a bit lost then things definitely start to become a little harder, irrespective of the level one may still be at or the medals one may still have the ability to win. Take that away completely and I can understand why many previous athletes have fallen into similar traps.

Thankfully, I know we can have lots to fall back on. I know being able to harness any attributes borne from a successful sporting career, paired with personal experiences and a well-rounded academic background, can naturally leave you not being short on transferable skills or paths to take. It can also leave you well-equipped to deal with anything

that life may throw at you and for me that has been some solace to the hole which naturally has been left.

In hindsight, aside from any physical skills, I have A LOT to thank my life in table tennis for (other than the need for a double hip replacement)! I have developed a mental resilience, an adaptability and an understanding of myself. I have accepted that I can't do some of the things that I used to be able to do, or have never been able to do, but that I can do them in different ways and that sometimes I can do them better. I now have a curiosity to see what is possible but know that not everything will always go to plan, that self-doubts are not facts and that they are sometimes normal. I have learnt to accurately and truthfully evaluate a given situation or circumstance, to analyse based on process rather than outcome and to control what can be controlled. I have learnt how to respond to setbacks, how to optimise my performance, how to positively influence my perceptions and my emotions and to remain disciplined and logical under pressure, to take risks when risks are calculated and reasoned; I have learnt to do the right thing – nothing else matters.

That last reflection really resonates with me and has really helped me in recent years. For a long time it's been about doing the right thing at any given moment, about sportsmanship, family and integrity, about keeping in mind the real purpose and importance of Paralympic sport and what really matters most. My needs and wants have changed and it's really not about the medals at all.

I've always felt a wider responsibility – wanting to drive positive change and make more of an actual difference. This is the power of elite sport and I think people can sometimes lose touch with that. Where you're more than just a table tennis player. Or more than just a Paralympian. Where it's more than blind progress with little reason or purpose other than winning medals which otherwise mean nothing.

I feel very privileged to have been able to call it my job for so many years but the time has come where I'm ready to find a new passion, a new purpose and a new reason to get up in the morning, one where I can best put my values and attributes into practice, to learn and to grow, in an environment which is equally as suited and no less exciting, and one where I can feel like I can really make a difference.

I'm really looking forward to it.



## of the Peninsula

'Humans' is a new technology-based support service to provide an immediate and personalised response to support people at a time of real need.

**W**e are looking to recruit people to join our humanitarian network who have a few spare hours a week (even if only evenings or weekends), to provide paid lifestyle support to someone, or to undertake random acts of kindness. All you need is to download the Humans App, go through our on-boarding process and you will receive real-time notifications of need for someone in your immediate community and you can respond to it and mobilise the same day.

If we have learned anything in facing this pandemic together, it is how every member of society has been placed in a more vulnerable position, and we saw community spirit probably not witnessed since the days of the Blitz. Where the worldwide web had made society global, the pandemic brought society back to its roots, confined in our homes and in our local communities, with neighbours reaching out, helping and caring for each other. We witnessed many acts of selflessness and kindness with armies of volunteers delivering essential supplies direct to the homes of the most vulnerable people.

Humans aims to enable this through a centralised point and upon taking referrals from our local NHS, Cornwall Council and community partners, we can respond through mobilising people when and where they are needed in their local community. Our plan is to make this work for anyone in need, whether being discharged from hospital, or if someone is finding themselves unwell and unable to manage, perhaps facing some difficulty, they may be in crisis, or perhaps a neighbour has reported a concern and we need to simply check in to ensure someone is okay.

Humans 'Personal Lifestyle Assistants' (PAs) are bank staff, paid at £10ph plus travel and they

are from all walks of life, they provide support to a person in the home, but this does not include personal care. This is usually to stabilise and prevent a person's situation from deteriorating. We often find problems such as the electricity has been cut off, they can no longer undertake domestic tasks, they are struggling to keep on top of the home, they have an inadequate household income to get by, they have become increasingly frail or their health condition has worsened, essential items have broken such as the fridge, or sadly sometimes, they're the victim of abuse, usually financial. A random act of kindness task could be simple things like collecting shopping, changing a light bulb, or perhaps just a wellbeing visit.

Well, with more people signed up to Humans, we can now better support our own communities, giving us the necessary geographic coverage to mobilise as and when needed and ensure people in need are not alone or unsupported and do not, by default, end up in hospital and this is and could be any of us at some point in our lives. Often PAs may





only need to do one visit, sometimes several over a few days, and they can choose what visits they are available to do at that time, by picking shifts from a rota in a user-friendly way. If they are not available, simply don't respond to the notification, it will disappear as soon as its been filled anyway. Or if on holiday or taking a break, just turn notifications off.

While tech is the enabler for Humans, it's combined with our support planning and brokerage service, so whether paid or unpaid, every person we mobilise is connected and supported by our back-office team, who provide guidance and support to the PA or volunteer while they are in the home, they answer questions and address any issues as they arise. We ensure your safety and wellbeing as a member of our team.

We also undertake the wrap around support for that person, such as providing crisis grants, or giving them a welfare benefits check to maximise household income, organise services, order equipment, speak with their GP or nurse, deal with utility suppliers and the list goes on. We also assist people to connect to specialist disability organisations in the community, perhaps if they have deteriorating sight, we will refer to iSightCornwall for example for an assessment and equipment.

Humans is not looking to recruit people who traditionally work in care, this is about all of us as citizens being able to step up when needed, in our immediate community. We simply require people with the right values, compassion and a willingness to help, the rest is learned through a short training programme and from working with our dedicated team. Our Humans will help us identify the broader issues creating health inequalities too – if the person's home is unsuitable or cluttered, or if they don't have a bed, don't appear to be eating, have no heating and so on... then these are the things you will tell our team and they work to address them 'behind the scenes'. This personalisation support wraps itself around the person, rather than people being expected to engage with services and it's truly bespoke to their specific needs.

So far 'Humans' has taken on former nurses, business people, current social care staff, retirees, OTs, students and more and they are all genders, currently aged 17-75 and it continues to grow. There is no age limit, and we welcome a truly diverse workforce, we all have something to offer. We're also now working towards developing specialist teams, such as people with end-of-life skills and experience, or in specific health conditions, as well as people with experience or skills in certain communication such as British Sign Language.

So how do you join Humans? Simply visit the website or download our App and complete the pro-forma which will request your CV, referees, a photo (for your ID card), and our friendly professional team will then take you through our short onboarding process, where we will do an online interview with you and carry out an enhanced DBS check. You then undertake our free training (all online) and then you are ready to be mobilised for work! We provide PPE and ongoing support and training opportunities if you would like to develop yourself or a career in this line of work.

This App also enables us to:

- > Have self-employed PAs/community carers to sign up. We will check your DBS, HMRC reference and public liability insurance and can refer people to your services
- > Advertise permanent vacancies on behalf of employers who want to recruit their own PAs.

## Inspired? Could this be you?

Our firefly logo says it all, any of us can be that guiding light and radiate the grace and generosity that's within us to make some positive difference to another person's life. Kindness is the best act we can do for humanity. It has no language, no border or division. It is universal for the whole world. We are all humans before anything else and there is no cost to kindness.

Please join us:

 [www.humansofthepeninsula.co.uk](http://www.humansofthepeninsula.co.uk)





Photos courtesy of Ellie Moseley

# Sea Swimming & Me

By Mike Goodenough

For so much of my life I ran from commitments, responsibilities and challenges. I was afraid of my thoughts and feelings and used anything and anybody to avoid reality and the consequences of my actions.

After thirty years of active addiction, through a series of undeniable consequences, I finally had to face myself and accept that my actions were not only destroying me, but also causing a huge amount of distress to my family and friends.

The ripple effect of my drinking and drug use were undeniable and what was left of my conscience and that internal flickering flame of self-preservation, burned just brightly enough to shock me into making changes. Initially, I didn't want to stop drinking and using, I just wanted the consequences to either stop, or become more predictable and manageable.

In time I realised that I couldn't bargain with this illness and had to give myself completely to a programme of recovery that asked me to practise some simple daily tasks, essentially aimed at checking my motives and getting out of myself by helping others.

I've been in recovery for over six years now and just over two years ago I faced a series of challenges. A relationship breakdown, the death of a close friend from cancer, leaving my previous job at a local treatment centre and starting a new one at disAbility Cornwall, health scares in the family and turning fifty, left me questioning life and my place in the world. I hit an emotional and spiritual rock bottom and became a shadow of my former self, losing over two stone in weight. I looked haggard and gaunt and despite being surrounded and

supported by my friends, family and colleagues, I felt completely alone and hopeless. My mental health was also seriously affected and the ensuing months of little or no sleep left me questioning my sanity. The emotional and mental pain was raw and unfiltered and I no longer had the luxury of chemical peace of mind. I was experiencing grief and its various stages for the first time in my life and it hurt.

The first Covid lockdown arrived and we were all told to stay at home and isolate. This is a dangerous situation for a recovering alcoholic as the illness thrives on loneliness. Fortunately Zoom enabled thousands of online AA meetings to be created and we are a resourceful lot, especially when we know what's good for us and crucial to our survival.

I remembered the time I had spent with my friend and one of our favourite past times was sea swimming. We were also colleagues and often met after work to swim off the prom and Battery Rocks in Penzance. We both saw it as a cleansing process and an opportunity to offload any worries or resentments we might be carrying. There is something incredibly freeing about cold water swimming where inhibitions, pretentiousness and insecurities are abandoned in favour of honest disclosure, emotional openness and friendship. It breaks down barriers, perhaps due to the basic need for survival in an environment where one feels vulnerable, exposed and hyper aware of temperature, changes in the body and sometimes challenging sea conditions.

I had always been a spring and summer swimmer and never considered swimming in the winter, especially when it was blowing a gale or lashing down with rain. It didn't seem possible and just plain scary to throw myself into the sea in January or February. After my friend died, I vowed to continue swimming throughout the year in memory of her and all we had shared.

I have always been drawn to the ocean and many of my happiest memories are associated with being in or around the sea. I've been fortunate enough to travel extensively to some exotic locations, including working for a year on the Great Barrier Reef, windsurfing and snorkeling in my spare time, water skiing down rivers in Borneo, swimming in the Mediterranean and cooling off in fresh water oases

in the mountains of the Sierra Nevada. All this warm water swimming had convinced me that the cold water would be no fun whatsoever. How wrong I was!

I became friendly with my downstairs neighbour who was struggling with Guillain-Barre Syndrome and who loved hearing about my adventures and gave me the number for a friend and masseuse in Pendeen. He thought a massage would help with my levels of stress and during a session I spoke of my love of sea swimming. She asked if I would like to be added to a WhatsApp swimming group called the Sennen Dippers. I agreed and over the winter months of 2020, travelled frequently to Sennen Harbour to swim with the gang and more often than not, the seals and their pups sheltering from the winter storms.

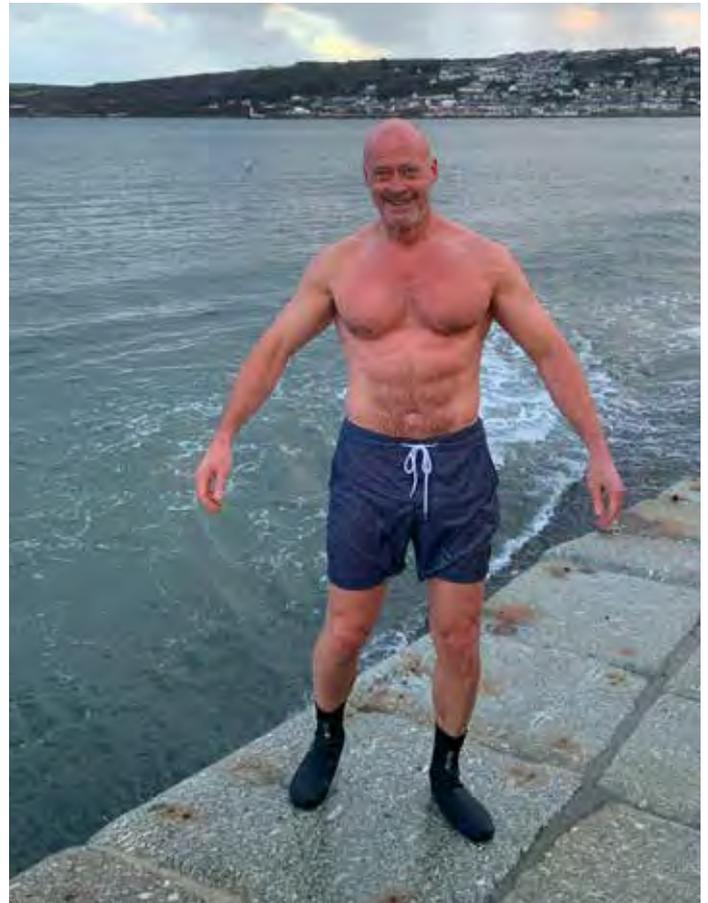
There's something incredibly grounding about swimming with the sea's residents and watching them in their natural habitat. It's a privilege to swim with these beautiful creatures and it only enhances my respect for the ocean and all the plants and animals that live there. When I am in the sea, I feel alive and truly connected to the environment, others and myself. Life, its demands and concerns are put into perspective and I learn to prioritise and focus on what's really important.....or not!

It's a process every time, warming up beforehand, getting the right clothing together to make it easier for quick changing when the fingers don't work as normal. The mental process of reminding myself of the benefits and the buzz when my head is moaning about how cold it's going to be and the unseen monsters that might be lurking beneath the surface!

The improvement to my mental and physical health have been incremental, profound and continuous over the last couple of years and I owe a huge debt of gratitude to the ocean and its healing powers. We are blessed in Cornwall to be surrounded by this priceless resource that inspires, motivates and nurtures.

There are so many groups both old and new that have tapped into this resource and the sense of community is extraordinary. I have and continue to meet so many amazing people from diverse backgrounds who all look out for each other and openly share their stories and feelings. The laughter, camaraderie and lack of judgement is infectious and in many ways, addictive.

I have not just discovered who I am again, but have learnt that through heartbreak, the mending process and challenging myself, I am capable of more than I ever thought possible.



A cold dip, Mike in Penzance



Companionship and Social Dancing



The Chough's Wheelchair Dance Team are a group of wheelchair users who meet every Wednesday afternoon, 2pm-3pm, at St Newlyn East Village Hall.

You are very welcome to come and watch us practice! If you are interested in joining our happy band please contact:

Coach – Margaret Oliver 01637 881 732  
Chris Penhaligon 01872 270 882

Website: [www.choughswheelchairdanceteam.btck.co.uk](http://www.choughswheelchairdanceteam.btck.co.uk)

# Steve Double MP on the Crisis in Health and Social Care



*DISCOVER first interviewed Steve almost two years ago but we didn't get to publish it. In light of all the current challenges within the health and care system, exacerbated by the pandemic, with many people stuck in our hospitals due to a lack of care in the community and long-standing inadequate funding for social care, we sought his views on what the government need to do to address this perfect storm.*

“ The pandemic has made many more people aware of the challenges that social care face, so as much as it clearly has been a terrible and a challenging time for many people, I think there's been some positives, as it's really raised the profile and importance of the sector and the people working in it, and that gives us something to build on going forward. Here in Cornwall, we're kind of ahead of many other parts of the country in terms of the progress we're making, setting up that integration between health and care, and it's so desperately needed. The number of people

regularly in Treliske is a problem because hospital isn't a good place to be if you don't need hospital treatment. Clearly the impact it then has is in terms of the hospital not being able to admit people who really need to be there, so it's probably the number one issue in Cornwall we need to address and reduce pressures Treliske are regularly facing.

I was pleased the government have come forward with several things recently. There's the Health & Care Levy, which although initially is going to help with the backlog in the NHS, it will in 2.5 years' time, bring a significant amount of money into the care sector. Some of that's already happening. I think 5.7bn is the figure initially coming into the care sector and then hopefully once the backlog is dealt with in the NHS, we'll see the majority of that £12bn a year coming into the care sector which, is what we've said is desperately needed.

There's the introduction of the cap on the amount anyone must pay for their care, and some other reforms around that, in terms of raising the threshold at which people qualify for funding for their care, up to £100,000. It's currently £23,500 so that will mean a lot more people will get support for their care, which is what some of this £12bn a year is to pay for. It's welcome there is an upper cap to the £86,000 on how much over their lifetime they'll have to pay. I think the hope is that then enables an insurance option to come forward for those who want to it up. Then, as you say there's the white paper laying out the future of the care system. I think the main things in that, were a real emphasis on enabling people to stay in their own homes more, which I think is right. The longer we can enable people to live at home with support, the better it is for them, and less demand on the residential sector. But at the heart of all this, the workforce remains the biggest challenge and some of the proposals the government are coming forward with will help towards that.

We said social care is a complex issue and some of it is clearly about pay and conditions, so hopefully more money into the sector will enable that to be addressed.

It still feels very wrong, that in many cases you can earn more money stacking shelves at Tesco than you can looking after some of the most vulnerable people. Unfortunately, it's the way the system has been run for many years which has meant we're in this position, but I think going forward that must change and the only way you can change it, is by having more money in the system to enable providers to pay more.

It's a difficult thing for the government because most care providers are private or third sector, not public sector. So, the government can't dictate what the level of pay is, but we need to work with them to enable wages to rise. I think the general recognition and esteem for people working in the sector is one of the things the pandemic has changed. There's much greater recognition for people who work in the care sector now and I hope we can build on that. I know from firsthand experience, the people that come and care for my father every day are just amazing. They do an incredible job caring for him and certainly that close first-hand experience helped me have a far better understanding of the people who work in care. People who work in the NHS, nurses and doctors have been sort of held in great esteem in our society and recognised and honoured as such, and rightly so, but we need bring care up to that same level, so people get the same recognition.

Integrating health and social care is one of the things hopefully we can do to stop seeing them as separate things, because they're intrinsically connected, so by bringing them closer together and hopefully changing the public perception it's really one sector, but with different elements of it, will enable the same recognition and respect for those working in social care. ””

*We favour self-directed care and support using personal budgets as it allows people to have more choice and control over their care and support and how they receive it. Here at disAbility Cornwall & IoS, we've been supporting people to find alternative solutions to formal care by brokering community support, so should people be encouraged to buy in their own support, rather than wait at home for a traditional package of care?*

“ I think we need to widen that to include family members because we all know unpaid carers save the government and taxpayer millions of pounds a year because of the level of care they provide and if they didn't, that burden would fall

on the system. So yes, I think the white paper has choice at the heart of it and that's important. Both so people can choose what care they receive and they're not just dictated to, but they feel they have influence over it and can choose to exercise choice and control.

Clearly it must include how money is spent, if they're being supported financially for their care, then clearly, we need to make sure that works. Because if you're spending public money, there must be accountability for it. But I think the more choice that can be built into the system when people are allocated a care budget, to say this is how I would like it spent, then it's going to work, and should enable more people to stay in their own home.

I also think there's been barriers in the past and I'm aware particularly in Cornwall, of people being unable to use their personal care budgets to pay family and I don't quite understand why we do that, because it shouldn't really matter. I know with my own Dad, even if a family member was being paid to provide some care, they go over and above almost certainly what they were paid for anyway. So, you would still be getting value for money from them and, it's far better for a person to be supported by someone they know and trust.

The more flexibility we can provide within the bounds of clearly having to be accountable for spending public money and making sure the taxpayer is getting value for money, within those broad boundaries, the more flexibility and more choice we make available, the better it would be. Overall, it would be better as well, because it's an easier thing if a family member is willing to provide the care if they were paid some money to do it.

That's also taking pressure off other care providers so why do we put that barrier in the way? So, short answer to your question is absolutely. I think the more choice, the more flexibility we can provide in how money is spent to meet the needs anyone has, the better, just with the caveat that it must be properly accounted for. Residential care is not terrible by any means, but, for many people, it's far better to be in their own home and at least have that sense of independence, so hopefully, we can make that happen. ””

#### Winter Wellbeing Top Tip

Your main living room should be between 18-21°C and the rest of the house a minimum of 16°C.

Use a hot water bottle or electric blanket (but not at the same time) to keep warmer in bed.

# The Integrated Care System's Kate

*DISCOVER* catches up with one of Cornwall's leading ladies, Kate Shields, the newly appointed Chief Executive of the Integrated Care System (ICS) which will become operational in July, to discuss its impact, new approaches and working with the voluntary & community sector.



*Can you tell us your vision for the new ICS?*

I think the starting point is that it brings the whole of the NHS together, so when we set up NHS Trusts, each was its own organisation and it still is, but we want to bring that coherence back. So, to most people who use the NHS its one big organisation, so we're going to work together as if we are, which will make it easier for other people to engage with.

For the local authority, particularly for social care, but also things like education, housing, benefits etc, it means it will be much easier to engage with and of course, for all of our voluntary sector colleagues across Cornwall, they will know who to talk to. So I'm just hoping that we will come together as a collective, a group of people who are all just determined to do the right thing for people who live in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly. As civil servants, we're there to meet the needs of our population, and we must merge our teams as much as we can.

Through this really local lens of seeing what people need we just make sure that the right things in the right place for somebody at the point that they need it, that would be my vision, and also we don't worry about who's in charge because it's collective and nobody's in charge of a collective.

*Right now we're facing a tough situation within health and social care and we, like other organisations are supporting hospital*

*discharge and we're recruiting and utilising Personal Assistants (PAs) and delivering holistic support for people through brokering community solutions. Do you feel this is a welcome approach?*

That's exactly what we want. One of the really great things about Cornwall is we've still got natural communities and where you live matters, because the community that you're in, is often where you socialise, shop and is often where your family lives. We need to support communities to do the things they want to do. So the work Disability Cornwall is doing at the moment with PAs I think it's really exciting and is a massive step forward. I would love us to really focus on more PAs across county, because you know, when I'm old, I'd like to choose who I'm going to get to support me. So yes, I'd really like to grow that and for our communities to feel that what they think is the right thing to do, is easy to make happen.

When I first came here I met Jane at Disability Cornwall, along with our Chief Nurse at Treliske, and we talked about Personal Assistants and people being able to recruit them to support them in their own community. At that time we were told it wasn't possible to pay your neighbours or your relatives or friends to provide care and it was against the law etc. It's not, they're made up rules and look how well it's working.

This winter we're going to have small health grants, so if you're working in a community setting, and you

think somebody needs that ramp before they fall over, or they need some stair rails or a bed moving downstairs, we're going to make it easy for money to go to the place it is needed.

*We agree, the money should follow the person and enable them to buy what they need to be happy and safe. So we are an advocate for personalisation Kate, and people having choice and control to self-direct their own care and support through direct payments and personal budgets and to stay in their own homes for as long as possible. Do you think these could be more frequently used in the future?*

So this has been a real step change initiative in Cornwall and what I want to do is put more money into it, so that we start diverting away from large organisations and into the hands of smaller organisations, in the places where people live. So more choice and control. I will want choice and control till the day I stop breathing, and that's whether I've got capacity or not, so I don't see why that should be different for anybody else. We need to make it easy for people to be able to have that control.

*We welcome the increase in collaboration between the voluntary sector and health and social care, so will we continue to build on this now?*

I used to work for a charity years ago, and you think the experience you've had goes with you into other places. They do, but they get watered down a bit. So it was only once I had left the acute trust and I'm in this job that you realise that we sometimes make it really hard for people to be heard. So I think the advocacy role of the voluntary sector in giving us feedback around how and where people want to receive care, as well as the direct care provision in the communities people live in, you can do it and more swiftly than the statutory sector can. It's all the things we've been trying to do at statutory agencies, but we're in the wrong place using the wrong tools.

I think the voluntary sector will become the 'go to' place that we need, to be engaged within communities and we need to give long term security of funding to make it easier for planning. Some Clinical Commissioning Group colleagues have actually been saying we've had more scrutiny on spend that goes into voluntary sector organisations, than hundreds of millions of pounds that go through large contracts. So we need to have a data set for outcomes that's proportionate to the

amount of spend and we also need to help small organisations when they're starting off and build that into the way that we work.

*We have now supported close to 500 people in their homes this autumn and winter, these are people in real need and its been incredibly humbling and our team feel like it's changed us as people, to see the difference its making just by brokering that community support. The amount of neighbours that we've recruited to assist people too, ordinarily, that would be something that would never have been considered.*

I was on BBC Radio Cornwall one day and a retired social worker phoned in, and he said what you're talking about, is a good neighbour scheme. He said, just think about the power of loads of young people aged 16-18 getting paid to go and check on vulnerable and lonely people in their local areas.

How many people would work in health and care if they realise the positive feedback you get from helping somebody and those ideas they've got legs, they call it social capital. It's the practical application of people being bothered about each other and for young people it's a great way of earning money whilst doing something that is socially essential, and older people like young people, often because they've got stuff to talk about.

Once I met a man with Parkinson's who was trying to get across a car park and of course, with Parkinson's, getting started is often the hardest bit. So I said to him, would you like me to help you? He said, yes please, so I said I'll go get a chair as it's a long walk, and when I dropped him off he said, Thank you, you must be very busy and I've wasted your time. I said, this is the most useful thing I will do all day, thank you for giving me the opportunity to do it. We just do need to reflect on that daily, small things make massive differences. And how we do something is as important as what we're doing. So I think we should encourage everybody to have that wonderful opportunity. The power of knowing you've done something that's made a difference for a person is absolutely massive.

For the article I would like you to say we think Disability Cornwall is fab, you do an amazing job and we just we're glad we work with you. Thank you.

# Hydrotherapy Pools

Hydrotherapy is physiotherapy practised in warm water, utilising the unique properties of the water, specifically for a person to maximise function, which can be physical, physiological or psychological. Here we feature two of Cornwall's hydro pools, do contact them and book your session in advance and confirm any additional accessibility requirements you may have.



## Hewas Water, St Austell

Situated in a beautiful rural setting the Primrose is a hydrotherapy infinity pool at 8x4m with a depth of 1.25m, maintained at 32-33°C, has water jets and mood lighting. Their physio team run 1:1 and group sessions and are trained in delivering land and water-based therapies for mobility, balance and strength. The pool has been carefully designed to ensure full accessibility and there is a ceiling hoist directly from a changing area into the pool, a pool dipper as well as gradual steps.

People registered with the centre who have MS or another neurological condition can book for £8pp for a group session.

☎ 01726 885530

✉ [hello@merlinmscentre.org.uk](mailto:hello@merlinmscentre.org.uk)



## Newlyn, Penzance

A 6x3m salt water chlorinator pool, kept at 34°C for an immediate feeling of relaxation and pain relief as you get in. The salt water increases your buoyancy, reducing stress on joints and allowing freedom of movement. This can bring a huge sense of achievement and independence in enabling functional tasks and activities not achievable on land. Physios available or you're welcome to bring your own, and a carer. Level access from the carpark to poolside.

£7 for a 30 minute shared session, £25 for a whole-pool booking for 30 minutes. If you bring your own physio, they pay £7 too unless you've booked the whole pool.

☎ 01736 366224

✉ [harboursidept@btconnect.com](mailto:harboursidept@btconnect.com)



# Are you digitally included?

Since the pandemic struck and face-to-face contact became something we avoided, and while we were stuck at home during lockdowns, digital inclusion became more of a necessity than a luxury.

There certainly are significant advantages to being 'online', such as being able to order shopping or prescriptions, make GP appointments, join groups of interest, and connect with family.

But even before this, organisations were already working to overcome digital exclusion as around 13% of our local population had never used the internet, that's around 71,000 people.

So why are so many people digitally excluded?

People are more likely to experience digital exclusion if they have a disability, especially one that prevents them from using a standard computer or equipment, if they are aged over 65, if they have a lower household income, or live in a rural area with poor connectivity.

There are other reasons, such as some people don't have the motivation to get online, they worry about safety of their information, or they don't have the confidence in their own skills.

If you think now is the time for getting online (believe us you are never too old for this) or if you want to learn more or join online communities, there is a variety of information sources and support that can help you, although in some cases, a friend or family member may be the best person to assist you in the first instance. You could try one of the following organisations:



## AbilityNet

Have a network of trained and checked volunteers who offer free computer and technology support to disabled or older people of any age.

Whether you need help to choose the right equipment, advice on assistive technology, or for diagnosing problems, they provide guidance on how to shop online, make video calls to friends, play music or games and use other entertainment services. All of this will improve your confidence and ability to ensure the benefits of the digital world can be experienced.

☎ 0800 0487642

🌐 [www.abilitynet.org.uk](http://www.abilitynet.org.uk)

# PASSWORDS ARE LIKE UNDERPANTS

change them often, keep them private and never share them with anyone.



## Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change (CN4C)

IT courses run in Redruth and St Austell, for 6 or 10 weeks. Participants are invited to bring their own laptop or tablet, and learn how to make it work for them and be safe online. It's IT basics and at a pace that suits you. Contact Vicky, the tutor to book:

📞 07507 412941  
✉ [vgilbert@cn4c.org.uk](mailto:vgilbert@cn4c.org.uk)

## Cornwall Rural Community Charity (CRCC)

Basic support and guidance by phone:

📞 01872 243557  
💻 [www.cornwallrcc.org.uk](http://www.cornwallrcc.org.uk)

## Mid Cornwall Lifestyles

Is leading on a Digital Skills and Wellbeing project on behalf of the Cornwall Disability Alliance. The project aims to build on digital inclusion 'socials' that have proved so valuable to disabled people through the pandemic.

With an emphasis on fun, the programme delivers a range of accessible digital wellbeing sessions on 'Zoom' that range from password security, frauds and scams, NHS online, financial wellbeing and more. The skills development sessions are mixed with interesting presentations from places like the Seal and Screech Owl Sanctuaries.

The project team are developing some short video clips about the topics that will be available to watch on demand. There will also be 'Train the Trainer' resources to enable others to deliver the sessions or adapt them to meet the needs of others.

Information about the winter programme of 'Online Socials' can be found on their website.

💻 [www.lifestyles-cornwall.org.uk/online-socials](http://www.lifestyles-cornwall.org.uk/online-socials)



every  
customer  
counts

delivering  
accessible  
services

## Inclusion is everybody's business!

Every Customer Counts (ECC) is a new web and App based initiative and the first kitemark for accessibility, which has been long called for by disabled people and their representative organisations. Despite 24 years of disability legislation, disAbility Cornwall continually heard of the difficulties our members experience in accessing every day goods and services. Our response was to develop a tool to enable businesses get the information needed to put things right in a simple, easy and affordable way.

We appreciate good access means different things to different people and is relative to their condition or circumstance, whether a wheelchair user, having sight or hearing loss or a cognitive disability, for example. So, as a pan disability organisation, we have taken that approach, incorporating all the best practice advice. The intention is to make our communities inclusive for everyone and to help businesses recover from the pandemic through becoming more inclusive, leading them to gain a greater market share of the 'purple pound' – the spending power of disabled people, said to be worth £274bn nationally (DWP).

We were delighted to officially launch ECC, on International Day for Disabled People, just before the pandemic arrived, as the theme that year was 'The Future is Accessible' a seemingly perfect fit. Over 50 businesses and leaders from across the county and beyond attended, and speakers included International Table Tennis player and 3-time Paralympian (and our Patron), David Wetherill and the dynamic Mark Shayler, Author, Innovation & Business Consultant who entertained attendees with 'Why kindness is a competitive advantage and diversity a fuel for innovation', Jane Johnson MBE, Chief Executive of disAbility Cornwall presented Every Customer Counts, for which all attendees were given a voucher for a free two year licence, followed by Laurie Magowan from The Inclusivity Project, showing why diversity enriches business, and Clare Harris from the Local Enterprise Partnership, presenting the Beacon Work and Health Project to help employers grow a



diverse workforce. Keynote speaker Mark Shayler, on hearing from all the speakers said: "Cornwall is on the up and I really think it's Cornwall's time." (Of course that 'up' got delayed by nearly a year or two!) Quite simply, Every Customer Counts requires three things: Evaluate, Change and Commit. A business visits the website, registers, creates their advert and takes a quiz, comprising around 60 questions with multiple choice answers.

This generates a personalised accessibility report for the specific business' premises, based on their answers, which details the information and solutions needed to make improvements. They create a business advert and receive the ECC logo and window sticker to display showing the rating they achieved, as well as an Inclusive Customer Commitment Policy. They can then get to work on the recommendations.

Customers can also register to search for accessible businesses, rate and review them, and when a new business registers in their area they will receive a notification in their app or on the website.

Getting access right benefits everyone, people



with a health condition or disability, temporary impairments, families with pushchairs and older people. That's all of us at some point in our lives, and it's time for change. There are three great reasons for businesses to do this: morally it's the right thing to do, legally, making reasonable adjustments is required and financially because more satisfied customers is great for business.

It's anticipated businesses will be incentivised to fulfil all their report's recommendations over time, as they will see the benefits of increased, repeat and loyal custom, particularly from disabled people and when they receive positive ratings, comments and engagement with customers on the App.

Please visit the ECC website and it will prompt you to add the App to your home screen, so you can use it when out and about. Customers can search for businesses by location, business type, ECC rating or their accessibility features, rate them and leave a comment on the business profiles should they wish. Let's get behind the inclusive businesses and show them our support!

[www.everycustomercounts.co.uk](http://www.everycustomercounts.co.uk)

What will your rating be?





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Credit: Cornish Pixels

 <p><b>The Information Standard</b></p>	<p>For health and care information you can trust look for The Information Standard mark</p>
<p>Supporting Partner</p>	<p><a href="http://www.theinformationstandard.org">www.theinformationstandard.org</a></p>



INVESTORS IN PEOPLE

Gold



# Personal Independence Payment Explained

Personal Independence Payment (PIP) is extra money if you have an illness, long term health condition or disability. It replaced Disability Living Allowance (DLA) for people of working age.

It's not means-tested and an award won't affect any other benefits you may have. If you think you may be eligible then do apply and ensure you receive everything you are entitled to.

## PIP basics

The PIP assessment is points-related, based on your ability to undertake a range of tasks under 12 activity headings. These relate to your daily living needs and your mobility. Your score decides whether or not you are entitled to either component of PIP, and if you are, at which rate.

It is advisable to keep a diary if your condition varies over time, so that you can provide an accurate picture of your abilities.

PIP comes in two parts:

**Daily living component** for help doing everyday tasks; weekly rate either £60.00 or £89.60

**Mobility component** for help with getting around; weekly rate either £23.70 or £62.55

Special rules if you are terminally ill:

The 'special rules' enable people who are terminally ill to make a PIP claim and receive a decision more quickly. This applies if the person's death can 'reasonably be expected' within six months (changing to twelve months from April 2022).

## PIP Awards

PIP is normally awarded for a fixed period, for example two or five years. The length of award depends on how likely it is that your needs will change over time. An indefinite award can be made, but most of these are reviewed every ten years to check they are still correct. If you think you should have been given a longer award, you can challenge the decision.



## PIP reviews

Your entitlement to PIP can be reassessed at any time after it has been awarded. Many people have had their reviews postponed during the pandemic and are being contacted about these now.

The DWP has started sending out a new version of the PIP review form, so it may look slightly different, but this won't affect your award.

Always fill in the whole form, simply writing 'no change' is not sufficient. Describe how you are finding each task or activity. If there has been a change, say what caused it, when it happened, and how it affects you.

Remember to say whether you've stopped or started any medication, or are using any new aids or appliances and include any supporting information that you have.

You may be called for more evidence or information, or to attend another assessment, and if you disagree with the decision, remember, you can challenge it.

You can see a full guide to claiming PIP at the Disability Rights UK website.

 [www.disabilityrightsuk.org](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org)



# Being My Own Boss

Actor, Samantha Renke, is a highly respected and effective campaigner, role model and activist in the disability rights movement. Further, as a broadcaster, writer and keynote speaker, she uses every opportunity available to raise awareness.

In all honesty, when I was a kid, I never thought I would work. In fact, like many disabled people I'd practically been written off since birth. Being told, by society, I shouldn't, couldn't or wouldn't. Every one of my achievements was met with astonishment and my prospects never really discussed.

Everything seemed like a constant struggle. Which schools could accommodate my needs, then which university. I always seemed to be a problem, the square peg that needed to fit into round holes.

As a child, my parents applied for funding and assistance but as soon as I became an adult all that dissipated, it's as though your disability disappears once you grow up.

So when the Government's 'National Disability Strategy' was published in July, the policy paper included plans for better provisions for homes, travel and equal employment opportunities for disabled people. I read the section on employment with interest.

Currently I feel I am in the happiest time in my career, with regular work, steady-ish revenue and I've set boundaries which help me manage my own needs; limiting the hours I can achieve in the day and putting boundaries in place with my clients and collaborators.

Sure, it's taken me a good 10 years of hard graft and perseverance but I am finally reaping the rewards of my labour and I'm excited about the future. But looking back has got me thinking about my decision to become a freelancer. When I finished my education, I fell into teaching and it seemed like the safest and most secure option because it was an environment I was used to and not a really big transition. The difference being I wasn't a student, I was part of the faculty. Spending over two years as a teacher, I've never felt more physically and mentally exhausted.

The sheer practicality of getting from A to B, pushing heavy fire doors, constantly being on

high alert to ensure children wouldn't accidentally bump into me... and if they did, I'd try to mask my disability. On the odd occasion, I went to work with a hairline fracture and told no one. I put on a brave face because I didn't want to be treated differently and worried that my colleagues wouldn't see me as up to the task.

I stuck at it because I liked how people treated me when I told them I was a teacher, no longer did they infantilise or patronise me, they showed respect but the price of their admiration affected my wellbeing.

**"I needed a job but the working world was a terrifying disabling, ableist place and no one really prepared me for that."**

Ultimately, I quit and began freelancing as an actor, broadcaster and disability consultant. Doing things for myself instead of pleasing others was better for my health, planning and structuring my day around the limited active hours my body allowed. But the grass isn't always greener. The downsides can be really challenging and I've often questioned my decision.

Firstly, there is the lack of stability and income. This can be extremely scary because being disabled costs a lot of money. At the beginning, I said yes to everything just to gain experience and network. For the first four years I mostly slogged away on a voluntary basis and didn't generate any earnings. I wish I'd had the confidence to put a price tag on my services sooner. Speaking to my non-disabled friends, it appears to be the freelancer culture in the early days but disabled people also experience the attitude that people are doing you a favour hiring you so don't pay. Disabled people should never be made to feel grateful for anything in life, including job opportunities.

The government strategy needs to look at the bigger picture, not just internal barriers we face but attitudinal ones too. You can adapt buildings to be 'wheelchair friendly' but until you tackle harmful stereotypical views, people with impairments come out worse off.

Being your own boss can be fruitful but you have to be disciplined with money as you never know when your next job will come or if, like me, your body will be up to the challenge. One of the biggest downsides to it is the isolation. As a disabled

woman this is not new. I've felt lonely throughout my life through the disabling obstacles I see all around me, like inaccessible buildings or insufficient transport.

## "I wish being disabled didn't mean being my own boss feels the best option – it can be lonely."

I used to enjoy socialising with colleagues, the Christmas parties and out of school get-togethers. As a freelancer I'd say 70% of my job is done from home. The only interaction I have is the steady stream of phone or video conversations and, as a devoted cat mum, I chatter away to my two kitties.

Sure, there are times where I'll be invited on television and it's great. I love waking up early, having a car pick me up, nattering away during hair and make-up, meeting new faces and catching up with people I know... but ultimately you aren't part of a team and once you are done it's straight back in a cab.

The biggest advantage is working from the comfort of my fully accessible home. Even down to not worrying about how many cups of tea I consume because I've got an equipped bathroom I can use as often as I want. I'm sure many people don't enjoy their commute but for me, being able to operate from my flat is a godsend. My anxiety is mostly induced by travelling, as several years ago I had a severe car crash.

Becoming a contractor has been the best thing I've ever done for my career. Yet the choice to work for myself wasn't because I necessarily wanted to, rather it was the only clear path to ensure my needs were met. This is one of the reasons so many disabled people become sole traders, we know what adjustments we need to implement to become productive and being able to schedule our own labour takes away the often repetitive and tiring battles of trying to get office culture to accommodate our needs.

Even though there are systems in place to support us, such as Access to Work grants, gaining employment can be a gruelling, long winded process that doesn't always guarantee the best result, you can be denied any help at all. Then there's the often complex conversations you need to have with your colleagues or employer to help support your needs, that is if you even make it past the interview stage.

Once, I arrived for interview and faced steps to enter the facility, and a secretary noticed and escorted me through a back entrance. The meeting went well but as I was shown around the hiring

manager said: 'We don't have an accessible toilet, is that going to be a problem?' Needless to say, I didn't get the job.

Becoming a freelancer has given me much more independence, autonomy and allowed me to progress in my career at my own pace, without compromising my health. But isn't it sad that, although it's successful for me thus far, I am missing out on feeling connected to others because the infrastructure and attitudes towards disabled people in varied occupations is lacking?

I truly haven't got it bad and feel grateful to be in the position I am today. Of course I could say I wish I had the same opportunities as everyone else but I'm really proud of the business I've created because I've not had anyone to hold my hand.

Discrimination is at times hard to identify. For example, if I disclosed that I am a wheelchair user on an application form and I don't get called to interview I could think that's because they were being ableist. But they could equally argue I wasn't right for the role. For real change to happen, we need an entire cultural shift on how we view disability. That includes how buildings and open spaces are designed and having inclusive education that values disabled people.

If you ask me, the National Disability Strategy still falls short. I find it hard to believe that you can get a true representation of how life in the UK is from a small cross section given the fact that everyone's needs are unique. The onus needs to be taken away from the disability community and, instead, organisations need to take initiative and liaise with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).

They should directly build strong connections so that deaf and disabled people don't even have to mention support schemes at interview. Employers should already be aware of these things and have trained staff to help you fight your cause. Rather than going to an interview feeling like you are a burden, you should be able to start a role knowing your colleagues see you as an asset.

I am always hesitant when it comes to strategies like this because I think that without real sanctions, without tangible consequences, people aren't held accountable and therefore progress is often slow. However, I do hope the promises outlined in the proposed National Disability Strategy are upheld so that disabled people are at least given a choice about how they work instead of feeling like me, with only one solitary direction to take.



# Off-Road Adventures thanks to Countryside Mobility

Countryside Mobility, an initiative led by Living Options Devon, aims to enable friends and family to share special memories in beautiful places. It partners with over 50 outdoor attractions around the South West to offer all terrain mobility scooter hire, otherwise known as ‘Trampers’.

Locals and visitors are spoilt for choice in terms of our county’s coast and countryside, but for many people access to the best places can be restricted, or completely out of reach. This can often result in people unable to join loved ones and families for walks, or the whole family missing out altogether.

Trampers have changed that, they are available for anyone over the age of 14 and there’s no age limit, even centenarians have used them! There is no requirement to be a wheelchair user or a Blue Badge holder to hire one either.

The 13 Cornish locations (and counting) that have them offer a wide range of experiences, whether

it is accessing the dramatic coastline, taking in historic estates, enjoying gardens or exploring a lake or canal side.

Introductory training is provided the first time a person hires a Trampler and, on successful completion of this and their Countryside Mobility membership being purchased, they then have access to all the Trampers in the network. Membership fees are £2.50 for two weeks or £10 per year. Hire fees also apply at some locations, but are never more than £2.50 per hour.

The Trampler at National Trust Antony in Torpoint, enables visitors to explore the enchanting gardens that led it to being chosen as the film location for Disney’s version of Alice in Wonderland, while at National Trust Pentire near Polzeath, four Trampler routes enable visitors to enjoy different aspects of the spectacular headland.

The full list of Cornish locations with Trampers can be found at:

 [www.countryside-mobility.org](http://www.countryside-mobility.org)



**activity  
alliance**  
disability  
inclusion  
sport

**SURE**  
**BREAKING  
LIMITS**  
PROGRAMME

Activity Alliance are excited to share with you that we are currently working with Sure, the world's number one antiperspirant and deodorant brand, and Beyond Sport to help get more young people moving through the Sure Breaking Limits Training Series.

The **Breaking Limits Training Series** is designed to equip community leaders, volunteers, mentors, trainers and coaches with the skills and tools to inspire confidence, motivation and opportunity through movement-based programmes.

The skills developed throughout the series will give you the power to fuel long-term, positive behaviour change that will ultimately transform both yourself and the lives of the young people you reach.

These are completely free to access and available to watch on-demand at:  
[www.suredeodorant.co.uk/digital-training-platform/](http://www.suredeodorant.co.uk/digital-training-platform/)



**#Sure**

**#WatchMeMove**

**#BreakingLimits**

**#ItWontLetYouDown**

**@AllForActivity**

**[www.activityalliance.org.uk](http://www.activityalliance.org.uk)**

# Cornwall Council's Kate

*DISCOVER* caught up with one of Cornwall's leading ladies, Cornwall Council Chief Executive, Kate Kennally, to talk about the Health and Social Care Reform & personalisation in Social Care.

*The new Integrated Care System will be fully operational this year, but how will it benefit Cornwall's people?*

**W**ell, I've spent 25 years of my life working in health, social care, and the voluntary sector, all with the aim and intention to join up care around individuals. So, on one level, the Integrated Care System doesn't feel like anything new, it feels the right thing to do, to join up services, in the best interest of the people that we're here to serve.

I think that in a place such as Cornwall, where we do have boundaries between the health care system and the Council, and as a unitary Council, we have housing within it too. So, as a local authority we make large scale investments into the economy, there should be a way within which we're able to better ensure our population is healthy and well. But a lot depends on relationships, culture and relies on power and those are the things that get in the way or, really help, and I want us to pay more attention to how we work together, than the structures we design, with a clear sense of what the priorities are, not just shaped by the hospital.

One concern is how we spend an awful lot of time talking around hospital discharge, and particularly the issues as they relate to frail or elderly people. But that means we're sometimes not spending enough time talking about people with a disability, or a mental health issue, and where they sit as part of the new Integrated Care System.

Adult Social Care and the partnership with health is really important, but equally and we've seen this in the white paper, are partnerships with housing, the importance of how we work with communities, how we support family carers, and how we ensure our communities are welcoming, safe and inclusive for disabled people. The health service needs to work



Kate Kennally

closely with the local authority around that, rather than the local authority always working closely with the NHS.

So I think it enables us to take that holistic view and the local authority can help bring into discussions with health partners, those wider factors going on in people's lives and how we can use those to create a safe society where people can maximise their potential.

*We have also recognised this, and the gap between health and social care provision, which is why we have found a place working with both, to bring that person centred and more holistic approach to meeting people's needs.*

We have always recognised this and the need to support people more holistically, exacerbated by the

gaps between health and social care. People can require support in various ways, one size never fits all.

It can be easy to default to a medical model of disability, rather than a social model. We must have inclusion at the heart of what we are doing. I still recoil when people are referred to as 'patients' just as a term and some of the terminology such as 'delayed transfers of care/discharge'. They're all terms that are about a process, rather than a person.

*This resonates with us, because as a disabled people's organisation everything we do is person centred and now we are involved with hospital discharge, we are trying to change some of the traditional thinking through a personalised approach. Yes, maybe this person does need care, but equally, is their housing suitable, do they have sufficient income, a means to access services, and a support network etc?*

Yes, a package of care becomes like administering a prescription and social care is not that type of service. Social Care is around sitting and working alongside an individual to help them lead the life they want. There's a risk now of social care moving into a clinically led / medically led space, that's not what good social care is, they should be there for people in their home.

I remember when I was leading in mental health and staff were working in community teams and crisis teams and finding it frustrating, as they were seeing their role sometimes as what they referred to, 'pills on wheels'. Because they were not actually doing social care-based intervention in terms of looking at relationships, at work, at a sense of self-worth, but instead, they were managing a mental health condition and that isn't what their role is there to do. So, it's going to be very important in the Integrated Care System for a strong and clear articulation of what social care is and what it isn't. How it's complementary to, but not the same as, healthcare. I don't think that's always appreciated or understood nationally.

*You mentioned in a recent statement about moving away from traditional models of care, how do you envisage this?*

There is a lot to do in Cornwall around this. We've got some examples of brilliant practice and we've seen some of that during the pandemic, in terms

of the ways in which communities support each other and a strong sense of neighbourliness, but then when I look at some of our current Adult Social Care spend, we are delivering care in quite traditional ways. Over 60% of our purchasing spend, that's money we spend to meet people's needs, is going into residential nursing care and it's really out of kilter with good practice. That's in-part around how things are being driven through that interface between hospitals and home.

Lately, we have had a lot of younger people who haven't had the opportunity to have homes of their own, their own front door, with support. There's more to do on supported living and moving away from group-based models of living and group-based models of day-care, to enable people to lead more socially inclusive lives. For example, our numbers of people with learning disabilities supported to be in work is in the bottom quartile in the country and similarly, we're not great in respect of mental health and the number of people known to secondary mental health services that are in paid employment. So, I think we've still got quite a paternalistic set of ways within which we deliver health and care in Cornwall.

Through our user satisfaction surveys, we do have higher levels of traction than some other places so, actually people are valuing the way they're receiving some services, but I think there are opportunities to give people more choice and control over how they lead their lives, that I've seen being done elsewhere and want to see in Cornwall.

*The housing crisis is a national issue, but as we have found during the pandemic, Cornwall has become quite the place to visit or live, leading to a significant increase in house prices and greater demand, so homes are becoming unaffordable for local people.*

For some places that's certainly true, but I was previously working in London and house prices were crazier than they are here, and there wasn't some of the sites for development that we've got here. But we still have more people living in supported living and I think we've got some real opportunities as we bring forward extra care and supported living, we take advantage of some of the direction set out in the Adult Social Care Reform white paper, to re-look at our day services and moving away from 'traditional day services'. We did this through COVID when those day services were closed and let's start giving people the opportunity to have a good day in a different way.

# iSightCornwall



■ iSightCornwall is a great local charity, here to support people who are partially sighted or blind, whatever their age, circumstance or condition.

As one of the oldest charities in our county, iSightCornwall has been helping people with sight loss to lead active and independent lives since its foundation in 1856. They have specially trained staff who provide emotional support and practical advice to make daily living easier.

Chief Executive, Carole Theobald, told *DISCOVER*: “We understand the impact sight loss can have and how it affects each person differently, which is why our services are tailored to meet each person’s needs.”

On behalf of the NHS, specialist advice about low vision aids is available as well as free, long-term loan of equipment for people with eye conditions that cannot be improved with prescription glasses or surgery.

Personalised advice is available on a range of assistive technology that can transform everyday living, reading, writing and so much more and iSightCornwall experts support people to make the right choice for their individual needs.

Their social and activity clubs and groups are operational around the county, including a shooting club, kayaking, lunches, choir, bowling, dancing and much more.

An experienced advisor is available to help people get their welfare benefit entitlements and are skilled at knowing what help is available, recognising this can be a daunting process.



They also have a dedicated Eye Clinic Liaison Officer, based at the Royal Cornwall Hospital, who can provide emotional and practical support to help people understand their diagnosis and come to terms with living with sight loss.

The charity is currently recruiting volunteers for all types of activity, from driving people to appointments or activities, as well as club activity support, so if you have a little spare time available to support this charity and its work, they welcome hearing from you.



**iSightCornwall**

**Inspiring futures** for  
people living with sight loss

☎ 01872 261110

✉ [info@isightcornwall.org.uk](mailto:info@isightcornwall.org.uk)

🌐 [www.isightcornwall.org.uk](http://www.isightcornwall.org.uk)

# Families Enjoying Cornwall



Stunning art deco architecture, geothermal heating, great access and a popular café. What more do you need in a seawater lido? Some of the family members from Cornwall Accessible Activities Programme loved it during a 2021 visit.

**J**ubilee Pool, located on the promenade in Penzance is the largest art deco seawater lido in the UK. It has been in the headlines many times over the years, not least for catastrophic storm damage, but now for being a unique geothermally heated pool, on which work was completed in September

2020. Of course, it was unable to open then due to the pandemic, but is now once again, becoming a centre of activity.

It hosts learner and main pools, plus the first-of-its-kind geothermally heated pool, which can be enjoyed all year round, as well as a terrace, changing facilities, showers, a new café with double the former seating capacity and a multi-purpose community space.

Swimming is of course a great form of exercise for everyone but the weightlessness experienced in water makes it more manageable and therapeutic for many, and different benefits occur when swimming in heated water compared to cold water, so it's a great opportunity to experience both here. The main pool is a couple of degrees above sea temperature and the geothermal pool is a balmy 30-35°C, all year round.

*DISCOVER* welcomes the considerable thought which has been put into the disabled access arrangements at the pool. All staff have been trained in equal opportunities, disability

# Wall's 'Blue Lagoon'



and mental health awareness and are happy to help wherever they can.

There are low-level kiosks at the front desk and café, as well as four wheelchair accessible changing rooms which have showers and benches. The geothermal pool is accessed by ramp, and the main pool has a hoist, which staff are trained to use.

Our featured photos are from a day out with the Cornwall Accessible Activities Programme (CAAP) in the 2021 holidays. Sandy Lawrence, programme director told *DISCOVER*: “We arrange fun and exciting activities during all school holidays giving our children, young people and their siblings stories to share with their peers when they return to school. During the summer we had some amazing times, including two visits to Jubilee Pool. Access is brilliant and it represented great value for money and meant 60 of our disabled children and their siblings had the opportunity to swim in a warm pool beside the sea. Having a closed session meant the families felt comfortable

even if their child/young person had a meltdown. It was great to see the friendship groups flourishing.”

CAAP is a registered charity created by a small group of parents when funding for holiday activities was cut in 2013. Initially the parents thought they could get together and take advantage of group booking rates, but it grew into a membership – a family of families who support one another with 800 families now members and supporting children and young people aged 0-25 years. They organise a full programme of partially subsidised activities every school holiday and each one is carefully constructed to include activities covering the whole of the county, are age appropriate, safe, fun and promote the confidence of children and young people, while encouraging them to step out of their comfort zone. They have enjoyed a closed performance at the circus and even tried a few extreme activities such as axe throwing and shooting! CAAP welcome referrals directly from families whose children

have an EHCP or attend specialist provision, or from professionals involved with a child's care if they do not meet the above criteria.

Jubilee Pool offers a concessionary rate for disabled people and carers are allowed in free if they are supporting someone with swimming. There are concessions-only sessions in the geothermal pool on Wednesdays at 12pm and tickets can be booked by phone or email, but not online, to allow staff to verify eligibility. Assistance dogs are welcome anywhere on site.

Tickets for the sea pool are £6 for adults, £4.50 for concessions and under 16s, and free for under 4s. Tickets for the geothermal pool are £11.75 for adults, £8.20 for concessions and under 16s, (under 5s not allowed) with discounts for families, larger groups and Penzance residents. They can be booked online or by phone.

📞 01736 369224

🌐 [www.jubileepool.co.uk](http://www.jubileepool.co.uk)

To get in contact with CAAP please contact:

Sandy Lawrence Director

✉ [info@caapuk.co.uk](mailto:info@caapuk.co.uk)

🌐 [www.caapuk.co.uk](http://www.caapuk.co.uk)

🏠 P.O. Box 538, Newquay, TR7 9DR

### Did you know?

- > Hot water causes superficial blood vessels to dilate, activating sweat glands, loosening joints, and removing toxic wastes from tissues. Exercising in hot water means your body burns calories faster than in a regular pool too!
- > Cold water improves circulation, boosts the immune system, releases endorphins to give a natural high and reduces stress.



Photography by Kitaen Photographic

CAAP families having fun in the geothermal pool

# Emma's story

*My Pandemic*



**T**he pandemic has been a life changing experience for my family. I'm a full-time working mum and my husband Dan is a brilliant full-time Dad and part-time gardener.

We have two beautiful children, Finley, who is ten and has autism, and a wonderfully wild five year old daughter called Freya. Like many people, when lock-down hit, we adjusted. I worked from home and my husband picked up the mantle of home-schooling our kids, spending his days making clay model Roman armies and facing the daily battle of wills as they rejected his attempts to introduce spelling and maths homework, while I busied myself with Zoom calls upstairs.

Two months in, Dan injured both of his hands while doing home renovations, sustaining nerve damage and excruciating pain. That moment was a hugely pivotal and devastating time for us. His mental health suffered and it became apparent he wasn't coping. Frustrated with not being able to function properly or, in his words, support us as he always had done, he entered a significant depressive episode and experienced frequent anxiety attacks. It was a worrying and frightening time for us all and he was put on antidepressants by the GP, which only served to make matters worse, as he slept for days and struggled to cope.

One day he sat down next to me and said "I can't

shut my brain off, it's exhausting." He had said this to me before, but this time it made me wonder. He always had a beautifully creative and different brain, but had struggled to stick with things, often hyper-focusing on big topics like world politics and displaying an encyclopaedic knowledge on his topic of choice. Clearly at this point he was struggling with a brain that simply wouldn't shut down and it was causing him major anxiety. I began to research and what came up again and again was attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or ADHD.

With this, the symptoms are worse if significant life stressors are at play and as soon as I showed him, he had a light bulb moment; "That's definitely me!"

Two months later, at the tender age of 44 and after 13 years of marriage, he received his diagnosis. Decades of wondering why he struggled to do things other people did, well, he now had an answer. Dan is now trialling his first ADHD medication and says his head is clearer and the anxiety is slowly starting to calm.

Medication is only part of the story for someone with ADHD and we are early in our journey learning about what works best, but lockdown has given us clarity and connected us better as a family. Importantly, it is helping my husband learn how to be kinder to himself and work with, not against, his incredible neurodiverse brain.

# Cornwall Carers Service

Vital support for our valued unpaid carers

There is a new contracted service for carers of any age in Cornwall which offers a wide range of support. The aim is to maximise carers' emotional and physical wellbeing through information, advice and practical support and opportunities to come together with like-minded people, to have a say and shape the future of the service, by saying what's working and what's not. The priority is to ensure carers feel connected and supported to maintain their mental and physical wellbeing.

There are also dedicated services for both young and young adult carers who are assisted to manage caring responsibilities with support via phone, and through working with schools, as well as one-to-one support and opportunities to engage with activities on a regular basis and during the school holidays.

Whether you need Information, advice and guidance, practical assistance such as completing welfare benefit forms, community support, assistance to use digital technology, support planning and statutory assessments, access to grants, provision of a carers emergency card, coaching and mentoring, carer specific training, planning for a hospital stay and support for you and the person you care for when discharged, keeping updated through newsletter sources and social media, the Cornwall Carers Service is here for you.

# Meet the Service partners

*A creative & inspirational partnership of like-minded organisations, here for you*



## disAbility Cornwall & IoS

We are proud to deliver the dedicated frontline service, the 'Cornwall Carers Advice Line' which is staffed by our friendly, professional team who welcome your call. They provide information, advice and practical support with welfare benefit forms, grant applications and anything else carer related.

We can triage for more in-depth support within the service where needed and also keep you updated on social media and email you a weekly bulletin. We also produce the Emergency Cards, so do get in touch if you don't already have one.

## Barnardos

Providing the Kernow Young Carers service, supporting young carers and young adult carers aged 4-25 years. Support includes holiday activities, residentials, targeted one-to-one and school support aiming to help reduce the impact of caring. There are also opportunities for young carers to be involved in discussions about different aspects of the service.

## Age UK Cornwall & IoS

Helping carers maintain their own health and wellbeing to achieve a balance between their caring responsibilities and a life outside caring, while enabling the person they support to enjoy the best quality of life through: Wellbeing Coaches, working one-to-one with carers: Activities, wellness and coaching programmes allowing carers to connect, engage and stay active and the Cornwall Link website for carers to explore their local community's activities.

> There are around 64,000 unpaid adult carers in Cornwall, that's an estimated 1 in 12 of us and caring for someone else will likely affect all of us at some point in our lives.

## Cornwall Rural Community Charity

Delivering formal care and support through a Carer Needs Assessment and associated Support Plan. Through this Plan, carers will be empowered to improve their wellbeing and manage their caring role. CRCC can also provide information, advice and guidance prior to admission to hospital and support successful sustainable discharges for both carers and the person they care for, including ensuring that adequate support is in place.

Carer Wellbeing Workers provide tailored guidance and carry out a statutory assessment if needed. CRCC also manage the dedicated Cornwall Carers Service website, which has valuable resources for informal unpaid carers, as well as producing a quarterly newsletter.

## Promas CiC

Delivering a wide range of free courses and support, written, and designed with the help of carers, including face-to-face training, online courses, one-to-one via telephone and up to six sessions of coaching.

The courses and support are designed to help you manage your caring role but more importantly, ensure you look after yourself. New for this year is a project where carers can access a year's worth of free activities including swimming, Tai Chi, photography and social events.

📞 01736 756655 (advice line)

📱 Text only 07840211674

✉ hello@carersadvice.org.uk

💻 www.cornwallcarers.org.uk (with live chat facility)

Opening hours: Monday, Wednesday Friday 9am-5pm, Tuesday, Thursday 9am-7pm.

Follow us on facebook @CornwallCarersService



Carers are people who provide unpaid care for a friend, neighbour or family member, who cannot manage by themselves. Carers can be any age, and any gender and the person they care for may have a long-term health condition or a disability, be elderly, or a substance misuser. You are an unpaid carer if you: regularly support someone outside of your home with tasks like shopping, cooking, and preparing meals, taking them to medical appointments, or helping with household affairs such as bill paying or cleaning; or you live with someone (whether related or not) as described above and do tasks to help them inside or outside of the home.

It might not feel like you do very much, but you still meet the definition. 16,000 people provide unpaid care for 50 or more hours per week, but many more provide less than this.

## Carers Emergency Card

This is basically a back-up service in case anything should ever happen to you that prevents you from reaching the person you care for. If you are carrying the card, the person assisting you in an emergency, such as a doctor or nurse can call the advice line and give them your personal reference number noted on the card, and they will then contact your 'designated person' who can step in to help the person you care for at that time.

Simply contact the Carers Advice Line with the names and contact phone number/s of your designated people such as friends, neighbours or family members, and they will complete your application and send you your personalised card, to keep in your purse or wallet.

## Carer's Allowance

Carer's Allowance is the main benefit for carers and is currently paid at £67.70 per week. If you are looking after someone for 35 hours a week or more, you may be eligible.

You can only claim Carer's Allowance if someone you're looking after is receiving one of the following qualifying disability benefits:

- > middle / higher rate of the care component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- > either rate of the daily living component of Personal Independence Payment (PIP)
- > either rate of Attendance Allowance or Constant Attendance Allowance of the normal maximum rate, paid with the Industrial Injuries or War Pensions schemes
- > Armed Forces Independence Payment (AFIP)

While Carer's Allowance is not based on your income and capital or your partner's, to qualify you must earn less than (currently) £128 weekly. Contact the Carers Advice Line team if you require further information to see if you qualify or support to complete the application form if you need it.

- > There are around 4,000 young carers age 4-15 in Cornwall who care for a disabled parent or sibling. They face difficulties balancing school or college with taking care of their family member and jobs around the house.



# Good Housing and its Importance to our Health

The Marmot review (2010) showed that people with a lower income live in poorer housing, which leads to shorter lives and there has been much debate in the corridors of power about how these health inequalities can be addressed, and who is responsible, with action being taken at localised levels.

With changes coming to the way both health and care are organised, and the formation of the new Integrated Care Systems formally this year, there is a new opportunity now to look at health and the factors that influence it, and bring about new ways to address health inequalities.

The Housing Associations Charitable Trust (HACT) has been working with public health teams and local housing associations in the Bedford and Milton Keynes area to examine the work these teams have been doing together, and explore how that partnership working could be replicated in other places.

Many housing association residents are people who have poorer health, including mental health and long term health conditions such as cardiac, cancer, alzheimer's, stroke, arthritis, and issues associated with smoking, alcohol and obesity. For public health teams, working with housing associations gives better opportunities to work with these residents than they would normally have.

The fact that many disabled people live in housing association properties is significant, so when the public health system works with housing in this way, it enables support at a level before intervention by social services and medical professionals. Greater assistance to live independently, increased resources around health and wellbeing and access



**Health & housing**  
Creating a blueprint for a new way of working

In collaboration with:



to social prescribing opportunities could all be significant.

If such a scheme of joined up working between health and housing providers could be explored in Cornwall, there could be considerable benefits for many disabled people because support to maintain good health and wellbeing could help prevent deterioration in health conditions and possibly alleviate it altogether.

Most importantly, a recognition of the link between housing and health at every level, will encourage efforts to support people to live where and how they choose, rather than trying to impose a one-size-fits-all social care model.

You can read the whole report from HACT:

[www.hact.org.uk/publications](http://www.hact.org.uk/publications)

- > Upgrading houses can give us 39% fewer hospital admissions for cardio-respiratory conditions.
- > £1 spent on improving warmth in vulnerable households can result in £4 of health benefits
- > Home adaptations can generate £7.50 of health and social care cost savings for every £1 spent\*

\*Making a Difference. Housing and Health: A case for investment (Public Health Wales 2019)

# Your Enquiries

to the Cornwall Disability Information & Advice Line Team

☑ My housing association put in an air source central heating system in my bungalow, which has seen my electricity bill rise by £25 a month as it must be kept on all year for hot water.

I did say at the time that I could manage with a small over-the-sink boiler as I don't need that much hot water, but that was not considered. I have secured the £140 heating allowance, which I will receive in February, but I'm worried about my winter fuel bills, and concerned that the housing association could do this to me.

Do you have any advice?

**AD, feeling skint, St Austell**

.....

A costly exchange it seems! You should contact your housing provider and voice your concerns about being financially disadvantaged by this. It might be an idea to see if your neighbours are affected in the same way. Did any of them also ask about having a smaller boiler?

Your housing association would be able to advise on fitting smart meters which would allow you to monitor how much electricity you are using on an ongoing basis and Community Energy Plus can advise on whether there are any schemes available which might help you with the increased cost of electricity. You can call them on 01872 245566 or email [advice@cep.org.uk](mailto:advice@cep.org.uk).

An online tenants' support organisation such as 'The Tenants Voice' might be able to offer you expert support and assistance if you can't get anywhere with your landlord. Their website is [www.thetenantsvoice.co.uk](http://www.thetenantsvoice.co.uk)

The Housing Ombudsman Service can be contacted if you don't feel that your landlord is progressing your query or complaint. Call 0300 1113000 or visit their website: [www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk)

☑ I am a wheelchair user, I don't drive, and taxis are so expensive. Do you know of any alternative, that is wheelchair accessible, that I can use for medical appointments?

**DM, car-less, Truro**

.....

Thanks for getting in touch. Cornwall Council's website provides useful information about local transport (search for community transport schemes). The following organisations also offer relatively affordable options: Royal Voluntary Service 01579 348262 and Age UK Cornwall & IoS 01872 223388.

For people who require transport due to a medical need and who would require support during the journey, there is a patient transport service which is mainly limited to ambulance transport. Call 01872 252211 if you think you may be eligible.

If you're on certain means-tested benefits, you can claim a refund of the cost of travel to hospital via the Healthcare Travel Costs Scheme (HTCS). You can read more on the NHS website, or find the Help with Health Costs team on Facebook.

Disabled people may be eligible for a bus pass too. You can find out more on the Cornwall Council website. The online service is quicker, but you can also phone 0300 1234222 to request a paper application form.

Get in touch...

📞 01736 759500

✉ advice@dialcornwall.org.uk



✉ I've been receiving home deliveries from supermarkets, even before the pandemic, but I've noticed that both Asda and Morrisons seem to charge more for items purchased online than they charge in their shops. Added to this the cost of delivery itself, means that I feel penalised for shopping online, which I have to do due to my disability and living alone I don't have anyone to help me. What can I do?

**Unhappy shopper, Newquay**

.....

We're sorry that you are having problems with the cost of online shopping. We contacted both supermarkets and below are their explanations.

Asda - Prices on products can change every 3-5 days, and when this is done in store, but an online order is put in at the same time, there could be a delay in the online prices being updated. Also, there are different offers online than in store, so if you see an offer instore, it might not be available online, or the offer may be different, and vice versa.

Morrisons - Online and instore offers vary so you will not always have the same offers available in both places. The promotion would be shown at the time of purchase and charged according to this information.

With regards to the cost of delivery, here are some suggestions to help you reduce the cost -

Check the different days and times for the cheaper delivery rates.

Supermarkets offer a monthly or annual account for delivery which greatly reduces the cost of each shop.

Some supermarkets run a free bus service and they have room for wheelchairs and the driver also helps load shopping for customers.

Supermarkets offer a click and collect service which is free, so we may be able to source a volunteer to collect your shopping, or if you have a neighbour or friend that could help, this is the best option.



All images courtesy of the Cowburn Family

# The Invictus Trust

Young people with mental health issues don't fit a stereotype.

You may think you know what a typical young person struggling with poor mental health looks like, but in truth ANY young person, with ANY colour hair, or ANY level of academic achievement, or ANY number of friends could be struggling with their mental health. And it might not be obvious.

This is the primary message that Sharon Cowburn would like to share. That, and that there is support available. There is hope. Sharon and her family are the founders of the Invictus Trust, one of the major players in young people's mental health in Cornwall, which they set up in memory of their son Ben, who lost his life aged 18, as a result of his mental health struggles, 11 years ago.

Ben was a wonderful, gregarious young man, sporty, musical, creative, and just about to start his second year at fashion college in London, when Sharon first had indication that he had any mental health issues at all. The family was visited by police to say that he'd attempted suicide and been sectioned. Sharon was initially convinced they had the wrong person.

Following his journey through adult mental health wards over the next four months, Sharon and the family were increasingly concerned that he wasn't receiving appropriate treatment and care, either for his age or in general to support his needs. He spent those months with people he described as "as old as dad, and mad", adding "and I'm not mad" – which he wasn't. He remained there until, after further unsuccessful attempts, he sadly took his life in December 2010.

Sharon says "We had no knowledge of mental ill health. No one in our circle had experienced it. It was heavily stigmatised, and no one was talking about it. We had no idea what 'being sectioned' meant, I had to look it up!" She adds "I was terrified – I Googled 'poor mental health' and saw horror

stories!" She also discovered that young people were treated in adult facilities literally from their 18th birthdays, being transferred from child to adult units on that day, often with little-to-no handover of care or preparation, and no recognition that medical thinking agrees that 'adolescence' continues into the mid-twenties.

After that middle-of-the-night phone call from the police to say Ben had passed away, having had no sleep, as she watched the sun rise over Truro Cathedral, she turned to her family and said "This should never have been allowed to happen. If we can do something to save just one life, to prevent one more person going through this, then we need to do it." She wanted to spread the word about mental health, perhaps through a new charity and improve the provision for young people, so that young people like Ben weren't treated in secure units with adults.

Her three daughters said they were behind her but they had two conditions: 1, it was a cool charity, because Ben was cool and 2, it didn't have Ben's name in the title. He'd have hated an uncool charity in his name! Invictus Trust was born within days, taking the name of Ben's favourite poem by William Ernest Henley, two lines of which Ben had tattooed on his arm, and the Anchor symbol the charity uses also has strong links back to Ben, who had a tiny anchor tattoo also.

The achievements of the Invictus Trust over the last ten years are remarkable. Most importantly, they have testimony from several individuals that the young people's mental health resources on the Invictus Trust website have been instrumental in turning them away from suicide. This was a primary aim for Sharon, and more than one life has been saved.

Through school visits handing out simple cards with the Invictus Trust web address, and training teachers to support students with mental health issues, who knows how many other lives have been saved? With visitors allowed into schools once more, Sharon and her family are back visiting schools now, giving presentations in assemblies, and teaching Personal, Social and Health Education lessons, as well as sharing teaching resources with teachers. Schools are invited to approach the Trust and request their input.

One of the other early strands to Invictus Trust's work was setting up the Anchor Fund, which gives up to £500 to families who have young people being treated in mental health facilities outside

Cornwall, to assist with visiting them. Cornwall did not have a facility of its own for under 18s, so young people requiring secure accommodation were placed in Chester, or Maidenhead, or other places a significant distance from home. Whether it supports petrol costs, overnight stays, or paying for childcare while parents are travelling, the Fund does not mind, and the money can be given twice a year, if the need remains. Over £40,000 has been given to families since the Fund's inception.

However, the biggest victory for the Invictus Trust has been Sowenna. At the time of Ben's death, there was no inpatient facility in Cornwall for young people, and after five years of campaigning, what they describe as brushoffs and denial of the need, in March 2017 the CEO of Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust rang Sharon and her husband Steve, to say there would be an announcement the following day that a residential mental health unit for under 18s would be commissioned and built in Cornwall.

Sowenna (meaning 'Success and Welfare' in Cornish) opened in Bodmin in 2019, after extensive consultation with the Invictus Trust, among others, to create an environment that would provide appropriate care for young people. It is a 14 bed unit including an education block, private rooms for each patient, a day-patient service, and assessment unit. Invictus Trust has contributed £100,000 to date to create a café, parent accommodation and a gym, helping to ensure the facilities at Sowenna are the highest quality possible, and give the young people there the best possible treatment.

However, one issue remained, had Sowenna existed when Ben was alive, he would not have been eligible to attend, being just over 18 at the time. So Invictus Trust carried on campaigning and after much pressure at the highest level, Matt Hancock, the then Health Secretary, agreed that a cut-off of 18 was unnecessary, and young people should be treated there past their 18th birthdays, up to the age of 25, should that be appropriate, a UK first.

So the message of the Invictus Trust and the Cowburn family, is that any young person could experience mental ill health, but support is available and it's here in Cornwall.

The Invictus Trust website contains extensive mental health resources for young people, parents and carers, and they are happy to be invited to speak to young people's or adults groups who want to be better informed about issues facing young people in their lives.

✉ [enquiries@invictustrust.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@invictustrust.co.uk)

🖥 [www.invictustrust.co.uk](http://www.invictustrust.co.uk)

🖥 [www.sowenna.cornwallft.nhs.uk](http://www.sowenna.cornwallft.nhs.uk)



*Ben's sisters*

## Invictus

By William Ernest Henley

Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.  
In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.  
Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.  
It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul

# Outrage at Cornwall's Housing Crisis

By Tom Barwell-Best



*Eviction notice being enforced courtesy of Tom Barwell-Best*

The latest trends in the housing markets have caused pandemonium for people on lower incomes, leaving residents forced out of their communities and away from essential support networks. This growing outrage has prompted many people to consider what they can possibly do to tackle the unprecedented crisis.

I spoke with Michael, a former NHS worker who developed PTSD after more than a decade of working in healthcare, about what he described as the 'sheer terror' when he was served a Section 21 no-fault eviction notice. After being a model tenant for over four years, the landlord chose to sell the property without 'tenant-in-situ', requiring Michael and his son Max, who is 20, to leave.

Michael works locally as a bid writer for charities, including 'Turn to Starboard', which offers support

in the form of sailing training for ex-servicemen living with PTSD. His son also works locally. Michael has two other sons, who are 11 and 15 years old, who live with his ex-wife in Bristol, but regularly come to stay. A year-long search for a three-bedroom property proved fruitless, and he was faced with the living nightmare of having to move into emergency accommodation, meaning he would not see his younger children for an indefinite amount of time, potentially lose his job, as well as having to watch his mental health deteriorate.

Michael attended a housing crisis demonstration in Truro, where he joined ACORN UK, a Tenants Union, founded in Bristol in 2014. ACORN is a mass membership organisation and network of low-income people organising for a fairer deal for our communities.

After informing ACORN of his situation, he was offered support with an 'eviction resistance', a tactic employed by ACORN in other areas of the country, where members peacefully stop bailiffs from removing the tenant, giving them more time to find a suitable property, or negotiate with the landlord. Formal training was conducted by members over an online zoom session, in preparation for the eviction on 17 September.

On the morning, around 20 members met at Penryn station before marching up to Michael's home.

A briefing was held before members formed an orderly blockade while Michael stayed inside, as advised by ACORN representatives. At around midday, the bailiffs arrived accompanied by the police.

A magistrates' bailiff asked the protesters to move, which they refused to do, informing the bailiff they were there to oppose the eviction so that Mike was not made homeless. A discussion ensued, with a police officer saying they were there 'to prevent a breach of the peace' and would not move the protesters out of the way, but also said, "It doesn't stop my colleagues from doing their job and returning at some other point. You can't stand here and stop this forever, can you?"

She went on to admit she was not completely sure of that law, before turning to the bailiffs to say, "Shall we go and have a chat?"

Eventually the bailiffs and police left, as did several protesters due to the rain. The founder of the newly established Falmouth & Penryn ACORN branch stated it was unlikely they would return, based on his previous experience in other counties.

The police drove past slowly at regular intervals, as the remaining members ate sandwiches provided by Mike. About an hour after they had disappeared, the bailiffs re-emerged quickly from around the corner, in what seemed to be an attempt to catch the protesters off guard. The police then also arrived on the scene. The human shield reformed but now with half the manpower.

The bailiffs began pulling at the gate behind the protesters, ripping it off its hinges, dragging people out of the way and throwing them to the ground. Protestors went to guard the front door, where the bailiffs continued to pull them out of the way.

Suddenly one of the attending officers signaled for the bailiffs to stop, saying, "I'm afraid at how far this is going to have to go in order to get you guys in." After some heated exchanges, the bailiffs and police left and did not return. Protestors had a debriefing and disbanded.

I stayed with Mike and his son for another hour or so, as they expressed their sincere and overwhelming relief and gratitude for the support in preventing their lives from being uprooted.

Mike and his son have since secured a suitable new home in the area.

A source from ACORN said two of their members have had their evictions retracted after their landlords witnessed the eviction resistance at Mike's home on Cornwall Live News.

Despite the confrontation, this event is testament to what can be achieved when communities stand together. When the courts, law enforcement, local and national government fail to protect the interests of those most vulnerable, community led actions can, and do triumph.

Full interviews and footage of the event can be found on YouTube belonging to M.C BeeBee.

 [www.acorntheunion.org.uk](http://www.acorntheunion.org.uk)



# CHAOS TV

CHAOS stands for Community Helping All Of Society. The Chaos group spans a range of industries, offering community support in diverse ways, to support people with different needs.

And they have CHAOS (live) TV.

This was designed to help inform, entertain and keep spirits up, especially important right now. CHAOS TV aims to bring people together, tackle isolation blues, and help raise a few smiles along the way.

Through live streaming the community radio station and accompanying live video, they are able to send familiar (and some new) faces into the homes and

hands of participants, professionals, friends and family.

Social media is another great way to engage and keep up to date with what's happening. Simply search @CHAOSTVUK on Facebook. You will also find them on Twitter, Instagram, Vimeo and YouTube.

If you would like to get in touch, or have something interesting to share, please contact

 01872 229601

 [production@chaosgroupcornwall.co.uk](mailto:production@chaosgroupcornwall.co.uk)

 [www.thisischaos.co.uk](http://www.thisischaos.co.uk)

# The Cornwall Memory Café Network



Photo courtesy of Amy Findlater

Hayle Memory Café Christmas 2021

The last two years have been tumultuous for us all, but through the numerous lockdowns and social isolation, the Cornwall Memory Cafés have stayed strong.

Many continued to support their members throughout, with home deliveries of activities and treats, telephone contact and sharing newsletters and the 'weekly sparkle', the reminiscence newspaper.

At least one Memory Café kept going at full strength through the time of restrictions, by moving online and holding a zoom café, lending out the necessary kit and finding individual ways of helping people manage the technology. With relaxation of restrictions, Memory Café teams have regrouped, worked out ways of being Covid secure and reached out to their members, with over 25 cafés already reopened since August 2021.

Pictured are photos from the Hayle Memory Café at Hayle RFC in December. One local couple who were attending for the very first time said "We've had one of the most enjoyable afternoons we have had in years, we definitely will be coming again."

Memory Cafés are places where anyone with memory loss along with their carer and family can find support and friendship. The aim is to enhance the wellbeing of people who have memory loss, whether diagnosed or not, and the cafés are social havens with various activities and also signpost to helpful services.

The network has recently benefitted from their first paid staff member, thanks to working together

as a partner in the Cornwall Disability Alliance through which they received funding from Cornwall Council. Kirsty Dexter, Network Coordinator, is now supporting the Memory Café community in reopening and accessing valuable resources. Kirsty told *DISCOVER* “The Memory Cafés are a credit to their communities, the facilitators are all volunteers, and they go above and beyond in providing a safe, fun space for their members. There is always a great activity going on at each Café and everyone who attends receives a warm welcome. Expect to have lots of tea, coffee and cake!”

With 46 cafés across Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, you’re bound to find one local to you!

For more information about your local Café, you can contact Kirsty or visit the website.

☎ 01736 697459

✉ [kirsty@disabilitycornwall.org.uk](mailto:kirsty@disabilitycornwall.org.uk)

🌐 [www.cornwallmemorycafes.co.uk](http://www.cornwallmemorycafes.co.uk)



Kirsty Dexter

## DISCOVER - Tea break

### Sudoku

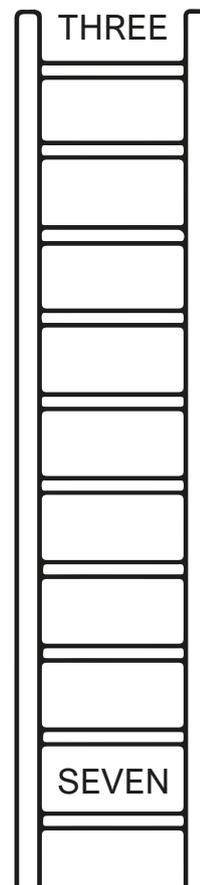
Sudoku is played on a grid of 9 x 9 spaces. Within the rows and columns are 9 “squares” (made up of 3 x 3 spaces). Each row, column and square (9 spaces each) needs to be filled out with the numbers 1-9, without repeating any numbers within the row, column or square.

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

The sudoku and ladder answers are on page 54

### 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.



Clues:

Hurled

Small mammal

Tatter

Fathered

Located

Gorged

Salvaged

Rescuer

Cut

# Social Care Reform, Making Our Voices Heard

The government has made a commitment to reforming social care with a significant announcement in September, followed up with publishing the long-awaited social care reform white paper in December, 'Build Back Better: Our Plan for Health and Social Care', together with its white paper on Adult Social Care, 'People at the Heart of Care'.

**D**isabled people's organisations feel that what we have seen so far will do little to improve the situation for disabled people of working age and for older disabled people who do not have significant assets, and the proposals were drafted without consultation with disabled people and their representative organisations, neither will they move England closer to implementing the right to independent living as defined in the 'UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities'.

Inclusion London is therefore leading a campaign and has set out key asks for reform, which would ensure disabled people receive the social care support they need to live a normal life.

In brief, reform should be based on the following principles:

- > Disabled people should have the right to thrive, not just survive. The role of care and support in



today's society must be to provide care, support and connections that enable people to live the life we choose within our community

- > Social care must provide support to people to live, learn, work, participate and connect, on an equal basis with others
- > Reform must be fully informed by the experiences, expectations and aspirations of disabled people who draw on it.

## This is what is needed to achieve this:

A long term funding solution for social care. People should receive the care and support needed to lead full lives. Social care must be put on the same footing as the NHS, free at the point of use.

Reform of the law to give more power to disabled people and to support inclusion. The law must

guarantee disabled people the right to choose where and with whom we live, have access to all necessary support to live a normal life and access community activities like everybody else.

It is critically important to ensure that money is spent on services that disabled people of all ages want and need. At the moment a lot of money is wasted by paying for care in institutions where some disabled people do not enjoy basic human rights.

Local authorities should record the needs that they are currently unable to meet which will make it possible for the government to work towards filling the gap.

Social care should be free at the point of use. It is completely unacceptable that people on means-tested benefits have to pay a significant proportion of their already small income for social care support. Charging for social care must be abolished.

Reduce bureaucratic burdens and enable disabled people to innovate. Reform must promote a radical change in the approach, ensuring that restrictions are removed so that people are truly able to self-direct their support and don't feel as though care is 'done' to them.

Inclusion London are calling on us all, individuals, organisations and allies to meet and discuss this with our MP. You can find who your MP is on the Parliament website [www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com)

MPs usually hold meetings with their constituents. It is up to each MP to decide when and how often. Those meetings usually take place on Fridays or over the weekend. To book an appointment you should email or phone your MP's constituency email and ask for a meeting.

## Here are some suggested key messages for the meeting.

It is important to remember that social care is primarily the responsibility of your local authority, however, the government sets minimum standards and determines the funding that local authorities will get. Make sure the discussion does not slip completely into local context. It is important that your MP understands that improvements can and should be made at national level.

*Ask your MP to do the following:*

To write to the Care Minister highlighting the problems for working age disabled people;

To encourage the government to engage with disabled people and disabled people's organisations (DPOs) in the development of the

reform. Social care first and foremost must work for people who need this support.

To table written questions about the involvement and consultation with DPOs in the development of social care reform.

## Key messages

- > 'Nothing about us without us' – this should apply to social care. Reforms that will not make a significant difference to the lives of people who need it, will not be successful. You may have to explain the difference between DPOs and organisations for disabled people.
- > Disabled people want to live a normal life like everybody else. Social care support should go beyond keeping people clean, fed and safe.
- > Current reforms will protect people with assets, which is important, but will do nothing for disabled people who are not able to work and do not have savings. They will continue paying for, often, minimal support they get out of their means-tested benefits.
- > Disabled people want support which will enable and promote the right to independent living. This means being able to decide where to live and receiving support in the community to live a normal life with equal opportunities to others.

## Teabreak answers

The Sudoku

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

The Ladder

THREE, THREE, SHREW, SHRED, SIRD,  
SATED, SAVER, SEVER, SEVEN

# Film Review

by Trisha Dowdall



The Sound of Metal is a film far deeper than a heavy metal drummer suddenly losing his hearing. While watching it on a rainy December afternoon, the soundtrack became even more atmospheric, from loud crashing to inaudible screeching to silence, it definitely deserves the Oscar and Bafta it won!

Drummer, Ruben, who is played by Riz Ahmed has overcome addiction from heroin after meeting his partner, Lou (Olivia Cooke) a singer and guitarist. They form a band and tour the US in their RV motorhome, playing to a loyal fan base. From the outset you can sense the tension, frustrations and insecurities Ruben carries, which he releases onstage when performing.

When his hearing disappears, Ruben is beyond devastated. He isn't capable of acknowledging he is deaf and won't accept he will never hear again, or play the drums.

The principal question posed by the film is whether his attitude to this disability is rational, or is it because he has an addictive personality? Is his drumming his replacement for the previous heroin habit? Faced with losing both Lou and his purpose in the band, he sees only one option: cochlear implants to restore his hearing; expensive and risky surgery.

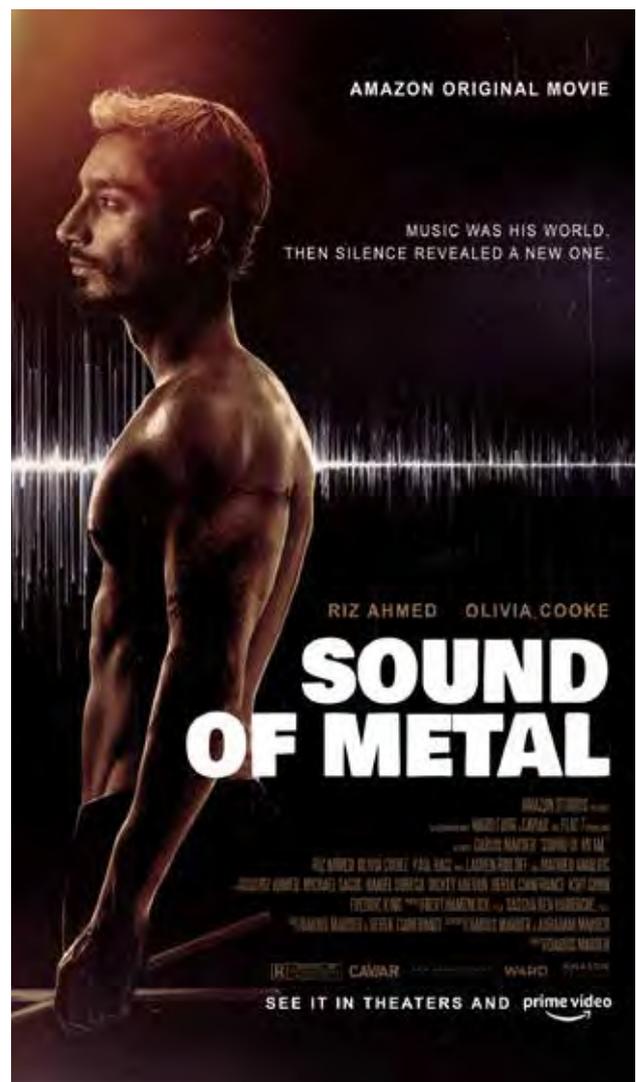
Ironically, the only way he could afford the surgery is by selling his beloved RV and musical equipment, sabotaging both his musical career and the relationship with Lou, which are his life and only purpose.

Ruben is referred to a sponsor and offered a place at a therapeutic community for deaf recovering addicts, run by a Vietnam veteran Joe (Paul Raci). Joe is a strong believer hearing impaired people need to learn to accept their condition, find the stillness inside and adapt. This causes conflict between the pair, as Ruben is filled with anger and resentment, certain surgery is his only option.

There are times though when he attempts to be part of the community, and these are powerful elements to the film. The one I specifically found poignant,

saw Ruben in a classroom of children introducing himself by writing his name on a board in capital letters, which is actually shouting in deaf society. Despite his efforts, (if that's what you call them – you decide) Ruben has the operation to insert the implants, which is seen as a betrayal by the deaf community, for which he is ordered to leave.

Ruben goes to catch up with Lou, who has her own demons to face, and it quickly becomes apparent how implants may not be the real solution to his loss of hearing, because he finally begins to realise that losing his hearing wasn't in fact his biggest problem.



# Cornwall Disability Alliance



Cornwall Disability Alliance

Cornwall's disability organisations have come together to collectively address the issues affecting our stakeholders, shape and influence future strategy, policy and services in county to ensure they are inclusive, and to strengthen our services and reach more people.

When the pandemic arrived in 2020, the voluntary sector in Cornwall was put under considerable pressure to respond to the needs within our communities, particularly the people who had clinical vulnerabilities, were older or who lived alone. Community leaders came together, led by the new Chief Executive of Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum, Helen Ball, to collaborate and work together to find solutions, support our communities and ensure the voice of the sector was heard in local, regional and national decision-making, and to provide the sector with the resources needed to continue to give support. Organisations that shared a common focus came together to share good practice and support one another.

As time went on, the community leaders were asked to bring together and lead 'Alliances' of like-minded voluntary and community sector organisations. So disAbility Cornwall & Isles of Scilly moved ahead to Chair and develop the Cornwall Disability Alliance, initially comprising 10 organisations with a shared interest in supporting people with long term health conditions or a disability.

Jane Johnson, Chief Executive of disAbility Cornwall said "With a vision of a fully inclusive and equitable society and 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, enabling us to create more inclusive communities that work for everyone."

The Alliance has had many successes since galvanising the disability sector. It's been awarded the contract with Victim Support for specialist support to its stakeholders who have been a victim of crime. This was followed by a substantial amount of Covid recovery funding to carry out a range of support services from digital training and cyber safety, to British Sign Language Counselling for deaf people, re-energising activities for people with sight loss, re-starting the Memory Cafes, providing a personalised and holistic support service for



people in complex situations and so much more. Most recently, a formalised agreement with the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust has been agreed, to provide a Co-production Advisory Panel for the building works, changes and developments at the Royal Cornwall & West Cornwall Hospitals to ensure they are accessible and inclusive.

The Alliance aims to address inequalities that are faced by their respective stakeholders and work with the authorities to make our communities more inclusive. They are also facilitating co-production with Cornwall Council on their Local Plan 2050, with a dedicated group comprised of people with lived experience to influence and shape future services. This will ultimately mean they work better for all of us and cost savings will be made in the process.

If you would like to make contact with the Cornwall Disability Alliance to discuss an issue that you believe we need to be addressing, contact Amy Findlater:

📞 01736 697057 or

✉ amy@disabilitycornwall.org.uk

## The Members of the Cornwall Disability Alliance are all featured in this publication, they are:

**disAbility Cornwall & IoS** with a mission to represent, include, support and empower people with long term health conditions or a disability, their families and carers.

**Active8** who offer day and residential activities for 14-30 year-olds with a physical disability.

**Cornwall Accessible Activities Programme (CAAP)**, who provide activities to children with additional needs during the school holidays.

**The Cornwall Memory Café Network** support people with memory loss and their carers.

**Cornwall Mobility**, a centre of excellence for mobility in the South West, who aim to provide solutions, services, support and reassurance to people of all ages who face independence and mobility challenges.

**Cornwall People First**, a user-led self-advocacy charity for adults with a learning disability or autism.

**Hearing Loss Cornwall** help people who are deaf or have hearing loss to benefit from fulfilling lives.

**iSightCornwall** supporting people who are blind or partially sighted to lead more active and independent lives.

**Mid Cornwall Lifestyles** provide practical and social support, with advocacy and guidance to disabled people.

**Merlin MS Centre** provide clinical and therapeutic services for people with multiple sclerosis, and other neurological conditions.

**Cornwall Advocacy** is the newest member, joining the alliance from January. They provide free advocacy for people with a learning disability in Cornwall.

For more information on the Voluntary Sector Forum and all of Cornwall's alliances, membership and events, visit their website.

🌐 [www.cornwallvsf.org](http://www.cornwallvsf.org)



# Keeping Warm, Safe & Well

## Winter Wellbeing Guide

This campaign, run by Cornwall Council and many partners, supports people who are at risk during the winter months, due to low income, older age, health condition or disability, carers and families with a child with an additional need, or a cold and damp home. The team offers home visits and follow-up support and advice for heating and insulation grants and practical advice on understanding and reducing your energy bills, as well as combatting condensation and damp. They also can advise and support with debt issues and welfare benefits.

Every year, the Winter Wellbeing Guide is printed, and circulated to households at risk. It contains advice on looking after yourself, staying warm, keeping safe when the weather is bad, and keeping mentally well, as well as a list of organisations that can offer support.

You can get hold of a copy from some GP practices, Treliske Hospital and other community organisations, or view it online.

 [www.cornwall.gov.uk/winterwellbeing](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/winterwellbeing)

## Community Energy Plus Advice Service

As energy prices continue to climb, the number of people struggling to keep their homes heated to an adequate temperature and stay on top of their energy bills is steadily increasing.

Low wages, large numbers of poorly insulated and solid wall properties and reliance on more expensive forms of heating where there is no access to mains gas, have forced many households to make difficult choices between heating and other living costs.

If you're in fuel debt, struggling to pay your energy bills or concerned about your property being cold, damp or mouldy, our fully trained and qualified energy advisors can provide independent advice. We can point you towards any current financial support schemes for insulation and heating or direct you to other charities and organisations who might be able to help.

Are you (or someone you know) elderly, with underlying health issues, caring for a vulnerable person or young children, worried about fuel bills, debts, keeping warm or your home being cold or damp? Is it affecting your health? If so, then Winter Wellbeing can help.



WINT  
Well





## Keep Safe Stay Informed Keep Warm & Eat Well

Services to help you enjoy a warmer, healthier home

- > Independent energy advice tailored to your individual needs, including home visits and follow-up support.
- > Support with staying active and eating well within your home.
- > Advice and support to access mains gas safety checks.
- > Free smoke alarm and home safety checks.
- > Access to the Cold Weather Priority Scheme if your home has oil fuel.
- > Access to heating and insulation grants.
- > Providing practical advice on understanding and reducing your energy bills and combatting condensation and damp.
- > Financial help and advice to stay warmer for less.
- > Support for smaller items such as heated blankets, slow cookers and clothing to keep warm during winter months.
- > Get your prescription for lower energy bills by using the new Home Energy Health Check service.

For advice and access to services provided by the programme's 30 partner organisations.

📞 0800 9541956.

### Community Energy Plus Freephone

Our independent energy advice service provides householders in Cornwall with information on insulation, heating and managing energy bills, including advising on any current government schemes for insulation and heating.

Our advisors are available to help you between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

📞 0800 9541956 or ✉ [advice@cep.org.uk](mailto:advice@cep.org.uk)

WINTER  
being



# Independent Cornwall Autism Network

Independent Cornwall Autism Network (ICAN) was founded by Tazmin, Amy and Heather who have a combination of personal and professional experience and an awareness of the need for autism specific services in Cornwall.

Tazmin told *DISCOVER*: "Our aim is to provide a platform for autistics, created by autistics. We've got online support groups, links to local services, and also guidance to help support people through their personal journey when they discover that they are autistic. It's not easy!"

## Peer Support Groups in Cornwall:

**Women with Autism / Asperger's** is for women diagnosed/pending diagnosis.

**Autistic / Asperger's** is for anyone diagnosed/pending diagnosis.

**40 years + HFA (High Functioning Autism) & Asperger's** is for mature autistics, diagnosed/pending diagnosis.

**Partners of Autistics** is a mixed group of autistics and their partners.

**Autistics / Aspies for Professionals** is for students and professionals, and people diagnosed with

autism or Asperger's who are happy to take part in research.

**Men with Autism / Asperger's** is for men who are diagnosed/pending diagnosis.



In addition to the Facebook presence, ICAN also advocates for the autistic community at Partnership Boards, and networking events such as the Aiming Higher Conference, seeking to address issues around gaps in services, and to speak on behalf of the community.

In the future, they are hoping to address bigger issues, using the connections made so far. However, the group needs new people to help run it and the original founders are urgently seeking new people to join their dedicated team.

If you are interested in supporting ICAN, then please get in touch via Facebook, or by email.

Facebook page: Independent Cornwall Autism Network

✉ independentcornwallautismnetwork@outlook.com

Independence

**Mountain Trike**  
THE ALL TERRAIN WHEELCHAIR  
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www.mountaintrike.com



Jan and Barrie Burns share with *DISCOVER* precious memories of their son Charlie, and how their tragic loss led at least to positive healthcare improvements, and also the creation of Charlie's Star, to 'create hope and smiles' for local families who have also endured the loss of a child, helping families cope together at the most difficult of times.



Families experience not only grief and depression around the loss of a child, but often, survivor's guilt. Financial issues are also common, as parents struggle at work and many life insurance policies do not cover the death of a child or young person.

Charlie Burns was considered to be perfectly healthy, yet he suffered a seizure one week after his 10th birthday in 2011 which was incorrectly diagnosed and treated. This meant that his parents were unprepared for a second seizure when it came, just four days later, during which Charlie also lost consciousness. Despite the best efforts of paramedics, Charlie sadly passed away before he arrived at hospital.

Charlie's death was the beginning of a long and painful road for his parents and sister Izzie. It took more than six months for his cause of death to be determined, and there was debate among medical professionals as to whether 'Sudden Unexplained Death in Epilepsy' (SUDEP) could even be given as a cause of death for someone who was not diagnosed with epilepsy. The fault for the initial misdiagnosis was eventually admitted by South West Ambulance Service Trust (SWAST), and changes were implemented to prevent such lapses in training and duty of care from happening again.

SUDEP is a silent killer, which takes the lives of people who have sometimes not even been diagnosed and is not well understood or widely known in medical circles, yet is one of the top ten causes of early death.

Charlie's parents have done so much to create a lasting legacy to raise awareness of SUDEP among medical professionals, especially paramedics, to ensure other families could be spared such heartache. They worked with SWAST to create a training pack called 'Charlie's Story' to inform and educate, which has been rolled out across all 10 Ambulance Service Trusts in England, impacting an estimated 35 million people.

SUDEP Action, the only UK charity that researches these deaths, has worked with Charlie's parents to launch the Epilepsy Deaths Register, for further research in this area. A device has been developed to detect epilepsy, as cases like Charlie's can remain undiagnosed if only the nocturnal seizures take place.

The Wearable Apnoea Detection Device secured a grant of €2m towards developing a viable product and initial research has now been completed and is being prepared for publication. Some unique and important findings are now being used to progress the Epilepsy Monitoring System. Charlie's Star holidays are offered at a beach chalet at Upton Towans near Hayle, sleeping 2-6 people and dogs are welcome outside the peak summer season. If you or someone you know could benefit from the support of this generous charity, contact them via their website.

 [www.charliesstar.org](http://www.charliesstar.org)

 [www.sudep.org](http://www.sudep.org)

# Let's Innovate

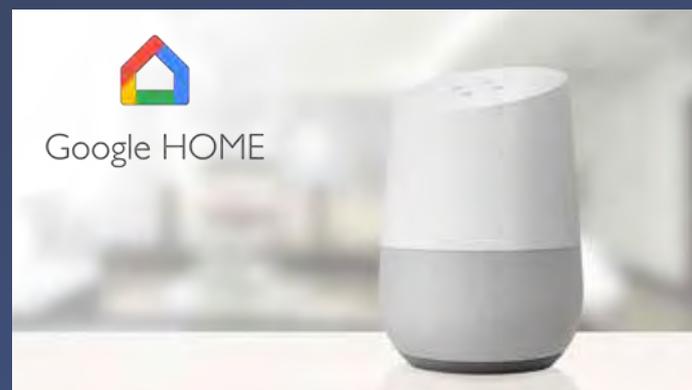
## The benefits of AI technology

There is no greater feeling than being independent in your own home. At one time only physical aids were available but now, electronic devices are increasingly being created and tested to enhance our independence and control.

*DISCOVER* has explored the world of Artificial Intelligence (AI technology), to demonstrate some

of the benefits they may bring for assisted living. A couple of names you might recognise are the Amazon Alexa, and the Google Home.

Both technologies can complete similar tasks, so we have chosen a couple from each AI assistant to let you know just some of the many benefits.



### Amazon Alexa

Alexa offers answers to many questions that once would be answered by friends, family or care providers. Examples of these are: "Give me the news", "play the radio", "read an audible book". Others include asking Alexa what the weather is like in your area so that you can dress appropriately for the outdoors.

Alexa can be connected to your heating, allowing you to verbally ask her to change your settings. You can also connect lights and lamps, and verbally ask for them to be turned on or off. This will save extra trips around the home if you have limited mobility.

You can ask Alexa to set timers and the reason for the time such as reminding you to take medication, or what time your Personal Assistant (PA) might be visiting you. Your PA could set this for you so you can ask Alexa "How long left on the PA timer?" on which she will remind you how many hours or minutes until your PA arrives.

Alexa can also be turned to high volumes for people with hearing loss. This again can be controlled verbally so if you can't quite make out what your Alexa is telling you, you can say "Alexa, volume up".

### Google Home

For people who may have limited dexterity, holding a smartphone and other technology might be a challenge. Google Home enables you to make and receive phone calls from your phone, by simply asking.

Similarly, if you find it difficult to hold your remote control, or maybe forget what each button can do, then it can be connected to your TV enabling 'hands-free'. You can say "Google play Planet Earth on Netflix".

There are many devices compatible with Google Home, such as key tags allowing you to locate your car or door keys by asking Google Home to play a noise from the key tag.

For people who have difficulty making extra trips to and from the front door, there are Smart Locks controlled by your Google Home. These allow you to lock and unlock your door without having to move. You can also ask whether your door is locked or not.

With Google Home you can set routines. You can add what you benefit from to a routine, for example, by saying "Hey Google, good morning" you could set the device to turn on your lights and TV, turn up your heating, remind you of your morning medication and also give you the news and weather update. This will save you the trip to the light switches, TV, remote control and thermostat.

# Let's Demonstrate

## iWalk Cornwall

iWalk was created to enable people to enjoy walks across Cornwall. This app allows you to purchase and download walks you are interested in, sorting by length and level of difficulty as well as location.



It gives you directions during your walk with beep and vibrate notifications when the path or direction is due to change, it informs you of points of interest, warns when you detour from the path and also tells you the distance until the next direction. Included are estimated walking times. The app uses your phone's GPS, not your mobile data and also allows you to report unsafe or newly damaged terrain so the team can report it to the local countryside team. It hosts guidance on suitability for dogs and steepness of the terrain. Available on iOS and Android.

 [www.iwalkcornwall.co.uk/](http://www.iwalkcornwall.co.uk/)

## Predictable

Predictable has been designed for people who are literate but have lost the ability to speak, possibly due to cerebral palsy, motor neurone disease, laryngectomy, stroke, apraxia or brain injury. Simply



start typing into the text box and the app will predict what you are going to say and read it out loud. They say this app "gives a voice to people who don't have one." Predictable has won many awards and is the market leader in its category, with eye-tracking function launching soon. Available on iOS, Android, and Microsoft.

## Safer Seas & Rivers Service

Created by the Surfers Against Sewage Charity based in Cornwall. The app informs you which facilities are available at each beach and also what activities are available there. It also enables you to check your local beaches to see whether they are safe and unpolluted to visit, as it has been known for people and animals to become ill from being in contact with sewage washed up onto our beaches.



 [www.sas.org.uk/safer-seas-service](http://www.sas.org.uk/safer-seas-service)

## NaviLens - Colourful QR codes for sight loss

A new, colourful kind of barcode technology, developed by a Spanish firm is being adopted for the first time in food packaging in the UK. It aims to help people who are partially-sighted or have sight loss to identify products in shops, and access health and safety information about food. Currently undergoing trials with Kellogg's and the RNIB, the new colourful barcodes can be picked out at a range of up to 3m by the app. The phone will then verbally tell the user what the product is, and can also bring up details of ingredients, fat and sugar content to help people with food allergies or health conditions. The technology is already in use on the New York Metro and Spanish public transport networks.

# Getting it right for over 35 years...

*'Always a pleasure to visit. Very helpful people.'* -Mr. P Crawford

*Since 1983 we've been providing high quality services and equipment to people in the South West. Our highly trained staff will always assess your needs first, before making a recommendation, so that we can help you choose the equipment or service that will provide the best solution for you.*



## Our wide range of services include:

- Driving assessments & tuition
- Theory & hazard perception tuition
- Passenger/transfer assessments
- Vehicle adaptations
- Specialist drive from wheelchair assessments
- Assessment and consultation for powered mobility scooters, wheelchairs, and wheeled walkers
- Maintenance, servicing & repairs

## Our Independent Living Centre features a wide range of mobility products, including;

- Mobility aids
- Rise & recline chairs
- Solutions for around the home
- Wheeled walkers
- Wheelchairs
- Specialist high care seating
- Powered mobility scooters & wheelchairs
- Sleeping solutions

### How to find us

**Cornwall Mobility,  
North Buildings,  
Royal Cornwall Hospital,  
Truro, TR1 3LJ**

Free parking  
We are open Monday to Friday  
9am to 5pm (Closed Bank Holidays)



*'Friendly team, excellent service.'* - Mr. D Law



# Catriona's Story *My Pandemic*

Life in lockdown was hard and lonely, although luckily, I could have my Personal Assistants (PAs) still help me, but not seeing my friends and family was awful.

I was in hospital recovering from an operation in March 2020 when it began, and the staff told me to go home as they thought it was safer, although I had not healed, was being sick and not at all well. I'm registered blind with some other health issues, so trying to recover while in a lot of pain with sickness and incontinence, was really hard.

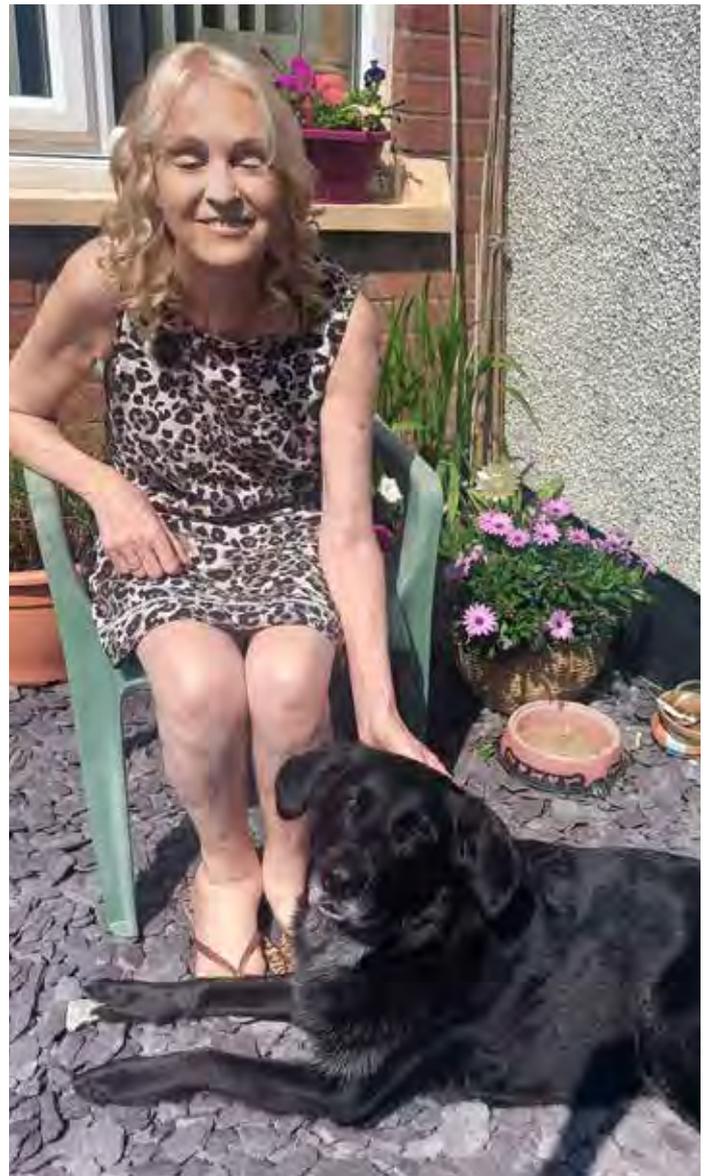
Lockdown began just a few days later and my main PA rang me in tears that morning to say she had to self-isolate as her husband had Covid symptoms, so already it was worrying what might happen if my other PAs had to do the same. There was no information from the government, so we just had to Google what was best to do regarding my PAs working with me.

I have Kiesha my guide dog too, so we arranged for two of my PAs to come only to my back door and take her out, then they would sanitise the lead and collar. I told them to wash their hands all the time, use disinfectant spray and to constantly wash all sides and handles with disinfectant. We all wore gloves and masks, and even today we have the same routine but without the gloves now.

I was lucky that my sister would drop off things at my front door and friends would phone me, as so many people didn't even have that.

After months of isolating, when it was time for us 'shielders' to go out, it was so busy here in the holiday town where I live that friends warned me not to. Some of my friends had to walk out into the road, which I couldn't do with my guide dog, so still felt very trapped, even though everyone else was getting out. To be honest I still feel trapped nearly two years later. Everyone can get on with their lives a bit more easily now, but because I've had a transplant, I still have to be careful. I wonder sometimes if people think I'm being over cautious with reminding them to wear masks, wash their hands and do a lateral flow test before they see me, but it's so risky for if I catch Covid with my immune system being so low.

I'm a very positive person and did just try and make life better for myself by finding things to do, like calling people who were elderly and on their own. I felt lucky I didn't catch the virus, after seeing so many people in intensive care and during my own hospital stays. At least I wasn't dealing with that!



*Catriona with guide dog Kiesha courtesy of Sophie Guest*

So many people were kind and offered help which was lovely, but it was the thought of not being able to go out with my guide dog that upset me, so as soon as the summer months were over and less people about, it was great to have some freedom to go out with her.

I still wear a mask because I don't know when people are coming near me. I think the public don't realise how life has been for people like me. I've not been able to see most of my family because they live far away, and I'm just too nervous to board a train or plane still. I only see a few people and mainly in my garden if it's nice.

I always thought it would be lovely for shielders if we could have one week all to ourselves just to go out, with the rest of the public having to stay in, just to be normal!

CORNWALL  
**LINK**

IMPROVE  
WELLBEING

**GET**  
ACTIVE

STAY  
HEALTHY

SPECIALIST  
SUPPORT

INCLUSION  
**MATTERS**

## **INCLUSION MATTERS**

is a service that aims to make it easier for residents of Cornwall to find out the information and advice they need to increase their well-being, stay healthy, get active and increase their connection to their community.

**HELPLINE:** The first port of call for people to find out about groups, activities and other opportunities. Our trained advisers will assist you to find out what's going on in your area and signpost you for further support.

**CORNWALL LINK:** Cornwall Link is the website to find out what's going on in Cornwall - from social groups to peer groups, walking groups to helping a group - there are lots of opportunities to explore. Community Groups and Organisations can also use the platform to share their activities and opportunities.

**SPECIALIST SUPPORT:** Inclusion Matters knows that sometimes we need a little more support to take part in activities and groups or, that we can have a range of issues that need tackling. Through our specialist support we can help you with things like fuel poverty and welfare benefits, or getting back to work.

## **SUPPORT FOR COMMUNITY GROUPS:**

We think community groups are at the heart of the places we live and work and that these groups need support too! Through our Community Asset Team we can offer support and training to community groups to access funding, build skills and capacity and share events/resources.

## **SUPPORT AFTER A HOSPITAL STAY:**

We know that a hospital stay can be daunting and the importance of support when you get back home. Our Hospital Discharge Worker will support you to have an action plan so that your recovery and recuperation goes smoothly.

**GET ONLINE:** We understand that using the internet can feel like a daunting task if you don't feel you have the confidence or skills you need, or you just simply don't know where to begin - we will be able to support your first steps and show you just how to gain all the benefits of being online.

**GET INVOLVED:** There are a number of ways you can get involved with Inclusion Matters such as volunteering assisting our Community Coaches. Please contact us to find out more.

**01872 266383**  
[www.cornwall-link.co.uk](http://www.cornwall-link.co.uk)

# Active Plus Veterans Inspiring People

## Well-being, Employment & Training Support

Active Plus deliver courses and activities that build confidence, boost motivation, improve communication skills and inspire change.

If you are: someone with a health condition or struggling to get into work or education; helping children and students to unlock their potential; an employer who is developing a resilient and sustainable workforce, Active Plus can help you take the next step - support available across Cornwall and Devon.

### Preparing for the future

#### Well-being activities

#### Employment support

#### Embrace change

#### Guidance

Positive People

Who Dares Works

Veterans Support

Health Works for Cornwall

Social Prescribing

Family Matters

Business support



☎ 01326 567174    ✉ [admin@activeplus.org.uk](mailto:admin@activeplus.org.uk)

Active Plus run a number of projects, funded by different funding streams, including BBO projects funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and the European Social Fund, as well as funding from Cornwall Council, the European Social Fund and the NHSE Armed Forces Team.



# Health Works for Cornwall & IoS

It can be a long road from unemployment into a job, but there is support along the way.

There are currently more than a dozen projects across Cornwall, funded by the European Social Fund and the National Lottery, to support people into employment, and Health Works for Cornwall is an exciting programme which aims to support 5,500 unemployed people, where there are health-related barriers to employment and this support is available across the whole of Cornwall and Isles of Scilly.

The word 'barrier' is particularly important here because most of these projects will offer targeted or specialist support to address the issues which prevent disabled people from achieving their goals.

The Who Dares Works project is led by Active Plus which employs sick, injured and wounded military veterans. The project has 17 different partners, providing help for everything from dyslexia to debt, substance misuse to mental health, housing and homelessness, sexual abuse and trauma.

The partners include disAbility Cornwall, United Response and CHAOS, who are frontline providers of support for people with a disability and learning difficulties.

Most of the projects will provide participants with a mentor or a change coach who will work one-to-one with them to assess their barriers and needs, and help them plan their steps towards employment, training or education. Work

placements, and especially volunteering, can play a massive part in helping people return to work. Not only does it look good on a CV, particularly if someone has been unemployed for a while, but it also puts the person in front of a potential employer, offers training, skills development and networking opportunities, as well as boosting confidence and self-esteem.

Some projects, including Who Dares Works and Work Routes, offer in-work support for their participants for up to six months. This can mean help with clothing, transport or childcare costs, to overcome what might be a difficult transition from unemployment into work. It can also open a dialogue between the participant, their mentor and employer, to identify and overcome any problems that might arise. To be eligible for these projects you must be unemployed and over the age of 16 or 18. All services are fully-funded.

Featured in the photograph are Who Dares Works participants, Heidi and Toni with their instructor Pete, upon completion of their confidence and motivation course. Heidi said she felt more confident after the course than she ever imagined she could have, and Toni said for the first time she felt that employment could be a realistic goal for her future. All instructors are military veterans who use their knowledge and experiences to help others.

By Sean Woods, Who Dares Works



# This is Malachi



Photos courtesy of Marie Ralph

In September, Malachi started at the Copper Academy in Devon, a special educational needs & disability college for young people with varying levels of disability. His passion has always been make-up, special effects make-up and beauty. At college, he's not only learning the functional skills needed in life, but will have the opportunity to sit his GCSEs, make appropriate peer friendships and get involved with the social aspects of being part of a thriving beauty business, as students also get to work in the salon where members of the public pay to have treatments and haircuts.

**M**arie Ralph, Malachi's Mum told *DISCOVER*: "All of this from a child who wasn't even allowed to use a pair of scissors in school, because he 'might' hurt someone due to his tics."

Malachi is diagnosed with a complex mix of autism, pathological demand avoidance, attention deficit disorder, tourette's syndrome, sensory processing disorder and various physical difficulties that cause issues with walking. He has his share of challenges, but that does not hold him back.

As a result of such complexities, his parents spent countless hours battling for both the education and social care support he desperately needed, after losing over five years of education due to a lack of special educational needs spaces to adequately and safely meet his needs. However, after just over two years in home education, on a bespoke package, he is thriving at college and proving everyone wrong that he would never cope in the 'real world'.

Marie added: "Despite his challenges, he has come on leaps and bounds over the past couple of years. He discovered a passion and talent for art, achieved his bronze Duke of Edinburgh, also several mountain and rock-climbing qualifications, and is working regularly for DISC, a charity which feeds and houses homeless and vulnerable people. He has made new friendships and most of all, is loving life."

Malachi said the college fits him 'like a glove', and he's finally found a space which understands him

and a peer group who accept him and think he's brilliant fun. Previously, like many children with neuro developmental disorders and no learning disability, he felt he didn't fit among the children with a learning disability, but he didn't fit among neuro typical children either.

Malachi has had several commissions for his seascapes and fiery acrylic pours and is now the proud tenant of his own working artist studio. He also displays and sells his artwork at the Marina Hotel in Newquay, after they saw his work and asked him to display there. His art and jewellery shop is online at Etsy, Redbubble and a Facebook page, and doing well. He's even now selling work across the water to New York, Massachusetts and Georgia!

Last Summer, Malachi ran several art workshops for children aged 3-16 at an 'Art on the beach' day with the youth group he also now helps to run: Youth Art Connect. This group sets out to promote positive mental health through art, and he worked all day setting up stalls and helping to organise workshops for a post-Covid family mental health day. He also assists his mum to run the 'Home Ed' weekly art groups.

Only three years ago, Malachi was requiring a minimum of 3:1 staffing for 'safety' and was experiencing hundreds of meltdowns a month. Now it's mostly 1:1 and even periods of total independence, due to a fantastic care team of eight staff working alongside the family.

Marie said: "We believe Malachi has proven that when consistent approaches, determined staffing and emotional coaching responses are used, children with complex behaviours that may challenge, can thrive in life and achieve the same as any other child. He never ceases to amaze me. Just when I think he cannot excel anymore, he blows it out of the water! He is maturing into a very thoughtful, talented and hardworking individual whom I thoroughly believe will do extremely well in life. Everywhere he goes he inspires, brightens and excites the people he meets. I look forward to the next few years to see where he will end up and what exciting adventures he will have."

 [www.facebook.com/thecornishartshed](https://www.facebook.com/thecornishartshed)

 [www.etsy.com/uk/shop/caiskrafts](https://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/caiskrafts)



# Tazmin's story

## *My Pandemic*

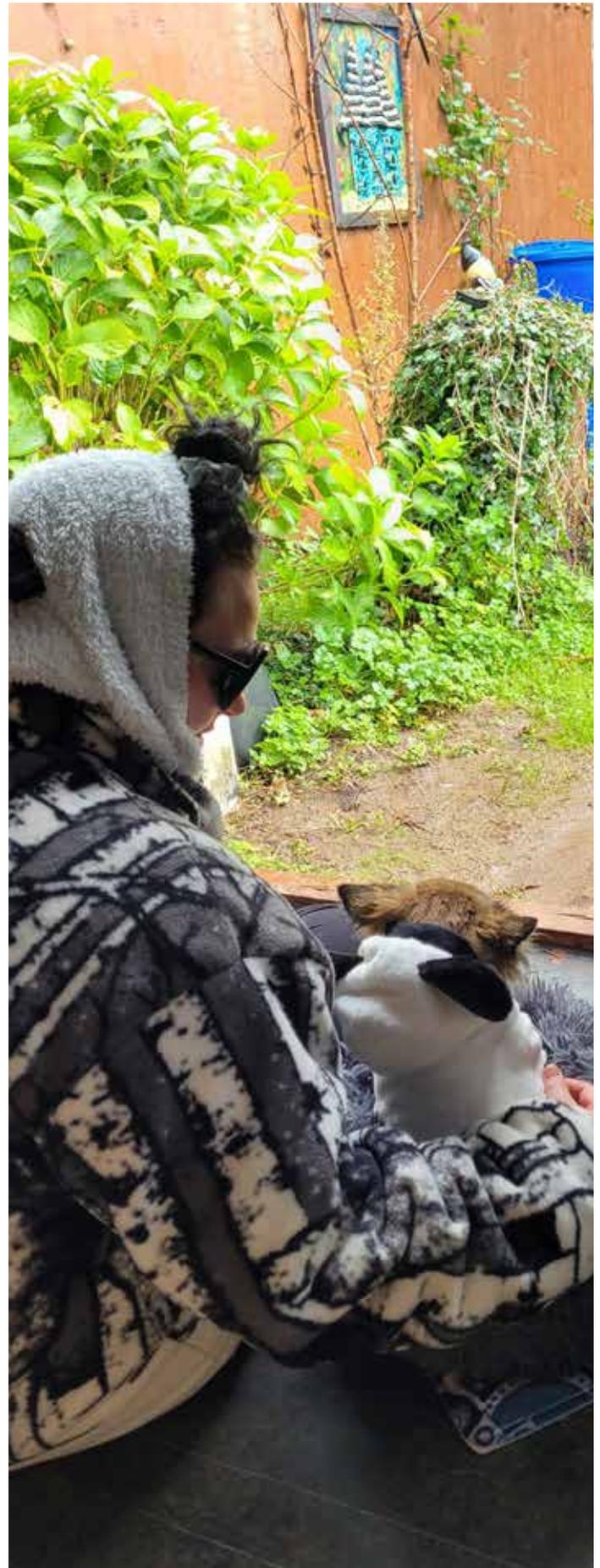
It's been confusing and overwhelming right? The rules have been inconsistent which adds to the already elevated anxiety and anticipation of what's next to come. Not for me though. Before the pandemic, I was struggling with complying to societal expectations (being an autistic) and too anxious to do much, except go to work and with my time off, I would pick up more projects to do, to completely mask that my mental health was plummeting, which would in turn, snowball.

Then the pandemic happened. Neighbours would ask why I didn't appear so worried. I was, I just knew how to handle the adrenaline better, this was normal for me. The anxiety levels Covid-19 brought the general public was similar to what people like me already have, planning a day in advance for everything. This impending doom of potential death wasn't much different to the feeling I got waking up every morning.

On the plus side, people have been more considerate when shopping, which means no more bumping into me, they are more mindful of where their germs are going. Something I, as a carer and someone who struggles with cross contamination thoughts, have always been aware and concerned of. People have had more empathy for each other. They are struggling to read facial expressions because of masks, have difficulty hearing full sentences, or adapting to busy rooms again after adjusting to online meetings, forgetting things or misperceiving something, due to adrenaline being so heightened. People have of course found it stressful, but I didn't. Uncertain impending doom is my baseline due to not having my needs met as a younger self. All I had to do was stay home, wash my hands, and keep my space.

I am used to grieving. My neurotype is known to have hyperfocal 'obsessions', so we have to grieve every time we are made to put one to rest. I've managed to use the time to better my life and find new hobbies. Can you imagine a world where we are given the space to work on ourselves without pressure bringing the worse out in us?

Lockdown gave me the space to avoid 'triggers' and heal, without the pressure to rush back to work. Now, as we come out of lockdown, I feel it all again, impending doom, but not the one I have gotten comfortable with. We may or may not get sick and die, but the impending doom that everything is going to go back to the way it was – 'Normal'.



*Tazmin at home*

# The 'Accidental' Mayor



*Truro in Bloom. Steven with the Anti Social Behaviour Officer for Truro, with the rest of the ASB and community safety team and Truro Town Crier Lionel Knight*

Steven Webb, Mayor of Truro, has found himself there by accident, both literally and figuratively. He is a wheelchair user due to a freak accident when he was 18, never really meaning to go into politics, and certainly not intending to become Mayor of Truro and a perceived champion for disabled people locally. But now he's here, he plans to use this year in office to ensure 'no groups are left out', and his legacy is a culture of inclusion across the board.

As a boy, Steven had a troubled childhood, with his parents' divorce, homelessness and his grandfather's suicide, all before his teens. He came to Cornwall after being made homeless with his mum, aged just nine, and was housed in a rented caravan near Truro, before moving to a women's refuge.

He ran away from home, was kicked out of sixth form college in Truro, and attempted suicide as a 'cry for help', by the age of 18. Diagnosed with dyslexia at primary school, he never really received support to deal with it and struggled to focus on his studies. Steven told DISCOVER: "I wasn't really troublesome to the extent that I was breaking the law but wasn't a model student either!" Recovering from the attempt on his own life, he was messing around at a swimming pool after hours and pulled a stunt that wasn't new, but for some reason it went horribly wrong on this occasion. The result was a broken neck, what's known as a complete C5 break, and he lost the use of his body below the chest, and the sensation in his hands and lower arms.

Steven added, "It took a year for me to be released from hospital, spending three weeks initially in Intensive Care and struggling to adjust to what my



body could, and could now not do. It's mind-blowing how the body adapts, yet frustrating how it doesn't."

Steven told us how he struggled until quite recently with the feeling of not being 'deserving', not being a 'proper' disabled person. He said, "I have immense respect for people who were born with their disability or acquired it through no fault of their own. I felt less worthy of assistance and support as I caused my disability." He's coming to realise now that people who call him 'an inspiration' might be right to be inspired by how he has coped with what life has handed him, rather than the teen who did something foolish.

His attitude has been to focus on what he can do rather than what he can't, to take a positive approach and look past the difficult days. He has had his own business, been in a long-term relationship, and he has been a meditation and mindfulness coach for the last few years too.

As a young man, Steven undertook work experience with Matthew Taylor MP and wanted to become an MP himself, briefly, so always had an interest in politics and using the statutory system to make a difference for people. In 2017, he ran out of excuses against the badgering of his party's elections committee, and consented to stand as a Councillor for Truro City Council. The following year, he was approached to be Vice Chair of the Council's planning committee, where he found himself the disabled advocate within the planning process, pressing for accessibility features in plans submitted.

Then in 2021, he was approached to be Truro's Deputy Mayor, which is normally a year-long position leading to a subsequent year as Mayor. He agreed on the understanding he didn't have to be Mayor, but in the May 2021 elections, the sitting Deputy Mayor failed to retain her seat. This left a vacancy which he was asked to fill, being the best qualified candidate, although without the traditional year to prepare an agenda for his mayoral year, or consider his platform!

"Truro City Council's staff have adjusted well to

my needs," said Steven. "They schedule meetings later in the day to allow for my carers and morning routine, check venues in advance to ensure accessibility, and forewarn meeting attendees of the potential need to reschedule at short notice."

Steven has condensed his extensive thoughts on what he would like to achieve. "In every decision I make, I want to leave no groups out, whether religious, disability, dementia, whether it's the youth, elderly, businesses. There will be a culture extending past my time in office of inclusion across the board."

Talking about his experience as a person with dyslexia, Steve said, "Although I was diagnosed at 9 or 10, I didn't really get any support to deal with it and blagged my way through school. It was only when I got to 40, I began to appreciate that it's a wonderful gift and an opportunity. Sure, I find reading difficult, and occasionally I mix up words – the other day I knew I needed to refer to a large bird, in a Council meeting, and my brain came up with pterodactyl, not albatross! Dyslexia means I have to slow down and really focus on things."

Of course, a key question for us to ask Steven was about his experience of living as a disabled person in Cornwall, in terms of how accessible it is. "Cornwall is a wonderful place," said Steven. "It's not changed much for hundreds of years and there are a lot of steps! It sometimes seems like there is a battle between disabled access on one hand and conservation and heritage preservation on the other, and clearly it's unrealistic to demand ramps everywhere. There needs to be a dialogue and reasonable efforts made to accommodate people with different needs. The cobbles in Truro can be a problem for example, but only where they've been neglected and become uneven. And the key is to ask questions: what needs to be done to allow people with disabilities to use this area? Different disabled people have different needs."

We asked Steven his views on Direct Payments compared to domiciliary care. He said, "I've tried both systems and was actually one of the early adopters of Direct Payments in 1993, but for me, it was a nightmare. After a long battle regarding what care I actually needed, I ended up receiving care through an agency, which has been better for me. I think where someone has flexible needs, and their condition or disability is relatively stable, then Direct Payments are brilliant, but the care must be person-centred, with regular reviews, considering their wellbeing and that of their carers.

The system is in crisis, and more training isn't the answer. You can't teach people the empathy and kindness they need to be a good carer, there has to be a change to the system and the infrastructure, to treat carers like human beings."



Access Cornwall know there are still so many places that are not inclusive, whether it's physical access through the door or having no other way to book a table other than via a phone call. So, they encourage businesses to become more accessible by explaining about the value of the 'purple pound', the spending power of disabled people and their families, which is worth an estimated £274bn per year to the UK economy.

The team understands there is so much more to inclusive services than just installing a wheelchair ramp or having a sign that welcomes guide dogs, and they support businesses to go the extra mile to make sure customers experience a comfortable and welcoming visit, and then to reap the benefits that brings: loyal custom.

The Access Cornwall website is continually being populated with new places wanting to promote their 'inclusive' status and are truly committed to it, whatever a customer's requirements may be. There is a growing list of attractions, places to eat and holiday accommodation which offer more than minimum service and the team would welcome the support of local people to help them identify the best local businesses that should be profiled,

so they can continue 'mapping' Cornwall for its accessibility.

If you can recommend anywhere which is offering great service, has disability-aware staff, autism-friendly support or provides 'quiet hours', displays materials which are accessible to all, first-class accessible accommodation or anything else that makes you go back time after time, then the Access Cornwall team want to hear from you. Just drop them an email or visit the website to see who is already listed. If you run a place like this, or want to, then drop them a line.

Access Cornwall offers training and volunteer opportunities to people with a long-term health condition or disability, who would like to review places such as attractions, restaurants, cafés and days out. The current training programme finishes in February 2022, and it is hoped to offer similar opportunities in the future. If you are interested in volunteering or training which may lead to paid opportunities, please get in touch.

✉ [hello@accesscornwall.org.uk](mailto:hello@accesscornwall.org.uk)

🌐 [www.accesscornwall.org.uk](http://www.accesscornwall.org.uk)

📘 [www.facebook.com/accesscornwall](https://www.facebook.com/accesscornwall)



Mid-Cornwall Lifestyles is a small Cornish based charity that provides support to disabled people so they can live the life of their choice. We work with a wide range of people and disabilities and have been doing so since 1999. We pride ourselves on our flexibility and dedication to deliver what our clients and commissioners require. Most of our clients fund the support we provide by using their Direct Payment.

We have a team of trained and dedicated Support Workers who support our clients with the things they need help with, except personal care. Our services can be described under the headings below:

**Individual Support:** Practical support and assistance with day to day living in the home and out in the community. We also try to help make experiences and activities possible.

**Befriending:** Sometimes some company, support and perhaps a good laugh is what's required. We can do that! Our friendly Support Workers can be that person to chat to, whether it be out and about or at home. We know how to listen and help.

**Advocacy:** The charity can be a supportive advocate for clients. We can be there if needed as part of our service to help deal with issues.

**Accessible Transport:** We have an 8-person accessible minibus and share the use of a larger minibus with the PHAB Club of St Austell.

**Digital Inclusion:** We can help anyone access the 'digital world' and we run weekly online Zoom socials for our clients and the wider disabled community in Cornwall. A place for us to laugh, learn, socialise and meet each other safely. This has been a new successful development for us, and we are proud to be leading on a digital skills and health project for the Cornwall Disability Alliance.

You can find out more about us and what we do on our Mid-Cornwall Lifestyles website, or contact us using the details below.

We will be happy to hear from you!

Ed Whitefield, CEO

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# Disabled People's Organisations Sharing Experiences

By Dr Theo Blackmore

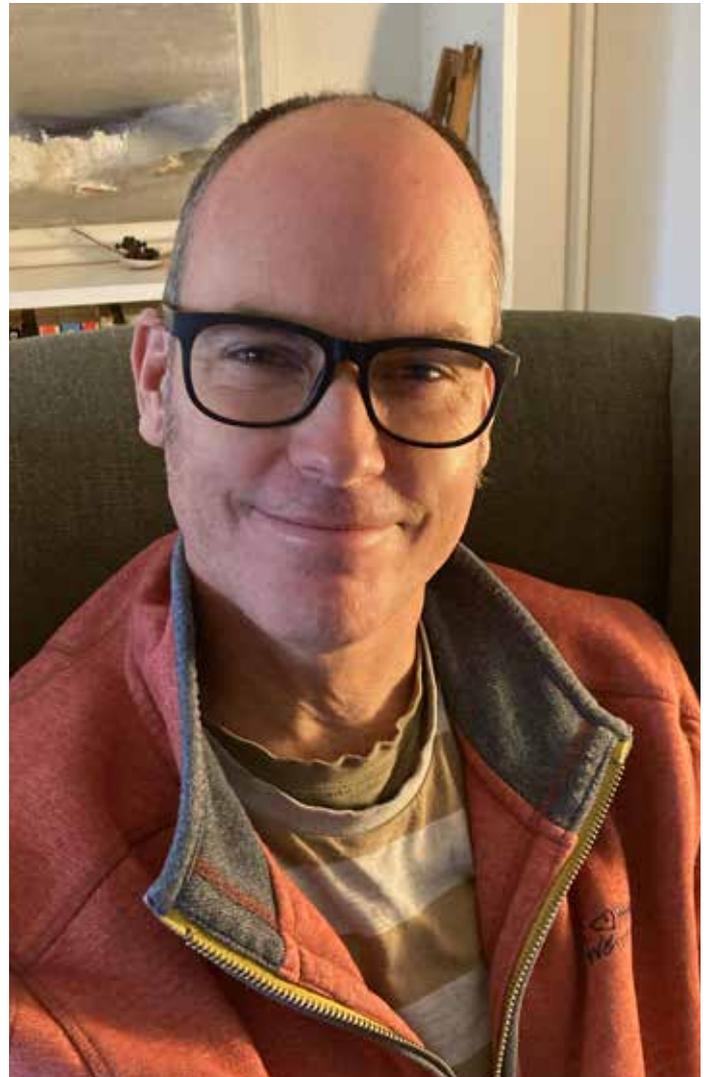
Disabled People's Organisations (DPOs) are created and run by disabled people. There are various different definitions of what one is, but most often accepted is how it must have a governing committee of at least 75% disabled people, with a majority of disabled people as staff to make them user-led.

Many DPOs also acknowledge and provide support to carers. They are a representative voice on behalf of their stakeholders, provide peer support, are knowledgeable of local need and deliver vital front-line services through a rights-based approach to equality.

In the UK, the history of these organisations begins with the creation of the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) in 1975. This organisation went on to write the Fundamental Principles of Disability, where the Social Model of Disability began its life. DPOs now exist all over the country, although some parts of the country are better served than others. They vary in size and function, though they share similar properties.

As Cornwall's Disabled People's Organisation, disAbility Cornwall & Isles of Scilly secured funding from the National Lottery 'Leaders with Lived Experience' programme to run a two-year project investigating the experiences of DPOs across England during the Covid pandemic.

This commenced with an information-gathering process, to see what the impact has been so far, whether they are still operating, how they are coping, whether their premises are still open, what services they are delivering, as well as what their plans are for the future.



*Dr Theo Blackmore*

So far I've discovered 115 generic pan-impairment organisations are still in operation across England and from those I engaged with, the majority have thankfully continued to provide services throughout the pandemic, albeit remotely, including through the internet or by phone. Most of their buildings have been closed entirely or partially, but plan to reopen and many already had systems in place to enable remote working.

One DPO said "We were really ready for lockdown as this is how many of us live our lives, rarely leaving home and working from bed is our normal."

There was a strong theme of a lack of core funding even though the pandemic has shown very clearly

how valuable DPOs are to disabled people, with many councils and clinical commissioning groups using their local DPO during the pandemic, some had still not received any funding for their services. Most claimed that future funding looks more difficult than ever, yet they continue to face a considerable and increased demand on their services.

One-to-one, group meetings and theme-specific online events throughout my research gave DPOs opportunities to share their solutions to common problems and learn from each other, such as how people with long term health conditions or a disability can maintain social distancing, work with the most 'at risk' people, maintain positive mental health and so on.

This also presented an opportunity to bring the DPO sector together to think about the broader questions, such as what is their role, how can we attract younger disabled people to be our future leaders, and what does the future look like for this vital sector? It's surprising how much DPOs have in common and therefore how much they have to talk about, regardless of where they are geographically, urban or rural, or what services they are providing.

Many wellbeing services have continued to the present day. The pandemic highlighted which services were really needed, and even what the actual purpose of their organisation was, meeting the local needs of their disabled population, whatever they may be.

The strength of DPOs became very apparent and overall our flexibility and versatility was clear to see. DPOs are of course used to meeting the needs of their staff, volunteers and clients in whatever way works best for them. It's not the 'new normal', it's just the way things have always been! There was concern initially for the closure of buildings as DPOs operate from fully inclusive premises, and there are few where disabled people can meet safely for mutual support.

Overall, many felt they became more recognised, respected and called upon by their council, of which some did not even have any idea how many disabled people were in their area, even though they provide services directly to these people. It seemed to some DPOs their council had noticed them for the first time!

The government made some short-term funding available during the past year, to help support people and recovery, often through local councils, and although gratefully received, it did mean that once again, it was short-term funding for time-limited projects and the core funded security these organisations need is still not available.

Many who work and volunteer for DPOs are people with long term health conditions or a disability and as such, some still do not feel comfortable being out in the world or mixing with others. The pandemic is by no means over, and the infection rate is yet again increasing (at the time of writing this, December 2021). Consequently, many DPOs have accepted the ways of working that they adopted during the pandemic are here to stay, and some staff are only going into the office one or two days per week at most.

These are still tough times and there isn't an end in sight. This project will run for another year, when I will be mapping the sector so we can see where the gaps in DPO provision exist, while offering opportunities to facilitate conversations between DPOs who have specific issues to deal with.

This sector has many hundreds of component parts and still no real unifying voice, but hopefully this project will at least provide some opportunities for DPOs to support and learn from each other. If you would like more information, please get in touch.

✉ [Theo@disabilitycornwall.org.uk](mailto:Theo@disabilitycornwall.org.uk)

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# Village Works

Village Works is delivered by a dedicated team who get alongside people who are out of work and support them to overcome barriers standing in their way, become better skilled and increase confidence and self-esteem, to make the most of what they have and get back into work. Like a village, supporting people who need it.

Led by Inclusion Cornwall and operating in rural parts of the county where employment opportunities are scarce, transport an obstacle and isolation a real issue, Village Works has provided everything from washing machines, to training courses, garden tidy-ups to bus fares, so people don't have to be driven by their current circumstances. If money is tight, paying to get to a training course, interview or job might be impossible, even if ultimately it will get you into a position where you can be earning good money.

Village Works is there to break down those barriers, so when meeting a new potential customer, the first step is to get to know them, find out their interests, and what's in the way of them achieving their goals. They can arrange coaching sessions and provide short courses.

Volunteering is a great way to grow confidence and interact with others, being a reliable team member and doing good in your local community. Recently the Village Works volunteering days have involved painting and tidying the playground at Breage and working in the garden of a care home in St Keverne.

If you are out of work for whatever reason and need some support to get back to a place where work is a possibility, they invite you to get in touch.

## *Jim's Story*

Jim was a volunteer driver for a local business. He lived in his own caravan on a nearby farm but was struggling with his mental health due to an infestation of rats. He had reached breaking point when he came to Village Works, desperate for help with his housing situation. He had been unsuccessful in bidding for a house on Home-Choice, but we were able to speed up the process, and get a bid accepted on a property suitable for him within a couple of weeks. Jim has just moved into a new property, for which Village Works also provided a new gas cooker and he's happy and settled.

## Village Works - Thriving together

### You could:

- Volunteer for something you've always wanted to try
- Gain skills so nothing holds you back
- Increase your experience and confidence

### We're waiting for you....

You'll find us at the Inclusion Cornwall Hub: t: **01872 326440** [www.inclusioncornwall.co.uk](http://www.inclusioncornwall.co.uk)

We cover Bude and Camelford areas, Helston and the Lizard Peninsula, including the wider areas of Goldsithney, Leedstown, Carnkie, Gweek and The Helford River. The project is driven by Inclusion Cornwall which includes Jobcentre Plus, Local Councils, disAbility Cornwall and Kernow Credit Union, (Covering Cornwall Council's Community Network Areas for Helston and the Lizard and Bude and Camelford).

## Together we can help you and the community to thrive

### What's it all about?

It's about you and finding the opportunity to inspire. Work with us to make a difference to you through volunteering, work experience or a community project. We will work with you to find the right opportunity and understand not everyone is ready for training or work.

Our team are trained to find the best ways to help you. They understand that many struggle with childcare, transport and other issues but these can be overcome.

Village Works is part funded through the European Social Fund



# Stay & Play at the Unique Trevassack Lake

On the Lizard, West Cornwall, you can stay, sail, swim, stand-up paddleboard and enjoy spending time with family and friends in an incredible, accessible, converted quarry. After all, sailing is good for the soul and this facility is designed to be inclusive for everyone.

The vision for Trevassack Lake was a fully inclusive centre of excellence where friends and family can spend great times together and make memories to last a lifetime. Run by the Children's Sailing Trust, it encompasses watersports, floating pontoon, open water swimming, community event space, accommodation with adapted vessels and hoists on site, plus more. This kind of accessible provision is a first for Cornwall and the team are excited to welcome both the local community and visitors to the centre.

Each of their purpose-built holiday houses and cabins are spacious and welcoming, located close to the lake, but secluded and peaceful with all the mod-cons including hot tubs, where all the family can enjoy a fun-packed watersports holiday. They have fully accessible accommodation with features like tracked ceiling hoists, electric profiling beds and there's an outdoor lift on site.

Trevassack Holidays can also provide a wide range of accessibility equipment to make your stay as easy as possible, they simply invite you to contact them to chat through your requirements. The Children's Sailing Trust is a charity that works to open up watersports opportunities for young people in Cornwall, to overcome financial or physical barriers. Complementing sessions on the Helford River, Trevassack Lake has enhanced the opportunity for more children to enjoy sailing, regardless of their needs.

They provide open water swimming sessions including longer distance swims around the lake, or just a 'dip' for people to feel the benefits of cold water for their mental and physical wellbeing. An onsite café provides a lovely opportunity for swimmers to warm up with a hot drink, or just to sit and watch people enjoying themselves on the water.

The accessible, one-of-a-kind platform boat 'Floaty' is a specially-designed, open-sided, floating platform taking up to 12 people, including three wheelchair-users, for trips around the lake. This space can be used for groups to get out on the water together, for children to learn out in nature, or just to help people who wouldn't otherwise get that opportunity.

There is still some availability during the winter season for couples or families looking for time away. Prices start from £33 per person/per night when the accommodation is fully occupied and this includes bedding, towels and that all-important hot tub!

 [www.trevassackholidays.com](http://www.trevassackholidays.com)

 [www.childrenssailingtrust.org.uk](http://www.childrenssailingtrust.org.uk)

## Guest reviews

*"We have just got back from our holiday and had the most amazing time. There was great accessibility around the house and the activities at the lake. The house is beautifully planned with lots of light and modern amenities and it's right on the lake. The staff were extremely helpful especially Jill, Vicky and our lovely swim instructor, Lucy."*

*"Our first son who is quadriplegic did some great 1:1 open water swimming along with our typical 6-yr old son who thoroughly enjoyed it and didn't want to come back home. We enjoyed our experience on the floating classroom (fully accessible) and we did some kayaking with our special needs son. We used the hot tub every night. The hot tub is cleaned every morning and ready to use for the day. Lots of local places to visit and an organic farm is a 10min drive. Already planning our spring holiday here. Thank you so much for such a memorable holiday." Shilpa*

e



Photos courtesy of Trevasack Lake

# My Secret Life

## The shame of aggressive behaviours

There's a saying that's so true. 'You never know what someone is dealing with behind closed doors.' You only know what you see or what you think you see. So, please, be kind.

There's something going on in homes, in your town and right across the world. It's happening in my home. A secret no one dares talk about because it's embarrassing, it feels shameful and there's no way any parent would want their child to be judged for something that isn't really their fault. This is the reason my story is anonymous.

A secret life of aggression. Of all the challenges that come with being a parent of children with additional needs, dealing with aggression is the hardest part. It's the thing that really gets to me. As much as I try not to take it personally, when you love your child so much it hurts and you would do anything to protect one tiny hair on their head, yet when you can get covered in cuts and bruises from bites and scratches on just one bad day, it's hard to not get down about it.

With my oldest child it started with self-injurious behaviours, but as he got older he started biting us, then scratching, pinching and pulling hair. It comes and goes in waves, sometimes it's hard to identify the trigger and these behaviours can increase during a period of anxiety, pain or illness. Other times it starts with just saying 'no'.

A 'no' can lead to a meltdown on an unimaginable scale for most parents. For my child, it can lead to crying for three hours solid, throwing himself on the floor and at walls. When you offer comfort, you might get to hold him for a few seconds only, then the overwhelming emotion of the meltdown quickly causes an urge to attack the closest person. No amount of bribery, promises, gifts or anything could calm my child down in the peak of a meltdown. I could offer him the world and it still would not be enough.

But the aggression doesn't just happen in a meltdown. My child is preverbal, which means he



has some words but has a very limited ability to communicate. Imagine somebody taking away your voice. Imagine you reach for something like a snack and are told no, yet you're hungry but can't say it. Most kids would plead and beg and their parents may well give in. My child can't do that. He can't explain, or can't reason. He wants to but he can't.

The thoughts inside his mind cannot come out of his mouth. He's frustrated, agitated yet he's clever, but his brain is wired in a way that makes communication hard for him, so he lashes out. Because to him, that's his way of communicating something. He's telling us he's unhappy, angry, or sad. But obviously this is not okay and every day we work hard to reduce these aggressive behaviours and help him learn more effective ways to communicate with us.

We're trying hard to overcome the aggression and sometimes it feels like we've nailed it because we'll have a period of a few weeks with nothing, but then suddenly the peace is shattered and the behaviours return with a vengeance. They tend to come in flurries with days or weeks of being on edge and then just like that, the storm passes and calm is restored. It's really weird, a total rollercoaster and we're grateful for every good day that we have.



A recent study found the average mum is asked almost 300 questions a day from a young child. My son has never asked me a single one, because he can't. What if he has all of those questions running around in his mind and no way of finding out the answers? It's no wonder he gets so frustrated.

Him hurting us, his parents, is hard enough to take, but when your child hurts themselves, their sibling or someone else, that's just a million times worse. Our toddler has had some pretty nasty bites. It's almost impossible to keep them apart all the time. If I go to the loo, I keep the door open and try to keep the little one with me. I try not to leave the room if they are in there together, not even to run and get something from the room next door. But it only takes a second, while you're loading the dishwasher, cooking dinner or folding laundry, for something to go wrong. When my little one has been hurt, the guilt I feel is beyond awful. I feel like a failure, like I've failed them both for not getting there quick enough to stop it.

But on the outside, I put on my brave face, slap the make-up on, smile, laugh, nobody would know that when I get home some days I'm crumbling. I'm living on the edge and not in a good way. The calm days are magical and cherished.

We worry about where these aggressive behaviours will lead, taking you to a place you don't want to go. A dark, scary, tear filled place which we try to avoid. We hear of horror stories of group homes and so called hospitals where challenging adults are 'cared for'. Where behaviours are managed by sedation and seclusion and dealt with in unspeakable ways. I worry what will happen if these behaviours don't go away and what will happen when my husband and I are no longer here? Who will love our child then if he behaves like this? What will become of him in one of those places? I worry that we will become old or acquire physical disabilities and no longer be able to manage. What will happen then?

But for now, we'll keep trying to help him learn how to better communicate and manage his emotions and pray that one day the aggressive behaviours will go away. My child is beautiful, sweet, funny, loving and smart, he shouldn't be defined by his disability nor his aggressive behaviours. He's just a little boy who needs love, support and lots of care.

Useful resources if you are affected by this:

 [www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk](http://www.challengingbehaviour.org.uk)

 [www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance](http://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance)



# Active8

Realising Ability

Registered Charity No. 1163942

Active8 supports, empowers and motivates young people with a physical disability to become independent through developing skills, confidence, support structures and aspirations.

We currently run two programmes:

- Acceler8 for people aged 14-18 through a two-year programme which provides one residential weekend away each month, over two years. The participants are provided with activities and experiences they never thought would be possible to achieve.
- Illumin8 for people aged 18-30 to find and maintain friendships and allows members to take part in activities and get involved in a mentoring programme. The project helps members to explore becoming more independent through living, travel, volunteering, employment and leisure. The mentoring scheme has been introduced so the older members can provide support to younger ones.

We also support members' families and communities in various ways including advocacy work with disability awareness training and access audits of facilities.



For more information please contact us at

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Facebook, Instagram & Twitter  
@active8online

# Jack's Story

## My Pandemic



Jack in his RAF days

**A**t the start of the pandemic, I had a phone call from the Council asking if I needed help with anything and they said they would keep in touch by phoning once a month or so, but since then I have not heard from them. There's been no change to my life, apart from the sheer frustration caused by able bodied people claiming that their life has become so hard and how they need a holiday, how they have experienced stress and anxiety. Well try a day living in my shoes!

I served in the RAF, reaching the rank of Sergeant, and seeing active service in the UK, Falklands and Germany. I was a bit of a fitness fanatic, doing weightlifting, jogging, martial arts, cycling and so forth, but I now have a degenerative condition affecting my spine, and other issues affecting all my joints, so am in constant pain despite being on morphine. I live alone, just with my cat, getting around on crutches in my adapted bungalow.

Unfortunately the DVLA withdrew my driving licence on disability grounds, so my only transport is a mobility scooter which I can get to the village shop on. There's only one taxi firm locally which can take me in my wheelchair and a return trip to the supermarket is over £30 so, added to the physical problems of shopping, online shopping has been my only option for the past few years. Apart from my weekly 'home help' visit, I can go for weeks without seeing anyone. I only get about three hours sleep a night and often wake up screaming in agony, then spend around 20 hours sat in my recliner watching TV for company every day.

It's frustrating seeing people on TV, acting like there's no pandemic and spreading Covid by not wearing masks or people not adhering to social distancing, and just their lack of respect for the emergency services and key workers such as supermarket staff.

I can't remember the last time I had a day out, let alone a trip to the shops. I've reduced my visits to the village shop to once a week, as there are so many second home owners and holiday makers down here and I certainly will not be going anywhere else, despite the fact that I have had the double dose of the vaccine. The last thing I need is to catch the virus on top of everything else!

Summing up 'My Pandemic', I didn't live beforehand, I merely survived. Since the start of it, there's no changes to my physical life, but mentally, increased frustration and anger at the able bodied whingers and non-compliers!



# R S S

## • A LIFE ON WHEELS •

Hi guys! I'm Ross, 28 years old and a lifestyle and disability blogger from Truro.

As you can see from the title, I'm a full-time wheelchair user, and have a rare condition called Spinal Muscular Atrophy, which ultimately causes muscle weakness and devastatingly handsome good looks...

**D**iagnosed at age two and half, the future wasn't looking so bright, however I'm still here causing trouble all these years later! I'm often described as a bit of a cheeky chap, always looking for ways to keep myself as positive as possible. Over the past few years I have been documenting various aspects of my life online, via my blog, 'A Life on Wheels'.

During the pandemic I also created a series called 'The Isolation Diaries', where I shared an insight into my life in lockdown, and what it's been like to be shielding.

After finishing mainstream education in 2009, I went onto study A-Levels at college, including one in Media, a subject that has always been a passion of mine. After college I volunteered in various office-based environments, before becoming employed as an admin assistant for the next 8 years.

In the meantime I also passed my driving test, started a blogging business and moved out of my family home to live independently, with support from a small team of carers. Did I mention that I am a dog-dad? Ralph, he's my proudest achievement!

Growing up I was a very shy and anxious character, but always determined not to let my disability hold me back. Looking back, I realise that I owe a lot of my new found confidence to Active8, a small Cornish charity who aim to empower and motivate young people with a physical disability.

Since becoming a member of Active8 when I was 13, I have learnt so much and continue to be involved with them to this day. From residential trips away, to trying out new and exciting activities, the fun didn't stop! Never in a million years did I think I'd ever experience activities like surfing, kayaking or ice skating in a wheelchair.

More recently, with initial support from Active8, I've also become a member of the Accessibility Forum at Newquay Airport. As a non-ambulatory wheelchair user, my aim is to make air travel a more inclusive experience for all.

Not only have I gained so much confidence throughout my time with them, they have also introduced me to some of my best friends, which I will be forever grateful for.

For as long as I can remember, it has always been a dream of mine to work within the media and as my blogging platform continues to grow, I have been fortunate enough to experience a number of new creative opportunities.

Recently, I have become a co-presenter at CHAOS Radio which I'm absolutely loving! It would be a dream to one day venture into TV presenting as well, so should anybody wish to hire me, please hit me up!! Haha.

I am also currently studying at the Academy for Disabled Journalists via Ability Today, which I hope will lead to many more opportunities for my writing work in the future.

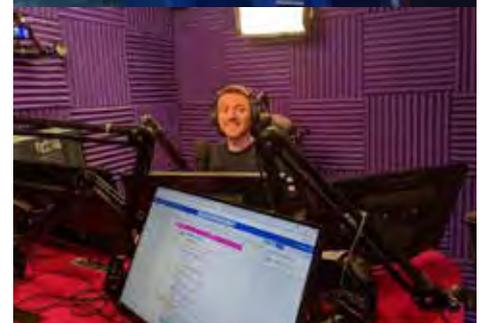
The vision behind my blog is to promote disability awareness in a positive light, by sharing comical lifestyle stories, as well as reviewing accessible events, activities and products. I also aim to use my voice as an advocate to campaign for inclusion and better disability representation within media.

Never one to shy away from a challenge, I once appeared as a 'supporting artiste' on a primetime ITV drama (alongside the awesome Dawn French!), as well as being a contestant on the BBC gameshow 'Letterbox'.

In my spare time, I enjoy socialising with my friends as well as going to live music events (pre-pandemic of course!). I'm also a massive foodie at heart, so if you ever need to get hold of me, I will most likely be sat in a burger restaurant, or waiting patiently at a carvery bar...

So there we have it guys, my life in a nutshell! Regardless of whether you have a disability or not, never let anybody stop you from chasing your dreams. I still have a long way to go, but I am definitely on the right path. My favourite motto in life is: "If you can't stand up, stand out!"

Should you wish to stay up to date with my adventures, you can subscribe to my blog for free at [www.alifeonwheels.co.uk](http://www.alifeonwheels.co.uk) or follow me on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter (@rosslannon)



# Cornwall dis-Ability Football League

Cornwall dis-Ability Football League is proud to support clubs across Cornwall who provide opportunities for players with disabilities from age 8 upwards.

If you love to play, then get in touch with one of our clubs for inclusive, fun and friendly football – become part of a team.



## Troon AFC Disability

Contact Nikki Perryman

☎ 07730 533 043

✉ applepye3@hotmail.co.uk

Training ground: Cornwall College, Pool

## St Agnes AFC Disability

Contact Mandy Kimmins

☎ 07974 370 666

✉ bolsterpaper@gmail.com

Training ground: Truro College, Truro

## Penzance AFC Disability

Contact Caroline Bruce

☎ 07734 599 602

✉ carolinebruce@me.com

Training ground: The Coombe, Newlyn

## Kernow Specials

Contact David Painter

☎ 07929 424 922

✉ djpaint1763@gmail.com

Training ground: Cornwall College, Pool

## Foxhole All Stars Disability

✉ Foxholeallstarsdisability@gmail.com

Training ground: Goverseth Park, Foxhole



# Respect

We only do positive.



Cornwall Disability Football Festival November 2021

# The Jubilee Pool Café

by George & Ann Le Hunte

The Jubilee Pool Café has a new kitchen and indoor seating for 24 (double the capacity it used to be) with full wall windows that open onto patio areas with further seating for 32, with fabulous views over the pool and Mount's Bay. There is good wheelchair access down a gentle slope and a separate disabled/baby change toilet inside the Café, so I was delighted when *DISCOVER* asked me and Ann to go and try this out, which we did on a beautiful sunny day in November.

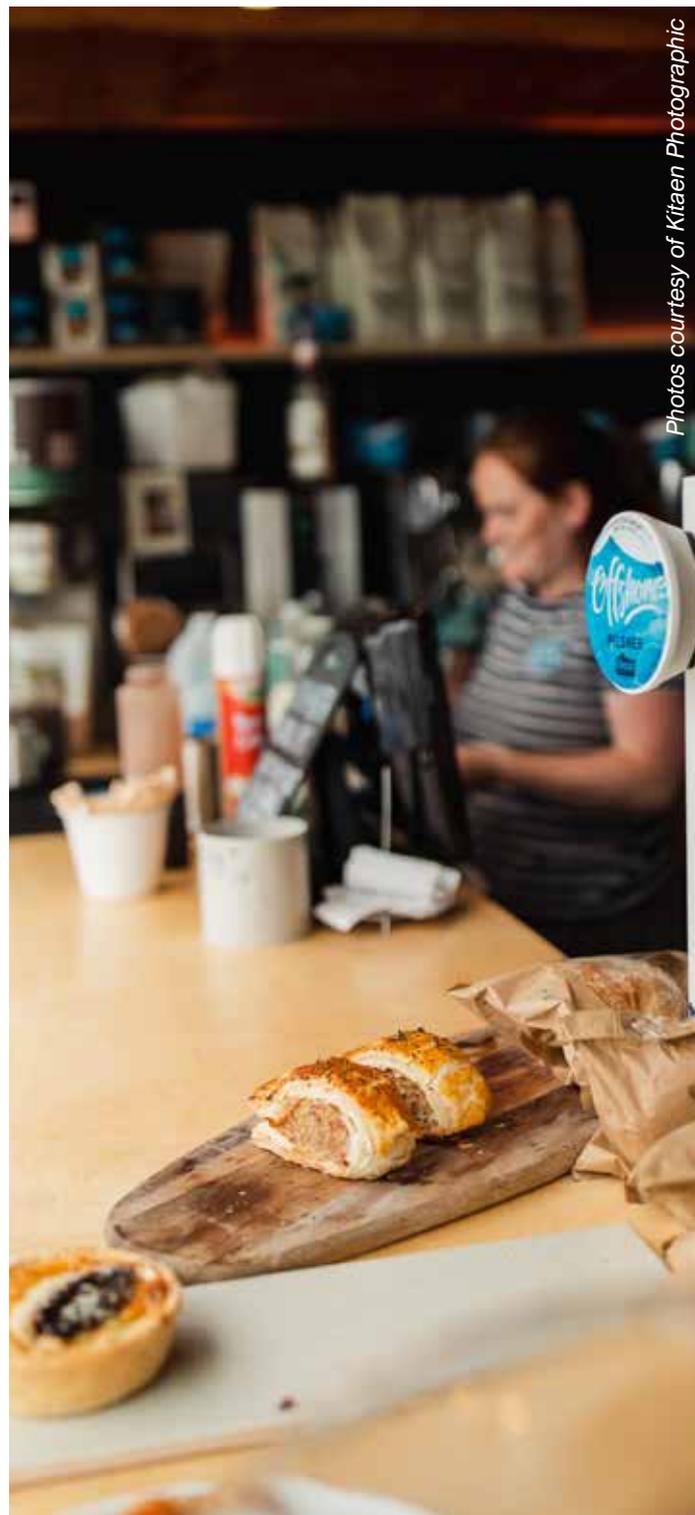
The café is licensed and offers Cornish spirits and wines and they use fresh local seasonal produce to support nearby suppliers and reduce their carbon footprint. They cater for specialist diets such as vegan, vegetarian and gluten-free. This winter they are offering 'Geo & Dine Evenings' when you can book to swim in the geothermal pool then enjoy a three course meal in the café.

There is plenty to choose from on the menu plus a specials board that changes every couple of days. Ann chose grilled Cornish goats cheese, beetroot, leaves and walnuts with a honey mustard dressing. I had Cornish lamb kofta, peppers, courgette, pickled red onion and leaves in a toasted flatbread with minted yoghurt. Both were delicious and followed by plum and red berry crumble, needless to say, we didn't need an evening meal!

The Café winter opening times are from 10am to 5pm Tuesday to Sunday, when they offer all day food including breakfast, lunch, snacks and drinks.

Dogs are welcome in the upper level of the café, and assistance dogs are welcome anywhere on site.

📞 01736 369224



Photos courtesy of Kitaen Photographic



# Coronavirus Hair Cut

My daughter has started cutting my hair  
To stop it turning into a daily nightmare  
I admit I do sit there in utter fear  
As the comb gets rammed into my ear  
And I have cried with much laughter and tears  
As I hear the scissors hacking away like shears  
I appreciate using craft scissors is a huge ask  
And the correct ones would make it a far easier task  
You would not find my daughter's technique in a book  
As it's a case of cutting off a lump and taking a look  
And whilst I laugh and constantly move my mop of hair  
My daughter complains I don't sit still in the chair  
But my hair continues to look quite smart  
And my daughter creates a unique piece of art  
Though my hairdresser might have a different view  
As many of the lengths are definitely askew  
But I am quite impressed with my new style of hair  
And it's not so hideous that people stop and stare  
When we are finished and it's washed and dried  
I look in the mirror with a real sense of pride  
And who cares if the left is longer than the right  
We can hack off another chunk tomorrow night

©Sarah Braunton - April 2020



## Hear me, I'm here

In a modern world geared for sound, Hearing Loss Cornwall are passionate about helping people who are d/Deaf, who have hearing loss or tinnitus, to broaden their horizons and help them reach their full potential and live fulfilling lives.

**H**earing Loss Cornwall (HLC) is a unique Cornish charity set up in 1931 to benefit the d/Deaf community and supports both individuals and organisations. They aim to assist anyone who is affected by any degree of hearing loss to take control of their lives, feel empowered and less isolated, break down barriers and ensure their voice is heard.

Through communication, signposting, education, and practical support, HLC works closely with audiology teams, Cornwall Council, businesses, service providers and the public. As well as promoting deaf awareness, HLC offers a unique and valuable service in Cornwall, being the acknowledged providers of British Sign Language Interpreters and Electronic Note Taking. They



ensure that vital communication support is in place for the d/Deaf community to access medical, mental health, dental, social care agencies and other meetings or appointments which are essential to aid their daily lives.

HLC also liaise with the police, magistrates, Crown Court and mental health services or charities, to ensure that d/Deaf people get the help they need where the 'hearing' world creates barriers. The charity is driven by its stakeholders and has proven its resilience serving a local community with very particular needs, they directly touch the lives of several thousands of people each year and their impact extends to the family and beyond.

Clare Greenwood, HLC manager said, "People living with hearing loss or who are deaf are a growing community who are already marginalised, people with hearing loss live in a dampened and isolated world. Our charity acts as a bridge between health and social care providing advocacy and communication, aiming to create a sense of wellbeing, improved mental health and potential prevention of more serious interventions."

The charity works closely with the Cornwall Deaf Community Centre in Camborne, which is also an independent charity and hosts regular social evenings, children's groups, a youth group, deaf church, lunch clubs, sporting events, BSL classes and events with over 100 people regularly using it.

Deafness remains, as ever, the hidden disability and hearing loss generally has been described as

a 'ticking timebomb'. By 2030, it will be among the top ten disabilities in the world, above diabetes and cataracts and its impact is significant. Clare added, "It appears that deafness as a disability in Cornwall does not always get the recognition it needs, yet its impact is great, not least its potential links to dementia."

Since the Covid pandemic, the charity has seen a notable rise in relationship crises, mental health challenges and even recorded hate crime incidents. Face mask use has posed major challenges for lipreaders to gain a full understanding of what is being communicated and d/Deaf people have struggled with GP call backs, due to the fact their hearing is usually aided by lipreading, visuals, assistive devices, as well as simply missing the call backs, due to not hearing the phone.

As the modern world becomes more committed to remote communications, the deafened world is fighting hard to remain engaged. Working closely with disability organisations as a partner with the Disability Alliance and benefitting from funding for a dedicated advocacy service, HLC remains resolute to its aims.

"If your reaction to the pandemic impact is that everyone feels lonely sometimes, you would be right. But you would also be understating the loneliness we feel."

It's estimated that 1 in 5 of the population of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly live with some form of hearing loss and numbers continue to grow.

# Bude is Making Waves



Active8 who work with young people with a physical disability has been involved in a project which is sparking a whole new direction for them, as well as making Bude a more accessible place to live and visit, inspiring everyone involved.

Bude Town Council had been looking at different ways in which people can be attracted to the town, which includes improving disabled access and, through working with Active8, they have been able to identify what needs to be done to make the area more inclusive.

John Sweeting, Manager of Active8 first became involved with accessibility issues in the town as a resident, and since funding was withdrawn for the all terrain sand chairs. He told *DISCOVER*: “I

helped facilitate bringing sand chairs back to Bude, to enable people to access the beaches again. Thankfully, Big Blue Surf School stepped up and now host two sand chairs, which are available free of charge to anyone who needs them.”

Following this, Active8’s members all got involved with looking at the town’s accessibility along with town councillors and carried out a consumer audit of the beachfront and associated facilities.

They set up an ‘Accessible Bude’ Facebook group, which drew lots of helpful comments and suggestions, as well as creating a focus group of local residents.

Footpaths and walkways between town and beaches, as well as access to the beaches themselves, cracked paving slabs, unclear signage and the need for handrails and visible indicators of steps, were all examined and highlighted. In some cases, regular sweeping of sand from paths, or cutting back overgrown vegetation would suffice, for others, building works is required along with associated planning permission and construction work. There is also a Changing Place toilet at



Summerleaze beach, which has since had some maintenance to make it fully operational.

A report is yet to be published on this, but John said, “We’ve highlighted some ‘easy wins’, things which can be fixed with a small amount of time and intervention, but will make a big difference. There are others which will require more time and effort, but we’re making lots of suggestions and it’s now down to the council to take it forward.”

Bude as a town is committed to improving accessibility and has a dedicated page on the ‘Visit Bude’ website, showcasing accessibility. It hosts listings for accessible restaurants, attractions and holiday accommodation, and you can search the accommodation by features such as ‘ground floor accommodation’ or ‘wet-room bathroom’.

We look forward to watching Bude’s journey and seeing Active8 expand this aspect of their work to other organisations and local councils who are as forward thinking. Making our communities accessible to all is the only way we can fully recover from the impact of the pandemic, people and businesses alike, so well done to everyone involved!

*Pictured from left to right: Bill Williams (Swim Safe), Oscar Allen (Big Blue Surf School), Cerys Oneil (Big Blue Surf School), Zoe Gascoyne (Active8), John Sweeting (Active8), Peter La Broy (Cornwall Councillor for Bude), Jolyon Sharpe (Cornwall Council)*

# STOP HATE UK<sup>©</sup>

## 0800 138 1625

### 24 HOUR HELP LINE

Hate crime is a disturbing reality and no one should tolerate it, either as a victim or a witness.

**A** hate crime is any criminal offence which is perceived by the victim, or anybody else, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone's race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity, or their disability. It not only harms its victims, it also harms their families and communities too.

It can include verbal abuse, bullying and intimidation, threats, harassment, assault and damage to property. A hate 'incident' is behaviour which isn't a crime, but which is perceived by the victim, or anybody else, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on their characteristics.

Mate Crime is generally understood to refer to befriending people, who are perceived by their perpetrators to be vulnerable, and for the purposes of taking advantage of, exploiting and, or abusing them.

Cuckooing is when a person or people use your home for their own purposes, which perhaps could be for illegal activity such as selling drugs.

You should always report any crime or incident if you experience or you witness it, and this could stop it from escalating. Do call or text 999 if someone is in imminent danger and never suffer in silence if this is happening to you. There are organisations here to help, and you can make anonymous reports too.

Devon and Cornwall Police

☎ 101

Text 67101, minicom/textphone 18001101

✉ 101@devonandcornwall.pnn.police.uk

There are six organisations in Cornwall who are Third Party Reporting Centres for Hate Crime or Incidents, so please contact your preferred organisation:

DisAbility Cornwall & IoS

☎ 01736 759500

✉ advice@dialcornwall.org.uk

TravellerSpace

☎ 07939 210014

✉ tspace@travellerspace-cornwall.org

Pentreath

☎ 01726 862727

✉ hatecrime@pentreath.co.uk

YAY Cornwall

☎ 0800 612 3010

✉ info@yaycornwall.org.uk

Intercom Trust

☎ helpline@intercomtrust.org.uk

✉ 0800 612 3010

Citizens Advice Cornwall

☎ 0800 1448848

Textphone 0800-144-8884

# Staying Active & Well at Home

Keep mobile from home this winter with iCareiMove!

They deliver evidence-based movement, exercises and activities to help you manage a variety of health conditions and wellness from your own home.

They are inviting parents, grandparents, elderly neighbours and people with underlying health conditions to join their community space.

On the iCareiMove website, there are some free online workouts, to help keep you active. Their facebook page has a variety of wellbeing and stress reduction tips, as well as more exercise videos.

Falls prevention classes, taught in person before the pandemic, are now available online, helping people

gain confidence after an operation, or as they age, becoming steady on their feet again.

The team is in the business of celebrating getting older. They deliver presentations and wellness courses to businesses across many sectors, encouraging positive thinking around ageing, particularly focussed on the menopause, and supporting women through this in the workplace.

☎ 0800 0541118

✉ info@icareimove.com

🌐 [www.icareimove.com/free-workouts](http://www.icareimove.com/free-workouts)

## Cornwall People First

 	<p>We are a self-advocacy organisation for adults with learning disabilities or ASD who live in Cornwall.</p> <p>We are a user-led organisation, putting people with learning disabilities or ASD at the head and the heart of our organisation.</p>
	<p>We hold group meetings across the county where people can get together to speak up about the things that matter to them and that affect their lives.</p> <p>We run Peer Support Groups and Speak Up Groups and support self-advocates to become involved in leading change.</p> <p>Our groups are held in various locations including Helston, Truro, Newquay and Pool.</p>
	<p>To find out about a group near you or how you can get involved call: Fliss on 07467 593820 or Suzanne on 07469 928565</p> <p>Or check out our Facebook page: cornwallpeoplefirstofficial or our website: <a href="http://www.cornwallpeoplefirst.com">www.cornwallpeoplefirst.com</a></p>

# LOAN SHARKS ARE ILLEGAL

***DON'T GET  
BITTEN BY A  
LOAN SHARK***

We can help you  
(in the strictest confidence)

Tel: 0300 555 2222

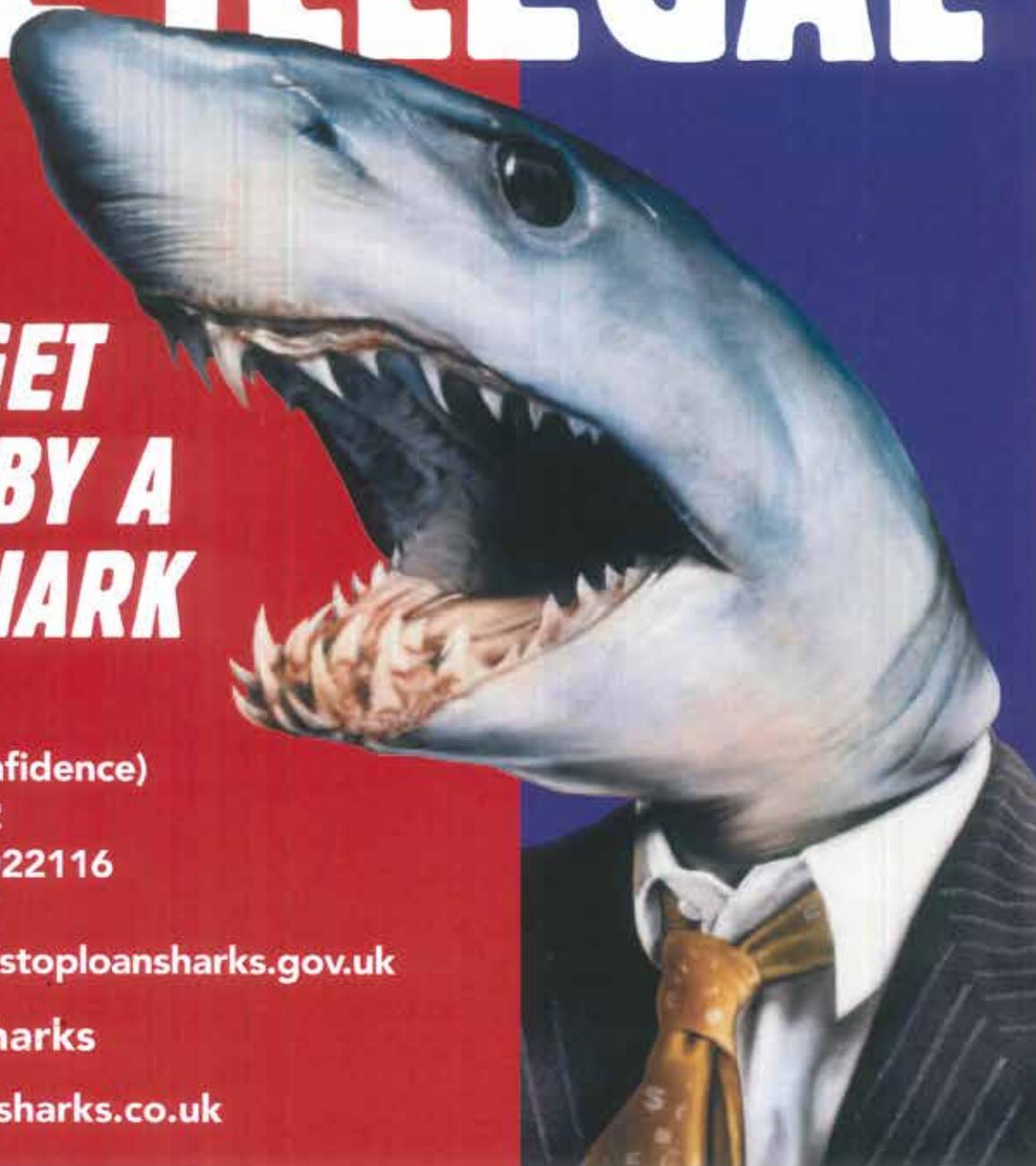
Text us on: 07860022116

Email us:

[reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk](mailto:reportaloanshark@stoploansharks.gov.uk)

 #StopLoanSharks

Website: [stoploansharks.co.uk](http://stoploansharks.co.uk)



# STOP LOAN SHARKS

Intervention . Support . Education

# Beware of Loan Sharks in Cornwall

The England Illegal Money Lending Team (IMLT) are working with disAbility Cornwall to raise awareness of the dangers of loan sharks and to protect people from falling into the clutches of criminals.

Loan sharks prey on people at their most vulnerable. Borrowing from a loan shark can seem like an easy option but often it will lead to a vicious cycle of threats, intimidation and spiraling debts.

We know times are very challenging at the moment and with Christmas just behind us, you may have needed some extra cash to tide you over, but be very careful where you got it from.

Illegal money lenders, or 'loan sharks', come in many different guises. They could be a regular from the local pub, a parent in the school playground, or a friend of a friend. These criminals lend money illegally, giving no paperwork on the loans and charge huge interest rates, creating an ever-growing amount of debt that's impossible to pay back.

There are several warning signs that you should be aware of which could indicate that a lender is acting illegally, the biggest one being no paperwork or agreement around the loan, or they refuse to give you clear information about it. If they hold your passport or bank card until the debt is paid, or mysterious charges are added, so the amount never seems to go down, that is also an indicator. If late payments are countered with threats of violence, or property is taken from you this is another warning sign. Any lender who starts out as your 'friend' but turns nasty, is not a reputable lender.

If you have borrowed money from a loan shark, it's important to remember that you have done nothing wrong and there is no shame in seeking help.



It may seem like a difficult step to take but there is support available from the England Illegal Money Lending Team.

If you have been affected by illegal money lending or you're worried about someone else, then call the Stop Loan Sharks 24 Hour Helpline.

# DISCOVER Directory

## Advice and Support Organisations

ACAS (Employment Advice)	0300 1231100
Advocacy in Cornwall	0300 3435706
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	03444 111444
Cornwall Advocacy	01872 242478
Cornwall Carers Service Helpline	01736 756655
Cornwall Complex Emotional Difficulties	01872 221434
Cornwall Eating Disorder Service	01872 221434
Cornwall Memory Café Network	01736 697459
Cornwall People First	07469 928565
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
Healthy Cornwall	01209 615600
Hearing Loss Cornwall	01872 225868
Hearing Loss Cornwall text phone	01872 263664
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)	0300 0030396
Royal National Institute of Blind People	0303 1239999
Scope	0808 8003333
Sexual Health Cornwall & IoS	0300 3030714
Shelter Helpline (Housing Advice)	0808 8004444
Shine (Spina Bifida & Hydrocephalus)	01733 555988
SSAFA Forces Support	0800 7314880
St Petroc's Society	01872 264153
Stroke Association Helpline	0303 3033100
Truro Young Women's Centre	01872 260847
Versus Arthritis	0300 7900400
We are with you (drug & alcohol)	0333 2000325
YMCA Cornwall Penzance	01736 365016

## Cornwall Council

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

## Crisis Support

Cornwall Rape & Sexual Abuse Centre	01872 303038
Cornwall Refuge Trust (24 hrs)	01872 225629
National Domestic Violence Helpline	0808 2000247
Samaritans Cornwall	0330 0945717
Victim Support	0300 3030554
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	0800 0381281
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 434200
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	01872 254920
EPC Wheelchairs	01872 218008
Unique Mobility	01566 774030
Pro Mobility	01326 569494
Tremorvah Industries	01872 324340

# Membership

## 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.

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: \_\_\_\_\_

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](mailto: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.



