

Manchester Evening News

# Independent Living

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 1997

The Essential Disabled Peoples' Guide to Greater Manchester



Pages full of information on how to improve our quality of life

Foreword by Coun Martin Pagel - deputy leader of Manchester City Council and town hall spokesman on Disabled People Issues

# The city celebrates independence day



MARTIN Pagel

IT is not often that disabled people have the opportunity to access information which contributes to our independence.

All too often it is assumed disabled people have no desire or cannot live full and independent lives. This is not the case and for many disabled people the wish to have a job, own a home, go on holiday, use public transport or visit a theatre is as strong as anyone else's.

However, disabled people often do not have the rights of non-disabled people to access those desires. One of the biggest barriers disabled people face in gaining independence is access to information. I am pleased that the Manchester Evening News has produced this supplement and recognises the importance of independent living to disabled people.

Manchester City Council recognises disabled people as active and contributing citizens in society. It is particularly proud of the efforts

made to encourage and support the employment of disabled people and the work on physical access around the city centre to date.

This is a very positive start but we still have a long way to go. We are aiming to be the most accessible city in Europe and hope to remove the barriers which often prevent disabled people from visiting, working and contributing to the economy of the city.

However, barriers are not only physical. Independence Festival 1997, organised by the city council

in partnership with disabled people and their organisations, hopes to present a different image of disabled people within a positive and celebratory atmosphere. Independence Festival is the first event of its kind which will bring disabled people, their friends and supporters together. Saturday September 20 is the day that Manchester opens its doors to disabled people from all over the country and hopes they will celebrate and be proud - we look forward to seeing you there.

## The way ahead



GEMMA Nash, disability rights worker

WE have come a long way since the days when disabled people were kept well out of public sight in institutions - or patronised and pitied by the non-disabled. Over the past 30 years, campaigning champions like former Labour Minister Alf Morris, the first politician every to work solely on the behalf of the disabled, have done their best to improve people's lives.

And there is no doubt that the range of facilities on offer in terms of accessibility and quality of life is far wider than it ever was in the bad old days when it was hard for disabled people to leave the house at all.

But as we approach the millennium, the message loud and clear from disabled people in Manchester is that the chance of leading an independent life - and living it properly - is the way ahead as far as they are concerned. After all, the only people who really understand the salient issues which should be at the top of the political agenda are themselves disabled people.

So the Manchester Evening News asked some fervent campaigners their views on the way they would like things to change for them in the years ahead.

Basically does not consider disabled people. Taxis, or at least black cabs, may now have been adapted for disabled passengers. But who can afford to travel by taxi all the time? Very few of us.

"As for buying your own car, that's a huge problem too. Usually you have to ask for it to be adapted and that costs an awful lot of money. There is the Ring and Ride service which does a good job but that means booking in advance and going home at 10pm, just when everyone else is starting to enjoy themselves. Far more must be done to improve transport facilities."



COUNCILLOR Brenda Hilditch

**Salford Work Development Unit**  
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Audrey Stanton, 46, works for the Young Disabled People's Forum, which campaigns and actively promotes positive images of disabled people.

By the year 2000, if not before, says Audrey, proper public transport should be readily available to disabled people. For her, it is the top priority of all.

She says: "That's one of the big issues affecting all of us. It has many implications much wider than the transport itself. It means effectively you have a segregated education system where disabled people are shipped off in special buses miles away from their homes. Schools should be places for everyone, and everyone should be able to get there."

"People don't realise this but it's not just wheel-chair-users who find buses a problem. So do the visually impaired and hearing impaired. Their design

She says: "We should have the right to choose how we live our lives, and how we are cared for, whether we want to look after ourselves and not rely on others. We should be educated with other people, and not be segregated into special schools, as we are now. We should make the environment accessible too, and not pollute it like we do now."

"I think one of the biggest problems disabled people face is in relation to housing. They should be built barrier-free so we can all live in them. Social life is another problem. We estimate around 70 per cent of bars are not very accessible to disabled people. Most restaurants are a problem too. The range of issues is so great that it's hard to know where to start. But an awful lot needs doing, and it is time that people realised this. That is why our campaigning is so important."

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<b>AFTERNOONS</b>	
DOORS OPEN	11.30am
EARLY FLYER	12.45pm
EARLY SESSION	1.15pm
<small>(SUNDAY 2.20pm)</small>	
MAIN SESSION	1.45pm
<small>(SUNDAY 2.30pm)</small>	
<b>EVENINGS</b>	
DOORS OPEN	5.30pm
EARLY FLYER	6.30pm
EARLY SESSION	7.00pm
MAIN SESSION	7.30pm

**A GAME OF BINGO FOR A PEUGEOT 205 INDEPENDENCE WILL BE PLAYED HERE ON THE 28TH SEPTEMBER THE CAR MUST GO ON THE NIGHT!**

**Where Everyone's a Winner!**

# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## A celebration in the city centre

THOUSANDS of disabled people from all over the country are expected to head for Manchester city centre on Saturday September 20 to join in city council's first-ever celebration of disabled people as it is described.

Town hall chiefs say that the Independence Festival 1997 will offer a chance for people to come together, enjoy the cultural events on offer and talk about the issues which concern them.

The festival also offers everyone the chance to explore the many achievements of disabled people, be they things by disabled artists, music outside the mainstream, or radical protest poetry on what it is like to be disabled person.

The festival kicks off at 2pm with speeches from deputy council leader Coun Martin Pagel, Ann Rise, chair of the British Council of Organisations for Disabled People, and Geoff Armstrong, from the National Disability Movement.

Once the speeches are over, Albert Square will be buzzing with activity as a Disability Market gets under way, with literally dozens of stalls designed to help people make the most of Independent Living. Amid the arts and crafts, the day also has a very practical side, with a cornucopia of information and advice on where and how to buy the goods and aids which make independent living that much easier.

As disabled issues spokesman Coun Martin Pagel says in his foreword to this supplement, it is the accessing of information in the first place which is

perhaps one of the most difficult tasks of all for people.

But the festival is also about fun as well as the more serious side of life. Throughout the day, expect the unexpected from stage performers, ranging from rock band Independence to singers Johnny Crescendo and Di Williams. DJs will be playing top sounds all day and if you are hungry, there is all kinds of food and drink, including spicy Thai specialities, from the stalls in Albert Square.

Inside the town hall, there will be just as much going on, from exhibitions by local and national artists, to drama workshops and a performance at 6.15pm by the Lawnmower Theatre Group. There will also be a children's room, with the usual face-painting, plus clowns and an art workshop.

On Level 2, there are dozens of information stalls manned by a wide range of organisations, including Shopmobility, Manchester Benefits Office, and the British Council of Organisations for Disabled People. Social services staff will also be on hand to answer queries.

In the evening, within the town hall's splendid portals, there will be a licensed bar and live music until about 10pm, with a grand musical finale at 9.40pm. Parking facilities will be available near the town hall, but only on a first-come, first-served basis. The usual car parks will all be open. At least 5,000 people are expected to take part, and organisers eagerly looking forward to Saturday's festival hope that it may become an annual event in Manchester like the city's gay Mardi Gras and Irish festivals.

● The Independence Festival will be held between 2pm and 10pm (2pm-6pm in Albert Square and 6pm-10pm in the town hall) and admission is free.



● FOLK singer Julie McNamara (above) and jazz pianist Francis Rwana (below) will be among the acts appearing at the festival



A broad range of styles will be in evidence at the festival including poet/singer songwriter Di Williams and protest singer Ian Stanton



## Having a broad appeal

of the driving forces and Saturday's events Ian Stanton, a keen activist on disabled issues, also a popular performer on the north-west circuit.

Now in his forties, Tyneside-based Ian has been taking the stage for 10 years, both in mainstream and disabled venues, and he says it is vitally important that the voices of disabled people are properly heard. "Basically I sing disability protest songs, but I don't stop me from singing to other people who enjoy my music. In my ears as a singer, I never had any problem getting an enthusiastic response from my audiences.

The only problems are questions of access to mainstream venues, and issues related to the realities of life. But the event is a real celebration of our lives, our culture, and our identity. And art and performance will be one of the festival's central focal points.

And art and performance will be one of the festival's central focal points.

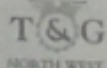
Adds Ian, who lives in Hollinwood: "The success of occasions like the Mardi Gras has encouraged those of us involved to aim to establish this as an annual event. With the support of these involved there is no reason why it cannot become something to look forward to every year," says Ian, who will be taking the stage and performing several of his songs at around 5.30pm on Saturday. There will also be an 'open mike' available inside the town hall for anyone inspired to make their musical debut. Other artists appearing include folk singer Julie McNamara, jazz pianist Francis Rwana, and Get Off Our Backs, a Disability Arts Theatre Group based on Tyneside.



● Ian Stanton: driving force

## Independence Festival 1997

Saturday 20th September • Albert Square, Manchester



MANCHESTER CITY COUNCIL

2.00pm - 10.00pm - FREE

Performers include

- Ian Stanton ● Julie McNamara
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# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## Getting the edge against prejudice

## Advantages to overcome difficulties

STATISTICS show that black people get the worst deal of all when it comes to career opportunities - with far higher rates of unemployment than other sections of the community. If you're disabled too, then it is likely to be extra difficult.

But now help and advice is available from Edge, a Manchester-based organisation run by and for black people. It is open to all black, African, and Caribbean disabled people and their families. The organisation aims to work with disabled people aged from 16 plus onwards and runs courses everything from assertiveness, first-aid, arts and crafts, self-defence, and DIY. You can have a go at flower arranging, but the courses in computing and numeracy will probably pay you dividends careerwise. Most of these courses are arranged in-house through Adult Education centres.

Says a spokesman: "Edge recognises that African, Caribbean and Asian disabled people face a lot of discrimination and exist mainly as a marginalised, hidden minority within a minority."

"We are aiming to provide practical, social and emotional support and act as a pressure group for disabled people in Manchester."

If you are interested in getting tuned up in a more general sense,



■ Tarek Kalam who runs the Edge support group talking with Miss Edith Michael in the gardens of the Claremont Resource Centre in Hulme

there are also workshops on disability rights, and housing and other welfare benefits, like disability equipment and adaptations to homes and vehicles. Edge runs a drop-in session every Wednesday from 12.30pm to 3.30pm and transport costs are paid for to members.

● The group also exists as a social focus, arranging trips to places of interest, debating disabled issues, and enjoying social events. It is based at the Claremont Resource Centre, Rolls Crescent, Hulme. More information from Zuki or Tarek on 0161 227 9199.

ITS a sad fact but if you are a disabled person job opportunities can be that much harder to come by. Not only is there a lot of ignorance and prejudice out there, but it is also difficult to get the necessary funding and time to make the most of courses. But it still pays to acquire extra job skills in these competitive times, and most adult education colleges in the Manchester area have a comprehensive list of training opportunities.

One of the biggest is MANCAT - Manchester College of Arts and Technology - which has several campuses right across the city. Organisations like the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People should also be able to help put you in touch with the right people with the right advice. Disabled Living Services, based in Cheetham Hill, runs training courses too and can be contacted on 0161 832 3678.

There are so many courses on offer it's all at best, a bit confusing, and at worst, incomprehensible. Another good starting-point is the relevant TEC (Training and Education Council) in your area. The courses are more specifically vocational and they should all be able to help with jobs advice or at least point you in the right direction. And there are many initiatives on offer at the moment.

One of Manchester TEC's most successful ventures at the moment is Skillshadow, which is designed to help people with health problems or disabilities. Under the project, which lasts for six months, people are sent to an employer on work placement and they learn their skill alongside a permanent employee. The aim of the exercise is, ideally, a permanent job. But even if that doesn't materialise, the scheme usually leads to other valuable opportunities.

Across the city, students are currently enrolling in a wide range of courses all designed to boost their lives. They range from literacy and numeracy to IT skills and independent living courses. It's worth finding out exactly what they have to offer.

With the best will in the world, it's often difficult to access precisely the right kind of information when it comes to getting proper jobs training.

There's more information about this and other courses from Manchester TEC direct on 0161 236 7222.

Similar schemes operate in other local authority areas in Greater Manchester, although they may have different titles. TECs are also able to offer general advice and supply general information and leaflets on getting a toe-hold in the world of work.

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Recently we have formed a partnership with Disability Information and Advisory Line (DIAL), Trafford. From this partnership Independent Choices has been formed. This is a sensory impairment centre capable of assessing people who have visual and/or hearing impairments with a view to providing technology or equipment for use, whether at home or at college.

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**SALFORD**

COMPUTERS can open up a whole new world to someone who is blind or partially sighted. Thanks to new funding from the National Lottery Charities Board, Henshaw's has launched a new Technology and Careers Service at the Greater Manchester Regional Resource Centre in Old Trafford. A rolling programme of computer training courses is now available as well as workshops in information technology.

Choosing a career or finding the right college course can be particularly difficult for someone with a visual impairment. To complement the IT training, a vocational guidance counsellor is now available to help people plan future career steps and to give them the skills and confidence to go on to employment, vocational training and further education.

Henshaw's runs several drop-in services, including one at the North Trafford Combined Care Centre in Seymour Grove, Old Trafford, where people can get advice about the practical problems they may be facing. Sessions take place on the first Thursday of every month from 12.30pm to 3.30pm. Contact Henshaw's direct for more details.

**S**alford College aims to provide a supportive environment which promotes inclusive learning.

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Central Admissions on  
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**SALFORD COLLEGE**

# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## Going for gold and good times

**BUILDERS** and athletics are being called up to train disabled people at the north west's most successful clubs.

Volunteers are being recruited to lighten the load for trainers at the Belle Vue-based Manchester Kestrels club which boasts a host of national champions.

More than 80 disabled people from all over the north west are registered with the club which meets every Monday evening at the Belle Vue Leisure Centre. At least 50 per cent of the club's members are on to join their national and represent Great Britain and compete across the globe.

Over 20 physically handicapped people attend the regular sessions which include track and field events, weightlifting, table tennis, archery, rifle shooting and

soft ball for severely disabled people.

Team manager Trina Curran and husband Bill, the club's secretary, formed the Manchester Kestrels 11 years ago to help disabled people excel in the sports arena. But Trina stresses that the club is open to people looking for a new hobby or interested in socialising through sport as well as sports fanatics.

She said: "People coming to the club have disabilities ranging from cerebral palsy and MS to amputees and paraplegics. A lot come here because they simply want to keep fit, some just want a laugh and a joke and it gives their carers a break."

"Others are very enthusiastic and take training and competing very seriously. One girl who went to Atlanta last year trains up to three times a day and only has one day off a week."

"For some people the club is a life-line and they can expect a lot of back

up and understanding here. It can improve people's lives so much. Our members are mainly from Greater Manchester but they come from all over the north west because we are such a successful club. We're probably the best in the region.

"Unfortunately we don't have the funds to pay for professional coaches. All our trainers are volunteers and we are always looking for more help especially in weight training where we need strong able-bodied people."

"We go all over the country and the competition is very tough but we come away with a lot of medals. We had 10 people in the last Paralympics and we've had lots of gold medalists."

"Once members join the national squad they tend to travel further afield for coaching so we don't see so much of them on club nights but it's good to see our members doing so well and we're always here when they need us."



Manchester Kestrels Disabled Sports Club 1-r front: Natalie Blake, Rachel Potter, Anthony Greer. 1-r back: Bill Curran, Nigel Bagguley, Fazel Yari, Stephanie Furlong, Abbas Tobati, Richy Barber, Joan Millerman



Manchester Kestrels Disabled Sports Club: Rachel Potter leads her team-mates Anthony Greer and Natalie Blake down the track

## Improvements on the way

Local council chiefs are drawing up plans to make sports facilities in Manchester more accessible to disabled people in the next millennium. Of the existing 17 sports centres, only a handful are accessible to disabled people but proposals are in the pipeline for a series of improvements.

Mr Mee of Manchester City Council is the first to admit that the current situation is not ideal but he pointed out that many of the buildings date back to the last century

He said: "The majority of indoor leisure facilities, with the exception of three or four, were built without the needs of people with mobility problems in mind. In many cases ramps have been installed at the front of the buildings but then people have to go upstairs to use the swimming pool or reach changing rooms."

"We are putting a plan together to enable us to address these problems. It won't be possible in all buildings but over a five or six year period access will be improved to enable people to get in and use more of the facilities available."

"In the first year of the plan we aim to have a minimum of two more centres

with accessible pools and roll out over five years subject to finance."

Projects already under way include the Broadway centre where ramps have been constructed and reception areas are being improved for disabled people. Further improvements will include a pool hoist and special changing beds for people with severe mobility problems and appropriate cubicles.

Abraham Moss Centre in Crumpsall has lifts to the first-floor changing rooms and a hoist to provide access to the swimming pool. Pool hoists are also provided at Moss Side

Leisure Centre and Wythenshawe Forum.

Mr Mee said: "We're trying to make sure the north, central and south of the city has at least one accessible centre with a pool for disabled people and, as soon as money is available, more will be provided."

"We do try to make sure disabled people have as much access to sports as we can. At Belle Vue Leisure Centre we have the very successful Kestrels sports club for disabled people who

use it once a week for a range of activities.

"In October we have the Manchester Marathon when wheelchair athletes have the chance to become involved with a major sporting event in the city and the Greater Manchester Youth Games caters for disabled athletes."

"We are not the best in the world, but we are identifying the problems. Manchester City Council is committed to access and we have tremendous support from the members."

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# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## Coalition guides you in the right direction

HERE are some major signposts of invaluable information on the many practical needs entailed in the art of successful independent living. For general information on what's available it might be useful as a first port of call to contact the Greater Manchester Coalition for Disabled People (0161 272 5125).

Social services departments in all the 10 authorities in Greater Manchester should also be able to help out when it comes to finding out what kinds of services are available.

**Disability Directory**

THE Disability Directory is a brand-new telephone companion which has been designed specifically to help disabled people, the elderly, or people with special learning needs.

There is lots of vital information included in the new guide, ranging from how to obtain Orange Badge parking facilities, to local travel information for bus and train users, and editorials with information on national and local charitable organisations are also listed.

The directory has a comprehensive A to Z listing of north-west businesses

which have a facility, product or service to offer or which are at least sympathetic towards the needs of disabled people.

● To obtain a copy of this valuable guide you can call the hotline telephone number on 01772 651825.

**Educational help**

THE Special Educational Needs Families Support Group was founded seven years and is a registered charity staffed by a volunteer team. It offers a support network, information and advice for all kinds of people in need of help and advice. Its family drop-in centre is based in Urmston, and there's a library, telephone helpline, and advice for families from all over Greater Manchester.

● You can contact them direct on 0161 785 3482.

**Carers forum**

WIGAN Carers Forum is a support group for disabled people and their carers. It meets regularly and offers all kinds of help and advice. Its next meeting is on September 18 at Aspull Civic Hall.

● Information packs on the group's activities and campaigns are available on 01942 404462.

### Independent living experts

THE Regional Disabled Living centre, Redbank House, 4 St Chad's Street, Manchester, is one of the longest-established points of call for people who want to lead independent lives. It has over 4,000 products and equipment all designed to make life that much easier for disabled people.

So, if you have difficulty with basic daily activities such as bending or reaching, dressing, getting in and out of your favourite chair, or with personal care and hygiene, including bathing and using the toilet, then they may well be able to help.

The emphasis is firmly on practical solutions to day-to-day problems, and helping people use the latest aids and facilities which are available. Here, you can try out a vast range of products to see if they are worth investing in, get expert advice from those in the know, and also access information about other services and products ranging from children's equipment, and clothing, to mobile phones, page turners, typing accessories, crockery, and non-slip materials.

Wheelchairs, scooters, and pressure relief prod-

ucts are also there to be investigated. And there are also state-of-the-art hoists, adapted kitchen utensils, electric mixers, beds, furniture, basically everything that might be required to make life a lot more pleasant and less fraught with difficulties.

● Contact the centre on 0161 832 3678.

### Plenty of scope

SCOPE - the UK's largest charity working with cerebral palsy and related disabilities - working together with 280 local groups across the country it offers information, advice and support to disabled people and their families. Scope also runs schools, a college, accommodation services and offers people practical support in their own homes.

● The Helpline on 0800 626 216 offers free and confidential information. Lines are open Monday to Friday from 11am-9pm, and on Saturday and Sunday from 2pm-6pm.

### Personal care

SOON to be opened in Sale is a new showroom where Clos-O-Mats - hailed as a new invaluable aid for disabled people - can be seen.

These newly-launched shower toilets are designed particularly for people who have restricted use of their hands. More than 100,000 units have been installed worldwide and their aim is to help people who are unable to cleanse themselves manually.

The unit can be customised to suit individual requirements with additional items if required, such as a soft seat or foot switch. Contact Freephone 0800 374965 for further information. The Strivell-based company also produces the Lorraine Body Dryer - a wall-mounted dryer designed for people who may be unable to towel themselves dry in the usual way.

Manchester-based Continence 2001 runs a confidential helpline for people wishing to share their problems and get practical advice. A qualified adviser is on hand for consultations on Friday afternoons 1.30pm to 6pm. Appointments are advisable.

● More information on 0161 834 2801.



■ THERE'S plenty of support available to help with independent living



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# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## Far-sighted facility

HENSHAW'S is by far the largest provider of services for the blind and partially sighted of all ages in Greater Manchester. In 1887, the charity is currently celebrating its 160th anniversary with a range of facilities offered than ever before.

This diverse provision has changed from its institutional beginnings, providing everything from residential care, to education and employment opportunities, to a host of leisure and community care services.

Regional Resource based in Old Trafford, Manchester, offers a range of facilities, both residential and social, all designed to support the needs of independent living. This includes teaching people who have lost sight how to use the microwave, how to cook, how to use a Braille or use a

white cane to get around the city. Training is provided both within and outside the home.

Henshaw's rehabilitation team manager Sue Munro says it is desperately important people leading independent lives get proper training.

She says: "Just pouring a cup of coffee can be fraught with danger when you can't see when to stop. Teaching someone to use a liquid level indicator which gives a buzzing sound when the cup is full can give the person the confidence to do what used to be a simple task before they lost their sight."

Henshaw's is also a base for community outreach services which include independence and mobility training, professional counselling, volunteer visiting and children and family services.

There is also a full-time Patient Support officer at the Manchester Royal Eye Hospital offering friendly advice to anyone requiring help.

● Henshaw's can be contacted on 0161 872 1234.



■ HENSHAW'S kitchen area (above) and sensory area below

## An escort for the arts

CULTURE vultures based at Arts About Manchester have always been at the forefront of projects designed to improve life for disabled people. One of their most popular schemes is the Ticket and Escort service which helps hundreds of people in Greater Manchester every year.

Its aim is to make theatres and concerts available to people who would not otherwise be able to make it. And at the moment the project is so popular there is a waiting-list.

Under the scheme, people are supplied with a comprehensive guide to what's on in the region and in-depth information on the accessibility of dozens of venues, theatres, and concert halls. This is also available on audio text, tape, or Braille, and is published three times a year. Under the scheme, disabled people can book their tickets and trips are organised in line with their special requirements. A team of volunteers are there to offer practical assistance if it is needed.

Says organiser Hazel Roy: "The needs of our customers vary greatly but often people going to the theatre on their own may feel vulnerable, or need help."

Joining the scheme is not expensive. There is a fee of £7 for individuals and £15 for groups of 10.

Transport is available for individuals, in adapted cabs, but it needs to be booked in advance. At the moment, the Ticket and Escort service is fully-booked but it is hoped to extend it in the next couple of months.

● More information about the scheme is available from administrator Hazel Roy on 0161 953 4035. It's also worth knowing that The Bridgewater Hall has a separate access guide for disabled people. Most of Manchester's major venues and theatres have decent disabled access. The Library Theatre, Green Room, and Palace and Opera House all cater for wheelchair-users.

## Getting creative at the workshop

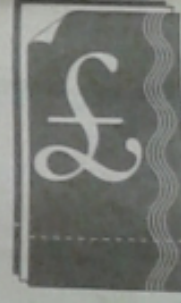
If you're interested in the creative arts, then The North West Disabled Writers Workshop could be for you. The group meets fortnightly on Thursday afternoons, between 1-3pm at Commonword, 21 Newton Street, Manchester.

The group has been meeting for four years now and has published a highly-praised

collection of poetry and stories, entitled Patronisingly Challenged Beware! Organisers say the aim of the group is to provide support, encouragement and constructive criticism to writers, as well as the opportunity to meet like-minded people. The group's avowed aim is to explore ways of writing creatively about disability issues.

Group activities include writing exercises, read-arounds, and visits to other groups. New members are always welcome, the venue is accessible and some members unable to travel into central Manchester also contribute via letters and tapes.

● Contact Commonword for more information on 0161 236 2773.

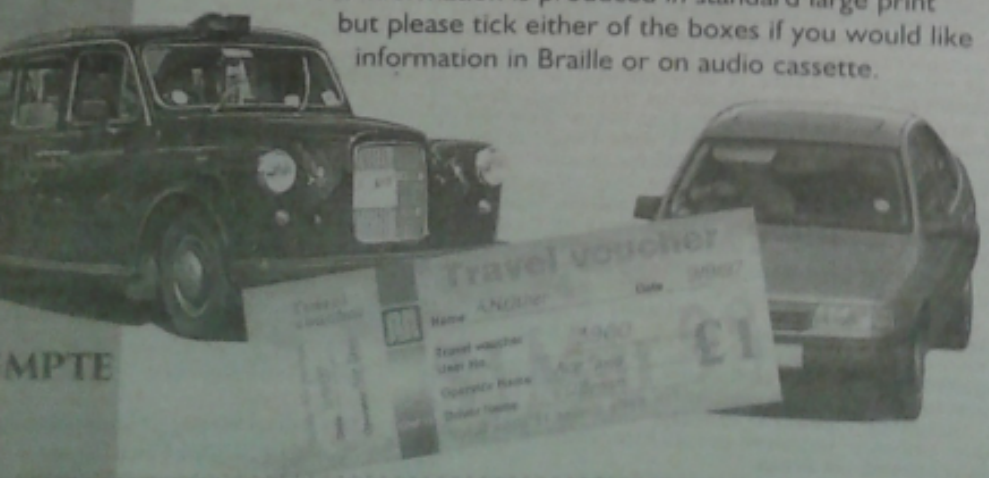


If you are physically disabled or registered blind and can't use ordinary buses, you could be eligible for **Travel Vouchers**.

Vouchers can be used for travel in taxis, accessible bus services (including Ring and Ride) and some Community Transport schemes. You can use vouchers to travel anywhere within Greater Manchester and into the neighbouring counties. They are not free but give a two-thirds discount when you pay for your journey.

If you are eligible, or if anyone you know might be, and would like further information and an application form, please complete and return the form opposite.

All information is produced in standard large print but please tick either of the boxes if you would like information in Braille or on audio cassette.



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Address \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

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\_\_\_\_\_

Post Code \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me information:

in Braille  on audio tape

Please return this form to:

Travel Vouchers, GMPTE, PO Box 229  
Manchester, M60 3GJ

# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## The easier rider

THE average package tour is not always a viable proposition for the disabled traveller.

In fact it's more likely to be a bit of a nightmare. Cramped charter planes, high-vibe hotels, and lengthy transport transfers from airports to holiday resorts on unreliable vehicles can all cause problems if you are not fully mobile or have other health problems which make flying or travelling by boat a problem. But there are ways of ensuring that a holiday either at home or abroad is something to look forward to - not dread.

British Airways, for example, will always do its best to accommodate the disabled air passenger as much as it possibly can. As long as you give a fair amount of notice on scheduled flights, the crew can usually accommodate passengers and make special arrangements, like providing a wheelchair and BA escort, if necessary, onto the plane in adapted host.

Enough not in the package holiday market, BA's Senior Services depart-

ment will also check out hotels in your chosen destination which are accessible and disabled-friendly. And the more you explain your needs, the more they are likely to be able to help ensure that you have a great time.

Most other major airlines offer similar help and advice. And package giant Airturns, based in Rosendale, now has plans to improve facilities for the disabled in time for next year's holiday season. Proposals, still in the early stages, include providing specially-adapted seats and easier access for wheelchair-users.

### Help is at hand

If you don't want to make all the arrangements yourself, there are a wide variety of organisations offering help and advice. Manchester-based Disabled Living offers holiday opportunities for up to 500 people every year - and deals with some 2,000 enquiries.

In charge of the scheme is Christine Trwoga, who is the manager of the Community and Leisure department

at the Chorlton Hill based charity. She agrees that it is by no means easy to find a decent holiday if you are disabled.

She says: "Many disabled people will choose not to take a holiday because of problems such as unsuitable transport, poor access to accommodation and entertainment within the resort they are going to, as well as the attitude of some hoteliers and their staff."

But if you want a door-to-door service with everything organised for you, then we at Disabled Living might have what you're looking for."

Under the scheme, Disabled Living selects hotels, camps and other kinds of accommodation all over the British Isles (including north Wales and Scotland) which provide the necessary facilities. And going abroad isn't forgotten - there is also a trip to Cyprus planned for later this year.

While not all the venues chosen cater solely for disabled people, they are all closely assessed for their suitability. And every effort is made to cater for special

needs such as diet and mobility.

Additional equipment, such as toilet fixtures, raised toilet seats and bath boards are generally available on request. If you need something of a more specialist nature then the organisation will do its best to help. Wherever possible, a door-to-door transport service is arranged from your home to the coach departure point at Disabled Living, 49 Chad's Street, Chorlton. The departure point for holidays abroad is Manchester Airport. And when travellers arrive at the departure point voluntary escorts are there if needed.

All transport provided has a No Smoking policy and is equipped to make your travel as comfortable and as safe as possible. For small coach parties, an adapted OMNI bus, with the unique facility to lower the rear of the vehicle to within a few inches of the ground, is used. This allows wheelchair passengers access to the vehicle via a gentle ramp.

All Disabled Living holidays are accompanied by trained volunteer helpers



WHEELCHAIRS needn't get in the way of a holiday

who are available 24 hours a day. On some holidays one-to-one help is available, although at extra cost to the individual. But people can bring friends or relatives to accompany them too.

Bear in mind that these holidays are NOT subsidised (although there is no extra cost for the disabled services

provided) but for those in real financial hardship, there is still the chance of a holiday via the possibility of grant aid from the local authorities. More details on this from Disabled Living.

To obtain a copy of the holiday brochure for this year call Disabled Living on 0161 832 3678. Unfortunately,

they are fully-booked at present, but there is a reserve list as there are often cancellations. And you could always have a sneak preview for next year! Bookings can only be made after a visit from the organisation's holiday assessor, who will try and ensure all your needs are going to be met.

### Disability Social Work Service



The team offers a social work service to:  
 • adults with a learning disability  
 • adults under 65 with a head injury  
 • adults under 65 with a physical disability and/or a physical illness

The team is based at  
 White Moss, Brocken Avenue  
 Off Sharp Street, Walkden  
 Bus Routes - 25, 27, 35, 36, 39  
 You can call in or ring us there on  
**0161 799 0888**

## Escape to Wales



HENSHAW'S Belmont hotel in Llandudno

ANOTHER major provider of holidays for disabled people is Henshaw's Society For The Blind which organises outings throughout the year. The major focus for their holidays is the popular Belmont Hotel, Llandudno, which is open all year round to visitors, offering themed minibreaks as well as weekly holidays. Escorted holidays are also available for people who need a holiday but feel unable to take one alone.

The hotel has a spectacular position overlooking the bay with easy access to the town's famous promenade and all the usual facilities, including good food and comfortable rooms. But, more importantly, help is offered with travel arrangements.

There is also ramped access and rooms selected for wheelchair accessibility. Guide dogs are welcome and the hotel has a wide range of specialist equipment for purchase. All facilities are adapted for people who are visually impaired, including tours with a running commentary and a radio cassette player with hotel information on tape. According to Henshaw's spokeswoman Megan Gilks, the Belmont is always in demand: "Some people go back there year after year," she says.

But Henshaw's is also keen to offer advice and information of a more general nature too for visually impaired people interested in taking a break.

Contact 0161 872 1234.

## Getting out and about

OTHER holiday facilities organised by Disabled Living include a varied programme of outings through the year, including visits to the seaside and countryside, trips to the theatre, cinema and many other places of interest.

- Equipment Hire - There are currently over 40 wheelchairs for hire, as well as a number of personal mobility aids.
- Independent Holidays - Disabled Living is also happy to offer advice and guidance to those people who would prefer to make their own arrangements. They also offer tips on all aspects of leisure, both indoor and outdoor.
- Disabled Living also needs volunteers to accompany its holidays. Phone 0161 832 3678 and arrangements can be made for someone to talk to you.

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# INDEPENDENT LIVING

# Motability scheme is a real winner



MOTABILITY can do much to ease the problems of people with restricted mobility

TRANSPORT is still a major problem for many disabled people. But a charity set up more than 20 years ago is still going strong - and doing its best to help thousands of people to a better life.

More than six per cent of new cars in the UK are now supplied through the Motability Scheme, the charity which does its best to help disabled people become mobile.

Motability was set up on the initiative of the then Labour government in 1977 to provide cars and powered wheelchairs to disabled people. The first car was supplied in 1979 and since then over 800,000 disabled people have used the scheme, which continues to grow at a remarkable rate - more than 10 per cent in the past 12 months.

In the last year, Motability was helping more than 20,000 disabled people and their families. That's a pretty impressive number.

How does it work? All disabled people receiving the higher Rate Mobility component of the Disabled Living Allowance or the War Pensioners Mobility Supplement can use their allowance towards the cost of obtaining a car or powered wheelchair through the Motability scheme.

Special terms have been arranged with motor manufacturers, banks and major insurers, most notably Royal Insurance Alliance, one of the major companies associated with the project, so that a variety of schemes can be offered to enable dis-

abled people to become more mobile.

Thanks to the initiative, disabled people of all ages, including children from the age of five, can get a wide range of vehicles through a national network of Motability Accredited Suppliers. And they will help you check out where the nearest supplier is.

Many people who rely on the scheme will need financial help to pay for adaptations or a larger car to suit their particular disability, which they desperately need but could not otherwise afford. Motability provides grants to pay for such things as hand controls, swivel seats, automatic transmission, wheelchair hoists, advance payments and special driving lessons. The average grant is between £800 and £1000.

In the years since it started, the charitable fund has provided more than £100 million in grants over the last year and demand is growing all the time.

According to the charity, every single donation received is vital income. Just £15, they say, could buy an additional mirror and help a disabled person with restricted upper body movement drive safely.

Says the charity's spokeswoman Anne-Marie Chatterton: "A Motability car is much more than just a means of transport, it is a passport to the outside world, offering people the chance to go to college, or get a job and live their lives to the full."

● Motability's Customer Services department can be contacted for all kinds of advice and information on 01279 635686.



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For Customer Service -

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373737**

Royal Insurance 'Motability'  
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MINICOM

**0500  
646362**

To Make a Claim -

**0500  
474747**

Royal Insurance 'Motability'  
PO Box 169, Orleans House,  
Edmund Street, Liverpool  
L69 3SJ

The opening times for our telephone lines are 8.30am to 7.30pm Monday to Friday and 9am to 12.30pm on Saturday. Our extended service is available to enable you to call us outside normal hours for your more urgent needs. We have introduced a Minicom facility to meet the needs of our customers with hearing difficulties. Remember all telephone calls are freecall. Telephone calls may be monitored and/or recorded to aid in the training/development of staff and to maintain and improve our service to 'Motability' customers.

As the insurers of the Motability Scheme, our special Royal Insurance 'Motability' Unit can offer a first class service especially for you.

Our care package is hard to beat and includes a free courtesy car to keep you on the road during repairs, as well as 24 hour legal advice, a nationwide network of recommended repairers and service backed up by award winning technology.

We're here for you, so if you need us, "ring the Royal" free.

## On the road



There are several groups for disabled motorists in Greater Manchester. Salford Disabled Motorists meets Tuesdays at 8pm, Alexandra House, Liverpool Road, Patricroft, phone 0161 281 7880. There are also branches in Tameside & Manchester.

**Royal Insurance**

INDEPENDENT LIVING

# Making public transport available to everyone

GETTING around is one of the major problems for disabled people in Greater Manchester. Much work may have to be done to solve matters, but there are still many facilities available to help.

Some are largely provided by the Greater Manchester Transport Executive, although some voluntary organisations do their own work.

Major buses to bear in mind are those which are available for disabled people in Greater Manchester - registered blind, deaf, hearing impaired, people with learning difficulties as well as those who are visually impaired.

The service offers the opportunity to travel fairly short distances locally and people interested in taking advantage of the service should telephone the day before they travel to book a ride. The cost to the user is just 40p per journey if the passenger holds a concessionary pass.

Other times the cost is approximately half the full adult fare. These cheap fares are also available to people with serious walking difficulties.

Some disabled people, particularly wheelchair-users, will find it very difficult to use standard buses and taxis, but there are still several options available for those without transport. All Manchester black cabs must now, by law, have adapted vehicles which are accessible for wheelchair-users. Unfortunately, most private cabs do not. However, the following services add to the range of services, and there are plans to increase the facilities in the years ahead.

**Ring and ride**  
This is a door-to-door bus service which covers approximately 80 per cent of the county and is available to people who are unable to use ordinary buses either because they cannot walk to the bus stop or because they cannot climb the steps of ordinary buses.

The service offers the opportunity to travel fairly short distances locally and people interested in taking advantage of the service

should telephone the day before they travel to book a ride. The cost to the user is just 40p per journey if the passenger holds a concessionary pass.

**Travel vouchers**  
Physically disabled people who can't get to the bus stop or climb the steps of the bus may be entitled to travel vouchers which can help with fares. Proof of disability is required to join the scheme.

Vouchers can be used to pay for taxis or for trips on bus services which are accessible to disabled people such as Ring And Ride and low floor buses. Each user is entitled to a set number of vouchers every year and pays only one third of the face-value of the vouchers.

Vouchers can be used to travel anywhere in Greater Manchester and into the neighbouring counties. There is no age limit for users and companions or relatives can travel with the user at little or no extra cost.

**Voluntary organisations**  
There are a number of voluntary organisations which provide an accessible door-to-door community transport

service for elderly or disabled people. These services can be quite expensive for individual users although they offer reasonable rates for group hire.

Contact bodies like the Greater Manchester Coalition for Disabled People or the British Council for Disabled People for more information.

**Small Travel Grants**  
These are available to groups of disabled people who wish to attend a one-off event or to voluntary sector groups who organise events which are likely to be of interest to disabled people. Contact GMPTE for more information.

**Easylink**  
This service operates in the Wigan area and is designed to help people by taking in local hospitals and health centres, shopping areas and schools.

Sufficient time has been built into the timetable to allow passengers to get on and off the bus in their own time. Easylink buses have a front entrance step lift which means that passengers in wheelchairs can board the bus with relative ease.

The drivers have also received disability awareness training so will understand the difficulties some of their passengers may face.

allow drivers to deviate up to half a mile off their usual route to drop off and pick up passengers on a pre-booked basis.

In all, there are now 18 Localine routes which operate in three districts of Greater Manchester (Stockport, Manchester and Bury). Localine buses have low entrance steps and a tail-lift for wheelchair users and an assistant on the bus as well as a driver.

**Low floor buses**  
These have no entrance steps and a kneeling facility which helps minimise the gap between the kerb and the bus. The buses are also fitted with ramps in case the bus is not able to pull right into the kerb or if the passenger needs absolutely level access.

Low floor buses operate on around 30 different routes in Greater Manchester. Contact GMPTE for more details about them.

**General information**  
GMPTE provides lots of timetable information for most local bus and train services and also offers numerous promotional and information leaflets, all of which are available in large print or in Braille or on audio cassette on request.

More information about all services and facilities for disabled people is available from the Access Unit, GMPTE, 9 Portland Street, Piccadilly Gardens, Manchester M60 1HX. Or telephone 0161 242 6243.



PROBLEMS with access on public transport for disabled people are now being addressed with the introduction of more and more purpose-built vehicles



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**Motability**

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THE DRIVE OF YOUR LIFE

# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## The much-needed new development from Bellway

HOUSING developers are appealing to disabled potential buyers with the first purpose-built barrier-free private properties to be built in Manchester.

Bellway Homes has taken the lead by designing a unique house that takes into account the needs of disabled people and incorporated these ideas into the overall house design.

The Chadderton-based north west developer has based the new houses on design recommendations in Manchester City Council's Unitary Development Guide. Its first house, complete with state of the art equipment, was opened at the Bronte Court development on Ribston Street off Chorlton Road in Hulme.

This property is part of a wider development in the area being carried out under an urban renewal programme to give Hulme a facelift and improve the image of the neighbourhood.

Bellway's development will be one of the largest of its kind in the north west and by the year 2,000 nearly 600 new homes will have been constructed in the area.

Architects from Bellway have been involved in consultation with Manchester City Council Planning department which have included discussions with disabled access officer Mark Todd. Mark drew up a comprehensive list of requirements and was able to suggest ways in which a modern house can be adapted to accommodate disabled people achieving the highest standards.

These views have been taken into account by incorporating a Stannah Chairlift to give easy access to the first floor and all doors within the house have been designed with extra width to ensure that wheel chairs can easily navigate them.

The kitchen units have been lowered so that all

storage space and work-tops are within the reach of the wheelchair user and avoids people straining to reach into cupboards.

Throughout the house, sockets and switches have been installed for easier use and careful use of design has been incorporated into the Victorian-style bathroom with chrome grab rails next to the toilet and bath.

Clr Martin Pagel, chair of Manchester City Council's Social Services committee and deputy council leader welcomed the initiative.

He said: "This is exactly the kind of development that we have supported for a long time. We hope all house builders will take note. It is better and cheaper to build houses to an accessible design from the outset."

Despite the innovative design the properties at Bronte Court have been pitched competitively to help families put a foot on

the property ladder.

The Tenby, a two-bedroom house with full central heating fitted kitchen and luxury Victorian bathroom suite, is only 37,700.

David Lloyd, regional director for Bellway Homes, is convinced that its custom built properties will prove a good investment for both the company and the buyer as city-centre house prices rise.

He said: "As a company committed to improving and reviewing the needs of our customers, we are happy to take on board the council's guidelines with improved access for disabled people."

"Many house builders often disregard the needs of disabled people however Bellway has taken this as an opportunity to show how new homes can easily be modified and that there is a growing market for them."

"We are aiming to provide quality housing that does not discriminate."



WIDER access allows greater freedom of movement in areas traditionally inaccessible to the wheelchair bound



### A decent proposal

MANCHESTER City Council is consulting the public on new planning proposals which are aiming to achieve a better citywide balance of special needs housing schemes and residential housing. This is because there is currently so it says, an over-concentration of such accommodation in areas like Cheetham Hill, Collyhurst and Ardwick.

Clr Andrew Fender, who is chair of the Environmental Planning Committee, said: "Our aim for the city is to achieve sustainable communities where there is a mix of family and single accommodation."

"To achieve this we are now consulting widely on new planning proposals. We hope this will ensure a more equitable provision of special needs accommodation in all parts of the city giving people with special needs a greater choice about where they live."

Clr Fender added that anyone is welcome to comment on the proposals which are available for viewing both at the town hall and Manchester libraries. The council will also be writing directly to the providers of supported housing to ask for their views.



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# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## A new lease of life for Ivy

### The Salford scheme

STUDENTS with learning difficulties are being helped into vocational training and further education through a new scheme at Salford College.

A new 'inclusion' policy has been adopted to ensure that students with learning difficulties or disabilities are fully included in all aspects of college life.

All students can now choose the type of course they wish to study with the provision of specialist help to attain maximum academic results. They are given guidance about courses they wish to pursue rather than a limited choice being made available to them.

A specially trained learning support team carries out initial assessment to determine what assistance is required on an individual basis. All students are assigned a personal tutor and those with learning difficulties are supported by the learning services unit on mainstream vocational courses.

There are two college counsellors to provide welfare advice and counselling for all students and special facilities including portable induction loop, textphones, tape recorders, scribes, readers and interpreters to help with lessons and exams.

As well as providing academic and emotional support Salford College provides practical and physical facilities to make life easier. Wardley campus is barrier free and there are adaptations at other buildings to improve access to toilets, computer suites, refectories and libraries.

During the 1996/97 academic year over 500 students took advantage of the scheme and the college earned full marks from their last inspection report by the FEFC for its provision of guidance and support.

Successful students include Kevin Peck of Irton who took on courses in RSA typing and Word Processing and the City and Guilds Further and Adult Education Certificate.

Kevin, who has brittle bone disease and is deaf, returned to college to learn and make up for time lost at school due to his disabilities. He is now teaching RSA Word Processing at the college's Wardley campus.

Howard Topping has been disabled for 15 years and unable to work before applying to Salford college to study carpentry and joinery. As well as obtaining an NVQ level II, he is taking extra tuition in maths and English to assist in the theory side of the course.

Sandra Carey who is dyslexic has completed a Body Massage course and is now undertaking computer studies with extra support and extra tuition to help her with assignments.

Sandra said: "I would recommend Salford College to anyone with a learning difficulty. Without the support of the staff, I think I may have failed the course. Instead the whole experience has been really enjoyable and positive."

Potential students should contact Marian Varnom on 0161 836 5058 for details of courses.

TINY tenant Ivy Dignan gave housing association bosses a fall order when they were asked to transform her home after she issued an SOS for a helping hand.

Ivy, a former mill worker, was born with acrodysplasia, a condition which severely restricts growth, but had lived happily in her flat for 10 years. But advancing years eventually took their toll and Ivy, of Anchor Housing Association's Springhill Court development in Oldham, could no longer cope alone.

At less than four-foot tall, Ivy suffered increasing problems with domestic surroundings and was no longer fit enough for the gymnastics needed to carry out everyday activities. Kitchen units and worktops were too high, shelves were inaccessible, the cooker included a high level grill and tending had become a hindrance.

Ivy feared she may lose her independence until her housing manager Jane Hinde stepped in to help provide a permanent solution to her problems. Now she is on top of the world after her flat was converted to suit her needs under Anchor's Staying Put programme aimed to help disabled people avoid residential care.

Anchor approached a cotton mill workers charity for help with funding

adaptations to the property which included made-to-measure kitchen units, sinks, a low-level cooker and a bathroom conversion.

Geoff Lughtin, Anchor's regional general manager, was delighted that the housing association was able to give Ivy a helping hand.

He said: "Anchor has been able to clearly illustrate how its various activities can work closely together to make things happen for the benefit of residents and clients. We specialise in dealing with older people and provide mainly sheltered housing with communal laundry and 30 or 40 flats plus some bungalow accommodation and residential and nursing homes.

"All our newly built properties have walk in showers and, where we have older properties, we carry out adaptations as they are needed.

Ivy had been happy enough with her accommodation over the past 10 years but, as she has grown older, it's become harder for her to reach shelves and cupboards because she couldn't stretch and climb anymore.

"When she spoke to her housing manager, Ivy was worried that she wouldn't be able to manage anymore without extra help and that could have meant leaving her home and her friends. As a temporary

measure, Ivy used wooden platforms to give her better access but this was clearly far from an ideal arrangement.

"We operate a Staying Put programme in Oldham which involves adapting properties or hiring out on long-term loan things like bath hoists. This helps people to maintain their independence in our own properties and can also help some people in council or private properties.

"With the help of a charity, we were able to re-design Ivy's flat so that life is now a lot easier and she needn't worry about having to move so she's a lot happier."



Ivy Dignan has been able to keep her independence thanks to some innovative changes

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# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## Barrier-free schools

MILLIONS of pounds have been invested in breaking down the barriers to integrated education for disabled children across Manchester.

The initiative started in 1987 with a programme to improve access to all schools and since then 10 'barrier-free' schools have also been created providing total freedom for all pupils.

There are now three barrier-free high schools, including the Roman Catholic St Gregory's, covering north, south and central Manchester. There are also three primary schools in north Manchester, two in central

Manchester and two in the south where another two are planned.

John Bedford, of Manchester's Education department, said: "There will be 12 barrier-free schools in the city which have undergone a six-figure capital investment and many others where access has been improved."

Each barrier-free primary school costs £100,000 to convert but secondary schools costs much more. We have just spent £800,000 on Newall Green High alone.

"Once we have made the necessary physical changes, we then have to staff these schools. All of them have additional staff support work-

ers and additional teachers.

"There is a major ongoing revenue expenditure needed to ensure that all pupils have full access. When new schools are built, these things can be designed in which is a lot cheaper than converting an existing school."

More than 60 disabled children now attend mainstream primary and secondary schools allowing education chiefs to close down one of the city's two special schools.

Mr Bedford admits that the programme has not always been popular and that many parents have been reluctant to put their children into mainstream schools where they fear ridicule. He said: "When we

started the barrier-free programme a number of parents had major reservations about taking their children away from a protected environment.

"Now I would say to anyone who doubts the success of the programme, go and have a look, talk to other parents. The benefits of a mainstream education are astronomical in terms of academic, social and personal development."

"We can't offer neighbourhood schools but we have one barrier-free school within reasonable travelling distance of most parts of the city if more money was available we would look to expand."

## Universities joint venture

A NEW resource centre has been set up for disabled people entering and studying at higher education institutions across Manchester.

The Access Summit Joint Universities Disability Resource Centre is based in St Peter's House in the Precinct Centre on Oxford Road Manchester.

The centre is a joint project between the Manchester Victoria and Metropolitan universities, UMIST and Salford providing a unique opportunity to share resources and expertise.

Workers at the centre aim to develop a supportive educational environment, sensitive to the needs of disabled students from pre-admission throughout the

course and on to graduation.

It is equipped with a range of technology and staffed to offer high quality support to increase the opportunities for disabled people to participate in academic life.

The centre will concentrate on introductory courses to allow would-be students to gain experience of university and setting up a mentoring system in occupational to improve disabled students' employment the prospects on graduation.

There will also be needs assessment and training to identify information technology useful to students in supporting their study as well as a help desk to give on-going support.

## An unqualified success

UNIVERSITY bosses are striving to attract more disabled people into higher education with a new course in social work training.

Manchester Metropolitan University is running the social work course which requires no academic qualifications as the emphasis is on experience. The course has flexible entry requirements where people who have personal experience of disability have been a success, or a community volunteer, with no occupation.

During the summer taster courses in social work have been offered at the university for the first time targeted at disabled people. Potential students have had the chance to see the university campus and its facilities test its accessibility and meet support staff as well as learn more about the social work course.

All publicity material about the course has been made available in Braille, large print, BSL video and audio tape so people can access the information not normally available to them. Senior lecturer Dianne

Keetch hopes the initiatives will encourage more disabled people to consider a career in social work and apply for university places.

She said: "We believe disabled people are under-represented in higher education and social work because it can be difficult for disabled people to compete with others for places when they don't have the necessary qualifications."

"Disabled people often don't have the appropriate qualifications because they are frequently segregated in special schools where there is little expectation of them achieving academic qualifications."

"They can't get the work experience as volunteers or as paid workers because generally access to buildings is poor in the UK."

"We've devised ways to even out the playing field and help disabled people compete on a more equal footing with non-disabled people."

"Many disabled people have had social workers themselves and have some insight into the work and feel they have much to offer the profession."

European money is being used to teach deaf culture including British Sign Language on the social work course which has already made it particularly attractive to deaf people.

Dianne said: "We find many deaf people apply to us for training because of our positive attitude and emphasis on this teaching."

"Many deaf students are now social workers working with other deaf people."

They are able to improve services and influence the social work profession in their thinking.

"Many don't want to concentrate on work with other deaf people and we have some success in that employers have provided equipment like text phones and signers for the fair employment of deaf workers."

"The taster courses have also been successful so far and we hope many of the participants will apply for the BA social work and post graduate masters in social work."

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
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# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## Get in training

SOCIAL services chiefs in Tameside offer a wide range of training projects for disabled people.

Their Jobmatch project, designed for people with learning difficulties, offers supported employment with staff on a one-to-one basis all in the pursuit of getting a job. A wide

range of opportunities is on offer and all adults who take part in the course are entitled to joint support funding by the borough council and Bessley.

There's also Eurocretech, funded by the EC, which offers lots of NVQ compatible courses for disabled people. There's everything from basic office skills to computer skills, on offer. Another scheme, based in Dukinfield,

Vision First, offers the visually-impaired access to new technology training and courses in the use of low-vision aids. Training in rehabilitation skills is offered in the Independent Living centre at Willshaw House, Ashton-under-Lyne.

• Contact Tameside social services for more details on 0161 342 8355.

## Eating out in the city



EATING out can often be a problem if you are not fully mobile, but there are lots of easily accessible restaurants in Manchester city centre.

- Italian**  
Pizza Express, South King Street. Cafe Uno, Albert Square.
- Greek and Middle Eastern**  
Cafe Istanbul, Bridge Street. Topkapi Kebab House, Deansgate. Dimitris, Castlefield.
- French**  
Pierre Victoire, Peter Street. Cafe Rouge, Deansgate.
- Indian**  
The city centre itself is a bit of a desert as far as restaurants go but the dozens of curry houses in Rusholme are largely at street-level and accessible to wheelchair-users as well as cheap and friendly.
- Pubs and cafe-bars**  
Too many to mention in full, but some worth checking out are: Atlas, Knott Mill. Duke's 92, Castlefield, J W Johnson's, Deansgate, Mulligans, Back Bridge Street.

## Advice about home help

Are you someone who lives in Manchester and uses a home help, a district nurse, respite care or some other service to help you to be independent? Do you sometimes wish that you could just go out, on the spur of the moment, but don't always have help available at right time?

Well, Direct Payments is a new project available through Manchester Social Services Department's Independent Living scheme. It offers advice and support to manage all aspects of being in charge of your life, from managing money to being assertive and setting your time.

Since last April, over 15,000 Manchester residents have started to use Direct Payments, and they say they are amazed at the difference it has made to their lives. If you are interested in finding out more about the scheme then ring 0161 273 5412 or ask to speak to someone in the Independent Living Unit.

## More help with finding the right kind of training

Are you a disabled person looking for work or training? If you live in Manchester then you might well be interested in a new company now setting up in Ardwick, only a mile or so from the city centre. Breakthrough UK is aiming to help disabled people to be independent, and to find the kind of training they need and to find a job.

Based at the Business Employment Venture Centre, it offers training in everything from basic reading and writing skills, and retail or outdoor work experience, to word processing and computer keyboard experience.

When you feel ready to look for a paid or voluntary job, then staff can help you find work and provide on the job support to settle you in and make sure you make the best progress. Breakthrough also works with employers to advise and encourage good employer practice. The scheme has been set up mostly by disabled people, with the support of Manchester City Council.

• More details on 0161 273 5412.

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# INDEPENDENT LIVING

## After a fashion? look no further

THINGS were very different a few decades ago. But these days being disabled does not mean staying at home or forgoing the kind of social life which the non-disabled take for granted.

The problem is that many venues, clubs, or restaurants do not necessarily take into account the needs of disabled people.

Many of Manchester's night-clubs, for example, are sited in dingy basements, or can only be reached via several flights of stairs. Not much use if you are a wheelchair user. Enlightenment seems to be on the way however. For more and more places are easily accessible to those who want a decent night out. The new Bridgewater Hall, for example, was designed with disabled people in mind and no-one wishing to see a concert here should have any prob-

lems. All Manchester's municipal buildings and leisure centres have been adapted to provide access by ramp or lift. And pubs and restaurants, too, are cottoning on to the fact there is a big market out there among disabled.

When it comes to fashion for your big night out, there is no need to miss out on the latest styles because of disability.

According to Patricia Watson, who has just launched a mail order catalogue designed with disabled people in mind, the time is long overdue to take their needs into account.

Patricia, who is based in Glasgow, has been in the rag trade for over 10 years. And she has now decided to capitalise on the fact that no-one is specialising in such fashion.

"It was first brought to my attention by a friend of mine who had multiple scler-

osis that the outlook for clothes was pretty frumpy if you were wheelchair-bound.

"So I had a think about it and decided to get together a team of people and see what we could do."

The result, after a while spent testing the market, is Wearable - a new mail order collection offering everything from stylish lingerie to evening clothes. There are also fashions for men. And all the designs are on the market following long consultation with those who are going to wear them.

Says Patricia: "We have spent an awful lot of time trying to find out what people want and what is comfortable for them. So most of our clothes are specially-cut. We have skirts and trousers specifically designed for wheelchair-users, and other problems like scoliosis (curvature of the spine)."

Wearable officially launches in October, and

Patricia is keen to hear from people in Greater Manchester interested in taking a look at her fashions. As well as catering for specific needs, Patricia has also tried to keep the prices as low as possible. "I'm trying to keep to High Street prices, probably on the same lines as Marks and Spencer cost-wise. The idea was to make our clothes available to as many people as possible."

Wearable can be contacted on 0141 774 0000. Or write to Freepost, SCO 2216, Glasgow, G33 4BR.



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- Tinted Windows
- Pull out Stereo



## THE RENAULT CLIO DIESEL PANACHE 3 OR 5 DOOR

WITH NO ADVANCED PAYMENT\*

- 1.9 litre engine
- Sunroof
- Remote Central Locking
- Tinted Windows
- Pull out Stereo

### MANCHESTER

Renault Manchester  
(0161) 832 6121

### OLDHAM

Renault Oldham  
(0161) 624 1979

## THE RENAULT CLIO 1.4 RT AUTO 3 DOOR

£180 ADVANCED PAYMENT\*

- Auto & Power Steering
- Electric Windows
- Electric Sunroof
- Remote Central Locking
- Velour Trim

*Motability*



**RENAULT**

\*Motability contract hire price.