



**SPECTRUM
NEWS**

Summer 2016

Brexit, Paralympics and Pokemon

Edited By Robert Droy

Think you know
Disabled People...
Think Again

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**SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living CIC
Is recruiting a:
Human Resources & Performance Manager
37.5hrs/wk (negotiable)
Salary scale: £30,178 - £32,778**



SPECTRUM is: a highly respected, progressive and innovative user-led organisation. As a result of a strategic review, we need to recruit an experienced HR & Performance Manager to lead the development of our HR and performance management functions, line management of Team Leaders and ensure our policies and procedures model good practice and employment law.

Working within our Senior Management Team: you will develop and implement policy and practice on all HR & performance management functions, including recruitment, personnel development and safeguarding. You will have a key strategic role in implementing SPECTRUM's ambitious new Strategic Action Plan.

The right candidate will have: human resources and performance management experience, and have Chartered Membership of CIPD or equivalent experience; Excellent management, interpersonal and organisational skills; You will be self motivated and have a pragmatic approach to problem solving. You will understand and champion equality & diversity in the workforce, and have a good understanding of the aims and values of our organisation and a commitment to the empowerment of Disabled People.

We offer: a flexible package, including 25-28 days annual leave + bank holidays (pro-rata) and a contributory pension scheme. You will have the opportunity to make a real difference to the lives of Disabled People and the success of SPECTRUM.

SPECTRUM is committed to equality and diversity. We particularly welcome applications from Disabled People.

To request further information and an application pack, in a format of your choice, please contact:

Tel: 023 8020 2625

Email: Ian.Loynes@SpectrumCIL.co.uk

Fax: 023 8020 2648

Minicom: 023 8020 2649

Address: SPECTRUM, Unity 12, 9-19 Rose Road, Southampton SO14 6TE

Closing date for completed applications is: 9am on 16th September

Interviews are likely to take place on 29th or 30th September 2016, and you should set aside the whole day for the purposes of interview and familiarity.

From the Guest Editor:
Robert Droy



Welcome to SPECTRUM's Summer Newsletter!

And what a summer it has been. We've barely had time to grumble about the weather given all the political shenanigans that have gone on since the Brexit vote. Whatever the outcome of the vote, it did show that people can be energised by politics and that real life can sometimes be more interesting than fiction.

It may be the holiday season for some but the staff, volunteers and Management Committee have been working hard on making the strategic action plan a reality. One of the key parts of that is recruiting a Human Resources and Performance Manager. This is one of our most important job opportunities we've ever created so please take a look at the job advert on the opposite page for more details.

Our feature article this edition is about the language of disability which we hope will be both interesting and thought provoking.

Our aim with the newsletter is to provide a range of topical and enjoyable articles however, if you do have access to the internet, please check out our website for more information about what we are up to.

So sit back and relax with a glass of iced tea or something a little stronger and enjoy our newsletter.

Happy reading!

Chief Executive's update

By Ian Loynes



Welcome to the summer edition of our SPECTRUM Newsletter.

SPECTRUM is never afraid to speak up for what we believe in, even if it is unpopular or controversial. Whilst many disability organisations sat on the fence during the long, (very long!) EU Referendum, SPECTRUM went public as we felt (and still do) that the case was very strong that Disabled People will be better off if the UK stayed in the EU. We were therefore sad, and concerned to see that the Brexit campaign won the day, and as a result the UK will be leaving the EU.

However, we do accept that the majority of people voted to leave the EU (Including, I am sure, many Disabled People). We also recognise that people voted to leave the EU for many different reasons - not just because of immigration concerns. It is far too easy to stereotype people's beliefs based on how they voted. SPECTRUM of course knows just how inaccurate most stereotypes are!

So our task now is to find ways to work in a different political climate outside of the European Union. SPECTRUM always looks for opportunities in relation to the wider political, economic and social circumstances we find ourselves working in, and we will continue to find opportunities that will maximise the ability of Disabled People to live independently and to achieve their ambitions.

Indeed, leaving the EU could be a good thing in at least one way for small locally based organisations like SPECTRUM: Many organisations like SPECTRUM have been the victim of Local Authority's tendering their services out to big national organisations mainly because they are cheap. We focus on quality, human based, services because we know this works better for our service users, but quality costs money. These tender laws have been set by the EU - maybe leaving the EU will at least make it easier for Local Authorities to create a funding environment that is more supportive of small locally based organisations like SPECTRUM to survive and to compete fairly in the future! Lets hope.



The staff & volunteers at SPECTRUM have been working hard as usual in a continuing climate of cuts and cut backs to create the best possible solutions for Disabled People. As I have said in previous newsletters, SPECTRUM cannot expect to be immune from the cuts - any more than the Disabled People we support are. This year it feels like the cuts are really starting to bite hard, and yes this is

Chief Executive's update

affecting SPECTRUM and we are finding it more difficult to fund the services we want to provide. Very recently we heard the very sad news that ESDA (East Sussex Disability Association) has had to call in the liquidators - after over 70 years of existence. ESDA is similar to SPECTRUM, and was one of the founding members of SENDPO (South East Network of Disabled People's Organisations). In the very same week we heard that Essex Coalition of Disabled People have decided that they should stop being a user-led organisation and form partnerships to try and survive. These are just the most recent examples of a trend going back several years (We lost our sister organisation, DAIN, two years ago for instance) NB: DAIN - Disability Advice and Information Network.



SPECTRUM WILL SURVIVE, SPECTRUM WILL THRIVE. Of that I am confident - but not complacent. The implementation of our strategic review is coming on a pace, its aim being to position ourselves internally and externally to take advantage of opportunities that exist, and overcome the barriers that face us.

For Example, we are now recruiting a Human Resources and Performance Manager to increase our capacity to work more effectively internally and to provide even better quality services to Disabled People. In addition, this role will help us to attract stakeholders and funders to see the value of our services, and we will have better systems in place to demonstrate the quality of the work our staff and volunteers do.

Whilst our User-Led Organisations support service for Hampshire is shortly to end, after 4 years of funding by Hampshire County Council, we are proud to have created the Hampshire ULO Network (HULON) as our legacy. Read about the HULON launch event, held in July on pages 14-15 of this newsletter.

We also have other projects which are likely to end due to lack of funding - but we don't let the economic or political climate get us down; we will continue to work hard to stay one step ahead of the game.

This newsletter includes a serious article on the language of disability, on pages 8-12, highlighting that language really does matter and helps to define our position as Disabled People in our society. Hate crime, affecting Disabled People, is rising and this issue is therefore all the more important and serious.

On a lighter, and topical note, **Pokemon Go** has taken over the world, and even parts of SPECTRUM! We feature one person's experiences of this fad on page 23.

We hope you find the newsletter informative and entertaining - and yes - the Marxist is back!! - so beware of page 16!

Sticks and stones: The language of Disability

By Gerry Zarb

In this article we take a look at the language we at SPECTRUM use to talk about Disability and why.

As the old saying goes, 'sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never harm me'. While that might be good advice to help children to deal with playground bullies, it might not be quite so much help when dealing with the kind of negative, stereotypical and sometimes oppressive language that Disabled People often have to face. Society's misconceptions about Disabled People are constantly being reinforced by disabling terms like 'cripple' and 'handicapped' - even in the 21st Century. Their continued use contributes significantly to the negative self image of Disabled People and at the same time perpetuates discriminatory attitudes and practices among the general public.

So, words can in fact do a lot of harm and - if you happen to be on the receiving end - can often be just as damaging as the proverbial 'sticks and stones'.

Sometimes, well-meaning but seriously misguided terms intended to counter this kind of overtly discriminatory language can do just as much harm, albeit in more subtle ways. For example, euphemistic terms such as 'physically challenged' and 'differently abled' have crept into our everyday language as a result of people failing to understand the difference between Medical and Social Models of Disability. While, in many ways, they are just plain daft - and often provoke a knowing shake of the head - such terms are still discriminatory because they imply that the 'problem' of Disability is still, essentially, located with people with impairments themselves. This neatly sidesteps the real reasons for the barriers we face. Yes, we are sometimes challenged physically - 10 flights of steps for a wheelchair user does indeed cause a certain degree of difficulty, even if they had three Weetabix for breakfast!! But take away the steps or put in a ramp, and the 'challenge' magically disappears.

Language is never neutral

All language has meaning that goes beyond being purely descriptive. It shapes how we see each other, the value we place on different identities, and how we actually behave. So, any discussion about the language we use to talk about Disability cannot be undertaken from a politically neutral standpoint.

At SPECTRUM we have always been very clear that our position is based on the Social Model of Disability, which makes a clear distinction between impairment and disability:

Sticks and stones: The language of Disability

Impairment vs Disability

IMPAIRMENT IS

The functional limitation within an individual caused by a physical, mental, intellectual or sensory condition which differs from accepted 'norms'

SOCIAL MODEL DEFINITION OF DISABILITY

The disadvantage or restriction of activity caused by society which takes little or no account of people who have impairments, and thus excludes them from mainstream activity. Therefore, disability, like sexism and racism, is discrimination and social oppression

DISABLED PEOPLE

Are therefore those people with impairments who are disabled by society

These distinctions make a huge difference to the language we use. Stereotypical language based on a Medical Model of Disability reinforces a negative view of Disabled People while, at the same time, disguises the social and economic basis of the barriers we face:

"Over the years a large amount of terminology concerning disability has evolved which denies the social construction of disability and is now considered offensive by many people in the British Disabled People's civil rights movement. These terms have originated and been perpetuated by the likes of the medical, religious and welfare professions. Many are patriarchal in nature, evoking the notion that Disabled People need looking after. Others are based on false premises that have since been disproved.

The language that people use reflects what they think and can influence how they deal with situations. If they behave as if the problem is with the individual, they will take a different approach than if they regard the problem as being with the attitudes, systems and practices that create disabling barriers."

(*'The Language of Disability'*, by Laurence Clark and Stephen Marsh, 2002)

So, for example, subjective terms like 'afflicted', 'sufferer', 'housebound' etc reinforce a negative view of Disabled People as powerless 'victims' or objects of pity. Similarly, phrases such as 'the disabled', 'the blind', and 'the deaf' dehumanise Disabled People to the point that they become invisible as real

Sticks and stones: The language of Disability

individuals. In some cases language can make us disappear altogether. How often, for example, have you heard wheelchair users referred to as "a wheelchair". Images of autonomous robot wheelchairs getting on and off airplanes might be appropriate in a science fiction film, but as a way of describing real people it is extremely offensive!!

'Political correctness' gone mad?

A lot is said about '*Political Correctness*' which has become a phrase of ridicule for many people. However this stance trivialises an important principle – that the language we use to describe people, should be language that those it describes are comfortable with, avoiding terms that are offensive or inaccurate.

It's also important to keep in mind that offensive language is offensive for a reason; many of the various words and phrases that have been used to describe Disability have a long history and almost always carry negative connotations. Interestingly, many also deliberately seek to define people with impairments as being 'outsiders' and not fully part of society. So, the term 'idiot', for example, derives from the Greek 'idiotus' meaning "a person who does not take part in public life." and 'cripple' has been traced back to the Medieval word 'kripple', which meant "to be without power" - which is quite insightful if you think about it!!

Dismissing concerns about such language as 'political correctness gone mad' is, at best, misguided and naive. The question is, in any case, a false one. The main issue is not whether or not this or that term is 'correct' - which can quickly become a quite tedious debate - but whether or not the meaning it conveys is one that reinforces a positive or negative perception of Disabled People. All language describing particular groups in society is political - it cannot be anything but. So, the important questions are about whose language should be respected and which political perspectives hold sway.

Disabled People and the disabling society

While negative language describing people with impairments goes back hundreds of years, the emergence of the Disability Movement and the Social Model of Disability in the 1970s and 80s saw language itself become a fundamental political tool in our struggle for civil rights and inclusion.

According to the Social Model of Disability, people have impairments, they do not have disabilities. Disability is caused by society's inability or unwillingness to meet the needs of people with impairments. As a result, the term 'Disabled People' was

Sticks and stones: The language of Disability

redefined to mean people with impairments who are disabled by socially constructed barriers and the word 'Disabled' before 'People' or 'Person' came to signify identification with a collective identity. Writing Disabled People with a capital 'D' and 'P' also became commonplace as a way of emphasise the term's political significance.

More recently some groups have chosen to adopt 'people-first' or 'person-first' language as a way of describing disability that involves putting the word 'person' or 'people' before the word 'disability' - as in 'people with disabilities'. The thinking behind this is to promote the idea that disability is just a label and not the defining characteristic of the individual.

But that is not a view we share because, just as with euphemistic terms like 'physically challenged', it mixes up the Medical and Social Models of Disability and confuses disability with impairment.. Most importantly, it implies that the effects of disability lie with the individual, rather than society. This effectively denies the political and collective meaning of the term 'Disabled People'.

Reclaiming our language

The term 'Disabled People' has been adopted to define a collective identity for the Disability Movement in the UK. Particular groups of Disabled People have also sought to reclaim different words and phrases as a way of asserting their own political and/or cultural identity. People with physical impairments have, for example, sometimes adopted terms like "crips", while some Mental Health System Users and Survivors have adopted the term "mads". In these cases, language is being used to reclaim and subvert words that were previously seen as derogatory and to give them a positive meaning. They are also used to express solidarity and collective pride in a shared identity in the same way, for example, that some members of lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) communities have reclaimed the term "queer".

The wheels, they keep on turning

When discussing the language of Disability, it is important to keep in mind that language in general is constantly evolving, and, accordingly, the language of Disability is an also evolving, so this is an ongoing debate.

At SPECTRUM we believe it is vitally important to resist any attempts - whether deliberate or unintended - to neutralise the political meaning of the language we use to talk about Disability. We do not want to take on the role of 'thought police' or

Sticks and stones: The language of Disability

However, such language is of course very context-dependent. While it may be okay for members of the group to use these 'reclaimed' terms, they usually still retain their original negative connotations in wider society. Once again, this underlines that the language of Disability can never be politically neutral and emphasises the importance of respecting the way that Disabled People choose to define their collective identity.

The wheels, they keep on turning

When discussing the language of Disability, it is important to keep in mind that language in general is constantly evolving and accordingly, the language of Disability is also evolving, so this is an ongoing debate.

At SPECTRUM we believe it is vitally important to resist any attempts - whether deliberate or unintended - to neutralise the political meaning of the language we use to talk about Disability. We do not want to take on the role of 'thought police' or try to force people to only say what we want them to say. But, it is important to try to educate people about why language matters and to raise awareness of the ways that words influence actions and relationships. Language does not just describe our position in society, it actually helps to define it.



The Paralympics: Superhuman or supercringe

By Berni Vincent



I am not Superhuman, I am human and humanity is important to me. I have spent years unraveling negative conditioning that "there is no such thing as can't", The magic really happens when you let the things you can't do float away and do the things you can do brilliantly, with commitment and passion.

The superhuman thing really bugs me, I am not special either! The superhuman videos are creative, fun, original. it has nothing to do with being a Superhuman, it has everything to do with creative talent, commitment and passion.



The launch of HULON

By Jennie Musson

Early on the morning of 4th July, bewildered Winchester residents would have spotted a peculiar, hunched looking creature, stumbling up the road towards the Discovery Centre, muttering to itself and laden down with a variety of bags and parcels. No, this was not the Ancient Mariner or Sisyphus, toiling up the mountain with his everlasting boulder, but Jennie Musson of the User Led Organisation (ULO) team, on her way to the Hampshire ULO Network Launch event.

Abdi, also from the ULO team, and Jennie had been organising the event for some weeks, along with the invaluable assistance of Rachel Harrison of Disabled People's Voice in Hampshire, Keith Hatter from Winchester Area Access for All and Ed Walton, from Hampshire County Council. The idea was to have an informal agenda giving people the chance to hear short talks from funders, interspersed with lots of activities for people to get involved in, networking opportunities, and the chance to find out more about HULON and what they do.



The event was well attended, with 60 people counted, and a great buzz in the room. It was also a valuable opportunity for User Led Organisations to show off their wares to other people - free publicity is never a bad thing! There was a quick introduction from Rich le Peuple of Greenbuttercup CIC, before the networking and activities.

These activities ranged from table football from Victory Hants to a music workshop with Global Music Visions CIC. There were stalls from a wide range of

The launch of HULON

organisations, like Parability from Basingstoke, Disabled People's Voice in Hampshire, Gosport Access Group and Disability Forum, SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living (of course!), GO LD, Together and lots more. Connect to Support Hampshire were also showcasing their exciting new website, an online resource for adults with care and support needs. Visit connectsupport.hants.gov.uk to find out more!

There were some excellent short and informative talks from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation on what kinds of funding User Led Organisations could apply for, and talks on funding from Hampshire County Council and the Big Lottery. Robert Droy from SPECTRUM also came along to Periscope the event so that people could follow all the action from the comfort of their own sofas! At one point, 80 viewers were watching! Robert also spoke about the work of the Personalisation Expert Panel (PEP). The last talk of the day was given by Moira Smyth of the LGBT Alliance, showing the Alliance's engaging website and all the groups that were part of the Alliance.



There was a terrific atmosphere in the room, down to contacts being made and information being exchanged, which was what it was all about. All in all, the day worked really well and proved that you do not need to have a tightly packed agenda or long talks from bigwigs to put on a successful event. In this case, short and sweet worked just fine for us!

Brexit: The aftermath

By the Marxist

The **EU debate**



Yes reader I am aware that the general view would appear to be that we all need to make up, especially presented by the government and certain media publications. However where does this leave many of us, in particular, the situation between my brother and myself.

You see, we both attended school in Liverpool and joined the Army for a number of years. Upon leaving, my brother entered the catering industry and I went to university and entered social work. Thus the political divide began and because I moved to Southampton in the late 90s, a was viewed as a plastic scouse by my brother.

I voted to remain in the EU for the following reasons among many:

- It was EU legislation that resulted in all EU airports having to ensure that they have facilities to support and cater for Disabled Passengers. I benefit from this service each year and will be travelling alone again in September.
- If I purchase an electrical item, I do not have to worry about having to fit a plug, due to EU Legislation.
- A large percentage of our employment legislation and the European Court Of Human Rights are all there to serve us all. Yes, I realise sometimes they say things that we do not like or agree with.

Here are the two reasons, to my knowledge, why my brother voted to leave the EU:

- My brother would like his country back, and;
- He is worried about immigration.

So yes reader, we do have a problem and how can I build a bridge across what I view as a forever widening gap?



Chariots of fire

By Michael Grimmett

You may have seen on your Facebook / Twitter feeds the video of a ten year old boy with Cerebral Palsy winning a race. His class mates are running slowly to let their classmate win. The video has been called 'inspirational', 'heart warming' and a 'touching moment' by various media outlets. As a person with Cerebral Palsy, I'm in two minds about this.

First of all, I don't want to be all negative about this, and say it is bad his classmates let him win. It is brilliant that his classmates would want him included in the sports day and they wanted to boost his self esteem as he didn't want to take part due to his impairment. Personally, I feel it is more 'inspirational' that his classmates wanted to include him and went to that much effort, rather than the end result. I'm also not doubting that every child regardless of their ability, should have the experience of being a winner.

But, the question is should disabled children / people be allowed to win?

I remember finishing last on more than one occasion in my youth, when with my school I went to Stoke Mandeville for the junior national disabled games. (I can't remember its official title) I was very adamant with my PE teacher and my parents that I could compete at the national games as I finished fourth out of six for the trails at school. It was explained to me numerous times that the sports chair was old and other people would have 'newer' chairs. To cut a long story short reader, I finished last about 20 metres behind my competitors and I was crying when I finally finished, my hopes of being a future Paralympian dashed by the age of twelve!

Because I was crying as I finished, the organisers decided that I should have my own race and get a medal for it. My parents loathed the idea and refused, saying it wouldn't 'teach me anything except if you are crying and disabled you can still win' (my dad's killer quote). I was mortified, I wanted a medal and more importantly an easy medal. I didn't speak to my dad for three days. I was even banned from the sweet cupboard, as I had to understand the true reality of life is you can't just win because you are disabled.

Losing is what teaches you how to win or how to find another way to succeed. Disabled or non disabled is not about letting people win and levelling the playing field, its about making things more accessible and more inclusive. At the moment our society needs more of the latter.....

Coproduction in action

By Robert Droy, PEP Chair and

Graham Allen, Director of Hampshire Adult Services

The timing of SCIE's first ever co-production week presents us with an excellent opportunity to reflect on why we feel in Hampshire that it is so important to work collaboratively to solve the issues that we face together.

As the song goes 'breaking up is hard to do', in our experience, working together can be just as tough, particularly during difficult times. It takes courage and determination but it also takes mutual respect. Too often it can feel like service users and carers find themselves on one side of the argument with health and social care professionals on the other side.

It is true to say that we all have different roles to play, different experiences, and different approaches to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead; as the scale of the task increases, we must approach these with a renewed commitment to work together, to listen to each other, to seek the views of a diverse, and sometimes divided, community, and to focus on the most pragmatic solutions for all of us.

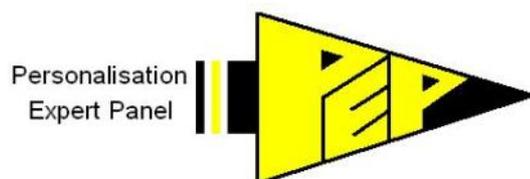
In Hampshire, over the last decade, we have tried to put our differences aside and tried to develop a different kind of conversation. A conversation that is realistic, grounded, pragmatic and one that focusses on our shared values and principles. The principles of Choice and Control are non negotiable for service users, but how we achieve that is up for discussion. On the flip side, both Health and Social Care have to do more with less. Many people may not like to hear that, but it is the reality of the situation we find ourselves in.

Currently, we each, as individuals, have the right to be involved in the decisions about how our own care needs are met, and as a collective we have the responsibility to ensure our contributions to discussions about the wider system lead to the best possible outcomes for all citizens.

This is where coproduction comes in. By working together we can try to achieve a solution that maintains those principles. That's why coproduction can sometimes be slow, it can be frustrating, but it can also be incredibly rewarding when an agreement is reached. We need to be honest that it doesn't always work but that doesn't mean we should stop trying.

A former colleague once said: "We will always have goals and targets, some we will miss and some we will reach, but what really matters is how well we work together".

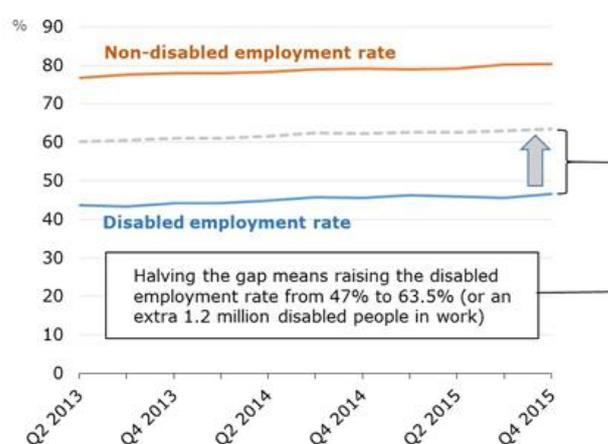
For us, that sums coproduction up perfectly.



Hampshire
County Council

Halving the disability employment gap: Policy and practice By Abdi Elmi

As part of their manifesto, the Conservative Government pledged to half the employment gap between Disabled and non Disabled people by 2020. However, according to Trade Unions Congress (TUC) report in June 2016 this is unlikely to be met. TUC analysis of the labour force survey found that the implementation of the government policy in its current rate of change is 10 years behind without considerable government and employer action.



On the other hand, The Resolution Foundation published a report on Disabled People and employment in June 2016. The report says that Disabled People who have had more than a year out from the workforce are treated twice as harshly as their non-Disabled counterparts. According to the research the chances of a Disabled person being able to re-enter the workforce during any particular quarter drop to just 2.4 per cent if they have been out of work for more than a year, compared with the 16 per cent chance they stand if they have been out of the workforce for less than a year. These figures mean that a Disabled Person's chance of being able to re-enter the workforce is 6.5 times lower if they spend more than year unemployed.

As a result of these reports, the All Party Parliamentary Group for Disability started an inquiry in how the government can achieve its pledge to half the Disabled People's employment gap and opens up an invitation to groups and organisation to submit proposals to assist in their inquiry.

While some progress is made in the direction of improving Disabled People's employment opportunities, the question is will the government keep its commitment to half the disability employment gap in post Brexit Britain?.

Loneliness: Making connections, we can make it happen By Berni Vincent

As a result of attending a workshop facilitated by 'The campaign to end loneliness' I have been inspired to write the following based on notes from the workshop.

Loneliness is synonymous with isolation but not the same as being isolated. Loneliness can be felt even when surrounded by others we do not feel connections with – loneliness is linked to a feeling of not fitting in or feeling different to the so called norm.

"There are some people who could hear you speak a thousand words and still not understand you. There are others who will understand without even speaking a word" Carl Jung

Loneliness is a deeply painful experience, linked to feeling disconnected from like minded people. The 2011 census found there is a stigma about admitting we are lonely, 84 % of older people say "it is difficult to admit loneliness to others for fear of being a burden". Loneliness is everybody's business, it is not just experienced by older people; it is something we all experience.

Risk factors identified by 'the campaign to end loneliness:

- Personal circumstances – such as living alone, being single, divorced or never married, living on a low income, living in residential care
- Transitions - such as bereavement, becoming a carer or giving up caring, retirement
- Personal characteristics – such as being older than 75, from an ethnic minority community or gay or lesbian
- Health and disability - such as being in poor health, immobile or experiencing cognitive, sensory or dual sensory impairment
- Geography - such as living in an area with high levels of material deprivation or crime

Loneliness is detrimental to our health; lonely people are known to pay more frequent visits to GPs sometimes just for someone to talk to. The wider issues associated with loneliness are the effect it can have on our health and wellbeing.

Research shows the impact of poor quality social relationships can impact on the likelihood of early death and is equivalent to smoking fifteen cigarettes a day, as well as an increased risk of high blood pressure and disability.

To tackle loneliness we need to work together and recognise that feeling lonely is part of the human condition. It visits every human soul at some time in every

Loneliness: Making connections, we can make it happen

By Berni Vincent

culture, every race, and every class. Loneliness is about wanting to feel connected but not having the opportunity to make those connections or know how to go about it.

We need to find people who are most at risk of being lonely, consider how to raise awareness, make space to talk about feelings of loneliness so that we can overcome the stigma and make connections. We need to create an environment where it's okay to be different, where the misunderstood and isolated can be included, feel a sense of belonging and be part of the bigger picture.

Most of all we need to work together in our communities, in our libraries, the doctors, the dentist, shopkeepers, faith groups, churches, local and national community organisations, play groups, schools, colleges, and in peoples homes, everywhere and anywhere where people are – we need to join up the dots, close the gaps, raise awareness and provide opportunities for people to connect with others – we just need to do it, and everybody has a part to play.

Examples of projects are:

Neighbourhood network in Leeds have led the way into establishing a neighbourhood based approach using the Older Person's Outcomes Star

- www.leeds.gov.uk/docs/Neighbourhood

Time Banking – helps individuals time exchange their skills

- www.timebank.org.uk/

Campaign to end loneliness

- www.campaigntoendloneliness.org

Solent Mind

- www.solentmind.org.uk/

Age UK

- www.ageuk.org.uk/reading/our-services/lunch-clubs/

Supported internships: One of the key ways into employment for Disabled young people By Abdi Elmi

As a result of recently attending Hampshire's supported Internship awareness conference, I write this article based on my notes and further readings after the event.

Although supported internships have a long history, the government emphasised it in its reform of the special education needs (SEN) and disability system through the Children and Families Act 2014. The reforms include a greater focus on preparing young people with SEN and disability for adulthood, including preparation for employment. This was recognition that the overwhelming majority of young people with SEN are capable of sustainable paid employment with the right preparation and support, but there was a need to raise aspirations about what these young people can achieve in their jobs and careers.

Therefore, supported internships were introduced as an effective route to progress towards paid employment for many young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans (or equivalent). Supported internships are a structured study programme based primarily at an employer's workplace. They enable young people aged 16-24 with a statement of SEN, a Learning Difficulty Assessment or an Education, Health and Care plan to achieve sustainable paid employment by equipping them with the skills they need for work, through learning in the workplace. Supported internships are unpaid, and last for a minimum of six months. The programme includes extensive work experience, on the job training backed by expert job coaches, access to work and complementary college based learning including relevant qualifications as well as English and Maths. The aim is to support the young person to move into paid employment at the end of the programme.

In the first phase of the supported internships trail, 15 Further Education (FE) colleges took part which led to 36% of young people being offered paid employment, compared with a national rate of just 7% for adults with moderate to severe learning difficulties. Currently eight colleges in Hampshire and Isle of Wight are offering supported internship programmes. This is a real opportunity for businesses and employers from all sectors to employ a diverse work force through supported internships.

Delivering successful supported internship programme requires establishing strong partnership between a college, an employer and the young person including their family. The role of job coaches are essential in building these partnerships as well as supporting the young person and the business.

And finally....Pokemon Go or Pokemon No?

By Robert Droy

By the time you read this article, the summer holidays will be here and the latest craze across the world will be in full swing.

The Pokemon Go game involves people hunting for animated Pokemon characters in the real world via a mobile phone app. Once you find a Pokemon, you have to throw Pokeballs at the character in order to catch it. You can also collect Pokeballs at Pokestops in the real world. There are also Pokegyms where you can battle other Pokemon but you're probably already confused.



I'm always up for a challenge so for research purposes of course, I downloaded the app and set off in my wheelchair. This is where the problems started, in order to track down the Pokemon you need to be constantly checking your phone, potentially crossing roads, and accessing places quite difficult to get to in a wheelchair. Once I found a Pokemon, I tried to flick a Pokeball at it. Easier said than done when you have dexterity problems like me. I had to hold the phone still with one hand, aim it correctly and then fire, or fling, or whatever the correct terminology is.

It's not just me who has experienced problems Gamers with a visual impairment have been up in arms about the lack of consideration the game designers have given to access issues.

While some people may think it's all a big fuss over a short lived craze, I think it does raise some serious issues. Why shouldn't young (or old) Disabled gamers be allowed to join in with the hottest game since...er,..the last one?

While I may be happy playing Tetris or Solitaire, Disabled gamers should get equal access to the latest games. Some of these games cost as much as a Hollywood movie to make, so there is no excuse for the game makers not to devote more resources to it.

Disabled People get left behind in the real world, let's make sure we don't get left behind in the 'virtual' world too.



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