

# An introduction to SPECTRUM



Centre for  
Independent  
Living CIC

**SPECTRUM Centre for Independent Living** is an organisation run and controlled by Disabled People, firmly rooted in the British and international Disability Movement, born of the civil rights movements around the world during the 1960-70's; the guiding principle being that disability issues are human rights issues.

We work to a Social Model of Disability philosophy, which defines disability in terms of the discrimination and social, economic and environmental barriers caused by a society which fails to meet the needs of people with impairments.

We are a not-for-profit Community Interest Company (CIC); we are membership based, comprising of 'full members' (Disabled People) and 'associate members' (non-disabled allies). We are fully accountable to our membership.

We are committed to the principle of equality, recognising that people can experience discrimination on the grounds of class, age, gender, transgender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, religion, belief, as well as impairment.



SPECTRUM is run by and for Disabled People to promote Independent Living and the meaningful inclusion of Disabled People into the community. By 'Disabled People' we include people with a physical, sensory, intellectual, psychological, emotional, age related or any other hidden impairment. We therefore include people with learning difficulties, mental health system users and survivors, cancer survivors and those living with HIV and AIDS and Older People.

## Our aims are:

- To provide a means by which Disabled People can take control over their own lives, achieve full participation in all spheres of society, and effect changes in how they are viewed and treated
- To provide encouragement, assistance, advice, support and facilities to individuals or groups of Disabled People wishing to live independently
- To empower and raise the expectations of Disabled People, individually and collectively, and ensure that their voices are heard

We deliver these aims by providing progressive & innovative 'user led' services which enable Disabled People to live independently, and by campaigning for the civil and human rights of Disabled People.

We believe that many of the services traditionally provided for Disabled People have resulted in segregation and disempowerment, creating systems which actually increase passivity and dependence. We work to create real opportunities for Disabled People to live independently and participate in the community as active and valued citizens. Our services are focused on empowering and enabling Disabled People to live the lifestyle of their choice, and to enjoy the same opportunities that non-disabled people take for granted.

Our philosophy is that all individuals can live independently in the community if they are provided with the right support and facilities. People who need support for everyday living can be independent if they have choice and control over the way their support is delivered. We assist Disabled People to overcome the barriers which prevent their independence.

The most important function we perform is to empower Disabled People to understand that independence is not about doing everything for yourself, it is instead a matter of having choice and control over your life and a say in what happens to you.

SPECTRUM has a long track record of supporting, informing and assisting Disabled People to live independently. Our reputation enables us to influence the development of progressive social policy solutions locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

## **The twelve basic rights to Independent Living:**

Disabled People have defined **twelve basic rights**, which have to be met before we can live independently, take control of all aspects of our lives and enjoy equality of opportunity comparable to non-disabled people.

**The twelve basic rights are:**

|   |   |
|---|---|
| an <b>accessible</b> environment                  | an adequate <b>income</b>                               |
| accessible public <b>transport</b>                | equal opportunities for <b>employment</b>               |
| technical <b>aids/equipment</b>                   | appropriate and accessible <b>information</b>           |
| accessible/adapted <b>housing</b>                 | <b>advocacy/self-advocacy</b>                           |
| <b>personal assistance</b>                        | <b>counselling</b>                                      |
| inclusive <b>education/training</b> opportunities | appropriate and accessible <b>health care provision</b> |

## **A brief history of SPECTRUM - 35 years and counting:**

**The Early years:** We were born as Southampton Centre for Independent Living (SCIL) at a public meeting held in Southampton in November 1984 by a small group of Disabled People who met to develop support mechanisms which enabled them to live independently. SCIL was one of the first Centre's for Independent Living in the UK. SCIL remained essentially a dedicated group of volunteers until the early 1990's, making itself known, campaigning and gaining representation on influential bodies.

In 1987, SCIL gained office space in Canute Road, Southampton. However, in 1990, we became 'homeless' due to accommodation and resource difficulties. These problems led SCIL to rethink its strategy. We decided to assume a dual role: our services to Disabled People remaining free to Disabled People, but a significant change was introduced to develop income generating support services, and the introduction of fee paying services to professional, statutory and commercial enterprises.

During 1991, SCIL received two grants to finance the appointment of our first full-time paid Co-ordinator and to develop Disability Equality Training. This enabled SCIL to develop policies and structures to ensure the efficient running of SCIL and to demonstrate our values, principles and accountability to members; this sound foundation enabled us to grow in size and influence.

**The middle ages: The Northlands Road years:** A move to Northlands Road in 1992 enabled SCIL to expand our services quickly, identifying opportunities to provide services which supported Disabled People to live independently via early 'Direct Payments' schemes. We developed consumer based auditing services, personal development training, and a range of training and consultancy services aimed at statutory authority staff and businesses. We also continued to campaign locally and nationally on disability issues and to further our demand for civil and human rights. We gained recognition for the role we played, and our ability to effectively represent the views of Disabled People.

By 1997 we had 8 staff. However, by 2004 this had increased to 24. We were bursting at the seams in Northlands Road; necessitating the next stage of our development.

**Modern times: The Unity 12 years:** In 2005 we purchased, renovated and moved to our current office premises in Rose Road which we called Unity 12. This enabled us to embark on a new and exciting development in our history. We set-up a subsidiary organisation, **Unity 12 CIC**, as the holding company to manage the property on our behalf. As sole shareholders in Unity 12, we have led 2 major refurbishment programmes and have developed fully accessible conference facilities, meeting rooms and office space that we rent to like minded organisations who deliver Independent Living opportunities for Disabled People in the community.

In 2008 we setup a 2nd subsidiary, **SCIL Continuing Care CIC**, to deliver personalised support services to Disabled People with health care needs.

In 2013 we rebranded ourselves as **SPECTRUM Centre for independent Living**, reflecting the diversity of our services, and the fact that we didn't just operate in Southampton any more.

**In 2016** we initiated a new strategy, to work more closely with our subsidiaries, develop our skill sets, make better use of our resources, and to work collaboratively to develop innovative new services and secure our future.

In early 2017 we became a Third Party Hate Crime Reporting Centre, and took a lead role in establishing Southampton's Hate Crime Network

SPECTRUM has a book available, containing a detailed exploration of our history and the history of Disabled People and the Independent Living Movement. Download a copy here: [SPECTRUM - Our History](#)

## **SPECTRUM today:**

SPECTRUM has weathered difficult political, social and economic climates, shrinking and growing accordingly. However, SPECTRUM has cemented its reputation locally, regionally and nationally as one of the most respected, influential and innovatively proactive User-Led Organisation (ULO) in the UK.

SPECTRUM currently provides the following services:

- Training, consultancy and advisory services to public, commercial and third sector organisations
- Personal development opportunities for Disabled People
- Direct Payments and Personal & Managed Budget support services
- Facilitated co-production opportunities with Disabled People
- Personal Assistance register (web-based)
- Student Social Worker placements
- Mentored support for Disabled People
- Advocacy support for Disabled People
- Awareness raising and providing support on all aspects of Hate Crime
- Accessible office, conference and meeting facilities (via Unity 12 CIC)
- Personalised care packages for Disabled People using NHS Continuing Care funding (via SPECTRUM Continuing Care CIC)

**The future:** Throughout our history we have succeeded where other ULO's have not by maintaining clear aims, values and principles; by being pragmatic and innovative; and by leading from the front on user-led developments and issues that we, as Disabled People, feel strongly about.

SPECTRUM will not rest until we achieve our aims and Disabled People are enabled to live independently and enjoy the same choices, control and life opportunities that non-disabled people take for granted.

Visit our website for more information: [www.SpectrumCIL.co.uk](http://www.SpectrumCIL.co.uk)

# Think you know Disabled People ... Think again