

Bristol Disability Equality Forum.

E-Bulletin January 2022



News

Happy New Year!

We at the Forum hope you've had a great holiday season and are looking forward to what 2022 has in store.

There are lots of things that are going on at the Forum that you can get involved in. We hope you enjoy reading this first e-bulletin of 2022.

You can keep up to date with us on our social media which are linked below:

[Facebook](#)

[Twitter](#)

[Instagram](#)

[LinkedIn](#)

[BDEF Website](#)

BDEF's Annual General Meeting Postponed

Unfortunately, due to key people from the Forum getting Covid over the last few months, our Annual General Meeting (AGM) is having to be put on hold for now. We will update you all if and when the AGM can take place.

Coronavirus News

A separate document has been sent with this e-bulletin that has all the latest up-to-date information on Covid-19.

Community Climate Action Project

Our **Community Climate Action plan** is very nearly ready to be published. We look forward to sharing it with you soon and send out thanks to those of you who helped create it.



The next step is to make sure that the plan is carried out. This will involve campaigning and lobbying for the aims that we are asking

from the city. There will be lots of ways that you can help with this over the next few years ahead.

Below are two ways you can help out now. **Please email cca.bristoldef@gmail.com if you would like to do either.**

Plan Launch

If Covid allows, we will be launching our plan to the council on February 15th outside the full cabinet council meeting. As it's the day after Valentines' Day we will be delivering our plan to councillors inside Valentine's cards that ask them to show Disabled people some love. We're looking for people to help talk to councillors.

Testimonies for Toilets

One of the asks in our plans is for public toilets to be reopened. **ACORN** is currently campaigning for this and have asked us to help their efforts.

Please sign their petition:

<https://acornuk.good.do/southwest/Unlock-Our-Toilets/?fbclid=IwAR3kCcBd96qY9hHnFpETiBsRjbRAt8DckxlfhK9VSpA6NIP2rL6XYDyrnD8>

We'd also love it if you could share some words or a short video about why reopening toilets is important to you as a Disabled person. We will share these on our social media to raise awareness of how this is an issue that Disabled people care about.

For more details on the project and to get involved, get in touch with Emma at cca@bristoldef@gmail.com or phone 0117 914 0528.

Making Change Happen



The end of 2021 was extremely tough for the members of **our Making Change Happen** Peer Support community as we said goodbye to Mike Hudson. Mike was a much loved member of the community who passed away late last year.

It was also a cruel reminder that we cannot take liberties with the ongoing pandemic, whatever our

own personal circumstances, because no one has the right to dismiss the safety of people with underlying health issues as a price worth paying because of inpatients with the minor and temporary inconveniences that the pandemic has forced upon us.

The **Making Change Happen** community continue to meet and support each other and if you are a Disabled or isolated person living in Bristol we would love for you to join us in our online meetings or in person as we schedule more meet ups in the near future.

You can also join our **Rolling and Strolling Walking Group** for some light exercise and chatter. We are also looking for Disabled people who live in south Bristol who would be interested in joining a discussion on the accessibility of South Bristols parks and green areas before taking part in more regular walks in the south of the City.

For those who are unable to access the internet we are able to provide not only a tablet computer and access to the internet but also ongoing I.T. support.

We are also on the lookout for volunteers who can help us deliver all of our projects including **Befriending** people who may find themselves isolated or struggling to go out into the community.

If you would like to join us as a highly appreciated volunteer or if you are interested in joining our Peer support community or walking group, if you or anyone you know cannot access the internet and would like too or would like support going out into the community or meeting new people then please dont hesitate to **contact Dan at mch.bristoldef@gmail.com**

Please contact Dan at: mch.bristoldef@gmail.com or phone 0117 914 0528.

Volunteering

If you care about equality for Disabled people in Bristol, then volunteering is the best way to push for change. There's a role for everyone and some can take as little as an hour a month. It's also a great way to make new friendships.

Current Great Roles

Befrienders

The pandemic has isolated many Disabled people, and made accessing the internet an essential skill. For some this has damaged their confidence around leaving their house. Befrienders are needed to offer support over the phone, visit people in their homes, help them access the internet and carry out support plans tailored to the individual.

Walk Leaders

Get out in nature with other Disabled people for our Roll and Stroll sessions around Bristol. Roll and Stroll happens once a week and walks of different lengths and difficulty are on offer.

We need walk leaders to help plan the walks and to be there on the day to help with their running.

Fundraisers

Do you have experience of fundraising? The charity needs fundraisers to develop and carry out a fundraising strategy to develop our charitable donations income stream.

More roles at: <http://bristoldef.org.uk/current-volunteering-opportunities/>. **To volunteer or find out more please email:** cca.bristoldef@gmail.com

Want equality and justice for all Disabled people? Then help fundraise for the Forum's work.

Are there staff in your organisation or business who would like to do a sponsored walk, run or any other event but don't know where to donate the funds to? Or are you an individual who buys most of their shopping online?

Through **EasyFundraising**, **Amazon Smile** and **Go Fund Me**, you can give and help us with fundraising as much or as little as you like.

Find out more on our website, social media channels or contact us on 0117 914 0528 or email bristoldef@gmail.com.

Over 118,000 Disabled people denied compensation from DWP after benefits error cut payments

Over 118,000 Disabled people "are facing injustice" by the DWP after being denied the right to compensation following its "blunder over benefit payments", **the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman (PHSO)** has said.

The PHSO is calling on the Government to urgently rectify the injustice, something which it is so far refusing to do.

In July 2018 - after an investigation by the National Audit Office, an inquiry led by the Public Accounts Committee and legal action from the Child Poverty Action Group - the DWP finally agreed to pay full arrears of benefit to all those who missed out.

The DWP has since corrected the ESA error and set about paying arrears to those affected. But it still will not allow them to claim compensation for the life-changing impact this error may have had.

Despite its refusal to comply, DWP's own policy states that people should be offered compensation if they suffer injustice and hardship because of administrative errors.

The Ombudsman urges anyone affected by this issue to contact an advice agency to seek help and support.

The full PHSO report and a case summary are available from <https://ombudsman.org.uk/>.

Ministers have already broken six Disability Strategy pledges, just months after launch

The government has already broken at least six promises it made in last summer's much-criticised **National Disability Strategy**, responses by various departments this week have confirmed.

Analysis of the strategy, published last July, shows that at least six of the actions it promised would be carried out by the end of 2021 have not been completed.

This includes action on tackling Disability hate crime, the accessible housing crisis, disability employment and how the government engages with disabled people.

When the strategy was published, the prime minister, **Boris Johnson**, described it as the “down payment” on his promise to “build back better and fairer, for all our disabled people”.

But the strategy has been described as “just cynical repackaging”, with analysis by **Disability News Service** last August exposing its lack of bold initiatives and new funding, and how ministers had padded it out with scores of consultations, reviews and vague pledges.

Fresh analysis of the strategy now shows that at least six of the “commitments” made in the document have already been broken.

[In a blog posted on 29 December](#), the minister for Disabled people, **Chloe Smith**, said that this review had now been extended until the spring of 2022 so as to provide “a full opportunity for meaningful engagement with our stakeholders”.

Smith declined to explain this week why so many of the government’s “commitments” had already been broken.

And she declined to say if this showed that the government was not treating disabled people as a priority, and if the prime minister’s statement that the strategy was the “down payment” on his promise to “build back better and fairer, for all our disabled people” had now been exposed as empty rhetoric.

Sign language interpreter to be projected on to big screens at Strictly Come Dancing live shows

She was the first deaf contestant and winner of **Strictly Come Dancing**, and now **Rose Ayling-Ellis** is set to make history again by taking part in **the UK’s first arena touring show that will have a British Sign Language interpreter at every performance**.

For each of the 33 shows of the forthcoming Strictly Live UK tour, producers are providing a registered interpreter who will appear on two large screens either side of the stage, meaning deaf people can sit almost anywhere in the venues to enjoy the event.

Her appearance on the **BBC One** dancing competition helped increase awareness of the deaf community and sign language. After her partially silent dance with Giovanni Pernice last autumn, **searches for information about sign language rose by almost 500% and the BSL Courses website reported an increase of almost 3,000% in sign-ups for its free training programmes.**

Although many theatres and arenas, such as the O2, can provide sign language interpretation to make shows more accessible, the producers behind the Strictly Live UK tour said their show is the first national British tour to feature a BSL signing at every performance.

Strictly Live UK begins in Birmingham on 20 January before going to other major cities including Manchester, Glasgow, Newcastle and London. Find out more here: <https://strictlycomedancinglive.com/>.

Go Gentle Shows at the Exchange

Exchange, a Bristol music venue, are pleased to announce the launch of their **Go Gentle Shows at Exchange on Saturday 29th January, 2pm, with Ben Marwood.**

Ben's show is a matinee to launch the series. They will be running 6 shows this year as part of the programme.

Go Gentle is a series of relaxed shows at Exchange featuring both touring bands and local performers. They will be cosy, with reduced capacity, a variety of furniture, and much more, to make them inclusive to everyone. Open to everyone and designed for people who will benefit from a more relaxed environment,

For tickets to the Ben Marwood event, visit

[https://www.headfirstbristol.co.uk/#date=2022-01-](https://www.headfirstbristol.co.uk/#date=2022-01-29&event_id=70447)

[29&event_id=70447](https://www.headfirstbristol.co.uk/#date=2022-01-29&event_id=70447). Find out more about Go Gentle here:

<https://exchangebristol.com/info/go-gentle-shows/>.

Impact of social care: Sharing Our Stories - a project from Being the Boss & Bringing Us Together

When we receive social care funding, we expect to have a good life. We have found that the process of applying for and living with

a complicated social care system often drags us down. What Disabled people want is for social care to work in a way that has a positive impact on our lives.

Bringing Us Together & Being the Boss are holding **a series of online workshops** for people who are applying for or receiving funding from **adult social care**. They want to hear about the pros and cons of engaging with and receiving support from adult social care.

They are interested in:

- 1) The impact that support from social care has on your mental health & wellbeing, your experiences of moving into adult social care (transition from children's social care), applying for social care/continuing health care funding, and daily challenges.
- 2) Gathering and sharing your stories about the impact social care (or the lack of social care) is having on your lives.

They would like to invite you to join them for **a series of workshops from January to June 2022**. They will have different speakers each month and you will have the opportunity to share your stories about social care. Workshops are for Disabled people and their family members.

To learn more, and/or to book a place on one of their workshops, please get in touch with us at: pippa@bringingustogether.org.uk.

Want to help us make this e-bulletin even more useful?

Are there changes being made where you live that you think others should know about? Do you have any news or views that other members may like to hear about? This is your e-bulletin so please get in contact with us by email, phone or post with your ideas.

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