

FORWARD MIDLOTHIAN DISABLED



2020 a vision of a disabled persons future

Institute for Public Policy Research and Disability rights commission have completed a paper on what disabled people can expect to happen by the year 2020. Disability 2020 assesses key health, demographic and policy trends in order to gauge the possible circumstances and experiences of disabled people by 2020 against the ambition of full and equal citizenship for all disabled people. Six key priorities for action have emerged out of the evidence in this report.

1. Develop needs-led public services to promote independent living. The ongoing process of public service reform should focus on shifting services from service-led to needs-led provision. Public services from education to health to social services and housing must respond better to clients needs. This means building the concept of independent living and promoting the take-up of direct payments and the roll out of individual budgets and ensuring the necessary support is available to enable all those disabled people who wish, to take advantage of the opportunity to take control over their lives and the services they receive.

2. Promote opportunities for social and civic participation by disabled people. Full social rights are necessary before disabled people are able to participate as full and equal citizens. A need to promote a wider concept of citizenship in order to frame more imaginative policy responses that value different forms of contribution, and challenge the poverty of expectation concerning disabled people's contribution to society.

3. Promote employment opportunities for disabled people. The impact of low employment rates for disabled people is made worse by the inadequacy of out of work benefits for disabled people and

the problematic structure and operation of the benefits system. Addressing the employment of disabled people will also be essential to meeting a range of other important government targets.

4. Boost efforts to tackle health inequalities. Poverty is still a driver of disability and disabled people are still more likely to be poor than non-disabled people. It is necessary both to tackle poverty and the health outcomes of poor people.

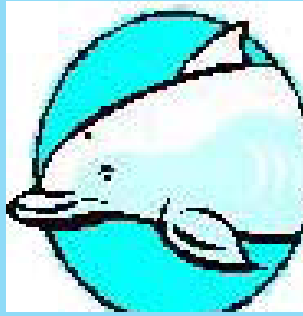
5. Promote better understanding of disability. There is an ongoing need for research and better data on the drivers of disability. If policymakers have a better understanding of disability, policy responses will be more appropriate and more effective. This will also enable the perception of Disability as a marginal issue to be challenged more effectively.

6. Identify and allocate the necessary resources to implement the above priorities. The Government has taken a significant step in articulating a vision for "a society where all disabled people can participate fully as equal citizens". In order to realise this vision, it is critical that the necessary resources are made available and this is yet to happen.

A full report can be found on www.ippr.org or phone on 020 7470 6100

Loanhead Dolphins

Loanhead dolphins is a swimming club for disabled people run in the Loanhead leisure centre. There is a swimming teacher for beginners and improvers also lanned swimming and coaching for those who wish to move on the sport. There is one drawback if you require help with getting into the pool or dressing then you have to supply your own helper. It is held on Thursdays 6pm until 7pm for beginners and 7pm until 8pm for advanced, for more information please phone 0131-440-4516



Dates for your diary

Forward MID have provisionally set the dates for the meetings in 2008, as we are waiting for confirmation from these venues. Transport can be provided if required.

Monday 14th January 2008, Loanhead miners, Clerk street Loanhead. 2pm until 4pm

Monday 11th February 2008, Loanhead Miners, Clerk street Loanhead 2pm until 4pm

Monday 10th March 2008, Open door, Penicuik North Kirk, 95 John Street, Penicuik 2pm until 4pm

Monday 14th April 2008, Open door, Penicuik North Kirk, 95 John Street, Penicuik 2pm until 4pm

Please check our website for confirmation of these dates our web site is www.forwardmid.org.uk alternatively phone us on 0131-663-9471. We look forward to seeing new faces and welcoming back all the auld ones.

We would like to wish all our readers a

Merry Christmas

And wish you all the best for

2008

Why this should never happen again

In the summer of 2006 on the afternoon of Saturday the 5th August, my eight-year-old son Liam and I decided we were going to go down to Dalkeith Festival and Barbecue for a lovely day out. We were meeting some friends down there and it was a nice day so we were both looking forward to having some fun.

On this particular day we had taken his wheelchair, as we knew we would be doing a lot of walking. When we arrived at Kings Park, Liam was drawn immediately to the quad bike attraction situated on the rugby pitch. We stood for a while waiting for Liam to get a turn. There was a sign displayed saying that children rode at their own risk but these signs are common in today's society due to the people's ability to sue for almost anything, so we didn't think anything of it. I knew Liam was more than capable of riding the quad bike as he had rode quads before, at other events. Liam and his friend got to the front of the line where the lady who was working on the ride put helmets on both the children. There was also a man there who was in the centre of the area supervising the children on the bikes. She then noticed either Liam's leg, or the empty wheelchair, which I was standing with and walked over to the man to whisper something to him. The man then came over, took the helmet off Liam's head and told him and I that Liam could not have a ride on the quad bikes because he was disabled. I told him that Liam's disability did not impair his ability to ride the quad bike as it had a throttle on the handle and not a pedal on the right side but he wasn't interested. He told me his insurance would not allow him to have disabled children on his ride, I asked to see his insurance He brought them over and I spent some time looking over the document. I was looking for anything that mentioned disabled users or even the words disabled or disability and found nothing.



With D.E.D. now in force all details of who cannot ride must be displayed. Thanks to Mandie Bowman for this article.

Changes

The Disability Rights Commission is merging with the commission for racial equality and the equal opportunities commission and will be known as the equality and human rights commission (ehrc)). This new group came into effect on the 1st October 2007. The Scottish section will work in Glasgow and will be chaired by Morag Alexander. To register your interest please visit the CHER web site at www.equalityhumanrights.com or phone them on 0845 604 5510 or write to Equality and Human Rights Commission Helpline Scotland, Freepost RRLG-GYLB-UJTA, The Optima Building, 58 Robertson Street, Glasgow G2 8DU

Blue Badges in Scotland

Any person in Scotland issued with a Blue Badge or having their Badge renewed will now receive the new-style format which includes the hologram, providing extra security against theft and fraud. Also, to assist in displaying the Badge correctly the top will include the words "Front - Display this side up".

You can get a blue badge if: you are unable to walk or have considerable difficulty in walking because of a temporary but substantial disability which is likely to last for a period of at least 12 months or longer. A Blue badge is normally issued for 3 years. Details on how to use the disabled person's parking permit. Contact Midlothian Blue Badge scheme office 0131-561-5442

In Scotland, there is no time restriction on parking for Blue Badge holders, unless local restrictions apply. In England and Wales you will need a parking disc which must be displayed every time you park. This should be set to show the time of arrival. Badge holders living in Scotland who intend to visit England or Wales should apply to their Local Authority for the loan of a parking disc which can be used for the duration of their stay in England and Wales.

Information courtesy of The Blue Badge Network. Anyone wishing to join the network or to receive a complimentary copy of their magazine should telephone Head Office on 01384-257001 or you can e-mail headoffice@bluebadgenetwork.org

DISABLED BADGE CRACKDOWN, EDINBURGH

Lothian and Borders police have taken the initiative and are checking disabled persons parking badges in Edinburgh city centre, in November 2006 three people were charged by police with fraud and a further eight people were being written to by the council regarding misuse of the scheme.

A 52-year-old Edinburgh man found using his dead mother's badge on his car

which was parked in George Street

A 43-year-old company director was charged after he had used a home made badge on his Mercedes off-road car parked in Melville Street

A 30-year-old man used a home made badge on his Smart car parked in Hope Street

In addition officers came across a further abuse on Monday November 27th when a 49-year-old man was charged after displaying a fake badge in his BMW X5. When he questioned by police it turned out he had bought the badge for £50.

Chief Inspector Willie Wills, of Lothian and Borders Police, said: "Our officers were taken aback when they discovered the level of blue badge abuse by motorists especially the example of the motorist using his dead mother's pass.

This then is proof positive that the disabled persons parking bill is a paramount issue to curb the misuse of disabled persons parking bays

Chief Inspector Willie Wills, of Lothian and Borders Police went on to say "These are acts of blatant fraud and those disabled parking bays are there for people who really need them not for able-bodied members of the public who can't be bothered to pay for a ticket or endure a five minute walk to the shops. www.lbp.police.uk/press



Out and about

When going out as a wheelchair user, simple things like taxis or buses



become major obstacles. The Department of Transport have laid down a size for wheelchairs that taxis have to be able to carry, height 1,350mm, length 1,250mm, width 700 with a combined weight not more than 300kg, but as anyone who is a wheelchair user knows, not all wheelchairs conform to this size. So I have been informed that there are now two places that the larger wheelchair user can get transport but booking and advising that you have a large wheelchair is paramount, 1. Handi-Cabs Dial-a-Ride : 0131 663 0163 you have to be a member first to use this service 2. Fountain Taxis, 119 the Loan, Loanhead 0131 440 3896. No membership required.



Thanks to Marlene Gill for this article

Spaced out



Spaced Out is a website dedicated to naming and shaming drivers who misuse disabled parking bays. By taking photographs either on a mobile phone or a digital camera and uploading them the Spaced Out website www.space-d-out.co.uk

Disabled parking spaces are one of the few noticeable amenities created to help disabled people and a simple one, however a lot of people find it hard to follow. Disabled spaces are not there for when able people “are just popping in” or as an overflow when standard spaces are full, nor are they for deliveries, rubbish bins or motorbikes.

Once 20,000 photos have been uploaded, Spaced Out will present this information as a petition to all the major UK supermarkets and the Disability Rights Commission to show them the need to change their disabled car parking policies.

Thanks to Anne Wood for this article

Disability from around the world

At a meeting with Eleni Strati it was suggested that we have an article from disabled groups around the world. The First is from Greece on a website called www.disabled.gr they have a free magazine distributed to around 8,500 people in Greece and Cypress. and approximately 4,500 are sent the newsletter by E-mail. They are receiving 2,500 visits daily to this website. The aim of Disability NOW is to produce and distribute all available information on disabilities as well as to empower the Greeks with disabilities with the appropriate technical knowledge and skills to manage their



needs and to reconstruct their lives They have also set up a library to help them understand about their own medical conditions they say “The creation of this Library started, initially, as our own personal desire to discover our paralysed body’s needs, to learn about all the available news concerning the Disabilities -worldwide-, to recruit and train our own personal assistants, and help the Greeks with disabilities obtain vital information about Living with a Disability, from accurate national and international sources” This might be something for Forward MID to consider as we grow stronger over the years.

Alternative Publications

The editions of the Forward MID newsletters are available in large print or a E-mail publications For alternative publication please E-mail to eric.johnstone@mvacva.org.uk or call Eric Johnstone on 0131-663-9471 or write to him at MVA 4-6 White Hart Street, Dalkeith EH22 1AE with your request.