

STAND UP

Supporting differences

"But You Don't Look Blind"

*Emily Davison:
challenging the stigma
surrounding sight loss*

Going For Gold

*Team GB paralympians
on the inclusivity in
sport*

Mapping Your Future

*Supporting Difference
on campus*

Getting Behind The Wheel

Learning to drive



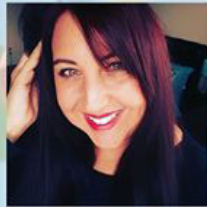
Mental Health Mates

== Newcastle upon Tyne ==

Mental Health Mates was set up in 2016 by Bryony Gordon (author of Mad Girl) following her own struggles with OCD. What started out as a mad idea, is now an international network of Peer Support walking groups.

Our message is simple and we offer a place to walk and talk without fear of judgement. Helping you find your WE... because YOU are not alone.

My name is Natalie and I run the Newcastle meet-ups. I have lived experience of depression, anxiety and a panic disorder. I am a Time To Change and Blue Light champion and I'm passionate about ridding the stigma and discrimination around mental health.



We meet once a month (usually the last Saturday of the month) for a gentle walk and talk usually around Exhibition Park, Newcastle and then have a nice cuppa afterwards. You can talk as much or as little as you wish about mental health but know that you are not alone and we understand that it's perfectly normal to feel weird. If you'd like more information or would like to join us on a meet-up get in touch.

@MENTALHEALTHMATES

@MHMnewcNat & @findyourwe

Mental Health Mates

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WHY STAND UP FOR DIFFERENCE NOW?



The first edition of Stand Up Magazine, brought young people together during a time of political uncertainty and confusion. We've had the rise of Trump, Brexit and the recent shockwave General Election. The turnout of 73% going out to vote showed that young people want to be involved more than ever before. It showed that there is a place for Stand Up and our vision to empower young people to have a say, be listened to and Stand Up for change.

Young people have been unfairly targeted with new policies and cuts to services. This austerity has left young people with disabilities hardest hit, who are often most vulnerable and in need of support.

In 2013 the then-coalition government began to reform the benefit system. Disability Living Allowance was scrapped on the 8th April that year, with Personal Independence Payments being introduced. This meant that people with disabilities now have to go through an often demeaning and humiliating process to 'prove' that they qualify.

The Personal independence Payment has rolled out across the country, and with Employment and Support Allowance being introduced for those unable to work, we have become all too familiar with the scenes depicted in the film I, Daniel Blake. Council services for young people with disabilities have been extensively cut over recent years, making more people reliant on an ever struggling voluntary sector, who find funding scarce to come by to continue supporting the people they work with.

Disability has made it into the media (often for the wrong reasons) with programmes such as the undateables highlighting disability in a somewhat negative and patronising light

and 'benefits street' portraying people as scroungers – this stigma further highlights the difficulties encountered when applying for disability benefits.


At the heart of Stand Ups ethos is to provide a platform for marginalised young people. Young people with disabilities have felt particularly marginalised, excluded and misunderstood. With the cuts to services, organisations like ATOS driving a coach and horses through peoples lives, it is time we dedicate this platform to what it means to be different.

Accepting and coming to terms with differences is something to deal with on top of the changes of going to university, watching the news and the governments particular disregard for disabled young people.

The motives for what you are about to read was clear. Going through assessments to access support can feel degrading and talking about how your differences affect you can feel like you have to constantly justify yourself. This alongside the many other worries that millennials are burdened with.

Young people with disabilities or mental health conditions may feel marginalised at times, that the stigma is very real and that there are often limited people to talk to who understand and 'get it.'

Stand Up was created to ensure you are heard, that you don't get left behind and that your story is listened to.

Journalism is about sharing – sharing the power to make a change, the power to make a difference and to shout for those who are unable to do so. I hope you enjoy this snapshot into young peoples lives who are seen as different, just as much as I have enjoyed writing it. 



The Dyspraxia/DCD Foundation Youth Group

Lost? Confused? Got questions with no answers?

We are a specialist group offering answers, help, resources and support drawing on our knowledge and personal experience of Dyspraxia/DCD.
Open to all 13-25 year olds with the condition.



**Join us on Facebook:
Dyspraxia Foundation Youth**

www.facebook.com/groups/DyspraxiaFoundationYouth

Further information available from:

Dyspraxia Foundation, 8 West Alley, Hitchin, Herts SG5 1EG

www.dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk Helpline: 01462 454986 (9 -5 Mon-Fri)

Admin: 01462 455016 Fax: 01462 455052 Email: info@dyspraxiafoundation.org.uk

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Mapping your future

University is said to be the best years of your life. We chatted to previous and current students about their time on campus

So you've just left school and, like most 18 year olds, are beginning to think about the next chapter of your life. Moving away (or staying at home) is a big decision to make for anyone, but for those with a disability it can present more challenges.

After A-levels most people consider: what am I going to do with my life? Where will I be in a few years time? What job is right for me? Whilst also still trying to work out who you are and where you fit into this world.

Maxine Roper, a freelance copywriter and journalist, was diagnosed with Dyspraxia in her second year of university whilst studying for a social sciences degree at Durham University. According to the Dyspraxia Foundation one in ten people will have Dyspraxia, equating to three in every class of thirty. Maxine said: "It was the student support service at undergrad who formally diagnosed me and I remain very grateful. I'm the sort of person who tends to deal with anything difficult by reading up and banging on about it, and university is a good place for that."

She had to deal with a new diagnosis and all of the questions this brings whilst finishing a degree.

"Most people's reactions if I told them were kind, or at least not overly hostile," said Maxine. "Some were lovely. A few people were puzzled: they couldn't see why it mattered, or why I wouldn't just prefer to ignore it."

Natalie Williams is in her second year of a psychology degree at Anglia Ruskin University, and is diagnosed with the same condition. She said: "It affects me in a variety of ways, from the physical aspects such as balance and co-ordination difficulties to socially. My thought processing, concentration and memory are just a few of the other areas that are affected."

Natalie chose to live at home because of some of these difficulties. She added: "I commute to university by train, so in terms of the travel me and my dad went on the route a few times prior to starting. This is due to the fact that sense of direction is one of the areas my dyspraxia affects."

Kate Jones* has lived with depression and anxiety for much of her life

and has studied for undergraduate and postgraduate qualifications. "I found university very stressful first time around," she said. "I always felt like I should be doing more, there was no down time. When I was relaxing or socialising I always felt like I should be studying. Especially my 2nd, 3rd and 4th years. I repeated 2nd year which was hard and meant that people who had started with me were now a year ahead."

Are young people with disabilities supported enough when they arrive at university? James Corkish, who has epilepsy, studied Theology and Religious Studies at York St John University. He described the difficulties he encountered to access the support needed for his studies. "At university I registered as a disabled student because at the time my epilepsy was pretty bad. I

"Most reactions were kind or at least not overly hostile. Some were lovely"

had no contact from the disability team despite numerous attempts to contact them, and when I turned up on my first day the disability team coordinator turned around and said they can't accommodate me at university as they can't meet my needs, and therefore I should go home.

"My dad dealt with the situation and once they realised they were in the wrong, they very quickly organised me all of the equipment I needed for my current medical situation, assistance with various bits of work and bent over backwards to keep me at university."

Once settled into university James was also given support by the Student's Union to put on concerts to raise awareness of epilepsy that he really valued.

Understanding your disability or mental health condition whilst at university can be difficult for some and accessing the support you need or the support that people advise is necessary. Alongside enjoying student life, living away from home and making new friends, many people feel that being prepared emotionally for what life may bring after university is equally beneficial.

"I would have liked more emotional preparation for what my only very recently-diagnosed dyspraxia would mean in the workplace," Maxine said. "That not driving would narrow my job search considerably. That admin-heavy jobs might be tricky, or I might need support under Access to Work. And that I'd benefit from therapy to address my self-esteem in order to make it in a very competitive, networking-driven industry."

Kate added: "My tutor did have a good understanding of the pressures of studying and working. But this is just a general thing you'd expect of a tutor in a postgraduate masters programme. This has nothing to do with whether she understood the pressures of managing a mental health problem."

There are often many unspoken difficulties that young people with disabilities at university face. Some support is offered through Disabled Students Allowance, a government funded programme that primarily focusses on practical and academic help, although occasionally emotional support is offered through accessing a 'specialist mentor.' The

availability of practical help through Disabled Students Allowance is one thing but being able to prepare yourself for the social pressures that university life brings is another. According to Nightline, a student support helpline that runs at many universities, 75% of students experienced some kind of emotional distress when at university whilst 43% felt feelings of loneliness, with disabled students being more prone to isolation and anxiety.

Maxine's experiences of dating started at university at the same time she received her dyspraxia diagnosis. "Dating was the hardest thing," she said "I didn't date during my teens because I went to a girls school, wasn't a typical girl, and lived on the opposite side of town to where anything happened. My first attempted relationships at university coincided with receiving my diagnosis and all the psychobabble that went with it. I wanted something a bit meaningful with someone who could handle the soul-searching as well as the fun stuff. Which is basically no 21-year-old bloke ever."

Going to university is exciting, an

"Stand up for what you believe in and don't be silenced by lack of understanding"

adventure and equally terrifying. Disability comes with its extra considerations, and the need to be understood. Balancing health and studying is one way to prepare yourself. "Studying this time, for the first two years was really great and the fact that it was going to help my career meant it felt like work," says Kate. "So psychologically I worked hard but could step away from it and take a break. I know it doesn't sound like much, but I would tell anyone who studies and has mental health issues to try to think about studying like this. No one should feel like they should always be working."

Maxine advises to make the most of it. Enjoy the experience while you can and don't feel disheartened if

you're not the loudest voice in the room. You don't need to be. Use the experience to understand yourself and learn what it means to be you.

"You will never again have so many opportunities to meet people or do things that are free and so physically close to you - really make the most of it. Make noise for those who can't, stand up for what you believe in, and don't be silenced by lack of understanding."

Natalie agrees: "Don't be scared to disclose your disability, even though it can be difficult. In doing so you will be able to access a lot of support academically. Also, don't be scared to ask for this support. Even if something seems like a really small adjustment or you don't think anything can be done to help, email someone about it as you never know. In addition, you will likely find that other students are much more open and understanding than other people may have been in the past. In fact, with such a large number of students you may even make friends with someone with the same disability as you."

Student life can bring so many opportunities, both academically and

otherwise that are new and exciting, but adjusting to this can take time especially for those of us who find new environments overwhelming and daunting at the best of times. Maxine recognises that at this time of your life you really start to understand yourself.

"If you're the sort of person who sits in the corner making dry remarks while other people set things on fire at parties (metaphorically or literally), student life can feel a bit of a downer, but you start to grow into yourself. I'm still a bit moody and introverted, but I also like to be busy and affect things," says Maxine.

*Name has been changed.

Hidden at work

How are disabled people supported in employment? We speak to Glasgow Disability Alliance to find out



The Glasgow Disability Alliance is an organisation ran by and for disabled people. Winners of the National Diversity Award in 2014, they support disabled people through accessing volunteering and job opportunities, and providing advice, information and peer support for young people.

The need for their services is clear for anyone with a disability. When we leave school or university and begin looking for our first job, it can be a time of uncertainty and confusion. This job search can seem more daunting if you have a disability that isn't visible to an employer. You know it's there, but unless you disclose people may make assumptions about your ability in work.

Kirsty* a young Glasgow Disability Alliance member said, "I did disclose to my employer but I was very nervous about telling them about my condition."

Harriet*, another member added "I'd only disclose if I knew the employer were looking to take on disabled people."

Disability Rights UK is an organisation whose vision is to enable disabled people to participate equally in society. According to their guidelines disability is protected under the Equality Act 2010 which means that employers have to provide reasonable adjustments at the application, interview stage and once you are offered a job.

There is however no legal obligation to disclose a disability, and when you have that conversation

with your new employer is a personal decision for the individual. Over 1.5 million people in the UK will have a disability, with only 2% using a wheelchair. This means that the majority will have some form of hidden disability. For those with conditions including specific learning difficulties, visual impairments, autism and chronic pain – entering the world of work can contribute to a new layer of challenges.

Brian Scott, Development Manager at Glasgow Disability Alliance advises, that there is support available to young people with

disabilities or differences. "The main support offered to disabled people in work is the DWP Access to Work programme," says Brian. "This can help with transport, equipment and personal assistance. This can be challenging to negotiate and secure but it can make a real difference to an individuals prospects of sustaining a job. The most important support is that offered by inclusive employers who offer flexibility and who have an understanding of the issues faced by disabled people in work, including those with hidden conditions. Such employers are unfortunately rare."

Inclusivity is important to many young people entering the workplace for the first time, gaining the trust and the understanding that your

information and considerations into background noise in an office environment may need to be made.

Hidden disability can affect people at work in a variety of ways depending on the condition. Sophie* a member of Glasgow Disability Alliance said, "I get tired and then struggle to concentrate – it gets worse as the week goes on. I often think I need a day off during the week to recharge my batteries."

Brian explains some of the support Glasgow Disability Alliance provide. "We look at capacity building and developing an individuals skills and confidence," he said. "This is often through informal and formal certified learning. We also offer coaching and employability support. It is also important to provide

"I get tired and then struggle to concentrate – it gets worse as the week goes on. I often think I need a day off during the week to recharge my batteries"

disability may cause difficulties not always visible. Kate* who has autism said that she wouldn't disclose for fear of losing her job. "They would find an excuse to get rid of me," she says.

There are organisations in the voluntary and charity sector who support young people like Kate, to secure employment and achieve the reasonable adjustments they need to be successful in a job. People may require more time to do things, instructions to be broken down or in writing to help with processing

information on services like Access to Work and to give people the opportunity of peer support with other people using our service."

The lack of recognition of hidden disabilities, can understandably cause difficulties and sometimes even conflict within employment, particularly those with mental health conditions. Brian said: "There's still a huge problem around lack of awareness of hidden disabilities and this is particularly the case in regard to individuals with mental health issues who face prejudice and

discrimination."

Emily*, from Glasgow Disability Alliance who has anxiety and depression, adds, "There is still a lot of stigma about mental health – people don't know how to talk about it."

Young people at school with hidden disabilities can often feel misunderstood and different from their peers. These feelings are regularly echoed when entering employment.

The feeling that they can fit in, that organisations like Glasgow Disability Alliance and many others are trying to provide, is often really valued.

"Hidden disabilities which are characterised by fluctuating conditions face discriminatory attitudes and practice," says Brian. "Few employers offer the flexibility they are entitled to. Given the prevalence of discriminatory practice it is also significant that many people in work do not disclose their condition to their employer through fear."

Many believe that awareness and education of how a hidden disability may affect someone at work is key to more inclusive and open environments. Disability or difference is very personal to the individual, and how much or how little you tell anyone is down to you.

When you get a new job, there are conversations you can have with your employer to ensure that your needs are met.

"Negotiate appropriate in work support and reasonable adjustments," Brian says. "Often it is down to the individual to advise or inform the employer of the sorts of adjustments they could put in place which would allow them to carry out their role. I would also advise to seek support from a trade union or workplace representative so you can get representation in the event of things not going well."

Kirsty concludes, "get lots of advice before you start work so you know what you are entitled to and what an employer can do to help you in your job."

Who to contact for further help and information?

Remploy: [www.remploy.co.uk/0300 456 8110](http://www.remploy.co.uk/0300_456_8110)

Disability Rights UK: [www.disabilityrightsuk.org/020 7250 8181](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/020_7250_8181)

Access to work: [www.gov.uk/acess-to-work/0345 268 8489](http://www.gov.uk/acess-to-work/0345_268_8489)

Scope: [www.scope.org.uk/0808 800 3333](http://www.scope.org.uk/0808_800_3333)

*Names have been changed



A career change...

What is it like to go through a career change in your 20's when you can't just get 'filler in' jobs? I tell all...

A year ago I sat down and thought about my future and where I wanted to be in a few years' time. I've always felt the pressure to be at a certain place by a certain age, prompting questions when I've always appeared miles away from where people expect me to be. A career change was certainly something I'd hoped I would have to think about a few years off yet, but there I was at the age of 27 thinking about changing careers. And watching the news.

Four years ago I trained as a youth worker, I loved my training and I really do enjoy working with young people. However, recent events made me reassess this decision. I've been a sessional worker for four years which has meant that work has been infrequent and often unreliable. When I took time off at the beginning there was no paid leave, I was only paid for the hours I worked, so it doesn't take long to begin to struggle financially. It also means that there's no certainty or predictability; routine is often non-

"Those whose skills are more specialist find it so much harder to secure that break or climb an increasingly unstable career ladder"

existent. I certainly can't make any long term plans to move away or any other plans that require consistent sources of income. Since I qualified the job market has become worse, with services being cut and youth centres closing. I grew up in a time when ten youth workers worked for the same organisation, there was a project young people could participate in every night and ample opportunities to get support. You're lucky now if you have one youth worker and several volunteers running a whole youth project, on limited working hours and funding. I really felt this austerity when I began looking for jobs.

I've always had to work with what I'm good at, and unlike my siblings and many of my friends I have been unable to get 'filler in' jobs as a

student until something 'better' comes along. I'm dyspraxic so retail or bar work is unobtainable and I've been very aware of this. Jobs involving high level administration and practical tasks can also be a challenge. When I tell people this I'm often met with phrases of 'you're putting yourself down' and 'you will be able to pull pints if you try.' I'm not snubbing these jobs by any means, in fact quite the opposite – I'd love to be able to have something with a consistent income and more routine. I'm also aware that I'm lucky and possibly fortunate to be in the position when I don't have to struggle in retail or similar, as I know there are many people with dyspraxia who aren't. In terms of youth work I am good at the most lucrative kind and the jobs that everyone wants and are applying for, so naturally there is more competition. As services are being cut and managers are applying for lower level jobs, leaving newly qualified youth workers little chance of getting to the interview stage.

Last year I re-evaluated everything I wanted to do, which is pretty scary for a 27 year old who had hoped it would all work out after qualifying. I'd hoped youth work would be something I could do for a few years yet. I wanted to give young people the same opportunities I had growing up and I felt incredibly passionate about this. I also realised that I had always enjoyed writing and that anything I do from now on had to include it.

Changing careers to something that, given my uneven pattern of strengths and weaknesses to something that is probably more competitive is clearly problematic. I knew I would enjoy journalism (and I do) but I shouldn't feel forced into a career change that has left me feeling almost as ill-equipped



as before. I certainly wasn't ready three years on from qualifying in something that I thought was going to be my career. It's rare to find someone who gets that deciding to become a student again was not an easy decision.

As this the year comes to a close, I face the prospect of looking for jobs again and the overwhelming feeling of not being good enough. Most writing jobs are scarce as it is, that I appear seemingly under-qualified for. Most jobs ask for experience but the competition to get that experience often feels like running a marathon. For people in their 20s and 30s, finding where they 'fit' takes longer than it did years ago. Those whose skills are more 'specialist' find it so much harder to secure that 'break' or to climb an increasingly unstable career ladder. Changing careers before I'd barely had my foot in the door of the first one is a very odd feeling. We really are living in uncertain times. My advice for anyone in a similar position as I was a year ago, is to go with what you're good at, find something you enjoy and work the rest out from there. We're all just working it out as we go along, aren't we? 

Getting behind the wheel...

What support is available when learning to drive? We speak to driving instructors and Natalie who has recently past her test and shares her experiences

Learning to drive seems a rite of passage for many. As soon as you hit 17 you can order your provisional licence, which opens more doors than simply ID. And if you haven't had driving lessons by your 20s, I'm sure you are familiar with the question: "So when are you going to start learning to drive?"

Driving has its perks, and is something most of us try to aim for at some time in our lives. No public transport disasters. No being turned down for a job because you don't tick the 'full driving licence essential' box on an application form. No relying on friends and family for lifts or being stranded because you've missed the last bus. It sounds almost idyllic doesn't it? Who'd have thought that a metal box with four wheels could add so much joy to your life.

For many people with disabilities driving is a harder goal to achieve. That Insta photo with your first legal pint may just be around the corner, but the conventional 'I've just past my driving test' photo might be a bit further down the line. But it's not an impossible ambition. Statistics show that 44% of people learning to drive are over 25, with financial implications amongst others making driving a skill that many are now acquiring later on in life.

The driving instructor community has recognised the need to provide extra support, guidance and patience for those learning to drive with particular challenges to overcome. There are now adaptations if you

need them, specialist training for instructors and assessments to understand your needs when learning for the first time.

Natalie Williams a psychology student from Hertfordshire, has recently passed her driving test first time after 40 hours of lessons. She has a condition called Dyspraxia that can impact coordination, processing information, spatial awareness and short term memory. It affects between six and ten percent of the

situations. I imagined some of the issues I would experience when driving would be co-ordination and spatial awareness, but I didn't know to what extent. I also thought that I would need many more driving lessons than someone without a disability."

Natalie's experience of driving varied from day to day, with short term memory problems making it difficult to remember instructions and to know the manoeuvres that

"I know how my Dyspraxia affects me, it can be hard to know how it will affect me in completely new situations"

population, with girls being more common to go undiagnosed. People with Dyspraxia are often advised that learning to drive may take longer, but with the right instructor they can develop strategies to adopt that will help them pass - and stay safe afterwards.

"Before starting to learn to drive I had no idea how my dyspraxia would affect it," she said. "Although I know the way my dyspraxia affects me, it can be hard to know how it will affect me in completely new

come next. "I began to find that my driving ability seemed to vary a lot from lesson to lesson," she says. "During one lesson I could be driving well but then in the next lesson I'd be making mistakes that I wouldn't normally make. I also found that once I made a single mistake that would affect my driving afterwards, as I would get frustrated at myself for making a mistake."

She adds: "I was generally okay with the manoeuvres; I think the logic and routine aspects suited the



Natalie Williams after passing her driving test

way my brain works well. Also, I think perhaps the fact that the car was going at a slower speed meant that I had more time to process what I was doing.”

Chris Marples, a Chesterfield based driving instructor who has taught several people with Dyspraxia and other conditions, recognises the difficulties for both the instructor and the pupil. “Teaching people with a disability comes with its challenges,” said Chris. “In my early days of teaching I would begin to doubt whether or not I would be able to help people who were slower on the uptake.”

Learning any new skill requires repetition and practice; much like when children learn to walk or talk, it’s a gradual process. Steering, roundabouts and clutch control can present challenges when you

struggle with basic everyday tasks that most people take for granted. Telling left from right is another difficulty, and people have been known to draw a giant L and R on their hands so that they go the right way. Explaining this to a driving instructor isn’t always easy.

Chris added: “Any condition, either mental or physical which forms a barrier to learning requires an extra degree of patience and understanding which can make my job more demanding, leaving me more mentally tired, especially if I have to deal with more than one challenging pupil in one given day. I will say that as I’ve become more experienced in what I do the effects on me have become less pronounced.”

Natalie found multi-tasking particularly difficult when driving,

processing the information and then converting this into an action. “There would be so much to think about at once that I would seem to forget something,” she says. “For example I’d be coming up to a roundabout and indicate but forget to change gears or vice versa.”

Processing information and taking longer to do things, is common when learning to drive or developing any other skill. The Dyspraxia Foundation encourage teachers in the classroom to allow more time for children or young people to take in information and understand what they have to do to complete a task. This advice can also be used when teaching new drivers. “At roundabouts or junctions I would find it hard to process the situation quick enough and would sometimes stop if I didn’t need to,” she explains.

"It makes me very proud to know that I've helped to make a difference to that person's life"

Instructions may need to be broken down to allow enough time to process them, more time may be needed to grasp steering and clutch control and more lessons until the learner is ‘test ready.’ As Chris says, a patient and understanding teacher will adapt their teaching to suit the needs of the pupil.

“The strategies that I’ve employed to help people overcome their difficulties are taking learning at a slower pace, emphasising the positives. Of course safety is an issue when skills are slower to develop, so I keep the less able learners on quieter roads for longer, introducing new skills slowly for a short length of time before returning the pupil to their comfort zone. The level of empathy and encouragement required to help these people to succeed can never be underdone.”

Since passing her test this year, Natalie’s experience of driving has now presented new challenges. “Driving has been quite different to what I expected,” she says. “My driving instructor’s car, the car I learnt in, was a diesel and my car is a petrol. To anyone without a disability this may seem like a slight difference which may not take a lot of getting used to, but for me it has been a huge difference. This is due to the fact that a petrol requires acceleration at the same time as bringing the clutch up – a lot more co-ordination involved than my driving instructor’s car where I could use the clutch with no extra acceleration to start off.

“Although I know I can drive, it’s just a case of getting used to my own car.”

There is support available for people like Natalie who need to learn in a different way or take information in at a slower pace. Driving Mobility, a national NHS free service provide driving assessments and can recommend the best way to make learning to drive a positive experience for you. This can be anything from trying adaptations, looking at driving a manual vs an automatic and

"Although I know I can drive it's just a case of getting used to my own car"

providing a list of recommended specialist driving instructors. “Our advice would be to speak to, or preferably visit, their local Driving Mobility centre where they will be able to obtain impartial unbiasedand knowledgeable advice from experienced practitioners in the field,” says Edward Trewhella from Driving Mobility.

Those who receive the enhanced rate of the mobility component of

Personal Independent Payment will also be eligible for the mobility scheme, allowing funding for a motability car.

Chris recommends considering who teaches you carefully: “The advice that I would give to a disabled person who is thinking of learning to drive would be to do some research into the constraints of their condition before deciding if a regular driving instructor will be suitable.

“There are driving schools who specialise in teaching people with mobility issues. In the case of issues such as Dyspraxia or learning disabilities, I would say it’s best to find a driving instructor who has experience in that particular field, who also has a good reputation for being patient and understanding,” he explains.

Chris gains satisfaction and a sense of achievement teaching someone who may struggle more than most. It may take you longer, or more hours of lessons to grasp something that seems second nature to others.

He concludes: “As much as I like to see first time passes, nothing comes close to the feeling of job satisfaction of seeing a person’s reaction to the good news they receive from an examiner after their journey to becoming a driver has been long and challenging. Then seeing that person wave to me whilst driving their own car makes me very proud to know that I’ve helped to make a difference to that person’s life.”



Top tips for passing your driving test...

- 1) Do your research to find a good driving instructor who understands how your disability may affect you when learning to drive.
- 2) Contact Driving Mobility in your area for a driving assesment and impartial advice.
- 3) Block out a time when you are going to learn - make sure it's at the right time, taking into account other commitments in your life.
- 4) Explain to your driving instructor the best ways you can learn, so that they can adapt their teaching to suit you.
- 5) Be patient if driving takes you longer.
- 6) Give yourself time to adjust once you pass your test.



Going for GOLD

How inclusive is sport? We asked team GB Paralympians

Training to master any sport requires determination, long training days, discipline and often setbacks. For those with a disability, there can be more challenges to overcome. Young people often describe mixed experiences of how inclusive and accessible school PE lessons are. Some recount either being the young person who is keen on sport and is given the opportunities to excel, or of times hiding at the back of the sports hall desperately trying not to be noticed. A few people with disabilities turn their passion for sport into a career. The Paralympics has, in recent years increased in popularity, with it being the second largest sporting event in the world followed by the Olympics. According to the BBC, over 15.9 million people watched the Paralympics when it came to London in 2012.

George Peasgood is a triathlete who represented Great Britain at the Paralympic 2016 games. He suffered a traumatic injury to his ankle as a child, resulting in his left leg being longer than his right and restricting movement. He took the sport further when his coach suggested that he attend a talent ID day where he was classified.

"I find the sport very inclusive. I train and live in a setup within Loughborough University," George says. "I mostly train with the same Olympic programme athletes. (Jodie Simpson, Ben Dijkstra, Sophie Coldwell.) If you're good enough to train with them, then you can."

The English Federation of Disability Sport motto is 'making active lives more possible,' and the body supports disabled people to participate by delivering a range of projects and programmes. According to the Federation, seven out of ten disabled people want to be more active, whilst 16.8% of disabled people take part in sport for 30 minutes a week compared to 39.9% of non-disabled people. The majority of people with a disability want sport to be more inclusive, with 64% of disabled people

preferring to take part in sport with both disabled and non disabled people – currently with only 51% doing so.

Michael Jennings, communications advisor from the English Federation of Disability Sport says, "The English Federation of Disability Sport aims to make active lives possible for everyone, including young people and children. We do this by working with organisations to support disabled individuals to be and stay active. Our work is centred on research and insight with disabled people as well as our engagement with disability and sports organisations."

The English Federation of Disability Sport currently work in partnership with Sainsbury's to deliver community training, aimed at youth workers, teachers and anyone who works with people with disabilities. The training looks at how you can make activities inclusive, strategies to adapt games so that everyone can join in, and resources offering ways to take their new skills forward. The training is practical, demonstrating how these new skills can be put into practice when facilitating activities.

Jamie Stead has Cerebral Palsy and is a wheelchair rugby player, winning a gold medal in the 2015 European Championships, later going on to represent Great Britain in the 2016 Rio Olympics. "I was born with my disability due to a blood clot that my mother had when she was pregnant. I was starved of oxygen which caused damage to my brain causing me to have Cerebral Palsy," explains Jamie. "My love of sport started from a young age, mainly due to my love of football and Manchester United. I dreamed of becoming a professional footballer but obviously my disability meant that was always going to be tough, so I started to look into other sports to see what I could do and that's when I found wheelchair basketball. I got in touch with my local club which I found on the internet and asked if I could come down and give it ago. I went on to play Wheelchair Basketball for eight years and was



Jamie Stead

quite successful, going on to represent Yorkshire at regional level and England at the Sainsbury's School Games. I was then introduced to Wheelchair Rugby by a few Great Britain scouts who were looking for new players at the time and I was asked to attend a training session. I was fast tracked into the GB team and joined Leicester Tigers wheelchair rugby club and achieved my dream of becoming a professional athlete going on to win two European gold medals and represent GB at world and Paralympic level."

Sport England is a national organisation who encourage people to take up sport and become more active. They conduct research, organise programmes and provide funding to encourage participation from very young children to pensioners. Since the 2012 Paralympics, disability sport has become one of their main focusses, and they have invested £170 million to get more disabled people participating in sport. Having big organisations backing disability sport is promising for our generation of young people. It can mean there will be more opportunities and understanding of disability, and how sometimes disability can make young people wary of exercise.

Jamie recognises the need to give disability sport more recognition. "I think giving disability sport more recognition and the same backing as able bodied sport would encourage people to get involved," he says. "I think that Channel 4 and Paralympics GB are doing a fantastic job of doing this by providing disability sport more coverage time and advertising it a lot better with such adverts as the super humans and the Last Leg TV show, which is a fun show that advertises disability sport and confronts issues head on in a light hearted way. In terms of backing I think we are starting to see this happen with big companies starting to sponsor disability sports and athletes more. With more money and coverage, it is only going help disability sport become bigger and create more opportunities." However, George adds, "I think there

could be more coverage of para events."

Is sport becoming more inclusive? Are young people with disabilities feeling more encouraged to participate in sport? Often it's about having a patient and understanding instructor, who takes the time to get to know your disability and possible implications when accessing sport. The profile of Paralympians certainly helps to increase this understanding. Jamie recognises that the world of sport is beginning to become more inclusive. "Its getting better but it still has a long way to go in my opinion," he says. "I'm a great believer in that all athletes should get the same recognition whether you are disabled, female or male, because every athlete puts the same amount of effort in, same amount of hours so why shouldn't all athletes get viewed and treated the same way. In terms of inclusiveness for people with a disability, it's great no matter what the extent of your disability there will always be a sport you can participate in whether that be for fun or to be competitive. In most disability sports there is a classification system to give everybody an equal chance to participate. In my sport wheelchair rugby athletes get classified from 0.5 to 3.5. 0.5 having the least amount of function and 3.5 being the most able, then you have four players on court but you can only have a maximum of eight points on court at one time giving all types of disabilities the chance to compete fairly."

Trying a new sport or activity can be daunting: Will I be good enough? Will they notice my disability? Should I do it? we ask ourselves. The Parlympians we've spoken to encourage young people to give it a go, and to find similar people who want to learn a new sport too. "Contact the national governing body of sports you take an interest in," says George, "and find out your talent support system and they will suggest pathway events."

Jamie adds, "I'd say go and give it a go, its a good way to stay fit, make new friends, meet and talk to people in a similar position as you or suffer from the same problems and might be able to give you some great advice. It can also open new doors, you could become a full time paid athlete and even travel the world. Most importantly it's great fun and will add to your life experiences, giving you some great stories to tell."



George Peasgood

What does social media mean to you?

Social media has in many ways drastically changed our lives. News is instant, we are never far away from our friends and we have a constant source of information about anything from cat's videos, the latest TV drama to mental health. Millennials are constantly being criticised for 'being on their phones too much', 'not being in touch with the outside world' or 'not being able to pick up the phone to have a

conversation.'

There is research into the negative affects of social netowrks. According to the Mental Health Foundation, prolonged use of social media can result in low self esteem, body dysmorphia and other issues, when we are constantly faced with a snapshot of the good parts of someone's life.

There is an argument that social media solves 50% of anxiety, but causes the other half.

There are of course benefits to embracing an online world, particularly for those with disabilities or mental health conditions. Many find a sanctuary in Twitter, Facebook or Instagram. Stories are shared, conversations take place and this can be a lifeline for those who struggle to get out or in other ways would be socially isolated. So, we asked our Twitter followers, what does social media mean to you? 

Replying to @StandUpMag_

My daughter has epilepsy and social media is great for her to connect with other the same and also support groups.

It gives enough flow of information to distract my brain, allowing me to get away from my anxiety.

StandUpMag @StandUpMag_

We are writing about the impact social media has on disabled people. Can you tell us in a tweet why it is important to you?

Replying to @StandUpMag_

With almost no resources for late dx ASD, social media is my lifeline to others in same situation. I know I'm not alone in this tough time.

Finding understanding

The Dyspraxia Foundation provide a place for young people to meet others like them. We chat to some of their members about what DF Youth has done for them

The Dyspraxia Foundation is an organisation who support people with Dyspraxia, from families with young children to adults. A condition affecting up to 10% of the population, dyspraxia impacts coordination, spatial awareness, short term memory and organisation to name a few of its symptoms. It is still, though, a largely misunderstood condition, with awareness lagging approximately 20 years behind its well-known cousin Dyslexia.

The teenage years and transition into adulthood can be particularly challenging, whether you have a disability or not, however, for young people with dyspraxia it can appear more daunting when trying to understand yourself, with the need to explain yourself to others. The Dyspraxia Foundation has recently set up a youth group to support young people through this transition and beyond, to find a sense of belonging and to meet people who "get it", often for the first time.

Sam Killip, 19, from Leicestershire is a young person from the group, he said: "The Dyspraxia Foundation youth group has benefitted me because I've felt a lot happier with the support of people with dyspraxia."

The network of young people mainly has an online presence, representing much of the UK and even abroad. The youth Facebook group has almost 300 members, offering a safe place to chat, offer advice, share experiences and strategies. The young people often form friendships, reducing some of the isolation they feel related to their differences.

Claire Cripps is the Youth Information Officer for the Dyspraxia Foundation. "The friendly, supportive environment created by the members is a wonderful thing to be a part of and the Group has certainly been hugely beneficial to many," she says, "with many stating how less alone they have felt knowing there are others in the group who will truly understand and 'get' them."

Natalie Williams has been a member of the group since it began. "Dyspraxia Foundation Youth has benefitted me in many ways," she says. "It has allowed me to speak to others online. This has been both helpful in terms of getting advice and simply speaking to others who 'get it.' There has been a range of topics that I have been able to get advice on through Dyspraxia Foundation Youth, such as uni and driving. I've been able to hear from other people who have had similar experiences to me."

The Dyspraxia Foundation organises events and conferences several times a year, allowing young

people, parents and adults to meet often for the first time. In recent years there has been events and activities specifically for young people that members of the youth group have really valued. "It's important to me to go to the events to meet people in person so that I can have face to face conversations with members of the Dyspraxia Foundation youth group," says Sam.

Meeting others with the same difference as you can

"Don't be scared to ask for help if you need it"

be a rare and daunting experience for many. What do I say? Will we get on? What if they don't like me? We've all worried about similar situations before. The youth group offers a safe and supported transition from the online world to real life.

"Meeting people in person has been fantastic; an opportunity that I never really had when I was younger," says Natalie. "I've always come away from Dyspraxia Foundation events in such a happy mood and find I can't stop talking about my day. Being able to talk to people who just 'get it' is so lovely."

Accessing support online can be a stepping stone for many young people today. They feel safe in these spaces and are able to explore their disability without the pressures social situations can bring. Natalie understands the value of this ability to connect with others who understand, recommending that other young people seek this support too. "My advice for young people with dyspraxia would be definitely to join Dyspraxia Foundation youth group and come along to the events. Even if you're unsure or a bit nervous at first I'm sure you'll enjoy it – everyone is really friendly and understanding."

Sam advises young people to seek out similar online groups as a first step, "I would say to other young people with dyspraxia to search around for local support groups and on social media for dyspraxia support groups."

"Don't be scared to ask for help if you need it. And embrace your dyspraxia – it's what makes you you," Natalie concludes.



But you don't look blind

Challenging the stigma surrounding sight loss

Twenty two year-old fashion Blogger and Vlogger Emily Davison, decided to challenge the stigma surrounding her sight loss, when she heard people say “but you don’t look blind.”

“I was very much inspired to start my blog because of a comment I got one day when I went out,” Emily explains. “I’d just got my guide dog only a few weeks before, I’d been qualified with her for a very short time and I decided to go up to London one day. I got up to London, and I go to go on the tube and get through the barriers. Of course having a guide dog, I went to go through the disabled barriers and this man who was manning the barriers said to me ‘you can’t go through those, those are for disabled people.’ And I said ‘But I am disabled, I have a disability, I’m visually impaired, I have a guide dog, look. And he stopped the guide dog and he said ‘oh it’s just you don’t look blind.’ And that’s word for word what he said to me.”

What does a blind person even look like? According to Emily, people tell her that the stereotype suggests that they are scruffy, don’t keep up with fashion or rarely have a presentable appearance. “It was the first time I’d come to the front line with comments like this, like ‘you don’t look blind’ or ‘you’re well dressed for a blind person,’” she says. “I started to get more and more of these comments and I found

it quite shocking. People would say these things and I’d ask my visually impaired friends and they’d say we get this kind of thing a lot, that it’s very common. People don’t think that when you’re visually impaired you can take an interest in the way you look aesthetically or that you can present yourself in a positive way and apply make up.”

According to Scope, disability or difference is often met with misunderstandings, misconceptions and confusion. People make assumptions or expect people to conform to a stereotype.

Emily has been diagnosed with a number of conditions from birth. She has Septo optic dysplasia that affects her endocrine system and vision. This means that she has no sight in her right eye, and limited vision in her left. Emily also has a condition called Nystagmus, characterised by involuntary eye movements or shaking and wobbling of the eyes. Nystagmus often means that it takes longer to focus or to judge the distance and speed of moving objects.

Emily wanted to change the perception people hold of visual impairment, so she founded her blog Fashioneyesta five years ago. Through her blog she talks about her love for fashion and style, and the adaptations that are needed to include visually impaired people.

Her determination to provide a platform for discussions around



"My blog is about helping people to empower themselves"

visual impairment stems from some difficult teenage years. When she was younger she struggled with the way she looked, her body image and accepting herself and her disability. This led to her battling anorexia nervosa. During her recovery she turned to fashion as a way to cope, help with her recovery and deal with the negativity resulting from years of bullying. “Fashion and beauty became part of my armour and a really essential part to me recovering from anorexia and accepting my disability,” she says. “I was able to turn my disability into a positive by using eye make up to eventuate my eyes and to give myself a trade mark in the way I looked in a positive way. Fashion and beauty was something I loved, and I wanted to start a blog to show how much I loved it for that reason.”

As a child she was fascinated by her mother’s job as a make up artist and had always been interested in fashion. Blogging seemed like a natural progression, and became something that helped her just as much as it has helped other people. “My mother’s vanity was like a sweet shop to me when I was a child. It was always something that I loved to take an interest in and that’s where it started from,” she says.

Through her extensive online presence on her blog and Youtube channel she hopes to challenge the assumption that she doesn’t look blind. “It’s assumed that people with disabilities or visual impairments can’t look nice or take an interest in fashion or beauty and the way they look,” she says. “This is one of the biggest things that I want to challenge through my blog. My blog is about helping people to empower themselves and move on in their life and to know that they can achieve what they want to achieve. Their disability doesn’t have to obstruct them from anything that they want to do.”

Talking about the realities of disability has certainly contributed to the success of Fashioneyesta. “We live in a society where disability can be seen as a terrible thing and people have very negative views on disability. I feel that with certain forms of media it’s not portrayed



very well and disability isn’t shown in a positive way. I think there needs to be a healthy balance, obviously you need to show the bad – I talk about things in my blog that impact on me from my disability but I also show the good as well,” says Emily. Emily believes that the fashion industry needs to become more inclusive and accessible for all kinds of disability, from developing shops accessible to wheelchairs to understanding the impact that

"We definitely need to see more diversity in fashion brand campaigns"

lighting and loud music can have on people with sensory conditions. She describes many of her friends being excluded from some shops because they aren’t included or able to have their needs met. She also believes that more disabled models should be used in the industry, so that disabled people can see themselves represented too. “When you start seeing yourself represented in this mainstream form of media, other things will start to follow. I think unless you’re creating a metaphorical scope where people are represented and you can see yourself, how can you imagine ways

where it can be more accessible?” she says. “We definitely need to see more diversity in fashion brand campaigns. On the cat walk but also with mainstream brand campaigns, brands that everyday people use, eg New look, Zara. All the various brands that people would use, you’d see people wearing and where people would go to for inspiration. It would be lovely to walk into a shop and see the latest brand campaign

featuring a model who has a disability.” Emily also recognise that online shopping, a resource that makes life easier for many is still inaccessible to disabled people. With website design and the models they use, rarely recognising disabled consumers. She said; “The online shopping sphere needs to start thinking about how they market their clothes, for example having a more detailed description of the garments on their website, making sure that the website is accessible for people with different needs, including for voice over users. It will also be nice to see

people modelling the clothes with disabilities, so people can see what it looks like when you’re sitting down. If you’re in a wheelchair and you are mainly sat down, clothes are going to sit differently on you.” “I think again that comes down to inclusion, it’s important to see yourself represented because people with disabilities have to wear clothes as well, and contrary to what people might believe we actually like wearing clothes. We don’t walk around with bags on our heads, we do actually enjoy fashion. A very big proportion of the consumer industry have a disability and it would be nice as paying customers to see us represented in that industry,” adds Emily. Emilys success and attention through blogging and talking about visual impairment in a very candid and honest way has led to her working with disability charity Scope on their End The Awkward campaign, Channel 4, and on several guide dog campaigns. The response from her readers has been positive, with many sharing stories of how her journey has helped them. Her individuality and message behind her work has enabled people to feel empowered by her story. “To this day I still get loads of messages from people saying ‘I can’t explain how much you’ve helped me, thank you so much’ and ‘your videos really help’ and I think it’s really great what you do,” she says. “I’ve had messages from family and parents of children with disabilities like mine contact me saying that they’re really grateful for my content and for me taking the time out to talk about my disability. It’s lovely and I think people underestimate the power it has. Getting messages like that when you’re having a bad day is amazing.” Emily’s message is clear: to embrace your disability and to feel comfortable with your differences, letting others know what it means to be you. Whilst recognising the difficulties she had growing up, she’s now put her time into something that she loves and that the stereotypes suggest she wouldn’t be able to do. “I want to show people who have maybe recently been diagnosed with a disability or a visual impairment, that it might be difficult and it was very difficult for

me when I was younger,” she says. “I came to embrace and accept my disability and see it as not an external part of me, but part of me that it helped shape my character so I was able to move on. Essentially my blog is about normalising disability. I’m trying to subconsciously say to people that disability is not out of the ordinary, it’s very normal and people can do whatever they want to do, just like I am doing.” Through writing and vlogging she’s learned about herself, her disability and other peoples lives, “I see my disability as a life coach. It’s been the best life coach I could have ever had. Because it taught me to love myself. I’m very accepting of my disability because of what it’s taught me. It’s about your personal road where you come to a point when you accept it.” So what does a blind person look like? The truth is anyone of us can become visually impaired – the view held by the man at the tube gates in London was a catalyst to fashioneyesta, but also harbours deeper issues that Emily tackles through her work. She said: “One thing I wish I was told when I was younger is, don’t let other people’s views of disability impact on you. We are in society where it’s predominantly people with non disabilities and a lot of the decision makers do not have disabilities. When you live in a society like that disability can be made into something very negative, people can have very underlying ablest attitudes – they may not mean to do it but the things they say or do can exclude you and can make you feel very marginalised and alienated. Don’t let anyone dictate how you should feel about your disability. Don’t let anyone make you feel that because you have a disability you will not live up to the life that you wanted for yourself, because you will.” Emily is now studying at university for a Masters in Children’s Literature, having met a supportive group of friends who are accepting of her and her visual impairment. Through her work, she hopes that others will accept and speak up for being different too. “Believe in yourself and the people around you. As long as you have faith in the people that you love. Advocate for yourself, speak up for yourself, don’t let anyone talk you down,” She says. “It’s important to be an advocate for yourself, whilst in this world there are loads of amazing advocates, the best advocate for yourself is you, so it’s important that you speak up. If people tell you that you’re going on and on, just tell them that you’re being an advocate for yourself and they can go and stuff it quite frankly,” Emily concludes.



"I believe every woman deserves the right to be well dressed - even if she does have disabilities"

Is the fashion industry changing?

Clothing manufacturers are beginning to recognise the need to produce inclusive clothing, for those who are met with the challenge of finding accessible fashion. One woman has recognised the need to produce a clothing brand that is accessible to all women. Clothing that is comfortable, in keeping with the latest trends and is fashionable. She created Fashion Ability. Inspired by producing adapted clothes for wounded soldiers going into rehab, Kay Simpson turned her attention to supporting women with disabilities, ensuring that all women can have the opportunity of accessible

fashion. “When a woman looks good she feels good. Yet, for many woman getting dressed is a daily struggle. This is a problem clothing manufacturers have not addressed – until now,” she says. The business speaks to the fashion industry, sending a message that it is possible to produce inclusive fashion. Mainstream brands may be slower to provide inclusive clothes, but small businesses like Fashion Ability are leading the way. “I believe that every women deserves the right to be well dressed – even if she does have disabilities,” Kay concludes.

How accessible is politics?

Scottish based One in Five campaign bring the participation of disabled people onto the political agenda. We speak to their founder about how more disabled people can be included in politics

Following the 2017 General Election we saw an increase in political participation amongst young people. Our generation is slowly being given a platform for debate; Jeremy Corbyn is recognising issues that affect young people. The Millennial generation, who are often branded as lazy and uninterested, are feeling empowered by this. But what about disabled people? Do they feel empowered to participate in politics and are they given a platform to do so?

Following the 2014 Scottish referendum, a campaign called 'The One in Five' was formed. The name comes from the fact that one in five people are disabled, and the need to increase their political participation

through empowerment.

Jamie Szymkowiak is founder of the One in Five campaign. "Disabled people are largely missing from the political debate and under represented at Westminster," said Jamie.

Following the recent General Election, the total number of disabled MPS has been brought up to five, including Emma Lewell-Buck of the South Shields constituency who kept her seat, and two new Labour MP's Marsha De Cordova and Jared O'Mara, who has Cerebral Palsy and ousted the former Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg from his seat in Sheffield.

The Business Disability Forum welcomed the election of new

disabled MPs but made it clear that there is still a long way to go to ensure good representation. The Business Disability Forum state that the percentage of disabled MPs amounts to less than 1% of the 650 MPs in The House of Commons, compared to 20% of people nationally.

Jamie feels that more still could be done to make politics inclusive and to enable Westminster to become more accessible to disabled people. "Although there has been recent improvements, voting could still be made more accessible for disabled people," he says.

He also recognises that we are beginning to understand the adaptations and reasonable

adjustments that disabled people may need to participate, "It is now the case that local authorities have to take proactive steps to avoid excluding disabled people. Polling station assistance and proxy voting is available as is accessible ballot papers."

The One in Five campaign have set out a charter that all major political parties in Scotland have signed, tackling inclusion in politics and outlining ways that political parties can avoid excluding or isolating disabled people from the political process. The charter includes the importance of making venues accessible, materials available in a variety of formats and to increase awareness and understanding of issues that affect disabled people. Exclusion and not being able to

political process and therefore more likely to vote."

Historically, Westminster is a place inaccessible to certain groups of people. In her first address to parliament, Laura Pidcock newly elected MP for North West Durham, discussed the distinct lack of working class representatives in Westminster and the difficulties they encounter when they get there. Similar can be said for disabled people. There used to be an 'access to elected office fund' that enabled disabled MPs and those standing for election to meet the costs related to their disability. Many have called for this to be reinstated to make Westminster more accessible. "Reviewing selection process to encourage more disabled people to consider standing as candidates in elections

Five believe that if we did have a larger representation of disabled MPs in parliament, maybe there would be more understanding and acceptance. "If our politics were more representative, nearly twenty percent of our politicians would have an impairment, learning disability or long term health condition," Jamie says. "Due to the lack of representation in politics, at all levels, disabled people often feel we are 'spoken to' rather than 'discussed with' or only included in debates regarding social security related matters."

Do you want to get involved in politics? Maybe you feel excluded? Disabled young people feel the burden of the stigma related to the expectations of a 'millennial lifestyle' and the difficulties relating to their disability. One in Five are carrying out ground breaking work to ensure that you can participate, that you are listened to and that you are given a platform to debate. Jamie encourages young disabled people to get involved. To shout about it and most importantly to stand up for being you. "If a young disabled person wants to get involved in politics but doesn't feel supported to do so, the first bit of advice I would offer would be to contact their local party branch or constituency association," he says. "No matter their political persuasion, most political parties in the UK have a local structure. If you have specific requirements, let the local chairman know. In my experience, most parties will make the necessary arrangements once they are aware of an individual's needs."

SL

"Disabled people are often largely missing from the political debate and under represented at Westminster"

participate is at the heart of the motivation behind the One in Five Campaign. "Disabled people often feel excluded from all aspects of politics," Jamie says. "In order for this to change, political parties need to ensure their local branch meetings are held in accessible venues and internal materials are available in accessible formats. Holding a range of accessible hustings will help disabled people feel included in the

as well as reinstating the Access to Elected Office Fund for Westminster elections will help increase the representation of disabled people (the AEOF is available in Scotland for local council and Scottish elections)," says Jamie.

Disabled people have been targeted by benefit cuts, sanctions and cuts to services. There's an argument that politicians are out of touch with real people. One in



What's on your MIND?

We chat to the experts and explore why it is important to talk about our mental health

According to mental health charity Time to Change, one in ten young people will experience a mental health condition at some time in their lives. This means you or someone close to you will be affected. It also means statistically that three people in every average classroom will too.

Mark Brown is a journalist and former editor of the One in Four magazine, a magazine written by and for people with mental health conditions. He regularly writes and tweets about mental health and his experience of trauma. Recognising how you are feeling, and then understanding that you may need support to deal with these feelings is a skill, that as we experience more we are able to develop. Mark

recognises that looking at the world around you and your own hopes, desires and aspirations for the future can get lost when we experience mental health difficulties. "Hope and the future are sort of mixed together in our heads," he says. "When we experience despair we both lose sight of the path to our own future but also lose sight of the future we want for the world, too. It can feel like what's going on in our heads and what's going on outside are all mixed up as if they were the same thing."

We often hear on social media, that 'it's good to talk', with people attempting to raise awareness of mental illness and rightly so. The anti stigma movement online and more physically has blown up in recent years with many celebrities

and public figures backing the campaigns. But how do we talk? How do we share our deepest darkest thoughts without burdening our friends and family? And how can we support friends?

Karen Polluck is a councillor from Northumberland Counselling specialising in LGBT issues. She recognises the importance of understanding mental health amongst friendship groups, that not showing up because of anxiety is understood and the need to talk about our mental health. "Sometimes the thing a friend needs is to know it's OK to not be ok," she says. "There is a lot of pressure on people to present a life which looks picture perfect. Let your friends know you don't expect that. Let them know

it's OK not to make events, and keep inviting them, and most of all be willing to listen. Being explicit can make a huge difference, tell friends they don't need to put up a false front around you. There are great campaigns that tell people to talk, but they are meaningless if no one is

is often vital for their recovery and in overcoming the isolation that they may feel.

The organisation also identifies five 'mental health first aid' strategies to follow; assess risk of suicide and self harm, listen non-judgementally, give reassurance and

are treated within the mainstream media," Karen concludes. "It seems trendy to laugh at very serious issues such as gender equality, poor labour rights, housing or environmental concerns simply because of the age of the person expressing them."

Marks adds the need to recognise how you feel, find an outlet that can help you and not to feel worried for feeling how you do.

Supporting your own mental health will make you better prepared and equipped when supporting others who encounter difficulties.

"It's not letting the side down or hiding away," he says. "We can't run on panic forever, always waiting for the crisis to hit. If we do that, when the crisis does come we'll have no reserves of strength to draw upon."



"We also need to not mock or downplay peoples concerns"

listening. Remember your own self care too, one of my favourite sayings is you cannot serve from an empty vessel."

According to the Mental Health Foundation, supporting a friend who has a mental health condition

information, encourage the person to get appropriate professional help and encourage self-help strategies.

"We also need to not mock or downplay people's concerns, something that can happen a lot particularly in the way 'millennials'



Thank you

This project wouldn't have happened without the input, time and support from a few people who made this special edition come to life. Stand up is about listening, providing a platform and ensuring that your voices are heard. Central to our ethos is empowerment, a value that I have carried on throughout this magazine.

Disability was touched on in issue one of Stand Up Magazine and it has been an honour to be able to explore this in more depth. I've spoken to many insightful people along the way, heard stories and understood issues that are often hidden or rarely recognised.

Special thanks to Sunderland University and Alex Lockwood for ongoing support and guidance. Thank you to everyone I have spoken to during the course of this project or who have supported me in any other way. Those who have given up their time to tell their stories and share experiences for others to read. I hope you've enjoyed reading this magazine as much as I have enjoyed writing it. It wouldn't have happened without any of you.

There are of course too many people to name but I would like to recognise everyone who has directly contributed to articles. Your help is greatly appreciated, so thank you.

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Members of Glasgow Disability Alliance

Brian Scott

Chris Marples

Edward Trewella

Driving Mobility

George Peasgood

English Federation of Disability Sport

Jamie Stead

Fashioneysta

Sport England

Stand Up Twitter followers

Claire Cripps

The Dyspraxia Foundation

Sam Killip

Emily Davison

Kay Simpson

One in Five Campaign

Jamie Szymkowiak

Mark Brown

Karen Polluck

SIDE BY SIDE



03.09.2017

PARALLEL LONDON

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QUEEN ELIZABETH OLYMPIC PARK

ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

World's Strongest Disabled Man Competition, Parallel Football, Motivate East, Wheelchair Dance Sport Association UK, Disability Snow Sport UK, Canterbury Hellfire Wheelchair Rugby Club, Commando Active, Surfability, This Girl Can, CP Sport, British Wheelchair Basketball, Access Sport & England Hockey, Lord Taverners

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