



CARE WORKER SLAMS PLYMOUTH TAXI FIRMS OVER LACK OF WHEELCHAIR ACCESS

A care worker has criticised taxi companies for failing to provide enough wheelchair accessible vehicles at weekends.

Sabrina Jones looks after a severely disabled woman who relies entirely on adapted taxis to get around.

Mrs Jones, who said she could not give any details of her client, said: "I think this is discrimination against disabled people not being able to access the community."

Read the full story:

This story appeared in the Herald on January 28th 2016 and **can be accessed at the web link below:**

www.plymouthherald.co.uk/Care-worker-slams-Plymouth-taxi-firms-lack/story-28626694-detail/story.html

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News from the Chair, Ann Pointon

As many members know Dawn Clarke, who started the original group known as Plymouth DAN, has been working with PADAN since the middle of 2015 on fund-raising and other research activities. However, in January we asked Dawn to work as PADAN's part-time Co-ordinator to take on the administration which Ann as Chair has been doing since Chris Wetherill, the Disability Engagement Worker left in 2011. This will enable us to expand PADAN's network and activities.

We are really pleased that Dawn accepted and as part of her work she has taken on the editing of the PADAN Newsletter, as you will see from the new look of this issue. Its design and content is likely to change further over the next year and comment and contributions from members will be very welcome. Dawn will be assisted by Debra Ewing, based at Plymouth Guild, who was working part-time for PADAN on the DisabledGo project but will now help with our general administration since that project finished.

'DON'T BLOCK THE DROP' Campaign

Disabled Motorist UK is proud to be supporting Disabled GO with their new '**Don't block the Drop**' campaign. The aim of this campaign is to stop motorists parking in front of dropped kerbs. When these kerbs are blocked it can cause huge problems for some disabled people who need dropped kerbs to get off the road and out of the path of oncoming traffic.

The company plans to collect **1,000 examples** of '**drop blockers**' over an eight week period so they are calling for anybody who has seen a vehicle parked in front of a dropped kerb to send their evidence in to:

They need you to send them a picture if possible, along with details of when and where it happened.



Email: dontblockthedrop@disabledgo.com
or post a comment on their **Facebook** or **Twitter** page.

PADAN Notices

ACCESS GROUP 2015 Activities

Last year the Access Group worked with a number of different organisations to raise issues and discuss best practice in disability access including:

- ◆ The new History Centre
- ◆ New Central Library
- ◆ Public toilet upgrades planned for Southway, Crownhill, Whitleigh, Richmond Walk & Devil's Point and continuing issues with the Life Centre toilets
- ◆ Parking on the Hoe

Access Group Meetings 2016

**Frobisher Room,
The Council House**

10.30 am for 11am - 1 pm

**Friday 22nd April
Friday 17th June**

**The Access Group is
an open meeting
- all members are welcome**

**It helps us to know if you are
coming**

Email: info@padan.org.uk

Next PADAN Main Meeting 2016

**Warspite Room,
The Council House**

10.30 am for 11am - 1 pm

Friday 13th May

Speaker:
Liz Price, Senior Community
Outreach & Engagement Officer,
Houses of Parliament

**Members of the
British Polio Association
will be joining us for this meeting**

Booking details to follow

Peers Defer to Elected Commons on Cuts to Employment & Support Allowance (ESA)

Peers backed down in their battle with MP's over cuts to disabled peoples' benefits. Ministers claimed because the cut involves money they have "financial privilege" and asserted the Commons' right to have the final say on budgetary measures.

The government was defeated twice in the House of Lords over their proposed cut of £30 a week to ESA for new claimants in the Work-Related Activity Group (WRAG) from April 2017. This will bring the rate in line with Jobseeker's Allowance, reducing weekly from £102.15 to £73.10, a £1,500 a year reduction

Ministers argue that this cut will be an incentive to return to work. Peers wanted an impact assessment on the health, finances and work prospects of claimants and campaigners say the cut will push claimants further into poverty.

Baroness Campbell said: "I hope and pray that we don't look back on this day as the moment we pushed some of the most severely disabled people in Britain over the edge."

"I think we all know deep down inside that it is attitudinal and environmental discrimination that really prevents this group from accessing employment."

Courtesy of Guardian News & Media Ltd

Read more at these links:

<http://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2016/feb/29/lords-rebuff-tory-plan-to-cut-esa-for-second-time>

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/esa-disability-benefit-cuts-wrag-baroness-campbell-a6918661.html>

Maximus & Work Capability Assessments

How are Maximus faring with the contract for the Work Capability Assessment?

In March 2015 Maximus took over delivery of the Work Capability Assessments from Atos.

On the 8th January 2016 the Guardian reported on disclosures made by official auditors about Maximus's performance. They are performing worse in the implementation of fitness-to-work tests in key areas and costs continue to spiral. DPAC (Disabled People Against Cuts) says very little is expected to change with this transfer to another large private company and calls for the Work Capability Assessment to be scrapped and benefit tests to be brought back within the public sector.

ESA targets were 7 weeks from assessment to receiving a benefit. In August, this figure was revised to 23 weeks the report said. The average time to process ESA claims has been cut from 29 to 23 weeks but there remained a backlog of 280,000 in August.

Read more at this link: www.theguardian.com/society/2016/jan/08/maximus-miss-fitness-to-work-test-targets-despite-spiralling-costs

Disability & the Law – 7 Short Films to Help Understand Your Rights

These films, presented in 7 short parts, have been produced by Marcus Dillistone of the Glory Film Company. Marcus is an award-winning and Royal Premiered British film director and is involved in social and charitable film making, being particularly known for films dealing with social and medical matters:

- **Introduction & Access**
- **Healthcare**
- **Work**
- **Welfare & Benefits**
- **Personal Injury**
- **Finances**
- **Travel**



You can download the film scripts here: disabilityandthelaw.com/dal-script-3-1n.pdf. They provide an introductory overview of the law to help disabled people.

To view “Part 1 Introduction & Access” visit: <https://vimeo.com/122211805>

South West Open Youth Orchestra - UK's only disabled-led regional orchestra



The UK's only disabled-led regional youth orchestra, works in partnership with musicians from the British Paraorchestra.

The orchestra's instruments have been developed and adapted for them to use by OpenUp Music who specialise in making orchestras, instruments and repertoire accessible to young disabled musicians.

They are currently searching for more young musicians up to age 25 to join this pioneering group. If you have a passion for music making and want to show the world what you can do, then the South West Open Youth Orchestra might just be for you!

Read more at this link: <http://openupmusic.org/swoyo/>

Scope Plymouth

SCOPE provide support, information and advice services to disabled people and opened new service in Cornwall Street in January this year.

I spoke to Amy Gunther, Manager about what is on offer from this new service. Amy explained that a Day Service operates from their new base with activities in and out of the Centre and they are offering **Taster Days**. She told me that SCOPE supports disabled peoples' access to mainstream opportunities by working with local businesses and organisations to ensure the activity is accessible.

If you are interested SCOPE can carry out an assessment to find out about your interests and access needs and provide an Enabler to support you. The service is not free, staff will discuss payment options with you if you want to use it. You can pay using direct payments, personal budgets, private income or through the local authority. The Day Service costs £46 per day.

Contact Scope in Plymouth for more information.

75-77 Cornwall Street,
Plymouth PL1 1NS

Tel: (01752) 221002

Email: devon@scope.org.uk

Disability Discrimination by Department of Work & Pensions (DWP)

Graham Kirwan has been told that he is unable to communicate via email to claim Personal Independence Payment (PIP). Kirwan was a long-term claimant of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), but his payments were suspended when he failed to respond to letters asking him to apply for PIP, letters that he says he never received and that would not have been accessible to him anyway.

Graham is partially-sighted and has computer software that magnifies text, but it does not generally work with scanned or PDF documents. He has been told by the DWP to use the charity Citizens Advice to help with his PIP application but he wants to fill in the form himself, so he can take responsibility for the accuracy of the answers.

DWP guidance states that email is an acceptable alternative for communication for people with a visual impairment.

Graham represents Dudley Centre for Inclusive Living on accessible information issues. He has already secured one legal victory over a government department, after a threatened judicial review led to the Department of Health publishing its first accessible information standard earlier this year.

Read more at this link: <http://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/pip-applicant-takes-legal-action-over-dwps-inaccessible-claim-process/>

Plymouth ‘Dementia Friendly’ parking spaces

Following consultation with carers Plymouth City Council’s parking unit has introduced new dementia accessible parking spaces in two of its car parks. This does not affect Blue Badge spaces.

The Council has made changes to signage and allocated two designated ‘dementia friendly’ spaces in both Western Approach and Theatre Royal car parks. The spaces are on entry level and close to the ticket machines and pedestrian exits.

Councillor Brian Vincent, Cabinet Member for Streetscene for Plymouth City Council, said: “We aim to make our car parks as accessible as possible and we are delighted to be able to introduce this new scheme in Plymouth.”

Read more at this link: plymouthnewsroom.co.uk/plymouth-dementia-friendly-car-park-spaces-thought-to-be-the-first-in-the-uk/

Your experiences of using hackney carriage vehicles in Plymouth

CTS Traffic & Transportation have been appointed by Plymouth City Council taxi licensing to review their current policy of limiting hackney carriage vehicle numbers.

As part of this independent review CTS would like to hear from anyone wishing to share their experiences of using hackney carriage vehicles in Plymouth – both great and not so great – and particularly to give them the opportunity to say how they think the current fleet meets their specific travel needs.

They are aware that people tend to use a mix of hackney carriage and private hire; these experiences may cover both kinds of vehicle, and bookings by telephone as well as taking vehicles at ranks or in the streets.

They are particularly interested in the personal access experiences or difficulties that disabled people encounter when using licensed vehicles. Responses can be kept anonymous if requested. They would like to hear from you as soon as possible but preferably before the end of March 2016. If you want to respond, but this timescale gives you issues, please contact them to say when you can respond.

You can make your views known as follows:

Email: plytaxi@ctstraffic.co.uk

By post: Plymouth Taxi Review, c/o CTS Traffic and Transportation Ltd, Unit 14, Aqueduct Mill, Aqueduct Street, Preston, PR1 7JN

Tel: 01772 251400 and leave a message for the Plymouth Taxi Review Study Manager to call you back.

Or give PADAN your response using the contact details at the end of this newsletter.

Blue Badge con: Warning to Plymouth disabled people

DISABLED drivers are being warned of a Blue Badge scam which has tricked at least one city motorist out of cash. Plymouth City Council is warning Blue Badge applicants and holders to beware of websites charging for help with their application or renewal.

One resident paid £49 for help filling out a Blue Badge form.

Councillor Brian Vincent said: “If you are renewing or applying for a Blue Badge you can do this directly with the council. You do not need to use other organisations’ websites. Our staff will give you all the help you need – for free. The only payment you will be asked to make is the standard fee of £10, to cover the cost of the badge.”

For more information and advice visit the Council’s website:

www.plymouth.gov.uk/bluebadge or **Tel:** 01752 668000

Guidance can be found at: www.gov.uk/apply-blue-badge

If you are concerned about a website charging for these services you can report the details to Action Fraud. **Tel:** 0300 123 2040 or **visit** www.actionfraud.police.uk

Read more at this link: <http://www.plymouthherald.co.uk/Blue-Badge-Warning-Plymouth-people-disabled/story-28745766-detail/story.html#ixzz42DdSgF4V>

Disabled parking badge prosecutions rise by 84% in a year

Misuse of disabled parking

Prosecutions for Blue Badge abuse

985 Prosecutions in 2014-5

535 Prosecutions in 2013-4

8,790 badges lost

2,056 badges stolen

2.45 million Blue Badges held in 2015

£1,000 fine for misuse of a badge

Source: Department for Transport

Some members may have seen PADAN Trustee, Bruce Abbott, interviewed about Blue Badge abuse on BBC Spotlight recently.

Councils in England took legal action against 985 people last year compared with 535 the year before. The majority were for using someone else's Blue Badge and this misuse attracts fines of up to £1,000 plus additional penalties for related parking offences.

Disability groups said they hoped legitimate holders of Blue Badges would be treated fairly by fellow motorists.

Badge thefts have risen to 2,056 cases, 300 more than the previous year.

Story courtesy of the BBC

Read more at this link:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-35408558>

'Toy Like Me' Campaign



Last year a social media campaign, **#ToyLikeMe**, was initiated by Rebecca Atkinson, a journalist who has a hearing impairment, and two mothers with disabled children to “increase diversity in the toybox”.

Rebecca has spent nearly 20 years working in TV production and print journalism (including Children’s BBC).

Campaigning for toys that represent diversity better is not new, but the ‘digital age’ is and it is social media that has made this campaign so successful.

With the exception of medicalised doctors’ and nurses’ kits, which began to feature during the 1940s, an analysis of 1930-1963 Billy and Ruth toy catalogues revealed an absence of disability-themed toys until a Three Blind Mice Talking Toy in 1955. The next to appear was Mr Magoo Toy Car in 1961, protested against by people with a visual impairment for stereotyping blindness. Disabled action figures J. Jay Armes (Ideal Toys, 1976) and Mike Power Atomic Man (G.I. Joe, 1975) were released as returning Vietnam vets were advocating for a more disability-inclusive society. Mattel Barbie’s Share a Smile Becky (1996) and American Sign Language Teacher (1999) followed the Americans with Disabilities Act (1990).

Ironically, Share a Smile Becky did not fit through the doors of Barbie’s Dreamhouse.

Following the **#ToyLikeMe** campaign Lego has revealed its first young disabled mini-figure and British toymaker Makies has released a line of dolls with disabilities using 3D printing.

#ToyLikeMe campaigners said that Lego was "pandering to disability stereotypes" because its only character to use a wheelchair was an elderly man. Other major toy manufacturers are now being urged to follow in the footsteps of the Danish firm.

Read more at these links:

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/feb/01/lego-wheelchair-toys-message-disabilities>

www.disabilitynewsservice.com

<http://designyoutrust.com/2016/03/the-worlds-first-line-of-dolls-with-disabilities-is-now-on-the-market/>

Plymouth Events

NEW CENTRAL LIBRARY OPENS

The new library will reopen in its new home at **167 to 171 Armada Way**, on the corner of Armada Way and Mayflower Street at **8.30am on Tuesday 29 March**.

The Central Library on North Hill will close at 8pm on Thursday 17 March

If you need more information **email:** library@plymouth.gov.uk

Read more at this link: www.plymouth.gov.uk/newcentrallibrary

PLYMOUTH ADVOCACY OPEN DAY

Wednesday 6th April from 1 to 6pm (with presentations at 2pm & 4pm)

Highbury House, 207 Outland Road, Plymouth

ACCESS INFO

Parking is available in Pridham Lane which can be accessed via Beauchamp Road, a left off Outland Road, travelling from Milehouse to Crownhill, just before you reach the Peverell Post Office junction. Level access to Highbury House.

Full details available on the Disabled Go website:

www.disabledgo.com/access-guide/plymouth-city-council/highbury-house

TRANSAT YACHT RACE

Sunday 24th April to Monday 2nd May

No access details are available yet

LORD MAYOR'S FESTIVAL

Saturday 28th May

FUNKY LLAMA FESTIVAL 2016

Saturday 11th June 12.30 – 10.30pm on Plymouth Hoe **Tickets on sale soon!**

Funky Llama celebrates the creative talents of adults with different abilities. This year's Festival will be staged by the Theatre Royal in partnership with Plymouth City Council.

Read more at this link: <http://www.theatreroyal.com/take-part/adults-and-communities/funky-llama/>

Useful Organisations

<p>Disability Now Tel: 020 7619 7760 www.disabilitynow.org.uk</p>	<p>Disability News Service Email: john@disabilitynewsservice.com www.disabilitynewsservice.com</p>
<p>Disability Law Service Tel: 0207 791 9800 http://www.dls.org.uk/</p>	<p>DisabledGo Tel: 01438 842 710 www.disabledgo.com</p>
<p>Disabled People Against Cuts http://dpac.uk.net/</p>	<p>Disability Horizons www.disabilityhorizons.com</p>
<p>Plymouth Advocacy Free & Independent Advocacy service for adults & young people Highbury House, 207, Outland Road, Plymouth PL2 3PF Tel: 0300 343 5719 SMS: SEAP followed by your message to 80800 Email: info@seap.org.uk</p>	<p>Advice Plymouth Ernest English House, Buckwell Street, Plymouth PL1 2DA Drop in service Monday to Friday: 9am – 5pm Telephone Lines Open: Monday, Wednesday & Friday 9am - 6.30pm Tuesday and Thursday 9am - 8pm Saturday 9am - 1pm Tel: 03444 111 444 (local rate) www.adviceplymouth.org.uk</p>
<p>Care or Not Ltd Sharon Lamerton, Plym Legal Services Tel: 01752 905031 SMS: 07922065761 Email: info@plymlegalservices.co.uk www.plymlegalservices.co.uk</p>	<p>Access Plymouth Mayflower East Car Park PL1 1QJ Tel: 01752 600633 Fax: 01752 229286 Email: accessplymouth@gmail.com www.accessplymouth.co.uk</p>



**Plymouth Area
Disability Action Network**

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Although every effort has been made to ensure that the information in this newsletter is correct at the time of going to publication, PADAN will accept no responsibility for the accuracy of text. Views expressed in articles in the newsletter are not necessarily those held by PADAN.

The Clare Milne Trust

Lynn Foundation

Supporting Disability in Devon and Cornwall