

Large Print guide

Nothing about us without us

Section:

To boldly go where all others have gone before

Text size: 14pt



Transcription

This guide contains:

- Large print of the wall texts and labels within this exhibition section.
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- Short descriptions of the objects and images within this exhibition section.
- Transcripts of the films and audio installations included within this exhibition section.

Large Print booklets in 18pt and 24pt text versions and magnifiers and colour overlays are also available.

Please ask a staff member if you need any further assistance.

Please share with us any feedback on this resource. You can email access@phm.org.uk or share your feedback with a member of staff. Thank you.

To boldly go where all others have gone before

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This guide follows the order of the displays within this section of the exhibition.

When you have finished using this guide, please return it or give it to a member of staff.

Section introduction: To boldly go where all others have gone before

The freedom to travel, work, learn, shop and socialise is central to everyone's independence. While many people may take these things for granted disabled people have often had to fight for these basic rights and services.

Some of the longest and strongest campaigns by disabled people have been about transport, from the provision of mobility cars and suitable parking spaces to the campaigns for an accessible public transport system. It isn't just transport that is inaccessible, many public services and facilities are too.

The 1990s saw an increase in disabled people's demands for a barrier free and inclusive society. 'To boldly go where all others have gone before' became a key slogan of the Disabled People's Movement, adapted from the famous Star Trek quote 'To boldly go where no man has gone before'. The phrase was often used by the Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) and it could be seen prominently on campaign banners and t-shirts. It was common to see members of DAN chaining themselves to buses, trains and other public spaces that excluded disabled people.

The widespread changes which are perhaps taken for granted today, are testament to the hard won achievements of disabled campaigners and Disabled People's Organisations.

Great Britain from a Wheelchair by Tony Heaton, 1994

Great Britain from a Wheelchair is a map of Britain made from parts of two NHS wheelchairs by artist Tony Heaton.

'I have in the past described this work as the disability equivalent of Picasso's Bulls Head (1942) made from the saddle and handlebars of a bicycle. Describing that work to photographer George Brassai in 1943 Picasso stated that, 'if you were only to see the bulls head and not the bicycle seat and the handlebars that formed it, the sculpture would lose some of its impact'. The same is true of Heaton's sculpture; it can be seen as wheelchair parts and it can be seen as a map of Great Britain but one needs to take both into account.

By retaining the original grey of the chairs, Heaton gives a reminder of the depressing institutional uniformity that they inflict upon disabled people. But that has been left behind in what is a fully cheering work. The sculpture reveals entirely unexpected possibilities not just that these wheelchairs can provide a map but they can be joyful. It gives a further, powerful message in relation to disability: we are everywhere.'

-Allan Sutherland

On loan from Graeae Theatre Company

[Object description]

Wall mounted sculpture, measuring 1,650mm x 1,000mm, in the shape of the map of Great Britain. It is made from the parts of two grey NHS wheelchairs.

ADAPT t-shirt, 1991

American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT) are a disabled people's activist organisation who worked with Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) in the 1990s. They use non-violent direct action to promote disabled people's rights.

On loan from the Disabled People's Archive



Main section one

- ▷ [Object description]
Red t-shirt with black print. In the centre is a wheelchair symbol with raised arms, breaking manacles binding their wrists. 'FREE OUR PEOPLE' is above the symbol and below is 'ADAPT'.

To boldly go where all others have gone before t-shirt, around 1993-1995

This t-shirt was one of many worn by Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) members in conjunction with transport and other campaigns. These battles contributed to the pressure for a Disability Discrimination Act which passed in 1995.

On loan from the Disabled People's Archive

- [Object description]
Black t-shirt, a grey and white image of space with the words 'To boldly go where all others have gone before'. Above this 'DISABILITY RIGHTS THE FINAL FRONTIER' and below this, 'YOUNG DISABLED PEOPLE FIGHTING FOR RIGHTS' and 'RIGHTS NOW' in red text.

The Creatures Time Forgot photograph by David Hevey, 1991

This image shows disabled people, who were attending a national conference of disabled people in Manchester, holding a spontaneous piece of direct action and blocking the path of an inaccessible bus on Wilmslow Road. It was part of a protest workshop led by members from ADAPT.

The photograph is also the front cover of David Hevey's book 'The Creatures Time Forgot: Photography and Disability Imagery'.

Copyright David Hevey



- ▷ [Object description]
Colour photograph of five protestors in front of an orange double decker Greater Manchester bus. Three of the protestors wear red ADAPT t-shirts and one protestor, who is sitting in a wheelchair, has their fist raised in the air.

Metro GAD accessible transport protest collage, 2008

Metro GAD is a user-led organisation of disabled people in Greenwich, London.

'This is one of eight replicas of a bigger image, which was displayed at City Hall, London and commissioned to commemorate all the activism that had happened to help shape a more accessible transport system in London. It is made of newspaper articles that documented these protests. Ken Livingstone presented eight of us with these replicas himself at a ceremony celebrating London's improved accessible transport system. It felt ironic as when we were doing these protests, Transport for London (TFL) were arresting us, and now here they were presenting us with these as a thank you'

.- Sue Elsegood

On loan from Sue Elsegood

[Object description]

Collage, measuring 400m x 400m. It includes: newspaper cuttings, black and white and colour photographs of people protesting in front of buses, Transport for London logos, an illustration of hands signing and a wheelchair symbol within a red circle with a diagonal line across it.

Various Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) protest photographs, 1990s

[Object description]

Black and white photograph of a protestor sat in a wheelchair handcuffed to the front of a bus. In the foreground a second protestor's arm is also handcuffed to bus.

Two colour photographs of protestors in a busy road blocking a London bus. Some protestors are handcuffed to the windscreen wipers. There are photographers and a film crew.

Disability Rights the Final Frontier protest photograph, around 1993

Courtesy of Disabled People's Archive

[Object description]

Colour photograph of three protestors in front of a bus one kneels, one is sitting in a wheelchair and the other is sitting on the ground behind the banner, only their arm and hand visible. A large black banner hangs on the bus, with 'Disability Rights the Final Frontier' in pink and 'To boldly go where all others have gone before' in white. A yellow sticker on the bus window reads 'Cripples not allowed'.

Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) accessible transport protest photograph, around 1996

This image is of a DAN accessible transport protest in Derby. A group of wheelchair users are around a bus including two that are chained onto it.

DAN formed from disabled people's frustration at the lack of success of other campaigning methods to secure the means for disabled people to be included as equal members in society.

Courtesy of Disabled People's Archive



▷ [Object description]

Colour photograph of protestors in the road blocking a Derby bus. Two of the protestors are handcuffed to the windscreen wipers. Activist and artist Mat Fraser is in the foreground. A filming crew are to the left of the protest

[Cased objects one - small block display case]

Mobility for the Disabled Campaign leaflet

Around 19 'Invalid' tricycles or 'Invacars' were provided by the NHS as a method of independent travel for disabled people.

This campaign leaflet was made after the government announced in 1976 that the scheme would close. At the time of the announcement there were around 21,500 Invacars in use around the country. Some people continued to use them until a ban on safety grounds made it illegal in 2003.

[Object description]

Blue A5 leaflet with black print. In the centre is a drawing of an 'Invacar', with one wheel at the front centre of the car and two wheels at the back. Below is text about the campaign.

Alf Morris Orange Badge scheme launch photograph, 1970

Alf Morris is pictured here holding an orange badge for disabled drivers as part of the scheme's launch in 1970. It was replaced by the Blue Badge scheme in 2000.

Alf Morris was Labour and Co-operative MP for Wythenshawe, Manchester and in 1979 became the world's first minister for disabled people.



▷ [Object description]

Black and white photograph of Alf Morris and another person, both looking directly at the camera through the window of a car's open front door. Alf Morris is holding a square badge that has the wheelchair user symbol and text 'DISABLED'.

In-Valid? stickers, 1992

In-Valid? was a user led disability arts organisation based in Bradford. Disabled artists worked with members to produce art works informed by people's experiences of disabling barriers.

A huge problem identified by disabled people was when non-disabled people take advantage of features provided to remove a disabling barrier, for example accessible parking near the entrance of a facility.

Members at In-valid? came together to devise a strategy to stop non-Blue Badge holders from parking in Blue Badge spaces. These stickers, made with glue that set fast after 30 minutes, were the result.

On loan from Ruth Malkin

[Object description]

A5 sheet of four rectangle red, white and black stickers with text warning people not to park in blue badge spaces.

Messages include: 'Are you disabled? If not why are you in this space?' and YOU MIGHT BE IN A HURRY BUT THAT'S NO EXCUSE!'

DANcuffs, 1990s

Non-violent direct action has been a necessary and important tactic used by disabled people to draw much needed media and government attention to our exclusion from many aspects of society.



- ▷ Handcuffs were essential tools used on many Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN) demos, especially accessible transport protests, allowing protesters to 'lock on' to the target vehicle, preventing it from moving away.
On loan from Disabled People's Archive

[Object description]

Closed silver hand cuffs.

Disabled People have waited for the bus long enough! Flyer, 1990s

In this flyer DAN call for all buses and trains to be accessible by 2007 stating 'transport is a right – not a privilege'.

On loan from Disabled People's Archive

[Object description]

Small red and white landscape flyer. In the centre '2007' is in large print. In the zeros are wheelchair symbols breaking manacles binding their wrists and the words 'ACCESS NOW' and 'WE WILL RIDE'. Below is printed 'Transport is a right – not a privilege!'.

Main section two

Campaign for improved mobility photograph, 1977

Although many rallies and demonstrations were held in London, disabled people from Greater Manchester often joined these to make sure their voices were heard.

This picture shows a group of disabled people from Rochdale getting ready to set off to a London rally to campaign for improved mobility for disabled people.

Courtesy of Disabled People's Archive





[Object description]

Colour photograph of protestors holding placards. One protester sat in a wheelchair is holding a yellow placard saying 'ROCHDALE WANTED WHEELS NOT WALLS'. In the background is the back of a van with the doors opened.

Drivers' Association photograph, 1970s

Throughout the 1970s, members of the Disabled Drivers' Association campaigned for disabled people to have better support with mobility.

The Association was founded as the Invalid Tricycle Association in 1948. In 2005, it merged with the Disabled Drivers' Motor Club to become Mobilise. Mobilise is known today as Disabled Motoring UK, a campaigning charity for disabled drivers, passengers and Blue Badge holders. Courtesy of Disabled People's Archive

[Object description]

Black and white photograph of four people on a podium, three are seated and one is stood at a microphone. A banner attached to the podium reads 'DISABLED DRIVERS' ASSOCIATION. FIGHTS FOR A BETTER DEAL FOR THE DISABLED'.

Buses for All conference protest photograph, 1995

This image shows a protest outside the Buses for All conference in Manchester on 16 June 1995. The 1990s were a period in which the right to be able to use public transport was demanded on a national level by disabled people.

Today there is still a lot of work to be done to make public transport more accessible.

Courtesy of Disabled People's Archive



▷ [Object description]

Black and white photograph of four protestors in the road blocking a bus, one person using crutches, someone using a mobility scooter and two people sat in wheelchairs. Albert Square is in the background, a person is filming the protestors.

Invacar protest film, 1977 (2 minutes 9 seconds)

In this film the Social Services Secretary David Ennals is confronted by protestors angry at the Invacar scheme being phased out and unsatisfied with the replacement support.

In place of the Invacar scheme, the government introduced cash schemes like the mobility allowance and Motability. Motability allowed disabled people to buy and adapt a mainstream car rather than the government providing disabled people with free vehicles.

Courtesy of the Media Archive for Central England

[Film description]

A line of Invacars drive up to a hotel. A group of people, some holding placards, are gathered outside the building in a carpark. Two people question David Ennals as he makes his way into the building. A person is interviewed by someone behind the camera.

Peterloo Memorial access campaign placard and photographs, 2019

Manchester City Council caused outrage among disabled people in 2019, when it tried to push ahead with plans for a memorial to the Peterloo Massacre that would be completely inaccessible to many disabled people.

It was eventually quietly unveiled without a civil ceremony in August 2019, but disabled campaigners continue to lobby the council to seek a solution that would ensure the memorial was accessible to all disabled people.



Main section two

/ Cased objects two – wall mounted

- ▷ A revised plan for an accessible memorial is still to be found. Images courtesy of the Peterloo Memorial access campaign

[Object description]

Placard measuring 530mm x 405mm, with a white background and drawn green, blue, red and black text that reads 'ACCESS IS A RIGHT MCC IS WRONG'

Colour photograph of 14 protestors in front of the Peterloo memorial holding placards. Four placards have a wheelchair symbol within a circle with a diagonal line across it. Text below the circle reads '1819 Peterloo 2019 Segregation'.

Colour photograph of a protestor in front of a promotional board with the Peterloo logo, holding a drawn A4 placard reading 'ACCESS DENIED'.

[Cased objects two - wall mounted]

Manchester Disabled Athletes (MDA) photographs, 1970s

MDA was set up as Manchester and District Disabled Sports Club in 1969. The club's constitution required the membership and committee to be made up of at least 75% disabled people. The MDA influenced many of Manchester Disabled People's Organisations that followed, and members played a key role in the integration of disabled people's sports into the mainstream. This came to fruition in the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games.

[Object description]

Colour photograph of a social gathering indoors, with groups of adults and children talking and smiling.



Cased objects two – wall mounted

- ▷ Black and white photograph of seven people in wheelchairs playing a game of basketball outdoors. People are watching along the left side of the court. Industrial units are in the background.

Colour photograph of two people in wheelchairs on grass. One in the centre foreground and one further back to the right. Each is wearing a blue tracksuit and holding a ball. A large building and carpark are in the background

Badges and leaflets from the Manchester Commonwealth Games, 2002

Includes the Key (accessible) route maps and commemorative pin badges.

In 2002 Manchester hosted the Commonwealth Games in a newly-built stadium. This was the first time worldwide that every medal in international games was counted equally, whether achieved by a disabled or a non-disabled athlete. The stadium had a record number of places for disabled spectators including wheelchair users.
On loan from Joan Rutherford

[Object description]

'your games your guide' booklet with images along the left and bottom of athletes competing, venues and children taking part in activities.

'Manchester pocket guide' booklet with a colour photograph of the reflection of a building in another building made of glass.

Three small enamel pin badges.

A round yellow badge with the Manchester Commonwealth Games logo of three illustrated figures in red, blue and green ▷

Cased objects two – wall mounted

/ Main section three

▷ standing together with both their arms raised. The figure in the middle holds the hand of the figure either side of them.

A white badge cut in the shape of a dog sat in a wheelchair, holding a union flag.

A navy badge, one end is a circle with the Manchester Commonwealth Games logo in gold, the other side is a rectangle with 'M2002' also in gold.

Main section three

Polling station cartoon by Crippen, 2008

This cartoon by disabled cartoonist Dave Lupton, aka Crippen highlights the physical barriers and social attitudes that prevent disabled people accessing important public spaces including accessing polling stations to exercise their democratic right to vote.

A campaign to make polling stations accessible and provide people with accessible methods to vote is still ongoing.
Copyright of www.crippencartoons.co.uk

[Object description]

Colour print. A person with a clipboard stands in a doorway at the top of some steps. Two planks of wood have been placed on the steps to act as a makeshift ramp.

A sign at the entrance reads 'Now fully accessible'. There are three people at the bottom of the steps: a person in a wheelchair, a person with a cane and a person standing.

The person standing is saying 'That's the trouble with you people – even when we give you what you ask for, it's still not good enough!'

CLAD DAG placard and photographs, 2020s

CLAD DAG are a leaseholder disability action group, campaigning on issues impacting disabled leaseholders trapped in the building safety crisis.

The group was founded in December 2020 after members became aware of each other on social media. They decided it was important to have a group representing disabled leaseholders impacted by the ongoing cladding scandal.

This placard was used at various protests, events and rallies in 2022, in London, Manchester, Salford and Liverpool. Courtesy of and on loan from Georgie Hulme

[Object description]

Placard measuring 320mm x 320mm with the text 'END OUR CLADDING SCANDAL' printed in yellow. Each letter is shown in the square of a black and white grid. Beneath this is the CLAD DAG logo, an illustration of two blocks of flats and the wheelchair and visual impaired symbols.

Image of the CLA DAG logo of two blocks of flats and the wheelchair and visual impaired symbols. Either side is a grid of colour photographs of people with signs. Messages on the signs include 'NOBODY DESERVES TO BE CREMATED ALIVE' and 'LISTEN TO DISABLED LEASEHOLDERS'.

Photograph of Breakthrough UK board toasting with drinks, 1998

Breakthrough UK was formed on 17 December 1997. The organisation aimed to remove the barriers to employment for disabled people. Breakthrough began delivering employment and training services on 1 July 1998 when this photograph was taken. Breakthrough's chair was Kevin Hyett and Lorraine Gradwell was the Chief Executive. The board members include representatives from Manchester City Council and Manchester Deaf Centre



Main section three

/ Cased objects three – wall mounted

- ▷ Left to right Councillor Martin Pagel, Lorraine Gradwell, Kevin Hyett and Councillor Richard Leese.
Courtesy of Breakthrough UK

[Object description]

Colour photograph of Councillor Martin Pagel, Lorraine Gradwell, Kevin Hyett and Councillor Richard Leese sat, smiling and toasting glasses of wine. There is a flower arrangement on the table in front of them

[Cased objects three - wall mounted]

Breakthrough UK 20 years mug, 2017

On loan from Breakthrough UK

[Object description]

White mug. Breakthrough logo is in the centre and below this is printed 'Promoting the rights, responsibilities and respect of disabled people for 20 years'.

Design for Access 2 manual, 2003

This manual was made in 2003 in collaboration with Disabled People's Organisations. The guidance it contains was based on the experience of disabled people in Manchester. At the time it was in advance of the Building Regulations and other Best Practice standards. It remains Manchester City Council's approved guidance on inclusive design.

On loan from Joan Rutherford

[Object description]

A4 wire bound booklet. It has a yellow front cover with blue and white access symbols for: assistance for blind/visual impairment, British Sign Language, assistive listening service available, facilities for assistance dogs, and the International Symbol of Access for wheelchair user access.

Subsection introduction: Education not segregation

This section is about disabled people's ongoing campaign for an inclusive education system.

Being separated from non-disabled peers during childhood often leads to isolation later in young disabled people's lives. It frequently leads to young disabled people not getting the opportunity to interact with or develop friendships with non-disabled young people.

Denying young non-disabled people the opportunity to have young disabled people as friends can lead to the development of views, carried into adulthood, that disabled people should be seen as 'different' and 'other' to themselves.

This often leads to a lack of understanding that disabled people are equal members of society and can be the cause of discrimination and prejudice.

We Know Inclusion Works - Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) t-shirt, 2020s

Courtesy of Alliance for Inclusive Education

[Object description]

Blue t-shirt, with large yellow text

'WE KNOW INCLUSION WORKS' in the centre.

Education not segregation

Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) logo, 2020s

ALLFIE believes that inclusive education is the basis of lifelong equality. Children who learn and play together will grow into adults who can understand and respect each other's differences.

ALLFIE's 'Educate Don't Segregate' work campaigns against legislation and policies which undermine disabled learners' right to inclusive education.

Courtesy of Alliance for Inclusive Education

[Object description]

Portrait illustration with a white background with a large yellow circle and black print. In the centre of the circle are two stick people joining hands. The person on the left is standing and the person on the right is sitting in a wheelchair. Both are using their free hand to hold a large white banner above their heads with the text 'EDUCATION NOT SEGREGATION'.

Simone Aspis scrapbook, 1990s

'We cannot expect to have an inclusive society unless we have an inclusive education service that welcomes all, and where both disabled and non-disabled pupils and students play, learn, work together and relate to each other.

This scrapbook represents one of the first campaigns I was involved in calling for the rights of disabled pupils and students to have choice and a right too inclusive education, including apprenticeships

.' -Simone Aspis

On loan from Simone Aspis

[Object description]

A4 page. Top left is a colour photograph of a person with a lighter colour circle over their head and a drawn speech bubble coming from their lips round the text to the side of them. Below this are two drawn images of students at Seven



Education not segregation

/ Cased objects four

- ▷ Oaks special school surrounded by a grey rainy sky next to one of students at Lincoln Manor mainstream school under a blue sunny sky. In the top right are copies of four school achievement certificates. Below are two written experiences of attending mainstream school.

[Cased objects four - small block display case]

Simone Aspis scrapbook, 1990s

‘Since childhood I have been passionate about civil and human rights.

My early memories were about protesting against segregated education, being torn away from family, friends and my local communities. The injustices I experienced of being denied the same opportunities that my non-disabled peers enjoyed whilst growing up, spurred me on to my life's work, to achieve the conditions that would promote disabled people's equality and inclusion.

It was whilst working with People First that I began to get involved in disability rights work, beginning with the big campaign to secure anti-discrimination legislation and easy to read information for disabled people which this scrapbook documents.’

-Simone Aspis

On loan from Simone Aspis

[Object description]

A4 plastic sleeved folder open on page of newspaper cuttings, headlines include ‘People First’s Concerns’, ‘MPs support fight to keep law simple’ and ‘Hi-tec help for disabled’. There is a black and white photograph of Simone Aspis, chairwoman of People First, Mabel Cooper and Harry Barnes MP.

Cased objects four

- ▷ On the right side the headlines read: 'People first, plain and simple' and 'Putting people in the picture'. There is a black and white photograph of 'Simone Aspis, chairwoman of People First, Mabel Cooper, Gerald Kaufman MP and Harry Barnes MP.

Alliance for Inclusive Education (ALLFIE) leaflet, around 2000

Courtesy of Ruth Malkin

[Object description]

A5 colour leaflet with a central colour photograph of children in a classroom, one child in the foreground is in a wheelchair. At the top it reads 'Alliance for Inclusive Education' next to the logo. Below the image, the text includes 'Campaigning to end compulsory segregation in education'.

The Inclusion Charter by the Centre for Studies of Inclusive Education, 1989

This seven-point charter was made as part of campaign work to end segregated education for disabled students. The first point on the charter says:

'We fully support an end to all segregated education on the grounds of disability or learning difficulty, as a policy commitment and goal for this country.'

Courtesy of Ruth Malkin

[Object description]

A4 white booklet with black text. The front page lists the Charter's seven points. Under the title is printed 'Ending segregation in education for all children and young people with disabilities and/or learning difficulties.

Education (handicapped children) Act 1970 – your ideal school? installation

Education (handicapped children) Act 1970 – your ideal school? installation by Jess Starns, 2020

This isolation desk was created to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Education (Handicapped Children) Act 1970. We do not use the term 'handicapped' today but it was still being used in 1970. The Act meant that all children of compulsory school age had a right to an education.

The audio is playing from a school isolation booth. School isolation booths are sometimes used as a form of punishment for disruptive behaviour.

Commissioned and supported by Unlimited, celebrating the work of disabled artists, with funding from Arts Council England.

On loan from Jess Starns

[Object description]

Light brown wooden desk measuring

1,600mm high x 1,000mm x 1,000mm. The tabletop of the desk is enclosed within wooden screens on the left, right and back. The screens run from the floor to above the tabletop.

Film and Audio Transcripts

[Film transcript] Invacar protest film, 1977

David Ennals: Thats right, that's right, I knew we had met before.

Demonstrators: No you've made lots of promises Richard, I'm not sure you are going to keep them.

David Ennals: I'm not making a statement now, I shall make it in Parliament, that's the right way to do this the right way.

Demonstrator: How would you feel if you lost the use of your legs, would you be in opposition then. For someone to strap your legs up for a month and just see how you get on.

David Ennals: Well look dear, I spent three years in hospitals after the war. Three years and part of it, part of it was with my legs strapped up. I have.. I am a disabled ex-serviceman.

Demonstrator: Well you've got the use of them now haven't you, yes but you've got the use of the leg.

David Ennals: And that's why I am so committed to doing more to help disabled people.

Demonstrators: It doesn't sound like it. It sounds as though we are fighting a dead duck.

David Ennals: That's very silly, that's a very silly thing to say.

Demonstrator: Excuse me, Excuse me.

David Ennals: I'm late for a conference,

Demonstrators: it doesn't matter about being late.

David Ennals: No it does matter, it does matter.



David Ennals: I'm late, i'm late altogether actually.

▷ Demonstrators: You're going to take my benefit and you are going to give me nothing.

David Ennals: I'm not

Demonstrators: You are

David Ennals: I am not.

Demonstrators: You're going to give me nothing

David Ennals: Of course I am

Demonstrators: My mobility allowance will come to nothing.

David Ennals: May I say I have given an absolute guarantee to you, because I wrote to every person who has a trike, that no one would be left stranded without a vehicle. I gave that absolute assurance. I give you absolute assurance.

Demonstrator: Why give it?

David Ennals: You must believe me, you must believe me, I have given it to parliament, I have given it to you and I assure you it's true.

Demonstrator: Oh, it's all true
Why not?

Demonstrators: Well, he keeps making promises. He's been making promises since twelve months ago, last August, which he hasn't kept. He's promised to find an alternative vehicle to the trike. There's no sign of it yet. And that's taking well over 12 months so we're disappointed in him.

▷

▷ **Education (handicapped children) Act 1970 – your ideal school? installation by Jess Starns, 2020**

[Jess]: On the 23rd of July, 2020 marks the 50th anniversary since the Education - Handicapped Children - Act 1970 was introduced. An Act to "make provision as respects to England and Wales for discontinuing the classification of handicapped children as unsuitable for education at school, and for the purpose connected therewith" meaning from the

23rd of July, 1970 all children of compulsory school age had a right to an education.

We do not use the term handicapped today, but this was still being used in 1970.

The audio is playing from a school isolation booth. School isolation booths are sometimes used as a form of punishment for disruptive behaviour. Before the pandemic, discussions about their usage in schools was being spoken about in the wider media. The idea is to explore the feeling of isolation and intimacy in the space.

I would like to commemorate the Act by asking you: 50 years on how inclusive do you feel the education system is today or when you were at school? And what would your ideal school look like?

[Cian]: When you are in school it really sticks with you for a very long time that you want to be able to have the same opportunities as everyone else, but you are told that "If your reading and writing doesn't improve you'll amount to nothing." and you believe it.

And there's so much focus on "You can't do this, you can't do that." Well it'd be great if I heard the word can't but without the T for some reason. I hated it.



▷ And teachers have this habit of sugar coating things saying "Oh, we don't think about how different we are anymore, because everyone's all nice. And we're all very sympathetic." Well, that's bullshit. We live in a very unsympathetic society.

Why do teachers live in this fantasy world where we all get on and there's no bigotry, that fucking couldn't be further from the truth. And we are not taught about our own disabilities in school, except in subtle ways where we don't realize that we're being taught. For example, studying *The Curious Incident of The Dog in the Nighttime* for English.

We have so much talent, you know, we may have learning disabilities, but we have so much talent. And yet we are told that we can't pass the course. And I think if you're only gonna let people that can read and write properly, and people that don't have any trouble reading and writing at all, then you are limiting yourself.

Your class could be given a lot of value from people that have problems reading and writing. It's just laziness. And teachers have a habit of saying. "Why can't you be bothered to learn?" Well, you can't seem to be bothered to teach us if we have a little bit of trouble. So it works both ways.

Of course, in reality the teachers are a higher authority and us, students, we don't have the power to stand up for ourselves, but that has got to change. And the idea of a good school would be where everyone is included.

[Nat]: Well, when I was at school, I definitely had a hard time, being dyslexic and dyspraxic. I feel like it was kind of known what it was, but not really. And there were, there were only like one or two specialists. The vast majority of the teachers knew the term, but not the definition.

I think it's kind of difficult to say how inclusive it was as a system because the system failed, but there was individuals which made the difference.



▷ I got through school. I was able to learn to read and write and do the basics, but not due to the machine, but due to one or two individuals who tailored the way they taught me. So I would learn in a way which suited my brain type.

[Charlie]: My ideal school is a school that is accessible, diverse, a school that reflects the society we want to achieve. That doesn't tell children they can not succeed here, but asks itself what it needs to do and change to help that student succeed.

My ideal school is a school where every student and teacher can walk or roll to class together, a school that prioritizes wellbeing and creativity.

My ideal school is well funded and values all of its staff and pupils wellbeing.

My ideal school would have an accessible, decolonized, diverse, creative curriculum that teaches critical thinking and politics to all ages, to empower students.

My ideal school would teach students their rights and how to advocate for themselves and about the many injustices in the world. And it would teach them that they all have value and deserve love, care, and respect.

My ideal school would teach social responsibility and consent and respect.

My ideal school would provide mental health support to all - children and teachers rather than waiting for them to suffer.

My ideal school would see the value of disabled students. It would teach disability history and culture and allow students to feel pride in that identity, through engaging with disabled teachers and mentors.

My ideal school is a reflection of my ideal society.



▷ [Sonia]: Well, back in my day, it was totally inaccessible because I had this whole series of learning disabilities which were totally undiagnosed. And I recently had this experience of finding my primary school books in my Mum's loft. And I was absolutely shocked at what I found, mainly empty pages. I would start a sentence. I would get a couple of sentences into whatever it was we were supposed to be doing and then I would just stop.

And clearly I was looking out the window. Or, goodness knows what I was doing. And there was no help of any kind whatsoever. I can remember maths being, a real struggle. And I've got dyscalculia, which has been diagnosed now, but I didn't quite remember how much I was struggling with just writing.

And that became really clear. And all the comments from my teachers are things like, "Good start Sonia, where's the rest?". And it was clearly no attempt to support me with that. It was just like, what is the problem with you? Why are you looking out the window?

There was no understanding of a child who could clearly do some things and was able in some ways but I just wasn't reaching anywhere near my potential.

And this carried on into secondary school. Again, absolutely no support. I remember just sitting through subjects like science and maths, and because I was in the lowest stream, I had to do something called math- science. I wasn't, I wasn't even taught separate science subjects. And I can just remember sitting there just glazing over and having to get through the lesson. It was so boring and nobody ever offered any particular help with that or said, "Why are you struggling? Why can't you do this?" It was just accepted, that I would get a bad mark at the end of it, that I don't have a maths qualification to my name. I don't have even the lowest type of maths qualification you could get back in the day. I think it was CSEs. So it was just like, we were just left to get on with it. And I think that was really, really bad.

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▷ [Max]: The school education system is doing so much to be inclusive, you know, we've whole departments set up for that. But they can be let down by individual teachers choosing to ignore students' statements or resorting to education methods that have been found not to be suitable for those who are not neuro-typical.

Um, I think that socially school can be a very difficult place for someone who thinks and acts differently inherently because of the way that their brain and body works.

[Faye]: I think that schools are definitely more inclusive and accessible today. The education system is so different to how it was even 10 years ago, when I was at school.

As somebody that works in special educational needs. I see on a daily basis, the amazing provision we put in place for these people. I work with autistic individuals on a one to one basis. I deliver the secondary education and curriculum to them. And I can honestly say that the facilities now, and the things we put in place for these kids is absolutely fantastic compared to how it was before.

I mean, we are very fortunate now that we have Ed Psychs testing people, we now have diagnosis for things, you know, years ago, people would just called slow or awfully thick and now we have labels. We have diagnosis, we have funding, we have facilities provisions. Um, it has got a lot, lot better.

If I take one of our children, for example, they have an educational healthcare plan, they have a list of their needs, they have a key support worker, they have laptops, computers, they have extra support in exams. They get extra time or a room by themselves. They get readers, they get scribes. They even get those pens, where the, it reads out what the question says for anyone that can't read very well. Um, we have come so, so far. The education system has become more inclusive.

My dad's dyslexic. He just got called thick and stupid and, and went on a naughty table, which I think is awful. I'm dyspraxic I went through the system and I had a lot of support



▷ when I was in secondary school. I had a room by myself because of distractions. I had 25% extra time because I didn't always understand what the question was asking and would need time to take it in. So yeah, we have come really, really far.

I think there's more understanding now. People are more educated, for want of a better word, on different learning difficulties and we're more, open to difference. You know, I've worked with children who are blind. I've worked with children who are deaf. The classroom is definitely catered now for a wide range of difference. And that's how it should be.

So we have come far, 50 years down the line. We are more inclusive. Things are more accessible now in the education system. But I still think we will still move forwards. Obviously there's always room for improvement, but it is a lot better than what it was. When I think about what our children get, some of our children get support at home, you know, we have outreach agencies coming in. We have people from like CALMS or Ed Psych or mental health agencies.

You know, each one of our children is supervised with a key support worker, so when they walk in to those mainstream lessons they have someone to supervise. When they need help with the work they have a one to one. They have an access centre - a unit where they can come because they're autistic that is facilitated to the max with computers, like I said, voice recorders. There's always someone on hand to help.

So I do think it's fantastic the way we've come. And quite frankly, the training sessions are better. I've always believed that newly qualified teachers need to be experienced and needs to be taught learning difficulties, you know, years ago it wasn't part of the teacher training.

I'm very grateful that we now live in a more understanding and equal society, where difference and difficulties are being celebrated and talked about, you know, these things have to be talked about. How do you educate someone if you don't teach them?



▷ You know, people will just remain ignorant, if people aren't aware of the best way to support. So absolutely we've come far. I think we could go a bit further maybe to incorporate even a bit more, whether that's different difficulties as well or more medical difficulties, but we are definitely becoming now more inclusive as schools in England.

[Sonia]: My ideal school, starting from primary, but going through to secondary would be lots of physical education, but not horrible sports. Just a chance to move around in ways that you enjoy. So lots of different options of what to do, not all doing the same thing.

I think it'd be fantastic to have visitors coming in a lot. So artists, scientists, poets, to just give you an idea of lots of different ways of thinking and working. And I think that would be really inspiring and exciting rather than boring. I found so much of my school boring that I would like to have things which actually excite children and the chance to do sort of experiments and lots of hands on stuff, and learning by making, I think that would be my preferred environment where you could follow your own interests as well. So quite Montessori and child-led.

[Tzipporah]: I don't think schools are that accessible. Better than they were, but I still think kids with hidden disabilities fall through the cracks.

I wasn't diagnosed as autistic until long after I left school. They weren't looking for it. As long as my grades were good, they didn't care about my obvious social problems. And it set me up for a life of isolation and mental illness. I still see this happening today.

My friend has got little girls and it's like, nothing's changed. Like teachers see a square peg in a round hole and rather than helping you find the right hole, they'd just smash away at it until it fits.



▷ [Lee]: A perfect school. What would be a perfect school for me? If I was young back then? A perfect school would be a place that opens for new dreams to happen. Somewhere that gives you fire in your belly and makes you want to learn. A safe space to move forward and follow dreams.

Don't let other people hold you back. If you want something, really desperate, then you gotta go for it, period.

[Robyn]: We have come a long way in 50 years, as we see that disability is more talked about and more represented within different sectors. And obviously education has been part of leading that change. However, there is still nowhere near enough representation and education still needs to play a vital role in educating peers, professionals and students to feel empowered.

In an ideal world, we would be free from labels and misconceptions and education would be the system to change that. Celebrate diversity in all of its wonderful forms. I hope that in 10 years time students aren't being asked how dyslexic they are or being called for their exams first to go in a separate room.

Being made to feel different is not okay. Being different is great, but being made to feel different is not okay.

[Michelle 1]: Our experience of SEN in schools is very mixed. It completely depended on the support and the SEN teacher. My absolute nightmare was when my daughter would ask a teacher for an explanation because she didn't understand, and rather than explaining in a different format they would say to my daughter, "Oh, you've not been listening." Well she was listening but she was asking a question because she didn't understand the way you'd explained it.

I think children who are on any spectrum, whether it be dyslexia, dyscalculia, dyspraxia are at a disadvantage, especially when you come to exams. Because the way the



▷ exams are set out they're reliant very much on memory and children with those cognitive processing will have a problem retaining information. I think exams should be brought back where part of the exam is based on your evidence of your work over the past two years and then some of it on actually doing an exam.

Generally SEN I think, needs to be improved. I think children are at a disadvantage and especially children where maybe they don't have the support network at home and also parents who then can't afford to have the children assessed. So they have an evidence document because any child has to be assessed, but that isn't covered, parents have to pay for that themselves. And it's very expensive. So generally things need to be improved. Children are at a disadvantage and they fall through the cracks.

[Megan]: For the question what does your ideal school look like? I chose my top three things. So number one is less focus on exams. Students spend so many years learning for it to be judged on a two hour or less exam.

I always found the pressure of exams quite difficult at school. Knowing that that short amount of time would determine your grade forever. Instead, I think there should be more of a focus on coursework. This allows for more time to learn and produce your best work. It reflects the time that you've dedicated to school in a better way than sitting a short exam.

At school I chose coursework based subjects as I knew it was how I produce my best work. Coursework based subjects also tend to be more creative, which is what I always found most interesting. From what I hear now, schools are replacing coursework with exams and I really think this alienates a good percentage of students.

Number two. The arts and vocational subjects should be valued at the same level as Maths, English, Science, et cetera. In order to hit targets, schools put too much pressure on the core three subjects of Maths, English, and Science.



- ▷ However, this means that people like me who wanted a career in the arts were allocated less time to learn about the things that they truly found interesting.

Everyone has different interests and futures and the curriculum should reflect that. The arts are also proven to be excellent for people's mental health. And I believe that they should be taken just as seriously as good grades. If there were to be a fairer divide of subjects, then there would, as a result, be more support for students who want a career in the arts or media or to be an actress.

Too often students, including myself, are told that there are no career options in the arts. Instead, there should be an encouragement to apply your creativity to your career.

Number three, nicer buildings to learn in. This may seem like a silly one, but I really believe that people excel in nicer environments.

Students should also be included in what their schools look like. They should reflect their personalities and make them proud to be there. They spend so much time. No one wants to learn in an old, uncomfortable, building.

[Benedict]: I don't believe that school was ever designed to be inclusive. It makes a nod to it now, but how can it be inclusive? It doesn't include diversity within its staff. So how can there be empathy within the system for those who don't fit into the normal straightjacket of education? Here we are 50 years after this legislation and we find over 50% of young offenders are dyslexics.

We find that somewhere around 20% of dyslexics are identified by the age of 18, leaving the other 80% unaware of who they are, of how they can be helped, how they can help themselves.

For me, school should be a reflection of its students. The diversity of individuals who go to school should be represented by the teaching staff themselves. This isn't the case.



- ▷ There should be time for conversation for debate, for diversity of thought and deed. How can this happen? Classes need to be groups of 10, not 30. Teachers need to be dyslexic. They need to be autistic. They need to be from the community they feed into. They should not be made up of those who do not, or cannot empathize with another person's position.

[Tzipporah]: My ideal school would be smaller, more child-focused, and also have different tracks so that you're not all being forced to learn this one, rigid curriculum. And it would value vocational and creative education much higher than we do know. I just think that the National Curriculum at the moment, it doesn't give kids space to grow.

And I'd want a school where kids are taught that their worth is more than just grades. That it's just as important to be kind and hardworking and curious and generous with each other. And when I was at school, I was told that my entire worth was in my grades and if I didn't get a perfect score, it was the end of the world. Everyone was disappointed at me and I was nothing. I never had space to ask what I actually wanted to do with my life. It was always about fitting in and pleasing other people. I'd like schools, to be less focused on their rankings and what they look like to the outside world and more about the emotional wellbeing of the children.

[Sam]: I went to a special needs school. Um, it was a school for people with moderate learning difficulties at the time. Although I believe now it's sort of transitioned into more of an SLD and MLD kind of thing.

I guess one moment which epitomises my experience with this institution was an instance in which I was encouraged to do some career consultancy with one of the people that worked there. It wasn't really an official, professional kind of career consultancy, it was a bit slapdash to be perfectly honest with you. And essentially, the job I was given, that would be good for me was either being a hairdresser or, because some people thought that was shooting a little bit too high for me, to be the person who sweeps up hair.



▷ Now I'm currently an academic and artist who's doing a doctoral thesis and as good as I feel that I've somewhat overperformed, let's say, um, it doesn't make me feel very good for all of the other kids who got told something like that.

And, um, were convinced that they wouldn't be able to do anything better than that. And I think we've lost a lot of potential because of this.

[Charlie]: When I was very young and I was diagnosed with severe dyslexia, the specialist told my Mum that I would never cope in a mainstream school and would have to attend a segregated, special educational needs institution. I was very privileged to have access to a small, private, primary school. And in reaction to this, my headmistress employed specialist dyslexia teachers to work with me on a one to one basis so I could stay in her school.

I actually went on to study English literature to masters level, which no one ever thought would be possible. I still struggled to read and write, but with the start I had and the tools I was given, I had so many more higher education options. Ironically, considering I went to private primary school and how much that helped me I actually think that private schools should be abolished because I think all students should have access to small classrooms and personalized learning plans.

As a teaching assistant, I've seen what access, resources, and decent funding can do for schools. I worked in a special educational needs school for a short time. In the middle of the school was a big hall that we had assemblies and other activities and around the edge of the hall, it was a large ramp going up the level of two flights of stairs.

This ramp allowed all the students and teachers to walk or roll to their classrooms together. All of the toilets were accessible. There were sensory spaces and small outdoor spaces off of each classroom, as well as a large playground with accessible play equipment and a sensory indoor swimming pool.



- ▷ The facilities were incredible but this is what we should have in all schools, rather than segregating students with disabilities. If we're not creating schools for all children to learn together with equal opportunities, how can we expect to build societies for all?

If we're hiding away disabled students and telling them they will not succeed with everyone else. We are telling them that they're the problem, rather than acknowledging that the problem is a society that does not prioritize their access.

[Mike]: I think there were many changes in the early 2000s which began to make education more accessible, but I don't think an understanding of the social model of disability has ever been embedded in education and in the education system, which has held back a true equality for disabled students.

Now, I find it so upsetting that parents, very understandably, would send their disabled child to a segregated school and not a mainstream school. As the only way they can be sure their child will get some sort of support and not be bullied. My ideal school would reflect an ideal society where there would be true equality.

[Emma]: Integration is founded on the deficit model with emphasis placed upon the child to change to fit the system. Whereas inclusion looks systemically for change that accommodates the child. This important distinction is still a source of contention and highlighted by the lack of consensus and definition.

It is clear that all descriptions of inclusion share the same goal of removing exclusion. However, the exact definition continues to be debated. Some acknowledge there is no single definition of inclusion, but believe one commonality is that children with and without disabilities be placed in the same setting. In 2001, the DFES offered a definition, which responded to changes in the law that strengthened students' rights to mainstream education.



- ▷ They said schools supported by local education authorities and others should actively seek to remove the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude pupils with special educational needs. However, the narrowly focused definition failed to harness the potential and possibility of pursuing holistic cultural change at a systemic level.

[Nat]: My ideal school would look completely different to what we have today. It would be tailored for everyone's learning styles. It wouldn't have sets or classes. They wouldn't make you learn the Maths, English, Science.

You would have a basic understanding, sure. But it would create experts. It would allow you to follow your passion and allow that passion to change over time. It would teach you to think and not to remember. It would praise people for having unique ways of solving problems.

In my ideal school, things like dyslexia and dyspraxia and other learning conditions wouldn't be seen as a negative. It'd be seen as a vital part of teams that are able to solve complex problems.

[Aiden]: I went to a Catholic school and I don't think there was much provision for anybody with other needs, additional needs, support, learning support. We never had any learning assistants in the classroom. Nobody was on one to one. I certainly wish I'd been picked up and that there'd been some awareness of cognitive difference back then, but there wasn't really.

I'm not sure how much things have changed. I think certainly, like with my nephews, they've been to nursery and the first school and they're just about to start going to school then I think it's a little bit better. One of them has got talking issues, verbal issues, and he's getting support.

And they got a package of care and making sure that they've got, like an educational plan. And so now that I know all about these things, and I think that that is, that's really



▷ positive and that it's all about integration and dealing with and coping with differences in the classroom and not separating people out.

Although I know that that's not the case and it's very school by school basis and that some schools, like I also know somebody who has a child who is autistic and mental health needs and can't access school. And yet they've just been left to flounder. He's 10 and should be getting some kind of education provision, but isn't. Not in the hospital, not in a school and it's kind of one size fits all. And either you can make it to school and cope with the system or you can't and you get left behind.

And I think it's all a bit of a lottery. It's not [00:30:00] fair that just because of where you live or your postcode that, that limits your degree of educational success, which impacts on the rest of life, about opportunities and how they present themselves or the kind of things that you can access.

And of course I've grown up with access to a lot more varied schooling like Steiner and Montessori and how they are much more inclusive and also not so rigid in their teachings and more adaptive to the children's needs.

And also having been like an artist going into school, it's like, you know, you get "Ooh, watch out for Johnny because he's like this". And actually, because you're not doing things in the traditional way and it allows other people to kind of access learning in a different method that maybe allows them to shine.

I think it all just smacks of the machine and putting them through the system and the individuals get lost. Not always, but generally. And I think that that system needs to change.

[Phil]: My experiences of special school education start, when I got kicked out of mainstream, funnily enough, back in 1978.

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▷ For a few months, I was just in a remedial room on me own trying to learn. I was bullied at, like a, mainstream education, and then I ended up in special, special needs for handicapped children as it was then. I did enjoy at first cause I wasn't being bullied and in a strange way I became bully myself because I came from a background where I was bit more streetwise than anyone else.

But my big issue is still with segregated education, or [like special needs, whatever term you choose to use is that people are still not given a right for like, exams. ASDAN is no where near a GCSE level. I grew up in 70s, matured in the 80s and throughout the 80s, I, I didn't have any work cause I had no qualifications.

In the 90s I did a degree. I'm degree educated, but my son still like thinks it's bizarre I haven't got any GCSEs. He's just doing A Levels at the moment but a couple of years back when he started his GCSEs he asked me what GCSEs I got. And I said, nothing and he was gobsmacked by that.

For like last 16 years, I've been involved in disability rights. And I've come in contact with a lot of young, disabled people. Cause I was a youth worker. And it's still amazing the lack of an education for any young, disabled person, especially if you're not in a mainstream setting. And there's still lots that are not in the mainstream setting.

I used to put when I first applied for jobs my school and that I'd put special schooling and I never got any interviews, never. And I stopped doing that and I got interviews but still try to negotiate people's biases Like people's stereotypes as a disabled person.

I would encourage, anyone who went to segregated education to look at their school records. Cause you can still get them through a subject access request. I've got my school records and for many years I was classed as highly strung now, whatever that means, I don't know. It's just that definition that hangs around with you. There's loads of writing say that people that've attended special school are at least five years emotionally behind everybody else.



▷ Also, anyone who went to a special school knows that sex education wasn't taught in any such form. And, I remember when we was reaching 16, the headmaster at the time saying, "Oh, now you go to leave school and you're going to experience things that you haven't done before." And all it consisted was him playing King of the Road to us and said, listen to this song. And that's all you need to know. And it was bizarre.

There's a big lobby of parents power that says like, "I don't want my child to get bullied and they would be bullied in mainstream and I don't want them.." But they don't realize the bigger picture. There's no education. There's no, no, perceived roots for a person.

It's a parents views that gets listened to over any young, disabled person. It, it and the parents rightly or wrongly, don't necessarily know what's good, what's best for the individual. They can perceive what's best for the individual, but they don't know. And I'm just amazed that this system is still in place.

How many people, are in employment that have been through that system? I've doubt if anybody could tell you the exact figures and nobody will say they've gone to special school. People will say they went to such a university or such a school. Um, but they would never tell you they went to special school and it's always perceived as, not education.

We know how shit society is. We, we deal with that every day. I would like schools to be for everybody, not for like, just people that fit the, the criteria. I'm, I'm happy being a disabled person. I'm not happy how other disabled people are treated by society.

[Charlotte]: I had a very weird school experience. I went into primary and early years and I was mainstreamed for a long, long time which was not a great experience for me. I was isolated. I was in a manual wheelchair and I wasn't allowed to touch my own wheels for my chair, which is incredibly disempowering. It's disabling actually. Until I finally decided that I didn't want to be mainstreamed anymore.



▷ I was bullied, all that kind of stuff. And the teachers priority was never about being inclusive or being supportive in any way. And at that time, my Mum wrote quite a few letters that I found that have been quite interesting. And there's just some really nice things that she said, for example: "As a parent, I want to ensure as much as possible that me, my wheelchair and disability do not become her defining features, me."

"It's critical that people see beyond the disability to the person. This sometimes requires that faculty and staff be sensitive to times and situations where she is likely to be left out or treated differently and to be a bit more creative in trying to make sure that it doesn't happen or to minimize the effect if it cannot be avoided, I feel that inclusion problems can come in many forms and sensitivity and creativity needs to be a feature of the educational process for all children. All children need to feel welcome and included."

That was really nice to hear that she wrote that that was back in, oh gosh, 2002. So I just thought that was quite powerful.

Since then I went to a mainstream school and then I went to a non-mainstream school where I got all the social aspects, but I didn't get much of the educational aspects, but I have since then, completed my undergraduate degree and I've completed my masters degree. So that kind of, even though that early experience wasn't inclusive and I felt very isolated, it's complicated to find your way through that.

And I know a lot of disabled parents; parents, obviously with children and also disabled parents who find it, the support system, incredibly difficult and hard to access, but my education has really given me the ability to achieve what I want to achieve in life.

And that's incredibly important, not just for disabled people, but for any child.

[Michelle 2]: My experience at school was pretty crap. At nine years old, I still couldn't read, let alone write properly. My parents complained quite a lot to the school. One of the teachers brought in the school psychologist and so I had to

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▷ do the tests. And the woman had no eyebrows, cause it was really common to shave your eyebrows off in the 60s.

And she was showing me these pictures asking me what's missing. And of course there was a picture of somebody with no eyebrows, but she had no eyebrows. So I felt quite a dilemma about saying, "Well, there's no eyebrows, but you haven't got any eyebrows either". And that's always stayed with me, that interview with this person to try and find out what's wrong with me or why aren't I learning particular things in a particular way?

And then I got singled out with a few other kids and we were taken out of our class and sent to the special needs class as it was called. And we had a teacher who's like, the Witch out of the Wizard of Oz because she had a bicycle with a, uh, uh, basket at the front. She was called Mrs. Marsh. I mean, she was great cause she taught us to read and write. But at the same time, there was a lot of stigma with being in the special needs class. And I had stigma already because I'm Jewish, so that didn't help. And then to have stigma on top of that of being in the special needs group, um, which is what we were called, which was horrible.

So the fact that you went to special needs and other people didn't. You were made to feel like you were the thick kids who didn't learn very well. And also it really impacted when you went to secondary school and dyslexia, wasn't recognized as a disability until 1989. And I left in 1985.

And my support and, and there's good and bad in that. So I didn't, I didn't get O Levels. I've got a History O Level. And that was about it. I mean, I've got English O Level, D D D. I've, I've never passed it and probably never will because I don't get certain things.

And about the week before my O Levels they said, "Oh, look, you can do it all on tape recorder". I've never, ever written an essay on tape recorder. So how a week before my O Levels would I suddenly just do that?

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▷ And also by then, I'd also got a diagnosis of clinical depression, which hardly surprising really, not just did I have dyslexia, but my dad became really ill and had brain cancer and died and schools weren't really kitted out for that.

Plus I've been expelled from my first secondary school because I didn't wear school uniform and I didn't conform and I was quite naughty cause, partly in my first year of my first secondary school, they wouldn't let the special needs teacher come to school cause they didn't recognize dyslexia. So for a year I didn't get support.

Second year, they then agreed that they'd let the teacher come in. But in order to, to be the only child in the school, going to a special needs class, you had to be tough because if you were the thick git, you had to be able to beat everybody else up, basically, and stand up for yourself. And that's hard work. You know, that's really tough.

You got picked on and bullied, and I don't know whether education has really dealt with that. And I know there's lots of people fighting for inclusive education. I was in inclusive education as a special needs person and actually suffering quite a lot. But what happened at this other school was I actually managed to get sent to college on day release.

And going to college on day release was the best thing going. Didn't have to wear school uniform. Nobody knew what you were doing at FE college, whether you were in special needs or whether you were in a other class. You could join the student union. You could party, you could, you know, do all sorts of things.

I think not having uniform and things like that gave you a sense of being able to be adult.

[James]: I had the good fortune of going to mainstream schools throughout my life. I think that over the last 50 years, the framework is in place, for disabled people like myself to theoretically have a better chance at a good education.



▷ The framework should be in place and is in place for disabled people like myself to get the education they need that prepares them for life as an adult, that instills in you that sort of lifelong love of learning as it should do. But having the framework in place only one part of the puzzle and it's gotta be put into practice and it's gotta be properly resourced.

I feel that, um, whilst the legislation and the regulation is there, I feel that too often, it's inaccessible to disabled people.

You hear all the time about parents, about individuals having to fight to get the support they need to be able to access the education that they need. I feel like whilst we have made great legislative steps forward, the practical realities are almost moving backwards. If you think about the difficulties that people face, when it comes to going to a SEND tribunal without support, uh, the lack of support that's available for families .

The difficulty with which people have to fight for an EHCP, just so their child can access education on, on a level of parity with their peers is almost barbaric.

The thing that's always enabled [00:46:00] me to access mainstream education hasn't necessarily been the legislation in place or, uh, the support that's on offer from the state.

But it's been the attitudes of the people around me in schools, by which I mean education professionals. So, when I was at primary school the SENCO uh, the special educational needs coordinator, she was the one who would drive to my house, pick me up and drive me to school. She didn't have to do that, but we were having such difficulty trying to access support from the local authority to get me to and from the house that the SENCO said, "Well, this is ridiculous, you're going to be waiting forever to get this approved, if it even is approved. So I will just do this myself." and that's what enabled me to get a primary education.



▷ When I was at secondary school the amazing SENCO for my primary helped us battle with the local authority to make sure that support was in place, so that I could then get assistance from the local authority to get from my home to my secondary school.

So thankfully, no other teacher had to put up with me at like 7 in the morning being dragged away from the TV to go to school, to do something I didn't want to do at the time. But it's only through the attitudes of people that I've been able to access the provisions that should have been in place.

I remember the school nominated me for a Jack Petchey award and my peers who are receiving one, um, one of them had got top marks across the country for his Science GCSE or whatever. And someone else had done some amazing community work. And the reason they'd nominated me was, and I'll never forget like the sheer, red, embarrassment on my face when they said in a sort of all years assembly and, and finally a Jack Petchey award for me.

When they, they said that I was to receive a Jack Petchey award for being a very pleasant and lovely person. And I thought, God, you just say you want to give me a Jack Petchey award [00:48:00] cause I'm disabled. Like just, just be frank about it, you know? Yeah. I remember, like just being ridiculed by my peers afterwards because they were like, "Oh, I wish I got a Jack Petchey award for being nice."

I just remember just being singled out like that just made me feel so, so excluded at a time when they were trying to make me feel included. Um, the school was really proud to do other things like they, they installed a lift. Um, and they, they made this big song and dance about how "oh yeah this is this for future generations, uh, who can access the school." But the irony is I went through selective education for my secondary. So I sat the 11 plus and I passed it and I got into a non fee paying grammar school.

You know, you're talking about sort of opening up level access for everybody and yet we're practicing selective education, but that's a wholly different conversation.



▷ [Lee]: Well, I can't talk about the education system right now, but I can talk about my own experience and how that affected my life.

Being at school was tough. Some teachers are well educated and have a vision that makes them passionate. This makes them great teachers. But you got to think big, if you think too small, its not enough. I learned from that. I nearly wasted 10 years of my life after I left school and college.

I don't want to gamble another ten. It was hard for me to go back into mainstream education. When I was looking at application form for Central, I was thinking to myself, should I even try for something different or should I just stay where I am, even though I'm not moving forward.

[Emma]: To begin to understand the origin of inclusion, it is important to consider the term exclusion. For many exclusion means to be separated from mainstream society because of disability, mental illness, race, religion, beliefs, values, appearance, or poverty; leading to societal divisions. Therefore policies of social inclusion were offered as a solution to separation and segregation.

The idea of inclusion in education has been highly contested nationally and internationally, due in part to the discourses surrounding definition and ownership. The term inclusion has traditionally been used interchangeably with integration. However, the conceptualization of both terms has different implications for the educational system and the children within it.

. [Jeff]: Disabled children, disabled young people, very often lack a variety of, of significant external role models of disabled people. When you're going through education, I mean, examples are everything. They clarify context and, um, reinforce the sense of real meaning.

And of course it is difficult to be able to readily cite role models who are disabled people out and around in society. Unless they are people who've, very often, have achieved incredible things against incredible odds. Um, and there's



▷ kind of imbalance in relentlessly using those kinds of role models, as examples in education and other settings, um, as tends to happen in the media.

I think that's just one very small example of how marginalized and disabled young people and children can be disadvantaged in those settings. Just that, that flow across from, you know, the outer real world out of society into, um, education and things like that can chip away at, uh, people's confidence and, you know, can contribute to that sense of isolation during education.

Standing back a little bit, you know, there's, there's probably something to be said about looking at all the positive things to say, well, people can contribute to education. And I don't just mean popping up as role models. I mean, as educators and, uh, people, making a powerful and positive influence on all children and young people. Not, not just young, disabled, people.

A very obvious point is the education sector is the highly disrupted sector. And, um, we do see huge numbers of young people leaving school with, uh, poor rates of literacy and increasingly high levels of stress, um, living with high degrees and high levels of competition around them but with low prospects. So this kind of discordance, this mismatch, it's part of the landscape.

Um, and the point here being that, that, the disabled young people are very much in the front line or the firing line of all of this. Um, and where perhaps wider forms of support, a variety of agencies that could target different kinds of support for disabled young people as they were due to transition out of education, of course have been so greatly depleted that, that sense of not, not just muddle about what they've been through, but fear, perhaps about what, what lies ahead is a hugely corrosive and undermining influence, I think in a, in a young life. And we see, you know, the negative ripples of all of this reflected in an educational workforce that's seriously undermined as far as its morale and its capability of retaining, recruiting staff's concerned.

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▷ Probably there's lots of good intentions in, um, around supporting disabled people in education, but, uh, looking at higher education settings, for example, I think some of the mismatches and disparities that you see there is, um, you know, very strong adherence to a kind of medical model of disability.

Fixing the individual, rather than looking perhaps at institutional barriers that can be, moved. And the greater concern is for the disabled people who don't even get into a higher education. They are the absent people in this discussion I think in many ways

. [Emma]: Definitions that go further and encompass all learners, as opposed to particular groups, may be more constructive with respect to the future of inclusion.

As such the definition offered by the Centre for Studies into Inclusive Education may offer a more progressive construct to aid change. They say that inclusion means enabling all students to participate fully in the life and work of mainstream settings, whatever their needs. Inclusion also is seen as continuing process of breaking down barriers to learning and participation for all children and young people.

In a social model of education, the individual is valued and not faulty. Diagnosis is replaced by needs-driven intervention, drawing on strengths. Relationships are nurtured. Solution-orientated identification of barriers reduces labeling. Diversity is welcomed, removing the perception of "normal" as an entry requirement and training prevents segregation with high quality teaching at the forefront. I believe in this type of thinking and feel that it would allow society to evolve in dissolving power within educational settings.

Are we there yet? Well, when you look at the growing reliance upon zero tolerance behaviour management, where all individuals are homogenously judged against the same set of behavioural standards and children are placed in isolation for hours. It is difficult to argue that we have reached a point where education is truly inclusive.



▷ [Jen]: Over the last 40 years in education schools have become incredibly more inclusive, but sometimes within the education plans at the moment, and they still try to move children out of primary schools. Um, as they say that a special school will be better and do better provision, but sometimes maybe, if they had one to one support from an adult within school, they could stay.

I work with, um, adults who have been through the education system, and many of them went to special schools where the provision is different, where the curriculum is different, where they have a better range of activities, which takes them away from National Curriculum and expectations of being able to achieve.

In a very strange world 40 years ago when we started teaching all children were equal. I never heard of autism or a child with behavioural needs. You treated all your class as you wanted them to treat each other and you taught them in groups and you gave group activities. But actually, um, we just used to say, where did all the autistic children come from? Where did all the children with behaviour problems come from?

Um, because actually in the past, we absolutely were inclusive and just included them and just got on with our jobs, which is really an interesting factor, I suppose. I still think mainstream education, especially primary could try to keep children rather than saying that their needs cannot be met and they need special support in a specialist school.

[Cian]: My ideal school would be a school where everyone is accepted and there aren't labels saying, you're disabled, you're not. And we're not segregated from each other, we all learn from each other. Cause if you segregate people with disabilities and people without disabilities that nobody will learn from each other.

My ideal school would be where it is compulsory to learn about learning disabilities and compulsory to learn about any marginalized groups. It's compulsory that we learn about all sorts of discrimination and that we do not sugar coat it.



▷ That we learn from history and not repeat it, unlike what the fucking government is doing, which is exactly, what they're doing, repeating bad history.

And it's important that we learn as disabled people we are oppressed and that we, um, we suffered a lot in times of oppression. It is important that we learn that as disabled people our human rights the are being taken away. That is my ideal school.

And a school where, um, we, um, celebrate people's differences, but we also remember the struggles that it took in order for all our differences to be celebrated. It's important that we celebrate, but we don't sugar coat all the shit we had to go through to get where we are now. And our journey is still far from over. and a good school would be where teachers, if somebody is behaving badly, we are given the benefit of doubt.

And we are asked, why are you behaving that whilst then? Oh, you're behaving that way. You're bad. You, you are bad person. We should learn why we are how we are.

[Max]: I couldn't really tell you what an ideal school would look like. An ideal school could only exist in an ideal world.

An ideal school would represent the area that it existed in. It would support the students that needed it. But, you know, it has to represent the staff and the pupils. It doesn't matter what a building is ,as long as it's physically accessible, when nothing is done to make the people accessible.

[Jess]: When I was at infants school in the 1990s, my desk was taken away from me and I had to share with my teacher until they felt my handwriting had improved. My teacher held my hand whilst I wrote. For me, I feel a desk signifies trust, freedom, and privilege to learn.

The end

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