

Cabbie Could Lose His Licence



A cabbie could lose his taxi licence after refusing to take Brian Gaskell because he was a wheelchair user. Brian was able to get in the taxi behind but took the details of the cab and complained to Manchester council.

The driver was found guilty of a 'refusal to hire' charge at Manchester magistrates court and was fined £100 and ordered to pay £350 costs plus a £15 victim surcharge. He will also have to attend a licensing review hearing where he could lose his licence.

Councillor Nigel Murphy, executive member for the environment, said: "Every licensed black cab operating in Manchester is designed and adapted to ensure they are accessible for wheelchair users and drivers are expected to help their passengers when and where necessary.

"There is no excuse for not accepting a disabled passenger and we would urge other people who feel they have been discriminated against in this way to make a note of the vehicle

registration number and contact the council Tel: **0161 234 5004.**"

Also...

A visually impaired woman, Annie Giles-Quinn, whose guide dog has repeatedly been banned from cabs, shops and restaurants, has launched a 'one-woman crusade' to highlight her situation.

Under the Equalities Act 2010, visually impaired people cannot be refused access or service, or given substandard access or service, because they have a guide dog.

She described how, on one humiliating occasion last summer, three cab drivers refused to take her because of her guide dog. But when it happened again in March, she decided to take action and complained to the licensing department.

Councillor Nigel Murphy, Manchester council's executive member for the environment, said: "It is the duty of every private hire and hackney carriage driver to allow guide dogs or hearing dogs into their cars".



Taxi Fares Increase Across Greater Manchester

There has been an increase in Black Cab fares in 3 districts of Greater Manchester – Stockport, Manchester and Wigan.

Oldham has agreed a new fare structure, and drivers in Trafford and Tameside are also consulting on a rise.

A Manchester council spokesman said: "The fares have increased to reflect large increases in the cost of vehicle insurance and fuel".

Save Time... Get A Haircut...



A disabled woman from London says she was told to "cut her hair" to save her carer time when she raised concerns about her home care hours being cut.

Mary Garland had her home care hours reduced when Westminster Council changed its eligibility criteria. When she asked her social care manager how there would be time for her home carer to help her dress and wash, as well as clean, tidy and perform other home duties; she said the manager recommended she would be "better off cutting her hair".

When Ms Garland asked what would happen if her condition worsened, she was shocked to hear the manager reveal she would have to go into residential care. She said the reduction in hours of home carer visits has affected many aspects of her life.

Westminster Council said it was unable to comment on the specifics of the case but Councillor, Rachael Robathan said: "Westminster Council is firmly committed to providing the highest quality care to its vulnerable residents, treating our home care recipients with the utmost dignity and respect".

"We are focused on protecting frontline services for those most in need, and strive to support disabled and older people at home for as long as possible before considering options for residential care."

Online Factsheets

Disability Alliance, the National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) and Radar have now unified to form 'Disability Rights UK'.

They provide a wide range of factsheets on their website on benefits, tax credits, social care and other disability related issues.

They are free to download on:
www.disabilityrightsuk.org/factsheets.htm

Disability Rights UK



Lord Jack Ashley



Lord Ashley of Stoke, the country's first deaf MP has died aged 89. Jack Ashley, who was a former Labour MP for Stoke-on-Trent, represented the city for 26 years until he was made a peer in 1992.

Lord Ashley was a tireless campaigner on a wide range of disability and social issues. His Civil Rights Bill (Disabled Persons) in 1983, was the first piece of anti-discrimination legislation presented to the UK Parliament. As a private member's bill, without the support of the government it was unsuccessful.

In the House of Lords, he initiated many debates on disability rights and fought against aspects of government legislation that he felt were detrimental to disabled people.

The Co-chairs of the All-Party Parliamentary Disability Group in a statement said "Jack Ashley was an outstanding parliamentarian and champion of disability and human rights.

Inclusion Matters - Conference

This is a one day conference for disabled people, parents and allies, organised by the Campaign To

Reverse The Bias Towards Segregation.

The conference will be on Saturday June 23rd 2012 in London, and is followed by an Inclusion Cabaret.

Further details can be found on their website:

www.reversethebiascampaign.com/

Care Quality Commission Report



A review on Health Care for Disabled Children published recently by the Care Quality Commission found that disabled children sometimes wait for up to a year for aids such as wheelchairs. It found there were considerable variations in services provided in England with the national average wait for a powered wheelchair being three months.

The survey also showed that the average wait for a referral to a community occupational therapist was 15 weeks, with the wait ranging up to two years.

Public Health Minister Anne Milton, reacting to the report, said that long waits and frustration for many families was unacceptable and the Government would take action.

The report can be found on The Care Quality Commission website:

www.cqc.org.uk/

Right To Independent Living



A report published by the Joint Committee on Human Rights in March, warned of a “significant risk” that the government’s policies will breach the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

It also found that the government’s welfare reforms and cuts to disability benefits and services are putting disabled people’s right to independent living at risk.

The inquiry’s report is based on evidence given by many disabled people and their organisations; and recommends incorporating a right to independent living and to advocacy in legislation.

It exposes the way the current government’s welfare reforms mark a step backwards for disabled people and could force many into residential care.

The report can be found at <http://www.parliament.uk/business/committees/committees-a-z/joint-select/human-rights-committee/news/independent-living-report/>

Your Information Your Right

Many organisations hold files on the people they deal with or have dealt with in the past; these include medical, social work, housing and school

records. The Data Protection Act gives you the right to know what information is held about you.

If you want to see what is written about you, then you need to write to the organization you believe holds the information. If you are not sure who to write to, address your letter to the Company Secretary of the organization.

It is a good idea to send the letter recorded delivery. Keep a copy of the letter and any further letters you send or receive. The organisation may ask for a fee, which is usually no more than £10. Once the organisation has all the information it needs (which may include photo ID) and the fee, it must reply within 40 days.

Further information can be found on the following websites:

Information Commissioners Office:
www.ico.gov.uk/for_the_public/personal_information.aspx

Campaign for freedom of information:
www.cfoi.org.uk

PIP Consultation Until June 2012

Disability Living Allowance (DLA) is being reformed to create a new benefit called Personal Independence Payment; initially this will be introduced for disabled people aged 16-64.

The Government has announced that Personal Independence Payment will be phased-in starting with new claims from April 2013. They will begin to

reassess existing DLA claimants, starting in October 2013.

The consultation asks for views on a number of aspects of the regulations including eligibility to the benefit and payment of the benefit for certain groups. It also contains more details on how they will reassess DLA recipients.

The consultation will run until 30th June and the current intention is that the final draft of the regulations will be published by the end of this year.

Further information about Personal Independence Payment is available on the DWP website:

www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/disability/personal-independence-payment/

Work Capability Assessment



For better
mental health

Paul Farmer, the Chief Executive of Mind has resigned from his position as the charity representative on the scrutiny panel set up to monitor the Work Capability Assessment.

He said his position was “no longer tenable” and that the Government was refusing to listen to criticisms of the Work Capability Assessment. He highlighted statistics showing around 50% of appeals that are heard against WCA decisions are upheld.

Whilst Farmer's decision has been widely supported by fellow mental health campaigners, ministers were less impressed. Chris Grayling, the Employment Minister, told the BBC that he had asked officials to ask Paul Farmer to step down after his charity, Mind, had begun legal proceedings against the Department of Works and Pensions. Mind stresses that the charity is not at this stage supporting any such legal action.

Schools Out

Schools Out is a new GMCDP project for disabled children and young people aged 10 to 14 who live in Manchester.

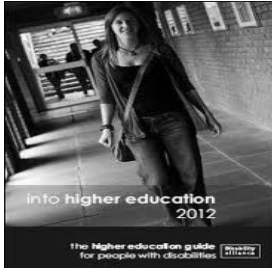
It aims to give young disabled people the same choices and opportunities as their non disabled peers, for instance accessing local youth clubs, sports/school clubs and leisure activities.

The project will offer one to one support and advocacy, an information and signposting service for disabled people and their families, travel training, as well as group sessions during school holidays.

The project is funded by Manchester Children's Services for one year and there is no charge to any young person accessing the project.

For further information contact:
Phil Samphire, Project Worker
Tel: **0161 273 5154**
Mobile: **07921 237 167**
Email: **psamphire@gmcdp.com**

Into Higher Education Guide



'Into Higher Education 2012', is a guide for disabled students thinking about studying in higher education. It deals with questions such as whether the college or university is accessible, how to choose a course and what support will be available.

It also covers the new student finance system and has up-to-date information on tuition fees and repayment methods.

The guide contains a useful resources section listing further websites, publications and organisations which can help. Into Higher Education was an annual publication from Skill: National Bureau for Students with Disabilities. Skill closed in April 2011 and Disability Rights UK is now running some of the former Skill services.

The guide can be downloaded from:
www.disabilityalliance.org/skillintoe.htm

Grants For Home Security In Stockport

The Home Security Package is a scheme which can help people in Stockport make their home more secure. To be eligible for the service,

for which there is no charge, you will need to qualify for the Council's grant. This is available subject to funding if you are over 60 years old (or under 60 and receive an income related benefit) and you are a homeowner or a private tenant living in a house in Council Tax Band A-D.

The Council's Home Security Officer will visit your home to see which measures would be suitable. There is a range of measures available including:

- Door viewer or door viewer/intercom.
- Window locks.
- Door chain.
- Five lever mortise locks to external doors.
- Security lighting for properties with an open aspect.

If you would like more information:

Tel: **0161 474 4364** or

Email:

home.repairs.adaptations@stockport.gov.uk

Salford Disability Forum Event

Salford Disability Forum will be holding Positive About Disability their Annual Awareness Raising Day on the 24th June at Buille Hill Park, Salford. There will be a range of activities, performances and exhibitors.

If you want to find out more please contact Salford Disability Forum:

Tel: **0161 737 1092**

Email:

office@salforddisabilityforum.co.uk

Undateable Debatable



In response to the recent Channel 4 series 'The Undateables', the Including Young Disabled Peoples Project have been canvassing the opinions of young disabled people about the programme. We held a session called 'Debatable', where both sides of the argument were debated by two teams of young disabled people.

We would be very interested to hear what the GMCDP membership thought of the programme.

If you have any thoughts, could you please contact the IYDP Project:
Email: dbroadbent@gmcdp.com or
Tel: 0161 273 5137.

DPAC Actions In Manchester

Disabled people Against Cuts are organising events around the country to highlight disabled peoples concerns about changes to ATOS, disability benefits and cuts to services.

Planned events in Manchester are:

Thursday 31st May at 12pm, Albert Square, Manchester.

Wednesday 6th June at 7pm, The Friends Meetings House, Manchester.

Day of Action and Campaign Stall, Saturday 9th June, meeting at 11am. Venue to be confirmed.

For further details please check the website: www.dpac.uk.net

Stockport Taxi Guide

The Stockport Disability Aware Transport Guide has been produced by Stockport Council in partnership with Disability Stockport.

It includes amongst other things; the contact details of licensed drivers who have successfully completed disability awareness training and information about how to make a complaint about a taxi or private hire driver.

An electronic copy of this guide is available on the Stockport Council website for you to view or download at:
www.stockport.gov.uk/taxilicensing

Alternative formats in braille/tape or CD are available on request.
Tel: 0161 474 3264 / 3286, Email: taxi.licensing@stockport.gov.uk

Tameside Hate Crime Survey

Tameside Hate Incident Panel (THIP) is a group of local partners (Police, Housing Associations, Tameside Council and Victim Support) who meet every 6 weeks to look at Hate Crimes within Tameside.

THIP are in the process of launching a new campaign to look at all aspects of Hate Crime such as race, religion, sexual orientation, transgender identity and disability. This will focus on supporting victims rather than targeting the perpetrators.

They are asking members of the public to help them understand what the focus of the campaign should be. To take part you can fill the survey in online:www.surveymonkey.com/s/JDQ3YTS

For more information contact: Email: shain.miah@tameside.gov.uk
Tel: 0161 342 2412.

The deadline is end of May 2012.

Disability Stockport



Disability Stockport is trying to improve and expand the services they offer and are currently looking at the options to develop into the Independent Living Centre in Stockport and to make their building a Community Hub.

They would welcome any suggestions on the ways they can improve and expand their services.

If you have any suggestions then please contact Disability Stockport.
Tel: 0161 480 7248, Email: email@disabilitystockport.org.uk

Next Information Bulletin

Please send any news or events you would like publicising by 7th June 2012.

If you need assistance accessing any of the websites or information given in this bulletin, please contact the GMCDP office and we will be pleased to assist.

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