

**DISABLED PEOPLE'S  
ARCHIVE CENTRAL  
LIBRARY SHOWCASE  
EXHIBITION PROGRAMME**

**OCTOBER 2024 –  
JANUARY 2025**



The Disabled People's Archive showcase exhibition is being held on the ground floor of Manchester Central Library until January 2025.

In this programme you will find information on each case which covers some of the general themes of our collection.

Each case is numbered A – N and each item has a number. The number next to the item matches the description in this booklet. There are 63 items in total in the exhibition.

To look at some of the scans and images of the exhibition items please visit our web page dedicated to the showcase at [Central Library Showcase Exhibition, October 2024 - January 2025 - Disabled People's Archive](#) ([disabledpeoplesarchive.com](http://disabledpeoplesarchive.com))

# Contents

GMCDP Cases	Page 4
LGBTQ+ Case	Page 10
Independent Living Case	Page 12
Protest Cases	Page 20
International Cases	Page 27
Disabled Women Cases	Page 32

# **GMCDP – Cases A, B, C**

## **Introduction:**

Established in 1985, Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP) is one of the UK's longest serving disabled people's organisations. This means it is run by disabled people, for disabled people. Their work includes campaigning for disability rights, providing support and resources to disabled people, and contributing to research and policy development to address the needs and challenges faced by the disabled community.

Therefore, GMCDP has been a significant advocate for the rights and inclusion of disabled people in Greater Manchester for almost four decades. In 2025 GMCDP will be 40 years old!

As GMCDP is our parent organisation, the Disabled People's Archive is tasked with preserving that forty-year long history. These three display cases showcase just a few items from our enormous GMCDP collection.

## **Case A**

**Items 1:** The origins of GMCDP can be found in the International Year of Disabled People in 1981. By the end of that year, groups had been established in each of the ten Greater Manchester districts that could co-ordinate events for disabled people. Over the next four years these groups increasingly shared their resources and expertise, eventually culminating in a conference at County Hall in June 1984, where the steering committee of GMCDP was nominated. The following year at the inaugural meeting an executive committee was formed which consisted of disabled people from all areas of Manchester.

**Item 2:** One of the first things that GMCDP did after its formation was to establish a news sheet called Coalition. Coalition was a chance for disabled people in Greater Manchester to find out about events and news from GMCDP. The first issue was published in February 1986, in which the coalition explained that its objective was to ‘establish a Resource Centre for the Greater Manchester area, to promote the integration of disabled people into society at all levels’. Coalition later developed into a magazine with essays, reports, satire, and poems written by disabled people. This publication was influential both nationally and internationally.

**Item 3:** Over the years Coalition evolved into a magazine which featured articles by disabled writers and activists from Greater Manchester, the UK, and overseas. Although Coalition never officially ceased publication, the last issue, an Archive Special edition, was published in 2019 to celebrate the Disabled People’s Archive project.

**Item 4:** GMCDP held celebrations to commemorate their ten-year anniversary in 1995. An anniversary video was recorded in which founding members were interviewed and, as you can see here, t-shirts were printed for the occasion.

## **Case B**

**Item 5:** One of the earliest GMCDP documents that we hold is a flyer from that inaugural meeting in June 1985. GMCDP hosted a day-long conference which aimed to report back to the local disabled community on its policy discussions, and to run a series of workshops for members and supporters.

**Item 6:** Between 1990-1994 GMCDP offered Disability Action Training (DAT). This project was very successful and offered training, to both disabled and non-disabled

people, in disability equality and job-seeking skills. GMCDP DAT also offered tutoring for potential trainers in the hopes of building up a pool of quality instructors who could educate others about the various issues facing disabled people.

**Item 7:** GMCDP has always endeavoured to support young disabled people and in September 2003 Pavilion Press published a report of GMCDP's Young Disabled People's Peer Mentoring Project. Julie Bethell used action research, undertaken as part of the project, to draw together a set of rules and principles for facilitating peer support among young disabled people. The guide was also available as a CD-ROM.

**Item 8:** GMCDP also recognised the need to support young disabled people from global majority backgrounds. GMCDP developed specific groups to make sure they



were able to represent and advocate for young disabled people of all ethnicities.

## **Case C**

**Item 9:** GMCDP also joined national campaigns to promote the rights of disabled people everywhere. This included being involved in the Rights Now campaign which was launched in 1992 by the British Council of Organisations of Disabled People (BCODP). Rights Now campaigned and lobbied for anti-discrimination legislation. This is one of the t-shirts from our collection that was worn during that campaign.

**Item 10:** In 2015, as part of UK Disability History Month (UKDHM), a group of young disabled people at GMCDP created a comic book called 'The Accessibles'. The young disabled people felt that using comics was a fun and accessible way of telling a story and providing information.

The Accessibles was produced as part of Manchester City Council's programme to mark UKDHM 2015 in partnership with the Central Library, GMCDP, and coordinated by Manchester City Council Disabled Employee Group. Three issues were published in total and the very first issue won the Manchester Community History Award in March 2016.

## **LGBTQ+ - Case D**

### **Introduction:**

The Disabled People's Archive is host to many items that represent the diversity of those involved in the Disabled People's Movement. In this display case you will find a small showcase of the material we have relating to disabled LGBTQ+ people. This includes the work done by the Disabled People's Movement recognizing the additional barriers that disabled people face due to their sexuality.

## Case D

**Item 11:** This is an example of academic research into the lives of disabled people. 'The Rainbow Ripple Report' looks at the services provided to LGBTQ+ disabled people and records their experiences of the services available to them in the city of Leeds. The report's focus on the specific needs of this community shows the importance of carving out a space for marginalized identities within the Disabled People's Movement.

**Item 12:** Over the years, GMCDP has put on events specifically aimed at the LGBTQ+ community in order to build a network of support and safety. This flyer is from the early stages when GMCDP began hosting regular meetings for LGBTQ+ disabled people where they could come together and socialise in a space that was both accessible and queer friendly. GMCDP still host LGBTQ+

specific events to this day, please contact [info@gmcdp.com](mailto:info@gmcdp.com) for more details.

**Item 13:** This is the first issue of REGARD Writes, a quarterly magazine from the group REGARD, a national alliance of disabled LGBTQ+ people fighting for disability equality and LGBTQ+ liberation. This magazine covered social events, accessibility in the gay/lesbian scene, updates on organisational campaigns (including anti-discrimination), book reviews, and news articles.

## **Independent Living – Cases E, F, G**

### **Introduction:**

Since its earliest days, the disabled people's movement has fought for disabled people's right to Independent Living. Independent Living is the idea that disabled people should be in control of their own lives and have choice over the support they need to live their life independently. In almost every area of our collection you can find

documents, images, and artefacts relating to the fight for independence and independent living.

In these three display cases you will find several items that demonstrate how disabled people were able to organise effectively and influence public perception of independence for disabled people, and government policy around independent living.

## **Case E**

**Item 14:** One of the most important documents in the fight for independent living, and indeed in the disabled people's movement, is 'Fundamental Principles of Disability' created by The Union of The Physically Impaired Against Segregation (UPIAS) and The Disability Alliance. This booklet established the principles upon which the Social Model of Disability is based. The Social Model of Disability

proposes that it is not a person's impairment that 'disables' them but the attitudes and structures of society. Therefore, 'Fundamental Principles of Disability' was largely responsible for revolutionising disabled people's understanding of their role in society. Many members of UPIAS lived in residential institutions so knew how important it was to work towards independent living.

**Item 15:** Some organisations, such as Disability Alliance, focused on the links between poverty and disability and argued for targeted policies and interventions to break the cycle of poverty and disability. This included a specific focus on the barriers to independence, such as access to employment, the need for specialist equipment, and increased living costs.

**Item 16:** At the Disabled People's Archive, we have many items from charity organisations, such as this leaflet from the Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB), which

focuses on helping disabled people find work. Although these charities were not formed by disabled people, leaflets like this show the sort of services that charities offered disabled people and speak to the environment in which the disabled people's movement developed.

**Item 17:** Changing the public's perception of disability was another step in the struggle for disabled people's independence. Authors, like Professor of Disability Studies Colin Barnes, published books arguing that disability should be viewed as a civil rights issue, rather than simply a matter of service provision or community care.

**Item 18:** Independence Festivals were the first national festivals of disabled people's art and culture in the UK. They ran each year from 1997 to 2001. The first three festivals were held in Manchester, then Birmingham in 2000, and Leeds in 2001. GMCDP created a number of postcards, including this one, for the Independence Festivals which depicted disabled people as independent

in an effort to alter people's perceptions of disability. This postcard states 'I am not special, I am not brave, I am a disabled person and John's my name'.

## **Case F**

**Item 19:** Local and regional groups, like GMCDP, published guides for disabled people on each of the seven needs of independent living: Information; Peer Support; Housing; Equipment; Personal Assistance; Accessible Transport; Accessible Environment. According to this philosophy, if each of the seven needs are met, then Independent Living can be achieved.

**Item 20:** Many disabled people resented the way that some charitable organisations depicted them as objects of pity who needed charity. Instead, they wanted rights, just like everyone else. This flyer, which targeted Children in Need and other charities that portrayed disabled people as



helpless, is just one example of the ways in which disabled people got their message across.

**Item 21:** In 2014 the government threatened to stop the Independent Living Fund (ILF), a payment to disabled people which allowed them control over the care and services they received, and thus endangered disabled people's hard-won rights to independence. Disabled people's organisations banded together and launched a campaign to fight those changes. This is one of the t-shirts from that campaign. Sadly, the ILF closed in July 2015.

**Item 22:** As the efforts of the Disabled People's Movement gained traction and began to affect policy, guides were published by Trade Unions to help branches navigate new disability discrimination legislation and how to support disabled people to stay in work.

## **Case G**

**Item 23:** GMCDP also created their own Independent Living Guide looking at the support that was available in Greater Manchester. This offered accessibility advice on issues such as, transport, housing, personal assistance, equipment, and accessible environments, alongside contact details for local agencies that could support with more specific issues.

**Item 24:** Independence Festivals were the first national festivals of disabled people's art and culture in the UK. They ran each year from 1997 to 2001. The first three festivals were held in Manchester, then Birmingham in 2000, and Leeds in 2001. GMCDP created a number of postcards, including this one, for the Independence Festivals which depicted disabled people as independent in an effort to alter people's perceptions of disability. This postcard states 'Our Voices Will Be Heard All Over the World'.

**Item 25:** These two orange parking badges are from a scheme in the 1990s that pre-dates the Blue Badge system we have today. The scheme provided a national arrangement of parking concessions for people with mobility impairments. Schemes such as this allow disabled people the freedom of transport and movement.

**Item 26:** Handbooks and guides were published to help disabled people who required a personal assistant (personal assistants perform tasks that assist disabled people in maintaining their independence). The Disablement Income Group (DIG) published “Facilitating and Supporting Independent Living: Guide to Setting up a Personal Assistance Support Scheme”. This comprehensive guide, written by Fidelity Simpson and Jane Campbell, was designed to help individuals with disabilities achieve greater independence through personal assistance support schemes.

**Item 27:** The West of England Centre for Inclusive Living (WECIL) published a handbook aimed at those disabled people who would be employing their own personal assistants. The handbook contained advice on how to choose a personal assistant, the rights of the personal assistant, and provided specific local advice for support services.

## **Protests – Cases H, I, J**

## **Introduction:**

The Disabled People's Archive is an archive of the social movement and self-organisation of disabled people, so many of our items show the different ways in which disabled people tried to influence the government. As such our collection holds many documents and artefacts that relate to protests both nationally and internationally. The Disabled People's Archive has a diverse array of items that cover all sorts of protests. From fighting for accessible transport, to protesting about civil rights, and fighting for the rights of other marginalised groups, disabled people have been at the forefront of change.

## **Case H**

**Item 28:** Disabled people wore t-shirts with political slogans like this - 'Nothing about us without us' - at protests. But they also wore them in everyday life as a way

to show solidarity with, and draw attention to, certain issues.

**Item 29:** The Disabled People's Movement didn't just fight against discrimination towards disabled people, they also fought for other groups in society that faced discrimination. As this poster shows, disabled athletes, supported the fight against apartheid when, in 1985, they organised a demonstration to fight against the inclusion of South African teams at the International Games for Disabled Athletes at Stoke Manderville (the precursor to the Paralympics).

**Item 30:** The Disabled People Against Apartheid also published this booklet, which was distributed during protests and at the main offices for the Anti-Apartheid Movement in London, showing that the disabled people's movement could influence important international issues.

**Item 31:** This magazine, published by Militant Labour (a precursor to the Socialist Party in the UK), was a special issue that focused on the challenges affecting disabled people. It addressed issues like charity, housing, and Anti-Discrimination Legislation (ADL). It shows that other groups supported the work done by disabled activists.

## **Case I**

**Item 32:** These three photographs depict a group of disabled people blocking the path of several buses at Owen's Park, Fallowfield, in Manchester. The group were there to protest about the inaccessibility of public transport. This form of protest brought attention to the barriers disabled people often face. The central image was taken by artist David Hevey and was used as a promotional tool for the Disabled People's Movement.

**Item 33:** One way people could show solidarity with, and draw attention to, certain issues was by wearing political t-shirts. This t-shirt from the Disabled People's Direct-Action Network (DAN), with its slogan 'The Legend Lives On – Free Our People', is one of our favourite pieces.

**Item 34:** Handcuffs were often used by disabled protestors to chain themselves to buses, trains and trams. This tactic was used to stop buses, trains, and trams from operating and highlight that they were not accessible forms of transport for disabled people. It was an effective and radical way to get their message across!

**Item 35:** Another way that disabled people protested was to organise a march with lots of people in attendance. This flyer, for example, advertised a march organised by the Federation of Deaf People. They wanted the British government to acknowledge British Sign Language (BSL) as Britain's fourth official language.



## Case J

**Introduction:** Disabled people also used more traditional routes in their fight for change. In this case are a number of documents demonstrating how disabled people tried to influence the government and activate change from within the political system. For more information about these items, scan the QR code to be taken to our online program.

**Item 36:** One traditional way to protest about an issue is to write a letter to your local Member of Parliament (MP) asking them to speak about that issue in the House of Commons. Disabled People's Organisations would provide templates on how to structure a letter to an MP. These templates would show what language should be used in

the letter and which points should be emphasised. Here we have a template and a letter about care service charges.

**Item 37:** Here is a letter written from a template supplied by a Disabled People's Organisation asking a local MP (Paul Goggins, Wythenshawe) about the cost of disability services and cuts to the budget which meant that disabled people were not able to afford vital services.

**Item 38:** Printing postcards decorated by disabled people's artwork was another way to influence public opinion and promote the voice of disabled people. This postcard 'Disabled People Bite the Hand that Patronises' was designed by Brian Hilton. The art looks at the often patronising and pitying attitudes faced by disabled people and shows that disabled people were ready to 'bite back'!

**Item 39:** Disability Daily put together this Campaign Resource pack which included templates, advice, and instructions regarding campaigning at local and national level on issues affecting disabled people across the UK.

**Item 40:** In 2001 Disability Daily also published this manifesto defining what the rights, equality, and inclusion of disabled people across the UK should look like.

**Item 41:** Another way to protest and draw attention to an issue is by wearing political badges. The badges in this case were all produced by the Disabled Direct-Action Network (DAN).

**Item 42:** This photograph depicts a group of disabled people outside the Houses of Parliament at the end of a protest march. Protest marches often end at the Houses of Parliament so that MPs can see the powerful image of

hundreds of people coming together in agreement to create change.

## **International Disability – Cases K, L**

### **Introduction:**

The Disabled People's Archive holds a significant number of items that relate to the Disabled People's International (DPI) and other international Disabled People's Organisations. The DPI is a Human Rights organisation committed to protecting the rights of disabled people and promoting their full and equal participation in society.

Established in 1981, DPI is represented through the active membership of national organisations of disabled people in over 130 countries. In the UK, membership to the DPI is accessed through the British Council of Disabled People.

## Case K

**Item 43:** The items on display here show some of the early work of the DPI, including this copy of the constitution which outlines the rules by which the DPI would operate and the principles on which it was founded.

**Item 44:** DPI also published this statement on equal opportunities. This was a document of vital importance for a Disabled People's Organisation that was pan-impairment. This meant that people with any impairment or health condition could be part of DPI and work together for the benefit of disabled people across the globe.

**Item 45:** Although, traditionally, we might associate human rights with agencies like the United Nations, the DPI found that disabled people were not represented by this institution at all. This article from the DPI's World Council meeting, held at Stockholm in 1983, shows that disabled people were not represented in any of the United Nation's documents concerning human rights at that time.

**Item 46:** Our collection also includes DPI supported publications, such as the pamphlet, 'Are Disabled People Included? An exposure document on the violation of disabled people's human rights and the solutions recommended within the UN Standard Rules', published circa. 1998.

**Item 47:** We also hold several published works looking at specific areas of the Disabled People's Movement, such as Diane Driedger's 'The Last Civil Rights Movement:

Disabled People's International' which was published in 1989.

## Case L

**Item 48:** One international organisation that was particularly influential was the American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today (ADAPT) group. This was a disabled person's organisation that was formed in the 1970s. Their work used protest and civil disobedience to get their message across. We think the slogan on this sweatshirt - 'Land of the free . . . Unless you live in a nursing home' - says it all!

**Item 49:** Our collection holds lots of newsletters and magazines from disabled people's organisations around the world, such as this newsletter from the South African Federation of the Disabled.

**Item 50:** 'En Marcha' was a magazine published by the Spanish Confederation of People with Physical Disabilities.

**Item 51:** A newsletter entitled 'Disabled in Action Speaks' which was the joint newsletter of the Disabled in Action organisations of New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Syracuse, and Virginia

**Item 52:** We also have other ephemera such as this poster advertising celebrations in Manchester for the International Day of Disabled People held on December 3<sup>rd</sup>, 1996. Global celebrations of disabled people's lives continue to this day across the world, bringing disabled and non-disabled people together.

**Item 53:** The DPI had regional factions that organised to lobby governments in that region, such as this leaflet 'Disabled People in Europe are Not Waiting'. This leaflet



informs readers of the different ways in which disabled people were working together to fight for their human rights specifically in Europe.

## **Women and Disability – Cases M, N**

### **Introduction**

The Disabled People's Archive is a wonderful resource that represents the diversity of those involved in the Disabled People's Movement. Very early on in the movement's history, disabled women came together to address the unique challenges they faced in society. In

these two display cases are several items from our collection that demonstrate how disabled women shared knowledge, created art, and how they tackled inequality and discrimination.

## **Case M**

**Item 54:** As the Disabled People's Movement grew, and disabled women's groups emerged, some women still felt that their voices were not being heard. They formed their own groups, such as GEMMA, founded in 1976, which aimed to lessen the isolation of disabled lesbians and bisexual women.

**Item 55:** Other groups were impairment specific, for example WILD 'Women in Learning Disabilities' issued a newsletter, published in Bristol and Manchester, by

women with learning difficulties and their supporters. It was meant to help women share information about the things that mattered to them like work, feminism, and art.

**Item 56:** ‘Boadicea’ was another disabled women’s newsletter, published by Greater London Action on Disability (GLAD). ‘Boadicea’ included discussion pieces on disabled women’s rights, sexuality, employment, support arrangements, and the particular forms of discrimination faced by disabled women.

**Item 57:** As we know, disabled people often resented the way that charitable organisations depicted them as objects of pity. This t-shirt, with its slogan ‘Piss on Pity’, is a wonderful example of how the disabled people’s movement used humour and art to disabuse the wider public of this idea. ‘Piss on Pity’ emerged as a key slogan of the movement during the Telethon protests of the 1990s. This particular t-shirt comes from comedian Barbara Lisicki’s (stage name ‘Wanda Barbara’) ‘Tragic but

Brave Tour', which was a touring cabaret that went all over the world.

**Item 58:** Disabled women also voiced their struggles in literary works that not only drew attention to their experiences, but also demonstrated the strengths and talents of disabled women. This book 'With Wings: an anthology of literature by women with disabilities' is an American publication that looks at the work of disabled women from all walks of life.

## **Case N**

**Item 59:** Disabled women were also able to influence on an international level. This Disabled Women's Resource Kit was published by the Disabled People's International (DPI). It outlined contemporary European legislation regarding discrimination and offered strategies for change in the

hope that this kit would enable disabled women everywhere to organise and advocate for themselves.

**Item 60:** This t-shirt, with its slogan ‘I’m Too Sexy For A Charity Poster’, is another wonderful example of how the disabled people’s movement used humour and art to disabuse the wider public of the idea that disabled people should be objects of pity. This particular t-shirt comes from comedian Barbara Lisicki’s (stage name ‘Wanda Barbara’) ‘Tragic but Brave Tour’, which was a touring cabaret that went all over the world.

**Item 61:** Women also organised conferences where they discussed the particular challenges faced by disabled women and organised ways to alleviate those challenges. This conference paper is from a joint event held in Manchester on May 19<sup>th</sup>, 1990, hosted by Manchester Disability Forum and GMCDP.

**Item 62:** Disabled women played key roles in activism outside of disability politics, taking part in global feminist events like the Global Women's Strike. This document has quotes from disabled women from around the UK stating why they were getting involved in the Global Women's Strike (circa. 2017).

**Item 63:** Independence Festivals were the first national festivals of disabled people's art and culture in the UK. They ran each year from 1997 to 2001. The first three festivals were held in Manchester, then Birmingham in 2000, and Leeds in 2001. GMCDP created a number of postcards, including this one, for the Independence Festivals which depicted disabled people as independent in an effort to alter people's perceptions of disability. This postcard states, 'I can't afford your charity - the price is my dignity' and depicts a woman with her guide dog.

