



News

Happy New Year + an update from our AGM

Happy New Year to all our members and supporters, we wish you all the best for 2018.

At our AGM and Open Forum, we discussed how to involve Disabled people in decision-making across the city. The Mayor, Marvin Rees, came and went away with a much better idea of how Disabled people want to be involved.

The one thing all our members agreed on was that organisations need to involve Disabled people right from the start, not leave it to the consultation stage.

As a result, Marvin has given the Forum a place on the Bristol Homes Board. This board is the lead on meeting the various housing needs of the city – from homelessness, all the way through to what new housing we build in the Bristol area.

In a few months' time, we hope to set up a Forum Housing sub-group to discuss and share ideas and solutions to problems, which our representative will then raise at Bristol Homes Board meetings.

If you are interested and have ideas about how best to meet Disabled people's housing needs, please contact the Forum office leaving your name, address and contact details.

Thank you, once again, to everyone who attended the meeting for inspiring Marvin to give Disabled people a place on this important committee.

The Forum's new Co-Chairs and Vice-Chairs

At the last Forum Management Committee meeting, Advisors elected the following people to be the Forum's Co-Chairs and Vice Co-Chairs:

Co-Chairs – Gordon Richardson and Karen Passmore;

Treasurer and Vice Co-Chair – Mick O'Neill-Duff;

Secretary and Vice Co-Chair – Vicki Kaye and Mark Williams (job-share).

We wish everyone the best in their new roles. These roles are especially important now, as we move into a new phase of the Forum's life, as an organisation not funded by the council.

We would also like to thank Mark Williams and Gordon Richardson for all their hard work in their previous roles as Co-Chair and Treasurer, respectively.

Are you exempt from Disability Benefits Assessments?

Some people are exempt from ESA and PIP assessments or re-assessments on medical grounds. The Forum Volunteer Coordinator, Juley Howard, is putting together a resource about the exemptions to encourage more people to apply for them and avoid these distressing appointments.

If you are someone who is exempt and would be happy to talk about why you are exempt in a general way, please get in touch with Juley: volunteering.bristoldef@gmail.com. Juley will arrange a time to talk to you in person or on the phone - she will email the questions she would like to ask beforehand to reassure you that the discussion will not be intrusive.

She would like to add some personal stories to show how and for whom the exemptions work in practice.

Honoured for making it more difficult for Disabled people to get Access to Work Support

Rilesh Jadeja, a senior Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) civil servant and the national manager responsible for delivering the much-criticised Access to Work (AtW) scheme, has been given an OBE in the New Year's Honours List. This is despite research published in October 2017 that found there are significant problems with the Government's Access to Work Programme.

Jadeja's OBE was awarded only three weeks after a Deaf Chief Executive launched a legal case against DWP over the "discriminatory" cap it has imposed on the amount of support available through the Access to Work scheme.

Are you LGBTQI+ and a Disabled Person?

The Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE), in partnership with the University of Bristol, Regard, and Stonewall have completed some research into the needs of LGBTQI+ Disabled people on direct payments, who employ PAs.

You can find information and videos for LGBTQI+ Disabled people and for their PAs and Support Workers at:

<https://www.scie.org.uk/lgbtqi/disabled-people/>

Inclusion Southmead

A group of Southmead residents have set up a group to tackle issues around access, inclusion and isolation in their community. The group includes Disabled and non-Disabled residents, who have decided to call themselves 'Inclusion Southmead.' They have also chosen Bristol Disability Equality Forum and the Care Forum to work with them over the next year.

The next meeting is on: **Tuesday 13th Feb, from 11am to 1pm, at the Greenway Centre**

If you would like more information, please email:

mike.bristoldef@gmail.com

Dates for the Diary

Independent Living Action Group

The Forum's 'Independent Living Action Group' is a place for Disabled people to share experiences, information and to campaign for the right to live independently. The focus for the next few meetings will be on issues with pre-paid cards, overnight support and Direct Payments for social care.

The next meeting is on:

- **Friday 19th Jan**
- **From 11am to 1pm**
- **At St Pauls Learning Centre**

If you would like to join us, or for more information, please e-mail:
mwilliams65@blueyonder.co.uk

Hidden Impairments: Getting Noticed

Do you have a long-term health condition but do not 'look disabled'? If so, you are invited to a workshop to discuss access issues for people with 'hidden impairments'.

The next workshop is on:

- **Tuesday 23rd Jan**
- **From 3.30pm to 5.30pm**
- **At St Pauls Learning Centre**

To book a place click here: <http://bit.ly/2mnhsQb> or just show up on the day.

For more information please call the Forum office: **0117 914 0528** or e-mail: volunteering.bristoldef@gmail.com

Consultation on Welfare Conditionality Research

Join University of Sheffield researchers, Dr Jenny McNeil and Prof Peter Dwyer to discuss the results of their project on Welfare Conditionality in the UK. They have been talking to people who experience sanctions and support in their everyday lives to find out whether linking welfare rights to 'responsible' behaviour is effective and under what circumstances, if any, it is justifiable.

The consultation will take place on:

- **Mon 29th Jan**
- **2pm to 4pm**
- **At The Vassall Centre**

For more information about the project visit: <http://bit.ly/1NAROh1>

To book a place email: j.m.mcneill@sheffield.ac.uk

Bristol Art For All

Bristol Art For All are a local community arts organisation who run drop-in art classes as well as art workshops. Their sessions encourage play and creative experimentation. Sessions are open to all people of all ages, backgrounds and experience. Classes are friendly and relaxed and while making art you can chat, drink tea and listen to music!

In January and February 2018 they are running a weekly Thursday morning drop-in art class at St Pauls learning Centre from 10:30am til 12:30pm. Each week there will be a different arts and crafts activity. Classes are open to anyone who wants to come, all we ask is for a donation for art materials.

To find out more check out The Bristol Art For all Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/bristolartforall>

You can also email Bristol Art For All at: bristolartforall@gmail.com