



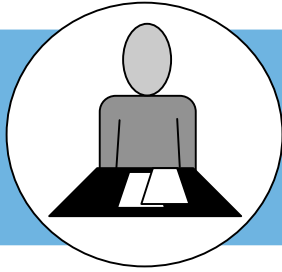
Centre for
Accessible
Environments

Access Newsletter: November 2011

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Power shift from Whitehall to communities gets underway

An era of Whitehall control has ended with a historic shift in power back to local people, as the Localism Bill becomes law. The Localism Act will trigger the biggest transfer of power in a generation, releasing councils and communities from the grip of central government.

The flagship legislation which this month received Royal Assent, puts a raft of new rights and powers at the disposal of local people. Key measures will increase the power of local government through the Act.

For further information, visit the **Communities and Local Government website**
<http://tinyurl.com/d2tj89g>

Housing strategy receives mixed response on older people's initiatives

The government's housing strategy has received a mixed response on measures for older people. The plan, unveiled this month, includes an equity release scheme designed to help owners stay in their home for longer.

The strategy states that the government is working with the financial services industry to stimulate attractive financial products in order to help older homeowners release equity safely to maintain or adapt their homes. It also calls for new guidance on how to give financial advice to older homeowners.

But experts have raised concerns about the lack of detail over how these will work. A spokesperson from the Homes and Communities Agency said there must be protection to ensure older people stay in the homes that suit them best.

For further information, visit the **Guardian website**

<http://tinyurl.com/7blzybr>

Disability: the difficulties of the Hardest Hit

Disabled people, their carers, friends and family, continue to protest against proposed changes to vital benefits and services around the UK.

Disability Alliance says the Welfare Reform Bill could:

- axe support to over 400,000 disabled people
- end entitlement to legal aid for challenging unfair benefit decisions
- abolish working age Disability Living Allowance payments
- cut projected expenditure by over £1.3 billion per year from 2015 – 2016

Many disabled people cannot access public transport in London and restrictions around Blue Badge parking and their limited number both impact on the ability to park near to protest events. Some people rely on friends and family to participate and not everyone can afford to take part.

For further information, visit the **BBC News website**

<http://tinyurl.com/6zfnv5t>

DBC and Hardest Hit Coalition's giant Christmas card for Government

The Disability Benefits Consortium (DBC) and Hardest Hit Coalition are planning to send a giant Christmas card to the government as a protest against welfare reforms. They hope to get 10,000 signatures on the card, timed to coincide with the welfare reform bill reaching report stage in the House of Lords.

For further information and to sign the card, visit the **e-activist website**

<http://tinyurl.com/bs7ecvp>

Disabled people suicidal campaigners say over Welfare Reform Bill

Planned changes to the UK benefits system have left disabled people feeling suicidal, campaigners in Scotland have said.

They have told Ministers in the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) that people were terrified over how Westminster plans to get more people back to work may affect them. The campaign groups urged MSPs to block a move allowing UK ministers to legislate on the issue in Scotland.

The UK government says changes under the Welfare Reform Bill will save £7 billion in welfare spending and encourage people on benefits to find a job.

But Keith Robertson, Access Development Officer and Manager at the Disability Equality Forum, said: 'the government was like a blind rhinoceros running wild that has got to make a 20 per cent cut, immaterial of the consequences. Some of the calls we are getting are devastating to hear - some people have become suicidal simply because of the thought of it.'

For further information, visit the **BBC website**

<http://tinyurl.com/c456wzj>

Warning over legal aid cuts for disabled people

Ministers are being urged not to restrict legal aid for disabled people wanting to challenge benefit decisions. A coalition of charities including Scope and Mind argues that limiting access would harm vulnerable people.

The government insists the £2 billion legal aid bill is unaffordable. Ministers are looking to prune £350 million from the civil legal aid budget by 2014 - 2015 as part of cuts across government.

The 23 charities say the changes mean up to 80,000 people will no longer be able to get access to legal advice to help challenge benefit decisions.

For further information, visit the **BBC News website**

<http://tinyurl.com/6a6dytu>

Welfare Rights: Disabled children face slide into poverty

The proposed introduction of universal credit from 2013 could massively affect social work practice. One particular change will cost some families with a disabled child up to £1,400 a year. These families are already more likely to be in poverty and using social services support.

Families with a disabled child entering the benefit system after universal credit is introduced will find themselves up to £1,400 a year worse off than current claimants.

For further information, visit the **Community Care website**

<http://tinyurl.com/dxtjzrm>

The Disability Benefits Consortium welcomes the Low Review

Lord Low of Dalston has called on the Government to protect mobility payments for disabled people in residential care, in his review, launched earlier this month.

The review has been warmly welcomed by more than fifty organisations that make up the Disability Benefits Consortium (DBC), who have been campaigning against the Government's move to stop the payments.

The independent review into how the personal mobility needs of people living in state-funded residential care are met found overwhelming evidence that the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance (DLA) or its successor, Personal Independence Payment (PIP), should be retained.

The report is clear that its removal would lead to a loss of independence for disabled people. Lord Low said: 'If payment of the mobility component to people living in residential care ends, this will be a serious step backwards for disability rights.'

For further information, visit the **Low Review website**
www.lowreview.org.uk

The case for the Human Rights Act

The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is responding to a consultation by the Commission on a Bill of Rights (CBR) on whether a UK Bill of Rights should be developed to replace the Human Rights Act.

The EHRC response is that one already exists in the Human Rights Act (HRA) and that it should be kept. The response also provides an analysis of the operation of the mechanisms in the Human Rights Act and argues that the path forward should build on the current rights and mechanisms in the HRA, rather than dilute or repeal them.

For further information, visit the **EHRC website**
<http://tinyurl.com/caotvtp>

UK bill of rights rejected by Scottish human rights body

The Scottish Human Rights Commission has rejected the UK government's proposals for a new bill of rights as regressive and unwelcome.

Professor Alan Miller, the commission's chair said plans to replace the Human Rights Act with a bill of rights were an ill-disguised attack by UK ministers on civil liberties and an attempt to weaken existing legal protection for vulnerable people.

He said the Scottish trend was to expand access to human rights through the devolved parliament's new road map to bring civil and human rights up to the highest international standards and establish a living experience for all.

For further information, visit the **Guardian website**

<http://tinyurl.com/co6uj5w>

Isle of Man disability act debate

The Isle of Man government is encouraging residents to add their voice to the disability act debate. The Disability Discrimination Act 2006 aims to protect disabled people against discrimination, both in employment and when using a service or facility. Earlier this year the government commissioned a report into the economic impact of the legislation.

Social Care Minister Chris Robertshaw said: 'We are committed to introducing this legislation, to do so we need views from organisations across the public, private and third sectors so we can fully assess the impact it may have on those stakeholders.'

For further information, visit the **BBC website**

<http://tinyurl.com/c7l3wd8>

Independent Living Fund to close in 2015

The fears of disabled people about the future of the Independent Living Fund (ILF) have been confirmed by the announcement this month that the fund is to close by 2015.

The ILF provides money to more than 20 thousand disabled people with high support needs to live independently at home out of residential care.

For further information, visit the **Disability Now website**

<http://tinyurl.com/btqvwzd>

Scope close DIAL UK

Scope announced this month it will close DIAL UK. The organisation supported a network of local DIALs (Disability Information and Advice Lines). Scope plans to

improve support to members by employing four new regional support workers as part of its information service. All DIAL staff have been made redundant.

For further information, visit the **Scope website**

<http://tinyurl.com/6lecy54>

Cold snap alert plan aims to save lives

Winter weather alerts aimed at helping vulnerable people during cold snaps are to be introduced in England. Agencies such as the NHS and social services will get the Meteorological Office alerts and will then have to take action to ensure people are safe in their homes.

An estimated 27,000 extra people die every winter. England has a much higher death rate during winter than many colder countries, such as Sweden.

The Department of Health has pledged an extra £10 million for this initiative. However, even with the extra money, the fund has still been cut compared to previous years.

For further information, visit the **BBC News website**

<http://tinyurl.com/63cnmr2>

How retro-styling homes can help elderly people with dementia feel more comfortable

Retro-decorating can help people with dementia to stay at home for longer by placing familiar items from their past in their home to reduce anxiety and to trigger memories.

With about 750,000 people experiencing dementia in the UK, costing the UK £20 billion a year and numbers set to grow to 1.7 million over the next 40 years, commissioners and providers are looking for cost-effective models of providing dementia care.

Adult Social Care Manager Joelle Bevington, from Surrey County Council, has seen good results from retro-decorating: 'We are seeing that people do feel less anxious and more able to do and get things for themselves from their kitchen because they know where things are. People are more self-sufficient.'

For further information, visit the **Community Care website**
<http://tinyurl.com/7k3jjuu>

Designers try to stop patients abusing casualty staff

Designers have come up with ideas to try to stop patients losing their temper with staff at accident and emergency (A and E) departments. The Department of Health commissioned the work to find out how the units could become calmer. Figures published this month revealed there was 57,830 physical assaults on NHS staff in England in 2010 – 2011, a rise on the previous year.

The Design Council briefed experts to find simple solutions that would make A and E patients feel less alienated, and help them understand why they may have to wait.

Solutions include a new approach to greeting patients when they arrive and answering questions, providing clearer signage and maps explaining the different stages of A and E treatment. Advice was provided about lighting, decor and seating.

For further information, visit the **BBC website**
<http://tinyurl.com/cdfrkx9>

Richard Herring's Objective: The Wheelchair

The comedian, Richard Herring examines the representative symbol of disability and wonders if it is still the case that people see the disability rather than the person.

For further information, visit the **BBC iPlayer website**
<http://tinyurl.com/cs3af2q>

Small-scale US-style care homes for older people

One of the UK's biggest care providers is planning to introduce a US model for replacing larger care homes for older people with smaller units that promise better outcomes.

Not-for-profit provider Anchor is looking to adopt the Green House approach, which involves having homes of just seven to ten residents, where staff perform all roles from care and activities to cooking and laundry. Residents' time is not scheduled, while meals are prepared in an open kitchen and staff and residents eat together at a single dining table.

For further information, visit the **Community Care website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cducnt9>

Living well with dementia

The Design Council CABI and the Department of Health have been running a competition to rethink life with dementia. The challenge is to help people with dementia and their carers live easier, better-planned and more enjoyable lives.

The competition began in the summer and the shortlisted entries now have an opportunity to pitch their ideas to the judging panel this month. The short-list includes a wide variety of ideas, including online and physical tools for better collaborative care, locks for doors allowing access via fingerprint recognition and, a product involving light therapy.

Winners will be chosen this month and the prototypes showcased in March 2012.

For further information, visit the **Design Challenge website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cy7yc6p>

When accessible is not acceptable

Rob Bracewell, a Disability Horizons contributor, shares his thoughts on the issue of accessible transport and whether it provides a customer experience that is of an equal quality to that received by a non-disabled passenger:

As a wheelchair user who travels by train daily, I have warmly welcomed the changes that have slowly started to come about following the development of the Disability Discrimination Act and now the Equality Act 2010. Recently, however, I have started to become increasingly disenchanted and critical of the type and standard of facilities available and the quality of experience that follows from them.

With the world now changing, treating me as a customer rather than a problem, my expectations have similarly changed; I now expect to receive the same level and quality of treatment and service as any other customer.

I have started to demand greater things from newer designs; I expect consultation and involvement to have taken place, design guidance to be exceeded and innovation tried to overcome what seemed insurmountable in the past.

For further information, visit the **Disability Horizons website**

<http://tinyurl.com/blvyuke>

The end of concessionary coach fares

The concessionary coach fare scheme has been withdrawn for disabled and older people in England. This means that, since the 31 October, discounts on long-distance coach travel are no longer available. The scheme was withdrawn after the government cut the Bus Service Operators Grant by 20 per cent in last year's spending review.

Mencap campaigns support officer Clare Lucas said: 'without access to affordable transport, disabled and older people will miss out on the independence and

opportunities that others take for granted. Most people with a learning disability cannot drive and many use coaches to visit family and friends.'

For further information, visit the **Mencap website**

<http://tinyurl.com/d8b6jx7>

Design failing on accessibility

The following is an extract from an article on the Independent Living website where readers are invited to join the discussion on design failings:

A manufacturer of evacuation equipment visited three newly built academic facilities recently, and found that none of them had large enough landings on their fire escapes to allow access support equipment to turn and continue the descent when assisting wheelchair users. Means of escape in case of fire or other emergency must include everyone who needs to get out, not just those who can walk. It may be very hard to adapt an existing building in some circumstances, but surely it isn't such a challenge to get a new one right?

For further information, visit the **Independent Living website**

<http://tinyurl.com/7c7lzc>

Three Ealing stations may finally get lifts

Greenford, Northolt and Perivale tube stations may be fitted with lifts after London Mayor Boris Johnson agreed to look at plans. They would benefit older people, disabled people, and parents with pushchairs and young children, by making the stations more accessible.

London Assembly member Murad Qureshi (Labour) questioned the Mayor on the subject at a City Hall transport meeting earlier this month, resulting in Mayor Johnson lending his support to reinstating the plans.

Mr Qureshi said: 'Everyone should have the right to access London's transport network - not just those without restrictions on their mobility.'

For further information, visit the **Ealing Times website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cpp9z6y>

Councillor starts petition for lifts for Harrow-on-the-Hill tube station

A councillor is urging the public to support a petition to get lifts installed to help disabled and older people at a tube station in Harrow.

Councillor Sue Anderson (Labour) started the petition to urge Transport for London to get lifts installed for Harrow-on-the-Hill tube station.

The councillor said she wants step-free access for the station at the heart of the town centre especially as Harrow Council wants to improve the area through £496,000 given by Mayor Boris Johnson's Outer London Fund last August.

For further information, visit the **Harrow Times website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cjijmzj>

Deafblind Lincolnshire students build bridges to local community

Deafblind students from two specialist educational resource centres in Lincolnshire (both run by Sense, the national deafblind charity) have found a novel way to reach out to the local community.

Residents crossing the Money Bridge, across the River Glen in West Pinchbeck, may have noticed the recent installation of a new tactile handrail with personalised ceramic coin-shaped decorations.

The idea came when staff and students at the centres worked together to research the history of the bridge. The students traced their own profiles onto templates using raised

ink that they could feel and then moulded around these outlines with clay that was fired and glazed to create the final coins. The coins also include symbols from the Braille and Moon alphabets.

For further information, visit the **Sense website**

<http://tinyurl.com/d55g73f>

Row over lack of disabled access on new bridge

A campaign has been launched after a new bridge at Bearsted railway station in Kent was found not to cater for wheelchair users. Network Rail said there were too few users of the new bridge to justify the cost. They also applied to the government for dispensation not to build lifts or ramps on the new bridge.

Wheelchair user Vicci Chittenden said: 'it is this kind of lack of access that makes a person with an impairment disabled'. An online petition has been launched.

For further information, visit the **BBC News website**

<http://tinyurl.com/5vy6raf>

Health funds could be raided to pay for road repairs

Cash-strapped councils may raid health budgets to pay for basic services such as filling potholes; some MPs are warning.

Local government is due to take charge of schemes to tackle lifestyle problems like obesity and excess drinking from 2013. To pay for projects, money will be transferred from the NHS.

But the Health Committee said there was a risk councils would play the system and use the funds for other purposes. To ensure it is spent on health-related projects, the government has agreed to ring-fence the money.

But MPs have warned that councils could re-designate services like filling in potholes and gritting the roads when it is icy as a public health measure, arguing they helped to reduce hospital admissions.

For further information, visit the **BBC News website**

<http://tinyurl.com/63mcunv>

Campaign: Stop pavements disappearing from our neighbourhoods

Pavements up and down the country are under threat from inconsiderate parking. Everyone should be able to use pavements without vehicles blocking their way.

Yet vehicles parked on pavements are forcing people with pushchairs or children to walk unsafely in the road and, older people and wheelchair users could feel unsafe travelling on their own street.

Living Streets say: 'Your local authority has the power to protect your pavement. Tell them that you support a pavement parking ban across your area and find out what they're doing to clamp down on pavement parkers.'

For further information and to take part, visit the **Living Streets website**

<http://tinyurl.com/6aa27yj>

Is it the end of the road for zebra crossings?

Sixty years after its introduction, the black-and-white striped pedestrian crossing is being replaced due to safety fears. More than 1,000 zebra crossings have been permanently removed in the past five years, and many thousands more have been replaced by higher-tech pelicans (red, amber and green lights for drivers; red and green men for pedestrians) and puffins (similar to pelicans, but with added sensors).

Andrew Howard, the AA's head of road safety said: 'Essentially, drivers don't take as much notice of zebra crossings as they should because there's no red light telling them

to stop, and pedestrians don't feel as safe as they do with a signal telling them when to cross'.

One example of this iconic part of the UK road network will however survive: the crossing on the cover of the Beatles' 1969 Abbey Road LP is now Grade II listed.

For further information, visit the **Guardian website**

<http://tinyurl.com/6hjwz5u>

USA: How visually impaired people cross the street when alone

Please follow the link below to a video featuring Tommy Edison who shows us how someone who is visually impaired crosses the street when they are alone. The videos are filmed at an accessible and an inaccessible pedestrian crossing.

To access the videos, visit the **Yahoo Accessibility website**

<http://tinyurl.com/3nac4et>

Locked out? Housing investigation launched by Trailblazers

Estate and letting agents will go under the microscope as the campaigning group Trailblazers launch a nationwide investigation and survey into how the firms are handling disabled customers and accessible property.

Agents' awareness of wheelchair accessible features, how accessible properties are being advertised and whether disabled customers can access agents' premises will be examined, as part of a study on housing issues affecting young disabled people.

The investigation was sparked following an ongoing flood of reports to Trailblazers about people waiting years to find wheelchair-accessible homes to rent or buy, despite local authorities funding adaptations to thousands of UK homes each year.

While the shortage of wheelchair accessible accommodation in the UK has been described as significant by organisations like Habinteg, evidence suggests that inefficient allocation of housing is leaving disabled people out in the cold.

For further information, visit the **Trailblazers website**

<http://tinyurl.com/c6ucyhz>

Progress on accessibility has stalled – a message to the Mayor of London from Transport for All

Transport for All (TfA) have warned that progress on making transport accessible is stalling. In their response to the Mayor's Transport Accessibility Strategy Implementation Plan, TfA are warning that disabled and older people are unable to travel due to Transport for London's (TfL) failure to invest in accessibility.

In the last year, TfL have:

- cut their targets for making stations step-free to the platform
- cut their targets for making bus stops accessible
- cut 650 frontline station staff on the Underground
- announced plans to get rid of pedestrian crossings all over London

As the numbers of disabled and older people continue to grow, the pace of improvements is not keeping pace with demand for accessible transport.

For further information, visit the **Transport for All website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cjl2snn>

Blue Badge Improvement Service

The Blue Badge Improvement Service (BBIS) is a new service that will be available to all local authorities in Scotland, England and Wales from January 2012. It will provide various services, including:

- secure printing, personalisation and distribution of new Blue Badges

- a central database of all Blue Badges issued
- an online application form
- an enquiry support service to handle general enquiries from the public

For further information, visit the **Department for Transport website**

<http://tinyurl.com/bwjngo3>

Alternatively, visit the **Transport Scotland website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cmzzrwv>

Disabled businessman pulled off tube carriage in his wheelchair

A disabled businessman was pulled off a tube carriage in his wheelchair and told the underground network was not accessible to wheelchair-users, just minutes after being helped onto the carriage by station staff.

Mr Lotun had booked assistance through Transport for London in advance. But just minutes after being helped onto the carriage, he was surrounded by three members of staff who grabbed his wheelchair without explanation and pushed him back onto the platform. Their refusal to allow him to travel on the tube meant he missed an important business meeting.

Mr Lotun said the treatment he received raises new questions about the capital's readiness to host huge numbers of disabled people during the London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

For further information, visit the **Can Do Can Go website**

<http://tinyurl.com/clshuvl>

Shortage of accessible hotels

This month, BBC's *Inside Out London* featured the young disabled people's campaigning group Trailblazers and their investigations into accessible hotels around the capital. The group visit hotels featured on the Inclusive London website.

To view the programme, visit the **BBC website**

<http://tinyurl.com/Inside-Out-London>

Additional information can be found on the **Trailblazers website**

<http://tinyurl.com/c58g5qo>

London hoteliers eye £2 billion tourism segment

As the London hotel market gears up for the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the question isn't whether hoteliers will be able to provide the minimum required accommodations for disabled guests, but if they will be able to capitalise on the more than £2 billion tourist segment for disabled people that may visit.

Ufi Ibrahim, Chief Executive of the British Hospitality Association said: 'The Paralympics gives you the opportunity to showcase that you have these fantastic provisions for people with special needs'.

She added: 'Hoteliers will have to go beyond provisions required by British Standards (BS8300:2009) and guidance documents (PAS88:2008) to take their share of the market. A lot of work has gone into this area. We've been working with Tourism for All to raise awareness. Many hoteliers in London have been doing sort of small quick fixes in order to enable some rooms to be usable for people who have accessibility problems — ramps, for example. That's a quick fix.'

For further information, visit the **Hotel News Now website**

<http://tinyurl.com/5ub4hl7>

Fisherman caught in lake access row

The owner of a farm could be acting illegally by denying a disabled angler access to a fishing lake on the grounds of health and safety according to legal experts.

In June a wheelchair-user tried to gain access to a lake in East Sussex. He asked the landowner for permission to drive to the edge of the lake. There is a path but this only runs half way. The owner said he did not allow cars to drive to the lake. He cited health and safety reasons.

Douglas Johnson, a disability rights worker at Sheffield Law Centre said: 'a hard stone path is a good example of a reasonable adjustment because it benefits disabled and non-disabled visitors. Doing nothing is unlikely to be a lawful option.'

For further information, visit the **Disability Now website**

<http://tinyurl.com/c4paeq5>

David Blunkett pays tribute to his guide dog retiring after nine years' service

In this article, Mr Blunkett talks about the valuable and close connection he has developed with Sadie and his previous guide dogs:

'Yes, Sadie, my devoted guide dog for more than nine years, is retiring. No longer will she have to worry about keeping her paws out the way as MPs troop into the voting lobbies or catching the Commons Speaker's eye with a mistimed wag of her tail.

To read the full article, visit the **Daily Mail website**

<http://tinyurl.com/d5mntme>

Europe: League of Historical and Accessible Cities

The European Foundation Center (EFC) is currently working on *The League of Historical and Accessible Cities* project, which aims to improve the accessibility of historical towns and promote sustainable tourism development.

Launched in 2010, the League is a pilot project focusing on improving the accessibility of historical towns while at the same time promoting the development of sustainable tourism and the protection of cultural heritage.

For further information, visit the **League of Historical and Accessible Cities website**
<http://www.lhac.eu/>

Canada: Cities study how to become age-friendly

Lucy Howe rides a scooter to get around but she bounces uncomfortably when the sidewalks are rough and cracked. Dropped kerbs aren't always wide enough for the scooter.

A lot of disabled people live in her neighbourhood and the footpaths aren't all wide enough for them. In addition, crossings flash the *Don't walk* signal too soon for people with mobility issues to get across several lanes or on busy streets.

As the population ages, city planners across Canada are teaming up with health researchers to listen to concerns and to understand more about how the physical and social environment affects health, social connectedness and mobility.

Joanie Sims-Gould, a researcher from the Centre for Hip Health and Mobility, Vancouver General Hospital said: 'What we're looking at is how where you live influences basically what you do, how you move about in your environment — so if you live in a walkable versus a not-walkable area, how that may or may not impact physical health.'

For further information, visit the **Winnipeg Free Press website**
<http://tinyurl.com/7vckzeq>

China: Airlines found to ban disabled people from flights

More than half of China's 24 airlines have rules saying staff may refuse to allow disabled passengers on board if they might offend other passengers or make them uncomfortable, a recent study found. Eight airlines maintain that disabled people have to apply for permission to fly. These practices violated China's anti-discrimination laws.

The report cited the case of a young woman who was not allowed to board a flight from Kunming to Chengdu last month because she did not notify Chengdu Airlines in advance that she was a wheelchair user.

For further information, visit the **Business and Human Rights website**
<http://tinyurl.com/cy5vecl>

Australia: Paralympic athlete drags himself to plane

Triple Paralympic champion Kurt Fearnley has received an apology from an airline after its policy of checking in wheelchairs as baggage resulted in him dragging himself across the floor of an airport.

Australian budget carrier Jetstar offered the wheelchair athlete use of an airline wheelchair to get from check-in to the gate, which he refused. Airline wheelchairs typically have to be pushed by an attendant, a situation that Fearnley equated to a non-disabled person 'having your legs tied together, your pants pulled down and be carried or pushed through an airport.'

For further information, visit the **Disability Now website**
<http://tinyurl.com/36b2hre>

USA: Millions for disability housing

More disabled Americans will soon have access to housing assistance from the federal government, President Obama's administration have announced.

Nearly \$150 million is headed to non-profit agencies across the country to provide rental assistance and develop new housing options for disabled people.

Most agencies receiving the grants plan to build new residences. Some will be small apartment buildings or condominium units while others will be group homes designed for three to four individuals.

For further information, visit the **Disability Scoop website**

<http://tinyurl.com/7k74hub>

USA: Voting by iPad

Disabled residents in the state of Oregon will get the chance to cast their votes with an iPad instead of a regular paper ballot in the special election this month. Oregon is the first state to use iPads in the voting process.

Election workers are taking iPads to disabled voters who might otherwise have difficulties marking their ballots. These voters are able to pull up the ballot on the iPad and tap the screen to mark the candidate of their choice.

State officials said they plan to use iPads again in the January 2012 special general election and extend it if it works well.

For further information, visit the **Politico website**

<http://tinyurl.com/7stjpf5>

Vodafone Smart Accessibility Awards 2011 finalists announced

The first round judges from AGE and European Disability Forum have completed the first round of judging. There are now 12 finalists.

For further information and to view the 12 final Apps, visit the **Vodafone website**

<http://tinyurl.com/czbkw3w>



Publications, consultations and reports

Report: Elderly home care failures breach human rights

This latest Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) report says elderly people are being robbed, left hungry and unwashed and, face unchecked ageism from council-funded care that is meant to let them live in their own homes.

The report which is partly based on the experiences of 1,200 older people, their friends and family, found examples of treatment that included cases of physical and financial abuse.

Some instances of care appeared to be less about neglect and more about cruelty. The EHRC reported some care workers placed food in front of older deaf and blind people, but did not let them know it was there, or left it in an inaccessible place.

For further information, visit the **EHRC website**

<http://tinyurl.com/5sbnelo>

E-petition: information about accessibility in hotels

At the moment finding information about access or accessibility at accommodation for disabled visitors in Britain can be a challenge.

This petition asks government to consider how all accommodation providers could be encouraged to provide better and more accessible information.

For further information, visit the **Government e-petitions website**

<http://epetitions.direct.gov.uk/petitions/20195>

Code of practice: Accessible train and station design for disabled people

This code of practice, published by the Department for Transport this month, provides standards and guidance for accessibility at railway stations and should be used by all train and station operators whenever they carry out works on their facilities. This latest version, replaces all previous versions.

For further information, visit the **Department for Transport website**

<http://tinyurl.com/7hw3zc7>

A plain English guide to the Localism Act - update

The guide describes the main measures of the Localism Act under four headings:

- new freedoms and flexibilities for local government
- new rights and powers for communities and individuals
- reform to make the planning system more democratic and more effective
- reform to ensure that decisions about housing are taken locally

For further information, visit the **Communities and Local Government website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cfjb38s>

Report: the experiences of people with hearing loss in the workplace

Action on Hearing Loss have launched a new report calling on employers to end their uncaring culture and remove barriers that prevent people who have hearing loss from progressing with their careers.

The report, *Unlimited Potential* explores the experiences of 27 people who lost some or part of their hearing while of working age. It states: 'losing your hearing can be extremely distressing and we found that some people are fearful their hearing will deteriorate further, that they will be unable to do their job well or even that they will lose their job. This in turn can impact upon their confidence'.

For further information, visit the **Acton on Hearing Loss website**

<http://tinyurl.com/c3k4g27>

Report: Another Way - transforming peoples' lives through good practice in adult social care

This report, by Voluntary Organisations Disability Group (VODG), seeks to demonstrate that social care need not be institutional, expensive and of poor quality, by presenting a handful of case studies which highlights the work of VODG members.

It is published in response to the Winterbourne View scandal, which exposed the abuse of people with complex learning disabilities at a care unit.

For further information, visit the **Deafblind UK website**

<http://tinyurl.com/d3kynme>

The Rough Guide to Accessible Britain – Family Days Out

This latest edition is now available and can be accessed online. It has an easy-to-use search tool that allows users to search by region, attraction type and accessibility requirements.

For further information, visit the **Accessible Guide website**

<http://tinyurl.com/c2qmnay>

Open London

Anyone with mobility or accessibility issues will find this guide helpful when travelling around London. Time Out's, Open London allows people to plan their time in London and provides information helpful for those planning for and enjoying the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

It includes information on sightseeing, walks, shops, nightlife and activities, along with transport details. There are details available on the 2012 Olympics including how to book, how to get to and from the park and event venues and, information on restaurants and travel links in and out of London.

For further information, visit the **Tourism for All website** <http://tinyurl.com/c3whvwy>

An A and E toolkit from the Design Council CAFE

The Design Council CAFE has produced a toolkit for NHS managers, clinicians and designer and healthcare planners who want to develop and deliver a better service in effective and inspiring environments.

The toolkit is designed to help people understand how to use design to develop integrated Quality, Innovation, Productivity and Prevention plans and improve performance against accident and emergency clinical quality indicators. It also covers a range of areas including pre arrival, entrance, reception and waiting areas and patient bays.

For further information, visit the **Design Council website** <http://tinyurl.com/cbob54t>

Consultation: Auxiliary aids for disabled children

A consultation on implementing the requirement for schools and local authorities to make reasonable adjustments to provide auxiliary aids for disabled children under the Equality Act 2010, is currently taking place.

Please note this consultation covers England only. Parallel consultations will be taking place in Scotland and Wales. The closing date is 5 December 2011.

For further information, visit the **Department for Education website** <http://tinyurl.com/3uzw3wh>

Consultation: Revised School Premises Regulations

Launched this month, the consultation aims to seek views on revisions to the regulations governing school premises, and on a reduction in the amount of guidance produced by the Department. The consultation ends 26 January 2012.

For further information, visit the **Department for Education website**

<http://tinyurl.com/63and26>

Research project: Space in the home

The Building and Social Housing Foundation (BSHF) has begun work on a new research project. The project will explore the public's perceptions of space in the home. It aims to find out how much space people think is needed for a minimum standard of living in Britain today.

The BSHF vision is that everyone should have access to decent housing. The World Health Organisation recognises that homes should have enough space not just for health but for a family life in line with the rest of society.

The research project will create a better understanding of public views on housing space needs. The research findings will provide a valuable resource for debate and policy development and the final report can be expected by summer 2012.

For further information, visit the **Building and Social Housing Foundation website**

<http://tinyurl.com/chzfftm>

Rethinking disability policy

Since concerns about the impact of reductions in benefits and public services on disabled people are growing, is it time to develop radical challenges to the current disability policy agenda?

This viewpoint reviews some aspects of disability policy literature since the early 1990s before concluding with a detailed assessment of the most recent literature and changes being introduced by the Coalition Government.

For further information, visit the **Joseph Rowntree Foundation website**

<http://tinyurl.com/ceh5gq6>

Report: We've been listening, have you been learning?

A new report by the Patients Association highlights harrowing cases of pensioners being left starving or suffering in agony, and relations being ignored as they watch their loved ones die because nurses claim to be too busy to help.

Elderly patients are increasingly being kept in hospital beds because there is no support at home, or there are no places available in residential homes.

For further information, visit the **Patients Association website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cjl69zb>

European Commission publishes guide on equality mainstreaming

The European Commission has recently published a compendium of practice on non-discrimination / equality mainstreaming.

It is designed to assist policy-makers and programme managers at local, regional and national level to mainstream non-discrimination / equality in all policy fields.

The compendium offers guidance and presents a variety of practice examples from different EU Member States.

For further information, visit the **Inclusion Europe website**

<http://tinyurl.com/d4f84c8>

European Disability Forum monitors the impact of the economic crisis

The European Disability Forum (EDF) has launched a survey on the impact of the economic crisis on disabled people. The aim of this is to reveal the current situation in Europe.

For further information or to take part in the survey, visit the **EDF website**

<http://tinyurl.com/blc3mp2>

Launch of British Sign Language (BSL) hate crime DVD

BSL users do not always have the same access to information as their hearing friends and family but they may still be attacked or bullied because of their Deafness or for using BSL in public.

The Equality and Hate Crime Team at Glasgow Community and Safety Services have launched a DVD called *Hate Crime – What You Need To Know*. Leaflets are also available in several different languages.

For further information, visit the **Deaf Connections website** <http://tinyurl.com/cak4jdz>

Global Ageing: An overview

Global ageing is unquestionably one of the great success stories in modern society yet it also brings many challenges. This paper looks at global ageing and the implications it will have.

For further information, visit the **Centre for Ageing Research and Development in Ireland (CARDI) website**

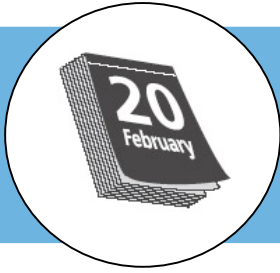
<http://tinyurl.com/c6b866f>

Access guide for Malvern now available online

The Malvern Access Group have made their access guide available on their website. The group aims to raise awareness and provide access information about the area, including the countryside, businesses and shops.

For further information, visit the **Malvern Access website**

www.malvernaccess.co.uk



Ageing Facilities: An exhibition of age-conscious interventions

When: from 28 November 2011 to 5 December 2011

Where: London

Ageing Facilities is a new generation urban research initiative actively exploring other ways of using and re-imagining the urban environment in older age.

This exhibition presents a snapshot of ageing facilities' practice as it has evolved over the last five years.

For more information, visit the **Ageing Facilities website**

<http://tinyurl.com/cs7dr72>

Access City Award 2012

The shortlist for the Accessible City Award has been announced. The European Disability Forum (EDF) partnered with the European Commission to recognise those cities that commit the most to improving accessibility.

One hundred and fourteen cities from 23 European Union member states entered the competition. Eight cities from France, Poland, Slovenia, Germany, Czech Republic, Austria and two from Spain have been shortlisted. The winner will be announced on 1 December.

For further information, visit the **European Commission website**

<http://tinyurl.com/dyaq67y>

Equality Act: the story so far

When: 2 December 2011

Where: London

This free event by the Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) aims to remove any of the foggiest around the Act and review how it has been working in practice for employers so far.

For further information, visit the **EHRC website**

<http://tinyurl.com/d3gslsj>

International Day of Persons with Disabilities

When: 3 December 2011

Where: Worldwide

Over 10 per cent of the world's population (650 million people), live with impairments. People are often unaware of the great number of disabled people living around the world and the challenges they face.

The day aims to promote an understanding of disability issues and mobilise support for the dignity, rights and wellbeing of disabled people. It also seeks to increase awareness of the benefits of including disabled people in every aspect of life.

For further information, visit the **United Nations website**

<http://www.un.org/disabilities/>

Training: Human Rights and disabled people

When: 6 December 2011

Where: London

United Kingdom Disabled People's Council is running a free training session about the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Disabled People and the importance of human rights for disabled people.

For further information, contact Stephen Lee Hodgkins on stephen@sidbaility.net or text / telephone 07951 050 153

Buildings Study Tour

When: 8 December 2011

Where: Newcastle

This study tour will visit buildings in and around Newcastle to help people develop design ideas and learn and be inspired by community groups who have completed building projects. There are some free places available.

For further information, visit the **Glass House website**

<http://tinyurl.com/c9gkafe>

Universal Design International Conference

When: 9 December 2011

Where: Paris

This conference is designed to provide further appreciation of the concept of universal design, to facilitate its dissemination among different stakeholders and its take-up by society in general.

For further information, visit the **Conférence sur la Conception Universelle website**

<http://tinyurl.com/bskotpn>

Getting to grips with the localism bill

When: December 2011 to March 2012

Where: UK wide

Urban Forum and the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) are running free events with local partners, to prepare for the practicalities, opportunities and challenges of rights within the Localism Bill.

For further information, visit the **NAVCA website**

<http://tinyurl.com/d9uy8bo>

Digital Accessibility – Web accessibility essentials course

The Equality and Human Rights Commission, AbilityNet and BCS (British Computer Society - The Chartered Institute for IT) have developed a Web Accessibility Essentials e-learning course.

This 80 minute, online course is designed to equip individuals and businesses interested in accessibility best practice, with a fundamental understanding of digital inclusion.

For further information, visit the **BCS website**

www.bcs.org/wae

Newsletter compiled by Geraldine McNamara, Head of Knowledge Development
Centre for Accessible Environments, 70 South Lambeth Road, London SW8 1RL
Telephone 020 7840 0125 or email geraldine.mcnamara@cae.org.uk

To subscribe to this newsletter, contact info@cae.org.uk

Alternative formats are available on request
