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News Releases

Our latest press releases and news stories are available on this page. Updated 30th April 2012.

30/04/12 DISABILITY campaign group Breakthrough UK is calling on policy makers to take action following its findings into the life and death issues facing disabled people.

The organisation has undertaken research to ensure that disabled adults' views remain central to guiding the ongoing "Right to Life" debate.

Breakthrough UK is at the cutting edge of tackling discrimination and removing barriers to disabled people's representation in society by promoting independence and employment.

Disabled professionals and academics shaped the research by sharing their personal experiences and expertise about the challenges facing them in 21st century Britain.

These findings are now being made available to policy makers in Government while also being used to help organisations ensure that their Equality Scheme Action Plans – which aim to ensure that everyone is treated fairly - are fully informed.

Breakthrough UK's Acting Chief Executive Michele Scattergood said the research aimed to overcome the "policy vacuum" which so frequently surrounds the rights of disabled people.

Ms Scattergood said: "This research could not be more timely – in recent years, legislation has been evolving regarding disabled people's right to life, dignity and freedom from neglect.

"We wish to ensure that policy makers at every level are fully informed about the way that disabled people feel about the fundamental issues which now impact on their lives from start to finish.

"At the start of life, disabled people may experience problems in fertility services and new genetic treatments bring with them ethical issues about the prevention of impairment.

"And there has been an increased awareness of the inequality surrounding end of life care.

"Disabled people's voices in this emotive and important ongoing debate have previously gone largely unheard and our findings are intended to address this imbalance."

The research has been led by Breakthrough UK's Policy Think Tank which is co-ordinated from the organisation's headquarters in Manchester.

Leading disability campaigner Sir Bert Massie CBE - who is a former Chair of the Disability Rights Commission – supports the work of the Policy Think Tank.

Sir Bert Massie said: "The most basic human right is the right to live.

"We need to move with the utmost caution in agreeing to any change in law that might threaten society's resolve to treasure the lives of disabled people.

"Breakthrough UK's Policy Think Tank is immensely important at this time - it provides a platform and space for disabled academics and professionals to discuss critical disability issues.

"Society must be prepared to discuss the issues surrounding pre-birth and end of life fully and frankly if it is to progress in an appropriate manner for the 21st century."

For further information or to speak to one of the members of Breakthrough UK's Executive team who contributed to the report please contact Michele Scattergood on 07800 557252.

06/01/12 The Clear Company, who work with organisations registered to be ClearAssured via ClearKit, have published a press release regarding MicroLink: one of our winners of the National Independent Living Awards. To find out more, follow the link below:

<http://www.clearkit.co.uk/news/microlink-awarded-for-its-comittment-to-recruit-and-retain-disabled-people/>

12/12/11 DISABLED ADULTS across Greater Manchester are shaping their lives and careers to meet their own needs thanks to a ground-breaking new initiative.

The Manchester Area Partnership Right to Control Trailblazer was launched earlier this year to give disabled people more choice and control over the social care, housing-related support as well as the employment assistance and funding they need to live independently.

The scheme is currently being trialled across five local authorities in Greater Manchester and, if successful, could eventually be rolled out nationwide.

Disabled adults living in Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Stockport and Trafford now hold a monthly meeting called the "Design Group" to shape the policies that lie at the heart of the trailblazer.

Sebastian Lynn (pictured here on the left), 25, from Bury has cerebral palsy quadriplegia and is a wheelchair user.

He has been a member of the Design Group since the start.

Sebastian said: "The Manchester Right to Control Trailblazer is empowering me and other disabled people to live our lives our own way.

"We've been consulted since the initiative began – and this process continues today – which is resulting in the policies at the heart of the trailblazer reflecting the requirements of disabled people.

"But the benefits for me have gone beyond this – I've found that the Design Group meetings have boosted my self-confidence, ability to work in a group and advocate what is best both for me and other disabled people."

The Design Group's input has directly resulted in the application process that lies at the heart of the Manchester Area Partnership (MAP) Right to Control Trailblazer evolving - something which continues today.

Additionally, the group's advice on the best way for funding to be distributed to users has also been implemented.

The Design Group is regularly attended by up to 15 disabled people who live in one of the five participating local authority areas.

Tom Raines, Project Manager for the MAP Trailblazer, said: "One of the main reasons why this trailblazing initiative will greatly enhance disabled adults' lives is because they are the driving force behind it.

"Disabled people know better than anyone else what needs to happen in order for them to live fulfilled and independent lives and that's what's happening with the MAP."

The new service is available to disabled adults who receive support from one or more of these services: Access to Work; Work Choice; Adult Social Care; Disabled Facilities Grant; the Independent Living Fund; Supporting People.

It enables them to choose the support that is offered, ask for it to be delivered in another way from another provider or have the money paid direct to them so that they can arrange their own support - or a combination of any of these.

01/12/11 Breakthrough UK is extremely saddened to learn of the death of Vic Finkelstein, a leading pioneer of the disabled people's movement. Vic Finkelstein was today described by Disability Studies Professor Colin Barnes as "arguably the most important figure in the history of the ongoing struggle for meaningful equality for disabled people both in Britain and the rest of the world."

His account, 'A Personal Journey into Disability Politics' (2001), describes his stance against apartheid in South Africa, where he was imprisoned, through to campaigns for full civil rights and inclusion of disabled people in the UK.

This, and a selection of his other writings, can be found on the Disability Archive at:

http://www.disability-archive.leeds.ac.uk/authors_list.asp?AuthorID=73&author_name=Finkelstein%2C+Vic

Below is an appreciation of his life, written by Alan Roulstone:

<http://nndr.org/2011/12/20/vic-finkelstein-a-life-remembered/>

17/08/11 Lorraine Gradwell will be speaking at The National Support Planning and Reviews Event: Health, Work and Providers on 11th October 2011. Further details and a booking form can be found at:

<http://www.helensandersonassociates.co.uk/whats-new/the-national-support-planning-and-reviews-event-health,-work-and-providers---11th-october-2011.aspx>

15/08/11 NHS Manchester held and supported a series of activities to raise awareness of Dying Matters Awareness Week encouraging people to talk openly about dying, death and bereavement. An event was held at Breakthrough UK in May to discuss these issues and the particular concerns of disabled people around end of life matters. The notes from this are included in the final evaluation report below:

http://www.manchester.nhs.uk/document_uploads/talking_health/dying_matters.pdf

05/08/11 A GROUND-BREAKING initiative which empowers disabled adults to shape their own future has been launched by the Government in the North West.

The Greater Manchester "Right to Control Trailblazer" gives disabled people more choice and control over the social care, housing-related support as well as the employment assistance and funding they need to live independently.

It is now being piloted across five local authorities in Greater Manchester – and, if successful, it could be rolled out nationwide.

The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) has established the Greater Manchester Area Partnership (GMAP) Trailblazer with the acknowledgement that disabled people are the experts in their own lives and are best placed to decide what support they need.

The two-year scheme has now been implemented in Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Stockport and Trafford and it is one of seven Right to Control Trailblazers established nationwide.

Tom Raines, project manager for the GMAP Trailblazer, said: "This trailblazing initiative will greatly enhance the lives of thousands of disabled adults in Greater Manchester by enabling them to live as independently as possible.

"They can now choose the support that is offered, ask for it to be delivered in another way from another provider or have the money paid direct to them

and arrange their own support - or a combination of any of these.

"Alternatively, if people are happy with the services they currently receive, they won't have to change anything."

In addition to the five local authorities, the Greater Manchester Area Partnership (GMAP) includes the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People, Breakthrough UK, Jobcentre Plus and the Independent Living Fund (ILF).

Right to Control is now open to disabled adults living within one of the five local authorities who start to receive support from one or more of these services: Access to Work; Work Choice; Adult Social Care; Disabled Facilities Grant; the Independent Living Fund; Supporting People.

Tom Raines continues: "Winning this trial scheme is a massive achievement for Greater Manchester - we will be at the cutting-edge of supporting disabled people to shape their own future.

"It is the first time that disabled adults have been able to plan their support according to their aspirations.

"And if this initiative proves successful here, it has the potential to improve the lives of disabled adults both across the North West and nationwide."

The six other local authority areas which are trialling the Right to Control are: Essex County Council; Leicester City Council; London Borough of Barnet; London Borough of Newham; two borough councils within Surrey County Council; and Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and Sheffield City Council.

28/07/11 We have recently launched a new YouTube channel! You can find the new channel on YouTube through the following link:

<http://www.youtube.com/BreakthroughUKLtd>

21/07/11 BUSINESSES and organisations which champion disabled people are being invited to take their curtain call at the new 'virtual' National Independent Living Awards.

Breakthrough UK - a not-for-profit organisation which is at the forefront of tackling barriers to employment and independence experienced by many disabled adults - has decided to stage this year's awards online for the first time.

It established them to celebrate those commercial and voluntary organisations that excel in promoting the independence of disabled people.

Awards will be presented to entrants promoting: an 'overall independent living initiative'; good practice in employing disabled people; accessible public transport initiatives; and public sector engagement with disabled people.

Other categories include: peer support among disabled people; disabled entrepreneur of the year; accessible communities; and tackling disability hate crime.

Michele Scattergood, Breakthrough UK's Deputy Chief Executive, said: "The National Independent Living Awards lead the way in rewarding those commercial and voluntary organisations that place disabled people at the heart of their organisation.

"In recognition of the difficult economic times facing all of us, we decided to take an innovative approach to the awards this year by hosting them online - saving on both the costs and carbon emissions which occur when staging such an important event.

"We fully expect to receive many inspirational applications which highlight the excellent work which is taking place nationwide."

While this is the first time that the National Independent Living Awards have been staged virtually, it will be fourth time that the event - which was previously held at Manchester Town Hall - has taken place.

Nominations are now open and must be submitted before Monday, October 24. The winners will be officially announced on Saturday, December 3.

Winning organisations will feature in a short film which will be shown on Breakthrough UK's website and receive a certificate and specially commissioned glass trophy from leading disabled artist Anne Smith.

In addition, they will be entitled to use the Breakthrough UK 2011 National ILA logo for a year.

Sponsors of this year's event include the Harvest Housing Group, NHS North West and the Kevin Hyett Legacy Fund.

Mary Walker, Head of Service Development at Harvest Housing Group - said: "The National Independent Living Awards offer fantastic recognition of the superb work that is being done by businesses and other organisations to include disabled people in their workforce and as customers.

"Harvest Housing Group also attaches great importance to this - and we are delighted to be sponsoring these awards."

Further information about how to enter can be found at www.breakthrough-uk.co.uk or by contacting Michele Scattergood on 0161 273 5412.

14/07/11 Over the past 12 months the Innovation Centre has supported 32 disabled people who access training and volunteering with the centre to achieve qualifications in skill areas such as retail, cleaning, care, gardening and in the office setting. The qualifications that people can access through the centre are OCR National Skills Profile and NVQ levels 2 and 3. We deliver our NVQ's in partnership with the International Learning Centre.

At Breakthrough UK Ltd we believe that disabled people have the opportunity to access vocational qualifications, which can be used to demonstrate to employers what skills they can contribute to their workforce. In a great deal of cases, disabled people don't get the opportunity to study vocational qualifications. This is why Breakthrough doesn't ask for qualifications when we recruit our staff.

Tim Dalton, current client studying office, retail and his ECDL Extras qualification at the Innovation Centre says:

"At Breakthrough you get to learn new skills, meet new people, make loads of new friends and get real life experience of working in a shop or office. I enjoy coming to the Innovation Centre and am enjoying doing my ECDL extra course".

13/07/11 In the past two months Breakthrough UK Ltd have received a sharp increase in the number of referrals for our Manchester Employment and Training service. We receive our referrals from Adult Services, Jobcentreplus, Connexions and local colleges to name a few of our referral sources. Most importantly we can receive referrals directly from disabled people themselves.

- In the periods between Mar-Apr 2011 Breakthrough received 17 referrals
- In the periods between May-June 2011 Breakthrough received 28 referrals

Lorraine Gradwell stated about the increased demand of our services:

"Because of our reputation, we have often been a service which has been very much in demand from disabled people living in Manchester and the groups that they are in contact with. What is interesting now is whether, in the current uncertainty about funding for organisations such as Breakthrough, we can continue to meet this increased demand".

11/07/11 Our Chief Executive Lorraine Gradwell MBE was invited to give oral evidence in connection with the Joint Committee on Human Rights' Inquiry into the implementation of the right of disabled people to independent living. She attended the meeting on Tuesday, 05 July at the Palace of Westminster. The video can be seen on the ParliamentTV website through the following link:

<http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Player.aspx?meetingId=8808>

28/04/11 The Manchester Evening News featured an article where financial organisations BNY Mellon volunteers for some work at our horticultural site in Crumpsall. You can download the article from the following link:

['Mellon helps the disabled break down their barriers' - Manchester Evening News](#) (PDF)

15/04/11 ['Making Choices'](#). The Local Government Association website featured an article on Thursday on the Right to Control Trailblazer.

16/03/11 'Breakthrough: Renovate to Innovate' Challenge. A short video about the renovation of Breakthrough's Innovation Centre by students from Manchester University can be seen on You Tube below (alternatively paste the following link into your browser www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ek1azszU1n0):

[Please download Adobe Flash Player to see this content.](#)

14/03/11 The Sale and Altrincham Messenger featured an article on Saturday about the new Trafford Centre for Independent Living and the Right to Control Trailblazer. This can be viewed at the link below:

http://www.messengernewspapers.co.uk/news/8905200.New_disabled_centre_opens_in_Sale/

14/01/11 Breakthrough is pleased to announce that we have successfully bid for funding from the Get Connected Project, run by the Social Care Institute for Excellence.

This money will enable us to support our clients to be introduced to the world of IT and become more independent.

[Find out more about the Get Connected project here](#) (Word doc)

08/12/10 Main article: [Neighbours Targeted Man for Being HIV Positive](#)

and also see:

[Editorial Comment about Hate Crime](#)

13/05/10 ['Making a Breakthrough' - Manchester Evening News](#) (Word Doc)

[\(or to view a JPEG image of the article, click here\)](#)

07/04/10 ['Charity that changes disabled people's lives' - South Manchester Reporter](#) (Word Doc)

23/02/10 [Hate Crime - Breakthrough in Support for Disabled People](#) (Word Doc)