

# Power 100 2018

Britain's most influential  
disabled people

#disabilitypower100

# #PurpleLightUp

**Be part of the revolution**



## **Kate Nash OBE**

CEO of PurpleSpace

In July 2017 I sent out a personal tweet asking what people thought about using the colour purple as one way of symbolising the experience of disability and as a means of helping employer organisations to support a #PurpleLightUp on or around 3 December as a way of celebrating disabled colleagues.

On 3 December 2017, to link in with International Day of Persons with Disabilities, major corporations and government buildings across the world went purple to celebrate the economic power of disabled people across the globe.

In 2018 we invite you to join us as we go #BiggerBolderBrighter.



# Foreword



Dear World,

It was an honour to be asked to chair this year's judging panel for the Shaw Trust Power List 2018. The nominations were strong and it was hard for the panel to make our choices: what we have is an incredible list of 'powerful' individuals who are really creating waves, breaking down barriers and working hard to create a more inclusive world for everyone.

This year we received a record number of public nominations, which made choosing only 100 an almost impossible task. However, we did eventually arrive at a consensus and I feel very proud to have been involved.

What the judges were looking for were individuals who are highly visible in their communities or whose sphere of influence was wide-reaching. Above all we were looking for role models for our next generation so they can become inspired by the leadership of others.

This publication is not a curated list of names. It is a publicly nominated list and as such there will be inevitable omissions. In addition we were allowed the opportunity to include names of individuals who we genuinely believe are making a huge impact at the highest level.

I want to take this opportunity to thank the judging panel for giving up their time for such a great publication. So, in no particular order, a huge heartfelt thanks to:

- Nancy Doyle, CEO and Founder, Genius Within
- Anna Bird, Executive Director of Policy and Research, Scope
- Simon Adams, Chairman/CEO/Founder, ExFor+
- Dom Hyams, Multimedia Producer and Digital and Communications Director, assist-Mi
- Clare Gray, Disability Advocacy Adviser, Shaw Trust
- Diane Lightfoot, CEO, Business Disability Forum

At PurpleSpace we lead the #PurpleLightUp, a new movement to celebrate the economic contribution of disabled people on or around 3 December, to coincide with International Day of Persons with Disabilities.

I hope you enjoy the publication, notice the extraordinary talent that it roll calls and join in the celebrations on 3 December. Visit [www.purplespace.org/purple-light-up](http://www.purplespace.org/purple-light-up) for more information.

**Kate Nash OBE**

Creator and CEO, PurpleSpace

# Welcome



Welcome to the 2018 Shaw Trust Power List, a celebration of the 100 most influential and inspirational disabled people in Britain.

A huge congratulations to everyone who made this year's list and to every person nominated. Each year the number of people receiving nominations rises as the level of awareness and inclusion increases, but we still have much to do to create a fully inclusive and fairer society. Our work with the Shaw Trust

Power List aims to change perceptions of disability, tackle social exclusion and, as importantly, provide role models for the young and talented leaders of tomorrow.

This year's nominees have come from a diverse range of sectors and have been nominated by members of the public, colleagues and those inspired by their stories. I am very grateful to the chair of our judging panel, Kate Nash and to our panel of excellent judges who have taken the time to read and qualify every entry. Not an easy task.

Since 1982, Shaw Trust has been supporting disabled people, creating opportunities for employment, independence and social inclusion. We have now grown to be one of the top 25 charities in the UK supporting people from all backgrounds and abilities across the country and internationally. Our purpose is to help to transform the lives of one million people each year. Our vision is for a fairer more inclusive world, in which accessibility is the norm and not the exception. We work closely with government, employers and local authorities to challenge opinions and crucially close the disability employment gap by creating opportunities for all.

So whilst choosing the top 100 has been a huge task for our judges, I can only hope that in years to come the task becomes bigger and bigger as more 'powerful' role models are nominated for the Shaw Trust Power List, Britain's most influential disabled people.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Bell'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

**Nick Bell**

Interim CEO, Shaw Trust



# Inside

## Profiles



## Features

- Jonathan Andrews 6
- Hall of Fame: Dame Sarah Storey 128



**128**



**In Memoriam 130**

- Sir Bert Massie CBE 132
- Stephen Hawking CBE 134
- Dean Jose 136
- Lorraine Gradwell MBE 137



[/jonathan.andrews.522](https://www.facebook.com/jonathan.andrews.522)  
[@JonnyJAndrews](https://twitter.com/JonnyJAndrews)  
[/jonathan-andrews-bcab-frsa-80482282/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/jonathan-andrews-bcab-frsa-80482282/)  
[www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jan/31/autism-employment-campaigner-jonathan-andrews/](http://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/jan/31/autism-employment-campaigner-jonathan-andrews/)  
[www.hyperlexiajournal.com/poetry/jonathan-andrews/](http://www.hyperlexiajournal.com/poetry/jonathan-andrews/)

## Jonathan Andrews

### Ambitious about Autism, Mind, and Stonewall

Jonathan has achieved an incredible amount at a young age, spanning government and private sector policy and law. He is a trainee solicitor, and chose to approach the extremely competitive recruitment process by being upfront about his autism – explaining how it is a strength. He says “A lack of understanding, particularly of invisible disabilities, is a big barrier to employment. Employers might see ‘autism’ on an application form an immediately make judgements that the person couldn’t handle any social interactions, or could only be competent in one area.” However, not mentioning a disability won’t stop someone who behaves differently from being marked down in an interview “even if they’re objectively best at the job.”

Instead Jonathan advocates being pro-active and framing the conversation wherever possible: explaining your disability to others. It helps avoid stereotyped assumptions, and most people will be grateful for the pointer: “Often, people don’t have in-depth understanding of

different disabilities, and are reluctant to discuss or ask for fear of ‘being awkward’ – if you’re able to clearly articulate this, it shows you’re, firstly, self-aware; and secondly, self-confident. And thirdly, the other person feels more at ease.”

Since joining the law firm Jonathan has worked on the recruitment procedures in his own firm and others, helping increase the number of disabled lawyers, and people from non-traditional backgrounds, they have hired since. Jonathan’s work and advocacy has not stopped there. He works tirelessly to improve social mobility through a mix of policy work and advocacy. At 24 years old, Jonathan holds a dizzying number of voluntary and advisory roles, including sitting on the government’s Health and Work expert group, the Westminster Autism Commission, and the Law Society’s Equality and Diversity board where he is their youngest and first autistic member. Jonathan is also a co-founder of Mind’s Equality Leaders board.

We asked what drew him to working in so many high-level groups. "If you don't engage with decision-makers, your voice is unlikely to make the most difference" he says. "I chose to work internally within organisations to help them better represent and understand the communities who are affected by their policies."

Jonathan's advocacy has always been intersectional – understanding that different disadvantaged and minority groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Jonathan advocates for LGBT+ and mental health issues to be fully recognised and supported within disability organisations, and advocates for disability and mental health issues in LGBT+ settings. He co-founded the London Bisexual Network, the UK's first professional network advocating for the mental health and wellbeing of bi people, and as an Equality Improvement Champion for Mind, he launched the 'Stand Bi Me' toolkit. In addition, Jonathan helped launch the first ever alumni network at his old comprehensive school, helping to support people from ordinary backgrounds to achieve through role-models, mentors and encouragement.

He explains "I'm motivated to give everyone a fair chance, no matter where they come from or the disability they may have. My mother was born on a council estate, the daughter of a teenage mother, and fought to ensure her own children could access opportunities ... I know many from my background who would be great in competitive fields, but who haven't been able to enter these industries due to social circumstance."

Jonathan is a leader of the Commonwealth's 'I Am Able' campaign, through which he became the first autistic LGBT+ person to address the UN. He has also spoken at the Council of Europe and OECD on the importance of employing disabled people, and was the only youth representative from the UK at the 2018 Global Disability Summit. Jonathan is a global board

member of the World Autism Festival, and is already Trustee of two national charities: Ambitious about Autism and Stonewall.

We asked whether these roles are ever intimidating "I'd be lying if I said I never experienced any form of 'imposter syndrome'," he says. "When you're the youngest person on boards, often by 20 years, it can be easy to assume your contributions won't be as valuable or sought-after. However, when this happens I remind myself that I'm not there because I'm young. I'm there because I've been selected due to my skills and experience – in relation to autism employment, mental wellbeing, social mobility, or anything else."

For fun Jonathan enjoys comedy, exercise, music, travel and writing. A poem he wrote, 'Creativity', won a national prize, and he judges the Queen's Commonwealth Essay Competition. Jonathan founded 'Unseen and Unspoken', a pan-Commonwealth poetry competition for young disabled people, to give people a platform to discuss their own experiences.

He explains: "As a teenager, I was caught between thinking autism had to define me in a certain way, and denying this aspect of my identity. The fact is that I am defined by autism, but that's not all I'm defined by, and ultimately, you know yourself best – taking ownership of my autism allowed me to explain my strengths and struggles, and how these fit into me as an individual, without being put into a box."

Jonathan judges the Autism Professional Awards and the Mind Peerfest Awards, and has received numerous awards himself, including Entrepreneur of the Year at the World Autism Awards 2017, Campaigner of the Year at the 2016 European Diversity Awards, a Queen's Young Leader 2017, and he is the youngest person to be recognised with a House of Lords British Citizen Award for responsible business. Next year he hopes to qualify as a solicitor.



The background of the page is a traditional marbled paper pattern, featuring intricate, swirling, and cellular designs in various shades of brown, tan, and cream. A solid, vibrant red rectangular box is superimposed over the center of the page, serving as a backdrop for the main title.

# **Arts, Fashion & Design**

Blake Beckford

Henry Fraser

Stephen Wiltshire MBE



“Be proud of your scars or what makes you different.”

🌐 [www.blakebeckford.co.uk](http://www.blakebeckford.co.uk)  
📘 [blakebeckford](https://www.facebook.com/blakebeckford)  
🐦 [@Blake\\_Beckford](https://twitter.com/Blake_Beckford)  
📷 [@blake\\_beckford](https://www.instagram.com/blake_beckford)

## Blake Beckford

### Model and campaigner

Blake Beckford is a model with an often stigmatised disability. He always wanted to be a bodybuilder and fitness model, but when he developed ulcerative colitis that goal became much more difficult. During his worst flare-up Blake lost three stone and was fitted with a stoma (ileostomy bag). As he recovered, Blake realised he didn't have any role models and couldn't find much information on nutrition or fitness for people with inflammatory bowel disease. He kept working towards his goal, and became the role model that he'd needed.

When he won in the Male Transformation category at the Pure Elite fitness awards, with his stoma bag visible, Blake made the national press. He has featured in numerous fitness magazines including Be Fit Motivation, Coach, Muscle & Fitness and Men's Fitness. Blake says: “Be proud of your scars or what makes you different. My scars are memories of difficult times, which have been able to give me more focus to achieve goals I never thought I could achieve.”

Blake has also been diagnosed with a rare brain and neurological condition called an Arnold Chiari Malformation with a Syringomyelia and has had four subsequent brain surgeries. He knows all too well the difficulties of life with an invisible disability, and continues sharing his journey with the world.

Earlier this year Blake made headlines when he needed to change his bag but was denied use of a toilet. He used his celebrity to talk about invisible disabilities, and is campaigning for his toilet access card to be nationally recognised so other ostomates don't suffer embarrassment.

Blake is a regular on online forums supporting others, and developed the website Stoma Advisor to give other ostomates choice, confidence, support and empowerment to lead normal lives after surgery.





“Life is much simpler and much happier when you always look at what you can do.”

 @henryfraser0  
 @henryfraser0

## Henry Fraser

### Mouth artist and author

Henry Fraser is a mouth artist, public speaker, social media star, and author. In 2009 he was an athletic, rugby-playing 17 year-old on holiday with his friends. When a dive into the sea hit a sandbank he dislocated his fourth vertebrae, resulting in life-changing injuries. Henry had a long and difficult medical journey, which included heart complications and having to learn how to breathe again.

In 2015 Henry was bed-bound for a few weeks. To relieve the boredom he started drawing using an app on his iPad and his mouth-held stylus. He rediscovered his love of art and started drawing and painting with pencils and brushes attached to a mouth stick.

Through social media Henry has welcomed the world to share his journey. His art, perseverance and positivity have earned him huge audiences and A-list fans including Thierry Henry, David Beckham and Jonny Wilkinson.

Henry says: “One thing I am asked most often is: ‘There must be down days when you ask yourself, why me?’ I answer that I wake up every day grateful for everything I have: my incredible family and friends; that I get to do a job I love; that I get to push myself and I am always learning. When I look at my life this way, I consider myself very lucky. There is no point dwelling on what might have been. The past cannot be changed; only accepted. Life is much simpler and much happier when you always look at what you can do.” Henry has hosted exhibitions and given talks for schools, sports teams and businesses.

In 2016 he was given the Blyth Spirit Award by the Rugby Player Association, and he’s appeared on TV programmes including the Jonathan Ross Show, CNN, and Arsenal’s YouTube channel. His book *The Little Big Things* was published in 2017 with a foreword from J.K. Rowling, and became a Sunday Times bestseller.



## Stephen Wiltshire MBE

### Artist

Stephen has become well known for incredible detailed and accurate paintings and drawings of cityscapes, which he is often able to draw from only the briefest of observations.

Over the course of his career, Stephen has been on drawing tours of many major cities around the world. In 2001 he was featured in the BBC documentary, *Fragments of Genius*, which looked into his art, his incredible power of recalling detail, and how that related to his autism. He was filmed flying over London in a helicopter before drawing a detailed and completely scaled illustration of a four-square-mile area in only three hours.

Among his greatest creations are the panoramic drawing of Tokyo he drew in 2005, two months before a similarly detailed picture of Rome, which included the Vatican and St Peter's Cathedral, drawn entirely from memory. That December Stephen spent a week creating a 10-metre-long drawing of Hong Kong's Victoria Harbour and the surrounding area from only a twenty-minute helicopter ride.

While he's known primarily for his work in capturing architecture and classic American cars, Stephen also has a passion for drawing portraits of celebrities and close friends in his private sketchbook.

In recognition of his services to the art world, Stephen was named by the Queen as a Member of the Order of the British Empire in 2006, not long before founding his own permanent art gallery in London's Royal Opera Arcade.





# **Business, Finance & IT**

Angus Drummond

Daniel Williams

Euan MacDonald

Helen Cooke

Julian John

Mary Doyle

Molly Jane Watt

Rob Smith

Shani Dhanda

Simon Minty

Steph Cutler

Dr Stephen Duckworth OBE

“To be Limitless means to push yourself outside of your comfort zone and experience new, exciting places.”



## Angus Drummond Founder and CEO, Limitless Travel

When Angus Drummond was diagnosed with Limb Girdle Muscular Dystrophy in his early 20s he decided to set off and explore the world before his mobility declined. The situations he faced and the lack of information available to disabled people about travelling were the inspiration for Limitless Travel. Angus' goal: to empower people with disabilities to explore the world.

Limitless Travel organises supported group tours to destinations across the UK and Europe, and is currently expanding further afield. All destinations are professionally researched and audited by his team, many of whom have personal experience with a disability themselves.

Angus explains: “I wanted to create more than just a travel company. Limitless is a disability company who specialise in travel. Being Limitless is a mindset I want to instil in all of our travellers. To be Limitless means to push yourself outside of your comfort zone and experience new, exciting places.”

In under three years, Angus has grown Limitless Travel in his capacity as CEO to a company of over 10 people, enabled over 1,500 people to take holidays who would otherwise be unable, and raised more than £300,000 of investment.

His determination to revolutionise travel for disabled people is the driving force behind the company and he has become a well-loved face among his customers. Limitless Travel has won several awards, including the People's Choice Awards at the Duke of York's Pitch@Palace competition at St James's Palace. Limitless Travel has also been invited to 10 Downing Street to discuss the challenges faced when travelling with a disability.

Over the last year Angus himself has received numerous awards, including the Great British Entrepreneur for Good and The Institute of Directors' Corporate Social Responsibility Director of the Year Award.





“Overcoming my challenges has given me resilience, determination and the ambition needed to be successful.”

🌐 [www.visualisetrainingandconsultancy.com](http://www.visualisetrainingandconsultancy.com)  
🌐 [www.visualisetrainingandconsultancy.com/resource-pack-health-pros/](http://www.visualisetrainingandconsultancy.com/resource-pack-health-pros/)

## Daniel Williams

### Founder of Visualise Training and Consultancy

At 22 years old, Daniel Williams launched his business with help from The Prince’s Trust. The company runs training sessions educating organisations to better assist people with disabilities and has worked with over 700 clients.

Alongside his enabling furry friend Zodiac, Daniel uses his experience of gradual sight loss to help organisations become Disability Confident so that inclusion is just ‘business as usual’. The consultancy makes recommendations on what adjustments can be made to support employees with visual impairments, as sight loss should not equal job loss.

After identifying a need for improved eyecare referral pathways for patients with low vision, he approached Peter Corbett, CEO of Thomas Pocklington Trust, and embarked on an empowering UK-wide roadshow entitled Seeing Beyond the Eyes, which was supported by the charity. It arms opticians with the knowledge to refer patients to services that will improve their lives and independence. He has also produced an innovative resource pack to ensure no one leaves without a referral for support.

Daniel says: “At the beginning, sight loss feels like the end but later you realise it’s just the start of seeing in a different way and having a new outlook on life. Overcoming my challenges has given me resilience, determination and the ambition needed to be successful. If someone tells you that you can’t do something, put your headphones in and politely tell them to go away!”

In a voluntary capacity Daniel is part of the Royal National Institute of Blind People’s Working Age and Transitions steering groups. He is also a Young Ambassador for the Prince’s Trust and sits on its Business Launch panels, helping other young people to start their own businesses.



Euan MacDonald is a Scottish entrepreneur who established The Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neurone Disease Research

🌐 [www.speakunique.org/clinical-pilot](http://www.speakunique.org/clinical-pilot)  
🌐 [www.euansguide.com](http://www.euansguide.com)  
🌐 [www.disabledaccessday.com](http://www.disabledaccessday.com)

## Euan MacDonald MBE Entrepreneur

Euan MacDonald is Scottish entrepreneur. In 2007 he established The Euan MacDonald Centre for Motor Neurone Disease Research in partnership with the University of Edinburgh. The centre is partly funded by Euan and his father, and conducts research as well as offering clinical treatments.

Building on the expertise at the university, the centre has already made some significant scientific discoveries, and also works with the J9 Foundation for people with MND in South Africa. In 2009 Euan was awarded an MBE for services to people with MND in Scotland.

Euan also helped establish the University of Edinburgh Voicebank Research Project, known as Speak Unique, which enables people who are at risk of losing their voices to record and preserve them. Participants' voices are 'banked' and stored ready to create a synthetic voice for a communication aid if they later need one. The clinical pilot ended in January this year and the results are currently being analysed.

In 2013, Euan and his sister co-founded the disabled access review website and app, Euan's Guide. Like TripAdvisor for accessibility, anyone can review a venue on the site. Euan's Guide aims to both take away the fear of the unknown for people with accessibility needs, and make it easier to give feedback to restaurants, hotels, shops and other organisations about how to improve their experience for disabled customers.

Euan's Guide is the main sponsor of Disabled Access Day, a biannual UK event which raises awareness of the access issues faced by many disabled people.

“I do believe that having a disability gives you something extra; a ‘plus’.”

🌐 [www.myplusconsulting.com](http://www.myplusconsulting.com)  
🌐 [www.myplusstudentsclub.com](http://www.myplusstudentsclub.com)  
🐦 @myplusvoice  
🐦 @MyPlusStudents



## Helen Cooke

### Founder and director MyPlus

Helen Cooke is a leading expert in disability and graduate recruitment. She works to ensure that having a disability or long-term health condition doesn't prevent anyone from building the career they want.

In 2006 Helen founded MyPlus, a consulting and training business focused on helping organisations realise the potential of investing in disabled people. Her unique approach comes from her expertise in human resources and graduate recruitment, combined with her first-hand experience of disability: Helen is a wheelchair user as a result of a childhood spinal injury.

Helen says: “I am often asked why we are called MyPlus. The answer is simple: whilst I don't believe that disabled people are any more remarkable than those who don't have a disability, I do believe that having a disability gives you something extra; a ‘plus’. This comes from managing a disability in a world that isn't always geared up to it, whether in terms of accessibility, attitude or understanding. However, this ‘plus’ is rarely acknowledged by either disabled individuals themselves or by employers.”

Building on the success of MyPlus consulting, in 2010 Helen launched the MyPlus Recruiters' Club, a membership forum offering employers training and expert advice to help them better attract and support disabled talent. She also founded the website [www.myplusstudentsclub.com](http://www.myplusstudentsclub.com) for young people with disabilities and long term health conditions. The site connects young people with employers, as well as giving support, motivation and advice.

Helen also works extensively with The Back Up Trust, an organisation supporting people with spinal cord injuries, where she is a trustee and mentor, and runs their Back Up to Work courses.



“People are people and potential is potential.”

## Julian John

### Managing director, Delsion Ltd

Julian John is the founder and managing director of Delsion Ltd, a people and development consultancy which covers human resources, learning and development, and diversity and inclusion. He drives the company's agenda of challenging the norm and putting people's potential at the heart of everything it does, providing creative and innovative solutions for businesses.

Julian founded the company after a decade-long recovery from a life-changing neurological injury (brain damage) which left him disabled. Keen to get back to work, Julian set out to build a company that would support employers in hiring disabled people.

His advocacy for people with disabilities has included a mission to make his home city of Swansea the first Disability Confident city in the UK, an effort which succeeded in 2015 when over seventy businesses signed up to the campaign. Julian also successfully campaigned to light Cardiff and South Wales up in purple to engage businesses with diversity and inclusivity.

Julian has been the winner of a Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative (RIDI) award, hosting RIDI's first event in Wales last year and joining the judging panel for its 2018 awards. He's also recently won the Director of the Year Award for Inclusivity from the Institute of Directors Wales.

He says: “My mantra has always been that ‘People are people and potential is potential.’ That's at the heart of everything we do at Delsion and drives our social goal of making Wales a leading nation for inclusion in the workplace.”





“Embrace and rock your difference.”

🌐 [www.rocketgirlcoaching.com](http://www.rocketgirlcoaching.com)  
🐦 @RocketGirlCoach  
📘 RocketGirlCoach

## Mary Doyle

Personal and executive coach, STEM and accessible aviation advocate, and CEO, Rocket Girl Coaching

Mary Doyle has over 25 years’ experience working for global, billion-dollar software and telecoms companies and now provides personal and executive coaching to business professionals. Since 2017 she’s run her own professional coaching business, helping people tackle challenges, find new directions, make brave choices and become ‘an outrageous success’.

She explains: “Being a wheelchair user and global manager has given me the drive for disability to be normalised in business and outside of the office. To quote Bruce Springsteen, ‘nobody wins unless everybody wins’ is my approach. My advice to younger disabled people is to embrace and rock your difference.”

Trust, curiosity and fun are all huge priorities and she brings her own lived experience of disability to her work, supporting people with a range of conditions from spinal cord injuries to neurodiversity and mental health issues. Mary brings a humour and irreverence to difficult topics and finds her most rewarding work in helping people through challenges, to triumph.

Her company, Rocket Girl Coaching, takes its name from Mary’s lifelong love of flying and space travel. A proud geek, she learnt to fly solo at 42 and is passionate about disabled people reaching their full potential in all areas of life.

Mary campaigns for women in STEM (science, technology, engineering and maths) and has volunteered for many years as a student mentor and ambassador for a charity that provides flying scholarships to disabled adults. She has written articles for Liability magazine, Disability Horizons and Runway Girl Network, and has been a listening volunteer for the Samaritans.



“Do not stop moving.  
Even if you step  
sideways, anywhere is  
better than backwards.”

🌐 [www.molly-watt-trust.org/](http://www.molly-watt-trust.org/)  
🌐 [www.mollywatt.com/](http://www.mollywatt.com/)  
🐦 @MollyWattTrust  
🐦 @MollyWattTalks

## Molly Jane Watt

### Accessibility consultant

Molly Jane Watt is a usability and accessibility consultant who specialises in assistive technology and design for people with sensory impairment. Growing up with Usher syndrome, a genetic condition that results in both hearing loss and visual impairment, Molly has grown adept at using and applying the latest assistive technologies, including gadgets, computers and wearables.

She founded the Molly Watt Trust, an organisation working to raise awareness of Usher syndrome and the ways people with the condition can benefit from relevant software, magnifiers, e-readers, speech-to-text software, large text and tactile aids.

Molly has spoken at the Houses of Parliament, Harvard Medical School, the Apple Campus, GN ReSound and for video game developer, Ustwo. Her presentations cover subjects ranging from awareness of sensory impairments to accessibility, assistive technology and accessible design. Molly has earned a reputation as an eloquent speaker who is inspirational, engaging and informative while also personable.

In addition to the Trust, Molly offers consultation services, working with organisations who want to meet the accessibility needs of elderly or disabled people. She specialises in advising on sensory impairments, deafness and hearing loss, as well as blind and deafblind needs. Molly runs workshops to educate others on how technology, accessible design and usability can help create a more inclusive and independent environment and lifestyle.

Molly advocates for those with accessibility needs as well as sharing her own experiences through her widely-followed social media presence and blog. She says: “Whatever you do, do not stop moving. Even if you step sideways, anywhere is better than backwards. The more challenges you face, the more resilience you grow – never doubt your abilities to prove that to the world.”





“There is nothing better than realising the horizon of what you thought you could achieve has suddenly expanded.”

🌐 [www.activehands.com](http://www.activehands.com)  
📘 [activehandsco](https://www.facebook.com/activehandsco)  
🐦 [@activehandsco](https://twitter.com/activehandsco)  
📷 [@theactivehandsco](https://www.instagram.com/theactivehandsco)

## Rob Smith

### Active Hands Company founder and athlete

Rob was studying Mechanical Engineering at Warwick University when a spinal cord injury left him with partial paralysis in all four limbs. He completed his studies but found his reduced hand function more frustrating than his reduced mobility.

As Rob began to focus on wheelchair sports, he used his unique mix of engineering skills and lived experience to design prototypes enabling him to grip gym equipment. When others in his wheelchair rugby team wanted the gripping aids too, the idea for The Active Hands Company was born.

After years of development, Active Hands has become the go-to website for products for people with reduced hand function. Its mission has always been to allow users to achieve independent inclusion in activities that would otherwise be impossible without their products. Active Hands has customers around the world, from Paralympic gold medallists and injured veterans to stroke survivors and young children. The company continues to grow, with a broad influence on social media and new products constantly added to their website.

Rob says: “There is nothing better than realising the horizon of what you thought you could achieve has suddenly expanded. From my own experience and from customer feedback, I know these small changes can have a huge knock-on effect on someone’s life.”

In 2011 Rob won the Stelios Disabled Entrepreneurs Award. In 2016 Active Hands won Pitch at the Paras and travelled to the Rio Paralympics, representing UK business. It was also a finalist in Nesta’s Inclusive Technology Prize and The Blackwood Design Awards.

Rob has played wheelchair rugby to a high level and is now a wheelchair racer. He has represented ParalympicsGB, winning European championship silver in the 1500 metres and the T52 World Cup Marathon in 2018. He competes internationally and has won numerous titles, including the Dubai marathon four times.



“I’m really passionate about representation and creating everyday equality.”

[www.diversabilitycard.co.uk](http://www.diversabilitycard.co.uk)  
[www.asianwomanfestival.com](http://www.asianwomanfestival.com)  
[www.shanidhanda.com](http://www.shanidhanda.com)  
[@ShaniDhanda](https://twitter.com/ShaniDhanda)  
[@ShaniDhanda](https://www.instagram.com/ShaniDhanda)

## Shani Dhanda

### Founder, The Diversability Card

Shani Dhanda is the founder of the Diversability Card, the UK’s first official discount card for people with disabilities. The card helps alleviate the financial pressure disabled people face due to the unavoidable extra costs resulting from their condition.

Shani is an award-winning event manager with a career spanning over 10 years, and has raised more than £450,000 for charity through fundraising events. However, her career began with having over 100 job applications turned down while she was at university – until she stopped disclosing her disability. Shani has brittle bone disease, which affects one in 15,000 people in the UK, and the barriers she has faced inspire her disability rights advocacy.

“I’m really passionate about representation and creating everyday equality. After continually feeling underrepresented in society, I was motivated to challenge perceptions and change attitudes by becoming the change that I wanted to see. Until societal and cultural views of disability improve, disabled people will continue to face a range of negative attitudes across all aspects of daily life.”

Today she’s a social entrepreneur and an accomplished speaker and disability rights advocate, recognised across the country and around the world. As well as the Diversability Card, she founded the newly-created Asian Woman Festival, the first festival of its kind in the UK celebrating the female Asian identity and creating an open dialogue to discuss issues relating to the South Asian community.

Shani has collaborated with Virgin Media as a disability programme manager, encouraging change in diversity and inclusion strategies across the business. Shani gives her time to a number of charities and advisory board roles, and has a reputation as someone who can engage intellectually, and emotionally with any audience on subjects of adversity, success, inclusion, and equality and diversity.

Simon helps organisations to recruit, employ and deliver better services or disabled people.

🌐 [www.sminty.net](http://www.sminty.net)  
🌐 [www.abnormallyfunnypeople.com](http://www.abnormallyfunnypeople.com)  
🐦 @simonminty  
📷 @simon\_minty



## **Simon Minty,** Consultant, writer and broadcaster

For over 20 years Simon has worked as a trainer and consultant around disability and inclusion. He is the founder of Sminty Ltd, a company which works in the UK and internationally to help larger organisations to recruit, employ and deliver better services or disabled people.


Simon also works with media organisations to improve the presence of disabled people on screen and behind the camera, and his clients include organisations such as British Council, Endemol Shine UK, Google and Buckingham Palace.

Simon is also a writer and broadcaster. He is the co-host of BBC Ouch: Disability Talk and a regular contributor to radio and television shows. In 1999 he won the Travel X Travel Writer of the Year award for his Channel 4 documentary about travelling in China.

In 2005 Simon co-founded the comedy troupe Abnormally Funny People, which he is a producer for as well as a performer. The troupe has enjoyed sell-out runs at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival and Soho Theatre in London. Simon is often mistaken for the comedian and writer Andy Hamilton, which he quite likes.

Simon is a trustee to StopGap Dance and Improbable Theatre and an associate at both the Business Disability Forum and the Disability Media Alliance Project in the USA.

Steph works to find ways to reduce and remove the barriers to disabled people.



[www.making-lemonade.co.uk](http://www.making-lemonade.co.uk)  
[www.pocklington-trust.org.uk](http://www.pocklington-trust.org.uk)  
[www.cloresocialleadership.org.uk](http://www.cloresocialleadership.org.uk)

## Steph Cutler Founder, Making Lemonade

Steph began her career as a fashion designer, working for quality high street brands including Marks & Spencer and Ted Baker. When she was in her late twenties she experienced unexpected sight loss, and became interested in finding ways to reduce and remove the barriers to disabled people as she herself began to encounter those barriers.

From there, Steph founded Making Lemonade, a consultancy firm that takes its name from the saying about life giving you lemons. Making Lemonade's mission is to promote inclusion and accessibility for disabled people, especially in the workplace.

Throughout her work Steph listens to and draws on a wide range of people's lived experiences to create informed models of disability and social change. She designs services and workplace policies and practices, making sure inclusion is built in from the start – a 'business as usual' approach to inclusion.

Steph has worked with high-profile organisations in the public and private sectors, helping to find innovative approaches to inclusion and diversity. In 2016 she became a Fellow of Clore Social Leadership, an organisation that promotes social change by supporting and investing in leaders.

Steph has also worked with disability charities including Disability Rights UK, Shaw Trust and Attitude is Everything, and earlier this year she was recruited to work for Thomas Pocklington Trust. Realising that there were even greater opportunities to create change in the right organisation, Steph is now the charity's head of employment, where she works to improve employment rates and outcomes for people with sight loss.

Steph says: "The employment gap for disabled people remains too wide and it's even wider for people with sight loss. Working with Thomas Pocklington Trust provides a real opportunity to take an innovative approach to get this issue tipping."



Throughout his career, Stephen has held a wide variety of roles supporting and advocating for people with disabilities.



## Dr Stephen Duckworth OBE

### Director, Disability Matters Global and Opt In Finance Ltd

Stephen's varied career began in 1989 when he founded the research company Disability Matters Ltd. He has held a wide variety of roles supporting and advocating for people with disabilities, including as a board member for the Olympic Delivery Authority on Health, Safety and Environment and as the executive director at the Serco Institute.

He's also been a member of the Department of Health's National Quality Board, a board member of the Employers' Forum on Disability and a member of the Disability Equality Delivery Board, which oversees ten government departments' work to deliver the 2025 agenda.

Stephen has been the regional operations director for West Midlands Flexible New Deal, providing support into secure, sustainable work for over 5,000 long-term unemployed jobseekers. From 2012-14 he was the chief executive of Personal Independence Payments, and he is the director of disability assessment services at Capita.

Stephen has recently set up a company to provide ethical finance for disabled people – Opt In Finance Ltd – that in the near future will provide advance payments to people to buy equipment and pay outstanding debts, using the daily living component of personal independence payments in a similar way to Motability Operations' provision of cars.

In 2016 Stephen chaired the five-day Rehabilitation International World Congress, hosted by Shaw Trust, calling it "The most exhilarating, challenging and rewarding event of my life." The event attracted 1,000 delegates from 64 countries, a quarter of whom were disabled, as were over half of the 180 speakers. The event attracted ministers for disabled people from China, India, Scotland, England, Germany, Australia and Hong Kong, and speakers from the United Nations, the World Health Organisation, International Disability Alliance, the World Bank and the International Labour Organisation.

# Education, Public & Third Sector



Andrew McDonald

Anna Button

Asif Iqbal MBE

Chloe Tear

Ciara Lawrence

Eleanor Southwood

Ellie Simpson

Emma Muldoon

Gemma Holtam

Hannah Barham-Brown

Jackie Driver

Dr James Cusack

Jen Blackwell

Jess Starns

Jo Southall

Kamran Mallick

Kiera Roche

Laura Torrance

Lucy Watts

Matt Hampson

Michael McGrath

Michele Thompson

Nick Rook

Richard Cartwright

Tom Ray



## Andrew McDonald

### Scope

Andrew McDonald spent most of his career in the civil service, where he worked in senior roles across Whitehall. In late 2007 he was chief executive of Government Skills, when diagnosed with Parkinson's disease. He chose to be open about his disability from the beginning, despite warnings from friends that it would end his career.

Looking back on that decision, Andrew says: "I was shocked that such attitudes persisted in the civil service, a liberal employer. It struck me that if I kept quiet I would be complicit in the culture of secrecy and I would be making life more difficult for the next person to be diagnosed with a degenerative condition."

Andrew went further, offering his services to the Cabinet Secretary, and from 2009 he led work across Whitehall aimed at challenging the barriers in the way of disabled officials and making it easier for them to secure reasonable adjustments at work.

In 2010 Andrew, the most senior openly disabled civil servant, was diagnosed with prostate cancer, which was later found to be incurable. He was appointed to set up and run the new regulator of MPs' expenses, pay and pensions, the Independent Parliamentary Standards Authority (IPSA). He served in this unusually high-profile role for a civil servant until 2014, when he retired on grounds of ill health.

In October that year Andrew was appointed chair of Scope, where he has overseen a radical renewal of the charity's direction, finances and leadership.

Andrew has also been a trustee of Action for Children and The Cure Parkinson's Trust. He lectures and writes on disability, public policy and history. He has held fellowships at Nuffield College, Oxford, the University of California, Berkeley, and the Australian National University. He recently returned to his first academic home: St John's College, Oxford.



Anna has been a catalyst for change within the West Yorkshire Police, since joining 11 years ago.

 @WYP\_DA

 @WYP\_AnnaButton

## Anna Button

Chair, West Yorkshire Police's Disability Association and secretary, the Disabled Police Association

Anna Button joined the West Yorkshire Police 11 years ago, originally as part of its diversity unit, and was immediately seen as a catalyst for change. She was involved in the Call for Evidence Review, which looked at the ways police forces respond to disability hate crime following the deaths of Fiona Pilkington and Francessca Hardwick. Anna arranged for human rights training to be delivered to the force to complement its Equality Impact Assessment Process.

Anna helped form the West Yorkshire Police Disability Network (WYPDN) in 2016, establishing a membership of over 400 police staff and volunteers to push disability as part of West Yorkshire Police's inclusion agenda. The network has grown to include local authorities, charities, and Leeds United Disabled Organisation.

Anna has mentored organisations including the NHS and British Transport Police to develop their own internal staff networks. She's also driven a positive role model programme called Purple Stories, featuring 16 employees of West Yorkshire Police who have shared their stories about working with a disability in the police service. One of these was featured by Scope, and has been taken up by the Disabled Police Association on a national level. Anna has been championing the Share It campaign, which looks at how terminology is used when telling workplaces about disability. The campaign argues against saying 'disclosing' disability, which can have negative connotations, and instead suggests people talk about 'sharing'.

For the past two years Anna has been regional ambassador for Staff Network Day and in the last year she was voted in as the chair of her own local disability network, the WYPDN, and secretary of the Disabled Police Association. She's a Recruitment Industry Disability Initiative finalist, and was highly commended at the Excellence in Diversity Awards and the European Staff Network 2017.

“It is important to achieve higher. If I can do it, you can do it too.”



## Asif Iqbal MBE

### President, Harrow and Brent United Deaf Club

Asif has spent his career in the public and not-for-profit sectors, and with local and central government, to increase representation and remove barriers for deaf and disabled people. He says: “It is important to achieve higher. If I can do it, you can do it too.”

Asif was born deaf, and is the president of the Harrow and Brent United Deaf Club as well as the chair of Hearing Loss Professionals UK Network, a network of representatives working with sensory teams and services within adult social care). He has been an ambassador for the Government Equalities Office and has sat on advisory boards for the British Council, the Runnymede Trust, the Department of Transport and the Department for Work and Pensions.

At the Harrow and Brent United Deaf Club, which has been running for almost ten years, Asif has led various initiatives to improve access, like working with Harrow Council to sign up to the British Sign Language (BSL) Charter in 2015, making it the second London borough to do so.

As lack of awareness of the barriers is one of the biggest problems, Asif works with councils and services to improve their engagement with the deaf community and address the gaps. Asif successfully influenced the London Assembly to pass a motion in 2016 for the Greater London Authority to adopt the BSL Charter.

Asif has worked with a number of arts organisations, including the Royal Collection at the Queen’s Gallery Project Group and the Harrow Arts Centre. At the latter, he set up the borough’s first ever BSL-interpreted performance (a Christmas pantomime) improving the deaf community’s access to arts. His proudest achievements include organising celebrations for the Queen’s Diamond Jubilee and the London 2012 Olympics.

Asif also appeared on TV shows including BBC2’s Impossible, Letterbox, Channel Four’s Political Slot and Coronation Street.





“I hope to use my experiences to promote a change in public attitudes.”

Facebook: [lifeasacerebralpalsystudent/](https://www.facebook.com/lifeasacerebralpalsystudent/)  
Twitter: [@chloeltear](https://twitter.com/chloeltear)  
Website: [www.cpststudentblog.blogspot.co.uk](http://www.cpststudentblog.blogspot.co.uk)  
Website: [www.cpteensuk.org](http://www.cpteensuk.org)  
Instagram: [@chloe\\_tear](https://www.instagram.com/chloe_tear)

## Chloe Tear

### Blogger and disability advocate

For the last five years, while working through her GCSEs, A-Levels and university degree, Chloe Tear has been writing her blog, Life as a Cerebral Palsy Student. The blog has attracted over 70,000 views and led Chloe to work with over 45 organisations including Scope, the Royal Institute of Blind People, Huffington Post, the BBC, Cosmopolitan and The Mighty.

Chloe has also worked closely with CP Teens UK, a new and growing charity for young people with cerebral palsy and similar physical disabilities. She is currently their assistant coordinator and helps to run the social media and website, as well as organising events throughout the year.

Chloe's writing and speaking styles are matter-of-fact, empathetic and humane. She uses her own experience of cerebral palsy, chronic pain and impaired vision to help others with a directness and kindness. Her writing and speaking have helped other young people – and their parents – to better understand, explain to others, and advocate for what they need. She explains: “I hope to use my experiences to promote a change in public attitudes, a greater level of understanding and reassurance for those who can relate.”

Chloe's speaking engagements range from Rotary clubs to the HemiHelp parents' conference, and she's also been featured in six magazines, filmed national campaign videos for RNIB and the BBC, had five radio appearances and delivers Scope Role Model sessions in high schools up and down the country.

Chloe is also active in politics and worked with her MP to get issues surrounding disability hate crime mentioned in parliament. She is also disabilities officer at her university and has been a finalist for the National Diversity Awards' Positive Role Model within Disability, Rotary GBI Young Citizen and the Princess Diana Award.



“I want to prove with the right support that you can do anything like anyone else.”

 @ciarale01

 [www.sunnybanktrust.org](http://www.sunnybanktrust.org)

 [www.head2headtheatre.co.uk](http://www.head2headtheatre.co.uk)

 [www.mencap.org.uk](http://www.mencap.org.uk)

## Ciara Lawrence

### Learning disability campaigner

Ciara Lawrence is one of the most well-known campaigners in the UK with a learning disability. She writes and campaigns on disability issues and has had articles published in the Guardian, the Huffington Post, and the Independent.

Ciara works as a Campaigns Support Officer for Mencap, and led their campaign to make OKCupid remove an offensive question about people with low IQs. She gained national press coverage and the dating website eventually bowed to public pressure. In 2016 she won the CharityComms Inspiring Communicator Award for her campaigning work.

Ciara says “I was diagnosed with a learning disability when I was 10 years old. I was always told that I couldn’t do things or that I would not achieve anything. I am now 38 and have a wonderful 16-year career at Mencap, am married and I want to prove that with the right support you can do anything like anyone else.”

Ciara is a tireless advocate and spokesperson. Outside of her job she is a club night volunteer and the first trustee with a learning disability at the Sunnybank Trust. Ciara is also a trustee of Head2Head Theatre, which runs multi-sensory performances for children and young people with special educational needs and their families.

Ciara is passionate about helping to improve the way disabled people are portrayed in the media, and works to help improve representation. She has spent time with the production team at Coronation Street to help the programme successfully include a character with a learning disability.



## Eleanor Southwood

### Chair, Royal National Institute of Blind People

Since graduating from Oxford University with a degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics, Eleanor has worked across the public private and non-profit sectors. Through senior and leadership roles in policy, research and organisational change, she has helped steer organisations through transition and contributed to public service reform at local and national levels.

Eleanor was born with no useful sight, due to a condition called Leber's congenital amaurosis. Since 2010 she has served as a trustee of the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB), where she has championed the development of RNIB Connect, a community for anyone affected by sight loss, their families, friends and supporters. The growing community helps to combat isolation and equip people with the skills and confidence to live life to the full.

In November 2017, Eleanor was elected as RNIB's youngest ever chair. She is the first woman to hold the role in RNIB's 150-year history.

Eleanor says: "Unacceptable inequalities still exist for too many people. I'm incredibly fortunate to be in positions that give me the chance to challenge this, through fighting to level the playing field for people with sight loss and championing local services that improve communities. I think the most powerful way to change outdated perceptions about disability is for people to see more disabled people in all aspects of life: in community groups, at work and in public life."

Eleanor is passionate about improving diversity in civic life. In 2014 Eleanor ran for office as a local councillor for the London Borough of Brent in North London, and won. She has borough-wide responsibility for housing and welfare reform. Eleanor is a Fellow of the Clore Social Leadership Programme and has a Masters degree in Organisational Behaviour.

Ellie is an icon of young disability activism.



## Ellie Simpson, Founder, CP Teens UK

Ellie says “I set up CP Teens UK after experiencing first-hand the lack of social outlets and opportunities that exist for young people with physical disabilities.” The group quickly became a huge and active network for young people with cerebral palsy, changing lives by connecting people who have grown up with the same challenges.


CP Teens UK, which became a charity in 2017, holds regular events across the country, runs a blog and holds an annual fundraising ball which last year raised £10,000. In 2017 Ellie received the Prime Minister’s Point Of Light Award for her outstanding contribution to the charity.

Ellie remains an icon of young disability activism, campaigning against venues banning plastic straws. Her campaign reached the government and was covered in the national press.

Ellie remains the driving force behind CP Teens UK, running it even while she was at university. She studied Sport Development with Coaching at Sheffield Hallam where she discovered RaceRunning, a sport where runners use a specially-built tricycle without pedals (a RaceRunner) making it accessible to people who might usually need electric wheelchairs to move around. “When I discovered RaceRunning, I knew I had finally found my ‘thing’. I have never met anyone who cannot RaceRun, and that’s what I love about it: everyone can do it, regardless of ability or disability!”

Ellie has become the face of the sport and runs a weekly RaceRunning club. She competes internationally, representing England at the Nottingham 2015 CPISRA World Games, and is currently the third fastest female RaceRunner in the world. This year the sport received approval from the International Paralympic Committee.



A photograph of Emma Muldoon, a young woman with long dark hair, wearing a red and black patterned shirt. She is standing in a city street, likely Amsterdam, with many bicycles parked in the background and a canal with buildings in the distance. The quote is overlaid on the top left of the image.

“I want to show others that it is possible to travel with a disability.”

🌐 [www.simplyemma.co.uk](http://www.simplyemma.co.uk)  
🐦 @Simplyemma2  
📘 @SimplyEmmaBlog  
📷 @simplyemmablog

## Emma Muldoon

### Writer and Blogger

Emma created her blog, Simply Emma, to share her life and travel experiences as a power wheelchair user and encourage others to see more of the world, whether that means international travel or being a little more adventurous in your hometown.

The blog, founded in 2014, has grown to become one of the UK's leading travel and accessibility blogs. Emma shares useful resources and travel tips and reviews attractions, accessible walks, live events, transport and accommodation – all with a personal touch. In her writing and photographs, she also shares some of the fantastic views that await fellow travellers, either abroad or in the great outdoors in Scotland. In her lifestyle posts, Emma also invites her readers to share the rest of her life: beauty, wheelchair fashion, and everyday good living, like nights in with partner Allan and cat Milo, or playing with her nephew.

Emma is also an ambassador for Euan's Guide, a website and app for disabled access reviews, founded by entrepreneur Euan MacDonald. She has collaborated with a number of travel brands and tourism boards to promote accessibility for all, and has worked with a number of charities including Scope, Disability Sheffield and Spinal Life Scotland.

Emma's writing has been featured in a huge number of publications and websites, including Motability, Cosmopolitan, Rough Guide to Accessible Britain, Huffington Post, Travelettes and Trips100. She's recently started working as a monthly columnist for the Falkirk Herald newspaper.

“Despite the challenges, I want to show others that it is possible to travel with a disability. My dream is for accessible travel to be fully inclusive and stress-free without any barriers, allowing for equal opportunities regardless of disability. The world is there to be explored so it's important to get out there and enjoy it.”



## **Gemma Holtam**

### **Assistive technology expert**

Gemma was diagnosed with dyslexia while studying for a teaching qualification at university. She was offered assistive technology and specialised study skills tuition. These adjustments transformed her experience of studying – and her grades. Later, Gemma was diagnosed as autistic and again found technology to be a great help in managing some of the challenges she faces.

Since 2013, Gemma has been delivering training on how assistive technology can benefit disabled students and staff. In her current post at De Montfort University she established a bi-annual assistive technology training event, and a mentoring scheme supporting around forty staff to embed assistive technology into their practice.

Assistive technology is still a new and growing specialism in higher education. Gemma served as a director on the board of the British Assistive Technology Association (BATA) for nearly two years to ensure the views of the sector were heard. She also co-founded and chairs The AT Network, with members including over thirty higher education institutions. The network gives assistive technology specialists support to develop their practice, in turn influencing quality of support across higher education.

Through the network Gemma carries out research into how assistive technology support is growing, and what assistance practitioners need. She published a paper in the *Journal of Inclusive Practice into Further and Higher Education* to help leaders of institutions understand the importance of assistive technology specialists in higher education. Gemma also speaks at local and national events and continues to work on developing resources for tutors to use.

As someone who was not diagnosed as disabled until adulthood, she found it very difficult when aspects of her disability were viewed or listed in reports as negatives. At first this affected her confidence and self-esteem but now Gemma recognises her ability to see the world differently is her greatest strength.

“We need disabled people to be more visible.”



 HannahBarhamBrown/  
 @HannahPopsy  
 [www.hannahbarhambrown.wordpress.com](http://www.hannahbarhambrown.wordpress.com)

## Hannah Barham-Brown

### Doctor, advocate, #RollModel

Hannah was studying to be a doctor when she became disabled with Ehlers-Danlos Syndrome (EDS). She was initially offered an NHS wheelchair, which was too heavy to work with her condition. Scared that she might have to drop out of medical school, Hannah – like a growing number of people – turned to crowdfunding for the mobility equipment she needed. Within 24 hours she had raised the money, and a junior doctor needing to crowdfund for a wheelchair had made the news.

Hannah has used her combined experience ‘from both sides of the stethoscope’ to campaign for change. Last year she presented a motion at the British Medical Association conference for patients to have “timely access to chairs suitable for their individual conditions”. It was passed unanimously.

Hannah works with the General Medical Council to make medicine a more accessible career, and uses her knowledge to support and navigate other disabled people through the healthcare system. She writes about a wide range of issues around healthcare and equality and diversity on her blog, *Wonky Medicine*, and across national press including the BBC, the Guardian, the Independent, the Times, and the Mirror.

She says: “I am determined that we need more disability ‘Roll Models’. Having grown up with a disabled mum, becoming disabled myself was made far more manageable for me because I knew it had never held her back. To make our society more inclusive, we need disabled people to be more visible, and we need to inspire the next generation to believe that they have the right to do whatever they want to with their lives, regardless of their disabilities.”

This year Hannah did the Superhero Triathlon for Action for Kids, a disability charity she is an ambassador for. Hannah is Deputy Chair for Professional Issues of the Junior Doctors’ Committee of the BMA, and a member of BMA Council, their Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Group, and their Representative Body.



## Jackie Driver,

### Programme principle at the Equality and Human Rights Commission

Jackie Driver supports a wide range of organisations to help create the right conditions for greater inclusion and life chances of D/deaf and disabled people.

She has been active in the transformation of Greater Manchester through devolution, where she is currently seconded out to Manchester Health and Care Commissioning to develop and implement its Inclusion Strategy together with the new Local Care Organisation to create a system-wide approach. She also co-chairs the Our Manchester Disability Plan: the first co-produced plan across all sectors to identify and remove remaining barriers in the city to disabled people.

Jackie has also worked with local governments, been a member of the Homes and Communities Agency equality advisory board, is the former Head of Good Relations at the Equality and Human Rights Commission, and sits on the advisory board of Result CIC which coaches people from marginalised groups.

Over the past year Jackie has given the Edward Rushton lecture and continued to promote Breakthrough UK, an organisation aimed at improving the life chances of disabled people through employment, training and independent living opportunities. She is the Chair for Sign Health, shaping it towards being a D/deaf-led organisation.

Jackie says: "I am not the first, nor will I be the last to use my influence towards getting public servants, elected representatives, MPs and ministers to understand and implement what empowering services and an inclusive society could look like for disabled people, but together, collectively, we do make progress, and that is why 'nothing about us, without us' remains our significant theme."



Dr James Cusack is one of the most visible and influential autistic researchers in the world.



## Dr James Cusack Director of Science, Autistica

Dr James Cusack is one of the most visible and influential autistic researchers in the world. As Director of Science for Autistica, the UK's leading autism research charity, he is responsible for its scientific strategy, grant-making, science communications and relationships with scientific stakeholders.

Autistica is the largest independent funder of autism research in Europe, and James is widely considered a leading light in the field. In the past six months alone he has been shortlisted for Executive of the Year at the Charity Times Awards, won an ACEVO Fellowship, a scheme to uncover the most inspirational charity sector leaders in the UK, and a Digital Leaders Award for his skilful use of Twitter to engage with the autism community.

James influences many large science funding bodies, from the Medical Research Council and National Institute for Health Research in the UK to major foundations and the Federal Government in the United States of America.

This year he has launched a new national network for autism research, Discover, while developing a new scientific strategy and securing Autistica's largest-ever donation for a ground-breaking new study. At the same time James has also set up international partnerships, and continued to raise awareness of autism science through numerous appearances on TV and in print.

James believes that research involving people who have autism and their family members can be key to delivering the long, healthy, happy life that far too many autistic people are denied.



“I’m changing people’s lives through dance.”

[www.dancesyndrome.co.uk](http://www.dancesyndrome.co.uk)  
[@dancesyndrome](https://twitter.com/dancesyndrome)  
[dancerleddisabilityinspired](https://www.facebook.com/dancerleddisabilityinspired)

## Jen Blackwell, Founder and director, DanceSyndrome

Jen is the founder and director of DanceSyndrome, an inclusive dance charity. Knowing she wanted to be a community dance worker, for ten long years she searched for the right opportunities to make that dream a reality, but nowhere could offer her what she needed. Opportunities are much more scarce for people with learning disabilities and Jen set out to change that: for herself and for others.

In 2009 DanceSyndrome began. Jen began running dance workshops herself and assembled a group of 14 dancers to work with intensively as dance leaders. From the beginning DanceSyndrome was founded to be inclusive to all and show that with the right support people can exceed any expectations. Half of the dance leaders also have learning disabilities.

Jen says “I live for dance, it’s my passion and my life. I have a right to a life of my choosing. I’m changing people’s lives through dance.” Jen and DanceSyndrome have gone from strength to strength. In 2013 the organisation became a charity, in 2015 Jen won Inspirational Woman of the Year at the Enterprise Vision Awards, and they have major funding from Spirit of 2012 and Big Lottery Fund to continue their work.

This year Jen and DanceSyndrome reached an even bigger audience of five million people when Jen’s hero Alexandra Burke surprised her at the famous Pineapple dance studios for a National Lottery video.

DanceSyndrome primarily works in the North West of England, running workshops and offering leadership training, but has performed across the UK, including at the Edinburgh Fringe festival. Jen is passionate about creating inclusive and supportive arts environments, and understands that dance can be a vehicle for change, creating opportunities and improving self-esteem as well as being great exercise and a fantastic way of making friends.



“You don’t need to know everything, you just need to know how to find out the answer.”

🌐 [www.dyspraxic.me.uk](http://www.dyspraxic.me.uk)  
🐦 @dyspraxicme  
🐦 @JessicaStarns

## Jess Starns Founder, Dyspraxic Me

Jess Starns’ mum taught her that “You don’t need to know everything, you just need to know how to find out the answer.”

Jess set up Dyspraxic Me in 2013 as she couldn’t find any suitable support for young adults with dyspraxia offering practical help to develop skills. So she created the resource that she needed.

In November 2013 Jess received support from Fixers, an ITV CSR programme, to make a resource book so other young adults with dyspraxia could set up their own support networks. Since then she has organised monthly workshops in London with practical and fun activities. Attendees can meet other people with dyspraxia and learn a wide variety of skills including cooking, sports, ballet, vlogging, and training to develop assertiveness and social skills.

Jess organises every aspect of the workshops, from booking venues and finding experts to deliver the sessions to updating the website, evaluating the events, and managing the budgets. She has raised over £13,000 so far, and also organises events during the yearly Dyspraxia Awareness Week in October. In November last year 2017 Dyspraxic Me became a registered charity, and Jess’s work has already been recognised by Downing Street with a Points of Light Award.

Jess works at the British Museum as the youth volunteer coordinator and is passionate about making museums inclusive. She is currently combining these interests with a Masters degree in Inclusive Arts Practice, for which she is researching how we interpret and curate the history of labelling people with specific learning difficulties (neurodiversity).



“Don’t undervalue the skills your challenges have given you.”

🌐 [www.jboccupationaltherapy.co.uk](http://www.jboccupationaltherapy.co.uk)

🐦 @JBOccyTherapy

🐦 @jboccytherapy

📘 JBOccyTherapy

## Jo Southall Occupational therapist

Jo is an occupational therapist specialising in supporting people with long-term conditions, particularly with those complex and variable symptoms. She originally worked in the outdoor adventure industry but a decline in health, leading to a diagnosis of hypermobile Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, forced her to rethink. She retrained as an occupational therapist specialising in the challenges of working with an uncooperative and unreliable body.

Jo gives people the tools to deal with whatever health challenge is thrown at them. She explains: “Having a long-term condition can be a challenge but it doesn’t always have to be a negative experience. Living with hEDS has given me a very particular set of skills, such as creative problem-solving, empathy, super-charged first aid, common sense and advanced level sarcasm. I use those every day in my work to help those who are struggling. These are things you cannot teach (except the first aid), so don’t undervalue the skills your challenges have given you.”

She uses technology to improve accessibility and has developed an online occupational therapy service where all of her clinics run through video chat platforms such as Skype, WhatsApp or Facebook. She helps people manage their conditions and be advocates for their needs and mentors health professionals with long-term conditions, focusing on topics like sleep hygiene, pacing yourself and physical self-management in the workplace.

Jo studied at the University of Northampton, where she was named Changemaker Student of the Year, partly for her work volunteering with the Hypermobility Syndromes Association (HMSA) and helping set up regular wheelchair basketball events.

She has guest-lectured at a number of universities and is a regular speaker at international events, often appearing by video chat. Her writing has been featured in various publications, and her blog is full of guides, product reviews and tips on managing conditions.



“I want disabled young people to dream big.”



## Kamran Mallick CEO, Disability Rights UK

Kamran has worked in the voluntary sector for over twenty years, and for the last 15 he's worked for organisations run by and for disabled people. He worked for Aspire, the spinal injury charity, and as CEO of Action on Disability. Since 2017 Kamran has been chief executive of Disability Rights UK.

Kamran contracted polio as a child and is a wheelchair user. His experiences at both special and mainstream schools informed his firm conviction that inclusive education for all children is essential. A driving principle has been ensuring disabled people have better opportunities than he did. “I want disabled young people to dream big and to have the support from society to make those dreams come true. And I want them to work together with us at DR UK to keep the hard-won rights we have and to campaign for all disabled people to have equal rights.”

At Action on Disability Kamran focused on opportunities for young people, transferring their youth service to mainstream settings and building a programme of supported internships for young people with learning difficulties, ensuring that young disabled people had real opportunities to work.

Disability Rights UK works towards change across three main strands: independent living, career opportunities, and influencing public attitudes. As part of his work leading an organisation which represents the range of disabled voices, Kamran is building links with grassroots organisations to ensure the diverse voices of disabled people are heard. Kamran is keen to work with others including faith-based groups, youth groups, and black and minority ethnic groups.

Kamran has been a member of the Transport for London Independent Disability Advisory Group, and Chair of Candoco Dance Company. Last year he was a runner-up at the Vodafone Diversity Awards and won an inaugural Civic Honour Hammersmith and Fulham. He is currently a board member of the Lyric Theatre and Wheels for Wellbeing.

Kiera has dedicated 17 years to helping others with limb impairments to rebuild their lives



## **Kiera Roche** Founder, LimbPower

In 2001 Kiera was approached by the Limbless Association to become a trustee. Using both her professional and lived experiences, she has dedicated 17 years to helping others with limb impairments to rebuild their lives through access to information, education and opportunities.

Kiera worked for the Limbless Association and Douglas Bader Foundation before founding LimbPower in 2009. LimbPower support people with limb impairments to live fulfilled and active lives, harnessing the power of physical activity, sport and art. The charity runs inclusive sports programmes with Sport England, and working with NHS England and the Department of Health, they've administered the Children's Prosthetic Fund to get more disabled people active.




Kiera's most impactful moment changed the lives of two young boys in a village near Baghdad: in March 2003 a bomb was dropped where Ali Abbas was sleeping, leaving him with life threatening injuries. Kiera received a call from the Metro and the Ali Fund was born.

She says: "Together we can change to world, it just needs one person to have a good idea and act upon that idea, for other people to join in and offer their support." Kiera has created and been involved in many fantastic initiatives, including creating the Limb Loss Information Centre and Limb Loss Legal Advisory Panel, campaigning for cosmetic covers for prosthetics and microprocessor knees, creating the LimbPower Games and Junior Games, workshops in sports and fundamental skills, rehabilitation clinics, dance events, a families' website, and summer camps for children with limb impairments.

Kiera leads by example, engaging in impressive physical feats including walking parts of the Great Wall of China, trekking in Cuba, and cycling along the River Nile. She has approached each gap in the market with a can-do attitude and passion to change perceptions and policy to enhance the lives of people with limb difference.



“My life completely changed but it wasn’t over.”

 [www.sisonline.org](http://www.sisonline.org)  
 [spinalinjurliesscot](https://www.facebook.com/spinalinjurliesscot)  
 [sisonlineorg](https://twitter.com/sisonlineorg)

## Laura Torrance

### Peer support advisor, Spinal Injuries Scotland

When Laura was 16 she sustained a spinal injury in a car crash. In the nearly twenty years since the accident she’s used her experience to help others, supporting people adjusting to life-changing spinal injuries and promoting road safety.

Laura began as a volunteer with Spinal Injuries Scotland (SIS), winning Volunteer of the Year in 2012. After seven years she had become invaluable and was recruited as a peer support advisor. Leading a team of peer support volunteers, Laura helped double the number of volunteers meaning SIS can give daily support to patients in the Spinal Injuries Unit of the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Glasgow.

Laura visits patients at the spinal injuries unit and clinics across Scotland. Her empathy and attention to detail have earned huge respect from patients and medical staff. Her colleagues all talk about how infectious her positivity is, how she goes above and beyond and brings light to any situation.

Laura has become the face of SIS through her appearances at schools, conferences, and in the media. Laura is a courageous road safety campaigner. She shares her own story with thousands of teenagers as they learn to drive, making sure they know to always drive safely, wear seatbelts, and never get into cars with unsafe drivers.

Laura goes to festivals, adventurous holidays, and has a great sense of style (her excellent shoes are often a talking point!) She’s a living example that people with spinal cord injuries can have fulfilling, happy lives, and she helps others to achieve the same. She says: “My life completely changed but it wasn’t over and it took me a while to realise that, and now I hope to inspire others that life can still be great if you want it to be.”



 @LucyAlexandria  
 [www.lucy-watts.co.uk](http://www.lucy-watts.co.uk)

“It’s amazing what you can achieve with hard work.”

## Lucy Watts

### Health advocate and activist

At 24 years old Lucy Watts is already a prominent advocate and activist for people with disabilities and those needing palliative care. Her work has taken in everything from local organisations to advocacy on a national and international level.

Lucy has a rare, complex and disabling life-limiting condition and receives palliative care. She recently founded YACCA, a user-led charity for young adults with complex health needs and disabilities, as well as Palliative Care Voices, an international patient and carer network.

Lucy regularly advises organisations about the needs of service-users and is a consultant for an international palliative care charity. She holds roles in a number of charities, co-leads research and sits on committees including for NHS England. Lucy also blogs for Huffington Post and has appeared on various BBC programmes. She is a sought-after speaker and uses her story, experiences and skills to educate other and create change.

Lucy says: “It’s amazing what you can achieve with hard work, determination and a refusal to be limited by other people’s attitudes and low expectations. I’ve exceeded so many expectations by refusing to accept them. My belief that I can – and will – achieve has taken me to incredible places. Life is an adventure; so grab every opportunity and don’t let the attitudes of others stop you reaching your potential.”

In 2016 Lucy was awarded an MBE for services to young people with disabilities, and this year she will receive an Honorary Masters from the Open University. In her own time she also mentors other disabled people, especially young people.





“I feel my role is to empower and raise awareness for other people in a similar situation.”

- 🌐 [www.matthampsonfoundation.org](http://www.matthampsonfoundation.org)
- 🌐 [www.gblcentre.co.uk](http://www.gblcentre.co.uk)
- 🌐 [www.specialeffect.org.uk](http://www.specialeffect.org.uk)
- 🌐 [www.restartrugby.org.uk](http://www.restartrugby.org.uk)

## **Matt Hampson** Founder, Matt Hampson Foundation

In 2005 Matt Hampson (Hambo to his friends) was a rugby player for the Leicester Tigers and the England Under 21 team. An accident in a training session resulted in life-changing injuries: he is now paralysed from the shoulders down and needs a ventilator to breathe.

Matt's motto is 'get busy' and he is devoted to living life to the full and helping others. He says: "I feel my role is to empower and raise awareness for other people in a similar situation." Matt's memoir, *Engage: The Fall and Rise of Matt Hampson*, co-written with Paul Kimmage, details his journey following the accident. It was published by Simon & Schuster, and featured in the national press.

In 2011 he set up the Matt Hampson Foundation, a charity which helps other young people seriously injured through sport. The charity has given over £1.5 million in grants to help other people, and has built the Get Busy Living Centre which opens this autumn. This facility, which cost around £2 million to build, will offer physiotherapy and help with specialist equipment. It also aims to be a place people can find a community and peer support – with the opportunity to be assigned a mentor – and beneficiaries can share their personal experiences and identify and work towards goals.

As well as working at the Foundation Matt does mentoring, fundraising, and gives inspirational talks to businesses and young people around the country. He is an ambassador for the Rugby Football Union's Injured Players Fund and Restart Rugby (the Professional Rugby Association's charity), and a Patron of Special Effect, a charity which helps disabled children use technology for communication and fun.



## Michael McGrath

### Polar adventurer, inspirational speaker and charity CEO

“When you’re driving something forward, when you’ve set goals, when you’ve absolute belief in your purpose, much can be achieved. So, whilst there’s fire in my belly, I’ll continue to push on”

In 2004 Michael McGrath became the first disabled person to lead expeditions to both the North and South Poles. His achievement was recognised by the Queen at Buckingham Palace and he was included in the 2004 Christmas Day broadcast.

These expeditions helped establish the Muscle Help Foundation (MHF), a multi award-winning national charity delivering personalised, transformational experiences in the UK for children and young adults with muscular dystrophy and related neuromuscular conditions, of which Michael is the founder and CEO. MHF’s goal is to deliver 657 of these life-changing ‘Muscle Dream’ experiences, one for every muscle in the human body. For beneficiaries, outcomes include improved confidence, self-esteem and an increased sense of hopefulness. Six years of evaluation data has been rigorously examined, giving the charity’s impact academic validation through a pioneering study available on its website at [www.musclehelp.com](http://www.musclehelp.com).

After his polar expeditions, Michael became a sought after motivational and business speaker. He has given conference keynote presentations around the world for private and public sector organisations, leads and advises hotel operators on how to generate revenue from the purple pound, and is a judge on the Cateys, the hospitality industry’s equivalent of the Oscars.

Michael has been recognised with several distinctions, including being a 2012 Paralympic torch-bearer, closing TEDx Warwick 2018, and most recently being awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Arts by the University of Hertfordshire.

“Never let anyone tell you no and believe in your abilities.”



## Michele Thompson Receptionist, Usel

For over 21 years Michele has worked for Ulster Supported Employment and Learning (Usel) as a receptionist, delivering first class customer service to everyone she comes into contact with.

Usel, based in Belfast, is the largest organisation in Northern Ireland supporting people with disabilities and health conditions into employment. It provides employment support and training to individuals and companies, and runs recycling and manufacturing initiatives.



In her job Michele works with clients and staff as well as business leaders, politicians and a number of dignitaries. Her colleagues describe her as the most helpful and enthusiastic person, and say that everyone who comes into contact with her has an unforgettable experience of the non-profit.

Michele's passion and commitment helps the organisation to drive its core values of championing ability, and Michele, who has cerebral palsy, is keen to inspire and encourage young people to fulfil their potential and follow their dreams. She believes that people with a disability have so much potential which is often not recognised and says that her key learning is “never let anyone tell you no and believe in your abilities.”

This can-do attitude has made her an outstanding ambassador for the organisation over the years, helping people with disabilities and health conditions across Northern Ireland.



“You decide where your limits are, not others.”

 @/WYP\_NickRook  
 @WestYorksPolice  
 @WYP\_DA  
 westyorkshirepolice

## Nick Rook

### Police officer, West Yorkshire Police

Nick Rook is a police officer serving on the West Yorkshire Police Force. He always wanted to join the police and began his career volunteering as a special constable. He eventually joined the regular police force and after 21 years of work achieved the rank of chief inspector.

Nick has always been active and sporty. He represented England in karate championships in his teens, and did sports studies at university. He has dyslexia, though as this was only diagnosed when he was in his 30s, he grew up without support for it.

Four years ago Nick developed an ulcer in one eye, which developed into further serious eye problems. Nick no longer has useful signs in his right eye and varies greatly in his left eye. This very painful condition has resulted in Nick being registered disabled. However, with support from RNIB and Access to Work, Nick has made adaptations which allow him to continue working for West Yorkshire Police.

He has become part of the West Yorkshire Police Disabled Association (WYPDA), helping to support colleagues with disabilities across the force. Nick promotes inclusion within the West Yorkshire Police Force and has shared his story with RNIB campaigns, even featuring on local radio.

Last year Nick represented WYPDA in the European Diversity Awards, where it was highly commended, and he has been nominated in the National Diversity Awards. This year he passed his board exams to become a chief inspector.

He says: “I’m glad as a teenager that I chose not to listen to the people who said I would never amount to anything. My advice to any person, particularly any young person who is struggling, is not to give up and to remember you decide where your limits are, not others.”





## Richard Cartwright

### Lecturer, University of Southampton and ICAEW

Richard Cartwright is an award winning lecturer at the University of Southampton and a Chartered Accountant who serves as a council member for the Institute of Chartered Accounting in England and Wales (ICAEW), chairing their Assessment Committee and sitting on their Learning and Professional Development Board.

Richard, now a Principal Teaching Fellow in Accounting at Southampton Business School, started his early career at professional services firm KPMG. Two weeks into his graduate training contract he broke his neck in an accident which resulted in life-changing injuries.

After nine months in hospital, he returned to work part-time before restarting his graduate training programme a year later. His big break came in 2011 when he was seconded to the company's Department of Professional Practice to run training courses. "I loved it. For the first time I felt that I could do my job as well as (or better than) my colleagues", he says.

Having found his true vocation and wanting to teach full time, Richard left KPMG and moved into higher education, joining Solent University as a senior lecturer in accounting in 2012. There he helped found Team Solent Sharks Wheelchair Rugby Club, acting as the club's chairman for the first three years while the club established itself. He left Solent University to join the University of Southampton in 2015.

A passionate advocate for volunteering, Richard espouses the benefits of putting your hand up and helping out. He says: "It has led to some weird and wonderful opportunities, from helping people to play a sport that they love to helping shape government policy in education."

Volunteering has also helped his career flourish, with his extra-curricular activities being a significant contributor to his successful promotion in 2018, making him one of the youngest lecturers of his seniority in the country.



## Tom Ray Founder, Resilience and Co

In 1999 Tom Ray was at home with his wife Nic when he suddenly developed sepsis, where the immune system massively overreacts to an infection. To save his life Tom had both of his arms and legs amputated, as well as part of his face. He wasn't expected to survive, and he was in a coma for five months.

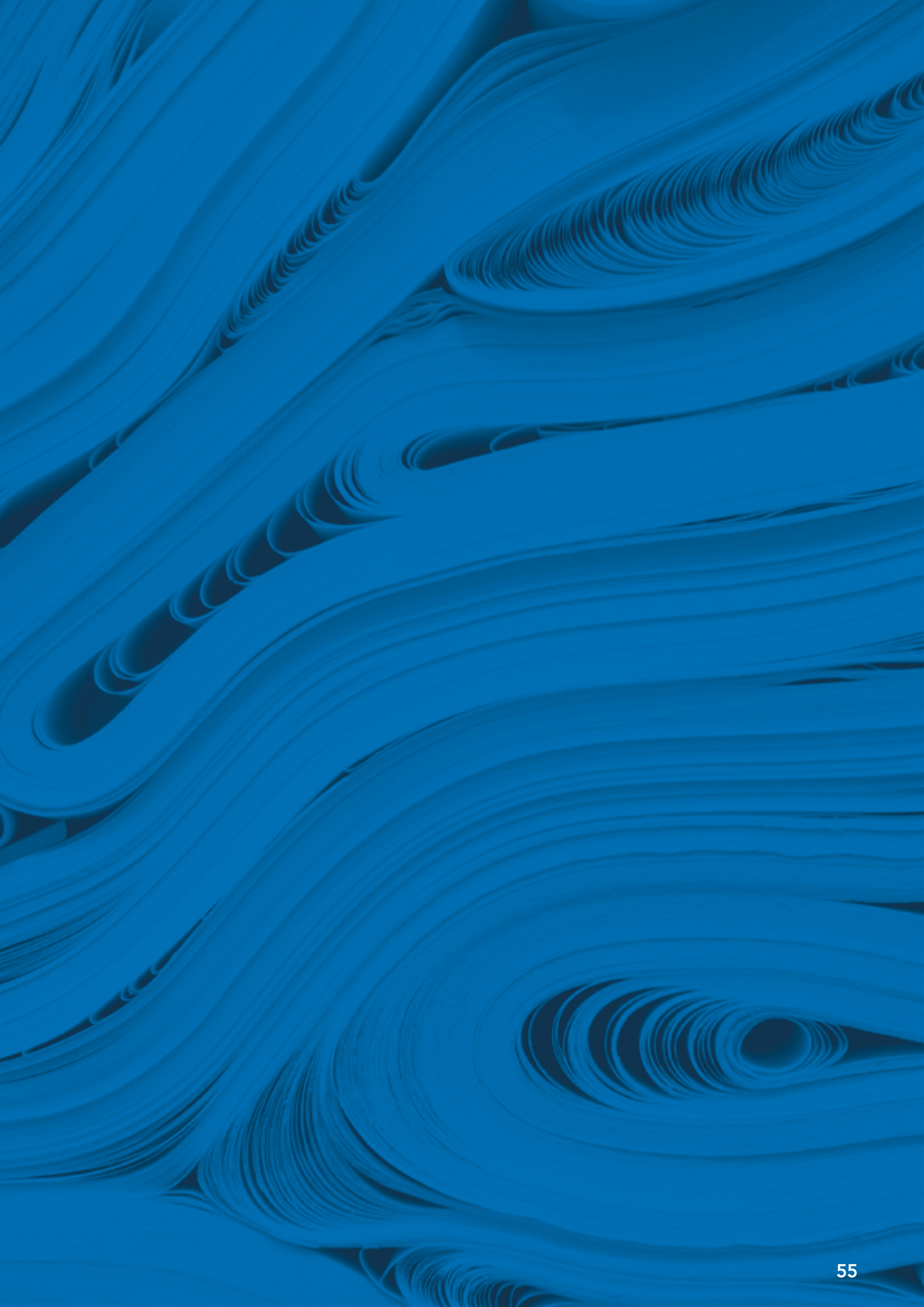
Recovery and rehabilitation have been challenging. Tom has fought battles with mental health, prosthetics, facial reconstruction and getting back into work.

Tom was a top fundraiser for 2012's Sport Relief. He's also campaigned with the UK Sepsis Trust to raise awareness about the life-threatening condition, which kills 44,000 people every year in the UK. His story was turned into the 2016 feature film, *Starfish*, and in 2017 Tom and Nic published a book of the same name, based on their personal diaries.

Now, as Resilience and Co, they are renowned motivational speakers about resilience, recovery and managing change. They speak to audiences of healthcare professionals, carers, schools, universities and business organisations. They're funny, inspiring, unique. They spread messages of confidence, collaboration and understanding.

Tom's words of advice? “Be generous, be kind, always follow your heart and always love the life you have.”

Tom has used his growing profile to lobby the government, talking to former Health Secretary Jeremy Hunt. He received a personal apology about the failure to diagnose his sepsis from the medical director of the NHS, but he's determined to do everything he can to reduce the incidence of this deadly condition. He featured prominently in last year's Panorama Sepsis edition on BBC 1, and acted as a mentor for the participants of BBC 2's disability employment documentary, *Employable Me*. His weekly blog about disability and resilience reaches out to a global audience.





# Entertainment



Cerrie Burnell

David Proud

Jessica Kellgren-Fozard

Jess Thom

Jill Barkley

Lisa Hammond

Melissa Johns

Ruby Wax

Sam Barnard

Sam Renke

Steve Day

Cerrie has used her public platform to raise the profile of disability and encourage parents to discuss the subject with their children.



## Cerrie Burnell

TV presenter, actor and writer

During her time on leading children's channel CBeebies, Cerrie Burnell has broken down barriers, challenged stereotypes and overcome discrimination to become one of the most visible presenters on kids' TV.

Cerrie was born with her right arm ending below her elbow. She trained at Manchester Met and worked as an actor in shows such as *The Bill*, *Eastenders*, *Holby City* and *Grange Hill* before landing the role on CBeebies in 2009. Cerrie gained widespread support for refusing to wear a prosthetic arm while presenting the *Bedtime Hour* and *Discover and Do* (or in any of her previous work). When a minority of parents made negative comments about her, Cerrie used the publicity as a public platform to raise the profile of disability and encourage parents to discuss the subject with their children.

Cerrie is also a well-known author and has published nine children's books with Scholastic, including *Snowflakes*, which she adapted for the stage with Oxford Playhouse in 2016 and the Harper series, which was a World Book Day title in 2016. She also wrote and starred in *Winged: A Fairytale* when it was staged at the Tristan Bates Theatre in 2007, as well as creating her one-woman show *The Magical Playroom*, which premiered at the Edinburgh Fringe in 2013.

Cerrie has been listed by the Observer as one of the top ten children's presenters of all time. She is a patron of Polka Theatre, has been an author-in-residence at Great Ormond Street and in 2017 was awarded an honorary degree for services to media from the Open University.

Since leaving CBeebies in 2017, Cerrie has appeared in BBC soap *Doctors* and presented a documentary for the broadcaster about the NHS. Her new book, *The Girl With The Shark's Teeth*, comes out in January.

“We have to respectfully, but adamantly, reclaim our own future.”



 @prouddavid  
 [www.davidproud.co.uk](http://www.davidproud.co.uk)  
 [www.imdb.com/name/nm2669710](http://www.imdb.com/name/nm2669710)

## David Proud Actor and Writer

In 2009 David Proud became the first lead disabled cast member on EastEnders, playing the intelligent and spiky Adam Best. The producers used David’s own dry delivery to create a complex character on prime time TV, who happened, like David, to use a wheelchair.

David has appeared in wide variety of film and TV roles, including Doctors, CBBC series Desperados, Secret Diary of a Call Girl, No Offence and Siblings. He has recently appeared as a series regular in the second series of the highly-acclaimed crime drama Marcella for ITV/Netflix.

David uses his platform to push for greater inclusion and talk about the barriers disabled actors face, from the physical (such as red carpets being inaccessible for wheelchairs) to the lack of roles and accurate representation. As David initially thought he couldn’t make acting his career because of his disability, he enjoys now being an ambassador for young people with similar disabilities.



He explains: “We have to respectfully, but adamantly, reclaim our own future. If it is about disability then it should be crafted by us, not for us.”

David has written opinion pieces for the Guardian, and wrote the book *The Art of Disability* about representation in the media. The book draws on a decade of his own experience and other voices in the industry, and was published in 2016. He has also written a number of plays and screenplays, including *Friendzone*, which played at Theatre Royal Stratford East. David has just co-written a new drama series featuring disability with Noel Clarke and *Unstoppable*.

David is a full member of the Film and Television chapter of BAFTA, voting on nominees each year.



“I’m living it [life] to the full in the most fabulous way possible – and so can you!”

 JessicaKellgrenFozard  
 @JessicaOutOfTheCloset  
 @JessicaOOTC  
 [www.jessicaoutofthecloset.co.uk](http://www.jessicaoutofthecloset.co.uk)

## Jessica Kellgren-Fozard

### Presenter, blogger and YouTuber

Jessica first came into the public eye on the BBC reality TV show Britain’s Missing Top Model about models with disabilities. While working as a presenter on Brighton-based TV station Latest TV she received messages from the general public that she ‘wasn’t disabled enough’. The experience made Jessica even more of an advocate about invisible disabilities.

She says “To me ‘disabled’ is a positive label: it shows that life might be a struggle but I’m here and I’m living it to the full in the most fabulous way possible – and so can you!”

Jessica models for vintage fashion brands, and is a progressive social media personality. Across a variety of social media channels she writes and vlogs about a mixture of accessibility issues, gay culture, deafness, beauty, vintage fashion and a love of old Hollywood glamour.

Her YouTube channel covers a fun and diverse mix of topics, including tutorials on vintage hair, makeup, British Sign Language, recipes for restricted diets, queer culture, travel vlogs and a variety of videos with her wife, Claudia. Her content often uses hashtags like #BabeWithAMobilityAid to break down stereotypes, and doesn’t shy away from the realities of living with a disability, such as shooting videos lying on the floor due to chronic illness.

Jessica has created online content for BBC Three and has bylines in the Guardian and Cosmopolitan magazine. She writes eloquently about a variety of issues around representation, including the double-edged sword of disabled people being seen as ‘inspirational’.





“There is a lesson to be learnt from everything that life throws our way.”

<https://www.touretteshero.com/>

## Jess Thom Comedian and theatre-maker

Jess Thom is a comedian and theatre-maker who has toured internationally. She's best known for her alter-ego and company Touretteshero, which won the 2014 Total Theatre Award for Best Emerging Company at the Edinburgh Fringe.

Though she's had tics – involuntary sounds or movements – since she was six, Jess was only diagnosed with Tourette's syndrome in her early twenties. While some people's symptoms of this neurological condition reduce with age, Jess's have become more pronounced. Her thinking about the condition changed when a friend described her tics as a 'language-generating machine'.

Touretteshero began in 2010 with Jess's long-time friend and collaborator Matthew Pountney. Wearing a superhero outfit, mask and cape, Jess's alter ego celebrates the humour and creativity of her unusual neurology. As well as being entertaining, Touretteshero raises awareness of the condition and reclaims it from common misunderstandings that tics are deliberate or only about swearing (coprolalia).

The website Touretteshero.com shares her tics and invites other people to take them as creative springboards to create art or music (or anything else) from phrases like 'Moon, do you miss Neil Armstrong tickling your pits?' or 'Good afternoon Britain, please pencil in a revolution.'

Jess has made a documentary for BBC2 called Me, My Mouth and I and has featured in a documentary about language presented by Stephen Fry, as well as This Morning and Russell Howard's Good News. She has given a TED Talk at the Royal Albert Hall and is a Preogwuelarr1a0t0G2la0s1t8onbury festival. Her book Welcome to Biscuit Land: A Year in the Life of Touretteshero is published by Souvenir Press.



Jill is a fantastic role model for what visually impaired people can achieve.

 @Jill\_Barkley  
 JillBarkleyShow/

## Jill Barkley

### DJ, journalist and advocate

At 19 years old, Jill suddenly lost her sight from diabetic retinopathy. While adjusting to the huge change, Jill's mum encouraged her to give hospital radio a go – and Jill found her new passion.

Jill studied sound engineering and came top of her class of eighty boys before taking a media degree at university and became a qualified journalist. Around 12 years ago Jill joined RNIB Connect Radio (originally Insight Radio) in Scotland, Europe's first station for blind and partially sighted people.

Every week day Jill presents her show The Morning Mix on RNIB Connect. It's a mix of great tunes, disability issues and listener call-ins, with her own unique mix of empathy, positivity and fun. She has also worked with BBC Radio Scotland hosting the Music Match and this year she took over a late night slot, presenting The Jill Barkley Show. Some of those listeners now tune in to RNIB Connect, too.

As well as being a fantastic role model for what visually impaired people can achieve, Jill has been very open and frank about the challenges, including the breakdown she had a few years after losing her sight. She's an ambassador for RNIB and Guide Dogs UK, regularly speaks for both charities at events, and featured in a documentary about guide dogs on ITV.

Jill's a regular at festivals, where she reviews performances and interviews acts. She's usually right at the front of the crowd at the shows, and has interviewed huge international stars including Dolly Parton, Guy Garvey from Elbow and Florence Welch from Florence + The Machine. She throws herself in to a huge range of things, from fire-breathing to conducting an orchestra, to flying a light aircraft!



Lisa has been engaging with the issue of representation of disability in the media for over 20 years.

 @lisahammondwhop

 [www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/still-no-idea/](http://www.royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/still-no-idea/)

## Lisa Hammond

### Actor and writer

Lisa Hammond first came to our screens in 1992, playing Denny in *Grange Hill*. She has acted on screens and stages consistently for the last 26 years, most recently playing series regular Donna on *EastEnders*. She is currently working on writing and performing her own show, *Still No Idea*, with Rachael Spence and Lee Simpson, which will tour the UK before coming to the Royal Court Theatre in London.

Throughout her career Lisa has chosen the parts she plays carefully, so as not to perpetuate harmful stereotypes in the media. She feels strongly that the parts disabled actors choose to play have a direct effect on how the topic of disability and disabled people is treated in the wider world. She has been engaging with the issue of representation of disability in the media for over twenty years. *Still No Idea*, the show she is currently making, will explore some of these issues in a uniquely light, funny and theatrical way.

She and best friend Rachael are about to make their work together over the years official by setting up their own company, called Bunny. As writing partners they are also part of BAFTA's Elevate 2018 programme.

Lisa's television credits include *Lowdown* (C4/All4) as a co-writer and performer; *Vera* (ITV), *The Interceptors* (BBC), *One Night* (BBC), *Psychoville* (BBC), *Casualty* (BBC), *Bleak House* (BBC), *Where The Heart Is* (ITV), *Max and Paddy's Road to Nowhere* (C4), *Holby City* (BBC), and *Everytime You Look At Me*.

Her theatre credits include *Still No Idea* (Rachel and Lisa/Improbable), *Too Clever by Half*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *A Little Fantasy*, *Shoot Me In The Heart* (Told By an Idiot), *Marat/Sade* (RSC), *The Little Locksmith* (USA), *The Hanging Man* (Improbable/The Sydney Opera House), *The Adventures of the Stoneheads* (National Theatre/Trestle Theatre Company) and *Peeling* (Graeae).



“There is a lesson to be learnt from everything that life throws our way.”

 @melissaclarej  
 @melissa\_clare\_j  
 [www.modelsofdiversity.org](http://www.modelsofdiversity.org)  
 [www.triplec.website](http://www.triplec.website)  
 [www.invisiyouthissity.com](http://www.invisiyouthissity.com)

## Melissa Johns

### Actor

Melissa Johns is an actor, best known for playing Imogen Pascoe on Coronation Street and Sadie in BBC’s The Interceptor. She trained at the acclaimed East 15 drama school and won the Laurence Olivier Bursary Award given to especially talented emerging actors.

Her casting in Coronation Street in 2017 made national headlines, as actors with disabilities are so under-represented in primetime entertainment. Melissa campaigns for actors with disabilities, and works to improve opportunities and representation in the creative arts. She is an ambassador for the charity InvisiYouth, which gives comprehensive support to teenagers and young adults with disabilities and chronic illnesses.

Melissa says: “My advice to any young person fighting for change would be to let the things that happen to you in life make you, not break you. There is a lesson to be learnt from everything that life throws our way.” When Melissa had hacked private photographs leaked earlier this year, she used it as an opportunity to speak about perceptions of disability. She made national press when she published a series of empowering photographs, shot with Models of Diversity – which she is an ambassador for – and spoke about her own experiences, and how big a difference representation in the media had made for her previously, such as seeing a strong female character with a similar disability in Mad Max: Fury Road.

Along with fellow Corrie actor Cherylee Houston, Melissa is a co-founder of TripleC, a Manchester-based collective of creatives working to increase access to the arts for disabled people. It runs workshops, builds confidence, and creates training and networking opportunities between schools and theatres.

Melissa has been nominated for the Diversity in Media Awards, shortlisted for the National Diversity Awards, the Positive Role Model of the Year Award, and last year she won JCI’s 10 Outstanding Young Persons Award.





Ruby is a household name, as a talented actor, writer, producer, presenter and comedian, and is also a powerful voice in the fight against mental illness.

## Ruby Wax

### OBE Comedian, TV star and mental health campaigner

Ruby Wax is a household name, with a career that encompasses everything from *Absolutely Fabulous* to *Count Duckula*. She's a talented actor, writer, producer, presenter and comedian, but she is also a powerful voice in the fight against mental illness.

As well as the TV and comedy work she became famous for, Ruby has helped facilitate workshops and present keynote speeches that focus on leadership, communication and neuroscience, easily mixing in the humour among heavy and important subjects.

Ruby knows what she's talking about, both from lived experience and academically. She studied psychology at the University of Berkeley, California, and gained a Diploma in Psychotherapy and Counselling from Regent's College, London. She has also recently completed a Master's degree in Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy at Oxford University.

Her work to raise awareness of and break the stigma surrounding mental health has included a best-selling book, *Sane New World: Taming the Mind*, which she adapted into a one-woman show in 2014. She has also given a TED Talk, *What's So Funny About Mental Illness?* and launched the website [blackdogtribe.com](http://blackdogtribe.com), which provides help, support and information to people with mental illness.

Ruby has also opened Frazzled Cafés in Brighton, Cambridge, Leeds, Liverpool, London (Marble Arch, Stratford and Victoria), Newcastle, Norwich and Wolstanton in Staffordshire. These peer support groups offering people a chance to talk honestly about experiencing mental health concerns without the stigma. For her services to mental health, Ruby received an OBE in 2015.



“I love acting.  
It is my life now.”

 [sam.barnard.104](#)  
 [@samalanbarnard](#)  
 [www.spotlight.com/interactive/cv/2538-1279-9283](http://www.spotlight.com/interactive/cv/2538-1279-9283)  
 [www.mixcloud.com/TheAudiobox](http://www.mixcloud.com/TheAudiobox)

## Sam Barnard

### Actor

Sam has been acting for 10 years, appearing in TV shows including EastEnders, The Inbetweeners, Grantchester and The Suspicions of Mr Whicher. He has also been on the reality TV show The Undateables, which follows the day-to-day work at a dating agency for disabled people.

Acting is a notoriously difficult profession to break into, and even harder with so few roles for actors with visible disabilities. However, Sam has worked hard, trained professionally, and he keeps getting bigger and better jobs. His advice to other actors is: “if you don’t get that role you auditioned for, don’t be disheartened, another role is just round the corner.”

In 2017 Sam was in an episode of Silent Witness and had a lead role in an episode of Casualty. He also works on the stage and last year starred in a professional pantomime of Jack and the Beanstalk in Rye. He is currently working with Hackney Showroom and Culture Device, supported with Arts Council funding, developing a production of Waiting for Godot where all the parts are played by professional actors with Down’s syndrome. He says: “I love acting. It is my life now. It is so great to get a new character in my head!”

This year Sam had a lead role in a five-part drama on BBC Radio 4, and more locally he co-produces and presents a radio show called the Audiobox with his friends from bemix. The weekly Dover Community Radio show features guests including musicians and MPs.

Sam is a very visible role model for young disabled people who want to work in the arts. He also co-led a workshop at the Young Vic Theatre in London, aimed at theatre directors and producers, about how to make theatre more accessible for disabled actors.



Samantha Renke is an actor, disability campaigner, and is also a patron, trustee and ambassador for various disability causes.

 @samrenke  
 [www.head2headtheatre.co.uk](http://www.head2headtheatre.co.uk)  
 [www.filmfreeway.com/LADFF](http://www.filmfreeway.com/LADFF)  
 [www.littledevilfilm.com](http://www.littledevilfilm.com)  
 [www.parallellifestyle.com](http://www.parallellifestyle.com)

## Sam Renke

### Actor and disability campaigner

Samantha Renke is an actor, disability campaigner, and is also a patron, trustee and ambassador for various disability causes.

She made her acting debut starring in the 2013 film *Little Devil*, for which she won Best Actress at the Los Angeles Diversity Film Festival. She featured in the series of Maltesers adverts in 2016 which starred disabled actors and became talking points in the national media.

Samantha campaigns for better representation for disabled people in the media, and for better access in day-to-day life. She has worked on the Pants Down 4 Equality campaign about the need for proper accessible toilets, and has spoken out on social media and in the press about the impact it has on her life when toilets and disabled access areas aren't actually fully accessible.

She has written for numerous newspapers, magazines and blogs including the Huffington Post, PosAbility Magazine, and Recite Me. She has also made numerous appearances on national television to speak about disability issues, including Channel 5's *The Wright Stuff*, Sky News and *Loose Women*.

In addition, Samantha is a patron of the Head2Head Theatre company, which creates inclusive and accessible theatre and multi-sensory productions. She's an ambassador for Parallel London, which runs fully-accessible family fun runs, and the non-executive director of Born This Way Media.



Steve is a founding member of the comedy Troupe Abnormally Funny People

 @TheRealSteveDay  
 @deafsteve99

## Steve Day Comedian

Steve Day likes to introduce himself as Britain's only deaf comedian, or as he puts it: "If there are any others, I haven't heard". Steve started out as a finalist in the Daily Telegraph's Open Mic Award in the year 2000, and went on to become a finalist in the Hackney Empire's New Act of the Year 2002. He describes himself as eighty per cent deaf, "though sometimes I say I'm 85 per cent. Just to add a bit of glamour."

A comedy circuit regular, Steve tours extensively around the UK and has taken seven different one-man shows to the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, including, this year, *Adventures in Dementia*, a tribute to his father who has Alzheimer's. Steve is a founding member of the comedy Troupe Abnormally Funny People, which has been going since 2005. The majority of comedians in the team have disabilities, "although we often have a token non-disabled comedian too". Other members include Steve Best, Liz Carr, Tanyalee Davis, Chris McCausland, Simon Minty, and now Britain's Got Talent winner Lee Ridley, known as Lost Voice Guy.

Though also hilarious, Steve's work makes time to deal with big questions and confront the audience about how they think about diversity and inclusion. He also isn't afraid to poke fun at some of the occasionally pompous attitudes surrounding the disability industry. Steve recently took part in a promotional video for the Disability Rights Commission, and does lots of after dinner and conference speeches "if the money's good".

Steve says: "I was delighted to be included in the Shaw Trust Power List 2018 and even more so when I googled it to find out what it was. I promise to spend the millions this will make me wisely, perhaps on a speedboat."





# Media & Publishing

Andy Stevenson  
Deborah Williams  
Elin Williams  
Eugene Grant  
Dr Frances Ryan  
Gary O'Donoghue  
Heather Lacey  
Holly Tuke  
Mik Scarlet  
Robyn Steward  
Ruby Jones  
Steph Weller  
Sam Cleasby  
Sara Hawthorn  
Shona Cobb  
Steph Weller  
Tanya Motie

Andy is one of the most experienced and senior people in the media industry to have a disability.



## Andy Stevenson

### TV producer and broadcaster

Andy works for TV production company Whisper Films and has helped it win contracts to produce Channel 4's coverage of the 2018 Winter Paralympics and 2020 Summer Paralympics. He was series producer in PyeongChang and is expected to play the same role in Tokyo. He also works on football and NFL American football.

In the lead-up to Rio 2016, Andy was a commissioning executive in Channel 4's sport team and at the games he reported for BBC Radio 5 Live, as he had at London 2012 and the Glasgow Commonwealth Games. He can still be heard as an occasional football reporter on 5 Live and BBC Final Score. Andy was born, in his own words, "without a full complement of limbs" but has always loved sport and grew up idolising broadcasters Des Lynam and Barry Davies. Whilst studying English and American Literature at the University of Warwick, Andy discovered student radio and hasn't looked back. He did a postgraduate course in broadcast journalism at Cardiff University and his first job in broadcasting was at BBC Radio Berkshire, performing a variety of on- and off-air roles. After five years in radio, Andy landed his dream job in TV in 2009, working for BBC Sport at Television Centre on Sports Personality of the Year and numerous acclaimed documentaries.

Early in his career, Andy admits he was reluctant to talk about his disability. "I wanted to focus on being myself and doing a good job rather than being known as 'that guy with no hands and one leg'." However, in recent years Andy has acknowledged that he has a responsibility to help younger disabled people looking to work in the media industry.





“Ambition is nothing to be afraid of, in fact, it’s that possibility that keeps me going.”

[creativediversitynetwork.com](https://creativediversitynetwork.com)  
[@cdnrebs](https://twitter.com/cdnrebs)

## Deborah Williams

### Executive director, Creative Diversity Network

Deborah Williams has over thirty years’ experience in the arts creating her own theatre shows, stage managing, producing arts venues and leading projects and initiatives across the cultural industries. In 2000 she founded her own production company, Reality Productions, producing and touring works nationally and internationally. She explains: “Ambition is nothing to be afraid of. In fact, it’s that possibility that keeps me going.”

Over the last seven years Deborah has worked for Arts Council England, creating its equality analysis process, making sure it meets its Public Sector Equality Duty and that the commissions programme, Unlimited, was included in the 2012 cultural legacy projects. She became diversity manager at the British Film Institute and designed its diversity standards. This work was formally recognised in the House of Commons by the Minister for Culture.

In 2016, Deborah took on her current role as executive director of the Creative Diversity Network (CDN), the industry membership organisation for diversity in UK broadcasting. Through Deborah’s leadership CDN launched Project Diamond, the world’s first broadcast-focused diversity data tool for both on- and off-screen talent. Diamond is now used by the BBC, ITV, Channel 4, Channel 5 and Sky.

Over the past twelve months, Deborah has been sought out by the British Army and WOW Festival and is a regular keynote speaker at schools and conferences in the UK and the US. Later this year she will travel to Bratislava to speak at the European Platform of Regulatory Authorities. Deborah is also a mentor for other disabled women in the arts and in July this year, she travelled to Rwanda to direct a piece by young disabled artists for the annual Ubumuntu Arts Festival at the Kigali Genocide Memorial.

“[Sight loss] doesn’t deprive me of my skills, my passions or my abilities.”



[www.myblurredworld.com](http://www.myblurredworld.com)  
[@myblurredworld](https://twitter.com/myblurredworld)  
[@myblurredworld](https://www.instagram.com/myblurredworld)

## Elin Williams

### Blogger

Elin started her blog in 2015 to share her love of writing and her all her passions, including music, beauty, fashion and lifestyle, and educate others on how she enjoys them as a visually impaired person. Her blog shares her perspectives and raises awareness of wider accessibility and disability issues. It also works to motivate and help others with visual impairments. She explains: “Sight loss deprives me from being able to see the world like everyone else but it doesn’t deprive me of my skills, my passions or my abilities.”

At three years old Elin started losing her sight, and aged six she was diagnosed with degenerative eye condition Retinitis Pigmentosa. By age twelve she was registered blind/severely sight impaired, though she has some remaining vision.

One of the most difficult things which came with the disability was isolation, and Elin’s blog works as a great tool to help other young visually impaired people find support, useful resources, and even friends. The tone of the blog is positive, enthusiastic and can-do, while not glossing over the difficulties that come with navigating a world which was not designed for people who are blind or visually impaired.

After finishing her A-Levels Elin worked for a year at RNIB, the Royal National Institute of Blind People. This year she enrolled at the Open University, where she’s studying for a BA (Hons) degree, with a specialism in creative writing.

Though the blog began with a focus on accessible beauty it has expanded to a much wider range of topics, and through the blog and her social media channels Elin has connected with thousands of other young people. She’s written guest posts for a variety of other blogs and charities, and been involved in RNIB campaigns. Her work has appeared on a number of influential blogger lists, including winning two awards at the Teen Blogger Awards 2018.



**“You have every right to be fiercely proud of who and what you are.”**

## **Eugene Grant** **Restricted Growth Association UK**

Eugene has worked in communications, policy, and public relations for a number of organisations including a local council, a charity, a think tank, and a leading university. He uses his professional skills to eloquently challenge cultural assumptions about people with dwarfism.

He has written articles for a number of publications, including the Guardian, the Independent and the New Statesman, and has appeared on BBC and CBC Radio. His writing advocates for more accurate, authentic, and positive representations of people with dwarfism, and highlights the harm done by limited portrayals of dwarf people as ‘entertainers’ or ‘others’ and, what he calls the ‘spectacle of the dwarf body’.

His social media presence provides a mix of education and campaigning, drawing attention to the harassment and discrimination many disabled people continue to face, and uses his platform to promote leading voices in the dwarfism community. He also writes about people with dwarfism throughout history and casts a critical eye over the historical lives of people who lived as members of the court as jesters, entertainers and, essentially, ‘human pets’.

Eugene is a trustee of the grassroots dwarfism charity RGA UK and has previously worked with Scope on its End the Awkward campaign. He has mentored children with dwarfism and helps to run youth camps and activity weekends for dwarf children and their families. He is an articulate advocate and has found fans across the disability and literary worlds.

Eugene says: “If I could pass on one piece of advice to younger dwarf and disabled people, it’d be this: you have every right to be fiercely proud of who and what you are. Your body is beautiful and your power is inherent, no matter how loudly others may try to deny it. Never be in doubt that you matter.”

“I try to use my platform to bring under reported issues out into the public domain.”



 @drfrancesryan

 [www.theguardian.com/profile/frances-ryan](http://www.theguardian.com/profile/frances-ryan)

 [www.differentprinciples.wordpress.com/](http://www.differentprinciples.wordpress.com/)

## Dr Frances Ryan

### Academic, columnist and activist

Frances Ryan is an award-winning journalist and political commentator. She is a Guardian columnist, writing the Hardworking Britain series, and feature writer. She also contributes to the iPaper, The Pool, and New Statesman. Frances has a doctorate in political theory, exploring inequality in education. As a journalist she writes about many different forms of inequality, from gender to the impacts of austerity.

Frances' work has a strong campaigning aspect. Recent stories include disabled women being forced to undergo unnecessary surgery because of a lack of accessible toilets, wheelchair users being sent to inaccessible benefit centres, and young disabled people threatened with care homes due to social care cuts.

Frances has muscle weakness and uses a wheelchair to get about. She has spoken publicly about how disabled people can get into journalism, from specific opportunities to how flexible work situations like freelancing could be more accessible.

As the UK has seen large cuts to disability services and social security, Frances' writing is a public record of the way policies have disproportionately affected disabled people. “I try to use my platform to bring under reported issues out into the public domain. As a disabled journalist, I also know how important it is to work to shape discussions about disability: anything from the problems of being labelled ‘inspirational’ to the brutal impacts of public funding cuts.”

She is a political commentator on radio and TV such as BBC Sunday Politics, Sky News, Woman's Hour, BBC Radio 5Live, BBC Radio 2's Jeremy Vine Show, and LBC. She is a regular public speaker, including giving guest lectures at universities.

Frances wrote a chapter on disabled feminism in *Can We All Be Feminists?* which is out now, and her first book, *Crippled*, will be published in 2019 by Verso.





## **Gary O'Donoghue** BBC correspondent

Gary O'Donoghue played blind football for England while he was still at school, and managed to fit in work experience at the BBC. He went to Oxford University, where he read Modern Languages and Philosophy, and returned to the BBC when he graduated, working as a reporter at BBC Westminster, and then on *The World Tonight* and the flagship *Today Programme* on Radio 4.

He has marked out an incredible career, going on to cover stories for BBC News across Europe, Africa and Asia. In 2004 he became a political correspondent in Westminster, reporting for TV, radio and online.

In 2007 Gary raised awareness of disability issues in the BBC after a story he broke, and which led on the BBC News at Ten, was handed to another journalist. He received an out-of-court settlement on grounds of disability discrimination. In response the BBC sent hundreds of employees on disability awareness schemes.

Gary has reported for and occasionally presented *In Touch* on Radio 4 since the start of his career, and for many years was a reporter and presenter for *From the Edge*, a BBC 2 magazine show about issues facing disabled people. Gary's work on a radio documentary on river blindness won the One World Media Award.

By 2011 Gary was the chief political correspondent for BBC Radio 4, and in 2014 he moved to Washington DC to take up a post as a Washington correspondent for BBC News.

“Now is the time we celebrated the disabled experience for the rich, positive, diverse experience that it is.”



🌐 [www.nosuperhero.co.uk](http://www.nosuperhero.co.uk)  
🐦 @nosuperheroblog  
📷 @nosuperheroblog  
📺 nosuperheroblog

## Heather Lacey

### Writer, inclusion ambassador and disability rights activist

Heather began advocating for disability rights through her blog, [nosuperhero.co.uk](http://nosuperhero.co.uk), to provide an honest and open look at disability through her own lived experience. Her writing aims to raise awareness of disability and the ways it interacts with other aspects of a person's life, in amongst her other passions of gin, guinea pigs, books and recipes.

Using her own experiences of cerebral palsy, Scheuermann's Kyphosis – a form of spinal curvature – and fatigue, Heather writes about the many ways disability influences other elements of her life. She uses Twitter and her blog to share experiences of anxiety and depression, and discusses her experiences frankly to give readers both insight and solidarity.

She explains: “I think we often forget that disability does not discriminate: it doesn't care who you are or where you're from. Now is the time we celebrated the disabled experience for the rich, positive, diverse experience that it is, and it is only through educating – and in turn empowering others – that we can begin to do so.”

Heather's nuanced guest article for Scope during Mental Health Awareness Week looked at how comparisons between physical and mental health (while intending to increase understanding of mental health) might have some unintended consequences. As an inclusion ambassador for inclusive minds she recently spoke at the Children's Media Conference about media accessibility and its importance as part of the Changemaker strand, sponsored by BAFTA.

As well as writing candidly on her blog and social media channels, Heather is a fantastic public speaker and a talented academic. She recently graduated from studying an MRes degree, with a thesis exploring how disability is portrayed in contemporary literatures. She presented a public seminar on her thesis, and has recently worked with the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals on its diversity review of the Carnegie Medal selection process.



🌐 [www.lifeofablindgirl.com](http://www.lifeofablindgirl.com)  
📺 [www.youtube.com/channel/UCOuT21MYb1TXioiGKkgX2fw/](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCOuT21MYb1TXioiGKkgX2fw/)  
📘 [lifeofablindgirl](https://www.facebook.com/lifeofablindgirl)  
🐦 [@lifeofablindgrl](https://twitter.com/lifeofablindgrl)  
📷 [@lifeofablindgirl](https://www.instagram.com/lifeofablindgirl)

## Holly Tuke

### Life of a Blind Girl

In 2015, Holly started her blog, [lifeofablindgirl.com](http://lifeofablindgirl.com). As the name suggests, it covers Holly's day-to-day life as well as a variety of topics relating to sight loss and disability, like education, assistive technology, beauty and lifestyle. Needless to say, the blog is fully accessible for assistive technology users.

Holly's particular eye condition is Retinopathy of Prematurity (ROP), due to being born prematurely. One of her aims of the blog is to educate people about the spectrum of visual impairment. Holly shares her own experiences and works to tackle common misconceptions and stigmas around sight loss and disability, showing non-disabled audiences that disability shouldn't limit a person.

Another aim is for the blog to be a resource for other people with sight loss or other disabilities. Holly shares things she's learned, from life hacks to pep talks, as well as tips on assistive technology, apps and services.

She says: "I share my experiences of living with a visual impairment to try and help others in the same or similar situation, to encourage them to face this predominantly sighted world no matter what life throws at them."

Holly went to university, where she studied children, young people and families. Originally she was aiming to be a teacher, but that has evolved into the aim of working in the disability sector: she now works at a university as an assistive technology officer.

Holly volunteers with the Royal National Institute of Blind People and has volunteered with LOOK-UK and other charities, both local and national. She has written guest blogs and posts for Royal Society for Blind Children, RNIB, Scope, Ability Superstore, Seable, RightHear and others, and has been featured and interviewed in many more. This year Holly has also started a YouTube channel, for which she edits her own videos using a screen-reader.



“Disability should not be a barrier to being happy.”

[www.mikscarlet.com](http://www.mikscarlet.com)  
[www.mikscarletaccess.co.uk](http://www.mikscarletaccess.co.uk)  
[@mikscarlet](https://twitter.com/mikscarlet)  
[mikscarlet](https://www.facebook.com/mikscarlet)

## Mik Scarlet

### Broadcaster and presenter

When he broke into the broadcasting industry in the late 1980s, Mik Scarlet was one of the first visibly disabled people to do so. His kids' show *Beat That* was syndicated around the world, and for ten years he was the lead reporter for BBC 2's disability magazine show, *From the Edge*.

With nearly thirty years' experience as a broadcaster and journalist, Mik made the BBC 2 documentary *Can Walk, Won't Walk* about deciding whether to have more surgery that might allow him to walk. He decided against it, and the programme challenged the assumption that someone who uses a wheelchair must be unhappy about it.

He says: “If I had known the kind of life that laid ahead of me when as a 15-year-old I was told I'd never walk again, I would have hugged the surgeon who told me. I've had an amazing life and am now happy to focus a great deal of my career trying to ensure other young disabled people can have whatever life they desire. Disability should not be a barrier to being happy and fulfilled and we owe it to every disabled child out there to build a society where that is the case.”

Mik has toured in a number of bands and was the first disabled actor in a UK soap on *Brookside*. He works as a presenter for shows including *Good Morning Britain*, *Inside Out*, *Victoria Derbyshire*, *the Wright Stuff* and *Good Morning*, and presented coverage of wheelchair rugby for the Paralympic Games.

Mik continues to offer advice and support, using his presenting skills to run disability quality training for companies including Uber, Network Rail and London Underground. He works closely with organisations including the Alliance For Inclusive Education, Transport For All, Inclusion London, Enhance the UK, and the charity Scope.





## Robyn Steward

### Musician, autism consultant and author

Robyn was born at 28 weeks and has ten disabilities, including Asperger's syndrome. At secondary school she felt overwhelmed and was bullied frequently. After being kicked out of school Robyn went to a college where she met other autistic young people, and they suggested training college staff on how to support them. After one session a tutor told Robyn: "You're really good at this. This could be your career."

Robyn began volunteering with the National Autistic Society to improve media awareness. For the past 14 years she's worked as a mentor, consultant and trainer with people at all levels of the education system, in social work and parent groups. She runs workshops on topics like anxiety with neurotypical and autistic children and adults.

Robyn has a particular passion for championing the diversity within autism and she creates online surveys on topics like stimming and safety. Her first book, *The Independent Woman's Handbook for Super Safe Living on the Autistic Spectrum* was based on survey results and Robyn's experience of developing strategies for others. Her second book, *The Autism Friendly Guide to Periods*, comes out next year.

Robyn says: "I thought I was thick until I wrote my first book. I learned I just do things differently so I have deliberately focused on building skills that can earn me money and to get unique results so people will want to use my skills, and I'll have maximum flexibility in how I use my time."

Robyn is a visiting research associate at the Centre for Research in Autism and Education, and was joint awardee of the 2015 NAS Professional Awards for Outstanding Achievement by an Autistic Individual for her work on rape and sexual abuse against autistic people.

Robyn is also a trumpet player, and has spoken on a panel at South by Southwest festival and conference.



 chr0nicallycute  
 @chr0nicallycute  
 @chr0nicallycute  
 [www.youtube.com/channel/UC5mosUv4diLW-Ol2u4Qh2fA](http://www.youtube.com/channel/UC5mosUv4diLW-Ol2u4Qh2fA)

## Ruby Jones Blogger

At 15 years old Ruby started experiencing pains which doctors dismissed as 'growing pains'. However by the end of her GCSEs she was she was virtually bed-bound.

Eventually Ruby was diagnosed with Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome as well as Ehlers-Danlos syndrome, which affects joints and connective tissue, and can mean chronic pain, fatigue, and frequent dislocations. Ruby's blog, [rubyj0nes.com](http://rubyj0nes.com), has been running for four years, taking people on her journey with her from holidays to hospitalisations and everything in-between.






Ruby's blog is humane, honest, and doesn't shy away from the ups and downs that come with chronic pain and mobility issues. She discusses both the mental health impact and the challenge of managing conditions, which can vary from day to day. Ruby's blog charts both the successes and challenges, in amongst posts on beauty trends, student life, family and friends. On her social media channels she covers topics in an engaging way which works to break down assumptions about what disability 'looks' like.

Ruby has written about invisible disability, prompted by someone not believing she was disabled, and works to increase awareness and understanding. Earlier this year she successfully campaigned for her gym to change an ableist quote they had written at the top of the stairs and set up a project called Chronically Cute Cards, which sends handmade cards to other chronically ill people and disabled people.

She says: "Being a young person with an invisible illness brings almost as many issues as the disability itself. I wish I could go back in time to encourage myself to embrace every part of my disability. My EDS isn't the only aspect of my personality, but it is certainly a part of me, and once I stopped fighting my illness and started accepting it, life became more meaningful and less exhausting."

“I wanted people to know they aren’t alone.”



 SoBadAss1/  
 @so\_bad\_ass  
 @instastoma  
 [www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk](http://www.crohnsandcolitis.org.uk)  
 [www.sobadass.me/](http://www.sobadass.me/)

## Sam Cleasby Blogger

Sam Cleasby’s blog, So Bad Ass talks about her life since she was diagnosed with Ulcerative Colitis in 2003, including her 2013 colectomy and ileostomy. The blog provides support, real stories and information, along with “terrible arse jokes”. It has not only been immensely popular with readers, but has also been instrumental in raising the profile of, and awareness about, invisible illnesses.

She continues to spread her blog’s message that “just because you have a bad ass, it doesn’t stop you from being a badass” and amplifies the voices of other people with IBD and stoma stories, as well as stories about self-esteem and body image.

Sam says: “It’s an absolute honour to be recognised on the Shaw Trust list. I started my blog as there is such a taboo around talking about illness and disability and I wanted people to know they aren’t alone. There is no shame and we can change the world by talking about our lives and the way that our disabilities are a part of who we are, and we should be proud of that.”

Newspapers including the Independent, the Daily Mirror, the Daily Mail and the Metro have all shared Sam’s story, and she’s appeared on Woman’s Hour, BBC Sheffield, BBC Breakfast, This Morning, and at a variety of charity events.

Sam has done all this around her day job: working on Scope’s online community, where she helps support thousands of people with disabilities and their families by helping them to find the emotional and practical support they need. She also works with other bloggers to share their stories on the community on a wide range of different topics.

Sam also supports Crohn’s and Colitis UK as a community champion.



“By being visible and encouraging others to speak up ... I believe we can make a positive difference”

 @DisAbilityPR  
 [www.infusioncomms.co.uk](http://www.infusioncomms.co.uk)

## Sara Hawthorn Director, InFusion Comms

Sara Hawthorn is director of InFusion Comms. Her career in media has been diverse, covering journalism, copywriting, blogger-in-residence, and PR professional. She founded InFusion to provide a flexible and alternative agency model and to show that disability need not be a barrier to success in the PR industry.

Sara says “It took me many years to be upfront and honest about my hearing loss and the impact it has on my life. There’s still a considerable challenge ahead in tackling biases and improving the numbers of PR people with disabilities in our industry. By being visible and encouraging others to speak up whilst providing support to employers, I believe we can make a positive difference.”

As a hard-of-hearing business owner she is committed to improving the diversity of the PR and comms sector, specifically related to disability inclusion, and founded the DisAbility PR Network to build a community, educate agency owners and raise awareness of issues surrounding inclusion and diversity.

Throughout her career Sara has worked to demystify public relations work, starting the InFusion Comms agency because she wanted a job that would make her proud to work in the sector. InFusion Comms focuses on speaking plainly, working ethically, and improving the ways businesses communicate with the public.

Throughout her long career Sara has remained committed to improving the accessibility and diversity of the communications industry, especially in the field of disability. She has worked with different organisations to tackle the low number of disabled people in the comms industry, setting an example as the hearing impaired director of her own firm. She has written extensively on the topic of disability in PR in PRWeek, PR Place, Influence Online and the Telegraph.





Shona works to change and improve services and support within disability sectors.

 [www.shonalouise.com/](http://www.shonalouise.com/)  
 [@shonalouiseblog](https://twitter.com/shonalouiseblog)  
 [@shonalouiseblog/](https://www.instagram.com/shonalouiseblog/)  
 [MyMarfanLife](https://www.facebook.com/MyMarfanLife)

## Shona Cobb Blogger

Shona started her blog in 2011. What began as a beauty and lifestyle blog has evolved and grown, reflecting changes in Shona's life and her condition. As Shona has experienced more complications from Marfan Syndrome she has shared them candidly, from surgeries to the social impact of disability. These days shonalouise.com is a platform for activism, discussions about accessibility and ableism, as well as many of Shona's other passions: fashion, beauty, musicals and more.

Shona highlights aspects people might not have thought of, such explaining that she and many others need pre-chopped ingredients in national conversations about excessive packaging. She has worked on a project for the Guardian, written for the Metro, and worked with Scope, Channel 4 and Channel 5.

She explains: "When I started my blog at just 14 I had no idea about the challenges I would face in the years to come, the multiple surgeries and my decline in my mobility. But, I also didn't know about how much I would achieve as a result, how many opportunities I would get and the difference I'd make in the world. The path I've taken in life is so different to what I'd hoped for but it's turned out to be the better path in the end."

Shona works to change and improve services and support within disability sectors. She is the youngest member on the patient advisory group for the British Heart Foundation, a Global Brand Leader for InvisiYouth and the Marfan Syndrome Ambassador for the Hypermobility Syndromes Association. She's also helped local shops to install ramps to make them more accessible.

In her own words, Shona has "changed from the teenager writing posts in her bedroom to a young woman, still writing posts in her bedroom but also trying to make change within this world."

“I was always told when I was younger that the only limit is your imagination.”

📷 @stephweller97  
🐦 @stephweller97  
🌐 www.stephanieweller.co.uk



## Steph Weller Blogger

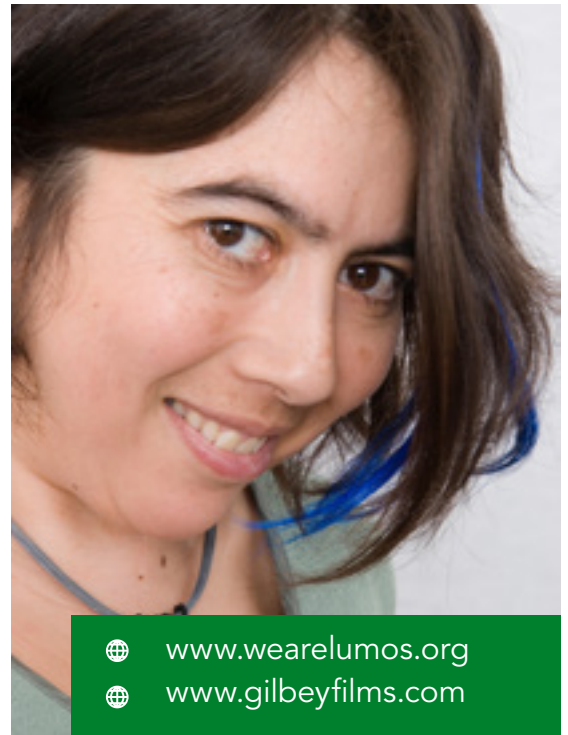
Steph grew up travelling a lot with her family, and loved holidays, beauty and fashion – including doing beauty pageants and acting. Weeks before her 18th birthday she was diagnosed with the spinal condition Spondylolisthesis, where vertebrae move out of alignment. Initially she was told it could be corrected with surgery. However, just days after the diagnosis Steph lost feeling and movement in her legs due to a complication called Cauda Equina Syndrome or CES.

Steph now uses a wheelchair to get about, and has lost no momentum in the things that excite and interest her. Her accessible lifestyle and travel blog, and growing social media presence, look at travel and more. She shares her day-to-day life with her adapted car, makeup business and product reviews. Her blog looks for the fun and fashionable – like medical ID bracelets which look like standard jewelry, and reviewing Mercedes-Benz cars with a view to fitting wheelchairs in the boot. However she also looks at everyday aspects too, like limited access on buses. This year Steph started an awareness-raising campaign using the hashtag #SpondylolisthesisAndMe to talk about her condition and encourage others to share their stories.

Steph was an ambassador at this year's Naidex, Europe's largest disability event which shows the latest in adaptive technology – both for the people who use it, as well as for healthcare professionals and people who work in the industry.

Most recently Steph has been documenting her weight loss journey and is working on a public speaking as well as an album which will be released soon. She says ““Never let anyone or anything dictate what you want to achieve in life, I was always told when I was younger that the only limit is your imagination, and that advice has been what has helped me achieve so much.”

Throughout her career  
Tanya created inclusive  
production teams and  
championed diverse talent



## Tanya Motie

Diversity champion, mentor and former BBC executive producer

Growing up in the shadow of Television Centre, Tanya knew from the age of twelve that she was going to work for the BBC. She packed out her holidays with work experience and ran her university TV station but even with that determination and knowledge it took her two years to break through the barriers to earn her first contract with the corporation.

Tanya's childhood dream was to be a war correspondent, but she soon decided that being a producer was the most effective way to tell important stories in the way she felt they needed to be told.

Tanya's BBC career spanned 25 years, starting out at the World Service with assignments from Ethiopia to Beijing. Following time at CBBC, producing flagship shows Blue Peter and Xchange, she became channel executive for BBC One and BBC Three. Throughout her career Tanya created inclusive production teams and championed diverse talent, as many in the industry would testify. Since retiring Tanya mentors, supports and connects people, creating alternative networks to create change.

"I've had an incredible career, but nobody can succeed on their own. I owe so much to those people who believed in me and helped me on my way." Tanya sits on the director general's Diversity Advisory Panel, where she has quietly influenced policy at all levels to try to make sure disabled people have equal access to opportunity and are represented, nurtured and developed throughout the BBC.

Tanya is the diversity advisor for Gilbey Films, a disability-focused production company founded by her husband, Paralympic medallist Andy Gilbert. She is a trustee for J.K. Rowling's charity Lumos, working to get children out of institutions and into safe, loving families or community-based care. Tanya feels this is vital, particularly when it comes to disabled children, who are often the first to be left forgotten in orphanages.



# Politics & Law



David Buxton

David Merkel

James Taylor

Kevin Shinkwin

Marsha de Cordova

Placida Uzoamaka Ojinnaka

Robert Halfon

Simon Harmer

Yasmin Sheikh

“Celebrate disABILITIES, you will grow stronger, more skilled, more self-confident, and more successful.”



 [www.actionondisability.org.uk](http://www.actionondisability.org.uk)

## David Buxton CEO, Action on Disability

David Buxton was the first deaf parliamentary candidate in British history to use British Sign Language (BSL). He co-founded the Liberal Democrats' Disability Association and as one of Britain's most recognised leaders in the deaf community, he lobbies for the legal recognition of BSL. During his time at the British Deaf Association, David was instrumental in re-launching Sign Language Week, which has been running since 2013, and he influenced the Liberal Democrats, Labour Party, Green Party and Scottish National Party to include a BSL Act in their election manifestos.

Until last year David was CEO and director of public affairs at the British Deaf Association. In that role he wrote a highly influential shadow report to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD).

David left his role at the British Deaf Association to become CEO of Action on Disability, where he continues to lobby Westminster on behalf of people with disabilities. He is currently challenging the government over the Access to Work cap and has succeeded in persuading the government to increase the cap from £42,100 to £57,200. He was one of three disabled political candidates recently working together to issue a legal challenge to bring back Access to the Elected Office Fund for Disabled People. The government announced it will re-install a £250,000 fund, a partial victory.

David also set up the Surrey Deaf Community, and is currently chairing the BSL Costings Group to support the All Party Parliamentary Group on Deafness. He says: “Successful Deaf and disabled people have fear, doubts and worries. They just don't let these feelings stop them. Don't wait until everything is just right, it will never be perfect. So what? Get started now. Celebrate disABILITIES, you will grow stronger, more skilled, more self-confident, and more successful.”



“Every disabled law student and practitioner have goals and aspirations – they should be encouraged and helped to fulfil their potential.”

 [www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/practice-management/diversity-inclusion/lawyers-with-disabilities-division/](http://www.lawsociety.org.uk/support-services/practice-management/diversity-inclusion/lawyers-with-disabilities-division/)

## David Merkel Chair, Lawyers with Disabilities

David was admitted as a solicitor in 1976, and was instrumental in setting up the Lawyers with Disabilities Division of the Law Society (LDD). The group, originally called the Group for Solicitors with Disabilities, was created in 1989. The legal profession is notoriously competitive and difficult to break into, and LDD works to support disabled students, trainees and lawyers, as well as improving the system to reduce barriers to employment and career success.



David has spent his career working primarily in areas of law around education and local government. As chair of LDD and a Law Society Council member he has worked to keep accessibility issues high on the Law Society’s agenda, feed into government initiatives on disability, and develop and increase the division’s mentoring and outreach programme helping other disabled lawyers.

Every disabled lawyer has the potential to be a trailblazer and role model for others in their profession, and given the potential reach of the legal profession: lawyers with disabilities have fantastic potential to advocate for change. David writes: “Every disabled law student and practitioner have goals and aspirations – they should be encouraged and helped to fulfil their potential.”

David has personally mentored a number of other lawyers, and LDD runs regular workshops on CVs and networking events. Its members include law students, paralegals, lecturers, practicing and retired lawyers and judges. The reach of LDD is very broad, reflecting and encompassing a wide range of disabilities, and therefore a wide range of accessibility needs. LDD provides and advocates for the right support so that their members can reach their potential, and help others join the profession.

James believes strongly in the need for the full participation of disabled people in campaigning on issues that affect them.



 [www.scope.org.uk](http://www.scope.org.uk)  
 [www.smartenergygb.org](http://www.smartenergygb.org)  
 @scope  
 @Jamestaylor2

## James Taylor

### Head of policy, campaigns and public affairs, Scope

James has had Spina Bifida since birth, and wears orthotics. He studied politics at the University of Birmingham and now works for Scope as the head of policy, campaigns and public affairs, where he's responsible for the pan-disability charity's influencing work. James has 10 years' experience in campaigning and shaping public policy. At Scope he works to shape government and business policy on disability, and he has helped bring a huge number of the issues disabled people face into the public eye.

James leads a team of ambitious campaigners, public affairs professionals and policy experts to identify and deliver Scope's campaigning on the issues that matter, including tackling disability unemployment, driving down the extra costs disabled people face and developing the next generation of young disability campaigners.

He is passionate about equality for disabled people and believes strongly in the need for the full participation of disabled people in campaigning on issues that affect them.

Before he worked at Scope, James ran campaigns at consumer rights group Which? and led LGBT charity Stonewall's campaigning, spearheading its rainbow laces campaign, in collaboration with Paddy Power, to make football more inclusive for LGBT people. The campaign reached thirty per cent of the UK population in a single week.

James is a talented spokesperson and has spoken on shows including BBC Breakfast, The One Show and Rip-Off Britain. He's passionate about getting people's voices heard, and giving them the information and the knowledge to create change. He works towards this goal in his voluntary role as non-executive director of Smart Energy GB, the voice of the smart meter rollout. Combining some of these areas of expertise, he recently gave evidence to the Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy Committee about the energy price cap and the impacts this would have on disabled people.





- 🌐 [www.channel4.com/news/lord-shinkwin-we-have-lost-powerful-voice-on-disability](http://www.channel4.com/news/lord-shinkwin-we-have-lost-powerful-voice-on-disability)
- 🌐 [www.thejc.com/news/news-features/i-m-not-jewish-which-i-had-to-take-part-in-the-march-of-the-living-kevin-shinkwin-1.468435](http://www.thejc.com/news/news-features/i-m-not-jewish-which-i-had-to-take-part-in-the-march-of-the-living-kevin-shinkwin-1.468435)

## Kevin Shinkwin Conservative Peer

Kevin Shinkwin was created a life peer, taking the title Lord Shinkwin, in October 2015. Since then he has used his position to champion disability equality issues both in the House of Lords and the media. In his first year he introduced a Private Member's Bill on disability equality after being horrified to learn that ninety per cent of babies diagnosed with Down's syndrome are aborted (some as late as 36 weeks). Echoing concerns raised by the former Disability Rights Commission and supported by Disability Rights UK, his Bill proposed that the law should be changed to prevent disability being used as grounds for abortion.

Kevin has been consistently clear that he does not take a position on abortion itself, only on disability equality, and is concerned that the current law logically informs a continuing culture of prejudice after birth. He says: "All human beings are born equal. However, according to our current law, before birth some are more equal than others. That's wrong. The law needs to change if we're ever to have real equality."

Last year Kevin resigned as a board member of the Equality and Human Rights Commission following the abolition of the position of disability commissioner, telling peers that he would not collude in this "shameful downgrading of disability."

In lasting gratitude to his childhood surgeon, who fled Nazi-occupied Prague as a boy in 1939, Kevin supports a secure Israel at peace with its neighbours and believes fighting the racism of anti-Semitism is crucial.

Before entering the Lords Kevin spent most of his career in the charity sector, with roles at Macmillan Cancer Support, Cancer Research UK and The Royal British Legion, where he led successful campaigns on the Armed Forces Covenant and enhanced support for bereaved Armed Forces families.



“Disabled people face countless injustices. My mission in politics is to tackle those injustices.”



@MarshadeCordova



[www.marshadecordova.co.uk/](http://www.marshadecordova.co.uk/)

## Marsha de Cordova

### MP and disability rights campaigner

Marsha became Labour MP for Battersea in June last year and was quickly promoted to Labour’s frontbench as Shadow Minister for Disabled People.

Marsha has the condition Nystagmus and is registered blind. She studied law at South Bank University and has worked at a variety of sight loss charities, including Action for Blind People, South East London Vision (which she founded and where she worked as its first CEO), and most recently the Thomas Pocklington Trust, where she worked as director of engagement and advocacy before her move into politics.



In 2014 Marsha was elected as a councillor in Lambeth and last year she defied the odds by overcoming an 8,000 Conservative majority in Battersea, a constituency that was considered ‘unwinnable’ for Labour. Since becoming an MP, Marsha has continued to work on a wide range of disability issues.

Marsha has been very open about the access issues she has faced as a disabled MP, such as large print versions of bills being made available to her later than the standard print size – sometimes even after the parliamentary debate has passed. Speaking to the press about these accessibility issues at the heart of our democracy has increased awareness of the barriers many partially-sighted people experience every day.

In her work as Shadow Minister for Disabled People, Marsha has been a vigorous opponent of cuts to social security and social care, highlighting the particular harm this has had on disabled people. She is passionate about tackling the many barriers disabled people face – from employment to transport, education to politics – and is a dedicated campaigner for a society where disabled people can participate equally. She says: “Disabled people face countless injustices. My mission in politics is to tackle those injustices, so that all disabled people are free to live in dignity and to participate equally.”

**“I believe that everyone needs to be able to SMILE and SHINE.”**



 /placida-uzoamaka-ojinnaka-a196a31a/  
 @inspiredbyway

## **Placida Uzoamaka Ojinnaka** Lawyer

Placida Uzoamaka Ojinnaka is a solicitor who volunteers and advocates across areas including social work, education, employment and disability issues.

This year she qualified as an interpersonal mediator for helping people with disabilities and vulnerabilities to resolve disputes. She has also been elected to a steering committee, while continuing to mentor law students in her community and is a committee member of the Law Society’s Lawyers with Disabilities Division. She also fundraises and does volunteering for charities including the British Polio Fellowship.

Placida is also extremely politically active, working closely with her local Labour Party. She is an effective activist and lobbyist who is passionate about disability rights and equal access. She has held persuasive debates in all members’ meetings, pointing out the challenges disabled people face in accessing employment and training.

Her most recent achievements include a successful campaign to persuade the Law Society to go purple in November and December this year as part of the Disability Confident campaign. Placida is a graduate of the Jo Cox Leadership Programme and has been nominated to a patient governor position with a leading NHS Trust.

At the same time she has also been working closely with the Lawyers with Disabilities Division and Cardiff University, performing research into the employment of people with disabilities in the legal field.

Placida says: “I believe that everyone needs to be able to SMILE and SHINE. This means that it takes only Simple Motivation Inspires Lifelong Experiences and Smiling Helps Increase Nurturing Events. Be positive and always try, never give up. If you are listening to naysayers, use their negativity to drive your ambitions and keep focused and patient.”



**“If it is not impossible  
there must be a  
way to do it.”**

## **Robert Halfon** **Conservative MP**

Robert Halfon has been the MP for Harlow since 2010. Since then, he has campaigned hard on a number of issues, including freezing fuel duty and ending hospital car parking charges once and for all. In 2017 Robert was selected as chair of the Education Select Committee, where he promotes social justice and skills in education, whilst scrutinising government policy.

Robert has spastic diplegia, and had a number of major operations for it as a child, developing osteoarthritis later in life. He says he has had to work twice as hard to get to where he is, but has worked creatively as a result.

It's difficult for Robert to walk far so he developed an innovative form of campaigning which is “ten times more successful than traditional methods”. At general election time, he sits at the side of the A road running into Harlow to engage with voters as they drive to work.

Robert champions apprenticeships and made his maiden speech in Parliament on the subject in 2010, later winning the Spectator 'Campaigner of the Year' Award for his work. He was the first MP to employ a parliamentary apprentice and has employed five apprentices since then, also promoting apprenticeships nationally as Apprenticeships Minister until 2017.

To Robert, apprenticeships provide a real ladder of opportunity and allow people to earn while they learn. He passionately believes in that ladder of opportunity; the key to people getting the education, skills and training they deserve, to achieve the jobs, security and prosperity, that they and our country need.

He says: “If there was one piece of advice I could give to younger readers, it would be to remember the words of Sir Nicholas Winton: “If it is not impossible there must be a way to do it.”





“You can’t go through life saying ‘why me?’ You have to say ‘why not me?’”

🌐 [www.blown-away.org](http://www.blown-away.org)  
📷 @simonmharmer  
📄 /simonmharmer  
🐦 @shorterSi

## Simon Harmer

### Public speaker, amputee advocate

Simon joined the Army in 1997 as a combat medic. He served in conflicts in Bosnia, Iraq, the Congo, and Afghanistan, rising to the rank of Sergeant. In 2009, three months after his wedding, Simon was deployed on an operational tour in Afghanistan with the Coldstream Guards.

Whilst on a routine foot patrol, Simon stepped on an improvised explosive device which exploded, and amongst other injuries lost both his legs in the blast. He spent the next four-and-a-half years recovering, and for most of that time he was at the Defence Medical Rehabilitation Centre near Epsom.

Coming from a medic’s background, Simon has always been extremely aware of, and very grateful for, the lifesaving help he received, and was determined to give something back. He is a volunteer ambassador for several service charities, including BLESMA and Help for Heroes. He represented the UK on the swimming team at the 2014 Invictus Games, an international sporting event for wounded and injured people from the armed forces.

Simon says: “If I’ve learned anything from the last few years it’s this: you can’t go through life saying ‘why me?’ You have to say ‘why not me?’ And get busy living.” He works as a public speaker, through his company Blown Away, and speaks to a variety of business, sport and military audiences including Lloyds Bank and Deloitte. Two years ago he gave a TEDx Talk at Royal Tunbridge Wells, and he has appeared in press including the Daily Record and BBC Radio Northampton. He lives in the South of England with his wife and three super-charged children.



“Disability doesn’t mean inability.”

[@Diversematters](https://twitter.com/Diversematters)  
[/yasmin-sheikh-96069783/](https://www.linkedin.com/company/yasmin-sheikh-96069783/)  
[www.diversematters.org](http://www.diversematters.org)  
[/Diversematters/](https://www.facebook.com/Diversematters/)

## Yasmin Sheikh

### Diverse Matters

At 29 years old Yasmin was a lawyer at an international law firm when a spinal injury resulted in life-changing injuries. As she began adjusting to her new reality, she realised she had become the first disabled person she knew.

When she returned to work after just over a year, using a wheelchair, Yasmin found some colleagues’ attitudes to her had changed dramatically. However, she was invited to join her company’s Diversity Board.

Finding a new passion in helping set up the Disability Network at work, Yasmin began coaching disabled colleagues and creating a better organisational approach to disability. She found this new focus so rewarding that she set up her own company, Diverse Matters, which helps other organisations and individuals become more confident around disability-related issues in the workplace. She is a council member and vice-chair of the Lawyers with Disabilities Division of the Law Society.

Yasmin gives presentations, keynote speeches and events talking about her own experience and the soft bigotry of low expectations she suddenly encountered. She shares ways organisations can become more welcoming, including a few tips on what not to say. She explains: “Disability doesn’t mean inability. Sometimes we need to reframe our disability for ourselves first so we can convince others of our skills. When you lose something you often gain something else, even if you can’t see it at the time – a different viewpoint, empathy and resilience.”

This year Yasmin gave a TEDx talk for TwenteU, and won the Chairman’s Award at the Asian Women of Achievement Awards.





# Sport



Aaron Phipps

Alfie Hewitt

Anne Walufa Strike MBE

Bailey Matthews

Billy Monger

Ellie Simmonds OBE

Jane Sowerby

Lauren Jones

Louise Hunt

Lucy Shuker

Mark Ormrod

Theresa Osborne-Bell



## Aaron Phipps Athlete

Aaron is a Great Britain Wheelchair Rugby athlete and Paralympian. At 15 he had both his legs and most of his fingers amputated due to blood poisoning from meningitis. After a 10km fundraising wheelchair race for the Meningitis Research Foundation (MRF), Aaron's sporting journey began, starting with wheelchair racing. He competed in two London Marathons, coming fourth in 2009, before joining the GB wheelchair rugby squad, scoring over half of his team's points in the 2012 London Paralympic Games.

Aaron's passion for wheelchair rugby inspired him to create the biggest club in the south of England. Team Solent Sharks wheelchair rugby club has helped the lives of many disabled people wanting to play the sport.

In 2016 Aaron decided to climb Mount Kilimanjaro to raise funds for MRF and Shaw Trust, with a specially adapted off-road wheelchair. However, when the wheelchair didn't work Aaron refused to be carried and reached the summit after four days of trekking on his hands and knees: the first time a wheelchair user has reached the top of Kilimanjaro unassisted. The story made headlines and a Channel 5 documentary was made about it.

Aaron says: "Losing my legs was the worst thing to have happened to me, but it was also the best. It has given me a completely different outlook on life and created so many opportunities. We've all got choices."

Aaron works on MRF's awareness campaigns and has helped raise over £250,000. Inspired by Aaron, the charity created Pushing the Boundaries, an annual sports event for children who have lost limbs to meningitis. He is an athlete mentor for Sky Academy, Chancellor of the New Forest and Southampton Children's University, and received one of Junior Chamber International's Ten Outstanding Young Persons award 2017. Aaron is currently training for the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games.

Credit: Anna Vasalaki



## Alfie Hewitt

### Wheelchair tennis player

At twenty years old, Alfie Hewitt is the youngest person to ever hold the title of World number one in men's wheelchair tennis. He has won the 2017 NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters, the 2017 Grand Slam in singles at the French Open, and silver in the Rio 2016 Paralympic men's singles.

Alfie grew up in Cantley, Norfolk. With his mother's encouragement he tried a variety of wheelchair sports as a child, and first played wheelchair tennis at eight. He took to the sport quickly as something he could play with his brothers and sisters. Three years later he played his first tournament, and his astronomical rise saw him winning the title of World Junior Masters Champion for three consecutive years. With his partner Gordon Reid he won the Wimbledon wheelchair men's doubles twice, and silver in the men's doubles at the Rio 2016 Paralympics.

In addition to his many achievements in sports, Alfie also takes his role as an ambassador seriously and uses his platform to try to make a difference. As a professional sports person he has a packed schedule, but makes the time to give talks at schools across East Anglia. He shares his own experiences of being left out and bullied when he first needed to use a wheelchair, and helps inform young people and adults about how to be more inclusive. His public speaking fosters understanding, determination and resilience.



“For the next generation of disabled people: we must not give up.”

- 🌐 [www.olympia-walufafoundation.org/team.htm](http://www.olympia-walufafoundation.org/team.htm)
- 🌐 [www.annestrike.org/](http://www.annestrike.org/)
- 🌐 [www.uka.org.uk/governance/uka-board/](http://www.uka.org.uk/governance/uka-board/)
- 🌐 [www.tinfy.org/this-is-not-f](http://www.tinfy.org/this-is-not-f)

## Anne Walufa Strike MBE

### Paralympian, author and campaigner

Anne came to the UK from Kenya in 2000, and found wheelchair racing two years later. By 2004 she was competing in the Athens Paralympics for Kenya, reaching the 400m final. After becoming a British citizen Anne took part in the 2006 World Championships with Team GB, racing in the 200m and 400m.

Anne uses her platform as a Paralympian to campaign for a better, more equal society for people with disabilities. Last year, she hit the headlines for a different reason: campaigning for more accessible toilets after a humiliating experience on a long train journey. Instead of staying silent, Anne courageously wrote about the episode in the national press to bring public attention to an issue which affects many disabled people. She joined the Changing Places accessible toilets campaign, and, together with Lorna Fillingham, personally delivered a petition to Downing Street earlier this year.

In response the Department for Transport sent out a consultation called Draft Transport Accessibility Action Plan. The feedback is currently being analysed and Anne continues to pursue a result with the consultation team. She says: “Together we are strong and we are wiser than we were yesterday. For the next generation of disabled people: we must not give up.”

Anne is currently a non-executive director of the UK Athletics Board and supports a large number of charities including the British Polio Fellowship, Right to Play, Play for Change, CBM UK and Active Essex. She set up the Olympia-Walufa Foundation, which supports disabled people in the UK and abroad, and in 2014 her services to disability sport and charity were recognised with an MBE.

Anne is also a public speaker, has won the BBC’s My Story competition, and has published her autobiography, *In My Dreams I Dance*, with HarperCollins. She is currently performing the play *This Is Not For You* with disabled veterans.





“It’s what I do –  
I fall down I get  
back up again!”

🌐 [www.bmbfoundation.co.uk](http://www.bmbfoundation.co.uk)  
🐦 @BMBCharity  
📘 /BMBCharity

## Bailey Matthews Triathlete

In 2015 Bailey completed his first triathlon at just eight years old. The childrens’ Castle Howard Triathlon is made up of a 100-metre swim, a 4km bike ride and a 1.3km run. Twenty metres from the finish, Bailey abandoned his walking frame, the crowds cheered and despite a couple of tumbles, he crossed the finish line unaided. When asked how he felt when he fell, he replied: “It’s what I do – I fall down, I get back up again!”

The mobile phone footage went viral and was picked up by BBC News, CNN, and other news agencies worldwide. Bailey’s grit and determination, along with his cheeky smile, are captivating: the confidence and joy he gained from participating and completing the triathlon is immeasurable and the many interviews that followed demonstrated how unfazed he was by the publicity.

Later in 2015 Bailey won the BBC Sports Personality Helen Rollason Award, a Pride of Britain Award and a Yorkshire Young Achievers Award.

Bailey believes in inclusive sport and has used the publicity he has received to encourage others to #BeMoreBailey and get involved. In 2016 he went on to complete all five triathlons in the Castle Triathlon Series, including events in France and Ireland, and he even hosted his own ‘Be More Bailey’ family triathlon in Derby. This year he completed the Ripon Junior Triathlon and the Nottingham Future Outlaw event, as well as continuing with the Castle Series Triathlons.

Through the Be More Bailey Charitable Foundation, a charity established to provide grants towards the equipment disabled children may need to enable them to participate in sport, Bailey continues to promote, inspire and provide opportunities for inclusive involvement in triathlon.



## Billy Monger

### Racing driver

Billy Monger's dream has always been to race in Formula 1. He started out in kart racing and went on to be a Ginetta Junior racer, with the nickname 'Billy the Whizz'. At 17 he was racing at Donnington Racetrack in a British Formula 4 event, which was broadcast live. However when the car in front of him stopped suddenly he was in a horrific and serious car crash.

Billy had to have both legs amputated, but the whole racing world rallied around him. He was sent letters from some of the biggest names in motorsports, and received a hero's welcome at Brands Hatch circuit when he returned, walking on prosthetics. Just 11 weeks after the crash he returned to the cockpit in a specially adapted vehicle.

Billy's recovery and return to adaptive motorsports have made national news. He's been supported by Mission Motorsport, a charity run by and for veterans which helps people with serious injuries to build confidence through motorsports. Using adapted cars Billy has been training with Terry Grant, one of the world's top stunt drivers, who's been astounded by his control of the cars. Billy has joined Terry and Mission Motorsport drivers to perform stunts with Jaguar F-Types at Birmingham's NEC as part of the stunt team at the Live Action Arena.

The dream to race in Formula 1 remains alive and well, and firmly in Billy's sights. He's now racing in Formula 3 and celebrated his first podium after the accident by drinking champagne out of his prosthetic leg.

Ellie became a household name in 2008 when she won gold at the 2008 Paralympics, aged just 13.



## Ellie Simmonds OBE 5 x Paralympic champion

Ellie swims in the S6 category, and became a household name in 2008 when, aged just 13, she became the youngest member of the British team at the Beijing Paralympics. At the 2008 Games she won gold medals in the 100m and 400m Freestyle. That same year she won the BBC Young Sports Personality of the Year Award.

In recognition of her prodigious achievements, Ellie was appointed as a Member of the Order of the British Empire in the 2009 New Year's Honours, becoming the youngest person to receive the title.

At the London 2012 Paralympic Games Ellie won two gold medals, a silver and a bronze, breaking two world records with her speeds. In the same event in Rio four years later she defended her gold medal for the 200m Medley and set another world record: the first below three minutes.

Ellie has won ten gold World Championship titles and was named Best British Sporting Performance for an Athlete with Disability at the Jaguar Academy of Sport Annual Awards. In 2013 she became an OBE for her services to Paralympic sport.

As well as training for Tokyo 2020, Ellie is also very involved in charity work and is a patron of the Dwarf Sports Association. She is also an ambassador for both The Scout Association and WaterAid, and works on the Active Kids campaign to encourage young people into sports. Ellie is a Girlguiding leader in Manchester, where she has the nickname Aqua Owl.

Ellie says; "I'm very grateful and honoured to have been included in this list amongst such wonderful, talented and inspirational people. I remember watching the Athens 2004 Paralympic Games and seeing Nyree Lewis (now Nyree Kindred) swimming and being just so incredibly in awe of her. She was my role model and the reason I decided to put everything into becoming a swimmer. As such, I understand just how important it is to have people to look up to, and that makes my inclusion in this list all the more of a privilege and one I'm very proud of."



Jane is a Paralympic skier and co-founder of adaptive sports charity Access Adventures.

[www.accessadventures.co.uk](http://www.accessadventures.co.uk)  
[@access\\_adventures](https://www.instagram.com/access_adventures)

## Jane Sowerby

### Paralympian and co-founder, Access Adventures

Jane had always loved extreme sports, and after a spinal injury she discovered mono-skiing. She went on her first adaptive ski camp around a year after her accident and found the whole experience gave her a renewed enthusiasm for life. She became an alpine racer for the British Disabled Ski Team and was selected to compete at the 2010 Winter Paralympics in Vancouver.

Sport can be a powerful rehabilitation tool for people with disabilities, with the potential to improve physical and psychological wellbeing. Jane knows first-hand how life-changing the positive impact can be. She volunteers as an adaptive ski instructor and an adaptive water-ski instructor, and sits on the committee for the British Disabled Water-ski and Wakeboard Association.

Jane enjoys a range of other adaptive sports and recognises the sense of freedom they can bring. After organising a number of adaptive water-skiing camps, she realised there was a real demand for these kind of activities for people with disabilities in the UK.

In 2015, along with fellow Paralympic skier Tim Farr, and physiotherapist Clare Williams, Jane set up Access Adventures. The charity organises residential camps to introduce adults and children to various outdoor adaptive sports, including skiing, water-skiing, wakeboarding, biking, kayaking and kite sports, all safe in the knowledge that there are suitable facilities, tailored instruction, adaptive equipment and the required level of support for them. The camps are designed to build self-confidence, encourage participation and inspire hope for the future.

Jane's mission, in her own words, is: "I would love to help make outdoor adventure accessible and affordable for everyone with a physical disability."





## Lauren Jones Wheelchair tennis champion

At thirteen years old Lauren was a talented footballer with Brighton and Hove Albion when a fall from a tree left her paralysed from the waist down. Although she did not play tennis before her accident Lauren had always loved ball sports, and within the first year of taking up wheelchair tennis she was selected to represent Great Britain at the Korea 2012 World Championships.

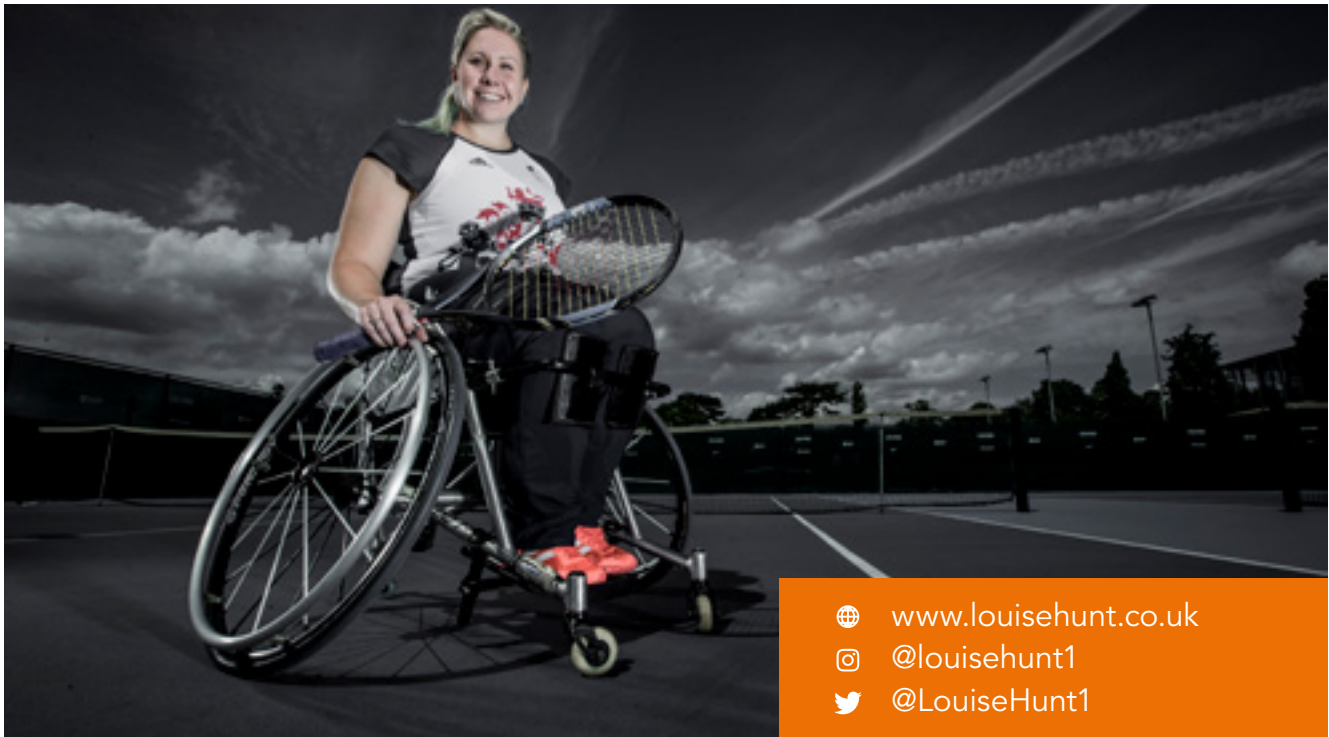
Along with doubles teammate Alfie Hewett she took home a bronze medal, and the following year they won gold. That same year she obtained world number one status in the junior girls division, and on finishing her education became a full-time professional athlete.

Lauren is now the reigning British national champion, having won the last three British Championships. She regularly competes in tournaments across the world and has won 10 national awards, twenty international titles and three world titles.

On top of her sporting achievements, Lauren is also a role model for women in sports and for adaptive sports. She works with people who have recently become disabled, such as wounded veterans, to help them come to terms with their injuries and try taking up adaptive sports. Her advice is: "Think about what you can do, not what you cannot. No matter what your situation, it could always be worse."

Lauren also gives talks to businesses and in schools to encourage people of all ages and abilities to get into sports, either for fun or as a career. "I want to change the way people perceive those with disabilities, I want to normalise disability," she says.

Through her social media channels Lauren shares her positivity, successes, and a realistic look at how much effort it takes to achieve them. She is currently ranked number 25 in the world and third in Britain. She is an ambassador for LTA Tennis Sussex and is working towards the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games.



🌐 [www.louisehunt.co.uk](http://www.louisehunt.co.uk)  
📷 @louisehunt1  
🐦 @LouiseHunt1

## Louise Hunt Paralympian

At the 2012 London Paralympic Games Louise achieved her lifelong ambition of representing the country in wheelchair tennis. She returned four years later to the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games, qualifying at 10 in the world – her highest ranking to date.

Louise was born with Spina Bifida and has always been a wheelchair user. From age five she began trying a number of adaptive sports. She took especially to tennis and wheelchair racing and set an unofficial world record, winning seven out of 10 London Mini Wheelchair Marathons.





On top of her sporting success, Louise supports a number of charities. She is sponsored by children's disability sports charity Get Kids Going and has been an ambassador from a young age. She is also ambassador for 28toomany, a charity which works to end female genital mutilation, and is an athlete mentor for the Youth Sport Trust. Louise shares her story and experiences with young people, encouraging them to work hard to achieve their goals.

She says: "The best piece of advice I've been given is that everything only lasts for a moment. In the good moments, enjoy and embrace every second, and in the tough times, just know that feeling won't last forever. The key is to learn and use those experiences to move forward and make you stronger. It's your choice how you come out of every experience: I believe there is no such thing as failure, just opportunities to learn from to help you find your path."

Louise has commentated for the BBC at Wimbledon and competed at the championship, the highlight of her sporting career so far. She also works as a motivational speaker for schools, charities and businesses, and in her role as a young person's community partner she advises businesses on accessibility and inclusivity in the workplace, working towards building better opportunities for young disabled people to move into work.



Lucy Shuker is one of the world's top #10 women in wheelchair tennis.

 [www.lucyshuker.com](http://www.lucyshuker.com)  
 [@lucy\\_shuker](https://www.instagram.com/lucy_shuker)  
 [@lucy\\_shuker](https://twitter.com/lucy_shuker)  
 [/lucyshukertennis](https://www.facebook.com/lucyshukertennis)

## Lucy Shuker Wheelchair tennis player

For over twelve years Lucy Shuker has remained inside the world's top 10 women in wheelchair tennis, a sport she only took up after a life changing motorbike accident in 2001, in which she was paralysed from the chest down. Within six years she was representing Great Britain at her first Paralympic Games in Beijing.

It was at the London 2012 Paralympics that Lucy won her first bronze medal in the women's doubles event alongside Jordanne Whiley, becoming the first women to win a wheelchair tennis medal for Great Britain.

Not slowing down the pace, Lucy helped GB to a World Team Cup silver medal in 2013 and 2014, and returned to the Paralympics in Rio 2016 to pick up a second bronze medal alongside Whiley. Lucy also finished 2016 as Doubles Masters Champion for the first time, alongside Diede De-Groot.

As a T4 Paraplegic, many initially considered Lucy's disability too profound for her to be able to compete amongst the top girls. With no core function, Lucy relies on a fully customised chair and a number of straps to provide her with balance. She has continually sought to break the mould and inspire others and is considered one of the great players of all time through her achievements.

An ambassador for Back Up Trust and Parallel London, Lucy is an accomplished motivational speaker and has previously been recognised with the Vitalise Women of Achievement Award. In 2017 Bournemouth University awarded her an honorary doctorate for her outstanding contribution to her community and to wheelchair tennis.

Lucy credits wheelchair tennis for helping her to come to terms with her disability. "I don't know where I would be without tennis," she says. "It gave me hope and focus after my accident and has helped me massively from a physical perspective." She is now working towards her fourth Paralympic Games in Tokyo 2020.



@markormrod  
 /markormrodmotivationalspeaker  
 @MarkOrmrod  
 MarkOrmrod  
 mark-ormrod-mpsa-44609121  
 www.markormod.com

## Mark Ormrod

### Motivational speaker

Mark Ormrod was a Royal Marines commando serving in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. While on a routine foot patrol he stepped on an improvised explosive device which exploded, resulting in life-changing injuries. He became the UK's first triple amputee to survive the Afghanistan conflict.

Mark says: "When I was injured back in 2007 I was 24 years old and I thought my life was over, but after lots of soul-searching and support from friends and family I decided I was going to use my situation to my advantage and as an opportunity for reinvention, and so this is what I did. I worked hard on regaining my independence, took the opportunity to share my journey on social media and as a speaker, and then I found myself in a position where people were asking me for help and advice. That gave my life meaning again and it's a path I've been on ever since."

Fitness had always been a huge part of Mark's life and it continues to be, but with some adaptations. Mark went on to compete in the 2017 Invictus Games, an international sporting event created by Prince Harry for armed services personnel who have been injured in conflict. He was selected to represent the UK at the Toronto event and came away with two silver medals, two bronze, and was also honoured with an Exceptional Performance Award.

Mark has become an internationally-acclaimed motivational speaker and peak performance coach. He's also a relentless charity fundraiser, regularly volunteers as a mentor and role model for other amputees, and is as an ambassador for the Royal Marines Association. His award-winning autobiography, *Man Down*, is published by Corgi Press.



“I have this one life to live and just hope my blog can help others to live theirs.”



## Theresa Osborne-Bell Climber

Theresa, or Tee, has only been climbing for a couple of years, but in her first year she earned podium places in every competition she took on. She did a sponsored climb of the 180-metre-high Gherkin building in London in just one day to raise hundreds of pounds for local sight loss charity Open Sight.

Tee has been visually impaired since birth, and is registered as severely sight-impaired (legally blind) for nearly ten years. She writes about it in her blog, [seemyway.co.uk](http://seemyway.co.uk), where she covers topics around accessibility, sport, and plenty of everyday life inbetween, in a straightforward and often funny way.

For the past couple of years Tee has also begun to experience hearing loss, and in response she has thrown herself into climbing even more. She competed in the British Mountaineering Council Paraclimbing series for the past two years, and has travelled all over the country to compete.

Like a growing number of people, Tee has had to raise funds for the mobility equipment she needs – in this case hearing aids. Not content with climbing the equivalent height of the gherkin, Tee decided to climb the height of the ‘Cheesegrater’ building in London, which is 225 meters tall, in just one day.

Tee gives talks about motivation, resilience, accessibility and fitness, and has recently received an award for her volunteer work with guide dogs. Tee’s blog invites others to share everything from useful resources to the sad loss of a retired guide dog. She has recently taken up tandem bike riding and is sharing her experiences with that new sport.

She says: “I never aim to be inspirational. I have this one life to live and just hope my blog can help others to live theirs.”

# The Top 10

10. Nancy Doyle
9. Neil Milliken
8. Gary Bourlet
7. Ruth Owen OBE
6. Warwick Davis
5. Adam Hills
4. Martyn Sibley
3. Baroness Jane Campbell
2. Jonnie Peacock MBE
1. Alex Brooker



10

“ADHD is my  
superpower.”

[www.geniuswithin.co.uk](http://www.geniuswithin.co.uk)

## Nancy Doyle CEO Genius Within CIC

Nancy Doyle is probably best known for her work on the award-winning BBC television series *Employable Me*. On the show, she supports neurodiverse people to find their inner genius, develop their confidence and keep working on their career goals. However, the television programme is just the tip of the iceberg of her work.

Nancy wrote the definitive guide to neurodiversity in the workplace for the British Psychological Society, and is a founding member of a British Psychological Society working group which provides guidance for other psychologists in the field. She's contributed to many publications and expert reference groups with organisations including Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service, the Employment Related Services Association, and the Department for Work and Pensions.

She says: “It’s easy to say that ADHD is my superpower now that I am in my 40s, but I want people to know that it wasn’t always this way. I had significant difficulty as a teen and was misdiagnosed, hospitalised and school-phobic. To those who are still suffering I hope that my story can provide encouragement. Find the right environment for you and stick with your tribe: life can be wonderful when you stop trying to meet everyone else’s expectations.”

Nancy is chief executive of Genius Within CIC, an award-winning social enterprise established in 2011 to help neurodiverse people fulfil their potential in employment and their careers. Genius Within is passionate about developing talent and helping people achieve success with ADHD, autism, dyslexia, dyspraxia, Tourette’s syndrome and more. The social enterprise provides positive assessments of people’s capabilities alongside coaching and workshops.

Nancy will become Dr Doyle later this year, after finishing her PhD at City, University of London.





## Neil Milliken

### Head of Accessibility and Digital Inclusion, Atos

Neil Milliken is responsible for accessibility and digital inclusion at Atos, an international digital services company. He is a member of the Atos Scientific Community and is an Atos Distinguished Expert, working to deliver better technology for the company's customers and staff and to embed inclusive practices into the business-as-usual processes of organisations with thousands of employees and turnovers in the billions.

Neil delivers strategy and services, working with a range of clients both within Atos and externally, helping them to develop policies, processes and technological solutions to meet their staff and customers' needs. Among his achievements are the creation of the Atos Centre of Competence, which covers accessibility, inclusive design and assistive technology services. He also created the company's first dedicated apprenticeship scheme for accessibility. In 2015 he was named Disability Champion of the Year by the Business Disability Forum.

Neil is also a board member of the charity World Institute on Disability and Chair of the diversity board for the Institute of Coding.

In 2014 Neil co-founded #AXSChat, a social media community and Twitter chat focused on raising awareness of accessibility, disability inclusion and innovation. Since its inception AXSChat has become one of the world's largest Twitter chats, accumulating over 3 billion impressions, and in May 2018 it won the European Digital Mindset Award for best digital campaign.

Neil is dyslexic and advocates for people with dyslexia as well as other disabilities and additional needs. He champions accessibility in IT as a clear business need and makes sure companies are aware of, and factor in, the widespread of use of accessible IT tools.



8

[www.learningdisabilityengland.org.uk/](http://www.learningdisabilityengland.org.uk/)

## Gary Bourlet Campaigner

Often described as self-advocacy's founding father in England, Gary Bourlet has done important work as the co-founder of People First England and Learning Disability England (LDE). Since it was launched in 2016, LDE has done invaluable work bringing self-advocates, families and professionals together under one banner, led by self-advocates to create a real voice for people with learning disabilities.

Gary's work was inspired by a research trip to the first International People First Conference in the United States in 1984. Learning from their ideas, he brought them back to England where he founded People First England and has been working to empower other learning disabled people ever since.

Gary went on to take a leadership role in the community, appearing live on Channel 4 News, being interviewed by BBC Breakfast and writing for the Guardian on numerous occasions. He has also worked to achieve real change through the political system, attending party conferences and meeting personally with politicians from all parties to lobby for people with learning disabilities, while also involving himself directly in parliamentary processes.

As part of his work Gary has also worked in partnership with day centres, schools and colleges to trained many people with learning difficulties to take on leadership roles. He has always been passionate about encouraging others to join him and speaks to large audiences of people with learning disabilities, as well as their friends and families, to share the power of self-advocacy and collective action.



7

[www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/](http://www.whizz-kidz.org.uk/)

## Ruth Owen OBE CEO of Whizz-Kidz

Ruth Owen got her first wheelchair at seven years old, and never forgot that feeling of independence. She understands how transformative it is for young people to be active, social and be able to make their own decisions. For the 75,000 children and young people in the UK who need mobility equipment to get around, that independence often starts with having the right wheelchair.

Since Whizz-Kidz began in 1990 it has helped over 20,000 children directly, and campaigns for change nationally. Ruth joined the charity as CEO in 2004, and for the past 14 years she's helped it grow to become the largest UK provider of powered and lightweight manual wheelchairs for disabled children outside of the NHS.


Before joining Whizz-Kidz Ruth worked in the technology sector, and ran her own IT company for a decade. She was also a trustee of Barnardo's. Under her guidance, Whizz-Kidz has added life skills training and a work placement programme to the charity's remit. This helps young disabled people get financial as well as physical independence.

In 2012 Ruth was awarded an OBE for her services for disabled children and young people, and in June 2018 she became a non-executive director on the board of Motability.

Ruth says: "I knew from an early age that I wanted to be independent and to have a career, and I was determined to achieve those things regardless of what anybody else thought I was capable of. Young disabled people today still face many of the barriers that I encountered, and that's why it's important we work collectively to empower them to face these challenges while opening up as many opportunities as possible for them to explore their talents and achieve their goals."



“Always celebrate, with great pride, who you are.”

 @WarwickADavis  
 WarwickADavis  
 Instagram: WarwickADavis

## Warwick Davis

### Actor

Warwick Davis’s career began at 11, when his grandmother heard a radio announcement from film producer George Lucas looking for actors under four feet tall. Soon he was fighting the Empire in Endor as Wicket the Ewok in *Star Wars: Return of the Jedi*. From there the actor went on to star in *Willow*, the *Harry Potter* movies (as Professor Filius Flitwick), and even as a fictionalised version of himself in the Ricky Gervais and Stephen Merchant sitcom, *Life’s Too Short*.

Warwick has also branched out into presenting, becoming the first person with a disability to regularly present a primetime show when he hosted *Celebrity Squares* on ITV. He currently presents the weekday ITV afternoon quiz, *Tenable*.

Warwick has also helped many others’ careers in show-business. He co-founded Willow Management, a talent agency which specialises in representing actors who are under five foot tall. In 2004 he also began representing actors over seven feet tall, recognising that they can also be confined to niche roles. He is also the founder of the Reduced Height Theatre Company, which puts on theatrical productions with casts entirely made up of actors who are little people, using reduced-height sets. The venture was set up by Warwick to give a platform to other talented short actors in the UK. Their first production, *See How They Run*, toured the UK in 2014.

Meanwhile, Warwick still regularly returns to where it all began in a galaxy far, far away, appearing in every one of the new *Star Wars* films since *The Force Awakens*, as well as the animated TV spin-off, *Star Wars: Rebels*.

Warwick says: “Instead of considering what I can’t do in life, I focus on what I can do. This approach allows me to reframe my disability, turning it into an ability, or what I like to call, my ‘super-power’. Always celebrate, with great pride, who you are.”



Adam is a great advocate for inclusion and breaking down stigma around disability.

5



## Adam Hills

### Comedian and presenter

Adam Hills is a stand-up comedian and presenter, best known in the UK for hosting the Channel 4 programme *The Last Leg*, along with comedians Josh Widdicombe and Alex Brooker. The show began as part of the coverage of the 2012 Paralympics, but became so popular it was commissioned to continue as a series, and is now in its sixth year. Adam began performing stand-up comedy in 1989 and has done a total 16 solo comedy shows, often touring them internationally. He has performed at the Melbourne International Comedy Festival, the Montreal Just for Laughs Festival and the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, where he has been nominated for the Edinburgh Award three years in a row. He has been nominated for numerous other awards, including the Perrier and a number of Logies, and in 2012 he won the Golden Logie Award for most popular presenter.

It wasn't until he became a popular and respected stand-up in his own right that Adam mentioned his disability: he was born without a right foot and uses a prosthesis. However, he is now a great advocate for inclusion and breaking down stigma around disability, even sometimes passing his prosthetic foot around audiences. He now regularly works with a sign language interpreter for his shows.

In addition to *The Last Leg*, Adam hosted his own TV show, *Adam Hills Tonight*, on ABC in Australia from 2011-2013. He has also presented radio shows, written for BBC Radio Ouch, and continues to be a progressive, humane and very funny advocate for inclusion. His book, *Best Foot Forward*, was published by Hodder & Stoughton.



4

 martynsibleyblog  
 @martynsibley  
 @DHorizons  
 DisabilityHorizons

## Martyn Sibley

Travel writer, podcaster, entrepreneur and activist

Martyn is a travel writer, and blogs on issues such as independent living. His book *Everything is Possible* documents his challenges and successes travelling the world as a wheelchair user. He explains: "The reason I work so hard for inclusion is I believe the next generation deserve a more level playing field. I've learned through my journey that despite our barriers, life is there for the taking. So regardless of what stands between you and your dreams, just go for it. We only live once."

With co-founder Srin Madipalli, Martyn set up the start-up accessible travel business Accomable, which was billed as 'Airbnb for people with disabilities' and clearly listed (and verified) the accessible features in listed accommodation around the world. In November last year the company was bought by Airbnb. The deal made national headlines, and is a positive move for accessible property becoming a larger part of the mainstream company's offer.

After the buy-out Martyn shifted his focus to work more on Disability Horizons online magazine, a hub for disabled people and inclusion professionals which he has been co-running with Srin since 2011.

Martyn also works as a media and business consultant, often delivering keynote conference speeches. He has written regularly for the Guardian, the Independent, the Huffington Post, Disability Now and BBC radio show Ouch. As an advocate, he has had numerous television appearances including BBC Breakfast, BBC London Inside Out and Channel 5.

Martyn is a regular at disability events such as Naidex, and most recently has been seen presenting the MyMobilityUnlimited channel on YouTube, meeting innovators around the world and looking at new futures for wheelchairs and other mobility aids.



Jane Campbell has had a long career of campaigning for the rights and interests of disabled people.

3

## Baroness Jane Campbell

Peer

Jane Campbell has had a long career of campaigning for the rights and interests of disabled people and those who need social care. In 1996 she co-founded and directed the National Centre for Independent Living, which she worked at for six years before being appointed by the Minister for Social Care to chair the Social Care Institute for Excellence. Her book *Disability Politics: Understanding Our Past, Changing Our Future* is a required text in the field, and she has chaired the British Council of Disabled People.

Jane was declared a Dame in the 2001 Queen's Honours List, and in 2007 she was made a life peer, sitting as a crossbencher in the House of Lords. She also chaired the All-Party Parliamentary Disability Group and has used her position to create structures which encourage disabled people, across society to take control of their lives and influence positive political and social changes.

She has sat on the Parliamentary Joint Select Committee on Human Rights from 2010 to 2012, and the House of Lords Appointments Commission from 2008 to 2013. Recently Jane succeeded in incorporating her Private Members' Bill on social care portability into the Government's Social Care Act 2014.

Today Jane chairs the Independent Living Strategy Group, working to protect, promote and ensure the rights to independent living are fulfilled for disabled people in England. She is currently working on raising the implications Brexit will have for disabled people and their families.



2

## Jonnie Peacock MBE Paralympic champion

Jonnie Peacock is a sprinter, double Paralympic gold medallist and media figure. In 2010 he set a new world record in amputee sprinting when he ran 100 metres in 10.85 seconds. Two years later, in front of a home crowd, he won gold in the 100m T44 final at the London 2012 Paralympics. He defended his title at the Rio 2016 games, winning gold and setting a new Paralympic record with his time of 10.81 seconds.

He has also taken gold medals home for the 100m T44 at the IPC World Championships in 2013 and 2017, and the IPC European Championships in 2014 and 2016, and this year hosted Channel 4's coverage of the Paralympic Winter Games.

In 2013 Jonnie was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours List for services to athletics, and in 2017 he was nominated for the BBC Sports Personality of the Year Award. Jonnie is a fantastic ambassador for disability sports and doesn't shy away from pointing out how things could be improved to put the Paralympics on a more equal status with the Olympics.

Last year saw Jonnie become even more of a household name when he appeared on *Strictly Come Dancing*. Paired up with dance partner Oti Mabuse, he quickly became a fan favourite, staying on until week nine. Jonnie did dance routines on both his 'day' prosthetic and his running blade, and in appearing on a prime-time show he increased visibility of people with disabilities in an entertainment context.





1

**Alex Brooker**  
TV presenter

Alex Brooker's TV career famously began with a job as a presenter as part of Channel 4's coverage of the 2012 Paralympics. Originally a journalist for the Liverpool Echo and the Press Association, he didn't expect his TV break to last beyond the 2012 games. "I always expected I'd end up doing a bit of work in London for the Paralympics and then go straight back to Leeds and try to get my old job back at Press Association," he explains.

However, *The Last Leg*, co-hosted by Alex and stand-up comedians Adam Hills and Josh Widdicombe, was so successful it was commissioned again outside of the Paralympics. The presenters have all become household names, bringing a warmth, wit and irreverence to the week's news on a primetime TV show featuring two disabled presenters.

It could be said that Alex's career trajectory represents the best of the Paralympics' legacy: while the Games opens a lot of doors once every four years, talented people have run with those opportunities to build better representation far beyond that initial scope. "I always say that the true legacy will be the number of schoolchildren that went," he explains.

“When I was younger, growing up in the 80s, there were no disabled role models really. Now you’ve got people like Jonnie Peacock: you see him on Strictly Come Dancing, and that’s just what he’s doing in his spare time when he’s not winning gold medals. Kids will see that, and if they have a kid with a prosthetic leg in their class, all of a sudden it’s a little bit cooler than it was.”

Alex is highly aware of both how he got his break, and also the responsibility it entails: “The Paralympics have really set the ball rolling for the positive representation of disability but it’s up to the media to really carry that forward. It’s up to companies to carry that forward. Obviously the Games are amazing but I’m well aware that not every disabled person is a Paralympian.” He cites actors Samantha Renke and Melissa Johns as part of the new wave of representation who inspire him.

The Last Leg is now in its fourteenth series and this year all three presenters won a Royal Television Society Award for Best Entertainment Performance. Though the show benefits from the understanding and nuance of having two disabled presenters, it is also a mainstream topical comedy show. “You go from being a disabled presenter to just the guy on TV. That’s a really big thing for me: to go from always being known as the disabled presenter or the disabled journalist to just being called journalist or presenter.”

So what does it feel like to be named as number one on the Power List? “I just wanted to beat Hills,” Alex laughs. “That’s all I cared about, beating Hills. Even if I was 99 but he was 100, I would have been happy.”

All jokes aside, Alex understands the importance of the Power List more than most: in 2015 he chaired the Power List panel. “To get all these disabled people together and acknowledge them in one publication: it’s fantastic.



Photo Credit: Ellis O'Brien

There are disabled people who are doing amazing things in all manner of industries who you otherwise may not hear about. The likes of myself and Hillsy and the Paralympians, to an extent: our work is widely known because it’s on television, it gets newspaper coverage, but there’s a great number of disabled people who I’d argue have probably been more influential than myself but are working in different industries.”

Speaking of different industries, lately Alex has been expanding his scope. As well as being a favourite on panel shows, this year he made a BBC Four documentary, *The NHS: A People’s History*. “I was really proud of it because it enabled me to be a journalist again,” he says. The series was well-received, though some of the praise seemed impressed at the genre switch. “Part of me felt like saying ‘don’t be that surprised, because being a journalist was my job. That’s what I trained to do. It’s the comedy that I’ve been winging!’”

In the future he’d like to do more documentaries and expand into acting, and keep continually improving *The Last Leg*. The show famously has a section where viewers can tweet in their questions with the hashtag #IsItOk, which began with questions around disability.

Alex also fronted Scope's End the Awkward campaign. As someone who's made a career out of tackling subjects some people tip-toe around, we were curious for his take on why people are so often awkward around disability. "We are inherently awkward anyway in British society," he says. "There is awkwardness, in general, about anything that's new or different. It's human nature, really, but it's how you progress from there. If you think 'I can't give this person this job because it's making me too awkward' then you're the one with the problem and you need to educate yourself."

Employment opportunities for disabled people are definitely improving, but nowhere near fast enough. Alex has given talks for businesses and presented awards for the Disability Confident initiative for employers, so we asked what his tips were for navigating disability and workplaces. "There may be something you might struggle with but it's important not to feel ashamed or nervous about telling an employer," he says. "I think, more often than not, they appreciate the honesty. Open dialogue is the way forward. Also, keep the faith that you bring something unique. You bring something to a position that nobody else will."

"I think it is easy, when you've had a few knock-backs, to think to yourself 'is it because I'm disabled?' It is easy to get stuck in a rut and I don't really blame people when they do because sometimes it can feel like the system is set up for you to fail. But at the same time, there are opportunities out there. There are organisations like Shaw Trust and Scope that do help you become more disability confident and I do feel that society is moving that way."

Alex talks a lot about confidence in relation to disability. "There are a lot of situations in life that I've put on my disability. I've thought 'oh, that's happened because I'm disabled' and it hadn't. It's just life." For

example, in his teens, he worried if girls would like him less because he was disabled. "Ultimately, it was more to do with the fact that I had absolutely no chat. I was boring, I had a rubbish haircut," he laughs. "It had nothing to do with my hands or my leg." As life changes the anxieties can sometimes evolve to keep up. Before Alex's daughter was born he found himself worrying about whether he'd be able to hold her for the first time. It took a reality check from a friend that "everyone worries about dropping a baby. That's just called being a parent. I had put it all on being disabled, but it wasn't."

"The hardest thing for anyone is their self-belief. You can put that on your disability: 'I don't believe in myself because I'm disabled'. No. You don't believe in yourself just because it's a human nature thing. Be confident and be proud of who you are."

The gap in representation and confidence can also be self-perpetuating: Alex almost didn't go for his big break "I thought 'there's no disabled people on telly, really, so there must be a reason for it'. That put me off to the extent that I very nearly didn't apply and I would've missed out on this whole different life that I've led."

We're glad he didn't listen to the doubt, and became a role model to others instead.



## Dame Sarah Storey: Induction into the Power 100 Hall of Fame

Last year's No.1, Dame Sarah Storey is the most successful female Paralympian the UK has ever produced. She's won a record 14 gold medals across seven Paralympic games, as well as being a six-time national track champion.



In the course of her 26 year career Dame Sarah Storey (nee Bailey) has successfully switched from swimming to cycling and continued winning gold – across 12 different events. She's also crossed from Paralympic to able-bodied sport and broken 75 World Records.

Sarah competed in her first Paralympic Games as a swimmer, aged just 14 years old. Her debut at the 1992 Barcelona Paralympics saw her taking home two gold medals, three silvers, and a bronze.

From that start she competed in the next three Paralympic games – Atlanta 1996, Sydney 2000 and Athens 2004, winning medals every time.

In 2005, due to a serious ear infection, she was forced out of the pool for a

number of months. Where some athletes might have considered this the end of their careers, Sarah adapted: taking up cycling as her new primary sport. By the time the Beijing Paralympics came by in 2008 she'd secured a place on the UK cycling team, and a place on the podium – taking home two gold medals.

By the London 2012 Paralympic Games – both the largest Paralympic games to date and with the home crowd behind her – Sarah won the UK's first gold medal of the games and set a world record in the women's individual C5 pursuit. She went on to win a total of four gold medals in four separate events, cementing her status as a sporting icon.

Sarah was made a Dame in recognition of her sporting achievements the following



year. Meanwhile, at Rio 2016 Sarah won a further three gold medals, claiming the title of the UK's most successful female Paralympic athlete of all time.

Though Sarah is naturally very modest and hasn't particularly sought out the limelight, she also hasn't shied away from talking frankly about the challenges faced by para-sport athletes – such as the separation of sport governance.

"There is also a complete division of sports who are governed by the same international governing body as the non-para sports, which creates different opportunities for the individual sports in different ways." She explains.

One of these differences is in status, with adaptive sport often seen as 'an afterthought', and having fewer opportunities for the sponsorship deals which allow athletes to make sport a career. Sarah helps tackle some of these issues at the root in her roles as an athlete representative for the UCI, cycling's governing body, as well as the International Paralympic Committee.

Sarah is married to tandem pilot and coach Barney Storey. In 2013, the couple had their first child, their daughter Louisa. Last year Louisa was joined by a baby brother, Charlie. Sarah has spoken frankly about the "integration challenges" of balancing motherhood and being a professional athlete – especially in team sports. This included, earlier this year, being unable to attend the Para-cycling Track Worlds in Brazil as the country had an outbreak of yellow fever. Though most athletes were vaccinated and competed at usual, as Sarah was breastfeeding this option wasn't an option. Instead she focused on the road cycling season. With 26 years of competing at an international level, Sarah's career has shown a longevity most athletes can only dream of, and she always displays a pragmatism, calm and positivity when talking about her future career goals. The Tokyo 2020

Paralympics are firmly in her sights, which will be her eighth Paralympic games, but as she's explained "with women's cycling you tend to get better with age."

And after 2020, what's the plan? "I'm not sure how long I can compete at the highest level, but whatever I do it is certain to involve sport and hopefully include the support of lots of people to be healthy and active," she says.

Sarah's career plan originally had been to become a PE teacher, and coaching and mentoring have always been a big part of her ethos. In 2014, along with her husband Barney, Sarah set up Pearl Izumi Sports Tours International, a women's amateur cycling team which supports the charity Boot Out Breast Cancer. Last year she and Barney set up Storey Racing, a new initiative targeted at providing racing mentoring and opportunities to female cyclists.

Sarah is passionate about sports, and making a healthy, active lifestyle possible to everyone. She does motivational speaking and coaches other athletes. Her advice to people thinking of taking up a sport is "Give it a try! Every sport can be adapted in some way ... If you can only swim with the aid of a flotation device then that's fine. There are bikes with three and four wheels, recumbent hand bikes and devices can be accessed to help make sport easier."



**In Memoriam**

Sir Bert Massie CBE

Stephen Hawking CBE

Dean Jose

Lorraine Gradwell MBE



## In memory, Sir Bert Massie CBE 1949 – 2017

Bert Massie was one of the giants of the disability rights movement. He spent his life working for equality for disabled people and was instrumental to the creation of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act. The law first made discrimination on the grounds of disability illegal in the UK.

Bert was born Herbert William Massie in Liverpool in 1949. He caught the polio virus at three months old and grew up as a wheelchair-user in a world which was happy to institutionalise and dismiss disabled people. His careers counsellor told him he was unemployable, and speaking later of the school which he left at 16 with no qualifications he said "special schools were deemed a success if you were still alive when you came out. A lot of my friends died along the way."

Bert's campaigning began with the everyday barriers he faced, once remarking: "I started off fighting for access to cars when I was a young man because I had been given a Niblet three-wheeler and it one had one seat. Put aside the fact that it kept breaking down, I couldn't take my girlfriend out in it!" Without legal protection in the 1960s he faced barriers in any public places

such as restaurants where "people would say: 'We don't serve wheelchairs' ... And I would say: 'Well, that's okay, I don't eat wheelchairs'."

Determined to stop these types of discrimination from being legal, Bert joined the Liverpool Association for the Disabled. He was encouraged to get A-levels, but as no night school in Liverpool was accessible he was tutored by nuns in a local convent. He went on to do a degree in Social Studies at Liverpool Polytechnic (now Liverpool John Moores University), and graduated in 1977.

The following year he moved to London to work for the Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR). Here Bert focussed on creating civil rights legislation for disabled people. Colleagues and friends praised his vision and determination in leading this crucial change. One of his first landmark successes was the 1984 amendment he drafted to a transport bill. Its adoption led to the founding of the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC), which Bert served as a member of for over 15 years.



The same year, 1984, he was honoured with an OBE, though he said of receiving honours "I'm conscious that it's not a badge that says you are worth more than anyone else." He was instrumental to the eventual creation of the 1995 Disability Discrimination Act. The Act – now replaced by the Equality Act 2010 – was the first comprehensive legal protection for disabled people and widened the horizons of the movement in numerous ways.

In 1998 Bert became the Director of RADAR, a role he held until 1999. (RADAR later merged with Disability Alliance and the National Centre for Independent Living in 2012 to become the Royal Association for Disability Rights.)

Bert was warm and supportive to many other campaigners. Tributes fondly remembered Bert for his strength of character and dedication to his driving mission: the wellbeing of disabled people. He was also a skilled speaker with a quick wit which often described situations concisely and memorably. He once famously remarked that disabled people "have been invited to look up to the stars while having the rug pulled from beneath them."

Bert Massie worked within government and systems of power to create changes which helped advance the cause. He received criticism in some quarters for being seen to be too close to the government or not being radical enough. Historically, Bert Massie worked at a crossroads in the movement from more old-fashioned, almost paternalistic attitudes to disability to the growing radical and progressive voices focussed on rights and direct action. Bert was a talented dealmaker, often able to bridge divides where needed to help advance the cause.

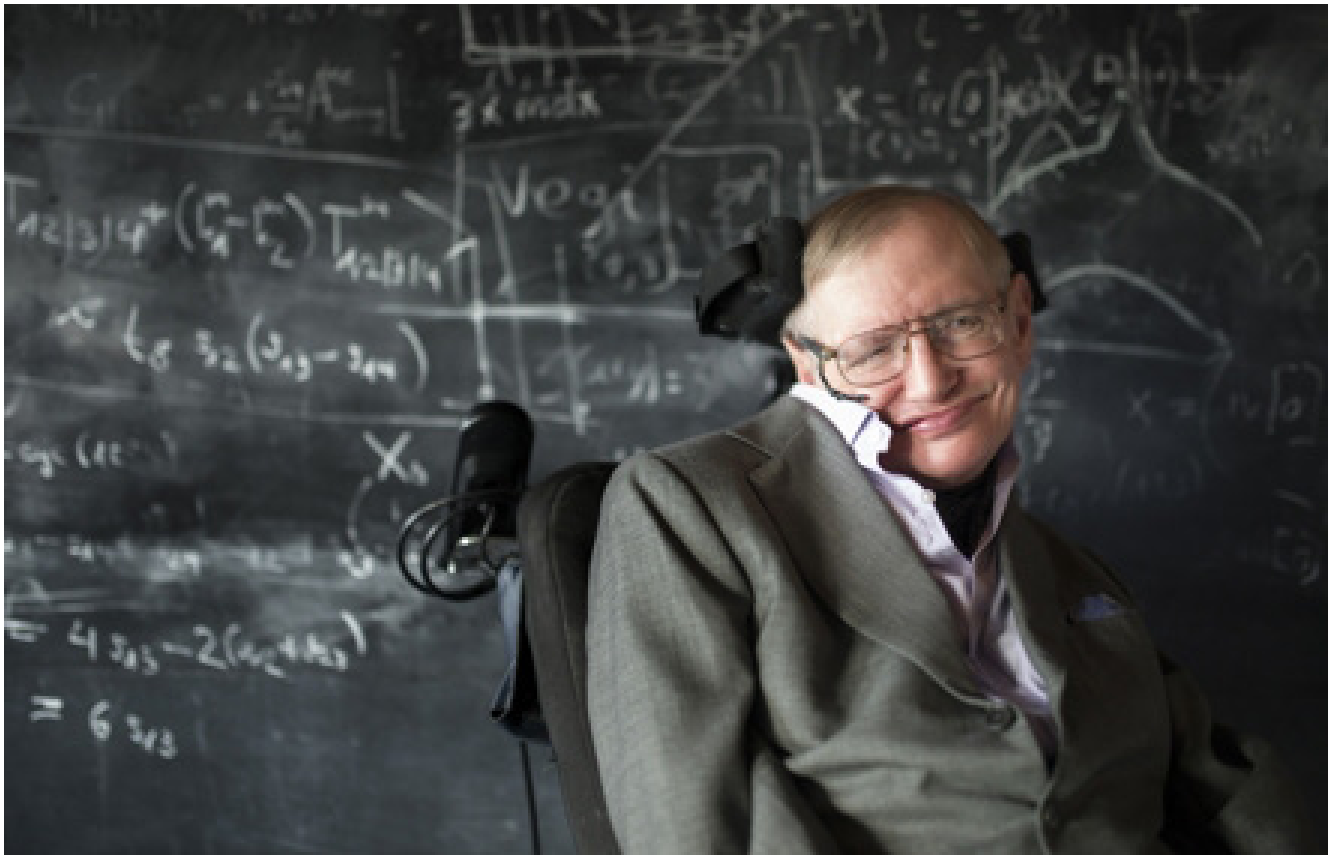
In 2000 he became a CBE and also the first (and only) Chair of the Disability Rights Commission, a position he held until 2007 when he stepped down to be Commissioner of the Equality and Human

Rights Commission. In 2007 he also married his wife Maureen Shaw and was given a Knighthood for services to disabled people. A proud Liverpoolian, John was honoured in 2008 with the Freedom of the City of Liverpool and – having previously received an honorary degree – became a Governor of his alma mater Liverpool John Moores University, where he worked on any number of boards and committees to represent disabled and other minority voices and the student body as a whole.

He became Commissioner for the Compact in 2008. The Compact was an initiative founded under the Labour government to improve links between the voluntary sector and government. Sir Bert held the role until the body was scrapped by the Coalition government in 2011.

In 2012 Sir Bert returned to Liverpool, intending to retire, though he remained very active through any number of roles as an advisor, board member or trustee. He was a Governor of Motability since 2002 and chaired a 2013 Labour party task force looking at how to break the link between disability and poverty. He was a trustee of a number of organisations including Motability, Community Service Volunteers, the Institute of Employment Studies, the Pensions Policy Institute and more.

He died from cancer on October 15, 2017. He is survived by his wife Maureen.



## In memory, Stephen Hawking CBE 1942 – 2018

Stephen Hawking was the greatest physicist of modern times and came up with a number of ground-breaking theories about the universe which have become widely accepted and vastly improved our knowledge of space and time. His bestselling book *A Brief History of Time* has sold over 10 million copies. On top of that, Stephen Hawking became a celebrity in his own right: appearing on everything from *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* to Pink Floyd tracks.

Born in 1942, in Oxford, Stephen was bright but not particularly motivated at school. Under the guidance of a good teacher he took to mathematics and started at Oxford University at 17 years old – where he complained that he found the work “ridiculously easy”. He was outgoing and adventurous, and was coxswain on the boating teams – navigating the boat into occasionally dangerous situations.

At 21 Stephen was working on his Phd when he was diagnosed with Motor Neurone disease and doctors predicted he only had two years left to live. At first, knowing he might die before he finished his Phd, he struggled to find motivation. However, he had recently met the person who would become his wife, and he decided to live as well as he could for as long as he could.

The disease progressed much more slowly than anticipated, and Stephen lived for a further 55 years. He had three children and probably the most distinguished academic career in the modern age. Though his mobility decreased Stephen continued with his work and his passions with intelligence and wit.

In 1968 he became a member of Cambridge's Institute of Astronomy and in 1970 he made his first major breakthrough,

discovering the Second Law of Black Hole Dynamics. In 1973 he built further on this with the theory of 'Hawking Radiation' of black holes, and in 1983 he published his theory of what existed before the Big Bang – developed with his colleague Jim Hartle and named the 'Hartle-Hawking state'.

In 1985, after a serious bout of pneumonia, he needed a tracheostomy breathe, which irreversibly removed his voice. The synthesised voice which replaced it became iconic and he even copyrighted in later years, saying "It has become my trademark and I wouldn't trade it for a more natural voice with a British accent."

In 1988 he published the book *A Brief History of Time* – a popular science book which covered everything from black holes to quantum theory. It sold over 10 million copies and was on the New York Times Bestseller List for almost 150 weeks. He published a further six science books for adults, co-authored many more, had over 150 peer-reviewed papers on physics and cosmology published and even wrote a series of children's books on science.

Stephen Hawking wasn't just an incredibly talented academic, he also worked hard to educate and enthuse the public about science – on everything from the dangers of artificial intelligence, overpopulation and climate change to the wonders of space exploration and the possibility of aliens. In the 1990s he reportedly declined a knighthood, in part in protest about the funding of science.

He was also forthright about the importance of healthcare and spoke out against privatisation of the NHS. Speaking to American audiences, he said "I have received excellent medical attention in Britain, and I felt it was important to set the record straight. I believe in universal health care. And I am not afraid to say so."

Stephen Hawking was also undeniably a pop culture icon in his own right – appearing on everything from *Last Week Tonight* to *Star Trek*. He had a mischievous sense of humour and didn't mind sending himself up, such as in a *Comic Relief* sketch where various celebrities 'auditioned' to be his new voice, and a number of cameos on the *Simpsons* – often with additions to his wheelchair like helicopter propellers or a boxing glove on a spring.

In 2007 Stephen Hawking went into zero gravity, at Richard Branson's behest, to increase public interest in space travel, as well as demonstrating that it was possible for disabled people. There were fears that zero gravity would be painful or uncomfortable given his motor neurone disease, but when this didn't occur the flight was extended to eight parabolic arcs (which produce periods of zero gravity).

Stephen Hawking's life story was made into the 2014 biographic film *The Theory of Everything* where he was played by Eddie Redmayne, who won an Oscar for the role.

Stephen Hawking was probably the most respected scientist in the world and won numerous awards, though he said "I didn't do my scientific work in the hope of winning prizes and medals – I did it because I wanted to understand the universe." However, though he was nominated many times for the Nobel Prize, that was the one award he never won – because his theories about black holes and the Big Bang were (understandably) difficult to conclusively prove. However, as he said in a cameo on the *Big Bang Theory*: "I've never won a Nobel Prize ... it's fine: I've been on the *Simpsons*."

Stephen Hawking died this year, aged 76, leaving behind three children and three grandchildren.



## In memory, Dean Jose

Dean Jose, known as 'Deano' to his friends, was a Rehabilitation Specialist with over 25 years' experience. Dean was born in 1970 and raised in East London. After leaving school he dedicated his life to helping disabled children and adults to live life to the fullest. – in part by having the right mobility equipment to live as independently as possible. Dean became very well-known and respected in the industry and was called upon many times by various professionals seeking advice for their clients.

Dean and his family moved to King's Lynn, Norfolk, when in 2011 he founded SMART Wheelchairs Limited along with his wife Maxine. The company has appeared on ITV News, DIY SOS and Surprise Surprise for helping people to find just the right wheelchairs to suit their individual needs. Maxine has continued to run the company in Dean's memory as it was his dream

Tributes all mention his warm, friendly and outgoing nature, and how Dean always went above and beyond to make sure

people had the support they needed from the amount of time and care he showed.

Tributes from his family said "Dean had an incredible zest for life and lived his life at 100mph never sitting down for a second, he loved having his family around him, socialising with friends and had a real passion for golf and music. Dean leaves us with huge hole in our hearts that can never be filled."

Dean died in September last year after an altercation outside a hotel. Dean and his wife had been attending a charity fundraiser for a children's cancer charity and they could never have envisaged the awful ending. The killer is serving a prison sentence for manslaughter. Dean, 47, leaves behind his wife Maxine and two young daughters Millie and Poppy.





## In memory, Lorraine Gradwell MBE

Lorraine Gradwell dedicated her life to fighting for disabled people's rights and systemic change - at local and national levels. She was bold, kind, and integral to the growing disability advocacy movements. She founded Breakthrough UK and sat on numerous government committees, as well as being a gold medal winner in adaptive sport.

Lorraine was born in 1953 in Middlesbrough. She contracted polio just before her third birthday, and spent most of her childhood in hospitals. She took a degree course in fashion design and management. Moving to Manchester to finish her education, she threw herself into student life and activism. Lorraine was also a talented athlete, swimmer and scuba diver. She represented Great Britain in the 1974 New Zealand Commonwealth Paraplegic Games, winning a gold medal at the Wheelchair Slalom. She was a founding member of Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People and became its chair and then its first development worker, campaigning for crucial changes like

more accessible transport. Manchester became the first UK city to bring in wheelchair-accessible black cabs. Lorraine earned an MA in Disability Studies and Leeds University and joined the Union of the Physically Impaired Against Segregation in the early 1980s. She sat on the British Council of Disabled People and successfully campaigned for changes like direct payments to disabled people for independent living. In 1997 Lorraine founded the charity Breakthrough UK, supporting disabled people to live independent lives and enter work. She served as its CEO for 14 years, growing the organisation to 40 members of staff, 70% of whom have disabilities. She sat on numerous government committees and advisory groups and was active in the Unison union. In 2010 she was awarded an MBE for her services to disabled people. Lorraine died in September 2017, aged 64, surrounded by her family. She leaves behind her husband Tony Baldwinson and her two children John and Jenny.

## Nominations for the Power 100 2019 open on 3rd December 2018.

For more information about the Power  
100 or sponsorship opportunities  
email [marketing@shaw-trust.org.uk](mailto:marketing@shaw-trust.org.uk)

---

Thank you

---

A huge thank you to Hannah Eiseman-Renyard at Anglosaxophone for all her hard work, time and dedication to writing this publication.

### Alternative formats

Please call 01179 989110 or email [studio@shaw-trust.org.uk](mailto:studio@shaw-trust.org.uk) to receive this publication in a different format.

All reasonable steps have been taken to ensure that images have been appropriately credited and copy has been checked for accuracy.

# Do you want your digital services to perform at their best?

AccessibilityServices



**Shaw Trust Accessibility Services has over 30 years' experience promoting independence and inclusion around the world and online.**

Our in-house digital testing team has first-hand experience of disability and assistive technology, bringing a unique perspective both personally and professionally, to help you.

Partnering with HeX Productions, we offer the complete solution of accessibility and development services, testing and fixing websites, mobile apps, videos and documentation.

- ✔ User Testing
- ✔ Web Design & Template Reviews
- ✔ Training
- ✔ Web Development
- ✔ Consultancy
- ✔ Subscriptions & Maintenance

**Improve your digital performance** with a free accessibility snapshot and start your accessibility journey to gaining an accreditation:

[accessibility-services.co.uk/free-accessibility-snapshot](https://accessibility-services.co.uk/free-accessibility-snapshot)

**Learn more by visiting our team** to understand more about assistive technology. We will show you how your audience interacts with your information and services.

**Accessibility made simple by experts. Maintaining high accessibility standards.**



 [www.horlix.com](http://www.horlix.com)

[accessibility-services.co.uk](https://accessibility-services.co.uk)



[accessibility-services@shaw-trust.org.uk](mailto:accessibility-services@shaw-trust.org.uk)



[linkedin.com/company/accessibilityservices](https://linkedin.com/company/accessibilityservices)



[@ShawTrusta11y](https://twitter.com/ShawTrusta11y)

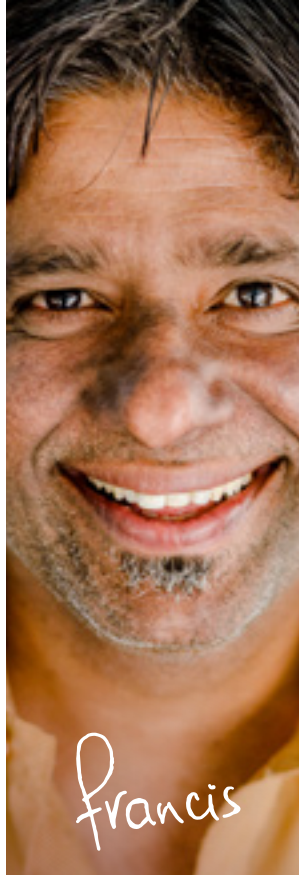




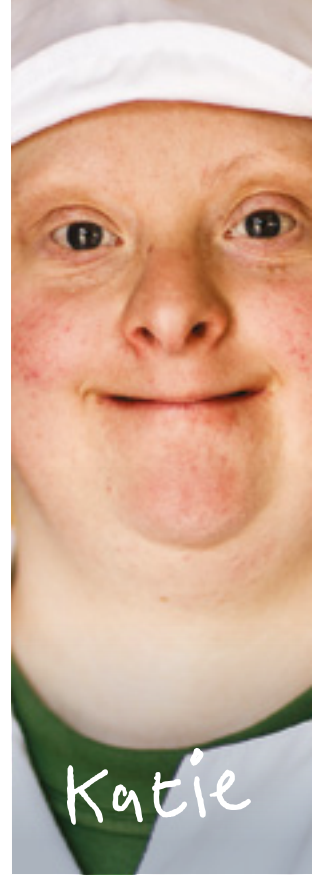
Rahmat



Danny



Francis



Katie

# Creating brighter futures

Shaw Trust is a charity helping to transform the lives of one million people each year. Creating brighter futures for people like Rahmat, Danny, Francis and Kate.

Commission us.  
Work with us.  
Fundraise.  
Volunteer.  
Donate.

Get involved: [info@shaw-trust.org.uk](mailto:info@shaw-trust.org.uk)  
[shaw-trust.org.uk](http://shaw-trust.org.uk)  
[@shawtrust](https://twitter.com/shawtrust)  
[facebook.com/shawtrust](https://www.facebook.com/shawtrust)



Shaw Trust Registered Charity No. England and Wales: 287785, Scotland: SC03985