

SPEAK UP



News from Manchester People First Issue 86 Spring 2022



MANCHESTER

PEOPLE

FIRST

30 years of
self advocacy

**LOOK
INSIDE!**

- **International Women's Day**
- **100 Weeks of Zoom**
- **Health Checks + MORE**



The Voice of the Learning Disabled

SPEAK UP



What we do

Manchester People First is run by and for learning disabled adults and is independent of all services.

We give training and support to learning disabled adults and professionals and we campaign for disabled people's rights.

Contact us

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Charges

£5 per day including lunch or
£2.50 if you get your own lunch

Our committee

- Nathan Cairns
- Paul Hughes
- Richard Hughes
- Joanne Smith

Staff

- Andy Needle
- Stephen Hughes
- David Dunnico
- Derek Owen
- Stephen Blake
- Christopher Kenny

Opening Times

Our office is currently closed due to the Coronavirus

Staff are working from home
Please use our usual email and phone number



Manchester People First is a company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales, number 6339300.

We are a registered charity, number 1124426.

Notice Board



Goodbye Lea



At the end of April, Lea Heim, our Service Audit Assistant Co-Worker, left to carry on with her university course.

We are a small local charity, so we are very grateful for all the donations we have been getting. We would like to thank the people and companies who have given us money, including Tesco Cheetham Hill, Don Giovanni's restaurant in the city centre and Marion from StreetShakers (the best exercise teacher in the business) who ran half-marathons for us.

Some others have asked not to be named, but every pound helps us do more for our members and we guarantee every penny is spent on things that support adults with a learning disability.

We are sorry to see her go, but happy she got a grant to fund her for the next 3 years at university.

We wish Lea the best of luck with her studies and would like to thank her for coming back to help us for the last 6 months – It was great to work with her again and she has been a big help. We hope we have not seen the last of Lea as she has said she will pop in from time to time to see us all.

Paul MacLeod Scott is hoping to raise money for us by walking all the way from Lands' End to John o' Groats – nearly 900 miles! You can sponsor him by going to the Go Fund Me page he has set up for his 'Big Walk'. <https://gofund.me/810af797>



www.youtube.com/firstmcr



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Our web site: www.manpf.org



It's our 30th Birthday!

In June, it will be 30 years since Manchester People First started. We will be celebrating 30 years of self advocacy – Speaking up for ourselves and the rights of other disabled people. It is something we can all be really proud of. We started on 2 June 1992, in a portacabin at Abraham Moss College and at first were called North Manchester Self Advocacy Group.



Birthday Logo

When we have a 'big birthday' we usually design a new logo to use during the year. These are some we used for our 15th, 20th and 25th birthdays.



This year we did a few different ones so the Committee could choose which one to use. We have put them on the next page – Which is your favourite?

Below is the one the Committee chose. We will use it on different things during our 30th year.



We are hoping to put on a big celebration later in the year and hope you will be able to come and join in the fun. We will let you know all about it when we have finished organising things.





Current Logo



Simplified Logo



Speech Bubble Logo



Under Glass Logo



Arrows Logo



Sphere Logo



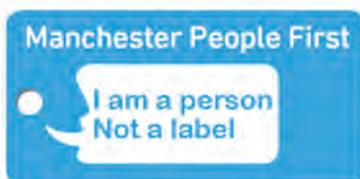
Ribbon Logo



Megaphone Logo



3D Speech Logo



Label Logo

Manchester People First



Self-advocacy for adults with a learning disability

Colour Block Logo



Hands Tree Logo



week of zoom

On 3 March, we passed a milestone with our 100th week of online sessions for members – That’s 300 sessions! We started using Zoom over 2 years ago, when the Coronavirus pandemic meant we had to close the office to members and visitors.

We are still running the sessions 3 times a week between 10:30am and 12 Noon on Tuesdays, when we usually do arts and crafts, Wednesdays where we invite guest speakers and Thursdays, when Marion does an exercise session and we have film reviews, quizzes or bingo.

Thanks to all our members who join in and thank you to all our friends who have hosted sessions. They have been such a hit that we plan to carry on having online sessions even when our office is fully open.

Not just online

Not all our members are online. We stay in touch with them by a weekly phone call to catch up and have a chat, see how their day is going and give them any help or advice they may need. We have also done consultations and questionnaires about issues over the phone to make sure their opinions and ideas get heard.





In March, we held 2 events for International Women's Day

We were going to hold the events in the office, but a positive covid test meant we did them online instead.

In the first session, Lea gave a presentation about why we should all be treated equally whatever our sex, disability or whatever other differences we have.

We learnt how Emmeline Pankhurst and the Suffragettes led the fight for women to get the vote and how since then women have still had to fight to get equal rights. We talked about the ways women have been affected by Covid and the rise in domestic abuse during lockdown.

In the second online event, we made letters from colourful fabrics, Lea put them together to make a banner which read 'Watch Us Shine' – the theme for this year's International Women's Day in Manchester.

Thank you to students from The Shaw Centre who joined our members online, and thank you to Manchester City Council who gave us a small grant to help us celebrate International Women's Day.



Would you like to work for MPF?

Our Service Audit Project inspects services for adults with a learning disability. We will be looking to recruit 3 new paid staff very soon.

There will be 2 jobs for Service Auditors Assistants. They will work 16 hours a week. These jobs are only for people who have a learning disability.

We will also be looking for 1 Service Audit Assistant Co-Worker. Their role is to support the Service Auditors to do their work. This job is open to anybody. If you want us to contact you with all the details when we advertise the jobs, send us an email.

mcrpeoplefirst@gmail.com



ANDY BURNHAM
MAYOR OF
GREATER
MANCHESTER

■ Disabled People's Panel

Richard Hughes is our member on the Greater Manchester Disabled People's Panel. This was set 2 years ago to advise Andy Burnham, the Mayor of Greater Manchester on what disabled people think are the important issues and how things can be made better in Greater Manchester.

Richard reports: "We have been talking about access issues – How we get into buildings, how accessible public transport is. Me and other disabled people have been to some stations to see how accessible they were.

We have also been looking at how disabled people will have to pay care charges for the social care support they get.

If you have any issues you want the Greater Manchester Mayor to know about, please let us know".

■ Covid Sounding Board

The Covid Sounding Board shares information about the Coronavirus pandemic and looks for better ways to support people with disabilities.

Paul Hughes is our member on it. He says: “We have been speaking about how the lockdown rules affected people, the Covid Helpline, vaccines and testing. We also talked about making Job Centres more accessible

There are some new diagnostic centres being set up in Manchester, where you can be seen if you are not feeling well.

We were told about a new NHS web page called ‘My Planned Care’

<https://www.myplannedcare.nhs.uk>

If you are waiting for an operation, you can go here to find out things such as how long you are likely to wait for the operation at the hospital you will be going to. You can also get advice on staying well while you are waiting.

■ Manchester College

At the end of March, Stephen B. and Lea from our Service Audit Team went to Manchester College’s Openshaw campus to meet students, parents and staff. They told them about the work MPF does and how we can support the students once they leave college. We had a great day and would like to thank the college and the students for the invitation. We are looking forward to working with you all.

■ Day Centre Review

In the middle of April, Manchester City Council’s Commissioners who pay for services, asked us to take part in a review of Day Centres. We did not have very much time to work out a way of speaking to members and reporting back to the Commissioners.

Members wrote on printed out speech bubbles what they like doing during the week and what we would do if money was no object. We talked about what we think works and what does not and fed all this back.

Government Covid Review

The government put out an online survey about how they had handled the Coronavirus Pandemic. Unfortunately, we only had a week to do it, and this was only after Learning Disability England got the closing date extended and told us about it. But we did our best and got as many members as we could to do the survey.

A lot of members were unhappy with the news that some MPs had broken their own rules by having parties during the lockdown.



Healthwatch join us on a Zoom session every month. They ask us about any problems we have had with doctors, dentists, chemists, or other health services.

Richard H. sits on the Healthwatch Board and talks about men's health and issues that affect people with a learning disability. Healthwatch were interested to find out what 3 things they need to think about over the next year.



Covid is still with us

Take care, get your booster jab



We made a short video with them showing the problems people with a learning disability face trying to book doctor's appointments online without support. People can find it very hard. Some could not remember passwords and everyone needed help to log on to the surgery's website.

Thanks to Neil, Morgan and Eamon from Healthwatch for all the work they have done with us.

Health Check



A new project in Manchester aims to get more people who have a learning disability to go to their Annual Health Check and make the health checks better.



People with a learning disability have more health problems than people who do not have a learning disability. On average they live 16 years less – and that was before the Covid-19 Coronavirus Pandemic. This should not happen.



A health check every year with your GP family doctor is an important way to stay healthy and spot any early signs of bad health. This can make treatment work better.



Your GP keeps a list of patients who have a learning disability. This is called the Learning Disability Register and lets health service staff know you should be invited to have an Annual Health Check. If you have not been, tell the reception staff at your GP's surgery.



We know a lot of people are not having an Annual Health Check, even though it is important and could even save their life. Or, the Health Check is not as good as it should be. So, the Learning Disability Annual Health Check Project Team is working with Manchester People First to see how to get more people to go to their Health Check and make the experience and results better for patients, their families and carers.



We are going to co-produce with Manchester People First some information and tools for GP Surgeries, which will help them do good quality Health Checks.



We are really looking forward to hearing about people's experiences and getting their ideas on how we can make Annual Health Checks better.



Dear Prime Minister...

Some of our members said how worried they are by the rises in the cost of gas, electric and water. They decided to write a letter to Boris Johnson, the Prime Minister to tell him and give him some ideas about ways the Government could help.

In the letter we said we were not happy with these massive increases in costs and worry that benefits have stayed the same while bills have gone up 4 times or more.

We also said we had worries about the coming winter months when the weather turns colder and people will not have enough money to be heat their homes. Some people may have to make a choice about whether to heat or eat. Our members felt this was not fair.

We gave the Prime Minister some ways these increases could be reduced or stopped altogether, such as:

- Take back ownership of some of the energy suppliers
- Windfall tax on the energy firms, so they do not make such big profits.
- Reduce or remove VAT and green taxes that are added to bills.

We asked Boris Johnson to write back to us, using plain English and easy read so we can understand. We are still waiting for his reply.

