

# NewsLink

News, views and information from Peterborough Disability Forum

**November 2018**

## **Former Government head slams PIP assessments as 'Kafka-esque'**

A former top civil servant has criticised the disability benefits assessment



system as a "hostile environment" after being told he was ineligible for support despite having Parkinson's and terminal prostate cancer.

Andrew McDonald, 56, had his benefits stopped after assessors decided he was no longer ill enough to qualify for personal independence payment (PIP).

Mr McDonald described the assessment undergone by hundreds of thousands of chronically ill and disabled people each year as crude, unprofessional and Kafka-esque. "I was shocked by the way this was being administered against the interests of some of the most disadvantaged people in the country," he said. "PIP is beset by profound administrative failures which work to the disadvantage of disabled people. My personal interactions with the [PIP] process were perfectly pleasant; but the system as a whole does create the impression of it being a hostile environment and one where two of the foes are complexity and the sense that it is not a level playing field [for claimants]. I thought this was a system to give people a hand up; in practice they encounter a sleight of hand that is completely out of kilter with the traditions of British public service in which I was not only raised but worked for most of my career."

He called on the government to look afresh at the entire PIP process, which has been dogged by controversy since it was introduced in 2014 as a way of cutting the disability benefits bill. The controversial assessments are carried out by private contractors Atos and Capita.

A DWP spokesperson said it monitored the quality of the PIP process to ensure it worked well for everyone. "We constantly seek to improve the quality of assessments. We have undertaken two independent reviews of PIP and most recently announced that we will pilot video recording of assessments, to help increase people's trust in the assessment process." McDonald's benefits were stopped in April and he lodged a tribunal appeal against the decision within weeks. Four months on, he is still awaiting a date for a hearing.

## Are there enough Blue Badge Bays to go round?



In 2019 the blue badge disabled parking scheme is undergoing its biggest shake-up since it was introduced in 1970. The Department for Transport (DfT) confirmed that from next year, people with hidden disabilities will also be granted access to the scheme. So how does Peterborough fare for the number of

disabled bays? Bryan Tyler asked PCC Parking Services

1. How many parking bays in total are there in the city centre? **3417**

2. How many are disabled bays? **108**

3. Do we have the number of new bays? **Not available as these are carried out ad hoc**

4. How many are hatched for bigger vehicles? **All bays vertical to the kerb or in car parks are wider, precise numbers are unknown**

5. Will we be anywhere near the 6% disabled bays HMG recommends? **On current numbers 3.16% are achieved but given that all on street pay and display can be used free this brings up the level to 13%**

Are there enough bays in the city? [bryan@disabilitypeterborough.com](mailto:bryan@disabilitypeterborough.com)

## Sporting Saturday 2019



It's time to get the ball rolling with "Sporting Saturday 2019", our showcase sport and physical activity event of the year! Save the date- Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> February. We will again be taking over the

Cresset, and we will announce booking details in the next edition of the newsletter. In the meantime if you are a sports club or local activity provider who provides disability or inclusive sport opportunities and you would like to take part in the day contact Nikki

on [ng.inspire@disabilitypeterborough.org](mailto:ng.inspire@disabilitypeterborough.org)

We ran out of space last year and had to start a waiting list so our advice is to do this soon. If you are a business and want to sponsor our event please get in touch. After visiting Sporting Saturday last year with his family Mick said "Without Inspire Peterborough, I would never have been able to actively engage in ANY sport, let alone Sledge Hockey (with the Phantoms Para Ice Hockey Club)...I can never thank them enough for what they helped me to discover about my own capabilities!"

## Talking Disability Radio Show



Don't forget to tune in to the Talking Disability Radio Show on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August. Lots of special guests, news, views, information and some jolly good music-Show starts at 10am on PCR FM. On this week's programme are Rita Young from the Senior Citizens Association. Sam

Stokes, Children's Worker from Disability Peterborough and Elaine Danaher from Supporters of Combat Stress talking about Armistice Day and Remembrance Day services.

## Inclusive Skating



Skating is back with a bang. We had 41 skaters take to the ice last session. We welcome all ages and abilities including wheelchair users. The coaches Gail, Ed and Paige are on the ice to assist. There are penguins and polar bears, sit-on cars and even a bowling area! Shoe grips are available for those who wish to walk on the ice. We are also able to offer grading towards Skate UK badges. Its £2pp on the ice, every other Monday 6.30 to 7.30pm, and you can book in advance please visit [www.bookwhen.com/inclusiveskating](http://www.bookwhen.com/inclusiveskating)

## Fantastic October start for Special Olympics Peterborough

October 2018 was a very successful month for SO Peterborough. Two SO

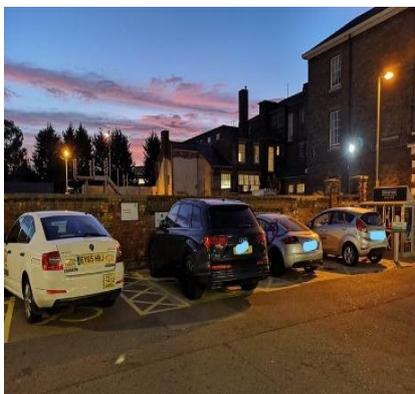


Golfers Mat and Ben Beeby attended the SO West Midlands Golf competition at Bromsgrove Golf Club. Supported by Suzanne Dickens, golf coach and Kay Greenaway SO Officer the boys competed in a nine-hole competition on a glorious autumn sunny day. The standard was very high and the boys both played very well.

Mat finishing with a round of 65 and placing 3<sup>rd</sup> and Ben with a round of 59, equal with a competitor from SO Wales, but on count back Ben was awarded first place. This was their first competition after taking up golf just a year ago. What a brilliant effort by both boys.

The following week Kirsty Butcher a rider with SO Peterborough Equestrian entered SO East Midlands Regional Equestrian competition. Kirsty competed in two elements, the Country Trial and Dressage in the higher 'A' standard for riders. Kirsty did amazingly well and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> in both elements all done on Babs, a horse she hadn't ridden before.

## “Taxi drivers are a law unto themselves”



The words of “Tom” a frustrated disabled driver and regular train user. Tom said he often sees drivers from the Station based Taxi Company parking their cabs in the bays designated for Blue Badge holders. Tom recently asked the company why they were parking in the disabled bays only to be told they were “allowed to”. Bryan Tyler from the Disability Forum contacted the Station Manager who has promised swift action against the cab company

## **Barry's Monthly Moan!**

### **Are courteous taxi drivers a thing of the past?**



I don't do it often because I'm far too old and it's far too expensive, but a few weeks ago I met up with some friends to have a night out in town. We had a great time, the staff at the pubs and clubs were helpful and made sure me and my wheelchair were conveniently sited near the bar and disabled loo! Other drinkers did their best to make sure I didn't get squashed in the clamour for happy hour drinks. Meeting friends, a few drinks, and a good night out-now for getting home. And that's where it all got messy! Several empty taxis totally ignored me and drove past. I waited until a cab pulled into the rank and basically launched myself, and wheelchair towards the rear passenger doors. I asked for the ramps which he begrudgingly put into place-but on the open road side of the cab.

He drove like Lewis Hamilton all the way home with no consideration for either me or other road users. Once we got to mine, he parked away from the pavement which meant me having to manoeuvre my way around puddles and muddy kerbs. I don't mind paying for good service, especially a friendly service, but this guy got what he deserved, the fare amount. No tip and certainly no referrals to family members and friends. And therein lies the rub!

The "Purple Pound" is worth c£200 billion to the UK economy. That's an awful lot of money disabled people are spending on trying to live a "normal" life. Sometimes that means paying for services like taxis. If that cab driver had displayed a little more consideration or even a scintilla of human kindness I would have been singing his praises and recommending his company to the people reading this article. As it stands, that Taxi Company has lost my future custom and everyone I know who needs a cab occasionally. You don't get a second chance at making a first impression.

### **More complaints about Wheelchair services in the region**

NewsLink reader "Pete" got in touch recently about his experiences with his Wheelchair Services provider. "I have been a wheelchair user for years and I have never experienced such poor service. My messages never get returned, engineers don't turn up or when they do they don't know why they are there or don't have the appropriate part. Wheelchair services in Peterborough are shambolic". If you are a wheelchair user or cares for someone that is, why not complete the Family Voice/Disability Peterborough survey:

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/DPFVPWheelchairSurvey2018>

# Amilly Fitness

Inclusive health and wellbeing centre

inspire  
Peterborough  
enhancing lives

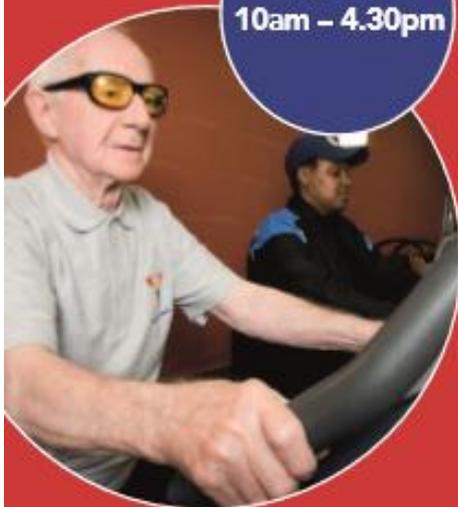


£2 per  
session



Mondays and  
Wednesdays

OPEN:  
10am – 4.30pm



Inspire Peterborough have teamed up with Oak Activities to run an inclusive fitness centre for adults with a long term health condition, special need, physical, mental, sensory or learning disability.

Chair based exercise classes and open gym sessions

Booking essential via  
[www.bookwhen.com/amilly-fitness](http://www.bookwhen.com/amilly-fitness)  
or for group bookings please call 01733 330 815

Amilly House, 88 South Street, Stanground PE2 8EZ

Contact Inspire Peterborough for more information

[www.inspirepeterborough.com](http://www.inspirepeterborough.com) | [/amilly-fitness](https://www.facebook.com/amilly-fitness)  
T: 01733 330 815 | E: [contact@inspirepeterborough.com](mailto:contact@inspirepeterborough.com)

Disability Peterborough Project/Registered Charity Number: 1089250



## **And finally.....Some useful numbers**

Age UK 01733 564185

Care and Repair 01733 863895

CareZone 01733 575083

Carers Trust Peterborough 01733 645234

City Care Clinic 01733 293800

Child Benefit 0845 302 1444

Department of Work and Pensions (new claims) 0800 055 6688

Disability Peterborough (DIAL) 01733 265551

Fire and Rescue Service 0800 917 9994

Headway Cambridgeshire 01223 576550

Housing Options 01733 864064

Inland Revenue – Tax Credits 0845 300 3900

Inspire Peterborough 01733 330815

Peterborough Association for the Blind 01733 344 844

Peterborough Community Assistance Scheme 0844 4994120

Peterborough Direct 01733 747474

Peterborough City Hospital 01733 678000

Peterborough Pensioners Association 01733 270528

Peterborough Police 101

Samaritans 08457 909090

Shopmobility 01733 313133

St Georges Hydrotherapy Pool 01733 453583

YMCA GYM 01733 313 085