

# SPELTHORNE COMMITTEE ACCESS Now (SCAN)



## April 2021

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## **DISABILITY RIGHTS UK (DRUK) – NEWS IN BRIEF**

We are the leading charity of its kind in the UK. We are run by and for people with lived experience of disability or health conditions. Our key decisions are made through our members who elect the Board of Trustees: and by our Senior Management Team.

We work with our members to influence national policy on independent living, benefits, education, employment, transport, human rights and other issues – shaping policy through direct experience and expertise. We also work with our local individual and organisation members to empower and to influence local policy and services.

To contact Disability Rights UK (DR UK) see [www.disabilityrightsuk.org/contact-us](http://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/contact-us)

### **Government Continues To Fail Disabled Election Candidates**

Questions have been asked this week in the House of Lords about why there isn't a Government fund to support the reasonable adjustments of Disabled election candidates. The Government continues to argue that it is the responsibility of political parties, ignoring the fact that the structures and organisation of such parties don't always provide the necessary support and that candidates may stand independent of political parties.

DR UK's Head of Policy Fazilet Hadi said: "Given the appallingly low representation of Disabled people in political office, the re-introduction of a fund that supports reasonable adjustments is a modest step to take. The Government could even ask political parties to refund the expenses, taking away the negotiation from individual Disabled candidates."

The Government has failed to release two key reports, one evaluating the Enable Fund, which did provide support for reasonable adjustments, and the other outlining the barriers Disabled people face in seeking political office.

This week, Disability Rights UK has again written to the Minister for Disabled People, Justin Tomlinson, asking for a permanent fund to be re-introduced. DR UK CEO Kamran Mallick said: "The voices of Disabled people need to be heard in Parliament and across local government. We make up 21% of the population and as the pandemic has shown, we are often overlooked or ignored. A fund which meets the reasonable adjustments of standing for elected office, where people can apply for mobility or communication support, is a very modest step and should be part of a wider plan



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with concerted commitment and effort to increase the number of Disabled people in political office.”

### **Coronavirus Care Act Easements To Be Removed**

The Care Act easements which allowed local authorities to remove Disabled people’s rights to social care under the Coronavirus Act, are to be removed ‘at some point’ after Easter.

Health Secretary Matt Hancock has said that: “We are rightly ending as many national measures as safely as possible, while maintaining those which remain necessary and proportionate to help reduce and control infections further as we cautiously but irreversibly ease restrictions and our historic vaccination programme continues apace.”

In a new report on its one-year review of the 2020 Act the government says that the decision has been made to expire twelve sections that are no longer seen as necessary to respond to the pandemic, including section 15 that relates to 'Local authority care and support' in England.

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/sites/all/modules/civicrm/extern/url.php?u=59716&qid=9367798>

### **Coronavirus SEND Easements To Remain In Place**

Despite the Government’s decision to remove Care Act easements, measures which allow the Education Secretary Gavin Williamson to amend parts of the Children and Families Act (CFA) 2014 to let local councils use only “reasonable endeavours” to provide named needs in Disabled children’s Education, Health and Care plans (EHC plans) will stay in place.

Under the Coronavirus Act, a school also no longer has a duty to admit a Disabled child if that school was named in the child’s EHC plan. Disability Rights UK, The Alliance for Inclusive Education, Liberty and Inclusion London have written to the Education Secretary to ask him to remove the CFA easements from the Coronavirus Act.

DR UK Head of Policy Fazilet Hadi said: “There is no consistency in scrapping the Care Act easements and keeping the CFA easements. It is just plain wrong that we are putting back the human rights of Disabled adults but not those of Disabled children.”

ALLFIE Policy and Campaigns Co-ordinator Simone Aspis told Disability News Service that some local authorities and schools had used the CFA easements last year when they were introduced, but: “some local authorities and schools are still acting as though those easements are still in place” even though they have not been



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switched on since last July. It is very serious in terms of the impact. It could end up with more and more children being out of school, being denied access to education and falling behind in the progress they could be making, and not having the same opportunities. We could be finding ourselves with a lost generation of Disabled people as a result of this.”

### **COVID Certification Review – Call For Evidence**

The government has launched a call for evidence for its COVID Status Certification review, in essence, vaccination passports.

The government is weighing up whether certification could and should play a role in reopening the economy, reducing restrictions on social contact and improving safety. Certification would be available to both vaccinated people and to unvaccinated people who have been tested.

The government is looking to consider the ethical, equalities, privacy, legal and operational aspects of a potential certification scheme, and what limits, if any, should be placed on organisations using certification. Disability Rights UK is preparing a response to this call for evidence. We would ask DPOs to contact us with their evidence, concerns and views no later than noon on Tuesday 23 March. Email us at [tellus@disabilityrightsuk.org](mailto:tellus@disabilityrightsuk.org) or call us on 0330 995 0400.

### **Half Of People With A Learning Disability And Autistic People Reluctant To Provide Feedback On Care**

Debbie Ivanova, Deputy Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care, said: “Listening to the lived experience of people with a learning disability and/or autistic people has to be at the centre of how we decide to regulate and improve care. It is so important to hear their voices and allow our approach to be shaped by this in order to properly address the challenges of closed cultures and inadequate care.

“Families and people with lived experience keep telling us that it’s so much harder to speak up in services that care for people with a learning disability or autistic people, and we’ve recognised this. The work I am leading will be about improving the way we can hear from people and making sure that their experiences drive the action we take.”

CQC research also showed that people with a learning disability and autistic people are more likely to accept health and social care providers offering a lower standard of care as a result of



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Coronavirus and that more than a quarter (27%) of survey respondents with learning disabilities and autistic people had noticed a lower standard of safety when accessing health and social care during the COVID-19 pandemic– more than double the average.

People can give feedback on their experiences of care, or those of someone they care for, on the CQC website or through their local Healthwatch. Local Healthwatch organisations can also help you with advice and information to access the support people need.

### **Boost To Bus Services**

Disability Rights UK has long been pressing the government and operators to provide bus services which will enable disabled people to access day to day activities more easily. The launch of the new government bus strategy has important implications for disabled people which at last recognises that buses are a lifeline to employment, education, medical appointments and leisure, as well as being essential to the economy.

The strategy highlights key issues that buses will be more frequent, cheaper, greener, and easier to use as government continues its levelling up agenda, and councils and operators will work in partnership for the benefit of passengers. It says that passengers across England will benefit from more frequent, more reliable, easier to use and understand, better co-ordinated and cheaper integrated services and ticketing across all transport modes, so people can easily move from bus to train.

The Department for Transport is also announcing the government's 'Rural mobility fund', which enables on-demand services – such as minibuses booked via an app – to be trialled in areas where a traditional bus service isn't appropriate.

Disability Rights UK's Stephen Brookes said: "The proposals are a welcome step in the right direction in delivering improvements for passengers. However delivering the scale of change needed to get people out of their cars and on to fast, frequent, clean, affordable and accessible public transport will require a long-term, sustainable funding model to drive investment in the years to come."



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

[www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility](https://www.facebook.com/stainesshopmobility)

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Membership is available on a daily or annual basis.  
Please contact manager for details



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## **DISABILITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK – NORTH SURREY**

Administration and management of the North Surrey Disability Empowerment Network (DENS) is arranged by the Surrey Coalition of Disabled People (SCDP) and covers the areas of Runnymede, Spelthorne, Woking &

Surrey Heath. It is one of three groups of local disabled people, and carers, who meet up quarterly with representatives from local organisations like the NHS and supportive charities for information and advice. **Next Meeting on Monday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2021**

**Please Note All Empowerment Meetings Are Being Held via Zoom**

Please contact Yasmin Broome, Engagement Officer at Surrey Coalition email: [Yasmin.Broome@surreycoalition.org.uk](mailto:Yasmin.Broome@surreycoalition.org.uk)  
Telephone or SMS text 0745 5267424 for details of how to participate in meetings remotely.



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## **GUIDANCE FOR CLINICALLY VULNERABLE 1<sup>st</sup> APRIL**

Since the national restrictions and shielding measures were introduced in January, cases of COVID-19 have fallen considerably across all parts of the country and over 22 million people have had at least one dose of the vaccine. We know that shielding has not been easy for you and we would like to thank you for your efforts during this challenging time.

Although clinically extremely vulnerable people will no longer be advised to shield, we still recommend that you take extra precautions to protect yourself while the virus is still spreading in our communities. The updated guidance provides practical steps that cover things like socialising, travel and going to work and school.

These are not rules but advice, so you can choose whether you wish to follow them or not. You can find the full guidance at the end of this letter and at <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

In addition to this advice, you must continue to follow the regulations that are in place for everyone during the pandemic. This includes rules on mixing with people from other households.

### **Summary of advice that applies from 1 April 2021**

Until the social distancing rules are eased more widely, it is important that you continue to keep the number of social interactions that you have low and try to reduce the amount of time you spend in settings where you are unable to maintain social distancing.

Everyone is advised to continue to work from home where possible, but if you cannot work from home you should now attend your workplace. Your employer is required to take steps to reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 in the workplace and should be able to explain to you the measures they have put in place to keep you safe at work.

### **Access to support**

Local councils and supermarkets will continue to provide support to follow shielding advice until 31 March. Councils will look to provide assistance wherever possible after that date and, if you have already registered for priority access to supermarket delivery slots, supermarkets will continue to offer priority access until 21 June. If you do not have internet access, please contact your local council who will be able to connect you to the support that is



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available in your local area.

After 31 March, if you are struggling as a result of Coronavirus please visit <https://www.gov.uk/find-coronavirus-support> or contact your local council to find out what support is available.

### **Access to health and care**

Please remember that the NHS is open, and we urge you to continue to access all the NHS services that you need. It is likely to be safer for you to use the NHS than to try to manage alone.

If you are concerned about the impact of COVID-19 on your health, speak to your GP, hospital clinician or use NHS111. Further information on accessing help and support can be found in the attached guidance.



### **‘INTERNATIONAL’ HAND SIGNAL TO INDICATE YOU ARE IN DANGER**

Videos depicting the simple hand gesture that can silently signal that you are in danger or need help are being circulated via ‘social media’.

The hand signal, which has since become recognised as an international signal of help, was first created by the Women’s Funding Network in connection with the Canadian Women’s Foundation at the start of the Covid-19 lockdown as a way for domestic abuse victims to indicate non-verbally that they needed help.

The signal, which is meant to be made with one hand, sees an individual face their palm outward to the camera or other person before tucking their thumb inwards and closing their remaining fingers on top to make a fist.

Organisations launched the signal as part of the #signalforhelp campaign, with the Women’s Funding Network stating: “The combination of increased isolation in quarantine, and increase in the use of video communication, created a critical need for a widely recognised, discreet, way a survivor could reach out for help.”

In March people on social media began widely sharing the signal following the disappearance of Sarah Everard, whose abduction and murder during a walk home in Clapham, south London, has



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sparked a global conversation about women's safety.

The video, as well as one created by the Canadian Women's Foundation, has prompted thousands of people to share the video with their own followers, with many acknowledging the importance of making the signal widely recognised.

"This is the international signal for Help Me. Learn it. Watch for it. Show this to others," one person tweeted. Another said: "The international sign for Help me. Please learn it. Pass it on. It may help save a life." "Learn this, teach this, see this," someone else wrote.

As for what to do if someone shows you the symbol, Elizabeth Barajas-Román, the president and CEO of the Women's Funding Network, previously told Vogue that those on the other end of a call for help can ask yes or no questions, so as to remain discreet, as well as questions like: "Do you want me to reach out to you directly?" and: "Can I check in with you?"

In addition to the safety measure, Ms Everard's case has also seen women sharing the safety tactics they rely on to feel safe while walking alone or at night, as well as the victim-blaming comments women are often subjected to.

Ms Everard's disappearance has also prompted a renewed call for men to do more in terms of supporting women against misogyny and violence, with one Twitter thread asking what men can do to make women feel safer.

The push to make the hand signal widely recognisable comes after UK pharmacies announced a codeword scheme (Ask for ANI) in collaboration with the government earlier this year, which would provide a "lifeline" to domestic abuse victims.



### **THE 'ASK FOR ANI' ALERT MECHANISM**

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/domestic-abuse-pharmacies-codeword-scheme-boots-b1786810.html>

The new scheme, which was rolled out across independent pharmacies and Boots stores in March, allows victims who may be trapped at home with their abusive partners to discreetly gesture they are in need of help.

If a victim asks for ANI (which stands for **Action Needed**



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**Immediately**), a trained pharmacy worker will offer them to go into a private space where they can support them to either contact domestic abuse services or the police.

Mark Lyonette, chief executive of the National Pharmacy Association, said: “Community pharmacies are about people, not just pills. There is a clear and urgent need to support victims of abuse and we want to play our part. “The Ask for ANI alert mechanism is a discreet and sensitive way to help support some of the most vulnerable people in our society.”

Nicole Jacobs, Domestic Abuse Commissioner for England and Wales, said: “It is dangerous to be confined with an abuser and it can be extremely difficult to seek help when you are with a perpetrator almost 24 hours a day - as many victims are under the current lockdown conditions.

“I welcome the Ask for ANI scheme which gives victims another chance to access safe spaces and to get help in pharmacies by using a code word. This is exactly the kind of activity I would like to see more of: the whole community stepping up to play a role in responding to domestic abuse, which is truly ‘everyone’s business’.”



## **ADULT SOCIAL CARE TEAM - Monthly Briefing 23 March Surrey partners come together to remember Covid victims**

Frontline staff, public services and volunteers from across Surrey who have managed the Covid-19 response will come together on Tuesday, 23<sup>rd</sup> March to remember and pay tribute to those who have died from coronavirus over the last 12 months.

On the first anniversary of the country being placed into lockdown, organisations that make up Surrey’s Local Resilience Forum – including the emergency services, health trusts and hospitals, the county council, district and borough councils – will come together at midday and stand in solidarity in a one-minute silence to remember all those who have died.

Steve Owen-Hughes, the Chief Fire Officer and Chair of Surrey’s Local Resilience Forum said: “Surrey’s LRF declared a major incident to deal with the pandemic and to coordinate the efforts of frontline staff, public services and volunteers from across the county on the 19<sup>th</sup> March last year.



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“There is no doubt that since that time by working together we have saved hundreds of lives. However, sadly we have also seen thousands of lives lost across Surrey and the whole country to the Covid-19 Pandemic. It is only right that on the first anniversary of lockdown that we take a moment to pause, reflect and remember all those who have tragically lost their lives and their families and friends who continue to grieve. Due to current restrictions, we are unable to come together physically, but we are encouraging staff from across the partnership to stop what they are doing at midday and join the nation to remember.”

Surrey’s Local Resilience Forum is a multi-agency partnership made up of representatives from first responders and local public services. It brings together all agencies with a significant role to play in responding to and recovery from the effects of emergencies and disasters.

### **Unpaid Carers And Those Over 50 Can Now Book COVID Vaccine**

The vaccination programme in Surrey continues to go well. Those over 50 are now being called for their COVID vaccinations and unpaid carers are now part of the groups eligible.

Residents are reminded that they need to wait to be contacted. When you are contacted by the NHS about your vaccine, book an appointment as soon as possible. This will either be at a vaccination site in your local community supported by your GP practice, or at a large vaccination centre. More details about the vaccination programme in Surrey can be found by visiting [Surrey Heartlands](#).

### **Peer-led SUN groups launched to support adults with complex emotional needs**

People experiencing difficulties with complex emotions that affect how they feel, cope with life and manage relationships can now easily access support in the community with the launch of SUN (Service User Network). SUN groups are for people with complex emotional needs that are often associated with personality disorder or aspects of this condition. It is estimated that, at any given time, about one in twenty people will have a personality disorder.

SUN is based on an established model of care that offers adults weekly peer support groups where they can share experiences and provide each other with help and advice. The service is provided by Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust in partnership with third sector provider, Community Connections



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Surrey.

SUN groups are facilitated by a clinician and peer support worker. They can be attended by anyone aged 18 and over who is registered with a GP in Surrey or NE Hampshire (Rushmoor and Hart boroughs). A person can refer themselves to SUN by contacting [sun.admin@sabp.nhs.uk](mailto:sun.admin@sabp.nhs.uk) and asking for a SUN membership form. They do not need a diagnosis of personality disorder to join SUN groups. There are several SUN groups each week, all of which are currently offered virtually due to Coronavirus restrictions.

For further information and support, please visit <https://www.sabp.nhs.uk/our-services/mental-health/sun>

### **Surrey Heartlands Integrated Care System (ICS)**

Surrey Heartlands ICS has secured £500,000 to help connect more people with nature to improve their mental and physical health. People who live and work in Surrey are being invited to fill in an interactive online map

<https://surreygreenprescribing.commonplace.is/> to highlight the opportunities already available and help shape provision in future. People are being asked to map the activities and places where they experience nature – everything from green spaces, local parks, waterways and community allotments to walking, cycling and outdoor sports. The pins and comments on the map will feed into a project aimed at providing more opportunities for communities to get involved in their natural environment, in line with any Covid-19 restrictions in place at the time.

The ICS is among seven partnerships in England to have been awarded government funding for the initiative as a “test and learn” site. It’s part of an initiative known as green social prescribing, which involves supporting people to take part in nature-based activities to enhance their wellbeing.

Residents are being invited to tell the project via the Commonplace website about outdoor activities or spaces they know about and how they feel about them – including the local park, feeding the ducks, walking groups, litter-picking groups, outdoor sports or any other opportunity. The website also has more information about the project and accessibility details.

Community groups – whether resident associations, charities, friends of local parks, Scout or Guide groups or any other group which draws together local people – are being invited to get



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involved in designing and producing the project. Groups which are interested can visit the Surrey Says survey.

<https://www.surreysays.co.uk/environment-and-infrastructure/green-social-prescribing-working-groups/>

### **Workshops To Develop The New Physical Disability And Sensory Impairment Strategy**

Surrey County Council is engaging with different user forums and groups to develop the new Physical Disability and Sensory Impairment Strategy and want to ensure the views of people with a physical disability and/or sensory impairment are at the centre of this.

The aim is for the new strategy to be based on a thorough understanding of local need, and a more personalised approach, driving both commissioning and providers to improve outcomes, ensuring services and support meet the changing needs of people with a physical disability and/or sensory impairment over the course of their lifetime.

The dates for the workshops are;

- For those with a Sight impairment **Thursday 22nd April** at 10.30am
- For those with a long-term neurological condition **Tuesday 11th May** at 10.30am

### **Surrey Care Services Directory published**

The new 2021/2022 edition of the Surrey Care Services Directory is now available online and the print edition will shortly be distributed to key agencies and social care teams.

This year the directory has been produced independently of Surrey County Council. The publisher, Care Choices Ltd has developed the publication with Surrey Care Association to provide a useful guide for local residents on care options in Surrey with up-to-date information on home care agencies and residential and nursing care accommodation. You may note changes to the editorial which has a more generic content. To access the online version please visit Care Choices Limited.

<https://www.carechoices.co.uk/publication/surrey-care-services-directory/>

### **Action For Carers' Programme Of Events Online Continues**

Action for Carers Surrey helps local unpaid carers of all ages, with free information, practical help, emotional support, events, advice and more.



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Free events are available to give carers a chance to relax or to get vital information. Most sessions are now on Zoom, and events include mindfulness, flower arranging, yoga and craft activities, plus practical sessions on topics like autism, carers rights, and emergency planning. Carers might like to join a support group and meet other carers in a similar situation, such as looking after someone with dementia or a child with a disability.

For further information or to access support, please visit Action for Carers. <https://www.actionforcarers.org.uk/>

### **Digital Attitudes Survey Launched**

Surrey and Borders Partnership NHS Foundation Trust would like to hear the views of people in Surrey on the use of digital technology in healthcare. The survey results will enable the trust to design and shape new services.

To complete the survey please visit Digital Technology in Healthcare. <https://t.co/NjUZgUAJ0f?amp=1>

### **Surrey Lieutenancy Charity Support**

The Surrey Lieutenancy would like to invite charity organisations to respond to a very short questionnaire in order to gain a better understanding of the charities operating in Surrey and the kind of support you would like to receive. In order to best be able to complete this questionnaire, you would be a volunteer or a paid worker for a Surrey-based charity.

Their questionnaire should only take **five minutes to complete**, and the information you provide will help the Surrey Lieutenancy to better support and better connect with organisations and the wider charity sector in Surrey in the future. <https://surreyca.us7.list-manage.com/track/click?u=d191e5a601c6aee03bf036f80&id=0e25be26c6&e=59f21eaae>

If you would prefer to complete a paper form, or dictate your answers to someone over the phone, then this can be arranged. Please contact Nick Bragger at Surrey Community Action on 01483 566072.

### **The Vital Role Small Charities Are Playing In The Pandemic Response**

Smaller charities have played a key role in supporting people and communities throughout the pandemic in a way that public services and mutual aid could not, a new report has found.



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The Value of Small in a Big Crisis report finds that small charities responded effectively because they are distinctive in who they serve, how they carry out their work, and the role they play in their communities.

Read more about the vital role small charities have played in the pandemic response by visiting the Civil Society.

<https://www.civilsociety.co.uk/news/small-charities-are-playing-a-role-in-the-pandemic-response-that-public-services-and-mutual-aid-cannot.html>



## **SCAN and SPELTHORNE PHYSICAL, SENSORY AND COGNITIVE DISABILITIES FORUM (SPSCDF)**

SCAN's members had a difficult year setting up meetings throughout the various pandemic lock downs, however we are pleased to announce that for 2021 we will be able to host a virtual meeting using 'Zoom' on **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> April**.

The session will start at 11am and will run for approximately 90 minutes. If you have access to a digital device with internet access, can use 'Zoom' and would like to join us, please send your details to either email [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk) or text message to 07853 038933 and we will send you the meeting's log in details.

The meeting brings together service providers and users to influence the solutions to any problems or access issues encountered by people with physical, sensory and cognitive disabilities. We receive reports from a number of local groups and service providers.

Please come along to the meeting to let us know if you have any access issues either with

- pavements that are being obstructed either by badly parked vehicles or overhanging trees,
- crossing points that need dropped kerbs,
- buildings or services that are not accessible or
- the 'abuse' of Blue Badge Parking spaces. \*\* See next Page

Alternatively leave a message on our website forum [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/forum/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/forum/) or send us an email to [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk)



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EasyFundraising is an indirect way to generate donations and we encourage people to register with us and use the portal. Retailers usually make percentage contributions but these aren't restricted to just high street retailers.

Contributions are also made by service providers such insurers, energy suppliers, phone companies, hotel chains and holiday booking sites. Sometimes they can be lump sum contributions.

Please sign up and help us at:

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/spelthorneaccessnow/)



### **BLUE BADGE ABUSE LOCAL SURVEY PLANNED**

SCAN is sending out a call to local blue badge holders to report back their own experiences over the last 12 months and has the pandemic made a difference.

Leave a message on our website forum if you would like to receive a survey form [www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/forum/](http://www.spelthorneaccess.org.uk/forum/) or send us an email to [info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk](mailto:info@spelthorneaccess.org.uk)



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