

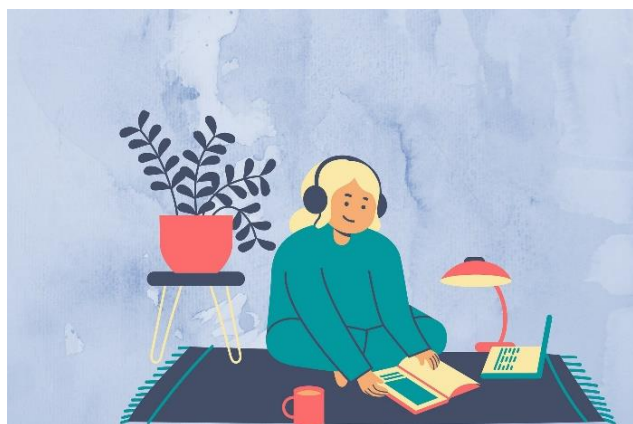


The Disability Rights UK newsletter co-edited with and for young people

Stay informed with news and information on your journey through education, training and work

National Apprenticeship Week

By Caroline



On 10th February the Disabled Apprentice Network held a webinar where students from Daventry Hill School and Fairfield Farm College asked questions from three apprentices, Luke, Kelly and Scott about topics from the prospects of an apprenticeship to what skills you can gain.

Students were able to pose questions to our apprenticeships network: Luke stated in one of the questions ‘an apprenticeship can make you a more attractive candidate with that extra qualification.’

Scott spoke of the best thing about an apprenticeship which was ‘meeting people my age, flexibility, taking breaks and having a supportive provider.’ This highlighted to all the students that not only it is a qualification but equips you with valuable life and social skills during the process too.

This tied in with National Apprenticeship week from the 7th to the 13th of February. The theme for this Apprenticeship week was ‘Building the Future,’ and all about young people discovering what apprenticeship opportunities are out there.

Whilst discovering what level of knowledge and education is required for their desired career, they also talked about understanding what needs to be put in place if you are disabled and how best the employers can support you.

Included was the idea of rights in the workplace, what you are entitled too such as accessibility to for example working round a work schedule that best suits you.

The important message of this Apprenticeship week was to promote the benefits of undertaking an apprenticeship and to demonstrate to employers how it can benefit them as well. To teach young people another route that they can explore on their journey to work, and how apprenticeships can help them towards their next steps and goals.

Read the report from the Disabled Apprentice Network: **Getting it Right for Disabled Apprentices**

Reasonable Adjustments and End Point Assessments



Employers and training providers should work collaboratively with the apprentice and the EPAO to determine the appropriate adjustment. They are advised to seek clarification from their EPAO in any case where they consider that they do not have the necessary expertise to judge whether a reasonable adjustment is required.

The outcome produced by the apprentice must always meet the requirements of the

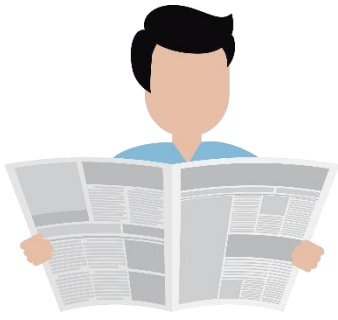
occupational standard regardless of the process or methods used, be as rigorously assessed as outcomes generated by other apprentices, be assessable, be a valid measure of occupational competence, and be able to be moderated or verified.

It is not necessary to obtain approval from the ESFA prior to putting reasonable adjustments into place for an apprentice. This process should begin as soon as the employer is aware that the apprentice is likely to need to access reasonable adjustments for the end-point assessment.

Evidence of the difficulty/disability will be required to support the application, along with evidence of any existing adjustments or additional support provided by the employer or training provider. These should also be kept for any future audit. They should complete the EPAO's reasonable adjustments application form and return to the EPAO who will aim to confirm a decision within 21 working days of acknowledging the request.

End-point Assessment Reasonable Adjustments Guidance / Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education

**World Autism
Awareness
Week**



News UK is proud to launch Britain's first-ever conference aimed at improving representation of staff with disabilities in newsrooms across the UK.

On Wednesday, March 23 journalism diversity experts and leading journalists with disabilities will come together to discuss a variety of topics including the benefits journalists with disabilities bring to newsrooms, breaking into journalism hearing from young disabled journalists to how to land your first job in journalism.

This event will be broadcast from a digital event platform and is open to trainee journalists, journalists with disabilities, university students, Executive producers, jobseekers, managers and managing editors.

Disability and Journalism Forum launched | News UK

It is time employers realised the benefits of employing young people with learning disabilities

Mencap explains that 'people with a learning disability can make great employees!'

Generally, they have lower sickness levels and stay in entry level jobs longer so can save employers money on recruitment.

Many employers also report that their staff team morale increases as a result of working with their colleagues with a learning disability.

As many of the workforce, who happen to have a Learning Disability, stay within their roles and with their employers for longer, retention is increased, and money saved on recruitment and training.

Another key benefit to employers is that public image is increased in a positive light. 77% of the public think more highly of businesses that make the extra effort to employ people with a disability. Inclusive employers promote a healthy public response.

There are many examples out there of the challenges faced and the high number of unemployed, but I also think it is essential to turn focus to positive news stories for inspiration

Appointing candidates who are Neurodivergent and/or have a Learning Disability can take a little more effort, a little more support than usual and more thought in matching skills to requirements but the long-term benefits definitely outweigh the additional work it might take to find the right person for the right job.

Read the full article : **[It is time employers realised the benefits of employing young people with learning disabilities - Special Needs Jungle](#)**



London175 Legacy programme

The programme takes place over Zoom – four hours per day over four days: 17,18,21,22 March, 1-5pm.

The London175 Legacy programme is your opportunity to come together with your peers from across London, think through what you want your generation's legacy to be and develop the leadership skills that you will need to make it happen.

You can apply by answering one simple question – 'Tell us why you should be part of London175?'

You can answer in writing, poetry, video or art – we love to see your creativity! The programme is free thanks to the generous sponsorship from City & Guilds, The City of London Corporation, Grant Thornton UK and PwC UK.

How does it work? You'll join a group of around 100 young people (18–25-year-olds) from London – some working, some unemployed, some studying, some campaigning, some volunteering...

You'll come together on Zoom to tackle a green challenge for London: 'How can we act together to transform London into a cleaner, greener place for all?'

You'll take part in café conversations and panel sessions with leaders from organisations big and small – public, private and non-profit - in London.

Join our 'Ask Legacy' sessions every Friday 10am – drop in and find out more here or email Maria McConville at: maria.mcconville@commonpurpose.org



Bringing Skills to Life: "Aiming Higher"

By Ryan

Hi there! My name is Ryan. I am currently in Post 16, which is kind of between school and college. It is about preparing for our next steps, whether that's going to college or getting an apprenticeship. Wherever we go next, we will most likely need to use public transport to get ourselves around. So, my friends and I have been out on some independence trips to enable us to use the bus and train and gain more confidence in going out. In this article I will talk about some of the trips I've taken part in over this year.



What trips have I been on?

I have been on multiple trips, including a scavenger hunt in Grayshott, where we had to try and find post office opening times and what certain shops are called. Afterwards

we visited the café, and I had a hot chocolate! The best trip so far was when we went to the Friary in Guildford for a big shopping trip. I used this opportunity to do a little bit of Christmas Shopping and buy things for my family secretly. I don't usually get my own gifts for family, so I knew they wouldn't expect this!

How have I prepared for these trips?

Most of these trips involved my friends and I looking at transport timetables. We also went out on some smaller trips over several weeks, learning how to use public transport and buying tickets for them before a final big trip, the Guildford shopping trip.

What skills have I developed?

I have helped my communication skills grow by ordering tickets and I have done some problem solving by working out the bus and train times. But I've also learned to stay positive because when coming back from Guildford, the train got delayed by 40 minutes! Overall, this is helping me become more of an independent traveller than I used to be.

Have I enjoyed these experiences? What have I learnt?

I have thoroughly enjoyed these trips; we are basically learning through fun! You wouldn't do any of this kind of stuff at school! I have learned how to buy a train ticket and use a cashpoint to check my credit card balance. I have learnt how to manage my money and use the bus, and I have also learnt about become more independent. These trips have helped me realise that some busy places aren't as bad as I had feared.

How will this help me in the future?

This will help me for when I go to college or university. Some of these skills are a part of daily life for most people so these skills will be very useful. Or just when I want to go out and see a friend, I may be able to do this without my parents, now that I have grasped some of these skills.

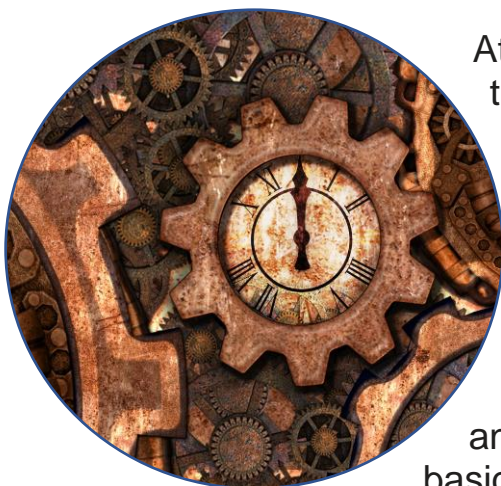
How have the staff around me helped with this? Any support?

The staff helped me with handling money. Amy, the O.T, helped me ensure I was sticking to budget on Christmas presents. They also helped me with my confidence, for example when I didn't know what to do after the Waitress in one of the cafes got my order wrong. I ordered a Mocha and a Terry's chocolate orange muffin, but I ended up getting a Mocha and a Terry's hot chocolate instead. So, the staff told me to go back and order again, making sure I was clear about what I wanted.

What would I like to do in the future?

I think I would love to go to a city like London in the future. At College or University, I may have to deal with a busy environment so this could help with my navigation skills and confidence around busy places.

by Aurelia



At the end of January, I went to the British Museum to see the special exhibition on Peru.

Peru is a country in South America. Part of the country sits on The Andes, the longest mountain range (that isn't underwater) in the world. This exhibition was about the ancient history of Peru.

Today, so that we can tell the time, we have iPhones, and watches, Alexa apps and Amazon Echo devices, and basically a lot of other electronic things to help us tell the time. We understand that there is past time, present time, and future time.

In ancient Andean culture, they believed that the past, present and future were all running at the same time. They couldn't tell them apart.

I find this rather interesting because I partially believe the same thing as they did. Because I am autistic, I find that, say I were to look something up, the second I look it up, that is then in the past, and the future is then happening right at that moment at the same time. Past, present and future are happening at the same time.

I struggle to use analogue clock faces, I always have. And I don't really remember how long-ago events in the past took place in my life. Time for me is kind of irrelevant, because I live in the moment. And if I remember something that happened in the past, I relive the emotions of that experience as if it was happening right now. This can be great if it's a good memory, or dreadful if it's a terrible memory.

This is fascinating to me, because a whole society used to think this way. Minutes, seconds, hours, a day ago – they didn't think like this. I wonder when they lost the ability to think of time as something that happened as history, future and the present all at once. I wonder what it would be like if we thought like that nowadays. Hypothetically in my brain, I think it would be better, but society doesn't work like that at this time.

Advice and Information for Disabled young people in education, apprenticeships, traineeships or Supported Internships is available from the DR UK Student Helpline

- Opening hours: 11am-1pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
- Telephone: 0330 995 0414
- Email: students@disabilityrightsuk.org



By Ashley

I was born in Philippines in 2000. I was very poorly because I did not have much to eat, and I was extremely tiny.

When I was 1 year old, I was diagnosed with Cerebral Palsy and speech impairment and I wasn't properly supported, so my parents made the decision to go to United Kingdom for health cares and work too.



When I arrived in UK, I was 2 years old and since then my life became a roller coaster. When I was at school, I did not have much mental support. I was bullying a lot, no one was next to me, and I had to overcome my frustration by myself. Things became much better in the few past years when I started to study at City College Norwich, doing Creative Media Pathways, General Enterprise, Retail Enterprise.

I am 21 years old, and I am developing my employability skills at MINT and studying English and Maths Functional Skills. I am receiving support at the college, and I am helped to get into the right path. During my life I have learned ways on how to overcome barriers. I have been through so much bullying in the past, but I always stand up and be strong, moving forward with my life and making progress! I had and I still have tons of arguments with my parents about my career and life.

When I am over stressed, I like to spend time in my bedroom to relax my mind with some relaxing music and/or watching comedies and funny films. If these don't work, I close my eyes and I calm my mind counting until 10 – this is my advice for you if you are seeking relaxing time! Last Summer, I got the surgery operation on my leg – this is enabling me to walk almost normally! I exercise and do physio therapist weekly. I am making progress day by day; I do not use anymore the wheelchair and crutches. This is giving me lot of confident, and I am very proud about my progress!

I have lots of aspirations and I like to develop always new skills. One of my dreams is to work in a Café and I am working on developing my ability to make different kind of coffees. My job coach at MINT is helping me to develop my employability skills and to gain a work experience in a Café in Norwich. I like to study History, Sciences and Music and I love exercises and swimming.

There is a lot that I want to achieve in my life!

I am now working hard to develop my ability to walking better and hopefully achieve a job in a Cafe. I am very committed with English and Maths lessons. Hopefully, one day I will have the opportunity to go to university and become a military/UK Space scientist or archaeologist. If I cannot go to university then I will be happy to work in a Cafe and earning money to live in Japan or Los Angeles, starting a career in making films. My advice for you is to ALWAYS stay cheerful and keeps moving forward in your life, keep practice and try your best!

DIY is an established Learning Disability Theatre Company based in Salford, UK. The company's vision is for a world where performers and arts leaders with learning disabilities are valued as part of the rich diversity of our cultural sector and society.

Aiming to:

- Challenge preconceptions and barriers experienced by people with learning disabilities through high quality performance, education projects and research.
- Celebrate diversity and creativity in all areas of our work.
- Promote the achievements of performers and theatre-makers with learning disabilities and share good practice.



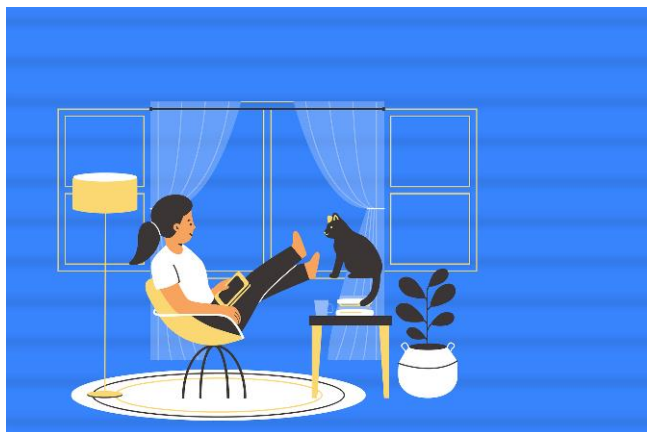
To do this they offer:

- Original performances which tour schools, colleges, and theatres.
- Drama projects with schools, colleges and youth organisations including accredited Arts Award projects at Discover, Explore, Bronze and Silver levels.
- Regular creative workshops and courses for adults with learning disabilities.
- Training for Arts Award advisers, universities, and practitioners.
- Bespoke consultancy and training

Home - DIY Theatre Company

You don't have to be the "perfect" disabled person

From Life of a Blind Girl



When I was younger, I was told that I needed to work harder than my sighted peers in order to get to where I wanted to be, whether that was in education, employment or achieving my goals.

It was instilled in me that if I wanted to succeed, I had to prove myself. I would have to fight for opportunities.

On the face of it, there would always be someone one step ahead of me, so I'd have to take an even bigger leap than everyone else and do whatever I could to stand out. Otherwise, I'd be left behind.

Unfortunately, that's true for the most part. I'm constantly having to prove myself and demonstrate my skills. I have to push back on those misconceptions and show why I am capable.

Whilst I'm proud of the obstacles I've had to jump over to get to where I am today, it has also brought out a sense of perfectionism. Striving to reach my full potential isn't disability related as such, it's just the person I am. However, there's certainly a

disability aspect in there somewhere, something which I'm sure many disabled people can relate to.

I try my hardest to tackle the stereotypes and misconceptions attached to disability. I want to prove that having a vision impairment doesn't stop disabled people from achieving or succeeding. However, I need to remind myself that this doesn't have to come at the cost of being a perfectionist.

The battle of disability and perfectionism has always been there, yet it's something I've become acutely aware of recently. I've had some rather big changes in my life over the last few months. I'm surrounded by family, friends and colleagues that I don't have to prove myself to because they see my skills and talents. Whenever I've gone to justify something, I'm stopped in my tracks. That perfectionist kicks in when it doesn't need to. And that has been a big learning curve for me. Don't get me wrong, there are still moments when I have to prove myself to others. That will never change.

I talk a lot about our disability journey because it's a huge part of being a disabled person. I think the idea of perfectionism intertwines with that journey. When we find ourselves comparing our skills or abilities to that of another disabled person, we need to remember that we are each on our own journey.

We need to encourage the world to see us for who we are, rather than tearing us apart because we haven't conformed to society's assumptions of disability.

If a disabled person doesn't achieve something, then they are seen as being inadequate. It is often assumed that our disability is holding us back. Yet this isn't the reason at all. The fact I need different adjustments and adaptations to others does not mean that I am any less successful than my disabled or non-disabled peers.

If you are feeling like you have to live up to societal pressures, I want you to remember that you don't have to be the perfect disabled person.

Be your true self. No one can ask any more of you.

You don't have to be the "perfect" disabled person - Life of a Blind Girl

Stand up to Bullying

Bullying can make you feel scared, upset, and embarrassed. Mencap have created some guidelines and top tips for young people with learning disabilities on bullying.

If you experience bullying, there are some things you can do:



You shouldn't have to deal with bullying on your own. You should talk about it to someone you trust like your parents, a friend or a carer as they can help you deal with it. Tell someone if you are being bullied. They can help you.

You can talk to someone privately. Childline has a helpline where you can talk to people about bullying. Their telephone number is 0800 1111.

You can report bullying to people who can help to stop it. This could be people like teachers or the police.

If you are being cyberbullied, you should try not to reply to any messages you receive. It can make things worse by encouraging the bullies or upsetting you more. Never give out any personal details on the internet. This could be things like your address, age or phone number.

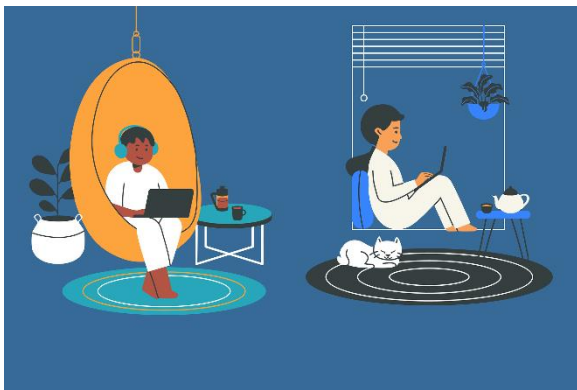
Mencap Direct is the easiest way for you to access advice and information about learning disability and find the right support and Mencap services in your area.

On 0808 808 1111, from 8am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Or email help@mencap.org.uk

I'm Being Bullied Because Of My Disability, What Should I Do? - Stand Up to Bullying

Disability Rights Conference

By Caroline



The Disability Rights Conference 'Get Ahead: Post – 16 Options for Disabled Young People', aimed to tackle the obstacles that young people face in their journey to find employment and work.

This included several organisations including Fairshot Café which provides work in a café for people with disabilities enabling them to not only gain qualifications but equip them with what a

working environment is like and what is expected of you in a job to meeting numerous customers.

To Jamie Brett with his presentation 'Virtually Unstoppable – Preparing Disabled Young People of the Workplace', where he talked about how employers can make a job more accessible, and more equal for the young person that they employ.

There was also information on statistics from Claire Cookson part of the DFN Project Search with her presentation 'Mind the Gap: Transforming Lives with Great Careers'. She said, 'for young people with learning difficulties and autism getting a job is even more of a struggle, only 5.1% secure paid employment compared to 80% of their peers.'

And this shows the very real gap of people employing those with learning difficulties and autism, which is what the conference tackled. How a workplace environment can be adapted, how an employer can take that next step to make sure the job is accessible and most importantly the benefits of hiring someone with a disability.

I spoke with Roisin O'Brien founder of Empower Autism, and we worked on a presentation together on what it is like to be on the spectrum. The myths, the workplace environment and I spoke about how for me being on the High Functioning end of the spectrum how I worry about going into a workplace.

I also did a speech on Identity; how Disabled people are given their identity by society. As soon as someone sees someone with a disability, they think of what they cannot do, such as a wheelchair you think 'they can't walk.'

How about changing this mindset? I felt brave for talking about such personal experiences to me, especially the bullying and the name calling ever since being diagnosed. How

people should realise words have more effect, at university the lecturer told me he wanted off the course because I didn't socialise like normal people.



To other students thinking that I was a 'spastic', or 'retarded.' But I have the mentality now to prove people wrong, I got a First-Class Honours Degree in Photography. This is why I wanted to give such a powerful speech to demonstrate that we are just as capable, and as someone with a disability our feelings matter just as much.

The whole message of the conference, that people with disabilities can achieve just as much if given the opportunity where they can excel. And its about being open minded as an employer, I often wonder if at a job as soon as they see the word disabled or having a disability, they disregard it.

But it's about taking the time to learn about that disability and how it doesn't shape our identity. As Katherine Jennick said in the conference with her presentation 'Empowering Young People to Discover Their Strengths', she made all these clever ideas of giving young people self-esteem and believing in their ability.

One picture stood out for me, it was a colourful chart saying, 'I have courage, I have perseverance, I am always learning.' The conference aimed to highlight all of the options open, from apprenticeships to training, and the main message of how people with disabilities should be employed. It was all about giving them the opportunity to learn and succeed, and for people like me on the spectrum to not get judged or told what I cannot do. We should have the mindset when employing young people with disabilities of what they can do.

For presentations of the conference:

<https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/policy-campaigns/education-skills-and-employment/disability-and-skills-unit/disability-and-skills>

Upcoming Events March / April

March 21 - World Down Syndrome Day **World Down Syndrome Day programme 2022 | Down Syndrome International (ds-int.org)**

March 21-27 - Neurodiversity Celebration Week

March 26 - Purple Day / Epilepsy Awareness Day

29-03 April - World Autism Awareness Week **World Autism Acceptance Week 2022**

31: Training: Accessible mobile development. Book today.

April

All month: Stress Awareness Month

All month: National Pet Month (Celebration of guide dogs)

02 April - World Autism Awareness Day

07 April - World Health Day

April 16- World Voice Day (Recognition of mutism and stutter)

18-24: MS (Multiple Sclerosis) Awareness week

Watching legendary singer and drummer Phil Collins thrill crowds at the start of an epic Genesis reunion tour has inspired and gladdened millions, in part because of his unquestionable talent, but also because he is determined not to let his declining health get in the way of doing what he loves.

Sadly, musicians with both physical and mental disabilities face considerable obstacles to pursuing their musical ambitions. I should know: my name is Paul Jelfs, and I am a music composer who lives with both physical and mental illnesses which challenge me to my limits daily.

I want to draw your attention to both "Help Musicians UK," as well as "Able Artist Foundation," the latter created by film composer Stephen Letnes – who lives with disabilities himself.

Both help disabled musicians like me develop and channel our potential which would otherwise stay unrealised. When I was at my lowest ebb, suicidal, the one thing that kept me going was my ambition to be a successful composer.

Through contact with "Help Musicians UK" and "Able Artist Foundation," whose support has been a literal life saver for me, I have been able to pursue my goal of a career. Just recently, I was awarded the grand prize in the global Able Artist competition in the All-Genre category with my composition, "Back to Where it All Began."

The competition judges included Grammy Nominated Monte Moir (Keyboardist from Prince's band and credited on Rihanna's "Work"). On the back of this success, Mike Patti, CEO of Cinesamples, and renowned media composer, has commissioned my composition "Gusty Heights" to showcase their woodwind library Cinewinds.

Cinesamples libraries are industry standard virtual instruments, used by top media composers, and can be heard on countless T.V., radio and film productions, including the BBC, SKY, Netflix, and Disney +.

These achievements show that despite living with a long-term disability, other disabled musicians can compete at the highest level within the industry. I aim to use this opportunity to encourage other musicians with difficulties to get involved.

My story shows there IS hope, regardless of the additional challenges of disability, with help from wonderful organisations that are willing to support you. Awareness is low, however, which is why I want to bring attention not to me, but to this pressing issue.

Please contact me at the below so I can give you more information: jelfsy@yahoo.co

Have your say

Research commissioned by City Bridge Trust into Disabled people's experiences of hybrid working.

The Work Foundation & Lancaster University are looking for **survey** respondents (UK-wide). Deadline 13th April.

Easy Read available: h.taylor11@lancaster.ac.uk

Contact Us

 Email: getahead@disabilityrightsuk.org

 Twitter: [@GetAheadDRUK](https://twitter.com/GetAheadDRUK)

 Instagram: [@GetAheadDRUK](https://www.instagram.com/GetAheadDRUK)

 Videos: [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/GetAheadDRUK)

 [Get Ahead webpage](#)



[DR UK website](#)

We like to hear from you!

Give us your feedback and contact:

Getahead@disabilityrightsuk.org

For a text-only and large-print version of the Get Ahead newsletter:

email: getahead@disabilityrightsuk.org

Access the Get Ahead newsletters and magazines on our [Get Ahead webpage](#)

To receive notifications about the Get Ahead publications please sign up [here](#)

Disability Rights UK

We are Disabled people leading change, and the voice of young Disabled people has to be central to that change.

