

# A Disability History Timeline

The struggle for equal rights through the ages



Stereotypes, cultural representations and attitudes



Legislation and policy



Achievements of the disability rights movement



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Achievements in the North West



Medical and technical developments



Key individuals

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This new Timeline aims to document how attitudes towards disability have differed (or not) through the ages and across cultures. It also marks the contribution of individuals and groups to advancements in health and social care in relation to disability; and it highlights legal and other landmarks in the struggles towards equal rights of disabled people.

This is the third such resource which NHS North West's Equality, Inclusion and Human Rights team has produced.

2008 saw our BME History Timeline to honour the contribution of Black and minority ethnic staff to the health service since its foundation in 1948.

In 2011, we produced a Timeline which acknowledged how lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people contributed to, and challenged, medicine and health care through the ages.

We hope you find this Timeline and its booklet interesting and informative, and that they will prove to be a valuable educational tool for the NHS and other public sector bodies.

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# Stereotypes, cultural representations and attitudes

## 2000 Before The Common Era (BCE)

In Babylon the births of children with congenital impairments are used to predict the future.

With the cult of the 'body beautiful', the infanticide of disabled babies becomes common. In Sparta, Lycurgus decrees that children are state property and that those born 'puny and ill shaped' should be 'disposed of.'

In Rome disabled children are drowned in the Tiber, while people considered to be 'mentally defective' are prohibited from marrying.



In Greek legend, Tiresias is a blind 'seer' who, while 'deprived of worldly sight', has magical insight and prophetic knowledge.

## 380 BCE

Plato's *Republic* introduces the concept of eugenics.

## 355 BCE



Aristotle says that 'those born deaf become senseless and incapable of reason.'

## 100-200 CE

Numerous references in the Old Testament associate disability with sin. God tells Moses: 'None of your descendants...shall draw near a blind or lame man, or he that hath a mutilated face or a limb too long, or man that has an injured foot or an injured hand, or a hunchback or dwarf or that hath a blemish in his eye, or be with scurvy, or

scabbed.’ (Leviticus 21: 16-20). However, the Bible also contains what might be the world’s earliest example of anti-discrimination legislation: ‘Thou shalt not curse the deaf nor put a stumbling block before the blind, nor maketh the blind to wander out of the path.’ (Leviticus 19:14).

### **100 - 200 Common Era (CE)**

There is an emphasis in the New Testament on cure and healing, as disabled people become the focus of Christ’s miracles.

### **500 CE**

The Jewish Talmud suggests that impairment is a holy state and a means of getting to heaven; those that help disabled people are similarly blessed. In the Jewish Torah, people are forbidden from serving God if they are disabled or tameh (polluted).

### **1100s - 1500s**

In Aztec society, the royal zoo includes a display of disabled people who live on scraps of food tossed in their cages.

### **1100s**



People with leprosy are quarantined in ‘leprosariums’ throughout Europe, an early example of the confinement and segregation of disabled people.

The Arabs in Baghdad establish asylums for people with mental distress, viewing mental illness as divinely inspired.

### **1300s**

The Renaissance period of art and culture in Europe revives the Greek and Roman obsession with physical beauty and perfection.

An English law allows discrimination between the ‘deserving’ and ‘undeserving’ poor claiming alms. Specific reference is made to disabled people.



For the next two centuries older and disabled people depend on charity for survival.

The Priory of St Mary of Bethlem in London is confiscated by King Edward III and used for 'lunatics'. Conditions are harsh, inhumane and filthy and the public is allowed to come and gawp at the inhabitants as a tourist attraction. The name 'Bedlam' becomes associated with chaos and disorder.

A Royal Ordinance decrees that lepers leave the City of London and 'betake themselves to places in the country'.



## 1400s

In medieval art and medical texts 'lunatics', as well as other disabled people, are portrayed as unkempt, frenzied and dishevelled.

Agricultural accidents are very common, particularly at harvest time, and parish relief and almshouses can no longer cope with the level of need. Attitudes in rural Britain harden towards the 'sinful poor'.



Bigotry and ignorance under the guise of medical science lead to religious hysteria, prejudice and the murder of disabled people across Catholic Europe, especially during the time of Pope Alexander I.



Henry Tudor exploits the new technology of printing in order to pillory and caricature his rival, the disabled king Richard III (1452-1485).

## 1500s



Between 8 and 20 million people, mainly women, are put to death across Europe, accused of being

witches. Many are disabled women whose impairment is seen as the badge of their evil. Others are the mothers of disabled children.

Various symptoms of mental illness are ascribed to witchcraft. It becomes a common practice for 'mad-doctors' to chisel a hole in the skulls of their patients to 'let the devil escape'. This ritual purification is called 'pharmakos' – from the same root as our word 'pharmaceutical'.

## 1600s



Dr Issac Hawes writes: 'Maniacs recover much sooner if they are treated with torture instead of with medicines.'

## 1664



The Great Plague of London. It is thought that during periods of plague, the gap between disabled people and the rest

of the community was reduced, as larger numbers of people experienced illness, impairment, exclusion and poverty.

## 1843



The stereotype of disabled people as pathetic and pitiable is given prominence in the portrayal of the character of Tiny Tim in *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens.

## 1876



Henry Maudsley, a leading British psychiatrist of his day and co-editor of *The Journal of Mental Science*, promotes his belief that 'lunatics' are by-products of evolution, not fit for treatment. He is almost universally condemned by the psychiatric profession.

## 1896

Mary Dendy (1855 - 1933), a member of the Manchester School Board, convinces the Board to set up special schools for 'mentally handicapped' children. She becomes convinced that 'mentally handicapped youths' continue to 'pose a threat' to the community after they leave school and advocated lifelong institutional care for them.

## 1907



The Eugenics Education Society is formed, which would later be renamed the British Eugenics Society and, later still, the Galton Institute. They believe that offering medical and social

services to disabled people will lead to the degeneration of the human race.

The movement gains support across the political spectrum in the early part of the 20th century, including William Beveridge, the architect of the welfare state. As Home Secretary (1910 - 1911) Sir Winston Churchill favours the confinement, segregation and sterilisation of 'feeble minded' people.

## 1913

The Mental Deficiency Act categorises people with learning disabilities and mental health issues as 'idiots', 'imbeciles', 'feeble-minded' or 'moral defectives'. Gradually, unmarried mothers begin to be placed in this 'moral defective' category too. Many people acquire their diagnosis of mental deficiency because of extreme childhood adversity or institutional care. The Act leads to many more people with learning difficulties being incarcerated.

## 1935

Dr. Alexis Carrel, a Nobel prize winner on the staff of the Rockefeller Institute, publishes *Man the Unknown*. He proposes disposing of criminals and people who are mentally ill via euthanasia institutions equipped with suitable gases.

## 1939

Hitler orders widespread 'mercy killing' of sick and disabled people. The Nazi euthanasia program, to eliminate 'life unworthy of life,' is code-named Aktion T4. An estimated 275,000 people are killed under the programme from 1939 to 1945.



## 1941

A Catholic bishop, Clemens von Galen, delivers a sermon in Munster Cathedral calling the Nazi euthanasia program 'plain murder.' Hitler suspends Aktion T4, which has already accounted for nearly 100,000 deaths. However the euthanasia program quietly continues using drugs and starvation instead of gassings.

## 1992

BBC soap opera *Eldorado* is the first to have a regular character played by a disabled person. However, in the 1960s, the actor playing Sandy in the television soap *Crossroads* becomes a wheelchair user during the lifetime of the programme.

## 2012

The Olympic Games and Paralympic Games are held in the United Kingdom.

Extensive media coverage by Channel 4 portrays disabled people winning medals as elite athletes.



# Legislation and policy

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## **1300s**

A law is introduced allowing the English monarch to seize the property of people with mental illness or disability (De Praerogativa Regis).

## **1535**

The Poor Law Act 1535 requires town and parish councils to look after 'every aged, poor and impotent person' who was born or lived in the locality for three years. Services are funded by donations encouraged by the Church.

## **1572**

The Poor Law Act 1572 introduces a compulsory poor rate; and makes it a punishable offence to refuse to work for lawful wages, or do work provided by the overseer.

## **1593**

An Act for the Necessary Relief of Soldiers and Mariners states that: 'Every parish shall be charged with a sum weekly towards the relief of sick, hurt, maimed soldiers and mariners.' Amending Acts raising the amounts to be collected are passed in 1597 and 1601.

## **1597**

The Poor Law Act 1597 provides the first complete code of poor relief including for 'the lame, impotent, old, blind and such other being poor and not able to work.'

## **1601**

The Poor Law makes economic provision for people dependent on charity, which includes disabled people.

**1774**

Act for the Regulation of Private Madhouses enshrines the role of a doctor in 'certifying' madness.

**1834**

The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 ensures that conditions within the workhouses should always be worse than the worst conditions outside them; and 'the workhouse test' – meaning that relief should only be available to those within the workhouses. This results in more and more disabled people being forced into institutions.

**1845**

The Lunacy Act and The County Asylums Act require asylums to be registered and have a resident physician.

Patients lose their legal rights to challenge their detention. The Act sets up the Lunacy Commission, which stresses the need for early removal from the home.

**1868**

The Second Poor Law Amendment Act encourages the setting up of infirmaries in the provinces, but there is no central funding or a national board to give direction.

**1886**

The Idiots Act allows local authorities to build separate asylums for intellectually impaired patients. It also attempts to clarify distinctions between 'idiots', 'imbeciles' and 'lunatics'.

**1890**

The Lunacy Act brings in a system of orders and certificates to prevent the wrongful admission of people to asylums. Unnecessary restraint becomes an offence.



## **6000-300 BCE**

In ancient Egypt, tomb carvings depict in one instance a dwarf as Keeper of the Royal Wardrobe, while other artwork depicts blind people as harpists and singers.

## **1893**

The Elementary Education (Blind and Deaf Children) Act transfers responsibility for the education of blind and Deaf children to local education authorities.

## **1897**

The Workmen's Compensation Act establishes the right to financial support for those injured in workplace accidents.

## **1908**

The Old Age Pensions Act brings in a non-contributory benefit for people over 70 who have low incomes and can pass a character test. The scheme is administered by the Post Office rather than the existing social welfare agencies as they are thought to be stigmatising.

## **1911**

The National Insurance Act combines contributions from employees, employers, and the state to fund the payment of unemployment benefits and sickness benefits. The latter are reduced after six months and paid as disablement benefit.

**1930**

The Mental Treatment Act brings in the concept of voluntary patients and recommends out-patient clinics and observation wards.

**1944**

The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act sets up a quota system requiring employers with 20 or more employees to ensure that at least 3% of their workforce are disabled people.

**1944**

The Education Act concedes that mainstream schools are likely to be the most appropriate environment in which to teach disabled children.

**1946**

The National Insurance (Industrial Injuries) Act paves the way for the payment of compensation not just for loss of earnings but also for loss of 'faculty' attributed to industrial accident or prescribed disease.

**1959**

The Mental Health Act abolishes the distinction between psychiatric and other hospitals and encourages the development of community care.

**1970**

The Local Authority Social Services Act creates a single social services department in each local authority area in England and Wales. The departments are responsible for domestic help, meals and recreation services, registration of independent, residential homes and social work support.

**1970**

The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act, introduced by North West MP Alf Morris, is the first in the world to recognise and give rights to disabled people. Local authorities are given the responsibility of providing welfare services, housing, practical assistance for people in their own homes, meals (provided at home or community centres) and adaptations to people's homes.



The Act also gives disabled people the right to equal access to recreational and educational facilities, including help with travel. Councils have a duty to provide educational facilities for children who are both blind and Deaf, later extended to include autism and dyslexia.

Buildings open to the public are required to provide parking and toilet facilities for disabled people. Disabled driver badges for cars are introduced with exemptions for parking and other access.

However the Act is seen by its critics as giving even greater power to professionals and medical specialists.



## 1981

The United Nations designates 1981 as 'The International Year for Disabled People'. Disabled people do not play a large part in most of its key events.

Their response is to challenge the 'for' of the Year and insist on the 'of' aiming at self-organisation. Disabled People's International is formed this year and now has consultative status with the United Nations.

## 1983

The Mental Health Act reduces the length of compulsory orders, narrows definitions of mental impairment, and requires consent to treatment three months after admission.

## 1986

The Disabled Persons Act strengthens the provisions of the Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons Act 1970 and requires local authorities to meet the various needs of disabled people.

## 1990

The Americans with Disabilities Act is passed – a wide-ranging civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability.

## 1995

Protests by disabled people lead to the landmark introduction of the Disability Discrimination Act. This makes it illegal to discriminate against disabled people in connection with employment, the provision of goods, facilities and services or the disposal or management of premises. Service providers must now make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled people to access their services.

## 1996



Bowing to pressure from the National Centre for Independent Living and the Independent Living Movement, the government makes direct payments for social care legal in The Community Care (Direct Payments) Act. Direct payments lay the foundations for self-directed support, upon which initiatives such as personal budgets are now building.

## 1999

The National Service Framework for Mental Health in 1999 sets minimum standards and good practice guidelines. But it has shortcomings in the involvement of mental health system survivors and service users.

## 2000

The Representation of the People Act allows patients in mental hospitals, other than those guilty of a criminal offence, to vote.

## 2001

The Special Educational Needs and Disability Act extends anti-discrimination legislation for disabled people to cover education providers.

## 2004

The legal requirement to make reasonable adjustments to make buildings accessible comes into effect.

## 2005

The Disability Discrimination (Amendment) Act extends protection to land, transport, small employers and private clubs, extends the definition of disability and introduces a duty for public bodies to promote disabled people's equality and 'involve' them in the design of services and policies.

## 2005

The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit publishes its report, *Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People*, setting out recommendations for achieving equality for disabled people by 2025. This report marks the first official recognition of the social model of disability.

## 2006

The Disability Equality Duty for public sector bodies comes into effect.

## 2007

The UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities opens for signature.

## 2007

The Government's *Putting People First* strategy proposes that all users of social care should have access to a personal budget to enable them to exercise choice and control over their support.

## 2010

The UK Government ratifies the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities. It applies to the 12 million disabled children and adults in the UK.

## 2010

The Equality Act is passed by Parliament days before the general election. It outlaws direct or indirect discrimination and harassment in employment, vocational education and the provision of goods and services, for a total of nine protected characteristics including disability. It also outlaws discrimination because of association with a disabled person or because of the perception that someone is disabled.

## 2011

The Welfare Reform Bill proposes the replacement of the Disability Living Allowance with Personal Independence Payments.

# Achievements of disability rights campaigners

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**1620**



Petition of the Poor Distracted of Bedlam to the King of England about the appalling conditions they suffer.

He later writes two books about his time in asylums. The Society takes up the cases of over 70 patients and, in the process, exposes abuses in several asylums, including Bethlem Hospital. Perceval becomes a formidable campaigner for legal reform of the lunacy laws and better treatment for people with mental illness.

**1845**



The Alleged Lunatics Friend Society is established by John Thomas Perceval (1803-1876), the son of a British prime minister who spent time in an asylum.

**1890**

Deaf people form the British Deaf and Dumb Association to protect and promote British Sign Language. A steering group set up to establish the constitution includes six Deaf men and six hearing men. There are objections to the inclusion of the word 'dumb' in the organisation's title, though the name lasts until 1970.



## 1919



The Central Council for the Care of Cripples is set up in response to the tens of thousands of injured ex-servicemen returning from the First World War. The lives of disabled people are in the hands of medical professionals whose efforts are typically aimed at curing them in order to reduce the 'burden' on society. After various name changes and mergers, the organisation exists today as Disability Rights UK.

## 1920

Partly bowing to pressure from a march of blind workers, the government supports the Blind Persons Act, which requires local authorities to register blind people and make arrangements for their welfare.

## 1920

The National Society for Lunacy Law Reform is established. It largely consisted of angry former patients critical of their experiences and complaints being dismissed by the authorities. It views medical treatment as mere 'window dressing' for what are in essence custodial and punitive practices. In 1922, Rachel Grant-Smith, herself an ex-patient, adds to calls for reform of the system when her pamphlet, *The Experiences of an Asylum Patient*, is published.

## 1935

A group in New York City called 'The League for the Physically Handicapped' is formed to protest against discrimination by the Works Progress Administration. They eventually generate over 1,000 jobs nationwide.

## 1948

The first Stoke Mandeville Games are held, later commonly regarded as the birth of the Paralympic movement. Professor Guttmann begins using sport as an important part of rehabilitation programmes and organises a competition for 16 paralysed men and women to coincide with the opening ceremony of the 1948 Olympic Games in London.

## 1965

The Disablement Income Group is set up to push for reform to social security for disabled people.

## 1970

In response to campaigning by disabled people, the introduction of Attendance Allowance is an attempt to cover the extra costs of disability in the widest sense.

## 1971

The National Association for Mental Health launches the MIND campaign to clarify its policy and aims and to attract funds. It is the Association's first major public education campaign and is considered so successful that in 1972 it adopts the new name 'MIND'.

## 1972



Jack Ashley (1922-2012), a Parliamentary campaigner for disabled people, sponsors the pivotal motion in the House of Commons making a distinction between legal and moral obligation.

The success of this enables *The Sunday Times* to continue its moral campaign for improved compensation for children impaired by thalidomide, even while the parents' legal case is still technically in the courts. Jack Ashley's ability to follow the proceedings of the House of Commons via the output from the stenographers helps inspire the development of live captioning and subtitles on television to benefit Deaf and hearing-impaired people.

### 1974

The Disabled Women's Coalition is founded at UC Berkeley by Susan Sygall and Deborah Kaplan. The coalition runs support groups, holds disabled women's retreats, writes for feminist publications and lectures on women and disability.

### 1977

A group of disabled people takes over the San Francisco offices of the Health, Education, and Welfare Department to protest. The occupation becomes the longest sit-in of a federal building to date and succeeds in getting the The United Nations Declaration regulations signed in May.

### 1981

The British Council of Organisations of Disabled People was set up, a national coalition of organisations controlled by disabled people to campaign for equality and human / civil rights. The organisation is still active as the UK Disabled People's Council.

### 1986

Survivors Speak Out is founded, an important networking organisation for the mental health system survivor movement in the UK. The initial objectives of the organisation are to produce a newsletter and to organise a national conference. This eventually takes place in Autumn 1987 and brings survivor activists from different parts of the UK together for the first time.

### 1992

Block 'telethon' campaigns lead to the new Disabled People's Disability Action Network (DAN) carrying out over 100 protest actions in the next five years. DAN is a radical network of disabled people who carry out non-violent civil disobedience, to try to effect change for disabled people.

DAN is part of the UK disabled people's movement, and its activities are guided by the social model of disability.

## 1995

The struggle for the rights of disabled people in Southern Africa takes a giant step forward with the election and appointment to parliament, for the first time in the history of the region, of two disabled women leaders in South Africa and Zimbabwe.

## 1996



The National Centre for Independent Living (NCIL) is co-founded by Baroness Jane Campbell DBE of Surbiton, an active leader

in the social care field and a campaigner and adviser for disability rights.

The work of NCIL is pivotal in changing the landscape of services for disabled people.

## 2011



Launch of the 'Hardest Hit' campaign, organised jointly by the Disability Benefits Consortium and the UK Disabled People's Council. It lobbies the government about the impact of welfare cuts. Around 8,000 disabled people march on Parliament in May.

## 2012

*Responsible Reform*, also known as the *Spartacus Report*, is published in January. The report analyses the UK coalition government's proposed welfare benefit changes and claims that the government's consultation of changes to Disability Living Allowance fails to meet its own codes of practice; and that its report presents a highly misleading view of the responses it received.

The report is widely circulated on Twitter using the hashtag #spartacusreport. On the date of publication it becomes a trending topic and receives backing from thousands of users including Stephen Fry, John Prescott, Alastair Campbell, Billy Bragg, Sue Perkins and Tim Minchin, as well as various disability rights campaigners.

## 500 BCE

The holy book of Hinduism, the Bhagavad Gita begins with a blind King, Dhritarashtra, asking about the victory of his sons in battle. In the story, the author, who also appears as a character, wants to give the blind king sight so that he can see the horrors of the war which he started.



# Social advances

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## 1300s

A Guild of Blind Beggars is established in Padua, Italy, which regulates begging and organises pensions for older blind beggars.

## 1847

The Poor Law Union is set up, a forerunner of generic social services. Farmers often act as Poor Law Guardians, earning wage subsidies by disguising them as sickness payments.

## 1851



The Census is the first attempt to monitor prevalence of impairment, specifically whether an individual is 'blind, deaf or imbecile'.

## 1878

The First World Congress to Improve the Welfare of the Deaf and Blind – although Deaf and blind people are not allowed to attend.

## 1880s

Admission of non-paupers to workhouse infirmaries marks the beginning of a state-funded medical service for those who can't afford treatment. The service is means-assessed (when the NHS is founded in 1948, many of its buildings are former workhouses and poor law establishments.) Dr Barnado opens the 'Children's Fold for Cripples'.

## 1880

The Second World Congress to Improve the Welfare of the Deaf and Blind decides to promote oral instruction over sign language. In addition, the first international conference of deaf educators, held in Milan, declares that oral education is superior to manual education and passes a resolution banning the use of sign language in school. Schools in Europe and the USA switch to using speech therapy without sign language in education for Deaf people.

## 1889

The Royal Commission on the Blind, the Deaf and the Dumb recommends compulsory education for blind and Deaf children. For blind children this could be either in their own schools or in suitable other institutions. However Deaf children were thought to benefit from being taught in separate schools or classes. This is the beginning of segregated 'special' classes and schools for disabled children.

## 1890



The Bethesda Home for Crippled Children in Manchester opens to provide a permanent home for physically impaired children. Members of staff encourage children to develop skills for work. This brings the plight of disabled children into public view and leads to an explosion of new philanthropic projects: open air schools; day and boarding schools for disabled children; schools in hospital; and convalescent homes and trade schools.

## 1894

The *British Medical Journal* (BMJ) begins a campaign to improve standards of care for older, sick and disabled people in workhouses. Over the next two years, workhouses across England and Wales are visited by a *BMJ* 'commission' and their inspection reports, often very shocking, are published in the *Journal*. The *BMJ*'s efforts result in improvements in the standard of care provided.

## 1899

The National League of the Blind forms as a trade union.

## 1909

The Royal Commission on the Poor Laws proposes a state universal safety net for citizens. The lack of a positive response to their proposals leads to the development of the Labour Party.

## 1916

British Braille becomes the English language standard because of the wealth of code already available in the British Empire. Previously New York Point and American Braille were used in the USA.

## 1918

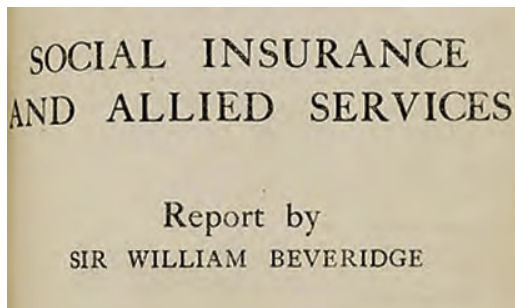
The end of the First World War heightens awareness of physical impairment issues. 1.5 million people have lost limbs, are blinded, become deaf or suffer severe mental trauma or brain damage during the four-year conflict. People who suffer shell shock are classed as mentally ill and, if badly affected, are sent to an institution.

## 1937

A report on health services by Political and Economic Planning points out that the poor treatment received by some in former workhouses has led to impairments. It calls for the setting up of a national health service. It was thought to have influenced the later Beveridge Report (1942).

**1941**

As the war economy booms, a severe labour shortage looms. The Government introduces a scheme to train and employ disabled people. Out of 185,000 people previously considered unemployable, all but 18,000 are employed.

**1942**

The Beveridge Report highlights 'five giant evils' on the road to reconstruction: want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness. Health and social security are to be improved through the creation of a national health service and extensions to existing social insurance.

However benefits to disabled people will depend on the causes rather than the consequences of impairment. War pensions are more generous than those for industrial accidents and old age, and themselves dependent on the rank of the ex-serviceman. All pensions depend on medical assessments of rather crude measurements of impairments.

**1943**

The Tomlinson Report states that: 'Disablement need not be a bar to economic employment.' However, in practice, disabled people are more likely to be unemployed, and for longer.

**1948**

The National Health Service (NHS) is founded. Former voluntary hospitals and Poor Law infirmaries all become part of the NHS.

**1975**

The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Disabled Persons is ratified.

### 1976

A new cash benefit - the Mobility Allowance – is introduced to allow recipients to choose the best way of meeting their mobility needs, whether driving a car, using taxis or getting a mobility scooter.

### 1985

The first Centres for Independent Living are established in the UK in Derbyshire and Hampshire, allowing local disabled people choice and control over their own support.

### 1988

The Independent Living Fund is set up to allow disabled people to continue living in the community if they choose, rather than move into residential care.

### 1992

Disability Living Allowance is introduced.

### 1999

The Disability Rights Commission is established to investigate and enforce disability legislation, and to advise employers on how to secure equal treatment of disabled employees.

### 2003

The European Year of Disabled People.

### 2003

British Sign Language (BSL) is officially recognised by the government as being a full, independent, language. This raises the status of BSL and leads to training more deaf BSL tutors and interpreters.

### 2005

People with learning disabilities are given hospital passports containing information to enable hospital staff to treat them appropriately. It contains 'red' information, on issues such as how people express pain, important 'amber' information and 'green' information on likes and dislikes.



## 2007

The role of the Disability Rights Commission is transferred to the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which has powers to issue guidance on, and enforce all the equality legislation, covering race, gender, disability, religion and belief, sexual orientation and age.

## 2010

The Right to Control pilots begin. This new legal right gives disabled people more choice and control over the support they need to go about their daily lives. Disabled adults are able to combine the support they receive from six different sources and decide how best to spend the funding to meet their needs.

## 100 BCE

Chinese historian Ch'u Yuann notes how some great Chinese classics have been written when their authors were disabled or 'in distress', whether social, physical or emotional. This includes Confucius (551 – 479 BC)

# Achievements in the North West

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**1846**

The Manchester Institute for the Deaf and Dumb is established, now known as The Manchester Deaf Centre.

**1872**

Work begins at Dearnley on a new workhouse on a 24-acre site bought by the Rochdale Poor Law Union. By the time it opens in 1877, it can hold 847 inmates and employs 29 officers. The total cost for land and buildings is £85,000 (in today's money, that would be worth £6.5 million).

**1876**

In Salford, the Greengate Medical Mission is founded to help children with cerebral palsy.

**1890**



The Bethesda Home for Crippled Children in Manchester opens to provide a permanent home for physically impaired children.

**1899**

Gilbert Kerlew transforms the Band of Kindness from an animal welfare society into the Crippled Children's Help Society, providing social and medical support for disabled children in Manchester.

**1903**

The Sandlebridge Boarding Schools and Colony for 'mentally defective' residents opens at Great Warford in Cheshire.

## 1905



Manchester opens the first local authority residential school for 'crippled children'.

## 1984

The organisation DaDa (Disability and Deaf Arts) was founded, then known as Arts Integrated Merseyside. It becomes one of the first Disability Arts Forums led by disabled people, breaking away from Shape in 1986 and eventually being set up in 1990 as North West Disability Arts Forum.

## 1985

An event is held in July at County Hall, Manchester, for disabled people. It is attended by more than 100 people. It results in the Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (GMCDP). As an organisation run and controlled by disabled people, it aims to promote the independence and integration of

disabled people in society; identify and challenge the discrimination faced by disabled people in society; and encourage and support the self-organisation of disabled people. Early members of GMCDP include Brenda Hilditch, a nurse turned disability campaigner, who becomes a local councillor in Tameside.

## 1985



Manchester Town Hall is not yet accessible, and the Disabled People's Steering Group have to picket outside it for

this to be changed. Disabled people also successfully lobby for the Council's Equal Opportunities Unit posts to be reserved for disabled people. This is possibly the first instance of such designation of posts in the country, prior to the enactment of equalities legislation.

## 1500s

In England, large numbers of disabled people become vagrants and beggars after the dissolution of monasteries and hospitals by Henry VIII destroys their social and practical support.

## 1991



Manchester City Council adopts the social model of disability.

## 1992

The first Disability Awareness Day in Warrington is held. Still running today, this has become Europe's largest (voluntary-led) disability event and has encouraged and empowered other like-minded people to establish similar events in places as far away as Cornwall, Rotherham, Wigan, Knowsley, Crewe, Gibraltar and India.

## 1995

Dave Thompson and Jackie Rotherham become the first disabled people employed by an NHS trust to oversee disability equality issues.

## 1998

During the 1990s Manchester City Council sets out to change the way training and employment are offered to local disabled people. Disabled people are promised support to find real jobs (paid or voluntary), and training to do the work they want. Lorraine Gradwell MBE is appointed to develop the partnerships to set up Breakthrough UK, a disabled people's organisation which offers support for employment and independent living. On July 1, 1998, Breakthrough UK begins providing training and employment services under contract to Manchester City Council.

## 2001

The first Dadafest, the Disability and Deaf Arts festival, is held in Liverpool. The festival continues to this day as a biennial event and remains truly ambitious and international in scale, attracting disabled and Deaf artists from all over the world.

## 2002

Breakthrough UK opens its employment support and advocacy service in Liverpool.

## 2011

The Manchester Area Partnership (including Manchester City Council, Oldham Council, Bury Council, Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council and Trafford Council) begins its Right to Control trailblazer project. Breakthrough UK wins the tender to provide a centre for independent living across the partnership.



# Medical and technical developments

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## 600 BCE

The earliest record of wheeled furniture is an inscription on a stone slate in China and a child's bed depicted in a frieze on a Greek vase.

## 525 CE

Images of wheeled chairs made specifically to carry people begin to appear in Chinese art.

## 1100s

Animal horns are adopted as a hearing device.

## 1200s

The Belgian village of Gheel supports people with mental illness in family care settings, and provides vocational opportunities.



## 1200s



King Louis IX of France founds the world's first institution for blind people (the Quinze-Vingts hospice) in Paris.

### 1200s

Asylums for people with mental illness are founded in Damascus and Aleppo.

### 1300s



Spectacles are invented in Italy.

### 1300s

The Venetian Republic founds the first publicly-funded health service in Europe, and requires licensed doctors to attend an annual course in anatomy, attend monthly meetings and exchange notes on new cases and treatments.

### 1300s

A 'madhouse' is constructed as part of the Georghospital in Elbing, Germany.

### 1400s



Gotz von Berlichingen, a German knight, creates prosthetic iron hands with moveable joints for himself, after losing an arm in battle.

### 1400s

Spain has been described as the cradle of humane psychiatry because of the treatment at asylums such as Valencia, Sargossa, Seville, Valladolid, Palma Mallorca, Toledo (the Hospital de Innocents) and Granada. Valencia, opened at the beginning of the century, is said to have removed chains and used games, occupation, entertainment, diet and hygiene as early as 1409.

## 1500s



Dutch surgeon Pieter Verduyn introduces the first non-locking, below-the-knee prosthesis – very similar to those in use today.

## 1760s

In Germany, France, Italy and England, the first schools for Deaf people are set up. In Paris, Phillippe Pinel unshackles people with mental illnesses.

## 1815

After his leg is shattered by cannon fire at the Battle of Waterloo, the Marquess of Anglesey begins using an artificial above-the-knee leg, with hinged knee, ankle and raising toes, developed by James Potts. The prosthetic limb becomes known as the 'Anglesey Leg'.

## 1816



A mental asylum at Lancaster Moor opens, eventually holding up to 2,400 patients in very overcrowded conditions.

## 1817



Connecticut Asylum for the Education and Instruction of Deaf and Dumb Persons, the first permanent school for Deaf people in America, opens in Hartford on April 15.

**1818**



Manchester Eye Hospital opens, for 'curing diseases of the eye.'

**1822**

The American School for the Deaf adds vocational training to the curriculum.

**1869**

Swiss surgeon Jacques Louis Reverdin became the first doctor to transplant skin from one individual to another. This was the start of skin grafts.

**1870**

The Royal Albert Asylum in Lancaster admits its first patients. It is one of only four regional institutions in England set up to care for and educate children with learning disabilities.

At this time legislation (such as the 1845 Lunacy Act) is unclear about the distinctions between learning disability and mental illness.

**1902**

The first practical, commercially available electronic hearing aid is made by Miller Reese Hutchinson.

**1905**

The first successful corneal transplant takes place in Austria.



## 1920

A hearing aid using a vacuum tube, 'Vactuphone,' is invented in the USA by Hanson, produced by Western Electric and distributed by Globe Phone.

## 1933

Harry Jennings and his disabled friend Herbert Everest, both mechanical engineers, invent a lightweight, steel, collapsible wheelchair.

## 1937

Italian neurologist Ugo Cerletti develops Electro Convulsive Treatment (ECT), convinced that induced convulsions were useful for the treatment of schizophrenia.

## 1939

During World War Two, the Queen Victoria Hospital in East Grinstead develops as a specialist burns unit. It becomes world-famous for the pioneering treatment of

Royal Air Force and other Allied aircrew who need reconstructive plastic surgery. The Hospital remains at the forefront of specialist burns treatment today.

## 1944



The National Spinal Injuries Centre is set up by neurologist Ludwig Guttmann at Stoke Mandeville Hospital to treat servicemen and women who sustain spinal cord injuries in World War Two.



**1946**



The Invacar company is founded, going on to win a government contract to supply transport for physically impaired people throughout the 1950s and 1960s. With its distinctive pale blue colour, the Invacar was a common sight and went through about 50 versions. Driving the vehicle becomes illegal on UK roads in 2003 as it does not meet new safety standards.

**1947**

Bell Labs invent the transistor, which is quickly adopted for hearing aids.

**1950**

The drug chlorpromazine is produced to treat schizophrenia, mania and others. As one of the major innovations in psychiatry, enabling far more people to be discharged after relatively short stays on psychiatric wards. It plays a major part in the closure of asylums begun in the 1960s and hastened from the 1980s.

**1950**

The first polio vaccine is developed. Between 1947 and 1958 around 50,000 people in Britain contract polio. Numbers begin to decline from the 1950s.

## 1962

The first full hip replacement is carried out by Professor John Charnley at Wrightington Hospital near Wigan.

## 1965

Research into the use of portable oxygen delivery systems are carried out in England and the USA. Such devices are crucial to enable greater independence.

## 1972

The first CT (computerised tomography) scanner is used publicly.

## 1980

The first commercial magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanner is produced. It is far more effective than earlier equipment for providing information about soft tissue, including the brain. MRI is particularly useful for finding tumours, as well as identifying conditions such as multiple sclerosis and the extent of a stroke.

## 1990



The iBOT powered wheelchair developed by Dean Kamen uses gyroscopic technology to allow the user to mount stairs and curbs and rise to a standing height.

**2008**

In the USA, experiments with retinal transplants improve vision in people with failing sight.

**2011**

The BBC's Panorama programme exposes the physical and psychological abuse suffered by people with learning disabilities and challenging behaviour at Winterbourne View, a private hospital in South Gloucestershire. The public outcry following the transmission leads to calls to close such institutions.

# Key individuals

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Hephaestus (Roman name Vulcan), the Greek god of fire and metal-working, is an almost unique case of a disabled deity.

## 100-44 BCE

Julius Caesar, the inspirational Roman general and politician, is prone to bouts of epilepsy, sometimes collapsing during military campaigns.

## 41 BCE-54 CE

The Roman Emperor Claudius is born with physical impairments which his family mistake for mental impairment and try to keep him out of the public eye. But he becomes an outstanding scholar, writer and historian, as well as a powerful emperor, most famous for invading and annexing Britain.

## 129 CE

Galen, the greatest medical authority in the ancient world for over 1,000 years, declares that the body is an instrument of the soul.

## 800s



Legendary Danish prince, Ivarr the Boneless, who invaded England, is unable to walk and is carried into battle on the back of a shield.

## 1500s

Bonifacio publishes a treatise on sign language, *Of The Art of Signs*.

**1500s**

Girolamo Cardano is the first physician to recognise the ability of Deaf people to reason.

**1500s**

Lu K'un orders city officials in Northern China to provide training for blind people in music, storytelling and fortune-telling.

**1680s**

Sugiyama Waichi, a blind Japanese acupuncturist, opens a school at Edo in Tokyo.

**1682**

The reign of Czar Feodor Alekseyevich (the older brother of Peter the Great) sees the creation of two charitable organisations to help disabled people in Moscow by providing them with food, minimal health care and a place to live. Forty years later, the number grows to 90 organisations.

**1697**

Daniel Defoe, journalist and novelist, proposes an insurance system to solve social problems, including disability pensions and medical and institutional care.

**1809**

When he is three, Louis Braille loses his sight in an accident and is sent to the Paris Blind School. He later invents the raised point alphabet still in use today.

**1815**

Thomas H. Gallaudet leaves America for Europe to learn techniques for teaching Deaf people.



**1859**



The first home nurse is appointed in Liverpool by William Rathbone (1819-1902) to provide care for his dying wife; this prompts him to campaign for a system of district nursing to enable poor people to benefit from similar care.

His involvement also makes him aware of the poor state of the workhouse hospitals, and he does much to help reform nursing in workhouses.

**1881**

The Invalid Children's Aid Association is founded by Allen Dowdeswell Graham, a clergyman, to help disabled children living in poverty. He writes: 'Poverty is bad enough, God knows, but the poor handicapped exist in a living hell. It's up to us to do something about it.'

**1898**

Mary Dendy establishes The Lancashire and Cheshire Society for the Permanent Care of the Feeble-Minded.

**1915**

Arthur Pearson, who had lost his sight in mid-career, establishes the St. Dunstan's Organisation. St. Dunstaners become an elite among their blind peers as, in addition to their war pension, they receive financial help from this well-endowed society.

**1961**

Enoch Powell, Minister of Health, announces the decommissioning of mental hospitals as part of the move towards 'care in the community'. In his famous 'water tower' speech to The National Association for Mental Health, he foresees a halving of acute patient numbers in psychiatric hospitals over the next 15 years, and ultimately no long-stay patients.

**1971**



Ed Roberts and his associates establish the first Centre for Independent Living (CIL) in Berkeley, California for the community at large. CILs are grassroots

organisations run and controlled by disabled people. They aim to assist disabled people take control over their lives and achieve full participation in society.

The centre initially occupies a cockroach-infested two-bedroom apartment until the Rehabilitation Administration gives them a \$50,000 grant in 1972.

**1972**



Paul Hunt (1937-1979), a resident in the Le Court institution in Hampshire, writes a letter to *The Guardian* newspaper calling for 'the formation of

a consumer group to put forward the views of actual and potential residents' of residential institutions, which he called 'the successors to the workhouse'.



**3500 BCE**

The Rig-Veda, an ancient sacred poem of India, is said to be the first written record of a prosthesis. A warrior, Queen Vishpla, who loses her leg in battle, is fitted with an iron prosthesis and returns to the fight.

**1974**



Alf Morris, later Baron Morris of Manchester (1928-2012) becomes Minister for Disabled People – a global first.

**1974**



Vic Finkelstein (1938-2011) and Paul Hunt co-found the Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation.

(Finkelstein had arrived in

the UK in 1968 as a refugee and joined the emerging disability movement.) His experiences of witnessing apartheid and his own treatment by South African police as a disabled person influence his ways of thinking about society and its oppression of disabled people. Finkelstein and Hunt develop the social model of disability, which focuses attention on the social and structural barriers that oppress people with impairments and thus disable them.

**1981**

Dorothy Whitaker, of Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Service, is tasked with proposing ways to mark the International Year of Disabled people (1981) in Greater Manchester. In the process she assists disabled people across Greater Manchester to network and share ideas.

**1990**

Martin Pagel is elected to Manchester City Council. He is the first active disabled person to be elected as a councillor. He goes on to serve as Chair of the Social Services Committee and Deputy Leader between 1996 and 2004.

**1991**

Professor Colin Barnes' book *Disabled People in Britain and Discrimination* is published. The book uses official statistics to prove that disability discrimination exists, denied by the Government of the day.

## Medical model thinking

- Person is faulty
  - Diagnosis
  - Labelling
  - Impairment becomes focus of attention
  - Assessment, monitoring, programme of therapy imposed
  - Segregation and alternative services
  - Ordinary needs put on hold
  - Re-entry if normal enough OR permanent exclusion
  - Society remains unchanged
- 

## Social model thinking

- Person is valued
- Strengths and needs defined by self and others
- Identify barriers and develop solutions
- Outcome-based programme designed
- Resources are made available to ordinary services
- Training for professionals
- Relationships nurtured
- Diversity welcomed and person included
- Society evolves



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