



Disability Writes! January 2024

Welcome to our January newsletter



Happy New Year everyone and welcome to our January newsletter!

I hope all of our members had a lovely Christmas period. With the coming of the New Year, we have made plans for our future, including the launch of our newest three-year strategy. The pandemic significantly impacted our last three-year strategy, and so as we look ahead, we want to learn from this experience as we plan for the next three years.

I would like to take this opportunity to ask a question to all of our members: what is most important to you right now, in terms of disability justice? Your answers will help us shape which barriers we should focus on trying to remove over the coming year. You can respond to this email directly, or email communications@equallives.org.uk and tell us about the barriers you're experiencing.

You'll hear more from us soon about the strategy, but in the meantime, I hope the New Year has started off well for you all.

All the best,
Ben Reed
CEO

Equal Lives Updates

An Advocacy Case Study

Our Advocates at Equal Lives work on a wide range of barriers to support their clients. In this



newsletter, we would like to share one case study with you to demonstrate the important work they do.

Equal Lives was contacted by a support worker for help with a client's issue with mould in their home. He and other professionals tried to overcome this barrier with the housing provider for over a year, to no avail. Our advocate was able to work with the client and the housing provider, throughout the process, resulting in a number of extractor fans being fitted at the property. The client was pleased and the new equipment appears to be making a big difference.

This is just one example of how an Advocate can support you in overcoming barriers. Check out our website for more information on the different types of Advocacy at Equal Lives.

[Find out more about Advocacy](#)

Information & Opportunities



NCAN Winter Advice Hub

As costs and prices increase, more and more of us are struggling with money. You may be able to get help to boost your income or cut your costs, but it can be hard to know where to start.

Norfolk Community Advice Network has put together some ideas, and you can find full details (including step-by-step guides) on the NCAN website, by clicking the button below.

[To access the NCAN Winter Advice Hub](#)

New Changing Places at Whitlingham Country Park

If you are planning a visit to



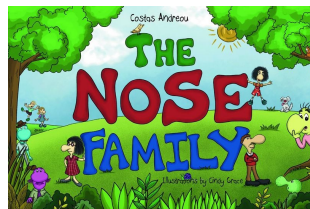
Whitlingham Country Park, you can be reassured that there will be accessible facilities for you to use. They have recently installed a Changing Places toilet at the site.

Whitlingham Country Park is a beautiful spot to take in some fresh air and enjoy nature, with the added benefit of knowing that accessibility has been taken into account. The park is located close to Norwich, and is a popular destination for families, walkers, and cyclists. In addition to the new Changing Places toilet, there are plenty of other facilities such as a café, picnic areas, and watersports activities.

The addition of a Changing Places toilet at Whitlingham Country Park is a positive step towards making outdoor spaces more inclusive and accessible for everyone. It's important that we continue to strive towards creating more accessible environments, so that everyone can enjoy the great outdoors without any barriers.

[For details of this Changing Places](#)

The Nose Family



Costas Andreou is the author of a children's book series called 'The Nose Family' that promotes Diversity. Costas himself is Disabled and champions inclusivity and diversity in his work.

We asked Costas what diversity means to him. He said, 'As a disabled author, I believe that diversity in children's literature is crucial for fostering empathy, understanding, and a sense of belonging among young readers. It goes beyond just representation; it's about showcasing a wide range of experiences, perspectives, and abilities. When children encounter characters with diverse backgrounds, including those with disabilities, they learn to appreciate differences and develop a more inclusive worldview. Inclusive literature not only reflects the reality of our diverse world but also has the power to inspire and empower children, regardless of their abilities; to embrace their unique identities and thrive in a society that celebrates diversity.'

'Furthermore, diversity in children's literature provides an opportunity to break down stereotypes and challenge preconceived notions about what is considered "normal." By featuring characters with disabilities, it sends a powerful message that everyone, regardless of their physical or cognitive differences, has a valuable and meaningful story to tell. As a disabled author, I strive to contribute to this narrative by weaving tales that not only entertain

but also enlighten. I hope that my stories serve as windows into the diverse lives of individuals with disabilities, fostering a deeper understanding and acceptance among young readers. Through literature, we can instill in children the importance of kindness, empathy, and the beauty that lies in our differences.

In the world of children's literature, diversity isn't just a checkbox; it's a commitment to reflecting the rich tapestry of humanity. It's about offering a mirror for some, a window for others, and a door for all to step through into a world where everyone's story is valid, appreciated, and celebrated'.

To learn more or order his books, click the button below!

[Learn more about Costas' work](#)



The Green Light Trust are a local environmental education organisation who are passionate about giving marginalised children and adults access to nature. They offer both woodland and online programmes, and have woodlands near Bury St Edmunds, Ipswich, at RSPB Minsmere, at RSPB Strumpshaw Fen, and other project locations around East Anglia. Through conservation-based work, attendees can learn life skills and build confidence, while reaping the health benefits of being close to nature.

To fill out more, and to complete a child or adult referral form, please follow the link below.

[The Green Light Trust's website](#)

If you would like to contact us, please email communications@equallives.org.uk or write to the address below.

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