



PulseSpecial: Disability History Month

PulseSpecial: UK Disability History Month 2023

This special edition of the CordisPulse was produced to mark the 14th UK Disability History Month - a national awareness campaign that takes place from 16 November to 16 December each year. The campaign aims to highlight disabled people's¹ struggle for equality and human rights in the UK, as well as their achievements in creating social change.

During this year's campaign, the Cordis Bright team have been reflecting on conducting research and evaluation in partnership with disabled people and in ways which are as inclusive as possible. We have been looking at examples of research conducted by others, and also considering our own research practices.

This PulseSpecial highlights some examples of recent publications related to our sectors, which were informed by research or co-production with disabled people. We selected them by reviewing all reports, briefings and tools included in our 2023 versions of the CordisPulse to consider whether and how disabled people were involved in producing them, or in the research and activities that underpin them. In total, we identified ten sources which referred to disability. Four explicitly mentioned the involvement of disabled people as part of the research process.

These reports illustrate different approaches to engaging disabled people in research and co-production, as well as the value of their involvement in ensuring that strategies, guidance and programmes can account for the specific experiences of disabled people and be more responsive to their priorities, preferences and needs.

¹ We are aware that referring to "disabled people" risks generalising highly varied populations with many different disabilities, strengths, experiences and views, which will also be shaped by other aspects of their identity. Where more specific communities or sub-groups of disabled people were identified in the articles we cite, we have used these more specific terms.



If you would like to discuss any of the issues raised in this PulseSpecial, contact us on 020 7330 9170 or email hannahnickson@cordisbright.co.uk.

Best wishes,

Scarlett Whitford Webb, Researcher
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If you would prefer not to receive future editions of the CordisPulse, please click 'unsubscribe' at the very end of this email. If you would like to discuss anything that arises from the Pulse (or if there are others who you think would like to receive copies) then please contact Dr Stephen Boxford on stephenboxford@cordisbright.co.uk or 020 7330 9170.

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Department for Culture, Media and Sport. Get Active: a strategy for the future of sport and physical activity

August 2023

This strategy outlines how the UK Government is planning to collaborate with the sports and physical activity sector to embed lifetime habits of physical activity from an early age and to ensure equality of opportunity to be active. To achieve this goal, the government states that it is committed to supporting the sports and physical activity sector to become more inclusive and prepared for future challenges.

Department
for Culture,
Media & Sport



One of the strategy's three main priorities is to make sport and physical activity more inclusive for disabled people. The rationale underlying this aim draws on evidence from the *Activity Alliance's* nationwide 2023 *Disability and Activity Survey*, which suggested that fewer than 1 in 3 disabled people believe they should participate in sport or physical activity. The strategy then provides an example of how this disparity can be addressed by highlighting the successes of British Cycling's *Limitless* programme. This national initiative was co-produced with disabled people to raise awareness of, and address, barriers that can prevent disabled people from taking part in cycling.

The insights generated from co-productive sessions with disabled community groups enabled British Cycling to identify three such barriers:

1. A lack of access to adaptive cycling equipment
2. Few accessible coaching sessions, and
3. Limited accessible competitive cycling events.

These findings allowed British Cycling to target their funding and provide adaptive equipment, accessible coaching sessions and inclusive competitions across their affiliated clubs and programmes in the UK. After four months in operation, the strategy emphasises that 39 *Limitless* clubs have been set up, which have welcomed over 800 new disabled cyclists. In line with the strategy's longer-term aims, *Limitless* is now also planning to support five additional cyclists to compete in the 2028 paralympic games.

Ministry of Justice. Formal support needs of disabled adult victim-survivors of sexual violence

March 2023

In 2021, the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) made a commitment in the Rape Review Action Plan to conduct “*targeted research with rape victims to better understand their experiences and what they want from support services so that future provision meets need*”. To meet this commitment and to inform the recommissioning of the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Fund (RASAF), MOJ analysts and external contractors undertook three strands of research with victim-survivors of sexual violence.

Ministry
of Justice

Formal support needs
of disabled adult victim-
survivors of sexual violence
A qualitative research report

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Ministry of Justice Analytical Series
2023



One of these strands specifically sought the views of disabled adult victim-survivors of sexual violence through collaboration between MOJ researchers and two organisations representing D/deaf and disabled people. 14 disabled adult rape victim-survivors took part in interviews.



The report contains detail on the approach to gaining informed consent and also universal and targeted adaptations implemented to ensure the research was accessible for participants.

The recommendations for statutory services developed from these interviews included:

- Ensuring that police officers, healthcare staff and social workers are proactive about making direct referrals to support services if they suspect sexual violence has, or is, occurring.
- Raising awareness of sexual violence support services, as some of the participants did not know they existed.
- Developing a best practice checklist for ensuring the accessibility of sexual violence support services. This could include ensuring information racks have information in multiple formats, such as braille, and accessible parking spaces.

The report states that these recommendations are aimed at informing future sexual violence support service commissioning to enable more services to provide effective support to disabled victim-survivors of sexual violence.

Department of Health and Social Care. Assistive technology research and development work: 2021 to 2022

February 2023



This report consolidates the research initiatives funded by the UK Government to improve assistive technologies which enable the independence and wellbeing of disabled and older people. The report describes the progress of multiple research projects that have been co-produced with disabled people, in order to improve the capabilities of assistive technologies.

These programmes include the James Lind Alliance (JLA). Funded by the National Institute for Health and Care Research (NIHR), this initiative brings patients, carers and clinicians together to form priority-setting partnerships (PSPs). PSPs aim to identify and prioritise the top ten unanswered questions for future assistive technology research. The overarching aim of the JLA initiative is to ensure that clinical researchers and funders remain aware of the issues that matter most to patients and clinicians. So far, over 120 PSPs have been established. They have identified research priorities regarding the need for assistive technologies to better support people with chronic fatigue syndrome (ME/CFS), as well as applications that can be easily used by community nurses.

The report also describes the activities of the Inclusive Public Activities for Information and Communication Technologies initiative (IPACT). This initiative is funded by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and includes a research team at the University College London Global Disability Innovation Hub. This hub aims to ensure that disabled people are consulted about developments in information and communication technologies research by supporting the development of researcher–public collaborations. The initiative plans to support the inclusion of disabled people as collaborators and experts in academic research and innovation through a range of public outreach, engagement and knowledge-exchange activities. These include surveys, interviews, focus groups and



workshops with non-disabled researchers and disabled people. The research team also aims to establish a national disability research and innovation panel consisting of disabled people, research experts in disability innovation, and industry leaders, to support the development of future research proposals for EPSRC.

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER). Children and young people's wellbeing and mental health during the Covid-19 pandemic

December 2022

This report reviews evidence concerning the influence of Covid-19 and the UK's pandemic response on the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people across the country. The report acknowledges that it is '*not easy to disentangle specific pandemic effects*' within data gathered during the pandemic. However, one of its main tentative conclusions is that children and young people with special educational needs and/or neurodevelopmental differences (SEN/ND) reported lower levels of wellbeing and poorer mental health before the pandemic compared to children and young people without SEN/ND, and that this trend persisted through the pandemic.

This conclusion was reached by analysing the results of the Co-SPACE study – a research project that tracked the mental health of over 1,600 children and young people (aged 4–16 years old) throughout the Covid-19 pandemic. The survey analysis indicated that children and young people with SEN/ND had on average lower wellbeing and poorer mental health throughout the pandemic compared to those without SEND, and that their scores were more consistent over different time points. The report highlighted exploring this ongoing disparity in mental health and wellbeing levels as a priority for future social research.

 NFER
National Foundation for Educational Research

Report

Children and young people's wellbeing
and mental health during the Covid-19
pandemic

Summary of the evidence

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER)

