

Do disabled people have the same opportunities as non-disabled people?

Legislation

1995 Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) - ammended in 2005 and replaced by the equality act

- Discrimination against disabled people regarding employment, the provision of goods and services, education and transport made unlawful

2001 Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA) - adjunct to the DDA

- Required schools, colleges, universities, adult education providers, statutory youth service and local education authorities to provide 'reasonable provisions' to ensure people with disabilities/special needs had the same opportunities as non-disabled people

2006 Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

- Asserts persons with disabilities should enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms

2010 the Equality Act

- Protects people against discrimination, harassment or victimisation based on nine protected characteristics
- Requires employers and service to make reasonable adjustments for disabled people

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) (1948)

In the universal declaration of human rights there are thirty articles. These are the relevant articles (in a summarised format). In the original declaration it is shocking to see only article 25, out of thirty, mentions disability.

3 We all have the right to life, and to live in freedom and safety.

5 Nobody has any right to hurt us or to torture us.

8 We can all ask for the law to help us when we are not treated fairly.

12 Nobody should try to harm our good name. Nobody has the right to come into our home, open our letters, or bother us or our family without a very good reason.

16 Every grown up has the right to marry and have a family if they want to. Men and women have the same rights when they are married, and when they are separated.

21 We all have the right to take part in the government of our country. Every grown up should be allowed to choose their own leaders from time to time and should have a vote which should be made in secret.

22 We all have the right to a home, to have enough money to live on and medical help if we are ill. We should all be allowed to enjoy music, art, craft, sport and to make use of our skills.

23 Every grown up has the right to a job, to get a fair wage for their work, and to join a trade union.

25 We all have the right to a good life, with enough food, clothing, housing, and healthcare. Mothers and children, people without work, old and disabled people all have the right to help.

26 We all have the right to an education, and to finish primary school, which should be free. We should be able learn a career, or to make use of all our skills. We should learn about the United Nations and about how to get on with other people and respect their rights. Our parents have the right to choose how and what we will learn.

Language

The language used around disability is important. The question deliberately utilises the terms disabled and non-disabled, these terms signify that disability is a fact of the human condition and that an individual either is or is not disabled.

Person first language such as I am a person with [a disability], this language is often seen as important to non-disabled people as it recognises the person above the condition but many disabled people view it badly as it suggests that the disability devalues them and should be ignored. Person first language aligns with the medical model of disability which views disabled people as the problem to be fixed this places importance on cures and sees non-disabled people as the norm.

Identity first language such as I am disabled is viewed better by disabled people as it is a tool of empowerment that removes the shame that people may feel around disability and shows that being disabled is a part of their identity. Identity first language aligns with the societal model of disability which views society as the problem to be fixed and focuses on barriers that prevent access.

A common problem disabled people face is ableism which is the discrimination against disabilities in the view that able-bodied people are better. Ableism is so normalised that disabled people can internalise this and be ableist to themselves and others.

Waldschmidt(2017, pp. 20-21) a university teacher of disability studies presents three assumptions of the social model

“First, disability is a form of social inequality and disabled persons are a minority group that is discriminated against and excluded from mainstream society.

Second, impairment and disability need to be distinguished and do not have a casual relation; it is not impairments per se which disable, but societal practices of “disablement” which results in disability.

Third, it is a society’s responsibility to remove the obstacles that persons with disability are facing.”

These assumptions highlight the barriers that will be explored.

Healthcare and the view of healthcare professionals

From the moment an embryo is identified as disabled they are treated differently. A baby that would be disabled is seen as an important argument for abortion (“nine out of ten british women terminate when they receive a positive diagnosis” for Down’s syndrome(BBC, 2016)) as their life would be pain filled and they would experience trauma. For example prenatal screening for down syndrome is often carried out and there is the option to terminate after discovering this fact, even though that person would not experience pain as a medical result of their disability only societal trauma and shame. If the general public were educated about disabled people this would not occur and more disabled people could have the opportunity of life. The unique view of the world that disabled people have leads to a life fuller than most non-disabled people but they are often limited by the endless barriers society throws at them.

When couples use IVF they cannot have disabled children due to the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Act 2008 which states that:

“Persons or embryos that ... will have or develop—

(a)a serious physical or mental disability,

(b) a serious illness, or
(c) any other serious medical condition,
must not be preferred to those that are not known to have such an abnormality." This elimination of disabled people being born is fundamentally eugenic in its nature as it reduces the number of disabled people being born. Additionally, description of these embryos as having an "abnormality" a dehumanising term in this law stigmatises disability even further.

Disabled people often have mental health problems due to their disability. More than 15 million people - 30% of the UK population - live with one or more long-term conditions, and more than 4 million of these people will also have a mental health problem (Naylor, et al., 2012). This publication also calls for the integration of mental health support with primary care and chronic disease management programmes. Surely as this is such a big issue there should be support for disabled people as soon as they are diagnosed or even before. Many mental health professionals additionally have limited knowledge of presentation of mental health conditions in those with learning disabilities and those with complex needs often don't have their needs met. Many counselors used characters from inside out to explain emotions to children. These characters were also used to help non-verbal children to express their emotions. As Pixar consulted with Paul Ekman and Dacher Keltner (who are scholars of emotion) the character accurately portrayed emotions in an accessible way.

At the start of 2021 the government of the United Kingdom announced a major reform of the mental health act to stop the use of the act to detain autistic people and people with learning disabilities and allowing people who are detained more control over their care after a review in 2018. This should hopefully reduce the number of disabled people wrongfully detained but other problems disabled people face with mental health care needs to be addressed so disabled people are not forgotten.

Another issue disabled people face is the child to adult care transition. Stemming from the lack of a set schedule for the transition many end up transferring to adult services unprepared. For example with mental health services "Only 4 per cent of young people received an 'ideal' transition" (HSIB, 2018). The unreliability of provisions like healthcare initiate the idea of disabled people specifically adults are unwelcome in society as their needs are ignored.

Some disabled people face the burden of implicit bias when trying to access healthcare. For women this may spring from the history of hysteria "There is a high risk of misdiagnosis inherent in this concept, whether it's called hysteria, somatisation, or 'medically unexplained symptoms' due to stress." (Dusenbery, 2018) and this can prove fatal at worse when a serious condition misdiagnosed and ignored. In America, "black patients were 22% less likely than whites to get any pain medication and 29% less likely to be treated with opioids" (Meghani, Byun and Gallagher, 2012 cited in Dusenbery, 2018) the implicit bias that minorities experience less pain or are drug-seeking attributes to these people experiencing more pain.

Relationships/Parenting

The UDHR section 16 states the right to marry and have a family if they want to. In America disabled people's benefits are removed if they marry a non-disabled person as their partner has to provide for them. Many households with disabled people cannot cope on one income so the removal of the disabled persons benefits is a human rights infringement.

Hannah Burcaw the wife of Shane Burcaw who is disabled highlights this when she says "There's almost no positive representation of disability or dating with a disability in our media, so many people think that disabled people couldn't possibly be in a healthy, wonderful relationship" (Taylor, 2021). People often assume that the partner of the disabled person is simply a carer and that the relationship is burdensome, hard and tough and this news story highlights several couples who face this problem often.

In LMICs "[disabled] women are perceived to be unable to perform the duties of a good wife and mother, according to societal expectations, and, therefore, may not be seen as suitable wives" (Braathen & Kvam, 2008; Price, 2011, cited in Tefera, et al., 2018). Arguably in countries such as the UK disabled people face much less stereotyping but this is an important issue which increases all the problems disabled people face.

Disabled parents often have to be creative in finding accessible solutions and modification for products to help parenthood. Daniels (2019, p.116) states "The assumption of a normatively working, non-disabled maternal body is rampant in the ideology of motherhood, resulting in the infuriating lack of provision for maternal bodies who do not conform to these standardised ideals." Arguably the lack of products for disabled parents causes a fear of parenthood as they will have to fight every step of the way.

Education

The education system prioritises attendance this causes all children to come in unless they are so ill they cannot. For disabled students this can mean they attend school even when it makes them deteriorate. Placing attendance over the wellbeing of students is a fatal flaw of the UK education system and needs to be changed imminently.

Access to quality education should be available to all students regardless of disability. In one case, "The day before the [grammar school entry] exam, the school said they couldn't make the adjustments that had been requested, including larger fonts on the exam paper, saying they would cost in excess of £2,000" (Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2020) If disabled people cannot even attempt to attend a good school their education is sure to fall behind.

A shocking display of the inaccessibility of the education system is that "The proportion of disabled people with no qualifications is nearly three times that of non-disabled people" (Mistry, 2020) This highlights how disabled people have some kind of barrier towards the opportunity of education and that barrier causes further barriers in life. These ideas are supported by Mistry(2020) "Young disabled people aged 16-24 are more likely than other groups to end up not in employment, education or training (NEET)" there needs to be more support put in place as this is causing disparity for employment opportunities.

Due to the coronavirus pandemic disabled students were able to be included more than ever learning was not limited by lack of access to classrooms. There was uproar from many that this access was not provided before the pandemic. During the pandemic SEN students were told they were allowed to come into school if needed but there are numerous accounts to the contrary. For example in Scotland, parents of SEN students struggled during the start of 2021 as "some children have limited or no time in school and provision appears to depend on where they live"(Macaulay, 2021) the disparity between areas of the UK and the

government pushing decision to local councils causes lack of opportunities for disabled people as they cannot find widespread information on what is available and have to fight for their individual case. When children returned to school coronavirus safety measures meant the environment was very different one girl who had an EHCP was "refused reasonable adjustments under the Equality Act which would keep her safe at school drop off and pick up because of the school's Coronavirus procedures" (DR UK, 2020) This is dismally not a one off story "This is one story of many we have heard about children being failed by schools using Coronavirus as an excuse not to make reasonable adjustments to ensure the safety of SEND children." (DR UK, 2020)

When watching the BBC documentary A Special School I was captivated by a quote from a staff member at The Calvert Trust (a accessible residential centre), "You shouldn't feel proud because you've created something that everybody could use - that should be the minimum." This quote also sadly highlights the lack of access for disabled people to many experiences non-disabled people take part in conveniently.

Historically Deaf/deaf students were taught in a segregated way for example "In the 1960s [...] there was no formal use of signing in schools [...] in some schools being caught signing could be a punishable offence. A small number of schools unofficially used some signs with older pupils for whom the oral approach had been unsuccessful but this was a private affair and usually kept quiet." (BATOD, 2017) The punishing of students communicating through sign language is extremely deplorable. Prejudice against signing was widespread - "The use of signs is a very primitive form of language" (Fry, 1964 cited in BATOD, 2017) . The website goes on to explain how the lack of sign language in education hindered Deaf/deaf students progress and caused low attainment. Shockingly BSL was only recognised as a language by the UK Government in 2003. While there is still progress to be made for Deaf/deaf students progress

In the UN's inspection of the UK "UN committee chair Theresia Degener pointed out: "you believe that the right to education entails a choice between mainstream and special education ... [but] article 24 is not about choice. It is about the right to inclusive education."" (Lambert, 2017) The common separation of SEN students in the UK inevitably contributes to stigma as non-disabled children may not see disabled people till they are older and then people feel awkward around disabled people and do not know how to act around disabled people.

While the proportion of students in UK mainstream schools "fell by 24 per cent between 2012 and 2019" (Department of education, n.d. cited in Milmo and Stanton, 2019) Malaysia set impressive targets so that "75% of students with disabilities, including deaf students, will be educated in mainstream classrooms by 2025." (Ministry of Education, 2013b cited in Khairuddin, Miles and McCracken, 2018, p. 48) This ambitious goal shows how developing countries are progressing to include disabled people. In England 13.5% of students in mainstream education in 2018/19 had special education needs (Department of education, n.d. cited in Milmo and Stanton, 2019) as the percent of SEND students recorded is 14.9% (National audit office, 2019) 1.4% of all students are in SEN schools.

In 15 developing countries "the proportion of primary school completion rates is lower among persons with disabilities" (Mitra et al., 2011 cited in Tefera, et al., 2018, p.86) diving into more specific disabilities "Lamichhane found the average years of schooling for persons with disabilities to be 8.8 years, compared to the country average of 9.4 years. However, those with hearing

impairments (6.9 years) had much less schooling than those with visual (9 years) or physical impairments (10.9 years)" (2012, cited in Tefera, et al., 2018, p.86)

Khairuddin, Miles and McCracken wrote that:

"Poor maintenance of assistive technology, insufficient teacher training and awareness, inflexibility of the education system, and limited home-school communication are some of the factors constraining efforts to promote equal participation in learning" (2018, p.46)

Here we can see these struggles faced by students are common across the world.

Improvements in SEN education are happening such as allowing parents or older children more say in their provisions this is in line with UDHR section 26 - Our parents have the right to choose how and what we will learn

Representation

In cinema categories of disabilities are always portrayed in a set of stereotypes. Davis highlights this in the journal Culture - Theory - Disability:

"Cinema and TV use popular and knowable narratives [...] Physical disabilities appear in the popular imagination in a variety of ways, notably as challenge or tragedies, [...] Intellectual disabilities, most particularly in the case of people with Down syndrome and non-verbal autism tend to function in the media as states of existence designed to evoke the compassion of the viewer" (2017, p. 39)

The stereotypical representation of disabilities in the media causes society to view disabled people as less human and can cause discriminatory bias. Another common way disabled people are portrayed online and in the media is inspirational disability propaganda also called Inspiration porn - a term coined by disability activist Stella Young which shows disability as pitiful and the completion of daily tasks are seen as inspirational to ease discomfort of non-disabled people with disability. Media needs to adapt and change how it presents disability to take a step in the right direction towards equality for disabled people.

The recent remake of the 2011 Belgian film Hasta la Vista caused outrage as it is a film with wheelchair lead roles and all of these roles were filled by non-disabled actors. In a press interview Grant Rosenmeyer producer of the remake said "[Finding disabled actors] takes time, it's a very long casting search. You can absolutely do it; it just takes time and resources, neither of which we had." The lack of disabled roles in film as a whole itself reduces the opportunities for disabled actors so letting non-disabled actors play these roles makes it basically impossible to get representation on the big screen.

In September 2020, the Oscars announced that from 2024 nominated movies needed to promote diversity. This is a great step forward in representation but The Washington Post review of the past 15 years of best picture winners revealed 73% of winners meet these criteria. This shows how little this "big show" of promoting diversity actually changes anything. These diversity quotas could be met by simply having some roles and behind the scenes roles taken by women and POC which means disability still won't be represented.

Music, a recent film released by Sia faced a big backlash when announced. The film was about a autistic girl but the character was played by Maddie Ziegler, a neurotypical person many people highlighted the magnitude of issues with the film and casting decisions and Sia responded defensively "maybe you're just a bad actor." The film was nominated for a golden globes award and a petition to rescind the nomination was signed by 123,000 people.

Tv shows like children in need often show disabled children as something to be sad about and to invoke pity from the population to donate to the cause. Clearly the government should make sure all of the disadvantaged children on this programme get the funding for a better life. The children shown in the programme tell everyone their story this robs dignity from disabled children and teaches them that everyone has a right to their medical information. Children are often not able to comprehend what taking part in this show means for them and may come to regret it later on in life. On television Barbara Lisicki said "If you make a disabled person an object of charity, you're not going to see them as your equal," (1989), highlighting this universal feeling among disabled people.

Many would argue the Paralympics are a great display of the opportunities for disabled people but recently classification of disability severity have mean some athletes have been prevented from competing "I was a disabled person but not disabled enough" (Brown, 2021) Brown does say there needs to be a line drawn to stop a "million categories" but at the moment "at the moment is far too arbitrary" for the paralympics to become truly great at disability representation there needs to be changes that take into account the views of the athletes.

Politics

An important section of the UDHR especially for disabled people is section 21 - Every grown up should be allowed to choose their own leaders from time to time and should have a vote which should be made in secret - disabled people may require assistance to be able to vote for example in the US a disabled voter can get assistance to use an accessible voting machine or bring someone to help them vote

The UN Inspection highlighted the many violations of a UN convention and UK law and the UN's final report contained " 60 recommendations for the UK government to bring it closer to implementation of the CRPD [...] "We're disappointed that this report does not accurately reflect the evidence we gave to the UN, and fails to recognise all the progress we've made to empower disabled people in all aspects of their lives," said a government spokesperson" (Lambert, 2017) The ignorance of disabled people human rights and fundamental freedoms by the UK government causes restrictions to the disabled people of the uk.

Ryan (2019) highlights how disabled people are ignored by the government "this country, scarred by a decade of austerity and fatigued by Brexit, is now charged with working out what kind of society it wants to be. Where disabled people fit into any of this is rarely part of the conversation" For progress to be made disabled people need to be part of any conversations pertaining to them because non-disabled people (and even disabled people about people with other disabilities) no matter how good their intentions can miss a small detail which could be devastating for the disabled population.

Employment / finances

Time after time there are violations of the UDHR section 23 - right to a job, to get a fair wage for their work, and to join a trade union - For example in Mistry (2020) "In 2019, there were 53.2% disabled people employed compared with 81.8% for non-disabled people," statistics like these confirm the fears disabled people have about disclosing their disabilities to employers. Disabled people are just as productive if not more with the correct adaptations required by the Equality act but there are many reports of reasonable adjustments not being put in place.

Currently when a child turns 18 there is Child Trust Fund which can be used to smooth the path into adulthood but sadly "no mechanism was put in place for parents with children who had learning disabilities to access the money if their child was unable to" (Lewis and Whitworth, 2020) which prevented "around 180,000 teenagers [from accessing] the money in their Child Trust Funds themselves" (Lewis and Whitworth, 2020) while this will become an issue of the past the same issue is happening with junior ISAs so need to be solved to allow disabled account holders from accessing their money.

Many disabled people turn to benefits if they cannot work. During the United Nations' inspection into the UK's record on disability rights the UK were questioned until they admitted that in the UK "18% a year" of disabled benefit claimants face sanctions" (Lambert, 2017). This proves there is something inherently inaccessible about claiming benefits as a disabled person causing disabled people to be failed by society.

As "On average life costs £500 a month more if disabled" (Mistry, 2020) disabled people need more money but are often left with less than non-disabled people "On average, a disabled person's extra costs are equivalent to almost half of their income (not including housing costs)" (Scope, 2019) this makes disabled people inventive and find solutions to the onslaught of problems they often face. This characteristic of many disabled people is disappointingly caused by the financial stress and strain that society puts on them but is proof of disabled peoples adaptability that many could learn from.

Price gouging is the act of raising the price of goods, services or commodities to an unreasonable/unfair level. Disabled people often face price gouging on medicine and adaptations they need. Sellers know there is a need for these products, in some cases needed to survive a prime example is insulin, and profit of the suffering disabled people who generally have lower incomes. "Between 2012 to 2016, the average cost of insulin in the United States nearly doubled to \$5,705 per year for individuals with type 1 diabetes." (Sainato, 2019)

Price gouging is not just a problem in the USA, during the pandemic many countries introduced laws to prevent price gouging during states of emergencies. Disabled people face price gouging and have to accept it and Governments only care when everyone is facing this issue as people will speak out and be supported. This demonstrates the repeated occurrence of the government only taking action when non-disabled people are affected en-masse.

Disabled people found the costs of being disabled even more during the coronavirus pandemic when they stayed at home. Instead of going shopping in person, those who isolated themselves had to find alternatives. These alternatives are often more expensive as there are fees for delivery (which is needed for the payment of workers) and prices of items are inflated. Disabled people's finances need to be improved by the government as there is an overwhelming issue that should not exist.

A common problem due to benefits cuts is food poverty - "being unable to afford a meal with meat, chicken, fish or vegetarian equivalent, every second day" (Waltz et al., 2018, p.53)

This is supported by statistics such as:

"Across the EU, the average for food poverty among disabled people was 16.1%, compared with 7.5% of non-disabled people of similar age" (Waltz et al., 2018, p.53)

"in the UK, people with long-term illnesses or disabilities form the largest group of individuals who require help from food banks to survive" (University of Hull, & The Trussell Trust, 2016 cited in Waltz et al., 2018, p.53)
When disabled people's finances are impacted due to prejudice their conditions may be worsened due to lack of adequate nutrition pushing them further into vulnerability

"Among the 154 poverty assessments conducted by the World Bank over the last two decades, only 11 considered the relationship between poverty and disability" (Braithwaite & Mont, 2008, p. 2 cited in Traustadóttir and Rice, 2012 p.2)
Traustadóttir and Rice also discuss the lack of research into the intersection between poverty and disability; this is important to note as people cannot know what is not shown to them. Another point examined by Traustadóttir and Rice is "The use of private charities is without question a highly stigmatising subsistence practice for economically vulnerable people, but sometimes there was no choice but to seek such assistance." (2012 P.10) they later go on to highlight several disabled people's stories about using charities. If the people who should benefit from these charities feel bad about using them there needs to be changes made.

Coronavirus pandemic

During the coronavirus pandemic while people complained about being "stuck" at home (which is many disabled people's reality due to inaccessibility) disabled people faced barriers to resources such as healthcare. It is not surprising that "Only one in five disabled and older people feel the government is doing enough to support them during the Covid-19 outbreak." (RiDC, 2020) the majority of disabled people lost confidence in the government's prioritisation of disabled people. Whilst the pandemic allowed people to learn and work from home, many were left angered that disabled people have been told these accommodations were impossible to provide before.

The implementation of multiple lockdowns to reduce pressure on the NHS led to changes to medical care such as online or telephone appointments. Disabled people could more conveniently attend appointments as could be accessed from home instead of having to travel which could potentially damage their health/condition.

On the 19th of March 2020 the coronavirus bill was published. This suspended the care act, to remove the pressure on authorities due to unwell carers. This goes against UDHR section 25 - Mothers and children, people without work, old and disabled people all have the right to help. Local authorities had to reduce care hours so all people could get care. People who receive this care have high levels of impairment meaning they cannot get out of bed or eat without assistance so allowing for the ability for these services to be reduced is extremely inhumane. The bill also meant councils did not have to provide transition from social care to adult care. The loss of services at this critical point in many teenagers' lives already occurred so this measure is devastating.

As everyone across the country worried about their health as we went into lockdown disabled people relied on care assistants to come into their homes and look after them this brought the opportunity for the spread of coronavirus as care assistants visit multiple disabled people who are often vulnerable to the virus this spread of the virus was only furthered by the lack of PPE. "The Research Institute for Disabled Consumers found that just over 30 per cent of

health care professionals and nearly half (48 per cent) of personal assistants have not worn PPE when making home visits."(Scope, 2020)

Through lockdown disabled people were unable to book online delivery slots, "38 per cent of disabled or vulnerable people were unable to get online shopping slots and 26 per cent were scared [of] catching corona while visiting supermarkets."(Stubley, 2020) Disabled people have used online shopping as an accessible way to get their groceries for a long time but as everyone started to use them even when they could go to the shops and get shopping they struggled to use these services. One respondent to a RiDC survey said "supermarkets are not doing enough to prioritise support for those in isolation at home"(2020) while supermarkets advertising that they were prioritising disabled people many struggled to get shopping access as there was no clear/universal way to get prioritised. This lack of supermarket deliveries tragically resulted in the starvation of a disabled man in London.

During the pandemic many were shocked to see that disabled people were being issued with do not resuscitate notices without consultation and often without their knowledge. This and the suspension of medical appointments caused "63 per cent of disabled people [to be] concerned they won't get the hospital treatment they need if they become ill with coronavirus."(Scope, 2020) Many disabled people viewed the governments treating disabled people during the pandemic as eugenics. From the start of the pandemic the UK aimed to gain herd immunity - when enough of the population has contracted the virus to stop the spread - but this method will result in the needless death of disabled people and elderly people. New Zealand's prime minister said "Some countries talked about herd immunity as a strategy. In New Zealand we never ever considered that. Herd immunity would have meant 10s of 10000s of New Zealanders dying & I simply would not have tolerated that."

When the world started to open up again the government required face masks in shops and public transport. There were exemptions for disabled people but disabled people were often judged and questioned which put them in danger. Due to social distancing measures disabled car parking spaces were often blocked off to use for queuing. This reduced accessibility for disabled people and many were angered as this practice implied that disabled people should just stay at home so everyone else can get back to normal.

In July, sanctions were reintroduced in the welfare system, this puts disabled people's health at risk as it forces them to go and meet other people, who might have coronavirus, otherwise they lose money. In August, shielding of vulnerable people paused despite 5% of disabled people feeling safe about it.

Two thirds of people who died from coronavirus were disabled, this shocking statistic shows the failure of the government to protect society's most vulnerable group. Disabled people's right to live was taken away throughout the pandemic. Due to numerous shocking statistics many called for an independent inquiry "Mr Johnson told MPs: "As I told the House several times, I do not believe that now, in the middle of combating still, as we are, a pandemic, is the right moment to devote huge amounts of official time to an inquiry. But of course, we will seek to learn the lessons of this pandemic in the future. And certainly, we'll have an independent inquiry into what happened.""(Politics home, 2020) The fact that there is still yet to be an inquiry shows that the Government do not want to be prepared for the future and do not care about disabled people ultimately minimising their opportunity to live further. Sir Edward Davey rightly

said that the PM refused to inquire "even though back in 2003 he voted for an independent inquiry into the Iraq war just months after conflict had started." (Braddick, 2020) showing that the PM has the resources to launch an inquiry. While the PM ignored the masses "MPs launched an immediate probe into the Government's response to the pandemic" (Brewis, 2020). "Clive Lewis, Norwich South MP, said "failings as catastrophic as the UK has just experienced" raised "profound questions"" (Frank-Keyes, 2020) He also said "The country and the NHS cannot afford for these errors to be repeated. There is no time to waste when it comes to learning the lessons from the response." For disabled people to truly have the same opportunities the government needs to treat them fairly.

Conclusion

Disabled people's rights have come far from the reigns of laws like the ugly laws (1867-1974) which stated that it was illegal for "any person, who is diseased, maimed, mutilated or deformed in any way, so as to be an unsightly or disgusting object, to expose himself or herself to public view." But there are still countless barriers that disabled people face through all stages of life in the UK and beyond. Perhaps these out-of-date laws are a cause for society's disdain for disabled people. The implicit bias disabled people face in trying to access healthcare so they can participate more easily often reduces the outcomes of attempts. Education, an important stepping stone to progress into a good future is reduced and the outcomes of disabled people in getting qualifications and jobs is proven by multiple statistics to be less than that of non-disabled people. When disabled people do not see themselves in media and politics they may believe they/ their vote does not matter which could have serious consequences to society and democracy. The government needs to do more to ensure disabled people are more secure financially as this is often ignored. The coronavirus pandemic has amplified the issues disabled people face and the recovery from the pandemic should utilise and cater to disabled people to ensure they are not left behind like they were in the pandemic. The barriers disabled people face need to be reduced and removed to ensure disabled people have the same opportunities as disabled people

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