



DON'T CALL ME SPECIAL

Manifesto
2023-2025

Seeing the person, not the disability

Chair Introduction



It is incredible how one small idea can grow into something truly impactful.

Harnessing the power of the social model of disability, **Don't Call Me Special** is rooted in the belief that we all have an inherent responsibility to make a difference in our community. Since founding DCMS in 2015, we have been proud to witness how our campaigns and activities have benefitted the disabled community and beyond.

Now that we are established as a community association, our vision is to work at a local level - reaching out to disabled people across Wales to help them gain access to training, education, and public services. We aim to facilitate them to share their impactful stories with the world, such as through our current project; a disability-led documentary based on disability rights and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People.

This will provide disabled people with a platform to strive - not just by teaching the community about disability and enabling them to thrive, but also by aiding disabled people in finding employment and changing the world one step at a time. As I say, we are not 'special'. No one is...

Past: Don't Call Me Special started as a campaign in 2015 and continued its impactful journey until 2022. During this period, the campaign undertook a positive approach to education and awareness, visiting schools across various regions in the UK, including Gloucestershire, Stroud, Cheltenham, Cardiff, London, Bristol and abroad. The campaign's reach extended beyond traditional educational institutions, also engaging businesses and social care students. It aimed to broaden perspectives and understanding regarding disability rights and social care.

Present: Today, Don't Call Me Special has transformed into a successful community association with a mission to start conversations about inclusivity and empowerment. Our focus lies in bringing disabled people into the heart of local communities. Through our community association, disabled participants are provided opportunities to contribute to meaningful projects that enhance the community's well-being. We are actively seeking funding to support these projects and welcome collaboration from individuals and organisations who share our vision.



Future: Our aspirations for the future centre around providing training to disabled individuals, enabling them to lead the educational sector across Wales. Our founder, Joshua Reeves BEM, set an example by engaging with the younger generation during DCMS in its past stages, influencing societal attitudes towards disabilities across the UK and abroad. In the future, we aim to build on this legacy by empowering disabled individuals with low or zero confidence to build into strong activists so they can champion the rights of disabled people in every aspect of public life. We strive for a society where people are seen for their skills and not their impairments, getting people to step away from stigmatising and inspiration porn and instead fostering genuine inclusion and understanding within society.

Through empowerment, we predict a more inclusive and empowering future for all.

Our Ambitions

A Disability Modules Training Programme:

This Disability Modules Training is driven by enabling disabled people to develop their voices through public speaking and campaigning skills, to shape positive change. We are committed to providing them with the skills and knowledge needed to engage with crucial stakeholders, such as public health services, educational services, youth clubs, and key decision-makers.

Our impactful training modules include:

1. Social Model of Disability:

Our training on the Social Model of Disability will highlight and target a diverse audience, including organisations, university/college students, and educators from various sectors. This training delves into the powerful notion that societal barriers, not individual impairments, shape disability as we understand it today. Our experts will showcase practical applications of the social model, from physical accessibility developments like ramps to inclusive education practices challenging the traditional medical model.

2. Essential Disability Awareness:

Made for pupils in education, our Essential Disability Awareness training seeks to promote a deeper understanding of the daily challenges faced by disabled people. This training, suitable for participants aged 8 and above, involves topics such as defining disability, exploring various impairments, highlighting the importance of accessibility initiatives like the Blue Badge Scheme, addressing disability language, and disassembling patronising attitudes. Through interactive activities, this training aims to educate and engage.

3. Understanding Disability in Social Care:

Catering to university/college students in health and social care studies (aged 16 and above), our Understanding Disability in Social Care training offers invaluable insights into the experiences of disabled individuals within social care systems. By simulating real-life scenarios and promoting discussions, we equip aspiring social workers with essential perspectives. Key subjects include an overview of our association's background, varied understandings of disability, legislative insights such as the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 and upcoming work, and practical guidance for support.

Disability-Related Podcast:

We want to challenge traditional media. This podcast will focus on breaking harmful stereotypes and promoting understanding of disability. Our engaging and humorous podcast will amplify the voices of disabled individuals. Through passionate discussions about their personal journeys, professional growth, and life experiences, we intend to shed light on the person beyond the label. Our aim is to inspire empathy, forward connection, and showcase the vibrant lives led by disabled individuals by talking to entrepreneurs, models, localised campaigners, and artists across the disability community.

Advocacy Program:

Joshua Reeves BEM, our esteemed chairperson has a wide experience in advocating for disabled individuals within the social care sector. Joshua's dedication extends to championing the rights of disabled people, assisting them in navigating challenges, and advocating for their rights in healthcare, social services, and housing. His advocacy work involves a wide variety of disability-related issues within our society.

The program will upskill disabled people looking to make a difference in the essential tools and skills for advocacy. This will include key targets, real-life examples and guidance for influencing rooted in experience and learnings from previous campaigns. The program will focus on and be tailored to individual's aims and will set bespoke goals for progress and include onward mentoring.

To learn more about our advocacy services, reach out to Joshua at:

Chair@dontcallmespecial.org

UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People Documentary:

Collaborating with charity Disability Arts Cymru, we proudly present "The Rights We Need!"

This truly empowering documentary, set to launch next year, features disabled artists both in front of and behind the camera. It passionately expresses the urgency of enshrining the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Disabled People into Welsh law. Through heartfelt and passionate stories and creative expression, the film is a catalyst for change, and will highlight the importance of these rights for our community.



**Work with us to create a world this is accessible and equal
for all.**



Don't Call Me Special

Community Association

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