



“We’re all going on a summer holiday”

Report on a research project about holidays for  
people who are learning disabled

Melanie Chapman  
John Cookney

QRSDT  
Manchester Learning Disability Partnership

Ian Kaplan  
Brendan Regan

The University of Manchester

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## **What this report is about**

This report is about a research project looking at holidays for learning disabled people. There were a number of different parts to the project:

1. The project found out what research had already been done on holidays for learning disabled people.
2. A member of the research team visited travel agents and tourist information offices
3. We looked at holiday brochures
4. We talked to people about their holidays

This report gives more information about the project and what it found out. The report also says how we are telling people about the project and what we hope to do next.

### **Main findings**

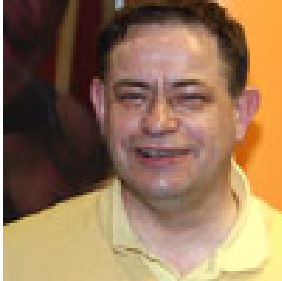
Fewer learning disabled people go on holiday than people who are not disabled. There is a lack of research on holidays for learning disabled people.

It is important that travel agents are helpful and polite. There are rarely pictures of disabled people in holiday brochures. There is a lack of accessible accommodation. The text size in brochures is usually small and difficult to read. Photographs and pictures would make the information in brochures easier to understand.

People had clear ideas about what type of holiday they would enjoy. It is important that people are supported to choose holidays they would enjoy. Many learning disabled people are going on a wide range of holidays in the UK and abroad. However, other people are not going on holiday. This may be due to cost or due to difficulties getting a passport. Some people are scared of flying or there may be other concerns about whether someone should fly.

## The research team

### John Cookney



John is a volunteer for the Quality, Research and Service Development Team (Manchester Learning Disability Partnership). John has been working on the holidays research project.

John has also written a report with Janet Flood about how accessible places are in Manchester. The report was for the Partnership Board Quality Sub Group and is called “Out and About”.

John is a member of a consultancy group for Manchester Adult Placement Services and a member of the Manchester Disabled People’s Access Group. Sometimes he is a volunteer panel member when services are interviewing for new staff. He is also a volunteer ranger at Reddish Vale Country Park, collecting litter, mending fences and footpaths.

John goes on a lot of holidays. This year he has been on a coach trip to County Wexford in Ireland for St Patrick’s Day, and to Porthmadog in North Wales. His next holiday is to the airshow in Paris.

### Melanie Chapman



Melanie has worked as a researcher for Manchester Learning Disability Partnership since 1999. She carries out research projects and helps members of staff to carry out a number of research projects.

Melanie is interested in carrying out more research in partnership with learning disabled people. She has just started a PhD by publication looking at researching in partnership in learning disability research. Her most recent holiday abroad was in Paris.

## **Ian Kaplan**



Ian works as an educational researcher at the University of Manchester. Ian works on projects that deal with marginalisation, equity, partnership research, learning disability and using photography as a research method.

Ian has also worked as a co-researcher with Brendan Regan on a project with learning disabled people who were being moved from a long stay hostel to different types of housing in their community.

Ian's last holiday was in Thailand and Cambodia.

## **Brendan Regan**



Brendan is a member of Bury People First. He has worked as a consultant for the University of Manchester, supporting learning disabled people in doing research. Brendan has also worked as a co-researcher with Ian Kaplan on a project with learning disabled people who were being moved from a long stay hostel to different types of housing in their community.

## Why we did this work



In 2005 we all took part in some workshops organised by the University of Manchester. The workshops were part of a project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

The workshops were looking at how learning disabled people and non learning disabled people could learn from each other about how to do research together. Twenty people came to the workshops. At the workshops we split into groups to look at different research ideas. Our group looked at holidays. There were a number of reasons why we wanted to look at holidays.

John thought it would be a good idea because he goes on a lot of holidays. He thinks that holidays are important for disabled people but some disabled people he knows do not get to go on holiday.

Melanie thought it would be a good idea because people usually enjoy talking about holidays so would want to take part. She thinks holidays are important for relaxing, seeing new places and having new experiences.

Ian thought it would be a good idea because many of the learning disabled people he has worked, who have had the opportunity to take holidays, have told him how important their holidays have been for them. Ian also greatly enjoys holidays himself.

## What we did

### 1. The literature



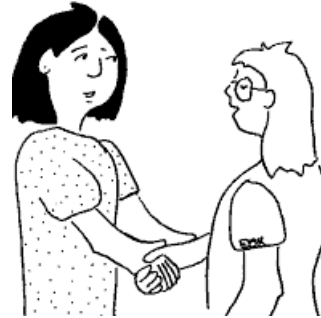
First of all we looked at whether anybody else had done any research about holidays and learning disabled people. We searched some databases and the internet.

There was not very much research about holidays for learning disabled people. This made us think that our project was even more important.

The research that has been done shows that:

- Fewer disabled people go on holiday than people who are not disabled. 66% of the general population go on holiday. However, a national survey found that only 59% of learning disabled people had been on holiday in the previous year [1].
- Reasons disabled people are less likely to go on holiday include:
  - Poverty and the cost of holidays
  - Lack of basic disability awareness amongst travel agents and tour operators
  - Inaccessible transport
  - Inaccessible holiday accommodation
  - Problems with taking wheelchairs and mobility aids
  - Difficulty getting travel insurance
  - A person's support needs [1-4]
- Despite these problems, 80% of people who go on holiday feel that it was a positive experience [3]

## 2. Visits to travel agents and tourist information offices



John went to four travel agents collecting holiday brochures. Most of the travel agents were very helpful. For example, at one travel agency the lady behind the desk asked, “Can I help you?” When John introduced himself, she asked what type of brochures he would like and gave him every type of brochure, including coach travel. However, one travel agency was not helpful: the lady was rude, shouting, “What do you want?” John left the travel agency because she seemed so rude.

John also visited two tourist information centres. The staff were very helpful there and said, “How can I help you?” They gave John brochures and one centre showed him where he could get large print brochures from in the A-Z of local council services.

These visits show how important it is that people working in travel agents and tourist information offices are helpful and polite.

### 3. Holiday brochures[c1]



We wanted to find out what information there was for learning disabled people in holiday brochures. We collected brochures from tourist information offices, tourist agencies, companies that we found on the internet and companies that people told us about.



We made a checklist to find out:

- Where the holidays are
- The type of holiday (e.g. beach, caravan park, general activity, cycling, walking, winter sports)
- Who the holidays are aimed at (e.g. family, couples, groups of friends, older people, disabled people)
- Whether brochures had pictures of disabled people
- If brochures said whether places to stay were suitable for disabled people
- If there was special information for disabled people

John filled in the checklist for twenty-six brochures and web-sites (for the year 2005). Six brochures were for holidays abroad, five were for caravan parks (in UK and abroad), and eleven were for areas within the UK. Four brochures and web-sites were for specialist holidays and accommodation aimed at disabled people.

## ***What we found out***

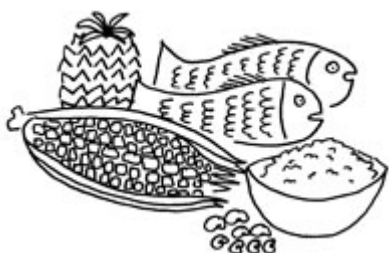
Most brochures did not include pictures of disabled people.



Companies offering holidays abroad usually have a special telephone line and team for disabled people. Most brochures for holidays abroad had information for disabled travellers at the end of the brochure. However, the writing in these sections was small and difficult to read. These sections were about the companies' liability and compensation.



There were few places to stay for people who use wheelchairs and companies would not guarantee that their needs would be met.

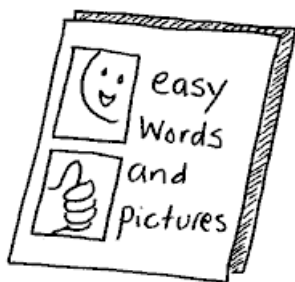


People often have to pay more for things like a gluten free diet.

UK Tourist Information brochures did not include much, if any, information for disabled people. Only one brochure had information about Shopmobility scheme, toilets, car parking and DIAL (Disability Information and Advice Line). It was unusual for there to be a separate section for disabled people, making it difficult to find relevant information.



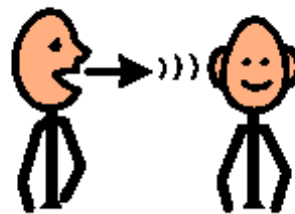
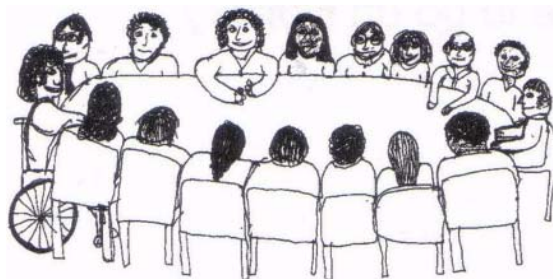
Britain has a National Accessible Scheme which has symbols to show how good places to stay are for disabled people. Few brochures used these symbols. Symbols for wheel-chair users and people who have difficulties walking were commonly used. However, the symbols for people with difficulties seeing and/or hearing were not used often. The text size used to describe the symbols was often small and difficult to read.



The brochures for holiday companies providing supported holidays and short breaks for learning disabled people only used text. Photographs and pictures would make the information easier to understand. Photographs and pictures would help people know more about where the holiday would be and what they might do on holiday.

## 4. Interviews and Group discussions

We wanted to know whether people had been on holiday and what they thought about their holidays. To find out what was important to people we carried out some pilot work. “Pilot work” is carried out to find out whether it is important to do research on a topic and to find out what questions to ask people. We talked to people in a group and on their own.



### ***Who we talked to***

We talked to eleven people in total. We carried out two interviews with learning disabled people at the Partnership Research workshops.

We also spoke to people who go to *Think Quality*. *Think Quality* is a group of people who talk about services they receive, focusing on what they like and do not like about services. We had two group discussions with nine people in *Think Quality*. We also carried out an individual interview with one member of this group.

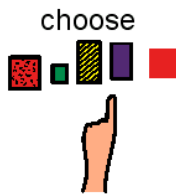
Everybody we interviewed was given an information sheet and a consent form to sign. The consent form said whether people had been given information about the project, whether people were happy to take part, and whether they were happy to be videoed. Copies of the information sheet and the consent form are in Appendix 1.

We also talked to two members of staff – a house manager and a carer. We asked them whether we thought it was important to look at holidays for people with learning difficulties and about their experiences of supporting people to go on holiday.

### ***How we did the interviews***

We had a list of questions to ask people in the group and individual interviews.

The questions we asked people were:



I like...



I don't like...



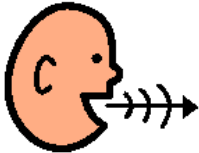
dream holiday



1. Please tell us about your last holiday
2. How did you choose the last holiday?
3. Who did you go with?
4. Where did you go?
5. Where did you stay?
6. What did you do while you were on holiday?
7. What did you like about the holiday?
8. Was there anything you didn't like?
9. What would your dream holiday be?



We wrote down what people said. The interview with the person from *Think Quality* was videoed, with their agreement. So that people did not know who took part people chose a name that was not their real name (a pseudonym).



**What people told us.....**

### ***Choosing a holiday***



Some people choose their own holiday. Advocates, family or staff sometimes helped with this. However, sometimes carers choose where people go.

### ***Places people had been***



People had been on holiday to many places in Britain and abroad.



People had stayed in a range of places including caravans, cottages, apartments, holiday parks, hotels.

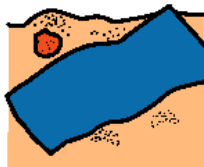
### ***Who people had gone on holiday with***

People had been on holidays alone, with people they lived with, with friends or family or on their own. Some people had been on organised holidays arranged by churches or other groups.

### ***What people did and did not like about going on holiday***



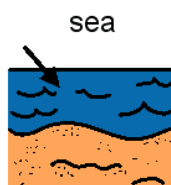
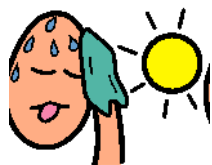
People enjoyed many things about their holidays, including:



- Climate – warm sun
- Sunbathing on a beach
- Swimming
- Boat trips and barges
- Walks
- Space and being on own
- Somewhere quiet
- Seeing family
- Room service
- Driving around



However, there were things that people did not enjoy on holiday, including:



- Hot climates (getting sun-burnt, the heat may make people feel ill)
- Going in the sea
- Rowdy, noisy places
- Theme park rides
- Having to share a bedroom
- Getting bored lying on a beach

This shows the importance of thinking about the type of holiday a person will like.

### ***Reasons people did not go on holiday***



Some people had not been on holiday. There were a number of reasons people did not go on holiday. Some people could not afford holidays. Other people had no passport and had found it difficult to get a passport. Some people were scared of flying or had been told that they could

not fly because of concerns about their health. Staff mentioned that some people could not go on holiday abroad because of flying risk assessments suggesting that they would walk around and make noise, or as they do not like enclosed spaces.

### ***Dream holidays***



We also asked people about their dream holidays. People had clear ideas about the type of holiday they would like, countries that they would like to visit, and activities that they would like to do:

- “Canada camping in the hills”
- “A longer holiday in the countryside”
- “Pontins...because they have bunk beds”
- “An activity holiday with lots of things to do”

## What we are doing now

### Looking for money



Since the workshops finished we have been looking for money to fund more research. We have met with Gill Parkinson from the University of Manchester and Simon Challis from the Manchester Metropolitan University for their ideas about this.

It has been difficult to find a funder who we think will be interested in the research idea. It also takes a lot of time to fill in the forms to apply for funding. Melanie and Ian have had to spend time working on other research projects and doing other funding applications so have found it difficult to find time to do this.

### Telling people about what we have found out



This report tells people about the project.

We have also told people about the project, what we found out, and things that we have learnt about researching together at conferences and workshops:

Melanie Chapman, John Cookney, Ian Kaplan & Brendan Regan, *We're all going on a summer holiday*, Partnership Research: Negotiating User Involvement in Research Design, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2005, Manchester.

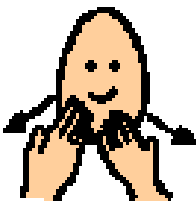
Kathy Boxall, Anita Wheldon, Angie Seddon, Bridget Whittell, John Cookney and Melanie Chapman, *Partnership research - researchers with and without learning difficulties working together*, INVOLVE 5th National Conference, University of Hertfordshire, Hatfield, 6th - 7th September 2006.

Melanie Chapman and John Cookney, *Partnership research - researchers with and without learning difficulties working together*, PPRD Seminar, Manchester Metropolitan University, 2 April 2007.

We may do more presentations on the work we have done and researching in partnership.

We might write a journal paper or articles in newsletters to tell people what we have found out.

## Thank you to.....



We want to thank everybody who has helped with this project, including:

- The people who took part in the interviews
- The organisers of the workshops
- Think Quality
- Gill Parkinson

## For further information



If you would like to know more about the research you can contact us.

You can contact Melanie and John on:

telephone



0161 958 4019 or 0161 958 4149

email



[melanie.chapman@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.chapman@manchester.gov.uk)  
[john.cookney@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:john.cookney@manchester.gov.uk)

address



Quality, Research & Service Development Team  
Manchester Learning Disability Partnership  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Mauldeth House  
Mauldeth Road West  
Manchester  
M21 7RL

You can contact Ian and Brendan:

telephone



0161 275 3540

email



[ian.kaplan@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:ian.kaplan@manchester.ac.uk)

address



Educational Support and Inclusion  
School of Education  
The University of Manchester  
Oxford Rd.  
Manchester  
M13 9PL

## References

1. Emerson, E., et al., *Adults with Learning Difficulties in England 2003/4*. 2005, Health & Social Care Information Centre: Leeds.
2. Burnell, L. and G. Parckar, *No room at the inn*. 2005, Leonard Cheshire: London.
3. Kober, C., *Wish you were here?* 2005, Leonard Cheshire: London.
4. Manchester Disabled People's Access Group., *Access Surveys 2002-4 (Manchester retail, tourist and hotel venues)*. 2005.

## Holidays

We are talking to people about.....

holiday

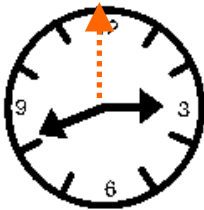


Their last holiday

dream holiday



Their dream holiday



This should take about 20 minutes.

**Is this ok with YOU?**

**YOU CHOOSE**

You can say



YES I will talk to you about holidays

**OR**



NO I don't want to talk to you about holidays



We would like to video the interview so we can remember what you said.  
You can have a copy of the interview.

**Is this ok with YOU?**  
**YOU CHOOSE**

You can say



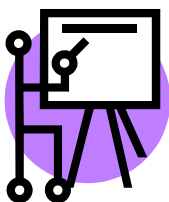
YES I am happy to be videoed

**OR**



NO I don't want to be videoed

The results



We will be talking about what people tell us at a conference




We may tell people about what we find at meetings.

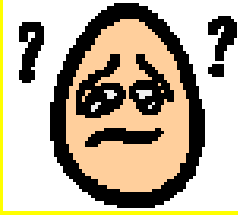


We also want to write about what people tell us.

We will **not** write

~~.....Your name~~ 

~~.....Your address~~ 



**Ask if you do not understand**  
**Ask if you need more information.**

## The research team is:

Melanie Chapman, Researcher, Manchester Learning Disability Partnership

John Cookney, Manchester People First

Ian Kaplan, Researcher, University of Manchester

Brendan Regan, Bury People First

If you want to contact us the easiest person to speak to is:



Melanie Chapman  
Research Associate

address



Quality, Research & Service Development Team  
Manchester Learning Disability Partnership  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Mauldeth House  
Mauldeth Road West  
Manchester M21 7RL

telephone

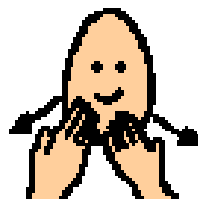


0161 958 4019

email



[melanie.chapman@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.chapman@manchester.gov.uk)



Thank you

# Consent form page 1

This is a consent form.

It says that you understand why we want to talk to you about holidays.

## Title of project: Holidays

1.



I have been given information about this research

2.




I understand that the research team want to get information about my holidays

3.

I understand that the research team will try to make sure no one else can find out anything about me. Especially not

.....My name 

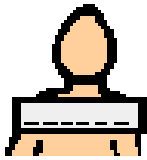
.....My address 



I say yes it is ok to ask me questions about my holidays for this research

# Consent form page 2

You can write your name or mark the form to show you understand.



Name .....



Date.....



Signature or mark

.....



I am happy to be videoed for the research.  
The researchers will ask me if they want to  
show the video to anyone who is not part  
of the research team.



Signature or mark

.....

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[info@change-people.com](mailto:info@change-people.com)

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Mayer-Johnson LLC  
P.O. Box 1579  
Solana Beach, CA 92075

Phone: 858-550-0084