



# CIL MATTERS NEWSLETTER

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**April 2020**

**Issue 24**

This newsletter reflects the diverse views  
of Merton CIL Members and Supporters

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# 1. The Merton CIL Update

## Message from the CEO



Dear Members and Supporters,

I would like to start by sending best wishes to you all during this difficult and uncertain time. I would also like to thank you for your continued support of Merton CIL.

Following Government advice around coronavirus, we have had to make some temporary changes to how we operate. However, we are still open and doing our best to support Deaf and Disabled people in Merton. Craftivism and Chat has been cancelled but we are planning to host an extraordinary group via Zoom on 28th April 2020 from 1pm. You can read more about how to join or get involved on page 5. We also have lots that you can get involved with whilst at home. You can read more on pages 8 and 9.

The Coronavirus Act was passed on 25th March 2020. This is extremely worrying for Disabled people. You can read more about the Act and what it means on page 12. Inclusion London are doing some important work campaigning around this issue. Please take their short survey on how coronavirus has affected social care for you. You can read more on page 14.

The situation with coronavirus and its impact on our community is constantly changing. We are doing our very best to keep you updated. The health and wellbeing of Disabled people, members, service users, staff, volunteers and supporters is at the top of our agenda. Please do feel free to get in touch if you require any support or information and we will try our best to help.

**Tom Lichy, CEO of Merton CIL**

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## Merton CIL's new address

Please ensure that you have updated our contact details:

### **Merton Centre for Independent Living**

#### **Unit 1 Batsworth Road**

#### **Mitcham, CR4 3BX**

Our office is currently closed and we are working remotely. However, we still do not offer a drop-in service so be sure to book an appointment before you come along. Our telephone number remains the same.

## How coronavirus has affected our service at Merton CIL

Following government advice around coronavirus, we have had to make some temporary changes to how we operate. However, we are still open and supporting local Deaf and Disabled people.

Our team will be working remotely until further notice. Our telephone line is monitored daily and you can also email and visit our website or social media platforms for general information and advice.

We are operating a reduced service but our advice and advocacy service is open to new benefits, community care and hate crime cases. Please get in touch to arrange an appointment.

We have temporarily changed the way that we conduct appointments. We will provide advice over the telephone, via email, in a letter or via video calling platform such as Zoom or Skype. We will not provide any face to face advice in order to protect our service users and staff.

We are doing all that we can to ensure that we adapt and continue to provide a supportive and accessible service for Deaf and Disabled people in Merton.

Unfortunately, our Craftivism and Chat groups have been cancelled until further notice. We will keep you updated on when we expect that it will return. My Voice Matters 2020 was scheduled to take place on 25th June 2020. Unfortunately, this event will be postponed until late October 2020.

# Help Merton CIL raise £1,000 with The Aviva Community Fund!

Help us raise £1,000 by September 2020 to keep our work reducing isolation and loneliness and making change happen going.

With your backing, we can **move** our community **forward**

#StrongerCommunities  
Support our project at [avivacommunityfund.co.uk](https://avivacommunityfund.co.uk)

AVIVA Community Fund

Let's work together and raise money to keep Merton CIL's important work going! Please share our campaign with your friends, family and networks - <https://bit.ly/2JJ4ybv>

## Craftivism and Chat Online

January / February / March / April 2020

If you are feeling lonely or want to help make change happen in Merton why not come along to...

Timetable on the back of the leaflet!

Our monthly group that aims to reduce isolation & loneliness in Deaf & Disabled People. As well as, improve independent living & make change happen in Merton.

**RAFTIVISM AND CHAT**  
The first Thursday of every month from 1pm until 4pm  
At South Mitcham Community Centre, Haslemere Avenue Mitcham, CR4 3PR  
Free materials and refreshments at every group

Funded by: Merton Giving Fund, Wimbledon District Nurses and Midwifery Benevolent Society (Established 1887)

[www.mertoncil.org.uk](http://www.mertoncil.org.uk)  
[info@mertoncil.org.uk](mailto:info@mertoncil.org.uk)  
0203 397 3119 - @MertonCIL

As mentioned above Craftivism and Chat has been cancelled until further notice. As we have all been asked to stay at home, some Disabled people may feel isolated and lonely. We want to help keep Disabled people in Merton connected. Therefore, we will be hosting an extraordinary Craftivism and Chat group on the video messaging platform Zoom. This

will take place on Thursday 28th April 2020 from 1pm.

We will send out information about the session closer to the time.

If you are interested in joining the meeting the Zoom meeting please use the details below:

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You can download the Zoom app on your smartphone or sign up online [www.zoom.us](http://www.zoom.us)

Join Zoom Meeting - <https://zoom.us/j/4521623769>

Meeting ID: 452 162 3769

## Craftivism and Chat Update

You fed back that you would like more information on what happens after each Craftivism and Chat session. You would like to see what is created and how your views are shared or what decisions they influence.

### January 2020

At Craftivism and Chat in January, local art group Made in Merton (@made\_in\_merton) hosted a fabric banner making workshop at Bee Creative Art Hub (@ieva\_bee\_art) in Merton Abbey Mills using William Morris and Liberty Fabrics.

We created a beautiful banner that linked Merton's design heritage to what matters to Disabled people in Merton right now. We chose a slogan that said what we felt we needed to say and picked all of the fabrics. We are extremely proud of what we created. Take a look below.

If you want to see this banner in person it will be exhibited at West Barnes Library when life returns to normal.



## February

In February's group Poet and Disability Arts Online's associate artist - Richard (@socialmodelling - @richdownes89) hosted a poetry workshop that focused on the importance of having choice and control to live an independent life.

We had planned to create one collaborative poem but we ended up creating a whole booklet of poems which you can take a look at here - <https://bit.ly/2USJDsR>. You can also read a poem on page 22.

**We are keen to get the poems illustrated by Disabled people. If you like to draw, paint or illustrate please get in touch.**



## March

At our Craftivism and Chat group in March, Bec from MVSC (@MertonConnected) came along to conduct the Improving Healthcare Together 2020 - 2030 consultation. In September 2019, NHS Surrey Downs, Sutton and Merton CCGs were allocated £500 million to improve the current buildings at Epsom and St Helier hospitals as well as build a new specialist emergency care hospital on one of the three sites – Epsom, St Helier or Sutton. Their preferred option is Sutton



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Hospital. We asked our members to respond to the consultation on the proposed changes to our local NHS services, so that Disabled voices are heard. You can read more about what we said on page 17

**Here are a few ways that you can be a Craftivist whilst staying home:**

**Whilst at home due to the coronavirus pandemic  
why not get involved with**



**How you can be a craftivist from home:**

1. Illustrate a poem that was written at Craftivism & Chat - You can find the poems on our website - <https://bit.ly/3agsuhR>
2. Create a piece of art that highlights what it is like to be Disabled in Merton
3. Create a piece of craftivism in response to the Coronavirus Act that suspends duties in the Care Act 2014
4. Or, just create whatever you want and share it with us.

**Share what you create with us via email [info@mertoncil.org.uk](mailto:info@mertoncil.org.uk) or tag us on social media @mertoncil #mertoncil**

**If you are Deaf or Disabled, living in Merton and want to be a #Craftivist while at home but have no art supplies please get in touch! We can send you a small package of art supplies. Merton CIL and Made in Merton want to keep disability arts going. #madeinmerton**



## We need you! Get involved at Merton CIL

Now more than ever we need our members and supporters to help us keep our important work in Merton going. Please see below for opportunities or get in touch on [info@mertoncil.org.uk](mailto:info@mertoncil.org.uk) or 0203 397 3119

### Fundraising

Following cuts to our funding and a strain on our services, this year more than ever we need you to help with raising money to keep our important work going! You can get involved with fundraising in four ways:

#### 1. Share our fundraising campaigns on social media

If we have ever helped you in the past or you support the work we do please share or retweet images of our Easter fundraising campaign along with some kind words about how we may have helped you or a family member.



#### 2. Raise Money for Merton CIL whilst online shopping

Want to help us raise more - just by shopping online? Well now you can with Give as you Live! When you shop at over 4,000 top stores including Amazon, Expedia and John Lewis via Give as you Live, they'll turn a percentage of your spend into free funds for our charity! Simply sign up, search for the retailer and start shopping. It's that simple. Get started

today! <https://www.giveasyoulive.com/join/merton-centre-for-independent-living/ct54304>

### **3. Become a fundraising champion**

Email us and ask for a fundraising pack. This will be a pack with ideas as to how you can fundraising independently to raise money for Merton CIL. For example, a bake sale.

### **4. Help with outreach stalls throughout 2020 and collect donations on our behalf**

Please contact us via email if you are interested [info@mertoncil.org.uk](mailto:info@mertoncil.org.uk)

### **Donate**

We also welcome donations. Just £5 can help us to support a local Disabled person. You can donate here <https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/mertoncil> and please share the link on your social media platforms.

### **Volunteer at Merton CIL**

We would love more local Disabled people and supporters to volunteer with us. We currently have three volunteering positions available: casework support, admin/reception and events. If you are interested in getting some new skills or supporting our work, please email us and we will arrange an informal interview.

### **Join our Monitoring and Evaluation Steering Group**

Help us improve our service and join our Monitoring and Evaluation steering group. We developed a user-led group to talk to service users, members, volunteers and staff, to find out how we are doing and help to improve the service. Get in touch to find out more.

### **Get involved with Craftivism and Chat**

We are dedicated to the group being run and controlled by volunteers and members. If you would like to lead on a craft session or host a discussion, please get in contact.

### **Get your friends and family to sign up as members of Merton CIL**

It is free to sign up as a member. We fight for the rights of Deaf and Disabled People and having more members with us helps everyone to be stronger together. You can read more here - <https://www.mertoncil.org.uk/feedback-2/>

## Let's work together to improve access in Merton

Over the next few months, we are working with Centre Court Wimbledon to feedback on access within the centre. We are keen to have as many local Disabled people involved as possible. We will be conducting a range of mystery shops and providing feedback. We will give an award to the store that we find most accessible. If you would like to get involved, please get in touch via email.

We are also keen to support our members to engage with venues that are not accessible. These could include spaces like polling stations, leisure centres, libraries, activity spaces, shopping centres and more. One of our members attended a concert at the O2 and was faced issues around access. You can read her story in the last edition of CIL Matters available here -

<https://www.mertoncil.org.uk/news/news-2016/cil-matters-newsletter-issue/>

If you want to get involved in our work with Centre Court Wimbledon have addressed an access issue with a company or organisation, we would love to hear from you. If you would like support to speak up about an access issue, we can help too. Please get in contact [info@mertoncil.org.uk](mailto:info@mertoncil.org.uk)

## Connect with us on Social Media

Please like our page on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MertonCIL/>

Follow us on Twitter and like/RT our tweets: @MertonCIL  
<https://twitter.com/MertonCIL>

Follow us on Instagram and like/share our posts and stories: @MertonCIL  
<https://www.instagram.com/mertoncil/>

Subscribe to our channel on YouTube and watch our Independent Living series:  
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCGPV8YAqNPYkLx9P3GzFJqg>

## 2. News

### The Coronavirus Act and what it means for Disabled people in Merton

On the 23rd March 2020, we wrote to our two local MPs Siobhan McDonagh and Stephen Hammond, to raise Merton CIL's concerns about The Coronavirus Bill and how it may impact on Disabled people and actually create further demands on the NHS by removing social care support. Merton CIL believes that the Coronavirus Bill presents a threat to the health and wellbeing of Disabled people at this difficult time. You can read our letters here -

<https://www.mertoncil.org.uk/news/coronavirus-bill-and-disabled/>

Unfortunately, The Coronavirus Bill was passed and became law on 25th March 2020. The provisions in the Bill relating to social care, support for Disabled children and detentions and treatment under the Mental Health Act went through without any changes and are now law.

However, in response to Inclusion London's campaign on this issue, the Government gave reassurance that these measures will be implemented only in critical situations as a last resort.

### What the Coronavirus Act means for Disabled People in Merton – Via Inclusion London

The Act sets out emergency laws in relation to the coronavirus crisis. Parts of The Coronavirus Act's related to the suspension of the duties in the Care Act 2014 were brought into force from the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2020, but the Secretary of State has a power to disapply them.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) has issued guidance that local authorities have to follow when implementing these provisions. You can read more here - <https://bit.ly/3c5tTbt>

This guidance informs when the relaxation of the Care Act framework should take place and details the steps local authorities need to take when implementing the easements.

## **These are the main duties that will change under The Coronavirus Act:**

- The local authority will not have a legal duty to assess needs in accordance with the Care Act, however it will have to carry out a proportionate assessment and keep a record of person's needs.
- The duty to carry out transitional assessments for young Disabled people who are moving from children to adult social services is suspended. The local authority also no longer has duties to continue support in transition periods, unless it is necessary to prevent the breach of a person's human rights.
- The local authority will not have a duty to determine which needs are eligible in accordance with the Care Act eligibility framework.
- The local authority will not have to develop a Care Act compliant care and support plan, but it still has to develop a support plan and involve individuals concerned.
- Local authorities are no longer required to carry out reviews, but they can still do so and if so, they have to involve individuals in the process.
- Local authorities are no longer required to carry out financial assessments, but they will be able to carry them out and charge retrospectively.
- Most importantly, local authorities will no longer have a duty to meet eligible needs, but they still can choose to do so under the Care Act Easements guidance. This says Local Authorities will still be expected to take all reasonable steps to continue to meet needs.

Local authorities will remain under a duty to meet needs where failure to do so would breach an individual's human rights under the European Convention on Human Rights. These include, for example, the right to life under Article 2 of the ECHR, the right to freedom from inhuman and degrading treatment under Article 3, right to liberty under Article 5 and the right to private and family life under Article 8. You can find more information about the Human Rights Act and how it protects Disabled people on The Inclusion London website:

<https://www.disabilityjustice.org.uk/take-action/human-rights/>

It is worth remembering that even when the local authority chooses to implement the easements scheme it still needs to decide whether to exercise their powers having regard to a person's wellbeing and having regard to The Ethical Framework for Social Care - <https://bit.ly/39Qdera>

**Therefore, although they are not legally obliged, they still have a power to continue complying with the Care Act legal framework and they have to make rational and lawful decisions when exercising this power.**

**Charging:** If the local authority decides to meet a person's needs and they would have been able to charge and did not carry out the assessment of finances, they can do it retrospectively as long as the person received information that stated social care is means tested and a charge may apply.

**The duties that remain** - Although many duties have been suspended, it is important to remember that many duties still remain. Some of those are:

- The duty to promote wellbeing
- The duty to provide information and advice
- Duties to involve
- Prevention duties
- Safeguarding duties
- Advocacy duties
- Equality Act including public sector equality duty, which applies to policies and decisions in individual cases
- Duties under the Human Rights Act

**Personal assistants (PAs):** We have also had a number of questions from our service users and members about PA's. PA's are included in the definition of a Health and Social Care key worker. They are able to move around during the lockdown and go shopping for a Disabled person that they support. If being challenged they might need to carry a copy of their contract of employment, Job description and/or a letter from the employer.

We have fought long and hard for independence, control and equality. We are in close contact with Merton council to ensure that the impact of this Act is monitored and our concerns are heard.

If you have any issues around community care that have arisen as a result of coronavirus, please get in touch to book an appointment.

## Inclusion London's social care survey

Please take a few minutes to complete Inclusion London's (@InclusionLondon) short survey to help influence Government policy around social care!

<https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/829S38M>

## Merton council to review home care charge assessments

Merton Council has agreed to review the rate allowed for disability related expenses when it assesses how much adult social care service users can pay towards their support. The assessment looks at any costs people have relating to their disability, things like having a special diet, needing to keep your home warmer than other people and having to get taxis if public transport is not accessible. Everyone who is having the financial assessment and gets either PIP, DLA or Attendance Allowance is allowed £10 a week for these costs and they can claim further costs if they have proof such as receipts and invoices.

Merton CIL's policy and strategy manager, Michael Turner, says:

'We've been concerned about these charges for some time. We were asked to go to a meeting of the Council's financial monitoring task group which was looking at how they deal with people who owe money for their service and we took the opportunity to raise our concerns.'

Merton CIL made the point that the £10 rate has not been reviewed since 2009 and the task group agreed this should be looked at. 'If they agree to put the rate up it will reduce the amount people need to pay for home care services and it should make the assessment easier for service users and the Council.'

The Council will be talking to Merton CIL about the review and we hope to develop the conversation to address other concerns about this issue. In the long-term, Merton CIL believes that there should not be charges for home care.

## Merton CIL supports a nationwide independent living service

Merton CIL is supporting a national campaign to set up a nationwide independent living service to ensure that Disabled people have choice and control over their lives, wherever they live in the country.

The plan for a national service has been drawn up by the Reclaiming Our Futures Alliance (ROFA), which is made up of Disabled people's organisations. It aims to

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challenge years of cut-backs to services, the failure of the Care Act to improve the quality of social care and what most people see as a crisis in the funding of social care.

The planned service would be rooted in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities and an approach based on the social model of disability, which recognises that the main barriers to equality for Disabled people come from society and issues like a not having the right support and a lack of access, rather than disability itself.

ROFA says in the plan: 'Our vision for a national independent living support system would also eliminate the post code lottery that exists within current local authority and clinical commissioning group administered provision.'

The idea is that the national independent living service would be part of the government and work across all government departments to ensure that it goes beyond what is traditionally seen as 'care' and takes in issues including housing, transport and employment. Services themselves would be run locally with co-operative services led by Disabled people. It is proposed that independent living services would be paid for through taxes and service users would not have to pay charges.

Merton CIL's policy and strategy manager Michael Turner comments: 'There's no doubt this is an ambitious plan and it's not going to happen overnight. But it's the campaigning by Disabled people that means that we now have equality laws that protect our rights and direct payments that have given choice and control to many, so we definitely should be pushing for this.' The process for setting up a service would begin a task force led by Disabled people and work to look at how the United Nations Convention and a right to independent living can be put into law.

This would be backed up by financial planning, which would particularly focus on how supporting independent living would save money in areas including NHS services, and an education programme to increase awareness and understanding of independent living.

For more information see:

<https://dpac.uk.net/2019/04/a-national-independent-living-support-service/>



## Disabled People say "Keep all core services at St Helier Hospital."

At our Craftivism and Chat group that was held on 6th March 2020, Disabled people responded to the Improving Healthcare Together 2020 - 2030 consultation. In September 2019, NHS Surrey Downs, Sutton and Merton CCGs were allocated £500 million to improve the current buildings at Epsom and St Helier hospitals as well as build a new specialist



emergency care hospital on one of the three sites – Epsom, St Helier or Sutton. Their preferred option is Sutton Hospital. We asked our members to respond to the consultation on the proposed changes to our local NHS services, so that Disabled voices are heard.

Our members made a number of recommendations as well as speaking about the issues Disabled people face in accessing local health services:

- 70% of attendees felt that the changes proposed were poor or very poor solutions
- 100% of attendees felt that St Helier was the most fitting of the proposed sites
- Members said that they should use the money to improve and keep all core services at St Helier
- Sutton and Epsom Hospitals are not easily accessible for Disabled people in Merton
- Transport connections between Sutton, Epsom and St Helier need to be improved and made fully accessible
- Carers and PA's of Disabled people need to be thought about in the planning to ensure Disabled people access the quality of care that they need
- Members discussed social care being looked after by the NHS and not the local authority

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- Improving technology and connecting the three sites to make things easier for staff and patients

You can read our full consultation response here: [Improving Healthcare Together 2020 – 2030 – Merton CIL Consultation Response](#)

## Accessible public transport

While there have been many improvements in access to public transport in recent years, there are significant barriers that make getting around London more difficult for Disabled people in London.

A new report by the London Assembly Transport Committee makes several recommendations for further improvements including:

- Transport for London (TfL) and Network Rail should provide live information about all aspects of an accessible journey across the Underground, railways, buses and trams - this would help to warn people about issues like lifts being out of order.
- TfL and Network Rail make sure that inclusive design is included in also new plans and all major infrastructure projects, with representatives to advise on project boards.
- TfL should review Dial-a-Ride and Taxi card to look at how it can be improved and to make sure everyone in different boroughs get the same service.
- TfL and Network Rail should make more use of the sunflower lanyard scheme to make it easier for people with hidden disabilities to assistance.
- TfL should add Thameslink to the Tube map - this is a fully accessible service and adding it to the map would increase awareness of this.

The report is on the London Assembly website -

[https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/accessible\\_transport\\_final.pdf](https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/accessible_transport_final.pdf)

### 3. Your Views

Personal views expressed in the 'Your Views' section of the newsletter are not the views of Merton CIL.

#### Self-Isolation by Richard Downes – Disability Arts Online, Associate Artist

I am considering writing a poem based on my current extreme self-isolation. Isolation is already a big issue for us. It was foisted upon many of us, it was not self-elected. I have adapted to it because the NHS identified me as being 'extremely vulnerable'. I have never selected that label for myself. I know that many of us are struggling with the terminology, just as many of us are battling against the idea of 'death due to underlying issues'. The activist view is this is allowing the government an easy cop out (not their fault).

The resistance to the language is further underpinned by the belief universal credit was based on a bio-psychological theory, whereby Disabled People could think themselves better, as well as prioritising the sanctity of the pound over our lives. In addition, opinions have been expressed that Dominic Cummings is minded to feed Boris with eugenic solutions to the perceived problem of 'the feeble minded'. On such rocky beliefs our beloved welfare state is smashed.

So, there is an unsafe island in the poem I am writing. Isolation is enforced by a shield. A shield and Boris and his team talking about putting arms around me. I am concerned about the reach of those arms but I am thankful of the shield. The shield started with my GP surgery. They spent hours trawling through their records, letting the NHS know about me and sending out letters about the virus and what I should be doing now. Believe me I was resistant. The NHS then set up a simple portal with simple tests that enabled me to self-identify and ask for support. Responsibility was passed to my local council Haringey and Haringey came up with the food parcels. These were tinned and dried goods. A local volunteer force delivers fresh vegetables. And, there are also our kind neighbours.

It has been difficult to accept all the kindness I have received. My independence is severely compromised. I am not the tower of strength I portray myself as being. It has been harder for my wife. She was always my real strength. She is not keen on this subsidiary position, so she fusses and does her thing whilst realising she/we are in a lesser position. But hopefully this is temporary and there is much more to look forward to.

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In the meantime, the new condition is very much like the old condition. I sit, I type, I think poetry. I watch TV but TV is not the same. Corrie is on less but I can now get YouTube on the screen, learn tai chi and qi gong, watch concerts and rock docs that I may have missed and then appreciating the power of the iPlayer and box sets. It's all changed a bit since my day. Change is something we look forward to. Yesterday social media, mobile phones, stood to be criticised but is increasingly seen as a life saver today. Especially with some people making a bomb out this crisis but imagine if this virus was presented as a lesson that we had to learn. What would tomorrow's world look like then? Interesting that the poetry competitions I've been looking at concern themselves with asking what do we know, how are we going to use what we know, what does tomorrow look like. Must go. I've got a poem to write. And here is it:

### **On The Island**

On the Island  
 We experience  
 Isolation alone  
 Together shielded  
 By unwanted arms  
 Clashing  
 Around about  
 Like seas crashing  
 Smashing against  
 Experienced isolationists  
 Alone together  
 On The Island

Follow Rich on Twitter – @socialmodelling

<https://disabilityarts.online/blog/author/richard-downes/>

<https://detrich.wordpress.com/>

<https://www.youtube.com/user/MrDetrich>

## 4. Events

A huge number of events across Merton have been cancelled due to coronavirus and the Government advice to stay home. Please see below for a range of online/zoom meetings that you could get involved in:

**Craftivism and Chat** – 28th April from 1pm

Join Zoom Meeting - <https://zoom.us/j/4521623769>

Meeting ID: 452 162 3769

**Carole's Creperie** - Daily Cooking Class, 12PM, Instagram Live

<https://www.instagram.com/carolescreperie/>

**Curzon Home Cinema**

<https://www.curzonhomecinema.com/>

**The Alexandra Pub** - Monday Quiz Night, 8PM

<https://www.instagram.com/14thefrog/>

**Together! 2012 CIC presents Join in from home** - The programme includes opportunities to create poetry, music, art, film and dance, and to share the work with Together! 2012 CIC and their audiences.

<http://www.together2012.org.uk/join-in-from-home/>

**Open Theatre and Alternative Voices Presents the Party Animal** - The Party Animal is a radio play written by Madeleine Levy and performed by six actors on the Autistic Spectrum. The play will be on Switch Radio – Unplugged: 107.5 FM.

<https://disabilityarts.online/events/open-theatre-and-alternative-voices-presents-the-party-animal-online/>

**Gig Buddies** - connects socially isolated people with learning disabilities with a volunteer so they can see live music.

<https://disabilityarts.online/events/gig-buddies-presents-coronavirus-fest-online/>

**Sadler's Wells presents Digital Stage** – Free dance performances and workshops.

<https://www.facebook.com/SadlersWells/>

☎ 020 3397 3119

✉ [info@mertoncil.org.uk](mailto:info@mertoncil.org.uk)

🌐 [www.mertoncil.org.uk](http://www.mertoncil.org.uk)

🐦 @MertonCIL

📘 Mertoncil

☎ Merton.cil

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## 5. A final word

### I have control and I have no control – A poem by Disabled People at Craftivism and Chat

I have control when I feel secure  
I do not have control when I appear demure  
I have control when I am in the kitchen cooking  
I do not have control when my electric wheelchair needs pushing  
I have control when I am making dresses and lost in design  
I do not have control most of the time  
I have less control when I am with other people  
I have more control when I am by myself  
I do not have control when I am in hospital due to my health  
I have control when I feed my cats meals  
I do not have control after I pay my bills  
I lose control when my day does not align with my to do list  
I gain control over my chair through my joy stick that I twist  
I have no control, what the hell am I doing here?  
I have control when I am driving my car  
I have no control over my noisy neighbour  
I have control when my deliveries come on time  
I have no control when people call me  
I have control over who I let come through my front door  
I have no control over my money  
I have control and I have no control

**But, having control is important to me. All having control is important for us all to see**

# Choice and Control Wordsearch

C H O I C E T H N M H M S P H  
 Q V A B K K E Z F X O J D B M  
 L W H Y A A Y D N D M H N G B  
 K O H F L P W U E G U J E J Q  
 S Y R T W N C E S G X V I F R  
 Z R H T P W R L C E Q R R R U  
 B V F N N F H D O M L J F R A  
 U X M K C O R K F E P D B E C  
 M L E X R K C I F R E A O Z J  
 E E E C N E D N E P E D N I C  
 P M R N Y A D B E E D L P K W  
 C F I T H P E L N K N N Y E J  
 S O E T O C Y E N O M O C N J  
 X R E M T N V Y W Q M D X B U  
 W D H L E N J X D Y J K F C Z

CHOICE  
 COFFEE  
 CONTROL  
 FREEDOM  
 FRIENDS  
 HEALTH  
 INDEPENDENCE  
 MERTON  
 MONEY  
 TIME



## 6. Coronavirus Support

### Support in Merton – Food, medication and more

People classified as 'extremely vulnerable' can self-register for support (food parcels) here: <https://bit.ly/34lJhhh>

#### MVSC coronavirus support

If you need help, or know someone that does, you can email [help@mvsc.co.uk](mailto:help@mvsc.co.uk) or call 020 8685 2272 between the hours of 10am and 4pm, Monday - Friday. The volunteer taskforce can help with:

- Shopping/basic provision parcel delivery
- Prescription/medication collection
- Dog walking
- Electricity/gas pre-payment card top-up
- A telephone call or keeping in touch
- Posting letters

**Commonside Trust** – Support and assistance to vulnerable individuals and families in Pollards Hill including food - 020 8764 9582

**Wimbledon Foodbank** – Part of a nationwide network of foodbanks, supported by The Trussell Trust - 020 8544 0126

**Dons Local Action Group** – A local network delivering weekly food packages. If you are in need of a food delivery please contact us and we will make a referral on your behalf.

**Merton Mutual Aid** – A grassroots community organising network established to support vulnerable Merton residents during the COVID-19 crisis - [mertonmutualaidgroup@gmail.com](mailto:mertonmutualaidgroup@gmail.com)

**Merton CIL** – Support to vulnerable Disabled people in Merton by providing them with foodbank vouchers via post – 0203 397 3119



Volunteer with MVSC - Merton Voluntary Service Council (MVSC) is working with the voluntary sector in the borough to mobilise a volunteer taskforce to help isolated households and those at risk from COVID-19. Anyone who puts themselves forward may be asked to support people who are currently unable to leave their home.

If you would like to volunteer, please contact the volunteer taskforce at [volunteer@mvsc.co.uk](mailto:volunteer@mvsc.co.uk). You will be partnered with key groups who will allocate you to tasks.

## Advice and wellbeing support in Merton

**Merton CIL** – Advice on issues relating to benefits, community care and hate crime – 0203 397 3119

**Age UK Merton** – Support for older people around benefits and pensions, housing options, social care and befriending - 020 8648 5792

**Merton Community Domestic Violence Support** – 0207 801 1777

**Wimbledon Guild** – Talking therapies, grief support and wellbeing support - 020 8946 0735

**South West London Law Centres** – Help for local people with legal advice and casework including problems they are facing as a result of coronavirus – 0208 767 2777

**Merton Uplift** – Mental health assessments and treatments via telephone. Self-referrals accepted - 020 3513 5888

**Merton Adult Social Care** – Social care and safeguarding concerns - 020 8545 4388

**Carers Support Merton** – Support for Carers of Disabled people - 0208 646 7515

**Merton Council** – Coronavirus updates - <https://news.merton.gov.uk/covid19/>

**Every Mind Matters** - expert advice and top tips on how to look after your mental wellbeing if you need to stay at home during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic - [www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/](http://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/)

## Information on Benefits & Finances

**Council tax support in Merton** - If your income has been affected by COVID-19, you may be eligible for council tax support. You can find out more about eligibility here - <https://bit.ly/3c2SM7I>

Merton CIL can provide support to apply. Please get in touch to book an appointment.

**Local Welfare Support Scheme** - Merton have a limited fund to support the most vulnerable Merton residents with short term severe financial difficulties. These grants are usually emergency payments to pay for food, heating, hot water and/or essential household items. Find out more here - <https://bit.ly/2XgNXUI>

Merton CIL can provide support to apply. Please get in touch to book an appointment.

**Citizens Advice** – Changes to benefits

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/benefits/coronavirus-check-if-there-are-changes-to-your-benefits/>

**Rightsnet** – Social welfare law updates - <https://www.rightsnet.org.uk/covid19>

**Money Saving Expert's Coronavirus Financial Help & Rights** -

<https://www.moneysavingexpert.com/news/2020/03/uk-coronavirus-help-and-your-rights>

**Turn2us** – Information for employees - <https://www.turn2us.org.uk/get-support/benefits-and-coronavirus-help-for-employees>

**Department for Work and Pensions** – updates and information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-work-pensions>

## Other information:

Government main page regarding Coronavirus - <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

Easy read guides available from Mencap -

<https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/24th%20March%20Cv19%20UpdateCU.pdf>

British Sign Language versions of government advice –

<https://www.signhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/>

Public Health England information in alternative formats -

<https://campaignresources.phe.gov.uk/resources/campaigns/101/resources/5080>

Government guidance on shielding and protecting for extremely vulnerable people (a government classification) -

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>

Government information regarding getting support if you are an extremely vulnerable person (a government classification) -

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus-extremely-vulnerable>

Information for carers from Carers UK - <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>

Homeless Link Webinar: COVID-19 and Homelessness Services -

<https://homeless.org.uk/webinar-covid-19-and-homelessness-services-1>

Citizen's Advice Information about support if you are affected by Coronavirus -

<https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/health/coronavirus-what-it-means-for-you/>