DLUHC funding programme gets underway

This month has been a great united step forward in the support given to Local Authorities receiving funds to build Changing Places Toilets in England. Muscular Dystrophy UK (MDUK) and the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) are replying to daily requests from Local Authorities and making the process of participating in this initiative as seamless as possible. MDUK is sharing design, planning and fit-out information as well as holding training sessions for each Local Authorities' Single Point of Contact (SPOC) Representative and DLUHC is addressing financial, protocol and procedural questions and all queries relating to any Change of Venue matters. Local Authorities have also received a helpful Next Steps Resource from MDUK which clarifies the next stages in this exciting and most eagerly awaited initiative. Check out our website for all updates.

Edinburgh Waverley

The much anticipated and long-awaited Changing Places toilet has opened at Edinburgh Waverley Train Station. Families have been requesting this much needed toilet for years as the nearest facility was in a Wetherspoons pub. Network Rail are also working on improving other accessibility features at the station and this should make it more accessible and easier to use. Scotland’s Accessible Travel Framework was developed with a view to improve accessible transport for all and PAMIS regularly attend the steering group meetings to ensure Changing Places toilets continue to be a priority at transport hubs.

Strabane Library

The Strabane Library in Northern Ireland offers a variety of services including tea and newspapers as well as Knit and Natter groups. Families can enjoy a great time in Rhythm and Rhyme groups, where children (and parents!) can experience the joy of learning through songs and stories. As the venue has a Changing Places Toilet, the location is a ‘go-to’ for a wide variety of community projects, thereby leading by example and welcoming everybody to its site and offering a respectful and comfortable toileting experience to all users as well as their care givers.

Email Derry City and Strabane District Council’s Access and Inclusion officer for more information about inclusion and accessibility in Strabane.

Swansea Arena!

Swansea Arena is a landmark building located in Copr Bay with capacity for 3,500 people. Recently opened in March 2022, the venue also hosts a new Changing Places Toilet located on the ground floor. Come and visit this outstanding new venue and have a brilliant day out, knowing that everybody’s toileting requirements can be fully met with accessibility and inclusivity at the heart of the day. Hosting some of the most recognised names in live music, comedy and theatre, the fully-modular arena also hosts e-sports, conferences and events.
Hertfordshire County Council recently opened their £22m Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre. Wealden Rehab delivered the Changing Places toilet fit out for Willmott Dixon. This room has doors to both wet and dry areas and has 14m² of floor space. This Changing Places features a shower trolley to provide transfers to poolside. The entire project was delivered during the depths of the pandemic which represented a much-increased level of working together.

In Scotland, Consortium co-chairs PAMIS provide a busy sports and leisure programme for people with profound and multiple learning disabilities. Activities include SOMA (sporting opportunities for motor activities), accessible snow-boarding, wheelchair ice skating, swimming, friendship clubs, multi-sensory storytelling and much more.

At the heart of this is ensuring that leisure centres are fully accessible and include a Changing Places toilet. 22% of all Changing Places toilets in Scotland are in sports and leisure centres. We were delighted to work with Moray Sport Centre recently in the North of Scotland to support their planning and design process and their lovely new toilet means a whole new range of activities are now available.

Birmingham 2022 is committed to hosting an accessible and inclusive Games. Part of our planning has involved provision of Changing Places toilets for our sport competition venues. These facilities will be for Games spectators, members of our workforce and athletes. Our venues comprise of various types of facilities, some are established (such as the Arena Birmingham and the NEC), some are ‘greenfield’ spaces (such as Sutton Park) where we will be building event sites. Some of the existing venues already have Changing Places facilities which is great to see. For other venues we will be hiring mobile Changing Places facilities to be used at Games time.

We believe that providing these facilities at as many venues as possible is really important. Not only will this ensure that people can enjoy an independent and dignified experience, but it will also raise awareness of these facilities and help demonstrate why they are essential.

Our ambition is to work with those existing venues who don't currently have a Changing Places area to see how we can encourage them to install this facility.

Supplier Comment

Wealden Rehab

This month, we spoke to Changing Places toilets supplier Wealden Rehab about their work at the Grange Paddocks Leisure Centre.

With June being the month of Wimbledon and the commonwealth games coming up in July, we thought that this month we'd focus on sports and leisure to get everyone in the mood!

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Find out more about SOMA here
Check out Moray Sports Centre here

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"I was absolutely delighted to be awarded the MDUK Peter and Nancy Andrews Community Achievement Award. I'd been invited to a Zoom meeting, and had no idea what it was about, and when I turned on my screen I saw Julie Etchingham and Catherine Woodhead, who presented me with this award for my Changing Places campaigning work. After the meeting I did some research into the work that Peter and Nancy Andrews had done, and it made me feel even more honoured that I received this award that bears their name. It was an absolutely lovely surprise! Thank you so much!"

Lorna Fillingham, Changing Places toilets campaigner

We caught up with Lorna Fillingham, winner of MDUK’s, Peter and Nancy Andrews Community Achievement Award. As Consortium Co-chairs, MDUK recognise Lorna’s tireless work in campaigning for better Changing Places toilets provision across the UK.

Speaking of awards...
On Thursday 28th May we were delighted to attend the Blue Badge Awards Ceremony in Manchester at the prestigious Hotel Brooklyn.
The Blue Badge Access Awards (BBAAs), which set the gold standard for accessibility globally, particularly in a hospitality setting, celebrate venues and people who create ‘accessibility with style’. We enjoyed networking and raising awareness of the Changing Places Toilet campaign all night long and have started new conversation with many new stakeholders and organisations that are keen to learn more about how they support and install Toilets within their venues … who knows there may even be a Changing Places Toilet award category next year!
We were inspired by the dedication to Inclusion and accessibility amongst the audience and winners that evening that were recognised in various different categories including the most Accessible toilet and the most Ludicrous Loo!

Question: Does Changing Places UK/ The Changing Places Consortium have an app?

Answer: No, there is no official Changing Places toilets app. The Changing Places Consortium (Changing Places UK) manage the Changing Places toilets map on our website, which is the only official source for information about location and venue specifics of all registered Changing Places toilets in the UK.

We know there are apps out there that list Changing Places toilets, but they're not affiliated with us in any way, so we can't guarantee their accuracy.

Registration round-up
- Jolly Josh Disability Centre
- Swansea Arena
- Royal West of England Academy (RWA)
- Wat Tyler Country Park
- The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
- Medway Maritime Hospital
- Inchgarth Community Centre
- Burrell Collection
- Penistone Leisure Centre
- Gullane Bents Toilets

Details of all registrations can be found on the official Changing Places toilets map