

*disabled*  
Every Child Matters

“If I could  
change one thing...”

**Children and young people’s  
views**

What disabled children and young  
people have told us would make the  
biggest difference in their lives...



**Every Disabled Child Matters (EDCM)** is a campaign to get rights and justice for disabled children, young people and their families.

We want to make sure that disabled children and young people:

- can live their lives the way they want to
- are listened to
- are included in their communities.

EDCM campaigns about the issues that disabled children, young people and their families tell us are important to them.

“I don’t think that people realise that young disabled people are just like everyone else and that we all have the same views. This enables people to see what we all think. I believe that it is really important for the opinions and views of everybody to be heard. I hope that this campaign will make those people that are in a position to change people’s views, stop and think about what we want, not what they think we want.”

Jo, 13

**Thank you** to all the children and young people who told us what they want to change.

Where quotes have no name next to them, this is because the young person did not give us their name.

## Get involved



Sign up to the campaign at **[www.edcm.org.uk/cyp](http://www.edcm.org.uk/cyp)**  
email us at **[info@edcm.org.uk](mailto:info@edcm.org.uk)** or call us on **020 7843 6318**.

# “If I could change one thing...”

We asked disabled children and young people all over the country this question:

**“If you were Prime Minister for the day, and could change one thing, what would it be?”**

We collected their answers in this booklet. These are the top three changes that disabled children and young people told us they would make:

- 1** **have more fun things to do**
- 2** **more respect** for disabled children and young people
- 3** make it everyone's right to get a **good education**.



Children and young people also told us that they wanted to be heard:

“I would make people listen to us!”



## Why have we made this booklet?

**We have put this booklet together to tell the government:**



- ★ **what disabled children and young people have said they want to change**
- ★ **what the government can do to make these changes happen.**

# What children and young people told us

**“If I were Prime Minister for one day, and could change one thing, it would be...”**

1

## Having more fun things to do

Most children and young people we spoke to agreed that they wanted more and different things to do.

*‘I want to be able to do more fun things in life.’*

Matthew, 13



*‘Help to go out with friends to the cinema, to have lunch, go to gigs.’*

Anna, 13

*‘More activities available during the week for different age groups, with inclusion of everyone.’*

Hannah



Many children and young people want to do these things more independently...

*‘To be treated like other people my age and to be able to go out without my parents - to have support from someone else.’*

Rachel, 12

*‘I would like to go on my own to football with my best friend.’*

... they also have clear ideas about what needs to change before they can have more and better things to do.

*‘A set date or time for disabled children and their carers to access the local cinema - without being told to be quiet when we can’t help it.’*

Kieran, 7



*‘We need centres where we can go and do stuff like play darts, snooker, chess maybe, and do arty or creative things, listen to music.’*

Patrick



*‘To be able to go out with friends of my own age. This could be done by having a ‘buddy’ system in place.’*

Jessica, 14





## Getting out and about



Children and young people told us the thing that would help the most would be making places more accessible. This would allow them to do the things that other children and young people do.

'If I could change one thing for disabled children and their families, it would be to make all shops and buildings accessible. The law was supposed to change ages ago, but it hasn't happened yet in some places.'

Lauren, 16

'More signs that are in pictures as well as writing.'

NCH Caring Together, a group of young disabled people in Lincolnshire

'My local cinema here in Skegness should put in a lift. My mates go every weekend but I can't. I'm 16 and this is the one thing that I could easily do with them. I can't do sport with them as I'm in a wheelchair. When I wrote to the cinema 3 years ago to complain, they just sent me free tickets, which was stupid because I can't use the cinema! It has about 30 steps!'

Oscar, 16

'There should be accessible toilets for when I go out, and I mean really accessible with changing beds and tracking system to enable my carers to support me with my personal care needs.'

Daniel, 17



## What we want the government to do ✓

- ★ **Make sure that local plans for children and young people show how disabled children and young people can access all activities and public places.**
- ★ **Make sure that national plans to create more places to go for young people work for disabled young people.**
- ★ **Make sure that all big public places have fully accessible Changing Places toilets. Go to [www.changing-places.org](http://www.changing-places.org) for more details.**





## Travelling

Children and young people told us that they want to change the public transport system. Changes will mean that they can access the things they want and be more independent.

*'Better access to transport, so young people could go places and meet their friends, without their parents.'*

Rachel, 21

*'Just because my mum has a car to help with my mobility don't assume that I want to go everywhere with her. I want to experience different types of travel.'*

Leigh, 16

*'They need more ramps on buses. It's just annoying that they have to ask to put it down. They should know that they're in the wheelchair, they need to put it down without them asking.'*

Anne Marie

*'I would change letting only one wheelchair on a train at one time.'*



### What we want the government to do ✓

- ★ Make sure all types of transport are accessible to disabled children and young people.
- ★ Make sure transport staff have training about disability equality and access.

# 2

## More respect

Negative attitudes about disability is an issue that children and young people feel very strongly about.

*'More respect for disabled people.'*

Sunjay

*'Stop people staring.'*

Tanya, 14



*'Our communities should realise we are part of the community too. There has to be more positive roles for disabled people.'*

Toni, 20

*'I want disabled kids to have good friends and people who don't pick on them.'*

Khaqan, 17

Children and young people told us what they would like to do to challenge the lack of understanding and respect – and stop disabled people being treated differently...

*'Put a law into place to make people understand my disability and not stare when I act funny or talk funny.'*

Callum, 10



*'I would make all those involved in places like schools and colleges go on courses to give them understanding of disabilities. This would stop the lack of understanding in people... we are not "weird or retarded" and most definitely not "lazy!"'*

Katie-Rose, 16

*'I would make a national 'equality day'. This would mean teaching people that everyone is different and not to be scared of people that are different because of their skin colour, nationality, disability etc.'*

Jo, 13



### What we want the government to do

- ★ **Make sure there is a strong law to promote disability equality.**
- ★ **Arrange for all teachers and pupils in schools to have training about disability equality.**



## Getting a good education

Many children and young people feel really strongly about their right to education and their right to be fully included.

*'That "average" is all a disabled child is allowed to be. We should have the same rights as the other children in schools.'*

Christopher, 14

*'We should have the right to take our GCSE and other exams with full access to all the language usually available to us (I need to use word prediction)...the examination board will not come out to my school to assess my individual learning needs.'*

Gregor, 13

*'Tackle issues such as disabled children being excluded from school trips.'*

Josh, 17

*'Find meaningful activities for us to do during games and P.E. Not timing others or collecting balls up.'*

Some children and young people told us they wanted more and better access to support in school...

*'Make every single school - primary and secondary - in the UK accessible for wheelchair users!'*

Alex

*'It should be easier to get help at school, without going through lots of fights, and before it's too late and you have lots of catching up to do.'*

Hannah, 16

*'I would have no school for a day. I have Asperger syndrome and I hate school because it is very noisy and I get annoyed... I find things very hard and I don't get any help. I would like the Prime Minister to come and talk to me - I can tell him how rubbish it is. I hate school!'*

Taylor, 9



### What we want the government to do

- ★ **Make sure teachers get training in disability discrimination (this means when a person is treated differently because of their disability) and special education needs (SEN). The training should happen when they are studying to be a teacher at university and in their jobs.**
- ★ **Make sure schools do everything they can to help pupils with SEN and/or a disability achieve all they can in school, and help them be able to stay in school.**



## Having more of a say

To make these changes happen in a way that works for children and young people, their views need to be listened to.

All children and young people should be asked about what they want. Some disabled children and young people need a bit of extra support to explain their views.

### Lots of young people said:

"I want to be asked about what I want to do.  
I want more choice."

"I want to be given the time and chance to be understood  
for being like I am."



## What we want the government to do ✓

- ★ **Make sure all disabled children and young people have an advocate if they want one. An advocate is someone who helps people get their views across and have their rights respected.**



# Other things that disabled children and young people feel strongly about

## Stopping bullying

'I want schools to take bullying more seriously - disabled children are more vulnerable to bullying. Teachers could teach classes about disabilities...kids with disabilities could help if they want to. A bit like a new lesson!'

Ralph, 11

## What we want the government to do ✓

- ★ Make sure that teachers and other adults who work with disabled children and young people, and young people themselves, have proper training and support to tackle bullying of disabled children. See [www.dontstickit.org.uk](http://www.dontstickit.org.uk)

## Getting a good job



'We want real job prospects - this means making employers aware that we can contribute with a little support and understanding. We too can be employed'.

Trevor, 19

## Children and young people told us about many other things they would like to change

'Give us a decent set of wheels! My wheelchair is more than just a piece of equipment - it means I can do what I want, with who I want and I don't feel frustrated having to rely on other people... it's all about having the chance to be free and be you.'

Gary

'Got a disabled driving instructor for me?'



'I'd make sure there was more help and support for parents. My mum finds it very hard work and gets tired a lot. I think parents need more help.'

Kylie, 9



Many of the things that are important to disabled children and young people are the same things that are important to all young people.

*'I'd like a disabled kid like me to get a girlfriend.'*

**Khaqan, 17**

*'If I could change anything in the world it would be that people were kinder to animals.'*

**Gary**

*'If I could change anything in the world I would like children to be safe.'*

**Aisling, 13**

*'I would like to change myself into a rock star, I would be a drummer, my hair would be spiky and I would be a brilliant singer.'*

**Dale**

*'Peace around the world - not just for a day, but forever (I have a magic wand).'*



## What needs to happen next

As you can see, disabled children and young people want the same things that all children and young people want. To play, learn, be with their friends and family, and be a real part of their communities. They want to be respected, and grow up to have a job, a home, and a family of their own.

Disabled children have the same right to a full life as all children and young people. We want to see this right delivered.

We are pleased that the government has started to see that services and support for disabled children and their families are really important. Now we want them to listen to the views of disabled children and young people and create better services, better opportunities, and better lives.



To see more comments from disabled children and young people about what they want to change, and to see parents' views, please go to **[www.edcm.org.uk/onething](http://www.edcm.org.uk/onething)**

For copies of the accessible summary, or the booklet about children's views, please contact us.

### You can:



go to our website: **[www.edcm.org.uk](http://www.edcm.org.uk)**

email us at **[info@edcm.org.uk](mailto:info@edcm.org.uk)**



call us on **020 7843 6318**

If you would like this booklet in a different format or language, please contact us and we will try to meet your needs.

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