SpeakEasy N.O.W.

Registered Charity No: 1106914

Autumn Newsletter

October 2026



In this newsletter you can read about:

- Our People's Parliament report and workshop
- Our visit to Hartlebury Castle
- Events we have attended





- Health Checkers and Expert Members updates
- SpeakUp groups and Forums
- Bus pass rule change

Hello!

Welcome to our Autumn 2026 newsletter! We have been busy here at SpeakEasy N.O.W. Have a read to find out what we have been up to.

Expert Members and our 2026 People's Parliament Report and workshop

Every year our Expert Members choose a People's Parliament topic. They choose an important issue that matters to people with a learning disability.

Expert Members talk to lots of people with a learning disability to find out their views and experiences. They write a report about their findings and say what they think needs to change or be improved.

They talk to local service commissioners and providers about their findings and organise an event or workshop for people with a learning disability.









This year's topic is Staying Safe in Our Communities.

Expert Members have been talking to people about their experiences and what stops them feeling safe.

They have written a report sharing the feedback and experiences they have gathered about feeling safe at home, when out and about and online. Along with some things for people to think about and the people and organisations who can help.

Expert Members are running a Staying Safe Workshop for people with a learning disability on **Monday 16th November 2026, 10am to 1pm** at Perdiswell Young People's Leisure Club, Droitwich Road, Worcester, WR3 7SN.



The workshop will include –

- Worcestershire County Council Public Health – staying safe at home
- West Mercia Police Hate Crime Officers
- AbilityNet – online safety
- Victim Support.



Please contact us to book your place for the workshop – mail@speakeasynow.org.uk



You can read our 2026 People's Parliament Report on our website now.

Please visit **www.speakeasynow.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2026/10/Staying-Safe-in-our-Communities-Report-2026.pdf**

or scan the QR code.

Staying Safe Workshop

Do you have a learning disability?

Do you feel safe?

Always? Sometimes? Never?

Come to our workshop -

'Staying Safe in Our Communities'

Monday 16th November 2026

10am - 1pm

Perdiswell Young People's Leisure Club, Droitwich Road, Worcester, WR3 7SN



Places will be limited so please book.

Call us on **01905 774247**

or email us on

mail@speakeasynow.org.uk

Our visit to Hartlebury Castle



In October, Rachel, Mano and Tammie visited Hartlebury Castle. We had been asked to attend to do an accessibility visit and we wrote a report about our findings.

The things we considered on our visit were:
-Finding your way around
-Physical accessibility
-Information
-Staff



We looked at the signs and maps around the museum and how easy to understand these were. We looked at lifts and ramps and whether there were disabled parking spaces in the car park.





We checked to see if there were any areas of the museum which weren't accessible if you are a wheelchair user or have mobility problems and whether the flooring was even and safe to use mobility aids and sticks on. We thought about whether the displays were at a height you could see from a wheelchair and whether they used easy language and pictures. We also asked if there were audio guides available. We spoke to staff and asked them if they have received training about learning disability.
We really enjoyed this visit!

Health Checkers update

Our Health Checkers have been busy. At their September meeting they were visited by Kerry McFarlane, Patient Engagement Officer for Herefordshire and Worcestershire Health and Care Trust who came to talk about digital inclusion. They also discussed Learning Disability Friendly badges for GP surgeries and Healthy Lifestyles.



In October Health Checkers attended the Hear Our Voices event in Hereford at the Kindle Centre. They talked about what the Health Checkers do and gave a presentation on lung and oral health.









Bus pass rule change

Earlier this year SpeakEasy N.O.W. member Sam attended a Worcestershire County Council Meeting, to ask Councillors to allow people with a learning disability to use their bus passes before 9.30am. We received a response from the council a few months later letting us know that the rule could not be changed.



However, during the summer we received the wonderful news that the rule would be changing nationwide, and people with a disability bus pass would be able to use them 24 hours a day. This is fantastic and we were so pleased to hear this.


Disabled people in England to get 24-hour free bus travel

A big well done to Sam and everyone across the country who has campaigned to change the rules!



Visit to Noble Care for Worcestershire County Council

Worcestershire County Council asked us to visit 2 Noble Care services in Evesham. Members Sam and Wayne did this on 7th July. Both of them have connections to the Evesham area, Wayne still lives there now and Sam lived there with his family when he was growing up.



Noble Care specialise in residential care for people with Learning Disability, Autism and Mental Health problems including people with complex needs.

When we visit services like this, they are called 'peer visits'. This means the visits are not part of the formal monitoring or inspection processes. They are informal visits by our members, who engage with the people using the service and gather their experiences and feedback.

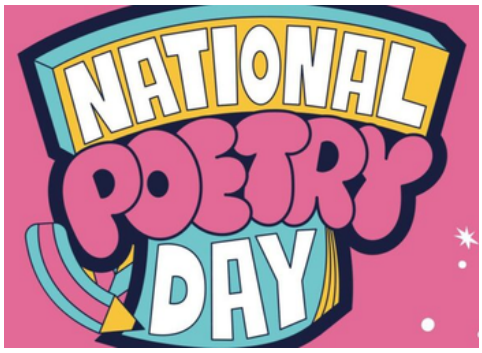


Noble Care were happy for us to visit and made us very welcome. We were introduced to the people living there and the staff who support them. We asked lots of questions about what people did each day and what they thought about the care and support they received.

Wayne and Sam saw how each home worked hard to be as person centred as possible. They were impressed by the level of care and support offered in both services. They produced a report for the County Council which was also shared with Noble Care.

SpeakUp Groups and Forum meetings

Our SpeakUp groups have been busy over the last few months. We have looked at National Poetry Day, Halloween and Afternoon Tea Week. We have looked at our People's Parliament report and we have also helped fill in a survey for Glasgow University about spare time. We discussed oral health and watched a video. We also conducted a survey for the Level Playing Field project for the British Institute of Learning Disabilities (BILD).











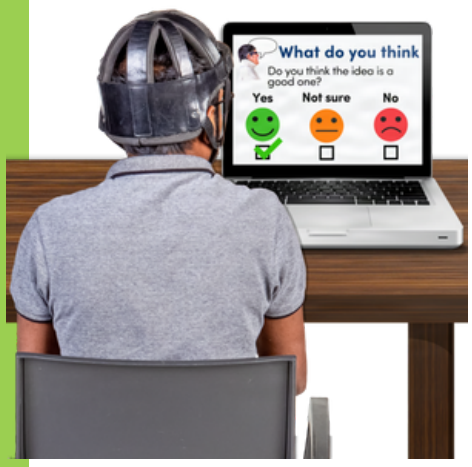
We have had some really interesting Forum meetings recently. We had a visit from Helen and Stacey from Worcestershire County Council to talk about their Digital Inclusion survey.

We also had a visit from SEND Co-production officers Amy and Chanika, Helen Hodges from AbilityNet and Michelle Bowen from West Mercia Police.

Thank you to all of our lovely visitors for coming to speak to us.

If you would like to have your say in the Digital Inclusion Survey please take a look at the flyer below.

If you would prefer a paper copy, please contact us on mail@speakeasynow.org.uk and we will provide you with one.



Your input matters

Worcestershire Digital Inclusion Survey

We want to understand how people use or access the internet, digital devices and online services. Whether you are confident online or do not go online your views matter to help us shape digital support.

Get involved your preferred way:

Use the QR code on this poster or visit:
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/DigitalSurvey

Pick up and drop off paper copies at a range of locations across Worcestershire

Get help filling in the survey from selected organisations across Worcestershire.

Worcestershire Digital Inclusion Partnership
StrengtheningCommunities@worcestershire.gov.uk

Give As You Live



Give as you Live Online

Give as you Live Online is the free and easy way to raise money for SpeakEasy N.O.W. when you shop online with 6,000+ stores.

From holidays and travel, to clothing and gifts, you can raise hundreds of pounds from your everyday shopping, all at no extra cost to you.

Please visit: www.giveasyoulive.com/join/speakeasy-now

Contact us

There are lots of ways to contact us at SpeakEasy N.O.W. Please don't hesitate to get in touch if you would like information about becoming a member, our SpeakUp groups or any of our projects.

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