

SPEAKING for OURSELVES

DISABLED PEOPLE in the 20TH CENTURY

1913
The Mental Deficiency Act required school boards to identify children who were 'defective' and send them to live in institutions

1914-18
The First World War created 20 million disabled men across Europe

1920s & 30s
Many disabled veterans fought for the Right to Work as part of the unemployed workers movement

1933
The Nazis came to power in Germany and introduced compulsory sterilisation of disabled people

1939
The Nazi euthanasia programme murdered 240,000 disabled people

1944
The Disabled Persons (Employment) Act required employers with 20 or more staff to ensure that 3% of employees were registered disabled.

1944
Education Act introduced selection by disability with disabled children sent to 11 types of special school depending on their impairment

1952
The Spastics Society (now Scope) was set up to campaign for better education and other opportunities for people with cerebral palsy (cp)



1957
Bill Hargreaves, a man with cerebral palsy, started his pioneering work to support over 1,500 disabled people into their first jobs



1970
The Chronically Sick and Disabled Persons' Act required local authorities to improve services to disabled people

1972
Alf Morris MP was appointed as Britain's first Minister for Disabled People

1976
Union of Physically Impaired Against Segregation was set up, the first organisation to argue for a 'social model of disability'

1978
British Council of Disabled People's Organisations was set up to campaign for disabled people's rights

1981
The Education Act paved the way for the integration of children with 'special needs' during the United Nations International Year of Disabled People

1986
A Spastics Society study entitled 'An equal chance for disabled people' revealed widespread discrimination against disabled people in the workplace

1990
The Americans with Disabilities Act becomes law

1991
Disability Living Allowance and Disability Working Allowance were introduced to help pay for the extra disability-related costs disabled people incur

1992
Polls Apart report found that 88% of polling stations were inaccessible to some disabled people



1994
The Spastics Society changed its name to Scope

1995
The Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) made discrimination against disabled people illegal and was an important step forward in the campaign for full civil rights for all disabled people. This was after 17 (1982-1995) attempts to introduce comprehensive and enforceable civil rights for disabled people

1997
Polls Apart 2 found that 92% of polling stations were inaccessible to some disabled people

1999
Scope's Left Out campaign to make Britain more accessible to disabled people was launched



2000
The Speak for Yourself campaign was launched – to highlight the difficulty disabled people had getting communication aids. As one person said, "If you can't walk you get a wheelchair... if you can't speak you get nothing"



2000
Polls Apart 3 found 69% of polling stations remain inaccessible

2000
The Disability Rights Commission was set up

2001
Special Educational Needs and Disability Act extended disability discrimination legislation to schools, colleges and universities and gave disabled children many more rights in mainstream education

2001
Scope launched the Engage Network to increase the representation of disabled people in public and political life



2004
Nelson Mandela launched Scope's Time to Get Equal campaign, calling for an end to disability



2005
The Disability Amendment Act introduced a 'dut' on the public sector to promote disability equality.

2005
"Up to one in five British adults is disabled and can find themselves cut off from the opportunities others enjoy... This Government is committed to improving the life chances of disabled people"
Tony Blair

2006
The statue of disabled artist Alison Lapper in Trafalgar Square