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Subject: ELFT Ability Network Newsletter No. 7
Date: 01 April 2020 17:23:53

ELFT Ability Newsletter

1 April 2020 - Issue 7

Welcome to ELFT Ability's newsletter.

ELFT Ability is about staff uniting to take the 'dis' out of disability. Staff from across the Trust can share their experiences of disability in the workplace for mutual support and to influence ELFT's culture around disabled staff.

Staying connected during the Covid 19 outbreak

Over the coming months ELFT Ability will focus on providing mutual support for disabled staff, those with health conditions and those who have disabled children/young adults with special educational needs. You can find details of ways to virtually connect with your colleagues in this newsletter.

Disability Champion of the Month

Congratulations to John Tindell and Diane Aston, who have been awarded Disability Champion of the Month for February and March respectively.

As the Trust's Fire Safety Officer, John Tindell has worked with us to update the template for staff Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEP). It is welcome to see staff proactively considering access needs within their day to day work. These plans could make potential life saving differences to disabled staff. The Trust PEEP form makes it clearer that staff with a variety of disabilities, not just mobility issues, may require assistance to evacuate in an emergency. If you require a plan, particularly as you may have recently changed your workplace, the template is available in the K drive under 'Fire safety/Disability'. Contact your building's Risk Officer for more information.

Di Aston led on the collation of information around staff with underlying health conditions so that their needs could be addressed in terms of how they worked during

the Covid 19 response.

John and Di demonstrate the importance of proactively considering access needs for disabled staff within ELFT's day to day work. Both of the areas they are working on have a significant health and safety impact.

If you'd like to nominate a future Disability Champion in recognition of their contribution towards promoting a disability positive culture at ELFT, please email [Shannon O'Neill](#).



Lip reading

There have been questions raised by staff in other NHS Trusts about how d/Deaf staff are adapting to them and their team wearing PPE. If you are aware of any creative solutions please contact [Shannon O'Neill](#).

Enhance The UK have produced guidance on communicating with hearing impaired and d/Deaf patients and relatives whilst wearing a mask to support NHS staff and key workers, and the deaf community. Check it out [here](#).

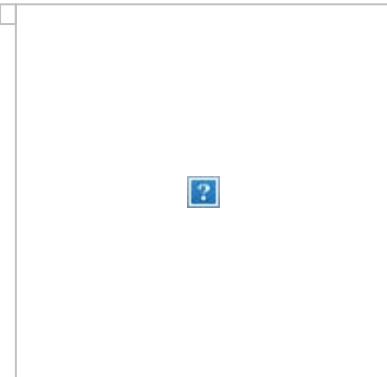


Access to Work

Access to Work are currently working to have more flexibility in how claims are submitted if there are practical problems in doing so during the Covid 19 outbreak. If your claim deadline is imminent, please contact them; otherwise we will update the process on the ELFT Communications staff update bulletin and/or the ELFT Ability area on the intranet.

If disabled staff or those with underlying health conditions have changed their workplace and need substantial adjustments, there is the possibility of being able to apply for equipment and travel if ELFT is unable to do this. Turnaround time for grants is about 5 weeks at the moment due to increased demand.

Click [here](#) for more information about Access to Work.



PurpleSpace

PurpleSpace is a global networking and professional development hub for disabled employees. They are providing a number of sessions for disabled employees in relation to issues raised by how we work during the Covid 19 outbreak.

If you would like their information, blogs or the opportunity to attend some of their online session please contact [Norbert Lieckfeldt](#).

They are also running a free webinar on working from home on Wednesday 8 April, 2-3pm. It will include some essential tips from disabled employees. Please see [here](#) for more information.



Covid 19 advice on people with health conditions

The Government has issued specific advice for people with underlying health conditions during the Covid 19 outbreak. This group includes everybody whose health condition entitles them to the free flu jab. If you are in this group and you have not already done so we strongly advise that you contact [Diane Aston](#) and/or your manager. We have been assured that this information will be treated sensitively and confidentially for the purposes of the Trust's emergency response. This is a vital health and safety issue and we have been impressed with how the Trust has supported a number of staff to move into lower

risk jobs or work from home.

Team Prevent have issued a guide for managers to assess the risk for this group of staff in a timely way. This is available [here](#).



Supporting those who are self isolating or shielding

Since last week, 1.5 million people across the country have been strongly advised to shield themselves from public for a minimum of 12 weeks within their own homes due to their severe health conditions. This is in addition to those with underlying health conditions who are being advised to be particularly stringent with social distancing and therefore staying at home.

If you are one of these people do let us know how you're getting on and if you need anything practically. We can't promise to be able to help but with a bit of creative thinking and pooling of resources we will have a good go. We know that having to stay at home for such a long time on medical grounds can be lonely and frustrating. Please don't hesitate to get in touch and ask for assistance. Email [ELFT Ability](#).



Are you living with someone with a health condition?

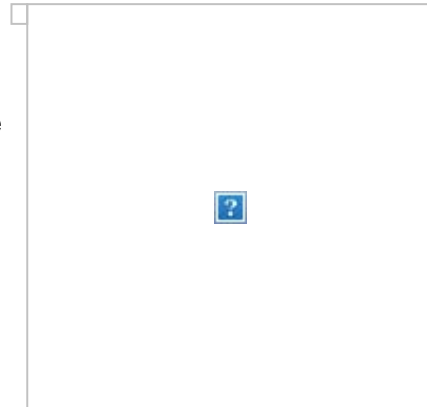
We know that this is a worrying time for those living with someone with a health condition, especially those who are 'shielding' and strongly advised against physical contact with others within their own home.

The Trust advises staff who live with a vulnerable individual to read [this information](#) from Public Health England on how to reduce the risk of them contracting the virus. You may also speak to your manager about working flexibly, if possible. In special circumstances, you can escalate any concerns to your manager's manager. Work can perhaps be arranged in a lower risk area of the service, however it is essential that we stay as well-staffed as possible, whilst ensuring we adhere to all government guidance.



Pando

For mutual support and connection please join our Pando group **#ELFT Ability Chat, ELFT**. Please search for it on the app or leave a Pando message for Shannon O'Neill.



Facebook

ELFT Ability have a closed Facebook group exclusively for disabled staff and those with health conditions to come together for peer support. You can find us by searching for "ELFT Ability" or join by contacting [Stuart Crawford](#) for more information.



Webex

ELFT Ability will be running an online mutual support space on WebEx. Feel free to drop by for a chat.

Friday 3 April, noon - 1pm

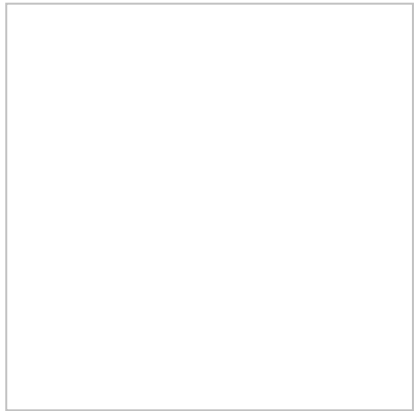
Meeting ID 147 056 490

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Tuesday 14 April, 2 - 3pm

Meeting ID 142 044 020

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Monday 27 April, 10 - 11am

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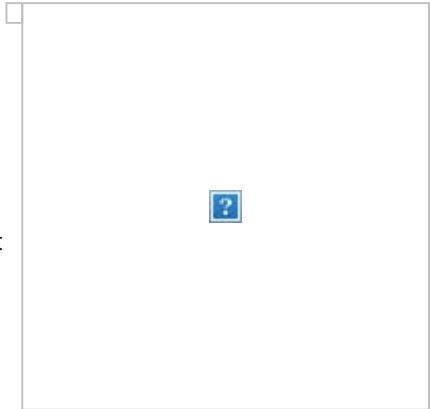
You can join by visiting elft.webex.com or using the Webex app and entering the meeting ID and password.



Twitter

ELFT Ability are very active on Twitter, raising awareness of disability and employment issues and much much more. Join in the conversation at [@ELFTAbility](https://twitter.com/ELFTAbility).

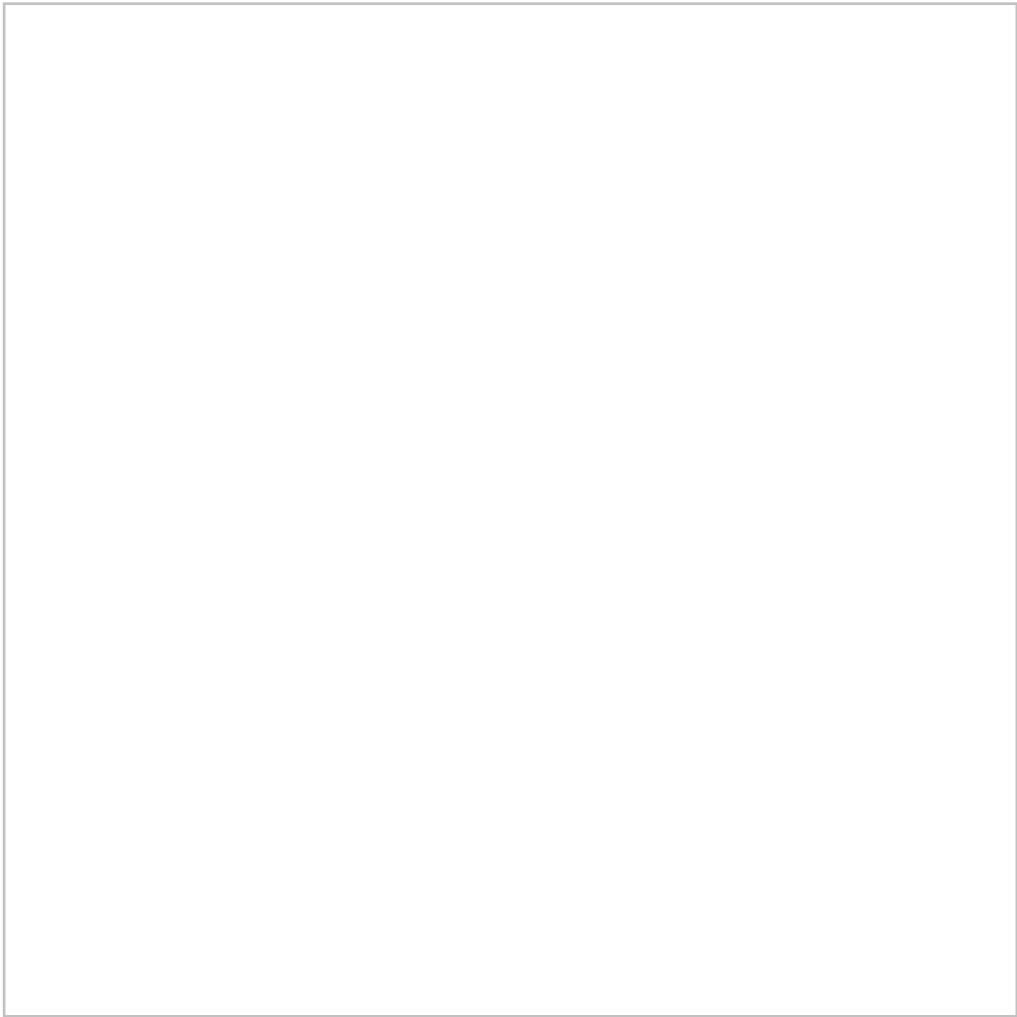
There are now over 60 ELFT team accounts on Twitter. We've compiled these together into one list so that you can see what's happening in the #ELFTFamily without having to follow every account. Subscribe to the list [here](#).



Be kind

We often talk about kindness being important and one of the key principles of accessibility. Many people are responding to the Covid 19 emergency with their own fight, flight and freeze defence mechanisms. It is especially important that we understand that sometimes a person's kindness lapses, and that's when they need kindness most.

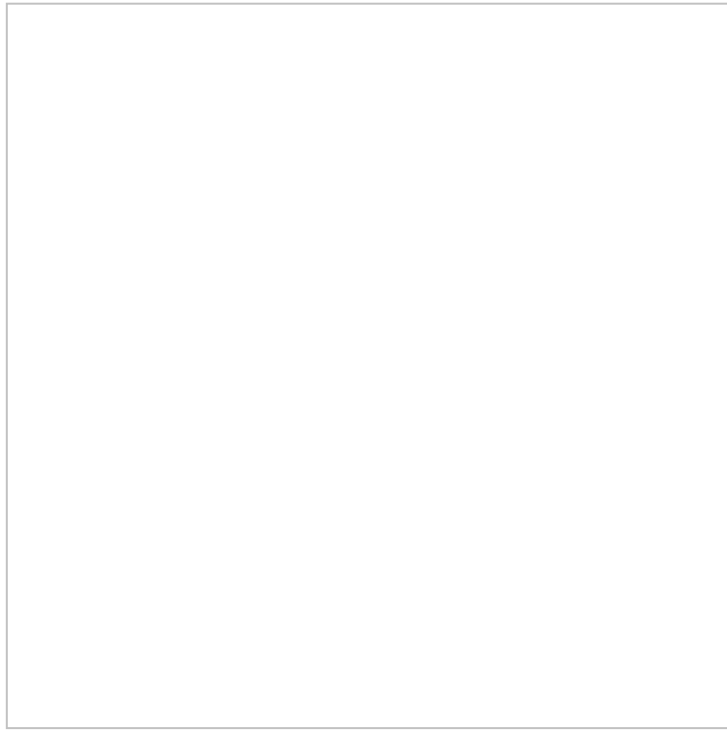
Together, we've got this!



ELFT Ability Membership

If you didn't not receive this email from the ELFT Communications then you are not on ELFT Ability's updated membership list. To subscribe, contact elft.ability@nhs.net





If you have any queries, suggestions or news for ELFT Ability, contact [Shannon O'Neill](#), Network Equality Lead (Disability) or [check out the ELFT Ability Intranet page](#).

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