



## Digital stories made by the members of Digitalk July 2016

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### Digitalk Case Study: Blue Badge

Digitalk is a lottery-funded project based in Bridgend County Borough and is part of the of the Big Lottery funded [Community Voice](#) portfolio. The project supports people with learning disabilities to get their voice heard in creative ways, offering training and representation using film making, animation and digital storytelling.

Bridgend County Borough Council proposed the possibility of charging Blue Badge holders to park in all council owned car parks. Under the law, before doing this, an Equality Impact Assessment had to be done to see what impact introducing these charges would have.

As part of the Equality Impact Assessment, Bridgend Coalition of Disabled People asked a number of organisations including Digitalk members to record their views so they could be sent to the decision makers at Bridgend County Borough Council.

Digitalk members were against the charge, they believed it would have a major impact on disabled people's lives. Despite big improvements in public transport, a lot is still not accessible to them.

We initially responded in writing, with members stating;

"I am worried I won't be able to afford it, I have already had my benefits cut."

"It's wrong for people who haven't got much money and can't work because of their disability."

"I don't have a choice to travel any other way, I can't walk because I'm in a wheelchair or use buses because there are not wheelchair accessible buses where I live."

As most Digitalk members cannot read or write and sometimes struggle in a formal meeting environment, they decided the best way to get their voice heard would be to make a film, showing examples of good and bad ways of consulting and giving members a chance to give their opinions on camera.

Both the letter and film were sent to Bridgend County Borough Council, who responded by asking to for a meeting. Digitalk members decided they would like to meet in a “chilled out” environment and chose the Digilab, which is a living room set up with sofas. They had tea and biscuits and discussed the issue with the planning officers.

Weeks later, they received a written response from the Council’s solicitor. When the letter was read to the members the room was full of very confused faces. The letter was filled with jargon and “complicated stuff” that no one, including the project staff fully understood.

Member’s comments included:

“Ask them to make it simpler and send it in audio, no one can understand that.”

“We done loads of work for that too, I want to know what’s happening!”

“It’s always the same, they want stuff from us and don’t give anything back!”

The members asked the project staff to write a reply to the solicitors requesting a simplified audio response. Months have gone by and they still haven’t received an audio response or any other response, explaining what the next steps are in the blue badge issue....

**Every Link Counts: Digi Talk @DigitalkELC**

**For people with learning difficulties offering training and representation using film making, animation and digital storytelling.**

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