

# About the Wheelchair Users' Group

(Registered as a Charity - Number 1064955)

*Access, Mobility & Shopmobility*

Patron: The Rt. Hon. Michael Howard, QC., M.P.

## **Address:**

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## **Contact:**

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Chairman

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**Support Help-line:** Freephone 0800 074 0948

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**Website:** [www.wheelchairusers.org.uk](http://www.wheelchairusers.org.uk)

**Membership Area:** County of Kent

Registered charity formed in 1992 by wheelchair users.

The mission of the Wheelchair Users Group is *“To Empower and Enable Wheelchair Users to lead full and active lives by helping them obtain the right mobility equipment from both the statutory and private sector”*.

We are a *‘user’* led organisation that is run and controlled by disabled people, this is reflected by the current management team of six, five being full-time wheelchair users. We also have our own Access Advisor, Access Auditor and a Mobility Advisor for assessments.

The group runs a Free-phone support help-line and provides an information service covering all aspects of wheelchair use. ‘Real Power’ newsletter issued 2/3 times a year.

Run Folkestone Shopmobility with support of volunteers, providing electric scooters and manual wheelchairs for shopping and leisure activities in and around the town centre area. Scheme is open Monday to Friday from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. and booking is recommended.

The group facilitates the Countywide Wheelchair User Forum, working in partnership with the NHS Wheelchair Service on the provision and future development of that service. If you have a wheelchair provided by the NHS Wheelchair Service in Canterbury, Dartford, Folkestone, Maidstone, Medway or Tunbridge Wells we are interested in your views. The group provides advice and information on how to access and use the NHS service, including details on the provision of electric powered indoor/outdoor wheelchairs (EPIOC's) and the voucher scheme.

The Wheelchair Users Group have a small group of volunteers who will go into schools, colleges, clubs and associations to talk about their experiences of being a wheelchair user in a society that caters almost exclusively for non-disabled people. For their talks in schools they take along an active user wheelchair so that the children can experience using a chair at first hand.

Work with Shepway District Council to improve access for all disabled people in the Shepway area.

The population of Kent is **1,565,960**, there are **161,155** people with a long-term illness or physical disability living in the county, which is **10.3%** of the population. There are over **25,000** wheelchair users in Kent. Recent work commissioned by the NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency estimates there are **825,000** regular users of NHS wheelchair services in England.

Membership of the group is open to any wheelchair user, enabler/carer, personal assistant, health/social professional or disability/voluntary organisation. Annual Membership rates are as follows: On Benefits or Retired **£10.00**, in Paid Employment **£14.00**, Disability/Voluntary Organisations and Family Membership **£14.00**.

The Group is an independent not-for-profit charitable organisation; all the services we provide are funded from advertising revenue, sponsorship, fund raising activities, membership fees, small grants from local councils and by donations from members and supporters.

## **Wheelchair Users Group**

**Registered under the Data Protection Act 1984**

*Registration Number X4144883*

**Member of RADAR & NFS (The National Federation of Shopmobility)**

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