

designability

Impact Report

2022 – 2023





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I'd like to extend my gratitude to our donors, partners and supporters who have played an invaluable role in making our progress possible.

Jerry Marwood, Chair of Trustees

Welcome



Since joining Designability as Chair of Trustees in 2021, I have witnessed this unique charity go from strength to strength, demonstrating its unrivalled expertise in creating products and services to help disabled people live with greater choice and independence.

Over the last year, the team has made significant progress across several exciting projects, establishing their reputation as the go-to experts in person-centred design. I'd like to extend my gratitude to our donors, partners and supporters who have played an invaluable role in making this progress possible and to everyone who has shared their stories and experiences with us.

It is with regret that we bid a fond farewell to our CEO, Catharine Brown, who will be stepping down from the role in September. After four years at the helm and having steered the charity through the choppy waters that the Covid-19 pandemic brought, she has overseen significant growth in our income and reach. The charity is stronger than ever thanks to Catharine's inspirational and outstanding leadership, and she leaves a skilled and highly motivated team in place, supported by a dedicated Board of Trustees.

I'd like to thank Catharine for her incredible commitment to Designability. We are sorry to see her go, but wish her every success in the future.

I look forward to welcoming a new CEO and working with them to build on the strong foundations set in place by Catharine, leading the charity to achieve our vision – a future where disabled people live the life they choose.

Jerry

Jerry Marwood, Chair of Trustees

Thank you

I'd like to thank Jerry, the trustees, and all the fabulous staff at Designability for making the last four years so enjoyable and the decision to leave so difficult! It has been a privilege to lead the team, and work with such talented people to deliver solutions to the challenges disabled people face every day.

This year's impact report marks the end of our 2020-2023 strategy. Reflecting on the past as we look to the future, it's been a period of great achievement.

We have seen the Wizzybug Loan Scheme continue to grow and have welcomed 157 new children to the loan scheme during the year. Following Covid-19, and the subsequent impact on the healthcare sector, we have adapted the way we work and streamlined the loan application process, enabling us to bring Wizzybug joy to even more families.

Over the course of the year, we continued developing and refining prototypes for our ground-breaking pushchair for wheelchair users, and are now hoping to engage with interested companies to bring the accessible pushchair to market for the first time.

In October 2022, and after extensive user testing and prototype development, we launched freely available design guidance to tackle the inaccessibility of public vehicle charge points, so that no one is left behind in the transition to electric vehicles.

In January 2023, Designability, along with five other members led by Coventry University, launched the new National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat). We're delighted to be a member and are looking forward to working collaboratively to improve access to travel for disabled people.

As we celebrate how far we have come and how many disabled people we have been able to help, we look forward to the future with renewed energy. With rates of disability growing, our support is needed now more than ever and we remain dedicated to helping disabled people live a life with more independence and fewer barriers.



Catharine

Catharine Brown, Chief Executive

I am part of #teamability



@DesignabilityUK



DesignabilityUK

designability

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It has been a privilege to lead the team, and work with such talented people to deliver solutions to the challenges disabled people face every day. ”

Catharine Brown, Chief Executive

About us

Designability is a national charity that creates innovative products and services with and for disabled people, removing barriers and helping them to live with greater independence.

By creating our own products, and helping others to increase the accessibility of their products and services, we help disabled people live a life with more freedom and choice, every day.

Based in the beautiful city of Bath, our talented team has grown significantly over the course of the last year, increasing from 29 staff members in April 2022 to 34 in March 2023.

As a charity, we receive no statutory funding and rely almost entirely on voluntary donations from individuals and organisations. It is only thanks to their generosity that we can continue our vital work.



Who we support

Since Designability began in 1968, we have created over **300 products**, improving the lives of more than **300,000 people**, with products ranging from the bottom wiper which has enabled over **94,000 people with limited movement** to be independent in their personal hygiene, to the day clock, enabling over **18,000 people with dementia** to know the time of day in a simple way.

Person Centred Design

At Designability, **disabled people are at the heart of everything we do**. We pride ourselves on designing innovative products they need and want to use. To do this, we involve disabled people at every stage of the design process. From initial research, to user engagement and product and service testing, we listen to their feedback and carefully translate their lived experience into our product designs.





Wizzybug

Since its launch in 2011, Designability's iconic Wizzybug powered wheelchair has helped over 1,300 disabled children across the UK to be independently mobile.

Suitable for children aged from 14 months, this revolutionary wheelchair gives young children the freedom to explore, interact with their siblings and peers, and make their own choices. Children across the UK can access a Wizzybug completely free of charge through our Wizzybug Loan Scheme.

Over the last year we have adapted the way we work and streamlined the application process to take account of the current pressures on the healthcare system following Covid-19 and offer an access fund to help families with costs related to attending their handover appointment. We removed the need for a clinical referral and created a more user-friendly online application form, meaning that applying for a Wizzybug couldn't be simpler. As the cost of living crisis affects more families we have increased funds available in our access fund, ensuring financial circumstances are never a barrier to a child experiencing the benefits of independent mobility.

The Wizzybug Loan Scheme is supported by the Motability Foundation, who have been working with Designability since 2019 to help us reach even more disabled children across the UK.



of families would recommend the Wizzybug Loan Scheme



new children joined the Wizzybug Loan Scheme



of children show a significant improvement in key areas in the first 6 months after receiving their Wizzybug

Case study

Alfie, aged 4, uses his Wizzybug to explore the world. His mum, Nikki, explained:

"I first heard about Wizzybug just from doing my own research. I applied for one for Alfie as he is unable to stand or walk however is very independent and wants to explore the world and be a typical toddler.

He loves going out in his Wizzybug with his grandparents and their two dogs for long country walks. He can be involved rather than being strapped in his pushchair being pushed by me. Alfie has taken his Wizzybug to nursery a few times and loves chasing his friends around the playground. I love the fact he is included.

One of my favourite memories was when we first collected his Wizzybug. His little face when he realised he could move around the room himself - he kept going around in circles making himself laugh and beeping his horn!

My future hope is that Alfie lives life to the fullest and doesn't let his disability hold him back in any way. The Wizzybug allows him to have independence while looking stylish. It's hard to go out without being stopped as everyone wants to ask questions or comment on how cool he looks driving around in his Wizzybug.

A massive thank you to everyone from the Wizzybug and Designabilty team."

Wizzybug mum, Nikki





An accessible pushchair

Designability has been developing an accessible pushchair to give disabled parents who are manual wheelchair users the freedom to take their babies and young children out independently.

Our research shows that many parents end up feeling isolated at home or dependent on a non-disabled partner or carer – or resort to impractical means, such as having the child sitting on their lap. This can be unsafe and uncomfortable.

There are currently no products of this type available on the open market, yet we estimate there are around 20,000 parents throughout the UK alone who are manual wheelchair users who could benefit.

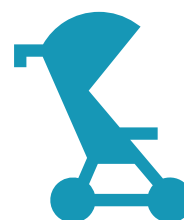


20,000

disabled parents who are manual wheelchair users in the UK alone



One solution suitable for a disabled and non-disabled user



Universal wheelchair attachment and adaptable to virtually any pushchair frame



Design and Development

The design and innovation team have worked on the project for the last four years, employing extensive user engagement and testing at every stage of the design and development process.

In 2021, we carried out in-person prototype trials with parents who are manual wheelchair users, with further parents engaging online. During 2022-23, using feedback and insight from earlier user testing, we were able to create our innovative final design, the first accessible pushchair designed for mass manufacture.

Thanks to support from the well-known pushchair manufacturer, Mamas and Papas, the pushchair completed safety testing in March 2023 to ensure compliance with British Safety Standard BS EN 1888.

Next steps

The pushchair will be launched officially at the Harrogate International Nursery Fair in October, where we hope to engage with interested companies to bring the accessible pushchair to market for the very first time. This is a hugely exciting time for the project and our hope is for this product to change the lives of disabled parents not just in the UK but across the world.

Case study

Disabled mum, Sarah, described the difference the accessible pushchair would make to her life:

"At home I can be everything for my children. I can achieve anything. When I'm out that completely changes. To leave the house, I need to find someone to help me push the pram, I can't just pop to the park, shops etc. I become a sideline watcher to my child. The amount of days my babies wouldn't sleep, what I would have given to be able to walk them round the block to calm them. It's like the change when you get your first car, suddenly you are free to do what you want to do, whenever you want to do it. True freedom."



Making EV Charging Accessible to Everyone

Designability has been working in partnership with the Motability Foundation, to understand the challenges facing disabled drivers and passengers when using public electric vehicle (EV) points.

It's estimated there will be 2.7 million disabled drivers or passengers in the UK by 2035, with 1.35 million expected to be partially or fully reliant on the public charging infrastructure.

In October 2022, and after extensive research and user engagement with hundreds of disabled drivers, we created and launched freely available design guidance for public charging. While aimed primarily at designers, manufacturers, installers and site owners of EV charging points, there are still many elements of the guidance which apply to home charging too.

Designability also sat on the steering group for PAS 1899:2022 – a new standard from the British Standards Institution (BSI) on accessible EV charging.

Following years of research and hard work, our aim now is to help industry future-proof their infrastructure, keeping accessibility in mind. We believe no one should be left behind in the transition to EV.

Throughout the process we engaged with over 200 Motability Scheme customers. Their lived experiences directly influenced the design guidance, ensuring the results are credible and transformative.



disabled drivers will be partially or fully reliant on public charging by 2035



disabled drivers or passengers helped create our design guidance



Directly engaged with over 800 EV industry professionals



Case study

Sam, who took part in the user testing, said:

"I was contacted through the Motability Scheme to take part in the EV charging project. I was thrilled to be included and invited to take part. I was a little apprehensive at first but I needn't have been.

I was treated with respect and everybody took account of my health conditions and made sure I was comfortable. It was great to test the new designs of chargers and give feedback.

There is an absolute fundamental need for the people who are going to be affected by new legislation designed to include them, and the technology used to implement that to be involved from the very start.

We don't need a group of experts to be telling us what is acceptable for our use, they need to take our feedback and use it to influence the new designs and technologies before they're implemented to ensure money and resources are not wasted.

It's really important to be involved in this process as a disabled person, because we are getting our views heard."

Making public transport accessible for all

In January 2023, Designability, along with five other members led by Coventry University, launched the new National Centre for Accessible Transport (ncat) with the aim of improving access to travel for disabled people. By engaging with disabled people to better understand their experiences and amplifying their voices in all decision making, we aim to co-design solutions and make transport truly accessible for everyone.

Your support

The fundraising team at Designabilty are always thinking of innovative and fun ways to raise money, and last year was no exception.

Bath Half

We took part in the Bath Half Family Fun Run, which was fully accessible for the first time. It was fantastic to see so many Wizzybug owners and their families taking part and having a wonderful time.



Dragon Boat Race



We hosted our annual Dragon Boat Race on the River Avon, with 14 intrepid teams going head-to-head in a series of trials, all vying to become top dragon!

Exhibitions



When we're not fundraising, the Designability team can often be found at conferences and exhibitions across the country, helping to spread the word about our vital work, and showcasing our latest products.

Awards



We were delighted to win the best Accessible Organisation at the Scope Disability Equality Awards in October. Scope recognised our Wizzybug Loan Scheme for the independence it gives to disabled children, so they can enjoy more opportunities to play and interact with their friends and family.

Winning the award was an incredible honour, particularly considering the formidable competition we faced. It makes us even more determined to continue making real impact with our work, and to make a lasting difference to the lives of many more disabled people.

Thank you

And lastly, as we reflect on our accomplishments this year, we'd like to say a huge 'thank you' to all our supporters for helping us raise the vital funds needed to deliver our impact.

Last year, 79% of our income came from voluntary funding with 86p of every pound donated going towards charitable activities. Our running costs are around £2.1 million each year, so every donation really does make a huge difference. With your help, we can build upon our success and reach even more disabled people, helping them to live with greater independence and choice.

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