

# FROZEN LIGHT

## The Frozen Light Podcast

### PODCAST SPECIAL- Chatting Changing Places with Zack Kerr

- Lucy (00:00):** Hello, and welcome to the Frozen Light podcast
- Amber (00:04):** A podcast aimed at staying in touch with the PMLD community in the age of coronavirus.
- Jingle (00:10):** *(Jazzy music plays)*
- Lucy (00:21):** So today, we are giving you a Frozen Light Podcast Special! Which we're really, really excited about. And we are going to be interviewing Zack Kerr, who is a Changing Places campaigner.
- Amber (00:36):** We've never had a podcast special before. So this is super, super exciting. We had really lovely responses from Season One of the Frozen Light Podcast, and then an opportunity arose to speak to Zack, who is a huge advocate for Changing Places toilets. Now, if you know anything about Frozen Light, you will know that we LOVE Changing Places toilets.
- Lucy (01:00):** Yeah, we do. And I think, if you've listened to any of the other episodes, I'm sure we've mentioned them a number of times, but in case you don't know a Changing Places toilet is a toilet which is completely accessible. It has a changing bed, a hoist, it has enough room for somebody to access it with two carers. To be able to use a standard accessible toilet you need to be able to transfer from your wheelchair onto a toilet. And a lot of people, especially in the Frozen Light audience, aren't able to do that. So that's why we need Changing Places.

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**Amber (01:34):** So it was announced in July that these large accessible toilets for disabled people known as Changing Places will be compulsory for new buildings in England from 2021. And this announcement will be a huge change for building rules in England, which will now require Changing Places to be designed for new public buildings. Also, as part of that announcement, the Department for Transport and Muscular Dystrophy UK announced a 1.27 million fund to install 37 more changing places at service stations across England, which means that 87 of England's 118 service stations will have the facilities in the next few years. And it is Changing Places at service stations, which Zack Kerr has been a particular advocate for over the last few years.

**Lucy (02:29):** So Zack Kerr is a Changing Places Campaigner, and I'm sure if you have anything to do with Changing Places, you will come across him. His voice is out there campaigning very loudly. Zack's from Lancashire, and he has cerebral palsy and uses a powered wheelchair and an iPad to communicate. Zack became involved in the Changing Places campaign when on a journey from Accrington, his home, to Swansea, when his family stopped numerous times, but not a single service station had facilities that meant that Zack was able to be changed. This resulted in a long and uncomfortable journey for Zack. And at that time, there were only 10 Changing Places service stations across the UK and all of these were South of Birmingham. And it was at that moment that Zack started campaigning. And since then, Zack has become a huge advocate for the rights of people to access appropriate toileting facilities.

**Amber (03:23):** Zack's a trustee of Mobiloo, which is a charity that provides mobile Changing Places facilities across the country. So, shall we welcome Zack Kerr!

**Lucy (03:35):** We'll just give him a ring now.

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**Ring tone (03:35):** *(Ring tone sound affect)*

**Lucy (03:35):** So hi Zack, thanks for coming today. So after such a long campaign, how are you feeling?

**Zack (03:47):** When I started my online petition in August 2017, I did not ever believe that I would get so much support so quickly. Within four months of starting the petition, I had presented it at number 10 Downing Street and spoken to lots of MP's who were already supporting the campaign. Within a year the Department of Transport had promised 2 million pounds of funding for motorway service operators and now just three years later, the announcement on Sunday was incredible. This is quite overwhelming for all of us who have campaigned and tried to raise awareness for a long time. I'd like to thank everyone so much for their support.

**Amber (04:33):** So the Sunday that Zack is referencing there is Sunday the 19th of July, which is when the Department for Transport and Muscular Dystrophy UK announced the 1.27 million fund to install another 37 changing places at service stations across England. So, so exciting and so amazing to have you on the podcast today. So can you tell us a bit about how the lack of changing facilities impacted on the lives of disabled people?

**Zack (05:05):** I keep saying that wherever, and whenever Changing Places facilities are provided, it is nothing short of life changing for me and hundreds of thousands of people like me across the UK. And this really is true. The COVID-19 lockdown has maybe given able bodied people a real experience of what life is like for us as disabled people. Without Changing Places facilities, we don't have accessible toilet facilities, which we can use safely and with dignity. So we end up being isolated in our own homes or having to decide between turning back home when we are out or being lifted and changed on a dirty toilet floor. It's

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not fair and it's not right, but this doesn't just affect us. It affects our families, friends and carers too, when Changing Places are available. We can all go out and travel together. No one is excluded.

**Lucy (06:10):**

You're so right and that's why we've been like massive supporters of the Changing Places campaign. It gives people, you know, the freedom that should be everybody's human rights. And, um, you've had to campaign hard for facilities. Do you think that there is a lack of understanding of the facilities that disabled people need?

**Zack (06:27):**

I think things are improving slowly. A few years ago there was a huge lack of understanding in many areas, but thanks to the tireless and successful campaigning of so many, people are now becoming more aware of how essential Changing Places are. I am also a trustee for Mobiloo, which is a charity who provide mobile accessible, Changing Places facilities and large vehicles, at all sorts of events. They have also helped to raise the awareness of the need for Changing Places at all venues. And they enable people with disabilities to attend and be included everywhere they go.

**Amber (07:10):**

And we are big Mobiloo fans aren't we Lucy. As, um, we look at developing our work further yeah, perhaps it's an organisation that we too will be able to work with in the future. As a theatre company, we see firsthand that so many of the venues that we tour to don't have Changing Places, and that makes it really really hard for our audiences to come to the theatre that we work so hard at making accessible, um, about five or six of the 70 venues we tour to have Changing Places facilities, which is just so, so few. Um, but we are starting to see, um, as theatres are starting to kind of refurbish and new theaters are starting to appear that Changing Places are becoming much more discussed topic and we are seeing more and more Changing Places being made available and theatres are starting to come to us as well to ask about how they can get more information about Changing Places, which is also really, really exciting. So can you

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tell us a bit about the impact that the campaign has had on you personally?

**Zack (08:19):** I have been especially busy on social media raising awareness of the campaign. And I have made thousands of friends all around the country and even abroad through my campaigning. Wherever I go, people seem to recognise me and comment that they heard me on the radio or seen me on TV or in the newspapers. I love meeting people anyway, and I have a lot of celebrity friends in the world of entertainment and media. Some of them say that I am now more famous than they are.

**Lucy (08:54):** (Laughs) I love it! And love that this campaigning has really brought people on board and celebrities and TVs and newspapers. That's just like so exciting to hear that people are finally interested in Changing Places toilets, as they should be. So Zack, what more needs to be done?

**Zack (09:13):** I'm really not sure. I used to say that hospitals were the next target of my campaign, but these have also been given the opportunity to apply for government funding, thanks to the work of other Changing Places campaigners. I would really love to see hotels and holiday parks becoming more inclusive with Changing Places facilities. Maybe these will be next on my list. Also, I have been shortlisted for the National Diversity Awards. I am very grateful to have been nominated.

**Lucy (09:49):** And massive congratulations on that nomination. I think it's like well deserved through all the huge amounts of campaigning. And I think that's in the category of positive role model for 2020, which is a pretty epic title to hold. So, um, yeah good luck with that.

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**Amber (10:08):** And it's just been so exciting to talk to you. Um, you know, I said that, I know you've already said that people recognise you, um, wherever you go, and again, you know, we've seen your face in so many newspaper articles and things that we've shared over social media the last few years about the Changing Places campaign. So, uh, thank you so much for all the work that you've been doing on the campaigning. And it's just amazing that it's yeah getting some results and hopefully, for Frozen Light at least it will mean more Changing Places toilets in theaters in the future. So really, really excellent.

**Zack (10:44):** Thank you.

**Lucy (10:46):** And thank you for coming today, Zack. And if there's anything else you want us to add to the podcast or anything else you want to shout out, do, just let us know. Well it's been so nice to interview you, Zack, thank you so much for coming on the Frozen Light podcast and having a Frozen Light Podcast Special.

**Amber (11:04):** Woo!

**Lucy (11:04):** Hopefully we will meet in person one day.

**Zack (11:08):** I want meet you. Would you like to follow me on Twitter?

**Amber (11:17):** I'm amazed if we don't already!

**Lucy (11:20):** (Laughs).

**Zack (11:20):** Okay.

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- Lucy ([11:22](#)):** We definitely follow you on Twitter already (laughs).
- Amber ([11:23](#)):** But we will put, we will add that onto your, the podcast as well. We'll and we'll make sure that your Twitter handle is given out, um, out with the episode.
- Zack ([11:38](#)):** Okay.
- Lucy ([11:41](#)):** Brilliant. Well, thank you for coming on today, Zack and lovely to meet you, and hopefully we'll be able to meet again in the future.
- Zack ([11:49](#)):** Cool.
- Amber ([11:49](#)):** Brilliant. Thanks Zack, bye! Thank you so much Zack for coming on the Frozen Light podcast. If you'd like to get in touch with Zack, he is all over Twitter where a huge amount of his campaigning has taken place, and you can follow him [@zackyboy14](#) on Twitter. Z A C K Y B O Y 14.
- Lucy ([12:18](#)):** And it was so lovely to talk to Zack and just have such a celebratory podcast. I mean, I know there's still a long way to go and Changing Places are by no means common and not in very many buildings already built, but to know that there's going to be more, that the government are actually listening and they're putting them into new buildings and more service stations, allowing people a lot more freedom of movement around the UK. I just think it's really, really exciting. And a lot of that can be put down to the work of Zack. So we're really excited that we interviewed him today.
- Amber ([12:54](#)):** Though I believe that Wales still has a way to go. I feel like when I tweeted about how happy I was about this change, uh, Riding on a

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Star, tweeted back at me and said, 'this isn't happening in Wales yet'. So come on Wales! You can do it too!

**Lucy ([13:11](#)):** Come on Wales! We, we, uh, we need you and we have a lot of audience in Wales.

**Amber ([13:17](#)):** We do!

**Lucy ([13:17](#)):** Yeah so...

**Amber ([13:19](#)):** Who probably pass many service stations to come to our shows.

**Lucy ([13:23](#)):** Yeah. So Wales- sort it out. So it was also super exciting to hear that Zack has been nominated and shortlisted for a National Diversity Award in the category of Positive Role Model- Disability. The winners will be announced in February 2021. So watch this space, but want to wish Zack all the best of luck and a really deserving candidate of the award.

**Amber ([13:48](#)):** In Frozen Light news we've been back in rehearsals, which has been super, super exciting. It's been a really interesting experience putting in place all the social distancing measures that we need to, to ensure that we are able to rehearse safely. But I think it has given us new passion and excitement for future multisensory shows that we will be able to make, which is really, really cool. I think last time we recorded the podcast, we weren't sure when we would be back in touch, but it looks like we are hoping to make another season of the podcast early on in the new year. So watch this space.

**Lucy ([14:24](#)):** And do keep an ear out for what we've been up to. We'll hopefully have some exciting projects to announce soon. You can get in touch with us on our website at [www.frozenlighttheatre.com](http://www.frozenlighttheatre.com). You can email



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us at [info@frozenlighttheatre.com](mailto:info@frozenlighttheatre.com). We're on Twitter [@frozentheatre](https://twitter.com/frozentheatre), Instagram [@frozenlighttheatre](https://www.instagram.com/frozenlighttheatre) and facebook [@frozenlighttheatre](https://www.facebook.com/frozenlighttheatre).

**Amber ([14:52](#)):**

And don't forget to listen to the podcast as well, which you can also access on the website with show notes. And on this episode show notes, we are including a BBC news article with more information about the exciting Changing Places announcement which Zack is quoted in as well. And you can get that on our website /podcast. And you can also find the podcasts on all the usual places you access your podcasts. So please do rate review and subscribe.

**Lucy ([15:24](#)):**

See you next time. Bye bye.