

Dear all at Co-operative Care Colne Valley,

I am a Visiting Researcher at the University of Leeds, researching disabled people's involvement in co-operatives in the UK. I am a disabled person and a member of a workers' co-operative myself.

The purpose of my research is to find out how co-ops may be helpful for disabled people, what barriers disabled people may face to participation in co-ops, what disabled people think about the politics and principles of co-ops and how they are applicable to their experiences, and how to enable co-ops and disabled people's organisations to inform each other and work together in ways that could be helpful for them both. You can read more about my research on my research website: <https://disabledcoops.uk>



[Work without bosses, homes without landlords, and nothing about us without us – Researching disabled people's involvement in co-operatives in the UK](https://disabledcoops.uk)

This site has been set up as part of a piece of research about disabled people's involvement in co-operatives in the UK, which is funded for one year from September 2021 to September 2022, but I hope that the site can continue to exist after the research officially ends as a general hub for news...

[disabledcoops.uk](https://disabledcoops.uk)

There are 3 main parts to my research:

- A survey of co-ops in the UK to find out how many co-ops have disabled members and to what extent co-ops have taken into account disabled people's access needs (online at <https://leeds.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/co-operatives-and-disabled-people-in-the-uk>)
- Individual interviews with disabled people who are or have been members of co-ops, about their experiences in co-ops and what they think and/or how they feel about the intersections between co-ops and disability (see my call for participants at <https://disabledcoops.uk/call-for-participants/>)
- A few case studies of co-ops which were created by and/or for disabled people, and/or intended for the purpose of meeting disabled people's specific needs.

Would your co-op be interested in being one of my case studies?

This could involve any or all of:

- interviews with key people in your co-op - these can be done by Zoom (as first preference), or face-to-face if it is more accessible for your co-op members (in which case we would need to arrange a suitable meeting place).
- analysing documents produced by your co-op - for example governing documents such as your primary and secondary rules, promotional materials, directors' reports, training materials, etc.
- if appropriate to the nature of your co-op and safely possible, an observational visit to your co-op's premises.

The aim of the case studies would be to profile your co-op and what can be learnt from it in terms of enabling disabled people's involvement in co-ops and the possibilities of different co-op models for overcoming disabling barriers.

The case study will be included in a research report, and may be used for other publications, such as articles in academic journals or presentations at conferences. All publications will be made open access so that they are available to everyone to read, whether or not they are associated with a university. Publications will be intended to be useful and applicable for existing and future co-ops with disabled members.

You can collectively choose whether to use your co-op's real name or a pseudonym in the case study.

If possible, I would like to carry out this research between April and June 2022.

All members of your co-op who I interview, or who otherwise provide their time and/or information for the case study, will get a £15 shopping voucher (the specific shops are yet to be determined, but I am hoping to give a choice including the Co-op supermarket chain and local shops which are co-operatives, such as Unicorn in Manchester or Valley Organics in Calderdale.) If you collectively prefer, a voucher of higher value could instead be given to the co-op as a whole.

If you need any further information to enable you to decide whether to participate in this research, or have any other questions about it, please don't hesitate to ask me.

In co-operation

Steve Graby

Visiting Researcher, Leeds University Business School

<https://disabledcoops.uk>

Twitter: @DisabledCoOps