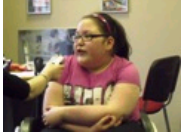


## So stare we dont care

Headliners speak to members of the Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus about how they overcome the everyday prejudices they face.



**Feeling normal does not mean you will be treated as normal. This is the experience of disabled young people who live with Hydrocephalus and Spina Bifida in the Northwest.**

Being treated as different is part of everyday life for these young people who experience discrimination in many forms.

This creates a confusion for disabled young people growing up in a world where, on one hand being unique is good, but on the other hand if having a disability is what makes you unique it can be a different story.

Headliners spoke to members of [ASBAH](#), (Association of Spina Bifida and Hydrocephalus), about the prejudices they face because they don't fit the 'norm.' And how they have overcome this to be confident and proud of who they are.

The girls shared their views on people staring at them and how they refuse to let it get them down.

Shannon who is 13 explained why people stare: "They stare because you are different and they just don't like people that are different."

Shannon described in what way people stare: "They just walk past staring at you and then if they have children the children turn round and they keep staring at you till you are out of sight."

12-year-old Caitlin commented on how staring could make you feel: "I think staring is very rude and it does hurt your feelings if people stare. I think people stare because they think you are different."



Rebecca has experienced similar feelings: "I think staring is terrible because it could make you feel very low and give you very low self esteem. People stare at me because I am very short for my age and that makes me different to them. People stare then they look away, then they really stare again."

Despite being aware of the negative feelings disabled people can get all three girls have learnt how to handle it and would appeal to other disabled young people, to do the same.

Shannon's way of dealing with it is to 'ignore the fact' they are staring.

She adds: "My friends and family don't even mind it when people stare because they think I can handle it, which I certainly can."

Caitlyn insists the staring hasn't stopped her going out and about, however, she did point out that she never goes out alone.

Rebecca is an inspiration to all disabled young people who get stared at: "It doesn't bother me that people stare. My friends and family just tell me to ignore the person. They tell me I look beautiful the way I am."

### About this article

This story was written by Amy Coyle (17) who interviewed young people from the Foyle ASBAH group.

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