



vital link

The Newsletter for Through the Roof



Time For A Break



Extra-Oar-Dinary People



Mkama's Transformed Life



Thank You Jenny



Faith Stories We All Need To Hear

Did you make it to one of our four 'Disability Inclusion in our Churches' events? The whole Through the Roof team is encouraged by what we've heard over the last two months in Ashted, Edinburgh, Manchester, and Bristol.

Inspired by the testimony of the paralysed man in Mark chapter 2, the theme of each event was enabling disabled people to tell stories of their faith journey with the aim of equipping churches and disabled people to serve Christ together. These powerful stories of how God is being glorified through disabled people are stories the whole church needs to hear.

Christians with responsibilities in church life, disabled people and family members all gathered to hear the main presenters, all of whom live with disability. At the first event, in Ashted, Neil Chitty, Senior Pastor at Bethany Community Church, Hertfordshire, spoke from the Through the Roof story, giving a Biblical view of disability ministry and mission. He shared insights from his own leadership and faith journey as a disabled minister.

Also in Ashted, Jo Hooper inspired everyone with her testimony, relating how despite tragic circumstances she encountered Jesus, and is now a natural evangelist, using her day-to-day experience of living with physical disability and sight loss to witness to the love of Jesus to those around her.

Disability Inclusion in our Churches is more than ramps and accessible toilets... it's about belonging, feeling valued and being able to contribute, so Through the Roof's own Fiona Gosden led sessions at all four events—speaking

from her personal experience of disability—encouraging everyone to share their own stories. These were captured on photos, video and put out on social media. Our hope is that the wider church will get to know of these stories, with the result—as in the story of the paralysed man in Mark chapter 2—that God is praised.

Delegates exchanged ideas and suggestions with fellow delegates to make a difference in their own church for the benefit of disabled people and glory of God, and anyone who was, or signed up to become a Roofbreaker for their church (Disability Champion) received a free copy of our popular publication, 'Be a Roofbreaker'.

"The thing I will remember most is how all disabled people need to be included in the discussion to enable true change"

We've tried to model best practice by providing a fully accessible venue, BSL interpreters, large print and alternative formats, and by being quick to respond to any specific requests that people had to access the days. One attendee commented, "Excellent speakers each with their own unique, relevant contribution", and another enthused, "The thing I will remember most is how all disabled people need to be included in the discussion to enable true change."

You can find comments and anecdotes from the events on Twitter using the hashtag #BeARoofbreaker. Visit www.throughtheroof.org to find out about becoming a Roofbreaker and making a difference in your own church.



Time For A Break

We've got a great range of holidays and one retreat planned for this year. If you're interested in joining us, please contact Jan at the office on jan@throughtheroof.org or **01372 7249955** for the holidays, and Jenny at jenny@throughtheroof.org for the retreat.

Contact Details

Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ

Phone:
01372 749955

Email:
info@throughtheroof.org

Web:
www.throughtheroof.org



Easter Retreat

6th–10th April 2020 at Brunel Manor, Torquay.

Building on the success and popularity of previous years, we are pleased to invite you to come for a time of renewal and refreshing, under the care and teaching of Jenny Edwards MBE and Ros Bayes. Our theme is Unwrapping the Gift.

Center Parcs Activity Holiday

Join us in Sherwood Forest, Nottinghamshire from 8th–12th June for the first of our 2020 activity holidays at Center Parcs, Sherwood Forest, where we have reserved two accessible lodges for our disabled and non-disabled guests to enjoy a fun-filled, action packed week.

Activity Holiday

Treloar's College Activity Holiday, Hants from 27th July–1st Aug 2020.

The Treloar activity holiday is situated in the heart of Hampshire, at Treloar College, with its fully accessible accommodation. Activities will be drawn from a range of such things as Bowling, Swimming, Climbing, Archery and Cycling. Activities are accessible to all.



Get on board now for a great break!

Coastal Holiday

1st–6th September 2020 at Brunel Manor. If you prefer a slightly gentler pace, then our Coastal holiday, again at Brunel Manor, could be the right holiday for you. Relax and enjoy the beauty of Brunel Manor, with its lounges, tearoom, woodland walks, lawns and gift and book shops.

Use Your Voice

Our Vision

'... is all people enjoying life together, mutually giving and receiving, as God intended'

Our Mission

'... is transforming lives through Jesus with disabled people'

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Quotes are sometimes edited for clarity and length

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We'll be closing our survey soon, so if you haven't yet responded please take a look—it would be great to have your voice included in our report.

Back in 2014, Through the Roof conducted a survey of disabled people's experience of Church. We asked four questions...

- What one thing do you wish churches knew?
- What's the most important thing your church could do for you?
- What do you wish your church would let you do for them?
- What positive benefits does your disability add to your relationship with God?

The results can be found at www.throughtheroof.org/allofus.

Now, five years later, we are hopeful things have changed since we did our survey, so we are repeating it with the same questions. People can respond by several different means: you can call us with your answers on **01372 749955**; email them to ros@throughtheroof.org; write them out and post them to Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ, or fill the form in online by going to <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/5RKRSSJ> or scanning this QR code.

We'd love to hear about your experiences—they could help shape how we work with churches for the next five years!



Scan this code with your phone to go straight to the survey

“Get Involved!”

How equipped are your church teams for welcoming everyone?

By Fiona Gosden – Deputy Church Inclusion Coordinator

Those who are new to church are often encouraged to join a team as well as a small group. It takes an army to make a church! Serving on a team is part of making church Home, rather than just attending. We are all quick to judge, regardless of someone’s gifts and abilities and we must be ready to recognise this and adapt our perspective when assuming which team a disabled person is best suited to in the church family. There are many situations throughout the Bible where God did not allocate gifts based on someone’s ability, therefore it is the responsibility of the church to ensure that teams are well equipped for a disabled person to join and enhance the team. Here is a little snapshot of my journey trying to settle into a new church.

I joined the connections team to welcome people to church in the church café because this is where my pastoral gifting can be used to serve the church. Serving tea and cake was part of the role to make sure people feel welcome, which is hard to juggle on crutches, and who is going to come to the one table without cake!? So, I chose to collaborate with someone else within the wider connections team, so I had someone assisting me for the more practical part of serving while I did the listening and chatting. Simple to organise, yet this came after being assumed the prayer team was the best

fit for me. Can I encourage you to make sure there is a champion in your church (find out more about becoming a Roofbreaker at www.throughtheroof.org) to assist disabled people to serve in the way God created them for. There’s been many times when the prayer team has been suggested to me because it is something you can do while seated! I love to pray and of course the prayer team is essential, but on a Sunday I choose to use my pastoral gifting.

Disabled people should have the same option of choices as non-disabled people, and we bring unique gifts, which should be valued across all teams in all churches. In my experience, allocating a team based on judgement of abilities, or convenience, is limiting not just the disabled person, but the church.

We’re working hard to produce a new ‘Church Toolkit’, which will be really helpful in equipping your teams to be accessible to a disabled person—lookout for it coming soon.

Extra-Oar-dinary People

Come and cheer on Through the Roof’s Dragonboat crew and have a fun day out at this charity event, organised by Kingston Rotary Club. There will be stalls, sideshows, food courts and much more. It takes place on the River Thames at Canbury Gardens, Lower Ham Road, Kingston, KT2 5AU on Sunday, 19th July 2020.

We are looking for a team of up to 14 people including a drummer to beat time for the crew. Races take place every 15 minutes throughout the day with each team racing at least three times over the 250-metre course. The first race takes place at 9.30am and the final one at about 4.30pm.



Contact us to join the crew this year (photo by Sam Goodridge)

Each Through the Roof crew member will be asked to raise a minimum of £100.00 in sponsorship money. Even if you’re not rowing, we’d love to see you there. If you can’t be there, please think about sponsoring us at www.justgiving.com/ttr. Don’t forget to Gift-Aid it!

“They Think I’m a Fraud—Pretending a Disability”

By Dr Mike Townsend, Chair of Trustees

In November, BBC News ran a story, focussing on a folk singer, called Tilly Moses who has Fibromyalgia. She reflected on the public’s attitude towards her. “People are shocked that I laugh and take care of my make-up! They think I’m a fraud--pretending a disability”. She’s tried to change people’s attitudes through her songs. You can search for one of them, ‘The Social Model’, on music streaming services or Youtube.

“I am not a tragedy nor a cautionary tale; nor a thing to inspire when you think that you might fail;

I am not a burden nor a duty or curse; I am not a scrounger, reaching into your purse. ... I am a passion and a person, have ambition, love and drive; I could be free of all the shackles you draw on me in your mind if you let me be.”

I am not a professional singer like Tilly Moses. I do try to change people’s thinking by talking openly about my experience of disability. You would be surprised at the questions I get asked. Some are quite personal and intrusive. God has given me his grace to be an ambassador.

“Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.”

The Rev. Matt Martinson, priest in charge of St. Barnabas and St. Luke’s in Carlisle, takes another approach. Matt was a convicted armed robber. He met Jesus in prison. After release, he responded to God’s call to train as a vicar. Shock! Halfway through his training, he had a spinal stroke. Now he uses a wheelchair. Matt is part of the ‘God For All Vision’ for Cumbria.

“I’ve learned more about God and my relationship with him by being in a wheelchair.” Songs of Praise on Sunday



Mike and friends having coffee in Fleckney. The folk in the shop knew it was his wedding anniversary, and the question came: “how did you know what Edith looked like?” He said the questions can be quite intrusive sometimes!

showed Matt in his wheelchair on a street in central Carlisle with a large sign reading ‘Ask me anything’. People do!

Your life journey, perhaps with disability, may mean you do not have the strength or resources to interact publicly. We can show Jesus through the way we live. “Let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father.” **(Matthew 5: 16, NLT).**

Tilly sings. Matt sits in his wheelchair talking to passers-by. I am very available and approachable with my guide dog Oxford. We can all help people to think differently by living with Jesus.

What do you think? How can we all show Jesus through the way we live? Mike would love to hear from you with your reactions—get in touch on info@throughtheroof.org.

In Memory of Margaret

We are extremely saddened to report that our recent work colleague of 17 years, friend, and sister in the faith, Margaret Bale, passed away last month from an aggressive form of cancer. Her family were with her at the end and she was at peace and we know she is now free from pain in a better place.

Please continue to pray for her husband, Mike; brother, David; son and daughter, Rick and Jacqui; grandson, Edward; and her mum and dad, Freda and John. Margaret specifically asked Jenny Edwards to speak at the service, and to make sure there was enough disabled parking!



Margaret taking a moment to enjoy the zipwire at the Dalesdown holiday, a real blessing for many families which she ran for 10 years

Mkama's Transformed Life

By Janet Eardley, Church Inclusion Coordinator and Churches Inc team member

Mkama had a stroke 13 years ago which left him unable to walk. He lives in Tanzania, where we recently held a joint Churches Inc and Wheels trip. He arrived carried in the arms of his grandson and was placed in one of the chairs set out for the Churches Inc programme. One of the benefits of having Churches Inc and Wheels together is that as people wait to see the Wheels team and be assessed for a wheelchair, they can join in the Churches Inc workshop. This is what Mkama did—and during that workshop he gave his life to Jesus!

Mkama was transformed. He had come for a wheelchair, but at that moment it was far more important to him to get a Bible. "I want the Word of God" he said—and went on to tell the whole room that the Word of God was more valuable than money or even a wheelchair. He was worried that the pastor would talk too long and forget to give him a Bible! It was amazing to think that this man who had not been able to leave his bed for 13 years without being carried now wanted a Bible far more than the wheelchair. He was experiencing a new sort of freedom.

Mkama did receive his Swahili Bible, a wheelchair, and reading glasses donated by UK churches. Praise God for a life transformed in every way!

We rely on your support to fund these amazing trips. Please visit www.throughtheroof.org



It was amazing to think that this man who had not been able to leave his bed for 13 years without being carried now wanted a Bible far more than the wheelchair

or call **01372 749955** to donate—your gift will keep these trips running and changing lives.

Find out more about joining one of future International Missions trips later in the newsletter.

Change Lives in 2020

We still have a few spaces on our International Missions trips—contact shaun@throughtheroof.org to find out more.

Wheels for the World

Maputo, Mozambique 6th – 16th May 2020

Ternopil, Ukraine 5th – 15th August 2020

Elburgon, Kenya 4th – 14th November 2020

Teams generally comprise of four therapists, two techies, a photographer/blogger, an administrator, and someone with pastoral experience.

Churches Inc.

Ternopil, Ukraine 5th – 15th August 2020

We encourage volunteers who can teach the Word of God at our Leaders' Events to apply, including those who have practical experience working with disabled people to teach at the workshops. We would also like to encourage any of our Wheels volunteer therapists who would like to impart their practical experience to come and teach at these Churches Inc. workshops. There is also a need for volunteers with administrative, photographic or pastoral experience to apply, or who have a personal story to tell about their own, or a family member's disability.



Join us in 2020, and help change lives

Steering You Through Life

By Jenny Edwards M.B.E.

As most of you know, I am a wheelchair user and I have an electric wheelchair. This is an amazing tool in many ways but can also—as with so many wonderful things—go wrong at times. However, it is also a wonderful illustration at times of how we feel and how God can intervene at the not-so-good times.

Do you sometimes have days when you feel discombobulated and things are just not running smoothly? I often do, and on those days I frequently find my chair simply does what it wants to do, and not what I want it to do! For instance, doors and walls get in the way and I crash into them knocking off the paint and causing even more frustration than before. Admittedly, this is mainly due to my not concentrating whilst driving, but at the time I see it as a wheelchair fault!

Another situation is when the chair takes on a mind of its own. The joystick on the chair is extremely sensitive and the slightest knock can send me in a direction I do not want to go, and at a speed that is frightening! This often happens when I fail to turn the chair off and someone rests their arm on it, hitting the joystick. Again, I blame the chair, but really if I had turned it off that would not happen. Once I actually had to be rescued from a bush in a ditch because I failed to turn the chair off whilst stopping to talk to someone!

Another chair incident can be caused by failing to turn the switch on when plugging in to charge the chair at night—no battery charge, chair will not go.

As I have gone through all these things, you will have no doubt realised that every one of these incidents could have been avoided if I had been more careful. It is so easy to blame things or people when the day does not go to plan. I blame my chair, but that does not make me feel any better, however just stopping still for a while, and using that time to connect with God, can and does change the day. A day that does not start with a conversation with God, is never a good day for me, but the wonderful thing is, I can stop and connect with him



Jenny tries out the activities on a recent holiday

anytime and anyplace, and he recharges my batteries and I am back feeling much better again. Why don't you try it?

A New Season

By Jenny Edwards MBE

God works in seasons, and sometimes it means He changes the direction our lives should go. God has done just that to me, asked me to change direction, so after 46 years with DCF, I am retiring at the end of April.

Things will be very different, and it will take some getting used to, but I am sure He will soon show me the direction He wants me to take next.

I am keen to keep in touch with friends so as there will no longer be 'Come Fishing' CD's, I shall be continuing with the same format, and a CD every month to whoever would like to receive one. It will be known as 'Jen Slot'. Let me know if you would like to receive one, for an annual donation. If you would like to keep in touch then please let me know before I leave so we can exchange contact details.

Go Forth And Multiply

By Shaun Burrows, International Missions Manager

Perched up high in the branches of a mango tree in Mozambique looking through the leaves, I saw the biggest mango I had ever seen. I stretched across, picked it and peeled off the skin, savouring the flavour as I took my first bite. As I sat down on a branch to enjoy the mango, I considered that the ultimate test for a mango tree must be in the production of such a fruit. Then, as I watched the bright coloured juice drip off my elbows to the ground below, I noticed the tiny mango trees growing at the base and realised that the ultimate test for a mango tree is to produce another mango tree.

In recent years some very good relationships have been established between us and our partners in developing countries, not least in East Africa. Some of these partners have travelled to their neighbouring countries to join our teams. Through the multi-cultural efforts of these teams the lives of many disabled people and their communities have been transformed through the wheelchairs that they have fitted and distributed together, and through the Biblical principles they have taught. Whilst in Tanzania in October last year, the four East African team members who were present decided to form their own team to reach out to leaders of disability ministries in other East African countries. The team has since grown to include members from Uganda and Malawi and they are now organising their own Churches Inc. trip to Rwanda. We believe that as the East African team grows, the lives of many disabled people will be transformed throughout the region.

God has also been working behind the scenes at our warehouse. Over the past two years we have seen many volunteers give up their time to go every Wednesday, clean



Thank you to all our volunteers at the warehouse!

the wheelchairs, attach belts and replace the castors. Recently, Parkhurst Prison has been unable to refurbish our wheelchairs and so these volunteers have ensured that there has been a sufficient supply of wheelchairs for every distribution. Last year, we formed a partnership with Risley Prison in Manchester who have now refurbished their first batch of wheelchairs. Through their commitment and that of our warehouse volunteers, we can increase the number of Wheels distributions this year from three to four. As a result, God is multiplying the number of people we can help. Thank you for your continued support—please do keep the work of Wheels and Churches Inc in your prayers as we expand.

Thank You Jenny

After 46 years of faithful service and ministry with Disabled Christians Fellowship—21 of those under the umbrella of Through the Roof—our dear friend and sister in Christ, Jenny Edwards MBE, will be retiring at the end of April.

Jenny has given an incredible lifetime of selfless encouragement and prayer, changing the lives of hundreds of disabled people and their families—pointing them all to Jesus. Under her leadership of DCF, at its peak she oversaw 141 groups and led holidays which each attracted up to 86 people, including trips to Israel, Malta, Cyprus and Tenerife. The holidays have always demonstrated joy and togetherness, a gathering of people which was more like a family with Jesus at the centre. Within this culture DCF witnessed 2 marriages between volunteers who met on the holidays. Recently Jenny was thrilled to have helped initiate a Christian Union at Treloar's



The first DCF holidays trip to Israel

College for disabled students with their Chaplain. The group grew so much Treloars had to start a second group.

(Continued on page 8)

Thank You Jenny

(Continued from page 7)

Jenny has been a great support for all of us, and it will be a big change for Jenny and the work. DCF and Through the Roof will continue to provide accessible group holidays of joy and togetherness with Christ at the centre, as well as spiritual Retreats, and Fellowship groups.

Over the years many people have been blessed by Jenny's kind and thoughtful words through Come Fishing and her Vital Link articles (her last one will feature in July's edition.) If you would like to pass on your own words of thanks and encouragement to her, and perhaps give towards a leaving gift, please send them to the office address, for Suzanne's attention, clearly marked for Jenny's leaving, or email: Suzanne@throughtheroof.org. Please help us to honour Jenny's amazing work, and get in touch if you have any questions.



Jen marking 50 years of DCF in 2009

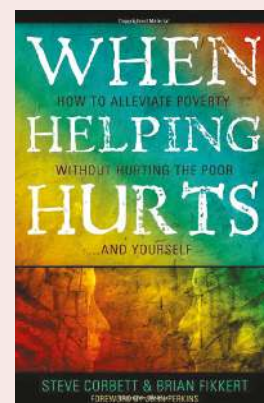
Helping Without Hurting On International Trips

By Rob Dalton, trustee and regular Wheels volunteer

Imagine your church has a choice: you can either have a one week visit from a team of 12 wealthy people from Las Vegas, coming to pick up litter around your area, or you can have the £12,000 it would cost them to travel. What would your church pick?

Be honest.

As a passionate supporter of short-term mission, the book 'When Helping Hurts' by Steve Corbett and Brian Fikkert can be a humbling read. A read that I would encourage anyone involved in overseas work to benefit from too. As well as putting the Biblical theory of mission in context, it has a fair few examples of mission gone wrong. But alongside humbling, it was heart-warming (and relieving) to reflect on how 'Through the Roof' is trying to do short-term mission well.



When Helping Hurts

The book outlines certain principles to organising a trip in order to do good, not harm.

Some are highlighted here:

- Partner with a local organisation
- Come at the request of that organisation to do the work that organisation requests
- Make sure your team are trained and qualified and coming to provide a service the local area would struggle to do
- Be open to not sending a team if the work cannot be done to a high standard
- Always be learning
- Keep the team numbers relatively small
- Vet and recruit your team well, choosing people engaged in their local church
- Do not advertise your trip as an adventure or for tourism
- Have a face to face meeting with the team before the trip to prepare
- Get the team to fully fund or part fund their trip

These practical points, in the considerable experience of the authors, tend to produce trips that lead to good, not harm. So, do we pat ourselves on the back? More like give thanks to God for his grace! But surprise surprise, the book suggests complacency is one of the biggest dangers! Let us continue to have high quality principles for short-term mission, and always seek to humbly learn and grow.

With millions worldwide in need of a wheelchair, and millions more misunderstood and unsupported with a disability, the need for us to step out is vast! And in most contexts, simply sending the team's airfare money will not lead to this need being met—it is a constant challenge for us.

I feel privileged volunteering for a charity that is working hard to uphold these principles and is always seeking to improve.

3 Good Deeds in 1



Sponsor a wheelchair for £42, and transform the life of a disabled person overseas

RECYCLE

Save an old wheelchair from landfill



RESTORE

Help prisoners contribute to society by refurbishing wheelchairs to 'as new' standard

RESULT

Change the life of a disabled person in a developing country through the gift of a wheelchair



"Thank you, may God bless you, you have made my life better!"
– Joyce, Wheelchair Recipient in Ghana



**Please return
this form to:**

Through the Roof,
Alpha House,
Alpha Place,
Garth Road,
Morden, Surrey,
SM4 4TQ

All About Wheels

65 million disabled people worldwide need a wheelchair (World Health Organisation). Most of these people don't have the money or opportunity to buy one. Wheels for the World, an overseas programme of Through the Roof, restores and distributes previously-used wheelchairs to people in several African countries, giving disabled recipients increased independence and demonstrating the love of God in a practical way. See more at www.throughtheroof.org.



Donor Details

Name:

Address:

.....

Postcode:

Telephone no:

Email:

We take your personal data and privacy very seriously and only use your information to best provide you with the products and services you ask for e.g. sending our newsletter, or accounting for donations. We only hold personal data for as long as it is needed, and it is held securely and never passed on to external organisations. More information can be found in our Privacy policy.

- Tick here to receive our International Missions news by email
- Tick here to receive our Vital Link newsletter by email
- Tick here to receive our Vital Link newsletter by post

Please return this form to:

Through the Roof, Alpha House, Alpha Place,
Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ
01372 749955

Gift Aid

Gift Aid enables us to make your gift go further without any additional cost to you.

I would like Through the Roof to treat as Gift Aid donations* all qualifying gifts of money made:

Today In the past 4 years In the future

Please tick all boxes you wish to apply.

Date:

giftaid it

or

It is not possible for me to Gift Aid my donations.

* I am a UK taxpayer and understand that if I pay less Income Tax and or Capital Gains Tax than the amount of Gift Aid claimed on all my donations in that tax year it is my responsibility to pay any difference.

Please notify the charity if you want to cancel this declaration, change your name or home address, or no longer pay sufficient tax on your income and/or capital gains. If you pay Income Tax at the higher or additional rate and want to receive the additional tax relief due to you, you must include all your Gift Aid donations on your Self-Assessment tax return or ask HM Revenue and Customs to adjust your tax code.

I would like to sponsor _____ wheelchair(s) at £42 per chair and/or _____ Bibles at £8 each

All wheelchair sponsors receive a photo certificate of a recipient after the trip—all Bible sponsors will receive a special bookmark to say 'Thank You'.

Name for sponsor certificate: _____

I enclose a cheque for £ _____ made out to Wheels for the World **OR**

I would like to make a donation by credit / debit card of (amount):

Card number:

Security Code (Last 3 numbers on back of card):

Issue number (If applicable): Valid from date: / Expiry date: /

Signature: Date:.....

Other Ways to Give

Please visit www.justgiving.com/ttr to donate directly and securely online, and reference 'Wheels Sponsorship'. To donate by bank transfer, use **A/C 00008105, sort 40 – 52 – 40** and reference 'Wheels' so your gift goes to Wheels for the World. Do let us know if you do this, so we can claim gift aid and keep you informed about the good work you're making possible. Or call us on **01372 749955** or email info@throughtheroof.org

Wheels for the World is a programme of Through the Roof Charitable Trust Ltd, Registered Charity number 1087788 with registered offices at Alpha House, Alpha Place, Garth Road, Morden, Surrey, SM4 4TQ. It is also a Registered UK Company number 04201510.